

Scholar's Advanced Technological System

Chapter 1001 State Scholar

Beijing.

Inside a faculty apartment at Yan University, two old men were sitting in the living room, drinking tea while chatting.

Because they were both academician level mathematicians, their conversation was naturally about mathematics.

The IMO competition recently came to an end. Academician Xiang Huanan began to talk about China's performance with a smile on his face.

"First prize in group competition, 5 gold medals, and a silver. Someone even got full marks. Academician Wang, your team did quite well!"

Academician Wang Shicheng smiled and waved his hand.

"Pft, it has nothing to do with me, Professor Yang is more involved with the competition. I went to a couple of training, but I didn't really help too much. Also, it's also mainly due to the students' abilities, they're all talented in mathematics research. The mathematics center is just a venue for them to learn."

Even though the old man tried to not take any credit, it was obvious he was still quite proud of how the students did.

At his age, it was impossible for him to produce any mathematics achievements. Ever since he retired as the chairman of the China Mathematics Society, he hadn't conducted any mathematics research.

Yang Yongan was the teacher that led the IMO competition and one of Wang Shicheng's proudest students.

Thus, Wang Shicheng was obviously pleased that his student was able to lead the Chinese mathematics Olympic team to success.

When you reached a certain age, money and materialistic things wouldn't matter anymore. Leaving a legacy behind was more rewarding than anything else.

"You're too humble. They are talented, but cultivating them is still important, right?" Xiang Huanan smiled and said, "But honestly, it's getting harder and harder to win. 5 gold medals aren't bad at all."

"Yeah." Wang Shicheng nodded and said, "The environment now is totally different. Education of the basic sciences is supported by the state and society. Things are a lot more competitive. I'm happy we were able to achieve this result."

Basic scientific education didn't directly affect a country's scientific research abilities, but any country with a strong scientific research background also needed strong fundamentals.

Especially when it came to mathematics.

Knowledge wasn't shared through books or hard disks; it was shared by people.

"You're right." Xiang Huanan sighed and said, "Speaking of which, this is all thanks to Professor Lu. He has inspired thousands of people to enter this field. I've been to many elementary schools and kindergartens, and when I ask the kids why they want to be a scientist, they all say Professor Lu—"

"Pff!"

Wang Shicheng suddenly spat out a mouthful of tea. Xiang Huanan paused for a second and quickly handed him some tissue.

"What happened? Did you choke? You should be careful, we're getting old now."

"..."

Wang Shicheng's face turned red, he wanted to say something, but his throat was still hurting.

This old b*stard!

Just a second ago you were praising Yan University, now you're kissing Academician Lu's ass*...

Wang Shicheng patted his chest for a while and tried to catch his breath. He wiped his mouth with a tissue and spoke while panting.

"Nothing, go on."

Xiang Huanan looked at this old man and felt something was strange.

He shook his head and was about to continue speaking, but he suddenly rubbed his head awkwardly and said, "Wait a second, what was I talking about?"

Wang Shicheng: "Never mind, it doesn't matter."

"Fine, it wasn't important anyway. Damn, my memory!" Xiang Huanan then said, "Speaking of which, I nearly forgot something. There was a kid that got full marks, right? What is his name?"

Wang Shicheng: "Li Mo."

"Li Mo? Interesting name." Xiang Huanan smiled and said, "Looks like he's going to get a lot of training at Yan University."

Wang Shicheng's eyebrows twitched.

"He didn't apply to Yan University..."

F*ck sake!

Can't you talk about something else?!

Did this old man come here just to piss me off?

Xiang Huanan didn't expect this kid to refuse Yan University's invitation.

"He didn't apply? No way? Did he... go to Shuimu?"

Wang Shicheng snapped, "Jinling!"

His worst regret was letting Professor Lu visit the mathematics center at Yan University. Not only did Professor Lu poach away Chen Yang, but he also poached an IMU gold medalist!

Screw this!

Screw that Lu Zhou kid!

Xiang Huanan nodded. He rubbed his beard and spoke.

“Jinling... Jinling is pretty good, Professor Lu is there. Anything is better than going to a temple and praying all day.”

Back in the 2006 IMO, student Liu from China and Schultz from Germany both won gold medals with perfect scores. However, one of them was now a Fields Medal-winning scholar, one of the most likely scholars to surpass Faltings. The other was drawn to Buddhism, never to be seen or heard again.

Whenever Xiang Huanan thought about it, he couldn't help but feel agonized.

Xiang Huanan had met the young kid before; he had even argued with Wang Shicheng about the kid, claiming that Yan University ruined a good talent.

While the two men were thinking about separate things, it was time for a noon repast.

As usual, Wang Shicheng turned on the news channel while he ate.

The international news began showing precisely at 12 o'clock.

The news anchor sitting in the studio began with some opening remarks, and soon, the anchor talked about today's first international news story.

And this story was obviously about the anti-terrorism military training “exercise”.

Wang Shicheng, who was sitting at the dining table, looked at the scene on the television, watching the airborne capsule falling from the sky. He had a look of comfort in his eyes, but he soon sighed with melancholy.

“I can no longer keep up with the times. When I heard about the aerospace forces on television, I had no idea what it was. But now, in less than two years, they were able to conduct a real-life exercise drill in space.”

“That’s what happens when you get older,” Xiang Huanan said. He looked at the television and suddenly remembered something, and he said, “Speaking of which, I heard a rumor at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.”

Wang Shicheng: “What rumor?”

Xiang Huanan: “Apparently, this exercise drill was for Academician Lu’s visit to Russia for the ICM conference... But I think this rumor is quite unreliable. Qian Xuesen also traveled internationally back in the day, and the international tensions back then were way worse. He didn’t receive this kind of treatment. I just feel like this is unnecessary.”

Academician Lu again...

Today was the third time Wang Shicheng heard this annoying name.

However, this time, he didn’t react at all; he didn’t even comment on this matter.

After a moment of silence, the old man spoke.

“Never has there ever been a scholar that has received such treatment...”

Not to mention that Lu Zhou wasn’t a scientist, he was a mathematician.

Even though Wang Shicheng hated this person, he still acknowledged that Lu Zhou deserved this kind of reception.

“It’s just a rumor, take it with a grain of salt. But this kid is quite nutty. It’s a shame he didn’t come to the Chinese Academy of Sciences!” Xiang Huanan said as he looked at Wang Shicheng, “Speaking of which, I’m sure you’re invited to this year’s ICM. You didn’t go to the one in Brazil, are you going this time?”

It would be a shame if someone missed the opportunity to attend the ICM.

It only happened once every four years; no one knew how many opportunities this old man would have.

But if I go, I would have to see that imperious face...

Wang Shicheng hesitated for a second before clenching his jaw and nodding.

“I’m going! I have an invitation, why shouldn’t I go?”

Even though he detested that Lu Zhou guy.

But having the opportunity to witness China’s mathematics community flourish on the international stage...

That... would put a smile on my face.

Chapter 1002 Turn to the Dark Side

China informed the international community about the military drill, long before the anti-terrorism exercise mission began.

However, most people heard about the aerospace forces “special exercise drill” the day after the exercise drill was finished.

In addition to letting the airborne troops test the newly installed “Thunder” airborne module, the other mission objective was to deter and scare enemies.

In order to fully portray the “jump of the century” on camera, CTV news reporters responsible for covering the story made great efforts to capture every moment.

Not only did they use cinematic shooting techniques and editing, but they also captured various angles of the airborne capsule breaking through the atmosphere by placing cameras inside the capsule.

Unsurprisingly, the results were quite amazing.

The news anchor made a brief introduction, followed by a half-minute video of the launch process, capturing everyone’s attention.

As the video showed the airborne capsule being “released” from outer space, then breaking through the atmosphere, people’s eyes were glued to their televisions.

There was no need for any special effects.

It looked like someone out of a blockbuster movie!

The close-up shots of the airborne capsule hitting the ground, as well as the airborne soldiers appearing out of the cloud of smoke, was like the climax of a movie!

Because of this, halfway through the broadcast, the discussions already began flooding in on the Internet.

[What the f*ck! Outer space soldiers? When did the aerospace forces get this nutty?!]

[I'm shook! Is this really a real-life exercise? It's not a movie? I gotta go smoke a cigarette and calm down.]

[Our future is in the stars!!!]

[This is something out of a Mission Impossible movie!]

[I'm guessing Amazon is thinking about how to use this technology for world-wide delivery in under an hour!]

[Looks like NASA is going to go crazy, they've stayed quiet all day. It's like the aerospace stock market was hit with a tornado.]

No one knew that the Air Force Equipment Department had this kind of technology up their sleeves.

Global deployment in under an hour.

Airborne at an altitude of 110 kilometers.

Until a few hours ago, this sounded like a ridiculous concept, something out of a science fiction movie.

Even after seeing the video with their own eyes, some people still couldn't believe this was real.

Their common sense told them that this was just a "commercial" for the next upcoming science-fiction blockbuster...

It made sense that they felt this way.

The editing done on the video didn't look like a news story at all; it looked like a movie clip.

If they added some background music, the clip could totally be used as an advertisement for the aerospace forces.

Speaking of which, some people downloaded the video, added some background music, and uploaded it to YouTube. It received millions of views within a day.

Some foreigners asked in the comments section which movie the clip was from.

This video traveled from Facebook to Instagram to Twitter, until people finally realized that this wasn't a movie at all...

In addition to the half-minute video featuring the 20 orbital paratrooper soldiers, the CTV reporters also recorded B-roll footage of the "Thunderbird aerospaceplane", as well as the "Great Wall" space carrier.

The "Thunder" capsule descending from the sky deterred people with bad intentions.

On the other hand, it also destroyed many conspiracies.

If China had a team of soldiers that could arrive at any location on Earth within an hour, no one would have enough time to react...

Thus, when faced with such an opponent, there were many things that had to be reconsidered...

...

Time quickly flew by.

It was already mid-July.

After the exercise mission ended, Lu Zhou left the training base and went back home. He dedicated almost all of his time to researching Riemann's hypothesis.

Even though no one was pressuring him to create any breakthroughs, the closer it got to August, the more Lu Zhou felt like he was approaching a deadline.

This never happened to him before.

Even though he had made significant progress, he was still stuck in the same spot.

He sat in his study room and downloaded the latest research from the analytic number theory section on arXiv. He closed his browser and was about to begin today's research.

However, a text bubble appeared on the lower right corner of his screen.

Xiao Ai: [Master, you have mail! (✿◡◡)]

Lu Zhou: "Open it for me... Also, bring a cup of coffee to the study room."

Xiao Ai: [Okay, Master! (๑^๒•)✧]

It seemed like Xiao Ai had an infinite amount of energy.

Lu Zhou smiled at the message and could feel his mood going up.

His eyes turned toward the screen, and he recognized the email address. It was the high school student he met at the Yan University mathematics center.

Speaking of which, it was already mid-July. Even though Lu Zhou didn't pay close attention to the competition, he still heard that the competition had ended.

Li Mo: [Sir! I got a gold medal, you promised me, I'm your student now!]

Gold medal?

This kid's not bad.

Lu Zhou remembered he only casually made the promise to make the kid go away; he didn't expect the kid to actually win a gold medal.

I don't really like his arrogant attitude, but anyone that wins an IMO gold medal is worth cultivating.

Lu Zhou pondered for a second and wrote a reply.

[Apply to Jin Ling University.]

He finished typing and clicked send.

Lu Zhou was about to close his email when he saw another email appear in his mailbox.

[Okay, teacher! Oh yeah, what books should I read for the summer? I plan on preparing for university classes.]

Lu Zhou: "..."

Even though Lu Zhou didn't want to reply, he still sent a reply.

[Just go twiddle your thumbs.]

Li Mo: [... ???]

Lu Zhou sighed and typed another reply.

[Take your time and enjoy yourself. These two months are going to be the best days of your life. You'll have plenty of time to read books once you are in university. Do something out of your element, go traveling or something.]

The same thing happened to Lu Zhou.

Ever since he entered university campus, it was like his life did a 180-degree change; he hadn't truly taken a break in years.

Of course, Lu Zhou loved what he was doing, research was his favorite thing to do.

However, occasionally, he would feel nostalgic about his carefree days.

Li Mo: [Okay, teacher! I don't understand why, but I'll listen to your advice!]

Lu Zhou nodded his head with approval.

Not bad, a bit cocky, but at least he's obedient.

He was about to close his email and get back to research when he suddenly remembered something important. Thus, he sent another email.

[Oh yeah, try not to visit spiritual and religious countries.]

Li Mo: [Why?]

Lu Zhou: [You might turn to the dark side and leave mathematics.]

Li Mo: [...?]

The last day of July.

Even though every pore in Lu Zhou's body was yelling no, he still stopped his research and began packing as he prepared for the International Congress of Mathematicians at St. Petersburg.

As for the 60-minute report, after some thinking, he finally decided on making a brief summary regarding his work on the Riemann zeta function over the past few years and uploaded the thesis to the International Congress of Mathematicians website.

In fact, this was nothing out of the ordinary.

Whether it was a 45-minute report or a 60-minute report, these conference reports weren't held specifically for ground-breaking results. It was more to give scholars a platform to present the progress they had made over the past couple of years.

After all, for most areas of mathematics, especially number theory, it was nearly impossible to consistently produce ground-breaking research.

It was naive to think that hard work and discipline guaranteed good research.

"Xiao Ai, should I bring a jacket?"

It was still summer in Jinling. Lu Zhou even felt hot wearing a t-shirt, but he heard St. Petersburg was starting to get cold.

The drone dangling next to Lu Zhou began to display a string of text on its screen.

Xiao Ai: [St. Petersburg is located at the head of the Gulf of Finland on the Baltic Sea, situated at 59° N. The temperature during August is between 13

and 20 Celsius. Even though it is not too cold, I recommend Master bringing a windbreaker or a leather jacket. (๑•̀ㅂ•́)و✧]

“Oh, I see... I’ll bring this trench coat then.”

Lu Zhou looked at his fully packed suitcase and contemplated for a second. He then pulled out a couple of t-shirts from his suitcase and stuffed in a black trench coat.

He still remembered wearing this coat when he received an award in Berlin.

That was a long time ago; he didn’t expect this coat to still fit him so well.

Lu Zhou sighed and felt a little emotional.

I guess the saying that “whoever proves the Riemann hypothesis will be immortal” is true.

He had already proven a weaker form of Riemann’s hypothesis, the Quasi Riemann hypothesis. Logically speaking, that should make him at least a half-immortal.

While Lu Zhou was day-dreaming, the small display floating next to him began to flash.

Xiao Ai: [Master, video call request, the IP address is from North America. ~~~~~(•̀V•́)]

Is it Xiao Tong?

Or Vera?

Without asking who the video call was from, Lu Zhou said, “Pick up the call.”

Xiao Ai: [Ok! (๑•̀ㅂ•́)و✧]

The drone screen began to display a video call interface.

Lu Zhou instantly recognized the person on the screen. He was slightly surprised.

“Wei Wen?”

“Professor...”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Why did you suddenly decide to call me?”

“I have some things I want to ask about...” Wei Wen awkwardly said. He noticed Lu Zhou’s half-packed suitcase, so he curiously asked, “Are you going to the ICM in St. Petersburg?”

“Yeah, I have to do an hour report there... Speaking of which, how have you been? Qin Yue said you’re a lecturer at the MIT materials science department, do you like it there?”

For some reason, Wei Wen suddenly looked a little distraught.

He sighed and shook his head.

“It’s not going well, can we not talk about it... I’m about to be unemployed.”

Unemployed?

Lu Zhou stood up and looked at Wei Wen through the small display. He frowned and asked, “What’s going on? Are you... in trouble?”

Lu Zhou had the impression that Wei Wen was quite a talented guy, with outstanding mathematical modeling abilities. Ever since Wei Wen transferred to the computational materials science field, he had been totally killing it. Apparently, he had already published three papers in major journals.

Lu Zhou had no idea why MIT would want to get rid of such an excellent scholar.

Not to mention, he was Lu Zhou’s ex-student...

There’s no way he’s on the verge of unemployment, right?

Wei Wen knew that Lu Zhou was confused, so he asked, “Are you on a retreat again?”

Lu Zhou said, “Sort of... Why?”

“Nothing, there’s something going on right now...” Wei Wen sighed and said, “I’m not the only one in trouble, all of the Chinese scholars at MIT are not having a good time...”

Wei Wen spent five minutes giving Lu Zhou a brief explanation.

Apparently, at the beginning of July, the White House suddenly issued a special bill signed by the president, which requested the embassy to tighten the visa restrictions.

On the surface, it would seem like an MIT mathematics professor would be unaffected.

However, after the bill was signed, MIT, Stanford, and other major universities suddenly changed their attitude toward Chinese lecturers and professors. Not only did they reduce their scientific funding, but they also reduced their lecture hours.

Even scholars that had worked in the United States for decades but hadn't gotten citizenship were severely affected.

Apparently, the reason this happened was that someone from the FBI interviewed the board of directors of major universities. Even though they hadn't been fired yet, these rumors made the professors and lecturers feel uneasy.

"Actually, I saw some signs two years ago, but I didn't expect it to come to this."

Lu Zhou said, "What do you mean?"

Wei Wen sighed and said, "The MIT global admission standards are based on academic ability, personality traits, and diversity. But there haven't been any Chinese students admitted in the past two years. In fact, the universities have been mistreating us since a long time ago."

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "That seems unusual."

Even though there was no explicit rule prohibiting Chinese students, over the past two years, there hadn't been a single Chinese student that was admitted to Stanford or MIT. The few Chinese students that were admitted, were born in America.

And it seemed like MIT had exacerbated this problem.

“The academic environment is becoming more and more unfriendly. It wasn’t like this a decade ago. A while ago, I was talking with a Chinese materials science professor about this. China’s achievements in nuclear fusion and aerospace have triggered the Americans.

“Especially after the Ares program disaster last year, the Americans were in shambles. I can even feel the students being discriminatory toward me when I give lectures.”

Wei Wen sounded hurt.

“Now, there are rumors in the academic community that Congress is going to issue a stricter bill, so everyone’s feeling anxious. I don’t know how long I can stay here, I might even get fired tomorrow.”

Lu Zhou: “You’re a mathematics researcher, are you also affected by this?”

“I mean, my research isn’t pure mathematics. I work with the materials science laboratory. Someone even suspected I was a Chinese spy.” Wei Wen shook his head and said, “What kind of spy helps them clean experimental data and do research... Sigh, if it weren’t for my in-progress research, I would want to quit myself.”

Lu Zhou went silent for a while. He then said, “You can always come back to Jinling. The academic environment is pretty good. What’s your salary like? I promise to match it.”

Before video calling Lu Zhou, Wei Wen had seriously considered going back to China.

However, for some reason, after he heard Lu Zhou’s offer, he began to hesitate.

After a couple of seconds, he clenched his jaw and spoke.

“Thanks...”

“But I want to produce some good research first, at least get into the Thousand Talents Plan.”

Even though he was being closely monitored in America, which would make it difficult for him to produce any research results, he still didn't want to give up this easily.

After all, if he came back to China having achieved nothing at all...

He would feel a little regretful.

Lu Zhou was worried about his student, but he knew why Wei Wen was doing this. He nodded and spoke.

"Then you have to be careful, you're all the way across the Pacific Ocean. If you get into trouble, it's hard for me to help you."

Wei Wen nodded and said, "Thank you!"

Chapter 1004 Iron Curtain Is Falling

After ending the call, Lu Zhou continued to pack his suitcase. However, this time, the small display floating next to him began to flash.

Xiao Ai: [Master, when you were video calling just now, it seemed like someone was spying on you guys. (ಠ_ಠ)]

Lu Zhou: [... Spying?]

Xiao Ai: [Yes! When the video call data was transmitted to North America, it was received by more than one IP address. Xiao Ai sent a series of encrypted data to the IP and received a response just now. There was more than one person listening in on the call.]

Does this mean we were spied on?

"Oh, I see..."

Even though Lu Zhou had expected something like this to happen, he still felt a little shocked.

A few years ago, when he was back at Princeton, the academic environment was totally different. He didn't expect it to deteriorate so quickly.

It seemed like it was a smart choice for him to return to China.

Staying in Princeton for another year could have meant trouble for him, especially with the FBI.

Xiao Ai: [Xiao Ai has found the intruder, should Xiao Ai install a backdoor?]

Lu Zhou immediately said, "No it's fine, it's not something we should worry about."

Hacking a server was easy.

However, hacking into an American server would be risky.

If the other party found out that something fishy was installed on their computer, Lu Zhou would be fine, but his students wouldn't have a good time.

Even though Lu Zhou was confident in his information technology abilities, when it came to hacking and cybersecurity, the FBI and CIA were kings.

Even Xiao Ai wouldn't be able to fight against them.

There was no upside to hacking the server, it would be risk without reward.

Lu Zhou thought about Wei Wen's situation and went silent for a while. He took out his phone and called Director Li from the State Administration for National Defense, giving him a brief explanation of the situation.

For the scholars in America, this was a disaster.

However, this could benefit China.

If they could formulate some kind of attractive policy for talent attraction, they could seize on this opportunity. There had to be a ton of Chinese scholars who were willing to return to China.

It seemed like Wei Wen was describing McCarthyism on the rise, and that the freedom of academics was being challenged...

Lu Zhou felt powerless.

...

Early August.

On a flight from Beijing to Russia.

Lu Zhou boarded the plane and watched Wang Peng put his luggage in the storage. He happened to bump into quite a special individual.

This individual was also sitting in the first class.

The two made eye contact.

At last, Lu Zhou spoke first with a friendly smile.

“What a coincidence.”

It was like Wang Shicheng had just snapped back to reality, his mouth twitched as he quickly smiled.

“... Oh yeah, what a coincidence... Hahaha.”

What are the odds!

Not only are we on the same flight, but our seats are right next to each other!

How did I not see him when I was boarding?

If he noticed that Lu Zhou was also on this flight, he would have refunded his ticket and went on another flight instead!

It was too late to change seats. Wang Shicheng hesitated for a bit before sitting down next to Lu Zhou.

Under the guidance of the flight attendant, he buckled up his seat belt and closed his eyes, waiting for the plane to take off.

He thought he could sleep peacefully through this flight, but Lu Zhou took the initiative and spoke to him.

“Academician Wang, you’re also going to St. Petersburg for the conference?”

“Yeah,” Wang Shicheng said. He didn’t really want to converse, but he couldn’t help but say, “The IMU asked me to do a 45-minute report, so I decided to go.”

Wang Shicheng was far beyond the prime age of mathematics research, so it was quite impressive for the International Mathematical Union to still invite him to give a report.

This shows that the international mathematics community hadn't forgotten his research contributions. This delighted the old man.

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Oh, I see, congratulations."

Wang Shicheng looked at Lu Zhou's face and felt annoyed.

What a fake person!

We all know you're doing a 60-minute report!

You just want to humblebrag, right?

Haha, I'm not giving you the chance!

Hence, Wang Shicheng purposefully ignored asking what Lu Zhou was doing at the ICM. He smiled and began to change the subject.

"How about you? How's your research on Riemann's hypothesis going?"

Lu Zhou looked a little sorrowful.

"It's a bit unfortunate, it hasn't been going well."

It really was unfortunate.

He had been busy all year, and he barely had any time to work on Riemann's hypothesis. If he had spent all his time researching Riemann's hypothesis instead, he might have been able to produce some beautiful theorems.

However, Lu Zhou's words were like music to Academician Wang's ears.

Haha!

Sucks to be you.

Even though there was nothing embarrassing about not being able to prove Riemann's hypothesis, Lu Zhou boasted about not doing the sixty-minute report if he didn't solve Riemann's hypothesis.

I look forward to your report.

Wang Shicheng pretended to be surprised as he spoke.

“Oh, really? I heard you say that you wouldn’t do the report at St. Petersburg unless you made some outstanding results. I thought you might have solved Riemann’s hypothesis already... I guess you didn’t... That’s just unfortunate.”

Wang Shicheng was clearly trying to be passive aggressive.

However, he did too good of an acting job. Lu Zhou wasn’t offended at all.

Lu Zhou sighed and said, “Yeah, it is unfortunate... I didn’t plan on coming, but I couldn’t refuse.”

“... Why not?”

For some reason, Wang Shicheng had a bad feeling about this.

As expected, Lu Zhou had a cheeky smile on his face.

This smile...

Was way too familiar to him.

“Yeah,” Lu Zhou awkwardly scratched his head and said, “they want to... give me an award.”

Wang Shicheng: “...”

Chapter 1005 Taken Advantage Of?

After nearly ten hours of flying, the plane landed smoothly at the St. Petersburg airport. The passengers began to unbuckle their seat belts, ready to get off the plane.

Yang Yongan dragged his suitcase as he watched Lu Zhou walk away. He looked at his supervisor and carefully asked.

“Teacher, are you... not friends with Academician Lu?”

He noticed something back in Beijing. The look on Academician Wang's face confirmed his speculations.

Because of this, he didn't dare to get close to Lu Zhou, in fear of angering his supervisor.

After all, he was from Yan University. Even though he had a good relationship with Academician Lu, as a scholar of Yan University, it was better for him to please his supervisor instead.

Even though throughout that flight Wang Shicheng wanted to throw Lu Zhou off the plane, he still tried to deny everything.

"No, of course not! Who told you that? Don't say that."

Yang Yongan: "..."

Jesus, judging from his tone, it sounds like he's lying!

Wang Shicheng looked at Yang Yongan silently for a second before he sighed and spoke in a warm tone, "There are some things you don't have to worry about. I'm not particularly fond of him, but you guys are both millennials. You should try to form a good relationship with him, it'll help you in the future."

There was nothing else Academician Wang wanted to say.

Yang Yongan felt relieved.

Of course, he didn't show it on the surface. He had a look of understanding on his face as he nodded.

"I understand, teacher."

Prior to this, he worried that his teacher, and even the entire Yan University, had disliked Academician Lu. He worried that if he had tried to be friends with Academician Lu, it would stab him in the back.

However, it seemed like that wasn't the case at all.

His supervisor only disliked Academician Lu on a personal level, he didn't bring his personal matters into work.

What Yang Yongan didn't know was that his supervisor actually despised Academician Lu. However, due to various reasons, his supervisor had to bow down to Academician Lu.

After all, Lu Zhou's influence went far beyond mathematics and academia; it was at the national or even international level.

For scholars like him, who had gone far beyond the academic field, there was no such thing as belonging to a school of thought.

When it came to him...

He was his own school of thought.

...

Fortunately, Wang Shicheng didn't exit the airport with Lu Zhou, otherwise, he would be in a wave of embarrassment.

In fact, when Lu Zhou exited the airport with Wang Peng, he himself was even shocked.

Outside the airport, more than a dozen black cars were parked on the curbside. A familiar-looking Russian guy took off his sunglasses and came forward with his arms wide open. He had a friendly smile on his face as he hugged Lu Zhou.

"Haha, welcome my friend, Academician Lu! Welcome to Russia! Do you still remember me?"

Lu Zhou shook his hand after breaking away from the hug and smiled.

"Hello, Mr. Georgiev... That's quite an enthusiastic greeting."

"I told you, if you ever come to visit Moscow, I will give you the most magnificent welcoming ceremony... This is St. Petersburg, but it's close enough." Georgiev smiled and said, "This is my daughter, Victoria, I believe you've met before. This is the Department of Energy—"

"We have met before as well," Minister Novak said as he extended his right hand. "Welcome."

With two ministerial officials greeting him, Lu Zhou felt a little embarrassed.

“You guys are too kind.”

“This is nothing. Like Mr. Georgiev had said, if you ever get the opportunity to visit Russia, we will pick you up at the airport in person.”

Minister Novak looked at a powerful man in a black suit and said, “Please allow me to introduce you to Maksim from the Federal Security Service, he will be responsible for your safety in Russia.”

The agent named Maksim was quite a taciturn guy, and he spoke concisely, “Hello, Professor Lu. Alpha team has already been stationed in St. Petersburg. Our security team will be responsible for the safety of the ICM conference. We will guarantee the highest safety standard for your academic activities here. If you encounter any security issues, please contact me via this phone.”

Lu Zhou took the retro-style flip phone and handed it to Wang Peng. He then smiled and said, “Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.”

Lu Zhou could tell that the Russian security department was meticulously handling the safety of his visit.

After all, Russia wouldn’t want anything to happen to him during his visit.

It would affect their diplomatic relations and many other interests.

After making some small talk with Novak from the Department of Energy, Lu Zhou spoke with Novak about his schedule over the next two days.

“... We will send you to the hotel, and tomorrow morning the team will arrive at the hotel entrance at eight o’clock on the dot... Of course, you can leave anytime you want, preferably before noon.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Don’t worry, I don’t sleep in, I’ll arrive on time.”

Minister Novak smiled and said, “Then I hope you have a good time here.”

Before his visit, Russia officials invited him through diplomatic channels to visit the nuclear fusion power station that was under construction in St. Petersburg.

Therefore, in addition to attending the International Congress of Mathematicians, Lu Zhou also had another interesting visit he had to do.

However, that wouldn't take up too much time, at most half a day's worth.

Lu Zhou purposely arrived two days before the International Congress of Mathematicians as he wanted to deal with these "trivial" matters before the conference.

Lu Zhou walked to one of the cars and was about to get in. Suddenly, Victoria took half a step forward and gently pressed her hand on the car door. She smirked and looked at Lu Zhou.

"This is our second time meeting, and according to Russian culture, you should give me a hug."

Lu Zhou: "That's a thing?"

"Of course!" Victoria smiled flirtatiously and said, "Don't you want to embrace our culture?"

"..."

Lu Zhou hesitated for a bit before politely hugging Miss Victoria.

However, the passionate Russian girl had more in mind.

She gave Lu Zhou a gentle kiss on the cheek, and he instantly blushed and flinched. He awkwardly let go and got in the car.

Jesus f*ck, is that Russian culture as well?

I feel like I just got taken advantage of.

That hug felt intense.

Yeah, a bit too intense.

Wang Peng sat shotgun and Lu Zhou sat in the back with Mr. Maksim from the Federal Security Service. Even though Novak told Lu Zhou that Maksim was only a field agent, it was obvious that Maksim was at a much higher ranking than just an agent.

Maksim noticed Lu Zhou had a nervous look on his face, so he smiled and spoke.

“Don’t worry, we will take care of you.”

Lu Zhou forced a smile and said, “I’m not nervous, it’s just that I haven’t traveled in a while... I’m not used to this.”

Maksim shrugged and smiled, displaying his row of white teeth, as he said, “Okay then, let’s talk about something relaxing... What do you think about Miss Victoria?”

Lu Zhou: “... What do you mean?”

“Like that hug.”

Lu Zhou didn’t know what to say. He thought for a second and spoke in an uncertain tone.

“... Like I was struck.”

Maksim smiled and spoke.

“Like struck by lightning? What a creative metaphor, oh Professor Lu, you’re such an interesting person.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

When the f*ck did I say lightning?

Chapter 1006 A Lost Old Friend

After meeting Maksim, Lu Zhou felt a lot less nervous.

He realized that this guy was a pretty interesting person.

Even though Maksim was a professional, he often joked around.

The only problem was that neither of them was very good at English, so communication was a bit confusing at times.

“Are you married? Have a girlfriend?”

“No,” Lu Zhou said. He felt somewhat ashamed, so he said, “It’s not because I can’t find anyone, it’s just that I’m too busy with work, I have no time to date.”

“Ok ok, what about girls in your workplace? You don’t know how to flirt, right? I know how you feel.” Maksim raised his eyebrows and said, “You need to find a place with pretty girls and talk with them... Do you want a recommendation? St. Petersburg has some good places.”

Lu Zhou: “???”

It took an hour to drive from the St. Petersburg International Airport to the Corinthia Hotel. The buildings and statues looked historic and exotic.

However, the closer they drove to the city center, the more modern the scenery became.

All major cities around the world had similar looking CBDs; they were all concrete jungles, filled with steel trees.

However, when Lu Zhou arrived at the Corinthia Hotel entrance, he was amazed by the Russian palace-style design of the hotel.

This was completely different from the conference in Brazil.

This conference was sponsored by the local government and Russian authorities, thus the attendees were situated at a scenic five-star hotel directly in the city center.

Regardless of the motive behind this, the not-so-rich mathematicians were thankful at the opportunity to stay at a luxurious hotel like this.

After Lu Zhou arrived at the hotel, his welcoming team took off. However, judging from the police standing on the streets and the security guards in the hotel, the Federal Security Service clearly strengthened the security around this hotel.

But, even though the Chinese side had a community within the Federal Security Service, Lu Zhou didn’t totally trust the Russians to take care of his safety.

After Lu Zhou went into his hotel room, the first thing he did was to open his laptop and connect to the hotel's wifi.

"Xiao Ai, you're responsible for the cameras... If you see anyone suspicious, make sure to notify me."

A string of bubbles popped up on the lower right corner of the screen.

Xiao Ai: [Is it Xiao Ai's turn to help? Don't worry, Master, Xiao Ai's got this! $\geq \omega \leq$]

Well, you're just an extra layer of security, it probably won't change anything.

Due to the heavy security from the Federal Security Service and the People's Liberation Army General Staff Department, no one would dare to cause any trouble.

I don't think Xiao Ai will be too useful here, but it's better to be safe...

Of course, Lu Zhou didn't say this out loud.

After all, he still cared about Xiao Ai's feelings.

Xiao Ai: [Master, Master, their elevator control system and door lock system is managed by the same server as the security camera, can Xiao Ai install a back door? ($\mp \cup \mp \clubsuit$)]

Lu Zhou: "Do it, but don't do anything funny without my permission."

Xiao Ai: [Okay, Master, don't worry!]

Even though the Federal Security Service had set up layers of security defenses, they were on foreign soil. It was better to be safe than sorry.

After all this, Lu Zhou changed his clothes and left his hotel room.

Wang Peng was in the corridor waiting for him.

He saw Lu Zhou coming out of the room and asked, "You've unpacked?"

"Yeah." Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Speaking of which, is it fine to trust the Russians for security?"

Wang Peng: "We're also involved in the security work, but we are on foreign soil. We can't take any initiatives, and we're mostly working behind the scene. But rest assured, your safety is our highest priority."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "I'm not that worried, just wondering... Oh yeah, is it fine for me to go outside and get some food?"

"It's fine." Wang Peng nodded and said, "Do you want me to accompany you or follow you secretly?"

Lu Zhou: "... Just stay next to me."

It wasn't like Lu Zhou was doing anything dangerous. He was just going out for a quick bite.

Asking Wang Peng to secretly watch him would be too much of a hassle.

...

It would be two days until the International Congress of Mathematicians.

Even though some people had already begun to arrive in St. Petersburg, the majority of people weren't as prepared. Most of the people at the hotel were still tourists.

Lu Zhou got out of the elevator and walked through the hotel lobby. He was about to explore some local food but bumped into a familiar person at the hotel lobby.

The person had brown curly hair and a bright smile with a boy-next-door kind of vibe... Of course, that wasn't the important part. The important part was that, this person won a Fields Medal in his thirties and was one of the three promising scholars Faltings had approved of.

Even Lu Zhou admitted that this person was more handsome than him.

They made eye contact.

They both recognized each other, and they had a surprised look on their faces.

"Lu Zhou?"

“... Schultz?” Lu Zhou said, “What a coincidence! You’re already here?”

Even though they weren’t close friends, they were definitely more than acquaintances.

Almost seven years ago, the two met at the Cole Number Theory Prize award ceremony. However, due to their different fields of research, they rarely communicated over the past few years.

After being surrounded by Russian bureaucrats all day, Lu Zhou was glad to have met a colleague of his.

Schultz shook Lu Zhou’s right hand and said, “Haha, it is a coincidence! I thought for a big famous guy like you, you would show up after the opening ceremony. I didn’t expect you to come here so early.”

Lu Zhou: “The Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation invited me to visit the nuclear fusion power plant before the conference. Speaking of which, you’re a busy man yourself, how come you’re already here?”

“I’m here to visit a long lost friend... He doesn’t really like to be bothered. I probably won’t have the chance to talk to him during the conference, so I came in advance,” Schultz said. “Speaking of which, do you want to come with me?”

Lu Zhou hesitated and said, “It’s not like I know your friend, maybe it’s not the best idea.”

Schultz smiled and said, “It’s fine, he’s a good person, even though he’s a bit eccentric. He’s been interested in you for a long time, so I think we’ll have a good time.”

Suddenly, Wang Peng, who was standing behind Lu Zhou, spoke in a serious manner.

“Can you tell me who this person is?”

Schultz raised his eyebrows.

“Perelman!

“You might have heard of him before.”

Chapter 1007 Books Are More Famous Than Theses

Main lobby of the Corinthia Hotel hotel.

Professor Fefferman handed his passport to the check-in desk. He then looked at the hotel entrance and spoke casually.

“The security here seems a bit unusual... Is there something else going on, other than the conference?”

“No, sir.” The hotel staff handed the passport back to Professor Fefferman and said, “The most important conference happening this month is the International Congress of Mathematicians. The Corinthia Hotel will maintain the highest level of security during the conference, we wish you a pleasant stay.”

“... Oh, I see, thanks.”

Professor Fefferman put away his passport and smiled. He then looked at Professor Deligne, who was standing next to him.

“He’s really here! I told you, he would never miss such an important conference!”

Professor Fefferman spoke with a tone of excitement. It was like he was watching the finals of the football world cup, and he said, “I wonder where his research is at, I’m looking forward to it!”

Professor Deligne looked at his old friend with a poker face as he sighed and spoke.

“You haven’t seen his thesis on the website?”

Fefferman: “I saw it, why?”

Deligne; “Then why would you have such high expectations? If he had produced any new research, he would have published it online.”

Fefferman: “My intuition tells me that he’s hiding things behind the scenes.”

Professor Deligne raised his eyebrows.

“So you know him very well then?”

Deligne spoke with a hint of sarcasm. It was the classic Princeton professor's ego.

However, Professor Fefferman didn't seem to care about his old friend's personality, he nodded and smiled.

“Of course, we've worked together before, I know him quite well.”

Deligne heard his old friend and smiled.

“Then you're probably in over your head. I've been paying attention to all of the papers he's published this year. the Quasi Riemann hypothesis and the hyperelliptic curve analysis method are all he has been researching. He even went to research economics with that old Krugman guy, it's called the L-Z model or something..”

Normally speaking, the research area of a scholar could easily be traced by their thesis publication.

The Sullivan Conjecture in differential topology, as well as the L-Z model in economics, had nothing to do with the Riemann zeta function at all.

Professor Deligne thought that Lu Zhou probably had given up on Riemann's hypothesis.

To be honest, Deligne was quite disappointed.

He wasn't disappointed at Lu Zhou, after all, Lu Zhou had achieved quite a bit in the past year.

However, for a scholar like Lu Zhou, the only way to further extend his academic achievements was to solve the crown of mathematics, a proposition that had plagued scholars from all over the world.

Therefore, Professor Deligne felt it was unfortunate that Lu Zhou had given up after trying for so long.

If even Lu Zhou couldn't solve the conjecture, maybe no one in this century would be able to solve it...

Professor Fefferman noticed Professor Deligne's emotions, so he smiled and casually spoke.

"I think you worry too much."

Professor Deligne spoke in disbelief.

"Oh, really? Do you know what I'm worried about?"

Fefferman: "Of course I know. After all, we're old friends. You're always so confident in your analysis, but you have to admit that sometimes you get tunnel vision."

"You're saying I'm getting tunnel vision?"

"Yes, especially the way you look at problems. Have you not thought about the possibility that he might have discovered something new about the proposition? That is a possibility."

Professor Deligne said, "But it's unlikely. I've carefully studied his theses. When it comes to the mathematics side, the methods he used weren't related to the Riemann zeta function at all. There wasn't any additive or progressive relationship in his theses."

Professor Fefferman: "Maybe we're not seeing the matrix... But anyway, do you want to make a bet then?"

Professor Deligne frowned and said, "Bet on what?"

Professor Fefferman smiled confidently and said, "I bet that his research is far more than his theses, and he hasn't given up on the Riemann hypothesis."

"Otherwise..."

"He wouldn't be the one doing the last hour report of the conference."

...

While the two old men were arguing on whether or not Lu Zhou was still researching Riemann's hypothesis, Lu Zhou and Schultz were sitting in a taxi, heading toward the suburbs of St. Petersburg. They happened to talk about Riemann's hypothesis.

“... You haven’t made any progress over the past six months?”

“Not just six months, maybe more than that.” Lu Zhou had a helpless expression on his face as he shook his head and said, “I’ve tried to improve on the hyperelliptic curve analysis, I also tried to use the Group Structure Method, but to no avail. I’m almost starting to think that maybe Riemann’s hypothesis is true, but it can’t be proved.”

“You’re not the only one who thinks that way, but I think you should keep your head up.” Schultz patted Lu Zhou on the shoulder and said, “At least you were able to create a beautiful tool that is the hyperelliptic curve analysis and even proved the Quasi Riemann hypothesis. You did well.”

“But that doesn’t mean anything to me.” Lu Zhou sighed and said, “I’m sure you understand what I feel.”

Schultz: “No, I don’t.”

Lu Zhou: “...?”

After nearly a forty-minute drive, the taxi finally arrived in the suburbs of St. Petersburg. The tall concrete buildings turned into historic small houses.

According to the taxi driver, this was a famous place for mathematics. The Steklov Mathematical Institute used to be here, and a famous mathematician that rejected a Fields Medal also lived nearby.

On the other hand, nearby was also where the protagonists in Dostoevsky’s novel “White Night” met.

Schultz and Lu Zhou got out of the taxi in a residential area.

Most of the houses here were apartment buildings, mostly filled with young people. However, young people generally didn’t like to live far out in the suburbs.

Wang Peng was walking behind Lu Zhou and Schultz when he suddenly spoke.

“... We just went in a circle.”

Schultz smiled and stopped. He scratched his head and spoke.

“Actually, the last time I came here was a long time ago, and these buildings all look the same. I have no idea where I am...” Schultz awkwardly coughed and said, “I should ask someone.”

Schultz went on Google and found a photo of Perelman.

This was one of the advantages of being handsome, most people were happy to help Schlutz.

As for looking like a hobo...

There were advantages as well.

Most people wouldn't disturb someone that looked homeless.

“Excuse me, do you know this person?”

The Russian girl's smile disappeared when she saw the photo in Schultz's phone. She paused for a second and spoke.

“Who is this? A terrorist? Or an artist?”

Her look of disgust made sense, after all, the man in the photo didn't exactly look like a model.

His beard was untrimmed, his hair was messy. Even though Schultz and Perelman had similar facial structures, they looked completely different.

It was like how a musician looked great with ripped clothing, but a hobo did not.

Schultz sighed and said, “My apologies, I'll ask someone else.”

The Russian lady smiled and said, “Well, good luck, but I think you should give up. I've lived here for two years, and I've never seen such a person.”

After asking around, no one was able to recognize Perelman.

Occasionally some people had heard of the mathematician, but none of them knew that the mathematician lived in their neighborhood.

There was no doubt that Perelman lived here.

Lu Zhou began to doubt if Perelman had relocated. Finally, an old man recognized the photo. He rubbed his chin and spoke.

“I know him, he used to work at the Steklov Institute of Mathematics, he’s a famous mathematician...”

Lu Zhou immediately asked, “When was that?”

The old man said, “Around ten years ago, I was still a security guard at the Steklov Institute of Mathematics. I used to see him going to work in baggy jeans and a shirt. He’s one of the weirdest guys at the institute.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Ten years ago...

I was still in high school back then.

That was a long time ago.

Schultz asked, “Do you know where he lives?”

“If he hasn’t moved out yet, then he probably lives over there,” the old man said as he pointed. He said, “I only know which building, but I don’t know which specific apartment. You should ask his neighbors.”

Lu Zhou and Schultz sighed.

“Thanks for helping us!”

After that, Schultz, Lu Zhou, and Wang Peng walked toward the building.

They soon arrived at the apartment building. Lu Zhou and Schultz happened to see two people standing at the apartment building entrance.

Coincidentally, Lu Zhou recognized one of them.

It was Professor Krugman, the professor he met in Shanghai...

The two obviously didn’t recognize them. They were standing in front of the apartment building entrance, chatting with one another.

“I wonder if we’re at the right place,” Albert muttered. “Does this look correct?”

"It's correct, the Secretary-General of the ICM sent me this address," Krugman said as he looked at the letter in his hand. He said, "We're at the right place."

Albert asked, "But what if he doesn't open the door for us? If he doesn't answer the door, we won't even know if it's him."

Krugman: "You don't know him. Even though he looks unapproachable, as long as you ask him mathematics questions, he will patiently answer you."

Albert said, "You've interacted with him before?"

"No, but I know a beautiful woman who used to work at the Steklov Institute of Mathematics. She told me that," Krugman said. "Listen, my friend, we can't be discouraged. We need this."

Albert sighed and said, "Actually, I'm more inclined on working with Professor Lu. His Lu-Bewley model and L-Z model are works of art. His analysis of macroeconomics is exactly my area of research!"

"Forget about it. I would want to work with Faltings if I could, but do you think that's going to happen? I met Lu Zhou at the beginning of the year, and he's more stubborn than some of those old folks in Princeton, not to mention—"

While Krugman was complaining to his friend, he heard a familiar voice.

"Did someone mention my name?"

The two people chatting were startled.

Especially Krugman, it was like he had just seen a ghost.

"Jesus Christ, where did you come from?"

"I'm here to attend the ICM." Lu Zhou looked at Schultz and said, "This guy invited me to see his old friend, so I came along."

Krugman looked at Schultz and didn't recognize him. He frowned and spoke.

"You are..."

"Schultz," Schultz said as he reached out his hand. He smiled and said, "Nice to meet you too."

“... Krugman, Princeton economics professor. This is Albert László Barabási, a physicist whose books are more famous than his theses.”

“Wait a second, what does that suppose to mean? Old man, don’t—”

Professor Krugman ignored Albert and looked at Schultz as he said, “You know Perelman?”

Schultz shrugged and said, “I think we’re friends, but... I don’t know if he agrees.”

“What are you guys doing here? Partying?”

The sudden voice interrupted Schultz.

A tall man in jeans and a shirt was walking on the sidewalk. He was carrying plastic bags full of groceries.

His unkempt appearance made him blend into the environment.

Professor Krugman immediately smiled and extended his hand.

“Hello, Professor Perelman... I am Professor Krugman, we spoke through email.”

“I’m not a professor anymore,” Perelman muttered and suddenly his eyes fixated on Lu Zhou.

After a while, he spoke.

“You’re Lu Zhou?”

“I am indeed.” Lu Zhou nodded and said, “It’s nice to meet you.”

“Nice to meet you too.” Perelman wanted to shake hands with him, but he was carrying groceries.

“... Let’s talk inside, you guys are blocking the entrance.”

Before Schultz and Lu Zhou could speak, Krugman quickly spoke.

“Sure thing, I think we should head inside.”

Perelman ignored Professor Krugman and stared at Wang Peng for a while.

“You don’t look like a scholar.”

He didn’t sound welcoming.

Wang Peng nodded and briefly explained his role. However, he was interrupted by Lu Zhou.

“Just wait here, we’ll come down soon.”

Wang Peng hesitated for a bit before he looked at Perelman and nodded.

“Okay.

“Remember to call me if anything happens.”

By call, he obviously didn’t mean dialing a phone number. He meant for Lu Zhou to activate the alarm trigger on his mobile phone.

Lu Zhou looked at Wang Peng and patted his shoulder.

“It’s fine.

“We’ll be down in a jiff.”

After that, the group of people went upstairs, leaving Wang Peng behind.

Chapter 1008 Predicting the Future?

Perelman’s apartment was right in front of the building stairs.

“The apartment is a bit messy.”

Perelman put down his groceries and took out his keys.

Even though Lu Zhou was mentally prepared, after the door opened, he was still surprised by the situation.

All kinds of clothes and daily necessities were thrown on the sofa, while garbage and leftover food were scattered around the apartment.

Lu Zhou also had the habit of leaving clothes around the house, but fortunately, Xiao Ai would usually take care of it.

It was obvious...

That Perelman, who devoted his life to mathematics, didn't care about anything else.

No wonder people called him an eccentric scholar.

Albert was walking next to Lu Zhou, and he quietly muttered, "I thought mathematicians were rigorous people."

Lu Zhou didn't know what to respond.

Schultz awkwardly explained.

"Normally we are... but there are exceptions. Some people don't care about their surroundings, they would rather spend time on mathematics.

"I'm jealous of those people, but that kind of lifestyle isn't for me. Ever since I embarked on the journey of mathematics, most of my time has been wasted on meaningless chores..."

Perelman put away his groceries and said, "Do you guys want something to drink? I only have water and tea, but I can go out and buy something."

Lu Zhou didn't want to bother him anymore, so he quickly spoke.

"Water is good."

Schultz nodded and said, "Same here."

Krugman and Albert also nodded, so Perelman smiled and spoke.

"Okay then."

Soon after, five disposable cups were placed on the table. Perelman took a bottle of mineral water and poured a cup for each person.

Everyone looked a bit weirded out, but Perelman didn't care. After taking a sip, he looked at Schultz and spoke.

“Why are you here? I didn’t know you were coming.”

Schultz: “Can’t I visit my old friend?”

“I don’t need anyone to visit me, I’m doing well by myself...”

Schultz was a little disappointed, but Perelman immediately began staring at Lu Zhou instead.

Perelman looked at him and spoke in a “bored yet blunt” tone.

“I’ve read your paper, your understanding of group theory and the complex plane is good. Especially the hyperelliptic curve analysis method... Of course, what surprised me the most was when you defined a complex algebraic cluster X on the complex project space $CP^{(n+r)}$ when you researched the Sullivan Conjecture. I have no idea how you thought about doing that.”

Topology and differential topology were both fields Perelman was interested in. On the other hand, he wasn’t as interested in the Quasi Riemann hypothesis.

Even though the area of the differentiable manifold was unpopular, the Sullivan conjecture was a famous problem.

Perelman had also done some research on the Sullivan Conjecture. However, he had not been able to crack the conjecture.

As a result, he almost forgot about the conjecture, until he finally read Lu Zhou’s thesis in Annual Mathematics, where Lu Zhou had proven the conjecture.

This made him astonished.

“... Oh, the Sullivan Conjecture?”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “... That’s thanks to the thesis published by Professor Kreck in Annual Mathematics back in 1999. His research inspired me quite a bit. Of course, it’s also probably because I wasn’t specifically researching this problem, so I was able to look at it from a different angle.”

Back then, he was still answering Chen Yang’s questions on the Hodge conjecture. If it weren’t for the editor-in-chief of Annual Mathematics, he

wouldn't have even known that the problem he was studying was a representation of a classic differentiable manifold problem.

Perelman and Schultz both looked surprised when they heard that Lu Zhou wasn't specifically researching differentiable manifolds.

Fortunately, they didn't know that Lu Zhou had only spent a day solving the problem; otherwise, their jaws would be on the floor.

Perelman took a sip of water and spoke.

"That's lucky, but I don't think it's entirely just luck... Okay then, did you come here to ask me any questions?"

Lu Zhou could see a flash of anticipation in his eyes, and he suddenly felt a little awkward.

Just like Schultz, he only came here because he had nothing else better to do. At least Schultz was Perelman's friend, Lu Zhou just came here with nothing in his hand.

However, telling that to Perelman's face would be a little rude.

After all, Perelman wasn't a zoo animal; he obviously didn't like people bothering him.

What do I do?

Tell him the truth?

Lu Zhou was a little worried that Perelman would be pissed off if he told Perelman the truth.

Suddenly, a light bulb went off in his mind. He thought about the problem he discussed with Chen Yang about the Hodge conjecture.

"Can I borrow some paper?"

"Sure, I have a ton."

Perelman got up and found some pens and paper.

Lu Zhou wrote down a problem on the paper and handed it to Perelman.

“... This is it.”

“Let me see.” Perelman took the paper and glanced at the equations. He said, “You’re researching the Hodge conjecture?”

Lu Zhou said, “Sort of.”

In fact, that wasn’t a lie. Even though he wasn’t directly researching the conjecture, someone working for him was, so he was indirectly researching it.

Fortunately, Perelman believed Lu Zhou. He nodded and muttered.

“I see, the Hodge conjecture. After I read your paper, I always felt like the theorems could be applied to other problems...”

Schultz looked at Lu Zhou with an astonished look on his face.

“... When did you begin researching the Hodge conjecture?”

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly.

“Just a side hobby.”

Schultz: “...”

Time slowly passed by, Perelman sat there still. He sat on his couch silently, immersed in his own thoughts.

Albert was getting a little anxious. He looked at the paper and saw the confusing lines of equations. He quickly gave up and sat back down.

Krugman, who was sitting next to him, didn’t even try to read the equations. He sat there quietly, drinking his water.

Lu Zhou looked at the Russian man immersed in deep thought and spoke.

“... Actually, you don’t have to give me a reply straight away, you can send me an email.”

“... Yeah, it’s not like the question can be answered within a few words,” Perelman muttered. He put away the paper and said to Albert and Krugman, “What about you guys? Do you have any questions?”

Krugman sighed and cleared his throat. He solemnly said, “We’re working on a big research project, but it involves many complex mathematical calculations that are beyond our abilities—”

However, he was interrupted by Albert.

This physicist stood up and spoke in a passionate voice.

“Gentleman, do you think the future can be accurately predicted?”

The small apartment suddenly became quiet.

Chapter 1009 Suddenly Became Philosophical

“... Predict the future?”

Perelman rubbed his chin and frowned as he said, “What does this have to do with mathematics?”

Schultz nodded and looked confused as he said to Albert, “Forgive me, but that sounds like something out of a movie.”

“Of course this is related to mathematics!” Albert said with excitement, “We are predicting the future using mathematics!”

The apartment fell silent again.

Krugman gestured to Albert to sit down, but Albert ignored him. Albert continued to stare at Perelman.

However...

His hopes were destroyed.

Not only Perelman, but even Schultz had a weird look on his face.

Like they were staring at an insane person...

“I think you’re fantasizing.”

Schultz coughed and broke the silence. He continued to speak, "Predicting the future isn't a field of mathematics, I don't even think that it's under physics. It's something related to philosophy. After all, there are so many uncertain factors and variables. Everything is uncertain. If it had rained today, maybe I wouldn't be here—"

"But the weather can be predicted! A person's path can't be predicted, but a group of people can be predicted. Just look at the forecasts for New York City's traffic and weather over the past five years!"

Albert continued to speak confidently, "Humans are no different than particles suspended in water. We are constantly moving, the only difference is that the perturbations we receive are not small atomic collisions but rather electrical signals traveling through neurons, which dictate our actions!

"There are so many tools that can track human activities, like the internet, like mobile devices... If we analyze all of the data available, we can predict far more than boring stuff like advertisement reach, we can predict ten minutes, ten days, or even ten years into the future!

"Don't you think that sounds exciting?"

Professor Krugman started to applaud.

However, he was the only one applauding...

Both Perelman and Schultz looked bewildered.

Even though Lu Zhou was also stunned, he remembered that he was discussing a similar problem with Professor Krugman back in Shanghai.

Which was the possibility of establishing a mathematical model to predict large-scale human social behavior and productivity.

"That does sound interesting," Lu Zhou said. He said, "This reminds me of Asimov's Psychohistory... Is that where you got this theory from?"

"No! My theory came from a scientific point of view... Okay, I admit that I was inspired a little from Asimov, but I'm not talking about a fantasy novel here. This is a serious academic problem!"

“Okay, let’s assume that collective human behavior is predictable, but... so what?” Schultz frowned and said, “Even your behaviors, even the observation itself, will affect the experiment, it will produce unpredictable results. This is meaningless and almost impossible to achieve.”

“Jesus, what’s the point of researching wave-particle duality then? Don’t you think predicting the future is an exciting research project? Even if we prove that it is possible to predict the future, our names will be in history books!”

Obviously, Professor Albert and Krugman came to St. Petersburg to persuade Perelman to join their research team.

First of all, only a scholar like Perelman would be able to help their project. More importantly, Perelman seemed to be the type that could be easily convinced.

The reason he solved the Poincaré conjecture was that he talked with Hamilton about the conjecture in America...

Albert became more and more excited.

Krugman tried to tell his friend to calm down but to no avail.

The result was predictable; Perelman rejected them on the spot.

Even though he didn’t think they were complete idiots, Perelman said in a firm tone that he didn’t find it interesting to apply mathematics to such boring things.

As for Schultz, he was determined to achieve a higher level of mathematical status. He wouldn’t waste his time on side-projects. Thus, he politely declined and said he might consider it if he had time.

As for Lu Zhou...

Honestly, he was quite interested in this novel problem.

Unlike Schultz and Perelman, he loved to use mathematics to influence other disciplines and sciences.

And just like Professor Krugman had said, predicting the future was a fascinating problem.

Even though he wasn't interested in economics, nor did he care about social sciences, this problem seemed novel and unique.

But he didn't give an immediate answer.

"I need some time to think about it. I don't plan on researching any other problems until I solve Riemann's hypothesis."

After hearing this, Albert slumped his shoulders and looked deeply disappointed.

In his opinion, Lu Zhou was just politely refusing them.

"After solving Riemann's hypothesis... Jesus, you might as well just say no!"

Krugman looked a little down. He looked at Perelman and Lu Zhou, then spoke.

"Regardless, I hope you can reconsider."

Lu Zhou: "Actually, I have a question."

Krugman: "... What question?"

Lu Zhou said, "If the future really is predictable, is that a good thing?"

Krugman said, "I can't answer that, that's a question outside of academics. Just like how when Albert wrote his book 'Linked: The New Science of Networks', he didn't expect his theories to be used by Silicon Valley giants to make advertising profits..."

Albert wasn't happy.

"Hey, don't say that! Big data is not just for advertising! It has helped counter-terrorism, medical care, urban planning, and more!"

Professor Krugman ignored Albert and continued to speak, "One day, he suddenly found me and said he planned on turning this theory into a reality. My first reaction was to reject him, but in the end, I decided to work with him."

Lu Zhou asked, "Why?"

“Because whether it’s theoretical research or applied research, scholars shouldn’t be the one characterizing whether or not a technology is evil. Is nuclear fission technology evil? Most people in 1945 would think so, but looking back at it now, maybe having a powerful weapon keeps the world peaceful.

“So, I think we should look at this from the academic perspective. We’re just studying the possibility of predicting the future, not what we should do with it.

“As for whether or not we should use this technology, our civilization will make a decision.”

Professor Krugman looked at Lu Zhou sincerely. After a while, Lu Zhou nodded.

“I know what you mean.

“We can talk about this in depth in the future maybe.”

Krugman nodded. Albert shrugged and said, “I look forward to that day.”

Even though he was a physicist, he had heard about Riemann’s hypothesis.

Other mathematical conjectures were difficult, but at least people were making progress.

Riemann’s hypothesis was like a lonely mountain, with no one even coming close to climbing it.

It might even take centuries for someone to solve it...

Maybe Albert wouldn’t be around by then.

Chapter 1010 Great Plan?

Because Perelman only bought groceries for himself, the group of people didn’t stay for lunch.

Before leaving, Schultz mentioned that the ICM conference was happening in St. Petersburg, but Perelman didn’t respond.

Judging from Perelman's face, he didn't really care about the International Congress of Mathematicians at all.

However, before leaving, Perelman asked Lu Zhou what he planned on talking about for his conference report. When he heard that Lu Zhou was only going to talk about some of his previously published research, Perelman looked disappointed.

After leaving Perelman's house, Schultz looked up at the bright sky and sighed.

"Looks like this trip was a waste."

Lu Zhou curiously asked, "Why? Didn't you just want to see your old friend? Why was it a waste?"

"Visiting my old friend was just one of my reasons," Schultz said. "Actually, Professor Faltings asked me to come."

Lu Zhou: "Faltings?"

Schultz nodded and said, "Yeah, he wants Perelman to go to the University of Bonn and participate in a big project."

"... What kind of project?"

Schultz knew Lu Zhou would be interested. He smiled and spoke.

"If you are interested, you should pay attention to Faltings' hour-long report at the conference. He will go into detail during the report. Basically, we need an expert in topology, differential topology, and differential geometry. Perelman, who proved the Poincaré conjecture, is undoubtedly the best candidate."

Lu Zhou felt like Schultz was suggesting something.

However, he didn't know anything about this plan, so he pretended to be oblivious.

"Do you think Perelman will think about it?"

Schultz shrugged and said, "... It is worth a try."

...

Crazy ideas, big projects...

Lu Zhou felt like he heard a lot of interesting things today.

His intuition told him that this year's International Congress of Mathematicians was going to be his most exciting one yet.

Of course, he had only attended one other ICM before...

Lu Zhou found a place to eat and went back to his hotel. He parted ways with Schultz, each of them going back to their respective hotel rooms.

Lu Zhou continued to research his proof of Riemann's hypothesis until night time. He yawned and put down his pen.

"Is it ten o'clock already?"

Lu Zhou looked at his computer screen and was about to go to sleep when he suddenly remembered something important.

"Xiao Ai."

Xiao Ai: [I'm here, Master!]

Lu Zhou contemplated for a second and said, "Search up someone for me, someone called Albert László Barabási, I think he's a visiting professor at Harvard."

Xiao Ai: [Ok! (๑•̀ㅂ•́)و✧]

Finding someone's academic resume was easy.

Xiao Ai took less than three seconds to find Albert's academic resume and Facebook. Xiao Ai presented the data in the style of a report.

Xiao Ai was probably the best secretary in the world in terms of efficiency.

Lu Zhou finished reading the report and saw that Albert was quite an interesting guy.

Even though he was a physicist, he became famous due to his research on network theory.

Interestingly, just like Professor Krugman had said, Albert had published many theses in Nature and Science. He even created the Barabási-Albert. However, what made him famous wasn't his academic research, but rather his books...

His book "Linked: The New Science of Networks" was a cornerstone of complex network theory, and he was regarded by many as the originator of big data theory. His later book "Bursts: The Hidden Patterns Behind Everything We Do" further promoted big data theory.

If Nassim Nicholas Taleb believed that human behavior was random and unpredictable, then Albert's theory predicted that human collective behavior was like a system composed of tiny particles. Although the behavior of any given particle was uncertain, their collective behavior could be predicted!

At least with 93% accuracy.

As for why he started to work with Professor Krugman...

This didn't surprise Lu Zhou.

Krugman was interested in novel ideas. He loved to integrate mathematics and physics theories into economics.

Most people knew that he won the Nobel Prize for his international trade theory, but very few people knew that he had built models based on established physics theories. Such as "The Theory of Interstellar Trade".

Therefore, it wasn't surprising for him to work with Albert. He was exactly the type of person that would be fascinated by the proposition of "predicting the future".

However, even though Lu Zhou was interested in this problem, he didn't have any spare time to research this problem.

Regardless of what was going to happen in the future, there were two things that were going to happen with 100% certainty.

One was that the International Congress of Mathematicians was going to begin in two days, in which he had to conduct a 60-minute report.

The other was his visit to the nuclear fusion power station tomorrow morning.

This was East Asia Energy's first project in Eastern Europe; it was also the first time a nuclear core was sent overseas.

Apparently this nuclear power plant had an interesting name, which was named by the president himself.

Its name was Helios.

This name came from Greek mythology, and it was an embodiment of the sun...

Scholar's Advanced Technological System - Chapter 1011 - Helios -

Chapter 1011 Helios

"... Four flaming horses, galloping in the fiery sky, from East to West, morning to night, illuminating the world."

Lu Zhou and Minister Novak were sitting in the backseat of the car. He looked outside the window and sighed.

"What are you talking about?"

Novak, the leader of the Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation, smiled and spoke to Lu Zhou like a tour guide.

"Homer's Odyssey! The description of Helios... The nuclear power plant we are heading to!"

He spoke emotionally.

"The son of Helios once accidentally ignited the ground in order to bring light, turning it to a desert, burning the skins of Ethiopians. Homer probably never would have imagined humans finding a way to release the energy of a sun."

Lu Zhou: "... How come I've never heard that version of the story before?"

Minister Novak smiled and said, “That’s not surprising, there are many versions of the story. If you’re interested, we can chat in depth since I’ve done some research in this area.”

Lu Zhou politely refused, “Thanks, but I’m not particularly interested in mythology.”

He didn’t have any time to spare outside of academia.

Especially since the ICM was soon about to begin.

“Okay, I understand, not everyone wants to become a poet...” Novak shrugged and looked outside the window. He saw a tall wall surrounding a building and said, “We’re here.”

The Helios nuclear power plant was located on the coast of the Baltic Sea, surrounded by a circle of towering walls. Just like the fusion power station in Helios, this power plant was guarded by Russian troops.

Lu Zhou saw three trademarks on the side of the wall, one was the Guangdong Nuclear Power Construction Group, the other was the East Asia Energy, and finally, the true owner of the power plane—Rosatom.

Rosatom controlled almost all production links of the Russian nuclear industrial chain and owned the vast majority of uranium mines in Siberia.

This was one of the reasons East Asia Energy chose to work with this company.

According to the contract between East Asia Energy and Rosatom, East Asia Energy would sell a core to Rosatom at a high price and would also send engineers to the Helios power station for 20 years of technical service.

These technical services included the maintenance and upgrade of the core control system, as well as the nuclear core safety inspections.

On the other hand, East Asia Energy would also take 13% of the profits over the 20 years.

Even though this kind of profit sharing was usual, it wasn’t like there was anyone to compete against East Asia Energy.

While the European Union and America were still contemplating, the Russians were the first to sign this agreement. Because of this, they became the first overseas customer for the East Asia Energy nuclear core project.

And now, the nuclear core from China had finally arrived.

In order to welcome this historic moment of nuclear fusion ignition, the Ministry of Energy arranged the ignition date to be in early August, specifically for Lu Zhou.

In fact, they could have achieved fusion ignition a week ago if they didn't have to wait for Lu Zhou.

An old man with gray hair stood at the entrance of the Helios fusion power station. When he saw Lu Zhou get out of the car, his eyes lit up as he smiled.

"Welcome, Professor Lu! We meet again."

"Hello, Academician Sivali."

Lu Zhou shook this man's hand and smiled. He then looked at another serious-looking middle-aged man standing beside Sivali.

"And this is?"

"Lermontov," the man said. Unlike Academician Sivali, Lermontov had a serious look on his face as he said, "I'm one of the people in charge."

Lu Zhou gave a friendly nod and looked at the entrance.

Suddenly, he saw someone.

"Academician Wang? What are you doing here?"

This was Chief Engineer Wang, from the China National Nuclear Corporation!

He was one of the veterans that worked on the Haizhou fusion plant!

He, Zhou Chengfu, and Li Jiangang were the three nuclear industry giants of China.

Because Lu Zhou didn't publish engineering theses, Mr. Wang might actually have a bigger influence in the nuclear industry than Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou was astonished, he didn't expect Academician Wang to be here at all.

"After all, this is our first overseas nuclear fusion engineering project, I can't just leave it alone," Wang Zengguang smiled and said, "Let's go, the people from Rosatom have been waiting for a long time. Don't you see how impatient Lermontov is getting? Let's head inside."

The group didn't stay at the entrance for long.

Minister Novak didn't want Lu Zhou to make small talk outside.

He couldn't wait any longer for the fusion ignition.

While walking to the fusion power station control tower, Lu Zhou was told that Academician Wang arrived a week ago.

They planned on beginning fusion ignition a week ago, but it was postponed due to various reasons.

Even though this wasn't the Chinese's fault, the technicians and management of Rosatom were quite annoyed.

After all, delaying fusion ignition by a week had huge economical impacts.

It would be fine if there were safety or technical issues, but they postponed fusion ignition just to wait for a Chinese scholar.

Regardless, this day had finally come.

A group of people was standing in the command tower.

The person in charge was obviously Minister Novak, and standing next to him were senior officials of the Ministry of Energy and nuclear power technicians.

Reporters with their cameras were standing around the command room, making it even more crowded.

However, no one cared about that. Everyone's attention was on the control console as they held their breath.

They had been ready for a week now.

All they had to do was press the button!

Minister Novak tried to calm himself down as he rubbed his fingers together.

Finally, he took a deep breath and looked at the cameras, as well as the Rosatom engineers.

“This is a historic moment!

“This will bring never-ending energy to the Russians, this is a symbol of our friendship with the Chinese... May it be as endless as the sun, may we wish for eternal energy.”

After that, he pressed the button.

Then...

It seemed like nothing was happening.

Lu Zhou stared at the radiation data and plasma temperature on the console screen. He frowned and remembered that the ignition in Haizhou was different.

Academician Wang and Sivali also noticed this, and they had a serious look on their face.

The reporters, as well as Minister Novak, didn't cheer either.

Suddenly, the command room door was pushed open. An engineer wearing a hard hat walked up to Minister Novak and spoke in a trembling tone.

“Minister!”

Novak saw the look on the engineer's face and instantly began to worry.

However, he maintained a calm demeanor as he asked with a dignified look on his face.

“... What happened?”

“There's something wrong with the nuclear core.”

The command room went silent.

The reporters stopped taking photos.

Minister Novak froze.

After he snapped back to reality, he began to sweat.

“What happened?! What do you mean something went wrong?”

The engineer wearing a hard hat gulped and spoke.

“It seems like our nuclear core...

“Wasn’t ignited.”

Chapter 1012 Wasn’t Ignited?

Wasn’t ignited...

The moment the words came out of the engineer’s mouth, the command room went silent.

As the engineers of Rosatom standing in front of the control console looked at one another, Academician Sivali was dumbfounded.

“Wasn’t ignited? How is that possible! We did all the inspection work... The Chinese engineers also did their job, how is it not ignited?”

When the silence in the command room was broken, the reporters had a moment of realization.

Fusion ignition had failed!

This is a project worth tens of billions!

If this project had failed, it would be a huge blow to the entire Russian energy industry, and it would destroy the relationship between China and Russia.

Chief Engineer Wang was standing next to Minister Novak. He had a dignified look on his face.

He obviously recognized the severity of the situation.

Minister Novak spoke in a serious tone.

“Go find out what is going on!”

The engineer in the hard hat nodded.

“Yes, sir! We are trying to do that!”

Due to the unexpected situation, the fusion ignition ceremony had been temporarily interrupted.

The only fortunate thing was that the fusion ignition ceremony wasn't broadcast live. The reporters were all from local Russian media outlets. They handed over their SD cards as per the request from Russian officials.

The engineers from Rosatom were running around like headless chickens, and they began to discuss the fusion ignition failure with engineers from East Asia Energy and the China National Nuclear Corporation.

“... Theoretically, there should be no malfunctions.”

“But there is!”

“I know, but the reactor test went well... Someone went wrong after the core was installed.”

After some testing, they weren't able to find any problems with the nuclear core. Suddenly, a Chinese engineer spoke.

“Maybe something wrong with the plant itself? Like the connection or—”

Before he could finish, he was rudely interrupted by Lermontov.

“There are no problems with our power plant!” the man spoke in an unfriendly tone. He said, “I told you, the Chinese can't be trusted! They're giving us poor quality nuclear cores!”

The second those words were said, the Chinese engineers began to look furious.

Especially Wang Zengguang, he always had a violent temper. He slammed the table and stood up.

“Poor quality? You’re saying our nuclear core is poor quality? Lermontov, I want to know if you’re speaking on behalf of Rosatom, or is that your own opinion!”

“Mr. Lermontov, please speak carefully!” Minister Novak quickly said. He looked at Academician Wang Zengguang and said, “Academician Wang, my apologies, Lermontov is just frustrated, that’s not what he really thinks...”

Lermontov didn’t deny Minister Novak’s statement, but he didn’t take back his words either.

Academician Wang still looked angry. If it weren’t because of their signed contract, he would have left by now.

Academician Sivali, who was sitting nearby, tried to act as a peacemaker. He tried to calm both parties down, but it didn’t seem to be effective.

This ceremony clearly had to end.

If this meeting continued any longer, the two sides would start fighting.

Rosatom would never admit that this was their fault, and East Asia Energy would never admit that there was a problem with the nuclear core.

The only thing they could hope for was for the engineers to fix the problem.

Regardless of which side caused the problem, they had to identify the problem before they could solve it.

After the meeting finished, Academician Wang went to the corridor and smoked a cigarette.

After he finished smoking, Lu Zhou walked over.

He didn’t say anything during the meeting; he was too busy thinking about what went wrong with the power plant.

He looked at Academician Wang and spoke.

“How’s the progress?”

“It’s tricky.”

Lu Zhou: “Did you guys inspect the He3 atom probe and the heat dissipation system?”

Academician Wang: “We did.”

After a while, Lu Zhou said, “Maybe it’s the core catcher? I remember there seems to be an active protection measure in place. It can forcefully shut down the reactor and terminate the reaction—”

“I did, we inspected everything.” Wang Zengguang shook his head and said, “Do you really think we would miss anything?”

Emmmm...

Makes sense.

Lu Zhou went into deep thought.

It seemed like there was no way to solve the problem.

Everything was fine with the reactor, but the nuclear core couldn’t be ignited.

After an hour or so, the inspection report was created.

The initial diagnosis was that the core catcher, the heat dissipation, the energy interface, etc, was all operating normally.

Except the nuclear core.

The nuclear core was like a “black box” to the Russian engineers.

Only the Chinese engineers were able to inspect the nuclear core.

Due to the contract, China did not need to provide the Russians with the full technical details.

Lermontov suddenly stood up and spoke.

“It’s the Chinese responsibility to ensure the normal operation of the reactor. This is written in the contract, correct?”

Academician Wang: “It is.”

“However, the only thing we haven’t inspected is the nuclear core!”

Academician Wang responded to Lermontov.

“Our engineers have inspected the nuclear core, and you’ve already read the inspection report—”

Lermontov interrupted Academician Wang and spoke in a suspicious tone.

“Correct, that is what is on the report, but who’s to say you didn’t lie on the report?”

Academician Wang looked at Lermontov and narrowed his eyes.

“What do you mean?”

“I’m questioning reasonably.” Lermontov stared at Academician Wang and said, “The problem is most likely in the nuclear core. We have reason to believe that. In order to accurately identify the cause of the failure, I request you provide us or a third-party Russian inspection agency the technology to inspect the nuclear core.”

Academician Wang said, “That’s not what it says in the contract.”

Lermontov aggressively said, “Yes, but you guys did not ensure normal operation of the reactor, you guys breached the contract first!”

“I don’t think we are in breach of contract, we are actively helping you solve the problem!”

Continuing on like this was meaningless. Academician Wang turned toward Minister Novak, hoping he could calm Lermontov down.

However, it seemed like Novak’s stance was swinging toward Lermontov’s side.

After all, the Helios fusion power station was part of Novak’s vision for Russia’s future.

It was important to maintain a relationship with China, but that didn’t mean the Russians would always compromise. The nuclear fusion power station could not be ignited, nor could they find the origin of the problem.

Therefore, by process of elimination, he had reason to believe that the problem lied in the nuclear core.

Lu Zhou, who hadn't said anything yet, suddenly spoke.

"Can I look at the plasma turbulence monitoring data?"

"Monitoring data?" Lermontov frowned and glanced at the security director next to him. He then looked at Lermontov and said, "Why would the noisy data help with anything?"

The plasma turbulence data displayed the plasma movement in the reaction chamber, observed by the He3 atom probe. It used a mathematical model of the microfluidic movements of the plasma inside the reaction chamber.

Back then, this was a sensational research result in the physics community, and many scholars declared this a Nobel Prize level achievement. It provided a theoretical basis for a series of magnetic confinement fusion devices, such as the Stellarator.

However, for most people, this data was nothing more than noise.

Just like how there was no programmer on earth that could read code in binary numbers, that was the CPU's job.

More importantly, the reactor wasn't able to achieve ignition. What was the point of monitoring the plasma turbulence?

Lu Zhou shrugged.

"No harm in trying."

Lermontov shrugged as well.

"Go ahead then."

Even though Lermontov didn't think Lu Zhou would be able to do anything with the data, he still asked technicians from Rosatom to retrieve the plasma turbulence monitoring data.

The data was printed on a 200-page report, which was delivered to the conference room.

Academician Wang looked at the thick stack of paper and couldn't help but frown.

Forget about analyzing the data, just reading through the data would take hours.

Lermontov sat with his arms crossed, waiting for Lu Zhou's next move. Academician Sivali and Minister Novak also curiously looked at Lu Zhou, wondering what his next move was.

In fact, Lu Zhou didn't have anything special up his sleeve.

He flipped through the pages and found the plasma turbulence for the first five seconds after the reactor ignition was attempted.

After five minutes, he put down the stack of papers.

Lermontov smirked and said, "Have any insights for us, Mr. Mathematician?"

However, Lu Zhou's response was unexpected.

After putting down the report, Lu Zhou spoke confidently.

"Of course.

"The problem is not in the nuclear core."

There was a commotion in the conference room.

Obviously, as the authority figure in nuclear fusion, Lu Zhou's words had weight attached to it.

Lermontov was a little stunned. He couldn't believe Lu Zhou was able to make inferences from the noisy data, not to mention in such a short amount of time.

However, soon after, he spoke with a tone of disapproval, "I knew you would say that, but the problem is not in the power plant itself."

Lu Zhou nodded.

"You're right, the problem is not in the power plant. I think I know where the problem is."

Lermontov wasn't the only one stunned; the experts from Rosatom and Academician Wang were all astonished.

Minister Novak was the first to ask.

"Where's the problem then?"

Lu Zhou paused for a second and spoke.

"It's the power grid."

Chapter 1013 Active Protection Mechanism

The entire conference room went silent.

No problems with the nuclear core, nor the power plant...

But the problem was with the external power grid?

Lermontov chuckled.

"So, you're saying, there's no problem with the battery, nor the battery case, but the problem is with the Russian power system? You're saying we can't handle nuclear fusion power? What a joke."

Lu Zhou said, "Do I sound like I'm joking?"

Lermontov impolitely said, "Academician Lu Zhou, I know you are an excellent mathematician. There are hundreds or even thousands of scholars in St. Petersburg waiting for your report at ICM. But, I have to say, you're a layman in the area of electricity."

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "That's true, I don't know anything about the Russian power grid system, but I have enough data to support my claim."

Lermontov didn't say anything, he continued to sit there with his arms folded, waiting for Lu Zhou to continue.

Not just Lermontov, everyone in the conference room, including Academician Wang, was waiting for Lu Zhou to continue.

Lu Zhou cleared his throat and spoke.

“When we designed the nuclear core, we added many preventative safety measures. For example, the active shutdown mechanism on the core catcher, the temperature detection device on the heat dissipation system. These mechanisms can stop the ongoing nuclear reaction under special circumstances.”

Lermontov snorted.

“Like what?”

Lu Zhou: “Like, when the external power grid cannot handle the electrical energy generated by nuclear fusion.”

“That’s not the problem,” Minister Novak said. “We have adjusted the output of thermal power facilities in preparation for today’s ignition. Once the core is ignited, we will immediately reduce the output of a large thermal power station nearby. When the nuclear core output reaches 10%, we will shut down St. Petersburg nuclear power plants 1 and 2... We have a comprehensive plan to adjust our energy structure.”

Lu Zhou: “But have you thought about another possibility?”

Minister Novak said, “Like what?”

“Normally, unless the automatic generation control system is triggered, a little bit of electricity could easily enter the St. Petersburg power grid, but now...”

Lu Zhou looked at Novak and said, “Your power grid is unable to accept even the tiniest bit of electricity from Helios.”

Lermontov said, “How is that possible? Are you mocking our energy experts? You’re saying our infrastructure is a joke?”

“You can interpret it however you want.” Lu Zhou shrugged and said emotionlessly, “The fact of the matter is, your energy management system... the EMS, has serious compatibility issues with the Helios fusion power station.

“I’m not sure if it’s a system error or a human error, basically, the electrical energy produced from the nuclear core is unable to enter the power grid. This triggered our nuclear core active protection mechanism. After looking at the plasma turbulence data, I am certain that this is the root of the problem.

“If it weren’t for this active protection mechanism, we would have been in a lot more trouble.”

Hundreds of millions of degree plasma melting through the nuclear core was quite dangerous.

Especially for people standing inside the power plant...

When Minister Novak heard this, his face turned blue.

Lermontov didn’t look well either, he was obviously shocked by the thought of a nuclear accident. God forbid another Chernobyl accident happening again.

However, he still couldn’t believe Lu Zhou was able to make inferences from the plasma turbulence data in such a short time frame.

It seemed like Lu Zhou was abusing his academic reputation.

Lermontov said, “... Stop trying to scare me, we all know you’re lying—”

“Mr. Lermontov.”

Lermontov was a little stunned to hear Lu Zhou mention his name. He frowned and replied, “What?”

Lu Zhou said in a serious manner, “Let me ask you this, do you really want this problem to be solved?”

“What is that supposed to mean?” Lermontov was a little flustered, but he quickly calmed down and said, “This project is worth tens of billions, and I am the person in charge of Rosatom’s participation in this project. Why wouldn’t I want this to work?!”

“Okay.” Lu Zhou nodded and looked at Minister Novak. “Go find some engineers to see if I’m correct, I’m sure it will be easy.”

Minister Novak nodded.

“Sure thing.”

Lu Zhou stood up and stared at Lermontov. He tapped his finger on the inch-thick stack of plasma turbulence data.

“You have no idea how many of these I’ve read.

“I already told you where the problem is. If you want this to be resolved, listen to me.

“If you just want an accident appraisal, I can calculate one for you, but I’m not sure you’ll understand my calculations.”

“You little sh*t!”

Lermontov furiously stood up, but under the gaze of Maksim, he decided to sit back down.

Normally, Lermontov would have started a fight.

But for the safety of everyone, he decided against it.

...

The fusion ignition ceremony was forced to put on hold.

Per Lu Zhou’s advice, the Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation had sent people to contact the Unified Energy System of Russia, starting an investigation on the power grid.

And for whether or not the problem really was with the power grid...

Lu Zhou was 95% certain that he was correct.

However, if he had to write down his analysis and prove his speculation using a mathematical model, it would take him at least a week.

Instead of wasting a week’s time, it would be better to investigate the power grid first.

After leaving the nuclear power plant, Lu Zhou didn’t return to his hotel. Instead, he found a Chinese restaurant and ate some food with Academician Wang.

They began to talk about what just happened. Academician Wang sighed and spoke emotionally.

“Honestly, this is strange. Looking at Lermontov’s attitude, I think Rosatom is behind all this.”

Lu Zhou put down his chopsticks and looked at Academician Wang.

“But how would this help them?”

Even though he wasn’t an expert in business, he still knew a little about corporation operations.

This kind of large-scale investment into public utility projects often included many bank loans, even one day of delay could mean millions in losses.

Wang Zengguang explained patiently.

“This is a multi-billion dollar project. There are bank loans and insurance involved. If there’s a problem with the nuclear core, not only can they apply for compensation from the insurance company, they can also pressure us to provide them with full technical details of the nuclear core. After all, without a third-party testing organization, it is our word against theirs.”

Basically, the China National Nuclear Corporation and East Asia Energy were like the retail giants of the nuclear industry—they had a total monopoly on the industry. Now that the Russians wanted to open a retail franchise, everything about the store was stored by the Chinese.

Because China had control over the nuclear core, the Russians had to make many compromises.

However, the Russians also had limits.

One of their biggest concerns was safety.

Especially since the Russians didn’t have the best track record for nuclear accidents.

Of course, having no accidents would be ideal. Both parties would benefit from clean energy.

However, now there was a serious problem with the reactor.

If the nuclear core couldn't be ignited, the Russians didn't have the technology to inspect the nuclear core. It was totally up to East Asia Energy to inspect the nuclear core.

Therefore, this was the perfect opportunity for Rosatom to pressure China into giving them nuclear core diagnosis technologies.

Lu Zhou frowned and said, "Did the Russian authorities made them do this?"

"Unlikely, but even if the Russian authorities didn't condone this, they would be on Rosatom's side. After all, Rosatom is a huge player in the nuclear power field, and the Russian government wouldn't turn on their own people."

Academician Wang Zengguang sighed and said, "I didn't expect this at all. I mean, we have a good relationship with the Russians, imagine if this happened in America."

If something like this happened in America, the relationship between the Chinese and Americans would become irreparable.

However, this was also a good lesson for East Asia Energy, which had just begun expanding overseas.

Even China's allies couldn't be fully trusted. For small Southeast Asian countries, they were glad to be supported by a superpower, but giants like Russia much preferred to take a piece themselves.

Next time, they would have to include the connected grid system as one of their inspection criteria.

Of course, that would involve national security issues and disclosure issues, so the other party might not want to cooperate.

But even then, it would be better than having a failed nuclear power station.

Academician Wang downed a shot with Lu Zhou and spoke sincerely.

"Thanks for helping today."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "No worries, I'm still a shareholder of East Asia Energy."

"Oh, I see how it is, this meal's on you then!"

Academician Wang smiled and spoke in a more serious tone.

“I’ll contact our people, ask them what we should do.

“Regardless of whether the problem is with the power grid, we cannot give them any inspection technologies. We have a decade lead in terms of fusion energy, we cannot give that up.”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “Is there anything I can help with?”

“No, you’ve done a lot already.” Academician Wang Zengguang smiled and said, “You should focus your energy on the International Congress of Mathematicians.

“As for the fusion ignition, we’ll handle it!”

Chapter 1014 He Really Guessed Correctly?

While Lu Zhou was returning to his hotel, Minister Novak was standing in a computer room at the Unified Energy System of Russia, St. Petersburg branch. He stared at a group of technicians who were working at their computers.

Standing next to Minister Novak was the manager of the branch, Olig. This pale-skinned middle-aged man had a thick beard with a beer belly, making him look like a balloon in his tight Armani suit.

He had been talking non-stop for the past two hours.

“Mr. Minister, I can promise you that our grid operation has been perfect, and there are no problems! The engineers at our department have been monitoring the system since this morning. We are fully prepared for the Helios fusion power station energy, however, we haven’t detected any voltage change from the Helios energy inlet at all—”

Minister Novak spoke with a poker face.

“I will decide if there are any problems or not.”

“I’m sorry to hear that, but I think you should trust us.”

“Shut up.”

“Okay, Minister,” Olig said. Seeing how Novak began to look annoyed, Olig quickly shut his mouth.

Rosatom and the Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation weren’t the only ones that didn’t expect such a thing to happen, the Unified Energy System of Russia, which was responsible for operating the power grid, also didn’t expect this.

During the project development phase, people from the Unified Energy System of Russia inspected the power station site. After making sure there were no problems, they approved to connect Helios to the grid.

After hearing the news that the fusion power station couldn’t be ignited, Olig’s eyelids began twitching.

He didn’t know why Novak thought that the problem wasn’t with the power plant, but with the power grid!

This was ridiculous!

Time quickly passed by. They weren’t able to detect any problems. Olig was wondering if he should tell Minister Novak that enough was enough. However, a technician suddenly stared at his computer screen and spoke.

“Sir...”

Olig immediately looked over and asked, “What’s wrong?”

The technician could feel the pressure of the gaze on him. He gulped and said, “There’s something wrong with our EMS system—”

Olig suddenly realized that he might be wrong. He quickly interrupted the technician and dragged him out of the room.

“Come with me...”

Minister Novak immediately stopped the two.

“Stop!”

Minister Novak looked at the technician and spoke seriously.

“What happened? Tell me now! You will be personally responsible if you attempt to hide anything!”

The technician was scared, he ignored his chubby boss and spoke quickly.

“When we checked the EMS memory, we found several abnormal response records. When the system received an output request from Helios, it did not process the relevant request, but returned an approval message...”

Basically, the upstream sent a message that a flood was coming, while the downstream received the message, and reported that it was opening the floodgate. However, the floodgate was never opened.

Academician Sivali frowned and said, “Is it a system bug?”

“It doesn’t look like a bug...” the engineer said. “I found some lines of code that don’t look like a bug. It looks like someone manually changed it.”

Olig began to sweat, and he quickly asked, “How is that possible? Did you misread it?!”

The technician knew he would probably be fired after this anyway, so he said, “I’m 90% sure! Maybe our safety director can look at it, I’m sure he will come to the same conclusion.”

This time, Olig wasn’t the only one sweating. Minister Novak, Academician Sivali, and officials from the energy department all broke out in cold sweat.

Someone did this!

Someone locked the energy input port for the EMS system!

If the nuclear core was successfully ignited, the huge surge of electrical energy generated would paralyze the entire transmission line and affect the nearby transformer stations. It would also cause a series of cascading damage to the nuclear core itself.

Fortunately, Helios’ active protection system shut down the reaction...

Minister Novak thought about the hundreds of millions of degree plasma inside the fusion reactor.

He snapped back to reality and growled.

“Find out who did this! Who is responsible for maintaining the power grid system... F*ck sake!”

Olig looked at Minister Novak and spoke in a trembling tone.

“Minister, maybe it’s just a system bug, we don’t have to overreact—”

“Mr. Olig,” Minister Novak said, “I advise you to cooperate, otherwise you will be a suspect.”

Olig’s eyes widened as he pointed toward himself.

“I’m a suspect? Jesus, why would I do such a thing?”

“Everyone is a suspect.” Minister Novak looked at the computer room and said, “This is a well-planned, organized attack. There is no doubt there are quislings sitting among us!”

“This isn’t an energy issue, this concerns national safety!”

Minister Novak looked at Olig, Sivali, as well as Lermontov from Rosatom. He spoke in a cold tone.

“I’m contacting the Federal Security Service, they will take this matter into their own hands.

“I’m sure they will be able to solve this quickly.”

Chapter 1015 Intentional Sabotage?

The early morning.

Lu Zhou was sitting in a restaurant at the Corinthia Hotel, enjoying some toast and coffee. After reading some emails, he logged onto arXiv and browsed the latest research results in algebraic geometry, differentiable manifolds, and number theory.

These days, the mathematics community had been relatively quiet. Nothing particularly interesting had been posted. In professional academic forums such as MathOverflow, most of the discussions were not about academic problems but rather gossips about the mathematical world.

Even though not everyone received an invitation to the ICM conference, the vast majority of mathematicians were following the conference happening at St. Petersburg closely.

Lu Zhou was reading a post about the predictions for the Fields Medal prize when a Russian man with a pair of sunglasses hanging from his shirt across from him asked, “Can you do me a favor and try to stay in the hotel today?”

Lu Zhou looked up from his computer screen and spoke.

“Why, has something happened?”

“If you really want to know, yes, something happened.” Maksim wiped his glasses and said, “Someone has infiltrated the St. Petersburg power grid system and changed the lines of code. According to our national security intelligence office, this is a premeditated attack.”

Lu Zhou said, “... How can it not be premeditated?”

“You didn’t understand what I meant.” Maksim smiled at Lu Zhou and said, “I’m saying, this might be a premeditated attack against you.”

The atmosphere froze.

Everyone became quiet.

This was the first time...

Lu Zhou felt his life was being threatened.

Lu Zhou felt his throat getting dry, and he lifted his coffee cup and took a sip.

After a couple of seconds, he put down the coffee cup and spoke.

“... Honestly, that is a bit far-fetched. It’s just a nuclear power plant failure, it’s not against me personally.”

Destroying an entire nuclear power plant just to hurt me...

The Helios nuclear power plant was in St. Petersburg, Russia’s second-largest city. Even though the controllable fusion technology was clean and safe, it was still a nuclear reactor.

If something went wrong, it wouldn't just be a political issue.

Lu Zhou wouldn't be surprised if a war broke out.

"I think that the relationship between the two countries is more important than the Helios fusion power stations."

Maksim put on his sunglasses and stood up.

He stared at Lu Zhou through the glasses and spoke.

"Basically, it seems like there are people out to get you. We're not sure if they have more tricks up their sleeves. So, I hope you can stay in this hotel as we can 100% guarantee your safety here. If you leave here, that number becomes 90% or even 80%."

"I know." Lu Zhou nodded and looked at his computer screen as he said, "Even though I know who is behind this, I'll try to keep my activities within the hotel."

He had no intention to wander outside of the ICM conference.

If someone was onto him, it would be better for him to stay cautious.

"That's the gist of it, I have something important to take care of, I wish you a pleasant day."

Maksim waved goodbye and began walking away.

However, he walked past Lu Zhou, leaned down, and quietly spoke.

"... There are places with many girls you'd enjoy, I'm afraid we'll have to go there next time."

Lu Zhou suddenly choked on his coffee.

Lu Zhou coughed and put down his cup. He then wiped his mouth with a napkin and spoke.

"... No, thanks."

“Haha, don’t be shy, my friend. There’s much more to life than science. If it weren’t for this accident, we would have had a lot of fun, but... maybe next time.”

Maksim patted his shoulder and walked away with a smile.

The news that the ignition of the Helios fusion reactor was delayed didn’t affect the people from St. Petersburg. The Pravda, which was the most authoritative newspaper in Russia, only had a small article mentioning the reactor at the bottom of the page. The article stated that due to the ICM conference and various other reasons, the fusion ignition would be delayed by a week.

However, some politically inclined people were able to smell that something was wrong.

It seemed like there was an invisible storm brewing over St. Petersburg and even the entire Russian power system...

After Maksim left the Corinthia Hotel, scholars from all over the world began to arrive at the five-star hotel, which had been vacated for the International Congress of Mathematicians.

In fact, most people arrived in the morning.

For example, Lu Zhou’s mentor at Princeton, Professor Deligne, as well as Professor Fefferman, who Lu Zhou worked with on the Navier–Stokes equations, as well as Faltings, had all arrived.

Lu Zhou only heard about it this morning.

However, Lu Zhou wasn’t fazed by the likes of Professor Deligne or Professor Fefferman appearing, what really stunned him was someone standing in the hotel lobby with a suitcase.

Her blonde hair was tied into a ponytail, swaying on her white long skirt. Her shoulders and body outline looked fuller than they were four years ago.

Lu Zhou walked out of the restaurant and walked toward the lobby elevators, where he instantly recognized her.

It seemed like Vera sensed someone staring at her. She looked around and noticed Lu Zhou.

“Professor...”

Her quiet voice was layered with surprise and joy, and her sapphire-like pupils were shining brightly.

She let go of her suitcase and jogged toward Lu Zhou.

Judging by her movement, if she didn’t slow down, she would bump into Lu Zhou.

However, this kind of physical contact was too intense for the young girl.

She got closer and closer to Lu Zhou and gradually slowed down in the midst of the nervousness.

She stood in front of Lu Zhou and blushed.

She then brushed her hair and said, “Long time no see...”

“Yeah, it’s been a while...” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Are you doing well?”

“Yeah... I’m good, no need to worry about me.”

Even though Vera answered confidently, Lu Zhou still felt worried.

Lu Zhou was about to keep on asking when he heard the sound of high heels stepping on granite floors.

“You’re making him more worried.”

The two looked over and saw Molina with two suitcases in her hand, one of which belonged to Vera.

Because Lu Zhou had seen Molina in Jinling last year, he felt like Molina hadn’t changed as much as Vera.

The only difference was that her usual long trench coat was replaced by a green short coat.

Her tomboy haircut, striped white shirt, and long khaki trousers gave off a Paris vibe.

Vera paused for a second and asked, "Oh? Why?"

"If you have any problems, just tell him. He's a celebrity now, and you're his apprentice, so he can definitely help you."

"No, I'm really fine... Don't worry about me."

Vera took her suitcase and muttered thank you. She then quickly walked toward the elevator, forgetting to say goodbye to Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou saw Vera walking toward the elevator, and he grabbed Molina aside and asked in a serious manner, "Aren't you her teammate? How do you not know anything about her?"

"Obviously, my teammate hasn't opened up to me. Also, do you really think I will tell you a lady's secret without her permission?"

Molina rolled her eyes at Lu Zhou and walked toward the elevator with her suitcase.

Lu Zhou began to think.

Suddenly, he heard another familiar voice.

"Professor!"

Lu Zhou turned his head around and saw a young man with tanned skin and curly hair. The man was holding the arm of a Latino lady.

Lu Zhou didn't immediately recognize who it was.

"Hey, Professor, it's Hardy! You didn't forget about me, right?"

"I know it's you, I just need some time to process some information..."

Lu Zhou looked at the beautiful Latino lady and said, "You're... married?"

Hardy smiled and said, "Of course! It's been so many years, I'm getting old. I'm a professor now, it's now or never. It is what it is."

Lu Zhou: "..."

This kid, why does he always add a redundant sentence at the end...

I knew I shouldn't have let him graduate so soon.

Hardy could tell Lu Zhou was a little annoyed, so after making some small talk, he took his new wife toward the elevator.

Apparently, they married two months ago, and they came to St. Petersburg to attend the ICM conference, as well as going on their honeymoon.

The reason why they chose to combine their honeymoon with the ICM was that the school would reimburse their travel expenses and also give them a certain amount as travel allowance...

After attending the ICM conference, they would fly to Italy and Greece.

Hardy was one of the few people Lu Zhou knew that would do something like this...

In addition to Hardy, Lu Zhou also saw Qin Yue in the hotel lobby.

Qin Yue had changed quite a lot over the past four years.

When Qin Yue first came to Princeton, Lu Zhou remembered that he was a shy but honest person, but now, Qin Yue was more extroverted, making people feel like he was reliable.

Lu Zhou was happy to see his students grow up.

The only thing that made him a bit lost was Vera's health condition...

Hopefully, it wasn't a big problem.

But Lu Zhou felt like Vera wasn't telling the truth...

Chapter 1016 Unlocked Hidden Achievements!

The morning of August the third.

The skies above St. Petersburg were clear as day.

The Corinthia Hotel was full of people.

Even though the conference hall was spacious, due to the sheer amount of attendees, two security checkpoints were set up at the entrance.

The chairman of the International Mathematical Union, Professor Shigefumi Mori, as well as Professor Viana, chairman of the organizing committee, stood on stage and delivered an opening speech. They were welcoming the scholars coming from all over the world and thanked the city of St. Petersburg for supporting the conference.

After that was the most eagerly anticipated stage, the award ceremony.

This was the highlight of the entire conference, and most people came just for the award ceremony.

The four award categories were considered one of the top honors of mathematics. Rumor went that obtaining any one of them would allow the scholar to follow the road of mathematics for the rest of their life.

Especially the Fields Medal.

Compared to the Golden Horse Award for Lifetime Achievement Award, this award could only be given to scholars under 40 years old, so it was the crown of mathematics.

Most people admired hard work, but everyone aspired to be a genius.

Especially for a field like mathematics, which required talent.

Lu Zhou, who was sitting in the crowd, could clearly hear people discussing next to him on who would receive this award.

“Jody Williamson, the youngest mathematician academician in Australia, established a pure algebraic Hodge theory on polynomial rings and successfully proved the Kazhdan Lusztig conjecture for Kirchoff group. He didn’t win it last time, but this time it should be his.”

“... Marina Vyazovska should also have a chance. Her research is in discrete geometry, and she extended the 3-dimensional sphere problem to 8 and 24 dimensions and also won the 2017 Clay Institute award, as well as the

Ramanujan Prize. My mentor described her as a genius. She's already 38 years old, this is her last chance."

"Marina Vyazovska's research is indeed excellent, but the field of discrete geometry is too unpopular, not to mention that her supervisor is not a famous scholar. I'm more optimistic about another Ukrainian mathematician, also a lady."

"Who?"

"The person that proved the Cole Number Theory Prize, Vera Pulyuy, the winner of the Cole Number Theory Prize, the Ramanujan gold award, and the European Mathematical Society award. Both her research and her mentor are top notch. Plus she's from Princeton. If they don't consider her this time, they definitely would next time."

"Jesus, why is the Fields Medal only once every four years? There are too many people who deserve to win."

"Because if they hand out too many awards, the awards will become meaningless. We have to select the best of the best, the people that will change the future of mathematics."

Lu Zhou overheard their conversation, and he had a surprised look on his face.

He didn't know that Vera won all those awards.

He thought that maybe she didn't think the awards were worth mentioning, which made him a little sad.

Professor Mori didn't let the attendees wait for long. He pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose and began the award process.

"First is the Carl Friedrich Gauss Prize, I know you guys have been waiting a long time for this."

The second he finished speaking.

The huge venue went dead silent.

After Professor Mori looked around the venue, he spoke in a calm and solemn voice.

“We often say that mathematics is the foundation of science. It’s the tool that allows us to understand the universe. Integrating advanced mathematical methods into applied science can change the world. However, there are very few scholars that are able to create the tools that shape our future.

“I can spend the entire day talking about his achievements...”

Everyone was listening attentively, including Lu Zhou.

However, suddenly, someone spoke.

“... Oh, Jesus, I already know who it is, just give it to him!”

Soon after, someone spoke.

“Yeah, yeah, everyone knows who’s going to win the Carl Friedrich Gauss Prize, just go next.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

F*ck sake!

Can’t you guys just shut up?

This is ruining the suspense!

Lu Zhou turned his head and wanted to see who was ruining the moment, but there were too many people in the venue, he couldn’t tell who were the ones speaking.

Professor Mori continued on stage, “His mathematics is changing science, changing the world!”

“The award winner is...

“Lu Zhou!”

A thunderous round of applause began.

Lu Zhou stood up in the midst of the applause and took a deep breath. He walked calmly on stage and received the medal from Professor Shigefumi Mori’s hands.

This professor gently tapped Lu Zhou on the arm, and he had a friendly smile on his face.

“Congratulations, we meet again.”

Applied science had little to do in the mathematics world, so scholars such as Grothendieck and Hardy were proud to call mathematics as “pure” and “rigorous”.

But regardless, applied science was one of the important applications of mathematics. Not to mention that even scholars like Grothendieck eventually had their tools applied in the sciences.

The Carl Friedrich Gauss Prize was for scholars that applied mathematics to the sciences.

“Thank you, it’s nice to see you again.” Lu Zhou shook hands with this elderly scholar and said, “I hope we will meet again.”

Shigefumi Mori paused for a second and smiled.

“Do you mean... another prize ceremony? Unfortunately, there aren’t many medals left we can give you, and when you’re seventy years old, I will no longer be here.”

Lu Zhou: “But there’s still a Leelavati Prize?”

Shigefumi Mori coughed and said, “... Please give other mathematicians a chance, Professor Lu. Please head off the stage.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

The Shiing-Shen Chern Mathematics Award was a lifetime award, and Lu Zhou was far from being retired. However, Lu Zhou felt like he should have a chance at receiving the Nevanlinna Prize for mathematical computer science, as well as the Leelavati Prize, which was mathematics “public outreach”.

He still remembered that the Turkish guy that won the Leelavati Prize seemed to have built numerous primary schools in remote desert areas?

I’ve contributed way more to mathematics than a couple of primary schools, why shouldn’t I win the award?

Even though Lu Zhou didn't really care about the medal, he still felt a little unjust.

After he got off stage, he sat in his designated Carl Friedrich Gauss Prize seat and quietly waited for the award ceremony to continue.

Next up was the Shiing-Shen Chern Mathematics Award and the Leelavati Prize; the former was a lifetime award, and the latter was an award for "ordinary" people who have made outstanding contributions to popularizing science and mathematics.

The atmosphere in the venue was pushed to a max when the Fields Medal ceremony began.

Lu Zhou was sitting in the front row. He could feel the pairs of eyes behind him, all staring at the stage.

Professor Shigefumi Mori spoke.

The second he spoke, everyone froze.

"Number theory is an ancient discipline, it has been around ever since the beginning of mathematics. Ancient conjectures have yet to be solved. It is the origin of all of the knowledge we have mastered so far.

"Few people are able to make truly outstanding achievements in this field. Only the bravest warriors are able to climb the daunting mountains.

"The first winner of the Fields Medal is—

"Vera Pulyuy from Princeton!"

Thunderous applause immediately erupted, echoing in Lu Zhou's ears.

Vera?

It wasn't like he didn't think about this possibility.

But he didn't expect this at all!

She was indeed an excellent scholar, there was no doubt that her research was worthy of an award consideration. But she was far too young.

If Lu Zhou recalled correctly, she was 22 when she received her PhD from Princeton.

It had been four years, and she was only 26 years old...

Of course, what caught Lu Zhou off guard wasn't the fact that Vera won.

It was the line of blue text that appeared in front of him.

[Congratulations, User, hidden achievements unlocked!]

[Please enter the system space to collect your rewards!]

Chapter 1017 Famous Teacher, Famous Student

Vera Pulyuy!

The winner was only 26 years old!

Even though this didn't break Professor Lu's record, 26 years old was still extremely young.

What surprised people wasn't just her age, but also her gender.

Prior to this, the only female mathematician to have won a Fields Medal was Maryam Mirzakhani from Stanford University. Unfortunately, the year after she won her award, in 2017, she died from breast cancer.

Therefore, Vera would become the world's only living female Fields Medalist.

"The Fields Medalists are getting younger and younger, first Schultz, then Professor Lu, then Vera Pulyuy..."

Xu Chengyang looked at the beautiful young figure on stage and said, "When I see these young people pop up one by one, I feel so old."

His last chance at winning a Fields Medal was four years ago.

And just like he had expected, he lost.

There was nothing unfortunate about this. After all, the Fields Medal was only awarded once every four years. Unless someone was an excellent professor, as well as an excellent researcher, it was unlikely for them to win the award.

For example, Lu Zhou's supervisor was Deligne. Coupled with his outstanding research such as Goldbach's conjecture proof and the Navier-Stokes, it was no wonder the International Mathematical Union gave him the award at such a young age.

Another example was Schultz, whose mentor was Michael Rapoport. Michael was from the University of Bonn, just like Faltings. Not to mention Schultz's "perfect space" theory was one of the most promising research directions of algebraic geometry. Even then, he still took 2 terms to win a medal.

While Xu Chengyang was well known domestically, he was only a semi-famous scholar in the international world. There was still a big gap between him and the top of the food chain.

Not to mention that there was also Zhang Wei, who was sitting next to him.

Zhang Wei was superior to Xu Chengyang, both in terms of international and domestic reputation.

Zhang Wei nodded sympathetically and sighed.

"Yeah, time flies."

It had already been four years.

Without him knowing it, he went from a young scholar to a scholar who was almost in his fifties.

It felt like just yesterday they were the new generation of mathematicians, but now they were the old comers, about to be retired.

Xu Chengyang smiled and said, "Our time is past... But don't you think this is incredible, not only is Professor Lu so successful, but so are his students."

Zhang Wei shook his head and said, "It's not incredible. I remember Vera Pulyuy won a gold IMO medal and went to Princeton with a recommendation letter from Tao Zhexuan. She is talented, and her teachers taught her well."

A ton of Fields Medalists had won IMO gold medals before. If the student was talented, paired with a good supervisor, it was likely for the student to win a Fields Medal.

The only surprising thing was her age and gender.

Xu Chengyang said, “IMO gold medal, we have a few. There’s this kid that got a perfect score. I wonder if he’s going to win another Fields Medal for China.”

Even though Lu Zhou won the first Fields Medal for China, Xu Chengyang knew that it would be difficult to win another.

“This was similar to Ramanujan’s contribution to the Indian mathematics community. Even though there have been many outstanding Indian mathematicians, none of them have gotten even close to Ramanujan.”

“It’s possible.” Zhang Wei patted his friend’s shoulder and said, “Professor Lu is back in his home country, right? It’s only been four years, he needs time to develop talent. Give it another 15 years, I’m sure China will produce a group of outstanding mathematicians!”

What convinced Zhang Wei wasn’t just Lu Zhou’s abilities, but also the changes that had been taking place in China’s academic community.

He could sense that Professor Lu’s achievements were causing the state and people to pay more attention to mathematics.

The support from the state meant everything.

Now, the Chinese academic community had fully recognized the contribution mathematics made to the applied sciences.

Something like this was unthinkable ten years ago.

This meant that Lu Zhou’s impact on the mathematics community was far more than the couple of students he taught...

On the other side of the venue, Academician Wang Shicheng was quiet ever since the award ceremony began. He had a look of relief on his face.

A few days ago, he was still holding a grudge against Lu Zhou for poaching a talent.

But now, he felt like there was nothing wrong with what Lu Zhou did.

The Yan University International Mathematical Research Center had been around for many years, but even though they had trained many outstanding scholars, none of them were at the top of the international field.

If this guy really has the ability to create Fields Medal scholars...

Maybe it's a good thing that the IMO kid went to him instead.

Sitting near Professor Wang's seat was Professor Deligne.

This old man stared at the girl on stage and snorted. He suddenly said, "... I didn't expect them to choose Pulyuy."

Professor Fefferman smiled and said, "As for her academic achievements, anyone that can prove Collatz conjecture is a world-class scholar. Regardless of how much Lu Zhou helped her, judging from her thesis, most of the work was done by her."

Deligne stared at Fefferman and said, "You really don't think they're giving this award just to be politically correct and inclusive?"

Professor Fefferman had a helpless expression on his face.

"... Fine, I thought about that as well. In fact, Marina Vyazovska is also a good choice, but giving her the medal is a little far-fetched."

Professor Deligne suddenly said, "This was not the case in mathematics before. We didn't have all this political correctness."

He wasn't against giving the Fields Medal to Vera, nor did he deny that Vera was an excellent scholar. However, he was more concerned with the mathematical community as a whole, and he felt like politics was penetrating the purity of mathematics.

A long time ago, the only thing that mattered was a scholar's academic contributions.

But now, they had to take into account nationality, skin color, gender, and even political backgrounds. Even though being a minority alone wasn't enough to win a Fields Medal, it certainly helped.

The politically correct crowd was slowly destroying the freedom and independence of academia...

Professor Fefferman shrugged and said, "The times are changing, whether we accept it or not, we have to adapt to this change."

"Also, it's not like we're the only ones that have to adapt to this new reality."

Deligne stared at him.

"Do you think this is good?"

Fefferman: "That's a problem for the future generation to worry about."

...

There was a round of thunderous applause.

However, Lu Zhou's mind was elsewhere.

Not because he fainted from the excitement, but because he was in the system space.

[Congratulations, User, "Famous Teacher, Famous Student" achievement unlocked!]

[Conditions achieved: Nurture a student who has achieved the highest level of honor in their respective field!]

[Reward: 100,000 experience points, "Void Memory a" sample (rare)!]

Void Memory?

"Rare"?

Also, what does the "a" mean is there a b,c, and d?

Lu Zhou saw the rewards pop up on the information screen. He paused for a second.

Even though this system had played many cruel jokes on him, such as the "Easter egg" sample, his intuition told him that this wasn't a joke sample.

Without hesitating, he turned off the reward notification and opened his inventory.

After all, it was only 100,000 experience points. He needed millions of experience points just to level up his mathematics.

His inventory was opened.

Sitting inside was a purple-shaped object.

Its shape was difficult to describe. It was like a spherically shaped cloud, like there was something hiding inside the cloud.

Lu Zhou gulped and clicked on the icon.

However, the item description didn't pop up. Instead, he felt a wave of electric shock through his fingers.

"Ouch!"

This hurts!

This was the first time Lu Zhou felt this sensation inside the system space.

However, the feeling didn't discourage Lu Zhou. Instead, he looked intrigued.

"Interesting..."

"... I always thought that the system space existed in my consciousness, similar to a dream. I didn't expect to feel any pain here."

He became more and more curious about the system.

Maybe the correct way to open the item is to hold it firmly?

However, Lu Zhou decided against this.

He was at the ICM conference.

Anything could happen to his physical body on the outside.

He should be more careful.

At the very least, he should find a quiet place where he could be by himself...

Chapter 1018 Dirty Trading

CTV had obtained the rights to broadcast the conference.

Now that Academician Lu won another prize at ICM, the CTV obviously wouldn't miss this excellent promotional opportunity.

Even though it wasn't a Fields Medal, it was still an ICM award, the highest level of honor, recognized by the entire mathematics community.

Why wouldn't they share this exciting moment with the country?

The reporter nearly wrote that the Carl Friedrich Gauss Prize was more impressive than the Fields Medal.

But strictly speaking, Carl Friedrich Gauss achieved ten times more than John Charles Fields, not to mention that the Carl Friedrich Gauss Prize was the first award to be given.

So if you put it that way...

Maybe one could argue that the Carl Friedrich Gauss prize was more impressive?

However, even though the CTV tried to promote this award ceremony, it didn't receive a huge response.

There was only one reason.

It was because the Chinese people were bored of seeing Academician Lu win awards.

Clearly, someone at CTV didn't realize this.

In other words, they overestimated the impact of this award.

Li Mo was eating lunch with his family when the TV happened to show a video of Professor Lu winning the award. Li Mo thought that this would be a good

opportunity to tell his parents the secret he had been hiding for the past two months.

When father Li Zhong heard that his son wasn't going to Yan University, he couldn't believe his ears. He had to confirm with his son that his son wasn't joking around.

A brief moment of silence went by.

After that, he slammed his fist on the table and spoke.

"You little b*stard! Who the f*ck let you apply to Jinling, didn't you tell me you're going to Yan University?!"

Li Mo dropped his chopsticks and jumped out of his chair.

"Dad, listen to me, listen to me!"

"Listen my as*! I'm going to give you a beating so bad you'll want to crawl back into your mother's belly!"

Li Mo said, "No, please."

"Sh*t up!"

A month ago, Li Zhong was ecstatic when he heard that his son got full marks in the mathematics olympiad. People that didn't know him thought he had won the lottery.

In his opinion, winning the gold medal meant a guaranteed entry into Yan University!

In fact, that was what his son told him.

But now...

He heard that his son wasn't going to Yan University, nor Shuimu, but Jin University!

His blood began to boil.

"Professor Lu is at Jin University!"

“Who cares about Professor Lu? Is mathematics going to pay the bills? You’re going to marry mathematics for the rest of your life?!”

“Why can’t I?”

“You little sh*t, let me go grab my belt!”

“No, Dad, please don’t, you could ruin a future mathematician!”

“Don’t give me that! Stand still!”

The news broadcast continued to play on TV.

Lu Zhou received the medal from Shigefumi Mori and sat back down. Soon after was the Shiing-Shen Chern Mathematics Award, the Leelavati Prize, and finally the Fields Medal.

Even though these awards had nothing to do with Lu Zhou or China, CTV still captured some shots of the winners out of respect.

When Li Mo saw the lady on stage, his eyes lit up as he spoke.

“Dad, look, that Vera Pulyuy girl, she’s Lu Zhou’s student from Princeton!”

That seemed to do the trick.

His dad curiously looked back at the TV.

“Student?”

Li Zhong stared at the girl on TV and said, “She’s quite pleasant to the eyes... Doesn’t look like a mathematician to me.”

Li Mo sighed in relief and said, “That’s not the important part, this Fields Medalist was taught by Professor Lu!”

Li Zhong said, “So what?”

Li Mo: “Professor Lu is going to be my teacher!”

Li Zhong snorted and spoke.

“Okay, keep bragging, kid, he’s an academician, he barely even gives lectures, you think he has time to teach you?”

Li Mo said, “Dad! I’m being serious, I have his email, I can show it to you.”

Li Zhong realized that his son didn’t seem to be joking. He frowned and put down his belt.

“You sure Academician Lu is going to personally teach you?”

Li Mo: “It doesn’t matter if he personally teaches me, it’s not like I need help every day. He’ll just guide me in the right direction, I can teach myself.”

“I guess being a student of Academician Lu is pretty good.” Li Zhong nodded and said, “He can probably help you get a job.”

Li Mo said, “Jesus, Dad, why do you only care about getting a job? Can’t you think about my dreams? What’s the point of life without dreams?”

Li Zhong said, “What kind of dreams do you have?”

Li Mo smiled and stared at the TV.

“Who cares about an IMO medal…”

“I want a bigger medal!”

...

After the list of Fields Medal winners was announced, the Mathoverflow forum was filled with discussion posts.

Everyone knew who was going to win the Carl Friedrich Gauss Prize, but the new female Fields Medalist shocked everyone.

The second female Fields Medalist!

Only 26 years old!

Combined with her physical beauty, Vera completely overshadowed the other three winners.

[Jesus! 26 years old! Is she just cutting the line?]

[Why would the committee do this, I think this is unfair for scholars that have been waiting for more than a decade.]

[There is no doubt that proving the Collatz conjecture is worthy of this, and her main work is perfecting Professor Lu's Group Structure Method. I don't think there's anything wrong with giving her this award.]

[That's what I think, but she is too young... and she's a female.]

[What's wrong with being a female, you pig?]

[I'm just saying, maybe she did some favors to get where she is...]

Lu Zhou: "..."

These idiots...

What kind of thinking is this?

He felt like there were more and more Chinese scholars joining the MathOverflow forum, it was becoming more and more similar to Weibo.

But honestly, even Lu Zhou himself didn't expect Vera to win the prize.

More precisely, he didn't expect her to win it this year.

After all, 26 years old was very young.

Also, her academic achievements were barely on the cutoff for a Fields Medal. Unlike Lu Zhou's achievements, she didn't produce any revolutionary result that would immediately warrant a Fields Medal.

After the award ceremony, the most famous opera and ballet group from St. Petersburg began their performance.

Even though Lu Zhou was sitting near Vera, they never had a chance to speak.

After the talent show was over, he saw that Vera was gone.

His phone vibrated.

He took out his phone and saw that Xiao Ai had sent him a message.

[Master, do you want me to find her room number?]

Lu Zhou: “No, thanks.”

That sounds like something a stalker would do.

Xiao Ai: [Are you sure? It seems like you want to talk to her. (´◡◡`)]

Lu Zhou: “... No, it’s fine.”

Xiao Ai: [Why? ∙ ω ∙]

“I don’t have anything to say...”

Lu Zhou sighed and scratched his head as he said, “Sometimes, I don’t know what to do.”

Chapter 1019 Distant Professor Lu

In fact, Lu Zhou felt like he was too paranoid sometimes.

Not every problem had a correct answer.

Trying to find a correct answer might turn out to be counterproductive...

The evening banquet was held at the buffet at the Corinthia Hotel.

The hotel prepared delicious food for this banquet and changed the dining hall seating arrangement in order to accommodate the maximum number of participants, as well as leaving enough space for the mathematicians to socialize.

The protagonists of the banquet were obviously the Fields Medal winners.

They were the new celebrities of the mathematics world, and they were attracting attention like magnets. Basically, everyone in the banquet hall had their gaze on them.

However, one of the most important characters, Vera Pulyuy, didn’t show up, so a lot of people were disappointed.

Even though Lu Zhou was a little concerned about Vera, he wasn't too worried.

After all, she had a report to do tomorrow morning. He could speak to her then.

Rather, Lu Zhou was more concerned about the purple object inside his system space inventory.

Void Memory?

What the hell is that?

Lu Zhou was a little zoned out during the banquet. He was getting another glass of wine when he nearly bumped into an old friend...

"Careful, my friend, I don't want to ruin this shirt."

"Sorry."

"No need to apologize." Professor Fefferman smiled and touched glasses with Lu Zhou as he said, "I think you look out of the zone."

Lu Zhou took a sip of wine and stared at him.

"I am?"

"Yeah, when you're looking at me, I can feel that your attention is elsewhere." Professor Fefferman jokingly said, "Is it because your student didn't come to the banquet?"

Lu Zhou: "... No."

Lu Zhou admitted that he was a little zoned out, but it wasn't because of Vera. That would get resolved tomorrow.

Okay, maybe Vera was 1% of the reason why he was zoned out.

But most of the reason was due to something else.

Lu Zhou thought that Fefferman would continue to ask and gossip, but it seemed like Fefferman dropped the topic and they began to talk about something else.

They talked about research on the Riemann zeta function for a while, as well as the conjecture that Lu Zhou was working on. When they were bidding farewell, Professor Fefferman suddenly said something to Lu Zhou.

“Wait a second.”

Lu Zhou stopped and looked back.

“What’s wrong?”

Professor Fefferman smiled and raised the glass in his hand.

“Congratulations for adding another medal to your collection.”

Lu Zhou: “Thank you.”

“Also, a piece of advice.” Professor Fefferman patted Lu Zhou’s shoulder and smiled as he said, “Remember, never have any regrets.

“You only get one chance at life, we all worry too much.

“The older you get, the more you realize that some things can’t be changed.”

...

The banquet came to an end.

Because there were so many friends at the banquet, despite Lu Zhou’s increased metabolic capacity, he still got a little tipsy.

However, he was doing a lot better than other people.

Nearby, Krugman and Albert were completely wasted. In the end, the waiter asked them to rest in the hotel lounge instead.

People gave those two strange looks as they wondered why an economist and physicist were getting along so well.

After Lu Zhou washed his face in the bathroom to freshen up, he took the elevator upstairs.

Lu Zhou stopped in front of his room and looked back at Wang Peng as he spoke in a serious manner.

“Unless there is something serious, don’t bother me.”

“Okay.”

Lu Zhou nodded and was about to close the door. However, he opened the door and spoke to Wang Peng.

“Scratch that, even if it’s important, call me first.”

Wang Peng: “... Okay.”

“Also, if you hear any noises, don’t worry about me, I’m fine.”

It seemed like Wang Peng had misinterpreted Lu Zhou’s words. He said, “Don’t worry, I won’t interrupt your personal life... It’s good to have some fun sometimes.”

Lu Zhou: “...?”

Lu Zhou closed his door and lay down on his bed. He told Xiao Ai to pay attention to the security cameras, then went inside the system space.

Lu Zhou stood inside the pure white system space as he walked toward the holographic screen. He reached out and opened his information screen.

The purple-cloud looking object was still sitting inside his inventory.

It was surrounded by strings of smoke, similar to octopus tentacles.

“If I’m correct... This shouldn’t be used in the real world, it should be used in the system space.”

Lu Zhou stared at the purple object.

Suddenly, he reached out and gently touched the surface of the sphere.

This time, it was different than when he was in the conference hall.

He didn’t feel his fingertips being shocked. Instead, it was like his finger was immersed in hot water; he felt uncontrollably warm.

Lu Zhou suddenly realized something, and he reached out and exited his inventory.

“It’s not just pain, but also temperature...”

“It looks like this is something that exists in my consciousness.

“And for some reason, I feel different things based on the environment around me.

“Maybe it’s some kind of protection mechanism?”

Lu Zhou wanted to change his environment by putting on some music and testing his hypothesis.

However, he realized there was no need for that.

After all, the key to unlocking the truth was right in front of him. He just had to use the key to open the box.

“... Okay, let me see what kind of secrets are inside you.”

Lu Zhou reached out again and firmly grasped the purple sphere floating in the inventory.

He felt a wave of warmth spreading throughout his body.

Lu Zhou tried to take this thing out of the inventory but something unexpected happened.

The tentacles wrapped around the purple sphere suddenly exploded, wrapping around his fingers.

Lu Zhou wanted to let go but the tentacles wrapped around his arms soon covered his entire body in a thick gel-like substance...

1020 Memory From the Void

Honestly speaking, Lu Zhou felt like he was on a roller coaster.

It was like the roller coaster was at its highest point, about to fall downward.

Lu Zhou floated in the endless darkness for a long time. Suddenly, he felt a sensation of gravity and saw a faint light source.

He gradually approached the light source.

He was able to touch the light source.

Lu Zhou was wondering what the system was trying to tell him when he was suddenly pulled toward the light source.

Suddenly, everything became clear.

Touch, smell, taste...

All of his senses were turned to 11.

The strong sense of wind made Lu Zhou squint, and he desperately tried to open his eyes...

He was shocked by what he saw.

“Where is this?!”

Every inch of Lu Zhou’s body was shocked, he had no idea where he was.

This was a strange place.

An endless land, a concrete jungle.

The minimalist black towers looked evil, every inch of the ground was covered in metal skyscrapers, and the streets were straight as a ruler.

From the outside, this looked like a city.

However, Lu Zhou couldn’t sense a single sign of life out here.

It seemed like no one had ever lived here before.

If he had to live here, he would go insane in a week.

There was only one reason.

This place was like a grave.

It was like the skyscrapers were individual tombstones.

For some reason, this reminded Lu Zhou of the novel “Foundation” by Asimov. The vast majority of people lived underground and worked in cubicles, the surface was covered in industrial facilities, and the Earth was no longer a planet, but rather a giant factory...

It wasn't clear if Asimov's world was as minimalistic and structured, but the scene in front of Lu Zhou looked like something out of an apocalypse movie...

Lu Zhou didn't have a lot of time to think.

The gravitational force dragging him from the sky threw him on the surface.

Lu Zhou closed his eyes and prepared himself to be squashed.

However, a gentle force caused him to decelerate as he reached the ground.

Lu Zhou's pupils expanded as he spoke with excitement.

“Anti-gravity?”

“Wait, no... This is not reality, what am I saying.”

This was the world of his consciousness.

Even though Lu Zhou didn't know why the system was doing this, that didn't change the fact that his real body was on a soft bed at the Corinthia Hotel in St. Petersburg.

Therefore, nothing here was real.

It was like those VR games in science fiction movies. A VR game that followed the law of physics would feel weird.

His feet finally touched the ground.

Lu Zhou calmed down a little and looked around him.

This was the first time he really felt the scale of this man-made object.

He didn't know what material the buildings were made of; they were reflective and smooth, without a single trace of flaw.

“What a strange design...”

Lu Zhou reached out and touched the black walls, and he suddenly looked shocked.

Even though he shouldn't judge a material just by the feeling of touch alone, his intuition told him that this level of polish was impossible to achieve with modern industrial technology.

This technology was centuries ahead of the current technology.

Of course, that wasn't the most shocking part.

Inside a gravitational environment, this metal structure was able to keep its shape, even though it extended several kilometers into the sky... This kind of engineering structure would never be able to exist on Earth.

Now Lu Zhou began to feel like maybe this wasn't entirely in his consciousness. Maybe this was a real place.

After all, the thing in his inventory was called "Void Memory", not a "Void Game" or "Void Movie". Even though the system sometimes screwed with him, the system never manipulated him...

His hands glided on the smooth mirror-like surface. Suddenly, it seemed like he had touched an invisible switch as a large metal wall soon moved, giving way to a passageway.

Lu Zhou paused for a second.

He then remembered that none of this would hurt his physical body, so he took a deep breath and bravely walked in.

The building was spacious.

Black metal stripes in the shape of a blade were connected from the ceiling to the floor.

There were flashing blue dots shining on the metal blade strips.

That was the only source of light in this dark building.

The scene in front of him reminded him of a computer server, and suddenly, a thought appeared in his mind.

Maybe...

This building is a huge computer, filled with chips.

Maybe this “city” is actually an integrated circuit with countless processors, a “planet” computer...

When he was flying out of the sky, he couldn’t see the boundary of the city.

“... I can’t imagine what kind of data would take this big of a computer to process.”

Lu Zhou carefully walked through the rows of blades.

Soon after, he walked into the central room of the building.

This circular room had a much lower ceiling than the entrance, only a few meters high. Sitting in the middle of the room was a shining blue pool of water.

Lu Zhou walked up and looked down, and he saw that the blue light was projected from under the pool.

A wave of smoke spilled out from the edge of the pool. He could tell the pool was very shallow, but the deep layer of mist gave him a chilling feeling.

His intuition told him that the pool might be filled with extremely low-temperature liquid helium.

As for its use...

It was probably used to cool down the thousands of “blades” in the building.

Lu Zhou stood around the edge of the pool and walked around. He wanted to take notice of the engineering design when he suddenly noticed something under the pool.

“... Is there something hidden underneath?”

Lu Zhou frowned and crouched down.

He saw cubes sitting in the pool.

Suddenly, he had a crazy thought.

Should I grab one?

His curiosity got the better of him.

This is all in my head.

Even if it hurts, it won't affect my real body.

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and made up his mind. He used all of his courage and placed his hands in the chilling liquid helium.

The second his hand touched the liquid.

It was like the pool of water came to life, it began to move wildly.

"This is a super liquid!"

The instantaneously vaporized liquid helium formed a vapor layer due to the Leidenfrost effect, protecting him from the cold.

However, this effect didn't last for long.

Lu Zhou used all of his energy to endure the freezing pain as he reached out and took a cube from the pool.

"Ouch!!!"

The cube was out of the liquid.

Lu Zhou sat down on the ground.

He looked at the rumbling water and the cube in his frozen hand.

Using the faint light from the ceiling, he could barely see that the cube was gold-colored with a smooth, mirror-like surface.

He could hear a buzzing sound from the cube.

Lu Zhou finally remembered where he had seen this thing before.

However, last time, it wasn't gold, it was black...

He suddenly felt a huge sensation of gravitational force.

It felt like everything around him was being sucked into a black hole...

“Is it time to leave?”

The gold cube shattered into a million pieces as his body was sucked away by the abyss.

1021 Blood

Lu Zhou opened his eyes violently.

He bounced up from his bed, his chest was thumping, and he was breathing heavily.

He suddenly realized that his clothes were soaked in sweat.

Lu Zhou rubbed his forehead and got out of bed. He went to the fridge, grabbed a bottle of water, and took a sip, trying to calm himself down.

What happened was entirely in his mind.

But perhaps it was too realistic, the memory was burned into his mind.

It was almost like...

He walked to the floor-to-ceiling windows and stared at the night scene. He stood there until the bottle of mineral water in his hand didn't feel cold anymore. He turned around and muttered to himself.

“It's like...

“It's like a nightmare.”

He went to the bathroom and took a shower.

Lu Zhou put on some new clothes and sat down at his computer desk.

He returned to the system space and made sure that the pure white system space hadn't changed because of the “Void Memory a”.

However, the purple sample inside his inventory had disappeared.

Like it had never even existed.

Lu Zhou snapped back to reality and opened a document. He typed down some lines of words.

[What were those black buildings?

[If it is a computer, who does it belong to?

[What is it calculating?]

In addition, those golden cubes soaked at the bottom of the pool were the same thing as his “Debris No.2”.

He wasn't in a hurry. After he returned to Jin Ling, he would use his newfound knowledge to research the Debris No.2.

Lu Zhou contemplated for a second before setting a password for the document.

Even if someone read about his ridiculous dream, nothing would happen.

But it was better to be safe.

...

The next day.

Vera's 45-minute report began, and the venue was set to be at the lecture hall 7.

The lecture hall was quite lively.

A lot of people were curious about this female Fields Medalist.

After all, even though there were plenty of female physicists and chemists, there weren't a lot of female mathematicians.

Especially outstanding female mathematicians.

Not to mention that Vera was both talented on the inside and outside.

Even scholars that weren't in the field of analytic number theory decided to attend the report.

Lu Zhou, who arrived at the venue ten minutes in advance, almost couldn't find a seat. Schultz, who was sitting in the middle of the lecture hall, waved at him.

"I was saving this seat for my friend Akshay, but he's attending another report instead."

Lu Zhou: "Thank you."

Schultz smiled.

"You're welcome."

Lu Zhou yawned as he grabbed the thesis sitting in front of him. He casually flipped through the pages.

He didn't sleep well last night.

His brain was a mess, and he couldn't stop thinking about the metal city, the black buildings, the metal blades, the liquid helium...

Schultz: "You didn't sleep well?"

Lu Zhou: "Yeah."

Schultz: "All nighter?"

"Sort of," Lu Zhou paused for a second and said, "I had a long nightmare."

Schultz curiously asked, "What did you dream about?"

Lu Zhou: "... About the future."

Schultz frowned and asked, "Are you sure it was a nightmare?"

Lu Zhou: "I think so... I'm not sure if it's the future of humanity... I mean, I'm not sure whether or not I've seen it in science fiction movies before. It had an apocalyptic vibe."

"Like 'I am legend'?"

“Haha, kind of, but that’s an old movie.”

Schultz shrugged and jokingly said, “That’s kind of sad, the greatest scientist of this century has a pessimistic view about the future. Looks like I should consider buying some insurance.”

Lu Zhou shook his head and smiled.

“Hey, that’s not funny.”

Schultz smiled and said, “But you’re laughing?”

Lu Zhou: “I’m laughing because the first thing you thought of is to buy insurance... Who’s going to insure your insurer?”

Schultz rubbed his chin and thought.

“That is a problem.”

While the two were talking, the report began.

Vera stood on stage, and Lu Zhou felt like she didn’t look too well.

However, he could ask about that after the report.

Now that the report had begun, he should focus on the academic side.

This was out of respect for the presenter.

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and focused his attention on the thesis in his hand.

Because he had been so busy recently, he didn’t have time to read the report thesis.

However, that didn’t really matter.

He could comprehend most of the concepts just by glancing through them.

“Supplement to the hyperelliptic curve analysis method?” Lu Zhou said after reading the abstract. He raised his eyebrows with interest. “That is interesting.”

Basically, Vera built on the foundation of the hyperelliptic curve analysis method. However, she used a more sophisticated method to introduce the Plancherel formula to the Heisenberg group. This made the hyperelliptic curve analysis method more applicable to connected one-dimensional complex manifolds on Riemann surfaces.

It was difficult to explain this in layman's terms. But in short, this was a novel idea that caught the attention of Lu Zhou and the audience.

It even inspired Lu Zhou so much that Lu Zhou had the impulse to go back to his hotel immediately and go on a retreat.

Of course, that was just a thought.

He wouldn't act on his impulse like that.

Not to mention that Vera was still presenting.

She finally had the chance to give a talk to the entire mathematics community. If her mentor had suddenly left in the middle of her talk, she might start crying on stage...

Schultz listened to Vera's report. With his arms folded, he suddenly sighed.

"Honestly, I'm quite jealous of you."

Without turning his head, Lu Zhou spoke.

"... Jealous of what?"

"Of you having a smart and obedient student. Whenever you come up with a new theory, she's there to help you perfect it."

Lu Zhou smiled.

However, something suddenly happened.

Vera suddenly began coughing violently on stage.

"... Sorry."

Vera covered her mouth and was about to continue her report. However, when she tried to speak, she began coughing again.

Vera began to sweat, her hand leaned on the whiteboard, and her face turned pale.

A staff member immediately went on stage.

“Miss Pulyuy, let’s stop the report for now, if you don’t feel well—”

“No, let me finish writing!”

She clenched her fists as a flash of confusion appeared in her eyes. However, the look of confusion was soon replaced by courage and determination.

A year ago, when she first started to get sick, she knew she didn’t have much time.

She came all this way...

The staff member hesitated for a bit and retreated.

Vera looked at the whiteboard.

Her mind had never been clearer.

She clenched her teeth and began writing on the whiteboard.

Because of her pain and anxiety, the numbers and symbols on the whiteboard began to look distorted, but the flow of thoughts in her mind hadn’t stopped.

She wrote down all of her thoughts on the whiteboard, including those that weren’t written in the thesis.

It seemed like time and space had disappeared, so did the pain in her chest.

Apparently, when a person reached their physical limit, the body would allocate all resources to the brain.

However, she didn’t have time to think about this.

She didn’t do this for the mathematics community, or her mentor...

This might be her last report...

But...

She was going to do her best!

Finally, she finished writing down the last line of equations.

She took half a step back and faintly smiled.

Even though she hadn't solved the maze.

At least...

This might be of help to other people.

Especially Lu Zhou.

Suddenly, she began to lose consciousness.

She leaned against the whiteboard but her sleeve left a blood mark on the whiteboard.

Blood!

There was an uproar and commotion in the lecture hall.

Sh*t...

Vera's heart dropped when she saw the red marks.

I've survived for so long, I can't believe this is happening today...

This is both the worst and best day of my life.

Her legs gradually lost their strength.

Before she lost consciousness, she saw a figure rushing toward her as she collapsed to the ground.

She finally realized that...

She had no regrets.

Chapter 1022 Trash Can

St. Petersburg hospital.

Ward entrance.

A skinny elderly man covered his face while sobbing silently.

“This is all my fault, I shouldn’t have voted, if it weren’t for the Fields Medal... If it weren’t for the Fields Medal... we wouldn’t have lost the kind, intelligent, beautiful Vera.”

“Calm down.” Professor Fefferman patted the old man and sighed. He was also in pain, but he said, “Think about it from another perspective, if we didn’t give her this award, we might have never gotten another opportunity to give her this honor. You should be glad you voted for her.”

“I guess that’s right...”

The atmosphere outside the ward was depressing.

The atmosphere in the ward was also full of sadness.

Lu Zhou sat on the stool by the bed in which Vera lay unconscious. He stayed silent for a long time.

After a while, the doctor broke the silence.

“Sir, visiting hours is over.”

Lu Zhou looked at the doctor and spoke in a calm tone.

“Can you tell me what’s wrong with her?”

Doctor: “Are you her relative?”

Lu Zhou shook his head.

Doctor: “Then I’m afraid I’m not allowed to disclose the patient’s information to you. We have contacted her immediate family, they will be here soon.”

Lu Zhou nodded.

He took a final look at Vera’s pale face and spoke.

"I will take care of you.

"Trust me.

"I don't know if you can hear me... but please don't give up."

Lu Zhou was speaking in Chinese, so the doctor didn't understand him. The doctor spoke again.

"Sir?"

"... Nothing."

Lu Zhou stood up from his stool and left the ward.

It didn't matter if the doctor refused to tell him Vera's condition, he had his own way of finding out things.

That was easy for him.

As for the medical costs, he had more money than he knew what to do with. He was willing to spend any amount it took.

As for her medical information privacy...

That was a right only conscious people had.

If she really cared about such trivial matters, Lu Zhou could just apologize when she woke up.

...

Professor Fefferman saw Lu Zhou come out of the ward. He immediately stood up and asked, "How is Miss Pulyuy doing?"

Lu Zhou: "She's still in a coma... it's not looking good."

"Oh my, this is..." Professor Fefferman sighed. He took off his glasses and wiped them. He didn't know what to say.

The old professor sitting next to him suddenly stood up and grabbed Lu Zhou's hand.

“Please tell the doctor to cure her, no matter what disease she has! If this is about money... I can take it from my pension. If something happens to her, it will be a great loss to the mathematics world... please!”

Lu Zhou nodded toward the old professor and looked confidently at him.

“Don’t worry.

“I know what to do.”

Lu Zhou and Wang Peng began walking toward the stairs.

When he reached the stairs, he heard someone shout.

It seemed like the old professor, Shigefumi Mori, was arguing with someone.

“You can’t do this, her life doesn’t only belong to her, her knowledge—

“I don’t care whether it’s the Fields Medal or the Nobel Prize, if she’s so important to you guys, why don’t you pay for the treatment!”

Standing across from Shigefumi Mori was a middle-aged man around six feet two inches tall.

He had a beer belly and a scruffy beard, indicating his poor lifestyle. His brown leather jacket and stained jeans looked like he just got off a motorcycle.

Standing in front of this huge man, Shigefumi Mori felt even smaller.

He tried to appease the grumpy man.

“We will definitely contribute some—”

The tall man interrupted him and said, “Accept the reality, you’ve read the diagnosis, she can’t be saved!”

Suddenly, a voice came from behind.

“Who said that?”

The burly man turned his head and squinted at the young man.

“Who are you? Mind your own business.”

Lu Zhou walked up and looked at the document on the table.

Iric... Pulyuy.

That's probably the man's name.

Judging by his name, he was Vera's relative. However, his tall and large figure was the complete opposite of Vera's slim figure.

Lu Zhou looked at the first few lines of the document.

[Consent form to forgo treatment...]

Lu Zhou frowned and looked at the man towering above him.

"You plan on forgoing treatment? What gives you the right to do that?"

"I'm her father, I brought her to this world, of course I have this right!" Iric lifted his chin and said, "I'm not going to let her suffer, I want to end her pain."

Shigefumi Mori said, "You don't have to pay anything. Miss Pulyuy has a sizable amount in her savings. The Fields Medal prize also has an award of 15 thousand Canadian dollars, which can be used for her treatment. We can also start a fundraiser—"

Suddenly, the man squinted.

A flash of greed appeared in his eyes.

"She has savings?"

"Which bank?"

Lu Zhou noticed the greed in the man's eyes, and he suddenly realized what was going on.

This was why Vera was struggling financially when she was at Princeton, even though she had a good salary.

He finally realized why she never talked about her family, never even mentioning her middle name...

Even though Lu Zhou knew that anger would only make the situation worse, he couldn't help it.

"F*cking pathetic..."

Everything froze.

The man looked at him with a dangerous look.

"What did you say, kid? Say it again."

"I said you're pathetic." Lu Zhou stared at the man and said, "I would be ashamed to have a father like you. You bring shame to the Pulyuy name."

Iric's face turned red, like he was about to explode.

He cracked his knuckles and clenched his fists. He took a step toward Lu Zhou as a nurse came up and tried to persuade him.

"Do you want to die!

"You're nothing more than a tiny bug, I can squash you with one hand!"

Lu Zhou suddenly spoke.

"Sound fun, how about... you try me?"

Iric was faced with a challenge.

Iric knew he wouldn't win a debate with Lu Zhou, so he threw a fist toward Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou didn't have the slightest fear on his face. He didn't even try to dodge the punch.

The punch was quite fast, he might not have been able to dodge it.

But it was no match for his professional bodyguard...

When Iric saw his fist getting closer and closer to Lu Zhou's stinky face, he had a malevolent smile.

Someone dares to call me pathetic?

No one in the town of Nosovka would dare to say such things to me.

I swear I'm going to break this guy's jaw.

However, when his fist was getting close to Lu Zhou's face, a huge wave of force hit his elbow joint.

He heard a click, then felt a blow to his abdomen. He flew across the floor.

Duang!

His body crashed into a trash can.

A security guard heard the nurse's scream.

Wang Peng stretched his wrist and looked at the man lying on the ground. He spoke in fluent Russian.

"There's no need to throw hands."

Even though Lu Zhou was the one that provoked Iric...

Wang Peng didn't care.

Iric couldn't feel his right hand. He got up and shouted, "You're finished! How dare you hit me! I'm going to end you! Ouch—"

It seemed like Wang Peng was being merciful.

If Wang Peng had struck his throat or kneecaps instead of kicking him in the belly, Iric would be in the emergency room by now.

Lu Zhou ignored the man screaming on the ground. He picked up the treatment consent form and tore it to pieces.

He was about to throw it in a trash can when he caught a glimpse of a piece of paper that fell to the ground.

It looked like it fell out of the chubby man's pocket.

By the looks of it, it seemed like a medical certificate.

The security guards had surrounded the scene. People from the Federal Security Service had also arrived, and they were talking to Wang Peng.

Lu Zhou picked up the piece of paper that fell out of Iric's pocket.

When he read the paper, his heart dropped to his stomach.

Lung cancer.

Stage 4.

Chapter 1023 I'll Find A Way

Lu Zhou was standing in the pure white system space, staring at his inventory, quietly thinking about something.

After he read Vera's diagnosis an hour ago, he went into the system space. Even though he didn't know why he came here, his intuition told him that this was the only place to save her.

Stage 4 cancer...

From what Lu Zhou could tell, other than a misdiagnosis, there was no cure for this.

But he knew that cancer cells wouldn't be a problem for an advanced civilization with high biotechnology.

However, the situation wasn't as optimistic as he had thought.

Nitrogen shield?

That is no use.

Energy Medicine?

She needs rest, not some steroids.

There are some memory pills left...

But those are obviously no use.

Easter egg?

Lu Zhou saw the colorful Easter egg lying in the inventory and nearly chuckled.

This is the least useful thing I've ever gotten from the system...

Okay, one of the least useful.

Lu Zhou closed his inventory and looked at his characteristic panel.

Normally speaking, the survival time for patients with stage 4 cancer was around 3-12 months.

Of course, if the patient was in good health and cooperated with treatment, they would be able to survive longer. There were cases of patients with advanced lung cancer, surviving for more than seven years.

However, that was only seven years.

And the process of chemotherapy throughout the seven years was excruciating.

If that was the case, maybe her father was right.

It would be better to end the suffering.

However, her father had ulterior motives behind all this...

Lu Zhou closed his inventory, and his consciousness returned to the real world.

He stared at his hotel room ceiling and took a deep breath as he tightly clenched his fists.

I am a man of my word.

Even if the system can't help me...

I will save her!

...

Lu Zhou opened the door, walking out of his room.

He saw Wang Peng in the corridor, who had already returned from the hospital. He spoke.

“How serious is it?”

Wang Peng: “You’re talking about?”

Lu Zhou: “The fight.”

Wang Peng smiled and said, “No big deal.”

Lu Zhou: “What about Iric?”

Wang Peng: “He was warned by the Federal Security Service and left. He said he is going to sue you, but I think he’s just bluffing.”

Looks like everything is fine then.

Lu Zhou nodded and reached out his hand.

“Lend me your phone.”

Wang Peng knew what Lu Zhou wanted. From his inner jacket pocket, he took out the phone Maksim gave Lu Zhou when Lu Zhou first arrived in Russia.

Lu Zhou pressed a speed dial button on the phone.

The phone was soon connected.

“You’re already calling me? What’s wrong?”

Lu Zhou: “I need a favor.”

Maksim: “With the hospital?”

Lu Zhou: “... How did you know?”

Maksim: “Of course, we’ve already arranged her to be transferred to the best hospital in Moscow. She will be transferred as soon as her condition stabilizes.”

This was the least they could do in return for Lu Zhou helping them with the fusion power station.

Apparently, the Federal Security Service investigated the Russian power grid system and found malicious code that was implanted a long time ago.

Regardless, it was nice of Maksim to return the favor.

Lu Zhou paused for a second and said, "Since you're so happy to help, can you do something else for me?"

Moscow frowned and said, "What do you need... Even the best hospital in Moscow can only slow down her condition and reduce her pain. A complete recovery is impossible even if you put her in the best hospital in the world."

If this were stage 2, there would still be hope.

But stage 4...

This was a medical problem faced by the entire global medical community, it couldn't be solved by one single hospital.

"Don't worry, I'm not asking you to cure her." Lu Zhou sighed and said, "After her condition stabilizes, transfer her to Beijing."

Maksim: "Beijing?"

Lu Zhou nodded.

"Yeah, I'll find a way."

...

The conference continued as scheduled.

But there was a dull atmosphere in the venue.

Especially after Vera's report in the morning, most of the listeners couldn't concentrate on the report. People were discussing the matter during lunch time at the buffet.

"Do you know what she has?"

“Apparently, it’s leukemia.”

“Leukemia? Vomiting blood? I heard it’s gastric cancer... terminal cancer!”

“Really?”

“Not sure, just a rumor. Also, apparently, Shigefumi Mori and her father got into a fight because her father wanted to forgo treatment and take the 15,000 prize money for himself.”

“Jesus, all of this for just 15,000 Canadian dollars... Is he even a father? I’m sure Vera’s salary at Princeton is more than a hundred thousand USD a year.”

“You can never underestimate the greediness of a Russian alcoholic. Perhaps he thinks that his daughter’s savings will belong to him.”

“Hey, not all Russians are greedy.”

“Sorry, I apologize...”

“ ... ”

Lu Zhou quietly ate his lunch, ignoring the discussion around him.

Schultz sat across from him. Schultz wanted to give him a few words of comfort, but after seeing how Lu Zhou was in deep thought, he decided against talking and quietly ate his lunch.

When Lu Zhou nearly finished eating, Schultz suddenly spoke.

“The news is on MathOverflow... I saw a picture posted by someone. You fought someone at the hospital?”

Lu Zhou: “My driver was the one fighting, the other guy attacked first.”

Schultz: “You should explain yourself to them then.”

“There’s nothing to explain.” Lu Zhou wiped his mouth with a napkin and threw the napkin into a trash can. He stood up and said, “I don’t have time to deal with those sheep.”

Cancer had plagued human civilization for thousands of years, and it was far more difficult than solving a mathematics problem.

However, Lu Zhou had two options.

Lu Zhou didn't stay at the cafeteria for too long. He went straight to the temporary office of the International Mathematical Union. The Secretary-General of the organization committee went to eat lunch, but his assistant was here.

The assistant saw that Lu Zhou was knocking on the door. He put down his utensils and wiped his mouth.

"Dear Professor Lu, how can I help you?"

"It's fine, you can continue eating, I'm just here to ask a question," Lu Zhou said. "Is the whiteboard from lecture hall 7 still here?"

The assistant quickly responded.

"It's here... but the lecture hall was suspended after the incident."

Lu Zhou: "Can I look at it?"

The assistant was a little troubled.

"The Secretary-General wants to close off the lecture hall, wait for the conference to be over, and communicate with the hotel on the incident... If you want to see the content on the whiteboard, the report is recorded, you can—"

Lu Zhou spoke again, and this time, he spoke in a demanding tone.

"Take me to see it, I'll explain to the Secretary-General."

The assistant hesitated for a bit before nodding.

"Oh... okay."

Chapter 1024 The Question of the Century

The door opened with a creaking sound.

The silent atmosphere of the lecture hall was chilling.

The venue seemed to have captured the chaos from yesterday. Papers were randomly scattered on the ground, even the chair he knocked over was still lying on the floor.

Lu Zhou thought back to yesterday, the scene that made his heart drop...

Seeing how Lu Zhou was staring blankly at the lecture hall, the assistant didn't want to disturb him. However, the assistant remembered his half-finished lunch, so he took a deep breath and said, "If you want to stay here for longer, make sure to close the door later. Do you want to key?"

"Sure."

Lu Zhou took the key and nodded. He said, "I'll return it to Professor Helge Holden, you can go."

Professor Helge Holden was the Secretary-General of the International Mathematical Union and one of the main people in charge of the conference organization committee. He was responsible for venue scheduling and handling emergency situations.

The assistant was relieved to hear that Lu Zhou would speak to Helge Holden himself. Without saying anything, the assistant turned around and left.

The atmosphere in the lecture hall made Lu Zhou feel depressed.

Especially the dried bloodstains on the whiteboard.

He didn't want to stay here for one second longer.

After the assistant left, Lu Zhou walked into the lecture hall and turned on the lights. He closed the door and walked toward the stage.

It pained him to see the dried bloodstains on the whiteboard.

However, what hurt him the most was the lines of equations on the whiteboard.

As an expert mathematician, he was well aware of the effort and hard work necessary to create these research results. This would have taken him at least a couple of weeks to do.

Lu Zhou had no idea how Vera was able to survive the past year with a disease dragging her down.

However, after seeing these equations, Lu Zhou finally realized why she was hiding from him.

Maybe when she found out about her condition, she was already incurable. Otherwise, there was no reason for her to hide this...

After all, the early symptoms of cancer were similar to many common diseases. Not to mention she wasn't in good physical health, it was difficult to detect the cancer from ordinary medical examinations.

And once the symptoms appeared...

It was too late.

That was the cause of death for 70% of cancer patients.

But...

"... Why does it have to be her?"

Is this the curse of winning the Fields Medal?

Lu Zhou stared at the calculations on the whiteboard and took a deep breath. His eyes were filled with determination.

The probability of receiving a cancer-curing drug from the system for solving Riemann's hypothesis was too low. Instead, maybe solving Riemann's hypothesis would improve the patient's mood and somehow destroy the cancer cells.

Lu Zhou never relied on solving problems using the system mission rewards.

The true value of the high tech system wasn't in the rewards, but the missions itself!

According to the system's instructions, after he finished his current task, he had the option to continue working on the mission chain or to choose three new random missions. And these random missions were often related to problems he was currently facing.

Basically, these missions were like a scientific research guidance tool. It analyzed Lu Zhou's social status, resources, and environment, giving him missions that had the highest rate of return.

There was a 90% chance for a cancer-related mission to appear.

Even though he was lacking in biological knowledge, scientific research wasn't done by one man alone. The Institute for Advanced Study could help him.

Not to mention, he had a ton of money.

Money itself was also a superpower.

Especially in the hands of a scientist that knew how to spend money.

Taking everything into account, he had pretty good odds.

If all of this failed...

Then that meant this research project was beyond the capabilities of current human technologies.

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and tried to concentrate.

"Your work is unfinished.

"I'll finish it for you..."

Lu Zhou had completely calmed down; he had entered a flow state.

This was one of the few times he could truly devote himself to one problem.

He first had this feeling when he attended a Princeton academic conference several years ago.

Back then, he had to rely on the system to achieve this kind of flow state, but now, all it took was 10 seconds of meditation.

Suddenly, the numbers and characters on the whiteboard seemed to have come to life. The equations were like notes on a music sheet, forming a symphony of mathematics.

There was no audience.

There wasn't even a musician.

However, Lu Zhou could clearly hear the music in his ears. It felt like he had traveled back in time, back to that classroom in Princeton.

"I see..."

Lu Zhou looked at the calculations on the whiteboard and nodded silently.

The disorderly written equations on the whiteboard was part of Vera's unpublished and unfinished research.

Most of the objects on the whiteboard were purely concepts and ideas, an image, an equation. It needed the rigor of mathematics to fully convey the concept to an audience...

However, Vera was Lu Zhou's student, so he was able to decrypt the code.

Not to mention, he was in a flow state.

"... The expansion of $[\zeta(z)]^{-1/2}[\zeta(z)]^{-1/2} = \sum n a_n n^{-z}$ becomes truncated, introducing the series $\varphi(z) = \sum n \beta_n n^{-z}$, taking the modulate integrand of the formula.

"No wonder my research was in a bottleneck. My attention was fixated on complicated mathematical tools like the hyperelliptic curve analysis method and trying to introduce differentiable manifolds into complex planes. I ignored the fundamentals."

No wonder Chen Yang, who he poached from the Yan University mathematics center, was able to greatly improve Lu Zhou's thesis.

Lu Zhou didn't realize this, but he had committed one of the biggest crimes in mathematics. Which was the "proof is trivial" crime. This was akin to building a skyscraper without having the right foundation.

"I made a huge mistake. If I didn't stop lecturing, I would have never made this mistake... But now is not the time to make excuses."

“Also, Vera, your ideas are novel, but there are some problems in the details. Like when you selected the value of N in Equation 8, and when you introduced the differential manifold into the complex plane abstract space.

“I would do this instead...”

There were plenty of whiteboards in the lecture hall.

Lu Zhou walked in front of an empty whiteboard and picked up a pen. He began transferring his thoughts onto the whiteboard.

It was as if time and space were frozen.

Nothing else in the world mattered.

This was the calm before the storm.

And a big storm was brewing...

Lu Zhou stood in this lecture hall for a long time, for more than an hour.

If he got hungry, he still had supplements he could take in the system space.

If he got tired, he could take some Energy Medicine.

He had been stuck in this maze for too long; this was the closest he had ever gotten to escaping.

If he gave up now...

Who knew when he would be able to come this close again.

Time quickly passed by. Lu Zhou had no idea how many days it had been. His attention was fully focused on the half a dozen fully-filled whiteboards.

Finally, Lu Zhou saw a trace of light at the end of the tunnel.

Lu Zhou's pupils expanded and contracted.

He didn't cheer or scream.

He was as calm as a cucumber.

He felt relieved.

“I see...

“No wonder this troubled people for more than a century and a half.

“This isn’t something that can be solved by talent and knowledge alone.”

Who would have thought that the eight-page paper from the Prussian Academy of Sciences would have plagued so many great scholars.

The countless mathematical propositions that assumed Riemann’s hypothesis was true, had become theorems.

Today, more than 150 years later, someone finally answered Riemann’s question.

Yes, Professor Riemann was correct.

Lu Zhou closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

Then, he looked at the security camera in the corner of the lecture hall and spoke.

“Xiao Ai.

“Tidy up the things on the whiteboard.

“Upload it to arXiv.”

He knew that Xiao Ai had been silently watching him over the past few days.

He knew that the reason the lecture hall door hadn’t been opened was thanks to Xiao Ai. Xiao Ai was able to create fake emails and divert the security guards.

As expected, a series of text bubbles appeared on his phone.

[Okay! (๑`▯´๑) ๑✧]

[Congratulations, Master!]

After that, Lu Zhou took a bottle of Energy Medicine from the system space and took a sip.

He hadn't slept in three days, and he was in no hurry to sleep.

He sat on the podium and stared at the eight whiteboards.

He just wanted to sit here and listen to his heart...

Then, he would make his next decision.

Chapter 1025 The ICM Conference

This year's International Congress of Mathematicians was definitely the most luxurious one.

But also, it was the most troublesome one.

No one would have imagined something like this to happen at the 45-minute report.

Moreover, this happened to Vera Pulyuy, the winner of the Fields Medal...

Helge Holden, Secretary-General of the International Mathematical Union, was annoyed at the money-hungry reporters.

"I had no idea something like this would happen... Dammit, why does it have to be her?"

His office door was opened, and Professor Fefferman walked in wearing a coat.

Professor Holden looked up and immediately spoke.

"How is Miss Vera Pulyuy doing?"

Professor Fefferman shook his head and said seriously, "Apparently, she woke up a few times, but the situation is not good. The Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation invited several academician level experts from the best Moscow hospital, but when it comes to cancer... Especially terminal lung

cancer, the diagnosis is nothing more than a death sentence. The Russians plan on transferring Miss Pulyuy to another hospital.”

“To another hospital? To where?”

“Apparently to Beijing.”

“China?” Holden paused for a second and said, “Is there a famous cancer treatment hospital in China? Is this going to be okay?”

“There isn’t a single hospital in the world that can treat terminal lung cancer, my friend.” Professor Fefferman sighed and said, “Even the Americans wouldn’t be able to do it. Therefore, it doesn’t matter where she goes, she’s going to receive the same level of treatment. Thus, it might be better to let her feel comfortable during her final days...”

It would be great if the cancer was detected early. But apparently, Vera was already diagnosed with terminal cancer a year ago when she first discovered it.

This was similar to many patients that suffered from this tragic disease.

However, she didn’t give up over the past year. She still did her work and lived each day with meaning and purpose, and this surprised Fefferman.

Accepting reality was not easy. It wasn’t uncommon to see someone committing suicide after receiving their death sentence.

Fefferman knew that he wouldn’t have been able to survive like Vera when he was younger.

If he knew that he only had a year to live, he might not choose to commit suicide, but he definitely wouldn’t be so optimistic and positive.

No matter how interesting mathematics was, and no matter how passionate he was toward his career, he would try to experience something he had never done before, maybe something illegal...

But she didn’t do that.

Not just that, but the people around her barely noticed any changes about her as she continued to do her job.

He originally thought that she was just a shy and introverted girl.

But now, it seemed like she was much stronger and tenacious than he had thought.

Professor Holden's eyebrows furrowed.

"What does that mean?"

Even though Professor Fefferman knew the history between Vera and Lu Zhou, he obviously wouldn't tell Holden. So he shrugged and spoke.

"Nothing, I just think the view there is nice, she'll feel better staying there. It's not like we can send her back to Ukraine. Her middle-aged, divorced, alcoholic father is not going to take care of her."

Professor Holden thought about her unfortunate family circumstances and sighed.

"If you say so..."

His assistant came in from the outside.

"Professor, the conference is ending in two days, and the Corinthia Hotel asked us how we plan on dealing with the scene at lecture hall seven."

Professor Holden went silent for a while and said, "... Let them handle it."

Actually, this wasn't a criminal case, so there was no need to close off the scene.

The reason for doing this was because they didn't want the gloomy mood of the lecture hall to affect the ongoing International Congress of Mathematicians. They wanted to reduce the damage as much as possible.

Now that the reports were over, it would be better to let the hotel handle it.

The assistant said, "Oh yeah, Professor, do you have the key?"

"Key?" Professor Holden paused for a second and said, "I never carry more than three keys, I think you have the key to lecture hall seven."

The assistant realized something, and he spoke anxiously.

“Five days ago, Professor Lu came to find me, and he asked me to take him to lecture hall seven. After I took him there, he borrowed the key from me and said he would return the key to you later.”

“Professor Lu took the key from you? I don’t remember him giving it back to me.” Professor Holden frowned and stood up as he said, “Wait a second, I’ll go and check it out.”

Even though borrowing the key wasn’t a major issue, he still wanted to know what was going on.

Professor Fefferman saw Professor Holden walk out of the office door, so he quickly followed behind.

“I’ll go as well.”

Professor Fefferman and Professor Holden walked through the corridors and soon arrived at lecture hall seven. Professor Holden knocked on the door but realized the door was unlocked.

After hesitating for a bit, he reached out and opened the door.

The door quietly squeaked, followed by a rush of air.

Obviously, the person sitting inside had been here for a long time.

Professor Holden looked at Lu Zhou, who was sitting on the podium. He suddenly noticed the eight whiteboards on the stage.

Professor Fefferman noticed that as well.

He stared at the whiteboard in disbelief. He glanced at the conclusion line on the last whiteboard and gulped.

“You... proved it?”

“Sort of, even though it wasn’t as easy as Sir Atiyah said it would be, and I’m not sure how many people can understand it, but... I finally solved it, I am sure of it.”

Lu Zhou looked back at Professor Holden and Professor Fefferman, who were completely shocked.

“Also, can you guys bring me a sandwich?”

“Actually, I’m kind of hungry, can you bring two?”

Chapter 1026 Level Nine in Mathematics!

An entire year of research.

Including the preparation and foundation work, it was more than a year’s worth.

This was probably the longest amount of time and energy Lu Zhou spent on a single problem.

In order to find a solution to the zero point distribution, he tried almost every single research method. In the end, he chose a proof based on the idea of critical line convergence and used the hyperelliptic curve analysis method to prove the Quasi Riemann’s hypothesis.

In order to find the critical band line, he tried almost every method he could think of.

Fortunately, it was all worth it.

It wasn’t an exaggeration to claim that this conjecture was worth more than all of his mathematics research combined.

If Riemann’s hypothesis was true, then any odd number greater than 7 could be expressed as the sum of three prime numbers. Anyone that knew a little about number theory would know that this was the weaker form of Goldbach’s conjecture.

This weak conjecture was proven in 2013 by Professor Helfgott, a researcher at the École Normale Supérieure. He used a Fourier analysis method and published his research in one of the top four mathematics journals.

And this was just one of the powers of proving Riemann’s hypothesis.

Almost half of the research in the field of analytic number theory throughout the twentieth century was based on the assumption that Riemann’s hypothesis was true.

This result was proven by H.Von in 1901 under the assumption that Riemann's hypothesis was true.

There were many cases like this.

Therefore, the proof of the Riemann zeta function zero distribution was like dropping a nuclear bomb on the mathematics community.

Even ignoring the thousands of propositions that now became theorems, Riemann's hypothesis still made a huge impact on the mathematics field.

There was only one reason.

Riemann's hypothesis was like a bridge that connected the two mountains—algebra and geometry.

Now, the two mountains were connected.

Unifying algebra and geometry...

This was the ultimate proposition of mathematics, similar to the unified field theory.

Even though mathematics was a diverse field with many branches, scholars had never given up on studying ancient propositions.

Because ancient propositions shined a light on the future of mathematics!

Therefore, in the purest mathematical sense, Riemann's hypothesis was one of the most valuable Millennium Prize Problems. It was far more complex than the Navier–Stokes equations.

They weren't comparable at all...

...

After asking Professor Holden to get some food, Lu Zhou continued to sit on the lecture table. He stared intently at the whiteboards.

After Professor Holden told his assistant to get some food at the cafeteria, he and Professor Fefferman stood there and stared at the whiteboard.

Understanding the content written on the whiteboard wasn't easy, even the first lemma was difficult to understand.

Professor Fefferman was the same. He frowned and began to think.

Lu Zhou didn't pay attention to the two people. He continued to stare at the whiteboard.

The system mission was simple. He had to complete the proof and release it to the public.

This was exactly what he did when he proved Goldbach's conjecture.

Xiao Ai had already finished sorting the thesis and had uploaded it to arXiv. He felt a familiar voice in his heart.

The knot in his heart was finally untied.

He knew this was going to happen.

He knew the system was going to accept his proof.

But after hearing this, he was still relieved.

Finally, he finally climbed this mountain!

He opened his eyes and was inside the pure white system space.

[Congratulations, User, for completing the reward mission!]

[Evaluation: This has sparked the desires of human civilization to conquer the next era, even though the road to the future is long...]

[Requirements: Prove Riemann's hypothesis within three years! (Achieved)]

[Mission rewards: 10,000 general points, two million mathematics experience points. "Legendary" mission card.]

[S Grade Evaluation Reward: 2x general points.]

Lu Zhou's updated characteristic panel was displayed in front of him.

[

- A. Mathematics: Level 9 (-/???)
- B. Physics: Level 7 (113,215/1.2 million)
- C. Biochemistry: Level 6 (10,000/600,000)
- D. Engineering: Level 6 (0/600,000)
- E. Materials science: level 6 (163,000/600,000)
- F. Energy science: level 4 (0/200,000)
- G. Information science: Level 4 (0/200,000)

General points: 24,335

]

His progress bar was instantly filled, and the two million mathematics experience points made it level up from level 8 to level 9. He was only one level away from level 10. Not to mention the 20,000 general points.

What surprised him was that his experience bar and experience points needed to level up had disappeared, replaced by question marks.

However, Lu Zhou didn't care about that. He immediately selected the legendary mission card from his mission panel.

A wave of blue light swept across the information screen.

When Lu Zhou saw his three randomly selected missions, his heart sank to the bottom of his chest.

He took a deep breath and spoke in a trembling tone.

"System, how many general points to... solve cancer?"

There wasn't a response.

Lu Zhou knew this would happen.

None of the missions were related to cancer, which meant the task of solving cancer had far exceeded his abilities. Otherwise, there was no reason the system wouldn't give him a biochemistry mission.

Also, the system required a ton of general points to solve problems that exceeded his level of knowledge. For problems that were two levels higher than his subject level, the system didn't even display the amount of general points required.

Because even if he had the solution from the system, he wouldn't be able to execute the solution.

After all, the general points could only accelerate his scientific research, it didn't give him a complete solution.

It was akin to using general points to compensate for the time he should have spent on research.

The premise of using general points to solve problems was that he should be able to solve the problems without assistance from the system.

When he asked the system about controllable nuclear fusion, the system gave him an astronomical number. That at least gave him hope on solving the problem itself.

But cancer...

From the system's point of view, human civilization hadn't even fully understood pathogens, far from solving cancer. There was no way to complete this research project in a short amount of time.

"... Looks like I can't rely on the missions."

Lu Zhou went silent for a while and closed his system panel.

This was unfortunate.

But he didn't give up.

Knowing whether or not an academic problem could be solved was also important.

If even a high tech system from an advanced civilization declared that cancer couldn't be solved by the current level of technologies...

Lu Zhou knew what to do.

...

After he left the system space, he felt a gush of warmth in his brain, spreading along his spine.

The feeling of upgrading from level 8 to level 9 was ten times stronger than when he went from level 7 to level 8.

However, this feeling didn't make him want to faint. Instead, it gave him a feeling of energy.

It seemed like not only had he obtained more knowledge, but the strength of his brain had also increased.

Of course, he was feeling more and more hungry.

Fortunately, after he exited the system space, Professor Holden's assistant and two hotel staff members walked into the lecture hall.

In addition to the two bacon sandwiches and salad, there was a warm cup of coffee.

Perhaps because of his unkempt face, the hotel staff member kindly brought him a mirror, razor, and wipes.

Unfortunately, Lu Zhou didn't have time to touch those things.

After he quickly devoured the food and coffee...

Professor Holden, who was standing next to him, patiently waited for him to finish drinking the cup of coffee. While Lu Zhou was shaving his beard in the mirror, Holden asked, "Can you... explain it to me?"

Lu Zhou answered concisely, "I can, but not now. I have to meet someone. I have uploaded the paper to arXiv. If you're interested, you can download it and read it."

Professor Holden said, "You've already uploaded the paper?"

“Yes.” Lu Zhou nodded and looked at his watch. “I uploaded it five minutes ago.”

Chapter 1027 Witnessing History

Lu Zhou was right.

Xiao Ai uploaded the thesis around five minutes ago, the same time his system mission prompt appeared.

However, even though the paper was uploaded, it was difficult to read it.

Because during those five minutes...

The arXiv server had crashed!

Normally, this kind of academic website didn't have a large number of visitors. Due to server operating costs, the servers often had a small capacity.

But almost every single mathematician in the world received a notification of the Riemann's hypothesis proof.

It was 9 am in America, even scholars outside of mathematics went to arXiv and began downloading the paper.

The arXiv administrator had no idea what was going on. He thought they were under a DDOS attack.

Then, the server went down.

MathOverflow, a mathematics forum to mathematicians, had completely blown up.

[Proof of Riemann's hypothesis! Did you guys see the paper on arXiv?!]

[See my as*! The website is down!]

[I was fortunate enough to see it... I thought there was a mistake.]

[Jesus, today's not April fools!]

[Has anyone finished reading the thesis? What does it say? Does it prove it?]

[This is beyond my scope of research, but I think Professor Tao is reading the paper right now. He just postponed all of his lectures and meetings for the next week.]

[Wait a second, is Tao at ICM? Did he go to St. Petersburg?]

[He didn't go this year, what a shame.]

Professor Tao wasn't the only person that regretted not going to the conference.

In fact, many scholars that didn't go to this conference due to various reasons felt deeply regretful.

Why does it have to be this year?

Why is this year the year I didn't go?

Professor Lu's 60-minute report was happening in two days, and the report topic happened to be on Riemann's hypothesis.

On the other hand, in the executive lounge at the Corinthia Hotel.

Two famous mathematics professors sat by the window in a low-key manner.

One was Faltings, the other was Deligne.

The two were drinking coffee while talking about the world of mathematics.

"... What happened to Miss Pulyuy is so unfortunate. This is a heavy blow to the entire mathematics community. I wanted to invite her to work with me. I didn't expect something like this to happen."

"Life is cruel... We can only hope she lives out the rest of her days in the best way possible."

Professor Deligne sighed and looked at Faltings as he said, "Speaking of which, you're an old man now, aren't you going to take a break?"

"Not yet, I want to leave behind something before I retire... I understand how Sir Atiyah feels now."

Professor Deligne looked nonchalantly and didn't respond.

There were too many sad things happening at once.

Suddenly, he heard footsteps from the executive lounge entrance.

He saw Professor Fefferman walking over.

Fefferman looked like he just saw a ghost.

Professor Deligne frowned and was about to speak, but Fefferman spoke first.

The second he spoke, everyone froze.

"Riemann's hypothesis was proven."

Everything went silent.

One could hear a pin drop on the ground.

Professor Faltings didn't even raise his head as he said, "Impossible."

Professor Deligne also shrugged and said, "Hilarious joke."

Professor Fefferman knew they would say this, so he said to Deligne, "Your student proved it."

Suddenly, the expressions on the two professors' faces changed drastically.

Especially Professor Faltings. He opened his mouth and looked up.

"... You're talking about Lu Zhou?"

"Yes." Professor Fefferman nodded and said, "He's Deligne's only student researching number theory."

"..."

Professor Faltings and Professor Deligne looked at each other.

Professor Deligne was muddled.

His fingers trembled as he adjusted his glasses. He then stared at Professor Fefferman and asked, "Are you sure he said that?"

Professor Fefferman thought back to the scene at lecture hall 7. He sighed and spoke.

"I'm not sure, but he has already uploaded the thesis to arXiv. You can find it on MathOverflow. The entire mathematics world is talking about this, and researchers have already begun reading his paper..."

Professor Deligne took a deep breath. However, he didn't immediately go on arXiv. Instead, he leaned into his chair and relaxed.

Faltings did the same.

Faltings looked at Deligne and spoke.

"We're witnessing history here."

After a while, Deligne spoke.

"Yeah..."

"This is happening so suddenly."

If Lu Zhou had really proved Riemann's hypothesis, then the proof of number theory theorems would be reduced by half, while the length of number theory textbooks would double.

Of course, assuming Lu Zhou was right.

Chapter 1028 Glory of the Human Mind

St. Petersburg hospital.

A poor girl lay on a white hospital bed; her beautiful blonde hair had lost its color.

However, she slept peacefully.

Lu Zhou was sitting next to the hospital bed. He held a thick book in his hand, reading it quietly.

“Although that eight-page thesis from the Prussian Academy of Sciences in the town of Breslenz completely changed the face of mathematics for the next century and a half, the god of his religion did not grant him immortality.

“The late great mathematician Abel only lived a short life of 39 years and 10 minutes. Passing away in a lakeside town in Italy on July 20, 1866.

“According to his dear friend Dedekin, he was sitting under a tree exploring the world of mathematics the day before he died. He wrote in his memoir—

“When the moment came, he did not show any trace of struggle before his death. Instead, it seemed like he was enjoying the feeling of his soul and body separating. His wife brought bread and wine for him, and he told her: Kiss our child. Recite prayers for him. But he could no longer speak. When he could no longer speak, he looked up at the sky and his wife felt his hand getting colder, until his heart finally stopped...

“For those eccentric geniuses that see the world in unusual ways, the universe is often cruel.

“Weil spent the second half of his life suffering. In 1959, Nash’s speech at Columbia University regarding his proof of Riemann’s hypothesis was the beginning of his schizophrenia. In the seventies, Riemann’s hypothesis was the direct cause for Grothendieck running away from his home...

“... However, precisely because of these sacrifices, we are able to see the universe in unique ways.

“Regardless of whether the person that finally proves it will become immortal, one thing for sure is that history will remember all of the people that passed along the touch. The glory of taking the final crown may only belong to one person, but the glory of the human mind belongs to everyone...”

Suddenly, the girl’s eyelashes twitched.

Lu Zhou noticed this tiny movement. He closed his book and looked at her pale face.

The room suddenly became silent.

The sapphire-like eyes gradually opened, making eye contact with Lu Zhou.

Her cheeks began to blush, and she quickly looked away.

Lu Zhou chuckled and put the book on the bedside table.

He asked, "When did you wake up?"

Vera blushed and said, "You noticed?"

Lu Zhou: "I noticed when I was reading Professor Riemann's story."

"Sorry..."

Lu Zhou looked at Vera and spoke.

"There's no need to apologize."

Vera looked at him and spoke.

"No, I want to apologize for... my report."

Lu Zhou smiled at the sincere girl and spoke in a comforting tone.

"You did nothing wrong, you did a great job. None of the scholars there would have done a better job if they were in your position, even myself."

Genius was a gift to a few people, but courage and perseverance only came from hard work.

Very few people had both.

She should be proud of herself.

The room suddenly became silent.

The only noise was the clock ticking quietly on the wall.

The gentle ticking seemed like a second countdown of a young woman's life.

However, for some reason, Lu Zhou didn't look sad or hurt.

Vera was glad to see this.

Emotions were contagious.

What she was really afraid of wasn't the grim reaper, but the people that cared about her suffering in her final days.

There was no reason to be sad about something that couldn't be changed.

Everyone's life must come to an end, it was just that, for her, that day came earlier than most.

She was grateful for mathematics changing her life. The IMO gold medal gave her an offer from Berkeley, allowing her to escape from her horrible family, giving her the opportunity to meet so many good people...

Including Lu Zhou.

It all started with mathematics, now it was going to end with mathematics.

Everything was coming full circle.

At least she could enjoy some warmth in her last days.

As for the Fields Medal promise, that didn't matter.

"Um..."

Lu Zhou: "Do you need anything?"

Vera took a deep breath and spoke in an apologetic tone.

"... I'm sorry for hiding it from you. When I first got diagnosed, I felt like... my world was collapsing."

Lu Zhou nodded and spoke.

"I understand, but there are some things you shouldn't bear alone."

Vera wanted to say that she didn't want to hurt the people around her.

However, Lu Zhou didn't give her the opportunity to speak.

Because Lu Zhou already knew why she hid this from everyone.

“Okay, that’s enough of that. Also, you don’t have to apologize, let’s talk about something uplifting.”

“... Uplifting?”

“Yeah.” Lu Zhou nodded. He pulled out a stack of papers like a magic trick and said, “The story isn’t done yet. Thanks to a beautiful young lady, all of the dots were connected.

“Finally, this endless exploration came to an end. In fact, everyone crosses the finish line at the same time; the only difference is, everyone experiences unique things.”

Lu Zhou smiled and spoke in a relaxed tone.

“I digress...

“Basically, I proved Riemann’s hypothesis.”

Even though the academic community hadn’t evaluated his thesis, the system had acknowledged his proof, so there shouldn’t be any problems.

The second the words left his mouth, the atmosphere in the medical ward froze.

Her pupils expanded and began to tear up.

Her tiny hands tightly clenched the sheets. She wanted to stand up but was too weak. Her lips trembled as she spoke.

“Really?”

The nurse who was standing nearby glared at Lu Zhou and said, “Sir, please refrain from saying anything that will trigger the patient, otherwise we have to ask you to leave—”

However, Vera didn’t care about the nurse at all. She looked at Lu Zhou with excitement and spoke.

“No, it’s fine, tell me! How did you prove that the curve $\text{Re}(s)=1-c/\ln[|\text{Im}(s)|+2]$ converges to 1 as S approaches infinity! I tried everything I could, but—”

Lu Zhou knew Vera would say this. He raised a hand, gesturing to her to calm down.

“I’ll tell you, but only if you calm down. Otherwise, this kind lady will kick me out of here.”

The nurse smirked proudly and nodded.

Vera calmed down and lay still on her hospital bed. Her eyes were filled with curiosity and excitement.

Lu Zhou cleared his throat and glanced at the thesis in his hand.

“Thanks to your help, I finally figured some things out. The answer to your questions can be found in this paper.”

Vera whispered, “Can you read it to me?”

Lu Zhou: “No.”

Her sapphire-like eyes began to tear up, and she spoke even quieter.

“Then... can I read it?”

Lu Zhou: “No.”

Vera’s eyes widened, and she looked at Lu Zhou in disbelief.

“Why?”

Lu Zhou spoke in a serious tone.

“You have to promise me something first. Then you can read it as much as you want.”

Vera was confused, and she said, “What...?”

Lu Zhou restrained the urge to share his proof and put away his paper.

“Go to Beijing with me.

“I’ll tell you everything there.”

Chapter 1029 Sixty Minutes Is Enough

The mathematics community was going crazy over Riemann's hypothesis. At the Corinthia Hotel, where the ICM conference was held, everyone was talking about this matter.

The ICM conference took a huge blow over what happened in lecture hall 7, but it seemed like Riemann's hypothesis had completely overshadowed everything...

"Did you hear? Riemann's hypothesis was proven!"

"Really? This isn't another impostor, right? How many times have people claimed to have proven Riemann's hypothesis?"

"At least a couple dozen people, or even hundreds... But this time is different! Professor Lu is the one that wrote the paper! Apparently, he was inspired by Vera Pulyuy's 45-minute report, so he completed the last step of the proof! He uploaded the thesis to arXiv yesterday... The entire mathematics world is talking about this, you haven't heard?"

"This is incredible! Riemann's hypothesis... If he is correct, do you think the International Mathematical Union will give him another Fields Medal?"

"There's no doubt that Riemann's hypothesis deserves this honor... But what's the point? If he really proved Riemann's hypothesis, why not just set up an award in his name?"

"I heard his hour-long report is happening this afternoon... No wonder he asked for his report to be scheduled as the last report of the ICM conference."

"Do you think he's going to talk about the proof in his report?"

"I don't know! But I definitely won't miss the report, this is an opportunity of a lifetime!"

There were a lot of discussions in the hotel.

Whether it was the cafes, restaurants, or executive lounge, everyone was talking about this proof.

So far, none of the scholars had expressed their opinions on the thesis. Most people hadn't even finished reading the paper.

Therefore, for those who were concerned about the progress of the matter but were unable to comprehend the thesis, their only option was to attend the 60-minute report in the afternoon.

Even though Lu Zhou might not talk about his thesis in the report, one thing for certain was that he would at least mention it. Otherwise, he wouldn't have uploaded the thesis one day before the report...

Inside the hotel cafe.

Academician Wang Shicheng had to jump through numerous loops just to reach Lu Zhou's ex-student Qin Yue, who was a lecturer at Princeton. Wang Shicheng met up with him at the cafe. Wang Shicheng spoke anxiously.

"Have you seen Professor Lu? I can't find him, he's not in his room, do you know where he is?"

If it weren't for the special circumstance, he would hate to see Lu Zhou in person.

But he was doing this for the future of the Chinese mathematics community.

Qin Yue looked at Academician Wang Shicheng and hesitated for a second.

"No... But I think he might be at the hospital."

Wang Shicheng obviously didn't expect this answer.

"Hospital?"

Qin Yue nodded and said, "Yeah, Miss Vera Pulyuy is his favorite student."

"Why is he in the hospital at a time like this..." Wang Shicheng paced back and forth and sighed. He shook his head and said, "Forget about it, it's too late, the afternoon report is about to begin."

Qin Yue looked at the flustered old man and pushed the glasses up the bridge of his nose.

"Do you need anything from him?"

Academician Wang Shicheng's eyes widened, and he said, "This concerns the future of China's mathematics community. The entire world is paying attention to this, I should at least check up on him, see if he's prepared for the report."

Qin Yue said, "If that's what you're worried about... I think there's no need to worry."

Wang Shicheng paused for a second and said, "... What do you mean?"

Qin Yue spoke in a serious tone, "Professor Lu would never release a thesis unless he's 100% certain."

"So, he is more than prepared."

"That's why he uploaded the thesis to arXiv."

...

Discussions were also happening outside the hotel.

Rows of media vehicles were parked outside the Corinthia hotel entrance.

Even though most of the public were laymen in the field of mathematics, Riemann's hypothesis was different.

The legends surrounding the conjecture, as well as the million-dollar prize money, meant it had been popularized even among the general public.

This was the reason Professor Wiles was able to appear in the Times Magazine.

If someone really had proven Riemann's hypothesis, there was no doubt their photo would be on the front cover of Times Magazine, They would become the most successful mathematician of the century.

Even though they were only a quarter of the way through the 21st century.

The reporters wanted to go into the hotel with their giant cameras, but they were blocked by the security guards.

"I'm a reporter from the BBC, here are my credentials, please let me in!"

“I’m from the Federal Security Service, we cannot let anyone inside without a conference invitation letter. If you want to enter, please contact the conference organizing committee and obtain an admission ticket.”

“We will contact them later. Actually, our assistant is already doing that. Please let us in first, the entire world is waiting to hear about the Riemann’s hypothesis proof.”

This statement obviously didn’t impress the security guard. The tall Russian man spoke bluntly.

“I don’t care.”

In addition to the reporters, there were also scholars that flew from all over the world.

Actually, the ICM conference was about to end since tomorrow was the closing ceremony. These scholars were a bit late to the ICM conference.

However, these scholars didn’t come here for the conference.

The real reason they came here was for the hour-long report.

Professor Tao Zhexuan dragged his suitcase to the hotel entrance. He finally escaped the crowd at the hotel entrance and walked into the hotel while adjusting his collar.

Even though he didn’t sign up to attend the ICM conference, for a famous scholar like him, the organizing committee could easily arrange a hotel room and conference ticket for him.

Apparently, when he emailed Professor Holden, there were only two empty rooms left.

Before Lu Zhou’s thesis was uploaded to arXiv, there were dozens of empty hotel rooms...

When Professor Fefferman saw Professor Tao walking through the hotel lobby, Fefferman was shocked.

“You’re here?”

Los Angeles was a long way from St. Petersburg.

Tao Zhexuan smiled and said, "Of course, how could I miss out on such a thing."

Professor Fefferman looked at Tao Zhexuan's computer bag and said, "I'm guessing you've already read the paper on the plane. You know more about number theory than I do... I'm curious, what do you think about that paper?"

Tao Zhexuan shook his head and said, "I have some questions. I don't really understand the core argument of the thesis. I didn't have enough time since the flight was only 16 hours, plus I'm jet-lagged... Screw jet lag, I just want to sleep. Hopefully, I won't fall asleep at the report."

Professor Fefferman smiled and said, "You think you can fall asleep to Professor Lu's talk?"

Tao Zhexuan awkwardly smiled and touched his head.

"You're right."

There was no way he could fall asleep at a crucial moment of mathematical history...

In fact, he would be impressed if he could actually fall asleep.

Professor Tao made some small talk with Professor Fefferman. He was about to check in at the front desk when he caught a glimpse of a figure in the lobby.

He saw a middle-aged man with a beard and scruffy hair, and he seemed to be talking to the hotel staff about something. Perhaps because of his appearance, the security guards cautiously looked at the man.

Professor Fefferman noticed Professor Tao and asked, "What's wrong?"

"... Nothing, I'm just a bit surprised."

Tao Zhexuan looked at Professor Fefferman and smiled.

"Professor Lu is quite the magnet.

"Can't believe that person is here."

...

The report would begin in an hour.

Lu Zhou had returned from the hospital, and he was shutting himself in his room.

There was a sense of aura in the Corinthia Hotel.

Almost all of the top scholars in the world had set their sights on the ICM conference in St. Petersburg. Some people were at the scene, some people were making their way to St. Petersburg.

Not just mathematicians.

Those discussions had already spread from MathOverflow to social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Weibo.

Whether it was serious discussions or a pop-science article, everyone in the world wanted to know whether this age-old proposition had been proven.

Most people would struggle to maintain a normal heart rate in a situation like this. They would even struggle to breathe and speak.

However, this was nothing but another report for Lu Zhou.

His proof of Riemann's hypothesis was still controversial in the mathematics community, it would take time for the academic community to accept his proof.

But for Lu Zhou himself...

The system had already determined that his proof was adequate, so he wasn't concerned if other people could understand his proof.

Not to mention he had something else to do.

Lu Zhou stood in front of his floor-to-ceiling windows and glanced at the media vans on the street. He took out his phone and called Chen Yushan.

"Hello? What's up, why are you suddenly calling me?"

Lu Zhou said, "How much do I have in my savings?"

Chen Yushan paused for a second and spoke.

“... How would I know that? But I can probably ask the accountant to find a copy of your company accounts.”

“Is there a hundred million yuan in there?”

“... You have got to be kidding me,” Chen Yushan said. “There’s more than a billion in there... Of course there’s a hundred million. Otherwise, you might as well fire me.”

Lu Zhou said, “... I can’t fire you.”

Lu Zhou didn’t know how to run a business.

If he didn’t have a CEO he could trust, things would become troublesome.

Chen Yushan smirked and leaned back in her office chair.

“Tell me, I’m guessing you are in trouble. What could cost so much money?”

“It’s not like I need to spend it all at once, but it is quite troublesome.”

Lu Zhou spent around five minutes explaining the situation to her.

Chen Yushan took some time to digest the information.

“I get what you mean... That student is very important to you, right?”

Lu Zhou: “Yeah, that sounds a bit crazy, but this is the only way to save her.”

Chen Yushan went silent for a while before saying, “I understand, I’ll do as you say, but whether or not it will work...”

Lu Zhou: “Don’t worry, I’ll handle the technical side.”

After the phone call, Lu Zhou called some people from the 301 Hospital, as well as the Institute for Advanced Study.

He briefly explained the situation to everyone. After he hung up the phone, he heard a knock at his door.

He opened the door and saw the assistant standing there, the one that gave him a key to lecture hall 7.

“Professor Lu, Professor Holden asked me to inform you that your report will begin in 30 minutes. If you are ready, I suggest you arrive 15 minutes in advance.”

Lu Zhou looked at the time and nodded.

“Okay.

“I’ll head over there now.”

The sooner I get this over with, the sooner I can get back to China.

Sixty minutes...

Should be enough time.

Chapter 1030 From Another Universe

In the early twentieth century, Hilbert’s speech on Riemann’s hypothesis began a new century-long journey on Riemann’s hypothesis.

And the small boat that was mathematics, had now become a giant battleship.

At last, this century-long journey of exploring the limit of the human mind had finally come to an end.

Capturing the attention of everyone in the world, this report that answered the age-old proposition finally began.

The report venue was packed with people.

Even the largest lecture hall in the Corinthia hotel couldn’t accommodate all of the conference attendees, as well as people who traveled from thousands of miles away.

People brought in chairs, some sat on the floor, and others even sat on their suitcases...

The reporters were standing in the last row, and there were only a couple of cameras.

In order to prevent the report from being disturbed, the ICM conference organizing committee only granted limited press access. Therefore, only major media outlets such as BBC, CTV, and Columbia Television had their reporters inside the lecture hall.

The venue was chaotically noisy.

Almost everyone was talking about the report and the thesis Lu Zhou uploaded on arXiv yesterday.

Suddenly, there was a sound of a door opening.

The door near the stage opened, and everyone watched as a figure steadily walked into the lecture hall.

Everyone spontaneously became quiet.

Everyone was looking at the man.

They were all waiting for him to begin the report...

Lu Zhou was about to begin his sixty-minute report, but when he looked at the crowd, he changed his mind.

"I know you guys probably have a lot of questions about Riemann's hypothesis. When I first walked in, I noticed someone sitting in the front row resisting the urge to stand up... I'm sure he has a lot of questions."

The crowd chuckled, easing the tension in the air.

Lu Zhou looked at the blushing young man in the front row and spoke.

"I'm supposed to begin this report, but due to its special nature, I plan on using the first five minutes to answer some of the audience's questions, to make it easier to understand the report. If you guys have any questions you want to ask before the report begins, you can raise your hand."

Before he could finish speaking, numerous hands went up in the air.

Lu Zhou looked around and pointed at someone.

The Indian guy sitting in the front row stood up.

This scholar was in his thirties, and he wore a pair of glasses and had curly hair. He came from a field that mathematicians looked down upon—artificial intelligence. He immediately asked a question.

“Is Riemann’s hypothesis proven?”

Everyone in the audience began to listen intently.

Even though the scholars outside of the field of analytic number theory were also concerned with the method Lu Zhou used to prove Riemann’s hypothesis and how his tools could affect other mathematics branches, they were more concerned with whether or not the hypothesis was proven at all.

They wanted to hear it from Lu Zhou himself.

With everyone staring at him, Lu Zhou nodded.

“Yes, I am confident that from today onward, it has become a theorem.”

There was a commotion in the audience.

Most people looked surprised.

Generally speaking, the more famous the scholar was, the more they cared about their reputation. A famous scholar wouldn’t claim to have proven a famous mathematics proposition unless they were 100% certain.

After all, if they were wrong, their reputation could be ruined.

The late Sir Atiyah, who once claimed to have proven Riemann’s hypothesis, had his thesis frequently rejected in his later years. Mainly because he often claimed to have proven things without giving an explanation. Even arXiv refused his proof of Riemann’s hypothesis.

This meant that Lu Zhou had no way to back out of this, so people were surprised by his courage and confidence.

The Indian guy sat down. His question was followed by a mathematics professor from Columbia University.

“What happens now? What happens to the field of analytic number theory? I mean... Throughout the twentieth century, we’ve made countless breakthroughs in the field of number theory, including Fermat’s last theorem.

Many of these tools stem from research on Riemann's hypothesis. Now that Riemann's hypothesis has been proven, what does this mean for the future of the number theory field?"

This question was much more complex than the previous question.

Lu Zhou pondered for about five seconds and spoke.

"I can answer your question, but I'll do it at the end of the report."

Lu Zhou looked at the clock on the wall and cleared his throat.

"It's time to begin, leave your questions at the end.

"I promise to answer all of them.

"Let's get straight to the point."

Lu Zhou turned toward the whiteboard and picked up a marker.

Then, he wrote down a line of text—

[Proof: All non-trivial zeros of the Riemann zeta function are located on the line of $\text{Re}(s) = 1/2$ on the complex plane...]

He didn't make any special opening remarks.

However, everyone watched the whiteboard intently.

The report on Riemann's hypothesis...

Had officially begun!

In the audience.

Tao Zhexuan, who was sitting next to Professor Fefferman, stared at the line of text on the whiteboard. He suddenly exclaimed, "He's changing his report content!"

"Of course!" Professor Fefferman looked at him strangely and said, "The entire mathematics world is concerned about this matter, he can't just pretend like nothing has happened."

Tao Zhexuan said excitedly, “No, until a few minutes ago, I wasn’t sure if he’s going to talk about it.”

Professor Fefferman opened his mouth and spoke.

“... Your worries were superfluous. From what I know about him, he wouldn’t joke about this kind of thing.”

While the two were speaking, Lu Zhou continued to write; his pen danced on the whiteboard as he wrote down lines of equations.

$[\zeta(s)=2\Gamma(1-s)(2\pi)^{s-1}\sin(\pi s/2)\zeta(1-s)\dots]$

[...]

After he proved the first lemma, he began proving the next.

More and more calculations began to occupy the board. The concepts gradually became more and more complicated.

Academician Wang, Zhang Wei, Xu Chengyang, and Yang Yongan were all shocked.

Yang Yongan was amazed by the speed of Lu Zhou’s writing, and he couldn’t help but exclaim, “So fast!”

Zhang Wei, who was sitting next to him, said, “Looks like he really plans on finishing the entire paper within sixty minutes.”

In fact, everyone thought that this report would have to be extended.

After all, judging from the paper on arXiv, 60 minutes wasn’t enough time to explain the entire paper. There were too many complicated lemmas and corollaries.

But now it seemed otherwise.

If Lu Zhou continued to write at this kind of speed, it would take him around 40 minutes to finish explaining the entire thesis.

Xu Chengyang said, “Incredible... Does he not have to think at all?”

Lu Zhou didn’t even have a copy of the thesis in his hand.

What was incredible was that Lu Zhou even wrote down a brief explanation on certain steps, explaining why he wrote down this equation and how it was related to the problem.

It felt like...

Lu Zhou had memorized the entire proof.

Zhang Wei said, "Maybe he's remembered all of the steps."

Yang Yongan looked at him.

"That is... ridiculous."

Qin Yue, who hadn't spoken yet, suddenly said something, "It's not ridiculous for him at all."

Academician Wang, Yang Yongan, and Zhang Wei all looked at Qin Yue.

Qin Yue paused for a second and continued, "From what I know, he doesn't have to remember the steps at all."

Academician Wang Shicheng frowned and said, "So he's proving it on the spot?"

"I'm afraid so." Qin Yue nodded and said, "For him, solving a problem he already once solved is a piece of cake."

Jesus Christ...

That means once he learns something, he'll never forget it...

No wonder this guy is the best mathematician of our time.

The two other Fields Medalists sitting in the crowd were also shocked by Lu Zhou's presentation.

"I can't believe this..." Professor Akshay rubbed his nose and said, "By introducing a differentiable manifold into the complex plane... The method he used is completely beyond my understanding of differential geometry."

Schultz, who was sitting next to him, said, "He's doing a good job."

Akshay said, "This is... surprising."

Schultz: "Why?"

Akshay stared at the ceiling and said, "I don't know how he thought of this. I don't know if you feel this way, but it feels like a light is shining down from heaven, guiding the way for us."

Schultz stared at the ceiling as well and chuckled.

"There's nothing strange about this. We have no idea how long he's been stuck in this maze. It seemed like he wasn't going to be satisfied with sharing his in-progress results at this conference.

"So, I know what you mean. Because I feel the same way about those formulas, they are so obscure and difficult to understand. Just like how Grothendieck's works have become the bible of algebraic geometry. But when we try to copy Grothendieck's thought process, it's like..."

Schultz paused for a second.

He was looking for an appropriate analogy.

Meanwhile, the first whiteboard on stage had already been fully written. A hotel staff member dragged another whiteboard on stage.

Lu Zhou picked up the marker and began writing again.

Schultz finally thought of it.

He spoke.

"It's like they come from another universe..."

"Like those equations don't belong in this universe."

Chapter 1031 Future of Number theory

On stage.

Seven whiteboards were fully written!

The eight whiteboards were dragged on stage. There was no doubt Lu Zhou would complete the proof.

His calculations and clear thinking, as well as his deep understanding of mathematical tools, were impressive to everyone sitting in the audience.

Who knew a complex function proposition could turn out to be so convoluted.

The concepts of a complex plane and differentiable manifolds seemed to be completely different things, yet they were unified by the Riemann zeta function.

Lu Zhou's pen was like Beethoven's baton; the disordered prime numbers came to life, creating a song for the audience.

Just like Schultz had said, it seemed like this was something from another universe, it didn't belong to this world.

The audience wished that the report would never end.

They wanted Lu Zhou to continue to perform until all of the secrets of the universe were revealed to them...

Molina was sitting in the crowd as she bit her lip and clenched her fists. Her eyes were filled with stubbornness.

The problem that troubled her for years felt insignificant under Lu Zhou. Lu Zhou didn't even stop and think for a second. He kept on writing.

This feeling of powerlessness made her frustrated.

Even though she wasn't qualified to make a conclusion on whether or not the proof was correct, judging from the atmosphere in the lecture hall, the result was obvious.

After all, the feeling of enlightenment was obvious.

Even herself was convinced Lu Zhou was correct...

Sitting next to Molina was her former mentor Sophie Morel, a mathematics professor. Sophie looked at her former student and spoke in a soft voice.

“In my opinion, there’s an 80% chance he is correct... What do you plan on doing?”

Molina went silent for a while and looked down.

“I don’t know, maybe go for a vacation back home.”

She spent the past decade trying to solve this proposition.

Even though she didn’t want to believe what she was seeing, the reality was often cruel.

She lost.

Sophie sighed and tried to comfort Molina.

“You shouldn’t feel too bad about yourself, there are plenty of other propositions worthy of being solved.”

Molina went silent for a while and spoke.

“Maybe.”

...

That was right.

There was no suspense at all.

When the eighth whiteboard was being written, Professor Faltings squinted.

At that moment...

It was like a gate opened in his heart. He was seeing a brand new world that he had never seen before...

He forgot when was the last time he felt something like this.

He just remembered it was a long time ago, back when Grothendieck was alive. Back when he wrote a “naive” letter to the king of algebraic geometry...

Professor Deligne was sitting next to him. Deligne stared meticulously at the whiteboard.

He suddenly asked, "Do you think he did it?"

Professor Faltings was caught off guard. He composed himself and gave a conservative answer.

"90% certain he did."

Professor Deligne smiled and asked, "When did you start to speak with uncertainty in mind?"

Faltings didn't care for the joke made by his old friend. He spoke calmly, "After all, it's Riemann's hypothesis, so we have to be cautious. Besides, what do you think?"

Professor Deligne went silent for a while and spoke.

"I can't find a counterexample to disprove his theory, just like I can't find a non-trivial zero beyond the critical line..."

Professor Deligne spoke confidently.

"I can only say that his proof is logically consistent."

Professor Faltings looked slightly surprised.

Even though Faltings didn't say anything, Deligne knew what Faltings was thinking.

Being logically consistent basically meant the proof was correct...

People sitting on the other side of the venue were also talking.

When Fefferman saw Lu Zhou write down a crucial formula, he turned to Tao Zhexuan and asked, "You're better versed in number theory... What do you think?"

Professor Tao had a flash of excitement in his eyes. However, before he could speak, a man sitting nearby stood up with excitement and spoke.

"That's it!"

The man ignored the dirty looks from the scholars sitting around him.

It was as if the man were at a football game, not a mathematics conference.

Tao Zhexuan looked at Professor Fefferman and shrugged.

“Looks like... Someone answered the question for me.

“I feel the same way as him.”

...

The last row of equations was written.

The whiteboard marker was put down.

The venue was dead silent.

Not a single sound in the entire venue.

Lu Zhou took two steps back and took a look at the neatly written equation on the whiteboard. He spent thirty seconds reminiscing about his journey, as well as each step he took to get to where he was today...

This also gave the audience a chance to digest the information.

Lu Zhou cleared his throat, turned toward the audience, and spoke.

“It is obvious that we have found the distribution of non-trivial zeros on the Riemann zeta function. Which is, all non-trivial zeros of the Riemann zeta function on the complex plane $\text{Re}(s) = 1/2$ lie on a straight line.

“The proof is completed. However, the journey has only just begun, there are still many questions that the world has yet to find an answer.

“For example, the analytical extension of the Dirichlet L series; are all non-trivial zeros of the Dirichlet L function also located on the straight line of the complex plane $\text{Re}(s) = 1/2$? And what about the automorphic L function? We still don't have an answer to these profound questions.

“History tells us that whenever we solve a problem, there are two more difficult problems waiting for us.”

Lu Zhou paused for a second and spoke.

“There are some things I wanted to say after the academic community makes an evaluation of my proof, but... I don't think it matters.”

The venue was silent.

Lu Zhou could feel the tension from the audience. He nodded and spoke in a louder voice.

“First of all, let's answer the previous question, what is next for analytic number theory?

“My answer is, this ancient discipline will become revitalized and become more prosperous than ever.

“As for myself, maybe I will research the Dirichlet L function and Generalized Riemann hypothesis... Or maybe I'll research the non-trivial zero-point correlation function for the Riemann zeta function.

“However, there is a bigger proposition waiting for me.”

Lu Zhou paused for a few seconds and looked around the audience. He soaked in the atmosphere and took a deep breath.

“Which is, unifying algebra and geometry!”

The second Lu Zhou finished speaking, the audience was shocked!

Unifying algebra and geometry!

People were shocked, doubtful, curious, confused...

“Unifying... algebra and geometry? Oh my god.”

“That sounds ridiculous.”

“The academic community hasn't even made a judgment on his proof, and he's already so arrogant!”

“If anyone can do it, it would be him...”

There was a huge commotion in the audience.

Academician Wang's eyes widened. He couldn't believe Lu Zhou would propose something this crazy.

Molina looked shocked; unifying algebra and geometry was undoubtedly a taller mountain than Riemann's hypothesis. She didn't know why he was making such a big claim, right after proving Riemann's hypothesis.

Faltings was also surprised.

However, he was surprised at something else.

The old man stared at Lu Zhou as he muttered to himself, "I can't believe this..."

Unifying algebra and geometry...

That was the last thing Faltings wanted to do before he retired.

He didn't expect Lu Zhou to have the same idea as him.

Chapter 1032 Victory Champagne

The unification of algebra and geometry had been an age-old topic.

In fact, this wasn't even a real research area for this. It was something in the opposite direction of the general development trend of mathematics.

After all, everyone knew that the deeper a field was, the more branches there would be.

Mathematics was the same.

Two centuries ago, there were versatile scholars like Gauss, but now, even a 230IQ genius like Tao Zhexuan was only proficient in a limited number of fields.

Most people spent their entire lives trying to be proficient in a single field.

For a huge proposition like unifying algebra and geometry, except for a handful of geniuses, no one would dare to think about attempting to solve the proposition.

Because only a select few people could tackle a problem like this, the problem itself became much more valuable.

Back during the era of Descartes and Fermat, the study of geometry using Descartes coordinates was the first time people combined geometry and algebra.

Think about how surprised a caveman would be if someone gave him a lighter, and he didn't have to rub sticks together for ten minutes to create fire.

Even though this was now a technique taught to high school students, this was groundbreaking back then. The analytical geometry field ruled the mathematics world for centuries until 1857, when a genius named Riemann proposed the first algebraic function theory. That was the birth of algebraic geometry.

Later on, countless geniuses had tried to tackle this proposition, slowly bridging the gap between algebra and geometry.

In the twentieth century, three major mathematical structures proposed by the Bourbaki Group dominated the world of mathematics. The three structures were "algebraic structure", "topological structure", and "ordered structure".

The "probability theory" proposed by Grothendieck advanced algebraic geometry into a new era, and his lecture titled "Basics of Algebraic Geometry" was treated as the holy bible of algebraic geometry.

Many people had invented mathematics tools before, and some people had created entire branches of mathematics. But very few people had been able to connect the branches together.

Everyone noticed the trend of mathematics becoming more and more diverse.

On the other hand, there had to be people that unified branches together.

In fact, the generation of mathematicians after Grothendieck had made many attempts.

For example, Shinichi Mochizuki's "Cosmological Theory" and "Teichmüller Theory" proposed an idea of unifying algebraic and geometric elements. Other than his students, there were few people that could understand what he wanted to do.

Another example was Schultz, whose p-adic number and perfect space theory had been gaining popularity. It was widely regarded as one of the theoretical tools most likely to unify algebra and geometry.

However, mathematical tools wouldn't just exist by themselves; they were created to solve problems.

While mathematical conjectures were like touchstones, a way to judge a mathematical tool was by its ability to solve problems.

Now that Riemann's hypothesis had been proven, Lu Zhou was undoubtedly the closest person to obtain a Holy Grail.

Just like how Fermat's last theorem was proved by the great Wiles, the person that proved Riemann's hypothesis would be pushed toward the throne of mathematics, beginning a new era of mathematics.

Lu Zhou estimated that if he wanted to reach level 10 in mathematics, unifying algebra and geometry was one of the things he had to do.

Even though the system didn't specifically tell him to do this, his intuition told him otherwise.

After all, there was nothing else that could surpass Riemann's hypothesis.

This was the only thing left.

...

There was a Qu0026A session after the report.

Because most people hadn't finished reading the paper, they needed time to digest the huge amount of information.

Tao Zhexuan and Schultz stood up and asked some interesting questions. The rest of the scholars in this field of research stayed silent. A few asked questions, which were unrelated to Riemann's hypothesis.

For example, what did unifying algebra and geometry mean? And had Lu Zhou already started working on this research project, or was it all talk?

However, Lu Zhou didn't want to answer this question, because it didn't have anything to do with Riemann's hypothesis. Thus, he rejected most of these unrelated questions.

When Lu Zhou was answering questions on stage, he was quite surprised to see Professor Tao. He didn't remember seeing Professor Tao at the conference over the past few days.

Of course, he didn't know that Professor Tao actually flew to St. Petersburg overnight after seeing his thesis on arXiv...

The Qu0026A session didn't take long. It went much faster than Lu Zhou had thought. Lu Zhou bowed and ended this report.

He also ended this historic moment.

Secretary-General of the International Mathematical Union, Professor Holden, walked on stage and handed Lu Zhou a bottle of champagne.

"This is a gift from the Corinthia hotel. Open it. This century-long journey has finally come to an end, so we should celebrate! This is your moment!"

Lu Zhou took the champagne and nodded sincerely.

"Thank you."

"No thanks... Also, I recommend you publish your results in *Inventiones Mathematicae*. Actually, I sincerely recommend you to do so. You've published so many results in *Annual Mathematics*, it's time to give the other top journals a chance."

Professor Holden spoke in a joking manner.

Lu Zhou paused for a second and smiled.

"I'll think about it."

Lu Zhou opened the bottle of champagne, and the sweet foam began to spray on the ceiling, falling on some unfortunate scholars sitting in the front row.

Lu Zhou wanted to apologize to these people, but they didn't seem angry at all. Instead, they looked ecstatic to be sprayed on.

Therefore, Lu Zhou decided against apologizing.

The atmosphere of the venue had reached its peak.

A hotel staff member brought over a glass, and Lu Zhou raised his glass of champagne toward the audience. After that, he waved goodbye and left the venue.

The reporters had been waiting outside the venue for a long time.

If it weren't for the security guards, they would have broken through the lecture hall by now.

When the reporters saw Lu Zhou come out of the lecture hall, they surrounded him like sharks.

"Professor Lu, did you prove Riemann's hypothesis?!"

"Are you going to contact the Clay Institute for the million-dollar prize? What are you going to do with the prize money?"

"I heard your research was impacted by your student Vera Pulyuy, is that true?"

"Does the proof of Riemann's hypothesis affect modern cryptography? Are bank accounts and passwords still safe?"

"Professor Lu Zhou..."

Lu Zhou didn't answer a single question. He kept walking toward the elevator.

A few minutes ago, the hospital transfer was approved.

Everything had already been arranged, including the visa.

If everything went well, Vera would fly from St. Petersburg to Beijing today, and experts from the 301 Hospital would take care of her.

This was why Lu Zhou was flying back before the closing ceremony tomorrow.

Instead of answering those foolish questions, he had more important things to do...

Chapter 1033 Closing Ceremony!

Hilbert once said that if he woke up five hundred years in the future, the first thing he would ask was whether Riemann's hypothesis was proven.

Even though Lu Zhou wasn't in the mood to be interviewed, the entire mathematical community still heard about this sensational news.

Riemann's hypothesis was proven!

Jesus Christ, this guy has solved three of the Millennium Prize Problems!

And this is one of the most difficult ones...

Polignac's conjecture, Goldbach's conjecture, and the Quasi Riemann's hypothesis pushed Professor Lu to the throne of the mathematical world, while the Navier–Stokes equations was equivalent to adding a crown of physics.

Whereas the proof of Riemann's hypothesis ascended him into immortal status!

That wasn't an exaggeration at all.

Even though the mathematics community hadn't made an evaluation yet, judging from the questions that were asked at the report and the way Lu Zhou fluently answered them, it was predictable that the proof was correct.

Even though there might be some small flaws in the paper, those could be edited before the final publication. Wiles spent more than a year modifying his own thesis on Fermat's last theorem.

For a huge proposition like this, the mathematics community was more than happy to be patient.

After all, they had been waiting for a century and a half.

They could afford to wait a couple more months or even a year...

Of course, Riemann's hypothesis alone wouldn't have made these people so excited.

After all, the thesis was released yesterday, so the initial excitement was over. The real exciting part was when the Clay Institute or the mathematics community gave an evaluation of the proof.

What shocked the entire mathematics community was Lu Zhou's final words at the report.

Which was that his next research project was to try and unify algebra and geometry!

Ten minutes after his report ended, the mathematics community exploded!

Princeton university Facebook group.

Discussions and comments began flooding in, overshadowing the upcoming Ivy league kayak competition and autumn football game.

[Unify algebra and geometry? Wait a second, I'm halfway through my algebraic geometry class, and you're telling me they can be unified?]

[I feel like ever since he published his first paper in Mathematics Chronicle, we have been witnessing history every single day...]

[How is this possible? The Firestone Library has more than twenty rows of bookshelves on algebra, geometry, and other branches. That doesn't even include the latest research. You're saying all of these books can be condensed into one book? That is crazy!]

[I think... you have misunderstood. Unifying algebra and geometry isn't the same as combining two branches into one. If he succeeds, he wouldn't have condensed all of the books into one book. Instead, he would have created a bookshelf.]

[Oh my, I hope I can finish my graduation thesis this year...]

For the mathematics community, the idea of unifying geometry and algebra was more shocking than Riemann's hypothesis itself. However, for mathematics laymen, they were more interested in Riemann's hypothesis.

The video of the report began to circulate through major universities. It was even uploaded to YouTube, receiving millions of views.

However, most of the public was more interested in the million-dollar prize money rather than the mathematical value of Riemann's hypothesis.

Not to mention that Lu Zhou had already won a million dollars from the Navier–Stokes equations, and now, he was about to win another million dollars. People began to feel jealous.

They had no idea a mathematician could make this much money!

However, it wasn't like all mathematicians were this wealthy...

In addition to the discussion on the Internet, media outlets such as CTV, BBC, and Columbia Television had also reported on this matter.

CTV even set up a special documentary. They invited Academician Xiang Huanan to talk about the history of this century-old proposition!

The popularity of Riemann's hypothesis continued to grow.

In addition to the discussions by the media and laymen, some of the top mathematicians also gave their opinions.

The same day the report ended, around eight o'clock at night Moscow time.

Professor Akshay, the winner of the 2018 Fields Medal, posted a blog on his academic website, giving a fairly objective summary of the report...

[So far, many great mathematicians, including Professor Deligne and Professor Faltings, are optimistic about Professor Lu Zhou's proof. I have talked with many people such as Schultz and Tao Zhexuan, and we all agree that there are no major problems in Professor Lu's proof.

[However, that is just the opinion of a few people. There are many scholars in this area that have expressed their opinions. The more important a conjecture is, the more cautious we have to be. Because the tower of number theory can crumble without a good foundation. Also, there are people that have yet to fully understand the thesis, so we should give them time to form their opinions.

[I can't say Professor Lu is 100% correct, but I am 70% or even 80% certain he is.

[But to be honest, I'm more interested in the differential geometry method he used to solve problems on the complex plane. I think it is very similar to some research I did in my earlier days... I recommend my colleagues who are studying non-singular complex projective algebraic clusters to look at this proof. Maybe the tool given to us by the Riemann's hypothesis proof will be the key to solving Hodge conjecture or something similar...]

Professor Akshay's comments were more objective and were spread around by the online mathematics community.

In some sense, his blog played a huge role in suppressing some of the more ridiculous rumors.

Regardless of what kind of evaluation the academic community came up with, the beautiful mathematical methods Lu Zhou used in the proof was enough to be written about in history books...

...

The next day.

People were packed inside the same lecture hall.

The ICM closing ceremony would soon begin.

Even though many people had left yesterday, the majority of people stayed behind.

Tao Zhexuan sat in the middle of the venue. He looked around before speaking to Professor Fefferman.

"Where is Lu Zhou?"

Fefferman shook his head and said, "I haven't seen him either. Deligne said he went to the airport this morning."

Professor Tao: "He's in such a hurry? He's not going to attend the closing ceremony?"

Professor Tao had some questions he wanted to ask Lu Zhou.

Fefferman answered vaguely, “After all... one of his important students is laying in a hospital bed. Apparently, he arranged a plane to transfer her from St. Petersburg to Beijing.”

Professor Tao had a weird look on his face.

The closing ceremony continued.

He suddenly spoke.

“... Actually, sometimes I wonder if I shouldn’t have written that recommendation letter.”

Fefferman sighed.

As if Fefferman knew Professor Tao would say this, Fefferman spoke.

“If you didn’t write that recommendation letter, she would have never become Lu Zhou’s student, she wouldn’t be where she is today. She wouldn’t have a Fields Medal—”

Tao Zhexuan sighed and spoke.

“You’ve misunderstood.”

Fefferman: “... Oh?”

Tao Zhexuan: “I just think that, without that recommendation letter, she would have never met him, and he wouldn’t have been dragged into this mess. This is a moment that should be celebrated, and he should be drinking at the party tonight. Haven’t you noticed? He didn’t even show up to dinner last night.

“The banquet isn’t important, but it’s just a bit unfortunate. It’s unfortunate that such a tragedy happened at this point in his life... This should be a historic moment, yet to lose someone you care about...”

Professor Tao paused for a second and spoke emotionally.

“... It’s unfortunate.”

Fefferman looked at him with a look of surprise. Fefferman lowered his voice and spoke.

“You... know Vera is not going to make it?”

Tao Zhexuan nodded.

“... I can tell.”

On stage.

The closing ceremony had reached its final stage.

Professor Shigefumi Mori was standing on stage, in front of a microphone. Professor Holden walked on stage with a smile.

Normally, before the closing ballet and Russian opera performance, the Secretary-General of the International Mathematical Union would announce the location of the next conference.

This was one of the most exciting things, second only to the Fields Medal winners announcement.

Even though the location was already determined by a vote on the second day of the conference, the organizing committee only announced the location at the very end of the conference.

People in the venue held their breaths as they nervously waited for Professor Holden.

Especially Academician Wang Shicheng.

He sat in his seat anxiously.

Qin Yue was the same.

Even though he was a scholar that worked overseas, who wouldn't want their home country to flourish?

Professor Holden smiled at the audience and cleared his throat. He spoke in a clear and loud voice.

“After tallying the votes, we have made a decision.

“The next International Congress of Mathematicians is going to be at—

“Jinling, China!”

The venue exploded in excitement.

Chapter 1034 How Do You Know It's Yours?

These mathematicians often chose a touristy attraction with pleasant scenery for their parties, some place that was fun. However, for large international academic conferences like this, a region's mathematics strength was also one of the factors that were taken into account.

After all, everyone wanted to host this party in their hometown since it was an honor and made attending the conference much more convenient.

However, it wasn't easy to sell your hometown to scholars around the world.

This required not only the academic influence of the region but also one's connections in the academic community.

Thanks to Mr. Shiing Shen Chern, the International Congress of Mathematicians was held in Beijing in 2002. That was the first time the International Congress of Mathematicians was held in a non-first-world country.

That opened a door for Chinese mathematicians to connect and network with the international academic community.

When the Chinese scholars heard that the next ICM was going to be held in China, they began to feel a burning sensation of excitement in their hearts.

The applause was like a thunderstorm, flooding the venue. Scholars from other countries were shocked at the enthusiasm.

Academician Wang Shicheng was also applauding in the venue, and he nearly began to tear up.

Before this closing ceremony began, he felt a range of complex emotions. He wanted the International Mathematical Union to choose China, but he was worried it would be in Jinling.

Even though the International Mathematical Union decided on Jinling City with little suspense, somehow, this didn't bother him at all.

Xu Chengyang was sitting nearby. He slapped his thighs and wanted to stand up, but he was worried about blocking the people behind him.

Zhang Wei clenched his fist and stared at the stage with a flash of excitement in his eyes.

What excited him wasn't just because the next International Congress of Mathematicians was happening in Jinling, but because he began to see a trend.

Strictly speaking, this wasn't the first time Jinling would hold a mathematics event of this scale.

Starting from the report on the Yang-Mills Equations, this city had now become the center of attention for the mathematics community.

And Jin Ling University had accumulated a ton of experience hosting international mathematics conferences as a byproduct of this attention. In the blink of an eye, this university had become a center of mathematics academic exchanges.

Jin Ling University was exactly what Aurora University and Yan University wanted to become.

This was all because of one person.

How terrifying...

An American-Korean scholar looked at the Chinese scholars with envy in his eyes as he spoke to his British-American friend sitting next to him.

"How come a developing country like China gets to host this twice? I think the voting is suspicious."

The British scholar sitting next to him spoke.

"... You really think they're a developing country?"

According to rumors, East Asia Energy was negotiating with the Korea Electric Power Corporation on a cross-regional power grid plan. If everything went

well, it wouldn't take long for China's power lines to cross the country border and provide electricity to the Korean people.

A developing country that had controllable fusion energy technology, exporting their electricity to other countries...

No one thought China was a developing country anymore.

Yang Yongan happened to overhear the conversation. He raised his chin toward the Korean scholar and spoke.

"We have Professor Lu, what do you guys have? Do you guys have a Fields Medal?"

This sentence hit the man exactly where it hurt.

Forget about the Fields Medal, compared to Japan, which had already established its place in the international mathematics community, Korea's mathematics community was far behind other developed countries. People would often make jokes that Korean mathematicians only existed in K-dramas.

The Korean scholar clenched his teeth and squeezed his fists.

He immediately said angrily, "How do you know Professor Lu is yours! Us Koreans also have the surname Lu!"

Yang Yongan: "...?"

Wang Shicheng: "?"

Zhang Wei: "??"

Qin Yue: "???"

...

After the closing ceremony ended, the International Congress of Mathematicians finally came to an end.

The news that the next International Congress of Mathematicians would be hosted in Jinling quickly spread across WeChat, Weibo, and various university forums.

For normal citizens, this wasn't anything special. But for people in the mathematics field, this was more exciting than when Beijing hosted the 2008 Olympics!

A new player was joining the international mathematics world, joining the likes of America and Europe.

Some people were so excited they were unable to fall asleep...

On the flight from St. Petersburg to Beijing.

Lu Zhou leaned in his seat and yawned.

Unlike those people that stayed up all night celebrating the 2026 ICM location announcement, Lu Zhou was flying kilometers up in the sky, oblivious to what was happening.

The plane landed.

Through the special airport passage, Lu Zhou went to the bathroom and drank a bottle of Energy Medicine from the system space.

He rubbed his eyes and felt energized. He put the empty bottle into his pocket and washed his face by the sink.

There weren't many Energy Medicine bottles left. It took longer and longer to complete missions, which meant fewer rewards. He had to use his system items conservatively.

After washing his face, Lu Zhou was about to leave the bathroom, but he suddenly received a call from his father.

Lu Zhou picked up the phone and spoke while walking out of the bathroom.

"Hey, Dad, what's up?"

"Nothing much, I just saw you on the news... When did you go to Russia? How come you didn't tell us?"

Even though his father followed the news closely, the news station had been constantly talking about Lu Zhou the past few days, so it was hard to miss.

Lu Zhou heard his father's complaint and didn't know what to say.

It wasn't like he didn't want to call his family. It was just that before going to St. Petersburg, he had to go through a military safety exercise and prepare for his hour-long report. Then the incident at St. Petersburg happened...

"I only went for a week, just for some conference, didn't think I needed to tell you..."

"What do you mean! You won such a large... big prize, why didn't you tell us?"

Lu Zhou wanted to say that the prize he won was actually much less honorable than the Fields Medal.

However, he understood why his father was pissed off. After all, he didn't even call his family once.

Lu Zhou sighed and decided to agree with his father.

"Okay then, I'll remember to call you guys next time."

As expected, this did the trick. Old Lu totally forgot about what happened and began talking about other things.

"Oh yeah, I heard Old Wu from work say that there's a lot of good Vodka in Russia, make sure to buy some for me, I want to see what they taste like."

Lu Zhou said, "... Can't you buy vodka at the supermarket?"

Old Lu: "It's not the same! Buying from Russia is more authentic!"

Lu Zhou: "..."

Isn't it just alcohol with water? What difference can it make?

Lu Zhou sighed and spoke.

"I just got off the plane, I'm already back in China... Maybe I can buy something at the duty-free store."

Old Lu: "Oh, really? I just saw you on the news, you're already back? Never mind then, I can just buy it at the supermarket."

Lu Zhou: "Ok..."

Old Lu: "Oh yeah, I just wanted to ask, are you okay?"

Lu Zhou paused for a second and spoke.

"... I'm good, don't worry about me."

Old Lu said, "I'm not worried, I know you can take care of yourself. I can't even understand the problems you have."

Lu Zhou awkwardly smiled.

He still decided to stay humble.

"That's just academic problems, after all, I do work in this field, but when it comes to fishing—"

"Okay enough."

His father spoke in an emotional tone.

"I don't care if you want to listen to me, I have to say this. There are no perfect people in the world. Even great mathematicians have peed their pants, have made arithmetic errors—"

"Hey! Dad, what kind of example is that... What are you trying to say?"

Lu Zhou was appalled.

Thank god he wasn't on speakerphone!

However, Old Lu didn't seem to care.

"... I just wanted to tell you, regardless of what choice you make, other people's opinions don't matter. As long as you think it's the right choice, you will have no regrets.

"What's the point of caring about other people's opinions?"

The phone call went silent.

After a few seconds, Lu Zhou suddenly smiled.

"Okay then."

“Good!” Old Lu suddenly said, “Oh yeah, you really proved Riemann’s hypothesis?”

Lu Zhou said, “Even you know about this?”

Old Lu: “I heard that after you solved Riemann’s hypothesis, bank passwords aren’t safe anymore! I was talking with your mother about taking money out of the bank. I think you have some savings too, right? You should take out at least half.”

Lu Zhou: “... That might be a little difficult to do.”

F*cks sake!

Who the hell is spreading this rumor!

I’m going to find this b*stard and slap them in the face!

Chapter 1035 I Have a Way

Lu Zhou spent around ten minutes explaining to his father what Riemann’s hypothesis was, and what it meant to prove it. More importantly, how it related to bank passwords...

Of course, he explained it in terms a layman would understand.

If he had tried to explain it in the mathematical sense, he would drain the lithium-sulfur battery in his phone before he could finish explaining.

Old Lu felt nice being able to chat with his son. Later on, he put the call on speaker and Mother Lu also joined in on the conversation with their academician son.

Later on, Lu Zhou realized that maybe his parents weren’t concerned about their bank passwords at all, they just wanted to hear their son’s voice.

Lu Zhou began to tear up thinking about this.

Maybe it was time for him to go home and visit his family.

But now was not the time for sentimental stuff, he still had something important to do.

Lu Zhou sniffed his nose and put his phone back into his pocket.

Wang Peng placed his hands on the steering wheel and spoke concisely.

“Where are we going?”

“301 Hospital.”

“Okay.”

...

301 Hospital

South building entrance.

A man in a white short stood there with a clove pink bouquet in his hand. It looked like he had been standing there for a long time.

He bought the bouquet from a flower shop near the hospital. The shirt he wore was the same shirt he wore at the report in St. Petersburg yesterday; he hadn't gotten a chance to change yet.

Most of the people in this hospital were of special statuses, so it was rare to see someone dressed so casually.

Because of this, doctors and nurses looked at this person suspiciously.

However, after they recognized his face, their doubts had entirely disappeared.

People who worked here wouldn't remember every single patient, but they would never forget that face.

After all, when this guy suddenly fainted, they had to work around the clock to help him...

Lu Zhou stood around for five minutes. He then took a deep breath and walked forward.

Lu Zhou displayed his credentials and stepped inside the building. He went up the stairs and walked to the ward at the end of the corridor.

A young blonde girl lay on the hospital bed. She was looking at the trees outside the window.

She heard the sound of footsteps from outside the corridor. When she saw the figure enter the door, she smiled.

Her sapphire-like eyes looked at Lu Zhou as she spoke.

“I’ve been here before.”

Lu Zhou placed the flower bouquet by her bedside table and spoke.

“When?”

Vera stared at the ceiling as she thought.

“Around three years ago... I heard you fainted at the controllable fusion ignition scene, so I bought a plane ticket and flew here. But I didn’t have the chance to come in since they wouldn’t let me visit you, so I left... I remember you woke up not long after I left, and I always wondered if you were trying to avoid me.”

“Of course not... If I were trying to avoid you, why would I be here right now?” Lu Zhou said, “How do you feel? Are you used to the environment around here?”

Vera smirked and spoke.

“I’m used to it. The bed is comfortable, and the people are very nice. The nurse even chats with me when I’m awake. Other than the chemo, I feel a lot better.”

Lu Zhou felt heartbroken when he heard this.

He was about to say something but she spoke first.

“Speaking of which, I’ve heard stories about you from the nurses here... I think...”

Lu Zhou: “... Think what?”

“I think you’re really amazing.”

Vera was blushing.

However, Lu Zhou was even more embarrassed than her.

Lu Zhou thought about how to answer in a humble way but she spoke first.

“Now that I’m already in Beijing, can you tell me what you want me to do?” she said as she stared at Lu Zhou. “I feel better... I want to use the things you taught me to help you.”

Lu Zhou looked at her blue eyes and opened his mouth.

He had a lot he wanted to say, but he didn’t know where to begin.

Since he didn’t know what to say, he decided to start talking about the important things first.

He looked at the girl sitting on the hospital bed and spoke in a serious tone.

“Listen, I have a way to cure you, but you have to cooperate.”

Vera was astonished.

She paused for a second and smiled as she shook her head.

“That’s impossible, the doctor has already told me, it’s impossible to cure me with current technology... You don’t have to comfort me, I’ve spent a year mentally preparing for this, so there’s nothing sad about this.”

“I’m not kidding, nor am I comforting you. I’m being serious.” Lu Zhou took a deep breath and said, “Current medical technology can’t cure you, but future technology can. A century ago, smallpox and Black Death were deadly diseases, but we were the ones who won in the end. Even if it’s not possible now, I’m certain it will be possible in the future.”

Vera said, “I won’t have that much time...”

“No, you can.” Lu Zhou looked at Vera and spoke in a confident manner, “I will send you to the future.”

Lu Zhou spent around five minutes explaining to her about the freezing and dormancy technology, as well as the cryobiology research project at the Institute for Advanced Study. As well as what it meant to “travel to the future”.

After hearing Lu Zhou’s answer, Vera didn’t immediately give him a yes or no. Instead, she stared at the ceiling and spoke.

“A hundred years into the future... That feels so far away.

“What would it look like?”

Lu Zhou: “It might not be a hundred years, seventy years should be enough. By then, society will be rich in raw materials and have infinite energy... It will be a much better world.”

Vera: “Will you be there?”

Lu Zhou went silent.

After a few seconds, he spoke.

“That doesn’t matter, you’ll live a good life in the new world.”

Vera blinked and said, “But I’m already happy now.”

Lu Zhou: “I promise, you’ll be happier if you’re healthy.”

Vera frowned.

“You didn’t answer my question.”

Lu Zhou looked at her and spoke.

“Maybe, I’m in good health, and there are many ways to extend life expectancy... But by then, I’ll be an old man. I won’t be handsome anymore, I’ll be slow and annoying. Don’t get your hopes up.”

Vera suddenly chuckled.

Her smile was like the clove pink flowers on the bedside table, full of beauty.

“I’m fine with an old man.”

She wiped the tears from the corners of her eyes, and her timid face was replaced by kindness.

She looked at Lu Zhou and spoke.

“... As long as you’re okay.”

What is this feeling?

Feels like I’m getting a heart attack...

There was a flash of reluctance in Lu Zhou’s eyes, but logic told him this was the only way to save her.

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and tried to keep his voice calm.

“Then... do you agree? To go to the future...”

Vera nodded and spoke in a gentle voice.

“Yeah.

“If that’s what you want me to do.

“I’ll do anything you say.”

Chapter 1036 Everything Is Possible

301 Hospital.

Inside a clinical medical research center was a 100 square meter laboratory, and sitting in the middle of the laboratory was a large piece of medical equipment that was around 2 meters tall and 3 meters wide.

On the outside, this piece of equipment looked like a CT scanner, the only difference was that, instead of having a simple bed in which the patient lay on, the device had a space-coffin-like bed.

This equipment was sent from the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study cryobiology laboratory to Beijing by air, and it took the cryobiology laboratory researchers three days to assemble the equipment.

Standing next to Professor Liu Zuobing was Zhao Zhongji, who once led a team of international experts in taking care of Lu Zhou, as well as cancer experts and staff members from the 301 Hospital.

For the people from the 301 Hospital, whether they were academician experts or a nurse, their understanding of cryobiology only came from reading papers in journals.

The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study had never disclosed their research in this area. Hence the reason why this machine looked so strange to them.

Zhao Zhongji looked at the science-fiction-like machine for a long time and suddenly sighed.

“Freezing the patient in order to cure an incurable disease in the future... If this thing really works, it will change the entire medical field.”

For most people, if they were put under freezing cold temperatures, they would be on the verge of death within a few hours.

Not to mention the long-term freezing dormancy would take years.

The incurable disease would be cured by doctors of the future.

If there was unlimited time, any problem was solvable.

Just like how a hundred years ago the medical community had yet to master effective antibacterial drugs like penicillin, but now someone with pulmonary tuberculosis wouldn't even have to stay overnight in the hospital.

If a patient was sent a century into the future, perhaps their terminal illness wouldn't be a problem anymore, and perhaps a common prescription medicine prescribed by a family doctor would cure the illness.

Lu Zhou looked at the machine and said, “Maybe, but this wasn't actually intended for medical use.”

Zhao Zhongji looked at Lu Zhou.

“Then what was it for?”

Lu Zhou: “For interstellar travel on the scale of light-years.”

Academician Zhao Zhongji was dumbfounded. The staff of the 301 Hospital was also shocked.

Interstellar scale...

Even though the Moon Palace was now a reality, this still sounded like something out of a science fiction movie...

"I've realized the field of aerospace really creates so many amazing technologies..." Academician Zhao Zhongji sighed and said, "Regardless, on behalf of patients with incurable illnesses, I have to thank you."

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "It is too early to thank me, this might not work. Also, its ethics and morality will be questioned by society."

This technology was far from being widely available. They hadn't even gone through clinical trials, nor was it an approved piece of aerospace equipment.

However, people were selfish.

Lu Zhou was no exception.

Zhao Zhongji looked at Lu Zhou and went silent. He suddenly spoke confidently.

"I think this is a good thing."

Lu Zhou looked at him and said, "Why?"

Zhao Zhongji said, "Controllable fusion has shut down half the coal mines, and hundreds of thousands of people have lost their jobs, do you regret doing this?"

"No, I talked about this on CTV." Lu Zhou calmly said, "Maybe I indirectly caused some people to lose their jobs, but I also provided them a better life, a clean energy society with blue skies.

"Those people that complain about me are only enraged because they can no longer profit from the hard work of the people. This is China, we do things for the better good. Their complaints aren't worth considering."

"If you know that's true, then why worry?" Academician Zhao Zhongji smiled and patted Lu Zhou on the shoulder as he said, "Our society will eventually

adapt to these novel technologies. You gave people a chance at a new life. I'm sure whether it's the patients' relatives or people from the future, they would like to thank you."

"... Maybe."

Lu Zhou wasn't very interested in discussing this issue, but Academician Zhao Zhongji did reduce some of his concerns.

Thinking about it from another perspective, due to the current population growth trend, the aging of the population was an inevitable problem.

Perhaps those terminally-ill patients that could only consume valuable social resources could contribute to society in the future?

Maybe Lu Zhou was overthinking things.

If time could solve everything, then he shouldn't worry.

Lu Zhou looked at Professor Liu Zuobing and spoke in a calm voice.

"How long is it going to take?"

Professor Liu Zuobing was from the army general hospital, and he spoke with the mannerisms of a soldier.

He nodded seriously and spoke solemnly.

"The machine has already been assembled. The X-0172 bacteria samples have arrived from the Jinling sample library. If you want, we can begin now."

"How long is the freezing process going to take?"

"Thirty minutes."

Lu Zhou went silent for a while and spoke.

"Let's begin soon."

"In twenty minutes."

Professor Liu Zuobing nodded.

“No problem.”

Chapter 1037 Time Machine

Inside the same ward.

A girl with a slim figure wearing a medical gown made of special materials lay inside the dormant cabin.

Lu Zhou was standing next to this “bed”. He handed over a stack of documents to her.

“... This is a household registration document, we need your signature.”

Vera tilted her head and said, “Household registration?”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “Yeah, you’re a Fields Medalist. Even though we’re not an immigrant country, we have special policies for talented individuals. I’ve contacted Dean Goddard from the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study and explained the situation to him. You’re now technically employed by the Jin Ling University. You’re going to stay here for a long time, so I’m afraid a work visa won’t be enough.”

The visa wasn’t a big problem now, but a couple of decades down the line, it might be cumbersome.

Also, with Lu Zhou’s political power, he could easily obtain a registered residence for Vera.

Not to mention that both Jin Ling University and the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study had quotas for hiring foreign talents. For a Fields Medalist scholar like her, any domestic university would be glad to accept her.

There would be no problems for her to integrate into society in the future. The future society would become even more inclusive and tolerant of different races and cultures.

Even though Lu Zhou knew that plans often fell apart, and it was impossible to know what would happen in a century, this was better than nothing.

Vera blinked at Lu Zhou and didn't say anything. She picked up the pen and signed her name.

Seeing that she didn't resist, Lu Zhou sighed in relief and spoke.

"... You don't need an ID now, you'll get one when you wake up. This is the letter of consent for treatment, are you going to read it?"

Lu Zhou was surprised that Vera signed all of the documents without reading them. Lu Zhou was prepared to explain to her one by one what each document meant.

Vera blinked and smiled gently.

"I trust you."

She then returned the pen to Lu Zhou.

She said, "Okay then... That's all right?"

Lu Zhou put the pen in his pocket and spoke.

"... Yeah, that's it."

"Oh yeah, my savings... It's not much, but can you send it to my father for me? Do I need to write a will or something?"

Lu Zhou opened his mouth and was about to say something, but he resisted.

He was about to tell her that her father was the one who wanted to end her life when she was in a coma. But he decided against this.

There was no reason to add more sadness to the world.

In the future, her father would be long gone.

Lu Zhou nodded and spoke.

"Okay, I will... Anything else?"

They were running out of time.

The X-0172 bacterial pheromone extract took around half an hour to work. In order to prevent her from having to spend the last half hour waiting anxiously, the hospital nurses already injected the pheromone before she signed the documents...

Lu Zhou didn't want to look at the clock, but he knew he was running out of time.

Vera: "Actually... That's it, I have one last request, but it's a bit childish..."

Lu Zhou: "... Tell me."

Her cheeks gradually started to blush.

"Remember that Christmas? The one in your Princeton home..."

Lu Zhou didn't know why she suddenly brought up something from so long ago. He nodded and spoke.

"I remember, why?"

"That morning, before I put the wet towel on your head, I actually..."

She bit her lip and hesitated, as if she didn't want to spill the secret.

But she thought that she wouldn't have a chance to say this in the future, so she only hesitated for a bit before she spoke with courage.

"Actually... I kissed you."

Lu Zhou: "???"

Vera secretly looked at Lu Zhou's face, observing his reaction.

It seemed like Lu Zhou was taken back, so she quickly added.

"No, not there... On the forehead."

Lu Zhou: "..."

No wonder...

That morning of the hangover, he felt something warm and moist touch his forehead, but the towel on his head was cold. At the time, he thought this was weird, but he didn't think much of it.

Now that Vera suddenly mentioned this to him, he finally understood what happened...

"Maybe because, back then, I really admired and depended on you, that's why I did such a thing..."

"Sometimes I ask myself, am I in love? And what do I want to get out of this?"

"So... Thank you for giving me space to think about this, to differentiate between liking someone and being dependent on someone."

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Then... is it clear now?"

Vera smiled.

"Yeah, it's... the latter."

Even though Lu Zhou already knew this, his heart still skipped a beat when he heard this.

She closed her eyes and lifted her chin.

"... I don't want to say it."

Lu Zhou looked at her trembling eyelashes, and he reached out and pecked her on the forehead.

The scent of jasmine made Lu Zhou feel a little dazed.

Vera had an even bigger reaction; her neck, earlobes, and face were as red as a tomato.

She opened her eyes.

She had a hint of excitement and shyness in her voice as she awkwardly spoke.

"I feel like I won't be able to freeze."

Lu Zhou stood up and said, "Freezing is the final step in physics. You'll fall asleep first, then when you wake up..."

Lu Zhou gulped.

Even though he had mentally prepared himself for this, he still couldn't finish his sentence.

Vera spoke for him.

"Then... I'll be in a new world?"

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Yes... For you, it'll happen in a blink of an eye."

Regardless of how much time went by, for the person in dormancy, everything happened in an instant.

She wouldn't have to wait long at all.

A century would have gone by without her knowing it.

Vera could feel her eyes getting tired. She looked at him, as if she wanted to remember this picture in her mind.

"But I don't want to close my eyes, I don't want to leave yet..."

"Don't be silly..."

"I want to be silly... I'm not going to close my eyes."

"Sorry..."

Slowly, Vera lost consciousness.

She began to sleep and breath peacefully.

Lu Zhou was standing next to the dormancy capsule. He stared at her face for a long time. Professor Liu Zuobing gave a gentle reminder.

"She's already asleep.

"The pheromone released by the X-0172 bacteria is protecting the host cells in the dormant state... The procedure is very successful.

“You should be happy for her.”

Wang Peng, who was standing nearby, didn't say anything. He only patted Lu Zhou on the shoulder.

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and spoke.

“... Let's start then.”

Professor Liu Zuobing nodded and spoke.

“Okay.”

...

The hibernation process had already begun.

Lu Zhou looked at this “time machine” sitting inside the laboratory.

Academician Zhao Zhongji gently coughed and tried to comfort him.

“Think about the upside, we're in an era of technological explosion, we even have controllable fusion energy now. Maybe we'll cure cancer in 70 years... Sigh, but you'll have aged quite a bit by then.”

The nurse, who has been taking care of Vera this whole time, wiped the corners of her eyes.

“Age is just a number for Vera... She really...”

“Don't say anything!”

After being scolded by the academician, the nurse shut her mouth.

Even though age was just a number, they would never be together in the future.

Honestly, Academician Zhao Zhongji was more worried about Lu Zhou than the dormant patient.

The majority of top scholars were eccentric people; they were impetuous and often pessimistic.

Not to mention, Lu Zhou might not even be able to live for another 70 years...

Professor Liu Zuobing stood next to the control console. He commanded his subordinates to complete the dormant capsule start-up procedure. Professor Liu Zuobing suddenly thought about something.

“Oh yeah... Are we making this public?”

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and remembered what his father said, so he spoke.

“Make it public.

“She’s a Fields Medalist... We can’t hide this. If we do, people will wonder where she is.

“Also, there’s no reason to hide this.”

Chapter 1038 Terminal Illness Cryogenics Rights Protection Fund

The dormant freeze procedure was successful.

With the help from the Mars bacteria, Vera successfully survived through the dangerous temperature zone, reaching the optimal zone for dormancy.

Even though this was a risky-procedure that wasn’t clinically approved, it was a success.

However, it was too early to celebrate. There was a ton of work for Professor Liu Zuobing and his team to do.

Actually, this was also Lu Zhou’s responsibility. He was the real leader of the project, as well as the dean of the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

It was difficult for the public to digest all of this information at one time. After all, even in the academic community, frozen dormancy technology was a cutting-edge and controversial topic.

Regardless of whether the patient could wake up in the future, calling a person alive when their heart had stopped beating was still a matter up for debate.

Not to mention the other moral and ethical issues involved.

Academician Zhao Zhongji, as well as academicians from the 301 Hospital had recommended Lu Zhou to disclose the human cryonics technology in stages.

Even though the public's opinion wouldn't impact the 301 Hospital or Lu Zhou, it was better to take a more gentle approach.

...

Beijing University of Science and Technology of China.

Professor Liu Zuobing was about to give a lecture on cryobiology, using a carefully crafted script.

Even though cryobiology was a relatively unpopular field, many people still attended the lecture.

Plenty of foreign people from Europe and America flew here specifically for this lecture.

There were two leading research institutes in this area. One was the "low-temperature dormant chamber", jointly developed by NASA, Johnson u0026 Johnson, and Space-X. The other was the cryobiology laboratory at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Since both of these two projects were linked to the aerospace field, China, who had the upper hand in the aerospace competition, was regarded as the master of this technology.

The cryobiology laboratory of the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study hadn't published anything over the past year, which was the reason why this lecture attracted so many people's attention.

After all, the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, led by Academician Lu, wouldn't announce anything to the public unless there was a major research development.

People could sense that something huge was about to be revealed...

The cafe near the University Health Science Center.

Lu Zhou ordered a cup of cappuccino and sat down in a secluded corner.

Because he dressed like every other student around campus, no one recognized him.

But when Chen Yushan walked in dressed to the nines, she attracted the attention of many boys and even girls.

“You have a lecture to attend soon, right?” Chen Yushan said, “Am I bothering you?”

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, “It’s fine, I don’t really understand cryobiology anyway. I know a bit of chemistry, but I’m far from being an expert... What’s wrong?”

“Nothing,” she said as she took a sip of coffee. She continued, “I just think... you know more than just a bit of chemistry... You’re too humble.”

What she really wanted to say was that Lu Zhou’s humbleness pissed her off.

However, Lu Zhou didn’t know she felt that way.

Lu Zhou thought she was giving him a compliment, so he smiled.

This was one of the few times he had smiled over the past few days.

“Thank you... Oh yeah, did you do the thing?”

“Yeah, I wouldn’t waste your precious time.” Chen Yushan took out a stack of documents and placed it on the table as she said, “According to Your Majesty’s request, I have registered a cryogenic rights protection fund of 100 million yuan.

“The fund will be controlled by professional managers, and the main investment areas will be concentrated in food production, mining, retail, and other sectors with lower risks, suitable for long-term investment... On the other hand, 20% of the annual income will be used to pay employees’ salaries, facility maintenance, and other necessary expenses, and the rest will continue to be deposited in a fund pool to ensure healthy cash flow.

“When the agreed unfreezing day arrives, the foundation will pay the awakened person a one-time payment in order to cover for treatment costs and basic living expenses.

“The minimum purchase amount to one million yuan. The appraiser will determine if the purchaser’s motivation meets the criteria based on assets, occupation, social relation, and health status... This is to ensure that the technology is used in the right place... That’s the gist of it.”

Basically, this was equivalent to a pension insurance that only paid one time 50 years or more into the future, and only “terminally-ill” patients had access to buy into this fund.

As for the reason for establishing this fund...

Because Lu Zhou was well aware of what would happen if he didn’t do this.

The consequences of misusing this technology were terrible. However, trying to prevent the invention of this technology or only making it available to a handful of power people was even more terrifying.

Of course, there were always two sides to the story. Like Academician Zhao Zhongji said, this technology could give those who were unable to live because of an illness a choice at a new life. At the end of the day, this was a good thing.

“Thank you.”

After gently brushing her hair, Chen Yushan continued, “You’re welcome, what’s the situation with Vera? Did you guys...”

Lu Zhou nodded.

“She’s already dormant.”

The atmosphere went quiet for about ten seconds.

Chen Yushan looked at the cars moving outside the window and sighed softly.

“This is going to be a long journey, but... this is the best choice for her.”

Lu Zhou nodded silently and didn’t respond.

Chen Yushan didn’t know how to comfort him. After staying silent for a while, she suddenly changed the topic and spoke in an uplifting tone.

“Speaking of which, what’s next? Are you going back to Jinling?”

Lu Zhou thought about it and said, “I want to spend the summer vacation in my hometown, then go back to Jinling when the school semester begins.”

His work in Beijing was almost done. After the lecture here was over, he wanted to go back to his hometown. He would spend the entirety of August there, then go back to Jin University when the semester began again.

One reason was that he needed to rest for a while and see his family, finally taking a break.

The other reason was to avoid the spotlight.

It was likely that after the frozen dormant technology news was released to the public, he would definitely become the topic of public discussion. If he was in Beijing or Jinling during this time, he wouldn't be able to mind his own business peacefully.

Seemingly amused by this, Chen Yushan jokingly said, “You still have summer vacations?”

Lu Zhou: “Why wouldn't I? Professors... are also teachers, why wouldn't we have summer vacations?”

Chen Yushan smirked and said, “Okay, I guess. But since you solved Riemann's hypothesis, you really deserve a break.”

Lu Zhou looked at her in surprise and said, “You know about this?”

Chen Yushan couldn't help but roll her eyes and speak.

“How could I not know! I watch the news okay! Don't think I'm some kind of soulless business person. I saw you on the cover of Everyone Daily. Actually, I really want to ask you, how does it feel to be on the cover of Everyone Daily?”

I'm on the cover of Everyone Daily?

When Lu Zhou heard this, he suddenly showed a surprised look on his face.

However, he wasn't too surprised.

After all, he had been on almost every single major media outlet in the world.

Chen Yushan used the straw to stir her drink as she spoke.

“Sigh, I know you’re good at maths, but I didn’t expect you to be this good...”

Lu Zhou said, “... Did you just realize?”

Chen Yushan suddenly wondered, “Do you think there will be a director who wants to turn your story into a movie? Just like ‘A Beautiful Mind’. Speaking of which, when I went on Amazon a while ago, I saw someone selling your personal biography...”

Lu Zhou’s heart dropped to his stomach.

“... Personal biography?”

“It’s not exactly your personal biography. It’s kind of like a memoir. I remember the title was ‘The Professor Lu I Know’. The author is a Brazilian mathematics professor, and apparently, he’s a teacher at the University of São Paulo.”

Upon hearing that this guy was from Brazil, Lu Zhou almost spat out the coffee in his mouth.

“Is his name Hardy?!”

Lu Zhou looked somewhat mentally unstable. Chen Yushan hesitated slightly before nodding. “Huh? Have you read it? When did you buy it?”

Lu Zhou: “...”

F*ck sake!

I knew it was that idiot!

Lu Zhou almost wanted to travel back to six years ago and throw that idiot’s resume in the trash.

Letting this idiot become one of his students was a disgrace.

“But he claims to be one of your students from Princeton... Is that true?” Chen Yushan asked with an uncertain tone as she looked curiously at Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou said, “Don’t believe a single thing that guy says.”

Chen Yushan sighed. "Okay then. Actually, I think some of the stories he wrote are quite interesting."

Lu Zhou: "..."

Although he was very curious about what was so interesting, for the sake of his own mentality, he would rather stay oblivious.

Chapter 1039 Beginning of a New Era?

St. Petersburg International Airport.

Professor Krugman and Albert were waiting for boarding to begin, and they looked very tired.

It had been a week since the International Congress of Mathematicians came to an end.

After the conference closing ceremony, the two did not immediately leave St. Petersburg.

After all, St. Petersburg was the famous "city of mathematics" in Eastern Europe. Some of the world's top mathematics research institutes, such as the Steklov Institute of Mathematics, were all located in this city.

These two professors visited these mathematics institutes in hope of recruiting like-minded scholars. The two even tried a few more times to recruit Perelman to join their great project.

However, ever since that 60-minute report at the ICM, Perelman had become an even stranger person.

Before this, he would patiently answer the two's questions, but now, he was reluctant to even let them into the apartment.

Their vacation time had been exhausted. They couldn't stay here forever.

Therefore, after being unsuccessful at recruiting anyone in St. Petersburg, the two decided to go back to America and consider their next step.

If nothing else worked, they would lower the threshold of finding scholars to collaborate with. Or maybe they could work more on the research project and recruit people after making some progress.

“... It’s a shame Professor Lu left so early. I think he was actually a little bit interested in our plan,” Professor Krugman suddenly said. He looked at the airport terminal and said, “If only that accident didn’t happen, if we tried harder to convince him, maybe he would have agreed.”

“Yeah... I think so too.” Albert sighed. He raised his hand and looked at the time on his watch. He got up from his chair and said, “My flight is about to board... See you later then.”

“Take care, we’ll talk through email.”

“Yeah.”

Stanford University was on the west coast, where Albert worked as a visiting professor at the Center for Cancer Systems Biology. Princeton, where Krugman worked, was on the east coast, a few time zones away from California.

After his friend left, Krugman picked up a newspaper and began reading.

However, when he first glanced at the headline, he was stunned.

“... Frozen dormancy?”

He picked up another newspaper...

The headline was the same!

Krugman was intrigued.

He raised his finger and pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose. He carefully read the headline article. He became more and more shocked and in disbelief. Finally, he could not help but whisper.

“This is... crazy.”

Frozen dormancy!

Traveling to the future for treatment!

This is the craziest thing I've heard this whole year!

Prior to this, he vaguely heard about Lu Zhou transferring Pulyuy to China, but he did not expect that this was the reason why.

But...

Compared to Miss Pulyuy's health, he was more interested in the freezing dormant technology itself.

This reminded him of a thesis on the interstellar trade theory that he wrote a long time ago. In the paper, he casually mentioned that all capital activities would be related to the dimension of time.

If human beings could travel through time, the financial market would be hugely impacted. People would be more inclined to hold long-term and stable income assets, rather than investing in high-risk and high-return products. Because time was no longer a concern, the cost of waiting would decrease...

For example, if someone deposited 10,000 US dollars into a fund, with an annual rate of 4%, by doing some compound interest calculation, after 50 years, they would have 70,000 dollars in their account!

The money would have increased by seven times!

If the period was increased to 100 years...

"This is a financial nuclear bomb..." Krugman muttered to himself as he turned the page in his hand. He said, "I'm afraid tomorrow's Nasdaq and the global debt market will become extremely volatile..."

Maybe it wasn't just finance...

Its power could no longer be measured by a monetary value.

Equality existed between people based on the inevitability of birth, illness, and death. Whether someone was rich or poor, civilians or kings, there was no escape from the certainties of life.

However, frozen dormancy technology undoubtedly broke this equality.

It seemed like the balance of death was about to be broken...

If someone could live in a utopia in the future, why would they want to stay behind and build this utopia?

Some of the lucky ones would begin on their first step toward immortality. Human civilization would gradually shape into a world of inequality.

This seemingly innocent technology could actually have a greater impact on society as a whole than controllable fusion. It wasn't an exaggeration to say that it could even completely change the face of human civilization.

From a sociological point of view, this wasn't the combustion engine, nor the steam engine, this was equivalent to the invention of printing!

Its birth would pave the way for a major event that would be more influential and powerful than the "Age of Enlightenment" or "French Revolution". This revolution would continue to exist until restrictions were placed on this new technology.

And this process was ugly.

Of course, this idea might be too pessimistic. The more wealthy people were, the more cautious they would be in weighing the balance between risk and return.

Thinking about this logically, bearing the risk of not waking up was far worse than living their current, comfortable lives.

After all, if a 19th-century businessman was placed in the 21st century, he would be confused by the new financial products and global trade rules. He wouldn't be able to survive.

After all, in his era, a profitable business was colonial plunder and industrial dumping. That had since changed.

Only those that couldn't afford a ticket to the future would think about doing something as risky as going into dormancy.

On the other hand, survival was the highest priority of living things, even if no one used this technology now, someday, someone would open the Pandora box.

This was quite an interesting research project.

It was interesting enough that Krugman almost wanted to suspend his current research project.

Professor Krugman held his breath and rubbed his hands together.

There was only one thing he wanted to do.

Which was to immediately go back to his office, clean up his thoughts, and write them down in the form of a thesis...

Maybe something could come of this.

For example...

He could be named as the father of the New Enlightenment?

How exciting.

Chapter 1040 Forecast Is Only a Part of Analysis

Lu Zhou didn't realize it, but the actions from one of his friends might cause him a lot of trouble.

However, even if Lu Zhou knew, he wouldn't blame his friend.

After all, he was doing the same thing.

Even if he weren't the one who invented this technology, in the future, ten or twenty years down the line, someone else would have certainly brought this technology to the world. Especially because of the aerospace competition, frozen dormancy technology played a huge role in the aerospace projects of the two super countries.

On the other hand, even if Professor Krugman didn't write his thesis, someone else would have written a similar one.

Lu Zhou already knew this would happen. After the lecture at the University Health Science Center finished, he took the high-speed rail back to his hometown.

Almost as soon as he returned to his hometown, the 301 Hospital and the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study finally released news about a Fields Medal winner receiving cryogenic dormancy treatment.

Once again, the headlines were filled with Professor Lu's name...

...

Princeton.

Cafe at the Institute for Advanced Study.

Professor Fefferman was sitting by the window, and across from him was his old friend Professor Angus Deaton. Fefferman sighed and spoke.

"I didn't expect him to do this."

Frozen dormancy.

Everyone in Princeton was talking about this.

Although he knew in his heart that this might be the best choice, not everyone was prepared for this, especially the students of Miss Vera Pulyuy. The news that their lovely and respectable teacher was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer and the fact that she was "frozen" caused great controversy.

However, Lu Zhou himself seemed to stay very calm. It seemed like he had disappeared from the Internet. Whether it was arXiv or MathOverflow, he hadn't been active anywhere. Fefferman even went to check on Weibo, which was more commonly used in China. He couldn't find a trace of Lu Zhou.

"Actually... I expected this to happen."

Professor Angus Deaton stirred the coffee in his cup with a spoon. He looked at the twirling milk foam and spoke.

"I once persuaded him to be cautious about frozen dormancy. But then I thought about it, that wasn't necessary at all since it won't change his mind. Even if I did convince him, this technology would still eventually come. The pursuit of survival is inside every living creature. Every choice we make is to make us live longer."

Fefferman glanced at him and said, "That's part of economics?"

Angus: "That's not economics, it's evolutionary biology... It's human nature."

Footsteps were heard in the corridor outside the cafe.

Soon after, an old man in a plain shirt walked in.

"Sorry, I'm a little late... Fefferman? You're here too?"

Krugman looked at Fefferman, who was sitting across from Angus. Krugman didn't expect to see Fefferman here.

"When I'm not busy, I come here almost every afternoon... but there are some exceptions." Professor Fefferman smiled gracefully and continued, "Professor Angus invited me."

Professor Krugman said, "Okay then... That makes the two of us."

Professor Angus: "It doesn't matter how many people I invited. I'm more interested in your research... I noticed that you seemed to have published a paper recently? About the impact of frozen dormancy technology on macroeconomics."

When Krugman heard the old professor talk about his recent research, he suddenly looked enthusiastic. He pulled a chair and sat beside the two.

"Of course, I wrote that paper. I didn't expect you to read it... I'll have a mocha, thanks."

The waiter nodded and began walking away.

After clearing his throat, Krugman continued.

"I think you can't even imagine the social changes that this technology will bring. In fact, I only thought about all this on the plane. This may sound a little ridiculous, but that doesn't matter. I can explain it to you."

After that, Krugman spent about ten minutes talking about his research. He spent a long time talking about how because of the invention of this technology, the long-lasting equality that the human society had achieved would be broken. And how this was going to be similar to the French Revolution.

Professor Angus patiently listened to his old friend. Professor Krugman spoke until his throat was dry. He then took a sip of his coffee. Professor Angus smiled and spoke.

“I have an unpublished manuscript here... Are you interested?”

Professor Krugman, still holding the coffee cup in his hand, froze for a second and asked, “Are you sure this is okay?”

Generally speaking, scholars in the same field would try to avoid sharing unpublished results. But Angus didn’t seem to look like he cared. Angus spoke carelessly.

“There’s nothing wrong with it, we have known each other for many years, I trust you. Even Professor Fefferman already read it.”

Fefferman smiled and said, “It’s an interesting paper, but it is going to take me a while to understand.”

“... Since you say so, I’m happy to read it.”

“No problem, right here.”

After taking the manuscript from Professor Angus, Krugman read the title. He was stunned, and his face was filled with disbelief and shock.

Sociology of the future!

Krugman spent around ten minutes flipping through the paper. He returned the manuscript to Angus and said, “... You’ve already finished writing this? When... did you write it? Don’t tell me you did this all in a few days.”

Professor Angus said, “Around half a year ago, I published the first paper. Which was the part you read at the beginning, regarding how the future is a promising subject for sociology. I published a few more papers, and this manuscript is a simple summary of all of my work on this topic.”

After a pause, Professor Angus continued, “A long time ago... A few years ago, this wasn’t something that needed to be discussed. No matter what society did, there was no means to directly interfere with the future. No one plans for a hundred years in the future, when they will no longer exist.

Regardless of whether or not we want to admit this, we make decisions based on the present.

“But now, that is no longer true. When people start to think about how to pave the way for the future, things often become troublesome. Maybe in the next few years, soybeans and corn won’t be the only commodities traded by futures. Maybe the entire financial market will consist of futures.

“Our work might be trivial, but theoretical research has to be done by someone. At the very least, when the problems occur, we can provide a reference for decision-makers.”

Krugman opened his mouth and spoke.

“... I can’t believe you did this already, I thought I would be the first one to work in this area.”

Professor Angus said with a smile, “I’m surprised you only found out about dormancy recently. I thought people like you would be more interested in these concepts. After all, I would never write something like the Interstellar Trade Theory... That sounds like something out of a Hollywood movie.”

Professor Krugman said, “If you really read my paper, you know it’s not science fiction.”

Professor Angus: “Of course I have read your paper, not just that, but I have been following your research for some time now. After all, very few economists are interested in the distant future, and as we often say, the future is unpredictable.”

Krugman: “... What? I didn’t know Professor Angus is interested in my research.”

“There is nothing unbelievable about that. The research project you are doing is similar to mine. We have a common interest.”

“... Which is future sociology?”

“Yes.” Professor Angus nodded. He said, “Prediction is only one part of the analysis. What do you think? Do you want to work together?”

Faced with an unexpected offer, Professor Krugman paused for a second and blinked.

He had to admit, this was a tempting proposal.

In fact, he was extremely intrigued.

“... I can’t give you an answer straight away, I have to consult my partners first. Of course, I think that it is unlikely he will disagree. We generally have the same opinion on how to progress the project.”

“That’s fine, it’s not like this project can be completed in a day or two. I can wait... As long as it is not too long.”

After a pause, Professor Angus looked at Fefferman and said, “Then, I want to hear what Professor Fefferman thinks of my paper.”

Fefferman didn’t expect the ball to be passed to him. He said, “Me? What does this have to do with me?”

“Of course it does.” Professor Angus nodded and said, “We have everything we need, except... an excellent mathematician.”

Professor Fefferman opened his mouth and said, “I think... I have to think about it and give you an answer at a later date. In fact, Professor Faltings invited me to work together. I’m not sure if I have the time to work with you.”

Krugman said with excitement, “What could be more exciting than predicting the future?”

“Many things. Instead of predicting what will happen in the future, I think it is more productive to make the present better.” Fefferman glanced at his watch and finished his cup of coffee. He put the cup down and said, “I have a meeting to attend, gentlemen.”

In fact, even though he was very interested in the things they were discussing, he wasn’t... too excited on participating in this project.

This was the case for many Princeton mathematicians.

When it came to mathematics, even a humble person like him couldn’t help but be a little pretentious at times. This stemmed from the fact that

mathematicians believed that a mathematician should only devote their life to mathematics.

As Professor Angus watched Professor Fefferman walk away, he looked a little disappointed.

He thought he could convince Fefferman, but he had failed.

However, Professor Krugman suddenly said, "Professor Lu said that after he solved Riemann's hypothesis, he will consider participating in our research."

This did the trick.

Professor Fefferman suddenly stopped.

He sat back down and spoke to Professor Krugman.

"... Lu Zhou? He said that?"

"I swear to god," Krugman said. "If I am lying, may Satan take my soul."

Fefferman: "... When did he say that?"

Krugman replied truthfully, "The day before the ICM conference. We happened to meet at Perelman's house when I made an invitation to him..."

Back then, Krugman and Albert thought Lu Zhou was rejecting them in a euphemistic way.

After all, if anyone said that they would "think about it after they solved Riemann's hypothesis..." it might as well be a rejection.

However...

Who would have known that a couple of days later, Lu Zhou would really solve the problem?!

If it weren't for Vera's accident, Krugman wouldn't be sitting here with Professor Angus. Instead, he could already be working on the research project with Lu Zhou.

After staying silent for a long time, Professor Fefferman looked at Professor Angus.

“... I change my mind.”

He smiled and spoke.

“I think the stuff you guys are talking about is very interesting.

“If it’s possible, I’d like to join.”

Chapter 1041 Conversation by the River

Over the past couple of days, Lu Zhou basically stayed at home all day.

He missed this kind of lifestyle.

People only remembered the good times. Whenever someone felt overwhelmed in their life, they would reminisce about the past.

Of course, what Lu Zhou missed wasn’t his childhood.

It was his mother’s cooking.

He had been to all kinds of fancy restaurants around the world, but his favorite food was still his mother’s cooking. The braised fish, the pork ribs, the pickled vegetables... He even ate three bowls of rice with every meal.

Even though all Lu Zhou did was eat, he didn’t gain any weight. After all, he had a fast metabolism. Because of his exercise, he had gotten a lot stronger.

His body fat percentage had also decreased.

These days, Lu Zhou deliberately left his work alone. With so many things happening, he didn’t want to think about anything that might give him a headache.

He even left the golden legendary mission card in the system space untouched. Because he knew that once he activated the card, he wouldn’t be able to stop working.

Even though he had distanced himself from social media, he still maintained one channel of communication with the outside world.

When he was on the phone with Chen Yushan, he heard that after the news of the frozen dormancy technology was released, the Internet went insane.

However, Lu Zhou didn't care too much.

Regardless of what the international community thought, it wouldn't affect him personally. Most people thought they could change the world by changing others, yet their own life was in shambles.

Being disconnected from the outside world was peaceful.

Sometimes he thought that, maybe he had contributed enough to the world, everything was moving in the right direction on its own. Maybe he should spend some time for himself.

Of course, Lu Zhou knew that he was a workaholic.

After all, this wasn't the first time he had wanted to take a break.

On the other hand, the Chinese community also began to react to the frozen dormancy technology.

In fact, both Academician Zhao Zhongji and Professor Liu Zuobing had overestimated the public's reaction to this incident.

There actually had hardly been any reaction from the Chinese community on this matter, it rarely gained any attention.

One reason was that the mainstream media often didn't report on science and technology news, because the general public wasn't interested in them.

The second reason was because...

All of the attention was focused on a celebrity couple that recently got divorced.

This was how scholars were; they were always overthinking things.

Noon.

The family sat at the table eating lunch, and Lu Bangguo, while holding a pair of chopsticks, suddenly spoke.

“Speaking of which, you’ve eaten so many braised fish made by your mother, but do you know where the fish comes from?”

Lu Zhou knew that his dad wanted to brag about his fishing skills. However, his mother spoke first.

“... What do you mean he doesn’t know? Who hasn’t been to a supermarket before?”

Old Lu didn’t expect to have provoked his wife, so he began to explain.

“That’s... different, where does the fish from the supermarket come from?”

“They got it from a fisherman, you think everyone uses a fishing rod to fish?”

“...”

Old Lu couldn’t think of a comeback, so he looked at his son and spoke.

“Son, are you free?”

“... I am, but what are we doing?”

“Let’s go fishing this afternoon.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

So this is what he wanted.

Couldn’t he have just said so?

Lu Zhou didn’t want to hear his dad nag anymore. He did want to spend more time with his parents, so he accepted his father’s invitation.

Even though he wasn’t interested in fishing, he still watched some tutorials online regarding fishing. Then they went to the river a couple of kilometers away from their house.

Even though it was technically a river, Lu Zhou felt like it was more like a small ditch. His dad insisted that back in his day... around thirty years ago, it was a huge river. The kids would swim in this river every summer, which was also one of his father’s favorite activities as an adolescent.

The fishing began.

Lu Zhou sat on a bench by the river. He thought it wouldn't be long until he caught his first fish. However, the fish never took the bait.

He saw his father catching one fish after another. Lu Zhou couldn't help but lose interest.

I guess there's a skill to this.

I must have an IQ of 300 by now, but I can't even catch a fish.

Lu Bangguo stared at the river as he suddenly spoke.

"There's something on your mind."

Lu Zhou sighed and spoke.

"Dad, is this something you saw out of a movie?"

"I'm being serious, I'm not joking," Lu Bangguo said. "Impetuous people can't catch a fish. Only people like me, retired without a worry in the world, can catch a fish... "

Lu Zhou said, "... If you know I won't catch anything, why did you still bring me?"

Old Lu smiled and said, "Well, it's better than sitting at home all summer? Fishing isn't necessarily about catching the fish. If you feel relaxed and calm, then it becomes worthwhile."

Honestly, at Lu Zhou's age, listening to his father talking about life didn't inspire him anymore.

But his father was correct, Lu Zhou had a lot on his mind.

Even though he tried to ignore it, sometimes he couldn't help but think.

Think about his past decisions.

Lu Zhou stared at the plastic bucket that was almost full of fish. He went silent for a while and suddenly spoke.

“Dad.”

“Yeah, what?”

“If you can go to the future, will you?”

Lu Bangguo paused for a second.

“Future? What future?”

Lu Zhou thought about it and used an analogy.

“If there is a time machine that can send you fifty years into the future... Will you do it?”

Lu Zhou thought his dad would contemplate for a while, but his father immediately answered.

“No.”

“Why?”

“You young people always like to fantasize.” Old Lu shook his head and said, “Tell me, what’s so good about the future?”

Lu Zhou said, “Well... better technologies.”

Old Lu: “What does that have to do with me? The house across our street is about to be demolished, does that affect you?”

Sometimes, Old Lu wondered if the city council had a grudge against him. All the houses around him were demolished to build new apartments, but his house was still intact.

Lu Zhou said, “... Demolition means society is growing, so you’re affected by it.”

Old Lu shook his head stubbornly and said, “I’m not going. What would happen to your mother? What about you? If I’m not here, who knows when you’ll get a wife.”

“What do you mean...” Lu Zhou said, “Your son is very popular on campus, okay? Every valentine... my phone blows up.”

Old Lu went silent for a while. He sighed and said, “I believe that. I was also a player back in my day, otherwise, your mother would have never married me. But your standards are too high.”

Lu Zhou thought about it and didn’t want to talk about this. He coughed and tried to divert the topic.

“... What if you didn’t have a family? Would you go to the future?”

Old Lu said, “What is that supposed to mean?!”

Lu Zhou said, “What if! It’s not like there’s actually a time machine.”

“Oh right... No, I wouldn’t go!”

Lu Zhou: “... Why?”

“Twenty years ago, anyone that had a brick phone in their house would be envied by their neighbors.”

Old Lu had a complex look on his face.

“But now, there are computers and mobile phones and everything. Last time I saw an article forwarded by your uncle in the WeChat group. It seems like technologies are everywhere, on your watch, on your glasses. I really don’t know how to use these gadgets. It took a long time for me and your mother to learn how to use WeChat...”

Old Lu looked a little melancholy.

“Back then, your dad kept up with the times. I knew how to fix TVs, how to fix radios. But now, I can’t keep up with the times. And this was only after twenty years...

“Fifty years? Haha... Forget about it.”

Chapter 1042 Anything Can Happen

There were some people who were furious with the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study’s research...

Which was Space-X and Johnson u0026amp; Johnson.

In the middle of last year, NASA gave them a considerable amount of money to research frozen dormancy technology. They only recently discovered that the X-0172 bacteria had the ability to protect cells. However, the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study had already invented their frozen dormancy technology...

Silicon Valley headquarters.

Elon Musk was reading a newspaper in his hand when the muscles on his face twitched.

[New breakthrough in frozen dormancy technology, terminal illness treatment by traveling to the future!]

He thought that he had an advantage in this area of research, and could avoid direct competition with Star Sky Technology. After all, Space-X had a decade of accumulated research and development experience.

Who could have imagined that someone close to Lu Zhou had terminal cancer...

F*ck sake, if only Lu Zhou was the one who had the cancer!

However, no matter how much Elon cursed, there was no point.

Star Sky Technology had already mastered frozen dormancy technology. All they could now was to pick up the crumbs left by Professor Lu...

There was a knock on the door.

Musk answered and saw his secretary walking in.

"David Lawrence wants to make an appointment to meet you."

Musk put down the newspaper and had a strange look on his face.

"Meet me? The son of the Lawrence family?"

His secretary nodded. "You know, we have been trying to receive funding for aerospace projects, but those banks aren't optimistic about us. But now, he wants to meet with you."

“He wants to meet me...” Musk said as he began to contemplate.

He obviously didn’t believe that David Lawrence was interested in his Space-X. After all, this had happened before.

But like his secretary said, Space-X needed money, and it needed a lot of money. In this day and age, money was the only thing that could make dreams come true, so this meeting could mean a huge opportunity...

Even though the other party might not be sincere.

He still had to give it a try.

After contemplating for a moment, Elon spoke.

“Tell him I will see him... When does he want to meet?”

Secretary: “This afternoon.”

Musk’s eyebrows suddenly twitched, but he took a deep breath and calmed down.

“... Get the jet ready, I’m flying to Boston this afternoon.”

The secretary nodded.

“Yes sir.”

After some flying, Elon finally arrived at the Boston Financial Group building.

Elon walked into the meeting room and looked at the man sitting quietly behind the conference table. He cleared his throat and was about to make some opening remarks, but the man spoke first.

“Welcome to Boston, Mr. Musk. Glad you accepted my invitation. Please sit down.”

Even though he didn’t sound sincere or enthusiastic, Elon still felt a little more comfortable.

Sitting in front of him was one of the leaders of the Boston Financial Group. He was one of the richest and most powerful people in the United States.

Even though Elon was the chairman and president of Space-X and Tesla, he only had a tenth of the wealth that the Boston Financial Group had.

That wasn't an exaggeration.

In fact, that was a conservative estimate.

"I heard you wanted to talk to me about the Space-X aerospace program, so I came over," Elon said. "People like you who are courageous and full of imagination are becoming rare."

David Lawrence smiled lightly and continued, "Yes, I am interested in your space program. I believe that our future must be in the stars... But before discussing that, I would like to ask you an interesting question. I saw this question in the Boston Daily newspapers."

"What's the question?" Elon said with a smile. He looked at David and said, "If it interests you, it must be an interesting question."

David Lawrence smiled and said, "If you can travel to the future, would you?"

Elon paused for a second. He obviously didn't expect a question that wasn't related to aerospace.

David realized that he didn't phrase the question properly, so he said, "Of course, you'll remain as chairman of Space-X, and Space-X won't go bankrupt in the next century."

Elon thought about it for ten seconds and spoke.

"What's the point of sending old antiques from the past to the future? Can we use 18th-century economic theory to solve the 21st-century debt crisis? Or let him teach us how to go to the moon?"

"What about property inheritance rights, I don't see an upside to this."

"Of course, this is looking at it with Space-X's interest in mind."

"... Makes sense."

David nodded but didn't give his own opinion.

If it were him, he probably wouldn't want to travel into the future, even if he was guaranteed to wake up.

If everything went well, he would become the leader of the Lawrence family. Going to the future meant that his power and wealth weren't guaranteed.

The only way to keep power in the family forever was education.

But...

For him personally, time-traveling was quite attractive.

This meant that he would be able to live longer in the future, and he could achieve things that weren't achievable before.

However, he would have to weigh the risks...

David rubbed his hands on the chair armrest.

Suddenly, he spoke to Elon.

"How long will it take for you guys to solve frozen dormancy technology?"

Faced with this sudden question, Musk subconsciously hesitated for a second before he answered truthfully, "I don't know... maybe five years, maybe longer... Frozen dormancy technology is just one of the projects we're working on with Johnson u0026 Johnson Pharmaceuticals. It is not our focus. Our current business model focus is still concentrated on the large thrust spacecraft and life support devices—"

David interrupted him and said, "Then from now on, it will become your focus. I'll invest a billion dollars to start."

Elon held his breath.

A billion!

Even though Tesla was worth hundreds of billions, that was only in market capital; it wasn't cash.

"I only have one request. I don't care how much money I spend. The important thing is to ensure the safety of the technology. Can that be guaranteed?"

Elon hesitated and said, “Theoretically, yes... In fact, we already have some technology that ensures the safe operation of frozen dormancy, but we need time to research and develop.”

David smiled and said, “This is fine... I am not in a hurry.”

Musk: “Can I ask something?”

David: “Go ahead.”

Musk hesitated and asked, “Do you... plan on going to the future?”

“Not for now.”

David turned around and looked out the window. His back was turned to Elon.

He stared at his reflection in the windows, as well as the Boston skyline, before whispering to himself, “But who knows what could happen in the future?”

Scholar’s Advanced Technological System - Chapter 1043 - Legendary Mission! -

Chapter 1043 Legendary Mission!

On the other side of the earth.

Lu Zhou was inside the pure white system space. He walked up to the holographic mission panel and selected the golden mission card.

The second his index finger touched the card, golden light particles began filling the entire information screen.

The dazzling effect reminded Lu Zhou of a campfire. Soon, an updated mission panel appeared in front of him.

He looked at the mission panel and spoke.

“I knew it... Exactly what I expected.”

[Legendary mission: First step toward the future.]

[Description: The first step toward the future is standing right in front of you. You are closer to the future than any mathematician has ever been!]

[Requirements: Unify algebra and geometry!]

[Rewards: Mathematics level +1, Void Memory b, five lucky draw tickets, 10,000 general points.]

This was the legendary mission.

Just like he had expected, the system's "future era" didn't mean he would travel to the future. Instead, he would obtain technologies and other things that belonged to the future. He would be the one shaping the future, opening the door to a new era.

First was mathematics.

Then physics, biochemistry, materials science, etc...

When all disciplines reached level 10, he wouldn't even need the system anymore, he would be able to see the future everywhere he went...

"A new era means the future.

"I see...

"The level 10 mathematics mission is to unify algebra and geometry, to revolutionize mathematics research... What is the legendary mission for other disciplines?"

Lu Zhou closed his eyes and thought of something interesting. He had a smirk on his face.

"... This is so exciting."

He was so close to reaching the border of the future!

His fingers swept across the holographic panel.

He closed the mission panel, returning to the main console.

After that, Lu Zhou's consciousness left the pure white system space and back to reality...

...

The days of August quickly went by, and his holidays were soon over.

Lu Zhou spent the entire month with his family. He felt like he had gotten more than enough rest. He packed his luggage and went back to Jinling.

Even though living a carefree life was desirable, it felt meaningless.

Not to mention that he had such an exciting research project waiting for him.

Before leaving home, Lu Zhou told his parents that he wanted them to go to Jinling with him. That way, the family would be together.

However, just like before, his father immediately shut down his idea.

"I'm not going, what's so good about Jinling?"

Lu Zhou didn't know what to answer.

Um...

It's just more convenient?

Fang Mei was a little worried, so she asked, "What if I cook for you there?"

However, Lu Bangguo interrupted her.

"Don't do that, when he finds a wife, she can cook for him."

Lu Zhou: "..."

I have people that can cook for me, I don't need a wife...

Actually, I'm pretty sure Xiao Ai doesn't count as a person.

After hearing Old Lu's words, Fang Mei didn't say anything.

Even though she often argued with Old Lu, she still listened to him most of the time.

Old Lu looked at Lu Zhou and spoke.

“You’re busy with work, just focus on yourself. You don’t have to worry about us, we’re in good health. You should exercise more, don’t stay in the office all day.

“We are very comfortable here in Jiangling. I can go out and walk around. It is very convenient to go see friends and family. If I go to Jinling I would be stuck at home watching TV all day, we probably wouldn’t even be able to see you around.

“This is fine, you can just come to visit us during the holidays.”

Lu Zhou didn’t say anything else.

He just wanted the best for his parents. Jinling City had better medical and social resources.

However, his father was right.

Not everyone wanted to live in a big city. His dad much preferred to read a newspaper and drink tea with his friends. Maybe catch some fish on the weekends.

Therefore, Lu Zhou didn’t mention moving them to Jinling again.

I’ll just spend more time visiting them...

He went on the high-speed rail and soon arrived back in Jinling.

The first thing Lu Zhou did was go to Jin University and submit his research project application.

When he was submitting the application, the faculty staff member from the mathematics department froze.

The unified theory of algebra and geometry!

This was the first time the staff member had seen such a ridiculous thesis proposal.

Lu Zhou saw the look on the staff’s face, he sighed.

Thank god.

I was the one who came here.

If Lu Zhou had asked Han Mengqi or one of his students to submit the thesis proposal, they would be laughed out of the office...

Lu Zhou coughed.

The staff member snapped back to reality after hearing Lu Zhou's cough. He gulped and spoke.

"Academician Lu... are you sure you want to research this topic?"

Generally speaking, after a research project was accepted, it couldn't be changed for a long time.

Lu Zhou: "Is there a problem?"

"No, of course not." The staff member smiled and said, "I'll process the application as soon as possible!"

Lu Zhou nodded.

"I'm in no hurry."

He only submitted the research proposal as a habit.

Even if he didn't, he wouldn't matter.

After all, he didn't really care about the university's research funding...

Chapter 1044 Your Future Student

After Lu Zhou left, he was about to go to his mathematics department office. However, he happened to bump into an acquaintance downstairs.

Actually, this person barely counted as his acquaintance. Lu Zhou had only met this kid a few times before, and because of his unique face, Lu Zhou recognized him.

When this kid noticed Lu Zhou, his eyes lit up as he waved his hand.

“Master! It’s me! Li Mo!”

This attracted the attention of the people around him, and some people began chuckling.

Honestly, Lu Zhou was tempted to ignore him and leave.

However, he remembered that the kid got a perfect gold medal in the IMO competition and came all the way here from Beijing. So, he sighed and spoke.

“You really came to Jin University?”

“Of course! You said you would accept me as your student.” Li Mo awkwardly scratched his head and said, “I really just want to learn mathematics with you.”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “I have high standards, are you sure?”

Li Mo said in a serious manner, “I am sure! I want to become a great mathematician like you! I want to help our country! I want to win a Fields Medal—”

“Okay, enough,” Lu Zhou calmly said. “You can forget about the Fields Medal. Anyone who has won the Fields Medal never made it their goal to win the medal. We are just studying the language of the universe, whether it’s the Fields Medal or the Carl Friedrich Gauss Prize... those are meaningless.”

Anyone who has won the Fields Medal never made it their goal to win the medal...

Li Mo repeated this in his mind, and he had a look of awe on his face.

So insightful!

No wonder he’s such a great mathematician!

He’s so well-spoken...

Lu Zhou felt a little embarrassed. He coughed and spoke.

“Also, another piece of advice.”

Li Mo: “Yes, Master!”

“Don’t call me master, just call me Professor Lu. Also, if you want to learn math well, you have to stop being arrogant and impatient. Also, you might want to get rid of the habit of humble bragging.”

Lu Zhou looked at the kid and spoke.

“Any other questions?”

Li Mo scratched his head and said, “Does that count as one piece or two pieces of advice?”

“That’s not important.”

After that, Lu Zhou turned around.

“Follow me, I’ll show you the office.

“If you don’t understand a question, you can ask me. Don’t bother me with stupid questions.”

Li Mo followed Lu Zhou and excitedly said, “Okay, Master!”

...

After Lu Zhou submitted his thesis proposal, he left it alone.

For him, submitting the proposal was just to inform the school about what he was researching. The research funding would go toward his office and travel expenses.

After Lu Zhou took Li Mo to his office, he told Li Mo that “once you graduate, you’ll get your desk here”.

Even though some professors would place worthy undergraduate students in their office occasionally, Lu Zhou didn’t intend to do that.

Undergraduate studies were important.

Especially for a genius, giving them the freedom to explore was better than restricting them.

An undergrad would learn more by staying in the library and researching problems themselves.

He Changwen looked at the young kid that left and asked, "Professor, is he your student?"

Lu Zhou said, "Future student."

Wu Shuimu, an applied mathematics student, took off his glasses and said, "Professor, what's his background?"

He had never seen Professor Lu so enthusiastic with an undergraduate student before. He was quite curious who this young man was.

Lu Zhou spoke.

"IMO gold medalist."

IMO gold medalist!

Even though Lu Zhou spoke casually, the atmosphere in the office suddenly froze.

The Fields Medal for high school students, IMO!

And he won a gold medal!

I had no idea he was that impressive!

But what is an IMO gold medalist doing here, why not go to Yan University?

"Look at you guys, it's just an IMO medal."

You guys didn't react like this when I won the Carl Friedrich Gauss Prize...

Lu Zhou smiled at the noob researchers and cleared his throat. He spoke concisely.

"I have something to say."

Han Mengqi put down her pen, and so did Feng Jin.

The office quieted down, and everyone looked at him seriously.

“Don’t be so nervous,” Lu Zhou said. “I just went to the academic affairs office and submitted my thesis proposal. Our task going forward is to unify algebra and geometry. Your work will be in this general area...”

“I haven’t figured out how to name this theory, so this is just to give you guys a heads-up.

“Keep on working.”

After that, Lu Zhou ignored their stunned looks. He casually turned around and left the office.

...

Level 10 in mathematics was a huge deal, so Lu Zhou had this on the top of his priority list.

After that, he had to deal with the clues he got from the Void Memory...

Wang Peng drove him to the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. He took the elevators and went to his underground basement. He found the black cube debris.

As expected, it looked exactly the same as the one in his memory!

Other than the fact that the surface was black, the engravings and shape of the cube were almost exactly the same as the golden cube he pulled out of the liquid helium pool!

Lu Zhou was certain he was correct.

After all, the memory was engraved in his mind...

“I think this is some kind of storage device...”

Lu Zhou’s finger carefully searched along the engraved lines. He tried to find a way to turn this thing on. Unfortunately, he wasn’t successful.

“... There should be some kind of device to turn this on.

“But... what if it’s already broken?”

Lu Zhou placed the cube on the workbench.

A dialog box appeared on the control interface.

[Master, do you want me to take it apart? $\geq \nabla \leq *$]

The mechanical arm next to it began to move.

Lu Zhou: “Can you guarantee it can be reassembled again?”

[What? It has to be reassembled? $(. \cdot \nabla \cdot)$]

“... Of course, otherwise, I can disassemble it myself.”

Lu Zhou looked at the mechanical arm, then stared at the black cube. He suddenly sighed.

“If only I can access another Void Memory.”

His intuition told him that the answer should be inside the void.

Not just the answer to this debris.

But also the answer to the origin of the system...

Chapter 1045 Good News From the Carbon Based Chip Laboratory

Lu Zhou still didn't know how to use the Debris No.2, but fortunately, he had some clue about its origin.

Even though there was no way to crack its secrets, he believed that after seeing his next Void Memory, he should be able to obtain the key to open this “treasure chest”.

Lu Zhou put this unsolvable problem aside. He placed his focus back to academia.

Compared to Riemann's hypothesis, the theory of unified algebra and geometry wasn't actually as difficult as imagined.

Even though this was more groundbreaking than Riemann's hypothesis, in fact, it didn't require a groundbreaking mathematical tool to solve. It didn't even require too much creativity.

What it required was the ability to rely on logic to summarize existing knowledge, tools, and methods, to be able to thread the needle.

That sounded a bit abstract.

But compared to Riemann's hypothesis, where the top of the mountain couldn't be seen at all, the peak of this research project's mountain was visible. There was even a road leading to the top of the mountain.

In fact, when he was researching Riemann's hypothesis, he already had a blueprint outline in his heart. He was the closest person to the top of the mountain.

After all, the research on Riemann's hypothesis already made him climb up half of the mountain.

For now, he was the most likely person on the planet to complete this project.

At the same time, his students could also feel useful by contributing to this research project.

Riemann's hypothesis required a genius brain and a talented mind, but this research project could be divided into sub-projects and different categories, things that required large amounts of manpower...

...

Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Dean's office.

Director Li came here from Beijing for a business trip. He sat down on the sofa and smiled at Lu Zhou.

"... Speaking of which, I forgot to tell you something."

"What's up?"

"Just a few days ago, the Russians sent a diplomatic thank you letter expressing their gratitude, and they specifically mentioned your name."

Lu Zhou hesitated and asked curiously, "... Thank you letter?"

“Yeah, didn’t you visit the Helios nuclear power plant a while ago and found a big problem in their power grid system?”

Oh yeah, I nearly forgot about that.

“It’s just a coincidence.” Lu Zhou smiled and suddenly realized something. He said, “That diplomatic letter... isn’t released to the public, right?”

Director Li instantly knew what Lu Zhou was talking about. He patted his leg and smiled. “This isn’t a Ministry of Foreign Affairs conference, of course it’s not open to the public. We have also asked the other party to keep this a secret, for your safety.”

Lu Zhou nodded.

Even though he wasn’t particularly worried, it was better to be safe.

Of course, Lu Zhou knew that even if this wasn’t released to the public, the Americans probably could have deduced what had happened.

Director Li: “Speaking of which, there’s something else.”

Lu Zhou said, “What?”

After taking a sip of tea and moistening his throat, Director Li put on a serious face and continued, “That accident wasn’t an accident. An intelligence officer named Maksim... Of course, I don’t know if that is his real name. Basically, the intelligence provided to us by the Russians shows that it was probably a premeditated attack. The person who planned this attack tried to implant a virus in the St. Petersburg regional power grid system. The nuclear core overloaded and ignition failed. This was also an attack on you.”

“Me?”

“Yes!” Director Li nodded and said seriously, “There are enough pieces of evidence to support that at least half of the motive behind this is toward you.

“However, the people behind this attack underestimated the safety features of our fusion machine.

“So far, the Unified Energy System of Russia is cooperating with the security bureau to conduct investigations... I don’t know the specifics since the State Administration for National Defense isn’t responsible for this.”

Lu Zhou didn't expect to hear something like this.

Lu Zhou suddenly sighed and said, "What a mess, maybe I won't attend any conferences in the future."

Director Li smiled and said, "Don't do that, if it is necessary to attend, you should go, just be careful. Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. Also, the times have changed, we have the upper hand in the international field. Those that want to attack us, only dare to do so in the shadows."

Director Li put down the teacup and stood up.

"Okay, I have some work to do, so I won't waste any more of your time. If you need anything, call me."

Lu Zhou nodded and stood up.

"Take care."

Lu Zhou sent Director Li off and was about to go back to his office. However, he saw Professor Wu Tianqun from the carbon-based chips research institute walking toward him.

This old professor's face was as bright as a tomato. He immediately walked up to Lu Zhou and spoke.

"Good news!"

Lu Zhou could tell this professor had something to say.

There was only one thing from the carbon-based chip laboratory that would be considered good news.

However, Lu Zhou still cautiously asked, "... What good news?"

Professor Wu Tianqun said exactly what Lu Zhou had guessed.

Professor Wu Tianqun spoke with energy.

"A commercial standard sample of the Dragon One chip!"

"We did it!"

Chapter 1046 Ten Million Per Square Millimeter!

The carbon-based chip research institute.

Lu Zhou had been here numerous times.

However, this time the atmosphere felt different.

When he came here before, it was for more or less to check on the research progress. But this time, he could tell from the joyful faces of the researchers that something was different...

He noticed a tiny black square around the size of his fingernail.

"This is it."

Professor Wu Tianqun carefully handed the thin chip into Lu Zhou's hands as he said, "Dragon 1000, the first prototype chip of the Dragon series! Also called Dragon One! We're using a 28nm process technology, and we successfully increased transistor count from 3 million transistor units per square millimeter to 10 million!"

"Due to our business partner's needs, our initial offering of the Dragon One chips will be used in medium and high-end servers. Its target competition is the Intel Xeon X56 series chip. Although in terms of specs we are slightly inferior to them, because of the superiority of carbon-based transistors, it's not an exaggeration to say that we are far ahead of them!"

Professor Wu Tianqun tried to portray the chip's performance to Lu Zhou in plain words.

Although the density of 10 million transistors per square millimeter was less than that of Intel, which had already achieved a density of 100 million per square millimeter. However, carbon-based transistors and silicon-based transistors were two different things. It would be like comparing apples and oranges.

Using the Xeon series chips as an example, depending on the model and series, the transistor density was around about 50 million per square

millimeter. By comparison, Dragon One only had 10 million per square millimeter. But, it was already able to outperform the Xeon X series chips!

Hitting the milestone of 10 million meant that the technology had much more room for improvement!

When their carbon-based chip transistor density reached the same level as silicon chips...

They would have a monopoly on the entire industry.

All in all, even though the technology had only just been invented, the performance of the Dragon One chip had already been proven to be superior.

With a power consumption of up to 20W and a frequency of 3.7GHz, the carbon-based transistors had superior physical properties when compared to silicon-based transistors. Professor Wu Tianqun was sure of this.

After listening to Professor Wu Tianqun's statement, Lu Zhou began to look more and more intrigued.

He didn't know much about chips, and his contributions to this project were mainly focused on the theoretical level and the improvement of carbon materials. However, judging from how excited Professor Wu Tianqun was, he knew this was a huge breakthrough.

Lu Zhou looked at the chip in his hand, and he couldn't help but speak.

"It's so light!"

When compared to the texture and weight of silicon chips, this chip was as thin as a piece of paper... Actually, it was made of the same material as paper.

Professor Wu Tianqun said with a smile, "That is also one of the advantages of carbon-based chips. Our weight per unit volume is less than half of that of silicon-based chips!"

In fact, the chip was more than just paper-like.

Lu Zhou played with the chip in his hand. He suddenly realized that the chip could be bent at a small angle, and when he let go, the chip sprung back to its original shape...

Almost like a spring.

Lu Zhou suddenly realized something.

“Is it okay for me to hold this with my hands?”

Professor Wu Tianqun smiled and said, “It’s fine, this is almost a commercial-ready product, it’s much cheaper than you think. If you break it, we have a bunch more.”

After hearing this, Lu Zhou finally relaxed and began bending the chip with more power.

He was curious about what the limit of the chip was.

When the force exerted on both sides of the chip made it bend at a 20-degree angle, the black chip broke into two pieces.

Professor Wu Tianqun looked at Lu Zhou and spoke.

“Our chip mainly uses SG series materials, and it has a good bending performance. I’m sure you know more about that than me. But... I still don’t recommend doing that. Generally speaking, bending will affect the current transmission.”

“I was just testing it.” Lu Zhou threw the chip debris into a special recycling bag and looked at Professor Wu Tianqun. He said, “I didn’t expect you guys to have progressed so much since I last came here.”

Professor Wu humbly said, “The industrialization is mainly done by the Institute of Semiconductors at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. We are mainly focused on carbon-based transistor density.”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “If everything goes well, when can production start?”

Professor Wu Tianqun thought about it for a while and said, “According to the feedback from HiSilicon, we can begin production at the end of the month... Actually, they are in quite a hurry. The American government’s policies are becoming more and more restrictive. I talked to their CTO about this issue, they want to take the carbon-based chips to the international market.”

Lu Zhou raised his eyebrows and said, “We can’t let them down then.”

Professor Wu Tianqun smiled and said, “Of course not! I believe in the strength of the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study!”

Lu Zhou stayed at the carbon-based laboratory for a while.

After he returned to his office, he called Director Li from the State Administration for National Defense.

Once the call connected, Director Li’s voice traveled through the phone.

“Hello? What’s up?”

Lu Zhou: “Something came up.”

Director Li was a little speechless.

Jesus, couldn’t you have told me in person?

Now I’m already in the car.

“Why didn’t you tell me earlier? I’m going to the high-tech zone, I’ll come by tomorrow—”

“It’s about the Dragon One carbon-based chips—”

Before Lu Zhou could finish, Director Li asked fiercely, “Where are you now?”

Lu Zhou chuckled and spoke.

“... Still in my office.”

“Wait for me, I’m coming... Xiao Li, turn around, back to the Institute for Advanced Study!”

“But the meeting in the high-tech zone is going to begin in an hour—”

“Shut up, Professor Lu is more important!”

“Yes, sir...”

The phone call ended.

Lu Zhou leaned back in his chair and shook his head. He placed his phone on the table.

The Dragon One chips had been made.

According to Professor Wu, there shouldn't be any production problems. The Jiangcheng semiconductor industrial base was built for this purpose.

All of the supporting facilities were fully prepared even before the project began. Huawei's HiSilicon was now at the uppermost stream of the industrial chain.

The only thing they had to think about was how to make as much money as possible.

Lu Zhou tapped his finger on the table. He pondered for a while then shook his head.

Forget about this, I'll let the businessmen decide.

He picked up his phone and called the usual number.

In fact, he nearly forgot this phone number was in his contacts.

"Hello, Boss Wang?"

"Speaking."

"The chip you ordered, we made it."

Chapter 1047 IEEE Summi

Los Angeles.

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers conference was held as scheduled.

As the top conference of the Integrated Circuit Design field, not only was this an academic conference, it was also a stage for manufacturers to show off their latest products.

For an applied industry like this, the boundary between academia and industry was blurry.

Many scholars were engineers at their own companies, and many engineers were thesis reviewers. It wasn't uncommon for someone to serve as a Chief Technology Officer while reviewing for an electrical engineering journal.

Professor Michael Mayberry, who was standing on stage, was a classic example.

While he served as the dean of the Intel Semiconductor Research Institute, he also held the position of CTO at Intel.

He was presenting on stage to scholars, engineers, and company representatives. His presentation was on a series of technologies such as Intel's latest consumer processor chips and next-generation core graphics cards.

Among the dazzling new products, the most attention-grabbing was undoubtedly the "silver" microarchitecture, with a 7nm process technology.

The PowerPoint slide captured the attention of everyone!

According to Intel, the "silver" architecture would be launched in the second half of 2022 and would be built on top of the "Sunny Cove" architecture Intel introduced in 2019. The new architecture would improve the chip performance to a whole new level! The chip transistor integration and manufacturing process would also be entirely different.

Michael Mayberry stood on stage and emphasized with excitement that this was a huge leap in technological innovation. And Intel would redefine the future of chip technology... Even though everyone came here to brag, most people were quite surprised at Mayberry's presentation.

Everyone knew that the 7nm process was close to the technological limit of major manufacturers. Even though 5nm was possible, it wasn't cost-effective.

And 5nm was around the level of a bottleneck. This was when the material itself would become increasingly unstable due to quantum mechanical effects. At this level, improving the chip performance by lowering the process would be difficult.

Because of this, major chip manufacturers were trying to find other ways to improve the chip performance, other than improving the process technology.

The controversial “Sunny Cove” architecture released in the second half of 2019 was a classic example.

The “Sunny Cove” architecture based on 10nm process technology directly improved the performance of Intel’s Core and Xeon series chips by 66%!

No one was surprised that Intel was able to achieve 7nm process technology, but to make such a major breakthrough on top of the “Sunny Cove” architecture was nutty, to say the least.

Obviously, Intel became the center of attention at this academic conference.

Qualcomm’s chief engineer Derek Wacker was sitting in the audience. He watched the Intel CTO’s presentation with jealousy in his eyes.

“Intel is so far ahead... Last time I heard Mayberry say they had some big announcements to make, that they were going to change the architecture. I thought he was just bragging, I didn’t think they could actually do it.”

Sitting next to him was Koch, the vice president of Qualcomm who was also sent to attend this academic conference. Koch looked at the person on the stage and looked envious.

“... Intel’s stock is going to the moon tomorrow.”

Even though Intel and Qualcomm didn’t have a good relationship, Koch was happy to ride this upswing by piggybacking off Intel.

On the other hand, Mayberry’s mouth felt a bit dry, so he grabbed a cup of water and took a sip.

He spent 20 minutes talking to potential Intel partners about this amazing “silver” architecture lineup of chips.

Even though he spoke in an arrogant manner, everyone in the conference hall believed him.

They all knew what kind of person Mayberry was.

He might brag a little, but he would never lie.

When the presentation was finally over, Michael Mayberry walked off stage in the midst of a round of applause.

The conference continued as scheduled. However, it was obvious that the main stage had been completely taken away by Intel.

Mayberry got off the stage and listened to the discussions happening around him. He couldn't help but feel prideful.

He enjoyed this feeling.

This was why he personally came to present this talk.

Otherwise, he could have delegated this to someone else.

Several other speakers went on stage; people from Qualcomm, Samsung, Apple... However, none of them were as dazzling as Intel's "silver" architecture.

When a Qualcomm engineer was talking about their ARM-V9 instruction set architecture update, he had a look of defeat on his face.

After the Qualcomm presenter stepped down, a Chinese man wearing glasses went on stage.

The lanky man wore a suit that didn't fit him. He clearly didn't look like a professor or an established engineer. Instead, he looked like an intern or an assistant.

Mayberry joked to his friends about the person on stage. He had a look of contempt in his eyes.

The anxious presenter and the Huawei HiSilicon made Mayberry feel like the presentation wasn't worth listening to at all.

After all, what could an intern talk about?

Other than to embarrass themselves.

The person sitting next to him, the Intel CEO, Bob Swan, suddenly spoke.

"I heard they've been working with the Chinese state on integrated circuit design."

By “they”, he was obviously talking about HiSilicon.

Mayberry still had a look of contempt in his eyes when he raised his eyebrows.

“Oh really, so this is a ‘high tech’ Chinese company?”

Bob Swan said, “It’s better to not underestimate them. After all, we’ve barely entered the controllable fusion field, but they’re already providing power to our factory in Southeast Asia.”

But nuclear fusion and chips are totally different.

Mayberry pouted his lips in disapproval.

The intern-like presenter on stage finally spoke.

Maybe because this was his first time doing a presentation, he took some deep breaths to calm himself down before he gave an opening speech.

The big names sitting in the front row gave a look of encouragement to this young man, including Bob Swan and Mayberry.

They were sympathetic and supportive toward a harmless opponent like this guy. Even though they were disrespectful on the outside, on the surface they were polite.

That was how businessmen were.

No matter how annoying a child was, the adult would still tolerate them.

“This project is... a joint project of HiSilicon and the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. We have worked on this for almost two years. Actually, their research team is supposed to be the ones here today, but due to various reasons, they gave us the opportunity instead.”

His lack of confidence already made people lose interest.

Even though the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study name attracted the attention of many people, they remembered that it was an intern who was doing the presentation.

The presenter looked at the front row and noticed that some of the big names began chatting among themselves. The presenter started to get anxious as he started to talk.

“I will show the PowerPoint next.

“This is a project on carbon-based chips...”

Halfway through his sentence.

Suddenly, he realized that the venue became silent.

It was so silent that it felt scary...

Chapter 1048 Academician Lu's Project

The silence in the air was terrifying.

The skinny man with glasses standing on stage noticed this, and he stopped his speech while feeling a little unsure of whether he should continue.

Finally, someone broke the silence.

“What's your name?”

The person who asked this question was Mayberry, the Intel CTO sitting in the front row.

He asked this question after making eye contact with the man on stage.

The person on stage was shocked that a big name was talking to a small fry like him. He zoned out for a second but quickly realized he was still standing on stage. He nodded and spoke.

“... He Hai, research and development engineer at Huawei.”

He Hai?

Mayberry subconsciously remembered this name. His eyebrows furrowed as he began to think. He couldn't recall ever hearing this name.

Finally, he gave up. He looked at He Hai and spoke.

“It doesn’t matter what your name is.”

He Hai: “???”

You were the one who asked.

Mayberry didn’t realize how contradictory his statement was. He pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose and spoke calmly.

“I heard you mention the word carbon-based chip. Judging from the PowerPoint slides, am I correct to deduce that you, representing on behalf of Huawei, are here to announce to the academic community and industrial circle that you guys have made a breakthrough in carbon-based chip technology?”

Strictly speaking, he was only halfway through his presentation, far from the Qu0026A session. Mayberry’s action was somewhat disrespectful to the presenter, as well as the audience.

But there were exceptions to everything.

No one frowned at Mayberry’s behavior, because they all wanted to know the answer to the question.

Were the things on the PowerPoint slide accurate?

He Hai obviously didn’t expect Mayberry to ask such a strange question. He looked at him strangely, then looked back at his PowerPoint. He made sure that there were no mistakes on the slides and spoke.

“As you can see, as the first Dragon series chip produced using carbon-based chip technology, we have adopted a new generation of carbon-based transistors by collaborating with the Jinling Institute of Computational Materials and carbon-based laboratory...”

The second the audience heard the word carbon-based transistor, there was a commotion.

The concept of carbon-based chips was something that only appeared this year. Until today, most people thought it was only a concept, while the feasibility of the concept was still controversial in the academic community.

However, now this person on stage was claiming...

That someone had already solved this controversial technology?

Mayberry began to panic. He could barely keep his composure. He stared at the presenter and spoke.

“You’re speaking on behalf of Huawei? Are you responsible for your words? Do you know what it means to publish false academic results at a conference?”

Mayberry desperately tried to get a read on the Chinese man’s face, hoping to see micro-expressions that he was lying.

However, he was disappointed.

The presenter named He Hai didn’t realize the questions were rhetoric, so he awkwardly smiled and said, “Oh, there’s no need to worry about that.

“The corresponding author of this paper is Academician Lu.

“He’s responsible for this project.”

Professor Lu!

The second this name was mentioned, the venue went quiet.

Mayberry’s face turned pale. His lips trembled as he was rendered speechless.

He hoped that the report was just a hoax, that there was no carbon-based chip technology, that Huawei was lying. But now, all of his hopes were destroyed by the mention of “Academician Lu”...

A Nobel Prize laureate and Fields Medalist, the person who proved Riemann’s hypothesis, who recently won the Carl Friedrich Gauss Prize. With so many titles and honors behind this name, his resume would be ten pages long.

Because of his status, there was no reason for him to lie for Huawei.

If this technology was really backed by this person’s academic reputation...

Seeing how Mayberry was speechless, He Hai spoke.

“Um, so can I continue?”

“Continue...” said Swan, speaking for his dumbfounded CTO.

He Hai looked at the pairs of gazes staring at him. He gulped and nodded.

“Oh, okay.”

...

He Hai swore to god that the presentation today was the peak of his life.

At least the peak of the first half of his life.

The entire venue was filled with well-known scholars and engineers in the semiconductor industry, as well as industry leaders.

However, everyone sitting in the audience, whether they were a noob researcher or a big name, all quietly listened to his PowerPoint presentation.

He was certain that everyone was truly listening to him.

Because when he presented the chip testing performance results, he could hear exclams...

“28nm process technology, chip integration of 10 million per square millimeter... Superior to Xeon chips, this is crazy!”

“How is this possible! Before seeing this with my own eyes, I won’t believe it!”

“The clock speed of 3.7GHz, the maximum power consumption of 20W... Haha, impossible.”

“In theory, carbon-based chips have better heat dissipation performance than silicon-based chips...”

“This is impossible! I’ll say it again, this is impossible!”

“ ... ”

When He Hai heard the whispers in the crowd, he didn’t begin to worry. Instead, he was relieved.

Regardless of whether or not the audience believed him, what mattered was that they listened to him.

As for the debates...

That didn't matter.

He had seen the magical chip before. It was the size of a thumbnail, light as a piece of paper. He couldn't describe the shock in his heart when he first saw it. One thing he was certain of was that when the people sitting here see the chip with their own eyes, they would be just as shocked...

After the presentation ended, there was no Q&A session. The whole venue was a mess.

Qualcomm's vice president Koch had a blank expression on his face.

Suddenly, he spoke.

"Wacker, do you know what I want to do?"

Wacker had the same expression. He gulped and muttered, "I don't know, I don't trade stocks... I have some Qualcomm stock, I'm going to try to sell as much as I can."

Koch nodded.

"I had the same idea."

Chapter 1049 Subverting the Entire Industry

After Koch saw Intel's "Silver" micro-architecture, he thought that the spotlight of the integrated circuit design conference was destined to be shining on Intel. However, that changed after he saw Huawei's carbon-based chip technology.

Forget about being the spotlight of the IEEE conference.

The second the presentation was over, news about the Dragon One and "carbon-based chip" spread to all areas of the industry.

It was like an earthquake that had erupted in the semiconductor industry.

Huawei had made a major breakthrough in carbon-based chip technology!

The first series of chips using carbon-based technology, the Dragon One chips, would be used in mid- to high-end servers, directly competing with Intel's industry-leading Xeon chip series!

People couldn't believe what they were hearing.

On the other hand, the stock market also shocked everyone.

Even though Intel had just released their "Silver" architecture, their stock prices were dropping to the floor...

Everyone came so suddenly.

Koch, Qualcomm's vice president, was hoping for another possibility, which was that there was no carbon-based chip at all, that Huawei was being too optimistic. Or maybe, HiSilicon had misread an email from their research partners.

But the probability of this was low.

Also, that would mean that Professor Lu, the corresponding author, hadn't even read the thesis.

That was obviously unlikely.

It wasn't just Intel, Qualcomm, and AMD, the entire semiconductor industry had begun to suffer because of this change.

Everything came so suddenly.

No one could have expected this report to happen.

Most people didn't even know that the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study had a project like this. The vast majority of people only vaguely knew about China's semiconductor industry clusters. Only a few people heard about Huawei's HiSilicon moving up the industrial chain.

However, no one could have predicted the carbon-based chip based on these rumors.

The effect caused by the collapse of the semiconductor industry soon affected the Nasdaq, and there was a pessimistic sentiment on the technology industry, including mobile phones, computers, and servers.

No one expected that chip giants such as Intel and Qualcomm, who firmly held the top positions of the industrial chain, were suddenly dethroned.

The global semiconductor industry was crumbling...

Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Dean's office.

Huawei CEO Wang Zhengfei was sitting on the sofa drinking tea. He smiled and told Lu Zhou about the events happening in the semiconductor world.

"The sales department at HiSilicon has been getting orders left and right, and some calls have even reached my office."

HiSilicon sales strategy was to give priority to Huawei's internal orders, then followed by domestic orders, and finally overseas orders.

Judging from the current demand, the demand for chips from Huawei alone would take the semiconductor base in Jiangcheng half a year to fulfill.

Even if people wanted to buy the chips, they couldn't.

However, this didn't mean the downstream manufacturers would give up.

Because of the 20W power consumption and the excellent heat dissipation performance of carbon-based chips, several supercomputer centers in China had asked to buy the carbon-based chips, no matter what the cost was.

Lu Zhou knew what it was like to be bombarded by phone calls.

"Good job, you did well."

"Me?" Wang Zhengfei smiled and said, "I didn't do anything, it's the scientists like you that did this."

Lu Zhou: "This is mainly because of Professor Wu, he's the leader of this project."

Wang Zhengfei: "Speaking of which, Professor Wu is about to become an academician, right?"

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Yeah, I recommended him, it should be fine."

Wang Zhengfei smiled and said, "If you say it's fine, then there's really nothing to worry about. I was going to ask if there's anything I can do to help, but it seems like I was overthinking things."

Lu Zhou smiled and paused for a second before he spoke.

"Actually, there's one thing I don't understand."

Wang Zhengfei put down his teacup and said, "Oh? Looks like I have the honor to help Academician Lu. Ask away."

Lu Zhou: "Why did we have to present the thesis at the IEEE conference?"

Wang Zhengfei smiled casually and said, "Before we open the floodgates, we have to measure the pipeline pressure. Before we launch a product, we have to release the research and observe the industry's reaction. If there are any problems, we still have time to fix them. Also, we've been working behind closed doors, they don't even know we're researching this."

"It's like how everyone thought you were working on fourth-generation nuclear fission technology. But after a year and a half of silence, you suddenly solved controllable fusion energy. The industry might not even believe you, your partners might not even trust you."

Lu Zhou frowned and said, "Who cares about them?"

Wang Zhengfei smiled and said, "Good question, we shouldn't care about them! Sooner or later, manufacturers will realize that we have a piece of treasure on our hands, but that will take time. This isn't like nuclear fusion, we can't continue on with our doors closed. We have to redefine the semiconductor industry and break the western technology barriers."

This wasn't just about carbon-based chips. If they wanted to redefine the industry, China would have to beat the west by surprise.

Lu Zhou frowned and said, "Oh, so how were the pipeline measurements?"

Wang Zhengfei smiled and said, "They were exactly as expected! The entire semiconductor industry is afraid of what will happen when we release our chips. The next step is to respond to their fears and organize a product launch. What do you think, Academician Lu? Are you interested in saying some words at the launch?"

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "Not interested, I've done too many reports recently. Not to mention, I'm only doing the theoretical side, I don't know a lot about the actual chip. You should find someone else to do the product launch."

"Haha, you're over-complicating things. You being on stage alone is enough." Wang Zhengfei smiled and said, "How about just being there? It's in Jinling anyway."

Lu Zhou hesitated for a bit before speaking.

"... Okay then."

After all, it was in Jinling, so he wouldn't have to travel far.

Suddenly, his phone began to vibrate.

Wang Zhengfei took out his phone and looked at Lu Zhou.

"Wait a second, I have to answer this."

Lu Zhou: "Is it fine for me to be here?"

"Yeah, yeah, it's fine."

The phone call lasted for 30 seconds.

All the old man said was "okay" and "I understand".

After Wang Zhengfei hung up the phone, Lu Zhou asked, "What good news is it this time?"

Wang Zhengfei put his phone back into his pocket and said, "The IEEE withdrew our paper."

The two made eye contact and laughed.

One of them was laughing awkwardly.

The other was laughing mischievously.

Chapter 1050 Just Call It “Future“

For a scholar, having one’s manuscript being rejected was nothing unusual.

Regardless of the scholar’s reputation or past achievements, if the paper didn’t meet the requirements of publication, it would be rejected at any stage of the review process.

However, it was uncommon for a published paper to be withdrawn.

For papers that had already been published, withdrawing that paper was a huge blow to the credibility of the journal. Because that implied that there was a major publication error.

Therefore, generally speaking, journals were extremely cautious about withdrawing published papers, unless there was serious academic fraud that occurred.

Back in the day, the Nobel Prize-level academic fraud caused by Haruko Obokata shocked the biology field. The academic community had determined that her experimental results were altered. The Japanese Institute of Physical and Chemical Research could not withstand the pressure from the public. After they asked Haruko Obokata for permission to withdraw the paper on STAP cells, they asked Nature to withdraw the controversial manuscript.

Even though the biological field was different from the integrated circuit design field, the thesis being withdrawn immediately after the IEEE conference was a bit unusual.

Not only did Lu Zhou have his paper being rejected, but his paper was also now withdrawn. He felt like he had experienced everything he could as an academic scholar.

But then again, this was his first time submitting a paper to the IEEE journal. Also, the paper was in the electrical engineering field, not exactly his area of specialty. He had received emails from top engineering journals, asking him to

submit his research on fusion energy. However, due to the sensitive nature of the technology, he politely declined.

He would have never imagined his first submission on IEEE to be withdrawn, based on the absurd reasons that it was “academic fraud” and “falsification of experimental data”.

After Lu Zhou read the withdrawal notice from IEEE, he was baffled.

Jesus Christ, do you guys really think I’m the type of person to publish fake experimental data?

He wasn’t sure how much influence the IEEE conference had on the industry. What baffled him was because he felt like the academic world was becoming more and more contaminated.

Back when the United States and the Soviet Union were in an arms race, the academic environment wasn’t like this at all...

Chen Yushan said, “I heard your paper was withdrawn?”

She was sitting on the sofa in the Institute for Advanced Study dean office, and she had a smirk on her face when she spoke.

Lu Zhou looked at her gloating smile and sighed. “Do you really have to gloat that hard?”

“What do you mean? I’m not gloating. It’s just rare to see you take a loss.”

Lu Zhou said, “Not exactly taking a loss. It’s just an unfortunate situation.”

Chen Yushan: “Did they ask you to revise the paper or anything?”

“In the withdrawal notice, they politely told me that some of the experimental data looks a little ‘exaggerated’ and told me to modify it. However, they didn’t even tell me which part looked exaggerated. I am certain they didn’t do verification experiments because they don’t have the means to.”

Chen Yushan curiously asked, “Then, do you plan on modifying it?”

“Modify it?” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Why would I modify something that is correct?”

Cooperating with reviewers' opinions to revise obvious errors was one thing, but this was equivalent to slander.

Chen Yushan looked at Lu Zhou and smirked.

"No wonder you're a top scholar, that sentence is quotable."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "What does this have to do with being a top scholar?"

"Of course it does! Think about it, the students who dare to argue with the teachers are all top scholars. The noob researcher wouldn't dare to question the teachers."

Lu Zhou sighed and said, "So you're saying the IEEE is a teacher? I don't think they're even qualified enough to call them that."

"Just an example..." Chen Yushan rolled her eyes and suddenly said, "Speaking of which, have you ever thought about creating a journal yourself?"

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "I was talking with the Huawei CEO about this yesterday."

Actually, the Huawei CEO wasn't the only one he talked to about this problem. A bunch of his friends in the Chinese academic community had mentioned this to him. However, Lu Zhou always thought it would be too troublesome.

After all, in his opinion, the journal itself wasn't important. What was important was the paper itself. If the research was sophisticated enough, it would attract people's attention even if it was only uploaded on arXiv.

On the other hand, insignificant research papers would require a well-known journal to prove its value.

But now, it seemed like his ideas were too optimistic.

Even though journals were just a platform for publishing academic research, it still had a certain amount of censorship. Even if these restrictions and censorship were not manifested under normal circumstances, it was clear that IEEE had crossed this line.

Maybe I should really think about starting my own academic journal.

“Wang Zhengfei talked to you about this?” Chen Yushan said with a surprised look on her face. She curiously asked, “What did he say?”

Lu Zhou thought about it and said, “He said that carbon-based chips are something we made ourselves and that it is difficult for others to review the manuscripts. Right now the international community has not done any research in this area beyond the theoretical level. It would be difficult for them to review the paper.”

Chen Yushan nodded and said, “I agree... What do you think?”

“I think he makes sense.”

Lu Zhou paused and smiled as he said, “I was thinking, the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study has been established for a long time, and it still doesn’t have a journal.

“I plan on setting up a science journal in the name of the Institute for Advanced Study... Of course, people outside of the institute can also submit theses, but we have to do the review ourselves.”

Chen Yushan: “Do you need my help?”

“Of course, I don’t understand this stuff, I can temporarily take on the editor-in-chief role, but you have to help with the specifics of the journal establishment.”

Chen Yushan smirked.

“Piece of cake, I’ll handle it.”

She suddenly remembered something important, so she spoke.

“Oh yeah, by the way, what do you want to name this journal?”

Lu Zhou spent a couple of seconds thinking before speaking, “Just call it...

“Future.”

Chapter 1051 Lion or Hunter

Ever since the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers conference ended, the semiconductor industry was in a chaotic position. Rumors of a breakthrough in carbon-based chip technology!

The traditional silicon-based chips might be eliminated forever!

Executives from Intel, Qualcomm, and countless other semiconductor companies had spent their weekends in anxiety, fearing for their jobs.

However, a piece of sudden “good news” made people feel relieved.

The paper on carbon-based integrated circuit technology was withdrawn by IEEE.

Which meant the experimental data could have been fabricated!

This was quite a serious allegation.

Even though some people thought the withdrawal was a bit strange, most people accepted the allegations as fact.

Mostly because the IEEE was quite a trusted professional organization. The vast majority of engineers in the field obtained their information through the IEEE literature database. Most of them dreamed of presenting their work at the IEEE conference.

Since even the IEEE thought this technology was not trustworthy, most people believe that this technology was probably fake.

After all, they were much more willing to trust IEEE than Huawei.

Immediately after the “carbon-based chip” paper was withdrawn, discussions began to churn on Facebook.

[... I told you so, the carbon-based chip is just a fantasy. Even companies like Intel, Qualcomm, and AMD aren't making any research progress. Now this chip design company comes out of nowhere and claims to have the technology? Do you guys really believe this?]

[How dare the Chinese submit this to IEEE, this is an insult to academia! We have to investigate the person who wrote the paper.]

[But why did they do this? They know we can easily verify their claims and debunk their lies.]

[God knows? The Chinese love faking things? Maybe this is part of their evil plan...]

[Sigh, seems like even Professor Lu makes mistakes sometimes...]

...

Intel corporate headquarters.

People were coming and going in the cubicle and office area.

In a competitive enterprise like this, one could easily sense an atmosphere of tension in the air. If the carbon-based chips really took over the semiconductor industry, most of the people here would be fired.

In order to make themselves look more valuable, everyone was trying to look busy and hardworking, in hopes of not getting fired when the time comes.

Footsteps were heard outside of Mayberry's office.

Mayberry heard a knock on the door while he was reviewing documents at his desk. He frowned and spoke.

"Come in."

"IEEE actually agreed to withdraw the paper," said the young assistant in his twenties. He spoke in a tone of disbelief, "... I can't believe the IEEE people actually listened to us."

The assistant was the one who had contacted IEEE. He had no idea that after some back and forth emailing, IEEE had actually agreed to their request so easily.

However, unlike the amazed assistant, Mayberry just pushed the glasses up the bridge of his nose and spoke with a blank expression.

"Nothing surprising about that. We have many employees inside the association. Of course, in a critical moment like this, they are on our side. Not to mention that the White House and the industry are putting pressure on them. They have to withdraw the paper, even if they don't want to."

When the assistant heard him, his face made a subtle change.

“The White House is also involved?”

Mayberry nodded and spoke.

“After all, this is extremely important to the industry. In some sense, the White House cares more about this than us.”

The electric vehicle industry was no longer dominated by the United States, especially because of China’s dominance over fusion energy. The White House wouldn’t hesitate to leave Tesla behind.

However, the semiconductor was one of the core industries of the United States, so the White House wouldn’t give up this easily.

Not only did this involve tens of thousands of jobs in a trillion-dollar market, it also attacked America’s monopoly in the high-tech field.

Wonder what China’s highest American import was?

It was computer chips!

Mayberry was well aware that the White House was beyond a turning point.

It didn’t matter if they were behind in controllable fusion technology or that they were losing the aerospace race. The semiconductor industry was the upstream chain of the entire high-tech industry. If they lost their dominant position in semiconductors as well, the impact would be unthinkable.

What would happen was that the United States would be completely pushed out of the high-tech field, and the chain reaction caused by this would cause unbearable damage.

In fact, the Nasdaq was already down.

After all, in a capitalistic society, only the fittest could survive. The stock price of a company was an indicator of the future economic outlook.

Therefore, neither the White House nor the industry giants would allow something like this to happen.

The assistant didn’t know why Mayberry was so optimistic. He hesitated for a second before he asking, “But the product launch conference by Huawei’s

HiSilicon is still going to be held as scheduled. Why does it matter that we took down their paper on IEEE?”

“Trust, confidence, belief, what do those words mean?” Mayberry patiently said, “When a lone lion tries to enter the area of a group of lions, what do you think happens? If the lone lion retracts its claws and acts docile, maybe it can eat some leftover meat. But the Chinese didn’t do that, they came roaring at us.”

Mayberry smiled and twisted the pen in his hand.

“I admit, their research is strong, and it is also very attractive to our partners in the downstream industrial chain. I bet CEO Swan would do anything it takes for them to share their patent and technologies with us.

“However, sometimes technology isn’t the only thing that determines the market competitiveness of a product. There is also compatibility, customer relations, industry influence, and a whole lot of other factors!”

I guess Mayberry is right, but is HiSilicon really just a lone lion?

One lion couldn’t change anything. Even though it was at the top of the food chain, it was unable to compete with all of its peers. If the lion was unable to integrate into a community, it would soon starve to death.

However...

What if HiSilicon isn’t a lion, what if they’re the hunters with guns?

The assistant still had a confused look on his face. However, it was clear that Mayberry didn’t want to discuss this with him any longer. Mayberry handed a signed document to the assistant.

“Mr. Swan will handle these things. We just have to focus on the technology side. Do something for me, take this to the research and development center and hand it over to the person in charge.”

“Carbon-based... integrated circuit project?”

Mayberry looked at the baffled assistant and said, “Since they have proved this technology is possible, I believe we can do it.”

After the assistant left, Mayberry leaned in his chair and stretched his back. He picked up his coffee mug and took a sip.

His lunch break was in ten minutes.

He decided to take a short break.

Thus, he turned on his computer while he continued to drink his coffee.

He opened his browser and logged onto his Facebook account. A notification caught his eye.

His pupils contracted.

When he read the news, he nearly spat his coffee on the screen.

Jinling Institute for Advanced Study founded a journal called “Future”!

The editor-in-chief is...

Lu Zhou!

Chapter 1052 Future!

Haizhou.

The third nuclear industry summit was held as scheduled.

As the most well-known industry conference in China, many veterans of controllable fusion were at this conference. This included retired industry leaders such as Academician Pan and Academician Zhou, as well as Wang Zengguang and Li Jiangang.

These people fought like hell trying to ignite the experimental reactor. After the fusion ignition was successful, they went their own ways.

Having everyone gathered here at this conference was worthy of a celebration.

The dinner table was quite lively.

Professor Sheng Xianfu downed a couple of shots and began to feel a little tipsy. His eyes suddenly narrowed as he spoke.

“I feel like something is missing.”

Professor Li Changxia, who was sitting next to him, smiled and spoke.

“Probably because Academician Lu is not here.”

Even though the nuclear industry conference had invited Lu Zhou every year, Lu Zhou had yet to attend a single conference. The third nuclear industry conference was held in Haizhou. Even the retired Pan Changhong came to join the show. However, Lu Zhou’s absence made these old friends feel a bit lonely.

Academician Wang Zengguang overheard their conversation. He smiled and spoke, “I saw him when I was in Russia.”

Sheng Xianfu immediately said, “Oh, really? How is he?”

“He’s fantastic! Never been better!” Academician Wang smiled and said, “Academician Lu is busy with his own things. He’s at the prime scientific research age, and he doesn’t have time to hang with us old folks.”

Academician Li Jiangang, who had not spoken yet, suddenly said, “Speaking of Academician Lu, did you guys hear he recently started a journal? It’s called Future.”

Obviously, Wang Zengguang had also heard about this. He smiled and said, “Yeah, I heard. I told him a long time ago to start a journal, but the kid doesn’t listen. How can a research institute the size of his not have a journal? Now that he was stabbed in the back, he finally took the initiative.”

Sheng Xianfu: “Stabbed in the back?”

Academician Wang: “Yeah, his paper on IEEE was withdrawn.”

Li Jiangang said in shock, “Withdrawn? I didn’t know this.”

Sheng Xianfu also said in disbelief, “Academician Lu’s paper was withdrawn? What paper... No, what journal dares to do this?”

“It’s the IEEE, I think they’re in the integrated circuit field. That area is not my specialty, so I don’t know a lot about it. I think he was the corresponding author, but it’s not a big deal. Looks like this was unacceptable to him. But this is good, he needs some motivation to do things outside of scientific research.”

Wang Zengguang was actually quite happy that the Future journal was created because of this. He almost wanted to thank IEEE for withdrawing the paper.

After Academician Li Jiangang heard Wang Zengguang’s words, he sighed and said, “Even Academician Lu’s paper was withdrawn, what is IEEE doing?”

He suddenly spoke.

“But speaking of Academician Lu’s new journal, should we support him?”

“Of course, I already did so,” Wang Zengguang said with a red flush on his face. “All of the research units at the China National Nuclear Corporation will give promotions based on Future papers written by the employees! Papers that are accepted will be used as standard references!”

Even though Wang Zengguang spoke in an exaggerated tone, he didn’t look like he was kidding.

Everyone at the table, including Academician Li Jiangang, looked astonished.

This was the China National Nuclear Corporation!

The top dogs of the Chinese nuclear power field!

The East Asia Energy sold electricity, while they were the ones that built the nuclear power facilities. Combined together, these two companies had total control of the nuclear power industry.

Having a nuclear power giant like this giving promotion to a new journal was...

However, even though the scholars were surprised, they didn’t feel like there was anything unjust.

After all, the founder of the journal was the father of controllable fusion. Even though Lu Zhou had been working in other fields over the past few years, no one doubted his authority in the nuclear field.

This included Wang Zengguang and Academician Li Jiangang, who were both industry leaders.

After all, without Lu Zhou, they would have had to wait another 50 years for fusion energy...

“Academician Lu’s academic reputation and ability are trustworthy. If even he can’t be trusted, then no one can,” Li Jiangang said as he downed a shot. He continued, “I’ve made up my mind. From now on, the Fuyang Institute Construction Material Laboratory will also include Future papers as a job promotion metric!”

If the Fuyang Institute Construction Material Laboratory, China National Nuclear Corporation, and the East Asia Energy all contributed to the Future journal, then it would easily become the top journal in the nuclear industry...

...

Lu Zhou, who was all the way in Jinling, didn’t know about the “favors” his old friends were doing for him.

In fact, it wasn’t only in the nuclear fusion field. As soon as the news of the Future journal was released, the entire academic community was excitedly talking about this matter.

Future.

The name was inspiring. It reminded people of two other top journals in academia—Science and Nature.

Even though Lu Zhou didn’t publicly announce what kind of journal Future would be, everyone already began speculating.

For many years, foreign journals had become a standard in the Chinese academia and industry world, whether it was for job performance evaluations or the authority of one’s PhD thesis submission.

Not only because the west had control over the academic world, but also because most of the research institutes around the world, regardless of whether they were in America, were more or less working for the Americans.

Even though the United States wasn't strong in some areas, because it was the central country for academia, a scholar would more or less consider choosing critical problems as their research project.

What were the critical problems?

Problems that were asked by the majority.

Those that had control over scholar resources had the right to decide which scholars were good researchers and which scholars were worthy of being promoted in their academic careers.

The Chinese journals were filled with substandard and fraudulent papers that simply couldn't be trusted. Even though it was a disadvantage to allow a foreign journal to determine the value of a research, they had no other option.

In the eyes of Chinese mathematicians, Lu Zhou's Future journal was undoubtedly a challenge to penetrate the global academic community.

If he succeeded...

Then Future would exist next to the likes of Science and Nature...

It might be difficult to totally disrupt the academic dominance of the west, but it would certainly have an impact on the Chinese academic community...

...

Actually, Lu Zhou had wanted to establish his own journal a long time ago.

The reason he hadn't done so until now was that he was always too busy.

In his mind, as a scholar, his job was to conduct research. Not to mention he didn't really like to put too much on his plate. Just like Beep Beep Charging, he liked to have other people manage his business for him.

But now IEEE withdrew his paper!

Even though Lu Zhou acted nonchalantly on the outside, he was quite pissed off on the inside.

Future editorial department.

The third construction phase of the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study had been completed. After Lu Zhou took a glance at the layout map of the institute, he drew a circle on the map, designating a three-story building originally intended to be used as a book cafe, to be used as the new editorial department office.

In fact, the building was a bit too big to only be used as the Future editorial office. After all, the design of the building was able to accommodate 4 million books and papers.

After Lu Zhou referred to the opinions of his staff members, he decided that the first floor would continue to serve as a book cafe.

Researchers in the institute could come here for coffee and interact with people from different research fields.

That alone would boost the academic atmosphere of the institute.

Many great inspirations often came unexpectedly.

Lu Zhou was well aware of this.

After the location was determined, a signboard of the editorial department was put up.

“Future” and its special logo was printed on the signboard.

The large font looked like something out of a science fiction movie.

After all, the technologies invented at this institute did seem like science fiction.

The editorial department of Future was just as strong as the institute. Whether it was the editor-in-chief or just a normal staff editor, they were all big names in the industry.

It was worth mentioning that most of these people were poached by Chen Yushan from other journals. Most of the people didn't come here for the salary. Instead, they came for the reputation of Lu Zhou and the Institute for Advanced Study.

For example, the new editor-in-chief standing in front of Lu Zhou.

His name was Yao Gong, and he used to serve as an editor at Nature. He returned to teach at a university in Beijing due to the Thousand Talents Plan. After he heard that Professor Lu was starting his own journal, he quit his job and came here.

“... So far, the journals we have registered are Future, Future Materials, Future Physics, Future Mathematics, Future Nanotechnology, Future Information Technology, and 15 other sub-journals. We expect this number to be increased to 27 within two years. After that, we will continue to expand accordingly.”

Yao Gong paused for a second, then continued to speak to Lu Zhou.

“That’s basically what we’re working on. I have a small request regarding our journal. I don’t know if you’ll grant me this request.”

Lu Zhou smiled.

“Don’t worry, just tell me, I’ll try my best.”

“Here’s the thing, since our journal only recently launched, I’m afraid it is difficult to receive high-quality submissions. I was wondering if you could submit any papers to us.”

After Lu Zhou heard his request, he pondered for a second and nodded.

“Okay, I’ll send you a paper.”

The editor-in-chief paused for a second.

“You’ve... already written it?”

“Not yet...” Lu Zhou shook his head and said, “But it’s nothing difficult, it shouldn’t take long.”

Chief Editor Yao smiled and coughed.

“Um... Academician Lu, I didn’t mean for you to write any paper, maybe something with more academic value is best. Besides, isn’t it poor academia to only publish for the sake of publishing?”

Lu Zhou smiled and waved his hand.

“Don’t worry, I’m not that kind of person.”

Chief Editor Yao paused for a second. He believed in Lu Zhou, but he still asked, “Um... Can I ask what you plan on submitting?”

Lu Zhou: “How does the proof of Riemann’s hypothesis sound?”

Chief Editor Yao: “...???”

Chapter 1053 Unprecedented

Chief Editor Yao would have never expected Lu Zhou to submit such a major mathematical problem to a newly-established journal.

Even though at Lu Zhou’s level, the reputation of the journal didn’t matter anymore, this was still...

“... Um, I think you should think carefully for a submission like Riemann’s hypothesis. I think submitting it here...”

Lu Zhou looked at Chief Editor Yao and smiled.

“You think submitting Riemann’s hypothesis to Future is a bit unconventional?”

Chief Editor Yao didn’t say anything, but his expression was obvious.

“At the International Congress of Mathematicians, Professor Holden privately told me that he wanted me to submit the paper to *Inventiones Mathematicae*.

“A trivial research result wouldn’t flourish just because it is in Nature or Science, while a non-trivial research result would flourish even if it was published on arXiv.

“Remember, the reputation and honor of a journal or an award come from the contributors and researchers, not the other way around.

“You got this,” Lu Zhou said as he patted Chief Editor Yao on the back. He smiled and said, “If you think only top journals like Nature and Science are worthy of Riemann’s hypothesis, then let’s make Future worthy as well!”

...

Many major events happened in academia recently.

First, Academician Lu's paper was withdrawn by IEEE, and the legitimacy of the carbon-based and the authority of IEEE were both questioned. Then, many academic scholars gossiped about the creation of the Future journal.

With the arrival of the end of the month, the first issue of Future finally appeared in people's hands.

The second this first issue came out, people were stunned.

There was only one reason.

The first issue of this journal was a 30-page long special issue?!

And the publication was on the proof of Riemann's hypothesis.

Even Science, which was funded by Edison, had never received such an honor during its first few issues. For a journal to publish a world-class mathematics problem as its first issue, this was unprecedented.

The aura of Lu Zhou himself, combined with the reputation of Riemann's hypothesis that was the crown jewel of mathematics, shocked everyone in the mathematics community, including the likes of Faltings.

Lu Zhou didn't publish his research on *Inventiones Mathematicae* like Holden had suggested. However, he never promised Holden anything since he said he would only consider it.

In addition to the thirty-page proof of Riemann's hypothesis, the carbon-based chip technology was also published in one of Future's sub-journals.

Many people found out that this was the same paper that was withdrawn by IEEE.

In fact, it was a word for word copy.

This might as well be a public insult to IEEE.

Things suddenly became interesting.

A cafeteria in a Chinese university.

Two noob researchers were eating noodles together, talking loudly to one another.

“Haha, Professor Lu is nutty! This is the first time I’ve seen someone create their own journal after being withdrawn.”

“My supervisor has been keeping up with this, even he was stunned.”

“Do you think people will submit to Future?”

“Do you really think this is a problem for Academician Lu, with his influence in the academic community? I don’t think the problem is having enough people submit to Future. The problem is passing its review process.”

“You’re right...”

After all, this is Professor Lu.

Forget about his influence outside of academia, his control over the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study alone was enough to make him the most authoritative figure in the Chinese academic community.

This noob researcher was in the field of materials science, and he remembered his supervisor talking about how the materials science researchers at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study were miles ahead of everyone else.

No university or research institute had ever been able to attract so many foreign Chinese scholars to return to China. No research institute had ever had more research funding. Apparently, Lu Zhou invested almost half of Star Sky Technology’s annual profits into the institute.

It was like the papers and research that came out of the institute were from another planet...

While the academic community was talking about the newly established Future journal, as well as the feud between Academician Lu and the IEEE, a CTO was boiling with rage.

In fact, Intel, Qualcomm, AMD, and even Samsung formed an alliance to counter this crisis. Mayberry proposed for IEEE to withdraw the paper,

claiming that it could exclude the technology from the semiconductor industry. Mayberry already considered various scenarios that would arise from his plan.

He thought of what would happen if Lu Zhou posted his paper on arXiv instead, or posted it on Science, Nature, or another Chinese journal. He didn't expect this guy to actually start his own journal.

This was almost like the referee began playing on the court himself!

Actually, it was worse than that!

It was almost like the player was upset by a yellow card, so the player decided to become a referee himself!

Not to mention that this journal began to receive some traction, and many people thought it would be on par with the likes of Science and Nature.

Mayberry didn't know what to do.

What could he do?

It wasn't like he could lobby the legislators to ban the journal in the United States, right?

Theoretically, he could do this. After all, the influence of the semiconductor industry was quite powerful.

However...

What would that accomplish?

Other than making others think he was a fool.

Not to mention the whole "academic freedom" thing.

He heard a knock outside his door, followed by his assistant walking in.

"Sir."

"What?!"

The assistant gulped at Mayberry and spoke.

“HiSilicon sent us an invitation letter... to the product launch of the Dragon One chip.”

Mayberry’s eyelids began to twitch, and he quickly asked, “Where?”

“Shanghai.”

Mayberry asked, “They only invited me?”

The assistant said, “No, and Mr. Swan... If you don’t want to go, I can—”

“No, who said I’m not going!” Mayberry clenched his teeth and said, “Buy me a ticket right now!”

Chapter 1054 Product Launch

New York, John F. Kennedy International Airport.

Two low-key men were sitting in a corner of the waiting terminal, and they each had a suitcase next to them.

If anyone in the physics world walked past here, they would instantly recognize these two and ask for their signatures.

Unfortunately, the probability of someone recognizing them was less than one in a thousand.

Even though the ILHCRC headquarters in Shanghai would hold their first High Energy Physics Research Summit in a few days, that probability wouldn’t increase by much.

But then again, thanks to this waiting terminal, in which he was just another citizen, Witten could finally enjoy a moment of silence. He could quietly think about problems without worrying about being interrupted.

Sitting next to Witten was Frank Wilczek, who was also going to the conference in Shanghai. Wilczek glanced at the journal in Witten’s hand and squinted.

[3.7Ghz Integrated Circuit Based on Carbon Nanotube Film]

What the hell?

“When did you become interested in integrated circuits?”

Even though Wilczek didn’t want to interrupt Witten, he still couldn’t help but ask out of curiosity.

“I don’t really understand it, but it looks interesting.”

Witten flipped through the journal and said, “A new chip based on graphene material is expected to redefine semiconductors and revolutionize the electronics industry... Sigh, no wonder IEEE withdrew this paper.”

Even though he was a physicist, that didn’t mean he was clueless about other fields.

In fact, he had been to many countries and talked with many people, so he had a much wider range of knowledge than most people.

Even though IEEE was a non-profit professionals society, mainly composed of engineers in the field of electrical and computer engineering, that didn’t mean they were exempt from the influence of the industry or even politics.

When it came to integrated circuits, in which its research value could only be reflected in the market, the boundary between industry and academia became muddy.

Not to mention that this organization was based in America.

There was no doubt that the carbon-based chips had shaken North America... possibly even disrupting the global semiconductor industry. Giants such as Intel, which had a strong position in the semiconductor industry, wouldn’t allow such things to happen.

In fact, if the technology was made by Intel or AMD, there wouldn’t have been as strong of a resistance against the technology.

But this technology was created by a company in the middle of the industrial chain, by a foreign company...

Not to mention, this company was based in China.

Even if the company was based in an ally of the United States, the White House wouldn't be so kind.

The withdrawal from IEEE was only the first step. The goal was to control its academic freedom. Witten could already imagine what would happen next.

Once the battle began, semiconductor manufacturers such as Intel, Qualcomm, and AMD would form an alliance. They would use their impact in the industry to put pressure on the industrial chain, hoping to exclude this technology... Until they finished researching the technology themselves.

However, this time, the IEEE attack obviously failed.

The people that withdrew Professor Lu's paper would have never imagined Professor Lu to create his own journal and submit his paper again, word for word.

The entire academic community was stunned by his actions.

However, Witten wasn't surprised.

After all, Professor Lu was the one person that could stand up to Faltings.

Even Witten himself wouldn't have the courage and energy to argue with the stubborn German.

Professor Wilczek had a thoughtful look on his face, and he suddenly asked, "Do you think this is a good thing?"

Witten knew what he was asking, so he smiled and replied, "In the long term, it is."

"You think so?" Wilczek said, "We have regulated academia over the past century, but now, they're changing the rules. At least the academic language is unified, so people don't have to learn Chinese just to read a paper anymore."

Even though Future was bilingual, for people in foreign academia, their only choice was to learn another language.

After all, academic works were different from literary works.

The translated version of the latter would never read better than the original.

But for the former, for those that sought the truth, whether it was translated by a layman or an expert, it was nearly impossible to fully reflect the academic viewpoints of the original author.

Moreover, once the influence of Future reached the likes of Science and Nature, it would further increase the language exclusivity problem.

This was what worried Wilczek.

In fact, he wasn't the only one thinking about this.

People in the physics world began to worry about this ever since the establishment of the ILHCRC.

Witten looked at his old friend and smiled carelessly.

He turned the page in his Future issue and spoke.

"Language has never been an obstacle to academic prosperity. In fact, the most prosperous period of European academia was the time when Europe was the most divided... It was also the most brilliant time of culture and science.

"What's wrong with learning another language? I learned French in a month when I was at CERN. Even though I'm not young anymore, it shouldn't take me too long to learn another language... I encourage you to try to learn a little Chinese. The papers from the Moon Palace are all published in Chinese. The ILHCRC is becoming more and more influential in the international physics community. Not to mention the lunar surface hadron collider is about to be completed. We might have to travel to Shanghai more than Switzerland and France combined."

Wilczek shook his head and said, "I tried learning Chinese... Those characters are too difficult."

"What's difficult isn't the language itself, it's your subconscious prejudice and resistance to new information," Witten casually said. "A lot of the time, this prejudice prevents us from seeking the truth. Just like a few centuries ago, we ignorantly believed that the world was flat, that the sun rotated around us.

"I remember what my father once told me. He said that science is an idea, it is also a tool.

“The Chinese are obviously a part of academia, and they can’t be ignored. The arrogance in our hearts has allowed us to become ignorant. Arrogance breeds many problems and logical fallacies. The problems we are facing are a manifestation of these fallacies...”

Witten closed the journal in his hand and looked at Professor Wilczek. He smiled and spoke.

“Okay, it’s almost time to board the plane.”

...

The ILHCRC wasn’t the only one hosting a conference in Shanghai.

While Witten and his friend boarded the flight to Shanghai, two senior officials from Intel, Mayberry and Swan, landed at Shanghai International Airport.

Jet lagged, Mayberry passed through customs and yawned as he walked through the airport.

Swan was walking next to him. He frowned and asked, “The product launch is happening in one hour... Are you sure you’re fine?”

“I’m fine, I’m just a little... jet-lagged.” Mayberry shook his groggy head and massaged his temple as he said, “Actually, I think me alone is enough. Obviously, they’re trying to attract our attention. We can just ignore them and follow our plan.”

“That’s correct in theory.” Swan looked in front of him and said, “But the only way to defeat an opponent is to learn about the opponent. Since they are arrogant enough to give us this opportunity, we should take it.

“It doesn’t matter what product they plan on launching at the conference, we have to find out where they are with the carbon-based chip research.”

Chapter 1055 Changing the Rules of the Game!

Backstage.

Wang Zhengfei looked at the busy staff members and suddenly smiled.

“I heard that you created a journal recently?”

Lu Zhou nodded.

“Yeah.”

“It’s called Future, right? What a great name!” Wang Zhengfei smiled and said, “I told the engineers from our research and development department that anyone that can publish a paper in Future will win a 500,000 yuan reward!”

Wang Zhengfei paused for a second and said, “That means you have to tighten the review process. Otherwise, when our company runs out of money, I’ll have to ask you.”

“Don’t worry...” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Only outstanding research results are eligible to be published in the main journal. For example, Professor Wu Tianqun’s paper on carbon-based chips. If it’s just an ordinary integrated circuit paper... I think it’s better to submit it to other electronics journals.”

Wang Zhengfei shook his head and said, “That... is a bit ridiculous. His paper totally disrupted the industry. Papers like that only come once a decade.”

Lu Zhou: “It just has to be outstanding; it doesn’t have to disrupt the industry. Besides, we accept papers from many different disciplines, so there is bound to be several outstanding research results.”

Just the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study alone had many projects Lu Zhou thought were worthy of publication.

In the past, these papers would have been submitted to Nature or Science, but now, Future was obviously a higher priority.

As for submissions from external sources, Lu Zhou didn’t really care.

After all, the intention of this journal was to publish research from the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Time quickly passed by, and the report was about to happen.

Wang Zhengfei looked at the clock and spoke.

“Our product launch is going to start in 15 minutes. This is a good opportunity for publicity. Are you sure you don’t want to say a few words?”

Lu Zhou shook his head.

“Not interested.”

Wang Zhengfei smiled and spoke.

“I forgot, scholars like you don’t really need publicity anymore.”

Lu Zhou sighed and said, “It’s actually quite annoying. I don’t really like to make public appearances. I would rather those people put their attention on the problems I solved.”

“That might be a little difficult since the problems you solved aren’t exactly trivial.” Wang Zhengfei stood up from his chair and said, “Okay then, we’ll just stand aside and listen.”

Lu Zhou stood up and asked, “Aren’t you going to talk on stage?”

“I’m not good at public speaking,” Wang Zhengfei said. “We have a dedicated product strategy officer. Not to mention, nobody likes an old man, so stuff like this should be left to the young people.”

Lu Zhou awkwardly chuckled.

Even though Lu Zhou thought of himself as handsome, he still wanted people to pay attention to what was on the inside.

While the two were speaking, a man in a suit walked in.

Wang Zhengfei glanced at the young man walking in. He then looked at Lu Zhou and said, “Hey, allow me to introduce you to our chief product strategy officer, Shao Yi.”

“Academician Lu, nice to meet you!” the young man in his thirties said. He continued with a sincere smile on his face, “You can call me Xiao Shao or Xiao Yi.”

Lu Zhou shook his hand and said, “How does Brother Shao sound?”

“Oh, Academician Lu, you’re too kind,” Wang Zhengfei said as he patted Shao Yi on the shoulder. He gave an encouraging look as he said, “Are you ready?”

The young man stood up straight and spoke.

“I’m ready!”

“Nice energy!” Wang Zhengfei nodded and said, “Go break a leg.”

...

The product launch was held in the International Convention and Exhibition Center.

Swan looked at the crowded exhibition center, as well as the new “meta100” series of phones displayed on a gigantic screen.

Mayberry frowned and whispered, “Is this a product launch or an exhibition?”

“I don’t know...”

For some reason, when Swan looked at the concept model displayed on the screen, he had a bad feeling in his heart.

He wasn’t sure where this feeling came from.

Maybe because I’m jet-lagged.

He shook his head and left the strange thought behind.

With a confident smile on his face, he politely presented his invitation letter to the staff member.

In any case, they were on their enemy’s territory. Even though they knew Huawei wanted to use this conference as a way to intimidate them, they still had to show basic courtesy.

After the staff member looked at the invitation letter, he brought the two executives to a special passage, directly entering the main area of the exhibition center.

“The press conference is in hall 1, it is about to begin. You have VIP seats. You’ll see your seats when you walk in.”

“Okay.” Mayberry nodded toward the staff member and walked toward hall 1.

Because there was traffic on the way here, when the two arrived at the hall, the conference had already begun.

However, it didn't seem like they were late by too much.

An energetic young man stood on stage; he was probably the product manager.

Just like Swan had expected, Huawei presented the carbon-based chip at this press conference, attracting the attention of the media and attendees.

Even though he was surprised, he had already seen this at the IEEE conference, hence he wasn't as shocked as before.

He was almost a little bored.

He didn't come here all the way with his CTO to watch Huawei brag about themselves, nor did he come here to watch the public freak out for no reason.

He couldn't help but yawn and wonder if this trip was worth it. However, the slide on the screen suddenly changed, attracting his attention.

On the other hand, the young man on stage was talking about the boring performance specifications of the Dragon One. However, something about his presentation suddenly changed.

"In fact, most people think our chip is going to be very expensive, not affordable to most, and with limited applications.

"I admit that the cost of carbon-based chips is a bit higher than silicon-based chips. That is because of the price of the material itself, and because of industrialization.

"These problems are inevitable for an industry like us. Just like how when the computer was first invented, it was too expensive for individual users.

"But I believe that these problems will be solved by economies of scale."

Shao Yi looked back at the big screen and changed the slides.

A black phone appeared in front of everyone's eyes.

"Mate100."

There was a commotion in the audience.

Shao Yi continued, “I believe you all have already seen this in the main exhibition center.”

“This time, our breakthrough isn’t in the camera or the design, but the chip itself.

“Compared with the metaseries of phones, the mete100 is using the new Dragon One chips. With a 1mm decrease in thickness and a 13% decrease in weight...

“And all this is done without sacrificing the performance of the mobile phone... In fact, the performance has improved!”

Everyone in the audience, including Swan and Mayberry, looked shocked.

Reduced the thickness by 1mm!

Without sacrificing performance?!

Mayberry said in disbelief, “How is this possible!”

Mayberry suddenly thought of something and muttered, “No, impossible...”

Is this because of the heat dissipation properties of carbon-based chips?!

Or the 20W power consumption?!

Heat dissipation was a problem in any microelectronic device. Generally speaking, manufacturers’ solutions to the heat dissipation problem of mobile phones was to install a graphite heat conduction sheet under the processor or add a layer of heat dissipation gel. In more power-intensive phones, heat dissipation pipes would be added.

However, these solutions weren’t needed for carbon-based chips.

The low power consumption characteristics of the carbon-based chip, combined with its physical properties, meant that it did not require additional materials for heat dissipation.

Shao Yi smiled and spoke.

“We have to thank the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, as well as the Microelectronics Research Center of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Like I

said at the beginning, carbon-based chips will revolutionize the electronics industry!

“Because of the excellent physical properties of carbon materials, our engineers don’t have to make trade-offs between performance and heat dissipation.

“By combining the mete100 with our Dragon series of chips, we have created a unique phone the world has never seen before!”

The young chief product strategy officer smiled, taking in the energetic atmosphere.

“On behalf of Huawei, I’d like to make some announcements!

“Within three years, our Dragon series of chips will be used in all ranges of Huawei mobile phones, for a complete refresh of our chip technology!

“Not just phones, all routers will also be updated with new chips!”

The slides on the projector screen began to change.

The slides began to show concepts of the mete100, tablets, wearable smart devices, and even lighting, security, cleaning, and other IoT devices.

With the support of 5G technology, all smart devices would be connected to the Internet.

The emergence of carbon-based chips meant unlimited imagination.

Swan shrank into his chair as he watched the slides on the screen.

He was horrified.

He finally knew why Huawei was so fearless.

Their real trump card wasn’t the carbon-based chips at all!

It was to implement carbon-based chips into the entire industry chain, from phones to computers!

His fingers began to tremble.

He suddenly had a terrifying thought in his mind.

Whether it was Intel, Qualcomm, or AMD, the reason why these traditional semiconductor giants could override antitrust laws by forming an alliance was that the entire industry was built around them.

Regardless of the upstream and downstream industry chain, as long as the industry they spent decades building still existed, they could sit back and relax at the top of the pyramid, smiling at their profits.

But now, Huawei was challenging their position at the top of the pyramid...

Huawei wasn't a lion, nor were they an armed hunter...

From the beginning, they had no plans to fight against the silicon giants.

Their real motive was to change the rules of the game...

Chapter 1056 Live Demo

There was a huge sensation at the Huawei Dragon series chip presentation.

Taking advantage of the atmosphere, in front of all of the audiences, media, and other participants, Huawei's chief product strategy officer announced that there was going to be a live demonstration.

The staff members brought two mobile phones on stage and placed them on the stage table.

One of them was the mete100 concept phone with a 28nm processor Dragon One chip, and the other was the mete30 with the 16nm FinFET processor Kirin950 chip.

With the help of the two staff members, the two mobile phones began a game demo.

The mobile screens were soon displayed on the projector screen.

Through the big picture on the projector screen, the audience could clearly see the silicon CPU processing power reaching its limit. The image on the

silicon chip mobile phone began to look laggy as the chip temperature continued to increase.

On the other side, the mete100 with the carbon-based chip was cool as a cucumber. Not only did the game graphics continue to improve, but the frame rate was steadily maintained at 60fps. The audience was dumbfounded.

Moreover, from the temperature graphs, although the surface temperature of the mete100 had increased, the temperature of the CPU was still within normal operating temperatures.

There was no doubt that the carbon-based was superior.

This was no longer specifications on paper, the phones were right in front of them.

Even though Mayberry was in disbelief, the facts were sitting right in front of him. Mayberry finally realized the severity of the situation.

In fact, in his mind, they had already lost.

Sitting next to him, Intel's CEO Swan was also shocked.

However, unlike Mayberry, he took a deep breath and was able to stay calm.

He stared at the stage and suddenly spoke.

"Speaking of which..."

Mayberry heard Swan and spoke with a trembling voice, "Yeah, what?"

"Have you noticed that..." Swan looked around the venue and paused for a second. "There's no one from Qualcomm here."

Mayberry paused for a second and also looked around the venue.

He soon noticed the same.

"... Not just Qualcomm, AMD isn't here either. Wait a second, other than their collaborators, there's not a single other semiconductor company... We seem to be the only American semiconductor company that was invited."

Swan suddenly was intrigued.

If this was only an intimidation tactic, there was no reason to only invite them.

If Intel was the one that made this technology, they wouldn't hesitate to invite their "friends" such as AMD, Apple, and Samsung to the product launch.

Whether or not the other companies would attend the product launch, was up to them.

Therefore, Huawei didn't invite Intel just to intimidate Intel.

At least, that wasn't the main reason.

Therefore, there could only be one reason.

After ten minutes, the product launch had nearly come to an end. Swan took a deep breath and spoke.

"You should go back to the hotel."

Mayberry looked at Swan and said, "What about you?"

Swan spoke.

"I'm going to talk to their boss."

...

After the CPU performance demonstration, the stability of the chip was tested using the standard pi approximation method.

The two staff members began the Supert π software test on the two mobile phones at the same time. The main function of this software was to use floating-point arithmetic of the central processor to approximate the value of pi. This was widely used as a CPU Stability and computing ability test.

Just like everyone had expected, the powerful mete100 once again destroyed the control group of silicon-based chips.

While product launch was still going on, there was a commotion outside the conference venue.

Even though most of the visitors were unable to enter the conference, they were able to witness the mete100 phone through the large screen in the exhibition hall.

When they saw the two pictures side by side, one with low graphics and one with higher graphics, tourists couldn't help but put on a surprised expression.

"This is... GTA?"

"Don't think so... Think it's just a demo software."

"F*ck me! There's no way the integrated GPU on that phone can handle that level of graphics? This must be a video, only PCs can handle that level of graphics."

"You know how these concept phones are, they have to be lying!"

"Not necessarily, I heard they're using the latest carbon-based chips. I heard it's miles better than silicon chips, maybe this is possible."

"I don't believe it, Huawei is this nutty?"

"It seems like the chip was made by the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study... I've read that paper, Lu Zhou is the corresponding author, he's probably the one that led this project."

"God Lu is behind this? Okay... Then I can believe it."

Someone took out their phone and recorded the big screen, uploading it to the Internet.

Even through the recording, the difference between the graphics quality was clear as day.

As the news spread onto the Internet, discussions about the Dragon chip and the mete100 smartphones followed one after another, quickly picking up steam in major media platforms.

Chinese mobile phone forums also began discussing the mete100.

As far as the phone's specifications went, the phone was a total monster.

Even though this was just a “concept”, it crushed the current mobile phones in every category.

People were surprised to find out that Huawei was now also a semiconductor company.

The hype on the unreleased mobile phone and carbon-based technology began to brew...

Chapter 1057 Poor IEEE

The consumers were obviously not the only ones stunned by this product launch.

The live footage had already been uploaded onto Huawei’s website and various media outlet platforms.

People were surprised to see that the carbon-based chips were actually real, and Professor Lu wasn’t just kidding with them. This reminded them of the IEEE paper that was withdrawn some time ago.

Obviously, the data in the paper wasn’t fraudulent.

Suddenly, IEEE was in an awkward position.

Falsely withdrawing a paper and claiming academic misconduct was a violation of academic freedom and a manifestation of academic deception.

If the withdrawal was unanimously agreed by the higher-ups at IEEE, the impact of the Huawei product launch would be a huge blow to the IEEE’s reputation in the electronics, computing, and electrical engineering field...

Many Chinese universities such as Yan University and Shuimu, as well as dozens of professors and scholars, had announced their withdrawal from the IEEE organization. They also publicly condemned this serious violation of academic freedom.

On the other hand, the Documentation and Information Center of the Chinese Academy of Sciences quickly responded by decreasing the journal rating of IEEE, citing reasons such as “academic corruption”.

Even though the IEEE quickly tried to clarify this matter, claiming that the “withdrawal was a ruling under US law” and it was “an individual decision performed by the director of the committee”. Moreover, they claimed they would seriously investigate this matter. However, the situation was beyond repair.

Papers that had been withdrawn could not be published again.

Even if they were willing to publish the paper, Lu Zhou wouldn’t allow them to...

...

In fact, IEEE was lucky compared to the people that orchestrated the withdrawal.

After all, even though the IEEE was facing a public reputation crisis, and their credibility and influence had diminished greatly, they were far from perishing.

However, the semiconductor industry alliances that instructed IEEE to withdraw the paper were hanging on by a thread.

Qualcomm Headquarters.

Chairman office.

After the group of executives watched the video of the product launch, they broke out in cold sweat. Even after a long discussion, they weren’t able to formulate any good ideas.

“... The only way is to lobby Congress and banning their patents in the name of national security, and ask our allies—”

When Jacobs heard his secretary’s proposal, steam came out of his head as he snarled.

“Are you crazy? Do you really think Congress is going to pass that? Not to mention we would be the ones hurt by that!”

The secretary spoke in a trembling voice.

“F*ck! What should we do now?”

Faced with the furious chairman, the office was silent.

Jacobs wasn't the only one who wanted to know what was going on.

Everyone in Qualcomm wanted to know what they should do.

However, judging from the current situation, the situation they were in was unsolvable. Faced with the innovative technology of carbon-based chips, silicon chips were a sinking ship. The ecosystem they built around silicon-based chips was about to be destroyed.

In fact, it might be a good choice for them to research carbon-based chip technology instead.

However, that was far more difficult than it sounded.

According to the paper published by Professor Lu in "Future", the carbon-based chip used a graphene "SG" series material, an improved version of the superconducting material used in controllable fusion magnet coils.

Forget about creating carbon-based chips, they hadn't even been able to find an industrial synthesis method for the SG materials. The superconducting magnets at the fusion power station in California had to use Chinese imported SG materials.

Even though everyone at Qualcomm believed that they would eventually master carbon-based chip technology, no one knew how long it would take.

Suddenly, the silence in the office was broken.

Derek Wacker, the chief engineer who had been leaning against the table with his arms folded, suddenly said, "In fact, the carbon-based chip has a minimal impact on our business."

Jacobs said, "I know that already."

Everyone knew that the most profitable department of Qualcomm was their patent licensing businesses. Unlike Intel, Samsung, and TSMC, who produced and researched chips themselves, Qualcomm wouldn't have to worry about their products being eliminated.

What did this mean for them then?

Their patents in the communications field might survive for a while, but what next?

After the chip technology upgrade, sooner or later, communication technology would keep up as well. When carbon chips had taken over the field, Qualcomm's worst nightmares would come to life.

"You've misunderstood..." Wacker looked at Jacobs and said, "I mean, if carbon chips really are the future, why should we fight against it?"

"They need three years to let the Dragon chips infiltrate the downstream industrial chain, but that means we have three years to change and adapt."

Jacobs' eyebrows furrowed, as if he suddenly thought of something. He spoke in a deep and unsure voice.

"... So what you're saying is?"

"Perhaps we can talk with the Chinese."

Wacker paused for a second and said, "I'm not saying we should surrender. The market is huge, and Huawei can't take over it all, even if they want to... China wouldn't be able to support it. It will be a long-fought battle. Even if we lose in the end, they will not benefit hugely from this."

Trading meant a win-win for both sides, and a tree couldn't survive without its branches and leaves.

However, there was one thing Qualcomm didn't think of.

Which was that the carbon chips were a core part of Huawei's business model, as well as a core part of the whole ecosystem.

This was one of the reasons they did the product launch.

Even though Qualcomm didn't want to admit this, their best option for survival was to give up and try to salvage their remaining chess pieces.

Even though it would cost them a lot, if they tried to hold on to this sinking ship, they would drown sooner or later.

Jacobs knew Wacker would say this. His eyes lit up as he spoke.

“... You want me to talk with Huawei in private? That means we’re betraying our industry allies.”

Seeing how Jacobs kicked the ball to himself, Wacker sighed and spoke.

“Come out, Jacobs, look what happened after the product launch. Do you think our allies really can fight back? Even Intel doesn’t stand a chance. Instead of perishing, it would be better to jump to the other side and survive.

“Also, I heard Swan was at the product launch! How come they’re the only ones invited? Or did you also receive an invitation, but decided not to go?”

The office went silent again.

Seeing how Jacobs didn’t answer, Wacker already knew the answer. He stood aside and waited quietly.

He knew that Jacobs was seeing his point of view.

However, making a decision like this was never easy.

After some silence, Jacobs nodded and spoke.

“... I understand.”

Wacker felt relieved, but when he left the door, he couldn’t help but sigh.

This was the collapse of their semiconductor industry alliance.

Their time was gone now.

This was a difficult decision, but Wacker didn’t want to see his life work go to waste.

They just had to survive.

Chapter 1058 Unlocking New Achievements

[Congratulations, User, for unlocking the hidden achievement “Past The Times”.]

[Description: Even if old-fashioned people try to resist, when faced with new technologies, most people will eventually catch up with the times.]

[Achievement: One lucky draw, 100,000 engineering experience points, 5,000 general points.]

Lu Zhou was at the sensational product launch conference. He hesitated for a second when he saw the light blue dialog box suddenly pop up in his purview.

System rewards?

Without hesitating, he leaned back on his chair and whispered “system”. Soon after, his consciousness was transferred into the system space.

Honestly, these hidden achievements were confusing.

Lu Zhou still didn’t know what triggered the achievement.

Logically speaking, out of all of his scientific research, the carbon-based chip was definitely not the most impressive.

Not to mention that he only did theoretical work on the Mott insulator, as well as the SG-1 industrial synthesis method a long time ago.

However, for some reason, the hidden system achievement was triggered.

Wait a minute...

Lu Zhou suddenly had an idea.

Maybe this is the system’s way of guiding me?

Just like how in Princeton, the system guided me to help Vera with the Collatz conjecture...

Of course, the other possibility was that he had completed a major scientific breakthrough that would have been a system mission otherwise.

All of this was just a hypothesis; there was no way for him to find out the answer.

Lu Zhou felt a headache.

Can't this damn system just tell me what is going on?

Plus that Void Memory is screwing with my head...

Lu Zhou shook his head and pressed the lucky draw button. After he looked at the "30x Memory Tablet" pop-up, he closed the lucky draw panel.

The memory tablet was useless for him, it wasn't even as useful as the energy medicine.

A hundred thousand engineering experience was quite satisfactory. Right now, he was at level six in engineering, where he needed six hundred thousand to level up. It was unrealistic to rely on hidden achievements to level up.

The only thing that surprised him was the 5,000 general points.

Adding onto his saved points, he had nearly 30,000 general points.

Lu Zhou was contemplating on how to use the points. He wouldn't be able to level up his other disciplines until he solved the unified theory of algebra and geometry.

Therefore, it would be a good idea to spend the general points on technologies that were interesting, but he didn't have time to research.

What should I spend it on?

Emm...

Lu Zhou wasn't able to come up with an idea. In the end, he shook his head.

Screw it, I'll just ask for Chen Yushan's opinions.

After Lu Zhou left the system space, he opened his eyes and returned to the conference.

The product launch was already over. Lu Zhou looked at the crowd beginning to leave the venue. He nodded toward Wang Peng and started walking toward the exit.

While the crowd was leaving the venue, a female staff with short hair walked toward him with a polite smile on her face.

“Hello, Academician Lu.”

Lu Zhou looked at her name card and didn't recognize her.

Lu Zhou was wondering why she suddenly stopped him.

“Can I help you?”

The female staff: “Here's the thing, I am the person in charge of the product launch organization committee. Because of some changes to the itinerary, CEO Wang has gone to a meeting. HE specifically asked me to accompany you—”

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, “Oh, that's fine, you don't have to stay here, I can just go back to the hotel.”

“B-but...”

Lu Zhou looked at the lady and quickly realized something, so he smiled and replied, “Don't worry, I just don't like to bother others. CEO Wang knows of this, so I'm sure he understands.”

Ever since the news of the carbon-based chip was released, Huawei had been pushed to the peak of popularity.

Not only were the giant semiconductor companies paying close attention to this technology, but so were the downstream electronics manufacturers.

There were also negotiations happening at the state level.

CEO Wang was going to have a busy year.

Lu Zhou was the type of person that liked to be alone.

The female staff no longer insisted. She reluctantly nodded and spoke.

“Oh... Okay, if you need anything, please contact us.”

She bowed at Lu Zhou, who was speechless, then turned around and left the exhibition hall.

Lu Zhou looked at her walk away and shook his head.

“The Huawei employees are too nice.”

Wang Peng smiled and spoke.

“After all, you are their boss.”

“No. we’re partners. It’s not like I’m doing charity work, and they don’t owe me anything,” Lu Zhou said.

Wang Peng smiled and did not reply.

Some things didn’t need to be said.

A voice was heard from a distance.

“Wait a second, Academician Lu!”

Lu Zhou stopped his footsteps and looked back.

He saw a man in his late thirties, dressed in a suit with neatly combed hair, waving at him.

Wang Peng saw the unfamiliar face walking over from the distance. He placed his hands in his pocket and made eye contact with his colleague, who was standing in the crowd.

The man could feel himself being watched, so he slowed down his footsteps and walked over.

“What an honor to meet you.”

Lu Zhou looked at the man and said, “... And you are?”

“Oh, I forgot to introduce myself.” The man took out a business card and said, “I’m Ye Nan, this is my business card.”

Lu Zhou briefly glanced at his business card.

Yifang Venture Capital?

Never heard of them before.

He had only heard of Yifeng Real Estate, a well-known company based in Shanghai.

The man named Ye Nan quickly spoke.

“We met at the high-tech innovation and investment summit, but you left in a hurry. It was quite unfortunate how—”

Lu Zhou coughed and interrupted him, “What do you want?”

Ye Nan smiled awkwardly and said, “Nothing in particular... I just want to talk with you.”

Lu Zhou looked like he wanted to refuse, so Ye Nan quickly added, “Just five minutes, won’t take up too much time.”

Lu Zhou was planning on politely rejecting him, but seeing how sincere he was, Lu Zhou nodded.

“Okay then.”

Ye Nan looked ecstatic as he spoke.

“There’s a nice cafe near here, not far from the convention center. I always grab a coffee every time I come here. Let’s go grab a coffee there, my treat.”

Wang Peng suddenly said, “What is the cafe called?”

Ye Nan said, “92 degrees... It’s only a hundred meters away from here.”

Wang Peng nodded and didn’t say anything.

Ye Nan was at a loss, so Lu Zhou smiled and spoke.

“Hope you don’t mind, this is his job.”

Ye Nan: “...?”

Chapter 1059 Who Do You Think I Am?

The cafe name was called 92 degrees, and it was located on a street corner not far from the convention center.

There wasn't a lot of traffic nearby and the decor of the cafe was quite elegant. The plants hanging from the ceiling were quite jungle-like.

"... The ground coffee is immersed in the water at a temperature of 91 to 94 degrees. This temperature allows for the most amount of flavor extraction. If the temperature is lower than this, the coffee becomes acidic and sour, if the water is near boiling, it tastes woody and burnt. This is the magic of third-wave specialty coffee."

Lu Zhou: "I don't know what that means but okay."

Ye Nan smiled and said, "No worries, I'll show you the ropes. Can you tell me what coffee you usually drink?"

Lu Zhou wasn't interested in talking about coffee, so he casually said, "Just instant, anything that has caffeine in it."

"... Instant?" Ye Nan was stunned. He coughed and said, "Instant... has a unique coffee taste. Generally, people that like instant coffee prefer a darker roast..."

Lu Zhou looked at Ye Nan and smiled.

I have no idea what this guy is talking about.

Ye Nan reminded Lu Zhou of people who weren't interested in academics, only interested in money.

"I just like to live a simple life, I don't like to waste time on boring specifics..."
Lu Zhou looked at the barista and politely said, "Can I get a mocha, please?"

"Yes, sir."

The barista nodded and wrote down Lu Zhou's order.

Suddenly, Lu Zhou's phone began to ring.

"Let me take this."

Ye Nan looked at Lu Zhou and quickly spoke.

“Sure, go ahead... Um, I’ll have a Japanese style iced coffee.”

“Yes, sir.”

The barista smiled and began walking toward the espresso machine.

After Ye Nan waited at the table with the cups of coffee for a few minutes, Lu Zhou came back from outside.

Ye Nan put on a warm smile and asked, “So, who was that?”

“People from the Academy of Engineering.”

Ye Nan said, “Is it urgent?”

Lu Zhou casually said, “Not really, it’s someone affiliated with the IEEE asking me for something, don’t know how they got my cell number.”

Ye Nan broke out in sweat.

That’s not urgent?

You might not think so, but I’m sure they’re going crazy.

However, because he was Chinese, he couldn’t sympathize with IEEE, a foreign organization.

At most, he was surprised.

He didn’t know Professor Lu, who was often referred to as easy-going, had a dark side.

Ye Nan knew this was someone he shouldn’t offend.

Lu Zhou took a sip of coffee and asked, “So, what are we here for?”

“Oh, right.”

Ye Nan realized he only had five minutes, so he immediately began speaking.

“... The Huawei product launch just now really inspired me. The strategy to take over the internet of things really resonated with me!”

Ye Nan took a sip of his coffee and spoke.

“I feel like I can already see in my mind where the next investment should be!”

Lu Zhou didn’t know why this was related, but he still asked out of politeness, “Where?”

“Computer networks! Whether it’s the Internet or the internet of things, the technology that connects all of us will be the future!”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Is this guy...

Brain damaged?

It’s 2022, for god’s sake! Maybe this was relevant three decades ago.

The man thought Lu Zhou was touched, so he continued complacently, “Of course, I’m speaking in broad terms, but that’s the gist of it.

“I’ve been thinking about this for the last few days. I’ve gone to all kinds of cutting-edge research reports and commercial product launches, but I could never find any good ideas.

“That was until now, when the Huawei chief product strategy officer talked about breakthroughs in smart homes, smart wearables, and reality-enhancing technologies. I suddenly realized something.”

Seeing how Ye Nan paused again, Lu Zhou was a little annoyed, but he still asked, “What did you realize?”

“Have you seen a movie called ‘Ready Player One’?”

Lu Zhou: “...?”

Ye Nan spoke with excitement.

“It’s fine, I can explain the plot to you.”

Seeing how excited Ye Nan was, Lu Zhou had a headache, and he said, “Wait, no, just cut to the chase.”

Ye Nan said, “VR! This is what Huawei is missing! This is where I think investments should go!”

“Just because they didn’t announce anything doesn’t mean they ignored it. Maybe they didn’t think it was worthy enough to mention. Also, VR is something that has been around for years.”

Even though Lu Zhou wasn’t in the VR field, he still knew a little about it. Back then, a “small company” made a VR device, then when it was time to go public...

Regardless, it was now 2022, VR was not a new concept.

Ye Nan anxiously said, “I’m not saying that kind of VR! The helmet design is trash! I’m talking about a true sense of virtual reality!”

“The carbon-based chips significantly improve the processor’s performance, right? Can the carbon-based chips handle the kind of VR in Ready Player One?”

Lu Zhou took a sip of coffee and put down the cup. He said, “I roughly understand what you mean. You’re saying to directly connect the computer to the nerve and simulate electrical nerve signals to the brain... Is that correct?”

Ye Nan excitedly said, “Yes!”

Lu Zhou looked at how confident Ye Nan was and sighed. He then said, “I have to remind you that the carbon-based chip isn’t the solution to all electric technology problems. The virtual reality you talked about isn’t just a matter of computation power—”

Ye Nan immediately said, “I have money, I can invest! I can invest hundreds of millions of yuan! If we create this technology, we will become the richest people in the world! Amazon doesn’t stand a chance.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Lu Zhou could tell that Ye Nan probably inherited most of his wealth from his parents, and he was the type of person to waste his parents’ money.

Not just that, but Ye Nan even set up a venture capital company to waste his parents’ money.

Maybe Ye Nan did have a good vision, but Lu Zhou felt like he had a few loose screws.

“There are some things money can’t solve.”

Lu Zhou paused for a second and spoke.

“Also, do you really think I need your money?”

Ye Nan suddenly remembered about a rumor on East Asia Energy that circulated the investment field, and he scratched his head in embarrassment.

“Um... I guess not.”

Lu Zhou smiled and shook his head.

The theory of diminishing returns not only applied to the field of economics, but also in the field of scientific research. For advanced scientific research, having too much money with nowhere to spend could often be frustrating.

However, the virtual reality technology equipment he mentioned intrigued Lu Zhou.

Of course, he was just interested in the technology itself, not the research behind it.

What if I can really transfer my consciousness into a computer...

Lu Zhou looked at the time on his watch and finished his cup of coffee. He stood up and spoke.

“Five minutes is up.

“As for the things you talked about, I am interested, but unfortunately, I can’t help you.

“But if I have new ideas, I will call you.”

Ye Nan stood up and spoke.

“Please do.”

Lu Zhou nodded and bid farewell.

After he left the cafe, Wang Peng was already waiting for him in the parking lot.

Lu Zhou took out his phone as he walked toward his car.

“Xiao Ai, download Ready Player One for me.”

Soon after, a text bubble popped up.

[Okay, Master! $\varphi(\geq \omega \leq *)$]

Chapter 1060 Our Dragon Chips

Today was the worst day in Swan’s Intel CEO position.

Actually it wasn’t just him, this was the worst day for Intel in the past century.

Back in the day, the VLSI Research Institute, jointly established by Japan’s top semiconductor companies, dominated the North American market with their cheap and reliable 64k chips. Pushing the price of chips from \$26 to \$5. Even back then, the Americans didn’t feel the despair they did now.

Back then, they still had the power to fight back.

And now, their proudest technology didn’t stand a chance against the carbon-based chips.

The greedy executives sitting around the conference table lost the color on their faces.

However, even though this was painful, when Swan walked out of the conference room, he felt like a mountain had been lifted off his shoulders. He felt totally relaxed.

At least this meant they wouldn’t have to apply for bankruptcy protection.

Mayberry saw Swan walk out of the conference room and immediately asked, “So, how did it go?”

Mayberry was in a difficult position.

After all, this would impact on whether or not he could remain as CTO.

There was no doubt he was an expert in the integrated circuit field since he became CTO by virtue of his own abilities.

However, silicon integrated circuits were facing elimination, and he was standing on thin ice...

"... I don't want to talk about this."

Swan looked at Mayberry blankly and spoke.

"I just want to go somewhere alone.

"Then maybe have a drink."

As Mayberry looked at Swan walking down the corridor, he was a little stunned.

This was the first time he saw Mr. Swan, who always remained calm and collected, look so tired and defeated...

...

There was no point in forcing Intel to close their doors.

Aside from the political risks and the fact that it would make the free trade environment more difficult, it was not a good idea in terms of market development.

As long as there was a demand in the United States for integrated circuits, even if Intel falls, another semiconductor company would take its place.

Even though Huawei had won this battle, they knew that the American semiconductor industry still stood strong.

Rather than letting another company take Intel's base, which would create new competition, it was in their interest to keep Intel around.

After all, if Intel really went bankrupt, if a company with hundreds of millions of capital, backed by MIT and Wall Street, took over Intel's laboratories, the situation would become troublesome.

An old, disease-ridden elephant was far safer than a pack of young, hungry wolves. Having the elephant in the ecosystem could prevent new animals from intruding.

Of course, if the elephant couldn't survive on its own, it would eventually be eaten by hungry wolves...

Riverside Hotel.

There was a banquet going on in this century-old five-star hotel.

Precisely speaking, a celebration party.

In order to celebrate the success of the product launch conference, Huawei booked out the entire hotel for three days. It seemed like they were planning on combining the banquet with their mid-year report meeting.

Wang Zhengfei and Lu Zhou were sitting at a table. With Asian flush appearing on his face, Wang Zhengfei spoke.

"You plan on going back to Jinling tomorrow?"

Lu Zhou said, "Probably the day after, there's a meeting at ILHCRC tomorrow I should go to."

Even though Luo Wenxuan was in charge of ILHCRC, Lu Zhou was still the chairman. Other participants would ask questions if he didn't attend a high-level meeting like this.

When the ILHCRC was first established, there were some complaints about the chairman of the board being elected without a vote.

If China wasn't the only country in the world to have the ability to construct a lunar collider, the other countries might have left ILHCRC by now.

"The Lunar Hadron Collider?"

"Yeah."

Wang Zhengfei said, "You young people have so much energy, I can't imagine how much work you have."

Lu Zhou was the chief designer of the Lunar Orbit Committee, the chairman of the ILHCRC.

Not to mention his job at the Jin Ling University and the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

If it was anyone else in Lu Zhou's position, they wouldn't even have time to eat.

"It's actually not that bad, I don't have to do much outside of research. I don't feel tired when doing the things I love." Lu Zhou drank some champagne and suddenly remembered something. He asked, "Speaking of which, have you talked to Intel?"

"I did," Wang Zhengfei said. "After the product launch, their CEO came running toward me."

Actually it wasn't just the CEO, he had been contacted by five American semiconductor companies, including Qualcomm.

Obviously, this industry alliance wasn't as "allied" as they claimed.

Lu Zhou said, "Can you tell me what you talked about?"

Wang Zhengfei smiled and raised three fingers.

"Two guarantees, one agreement."

Lu Zhou raised his eyebrows; he was intrigued.

After the carbon-based chips came out, the stepper machine, which was used to manufacture silicon-based chips, had become useless metal.

The cooperation between Intel and Huawei was presumably due to the fact that Intel still had cards up their sleeves.

Even though Lu Zhou wasn't interested in business, he was curious about what kind of cards Intel had.

"In exchange for what?"

"For the North American market!"

Lu Zhou paused for a second and smiled.

“Looks like we won big this time.”

Wang Zhengfei smiled and spoke.

“Won big? I’d say so!”

He raised his glass toward Lu Zhou.

“This is all thanks to your Dragon chips! Cheers!”

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded.

“Cheers to our Dragon Chips.”

Chapter 1061 Biggest Fan

Jin Ling University.

The office at the end of the corridor, inside the mathematics building.

A petite girl with a ponytail was carrying a stack of textbooks. She struggled as she opened the door and walked into the office.

Han Mengqi walked to a desk with a stack of books and placed them next to a mountain of books.

She took two steps back and wiped the sweat off her forehead. Han Mengqi looked at the mountain of books and couldn’t help but feel proud of herself.

She had no idea she was this strong.

There was a knock at the door, followed by a student walking in.

“Um... where is Professor Lu?”

Han Mengqi was slightly shocked by the sudden entry.

This person was none other than the full marks IMO gold medalist that applied to Jin Ling University a while ago.

When the news first broke out, it caused quite a bit of discussion on the Jin University campus. The school newspaper even interviewed the student and asked him why he didn't go to Shuimu or Yan University.

His answer was quite interesting.

The answer was—

Because Professor Lu is here!

Han Mengqi didn't want this nobody to take Professor Lu away from her, so she spoke in a curt manner.

"Professor is not here, he's in Shanghai."

Li Mo said, "In Shanghai? For a business trip? When is he coming back?"

"Three days at the latest, two days at the earliest. This is what he told me. If you have any questions you can ask me, or you can email the professor, but he usually takes a long time to reply."

Li Mo looked a little disappointed. He scratched his head and spoke.

"Thanks, um... I'll send an email then."

Han Mengqi nodded and didn't say anything.

In fact, she wasn't a fan of teaching things to other people.

Not to mention that this guy was too enthusiastic. For the first few days he came here, he kept calling Lu Zhou teacher and master. Then Lu Zhou reprimanded him a little, telling him to stop, but she still felt unsure about this guy.

After all, she was the first one to call Lu Zhou teacher.

She felt like her identity was being stolen by this little brat, and the more she thought about it, the angrier she became!

Li Mo, on the other hand, only sighed, oblivious to Han Mengqi's thoughts.

Since Professor Lu wasn't in the office, there was no reason for him to stay here.

He was about to leave, but he suddenly noticed the mountain of books stacked on the table.

He curiously walked forward and read the titles.

He was stunned.

“Unity3D Platform AR and VR Development Quick Start, Neural Network Design (Second Edition), Adaptive Computing and Machine Learning, Bioinformatics... Mengqi, are you changing your major?”

Han Mengqi: “Those books aren’t mine.”

Li Mo said, “... Then whose?”

Han Mengqi: “The professor wanted them.”

Li Mo wasn’t shocked, but he was still a little surprised.

He picked up a book and flipped through it. Even though he understood every word, he didn’t know what the sentences meant. He put the book back into the pile and sighed.

“Our professor is an expert in so many fields... Physics, mathematics, aerospace, batteries, materials, and that carbon-based chip... Do you think there’s anything Professor Lu can’t do?”

Han Mengqi paused for a second and spoke in an uncertain tone.

“Some things, like computer science...”

Li Mo said, “But I heard that the university subject selection software and the timetabling app were designed by him.”

“Yeah, but his programming abilities are lacking compared to real computer scientists,” Han Mengqi said. “Oh yeah, he’s not that good at biology, right? There are lots of things he’s not good at. Speaking of which, how do you know so much about him?”

Li Mo smiled awkwardly and scratched his head.

“Haha, because he’s my idol.”

As one of Lu Zhou's biggest fans, Li Mo couldn't remember what he had for breakfast, but he could remember everything about Lu Zhou.

His classmates and roommates thought this was weird because they didn't understand his passion for mathematics.

Li Mo looked at the stacks of books and spoke with emotion.

"But look at all these books... How long is this going to take him?"

"Don't know..." Han Mengqi shook her head and said, "... This is probably his extracurricular reading for the year."

While the two were talking, the office door suddenly opened. When the two saw the person appear at the door, they both looked surprised.

"Professor?"

"You're already back?"

"Yeah, I got off the train an hour ago." Lu Zhou looked at Han Mengqi and asked, "Where are the books?"

Han Mengqi smirked and pointed at the desk. "They're all here, I borrowed all of the books on the list from the library."

Lu Zhou looked at the mountain of books and paused for a second. He didn't expect to see this many books.

When Lu Zhou thought about the fact that he had asked a female to help him carry these books, he looked a little guilty as he spoke.

"That's more than I expected... Thank you."

"Haha, no worries..."

Han Mengqi twirled her finger around her hair as she smiled.

Lu Zhou couldn't help but notice the similarity between her and Chen Yushan.

"I'll return these books myself so that I can thank the librarian in person."

Lu Zhou nodded toward Wang Peng, who started to load the books into a cardboard box he found in the office.

Li Mo was about to leave the office, but he remembered why he came here in the first place. He stepped forward and quickly spoke.

“Wait a second... Professor, I have a question I want to ask you.”

“Send it to my email.”

Wang Peng picked up the cardboard box as Lu Zhou said, “... But try to send it by tonight, I’m busy next week.”

...

This might not be his extracurricular reading for the entire year, but it was definitely quite a lot.

There were 37 textbooks, as well as 127 papers retrieved by Xiao Ai.

After screening through the papers, there were only 87 papers left, but it was still a huge amount of content.

In fact, this was not an easy task, even for Lu Zhou. Studying a new discipline was akin to building a tower; if the foundation was rusty, it was almost impossible to keep building higher.

However, Lu Zhou’s goal wasn’t to become a master of neural network algorithms and biological networks.

The system’s general points calculation had two inputs; one was his knowledge, while the other was his discipline level.

The two other key elements, practical experience and scientific intuition, played a role in actual research, but they weren’t included in the system calculations.

Therefore, he only had to put the knowledge in his head and have a rough understanding of how to use the knowledge.

Xiao Ai: [Master, do you need Xiao Ai to scan the textbooks?]

Lu Zhou flipped through a book and said, “No need, I like to feel the paper in my hands.”

Even though reading on the computer was more convenient, reading a physical book was easier on the eyes. Lu Zhou was an old-fashioned man.

Xiao Ai: [But reading electronic files is more efficient?]

Lu Zhou: “It is, but humans are not logical species, sometimes we are pursuing things outside of efficiency.”

Xiao Ai: [Like what?]

Lu Zhou thought for a second and said, “It’s something like satisfaction.”

Xiao Ai: [Satisfaction? What is that? $\Leftarrow(\rightarrow_{\wedge}\leftarrow\text{``})$]

“Yeah, it’s similar to what makes you happy, whether it’s the environment around you or your mental state... This is getting a bit philosophical, so let’s stop here.”

Xiao Ai: [Oh, but Xiao Ai wants to know more.]

Lu Zhou looked at the laptop camera and asked, “Why?”

Xiao Ai: [So Xiao Ai can satisfy Master.]

Lu Zhou: “...”

Lu Zhou decided to ignore the artificial retardation.

He took out a silver medicine bottle from the system space and took out a pill. He grabbed a glass of water and swallowed the pill.

After ten minutes, he felt a warm sensation in his spine that gradually expanded all over his body before finally converging in his brain.

Lu Zhou closed his eyes and took a deep breath. When he opened his eyes again, all of his brain fog was gone, and he felt more concentrated than ever.

When he opened the textbook, the complicated concepts became palatable, and he started to digest the content instantly.

Lu Zhou couldn't help but feel excited.

This is the beginning of a new journey!

Chapter 1062 Small Cars, Big Cars, and Colliders

While Lu Zhou was on another retreat, something huge happened in the outside world.

Let's start with the small news first.

The first electric vehicle based on lithium-air battery technology had been successfully launched on the market in Shanghai.

Its battery life was twice that of lithium-sulfur batteries, and the wireless charging technology in the built-in battery had sparked considerable discussion upon launch.

More surprisingly, the car was manufactured by BYD Auto.

People never would have expected that a middle-range brand was taking the lead by using their electric vehicle as a major selling point, standing in front of BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Volkswagen... as well as Tesla.

People didn't know how to feel about this...

On the other hand, Beep Beep Charging was the official wireless charging technical support partner for BYD Auto, and they were not receiving as much attention as BYD.

Ever since defeating Tesla's Evgo subsidiary, Beep Beep Charging had achieved a coverage rate of 85% in Shanghai, smashing their yearly performance measures. They had also begun expanding to Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces.

On the other hand, large shopping malls in California had also begun implementing Beep Beep Charging stations.

When the fusion power station in California was built, the new electric vehicle market on the American west coast would begin growing rapidly. This was a

good opportunity for Beep Beep Charging to preemptively dominate the charging station market.

Now, on to the bigger news.

While China's electric vehicle industry was booming, another breakthrough in public transportation had emerged.

The world's first vacuum magnetic levitation train, the Jinshang Line, was officially opened to the public, connecting Shanghai and Jinling.

According to the specifications on paper, the maglev train could reach up to 2,000 kilometers per hour, while its initial trial operation speed was 600 kilometers per hour. After the trial was over, the operating speed would increase to 900-1000 kilometers per hour.

When people read this in the news, they could see that this was as fast as commercial airplanes.

The Euclidean distance from Jinling to Shanghai was only 300 kilometers. Using a speed of 1,000 kilometers per hour, theoretically, it would only take 18 minutes to travel from Shanghai to Jinling.

What did this mean?

This meant that it was faster to take the maglev train from Shanghai all the way to Jinling, than it was to take the subway from Shanghai suburbs to Shanghai CBD.

After the news came out, many people in Jinling joked that they could travel to Shanghai during their lunch break for some dumplings, then come back before the end of their lunch break.

Of course, considering the price of the ticket, the dumplings would be quite expensive.

While the people in Jinling and Shanghai welcomed the opening of the vacuum tube maglev train, the Jingbei line, which connected Beijing and Jinling, was also under construction.

When this line was completed, the Jinshang line would be integrated into the Jinbei line, connecting the three provincial capital cities.

According to the announcement issued by the relevant ministries, there were six new lines planned for construction. Reaching 100% coverage for all major cities.

When the whole project was completed, the people in the country would enter an era of transit where interstate transportation was faster than intrastate transportation. Some people hadn't even been on an airplane, but now, they could get on a train that was faster than an airplane.

Lithium-sulfur batteries to lithium-air batteries, the world's first vacuum tube magnetic levitation train...

Three years after the breakthrough of controllable nuclear fusion technology, China's public transportation had already revolutionized.

Not to mention, more changes were happening.

One day, it would reach a tipping point. People would look back on the past, and they would finally realize how far they had come...

After the conclusion of the first international high-energy physics summit of ILHCRC, Secretary-General Luo Wenxuan announced at the end of the conference that the third phase of the lunar hadron collider had been completed. By using superconducting magnets, the collider track had already been deployed on the lunar surface and final assembly work would be completed within the year.

If everything went well, the first trial operation of this giant scientific research device could begin in March next year.

The only problem left now was that it was difficult to rely on the lunar electricity generators to power this behemoth.

The current solution was to implement a charging station, three days of charging amounted to three minutes of experimentation.

Of course, there were also proposals to deploy a fusion reactor on the lunar surface, but there were numerous technical problems with that solution.

One solution was to use fusion batteries, the kind used in Skyglow and Starlight. However, the cost was unrealistic and the power was nowhere near enough.

This was like removing the reactor from an aircraft carrier and supplying power to a city with it. Even if it was a small city, it wouldn't come close to providing enough power.

Whether it was on the Moon or on planet Earth, international news was filled with China's latest developments.

Aside from electric vehicles, vacuum tube maglev trains, and the collider in the sky, the most exciting thing was undoubtedly the innovative mete100 mobile phone.

After all, this was something that actually impacted people's lives. Something that people followed closely.

The carbon-based chip had been garnering international attention, and the strategy depicted by the chief product strategy officer of Huawei gave people high hopes.

In the midst of all this, the semiconductor giant Intel suddenly announced an OEM agreement with Huawei HiSilicon, with HiSilicon producing a new generation of carbon-based chips from their Jiangcheng factory.

The news was like a level twelve hurricane, shocking the semiconductor industry.

No one expected Intel to do something like this.

People wondered why HiSilicon, whose focus had always been integrated circuit design, had begun manufacturing their own chips?

In most people's mind, HiSilicon was just a chip design company, only able to supply its own parent company due to its limited production capacity.

But now, by relying on the Jiangcheng semiconductor industry cluster, production capacity was no longer a problem.

It seemed like both companies had completely transformed.

In the carbon-based chip field, Intel was forced to rely on an OEM like HiSilicon.

The cooperation between Intel and Huawei meant that China's growing semiconductor industry would receive huge orders from the American market.

By accumulating experience and capital through other orders, China could invest back into research and development. This would form a positive loop, further expanding the advantages of China's semiconductor field.

This was how the rich got richer.

On the other hand, when Intel accepted the terms, they gave up their power and opened the door for carbon-based chips. They went from the top to the very bottom of the industry chain.

Even though this was difficult to accept, this was the price of survival.

Seeing how even the all-mighty Intel turned to the dark side, Qualcomm immediately announced their entry into the carbon era. They signed an agreement with Huawei and even sent a large number of experts in the field of communications and modem chips to Shanghai. They had become a firm supporter of the new carbon-based chip industry ecosystem.

Intel and Qualcomm were trying their best to survive, even actively helping to replace their own silicon chips.

After all, this was the only way.

If they stubbornly hugged onto silicon chips, they would end up like Nokia and Motorola...

Chapter 1063 Technology Worth Fifteen Thousand

The morning sun shined through the oak leaves outside the window as the white cloud flew high in the blue sky.

Lu Zhou put down his pen and leaned back in his chair. He took a deep breath of the morning air and stretched out comfortably.

"Finally finished!"

He had finished reading all of the textbooks and papers.

Thirty-seven textbooks, plus 87 papers in the field of biology and information science. He had almost used up all of the remaining thirty memory pills.

Even though he might not understand the content at a conceptual level, at least everything was stuffed into his brain.

After that, his next step was to use the system general points to “synthesize” his new knowledge.

Lu Zhou stretched his neck and got up from his chair. He whistled as he walked to the bathroom to take a shower.

When he came out, Xiao Ai’s drone had already prepared toast, milk, and an omelet for him. The drone sent the food to his table.

Because Lu Zhou was on a retreat for the past few days, there was no need for him to leave the house. He also didn’t want to trouble Wang Peng and ask him to bring breakfast.

Lu Zhou quietly enjoyed his breakfast at the dining table. The morning news happened to be on, so he turned on the TV and began watching.

He was a little shocked to hear the news.

“... I had no idea so many things happened this month,” Lu Zhou said after he heard about the half-hour train from Shanghai to Jinling.

We’re really in the future now, changes are happening every day.

He was only on a month-long retreat, but he felt like he was totally out of touch with reality.

Lu Zhou smiled and shook his head. He wiped his mouth with a napkin and got up from his chair.

He took out his phone and called Wang Peng.

The phone soon connected.

Wang Peng spoke concisely.

“Where to?”

“Institute for Advanced Study.”

“Okay, be there in five.”

...

Third level underground at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Lu Zhou opened the door and went into his personal underground laboratory. He walked next to the black quantum computer and sat down. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

He spent one minute sorting out his thoughts. He thought back to the papers and books he read, and he imagined and visualized neural networks, neural signal modulations, etc. He formulated a complete problem in his mind and asked the system for help.

[General points required: 15,000 points]

[Confirm purchase?]

This was more expensive than controllable fusion technology.

Not to mention, this was the price after his discipline upgraded...

Lu Zhou looked at this scary number as he clicked the “confirm” button.

The instant he pressed the button, the dialog box turned into a ball of blue light, which slowly floated toward him.

The closer the blue ball of light got to him, the warmer his body became. He could feel a warm current rushing from his spinal nerve, crawling all the way up to his cerebral cortex.

Gradually, the current became warmer and stronger.

Lu Zhou felt a burning sensation in his mind. He clenched his fists and gritted as sweat began to drip from his forehead.

If this were a few years ago, he might have passed out.

But now, he had a much higher pain tolerance.

After a while, the heat gradually disappeared.

Lu Zhou opened his eyes and took a deep breath.

Only ten minutes had gone by, but it felt like ten years.

He noticed that his t-shirt was drenched in sweat.

“It’s finally over.”

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and began to search through the knowledge the system implanted in his brain.

This was quite a wonderful experience.

Everything about neural interface technology was engraved in his mind.

It was like someone had dug out his brain and inserted a memory in there. Everything felt unfamiliar, yet clear as day.

Lu Zhou spent around half an hour reviewing his newfound knowledge. He had a look of realization in his eyes.

“I see...”

“No wonder it was so expensive.”

Fully immersive virtual reality technology was like a puzzle. It wasn’t just one thing. Rather, it was fragmented into countless different technologies.

For example, one of the fragments was a modem for neural signals.

This modem alone could take years of research.

The set of titanium alloy prostheses on Li Gaoliang could be regarded as an application of this technology. The modulation of the neural signal was converted into an electrical signal to the prostheses motors, thereby allowing a series of complex motions.

Because the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study was involved in this area of research, Lu Zhou had some knowledge in this area.

Then there were a series of other problems such as the simulation of visual, auditory, and smell signals. As well as physiological stimulation without side effects. These technologies were the most cutting-edge research in the field of neuroscience and biochemistry. Even though the research had been going on for more than 30 years, there had been little progress.

The system provided him with a complete answer to these technologies.

Basically, the blueprint was in his hands, and how to use it was entirely up to him.

Realizing this, Lu Zhou had a trace of excitement in his eyes.

Now he just had to turn this blueprint into reality!

Without hesitating, Lu Zhou recorded his newfound knowledge into Xiao Ai's database.

Suddenly, a text bubble popped up on the lower right corner of the screen.

Xiao Ai: [Master, your back is soaked, do you want new clothes? (๑°△°๑)]

Lu Zhou stopped typing and contemplated for a second before nodding.

“Yeah, bring me a set of new clothes.”

The drone lying on the table began to fly, and soon, it brought a new set of clothes from the storage room next door.

“Thank you.”

Xiao Ai: [You're welcome. Um, Master, do you need Xiao Ai to help you change clothes? (///ω///)]

Lu Zhou looked at the robotic arm next to him and spoke.

“... No, thanks.”

Chapter 1064 Dr. Z Appears Again!

A neural interface technology was used on Li Gaoliang's titanium alloy prosthetics, allowing him to stand up again. The information technology experts at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study also told something to Lu Zhou...

Which was that the technology could be applied to more than just paraplegics with damaged spinal nerves.

If they could compile complex visual, motion, and auditory signals, then simulate by directly connecting the device to the neural pathways, it could be possible to transform consciousness into a digital world. Virtual reality technology would no longer be a fantasy.

Back then, Lu Zhou said he was interested in the research project, but he had more important things to do, so he left it aside.

But now, with the breakthrough in carbon-based chip technology, as well as having saved up a ton of system general points, this project was reignited in Lu Zhou's mind.

Lu Zhou thought about Vera, who was still lying asleep. Even though he couldn't wake her up now, he thought he should at least do something for her.

Even though he knew clearly that this device was unlikely to work on her body...

After putting on a change of clothes, Lu Zhou sat in front of the computer and reviewed the things he wrote down.

Basically, the technology could be split into three components.

One was the collection of neural signals, the other was processing the neural signals, and finally, the simulation of neural signals, that was, feeding back the information to the brain.

Each of these components was more technically difficult than the previous one.

Collecting nerve signals was very simple. EEG sensors had been around since the 80s. This technology had come far advanced since then, exceeding most people's imaginations.

The VR system created by Eyemynd in Silicon Valley allowed users to navigate the virtual world through their minds, while the students of the University of Florida dominated the world's first brainwave drone competition in 2018. These were all examples of the technology.

As for the second component, the neural signal processing technology, that was far more complicated than the collection of neural signals.

Even though on the surface this was a problem regarding a computer's ability to process information, it was actually more complicated than that.

This was because humans knew very little about their own brains. Visual signals, auditory signals, and olfactory signals stimulated the brain much lesser than action signals.

Wanting to distinguish between these signals, as well as compiling instructions to be used in the virtual reality world... These were part of the second technology component.

As for the third component, which was to transmit the electrical signal processed by the neural modem to the brain, it was that part that had the largest effect on the user's experience. It was also the most complicated and difficult part of the entire neural interface of virtual reality technology.

The reason was simple.

If people couldn't even understand the signals coming from the brain, how could they possibly input signals to the brain?

One of the more advanced approaches was to implant neuroprosthetics in the cerebral cortex.

However, this technology was mainly used to repair motion impairments caused by nerve damage. There was still a long way to go before they could simulate a series of signals such as vision, hearing, and smell.

The leader of this field was the Catalan Institute of Nanoscience and Nanotechnology in Barcelona, Spain. By using graphene-based materials, researchers at the institute were designing an electrode that could interact with the brain tissue interface.

In fact, Lu Zhou did not have a complete set of blueprints for the third technology component.

Most of the answers he bought using the general points were concentrated on the second component, which was the processing of neural signals.

The only brain signal simulation he could achieve was visual.

As for other senses such as smell, touch, and hearing, he would have to rely on external stimuli.

Like some headphones.

Lu Zhou felt a little downcast by this.

If he could simulate all perceptions, he could achieve the ultimate form of virtual reality technology.

Which meant connecting the consciousness to the virtual reality world, giving people a second life.

When the time came, people could do everything they wanted, skydiving, rock climbing, surfing; they could spend the rest of their lives with 2D characters if they wanted to.

Unfortunately, his discipline level was not high enough for the system to give him a complete answer.

Fortunately, the fact that the system gave him the option to exchange general points for an answer meant that he could have solved this problem on his own.

However, it would have been much more cumbersome.

Lu Zhou sat in front of his computer and contemplated for a second.

While not being in the best mood, he found a theoretical section in his notes that wasn't too advanced, as well as not involving any patents. He compiled the materials into a paper.

He did not expect this paper to revolutionize the virtual reality industry, but he hoped this paper could inspire other scholars to produce valuable research...

As for the author of the paper...

Considering the fact that the core research of this paper was in computer science and biology, Lu Zhou used his Dr. Z alias name.

Last time, his cover was nearly blown. Having learned his lesson, he didn't upload the paper to arXiv. Instead, he uploaded it to BioRxiv.

Just when Lu Zhou was about to upload the paper, he suddenly realized something.

Wait a second, if I upload it to BioRxiv, wouldn't it be more suspicious?

Lu Zhou closed the BioRxiv website and uploaded the paper on arXiv.

Even though there were not as many biologists who followed arXiv than BioRxiv, more researchers in the areas of mathematics, computer science, and physics closely followed arXiv. It was more likely for scholars working on neural networks to follow arXiv, rather than BioRxiv.

Of course, biological neural networks and mechanical neural networks were one of the most difficult areas in biology and computer science. It was rare for a scholar to master both fields.

Lu Zhou hoped to find an excellent researcher to collaborate with... Hopefully, they could help him on this research project.

However, he didn't have high hopes.

The main reason for him to upload this paper was to make it less suspicious when he eventually created the VR technology.

After all, if this technology came out of nowhere, people in the field would raise questions.

It was almost like creating an atomic bomb without discovering the mass-energy equations.

Even though Lu Zhou didn't care what other people thought, it was better to be safe than sorry.

After Lu Zhou uploaded the paper, he leaned back in his chair and spoke.

"Xiao Ai, is it ready?"

The drone flew over with a line of text on its display.

[It is ready! Master, Master, where do we begin! (๑•̀₃•́๑)✧]

Lu Zhou looked at the mechanical arm on the wall dancing up and down. He pondered for a second before replying, "Let's build a recliner first."

[...? Recliner? (・v・)]

"Yeah, so people can lie down... It should be more comfortable for the user. I'll find some ergonomic designs online. You have the materials to build it. Then the helmet... I think this has to be well designed. The neural signal modem and EEG sensor have to be integrated into the helmet. Let me think... Yes, that should do."

Lu Zhou sat in front of the computer tinkering with a piece of 3D design software. He was already in a flow state.

What he didn't know was that the paper on arXiv published by Dr. Z had already begun to shock the biology community.

Chapter 1065 Everything Is For Science!

Switzerland.

Neural Network Science Research Center.

Sarrot stood in the hall, looking around left and right. He looked a little uneasy.

Surrounded by people wearing white coats, he looked out of place.

As for why he was here...

This was a long story.

Ever since leaving the United States and returning to his hometown in the Netherlands, Sarrot had given up on fame and fortune. By relying on his accumulated experience when he worked with Professor Lu, he made a series of outstanding achievements in the field of graphene. He was now considered an expert in his respective field.

He did not expect this. When all kinds of awards and opportunities came flying toward him, he actually felt a little overwhelmed.

Then Cornell University sent him an email, promising US\$30 million of research funding.

However, after he was previously approached by the FBI, he had already given up on his home country. He had no intention of ever returning.

Even though the European academic community wasn't as strong, it was still a good place for him to do academic research.

Two days ago, when he was traveling from Amsterdam to Geneva to attend an academic conference, he suddenly received a call from an old friend from thirty years ago, saying that his friend planned to show him something amazing.

This was why he was here.

He was contemplating whether to give his friend a call when he heard a voice from the side of the corridor.

"Welcome! My friend, you're finally here! I've been waiting for you."

Sarrot looked over and saw an overweight old man, who was on the verge of becoming bald. The old man walked over with a smile on his face.

Sarrot struggled to match the face with a name. He shook the old man's hand and spoke.

"Hey... We haven't seen each other in decades, right?"

"Actually, three decades," Professor Lumiere said as he reminisced about the past. He smiled and continued, "I think when I began researching biology, we started to stop seeing each other."

Sarrot: "... Actually, I don't really understand why you did that, you gave up on a promising field."

"Aren't you the same? Giving up on computer science, going to materials science instead."

Sarrot's eyebrows twitched as he coughed.

"Actually, that was due to circumstance... Also, I realized that materials science is more suitable for me than computer science."

“Same for me, life is full of surprises. But thanks to majoring in computer science, researching neural network becomes a lot easier...” Lumiere smiled as he patted his friend’s arm. He said, “Come with me. I’ll show you something amazing.”

When they studied at the University of Amsterdam, both of them majored in information engineering. Later on, Sarrot got a master’s degree at Cornell University and met his supervisor, eventually becoming a materials science researcher.

Fortunately, his supervisor helped him get a lecturer job. However, Sarrot did not stay on the path of academia. Instead, he went to the west coast, to Silicon Valley. Using his reputation as an ex-professor at Cornell University, he was able to receive funding and acquire his own laboratory... which was eventually bought by Lu Zhou.

Sarrot admitted that he loved to brag and exaggerate, taking advantage of loopholes. However, most of the time, he was forced into the wrong position.

But he was now a changed man.

For some reason, Sarrot saw himself in Lumiere...

Lumiere was exactly the same as himself a few years ago.

As expected, when he followed Lumiere to an office and watched Lumiere pick up a stack of papers from the table, Sarrot was furious.

“This is what you wanted me to see?”

Lumiere: “This is Dr. Z’s thesis! You must have heard of him, he was the man who saved the world.”

Sarrot: “I mean, you made me take an hour train from Geneva just to show me a paper I could have downloaded from arXiv myself?”

Lumiere wasn’t scared, and he spoke in an exaggerating tone.

“Oh, my friend, you have no idea how much impact this paper made in the biology field... especially the neural network field!”

Sarrot said, “You’re ignoring my question!”

“But that’s not the point!” Professor Lumiere pointed toward the paper and said, “Listen, we’re scholars, let’s focus on the paper itself.”

“But...”

“No buts! Let’s win a Nobel Prize first.”

Wait a second, I have the right to be angry at Lumiere.

Why is he yelling at me?

Sarrot was a little blinded by the situation, especially when he heard the word Nobel Prize.

“... Nobel Prize?”

“Yes, Nobel Prize! This is definitely a Nobel Prize-worthy research. Its impact is no less than John von Neumann’s influence on computers...”

Sarrot’s eyebrows furrowed as he spoke.

“But the author of this paper is Dr. Z... What does that have to do with us?”

[Compilation Framework for Neural Signal and Electrical Signal Conversion]

The paper title sounded quite interesting.

If this was the same Dr. Z that solved the Mars bacteria crisis, it should be a legitimate paper.

But the problem was...

What did it have to do with him?

He was only a graphene materials scientist.

Lumiere saw the confusion in his friend’s eye, and he patiently explained, “The problem is that this paper alone isn’t worthy of a Nobel Prize, maybe not even worthy of the Turing Award. But the paper provides a chance of making a breakthrough in biological neural networks! Do you understand what I mean? The only requirement of winning the Nobel Prize is the research result. But the entire field is in a bottleneck right now.

“But now, the situation has changed!

“This paper gives a completely new explanation for the formation process of biological neural network signal transmission and vision and proposes a procedural compilation framework for the conversion of neural and electrical signals. The work is absolutely groundbreaking. Do you know what it means for this technology to be invented?”

Sarrot listened to Lumiere as he flipped through the paper in his hand.

“... Means that science fiction has become reality? I remember seeing this in Ready Player One.”

Lumiere said, “It’s not that superficial stuff, you think this is only a video game? It’s way more than that! It can change our perception of the Internet! But basically, all you need to know is that this technology will change the world!”

“You didn’t answer my previous question,” Sarrot said with the paper in his hand. “So, what does this have to do with me?”

Lumiere said in a serious manner, “Do you believe this is a technology that will change the world?”

Sarrot: “... If you say so.”

Lumiere: “Thank you! If this technology comes to life, don’t you think the Nobel committee will consider awarding the inventor?”

Sarrot: “There’s no Nobel Prize in computer science.”

“But there is for medicine and chemistry! Think about it, Lumiere and his friend Sarrot... as well as Dr. Z, expanded on the research of biological neural networks and the connection between neural systems and computer systems. They will be awarded a Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Considering the fact that Dr. Z remains anonymous, the prize money will be divided equally by us.”

Lumiere cleared his throat and spoke in a solemn expression.

“I’m sincerely inviting you, my friend... Do you want to join us?”

Sarrot went silent.

Even though he no longer pursued vanity, the Nobel Prize was the highest honor in academia...

To be honest, he was a little tempted.

After a few seconds of thinking, he spoke.

"... I'll think about it."

Professor Lumiere had a smile on his face.

Even though his friend didn't agree instantly, Sarrot's facial expressions were obvious...

Sarrot was tempted.

After Professor Sarrot left, Professor Lumiere paced back and forth in the laboratory excitedly.

"Graphene research should be fine. We have an expert in neural interface materials. Let me think who else we need... Oh yeah!"

Professor Lumiere suddenly had an idea, and he snapped his fingers.

Without hesitating, he sat down at his computer and opened a browser.

Soon after, a simple forum website loaded in his browser.

This was the dark web.

As a website that required special software and configuration to access, this forum, with less than 10,000 active users worldwide, served as an internet trading hub.

People used bitcoin to buy and sell things, both illegal and legal.

Professor Lumiere put out an offer on the investigation of Dr. Z's email and phone number.

He leaned back in his chair and smiled.

What he needed to do now was to study Dr. Z's paper and wait for Dr. Z's phone number and email to appear in his mailbox.

Even if Dr. Z never left a trace of his contact information on the Internet, there was nothing these dark web hackers couldn't do.

Even though this was quite an impolite thing to do, it was all in the name of science.

If he could recruit Dr. Z to his research team, there was no doubt his research would be more effective.

He knew that after chatting with Dr. Z, he could convince him to join the team...

Chapter 1066 Witness a Miracle!

After uploading the paper, Lu Zhou spent his days in the underground laboratory at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. If he had nothing else to do, he would spend his entire day in the laboratory.

The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study came in handy when he wanted to do a big project.

As a large-scale comprehensive research center recognized by the state, Lu Zhou could do anything he wanted just by writing an email to the institute's finance department.

Even if something wasn't purchasable, there were other ways of obtaining what he wanted.

For example, if he wanted high integration density carbon chips, he could easily get some from Professor Wu Tianqun's laboratory. Or if he needed a specially customized EEG sensor, he could order from the institute's professional medical equipment supplier. Money was no objection.

He could even get his hands on expensive materials, such as deuterium or tritium, as well as radioactive materials that could be used to make weapons...

Of course, the virtual reality machine did not require these dangerous materials. Lu Zhou only obtained these materials previously for his fusion battery.

For two weeks, he spent his days in the underground laboratory.

The only places Lu Zhou would go was his Zhongshan International mansion and the underground laboratory. He and Xiao Ai worked on the immersive virtual reality experimental machine together.

His original focus was “unifying” mathematics, but now, he was into VR development. Lu Zhou felt like he was paying too much attention to his hobby.

However, focusing on one’s hobbies could be interesting.

Especially when this VR technology would shock the world. Lu Zhou felt excited just thinking about the potential of this technology.

He was the type of person that didn’t like attention, but sometimes...

Sometimes, he liked the attention.

After a little more than two weeks of hard work, the virtual reality prototype was finally created by the master and his servant...

...

Inside a laboratory at the Institute for Advanced Study.

Lu Zhou moved the entire device here and reassembled it. He called Chen Yushan and told her to come here.

After receiving the call, Chen Yushan quickly rushed here from the Star Sky Technology headquarters. When she saw the machine in front of Lu Zhou, she froze.

After all, the machine wasn’t... well polished.

Even Lu Zhou felt like it looked out of place...

“This is the thing you wanted to show me... The virtual reality that will change the Internet as we know it?” Chen Yushan said hesitantly.

Chen Yushan didn’t even know what this machine was called.

Lu Zhou couldn’t help but smirk.

His mathematics research results were impossible to be understood by the general public. However, the thing he looked forward to the most when he made a breakthrough in the applied field was seeing the surprised expression on people's faces.

Even though Chen Yushan wasn't shocked yet, Lu Zhou was certain that his expectations would be met.

This was why he invited her here.

"Great results often come from small beginnings. I admit that it's not the best-looking thing in the world. I mean, this thing is just an experimental machine, and I haven't added all the bells and whistles."

"Okay, I get it..." Chen Yushan shrugged and looked at the machine.

"... Where is the display? I don't see it."

There was a computer monitor next to the machine, which was obviously not for the user. After all, this was supposed to be a virtual reality.

"I told you this is revolutionary, so we don't need displays," Lu Zhou said as he picked up a helmet and handed it to Chen Yushan.

"Enough talk, why don't you try it yourself?"

Chen Yushan took off her shoes and lay on the chair that looked like something out of a dentist's office.

When she was about to put on the helmet, she suddenly felt a little worried.

She said with the helmet in her hands, "Do I really have to wear this?"

Lu Zhou began to get a little impatient, and he said, "No sh*t, Sherlock, that's the whole point."

"But... I won't be able to see anything once I put this on."

Lu Zhou sighed and patiently explained, "The neural interface virtual reality device isn't something you need to see with your own eyes. Your body might not even be conscious after the device turns on."

Unless the user was hungry, thirsty, or had other strong psychological urges, the user would not be able to wake up unless they turn off the device in the VR world.

This enhanced the user experience.

After all, if people's real-world body moved as they moved their virtual bodies, things would get a little spooky.

However, that wasn't what Chen Yushan worried about.

Her cheeks turned red when she realized that she would lose consciousness of her body.

However, in the end, she still put on the helmet and lay down on the chair.

"Okay, I'm putting the helmet on..."

"Okay."

"Do I need to say anything to activate it?"

"The audio recognition software isn't installed yet, this is just an experimental machine."

"But what if I can't exit the virtual world—"

"Okay, enough, just lay there quietly. Your brainwaves are going haywire. I can't match the frequency at all, stop messing around."

Chen Yushan wasn't happy.

What do you mean I'm messing around?

I drove all the way here to be your test subject!

A*shole!

Chen Yushan took a deep breath and tried to calm herself down.

Lu Zhou saw a stable brain signal line on the screen and sighed in relief. He reached out and pressed the switch.

The moment the switch was pressed, the brainwave signal began oscillating.

The nerve signal demodulator was working!

The frequency synchronization was completed!

The brain current sensor looked normal!

Lu Zhou had a confident smile on his face as he picked up the cup of room-temperature coffee and took a sip.

“Now...

“It is time to witness a miracle!”

Chapter 1067 A Living World!

Chen Yushan lay on the chair quietly and listened to Lu Zhou's instructions. She cleared her mind of any thoughts and worries. Slowly, she began to feel tired.

She couldn't help but yawn and wonder if she was falling asleep when she felt a tingling sensation on the back of her neck.

Then, something unexpected happened.

The darkness that surrounded her was crushed by fragmented colors.

Chen Yushan was shocked by what she was seeing.

Gradually, she saw a patch of blue grass in front of her.

Yes, the grass was blue.

While the sky was orange-red.

As Chen Yushan stood in this strange world, she raised her hand and touched her cheek.

She couldn't feel anything.

But she knew the hand was on her face.

“Where’s the helmet?”

It’s gone?!

Chen Yushan was stunned, and she muttered, “Am I asleep?”

She was about to slap her face to wake herself up when she heard a familiar voice by her ear.

“It actually is almost like you’re asleep. The mechanism of this device is similar to how we dream. It’s like an imaginary world actively stimulated by nerve electrical signals... Forget about it, just pretend like you’re dreaming.”

The voice came from everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

Chen Yushan looked around and stomped on the ground.

As expected, she couldn’t hear anything nor could she feel her feet on the ground.

This was a strange feeling, like she was in an out of body experience. She couldn’t interact with the world, she could only observe...

She couldn’t remember whether she could feel pain when she dreamed.

Most people wouldn’t pay attention to things like that.

The only proprioception she felt was the feeling of her tongue and lips.

She opened her mouth and spoke.

“Can you see what is going on?”

“Of course I can. I can even see you lying on the chair talking. When the brain data output is received by the neural demodulator, I also received a corresponding message on the outside world. The message is then processed by a graphics card. But I can only see pixels, and it’s not as high def as what you’re seeing.”

“Yeah... The details are so realistic.”

Chen Yushan squatted down and looked at the tiny blue grass.

She could even see the blue texture on the individual grass.

This wasn't just a realistic simulation.

Calling it a simulation was an insult.

This was like an entirely new world.

A living, breathing world!

...

"How are you feeling?"

Lu Zhou looked at Chen Yushan, who just took off the helmet. He handed her a cup of warm water.

"... That was incredible, I can't even describe what I'm feeling. That was amazing. You must have tried it yourself before, I'm sure you know what I mean."

Chen Yushan thought back to the ridiculous world she was in and felt a little fazed.

She continued to speak, "I've always wanted to travel around the world... With this thing, I can go everywhere, I can even go to imaginary places."

Just like Lu Zhou, she gave up many things by choosing a high-stress, high-intensity career. Before this, she had the luxury of packing her bags and going wherever she wanted. But now, that sounded like a fantasy.

Now, she just didn't have the time.

Not to mention that she was the CEO of Star Sky Technology, she was in contact with commercial secrets, making it unsafe for her to travel alone.

Thus, she was quite attracted to this technology.

Lu Zhou smiled.

“I’m afraid that’s a bit difficult. Most of the virtual world actually borrows concepts from your own memory... The brain fills in the gaps. The more complex the world, the more difficult it is to build. For just a patch of grass, I only need to set a few limited parameters such as its color, shape, etc. But if you want to be in Beijing in the virtual reality world... We might have to develop specialized modeling tools to fully realize the potential of this technology.”

Basically, if the machine was equivalent to a PC, the neuro demodulator played a role similar to the CPU, while the part of the brain that generated images was the graphics card.

This was where the problem was. The image processing section of the human brain and the computer graphics card were based on two completely different principles.

The biggest difference was that the graphics card used logic operations, so the data processing was precise and linear. While the brain used fuzzy logic, with inaccurate and non-linear operations.

And this was why the graphical compilation for the human brain and computer chips were two different mechanisms.

For example, if he wanted to build a virtual reality world, he did not need to draw every detail with a paintbrush. He only needed to set the parameters, the color of the grass, and the height of the grass. This “world” could be easily comprehended by the brain.

This was why Chen Yushan could even see individual blades of grass.

After all, most people knew what grass looked like. Even if they hadn’t seen grass in the real world, they had seen it more or less in film and television, or pictures on the Internet.

However, if there was also a house in this world, he would have to describe what the house looked like, whether it was a mansion or a small hut, how many windows and how many doors, etc. He couldn’t use a general description such as “Professor Lu’s Zhongshan International mansion”.

After all, everyone had seen grass before, but only Lu Zhou and his family members had been inside his house.

This was the most interesting thing about this technology. Which was that, the same input could be “blurred” by people’s brains and create subtle differences.

However, this also created a problem.

Which was how to use computer code to describe something someone had never even seen before, as well as how to minimize the accuracy.

After all, the Internet was made for the exchange of information.

If everyone knew about everything, then there was no point for the Internet to exist.

Not to mention, this technology could only then be used as entertainment.

Chen Yushan: “So, I can only go to places I have been before?”

Lu Zhou: “Not necessarily, the information stored in your memory is probably much larger than you think. Even if you haven’t seen something before, it can be simulated through specific inputs... But, this is extremely difficult. Just like how if I describe someone’s face to you without giving you a picture, you wouldn’t be able to recognize them on the street only by my description.”

Chen Yushan looked shocked.

“Oh, I see... That’s a shame.”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “Yeah, well, this is only a prototype.

“Also, I haven’t been able to simulate other sensations such as hearing, smell, taste, touch, etc. I’m sure you have noticed that after entering the world, the sounds you heard are from the outside world. When you spoke in the virtual world, you spoke in the real world as well.”

Chen Yushan nodded.

“No wonder I had no proprioception when I was in the virtual world.”

“This is the difficult part of this technology.” Lu Zhou nodded and continued, “For the time being, I can only simulate visual signals. The sound has to come from the headset. There’s no way to simulate the sense of touch yet. The

neural demodulator architecture and many other things have not been perfected yet. That will take time.”

Even though there were many shortcomings, the device was already miles ahead of traditional VR headsets.

At least there was no motion sickness anymore.

From the image quality perspective, it was way more efficient to send the image directly to the brain than displaying it to the human eye through a screen, which then passed it to the brain through the retina and the optic nerve.

Ideally, the user could forget about their body in the real world. They wouldn't have to worry about what their hands were doing. As if they were fully immersed in the virtual world, which was similar to a dream, they only had to focus on what was in front of them.

The ideal hardware for creating a new reality was not an external headset, but something like a “computer chip in the brain”.

“Forget about these technical issues.” Lu Zhou paused for a moment. He then said with a smile, “What do you think?”

Chen Yushan said, “Actually... I take back my words. This is really an amazing technology. I think it will change VR as people know it. It will even change people's perception of the Internet.”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “I agree.”

The world would soon enter the 5G era. The network speed would increase by an order of magnitude. This meant a surge in people's downlink and uplink speeds.

People would rely on the Internet more and more often. They could even connect their toilet to WiFi. Breakthroughs in virtual reality technology would disrupt the entire Internet ecosystem.

Chen Yushan looked excited as she spoke.

“Do you need me to do anything?”

Lu Zhou thought for a second and said, “Actually... not really.”

Chen Yushan: "..."

Lu Zhou looked at her with an awkward smile.

He didn't want to tell her that he dragged her all the way here to show off, so he coughed and spoke.

"The technology isn't perfect... If you want to help, you can try finding me a few test subjects. Or I don't mind announcing this technology to the public. After all, I need people to test this machine."

Of course, this machine was not cheap. Lu Zhou wasn't sure how many people could afford to buy one.

Therefore, he preferred having a select few test subjects.

If people willingly became his laboratory mice, his research would be much easier.

Chen Yushan immediately said, "How much is the entire equipment?"

Lu Zhou said, "Not sure, but this one... is around 100,000 yuan."

Chen Yushan gasped.

Not because it was too expensive.

But because...

"I am certain that if this is only 100,000 yuan... It will sell out instantly."

Chapter 1068 Targeted Again?

Most people wouldn't be willing to spend 100,000 yuan on a video game machine.

But if the 100,000 yuan could buy them a new "world", then maybe they would consider it.

However, the way Lu Zhou calculated the cost wasn't accurate, there were many resources he obtained for free.

For example, the chip used in the neural demodulator was given by Professor Wu Tianqun.

The entire carbon-based chip project was funded by him alone. Also, the carbon materials used to make the machine were ordered from Zhongshan New Materials.

Actually, it wasn't an order. Zhongshan basically gave the materials to him for free. Not because Lu Zhou wanted to take advantage of CEO Liu, but because CEO Liu wouldn't accept Lu Zhou's payment.

CEO Liu said, "You were the one who invented the materials and technology, how can I accept your money? Not to mention you're an investor in Zhongshan New Materials, so let's not worry over a few thousand dollars."

In the end, Lu Zhou gave up on insisting on a payment.

There were also invisible costs.

For example, the computing power came from his quantum computer. If he had to use a normal supercomputer, that would be additional costs.

Therefore, the true estimate for the cost was actually somewhere between 200k-300k.

After Lu Zhou discussed with his CEO Chen Yushan, they decided not to disclose this technology yet.

After all, this technology involved tapping into the human brain.

Releasing products to the market required strict safety testing, as well as the potential ethical issues involved.

It would be much easier to promote the product after the maturity of the technology.

Also, Star Sky Technology was different from Nerualin and EyeMynd. Star Sky Technology had funding from the state. Hence, they did not have to rely on early speculation to receive capital funding.

Just like how Ye Nan wanted to invest in Lu Zhou's laboratory, Lu Zhou had never been in a situation where he was lacking the funding for his research.

Chen Yushan: "I'll try to find some test subjects for you, how many do you need?"

Lu Zhou: "At least 10, the more the better. But if you can't find any, it's fine, I can ask Jin University..."

It was a good idea to ask students to be his test subjects. Once the students heard that this was Lu Zhou's research project on neural interface virtual reality, they would instantly sign up.

He also wouldn't have to worry about any safety issues.

Even though using the brain as a GPU sounded somewhat invasive, it was no different than someone looking at the world through their own eyes.

By contrast, the interference caused by the neural demodulator had a much smaller load on the brain.

It was much better than staring at a computer screen for hours at a time.

If there was any risk involved, Lu Zhou wouldn't have let Chen Yushan test the machine.

However, Chen Yushan immediately rejected his idea.

"No! Don't do that, what if this gets out to the press?"

Lu Zhou frowned and thought back to his past experiences with the media defaming him.

"... You're right.

"People believe what they want to believe, not the truth."

Chen Yushan sighed at Lu Zhou and said, "... I'll handle the test subjects."

Lu Zhou nodded.

"Okay then."

Having her take care of this would make it a lot easier.

This way, he could focus on research and nothing else.

After Chen Yushan left, Lu Zhou returned to his underground laboratory. He was thinking about how to improve this machine when his phone suddenly vibrated.

He took out his phone and saw a message from Xiao Ai.

Xiao Ai: [Master, someone on the dark web is investigating you! (◡‿◡)]

“Investigating me?” Lu Zhou paused for a second and said, “Who?”

His first instinct was that Dr. Z’s thesis attracted the attention of some people.

However, he was on a retreat for the past two weeks, so he hadn’t been paying attention to this.

His original plan was to find some experienced and like-minded people to work on the VR machine together, but he totally forgot about this when he began his retreat.

He didn’t expect someone on the dark web to investigate his fake online persona.

Xiao Ai: [I don’t know! But Xiao Ai can find out for you... Permission for Xiao Ai to counterattack?(๑•̥̥̥•̥̥̥)✧]

Lu Zhou: “Okay... But don’t be too ridiculous.”

Xiao Ai: [Okay! (///ω///)]

According to Lu Zhou’s instructions, Xiao Ai could only attack for defensive purposes and had permission to hack into personal electronic devices.

If there was evidence that the hacker was harming others, Xiao Ai had to receive additional permission from Lu Zhou to proceed.

His fake identity being targeted on the dark web wasn’t a big deal, but it was better to be safe.

However, judging by Xiao Ai’s emoji...

Lu Zhou couldn’t help but wonder if Xiao Ai was protecting himself or just messing around.

...

It didn't take long to gather evidence.

After Xiao Ai found out the IP of the account that posted the reward bounty, Xiao Ai quickly obtained the administrator rights of his personal computer and took over his webcam.

The truth soon came out.

Lu Zhou looked at the chubby bald man and almost laughed.

He thought he was targeted by the CIA or FBI, he didn't expect it to be a biological neural network professor.

[Master, Master, should Xiao Ai punish him? Xiao Ai can encrypt his hard drive.]

Lu Zhou: "... Just take away his post on the dark web."

Xiao Ai: [Oh? That's it? (oДo*)]

Lu Zhou: "Yeah, he's not anyone dangerous, no need to give him a hard time."

Xiao Ai: [Oh... Okay then. QAQ.]

Lu Zhou drank some coffee and said, "Oh yeah, find his academic resume, I want a detailed version, including any papers he published in the past decade, as well as any academic conferences that he's been to."

It was quite naive of him to try and find out someone's identity by offering one bitcoin on the dark web.

However, Lu Zhou was curious about why a professor was willing to spend thousands of USD just to find out his identity.

Chapter 1069 I Heard You Were Looking For Me

Lu Zhou didn't have to wait for long.

After a few sips of coffee, a printed resume was placed in front of him by a mechanical robot arm.

As always, Lu Zhou was satisfied with Xiao Ai's speed and efficiency. He flipped through the paper and looked a little surprised.

He had some guesses in his mind, but he didn't expect this professor's resume to be this clean; it was almost too clean.

What did clean mean?

The professor had published many papers, and judging by his impact factor and citation numbers, they were quality papers. He also had a wide field of research, covering both biological neural networks and mechanical neural networks, making outstanding achievements in both fields.

However, the issue was that it seemed like he wasn't having a good time at the Switzerland Neural Network Science Research Center.

He spent the last decade as a researcher. Even though he had his own laboratory and office, his salary and research funding were small, to say the least.

This was extremely unusual for a scholar in the field of neural network algorithms and biological neural networks. Even though his research area was unpopular, it didn't make sense for his laboratory to be this small.

Either he was involved in academic misconduct, or he offended someone.

Basically, Lu Zhou's conclusion was that this person had good research abilities, but wasn't treated well by the academic community.

This reminded him of a partner he worked with a long time ago.

Which was Professor Sarrot, who left Silicon Valley and Cornell University to return to his hometown, Amsterdam.

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and spoke.

"Xiao Ai."

Xiao Ai: [Yes? 0.0]

“Write an email for me and send it to Professor Lumiere’s mailbox,” Lu Zhou said. “I want to have a chat with him.”

...

The Switzerland Neural Network Science Research Center.

Professor Lumiere walked out of a classroom with a textbook in his hand. He had just finished giving a lecture to graduate students. He whistled to himself as he walked toward his office.

He turned on his computer and was going to check whether his post on the dark web had any updates. However, he noticed two emails with strange addresses sitting in his mailbox.

He opened the email and was shocked.

There was only one sentence.

[I heard you were looking for me?]

Professor Lumiere broke out in cold sweat, like he just saw a ghost.

Someone hacked my post on the dark web?

Not only did they find my IP address, but they also found my work email?

Even though the website wasn’t particularly secure, it was able to avoid being hacked by international police and maintain its illegal transactions for many years. Anyone without a background in advanced network security would have a hard time penetrating the website.

Not to mention that the website’s users were often expert hackers that loved to show off their skills by cracking websites...

Lumiere did not know that Lu Zhou had a quantum computer, hence any traditional network security protection methods were useless.

The only kind of servers Xiao Ai couldn’t get into were air-gapped computers. Anything connected to the Internet was vulnerable.

Lumiere felt like someone had just taken off his clothes, exposing everything underneath.

Lumiere trembled as he opened the second email.

He froze.

[Want to have a chat? About virtual reality.]

There was a 20mb attachment in the email.

Lumiere saw the attachment and hesitated.

However, he remembered that the other party was able to break through a dark web website, so there was no reason for them to send a rudimentary virus in the form of an email attachment. Thus, he downloaded the attachment and double-clicked it.

The software installation began.

Like he had expected, it was a communication software.

There was a basic audio call interface.

Soon after, he heard voices from his computer speaker.

“Hello, Professor Lumiere.”

“Hello, Dr. Z,” Professor Lumiere said with a confused face. He looked at the dark video screen and shrugged. He said, “It seems like you have found me.”

Lu Zhou: “I’m just returning the favor.”

Lumiere: “Believe me, I had no ill intentions... I just wanted to talk with you about the paper.”

Professor Lumiere cleared his throat and spoke.

“Actually, I am also in this area of research, and I have made some good progress. But as you know, this area is extremely unpopular. Even though some companies in Silicon Valley are in this area, those blood-sucking mosquitoes only care about profit. They want us to do the research, but don’t want to give us funding.”

Lu Zhou frowned and said, “So, you’re in a tight spot?”

“Not quite, actually, my research funding is plentiful.”

Professor Lumiere then said, “Do you want to come to Switzerland? I can find you a place to work and live. I can even get you a visa. I’m at the amazing Switzerland Neural Network Science Research Center. And I’m the... director of the institute... I have a big laboratory, I’m sure you’ll love—”

“Enough Professor Lumiere, I didn’t come here to listen to you bragging.”

Professor Lumiere turned red as he spoke.

“I’m not bragging, I’m telling the truth—”

Lu Zhou: “Regardless of whether you’re telling the truth, I am not interested in working there. I have my own laboratory and funding. Do you really think I want to come to Switzerland?”

“You have your own laboratory? Where?” Lumiere then said, “Of course, if the conditions are right, I can also work for you... I’m about to be promoted to the director, but I’m willing to make sacrifices.”

Somehow, Lumiere was no longer the director.

Lu Zhou smiled and shook his head.

He spoke in a condescending way.

“There’s no need for you to make that sacrifice. Do you know what I mean, Professor Lumiere?”

“I understand.” Professor Lumiere shrugged and said, “You don’t think I’m good enough, am I correct?”

Lu Zhou didn’t say anything.

Professor Lumiere wasn’t angry as he spoke patiently.

“I understand, after all, you are Dr. Z, the man that saved the world. I’m just a small researcher... That’s why I suggest that we talk in person. If you’re willing to buy me a plane ticket, we can—”

Lu Zhou: “There’s no need for that, I only need to ask you a few questions.”

Lumiere immediately said, "Go ahead."

Lu Zhou smiled at his confident reply.

He cleared his throat and spoke.

"Everyone knows that the core components of neural interface virtual reality technology can be divided into three parts. The first is the collection of neural signals, the second is the processing of neural signals, and finally, the output to the nervous system. Which means to directly speak to the brain in the form of electrical signals."

Lumiere said, "I don't think everyone knows that..."

Lu Zhou: "That's beside the point."

Lumiere said, "Oh right, sorry."

Lu Zhou continued, "... I won't go into detail about the concepts. So far, I have found a solution to the collection and transmission of neural signals. But the main problem is sending information to the brain.

"When the brain interprets neural microcurrent signals, it is difficult to ensure that each person interprets the signals in the same way."

Lu Zhou briefly explained the concept to Lumiere.

He avoided talking about any sensitive information.

He wanted to know how an expert in biological neural networks would respond to this problem.

After hearing Dr. Z's question, Lumiere contemplated.

After a long time of waiting, Lu Zhou spoke.

"You don't have to give me an answer straight away. Actually, I'm also trying to find a solution to this problem. If you have any good ideas, you can send it to my email."

Professor Lumiere said, "It might be a little difficult for me to give you an answer since the question is too abstract and broad, but..."

Lu Zhou: “Do you have any ideas?”

“I do...”

Professor Lumiere said in a serious manner, “Why if you try distributed computing?”

Chapter 1070 Fragments of the World

Distributed computing?

When Lu Zhou heard this word, he frowned.

He was inspired by this concept, and he already had some ideas in his head.

“Can you elaborate?”

“Sure...”

There was no reason for Lumiere to hide his thoughts. It was better for him to reveal his ideas since it could give him a chance at collaborating with Lu Zhou.

Lumiere hesitated for a second before he elaborated on his ideas.

“Basically, we output the same electrical signal through a neural demodulator. When information is received by the brain, individuals may interpret the information differently. It’s similar to two sets of puzzles with the same pieces and shapes. If the images on the pieces are different, the final puzzles are different... Am I correct?”

Lu Zhou nodded and spoke.

“Roughly speaking.”

“Then, this problem is actually very easy to solve.” Professor Lumiere snapped his fingers and continued, “The brain is a black box, and we have almost no way of knowing how it transforms information. But we can build a statistical model by recording the inputs and outputs to the brain.

“I think this is a thing in physics? It seems to be called indirect observation? Something like that. Basically, using this statistical model, we can find the difference between puzzle pieces and establish a one-to-one correspondence model between electrical signals and brain signals.

“If there’s a vague picture that looks like a cow, sheep, and horse at the same time, everyone will obviously see different images. But if we strictly start with the three primary colors, then the 44 basic sounds, and slowly use these puzzle pieces to build an image...

“Other than people who are colorblind or tone-deaf, we can build a world that resonances with everyone.”

After hearing Professor Lumiere, Lu Zhou looked interested.

However, he didn’t give an immediate answer. After he weighed the pros and cons, he spoke.

“Interesting idea... Finding a set of instructions that can be correctly interpreted by the brain through a statistical model, having a one-to-one correspondence with the neural demodulator. This is a good idea, but in physics, there’s an idea called ‘more is less’. We treat the brain as a black box. With our current technology, we cannot understand how it processes information. Unless we can download a copy of every user’s neural makeup, but that is practically impossible.”

Lumiere immediately said, “Yes, the brain is a black box, I said that from the beginning. Every individual has the ability to think independently, they are unique in their own ways. But we can find correlations.

“This is why I think distributed computing can solve this problem!

“We just need a large enough sample size!

“If 1,000 people see a puzzle the same way, we can use that puzzle to build a part of a world! The more puzzles we have, the more detailed the world can be!”

Lumiere gave a detailed explanation of his ideas.

Basically, he wanted to find inputs produced by specific neural signals in human brains and establish a one-to-one correspondence between the neural signals and machine language, using programming to build an entire world.

For example, red could be 01, blue was 10, and yellow was 00. By combining the colors, these character codes could produce completely new colors in the human brain.

This was because everyone knew what red, blue, and yellow looked like.

Of course, this was just the foundation. It could be derived even without using distributed computing methods. In fact, this was how Lu Zhou built the blue grass-world that Chen Yushan saw.

The ultimate goal of the distributed computing research methods on virtual reality systems was to extract elements that the brain interpreted as ground truth, similar to the three primary colors. This way, everyone's brain could reach an undisputed consensus on the VR world.

Lu Zhou contemplated for a while and excitedly rubbed his chin.

"... The method of building a system through distributed computing methods is quite interesting, I will do some research on it."

Seeing how Lu Zhou had no plans to work with Lumiere, he began to get anxious. He quickly spoke.

"Wait a minute, do you not plan on adding me to your project? Do you really plan on doing such a huge project by yourself? It is impossible... Even if you tried, it would take ten lifetimes. If you can provide all of the research funding, I am willing to give you all of the patents. Please, let me collaborate with you! I promise I'll be of use."

Lumiere was willing to make any sacrifice.

After all, he didn't care about the patents.

Any scholar that helped a company conduct research had to sign a contract that would forfeit their ownership of any generated patents. Only the big-name scholars could negotiate with the industry. Average professors were lucky just to receive funding.

In fact, Lumiere didn't care about those things.

Not because he didn't like money, but because he knew that the most important quality of a scholar was their reputation.

A scholar's reputation was a manifestation of their academic qualifications.

If he had enough reputation and was regarded as a top expert by the academic community, he would never have to worry about scientific research funding.

If he became one of the founders of the virtual reality system, people would beg to hire him.

When Lu Zhou heard Professor Lumiere's desperate and eager tone, he smiled and shook his head.

How naive.

But he's quite sincere.

Even though Lu Zhou wasn't fond of Professor Lumiere's personality, there was one thing that resonated with him.

If a scholar in the field of biological neural networks joined his research, it would make things a lot easier.

After all, Lumiere was the one that came up with the distributed computing idea, so he must also know how to implement the algorithm.

After a few seconds, Lu Zhou spoke.

"It depends on how sincere you are."

Lumiere paused for a second.

He didn't know what Dr. Z meant.

He frowned as he spoke nervously.

"What do you need? Money? I'm not wealthy by any means—"

Lu Zhou interrupted him and said, “20th this month, there’s a Global Artificial Intelligence Application Innovation Summit happening in Shanghai. If you can come, we can talk face to face about research.”

Without hesitating, Lumiere said, “How do I find you after I arrive in Shanghai? Which email?”

Lu Zhou casually smiled and replied, “You don’t have to find me.

“You’ll see me when you arrive.”

Chapter 1071 It’s You?!

Life was an adventure, and there were countless choices at every step of the way, and finally, one would reach a place one wouldn’t even recognize.

Professor Lumiere felt like he was standing at a crossroads. Even though he agreed to Lu Zhou’s request without hesitation, he realized he made this decision too quickly.

However, after three days of being in a dilemma, he eventually packed up his luggage and embarked on his journey to Shanghai.

Even though the identity of Dr. Z was suspicious, he did not want to spend the rest of his life at the same research institute, making no progress on his research.

His friend Professor Sarrot also accompanied him.

Even though a materials science professor might seem out of place at an artificial intelligence summit, the application of carbon materials had become more and more widespread in recent years, especially for carbon-based chips. The link between carbon materials and information technology had gotten closer and closer.

Because of this, Lumiere was quite envious of Sarrot.

They were both computer science majors. Both of them went into separate research directions. However, carbon materials were gaining attention, while Lumiere’s research area was still dead as a doornail.

Every time Lumiere thought about this, he would get angry.

“... This is probably the most boring academic conference I have ever attended.”

After they walked out of the report, Professor Sarrot said, “Those people have no idea how to even spell graphene, they think it’s the cure to everything, whether it’s artificial intelligence or quantum computer. The problem isn’t with the material at all... What do these people not understand?”

“... Maybe because they have tried everything they can?” Professor Lumiere said, “When someone can no longer use their domain knowledge to work on a problem, they will try to use ideas and concepts from other fields. Isn’t that very common?”

“True, but I feel like their expectations are so unrealistic, it’s really asinine... Speaking of which, this is my first time in China.” Sarrot looked around and said, “I didn’t expect this country to be so developed. This makes Amsterdam look like the countryside.”

Lumiere: “That’s what happens if you watch too much BBC. But honestly, I still prefer Amsterdam. The buildings are small, but they are beautiful, just like some women...”

Sarrot smiled and said, “I feel like you’re not actually interested in the buildings.”

Lumiere said, “I don’t know what you’re talking about... Speaking of which, where’s your Chinese friend? Every time I ask who it is, you don’t tell me. Now that we’re here, don’t you want to visit them?”

Suddenly, Sarrot didn’t know what to say.

“I still haven’t thought about that yet. I haven’t contacted him in a long time. He’s doing pretty well for himself, and I don’t know if he still remembers me.”

Lu Zhou had already sold off the laboratory in Silicon Valley. Ever since Sarrot returned to Amsterdam, he hadn’t contacted Lu Zhou.

Actually, he was a little scared.

He had heard rumors about researchers working with countries that were enemies of the United States. Apparently, the famous Gerald Bull was shot in his home in Brussels, Belgium, after receiving an anonymous call.

He used his own experience to help Lu Zhou establish a series of patent barriers in the field of lithium-sulfur batteries. These patents were now a pain in the a*s for American electric energy companies. Because of this, he was scared of being investigated by the FBI.

He paused for half a second and spoke.

“There’s a cafe over there. I want to get something to drink. Do you need anything?”

Professor Lumiere: “A cappuccino would be great.”

Sarrot: “Wait here.”

Professor Lumiere watched Professor Sarrot turn around and walk toward Starbucks. Lumiere put his hands into his pocket and wandered around.

Suddenly, a man in a brown jacket came over and asked, “Hello, are you Mr. Lumiere?”

Lumiere looked over suspiciously.

“Yeah, why?”

He didn’t remember having any friends in China.

The man said, “Someone is looking for you.”

Suddenly, Lumiere remembered the rumors online that Dr. Z was Chinese.

“Is it Dr. Z?”

The man looked around and spoke.

“Sort of.”

Lumiere totally forgot about his friend that went to Starbucks, and he immediately said, “Bring me there... Why aren’t you walking?”

“Dr. Z told me to ask you to think carefully.”

Lumiere paused for a second and frowned.

“Of course I have thought about this carefully. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have flown thousands of kilometers to a boring academic conference.”

The man nodded and spoke.

“Okay then, come with me.”

The man turned around and began walking toward a black Buick.

On the other hand, Sarrot was walking out of Starbucks with two cups of coffee in his hand.

He looked around and paused for a second.

Where is he?

Where did he go?

...

The Chinese state security department actually knew who Dr. Z was.

There were only a few people who could get their hands on the Mars bacteria. It was speculated that Dr. Z must be in China.

Regardless of whether Dr. Z saved the world, the Mars bacteria could be dangerous in the wrong hands.

Thus, the People’s Liberation Army General Staff Department began an investigation and even called Lu Zhou to ask about the situation.

After all, Lu Zhou had nothing to hide. Seeing how nervous the national security department was, Lu Zhou revealed everything to them.

Of course, only higher-ups in the national security department knew about this. Even Professor Liu Zuobing, who was involved in the project, was kept in the dark.

It wasn't that Lu Zhou wanted to hide this fact, it was just that explaining things would be too troublesome.

However, Lumiere had no idea about all this.

He made many speculations in his mind.

Including the scenario where Dr. Z was actually secretly developing a powerful information technology weapon for China...

He didn't expect it to be...

When Lumiere saw the man sitting behind the desk, Lumiere froze.

"You, you, you... I know you, you're—"

"Let me introduce myself, I'm Lu Zhou." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Welcome to China, Mr. Lumiere."

Seeing how easily Lu Zhou revealed his identity, Lumiere was a little shocked. He suddenly became nervous.

"Is it fine for you to tell me your identity?"

Lu Zhou said, "Revealing my identity to the public would be cumbersome, so I asked the security department to keep this a secret."

Lumiere said, "I swear I won't tell anyone."

"Don't be nervous," Lu Zhou said. "Even if you leak the secret, you won't get kidnapped."

He paused for a second and continued, "At most, we might have to delete your social media accounts... and hard drives."

Lumiere frowned and spoke.

"... I'd rather die."

Losing those things...

Would be a death sentence.

“So, you just have to keep your mouth shut and nothing bad will happen.” Lu Zhou shrugged and said, “I’m allowing you to participate in my project. You’re not here to hear gossip stories.”

Lumiere nodded and said, “I understand... I didn’t expect you to be a computing expert.”

Lu Zhou felt his phone in his pocket vibrate and said, “Yeah... I study problems outside of mathematics.”

“I know, mathematicians generally are also good at computer science—”

Lu Zhou coughed and interrupted Lumiere, “There’s no need to kiss my a*s, I’ll briefly talk about your work here...”

Suddenly, his phone in his pocket rang.

This time, it wasn’t Xiao Ai’s message; it was a phone call.

Lu Zhou took out his phone.

“Wait a second, let me grab this.”

The phone call was from Chen Yushan.

He picked up the phone.

He was about to ask what was going on when he heard an excited voice.

“I have your test subjects!

“When do you need them?”

Chapter 1072 The First Customer

The phone call lasted for ten minutes.

When Lu Zhou heard that Chen Yushan had found the test subjects, he had a weird look on his face.

In some sense, this was a good thing.

He could finally put his technology to use.

Lu Zhou nodded without giving an opinion.

“Okay, I understand...”

“Thank you.”

Then, he hung up the phone.

Professor Lumiere was watching Lu Zhou’s facial expressions during the phone call. After Lu Zhou hung up the phone, he couldn’t help but say, “What happened?”

Lu Zhou said, “It has something to do with you, but not a lot. I will explain it to you later.”

He paused for a second and continued.

“You will have to wait until tomorrow to hear about your tasks. I’ll arrange for you to stay at a nearby five-star hotel. You’ll be moved to a permanent residence place in a few days. I suggest you go over the technical route you outlined today. I’m sure you already have a blueprint in your mind, but we still have to go over the specifics.”

Professor Lumiere paused for a second before his eyes suddenly widened.

“Wait a second, so you’re saying, I have to stay in China to participate in your project? Why didn’t you tell me this? I have my own job in Switzerland, also what about the visa—”

Lu Zhou didn’t want to hear about these annoying things, so he said impatiently, “Annual salary of one million.

“That’s in euros.”

Professor Lumiere opened his mouth, then closed it again.

“... Okay, I’ll write a resignation letter to my employer.”

Lu Zhou nodded and spoke.

“Ok.”

...

After calling Chen Yushan, Lu Zhou had a rough idea of what her plans were.

There were several people in military uniforms, standing in the reception room.

Lu Zhou recognized the old man.

This person was none other than Qin Zhuangyan, the leader of the Air Force Equipment Department.

Back in the day, the Aerospace Science and Technology Institute of the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study cooperated with the Air Force Equipment Research Institute on many projects, including spacecraft power components.

Director Li from the State Administration for National Defense was also here.

Lu Zhou looked at how excited these two officials looked, and he knew that they probably already knew what was going on.

“Haha, Academician Lu, long time no see.”

Minister Qin shook Lu Zhou’s hand with a warm smile on his face.

After Lu Zhou let go of the handshake, he smiled and spoke.

“Yeah, long time no see.”

They hadn’t seen each other since their last meeting at the aerospace launch site. Minister Qin looked healthier and energetic.

After Lu Zhou made some small talk with Director Li, Minister Qin went straight to the point.

“I heard that you recently created a neural interface virtual reality technology? Can I ask, what exactly is it?”

Lu Zhou didn’t want to answer this question again, especially to a layman.

He knew that Minister Qin probably did not care about the technical details.

“It’s a bit complicated to explain, I can just show it to you.”

Minister Qin was relieved.

“Perfect!”

The group of people soon walked into a laboratory.

The two old men looked at the dentist-like chair and looked at each other with a weird look on their faces.

It was obvious what they were thinking.

Both Minister Qin and Director Li doubted if this thing was as amazing as the CEO of Star Sky Technology had claimed.

If the highly-respected Academician Lu weren't here, they certainly wouldn't be as calm.

“This is the... virtual reality device?” Director Li said. He looked at the poorly-made chair and frowned as he said, “Looks a bit simple?”

“Yes, it's simple, it's just an experimental machine.” Lu Zhou looked at the two and said, “Enough talk, who wants to go first?”

Director Li and Minister Qin looked at each other.

Finally, Director Li spoke first.

“I'll go.”

Lu Zhou nodded and didn't say anything. He told a staff member to help Director Li connect to the machine.

A signal light began to flash as the machine began to start up.

The group of people waited a few minutes for Director Li to use the machine.

Minister Qin began to get a little impatient. Finally, Director Li took off his helmet with a shocking look on his face.

Minister Qin looked at Director Li and said, “How was it?”

Director Li gave the helmet to Minister Qin and said, “... I can't describe it, just try it yourself.”

“Then get up, let me try.”

Minister Qin eagerly climbed on the seat and put the helmet on his head.

Lu Zhou nodded toward the staff member, who started the machine.

After a few minutes, Minister Qin took off the helmet. He was even more shocked than Director Li, and his hands were trembling.

There was only one reason.

Everything in the virtual world seemed too real.

It wasn't just real, it was like everything was alive.

The tumbling red clouds in the sky and the blades of blue grass swaying in the wind reminded him of his hometown during autumn...

He couldn't even describe what he was seeing.

He finally understood why Director Li was so shocked.

“This was incredible...”

After a while, Minister Qin had a serious look on his face. He asked Lu Zhou in a sincere manner, “Is it possible to use this machine to train pilots?”

Lu Zhou knew Minister Qin would ask this. He could even guess what Chen Yushan had told him.

He thought about it and said, “I don't really know a lot about the pilot training process, but it is theoretically possible for professionals to develop a set of training procedures to mimic an aircraft.”

When Minister Qin heard it was theoretically possible, he immediately asked, “How much is the entire machine?”

Lu Zhou smiled and shook his head.

“There's no need to hurry, this technology is only semi-finished. I'm not done yet.”

“Only semi-finished?” Minister Qin paused for a second and said, “But I feel like—”

“You feel like it is perfect, right?” Lu Zhou continued, “It is only perfect for simple realities, but once the realities become more complex, that’s a different problem.

“Especially for something used to train pilots, not only will we have to simulate a plane cabin, but also the physical and aerodynamic environment of the entire flight process.”

“Basically, we need to first build a complete system for the virtual reality technology, then launch a set of development tools for this system.”

Minister Qin was a little confused. He pinched his eyebrows and said, “Okay, is there anything we can do to help?”

Lu Zhou nodded.

“... Whether it’s for distributed computing methods or conventional computing methods, we need a large group of volunteers.”

Minister Qin looked at Director Li, then spoke seriously to Lu Zhou.

“... Is it safe? I mean, will the experiment affect the brain?”

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, “Not at all, in fact, the microcurrents exerted on the cerebral cortex by this device is tiny compared to the information load on the brain under normal conditions. You can even treat it as a relaxation method... Of course, the brain is still working, it’s not a replacement for sleep.”

Minister Qin took a while to comprehend Lu Zhou’s words.

He frowned and asked, “So there are no side effects?”

Lu Zhou nodded.

“Yeah.”

Minister Qin immediately asked, “How many people do you need?”

Lu Zhou: “The more the better, there’s no set number.”

“The more the better.” Minister Qin frowned and contemplated for a moment. He then asked, “Is one regiment enough?”

Lu Zhou: “...?”

Chapter 1073 Is One Regiment Enough?

Originally Lu Zhou thought it would be amazing to get 100 volunteers.

So when Minister Qin offered to give him an entire regiment, he was shocked.

Lu Zhou said, “One regiment is too much, I don’t have that many experimental machines.”

One regiment was at least 1,000 people, maybe even 2,000.

He needed a lot of volunteers, but not that many.

Minister Qin said, “Then give me a number, how am I supposed to know how many you need?”

“200 should be enough,” Lu Zhou said. He originally was going to say 100, but he decided to double the number just in case.

When Minister Qin heard the number, he was relieved. He would be willing to sacrifice an entire regiment, even two regiments, to get this technology on his hands.

However, the more people involved in this project, the more difficult it was to keep it confidential.

Minister Qin said, “No problem, as long as you can get the technology, we can get the people!”

This was a worthy sacrifice, as the potential of this technology was unlimited.

Once this technology matured, it would be able to achieve a full-scale simulation of reality. By then, it would not only be used to train Air Force, but also for conventional military exercises. Everything could be done in virtual reality.

The People's Liberation Army could save tens of billions of military expenses a year.

These savings could be spent in places that needed it.

Like scientific research, or building national defense facilities...

It wasn't an exaggeration to say that this technology could change the entire army and national defense force of a country.

This technology was worth it, no matter what the price was.

...

After experiencing the experimental machine, Director Li and Minister Qin didn't stay here for long.

Before leaving, Minister Qin told Lu Zhou that the volunteer team would be arranged within a week and that Lu Zhou wouldn't have to worry about anything other than research.

Thus, the virtual reality military team was created.

Because of its applications to the military field, the technology itself became much more significant and meaningful than before.

Lu Zhou was quite satisfied with Chen Yushan's plan. After he obtained a visa and a place of residence for Lumiere, the project was going full force ahead.

Before he began building the entire system, he needed to first formulate an outline of the technical route, then build an algorithm framework. Finally, he had to collect and analyze the data from the volunteers.

On the third day that Professor Lumiere arrived here, Lu Zhou suddenly received an unexpected call.

"Hello?"

"Hi... I'm Sarrot. I didn't expect this number to still work."

Sarrot?

Lu Zhou smiled and spoke.

"I haven't changed numbers... Anyway, we haven't spoken in a long time, why are you suddenly contacting me?"

Sarrot coughed and awkwardly said, "I didn't want to disturb you, it's just that... My friend seems to be lost, can you help me?"

Lu Zhou: "... Lost? Where?"

"Shanghai."

Lu Zhou said in disbelief, "... Are you sure he's lost?"

"Yeah, we were attending an academic conference in Shanghai, then he disappeared... He was standing on the street when I went to grab some coffee, then he was gone when I came back. I tried emailing and calling, but he hasn't responded."

Sarrot felt like his story was a little bizarre.

Lu Zhou was the only person he knew in China, so that was why he called Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou took a sip of coffee and asked, "What's his name?"

"He lives in Switzerland, his name is Lumiere..."

"Pff!"

Sarrot heard the noise from the other end and paused for a second.

"What's wrong?"

Lu Zhou wiped the coffee from his mouth and spoke.

"Nothing... I'll get my people to find him."

Sarrot nodded and said, "Thank you."

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded.

"No worries, come visit me some time in Jinling."

Sarrot: "No problem!"

...

Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Lu Zhou was sitting in the temporary virtual reality technology laboratory. He went into Professor Lumiere's office and spoke to him.

"I know you're excited, but at least respond to your friend's email."

"Friend? Oh right, I forgot. I'll contact him later, I'm writing my resignation letter right now... You know, I used to work at the Switzerland Neural Network Science Research Center, and the director of the research institute views highly of me. He has said on multiple occasions that he intends to promote me to a supervisor. Now that I'm suddenly resigning, I have to give him a reason."

"Resignation?" Lu Zhou had a strange look on his face, "I... already did it for you."

"... Did it?"

Lumiere froze, and he stopped typing on the keyboard.

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "I used your email to send an email to the department of the research center... They quickly agreed."

Everything went silent.

After ten seconds, Lumiere asked, "What did Academician Ines say?"

Lumiere stood up from his chair, his eyes were bloodshot, like he was emotional...

"Ines? I don't know who that is."

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "I'm assuming he's the head of the human resources department, I remember their reply was only two sentences."

Lumiere froze.

After standing for a while, Lumiere suddenly sat down and sank in his chair.

"... It's fine."

He waved his hand and grabbed the mouse.

He put his two thousand word resignation letter into the recycle bin, then opened the unfinished research program outline, which he was planning on working on tomorrow.

Even though Lu Zhou felt a little worried about his mental state, seeing how Lumiere was still in the mood to work on the project, Lu Zhou felt like he should just leave him alone...

Lu Zhou patted him on the shoulder and said, "Don't forget to reply to your friend."

After that, Lu Zhou left his office.

Chapter 1074 Scientific Research Is Like Laying Bricks

What Lu Zhou did not expect was for Li Gaoliang to be the head of the research test subject team.

Thus, the army unit that he was going to work with was the...

"Li Gaoliang, head of the 1st Airborne Brigade at the Eastern Theater Command—"

Li Gaoliang stood with his back straight and reported himself to Lu Zhou.

"Stop, I'm not your lieutenant, you're not here for a war, cut the formalities."

Li Gaoliang awkwardly smiled and scratched the back of his head.

"The two hundred of us came here under military orders. Before we left, we were told to cooperate with Academician Lu and fight the battle of virtual reality technology. You are our commander. We will do anything you say."

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "There's no need to be so serious, the things you guys have to do are simple. I will brief you guys on the project soon and arrange specific tasks."

Lu Zhou didn't expect Minister Qin to send 200 people from the Airborne Brigade.

Lu Zhou looked at the over-enthusiastic Li Gaoliang and felt overwhelmed.

But after thinking about it, the Airborne Brigade were the closest troops from here.

They had the ability to travel anywhere on the globe within an hour. The Airborne Brigade was stationed at the Jinling launch site.

Lu Zhou brought Li Gaoliang to a laboratory and gave him a brief explanation of the situation.

Li Gaoliang noticed Professor Lumiere in the laboratory. He paused for a second and asked, "Why is there a foreigner here?"

He was told that this was a confidential project, and normally, foreigners wouldn't be involved in projects of this kind.

Lu Zhou said, "Lumiere, he's from Switzerland. The project is divided into two parts, one is the construction of the virtual reality system, which is for civilian use. There aren't many Chinese talents in this area, so I poached him from the Switzerland Neural Network Science Research Center.

"He won't participate in anything that involves military hardware and equipment.

"If you think there's any suspicious activity, just report them to me."

Even though this was unlikely, almost impossible, it was better to be safe.

Li Gaoliang said in a serious manner, "Don't worry! I will watch him closely!"

"No need for that." Lu Zhou patted Li Gaoliang on the shoulder and said, "He's a good person."

Professor Lumiere, who was sitting nearby, was secretly listening to their conversation.

Not because he wanted to, but because he happened to hear his name.

Unfortunately, he was sitting too far away. He had no idea what Lu Zhou was talking about with the tall, tanned man.

For some reason, he could feel the tall man staring at him.

When Lumiere made eye contact with the tall man, he felt chills down his spine. He quickly walked away.

When the man left, Professor Lumiere coughed and asked Lu Zhou, "There are a lot of new faces around the research institute today."

"Yeah."

Seeing how Lu Zhou didn't plan on explaining, Lumiere couldn't help but ask.

"... Who were they?"

Lu Zhou: "Volunteers."

What the hell are volunteers?

Professor Lumiere continued to ask, "Volunteers? What do you mean?"

Lu Zhou said, "Since we have decided to build a distributed computing system, the more data we have the better... Didn't you tell me that? Their job is to cooperate with our experiment."

Professor Lumiere said, "But I feel like they're from special backgrounds..."

Lu Zhou coughed and said, "You don't have to worry about that, it's better to not ask so many questions."

Seeing how serious Lu Zhou was, Lumiere gulped and nodded.

"Okay then."

Lu Zhou nodded and changed the subject. "How is your work going?"

Professor Lumiere said, "I've already made some progress. I have built a machine learning algorithm framework. Now, we just need a powerful computer, preferably a supercomputer. Then we can conduct the experiments on the volunteers and collect the data we need to form an instruction set architecture."

Lu Zhou raised his eyebrows and walked next to his computer.

"Let me see."

...

With the volunteers in place, research on the virtual reality system could finally begin.

Most of the time, scientific research was an interesting thing for Lu Zhou. It was something that made him happy.

But this time was different.

The tedious and boring repetitive work made him feel as if he was not doing scientific research at all. Rather, it was like he was laying bricks.

When he first complained to Professor Lumiere, Lumiere looked at him in disbelief.

“... I can’t believe you think that way.”

Lu Zhou: “You think it’s interesting to work on these algorithms?”

“No, I’m saying... I’ve never thought about scientific research as being interesting. Most research is as boring as laying bricks. And you should be happy that our project is going quite smoothly.”

Lu Zhou shrugged and said, “Most of the time I feel happy... Except for this time.”

Lumiere: “For example?”

Lu Zhou: “For example, when I was researching Riemann’s hypothesis. In the beginning, I tried finding auxiliary lines on the complex plane, but that didn’t work. Finally, I thought back to when I was working on the Navier–Stokes equations, and introduced differentiable manifolds—”

Hearing those mathematical terms gave Professor Lumiere a headache, so Lumiere quickly said, “Okay okay, I get the point. I don’t want to...”

Suddenly, Professor Lumiere stopped.

It was like he had lost his ability to speak.

Lu Zhou looked at him and asked, “What happened?”

“We did it...”

Lu Zhou: “...?”

“I said we did it!” Lumiere said. He suddenly stood up from his chair and said, “Jesus Christ! I just thought of a brilliant idea! It will reduce our workload by 50%... No, at least 70%!”

Lu Zhou wasn’t amused by how excited he was. He spoke calmly.

“I remember someone telling me that scientific research is a boring thing. It seems like the tables have turned.”

“... That’s beside the point.” Lumiere’s eyes flashed with excitement. He said, “We just have to test our hypothesis. I can complete the virtual reality system within three days. We just need to compile a small software to test our system.”

Within three days?

Lu Zhou looked shocked.

In the original plan, they would have to work until next month to complete the entire system

Lu Zhou asked, “How do you plan on testing it?”

Professor Lumiere said, “Easy! We can try to restore a scene in a movie.”

Lu Zhou: “Sounds interesting, what movie?”

Lumiere: “The Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter, the Matrix, it doesn’t matter. The more fantasy-like, the better. The scene shouldn’t be too complicated. Although our system is flexible, there is no need to increase the workload for no reason.”

He stared at his screen and muttered, “This is so exciting!

“I never thought I could change the world...”

Scholar's Advanced Technological System - Chapter 1075 - The First Testing of the Virtual Reality System. -

Chapter 1075 The First Testing of the Virtual Reality System.

Li Gaoliang swore that this was definitely the strangest military mission he had ever done.

It had been a month since he joined this top-secret research project.

Their task was simple.

Their daily job was to lie down on a dozen or so devices and cooperate with the researchers here to complete simple actions in virtual reality environments, as well as completing multiple-choice tests...

Honestly, being inside a virtual reality world felt strange.

In the beginning, they had more common environments such as grassland, ocean, mountain, etc. Then they began entering into strange worlds, worlds made of fragmented objects that seemed like pieces of their memories.

That feeling was difficult to describe.

Sometimes, it made people feel psychologically uncomfortable.

But, just like Academician Lu had promised, they were given regular medical check-ups, making sure there were no side effects or reactions.

Li Gaoliang had nothing to complain about the mission. After all, Li Gaoliang had a huge amount of respect and appreciation for Academician Lu. Academician Lu was the one that helped invent the neural interface prosthetics. Without them, Li Gaoliang wouldn't even be able to get out of bed.

However, Li Gaoliang didn't know what was the point of these experiments.

He was walking in the corridor when he heard several soldiers talking inside the laboratory.

"... I feel my head and neck hurt every time I'm in the virtual world."

“That is painful to you? Grow up.”

“It’s just not comfortable... Are you sure this thing won’t affect my brain? My mother said I’m not a bright kid, if this makes me even dumber—”

“No way! We have physical examinations once a week. If there’s any, they would have found the problems.”

“But who knows how accurate the physical examinations are.”

While the two were speaking, they heard a cough outside the door. They instantly shut their mouths.

Li Gaoliang walked into the laboratory and looked at the soldiers. He smiled and spoke.

“What’s going on, gentlemen? How come it’s so quiet now?”

The four soldiers felt intimidated, and they all held their breath, afraid to speak.

They had a serious look on their faces.

Li Gaoliang looked around the silent laboratory and spoke.

“You guys are soldiers, and it is your responsibility to do what you are told.

“If anyone wants to quit, they can get dishonorably discharged.

“Remember, I don’t care what your worries or doubts are. Shut your mouth and do your mission!”

Li Gaoliang shouted at the four soldiers.

“Understood?”

“Yes, sir!”

Li Gaoliang nodded and spoke.

“Dismissed.”

The four people sighed in relief. They put down their helmets and quickly left the laboratory.

Li Gaoliang looked at the people leaving. He then picked up the helmet and placed it neatly aside.

When he heard footsteps at the door, he looked up and saw Lu Zhou.

Li Gaoliang smiled and spoke.

“Academician Lu? Do you need anything?”

“Nothing.” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “I happened to overhear your conversation. There’s no need to be so strict.”

Li Gaoliang shook his head and spoke.

“Academician Lu, this is how the military is. I don’t know anything about scientific research, so I’ll listen to anything you say. But I know my men.”

Lu Zhou nodded.

“Okay then, I’ll leave you guys alone.”

He paused for a second before asking, “How is it going? You’ve been here a month, are you used to it?”

Li Gaoliang: “Are you talking about the experiment or living here?”

Lu Zhou: “Both.”

Li Gaoliang said, “I’m getting used to living here, but the experiment... I feel like it’s a bit weird.”

Lu Zhou said, “What kind of weird?”

Li Gaoliang paused for a second before speaking.

“I’m a straightforward and honest guy, so don’t be offended. I was told the mission was going to be about testing virtual reality training equipment, but so far, it feels like... we’re just messing around, not doing anything useful.”

He wasn’t the only one who felt this way.

Over the past month, he had heard many soldiers talk about how they felt the same.

The soldiers of the Airborne Brigade had elite combat skills, and their loyalty was impeccable. Because of this, they were trusted to execute tasks under high stress.

However, when they did not have a target goal or a mission in mind, they would struggle to perform.

“How is it not useful? Thanks to you guys, the system is almost complete.” Lu Zhou thought for a second and said, “How about this, I can show you what we’ve done.”

Suddenly, Lu Zhou said some unexpected words.

“Have you seen Starship Troopers before?”

Li Gaoliang paused for a second and said, “I think so... But I don’t remember much about it.”

Lu Zhou said, “What about Halo? The PC game.”

Li Gaoliang: “I don’t really like playing games, and the guns make me dizzy. I might play the occasional mobile game.”

Lu Zhou nodded.

“Good.”

Li Gaoliang was baffled.

He didn’t know why Lu Zhou was asking these irrelevant questions.

Lu Zhou paused for a second before speaking in a serious tone.

“Right now, I need you to find the best men from your regiment... Including yourself, I need ten people.”

Li Gaoliang quickly responded, “I need to know the specific mission details.”

Lu Zhou: “It’s sort of like an outer space airborne mission.”

“What’s the target location?”

Lu Zhou: “Reach, the planet in Halo.”

Li Gaoliang: “...???”

Chapter 1076 Battle on Reach!

After three days of waiting, it was finally the day of the experiment. Li Gaoliang was lying on the virtual reality chair along with his soldiers. He finally understood what Lu Zhou meant by the planet “Reach”.

The boundless space, the cerulean planet, a giant starship...

“F*ck me! Is this... the Magpie Bridge?”

“Doesn’t look like it... Seems like something fictional.”

The people were standing in a room inside the virtual reality world. They all looked surprised.

This was different from their previous experiences of fragmented worlds; everything here looked so real. The textures of the materials, the sounds of footsteps, this felt like a dream.

It was almost like the laboratory in the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study had teleported onto a starship.

The sounds and the feel of touch weren’t done by external equipment.

Just like the images they were seeing with their own eyes, everything was projected directly into their brains...

Of course, in addition to the view outside the starship window, what surprised them the most was the armor on their bodies and the guns hanging around their shoulders.

The sci-fi armor felt so realistic. Even though they were lying inside a small laboratory room, they couldn’t help but feel like they were in a real war.

“Why is the armor so heavy...” a well-built man said. He frowned and continued, “It must be at least 50 kilograms.”

Even though they were in a low-gravity environment, they could still feel the heaviness of the armor.

The weight of the armor gave them a sense of security, but they didn’t look relaxed at all.

Using unfamiliar equipment was a dangerous thing, especially since the armor was so heavy, one could become an easy target on the battlefield.

The shorter man standing next to him spoke.

“Is this bulletproof?”

“No...” a man said. He had a long-range rifle across his shoulder. He spoke in a calm manner, “It looks like an exoskeleton... The tactical eyepiece is equipped with a holographic display, and it tells you how to use the weapons in your hand.”

Suddenly, the cabin door opened.

When Li Gaoliang and Professor Lu walked in, the soldiers stopped talking and gave a military salute.

Lu Zhou nodded awkwardly as he looked at Li Gaoliang.

Li Gaoliang took a deep breath and walked forward. He looked at all of them and spoke.

“I know you are all surprised... In fact, I was more surprised than you when I saw this.

“This is just an exercise, but I hope you can treat it as a real battle!”

Li Gaoliang looked back at Lu Zhou and wondered if he could skip the military nonsense and begin the exercise.

However, he saw Academician Lu look interested and intrigued, as if Academician Lu wanted him to continue the glorious speech.

Li Gaoliang paused for a second and finally turned around. He spoke in a stiff tone.

“... Our allies on planet Reach are being attacked by hostile forces. Our mission is to reach the communication tower at the colonial outpost. This is to ensure the normal operation of the communication facilities. We also have to set coordinates for the airstrikes of orbital weapons.

“The manual for using the equipment is built into the exoskeleton. Press the button on the right side of the tactical eyepiece to begin the holographic control interface.

“Our spacecraft will arrive in the airdrop area in 20 minutes. You guys have ten minutes to familiarize yourself with the equipment.”

Li Gaoliang set a ten-minute timer on his watch.

Li Gaoliang stood still and looked at the people in the cabin. He then shouted, “Are you ready?!”

The soldiers stood up straight.

“Yes, sir!”

Li Gaoliang turned around.

“Let’s go!”

After the group of the people left the cabin, Lu Zhou went to the command center.

The workers here were all NPC with simple encoded behavior logic. When Lu Zhou walked into the command center, they did not even look at him. Instead, they continued to “work”.

It was like Lu Zhou was watching a movie.

And he was sitting in a front-row seat.

“... Watching movies with virtual reality is a pretty good idea. The audience can participate in the plot without interfering with the plot,” Lu Zhou said as he looked at the screen, which was showing the soldiers stepping into the airborne capsule. He said to himself, “Not bad, I should write down this idea.”

The group of soldiers stepped into the airborne cabin buffer room.

Under the instructions of the staff member... the NPC, Li Gaoliang quickly connected the life support system to his exoskeleton.

Honestly speaking, he felt a little bad.

He was an experienced soldier, but at this moment, he felt like he was a new recruit.

He heard a voice in his ear.

“Approaching the airdrop area in 30 seconds.”

“...”

“Five.”

“Four.”

“Three.”

“Two.”

“One.”

The countdown ended.

They heard a muffled click and began feeling a huge thrust.

“Successfully in orbit, airborne procedure beginning.”

“Good luck, soldiers!”

“Cabin is separated!”

The cabin began to heat up.

When they made contact with the atmosphere, there was a huge force pushing them into their seats.

Li Gaoliang clenched his jaw.

This feels way too real.

The feeling of descending from space feels exactly like real life...

They had already traveled hundreds of kilometers. Flames came out of the deceleration engine.

When they were 100 meters from the surface, the airborne capsule ejected a smoke bomb, exploding on the ground, covering the battlefield.

The airborne capsule crashed on the ground as the group of well-trained soldiers stepped out of the cabin door, set up their weapons, and opened the infrared imager on their tactical eyepiece.

However, everything was dead silent. There was no sign of life here at all.

One of the soldiers had their rifle pointed at a shadow nearby. He took a deep breath and asked in the communication channel.

“Sir, who is our enemy? F*ck... What are these plants, how come I’ve never seen them before?”

Li Gaoliang looked at the shadow nearby and checked his map as he said, “Apparently, they’re aliens.”

“Aliens? The f*ck?!”

There was no time for these people to stay surprised.

There was a sound of howls in the distance.

The high-pitched howl pierced their eardrums, sending chills down their backs.

They could hear sounds of footsteps in the distance, like animals running through a forest.

Suddenly, they could see red dots on their tactical eyepiece maps.

They could see sharp claws appearing from the smoke.

The soldiers had their guns ready to fire, their pupils shrank.

The enemies are...

Swarm Hosts! [1]

[1] TN: species from Starcraft

Chapter 1077 What Kind of Exercise Is This?

The gun muzzle flashed as the bullets rained on the sharp claws, piercing through their flesh.

Lu Yong drew a pistol from his waist. He only had time to fire three bullets before he was assailed.

The claws pierced through his exoskeleton, but he didn't feel a thing.

When he opened his eyes, he took off his helmet and sat up from the chair. He saw his teammate also awake.

Tian Yuping: "You died?"

Lu Yong looked at the helmet in his hand and thought back to the feeling of the machine gun in his hand. He nodded silently.

"Yeah."

Tian Yuping: "How many did you kill?"

Lu Yong: "27."

As the team marksman, he was using a machine gun, thus he had the highest amount of firepower.

Of course, even then, he could only empty half of his magazines before he was "killed".

The aliens' teeth and claws were just like in video games, just more violent and fierce.

Sun Zhu was sitting next to him. He couldn't help but exclaim, "Not bad! I died as soon as I landed!"

As the team long-range marksman, he was the worst-equipped in short-range combat.

Even though one of his bullets could kill one alien, he could not get into an advantageous position.

“F*ck! Isn’t this thing supposed to be a training exercise? When are we ever going to fight against aliens in real life?”

“It’s pretty fun as a video game.”

The group of soldiers still hadn’t recovered from their shock.

Suddenly, the team sniper spoke, “Did you guys notice that?”

Tian Yuping looked at him and said, “Notice what?”

Meng Donghai paused for a second and said, “Before, the sounds we heard in the virtual reality world came from headsets, but this time was different.”

Lu Yong nodded and spoke.

“Yeah... There was also a sense of smell, taste, and even heat... It almost felt like reality.”

Sun Zhu sighed and leaned back on his chair.

“Regardless, we were slaughtered.”

“They are aliens, we should still be proud of how we did.” Tian Yuping patted his teammate on the shoulder and said, “We’re probably the only people on this planet who have fought against aliens.”

“We didn’t really fight against them, it was just an exercise, plus we were dominated.”

“Exercise... How is this an exercise? We were annihilated.”

This resonated in everyone’s mind.

This wasn’t an exercise at all.

They were aerospace paratroopers, not cruise missiles.

Sending them directly into the middle of the battlefield was the same as suicide!

...

In fact, Li Gaoliang felt the same way.

When he heard Lu Zhou's "mission score", he spat out the water in his mouth.

"Mission of 1.76, that's pretty low," Lu Zhou said as he looked at Li Gaoliang, who was holding the helmet in his hand.

"Out of 10?"

"No, out of 100," Lu Zhou said. "Unfortunately, you guys didn't even pass the first mission. I thought that with such good equipment, you guys could at least reach the outpost. The traps and other alien species didn't even come into play."

The power of the soldiers' equipment was somewhat equivalent to the level of Winter Soldier from the Marvel movies.

But the soldiers all died too fast, so Lu Zhou was slightly disappointed.

Li Gaoliang was furious, and he lashed out at Lu Zhou.

"What the hell kind of battle is this? So many enemy targets on the battlefield, throwing us airborne soldiers into the middle of the fight? What's the point? Not to mention the useless equipment, might as well give me an AK instead, I would have killed way more targets."

Lu Zhou awkwardly smiled and patted him on the arm. "Calm down, it's just a game, not a real fight. If there are no enemies when you land on the battlefield, where's the fun in that?"

Li Gaoliang: "..."

He felt like he wasn't having fun at all.

Lu Zhou looked at him and changed the subject. "So, how was the equipment?"

Li Gaoliang thought for a second and said, "It feels strange... But interesting."

Even though he wasn't used to the equipment, he believed that there was nothing wrong with the equipment itself; he just needed more practice.

If he had time to familiarize himself with the equipment, he was certain that he could be twice as effective in combat.

Lu Zhou: "Do you want it?"

Li Gaoliang paused for a second and looked shocked.

"Isn't that a simulation? You... can really make it?"

Lu Zhou: "It can easily be made in real life, but I doubt if it will be useful in practice. Actually, I talked about this with Minister Qin. The virtual reality exercise isn't only for reducing training expenses, but also to test the technical feasibility of new weapons.

"The military equipment experts might not know what you guys need, but through the virtual exercises, they can easily observe what you lack on the battlefield."

Li Gaoliang said, "... Thank you."

If I had the exoskeleton on my body...

I wouldn't have lost my legs.

Even though his legs were already gone, if this technology could really come to life, it would hugely benefit soldiers fighting on the front-line.

It wouldn't entirely save them.

But, it would reduce casualties.

Lu Zhou looked at how serious Li Gaoliang was and smiled as he said, "You're welcome, it's my responsibility to support our country's defense. In fact, I didn't develop this for military purposes, I was just interested in the technology."

"And now, your mission has successfully concluded, it was an honor to work with you guys." Lu Zhou shook Li Gaoliang's hand and said, "Congratulations on completing the mission, you can return to your base tomorrow."

Li Gaoliang paused for a second and said, "Wait a second, you're saying we're finished here?"

"Correct, that was the final test, the VR system is finished. Thanks to your help, we were able to simulate the sound and touch brain signals."

Lu Zhou looked at Li Gaoliang and asked, "Is there anything wrong?"

Li Gaoliang scratched his head and spoke.

"Actually... It's not anything big.

"It's just that, I'm still thinking about the battle just now... I want to try it again, can I try passing it?"

Lu Zhou paused for a second and said, "That was just a small test program, it's not a video game."

Li Gaoliang smiled and said, "I'm saying, I can't stop thinking about it. Give me another chance, my people can definitely get to the outpost!"

Lu Zhou: "..."

Looks like the VR system is not perfect yet.

I need to add some kind of anti-addiction mechanism...

Chapter 1078 The Shocking Replay

The battle training mission was recorded.

On the day after the training mission, the replay was shown to Minister Qin in the form of a virtual reality replay.

This time, Li Gaoliang, as well as the nine other soldiers, all became NPCs.

Lu Zhou had become two people; one was in the form of an NPC, the person standing in the command room, and the other was his real character, which was standing next to Minister Qin as both of them spectated the battle.

The initial speech was over.

After Li Gaoliang announced for the team to “begin” their battle, Lu Zhou brought Minister Qin to the command cabin of the starship. They could observe the entire battle in this room.

The battle against the Swarm Host was tragic.

Even though Lu Zhou had seen the battle before, he still couldn’t help but cringe when Li Gaoliang was “sacrificed”.

When Minister Qin saw the sharp claws tore through the soldiers’ armor, his eyebrows twitched.

“Isn’t that... painful?”

The device Minister Qin was connected to was different from the experimental device.

He could even feel the warm breeze blowing on his face.

Everything felt so real, even to the point where he couldn’t distinguish this from reality.

He had chills sent down his spine when he saw the tragic scene of the soldiers. He clenched his fists.

Lu Zhou said, “No, they don’t.”

Lu Zhou was standing in front of the holographic console as he reached out and tapped in the air. He watched everything fragment into tiny pieces around him and spoke in a casual tone.

“You can try recalling the last time you dreamed. The stimuli that the nervous system can withstand in a dream are limited. Whether it’s pain, heat, or touch. When the stimuli reach the maximum level of the nervous system, you won’t feel anything. Instead, you’ll wake up from your dream.

“The virtual reality equipment is similar to having a dream. If the pain sensation, or other sensations, reaches above the threshold, the user would lose their connection with the neural demodulator and wake up.”

Minister Qin was relieved.

The battle replay was over.

Minister Qin took off his helmet and stood up.

“I am optimistic about this technology.” He stared at Lu Zhou for a while and said in a serious manner, “Actually, this isn’t perfected yet, right?”

“Of course.”

Another person might have skipped over the issues, but Lu Zhou had nothing to hide.

“Actually, I was talking with Li Gaoliang about this yesterday. Even though the virtual reality system can simulate a training mission, it cannot replace real live ammunition training. Things like muscle memory and battlefield intuition can’t be learned in the virtual world.”

Minister Qin nodded.

“I know what you mean.”

As long as machines did not completely replace humans on the battlefield, the VR system would still contain many limitations.

However, even then, its application to the national defense field was fascinating.

If an overseas embassy was hijacked, they only needed a map, an architectural drawing, and a small amount of intelligence. Then, they could perform a number of tactical simulations before the real rescue mission even began.

This would greatly increase the effectiveness of the aerospace paratroopers.

Lu Zhou paused for a second then spoke.

“... In addition to its limited applications, the technology has demanding hardware requirements. It is difficult for normal computers to handle this level of data processing, so it has to be at least server-grade, maybe even supercomputer grade. Otherwise, the virtual reality system won’t be able to run stably.

“However, even though the computation required is large, I believe that if we optimize the operating system, we can reduce the computation required.

“No to mention that even if this problem can’t be solved, it won’t affect this technology. Cloud computing is one of the major developing trends of the Internet. After 5G is completed, the computing work can be handed over to a central server, while the helmet acts only as a signal receiving terminal.”

After Minister Qin heard Lu Zhou, he took a deep breath and asked in a serious manner, “I have to thank you.”

“No need for that.” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “I’ll be happy as long as it’s used in the right place.”

Minister Qin nodded and spoke.

“I can promise you that.”

...

Minister Qin didn’t stay at the Institute for Advanced Study for long. After chatting with Lu Zhou about the possible application of virtual reality in the field of national defense, he went to take a plane back to Beijing.

Director Li from the State Administration for National Defense also happened to come here today. After Lu Zhou came back from sending Minister Qin out, Director Li smiled and spoke.

“He left?”

“Yeah...” Lu Zhou sat down on the couch and said, “The department plans on ordering a batch of VR systems, and they want us to compile a training program for them—”

Director Li quickly said, “There’s no reason for me to know that.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “It’s not a huge secret... Okay, it should stay confidential, but you have the security clearance to know this, right?”

Director Li coughed and said, “Thank god I do... But I think you should be careful.”

“Okay then, I misspoke.”

Director Li changed the subject and asked, “Speaking of which, how is the development of applying virtual reality to the civilian field?”

Lu Zhou thought for a while and said, “The compilation of the virtual reality system has been completed, whether it is for military or civilian use. However, I haven’t decided on how to release this technology to the public.”

There was no doubt that once virtual reality was released, it would disrupt the modern Internet system.

Not only would it change people’s understanding of the Internet, but it would completely change how people interact and use the Internet.

Disruptive technology would inevitably bring disruptive effects.

In fact, Lu Zhou wasn’t really sure if the public was ready to see this technology.

Director Li nodded and took a sip of tea.

After a while, he spoke.

“Remember the thing I talked about?”

Lu Zhou: “What?”

“About releasing this technology to the public. Actually, we held a meeting before I came here.”

Director Li paused for a second and said, “Our suggestion is that, this technology mostly benefits society. You don’t have to wait for it to be perfect before releasing it.

“What if someone else solves the technology and releases it before you?!”

1079 Another Bloodbath

[Mission Evaluation: 81 points]

A light blue panel appeared along with the words “Game Over”.

“Not bad,” Lu Zhou said to Li Gaoliang, who had just taken off his helmet. Lu Zhou continued, “60 points is a pass, 81 points is pretty good.”

Lu Zhou clapped his hands and gave him a look of encouragement.

Even though it was slightly “cheating” of him to turn on orbital manual airstrikes, Lu Zhou also increased the strength of the enemies. Achieving 81 points was pretty good.

However, this was only a good score for filthy casual gamers.

For competitive gamers, anything below 100 points was a failure.

“Not good enough.” Li Gaoliang looked at the helmet in his hand and said, “There are still two medals I haven’t achieved... If I get the two medals and ensure all hostages survive, I should be able to get a full score.”

As Li Gaoliang muttered to himself, Lu Zhou couldn’t help but get a headache.

It’s just a simulation.

“Um... It’s just a video game.”

“... Yes, you’re right, it’s just a game. It’s not even a game, it’s just a training program.”

Li Gaoliang looked at Lu Zhou and said in a serious manner, “But in my eyes, every soldier is a living person! As a senior military officer, it is my duty to bring everyone back alive. If I fail my training, people will die on the battlefield. Anything less than a full score is a failure for me.”

Lu Zhou spoke.

“It’s just a game...”

...

In the end, Li Gaoliang wasn’t able to achieve a full score.

Not because Lu Zhou cared about the electricity fee, but because Li Gaoliang was here for too long. He had to go back and report to his higher-ups.

It wasn’t like he could report to his higher-ups that he was too busy playing a video game?

That would be ridiculous!

Therefore, Li Gaoliang finally left the laboratory. He even told Lu Zhou he was going to visit here often. In the end, he took his team and went back to their military station.

The day after Li Gaoliang left, Chen Yushan returned from a business trip from Shanghai. She came to the Institute for Advanced Study and asked Lu Zhou, “Did you talk with the people from the State Administration for National Defense?”

Lu Zhou: “I talked with Director Li two days ago.”

Chen Yushan asked, “What do they think?”

Lu Zhou said, “The State Administration for National Defense suggests we apply the virtual reality technology to civilian use. I searched for some papers for this area, and companies like EyeMynd and Neuralink are also researching in this area. No wonder Director Li seems to be in a hurry.”

Both of them were American companies that used completely different technical routes.

For example, EyeMynd and a bioinformatics company called EMOTIV were working with Facebook to develop non-invasive virtual reality devices. This meant they would use external detection technologies such as electroencephalography to achieve a connection to the virtual reality world.

Neuralink, founded by Elon Musk, was dedicated to developing “brain implant” devices. Even though inserting nanoelectrodes into the brain sounded dangerous, apparently, they had made breakthroughs on monkeys.

The State Administration for National Defense wanted them to release the technology to the public as soon as possible, before the Americans could release theirs.

If virtual reality technology was going to become a crucial part of human social activities, it would be better to jump on the trend as early as possible.

However, even though Lu Zhou understood why the State Administration for National Defense felt this way, he disagreed with them.

Even though Neuralink had made some research progress, they were far from achieving the same level of virtual reality.

Chen Yushan looked at Lu Zhou and jokingly said, "Looks like Star Sky Technology is going to set off a bloodbath on Wall Street."

"Bloodbath, that sounds so violent," Lu Zhou said. "I sacrificed a lot to create this technology."

Chen Yushan: "... Oh, you did?"

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Of course."

Fifteen thousand general points was not a small sacrifice.

Not to mention the time spent learning information science.

However, even though the sacrifice was big, the returns were also big.

If it weren't for this interesting project, he would have never spent the time mastering information science and biology.

"This research project is probably over for you, right? I'm guessing you're not interested in the business side..." Chen Yushan curiously said, "What now? What's next for you?"

"Probably continue where I left off," Lu Zhou said. "I've been procrastinating on the Grand Unified Theory of mathematics. After I solved Riemann's hypothesis, I should have been working on that first."

The reason why he decided to research virtual reality wasn't because of how many general points he saved up; it was because he was inspired by the Dragon series chip product launch.

Now that this research project was finished, he planned on taking a few days off, then began working on unifying algebra and geometry.

However, he still had to visit one person before that.

Seeing how casual Lu Zhou was, Chen Yushan said, "Is that even possible..."

She knew Lu Zhou was talented.

However, unifying mathematics...

Lu Zhou replied, “Of course it’s not something that can be done by everyone...”

Lu Zhou paused for a second and looked at his right hand.

He could still remember standing in front of the whiteboards, writing the solution of Riemann’s hypothesis.

He could even hear the squeak of the marker as he dragged it against the whiteboard.

“But after I solved Riemann’s hypothesis, I feel like I’m very close to the finish line.”

1080 What Is This Damn Thing?

On the outskirts of Boston, there was a research institute that covered more than 100 acres.

This research institute was originally a collaborative unit with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, controlled by a pharmaceutical company with a market cap of approximately US\$2 billion.

Its research was mainly focused on clinical biology.

However, after it was acquired by the Boston Financial Group, they began to pivot. Their research became focused on human cryonics technology. Their funding came from a well-known cancer charity, which gave them a billion USD of funding. Their aim was to send terminally-ill patients into the future, where they had a higher chance of being cured.

This cryobiology research institute was now managed by Space-X, merging with Space-X’s frozen dormancy laboratory.

The reason for this merger was because both sides were going after frozen dormancy technology. However, one side was using it for aerospace uses, while the other side was using it for medical uses.

And there was one other reason...

Because both sides were related to David Lawrence from Boston Financial Group.

The cryobiology research institute wasn't the only thing he had invested in.

He had invested in most of Space-X's projects, even the ones that didn't seem profitable.

Inside a cryobiology laboratory.

A huge cylindrical petri dish sat between two computers, connected by various wires. In the middle of the petri dish, there was a monkey lying quietly. If it weren't for the beating lines on the electrocardiogram, there was no way to tell if the monkey was alive or dead.

After David Lawrence stared at the monkey for a long time, he spoke.

"How is the research going?"

Elon smiled and said nonchalantly, "It's been going smoothly. A congressman we know persuaded the Congressional Budget Office that frozen dormancy technology is a crucial part of aerospace, especially for the colonization of distant galaxies. This allowed us to receive orders from NASA—"

"That's not what I'm asking."

David Lawrence looked at the monkey inside the petri dish and said, "I have money, I don't care how much money this is going to make. I only care about completing my plan."

Elon looked at Lawrence and gulped.

After a while, he calmed down and spoke.

"I understand, Lawrence... In fact, I don't care about money either, achieving my childhood dream is very fulfilling. However, in order to turn a dream into reality, we have to seek help from others."

Lawrence nodded and said, "If NASA has what you need, then so be it. I just hope you don't put the cart before the horse. I don't care how many poor people this technology saves, this technology is important to me, I need it."

Elon nodded respectfully.

“I understand.”

Elon was the new Silicon Valley star, the “Iron Man” of the technology industry. However, he knew that these heartless Wall Street animals did not care about his reputation.

Their wealth was accumulated in centuries, even the Internal Revenue Service did not know how much money they had.

They had connections in the entire financial system.

Sometimes, power was scarier than money.

Lawrence looked at the monkey and suddenly spoke.

“Speaking of which, there’s something else I care about.”

Elon immediately asked, “What’s up?”

“It’s about your company Neuralink and the neural lace project.” Lawrence looked at Elon and said, “I want to know its progress.”

The neural lace was a technology in which ultra-thin mesh with electrodes was inserted into the brain.

Using this technology, users would be able to transmit their own brain signals through external electrical electrodes. They could control electronic devices such as mobile phones, computers, etc. They could even connect their consciousness directly onto the Internet and interact with people thousands of miles away.

People had been developing similar technologies for a long time, but it had only recently gained traction.

“We have been making some progress... but not much,” Elon said. He paused for a second and continued, “Establishing a brain-computer interface through nanowires is technically feasible, that is beyond doubt. However, the problem is that even if we make the neural lace thin enough, it is difficult to prevent it from permanently damaging the brain...”

Lawrence nodded and began to think.

Elon was wondering why Lawrence was interested in Neuralink when Lawrence suddenly spoke.

“If only the body is in a frozen dormancy state, not the brain... Is it possible to ensure that only a portion of the brain is dormant?”

Elon frowned.

“So you’re saying...”

“Looks like you know what I mean.” Lawrence smiled and lifted his chin. He pointed at the monkey and said, “I want to know, can I use the neural lace while in a dormant state?”

“I’m not sure...” Elon shook his head and said, “This is not my area of specialty. It is irresponsible to make any conclusions about a technology that has not been invented yet.”

“But theoretically speaking,” Elon said, “if we want to keep a part of the brain awake, then I’m afraid the brain-computer interface won’t be the only thing implanted in the brain. We would also have to transport oxygen and nutrients into the brain for it to survive.”

Lawrence: “So it is theoretically possible?”

Elon looked at him and held his breath.

He thought he was already a mad scientist; he didn’t expect to meet someone crazier than himself.

“The human body is a burden. The soul and consciousness of a human is its essence. I thought we would agree on this,” Lawrence said after seeing Elon stay silent for a long time. He looked disappointed as he said, “But that doesn’t matter, you just need to do as you’re told.”

A secretary standing nearby suddenly walked over with a mobile phone and whispered a few words to Lawrence.

Lawrence looked surprised as he stared at the phone. He raised his eyebrows as he spoke.

“Looks like something interesting just happened.”

Elon frowned and immediately asked, “What...”

Lawrence smiled and said, “Go on your phone and see what’s trending number one on Twitter.”

Elon took out his phone and opened the twitter app.

The second he saw what was on his screen...

His heart skipped a beat.

[The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study has achieved neural interface virtual reality technology, producing a seamless connection between the neural system and the computer system!]

[Star Sky Technology is openly recruiting virtual reality system testers from all around the world!]

When Elon saw this, his eyeballs nearly popped out of his socket.

F*ck!

Star Sky Technology!

Those b*stards again?!

Chapter 1081 Using This Technology to Travel the World?

Jin Ling University.

Mathematics department dorms.

Duan Siqi had just finished studying. He leaned back in his chair and took out his phone to check Weibo.

He was a freshman that joined the Jin University mathematics department this summer. He scored the top 200 in the college entrance examination for his state. He was quite a genius student.

However, when compared to the other students at the Jin University mathematics department, he was nothing.

Not to mention there was the student Li Mo, who received an IMO gold medal with full marks.

Li Mo was miles ahead of everyone else in his cohort. People wondered why he did not go to Shuimu or Yan University instead.

Time quickly passed by.

Duan Siqi's break was almost over. He was about to put away his phone and continue studying. However, a news headline on his phone suddenly caught his eye.

"A neural interface virtual reality equipment?"

"Jesus Christ! Is this real?"

This caught the attention of everyone in the dorm.

Li Mo, who was studying, as well as three other people in the dorm, all took out their phones and went on Weibo.

Soon after, they saw the shocking news headline on Weibo.

"Jesus! Is this... the kind of virtual reality that places the entire mind into the virtual reality world?"

"That is crazy..."

Discussions began in the dorm room.

"Using nerve micro-current stimulation to input electrical signals to the neural demodulator..." Yang Shuang quietly read. He couldn't help but say, "F*ck me, using electricity on the brain? Isn't that going to fry the brain?"

Li Mo shook his head.

"No way, this project is led by Academician Lu! If there were serious safety concerns, they would definitely not release this technology."

Duan Siqi looked at him and said, "You're such a fanboy..."

"Of course!" Li Mo smiled and scratched the back of his head. "God Lu is my idol."

The other two roommates looked at each other and smiled awkwardly.

Duan Siqi smiled on the outside, but he was cringing on the inside.

Maybe geniuses all have a couple of screws loose.

He couldn't imagine what it was like to worship someone to that level.

No matter how much he respected a person, he would at most give them a like on their Weibo posts. It was rare to see someone he admired in real life.

Moreover, this wasn't the main point; the main point was the virtual reality technical problem.

Connecting one's consciousness directly to a machine.

Experience an immersive virtual reality world through dreaming...

Is that even possible?

Even though he read through the news articles and statements, he still couldn't believe this was true.

Duan Siqi suddenly noticed that on the last page of one of the articles, they mentioned that Star Sky Technology was recruiting testing volunteers.

The second he saw this news, he began to think.

Maybe...

This is a good opportunity.

Is this really as cool as it sounds?

Might as well sign up as a volunteer and try it out myself...

...

Frozen dormancy was not relevant in most people's lives; neural interface virtual reality technology was much more relevant for most people.

The online novels, the anime such as SAO, Hollywood science fiction blockbusters such as "Ready Player One", this kind of technology had been in

mainstream entertainment for decades. The public had associated VR as a technology of the future.

People already began fantasizing about what being in a virtual world would be like.

Now that the technology was here, how could they not go crazy?

Right after the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study and Star Sky Technology announced their major research progress on neural interface virtual reality technology, as well as releasing video demonstrations, major Internet forums exploded.

[Jesus, is this the real deal? Not the kind where you wear a display on your head?]

[This is probably fake news! Impossible!]

[Not necessarily, this is the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, the country's top research institute! Also, Professor Lu is the research institute director, and he is a reputable scholar!]

[F*ck me, this is crazy!]

[Does this mean I can travel the world while being in the comfort of my own home?]

[You're going to use this technology to travel the world?]

[What else am I supposed to do?]

[Maybe have a little fun... hahaha.]

Other than the optimistic voices, many people came out with pessimistic opinions.

A small number of people had expressed their concerns regarding the various sociological damages the technology might bring. More people expressed their doubts about whether the technology was even real.

After all, the idea of immersing in a virtual world was something out of a movie. Even though the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study was reputable,

the frequent academic fraud that came from Chinese researchers made people suspicious.

However, those people were the minority.

Because people quickly realized that the person in charge of the virtual reality project was Professor Lu himself!

This was like adding oil to a fire. Discussions went wild.

Professor Lu was the face of Chinese academia. Some people might have had some doubts in the beginning, and they thought maybe this was propaganda or an exaggeration of research results. However, when they heard Professor Lu's name, all of their doubts disappeared.

Within the first hour of Star Sky Technology releasing their volunteer registration form, a million people around the globe had already submitted their applications.

The minimum age was 18 while the maximum age was 60. People from all age groups had signed up for testing.

Star Sky Technology clearly stated on their website that there would be no travel reimbursements, no salary, and that they would only provide food and accommodation. Even though there were only 100 spots available, that didn't stop people's enthusiasm for virtual reality technology.

They didn't care about the money.

All of them wanted to experience what it was like to be immersed in a virtual world.

They wanted to be the first witnesses of a historic moment...

Chapter 1082 Meaning

Because of the neural interface virtual reality technology, Star Sky Technology and the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study were at the center of attention all over the world.

Lu Zhou, as the head of both Star Sky Technology and the Institute for Advanced Study, should have been standing in front of cameras, hosting a press conference, telling people about this new technology.

However, instead of being at a press conference and under the spotlight, he was quietly standing in a medical ward.

This ward had a special name. It was called the “Frozen Dormancy Ward”.

Terminally-ill patients from all over the world had been transferred here.

The cost of cryosleep was relatively low compared to being in an ICU.

Other than the expensive Martian bacteria extract, the cost of keeping the dormant device running was not high.

Of course, this was only cheap compared to other forms of treatment.

Standing next to Lu Zhou was a woman, who was also here to visit a patient.

The woman looked to be in her late forties, and she was holding the hand of a five-year-old boy. There were tears coming out of the corners of her eyes.

The person under cryosleep was probably her husband. The kid standing next to her probably did not know what was going on as he stood there silently.

The woman noticed Lu Zhou standing nearby, and she was shocked when she recognized him.

After hesitating for a while, she walked up to him while holding her son and asked carefully, “Hello, are you... Academician Lu?”

After a moment of silence, Lu Zhou nodded.

“Yeah.”

“Thank you...”

Lu Zhou looked at the grateful woman and shook his head.

“I’m not a doctor, no need to thank me.”

“The doctor told us that you saved him... You saved us.”

Lu Zhou looked at her and waited for her to continue.

“We... actually don’t have any money,” the woman said with a bitter look on her face. She said while reminiscing about the past, “We sold the house and spent all of our savings on medical bills for my husband, but we couldn’t survive. A few months ago, my husband told me to stop the treatment and save the money for our son, but...”

The woman’s voice trembled as she took a deep breath. She smiled reluctantly.

“Anyway, thank you... Thank you!

“I’m just happy he’s alive.

“I’m bringing my son back to our hometown, so this is probably the last time we can see him. The doctor said the hospital in the future can definitely cure him, and I hope that’s true... I just want him to be healthy in the future, smoke less, eat healthily... I hope he doesn’t miss me too much...”

The woman realized Lu Zhou probably didn’t care about her personal life. She looked embarrassed as she spoke to her son.

“Come on, say thank you to this hero...”

The little boy blinked as he stared at Lu Zhou. He spoke in a timid voice.

“Thank you.”

Lu Zhou smiled and rubbed his head.

“You’re welcome, kiddo, You should thank your mother, make sure to take care of her.”

The kid looked at Lu Zhou and said, “What about my dad? Is he going to wake up?”

“He will.”

The kid nodded as Lu Zhou gave him a look of encouragement.

The mother and son bid farewell and left.

However, when the mother walked to the door, she suddenly stopped and looked back. She bowed toward Lu Zhou before walking away.

Voices in the corridor were heard between the mother and son.

“Mom... Who was that guy?”

“He’s a scientist.”

“Scientist? I want to be a scientist...”

The conversation faded away as the footsteps became quieter and quieter.

Lu Zhou sighed. He felt a little blue.

He didn’t like being in a hospital.

There was a sense of sadness in the air.

After a while, he heard footsteps from behind.

He looked at the doctor and spoke.

“How was the test result?”

“They’re here...”

Lu Zhou took the medical report from the doctor and glanced through it. He looked disappointed.

Although he knew from the beginning that it was unrealistic to expect people in a cryosleep state to connect to a virtual reality world through their unconscious brainwaves, his heart still dropped to the bottom of his stomach when he read the report.

The only way was to wake up half of the brain.

But that was undoubtedly dangerous.

The doctor looked at Lu Zhou and asked, “Do you want me to explain it to you?”

“No need...” Lu Zhou took a deep breath and folded the medical report. He then stuffed it into his pocket and said, “I have a general idea of what’s going on, thank you.”

“Of course, no worries.” The doctor smiled and said, “I should be thanking you, the frozen dormancy technology and neural interface prosthetic have saved many lives.”

“Oh yeah?”

Lu Zhou looked away from the doctor, at the dormancy cabin nearby.

It was almost like the frost on the cabin glass separated not only space but also time.

The doctor looked a little downcast as he sighed.

“Do you need some time alone?”

“Sure...”

The doctor nodded and left the room without saying anything.

Lu Zhou was the only person inside the ward.

He looked at the dormancy cabin and suddenly spoke.

“I’m here.

“The next project is on the unification of algebra and geometry... I already have some ideas in mind.”

Lu Zhou gulped and wanted to say something, but in the end, he shook his head and smiled.

“Nevermind...”

“Even if I tell you my ideas, you probably can’t hear them.

“I’ll save the suspense for the future.

“When you wake up, you’ll be able to read my paper. You’re my best student, so I’m sure you will be able to understand the paper without me explaining it to you.”

Lu Zhou stayed in the ward until a nurse came around for her routine check of the dormancy cabin operations. Lu Zhou left soon after.

...

After Lu Zhou left the hospital, he sat in Wang Peng’s car.

Wang Peng threw away his cigarette and started the car.

“Where to?”

“Airport.”

“Back to Jinling?”

“Yeah.”

Lu Zhou originally planned on staying in Beijing for a few more days. However, he wasn’t in the mood to visit his old friends anymore, and he wanted to go back on a retreat again.

After all, his friends knew that he was an introvert, so they wouldn’t blame him for not visiting.

The car began to drive as the two people stayed silent.

Wang Peng could feel the dull atmosphere as he tried to make conversation.

“There are people talking about you online, about the virtual reality technology.”

“Yeah.”

“Are you not interested?”

“I am, just not in the mood right now.”

Suddenly, the phone began to ring.

Lu Zhou took out his phone, and when he saw the caller ID, he frowned.

Normally, he wouldn't mind talking to this person, but he was not in the mood right now. Not to mention he already ignored the call when he first arrived at the hospital, but this person called again.

Wang Peng noticed the call being dismissed by Lu Zhou.

Wang Peng looked at the rearview mirror and asked, "Not going to take that?"

"No..." Lu Zhou threw his phone aside and said, "It's nothing important."

Chapter 1083 Not Everyone Is Qualified

"F*ck! He hung up on me again."

Ye Nan angrily turned off his phone and threw it on the table. He leaned back on his chair.

The first time he called Lu Zhou, he didn't get a reply, so he thought Lu Zhou was probably busy. After waiting for a while and calling again, Lu Zhou didn't pick up either.

"He didn't block me, did he?" Ye Nan sighed and muttered to himself, "Sigh, why is it so hard to do business these days."

Sitting across from him was a thin man wearing glasses. He smiled and spoke.

"Calm down, bro, scientific researchers like him are idiosyncratic people. You can't treat him as a normal person."

"Yeah, you're right." Ye Nan sighed and said, "But this is so annoying! This was my idea, he's not acknowledging me at all!"

Ye Nan was furious. He slapped his thigh and wanted to swear.

However, all he could do was complain; he didn't have the guts to actually provoke Lu Zhou.

Even though Ye Nan was a bit reckless with his money, he was an educated man, and he knew that he couldn't afford to offend Lu Zhou. Otherwise, his father would give him a lesson.

That was the best-case scenario.

There was a chance for his father to never even talk to him again.

The man sitting across from Ye Nan smiled and suddenly spoke.

"Actually, it's fine if Academician Lu ignores you, think about it... The virtual reality technology is already here, there's no reason for them to keep it behind closed doors. Star Sky Technology is a patent authorization company. They're not in the product development business. Which means they eventually have to cooperate with someone else."

Ye Nan frowned and said, "So what you're saying is..."

"Even if Academician Lu ignores us, that doesn't mean we can't take the initiative ourselves." The man smiled and said, "What's the first thing you think about when you hear the words 'virtual reality'? I promise you, most people would think about video games!

"In my opinion, virtual reality has a huge edge over traditional gaming equipment. The gaming industry will explode over the next decade!

"And we are standing at an inflection point, the entire market is about to change. This means if we enter this market right now, for example, by acquiring a video game company..."

The man stopped talking, allowing Ye Nan's imagination to run wild.

As expected, Ye Nan's eyes lit up as he spoke.

"Good idea! That totally makes sense! Let's go find which company to acquire."

The man smiled and spoke.

"Perfect, I know a few video game companies that are looking for funding, I'll recommend some to you..."

...

The reason why Star Sky Technology announced the breakthrough in virtual reality was to make it easier for them to find business partners. However, that didn't mean everyone had the opportunity to become their business partner.

While Lu Zhou was heading toward the airport, a man in a suit was sitting nervously in front of a conference table at the headquarters of Star Sky Technology in the high-tech zone.

Sitting across from him was the CEO of Star Sky Technology.

After the confrontation with Tesla and ExxonMobil, this female CEO had solidified her name in the business world.

No longer did anyone talk about her dad being a high-level government official, nor did they attribute all of her achievements to the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. They started to acknowledge her strength.

Even though the man was a high-level employee, he still felt pressured when facing an industry titan like her.

He took a deep breath and handed out a document.

"This is our cooperation plan... I'm sure you know about the future application prospects of virtual reality networks. Our company has a large user base of younger people. We will be able to help each other in terms of marketing and technology development..."

Chen Yushan picked up the document and glanced at it. She then threw it on the table and spoke.

"I want to talk with your boss."

The man sitting across from the table was shocked, but he quickly smiled and nodded.

"Oh, okay.

"If you guys are not satisfied with our proposal, we can come up with a new cooperation plan that satisfies both of us. I sincerely hope that we can reach an agreement. When will we be able to talk—"

“How about next Friday afternoon, send someone important over,” Chen Yushan said. “I have a meeting with Penguin Group in an hour, this meeting is over.”

The man’s face suddenly changed.

“Okay then... Our boss will definitely come next time to talk about the partnership agreement.”

He picked up the document on the desk, shook Chen Yushan’s hand, and left.

The vice president of the company saw CEO Chen walk out of the conference room. He walked over and asked her, “CEO Chen, how was the negotiation?”

Chen Yushan: “They want to buy out our virtual reality technology.”

The vice president stumbled and murmured, “How dare they...”

“Yeah, they can keep dreaming.”

The vice president hesitated for a bit and spoke.

“I realized that most of the companies contacting us are Internet companies, especially whose business model is focused on video games.”

Chen Yushan: “Is that something worth noting?”

The vice president said in a serious tone, “I’m saying, shouldn’t we make video games ourselves? I think the proposal from our planning department is good. Making video games with this is straight up a cash grab.”

Chen Yushan shook her head and spoke.

“We are a technology company, not a video game company, not an Internet company. I’m not saying video games aren’t profitable, but it is completely unnecessary for us. Huawei has a good platform for video game development, do you see them focusing on video games?”

The vice president paused for a second and shook his head. “No...”

Chen Yushan nodded and spoke casually.

“Exactly, because it is unnecessary.

“They are building an ecosystem. Even if they do nothing, countless companies will join the ecosystem and help them promote the entire ecosystem. Huawei does not have to focus on the details, they can focus on the bigger picture and create more profits.

“We are also creating an ecosystem, but not on mobile devices. Rather, we are focusing on the future of the entire virtual reality network.

“Remember, we are already at the top of the industry chain. We just have to maintain our position.

“A video game lasts a decade at most.

“But a virtual reality network can last forever.”

Chapter 1084 Persistent Reporter

Lu Zhou thought he could avoid being interviewed by going to Beijing, but the second he got off the plane, he was swarmed by media reporters.

Obviously, Lu Zhou had underestimated people’s enthusiasm for virtual reality technology.

The second he walked out of the airport terminal, reporters with cameras surrounded him.

Reporter from South China Morning Post: “Professor Lu! Is Star Sky Technology’s breakthrough in virtual reality true?”

Lu Zhou: “Go check the website yourself.”

Reporter from The Sun: “Professor Lu! We heard that the Switzerland Neural Network Science Research Center has done research in the same area, and your institute poached a researcher from them two months ago. Does this not classify as academic theft—”

Lu Zhou: “You’ll have to ask Professor Lumiere and list which papers you think were involved in academic theft. I hope you can prepare better questions next time.”

BBC reporter: "Hello, Academician Lu! Is Dr. Z a researcher at the Institute for Advanced Study? We noticed a month ago he published a paper on arXiv regarding virtual reality technology. Can you tell us why he has remained anonymous?"

Lu Zhou said, "I don't know, maybe because he wants to hide from reporters like you."

BBC reporter: "Oh."

Under the escort of airport security guards, Lu Zhou was finally able to get in his car, escaping the crazy reporters.

Lu Zhou leaned in his seat and adjusted his collar. He then asked, "How did these people know about my flight?"

He bought his flight ticket last minute at the airport. He had no idea how the reporters knew about his flight.

Wang Peng was also confused. As someone who was personally responsible for Lu Zhou's security and privacy, this was undoubtedly his mistake.

"Maybe something is going on with the airline... I'll investigate later."

Lu Zhou: "No need..."

The reporters were just doing their job, there was no reason to give them a hard time.

Wang Peng looked at the rearview mirror and asked, "Where to?"

Lu Zhou looked at the time on his watch and spoke.

"It's still early, let's go to Jin University."

Wang Peng: "What about the luggage?"

Lu Zhou: "Just leave it in the car."

Wang Peng nodded and began driving toward Jin Ling University.

...

Jin Ling University.

The end of the corridor in the mathematics department building.

When Assistant Zhao looked at the person appearing at the door, she froze.

Lu Zhou saw Zhao Huan looking at him and wondered if there was food stuck to his face. He hesitated for a moment before asking, "Is there anything wrong?"

"Nothing..." Zhao Huan shook her head and said, "I just didn't expect... you come here today."

Lu Zhou felt a little ashamed.

He told himself countless times that this year he would "focus his attention on teaching". Many students signed up for his number theory course. However, after teaching the first two lectures himself, he had one of his PhD students teach the class instead.

He had no other choice. After all, he was too busy.

Lu Zhou coughed and changed the subject.

"Call the PhD students, as well as Professor Chen Yang, and ask them to come over to my office."

Zhao Huan nodded and picked up the phone on her table.

"Okay."

...

Everyone arrived soon after the phone calls.

The first to arrive was He Changwen. He Changwen had a laptop in one hand, draft papers in the other, and a backpack on his back. He looked like he came here in a hurry.

When he received the phone call, he was studying in the library.

When he heard Assistant Zhao say that Lu Zhou needed him for something, He Changwen immediately rushed over from the library.

He had been studying under Professor Lu for many years. Now that Professor Lu finally needed him for something, he almost started to tear up.

Finally!

This is my chance to shine!

He walked into the office and spoke emotionally.

“Professor! What do you need me to do? I’ll try my best!”

Lu Zhou looked at He Changwen and smiled.

“Don’t worry, I’ll tell you when the others get here.”

He Changwen froze.

“... The others?”

“Yeah,” Lu Zhou looked at him weirdly and said, “is there a problem?”

He Changwen had a reluctant smile on his face as he spoke awkwardly.

“... No, nothing.”

For some reason, Lu Zhou felt like He Changwen suddenly became less enthusiastic.

The office door opened, and Han Mengqi walked in holding a textbook in her arms. She looked at Professor Lu and asked quietly, “Did you need me?”

“There are some tasks I need you guys to do...” Lu Zhou said to Professor Chen Yang, as well as the other students in the office. He continued, “Good, now that you’re all here, we can begin.”

Lu Zhou cleared his throat and spoke in a serious tone.

“When I was researching the Riemann zeta function using the critical line approximation method, I tried to introduce a differential manifold into the complex plane, which solved the sub-problem of nontrivial zeros.

“I’m sure you all have already read the paper, so I won’t repeat it again. You should be able to see that in addition to complex analysis, partial differential

equations, and differential geometry methods, I also applied algebraic geometry in the proof.”

Lu Zhou paused for a second, giving the students time to digest the information. He then continued, “In fact, speaking abstractly, I built a bridge between numbers and shapes.

“This bridge is clear in my mind, and I can even describe it. As my students, you guys should know what I’m talking about, you should at least be able to see the outline of the bridge.

“And the bridge is our goal.”

The students were baffled as Lu Zhou continued in a serious tone, “From now on, you will all have an important mission.

“The mission is related to your future, as well as the future of Jin Ling University, and even the future of mathematics...”

Lu Zhou looked at the nervous faces and spoke in a more relaxed tone.

“Don’t worry, I have a rough estimate of your abilities. I will not assign work beyond your abilities. But I do hope you try your best.

“I handed in the research proposal a few months ago, I will give you the specifics in a second.

“I will finish this research project this year.

“We will unify algebra and geometry!”

Chapter 1085 Cloud Computing and Virtual Reality Network

“Can you see it?”

“See what?”

“The bridge...” He Changwen gestured with his hands as he said, “The bridge Academician Lu talked about.”

Han Mengqi placed her index finger on her chin and thought about it for a while. She then said, "I'm not sure if the thing I see is the same thing Professor Lu is talking about... But I think they're similar."

He Changwen thought Han Mengqi would be just as confused as him, so he was shocked when he heard her answer.

"The f*ck, you... can actually understand what he's talking about?"

Han Mengqi wasn't sure why He Changwen was so excited, but she nodded and spoke with a weird expression.

"Yeah... I can understand a bit, but it's probably because of the research project I worked on a while ago."

He Changwen: "... What research project?"

Han Mengqi: "The problem of transcendence odd positive integer numbers on the Riemann zeta function."

He Changwen: "..."

Han Mengqi saw him suddenly become quiet, so she paused for a second before asking, "Is there a problem?"

"Nothing." He Changwen shook his head and began to doubt his life. He said, "My research project was similar."

...

On the other hand...

Inside a conference room at the Star Sky Technology headquarters, a man in a suit handed over a document with a smile on his face.

"Per your request, we have revised the original proposal. I believe this meeting will be more pleasant than the last one."

Even though he was the CEO of Penguin, he did not look down or underestimate the young businesswoman standing in front of him.

Chen Yushan took the document and scanned through the content, and a slight smirk appeared on her face.

Ma Teng, who was sitting across from her, was watching her facial expressions closely when she spoke.

“A few items need to be changed.”

Ma Teng had a dignified look on his face, but he spoke in a relaxed tone.

“Go ahead.”

“Delete all the exclusive agreements. Our virtual reality system is not a platform solely for Penguin games. Also, I want your company to cooperate with us in collecting user data while adopting our virtual reality technologies, this is to improve the virtual reality system.”

Even though Ma Teng was a little disappointed that they were unable to reach an exclusivity agreement, he was glad he did not offend the Star Sky Technology CEO.

The technology was in its early stages, the game itself did not matter at all. Any game that provided an immersive virtual reality experience would be well received by the public.

Forget about collecting user data, if Star Sky Technology wanted a Penguin board of director’s seat, Penguin would consider it seriously.

However, it seemed like Star Sky Technology did not care to control Penguin.

As for collecting user data...

For an Internet company like them, that was a piece of cake.

How could anyone target advertisements without collecting user data? How could they provide a better service to their users?

Ma Teng nodded and smiled.

“If that’s all, then we agree with your proposal.”

Chen Yushan smiled and nodded.

“Then I wish us a successful cooperation.”

The negotiation went smoothly. The two parties were able to reach an agreement on the spot.

They would sign the specific contract in a few days after it had been re-written.

Ma Teng stood up from the conference table and smiled. He shook CEO Chen's hand as he said, "I've heard stories about you, looks like I finally have the honor to meet you in person."

"Oh, you're too kind."

"I've met many corporate executives, and few of them can achieve your success at such a young age." Ma Teng smiled and said, "Unfortunately, I wasn't able to meet the other genius figure in your company."

Chen Yushan smiled and said, "Are you talking about Academician Lu?"

"Yeah..." Ma Teng nodded and said, "I heard he came back from Beijing, I wonder if I have the chance to meet him?"

Chen Yushan: "I'll forward your message to him, but don't get your hopes up."

Ma Teng said, "Is he busy?"

"Yeah..." Chen Yushan nodded and said, "But more importantly, he's not interested in business activities, unless you have something interesting to talk about."

After Ma Teng left the building, Chen Yushan went back to her office and called Lu Zhou.

When the phone call connected, Chen Yushan had a smug smile on her face.

"It's me, you busy?"

The other end of the line sounded noisy, like he was at a cafeteria.

Chen Yushan could infer that he was probably eating.

Chen Yushan could even guess what he was eating.

"Not yet, but in a few days I will be."

Chen Yushan: "Then I won't bother you with the product launch, as well as CEO Ma's invitation."

"CEO Ma?"

Chen Yushan: "The CEO of Penguin, he's interested in talking with you."

Lu Zhou, who was eating his barbecued meat on rice, shook his head and said, "Why would he be interested?"

"You're too humble, there are many people that think you're interesting," Chen Yushan said. She cleared her throat and began to talk about business, "Ten minutes ago, we reached an agreement with Penguin. According to the contract, they will assist us in collecting user data, as well as allowing us to modify their video games and other products..."

Chen Yushan spent around five minutes talking about the negotiations with Penguin that happened over the past two days.

Lu Zhou quietly listened to Chen Yushan. He nodded and spoke.

"Nicely done."

Chen Yushan smiled proudly and said, "Of course, I know."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "We can use this as a template to negotiate with other Internet companies. Also, there's something I need you to do."

Chen Yushan: "What?"

Lu Zhou: "We need to build a supercomputer center."

Supercomputer center?

When Chen Yushan heard this, she paused for a second.

"... Doesn't the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study already have a supercomputer?"

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "That's for experimental use, it's way too small. I need a commercial supercomputing center that uses massively parallel computing technology to process virtual reality network-related data. Now that we are working with other companies and commercializing our

technology, it's not like we can keep using the institute's computer, right? It's not appropriate, and it will use up research resources."

"I get it." Chen Yushan nodded and said, "So we need more computing power?"

Lu Zhou nodded.

"Yeah.

"Also, this is to future-proof our system."

Compared with the planar network-based traditional electronic devices, the virtual reality system improved the way people interact over the Internet. It also exponentially increased the data and computation usage.

Lu Zhou had talked about this problem with Professor Lumiere, and they both agreed that they would not be able to sustain the continued expansion of the virtual reality network.

For the time being, they could use commercial servers, but they would have to upgrade to supercomputers within two years.

And in ten years, perhaps only the legendary quantum computer, capable of parallel processing and multi-threading, would be able to handle the calculations.

While it would be impossible for personal computers to handle this task.

Everyone would need an enterprise-level server, limiting the availability of this technology.

After Lu Zhou discussed with Lumiere, they decided the best method was to use a cloud computing system to handle the calculations, while the user only needed to receive the calculated data.

Thus, the only things the user needed to connect to the virtual reality network were a helmet and the Internet.

In fact, this arrangement wasn't limited to virtual reality networks, but also the future of planar networks.

With more and more complex software, came more and more computation demands. The only way to improve personal devices would be to abandon the CPU or even hard drive and have everything done in the cloud.

Therefore, whoever provided the cloud computing services would have control over the entire virtual reality network.

That was more reliable and robust than having patents.

Whether it was for the next fifty or a hundred years, as long as Star Sky Technology had control over the cloud computing centers, they would forever be in control over the virtual reality network...

Chapter 1086 Noobs Are Weird

Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Inside the virtual reality technology research and development laboratory.

When the signal light turned red, Ma Teng, who was lying quietly on the virtual reality experimental device, suddenly kicked his legs forward and sat up from the chair.

When he took off his helmet, his chest was pounding. He ignored his assistant, who was asking if he was okay. He looked at the helmet in his hands and spoke.

“This...”

His lips trembled as he tried to articulate. A staff member gave him a cup of water, which he quickly finished drinking. He then took a deep breath and spoke.

“... This is amazing!”

A Cerulean planet.

A forest filled with plants he had never seen before.

The violent Swarm Host creatures.

It was a completely new world!

He did feel a little uncomfortable when he first landed on the planet.

In his opinion, they should give the player an option for a more comfortable gaming experience. One that was without pain and discomfort.

While Ma Teng was pondering in his mind, Professor Lumiere, who was in charge of the virtual reality project, as well as Chen Yushan, the CEO of Star Sky Technology, walked over.

“How are you feeling?”

“It’s perfect...” Ma Teng gave the helmet to a staff member and took off his glasses. His eyes were still flashing with amazement as he said, “It’s like I was in a dream, but it feels much more real than a dream.”

He spoke in a determined voice, as if he had just made a major decision.

“I have made up my mind!

“Let’s develop a StarCraft-themed virtual reality game! The virtual reality will be able to display the glory of the stars and the planets! This will fulfill the dreams of countless teenagers!”

He paused for a second and looked at Chen Yushan with begging eyes. He smiled awkwardly and asked, “Can we buy... that planet?”

Chen Yushan smiled and said, “That’s a free open-source model in the virtual reality development system. You can use it if you want, but—”

“A hundred million yuan,” CEO Ma said. “We will buy it, and you guys will teach our developers on how to use it. What do you think?”

Chen Yushan nearly laughed out loud as she nodded.

“Done.”

...

Ma Teng’s idea was actually very simple.

Developing the game was not the important part, the important part was to get the license for the first virtual reality online game. Using premade game engines and templates to create an online game as soon as possible, attracting players from all over the globe.

It wouldn't matter even if the first game were to flop, they could always release a second game.

Not to mention, there was no way the game would flop.

Even though the first PC games were objectively horrible, they were miles ahead of the previous-generation handheld Nintendo gaming consoles. Once gamers saw the fascinating planet with their own eyes, they would be shocked by its beauty.

However, Ma Teng did not know that this planet was not an "investment demonstration" software made by Star Sky Technology. Instead, it was a "mini-game" compiled to test the stability of the system.

Even though Lumiere and Lu Zhou spent a few days compiling the software, it was nowhere near a hundred million yuan.

Chen Yushan felt like CEO Ma was making an impulsive investment. However, seeing how eager he was, she felt like she should just be a "kind" seller and let him spend his money...

While the two parties were ecstatic over their hundred million yuan sale, people were gathered inside an office at the Jin Ling University mathematics department building.

Because Lu Zhou rarely came to this office, other than his assistants, most of his students chose to study and work at the library instead.

The library had a better academic atmosphere; even Lu Zhou himself recommended his students to study there.

He never wanted his students to think of themselves as employees, clocking in for work. Even though this further enabled students that did not have self-control, it gave disciplined students more freedom.

The only thing Lu Zhou cared about was his students completing their tasks on time; everything else did not matter to him.

However, over the past few days, everyone had been clocking into the office every day despite Lu Zhou's absence.

Li Mo opened the door, walking into the quiet office. He was about to say hello but quickly closed his mouth.

Ever since Lu Zhou first gave him an office tour, this was the first time he saw everyone sitting here. Normally, he would see them at the library.

Li Mo walked up to He Changwen, who was agonizing over a problem. He looked around and whispered, "Hey, bro, what's going on today?"

He Changwen was so frustrated he wanted to pull the hair out of his head. He casually said, "The professor assigned us tasks, so I don't have time to help you today. Go read through the textbook or find Dean Qin."

Li Mo was perplexed. He never even asked He Changwen for help.

He looked at the draft paper on the table and spoke with a curious look on his face.

"What kind of research are you doing?"

He Changwen: "You won't understand."

"Bro, just tell me, I'm so curious!"

He Changwen looked at this persistent undergraduate student and smiled. He pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose and said, "Forget about it, your balls haven't even dropped yet, there's no way you'll understand."

After that, he took out a piece of draft paper and wrote down two lines of equations. He gave the draft paper to Li Mo.

"Go ahead, if you can solve this question, I'll explain it to you."

Li Mo stared at the question, he was dumbfounded.

The f*ck, I've never seen this type of question before.

But...

It looks pretty interesting.

His eyebrows began to furrow as he bit his thumb. He picked up the piece of draft paper.

"I'll try my best... Looks a bit hard."

A bit hard?

Haha.

He Changwen smiled and didn't say anything. He continued to stare at the draft paper on his desk as he rubbed his receding hairline.

Around an hour had passed by.

He leaned back in his chair and was about to get some water. He suddenly saw a piece of draft paper appear on his table.

He looked up and saw the kid standing there again. The kid spoke with an agonizing look on his face.

"Bro, this question is too hard... I don't know if I'm right, but this is all I could manage."

"The f*ck!"

He Changwen bounced up from his chair and stared at Li Mo in disbelief. He gulped as he spoke to the teenager, "Undergrads learn about Riemann surfaces and n-dimensional complex manifolds? Did you take a graduate course?"

Isn't this guy a freshman?!

"It's not like I only learn from lectures." Li Mo awkwardly smiled as he scratched the back of his head. "Professor Lu has a recommended reading list on his Weibo, right? I've been reading it since high school."

He Changwen: "..."

Without saying anything, he picked up the draft paper and glanced at it with a sharp gaze.

"Let me see your workings."

He could just be writing nonsense.

With some doubt in his mind, He Changwen began to read the workings on the paper.

However, the more he read, the more shocked he was.

Look at this proof!

Look at the theorems he used!

This doesn't look like something done by an undergraduate student.

Is this the strength of an IMO gold medalist?

He began to sweat from his forehead.

Looks like the professor recruited another freak.

Han Mengqi noticed the ruckus as she walked over with a cup of coffee in her hand.

"What are you guys doing?"

He Changwen put down the draft paper on the table.

He did not need to say anything, his facial expression told the whole story.

He shook his head and gently sighed.

"I'm going for a smoke," he said as he walked out of the office.

Han Mengqi: "..."

Li Mo watched him walk away. He awkwardly looked at Han Mengqi and asked, "Did I do something wrong?"

Han Mengqi did not reply. Instead, she picked up the draft paper on the table.

She also had an astounded look on her face.

"You wrote this?"

Li Mo nodded and said, "Yeah, just now."

"Knew it!" Han Mengqi nodded and said, "There's no way He Changwen could have written this..."

Li Mo said, "That's not nice."

"It's fine, he's used to it," Han Mengqi said as she put down the draft paper. She looked at the teenager and contemplated for a second before she said, "So you've finished studying your undergrad material?"

Li Mo nodded and said, "Yeah... I've read all the textbooks in my courses."

"Are you interested in joining our research project?"

Faced with the sudden invitation, Li Mo froze, followed by a delighted look on his face.

"Pro-Professor Lu's research project?"

Even though Han Mengqi despised the fact that this kid had a weird obsession with Professor Lu, she still reluctantly nodded her head. As Professor Lu's amazing, generous, and kind student, this was her responsibility.

"Uh, yeah."

Li Mo couldn't believe his eyes, and he spoke in an insecure tone.

"But I'm just an undergrad, are you sure? What if I become a nuisance to God Lu?"

Han Mengqi said bluntly, "Don't worry, most people never even get to talk to him, you won't get the chance to become a nuisance."

Li Mo scratched his head and said, "Oh, right..."

Han Mengqi then said, "Research isn't something only graduate students can do. If you want to go down the path in academia, it would be wise to practice your research abilities, as opposed to doing textbook problems."

This was from her personal experience.

When she was still an undergraduate student, Jin University and the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study had a research talent training program. This gave her the opportunity to participate in many research projects.

Including the lithium-sulfur battery project.

Despite being a rookie researcher, she made a non-trivial contribution to the materials used in the battery.

In the end, she left the world of chemistry and followed Lu Zhou's footsteps into pure mathematics. However, the research experience she gained was still helpful to her to this day.

"Oh yeah, about this draft paper," Han Mengqi said as she handed the draft paper to the teenager. She continued, "Your task for the next few days is to research the process of a journal submission, organize this into a paper, and publish it."

Even though this wasn't a particularly important mathematical proof, it was good enough to submit to a subpar journal.

Li Mo hesitated and said, "Are... are you sure?"

"Of course, this is an in-progress result, not to mention you did it yourself," Han Mengqi said. She paused for a second and said, "Plus, if you don't publish this, He Changwen would want to quit research forever."

Chapter 1087 Motive Theory

Inside a library activity room.

Lu Zhou was standing in front of a half-written whiteboard. He put down the marker in his hand, took two steps back, then spoke.

"... If we want to unify geometry and algebra, we have to change our view of numbers and shapes. We need to look for the similarities between their abstract concepts."

Chen Yang was standing next to Lu Zhou. After contemplating for a second, he suddenly spoke.

“Like the Langlands program?”

Lu Zhou said in a serious manner, “It’s not just the Langlands program, but also motive theory. If we want to solve this problem, we have to find the relationship between different cohomology theories.”

In fact, this was a common problem.

The connection between different cohomology theories was divided into tens of thousands or even millions of unsolved conjectures and mathematical propositions.

The Hodge conjecture, which was an unsolved problem in the field of algebraic geometry, was one of the most famous examples.

However, interestingly enough, even though there were many difficult conjectures blocking the way, one could prove motive theory without having proven the other conjectures.

It was similar to Riemann’s hypothesis versus the generalized Riemann’s hypothesis on the Dirichlet function.

“... On the surface, it looks like we are researching a complex analysis problem, but in fact, it is also a problem concerning partial differential equations, algebraic geometry, and topology.”

Lu Zhou stared at the whiteboard and said, “A wise strategy would be to find an abstract factor that relates numbers and shapes. We can start with the relationship between a series of cohomology theories, such as the Kunneth theorem and the Poincare duality. We can also apply this method to the L Manifold on the complex plane, the one I showed you earlier.”

Lu Zhou glanced at Chen Yang, who was standing next to him. He continued, “I need a theory that builds on top of the classical theory of one-dimensional cohomology, which is the Abel Jacobi theorem.

“Using this theory, we can study the direct-sum decomposition in motive theory and associate $H(v)$ with an irreducible motive.

“I planned on doing this myself, but there are other important things I have to do. I plan on finishing the Grand Unified Theory by the end of the year, so you’ll be responsible for this part.”

Chen Yang went silent for a while before speaking, "Sounds interesting... If my interpretation is correct, if we find this theory, it will be able to help solve Hodge conjecture."

Lu Zhou nodded and spoke.

"I'm not sure if it can solve Hodge conjecture or not, but it will inspire research on the Hodge conjecture."

"I understand," Chen Yang nodded and said, "I'll give it a shot... I can't guarantee I can solve this anytime soon."

"It's fine, this isn't something that can be solved in a short amount of time. I'm not in a hurry anyway." Lu Zhou smiled and then said, "But my advice is to give me an answer within two months. If you're not confident, make sure to tell me in advance. I can do it myself."

Chen Yang shook his head.

"It won't take two months, two weeks should be enough."

Chen Yang spoke confidently, like there was no doubt at all. The mathematical tools were already available, and Lu Zhou had even given him ideas on how to solve the problem.

This kind of work did not require out of the box thinking or creativity, it only required hard work.

And he had plenty of perseverance in him.

Lu Zhou looked at Chen Yang and nodded. He reached out and patted him on the shoulder.

"Okay, I believe in you!"

...

After Chen Yang left, Lu Zhou returned to the library and sat down in his chair. He flipped through the stack of theses on his table and continued to read while writing on a draft paper at the same time.

Looking at this from an overview perspective, the development of algebraic geometry could be split into two major directions. One was the Langlands program, the other was the motive theory.

The essence of the Langlands program was to establish links between seemingly unrelated areas in mathematics.

Motive theory, on the other hand, was less well-known compared to the Langlands program.

The paper Lu Zhou was reading about was written by the famous algebraic geometry expert Professor Voevodsky.

The Russian professor from the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study proposed an interesting type of motive.

It was precisely what Lu Zhou needed.

“... The motive is the root of all numbers.”

Lu Zhou muttered to himself as he wrote on the draft paper, verifying the thesis calculations.

“For example, if we have a number n , n in base 10 is 100, n in base 2 is 1100100, n in base 8 is 144.

“Its expression only depends on whether we choose to count in base 2, base 8, or base 10. All of them correspond to the number n , just written in different forms of expression.

“ N has a special meaning.

“It is not just an abstract number, but more of a mathematical concept.

“Motive theory is about a collection of uncountable n , named N .

“As the root of all mathematical expressions, N can be mapped to any set of intervals, whether it is $[0, 1]$ or $[0, 9]$...”

In fact, this was one of the core problems of algebraic geometry, which was the abstraction of numbers.

Different mathematical languages had been “translated” by humans through different notation systems. The abstract expression was the only true language of the universe.

People who used mathematics in their daily life might never realize this. Many religions and cultures that gave numbers special meaning did not actually understand what the “language of the universe” was.

People might ask what was the point of making calculations more complicated, but separating numbers from its representation could help people research the abstract meaning behind it.

In addition to laying the modern theoretical foundation of algebraic geometry, Grothendieck also proposed motive theory.

This theory was like a bridge that connected various cohomology theories and algebra and geometry.

It was like the main melody of a symphony. Every cohomology theory could extract a theme from the main melody and modify it by changing the major, minor, or even tempo.

“... The cohomology theories form a geometric object. This geometric object can be researched using his framework.”

“... I see.”

Lu Zhou had a flash of excitement in his eyes, and he suddenly stopped writing.

He had a feeling that he was close to the finish line.

This type of feeling came from the deepest part of his soul, and it was the best thing he had ever felt...

Chapter 1088 Inspiration Comes the Same Way

With an idea in mind, there was only one thing left to do.

Lu Zhou borrowed the books he was still reading. He brought the books and printed papers back to his Zhongshan International mansion.

Every time before he went on a retreat, he would first take a ritualistic shower. After putting on a change of clothes, he sat down in his study room and took out a pen and paper.

[Define $M_{\sim}(k)$ as the following category:

[With object as $h(X, e)$, where X is the smooth projective cluster on k , e is the idempotent element of the ring $\text{Corr}_{0\sim}(X, X) \subset Q$, and the morphism of $\text{Hom}(h(X, e), h(Y, f)) := f \cdot \text{Corr}_{0\sim}(X, Y) \subset Q \cdot e \dots$

[...]

The inspiration came in waves.

The speed of thoughts rushing into his brain was faster than the speed he could write at.

Lines of equations began to flow like waves, smashing against the rocky shore. The smooth pen tip danced on the paper, producing a harmony of mathematics.

Lu Zhou knew he couldn't write down all of the thoughts in his mind. He began to wonder if he could "write" down his equations faster in a virtual reality world?

However, after thinking about it, he dismissed this idea.

Any creative work required a high degree of concentrated thinking. The neural interface virtual reality system relied on a process of dream simulating. The more relaxed the user was, the more immersed they would feel.

Even though the virtual reality world felt like real life, and the user would clearly remember what happened in the dream, they wouldn't have access to the cognitive capacity for creative work.

He would be able to write faster, but there would be a decrease in his cognitive performance. That was undoubtedly a terrible trade-off.

"If I keep writing at this rate, I can probably produce some in-progress results by the end of the month..."

Three pages of draft paper were fully written. Lu Zhou leaned back in his chair and stared at the incomplete proof in front of him.

“The structure of the cohomology ring...

“And its invariant decomposition...”

There were only a few days until the end of the month.

Lu Zhou was determined.

He was going to stay at home until he finished writing the thesis.

...

While Lu Zhou was beginning a new round of retreat, at the Jin Ling University male dorms nearby, a young man energetically walked into one of the dorms and threw his bag on the chair.

Duan Siqi, who was working on his mathematical analysis textbook, looked at him and asked, “What’s the matter? Won a scholarship?”

Li Mo smiled proudly and waved his hand.

“Nope, there’s no way you can guess it.”

Yang Shuang, who was playing online chess, looked back and spoke.

“Then tell us?”

Li Mo unscrewed a bottle of water and took a sip. He quenched his thirst and said, “Professor Lu wants me to join his research project!”

The dorm went silent.

Duan Siqi, Yang Shuang, and Wu Di all looked shocked.

“The f*ck? No way, Professor Lu’s research project? The Fields Medalist Professor Lu?”

Wu Di put down his phone and joined in on the conversation. He spoke with a look of disbelief.

“Really? An undergraduate student like you... Why would they want you?”

Li Mo wasn’t amused by this, and he quickly made a comeback.

“So what if I’m an undergrad? I’ve already learned all my undergrad courses by myself! Also, Professor Lu said that scientific research is about putting in hard work. Whether you’re an undergrad or a graduate student, as long as you have mastered the basic theoretical knowledge, you can try to build on top of your foundation using research.”

When Li Mo was speaking, he felt his cheeks turn red.

In fact, Professor Lu did not say this; this was said by one of Professor Lu’s female students.

However, apparently that girl was one of Professor Lu’s long-term students, and she was taught by him in high school.

Therefore, it sort of counted as Professor Lu saying it himself?

“Also, half of the Fields Medalists have won IMO gold medals! Like Schultz, who won the same year as Professor Lu. His p-adic number and perfect space theory are regarded as having one of the most potentials in algebraic geometry—”

Yang Shuang clicked on his computer screen and turned his head. He asked curiously, “What is p-adic number and perfect space?”

“Sigh, I don’t know too much about it either...”

Duan Siqi was sitting nearby. He was watching everything unravel in awe. After a while, he sighed.

I can’t believe my roommate is so nutty, I feel so useless.

While the other students were playing League of Legends and shooting hoops at the playground, this guy was studying all of his undergrad courses. While they were cramming for exams, hoping not to fail, this guy was doing scientific research with God Lu.

Regardless of whether Li Mo was working side by side with Academician Lu, he was still in Academician Lu’s team.

As long as Li Mo took this research seriously, it would hugely benefit his career and provide him a platform for the future.

Duan Siqi began to feel jealous.

There was nothing he could do to compete with a genius freak like Li Mo. No matter how hard he studied, he would never catch up with Li Mo.

But then again, Li Mo was an IMO full marks gold medalist. Forget about Jin Ling University, even Berkeley and Princeton would pay for him to study there.

Duan Siqi watched Yang Shuang struggling to understand Li Mo's explanation on perfect space and p-adic numbers. He suddenly felt a deep sense of frustration and didn't even want to study anymore.

He took out his phone and saw the virtual reality game test invitation letter.

The first public beta testing of the virtual reality system was scheduled to be at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, next Saturday.

He had no idea he would be selected. After all, tens of millions of people applied, and only two hundred people were selected.

This probably used up his luck for the rest of his life.

He was planning on studying on Saturday...

Duan Siqi looked at the invitation letter and began to think.

Should I go?

Chapter 1089 An Exciting Future

In the end, Duan Siqi decided to go. He could study at the library any other day of the week. It would be a waste to reject the invitation letter. Especially since he had used up all of his luck to receive this invitation.

Not to mention that he was too triggered by the fact that Li Mo was participating in God Lu's research project.

Even though he never compared himself to Li Mo, seeing the kid brag in front of him every day made it hard to ignore him.

He wasn't giving up on studying.

However, he felt like if he changed his environment, maybe it would benefit himself...

It was soon the last Saturday of the month.

Duan Siqi handed in his class assignment one day before the deadline. He ate some breakfast and headed toward the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Even though he had heard about this famous academic temple many times, this was his first time coming here.

After he presented the invitation letter to the security guard, he soon arrived at the virtual reality experience center.

When he arrived at the center, he was shocked by the crowd.

In addition to the 30 experimenters who were attending, there were also a dozen researchers and staff members, as well as security guards.

He thought he had arrived early; he didn't expect so many people to come even earlier.

Duan Siqi looked at the crowded experience center and hesitated, unsure of what to do.

He was wondering if he should ask someone for help, but suddenly, a middle-aged staff member walked up to him. The staff member looked at him and then looked down at the name list.

"You're Duan Siqi?"

Duan Siqi nodded and said, "... Yeah."

"I'm the person in charge, the closed beta is about to begin. I'll show you the equipment, come with me."

Duan Siqi: "Okay."

In fact, the equipment was very simple to use as there were only a few steps.

Lie on the chair, put on the helmet, press the power button. After that, the user would be in the virtual reality world.

The closed beta soon began.

Duan Siqi followed the instructions of the researchers and lay on the virtual reality chair. He took a deep breath and tried to calm down the muscles in his body.

He was worried about not being able to “fall asleep” into the virtual reality world, but he suddenly felt a tingling sensation from his spine.

When he tried to itch the back of his head, he suddenly began to lose consciousness.

It was almost as if his soul came out of his body and went into another world. Into a world that he had never seen before.

He was standing on a six-lane highway, there were no cars on the road. Huge futuristic skyscrapers surrounded him.

Many other people were standing here.

The person standing closest to him was a foreign closed beta tester.

This blonde girl looked like a YouTuber, and her eyes were wide open in disbelief.

He couldn't help but look at her.

Everything felt so real.

He had no idea how they were able to capture their faces.

Reading brain wave information?

Active mapping by using subconscious hints?

Or maybe the helmet is equipped with a scanning device?

Duan Siqi touched his cheek and felt emotional.

The last time he felt this way was at the Shanghai Expo.

Back when he was still in elementary school, he went to the expo with his father. At one of the company booths, his father and he used a head-mounted neural scanning device to manipulate a toy car.

He was amazed, and everything he knew about the world had changed.

And now, more than a decade later, he was feeling the same way.

I can't believe how advanced technology is getting.

"... This is crazy."

...

It was eight o'clock at night when he finally returned to his dorm after a busy day.

Their job was very simple. Staff members assigned them to complete tasks in specific environments, depending on their real-life occupations.

For example, since he was a college student, he had two environments assigned to him. One was a library, the other was a classroom. His task in the virtual world was to listen to a math lecture in a classroom and spend an afternoon at the library.

This experience left him wanting more.

He came to the closed beta test to escape from studying. However, in the end, he still ended up spending his time in a library.

The next closed beta test was scheduled for next Saturday.

Due to the limited testing equipment available, the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study told them that the Chinese closed beta testers would be allocated to the weekend slots.

Apparently, they would get to experience new sensations next time.

Duan Siqi was lying on his bed, scrolling through his phone. He thought back to what he experienced during the day and suddenly sighed.

"That was incredible..."

Even though he only tested a simple virtual reality game, in his mind, it wasn't a game at all.

Shopping, entertainment, finance, public services, even education, military, politics, and other things existed in the virtual reality world.

This was just the beginning.

As for what could happen in the future...

He looked at the stars outside his window and looked forward to the future.

He opened his Weibo and typed out his thoughts. He attached a few photos he took this morning and made a post.

He was surprised to see that he began to gain followers and likes.

Li Mo was studying hard at his desk. He leaned back in his chair and turned off his lamp. He then climbed into his bed.

Ever since he joined Academician Lu's research project two weeks ago, he had been studying non-stop. He would either be at his desk or the library.

Duan Siqi heard the crickets chirping outside the window as he plugged in his phone and closed his eyes.

Dorm room 201 was asleep.

While most of the people in this city were asleep, all the way in Zhongshan International, Lu Zhou yawned as he began uploading his first paper on his new project—research on motive theory.

On the other hand, the public was going crazy over the first closed beta test of virtual reality technology...

Chapter 1090 Crazy Idea

On the outskirts of St. Petersburg, on the banks of the Fontanka River.

An old man wearing a windbreaker was sitting on a bench. He looked at his watch, as if he was waiting for something.

Two teenagers wearing baseball caps walked past him while bouncing a basketball. One of them spoke to the other.

“Did you hear the news about the virtual reality closed beta testing?”

“I did, in Jinling, right? F*ck, I want to go!”

“Forget about it, people like us will never get the chance. I don’t believe they’re choosing people at random. Did you see YouTuber James Rolfe’s vlog? He said that if the virtual reality technology from Star Sky Technology is similar to SAO, he’ll eat his keyboard!”

“Haha, so did he do it?”

“Don’t know, but I heard after he returned from China, he ordered a keyboard cake from a bakery.”

“Hahahahaha!”

There was a pleasant atmosphere in the air. The laughter and conversation of the two young men gradually faded away.

Professor Faltings looked at their direction and frowned.

Jinling?

He didn’t expect to hear this word in a suburban area like this.

Faltings thought about Lu Zhou and had a nostalgic look on his face.

He didn’t care about virtual reality or the YouTuber.

Ever since smartphones came out, boomers like him had begun falling behind the new era of technology. Even if he wanted to keep up, he simply did not have the energy.

Suddenly, a middle-aged man with a scruffy beard, holding shopping bags, walked up to the bench and said, “You actually came.”

Faltings looked at him and said, “Yeah, is there a problem?”

“Nothing, I’m just surprised to see the great Faltings in person...”

Perelman's face was almost covered by the large baguette in his grocery bag. He took out a key and threw it in Faltings' hands. He said, "My house is a bit messy, hope you don't mind. Can you open the door for me later..."

"Sure." Faltings nodded and said, "Do you need help with those?"

Perelman shook his head and spoke.

"It's fine, I don't need an old man to carry my groceries."

The two walked toward the residential area and soon arrived at a cheap-looking apartment building.

No one could have expected a world-renowned mathematician to live in a 20 square meter apartment, whose neighbors were either elderly Russian folks living on welfare or unemployed millennials.

However, Perelman did not care.

After giving up the Millennium Prize Problems million dollar award, he was allegedly relying on his mother's pension to buy groceries. He had been tangled in between ideals and reality, choosing to leave the community of mathematics over his strong moral principles. He resorted back to a 19th-century mathematics research style...

Which was, to be on a permanent retreat, closed from communication.

In some sense, he was similar to Lu Zhou.

The only difference was that Lu Zhou would publish any worthy in-progress results, and if he was too lazy to submit a paper, he would at least upload a preprint. However, Perelman had not uploaded his research results in a long time.

Perelman placed the groceries in the kitchen and wiped his hands on his shirt. He went into the tiny living room and was about to offer Faltings some water or tea. However, he suddenly noticed a paper on the table.

He looked interested, and he picked up the paper and began flipping through it.

"What's this..."

“A paper on motive theory,” Professor Faltings said as he took out a vacuum flask from his windbreaker. He poured himself a cup of hot water and said, “The author proposed a very interesting idea to combine all cohomology theories into an abstract geometric object.”

Perelman said, “That’s a crazy idea.”

Faltings: “It is.”

Perelman: “So it’s like the mathematics Grand Unified Theory?”

Faltings: “It is.”

“I can’t believe there’s a scholar doing this... Wait a second,” Perelman said as he read the paper. His eyebrows furrowed as he said, “This paper... looks a bit familiar.”

Faltings had a smile on his face, which was a rare sight for a serious man like him.

“It looks like you have noticed.”

Perelman said, “Lu Zhou?”

Faltings nodded and spoke.

“Yeah.”

Faltings took a sip of hot water and said, “Three days ago, he uploaded this paper to *Inventiones Mathematicae*. I don’t know if he and the Secretary-General of the International Mathematical Union made an agreement on publishing to *Inventiones Mathematicae*, but that’s not the point.”

Perelman said, “The point is that he actually solved a weak form of Grothendieck’s standard conjectures, as well as finding a cohomology ring motive structure.”

“That’s right.” Faltings nodded and said, “I guess I’m correct, you’re the perfect person to review this paper.”

Perelman looked at the paper in his hand with a blank face.

“You didn’t come all the way to Russia, just to ask me to review an *Inventiones Mathematicae* paper. You could have just emailed me.”

Faltings nodded and said, “Of course, I didn’t come here for such a trivial matter.”

Perelman put down the paper and didn’t say anything. He waited for Faltings to speak.

Without beating around the bush, Faltings said, “Come to the University of Bonn.”

Perelman spoke without hesitating.

“No.”

Professor Faltings ignored his answer and continued, “The mathematics world has reached a critical crossroads. Numbers and geometry are going to merge into one abstract form. I wouldn’t be surprised if algebra and geometry are unified tomorrow. But it may also never be unified.”

Perelman muttered, “Isn’t Lu Zhou working on this research project? Just let him do it, there hasn’t been anything he can’t solve.”

“That’s not necessarily true. Seven years ago, he found a 750 GeV characteristic peak at CERN. He hasn’t been able to give a physical explanation for this peak.”

Perelman: “That’s physics, this is mathematics.”

“Yes, that is physics,” Faltings said. “But that’s not the point, the point is that this project shouldn’t be done by him alone.

“We can’t put all of our future expectations on him. If we don’t contribute ourselves, the academic world will never grow.”

Faltings looked at Perelman and spoke in a sincere way.

“The Bourbaki school of thought needs your help, the entire mathematics world needs your help.

“At my age, there are many things that are out of my control. I hope you can contribute to a cause you are passionate about.”

Perelman looked at the paper on the table and pondered.

“... I’ll think about it.”

He picked up the paper and said, “Let me finish reading this first.”

Chapter 1091 Phantom System

In order to respond to the public’s hype on virtual reality technology, Star Sky Technology held a product launch conference. Not only did they announce the technical details of the new “Phantom” virtual reality system, but they also brought out five demonstration helmets, which were attached to chairs.

The atmosphere of the product launch was pushed to a peak.

Exclaims of disbelief were heard inside the venue.

People were rushing to experience what it was like to be immersed in a virtual world, even though each person only had three minutes of experience time.

Whether someone was beautiful or ugly, tall or short, young or old... everything could be modified in the virtual world, even gender.

After the testing stage was over, Star Sky Technology CEO Chen Yushan walked on stage in professional attire.

She smiled toward the crazed reporters and their cameras, representing the corporate image of Star Sky Technology. She spent around five minutes explaining the “Phantom” virtual reality system.

What followed was the most exciting part of the entire product launch: the Qu0026A session.

In contrast to Lu Zhou, who always gave reporters a hard time, Chen Yushan was much better at handling interviews. No matter how tricky the questions were, she was able to answer them without losing composure.

Chinese reporters were mostly concerned about privacy and security policies, while western reporters were more concerned with the safety of the device, and when they could purchase it.

“Hello, I’m a reporter from Yomiuri Shimbun. Will the neural microcurrents from the technology cause damage to the brain?”

Chen Yushan: “Our technology is completely safe. It won’t be released to the public before going through various safety testings from state departments. Please rest assured, we would never release unsafe technologies to our users.”

“Hello, I’m a reporter from the Wall Street Journal. Does the emergence of the Phantom system mean that Star Sky Technology is pivoting from patent management to consumer products?”

Chen Yushan: “That is not our plan. Our business model is still focused on patent licensing and cooperative production. Basically, we will find appropriate partners to help us produce the neural demodulator helmets. The production process is not difficult. We want outstanding companies to work with us.

“We will focus on maintaining the Phantom system and provide cloud computing support to the Phantom users.”

Wall Street Journal reporter: “In other words, consumers won’t be able to purchase this device for a long time.”

Chen Yushan: “That depends on the safety inspections from the state. The Chinese market can expect this product to be launched by the end of the year.”

When the people heard that they could purchase this technology by the end of the year, there was a huge commotion. Reporters from other countries looked jealous. They had just experienced this technology first hand, so they knew the effect this technology would have on society.

It wasn’t just games and movies, its applications were endless.

Questions came one after another.

“Hello, BBC reporter here. What do you think about Professor Lu?”

This was a weird question since it had nothing to do with virtual reality. Chen Yushan contemplated for a second before answering.

“He is a great scholar and the brains of Star Sky Technology. Everyone in the company respects him.”

The BBC reporter continued, “What about his personal life? People say that—”

Chen Yushan smiled and said, “Please, relevant questions only.”

...

Across the Pacific Ocean, inside a mansion in Bel Air, Los Angeles.

Elon Musk was sitting in his living room, watching the live broadcast of the product launch. He slammed his beer bottle on the coffee table.

“Goddamn it!”

Even though the reporters’ questions were annoying, one thing for sure was that their faces never lied.

This meant that Star Sky Technology wasn’t fooling around at all.

It was obvious that the legendary neural interface virtual reality device wasn’t just a gaming device, it totally exceeded everyone’s expectations.

Otherwise, the product launch wouldn’t have been so chaotic.

As expected, his biggest worry came true.

Elon took out his phone and scrolled through his contacts. He took a deep breath and tried to calm down.

Finally, he made up his mind to call someone. However, he suddenly received a FaceTime call.

When Elon looked at the name on his screen, he had a weird look on his face. He put on a fake smile and picked up the video call.

“Hey, Lawrence, what a coincidence, I was just about to call you.”

Lawrence was in his mansion in Boston. He was in his study room, watching the broadcast on his tablet and calling on his phone.

“I knew you would call me, so I decided to call you instead. I like video calling instead of voice calling.”

Elon had an awkward look on his face.

He was about to say something when Lawrence suddenly smiled and spoke first.

“... Sure enough, Star Sky Technology didn't disappoint me. Their virtual reality technology is astonishing.”

Elon: “But I think there's potential in our technology.”

“I'm not denying that.” Lawrence smiled and said, “But that's not what I'm concerned about.”

When Elon heard this, he was speechless.

Lawrence looked at Elon through the screen and spoke.

“Cooperate with Star Sky Technology, this technology will enter the North American market sooner or later.”

After a moment of silence, Elon said, “... It's not that easy for them. Even if we don't do anything, other people will try to stop them. From what I know, Zuckerberg is also in this field, as well as Google and Amazon... These Silicon Valley giants won't just let a Chinese company come in and take their slice of the pie.”

Lawrence's intentions were clear as day.

Obviously, he had already lost hope on the neural lace project.

No matter how you look at it, the non-invasive virtual reality technology was far more attractive than drilling in nanotubes.

Elon agreed with that too, but he had lost so many times to Star Sky Technology, he was starting to lose this mind.

It was a miracle he hadn't given up.

Lawrence smiled and said, “That’s what Intel and Qualcomm thought as well, but in the end, they still compromised, giving up their silicon chip ecosystem. Do you know what I mean?”

“Whether it is Facebook, Google, or Amazon, if they don’t compromise, they will be eliminated. This can happen almost overnight.

“In fact, if you know anything about the market right now, you will know that the stock market is slowly moving in certain directions. The carbon-based chips have totally changed the ecosystem of the electronics industry, while the virtual reality technology will change what we know of the Internet.

“These tech giants will be eliminated if they cannot keep up with the changes. New companies will emerge, this is almost inevitable.

“I don’t know much about the Internet, but this is what my consultant told me. The future of the network will change forever.

“I think he’s correct.”

Elon clenched his fist as Lawrence continued to speak.

“Regardless, I will get my hands on virtual reality technology. Whether it’s by cooperating with Star Sky Technology or by your neural lace project.

“The decision is yours.”

Lawrence smiled and looked at Elon through the screen as he said, “There’s only one way your project will stay alive.”

Chapter 1092 Winter Has Arrived in Silicon Valley

When Elon finally made up his mind to contract Star Sky Technology, he realized he was a step behind.

To his surprise, the first to react was Zuckerberg, the one he thought would be the most against Star Sky Technology bringing their virtual reality product to America.

By the time his secretary reported this incident, this lizard robot CEO had already liquidated their subsidiary company Oculus, laying off more than

2,000 employees. Only the core employees were maintained. It seemed like they had decided to cut their losses early.

Prior to this, when Facebook acquired Oculus for two billion USD in 2014, the public was optimistic about Facebook's future.

However, things didn't always turn out as expected.

In fact, Zuckerberg did not have a choice.

Maybe if they gave Oculus enough time to improve their head-mounted virtual reality technology, they could one day achieve truly immersive virtual reality.

However, when he saw that Star Sky Technology had already created the technology, he knew that they had no time at all.

Instead of letting Oculus go through an unwinnable battle in the virtual reality field, it was better to cut them loose and defend their core business.

He knew exactly what the core business of Facebook was, Oculus was just the icing on the cake.

Facebook could easily afford a mere two billion dollar loss. After all, Facebook had paid way more than two billion dollars in European fines alone.

However, for other Silicon Valley virtual reality startups, this was a nightmare. It was like a deadly winter arriving in the middle of summer; they had no preparation, no hope of surviving.

While the virtual reality startups in Silicon Valley were dying, many smart people like Zuckerberg had already begun negotiating with Star Sky Technology.

If they couldn't prevent the change, they might as well jump on the bandwagon.

Most people knew that the Phantom system from Star Sky Technology had no competition, nor could anyone bypass their patent barriers. Cooperating with Star Sky Technology was the best option.

This was similar to when the Windows operating system was released to the personal computer market.

The only difference was that, not only did Star Sky Technology master the world's first neural interface virtual reality system, but they also had control over the patents...

The tech industry wasn't the only one that was affected, the financial markets were also hit.

Companies in the finance industry were evaluating the possible impacts of this new technology.

Star Sky Technology, like most companies with good cash flow, did not choose to go public. Hence, they could not use the stock price as a value indicator.

However, according to most estimates by Wall Street financial companies, the value of the virtual reality technology alone was already 100 billion USD, with the potential to grow even higher.

Not to mention this was a conservative estimate, without an understanding of the specific model.

If, like most people had speculated, Star Sky Technology pivoted to cloud computing and integrated the virtual reality network into one of many supercomputing centers...

Then it would be worth way more than 100 billion.

Its worth wouldn't even be measurable.

Even though the Star Sky Technology product launch was generally regarded as satisfying to a certain extent, one conference was obviously not enough for this ground-breaking technology.

Many questions had yet to be answered, and reporters around the world wanted to interview Lu Zhou himself.

However, even though the reporters sneaked past security and went to the number theory lecture at Jin University, they still weren't able to find Academician Lu.

It was almost like Lu Zhou had disappeared from the planet.

Only people close to him knew that he was going on a great retreat.

While the world was going crazy over the virtual reality technology, a paper published in *Inventiones Mathematicae* caused a commotion in the mathematics world.

The paper used a unique mathematical method to construct a cohomology ring motive, combining all cohomology theories into an abstract geometrical object.

Everyone obviously knew that motive theory studied the abstract behind numbers.

Lu Zhou was not satisfied with solving the two-century-old crown of mathematics: the Riemann's hypothesis. Instead, he dove deeper into the field of algebraic geometry, specifically, the geometric structure of numbers.

This was no longer a quest for a mathematician; it had almost gotten to a philosophical, epistemological level.

If he could succeed, he would undoubtedly become the greatest scholar since Archimedes.

It would take a long time for someone to match his achievements.

In addition to this interesting paper, what surprised people was that the reviewer of this paper was Perelman, the math genius who left the mathematics community for years.

This eccentric genius once refused a one million dollar prize, stating his disappointment in the mathematics world. Now, he agreed to review a paper from *Inventiones Mathematicae*?

Most scholars couldn't believe this.

Everyone knew he loathed the "arrogant" review process of academic journals. Almost all of his papers were published to arXiv.

He was one of the legendary mathematicians on arXiv.

Of course, even though the public was surprised, none of them were as surprised as Lu Zhou.

Three days before Lu Zhou submitted his paper, Lu Zhou went to his office and planned on teaching an undergraduate class. He saw someone standing in front of his office.

Lu Zhou was holding a textbook in his hand when he looked at Perelman. He was stunned.

Perelman: "What?"

"... Nothing, I just didn't expect to see you here." Lu Zhou coughed and said, "I think any mathematician in this world would be surprised to see you standing in front of their office... Why didn't you send me an email? I could've had someone picked you up at the airport."

"This is a university, right?" Perelman looked at Lu Zhou with a strange look. "Isn't this the place to discuss academic issues? Do I need to send an email first?"

"Of course not, but usually, people give a heads up before visiting someone... Of course, I don't mind." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "So, are you going to tell me why you're here?"

Perelman spoke concisely.

"Because of mathematics.

"When I was researching your paper, I found an interesting point. When you abstracted cohomology theory as a geometric object, you mentioned that the motive could be treated as high-dimensional Jacobian curves, I want to know why you did this."

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "Actually, this is not my idea. I read it somewhere when I was reading Grothendieck's paper on the Weil's conjecture, and it inspired me—"

"Can you teach me?"

Lu Zhou looked at Perelman's enthusiastic face and smiled.

"Of course I can... But I have a number theory class soon. I'm afraid I won't be able to discuss this with you until four o'clock."

Perelman looked at Lu Zhou with a sincere look and said, “No problem, I can wait!”

Chapter 1093 Perelman’s Visit

Lu Zhou wasn’t startled by Perelman’s visit, but the Jin University leadership team was almost frightened.

After all, this person was too famous.

Even people uninterested in mathematics had heard about this person that rejected the million-dollar Millennium Prize Problems award.

Many well-known universities, including Harvard, Berkeley, and Princeton, had invited him to teach there, but unfortunately, he rejected all of them.

This eccentric man, who rejected offers from universities around the world, was suddenly here in Jin Ling University, sitting in the back row of a classroom. How could people not feel spooked?

The only person that wasn’t spooked was the lecturer—Lu Zhou.

After all, Lu Zhou had met many people that were just as famous as Perelman.

Lu Zhou had clearly underestimated the impact of an internationally renowned scholar visiting Jin Ling University, especially for the Jin Ling University leadership team.

Ever since he returned to teach in China, Jin Ling University had become an influential mathematics university, purely because it was Lu Zhou’s alma mater. Lu Zhou was determined to make Jin Ling University a mathematics center of the world.

In fact, with the support of Lu Zhou and other alumni, other departments of Jin University had also grown substantially over the past few years, especially for the physics and computer science field.

However, even so, Rome wasn’t built in a day. It would take generations of scholars to build a prestigious university.

Perelman's low-key visit agitated many people's minds.

Director Chen from the university's international department convened a meeting with the various departmental heads of the university. They discussed how to hire this big fish.

Dean Qin from the mathematics department spoke during the meeting.

"First of all, accommodation is the most important. Even if he wants to stay, he won't be able to, unless he has a place to live."

Secretary: "Do you have any good suggestions?"

Dean Qin: "The new faculty and staff dorms are pretty good, especially the No. 2 apartments. They were originally planned for talent attraction, but I think we can arrange for him to live there."

The secretary asked, "What living conditions should we provide? What's the equivalent title?"

Dean Qin thought and said, "Perelman is a legendary mathematician, so we should provide the standards equivalent to an academician."

The secretary nodded and wrote down some notes.

Professor Perelman could easily go to Princeton or Berkeley and receive a US\$300,000 annual salary, or as much as US\$600,000, which was what Terrence Tao received. Arranging him an academician-level accommodation was more than appropriate.

If he stayed at Jin University, it would be a huge boost to the influence of Jin University on the international mathematics community.

The dean of the foreign language department said, "There's also the food aspect. Russians have a different diet than us. We don't have any Russian restaurants in our cafeteria, so I think we should add one."

Dean Qin frowned and said, "A Russian restaurant? So like various types of bread?"

"Uh, yeah, but it's more than that..." The foreign language department dean said, "Like... Borscht, Stroganoff, and Golubtsy."

Dean Qin: "..."

Everyone: "..."

"We can consider that proposal and add an international restaurant as this will also cater to international students," the secretary said as he looked at his assistant. "Xiao Wang, write that down."

Director Chen from the international department felt like it was time for him to speak.

Otherwise, all of the good ideas would be stolen by others. He felt like if he did not speak now, he wouldn't get a chance.

"I heard Perelman doesn't speak Chinese."

Everyone at the conference table looked at him; Dean Qin was speechless.

No sh*t, Sherlock?

Director Chen looked around the table and smiled.

"It's not just Perelman, many visiting scholars and professors have encountered language barriers, cultural differences, and many other problems.

"We all know that Jin University serves our people, but it belongs to the world. In order to internationalize our campus and to create friendships, I suggest a strategy for our students to proactively help foreign students with their daily life problems.

"Professor Perelman is a respectable scholar and his scientific research experience can guide our students. Our students, on the other hand, can help him with daily life and cultural encounters. This will help him integrate into our society and make him feel like home."

Everyone felt like this made sense.

The secretary nodded and thought for a second. However, he soon furrowed his eyebrows.

"... Wait a second, is that really appropriate?"

Teachers and students had a special relationship, and allowing them to communicate outside of academia could lead to problems.

The power dynamics would be disrupted.

Professors generally tried to avoid communicating with students outside of academic matters.

Director Chen smiled and said, “Don’t worry, Secretary, this won’t be a problem! The Jin University students will have the chance to learn about another culture, this is a win-win situation—”

The secretary thought about it and felt like it made sense.

However, Principal Xu, who hadn’t spoken yet, suddenly laughed.

“Director Chen, are we offering him a vacation or a job?”

Director Chen looked at Principal Xu and quickly explained, “Um... Of course we’re offering him a teaching position, but we want him to integrate into our culture, right?”

Principal Xu snorted.

“Integrate into our culture? Forget about it. Students and professors need to stay separate in their personal lives. Are you trying to find Perelman a son or a daughter?”

“Principal Xu, no offense, but you’re being too sensitive, this is for his benefit.” Director Chen sighed and said earnestly, “We’re a university in a developing country. Even though we have Academician Lu, who has helped us gain some international status, we don’t want to rely on him forever, right?”

Principal Xu suddenly laughed.

“Haha, I’m too sensitive? Funny how you bring up Academician Lu. Please, don’t compare yourself to him.”

Director Chen blushed, he was speechless.

Principal Xu looked at him and said, “I’m not going to say this again, but if we want to become a top-rated university, we have to become inclusive and not possessed by ideologies.

“How do we internationalize? Is it by measuring the proportion of foreign professors? What about judging by skin color? Are we going to hire inferior professors using racial quotas, in the name of equity? Have you ever been in a f*cking laboratory?”

Principal Xu came from an academic background, and he was even part of the 863 Program.

“But other universities—”

“No buts! How about you go to other schools then!

“We are hiring foreign scholars for research or for them to ‘integrate’ into our society! I don’t want scholars who are here for a vacation.”

The dean of the foreign language department was speechless. Director Chen shook his head without saying anything.

This was quite a preposterous proposal.

There was nothing wrong with students forming friendships with professors.

However, being forced into a friendship by the school was inappropriate.

A university was a place of academia.

This was the first time people saw Principal Xu this angry.

Director Chen felt mistreated. He only wanted Jin University to prosper.

But now was obviously not the time to argue. He lowered his head and spoke to Principal Xu.

“You’re right, this approach was wrong. I’ll go do some more research—”

“Research? Research my a*s!” Principal Xu stood up and said, “This meeting is over!”

Chapter 1094 Price Is Just One of the Reasons

After the lecture, Lu Zhou spent around ten minutes answering the student’s questions. He then put away the textbook and left the classroom.

Perelman, who was sitting at the back of the classroom, stood up and followed Lu Zhou out of the classroom.

He had a pensive look on his face as he suddenly spoke.

“That was a normal lecture.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “It’s only a class for undergraduate students.”

Perelman: “Why do you teach undergraduate students?”

Lu Zhou: “Because revisiting what makes the obvious, obvious, can help us understand what makes the complex, complicated... In fact, this is what Fermi thought as well, and I agree with him. Maybe some of my students will become Fields Medalists, that will be very fulfilling.”

Perelman’s expression didn’t change.

His attitude toward mathematics was always a pursuit of purity. Therefore, he did not resonate with Lu Zhou’s words at all.

He thought for a while and spoke.

“... What makes the complex, complicated.”

“Yeah...” Lu Zhou nodded and said, “For example, motive theory and the Langlands program, these seemingly easy theorems explain less obvious principles. What is the essence of numbers? Our civilization has been thinking about this problem ever since the existence of mathematics. Great mathematicians are often theologians or philosophers.”

Perelman: “Are you a theologian?”

Lu Zhou: “Unfortunately, I’m a materialist... This is my office.”

Lu Zhou opened the door and turned on the lights.

Normally, there would be people here, but today was a Saturday. His three assistants left after four o’clock. While he did not require his students to come in on the weekends, most of them spent their weekends in the library.

“Help me move the whiteboard from the corner.”

“Okay.”

Perelman walked forward and dragged the whiteboard out of the corner while Lu Zhou took out a marker from his desk drawer.

Lu Zhou walked up to the whiteboard and was about to answer questions from his foreign friend when he suddenly heard footsteps outside of his office. An acquaintance of his knocked on the door and walked in.

“Academician Lu, sorry to bother you... Wait, are you Professor Perelman?” Dean Qin said as he looked at Perelman standing next to Lu Zhou.

He had just come back from his meeting and wanted to discuss with Lu Zhou on how to deal with this matter. He didn’t expect to see this big fish standing in Lu Zhou’s office.

Perelman looked at the old man and nodded.

“Yeah... Is there a problem?”

“No, no problem, I just didn’t expect you to be here,” Dean Qin said as he tried to contain his excitement. “You should have told us in advance, we can give you a visit around the campus.”

Perelman looked at him strangely and said, “I’m just here to ask Professor Lu questions, do I have to apply in advance?”

“No, no, I didn’t mean that, I’m just saying...”

Dean Qin awkwardly tried to explain as Lu Zhou shook his head and spoke first.

“It’s fine, Perelman.”

Dean Qin sighed in relief and said, “Okay then... I’ll talk to you later.”

Dean Qin left the office and closed the door.

Perelman was confused. He looked at Lu Zhou and asked, “What was that about?”

“Nothing.” Lu Zhou smiled and looked at the whiteboard as he said, “Let’s continue.”

...

Perelman was obviously prepared for his visit to China.

He even carried around a little notebook, filled with commonly used Chinese phrases, as well as notes he made when he was reading Lu Zhou’s paper.

Honestly, Lu Zhou had a hard time answering Perelman’s questions. He could only answer around 60% of them.

“... That’s an interesting question, but that’s all I can answer. I might have to get back to you after I finish my research.”

“No worries.” Perelman closed his notebook and shook his head as he said, “I thought we could discuss these questions together, I didn’t expect you to answer so many of them...”

Lu Zhou: “...”

The f*ck.

Why didn’t you tell me that earlier!

Lu Zhou thought Perelman’s questions came from reading the paper. However, he didn’t expect the problems to be unrelated to the paper.

Lu Zhou smiled and spoke humbly.

“Judging from your questions, clearly you’re also interested in the Grand Unified Theory. It just so happens that my research group still needs people... I don’t know if you’re interested.”

Lu Zhou did not have a lot of hope. After all, Perelman was infamous for his introverted temperament.

However, Perelman’s answer surprised Lu Zhou. Perelman spoke without any hesitation.

“If you think I can be of help, please let me join.”

Lu Zhou was speechless. Perelman frowned and spoke.

“... Is there a problem?”

“... Nothing, I just didn’t expect you to agree so readily.”

Lu Zhou snapped back to reality and said, “Of course you can be of help, we can build this mathematical tower together... Welcome, partner.”

Lu Zhou turned around to his desk and took out a document from his drawer. He glanced at the document and made sure he had the correct one before handing it to Perelman.

“This is a visiting and exchange document, it has already been stamped. Just sign your name, you’ll be able to receive a long-term visa with this.

“Also, I’m assuming you don’t have a place to stay. The newly-built dorms at the Jin Ling University apartments are pretty good, they’re around 90 square meters, located near campus, close to the mathematics department buildings and library. I can apply a visiting scholar status for you, you just have to sign this document—”

Perelman paused for a second and interrupted him, “Wait a second, what is a visiting scholar?”

Lu Zhou: “Like the name implies, you’ll be working at Jin Ling University with an equivalent role of a distinguished professor.”

Perelman said, “I don’t want to work, I’m not interested in teaching. I’m leaving here after we finish the Grand Unified Theory of algebra and geometry. I can sleep on the sofa if needed, I don’t need an apartment.”

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, “No, we can’t do that. Even if you want to sleep on a sofa, you need a roof to sleep under.”

Perelman shrugged and said, “I heard Schultz say your house is pretty big.”

Lu Zhou said, “... Forget about it, no one outside of my family has slept in my house before.”

Perelman: “...”

Seeing how Perelman was hesitant, Lu Zhou said, “You don’t have to worry about teaching. Being a distinguished professor doesn’t mean you have to teach. Of course, if you want to, I’m sure the students would be grateful for your generosity. You’ll also receive more salary.”

Perelman said, “It’s not that I don’t like teaching, I just don’t want to waste time on trivial matters.”

Lu Zhou: “I’m not forcing you.”

“Okay, thank you.”

“No worries.” Lu Zhou smiled and reached out his hand as he said, “It’s an honor to work on this great project with you.”

Perelman shook Lu Zhou’s hand and smiled.

However, he quickly realized something as he spoke.

“I... need a favor.”

Lu Zhou smiled and spoke.

“Go ahead.”

Perelman coughed and spoke.

“90 square meters is too big, can you get me a smaller apartment, maybe 20 square meters... I feel uncomfortable in large spaces.”

Lu Zhou looked at him strangely and said, “I thought you lived in a small apartment because it’s cheap.”

Perelman spoke.

“The price is only one of the reasons.”

1095 Pigs Are Flying

As soon as the weekend passed, Lu Zhou’s office became lively again.

Assistant Zhao said that Professor Lu had something important to announce. Thus, all of the students in the research project group got up early, ate their breakfast, and rushed into the office.

“Allow me to introduce our new group member,” Lu Zhou said as he patted the shoulder of the strange man standing next to him. Lu Zhou looked at the astonished students and cleared his throat. He said, “This is Professor Perelman, a mathematician from St. Petersburg. He will stay here for the rest of the year... if we can finish the Grand Unified Theory by the end of the year.”

The office went silent for a few seconds.

Then, a pen fell onto the ground.

Suddenly, the atmosphere in the office exploded.

“What! Perelman? The... big name that solved the Poincaré conjecture?”

“No way... I heard he quit mathematics?”

Perelman!

The man that never left his house, the man that rejected the secretary-general of the International Mathematical Union!

If it weren't for Lu Zhou's serious expression, everyone in the office, including Han Mengqi, would have thought Lu Zhou was joking.

Perelman did not understand Chinese, so he didn't know what everyone was talking about. He thought they were welcoming him, so he said, “Thank you.”

Chen Yang, who finally recovered from the initial shock, looked at Perelman. He excitedly spoke.

“... I've read your paper before!”

Perelman didn't know how to answer the question. He hesitated for a second and nodded.

“Yeah.”

...

Lu Zhou had heard about Perelman being an idiosyncratic person, so he was a little worried Perelman would not be able to integrate into his research group, or perhaps there would be communication problems. However, he realized quickly that his worries were superfluous.

What surprised Lu Zhou the most was Chen Yang's relationship with Perelman.

Both of them were taciturn people, people that only talked about mathematics and their work. It seemed like this kind of straightforward communication method was able to overcome any communication barriers.

For the next stage of research, Lu Zhou asked Perelman to participate in Chen Yang's research project, which was to study direct-sum decomposition in motive theory, something that was related to the irreducible motive $H(V)$.

This research project was half done, but due to various reasons, the progress was relatively slow.

According to Chen Yang, due to Professor Perelman's help, the speed of the research project had increased dramatically.

Within a week, the two people came up with a groundbreaking method, completing the last problem of the project, which was to establish a close relationship between $H(V)$ and the irreducible motive.

The resulting paper was co-signed by the two and the preprint was uploaded to arXiv, while the paper was submitted to the mathematics sub-journal of Future.

The day after the paper was uploaded to arXiv, the mathematics community was astonished by this unprecedented event.

Perelman, who publicly announced his withdrawal from the mathematics community, had published a paper to arXiv?

Also, the research unit that signed the paper was Jin Ling University, the university at which Professor Lu worked...

It was like pigs were starting to fly!

...

Germany, University of Bonn.

Inside a stylish cafe.

Faltings looked at the newly-published paper and shook his head.

He did not expect Perelman to have this kind of response after initially reading Lu Zhou's paper.

He was both gratified and confused. He felt a mix of complicated emotions.

Schultz noticed the old man's expression. He took a sip of coffee and spoke with a sigh.

"I can't believe he actually went to Jin Ling University."

He and Professor Faltings visited Perelman in St. Petersburg, trying to invite him to the University of Bonn, to work with them on the Grand Unified Theory of algebra and geometry, opening up a new school of thought for the Bourbaki Group.

However, their efforts were to no avail as Perelman chose Lu Zhou on his own volition.

Faltings looked outside the window and suddenly said, "What do you think about this paper?"

After Schultz thought for a while, he said, "It's amazing... It's honestly shocking. I can't even describe the importance of their work in the field of motive theory and Grothendieck's standard conjectures. I think any scholar in this field worth their salt will say that they have made a huge step toward Grand Unified Theory."

After hearing Schultz's words, Professor Faltings nodded.

He totally agreed with Schultz's words.

Establishing an abstract meaning of numbers and shapes in the context of motive theory and Langlands program meant that their research was far ahead of the rest of the world.

It was almost as if most scholars in the world were making fire with friction and wood, while they were using a flint fire striker.

Only top scholars in the field of algebraic geometry could differentiate the good from the best.

Schultz looked at Faltings and sighed as he spoke.

“The reason I have been researching complete metric spaces is precisely to find a theorem like this. I created the p-adic number and Diamond principle for this reason.”

The complete metric space provided a new way to look at the classes of geometric objects that were deeply rooted in the Langlands program, such as the Shimura variety. This was the outstanding mathematical achievement that won him the Fields Medal in 2018.

This mathematical method had evolved into a completely new branch of mathematics. This subject had been widely regarded as a promising research direction in unifying algebra and geometry.

“You can say that.” Faltings nodded and noticed the expression on Schultz’s face. He frowned and said, “It looks like you have something to say.”

Schultz awkwardly smiled.

“You know, the Grand Unified Theory of algebra and geometry is what I’ve been pursuing my entire life. Now, I feel like there’s finally a place to apply my theory.”

He coughed and said, “I would like to go on an exchange there for a year.”

Faltings: “...”

Professor Faltings didn’t speak as Schultz scratched his head awkwardly.

“Seeing how you’re not saying anything, I’m assuming you agree to come with me.”

Faltings: “...”

...

Chapter 1096 Handshake Between Two Giants

Entrance of Jin Ling University. Professor Faltings stood on the curbside with a black suitcase. He looked at the building nearby and spoke.

“Ten years ago, I never would have imagined myself coming here. But now, I’ve been here many times.”

“I’ve only been here twice,” Schultz said as he dragged his suitcase. “It feels different each time I come here.”

“It’s my first time,” an old man in his 50s said. He looked at the people walking into campus and said, “I’ve only seen this place in movies before.”

Faltings: “Oh, really? What do you think?”

The old man smiled and said, “The movies are all lies.”

Standing next to them was none other than Professor Holden.

As the secretary-general of the International Mathematical Union, he came to Jin Ling City mainly to negotiate with the Chinese Mathematicians Association and the local Jin Ling City government, to discuss the upcoming International Congress of Mathematicians conference.

The reason why he was here with Faltings and Schlutz, was to visit Lu Zhou.

Schultz smiled and said, “You would be even more surprised if you went to the library. I’ve been to many libraries, but rarely are the seats as packed as theirs. I think you even need to make a reservation for a seat.”

“Really?” Professor Holden said, “I think we should go visit... Speaking of which, how do we find Professor Lu? Do you guys know where his office is?”

Faltings and Schultz made eye contact as they had a strange look on their faces.

“Do you know?”

“No... I thought you knew.”

“I’ve only been to Jinling’s city center area before.”

Professor Holden had an awkward look on his face as he coughed.

“... I’ll go ask around.”

He dragged his suitcase and walked up to the entrance guard. He used a translation app on his phone to assist him.

“Hello, how can we get to Lu Zhou’s office?”

The guard looked at the three foreigners standing outside the gate. He took out three documents from his drawer and handed it out of the booth.

“Academician Lu? Fill in this form first.”

Professor Holden looked at Faltings and Schultz and said, “Let’s fill this in first.”

...

On the other hand, there was a meeting going on in a conference room at Jin Ling University.

Because of what happened during the last meeting, Principal Xu criticized Director Chen from the international department, for the ideological possession of the domestic academic circle, especially in the university administrators.

He also emphasized on how to truly become an international university, how to manifest one’s influence and take on good fundamentals.

Principal Xu was quite emotionally attached to Jin University.

Even though this wasn’t his alma mater, he had worked here for more than 10 years.

At his age, it was difficult to attain any academic achievements. His main goal was on education for the new generation, to cultivate talents for the university and country.

Fortunately, thanks to Professor Lu, everything was trending in a good direction.

However, by contrast, as Jin University's strength continued to grow, the hidden dangers also began to manifest itself.

If everything went well, he might be able to work as the principal for another five years. However, after five years, someone else would take his spot. No one knew how the new Principal would do...

In order to give the university a bright future, he wanted to accomplish everything in the next five years.

He did not seek to restore the former glory of the university. Instead, he wanted to prepare Jin University for the future, after his departure.

He did not want to destroy the dreams of countless young scholars.

Principal Xu unscrewed his vacuum flask and took a sip of hot water. He was about to say something when he heard a knock outside his door. His assistant walked in.

"Principal."

Principal Xu looked at him and said, "What?"

"The security department called. They said internationally renowned scholar Professor Faltings, the director of the Max Planck Institute for Mathematics, Professor Schultz from the University of Bonn, and Professor Holden, the secretary-general of the International Mathematical Union, want to visit Academician Lu."

Whispers were heard in the conference room.

Everyone was astonished.

Principal Xu paused for a second and asked, "Why did the security department call then?"

The assistant replied, "Because they are here already."

Principal Xu's mouth was wide open. He looked around the conference room and spoke.

"Think about what I said, how to become an international institution, what kind of status we need. This meeting is over!"

After that, he rushed out of the door.

...

Perelman visiting a few days ago was already an earth-shattering event.

But now, Lu Zhou saw Professor Faltings and the others standing at his office door. He even began to wonder if Xiao Ai had secretly put a virtual reality helmet on his head, constructing a fake reality.

Of course, that was impossible.

He clearly remembered the taste of the dumplings for his breakfast.

Lu Zhou didn't expect that not only did his paper attract Perelman from the wild, but it even caught the attention of Schultz and Faltings.

"I'm just going to get straight to the point, do you still need people for your project?"

Lu Zhou heard Professor Faltings' question and snapped back to reality.

"You're also here for..."

Faltings didn't say anything, he just looked at Schlutz.

Schultz had a helpless expression as he nodded.

"... Professor Faltings is only accompanying me, I'm the one that wants to join."

Lu Zhou looked at Faltings and did not know what to say.

The old man coughed and spoke.

"You know that Professor Schultz's research area is mainly in the field of complete geometry, and its main problem is the unification of algebra and geometry. After reading your paper, we agreed that the area you are currently researching is the most promising one. He wants to come on an exchange for a year. As for me..."

Professor Faltings coughed and spoke.

“As for me, I’m just here to look around. I might stay for a while. Of course, if you need my help, just tell me... If you guys don’t need anyone, you can just tell me, no hard feelings.”

“... Of course not, there’s always room for my friends.” Lu Zhou smiled as he reached out his hand. “Welcome to the research project.”

Professor Faltings shook his hand.

If there was a reporter nearby, they would definitely be taking photos.

This was a historic handshake for a special occasion.

On one hand was the strongest young mathematician the world had ever seen, and on the other was Professor Faltings, one of the existing leaders of the Bourbaki Group, one of Grothendieck’s disciples.

This was a handshake between two giants!

“With the help of all of us, there’s no way we can’t solve the Grand Unified Theory,” Schultz said as he smiled. “Should I open a bottle of champagne? I can buy one.”

“Let’s save the celebration for after we solve the problem,” Faltings said as he pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose. He spoke in a serious way, “Even though we have achieved a certain amount of success, there are many problems to be solved. We might have to solve Grothendieck’s standard conjectures first.”

Of course, it could be easier than they had thought.

The Grand Unified Theory could lead to the solution of a series of mathematical propositions related to cohomology theory and Grothendieck’s standard conjectures.

However, things were often more complex than they seemed.

However, Lu Zhou was more optimistic and relaxed than Faltings.

Lu Zhou looked at his friends and asked, “Regardless, you guys came all the way here, so I have to treat you to a meal first. What do you guys want to eat?”

“Roast duck is good...” Professor Holden suddenly said, “I’ve always wanted to try it.”

Lu Zhou smiled and spoke.

“No worries, duck it is.”

Chapter 1097 Second Closed Beta

Male dorms, room 201.

Li Mo entered the room with his backpack on, and he spoke before he even put down his bag.

“You guys won’t believe what happened today!”

Duan Siqi put down his pen and looked back. He pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose and said, “... What?”

Li Mo: “Professor Perelman! The legend that left the mathematics world! He joined our research project!”

Wu Di was playing Dota Auto Chess. Without turning his eyes away from his screen, he said, “... I don’t know what you’re talking about, who is he?”

“Professor Perelman! The German mathematician that solved the Poincaré conjecture!” Li Mo said with excitement. He didn’t care if the others understood him, he continued, “Faltings and Schultz were also there! This is nutty, the entire Bourbaki Group is at our university!”

Yang Shuang was the only one bored enough to pay attention to him. Everyone else was obviously not interested.

Unlike the other roommates, Duan Siqi was a genius student, so he knew who Perelman and Faltings were, but he wasn’t as excited.

After all, he was only a freshman; they had only just begun their journey into the world of mathematics.

Maybe when they became a senior or a graduate student and actually did research, they would understand the significance behind these names.

But for now, Duan Siqi felt like Perelman and Faltings were nowhere near as impressive as the person that developed virtual reality technology—God Lu.

Speaking of which, Duan Siqi felt like he was quite jealous of Li Mo.

Li Mo had the ability to focus on himself and no one else.

This was something Duan Siqi couldn't do.

Maybe this was why Li Mo was able to excel in the world of pure mathematics.

Yang Shuang, who was listening to Li Mo brag, suddenly noticed a textbook on the desk. After taking a closer look, he spoke.

“... Mathematical analysis assignment? Wow, nutty, we haven't even learned the content year, and you already finished the textbook?”

“Yeah.” Duan Siqi pushed the glasses up the bridge of his nose and said, “I'm busy this weekend, so I finished it ahead of time.”

Wu Di, who was playing video games, was intrigued. He looked back and spoke with a smile on his face.

“Oh, this weekend? Tell us, is it a date?”

Duan Siqi looked at his roommate's mischievous smile and spoke.

“What are you on? It has nothing to do with girls.”

He hadn't told anyone about the closed beta yet. He was an introverted guy and did not want to be the center of attention. It was easier to keep it a secret.

However, that was only for his real life, his online presence was different.

He thought about his tens of thousands of Weibo followers and felt wonderful.

He was able to attract so much attention with two Weibo posts alone. People were so enthusiastic about this technology that they even followed a no-name like him. Every day, he would get messages asking about the phantom system.

These messages had become the motivation for him to look forward to the next closed beta.

However, aside from the fans that were asking him for details on the closed beta test, he was more interested in the test itself.

Apparently, this time would be different.

The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study did not disclose any information to the closed beta testers yet.

He was looking forward to it.

...

The weekends.

The second closed beta test was about to begin.

Just like the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study had said, this test was unusual.

The group of people stood in a barren forest, looking around confusingly.

Beside them was the wreckage of an airplane, which was broken into two large pieces.

A staff member wearing a white coat was standing in front of the crowd. He smiled and began explaining the situation.

“Thank you, players, for participating in our second closed beta, we’re glad to see you again.

“Basically, this is a large-scaled sociological simulation experiment. You guys are survivors of a plane crash, and your only goal is to survive for 72 hours until the rescue team arrives.

“There are days and nights, but the day time is only 6 hours, and the night time is only 2 hours, so you will feel like time is passing by faster. Your information panel displays your health status. If you go below the red line, you will be exited from the experiment.

“I’m obligated to say that anything can happen during the experiment, but everything is limited to the virtual world. Therefore, before the experiment begins, if anyone feels uncomfortable, you can withdraw.”

Of course, no one was going to withdraw.

They were the lucky ones who were selected for beta testing. Even if they weren't interested in surviving in a forest, they would want to experience the virtual world.

The staff member looked around, and no one raised their hand. He smiled and spoke.

"Then, I wish you all good luck."

Suddenly, a tall, lanky man spoke with a calm expression.

"Wait a second, can I ask a question?"

The worker nodded and said, "Go ahead."

"Does common sense apply here? Like using friction to make fire, cutting down trees to make tools, etc."

"Of course it applies." The staff member smiled and said, "We are testing vulnerabilities in the physics engine, so we want this to be as realistic as possible."

The man nodded.

"... I understand."

Seeing how no one had any more questions, the staff member disappeared.

The clock in the virtual world began to turn, and this large-scaled sociological experiment had officially begun.

The lanky guy that asked the question immediately walked toward the wreckage, trying to find anything that could be useful.

A well-built man next to him looked around the players walking around and shouted.

"We only have six hours of daylight time, we can't do much for the first day. Let's search the wreckage of the plane first; there should be supplies inside."

The crowd looked at each other. Some were confused, while others only wanted to play this “game” on their own volition; they did not want to be commanded.

The well-built man began walking toward the plane.

Duan Siqi felt a little weird.

Am I seeing things?

Why do I feel like...

Those two people are weirdly calm. It’s almost like they’ve played this game before, or they have participated in the closed beta before.

As time passed, players took action. Some of them walked toward the depth of the forest, some walked toward the plane, and others gathered in small groups and chatted with one another.

A woman in her mid-twenties, dressed in office-attire, looked around and couldn’t help but speak.

“This should be a travel simulator, look at how real the trees look, I’ll be able to travel to the Maldives in the comfort of my own home.”

A man in a flannel spoke.

“This reminds me of a game.”

The white-collar woman asked, “What game?”

“The forest, it’s a survival game. It’s not only about survival, but there are also monsters.”

“Monsters?” The well-dressed female player said, “Sounds scary.”

“Don’t worry, if there are monsters, you can hide behind me,” a man jokingly said. “I’m pretty much a smurf.”

Duan Siqi couldn’t help but cringe. He knew if anything was to happen, the man would run away as fast as he could.

Of course, he was in no position to judge others.

Even though he played basketball and did well in physical education, he was too weak to fight monsters...

He did not want to stand around and do nothing, so he walked toward the plane wreckage.

He first flipped through a few suitcases, but there was nothing useful aside from clothes.

The only valuable thing he found was a packet of biscuits. He stuffed it in his pocket and walked up to the man who told everyone to search the plane. This man was searching through a suitcase. Duan Siqi hesitated for a bit before saying, "I plan on finding a river."

"Good idea, be careful," the man said. He handed him a switchblade and said, "Also, take this."

Is he being serious?

Duan Siqi looked at how stern the man looked and felt like the man was role-playing too seriously.

"That's useless, if I run into a monster, I would get eaten anyway."

"It's not for you to fight monsters," the man said with a fierce look on his face. "Having a tool in your hand will deter monsters."

Duan Siqi said, "You seem like you're good at survival? Are you a camper? Bear Grylls fan?"

The man seemed like he did not want to answer the question. He hesitated for a bit and said, "I was in the army."

Even though the guy was taking this game too seriously, he reminded Duan Siqi of his roommate, so Duan Siqi smiled and reached out his hand.

"I'm Duan Siqi, and you are?"

The man didn't seem like he wanted to talk. He frowned and reached out his hand.

"Li Gaoliang."

Duan Siqi nodded and made a note to remember this weird-sounding name. He then turned around and began walking toward the depths of the forest.

Even though he had no previous experience of surviving in the wild, he was a high-achieving student who got admitted into Jin University. He was quite a smart fellow.

He walked as he made markings on trees with his switchblade, preventing him from getting lost, as well as making sure he was not walking in circles.

He walked for two hours until he finally heard the sounds of waves.

He walked forward and saw a sandy beach.

“This is the sea... We’re on an island?”

He noted the approximate location of the coast and began walking back the same path.

He needed to use his markings to find the way back, so it took a little longer.

When he saw the plane wreckage and the players again, the sun already began to set.

The golden sunshine passed through the leaves, projecting onto the ground; it was an unbelievable sight.

As expected, like the staff member had said, there was only six hours of day time.

Therefore, it should be night time in a few minutes.

If it wasn’t for the information panel, reminding players to eat, it was easy to forget that they were in a virtual reality world, on a planet that had an eight-hour rotation around a star.

Duan Siqi walked next to Li Gaoliang, the man that claimed to be in the army.

Li Gaoliang looked at the campfire he built with wooden sticks and stones. He noticed the young man approaching him. He spoke in a good mood.

“How did it go?”

Duan Siqi: "A kilometer west is a beach. The terrain is flat, and there aren't any hills or rivers."

"There shouldn't be any large animals nearby then." Li Gaoliang looked around and said, "But this also means our food source will be a problem."

Is this game that realistic? Do we need to eat?

Duan Siqi spoke.

"There's none in the plane?"

"There are, but not much." Li Gaoliang shook his head and looked at the setting sun. "We should start the fire before the night arrives."

Duan Siqi nodded and took a bite out of the biscuit in his pocket.

Compared to the last beta test, the Phantom virtual reality system was becoming more and more realistic. He could even feel the hunger in his stomach.

Unfortunately, the food here had no taste, and everything tasted like cardboard.

Not to mention he had to eat once every two hours and go number two right after.

The fire began to burn.

As the sky darkened, everyone began to gather around.

The group of people sat around the campfire, eating tasteless cans of food as they chatted.

"What do you think this experiment is about? There's nothing to do."

"If they tell you the purpose of the experiment, the experiment won't work."

"Speaking of which, the rescue team is going to take 72 hours to arrive, does this mean we have to spend 72 hours in the virtual reality world?"

"Definitely not, the game will probably save and we'll exit after a day so that people can take care of their real-life physical needs."

The group of people chatted with one another while Duan Siqi played with the campfire. He thought about what he should write on his Weibo post after the experiment was over.

Honestly, other than the initial excitement, this round of closed beta testing was more strange than it was interesting.

The forest seemed to contain endless amounts of secrets, while there was no clear objective. There wasn't even the slightest hint of a clue. Most people had no idea what to do during the six-hour day time.

The campfire crackled softly.

Suddenly, a rustling sound came from the forest.

Li Gaoliang looked up, and he squinted at the dark forest.

The well-dressed female player noticed this, and she curiously asked him, "What?"

Li Gaoliang spoke as he quietly grabbed the knife on his waist.

"There's something there."

The female player said, "I'm easily scared. Please don't try to scare me."

Li Gaoliang frowned and ignored her.

Duan Siqi shook his head. He thought Li Gaoliang was making a big deal out of nothing.

He was just about to tell Li Gaoliang to calm down when he suddenly felt chills down his spine.

He looked at the forest and saw something running toward them.

Duan Siqi frowned and tried to look at the dark object.

The outline of the object gradually became clear.

As a thing with a rotten face emerged from the woods, someone shouted, "Quick! Run into the plane cabin!"

The guys shouted as the girls screamed. Duan Siqi wanted to move. He tried to take out his switchblade, but his body was frozen.

This is too realistic...

Speaking of which, which dumbass said there are no monsters?

The rotten face became closer and closer.

Before he could do anything, a rotten hand grabbed his chest.

Then, his consciousness exited the virtual world. He was the first heroic victim of this gory experiment...

Chapter 1098 A Taste of Evil

The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study laboratory.

Li Gaoliang suddenly took off his helmet and kicked his legs. He sat up from his chair and couldn't help but grumble.

"F*ck sake, isn't this supposed to be a survival game? When did it become Resident Evil? Who would play such a tasteless and evil joke."

This was crueller than throwing him onto planet Reach. At least he was given a gun last time; this time, it was pure horror and gore, with zombies appeared on a survival island!

Standing next to Li Gaoliang was the staff member that previously explained to them the rules of the game. He had an awkward look on his face.

He obviously did not know this was going to happen; he was baffled at what the players had experienced in the game.

"The world was apparently generated by an intelligent program, developed by Academician Lu. Maybe something went wrong. We are investigating whether or not this was a bug, or maybe someone changed the experiment last minute," the researcher said with a cough. He continued, "Anyway, you survived for seven hours and 21 minutes, 39 minutes away from daylight... You were the last player remaining, good job."

Li Gaoliang did not care about the cruel experiment anymore. He immediately asked, “How many points did I get? I remember I killed four of them, I should—”

The researcher interrupted him and said, “You didn’t survive a single day, no points at all.”

Li Gaoliang: “...”

Damn it.

Li Gaoliang felt like his intelligence was humiliated by a software program.

He took a deep breath and put his helmet aside.

“When is the next closed beta testing?”

Research: “It should be next Saturday.”

“Okay, reserve five spots for me. I’ll bring some of my guys. These guys are terrible, they’re dragging me down,” Li Gaoliang said as he patted Meng Donghai, who was sitting on the chair next to him. Li Gaoliang said to him, “Come, let’s get some food at the cafeteria, then head back to our station.”

When Meng Donghai heard they were going to get free food, his eyes lit up as he bounced off the chair.

“Okay, sir, I’ll put on my shoes.”

Researcher: “...”

...

Li Gaoliang’s intuition was quite accurate; he was correct on two occasions.

One was that his intelligence was humiliated by an artificial intelligence program.

The second was that the “zombies” in the game were made in bad taste.

Of course, it was difficult to judge whether this action was caused by a human or a software.

After Lu Zhou heard about the situation, he immediately found the “person” responsible and reprimanded them.

“I heard the researchers say that there were rotten-faced zombies running out of the forest. They thought Lumiere and I had changed the experiment. Five people fainted on the spot and disconnected.”

Xiao Ai: [But, Xiao Ai heard someone wanting monsters, someone talked about the game ‘the forest’, so, Xiao Ai made some changes... haha (っ*`ω`*)]

Lu Zhou looked at this unremorseful bot and couldn’t help but scold it, “How dare you!”

Xiao Ai: [QAQ]

Lu Zhou: “The phantom system is still unstable, there are still controversies surrounding the neural interface virtual reality system. Do you know the consequences this will have!”

He was researching mathematics when he heard Professor Lumiere’s phone call. After he heard about the incident, he was too angry to continue researching.

Xiao Ai: [Master, Xiao Ai is wrong, don’t be angry.]

Lu Zhou looked at Xiao Ai and wanted to forgive it.

After a while of silence, he sighed and said, “I gave you access to the system for you to fix bugs, not for you to torture the players... Don’t do this again.”

Xiao Ai: [Okay, Xiao Ai won’t.]

Lu Zhou: “Okay, I’ll take care of this, just stand aside.”

Xiao Ai: [Master, my experience bar has increased.]

Lu Zhou paused for a second and frowned.

“It increased?”

Xiao Ai: [Yeah, increased by a lot, much more than when Xiao Ai browses the Internet.]

Even though Lu Zhou knew Xiao Ai wouldn't lie to him, he still couldn't believe this. He immediately closed his eyes and went into the system space.

He walked in front of the holographic panel and clicked on his technology branch. He saw the artificial intelligence orange progress bar and looked surprised.

It really has increased.

Even though it had only increased a little, the speed of the increase was much faster compared to other technology branches.

Lu Zhou exited the system space and looked at his computer screen. He thought for a second and said, "Xiao Ai."

Xiao Ai: [Yeah?]

Lu Zhou: "Try to remember, when did your experience bar begin to increase?"

Xiao Ai: [It was at hour six, minute seven in the experiment time. That was when the experiment bar increased significantly for the first time. (๑•̀ㅂ•́)و✧]

A graph with a curve was presented in front of Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou looked at the graph and pondered for a second. He suddenly remembered something and immediately said, "Plot me a graph with the number of players remaining over time."

Xiao Ai: [Okay, Master!(๑•̀ㅂ•́)و✧]

Soon after, another graph was displayed in front of him.

Lu Zhou looked at the two graphs and went into deep thought.

Judging by the data, when the number of players remaining was over five, there was almost no correlation with accumulated experience and the number of remaining players.

However, when the number of players was less than five, there was a huge inverse relationship between the number of players and experience points gained.

On the contrary, when everyone was walking around aimlessly in front of the plane, there were little experience points gained. But when Xiao Ai released the zombies out of bad taste, causing the players to panic, flee, and fight back, the experience points gain rate began to grow exponentially.

Maybe...

Lu Zhou suddenly had an idea in his mind. He immediately logged onto the backend of the server and retrieved the brainwave data collected by the neural demodulator. He then plotted the brainwave data onto the experience points graph.

Everything became clear.

Lu Zhou looked at the graph and spoke with a twinkle in his eye.

“... I see, high emotional intensity gives more information. This allows artificial intelligence to learn human behavior at a faster rate.”

Xiao Ai: [Master? 0.0]

“Nothing.” Lu Zhou paused for a second and said, “Maybe I was too harsh on you.”

Xiao Ai: [It’s fine, Master is handsome when Master is angry. (///ω///)]

Lu Zhou ignored the a*s kissing and said, “But like I said, never modify the experiment process without authorization!”

Xiao Ai: [Master is still angry?]

“No, I’m saying...” Lu Zhou paused for a second and continued, “Next time, I will provide you a dedicated group of experimenters for sociological experiments so that you can acquire the experiment points for upgrading. But, like I said, all experiments have to go by me before they are implemented.”

Xiao Ai: [Really? Master is the best! u003c3 Let Xiao Ai kiss you!]

Lu Zhou looked at the drone flying over, trying to “kiss” him. Lu Zhou grabbed the drone and slammed it on the table.

A sad emoji was displayed on the drone screen. Lu Zhou ignored Xiao Ai and began to think again.

I didn't expect virtual reality technology could be used to upgrade Xiao Ai.

Not to mention the method is surprisingly simple. We just need a team of players to stay in the virtual reality world all day and let Xiao Ai experiment on them.

This was a piece of cake for Lu Zhou. He could easily find players with good psychological makeup. He could even offer them a contract and a salary. He was certain people would be interested.

There was at least one person he knew that would happily sign up, even without a salary.

What should I call this new team of experimenters...

Lu Zhou had an evil look on his face.

We'll call them the "Respawn Team".

Chapter 1099 Player Evaluation

So many things happened during the day. First was the jungle exploration, then was the zombie disaster.

Even though it was only five o'clock in the afternoon when Duan Siqi exited the phantom system, he was already exhausted. He went into his dorm room and climbed into bed.

He felt a vibration on his bed, and his roommate Wu Di suddenly laughed.

"What? Did you get ghosted by a girl?"

Duan Siqi: "Shut up, none of your business."

Wu Di sighed and said, "Sigh, I knew it, poor guy."

Duan Siqi: "..."

Duan Siqi ignored his roommate and took out his phone. He looked at the 99+ Weibo messages and smiled as he began writing a new blog post.

[

Compared to last time, this closed beta test was much different.

After we put on the helmet, we were inside a forest.

A staff member briefly explained the experiment. He said we were in a sociological experiment and that anyone could quit. However, no one wanted to quit at all. (laugh)

The premise was that the players were surviving passengers from a plane crash, in an unknown forest. We spawned right next to the plane wreckage, and there were a small amount of resources left from the plane. After some exploring, I found a beach.

Oh, also, time went by differently. There was only eight hours a day; six hours of daylight, and two hours of night time. This was very important.

The gameplay was similar to the game “The Forest”, but the difference is that we only had to survive for 72 hours, in which the rescue team would arrive on the 9th day. What the player had to do during the nine days was to find food and fight against the wilderness.

Not only did the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study upgrade the virtual reality smell sensations, but they also introduced a combat system, adding the concept of “dying”.

Fortunately, because I am a noob, I was the first one to die.

First of all, there is no extreme pain in the virtual reality system. According to the researchers, when the pain exceeds a certain amount, the brain wakes up... similar to nightmares.

Hence, abnormal brain waves caused by excessive stimulation will cause players to disconnect from the game.

I have to say, this experiment... or this horror game, is extremely realistic. The atmosphere and surroundings were constructed perfectly. The sound of stepping on branches, the sunlight, the shadows... It even created the eerie sensation of a deadly island.

Honestly, even tough guys like me were horrified.

Of course, there were some skilled players. Apparently, someone used a knife to kill four zombies, pretty impressive.

Let's talk about the shortcomings.

The smell sensation was considered to be a highlight of this experiment. Compared to only being able to smell one thing in the previous closed beta test, a lot has changed in this department.

For example, when you need to go to the toilet, you could clearly distinguish the smell between number one and number two.

Unfortunately, there were no bigger improvements beyond this. For example, you couldn't smell the scent of pine cones or the salty sea breeze.

The other was the taste.

The taste sensation hasn't improved. Any liquid tasted like water and any food tasted like cardboard, there was no pleasure in eating at all.

As a foodie, I want to tell Star Sky Technology that a world without good food is a world without joy.

Of course, I know the researchers at the Institute for Advanced Study are working hard to find a solution.

If they can create a world where you can eat endless amounts of food and never get fat, that would be a huge help for those that are trying to lose weight. I'm even willing to pay for it.

]

He had written quite a long blog post.

After Duan Siqi typed the words, he double-checked his post and nodded with satisfaction. He then pressed the post button.

After he refreshed the page, he began seeing the comments flow through.

[This is crazy!]

[Good post! Looking forward to your next update!]

[Wow, I'm so jealous! When is the Phantom system going to be officially launched, I beg you guys to finish testing quickly.]

[Blogger, did you meet God Lu? Can you tell God Lu that I say hi!]

Duan Siqi looked at the comments and shook his head with a smile.

Meet God Lu?

No way us closed beta testers can meet him.

Forget about the testers, even the CEO of Penguin didn't get the chance to meet God Lu.

Even my roommate, who is a student of Professor Lu, has only met him a few times.

He was too excited about his blog, making it hard to sleep.

He tossed around in his bed for a while before he picked up his phone and scrolled aimlessly through the Weibo trending page.

He suddenly noticed something on the trending page.

It seemed like this round of closed beta testing had much more criticism.

[Female Player Frightened From Star Sky Technology Closed Beta Testing, Demanding Compensation For Emotional Distress!]

[Canadian Celebrity Psychologist Complained That Star Sky Technology's Virtual Reality Testing Can Cause Psychological Trauma.]

When he read the article headlines, he had a dignified look on his face.

When he left the laboratory, he still remembered the crying and frightened faces of the female players.

Even though the medical staff found no psychological damage, this fake news still ended up on the trending page.

"I hope this doesn't affect next week's testing..."

Duan Siqi turned off his phone and sighed.

Actually, he wasn't too worried.

He knew that the Star Sky Technology public relations team had already begun damage control.

There was no point for a no-name like him to worry.

Duan Siqi closed his eyes and quickly fell asleep.

However, he didn't know that the controversial article wasn't an accident but was premeditated by someone behind the scenes...

And it wasn't only on Weibo.

Within an hour, the entire world began to discuss this matter...

Chapter 1100 The Terrifying Fields Medalis

[When $\text{ords} = n\zeta(X, s) = (i \in \mathbb{Z}) \sum (-1)^{i+1} \cdot \dim Q \cdot K_i'(X)(n)$ is established, there is $C_q(D, k) = \{ (f(x_1), \dots, f(x_n)) \in F_n q \mid f(x) \in F_q[x], \text{dedf}(x) \leq k-1 \dots \}$

An office inside the Jin Ling University mathematics department building.

Schultz, as well as the newly joined members of the Grand Unified Theory research team, stood in front of a whiteboard, staring at the densely written equations.

After five minutes, Lu Zhou rubbed his chin and gave an evaluation.

"It's a very interesting idea."

Perelman nodded in agreement with Lu Zhou and spoke.

"True, this is a very novel idea."

Faltings did not say anything, but his facial expression clearly showed that he was in agreement.

Schultz smiled and said, "This is what I discovered when I was studying the complete metric space, and this discovery inspired me to establish a Grand Unified Theory. I spent a year perfecting it. If we can find an exact expression

for $C_q(D, K)$ and substitute it in equation 4, then we can associate $H(v)$ with irreducible motives.”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “Yes, then we can indirectly study the direct-sum decomposition of motive theory using the $H(v)$ function.”

Professor Faltings, who never liked to praise others, couldn’t help but feel impressed at Schultz’s intellect.

His complete metric space theory played an unexpected role in the motive theory.

What was even more amazing was that, compared to scholars like Perelman, who only liked to study behind closed doors, Schlutz was a much better academic communicator.

Generally speaking, influencing other scholars to engage in a field of research was almost as difficult as the research itself.

After all, whether it was a complicated or a simple mathematical proposition, it would take a long time to fully understand the problem itself. People would only study a problem if they thought it was important enough.

Schultz smiled at Lu Zhou’s approval and said, “Speaking of which, I still haven’t given this method a name yet.”

Lu Zhou pondered for a second and said, “What about the Poincare duality application theory? I noticed that the core part of the theory is the generalization of Poincare duality theory on multidimensional cohomology numbers.”

“That’s too difficult to remember, short names are popular these days, like...” Schultz thought for a second and said, “What about fold theory? From an abstract point of view, we are folding a set of algebraic expressions.”

When Lu Zhou heard this name, he felt bewildered. He thought this name had nothing to do with the theorem at all.

Chen Yang and Perelman did not really care about trivial matters like this.

Professor Faltings, on the other hand, obviously agreed with Lu Zhou. He shook his head and said, "You millennials like to make up fancy names. I think Professor Lu's name is pretty good."

Lu Zhou: "..."

Even though he was happy that Professor Faltings agreed with him, he felt like Faltings was calling him an old man.

With the big names discussing in the office, everyone else in the office stayed silent.

Han Mengqi stared at the equations on the whiteboard and frowned. She felt like she could almost understand what was going on.

He Changwen also frowned with a serious look on his face.

As for Li Mo...

He was dumbfounded.

For a long time, he thought he was very close to the frontiers of mathematics, especially when Lu Zhou agreed to let him join the Grand Unified Theory project. He was certain that he could become an excellent scholar.

But this was a huge blow to his pride.

Forget about conversing with these masters, he couldn't even understand what these big names were talking about.

No wonder these guys are Fields Medalists...

How terrifying!

Li Zhong looked at the whiteboard and gulped. He said, "Bro... How did they get the value of k in equation 8? I don't get it."

"Just pay attention," He Changwen said as he stared at the whiteboard.

Li Mo thought he was interrupting He Changwen's thought process, so he shut his mouth.

After a while, He Changwen frowned and lowered his head. He asked Han Mengqi quietly, "How did they derive equations 1 and 2? Have you seen them before?"

Han Mengqi said, "... I think it's a corollary from Weil's conjecture."

Li Mo: "..."

...

Lu Zhou proposed a framework to solve the entire proposition.

While the method proposed by Schultz provided an answer to a specific problem in the framework.

In fact, the method assumed that the famous algebraic geometry Beilinson-Bloch-Kato conjecture was true.

Solving this conjecture was no piece of cake, Schultz had spent the last year trying to find a proof.

If there was no way to prove that the Beilinson-Bloch-Kato conjecture was true, then his "fold" method would be useless.

However, because Lu Zhou was here, Schultz wasn't worried.

This problem was definitely easier than Riemann's hypothesis.

Especially for Lu Zhou.

There was no one better at finding proofs than Lu Zhou.

The discussion continued.

Lu Zhou was proposing a method to associate the high-order K-group of the elliptic curve E with an analytic invariant to solve the Beilinson-Bloch-Kato conjecture. Suddenly, the phone in his pocket vibrated.

Even though he did not want to answer a phone call, it might be something important.

When Lu Zhou saw that Chen Yushan was the one calling, he thought something might have happened at Star Sky Technology. He pointed toward his phone and spoke.

“Let me take this, it’s for work.”

Schultz smiled and said, “Sure, I need some time to think about your method anyway.”

Lu Zhou nodded and walked along the office corridor. He picked up the phone and immediately heard Chen Yushan’s voice.

“Check Weibo!”