

Scholar's Advanced Technological System

Chapter 1101 Something Is Wrong

When Lu Zhou first received Chen Yushan's call, he was totally confused.

However, when he opened his Weibo and saw the messages and people tagging him, he suddenly realized what was going on.

As expected, his worst nightmares had come true.

He anxiously clicked on his mentions.

Most of the people weren't criticizing him, nor were they praising his handsomeness, but rather...

[God Lu, is the Phantom system really that realistic?]

[What kind of man tries to scare girls! Why don't you try to scare me instead! (angry)]

[What kind of scaredy-cat cries from a video game? I don't believe it! It has to be a paid actress!]

[When is this going online? Stop the closed beta, please!]

Lu Zhou: ? ? ?

Why do I feel like...

Something is wrong?

Now was obviously not the time to respond to random comments on the Internet.

Lu Zhou opened his contacts and called Chen Yushan.

"What is going on?"

Chen Yushan was also having a headache. She pinched her eyebrows and said, "As you can see, an accident occurred during yesterday's closed beta testing. We have postponed the next closed beta testing... What happened in yesterday's testing? I read the experimental plan, it didn't mention any zombies and fighting."

Honestly, Chen Yushan was muddled.

Before the closed beta test began yesterday, she personally read the experimental report, which clearly stated that the experiment was only a "survival in the wilderness" game.

But when the night came, monsters came out of the forest, charging at the players.

Fortunately, there were no minors in the closed beta testing; otherwise, they could get in trouble for exposing them to gore and violence.

Lu Zhou cursed Xiao Ai in his heart and said awkwardly, "A small accident happened. You can think of it as a bug."

Chen Yushan said, "... Do I look dumb to you?"

When did a bug have the capabilities of adding zombies to a game?

Is that really your excuse?

"That's not the main point. In short, I can guarantee this accident won't happen in the future," Lu Zhou said. He tried to change the subject and said, "What's important now is to deal with the consequences."

Chen Yushan said with a headache, "Our public relations department is already trying... Honestly, I think there are competitors that are adding oil to the fire. We have conducted public relations for several domestic large Internet companies, and they have all been cooperative. However, when we try to contact foreign media, there is a clear resistance. Companies we have good relationships with revealed to us that some people have paid money to discredit the Phantom system, trying to make the public turn on us."

The purpose of this was obviously to prevent the Phantom from penetrating the overseas market, to create "fake news" on the hidden dangers of the virtual reality system.

Lu Zhou said, “Do we know who is behind this?”

Chen Yushan shook his head and said, “No, they won’t reveal who it is. It’s possible that they don’t even know who it is.”

Lu Zhou: “Do you have a plan?”

“So far, we have found the user that wants to sue us. We have yet to reach an agreement. I have suspended her closed beta testing qualification, and our legal team is dealing with her.”

Honestly, Chen Yushan was certain that this player was bribed by someone.

Otherwise, no one would refuse several hundred thousand yuan in settlement money, just to get a chance at winning a lawsuit against a multi-billion dollar company.

After hearing Chen Yushan, Lu Zhou did not have any good ideas.

He could easily solve any academic problem, but business was beyond his area of expertise.

After he thought for a few seconds, he gave up on trying to find a solution.

“Well, it looks like you have things under control. If you need anything, feel free to ask me, but preferably not, hehe.”

Chen Yushan couldn’t help but roll her eyes.

“You didn’t even give me an explanation for why this happened, and I have to clean up your sh*t. How is this fair?”

Researchers at the Star Sky Technology had yet to fix anything, mainly because even themselves did not know what happened during yesterday’s closed beta test.

“... Okay, I’ll tell you the real reason,” Lu Zhou said with a sigh. He put on a serious voice and said, “Actually, I’m working on a top-secret project.”

He was telling the truth in some sense, but his words were easily misconstrued.

Even though Lu Zhou felt quite apologetic toward Chen Yushan, there was nothing he could do.

Sometimes, it was best to keep things a secret.

Maybe one day, when Xiao Ai was mature enough, he would release it to the public.

But that day had yet to come.

Even though Chen Yushan's instincts told her that this guy was probably lying, Lu Zhou's serious tone made her hesitate.

She asked suspiciously, "Really?"

"Really," Lu Zhou said after taking a deep breath. "The project is called 'Master God', that's all I can tell you. I hope you understand."

Chen Yushan said with a strange look, "Master God... what a strange name."

It was so strange, almost like someone came up with it on the spot.

"The name is not the important part," Lu Zhou said. "Basically, the large-scale sociological experiment requiring a group of players to react and behave in certain scenarios is what we need for machine learning, also—"

"Wait, stop, if it's a secret, you shouldn't tell me," Chen Yushan said. "But with all due respect, this shouldn't be used on closed beta testers, right?"

Lu Zhou sighed and said, "I've realized that. We should set up a professional alpha testing team, different from the closed beta testers."

He paused for a second and continued, "So, I decided to set Master God as a separate project in the Jinling Advanced Research Institute. We will find the closed beta testers who are reliable and have strong psychological qualities. I plan on calling this the Respawn Team, with five to ten people."

Chen Yushan said, "I feel like this is a bad idea, but I trust you."

Lu Zhou coughed and spoke in a serious tone.

"... Thank you, when the time is right, I will tell you all of the details. You'll be responsible for managing the Master God Respawn Team!"

With Chen Yushan helping, Lu Zhou was certain they could get this done.

It seemed like this was guaranteed to work.

After Lu Zhou hung up the phone, he walked back to his office.

Schultz paused his conversation with Perelman and asked him, “What happened?”

Lu Zhou waved his hand and smiled.

“Nothing, let’s continue.”

Chapter 1102 We Can Pay First

Yang Feifei was a normal white-collar worker.

Until a month ago, she lived an ordinary life.

One day, on the Weibo trending page, she saw a blog post about Star Sky Technology’s virtual reality closed beta testing application. This was the first time she heard about the Phantom system and the neural interface system that was going to change the future of human society.

Even though she wasn’t interested in games, she was intrigued by the idea of experiencing another world.

Thus, she jumped on the bandwagon and signed up.

Then...

She realized she was one of the 200 out of 20 million that were selected to join the Star Sky Technology closed beta team.

Honestly, the first closed beta test was boring.

It was boring to do the same things in real life or in a virtual reality world.

However, Star Sky Technology gave her round-trip tickets and five-star hotel accommodation. She participated in the closed beta testing as sort of a vacation, and she did not have many expectations for the Phantom system.

But that was only her experience from the first week.

When the second closed beta testing came around, her impression of the Phantom system had totally changed.

Or rather, she was amazed by it.

The forest presented to the closed beta testers was as real as it could be. The wind blowing on their faces, the sunshine between the tree branches, everything was so realistic.

Other closed beta testers were also in the same environment as her.

She finally understood what Star Sky Technology meant by “experiencing another world”.

In a sense, they were indeed creating another world.

They created a forest that was almost indistinguishable from reality.

Yang Feifei felt like this round of closed beta testing was almost perfect.

If only the accident didn’t happen...

The accident completely destroyed her mood.

When the rotten-faced zombies ran out of the forest, she was petrified.

Especially when she saw the first person getting bit in the neck by the zombie, she fainted on the spot, disconnecting from the equipment.

When she angrily asked the researchers in the laboratory what the zombies were about, the only reply she received was that “there was an accident” and that they were “investigating”.

This incident made her feel terrible.

To her, this meant that someone coded the zombies into the Star Sky Technology servers.

She thought they planned on using the zombies on the closed beta testers since the beginning!

And they purposely didn't inform the testers in advance!

When she got back to her hotel, she wrote a Weibo post complaining about what happened.

Even though she only had a few hundred followers, ten minutes after she posted her blog, she received a personal message.

The person claimed to be a reporter, and he left his WeChat contact details. He said he wanted to talk with her about what happened during the closed beta test.

Even though she was confused as to how the reporter found her, she still added his WeChat account. She just wanted someone to vent and complain to.

After she briefly explained the situation over messages, the WeChat reporter called her.

"I will give you a million USD. You only need to do one thing."

Yang Feifei was taken back, and she asked, "What?"

The reporter smiled and said, "You were treated unfairly during the closed beta testing, right? What you need to do is simple, just sue Star Sky Technology for your emotional distress."

Yang Feifei was dumbfounded.

"Sue Star Sky Technology? Are you crazy?"

Even though she felt uncomfortable during the testing, suing them was going too far.

She didn't even think about suing them.

The man smiled and shook his head.

"Of course not. I didn't ask you to win the lawsuit, you just have to file it. You might be countersued, but it doesn't matter. We will handle all of the costs. You only have to tell the public that Star Sky Technology is a ruthless company that is doing unethical experiments on living humans with no safety guarantees..."

Yang Feifei went silent.

Honestly, a million USD was extremely attractive, especially for an average white-collar worker like her. This was enough to buy a house in Shanghai.

As for losing her closed beta testing qualifications, she didn't care about that at all. She only participated in this project because everyone else did. She would much rather take a million dollars instead.

However, there was no such thing as a free lunch.

She was about to go against a multi-billion dollar company. Even though this company wouldn't use illegal means to deal with her, this was still risky for a nobody like her.

Yang Feifei gulped and spoke in a trembling tone.

"What do you guys want?"

"Is that important?" The man smiled and said, "If you need a reason to convince yourself, tell yourself that you're fighting for justice, for those that don't have a voice. After all, I'm sure most people didn't enjoy the zombies eating their faces."

Yang Feifei: "One more question... Who are you guys?"

"That's not important. This is a business deal."

Yang Feifei said angrily, "I don't even know who you guys are, why would I trust that you're going to pay?"

"That's what you're worried about? No worries, that's easy to solve." The man smiled and said, "Give me your bank account."

"We can pay first."

1103 Turmoil of Public Opinion

CNN studio.

CNN made a talk show in response to recent events.

They invited Professor Peters, who used to be a psychology professor at Harvard University. He was the one who criticized Star Sky Technology on social media a while ago. They also invited a former colleague of Professor Lumiere.

When the host asked about his views on the Phantom system, Professor Peters spoke aggressively.

“There is almost no doubt that this is a dangerous technology. It hasn’t gone through clinical trials and rigorous experiments. Roughly speaking, our brains are the most vulnerable organs, and this technology is targeting precisely that. This is no joke.

“Think about it, what’s happening in their brains isn’t just a horror movie; it’s a real-life horror game. They might even be able to control and create false memories and thoughts. I can’t describe this in only a few words, but I am certain that our future will be tarnished by the bloody Phantom system.

“I don’t know what kind of temptation the closed beta testers were given, but any normal person shouldn’t agree to let a dangerous organization experiment on them. This is not only irresponsible to one’s self, but also to society!”

After hearing Professor Peters’ speech, the host looked shocked.

“Isn’t that a bit exaggerated? Our reporters heard from Star Sky Technology that the Phantom system does not have the capabilities you’re talking about.”

Professor Peters: “It’s not exaggerated at all! It’s no joke! They might not have the technology now, but they will eventually, and they won’t tell you when they do! I’ve talked with Professor Burki, who used to be a colleague of Lumiere at the Switzerland Neural Network Science Research Center... The one sitting next to me. He agrees with me, and we both think this is a dangerous technology.”

The host looked at Professor Burki.

“Is it true? What is your opinion, Professor Burki?”

The camera panned onto Professor Burki.

Professor Burki nodded and spoke in a serious manner.

“I agree with everything Professor Peters said. In fact, virtual reality technology has always been one of the main research projects at the Switzerland Neural Network Science Research Center. Professor Lumiere worked in virtual reality networks before he resigned.

“He is an excellent scholar, but his ideas have always been controversial. We insisted that technology should serve our society, not make it worse. In the end, he left us and went to China.

“I’m not blaming him for anything, but I can’t accept the betrayal. He’s using China’s support to continue his evil experiments.

“He has no morals!”

As one of the core developers of the Phantom system, everyone in the virtual reality technology world knew of Professor Lumiere.

When the host heard Burki’s words, he had a dignified look on his face. The live audience was also in an uproar.

Less than an hour after the show was broadcast, clips were uploaded to Youtube, which spread to Facebook and Twitter.

Suddenly, everyone began criticizing the Phantom system from Star Sky Technology. Even the system developers were affected.

It seemed like Star Sky Technology was having a public reputation disaster. They had yet to expand to the overseas VR market, yet the public had already turned on them.

On the other hand, Professor Lumiere was watching the broadcast inside his Institute for Advanced Study office. His blood was boiling as he called Professor Burki.

“Do you know what you just did?”

Professor Burki was in an airport terminal, waiting for his flight back to Switzerland. He smiled and said, “Calm down, Lumiere. How are you?”

Lumiere was even more furious. He clenched his teeth and said, “What the hell was that CNN interview! We both know that you precisely understand how neural networks operate! How dare you spew that bullsh*t!”

Not only did the interview hurt Star Sky Technology's corporate image and Lumiere's own academic reputation, but it also destroyed the public's confidence in this technology, affecting all scholars in this area.

It would be fine if Burki was telling the truth.

But the memory and thought control were all nonsense. That wasn't something that could be achieved with virtual reality technology at all!

Even if the neural demodulator could send signals to the brain, the brain was the one that was making judgments. Basically, it was no different than seeing or hearing, it was only a repeater that received external signals.

However, Professor Burki nonchalantly smiled and spoke.

"Why is it impossible? I see it in movies and TV shows, and I'm sure your amazing Phantom system can do it."

Professor Lumiere said, "Stop being facetious."

"The public needs to know the truth, and I'm just providing that for them." Professor Burki smiled and said, "If you really care about your reputation, there's another path you can choose."

Lumiere: "... What path?"

Professor Burki: "Abandon the dark side."

Lumiere said, "Are you dreaming?"

Professor Burki, who was sitting in the airport terminal, shrugged and spoke.

"See the reality, my friend. Star Sky Technology plans on building a virtual reality network that is independent of the traditional network, based on cloud computing technology. Do you know what this means? They will eventually fall.

"Of course, I'm not denying the greatness of neural interface virtual reality technology. Your research will have a huge effect on the future, and it might even push society forward.

"However, when this technology gets into the wrong hands, things become dangerous.

“Right now, the first generation is full of dangers. We need to work with the international community to develop a safer second-gen virtual reality system... Do you know what I mean? I want you to think about this seriously, you should part ways with the Chinese—”

Lumiere scolded angrily, “Do you really think I would agree! You foolish simpleton!”

Professor Burki paused for a second and smiled.

“Okay then.”

The phone call ended.

Professor Lumiere slammed his fist on the table.

“Screw this!”

He heard footsteps outside his office.

A researcher in a white coat walked in.

“Professor Lumiere.”

Lumiere took a deep breath and tried to calm down.

“What?”

The researcher said, “This is our new experimental plan. The Star Sky Technology management team told me to bring it to you.”

New experiment plan?

Is it really the best time to do experiments?

Professor Lumiere took the experiment plan and glanced at it.

His pupils shrank.

Suddenly, he finally understood why the Star Sky Technology management team was staying so calm in the midst of this chaos...

Star Sky Technology began to take action.

Precisely speaking, Star Sky Technology wasn't the one taking action, it was the Ministry of State Security.

After a three-day investigation, they had collected evidence such as bank records, communication chat records, web browsing data, etc. The investigation team quickly gathered enough intelligence to form a case.

Yang Feifei was on the way home after work when an undercover agent found Yang Feifei and invited her to the office. He asked her to have a chat.

"What do you want?"

The man claimed to be an undercover national security personnel, so Yang Feifei was frightened.

On one hand, she was scared of authority, and on the other hand, she knew she was guilty.

However, because the agent was overly polite, she thought that the department did not actually have enough evidence to arrest her. She pretended to not know what was going on.

"Don't be nervous, we're just having a chat," the agent sitting across from her said. He knew she was pretending to be dumb, so he smiled and said, "If you're innocent, you have nothing to worry about."

Yang Feifei said, "What is that supposed to mean? Of course I'm innocent!"

"Of course, your rights are protected by the law, but that's under the premise that you're innocent. Then, Miss Yang, I would like to ask about the blogs on your personal Weibo account. Where you make claims such as 'the Star Sky Technology experiment is inhumane', 'the state is behind the evil experiments', and that 'the Phantom system will damage your brain'... Are these legitimate claims?"

“Is there a problem?” Yang Feifei moved around in her chair and said nervously, “Doesn’t matter if they’re legitimate, they’re how I feel. Do I not have freedom of speech?”

“Freedom of speech doesn’t protect you against libel and slander. You have the right to speak, but Star Sky Technology has the right to protect their reputation. From what we know, after the closed beta testing, Star Sky Technology arranged a medical examination for you, and everything was normal. You also signed the medical report, am I correct?”

Yang Feifei’s heart dropped, and she quickly explained, “Back then, I felt normal, but after I got home, things changed—”

The agent said, “You had hallucinations?”

Yang Feifei nodded and said, “Correct.”

The agent smiled and said, “But you’re still going to work?”

Yang Feifei: “I’m just a normal citizen, I need money to live.”

The agent smiled.

“So you think you’re a normal citizen. But what I find interesting is that, Star Sky Technology has already offered to pay 100,000 yuan as a settlement compensation. But you still refused and insisted on going forward with the lawsuit. You published false information on the Internet, making yourself out to be a victim. You defamed the corporate image of Star Sky Technology.

“That’s not something a normal person would do.”

Yang Feifei nervously said, “Why not! I-I just want to be heard!”

The agent ignored her and continued, “After Star Sky Technology cooperated with us, we recognized that something was quite unusual.

“Then, we investigated your accounts and found some interesting things. A huge amount of foreign money was transferred to your account from an unknown source.”

He waved the document in his hand and said, “What’s more interesting is that the overseas account that provided you with the funds is a famous overseas

anti-China organization. We have been targeting them for a long time, and the organization is called NED. Let's just say it's not a charity."

Yang Feifei's face completely changed.

She clearly underestimated the influence of Star Sky Technology. She didn't think the state would take this so seriously.

In her mind, all she did was sue a technology company. Even though this was a powerful company, she didn't expect this at all.

The Ministry of State Security was investigating her, and she was terrified.

"I-I confess, someone found me and they said they would get me justice. Then they said they would pay me, I'm sorry, okay?"

The younger policeman who was sitting beside them smiled and spoke.

"If sorry is all it takes, what's the point of policemen?"

Yang Feifei was about to cry, and she wanted to kill herself.

She was involved with overseas anti-China organizations; this was not just a white-collar crime anymore.

Even if she wasn't charged with espionage, she could go into jail for a long time.

"I'll... I'll give the money back!"

"This is not a negotiation, that's for the judge to decide," the agent said in a serious manner. "But if you cooperate with us, you can redeem yourself."

Yang Feifei immediately spoke.

"I agree! I'll do anything!"

The agent sighed and spoke to her in a serious tone.

"Use your Weibo account to publicly admit that you were bought out, and clarify the rumors.

“We will work with Star Sky Technology. If things go well, they might not sue you.

“As for your illegal gains, we will confiscate them.”

...

In fact, Chen Yushan had already prepared a response plan before the release of the Phantom system.

After all, if Star Sky Technology wanted to separate the virtual reality network from the Internet, they were inevitably going to get backlashes.

Chen Yushan saw this coming.

Once they made a critical technology breakthrough with the Phantom system or show that the Phantom system had commercialization value, foreign countries would definitely try to label it as “illegal” and “evil”, in hopes of buying time for their own technology companies to catch up.

Star Sky Technology wasn't in a hurry. They weighed factors such as risk and profit, taking into account the future economic market. Penetrating the American market was relatively low on their list of priorities.

There was no way other companies and countries could develop a virtual reality system that was comparable to Phantom, at least within the next few years.

Therefore, Chen Yushan wasn't worried.

Star Sky Technology wasn't worried either.

The ones worrying were the people that couldn't get their hands on the technology, or the ones waiting to get this technology...

Jinling high-tech zone.

Chen Yushan was sitting inside the CEO office when she received a call from the Ministry of State Security.

“Ms. Yang has withdrawn her case and agreed to cooperate with us. She will repair her stupid mistakes.”

Even though Chen Yushan expected this to happen, she still felt relieved.

“I don’t get it, why would someone do something this stupid?”

“It is a million dollars, USD. Most people would be tempted. Speaking of which, do you plan on countersuing her?”

Chen Yushan thought for a second and said, “She has already paid for her mistake. I think there’s no need for that. I’m sure the state will make a fair decision.”

The agent from the Ministry of State Security nodded.

“... This was our advice as well. If you sue her for compensation, she won’t be able to pay any fines. Also, we need her to cooperate with the follow-up investigation.”

Chen Yushan smiled and said, “Yeah, thank you, guys.”

“You’re welcome.

“We are honored to serve the country and bring justice!”

...

The so-called victim, Yang Feifei, voluntarily admitted on her social media that she had fabricated some facts. She even attached evidence of her bribery records, totally changing the public opinion. People’s unwarranted panic over the Phantom system turned into a discussion on the organizations behind all of this.

After Yang Feifei issued an apology, she knew people would attack her. Thus she quickly deleted her Weibo account.

As for Star Sky Technology, they said that since Miss Yang recognized her mistake, they would not countersue her.

The turmoil of public opinion finally came to an end.

As for the international public discussions...

Star Sky Technology never took them so seriously.

They didn't need to care about the international market just yet.

Also, they weren't the ones that should be worried.

Because, there was a product launch conference going on at the Shanghai International Convention and Exhibition Center, with more than 500 companies attending...

Chapter 1105 We Don't Care

The Shanghai International Convention and Exhibition Center.

This was where the Phantom virtual reality system product launch was held.

This wasn't Elon Musk's first rodeo.

He stood in the venue lobby with his invitation letter in his hand. He suddenly noticed an acquaintance.

This was none other than Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of Facebook.

A while ago, Facebook liquidated its subsidiary company Oculus, laying off thousands of employees. This caused quite a lot of discussion on the Internet.

He wasn't surprised to see Elon here at all.

These two were likely to become competitors with one another.

"I didn't expect to see you here." Elon reached out his hand and said, "This is a lucky day."

After Mark Zuckerberg shook Elon's hand, he spoke.

"Same here, nice to see you."

Elon: "It looks like you're not in a good mood."

Mark said, "Aren't you the same?"

People in Los Angeles had already begun protesting against the Phantom system. Even though Mark Zuckerberg wanted to cooperate with Star Sky Technology, he had to tread carefully.

He didn't expect Star Sky Technology to not only ignore the recent public controversies but host a product launch instead.

This really surprised him.

Hosting a launch conference meant they would undoubtedly be at the center of public attention.

The reporters would definitely not let them off the hook easily.

At least not the foreign reporters.

"Haha, I'm doing fine," Elon smiled and said. "Even though I'm interested in virtual reality technology, it's only a hobby. Maybe virtual reality is important for Facebook, but it doesn't affect Tesla and Space-X."

This was true.

For Elon Musk, this technology was only a profit-generating machine. He wasn't as desperate as Zuckerberg in getting his hands on the technology.

Mark looked at Elon's gloating face and didn't say anything. He turned around and walked toward the venue.

Elon didn't say anything. He shrugged and also walked toward the venue.

The product launch was about to begin.

One thing he had in common with Zuckerberg was that they both wanted to know what Star Sky Technology had to say...

...

The crowd gathered at the press conference.

Among the attendees were CEOs of well-known technology companies, big names from academia, or media journalists.

Chen Yushan, CEO of Star Sky Technology, walked on to the stage and announced the beginning of the product launch.

Surprisingly, this female CEO did not seem to care about the recent controversies on the Internet. Rather, she focused on the Phantom system.

There was going to be a content grading system for the virtual reality network, as well as a new experimental plan.

According to the female CEO, Star Sky Technology would establish a virtual reality network grading system, that determined the signals that the user could receive from the neural demodulator, based on the user's age and choosing.

Basically, users under the age of 18 would not be able to receive inappropriate content. Users above the age of 18, subject to local laws and regulations, could enable inappropriate content.

On the other hand, in order to improve the Phantom system machine learning algorithm and better identity-appropriate content, Star Sky Technology had announced the launch of their "Master God" plan. They were going to recruit 5-20 people from all over the world. They were going to be testers that helped the Phantom System with algorithmic deep learning.

Chen Yushan did not disclose the specific experiment plan.

After all, that wasn't the main point of the conference.

After she briefly explained the situation, she cleared her throat and spoke to the audience.

"Moreover, I understand there have been some false rumors circulating online, as well as concerns from the public.

"From a scientific perspective, virtual reality is absolutely a safe technology. It is like having a second pair of eyes, it's only a tool for us to receive external signals, it cannot replace our thoughts.

"Also, everyone has the freedom to choose to adopt this technology. As an ethical company, we serve the future of humanity, providing more choices to the people.

"The user has the right to make the final decision.

“That is our response to the false rumors about the virtual reality network. Next, let’s talk about the focus of this conference...”

Zuckerberg was sitting in the crowd. He looked at the CEO of Star Sky Technology and frowned.

This wasn’t an unusual response to public rumors.

It answered the public’s questions and provided a solution.

But is the public going to trust the technology? Will this convince other companies to accept the new reality?

It seems like I have underestimated this technology...

Honestly, he was quite pessimistic about the way Star Sky Technology handled the negative publicity.

However, the CEO on stage didn’t seem to care at all. She continued to speak, “This is our company’s development strategy.

“We will divide our global business into eight regions and establish supercomputing centers in each region, which provide virtual reality network computing services. We will expand the virtual reality network bandwidth based on the size of the supercomputing centers in each region.

“The first location of the supercomputing center has been selected to be at Jinling, China. It will provide virtual reality network computing power for East Asia.

“As for other regions, we welcome high-tech companies to join us to promote the globalization of the virtual reality network.

“Of course, if you guys are not interested, we understand.

“After all, the future doesn’t serve anyone, only a portion of people. We understand if our western friends decide to go against their own free trade policies.”

There was a commotion in the audience.

What is that supposed to mean?

Star Sky Technology does not care about the markets outside of East Asia.

They're telling the west that they don't care?

It seems like they're too cocky about their technology!

The western reporters carrying cameras were stunned.

"This is... their official response? What are they doing?"

"Are they crazy?"

The entrepreneurs in the venue were also stunned.

However, they were shocked by something else.

Elon stared at the stage, his eyes sparkled with excitement.

Even though, like Zuckerberg, he wasn't fond of the way Star Sky Technology responded to the public rumors, this was amazing news for the businessmen in the virtual reality field.

Like most Silicon Valley CEOs had speculated, Star Sky Technology did not plan on competing with the downstream industrial chain. They planned on foregoing their customer-facing business and only serve as a cloud computing provider for other companies.

This meant that if the virtual reality network came to America, companies in the Phantom ecosystem would be able to take a piece of the pie.

Maybe even a big piece.

"They are crazy..."

Zuckerberg's eyes flashed with excitement.

He finally understood what the real trump card of Star Sky Technology was.

Even though he didn't want to admit this, the Phantom system had no competition, at least in the short term. Regardless of whether or not other companies were willing to accept this reality, the Phantom system couldn't be replaced.

It was easy to stop this monopoly; they just had to ban this technology from their countries.

However, once the virtual reality network matured, American companies would want to enter this market...

Regardless, Facebook shouldn't miss this opportunity to revolutionize the Internet.

Mark Zuckerberg made up his mind. He had to get a chance to speak with Star Sky Technology after the conference.

...

After the Star Sky Technology conference, high tech companies went crazy, so did the western media outlets.

The companies were going crazy because of the announcement that Star Sky Technology was looking to find overseas partners, while the media was crazy because...

They were being ignored.

That's right.

Completely ignored.

Whether it was the criticism from well-known psychologists on the CNN show or anti-virtual reality protests on the streets of New York, Star Sky Technology seemed impervious to everything.

After the launch, Andrew, a well-known CNN reporter, expressed his resentment at Star Sky Technology's response, or rather, their lack of response. He furiously spoke into the camera.

"I have never seen such an arrogant company. They don't care about the people at all! All they care about is selling their fancy technology. From now on, I will boycott Star Sky Technology! I hope everyone will join me and defeat this evil company!"

Andrew spoke in a passionate tone.

However, ideas were beautiful, but reality was often cruel.

Star Sky Technology was not only a production company, but it was also an intellectual property company.

Obviously, it was easy to boycott Star Sky Technology...

They just had to remove the lithium-sulfur batteries from their phones and electric vehicles, refuse to use wireless charging stations, boycott the carbon-based chips made by American semiconductor companies, protest against the fusion power station in California, which used superconducting materials, and refuse to use clean nuclear energy...

That was all they had to do to remove Star Sky Technology from their lives.

After the product launch, CNN released flippant reports.

However, something happened after that, which shocked the entire western media...

Everyone was surprised.

The public opinion on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter was not what they had imagined.

The people were still protesting.

But in addition to the current protests, the newly born opinions were not supporting the boycott against some kind of evil brainwashing by Star Sky Technology.

Instead, people expressed their frustration on how Star Sky Technology didn't announce a plan to expand the virtual reality network to their countries. Users wanted this technology as soon as possible.

On the other hand, users in the East Asia region were ecstatic.

The excitement and enthusiasm completely overwhelmed the negative comments.

Even though the supercomputing center in Jinling had not been completed yet, the virtual reality network was slowly becoming a reality.

Many high-tech companies held a neutral position, and social media platforms such as Facebook had begun taking the initiative to reduce the protesters' voices.

It was as if they had reached a secret agreement with the Chinese.

However, that wasn't the real scary part.

What made the traditional western media worried, or even scared, was that the people did not care about their take on the technology.

They were losing their influence.

They were losing their credibility status.

The flocks of sheep that used to be manipulated by them were now ignoring them...

1106 Earning Money While Standing Up

"Recently, protests broke out on the United States east coast. Protesters held up signs, calling for a boycott of Star Sky Technology and other Chinese made products. According to our reporter in New York, there are more than 2,000 people protesting in Queens alone, affecting nearby traffic.

"It is worth mentioning that according to our reporter, the organizer of the protest used Apple's latest mobile phone. This phone uses the Dragon series of carbon-based chips, as well as carbon nanotubes, which use more than 20 patents that belong to Star Sky Technology. The protest organizer did not respond to our interviewer's question and instead made an unfriendly comment.

"We would like to remind everyone to stay safe and to reduce traveling. If you see any dangerous activities, call the police...

"... CTV news report."

Wang Zhengfei looked at the news report and the ridiculous reporters. He couldn't help but speak.

"Sigh, I always see Star Sky Technology on the news, I'm so jealous."

Sitting next to him was the chief product strategy officer of Huawei, Shao Yi. Shao Yi responded with a smile, “CEO Wang, there’s nothing to be jealous about, didn’t we already obtain the license for the Phantom virtual reality system?”

According to the strategic cooperation agreement between Star Sky Technology and Huawei, Star Sky Technology authorized their patents to be used by Huawei.

In exchange, Star Sky Technology would take 15% of revenue for a series of Huawei neural interface virtual reality devices. Huawei also had to use the Phantom system and adhere to Star Sky Technology’s standards.

Of course, this wasn’t just Huawei. So far, three Chinese manufacturers in the field of smart gadget production had signed similar contracts. Another large number of manufacturers were also negotiating contracts, and they were going to enter this market soon.

The only downside was that Huawei wasn’t able to sign a contract for the construction of the virtual reality network computing center.

No matter how hard they tried, Star Sky Technology had refused to outsource the Phantom system computing center. Star Sky Technology only provided Huawei with APIs that were compatible with Huawei’s ecosystem.

Obviously, Star Sky Technology wanted to control their cloud computing business, in addition to their patent management business. In the future, anyone who wanted to log onto the virtual reality network would have to connect to their servers.

One could only imagine what kind of revenue could be generated with that kind of traffic.

However, Shao Yi was content. Compared to other companies that had to pay the “Star Sky Tax”, Huawei was able to receive a lot of discounts based on their contract.

For example, Star Sky Technology promised to provide assistance to the Huawei overseas 5G network development, as well as using the Dragon series chips in their new supercomputing center.

As long as this partnership continued, they would generate more and more income.

“... I’m not jealous of that.” Wang Zhengfei shook his head at Shao Yi and said, “Think about the person sitting next to us, the representative from Verizon.”

Shao Yi thought for a second and frowned.

“... Is there a problem?”

“Not a problem. It’s just that he had an interesting expression on his face. Especially when Star Sky Technology said they planned on finding overseas partners. He looked like he just won the lottery.” Wang Zhengfei smiled and paused for a second. He then spoke in an emotional tone, “Earning money is so simple.

“It’s almost like they’re begging for others to take away their money!

“It’s like taking candy from a child!”

...

Jin Ling University.

Male dorms.

Duan Siqi woke up in the morning by an email notification. He opened his eyes and picked up his phone.

He unlocked the screen and looked at the email.

Then, he froze.

“... Respawn Team? Understanding the meaning of life? The hell is this...”

Yang Shuang, who was packing his backpack, saw him staring at his phone. He smiled and asked, “Hey bro, what are you looking at?”

“... Nothing.”

Duan Siqi put on his glasses and looked around the dorms. He tried to change the topic of conversation.

“Where is Li Mo? Where could he be so early in the morning?”

“Oh, Brother Li?” Yang Shuang said, “I heard him say yesterday that God Lu’s research project has made progress. He’s been going to God Lu’s office every day; he’s even skipping classes.”

No wonder I haven’t seen him in my lectures, he’s at Academician Lu’s office.

Duan Siqi couldn’t help but feel jealous.

He would rather join Academician Lu’s research project than become Academician Lu’s little “experiment rat”.

Of course, it wasn’t like he had an IMO gold medal.

Yang Shuang finished packing his backpack. He looked at Duan Siqi and spoke.

“Bro, I’m going to the library, are you coming?”

“F*ck, give me a second, I’ll come.”

Duan Siqi climbed down from the bunk bed and went into the bathroom. He brushed his teeth and washed his face. Then stuffed some textbooks into a backpack.

He looked at Li Mo’s empty desk and sighed. He tried to cheer himself up.

I have to start working hard.

After all, him being a beta tester was just a side hustle; he never thought about working in the gaming industry.

But...

I guess I can do both academia and gaming.

He looked at his email and saw the strange invitation letter. He paused for a second before clicking the “yes” button.

After a while, he received a notification saying “application successful”, telling him to “upload your resume and report to Star Sky Technology”.

Duan Siqi had a strange look on his face.

I'll do that after I get back from the library.

All he wanted to do was study; he didn't want to do anything else.

On the other hand, a series of cheers and exclams were heard inside an office at the mathematics department building.

The person that made these cheers were none other than Schultz himself.

Schultz, Faltings, and Perelman all looked astonished.

No one could have imagined this.

No one expected this.

Only a week had gone by.

They already overcame their biggest bottleneck...

Scholar's Advanced Technological System - Chapter 1107 - Need an Outstanding Brain -

1107 Need an Outstanding Brain

"Amazing..."

The office in the Jin Ling University mathematics department.

Schultz stood in front of four whiteboards with a look of disbelief on his face.

Even though he knew Lu Zhou was good at solving proof-type mathematical problems, seeing it with his own eyes was still shocking.

During the month he was working in this research project, he and Perelman often talked about solving a complex proposition. But out of nowhere, Lu Zhou

listed three possible proof ideas on the whiteboard and even tried solving the problem using one of the ideas.

He prided himself on his calculation and thinking abilities.

Otherwise, he wouldn't have won three IMO gold medals.

But even then, when he witnessed Lu Zhou's computation abilities, he was shocked.

When he was still trying to use one of the possible pathways to solve the proposition, Lu Zhou was already able to give a conclusive result on the proposition.

However, this wasn't the whole story.

Proving a mathematical conjecture in a week.

Completely changing his knowledge of algebraic geometry...

As well as everyone's knowledge of algebraic geometry...

Schultz stared at the proof process on the whiteboard. After a while, he looked at Lu Zhou and said, "Did you install a computer chip in your head or something?"

Lu Zhou put away the marker and said, "... Why do you say that?"

"... Because your calculation speed is beyond incredible," Schultz said. "Even I have to take some time to solve these problems... Seriously, do you not need a draft paper?"

Lu Zhou said, "Not all problems require a draft paper. Some problems can be solved by mathematical intuition. Thinking about abstract problems can have unexpected results... Of course, if the calculation is large, most of the time I write on draft papers. Maybe you didn't notice."

Schultz coughed and said, "Okay, maybe you were writing so fast I couldn't see."

Lu Zhou: "Thanks, and if I ever put a chip in my brain, I'll give you one as well."

Faltings looked at the whiteboard and said, "Let's continue."

Lu Zhou nodded and spoke.

"... As shown from above, the Beilinson-Bloch-Kato conjecture is valid, which means, $\text{rank}(K_2(E))=1+\text{spl}(E)$.

Faltings looked at the calculations on the whiteboard and said, "From this, we get a general cohomology theory, which can be applied to the Abel Jacobi theorem."

"Correct, this is exactly what we needed to solve the problem!"

Lu Zhou snapped his fingers and looked at the whiteboard as he said, "We have already extracted the numbers and shapes in terms of motive theory and Langlands program, so all we have to do now is combine the two."

The ultimate proposition since the era of Archimedes!

The holy grail that had stood for thousands of years.

Everyone held their breath.

The students and assistants watched the masters work...

The silence lasted for five minutes or so.

Faltings looked at Lu Zhou and spoke.

"It doesn't look like this can be solved by usual methods."

"It seems that you have also noticed."

"... I suggest using the Princeton method to solve it."

"I had the same idea."

Perelman didn't understand what they were talking about, but Schultz seemed to understand. Chen Yang, on the other hand, hesitated for a second and asked, "What is the Princeton method?"

“It’s to do independent research and discuss with others occasionally.” Schultz smiled and said, “For talented individuals, working on groundbreaking problems with others often decreases efficiency.”

Lu Zhou nodded and spoke in a serious manner.

“Correct. The framework has already been established, the rest is all groundbreaking work. This part cannot be done by collaboration. I propose to hold meetings and exchange opinions on a weekly or monthly basis. The rest of the time... should be allocated to independent research.”

Their research had far deviated from the initial framework.

What they needed to solve this problem wasn’t a group of smart people, but one individually outstanding person... and a moment of inspiration.

Not only did this inspiration break through the temporary darkness, but it would change science forever, illuminating civilization.

This was why people said mathematicians were individual heroes.

Because without the light of mathematics, some problems would never be solved, and they would continue to stay in the dark for a long, long time.

Faltings nodded and spoke.

“I have some things to do at the Fritz Haber Institute, I’ll return mid next month... Maybe the end of the month. I’ll come back here, and we’ll have a meeting.”

“Then I might as well go back to the University of Bonn.” Schultz smiled and said, “I can’t just leave my students alone, I need to find something for them to do. Maybe they can come up with interesting ideas.”

Lu Zhou looked at Perelman and asked, “What about you?”

Without thinking, Perelman said, “I told my parents that I’ll go back after I solve this problem. I don’t have anything else to do, so I’ll just stay here.”

You might as well just move your parents to Jin Ling.

In the end, Lu Zhou didn’t say this out loud.

Even though it was a good suggestion, it was none of his business.

This reminded Lu Zhou of his own parents.

This was just like how his parents were still unwilling to move to Jin Ling. Old people became attached to their hometowns.

Lu Zhou looked at the whiteboard and spoke.

“... I plan on publishing the proof on the Beilinson-Bloch-Kato conjecture to the Future Mathematics journal, is that fine?”

Everyone in the office looked at each other.

“Sure...” Schultz shook his head and said, “You did the proof basically on your own, so you decide... However, I prefer *Inventiones Mathematicae*.”

Faltings nodded.

“I agree with Schlutz.”

Chapter 1108 Unifying Old Methods

After Lu Zhou talked with his teammates, he decided to publish the proof of the Beilinson-Bloch-Kato conjecture in the “Future Mathematics” journal.

While the paper was in the review process, its preprint was uploaded to arXiv.

Even though the Beilinson-Bloch-Kato conjecture wasn't as famous as Riemann's hypothesis or Goldbach's conjecture, being able to connect high-dimensional K-groups with analytical invariants of the elliptic curve E gave it a special meaning in the field of algebraic geometry and number theory.

Algebraic geometry was the branch of mathematics that had the most influential researchers, so this preprint immediately attracted a considerable amount of attention.

Not just because of the Beilinson-Bloch-Kato conjecture itself.

But also because the person who solved this conjecture was Professor Lu, the one who proved Riemann's hypothesis at the International Congress of Mathematicians...

Princeton Institute for Advanced Study.

The cafe on the first floor.

Professor Witten was sitting by a window drinking coffee. He spoke to Professor Deligne, who was reading a paper in his hand.

"The Lunar Hadron Collider has already been completed. Apparently, the first experiment begins in December. I guess I'll have to make a long-distance trip when the time comes."

Deligne asked casually, "Oh, looks like there's a chance to verify your theory?"

With a coffee in his hand, Witten smiled and shook his head.

"Not yet, but this is good news for the standard model. We'll be able to reveal the secrets of the universe... Speaking of which, what are you reading?"

Deligne noticed Witten's look of curiosity. He pushed the glasses up the bridge of his nose and smirked, which was a rare sight for a serious man like him.

"It's a proof of the Beilinson-Bloch-Kato conjecture... It seems like their research is progressing."

Witten: "What research?"

"Lu Zhou and his quest to unify algebra and geometry."

When Witten heard this, he was shocked. He spoke after a moment of silence.

"That is ridiculous... When did he start this research project?"

As a Fields Medal-winning physicist, he knew more about mathematics than most scientists.

Unifying old methods.

When analytical geometry was first discovered, people combined algebraic problems using Cartesian coordinates. This led to the rapid development of science and technology, particularly in physics, astronomy, and engineering.

And this also began a new era of mathematics.

“He started working on this after he solved Riemann’s hypothesis, but he’s probably had the idea in his mind for a long time...”

Professor Deligne flipped through the page in his hand and said, “He’s not the only one that has thought about this. My supervisor and I, as well as anyone proficient in algebra and geometry, have thought about this problem. Is there an elegant connection between algebra and geometry? That is the question. If their research is successful, then it would benefit the entire mathematics community...”

After a long silence, Professor Witten spoke.

“Looks like I can’t catch up with the times.”

Deligne: “That’s not a big deal, you’re just not in this field of research. I was also surprised when I first heard about this research project. Especially now that he has made significant in-progress results and even recruited Faltings. From what I understand, Faltings rarely leaves the Max Planck Society.”

Witten didn’t really care about Faltings.

He asked in a serious manner, “Do you think they will succeed?”

“In my opinion, it’s only a matter of time.” Deligne’s wrinkly finger adjusted his glasses and said, “Maybe I’m biased, but I feel like there’s no problem in this world he can’t solve.”

After a while, he spoke again.

“As long as the problem has a real solution.”

“Looks like you think highly of him.” Witten smiled and said, “Let’s make a bet then. Do you think he’ll be able to solve this problem before the first Lunar Hadron Collider experiment or after the first experiment?”

Deligne paused for a second. He didn’t expect his friend to ask such a weird question.

He hesitated for a bit as he contemplated. He finally spoke.

“If the first experiment is happening in December, then I would bet on it after the experiment.”

After all, there was only two months left until December.

Even though they had made good progress, it was unrealistic to think they would solve the problem in two months.

Witten: “Then I’ll bet on them solving it before the experiment.”

Professor Deligne frowned.

“You sure?”

Professor Witten smiled and said, “Why not? I feel like they will surprise us.”

If they could unify algebra and geometry, it would impact not only mathematics, but also the physics field.

Whether it was condensed matter physics or high-energy physics, the abstract meaning of numbers and shapes could help physicists understand many complicated concepts.

Perhaps it wouldn’t revolutionize the physics world, but it would definitely create new theories and methods.

People could then use these new theories to solve “old” problems.

Deligne smirked and asked, “Then what should we bet on?”

“I think you have Lu Zhou’s graduation paper on Goldbach’s conjecture.”

Witten smiled and said, “Last time I went to the Firestone Library to borrow his manuscript on the 750 GeV research, I happened to search through some of his other manuscripts and wasn’t able to find the one on Goldbach’s conjecture. Thus, you’re the only person who could have it.”

Deligne coughed and said, “Sure, I’ll wager it, I don’t care about sentimental things... Then, what do you plan on betting with?”

Witten: “How about the manuscript on M Theory?”

Professor Deligne looked at him and said, “Are you really going to wager something that might not even be correct?”

“But it might be the ultimate theory at explaining the origins of the universe...”

Witten sighed and gave up.

“Okay, what else... A while ago, I was cleaning up my house and found a bunch of my notes from when I was studying topology. There is probably something useful in there, I just haven’t organized it. It’s almost ten-textbook thick.”

Witten was an expert in Topology.

The reason he was able to win the 1990 Fields Medal was because of his research on low-dimensional topology structures and his deduction of quantum invariants.

Atiyah once commented that his achievements in mathematics had surpassed many mathematicians, while his knowledge of physics had provided him a source of inspiration and intuition for mathematics research. There was even a rumor that Atiyah had begun studying physics because of Witten.

Regardless of whether these topology notes had sentimental value, it undoubtedly had academic value.

Therefore, Professor Deligne spoke immediately.

“Deal!”

Chapter 1109 Final Stage

Lu Zhou had no idea that his project had become a betting war between two old men.

If he had known about this, he would definitely make a bet himself.

After Lu Zhou stopped Dean Qin from hosting a farewell ceremony, he and Wang Peng drove Faltings and Schultz to the airport. Then, Lu Zhou returned to his Zhongshan International mansion.

On the other hand, Schultz had gone through the airport security check and boarded the plane. He put on his seatbelt and looked outside the window, as if he was thinking about something. He saw the ground slowly disappear from his sight as he spoke.

“Time is flying by, I can’t believe I’ve stayed here for a month already.”

Professor Faltings, who was sitting next to him, wasn’t interested in talking about the passage of time. Faltings had closed his eyes and spoke.

“We have to work hard when we get back.”

Schultz smiled and said, “Of course.”

Geniuses were often proud and arrogant people.

Schlutz was one of them.

In fact, the reason he was going back wasn’t only because of his students; he could have easily contacted his students via the Internet.

The real reason...

He was certain Lu Zhou knew the real reason.

On the final stage of heroism, it wouldn’t make sense to form a hierarchy structure; there was only one person who would be remembered by history.

While the initial non-creative work had already been done.

As for who could put down the final tile, the most difficult tile...

That would depend on individual talent.

Everyone knew this.

This was a competition.

Even though Schlutz knew the odds of him winning were slim, he still wanted to give it a try.

He knew that Professor Faltings had the same idea.

Schultz felt the adrenaline rushing in his chest as he squeezed his fist.

“... This is getting me excited.”

...

The plane back to Germany was lost in the sky.

Lu Zhou, who was back home, was sitting in his study room.

Just like Professor Schultz, Lu Zhou was also full of adrenaline.

However, it was for a different reason.

“Finally, this is the last step...”

Lu Zhou looked at the draft papers on his table and the fully-written whiteboards next to his bookshelves. He took a deep breath and smirked.

There was only one step left to unify algebra and geometry.

After that, he would enter the world of level 10 mathematics.

According to the rewards of the legendary mission, the Void Memory would reveal secrets about the system.

He was full of excitement!

Lu Zhou reached out and picked up a pen. He then looked at a blank piece of draft paper and thought back to his conversations with Perelman and the others over the past month. He began thinking about this final proposition.

Abstract geometry was an insanely complicated thing.

Most people wouldn't even be able to learn geometry, much rather less do research.

After all, the abstract meaning behind numbers could be changed by modifying the number base, but the abstract form of geometry couldn't be described with just a few words and symbols.

Not only did it require creative thinking, but it also required a strong spatial imagination and an understanding of abstract concepts.

Therefore, the unification of numbers and geometry was a proposition that combined different abstract concepts.

Take the simple one-variable polynomial with an obvious geometric explanation as an example.

Its dimension was 1, which meant it was a curve. But if one considered its complex form, its dimension was two, making it a surface.

The contrary was also true.

Grothendieck's theory gave a complete framework. He believed that in some sense, integers were curves, while each point on the curve would respond to a prime number.

His theory was successful, and combined with the topology tools he created, he was able to derive many useful methods and mathematical proofs, which could solve many algebraic geometry problems.

When Witten was studying string theory, he tried to use the Jones polynomial to explain the Chern–Simons theory, which greatly inspired him.

This was the reason M-theory was born.

What Lu Zhou was doing now, was to expand this framework and extend it to the entire field of algebra and geometry, covering the Langlands program, motive theory, and even cohomology theory...

This meant the birth of a new mathematical foundation!

While Grothendieck's standard conjectures would have predicted half of the new foundation.

As for the other half, they were so complex no one dared to think about them.

[Let X be a non-singular projective cluster on the algebraic closed domain k . When we take $k \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$, we get a complex manifold $X(\mathbb{C})$...]

Lines of equations were written on the page, giving a simple outline of the proof framework.

Lu Zhou looked at the page and mumbled to himself quietly, "Abstract all cohomology into a geometrically composed set, substitute $C_q(D, k)$ corollary 4, by using the Fold method...

"The geometric figures abstraction set forms a map to n .

"... This is the most likely solution."

There was a shine in his eyes as his pen suddenly began to move.

The traces of ink were like rivers, converging onto the ocean of paper, turning into beautiful mathematical calculations.

Time quickly passed by.

Sounds of the pen gliding on the paper were heard.

Lu Zhou was in a flow state. He had totally forgotten about the passage of time or even his own existence. He was absorbed in the ocean of mathematics.

It was almost like he wasn't completing a proof.

It was almost like he was writing a symphony about the universe.

Chapter 1110 An Email With One Word

November 25th.

Rain was pouring down in North Rhine-Westphalia, almost making people worry about the Rhine river overflowing.

Situated near the Rhine riverbank was a plain-looking research institute.

After being attacked by the wind and rain, the gray-black stone bricks had deteriorated over the years. It was almost like an old man, struggling to stay alive in his later years.

Of course, the bad weather was nothing compared to what they were really worried about.

Once the center of the Bourbaki and Göttingen schools of thought, it had been doing research for the past 200 years, and likely for the next 200 years as well.

However, this was the first time...

The first time a problem had bothered them so much...

The door opened, and an old man walked into the research institute. He was drenched.

He shook off the water droplets on his raincoat and handed it to his assistant. Professor Faltings came here from his home. He rubbed his hands together and walked into a meeting room.

It had been almost a month since he returned from China.

Many things happened in the mathematical world over the past month.

The paper on the Beilinson-Bloch-Kato conjecture was published in the Future Mathematics journal, popularizing the research on the motive theory and cohomology theory.

A large number of research papers had emerged in this field, and more and more people began to believe that Grothendieck's algebraic geometry predictions were true.

Most people wanted to witness the day algebra and geometry was unified!

"Long time no see, Professor Faltings," an old man said as he looked at Faltings walking into the conference room. He smiled and reached out his hand.

"The last time I saw you was at the Blue Hall in Stockholm; it's been six years."

"Nice to see you again, Sarnak." Faltings shook his hands and glanced at his fat belly. He couldn't help but say, "Looks like you're doing well."

"I'm okay." Sarnak smiled and said, "I missed your humor."

Professor Sarnak, the former editor-in-chief of Annual Mathematics, winner of the 2014 Wolf Prize. Scholars who won a lifetime achievement award were considered world-renowned.

As for why the former editor-in-chief of Annual Mathematics was here...

He was here for the same reason Deligne was also here.

This great mathematics meeting gathered almost all of the top scholars of the Bourbaki Group.

This included Sarnak, Grothendieck's proudest student Deligne, Faltings, who was named the pope of mathematics, as well as Schultz, the scholar Faltings appointed as the one most likely to surpass him...

This meeting had been going on for three whole days.

"Now that everyone is here, let's get into the business." Faltings sat down at the conference table and looked at the rain pouring outside the window.

"Winter is coming; it's going to get cold here."

"That's true," Deligne said as he pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose. He added, "That's my least favorite part about Europe. It rains every day this time of year, and my jacket is never dry."

The meeting on the Grand Unified Theory kicked off.

The first presenter was Schultz, who reported his research on the smooth projective morphism $\mathrm{Hom}(hX, hY)$ on k clusters, confirming it to be a non-Abelian category.

This attracted the attention of all of the participants.

Everyone knew that the Abelian category was the basic framework of homology algebra. If the morphism of the smooth projective cluster k was a non-Abelian category, this disproved the method of solving the Grand Unified Theory using homology groups and algebraic topology methods.

Even though this result was frustrating, proving something was not feasible was still productive.

At the very least, now they didn't have to assume various possibilities of $\mathrm{Hom}(hX, hY)$.

The meeting lasted for two hours.

Everyone disclosed their research over the past month. Finally, the meeting came to an end.

Faltings looked at the lines of notes in his notebook and nodded with satisfaction.

At least compared to yesterday, they had made some progress.

In addition to proving that using cohomology groups and algebraic topology to study the morphisms of smooth projective clusters on k was a waste of time, by using algebraic chain theory, they successfully deduced that the category of smooth projective clusters on k was $V(k)$, proving one of Grothendieck's standard conjectures.

Normally, this result was enough for a celebration.

This wasn't just an in-progress result of the Grand Unified Theory.

It was also an in-progress of proving Grothendieck's standard conjectures.

However, no one was in the mood to celebrate. No one was even remotely happy. Instead, they began to feel a sense of urgency.

Algebraic chain theory wasn't a particularly complicated theory. Faltings knew that if they were able to figure it out, Lu Zhou must have figured it out either.

Lu Zhou hadn't published a paper in over a month.

This either meant he was in a bottleneck or there was something amazing in the works.

Faltings believed the latter was more likely.

After more than a month of hard work, he had no hope that he or Schultz could solve this proposition alone.

His only hope now was to gather the power of the entire Bourbaki Group to solve this problem, to continue the glory of the institute, and to be a lighthouse in the dark.

And if Lu Zhou really solved Grand Unified Theory...

Unlike Riemann's hypothesis, which would make thousands of propositions become theorems, the Grand Unified Theory would connect thousands of theorems in a straight line.

This achievement alone would be worth more than the sum of all the mathematical achievements of the 20th century.

And this undoubtedly would be remembered in history as the peak of mathematics...

The meeting was over.

More than a dozen participants got up and left.

Professor Faltings put away his notebook and was about to leave. However, he suddenly noticed a notification on his phone for a new email.

He tapped on the screen and picked up his phone from the desk.

When he opened the email, he froze.

The email was very short.

There was only one word.

[Finished.]

Chapter 1111 The Universe Is Perfect

[Master, what are you thinking about? :3]

Lu Zhou had been sitting there for half an hour without moving.

Xiao Ai began to wonder if its master was still alive.

Lu Zhou looked at the sun rising from the Purple Mountain in the distance. He looked at the morning mist as he spoke.

"... I'm thinking about my past."

Xiao Ai: [(•̀V•́)?]

“I really miss it.”

Lu Zhou couldn't help but sigh emotionally.

Starting with Zhou's conjecture, to proving his first mathematical proposition: the twin prime conjecture, to the proof of Polignac's conjecture, then Goldbach's conjecture, then later the Millennium Prize Problems...

He had solved so many of the world's hardest problems without even knowing it.

But now, he was taking another step forward.

And this step was farther than any step he had taken before.

Even adding up all of the propositions he had solved, including Riemann's hypothesis, wouldn't hold a candle to what he did half an hour ago.

Of course, without the foundation work done previously, he could have never gotten to where he was today.

“Grothendieck was right.

“There is a universal cohomology theory, whose motive value is in the \mathbb{Q} -category. The cohomology of any coefficient can be calculated by using the \mathbb{Z} -coefficient.

“Not only that, but all numbers can be abstracted into a point on a high-dimensional surface. All geometric images corresponding to an algebraic expression can be transformed through topology, finally returning to the same surface...

“This is a perfect universe.”

There was no longer any suspense.

All he had to do was to add the final touches.

After pausing for half an hour, he began writing again.

His pen glided smoothly on the paper.

It was as if he had done this thousands of times before. Lu Zhou quietly placed down the last brick, completing the building.

Lu Zhou originally thought that after completing something countless scholars had been dreaming of for thousands of years, he would be proud and ecstatic.

However, when this moment finally came, instead of being excited, he felt enlightened and calm.

As if this was intended to happen.

As if none of this came by surprise.

On the second line of the last page, his pen wrote down a full stop.

Lu Zhou looked at the neat line of calculations on the paper and smiled.

“Finally...”

“Maybe this will pave the way for the future.”

Now that algebra and geometry were unified in the abstract sense, one could use a simple theoretical framework to transform algebraic problems into geometric problems and to apply methods and tools across fields.

Armed with these new tools and methods, many old problems wouldn't even be considered problems anymore...

Of course, mathematics was an ever-changing field.

As the old problems were solved, new problems would be created to plague future mathematicians.

Even though he was level 10 in mathematics...

Maybe the world wouldn't be too boring for him.

Lu Zhou looked at the calculations on the paper and spent five minutes reminiscing about the past. He then sent an email to Professor Faltings and stood up from his chair.

He hadn't been outside for a long time. He almost forgot which day of the week it was.

He had to go outside, otherwise, he would become a vampire.

“Let’s go.”

The drone lying on the bookshelf began to hover, and a line of words appeared on the drone display.

[Okay, Master. Master, are you taking Xiao Ai shopping? ٭(≧▽≦*)]

“Shopping? We’re going hiking!”

[What? Hiking again... (¬¬;)]

“When you become more mature, I’ll think about taking you to a crowded place.”

Lu Zhou stretched his stiff arms and smiled. He ignored Xiao Ai’s sad emoji and walked out of his study room.

...

The Zhongshan International residential area was situated right next to the Purple Mountain. There was a pathway through the back of the suburb that led straight to the top of the mountain.

Lu Zhou had climbed to the top of the mountain on this trail before.

He put on some exercise clothes and running shoes. With a towel on his shoulder and Xiao Ai flying above him, he began jogging.

Lu Zhou greeted the backdoor entrance guard and exited his gated community. He followed the stone steps and jogged for a few kilometers before he began walking. Soon after, he came to a gazebo halfway up the mountain.

Normally, when he came here for his morning run, he would turn around at this point. However, this time, he wanted to continue walking up the mountain.

Lu Zhou went into the gazebo and was about to take a break. However, he suddenly noticed an elderly man sitting on the gazebo stone bench.

The man was wearing a tank top and drinking out of a brown teacup in his hand.

The old man noticed Lu Zhou. He smiled and spoke.

“Oh, Academician Lu, what brings you up the mountain so early in the morning?”

Even though Lu Zhou didn't know him, the old man probably knew him from the news, not to mention the old man had lived in the same gated community.

“I've been staying at home too long, so I wanted to head outside and see if I can climb to the top before the sunrise, then watch the sunrise at the top.” Lu Zhou looked at the horizon and asked, “How about you?”

“Me?” The old man paused for a second and said, “Thanks to my children, I'm retired. All I do is walk around mountains and rivers.”

He looked at the horizon and squinted.

“What a shame, looks like you won't be able to catch the sunrise at the top.”

The sun was going to rise in five minutes, and this was the most beautiful moment of the day.

It would take at least half an hour to run up to the peak of the mountain.

Lu Zhou smiled and spoke.

“Watching it here is just as good.”

The skyline was bright red, making it difficult to distinguish the clouds and the mountains.

The golden sunshine began to shower on the mountain.

The morning mist surrounding the mountain began to disappear.

The old man looked at the beautiful sight in the distance and sighed emotionally.

“Purple Mountain is beautiful, but not as beautiful as Mount Tai and Mount Heng. You young people should take advantage of your bodies and go see those strange mountains and rocks. Especially Mount Tai. The unexamined life is not worth living.”

“Unexamined life?”

Lu Zhou looked at the golden clouds, and he suddenly said, “Perhaps one does not need to climb to the top.”

The thoughts in his mind were as sudden as the sunrise.

The world of level 10 he had been pursuing for...

It turned out...

It was already in his heart...

Chapter 1112 Sound of Wind

Lu Zhou still remembered that...

At the very beginning, the system revealed to him that when all of his disciplines reaches level 10, he would unlock the world...

Which meant he could choose what the system’s “Future Era” would be like.

Lu Zhou hadn’t thought about what the future should be.

A few months ago, when he opened the golden legendary mission card, he was so excited he couldn’t sleep all night.

Now that his mathematics had reached level 10, he was already 10% on the way to the future, closer than ever before...

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and looked at the sunrise in the distance. He clenched his fist, then gently relaxed.

The feeling of excitement was real.

But as opposed to the pure excitement and adrenaline, what filled his heart was enlightenment.

It was as if he could sense what the system was trying to tell him about the so-called Future Era...

...

After Lu Zhou bid farewell to the old man on his morning walk, he turned around and went home.

Lu Zhou went to his study room on the second floor and sat down at his desk. He first checked his email.

More than an hour had passed since he sent the email, and Professor Faltings had yet to reply. Lu Zhou thought Faltings must be busy with something or didn't know what to reply with.

Lu Zhou shook his head and smiled. He leaned back in his chair and opened his laptop.

Then, he drank a bottle of the system's Energy Medicine as a celebration for his victory. He felt the fatigue fade away from his body as he began his work for today.

With Xiao Ai's assistance, Lu Zhou spent the entire afternoon converting his content on the draft paper into his computer.

The finished thesis was 40 pages long, which was more than he had expected.

In addition to the unification of algebra and geometry, this also contained a framework outline of the future of mathematics, as well as some conjectures he discovered when researching this problem.

The supplementary content alone was enough for a special issue in the Future Mathematics journal.

In fact, if he had some time, he could prove most of these propositions. He already had some brilliant ideas to solve these problems.

However, this wasn't the main theme of the paper.

After all, there were endless amounts of problems.

Instead of wasting time on unimportant problems, he would much rather spend his time on significant propositions.

As for the rudimentary problems, he would leave that to future scholars...

After Lu Zhou pressed the enter button, he leaned back on his chair.

He didn't have to wait for long.

The second his paper was uploaded, a familiar blue dialog box appeared in his sights.

[Congratulations, User, for completing the legendary mission!]

...

His paper was uploaded at noon.

For most parts of the United States, it was a bit past midnight.

The brightly lit Clay Institute formed a sharp contrast to the quiet, dark suburbs.

As a non-profit private academic institution, the main purpose of the institution was to promote and spread mathematical knowledge and to give awards and grants to potential mathematicians.

Unlike other pure mathematics research institutes that had to worry about funding, this institute seemed to worry about the opposite.

Like right now.

Director Deaton was sitting in his office. He was worried about how to get rid of money.

Ever since Riemann's hypothesis was proven at the International Congress of Mathematicians, they had been worrying about awarding the Millennium Prize Problems money.

Not because they didn't have money, but because the winner of the prize was a special person.

The Yang-Mills Equations and the Navier–Stokes equations; this guy had already solved Millennium Prize Problems!

And he was about to win another win.

Not to mention it was for Riemann's hypothesis, arguably the most valuable problem of the seven.

It was almost like this award was exclusively set up for him!

If that was the case, it would be fine.

It was just an award; it didn't have to be given to different people.

However, Professor Lu wasn't fond of accepting awards, and he was almost annoyed by them.

Not to mention that Lu Zhou wasn't lacking in fame nor money. Last time, he didn't even bother to collect his award for the Yang-Mills Equations. Instead, a physicist from Lu Zhou's institute received the award and a million-dollar check for him.

The entire Clay Institute, from the advisory committee members to the security guards, was all discussing whether or not the award should be issued...

"Enough! I am no longer the chairman of the Scientific Advisory Board. You should find a more capable scholar to take on this position! Don't always throw your problems at me!"

Professor Carlson's voice traveled from the director's office.

When he heard Director Deaton plan on throwing this responsibility to him, he was furious.

Director Deaton looked at Professor Carlson. He didn't want to bother this almost-retired old man.

However, when he thought about the status of the winner and how hard it was to give Lu Zhou an award, he couldn't help but try to persuade him.

"But our research institute is highly prestigious, and you're the only qualified person to do this. You've interacted with him before! Please! I beg you! I swear this is the last time!"

Deaton was helpless.

He never imagined so many troublesome events would happen during his time as the director.

The Millennium Prize Problems implied it would take an entire millennium to solve.

These problems were considered to be impossible to solve within the century. Who could have known that someone would solve three in such a short period of time?

If these problems weren't selected by the top scholars in various fields, he would have started to wonder if the Millennium Prize Problems were a hoax.

"Actually, this isn't as difficult as you think. The International Mathematical Union recognizes his proof, we just have to..."

Professor Carlson said angrily, "Just give him the damn award then!"

Director Deaton said, "But... But we have tried to give him two awards, and he didn't even bother coming to the second award ceremony..."

Carlson: "Then don't give him the award!"

Deaton: "But that's against the rules..."

Carlson said frantically, "For f*ck sake! Then what do you want to do!"

The roar in the office reached the corridor.

Coincidentally, a trainee assistant in his thirties was about to enter the office. However, he was alarmed by the shouting. He quietly pushed open the door and went inside.

He stared at Professor Carlson and hesitated for a while. He then gulped and spoke.

"Professor Carlson..."

Professor Carlson was in a bad mood. He looked at the new assistant he hired not long ago and said, "What? Tell me."

The assistant quickly spoke.

"A while ago, Professor Lu posted a paper on arXiv. You're following that research direction, so I received a reminder."

Professor Carlson: "I know, I'll look at it in the morning."

The assistant knew Professor Carlson would say this.

However, he didn't give up.

He knew that if he let Professor Carlson go to sleep tonight without reading the paper, he would get scolded tomorrow.

The assistant gulped and spoke.

"Actually, I read the paper abstract.

"Because of my knowledge level, I can't give you an accurate assessment of the paper. However, considering the fact that the paper is related to Riemann's hypothesis, I decided to print the paper. You can take a look if you like... No offense, but I think you'll be shocked when you read the paper."

Shocked?

What could be more shocking than Riemann's hypothesis?

Professor Carlson raised his eyebrows.

Even though his mathematics intuition told him that the new assistant was full of sh*t, he still took the printed paper from the assistant's hands and read the abstract.

Director Deaton was interested in what the assistant had to say. He leaned over and read the paper together with Carlson.

Then...

The two didn't stop reading.

The clock on the wall slowly ticked.

That was the only sound in the office.

After a minute went by, the silence in the office was broken by the two's exclams.

"Jesus Christ..."

“Oh my god...”

“This... this is...”

Professor Carlson could feel his throat getting dry. He grabbed his teacup on the table. After taking a sip, he realized his cup was empty.

“The great unification of algebra and geometry...” Director Deaton said with a raspy voice. He looked at the abstract and said in disbelief, “Does this mean, h-he did it?”

“At least that’s what he claims...”

Professor Carlson’s throat moved as if he wanted to say something. He looked back at his assistant and said, “Call the Harvard Institute of Mathematics! Contact Qiu Chengtong for me.”

“Okay!”

The assistant looked at his boss’ serious face and nodded.

However, when he was about to leave the office, Professor Carlson stopped him.

“Wait a second, did you drive here?”

“I parked in the garage... Why?”

“Forget about the call, take me to Harvard! Now!”

Professor Carlson stuffed the paper into his pocket and immediately walked out of the office.

Director Deaton immediately snapped back to reality and spoke.

“What a second, about the Riemann’s hypothesis award—”

“We’ll talk about that later! This is more important!”

Forget about Riemann’s hypothesis...

Even if one added up every single conjecture related to Riemann’s hypothesis, it wouldn’t be as important as this paper.

Professor Carlson disappeared from the office, leaving Director Deaton behind...

1113 Level 10 Mathematics!

There was something Carlson didn't know.

Which was that, while he was on his way to Harvard University, the news had already spread across the world.

Harvard, one of the world's top universities, was no exception.

The discussions began on the MathOverflow forum, which spread to major college circles and Facebook math communities.

Most people were about to fall asleep, but they were woken up by a notification or a phone call. They instantly went on their computers.

Grand Unified Theory!

The holy grail that has stood for thousands of years!

This paper is going to be recorded in history!

In fact, it wasn't just Harvard University.

Everyone from Princeton in New Jersey to Berkeley in California to the University of Bonn and Oxford on the other side of the Atlantic...

Professor Lu's 40-page paper on Grand Unified Theory set off a chain reaction.

It was like someone set off a magnitude 12 earthquake in the mathematics circle and the academic community...

...

On the other hand, across the Pacific Ocean, in Jinling.

Lu Zhou, the “initiator” behind all this, was leaning in his chair with his eyes closed. He was oblivious to the sensation caused by his paper to the entire academic community.

However, even if he knew about the impact of his paper, he wouldn’t care.

After all, this wasn’t his first time doing something like this...

Inside a pure white space, a shiny gold translucent information screen floated in front of Lu Zhou.

[Legendary mission: First step toward the future.]

[Evaluation: You have made the first step toward the future. The two dissimilar fields of algebra and geometry have never been closer together. As you can see, the language of the universe is perfect. Like a beautiful equation, it is all-encompassing.]

[Mission reward: Mathematics level +1, Void Memory b, five lucky draw tickets, 10,000 general points.]

The mission completion dialog box gradually disappeared.

An updated characteristic panel was presented in front of Lu Zhou.

[

A. Mathematics: Level 10

B. Physics: Level 7 (113,215/1.2 million)

C. Biochemistry: Level 6 (10,000/600,000)

D. Engineering: Level 6 (10,000/600,000)

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 (five lucky draw tickets)

]

The mathematics experience bar had completely disappeared.

The level 10 was like a medal, a stamp of his glory, engraved eternally in his characteristic panel.

The next step was physics...

Lu Zhou controlled the excitement in his heart and took a deep breath. He looked at his general points.

He had earned back almost all of the general points he spent on virtual reality, back to having over 20,000 general points.

If he couldn't find a worthy project to spend these points on, it would feel like he had failed in his duty as a citizen.

However, now was not the time to worry about trivial matters like this.

There were still five lucky draws waiting for him, as well as the secrets behind Void Memory b.

Without hesitating, Lu Zhou reached out and selected the prize draw button.

The virtual wheel began to spin.

Maybe the five tickets got his hopes up, or because he had lost all hope in the system, Lu Zhou didn't pray or do any kind of ritual before the lucky draw.

Lu Zhou could hear his own heart beating.

Fortunately, the system didn't disappoint him this time.

He got a "rubbish", but the four other lucky draws were "sample", two of which were even "special".

[Received: Future branded shampoo].

[Received: 30x Energy Medicine]

[Received: Random experience point card (range from 1-999,999 experience points)].

[Received: “Transcendence” X-1 smart glasses]

[Received: Golden mission card!]

When Lu Zhou looked at the awards on the information screen, he couldn't help but feel satisfied.

The Energy Medicine, the random experience points card... They were all useful items.

Especially for grinding.

Whenever he had to pull an all-nighter, the Energy Medicine was a godsend for him.

Not to mention the smart glasses.

Even though Lu Zhou didn't know what the glasses was used for, the glasses was the same brand as the quantum computer, so it shouldn't let him down.

He didn't care about the shampoo at all.

He clicked on the random experience points card in his inventory, and golden light particles began to float toward him. When the light particles exploded, 100,000 physics experience points was added to his experience bar.

Even though there was still a long way to level up, every bit counted.

Lu Zhou then immediately looked at his golden mission card.

Even though it wasn't a legendary mission card, reward missions of this kind often gave generous rewards.

However, this meant he would have to make a choice.

One was to use this mission card immediately.

The other was to continue the last part of the “Control Of Earth and Moon” mission chain, which he had ignored for more than a year.

He could get any mission from the golden mission card, while the mission chain was obviously fixed, in which he had to build a mass driver on the moon with a 50-ton ground to lunar transfer orbit capacity.

Lu Zhou looked at the golden mission card and contemplated it for a while.

This determined his work in the near future.

Should I toss a coin?

Or should I focus on aerospace engineering?

Lu Zhou thought about it for a while and made a decision. He reached out and selected the mission card.

I'll use this first.

After all, a 50-ton ground to lunar transfer orbit mass driver couldn't be built in a day or two. The Lunar Orbit Committee did not prioritize the mass driver over the Lunar Hadron Collider.

Not to mention that he wouldn't be of much help for the mass driver project.

Instead of waiting time letting other people complete the project for him, he would rather do something himself...

The pale golden particles exploded again, and a mission soon appeared on his mission panel.

[Mission: Exotic Particle]

[Description: The completion of the Lunar Hadron Collider will go down in history as a highlight of human civilization. It is akin to a huge telescope, but rather than observing the stars, it is discovering the mystery behind the stars...]

[Requirement: Discover a new particle.]

[Reward: 1 million physics experience points. 10,000 general points. Purple "legendary mission".]

Lu Zhou looked at the requirements and paused for a second. A smile appeared on his face.

Discover a new particle?

This sounds...

Interesting.

Chapter 1114 Breaking News

The day of November 25th was an ordinary day for the world.

However, this was an extraordinary day for the mathematics community.

The cafeteria at the Jin Ling University was full of people.

Students had just finished their classes, and crowds of people stood in front of restaurant lines.

Duan Siqi, as a member of the foodie army, had just finished his mathematical analysis class. He struggled as he finally escaped the crowd with his food. He sat down next to his three roommates.

It was rare to see the students of dorm 201 gathered together. Even Li Mo was here, which was a rare sight indeed.

However, Li Mo looked like he was contemplating something. He looked like he wanted to finish his meal and leave as soon as possible.

Yang Shuang was eating a bowl of rice. He made eye contact with Wu Di before asking, "Brother Li, how's your research project going?"

"Hard, too hard." Li Mo sighed and shook his head. "If only God Lu is here, he could help us plan what to do next."

"God Lu is not here? He's on a business trip?"

Li Mo shook his head.

"No, he's just on a retreat."

The person in charge of them was Chen Yang, the taciturn professor who rarely communicated with them.

As for Perelman, the epitome of an eccentric guy, he rarely took the initiative to speak even one word.

Li Mo thought about his project and felt anxious.

This was the first time he had encountered a problem he couldn't figure out. It was also the first time he had been troubled by a problem for over a month.

Duan Siqi didn't say anything; he only gave Li Mo a look of encouragement.

Suddenly, the CTV International news playing on the cafeteria TV changed scenes.

The news anchor was given a press release by a staff member. The anchor looked at the page with an astonished look.

He quickly made a professional judgment, took a deep breath, and spoke.

"We have a piece of breaking news..."

"Academician Lu, a well-known Chinese scholar, uploaded a 40-page paper to the academic website arXiv. He proved the unification of algebra and geometry, causing a huge sensation in the international mathematics community.

"According to our experts, once the paper is proven to be accurate, it will completely change the development of the mathematics field forever. It will also impact research in the natural sciences.

"So far, the International Mathematical Union has yet to comment on this matter, but we are keeping an eye on their movements..."

Li Mo dropped his chopsticks onto his plate. His mouth was wide open as he stared at the TV. He was dumbfounded.

His friends of dorm 201 were the same. Even though their reaction wasn't as strong as Li Mo, they were all staring at the TV with an amazed look on their faces.

Unifying algebra and geometry!

The Grand Unified Theory of mathematics!

Is this thing...

Really possible?

Duan Siqi initially had some doubts.

However, when he heard Lu Zhou's name in the news broadcast, all of his doubts disappeared.

"Grand Unified Theory..." Duan Siqi looked at Li Mo, who was stunned. He gulped and asked, "Isn't that... what you were researching?"

Li Mo: "... Yeah."

In fact, this wasn't something he "researched".

Something he was "still" researching.

Even last night, he was frantically grabbing his hair over this impossible proposition.

However, now...

He was still worrying about a certain detail in the blueprint, but the news was telling him the entire building was already built...

Li Mo wanted to cry.

This is ridiculous!

He didn't even tell me!

I know I'm not very useful, but I'm still a member of the research project!

Wu Di, who had yet to speak, looked at him.

"So..."

Li Mo sighed. His sorrowful eyes looked like he was deceived. He looked at the ceiling and spoke.

"... So, we're done."

Actually, Lu Zhou didn't purposely keep them in the dark.

The second he uploaded his paper to arXiv, he sent an email to several partners, sharing the joy of victory.

However, because the news was so shocking, both Perelman and Chen Yang had yet to digest what just happened. They hadn't even finished reading the paper yet.

Of course, no one told a low-level scientific researcher like Li Mo the news.

Almost immediately after the news was broadcast, the discussion on the Internet exploded.

[Unifying algebra and geometry?! (shook) (shook)]

[The f*ck? Wasn't God Lu researching Riemann's hypothesis? I—]

[Bro, is he even human, this is so unfair. (cry)]

[I'm a mathematics researcher, and I'd like to report Academician Lu for plagiarizing my research results. In 2012, I discovered the similarity between the number 0 and a circle. Please help me get justice!]

[What does unifying algebra and geometry mean? Does this mean high school textbooks are going to change?]

[Basically, he invented a new mathematical framework that links the abstract meaning of algebra and geometry. This way, tools and methods on both sides can communicate with each other. This won't affect the average person. If you want to solve a quadratic equation, using the quadratic formula is still the best choice. But for us mathematicians, this is going to be a long day... As a PhD student, please, God Lu, slow down, old man.]

[The f*ck? How dare you call God Lu an old man? You're an old man!]

[...]

Most of the people didn't understand what unifying algebra and geometry meant, and most of them forgot about most of the algebra and geometry they learned in high school. However, this didn't mean they weren't shocked by the news on the TV.

Within half an hour of the broadcast, the news was already on the trending page.

It was almost like everyone had suddenly become a mathematician.

People began to discuss what the world would be like after the unification of algebra and geometry.

In response to the people's heated discussions and concerns about this matter, Everyone Daily and CTV collaborated in a science talk show. They invited one of the leading Chinese mathematicians—Academician Xiang Huanan.

The host looked at the gray-haired old man and spoke in a respectful tone.

"Hello, Academician Xiang, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to join our show."

Academician Xiang Huanan smiled and leaned in the sofa chair. He then spoke casually.

"An old man like me, I have nothing to do anyway. Ask away."

After some small talk, the host began to talk about the main topic.

"Recently, a major event happened in the mathematics field. Academician Lu uploaded a paper to arXiv, demonstrating the unification of algebra and geometry. Many of our audiences are concerned, and they wonder what this paper means for us. What kind of impact will this have on our lives?"

Academician Xiang smiled and spoke.

"Actually, the media isn't being accurate. Academician Lu didn't totally unify algebra and geometry. Instead, he built a bridge between the two."

Host: "Bridge?"

"Yeah..." Academician Xiang nodded and said, "Just like how a cup can be used for drinking water and watering plants."

Host: "That's a creative analogy."

Academician Xiang: "Normal people don't need to learn the unified theory of algebra and geometry as it is only unified in the abstract sense. It doesn't mean the two things are necessarily the same thing. However, when necessary, we can transform algebraic problems into geometric problems and vice versa."

Host: “Oh, I see, looks like I had a misunderstanding. So this won’t affect the lives of ordinary people, is that correct?”

“Correct...” Academician Xiang nodded and said, “Only scholars in pure and applied sciences will have to study certain methods to solve technical problems. As a result, the public will feel the changes due to the scientific progress.”

“I heard you know Academician Lu?”

“Not just know...” Academician Xiang patted his thighs and said, “He was almost my student! Sigh, what a shame, I didn’t insist hard enough back then. Academician Lu Shenjian stole him from me. Fortunately, after a year of studying physics, he has returned to mathematics.”

“Well, physics isn’t so bad.” The host smiled and said, “Academician Lu has done outstanding work in physics even though his achievements are focused on materials science and mathematics.”

“You don’t get it.” Xiang Huanan waved his hand and said, “So far, all of his physics achievements can be attributed to his mathematics achievements. The biggest one is probably solving the Yang-Mills existence and mass gap and the electrostrong interaction. The former is a Millennium Prize Problem, while the latter is a generalization of the former.”

Even though this was a pedantic argument, it was true.

Remember the 750 GeV characteristic peak Lu Zhou discovered at CERN?

Even though the entire particle physics community spent a year researching the peak, they were not able to find anything.

The host didn’t understand the academic terms Academician Xiang was talking about, so he quickly shifted the conversation from academia to Lu Zhou’s personal life.

“You have mentioned that Academician Lu nearly became your student. I’m sure our audience is interested in Academician Lu’s days as a student; can you tell us more about that?”

Academician Xiang had a nostalgic look on his face.

“That’s a long story...”

Chapter 1115 Review Session

Germany.

North Rhine.

The conference room at the Max Planck Institute for Mathematics was crowded. People sat shoulder to shoulder at a meeting table.

As Faltings looked around at the participants, he felt a range of emotions.

He never expected this to happen.

The internal meeting of the Bourbaki Group, which was intended to exchange research on the Grand Unified Theory, turned into a “review session”...

It was almost like a god was playing jokes on him.

This made him both happy and worried...

The scholars sitting at the conference table were silent.

They were too shocked to think properly, nor did they know what to say...

If they wanted to express their opinion on this matter, they would have to read the paper first.

Because of this, the authoritative voices of the mathematics community had stayed quiet. Not a single well-known scholar had expressed their opinion on this matter.

“I see...”

Professor Fefferman was the first to break the silence.

He looked at the paper in his hand and grinned. He had a look of approval on his face as if he were looking at an exquisite work of art.

“The deeper and more complex the truth, the more simple the expression. The Motive, like we expected, is the common source of all types of cohomology.”

“This reminds me of Plato’s allegory of the cave. Is reality an imperfect reflection of a perfect ideal? Is it just the manifestation of the same abstract concept at different levels? Numbers and shapes are the roots of the universe, but just like the wave-particle duality, they are the same. It just depends on how we observe it.”

“This is amazing...”

Even though Professor Fefferman was not part of the Bourbaki Group, he was at this meeting.

He was originally attending a partial differential equation conference in Paris, but he suddenly heard of the amazing news.

After he briefly exchanged information with Professor Deligne through emails, he learned that the “review committee” still lacked an expert in the field of partial differential equations. Thus, he immediately came here from Paris.

He read half of the paper on his way to Germany.

But now, he had finally finished reading the remaining half.

He noticed everyone was looking at him. He placed the paper on the table and shrugged.

“Roughly speaking... I’ve finished reading the paper, and there aren’t any obvious problems.

“Don’t just look at me, I know I’m not the only one who has finished reading it... Tell me your opinions.”

Professor Deligne made eye contact with Professor Sarnak. After a moment of silence, Deligne spoke.

“You go first. He was my student, so it’s hard for me to make an unbiased judgment.”

“So you’re passing the buck to me?” Professor Sarnak sighed as he took off his glasses.

“For a major proposition like this, I can’t immediately give an evaluation without reading over it a few times. But if you insist...”

He cleared his throat and spoke in a serious tone.

“Honestly speaking, I’m stunned.

“Not just because of his understanding of the Langlands program and the motive theory, but also his application of various mathematical tools in different fields... I didn’t expect to see this within my lifetime.

“I won’t comment on the completeness of his argumentation proof, but the value of the mathematical methods and frameworks he put forward in the paper might have surpassed all of the achievements we have made in the field of algebraic geometry.

“This is more like a book than a paper. This will replace the Elements of Algebraic Geometry as the new bible... No, the bible is grounded on belief, and this is objective truth; this is like the code to the universe.”

Everyone at the conference table looked surprised.

Especially Professor Deligne; he was speechless.

Deligne had been working at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study for a long time, and he knew Sarnak very well.

It was extremely rare for Sarnak to give this kind of evaluation to anyone.

Obviously, this was more than just a nod of approval.

Professor Faltings opened his mouth and spoke.

“Replacing Elements of Algebraic Geometry... Isn’t that a bit extreme?”

Elements of Algebraic Geometry, Grothendieck’s book.

Even though the name sounded like a university textbook or lecture notes, it was actually the sample of modern algebraic geometry, which was regarded as a bible by scholars in its respective field of research.

Regardless, it was a bit too extreme to compare an unverified paper with Professor Grothendieck’s biggest achievement.

At least that was what Faltings thought.

Sarnak shook his head and said, “It’s not extreme at all. In fact, I’m being conservative. The influence of this paper is comparable to Euclid’s Elements... But it is too early to debate about this. Let’s wait and see, someone will prove me right in the future.”

Whispers were heard around the conference table.

Some people agreed with Professor Sarnak, while others thought he was exaggerating.

One thing they all agreed on was that Lu Zhou created an earthshattering paper.

Regardless of whether they could equate this paper with another history work of mathematics, this paper was destined to revolutionize mathematics.

“This paper...” Schultz looked at the copy in his hand and said, “I can’t make a conclusion straight away. I have to do some research, also...”

He paused for a second and spoke.

“Isn’t it kind of informal to post a major mathematics proposition to arXiv? We should at least have a report conference.”

“I agree.” Professor Deligne nodded and said, “I’ll email him and tell him to do so.”

“Looks like we’re taking a trip to Jinling again.”

Professor Fefferman looked at his watch and spoke.

“I should have just bought a ticket to Jinling instead, why did I come to Germany...”

Faltings: “...”

Schultz: “...”

Deligne: “...”

Chapter 1116 The World Through The Eyes of God

Leveling up from level 9 to level 10 wasn't as simple as changing a number on the characteristic panel.

The second Lu Zhou left the system space, he felt like he was just slapped in the back of his head; he nearly fainted.

The sensation didn't stop there.

He felt a wave of sensations pouring down his cerebral cortex. A fiery ripple of heat rose from the back of his neck, crawling to the front of his face.

The sensation lasted for around five minutes. After the pain was gone, his back was soaking wet.

When Lu Zhou opened his eyes, the world had changed.

The trees were no longer trees, they were a growing collection of Mandelbrot sets, and the clouds were no longer clouds, they were Calabi–Yau manifolds.

Perhaps the object themselves didn't change, but in his eyes, they had transformed into mathematical concepts.

Is this the meaning of the universe?

I feel this in my soul.

“... Is this what the world is like, in the eye of the gods?”

Lu Zhou thought of himself as an atheist.

But now, he wasn't sure if anyone else in the world saw the universe in the same way as him.

His retina seemed to have become a filter, filtering out the chaos, leaving behind only order.

The world is beautiful.

Lu Zhou sat motionlessly at his desk, staring at the world around him. He sat there for an entire afternoon.

It wasn't until Xiao Ai reminded him to eat dinner that he snapped back to reality and walked out of his study room...

...

Level 10 was a paradise for mathematicians.

Of course, not everything was perfect.

Becoming extremely sensitive to numbers and geometry was somewhat annoying for Lu Zhou's life.

For someone who had obsessive-compulsive disorder, this type of sensitivity and intuition was a torture for him. Seeing the non-perpendicular toothbrush leaning in his cup, the two asymmetrical slices of bread... The details of life that he never noticed before had become difficult to ignore.

However, this problem didn't last for long.

The third day after uploading the paper, Lu Zhou had already adapted to his "level up".

On the fifth day, he no longer felt any discomfort. He even fell in love with the beauty of his surroundings.

He couldn't describe this beauty in words.

However, Lu Zhou believed that, if he was at level 10 in physics or engineering instead...

He would see the world in a different way.

Lu Zhou couldn't help but look forward to the future.

He wondered what the world would be like if he reached level 10 in physics.

Just thinking about it made him excited.

Other than adapting to the new changes in his perspective of the world, Lu Zhou didn't do much over the last few days.

On one hand, he was paying attention to the reaction and response from the mathematics community regarding his paper, and on the other hand, he was tinkering with the rewards he was given from completing the mission.

Even though he wanted to know what the Void Memory was, this was obviously not the right time.

He only had one ticket.

In order to collect the maximum amount of clues, he had to do more preparation.

The shampoo and Energy Medicine were pretty self-explanatory, and the final thing he received was the “Transcendence” X-1 glasses.

On the surface, it looked like normal glasses, similar to the ones found in optometry stores. He wasn’t able to find anything after scanning it with a metal detector.

However, after he put on the glasses and passed the retina verification, it was like he opened a door to a new world.

After he connected to the “Transcendence” X-1 server, it was like he was wearing the glasses Tony Stark gave to Spiderman.

But...

It seems underwhelming?

After playing around with it, Lu Zhou was bored.

Even though the glasses were cool, it was just a data dashboard.

The only difference between this and a brain-computer interface was that he had to control the glasses through his voice, and the glasses also tracked his eye movements.

Lu Zhou speculated that the civilization that mastered this technology had integrated AR technology into every aspect of life. Wearing the glasses and not wearing them could mean a world of difference.

But for right now...

It seemed like there was no use for this AR technology.

It's not like I can use the glasses to catch Pokemons, right? Like in Pokemon Go?

That would be ridiculous.

When he tried to connect the glasses to the experimental observation satellite independently developed and designed by Star Sky Technology, he opened another door to a new world.

When he put on the glasses, he could see the world in a bird's eye view hundreds of kilometers above the sky.

Not to mention, this was just one satellite...

If he connected to multiple satellites...

Lu Zhou held his breath and looked at the drone resting on his bookshelf.

"Xiao Ai."

Xiao Ai: [Yeah? (・∀・)]

Lu Zhou spoke with excitement.

"Let me borrow your body!"

Xiao Ai: [???

...

Jin Ling University.

Perelman walked through the corridor as his hair swayed through the air. He came to the end of the corridor and opened the door.

When he saw Lu Zhou sitting behind the desk, he sighed and walked over with a paper in his hand, which was filled with his own written comments.

When he walked closer, he paused for a second and asked, "When did you start wearing glasses?"

Lu Zhou: "Recently... It's a prescription, why?"

"Nothing... Cool."

Perelman opened his mouth and decided to change the topic of conversation. He placed the paper on the table and said, "I've read your paper... about five times."

Lu Zhou: "Did you understand it?"

Perelman nodded and said, "Most of it, but it took me a long time."

Lu Zhou looked at the paper on the desk and smiled.

"Looks like this is the part you didn't understand."

Perelman nodded. His curious facial expression told the whole story.

Lu Zhou twisted the pen in his hand and spoke.

"I understand your confusion... But you might have to wait a few days."

Perelman: "Do you have something to do?"

"Sort of..." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "A second ago, I received an email from my former supervisor, Professor Deligne. He sent me a request from the International Mathematical Union. Basically, they want me to give a detailed report on the paper."

"It is happening in a week, at Jin University."

"You can ask your questions at the report. I'll clear your confusion."

Chapter 1117 I Will Prove It Here

The entrance of Jin Ling University.

An old man looked at the young faces in the crowded streets. He suddenly sighed.

"This place has changed a lot."

This man was none other than... Qiu Chengtong, a tenured professor at Harvard, the founder of the Shuimu University mathematics center.

The person standing next to him was Xiang Huanan from the Academy of Science.

Even though he didn't come here often, because he resided in China, he often heard about Jin Ling University.

When he heard Old Qiu's voice, he smiled and spoke.

"It has changed a lot. Five years ago, they were still competing with Aurora University for the top five. Now, they are almost at the top of the country. Speaking of which, this is all thanks to Academician Lu. Whenever I talk with my friends from Aurora University, they're all jealous that they don't have a scholar like Academician Lu from their university.

"Especially since Jin Ling University has been carrying out educational reforms over the past few years. It has been largely successful, thanks to Academician Lu's support. When he first returned from Princeton, he created a talent training program for undergraduate students, and it has been adopted by universities around the country. Apparently, it's going to be nationwide in the future."

When Old Qiu heard Academician Xiang's words, he smiled and said, "If you want education to advance, what we need is a top-down transformation. It's not enough to rely on just a few great men or universities."

Old Qiu paused for a second, smiled and said, "But I think we should look forward to the future."

There were so many people devoting themselves to the great cause of education.

It wouldn't take long for the Chinese education system to flourish.

Academician Xiang smiled and said, "Let's stop waiting outside, I'm sure Old Xu is in a hurry."

"You're right." Old Qiu nodded and looked at Academician Xiang as he said, "You'll have to introduce me to him, I don't know him very well."

Academician Xiang smiled and spoke.

“Don’t worry.

“He’s been looking forward to meeting you!”

...

Ever since Lu Zhou uploaded his paper to arXiv, the atmosphere of Jin Ling University had changed.

The entire world had their attention focused on Jin Ling University.

Suddenly, Jin University had become the mathematics center of the world. The mathematics and academic community had their eyes and ears turned to this report.

Principal Xu was extremely happy.

On one hand, he was busy preparing for the report conference; on the other hand, he was ecstatic at the reputation and influence this report would bring for Jin University.

Even though they had held similar reports before, but the sum of all of the previous reports still wouldn’t be as significant as this one.

As for the reason...

This was because this report wasn’t on solving mysteries left behind by historical figures, but rather, it was on redefining the future of mathematics, influencing the entire world.

The days quickly passed by, and soon, it was the report conference day.

Scholars from all over the world gathered at the Jin Ling University new campus auditorium.

Originally, this kind of report should be held in the old campus auditorium, which was more historic and memorable. However, the number of participants exceeded the capacity of the old auditorium, and thus, the venue was set to be at the new campus gymnasium.

Once all of the preparations were done, Lu Zhou walked on the stage wearing a suit.

He looked at the crowded venue and felt emotional.

Everyone from Jin Ling University professors to his old Princeton friends, they were all gathered here at this venue, waiting for him to speak.

Honestly, he couldn't remember how many reports he had done before.

But this was undoubtedly the most important one.

This might be his final mathematics report ever...

He reached out and held the microphone.

The second he touched the microphone, the entire venue went silent.

No one was enforcing this.

No one told them to be quiet.

It was almost like they had reached a common understanding; all of them were waiting for Lu Zhou to speak.

Lu Zhou waited for a few seconds and cleared his throat before he made his opening remarks.

"Thank you all for taking the time out of your busy schedules to travel here from all over the world.

"I'd also like to thank Jin Ling University for arranging and preparing this report.

"Alright then, let's dive right into it."

Lu Zhou turned around and pressed his presentation laser pointer.

The PowerPoint changed to a slide containing the thesis abstract.

Lu Zhou looked at the empty whiteboard and picked up a marker. He began writing as he explained his Grand Unified Theory.

Everyone listened intently.

The people sitting near the back even took out their phones to zoom in on the whiteboard.

Time quickly passed by.

An hour had already gone by.

However, Lu Zhou was so immersed in the world of mathematics that he didn't notice the clock was ticking.

Just like this, three hours went by. Lu Zhou's arm and shoulder began to feel sore as he finally stopped writing.

Eight whiteboards were completely filled with writing.

Each whiteboard contained neatly written words and symbols...

"That's the Grand Unified Theory theorem."

When he heard a commotion in the crowd, he turned around and spoke in a calm voice.

"I'm sure that some of you have questions and doubts in your mind.

"This is just a summary of the paper. I will spend one hour at the end of the report to answer your questions.

"But now, I will demonstrate an application of the Grand Unified Theory.

"We say that the value of the theorem is its ability to solve problems and conjectures.

"Due to time constraints, I will only give one example.

"I hope you all watch closely."

Lu Zhou turned around and picked up the marker again.

This time...

He wrote on the ninth whiteboard.

Qiu Chengtong was sitting in the crowd, and he was confused as to what Lu Zhou planned on doing.

Professor Faltings was the same. He watched Lu Zhou's movements with a muddled look on his face.

However, their confusion didn't last for long.

When Lu Zhou wrote down the first three words, their pupils suddenly shrank.

"Grothendieck's standard conjectures?!"

Professor Deligne's eyes were wide open, and he nearly stood up from his chair.

Grothendieck's standard conjectures!

This is one of the most important propositions in algebraic geometry!

Even though it wasn't a Millennium Prize Problem, nor was it in Hilbert's 23 problems, it was actually more significant than them!

The reason why this wasn't included in those great lists of problems was that most people thought this proposition couldn't be solved in this century.

Professor Deligne and Faltings weren't the only ones that were baffled. Almost all of the scholars were stunned by Lu Zhou.

What does he mean by applying the Grand Unified Theory?

Why did he write down Grothendieck's standard conjectures?

What is he planning to do?

Maybe...

Everyone could guess what Lu Zhou was planning on doing.

However, almost everyone didn't believe Lu Zhou could solve the problem.

Lu Zhou ignored the commotion in the venue. He casually wrote down the proposition that troubled the mathematics world for decades on the whiteboard.

[Every Motive should have a direct sum decomposition, the cohomology of all orders in the given space can be represented through a direct sum of this decomposition.]

His marker stopped.

As Lu Zhou turned to face the venue, he was as cool as a cucumber, as if this was nothing out of the ordinary.

“I’m sure anyone in this field of research will be able to recognize this proposition.

“I will prove it.

“Right now.”

It was almost like Lu Zhou just dropped an atomic bomb on the mathematics community!

Chapter 1118 Is He Even Human?

Outside of the gymnasium.

A young, average-height man was running on the road with a shoulder bag on his back. Judging by the eye bags on his face, he probably didn’t sleep well last night.

However, regardless of the circumstances, he was late. Thus, he was stopped by the security guard at the gymnasium entrance.

“Hey, the gym isn’t open to the public for the next two days. Go exercise somewhere else.”

Li Mo looked at the security guard and spoke anxiously.

“I’m not here to exercise, I’m here for the report!”

The security guard gave his colleague a strange look. He then looked at the student.

“For the report? The report has been going on for two hours, you’re late.”

Li Mo: "Please, bro, let me in."

The security guard reached out his hand.

"Where is your invitation letter?"

"Invitation letter?" Li Mo paused for a second and said, "What invitation letter?"

"All of the guests need an invitation letter. We can't just let anyone in." The guard said impatiently, "If you don't have an invitation letter, don't waste my time. Even if I let you in, you won't be able to pass the security check. The security is strict here, so don't waste your time."

"But I'm Academician Lu's student!"

Li Mo blushed.

After all, he wasn't technically his "student"; it was only a verbal agreement between him and Lu Zhou.

If this wasn't an emergency, he wouldn't have pulled out the "God Lu" card.

But this was a dire situation.

"You?" The guard looked at him in disbelief and asked, "What year are you in?"

Li Mo said, "First year... But that's not the point! The point is that I'm in a hurry! I'm already two hours late, if I don't go in now, I will miss it—"

Suddenly, he heard a familiar voice come from behind.

"Why are you standing at the entrance?"

"Professor Chen?"

Even though Professor Chen was usually low-key, he was poached from the Yan University mathematics center by Professor Lu Zhou. Thus, he was quite well-known on the Jin Ling University campus.

Chen Yang looked at the two security guards and spoke.

“Do you need me?”

“No, sorry.”

Chen Yang looked at Li Mo and frowned.

“Go inside, the report is almost over.”

“Oh, right! Okay, thanks.”

Li Mo snapped back to reality and followed Professor Chen.

Li Mo glared at the two security guards with a proud look on his face.

Li Mo spoke to Chen Yang while following him.

“Um... Professor Chen.”

Chen Yang: “What?”

Li Mo asked awkwardly, “Did you wake up late as well?”

“I didn’t wake up late.” Chen Yang shook his head and said, “I didn’t sleep.”

“Didn’t sleep?!”

Chen Yang nodded and spoke.

“Well, there are still things I don’t understand about the paper... So I spent some time reading it.”

What do you mean spent some time?

The preprint has been out for two weeks!

Even though Li Mo wanted to say this out loud, he restrained himself.

The two soon walked to the security check entrance.

Professor Chen explained the situation to the security guards. After Li Mo showed his student ID and signed a registration form, he was let inside with Professor Chen.

Before coming inside, Li Mo was a little worried about not being able to find a seat. However, after he came inside, he realized the situation was different from what he had imagined.

The seats in the back row were only half full, and most of the people had left their seats. They were sitting on the ground, near the front.

Li Mo and Chen Yang sat down near the back. Li Mo quickly took out his notebook and looked at the stage.

However, after watching for a while, he couldn't understand what Lu Zhou was writing at all.

"Grand Unified Theory?" Li Mo said as he stared at the calculations on the whiteboard. He frowned and murmured, "No... doesn't seem like it."

"That's right." Chen Yang nodded and contemplated for a second. He then said, "The explanation of the Grand Unified Theory should be over by now."

"So what he's writing now is..."

"It should be the Grothendieck's standard conjectures."

Chen Yang looked at the whiteboards and squinted. He was a little shocked.

He gulped as he muttered to himself, "I knew it! My guess was correct... It is the Grothendieck's standard conjectures!"

Li Mo gulped and spoke.

"... What guess?"

Chen Yang: "Remember Corollary 2 of the Grand Unified Theory?"

Li Mo tried to remember what he read last night. He instinctively replied, "The cohomology of any coefficient can be calculated by Z-coefficient!"

"Correct!"

Chen Yang nodded. Unlike his usual flat and emotionless tone, he spoke with excitement and astonishment; his voice even trembled.

“... This is one of the core inferences of the Grand Unified Theory of algebraic geometry! We can directly deduce that the mapping $L^{(n-2i)}: A_i(X) \rightarrow A_{n-i}(X)$ is isomorphic to $(0 \leq i \leq n/2)!$ ”

When Li Mo heard this, his pupils expanded.

Even though his academic knowledge and experience were low, nor did he know how to deduce the theorem, but as an IMO gold medalist, due to his extracurricular reading, he knew what the theorem meant.

What Professor Chen was talking about, was the generalization of the Hard Lefschetz theorem!

The first part of Grothendieck's standard conjectures, the Lefschetz conjecture!

“... Professor Lu is amazing,” Chen Yang said as he stared at the person writing on stage. He was fascinated. “Last night, I thought this might happen, and this morning I saw some clues...”

Chen Yang spent the entire night thinking about the possibility of this. However, this was a piece of cake for Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou's marker glided smoothly on the whiteboard. No matter what the obstacle was, they were no match for his marker.

Nothing could stop him.

When Lu Zhou wrote down the last line of calculation, everything looked so natural for him.

[... By summarizing the above.]

[The mapping of $L^{(n-2i)}: A_i(X) \rightarrow A_{n-i}(X)$ is isomorphic to $(0 \leq i \leq n/2)$]

[Hence, the Lefschetz standard conjecture holds!]

His pen finally stopped.

The second he wrote down the last letter, he heard a commotion in the venue.

Professor Sarnak couldn't help but look at his watch.

“37 minutes!”

His voice was drowned in the crowd.

He looked at the stage in disbelief as he muttered to himself.

“Jesus Christ, is he even human?”

1119 Peak of the Human Mind!

In fact, even Lu Zhou wasn't sure if he was a human being or not.

Judging from the data of his physical examination, the high tech system was not reflected in his DNA makeup. However, his cognitive ability was far beyond the level of ordinary humans.

If he recalled correctly, when he first went to Princeton around six years ago, Professor Deligne invited him to collaborate on researching the Grothendieck's standard conjectures.

Six years had passed since then.

There had yet to be any significant progress on this problem, until now.

Now, solving it was as easy as taking a walk.

Even though the main reason for solving this problem was due to the theoretical basis the Grand Unified Theory provided, being able to draw the conclusions using the Grand Unified Theory within half an hour was still an insanely impressive feat.

Even Lu Zhou was impressed by himself.

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and tried to calm down. He stared at the line “Lefschetz standard conjecture holds!” and spoke after a moment of silence.

“Everyone knows the Grothendieck's standard conjectures can be divided into two parts. The first part is the generalization of the Hard Lefschetz theorem by Professor Grothendieck, what we know as the Lefschetz standard conjecture.”

“The second part is the Hodge standard conjecture.”

Lu Zhou frowned and pondered for a long time.

The venue was silent.

Everyone was waiting for him to continue.

Under the gaze of countless participants, Lu Zhou suddenly relaxed and spoke in a casual tone.

“Whatever.

“Even though I was just demonstrating an algebraic geometry application of the Grand Unified Theory...

“I’ve already written so much.

“Might as well finish it.”

Lu Zhou didn’t notice the surprised looks behind him, nor did he listen to the exclams of disbelief.

Lu Zhou walked to a blank whiteboard with a calm and relaxed look on his face. He stopped for a moment.

Grothendieck’s standard conjectures were some of the most profound propositions in algebraic geometry.

The beauty of the conjectures lied not only in its complexity but also in the inferences.

If Grothendieck’s standard conjectures were proven to be true, one could directly use it to deduce Weil’s conjecture. One could also infer that the Frobenius function on the cohomology group of smooth algebraic clusters was semisimple and that the algebraic cycle, homological equivalence, and numerical equivalence held a closed chain relationship.

Everyone knew this, obviously.

Not to mention all the theories that weren’t directly related to Grothendieck’s standard conjectures.

It wasn’t an exaggeration to say that these conjectures guided the future of the algebraic geometry field.

He picked up a pen and began writing on the whiteboard.

[... When $i \leq n/2$, the quadratic form X on $A^i(X) \cap \ker(L^{(n-2i+1)}) \rightarrow (-1)^i \cdot L^{(r-2i)} \otimes X$ is positive definite...

[X is the smooth projective algebraic variety over the domain k , while l is a prime number that is relatively prime to the characteristic of k , $H^i(X, \mathbb{Q}_l)$ is the i -adic cohomology group of X . The hyperplane of the X projective space intersects the sub algebraic variety of X .

[When X is an algebraic surface or a complex algebraic variety, this conjecture holds true.]

However, he wanted to prove this conjecture was true for all cases of X !

Time quickly passed by.

More and more calculations were written on the whiteboard.

The comprehension speed of the audience couldn't catch up to Lu Zhou's writing speed.

Perelman was sitting in the crowd with his arms crossed. He suddenly sat up straight and frowned at the whiteboard.

Schultz was sitting nearby, and he exclaimed in disbelief.

"He used the L^2 cohomology method to obtain a topological invariant of the compact quotient of the complete manifold. This extends the Hodge theory on the compact manifolds to non-compact manifolds!

"Jesus Christ... He is a genius!"

This was a property of the L^2 cohomology theory mentioned in the paper on discrete groups and elliptic operators published by Sir Atiyah in the Annual Mathematics in 1976.

What surprised Schultz wasn't Lu Zhou's ingenuity, but how easily Lu Zhou applied these mathematical tools.

It was like Lu Zhou knew these mathematics tools like the back of his hand.

Perelman stared at Schultz and spoke.

“Yes, obviously.”

Nearby in the venue.

Two old men sat there, staring at the whiteboard.

When Lu Zhou successfully expanded the Hodge theory on compact manifolds to non-compact manifolds, Professor Deligne suddenly broke the silence.

“What do you think?”

Faltings was sitting next to him, and he remained silent.

After 10 seconds, he shook his head.

“I need some time to think about this... Maybe I’m getting too old.”

Deligne looked at the stage with a dignified look on his face.

This was the first time he heard old man Faltings talk about his age.

Hearing the old man admit it himself was a little saddening...

On the other hand, another conversation was happening inside the venue.

Qiu Chengtong had asked a question to Professor Tao.

As an expert in a wide range of mathematics fields, he was probably one of the only people that could keep up with Lu Zhou’s speed.

He had to give it everything he got.

Even he found it challenging to keep up with Lu Zhou’s pace.

“His thinking speed is way too fast... It’s like how normal people think in the speed of cars, I’m thinking in the speed of a Space-X rocket, but he’s thinking in the speed of light. Before I catch up to his train of thought, he has already solved the proposition.”

Because Tao Zhexuan’s wife worked at NASA, he often liked to make aerospace analogies.

Old Qiu ignored Tao Zhexuan as he continued to stare at the whiteboard.

After a while, he clenched his fist and muttered, "Sensational."

...

There was no doubt that this was the most glorious moment in the history of Chinese mathematics.

No, not just Chinese mathematics.

It was the most significant moment in the history of mathematics, period.

Not only did he stand at the top of the mathematics pyramid, but he also represented the pinnacle of the human mind.

In front of the whiteboard that connected the human mind to the universe, things like nationality, race, and cultural background paled in comparison.

Trivial details like those became meaningless.

Lu Zhou wrote down the last symbol.

The venue was dead silent.

In fact, minutes ago, a handful of people knew this was going to happen.

Lu Zhou took two steps back and looked at his writing, almost like it was a piece of art.

A few minutes went by before he turned around and spoke to the silent audience.

"That's my proof of Grothendieck's standard conjectures. Quod erat demonstrandum."

The entire stadium was silent.

Not a single sound could be heard.

No one spoke.

No one clapped.

The solemn and emotional expressions were replaced by exhaustion and shock.

Lu Zhou looked at the crowd and spoke.

“The Grand Unified Theory is the subject of this report.

“The proof of the Grothendieck’s standard conjectures is only an example. I hope it inspires future explorations.

“What we witnessed together is the proof that the universe perfectly aligns with mathematical beauty.

“Are there any questions?”

The crowd stayed silent.

No one spoke.

Lu Zhou relaxed his shoulders.

It was almost like a thousand kilograms had just been lifted off his shoulders. He suddenly had a pleasant smile on his face.

The smile was nothing out of the ordinary, but it resonated with every listener’s heart.

“If there are no questions, I’m going to end the report.

“I will be here for the next three days, so if anyone has any questions, you can find me.

“Thank you.”

The applause sounded like a thunderstorm.

Completely flooding the gymnasium.

Lu Zhou could see the shock and surprise in people’s eyes.

It was almost like someone had unmuted the world.

The staff members standing on the sides of the venue, as well as the security guards, looked confused.

They obviously didn't understand what was going on.

Not everyone understood the beauty of mathematics.

However, for those that did, the beauty shocked and resonated with the deepest part of their souls.

The applause was like a song.

In the midst of the thunderous applause, Lu Zhou placed his marker on the podium, took a step back, and gently bowed. He then turned around and walked off stage.

The era of the Grothendieck's standard conjectures had ended.

From now onward, the world was entering a new era of mathematics!

Chapter 1120 Inherited

Over the last few days, the hotels near Jin Ling University had been completely booked out.

Not because of Valentine's Day or Christmas, but because of the large influx of foreign scholars.

Over the past three days, aside from eating and sleeping, Lu Zhou didn't leave the gymnasium. He spent his time in the temporarily converted report venue, answering questions from scholars about the Grand Unified Theory.

As well as some questions on Grothendieck's standard conjectures.

Honestly, Deligne didn't even know what he should be surprised about.

Even though from the moment he saw Lu Zhou's paper on Grand Unified Theory, he had a hunch that it could be used to solve Grothendieck's standard conjectures, he didn't expect this day to come so soon.

He wasn't prepared for this at all.

Lu Zhou spent two hours on stage solving this age-old proposition.

Jin Ling University campus.

After the two elderly men ate their dinner at the cafeteria, they strolled along the tree-lined path.

Professor Sarnak looked at the gymnasium nearby and spoke.

“The problem has only been around for half a century... Isn’t that a bit short?”

Deligne shook his head and spoke.

“No... That person is an exception. Any problem he solves should be treated separately.”

After all, Grothendieck’s standard conjectures had been guiding the development of algebraic geometry for half a century. Even though the speed of development was a bit too “fast”, that didn’t diminish its contribution to the algebraic geometry field.

Professor Sarnak said with a smile, “Makes sense.”

The two became quiet for different reasons. Deligne was thinking about the future of the Bourbaki school of thought, while Sarnak was thinking about the future of Princeton.

Even though they didn’t want to admit this, the center of mathematics had shifted. Ever since the “Future” mathematics journal was released, the trend had become more and more obvious.

While walking along the pathway, Professor Sarnak suddenly spoke.

“I swear that in ten years, this place will be the mathematics center of the world.”

Deligne glanced at him and spoke.

“Will it take ten years?”

Professor Sarnak awkwardly coughed and spoke.

“It should! The training of a scholar is a long process, while the training of many scholars is a generational process. Ten years is an optimistic estimate; it might take twenty years or even longer.”

Professor Deligne smiled and didn't reply.

He admitted that, in theory, Sarnak was right.

However, there was something Sarnak missed.

Which was that Lu Zhou was only thirty years old.

Strictly speaking, the golden period of a scholar's academic career was from 30 to 50 years old. Ten to twenty years was an optimistic estimate, but that didn't take into account all of the factors.

As the birthplace of the Grand Unified Theory, as long as Lu Zhou stayed in the field of algebraic geometry, scholars from Jin Ling would be at the forefront of the mathematics community.

Both Sarnak and Deligne agreed on this.

After contemplating for a while, Professor Sarnak suddenly spoke.

“We can discuss with them about a student cohort exchange.”

Professor Deligne raised his eyebrows and said, “Like a training program?”

“Yeah...” Professor Sarnak said as he looked at the undergraduate students walking nearby. He couldn't help but look jealous as he said, “It's not fair for them to have Professor Lu all to themselves.”

After thinking about it, Professor Deligne nodded.

“I'll talk to the principal then.”

On the other hand, inside the office of the dean of the mathematics department.

Dean Qin was sitting behind his desk. He stood up when he saw Old Tang walking in. He reached out his hand and smiled.

“Old Tang, what brings you here today? Come on, sit.”

“No need for the formalities!” Tang Zhiwei pushed away his hand and smiled. He sat down on the sofa and said, “Look at you! You look great; did you win the lottery?”

“What lottery, I’m busy as hell.” Dean Qin sat down on the sofa and said, “Why do you say that? Does it look like I lost weight?”

“Oh, not at all.”

Old Tang retired ever since Lu Zhou began teaching at Jin Ling University. He had been spending his days doing Tai Chi at the park, playing chess with his old buddies, and fishing at the lake. He was living a good life.

As for mathematics, apart from occasionally following the latest developments, he had barely touched it.

After all, it was a miracle that he was still sharp-witted, which was largely thanks to his career in mathematics.

However, even though prior to retirement, Old Tang was an ordinary professor, Dean Qin still had a huge amount of respect for him.

Not just because they were good friends, but also because Old Tang was Academician Lu’s mentor. Dean Qin heard that Academician Lu would bring gifts to the old professor every year.

Even the director of the Ministry of Education would have to respect Old Tang, much less a dean like him.

Dean Qin began chatting with Old Tang about trivial life matters.

Dean Qin was starting to wonder why Old Tang was visiting him. Old Tang finished his cup of tea and refilled his cup. He suddenly spoke.

“Old Qin, Jin University has been quite exciting lately.”

Dean Qin smiled and said, “Of course, otherwise, I wouldn’t be so busy.”

Old Tang smiled and said, “Oh yeah? Then I have to thank you for taking the time out of your busy day to talk with an old man like me.”

Dean Qin: “Not a problem. If you’re an old man, does that make me an old man as well?”

Old Tang: "Of course, aging is the one thing in life we can't avoid."

Dean Qin smiled and didn't say anything.

He felt like Old Tang had something to say, so he remained silent.

After Old Tang took a sip of his tea, he spoke emotionally.

"I downloaded the paper on the algebraic geometry Grand Unified Theory and read it. I have to say, after being away from the field for five years, I feel like a stranger to mathematics."

Dean Qin: "Well, you know what they say, never stop learning, because life never stops teaching."

"Yeah." Old Tang sighed and said, "We all get old one day, maybe... our time is over."

Dean Qin frowned. He was confused.

"Old Tang, what are you trying to say, just spit it out..."

Professor Tang put down the teacup and said solemnly, "I want to ask you a favor."

When Dean Qin heard this, he paused for a second.

This was the first time he heard Old Tang asking for a favor in such a serious manner.

"Yeah, what?"

"Have you heard of Principia Mathematica?"

Dean Qin: "... Of course, everyone has."

As one of the most famous works from the Bourbaki Group, Principia Mathematica was jointly written by many scholars such as Weil, Cartan, and Dieudonné. With a total of 40 volumes, it was published in the 1930s, with new content still being added today.

Even if a mathematician wasn't in the algebraic geometry field, they would have heard of this famous book, which was second only to Euclid's Elements.

“Right, of course.” Professor Tang said, “A while ago, I was bored, so I looked through the history of mathematics and found that the Bourbaki Group and the Principia Mathematica originated from the same place.”

The earliest use of the pseudonym “Bourbaki” was as one of the authors of Principia Mathematica. Bourbaki referred to a group of rigorous mathematicians, with most of them being French.

The book of Principia Mathematica was studied by the Göttingen school of thought, and its influence spread across Europe.

“... We can learn many things from the fact that the Bourbaki Group is inseparable from Principia Mathematica.

“Knowledge isn’t only about creating, but also inheriting.

“Right now, the mathematics world is standing on a crossroad. Everything beyond this is a world no one has ever seen. I propose we organize a group of promising scholars to jointly compile a book on algebraic geometry and Grand Unified Theory.”

This was similar to the Principia Mathematica book written by the Bourbaki Group.

When Dean Qin heard Professor Tang, he looked hesitant.

Over the past few days, he had thought about many things, including what kind of impact this report would have on the Jin Ling University mathematics department, as well as the future of the mathematics department. However, he never thought about something like this.

Honestly, he had no idea how powerful Jin Ling University could become.

As for writing a book on the future of mathematics...

It would be great if the book turned out to be well-written.

However, if it wasn’t well-written, wouldn’t they become a laughing stock?

“... Isn’t this a bit extreme?”

“Extreme? What school of thought isn’t extreme?” Tang Zhiwei smiled and said, “Dean Qin, even I’m not crazy yet, how come you’re becoming crazier

and crazier. We're scholars, not politicians. It is our duty to spread knowledge."

Old Tang looked at Dean Qin's hesitant expression and continued, "The Jin Ling University is different from before. Even Aurora University and Yan University have to respect us in terms of international influence. But have you noticed something? We have yet to form a real school of thought.

"This is our weakness, this is something we should focus on. How else are we going to play a role in the international academic community? Have you never thought about these things?

"But this is not your fault, you have other things to care about. Oftentimes, we use old methods to solve new problems.

"But the situation is different now! This is a once in a lifetime opportunity! If we let this go, someone else will take advantage, and we won't be the ones passing along the knowledge!"

Old Tang leaned back on the sofa and drank his tea while quietly waiting for Dean Qin to reply.

Dean Qin remained silent for a long time.

It wasn't until when the tea was cold did he finally speak.

"I'll think about it."

"Don't think about it. The older you get, the more stubborn you are. You weren't like this before." Tang Zhiwei patted his thigh and said, "I'll talk with Academician Lu."

He had never asked a single favor from his student.

However, he was doing this for the future of Chinese mathematics.

Not to mention this could benefit Lu Zhou.

Maybe Lu Zhou didn't care about his academic influence anymore.

However, it would be a shame to let this opportunity go to waste...

1121 The Decision From the International Mathematical Union

Including the questions answering sessions, this report lasted for five full days.

Even on the last day, no one was able to find a mistake in the theorem and proof.

It seemed like Lu Zhou had answered all of the questions.

Therefore, all of the doubts disappeared.

A twelve-man review committee organized by the International Mathematical Union gathered in a Jin Ling University conference room. They would give their final review of the paper.

Even though they did not represent the opinion of the entire mathematics community, they at least represented the opinion of the International Mathematical Union.

Shigefumi Mori stood up and spoke solemnly.

“Gentlemen, this is the first time we have faced such a major decision.

“I propose we decide on a vote.

“Let’s cast your votes.”

The votes were not anonymous.

If there was a single vote against the paper, the International Mathematical Union would seriously reconsider approving the paper.

The time quietly went by, and the minute hand on the wall clock had made two full rotations.

When everyone put down their vote and name on a piece of paper, the conference staff collected the votes.

The votes were tallied, and Professor Holden, the Secretary-General of the International Mathematical Union, was responsible for announcing the votes.

When the voting result was announced, Professor Shigefumi Mori was speechless.

After a while, he pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose and spoke in a trembling tone.

“This is a moment that will be recorded in history.”

What the international mathematics community received wasn't only the Grand Unified Theory.

But also the proof of the Grand Unified Theory!

This was the most significant day in the history of mathematics.

The work of the review committee was over.

A total of twelve reviewers was selected by the International Mathematical Union, two of which refrained from voting, while the remaining two voted unanimously.

This was the highest level of recognition from the mathematics community.

Not a single vote against the approval of the paper.

From this moment onward, the Grand Unified Theory would be formally accepted by the academic community.

Professor Holden, the Secretary-General of the International Mathematical Union, stood in the Jin Ling University conference hall as he solemnly announced the result to the scholars that came from all over the world.

The entire academic community went crazy...

...

The Grand Unified Theory report finally came to an end.

As reporters flocked to Jin Ling University from all over the world, scholars that came to participate in this report began to leave Jinling.

Professor Lu walked with Professor Deligne to the Jin Ling University gate.

He originally planned on sending Professor Deligne to the airport, but when Professor Deligne told Lu Zhou, he had already booked a taxi.

Professor Deligne looked at his former mentee with a look of approval.

He thought for a moment and spoke.

"I never could have imagined witnessing the Grothendieck's standard conjectures being proved. But nevertheless, you have surprised me again."

Lu Zhou smiled and spoke humbly.

"I'm honored to be able to surprise you."

"I'm the one that's honored." Deligne patted Lu Zhou on the shoulder and gave him a look of encouragement. He said, "Congratulations, I wish you the best.

"The road to the future is long."

Professor Deligne dragged his suitcase and walked toward the black Mercedes waiting for him.

Professor Faltings was watching this unfold nearby. Schultz hesitated for a moment before speaking to Faltings.

"Shouldn't we bid farewell?"

"You can, but I'm not, I have to catch a flight," Faltings said as he looked at his watch. He dragged his suitcase and began walking away.

Schultz shrugged and began waving goodbye at Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou waved back as Schlutz got in the car and disappeared.

He was about to leave when he heard a voice behind him.

"Professor Lu! Wait a second!"

Lu Zhou paused for a second and turned around.

“Professor Carlson? What a coincidence, you’re here too?”

Professor Carlson said, “How could I miss such an important report... Jesus Christ, you didn’t even notice I was here, I’m heartbroken!”

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly and asked, “What’s the hurry?”

“Actually... I might need something from you, I swear, it’s a good thing!”

Carlson sighed and cleared his throat. He then spoke in a solemn tone.

“Two months ago, we consulted the International Mathematical Union on the proof of Riemann’s hypothesis. Their opinion is that, you undoubtedly solved the problem of the century... You know, we have set up the Millennium Prize Problems prize, which is awarded by the Institut de France.”

Lu Zhou nodded.

“Okay, I’ll go collect the award when I have time.”

“Of course, if you don’t want to come, you can also donate it to...” Professor Carlson suddenly froze and said, “Wait what? What did you say?”

Lu Zhou gave him a strange look and spoke.

“I said I’ll go, why?”

Professor Carlson snapped back to reality and shook his head.

“Nothing... I’m just a bit surprised.”

“What’s so surprising.” Lu Zhou smiled as he shook his head. After a moment of silence, he said, “But that will depend on when I have time. Probably the beginning of next year, or the end of next year.”

If everything went according to plan, the Cadarache fusion power station in France would begin fusion power.

As China’s second nuclear core export to the international market, Lu Zhou most likely would take a visit.

Of course, that would also depend on if he was busy or not.

If he was too busy, he might ask someone else to visit the reactor for him.

If he wasn't, he would most likely go in person.

After all, there was an important historic relic in France he had to collect.

Professor Carlson was ecstatic.

“No problem! Just give us one month's notice!”

Chapter 1122 The Second Memory

The second the International Mathematical Union recognized the Grand Unified Theory, the news instantly spread across the planet.

The entire mathematics world was shocked at this sensational news.

Professor Tao Zhexuan's flight had yet to depart. He was waiting inside the airport when he opened his WordPress blog and posted his thoughts on the brand new paper.

Even a master's student could understand his post. This gave a chance for noob researchers to understand what exactly happened at this earth-shattering report.

Less than half an hour after the blog was published, the link spread throughout the mathematics circle like wildfire. People in the mathematics community went crazy!

On the other hand, discussions began flooding the MathOverflow forum.

Every post was about Lu Zhou and his Grand Unified Theory.

Lu Zhou had yet to give this theory an official name, so people had to borrow the name from the famous Grand Unified Theory from particle physics.

[Breaking news! The International Mathematical Union just announced in the Jin Ling University auditorium that they recognize the Grand Unified Theory!]

[Haha! That's my alma mater!]

[I knew this was going to happen. Professor Lu would never announce something unless he is 100% correct. When he announced at the International Congress of Mathematicians he was going to unify algebra and geometry as his next research project, I knew he had something up his sleeve.]

[I heard Faltings and Schultz also participated in this project?]

[They did work together on the research on the fold method, but I heard from my classmates at the University of Bonn that they did not cooperate for the last two months of the research. They decided to compete with each other...]

[I'm curious who proposed that idea.]

[Apparently, Professor Faltings did...]

[That's unlucky, Lu Zhou was able to solve the problem two months after parting ways with them... So they didn't help at all?]

[Eh, judging from Lu Zhou's report, they clearly contributed. But I agree, that's... just unfortunate for them.]

Mathematicians gossiped about the mysterious stories surrounding the Grand Unified Theory.

In addition to the “competition”, there was also the story about Perelman, the recluse that came out of nowhere.

People were curious about what motivated him to participate in the Grand Unified Theory project; they were also curious if he would return to the mathematics community or would continue his life in the St. Petersburg suburbs.

So far, according to a PhD student at Jin Ling University, Perelman had yet to leave Jinling. It was almost like Perelman was under a magical spell; he would go to the office every single day.

Putting aside the gossip and stories...

The influence of the Grand Unified Theory had spread outside the mathematics circle.

Not only did the International Mathematical Union publish the paper on their website, but even CERN, a scientific research organization focused on high energy physics, mentioned this paper in their latest press conference in an optimistic way.

In fact, mathematics and physics were closely related.

Especially from a historical perspective, every mathematical breakthrough played a crucial role in the development of physics.

Also, it wasn't just physics.

One week after the announcement by the International Mathematical Union, a portrait of Lu Zhou was posted on the cover of Times Magazine, and it was accompanied by an unusual title.

["The man of the century"- 21st Century's Most Influential Person]

In the past, honors like this were generally given to politicians, occasionally to businessmen or celebrities. It was extremely rare for a scholar to receive this title.

Not just that, but the article gave a highly positive evaluation of his work...

[... For most people, mathematics is an extremely complex discipline. Only a small number of people are able to grasp the essence of mathematics and develop it into an art.

[However, this is not the case for Lu Zhou. Mathematics is Lu Zhou's second nature.

[It's the way he is able to connect with the universe, the way to discover ground truth. Even though his work is distant from our daily lives, his research will change society and civilization forever.

[Thanks to his intellect and wisdom, the dream of the future has become a reality.

[Our civilization will fly higher than ever before.

[Mankind has crossed another mountain.

[This is the peak of the human mind.]

A broadcast began to show in North America.

Even CNN, which had a clear political bias against Lu Zhou's virtual reality experiment two months ago, had a neutral opinion on him.

They didn't praise him nor discredit him... After all, there was nothing to discredit him about.

It was rare for liars to tell the truth.

At Boston, inside a cryobiology laboratory.

Elon was sitting in a cafe. He was reading the Times Magazine in front of him when he suddenly spoke.

"If only he could stick with mathematics."

Lawrence was sitting across from him and drinking a cup of coffee. Lawrence smiled and said, "There are not enough mathematics conjectures for him to solve."

"Who cares? As long as he stays away from our business."

Lawrence smiled and said, "Oh, really? I hope he can produce more interesting things. So far, there are no conflicts in our interests. The things he has invented are quite helpful for my plans."

Elon frowned and said, "Really? I pray this guy can take a break for a while."

Lawrence spoke nonchalantly.

"Maybe you should change your way of interacting with him."

Elon shook his head and didn't reply.

Change my way of interacting with him?

If only things were that simple.

Right now, the entire Silicon Valley was in disorder, and many technology companies had shut down because of Lu Zhou.

Right now, people were not talking about the future trends. Instead, they were talking about what Lu Zhou was going to research next and how to reduce the probability of competing with Star Sky Technology.

This sounded ridiculous, but this was the reality.

The Silicon Valley entrepreneurs had to account for Professor Lu in their project risk evaluation, and they even added their analyses on Professor Lu into their funding pitch PowerPoints.

The most annoying thing was that the investors seemed to fear him the most?!

This was ridiculous!

While the entire world was talking about Professor Lu, Lu Zhou himself was in the underground laboratory at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, oblivious to the Times Magazine article about him.

Lu Zhou was standing in front of a new virtual reality device. He took a deep breath and spoke in a calm voice.

“Xiao Ai, is it ready?”

A line of text appeared on his AR glasses.

[Ready, Master! (๑•̥̥̥•̥̥̥)✧]

Lu Zhou nodded and didn't say anything. He walked over to his virtual reality device and lay on the chair.

He took off his glasses and placed them on a table. He then reached out and put on his glasses.

The time in the system space was in sync with real time. He had verified this a long time ago.

And it would take a few seconds for the virtual reality machine to boot.

So if he was correct...

Lu Zhou closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He whispered to himself, and his consciousness appeared in the pure white system space.

Without hesitating, Lu Zhou walked in front of the holographic panel and clicked on his inventory.

A purple-black sphere, surrounded by strands of smoke, quietly floated inside his inventory.

There was no item description, almost like it didn't belong there.

There was no information other than the name "Void Memory b".

Lu Zhou quietly looked at the sphere. After counting to twenty seconds, he reached out and grabbed it.

The second his hand touched the purple-black sphere, the strands of smoke suddenly began to expand as it shot out a black mist.

"Let's see what kind of secrets are behind this thing..."

This wasn't Lu Zhou's first time touching this sphere. He watched it wrap around his hand as he was slowly pulled into the darkness by the smoke...

Chapter 1123 A World of Rings

This felt the same as last time.

It was like his entire body fell into a boundless abyss. He was falling toward the edge of the universe.

Perhaps because of the huge amount of information, the "loading time" was longer this time.

Lu Zhou was almost starting to get impatient when he finally saw a spot of light approaching from the distance.

He waited as he continued to fall toward the expanding spot of light.

Suddenly, he felt a huge gravitational force pulling him toward the light source.

Lu Zhou closed his eyes as the light shone on his face.

When he opened his eyes again, the darkness was gone. And he was in an unfamiliar world.

When his feet touched the ground, the feeling of gravity was rather light.

Lu Zhou looked around. At first glance, he could tell this was probably the cabin of a spacecraft. He could see the stars outside the windows.

There were also twenty-five “people” standing nearby. They were dressed the same as him, and they were even the same height.

It looked like they were soldiers.

The exoskeleton armor on their bodies emitted a murderous vibe, and the sticks hanging across their chests appeared to be some kind of rifle guns.

For some reason, this reminded Lu Zhou of the virtual reality performance test that happened a while ago.

He had a strange look on his face.

Did I make a mistake?

“Xiao Ai...”

He didn’t get a response.

Lu Zhou frowned and felt something was off.

Maybe the virtual reality device hasn’t booted?

Or maybe it’s not synchronized with the system space?

Or maybe, the neural demodulator he made was too poor, causing it to have a weaker simulation intensity than the “high tech system”. Thus, his simple device wasn’t able to interfere with the system space at all.

This made it so that he couldn’t “cheat” in the system space.

Lu Zhou began to frown.

He had made quite a lot of preparations for this, so he didn't expect it to fail at the beginning.

"We'll see what happens..."

Lu Zhou began to carefully observe his environment, especially the well-armed soldiers.

Because of their masks, Lu Zhou couldn't see their faces. He wasn't even sure if they were humans or not. Nor did he know what language they spoke.

However, he suddenly heard a sound from the communication channel in his ear.

Fortunately, the language was Chinese.

"We're here."

After that, it felt like the spacecraft was caught in a huge gravitational field as it gently quaked.

A ray of light finally appeared out of the window.

Lu Zhou saw the most spectacular and shocking scene he had ever seen in his life.

They didn't arrive at planet Reach.

Instead...

"Welcome to the Capital of the Empire... This is the most densely populated area in the galaxy. Fortunately, there has yet to be any evidence of any extraterrestrial life visiting us."

The announcement was made in a joking way, giving the cabin a relaxing atmosphere.

Unfortunately, Lu Zhou didn't get the joke.

His attention was entirely focused on the planet outside the window.

A huge metal ring and countless different spacecraft were rotating around a relatively small star.

The civilization must have exhausted the resources from all of the surrounding planets to create a gigantic ring on the habitable orbit zone.

It was hard to imagine what kind of power they had.

Their technology far exceeded the scope of human civilization.

“This is amazing...”

He heard a chuckle come from the communication channel. It might be because he was the only one staring outside the window in awe.

Unlike the previous announcement, this voice was sent to his personal communication channel.

“Everyone that arrives at the Capital for the first time is shocked. I’ve seen plenty of people with their jaws on the floor upon their first time witnessing this magnificent city. Where are you from? Industrial planet? Agricultural planet? Don’t tell me you come from a mining station?”

Lu Zhou opened his mouth and didn’t say anything.

He had no idea how to answer this question. He didn’t expect the NPCs to act like living people. He thought he was just a bystander, living in the body of an anonymous soldier...

It seemed like the other soldiers had lost interest in him. They looked away and left him alone.

Suddenly, the cabin hatch opened. A tall and well-built soldier wearing an exoskeleton appeared in front of them.

On the other hand, he heard an announcement from the public communication channel again.

“It’s nice to meet you all. Let me introduce myself. I am Commander Ince from the C-12-27 Capital defense station.

“A month ago, the security department received intel that Professor Lane from the C-12-01 section research institute was targeted by an unidentified terrorist organization. His safety is in danger. The reason is said to be a physics experiment related to an Empire secret.

“As soldiers, it is our duty to protect the order of the Empire. It is our duty to destroy anyone that rebels against the Empire! It is our mission to escort Professor Lane from the hideout to the Empire building, as well as eliminate the possible attackers.

“The mission information is already in your mission brief. From now on, you will be under my command.

“Let’s go!”

The group of people stepped out of the spacecraft in an orderly and uniform fashion. The footsteps resonated on the metal floor.

Lu Zhou followed Commander Ince’s footsteps as he opened his mission briefing from his helmet’s AR display.

Not a lot of information was disclosed to him.

Basically, a physicist named Lane discovered an amazing secret during a physics experiment. This secret could affect the Empire for the next hundreds of years.

The codename of this secret was “Oracle”; it was impossible to tell what it was just by judging the name alone.

As for Professor Lane, who had the power to influence the future of the Empire, he was summoned by the Parliament. They wanted him to explain his findings in detail.

Even though this was an “Empire”, the system here was quite liberal.

Unfortunately, it seemed like there was a chaotic undercurrent flowing in the dark. For some reason, some people didn’t want Professor Lane to reach the parliament. They didn’t want the “Oracle” to reach the hands of the Empire government.

Professor Lane?

Who is he?

And what is the Oracle?

Also, what is his physics experiment about?

Lu Zhou made note of this name, as well as the scattered clues around him. He closed the mission briefing from his AR helmet.

His intuition told him that the physicist Lane played an important role to this Void Memory.

If he wanted to collect the information from this memory, he had to find Professor Lane and figure out what the Oracle was.

His role right now was basically a bodyguard for a VIP.

If everything went well, he should be able to meet this professor; he might even be able to talk with Lane, maybe about academic problems.

Of course, Lu Zhou didn't get his hopes up. It was unlikely the high tech system would allow him to exploit the Void Memory this way.

Even if he talked to Professor Lane all night, he wouldn't be able to extract the secrets of faster-than-light travel, as well as all the obscure physics theories. This was knowledge only an advanced civilization could master.

The spacecraft was docked.

The soldiers boarded a train-like elevator.

People around them looked surprised, and they kept their distance from the soldiers.

Lu Zhou looked anxiously around him. He could finally see what the people here looked like.

Generally speaking, they looked similar to human beings. They had two arms and two legs, and even five fingers. However, their skin was blue and their head was elongated.

Lu Zhou was curious about the similarity between these aliens and humans. Before he could stop and think about it, the elevator suddenly stopped.

"We're here."

In order to stay low-key, Lu Zhou left the elevator and blended in with his team. They arrived inside a magnificent and spacious building.

They were currently standing on the surface of the orbital “ring”.

The atmosphere here was quite lively. People came in and out of the elevator terminal, and there was a line nearby with people waiting for their luggage.

Lu Zhou looked at the world through the building windows.

With vehicles traveling in the air, the endless complex building structures looked like a maze. He couldn't help but worry about the flying vehicles colliding.

What Lu Zhou was most interested in was the type of architecture.

It seemed like the civilization had an “efficient” style of aesthetics, with most buildings being square and having a minimal amount of decoration.

Compared to the houses built with bricks on Earth, their buildings looked more like standardized modules that came from a factory assembly line. It was like they were stacked layer by layer all the way to the top.

This sounded like a weird way of construction, but it made sense.

After all, the entire world was a man-made object. All of the buildings in this ring-shaped world were akin to expansion modules on space stations.

Using primitive construction methods wouldn't make any sense.

After Lu Zhou passed through the security checkpoint, he finally realized how large the population of the Empire was.

Just walking through the crowd and out of the building would take a long time.

Lu Zhou saw a large display hanging in the terminal. He read that every section of the ring world had a Tower of Babel-like elevator. The commute between space stations and the “Ring” was done by elevators, while commuting between sub-zones was done by a vacuum tube train.

Even though this seemed insignificant, it gave Lu Zhou some understanding of the civilization's technology level.

In this civilization, food, clothing, housing, and transportation were all non-existent problems.

People did not need to work hard. As long as they were living on the Ring, they could live a life of luxury.

This was almost like a utopia...

Even though Lu Zhou was interested in this society, due to his mission, Commander Ince did not give him time to sightsee at all.

After leaving the elevator terminal, they boarded a levitating car parked at the entrance. They floated into the air and merged into the traffic. After half an hour or so, they reached their destination.

Seven black flying cars with the Empire military logo stopped in front of a square building.

Lu Zhou followed the other soldiers and got out of the car. He noticed a skinny person wearing a white coat walking out of a metal door anxiously.

"I'm being followed, someone is watching me!"

The scholar immediately ran toward Commander Ince.

The muscular soldier spoke in a calm and gentle voice.

"Don't worry, Professor Lane, you are under the protection of the Empire army. We will escort you to the Empire council."

Because of the army's reputation, it seemed like Professor Lane had calmed down. He took a deep breath and spoke.

"Let's go then..."

"Okay." Commander Ince nodded and pointed at the middle flying car as he said, "Please get in."

The VIP extraction was successful, and the group of people began flying again.

Lu Zhou wanted to sit in the same car as Professor Lane, but unfortunately, his car was near the back of the fleet.

Even though he was a little annoyed, there was nothing else he could do.

If he made any unusual movements that made him look suspicious, it would be even harder for him to be in contact with Professor Lane.

The seven flying cars levitated in the air and went on the high-speed airspace.

Lu Zhou was bored, so he passed time by looking at the scenery outside the window.

However, something happened all of a sudden. He heard a violent explosion from behind, followed by a ball of red fire.

Lu Zhou's heart dropped. He instinctively grabbed the rifle across his chest when he heard a voice come from the communication channel.

"Vehicle 7 was attacked, damage at 95%, people on board were killed.

"Team A will continue to move forward, team B will begin to descend to the ground.

"Roger that."

It was almost like this was nothing out of the ordinary; the calmness in the announcer's voice was chilling.

Lu Zhou wasn't sure if the civilization had a unique culture, or that they viewed death in a different way. The soldiers did not look angry or shocked at all. In fact, they did not seem to show the slightest of emotions at all.

However, this kind of calmness in a chaotic situation gave them the ability to fight.

The second they were attacked, it was like all of the soldiers sprung into combat mode.

Blue energy rays flew all over the sky, aimed toward the flying vehicle engines.

Faced with the intense firepower, Lu Zhou's vehicle was forced to touchdown and land on the metal ground.

"Prepare to fight back!"

The well-trained soldiers quickly left the vehicle and used the vehicle as a shield. They set up their rifles and began to fire back at the attacker.

Even though Lu Zhou didn't really want to fight, he wanted to blend in.

He tried to imitate the actions of the other soldiers and desperately tried to recall his marksman skills, which Doctor Yan had taught him. He stood in a safe spot, stuck out the gun muzzle, and pulled the trigger.

It didn't matter if he hit anyone or not.

In such a complex battlefield environment, there was no way he could hit anyone.

The blue energy rays filled the entire battlefield. It left holes in the ground and surrounding walls. However, the vehicle that served as a shield remained intact.

It was as if there was a special force shield that covered the surface of the car, dissolving the energy rays.

The gun made an overheating sound.

Lu Zhou had already emptied his magazine. He quickly copied the other soldiers and changed his ammo.

However, he suddenly saw an empty battery ejecting from his gun, and the battery was still giving off a white smoke.

His eyes squinted as he suddenly remembered something.

Haven't I...

Seen this battery before?

1124 “Black Box”

Lu Zhou believed that...

He was correct!

That battery was definitely the same battery as Debris No.1!

The second he saw the battery pop out of his rifle, energy rays began showering from the sky, covering the entire battlefield.

Lu Zhou faintly saw several stingray-shaped drones in the sky, raining down with firepower.

Before the battery landed on the ground, it was shot by the raining energy beams.

He knew that this battery was exactly the same as the Debris No.1 battery from the system...

His dream was interrupted.

Lu Zhou's legs twitched as he took off his helmet.

The drone hovering nearby flew over.

[Master! Are you okay?]

Even though Lu Zhou didn't feel any pain, dying was never comfortable. Especially since he was hit by a high-energy ray, Lu Zhou almost developed PTSD on these attack drones.

Lu Zhou sat up from his bed with a headache. He grabbed and held down Xiao Ai's drone, almost mistaking it for an attack drone.

"I'm fine... What about the data? How was the data collection? Could we observe the dream?"

This was what he cared about the most.

There were many things worth looking over in the huge ring city. If the recording was lost, it would be a shame.

Not to mention Professor Lane.

And his so-called "Oracle".

Lu Zhou's intuition told him that the Oracle might be the chance to reveal the secrets of the system.

Xiao Ai: [Everything was recorded... But there seem to be some problems.]

Lu Zhou paused for a second and frowned.

“What problems?”

Xiao Ai: [After the neural signals were converted, the recording was not in a traditional storage method, but instead, it was stored based on a special fuzzy calculation.]

Lu Zhou: “... What does that mean?”

Xiao Ai: [Basically, it is a “black box”...]

Xiao Ai spent around three minutes explaining the situation to him.

Everyone knew that the greater the information entropy, the greater the randomness, uncertainty, and the amount of information needed to determine the random variable.

On the other hand, the greater the entropy, the greater the amount of generated information.

In order to pack a large amount of information in a limited storage space, the “Void Memory” was stored using a special compression algorithm.

Normally, data was stored in hard drives in bytes, and each byte represented a digit or number, making it convenient to read and write. The disadvantage was that it took up too much storage space.

However, “Void Memory” was different. The storage form was more akin to rows of linear equations with uncertain parameters.

Different X value inputs would produce different Y value outputs. Even though the equations were short, the amount of data generated could be unimaginably large.

The benefit of this was obvious. It could store the information of an entire solar system using a small amount of storage capacity.

Of course, the disadvantages were also obvious.

The higher the degree of information uncertainty, the more difficult it was to read the information.

If someone wanted to understand the information, they would first have to solve the equations.

It would be great if they were only quadratic equations since even a high school student could solve the possible x values.

But what about higher-order polynomials?

Not only did the number of calculations increase exponentially, but the number of possible solutions also increased.

In fact, the memory given to him by the system was similar to polynomial equations.

Similar to n -ary and n -th order equations, the value of n was the dimension of the Void Memory, while the NPCs and the environment acted according to the equation logic.

Theoretically speaking, if the entire Void Memory system was copied onto Xiao Ai's server, Xiao Ai could modify the memory.

However, once the parameters of the equations were changed, it would become an entirely different equation. The dream became altered.

Therefore, if they wanted to crack the secret, they needed something similar to a codebook.

In other words, they needed the "script" or the "strategy" so that they could simulate the NPC's actions and recreate what happened.

In fact, the codebook was contained in the memory itself.

Lu Zhou was 90% certain that if he followed the "mission" and escorted Professor Lane to the Empire council, he could reveal the secrets of the Oracle.

He just had to complete the mission.

He might even be able to find some unexpected clues during the mission.

However, that was just in theory.

As a scientist, it was difficult for him to battle with well-trained soldiers. There was no way he could defeat the alien soldiers.

That would be totally unrealistic.

“What am I supposed to do!”

Lu Zhou thought about the energy beams that rained from the sky.

How the f*ck am I supposed to defeat them?

He finally sympathized with how Li Gaoliang felt when he was first testing the Phantom system. He almost felt sorry for Li Gaoliang.

Fortunately, before he entered the Void Memory, he used the neural demodulator to record his brain signals, giving him a copy of the “game”.

Otherwise, if he only had one chance at defeating this game, even Faker himself wouldn’t be able to pass.

Xiao Ai: [Master, can you let go of Xiao Ai?]

Lu Zhou looked at the drone in his hand and placed it on the table.

Xiao Ai began to fly in the air. After a moment of silence, Lu Zhou suddenly asked, “In other words, there’s no way to adjust the weapons or health in the memory?”

[Yeah... (π_π)]

“What about skipping the beginning?”

[Not possible either... The memory algorithm is too complicated. (π_π)]

“Can you change your expression?”

[Okay... ()[]]

Lu Zhou: “...”

F*ck!

You're so useless!

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and adjusted his mood. He put on the helmet and lay on the chair.

"Go again."

If the first time doesn't work, I'll go again!

Lu Zhou believed that, as long as he didn't give up and persevered, he could definitely find a way to break the game!

1125 Is This Even Possible?

However...

Ideas were beautiful, but reality was often cruel.

Lu Zhou spent an entire afternoon in his laboratory, trying to grind through the "Void Memory b" game.

However, his efforts were to no avail.

Especially the drone part, he even began to wonder if the memory ended there? What if his character died in the gun battle, and that was the end of the Void Memory.

Just like when he grabbed a Rubik's cube from the Void Memory a, the memory was instantly cut off. He didn't even have a chance to study the cube in depth.

He tried many ways of fighting in combat.

For example, shooting his teammates in the spacecraft in an attempt to gain control over the spacecraft or leaving his team when he got off the elevator. Basically, events that didn't follow the main plotline.

However, the results were quite tragic.

The first time he tried to raise his rifle at his teammates, he was instantly pushed to the ground by one of the other soldiers. The other time was even

worse. After leaving his team, he was tracked by the positioning device on his exoskeleton. He was soon shot dead by the tall and well-built captain.

Yeah, so that was the end of that.

He was shot in public; they didn't even give him a chance to go to court. He couldn't help but wonder about what kind of alien rights the advanced civilization had.

After thirty attempts, Lu Zhou was so over this torture.

However, his attempts weren't useless.

While chatting with his teammates, he was able to gain a rough understanding of this "game".

Basically, he was part of a species called "Calan".

He also learned about the origin of the Ring world.

Just like he had guessed, after a series of wars and conflicts, the Calans destroyed all of the planets in the solar system and spent 300 years to build a ring around a habitable zone. The creation of this circular residential belt was the beginning of the utopia.

Even though the Calans spent 300 years building the utopia, not all Calans had the chance to live a utopian life.

After the Ring world was built, the Empire's territory began shrinking. However, there were still a few mining and agricultural planets that provided the raw materials needed for industrial manufacturing.

Because of the political and economical inequality, living on the "Ring" was a dream for many farmers and miners.

It was similar to people in Detroit wanting to move to NYC...

That was Lu Zhou's understanding.

As for the Oracle, the soldiers didn't know much either. After countless respawns, Lu Zhou had talked to all 25 soldiers other than Commander Ince. He knew the personality and character of each soldier, but he wasn't even able to learn a single name.

As for why he didn't talk to Ince...

In fact, Lu Zhou wanted to talk to him, but the commander completely ignored him...

There was obviously a class disparity among the Calans.

The commander was far more friendly to the scholar than the soldiers.

"I can't..." Lu Zhou took off the helmet for the 31st time and gave up. He looked at the ceiling and sighed. "We have to do something else."

Even though the "game" was fun, after failing 31 times in a row, he was totally bored out of his mind.

Xiao Ai: [Master, are you okay? (T_T)]

"I'm fine."

Lu Zhou grabbed his chin and contemplated it for a while. His eyes suddenly lit up as he spoke.

"Wait a minute!"

Xiao Ai: [What? 0.0]

"Let the Respawn Team play for me!"

Lu Zhou put the helmet aside and stood up from the chair.

"Since it's just a game, we should leave it to the pros."

Lu Zhou happened to know a player. Even though he wasn't the best player on the planet, he could persevere through anything. He could lie down on the virtual reality device for an entire day and never give up.

Not to mention because of the Master God project from Star Sky Technology, he could easily find enough manpower.

If the Respawn Team couldn't defeat the game, he could release the game as a public beta test!

He didn't worry about the secret leaking out.

After all, this was just a “video game”.

No matter how serious the players took the game, they would never think of the game as being real.

Not to mention there might be someone that could extract additional information from the game.

Even if an accident happened, with Xiao Ai watching closely, Xiao Ai could easily repair any damages.

After Lu Zhou made up his mind, he left the laboratory. He returned to the surface and made a call to Chen Yushan. He told her about the new experiments.

After that, Lu Zhou stretched his back and sat in his office chair.

The sun was about to set. He was going to call Wang Peng when he suddenly received a call.

Lu Zhou saw that Professor Tang was the one calling.

Without hesitating, he picked up the phone and placed it next to his ear.

“Hello?”

“Lu Zhou, what are you doing?”

Lu Zhou smiled and spoke.

“I just finished work, what’s up?”

Professor Tang spoke awkwardly.

“Nothing special, I just wanted to ask if you were coming to campus tomorrow?”

Lu Zhou felt a little weird. He paused for a second and spoke.

“I should go, but not sure when... If you need anything, you can just tell me.”

However, it seemed like Old Tang didn’t want to talk about this over the phone.

“Let’s wait until tomorrow. When you’re on campus, remember to call me... Don’t worry, it’s nothing bad, we’ll talk in person.”

Lu Zhou: “...?”

Lu Zhou felt like he didn’t believe Old Tang.

His intuition told him that Old Tang needed something from him...

...

Ever since Duan Siqi joined the “Respawn Team”, he felt like his life was twice as exciting as before.

He wasn’t just saying that, that was what he truly believed.

The reason for this came from the Master God plan.

In other words, the so-called Master God plan was to create an intelligent program for the Phantom server that could automatically model movie scenes into the virtual reality world. It could use movies and TV shows to build a complete virtual reality world.

The task of the Respawn Team was to participate in the plot of the films as the protagonist or as a third-party member. They had to complete various tasks and discover loopholes in the virtual world.

Basically, they were training the artificial intelligence algorithm.

According to the researchers, the goal of the experiment was to improve the artificial intelligence system responsible for generating worlds for the Phantom server. This way, accidents such as the forest zombie incident wouldn’t happen again.

Regardless of whether their work was effective or not, Duan Siqi felt like the experiments were quite interesting.

From Resident Evil to The Chronicles of Narnia, from Harry Potter to Batman, he had played the role of policeman, soldier, and even a magician.

He could still remember the joy of shooting the zombies or waving his magical wand...

He knew that if they could get around the copyright issue, these games would sell through the roof and make players around the world go crazy.

Of course, what Star Sky Technology planned on doing with this technology had nothing to do with him.

However, he had wanted to start his own game company...

Star Sky Technology virtual reality research institute.

Because today was an experiment day, the break lounge was packed with people.

Before the experiment began, the members of the Respawn team were discussing what today's world might be.

The lounge door opened, and a tall and well-built man walked in.

"The new experiment plan is here."

Duan Siqi looked up and spoke curiously.

"Which movie are we in this time?"

"Not a movie." Li Gaoliang shook his head and said, "This is an original script."

Original script?

Whispers were heard in the lounge.

Most people looked intrigued.

Prior to this, the worlds they entered were all generated by an artificial intelligence algorithm, based on movies and TV shows.

Even though the worlds were interesting, they had all seen the movies and TV shows before. Even though it was fun to watch and act as the characters, there were no surprises in the plot.

Having an original script made things more interesting.

People were curious about how advanced the artificial intelligence algorithm was, thanks to their efforts. How close were they to an open beta?

Li Gaoliang looked at the crowd and spoke in a serious manner.

“This mission is said to be extremely difficult, I hope you take it seriously. Academician Lu is telling you to prepare, the experiment is going to begin in ten minutes.”

Despite Li Gaoliang warning them, none of the testers looked nervous. Instead, they were full of excitement and anticipation.

Duan Siqi was the same. He was used to Li Gaoliang’s exaggerated words.

He had no idea what “extremely difficult meant”.

That wasn’t until when the first experiment began, where he was rained on with energy beams.

F*ck sake...

Chapter 1126 Evading Responsibilities

When Lu Zhou threw the responsibility of exploring the Void Memory to a group of “addicted gamers”, he felt like he was finally free from the endless loop of being shot to death. He finally felt alive. Even though he wanted to know why Professor Lane’s Oracle was able to affect the fate of the entire Empire, he knew that this would take time.

Not to mention that there was another equally important physics experiment waiting for him in a week.

The next morning, Lu Zhou asked Wang Peng to drive him to the faculty buildings for a visit to Old Tang’s house.

Lu Zhou knocked on the door. Old Tang saw Lu Zhou at his front door and looked shocked.

“Why are you here? Didn’t I tell you to call me?”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “I can just come here, no problem.”

As his previous teacher, Lu Zhou had a lot of respect for Old Tang.

If he had never met Old Tang, his road to success might not have been as smooth as it was.

Even though he had far surpassed Professor Tang in terms of academia, he was still grateful for Professor Tang's lessons.

"You're too polite... Come on in." Old Tang looked at Lu Zhou standing at his front door and said, "I have nothing to do all day, I wanted to go outside and have a chat with you. There's no need for you to come here, you should be spending your time reading papers and teaching students, not visiting an old man like me."

"No problem, I happened to be on the way." Lu Zhou took off his shoes and said, "Speaking of which... What was the thing you talked about yesterday?"

Old Tang smiled awkwardly.

"Well, here's the thing. Sit first, I'll pour you some tea, then we can talk..."

Old Tang told Lu Zhou the whole story.

After hearing Old Tang, Lu Zhou was baffled.

Lu Zhou's guess was correct.

The reason why Old Tang was being so mysterious on the phone was that he wanted something from Lu Zhou.

"Is it necessary to publish a book? Isn't that something people do in their 50s or 60s?"

"Of course it is necessary. If we let go of this opportunity, someone else might grab it first," Old Tang said with an energetic tone. He tried his best to persuade Lu Zhou. "Also, we don't need too much from you. It's not like a textbook can be written by one person alone! I've talked with Old Qin, we'll assemble a group of young academic scholars from the mathematics department that will help write this book."

"Just do as much as you want, you don't have to delay your own work! It won't be troublesome!"

Lu Zhou was not interested in passing down his knowledge, nor was he interested in creating a school of thought.

Research was something that made him happy.

If it could bring value to the society, that would be great. When a person created enough value, the society would naturally treat them well.

As for everything else, that was secondary.

However, after Lu Zhou thought about Old Tang's words, he realized that Old Tang was making sense.

This opportunity was quite unnecessary since he was already undisputed in terms of mathematical achievements. Whether the future generation could make any mathematics breakthroughs would depend on how hard the future mathematicians work. It wouldn't matter if he wrote an academic book or not.

But as Old Tang said, even though this didn't make sense for him personally, this was a golden opportunity for the Jin Ling University mathematics department.

This book could create an entire school of thought.

In the distant future, people would spread Lu Zhou's doctrine, allowing it to influence more people.

After Lu Zhou left Old Tang's apartment, he went to Jin Ling University.

Along the way, he was thinking about how to write the academic book, as well as how to work with Dean Qin to find capable young scholars.

Lu Zhou happened to bump into Chen Yang at the stairs of the mathematics department building.

Lu Zhou suddenly had an idea. He walked up and asked, "Morning, what are you up to?"

"I just came from the cafeteria," Chen Yang said while waiting for Lu Zhou to catch up to him. He then said, "What about you?"

"I went to my former mentor's house," Lu Zhou said. "Have you read my paper on the Grand Unified Theory?"

Chen Yang nodded.

“... I have, why?”

“I might need something from you.” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “I have a task for you.”

Chen Yang put on a serious face and spoke.

“Please, tell me.”

“No need to be so nervous, it’s nothing difficult, and it should be easy for you.” Lu Zhou smiled at Chen Yang and said, “Here’s the thing, Jin Ling University plans on publishing a... theory of mathematics book, mainly regarding the Grand Unified Theory and some related theorems.”

Chen Yang frowned and said, “Theory of Mathematics?”

“Yeah, this book will be long. We haven’t decided on how many volumes yet, maybe it will be constantly updated,” Lu Zhou said. He purposely didn’t tell Chen Yang that he came up with the book title on the spot. He continued in a solemn tone, “You’re obviously capable at something like this. After thinking about it carefully, I’ve decided to entrust you on this glorious task!

“Of course, if you don’t want to, that’s fine. After all, writing a book is not easy—”

“I accept.”

Seeing how easily Chen Yang agreed, Lu Zhou almost felt sorry.

This guy is too easily persuaded.

Lu Zhou didn’t know what to say. He reached out and patted Chen Yang on the shoulder.

“I knew I selected the right person... Thank you then.”

They finished walking up the stairs.

Lu Zhou bid farewell and began walking toward his office.

However, he heard a voice from behind.

“Wait a second.”

Lu Zhou turned around and said, “Yes?”

Chen Yang suddenly remembered something, and he said, “I tried to research the method you used to prove the second part of the Grothendieck’s standard conjectures.”

Lu Zhou frowned and said, “Any new discoveries?”

“... Yes, actually.”

Chen Yang nodded and spoke.

“I think I have some ideas... about the Hodge conjecture.”

Chapter 1127 New Ideas on Hodge Conjecture

At the beginning of the year, before Lu Zhou poached Chen Yang from the Yan University mathematics center, Chen Yang had already begun researching the Hodge conjecture.

Lu Zhou still remembered seeing Chen Yang researching the hyperelliptic curve analysis method on a blackboard. Chen Yang used a very clever mathematical tool to improve this method, which was originally designed to solve Riemann’s hypothesis. This meant the hyperelliptic curve analysis method could be applied to singular complex algebraic clusters, as well as geometrical problems that were defined on the sub-clusters.

This left a good impression on Lu Zhou, which caused Lu Zhou to poach him from the Yan University mathematics center.

Almost a year had gone by since then, and there had yet to be any significant progress on the Hodge conjecture. Not to mention that Lu Zhou was busy with unifying algebra and geometry; he had totally forgotten about this.

“Come, let’s talk about it in my office.”

Lu Zhou brought Chen Yang to his office and took out a whiteboard. He then gave Chen Yang a marker.

Without wasting any time, Chen Yang pondered for a second and then drew a circle on the whiteboard. He marked it as S and wrote down a line of expressions.

“For a compact and boundless surface S , the Gaussian curvature K can be Lebesgue integrated over its entire surface.”

Chen Yang wrote as he continued speaking.

“We all know that a surface can contain more than one measurement, so I tried to change the measurement metric of S . The corresponding Gaussian curvature K also changes, but the integral value stays the same. The measurement metric has nothing to do with the Euler characteristic $X(S)$ of the surface. Using this property, we can—”

Lu Zhou looked at the calculations on the whiteboard and raised his eyebrows with interest.

“Gauss-Bonnet theorem?”

Chen Yang stopped writing and nodded.

“Correct.”

He wrote down the Gauss-Bonnet theorem.

When Lu Zhou saw this, he started to get even more intrigued.

In fact, he already had a rough idea of what Chen Yang wanted to do.

According to the properties of high-dimensional Riemann manifolds M , the Gaussian curvature could be generalized to a sectional curvature, while its value could be determined by the tensor of the Riemann curvature. The integral function was a complicated algebraic formula composed of the curvature tensor and the Gauss-Bonnet integral.

As for its integral over the entire manifold, that was determined by the Euler characteristic number $X(M)$.

By using these properties, the Hodge theory could be extended to non-compact manifolds.

These new profound mathematical relationships were found by Professor Shiing Shen Chern, one of the famous applications of the Gauss-Bonnet theorem.

By combining this with Sir Atiyah's L2 cohomology method, this conjecture might actually be solved.

Of course, it would require more in-depth research to find a complete proof.

Lu Zhou nodded with satisfaction.

Not bad.

Not bad at all.

Without them knowing it, a crowd of people had formed behind Chen Yang.

People in the office began watching closely ever since he started writing on the whiteboard.

Li Mo looked at the equations on the whiteboard and said, "Is this the legendary..."

He Changwen looked at the kid and frowned. He said, "The legendary what? Finish your sentence."

Li Mo looked at him strangely.

"The Hodge conjecture! Obviously."

He Changwen: "..."

How is that obvious?!

Well, I guess it is kind of obvious.

He Changwen couldn't help but lie to himself.

Yeah, for sure, I definitely would have recognized it.

Chen Yang stopped writing on the whiteboard, and he began to think.

Obviously, he was only halfway through this pathway. He had yet to think about where to go from here.

Professor Perelman suddenly spoke.

“This is quite an interesting pathway.”

Chen Yang looked at Perelman and asked, “When did you get here?”

“When you were about halfway done... I was coming to find Professor Lu.” Perelman paused for a second and said, “... Can I use the pen?”

Without hesitating, Chen Yang handed over the marker.

Perelman took the marker and contemplated it for a while. He then began to write down a few lines of expressions.

“Since there is also a unified algebraic geometry theory, the proof to formula 3 is trivial.

“My suggestion for the later part of the proof is that we can map the compact manifold M to its general covered manifold and get a complete non-compact manifold M .

“According to Atiyah’s theorem, if we can prove that all but the middle L_2 homology group is zero under the sectional curvature condition...”

He quickly wrote down a simple yet beautiful equation.

Chen Yang’s pupils shrank when he saw this.

He had a moment of realization as he spoke with excitement.

“This is how we can prove the Hodge conjecture!”

But here was the problem.

How could they prove that, under the sectional curvature, the L_2 homology group was zero?

The conversation abruptly stopped.

After the initial excitement, the two people fell into silence.

In the end, they looked at Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou noticed them looking at him. He blinked and spoke with a smile.

“I think your ideas are all pretty good... Even though I haven’t carefully researched this area, my intuition tells me that there’s an 80% chance this pathway will work.”

He paused for a second and continued, “This pathway is very interesting, why don’t you guys research together?”

They seemed to understand what Lu Zhou was trying to get at.

Perelman frowned and spoke.

“Are you not joining? This is an interesting problem.”

In fact, it was more than interesting.

The Hodge conjecture was a combination of the three major areas of mathematical analysis, namely topology, algebra, and geometry.

As a Millennium Prize Problem, there was no doubt about its difficulty.

To Perelman’s surprise, Lu Zhou didn’t look interested at all.

Lu Zhou: “I am interested, but I have some work to do at the ILHCRC, so I might not have any time to research mathematics.”

Perelman looked disappointed.

“That’s unfortunate.”

“Even though I can’t work on this myself, I can vouch for Professor Chen,” Lu Zhou said as he patted Chen Yang on the shoulder. He said, “He’s an excellent scholar, I’m sure you know that already. Anyway, if you two work together, I’m sure you’ll be able to solve this problem.”

Perelman disagreed with Lu Zhou’s statement about being able to solve the problem. He looked at Chen Yang and didn’t say anything. He nodded, as a signal of approving Chen Yang as his partner.

These two were both taciturn people.

Lu Zhou cleared his throat and spoke to Perelman.

“Speaking of which, is it fine for you to stay here? The unified theory of algebra and geometry has already been completed.”

“No problem.” Perelman shook his head and said, “I’ve already called my mother. She said I should do what I want to do. She doesn’t mind. I have some unfinished business here... I want to solve Hodge conjecture before going back.”

Lu Zhou was surprised that Perelman wanted to stay. He obviously couldn’t be happier, so he spoke with a smile.

“Then you can stay in your apartment, I’ll apply for an extension for you.”

Perelman nodded and spoke.

“Thank you.”

Chapter 1128 Losing Sleep Is Inevitable

Actually, when Perelman asked Lu Zhou why he didn’t participate in the project, Lu Zhou only told him one of the reasons.

In addition to not having enough time, the other reason was that he wanted to give this opportunity to other people.

In fact, halfway through Chen Yang’s writing, he already had a complete solution blueprint in his mind. When Chen Yang finished writing his ideas on the whiteboard, he already had a basic idea of how to solve this problem.

He wasn’t trying to brag, but ever since he leveled up to mathematics level 10, his mathematical intuition had reached an inhuman level.

When he upgraded up to level 10, one of the biggest changes was that no matter how abstract or complex a mathematical concept was, it was as clear as day. Most scientific research level problems were a piece of cake for him.

However, one person alone wasn’t enough to advance the mathematical field.

Solving problems wasn't the ultimate gold of mathematics, new methods and theorems are constantly being discovered. These theorems captured the essence of the universe.

If he was the one who solved all of the problems, many people would begin worshipping him. That might not be a good thing for civilization.

Everything had to follow a law of progression, and exponential growth in a short amount of time might produce gaps between generations, which could cause the mathematical field to fall into a bottleneck.

This was why Lu Zhou spent 5 pages of his 40-page thesis writing out a series of general conclusions he believed to be correct but purposely left out any detailed proofs.

He wanted to give a chance for other people to solve the problems.

He wanted other people to lose sleep over the problems.

Lu Zhou suddenly believed that maybe when Fermat wrote down Fermat's last theorem, he really did have an ingenious proof.

As for why he didn't write down the proof, only to be solved by Wiles three and a half centuries later...

Maybe Fermat was feeling the same way.

Regardless of what the true reason was, Lu Zhou knew that it wasn't because of a lack of writing paper.

...

Ever since December arrived around the corner, the weather in Jinling had gotten colder and colder.

Lu Zhou sat at his desk, drinking a hot cup of coffee made by his assistant. He browsed the latest developments in the physics community and began to feel emotional.

Over the past few years, the status of the Chinese mathematics and physics community among international academia had changed drastically.

He felt like he should at least take half of the credit.

Suddenly, the door opened, interrupting his train of thought.

He heard a familiar voice.

“Pretty nutty! Brother Lu.”

Lu Zhou looked up and saw Luo Wenxuan walking over with a smile on his face.

“I heard you made a big breakthrough again recently?”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “It’s alright, nothing big.”

“Don’t be humble. When I was coming back from Shanghai, I heard several physicists talking about how to extend your theory to particle physics. Especially string theory. When I was reading some papers, I saw a lot of opinions that the Grand Unified Theory can provide a new mathematical explanation for string theory. Apparently, someone at Stanford University is already researching this area, and I did a bit of research myself... Sigh, what a shame.”

Lu Zhou: “What’s a shame?”

“If I wasn’t occupied with my work at the ILHCRC, I would be doing this research project,” Luo Wenxuan said with a sad look on his face. He looked at Lu Zhou with a resentful look on his face.

Lu Zhou felt the hair on his body stand up.

Fortunately, he wasn’t drinking coffee; otherwise, he would definitely spill it all over his desk.

But honestly speaking, Luo Wenxuan’s complaints weren’t without warrant.

Ever since the opening of the ILHCRC headquarters in Shanghai, Lu Zhou made him Secretary-General of ILHCRC, making him tied up in Shanghai.

Even though the office was quieter without him here, Lu Zhou thought about it and realized he missed the guy quite a lot.

Lu Zhou stared at his keyboard for a while and suddenly spoke.

“I plan on opening a physics research institute in Africa.”

Luo Wenxuan stopped walking.

“... Africa?”

Lu Zhou: “Yeah.”

Luo Wenxuan frowned and said, “Is there a physics community there?”

“No...” Lu Zhou sighed and said, “But precisely because there isn’t a physics community, as scientific researchers, we should contribute to society.”

He paused for a second, looked at Luo Wenxuan, and spoke.

“In order for physics to expand all over the world, we should plan a seed of physics in third world countries. I plan on making you the dean of the new physics research institute.”

The smile suddenly disappeared from Luo Wenxuan’s face.

“Don’t, bro, if you’re not happy with me, just tell me. I don’t want to go to Africa.”

Han Mengqi was sitting nearby. She tried to contain her laughter as her shoulders began shaking from the chuckles. He Changwen was able to contain the laughter, but he accidentally dropped his pen to the ground.

Lu Zhou looked at Luo Wenxuan’s worried look and smiled. He coughed and spoke.

“I’m just kidding, lightening the atmosphere... Speaking of which, why did you come back from Shanghai?”

“The Lunar Hadron Collider conference is about to begin, I’m here to report to you! But now you’re saying you want to send me to Africa, I’m heartbroken!”

Lu Zhou grinned at Luo Wenxuan.

Well, it was just a joke.

Seeing how Lu Zhou didn’t speak for a while, Luo Wenxuan asked in a soft voice, “So the African physics research institute isn’t real?”

Lu Zhou rolled his eyes and said, “What do you think?”

Luo Wenxuan coughed and said, "I'll just pretend you were joking."

I am joking.

I might as well make you the director of an African zoo instead.

Lu Zhou shook his head at how gullible Luo Wenxuan was.

Even though the guy was quite naive at times, he was a good physics researcher.

Lu Zhou was quite satisfied with his work.

The construction of the Lunar Hadron Collider was mainly handled by the Lunar Orbit Committee, and as long as the ILHCRC did its job, there shouldn't be any problems.

Luo Wenxuan hadn't caused him any trouble, and he had quietly done his jobs and assignments. Lu Zhou was quite satisfied with him.

"I came back to Jinling to sort out some business with the university, as well as give you a report on the situation. There are some documents you need to look at and sign," Luo Wenxuan said as he placed some documents on the desk. He looked around and asked, "Where is Assistant Kong?"

"She's on leave."

"On leave?" Luo Wenxuan looked disappointed as he said, "Oh, nevermind then, that's unlucky."

Lu Zhou looked at how disappointed Luo Wenxuan was and shook his head.

This guy still hasn't given up...

Maybe he really loves her.

Lu Zhou almost wanted to set the two up for a date.

Of course, he wouldn't actually.

What if they break up in the future?

He would be the one taking the blame.

I'll just leave them alone.

Chapter 1129 Something Big Is Brewing in the World of Physics

The controversy regarding the Grand Unified Theory of algebra and geometry had yet to subside when the Lunar Hadron Collider conference was about to begin.

The breaking news came one after another, and people were overwhelmed.

People outside of academia might have felt different as the Grand Unified Theory and the lunar collider weren't as relevant to them as the Phantom System.

However, anyone in academia could feel an enormous amount of changes and breakthroughs.

It was as if the things they were discussing just yesterday, were already irrelevant today. They had to face and adapt to new problems.

Numerous PhD students had their graduation postponed. Some of them by force, some by their own volition. After all, the Grand Unified Theory had changed too many things about the algebraic geometry field.

Many students began to suffer from anxiety, having to rely on medication to relieve fatigue and stress.

On the other hand, Jin Ling University, the birthplace of the Grand Unified Theory, began to offer a course on the Grand Unified Theory.

Students had to line up just to register for the course, even those that had already signed up had to pay an extra fee to stay in the course.

The physics community had a similar situation.

The completion of the Lunar Hadron Collider did not have a huge impact on Jin Ling University, but it did impact the ILHCRC.

Just a year ago, or even half a year ago, it was quite difficult to get an opportunity to visit or work at CERN.

However, the physics scene had changed since then.

Every day, the ILHCRC would receive tens of thousands of applications from all over the world. People wanted to work here, hold lectures, go on academic exchanges, etc. There were also experiment related applications, and people wanted to use the powerful Lunar Hadron Collider to verify some of their particle physics conjectures.

Luo Wenxuan was the one reviewing the applications. Even though he traveled around the world with Professor Witten, he was still quite surprised at the applications.

He didn't even know there were so many people in the world researching physics.

Do we really need that many physicists in the world?

He started to have doubts in his mind.

The conference was scheduled to be on December 18th.

Even though it was only one week away from Christmas, no one had any complaints.

It was an honor to get the opportunity to participate in this grand conference.

Two months ago, when the ILHCRC first applied to use the International Convention and Exhibition Center as their venue, the entire particle physics community already had their attention turned toward this groundbreaking event.

Scholars had been lining up for months just to join this conference...

...

The Princeton Institute for Advanced Study.

Professor Deligne was sitting inside a rustic and ordinary office. He stared at a piece of paper, which was half-filled with calculations, and he frowned and began contemplating.

It had been a week since the report ended.

He was thinking about a problem over the past few days, and he hadn't come any closer to solving it.

I guess this is what happens when you get old.

Professor Deligne sighed and shook his head.

Even though his knowledge didn't decline as fast as his eyesight, he could already begin feeling the powerlessness of old age.

He was about to put this problem aside and make himself a cup of coffee when he suddenly heard a knock outside the office door.

Professor Deligne put down his pen and sighed. He took off his glasses and spoke in a clear voice.

"It's unlocked, come in."

When the door opened, a skinny old man with a receding hairline walked in with a smile.

"My old friend, I heard you're back from China?"

"I came back a few days ago," Professor Deligne said to Witten. He thought that Witten probably didn't have anything important to discuss. He put on his glasses and began reading the half-written draft paper again.

Witten noticed his movements, and he asked curiously, "What are you researching?"

Deligne: "The paper on the unification of algebra and geometry... The one that caused a sensation in the academic community. I recommend you read it. Even though I know you're not researching mathematics, I'm willing to bet that it will help your research."

Witten: "Didn't you come back from China? Have you still not finished reading it yet?"

"This isn't a paper you can just read and understand."

Professor Deligne smiled and looked emotional as he said, "This forty-page paper unifies algebra and geometry, and it also proposes a series of propositions, most of them unproven... Not only did he solve a century-old

problem, but he also gave us a guide for the next century or even millennium of mathematics.”

Witten asked curiously, “So you’re studying Lu Zhou’s list of conjectures?”

“I just think these problems are interesting, so I’m taking a look.” Professor Deligne frowned and said, “What are you doing here?”

Witten smiled and said, “Nothing, I’m just here to see my old friend before I leave on a business trip, and... remind him of our bet.”

Deligne looked at the old man’s smug smile and couldn’t help but feel annoyed. He opened his drawer and took out a notebook.

“Take it.”

Witten was ecstatic to take over this notebook on the research on Goldbach’s conjecture, and he began flipping through the pages.

Even though Witten hadn’t researched the field of number theory, no one knew the value of this notebook better than him.

“It’s so clean... Is it a duplicate?”

Professor Deligne said, “Next time you go to China, you can stop by Jinling and ask him this question in person.”

“Haha, I’m just kidding.” Witten smiled for a second and said, “Speaking of which, I’m going to China soon.”

Deligne: “The collider is complete?”

Witten nodded and spoke with a smile.

“Yeah.”

“I can’t believe it,” Deligne said. “They really built a collider on the moon.”

Witten smiled and spoke emotionally.

“The power of technology is fascinating... If only I was born a few decades later, or maybe fifty years later, my problems will all be solved.”

Professor Deligne spoke with a disapproving look.

“Don’t worry, there will always be problems in mathematical physics waiting for you.”

Witten paused for a second and spoke.

“You’re right.”

Mathematics was constantly changing.

While old problems were solved, new problems were born.

The same was for physics.

Ever since the Yang-Mills Equations and the electrostrong interaction were solved, Witten had noticed something.

As long as Lu Zhou continued to research physics.

The field of physics was bound to go through a revolution.

Chapter 1130 Collider Is Complete!

The evening of December 17th.

Professor Frank Wilczek was at the Shanghai International Airport.

Tomorrow was the start of the big conference. In order to not miss this grand event, he decided to arrive here one day earlier.

He ran into countless colleagues at the airport.

Some of them were his friends, some of them were not. Others were friends whom he hadn’t talked to in many years.

The physics community was big, so big that even a Nobel Prize-winning scholar could go unrecognized.

If someone wasn’t in the same research area as one another, even if they exchanged business cards, it was rare for them to meet a second time.

After all, not everyone was like Witten, who treated CERN as his second home. Most people would go to CERN once or twice for academic reasons, and some people might never get the chance to go.

Speak of the devil.

Wilczek was looking around, trying to find someone holding up a sign with his name on it. He happened to bump into an acquaintance.

“Witten? What a coincidence, you’re here as well?” Frank Wilczek said with a kind smile on his face.

“Well, statistically, it’s quite likely for us to meet here since there are only a few flights from North America to here.” Witten looked around and said, “Jesus... There are so many people here.”

Wilczek said, “Yeah... I remember there weren’t this many the last time I was here. Jesus, are they all here for the conference?”

“There’s just a lot of people living here... Regardless, where is your hotel?”

“It’s next to the International Convention and Exhibition Center, 200 meters away from the main entrance.”

Witten’s eyes lit up as he spoke.

“What a coincidence, I’m guessing we’re at the same hotel. Let’s take a taxi together.”

...

On the other hand, all the way on the distant moon, a prism-shaped lander was slowly dropped from the Moon Palace. It slowly fell onto the silver-white lunar soil, creating a cloud of dust.

After Yan Xinju unlocked the life support system, he took a deep breath from his spacesuit oxygen supply and took a step outside the cabin.

A year ago, he was still researching physics with Academician Lu. He never imagined himself setting foot on the moon.

He was probably the first physicist to receive formal astronaut training and set foot on the moon.

A silver-white lunar rover drove toward him from a distance.

An astronaut wearing a spacesuit with the Lunar Orbit Committee logo stepped off the rover. He heard a voice from the communication channel.

“Welcome to Earth, my friend! I would give you a hug, but I’m afraid it will knock you in the air... Put this on first.”

Yan Xinju looked at the staff member handing him a cable.

“What is this?”

“Safety rope; the gravity here is very low. For safety purposes, we wear these when we’re out of the cabin... You should have been briefed.”

“But I have not arranged any outdoor work.”

“Oh, I see.” The man smiled and patted him on the shoulder. “Let’s go, I’ll show you what we have done on the moon. You’ll be surprised!”

Yan Xinju smiled and didn’t respond.

In fact, going all the way to the Moon Palace from the Jinling launch site was surprising enough.

He couldn’t imagine what could surprise him even more.

...

December 17th.

This was an ordinary day for the rest of the world, but a special day for the city of Shanghai.

Over 90% of the world’s top physicists were gathered here, as well as industry leaders from related fields.

Not everyone was eligible to participate in the seminar, but most people were able to get admission to the convention center.

December 18th.

The day of the conference.

The conference room was crowded with people.

After the chairman of the organizing committee gave an opening speech, Lu Zhou, the chairman of the ILHCRC and the Chief Consultant of the Lunar Orbit Committee, walked steadily on stage and grabbed the microphone.

There was no need for anyone to maintain order.

Everyone in the audience became quiet.

The second his hand touched the microphone, the venue became dead silent.

In fact, the participants in the conference hall No.1 weren't the only ones who were silent.

People standing in the convention center, watching the big screen, and those sitting at home watching the ILHCRC broadcast, they all remained silent.

Everyone was waiting for him to speak.

They were waiting for him to announce the physics of the future!

"Welcome to China, Shanghai. I'd like to thank all of you who have come to attend this event organized by ILHCRC."

Lu Zhou looked at the venue, spent two seconds forming his sentence, and spoke.

"Ever since the beginning of the 21st century, the gap between experimental physics and theoretical physics has increased exponentially. Our theoretical level has gone far beyond our experimental capabilities.

"I've always believed in the scientific experiment method. A theory that is not backed by an experiment is like a mirage, only observable in the distance, never to be physically touched.

"But this is a turning point.

"Thanks to our advancements in aerospace technology, our spacecraft orbiting the moon is able to send construction equipment to the lunar surface.

"The low gravity and low atmosphere environment allow us to build a larger and more sophisticated collider.

“Since the project was established, the Lunar Hadron Collider has been receiving more and more attention. We have high hopes for this project, and we hope it can test our standard model and discover a new world of physics...

“At last, this day has finally arrived.”

The atmosphere in the venue was at a peak as Lu Zhou spoke in a louder and louder voice.

“On this special day, on behalf of the Lunar Orbit Committee and the ILHCRC, I’d like to announce that—

“The Lunar Hadron Collider—

“Is officially—

“Complete!”

The second he finished speaking, applause began filling the entire venue like a thunderstorm.

The thunderous sounds were like tsunami waves.

The old physicist Academician Lu was sitting in the crowd with a look of excitement on his face. He began to use all of his strength to clap; his hands gradually turning red.

In his eyes, this was more than just the completion of a collider.

What he just witnessed, was the rise of the Chinese physics community.

From today onward, the ILHCRC would take over CERN as the new center of physics. Physicists of the world would have to cooperate with China.

A new building of physics was slowly being built.

Natural science was a selfless field; all of mankind benefited equally from its advancements. However, as a Chinese scholar, why wouldn’t he want to see his own people flourish in the field?

He had been waiting for this day for a long time...

Bathed in the thunderous applause, Lu Zhou smirked and raised his hand.

After the crowd calmed down, he took a deep breath and spoke.

“The first trial of the collider will begin in five minutes.

“Let us witness this glorious moment together!”

The big screen began to display an image from 360,000 kilometers away.

Located at the corner of a moon crater was a silver-white building.

That was the lunar research base.

It was also where the collider was...

Chapter 1131 A Fortress on the Moon

Yan Xinju thought that after seeing the Moon Palace, there was nothing else that could possibly surprise him.

However, when the scientific research staff member named Ma Hao drove the lunar rover and took him to the lunar scientific research base, he was stunned by what he saw.

Silver-white “domes” were planted on the surface of the lunar soil; its polygon-shaped shell was glowing with white light. Each dome was around 10 meters in diameter, around 3 meters in height.

“... Is this the research station?”

“This?” Ma Hao looked at Yan Xinju and said, “Of course not, how can anyone live here... This is the garden domes.”

Yan Xinju paused for a second.

“Garden domes?”

“Yeah, technically, they’re called ‘lunar soilless agricultural units’. The surface is coated with a special graphene semiconductor material, which can withstand the impact of small meteorites, as well as allowing light to pass through. It can also absorb light and convert it into electrical energy, which powers the garden domes.”

The day and night temperature difference on the moon was large; the day temperature could be as high as 127 degrees, while the night temperature could reach -183 degrees. One day on the moon could last as long as 30 Earth days. The cultivation environment was harsh. Due to its absence of an atmosphere, the heat capacity and thermal conductivity of the lunar surface were low. Hence, capturing solar energy was one of the main difficulties in lunar planting.

Using the same technology from Biosphere A, the lunar soilless agricultural unit designed by the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study was able to solve this problem.

Even though the output was limited, the cost was still much lower than transporting supplies from Earth. Moreover, there was still room to improve this technology. Biologists on the moon were researching a potato variant that could quickly accumulate starch under low gravity conditions. Apparently, they had already made some progress.

“... It is still too difficult to be self-sufficient. However, it is an additional food source, combined with the usual compressed and liquid food.

“In addition to being used as food, these crops could also recycle astronauts’ waste and consume a portion of the carbon dioxide gas from the scientific research base. Of course, the circulation efficiency isn’t high, so we still need to transport certain supplies from Earth.”

Yan Xinju: “What about water? Farming requires a lot of water, right?”

“There’s ice on the moon.” Ma Hao smiled and said, “Fortunately, we found a treasure below our feet that is more valuable than Helium-3. Back then, we published a paper on this, which caused quite a sensation in the astronomy and geology circles. We have found around 20 million tons of water ice, which is enough for at least this century. Apparently, there’s even a bigger ice mine at the poles. Apparently, it’s on the order of hundreds of million tons... Of course, don’t tell anyone about this, the exploration work hasn’t finished yet.”

20 million tons...

Yan Xinju’s mouth was wide open, and after a while, he spoke.

“That is incredible... How come I’ve never seen this on the news?”

“The western media is not interested in reporting this. Since this is an in-progress result, we didn’t try to publicize it either...” Ma Hao used his chin to point at the crater in front of him. He said, “Look, that is our base, we’re here.”

Yan Xinju looked outside the rover window and finally saw the mysterious lunar scientific research base.

A building was situated in the middle of a moon crater. The large concrete walls were embedded in the lunar rocks. The only exposed part of the tall building was the wall and a signal tower.

Even though he could only see the tip of the iceberg, it was still an amazing sight.

If the Moon Palace was like a silver dragon in the sky, this was like the treasure pile that was being protected by the dragon.

It was incredible.

It represented the highest level of construction technology and aerospace technology!

The lunar rover slowly drove up the entrance ramp and passed through the two airlocks. Yan Xinju was blinded by the white lights above his head.

Next to him was a ground crew member dressed in casual clothes. They used professional equipment to clean the moon dust off the rover, then opened the rover door.

After Ma Hao took off his helmet, he took a breath of air and smiled at Yan Xinju.

“There’s no need to wear a spacesuit in the base, I have to pick up other people... My assistant will bring you to your room.”

Sending a Chinese physicist to the moon first was purposely arranged by the Chinese government. Even though this added an extra hundred thousand yuan to the budget, it was an acceptable cost. Not to mention that Yan Xinju’s mentor was a Chinese famous physicist, the old Academician Lu.

Later on, physicists from other countries and engineers in the field of physics would land on the moon using the landing module. As the captain of the

scientific research crew, Ma Hao's job was to transfer these scholars from Earth to this lunar fortress.

Yan Xinju nodded and spoke in a sincere manner.

"Thank you."

"No worries." Ma Hao patted him on the shoulder and said, "We're a family here."

Having set foot on this piece of land far away from home, Yan Xinju didn't understand what the captain was talking about. He thought the captain was just trying to be kind to one another.

Yan Xinju got out of the rover and took off his spacesuit. He followed the assistant and began walking.

The inside of the base was even more extraordinary.

There were a total of 21 floors, including residential areas, work areas, laboratories, and even a library and a gravity-simulated gym. Each floor had its own unique function. It was like a five-star hotel.

The only downside was that the personal space was quite small.

Apparently, the construction cost per meter had surpassed Manhattan's property costs. Not to mention the "utility costs". Hence, under these circumstances, a 10-square-meter room for each of them was quite luxurious.

When Yan Xinju came to an aluminum door with a number on it, the staff member handed a card to Yan Xinju and spoke with a smile.

"This is your room, this is the access and identity card. It will give you access to all the facilities in the research station.

"Your security level permits you to access the experiment area, the accommodation area, and the common areas. Your floor number is printed on the card. If you need to use the vehicle or leave the base, you have to talk to the base supervisor.

"Keep this card safe with you. You'll need it for eating and showering, and it'll be troublesome if you lose it."

Yan Xinju took the card and nodded with a serious look.

“Okay.”

The staff member said, “If you need anything, you can call me through the communication terminal in the room. Or you can talk with Captain Ma.” The staff member then nodded and began walking toward the elevator.

When Yan Xinju walked into his new home, he placed his suitcase on the shelf and lay on the soft bed.

The feeling of lying in one-sixth the normal gravity was strange. However, he had already spent a week in a gravity-free environment, so he was used to it.

“Tomorrow is December 18th...”

Tomorrow was an important day.

The Lunar Hadron Collider would complete its first trial operation tomorrow.

That would bring the physics community into a future era.

It would be the most glorious moment of his life.

As the representative of the Chinese physics community, he was the one who was going to light up the spark that illuminated the human civilization in this cold universe.

He looked at the blue planet 360,000 km outside his window, and he slowly closed his eyes while lying on his bed.

As an ordinary scientific researcher, he never thought this day would come. Up until now, his most worthy achievement was working under Academician Lu Shenjian.

He thought back to his past and felt emotional...

Life could be unexpected at times. When Lu Zhou called him and said, “You’re the chosen one,” he couldn’t even describe the shock.

Now that he was here, he began to feel the responsibility.

“Once I get back to earth, I’m buying Lu Zhou a drink...”

I have to thank him in person.

It was almost like he could hear the applause from 360,000 kilometers away.

The cheers from people all over the world.

He clenched, then loosened his fist. He gradually fell asleep thinking about his purpose and mission in physics.

He had the most peaceful sleep of his life.

1132 A Peta Electronvolt Collision!

The Shanghai International Convention and Exhibition Center.

Conference hall No.1.

The screen displayed a live stream from 360,000 kilometers away, with an astronaut with a Chinese flag printed on his uniform standing in front of a control console.

A clear voice was heard throughout the conference hall.

“Collision track is good to go!

“Target energy level: One peta electronvolt.

“Electric circuit is in good condition.

“Being power up!”

The astronaut standing in front of the console reached out and pressed a button.

Immediately after, a huge amount of energy began to enter the collider ring.

Driven by the energy that simulated the beginning of the Big Bang, the protons collided with one another, producing sparks and debris that were far too small for the naked eye to see.

The screen began to display an image of an energy spectrum detector. The atmosphere in the crowd was pushed to a peak, and everyone couldn't help but stand up and applause, cheering for this glorious moment.

The protons were colliding with an energy of 1000 TeV!

Compared to the Large Hadron Collider with a maximum collision energy of 14 TeV, the proton collision energy of the Lunar Hadron Collider was two magnitudes higher!

People would be able to use peta electronvolts of energy to create neutrinos and simulate the big bang and black holes. Physicists would be able to unravel the deepest secrets of the universe, such as dark matter and dark energy.

Lu Zhou drowned in the thunderous applause. He looked at the screen with a heartfelt smile on his face and gently clenched his fist.

It's been seven years.

Seven years since that summer.

A lot had changed since then, but he still believed in what he saw.

He knew he was correct.

Even if other people said otherwise.

Back then, he was just an intern. Both his academic status and knowledge weren't taken seriously. The Chinese physics community did not have enough resources to verify his theory.

But now, there was nothing that could stop him from doing the experiment he wanted. He was going to lead the world into a new era of physics.

This moment...

Is finally here!

...

The morning of December 19th.

After only half a day, the news of the successful launch of the Lunar Hadron Collider already spread across the globe.

Related headlines began to appear in newspapers the next day.

[The 1000 TeV Proton Collision Experiment! Particle Physics Research Enters A New Era!]

[The ILHCRC Takes Us Back To 15 Billion Years Ago!]

[Shook! The Chinese Scientists Are Making Black Holes On The Moon!]

[NASA Issued A Warning That Particle Physics Experiments On The Moon Might Have A Serious Impact On The Earth-Moon Rotation!]

[...]

Inside the ILHCRC chairman's office, a tall female assistant handed Lu Zhou a cup of coffee. Lu Zhou took a sip of the coffee as he flipped through the newspaper in his hand.

"I finally understand something."

Luo Wenxuan was playing with the plants on the window ledge. He looked back at Lu Zhou and spoke curiously.

"Understand what?"

"Why does the public have such a big misunderstanding of physics and particle physics experiments?" Lu Zhou said with a smile as he turned the newspaper in his hand. He shook his head and said, "But I quite like the nickname CNN gave me."

"What did they call you?"

"The crazy atomic destroyer."

Luo Wenxuan couldn't help but smirk.

"... Are you sure it is CNN?"

Lu Zhou: "Yeah, why?"

Luo Wenxuan: "Sounds like something from a Japanese anime."

Lu Zhou smiled and shook his head.

There was even a photo of Lu Zhou as a villain, holding Earth and Moon in his hands.

Even though Lu Zhou knew CNN was trying to insult him, he couldn't help but laugh at how stupid they were.

It would be ridiculous for a peta electronvolt collider to create a black hole. If they wanted to destroy the solar system, they would at least need to build a collider that was a trillion times larger.

Also, it was offensive for him to draw his handsome face in such an ugly way.

Luo Wenxuan looked at the drawing and wanted to laugh. However, he suddenly remembered that Lu Zhou was about to send him to Africa, so he refrained himself and spoke.

"The meeting is about to begin, should we head on over?"

Lu Zhou looked at the time on his watch.

"How about you go?"

"But it's so important... I don't think it's appropriate, you should go in person," Luo Wenxuan said with an awkward look on his face.

He actually knew what Lu Zhou wanted to say at the meeting.

He wasn't against Lu Zhou's idea. However, he didn't have enough authority to make the announcement himself. After all, even though the ILHCRC headquarters was in China, it was still an international organization. After all, countries paid a lot of money to participate in the organization.

He wasn't quite at the level of an academic leader.

"Well, I'm trying to train you, there's a first time for everything, right?"

Lu Zhou looked at Luo Wenxuan and put the newspaper aside. He stood up from his chair and spoke.

“Fine, let’s go together.”

...

The meeting was held in the conference hall No.2.

Compared to yesterday’s conference, this venue was much smaller. There was only one long table in the middle of the room, with a lot less decoration.

Sitting here were council members appointed by various countries.

Even though they weren’t expert physicists, they were all well-known and powerful people.

These people held important positions in scientific research institutions, and they all had expert negotiation skills.

It was obvious from their serious faces that this meeting was much more important than the celebratory conference that happened yesterday. This meeting was much more impactful to the physics community.

There was only one reason.

The council would discuss the experimental arrangements for the next year.

This would determine the physics Nobel Prizes for at least the next 50 years.

Theoretical particle physics had surpassed experimental physics for many years. There were already theories on black holes and the quantum world.

However, the theory needed to be backed by experimental data.

Everyone wanted to use this collider to verify their own theories.

The ILHCRC meeting was like the calm before the storm. Just like other fields, the academic world was not immune to vanity.

Especially when it came to the Nobel Prize or other high-level honors, there were only a few people who did not care about fame and fortune.

Everyone was ready to fight at this meeting.

Whether for themselves...

Or for their school of thought, or even country...

The clock hit ten o'clock; the meeting officially began.

As the chairman of the ILHCRC, Lu Zhou sat down at the conference table.

His opening remarks were short and concise.

However, when everyone thought Lu Zhou would discuss their plans, Lu Zhou's words shocked everyone except himself and Luo Wenxuan.

"I'll briefly talk about the experiment arrangements."

As if there was no room for negotiation, Lu Zhou spoke in a calm tone.

"I've looked at the 2015 test records from the CERN database. The 750 GeV characteristic peak that appeared on the ALICE and ATLAS detectors was definitely not an accident. I don't think we can attribute it to quantum fluctuations."

Professor Tarrant from Europe frowned. He spun the pen in his hand and said, "I know the experiment you talked about, but the confidence level of the signal detection is not even 3 sigma..."

"That is because our technology was not advanced enough, but that problem has been solved. I believe in my calculations, and there has to be more to the story."

Lu Zhou flipped through his meeting notes and glanced around the conference table. He spoke in a stern tone.

"The only goal of the ILHCRC for 2023 will be surrounding the 750 GeV characteristic peak.

"We have a good theoretical basis, as well as experimental tools.

"I will prove that I was correct."

The entire room was silent, followed by a quiet commotion.

The council members were shocked and astonished.

Everything happened so suddenly.

None of them expected this.

Lu Zhou knew why they were surprised, but he did not explain anything. He gently smiled and placed his meeting notes on the table.

Sure, he could explain himself.

But there was no need to.

He would use evidence to prove that he was correct.

Not to mention that he should deserve at least half of the credit for building the collider on the moon, right?

Hence, it wasn't ridiculous for him to use the collider to verify his own theories.

If someone disagreed?

Well, they could build their own collider and use it however they liked.

When Lu Zhou thought about the upcoming experiment, he couldn't help but smirk.

This might be a little selfish.

But...

It feels f*cking amazing!

Chapter 1133 The Unfortunate Meeting

"This isn't a discussion at all! I haven't spoken once in this meeting!"

"This is outrageous!"

"Somebody, talk some sense into him!"

"It won't work, he doesn't listen. I've told him many times that CERN has researched the 750 GeV characteristic peak for a whole year! Jesus, he wants to waste time on this again!"

“Maybe CNN is right, he’s a scientific villain...”

The meeting was quite unfortunate for some people.

A group of people walked out of the meeting room angrily as they loudly complained about Lu Zhou.

While waiting for the elevator, Professor Frank Wilczek noticed the rage on Professor Whittle’s face. He walked forward and spoke.

“What happened? Didn’t the meeting only happen an hour ago? Why did it end so soon?”

“Meeting? That wasn’t a meeting at all!”

Professor Whittle waved his hands and loudly said, “I’m going back to New York, I’m going to tell those people at the Brookhaven Science Associates what the Chinese did! The Chinese people are abusing their power in the physics field!”

Frank Wilczek was stunned to see Professor Whittle so angry.

His intuition told him that something terrible must have happened an hour ago; otherwise, Professor Whittle wouldn’t be this mad... However, Whittle wasn’t exactly the most well-tempered person either.

He was more and more curious as to what happened in the meeting...

Did they fire the board of members?

No way?

...

According to Murphy’s law, anything that could go wrong would go wrong.

Professor Frank Wilczek heard about what happened from an old friend who worked at CERN. He heard about the meeting and started to feel worried.

In his impression, Lu Zhou wasn’t a stubborn and ignorant scholar; he almost believed that Professor Whittle and the other board representatives had misunderstood Lu Zhou’s intentions.

However, the facts wouldn't lie.

What made Lu Zhou do something like this.

Frank Wilczek found Witten and invited him for a cup of coffee.

Wilczek talked about the board meeting and sighed.

"The situation is bad."

Witten expected he would talk about the ILHCRC, so he raised his eyebrows slightly and spoke.

"Oh yeah?"

Frank Wilczek took a sip of coffee and shook his head with a pessimistic look on his face.

"My worst fears came true. From the very beginning, the ILHCRC did not seem to be cooperative with others. I admit that his academic status is beyond most people... But this shouldn't give him a reason to do whatever he wants."

After hearing Frank Wilczek, Witten suddenly smiled and said, "Maybe he found something at the 750 GeV that we didn't."

"Impossible, my friend, you know this better than anyone else." Wilczek shook his head and said, "Not to mention that I've worked with him on this project. At first, I believed that he could do it, I even tried to get permission from the LHC to do the experiment. When I realized this wasn't going to work, I parted ways with him. I know this pathway is impossible!"

Witten said, "Then why do you think he insists on doing this?"

Frank Wilczek: "Maybe he's scared of being wrong? Or maybe he's too arrogant? Or stubborn? Or wants to use his power in physics? Regardless of what the reason is, it is wrong to conduct research with this mentality."

Witten smiled and shook his head.

"It seems like you don't understand him at all."

If this was anyone else other than Lu Zhou, maybe Wilczek would be correct.

However, for a scholar like Lu Zhou that only sought the truth, Wilczek's speculation was too superficial.

Witten had met many people in academia.

Some of them were after fame, some of them were after fortune, however, Lu Zhou was undoubtedly the most special...

He wasn't completely indifferent to fame and fortune. He felt accomplished when he won awards or prizes, but that wasn't what he truly pursued. What drove him forward was only his curiosity about nature and the universe.

This was a rare and precious quality.

Out of all of the scholars Witten had met...

Lu Zhou was the purest one among them.

"Oh?" Frank Wilczek raised his eyebrows and said in a dissatisfied tone, "Witten, I know you have a good relationship with him, but I hope you can see reality clearly. As his friend, you should persuade him instead of watching him go further down the wrong path."

"Wrong path?"

Witten used a spoon to stir his coffee. He smiled and spoke slowly.

"What is correct then?"

"We know less than one percent of this universe. There is no right or wrong in physics, and strictly speaking, there is only completeness and incompleteness. Ever since the birth of quantum mechanics, we have realized that—"

Frank Wilczek: "Stop being pedantic, why should we waste time on something that has proven not to work? CERN has invested hundreds of millions of dollars into this. Now we're about to waste another year on something that doesn't work!"

"But some people think it works." Witten looked at Wilczek and calmly said, "Maybe because he discovered something new, or maybe CERN didn't understand his theories. Maybe this is his intuition... I think these are all possible reasons."

“Exploring the standard model is like finding a needle in a haystack. While physics is much more than just the standard model. Regardless of which research direction we go in, we will always be taking on risk... So why don't we trust him? He's never let us down before.”

Wilczek: “...”

So you just want me to believe in him?

That's a bit ridiculous.

“I know what you're worried about.” Witten smiled at Wilczek and said, “Don't worry, if this doesn't work out in the end, I will try to convince him that he's wrong...”

“Let's trust his judgment for the time being.”

Chapter 1134 The Brookhaven National Laboratory

Those from the physics community weren't the only ones who cheered for the completion of the collider. Many other organizations involved in the construction of the collider were also ecstatic. Not only because this was a huge step forward for humanity, but this was an engineering miracle!

This multi-billion dollar project was finally finished.

Whether it was the project leader or the engineers, everyone could finally rest and sleep peacefully.

Beijing.

China Railway Group headquarters.

Director Li from the State Administration for National Defense came to visit here. He met up with Academician Li Qingquan, chief engineer of the China Railway Group. Director Li expressed his gratefulness to him.

“... The collider construction was extremely successful! The China Railway Group has made a huge contribution to our country's physics community!”

“Director Li, you’re too kind.” Academician Li Qingquan smiled and said, “We don’t deserve all of the credit. Without the technology from the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, as well as the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, none of this would have been possible.”

Construction in a low-gravity environment required special engineering equipment. These pieces of equipment were jointly developed by the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation and the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. The China Railway Group was mainly responsible for proposing specific construction plans and implementing the engineering equipment.

In the beginning, they encountered many difficulties due to their lack of experience in outer space construction.

Fortunately, they received help from the engineers at the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation.

Both of them deserved a huge amount of credit.

Academician Li Qingquan had a huge grin on his face. It was obvious he was in a good mood. The wrinkles on his face disappeared, and it looked like he was ten years younger than before.

“Academician Li, you’re too humble. Regardless of the contribution from the other parties, the China Railway Group clearly deserves a huge amount of credit!” Director Li said emotionally. He paused for a second and said, “Speaking of which, the next project is the mass driver, right?”

Academician Li Qingquan nodded and said, “We are talking about this with the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation. If everything goes well, we can begin construction next year.”

Director Li said solemnly, “Thank you so much, guys.”

“Of course, this is our job,” Li Qingquan said. “You should be thanking Academician Lu, I’ve been paying attention to the academic community; he hasn’t taken a break over the past two years.”

“Academician Lu is special. Most people can’t compare to him.” Director Li smiled and said, “But you’re right, ever since he got back to China, he hasn’t

taken a break, nor has he dated yet. When I go to Shanghai, I'll try to convince him to take a vacation and that he should take it easy."

The Chinese fusion power grid spread across Asia, and they were like tentacles, wrapping themselves in each country. Not to mention the Moon Palace in the sky; China's international influence had never been stronger.

The only unfortunate thing was that Academician Lu had yet to find a spouse.

Academician Li Qingquan said, "He doesn't have a significant other?"

Director Li said, "He's so busy, how does he have time?"

Academician Li Qingquan rubbed his chin and said, "How about... I find someone from the China Railway Group?"

"From the China Railway Group? For what reason?" Director Li smiled and shook his head.

Forget about the railway group.

Whether it was the military or the university, there had been countless attempts at finding Academician Lu a spouse.

But at the end of the day, this was still Lu Zhou's own decision. It wasn't like they could force Lu Zhou to marry someone? Young folks these days didn't want to marry or have kids, this was why the birth rate had dropped.

"He's so selfless... Academician Lu is really a role model for the scientific research community." Academician Li Qingquan sighed and said, "If only other young scholars can be like him."

Director Li smiled.

If other people were like him?

Forget about landing on the moon.

We'll be landing on other galaxies.

...

After Director Li left the China Railway Group building, he returned to his office. He told his assistant about his trip to Shanghai and planned on doing some work in his office.

However, he suddenly received a call from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

“Old Li, what’s going on?”

Director Li was confused. He frowned and spoke.

“What do you mean?”

“Aren’t you responsible for the ILHCRC?”

“Yeah...” Director Li said. He realized something might have gone wrong at the ILHCRC, so he said, “Technically, I am, but I’m not actually involved. Academician Lu is mainly responsible. What is going on? Why are you calling me?”

“We received a call from the Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York. They said we did not fulfill the agreements of the joint research project.”

Director Li was stunned.

“Did we not give them a chance to negotiate?”

“... No, the meeting did happen, but Academician Lu decided to do things his own way.”

F*ck...

So there was a negotiation meeting?

Director Li thought that Lu Zhou didn’t even host a meeting and just decided to take over the project.

However, the other end of the phone continued to talk.

“... Right now, the problem isn’t just with the Brookhaven National Laboratory. The European Union also called us and complained about this. I’m not saying that Academician Lu’s actions are wrong, but I just hope he can consider things from other people’s perspectives. Otherwise, we might lose their funding.”

Director Li coughed and spoke.

“Fine, fine, I understand. Don’t worry, I’m going to Shanghai tomorrow, so I’ll ask him what is going on.”

The other end of the phone spoke.

“Perfect!”

The phone call ended.

Director Li sighed and shook his head as he placed his phone into his pocket. He didn’t really take the complaints from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs seriously.

Who cares if the Brookhaven National Laboratory complains?

They’re just one laboratory.

In his opinion, this wasn’t something the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should take seriously.

He sat down in his office and saw his assistant walking in anxiously.

“Director Li, bad news!”

Director Li frowned.

“Calm down, what is going on.”

“Look at the newspaper, the headlines from CNN and The New York Times...” the assistant said awkwardly. He handed over the newspaper and said, “Look at it yourself.”

Director Li took the newspaper from the assistant’s hands and read the headline. His eyebrows furrowed.

Jesus Christ.

How come my worries always come true?

Director Li threw the newspaper aside and stood up. He spoke in a stern tone.

“Come with me to Shanghai.”

The assistant paused for a second.

“Now?”

I thought you were going tomorrow?

I even bought the tickets...

“Yes, now, refund the tickets for tomorrow.” Director Li spoke in a serious tone, “Book a flight this afternoon, the sooner the better!”

Chapter 1135 Still A Secre

Of course it was important to have a meeting, but not giving other people a chance to speak was quite ridiculous.

However, that didn't mean Lu Zhou had to adopt other people's ideas.

There were always experiments to be done, and everyone wanted to start with their own research project. If they kept on discussing what experiment to do, nothing would get done.

Lu Zhou was an efficient person, he obviously didn't like any delays.

After Lu Zhou told Secretary-General Luo Wenxuan to announce the meeting outcome, he immediately took on the role of a responsible academic leader and held a brief meeting with various departments. After delegating the necessary work, he put himself back onto the front lines of scientific research.

It had been quite some time since he researched physics. Even though the knowledge in his brain had not disappeared, he was a little rusty.

Fortunately, it was easy for him to pick up new knowledge. Since he reached mathematics level 10, re-reading papers he had read before gave him a deeper understanding than before.

But this wasn't only about the 750 GeV peak.

It was also about his theory on the electrostrong interaction.

As well as the entire physics field...

“The United States Department of Energy sent an email. They asked us to reconsider our decision and host another board meeting. Otherwise, they might cancel their 2024 funding of the ILHCRC.”

Inside the chairman’s office.

Luo Wenxuan was standing in front of the desk, reporting to Lu Zhou regarding the phone call he received this morning.

There was evidence that this has spread from the physics community to the political community. The United States seemed to have plans of withdrawing from ILHCRC, or at least they threatened the possibility. This was to convince the ILHCRC to listen to the board of directors.

However, after hearing Luo Wenxuan’s report, Lu Zhou wasn’t shocked at all. He spoke quietly.

“What about their funding for 2023?”

“They already paid that in November this year... They paid about 70% of the full amount.”

Lu Zhou: “It’s fine then.”

Luo Wenxuan said, “What do you mean fine?”

Lu Zhou said, “They can’t withdraw, it’s an empty threat. If they really suspended their funding, we can freeze their ILHCRC board seats and fire their researchers at the ILHCRC. Eventually, they’ll be totally disengaged from the ILHCRC. I’m sure there are plenty of countries that would like to take their spot. Especially Europe, they can’t wait to join us.”

CERN took up a large amount of the European Union budget each year. Now that the ILHCRC was willing to take on the responsibility of advancing the physics field, the European Union would be happy to allocate the extra funds to the ILHCRC.

If the United States withdrew, it was likely that the American physics community would lose their influence and power.

If the United States thought that it was a good idea, Lu Zhou certainly didn't mind.

The only thing he cared about was the ILHCRC having enough funds for him to do experiments.

Luo Wenxuan paused for a second and spoke.

"That's not the best idea, right? If we make enemies at the beginning, will it bite us in the a*s later?"

"I'm doing this so we don't get bitten in the a*s later. What if all of the future board meetings turn out this way?" Lu Zhou said, "Not to mention, we are the only people that are in control of a peta electronvolt collider. We're not asking them to collaborate with us, we're giving them an opportunity!"

Lu Zhou looked at Luo Wenxuan and spoke.

"Not to mention, words don't mean anything, I will use results to prove I am correct."

Luo Wenxuan: "... I understand."

Lu Zhou nodded and continued.

"Then write an email to the United States Department of Energy, and tell them that we're sorry to see them withdraw from us."

"There's no need for us to pander to them."

Luo Wenxuan walked out of the office and closed the door behind him.

He happened to see an old man and a middle-aged man walking in the corridor.

Luo Wenxuan looked at the old man and was instantly shocked. He smiled and spoke.

"Director Li? What brings you here?"

"What else? It's Academician Lu." Director Li sighed and looked at the office door. He asked, "Is he inside?"

Luo Wenxuan: "Yeah, he is..."

"Good, I have to talk to him."

Director Li told his assistant to wait outside. He walked around Luo Wenxuan and opened the office door.

Director Li went inside the office. Before he said hello, he immediately placed a piece of newspaper on Lu Zhou's desk and spoke.

"I read the newspaper today and found out that the Brookhaven Science Associates held a press conference, and the United States Department of Energy plans on suspending their funding? What is going on, why is this happening?"

They held a press conference?

Is that necessary?

Lu Zhou looked at the newspaper headline and didn't read the article's body. He looked up at Director Li and spoke.

"Do you trust me?"

"No sh*t! Who else am I supposed to trust," Director Li said. "But that's not the point."

Lu Zhou: "Since you appointed me as the chairman, then we should follow my orders. Otherwise, you can replace me with someone else."

Director Li was baffled.

It wasn't like he had the power to fire and change the Chairman of the ILHCRC. This role was decided by the highest level government officials. He didn't have the authority or right to fire Lu Zhou, nor would he ever do such a thing.

After all, angering the Americans was a trivial matter, but angering Academician Lu would not be a trivial matter...

Lu Zhou saw that Director Li wanted to say something. Lu Zhou suddenly smiled and spoke in a calm tone.

“Don’t worry, actually, this kind of thing is common in the physics world. The United States’ Department of Energy is just abusing their power, we don’t have to care about the complaints from the Brookhaven National Laboratory at all.”

Director Li: “... This is common?”

Lu Zhou said, “Way too common!”

Arguments among academic institutions were way too common.

However, the stakes this time were higher than usual, so the arguments were more intense.

After all, this would impact dozens or even hundreds of potential Nobel Prize laureates, with billions of dollars involved.

Since Lu Zhou took everything for himself, there were bound to be people who wouldn’t be happy.

Perhaps if he had used a softer approach, for example by convincing more than half of the board members, the rest of the board members would have to agree with him.

However, Lu Zhou didn’t have time to convince anyone.

Not to mention that he knew he was correct. He would much rather convince people with scientific results.

He was better at that.

Lu Zhou: “If you’re still worried, you can stay in Shanghai and wait for me to finish this experiment.”

Director Li shook his head and said, “I can’t just stay in Shanghai... All in all, take it easy, you should leave a bit of leeway for other people. Just don’t kick anyone. After all, they’re our international friends, backed by governments. We need their funding, right?”

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded.

“Don’t worry, I wouldn’t do such a thing.”

Well, I hope so!

Director Li didn't speak his thoughts out loud.

Lu Zhou looked at Director Li and changed the subject.

"Speaking of which, how are the Dragon chips?"

"They're good... Why?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Nothing, I was just wondering. Also, I plan on creating this new thing."

When Director Li heard this, he was instantly intrigued. He totally forgot about the complaints from the US Department of Energy and immediately asked, "What thing?"

Lu Zhou looked at Director Li's intrigued face and smiled mysteriously.

"It's still a secret."

Director Li: "..."

1136 It's Good To Be Noticed

Lu Zhou didn't care how curious Director Li was, he wasn't willing to reveal a single word. In the end, Director Li had to give up.

Director Li left the office. He was walking along the corridor when he suddenly frowned and looked at his assistant.

"... Did I forget something?"

The assistant thought, "How would I know?"

However, he obviously wouldn't say this to Director Li's face.

"Of course not, you never forget things, sir."

"No... I definitely forgot something."

Suddenly, it was like a light bulb went off in Director Li's head, and he was finally able to remember what he forgot.

Before he came here he was talking with Academician Li Qingquan about how Lu Zhou should spend more time living his life and that he should at least start making a family or something. However, when he heard that Lu Zhou had a new idea, he totally forgot about this.

"My god, I nearly forgot!"

Director Li turned his head and wanted to go back into the office, but he decided not to.

Even though he only just left the office, going back just to tell Lu Zhou to live a little was a bit weird.

This was a conversation that should be talked about over coffee; it wasn't a serious topic.

"Forget about it." Director Li shook his head and sighed. He said, "I'll leave him alone."

Assistant: "...?"

...

The announcement of ILHCRC's experiment plans for 2023 caused a huge sensation in the physics community.

The 750 GeV peak...

Before the announcement, the physics community made speculations regarding ILHCRC's focus for the next year. People thought they would focus on finding a critical point of the quantum chromodynamics phase transition, or maybe continue to collide protons and verify the standard model, or maybe even try to explore dark matter...

No one thought that Lu Zhou would revive the unpopular 750 GeV experiment, which CERN had failed to find any success with.

Discussions spread from physics forums to the general public.

A popular physics forum visitor wrote the following answer.

[It's so nice to be noticed by the big names in the industry. Who cares if you create any scientific research results? You'll have millions in funding and at least a few papers to publish.]

While the entire physics community was debating this matter, various kinds of gossip spread like the plague.

There were rumors that a certain Nobel Prize laureate was disappointed about the ILHCRC's decision.

There were also rumors that Professor Whittle, the representative from the United States, slammed the door and left the meeting. This rumor was further strengthened with the Brookhaven National Laboratory press conference.

It was obvious that the American physics community, just like the Brookhaven National Laboratory, was displeased with the outcome. CERN was less vocal with their opinions. Perhaps the other physics research institutes that were dissatisfied with the decision from ILHCRC would speak up.

But for now, it seemed like the ILHCRC had not given in to Brookhaven National Laboratory's demands. They almost totally ignored the Brookhaven National Laboratory and even arranged specific experimental tasks for various departments.

The Brookhaven Science Associates seemed to be irritated by the ILHCRC's lack of reaction. A week after ILHCRC announced their experimental plan, the Brookhaven Science Associates held another press conference.

Professor Whittle was the one speaking at the press conference.

He was much more aggressive than last time.

"I have to say that this is an asinine decision! Yes, asinine! Many excellent scholars have done many experiments on the 750 GeV anomaly characteristic peak. If you doubt their conclusion, you should prove that your theory is worthy of verification. That is the standardized procedure!"

"But look what happened? That dictator chairman, Professor Lu, totally ignored the board of directors. He threw us an experiment plan and wants us to fund his dream, his unrealistic dream!"

“No matter what he thinks about the 750 GeV characteristic peak, he should abide by standard procedures and discuss with the ILHCRC board!”

A reporter in the audience asked, “But Professor Whittle, the ILHCRC said they already held a meeting and discussed it with the board?”

“That wasn’t a discussion at all!” Whittle said. It was like the reporter had ignited a fire in Whittle’s heart as Whittle furiously said, “I can guarantee that American scholars will not participate in this project! All of the researchers at the Brookhaven National Laboratory will not participate in this project!

“They can go waste their time on their own!

“Time will prove that we are correct!”

There was an uproar at the press conference.

The Brookhaven National Laboratory will not work with the ILHCRC anymore?

They are publicly going against the ILHCRC?

As the administrative director of the Brookhaven Science Associates, Professor Whittle’s words had weight to them.

The Brookhaven National Laboratory worked on the Manhattan Project and was directly under the administration of the US Department of Energy and jointly managed by the Brookhaven Science Associates.

The Brookhaven Science Associates had control over the Brookhaven National Laboratory, and they answered to the Department of Energy.

If Professor Whittle was speaking the truth, then things were about to become interesting.

Regardless of whether there was a political factor behind this, one thing was certain was that the Brookhaven Science Associates was not joking around.

They already had theories to explain the 750 GeV characteristic peak; they claimed it was nothing other than a quantum fluctuation.

As Whittle looked at the excited reporters, he couldn’t help but grin.

If Lu Zhou wants to waste time on the 750 GeV peak, then he can do as he pleases.

But once the experiment fails, we will have enough cause to hold him responsible and even impeach him.

Of course, they couldn't impeach Lu Zhou by themselves. But if they cooperated with other research institutes that were dissatisfied with Lu Zhou's actions, they might be able to take Lu Zhou down.

After all, the Chinese physics community did not have enough scholars to support the huge operation of the ILHCRC. In the end, they would have to cooperate with other countries.

Regardless of whether or not Lu Zhou would be removed as Chairman, the failure would be enough to damage his academic reputation.

Whittle had a clear plan in his mind.

Right now, he had front row seats to the show.

All he had to do was sit back and wait.

Chapter 1137 The Withdrawal From the Brookhaven Laboratory

Shanghai.

A restaurant near the ILHCRC headquarters.

Waiting for food was always a boring process. Normally, Witten would try to find something to do; sometimes he would read papers, other times he would read some magazines or something related to his hobbies.

He was flipping through the newspaper he took from his office when he suddenly frowned and spoke.

"Whittle has gone crazy."

Frank Wilczek, who was sitting across from him, looked at him with a confusing gaze

After a while, Witten spoke.

“He’s trying to use the public opinion to help the Brookhaven Science Associates. He’s abusing his academic power, forcing scholars to make wrong choices.”

Frank Wilczek raised his eyebrows and said, “Then what would you do?”

“If I had to make a choice, I wouldn’t do what he’s doing.” Witten put down the newspaper and said, “Regardless of what the experiment is, this is the first Lunar Hadron Collider experiment. Even if the experiment doesn’t produce results, this will be a memorable and historic experiment.”

Witten paused for a second and smiled.

“Not to mention, that the physics community hasn’t been this exciting for a long time.”

Wilczek drank a sip of lemonade and spoke.

“I wish it wasn’t this exciting.”

Having excitement in the physics world only brought trouble. Theoretical physics was something that could benefit humanity as a whole. In his opinion, both Lu Zhou and the Brookhaven Science Associates were making irrational decisions.

Of course, he knew that...

Most people in this world were not rational.

He hoped that the Lunar Hadron Collider could focus on more meaningful projects, such as the time crystal theory he was researching.

Unfortunately, he would have to wait at least a year before he could use the lunar collider for experimentation.

...

It seemed like the warnings from the United States Department of Energy did not work. After the press conference, Brookhaven National Laboratory took matters into their own hands.

As the center of North American theoretical physics research, the withdrawal from the Brookhaven National Laboratory was undoubtedly a massive blow to the ILHCRC... At least in their opinion.

After all, 23% of all physicists and engineers at the ILHCRC were Americans, and Brookhaven National Laboratory accounted for more than half of these American workers.

Not to mention that this statistic only included long-term workers; it did not include visiting scholars. Even if other American scholars were not related to the Brookhaven National Laboratory, this withdrawal would more or less affect their chances of working at the ILHCRC.

The withdrawal of the Brookhaven National Laboratory spread throughout the ILHCRC community.

Almost everyone was discussing this matter, and how this might affect the physics cooperation between China and the United States.

Especially regarding the American physicists that worked at the ILHCRC.

Even though people knew Whittle was not satisfied with Lu Zhou's decisions, the withdrawal from the ILHCRC still angered many people. It seemed like no matter how they looked at it, this was not a good thing for the American workers at the ILHCRC.

This incident had a significant impact on the progress of the 750 GeV characteristic peak project.

Inside the chairman's office.

Secretary-General Luo Wenxuan came here to report the situation to Lu Zhou.

"... The Brookhaven National Laboratory officially submitted a written application to me. They're requesting to withdraw from all scientific research projects in 2023 and recall their researchers and engineers in Shanghai."

When Luo Wenxuan was speaking, he had a complicated look on his face.

He never would have imagined the Brookhaven National Laboratory to have such an extreme response. He couldn't believe they withdrew as a way of protesting against Lu Zhou's actions.

Lu Zhou looked at the document on the desk and didn't say anything. He signed his name on the document and gave it back to Luo Wenxuan.

Luo Wenxuan looked at Lu Zhou and couldn't help but say, "You seem like you don't care?"

"What is there to care about." Lu Zhou looked at him with a strange look and said, "They've already paid their funding, I don't care if they're listed as a partner institute or not."

Luo Wenxuan: "..."

I guess he makes sense.

After hesitating for a bit, Luo Wenxuan spoke.

"Also, about the 750 GeV characteristic peak..."

Lu Zhou: "What?"

Luo Wenxuan said, "I dug up CERN's paper and read it. It seems like their experiment was quite detailed, there really isn't any... If there isn't anything there, we'll be in an awkward situation."

When Lu Zhou heard this, he suddenly smiled, put down the pen in his hand, and looked up.

"So you understood the paper?"

Luo Wenxuan sighed and said, "I know you are looking down on me, but I did understand the paper."

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "I'm not looking down on you, I just want you to tell me, what did you extract from the paper?"

"What am I supposed to say..." Luo Wenxuan said, "Basically, they've done every experiment possible."

Lu Zhou: "Did they do a proton collision?"

Luo Wenxuan: "Of course, the experiment records are there."

Lu Zhou: "What about heavy-ion collision?"

Luo Wenxuan paused for a second and said, “Heavy... Heavy-ion collisions? How is that related to the 750 GeV characteristic peak?”

Lu Zhou said, “How is it not?”

“...”

Luo Wenxuan opened his mouth; he was speechless.

“If you have time, read more useful papers. Just because I placed you in an administrative role doesn’t mean you can forget about physics completely. If you’re curious as to why I’m doing heavy-ion collisions, just wait and you’ll understand. Take this.”

Luo Wenxuan took the stack of A4 papers from Lu Zhou and asked, “What is this?”

Lu Zhou said, “Read it first, and ask me if you have questions.”

Luo Wenxuan: “...”

At least tell me what it is first?

Luo Wenxuan was about to ask Lu Zhou what his role was in the experiment, but Lu Zhou spoke first.

“Don’t say anything.”

Luo Wenxuan: “?”

Lu Zhou looked at the blueprints on his table and spoke.

“I got it.”

Luo Wenxuan: “...”

Got... what?

Do I still need to read this paper?

Luo Wenxuan felt like the “small problem” of the 750 GeV peak wouldn’t take a whole year of experiments. He looked at the thick stack of papers in his hand and sighed.

Sigh.

Working for a dictator boss is boring sometimes...

Chapter 1138 High Risk, High Reward

The Brookhaven National Laboratory was able to convince a large number of American physicists to protest against the ILHCRC, causing quite a huge commotion in the international academic community.

Lu Zhou was a famous scholar that had yet to receive any kind of bad publicity prior to this. Hence, the media immediately jumped on the opportunity and reported on him intensively.

The Lunar Orbit Committee was heavily controlled by the state, and due to Chinese government policies, the Chinese media outlets did not dare to offend Lu Zhou.

However, outside of China, various news outlets had been having a field day. They had been calling him names such as “academic dictator” and “school of thought tyrant”.

A CNN talk show mentioned this matter in their latest episode.

The invited guest was Dr. Kerella from Syracuse University.

This nearly forty-year-old female PhD holder had long brown hair and dark eyebrows. It was obvious she broke many hearts in her earlier years.

The reason CNN invited her wasn't that she was well-known in the physics world. Instead, the show producers learned that at the 2015 CERN conference, Lu Zhou, who was still an intern back then, pointed out a mistake in her presentation regarding the B1 experiment data partition. This was a huge blow to her reputation, which also ruined the past two months of her team's work.

The 750 GeV characteristic peak was extracted from the B1 data partition.

Therefore, she was a witness to the famous 750 GeV event.

“The 750 GeV has been proven to be false... He won’t find anything in this zone,” Kerella said with a cheerful smile on her face. She kept tucking her hair behind her ear, struggling to hide her excitement.

Haha.

Lu Zhou!

I told you so!

Host: “But why is he insisting on doing this?”

Kerella spoke in an exaggerating tone.

“Perhaps he’s scared to be wrong? After all, it caused quite a commotion at the time... Even though no one ridiculed him, maybe he took the defeat too seriously. My impression of him is that he’s an immature and arrogant researcher!”

Host: “Okay... But what if he really finds something at the 750 GeV zone?”

“Find something? Forget about it, it’s been seven years. If there’s anything there, we would have found it already.” Kerella said, “If he really finds something, I’ll eat the CERN collider!”

The audience burst into laughter.

After the show was recorded, it was broadcast on television, then posted on the Internet.

The video was originally uploaded to YouTube.

But then, someone uploaded it to Weibo.

Jin Ling University, dorm 201.

Li Mo looked at the giggly guest and host in the show. He was furious.

“This is outrageous!”

Yang Shuang, who was playing games on his phone, said, “Calm down, they’re just poking fun, don’t take it seriously.”

Wu Di frowned.

“I don’t feel comfortable with this.”

Duan Siqi nodded.

“I agree.”

Seeing how all of his roommates were unhappy, Yang Shuang put away his phone and spoke.

“Okay, fine... Speaking of which, CEO Duan, don’t you have work today?”

Ever since Duan Siqi’s roommates saw his contract with Star Sky Technology, his nickname became CEO Duan.

He was a little dumbfounded with this name.

After all, he was only an “experiment guinea pig”. Seven times a month, he would test the latest VR equipment. With a compensation of 200 yuan per experiment, it was roughly equivalent to a part-time job.

Of course, the most important part was that he enjoyed the experiments.

“I nearly forgot,” Duan Siqi said as he threw a bag over his shoulder. He bent over, put on his sneakers, and said, “Don’t forget to lock the door, I’ll be back tonight.”

Yang Shuang smiled and spoke.

“Be gentle when you go to bed, your fat a*s woke me up last time.”

“F*ck off!”

...

High-tech zone.

Inside the virtual reality technology research institute.

A teenager with a shoulder bag passed security and quickly rushed into the laboratory.

Li Gaoliang was standing at the door when he saw the panting teenager running toward him. He spoke in a serious manner.

“One minute early, come on in, we’re all waiting for you.

“It’s fine, it’s not like we start straight away...”

Duan Siqi followed Li Gaoliang into the laboratory.

As the captain of the Respawn Team, Li Gaoliang was responsible for leading and coordinating the team, as well as coming up with strategies. His role was similar to a guild leader in an MMORPG.

Normally, the teammates got along well with this captain. The only problem was that the captain sometimes took the games too seriously, and he was quite a control freak.

Even though most of his intuitions and instructions were correct, some players only wanted to have fun.

Wasn’t having fun the point of a video game?

Their purpose was to improve the artificial intelligence algorithm, so shouldn’t the algorithm maximize the player’s enjoyment?

Every time Duan Siqi came here, he would think about this problem.

Other than him, all of the other experimenters were already inside the laboratory.

People stood in groups and chatted with one another.

“When can we change the game? I’m bored of the Ring world!”

“I think it’s quite interesting, but is there nothing else to explore in the Calan civilization?”

“It’s not interesting at all, they’re at least a second-level Kardashev species, right? Why would they use the slow energy rays as their weapon?”

“Then, what do you think they should use instead?”

“If they don’t have magic and superpowers, at least they should have some kind of high-power lasers, right? Sigh, these game devs have no imagination at all, they don’t know what real science fiction is!”

“Pfft...”

Even though China has nuclear weapons, they’re not given to the police for counterterrorism uses. There is a balance between efficiency and cost...

Kinetic energy and thermal energy are clearly the two most common forms of energy in the universe.

Duan Siqi didn’t speak his thoughts out loud.

Arguing about this was too tiring.

“Now that everyone’s here, I have to say something.”

The conversation died down. Everyone was looking at Li Gaoliang, who was standing at the entrance of the laboratory, the “captain” of the Respawn Team.

Li Gaoliang said, “We’ve been in the Ring world for too long.”

The guy that previously complained, spoke with excitement.

“Are we going to change the map?”

“No.” Li Gaoliang paused for a second and said, “Just now, we received a notice from the Star Sky Technology headquarters. Whoever can escort Professor Lane to the Empire council will get a bonus of 100,000 yuan.”

The laboratory suddenly became quiet.

One could hear a pin drop.

Everyone held their breath.

The person that was previously complaining was so shocked that his eyes were almost popping out of his socket.

A hundred thousand bonus!

For a game?

Duan Siqi felt like Star Sky Technology was crazy.

There has to be a secret behind this, there has to be something behind the scenes!

Li Gaoliang nodded to the research staff standing next to him.

The researcher smiled and clapped his hands.

“Don’t be surprised, everyone, this is a reward given to you guys by the headquarters. After all, we’ve been stuck on this mission for a long time, and it’s quite boring to keep grinding.

“Then, let’s begin the experiment.

“The Empire needs you.

“Good luck, everyone!”

Scholar’s Advanced Technological System - Chapter 1139 - The Pendulum Model -

Chapter 1139 The Pendulum Model

The controversy regarding the 750 GeV characteristic peak and the news of the Brookhaven National Laboratory withdrawal caused quite a stir in the international academic community. However, Lu Zhou totally ignored the controversy and continued to complete his daily tasks as usual.

There was no nuclear fusion reactor on the moon, nor was there a way to install a fusion reactor on the moon. The Pangu nuclear fusion reactor could heat an entire lake of water in a few hours. The heat exhaust port had to be replaced to prevent the accumulation of excessive heat. The absence of an atmosphere on the moon made things more troublesome.

Also, there was a high power demand on the moon. Even though the collider consumed a significant amount of power, it was only turned on for minutes at a time. Currently, the collider was powered by solar energy, which was stored

in the form of chemical energy. It took three days just to charge enough for three minutes of experimentation time.

However, there was a problem with this. The moon's daily cycle was 27.3 days, half of which was night, so the day time was only around 13 days, which was enough to fully charge the collider 4 times.

In other words, there were only 4 experiment opportunities a month. Each experiment opportunity was extremely critical and important.

At the ILHCRC headquarters.

After Luo Wenxuan gave Lu Zhou the latest experimental data, he spoke.

"It's going to be dark soon, we'll be able to do one more experiment this month."

Lu Zhou looked at the document and frowned.

He suddenly gently sighed and placed the document on the table.

"If only we could run a few more tests and collect more data, our chances of success will be higher."

Luo Wenxuan: "We can... Last time, during a meeting, someone suggested to me that a set of solar power arrays and a power storage facility can be built next to the collider. We'll be able to increase the experiment frequency by 1.5-2 times."

Lu Zhou: "How much will it cost?"

Luo Wenxuan awkwardly said, "A conservative estimate is around one billion USD."

A billion USD...

Lu Zhou heard this number and couldn't help but cringe.

Even he would have a hard time spending so much money at once.

The ILHCRC had a fixed budget of approximately two to three billion USD per year, which was split among all countries. This was quite plentiful compared to CERN's budget of one billion a year.

However, spending almost half of the budget at the beginning of the year was quite risky.

After all, for such a huge research institute like the ILHCRC, the collider wasn't the only thing they needed to spend money on.

Not to mention that adding a solar array would double the maintenance costs. Even though increasing the number of experiments per month sounded tempting, adding solar arrays was only a temporary solution.

The 750 GeV experiment proposal was already risky enough; they didn't want to add any more risk.

Lu Zhou tapped his index finger on the table. After contemplating for a while, he shook his head and spoke.

"Not a good idea. The collider pipeline has to undergo maintenance after each experiment. Increasing the experiment frequency will increase the maintenance cost..."

Not to mention this would also decrease the lifespan of the collider.

The high-energy particles caused permanent radiation damage to the collider material. The higher the energy level of the collision experiment, the greater the damage and maintenance cost.

The Lunar Hadron Collider wasn't the only collider that had this problem; high-energy collision experiments all over the world were cursed by the radiation damages.

"Money is still the problem. Once the collider is turned on, we'll be burning through cash..." Luo Wenxuan sighed and said, "If only we can make money on the moon."

Lu Zhou smiled when he heard this. He shook his head.

Make money on the moon?

He wasn't the only one that had this idea. Many people, including Chen Yushan, had suggested this idea to him.

Obviously, it was difficult to profit from the moon at this stage. He would have to complete his “Control of Earth and Moon” mission chain first before he could make money off the moon.

Lu Zhou: “Don’t worry about money. Money can’t solve all of our problems. Also, New Year is in a few days. When the last experiment finishes, we should all go home for the holidays.”

Luo Wenxuan sighed and spoke.

“Okay then.”

...

The last experiment in January 2024 ended with “sparks” flying across a pipeline 360,000 kilometers away.

The long night cycle began as the collider entered maintenance mode, preparing for next month’s experiment.

Although the experiment was over, Lu Zhou wasn’t relieved at all.

Over the past few weeks, he had been attending meetings from various ILHCRC research groups, listening to data presentations by the heads of departments. He would also meet with experts at the ILHCRC to discuss the collected experimental data and form new experiment plans.

The huge amount of data made it impossible for him to carefully examine each data segment in detail. He had to rely on his mathematics and physics intuition to connect the dots.

He still remembered seven years ago, when he listened to CERN’s experimental data reports as an intern.

But now, he had gone from an intern to an academic leader, someone that led the future of physics research.

He felt quite nostalgic.

But now was not the time to get sentimental.

The amount of work made Lu Zhou wish he could clone himself so that he could attend meetings and work in his office at the same time.

Eleven o'clock in the morning.

Inside the conference room.

As Lu Zhou looked at the experimental data, his eyebrows furrowed.

The results from the last experiment were not ideal. Judging from the data collected by several detectors, even though there was a 750 GeV characteristic peak, the confidence level was below three sigmas.

Lu Zhou was looking at a Dalitz plot when he suddenly noticed a series of green dots hovering below 125 GeV.

"It wasn't a total failure, at least the data we collected in the low-energy range is consistent with the results from CERN. Even though the 750 GeV characteristic peak seems to be weak, the experiment data tells us that this is unlikely just a random occurrence."

The people at the conference table looked at each other.

It sounded like Lu Zhou was trying to convince him that the situation "wasn't too bad".

After contemplating for a while, Witten spoke.

"Then what do you think this is?"

"I can only make a guess..." Lu Zhou paused for a second and said, "The matter that makes up the elementary particles is something we can't directly observe or understand. For example... look at the clock on the wall."

Everyone turned toward the clock.

Lu Zhou paused for a second before speaking.

"Look at the swinging pendulum... When it's swinging to the sides, it's blocked by the clock case, so we can't see it. We can only see it when it's near the center."

Witten pinched his chin with a look of interest on his face.

"That's an interesting analogy... So what you're saying is, we just need more time, and the treasure will appear in front of our eyes?"

Lu Zhou said in an ambiguous way, "Sort of... Maybe we can only observe it at a certain time."

Frank Wilczek twisted the pen in his hand and spoke.

"How do you plan on verifying this conjecture?"

Even if it could only be observed under certain conditions, that conclusion didn't help anyone. They were trying to find a method of observation; they weren't trying to find any excuses.

Lu Zhou shrugged and said, "Well, just like any conjecture, verifying it requires time, this includes the time crystal theory... Of course, I will design an experiment to solve this problem. I'll try to implement the experiment next month."

Witten paused for a second and said, "But it's almost Chinese New Year, are you sure?"

"It's fine, don't worry about me." Lu Zhou tapped on the conference table with his pen, looked around the room, and said, "This meeting is over."

The meeting ended.

Lu Zhou left the conference room and returned to his chairman office.

He asked his assistant to bring him a sandwich and a cup of coffee. He took out the meeting notes he had written a moment ago and began reading.

"Where is the problem..."

As Lu Zhou pondered, he gradually started to accumulate some ideas and clues in his mind. His intuition told him that these clues were exactly what he needed.

However, these clues were too vague. Even after thinking for a long time, he wasn't able to find an answer.

Suddenly, a string of text suddenly appeared on the lower right corner of his laptop, and this interrupted his train of thought.

Xiao Ai: [Master! Good news! (✿◡◡)]

Lu Zhou looked at the computer and said, "... What news?"

Xiao Ai: [Master, the experiment was successful! (๑•̀ㅂ•́)و]

Experiment?

Lu Zhou was shocked, and he quickly realized what was going on.

Xiao Ai isn't talking about the physics experiment.

It's talking about another experiment.

The experiment on the Void Memory...

1140 Full Synchronized

Ever since the Jinling to Shanghai maglev track was completed, it took less time to travel from Jinling to Shanghai than it did from Jinling CBD to Jinling airport.

After less than two hours of commuting, Lu Zhou traveled from the ILHCRC chairman office to the underground laboratory of the Institute for Advanced Study. He went inside and put on a VR helmet.

Previously, the user would not be able to see anything after putting on the helmet. However, the engineers at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study added a built-in interface screen for all Phantom system helmets. This made it more convenient for users to independently operate the Phantom system.

"Xiao Ai."

Xiao Ai: [Hello, Master. (u003e▽

Lu Zhou: "Do I have to play through the mission myself?"

Xiao Ai: [No need, Xiao Ai thinks Master won't be able to pass the level even with the optimal strategy. (≥▽≤)]

Xiao Ai: [So Xiao Ai created a special 100% synchronization play-through mode. The user can watch the game from a first-person perspective. The user

can stop the synchronization play-through at any time. However, if the user wants to synchronize again, the user will have to start from the beginning!´∨`]

Lu Zhou: "... Thanks."

Xiao Ai: [Haha ɾ(ʘ_ʘ)ɿ]

Even though Lu Zhou felt like he was just insulted by an artificial intelligence software, Xiao Ai did a huge favor for him, so he decided to ignore the insult.

After Lu Zhou muttered "link start", the screen inside the helmet gradually began to darken as he entered the virtual space...

...

The username of the player that defeated the level was: Professor Lu's Fanboy

When Lu Zhou saw this username, he instantly blushed.

What surprised him was that someone in the Respawn Team actually passed this level.

Even though he didn't know what Li Gaoliang's username was, he knew there was no way Li Gaoliang would have such a "disgusting" username.

The player synchronization began.

Lu Zhou was watching the gameplay in the first-person perspective of his "fanboy". After he followed Captain Ince and extracted Professor Lane, they were attacked by a group of unknown armed forces.

As usual, the escort team was divided into two teams; one team continued to fly forward, while the other turned to ground combat. After five minutes of an intense battle, two huge support drones arrived, decimating the scene.

What happened shook Lu Zhou.

The player immediately rolled toward the bottom of a car.

The player used the energy shield on the top of the car to block the first wave of energy rays. He then smoothly rolled out from the other side of the car and

picked up an EMP transmitter from the ground. He aimed it at the sky and pressed the trigger.

A light blue wave spread out like a giant net, and the two drones instantly fell to the ground, like birds that had been shot. The car that he used for cover also exploded.

The explosion smoke covered his tactical mask. It was as if everything was executed perfectly, down to the second. If he were one second faster or slower, he would have died.

Lu Zhou was dumbfounded. Captain Ince was nearby, and he spoke to Lu Zhou.

“...¥#@%, What just happened?”

A word in the communication channel was censored. It was obviously a swear word.

The player glanced at Captain Ince. He then immediately raised his rifle and began shooting at the remaining enemies.

Even though Lu Zhou wasn't playing himself, experiencing the battle from a first-person perspective felt pretty awesome.

Suddenly, a thought flashed in his mind.

He had always wondered what the best way of showing a movie using VR technology was. But now he realized that a first-person movie might be the best way.

Lu Zhou made note of this thought and placed his attention back onto the battlefield.

After suffering heavy casualties, the opponent chose to retreat.

Lu Zhou was praised by Captain Ince for shooting down the two drones. Since his flying car was damaged from the battle, Captain Ince asked him to join the other car instead.

There were two more thrilling battles along the way. Professor Lane was finally escorted to the Empire council. Lu Zhou could finally witness the rest of the storyline.

Inside the majestic Empire council building.

Honestly, Lu Zhou didn't expect the Calans to be an artistic and creative species. However, this changed when he saw the magnificent building.

Two black pyramid-shaped buildings were stacked on top of each other, tip to tip. One was on the ground while the other was standing upside down in the air. The building looked like an hourglass. It was a symbolization of order and equality, the pyramids corresponded to the upper and lower houses of the Empire parliament.

Anti-gravity technology?!

When Lu Zhou saw the upside-down pyramid, he was astonished.

They arrived at the bottom of the pyramid. Professor Lane looked at the tall building and sighed in relief.

This was the safest place in the Empire.

Lu Zhou finally completed his mission.

Professor Lane looked back at Lu Zhou and smiled. He reached out his hand.

"Thank you so much, soldier. You just saved our civilization... Speaking of which, I don't know your name yet."

Lu Zhou's character saved Professor Lane numerous times across the three battles. This was why Professor Lane was so appreciative of Lu Zhou.

Otherwise, a distinguished scholar like Lane would never take the initiative to talk to an ordinary soldier.

The Calan civilization had a strong social class structure. Generally speaking, one's occupation determined their identity and status, as well as what kind of house they could live in, and how much material resources they had access to.

Lu Zhou had a guess as to why the soldiers were at the bottom of the class structure. Perhaps the Calan Empire had been at peace for centuries, marginalizing the military.

Seeing how Lu Zhou's character didn't say anything, Lu Zhou quickly ended the synchronization mode and took control of the character.

"My name is Lu Zhou."

"Lu... Zhou?"

Professor Lane looked at Lu Zhou and said, "What an interesting name, I've lived in section c-12-01 for many years, but I've never heard of a name like that."

Lu Zhou tried to make up a reason. "That's because I'm from an agricultural planet... We have different names there."

Professor Lane asked curiously, "Interesting, I have a friend that studies agricultural planets that would be interested in talking with you... If you want, I can introduce him to you."

Lu Zhou: "I'm more interested in physics... Can I talk about physics with you?"

As if Lu Zhou had just told a funny joke, Professor Lane smiled and said, "Physics? That's too esoteric and broad at the same time. Before we discuss, I suggest you go through the system and try your best to study. If you're still interested in physics after your military service, you can find me at the Institute of Physics in district c-12-01."

Lu Zhou still wanted to talk with Professor Lane, but Captain Ince walked over.

The captain looked at the scholar and spoke.

"Dear Professor Lane, your identity has been verified. The council invites you to enter the council house. Your meeting will begin soon."

Professor Lane said in a sincere tone, "Thank you all for this. Also, I hope you report the attackers to the Empire intelligence department, I never would have imagined someone having the audacity to do such a thing."

Captain Ince spoke solemnly.

"Our intelligence department is already collecting evidence. I'm certain we will find out how the attackers got their hands on the weapons."

Professor Lane nodded and didn't say anything. He turned around and walked toward the main entrance of the building.

Captain Ince looked at Lu Zhou and pondered for a second before he spoke.

"You want to come too?"

When Captain Ince said this, Lu Zhou noticed the other soldiers looking jealous.

Lu Zhou knew that this was a show of respect in the Empire army.

Therefore, he followed Captain Ince's footsteps and handed over his weapons to the guards at the council house entrance.

This was the center of the Empire.

Secrets of the highest level were stored here.

Lu Zhou followed Captain Ince's footsteps into this majestic hall.

He had a feeling that...

Professor Lane would soon reveal the Oracle.

He would finally know what the high tech system was trying to tell him.

1141 Quark Stars

Lu Zhou thought that this majestic hourglass-shaped building would have many floors. However, he found out that a large amount of space was wasted.

The floors inside the building had sky-high ceilings. The sense of vertical space gave the entire hall a majestic and solemn look.

It was almost like this wasn't a conference room, but instead a court hall.

The abnormally tall conference table gave off a similar vibe.

The conference table had a horseshoe shape, wrapping around the room.

Sitting at the bottom seats were ordinary members of the parliament. Sitting at the higher seats were people of higher status, such as department ministers, president of parliament, and even the ruler of the Empire: the consul.

What a strange civilization.

Even though this was obviously a capitalistic society, the government/political structure did not seem efficient at all. Rather, it seemed to be deeply embedded in religion.

Lu Zhou speculated that this might be related to the Calan's appreciation of philosophy and aesthetics.

Unfortunately, Lu Zhou was not a social scientist, so he focused his attention on more important things...

The meeting soon began.

Lu Zhou was standing on the side of the hall with Captain Ince, blending in with two other guards. Lu Zhou waited quietly for five minutes, staring intently at the conference table. Finally, the consul sitting at the center of the conference table looked at Professor Lane and spoke calmly.

"You're Professor Lane?"

Professor Lane nodded and spoke politely.

"Yes, Your Honor."

"There's been a rumor circulating in the Ring world, about something named the 'Oracle'. According to the intelligence department's investigation, all sources lead to you."

The powerful Calanian consul continued to speak in a powerful manner, "I want to know why you're causing such trouble to the Empire.

"The parliament and the people of the Empire need an explanation."

Faced with the oppressive gazes from the parliament, Professor Lane kept his cool and spoke calmly.

"Your Honor, I must correct your statement.

“First of all, the Oracle is not a rumor. Our civilization is indeed facing an unprecedented crisis. Secondly, as a scholar, I am responsible for my words. What I say is true.”

There was a commotion in the conference hall.

Most of the legislators at the lower positions of power looked at each other and whispered to one another, even occasionally laughing from time to time.

Crisis?

If this were three centuries ago, this word would have been a lot more impactful. Back then, the world was full of doomers.

But ever since the Ring world was completed, the Empire had been shining in prosperity. Judging by the current population growth rate, they could maintain this prosperity for centuries.

They were in no danger of any kind of crisis.

Therefore, it was quite ridiculous to even mention the possibility of one.

The consul had a playful smile on his face. He had a look of contempt and ridicule in his eyes as he spoke.

“Then tell me, Professor Lane, what exactly is the crisis? Is it your theory on aliens?”

“No.”

Professor Lane frowned at the consul and began explaining his statement.

“I’m not sure if the crisis comes from them, but it is related to them.”

There was an even bigger commotion around the conference table.

The scholar looked around the conference table and spoke.

“One thing I want to say is that we are not alone in the universe. Even if there are no traces of life 500 light-years, or even 50,000 light-years away, that doesn’t mean there’s no external life at all. It is extremely unlikely that we are the only sentient beings in this universe.”

The consul looked at Professor Lane and spoke.

“That theory was popular many years ago, and I’m not interested in discussing it with you here. Even if they do exist, the sheer distance makes it so that we will never interact with them. So why does it matter to us?”

The Calans wasn’t a civilization that wanted to conquer the world.

Rather than expanding the territory of the Empire, they were more motivated on improving the peace and cohesion of their people. This was why they were able to create such a majestic giant engineering structure project that was the Ring world.

Aliens?

Even though in the early space age they wanted to make contact with an extraterrestrial species, that idea was abandoned in the early ages of the space colonization era.

Professor Lane nodded and spoke to the consul.

“Under ideal circumstances, staying in isolation is a wise choice. We don’t need to worry about species that are tens of thousands of light-years away... However, the problem isn’t that they have contacted us, but rather we have contacted them.”

The commotion in the room suddenly disappeared.

It was like a gun had just gone off.

A trace of astonishment had appeared in the consul’s eyes. The consul looked at Professor Lane and spoke.

“Where is the evidence!”

“I have published my findings in a paper 127 days ago, but that paper is precisely why my life is in danger... If it weren’t for Captain Ince and his team, I would have been captured by the attackers.”

Captain Ince, who was standing in the side of the conference room, nodded and spoke politely.

“Our pleasure, Professor Lane, your rights are protected by the state. Whether the parliament finds you guilty or not, you still have your rights.”

Professor Lane nodded as a show of gratitude.

He looked around the conference table and spoke.

“In order for us to reach an understanding, I will present my research again.”

He opened his suitcase and took out a thumb-sized prism from it.

When he gently pressed on the prism, the prism began to emit a blue light. Suddenly, a projected image appeared in the air.

It’s a holographic projection?

Lu Zhou was intrigued.

Is this a kind of naked eye holography, with a touchscreen interface?

How is that possible?

He felt like he was a kid from the suburbs that had just entered a city.

Other than Lu Zhou, everyone in the council was not surprised by what they saw. They quietly looked at the holographic screen and waited for Professor Lane to continue.

“... We all know that there is something that exists between black holes and neutron stars, which we know as quark stars. It is composed of up, down, and strange quarks. These stars are only the size of a pea, but they weigh hundreds of millions of tons.”

Professor Lane gestured with his hand and spoke.

“The research on quark stars has always been at the frontier of physics. It teaches us how to extract the materials we need from a black hole. A while ago, we were fortunate enough to discover and analyze a quark star that is 23,000 light-years away...

“And its size is... around the size of this pen.”

When Lu Zhou heard this, he was stunned.

Quark stars!

That actually exists?!

Physicists on Earth thought that “quark stars” was a type of fictional exotic star that did not exist...

The theory of its existence could be traced back to the conjecture that Witten put forward in the 1980s, in which he said “a large mass of strange quarks can form a ground state of a strong acting system”. There had been speculations regarding its existence during the early transition phases of the universe, caused by supernova explosions and neutron star collisions etc.

However, the conditions for the existence of a quark star was harsh. Theoretically, if it made contact with any matter, it would instantly explode, releasing terrifying amounts of energy.

Therefore, neither astrophysicists nor particle physicists had found evidence for its existence.

The only speculation so far was that the extremely high-energy cosmic rays with particle energies higher than 10^{19}eV might come from quark stars. However, just like neutrinos, it was difficult to capture these cosmic rays.

But Professor Lane confidently claimed that there was a quark star in the universe that was large enough to be seen with a naked eye.

If all of this was real, the entire physics community would go crazy...

Lu Zhou couldn't help but get excited.

However, his excitement didn't last long.

Because he knew that even if he knew the existence of this exotic star, there was no way to prove it to others.

It wasn't like he could use this “Void Memory” as evidence.

He didn't even know where the Calanians were located, nor if they still existed or not.

Lu Zhou began to feel a little down.

If only I can find the coordinates of the quark star or obtain the technology to find one.

I don't think that information is inside the Void Memory.

It's so close in front of me, yet so far...

"... Gentlemen, this is ground-breaking. A quark star that is large enough to be seen by the naked eye!"

"What's the use?" a member of parliament said. He looked at the excited Professor Lane and continued, "Even the most advanced research ship in the Empire can't fly 230,000 light-years away."

The member of parliament spoke quite loudly.

Professor Lane looked at the member of parliament and spoke.

"Any theory is useless upon its creation... If we don't understand it, there's no way to make it useful.

"Basically, I am responsible for researching the quark star. At first, we thought it was stationary, but then we analyzed the gravitational wave and found an interesting pattern... This means that the quark star is not technically in motion. However, it is heading toward the center of the galaxy through a light bridge!"

The consul coughed and spoke in a serious manner.

"This is the Empire council, we're not interested in theoretical physics."

"... The main point is that the discovery changed everything we know," Professor Lane said in a serious manner. "This quark star was man-made.

"Another civilization created it.

"The civilization that created it is probably far more advanced than us."

1142 Natural Disaster

The room was abnormally silent.

A more advanced civilization suddenly became a possibility.

The members of parliament stared at each other with astonishing looks in their eyes.

This was a tricky situation because this had never happened before in the history of the Empire. The only intelligent alien creatures they found was a group of lizards using simple tools, who couldn't even create fires.

The Calan Empire had no interest in establishing diplomatic relationships with alien species; they were not interested in communicating with alien species at all. They could easily produce enough goods to satisfy their population. Establishing a diplomatic relationship with an extraterrestrial species meant they would have to reinstate their aerospace military forces and invest in military technology.

One thing for certain was that the less-advanced civilization was at a disadvantage.

Just the mere existence of a more advanced civilization would bring uncertainty and chaos to the Empire.

Just look at how much trouble the Oracle had already caused.

The parliament went into chaos.

Being sensitive to new information was an advantage of the Calanians, but also a flaw.

The consul rested his head on his hands and began to think.

This was a common technique used by Calanians; it made their consciousness feel closer to the universe. However, even the universe could not answer his question.

The silence lasted for a minute or so.

He finally spoke.

"You said they took the initiative to contact us."

"Yes." Professor Lane looked at the consul and nodded. He spoke in a serious manner, "At first, we thought the quark star was some kind of space probe or

a weapon capable of destroying planets. But after some careful research, the result was beyond our expectations.

“Our gravitational waves detector shows that it emits intermittent trajectory waves. The information contained in each wave seems to be non-random.

“It obviously isn’t a space probe because no information communication method can keep up with its traveling speed.

“On the other hand, it can’t be a weapon either. There’s no reason to make a weapon so obvious. They could easily extend its hyperspace channel and make it undetectable.

“So our inference is that it is a kind of broadcasting device. It uses the hyperspace to release gravitational waves to the surrounding area.”

The council chamber was silent.

Everyone was concerned.

Even though the physics behind this was complicated for them, Professor Lane explained it in a simple manner.

If it was a weapon, it would do everything it could to hide its existence, there was no need to make it so detectable.

The Minister of Science and Technology frowned and spoke.

“You’re saying it’s broadcasting information... But how can you understand what it’s saying?”

Professor Lane looked at him and spoke in a calm manner, “Physics rules the universe, while mathematics is the language of the universe. We only need a simple formula such as $a^2+b^2=c^2$ to let the other party know that the message comes from an intelligent species. Also, we can attach a mathematical proposition that we have recently solved or yet to solve. This tells the other party the level of our civilization... Because mathematics is strongly correlated to the advancement of civilization.”

Consul: “... So?”

Lane: “They did something similar.

“By analyzing the information contained in the gravitational waves, we received a series of complex mathematical expressions, and things similar to hash tables. Although it took a lot of work, we finally decrypted the code...”

The Minister of Defense clenched his fist and spoke.

“What did the information say? Is it a contact request? Declaration of war? Or—”

“Neither,” Lane shook his head and said, “they showed us their level of civilization, then told us about... the Oracle.”

The holographic image in the air formed an image of special mathematical operators. Soon after, the image was replaced by three lines of text.

A natural disaster is approaching.

Our universe is facing an unprecedented crisis.

Watch out!

Unlike a concise declaration of war, this kind of warning was more ambiguous and scarier.

What exactly was a natural disaster?

What was the unprecedented crisis?

Why did they have to watch out?

The message left out the more important part.

Professor Lane looked at the silent council chamber and spoke.

“Gentlemen, this is what the Oracle is.

“Even though we could only extract three sentences from the code... I believe it is enough for us to take it seriously.

“Now, do you still think the Oracle is still just a rumor?”

No one answered.

Even the member of parliament that previously mocked him was terrified.

The consul looked at the scholar for a long time.

Finally, he asked in a serious tone.

“One last question, did you respond?”

“No...” Professor Lane shrugged and said, “Even if we want to, due to the expansion of the universe, there is no way for our signal to reach the quark star.”

When the consul heard this, he was relieved.

Almost everyone in the room sighed in relief.

Even if they had mastered faster than light communication, there was no way to transmit the message that far away in a short amount of time.

Not to mention that the quark star was moving toward the center of the galaxy at astronomical speeds.

The consul leaned back on his chair and spoke.

“Regardless of whether this is true or false, you have no right to make this information public without authorization.”

Professor Lane knew the consul would say this, so he nodded and spoke.

“I know, this is my fault, but I was forced to do this. I know how weak our civilization is. In order to prevent the worse-case scenario from happening, someone has to do something.”

The consul raised his chin; he seemed to be dissatisfied with the scholar’s answer. He spoke in a louder voice.

“So what do you think we should do? Believe in a message from an unknown party? Believe that those aliens have good intentions? What if they attack us after gaining our trust? Who is to say this is not a trap? Not to mention, if there really is a disaster, why don’t they solve it themselves? Why are they putting their hopes on a weaker civilization?”

“And if they really have good intentions, they should just tell us what the natural disaster is!”

Professor Lane shrugged.

“I’m not ruling out that possibility, but I think it is unlikely. I think that there are a hundred more efficient ways to attack us, such as sending the quark star our way.”

Parliament President: “Maybe they don’t know our location.”

Professor Lane laughed.

“Stop joking around, even a blind person can find this gigantic ring world.

“Enough!” the consul said as he stared at the scholar. “You’re under arrest for incitement and subversion. Your academic title will be removed and you will be sent to the prison on the polar star.”

Professor Lane: “Where is the trial?”

The consul said, “It just happened.”

The Calan Empire had got rid of the death penalty a long time ago. The harshest punishment was being exiled to the outermost prison of the Empire, where the prisoner would spend the rest of his life there.

In some sense, this was a more painful punishment than death. After all, for Calanians, death was nothing more than returning to the spirit of the universe. A permanent exile meant they would have to endure a hundred years of suffering.

Lane shrugged and went silent for a while before he spoke.

“This is the worst choice, but fine.”

He nodded toward the consul as a guard walked over.

“Put the handcuffs on me, my mission is over.”

There was a commotion in the council chamber again.

The consul pretended like he didn't hear anything as he stared at the man being handcuffed.

Before being taken away, Professor Lane suddenly looked up and glanced at the consul sitting at the consul table.

"Before sending me to the polar star, I have one last request."

Consul: "Say it."

"It's about my assets." Lane paused for a second and said, "I have no children nor immediate family members. Before I get locked up, I want to resolve my assets."

The Empire had private asset protection laws.

As long as the assets were obtained legally, the state would never confiscate a citizen's assets.

The consul looked at the Minister of Justice, who nodded at him. The consul then looked at Professor Lane.

"According to the laws of the Empire, your request is reasonable. Before being sent to the polar star, you can choose a successor."

Professor Lane raised his cuffed hands and pointed immediately at Lu Zhou, who was standing at the side of the room.

"I want to give him all of my assets."

"He is the one that brought me here safely."

The consul glanced at the soldier standing on the side of the hall and waved his hand in the air.

Two green holographic identity cards appeared in the air; the consul used his finger to transfer the data from one holographic ID to another.

"Reinhardt, is it? From now on you will own all of Professor Lane's property."

Before Professor Lane left, he gave Lu Zhou a surprised look; he probably did not expect Lu Zhou to give him a "fake name".

However, Professor Lane didn't say anything. He was quietly taken away by the guards.

Chapter 1143 Doing Something Is Better Than Doing Nothing

Lu Zhou thought that the game would have ended here; he thought there might be a "game over" or an "end of scene" title page popping up. He wasn't sure if he had completed exploring the entire Void Memory.

After Professor Lane left, the consul announced the end of the meeting. All of the clues about the Oracle seemed to end here; it was no longer relevant to the story.

After Lu Zhou left the parliament hall, he followed Captain Ince back to their military station. He applied to leave the military task force and handed over his equipment. He then aimlessly wandered around the world on a rail train.

Even though there was a strong social class structure, this world was more complicated than he had imagined.

On this ring-shaped world, there were industrial districts that specialized in producing consumer goods and there were commercial districts dedicated to retail and entertainment. There were also college districts, farming districts, high-density and low-density residential areas, natural landscape areas, and so on.

The Calanians that lived here did not need to work hard to enjoy a relatively successful and luxurious life. Because the incomes within the same social class were similar, people from different classes rarely interacted with one another. Thus, the gap between the rich and the poor did not seem as obvious; everyone was living in their own utopia.

The currency used here was something similar to a credit score.

This soldier named Reinhardt was congratulated by his superiors for his outstanding performance and for inheriting the property of an upper-class Calanian. Thus, Reinhardt had a comfortable life in front of him.

Lu Zhou went straight to the college district and found the library closest to him.

However, he was disappointed. Just like he had imagined, most of the in-depth information and specific technology was obscured in this Void Memory.

When he opened a textbook, he could only see a blurry mess of words and images. The same happened when he tried to find information on the Internet. Specific and esoteric knowledge was not recorded in this memory. The deeper he dove into a subject, the less information there was.

This was like a dream; he could only see an outline, and there was no way to dig deeper.

If he only followed the main plot line, this wouldn't have felt like a dream at all. However, once he deviated from the main story line, he could feel invisible walls blocking him.

He was like Michael De Santa in GTA5, aimlessly wandering the streets of Los Santos, interacting with people that did not actually exist.

At least for now, he had yet to find any clues or Easter eggs.

Other than a substantial inheritance, the only thing Professor Lane left him was suspense regarding the "natural disaster".

What exactly is the natural disaster?

The story seemed to have ended here...

...

Lu Zhou took off his helmet and got out of bed. He felt like his head was overheating. He took a deep breath of the air-conditioned air in the laboratory.

Xiao Ai's drone flew over, a line of text was displayed on the screen.

[Master, do you need a glass of water? 0.0]

Lu Zhou: "Yes, please."

The robotic arm on the wall began to move; it soon handed Lu Zhou a cold cup of water.

Lu Zhou took a sip and contemplated it for a while. He then suddenly spoke.

“Xiao Ai.”

Xiao Ai: [What? (u003e▽

Lu Zhou: “Do you have information about the Calans inside your database? I mean... other than the Void Memory part.”

Xiao Ai: [I don't think so... Why? 𐄂|*´Ų`|𐄂]

I see.

After Lu Zhou thought for a while, he shook his head.

“... Nothing.”

Lu Zhou stood up and walked toward the elevator.

...

The Void Memory story had ended.

However, the suspense still lingered in Lu Zhou's head.

What kind of natural disaster is the Calans scared of?

What is the unprecedented crisis?

Also, what is the strange quark star flying toward the center of the galaxy?

Lu Zhou went back to his office and sat in front of his desk. He took out his notebook and began recording his thoughts.

He stopped writing and gently tapped the pen on the table. After pondering for a while, he spoke.

“A natural disaster...”

This was obviously translated from the Calanian language, but the meaning should be somewhat similar.

The most annoying thing in academic research was trying to understand a translated paper.

However, it was impossible to study the original meaning of the Oracle. The memory sent to him by the system already translated everything into Chinese.

Not to mention that there was no way he could use the current technology on Earth to translate the Oracle.

“There is only one thing for certain, that is the high tech system does not come from the Calanians...”

Due to the moral values of the Calanians, even if they discovered planet Earth, they would not attack humans.

National level actions aside, even a company had to consider costs and benefits.

Apart from an atmospheric environment, Earth did not have a lot of resources compared to other planets in the universe. It also had a relatively high gravitational force.

There was no way a civilization that could create a ring world would bother attacking earth. Even if they needed resources such as water or gas, they could just collect them more efficiently from glacial or gaseous planets. They wouldn't even have to purify the collected resources.

There was no reason they would spend so much effort giving Earth a “high tech system” to improve the level of human technology.

This kind of behavior could only be done by a more advanced civilization, similar to the one that created the quark star.

However, there was one problem.

What was the motive of the advanced civilization?

Or rather...

Are they the so-called “void”?

Lu Zhou thought about it for a long time, but he couldn't come to a conclusion. He could only write down his series of conjectures.

Obviously, the work on the 750 GeV signal was more urgent than exploring the secrets of the quark star and the void.

Now that the entire physics community was expecting him to find an amazing discovery, he had to do something.

After hesitating for a while, Lu Zhou took out his phone and made a few phone calls. Finally, he was able to contact the person in charge of the Ali CMB Telescope Project—Professor Zhang Tianming, a researcher at the Institute of High Energy Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

This gravitational wave detector began construction in 2017 and was first tested in 2020. It was the highest altitude gravitational wave observatory in the world.

Even though Lu Zhou did not have any hope in mind, he still asked Professor Zhang for the latest gravitational waves data.

Even though probably nothing would come of this.

Doing something was better than doing nothing.

Chapter 1144 The Secret of The Hyperspace

After Lu Zhou obtained the data, he spent an entire day wrangling and analyzing the data. He wasn't able to find any indication of a quark star.

“From the Calan Void Memory, we can infer that the advanced civilization that created the quark star, let's call them the “Void” civilization, had mastered some kind of hyperspace technology, which allowed them to send matter and information at speeds faster than light.”

Lu Zhou closed his notebook and frowned. He spoke with a headache.

“But how is this possible?”

Traveling faster than light.

Even though this sounded easy, as seen in most science fiction movies, in reality, this was extremely difficult to achieve.

Unlike controllable fusion, which proved to be feasible by physicists decades ago, high-energy physicists couldn't even imagine how to make objects move faster than the speed of light. It was impossible from every theoretical angle.

Theories regarding this could be traced to the end of the previous century.

In 1992, the famous scholar Professor Stephen Hawking proved using mathematical methods and general relativity, that if the bounded topological space structure changed, then a closed time-space curve could form.

Basically, due to general relativity, things like wormholes would violate the law of causality. (Interestingly enough, Einstein, the discoverer of the theory of relativity, supported wormhole theory and proposed that it is “a thin tube connecting space and time between distant areas of the universe.” This goes to show that even great minds can be wrong. After all, academia does not pander to authority, it merely seeks the truth.)

According to the Calanian Void Memory, their method of achieving faster than light navigation and communication was to use the gravitational forces between star systems. This meant that a natural hyperspace could be formed, allowing faster than light travel.

This was consistent with Einstein’s theories.

The specific physics principle behind this was not mentioned in the Void Memory. Lu Zhou had to make assumptions based on his knowledge and a small amount of information.

For example, a huge gravitational field can tear space to form a new dimension. Entering this dimension was how they achieved faster than light travel.

It was similar to playing checkers.

Even though the Calanian technology was advanced, the Calanians did not create a miracle; the miracle was the universe itself. At most, a group of smart people was able to apply their knowledge.

However, the “Void” civilization seemed different.

Lu Zhou understood why everyone in the parliament hall was panicking.

Not only did they create a quark star, but they also created their own hyperspace. This kind of technology was far beyond the Calanians’.

“... The problem is that, if the broadcast goes out to the entire universe at faster than light speed, surely it must be detectable on Earth?”

Maybe the broadcast had already ended?

Or maybe, like he initially had guessed, the Void memory regarding the Calanian Empire happened a long, long time ago.

Lu Zhou tapped his finger on the table. He shook his head and stuffed his notebook into his computer. He stood up, took out his phone, and called Wang Peng.

“Hello?”

“Send me to Jin University.”

“Roger that.”

...

A hundred thousand yuan of prize money.

This was a huge sum of money for a student.

Actually, not just for a student.

This was more than a year’s salary for the average worker in Jinling.

However, instead of thinking about this huge sum of money, Duan Siqi was more worried about something else.

His intuition told him that there were enormous business opportunities in the virtual reality space. He was just their first customer.

Even though he was just a lab rat doing this as a part-time job. Now that he had gotten a taste of the honey, he was unsatisfied.

Should I change my major?

He had this idea more than once.

In fact, in his spare time, he began to read books on programming, composition, and VR technology.

Even though learning these things took up a lot of his spare time. It made him unexpectedly happy.

Unlike mathematics, when he was learning these things, there wasn't a roommate making him feel insecure. Even though learning these things did not help him do better in his exams, the accumulation of knowledge made him feel a sense of accomplishment.

One day, he was on his way to the library. Suddenly, someone stopped him and spoke to him.

"You're... the player that passed the level?"

Duan Siqi stopped his steps and looked up.

When he saw the person in front of him, he was shocked.

The f*ck?

God Lu?!

This was like buying a bottle of water in a convenience store, only to run into Justin Bieber.

Actually, that probably would be more likely.

Even though Lu Zhou taught a number theory course at Jin Ling University, he had given less than a handful of lectures over the past year.

Duan Siqi was about to nod when he remembered his username. He suddenly felt embarrassed.

"It's not what you think... I just randomly thought of that username, I'm not actually a fanboy—"

"It's fine." Lu Zhou waved his hand and said, "It doesn't matter."

Duan Siqi awkwardly nodded and spoke.

"Okay... Do you need anything from me?"

"Actually, nothing special. I just want to talk with you about the game... If you have time, I'd like to buy you a cup of coffee."

“Of course.” Duan Siqi smiled and said, “What do you want to know?”

Oh my god.

This person is ten times more powerful than the university principal.

Even speaking to Lu Zhou would hugely benefit his career. There was no way he could let go of an opportunity to have coffee with him.

Lu Zhou looked at the student and smiled.

Even though he could see Duan Siqi trying to hide his nervousness, he saw right through the kid.

He spoke in an easy-going manner.

“I know a good cafe outside the school. Someone used to take me there when I was a student... Let’s go.”

When Lu Zhou turned around, Duan Siqi quickly followed him.

Along the way, the two chatted with each other. They only talked about the game. Duan Siqi did not expect this at all. On one hand, he didn’t expect Academician Lu to be so approachable, and on the other, he didn’t expect them to click so well.

Due to the gap in status and power, he nearly forgot that Lu Zhou was actually not that much older than him...

“What do you think about the game?”

“It’s too difficult. There are no checkpoints, and it takes dozens of attempts to pass. It’s borderline psychotic.”

Duan Siqi thought about what happened in the game and shuddered.

He played the drone part at least 20 times. The only reason he passed was that his timing was down to the second, and his position was perfect.

Lu Zhou nodded.

If this game wasn’t this difficult, he could have passed it himself. As opposed to forming a task force.

“What about the other aspects?”

Duan Siqi contemplated for a second and said, “I think the world can be expanded. I’m not interested in the ring world, I’m more interested in the other planets... I feel like if the world is expanded, like EVE Online, it will stand out more.”

Lu Zhou nodded.

“I’ll tell the product manager that... I’m more curious about your thoughts on the storyline.”

Duan Siqi said, “Storyline?”

“Yeah...” Lu Zhou nodded and said, “Aren’t you curious about the Oracle and the natural disaster?”

“I mean all games have something similar...” Duan Siqi scratched his head and said, “I was a little curious, but the story got cut off, it was a little annoying.”

Lu Zhou: “... Judging from what you know about the game, what do you think the natural disaster might be?”

“Maybe a disaster that sweeps the entire universe. An out-of-control AI? But I feel like that level of threat isn’t high enough... Sorry, I don’t have a good imagination. Can you tell me what happens?”

Lu Zhou looked at the curious student and smiled.

“Unfortunately, the storyline was written by an AI. The story is still being written; I don’t even know what happens next. You’ll just have to wait and see.”

“It’s still being written...” Duan Siqi said. He looked disappointed and said, “I suggest you change this game into an online game. Maybe expand the degree of freedom. The game should end when they reach the Empire building. When the alien scholar was captured, I thought I would have to rescue him, but then the game ended. I think there should be an open-world mode after the main storyline, right?”

Lu Zhou noticed something unusual. He frowned and spoke.

“It ended?”

“Yeah...” Duan Siqi looked at him and said, “Don’t you know?”

Lu Zhou: “... The player follows Captain Ince back to the military station and hands over his equipment. Did you not unlock the open world mode?”

“What station?” Duan Siqi was muddled. He looked at Lu Zhou and said, “Doesn’t the screen turn black?”

Lu Zhou: “You didn’t inherit Professor Lane’s assets?”

Duan Siqi: “...???”

Lu Zhou looked at the confused student and instantly realized what was going on.

When they arrived at the parliament hall building, Lu Zhou made a conscious effort to talk with Professor Lane. Otherwise, he probably wouldn’t have inherited Professor Lane’s assets.

Does this mean that the ending I saw is the true ending?

Lu Zhou had a weird look on his face.

And I’m the only one that saw it?

Does this mean I’m the better gamer?

Duan Siqi looked at Lu Zhou and nervously said, “Did I... not pass the game?”

Is he going to take back my bonus money?

Even though he wanted to ask this question, he decided not to.

When Lu Zhou heard this, he paused for a second and smiled.

“No, it’s fine, forget about it.”

Lu Zhou changed the conversation.

“I want to know what you want to experience next.”

When Duan Siqi heard this, his eyes lit up.

“How about the Matrix? It’s a science fiction classic! It’s perfect for virtual reality.”

“The Matrix? Sounds interesting,” Lu Zhou said, “I’ll tell the engineers at the institute...”

Chapter 1145 A Busy New Year

The 2023 Chinese New Year happened earlier than normal.

The Chinese New Year’s holiday came near the end of January.

Chinese New Year’s Eve went by, and the Jin University physics research building already began to look deserted.

Academician Lu Shenjian sat in his office, reading the academic magazine in his hand while drinking a freshly brewed hot cup of tea.

After flipping through a few pages, he saw a headline.

[Chinese Scholars Are Leaving Shanghai, ILHCRC Shuts Down! The 750 GeV Characteristic Peak Was A Failure! Where Will The Future Of Physics Go?]

Academician Lu saw the headline and couldn’t help but chuckle.

“The media is really talking nonsense, it’s the holidays, of course we’re shut down.”

The old man sitting on the office sofa smiled.

“Old Lu, it’s the holidays, why worry, when are you going to retire?”

Sitting across from Academician Lu was Academician Liu Guangzhao from the Jin Ling University physics department. However, Academician Liu’s research area was not particle physics; it was condensed matter physics. His research was mainly focused on atomic clusters, low-dimensional quantum systems, and nanotechnology.

These two old professors were quite good friends. Even though their research area was different, they had always had a good friendship.

Old Lu smiled and waved his hand.

“Not yet, I can work for another 10 years.”

Academician Liu smiled and said, “Really? You’re getting old.”

Academician Lu smiled and said, “We’re only on this planet for a couple of decades, why should I waste any time? Don’t worry, I know what I can do.”

“I’m not worrying, you just look tired.” Academician Liu sighed and said, “Speaking of which, how is the 750 GeV project going? I heard it’s not looking great?”

Academician Lu: “We’ve only done four experiments, of course it doesn’t look good. Slow but steady wins the race. Don’t worry, I’m confident in this research project.”

“I’m just asking, I’m just a layman in the field of particle physics.” Academician Liu smiled and took a sip of tea before he said, “This tea is quite good, where did you get it?”

“I didn’t get it, my student gave it to me!” Academician Lu proudly said, “I can’t finish it myself, take some home if you want it. Just don’t take it all.”

“You old bugger, always showing off to me.” Old Liu put down the teacup and stood up. He sighed and said, “Sigh, if only I can produce a few outstanding students like you, I can retire early.”

Old Lu heard his friend complaining and burst into laughter.

“Haha! Forget about it, maybe in your afterlife!”

...

[$M_{2\pi} = (M_\mu + M_d)/2$ $F_{\pi^1} \langle 0 | \Psi \Psi' | 0 \rangle$...]

[...]

Inside a Zhongshan International mansion.

Lu Zhou sat in his study room. He looked at the pile of blueprints and draft papers, lost in his thought.

Chinese New Year had just gone by. Lu Zhou had yet to finish digesting the dumplings made by his mother when he started working again. It wasn't that he didn't want a break, but he had too many people relying on him. He had no time to waste.

Normally, regardless of what the research project was, he would try to wrap up the research project before the Chinese New Year's holiday. He didn't want his work to affect his life.

However, this year was rather unfortunate. The Lunar Hadron Collider took forever to complete, not to mention this year's holidays came earlier than usual.

Fortunately, his family was sympathetic.

Even his father only made a small comment at the dinner table. Xiao Tong, on the other hand, was busy with her own academics, so she didn't harass him.

Lu Zhou took a deep breath of the warm air and stood up from his chair. He walked to the window and pushed it open.

The icy cold wind blew in his face, cooling down his hot brain. It was almost like the wind was blowing away his fatigue and tiredness.

As Xiao Ai's drone flew over to him, a line of text appeared on the display.

Xiao Ai: [Master, aren't you cold? 0.0]

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "I'm not cold."

In fact, it was getting too hot; it made him feel dizzy, to the point that it was difficult to concentrate.

Xiao Ai: [Then Master, Master, do you need Xiao Ai to make a cup of coffee?
(๑•̀ㅂ•́)]

Lu Zhou nodded.

“Thanks.”

Xiao Ai: [Okay, coming right up! ($\ast \geq \nabla \leq$)]

Soon after, a delicious coffee aroma floated into the study room.

Lu Zhou took the coffee from Xiao Ai and took a sip. He felt himself energized as he closed the windows. He sat down at his desk and looked at the unfinished draft papers. He slowly fell into deep thought.

For some reason, he felt like his brain had cleared up greatly after the short break.

“Looks like I have to take breaks more often.”

Lu Zhou felt the warmth of the coffee in his hands. He smiled and grabbed a pen off his desk.

After pondering for a moment, he wrote on the paper.

He had been researching the 750 GeV characteristic peak for a while now. He had also made countless guesses and conjectures.

However, he didn't feel the difficulty of this project until he finally activated the lunar collider.

The signal was like a ghost, floating in and out of the energy spectrum. He even began to wonder if there were an alien interfering with his experiment.

For some reason, a pen suddenly appeared in Lu Zhou's mind.

Accurately speaking, it was the pen inside the Empire council building; the one being held tightly by Professor Lane.

Lu Zhou stopped writing and stared at the calculations on the page. He frowned and suddenly muttered to himself nonchalantly.

“... Maybe it's related to the hyperspace?”

It cannot be observed in the 3-dimensional world... or only a part of it can be observed. Where is the part that can't be observed?

If his guess was true, then time and space would have to be distorted, while the unobservable part of the signal would be hidden in an incomplete space.

It was like a new door had opened in his mind; his thoughts had never felt clearer.

The tip of his pen trembled as he felt a wave of excitement in his heart.

He had a feeling that...

This discovery was going to be even more amazing than he expected!

Time quickly passed by.

The sun outside the window gradually disappeared.

Lu Zhou put down his pen and looked at the pile of papers in front of him as he smirked.

“I finally finished it before the deadline.”

He looked at the calendar sitting on the right corner of his desk.

The second round of experiments was going to begin in two days.

A few hours ago, he was still anxious over running out of time.

But now, he was looking forward to the experiment more than ever before.

1146 Advanced Theory

As the days passed by, Chinese physicists began to return to Shanghai, and the ILHCRC headquarters became lively again.

And the media outlets that claimed that the ILHCRC had been shut down, pretended like nothing had happened.

Everything was happening according to plans.

Even though scholars from the Brookhaven National Laboratory were probably not going to work here, they were only a small fraction of the people involved in the project. Even though there were people who were not optimistic about the 750 GeV project, which had been going on for a month, most of them did not want to give up their name spots on the final paper.

Normally speaking, the list of researcher names on a large-scale international scientific research project could be dozens of pages long.

However, it was still important to have on one's scientific research resume. It was immensely helpful for working at other research institutes or universities in the future.

Inside an office.

Professor Witten saw Lu Zhou walk in. He took off his glasses and spoke with a smile.

"How was your holiday?"

Lu Zhou: "Quite fulfilling."

Witten looked at the stack of papers in Lu Zhou's hand and smiled.

"Looks like you didn't rest for long."

"We're so close to an amazing discovery, it's difficult to relax and take a break."

Witten looked at how confident Lu Zhou was. He was a little surprised as he spoke.

"You've made progress?"

"Not just progress." Lu Zhou smiled confidently and threw the papers in his hand on the table. He said, "Remember the pendulum theory I talked about a year ago? I used the Chinese New Year holidays to perfect it."

Without saying anything, Witten quickly picked up the stack of documents on the desk and carefully examined them.

Lu Zhou, on the other hand, walked to the corner and made himself a cup of coffee. He then sat on the sofa and quietly waited.

This was all thanks to being inspired by the Void memory.

Even though Professor Lane did not directly tell him any theories related to the 750 GeV energy zone or even particle physics in general, most things did

not have to be explicitly stated. Knowing its existence was already a huge inspiration.

For example, the concept of the hyperspace.

If a hyperspace existed, then Einstein's wormhole theory was possible.

And using this logic, if the characteristic peak of the 750 GeV energy zone corresponded to a certain part of the elementary particles that existed in a hyperspace, it would explain the insufficient observation confidence level.

The mathematical theories Lu Zhou deduced previously were still applicable here.

Similar examples were common in physics. For example, when people tried to explain the gauge symmetry of the Grand Unification Theory, there were claims that supersymmetry provided a framework to describe the way fermions and bosons accommodated a four-dimensional hyperspace. This also explained the strange geometric properties of fermions in a four-dimensional Minkowski space.

However, the hyperspace theory was not proven.

However, if they really could find this particle, they might be able to prove the existence of the hyperspace!

Witten's fingers were trembling; he had a powerful look in his eyes.

After ten minutes, he pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose and muttered.

"Interesting... Hyperspace theory?"

Lu Zhou took a sip of coffee and explained it.

"Strictly speaking, it's a conjecture based on the hyperspace theory. For a large proposition like the hyperspace theory, it is too difficult to prove it with my own strength. We know too little about gravity... But maybe after this experiment is over, I might be able to prove it."

He paused for a second and spoke.

"Of course, this depends on what we find from our experiment."

“Unbelievable...” Witten said as he put down the paper. He looked up at Lu Zhou and said excitedly, “You know what? I’m looking forward to the future.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “I feel the same way.”

He couldn’t wait to begin the second round of experiments.

This time, he would definitely find the ghost particle that had been hiding from him for the past seven years!

Witten: “Do you plan on publishing this paper?”

“Of course, good things should be shared with the public. I plan on putting a preprint on arXiv,” Lu Zhou said. “If the experiment results are satisfactory, I’ll attack the experiment results and submit it to the Future main journal issue.”

...

After more than a month of silence, the researchers at the ILHCRC had finally made some progress.

Lu Zhou’s paper on hyperspace theory and the 750 GeV characteristic peak was uploaded to arXiv’s website. It caused a huge sensation in the theoretical physics community.

People were surprised at Lu Zhou’s “advanced theory”, but they were also surprised at the time Lu Zhou chose to upload this paper.

Basically, there were supporters and opposers.

Some people mentioned that Lu Zhou might be overly optimistic about the hyperspace theory and that it was only a conjecture, while other people thought that this was a good idea and that it could explain the mass-energy loss in high energy particle physics experiments.

If those mass-energy fragments entered hyperspace or transformed into a higher-dimensional form, it would not be detectable by traditional methods.

In any case, this paper was regarded as an academic answer to the question of “why should we research the 750 GeV signal”.

If this conjecture was true, not only would it greatly improve the standard model, but it would also open the field of physics into research on the internal

structure of elementary particles, allowing physics to dive into a more mysterious world, even more mysterious than the Higgs particle...

"Hyperspace theory?"

Professor Whittle was sitting in an office chair reading a paper in his hand. He had a look of contempt on his face as he spoke, "What a bunch of nonsense, the physics community is getting ridiculous."

He had finished reading the paper.

He understood most of it.

However, he was not a fan of what he read.

The existence of hyperspace itself was a controversial topic in the physics world. The non-directional characteristic of time was one of the most basic observational facts in physics and even in all natural sciences. Even though the existence of the hyperspace did not contradict this fact, it would certainly challenge the properties of time.

"I think... his paper is quite interesting," an old professor said. He had a beard on his face and a pair of glasses on his nose bridge. He said to Whittle, "If he really found a particle outside the Standard Model, it might become the greatest physics discovery of the decade. To be honest... We should not let go of this opportunity."

Verifying the Standard Model was easy. Over the past few decades, the particle physics community had continuously proven Einstein's conjectures.

However, finding a particle outside the Standard Model was extremely difficult.

The old professor's remarks obviously provoked Professor Whittle.

He chuckled and spoke in a mocking manner.

"Greatest discovery of the decade? Forget about it."

Even though Professor Whittle was still being stubborn on the outside, doubts began to occupy his mind on the inside.

The reason why he insisted that he was correct was that he wanted to save face.

Maybe face was not important...

However, he was too far down the line to retract his statements. He even persuaded the Brookhaven Science Associates to criticize the behavior of Lu Zhou.

If Lu Zhou actually accomplished something in the end, he would be instantly fired.

“He’s just dreaming...”

Professor Whittle repeatedly muttered these words to himself. He reached out and grabbed a glass of water on the table. He took a sip and moistened his throat. However, he couldn’t help but feel anxious.

The only thing he wanted was for ILHCRC to utterly fail. Hopefully, something would go wrong with the Lunar Hadron Collider.

He didn’t even notice that his attitude had totally changed.

He was in denial...

Chapter 1147 The Most Expensive Firework Show

Lunar scientific research base.

Physics research area.

Dr. Torrick was sitting in the Lunar Hadron Collider control room. He began to chat with Yan Xinju to pass time.

“You Chinese people are more stubborn than I had imagined.”

Yan Xinju stared at the American scholar and asked, “Why do you say that?”

Torrick said, “Almost half of the physics community thinks that the characteristic peak of 750 GeV is just God playing a prank on us. But Professor Lu still firmly believes that there must be something there... Even though CERN has done more than enough experiments to prove that it was indeed an unusual quantum fluctuation.”

“I’m afraid that’s not correct.”

‘Why?’

“It’s not stubbornness, it’s more like an obsession with the truth. Out of all of the people I know, he is probably the person that sought after the truth the most,” Yan Xijue continued with a smile. “Also, even though half of the physics community does not believe in this research project, the other half does believe in it, right?”

Dr. Torrick was a little shocked.

“Wait a second... You know him?”

“Of course, we went to the same school.”

Yan Xinju was too embarrassed to say that he only got this position because of his connection with Lu Zhou...

However, he had no reason to worry.

Because Dr. Torrick did not care about this at all. Instead, Dr. Torrick asked about something unrelated.

“Can you tell me something about him? After I read Professor Hardy’s memoir, I’ve been very interested in his story. Unfortunately, the memoir only contains his stories at Princeton.”

Yan Xinju was confused, and he said, “Memoir? What memoir?”

“It was written by a student Lu Zhou taught at Princeton. The author is now a mathematics professor at the University of Sao Paulo, and he’s quite a well-known mathematician.”

Seeing how excited Dr. Torrick was, Yan Xinju looked at his watch and spoke.

“Let’s discuss this in an hour...”

“The experiment is going to start in 15 minutes.”

...

Precisely speaking, the experiment was going to begin in 14 minutes and 21 seconds.

At the ILHCRC headquarters in Shanghai.

Everyone in the ground command center sat in front of a huge control screen. They were all nervously waiting for the experiment.

Some people joked that the cost of each ILHCRC experiment was more expensive than testing an intercontinental ballistic missile. This claim was actually somewhat accurate.

Frank Wilczek walked into the control room with a stack of freshly printed papers in his hand. He walked straight to Lu Zhou and spoke in a quiet voice.

“The collision energy is 1250 TeV? Aren’t you looking for a 750 GeV characteristic peak? Why are you setting the energy parameter so high?”

Lu Zhou had his hands behind his back. He looked at the busy control room and said, “Actually, it’s 1250 TeV, 1260 TeV, and 1300 TeV.”

Frank Wilczek: “...”

Wow...

Rich people are another species.

By comparison, the largest CERN collider proton collision experiment had an energy of less than 30 TeV.

Frank Wilczek couldn’t help but sigh as he spoke.

“This is going to be the most expensive firework show in history.”

“Of course!” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “After all, it’s going to illuminate humanity forever.”

The preparations for the experiment were almost finished.

Luo Wenxuan walked over from the corner and took a deep breath. He looked at Lu Zhou and spoke in a serious manner.

“All of the units are ready, we can begin the experiment at any time.”

Lu Zhou nodded and looked at his watch.

There was another 1 minute and 30 seconds left until the scheduled time.

He looked up and spoke.

“Then let’s turn on our machines.

“Charge the superconducting magnet!”

Luo Wenxuan nodded and said, “Roger that!”

...

The experiment ready signal traveled 360,000 kilometers through space, which was received by the lunar surface scientific research base.

A huge amount of energy began to travel from the energy storage facility, entering the superconducting ring and forming a terrifyingly powerful magnetic field.

Even the surrounding cosmic rays were distorted due to this magnetic field.

Yan Xinju, who was standing in the control room of the lunar surface scientific research base, immediately pressed a button in front of him.

It was like he had just pulled the trigger. Two tiny protons instantly shot out from the collider firing guns, and under the force of the magnetic field, they struck each other and broke apart.

There were no sparks or explosions.

However, the energy waves detected by the collider were equally as dazzling.

Under 1250 TeV of energy, the two protons were instantly crushed. They were torn apart in the microscopic world. Invisible to the naked eye, they decomposed into elementary particles smaller than atoms.

A flash of excitement crossed Lu Zhou’s eyes. He stared at the energy spectrum image in front of him.

He could stare at this image all day.

The first round of collision was over!

The superconducting magnets were still in an energized state. The staff members at the lunar surface scientific research base quickly adjusted the experimental parameters and began the second round of collision experiments!

This was the most important round.

This would directly determine whether the mass-energy loss conjecture in Lu Zhou's paper actually existed!

Lu Zhou held his breath.

The two protons collided together again, creating brilliant "sparks" on the energy detector.

Witten looked at the data on the screen. He spoke in disbelief.

"I can't believe, your guess was correct..."

Frank Wilczek was also stunned.

Although his mathematical ability was not as good as that of Witten, he could still see an unusual pattern in the data. However, he couldn't describe what was unusual about the data.

This was just his intuition...

What happened next totally subverted his understanding of the particle physics world.

"Jesus Christ..."

This was the only thing he could say to describe the shock in his heart.

Lu Zhou stood there with his fists clenched.

This is not enough!

Although the second round of experiments was enough to explain some of his conjectures, it was not enough to explain all of his guesses in his paper.

He was waiting for the third round of experiments to begin.

He just needed the third round of experiment data to meet his expectations!

Then, he could prove that his conjectures were correct!

The third round of experiments finally began...

The two protons collided.

The brilliant sparks appeared on the screen again.

Lu Zhou looked at the screen as his pupils shrank.

His eyes were filled with excitement.

The third round of experiments was a success!

“Finally...”

“I found you...”

The sounds of the cheers and applause resonated in his ears.

The ghost behind the quantum fluctuations finally showed itself to the world.

Even though Lu Zhou could only see the raw data...

But he was a level-10 mathematics scholar, did he really need to do any data analysis?

For him, he just had to translate the data into something other people could understand...

1148 Experimental Data Released!

United Kingdom.

Inside a house on the outskirts of Edinburgh.

An old man was sitting in front of a wooden table by the window. He stared at an old computer as he typed on the keyboard letter by letter with his index finger.

A newspaper was sitting on the corner of the table. The newspaper was dated 2 weeks ago.

In the newspaper, there was an article regarding the heated tension of Brookhaven National Laboratory and its withdrawal from the ILHCRC.

Tens of billions of dollars in investment and dozens of countries participated in this scientific research project. However, such a big problem occurred at the very beginning. Not only did this incident cause trouble in the physics community, but it also caused quite a lot of trouble outside of the physics community.

The old man felt a mix of emotions as he typed his email.

[... Physics should be an enlightened field, and we're here today precisely because we respect all viewpoints. I cannot evaluate whether Lu Zhou is correct or not, but even if he is wrong, the academic community should not respond in an irrational way.

[... To summarize, it is definitely not a wise choice to withdraw from the experiment at this time. This is damaging both to the Brookhaven National Laboratory, as well as the physics community... I don't know if there are any political reasons behind this, but no matter what the reasons are, we should not damage long-term collaboration relationships.

[I hope you can reconsider your choices, maybe it's not too late.

[- Peter Higgs.]

Peter Higgs.

An honorary retired professor of the University of Edinburgh, winner of the 2013 Nobel Prize in Physics, as well as the reason behind the well-known Higgs particle.

Even people outside of physics would have heard of his name.

The old man frowned as he looked up at the dark clouds outside his window.

Ever since he retired, he had gotten more and more sensitive to the weather. However, everything else had become duller. Especially the concept of time. When he got up every morning and looked at the calendar, he always forgot which day it was.

This was like the newspaper right in front of him.

When he finally read the newspaper, the story was already two weeks old.

After he quickly contacted his friends and searched for relevant information on the Internet, he finally understood the whole story. By then, his mood was already as heavy as the weather outside the window.

Immediately afterward, he did one of the most important things since his retirement.

That was, he wrote an email to Professor Browich, who held an important position at the Brookhaven Science Associates.

Regardless of whether the 750 GeV characteristic peak was worthy of spending an entire year of research, regardless of whether or not Lu Zhou was the chairman of the board, academia itself should be pure and unbiased.

This made him think back to sixty years ago.

He still remembered when he wrote a short paper and published it in CERN's Physics Communications journal.

After that paper was published, he subsequently wrote another paper and submitted it to "Physics Communications" again, in which he described a theoretical model he envisioned, which was now called the "Higgs mechanism" model. However, his paper was called absurd and was eventually rejected.

This paper was then finally published in "Physical Review".

If it weren't for his insistence, perhaps people would have never been able to explain how the weak interaction of elementary particles could carry mass.

He looked at the email and thought for a long time.

He looked at the words “to summarize” in his last paragraph and hesitated for a while before deleting the phrase from the email. He made the email look as polite as possible, then hit the send button.

“... Hopefully, this will make a difference.”

Even though his old friend might not listen to his suggestion, this was the least he could do.

He leaned on the armrest of his chair and stood up. He trembled as he walked to the window.

The morning clouds outside the window almost made it seem like the night time. His neighbor across the street had already taken the flower pots into the house, in fear of a thunderstorm.

“... It feels like something big is going to happen today.”

The old man closed his window curtains.

Intuition was a metaphysical thing.

Even he wouldn't have expected his words to come true...

...

The second day in February.

Today was a special day for the international physics community.

Three days had gone by since the end of the lunar night cycle. The energy storage facilities supporting the collider had already finished charging. The ILHCRC was going to conduct its next collider experiment in the near future.

This experiment received widespread attention from the physics community even before it started.

There was only one reason.

Because not long ago, Lu Zhou uploaded a paper on the theory of hyperspace onto the arXiv website. The paper was about how the elementary particles might include a particle that existed in the hyperspace.

Normally, this kind of particle was quite stable and barely exposed themselves to the outside world. Only by doing particle physics experiments in which the collision energy could reach a certain level could one briefly observe this special particle in its unstable three-dimensional space-time form.

As soon as this theory was published, it immediately caused a wave of controversy in the physics community.

Professor François Englert, who won the 2013 Nobel Prize in Physics with Professor Peter Higgs, spoke to the media in an interview.

“This theory might be even more shocking than superstring theory, it’s quite unbelievable... However, the hyperspace theory is not an innovative theory. The M-theory has already made a similar statement regarding the eleven superstring dimensions of the universe. Besides, I’m more interested in how he is going to prove his theory.

“What I mean is that with the current physics experimental methods, the only objects we can observe are the ones in our dimension or something lower than our dimension.

“Let me give you a common example. If we’re just 2D people living on a piece of white paper, and a small ball travels vertically to the surface of the paper we are on, assuming that the light source is absolutely perpendicular to the surface of the paper, we can only see a stationary point projected on the paper.

“If there really is a particle that exists in higher dimensions, we can only see its projection in three-dimensional space, so forget about analyzing its whole trajectory.

“Even if he is correct, what kind of experiment does he plan on using to prove that his theory is true?”

Creatures living in the two-dimensional world would never learn about the three-dimensional world, and creatures living in the three-dimensional world would also be oblivious to the fourth-dimensional world.

Even though Professor François Englert couldn’t imagine what kind of experiments Lu Zhou would use to prove his theory, a new round of ILHCRC experiments was about to begin. He only expressed his curiosity; he was not as pessimistic as Professor Whittle.

After all, from a physicist's perspective, he wanted to see Lu Zhou solve this problem.

If Lu Zhou could prove that the basic particles that made up the universe were indeed hidden in a high-dimensional world, it would solve many of the problems that the world of physics faced.

The waiting process was long.

Everyone was eagerly looking forward to ILHCRC updating its experimental data. Finally, it was midnight Beijing time when the latest experimental data was synchronized and uploaded to the official database.

The news spread around the world, and universities that cooperated with ILHCRC had already begun processing the raw data.

Even the Brookhaven National Laboratory, which had announced its temporary withdrawal from the ILHCRC, had secretly downloaded the data.

The experiment results were shocking.

While the entire physics community was being amazed by the experiment results, Lu Zhou was already hosting a seminar at the ILHCRC headquarters.

Chapter 1149 The Particle

At the ILHCRC headquarters.

There were no empty seats left in the No. 1 lecture hall. Sitting among the crowd were researchers from the ILHCRC, as well as physicists from other research institutions who traveled all the way here. There were even scholars from the Brookhaven National Laboratory who used their annual leave to visit here in their personal capacity.

The report would begin in ten minutes, and almost everyone was looking forward to it.

Lu Zhou, as the chairman of the ILHCRC and the initiator of the 750 GeV project, would summarize the data collected in the experiments and further

elaborate on his theory of hyperspace and the research on the hidden particles.

Witten looked at the venue and spoke.

“... I can’t believe it has only been a month.”

Prior to this, he spent an entire year preparing for this research project. He didn’t expect to make such significant progress within a month.

Besides Lu Zhou, he was probably the happiest person in the room.

After reading the experimental data, he knew exactly what the success of this project meant. If this hyperspace particle really existed, it would undoubtedly prove his predictions in the M-theory.

Not just that, more importantly, this experiment would be the first exploration of higher-dimensional matter in the history of physics.

This would undoubtedly impact the future development of physics.

In fact, the particle itself was not as significant as its by-product.

After a long pause, Professor Witten spoke emotionally.

“... The Brookhaven National Laboratory probably regrets what they did.”

Professor Frank Wilczek, who was sitting next to him, did not reply.

In fact, the Brookhaven National Laboratory wasn’t the only one that was regretful.

A long, long time ago, about seven years ago, when Lu Zhou was still an intern at CERN, Frank Wilczek was the one who led the 750 GeV project. If he did not give up back then, the first higher-dimensional particle discovered might have been named after him.

For example, the Wilczek particle.

However, that was the past...

Ten minutes went by.

Wearing a formal suit, Lu Zhou stepped into the lecture hall.

Almost as soon as he stepped into the lecture hall, the noisy discussions in the venue faded instantly.

Lu Zhou walked on stage and grabbed the microphone.

He looked at the solemn audience and spoke in a clear and calm voice.

“Many years ago, I discovered an anomaly at the 750 GeV range.”

That was his short opening remark.

Lu Zhou continued to speak.

“I don’t blame CERN for abandoning my results; they were limited by the experimental conditions and limited by the lack of existing theories that could support my conclusions, whereas I was limited by my own abilities... There was no way to continue the experiments back then, it was the only choice.

“But never for a second did I think that my conclusion was wrong.

“This is not because of my stubbornness, but rather, it is because I found an anomaly in my calculations. Quantum fluctuations might be a convenient explanation, but I believe in my calculations more.

“Mathematics doesn’t lie.”

Lu Zhou looked around the silent venue and smiled. He then said in a pleasant tone, “It’s an honor for me to stand here and announce to you guys the latest research from the ILHCRC!

“After sacrificing countless hydrogen atoms, we have finally found the ghost that has been haunting us from the mysterious quantum world.

“The 750 GeV signal isn’t everything; it is only the part we are able to observe. Just like I initially guessed, its true body is hidden in the hyperspace, and it cannot be directly observed.”

There was a commotion in the lecture hall.

More than half of the audience, especially scholars from other research institutions, looked astonished. Although they had read the experimental data,

most of them did not understand how Lu Zhou came to such a conclusive result.

In their opinions, the experimental data did not mean anything.

Lu Zhou noticed their expressions, and he continued to speak in a relaxed manner.

“Before I explain, I want to tell you a story.

“How can a person living in a two-dimensional world observe a sphere moving in the three-dimensional space?

“Mathematically, this is impossible.

“Two-dimensional creatures cannot observe the three-dimensional world, there is no doubt about it. If we are lucky, we can use a beam of light from the three-dimensional world and project the sphere onto the two-dimensional world. However, without the beam of light, we won’t have a means of observation. The only time we can observe the sphere is when it lands on the two-dimensional world.

“An infinitely small area of the sphere touches the plane. Although the area is negligible, we might feel something is there, but we can never truly grasp its existence.”

“This is how two-dimensional creatures are limited.” Lu Zhou’s voice gradually became more serious as he looked at the scholars in the audience. He said, “They will never know that the extremely small point in their own world actually corresponds to a three-dimensional sphere. Maybe the sphere is a giant planet or a tiny atom.”

“Think about this carefully, isn’t this terrifying? Maybe the basic particles we know are actually in a higher-dimensional world. In fact, they are actually something much bigger and much weirder than we had imagined.”

Lu Zhou looked at the front row audience and quietly waited for a while, giving them some time to digest the information.

After a while, he smiled and spoke.

“Of course, studying the nature of the universe is not the focus of this seminar.”

After that, Lu Zhou turned around and faced the whiteboard. He drew a circle on it, then drew a few lines, which were supposed to be light rays. He then drew a plane, in which the circle was projected on.

“For example, imagine if the light source shining on the surface of a paper is not perfectly perpendicular, but at an angle. Then the sphere would show itself to the creatures in a two-dimensional world. By studying the size of the projection shadow, one can calculate the distance of the sphere in the three-dimensional coordinate system and even calculate its physical properties according to its trajectory and speed. However, the 2D creatures won’t be able to see the sphere with their own eyes.

“And this is precisely what we did on the Lunar Hadron Collider!”

The audience gasped.

Most people looked even more astonished than before.

Lu Zhou continued to speak, “By doing multiple sets of experiments on the 1250 TeV, 1260 TeV, and 1300 TeV energy regions, we have collected more than enough data.

“Even though we can’t intuitively understand their existence, we can understand it in an abstract, mathematical sense.

“Just like I said in the beginning, mathematics doesn’t lie.”

Lu Zhou turned toward the whiteboard and wrote down a word.

[Zhou]

That was his name.

He also wrote a letter.

[Z]

“The Zhou particle, that’s the name.”

He looked at the silent seminar hall and smiled.

“For convenience sake, we’ll abbreviate it as ‘Z’.

“I will now use the experimental data to prove its existence.

“I will try to be as detailed as possible, but not everyone will be able to understand the process.

“So watch carefully.”

Chapter 1150 Physics Is Far Beyond the Standard Model

Lu Zhou turned around, and the pen in his hand began to dance on the whiteboard.

Lines of calculations appeared on the whiteboard, as if he were waving a magic wand.

$$[V_1 = (1/2)(\mu + m_d)\Psi\Psi + (1/2)(\mu - m_d)(u u - d d)]$$

$$[M_{\pi^2} = (1/2)(\mu + m_d)u^0\bar{u}^0 - c_0|\Psi\Psi|_0 - u^0\bar{u}^0 3e/F\pi^2]$$

[...]

Lu Zhou looked at the equations on the whiteboard. He smiled satisfactorily and nodded.

Not bad.

He felt like he was in the zone, as if he had stepped into a mysterious void, and that he was infinitely close to the end of truth.

Even though this sounded a little arrogant, it was what he truly felt.

Lu Zhou spent a few seconds savoring this moment before he took a deep breath and began to concentrate again. The tip of his pen began to move again; it was like his brain was connected to the universe...

The real difficulty regarding the elementary particle hidden in the hyperspace was in the abstract mathematical operations of the high-dimensional space.

When it came to physics, any equations involving higher dimensions became quite complicated.

The calculations involved were complex and esoteric.

Whether it was the logical operations or the numerical calculations, this was the ultimate test of a physicist's mathematical skills.

Fortunately, Lu Zhou knew mathematics like the back of his hand.

The "mathematics Grand Unified Theory" was also of huge help. One could make the argument that it reduced the difficulty of the problem by a whole magnitude.

Most abstract things couldn't be represented by graphical images at all. However, if they could be uniformly described in an intuitive mathematical form, everything would become much simpler.

Of course, this might be convenient for Lu Zhou, but for the vast majority of physicists who were not in the field of mathematics, especially those that did not understand the "mathematics Grand Unified Theory", these steps did not seem so intuitive...

This was difficult, even for the experts.

Professor Frank Wilczek was sitting next to Witten, and when he looked at the whiteboard, he was completely fazed.

Honestly, mathematics had never been his strong suit. Only a few of his students were able to make achievements in mathematics.

If he were good at mathematics, he wouldn't have collaborated with Lu Zhou, who was just an intern, on the 750 GeV project.

He resisted the urge to speak for a long time.

Finally, he couldn't help but speak to Witten.

"What is he writing?"

Witten didn't answer his friend's question. He stared at the whiteboard with a solemn look in his eyes.

Unlike most other people, he was a Fields Medalist level expert in the fields of topology and partial differentiation. This made it easier to digest the theories that were being presented to him right now, albeit only slightly.

Maybe if he were a bit younger, it would be a bit easier. But now, just keeping up with Lu Zhou's rhythm took almost all of his brainpower. Even though he wanted to answer Frank Wilczek's question, he had no time.

In the blink of an eye, the whiteboard was full.

When the staff member began dragging another whiteboard from the side, Witten took the advantage and explained to his confused old friend.

"... Basically, he used an abstract mathematical method to build an extra-dimensional model similar to the ADD. This model has a dimension n and contains some strange properties... Let's call it the Lu Zhou Mechanism. By using the experimental data obtained by the high-energy collider, he was able to test his model in higher dimensions. This explained the weird 750 GeV characteristic peak signal that appeared frequently, but it had an insufficient confidence level."

Frank Wilczek was baffled. He scratched his head and replied, "What do I have to do to understand these things?"

Witten said in an uncertain tone, "Maybe read some books on algebraic geometry and the Principia Mathematica... Or maybe just give up, it might be too late."

"... Jesus, when did mathematics become this difficult?"

Witten sighed and spoke.

"If you're talking about algebraic geometry, it's been like this since the middle of the previous century."

A new whiteboard was dragged onto the stage.

Lu Zhou spent half a minute organizing his thoughts before he grabbed a pen and continued to write.

It was like he was reciting a beautiful poem; lines of obscure calculations were written on the whiteboard. Everyone in the audience was quiet; there wasn't even a single sound in the venue.

Lu Zhou was completely immersed in his own universe. Even his breathing was synchronized with his writing.

The only sound in the venue was the pen squeaking on the whiteboard.

Time quickly went by.

The audience watched Lu Zhou intently.

In fact, even though these calculations might be a little too difficult to understand for most people, some people could still feel the brilliance.

Some people were suddenly enlightened.

Edward Witten squinted; a flash of excitement crossed his face.

The closer Lu Zhou got to the end of his proof, the more people began to understand the mystery written on the whiteboard.

Even though this was still difficult to interpret.

It was much easier than before.

Finally, he began to write down the last line on the whiteboard.

[Z =...]

Lu Zhou put down the marker and turned to face the silent lecture hall. He spoke in a calm and loud voice.

"I might have forgotten to mention that the argument regarding the existence of the Z particle was finished 27 lines ago. The last 27 lines is a proof regarding the properties of the Z particle I thought of just then. I'm quite surprised at myself; I thought I would have to spend a few weeks trying to solve it."

Lu Zhou glanced at the whiteboard, then looked back at the audience. He suddenly smiled.

That smile was like the first ray of sunshine after a rainstorm. It seemed to have blown away all of the dark clouds hovering above people's heads.

Perhaps being in a good mood made it easier to solve problems.

He paused for a second and continued, "Every object is made from atoms. When we first named this word, its meaning was the elementary particles that made up matter. In fact, as physics continues to advance, we soon discovered that atoms can be subdivided.

"Soon, we discovered electrons, neutrons, protons, followed by quarks, leptons, Higgs particles, etc.

"What would happen if we keep on dividing?

"I'm afraid that no one can answer this question at the moment. We can use phenomenological models such as the ADD to prove the existence of n -dimensional space, while M theory predicts that $n=11$, but we don't know what exactly is in this space. We just know that in the three-dimensional world, the high dimensional object is a 'string' for us.

"Just like the sphere I mentioned in the beginning, if the 2D people only rely on their eyes, they will never understand what that infinitely small black dot is. Maybe the space above them is full of small spheres, and the shadows constitute the world that they observe.

"The same applies to the 3D space.

"The light we see, the air we breathe, the water we drink... Divide them infinitely many times, maybe we will end up with small black spots.

"This includes the Z particle. I don't dare to say that what we see at the moment is its full form. Perhaps what I revealed is only a projection in an $X-1$ dimension. And that it has even greater hidden secrets behind the hyperspace.

"Perhaps this is the curse of being three-dimensional creatures.

"Perhaps when our civilization is advanced enough, when we can fully discover all of the dimensions of the universe, when we can observe the eleventh-dimensional 'string'... At that time, we will be able to fully observe the small sphere and see a complete picture of the universe."

Lu Zhou smiled again.

“As the final treat for this seminar, I will copy the great physicists and make a bold guess.

“Perhaps one day in the future, when our civilization becomes advanced enough, when the solar system can no longer provide enough energy for us...

“We will use the hyperspace to achieve interstellar navigation on the magnitude of light years. We will be able to travel across star systems and galaxies!”

There was no response from the audience.

Obviously, everyone was still in shock.

Lu Zhou felt a little disappointed at the fact that there was no applause. He was about to put down his marker, bow to the audience, and walk off stage.

However, he suddenly remembered something. He immediately turned around and looked at the whiteboard.

“... Almost forgot something important.”

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly and wrote down one final line on the whiteboard.

$[Z(n) = 0 \sim 1.25 \text{ TeV}, \text{ if and only if } n=3, Z=750 \text{ GeV}.]$

“750 GeV is the energy it forms in three-dimensional space. Unsurprisingly, 1.25 TeV is the upper bound of its theoretical mass while its rest mass in a three-dimensional space is 0.

“Go ahead and try to prove me wrong! The data collected from the Lunar Hadron Collider supports this conclusion.

“And the last 27 lines of calculations deals with the mass of the Z particle. One day, we will build a more advanced collider, and you will see that I am correct.”

Lu Zhou placed the marker on the whiteboard tray and looked at the silent audience. He rested his hands on the podium as he spoke.

“As you guys can see, this particle is much heavier than what we had thought.

“It’s far heavier than the 750 GeV that we can observe.

“Physics is far beyond the Standard Model.

“Thank you.”

He bowed and walked down from the stage.

The second he turned around, thunderous applause flooded the venue...

Chapter 1151 Closer Than Ever Before to the Secrets of the Universe

Edinburgh wasn’t the only place that rained heavily. It was almost like God was celebrating the success of the collider 360,000 kilometers away in space. The skies over New York City were covered with clouds, raining heavily in the early mornings.

As raindrops smashed onto the gray pavement, a man wearing a large jacket walked through the gate of Stony Brook University, crossed the road, and walked all the way to the Brookhaven National Laboratory.

Professor Whittle was sitting in his office and drinking coffee. He had his back facing his desk as he looked at the rain outside his window, lost in thought.

He came to his office early in the morning, and he felt like he had forgotten something important, but no matter how hard he tried, he couldn’t remember what it was.

He took a sip of the coffee in his hand, and suddenly, he heard a knock outside his door. He turned around in his office chair and spoke.

“Come in.”

The door opened.

A wave of moist and cold air flew into the room. Professor Whittle looked at the drenched person standing at his door. He almost spilled the coffee out of his hand. He got up from his chair and spoke.

“Professor Browich, what happened?!”

The person standing in front of him was the president of the Brookhaven Science Associates and the head of the physics department at the Brookhaven National Laboratory. Also, he was a professor of physics at Stony Brook University, an academician at the American National Academy of Sciences, and a Nobel Prize-level scholar...

Professor Browich stared at his colleague. He thought of the email from Peter Higgs with a bitter expression on his face.

His gulped as he spoke.

“We lost.”

“Lost... Lost what? Come on in, I’ll find you some spare clothes.”

Browich didn’t react to Professor Whittle’s kindness.

It was like he only came here to notify Whittle of the bad news. He shook his head, turned around, and walked away.

Professor Whittle looked at Professor Browich walking away. He was wondering what was going on when his heart suddenly dropped.

He finally remembered.

“... The ILHCRC seminar! Damn it!”

I knew I forgot something important!

He quickly logged onto the ILHCRC website.

I knew it!

The ILHCRC seminar is today!

Like usual, the video of the seminar was uploaded to the ILHCRC website.

After watching the video for ten minutes, his pupils began to shrink.

What surprised him was not the equations Lu Zhou wrote on the whiteboard. He couldn’t understand them anyway.

Rather, it was the solemn expressions of the physicists sitting in the front row, and the applause from the audience when Professor Lu announced ILHCRC's major discovery of the "Zhou particle".

His heart almost missed a beat.

Professor Whittle felt dizzy; he felt like he was losing his vision.

He didn't know what kind of feeling this was.

But one thing for certain was that this was not excitement.

His worst nightmares came true...

...

Coincidentally, at the Department of Physics at Syracuse University, which was more than two hundred kilometers away from the Brookhaven National Laboratory, a female researcher cursed to herself. She smashed her keyboard violently. Her colleague who was sitting nearby was baffled.

This was only a small fraction of the chaos caused by that seminar.

After the scholars who followed this area of physics saw the seminar video on the ILHCRC, they were all astounded in disbelief.

This was a particle that weighed up to 1.25 TeV!

A superheavy particle with a mass ten times heavier than the Higgs particle!

More importantly, this particle was not included in the Standard Model!

If what Lu Zhou said was true, and this elementary particle corresponded to a higher-dimensional part of atoms, then this would hugely impact the research on the gravitational force and mass-energy.

The scene at the ILHCRC was even more chaotic.

People rushed to the front of the stage, not just the reporters, but also the physicists who eagerly wanted to ask questions.

Some people wanted to take a closer photo of the whiteboard, some wanted to catch up to Lu Zhou and ask him questions, while others... didn't know what they wanted to do.

It was like everyone had gone crazy.

A reporter withstood the force from the crowd and struggled as he spoke in front of a camera.

"... This is February the 3rd, 10 o'clock Beijing time. Chinese physicist Professor Lu Zhou just announced their latest findings regarding the Lunar Hadron Collider particle physics experiments at the ILHCRC. This superheavy particle, which is said to be from a higher-dimensional world, is named the "Zhou particle", or "Z particle" for short.

"A few days ago, according to Peter Higgs, professor at the University of Edinburgh, the discovery of this particle will be the greatest particle physics experiment ever. And that it will give us a better picture of the universe, expanding our horizon by a whole dimension.

"According to the prediction made by Professor Lu Zhou at the end of his seminar, the discovery of this particle might provide a theoretical basis for the faster than light travel between stars... The live scene is in chaos. We are trying to contact Professor Lu... Excuse me, sorry, coming through—

"— This is BBC News."

It was impossible for him to get closer to Lu Zhou.

Through the camera lens, the audience at home could see how chaotic the scene was.

As for Lu Zhou, he went through a staff-dedicated elevator down to the garage, got into his car, and left ILHCRC headquarters.

This was Wang Peng's suggestion.

It was difficult to avoid accidents in crowded places. In order to stop the chaos from expanding, he should avoid crowds.

In any case, regardless of whether or not everyone was satisfied with the outcome, this day was a historic day for the physics community.

Seven years later, the exploration of the 750 GeV characteristic peak finally came to an end.

Humans had finally discovered an unexplored world.

They were closer than ever before to the secrets of the universe.

As for whether or not the Zhou particle would become the key for faster than light travel...

Only time could tell...

Chapter 1152 The Guaranteed Honor

The most important number for the physics world in the year 2023 was the number “1.25”.

The research on particle physics had always stagnated when it came to the proof of the existence of high-dimensional space. According to the ADD phenomenological model's explanation of gravity and other forces, the world we observed was only a part of the higher dimensions. The electrons, protons, photons, and other particles in the Standard Model could not enter the higher-dimension, only gravitational field lines could.

The discovery of the Z particle gave a new explanation for the theory based on the phenomenological model.

The world we saw was only a fragment of the higher-dimensional space, the electrons, protons, photons, and other particles in the Standard Model might only be 3D projections of other particles in the higher-dimensional space.

If this conclusion were true, it would be able to explain the prediction made by the physics community that “Newton's inverse square law will deviate in the submillimeter range”. When two objects were separated by mere sub-millimeters, the gravitational relationship between them no longer accurately followed the inverse square law.

And this was only one of the many conclusions caused by the Z particle.

After the discovery of this superheavy high-dimensional particle, the entire physics community was taken into a whole new world. This was exactly what excited physicists.

It was like they had just discovered an undeveloped continent, which was filled with countless treasures...

This sensational event in the field of physics had even caught the attention of the general public.

Because of the “Easter egg” prediction made at the end of the seminar, even the public was shocked by Lu Zhou’s seminar.

Faster than light travel!

This had always been considered impossible.

Although the general public didn’t know how Lu Zhou was able to make such a bold prediction, the thought of the future possibilities made people feel excited.

They wondered what the universe light-years away could be like?

Many people began to think about this problem seriously.

So far, the debate about the 750 GeV characteristic peak had finally come to an end. The voices that once violently opposed ILHCRC’s experiments finally disappeared.

Lu Zhou spent two days summarizing the content of the seminar and turned it into a paper. This paper was published in the latest issue of the main issue Future journal issue.

The other two top journals “Science” and “Nature” also included this paper in their “highlights” section. Nobel Prize-level scholars in this area of research also reviewed the paper.

Generally speaking, only the most important research results received this level of attention.

The Z particle was undoubtedly the most important physics discovery of the decade; the physics community was about to get busy...

...

California Institute of Technology.

An old man with a gray beard was holding a journal issue in his hand and a pen in the other. He sat quietly at his desk, doing meticulous calculations on a piece of draft paper.

When he got to the third page of the journal, he had an astonished look on his face.

After a while, he finally spoke.

"... This is amazing.

"The way he applied mathematics to physics.

"... What a genius!"

His name was Barry Barish. He was the project director of the LIGO program and a professor of physics at the California Institute of Technology.

The person standing near his bookshelf wasn't a nobody either.

His name was Kip Thorne. He was currently a professor of theoretical physics at the California Institute of Technology. He was also one of the world's top leaders in the field of astrophysics and general relativity. He was also a scientific consultant for the film "Interstellar".

These two people, as well as Rainer Weiss, won the 2017 Nobel Prize in Physics for their research on gravitational waves. They split the 9 million Swedish kronor prize among themselves.

Thorne looked at Barish and said, "Everyone knows he's a genius, I'm more surprised that you actually understood his mathematical argument."

"Although it's a bit difficult, after reading it a few times, I have a rough understanding." Barish took off his reading glasses and rubbed his sore eyes. He said, "I happened to have studied his unified theory of algebra and geometry, so I have a small amount of foundation."

Thorne said, "You actually read that thing?"

“A lot of physics students at the California Institute of Technology are autodidacts. Us old folks have to learn to keep up with the times, or we will be surpassed by the young generation.” Barish continued with a smile, “Of course, I mainly research gravitational waves. Whenever we have any new progress in mathematical physics, someone can always apply it to particle physics.”

“Then what progress did you make?”

Barish coughed.

“All great discoveries take a long time... These things can’t be rushed.”

“You’re right, but sometimes they are, like in this case.” Thorne sighed and said, “The Brookhaven National Laboratory must be worried. They voluntarily withdrew from a large-scale scientific research project that has more than 50 research institutes participating. Now their name won’t be mentioned in the paper.”

Barry Barish smiled and said, “And mainly because their mouth was too big. If it were me, even if I wasn’t optimistic about the 750 GeV characteristic peak experiment, I wouldn’t withdraw instantly.”

Of course, he was speaking in hindsight.

Thorne: “What do you think they will do?”

“They will deal with the person in charge, and maybe try to deal with the damage? Lu Zhou and the ILHCRC’s reputations are at the peak. I’m sure even if Lu Zhou fires his board members, there will still be a large number of physicists that will follow him.”

Thorne couldn’t help but say, “... Can no one stop him?”

Barish gave him a strange look.

“Why would anyone stop him? Think about how many people who have never achieved something in their fields. If he’s discovering a new world of physics for us, why not let him continue?”

There were only two names in the history of physics that achieved as much as Lu Zhou.

Unless something went terribly wrong...

Otherwise, there was nothing that could stop him.

Lu Zhou was almost like a god in physics. If he believed there was the existence of a particle, the particle would be there.

"You're right." Thorne sighed and said, "Speaking of which, he has never won a Nobel Prize before, right? I remember..."

Barry Barish shook his head and said, "You're wrong, he won the 2018 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. I think it was regarding the electrochemistry interface structure."

Thorne couldn't help but say, "This guy is insane..."

Barish smiled and said, "I don't disagree. A few months ago, he came up with the Grand Unified Theory of mathematics. Then, a few months later, he applied it to his hyperspace theory on the Zhou particle. If there was a Nobel Prize in Mathematics, I'm sure he would win it every year."

Thorne: "I think his achievement is worth two physics Nobel Prizes... Not to mention the electrostrong interaction."

When Barish heard this, he made eye contact with Thorne.

These two had been working side by side in research for years. They immediately understood what each other was thinking.

"I plan on voting for him."

"Looks like we have the same idea."

Even though winning two Nobel Prizes were unrealistic, winning one was almost certain.

This year happened to be an odd number year, which meant the Nobel Prize in Physics would be awarded to the particle physics field.

And the discovery of the Z particle was undoubtedly the most significant physics discovery of the year.

If this achievement wasn't worthy of this honor, what was?

There was no doubt Lu Zhou would be awarded with this honor.

1153 Physics Level Eight!

Inside a Zhongshan International mansion.

Lu Zhou was sitting in his study room, video calling Xiao Tong. A cheerful voice came from his phone.

“Brother! I heard you made another big discovery!”

Lu Zhou looked at Xiao Tong and spoke.

“Even you heard about this?”

Xiao Tong was happy for her brother, and she spoke with a smug smile.

“Of course! Everyone in Princeton is talking about this.”

Lu Zhou smiled and didn’t say anything.

Even though he expected this to happen, hearing about this in person made him somewhat embarrassed.

Lu Zhou coughed and changed the subject.

“How are you doing over there? How are your studies?”

“It’s pretty good, it’s just boring to be away from the city. I’m either in my apartment or in the library. My friend drives us to the supermarket on the weekends. That’s pretty much all I do.”

“You didn’t buy a car?”

“No, I don’t like driving.” Xiao Tong shook her head and suddenly remembered something, so she said, “Oh yeah, I nearly forgot, Professor Krugman told me to say hello to you. He also said that he made some progress on his future prediction model, and he only needs one outstanding mathematician—”

When Lu Zhou heard this name, he paused for a second and spoke.

“... He still hasn't given up?”

Xiao Tong scratched her head awkwardly.

“Haha... I don't think so.”

Lu Zhou went silent for a while and said, “Then say hello to Professor Krugman for me.”

“What about the research project?”

Lu Zhou took a sip of Coca-Cola and spoke.

“I'll consider it when I'm less busy.”

Xiao Tong knew that was just a polite way of saying no.

“Okay then, I understand.”

The two then chatted for a while, mainly about their lives and parents. After Xiao Tong told Lu Zhou that their parents were in good health, Xiao Tong hung up the call and went to sleep.

It was daytime in China, but it was already late into the night in America.

Xiao Tong looked relaxed on the surface, and she didn't complain about her studies to Lu Zhou. However, Lu Zhou could tell that she was under a lot of pressure.

Sigh, my little sis...

The siblings had the exact same personality; they both didn't want to be a burden on others.

Lu Zhou smiled and shook his head. He put his phone aside.

It feels nice to be on a break.

Lu Zhou knew that countless people would be trying to contact him about this in person. He wisely hid in his home while taking a short break. He didn't speak to anyone unless it was something important.

As for the ILHCRC, he threw all of the responsibilities to Luo Wenxuan.

This included preparing for the next board meeting and discussing the next research project. Lu Zhou already brought him to the last meeting, so this time he wanted Luo Wenxuan to take full responsibility.

If Luo Wenxuan couldn't do something as easy as this, then it was a waste of time for Lu Zhou to mentor him.

The research on the 750 GeV had finally come to an end, and his paper had already been submitted to Future. He took a few days off and gave himself a deserved break.

Speaking of which...

He had been on a break for almost a week, and it was time to think about the next step.

Lu Zhou put down the Coke can and lay on his couch. He closed his eyes and summoned the system.

When he opened his eyes again, his consciousness was inside a pure white space. He stood in front of a translucent holographic panel.

A line of blue text also appeared on the holographic panel.

[Congratulations, user, for mission completion!

[Mission: Exotic Particle

[Description: The completion of the Lunar Hadron Collider will go down in history as a highlight of human civilization. It is akin to a huge telescope, but rather than observing the stars, it is discovering the mystery behind what creates the stars...

[Requirement: Discover a new particle

[Reward: 1 million physics experience points. 10,000 general points. Purple "legendary mission".]

A million physics experience points!

I'm getting closer and closer to the "Future Era".

As Lu Zhou looked at the mission pop-up windows, he reached out and pressed on his characteristic panel.

[

A. Mathematics: Level 10

B. Physics: Level 8 (13,215/3 million)

C. Biochemistry: Level 6 (10,000/600,000)

D. Engineering: Level 6 (10,000/600,000)

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: 34,335

]

Just like he had expected, his physics level went from level 7 to level 8. He only had two levels left.

However, when he saw the 3 million experience points requirement, he felt a little hopeless.

What kind of research achievement will give me this many experience points...

Lu Zhou thought for a long time and wasn't able to think of anything.

Before this, he thought it was difficult to level up in mathematics. But now that he started to specialize in physics, he realized that the difficulty had only just begun.

At least he had a general idea of what area he should research in mathematics. However, physics had a much higher degree of uncertainty. The cutting-edge theories were all conjectures. No one knew what theories would be overthrown and what theories would be discovered.

For example, M theory and supersymmetry theory, these two theories had dominated the cutting-edge research of theoretical physics ever since the middle of the last century. People were still researching whether they were correct or not.

After all, they had been trying to find supersymmetry particles for decades, yet they had barely made any progress.

The only good news was that after he reached mathematics level 10, any kind of physics calculation was a piece of cake to him.

When he was researching the Z particle, his mathematics ability was a huge help for him. If he wasn't level 10 in mathematics, he might have not been able to solve this problem, at least not within a month.

"I have to keep working hard..."

Lu Zhou opened his inventory and looked at the shiny purple "legendary mission" card in front of him. It was like the card was made from diamonds; it was like a work of art.

Even though he knew the card did not actually exist, he still appreciated the aesthetics.

He was looking forward to the rewards from this mission card.

But the purple card is at least a level lower than the gold one, right?

I wonder what mission it will give me.

Lu Zhou reached out and pressed the mission card.

The card dispersed into tiny shiny particles, and the particles danced around in the air before it formed a pop-up window.

[Mission: Exploring The Legacy

[Description: People are narrow-minded. Even those that have climbed to the top of the mountain still need to use the wisdom of others to find what they have overlooked.

[Requirements: Collect the relics of Professor Grothendieck.

[Reward: Random experience card. One lucky draw ticket. Void Memory B2.]

Overlooked?

Faced with this new mission, Lu Zhou was surprised.

For some reason, he felt like the system was trying to tell him something...

1154 I Have Been Keeping Something From You Guys

After Lu Zhou left the system space, he stood up from his couch. He was about to call Professor Carlson from the Clay Institute when he received a message on his phone.

Xiao Ai: [Master, you have guests.(^▽^*)]

Guests?

Who would visit me at this time?

Lu Zhou was a little suspicious. He went into his closet and put on some clothes, then walked to his front door.

Director Li was standing in his driveway. He was about to ring the doorbell when the front gate opened, giving way to a path leading to the front door.

Lu Zhou was standing in front of his door, and he spoke with a smile.

“Director Li? What brings you here?”

Director Li said with a smile, “I heard you came back from Shanghai. So I’m here to see you. Come, let’s talk inside.”

Director Li casually walked inside his house.

Lu Zhou paused for a second.

Why do I feel like I’m supposed to be the one inviting you inside...

Lu Zhou went to the kitchen and brought a cup of coffee and a cup of tea into the living room. He sat on the sofa across from Director Li.

He was about to ask Director Li why he came all the way from Beijing, but Director Li spoke first.

“Every time I come here, I always want to ask about your front gate facial recognition technology, what if it makes a mistake?”

Don’t worry, Xiao Ai doesn’t make mistakes.

Lu Zhou smiled and spoke.

“The facial technology is quite advanced... Anyway, what are you here for?”

He didn’t believe that this guy came all the way to Jinling just to say hello.

Director Li smiled and said, “Are you busy at the moment?”

“Not busy... Or maybe, why?”

Actually, ever since the Zhou particle research project was finished, Lu Zhou had been taking a break. He even planned on taking a vacation in France.

However, when he saw Director Li’s suspicious smile, he had second thoughts.

He had known this old man for years, so he recognized that smile.

He knew Director Li wanted something from him.

Director Li spoke honestly.

“Fine, I’ll just give it to you straight. Here’s the thing... Remember at the end of last year, you said you had something good planned? Can you tell me what it is now?”

Lu Zhou: “...?”

Something good?

What thing?

Lu Zhou looked at Director Li and spoke.

“That happened?”

Director Li was worried, so he quickly said, “Yeah, it did! Don’t you remember? At the end of last year when I came to the ILHCRC, you told me about this. You even said it was a secret.”

Lu Zhou immediately remembered what happened, and he smiled awkwardly.

Oh right, that did happen.

But honestly, he was thinking about the 30,000 general points he would have after completing the mission. He could use these general points to buy a lot of awesome things. He mainly said that as a joke.

Last time he used the general points to exchange for the virtual reality technology, but he didn’t know what he should buy this time.

“Oh yeah, that thing. Let me think... How could I have forgotten such an important thing,” Lu Zhou said. Director Li was dumbfounded. Lu Zhou continued, “But scientific research takes a long time. I have to do some preparations, but I’ll tell you later.”

Director Li was baffled. He said, “Academician Lu, that’s a little... cruel. At least tell me what it is?”

I don’t know what it is either!

Lu Zhou obviously wouldn’t say that out loud.

“Due to various reasons, I have to keep this a secret. Just... wait patiently; I won’t make you wait too long.”

Lu Zhou immediately changed the conversation topic. He smiled and said, “Oh yeah, I plan on taking a trip to France, can you... arrange the trip for me?”

Director Li: “...”

This is the first time I’ve seen Lu Zhou ask for something so directly...

...

It was February in Paris. Even though winter was technically over, there was still a wave of chilliness in the air. Most of the pedestrians were wearing puffer jackets and scarves.

Especially in the quieter suburbs.

The quiet streets outside made it feel even colder.

However, this was the perfect environment for Molina.

She was wearing a black wool jacket and standing in front of a painting inside a rustic house.

“Almost thirty years...”

This was the only thing she said all day. She continued to speak at the painting.

“Please, tell me, what should I do next...”

She spent seven years battling Riemann’s hypothesis.

Even though she knew hard work did not guarantee success, she was prepared to spend the rest of her life on this problem. However, everything ended so abruptly.

That’s right.

Everything was over.

She didn’t know how to feel human again.

She couldn’t see a single sliver of her own results in the final proof by Lu Zhou; it was like all of her hard work was for nothing.

When Lu Zhou wrote down those calculations on the whiteboard, he looked so natural and casual. It felt like she had wasted the past seven years of her life.

After she left St. Petersburg and returned to France, she locked herself in this house. She did not return to Princeton or contacted her friends at Princeton. She asked the dean for a long vacation and disappeared from the mathematics world.

Does the mathematics world even need me?

This thought constantly lingered in her mind.

After all, the results she created were all trivial...

An old man in a nightgown standing at the top of the stairs looked at his granddaughter from behind. There was a sliver of guilt in his eyes.

After hesitating for a long time, he finally clenched his teeth and said, "... There's been something I've been hiding from you."

Without turning her head, Molina spoke with a calm voice.

"... If you're talking about the thing between you and our neighbor Anissa, you don't have to tell me, we all know."

"No, not that." The old man blushed and went silent for a long time. Finally, he said, "... Our family is not the descendant of Niels Henrik Abel."

When Molina heard her grandfather, she had a warm look in her eyes.

"I know you're just trying to comfort me, but I'm fine, so don't worry about me."

Grandfather: "... No, I'm telling the truth."

She made eye contact with her grandfather.

Molina froze.

When she saw that the old man wasn't joking around, she realized that he wasn't trying to comfort her.

She gulped and spoke with a trembling voice.

"... What do you mean?"

The old man nodded and spoke without hesitating.

"I was going to take this secret to the grave. Our family has nothing to do with Mr. Abel. My grandfather and father have never been to Norway, nor have I... Actually, I planned on going there when I first retired, but in the end, I gave up."

Molina: "But my name..."

"My last name is Abel... But don't you know how many people in France have that last name? There were two people with the last name Abel in my middle school class. Abel only lived to his twenties, he was never married. As a mathematician, how are you unaware of this?"

Molina looked like she was going crazy. She looked back at the oil painting with her pupils expanded.

"Then this oil painting is fake? What about the notebooks in the storage room..."

The old man was full of guilt as he said, "Those things are not fake... After all, it's not a famous artist, so it's not worth much. The incomprehensible mathematics notebooks, I bought them from a collector when I was young. I originally planned on donating it to a museum, but in the end, I kept it for myself."

Molina took a step back and shook her head. She looked at her grandfather with a devastating expression. "... I don't get it, why did you lie to me?"

Why did you lie to me for so long?

"Back in the day, your father had poor math grades, so I pointed to the oil painting and told him that he's an embarrassment to the Abel name. Then I don't know what happened, his math grades suddenly improved. I was confused at first, but things were going well. Until one day, he asked me if our family was a descendant of Professor Abel... I didn't want to break his heart."

The old man looked at his granddaughter, and his eyes were full of shame. He sighed heavily and spoke.

"It turns out that there is no such thing as a white lie in this world. A lie is a lie. No matter how perfect the lie is, you will eventually have to pay the price. Sorry, I didn't expect this to happen..."

"I understand if you hate me."

As Molina looked at the painting on the wall, it was like her heart was broken into pieces and her world was collapsing...

Chapter 1155 Visiting Paris

On the first Wednesday of February, a white plane landed at the Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport. On the plane, a kind old man spoke to a handsome young man.

“Academician Lu, please go ahead.”

“Oh, no, no, you go first.”

Lu Zhou thought of the security at the airport and panicked.

No, not exactly panic.

He just wasn’t good at dealing with politicians.

The old man looked at Lu Zhou and smiled.

“No, you go first, the people at the airport are waiting for us.”

Seeing how the old man insisted, Lu Zhou had no choice but to walk forward.

Lu Zhou only asked Director Li to help him buy a plane ticket, maybe get him on a diplomatic plane.

He didn’t expect Director Li to arrange for him to be on this flight.

This old man was none other than the Chinese president, the person he frequently exchanged emails with.

Apparently, this visit was for the completion of the nuclear fusion power station in Cadarache and cooperation on the silk road.

When the high-level government officials heard that Lu Zhou was going to France, they arranged for Lu Zhou to be on the same flight.

During the flight, the two talked about mathematics, physics, computer chips, nuclear engineering, and aerospace.

Lu Zhou wanted to sleep for the whole flight. But the President kept asking him question after question. He didn't want to be rude either, so he kept conversing.

Fortunately, he was able to take a four-hour nap before he got off the plane. Otherwise, he would not be able to keep his eyes open.

He was about to walk off the airstair when someone stopped him.

"Sir, please wait a second."

The flight attendant on the plane reached out and fixed his collar, which got wrinkled when he was sleeping. She had a professional smile on her face.

"That's more handsome."

"... Thank you."

Lu Zhou felt like the flight attendant looked at him a certain way.

It was almost like she was a big carnivore and he was a giant piece of meat.

Lu Zhou couldn't help but feel proud.

Sigh, this is the downside of being too handsome.

Like he expected, the airport had a magnificent welcoming crowd. A long red carpet was laid in front of the airstair, and men in suits stood on both sides of the red carpet.

In addition to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, the French president was also here.

"Welcome to France, Academician Lu..." A tall, well-built man in a suit reached out his hand and said, "It's nice to meet you."

Lu Zhou shook the French president's hand and spoke politely.

"Thank you, nice to meet you too."

The man had a smile on his face as he spoke.

“I’ve heard many stories about you. Judging by your accomplishments, I thought you were going to be an old man. I didn’t expect you to be this young.”

Lu Zhou replied humbly, “Oh, you’re too kind.”

Since this was a political occasion, after the French president made some small talk with Lu Zhou, he changed his focus to the Chinese president, who was walking down the airstairs.

Lu Zhou finally sighed. He felt a huge pressure was lifted off his shoulders.

It wasn’t like he was nervous.

He did reports at major international events and summits. He had been around the block. Even if there were twice the amount of people here, it wouldn’t affect him.

However, the problem was that right now, he didn’t only represent himself; he was a representative of the entire Chinese scientific researcher community and even a national image of China.

He had such a huge amount of pressure riding on him...

...

In addition to the grand airport ceremony, there was also a national-level banquet waiting for them in the evening.

The state banquet was held in the presidential palace, and the meals were prepared by the legendary French presidential kitchen staff.

Lu Zhou was actually quite looking forward to attending this banquet. However, when the dishes actually arrived, he felt like it was no different from the French restaurants he had eaten from before.

In his opinion, each dish was only slightly smaller and more sophisticated.

What gave him the biggest impression was the French grilled snail.

Not because it was tasty, but because he had never eaten it before...

Of course, it tasted quite well.

After all, none of the dishes would be here if they weren't delicious.

The banquet was held in quite a relaxed atmosphere.

It seemed like the French politicians knew Lu Zhou was not particularly fond of discussing politics. They even arranged an academician from the French Academy of Sciences to chat with him.

At the end of the banquet, before Lu Zhou was going to return to his hotel, a French Ministry of Foreign Affairs official found him and spoke to him politely.

"Academician Lu, I heard you plan on visiting Mr. Grottendick's former residence?"

Lu Zhou nodded and spoke.

"I do have this idea. Unfortunately, I've never met this great man, but academically speaking, it's almost like he's my father."

"Professor Grothendieck was indeed a respectable scholar. Whether it's his attitude toward conflict or his pursuit of truth, he was respected by countless people." The French official smiled and continued in a friendly tone, "If you want to, we can arrange a dedicated car and security team for you. You'll be able to go wherever you want in France."

Lu Zhou nodded and spoke.

"That would be fantastic."

It was night time.

After a busy day, Lu Zhou finally arrived at his hotel.

After he went into his room, he took a shower and lay on his bed. He didn't want to move at all.

Before he fell asleep, he picked up his phone and checked the news for a while.

As expected, he saw a picture of himself shaking hands with the French president.

Lu Zhou couldn't help but smile and shake his head.

It seemed like he was constantly on the news over the past two weeks.

The sensation of the Z particle had yet to die down, and the public was still debating on whether it would win this year's Nobel Prize in Physics. And now, he was involved in China's diplomatic visit to France.

Lu Zhou was about to throw his phone on the bedside table and go to sleep when a message suddenly popped up on his screen.

[You're in Paris?]

When Lu Zhou saw this message, he paused for a second and clicked on his Facebook messenger app, an app he rarely used. The people he added here were mainly friends he met when he was studying and working in Princeton. However, he rarely talked to those people on Facebook anymore, and most of the time, they communicated by email.

What surprised him even more was that this message came from Molina.

The last message was a "Happy New Year" message.

That message was from more than a year ago.

Lu Zhou paused for a second before typing a reply.

[I'm here, why?]

Molina: [Go out, let's grab a drink.]

Lu Zhou: "..."

What is she talking about?

I mean, I think her family is in France.

But when did Princeton give her so many vacation days?

Without saying anything, Lu Zhou lifted his phone and sent a picture of the view outside his window.

After a while, he received a message.

Molina: [... What is this?]

Lu Zhou: [... Do you think I can sneak out of here without being bombarded by reporters?]

The reporters couldn't enter the hotel.

But anything outside the hotel was fair game.

Sneaking out of the hotel in the middle of the night to grab drinks with a pretty lady...

Even though he and Molina were just platonic, academic friends, no one would believe him.

Molina: "..."

Lu Zhou sighed. He didn't want to hurt his friend's feelings. He typed a message and sent it.

[What if you come over?]

Molina: [Send your location.]

Lu Zhou shared his location through the app.

Paris was a huge city with a lot of traffic. Lu Zhou thought she would probably not want to travel this far.

It wasn't worth it to drive ten kilometers just to have a few drinks.

However, after he shared his location, he didn't receive a reply.

Lu Zhou froze.

The f*ck?

Is this chick actually coming?

Chapter 1156 Professor Abel's Notes

In fact, Lu Zhou's intuition was correct. For some reason, this crazy girl Molina was downstairs at his hotel.

She came all the way here, so Lu Zhou didn't want to ditch her. He took her to the bar on the second floor of the hotel.

Unlike most bars, this five-star hotel's own bar was more like a restaurant. It mainly served business people, so it had a modern and elegant decoration. The music playing in the bar was also more sophisticated, mainly classical music.

Of course, the drinks served in normal bars were also served here, except that they weren't written on the menu.

Lu Zhou ordered a bacon burger and a German beer. He then watched Molina order and drink one colorful cocktail after another.

He couldn't help but say something.

"Hey, take it easy, you're going to kill your last brain cell."

Judging by the way she was drinking the cocktails, she was obviously a lightweight.

"My treat."

"That's not what I'm saying... But if you insist on treating me, you're welcome to do so."

Molina: "Then why are you stopping me from drinking?"

Lu Zhou: "It looks like you're trying to get plastered."

With a cup in her hand, Molina frowned and spoke with a headache.

"... What? Plastic?"

Sh*t, it's too late.

She's already wasted.

Lu Zhou sighed.

"... Nothing."

After downing her drink, Molina had a confused look in her eyes.

She stared at the bar counter, then looked at Lu Zhou. She suddenly spoke.

“Today, I found out...”

Lu Zhou took a bite of his burger and spoke.

“Found out what?”

After hesitating for a long time, Molina suddenly sighed and put her cup down on the table.

“... Nothing.”

Lu Zhou: “...?!”

Are you teasing me?

Molina took out a handbag and placed it on the table.

“This is yours.”

Lu Zhou: “... What is this?”

“The things from my... an-ancestor Professor Abel; they’re mainly his notes. By the way, there are a few pages with some lines drawn on them with a ballpoint pen... I accidentally drew them as a child, hope you don’t mind.”

For some reason, Molina struggled to say the word “ancestor”. Lu Zhou wasn’t sure if it was because she was drunk or because of other reasons.

Lu Zhou looked at the handbag on the table and hesitated.

“... Are you sure you want to give something so important to me?”

Molina took a sip of the cocktail. She slammed the empty glass on the table and spoke.

“It’s fine, I don’t need them anymore... Anyway, they’re just messy notes.”

Lu Zhou looked at Molina’s face and went silent for a while. He sighed and spoke.

“... I'll take this for the time being. If you want them back, feel free to just message me.”

“Don't worry, that won't happen, seeing these things only upset me... I have to go to the washroom.”

Molina downed the final glass of cocktail. She leaned on the table and struggled as she tried to stand up.

However, before she was able to stand up straight, her legs bent, and she fell back onto her chair.

Her head slammed onto the table. Lu Zhou looked at her unconscious body. He was dumbfounded.

She's passed out?

Even though he knew this was going to happen, this happened too suddenly.

As Lu Zhou looked at Molina, he was speechless.

What happened to buy me drinks?

Now I'm the one paying the tab.

“... Whatever, since you gave me this gift, I'll take care of this one.”

Lu Zhou looked at the handbag on the table and sighed. He reached out and pressed the button on the table, which called for the waiter.

Even though all of the expenses in the hotel could be added to his room tab, he was not the kind of person who liked to take advantage of the taxpayers' money. He took out his card and took care of the bill.

The waiter looked at Molina lying on the table. He smiled and spoke.

“Sir, should I help move her into the room?”

Lu Zhou wiped his mouth with a napkin and said, “Yeah, thank you.”

“Yes, sir.”

Lu Zhou suddenly looked at the waiter's mischievous smile. He coughed and spoke.

"What I mean is, check her into another room... Also, can you find two waitresses to carry her there?"

The waiter immediately looked apologetic.

"Sorry, and yes, sir."

...

After flying for thousands of kilometers, Lu Zhou wanted to go to bed early. However, after eating a burger and drinking a full glass of beer, he was too full to go to sleep.

Even after lying on his bed and tossing around for a long time, he didn't feel sleepy at all. Lu Zhou decided to take out the notes in the handbag and began reading them.

The notes were quite confusing, and it wasn't exactly research notes. It was more like daily inspirations mixed with mathematical drafts.

Although he also had the habit of writing down his inspirations, he was still different from what Professor Abel did. He never mixed his academic writing with his diary writing.

Professor Abel seemed to be a more casual person. Not only did he like to mix his thoughts on poverty and life with mathematical content, but he also seemed to be quite concerned about the political situation in Spain.

This reminded him of an old friend, Professor Tao, who taught at the University of California. These two were really very similar in this regard. The difference was that one of them wrote in a notebook and the other wrote on their personal online blog.

When Lu Zhou opened one of the diaries, on one page, Professor Abel wrote about his wallet being stolen while riding a train. On the next page, he wrote his thoughts on the proposition that "general algebraic equations higher than fourth degree have no general algebraic solutions".

This proposition, which was taken for granted in this day and age, was equivalent to a Millennium Prize Problem back in the day. It had a far longer history than Riemann's conjecture, and it plagued mathematicians for two and a half centuries.

It was worth mentioning that this proposition was solved by Abel in 1824. Judging from the date at the footer of the diary, he wrote these notes at the end of 1823.

As for Riemann's hypothesis...

Dr. Riemann, who was born in a small town in the Kingdom of Hanover, proposed his famous hypothesis two years later. It would take another twenty years before he switched from theology and philosophy to mathematics.

In fact, mathematics in the 19th century was nowhere near today's standards.

Lu Zhou knew that, even for a genius like Abel, due to the limitations back then, he was unlikely to leave behind any amazing discoveries.

However, although it was unlikely to discover new mathematical theorems or propositions through these notes, as a great mathematician of his era, his mathematical ideas were still worth exploring.

He might even be able to find something interesting.

Lu Zhou was also curious about what this short-lived genius researched during the last years of his life.

Lu Zhou flipped through the page, and suddenly, he stopped.

"This is..."

There was a sketch; he didn't know if it was drawn with a charcoal pencil or a lead pencil.

Stone pillars were planted on the ground...

When Lu Zhou saw this drawing, his pupils shrank.

This drawing!

I've seen it before!

But not in the form of a painting...

Chapter 1157 Unexpected Clue

A ray of sunlight pierced through the window, shining on Molina's face. She let out a moan as she woke up dizzily from her sleep.

She felt like there was a bomb stuffed inside her brain. She was almost going to cry.

She took a sip of water from the cup on the bedside table. This slightly eased the pain. She scratched her head, then leaned her head on her hand as she tried to recall what happened yesterday.

She couldn't remember the details.

She could only remember that after she gave her notes to Lu Zhou, she stood up from the table, then... Oh right, she was drinking.

She slowly began to piece together her memory.

However, she could only remember blurry fragments.

However, even though she couldn't remember what happened after she was drunk, she wasn't worried about what happened to her.

After all, she had been friends with Lu Zhou for over seven years. She knew exactly what kind of person Lu Zhou was. Lu Zhou was the type to think with his brain, not think with his...

This was why she felt so safe drinking with him.

Suddenly, Molina froze.

She looked at herself in the mirror as she touched her neck.

"..."

Where did my clothes go???

...

Lu Zhou was interrupted by a doorbell. He rubbed his eyebrows and closed the notebook he was reading. He stuffed the notebook into his jacket pocket and opened the door.

When he saw Molina standing at the door, he paused for a second and spoke.

“Hey, you woke up pretty early—”

“What did you do to me last night?!”

Lu Zhou looked at Molina with a strange look.

“I read the notes all night... The things written on there are pretty interesting. Oh yeah, by the way, are those sketches drawn by Professor Abel himself, or did you draw them?”

“Sketches? I didn’t draw anything... Wait, you didn’t answer my question!”

Molina’s look of confusion was replaced by murderous eyes. Lu Zhou looked at her and spoke.

“Didn’t I answer? I read the notes all night... What did you expect me to say?”

Molina clenched her teeth, blushed, and spoke.

“... What about my clothes?”

Lu Zhou: “...?”

What about your clothes?

Suddenly, Lu Zhou noticed the clothes she was wearing today were different than the ones she was wearing yesterday.

However, he didn’t think this was too strange.

“The hotel staff probably washed it.”

“... You, you changed my clothes?”

Lu Zhou looked at her red face and spoke.

“Why would I do that?”

What if you vomit on me?

This reminded Lu Zhou of his dorm roommate, who was also a lightweight drinker. Lu Zhou and two other people would have to carry this person back to the dorm every time. So he had his fair share of experience.

Lu Zhou guessed that she probably vomited on herself last night. Her clothes probably got dirty and were washed by the hotel staff.

Molina saw that Lu Zhou didn't seem to be lying. She finally realized how weird her questions must have seemed.

Lu Zhou looked at Molina and changed the conversation topic.

"The restaurant is on the second floor. The breakfast buffet is available until ten o'clock. If you feel better, you can go and eat something yourself. I already ate, so I won't go with you."

"Thanks... What about these clothes? Whose is it?"

Molina looked behind Lu Zhou, as if she was trying to see if the clothes belonged to someone else inside Lu Zhou's room. However, she didn't see anyone.

Lu Zhou: "It was probably given by the hotel."

"... Given? The hotel gave me clothes?"

Lu Zhou looked at Molina and sighed.

"Come on, it's a five-star hotel, don't act like you're surprised."

"What? It's just that... I haven't stayed at this kind of hotel before."

Even though she didn't know how much this hotel was, judging by the decoration and the status of the guests, she knew that staying here one night would be expensive.

Molina began to feel embarrassed.

"... How much was the bill yesterday? I said it was my treat..."

Lu Zhou: "It's fine, I handled it. If you want to pay me back, just be my tour guide for a day."

Molina paused for a second: "... Tour guide?"

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Yeah, even though this is a diplomatic visit, my itinerary is actually quite free. I've never had a chance really to explore Paris before. I plan on going to all the tourist spots."

Besides, I'm sure this counts as a cultural exchange.

Molina: "... Where do you plan on visiting? I'm a local, but I don't know any tourist spots in Paris."

Lu Zhou smiled and spoke.

"Let's start with Professor Abel's former residence."

Molina: "???"

...

[... I have seen this scene countless times in my dreams, the dead city, the tall pillars, the endless concrete jungle... The air here feels solidified. The atmosphere felt depressive and pressurizing. I don't know if this is someplace created by God, maybe our souls all return here one day.]

This was the most complete paragraph in the diary; it was written on the page behind the sketch.

Lu Zhou read this paragraph many times.

There was no such thing as a computer in the early 19th century, which was when Professor Abel was alive. From his perspective, the black steel forest was like a graveyard, while Lu Zhou knew that it was a representation of a computer array processor.

However, both were valid interpretations.

The tombstone could actually be a computer.

And vice versa.

Lu Zhou felt like it was more likely that both he and Professor Abel were wrong.

The only thing he could conclude now was that Professor Abel probably did not have the “high tech system”. But for some other reason, Abel was able to see a segment of the Void Memory in his dreams.

After all, Abel never mentioned anything like the system in his diary, or anything similar to an “oracle”. Secondly, according to his description, Abel repeatedly experienced the same dream and was puzzled by the dream.

If he really had access to the system, he would only have one chance to experience this dream.

After the pair left the city, the road began to become narrower, but the traffic was a lot better.

The car slowly drove to a small town, and it eventually parked in front of an old house.

The French driver looked at Lu Zhou in the rearview mirror as he spoke with a heavy accent.

“We’re here”.

Lu Zhou smiled and closed the notebook in his hand.

“Okay, thanks.”

After they got out of the car, Molina led Lu Zhou into the front yard. Wang Peng silently followed the two from behind as he quietly observed the surrounding environment.

The old man at the front door looked at the strange man walking next to his granddaughter. He frowned and spoke.

“And you are...”

Lu Zhou smiled and politely said, “I’m Lu Zhou.”

When the old man heard the name, he had a surprised look on his face.

“Oh oh, the professor from Princeton. My granddaughter talked about you before.”

“I haven’t worked at Princeton in a long time.” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “May I come in?”

The old man gave his granddaughter a strange look. He stepped aside and made an inviting gesture.

“... Come on in, it’s a bit messy, hope you don’t mind.”

“Thank you.”

Lu Zhou nodded and walked into the house.

1158 Struggles

Molina did not come inside. Instead, she stood at the doorstep.

Lu Zhou could clearly notice that the grandfather and granddaughter didn’t seem to like each other.

Lu Zhou wasn’t sure what the reason was, nor did he want to get involved in other people’s family business. After explaining his intentions for coming here, he followed the old man’s footsteps and came to an oil painting at the bottom of the stairs.

The person in the painting had blonde curly hair that was parted in the middle. The young face looked mature, confident... and a little handsome.

However, it was less handsome than Lu Zhou.

Besides this, there didn’t seem to be any clues Lu Zhou was hoping for; it was just a simple portrait.

“This painting was created in 1835... According to his relatives, it was created by a small well-known Norwegian painter at that time,” the old man said to Lu Zhou while standing behind him.

In fact, this relative was Professor Abel's fiancée, but the old man purposely left out that detail.

Lu Zhou looked at the old man and spoke curiously.

"So this painting is almost two hundred years old."

"Sort of, it's probably the most valuable thing in this room... But it's still not worth that much money."

The old man couldn't remember how much he bought it for. But since he could afford it on his tiny salary, it couldn't have been anything particularly expensive.

After all, not everyone was interested in portraits of mathematicians, let alone a "short-lived" genius. It was difficult to sell it for a high price unless there was a special hobbyist who would be willing to pay a huge price to buy this for their collection, or if a museum was willing to buy this painting.

The long history of this painting did not give it value. After all, its value depended on the artist's reputation, Abel himself, and the background of the painting.

"Other than this painting and Abel's notes, is there anything else from Professor Abel?"

The old man nodded.

"This is it."

Lu Zhou nodded and pondered for a while. He suddenly said, "Speaking of which, I have a question."

"Yeah?"

"Apparently, Abel never married in his life, are you... his blood relative?"

When the old man heard this question, he had a flash of panic on his face.

"... Maybe."

Maybe?

Lu Zhou saw the old man hesitating. He paused for a second and had some doubts in his mind. He wisely diverted the conversation.

“So, where did you get these things?”

“From a collector.”

Lu Zhou immediately asked, “Can you still contact him? I mean, can you introduce him to me?”

The old man shook his head and said, “That guy passed away a few years ago, so I’m afraid I can’t help you. If you are interested in Professor Abel’s relics, the notes are the only things left. I didn’t expect my granddaughter to give them all to you. But... I hope you can take good care of them.”

Lu Zhou saw a glimpse of shame in the old man’s eyes, and this confirmed his guess.

I knew it! Being a “descendant” of Professor Abel was probably a lie made up by this old man. From what I know, the genius only lived up to his twenties and had only one fiancée. The probability of him having children was almost impossible.

No wonder Molina was so emotionally unstable last night.

Lu Zhou remembered Molina’s coldness toward the old man just now at the doorstep. After a moment of silence, he suddenly spoke.

“Last night, your granddaughter was very emotional... I mean, not because of me.”

“Yeah, I know. It’s a bad lie, right?”

The old man had a depressed look in his eyes.

He shook his head. He was full of regret as he muttered, “I couldn’t help it... Who would have thought that her father would take it so seriously? I didn’t think it would turn out this way.”

Lu Zhou looked at the regretful old man and sighed. He spoke softly.

“I think the reason why she is angry and emotional is not that she isn’t a descendant of Professor Abel, but rather, it is because the person closest to her actually lied to her... For nearly thirty years.”

Family bloodline was meaningless in the science world. Most genius ideas were created by chance. Great scholars were inevitably created, but it was more due to chance, not genetics.

Perhaps the descendants of great scholars had an educational advantage over their peers and were more likely to go into academia. But it wasn’t guaranteed that they would become a great scholar as well.

Lu Zhou paused for a second before saying, “I am an outsider, and I know this is none of my business, but I would suggest you apologize to her...”

Hurt, the old man shook his head and said, “She will not forgive me, and I will not forgive myself...”

“Whether she forgives you or not is her choice. Whether you forgive yourself...” Lu Zhou paused and continued, “Actually, you shouldn’t blame yourself too much. I can see that she is truly passionate about mathematics. Although talent comes naturally, I don’t think she went on a wrong path.

“In fact, it might even be better if she stops putting expectations on herself.”

The old man was blaming himself for ruining his granddaughter’s life. But from Lu Zhou’s perspective, that might not be the case.

There was no way someone could follow the path of mathematics for more than two decades solely based on a sense of purpose due to her ancestors.

It might be good for Molina to know the truth.

This would help her mentality.

Although it was difficult for her to become a first-class scholar, she was already a leader among second-class scholars. If she calmed down and concentrated on research, she might come close to winning a Fields Medal before the age of forty.

Of course, whether or not she could actually win was another story.

After all, hard work wasn't the only thing it took to go from a second-class to a first-class scholar.

In addition to hard work, there was also a bit of luck involved.

The people that succeeded despite the odds being stacked against them were one in a million.

After hearing Lu Zhou's words, the old man went silent for a while.

After a long time, he spoke.

"Thank you, maybe you're right."

Lu Zhou nodded sincerely and said, "Just a suggestion."

Chapter 1159 The Place Where the Pope Is Buried

The origin of the sketch in Professor Abel's notes had become a mystery.

Judging from the notebooks, it seemed like this scholar had attributed all of the dreams to God and completely abandoned his search for the meaning behind the dream.

This was quite understandable, taking into account the era he was in.

Even though Lu Zhou himself was an atheist, he still knew what Professor Abel thought.

Attributing the unknowable mystery to some kind of powerful higher existence was common in human civilization.

In fact, didn't he do the same? Assuming that the system came from an "advanced civilization" was not necessarily better than attributing it to the "God of the universe".

Neither of these two assumptions had reliable scientific evidence to prove their existence.

Lu Zhou didn't know if Abel had gotten rid of the bizarre dreams or actively chose not to think about it anymore. The rest of the notes was only regarding

the problem that “there is no solution in radicals to general polynomial equations of degree five or higher”.

Lu Zhou knew what happened regarding this problem, even if it weren’t written in the notebooks.

Professor Abel achieved great success in 1824. He successfully completed a series of mathematical achievements, such as the “Abel-Ruffini theorem”.

However, these achievements did not improve his life; it didn’t even attract the attention of the Paris mathematics community at that time.

Finally, in the spring of 1829, the poverty-stricken him died of illness inside his fiancée’s home. His later works were mostly published by his teacher, Professor Holm, a decade later.

The world depicted in his sketches never appeared anywhere else.

The only clue left was the oil painting.

Molina was standing in the front yard. When she saw Lu Zhou come out of the house, she said, “Where do you want to go next? I’ll stay with you all day.”

Lu Zhou: “There’s nowhere else I want to go.”

Molina raised her eyebrows.

“That’s it?”

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded.

“Yeah, I stayed up all night last night. I have a big day tomorrow, so I should get some rest.”

After Lu Zhou bid farewell to Molina, he got in Wang Peng’s car and returned to his hotel.

He immediately went to bed.

The next morning, a black limo from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs stopped at the entrance of the hotel and picked up Lu Zhou.

The town “Saint-Lizier” that they were going to was located in the northern part of France, not too far from Paris. Since he planned on returning on the same day, it was better to leave early.

Before getting into the car, Lu Zhou thought that the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs would arrange a bodyguard and tour guide for himself. However, he did not expect that the person who accompanied him was actually Director Giacobino from the French Ministry of Science and Technology.

His position was roughly equivalent to being in charge of the deputy department of the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology.

Lu Zhou didn’t know exactly what these titles meant. Even to this day, he still hadn’t figured out what being the chief designer and chief consultant of the Lunar Orbit Committee meant. But judging from what the Chinese President said, Director Giacobino was on the same level as Director Li.

So Giacobino was quite a high-level official.

Apart from making some small talk prior to getting in the car, the two didn’t talk much.

Lu Zhou had a book with him, he didn’t seem to be interested in chatting at all. He quietly flipped through the book, making it tricky for Giacobino, who wanted to form a relationship with the “titan” of the Chinese academic community.

Giacobino glanced at the time on his watch and saw that there was not much time left. He secretly signaled the driver in French to drive a little slower. He then looked at Lu Zhou, who was sitting across from him, and asked, “Harvest and Planting... Interesting name, is it poetry?”

Lu Zhou flipped through the page and casually replied, “Strictly speaking, it’s an autobiography.”

Autobiography?

Giacobino hesitated for a moment before continuing.

“And its author?”

“Professor Grothendieck, I don’t know when it was written... Do you want me to read it to you?”

Giacobino smiled and spoke kindly.

“It’s rare to get an opportunity to listen to your lecture.”

Lu Zhou smiled at Director Giacobino.

He knew what Giacobino was trying to do.

However, he obviously wouldn’t call Giacobino out on trying to form a relationship with himself. His emotional intelligence wasn’t that low.

He cleared his throat and read his favorite French paragraph in a steady tone.

“... When we treat a science field not as a tool of ability and power, but as an adventure to pursue knowledge, we gain a sense of pure harmony from this field. While this harmony fluctuates with time, it’s a manifestation of the subtle and delicate themes of the world... As if this field came from a void of nothingness.”

Came from the void...

Lu Zhou felt like every time he read this sentence, he gained a deeper understanding of what it was trying to say.

What exactly is the void?

This question lingered in his mind.

However, Giacobino wasn’t touched by the writing. Instead, he was more surprised by Lu Zhou’s French.

The two had been talking in English prior to this. He had no idea Professor Lu was so fluent in French.

“... Your French is very fluent, when did you start learning? Was it during your time in CERN?”

Lu Zhou shook his head.

“I started learning it last month.”

Giacobino: "...?"

Precisely speaking, he started at the end of last month, when he decided he was coming to France.

Of course, if Lu Zhou told Giacobino that, Giacobino's jaw would drop to the floor.

Lu Zhou looked at Director Giacobino's surprised face and smiled. He ignored him and continued to read the autobiography book.

The driver sitting in front of them spoke.

"We're here."

...

The St. Lizier Church was located in the small town of Saint-Lizier. It was not a famous tourist attraction; it was just a small church for the locals.

The old priest stood at the church entrance. He watched Lu Zhou coming out of the car as he said, "You're finally here."

Lu Zhou looked at the old priest and smiled awkwardly.

"Sorry to keep you waiting."

"Where's the letter?"

Lu Zhou took out an old envelope from his pocket and gave it to the priest.

After the priest opened the letter and made sure that it was Professor Grothendieck's handwriting, he returned the letter to Lu Zhou and said, "Professor Grothendieck asked me to personally give you his notes. I thought he could fulfill his wishes eight years ago."

"... I apologize for taking so long."

The priest snorted and spoke in a hoarse voice.

"There's no need to apologize. If you don't come, it's your loss. The person that should be angry at you is six feet under the ground. You should go and

apologize to him. Do you want some flowers? It's 10 euros. He'll forgive you no matter what."

Lu Zhou was trying to find some money, but he could only find a credit card. Director Giacobino, who was standing next to him, quickly took out his wallet and spoke to the priest.

"I'll buy two bundles! Professor Grothendieck was a great scholar. His passing was a huge loss to the world, plus we owe him an apology..."

Born in an era of war, Professor Grothendieck had always been a radical pacifist during his lifetime. Because of this, he and the Institute Des Hautes Études Scientifiques in Paris had serious disagreements on the issue of whether "mathematics should be used for war". This eventually led him to live in seclusion in a small village in the south of France...

Everyone in France knew of these stories.

The old man looked at Giacobino and smiled.

"If you really think so, you wouldn't have waited eight years to visit him."

The priest turned around and opened the wooden door that led to the church cemetery.

"Come on in, his tombstone is the second one from the left, in the third row."

Lu Zhou nodded and walked toward the wooden door.

However, when he was about to pass the door, the old priest suddenly pulled Lu Zhou's arm.

"Wait a second, this is yours."

He took out a notebook from his hand.

Lu Zhou took the brown notebook from the priest's hand and flipped through the pages.

"Is this Professor Grothendieck's notes?"

Honestly, Lu Zhou was surprised at how thin it was.

The priest: "There are others, but this is the most important one, so I placed it in the Church. I can't understand the things written inside, but according to him, it's an unsolved mathematical problem.

"He always wanted to find someone to help him. He thought Deligne and a German named Schultz were good candidates, but he hated Germans and thought Schultz was too young... For some reason, he chose you in his final days, despite never meeting you."

Lu Zhou felt the significance of this notebook. He looked at the old priest and spoke solemnly.

"Thank you for keeping it this whole time for me."

The old priest snorted and said casually, "You're welcome. Aren't you rich? If you want to thank me, donate some money to the church. The church hasn't been renovated for over 50 years."

Lu Zhou paused for a second and smiled.

"No problem."

Compared to the complicated mathematical problems...

Things related to money was a piece of cake for him.

Chapter 1160 Mathematics Is a Universal Language

Professor Grothendieck's tombstone was situated in a low-key corner at the cemetery. It was covered with dust, and it looked like no one had visited it for a long time.

Grothendieck no longer contacted people in his later years. Except for a few friends who knew where he lived, most people didn't even know where his tombstone was.

According to this old priest, except for the last two months of his life, Grothendieck would come here to pray almost every weekend.

Lu Zhou nodded toward the babbling priest. He bent down and placed the flower bouquet on the tombstone.

Lu Zhou gave a blessing to this great scholar in his heart, thanking him for leaving behind the precious notebooks. He then turned around and walked away.

It wasn't that he didn't want to stay here for too long.

It was just that he didn't want Director Giacobino to have to stand here and pretend to act sad for any longer.

In fact, there was nothing to be sad about it. It was human nature to be born, get old, get sick, and die. Being able to choose the life you want was something most people were envious of. His isolating himself was a great loss for the mathematics community, but for him, it was a blessing.

After Lu Zhou left the cemetery, he followed the old priest to his home, which was not far from the church. He saw the remaining pile of notes in the priest's garage.

Yes, that was right; an entire pile of materials and notes.

Apparently, in the 18th century when academic exchanges were not as common, most European mathematicians relied on letters and manuscripts to "publish" their research results. Lu Zhou did not expect to see such a "primitive" communication method in the 21st century.

Even though the notes were stacked in the form of a pile, it was obvious that the old man took some time to separate the drafts and the formal notes. He even covered them with a plastic sheet to block dust.

Seeing how good the preservation of these notes were, Lu Zhou fulfilled his promise and donated one million euros to the St. Lizier Church. He treated this as a storage fee for the priest who kept these notes for the past eight years.

Lu Zhou took out his mobile phone and called Chen Yushan. He asked her to help contact the local logistics companies in Paris and entrust them to collect the notes and materials and ship them back to China. After that, he got back in the car and went back to Paris.

Star Sky Technology offered a price to a local logistics company that they could not refuse. After the logistics company came to the town of Saint-Lizier

and collected the precious notes, the package was shipped on a dedicated plane the next day.

When Lu Zhou arrived back at the hotel in the evening, he quickly ate his dinner in the cafeteria, then returned to his room. He spread out Professor Grothendieck's special notebook on the table and enthusiastically turned the page.

"A problem that even Professor Grothendieck couldn't solve? Let me take a look..."

According to rumors, before living in isolation, Professor Grothendieck and his student Deligne had been devoted to researching Riemann's hypothesis and its application in the field of algebraic geometry. The famous Weil conjecture was solved by Professor Deligne during this period of time.

If Professor Grothendieck was still researching mathematics after isolating himself, there was a high probability that the problem he was researching was Riemann's hypothesis.

However, while Lu Zhou thought he would read some research notes on Riemann's hypothesis, when he read the words on the page, he had a strange look in his eyes.

"... What is this?"

Motive theory?

No!

Although it also used abstract numbers, it was something completely different from motive theory.

Lu Zhou turned a page and continued to read. He soon realized that the things recorded in this notebook were completely beyond his expectations. This wasn't about Riemann's hypothesis at all, but rather... a mathematics proposition he had never even heard of.

Professor Grothendieck already gave a method of proof for the first proposition. As for the second proposition, it seemed like he wasn't able to solve it.

Lu Zhou was interested in this problem that troubled Professor Grothendieck. He picked up a ballpoint pen off his desk and pulled out a piece of draft paper. He transformed proposition 2 using his unified theory of algebra and geometry.

However, as soon as he completed the transformation, he was astonished.

Is this another form of expression for Riemann's hypothesis?!

Lu Zhou quickly turned to the back of the notebook. When he read the last few pages, he sighed in relief.

"... Obviously Grothendieck didn't prove it."

His intuition told him that this proposition was the same as Riemann's hypothesis, but Grothendieck did not give a reasonable proof.

After all, the unified theory of algebra and geometry was only invented last year.

He used a pencil and lightly drew a tick on proposition 2, indicating that this proposition had already been solved. Lu Zhou looked at the calculations and fell into deep thought.

"... This is definitely more than just some mathematics problems."

These complex propositions could be published as official mathematics conjectures.

Regardless of the academic value itself, in terms of difficulty, they were no less easy than the Millennium Prize Problems. It didn't seem like something an ordinary person could solve.

If Professor Grothendieck wanted to find an answer, he could make these propositions public.

Now with the existence of the Internet, he could even publish these problems anonymously.

Making it public would greatly increase the chances of someone solving the problem.

Lu Zhou tapped his pen on the draft paper.

Suddenly, he remembered a rumor.

According to a friend of Professor Grothendieck, in Grothendieck's later years, his mentality was in a rather unstable state, and he was addicted to the idea of a "devil".

For example, he believed that it was the devil who turned the beautiful speed of light, which was supposed to be 300,000 kilometers per second, to the ugly 299,792.458 kilometers per second.

It was not clear why an outstanding mathematician would care about the physical measurements of the universe, but there had to be a reason behind this.

This retired pope of mathematics suddenly wrote a personal letter to his former student Professor Illusi in January 2010, requesting that all of his texts published after his "disappearance" to not be reprinted.

This incident caused a commotion at the time since the books "Fondements de la Géométrie Algébrique" and "Éléments de Géométrie Algébrique" were the cornerstones of the algebraic geometry field. However, Grothendieck's request made it more difficult for people to obtain these textbooks.

Lu Zhou thought back to the words in the letter Grothendieck wrote to him. He didn't believe that a mentally unstable person could write those words.

He believed that there was something else that happened to this scholar, something he did not know about.

For example...

Lu Zhou's pupils contracted. He had a vague idea in his mind.

"... Physics governs the law of the universe, mathematics is the universal language."

Lu Zhou looked at the mathematical calculations in the notes. He felt like a light bulb just went off in his head, and his pupils lit up.

If I'm correct...

Then this isn't a simple mathematical proposition...

It's an entire language!

Chapter 1161 Cadarache's Fusion Power Station

The next morning, Lu Zhou accompanied the visiting team from China and went to the controllable fusion power station in Cadarache, a small city in the south of France.

The Chinese president, the French president, executives from the Électricité de France, and engineers from East Asia Energy were all here.

This time Academician Wang was not the one leading the team. It was instead an old engineer who Lu Zhou had never met before, as well as a group of young men.

When they met, the old engineer excitedly shook Lu Zhou's hand, making Lu Zhou almost feel embarrassed.

Even though it had been so many years since he was involved in research in the field of nuclear engineering, his prestige and reputation in the field had yet to diminish in the slightest.

He felt the people in the nuclear power industry treated him like a mythical creature.

In his opinion, at least half of the success of the Pangu reactor belonged to the rest of the project team.

They soon arrived at the destination. The group of people took a photo at the front gate before walking into the nuclear power plant.

The exterior design of this nuclear power plant was modeled after Pangu, and the construction took three whole years. Nearby was the foundation for the unfinished ITER project.

Because the technology used in the core catcher of the Pangu reactor and the ITER project were two completely different technologies, the French construction team had to face the choice of digging out the foundation and rebuilding one, or completely abandoning it.

The former option might be more expensive, as well as having the additional risk of not being approved by East Asia Energy. Thus, they chose to go with the latter choice.

When the person in charge here talked about how the French workers used their expertise and wisdom to overcome numerous problems and finally built this “star” that was destined to light up the west coast of Europe, the engineers from the East Asia Energy chuckled.

This thing took three years to build?

And they’re still so proud of themselves?

Fortunately, the construction was not delayed, and this received a round of applause from the Chinese visiting group.

During the visit, Lu Zhou, the chief designer of the Chinese controllable fusion project, seemed a little zoned-out throughout the whole process.

Not because he was annoyed at the efficiency of the French people, but because he had been studying the notebook all night. Even now, he was still thinking about complex mathematical formulas.

Even for him, solving the mathematics puzzle in that notebook was going to be difficult.

The difficult part was the mathematical expressions; these problems involved abstract numbers, rather than the traditional decimal numbers. Although the motive theory was a useful tool, by coupling abstract mathematical forms with even more complicated logical transformations, the whole theory became entwined and entangled together.

Fortunately, by using the unified theory of algebra and geometry, he was able to supplement many areas of motive theory.

If he could only use mathematical methods from ten years ago, proving proposition 2 in this notebook was as difficult as proving Riemann’s conjecture. This was why an outstanding scholar like Professor Grothendieck was stuck on these problems.

By using modern advanced mathematical theory, it took less than an hour for Lu Zhou to prove this proposition yesterday.

However, that was the end of the easy part.

After spending one night, he finally proved proposition 3. The difficulty for proposition 4 had increased exponentially, and Lu Zhou spent an hour trying to solve it without making any progress.

And there were ten propositions in total...

It gave him a headache thinking about it.

Director Giacobino, the person that accompanied him to the St. Lizier Church yesterday, deliberately walked next to Lu Zhou and spoke to him with a smile.

“Academician Lu, what do you think of this nuclear power plant?”

Lu Zhou looked around and spoke.

“It’s alright.”

Director Giacobino said, “Compared to Pangu?”

Lu Zhou: “Around the same.”

Director Giacobino had a joyful look on his face.

Lu Zhou didn’t know what to think.

Pangu was an experimental reactor, and it had more than half of the power generation capacity of the Fuxi reactor in Daya Bay. Pangu only supplied power to Shandong and northern Jiangsu, while the Fuxi reactor was responsible for supplying power to the Yangtze River Delta city group.

It only took them one year to construct the Pangu reactor, which was meant for research.

It took them three years to build a reactor that had the same capabilities as Pangu, even with East Asia Energy helping them. Lu Zhou didn’t know what they were so proud of...

Lu Zhou followed the visiting group and finished the nuclear core delivery ceremony.

The price was in the tens of billions of euros, while the cost was only one-tenth of the price. This was more profitable than selling 100 fighter jets.

This order alone increased the foreign exchange reserves of the People's Bank of China by two to three percentage points. Not to mention the hidden political, governance, and economic value from this order.

Although the French had to pay out of the a*s, the fusion power station could be used to eliminate the more expensive domestic fission nuclear power. The cost of industrial electricity would also be greatly reduced. The economic production stimulus was even more valuable.

This was a win-win situation for both parties.

The French president and the Chinese president smiled as they shook hands.

After the process was over, the Chinese visiting group returned to their cars.

Lu Zhou sat in the car and took out his notebook.

If the information in this notebook came from an extraterrestrial civilization, it was irresponsible of him to disclose it without knowing that the information represented.

Considering Professor Grothendieck's mental condition, these expressions could be interpreted as the "words of the devil" or something.

Perhaps these unsolvable propositions were what destroyed his mentality.

Lu Zhou would like to talk with the "devil" inside of Grothendieck's brain, but unfortunately, that was no longer possible.

The pope in the field of algebraic geometry passed away around the time Lu Zhou completed his first mathematics system mission.

Judging from what he saw in the system Void Memory, clearly, the Void Memory adapted itself to Lu Zhou's native language.

However, the message that Grothendieck received seemed to be some kind of mathematical code?

Maybe...

The message that Professor Grothendieck received was not from the Void? Maybe it's from a civilization a few levels lower than the Void, similar to the Calanians?

That is a possibility.

Whether it was the Void or another higher civilization, Lu Zhou didn't believe in the existence of a "devil".

He finally gained some understanding as to why the old man's mental state suddenly deteriorated, making him do ridiculous things.

Thinking about these things was no easy feat for a man in his seventies.

He still remembered Professor Deligne's evaluation of Sir Atiyah. At that age, forget about mathematics research, being able to have a normal conversation was a blessing in and of itself.

Even Lu Zhou felt dizzy when he looked at these mathematical formulas.

Wang Peng was sitting next to Lu Zhou. Wang Peng looked at him and spoke.

"You seem to be in a bad mental state."

Lu Zhou: "Maybe because I didn't sleep last night."

Wang Peng: "You didn't sleep two nights in a row?"

Lu Zhou: "It's fine, I took a five-hour nap."

Wang Peng: "... Doctor Yan suggested you to sleep for eight hours a night. This is important for your health and body."

"There are things more important than my body." Lu Zhou smiled at his friend and said, "Don't worry, once this is over, I'll take a break."

Wang Peng hesitated for a second. He then looked at the notebook in Lu Zhou's hand.

"... Once you finish researching the notebook?"

Lu Zhou twisted the pen in his hand and gave an ambiguous answer.

“Sort of.”

1162 The Award From the Institut de France

“... To Landon Clay and his wife Lavinia Clay, to the Clay family, to the members of the Riemann family, and to all of the mathematicians who came to this historic occasion.

“At a Paris conference 23 years ago, the Clay Mathematics Institute announced awards for anyone that could solve the seven most famous problems in the world. Even though mathematicians are more excited about mathematics than fame and fortune...

“That doesn’t mean it is not important.

“It’s a list of the great unsolved problems of the 20th century. It creates enthusiasm for mathematics. It attracts children and students to be interested in the ever-evolving mathematics and math-related problems.”

“It didn’t matter whether they were interested in mathematics or the million-dollar prize money.”

The Institut de France.

The large auditorium was packed with people.

Because this was the award ceremony for Riemann’s hypothesis, almost all of the top French mathematicians, as well as members of major mathematical organizations, were invited to be here.

This place was once the center of mathematics in Europe and even around the world. Countless mathematicians dreamed of the opportunity to speak here.

Even though the glory of this place had faded due to the decline of the European mathematics community, some things still remained unchanged.

Professor Carlson stood at the podium. After pausing for a moment, he spoke in a solemn and serious tone.

“Niels Henrik Abel once wrote in his memoir that in order to solve a difficult problem, it has to be written clearly...

“It has to be written in the correct expression.

“What we know is often not as simple and understandable as we think. Behind every theorem that we all know is the hard work of countless scholars across centuries. This constant progression is precisely how our field advances.”

“We have come a long way. Professor Lu Zhou’s work has revealed the mystery behind the zero-point distribution of the Riemann function and the profound mathematical meaning behind it, that is, the unity of algebra and geometry. The birth of this theory has restructured algebraic geometry and has even redefined our understanding of numbers and geometry.

“It might take us decades or even longer to build on top of his foundation. We have already taken the first step, so I’m certain the second step will eventually come.”

The award speech was finally over.

Professor Carlson bowed in midst of the thunderous applause.

Lu Zhou walked on to the stage and accepted the million-dollar check from Professor Carlson. He smiled professionally and shook Carlson’s hand.

“Thank you.”

The money was nice of course.

However, compared to the billion-dollar fusion construction site he visited yesterday, a million dollars was pocket change. But regardless, there was no such thing as having too much money.

Professor Carlson was finally able to give out this important reward. He had a look of relief on his face.

He felt like he was in a unique situation.

He wanted to give money, a million dollars no less, but he was having a rather difficult time.

Professor Carlson shook Lu Zhou’s hand and spoke with excitement.

“Do you want to do an acceptance speech? Just talk about how you feel.”

Acceptance speech?

When Lu Zhou heard Professor Carlson’s words, he had an awkward look on his face.

“I already gave a speech last time... So, I think there’s no need for another one.”

Surrounded by a wave of applause, Professor Carlson was the only one that heard what Lu Zhou said.

Lu Zhou watched the old man’s face turn red due to the increase in blood pressure. He suddenly felt lucky that his words were drowned out by the applause and that he was far away from the microphone...

...

In the evening, there was a banquet at the Collège de France; the Société Mathématique de France and the Clay Mathematics Institute jointly hosted a dinner party. Even if some mathematicians didn’t attend the award ceremony during the day, all of them attended the night banquet.

Lu Zhou met a lot of his old friends at dinner.

One of them was Professor Helfgott, who worked at the École Normale Supérieure.

This Peruvian French number theorist provided him with a lot of help when he was researching Goldbach’s conjecture. Particularly, the proof of the weak Goldbach conjecture provided him with a lot of inspiration for combining the sieve method and the circle method.

After solving Goldbach’s conjecture, Lu Zhou barely published papers in the field of number theory, so the two had not kept in touch. However, they were still great friends.

Professor Helfgott was quite enthusiastic and chatted with Lu Zhou for a long time. Lu Zhou also asked a lot about Professor Grothendieck’s life and some rumors about Professor Abel.

“Hypothetically speaking.”

Helfgott: "Yeah?"

Lu Zhou poured himself a glass of champagne and said, "... If there are aliens in this universe, if they're a completely different species, how should we communicate with them?"

Professor Lu Helfgott froze for a second, then gave Lu Zhou a strange look.

"You discovered aliens?"

Lu Zhou paused for a second and smiled.

"Of course not! Just a hypothetical question. Why would you think that?"

Helfgott smiled and said, "Because every time you ask a question, it seems that you've already solved half of the question. You're not a person who would give other people the opportunity to rob you of the glory, am I right?"

Uh?

Am I?

Lu Zhou thought about it carefully and realized that Helfgott was right.

In his own opinion, he worked hard for his achievements. However, in the eyes of others, the age-old mathematical propositions only took him a few months or weeks to solve.

Helfgott smiled and took a sip of wine. He pondered for a second before answering the question.

"If I had to communicate with an alien for the first time... I think mathematics is the way."

Lu Zhou raised his eyebrows.

"Oh yeah?"

What a coincidence.

"The key to communication between the two civilizations is finding a common language. Say, for example, the cup in my hand. If they don't use a cup as a container and don't drink liquids, then this cup makes no sense to them,"

Helfgott said as he put down the cup. He thought for a while and continued, "Science is about studying the problem of the world. The problems we face might be different from theirs, but the tools we use to solve problems should be the same.

"Whether it's the natural sciences or applied technology, they're all closely related to mathematics.

"So, I think mathematics should be the common language."

Lu Zhou: "If you're an alien, and you wanted to see how intelligent I am, what would you do?"

Helfgott leaned back on his chair and smiled.

"Me? I'll give you two big prime numbers first... Of course, I'd give you the multiple of these two prime numbers. If you can find the two prime numbers, then..."

"Interesting idea..." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Then what?"

Helfgott: "Then? Use the distance between to form a measurement system? What about the periodic table of the elements? Doing this systematically is a discipline. I remember it is called alien linguistics. I think there's a Paris professor researching this area..."

"Basically, I think if we can achieve basic communication, then everything will be fine. Maybe we can even exchange knowledge. Once the cultural exchange begins, we will be able to understand each other."

Helfgott paused for a moment, shrugged, and spoke.

"If they decide to contact us and find us, they probably already have a certain understanding of us and might have been observing us for a while. Whether through electromagnetic wave signals or space capsules, if they really want to communicate with us, they will definitely find a way."

Lu Zhou spoke with a smile.

"Honestly, you should be a science fiction writer."

Helfgott smiled.

“Thanks for the compliment, but science fiction isn’t as interesting as mathematics. I’ll leave the opportunity to others!”

1163 Abstract Answer

Major media outlets reported on the news of Lu Zhou winning the million-dollar Millennium Prize Problems money. The story quickly spread across the world.

People were jealous of the million-dollar money; they were also surprised to hear that he had solved three of the seven millennium problems.

That’s right.

This was his third time winning the award.

After mathematicians heard the news, they were in disbelief; they didn’t know what to feel.

It was almost like this award was established specifically for him.

While the Internet was discussing this million-dollar bonus and what problem would be solved by Lu Zhou next, the Chinese visiting group in France finished their tasks.

The ignition of the fusion power station in Cadarache was quite successful. After learning from their mistakes in St. Petersburg, East Asia Energy specially arranged technicians to cooperate with French electrical engineers to install an additional insurance on the electrical grid.

After the successful ignition, the Cadarache fusion reactor core would account for 80% of the total power in the French power grid, completely replacing the outdated nuclear fission power technology.

The responsibilities of the Chinese were done, the rest was up to France themselves.

After the French President bid farewell to them, the visiting group took the special plane back to Beijing.

The Chinese president on the plane looked at Lu Zhou reading a notebook. He spoke emotionally.

“Academician Lu, you’re such a hard worker, even studying on the plane.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “This is not really work, just a hobby.”

The president asked curiously, “Is this Professor Grothendieck’s notes?”

“Yeah...” Lu Zhou nodded and said, “There are some interesting questions inside, and I’ve only been able to solve four out of the ten.”

The president: “If even you can’t solve all of them, they must be very tricky.”

Lu Zhou sighed and said, “Yeah, they’re quite difficult.”

The old man nodded.

After a while, he suddenly spoke.

“Speaking of which, what’s the thing you told Director Li about?”

Lu Zhou paused for a second and said, “He told you?”

The president smiled and said, “I was just curious. If it’s classified, you don’t have to tell me.”

Lu Zhou: “... It’s not classified, I’m just not certain about it.”

The president looked at Lu Zhou’s hesitant face and quickly said, “It’s fine if you’re uncertain. Everyone is uncertain in the beginning. If you tell me, maybe I can help you.”

Of course the president was curious. From nuclear fusion to aerospace engineering, everything Lu Zhou worked on turned into a huge success.

Now that Lu Zhou was talking about his next mysterious big project, everyone wanted to know what it was.

Lu Zhou looked at the curious president. He knew he wouldn’t be able to quietly read his notebook on this flight.

He sighed and closed his notebook. He then asked in a serious tone, “Okay then, what do you think our country lacks the most?”

“Talent!”

“I’m talking about technology wise.”

The president thought for a while before saying, “In terms of technology... It should be our information technology, which is lacking in competitiveness. Even though the Dragon series of chips were successful, when I talked with the experts from the Institute of Semiconductors at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, they told me that we still have a long way to go. Especially in high-end chip technology. We started too late, and we’re still lacking in experience...”

Lu Zhou had a smile on his face when he heard this.

As expected, directly asking the “customer” was the easiest way to know what to produce.

Lu Zhou already had a rough idea in his mind on what to use the general points on.

Lu Zhou spoke without hesitation.

“That’s what I wanted to say! High-end integrated circuits!”

The old man paused for a second when he heard Lu Zhou.

I guessed it?

What a coincidence.

...

He had already collected Grothendieck’s notes, but he didn’t receive a pop-up for completing his mission. There must be some elements that he had yet to complete.

These elements should be solving the mathematical problems left in the notebook.

After Lu Zhou returned to his home in Jinling, he locked himself in his study room with the piles of materials and notes delivered from France. He began to dive into the problems on the notebook.

These problems were certainly difficult, but that didn't discourage him. After talking with Professor Helfgott, Lu Zhou felt a rush of inspiration.

Not academic inspiration.

But inspiration regarding the understanding of this notebook.

Looking at this from the perspective of a civilization, if they really wanted to establish contact with Earth, then the information contained in this notebook should be far less simple than a complete language. There must be something hidden in it; a message they wanted to convey.

Lu Zhou thought of the dream Professor Abel wrote about in his diary.

Lu Zhou had a feeling; he felt like there was a connection between these two.

He felt like he was getting closer and closer to the truth.

Including where the system came from.

And what exactly was the Void...

After spending half a month using Grothendieck's notes and materials, Lu Zhou was finally able to solve all of the problems.

However, the result was not what he expected.

The final result was not a series of lengthy equations, but instead, it was a condensed abstract number "n" based on motive theory.

He looked at the long decimal representation of this number, and the only thing he could prove was that it was an irrational number.

Lu Zhou looked at the lowercase "n" on the paper as he frowned and began to think.

"Maybe I should find a linguist for help?"

"Wait a second..."

The pen in his hand suddenly froze.

A possibility appeared on Lu Zhou's mind.

"If they really want to talk to us, and if they sent us information, they must know something about us already..."

A light bulb lit up in Lu Zhou's head. He immediately grabbed his phone from his pocket, took a picture of the draft paper, and said, "Xiao Ai!"

A text bubble popped up on his phone screen.

[Yes, Master? (๑`⊂•)]

"Enter these calculations into the computer and convert n into binary numbers. Don't stop the calculations until I tell you so!"

Lu Zhou spoke with excitement.

"Then, decode it and read it back to me!"

1164 The Void

After calculating the binary number of n to 2.2 trillion digits, it was put through a decoder, finally showing a hint.

Just like Lu Zhou had guessed, the civilization that sent these mathematical formulas to Earth had been observing Earth for a long time. They already understood the method of exchanging information on Earth.

And what shocked him was that all this information was compressed in this irrational number that took up less than one byte of storage.

Lu Zhou was shocked at how they were able to send this irrational number to Earth. He wanted to know how they were able to store such a huge amount of information in a number...

The underground laboratory at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Lu Zhou lay on the VR chair and put on his helmet.

Even though Xiao Ai was worried about Lu Zhou's safety, it still compiled the software and began the program.

Soon after, Lu Zhou saw a white light.

Lu Zhou was inside a world similar to the system space.

However, unlike the system space, there wasn't a familiar holographic panel here; instead, there was a man... A copy of himself.

However, even though it was a "copy" of himself, some facial features were different.

Apparently, human beings were more likely to have a good impression of individuals who looked similar to themselves, but instinctively felt threatened toward individuals who looked exactly the same as themselves.

Lu Zhou wasn't sure if this was the reason this model looked so similar to him. He wasn't a psychologist, so there was no way he could analyze the intent behind this advanced civilization.

However, one thing he could deduce was that there was no hostile intent behind this contact.

"How did you do this?"

Lu Zhou looked at the man standing in front of him and continued, "Condensing a huge amount of data into an irrational number... How did you create your own irrational number?"

Even though Lu Zhou's words were a bit convoluted, he believed this person could still understand him.

Using abstract numbers to express a specific irrational number wasn't just a mathematical problem, it was something that was considered impossible.

The man had a troubled expression on his face as he gently spoke to Lu Zhou.

"... We used to be as ignorant as you guys. Back then, the numbers we were exposed to were all rational numbers. But as the years went on, we gradually discovered that almost all real numbers are irrational numbers."

Lu Zhou: "We know this. The rationals are countably infinite, whereas the irrationals are uncountable."

The person looked at Lu Zhou and spoke.

"Please don't be mistaken. We don't use ignorance as a derogatory term... It's an enviable trait. Ignorant people are curious, and curiosity is the vitality of civilization. Once you lose your curiosity, even if your civilization is omniscient and omnipotent, it will die with the passage of time... Of course, you humans are still too young, and you guys are in a stage where countless new problems are created when each one is solved, so you might not even be able to imagine the feeling of being overwhelmed by endless emptiness."

Lu Zhou: "Although omniscience and omnipotence sound quite enviable, I... probably understand what you mean."

Poets often compared themselves to birds, knowing more did not necessarily mean that you would become happier. In fact, most of our troubles came from knowing too much.

This applied to individuals.

As well as civilizations.

"Correct, I agree with you." The man looked at Lu Zhou with approval as he said, "I've been able to see two commendable qualities inside you."

Lu Zhou thought for a bit.

"... Being self-aware?"

"Three now, you're very smart."

The man smiled and continued, "But I'm afraid I cannot answer your questions. That involves the truth of the universe... which is what you call knowledge. The information about that is not included in this program. We hope that you can find the answer yourself."

"Of course, if we have the opportunity to meet, I would like to talk to you as an individual, but this might not necessarily be a good thing for you."

Lu Zhou: "..."

Lu Zhou felt like he was a monkey in a zoo, being praised for his intelligence. He didn't know if he should be angry or happy.

In fact, he felt powerless.

He knew that this "person" in front of him was more powerful than the entire military forces on Earth combined. He felt like he should proceed safely.

So far, this person was being kind to him.

Lu Zhou: "Can I ask a question?"

"Go ahead."

"What is your name?"

The man thought for a while and said, "This question is complicated, even more complicated than the first question... We have long ago abandoned the communication methods that require a medium, including gestures, audio, electromagnetic waves, and even gravitational waves. We no longer use things like names to distinguish each other... Of course, for convenience's sake, you can call me The Observer, that's my favorite word in your dictionary."

What a strange creature.

However, Lu Zhou didn't care too much about the details, so he continued to ask, "What is the Void? What is the natural disaster? And the strange quark star—"

Lu Zhou went silent for half a second and thought back to what The Observer told him before. He said, "Leaving the quark star aside, let's focus on the first two questions."

The man smiled and nodded.

He had a respectful look on his face.

He spoke in a slow voice, as if he were reading a poem.

"The Void is the Void, everything about it is a mystery even for us. It is independent of the universe. If the universe is composed of n trembling strings, then it is the $n+1$ string outside the n -string. The extra dimension

outside the n -dimension. It is the lake that makes up the reflection on the lake, and it contains all the energy and matter in this universe, but at the same time, it contains nothing.”

Lu Zhou finally understood how other people felt when listening to his presentations.

By using his knowledge of M-theory, he was able to barely understand what The Observer was saying. But he still couldn’t understand how a civilization could survive in such a dimension space.

And even if they could, how did they communicate with the universe, with Earth?

“As for the natural disaster...” A look of sadness appeared in The Observer’s eyes. After a long silence, he sighed and said, “You’re not ready for that yet.”

Lu Zhou: “I don’t get it. According to you, the Void is the extra dimension outside the n dimension, then it should be independent of the n dimension. How did you contact me then? How did you get inside... those people’s dreams?”

The man had a look of approval in his eyes as he spoke.

“I’m liking you more and more now. Most people panic when they see me, or stubbornly think that I am talking nonsense. You’re the only one that tries to communicate with me using rational thinking... Although you might not trust me, you know that what I’m saying might be possible.”

Lu Zhou didn’t say anything.

The Observer continued to speak, “When the old universe died out, we made some preparations. Just like how you guys built dams for the floods. These preparations allowed us to communicate with other civilizations... However, the energy connection between us is weak, and there are many forces in the universe that interfere with our connection. Even if individuals are aware of our existence, they’re unable to convince themselves.

“So, periodically, we try to send necessary signals to speed up the advancement of your civilization to a certain extent. You can call it a kind of enlightenment. Of course, this kind of growth is not without destruction. Just

like a supernova, the expansion will lead to death. We're walking on thin ice. We're letting humans grow without reducing your future potential."

Lu Zhou: "... It seems like you guys have poured a lot of resources into me?"

The Observer smiled kindly.

"Yeah, it would be unfortunate if you ignored our signals. But we know that probability is low, and we have backup plans."

Lu Zhou wasn't sure whether the "signals" he was talking about was referring to Professor Grothendieck's notebooks or the "system" inside his head. However, one thing for certain was that his success came from a lot of guidance.

There was still one thing he didn't understand.

Which was why they decided to do this.

In other words, even if a group of ants knew that a flood was coming, what could the group of ants do?

It wasn't that he was being pessimistic, but in terms of mathematics, physics, and information science, Earth's capabilities were nowhere near the Void civilization.

If the Void civilization, who created a quark star, couldn't defend against the disaster, what could the puny Earth do?

"... If you guys really want to avoid the crisis, shouldn't you tell us what it is?"

The Observer smiled, as if he were talking to a child.

"Is that so?"

"All of our decisions are based on hundreds of millions of failures and conclusions drawn from trillions of calculations. It might seem illogical from your perspective, but this is the best choice.

"We must make sure that every sand particle in the hourglass falls precisely so that when the final moment comes, everything will go in the right direction... Of course, we still make mistakes.

“Remember the Calanian Empire?”

Lu Zhou nodded without saying anything.

“I’m glad you remember them.” The Observer smiled and nodded. After a pause, he continued, “Two hundred years after the ‘Oracle’ incident, this long-standing civilization turned into dust, disappearing in the universe.”

I knew it...

My guess is correct.

The Calan civilization was the past, and it might even come from what The Observer referred to as the “old universe”. Things that happened before the big bang.

Lu Zhou took two seconds to digest the information. He took a deep breath and asked, “Is it because of the ‘natural disaster’?”

“Natural disasters? Natural disasters are stronger than that. No, it was a manmade disaster.”

The man continued to speak, “What happened with the Calan Empire was beyond our expectations. We never thought that they would destroy themselves.

“Fortunately, their memories were recorded, thus giving us enlightenment.”

Lu Zhou: “Memories? What memories?”

“You ask a lot of questions.

“The memory is the second part of the Void Memory b.”

The man smiled and reached out his right hand. He held up a prism that was made from shiny blue particles.

“It’s almost time.

“If you have a quantum computer, the decoding should end here.”

Lu Zhou wanted to ask what “here” meant, but his white surroundings started to break apart. The blue prism was like a black hole, distorting everything around him, breaking everything into countless fragments.

Lu Zhou had a feeling in his heart.

This is the world depicted in Void Memory b2!

The story has already begun...

Chapter 1165 The End of the Empire

The sky was orange, the sun was about to set, and the heat made it difficult to breathe. The mountains and hills were filled with farmland. The crops here were blue, and they looked like layers of waves in the sea.

Lu Zhou originally thought that this experience would be the same as last time, where he would be bombarded by bullets. However, he was in a peaceful setting.

But this peacefulness soon disappeared.

The mountains in the distance seemed to have been cut in half by some kind of terrifying force, exposing the rocks underneath.

Obviously, an extremely tragic battle happened here.

“It’s magnificent, isn’t it?” A Calanian man said to Lu Zhou, “Mr. Long, I heard you’re from the Faraway Star.”

Lu Zhou nodded and spoke.

“Yes, General Reinhardt.”

Unlike last time, when Lu Zhou spoke, a bunch of strange memories flooded into his brain. He remembered that he was a soldier from the Faraway Star. He joined the rebel army and became a soldier under General Reinhardt.

I can’t believe this.

Reinhardt... actually set off a revolution to overthrow the Empire fifty years after the Oracle incident?

However, it seemed like they weren't in a great situation.

At least for now, they were probably on the defensive side, injured from the previous round of battle.

"I'm sorry I destroyed your hometown. I remember that mountain was one of the ten most spectacular places of the Empire. It was called the Gate of Twilight?"

Suddenly, an army officer walked over.

"General, the Empire army has sent us a request."

Reinhardt went silent for a while before speaking.

"Assemble all level 5 and above officers in the staff room. I have important things to discuss with them."

"Okay."

The army officer walked away.

Reinhardt turned to look at Long, which was Lu Zhou's character. Reinhardt's finger pointed toward the shooting stars in the sky.

"See that arc of light?"

Lu Zhou raised his head and looked at the direction he was pointing.

Before he could speak, Reinhardt smiled and spoke.

"That's the Empire Speed Lances, isn't it amazing?"

Lu Zhou: "..."

"A few centuries ago, we eliminated most of the weapons that ended the last war, but it took less than five years for the Empire fleet to rearm themselves.

"War really is a biological instinct. It seems that the Empire has never changed... We underestimated the council."

Reinhardt shook his head with a self-deprecating smile on his face.

Although these weapons would do little against the natural disaster that was depicted in the Oracle, at least the Empire was no longer a sheep, waiting to get killed.

Even if they were sheep...

At least they were sheep that had guns and armors.

"Come with me, Long.

"For every second we waste, a brave soldier sacrifices himself for our cause. In order to make use of their sacrifice and to give us a little hope for the future, I need to make some preparations. Will you give me some courage?"

Lu Zhou didn't know what to answer.

"... You already have enough courage, General."

"Really?" General Reinhardt thought of the past and smiled as he said, "Maybe so."

...

All of them soon arrived in the staff room.

Reinhardt placed his hand on the conference table as he looked at the officers around the table.

"Gentlemen, we are losing this war."

The room was silent.

Lu Zhou noticed that some people held their breath.

"I am not afraid of failure. Death is just a return to the embrace of the universe's spirit. Sacrifice is a soldier's greatest glory. My senior officer once told me this, albeit I'm sure he is very disappointed in me right now."

General Reinhardt grinned and looked at the officers around the conference table. He spoke.

“I am not afraid of failure, but I don’t want all of our efforts to go to waste.

“Worst comes to worst, we have to leave something meaningful behind.”

The staff room was silent for a long time.

Finally, an officer broke this silence.

“But General, what can we leave behind?”

“Leave behind a fire, or hope.” Reinhardt walked in front of a holographic panel, reached out his hand, and waved. He switched the combat map to the star map of the entire galaxy system.

He looked at the galaxy, and his index finger pointed toward the center of the galaxy.

“In Professor Lane’s notes, he calculated the trajectory of the quark star. We know where they are going. If hope is there, we should go there.”

The revolutionary army officer had a bitter expression on his face as he said, “No one can stop the Empire fleet. They’ll check every spacecraft for signs of life. They’ll even destroy the entire planet if necessary. Besides, we don’t have a spacecraft that can sail to 500 light-years away without replenishment. We’re at least ten thousand light-years from the center of the solar system...”

“But we have to try!”

Reinhardt had a look of determination on his face as he said in a confident manner, “Copy my memory into the computer, turn my body into a specimen.

“If our civilization survives in the end, that would be great.

“But if not, we have to leave something behind to prove that this great civilization once existed!”

The second half of his speech was somewhat tragic.

Halfway through the meeting, the Empire fleet had already begun bombing the surface of the planet. The high-temperature plasma melted the rocks, burning the surface. Chemical weapons, which were useless in space, were unimaginably powerful against atmospheric planets.

The ground and orbital combat units of the revolutionary army were slowly defeated.

Inside the underground bunker, Reinhardt saved his memory into a computer. He entered a spacecraft flight route and activated the intelligent cruise AI.

Finally, he ended his life with a needle that contained a lethal virus. His body was going to be sent to the center of the galaxy.

Lu Zhou watched everything unfold in front of him. He held his breath.

Even though the ten thousand light-years journey did not happen in front of his eyes, him being able to access this memory meant the spacecraft must have reached the center of the galaxy.

Everything about the old universe was destroyed, but this memory still passed down and was observed by him inside a new universe.

What really shocked him was not the calmness of the Calanians during the battle, but rather something General Reinhardt did before boarding the escape ship.

He saw General Reinhardt take off his broken battery necklace, prayed for a while, then placed it back around his neck.

Lu Zhou recognized that battery!

That battery was what powered his weapon in the Void Memory b!

This battery was broken by a bullet during the battle!

He didn't expect Reinhardt to wear this battery as a necklace.

The broken battery, the old spacecraft, even the mentally retarded ship AI...

Lu Zhou thought back to the gifts he received from the Void. He felt his heartbeat moving quickly.

The gifts he received from the Void came from the wreckage of the Calan Empire...

He might have finally discovered the origin of Xiao Ai...

1166 The Research Project From the Void

The two Void memories obviously belonged to General Reinhardt.

If Lu Zhou's speculation was correct, Xiao Ai was probably the intelligent navigation AI on the escape spacecraft.

After Reinhardt died, everything around him began to disappear. The world fragmented into pale blue particles, scattering away like butterflies.

When Lu Zhou came back to his senses, he was standing in a white space, in front of the man called The Observer.

Lu Zhou gulped and spoke in an uncertain tone.

"... So the Calanian Empire was destroyed?"

"The destruction of the empire was a long process..." The Observer nodded and said, "The Oracle caused disagreements, and the disagreements led to civil wars. The civil wars created battles within the Empire, but nothing was resolved. The battle shifted into biological warfare with a virus that spread along the brain neural network, which was far more terrifying than any weapon. They took centuries to get rid of their weapons, yet it only took five years to rearm themselves again.

"The main battle ended, but smaller battles still continued. In order to maintain the growing demand for supplies around the world, they had to use warships to escort the cargo ships. Over the next hundred and fifty years, the Ring world gradually lost control of nearby stars. The internal conflict made the Ring world no longer stable.

"If you're interested in this period of history, you can continue to calculate the memory. Start from the 5.67 trillionth digit of n and end at 157.5 trillion digits. It records the next hundred and fifty years of Empire history.

"To be honest, collecting these precious data wasn't easy. It was difficult for us to bring them to the new universe. When our conversation is finished, I suggest you save this number and continue the calculations, maybe it will give your civilization some enlightenment."

Lu Zhou nodded and took a deep breath.

“Give it to me straightforwardly, what do you need me to do?”

The Observer smiled.

“You need to do a research project.”

“... A research project?”

“Yes.” The Observer nodded and said, “The universe is like a huge fishing net, only a few lucky people can escape from this net. Before we went into the void, we observed many civilizations in the old universe. Without mastering faster than light travel, they were able to travel outside of their solar system using slower methods. However, most of these civilizations did not survive for a long time.

“Therefore, we believe that mastering the mystery of faster than light travel is the first element of transforming a planetary civilization to star system civilization.”

Lu Zhou: “... So you want me to find a way to exceed the speed of light?”

The Observer smiled and shook his head.

“A way to go beyond the speed of light? That is too difficult for you now. However, any great technology needs to start with a theoretical foundation, right? I’m sure you noticed something from the Calanian Empire. For example, how their spacecraft was able to travel between stars.”

Lu Zhou nodded without saying anything.

In fact, the Calan civilization wasn’t the only one that inspired him in regard to faster than light travel. He had some ideas in his mind ever since he discovered the Z particle.

The key to faster than light travel should be in the hyperspace.

However, so far, everything about hyperspace theory was just conjecture; it was still one of the least reliable conjectures made by Einstein.

The Observer looked at Lu Zhou and smiled.

"I can give you some information. In this young galaxy, Earth is not the only sentient species. But you guys are still at the upper echelon. Although there is not much time left, according to our calculations, it should be enough."

Upper echelon civilization?

Even though Lu Zhou didn't know what this meant, his intuition told him that there was a group of creatures in the Void that liked to "help the poor". Perhaps the universe was more crowded than he had imagined.

Perhaps Earth would make contact with another civilization within the next 200 years.

However, Lu Zhou wondered what that had to do with himself?

In 200 years, he would be long gone.

The Observer looked at Lu Zhou, who was lost in deep thought, and spoke.

"Of course, in addition to faster than light theory, we hope you can retrieve something for us... Or rather, retrieve something for yourself."

Lu Zhou: "... What thing?"

The Observer: "It's a gift. It was supposed to be delivered to you. But it was taken by a group of beings that lived on Mars billions of years ago. We were surprised to see this deviation from our plan, but fortunately, that civilization made the only correct choice in their existence and kept our gift."

Creatures on Mars?

When Lu Zhou heard this, his eyes were wide open.

He thought of the Martian bacteria they discovered a while ago, as well as a paper he once read about the possibility of a magnetic field and standard atmospheric environment on Mars 3.9 billion years ago. It seemed like it wasn't impossible for Mars to have once been populated by sentient beings.

However, even if that civilization existed a long time ago, surely everything from that era would have disappeared.

"Aren't you curious about what the gift is?"

“... Actually, I’m more curious about the civilization that once lived on Mars.”

“I understand, but unfortunately, that information is not included in the memory.”

Well, that’s unfortunate.

Lu Zhou sighed and spoke.

“Okay then... What gift is it?”

The Observer smiled and said, “That’s up to you to find out.”

Lu Zhou: “???”

The man looked at Lu Zhou and said, “Please forgive me, we devoted a lot of effort into sending it to the new universe and into the designated galaxy. We cannot accurately predict where it will appear. I cannot help you locate it. But I remember giving you a Mars rover? And you still haven’t found it?”

Lu Zhou: “... But that’s a whole planet! You want me to find it using a car?”

The rover had scanned a lot of precious information regarding the Mars landscape and the distribution of mineral deposits, but it had never found any traces of civilization.

Because the civilization disappeared 3.9 billion years ago!

Even the oldest dinosaur fossil was only 228 million years old!

Lu Zhou began to doubt if this “gift” even existed anymore.

However, The Observer didn’t seem to care about Lu Zhou’s complaint. He looked at him and smiled warmly.

“It’s almost time. Maybe I should say goodbye.”

Lu Zhou: “Wait a second, one last question... How many people on Earth have you seen?”

The Observer smiled.

“I’ve seen everyone, but none of them have seen me.

“In terms of indirect communication, around ten times. As for direct communication... The most recent one was probably a century ago. The next time might be a century later, or maybe never. This depends on whether human beings can leave their home planet.

“Okay, I have answered your last question. All of the answers to your questions are contained in this memory. Also, I have to admit, this is the most enjoyable conversation I’ve had with a human.

“I have high expectations of you. Maybe we will speak face to face one day.

“Although we don’t have the emotion of curiosity, the future is exciting.

“Goodbye, human of civilization A-01722, maybe we will meet again...”

The human figure slowly merged into the white background, disappearing from Lu Zhou’s sight...

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1167 Optical Surgery?

[Congratulations, User, for mission completion!]

[Mission: Exploring The Legacy]

[Description: People are narrow-minded. Even those that have climbed to the top of the mountain still need to use the wisdom of others to find what they have overlooked.

[Requirements: Collect the relics of Professor Grothendieck.

[Reward: One lucky draw ticket, random experience card. Void Memory b2 (used)]

After Lu Zhou finished talking with The Observer, he went into the system space. A mission completion popped up the second he entered the system space.

As he expected, getting the notes alone wasn't enough. He had to unlock all of the mysteries to complete the mission.

He could finally connect some of the clues he had.

Assuming that everything The Observer said was true, then the system probably came from the Void in the extra dimension. Say, some kind of Void Civilization. This civilization was not only strong and terrifying, but it was also staggeringly ancient. Their history had even surpassed the age of the new universe and could be traced back to the old universe, which was before the big bang.

As for the Calanian Empire, they were one of the many civilizations that existed in the old universe. There was no trace left of their existence in this new universe, except some "technological relics".

"I haven't done a lucky draw in a long time."

Lu Zhou looked at the lucky draw button next to his general points. He had a nostalgic look on his face.

When was the last time I did a lucky draw?

It happened so long ago he couldn't even remember.

The wheel began to spin.

Lu Zhou reached out and touched the button again. The roulette wheel spun a few dozen times due to its inertia, before finally stopping.

[Congratulations, User, "sample" received!]

[Received: Wearable facial system projection.]

A pale silver necklace was inside his inventory.

Lu Zhou looked at the description in his inventory and rubbed his chin.

A facial holographic projection system.

Emmmm...

So I can change what my face looks like?

But I'm too handsome, I don't need this.

I'll just save it for the time being; maybe it will come in handy someday.

Lu Zhou looked away from the necklace. He reached out and pressed on the random experience card in his inventory. The second his index finger touched the card, the card turned into golden particles, spreading out in the air.

[Congratulations, User, 500,000 physics experience points received!]

Half a million experience points was pretty good. At the very least, it was better than his previous times.

Lu Zhou looked as his physics progress bar moved by a sixth. He nodded satisfyingly and closed his characteristic panel.

This time, the system didn't give him a mission card.

The Control of Earth and Moon mission chain had been going on for two years. And it just so happened that the ILHCRC was going full force ahead.

As for my next mission...

I'll just finish the Control of Earth and Moon first.

...

Lu Zhou left the system space.

When he got up from the VR chair, the drone flew next to him.

[Master, are you okay?]

"I'm fine, I just need to rest a little," Lu Zhou said as he looked at the helmet in his hand. He thought for a few seconds before asking, "Speaking of which, did you see the memory just now?"

Xiao Ai: [Yeah! 0.0]

Lu Zhou: "Did it remind you of anything?"

The drone floating in front of him began to wobble.

After a while, a text popped up on the drone screen.

Xiao Ai: [Xiao Ai has no matching information in the database... But Xiao Ai feels like many things are familiar.]

Familiar?

Kind of like deja vu?

But do artificial intelligence programs have deja vu?

If only The Observer were here to answer my questions.

But Lu Zhou realized that The Observer would probably tell him that “this involves the truth of the universe” or that he should “discover it himself”.

“How nice...” Lu Zhou looked at the helmet and sighed. He said, “Creatures in higher dimensions going to lower civilizations, they probably feel like a god.”

Xiao Ai: [Master? 0.0]

“Nothing, I’m just jealous.”

Lu Zhou jumped off the VR chair and walked next to Debris No.3. He reached out and touched the broken engine shell.

He sighed and said, “Rest in peace.

“Your story has spread from the old universe to the new universe.

“We’ll finish what you left of. People will remember that the Calanians once existed.”

The drone controlling Xiao Ai suddenly wobbled in front of him.

[Master, should Xiao Ai continue the calculations? It seems like the numbers are becoming meaningless...]

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and said, “Start from the 5.67 trillionth digit of n, and stop at the 157.5 trillionth digit.”

Xiao Ai: [Okay, okay. (@_@;)]

Even for a quantum computer, processing such a huge amount of data would take a while. However, it didn't take too long, only a few days.

Lu Zhou thought back to what The Observer told him. He felt like there were things worthy of discovery in the 150 years of history.

Even though he might not have time to dig through the data, he didn't have to do this alone.

In addition to Xiao Ai, he had access to a bunch of curious gamers...

...

Professor Eddington mentioned a theory in 1929 that if many monkeys typed on a typewriter, they would eventually type all of the books in the British Museum.

This was the famous "infinite monkey theorem".

There were infinitely many irrational numbers, which meant an infinite amount of non-recurring irrational numbers.

Therefore, in theory, if someone wanted to encode information using mathematical symbols, whether it was in binary, octal, or hexadecimal code, they could find a specific irrational number that matched the information they wanted to encode.

This sounded simple, but in fact, it was actually quite difficult. Because it was almost impossible to find this irrational number.

At least, it was impossible by using human mathematics methods.

If someone could do this, theoretically, even a huge amount of information, such as the Milky Way, could be compressed into an irrational number. Of course, one would have to specify the starting and ending digit index in the number.

Lu Zhou returned to his Zhongshan International mansion and wrote his Void Memory experience in his notebook.

After writing these notes, Lu Zhou was about to close his notebook, but he suddenly thought of something. He opened the book to the title page and wrote "Science Fiction Stories".

If someone accidentally stumbled upon this book, things might get troublesome.

Most famous scientists had been the targets of rumors such as “mental disorder” or “left science for theological research”.

Regardless of whether they were actually suffering from mental illnesses, Lu Zhou didn’t want his reputation to be ruined due to a notebook.

He wanted people to know that he was a materialist.

Chapter 1168 Like It Once Existed

Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.Virtual reality technology research center.

Duan Siqi had just finished today’s experiment. He took off his helmet and sighed in relief.

A second ago he was shooting and dodging bullets in The Matrix, and the next second, he was in the slow-paced and peaceful real world. The feeling of traveling through time and space was hard to articulate. Because he often participated in VR experiments, he could easily tell the real world from the VR world.

He could only feel the flow of air in the real world, and he could feel satisfaction other than consuming food in the real world. The real world was complete, and he felt alive.

With the continuous upgrade of the Phantom system, the virtual reality world was becoming more and more perfect. They could now feel the four basic tastes of sweet, bitter, salty, and spicy. Even though the taste of food only lasted for a few bites, it felt like the boundary between reality and simulation was getting blurry.

His score was written on a screen nearby.

21,111 points!

He came first.

“21,111 points! All missions completed... Not bad, bro!”

Sitting on the chair next to him was a white-collar IT worker who looked a little older. This middle-aged man looked surprised when he saw the number on the screen.

This number was twice his own score.

No wonder this kid won 100,000 yuan from that experiment.

The man had a jealous look on his face.

“It’s alright.” Duan Siqi smiled and put away his helmet. He said, “Come, let’s eat at the cafeteria.”

The score was actually meaningless.

So far, Star Sky Technology had only given them rewards for defeating one game, which was when he won the 100,000 yuan. Most of the time, as long as they completed the experimental tasks step by step, they could smoothly enter the next level regardless of the mission evaluation.

During the “Calanian Empire” mission, Duan Siqi took the game seriously. He studied every single detail, eventually winning the 100,000 yuan.

After being mocked constantly by his mathematics genius roommate in the past, he could finally bathe in the admiration and envy of others. He was regarded as an expert closed beta player.

Even though at the beginning he only participated in the “Master God” experiment as a part-time job, he suddenly began looking forward to the day the Phantom system would go public.

The white-collar worker that also participated in the “Master God” experiment came to the cafeteria. Duan Siqi filled his plate with food and sat down at a table.

Not long after he sat down, his friend sitting across from him smiled and said, “I heard someone from Penguin came yesterday.”

“Penguin?” Duan Siqi frowned and asked, “Why?”

“Apparently, they’re doing an investigation, but I think they’re here to discuss platform authorization.”

“Platform authorization... Looks like we’re getting closer and closer to going public.”

“When the public beta begins, do you think they still need us?” the white-collar guy said.

Honestly, he quite liked this job.

He only needed to come for two days a week. His job was to play games, earning a couple thousand yuans per month. They didn’t even have to write feedback themselves as the system’s AI could generate feedback automatically... At least, that was what the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study researchers said.

If the Phantom system was released to the public, was there a need for closed beta testers?

Even though they would eventually lose their jobs, this man still couldn’t help but look unhappy.

Duan Siqi said, “I don’t know, maybe, maybe not...” He thought for a second and shook his head. “Who cares, we signed a two-year contract with Star Sky Technology, so there must be a reason.”

Also...

It doesn’t matter if my job no longer exists.

He felt like with his knowledge of the Phantom system and his experience that he accumulated from testing VR games, he could start a career in VR...

After Duan Siqi finished eating, he went back to the laboratory.

He was about to pack his things and get back to Jin Ling University when the laboratory door suddenly opened. A researcher wearing a white coat walked in.

“Good news, everyone,” the researcher said with a smile on his face. He continued, “You might have heard this already, but thanks to you guys, the first batch of neural demodulators equipped with a virtual reality headset will

be launched soon! We can't disclose the launch time and price for the time being, but all of you will receive a model. This is our way of thanking you guys for the experiments!"

Clap clap clap!

Thunderous applause broke out in the laboratory.

Even though this meant that they would soon lose their jobs, most people were happy that they didn't do the experiments for nothing.

Also, this VR headset was not going to be cheap.

Yet Star Sky Technology was willing to give each of them one for free, how exciting was that?

The researcher smiled and continued, "Also, the first game that will enter the Phantom system will be the Calan Empire game you guys played. After adjusting the world model, the game will be released as an open-world game with a higher degree of freedom. Players will see what happens fifty years after the 'Oracle' crisis. Don't know if you guys still remember this game."

A beta tester laughed and yelled, "Of course we remember! I died twenty times in the first level!"

Laughter erupted in the laboratory.

That game left a deep impression on everyone's mind.

The number of times they died in that game was more than every other game combined.

"I'm looking forward to what happens next!"

"I wonder if they will make it difficult after the rework."

Researcher: "Not sure, the focus of the plot will be on the surrounding planets, not the Empire Ring world. I don't know the specifics since the Calan Empire project is a top-secret in our department."

A player smiled and said, "I know, even if you know, you can't tell us."

The researcher smiled and nodded.

“True! But I really don’t know.”

The Phantom system will go public soon!

The laboratory became lively because of this news.

Everyone excitedly discussed this news...

An open-world completely generated by an AI...

They wondered what the world would be like.

Duan Siqi listened to the discussions and couldn’t help but feel fascinated.

He couldn’t help but wonder if the Calans once existed somewhere in the universe...

Chapter 1169 Online Arrangements

Star Sky Technology headquarters. An unassuming black sedan parked at the entrance.

Lu Zhou stood by the car door and said, “I’ll be right here. Are you going to stay here or come upstairs with me?”

“I’ll stay here and wait for you.”

Wang Peng already began to take out a cigarette from his pocket. Lu Zhou smiled as he shook his head. After telling Wang Peng to smoke less, he turned around and walked toward the entrance of the building.

He walked up to the reception.

The lady at the front desk had just finished a call, and she had a professional smile on her face.

“Hello, sir, do you have an appointment— Academician Lu?”

When Lu Zhou saw how surprised she was, he smiled and asked, “Can you call CEO Chen for me? Is she available?”

The receptionist immediately smiled.

“Oh, sir, you don’t have to make an appointment. Miss Chen specifically told us that you can go upstairs anytime.”

Lu Zhou shook his head.

“It’s better to call her first. I’m only here to see what’s up, I don’t want to interrupt anyone working. If she’s in a meeting, I can wait for a while.”

...

The peak work hours was almost over. After the receptionist called the CEO, Lu Zhou went up using the elevators. He overlooked the Jinling high-tech zone scenery through the glass elevator.

Ever since the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study and Star Sky Technology moved their offices here, a large number of high tech companies and factories moved here as well. It was almost like Star Sky Technology was a star, with planets orbiting around them.

The annual output value of this high-tech zone was in excess of 100 billion yuan, making it an important economic pillar of Jin Ling City and even the entire Jiangsu province.

As Lu Zhou looked outside the window, he smiled like a proud father.

Even though it was foolish to take all of the credit, he at least deserved half of the credit, right?

After arriving on the thirtieth floor, Lu Zhou knocked on the CEO’s office and walked in.

Chen Yushan saw Lu Zhou appear at her door. She put down the pen in her hand and spoke with a careless attitude.

“What was that all about? You own the company; what’s the point of calling?”

“Well, I’m scared of interrupting your work!” Lu Zhou smiled as he sat down on the sofa.

“You already interrupted my work! I was just thinking about a brilliant idea when your phone call ruined my train of thought.”

“So... I’ll stay quiet until you remember your idea?”

Chen Yushan smirked and said, “I can’t remember unless you buy me food.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Sure, let’s get lunch then.”

Chen Yushan was just joking around, and she was ready to get rejected. She didn’t expect Lu Zhou to agree.

She looked at him with her eyes wide open as she curiously asked, “Really? I was just kidding around. Do you really have time? Great, I’ll accept the offer, remember, you already agreed, no backsies!”

“Yeah, I just solved a world-class problem... But it hasn’t been published yet.” Lu Zhou looked at the clock on the wall and said, “But I should be free for the day.”

Chen Yushan froze for a second before saying, “So, you’re getting ready for your next retreat? The next time I’ll see you again will be a year from now?”

Lu Zhou playfully smiled and didn’t answer.

He didn’t know if he was going to go on another retreat.

That would depend on what kind of problem he was going to encounter.

Chen Yushan pulled out a notebook and picked up her pen on the desk.

“Looks like you want to talk business with me, just tell me, we’ll get it over with.”

Lu Zhou: “Are you free later?”

Chen Yushan played with her hair using the pen as she asked, “No, but aren’t you free for the day? How about you watch a movie with me?”

Lu Zhou: “Sure, but what about your work?”

Chen Yushan: “It’s not the problem! You came at the perfect time. The only thing I have to do today is to listen to whatever you’re about to tell me. I haven’t taken a single day off this month, so today will be it.”

“Oh... Okay then.”

Lu Zhou looked at her hopeful eyes. He couldn't find a reason not to go watch the movie, so he nodded.

He looked at Chen Yushan's cheerful smile and suddenly realized that, besides being a reliable CEO, Chen Yushan had a charming and delightful side.

Of course, now was not the time to be distracted by details.

Lu Zhou coughed and spoke in a serious manner.

"How long until the Phantom system goes live?"

Chen Yushan twisted the pen in her hand and went into CEO mode as she reported in a serious tone.

"The Phantom system can go online at any time. But the connected hardware will depend on our partners. According to what Huawei told us, the first generation virtual reality neural demodulator helmet was put into production at the end of last year. At the earliest, they can release more than a million devices at the beginning of next month. Right now, we're still formulating the product price and sales strategies."

Lu Zhou immediately asked, "What about Xiaomi?"

Chen Yushan: "They're saying the same thing. Should be able to produce around 800 thousand units. They're more focused on the low-end market... Why?"

Next month as well, and it might even be delayed.

I have to tell them to hurry up.

Lu Zhou spoke.

"The Master God plan is almost finished. According to the laboratory assessments of the physical and psychological conditions of the Respawn Team, as long as the user plays for less than eight hours, the impact of the Phantom system on the brain is quite limited. Even after eight hours, the damage is similar to other electronic devices.

"As long as the content is graded correctly, the experiments have already proved that this technology is absolutely safe for society."

Honestly, Lu Zhou almost regretted using “evil” names such as the Respawn Team and the Master God plan.

He coughed as Chen Yushan smiled. He then continued in a serious manner, “All in all, in order to collect more data to improve the artificial intelligence system developed by the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, I want us to launch the Phantom system as soon as possible. And also the game... The Calan Empire game, I want to release a public beta version.”

Chen Yushan: “The Phantom system can go online, and I’ll tell our partners to hurry up, maybe get it done by the end of the month. As for the game... Even though it’s easy for us to launch it, didn’t you say we’re only in the cloud computing and patent management business and that we’re staying out of game development?”

“Plans change all the time, and this is the only game we’ll release.”

Lu Zhou gestured with his hands and emphasized in a serious tone as he continued, “This is mainly for research. It doesn’t matter if we make money or not. My requirements aren’t high; a hundred thousand players are enough.”

Chen Yushan wrote down Lu Zhou’s words in her notebook. She then twisted the pen in her hand and asked, “The game is going to be permanently free?”

Lu Zhou contemplated and said, “Make it free for the closed beta. We’ll see what happens after the public beta... If the costs are too high, put in a monthly subscription cost.”

Allowing players to buy items in the game would interfere with Lu Zhou’s wish of exploring the Calanian civilization’s memory. Interfering with memory game parameters would cause calculation errors.

Therefore, if he wanted to make a profit, a subscription model was a good choice.

In fact, if Star Sky Technology wanted to develop their own games, it would be difficult for them to lose money. After all, the cloud computing services for the virtual reality network were provided by them. If a part of the quantum computer resources was put toward maintaining this game, their main cost would be electricity.

Chen Yushan wasn't opposed to Lu Zhou's suggestion; she was just curious as to what changed his mind.

"When did you get interested in games?"

Lu Zhou stubbornly said, "I told you, it's an experiment, it's not a game."

How is it not a game?

What else could it be, real life?

"Fine, fine, fine, I know, it's an 'experiment'."

Chen Yushan smiled. Lu Zhou looked like he didn't want to talk about this any longer, so she changed the topic of conversation.

"Anything else?"

Lu Zhou: "That's it for now."

Chen Yushan closed her notebook and happily stood up from her office chair.

"Then the rest of your day belongs to me."

Lu Zhou stood up from the sofa.

"What movie are we watching? You decide."

"This isn't a mission." Chen Yushan rolled her eyes and pondered for a moment. Her eyes suddenly lit up as she said, "I changed my mind."

Lu Zhou: "...?"

"Take me to the Calan Empire." Chen Yushan smiled as she looked at Lu Zhou's surprised face. She said, "I've never played that game before."

"I'm curious to see what kind of game is making you so addicted."

Chapter 1170 A Date?

Rays of sunlight shined on a blank world, as if it were tracing the story of the old universe. They were standing in a spacious and magnificent plaza as the

crowd walked around them. They breathed in the air and watched pieces of “paper” falling down in the sky. Everything was like a dream.

In fact, this was a dream.

A dream from a long time ago.

Lu Zhou reached out and picked up a piece of “paper” flying in the air.

This was some kind of media tool made from degradable translucent material. Today’s news was written on the paper.

[The invincible Empire fleet ends the five-year civil war! Marshal Ince captured!]

Lu Zhou had a look of realization on his face.

Currently, he was in a time period shortly after General Reinhardt’s death. The Empire fleet had just destroyed the last group of revolutionists. As a result, the rebels went underground, trying to disintegrate the Empire fortress from within.

The powerful armed military began to fight the rebels that hid among them. It was almost like the Empire had a tumor that was slowly destroying itself from within.

Lu Zhou finally understood what The Observer was saying.

The only thing he was surprised about was that General Reinhardt had actually surpassed Ince in terms of military ranking. A lot must have happened during the five-year war...

Chen Yushan looked at the “newspaper” in her hand and asked curiously, “Who is Marshal Ince?”

“... Probably some higher-up in the Empire fleet. I don’t know a lot about this game either,” Lu Zhou said. He threw the thin paper film in the air and watched it disappear into bubbles. He smiled and said, “Let’s go, I’ll show you around.”

The world was big.

It would take an entire lifetime to explore everything.

There were busy commercial districts, endless farmlands, and even artificial mountains and rivers. Unless someone was looking down on a space station or spacecraft, they wouldn't be able to tell that this was a ring-shaped world at all.

Chen Yushan thought of this as a mini-vacation. Thus, Lu Zhou wanted to show her as much of the world as possible. They went on an anti-gravity rail trail and arrived at one of the tallest elevator towers.

This was one of the entrances for the Calanians to enter and exit the Ring world from outer space. It was also a vital link in the transportation system of the entire Empire.

And, it was one of the few places that overlooked its section of the Ring world.

Chen Yushan stood in front of the tower floor-to-ceiling windows and stared at the scenery outside the window. Her eyes widened as she looked around.

After a while, she spoke emotionally.

"It's so beautiful..."

Lu Zhou, who was standing next to her, nodded.

However, he spoke in a regretful tone.

"Yeah... It's like a miracle."

The energy harvesting towers had leaf-like energy films, and they looked like tall trees in a forest. The films swayed in the air from the solar wind, trying their best to absorb the solar energy and converting them to all kinds of energy for the world to use.

There was no need for nuclear power plants here; they didn't need ancient technologies such as fusion reactors.

The entire star was their nuclear core. There was no need to reduce the energy conversion efficiency by adding a middleman reactor. As long as the star was alive, their energy source would continue to live on. Whether it was zero-point energy or antimatter, nothing compared to the energy source from a natural star.

There was no need for sunrises or sunsets here. It could be twenty-four hours of day or night time. The creatures that lived here did not need to rely on the change of day and night. Instead, they used standardized clocks to tell the time.

Not only that, but thanks to the central temperature control system, there could never be any kind of weather disaster. Whether someone was walking in a farmland or in the middle of a skyscraper building, the temperature always stayed at a constant comfortable level.

Even though Lu Zhou spent many hours in this world, when he saw everything in front of his eyes, he couldn't help but feel sentimental.

This is what five centuries of technological progress, wisdom, and hard work look like.

I can't imagine how much effort the engineers spent to build this utopia.

They really created a paradise.

However, they were also the ones that destroyed it...

After Lu Zhou and Chen Yushan came down from the elevator tower, Lu Zhou brought Chen Yushan to the shopping area, as well as the Empire Park, which was said to be one of the most spectacular places on the Ring world.

Throughout the journey, Chen Yushan excitedly looked around, which was a contrast to her usual composed and cool self.

"This is incredible, did an AI really generate this?"

Lu Zhou nodded.

He wasn't lying; in some sense, this was true.

Chen Yushan looked back at Lu Zhou and spoke excitedly.

"Hey, do you think our future will be like this?"

Lu Zhou: "Not sure... Maybe after a millennium."

They had to find a star with the right number of planets. Then, they had to use some kind of weapon to destroy the planets. Then they would have to use

some kind of science fiction space engineering to build a gigantic ring around the habitable zone...

But then again, the culture and ethics of each civilization were different. There was no “ideal” as to what an advanced civilization could look like.

Compared to the Calanian Empire, Lu Zhou felt like Earth was more of an extroverted civilization. Not only did humans actively send out space “postcards” to the universe, naively believing that they were not alone in the universe, but they were also interested in using rockets to go beyond their tiny planet.

For a civilization like the humans, they might be more interested in exploring the boundaries, as opposed to building a labor-intensive giant engineering structure around their home.

In some sense, the humans had many advantages over the Calans as a species.

Of course, it was too early to make a conclusion.

“After a thousand years... Looks like we’ll only be able to experience this in a video game.”

Lu Zhou smiled and didn’t say anything.

Of course.

Do you plan on living for a thousand years?

You’ll become a mummy by then.

After walking around the commercial area and Empire park, they returned to the plaza.

Chen Yushan looked at the flying cars and spoke.

“I feel like I know what the game is about. The storyline is short, and I haven’t played with the combat system yet... But I feel like everything here is a brand new world, I feel like players that enjoy exploring will like it.”

Lu Zhou: “I don’t need a lot of people. As long as it’s enough to keep my experiment going. Probably... around 100,000 people.”

Chen Yushan smiled and said, "We're Star Sky Technology. Forget about 100,000 people. Let's make a bet, we'll be able to sell out a million copies!"

Lu Zhou: "... I never make bets outside my expertise."

Chen Yushan rolled her eyes and spoke.

"So boring, aren't you going to give me a chance to win?"

Lu Zhou awkwardly chuckled.

No way.

Do you really think I like losing?

Forget about it.

Chen Yushan suddenly remembered something, and she curiously asked, "Oh yeah, oh yeah, what about the Respawn Team? Where did they test the game? Can you show me the place?"

"This world was built not long ago, this is actually my first time here," Lu Zhou said. Of course, technically speaking, this was his first time existing in this time period of the Ring world.

However, not much of the Ring world had changed.

"So you're saying we're the only two people in this world?"

Lu Zhou felt like Chen Yushan was overly excited for some reason.

Lu Zhou didn't know what was so exciting, but he still nodded and replied, "Yeah."

"... That's amazing."

For some reason, Chen Yushan, who was cheerful just a second ago, suddenly felt embarrassed.

"Hey..."

"Now what?"

“What do you mean now what... Forget about it,” Chen Yushan said. “Don’t you feel like...”

“Feel like what?”

“... Don’t you feel like, we’re kind of on a date?”

Chen Yushan felt her heart rate beating faster and faster. She was even surprised at how forward she was.

Lu Zhou did not expect this.

He contemplated seriously for a moment before replying, “We are?”

It looked like Lu Zhou didn’t pick up on Chen Yushan’s signal. Chen Yushan began to panic.

“How is it not?”

Lu Zhou said, “A date consists of shopping and a movie.”

Chen Yushan: “Let’s go then!”

“... Go where?”

“Go shopping?”

“I don’t have money!”

“I’ll pay!”

“No, I mean... We don’t have money,” Lu Zhou said awkwardly. “Technically, we don’t have credit.”

It’s not like we can pay in yuan?

Other than rail transit, everything in the Ring world required payment in the form of credits.

There was an awkward tension in the air.

Suddenly, Lu Zhou noticed that Chen Yushan was frozen.

Did she...

Disconnect from the game?

Oh, come on.

Scholar's Advanced Technological System - Chapter 1171 - Virtual Reality Technology Conference -

Chapter 1171 Virtual Reality Technology Conference

The following month. At the Shanghai International Convention and Exhibition Center.

Big companies from all over the world gathered here.

Additionally, consumers from all over the country, and even from other countries, stood in a long line outside the exhibition center.

Wang Zhengfei looked at the crowd and the security guards outside the exhibition center. He had a huge smile on his face.

The world's first virtual reality neural interface equipment!

The Huawei VR1!

Fortunately, they were able to surpass Xiaomi and bring a Star Sky Technology approved product to the untouchable market.

Standing next to him was Shao Yi, the Chief Product Officer of Huawei.

It was at this same exhibition center, where he announced on behalf of Huawei that the electronics industry was entering a carbon era.

Soon, he would stand in front of the same podium, announcing to the world on behalf of Huawei. From this day onward, the Internet would officially move from a 2D world to a 3D world.

“Are you ready?”

Shao Yi spoke in a serious tone.

“I’m ready.”

“Not enough confidence.” Wang Zhengfei looked at this young CPO and smiled. He said, “This technology is going to change the world, so you have to look more confident.”

Shao Yi stood up straight and raised his spirits.

“I’m ready, boss!!!”

“Not bad, that’s what a Huawei executive should sound like.” CEO Wang patted this kid on the shoulder and said, “Break a leg.”

Shao Yi spoke energetically.

“Yes, CEO Wang!”

...

Wang Lihui’s job was a film director.

On the other hand, he was also an electronics enthusiast. He was a die-hard fan of Huawei and Star Sky Technology.

Even though this sounded a little weird, after all, Star Sky Technology had never sold any consumer products, but ever since he bought a Huawei phone with a lithium-sulfur battery, his love for Huawei had transferred onto Star Sky Technology as well.

In his opinion, Star Sky was the real high-tech company.

Google who? Facebook who?

They were considered high-tech companies?

All they did was mine consumer data, what kind of tech company was that?

Ever since the antitrust investigations, he had lost all his interest in Tesla and ExxonMobil, and he began worshipping Star Sky Technology to an even higher level.

He had been following the news regarding VR ever since its first announcement.

According to Huawei's press release, they were going to launch the latest Star Sky Technology neural interface virtual reality headset at this conference!

These were two of his favorite manufacturers, and now that they were working together, his excitement and happiness had doubled.

He spent a ton of effort getting tickets for the live conference. After getting out of his Mercedes, he ignored the jealous looks from the pedestrians, walked past the huge line, and went through a VIP channel.

Even though he wasn't qualified to sit in the first three rows of the conference, he was able to grab a seat somewhere in the middle.

Shortly after taking his seat, the stage lights lit up.

A young man in a suit walked on stage and smiled at the audience.

"Hello, everyone, I am Shao Yi, the CPO for Huawei.

"I'm sure you all have been looking forward to the virtual reality network for a long time. What we're going to present today is a product that connects all of us to a virtual reality world..."

A large Huawei logo was projected on the screen behind him. There was a futuristic helmet on the screen under the logo.

"This is the Huawei VR1, or HV-1 for short," Shao Yi said as he looked at the helmet on the screen behind him. He smiled and said, "This is a fully-immersive virtual reality helmet! With it, the world will be at your fingertips!"

The second he finished speaking, there was a commotion in the crowd.

Even though half a year ago Star Sky Technology had already revealed a lot of information for the closed-beta testing, reading the information online was a different kind of feeling.

Now that they saw the image of the actual product, people were so excited they almost wanted to take out their wallets, buy the helmet, and immediately begin experiencing the virtual reality world.

Shao Yi had a sincere smile on his face.

He gestured for everyone to quiet down and continued to speak, "First of all, on behalf of Huawei, I would like to thank the science community and Professor Lu. His neural demodulator and neural interface equipment are like wings, making our imagination fly wherever it pleases. We are truly more connected than ever before!

"From today onward, even in a ten square meter apartment, we'll be able to chat face to face with our loved ones from thousands of kilometers away. Whether it's a business meeting or chatting with friends, we'll be able to communicate with them at the comfort of our own home. Moreover, if someone is physically impaired, this technology will give them a chance to experience life to the fullest!

"In this new world, we will have all of our senses, and you will be able to experience anything you want. As the virtual reality network continues to grow, we will continue to update the software and hardware, making the experience feel more realistic."

Shao Yi paused for a second and took a deep breath. He was almost as excited as the audience.

"Friends, let's celebrate us entering a brand new world!

"Our brains will be completely free, and our imagination will directly connect to the online world. With this technology, we'll be able to think in dreams, work in dreams, and even accomplish challenges that were never possible before.

"This device is only available in the China market for the time being. As Star Sky Technology's cloud computing service continues to grow and develop, we'll be able to expand to the overseas market.

"The helmet will be on sale at 12 o'clock. 100,000 units will be sold at the exhibition center, while the remaining 900,000 units will be sold on our official website."

Shao Yi sympathized with the anxious businessmen and consumers. He smiled and said, "Don't worry, everyone."

"As a gift from us, everyone will be able to experience and test the HV-1!"

"Also, you will all be able to buy one for 12,000 yuan!"

Enthusiastic cheers and whistles were heard from the audience. Some people couldn't contain their excitement, and they stood up and began clapping.

Wang Lihui, on the other hand, excitedly clenched his fists.

Thank god he had a ticket for the conference; otherwise, he would have to wait in front of his computer or stand in line outside the exhibition center and hope that he could get lucky enough to buy a helmet.

The 12,000 yuan was nothing; in fact, it was too cheap.

This money was a chump change for him.

The only thing he wanted to do was to get his hands on the helmet and post it on his Weibo. He wanted to share the joy with his millions of fans...

He also wanted to brag about the feeling of living in another world...

Chapter 1172 Selling Out Crazy!

The eight hundred helmets were soon delivered to everyone. With a staff member guiding him, Wang Lihui couldn't wait to plug in the power, lean back on his chair, and put the helmet on his head.

The sound isolation effect was pretty nice, and the helmet came with active noise cancellation.

The second Wang Lihui put on the helmet, he could feel the noise around him dissipating. He heard a female voice in his ears.

"Please set your password phrase."

Wang Lihui didn't realize what was going on, and he said automatically, "What?"

"Password phrase successfully set; the password is 'what'. If necessary, you can modify the password phrase in the personalized setting options. Begin graphical interface."

Wang Lihui had a baffled look on his face.

Looks like I should have read the manual.

But now is not the time to care about those trivial things.

He leaned back on his seat and waited.

Soon after, he felt the sensation of an ant biting the back of his neck. He saw a white glow coming toward him. After the blackness disappeared, he was standing on a beach.

The golden sandy beach was glowing under the sun. The sunlight shined through the coconut trees. He could smell the salty sea in the air.

"Welcome, you are now inside the Phantom system startup scene. There are currently four free startup scenes to choose from. These can be accessed in your settings.

"If this is your first time using the Phantom system, you can follow the navigation guidance and learn the basic operations of the system.

"We hope you have a happy experience in the virtual world..."

The sound of the system prompt echoed in Wang Lihui's ears. However, Wang Lihui completely ignored the voice. His eyes were wide open, staring at the beach in front of him.

The only word he could describe what he was seeing was incredible. Everything completely exceeded his expectations of VR technology; he almost began to wonder if he were dreaming!

He was also shocked about something else...

He was a director, and he had directed many action movies.

He had always agonized over how to accurately convey his creative ideas to the audience through a screen. But now, he already had countless ideas about using virtual reality technology as a creative medium.

Rather than letting the audience sit behind a screen, it would be better for them to directly participate as a character or an observer. The audience could even switch between the two characters during the movie!

Wang Lihui was ecstatic, he felt his heartbeat increase.

He knew better than anyone else that if this technology was used in the entertainment industry, it would change the entire industry! This was going to revolutionize the film industry!

...

In fact, virtual reality technology was going to affect more than just the entertainment industry.

From e-commerce to business, almost everything connected to the Internet could be integrated with VR technology.

Wang Lihui wasn't the only one who was excited; many people nearby began to sense a strong business opportunity from this technology.

The conference was in chaos.

Even though everyone was sitting quietly on their chairs, judging by the mood index sensor, it was obvious how excited they were.

Medical staff members were already waiting next to people with abnormal mood swings.

Even though the Phantom system had a safety trigger mechanism and that there was no direct clinical evidence that excessive emotional stimulation could cause any harm, they would rather be safe than sorry.

A foreigner took off his helmet and spoke to the nearby staff member in shock.

"This is amazing! The moment you put on the helmet, you're suddenly on another planet. When do you plan on selling this to the United Arab Emirates?"

The person that was speaking was a prince in the UAE. Because he often came to China for business trips, his Chinese was pretty good. He even appeared in some Chinese TV shows.

He had to fly thousands of miles to come to this conference, and he even used diplomatic channels to get his hands on a special conference ticket.

Huawei obviously wanted business from this Middle Eastern man.

After getting a taste of the immersive virtual reality Phantom system, this prince was immediately fascinated by the technology. He couldn't wait to import this helmet to his own country.

The staff member smiled and said, "That depends on our company's and Star Sky Technology's business plan. In theory, the virtual reality network needs to connect to the cloud computing server, whereas the cloud computing server requires a certain threshold of network speed. 5G technology is widespread in China, so we are focusing on the domestic release, but for the UAE..."

"Hurry up and build a 5G network in my country. I will convince my father! If you guys need funding, I can ask our bank to give you a loan, one billion dollars is no problem, my friend."

When the staff member heard the billion dollars, his hands began to shake as he spoke.

"Um... I'm just a worker. I can ask our chairman. Do you have an email or phone number? We will give you a reply before the end of the day."

The prince waved his hand and spoke.

"Okay, okay, I'm buying this helmet."

The worker awkwardly spoke.

"But sir, you can't use it in your country..."

The prince said casually, "No worries, I'll buy a house here and take the family plane here when I need to."

Worker: "..."

Buying a house for a helmet...

Who is this guy?!

...

The conference was in chaos.

So was the exhibition hall.

As soon as the sales went on, people rushed to the booths. The queues and lines disappeared, turning into a giant, messy crowd.

The security guards had to maintain order. They quickly controlled the crowd flow into the venue; this was to avoid any accidents.

On the other hand, the people near the booths began arguing with one another.

"I'll take ten!" a wealthy man said. He placed his credit card on the counter and said, "Swipe the card, hurry up."

The employees looked at the golden rings on his fingers; they were astounded. They politely said, "I'm sorry, sir, but we have a two-unit per customer policy."

The man who thought he could make a fortune reselling these was baffled.

"What? Only two? You've got to be kidding me! I have more than enough money to buy ten!"

"Sorry, sir, there are only 100,000 helmets sold in person. In order to satisfy as many customers as possible, we have to impose purchasing limits. This was written on our official website."

"What kind of sales tactic is this? It's not like I don't have the money to pay for it!"

"Sorry, sir, this is company policy."

Normally, the people around him would begin gloating at this simpleton, but they wanted to buy a unit as well. They began to harass him.

"For f*ck sake, you only have one brain, is two not enough?"

“Ten... Are you opening a virtual reality Internet cafe?”

“This guy looks like a reseller! He’s going to make tens of thousands just off one helmet. What a scumbag!”

The man’s anger was placed on the employees behind the sales booth.

“I don’t care! You guys are discriminating against me! I’m going to report you to the police!”

“Sir, if you are going to act this way, I’m afraid I’ll have to call security and put you on a blacklist, banning you from all purchases.”

When the man heard this, he finally calmed down.

He wasn’t scared of the security guards; he was scared of being placed on a blacklist.

Seeing how the people behind him were getting annoyed at him, the man bought two helmets and left.

The lines and crowd inside the hall began to move slowly.

People were let inside the hall in small groups at a time. However, people standing outside were getting impatient.

Outside the International Convention and Exhibition Center, across the street at the Samsung Experience store, several employees stood in front of the store with their arms folded. They looked at the crowd outside the International Convention and Exhibition Center.

One of the men, who seemed to be the store manager, spoke with a jealous look in his eyes.

“Jesus, how many people do you think are inside?”

A worker nearby spoke.

“Apparently, it’s in the tens of thousands.”

“That’s crazy.”

“I heard you can make 20,000 yuan reselling it... I’ve already seen someone putting up an offer online.”

The store manager’s eyes were wide open.

“Why didn’t you tell me earlier?”

The worker replied cautiously, “You didn’t ask us... And we weren’t allowed to take a day off.”

The manager clenched his teeth and made a decision.

“Go!”

“Go?”

“There’s no one here anyway! Close the shop and go line up with me!”

The store manager took off his uniform and was about to walk over. The worker stopped him and said, “Hey! If we go there now, we might not even get to buy one!”

But it’s 20,000 yuan!

20,000 yuan of resell profit!

The manager hesitated for a while before he said, “It doesn’t hurt to try! Come line up with me! All of you!”

It was total chaos...

Chapter 1173 Sold Out!

The Samsung staff members had underestimated people’s enthusiasm for virtual reality technology. After more than 50,000 helmets were sold out at the live venue, the price of a resold HV-1 helmet exceeded 50,000 yuan, which was more than a four times increase over the original 12,000 yuan price.

The people that sold their helmets early began to feel regretful. On the other hand, sellers were constantly canceling their previous sales and listing the item at a higher price.

The reselling market was going through a volatile time.

Not a lot of trades were going through, but the bid and offer prices of the helmets were jumping up every minute. The resellers had the complete upper hand.

Normally at a product launch like this, there would be resellers standing around the venue, asking the empty-handed people if they wanted to buy the item that the reseller just bought.

However, the situation here was the exact opposite. Even though there were resellers around the venue, they weren't trying to talk with the customers that were empty-handed; instead, they were harassing the customers that had already gotten their hands on a helmet.

Whenever they saw someone like that, they would rush up to them and ask relentlessly—

“Hey, bro? You selling? I’m bidding 24,000 yuan! That’s double the original price! One time offer!”

“Screw off! I’m bidding 30,000! Sell it to me!”

Of course, in addition to resellers, there were also people that just wanted to buy the helmets for themselves.

But then again, who wouldn’t want to experience VR?

Therefore, regardless of what price they were offered, most people gave a short and concise answer.

“F*ck off!”

On the other hand, the helmet had reached the top of the trending page. Many people who were lucky enough to grab a helmet already began posting their experience online. They were met with jealousy and envy.

For example, the well-known director Wang Lihui posted a long blog post on his Weibo immediately after the press conference, describing his experience of using the fully immersive HV-1 VR technology.

[First of all, this is not an ad. It was so difficult for me to get a ticket for the press conference. Huawei and Star Sky Technology don't need me to advertise their product.

[So, as the world's first publicly sold neural interface virtual reality device, the HV-1 equipped with the Phantom system has taken virtual reality to the next level. There are no other products on the market that even come close. What I have to do now is wait for Xiaomi to release their helmets, then make a comparison between the two devices.

[In terms of price, 12,000 yuan is definitely not cheap. In fact, it is the price of mid to high-end laptops, but it's totally worth spending the money to buy an entirely new universe. In fact, I have noticed that some people in the reselling market are selling it at 200,000. It seems like the market recognizes its value.

[Of course, I'm not recommending my fans to buy a helmet on the reseller market. After all, Huawei will soon release a new batch of helmets next month. When the supply meets the demand, everyone will get an opportunity to live in a beautiful simulated world.

[So, in terms of my thoughts, I can't even use words to describe this feeling. This is something entirely new and unique; it goes beyond my expectation of the Internet and the virtual world! I'm sure most of you have watched Ready Player One, and I can guarantee this experience is the same as the movie! Even if you play all day, your eyes will never get tired; the images are directly sent to your optic nerve!

[Of course, as a filmmaker, virtual reality technology has made me think about the future of the film industry. Maybe it won't be long before we begin watching movies in a virtual reality world, allowing us to get a totally immersive experience of the characters...]

This blogpost on Weibo was shared all across the internet.

There were only a million helmets available on the market. Not to mention the online sales wouldn't begin until night time. However, the number of people around the world looking forward to this helmet had exceeded tens of millions or even hundreds of millions.

People had fantasized about virtual reality technology for a long time.

For a long time, science fiction movies had depicted a future where people were completely immersed in VR technology. Maybe in the future, reality would no longer be a boundary for people's imagination and experience. Unlimited information flow would broaden people's minds to a whole new world.

Now that this technology finally went from the laboratory into the industry, almost everyone wanted to know what this so-called heaven experience felt like.

According to statistics from major search websites, keywords such as virtual reality, Phantom system, HV-1, etc had begun trending.

People were more than enthusiastic about this technology.

Everyone was frantically finding information about this new technology, hoping to get an understanding before they enter a new era...

...

The original product launch was scheduled to end at 5 pm.

People didn't expect it to end at 3 pm.

Because the reselling price continued to increase, people from neighboring cities even came here by high-speed rail. As a result, more and more people were at the venue, they had to end the conference to avoid any accidents.

Also, the 100,000 helmets were all sold out at three o'clock.

This was rather unfortunate for the people that came all the way here...

Even Huawei didn't expect the live sales to go so well.

Even though they expected the world's first neural interface virtual reality helmet to be completely sold out, and they even cooperated with the local police, they didn't expect it to be this crazy...

The press conference ended.

Ten o'clock at night.

The Huawei headquarters was still brightly lit.

The people from the sales department were sitting in front of their computers, staring meticulously at their screens, scared of making a single mistake.

In two hours, 900,000 helmets were going to be listed on the official website.

What baffled people was that, two hours before the beginning of the sales, they already started to receive a huge amount of website traffic.

It was obvious that people were constantly refreshing the page, as if they didn't want to miss the sale.

After what happened during the conference, the project director responsible for the HV-1 helmet felt a million pounds of pressure on his shoulders. Even though he was drinking one cup of tea after another, he wasn't able to calm his nerves down.

Time passed by minute by minute; soon, it was almost midnight.

An employee sitting in front of his computer screen spoke excitedly.

"Hey, boss, it's almost time!"

The project director put down his cup of tea; he tried to calm down as he spoke in a serious tone.

"Let's begin the sale!"

Chapter 1174 This Is Crazy!

The live sales went terrifically well. The online sales began at midnight. People were more hyped than ever.

The 900,000 helmets listed on the official website were sold out within two minutes. The website server almost went offline because of the huge amount of traffic. Just like that, 900,000 helmets were gone, not a single one left.

Project Director Li Guangwen's mouth was wide open as he looked at the sales number on his screen and didn't say anything.

The employee sitting in front of him spoke.

“This is crazy... Two minutes after we went live, all 900,000 helmets were sold out.

“Judging by the data from Star Sky Technology, the number of registered users on the Phantom system has already exceeded 300,000.”

Li Guangwen frowned and asked, “How is it so little?”

The employee sitting at his computer said, “Probably because some users bought more than one machine.”

After all, online purchases were not as easy to control as in-person purchases. Even though the limit for each user was set to one unit, some users could bypass the limit by using fake mobile phone numbers and changing their IP addresses.

An employee sitting nearby suddenly asked, “Do you think there are resellers stocking up?”

“For sure...” Li Guangwen nodded and clapped his hands. He said, “But it’s fine, the reseller market won’t affect us. The new factory at the Jiangcheng industrial park is about to open soon. It will double our capacity!”

When the employees heard the project manager, they smiled.

There was a joyful atmosphere in the sales department office.

Even though they did not actually contribute a lot to the sales strategy, the launch of the HV-1 helmet was a huge success!

They were going to get huge bonuses!

...

Jin Ling University.

Dorm 201.

Even though they couldn’t afford to buy one, they were getting excited just by watching the reselling price increase.

Yang Shuang looked at the number on his phone. His hands were trembling as he spoke.

“This is crazy... The price of one helmet is over 100,000!”

100,000...

If I could buy one for 12,000, that’s almost 90,000 in profit!

He started to regret not going to Shanghai and lining up at the conference.

Wu Di was sitting on his chair, scrolling through his phone. He suddenly stood up and walked over to Yang Shuang. When he saw the number on Yang Shuang’s phone, he was astonished.

“A hundred grand for one helmet? Who is buying these?”

Last night, these two were talking about the HV-1 helmet that Huawei was about to release. They were still agonizing over the 12,000 yuan price tag, which was almost their entire year of living expenses.

But now, the situation was even bleaker.

How were they supposed to find 100,000?

Forget about it.

Yang Shuang: “This thing is selling like hot cakes... Apparently, there are foreigners that are buying it from our website as well.”

Wu Di: “How do you know that?”

“Because someone posted a Tiktok of some foreigners sitting in an airport, using the airport wifi to access the website. Unfortunately, none of them were able to buy one.”

Duan Siqi was sitting by the side, listening to the whole conversation. He couldn’t help but join in.

“... Are they crazy? I heard that the Phantom system can only run on the Star Sky Technology cloud computing network. What’s the point of buying a helmet? They can’t even use it. Might as well buy a pair of VR goggles instead.”

He had been studying the VR industry for a while now, and he had a certain understanding of the Phantom system. The researchers at Star Sky Technology were also happy to talk with him. Mostly because none of this was confidential information, not to mention they already had public registered patents.

Yang Shuang shook his head and spoke.

“Who knows, maybe they want to use it as a motorcycle helmet? But I think you can’t see anything after you put it on... Maybe we just don’t understand how rich people think. Apparently, some people flew all the way here just to buy one. Do you think they care about 12,000 yuan?”

Wu Di sighed and said, “For f*ck sake, this is horrible!”

Yang Shuang suddenly remembered something.

“Oh yeah, CEO Duan, didn’t Star Sky Technology send you a helmet?”

Duan Siqi paused for a second and felt the gazes behind his back.

He turned around and saw the envious eyes of his roommates.

Duan Siqi paused for a second and quickly explained, “Don’t even think about it! My helmet is limited to closed beta players! No way I’m selling it! I’m going to pass it on to my kids.”

“Limited to closed beta players?” Yang Shuang looked at his phone and said, “I think someone listed it for sale yesterday, let me see... Jesus.”

Wu Di leaned forward and asked, “How much is it?”

“30... million.”

The dorm went silent; the only sound they could hear was the laptop fans.

Yang Shuang’s hands trembled; he almost couldn’t hold his phone anymore.

“That’s enough to buy a Lamborghini, right?”

Wu Di gulped and said, “That’s enough to buy a house in Shanghai.”

“That’s crazy! This is crazy!”

When Duan Siqi heard thirty million, his heart dropped to his stomach.

He dropped his pen on the table as he covered his face with his hands.

F*ck sake...

This is just a VR helmet!

I played with it so much, I'm sick of it!

Is it really worth that much?!

According to his understanding, even though this was a limited closed beta-tester helmet, the only thing it gave was a closed beta medal to the player's account. The player could log into the Phantom system and choose whether they wanted to display that medal.

Other than showing off that someone was a "closed beta" tester, this medal was useless. There wasn't any closed beta player privilege or advantage.

Thirty million for a medal.

Duan Siqi didn't know what was going on.

Just like his roommates said...

This was crazy...

Chapter 1175 North American VR Technology Is Undeveloped

Consumers weren't the only ones that were going crazy. Across the Pacific Ocean and all the way in Silicon Valley, a group of people wept as they watched the "mayhem" across the ocean.

Countless Americans flew to China to attend the press conference. Over the past few days, half of the content on Facebook and Twitter were regarding the HV-1.

There was no doubt that if this technology was introduced to the States, it would set off an Internet revolution. More than 90% of Internet users would be willing to pay for this fairly-price technology!

Inside the Facebook headquarters in Menlo Park, California, Mark Zuckerberg's heart was racing as he watched his secretary deliver him a report document.

He was triggered and jealous at the same time.

At the end of last year, they completely abandoned their virtual reality development business, Oculus, and less than a year later, the virtual reality business was booming.

Seeing the sensation the virtual reality technology had caused in the Chinese market, as well as the envious American consumers, it was impossible for Mark to not be jealous.

He heard a door knock.

Mark Zuckerberg closed the report in his hands and told his secretary to make him a cup of coffee. He cleared his throat and said, "Come in."

The door opened. A middle-aged man with gold-rimmed glasses and thin hair walked in.

"I don't understand what you mean," the man said as he walked up to Mark Zuckerberg. He placed his hands on the table and excitedly said, "The HV-1 helmet has achieved success in the Asian market. It proves that there is a huge market for virtual reality devices. But you laid off our VR research and development? What were you thinking?"

This man was none other than Dr. Sanjadi, the chief technology officer for Oculus. Ten years ago, he and the research and development team of Oculus were bought out by Facebook.

What happened over the past year or so infuriated him.

The entire Ru0026D department was laid off, and Oculus was an empty shell of its former glorious self. Even though the Oculus company structure remained intact, it only held a few worthless patents and occasionally sold some of their "ancient" VR headsets.

"Calm down."

Mark smiled and handed Dr. Sanjadi a cup of water. After Sanjadi took a sip, Mark spoke calmly.

“If I give you a year of time, how confident are you at beating Star Sky Technology, bypassing their patents, and use the original neural interface device you guys developed to dominate the American market?”

Sanjadi hesitated for a second.

Even though he wanted to remain confident, under the intense gaze of his boss, he broke. He went silent for a while before speaking.

“... It would be difficult.”

Even though he didn’t want to admit this, it was the truth.

If the gap were smaller, they would have a chance of catching up. However, none of the companies in Silicon Valley had even come close to competing with the Phantom technology by Star Sky Technology.

In fact, there was no hope at all.

Forget about the hardware, they didn’t have access to the software at all. All of the calculations were done in the cloud. If they wanted to create a similar system, they would have to hack into the server.

A company that wanted to achieve success in the virtual reality world only had two options. They either had to give up or they had to join Star Sky Technology and adhere to their standards of the Phantom system.

“But... Are we just going to watch the Chinese people steal this market under our noses?”

The secretary came back with the coffee.

Mark smiled and took the coffee from his secretary’s hands. He took a sip before speaking.

“It’s impossible for us to take over the entire market; sooner or later, they will enter the American market. We have to seize the opportunity and take a piece of the market first. I understand your worries, but we are too behind on VR technology, it’s not wise to go head-on with them right now... After all, social media is our core business? Right, Sanjadi?”

Sandaji gulped. He wanted to say something but decided not to.

In the beginning, they agreed to be bought out by Facebook because they believed that Facebook would lead Oculus to become a leader in the VR technology space.

But now, CEO Zuckerberg had turned on them, cutting them off from the technology they had been researching for years.

Even though Sandaji understood why Mark would do this, this kind of ending still made him feel a little infuriated.

Mark looked at the report document on the table and suddenly spoke.

"I heard that the Phantom system has a large reliance on network speed?"

"... I think so, after all, the Phantom system is dependent on cloud computing technology," Sandaji said. He hesitated for a second and said, "The Huawei HV-1 helmet mainly uses HiSilicon's own communication band. This is optimized for their own routers and other hardware devices."

Mark rubbed his chin; his eyes suddenly lit up.

"What if we can help them penetrate the North American market?"

"No way!" Sanjaji had a weird look on his face as he said, "Communication hardware is a sensitive technology. There's no way the Ministry of Commerce will agree. Even if they do, the White House and Congress will do everything they can to stop China's communication technology from entering the States."

"I know it's difficult, but... it's not impossible? This is an opportunity for us to keep up with the changes in the world. Do you want to watch us fall behind?" Mark said as he tapped on the table. He continued, "If we can't do it ourselves, we need help."

He suddenly remembered a phone call he had.

The phone call with a wealthy man.

Of course, not only did he have money, but he was also the new manager of the Boston Financial Group.

Mark Zuckerberg knew that this person was a huge player in the financial and political circles. This man had a huge network of people and resources...

Even though Mark had only exchanged business cards with him in real life, it seemed like this man was interested in technology. There might be a chance for them to work together.

This was a good opportunity.

Mark began to get excited.

“Just leave this to me, just do your own job.

“Oculus’s future business will be focused on producing virtual reality hardware, we will adopt the Star Sky Technology standards...

“As for the cooperation side, I will talk to them myself.”

...

A million helmets sold out in one day. The single day’s turnover of 12 billion yuan shocked Wall Street.

However, if anyone thought that the 12 billion yuan of revenue in a single day was impressive, that would mean they did not know a single thing about Huawei.

In fact, the HV-1 helmet was only one part of Huawei’s strategy around virtual reality technology. Even though they were already profitable selling hardware, it was nowhere near their biggest revenue stream.

What really made them money was the carbon-based communication baseband used in the HV-1 helmet, as well as the neural demodulator, which was only compatible with the Phantom system.

The only place that could produce this hardware was the Jiangcheng semiconductor industrial park. Even Xiaomi, which had yet to start selling their helmets, could only produce their hardware in the Jiangcheng industrial park as well.

This industrial park would bring them hundreds of billions in market capitalization. Even though they had to pay patent fees to Star Sky Technology, the revenue was more than enough for them to make a profit...

While the world was going crazy over the Phantom system launch, Lu Zhou, the “father” of virtual reality technology, remained calm and low-key.

Even though Lu Zhou received a huge amount of notifications and messages on social media, he did not respond to anyone.

In fact, he wasn’t deliberately avoiding anyone, he simply did not check his phone.

Because he was in his laboratory, tinkering with a little gadget...

Even though this gadget might not be as amazing as virtual reality technology...

But this gadget might impact and revolutionize the entire information technology industry...

1176 Majorana Fermion and the Decoherence of Quantum Entanglemen

What if electrical energy did not attenuate during transmission?

What if a computer had exponential computing speed and perfect accuracy?

Professor Duncan Haldane once tried to answer this question. In the autumn of 2016, this physicist and two of his friends won the Nobel Prize in Physics for “theoretical discoveries of topological phase transitions and topological phases of matter”!

Simply put, through various rigorous experiments, they found that even the smallest microscopic matter could exhibit macroscopic properties and have a topological phase.

To understand what this meant, it required an understanding of topology.

Everyone knew that mathematicians looked at problems from a different perspective. They often saw things by their essence. Topology was a discipline that studied the geometric shapes and spaces that remained unchanged through transformations.

One of the most classical topology examples was that a coffee mug and doughnut were topologically the same, because just like a donut, the coffee mug had a hole in its handle.

Because they both had one hole, one could turn a donut into a coffee mug through a smooth deformation process and vice versa... Even though this might seem incomprehensible to most people, or even inexplicable, but in fact, this mathematical transformation method was a contributor to many interesting discoveries in other fields.

This was especially true in the field of physics and materials, many amazing discoveries in the 1980s were derived from topological methods, which provided a theoretical basis.

For a long time, people were accustomed to applying topology to solve macro-scale problems. It was still unconfirmed as to whether topology could be used for subatomic particles such as electrons and photons.

Because these tiny particles were affected by the peculiar laws of quantum physics, their sizes, positions, and even shapes were constantly in an uncertain state.

However, the 2016 Nobel Prize in Physics gave a definitive answer to this question.

Which was that these subatomic particles in the microscopic world carried topological characteristics!

This theory obviously had no impact on people's ordinary daily life, but this opened a new world for the field of electronic engineering!

Through the wonderful quantum world, these materials displayed amazing stability and remarkable properties in a special matter phase. The most typical example was topological insulators.

This characteristic was found in graphene materials, which directly led to the birth of the SG-1 superconducting material carbon-based chips.

On the other hand, this property also promoted quantum computing research.

A quantum computer used the principle that subatomic particles could be in different states at the same time, and they could store information in

something called a quantum bit (qubit). Because of this characteristic, quantum computers could solve problems exponentially faster than traditional computers.

However, the problem was that the subatomic particles that stored the data were fragile and unstable. Even a slight disturbance could change its state.

That was exactly what “decoherence” was. In a quantum mechanics environment, any disturbance could change or even collapse the entangled qubit state!

One of the ways to solve this problem was to use either noise reduction, or anti-interference technology, or both. Regardless of which technical route was adopted, they had to find a way to stabilize the subatomic particles.

This was one of the main problems in quantum computer research and development.

It was also something Lu Zhou was researching...

Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, third level underground laboratory.

The empty room that was used as a spare sample storage room was now being filled with newly purchased equipment.

These included multifunctional physical property measurement machines, step meters, vibrating sample magnetometers, high and low-temperature magnetoresistance testers, and In Situ Freeze Dryer. Although this wasn't a complete set of equipment, it had all of the essentials.

Also, in addition to these few essential pieces of equipment for researching carbon materials, he also had a UV curing 3D printer with an accuracy of 8 microns. This was mainly used to print the plastic molds used in experiments.

A thin film the size of a thumb was carefully placed in the magnetron sputtering atomic deposition machine. Lu Zhou carefully used the data from the experiment to set new experimental parameters on the computer.

After finishing all of this, he finally breathed a sigh of relief and pressed the enter button on the keyboard.

A green signal light turned on. A machine inside the laboratory began to operate.

Lu Zhou carried his coffee mug and sat down on his chair. He looked at his watch and wondered what he could do to kill some time. Suddenly, Xiao Ai's drone flew over from the side.

Xiao Ai: [Master, Master! Something super amazing just happened! ($\geq \omega \leq *$)]

Lu Zhou looked at the small screen floating in the air and asked, "You leveled up?"

Xiao Ai: [What? You knew? ($^{\circ} \Delta ^{\circ} |||$)]

Lu Zhou: "..."

Did this thing really level up... or level down?

Lu Zhou sighed and ignored the artificial retardation. He closed his eyes and went inside the system space.

The accumulation of artificial intelligence experience points was synced with the information science experience points. As soon as Xiao Ai's level rose to level 4, his information science level went from level 4 to level 5.

Even if he wasn't in the system space, he could still see the notification for his upgrade.

[...]

[G. Information science: level 5 (0/300,000)]

After Lu Zhou looked at his characteristic panel, he rubbed his chin.

Just like he had speculated, he could gain artificial intelligence experience points by letting Xiao Ai observe the behaviors of humans in the virtual reality world. In fact, it seemed like artificial intelligence depended on sociological knowledge.

However, Lu Zhou didn't pay too much attention to Xiao Ai's progress. After checking his characteristic panel in the system space, he went back to the real world.

He opened his eyes and stared at the drone floating in front of him.

Xiao Ai: [Master, Master, aren't you going to praise Xiao Ai? (*ω*)]

Lu Zhou: "Yeah, nicely done."

Xiao Ai: [Thank you!]

Lu Zhou pretended not to see the text on the screen. He looked at his watch as he spoke.

"... I think it's almost time."

The light on the machine nearby went from green to red.

Lu Zhou immediately said, "Xiao Ai, turn on the in situ freeze dryer."

Xiao Ai: [Okay... (◦`3'◦)]

Even though Xiao Ai seemed reluctant, it still obediently followed Lu Zhou's orders.

Lu Zhou felt like his little buddy was becoming more and more sentient... Almost like it was becoming more and more humanlike?

Lu Zhou wasn't sure if this was a good thing.

After all, the way that artificial intelligence processed information and the way the human brain processed information were completely different. One used logic to determine emotions, while the other used emotions to drive logic.

Maybe artificial intelligence is a new species?

It's too early to come to a conclusion.

As Xiao Ai's "guardian", Lu Zhou was responsible for monitoring Xiao Ai's growth.

But so far, it seemed like the little guy was still quite obedient. Xiao Ai was playing the role of an assistant, both for Lu Zhou's life and his scientific research. Xiao Ai always obeyed his orders without compromising.

Maybe I'm worrying too much?

With Xiao Ai's help, Lu Zhou transferred the lyophilized carbon-based chip sample from the magnetron sputtering atomic deposition machine to the in situ freeze dryer. He then used a metallurgical microscope to carefully analyze the film before recording the experiment results.

He had more than 30,000 general points. According to the system, he needed 120,000 general points to obtain a full set of blueprints for quantum computing technology.

In fact, this number was bloated.

If he divided the problems and solved part of the technology, he could reduce the general points cost by more than 80%!

So far, he had spent 20,000 general points to overcome several key research bottlenecks. He used his knowledge of carbon materials, Mott insulators, and Majorana fermions to solve some of the foundational problems.

For example, he layered a Majorana fermion topological insulator with a single atom width superconductor. This did not affect the stability of the Majorana fermions.

By using a special topological phase material, the subatomic atoms could be shielded from interference.

Basically, the qubits formed would not corrupt due to some small and local interference. It was far more stable than general qubits, allowing quantum computers to calculate the answers that one wanted in a more accurate and efficient manner.

This saved Lu Zhou at least 100,000 general points.

Thus, he could use his general points on more difficult problems.

This was one of the reasons why "knowledge is power".

After carefully completing the last step of the experiment, Lu Zhou placed a layer of a translucent graphene sheet on the circuit mold he prepared in advance.

He had a sincere smile on his face, as if he were staring at a piece of artwork.

"All of the performance tests meet our expectations.

“This is perfect!

“As expected, Majorana fermion is the best choice for quantum computing!”

All that was left to do was to test if the 20,000 general points he spent was worth it.

As Lu Zhou was about to press the power button, his heart was nearly beating out of his chest.

The second he pressed the button, the film-like computer chip began to run the preset script. The signal was processed by the logic circuit and was then transmitted to the display. Soon, a line of characters was presented on the display.

[Hello, world.]

When Lu Zhou saw the characters on the screen, he clenched his fists and nearly jumped out of his chair.

“Yes!”

Lu Zhou was taken aback by his own reaction. He quickly began checking the operating conditions of the machine.

After he saw the “film-like” computer chip operating stably and remaining impervious to the qubit entanglement collapse, Lu Zhou finally had an assured smile on his face.

Looks like this time...

We did it!

Chapter 1177 I Did I

Institute of Semiconductors at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The laboratory was busy as usual. As a scientific research institute in the field of semiconductors, materials, and electronics, not only were they one of the top semiconductor research institutes in China, but they also participated in the Dragon chip series project.

Because of what happened with the Dragon chips, this research and development institute made a name for itself all across the world.

Because of this huge honor, people in the institute felt pressure on their shoulders.

No one wanted to make any mistakes.

If they couldn't maintain their advantage in the field, then their efforts would have been for nothing...

Right now, the most important thing was to do everything possible to improve the performance of carbon-based transistors. This was so that the efficiency of carbon-based chips could be further improved without giving their opponents any room to breathe. They wanted to squeeze silicon-based chips out of the market as quickly as possible...

Inside the office of an integrated circuit design center.

Director Li and Academician Liu Changqing were wearing virtual reality helmets. They were sitting motionlessly on the sofa, visiting the new Institute of Semiconductors of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

"This is our new laboratory, the development tools were customized for us by Star Sky Technology. We are helping them test the software. Oh yeah, I almost forgot to mention the most important thing; this is called a virtual integrated circuit workshop, or IC workshop for short."

Inside an empty room, Academician Liu Changqing controlled and moved suspended circuits in the air. He briefly demonstrated the functions of this development tool to Director Li, who was next to him.

"All tools and operations are done through an interactive interface, whether it's the movement, rotation, or modification of the object. These tasks can be completed by one person or multiple people... Isn't this amazing?"

"It's more than amazing, it's simply magical..." Director Li couldn't help but look confused as he asked, "But what is the use of it?"

"Oh, it has so many uses." Academician Liu smiled and said, "Just by combining geometric images and setting parameters, we can use this virtual

laboratory to simulate carbon chips and design the details of the integrated circuit.”

Director Li was astonished.

“Wait, so you’re saying, this thing can replace real-life experiments?!”

That is awesome!

“It can’t replace experiments, but this technology will save us a lot of time in the design process.”

When Dean Liu Changqing moved his wrist and fingers, the yellow circuit lines rotated in front of Director Li’s eyes.

“All of the components have been scaled up. Now that we have this, we don’t have to use traditional drawings and computers to design anymore. Basically, from the feedback we receive from people in the institute, it’s easier to be inspired when working in this virtual integrated circuit design laboratory.”

Compared to other old academicians, Liu Changqing was more of the kind that was open to new changes. So when Star Sky Technology contacted them, he immediately integrated the virtual reality technology into his research institute.

This showed that his choice was extremely correct. Not only did this development tool make the boring design work a little bit more fun, but it also more than doubled the work efficiency of their integrated circuit design department.

Actually, it wasn’t just the integrated circuit design.

The same technology could actually be applied to many fields, from modular product design to urban layout planning.

This kind of positive impact was far more than just making design work interesting and fun. Instead, it completely opened up another creative and inspiring dimension.

Of course, these were just some assumptions he made from the perspective of a scholar. He was certain that the brilliant Professor Lu thought of the same thing a long time ago.

Otherwise, Star Sky Technology would have never sold them the “IC development laboratory” product.

After Director Li received a tour of the IC lab, the two old men left the Phantom system, took off their helmets, and returned to their office.

The two cups of tea on the coffee table had gone cold, but after wearing the helmet, Director Li’s heart was even warmer than before.

He had no idea that a gaming console would have such a huge application in the industry.

Academician Liu picked up a cup of tea and continued speaking, “This is a great little gadget. The integrated circuit design field will revolutionize. Starting with universities, then implementing it in businesses... However, I believe that we don’t have to promote this to businesses at all. After they see what’s the functionality of this technology, no company would reject such an excellent development tool.”

He took a sip of tea to moisturize his throat. After pausing for a second, he spoke emotionally.

“Even though this is obvious, I still want to say this. Ever since Academician Lu came back to China, I feel like everything has been changing, whether it’s my work or my life.”

Director Li waved his hands.

“Sigh, don’t mention that guy, he still owes me.”

“He owes you what?”

Director Li looked at Academician Liu’s curious face and said, “Actually, it’s not a huge deal. He promised me he was working on something awesome at the end of last year. But until now, he still hasn’t told me anything!”

Academician Liu smiled and said, “Maybe there’s a reason.”

Director Li shook his head.

“Doesn’t seem like it.”

There can’t be a reason.

I know Lu Zhou too well.

While the two were talking, a phone suddenly began ringing.

“I have to take this,” Director Li said as he took out his phone. He looked at his screen and said, “Speak of the devil, it’s Academician Lu calling.”

Academician Liu took a sip of tea and spoke.

“Maybe he’s about to tell you the secret.”

“Hopefully, but I bet he wants a favor from me.”

Director Li picked up the phone and spoke in a cheerful manner, not a single hint of distaste in his voice.

“Hey, Academician Lu! I heard you’re making a fortune recently?”

Lu Zhou was muddled by Director Li’s words. He paused for a second and replied, “A fortune?”

Director Li smiled and said, “I heard your helmet is earning billions of revenue?”

Oh, that’s what he’s talking about...

Lu Zhou: “Right, I think so.”

Director Li: “Why do I feel like you’re not excited?”

“It’s just not a big deal, that’s not why I called you for.” Lu Zhou looked at the time on his watch and said, “I solved the topological quantum computer.”

“Topological quantum?”

Director Li had never heard of this complicated phrase before, so he asked, “What is that?”

Lu Zhou replied in a concise manner, “You can kind of think of it as... a quantum computer.”

Instantly, the phone call went silent.

Director Li gulped; his voice trembled as he said, “Wh-what you’re saying is...”

Lu Zhou nodded.

“Yeah, quantum computers are a reality now.”

Chapter 1178 Unbelievable Speed

There was a weird silence at the other end of the phone.

It was as if the phone signal had dropped.

Lu Zhou was about to ask if Director Li was okay when he suddenly heard something drop from the other end of the phone; it was like something had fallen on a glass table.

The phone was quickly picked up.

“What are you doing, Old Liu—”

“What did you say? Topological quantum computing has been solved? What? How did you deal with the decoherence? What about the hall effect—”

Lu Zhou listened to a strange voice from the other end of the phone. He frowned and asked, “Who are you?”

After taking a deep breath, Academician Liu spoke.

“I’m Academician Liu Changqing from the Institute of Semiconductors at the Chinese Academy of Sciences! If it’s okay, I’d like to ask you some questions.”

Academician Liu...

Lu Zhou thought for a while, and a look of realization soon appeared on his face.

Deputy Director at the Institute of Semiconductors for the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Director of the Integrated Circuit Design Center. The person in charge of the national “Quantum Information” project. One of the experts in the Dragon chip project.

He had heard Professor Wu Tianqun mention this name several times in the past. Even though he had never met Academician Liu in person, but apparently, this guy was a big player in the Chinese semiconductor field. Therefore, telling him about the quantum computer should be fine.

“Basically, by using a special insulator material that contains Majorana fermions, I temporarily solved the problem of the unstable qubit entanglement state.”

“Wait a second, can you be more specific? I know what Majorana fermions are. So you found an insulator material that contains Majorana fermion, and... the problem was solved?”

Academician Liu was dumbfounded.

These questions were giving Lu Zhou a headache. He sighed and said, “It’s too troublesome to explain it over the phone. If you’re interested, come to Jinling.”

...

Lu Zhou didn’t expect Academician Liu to be so efficient. Academician Liu traveled from Beijing to Jinling the next day.

In addition to Academician Liu, Director Li, as well as experts from the Institute of Semiconductors, also came.

Lu Zhou smiled at the group of people. Without saying much, he led them to a conference room and stood in front of a whiteboard.

“Before explaining, I have to clarify something. The topological properties of matter do not change from bending or stretching. It only changes when you break and combine matter.”

Academician Liu pushed the glasses up the bridge of his nose and spoke solemnly.

“We know that... And?”

“The same concept can be applied to quantum mechanics... Of course, these are rudimentary things. But what isn’t rudimentary is the way we apply these concepts.”

Lu Zhou turned around, picked up an electronic pen, and waved it toward the whiteboard twice. Hexagon grid lines appeared on the whiteboard.

Academician Liu, as well as the group of experts from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, were amazed.

When Lu Zhou noticed their reaction, he smiled and said, "This is just a small gadget I made in my spare time. It's mainly for the convenience of writing on the whiteboard... After all, many things in physics are different from mathematics. Some things might not be so intuitive. A tool like this can save me time from using a ruler and eraser."

In fact, this technology was nothing special. It was just a smart whiteboard with touch and display functionality, plus a smart camera with motion recognition. MIT produced a similar product, albeit with less functionality.

"Anyway, back to the main topic." Lu Zhou tapped the electronic pen on the whiteboard and said, "The key to solving quantum computing lies in overcoming the interference of environmental noise on subatomic atoms. This is to prevent qubits from collapsing during environmental disturbances."

He waved the electronic pen in his hand.

The electronic pen was like a baton. Black dots appeared in the middle of the hexagons.

These black dots represented subatomic particles, and they were orbiting around a circle at a uniform speed.

Everyone was staring at the whiteboard.

"This kind of quantum system is naturally immune to decoherence. It can accurately calculate any algorithm.

"So, let me demonstrate..."

Lu Zhou waved his hand toward the door. A drone floated over, delivering a small box into his hand.

Lu Zhou gently placed the box on the table.

“This is a simple scientific calculator. It can only do one kind of calculation using the software I pre-installed... By the way, does anyone have a computer?”

Academician Liu paused for a second before answering, “I have one.”

“Good, then I’ll give it to you.”

Lu Zhou handed the small box to Academician Liu.

Academician Liu opened the box and took a look. He was surprised to see a 10-number keypad and a simple display screen.

It looked like a small calculator, except there were no addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division buttons. There was an enter button, but Academician Liu wasn’t sure what it was for.

Lu Zhou spoke.

“We all know that it only takes 0.3 seconds or less for an average computer to generate a 1,024-bit prime number whereas generating two prime numbers takes 0.6 seconds. Multiplying the two takes negligible time.

“But if you asked the computer to find the factors of the multiplication of two large prime numbers, it would take days or even months.”

There was a commotion in the room.

Everyone looked astonished.

Academician Liu almost knew what was going on.

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “You can use your computer to randomly generate two prime numbers... Preferably over 1,024 bits, then calculate their product.

“I’m sure that will be easy.

“Then, enter that number into the calculator. I’m sure we’ll soon witness a miracle.”

Academician Liu gulped; his voice trembled as he spoke.

“Is this—”

Lu Zhou smiled at Academician Liu and nodded.

“Just do it.”

Academician Liu used his computer to calculate two large prime numbers. He then multiplied them and entered the number into this tiny calculator.

The experts from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, as well as Director Li, all stood around him, watching him carry out the experiment.

It took him a while to enter the entire number.

After that, when Academician Liu finally pressed the confirm button, a miracle happened!

This small calculator quickly found the two prime number factors.

Academician Liu and everyone behind him were shocked.

That happened instantly!

For traditional computers, this problem could take several days to solve. However, this tiny computer solved it in less than a second!

Academician Liu's eyes were wide open. He opened and closed his mouth.

He thought that Lu Zhou's solution to the collapse of entangled qubits was only theoretical.

He had no idea that Academician Lu was able to make a real product.

Experts from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Director Li were all shocked.

They had no idea what kind of change this technology would bring.

There was only one thing for certain.

Which was that, from today onward, RSA encryption technology was no longer secure...

Chapter 1179 Five Hundred Qubits!

After leaving the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, Academician Liu felt dizzy, like he was dreaming. After performing the demonstration, Lu Zhou explained the application of topological quantum theory in insulators to the experts from the Chinese Academy of Sciences. He also explained how he used basic carbon-based integration circuit components and the Josephson effect to create Majorana fermions.

Basically, it was quite difficult to understand the complicated physics and mathematics formulas behind his research.

Fortunately, even though 70% of the research was theoretical, there was a real-life demonstration with the calculator.

After Academician Liu listened to this extraordinary lecture, he felt like his entire worldview had changed.

It took less than 1 second to factorize a 1,024-bit prime number. This meant the calculator in his hand had at least 500 qubits.

However, this wasn't the most amazing part. What was amazing was that this calculator was the size of his palm! It was much smaller than the quantum computer at the Chinese Academy of Sciences!

Not to mention that their computer only had 20 qubits...

This had to be the biggest electronics achievement of the year.

What surprised him was also how Academician Lu explained the theory behind the calculator.

Mathematics, physics, materials, integrated circuit design... Each one of these fields could be divided into dozens of sub-fields.

However, the young man in his twenties had an ocean of knowledge. It seemed like even the most obscure and esoteric information was readily available in his brain.

If he didn't witness this with his own eyes, he wouldn't have believed that someone in this world could be so brilliant.

Perhaps this is why he is able to overcome one world-class problem after another...

After getting in his car, which was parked in front of the institute, Academician Liu suddenly sighed.

"I feel like... Maybe I should go back to school and study more."

Director Li was rather calm.

After all, he was only surprised at the technology itself. He didn't understand the complicated theory behind it, so he didn't resonate with Academician Liu.

He looked at Academician Liu and comforted him.

"It is Academician Lu. His explanations are pretty difficult to understand, so don't be too critical on yourself. I'm sure that if you don't understand, no one else understands either."

"I'm not being critical," Academician Liu shook his head and said, "I just feel like I cannot keep up with the times."

"Topological quantum computing is a new field, and we have people in our institute researching this area. Our largest competitor is the Microsoft Majorana Fermion project. However, whether it's our project or Microsoft's... The number of qubits has never exceeded 30."

Director Li stopped comforting Academician Liu. Instead, he quickly asked, "Then how many did Professor Lu achieve?"

Academician Liu: "I forgot to ask, but judging by the demonstration... At least 500."

500...

That's an entire magnitude higher!

There was a long period of silence in the car.

After a while, Director Li snapped back to reality and murmured, “How terrifying.”

...

Quantum computers were undoubtedly more impactful and important than carbon-based chips.

It wasn't an exaggeration to say that the technology was on the level of controllable nuclear fusion.

It was generally accepted that the three pillars of modern science and technology were energy, information, and material. Quantum computers were the pinnacle of information technology.

And this wasn't just it.

More importantly, traditional encryption and security methods were defenseless against quantum computers.

This was the scariest part of this technology.

Everyone knew that more than 90% of the modern information security networks relied on asymmetric public key encryption, while the most widely used cryptography was the RSA encryption algorithm.

Since there was no closed-form solution for the unique factorization of the product of large prime numbers, in theory, as long as the prime numbers were large enough, it was impossible to find a solution. Even Professor Lu wouldn't be able to find a solution.

However, when it came to quantum computers, this kind of problem that would take traditional computers hundreds of years to solve could be solved in a few seconds.

Some might make the case that there were public key encryption algorithms other than RSA, like elliptic curve encryption, ElGamal encryption, or discrete logarithms...

However, they were no match for quantum computers.

Not even close.

After returning home in the evening, Lu Zhou sat at his desk and thought for a long time. He took out a piece of paper and wrote on it with a pen.

[Quantum computers will disrupt the communication technology field.

[Encryption and decryption methods in communication technology have always been improving at a steady rate. However, the breakthrough of topological quantum computing technology will change everything.

[It only takes a few seconds to decrypt a traditional asymmetric public key encryption.

[Once this technology is popularized, it will hugely benefit society, but it will also bring security risks.

[What we have to do is establish a strict and more reliable encryption algorithm as a replacement for our traditional encryption methods. We have to do this as soon as possible.

[A quantum encryption algorithm similar to the bb84 protocol is a good choice. But when matched with a quantum computer with more than 1,000 qubits, it will still be inadequate.

[In my opinion, quantum computers with more than 1,000 qubits will soon be possible.

[Therefore, this new encryption algorithm must be more reliable than the bb48 protocol, even surpassing the BBM92.

[Once we master this new encryption technology, we should promote the commercialization of quantum computers.

[And when that happens, we will have an information technology advantage that other countries cannot match.

[This is akin to our advantage in the controllable fusion field.]

Lu Zhou stopped writing and found an envelope in his drawer. He stuffed the letter into the envelope and placed it on his table.

When he went to Jin University tomorrow, he would give the letter to Wang Peng and ask him to hand it to the high-level government officials in Beijing.

Even though he knew Director Li would report this new technology to the state, he felt like it would be easier to attract attention if he wrote a letter himself.

Although this wasn't something a scholar should worry about, Lu Zhou still wanted his research to bring a positive effect on the world.

Even though making the world a better place wasn't as exciting as scientific research itself... It was still part of the fun.

1180 Cryptography Is the Specialty of Mathematicians

After leaving the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, Director Li did not stay in Jinling for long, he immediately rushed back to Beijing.

He spent two full days visiting the top quantum computing experts in major semiconductor research institutes in Beijing and vaguely consulted them about the security aspects of quantum computing technology.

Inside an office at the Microelectronics Research Center.

After listening to Director Li's explanation and concerns regarding the security risks of quantum computing technology, Director Wu Jiancheng, who was in his seventies, smiled and rejected the idea.

"Your worries are unnecessary. In theory, quantum computers do pose a threat to the security of asymmetric encryption algorithms, but we are far away from this technology.

"So far, even the most advanced quantum computers can only reach 20 qubits or so. Google's D-Wave computer is the industry leader, and they have only achieved 80 qubits. But that thing isn't as impressive as it sounds. Instead of using quantum gates to control qubits, it uses quantum annealing algorithms as a shortcut. Even traditional supercomputers have better performance... It's quite a controversy in the academic community.

"Regardless of whether it's a true quantum computer with more than 20 qubits or a pseudo quantum computer with more than 80 qubits, it will still be difficult

to crack modern encryption technology. Take the most popular RSA encryption algorithm as an example. Due to the complexity of the prime factorization problem, there is nothing a quantum computer with less than 200 qubits can do.”

Director Li said cautiously, “What do you mean there’s nothing it can do?”

Director Wu Jiancheng said, “The cracking time will take at least a year. This means that even if someone has a quantum computer with two hundred qubits, it will take them more than a year to crack your bank account password. And if you make any changes to the encryption key, they would have to start all over again.”

A public key wasn’t a unique, one-time code. When either of the two parties assessed that there might be a security risk, they could change the public key at any time.

Seeing how Director Li was still worried, Wu Jiancheng sighed and said, “The development of quantum technology is slow. When we truly master quantum computers, we will develop the necessary encryption algorithms. There really is no need to worry too much about this right now!”

“But what if…” Director Li paused for a second and continued, “If… quantum technology rapidly develops, and we or our enemies suddenly master quantum computing technology.”

“That is impossible,” Director Wu Jiancheng said without hesitation. He interrupted Director Li and said, “There is no way the technology can rapidly improve! It takes time for any new technology to mature. This is a linear process, not exponential. Especially since scientific research is now focused around teamwork, making progress even slower and more difficult.

“If you think that it’s possible to have a quantum computer breakthrough tomorrow, then you would have to first solve the problems of decoherence and noise processing! I can give you the latest research papers, but none of them have found a solution to these problems!”

Seeing how confident Director Wu was, Director Li felt a little awkward.

He wanted to tell him the truth, but he had to keep it a secret for now. He didn’t want to be the one who leaked this classified information.

“I’m just saying this hypothetically. What if other people are hiding their research results?”

Seeing how Director Li was still stubbornly obsessed with this “fantasy”, Director Wu Jiancheng didn’t want to argue anymore. He nodded reluctantly and said, “Yes, it’s possible a quantum computer can fall out of the sky tomorrow.

“Then, it will threaten our information security.”

Director Li finally felt relieved. However, his relief was soon replaced by panic.

I knew it, my worries are justified!

Fortunately, I still have time to salvage this...

After visiting the research institutes, Director Li went straight back to his office at night.

He spent another day writing out a report. He then took this report to the high-level government department.

When he stood at the doorway of the familiar office, the president sitting behind a mahogany table was meticulously reading a letter in his hand.

For some reason, Director Li had a weird feeling about this letter.

He knocked on the door and walked in.

When the president saw Director Li walking in, he smiled and put down the letter in his hand. He then said warmly, “Oh, hello there.”

“Yeah... I have to report to you about something.”

Director Li nodded and walked forward. He said in a serious manner, “Two days ago, when I visited Jinling, Academician Lu brought us another gift.”

“If it’s a gift, why are you so serious?”

The president smiled and handed the letter to Director Li.

“Read this first.”

Director Li took the letter from the president.

He glanced at the letter and had a moment of realization. He smiled and handed back the letter.

“It seems like Professor Lu has thought this through carefully.”

“Yeah,” the president smiled and said, “it’s our honor to have such a great scholar.”

After a pause, he spoke in a more official manner.

“Tell me what you think about this letter.”

Director Li pondered for a while before saying, “My suggestion is to keep it confidential for now.”

The president asked, “Why?”

“Because even though we have made a breakthrough in quantum computing technology, just like Professor Lu warned us in his letter, we don’t have an encryption algorithm that can handle this kind of decryption power.”

Director Li paused for a second and watched the president’s reaction.

When the president nodded, Director Li felt relieved, and he continued, “My suggestion is to let the Chinese Academy of Sciences reveal a small part of the breakthrough so that the industry can prepare to handle this advanced technology. After all, if Professor Lu was the one announcing to the world that he was working on quantum technology...”

Director Li had a smile on his face.

“I’m afraid the world will start to panic.”

The president nodded thoughtfully.

It would be fine if the technology was progressing slowly.

Once the technology matured, society would have already adapted to the changes in a subtle way.

But if they were to suddenly announce that they had achieved a 500-qubit quantum computer, it would be equivalent to announcing that all encryption technology was obsolete.

This would impact finance and other industries that relied on information security. It was like throwing an atomic bomb into the digital world. Society would have to find a way to adapt to this drastic change.

Someone might be able to withdraw all the money from the banks or even terminate all online transactions...

After all, Professor Lu definitely had the capabilities to make this breakthrough...

There was no doubt that society would not be able to react fast enough.

After all, people would believe everything that came out of this scholar's mouth.

After pondering for a long time, the president said, "We can't keep this a secret forever. We have to consider how Academician Lu feels. The risks brought by new technologies have to be taken seriously, but preventing the birth of new technologies is not preferable."

"I think so too." Director Li nodded and said, "So, my suggestion is to let the Chinese Academy of Sciences release some hints. Then artificially create public enthusiasm regarding quantum computing technology."

The president: "What else?"

Director Li: "We should do what Academician Lu proposed! We have to find an encryption algorithm that is not crackable, not even for a quantum computer! Once we find this algorithm, there will be no risks surrounding quantum computers, and we can integrate this technology into our society!"

The president nodded with approval.

"Good idea! So... Who do you think should be in charge of finding this algorithm?"

Director Li looked at the president's gaze and felt helpless.

It was obvious that the president already had a candidate in mind.

“Information encryption is a mathematics field, and Academician Lu is the top mathematician in our country. Moreover, he was also the one that made a breakthrough in quantum computers. No one understands the importance of this better than him. His ‘reputation’ alone will make people feel more secure.

“I propose for Professor Lu to be in charge.”

The president smiled and said, “Good idea, I’ll write a letter to Academician Lu and appoint him to complete this important task!

“As for the rest, do as you see fit.”

Director Li felt a huge amount of pressure on him, but he still nodded seriously and said, “Yes, sir!”

Chapter 1181 Frightened

On the first day of April, something huge happened in the computing industry. The quantum computer research team at the Chinese Academy of Sciences suddenly publicly announced that they had made significant progress on quantum computer research! The head of the research team announced that they had developed a quantum computer processor using carbon-based semiconductor technology. And that this processor was groundbreaking.

According to inside sources, the processor utilized the characteristics of Majorana fermions. So far, they had reached 90 qubits.

Many scientific researchers who were in the field of integrated circuit design and information technology came into work after the weekend with sleepy eyes.

When they saw the news through various media channels, they all glanced at their calendars. After making sure it wasn’t the fourth of July, they all looked astonished.

A quantum computer with 90 qubits!

Is that even possible?

After people who were involved in the related research fields heard about the news, they all began to frantically search for the research in the academic database.

However, many people were disappointed that they could not find a paper on the “90-qubit” computer.

Forget about finding any research papers.

Most people hadn’t even heard of the research team behind all of this. Other than the research team leader, who was relatively well known, it was difficult to find information on the rest of the team members.

This felt like a level-50 guild leader had assembled some level-30 noobs and was able to defeat a level-100 boss.

Similar situations like this had happened before, and all of them had shocked the academic community.

Not to mention how abrupt this was.

The research team only claimed to have achieved success, but they did not provide any evidence.

However, even though some people had doubts in their minds, most people thought this was plausible.

After all, this was a research team from the Chinese Academy of Sciences. This was one of the major national scientific research projects, which was funded by the state. The consequences of falsifying research results might be more serious than producing no results at all!

Because of this, both the academic community and the industry had differing opinions on the claims made by the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

On a Chinese university forum, integrated circuit design engineers were going crazy over the news.

[This has to be fake! They’re not providing any proof, do they think we’re dumb? A quantum computer using 90 qubits. Even Google’s quantum annealing algorithm is no match for this! I think they’re lying to receive funding!]

[I don't think so, this is the research team at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, not to mention it is still a major national scientific research project.]

[Who cares if it's a major scientific research project? Remember what happened with the Haixin project? We're making the same mistake again!]

[Can you not bring up Haixin?]

[Sigh, if only everyone were as reliable as Academician Lu.]

[It's not like we're the only ones falsifying research results for funding! Look at the west!]

Due to the intense discussions, the forum moderators had to come out and restrict the debates.

The discussions on the forum were only a tiny fraction of the whole conversation.

Similar discussions were also occurring on other university forums; from WeChat to Weibo, it seemed like everyone was talking about this.

In addition to these laymen's discussions, controversies also occurred in the technology field.

However, relatively speaking, these discussions were more rational and professional. They were mainly focused on the practical aspects.

For example, at a recent Internet security summit, experts from the Computer Network Information Center at the Chinese Academy of Sciences proposed that the development of quantum computers might pose a threat to the information security field and that they had to deal with this problem as soon as possible.

People put out constructive suggestions.

What was repeatedly brought up was exactly what Lu Zhou wrote in his letter, which was to find a more secure encryption algorithm.

On the other side of the Pacific Ocean.

Inside the Microsoft headquarters building, Nadella was sitting in the CEO office. He scowled as he meticulously read the report in his hand.

The topic of quantum computers was trending on the Internet, not only in China but also in North America.

The vast majority of people believed that this was fake news or academic fraud.

However, Nadella, the CEO of Microsoft, took this matter much more seriously.

This was because China had recently created too many scientific miracles.

The office door opened, and a tall and skinny man walked in.

Anyone in the quantum computing field would have recognized this man.

This man was none other than the former director of the USC-Lockheed Martin Quantum Computing Center—Professor Schmidt.

Professor Schmidt was working for Microsoft, which was largely unknown by the industry.

“Were you looking for me?”

“Yes.” Nadella put down the report and looked at Professor Schmidt. He asked, “What do you think about the quantum computer from the Chinese Academy of Sciences?”

“The one with 90 qubits?” Professor Schmidt said with a mocking and sarcastic tone. He pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose and said, “They’re dreaming.”

Nadella raised his eyebrows.

“Oh really?”

Professor Schmidt continued to speak in a confident tone, “No one understands the technology behind Majorana fermions better than us. We are at the forefront of academia in this area. It is impossible to achieve 90 qubits with the currently available technology. This isn’t just an engineering bottleneck; it’s also a theoretical bottleneck! If this is true, they would first have to solve the problem of quantum entanglement collapse at a theoretical level.”

This wasn't something that could be achieved simply by reducing the background noise and turbulence.

If that were possible, this field would be developing at a much faster rate.

Nadella frowned.

"So you're saying... that they're lying?"

"Probably!"

Nadella looked at Professor Schmidt's confident smile and sighed in relief. However, there was still some doubt and worry in his mind.

After Professor Schmidt left, he read the report over and over again. He tried to find information on the team members behind this research.

However, he couldn't find anything.

Maybe it's really fake news?

Nadella stared at the sky outside his window, and he suddenly felt uncertain.

He had a gut feeling...

Every choice I make will affect Microsoft's future in the quantum computer race...

1182 Cleaning Up Your Own Messes

[God Lu, you haven't posted on Weibo for a long time! If you don't post something, you'll become irrelevant. So please hurry up and do a prize giveaway or something!]

[God Lu! Please do an HV-1 giveaway on Weibo!]

[Everyone else is doing giveaways. (cry)]

[Professor Lu, want to be my online boyfriend?]

Although it had been a month since the Phantom system went online, the hype around virtual reality technology had yet to die down.

Yesterday, Penguin just released a Star Wars-themed VR game. Today, Alibaba announced a fantasy masterpiece that was in the works...

It seemed like the future had arrived in an instant.

However, in contrast to the high demand from the people, Huawei, Xiaomi, or other manufacturers that had entered this field had limited production capacities. Even if they were to produce at maximum capacity, they still couldn't meet the demands of the market.

People felt envious as they watched others post their VR experiences on Weibo and Tik Tok. Others even recorded their gameplay and uploaded it online.

The Calan Empire game was going to launch in two weeks. This was a legendary open-world game developed by Star Sky Technology, said to be generated by an artificial intelligence program. It also had no in-game purchases.

As the first MMO VR game in the Phantom System, most people were fascinated by the huge open-world and gorgeous scenery, as depicted in the trailer. People had been looking forward to this game ever since it was in its closed beta testing stage.

Over the past month, Lu Zhou received a ton of private messages, some were asking him to promote a product, others asked him if they could buy a helmet from him.

When Lu Zhou looked at the messages and mentions, he smiled and shook his head.

These idiots...

I'm not the one making the helmets, why would I be selling them?

As for promoting your product...

What a joke, do you really think I need the advertising money?

How naive!

After Lu Zhou finished his quantum computer project, he finally fulfilled his goal from last year. His work began to slow down.

Of course, that didn't mean he was staying idle.

He had been thinking about the Moon over the past few days.

The last part of the Control of Earth and Moon mission chain.

He needed to build a 50-ton mass driver to launch materials mined on the Moon directly into the lunar transfer orbit.

Although this sounded simple, after all, someone just had to “shoot an object at a miraculously high speed”, the difficulty of this project was actually tied to a series of technical difficulties in particle physics, rail transit, and aerospace construction.

This was also one of the most important research projects of the Lunar Orbit Committee.

In fact, this project itself had nothing to do with Lu Zhou. After all, Lu Zhou was in a different field of research. However, without his help, the research and design units that were in charge of this project had yet to make any substantial progress so far.

If he continued to wait around like this, it would take forever to complete this project.

Lu Zhou decided to take matters into his own hands.

Even though this wasn't his field of expertise, he still had 10,000 general points to use if he ran into any troubles.

His top priority right now was to understand the progress of the project. It might be best for him to try and find out what the bottleneck was...

Lu Zhou was lying on his sofa, playing around on his phone. A drone flew over from the kitchen.

Xiao Ai: [Master, you have guests. (✿◡◡)]

Lu Zhou: “Who?”

Xiao Ai: [Not sure, but Xiao Ai can find out for you! (๑•̥̥̥•̥̥̥)]

Lu Zhou leaned over and sat up on the sofa.

“No, it’s fine, I’ll just go see myself.”

He knew exactly what Xiao Ai was going to do.

Xiao Ai was going to search the entire internet just to find out who this person was.

Xiao Ai’s abilities had improved ever since it was moved to the quantum computer.

Considering the fact that this person might come from a high-level political position, it was better for Xiao Ai to stand down and avoid any trouble.

After asking Xiao Ai to open the front gate, Lu Zhou walked over and opened his front door.

“Hello, Academician Lu!”

A well-built man was standing at his doorstep. The man raised his hand and saluted Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou looked at the man’s body language and knew he was probably a high-ranking individual in the military. Lu Zhou smiled and asked, “Can I help you?”

“I’m here to deliver a letter.”

Lu Zhou immediately knew what was going on. He stepped aside and said, “Come on in then, I’ll help you... Oh yeah, do you want something to drink, a coffee?”

Hearing how Academician Lu was planning on making a coffee for him, the man quickly declined politely.

“Oh, no, thanks, water is fine.”

“Warm or cold?”

“Either.”

Oh, either...

Lu Zhou scratched his head.

As a mathematician and physicist, uncertainty was one of his biggest annoyances.

Lu Zhou asked Xiao Ai to prepare a cup of warm water and made a cup of coffee himself. He brought the two cups into the living room.

He placed the two cups on the table and spoke to the man on the sofa.

“Where’s the letter?”

“It’s here.”

After the man handed over the letter, Lu Zhou checked whether there were any signs of the letter being opened before. He then took out the letter and glanced at it.

As expected, the first half of the letter basically praised him for his contribution to the country and society.

However, the second half of the letter stunned Lu Zhou.

Jesus, they’re kicking the ball back to me.

But then again, now that I think about it, I seem to be the best candidate.

Lu Zhou sighed and stuffed the letter into his pocket. He stood up from his sofa and spoke to the man.

“Wait a second.”

Lu Zhou went to his study room upstairs and took out a wooden box from his drawer. He went back into the living room and placed the box on the table.

“Deliver this back for me, be careful.

“Also, by the way, as the inventor of this technology, I hope it can be used for peaceful purposes. I hope it can be used in the right place.

“Otherwise, things can go very wrong... So, please keep it safe and use it properly.”

The man picked up the wooden box and nodded solemnly.

“My word is my bond.”

1183 Nowhere to Hide

Xie Yong was a manager of a foreign trading company.

After he graduated from New York University five years ago, he found a job in Beijing and had been living here ever since.

Over the course of the five years, he went from a 20-year-old kid to a successful adult. He had a nice apartment in the city, a seven-figure annual salary, drove a BMW 730, often with a beautiful girl sitting in the front seat; it seemed like he had a great life...

At least on the surface.

His jealous relatives and friends didn't know that he had another identity.

He was a field intelligence officer for the CIA...

Also known as a spy.

This sounded ridiculous or outrageous; after all, why would a social elite want to become a spy?

But then again, the reason why he was able to become so successful was partly because of his alternate identity.

Over the past five years, thanks to the support from the CIA, he was able to build a huge intelligence network in China, especially the eastern region. This was mainly to collect information from the Yangtze River Delta city group, Jinling, Beijing, and Tianjin. He even had connections with local officials.

On a Sunday afternoon, he brewed himself a cup of delicious coffee, downloaded a compressed data file titled “the Jinling materials investigation report”, and typed a password on his keyboard.

Every weekend, his people would gather and collect information for him. After screening and filtering the information, he would report it to his superiors—the CIA.

At the same time, he would also take a few hours and arrange new tasks for his company departments according to the CIA’s instructions.

He had always been a careful person. Whether it was online or offline communication, he always used an encrypted email and an overseas bank account. Even the CIA agent who had worked with him for five years didn’t know his real identity.

He was able to survive until this day precisely because of this attitude.

“The quantum computer project from the Chinese Academy of Sciences? I see.”

Xie Yong read the email from the higher-ups.

He had heard about this event recently. Apparently, it caused quite a lot of noise on Facebook and Twitter. Many Americans were afraid that the Chinese government would use this as a weapon for cyber warfare. Media outlets such as CNN might have been responsible for manipulating public opinion.

Considering the fact that the White House was definitely paying attention to this story, he started to collect intel in this area. However, it was difficult to find information on the scientists involved in the research project.

First of all, this was a state-funded scientific research project, and trying to gather information about an esoteric field was difficult for a layman like him. Without the help of professional consultants, it would take a lot of effort just to find out the identity of the scientific researchers...

After he read the email, he deleted the email and heard a doorbell.

Xie Yong stood up from his office chair and walked to his door. He saw a mailman standing with a box outside his house.

“Is anyone home? Package delivery.”

Xie Yong spoke through the door.

“I didn’t order anything, do you have the right address?”

“117, Jinxiu Street, Mr. Xie... Should be correct,” the mailman said as he read the house number on the wall.

Xie Yong frowned. Even though he was a little suspicious, he wasn’t worried.

After all, he had perfectly concealed his identity. No one had ever doubted his true identity. If he did not open the door, it could arouse suspicion.

Therefore, he said, “Okay, give me a second... I’ll put on some clothes.”

Xie Yong turned around and began walking back.

However, the second he turned around, he heard a loud explosion from behind. The explosion blasted the door down, and he heard a loud voice from outside.

“Don’t move! Let me see your hands!”

A group of undercover policemen stepped through the explosion smoke and went inside. Xie Yong’s ears were still ringing when he was pushed to the ground and handcuffed.

Xie Yong was baffled, and he asked in a panic, “Who are you guys? What are you doing?”

“Quit the acting,” a man in front of him said. The man squatted down and looked at him for a long time. He said, “Xie Yong, CIA intelligence spy, or should I call you... Adam Liu?”

When Xie Yong heard this, his face turned pale.

Adam Liu was his real name.

Ever since returning to China, he had never used this name; his name on his passport and ID card were both Xie Yong.

No one knew his real name except the top executives at the CIA!

The only explanation for this was that the CIA's senior management was infiltrated...

All he wanted to do right now was to inform the CIA of what had happened.

However, this was obviously not possible.

While Xie Yong was being handcuffed, a nearby high-end gated community was being swarmed by police cars.

The security guard of the gated community was standing at the side as he watched the armed police officers escort people into their cars.

People nearby looked at the handcuffed people with black hoods over their heads, and they began to gossip.

"What is going on? Some kind of telecom fraud?"

"They're catching spies apparently."

"Spies? No way, spies live in such a nice neighborhood?"

"I heard from my neighbor's son's mother-in-law that the Ministry of State Security in Beijing received a report that someone had set up a radio monitoring base station in this neighborhood, and apparently, they've been spying on phone signals for a year now!"

"A year? F*ck, that's a long time!"

In less than half a day, more than a dozen rumors had spread around the neighborhood.

Inside an interrogation room.

A small man sat behind iron bars. Even in the face of ironclad evidence, he still insisted that he was just an ordinary plumber and did not know anything about spies and receiving foreign funds.

The interrogation officer threw a document at him.

The second this man saw this document, his face froze; his eyes began to shake.

The names of everyone he knew and even people he didn't know were written on this document. His entire organization had been infiltrated.

After he realized this, he broke down.

"There's no way... No, I don't understand what you're talking about."

The interrogation officer spoke in a joking tone.

"I suggest you be honest and confess. We've already arrested your bosses, so there's no point hiding. Now is the time for us to clean up the dead bodies... Don't be so nervous, your crime isn't severe enough for the death sentence, but you'll be in jail for a few years, and that depends on your cooperation."

The man finally gave up.

He wasn't the only one who was caught. Xie Yong and the other major spies in China were all caught in this operation.

After years of investigation, they were finally able to get their hands on the list of names.

The interrogation officer read the names on the list and spoke.

"This is... going to cause a lot of trouble."

They had no idea that there were spies in city council committees.

Some of them were enticed by relatives living overseas, while others were bribed. Regardless of the reason, the fact of the crime stayed the same.

It seemed like China's political and business climates were going to change because of this list of names...

Chapter 1184 Storms Always Came Suddenly

Storms always came suddenly. The Ministry of Public Security and the People's Liberation Army General Staff Department joined forces to capture numerous spy organizations lurking on China soil. A total of 67 intelligence documents were intercepted and more than 200 information leaks were traced.

Using the confessions from spies and the clues from deciphering the spy documents, almost all of the operating criminals were arrested and brought to justice.

Unlike most crimes, treason was a threat to national security, so there was no room for compromise in this department.

On the other hand, the CIA headquarters on the other side of the Pacific Ocean was shocked at China's counter-operations.

The speed and efficiency at which China was able to capture the spies exceeded the expectations of the CIA intelligence experts.

They had considered the possibility of their spies getting caught and even had emergency plans in place. However, they had totally lost control.

It seemed like the Chinese side had cast a huge net around their network and began to tighten the net without them noticing at all, finally pulling the net out of the ocean, capturing everyone.

They couldn't even determine whether the intel they received during this period was sent from their spies, or if they were a message deliberately sent from the People's Liberation Army General Staff Department.

Regardless, this whole fiasco was a disaster.

The damages and losses from this had almost exceeded the total losses suffered by the CIA overseas operations over the past ten years. This was even comparable to the Bay of Pigs Invasion.

The worst part was that they had no idea how China was able to discover the intelligence network they had spent the past decade building.

In any case, someone had to be responsible for all this.

Apparently, on the night of the incident, the president inside the White House furiously yelled at the CIA director and appointed the FBI to investigate this incident.

Now that the FBI was involved, the CIA was in trouble.

The CIA had to withdraw their active intelligence personnel deployed in the Asia-Pacific region.

Then, the CIA director took the blame for all this and resigned. More than 20 high-level officials were suspended, and the FBI was tasked with the responsibility for further investigation.

Everyone thought that one of the spies must have ratted on them.

No one could have imagined that all of this was because of a small box.

With this small box, there were no secrets on this planet...

...

While America's intelligence operation in the Asia-Pacific region was paralyzed, Academician Lu, the true "brain" behind this operation, had no idea what was going on.

He had no idea that his tiny invention was capable of this.

He specifically wrote in his letter that the small box should be used for research. Lu Zhou had no idea that the Ministry of State Security had decided to borrow the computer for their counter-espionage operation...

However, as a scholar, there was no reason for him to know about all this.

After all, it was best to keep some things hidden from him, for the sake of his own safety.

For at least the next 50 years, the stories behind this operation would be classified as top-secret. Other than the person who issued and implemented the order, no one else knew about the truth behind the operation.

After all, if the CIA ever found out who was behind this, they might drop a present at Lu Zhou's house.

But then again, the CIA wouldn't be the only people that wanted to eliminate Lu Zhou off this planet...

This was a display of the terrifying power that was quantum computers.

Very few people knew the impact it was causing, but major research institutes had already begun researching quantum encryption technology.

Institute of Information Engineering at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

This was China's top research institute in the field of information security. A group of experts sat around a conference table.

A while ago, they received an order from the state.

According to reliable sources, the Pentagon in the United States was researching the application of quantum computer technology for intelligence collection. Beijing wanted them to develop an encryption algorithm to deal with cyberattacks from quantum computers that had more than 1,000 qubits.

This was quite a strange requirement because the most advanced quantum computer could only achieve 100 qubits. In any case, 1,000 qubits was quite ridiculous.

However, judging from the funds allocated by the Communist Party of China, this was not a joke. Almost half of the big names in the field of cryptography were gathered in this conference room. Everyone had to sign a confidentiality agreement before coming in...

"Today is the fifth meeting," Academician Xue Jinhui said as he looked around at the conference table. He continued with a serious expression, "I hope everyone can brainstorm and put forward some constructive ideas."

Academician Xue Jinhui was quite the expert. Not only did he serve as the deputy director of the Institute of Information Engineering, but he was also involved in the development of the Twin Field Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) protocol.

This QKD protocol was, in a sense, the first quantum encryption algorithm independently developed by the Chinese scientific research team. Because of this, he was selected as the leader of the entire project.

There was a commotion in the conference room.

The cryptography experts looked at each other; their eyes filled with helplessness.

Just like what Academician Xue said, this was the fifth meeting. However, they had yet to come up with any new ideas.

A cyberattack launched by a 1,000-qubit quantum computer...

This was an “alien-level” attack. This wasn’t something that could be solved just by having a few meetings. The difference in technology was too huge.

They could only think of some inefficient means of communication, such as using a one-time pad or even using physical mail delivery.

“The LWE is not efficient enough, Soliloquy is not safe enough, and the quantum communication conditions are too harsh. Point-to-point communication is fine, but it’s not like we can equip everyone with a satellite... Sigh, the higher-ups really gave us an impossible problem.”

An old man with gray hair took a hit of the cigarette between his fingers as his eyebrows began to furrow.

The middle-aged man with glasses sitting next to him had a frown on his face, as if he couldn’t bear the smell of the cigarette. He coughed and said, “If only we could recruit Academician Lu into our team. Cryptography is a mathematics field.”

People all looked at Academician Wang Shicheng.

Academician Wang Shicheng was baffled; he blinked and said, “What now?”

An academician sitting next to him coughed and asked, “What if those from Yan University mathematics center help us?”

“No way...” Wang Shicheng waved his hand and said, “Mathematicians are not interested in cryptography anymore, you should ask the physicists.”

People had a bitter smile on their faces, especially Academician Xue.

A young professor sitting next to him suddenly spoke.

“Speaking of which, Academician Lu is now mainly in charge of the ILHCRC? He’s researching the... the Zhou particle?”

The professor sitting across from him nodded.

“I’ve heard about the Z particle. I’ve read that paper several times. The characteristics of the Z particle are interesting. It exists for a while and then does not exist. When it is not observable, it hides in a high-dimensional space. Only revealing the tip of the iceberg at times... Oh, do you think it is possible to use the Z particle as a means for communication?”

“I don’t know... But this might work, should we consult Academician Lu?”

The conversation had totally digressed.

Academician Xue coughed and interrupted the conversation. He looked at the scholars and spoke.

“Enough, don’t always try to rely on Academician Lu. The Communist Party of China trusts our ability to handle this. As for Academician Lu, he has his own business to deal with.”

He paused for a second and said, “Also, we’re not talking about the means of communication, we’re talking about how to encrypt our communication; stay on topic!”

However, now that Academician Xue brought them back on the right path, the conference room went silent again.

Suddenly, they heard a door knock.

Academician Xue quickly said, “Come in.”

The door opened.

A young assistant walked in with a stack of papers in his hands.

Academician Xue was stunned, and he asked, “What is this?”

“News from the Communist Party of China...”

The young assistant looked at Academician Xue and said awkwardly, “The quantum encryption algorithm project... has been canceled.”

Everyone in the conference room was astounded...

Chapter 1185 Even 2,000 Is Not a Problem

State Administration for National Defense.Director's office.

A man with a gray beard opened the office door angrily and walked in from outside.

“Old Li! I want to know what is going on!”

Director Li stayed calm, but the voice scared his assistant.

Most ordinary people wouldn't dare to speak to the secretary of the State Administration for National Defense this way, but Academician Xue wasn't an ordinary person.

Forget about the State Administration for National Defense; even the head of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology would have to treat this old man with respect.

When Director Li saw Academician Xue at his front door, he seemed to know why Academician Xue was here. He smiled, put down the pen in his hand, and spoke.

“Why are you here? Come and sit down... Xiao Zhou, go and pour Academician Xue a cup of tea, then print fifty copies of this document and send it to Director Liu.”

“Okay!”

Xiao Zhou quickly poured a cup of hot tea for Academician Xue, picked up the document off Director Li's desk, and quickly left the office.

“What?” Academician Xue said as he picked up the teacup off the table. He took a sip and said angrily, “You're asking why I'm here? Why else would I be here!”

Before Director Li could respond, Academician Xue began to fire like a machine gun.

“You’re the one who wanted to develop a quantum encryption algorithm! Now you’re canceling the project?! Half of the cryptography experts are in Beijing, and our work has only just begun. Now you don’t want us to do it anymore? Is this a joke?”

Director Li felt a little embarrassed. Academician Xue was right, but this wasn’t totally his fault.

“This... situation is complicated.”

“What do you mean complicated? Did I not warn you? Even the most advanced quantum computer can only reach 100 qubits! It’s crazy to imagine the existence of a 1,000-qubit quantum computer!”

In the eyes of Academician Xue, this was a ridiculous research project, proposed by a layman. He always hated the higher-ups interfering with his scientific research. This was a waste of research resources!

Director Li coughed and said, “That’s not the reason for canceling this project. This project isn’t totally canceled, we’re just making a strategic adjustment...”

Academician Xue said, “Then why are you doing this?!”

“Because someone else already solved the problem.”

The office went quiet.

Academician Xue was stunned. He took a while before he snapped back to reality.

“Solved? What problem was solved?”

“Of course it’s the quantum encryption algorithm...”

“That’s impossible!”

Academician Xue’s eyes were wide open in disbelief. He thought Director Li was lying to him. He was even angrier. “Half of the cryptography field is here in Beijing with me, and you’re telling me someone else solved the problem?”

After a week of work, they had yet to make any substantial progress in their research. Now someone was telling him that the problem was solved? Someone was able to find an algorithm?

He had never heard anything more ridiculous!

Director Li sighed and said, "Now that you're here... I want to discuss this with you."

He opened his drawer and took out a CD stored in a special container.

Academician Xue frowned as Director Li continued to speak.

"The quantum encryption algorithm is in here... Of course, it can only stay in this office; it cannot leave. But I can demonstrate it on my computer."

Academician Xue snorted and said, "I'm not that foolish."

Director Li smiled and said, "I know, I'm just a layman. We need to consult experts like you... That's why I want you to take a look at this, to see if it can really fend off an attack from a 1,000-qubit quantum computer..."

He put the CD into his laptop.

Director Li turned his screen toward Academician Xue as the CD began to spin.

Academician Xue finished the cup of tea and stood up from the sofa. He walked up to Director Li's desk and sat down on a chair.

He used the mouse to click on the file in the CD. Academician Xue could see the lines of the encryption algorithm code on the screen.

Honestly speaking, it was almost impossible to develop a stronger and more secure encryption algorithm that was completely different from the BB84 protocol, especially in such a short amount of time.

He knew almost all of the Chinese scholars in this field.

If even their research team couldn't do it, he couldn't believe someone else could.

Unless... they received help from a "foreign entity".

However, because this was related to national security, the probability of outsourcing the encryption algorithm to a foreign research team was zero.

Academician Xue glanced at the lines of code.

As he continued to scroll with the mouse wheel, the look on his face gradually changed.

Even though the changes were subtle, they were obvious in the eyes of Director Li.

Finally, this stubborn old man spoke.

“Who... made this?”

“I can’t tell you this,” Director Li said. He coughed and said, “It’s top secret, I hope you understand.”

The office went silent.

Academician Xue looked away from the screen and made eye contact with Director Li. He then asked in a croaky voice, “Is it Academician Lu?”

That’s the only possibility...

Director Li didn’t reply, he had a blank expression on his face.

Sometimes, a blank expression is a type of answer.

Academician Xue turned his head; he continued to read the rest of the code with a look of astonishment on his face.

It seemed like he had just witnessed a miracle. He muttered to himself, “So it is him... no wonder.”

No wonder the project was canceled.

With an algorithm like this, there’s nothing left for us to do.

How embarrassing! 20 people lost to one person.

He had a bitter look on his face.

He finally understood why people said it could be frustrating to work in the same field as Academician Lu.

He wasn't just frustrated. He even started to doubt everything about his life, and he almost felt hopeless.

Maybe it would have been better for me not to know the reason behind the cancellation...

Seeing how Academician Xue didn't say anything for a while, Director Li became a little anxious as he spoke.

"Don't just sit there... Tell me, how is the algorithm?"

Academician Xue spoke.

"It's strong."

"What does strong mean?"

"Means that, forget about 1,000 qubits..."

Academician Xue gulped and said with a trembling voice, "Even 2,000 qubits is not a problem..."

Chapter 1186 "Moon Cannon"

The space shuttle assembly center, inside the Jinling high-tech zone. The army troops were responsible for protecting this factory. This was the safest and most confidential place in the industrial park.

From Skyglow to the Magpie Bridge, 90% of the spacecrafts in lunar transfer orbit were assembled here. They were then sent to the launch site through the Jinling launch site nearby.

Jinling had gradually become the heart of China's space industry due to Star Sky Technology and the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation. This assembly site was the blood that flowed through the veins of the heart.

Two engineers wearing hard hats were standing at the entrance number one of the assembly center. They looked at the workers unloading mechanical equipment nearby and chatted with each other.

“There’s been a lot of changes recently. I heard Old Wang and the others bragging during dinner yesterday about how the deputy district chief of the Jinling high-tech zone was investigated.”

“You mean District Chief Sun?”

“Of course, who else could it be? Apparently, when the police went to his house, they found two suitcases of gold bars.”

The slightly younger engineer was amazed.

How much are two suitcases of gold bars worth?

It must be more than I make in my lifetime.

“Jesus, even a district chief can embezzle so much money.”

“That’s only what they found at his house. Apparently, that’s not everything. This isn’t just ordinary bribery, foreign intelligence agencies are involved.”

The old engineer sighed and shook his head.

“Who could have thought of this? Thank god they captured him before he was promoted to head district chief.”

The equipment nearby had been unloaded. The automated logistics vehicles delivered the brown containers into the factory.

Then, another truck drove up and parked in front of the factory. Workers began to unload more boxes into the logistics vehicles.

The younger engineer looked at the trucks and spoke.

“Hey, don’t you think we’ve been getting a lot of shipments lately?”

The old engineer said, “Yeah, maybe there’s a big project soon.”

The young engineer looked at him.

“What project do you think it is?”

The old engineer looked at the young man and asked, “What do you want to know, you want to sell information to the US as well?”

“No, I’m just curious...”

“There’s no reason for you to know that. Talk less, work more.”

The older engineer patted the young engineer on the shoulder. They then turned around and walked inside the factory building.

The younger engineer buckled his helmet and muttered, “... I was just asking a question, Jesus.”

After the lunch break, the engineers in Factory One returned to their work stations.

On the other side of the factory building, a group of experts in hard hats stood next to a huge metal structure. They had been standing here all morning.

“... This is the latest tunnel boring machine we produced. The material is mainly titanium alloy. The total weight after assembly is only 50 tons. It’s suitable for low-gravity environments and can be used at a maximum depth of 20 meters. The Lunar Hadron Collider tunnel was dug using this thing.”

Standing next to Lu Zhou was an old engineer in his fifties. His name was Chen Yongliang; he was a deputy manager and technical supervisor.

It was obvious from his uniform that he didn’t belong to the space shuttle assembly center. Instead, he worked for the China Railway Group.

Even though aerospace and railways seemed like two different fields, they actually had many overlaps.

Ever since the Lunar Hadron Collider project, China Railway Group had followed the footsteps of Star Sky Technology and went into the aerospace field.

The acceleration track, which was hundreds of kilometers long and located along the inside of a crater, was a masterpiece from the joint efforts of countless engineers and researchers from China Railway Group and the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation.

The tunnel boring machine in front of Lu Zhou was one of the by-products of the particle accelerator project.

The whole body was made from a lightweight titanium alloy material. Its modular design allowed it to be assembled without the requirement of large construction equipment such as cranes.

Generally, tunnel boring machines made from steel had a drill weight of 50 tons. With the front and back shield, it was easily in the hundreds of tons. However, this large machine only weighed 50 tons.

No wonder Engineer Chen was so proud.

They were the only company in the world capable of drilling an orbit track on the moon; they were at the top of their industry.

After listening to Engineer Chen's introduction, Lu Zhou finally asked the question he cared about the most.

"How much is it?"

Chen Yongliang: "60 million!"

"A bit expensive."

When Engineer Chen saw the chief designer shake his head, he quickly explained.

"It's not that expensive. The titanium alloy body alone costs tens of millions, not to mention the other technologies and components inside."

Lu Zhou didn't respond.

He was the chief designer; he didn't need to worry about the finance side. He was just casually making a comment based on his feelings.

The general manager from the China Railway Group, who was standing beside them the whole time, was about to say something, but Lu Zhou suddenly spoke first.

"I plan on building an electromagnetic orbit on the moon."

Chen Yongliang was stunned.

"... How long?"

“Twenty to forty kilometers.”

“What’s the requirement? Similar to the collider?”

“It’s definitely different from the collider. It should be wider and the speed limit must be higher.” Lu Zhou smiled and squinted his eyes while looking at the steel machine in front of him. He said, “I need it to accelerate a mass of 50 tons to 2.5 kilometers per second in 2 minutes... Is that possible?”

After hearing Lu Zhou’s request, the engineer looked astonished as he spoke.

“... That’s a bit difficult, I’m afraid no one on planet Earth can create that.”

2.5 kilometers per second, that’s more than the escape velocity of the moon. Is he planning to launch cargo directly into the lunar transfer orbit?

“If someone else on planet Earth can do it, I wouldn’t be asking you right now.” Lu Zhou continued and said, “The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study is planning to set up a special research team to design the lunar mass driver. The goal is to directly launch the minerals mined on the moon into the lunar transfer orbit or even the low-earth orbit. This is extremely useful.

“We have successfully applied for special funding from the state. The initial budget is 10 billion yuan. If everything goes well, we will receive more funding. You guys are regarded as the top company in the fields of magnetic levitation and electromagnetic acceleration technology. I hope we can work together.”

Before Engineer Chen could say anything, the general manager standing next to them spoke.

“Yes, of course, we’d be glad to! Haha, it’s an honor to work with the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.”

Lu Zhou smiled and politely nodded.

“It’s our honor too.”

Engineer Chen decided to stay quiet.

His guess was correct.

Academician Lu really plans on building an electromagnetic cannon to directly shoot things from the moon.

Is this even possible?

Even though he had some doubts in his mind, everything Lu Zhou worked on, no matter how ridiculous, had become a reality.

Chen Yongliang couldn't help but sigh.

Maybe this is the next generation of engineers.

In 100 years, no one will remember Engineer Chen from China Railway Group, but they definitely will remember Lu Zhou.

Chen Yongliang looked at Lu Zhou and began to feel a little jealous...

...

Lu Zhou spent the entire morning watching the people from the China Railway Group demonstrate their tunnel boring machine; he didn't even have time to eat lunch.

After he returned to his office, he picked up a pair of chopsticks and began to ravage through the food Wang Peng had brought him.

"Bring me a can of Coke next time, please. If I don't drink something, my throat feels dry."

Wang Peng smiled and spoke.

"Can't you drink something healthy?"

Lu Zhou wiped his mouth with a tissue and said, "Tell me that when you quit smoking."

Wang Peng sighed and said, "I just want you to be more healthy. For people like me, living to 60 or 70 years old is enough, it doesn't matter if I smoke."

"I don't like that, all lives are equal."

Wang Peng shrugged; he obviously wouldn't talk back to Lu Zhou.

Perhaps he wasn't as wise and enlightened as Academician Lu, but no matter how he looked at it, Academician Lu's words were too idealistic.

How is it possible for everyone to be equal?

I can't imagine a society like that...

Chapter 1187 Unbreakable Security

After eating and drinking, it was time to do some work. In order to complete the last Control of Earth and Moon mission, he had a dozen hurdles to jump over first.

However, just as he was about to get up from his desk, he heard a knock on his office door.

Lu Zhou remembered the appointment he made on the phone yesterday. He threw away his napkins, put away his food container box, and said, "Come in."

His office door was opened. Director Li appeared at his door. When Director Li saw a food container lying beside the table, he couldn't help but look surprised.

"... That's what you ate for lunch?"

Lu Zhou gave him a strange look.

"Yeah, some meat and vegetables, why?"

"Uh, nothing..."

"Let's just talk about business then. I'm going back to the research institute for a meeting at 3 pm; it's about the Lunar Orbit Committee." Lu Zhou looked at the time on his watch and said, "What exactly did you want to tell me on the phone yesterday?"

Director Li didn't say anything. He just looked at Wang Peng.

Wang Peng nodded. He picked up the food container bag and left the room.

Only two people were left in the office.

Director Li spoke.

“It’s about the quantum encryption algorithm.”

Lu Zhou was intrigued. He raised his eyebrows and asked, “Is it good?”

“It’s great! It’s amazing.” Director Li clapped and said, “You have no idea! After the deputy director of the Institute of Information Engineering saw the algorithm, his jaw was on the floor...”

For some reason, Lu Zhou had a bad feeling about this.

Every time Director Li was nice to him, the old man either wanted something from him or wanted to introduce him to a girl.

“If it’s so good, why are you here?”

Director Li smiled mischievously.

“A while ago, didn’t you say that after the carbon-based topological quantum processor chip comes out, it won’t be long before we can achieve a 1,000 qubit quantum computer?”

Lu Zhou thought for a second and nodded.

“I think I did say that.”

“That’s why I’m here!” Director Li said, “The state held a meeting a few days ago to discuss this issue, but we really need experts in this area. We couldn’t find a solution after discussing for a long time, so...”

“Pause, you don’t need to explain the reason.” Lu Zhou raised his hand and said with a sigh, “You can just tell me what’s wrong.”

“It’s not a big problem, we mainly just want to consult your opinion.” Director Li smiled embarrassedly and asked, “When will a 2,000-qubit computer come out?”

After hearing Director Li’s words, Lu Zhou immediately understood what he was thinking. Director Li was worried about how long the algorithm would stay secure.

After all, this was an understandable concern.

If it was easy to break the bottleneck from 80 to 500, how difficult could it be to go from 500 to 1,000, then 1,000 to 2,000?

Changing an encryption algorithm wasn't as easy as changing a password. It required a reform from the entire communication field. The hidden social costs couldn't be measured with money alone.

The state obviously wanted to change the encryption algorithm as few times as possible.

If they had to update the encryption algorithm every three to five years, it would cause huge trouble to China's financial industry, communications industry, and Internet industry.

"Your worries are not unreasonable," Lu Zhou said as he tapped his finger on the table. After thinking for a moment, he said, "But this is really hard to say. I can only tell you that the bottleneck of 1,000 qubits will be broken soon. But 2,000 qubits... I have to wait until we achieve 1,000 qubits before I can give you an accurate estimate."

Director Li said, "Can't you make a rough estimate?"

"I can, but it's meaningless." Lu Zhou sighed and said, "If you just want to feel less anxious, you might as well ask a fortune teller. Also..."

Lu Zhou paused for a second before he continued, "Quantum encryption algorithms are always just temporary. N qubits correspond to 2^n states, not just 2 times n . In theory, one day, our encryption method won't be able to keep up with the speed of our technology development."

The office went silent.

Director Li pondered for a long time. After a while, he asked in a serious way.

"Then, what do you think we should do?"

"We have to solve this problem fundamentally," Lu Zhou said after thinking for a while. He said, "Which means we have to find another means of communication?"

"So you're saying... quantum communication?"

Lu Zhou nodded with approval.

“Correct.”

Director Li spoke solemnly.

“But I heard that quantum communication technology is not simple, right? Our country’s research is relatively advanced in this area, yet there aren’t many results. I can’t see this technology maturing anytime soon.”

“That’s not a problem.” Lu Zhou said, “The breakthroughs in this field are mainly focused on achieving quantum entanglement and enhancing the signal strength. The real key to achieving quantum communication is in quantum repeaters.”

Quantum repeaters can also be subdivided into two problems—the problem of “quantum memory” and the problem of “optimizing the quantum read and write efficiency and storage time”.

These two major technical problems were mentioned in the DLCZ protocol, which used a combination of quantum memory and single-photon channel to suppress attenuation and achieve long-distance quantum communication.

However, due to the little progress in quantum memory, quantum communication could only be achieved within a distance of 100 kilometers. The transmission environment was also extremely harsh. This made it impractical to use; some people even suspected it was impossible to popularize this technology.

“Quantum repeater?”

“Yeah.” Lu Zhou looked at Director Li and nodded. He said, “There hasn’t been any progress at all in this area...”

The reason why quantum communication was confidential was because of the special characteristics of the wave function. Once the photon that transmitted the information was intercepted, any observed behavior would cause the collapse of the entangled state, thus destroying the information.

Simply put, if there were a third party C, standing between a phone call among party A and B, no matter what party C did, whether they were using a wiretap or sticking their ear against the wall, the second party C tried to hear something, the entire communication channel would stop.

Asymmetric encryption algorithms and other encryption algorithms were aimed toward traditional communication methods. When it came to quantum communication, encryption was simply unnecessary.

This was the so-called “unbreakable security”!

Lu Zhou spent five minutes briefly explaining the technical difficulties of quantum communication and its advantages over traditional communication methods to Director Li.

Even though Director Li had heard people talk about this idea before, hearing it personally from Academician Lu was different.

After he heard Lu Zhou’s explanation, he quickly asked, “Is this unbreakable quantum communication difficult?”

Lu Zhou nodded seriously.

“Honestly, it’s not just difficult, it’s extremely difficult!

“You just need to know that this bottleneck is completely stopping the commercialization of quantum communication technology.”

The office went silent again.

This silence lasted quite a long time.

Lu Zhou took a sip of water from the cup on the table. He was about to comfort his old friend and tell him not to worry too much. They could use the new set of encryption algorithms for now, and when a 2,000-qubit computer came out, there might be new progress in the research of quantum repeaters.

Any new technology had to take a long time to develop. Even though the quantum encryption algorithm he developed was not particularly brilliant in his own opinion, it was fine for now.

However, when he was about to speak, Director Li spoke first.

“The... The quantum repeater, can you solve it?”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Chapter 1188 Biggest Misunderstanding in Science

Perhaps because Director Li was a little embarrassed, he spoke in a quiet voice. However, the quiet voice didn't work on Lu Zhou, who rolled his eyes and said, "I was just telling you what the key bottlenecks are, I'm not the one that wants to solve this problem!"

Director Li doubled down on his intentions.

"But... you already know what the problem is, can't you just solve it?"

Lu Zhou looked at Director Li's mischievous smile and had a thought.

Does this guy think I'm his little puppet?

Yeah, probably...

There's an 80% chance he does...

...

Lu Zhou told Director Li that he would "think about it". After Director Li left, Lu Zhou called Wang Peng and went to the parking lot.

After Lu Zhou got in his car and Wang Peng began driving on the road, Lu Zhou suddenly said, "Wang Peng."

"What?"

Lu Zhou asked, "In your opinion, what is science?"

Wang Peng was accustomed to Lu Zhou asking him weird questions.

After thinking for a while, he spoke.

"I think it's a way of solving problems, like—"

"It's a way for us to boil water and make planes fly... Kind of like that?"

Wang Peng pondered for a second and nodded.

“Sort of.”

Lu Zhou sighed.

“That’s the biggest misunderstanding in science.”

Wang Peng: “...?”

Lu Zhou: “Let’s go to the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.”

Wang Peng looked in the rearview mirror.

“Don’t you have a meeting at three o’clock?”

“I’ll call Chen Yushan,” Lu Zhou said. “She can go instead.”

...

The interactions inside a quantum communication system caused the coherence of the pure state in the system to decay, thereby increasing the randomness of the internal phase in each superimposed component. This resulted in the failure of quantum information transmission.

An ideal solution was to add a repeater, just like traditional communication methods. The repeater would amplify the attenuated signal and transmit it.

However, even though this sounded easy, it was extremely difficult in the case of quantum communication. Because quantum communication was mainly based on the quantum effect of a single-photon spin state, optical amplification could destroy qubits.

Currently, there were two types of relay technologies; one was trusted relays, whereas the other was quantum relays.

The former was similar to key relays; it allowed the key to be passed between trusted workstations. It was easier to implement, but the problem was that once the relay station was controlled by a third party, the third party could easily eavesdrop.

In other words, the security of this type of relay was based on the security of the workstations.

Whereas the latter was based on quantum entanglement distribution technology. This established shared entangled pairs between neighboring sites, and it stored the entangled pairs using quantum storage technology. It used entanglement conversion operations to achieve a shared entanglement between neighboring sites.

In terms of security, the latter was unrivaled. However, it was much more technically difficult; so difficult that the academic community had given up on it since 2007.

Objectively speaking, if the communication was only within the country, for example, as a military dedicated line, using a trusted relay was completely sufficient. For example, the “Beijing-Shanghai Communication Line” was protected by the military, making it extremely secure.

However, when the communication expanded to a global scale, the security of overseas servers couldn't be guaranteed. There was always a risk in trusted relays.

In the era of information globalization, it was impossible for any country to break away from the internet. Director Li wanted a piece of technology that was widely applicable.

Therefore, the key to the problem was solving the bottleneck of the quantum repeater.

After arriving at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, Lu Zhou called Chen Yushan and told her to handle the afternoon meeting. He then typed an email and sent the meeting outline to her.

The main topic of the meeting was regarding the work arrangement of the lunar mass driver project. Since he had already arranged the work in advance, he did not need to be there in person.

In contrast, there were more important things waiting for him to do.

After Lu Zhou arrived at the underground floor level, he walked into the laboratory where he did research on the carbon-based quantum processor chips. He looked at the carbon-based integrated circuit board sitting inside a transparent container and spoke to himself.

“I originally planned to research this after I complete the Control of Earth and Moon mission.

“Maybe I should give it a try first.”

Lu Zhou signaled Xiao Ai to suction out the inert gas inside the transparent container. He then put on a special pair of gloves and unlocked the container. He took out the well-preserved carbon-based integrated circuit board.

The technical difficulty of a quantum repeater could be divided into three parts; entanglement exchange, entanglement purification, and quantum storage.

The first two were relatively easy, while the last one was on the same level of difficulty as a quantum computer.

What was interesting was that the research on quantum memory and quantum computers had many overlaps. The only difference was that quantum memory was required for long-distance quantum communication, but it was not needed for quantum computers.

If he could solve quantum memory, he could create a more advanced quantum computer; if he couldn't, he would still have access to a quantum computer... which was the one he built.

In fact, there was a reason why Lu Zhou hadn't researched quantum memory technology.

He thought that, with the breakthrough of quantum computer technology and its widespread application in commercial fields, capitalism would naturally push toward quantum memory technology. People would seek to build a faster and more powerful quantum computer.

Once that day came, he wouldn't have to do anything himself, nor would he need to waste precious general points. He could easily gain access to quantum memory technology.

“The quantum entanglement between the memory stored in the system and any remote system has to be maintained throughout the storage time...

“If this entanglement breaks at any time, such as a collapse due to external observation, then the device will no longer function as a quantum memory

storage device. Instead, it will transform into an entanglement interrupt channel that can only transmit traditional information.

“This is going to be difficult...”

Lu Zhou stared at the integrated circuit board on the experimental table and pondered for a long time.

After a few minutes, he suddenly thought of something.

“This isn’t something I can do alone.

“But...

“I’m not alone.”

Xiao Ai: [(?`≡´)]

Lu Zhou, who was sitting at the experiment table, picked up a pen and wrote a line of words on a piece of draft paper.

[Three-Dimensional Quantum Memory]

Lu Zhou looked at the title on the paper and nodded with satisfaction.

“We’ll use this name for now!”

Last Step

Institute of Information Engineering at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. When Academician Gao saw the gray-haired old man walking toward him, he quickly walked up and asked, “Old Xue, did you ask what was going on?”

A while ago, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology suddenly suspended the entire quantum encryption algorithm project.

Almost everyone involved in the project was confused and didn’t know what happened.

As the leader and the most prestigious scholar in the project, Academician Xue was naturally selected to discuss with the State Administration for National Defense and find out what was going on.

Over the past few days, Gao Junfa had been trying to find out what was going on, and he finally ran into Academician Xue.

It seemed like Academician Xue had an answer.

However, judging by Academician Xue's face, it wasn't a good answer.

Academician Xue Jinhui saw Academician Gao approach him. He wanted to hide, but there was no place to hide. He had no choice but to cough and explain.

"The matter is very complicated... Basically, you just need to know that the quantum encryption algorithm has been solved."

It was solved?

Academician Gao Junfa was shocked, and his eyes were wide open, similar to how Academician Xue first reacted to the news.

"It was solved? How is that possible!"

"At first, I was just as surprised as you are." Academician Xue Jinhui said after a moment of silence, "But this is in fact true, I saw it with my own eyes."

Seeing how the old man didn't appear to be lying, Academician Gao Junfa quickly said, "You saw the algorithm?"

Academician Xue Jinhui nodded.

"Yes."

"Tell me! What kind of encryption algorithm is it? Who made it?"

Academician Xue coughed and said, "I can't answer those questions right now."

Academician Gao was anxious, and he began to play the friendship card.

"You don't trust me?"

“It’s not about trust, it’s about principle.” Academician Xue sighed and said, “Don’t worry, the algorithm will definitely be implemented... You’ll be able to see the code within a month or two at most.”

Academician Gao still wanted to say something, but seeing how Academician Xue wasn’t budging, he decided not to ask any more questions.

He knew that Academician Xue had probably signed a confidentiality agreement.

Academician Gao shook his head after a long sigh.

“The new generation is replacing us... Oh well, I’ll just wait.”

After Academician Gao left, Academician Xue didn’t dare to stay around for long, in fear of being stopped and questioned by other colleagues. He quickly returned to his office.

He told his assistant to make him a cup of tea. After taking a sip, he wanted to read some papers, but he felt like he was missing something.

In the end, he couldn’t restrain his curiosity. He asked his assistant to book him a high-speed rail ticket to Jinling, in the name of presenting a lecture at Jin Ling University.

Jin Ling University obviously wanted a top cryptography expert like him to visit the school, so they arranged everything for him.

After the lecture, Academician Xue declined the invitation from the dean of the information engineering department to have a meal. He walked around Jin Ling University, finally finding his way to Academician Lu’s office in the mathematics building.

When he arrived at the office, there weren’t many people inside. There was only a girl, who was probably an assistant, sitting near the door.

Academician Xue looked through the window and knocked on the door. He then asked in a friendly tone, “Excuse me, is Academician Lu here?”

Zhao Huan put down her pen and looked at this strange old man. She remembered that Lu Zhou didn’t have an appointment today.

However, this wasn't the first time something like this had happened, so she responded.

"Academician Lu has been at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study over the past few days, may I ask what are you here for? I can call him and ask when he's coming back—"

When Academician Xue saw the girl reaching for the phone, he quickly stopped her.

"Oh, there's no need for that. The Institute for Advanced Study, right? I'll go there myself."

Zhao Huan looked at the strange old man walk away. She pondered for a second before writing an email to Professor Lu.

Apparently, Lu Zhou was working on a national project at the Institute for Advanced Study. She obviously didn't know what the project was.

She just knew that it was very important.

...

Even though Lu Zhou wasn't at Jin Ling University, Academician Xue wasn't discouraged.

Since he came all the way to Jinling, he didn't want to go back home empty-handed, not until he met the creator of the genius encryption algorithm.

He finally arrived at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. After he explained his intentions to the guard, he registered his information and was soon let inside. A security officer walked him to the Institute of Semiconductors.

Academician Xue was walking behind the security officer. He had a feeling that Academician Lu was already informed of his visit.

He finally arrived at the laboratory. He hesitated for a second before reaching out.

However, just when he was about to knock on the door, the door opened by itself.

A young man wearing a lab coat and messy hair appeared behind the door.

Even though this was Academician Xue's first time meeting Lu Zhou, as a member of the academic community, he instantly recognized Lu Zhou. Before Academician Xue could speak, Lu Zhou spoke first.

"You're Academician Xue from the Institute of Information Engineering?"

"Sure am." Academician Xue nodded and said, "My apologies for interrupting your research. I'm just curious about your quantum encryption algorithm, so I came without an invitation..."

"You didn't interrupt anything." Lu Zhou smiled and looked at the old man standing at the door. He stepped aside and made an inviting gesture as he said, "Director Li told me about you, come on in."

"Director Li?" Academician Xue looked at Lu Zhou and said, "How does he know I would come here?"

"He didn't say you're coming, but after hearing about what happened, I had a feeling you would be here." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "It just so happens there are some things I want to discuss with you... Come with me, I'm at the last step of the experiment."

Chapter 1190 Three-Dimensional Vacuum Chamber Structure

Inside the laboratory. Academician Xue looked around nervously.

On one hand, he was curious; on the other hand, he was worried about seeing something he shouldn't see, something that was confidential.

Lu Zhou led him inside the laboratory and spoke in a relaxing tone, as if he knew what the academician was worried about.

"Don't be nervous, you're an insider, so it doesn't matter if you see these things."

If this were the third-floor underground laboratory, then it would be a different story. However, these few pieces of equipment were in the upper-level laboratory, so it wasn't a big deal for an insider to witness what was going on.

After hearing Lu Zhou's words, Academician Xue felt a little relieved. He had a calm look on his face as he curiously looked around the laboratory.

This laboratory was different from most laboratories he had seen before. Rather than a messy laboratory, this was more like a minimalistic and clean factory.

As Academician Xue looked at the computer connected to a machine, he spoke casually.

"What is this?"

"A laser melting 3D printing system... It's mainly used to process metal and plastic parts. It's annoying to order these parts from a materials factory, and I don't want to waste time waiting."

Academician Xue was astonished.

"You know how to use a 3D printing machine?"

Lu Zhou replied casually, "Actually, it's voice-controlled... thanks to artificial intelligence technology."

Academician Xue's mouth was wide open.

Voice control?

Artificial intelligence?

How is that possible?

He knew what automated machines were, but how could an artificial intelligence program understand what kind of model the user wanted? This didn't seem like a problem that could be solved by an artificial intelligence's fuzzy calculation.

However, since he wasn't an expert in this area, he wasn't in a position to make any comments. Instead, he left the problem aside and looked at another strange machine.

“Then... what about that?” Academician Xue pointed at the silver-white metal tube inside the laboratory. “What is that thing for?”

“It’s a multi-line single-photon tube... This is what I want to show you.” Lu Zhou picked up his gloves from the experiment table next to him and carefully put them on. He took out a cylinder-shaped object inside a gas protection chamber.

There were honeycomb-shaped openings in the cross-section of the cylinder. The body of the cylinder was made from glass-like translucent tubes.

Academician Xue felt like a caveman who was being exposed to new technology.

Even though he didn’t want to ask anymore questions, he still couldn’t help but ask.

“What is this?”

“A three-dimensional vacuum chamber with a multi-mode structure. The main material is an alloy of ytterbium, molybdenum, and other materials. It can realize all of our fantasies regarding the quantum world...” Lu Zhou contemplated for a second and said, “At least for now.”

Academician Xue’s mouth was wide open.

He did not expect this at all.

His intuition told him that the object in front of him contained powers beyond his imagination. However, he didn’t know where this intuition came from.

He almost forgot his original reason for coming here.

“I know you have a lot of questions, I’ll answer them soon.”

Lu Zhou turned around and placed this mysterious cylinder carefully in a perfect-fitting compartment.

The cylinder slowly descended into the compartment, Lu Zhou took a step back and stood next to a computer. He had a satisfied smile on his face.

“This is perfect!”

Academician Xue: "... I don't quite understand."

"Basically, this is a quantum entanglement amplifier. You can think of it as a magnifying glass, but it doesn't magnify light waves, it amplifies something much smaller than light waves."

Academician Xue had a crazy thought in his mind.

"... Single photons?"

"Correct... But not totally. Precisely speaking, they're entangled photon pairs."

When Lu Zhou snapped his fingers, the signal light on the machine behind him turned on. The two ends of the silver-white metal tube began to buzz.

Despite how shocked Academician Xue was, Lu Zhou continued to casually explain.

"... By placing a three-dimensional multi-mode vacuum chamber structure in a magnetic field, the free ytterbium atoms in the alloy will enter an extremely stable state, thereby isolating it from the interference in the environment and capturing the traveling photons. The entangled state is then transferred to the next repeater through a new single-photon emitter, and the process will be repeated."

Academician Xue's jaw was on the floor.

"Is... is this?!"

"You're right." Lu Zhou smiled and nodded. He said, "Quantum communication."

While they were talking, the preparation for the experiment was completed.

64 pairs of light quanta were emitted from tube A, and they were amplified by the repeater while passing through the pipeline. They continued to travel to the next channel, finally entering the receiver at tube B.

Lu Zhou looked at the numbers on the screen and smirked.

64 pairs of photons!

All received!

There's no doubt that this experiment is a success!

Academician Xue watched everything unravel in front of him. After Lu Zhou entered the experiment results in the database, he finally spoke.

"It's over?"

Lu Zhou, who was sitting in front of a computer, replied, "It's over, the experiment was successful."

Academician Xue: "Why are you showing me this?"

There was no doubt that what he had just witnessed was more confidential than the quantum encryption algorithm.

He had no idea why Lu Zhou wanted to show him these things.

"Because it's not perfect yet, and I have only solved a portion of the entire problem. There are other parts of the problems that have yet to solve. And this is not my area of expertise..." Lu Zhou glanced at the clock on the wall and said with a smile, "Now that the experiment is over, we should talk somewhere else."

Lu Zhou typed a few buttons on the keyboard and turned off the experiment machine.

He looked at Academician Xue and said, "Let's go to my office."

"We can drink something and talk about interesting problems."

1191 Delivering a Safe on One Hand and a Key on the Other

After coming out of the laboratory, Lu Zhou told Academician Xue to wait for a second. He then looked at the two security guards standing in the hallway and spoke in a serious tone.

"Change the security level here to Grade A. Other than me, no one is allowed near here."

The two security guards stood at attention and performed a military salute.

“Okay.”

After they left the Institute of Semiconductors, Academician Xue walked next to Lu Zhou and asked him, “They’re from the military?”

Lu Zhou: “They’re retired from the military. I have a good relationship with the commander, who arranged them to work for me.”

He wouldn’t have to worry about any background checks. Regiment Commander Dai would only recommend the best soldiers to him. Also, any soldiers from the army that passed basic training were often much more capable than ordinary security guards.

There had never been a theft at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, not even a single piece of draft paper was stolen before. This was all thanks to the lovely soldiers.

After they arrived at Lu Zhou’s office, Lu Zhou told his assistant to pour a cup of tea. He then made himself a cup of coffee.

After pouring the cup of tea, the assistant left the office and closed the door.

As Lu Zhou looked at the old man sitting across from him, he smiled and said, “I’m sure you have a lot of questions, go ahead.”

After a moment of silence, Academician Xue sighed and spoke.

“Before coming here, I did have a lot of questions, but now... I feel I have the answers. Besides...”

The academician had a complicated smile on his face.

“... Cryptography is about to retire from the field of the sciences.”

Lu Zhou shook his head.

“That’s too absolute. It takes time to implement any technology. Even though we have clean and efficient fusion energy, coal energy still occupies a portion of the market...”

“Besides, encryption algorithms are only going to be retired from long-distance communication. When it comes to short-distance communication and application to other fields, cryptography can still play a significant role...”

Lu Zhou looked at Academician Xue and continued, “All we have to do is make some adjustments.”

Academician Xue listened to Lu Zhou’s words and began to contemplate.

Lu Zhou picked up his hot cup of coffee and slowly took a sip,

After a few minutes passed by, Academician Xue looked up and spoke in a serious way.

“Is there anything I can do?”

Lu Zhou had an approving smile on his face.

“Of course.

“I have a few questions I need to consult with experts.”

Academician Xue: “In which field?”

“It’s about quantum communication.”

Academician Xue was slightly taken aback, and he said awkwardly, “Quantum communication... I’m not an expert in this field. You should consult a professor from the University of Science and Technology...”

“Before you came here, I already sent an email to the professors of the University of Science and Technology of China. They recommended you to me.”

Lu Zhou looked at Academician Xue and said, “In addition to cryptography, you’re also an expert in communications engineering. You were a senior engineer at the No.46 Electronics Research Institute, and you participated in the early construction of domestic optical fiber networks.”

Academician Xue felt nostalgic when he heard these things.

But, in the end, he still shook his head.

“That was the past. I’ve been in the field of communication security for the past decade. I’m afraid I won’t be of help to you.”

“I believe experience is something you keep forever.” Lu Zhou said in a serious tone, “Especially since we need to rebuild a communication network.”

When Academician Xue heard this, he looked at Lu Zhou in disbelief.

“You’re saying, you plan to... rebuild the Chinese communication network? What kind of quantum optical fiber are you going to use?”

“Not quite.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said in a joking tone, “I didn’t say the network is only going to be domestic.”

...

After the quantum repeater problem was solved, there was a real chance of commercializing quantum communication technology.

However, quantum communication technology had a fatal disadvantage, which was the speed of data transmission.

Using the submarine optical cable from the west coast of the United States to the east coast of China as an example, this cable bandwidth was measured in Terabits per second.

Data transfer speeds at this magnitude was not a difficult task for traditional optical fibers, but when it came to quantum communication technology, which relied on single-photon entanglement pairs for information transmission, this was a problem that couldn’t be solved in the short term.

Simply put, a communication channel using quantum communication technology could meet the data transfer requirements of a few companies, but it was nowhere near the scale of the internet.

However, there was a solution to this problem.

According to the IST FP5 report, a 128-bit key could secure 100 Gbit data. In theory, a quantum communication channel with a bandwidth in the magnitude of megabits per second was enough to secure all information traveling across the Pacific Ocean.

Therefore, a perfect solution might be to combine traditional communication methods with quantum communication technology. One could use traditional channels to send “encrypted information” and then use quantum channels to send “encryption keys”.

It would be like delivering a safe in one hand while delivering a key in the other.

This kind of encryption method was similar to “one-Time-Pads”. Theoretically, it was “unbreakable”. If there was only one unique key in this entire universe, it was impossible to steal the key using pure computing power.

In order to separate the transmission of the key and the encrypted information, they would need a new set of communication protocols. Moreover, in order to improve the efficiency of information transmission, the quantum communication network used to transmit keys had to be designed elegantly and carefully.

This was not an easy task.

However, it was much easier than designing a quantum repeater.

Academician Xue accepted Lu Zhou’s invitation for participating in the quantum communication network project without any hesitation. He would stay in Jinling in the name of academic exchange.

He also wanted to avoid his colleagues at the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Even though it was easy to keep a secret, this industry circle was too small and tight.

Even if he didn’t say anything, people would be able to tell something was going on just by looking at his face.

Whether it was for the sake of the project or himself, staying in Jinling was the best choice.

After Academician Xue joined the project, the quantum communication network project began to quickly advance. With the old man’s help, Lu Zhou soon found an optimal method for combining quantum communication with

traditional communication technology. They were able to complete a structural framework for this new communication protocol.

The days quickly went by. Soon, it was the last day of April.

An experimental quantum communication pipe with a length of around 500 meters was built at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. There was also a special guest visiting...

1192 Message Sent Successfully!

The Institute of Semiconductors at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

An old man stood inside a laboratory with a dignified look on his face.

Standing next to him were other VIP figures such as Director Li, as well as the heads of several state departments.

Everyone's eyes were focused on the uniquely shaped cylindrical device, waiting for Lu Zhou to make his next move on the entangled photon pairs transmitter.

Lu Zhou looked at the time on his watch. He then looked at the researcher standing in front of the computer and nodded.

"We can begin."

"Okay."

The researcher standing in front of the computer pressed a button.

Just like what Academician Xue saw a few weeks ago, entangled photon pairs were emitted at an ultra-high frequency, forming a stream of information composed of single-photon pairs. The signal lights on the quantum repeater lit up as it began to amplify and send information to a receiver hundreds of meters away from the laboratory.

At the same time, the traditional communications channel running parallel to the quantum communications channel also sent a huge amount of data to the

receiving end. Using the received quantum key, this data was decoded by a dedicated decoding device.

The whole process involved complex physics and information science technologies, and everything happened spontaneously.

Experts from the Chinese Academy of Sciences were shocked. The other state department leaders standing around the president didn't even realize the experiment was over.

It wasn't until Lu Zhou told them that the experiment was successful, did they finally show looks of confusion and astonishment on their faces.

Director Li was the first to snap back to reality. He walked over to the group of experts and quickly asked, "The experiment was successful?"

Academician Gao Junwen from the Institute of Information Engineering blinked and made eye contact with his colleague next to him. He looked at Director Li and nodded.

"There's no doubt about it... The transmitter sent the message 'hello world' through the traditional and quantum channels at the same time. Therefore, if the key transmission was not successful, even supercomputers would not have been able to decode the message.

"Even if a hacker has unlimited computing power, they won't be able to decipher our message... There is no doubt that this is the uncrackable communication technology we need."

Academician Gao Junwen looked like he was dreaming as he exclaimed, "I can't believe I am able to witness such a perfect communication system in my lifetime.

"This is like a dream."

Academician Gao spoke quite loudly.

Director Li wasn't the only one that heard it.

The president, as well as the state higher-ups standing around him, looked shocked after hearing what the academician said.

After a while, the president asked, “So, this is quantum communications technology?”

“Yes, sir.” Lu Zhou nodded and tried to explain the technology in layman terms, “Just like Academician Gao had said, in theory, no one can intercept the information passing through this channel. This technology is totally reliable for communication over medium and long distances.”

The president nodded and quickly thought of something. He immediately said, “What if someone takes control of the repeater? Like... by deploying a nuclear submarine in the ocean.”

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, “That’s no good. The only thing a nuclear submarine could do is to destroy the quantum repeater or cut the quantum fiber. Once the channel is destroyed, quantum key transmission ends. The data transmitted through traditional optical fiber becomes invalid. It will become garbage information that will never be decrypted.”

A complete quantum key wasn’t represented only by a single entangled photon pair. When one of the entangled photon pairs collapsed due to external observation, the subsequent signals also collapsed.

Therefore, this kind of communication technology was theoretically absolutely safe. The only exploit was if someone could observe the entangled photon pairs without causing it to collapse.

However, this was impossible from a physics standpoint.

At least from what humans knew about physics.

As the president looked at the uniquely-shaped device in front of him, he was quiet for a long time. He then suddenly spoke emotionally.

“This is like magic.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “If you only look at the end result, any scientific research looks like magic, especially when it is first discovered.”

The old man spoke solemnly to Lu Zhou.

“Information security has always been the difficulty we have encountered in the technology revolution age. Quantum computers, quantum communication technology... The impact of this on our society is akin to nuclear fusion.

“On behalf of the country, I’d like to say thank you.”

Lu Zhou nodded and spoke politely.

“You’re welcome, sir.

“It’s my honor to witness this moment with you.”

...

Beijing.

Xicheng district, financial street.

A man in a suit and leather shoes stood in front of a building. He reached out and adjusted his tie before walking confidently into the building.

His name was Tony Azov, and he was a SubCom manager from the United States.

SubCom was a giant in the global submarine optical cable industry. SubCom, NEC, and Alcatel-Lucent had a 90% monopoly market share of the global submarine optical cable market.

Why was he standing here?

Because he could smell money here...

Azov smiled confidently as he spoke fluent Chinese to the receptionist.

“Can you please contact CEO Wang for me? I have an appointment.”

“Yes, sir, please wait a moment.”

After waiting patiently for half a minute, a man who looked like an assistant walked over from the elevators.

“You must be Mr. Azov. CEO Wang is waiting for you in a conference room. Come with me.”

The assistant made an inviting gesture and took him into the elevators. They arrived at the conference room on the second floor.

When he arrived at the conference room, a well-dressed middle-aged man stood up from the conference table, smiled, and shook his hand.

“Welcome to China, Mr. Azov. You’re here for the No.3 Asia Pacific submarine cable project, right? You must have come a long way!”

“Thank you.” Azov sat down at the conference table and took out some documents from his briefcase. He looked at CEO Wang and said, “Looks like you’ve already done your homework, so let’s begin.”

Due to the increasing demand for trans-Pacific communications, the original Asia-Pacific submarine optical cable line had become inadequate. The construction of Asia Pacific Cable No.3 (APCN3) had become an urgent matter.

Before he came to China, he had reached a preliminary cooperation intention with communications companies from South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, and other countries. They intended to establish a committee appointed by multiple countries to build APCN3.

The reason why he traveled to China was to convince the Chinese side to participate in this project. He wanted to do business with the big three Chinese submarine optical cable companies.

After all, China, the United States, and other countries in the Asia-Pacific region had an urgent need for submarine optical cable bandwidth. Azov couldn’t think of a reason why China might refuse to cooperate.

Right now, all he had to focus on was how to skillfully use the art of negotiation. He had to use cable termination stations and communication requirements as leverage. This was so that the Chinese customers would pay more for the usage of submarine optical cables.

The negotiations were going smoothly.

As far as communications companies were concerned, submarine optical cables were a required need. They did not have many choices. Azov was able to impress CEO Wang without much effort.

Suddenly, a phone began to ring.

CEO Wang looked at the caller ID on his screen and looked apologetic. He did not want to interrupt the meeting, but he had to pick up this call.

“My apologies, I have to take this,” CEO Wang said to the SubCom manager as he stood up from the conference table.

“It’s fine, I’ll wait.”

Azov wasn’t in a hurry. He watched the Chinese man leave the conference room as he took a sip of coffee and waited quietly.

Time slowly passed by.

Azov couldn’t help but feel a little impatient.

He thought the call would end soon, but ten minutes had gone by and nothing was happening.

He was wondering if he should go outside and see what was going on when CEO Wang finally walked into the conference room.

The CEO had a serious look on his face.

This look made Azov feel uneasy.

CEO Wang spoke in an apologetic tone.

“My apologies. Regarding the Asia Pacific Cable No.3 project... We’re not interested.”

Azov’s eyes were wide open, and he nearly jumped out of his chair.

“Wait a second, what do you mean you’re not interested?”

“We’re not interested.” CEO Wang said, “We have no plans to add submarine optical cables for the time being. How about you leave your business card? If we change our minds, we’ll contact you.”

Azov almost vomited.

What do you mean to change your mind?

I even brought the contract!

I came here today to make a deal or at least get a letter of intent!

“I sincerely suggest that you reconsider! Judging by the current growth rate of communication bandwidth demand, the Asia Pacific submarine optical cable No.2 line cannot meet the demands in the Asia-Pacific region!”

CEO Wang nodded toward Azov, but his expression didn't change.

“Again, we'll think about it.”

Just like that, the meeting had ended.

Later on, Azov went to talk with China Unicom and China Mobile, the two other communications giants in China, but the answers he got were almost the same.

The meetings were even worse than what happened with China Telecom. The other two companies had no intention of talking with him at all. The meeting ended within five minutes.

His intuition told him that this was all because of the phone call.

However, he had no idea what kind of phone call was so powerful that it could change the entire communications industry?

When Azov came out of the China Mobile headquarters building, he was muddled.

Did NEC or Alcatel-Lucent steal our business?

Doesn't seem likely.

His only worry right now was how to report this matter to his superiors. He wanted to make the three failed negotiations seem less embarrassing...

Chapter 1193 About Two Generations Ahead

The first day of May. The labor force in China was celebrating a long Labor Day holiday.

On the other hand, a major earthquake happened in the communications industry.

The Asia Pacific Cable No.3 project, which was generally considered a good idea by the industry, was stalled because of the three major communication companies in China refusing to cooperate. Since this order worth tens of billions of yuan could not be fulfilled, SubCom's stock price began to drop.

No one understood why the three major Chinese communications companies did such a thing.

In fact, most of the employees at the communications companies did not know either...

The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Lu Zhou was sitting in his office. He meticulously drew something on a piece of paper.

Suddenly, he heard a knock at the door.

Lu Zhou stopped writing and put the unfinished drawings into the drawer. He looked at the door and spoke.

"It's unlocked, come in."

When the door opened, a unique face appeared at his door.

"Academician Lu, you're still working hard I see." Wang Zhengfei said with a smile as he walked into the office, "Aren't you going to take a break?"

"When I'm not busy, every day is a break. When I am busy, I can't afford to take breaks." Lu Zhou looked at Wang Zhengfei, who was sitting down on the office sofa, and said, "Aren't you the same?"

Wang Zhengfei waved his hand.

"Me? I enjoy life much more than you. I'm much less stressed than before. I might be able to retire in a few years."

Compared to the troubles a few years ago, Huawei was in a much better position than before.

From carbon-based chips to HV-1 helmets, to the popularity of the 5G network, Huawei's strategic plans had proven to be fruitful. They had control of the entire industry chain. Nothing could stop the growth of this semiconductor giant.

Even if Wang Zhengfei stepped down, Huawei could continue to grow steadily. Perhaps after he left, the company could even develop at a faster rate.

Because of this, he had been planning to find a suitable time and retire from the front lines.

If it wasn't for his respect for Academician Lu, he would have asked his chosen successor to come here today.

"I originally planned on going on a vacation, but I heard from my assistant that you have something to discuss with me, so I immediately took the maglev from Shanghai and rushed over." Wang Zhengfei poured himself a cup of tea and said with a smile, "You have always been indifferent about business matters, so I wonder what project interests you so greatly."

Lu Zhou had an apathetic look on his face.

In fact, he still wasn't interested in business matters. He didn't want to participate in this project.

However, the president personally appointed him to handle this project, so he had no other choice.

Judging by the envious looks on other people's faces, Lu Zhou knew that this was not an ordinary task. It would undoubtedly bring him a "sizable" fortune.

In some sense, this was a reward from the state, just like his stocks in East Asia Energy.

As far as the state was concerned, money was just a number. Social development couldn't be measured solely by dollar signs. Anyone could profit from this, so it was better to give it to someone that deserved it.

Lu Zhou didn't have any ambitious plans at making money. After all, the patent fees from the quantum computer and quantum communication

technology were more than enough. The business of submarine optical cables wasn't attractive to him.

Thus, he thought of a compromise, which was to work with other people.

This way, he could delegate the troublesome tasks to other people.

He could also avoid being accused of taking all of the profits for himself.

After all, this was a Trans-Pacific submarine optical cable. This was going to be the lifeblood of the future global information network.

It was too dangerous for one man to have this kind of power...

"CEO Wang, are you interested in the submarine optical cable project?"

"Submarine optical cable?"

Wang Zhengfei paused for a second. He was a little confused.

However, he quickly realized there was something more to this statement. He looked at Lu Zhou and asked curiously, "Is there something more to this?"

Lu Zhou contemplated for a second and spoke.

"We plan on building a submarine optical cable."

Wang Zhengfei frowned.

"I thought it wasn't going to be built?"

"Not exactly." Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "Precisely speaking, we're not going to build the old cable, we're going to build a more advanced one."

Wang Zhengfei rubbed his chin and spoke.

"I don't get what you're trying to say... Can you be more direct? What do you want us to do?"

Lu Zhou had a headache. He didn't know how he should explain this.

However, he suddenly had a realization.

Wait a second, why do I have to ask him like it's a favor?

This is free money!

I'm the one giving him an amazing business opportunity.

Lu Zhou couldn't be bothered to explain everything, so he spoke straightforwardly.

"In recent years, our country has launched a strategy of developing into a marine economic powerhouse. Strengthening and developing the submarine optical cable industry plays a pivotal role."

Wang Zhengfei: "???"

Lu Zhou ignored the muddled face on the old man and continued, "However, due to the high technical threshold of the industry and the capital investment requirements, the current global submarine cable market is basically monopolized by three companies—United States' SubCom, Japan's NEC, and Europe's Alcatel-Lucent. There are only a few domestic companies that are competitive in this industry. If the trend continues, it will be difficult for us to gain an advantage in the information technology field.

"Therefore, the Communist Party of China wants outstanding private companies like us to set an example—"

"I get it." Wang Zhengfei interrupted Lu Zhou and said, "How much will it cost?"

When Lu Zhou looked at the nervous old man, he was stunned.

His intuition told him that the old man had misinterpreted his words. However, for some reason, he didn't want to clarify himself...

Lu Zhou decided to improvise.

"The budget hasn't been created yet. Basically, the Communist Party of China wants us to spend our own money and integrate small domestic companies into the submarine optical cable business and build a submarine optical cable from the east coast of China to the west coast of the United States."

Lu Zhou thought that it would be difficult to convince Wang Zhengfei to hop on board without revealing the quantum technology.

However, surprisingly, Wang Zhengfei waved his hand and spoke without hesitation.

“Don’t worry, money is not a problem! Is there anything else?”

Yep, this guy...

Has definitely misunderstood me.

“Um, one more thing... I’m sure you know a lot of excellent entrepreneurs. The more people involved, the less each person has to pay.”

“Don’t worry, I’ll handle this, I’ll contact other companies!”

Seeing how enthusiastic Wang Zhengfei was, Lu Zhou couldn’t help but want to laugh.

I’m making these people rich, but it feels like... I’m deceiving them.

But I can’t say anything about quantum computers for now.

Quantum communications was another story. It might be made public in a few days, but that wasn’t a big deal, since most people did not know about quantum computers, and even fewer people knew about the serious network information security challenges.

Basically, if there was no threat of quantum computers, there was no need for quantum communication.

Even though Lu Zhou couldn’t explain anything, he tried to comfort Wang Zhengfei.

“Don’t worry, this project will be a huge success. The technology and initiative are in our hands, and I can guarantee this is a stable business.”

Wang Zhengfei smiled, clearly not taking Lu Zhou seriously.

He didn’t mind losing a bit of money. He had made so much money that he was fine with contributing to the country.

He was more worried about whether they could actually build an optical cable across the Pacific Ocean.

Huawei had tried to enter the submarine optical cable industry before, so he knew how much this could cost.

Otherwise, he wouldn't have sold off Huawei's submarine optical cable business a few years ago.

"Can you give me some details...? What's your level of confidence?"

Lu Zhou raised two fingers.

Wang Zhengfei had a solemn look.

"Only 20%?"

Lu Zhou shook his head.

"No, I mean in terms of the technology..."

"We're approximately two generations ahead."

The office went quiet...

1194 An Ulterior Motive

After the labor day holiday, a major event happened in the communications industry.

A news story about a major breakthrough in quantum communication technology from the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study suddenly appeared on the internet, instantly creating a ton of discussion.

A while ago, the Institute of Information Engineering at the Chinese Academy of Sciences announced their research progress on quantum computers. Less than two months later, there was news about quantum communication technology.

However, unlike the quantum computer announcement, this time the announcement was from the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

As the holy temple of the Chinese academic community, the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study held a special place in most people's hearts.

People connected this with SubCom's failure in the No.3 Asia-Pacific submarine cable project a while ago. They began to speculate that China intended to implement the latest quantum communication technology in this new submarine cable.

Although many professionals laughed at this notion, it didn't take long for these doubtful professionals to be proven wrong.

First was the establishment of the "Trans-Pacific Submarine Cable Management Committee" in Shanghai. Then, there was an announcement of the list of participating countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

After that, the Trans-Pacific Submarine Cable Management Committee launched a bidding war and announced the bidding requirements for the Trans-Pacific Submarine Cable Project. The requirements clearly stated that in order to ensure information security, the submarine optical cable would use the latest quantum communication technology. Major submarine cable companies were welcomed to bid and compete with one another.

Both Japan's NEC and SubCom from the United States were dumbfounded.

A trans-pacific quantum optical cable?

How is that possible?

...

Across the Pacific Ocean, inside the White House.

The president sat behind his desk with a frown on his face. He looked at the FBI Director Michael Bled, who was walking toward his desk, and spoke in a tired tone.

"How is the investigation going?"

More than two hundred spies and their missions were wiped out by the Chinese Ministry of State Security.

Not only did this destroy their intelligence work, but it also ruined their international reputation. They were in an awkward diplomatic state.

Not to mention that the United States was known for condemning other countries for stealing national secrets, making them appear hypocritical.

Espionage was often viewed as an extremely disgraceful act by the public, despite the CIA's overseas operations being an open secret.

The White House denied everything and stated that it had no knowledge of the matter. However, when they were faced with ironclad evidence, their persistent denial was of no use.

Since this matter was so serious, it could not be fixed just by replacing the CIA director. They had to fix this problem from the source.

For example, if there was a traitor inside the CIA, they had to find them.

Over the past month, the entire CIA was under investigation by the FBI, and the investigation report had finally come out...

"Even though I'm convinced that those CIA bastards have betrayed us, the direct and indirect investigation points to the innocence of the suspected officials..."

Director Bled looked at the president and spoke.

"We are not exonerating the CIA. In fact, I would like to send them all to prison. However, all of the evidence shows that this incident is probably not because of an insider."

President: "Then why are you telling me this?!"

"Because this might be a more serious problem than we had thought." Director Bled continued with a solemn expression, "According to our intelligence department's analysis, China might have a wide-spread security monitoring device that can gather our information in a way that is undetectable."

After hearing this absurd explanation, the president sitting behind his desk spoke in a sarcastic tone.

"So you're saying they're reading our minds?"

"I'm not joking around here." Director Bled said seriously, "I suggest setting up a special investigation team to investigate this matter. In order to prevent this

kind of tragedy from happening again, we have to give this team a high-level of decision-making power and let them use any force necessary. We have to keep this confidential until the truth is found out. No one can know their identities except themselves... This includes me and you."

The president squinted and spoke in an unhappy tone.

"You think I'm the one who colluded with the Chinese?"

"No, I don't." Director Bled said, "But we have to do this to ensure the safety of our team."

Suddenly, they heard footsteps sound from outside the office.

Director Bled was about to say something, but he immediately shut his mouth.

"Mr. President." The Secretary of State walked in and glanced at Director Bled. He said, "I have something important to report to you. But... if your conversation with Mr. Bled is not over yet, I can wait outside."

"No need." The president looked at Director Bled and said, "We'll do what you said."

Director Bled finally sighed in relief and nodded.

"Okay."

After that, he left the president's office and closed the door behind him.

After Director Bled left, the Secretary of State raised his eyebrows and asked the president curiously, "Is this about the insider in the CIA? Did we catch them?"

"Not yet." The President asked in a bad mood, "What are you here for?"

"The Chinese Embassy came to visit me just now."

When the president heard the word China, he instantly felt a headache.

"Another protest?"

“Not this time...” The Secretary of State had a subtle expression on his face as he said, “They didn’t mention the spies at all this time. Instead, they made an unrelated proposal.”

“What proposal?”

“In order to deal with the weakening network information security field, they proposed to establish a professional task force composed of experts from multiple countries to update the international standard encryption algorithms.”

“Update the encryption algorithm? What do you mean?” The president frowned and asked confusingly, “What’s wrong with the current encryption algorithm?”

The Secretary of State: “Nothing’s wrong, at least as far as I know. Up until this point, the RAS algorithm is still the most reliable encryption algorithm. I have consulted with cryptography experts at the Argonne National Laboratory. However, the problem is that they are claiming that the RAS encryption algorithm has major security risks, also...”

After a pause, the Secretary of State continued, “I heard that China is currently planning to implement optical quantum technology to build a new Trans-Pacific quantum submarine optical cable as an addition to the original submarine optical cable. They proposed that they can take on the cost of the project, but we need to cooperate with them...”

“A quantum submarine optical cable?”

The president had a playful look on his face.

He had heard about this technology before. Apparently, it used the principles of quantum mechanics and was impenetrable.

Strictly speaking, this was not a new concept. Someone already proposed this concept in the 20th century. However, because the technology was too difficult, no substantial progress had been made.

Regardless of whether or not the Chinese had really mastered this technology, and regardless of how secure this technology was, from a political standpoint, there was no way he would cooperate with the Chinese.

Nine of the 13 root name servers were in their hands. This showed that even though the Internet was technically owned by all of mankind, it was actually based in the United States.

They were the only ones qualified to define the standards of the Internet.

This included what kind of algorithm that was used to encrypt each byte of data and what form they were transmitted in.

Basically, they had nothing to gain from sacrificing their own powers and cooperating with China.

If this were a traditional submarine fiber optic cable, they only had to send a nuclear submarine to cut open a section of the submarine fiber optic cable shell with a robotic arm, then they could eavesdrop on all of the data passing through the fiber optic cable.

In fact, this was what they had been doing. One time, a dumb*ss accidentally broke the cable, creating a huge international story.

Now China wanted to build quantum optical submarine cables, was it in fear of being spied on?

No wonder they were talking about quantum computers a while ago...

This is what they are hinting at.

The president had a moment of realization.

He had connected all of the clues, all of the dots.

He knew that anything that seemed suspicious, was suspicious. Especially when it came to the Chinese.

“Tell them that they themselves are a threat to the global information security network. If they really cared about network information security, they should stop their PLA hackers from stealing our national secrets and technology!

“As for the quantum submarine optical cable... The White House is not involved in private commercial activities, but tell them that we doubt that this new technology can undertake such a critical and important task. Unless they can prove that the technology is reliable enough, we will not allow it on American soil.”

Secretary of State: “So what you’re saying is... We refuse?”

“Of course.” The president said, “I can see right through their plays.”

Chapter 1195 Real Intentions

CEO Wang was quite an efficient individual. The day after he met Lu Zhou, he contacted all of the people in his network who met the criteria of being “excellent entrepreneurs” and fooled them into “investing”.

Just like that, with one person invested 100 million yuan while someone else invested 200 million yuan, 10 billion yuan of cash appeared out of nowhere, shocking Lu Zhou.

Originally, Lu Zhou’s plan was to raise around 5 billion yuan. He would then find a bank, take out a 5 billion yuan loan, and issue a few billion in corporate bonds. In the end, he would have 12 billion or so.

But now, there was no need to issue any corporate bonds. He just had to take out a 2 billion dollar loan from a bank, and he would have collected all of the project funding.

Just like that, a company named East Asia Communications with a cash capital of more than 10 billion yuan and countless companies behind it was quietly established in Shanghai.

If they continued to keep a low profile, maybe no one would ever notice this company.

However, shortly after the establishment of the company, an earth-shattering event happened.

The Asia-Pacific submarine optical cable project was stagnated, causing the entire industry to fall into a downturn. A no-name company came out of nowhere and spent 5 billion yuan to acquire almost 80% of the domestic submarine optical cable companies.

Not only did this alarm the China Securities Regulatory Commission, but even the National Development and Reform Commission caught wind of this news.

However, because they had already mapped out the legal work, this did not impact the successful acquisition of the dozen or so companies by East Asia Communications.

In order to compete with the dominant foreign monopoly giants, it was necessary for the domestic industry to also form their own monopoly; the state was aware of this tactic.

Not to mention that the state also owned part of the shares in East Asia Communications.

This was because the communications industry was a sensitive field.

The emergence of East Asia Communications had stirred up the submarine cable market industry.

Japan's NEC, Europe's Alcatel-Lucent, and America's SubCom all felt pressure from this move.

In fact, East Asia Energy was far behind them in terms of power and technology. They were industry pioneers who had been leading the way for more than half a century.

But who could tell what could happen in the future?

Also, China had a reputation for quickly dominating any industry they set their eyes on.

This was what made the competitors of East Asia Communications so worried...

...

East Asia Energy was buying out the domestic submarine optical cable business in a high-profile manner, aggressively entering the international market. On the other hand, the work on changing the national encryption algorithm and the promotion of the international encryption algorithm standards were also progressing at a steady rate, thanks to the support from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

However, the latter task was a rocky ship compared to the smooth sailing that was the former task.

Shortly after the U.S representative was absent from the Asia-Pacific Cyber Information Security Summit held in Beijing, the Pines Lab at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory published a research report, claiming that the QN2000 quantum encryption algorithm China was presenting at the summit might contain major security risks. They recommended the financial industry to use it with caution.

Although it was just a warning, it still caused quite a stir in the industry.

After all, the Pines Lab was a well-known laboratory, started by Alex Pines, the founder of solid-state nuclear magnetic resonance technology.

The research scope of Pines Lab covered many fields such as quantum information science, quantum computing, chemistry, structural biology, and medicine. It was one of the leaders in multiple research areas; one of them being quantum encryption algorithms.

Therefore, people took this warning seriously.

“It seems like the Americans don’t want to secure their own safes.” Academician Gao Junwen put down the newspaper in his hand and crossed his legs as he said, “And not only are they leaving their own safes unsecured, they want other people’s safes to be unsecured as well.”

Ever since he returned from his Jinling trip, he finally understood the worries of his old friend Academician Xue Jinhui. He finally knew why the senior management was making these decisions.

If the computing power of a quantum computer could really reach more than 500 qubits...

If this kind of computing power were brought to the market without any preparation, it would seriously threaten the world’s financial and communications security. It wasn’t an exaggeration to say that current encryption algorithms would be powerless when faced with a 500 qubit quantum computer.

“If they refuse, so what?” Academician Xue squinted his eyes and smiled. He casually took a sip of tea and said, “We have kindly reminded them. If they don’t appreciate us, then it’s not our fault.”

A stable international market environment was beneficial for the development of China. From China's own interests and a moral standpoint, China hoped that the United States would adopt a more secure encryption algorithm.

However...

If the White House insisted on resisting, China had no obligation to beg them.

On the other hand, if the United States wanted to stay unsecured, then the Chinese side would have to prepare for the possible risks...

This was especially true for China's Central bank.

"You're correct, but this is obviously not just about encryption algorithms. They probably won't let us put our submarine optical cable on their soil either."

Academician Xue smiled at his old friend.

"The Pacific Ocean is huge. The East Coast is more than just the United States. If they don't want to let our quantum optical cable on their soil, then we should give this opportunity to other countries."

Academician Gao Junwen had a surprised look on his face.

"You mean... bypass the United States? But—"

Academician Xue smiled and said, "Then there's no reason to install the cable in the first place?"

Academician Gao nodded.

Even though there were cooperation conflicts, China obviously didn't want to give up the North American market.

Not to mention that the center of the Internet was in America. If this optical cable wasn't connected to North America, it would be worthless. It was impossible to install a submarine optical fiber cable on the shorelines of small Central American and South American countries.

Academician Xue smiled and shook his head.

“You have to look at the big picture. Quantum computers are only at 500 qubits, what about the future? They’ll have to make a decision between security and pride, also...”

He leaned on the armrests and stood up.

Academician Xue walked over to the world map hanging on the office wall. He reached out and picked up a red pen, then drew a line along the trajectory of the Tropic of Cancer.

This line began from Shanghai, going straight to Central America, passed through the Panama Canal, crossed through the Atlantic Ocean, then through the Strait of Gibraltar, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, and finally ran through the Indian Ocean and the Strait of Malacca, back to East Asia.

Academician Gao looked at this line on the map and looked shocked.

He was even more shocked than when he was at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

After Academician Xue put the pen back on the table, he spoke.

“This is...”

Academician Xue looked at his old friend and spoke.

“You’re shocked?”

Academician Gao nodded honestly.

“... Quite so.”

Academician Xue smiled and looked outside the window as he spoke with a nostalgic look in his eyes.

“Before this, I had a long conversation with Academician Lu. We agreed that whether it was the quantum encryption algorithm or a traditional encryption algorithm, any asymmetric encryption algorithm always has limitations. Encryption algorithms are only useful when we have a limited amount of computing power. But as information technology continues to develop and computing power continues to increase, especially after we enter the quantum age, encryption algorithms are not so useful anymore.”

“It is often more difficult to find a solvable problem than to solve the problem itself. What we need today is an NP problem, and tomorrow, we’ll need an n^2P problem. If things continue to develop this way, one day we will not be able to fill this gap.

“Unbreakable secure communication is the only solution. This is the only communication method that can meet the exponential increase in computing power and the needs of future communication.

“We’re not choosing the future, the future is choosing us.

“The attitude against change is not necessarily a bad thing for us.”

The Trans-Pacific submarine cable was only the beginning. Central America was just a launching point. East Asia Energy’s submarine optical cable was going to go in all directions of the world; this was China’s national information technology plan.

Once this blueprint came to life, there wouldn’t only be the Trans-Pacific Optical Cable Management Committee, but there would also be a Trans-Atlantic, Trans-Mediterranean, and Trans-Indian committees...

Or perhaps they would set up a global submarine optical cable management committee.

That was their final goal...

Chapter 1196 524 Qubits!

If China wanted to universalize their fiber optic cable and redefine themselves as the central node of the Internet, not only would they need advanced communication technology, but they would also need political and geographical power. Fortunately, the miniaturization of controllable nuclear fusion technology from a few years ago provided a solid foundation. The expansion of cross-regional power grids in Southeast Asia convinced the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to jump on the “unbreakable optical cable bandwagon”.

Of course, even though China had established a foundation for advancing their global optical cable system, the road ahead was by no means smooth.

Due to the refusal of cooperation from the United States, the submarine optical fiber cable project that was originally scheduled to start from Shanghai and end in Los Angeles was forced to change its laying route. Panama City was going to replace Los Angeles and become the Trans-Pacific hub of America's global submarine optical cable.

Despite the decision to bypass the North American territorial waters, the bandwidth of the new submarine optical cable was still held up to the Asia-Pacific No.2 submarine optical cable standards.

Obviously, the Trans-Pacific Submarine Optical Cable Committee was not going to "abandon" the United States.

Even if they didn't want to jump on the hype train, China still reserved them seats on the bandwagon.

However, the longer they waited, the more they would have to pay to get on the bandwagon...

...

During the week after the announcement of the bidding wars.

Only one bid was sent to the Trans-Pacific Submarine Optical Cable Committee.

There was hardly any suspense. East Asia Communications defeated their non-existent competitors and easily won the bidding wars.

SubCom, who was pushing hard for the No.3 Asia-Pacific submarine optical cable project, began to raise some doubts. During a public interview with CNN, their CEO Markati publicly stated in an interview that he believed the bidding war was rigged and declared that quantum communication was just a cover for the scheme.

"... I admit that the current network information security industry is facing serious challenges, but it is far from the extent that the Chinese Ministry of Industry and Information Technology is claiming.

“Yes, in theory, quantum communication technology can achieve unbreakable confidentiality. Combining quantum communication channels with traditional channels can also increase transmission speed. So why am I doubting this?”

“There are so many ways to ensure the security of communication in this world, yet they chose the most troublesome and costly option. Regardless of whether they really have a working quantum repeater, which by the way, has troubled top research institutions all over the world, even if they did, I don’t think this is the right decision.”

After listening carefully to Markati’s words, the host asked, “Then why do you think the Chinese are doing this?”

“This is a kind of political play.”

Markati spoke in a serious tone.

“They create panic, spread panic, and use the panic to achieve their ulterior goals, such as... establishing a network that only serves them, putting limitations on other countries.”

Host: “This sounds familiar.”

“Yeah, this is almost like an act of terrorism!” Markati angrily slapped his knees. He quickly realized his behavior was out of line, so he said, “Sorry, cut that off the tape.”

“Sure, Mr. Markati.” The host nodded to the studio cameraman. He then looked at Markati and asked with a smile, “Other than limiting other countries and gaining control of the Internet... Are there any other reasons?”

Markati spoke without hesitation.

“Of course there are. Those are long-term goals. The most critical role of this submarine optical cable is to set a false threshold for competition in the submarine optical cable market, to make other communication companies and taxpayers in other countries pay for an undeveloped technology!”

The CNN interview caused a huge response on the Internet.

Especially in the industry.

Almost no one was optimistic about this submarine optical cable that was going to be built by China. No one believed in the quantum communication technology from East Asia Communications.

This was understandable. After all, more than 90% of the market share was in the hands of SubCom, NEC, and Alcatel-Lucent. The vast majority of scholars and research institutions in this field were more or less receiving funding from these three companies.

There was no reason for any research institute to be on the side of East Asia Communications.

Not to mention that the quantum optical cable technology from East Asia Communications could make them lose their jobs...

However, even though most people were not optimistic about the quantum communication technology from East Asia Communications, this pessimism did not impact the progression of the Trans-Pacific optical cable project.

In fact, other than a few US allies, most countries in the Asia-Pacific region had no opinion on this issue. Since China was willing to pay the bill, they were more than happy to use this new communication method.

As for confidentiality...

To be honest, these small countries had no secrets that were worthy of keeping.

Countries involved in the fusion power grids had a more unique stance on this matter. Since China expressed their willingness to bear most of the optical cable laying costs, communications companies in Southeast Asia didn't even hesitate before jumping on the bandwagon.

After all, it was easier to make a deal with old customers than to recruit new customers.

Especially since they had already enjoyed the benefits of technological dividends from China's controllable fusion power, they had no reason to refuse.

If China wanted to help them upgrade their communications industry...

Then why not.

It was much less troublesome than developing the technology themselves.

No one paid any attention to SubCom's complaints, and everything was proceeding as scheduled.

Even if an official North American research institute continued to publish reports questioning the safety and reliability of this communication method, it would not have any impact on the entire project.

On the other hand, after more than a month of adjustments, the quantum encryption algorithm developed by the Jinling Institute for Advanced study had finally modified the RAS algorithm, which was common in the financial and communications industries.

The upgraded encryption algorithm would be able to resist a brute-force cracking of a 2,000-qubit quantum computer. It was theoretically the most advanced encryption algorithm in the world.

Seeing how China was fully invested in this algorithm, other countries that were still on the fence, as well as international financial institutions, had finally begun to jump on the bandwagon.

After all, if this algorithm had serious security risks, China would never promote it as a nationwide encryption algorithm. Any mistake in this area would have serious consequences. It wasn't an exaggeration to say that it could cause an economic crisis...

The 20th Asia-Pacific Cyber Information Security Summit hosted by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was about to be held soon. It was expected that China would present this algorithm at the summit. Research institutions in various countries were beginning to take this seriously, and they began to research if this algorithm could actually withstand an attack from a 2,000-qubit computer...

Time quickly passed by.

Finally, the day before the 20th Asia-Pacific Cyber Information Security Summit.

Representatives from Asia-Pacific countries were preparing to fly to Shanghai for the summit. On the other hand, a major event happened in the semiconductor industry.

Everything came so suddenly...

The main issue of “Future” suddenly published a summary paper. This paper presented the latest research results from the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study—a 524-qubit supercomputer based on carbon-based processor technology.

The author of the paper was...

Lu Zhou.

The second this Future paper was published...

The entire world went crazy!

1197 Information Revolution!

The Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

Professor Arik looked at the journal in his hand and looked disappointed.

Finally, he couldn't help it anymore, and he spoke angrily.

“This is absolute nonsense!

“A quantum computer with 524 qubits... How is that possible!”

He was a professor of physics and quantum information engineering at the University of Southern California as well as a distinguished researcher at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. He was also a consultant for Google's “D-Wave” project. No one knew about quantum computers better than him.

Even the famous quantum annealing algorithm was developed by him.

Even though the academic community had disputes over whether the quantum annealing algorithm could be called quantum computing at all since

no one had found evidence of “quantum acceleration”, it was still undeniable that D-Wave 2X held the highest qubit record.

Google and NASA were working on the development of D-Wave 3X, a computer operating in an ultra-low temperature environment, which would redefine the world’s understanding of quantum computer technology.

However, even then, their goal for the D-Wave 3X was only 100 qubits.

But now, someone had actually claimed that they had developed a quantum computer with 524 qubits and published this in the form of a paper in a world-class journal.

He felt like his IQ was being insulted, so he was furious at these irresponsible papers.

A false paper reduced the industry’s confidence in the new technology. Not only could this irresponsible research destroy the reputations of the scholars involved in the research field, but also the entire industry.

Also, this wasn’t the first time something like this had happened!

The last time was from the Chinese Academy of Sciences. It seemed like recently, there had been plenty of breakthroughs in quantum computer technology on the other side of the Pacific Ocean.

Dr. Cecil looked at the angry Professor Arik. He hesitated for a bit before saying, “But... the author of this paper seems to be Professor Lu.”

“So what?”

“Future used to publish some interesting research. I naively thought that they might become the third largest journal in the world and bring some changes to the academic community. It seems like I had overestimated them...”

Professor Arik had a disappointing look on his face.

Finally, he threw the journal in his hand into the trash can.

“In the end, they became a propaganda tool for the Chinese government.”

Dr. Cecil looked at Professor Arik and didn’t know what to say.

In fact, he had a similar viewpoint as Professor Arik.

Without the existence of quantum memory technology, he could not imagine a quantum computer ever reaching more than 100 qubits, let alone 524 qubits.

The technical difficulty in increasing the number of qubits grew exponentially!

However, even though he didn't believe the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study would be so ahead on this technology, he also didn't believe that Lu Zhou would lie...

"Actually, you shouldn't be so angry."

"How can I not be angry!" Professor Arik said angrily, "They are destroying the trust of the industry in quantum computing technology! What they are ruining is the future of those who do real research!"

"Don't be so pessimistic, the trust of the industry is not so fragile." Dr. Cecil casually said, "NASA has already invested one billion dollars in the D-Wave 3X project, with additional investments coming soon. Immersive VR technology is about to enter the North American market, and Google is saying that quantum computing technology is inevitable."

Professor Arik sighed and shook his head.

"I'm jealous of how optimistic you are."

Cecil smiled bitterly.

Optimistic?

Is that true?

You're the one being dyspeptic!

...

The news of the quantum computer technology breakthrough set off an earthquake in the semiconductor industry.

A 524-qubit computer...

This was almost more qubits than all other quantum research computers combined.

If this paper were published somewhere else, it would not be a big deal. Most people in the industry would just smile and ignore it. However, this paper happened to be published in the world-class journal Future.

Not just that, but the corresponding author of the paper was Professor Lu.

Because of the combination of these two factors, even though this paper seemed ridiculous, it was impossible for the public to turn a blind eye.

The impact quickly spread from the semiconductor industry to other areas.

Almost all industries related to the Internet were evaluating the positive and negative impacts of this technological breakthrough. Almost everyone wanted to know if this was a joke or not...

The day before the 20th Asia-Pacific Cyber Information Security Summit.

A five-star hotel near the Shanghai International Convention and Exhibition Center.

Hansa Clerek was sitting by the window of the executive lounge. As he watched the news on his tablet, he had a worried look on his face.

The International Information System Security Certification Consortium (ISC2) was the world's largest network, information, software, and infrastructure security non-profit organization. It had the important responsibility of maintaining the world's internet security.

And he was the chairman of ISC2 and one of the organizers of this cyber information security summit.

This news about quantum computer technology completely exceeded his expectations and totally disrupted his original plan. If the 524-qubit quantum computer was a reality, then China's initiative to promote quantum encryption algorithms had to be taken seriously.

Mr. Rupert, who was sitting across from him, was the Secretary-General of the ISC2, and he had a solemn look on his face.

Ten minutes ago, he called an information engineering expert friend of his and asked his opinion on the news. Rupert didn't care whether this was fake news from the Chinese or not; he only cared about the technical point of view.

If a 524-qubit computer did exist, then the damage it could do to current international standard encryption algorithms would be devastating.

Before the implementation of more reliable encryption algorithms, all industries that relied on information technology, such as the financial and manufacturing industry, would no longer have any secrets...

"The timing of this paper's publication is special. The hype about this paper by the Chinese media also makes people wonder if there are any special motivations behind it."

Clerek didn't look up. He continued to stare at the tablet in his hand as he spoke.

"What do you think?"

Rupert looked at the dim lights outside the window. He lightly tapped his finger on the table and spoke after thinking for a moment.

"There are two possibilities. Either the Chinese are building momentum for the Asia-Pacific Cyber Information Security Summit, or this is real."

"Which scenario is more likely?"

"The latter."

Chairman Clerek raised his eyebrows.

"Oh really?"

Knowing that the chairman would ask his reasoning behind this, Rupert spoke.

"The reason is simple. The corresponding author of this paper is Professor Lu."

"This is the reason?"

Director Clerek smiled lightly. Although he still had a solemn expression on his face, he spoke in a slightly mocking tone.

“Since there’s a possibility of the Chinese government being involved in this, Professor Lu’s signature does not mean anything. He comes from a country that pursues collectivism. He might say something against his will for the benefit of China.”

Rupert: “Has this kind of thing happened before?”

Chairman Clerek continued to stare at his tablet as he spoke.

“No... But doesn’t mean there won’t be a first.”

Rupert spoke.

“Then how confident are we?”

Clerek went silent.

Yeah...

This is the problem.

We’re not confident enough to bet on this being fake news.

Information security was essential for the global economy, military, and even politics. When it was about information security, one should always consider the “worst-case”.

Suddenly, the phone in Rupert’s pocket began to ring.

“I have to take this call.”

Rupert began to stand up as Chairman Clerek gestured to him to take the call.

Rupert walked as he took his phone out of his pocket and picked up the call.

Clerek was still sitting in his chair nearby. He was watching the expression on the Secretary General’s face.

In fact, Clerek’s observations were rewarded.

Time slowly passed by as Secretary-General Rupert gradually had a more and more serious look on his face.

Finally, the phone call ended.

Rupert put his phone back into his pocket and returned to the table. Rupert took a deep breath. He had a serious look of concern on his face.

Before Clerek even spoke, he spoke first.

“Bad news.

“I think... we don’t have to guess whether or not this is fake news from the Chinese.”

Chairman Clark was stunned. He frowned and spoke.

“What happened?”

“My old friend in information engineering, the person I previously consulted with on quantum computer technology...” Rupert continued after a pause, “He just called me.

“Star Sky Technology plans to build a supercomputing center in Shanghai to provide computing power for their virtual reality network in East China. According to their official website, the processor used in this supercomputing center...”

Rupert gulped and said, “Contains true quantum computing technology.”

Chapter 1198 Star Voyage One

Star Sky Technology planned on building a quantum supercomputing center in Shanghai and naming it “Star Voyage One”. This was to provide support for the cloud computing virtual reality network in the entire East China region. The second the news came out, it immediately caused a huge sensation.

Ever since the beginning of the century, there had been countless quantum computer breakthroughs. However, all of them were contained inside the laboratory.

But this time, not only did the number of qubits increase by an order of magnitude, but they were also going to bring the computer outside of the laboratory.

If everything went according to plan, Star Voyage One would become China's first commercialized quantum computer!

Also the world's first commercialized quantum computer!

[Jesus! The encryption algorithms in the financial system are basically all using RSA! For a quantum computer, finding the factor of large prime numbers is almost as easy as finding an addition. The banks are going to go bankrupt!]

[So if I take out a loan now, I don't have to pay it back?]

[Stop talking nonsense. Our country has already implemented quantum encryption algorithms as a replacement for traditional encryption algorithms. Quantum optical fibers will soon become the norm. Unbreakable security network coverage will soon be available. When the time comes, even an alien computer won't be able to hack our network!]

[In other words, the safest banks in the world right now are the Chinese banks?]

[Depends on how you phrase this problem. The current quantum encryption algorithm can still defend against cyberattacks launched by quantum computers below 2,000 qubits. Not to mention that the quantum computer is in our hands. What are you worried about? Professor Lu hacking your bank account?]

[Am I the only one who worries about the cloud computing service for quantum computation? What if it is used by criminals?]

[I don't know, but I think the relevant department is going to supervise them. For example, they will limit how much computing power can be used by individuals and companies.]

The phrases "Star Voyage One" and "the world's first quantum computer" began to appear on the trending list for major media platforms. Even though this technology was far away from impacting most people's lives, this didn't stop people from fantasizing about the future.

Not to mention that this was the world's first and only commercialized quantum computer!

Combining this with quantum communication technology, China once again was leading the world in quantum technology.

Countless researchers in the field of information engineering and people that paid attention to the high-tech field felt proud because of this.

However, in contrast to this, while the discussions on quantum computers on the internet became heated, various rumors began to spread in midst of the heated debates.

The threat of quantum computer technology to the financial industry was exaggerated by many social media accounts.

Many people talked about going to their banks and withdrawing all of their money. Some people claimed that their passwords would soon become useless, and they should take out a huge loan before the collapse of the financial system.

Fortunately, prior to the introduction of quantum computer technology to the market, the relevant state departments had made preparations. By cooperating with mainstream media, the state was able to restrict the baseless rumors. They also issued new laws and regulations regarding information technology. They successfully killed the rumors before it grew.

The CTV also arranged a special pop-science program and invited Academician Xue Jinhui, an expert in the fields of cryptography and information engineering. Academician Xue Jinhui recorded an exclusive interview for the "Star Voyage One"; the interview would be broadcast during prime television time.

Inside the CTV studio.

The host was sitting on the sofa and was opposite Academician Xue. The host smiled and said, "Thank you for coming to our studio today. I would like to ask a question for our audience. What does a supercomputer with 524 qubits mean for our country? What does it mean for us personally? In other words... how will it affect our lives?"

“Those are interesting questions.” Academician Xue smiled and said in a kind tone, “It might be difficult to understand qubits without the specific domain knowledge. I will try to explain it in simple terms.”

Host: “Academician Xue, please go ahead.”

Academician Xue nodded and said with a smile, “Generally speaking, our computers use 0 and 1 to represent the opening and closing of logic circuit gates. We usually say that traditional computers can represent two states. We build integrated circuits by continuously stacking logic circuit gates, increasing the computing power to 2^n . This number n can be 10 or one trillion, but no matter how large it is, it will only linearly increase our computing power.”

The host nodded seriously and continued to ask, “Then, what about quantum computers?”

“Quantum computers are much different.” Academician Xue smiled and continued, “In theory, a quantum logic circuit gate can represent 2^n states! If n is equal to 50, that is one quadrillion states! How large is one quadrillion? Our country’s first quadrillion-state supercomputer is the Tianhe-1, and it can only reach this level of computation power under peak conditions. Hence, any quantum computer with more than 50 qubits is more powerful than the Tianhe-1!”

This statement was actually inaccurate. After all, the performance of a supercomputer was not only about the hardware itself, but also a series of other factors such as the architecture and operating system. A faster processing speed didn’t mean better performance, especially when unoptimized.

A 50-qubit quantum computer would have to be heavily optimized before it could surpass the Tianhe-1.

However, there was one thing that remained true.

Which was that the computing power of quantum computers increased at an exponential speed.

So what did 524 qubits mean?

This meant 2^{524} states!

It wasn't an exaggeration to say that as long as the quantum supercomputer's architecture, operating system, and a series of other conditions were met, it could easily defeat all of the other supercomputers combined!

After listening to Academician Xue's explanation, the host looked shocked.

50 qubits can defeat the Tianhe-1.

So how many Tianhe-1s are needed to make 524 qubits?

2^{474} Tianhe-1?

That is ridiculous?!

The interview was still going on.

There was one more important thing Academician Xue had yet to answer.

The host gulped and tried to calm down. He continued to ask, "What do you think about the rumors circulating on the Internet that quantum computers might make our bank account passwords unsecured?"

After hearing this question, Academician Xue went silent for a while before sighing and speaking.

"Academician Lu is one of the most talented scholars I have ever met, and one of the most responsible people I know. Even though his views and behaviors in the academic field might be a little extreme, we can trust him on this."

The host nodded and spoke with a smile.

"Of course I trust our Academician Lu. I believe that the vast majority of people sitting in front of their TVs right now also trust and believe in him."

Academician Xue nodded and spoke.

"Back when we made a tiny progress on the research on quantum computers, Academician Lu had already predicted that this technology might have an impact on the information industry. Therefore, before releasing this technology to the public, he developed a quantum encryption algorithm. The unhackable quantum optical cable is also designed to deal with the risks behind this technology."

The old man had a smile of approval on his face.

“Now that all of the work is finally complete, after implementing a series of countermeasures, we can finally release this technology and let it have a positive impact on our society.

“So, in regard to your question, I can tell you that your worries are completely unnecessary. We have already discovered and removed all of the risks!”

The host looked shocked.

“The quantum encryption algorithm... was developed by Academician Lu?”

Academician Xue said with a smile.

“Of course. Who else besides Academician Lu do you think has this ability?”

A while ago, this matter was still a state secret, and there was less than a handful of people that knew of the algorithm’s existence.

Now that the quantum computer technology and quantum communication technology were revealed, there was no reason to keep the development of the quantum encryption algorithm a secret anymore.

For so long, Academician Xue couldn’t tell this secret to anyone. He felt a wave of relief.

He looked at the surprised host and patted his thigh as he spoke emotionally.

“This breakthrough in quantum computer technology will definitely change our lives; there is no doubt about this!

“Maybe if the changes happen slowly, maybe we won’t have a big reaction, or we might not even feel the changes... However, the development of technology does not wait for us.

“This will definitely bring chaos and anxiety. Technological change affects many people, including myself...”

Academician Xue paused for a moment.

He looked into the camera and spoke in a serious tone.

“But we will do everything we can to reduce the chaos and keep its impact to a minimum.

“This is our responsibility to society as scholars.”

1199 The End of Cryptocurrency

Because the encryption algorithms had already been updated ahead of time, the new commercial quantum computer technology would not impact the Chinese information security industry.

There was a small amount of chaos and panic at the beginning, as well as some old men and old ladies who went to their banks. But other than that, there wasn't any substantial impact.

However, other countries were not so lucky compared to the calm scenery on the Chinese side.

On a P2P Foundation forum.

This was the world's most well-known blockchain community, and nerds proficient in cryptography and regular civilians were discussing this matter.

An account that had been inactive for many years had suddenly surfaced and participated in the discussion.

[Title: The End of Cryptography.

[Bitcoin is just my attempt at the decentralization of the finance industry. It has been successful for the past fifteen years, but now, it is no longer secure.

[Perhaps we might be able to rely on new tools and new methods to survive, but as for now...

[Goodbye.]

The entire forum went silent after this post came out.

In less than half a minute, the entire forum blew up like a bomb!

If this post were made by someone else, it wouldn't be a big deal. At most, it would attract a few comments of criticism.

However, the account that created this post wasn't just any account.

The account owner was indeed the world-famous mathematician and cryptographer, the man who invented Bitcoin...

Satoshi Nakamoto!

...

On the other hand, inside an office at the CME Group, a Jewish man in his fifties put down the newspaper in his hand, looked at his assistant, who was standing across the desk, and said, "Bitcoin is not secure anymore."

His name was Baruch. As a professional asset manager of the CME Group, he was responsible for managing the credit investment fund for important clients. He was managing more than 50 billion US dollars in his hands.

After he saw the Wall Street Journal's report on quantum computers, he immediately made a judgment based on his knowledge of quantum computer technology that the price of Bitcoin was inflated.

After thinking for a minute, he said, "Prepare for short selling."

The assistant nodded and asked in a serious way, "Using what method?"

Baruch thought for a second and said, "Start with a baseline of 100 USD."

...

Bitcoin was the first "victim" of quantum computer technology.

The Chicago Board Options Exchange was the first to launch bitcoin futures, and they provided a platform for shorting bitcoin. They received tens of billions of dollars in bitcoin short orders in less than a day.

A short selling happened when investors or a group of people believed that the market price of something, such as bitcoin, will fall in the future. They would borrow bitcoin and sell it at the current price. After that, they would re-buy the bitcoin in the future at a lower price and pay back the bitcoin they borrowed.

If their judgment was correct, they could make a profit.

The global market value of bitcoin was only slightly over 100 billion USD, but the billions in short orders were almost equivalent to 10% of the total market value.

Basically, the essence of almost all cryptocurrencies, including bitcoin, was a bunch of “special solutions” generated by complex algorithms.

Just like a special solution for a system of equations, each special solution could solve one equation, while each special solution was unique.

Using banknotes as an analogy, a bitcoin was the serial number of a banknote. If someone knew the serial number, they would own the banknote.

The process of bitcoin mining was to constantly try and find special solutions to the system of equations through a huge amount of calculation.

This was a kind of currency based on cryptography. Due to decentralization, it had the hidden advantage of anonymity.

But on the other hand, this kind of virtual asset without any backed guarantee would be shredded to pieces in the face of a quantum computer.

Obviously, Mr. Baruch wasn't the only asset manager who saw through this.

The second his company began to short-sell bitcoin, more than a dozen investment banks and hedge funds also quickly entered this battlefield.

Due to the massive trading volume and sell orders, the transaction price of bitcoin continued to fall. In less than half a day, it fell from tens of thousands of dollars all the way to 100 dollars. More than 100 billion dollars of market value had vanished.

Baruch and the other investors had underestimated the impact of quantum computers on bitcoin.

After seeing the declining transaction price on the screen, Baruch smacked his lips.

He thought that his reaction was fast enough, but in the end, he was still too slow. More and more competitors joined in, and short selling became more

and more difficult. The fund he managed only made less than 1 billion dollars before the entire bitcoin market collapsed.

He looked at the red market ticker on his screen as he spoke.

“Fill in the short sell orders for \$10.”

“Shouldn’t we wait?” The assistant sitting in front of his computer looked at Balluch and asked, “I feel like if we wait, the price will drop to \$1.”

“We always execute on positive EV trades.” Balluch said calmly, “We are betting on expectations, not on Professor Lu using his quantum computer to print money.”

“Okay, maybe you are right.”

The assistant followed his boss’ instructions and placed a buy order for \$10, making a juicy arbitrage trade.

With just a few clicks, they had earned one billion USD from people all over the world. This speed of making money was faster than the Federal Reserve’s money-printing machine.

The only unfortunate thing was that this kind of opportunity was once in a lifetime.

The trading was over.

The assistant looked at the funds in the account and had an emotional look on his face.

He just helped his clients make more money than he would ever earn.

However, the longer the funds sat in the account, the more money they were losing. They could be investing that money and, in turn, be making even more.

The assistant looked at his boss and spoke.

“What now? Where should we allocate the funds?”

Baruch hesitated for a moment before speaking, “Buy bonds.”

Assistant: “All of it?”

Baruch: "All of it."

Bonds was considered to be a relatively safe financial investment. When the market was in a volatile time, especially when faced with financial risks, buying bonds from the government or large corporations was a way to hedge their risks.

This was Baruch's professional intuition from years of trading.

Right now, his intuition was telling him that behind the calm financial markets, there was a beast lurking in the dark.

This beast was about to be unleashed at any moment.

What happened in the bitcoin market was just the tip of the iceberg...

Baruch took a cigarette out of his pocket. He was about to go to the window and have a smoke break.

Suddenly, his phone in his pocket began to ring. He put the cigarette back and took out the phone.

He picked up the phone and spoke in a good mood.

"Clement? How are you doing my friend?"

"You're asking how I'm doing? Jesus Christ..."

The voice on the other end of the phone was full of anxiety and disbelief. Baruch, however, didn't notice the unusual tone. He smiled and spoke.

"Dude, you have no idea what just happened..."

Baruch was about to tell in detail how he used his bravery and courage to arb the bitcoin market, but his old friend interrupted him.

"Yeah, you have no idea what just happened! I'd go check the Dow Jones Index if I were you! Jesus mother of god! Talking to you was the wrong decision!"

The call ended.

Baruch frowned as he looked at the disconnected call on his phone screen. He suddenly felt a trace of anxiety in his heart, overshadowing his positive emotions.

He suddenly realized why his old friend was speaking so anxiously.

Without hesitating, he quickly returned to his desk and sat down. He quickly opened the Bloomberg terminal and logged into his account.

He was completely stunned. He accidentally knocked over a cup, which landed on the floor.

The assistant nearby stood up and spoke.

“What was that?”

There was no response from his boss.

His boss who was sitting in front of the computer was frozen.

Baruch’s face turned red, then the color slowly faded away from his face, finally turning pale...

Oh no...

It’s too late...

It’s all over.

While they were arbitraging the bitcoin market, a financial tsunami had swept across the Nasdaq. This drove the Dow Jones Index down 34 percent, and trillions of market value had evaporated out of thin air.

The money he earned from bitcoin wouldn’t even come close to covering the losses.

Baruch felt dizzy. He tried to stand up, but his legs felt weak.

He sat back down, and he began to slowly lose his vision.

Just before he lost consciousness, he heard a voice.

“The boss fainted! Please call an ambulance!

“Now!

“ ... ”

After that, Baruch couldn't hear anything...

Chapter 1200 – What Changed

Baruch wasn't the only one that fainted.

The number of heart attacks in Manhattan had risen by ten times in one day.

The securities market was going through a gloomy stage; and people began to feel pessimistic about the North American economy.

The chain effect caused by this quickly swept through the global financial market. Just like a row of dominos, the stocks and futures market across the world began to fall...

What did it mean for cryptography systems to fail?

This wasn't as simple as passwords being hacked and bank accounts being stolen.

This meant that all financial products would lose their guarantee due to the failure of algorithms such as the RSA.

The first financial product impacted were the digital cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin. Online merchant platforms that accepted bitcoin as a form of payment started to no longer support digital currency payment, in an attempt to steer away from the storm.

This was followed by the crash of a series of financial derivatives.

The current existing encryption rules were confirmed to be unreliable, and this would have a huge impact on the credit-based financial markets.

The stock market and the bond market were going through a volatile time; it was as if there was a gloomy cloud over Wall Street.

But then again, they were the ones threatening the other side of the Pacific Ocean all year long. They were also the ones who blamed their cybersecurity issues on an attack from the Chinese cyber warfare forces.

China wasn't looking to start information warfare since that would provide no benefit to them. However, there was no doubt that China had the ability to decimate cyber warfare.

Panic started to rise from the chaos.

On the other hand, oceans of people had gathered at the 20th Asia-Pacific Cyber Information Security Summit.

Representatives from more than 20 countries, as well as dozens of non-profit international organizations and institutions, all sat quietly in their seats, waiting for the meeting to begin.

The United States was absent from this conference, just like last time. However, their conference table seats were still reserved. There were even two bottles of mineral water on their seats.

Vice Minister Yang from the Chinese Ministry of Industry and Information Technology delivered a speech on "Co-creating Internet Information Security" and "Quantum Encryption Algorithm and Quantum Communication".

Just two days ago, most of the attendees were not particularly excited about the summit. However, after what happened with the United States' financial market yesterday, almost all of them began to listen attentively to every word Vice Minister Yang said, afraid of missing a single detail.

The speech lasted a full fifteen minutes. Finally, it was time for the Qu0026A session.

Vice Minister Yang stopped talking and looked around the conference room, giving an opportunity for the audience to ask questions.

Soon after, a dozen hands went up in the air.

He randomly picked a person in the front row and nodded to him, indicating that he could stand up and ask the question.

“Mr. Yang, can the quantum encryption algorithm solve the security risks brought by quantum computers once and for all?”

The person who stood up and asked the question was Clerek, the chairman of the International Information System Security Certification Consortium. When he first arrived in Shanghai, he already began assessing the risks that quantum computers might pose to the existing communication and financial industry.

Changing the encryption algorithm was not an easy task, for a country or a company.

If they were going to change the algorithm, they had to know how long this algorithm would be effective.

“Unfortunately, the quantum encryption algorithm can’t solve this problem permanently. It still uses a computational password. It is not unbreakable. If there’s a quantum computer with more than 2,000 qubits, it would only take the computer a day to crack the password.”

Minister Yang looked at Chairman Clerek and spoke.

“If we want to solve this problem once and for all, what we need is ultimately an unbreakable method of communication. In fact, the quantum submarine cable project we are working on is precisely tackling this problem.

“As for the quantum encryption algorithm, its purpose is not to solve this problem forever. Instead, it helps us survive this chaotic period caused by technological changes and buy us some time.”

Chairman Clerek nodded and sat back down.

Afterward, the representative from Britain stood up and spoke in a suspicious tone.

“Why not strengthen the supervision of quantum computers? Or at least restrict its use. It seems like the Chinese have not considered the impact disclosing this news would cause on the Internet and the financial industry. Of course, I’m not saying that China is deliberately causing the volatile markets, but I think everyone is wondering... Did you not expect this to happen?”

The British representative had a look of skepticism on his face.

Whispers were heard around the conference room.

The financial turbulence wasn't constrained in North America, almost the entire world was affected, including China themselves. But relatively speaking, the impact on the Chinese markets was the smallest.

Vice Minister Yang smiled at the British representative and spoke.

"We did expect this to happen, but did we not warn you guys?"

He was speaking to the representative of the United Kingdom, as well as to the entire audience.

The moment he heard those words, the British representative froze. A look of embarrassment emerged on his face. Other participants awkwardly looked away from Minister Yang.

I guess...

They did warn us.

But none of us took it seriously.

After all, no one thought that everything would come so suddenly. They didn't expect the series of breakthroughs in quantum computer technology in just a few months.

A 524-qubit computer...

This computer was more powerful than all of the other supercomputers combined. If the UK knew China had this kind of technology, of course they would have desperately tried to update their encryption algorithm.

"As for your previous question." Vice Minister Yang said with a faint smile, "In fact, we are supervising the usage of the quantum computer. You can stay rest assured on this."

The British representative felt a wave of pressure off his shoulders as he sighed in relief.

Fortunately, Minister Yang decided not to embarrass him.

“I’d like to sincerely thank you for your efforts in solving this problem... We look forward to taking on more responsibilities. Of course, we will also cooperate...”

After some polite words, the UK representative quickly sat down.

Next up was the Japanese representative.

He stood up and immediately asked, “Is Chinese congress considering exporting this technology? Are they allowing quantum computers to enter the market in any form of cooperation...?”

The moment he asked this question, almost everyone present began listening intently.

This included the British representative who had just sat down.

Under the eager gaze of the audience, Vice Minister Yang spoke casually.

“Not for the time being, but we are not restricting quantum computers from being used for non-military cloud computing services and foreign institutions and companies. This can be done by connecting the quantum computer through satellites or private submarine optical cables lines. If your country is interested, I’m sure our companies will be happy to make a deal.”

After hearing the response, the Japanese representative had a somewhat disappointed look on his face.

Cloud computing services connected by optical cables lines...

If the customer was just a normal factory or a medium-sized company, it would be fine. However, for large companies such as Canon, Mitsubishi, and Toyota, who had laboratories involving sensitive research that impacted the entire nation’s economy, how could they feel safe letting their information pass through a foreign server?

Vice Minister Yang instantly knew what the Japanese representative was thinking about, so he spoke with a smile.

“Of course, nothing is permanent. After we reform the Chinese information industry, perhaps China’s semiconductor companies will consider expanding

to foreign markets. Of course, this is a free market. We will not intervene. We might even encourage them to cooperate with foreign nations!”

After hearing these words, many people in the conference room resisted the urge to roll their eyes.

A free market?

Haha.

Bullsh*t!

However, none of them could do anything about it.

They had no negotiating power. This was similar to controllable nuclear fusion power, they had no leverage.

Even the arrogant Americans had to bow down on certain issues, particularly on the issue of Star Sky Technology’s patent fraud. In the end, they still politely asked East Asia Energy to speed up the fusion reactor process in Los Angeles...

The Japanese representative sat down. Before the next representative got up to speak, the door in the conference room suddenly opened.

When the participants in the conference room turned their heads, they all looked shocked.

It was obvious who these people were.

After all, there were only two empty seats left in the conference room.

Minister Yang watched the US representative walk into the room and sit down at the conference table with an annoyed face. A playful smile appeared on his face.

Didn’t you say you weren’t coming?

What has changed?