

Scholar's Advanced Technological System

Chapter 1201 – It's Spilling!

Bitcoin is crashing?

When Lu Zhou heard the news, he was dazed.

He had planned to use bitcoin to test whether his computer was fast, but before he could do his tests, the entire bitcoin market exploded in his face.

The way he heard the news was quite interesting.

The people that lost some money couldn't do anything. It wasn't like they could go and complain to Wall Street.

The people that suffered more substantial losses had an interesting reaction. They came all the way to Jinling on a maglev train. They found the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study and stood outside the gate with a "Return My Hard-Earned Money" banner.

This scene shook the scientific researchers inside the institute. Many scientists even began to watch the fun through their windows.

However, the security guards weren't there for nothing. The security team stood shoulder to shoulder outside the gate. The people outside the entrance felt intimidated by the wall of guards, afraid to cause any more trouble.

However, compared to the calm researchers at the research institute, the management team was not as calm. When the higher-ups heard that the gate of the Institute for Advanced Study was blocked, these old men were so scared they nearly had a heart attack.

Almost all of the police cars in the entire district were dispatched here. Bystanders didn't know what was going on. They thought it was a large-scale anti-terrorism exercise.

The documents issued by the People's Bank of China in 2017 already set the outline of bitcoin. They claimed that bitcoin was just a virtual commodity and not a currency. They also prohibited Chinese financial institutions and payment companies from providing tools to use and purchase bitcoin.

Bitcoin was always in a gray area, not supported by the state, yet now people were running outside and protesting.

Police cars rushed to the scene and arrested anyone blocking the entrance. They brought the protesters back to the precinct and interrogated them one by one on where they bought the bitcoins.

Those that bought the coins abroad were left alone. Those that purchased the coins through illegal channels were further investigated; none of them were spared.

Immediately afterward, something more interesting happened. The people who were investigating suddenly discovered that most of the protesters were not trading bitcoins.

Even after tearing through the internet records of the protesters, they were not able to find any traces of bitcoin transactions.

The task force leader realized that something was wrong, so he immediately reported the news to his superiors.

In the end, people from the Ministry of State Security joined the task force.

Finally, everything was clear.

Last time, when they were cleaning out the foreign spy networks, the bitcoin transactions fell through the gaps.

These spies were thinking about protesting and applying for asylum status; a paradise position for immigrants. But the second they put their heads above the surface, they were immediately caught.

After Lu Zhou heard the story from Director Li, he shook his head and spoke.

"These people are crazy."

I'm not the one that shorted bitcoin, why protest against me?

Go protest on Wall Street?

He really didn't know why these neanderthals blamed him for this.

"This isn't even bad." Director Li took a sip of tea and said, "You haven't seen the people that destroy real estate company buildings just because their property values are decreasing. The people that have bitcoins are somewhat civilized; it's just a few banners and signs outside your office."

Lu Zhou: "Yeah, we weren't affected too badly, thanks to you guys."

"Don't mention it." Director Li smiled and said, "You should have seen the look on Vilgas' face at the Asia-Pacific Cyber Information Security Summit yesterday."

"Vilgas?"

Lu Zhou frowned. He had never heard this name before.

"Oh right, I forgot... Vilgas is the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission." Director Li said with a cheeky smile, "If you know what I mean."

The Federal Communications Commission directly answered to the United States Congress, while the United States Congress represented the interests of most American capitalists.

Obviously, when it came to the issue of communications security, the United States Congress had serious disagreements with the White House. Since the White House had yet to express their position on the cyber information security summit, the United States Congress sent their own personnel to attend the conference.

The reason was obvious. The poor performance of the US stock market frightened everyone.

After all, a certain US president said that if the US stock market were to plummet, the president should fly to the sun on a rocket.

Although the United States Congress did not tie the president to a rocket heading toward the sun, things had developed to a point of no return.

“But to be honest, even though the digital currency is not regulated, it is an attempt to decentralize the finance industry. The fall of bitcoin is not necessarily a good thing for us.”

After taking a sip of coffee, Lu Zhou, who was not very interested in this conversation, replied casually, “Oh, is that so?”

“The current economic trend is globalization. Since the international community is headed to a multi-country world, the international monetary system does not make any sense, as it is not backed by precious metals anymore. Besides, there hasn’t been any change since World War II; it’s time for some change.

“Keynesian economics is still relevant. Developed countries can easily inflate their own currency in regard to underdeveloped countries, thus preventing the prosperity of others.

“If we want to end this unfair exploitation, there must either be a powerful world central bank to formulate monetary policy based on the global scale, or we would have to have a world-wide and reliable currency. This currency cannot be controlled by the policies of central banks, it has to be self-regulating. Central banks should be allowed to buy this currency freely as a hedge against their own currency.”

Humans had a history of decentralization. The only difference was whether the decentralization was fierce and immediate or slow and gradual.

In 1994, Kevin Kelly used a bee colony as an example in his book “Out of Control”. He proposed a redistributing capitalistic structure, which was probably the embodiment of decentralization.

Unfortunately, bitcoin and other digital currencies had the spirit of decentralization, but they were not able to fully achieve their mission.

There was no real backed commodity as a guarantee; it was just a number on a ledger. It was just a solution to difficult mathematical problems. Therefore, it could easily be dominated by quantum computers.

Perhaps a digital currency backed by a powerful credit entity would be more reliable. But then again, the essence of a digital currency was that it was not controlled by mainstream corporations. If a digital currency could be

guaranteed and fully controlled by a credit entity, could it really be considered a digital currency?

This was a catch-22.

Lu Zhou didn't understand economics very well, unlike Chen Yushan or his sister. Thus, he sat there quietly and silently watched Director Li talk out of his a*s.

After Director Li was tired of speaking, he finally took a sip of tea and rinsed his throat.

However, just when Lu Zhou thought he would change the conversation topic, the old man suddenly asked, "Do you think there is a possibility?"

Lu Zhou: "Possibility of what?"

"To use quantum algorithms and generate a digital currency based on quantum encryption technology?"

For some reason, when Director Li said these words, the atmosphere in the living room suddenly froze.

Lu Zhou did not reply. He quietly drank his coffee as he looked at Director Li.

Director Li couldn't help but laugh and say, "What are you looking at me for? I'm just curious, just an idea..."

Lu Zhou put down his coffee cup and picked up the teapot on the table.

"I'll pour you some tea."

Director Li immediately waved his hand.

"No, no, it's fine, I still haven't finished yet. I can pour it myself later."

Lu Zhou: "No, it's fine, drink some more."

Director Li: "Ah, you're too kind... Wait wait wait, slow down, it's spilling!"

Chapter 1202 – Not a SuperComputer, But a Gold Mine

In the eastern dock suburbs of Shanghai, if it weren't for the subways, this place wouldn't even be considered Shanghai.

In fact, many Shanghai locals no longer recognized this as a part of Shanghai.

Even though there were several zoning plans here, such as a smart manufacturing zone, an integrated development zone, a smart ecological zone, and a marine science and technology hub, etc... Due to the remote location of the area and the weak industrial foundation, there hadn't been any particularly big development in this area over the years.

It was almost as if...

This place was abandoned.

However, things had been changing recently.

About two months ago, a group of important-looking people came here. They walked around with some blueprints in their hands and drew a circle on a blueprint map.

Soon after, a group of construction teams arrived at the suburb. They began to start construction on the land circled by the previous group of important people.

For the residents and small business owners of the eastern docks area, this was quite a big story. However, no one knew what they were building. Judging by the fenced-off area, it seemed like this was going to be a big project.

Some people said that they were building a new business district. Others said that they were developing real estate, whereas some other people even guessed that a semiconductor manufacturer was going to move their factories to Shanghai. It was estimated that the property value would increase because of this.

Various rumors spread around for more than two months. It wasn't until the announcement of the "Star Voyage One" quantum computer by Star Sky Technology did people finally realize what was going on.

It turned out that this thing was not a shopping mall, nor was it a new building or a stadium. It was actually a powerful quantum computer.

Unfortunately, a supercomputing center was non-labor intensive, and it would not bring any jobs and wouldn't have any effect on the property prices...

...

An Audi A6 parked on the side of the main road in the smart manufacturing zone, and two men in suits got out of the car.

A chubby man wearing gold-rimmed glasses squinted his eyes as he looked at the construction site. He curiously asked, "What is going on over there?"

His name was Ding Rong, and he was quite a wealthy entrepreneur. He was involved in the production of auto parts, mainly for export trade.

His factory was originally located in the Suzhou Industrial Park. Because he heard that there was a policy change in the eastern docks area, he came here for a site inspection to see if there was any value in opening a shop here.

Honestly, he was quite satisfied with all of the conditions here. The only downside was that the location was too far, and it would be difficult to hire workers here.

Suburb Chief Liu, who was responsible for attracting investment in the zone, immediately said, "That's the land bought by Star Sky Technology. Apparently, it's the location for the supercomputing center."

Two months ago, this news was a secret. Even the senior management of the suburb's management committee did not know the truth.

But now, this matter was an open secret. Everyone knew that this piece of land belonged to Star Sky Technology.

"Star Sky Technology? Supercomputing center?"

Ding Rong paused for a second. He couldn't figure out the relationship between these two things.

Suburb Chief Liu immediately smiled and said, "It's the Star Voyage One, the world's first quantum computer that was unveiled a while ago! Apparently, the computing power is more powerful than all of the other top supercomputers combined. This will become the first domestic quantum computer to provide

cloud quantum computing service, and this place will be equivalent to the high-tech zone in Jinling!”

Suburb Chief Liu purposely boasted about this development zone.

After listening to the explanation, Ding Rong was shocked. He had an astonished look on his face.

“It’s that amazing?”

Recently, he was busy with the new factory, even working during lunch break. He didn’t have time to pay attention to what was happening in the frontier of science and technology.

He didn’t expect quantum computers to come to life in the blink of an eye.

He thought back to when he talked about the trend of industrial informatization with the engineers at his factory during lunch. Apparently, in the future, artificial intelligence robots would take over humans in factories.

Why is Star Sky Technology building their quantum computer here?

Why not Jinling?

The more he thought about it, the more excited he was.

It was like this was a gold mine, standing right in front of him.

Without hesitating, he stretched out his hand, pointed to the open space beside the construction area, and said, “Then, I’ll set up my factory there.”

“Oh, right there?”

“Yeah, the transportation here is convenient. I plan to invest 200 million yuan to open up a new production line here to produce electric vehicle parts...”

Ding Rong suddenly noticed the awkward look on Suburb Chief Liu’s face. He couldn’t help but frown and said, “Is there a problem?”

Suburb Chief Liu looked at Ding Rong and smiled awkwardly.

“That... I’m afraid it will be a bit difficult. Two months ago, all of the land around here was auctioned off.”

“All of it?” Ding Rong was taken aback for a moment. He then realized that he might have fallen behind this trend, so he quickly asked, “Two months ago, did anyone know that Star Sky Technology was going to build a supercomputing center here?”

Suburb Chief Liu quickly spoke.

“No way, even the city mayor didn’t know!”

Ding Rong: “Then how come...”

Suburb Chief Liu sighed and said, “It has nothing to do with the supercomputing center. When people heard that these construction teams were working for Star Sky Technology, our development zone management committee was contacted by at least a few hundred companies a week. They were all inquiring about the land in the vicinity. Thus, whether it was the commercial or industrial area, all of it had been auctioned off.”

Even though Ding Rong could buy the land off the companies, Suburb Chief Liu thought this was not a good idea.

After all, running a high-tech company was not only an entrepreneurial task but also a political task. Higher-ups in the state were all watching closely. The main purpose of this development zone was to attract investment, not to increase land prices.

If too much of the capital was spent acquiring land, there would be no money for the production and growth of the development zone.

Ding Rong was in disbelief.

“... Not a single lot is left?”

Suburb Chief Liu: “There’s one a little farther away, but none within a one-kilometer radius.”

None within one kilometer...

This is insane!

Ding Rong didn’t know what to make of this.

Although it was unfortunate that he did not get to buy the land, after hearing how popular this zone was, he was more determined than before to move his factory here.

Large-scale industrial production was always important. As long as there were good traffic conditions, a large-scale industrial park was far more attractive than a small economic development zone.

Even if the new factory failed and bankrupted him, he could sell the land for a profit. Investing and setting up his new factory here was a win-win situation.

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1203 What to Do After This

Countless business owners who were attracted by the new quantum computer in the eastern docks area had the same idea as Boss Ding. When Star Sky Technology first announced that Star Voyage One would be in Shanghai, countless companies sent representatives to the city to investigate a potential investment in this development zone.

Jinling’s high-tech zone was basically saturated, but this place was an unexplored land.

Boss Ding was worrying about which piece of land to buy and which bank he would take out a loan from. On the other hand, a group of men in casual clothes and hard hats stood at the construction site of the Star Voyage One supercomputing entrance.

Among them was the person in charge of the development zone management committee. The leader of the city council investment committee was also there, as well as Director Li and Lu Zhou.

“This is unbelievable...”

As Director Li looked at the towering steel frame and concrete structure, he said emotionally, “It’s only been two months, and it looks almost complete. This is...”

He couldn’t describe the feeling in his heart.

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “It’s like it’s appearing out of nowhere, right?”

Director Li nodded and said,

“Yeah, that’s exactly how I feel.”

It wasn’t difficult to build a building in two months, but this building was special.

“It’s using modular construction technology.”

Lu Zhou squinted and continued to speak with a smile, “Actually, I don’t understand it very well. I just listened to the people in our institute talk about how this is a modification of the lunar surface construction technology from Shanghai Heavy Industry Group. The engineering aspects have been slightly modified to account for the earth’s gravity environment. This technology saved us a lot of construction time”

Director Li spoke.

“Sure enough, science and technology are the driving forces of productivity.”

Lu Zhou gently smiled.

“Of course.”

“Actually, I still have a question...” Director Li said. He noticed Lu Zhou looking at him, so he quickly said, “Don’t look at me like that, I swear, this is only just a question.”

Lu Zhou: “... Go ahead.”

“The test quantum computer that I tried last time, isn’t it only the size of my palm?” After making a gesture with his index finger, Director Li continued to speak with a confused look on his face, “Why is it a big building?”

“You said the reason yourself. That thing was just a test product and could only perform specific calculations on specific problems. If we want to handle different complex problems and use it like a general-purpose computer, we have to analyze its quantum logic circuit gates and design a system architecture, as well as an operating system. Then combine everything, it’s like...”

After thinking about how to describe this concept, Lu Zhou said, “It’s like organizing a group of individually well-trained soldiers into an army.”

Director Li said, “Can you find a better analogy next time?”

Lu Zhou said, “No I can’t, all analogies are not accurate.”

Director Li: “... I think using analogies I can understand are better.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

...

Lu Zhou had always believed that the path of an individual was inseparable from the destiny of society as a whole.

The reason why he was able to build a collider on the Moon was because of the support from the state, as well as other conditions that supported him.

After all, without the help from other scientific fields, he wouldn’t have been able to achieve this level of success.

If a person couldn’t even afford to pay for food, there was no way that person could focus on doing great things.

The creation of controllable fusion technology greatly boosted human productivity. This created technological advances in a range of fields, from energy to materials and chemicals. It turned fantasy into reality.

Also, the series of aerospace activities, including the Moon landing project, had gradually manifested its value in technological innovations, rather than simply being a consumption of social resources.

Lu Zhou and the Lunar Orbit Committee were preparing for an even larger project.

Which was the lunar mass driver.

If they could build the lunar mass driver, they could easily send minerals from the lunar surface to the lunar transfer orbit.

As a result, sending minerals from the surface of the moon to the earth would not only provide experimental value, but it would also provide economic value. This was especially true for rare earth resources, such as helium-3.

After effectively creating endless energy using nuclear fusion, they were also about to solve the problem of scarce raw materials.

However, resources alone were not enough.

China's economy had long ceased to solely rely on resource exports. They were no longer the low-end raw materials supplier in the global industrial chain.

They had to find a way to achieve higher production capacity.

So far, the Jinling high-tech zone had achieved some initial success.

By relying on the research and development from the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, the Jinling high-tech zone represented the Chinese industry. They occupied most of the market share in carbon-based materials and electric vehicles.

As for the eastern docks zone, that was a bold attempt to expand the "Jinling high-tech zone model" to the whole country.

Which was to use technology-focused companies as the backbone and production-focused companies as the body, forming a production relationship.

They could create a production system driven entirely by research and development forces.

Of course, although these things sounded simple in theory. They were actually not so easy to do.

No matter how strong their backbone was, they couldn't withstand the storm from the international market.

This was the problem.

There was only one Academician Lu, only one Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

The Jinling high-tech zone could rely on the research and development strength of the Institute for Advanced Study, but the eastern docks development zone in Shanghai was not so lucky.

To a large extent, the reason why the Star Voyage One quantum supercomputing center was chosen to be located in Shanghai instead of Jinling was because of this.

Lu Zhou hoped to use Star Voyage One to incubate a group of technology-intensive companies that focused on Ru0026D, just like Star Sky Technology, and focused on intellectual property development.

Although it was foolish to expect them to replicate the success of Star Sky Technology, sometimes quantity was over quality.

This industrial backbone did not have to be supported by one company only...

1204 Big End to the Year

The Asia-Pacific Cyber Information Security Summit came to an end. They finally reached a resolution to finalize the new international encryption algorithm. By using this standard as a reference, communications departments of various countries would upgrade a series of security systems in fields such as finance, replacing them with more secure quantum encryption algorithms.

Most countries directly copied the QS2000 encryption algorithm developed by China.

After all, this quantum computer algorithm was made by Professor Lu. No one knew better than him on how to defend against cyberattacks initiated by quantum computers.

Professor Lu's achievements in mathematics were much higher than his achievements in physics.

This alone was enough to give people psychological comfort.

California, United States.

A board meeting was held at the headquarters of SubCom.

CEO Markati walked into the conference room and sat down. He had a look of worry on his face, not a trace of relaxation in sight. He tried to make himself look more comfortable; however, he was not doing a good job.

The situation recently was very bad.

The No.3 Asia-Pacific cable plan had failed. The company's share price was still falling. Their profits could not meet market expectations. Part of this was caused by the external environment. The board of directors could not find any solution to change the situation.

Not to mention that East Asia Communications had completed their merger and reorganization of Chinese communications companies, they were also planning on aggressively entering the international market.

There was no doubt that these industry giants, which had been monopolizing the market for decades, were facing the most severe crisis in history.

Coincidentally, just a few days ago at the Asia-Pacific Cyber Information Security Summit, China had united more than 50 countries to form the "Global Submarine Cable Committee", which was abbreviated as GSCC. They planned to lay a cable that crossed through the Pacific Ocean, through Central America, the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, and across the Indian Ocean.

This fiber optic cable was worth more than 50 billion US dollars, none of which they had anything to do with.

The United States, which was originally against the submarine quantum optical cable, suddenly was on the fence.

The United States Congress had decided to ignore the White House and let the Federal Communications Commission talk with China about the “new internet cable”.

Political interests were important, but they also had to protect the interests of Wall Street.

If Wall Street lost control of the global economy, it would deindustrialize the United States. The government would not be able to support the current economic scale. The consequences could be unimaginable.

Unsurprisingly, the unbreakable encryption technology was the future.

After all, when it came to traditional optical cables, the transmitted data was powerless against quantum computers. Someone would only need a nuclear submarine to collect the data. They could monitor the entire communication line without being discovered by anyone.

With the power of quantum computers, anyone would have the ability to filter and parse out useful data.

If this kind of basic information security was not guaranteed, there could not be a credit system.

“Mr. Markati.” Chairman Bob Carter stared into the eyes of CEO Markati and tapped his laptop with his pen as he said, “You’re finally here.”

Markati felt his face tighten under the pressure.

“I was caught up in some work, but we can start now.”

“Of course, but before the meeting begins, I want to ask you something.”

“Yeah, what?”

“We heard that our company is completely excluded from the global submarine optical cable project.” Carter’s eyes narrowed as he asked, “Is that the case?”

Markati knew the chairman would ask this question. He took a deep breath and tried to think of a way to defend himself. He then replied reluctantly, "We're working on it."

Carter nodded and spoke.

"I appreciate your words, but we want to see results. We don't want to see our poor earnings report and the fall of our stock price."

Markati: "Financial reports and stock prices do not represent everything, and many things are behind the scenes. We are working with the Quantum Communication Institute of the Argonne National Laboratory to develop a quantum repeater technology. And when we solve the critical bottlenecks—"

Carter asked abruptly, "How long will that take?"

Markati took a deep breath and went silent for a few seconds.

"I can assure you that it will be done within two years."

"Looks like you are fairly honest. You could have lied and said three months." The chairman nodded and casually threw aside the report in his hand. He said, "However, honesty, just like hard work, can't solve our problem."

Markati went silent. He clenched his fists and slowly relaxed them again.

"You're right."

Carter: "So, can you find a solution?"

When Markati went silent again, Carter sighed with a look of realization on his face.

Even though Markati couldn't be blamed for this, the company had to make changes in order to survive.

Even if they might have to make some sacrifices.

"East Asia Communications provided us with an interesting proposal." Carter gestured to his assistant, who handed him a contract. He placed the contract gently on the table and said, "This one is worth about two billion USD. With a financing proposal of around 100 million USD."

Two billion dollars!

A lot of people in the room took a deep breath.

This was the first time the smaller shareholders heard about the news. They had a look of uncertainty on their faces.

Letting East Asia Communications become a shareholder.

This would not impact the major shareholders. After all, they and East Asia Communications must have signed some agreements they were unaware of. However, this was definitely not a good thing for the minority shareholders and trust companies that held SubCom shares.

However, the board of directors obviously intended to sacrifice their interests in order to survive...

"You can't accept it!"

Markati stood up abruptly. He propped his hands on the table and spoke fiercely.

"This is a scheme from the Chinese. Even though they do have some advantages in quantum communication technology, they are at least 20 years behind in experience for laying submarine optical cables. If we let the Chinese people on our board—"

Carter: "This is none of your concern, the board will do a vote..."

Markati said in a threatening tone, "There is no way the Department of Commerce will approve!"

Carter looked at Markati calmly and said in a casual tone, "As for you, thank you for your dedication to SubCom over the years. East Asia Communications wants to appoint a new CEO in the near future.

"After this meeting, go to the finance department for your exit bonus."

Markati angrily slammed the door and walked out of the conference room. The other board members looked at each other. Carter sighed with a blank face.

In any case, SubCom was a lost cause.

Soon, the entire submarine optical cable market would go through a revolution. Neither SubCom nor NEC could stop this change.

NEC had already withdrawn from the submarine optical cable market and had begun to focus their business on the electrical industry. Their old rivals in Europe were also trying to transform their business model, and they even laid off many employees.

Even though his decision today might not be correct.

This was their only choice...

1205 Hologram Technology

Generally speaking, the Department of Commerce certainly could not agree to this merger. Even though America was a country that advocated for free trade, it was unlikely for them to allow a foreign company to borrow tens of billions of dollars from their own banks and use these loans to acquire companies in their own countries.

If this kind of merger were successful, a series of assets including technology, talent, and market share would exit the country. The Americans would certainly not get any benefits.

Not to mention that SubCom itself had a monopoly in the industry. There was no reason for a company like this to be allowed to merge with overseas companies.

However, the current situation was obviously extraordinary.

The acquisition of SubCom by East Asia Communications wasn't just a business transaction; it was also the result of a compromise from a political battle.

If this acquisition failed, SubCom would not have access to the technology and the ability to put down quantum optical cables. They would eventually go bankrupt.

If the acquisition was successful, not only would it mean that East Asia Communications would be able to penetrate the North American market

faster, but also SubCom would have a chance of entering the global submarine quantum optical cable project.

Even though it was unlikely for East Asia Communications to give them access to quantum submarine optical cable technology, they could still purchase equipment from Chinese factories and work in secondary cable laying...

Jinling high-tech zone.

Star Sky Technology headquarters.

After Chen Yushan read the report from the manager of the investment department, she nodded with satisfaction. She signed her name on the document and put it aside.

“... I have a rough understanding of the situation, so let's follow this financing plan.”

Star Sky Technology held 30% of the shares of East Asia Communications. Although they were not involved with its specific operations, a round of large-scale financing like this must be approved by Star Sky Technology.

The manager picked up the document off the table and took two steps back. He suddenly thought of something and said, “Oh yeah, one more thing...”

Chen Yushan: “Go ahead.”

The investment department manager said, “... Why don't we use this opportunity to borrow more USD from JPMorgan? Now is a good opportunity to short US stocks. We can use this opportunity to make a lot of money.”

“It's too late. The bad news is already out on the street. The US stocks have the bad news priced in. Also...” Chen Yushan shook her head and said, “This is not the best time to borrow USD.”

The manager asked, “Why?”

Chen Yushan: “After this wave of financial turbulence, Manhattan is gradually losing its status as the world's financial center. In order to prevent the outflow of American assets, the Feds might release more dollars to the market by reducing reserves and interest rates.”

“So you’re saying... the Feds might adopt an active devaluation strategy?”

Chen Yushan nodded and said, “Yes, a one-time substantial depreciation.”

Even though the Fed’s control of the exchange rate was not as powerful as the People’s Bank of China, it was still possible for them to manipulate the exchange rate in an indirect and secretive manner.

By using a one-time large-scale active devaluation, they could effectively prevent the inflow of foreign capital.

However, this behavior was very risky. It was like drinking seawater to quench one’s thirst.

Active depreciation methods could certainly prevent capital from leaving the country in the short term, but in the long-term, it would weaken the domestic currency’s credit and ruin the competitiveness in the international market.

If the future economic situation did not improve, it would further enhance the dangers of foreign capital.

After all, no one was stupid.

If the future expectations were gloomy, no capital would be willing to stay in America...

Chen Yushan looked at the investment manager and said, “Don’t think about this too much, we are a technology company, not an investment bank. Just invest our funds in low-risk bonds. There is no need to go into the muddy markets.”

“... I understand.”

After the investment department manager left, the office was quiet again.

Chen Yushan twisted the ballpoint pen in her hand and was about to continue her unfinished work for today.

However, she suddenly thought of the phone call she had with the people from the high-tech eastern docks zone this morning. Thus she picked her phone off the corner of the table.

Chen Yushan stared at the phone and thought for a while. She muttered some opening lines to herself, such as “hey” and “what are you doing?”.

She practiced until her voice sounded softer and more soothing.

A smile appeared on her face. She dialed a number on the phone and waited for the call to connect before she said, “Hey, what are you doing?”

Lu Zhou was standing in a laboratory at the Institute for Advanced Study. He was staring at the oscillating graph on the computer screen in front of him as he replied casually, “Doing an interesting experiment, what’s up?”

An interesting experiment?

Even though she was curious about what the experiment was, since Lu Zhou was busy, she did not want to disturb him too much. Thus, she went straight to the point.

“The Star Voyage One will be completed in a few days. The high-tech eastern docks zone management committee invites you to cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony. Will you have time to go?”

Opening ceremony?

Lu Zhou pondered for a while before speaking.

“I think... I have time.”

In any case, he had a trip planned to Shanghai in the near future.

He could just stop by and cut the opening ceremony ribbon. It would not take too much time.

Chen Yushan: “Okay then, I’ll arrange it for you.”

“Okay, thanks.”

The phone call ended.

Chen Yushan put her phone on the desk and sighed. She began to fan herself with her hand.

“Who set the aircon temperature so high, it’s boiling in here...”

Chen Yushan took out the remote control from her desk drawer and lowered the temperature of the central air conditioner by two degrees.

She felt the temperature in the office gradually cool down. She took a deep breath and patted herself on the cheeks, trying to make herself focus on the work at hand...

...

At the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

After hanging up the call, Lu Zhou turned his attention to the weird equipment.

A string of text popped up on his phone.

Xiao Ai: [Master! The program debugging is finished, can begin at any time! (・∀・)]

Lu Zhou nodded.

“Then, let’s begin.”

Xiao Ai: [Ok! (๑•̀ㅂ•́)و✧]

The signal lights on the top of the strangely shaped equipment lit up for the first time. Soon after, a silver ring at the top of the equipment lit up with a blue light, followed by a rumbling sound.

Then, a vertical beam of light began to shoot upward. The string of light particles seemed to suspend in the air, interlaced with one another according to a certain pattern.

These light particles formed a Rubik’s cube at first, then a model of Starlight, constantly switching the images.

Even a layman who knew nothing about imaging technology could still name this device!

This was a hologram projection!

The kind that could be seen with the naked eye!

This gadget was inspired by the “wearable facial hologram projection system” Lu Zhou won in the last system lottery. The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study had developed a similar product over the years.

To be honest, when Lu Zhou first came into contact with this thing, he thought it was an incredible piece of advanced technology. But after some in-depth research, he discovered that it was actually not as advanced as he had imagined.

The specific principle was very simple. A water droplet with a diameter of 1 to 100 nm was activated by high-frequency vibration and thrown into the air, forming a state space with air as a dispersive substance. Using the Tyndall effect, light beams of specific wavelengths were emitted from multiple angles, and the light-scattering properties of the water particles were used to generate a three-dimensional image.

At first, Lu Zhou thought this was an optical problem.

However, after some in-depth research, he discovered that this was actually a programming problem.

After the accuracy of the emitted light, the diameter of the dispersed particles and the strength of the vibration waves all had to reach certain standards. The rest of the problem was how to program and make each beam of light enter the designated area at a specific angle and intensity to form the image needed.

This involved extremely complex programming problems.

Even with the help from Xiao Ai, it took him a long time to finish.

After 20 sets of preset images were displayed, the device had successfully completed all of the tests. The performance had reached the expectations, at least for a laboratory prototype.

The rest was the constant debugging and adjusting the parameters.

“Not bad.”

As Lu Zhou looked at the light particles disappear, he shook his head and mumbled, “But...”

“It’s still not perfect.”

Due to the sensitivity of the device, the images appeared to be distorted when changing pictures, especially for some complex structures. It was difficult for the machine to accurately project these images.

This was still far from the hologram projection technology that he had imagined.

Maybe when the technology matures, it will get better.

As for an interactive hologram technology...

That would take a while.

Xiao Ai: [But Xiao Ai thinks it is very good. (;'⋈`)]

Lu Zhou: “Maybe... What is this?”

The experiment device was not turned off. He saw some light particles floating in the air, forming the image of a woman...

A female model?

The female floating in the air... It looked like something in heaven.

Lu Zhou didn’t know what Xiao Ai was doing.

A hologram dialog box appeared in the air, right in front of his face.

[By using fuzzy calculation methods on the data from 320,000 players in the Calan Empire, this is the most attractive body model. There is no doubt that if this woman were in a TV show, she would be the most popular character!]

The players in the Calan Empire could customize their own characters’ appearances. After all, it would be a bit weird if everyone were designed to have blue skin.

Players could also adjust minor appearance details.

Thus, the players’ characters were all beautified, even though it didn’t fit the theme of the game.

But...

Lu Zhou asked, "So what?"

Xiao Ai: [This is Xiao Ai's body! (๓u003ew

Lu Zhou: "..."

Yep, this guy...

Has definitely lost a few brain cells.

1206 Star Voyage One!

Approaching the end of April, two major events occurred in the international science and technology community. First was the 20 billion USD financing round from East Asia Communications for SubCom, which shocked the entire North American market.

No one expected that the communications giant SubCom, who once occupied more than 40% of the submarine optical cable market, would publicly announce their surrender.

What people also did not expect was that the U.S Department of Commerce actually approved this financing plan. They allowed a Chinese communications company to get their hands dirty on an American company.

Even the loan for the financing round was from an American bank.

According to the analysis from the Wall Street Journal, this was because of the poor financial performance of SubCom and its failures in the global submarine optical cable project. Not to mention that their quantum repeater technology was nowhere in sight, so they had no hope of defeating competitors. This eventually led to the board of directors' having to bow down to a financing round from East Asia Communications.

Even though the WSJ's analysis was mostly correct, Chairman Carter insisted in an interview that the cooperation between SubCom and East Asia Communications was a win-win situation. He claimed that both parties could complement each other in experience and technology and that this was a normal business practice.

However, many people were able to smell something unusual from this financing proposal.

In any case, the agreement had already been signed.

The Department of Commerce also approved the financing proposal.

The quantum submarine optical cable was headed toward the eight landing cable stations on the American west coast. Everything was going great...

The other major event was that, after more than two months of construction, the Star Voyage One supercomputing center was finally complete.

...

High-tech eastern docks zone.

There was a tall and steep building beside a spacious six-lane highway.

A few days ago, this building was still just a steel frame, but now, it was covered with rows upon rows of black glass panels. Looking at it from a distance, it didn't look like a supercomputing center at all. Instead, it looked more like a skyscraper or a monument.

Judging by the shape alone, this supercomputing center was quite unique. Many people were wondering why Star Sky Technology adopted this strange design.

However, doubt and confusion did not last for long. Soon after, a report came out that the design of this supercomputing center was chosen by Academician Lu himself.

After hearing this news, everyone finally understood the reason behind this design.

After all, Academician Lu had peculiar tastes.

Most geniuses were idiosyncratic and eccentric individuals.

Choosing this design for the supercomputing center...

Was nothing out of the ordinary.

After Lu Zhou got out of his car, he was followed by Director Sun from the eastern docks Development Zone Management Committee. Director Sun spoke with a smile on his face.

“Over the past two months, at least 200 companies have moved into this zone. Our investment department was originally worried about how to complete this year’s investment targets. None of us expected to reach our target at the beginning of the year.

“This is all thanks to you, Academician Lu!”

Lu Zhou’s expression didn’t change as he spoke.

“Director Sun, you’re too kind, I’m just a scholar.”

Director Sun: “You’re too humble!”

Lu Zhou changed the topic of conversation.

“When is the opening ceremony?”

Seeing how Lu Zhou wasn’t amused by his flattery, Director Sun quickly dropped the nonsense and went straight to the point.

“It’s already ready! We can begin at any time—”

There seemed to be some kind of commotion at the ceremony site nearby. There was a female reporter dressed in casual clothes, accompanied by a cameraman. She was arguing with the security guards.

Wang Peng, who was standing silently behind Lu Zhou, looked over at the building.

Lu Zhou looked over and spoke curiously.

“What’s going on over there?”

Wang Peng: “It looks like a reporter.”

Lu Zhou had a moment of clarity on his face.

“Oh, reporter.”

The group of people stopped at the ribbon-cutting opening ceremony site.

Director Sun looked at the security guard and frowned. He was about to reprimand the security guard, but he remembered that Academician Lu was beside him, so he stayed silent.

He was about to ask which company the reporter was from. However, the reporter's eyes lit up when she recognized Lu Zhou. She totally ignored Director Sun, walked forward, and reached out with her microphone.

"Hello, Academician Lu, I'm a reporter from the South China Morning Post, may I interview you?"

Lu Zhou strangely looked at Director Sun next to him. Lu Zhou could tell that Director Sun did not expect this reporter to be here.

However, he didn't put all the blame on Director Sun. After all, it was impossible for a plan to go perfectly, even the ILHCRC collider occasionally had mistakes.

Lu Zhou looked at the reporter lady and nodded.

"Of course, I'll answer anything I can."

"Thank you for accepting our interview!"

The reporter had a glamorous smile on her face. She pointed the microphone at Lu Zhou and said, "Prior to this, we heard that Professor Arik from the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory said in an interview with the New York Times that, unless the bottleneck of quantum memory is solved, it is impossible to achieve 500 qubits by relying on the design of quantum logic circuit gates.

"Then, Academician Lu, can I ask if the computing power of Star Voyage One can really reach 524 qubits? Is there more to the story?"

Director Sun began to feel anxious even before Lu Zhou replied.

What is that supposed to mean?

Is she doubting the capabilities of the Star Voyage One supercomputing center?

So far, companies from all over the country interested in intelligent manufacturing were inquiring about the policies of the high-tech eastern docks zone. Most of them were interested in the cloud computing service provided by the legendary world's first quantum computer.

If this kind of fake news goes out, it will ruin Star Sky Technology's reputation, which will ruin our development zone.

"Reporter, what is that supposed to mean?"

The reporter replied with a calm smile, "I'm just asking a question, Director Sun, my apologies if you were offended."

"No, it's fine, it's normal to have questions."

Lu Zhou looked at Director Sun, gesturing to him to shut up. He then looked at the glass building next to him and said, "Coincidentally, there's going to be a trial run soon. I'll demonstrate for you."

The eyes of the reporter from the South China Morning Post suddenly lit up. She spoke as if she had just discovered a piece of breaking news.

"What do you plan on demonstrating? Can you disclose any information?"

Lu Zhou: "It's nothing confidential. If you pay attention to the academic community, you should know that our test plans were announced a week ago."

Reporter: "Sorry, can you be more specific?"

"It's a simple mathematics problem." Lu Zhou said after a pause, "It involves our favorite irrational number, pi."

1207 The Most Powerful Startup Screen In History!

Pi?The reporter lady was taken aback.

She was about to continue to ask Lu Zhou how he was going to show the computing performance of Star Voyage One using the number pi. But she could only watch as Academician Lu and his colleagues walked past her, heading toward the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Lu Zhou looked at the staff member that had been standing there for a long time and said, "Give me the scissors."

This staff member had a long speech planned. But since Academician Lu was reaching out for the scissors, and he was being stared down by Director Sun, he quickly took the scissors out of the box and handed them to Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou didn't like to waste time on trivial things. He picked up the scissors and cut the red ribbon tied at the building entrance. He then threw the scissors back into the box.

"The construction of the Star Voyage One building is complete! Thank you all for your hard work.

"We're all scientific researchers here, so I'll spare you the speech.

"Let's focus on the next matter of business."

After that, under the eyes of the reporters and the invited participants, Lu Zhou turned around and walked into the monument-like building.

The second he stepped into the building, he took out the glasses he won from the system lottery from underneath his shirt collar and said, "Xiao Ai."

A light blue chat box appeared on the glasses.

[Yes, Master. (´•ω•`)]

Lu Zhou: "Let's turn on our new computer."

[Okay! (๑•̥̥̥•̥̥̥) ✨]

Suddenly, the whole building made an electric buzzing noise. The current in each circuit unit gradually reached its maximum, and the nearby electronic devices were slightly affected by this large influx of electrical energy.

However, most people didn't notice this effect.

Because their attention was totally on the scene in front of them.

The surface of the glass building began to light up. It was like the building was made from blocks of LED screens. Lines of characters began to move across the screen horizontally.

Everyone was shocked by the sci-fi looking building in front of them. Even people from tens of kilometers away could see the “booting screen”.

“Jesus, f*ck! Is there a display for every single glass panel? How much did that cost?”

“I heard the construction unit that installed the glass for the building said that it used the latest photosensitive semiconductor material that was developed by the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study! It could convert solar energy into electricity during the day and store it, then use the energy to power the screens at night.”

“We have nuclear fusion already, what’s the point of solar energy?”

“Who knows, maybe it’s to promote low-carbon and environmentally friendly energy!”

Almost everyone was admiring the staggering startup screen that was displayed on the building. They excitedly chatted with one another. However, before they could finish their discussions, the image on the building began to change.

A string of numbers traveled toward the top of the building. More numbers began to join, slowly filling the building from the top.

Everyone was shocked. They did not know what Star Sky Technology was doing. Someone took out their phone and zoomed in using the camera. The person then shouted, “3.1415926... That’s pi!”

“Pi? Why is pi appearing here? What exactly is Academician Lu planning to do?”

Before anyone could react...

Lu Zhou...

Or rather, Star Voyage One, answered their questions.

The very bottom of the building displayed the number of digits.

The number continued to increase, attracting everyone's attention.

In the blink of an eye, this computer had calculated pi to the 2.7×10^{12} digits!

This was the current world record!

Google engineer Emma Ivo used 25 Google Cloud virtual machines and the y-cruncher software to run the Chudnovsky algorithm, which was specially designed for calculating pi. it took 121 days to get the result!

But now, it took Star Voyage One less than a minute to break this record.

Director Sun, an information engineering professor at a nearby university, and a senior engineer from a software company were all astonished.

What they were witnessing was ridiculous.

Many experts in information research fields almost believed that this calculation was done prior to this, and they were only retrieving the calculations.

However, this explanation did not make sense...

Because the calculations were still going on.

As everyone looked at the increasing exponent, their heartbeats began to increase.

20!

40!

60!

99!

Everyone thought that Star Voyage One was going to calculate toward infinite digits. However, the quantum computer stopped its operation, leaving the exponent at a round number of 100.

Which meant it had calculated pi to the 10^{100} th digit.

Compared to the previous record of 2.7 trillion digits (2.7^{12} digits), this record was broken by a whole exponent magnitude!

After the birth of supercomputers, this number was progressing at a “snail speed”, hovering around $10^9 \sim 10^{13}$ digits...

Lu Zhou stood in the lobby of the building, and he looked at the data passing by on the holographic panels. Lu Zhou suddenly felt in control of the world. In fact, that was sort of true. With the power of this computer, he was almost omnipotent. He could make the world go through a technology blackout.

He just needed to use the huge computing power of the Star Voyage One to hack into various nodes of the global Internet and set up backdoors. Then, he could make the Internet systematically collapse by overloading the servers.

If the computing power of the Star Voyage One was increased to more than 2,000 qubits, without the protection of quantum communication technology, its power was equivalent to a weapon of mass destruction.

Even the most secure cybersecurity defense line constructed by the most talented experts was as fragile as a sheet of paper. This was like soldiers facing an artillery attack, they were hopeless.

The words that appeared on Lu Zhou's glasses interrupted his thoughts.

Xiao Ai: [Master, should we continue? $\varphi(\geq \omega \leq^*)$ ♪]

Lu Zhou snapped back to reality and spoke after thinking.

“Just stop at 10^{100} digits; it's a nice round number.”

Even though calculating pi to more digits could be interesting, the number was nowhere near as meaningful as the computer itself.

This was just a demonstration to the world that the Star Voyage One was more powerful than all of the other supercomputers combined.

Pi to 10^{100} digits...

Even if a traditional supercomputer spent a century calculating pi, it would come nowhere close to 10^{100} digits.

Xiao Ai: [But it seems like Xiao Ai has accidentally calculated more digits.
 $\Sigma(^{\circ}\Delta^{\circ}|||)]$

Lu Zhou: “In that case, press the backspace key and delete the digits.”

Xiao Ai: [Oh, Master is so smart. $(^{\circ}\Delta^{\circ}|||)^{\circ}$]

Lu Zhou: “...”

More like you’re not smart enough.

On the other hand, at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Before the ribbon-cutting ceremony even began, Star Sky Technology invited the Guinness World Records certification officer to record this magnificent moment.

This story spread all over the world through the Internet and media outlets.

The entire information engineering field was flabbergasted...

1208 Quantum Supremacy

Even though a month had passed since the news of quantum computer technology breakthroughs, Professor Arik from the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory still did not give up his original opinion. It wasn’t that he didn’t believe in Lu Zhou’s ability.

However, he just couldn’t imagine that it was possible to achieve more than 100 qubits without mastering quantum storage technology.

Google’s approach was now to focus on software, which was the popular quantum annealing algorithm.

However, even the best brains at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory could only come up with an experimental quantum computer of 80-90 qubits.

As for 524...

That was too unrealistic.

He viewed this story as a political scam. After all, in his opinion, this wasn't the first time the idiots in Washington had been blackmailed by a third world country with weird schemes.

Obviously, by demonstrating quantum supremacy, China would put pressure on the International Information System Security Certification Consortium to promote their quantum encryption algorithms and quantum optical cables.

Hypothetically, if there were no quantum computer, both the quantum encryption algorithm and quantum communication would be completely unnecessary.

The slow, traditional supercomputers would take billions of years just to crack open the Fed's encryption.

However, quantum computers were different.

Its exponentially increasing computing power was something everyone was scared of.

Professor Arik brought his breakfast to the laboratory as usual. He sat at his desk and was about to open his email to check if there was a new paper review invitation.

His colleague, Dr. Cecil, was walking back from the coffee machine with two cups of coffee. Cecil placed one of the cups on his desk.

"Do you want some coffee?"

"Sure, thank you."

"You're welcome... Speaking of which, the Star Voyage One construction completes today. Are you paying attention to this matter?"

"I have been paying attention, but their performance has disappointed me." Professor Arik took a sip and said, "It doesn't look like the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study plans on publishing a paper. Except for a summary paper, there is nothing on the quantum computer."

Dr. Cecil nodded.

"Oh, I see... That is a bit strange."

Professor Arik looked at him and said, "Do you know anything?"

"I don't know if it counts, but I saw it on their official website." Dr. Cecil thought for a while and continued, "Apparently, they plan on proving Star Voyage One's computing power by calculating digits of pi."

Arik took a sip of coffee and chuckled pleasantly.

"Haha, how many digits are they going for?"

"I think ten to the power of 100."

The second Arik heard this, he nearly choked on his coffee.

Ten to the power of 100?!

Are these motherf*ckers crazy!

"Yeah, good luck to them, they're going to be calculating for the rest of their lives!"

Arik put the coffee cup aside and used the mouse to open his web browser.

He didn't care about the Star Voyage One opening ceremony.

However, he was surprised that they had prepared a demonstration for the opening ceremony.

He thought the Chinese would continue to "bluff and lie" forever. He didn't expect this lie to be exposed already.

Calculating pi to 10^{100} digits?

Haha! What a joke!

I'm not going to be merciless when they fail. They did this to themselves.

The D-Wave 3X is about to be completed soon. If those Chinese people think that they only need to calculate a trillion more digits and fake the rest, then...

I will make them pay for their lies.

Even though it was unrealistic for the D-Wave 3X to calculate pi to 10^{100} digits, 10^{15} digits was not a problem.

However, after Arik opened his browser and looked at the computer screen, his body froze.

He wasn't even on the Star Sky Technology website.

He saw some eye-catching headlines on the front page.

[A revolutionary computer! Star Voyage One creates a new Guinness world record for calculating pi!]

[—The Los Angeles Times.]

Arik: "???"

...

Obviously, Arik was not the only one who was shocked by this news.

Immediately after the new record was included in the online Guinness Book of World Records, discussion about the Star Voyage One began to explode on Facebook and Twitter.

[Isn't Google also working on quantum computers? Why haven't they achieved anything?]

[I am very disappointed at the White House. Even when we faced the Soviet Union, we still had the upper hand! But now, first controllable fusion energy, then the lunar space station... We're being surpassed.]

[The approval of East Asia Communications' acquisition of SubCom is the stupidest decision ever! This is how we lost our advantage!]

What was amazing was not only that Star Voyage One was able to calculate pi to 10^{100} digits, but that it only took Star Voyage One one minute!

What was the significance of this?

It was difficult to describe.

One could make a comparison to let people understand how terrifyingly powerful this computing power was.

Prior to this, Google engineers spent 121 days using 25 virtual machines to complete the 2.7×10^{12} record. Not to mention that they were using an algorithm optimized for calculating pi!

This was actually more complicated than it looked.

Soon after, a professor of information engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology named Griffin stepped up and published his views on this matter on his personal blog.

Or rather, his personal warnings.

[With current computer technology, it is almost impossible to calculate pi to 10^{100} digits. Even if you use the latest Dragon series carbon-based chips, you would need a server the size of the White House and a professional team of at least ten people to design a set of specially customized algorithms for calculating pi. Then, you would need at least a few hundred years for the computer to do the calculations.

[If you are using the Summit supercomputer at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, then you would have to wait for thousands of years to calculate even a tiny fraction of what the Star Voyage One calculated within one minute.

[I must warn our experts at the United States Department of Defense, as well as information security experts, that although the Cold War has long passed, a new crisis has emerged.

[Quantum supremacy will become something more terrifying than nuclear weapons. Due to the powerful information processing capabilities of quantum computers, those who have access to them only need a few small satellites or high-altitude drones to take down an entire city.

[Nuclear missiles? Intercontinental missiles? We countermeasures for physical weapons, but not for quantum computers.]

1209 Unusual Discovery

Professor Griffin's warnings were unnecessary. The Pentagon was a mess right now.

While the adjutant was walking into the office, Minister Marshall was pacing back and forth while thinking. He immediately stopped and looked up with hopeful eyes.

“Is the news accurate?”

“I’m afraid... it is. The Oak Ridge National Laboratory has performed calculations on the results. So far, we have tested to 10^{15} digits and have yet to find any mistakes.”

Marshall’s heart instantly sank.

This was the last thing he wanted to hear.

It took the Oak Ridge National Laboratory three days just to verify the results. If the Chinese attacked their network using the Star Voyage One, they would have no chance of survival.

“I need a risk assessment report. If the Chinese use their quantum computer to launch a cyberattack on us, we have to cut off the submarine optical cable. I want to know what kind of impact it will have, and how we can take military measures...” Marshall took a deep breath; his heart was throbbing. He said, “If we have to resort to military measures, I want to know how long will it take to end the threat.”

The adjutant had a bitter look on his face.

“Sir?”

Marshall spoke in a serious tone.

“What’s wrong, were my orders not clear enough?”

The adjutant lowered his head and spoke.

“If the situation advances to that point, we might not be able to contact our nuclear submarines deployed in the Atlantic. According to a report by the Institute of Information Engineering at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, their satellites can directly hijack all of our radio frequency bands. Any unit

that is separated from a physical fiber optic cable will be disconnected from the grid.”

Not to mention that the Chinese had their Airborne Brigade team, which could appear anywhere on earth within an hour.

They could appear at the White House, the Pentagon, or America’s missile bases.

In any case, a direct military response was the worst choice.

“We should listen to the advice of Professor Griffin at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The quantum computer is more threatening than nuclear weapons.

“Rather than responding to the risks, it is better for us to think of ways to prevent this battle from happening in the first place.”

Marshall’s face went pale.

“Do as you’re told.”

The adjutant immediately stood at attention and spoke.

“Yes, sir!”

Marshall watched the adjutant walk out of the door. The tense expression on his face eased slightly.

His adjutant was an excellent war strategist.

Even though he was unwilling to accept the reality, his logical brain told him that there was at least an 80% chance of the adjutant being correct.

Marshall didn’t hesitate. He grabbed the phone on the desk and called the White House.

In order to prevent the worst situation from happening, he had to report this to the higher-ups.

He especially had to warn the president to not do anything impulsive...

...

Ever since the opening of the maglev train between Shanghai and Jinling, the two cities were connected together. It felt like the Shanghai Station and Jinling Station was just one subway stop away.

In the morning, Lu Zhou was working at the supercomputing center in the Shanghai eastern docks area. In the afternoon, he was already standing in a laboratory at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, showing his latest research results to an old man.

A holographic image of a tank floated above the silver disk. Although the projected tank was not to scale, it basically had the same composition and colors as a real tank.

If they could make the scale 1:1, it might even be difficult to distinguish the projected image from a real tank.

When Director Li reached out and poked the tank model floating in the air, his finger passed through the image as he spoke.

“This is quite interesting, what if...”

“What if we put on an aircraft carrier?” Lu Zhou said. He knew the old man too well. He reached out, grabbed the device on the table, and gently shook it.

The violent shaking was not passed on to the holographic image. Instead, it was transmitted in a more violent way. The tank floating above the silver circle was broken into colorful fragments. It was like a corrupted image, totally losing its form.

When Director Li saw this, he paused for a second and awkwardly scratched his head.

“I see... So, no movement, right?”

“Correct.” Lu Zhou nodded and said, “Vertical movement is fine, but if it swings side to side, it causes the picture to be distorted, like what you just saw. The entire model would have to be rebuilt.”

The corrupt holographic color pieces quickly reorganized itself in the air and restored the original tank appearance, as if nothing had happened.

Lu Zhou sighed in his heart.

Earth's technology is very far behind.

The thing he got from the system lottery would definitely be able to withstand a little shaking.

But for now, this thing was only good enough to replace a billboard or to be used as a home television display.

“... Also, I don't think that your first reaction to any new technology should be to implement it in the military field. We're in a peaceful time, so we should do something more imaginative and truly realize its value.”

Lu Zhou reached out and lightly swept across on the edge of the silver ring with his index finger.

The image floating in the air quickly changed from a tank to a video window.

He looked at the floating window and said, “We're researching how to improve the hologram image from a pure 3D screen into an interactive interface that supports touch operation. If we implement this technology, we'll be able to make science fiction come to life.”

Suddenly, the phone in his pocket began to ring.

Lu Zhou looked at the shaking hologram image and coughed.

“We are also researching how to avoid interference from sound waves. This is not too difficult, it should be solved soon... Let me answer this call.”

Lu Zhou left Director Li alone in the laboratory and went outside.

Strangely, the call was from Luo Wenxuan.

Lu Zhou picked up the phone, put it next to his ear, and said, “Hello?”

“It's me.”

“I know it's you, what do you want?”

“Hey, I'm just here to call my friend.”

“If it's not an emergency, I'm hanging up.”

“Wait! Wait a minute, I’m just kidding.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Luo Wenxuan coughed and said, “Here’s the thing. Yesterday, the Lunar Hadron Collider completed its last experiment of the month. Normally, this isn’t a big deal, but we found something very interesting in the experiment... It’s something unusual, but we don’t know what it means.”

He paused for a second and continued, “I can send the information to your email, but... I think it’s better for you to come here in person.”

1210 Scientific Intuition

An hour later, Lu Zhou was already standing in front of the ILHCRC headquarters. Luo Wenxuan waved at him while walking over. Lu Zhou waited for him to come closer before speaking.

“I really wished you called me in the morning instead.”

“Why?”

“Because I was at the eastern docks this morning, and it only takes half an hour to get here from there. But now, I think I have to stay in Shanghai for dinner.”

“Eastern docks? Where the Star Voyage One is?”

“Yeah.”

Luo Wenxuan cast a curious look at Lu Zhou and said, “I heard you calculated pi to 10^{100} digits?”

“Technically, Star Voyage One was the one that did the calculations... Why?”

“Nothing... I just think it’s pretty cool. Man! It’s a shame we were all doing experiments at that time, and we didn’t get the chance to watch it live...” Luo Wenxuan sighed and looked up at the sky. He said regretfully, “Damn, I feel like I missed a chance to witness history.”

"If you want to, you can witness history every day..." Lu Zhou walked into a corridor of the IMCRC headquarters. He glanced at his silver watch on his wrist and said, "Okay, back to business, tell me what happened."

Luo Wenxuan nonchalantly shrugged and said, "Sure, so here's the thing..."

It took him about ten minutes to tell Lu Zhou the whole story.

Basically, three days ago, they conducted a high-energy particle collision experiment in the 1.13-1.14 TeV energy region using the Lunar Hadron Collider. They hoped to find more evidence for the high-dimensional particle theoretical model proposed by Lu Zhou, as well as the proof for the hyperspace theory that Einstein dreamed of.

However, after they completed the last set of experiments, they discovered something extremely unusual...

"The last three sets of experiments were originally intended to be a control group. However, the energy data observed by the four detectors all showed violent fluctuations... These were not fluctuations that could be explained by quantum fluctuations; it was an order of magnitude more powerful!"

"It feels like..."

Luo Wenxuan struggled to think of an analogy, so Lu Zhou spoke instead.

"It feels like you're playing pool, and someone used the cue to hit the moving white ball?"

"Exactly!" Luo Wenxuan snapped his fingers and said, "That's exactly how it feels! But there is a slight difference. Not only did someone hit the ball mid-shot, but they also added an extra black ball to the table."

Lu Zhou raised his eyebrows.

If only the energy were increased, there were many theoretical explanations that provided a basis. However, both the energy and the mass were amplified at the same time, making it somewhat unusual.

"Are you sure you read the data correctly?"

"Come on, do you really think I'm that careless?" Luo Wenxuan said as he looked at Lu Zhou's obvious distrust on his face. Luo Wenxuan sighed and

said, "Fine, even if you don't believe me, you should trust the team of engineers and physicists at the ILHCRC."

Lu Zhou: "Did you inspect the experiment machine?"

Luo Wenxuan said, "Is that even a question? The second after the experiment was over, I asked the engineers at the lunar scientific research station to inspect the experiment machine. Nothing unusual was found on the superconducting magnet and the high-energy particle emitter."

"This does seem a bit unusual..." Lu Zhou rubbed his chin for a while. He then asked, "What about the meeting? Did you guys host a meeting?"

"I called you right after the meeting."

In fact, calling Lu Zhou was one of the conclusions for the meeting.

Even though the ILHCRC had many Nobel Prize-level scholars, their prior experience in experiments was not applicable to this new abnormal observation.

Instead of having endless debates, most people wanted to hear what Professor Lu thought.

After all, the purpose of this experiment was to perfect his theoretical model of high-dimensional particles.

Luo Wenxuan looked at Lu Zhou and spoke.

"... Professor Witten's guess is that the low-dimensional expansion of some high-dimensional matter disturbed the nearby space-time curvature, resulting in anomalies in the observed data, and there was actually no change in the mass and energy under the space-time scale. In fact, my opinion is the same, but Professor Wilczek has a completely different point of view. Academician Wu from the Institute of High Energy Physics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences has a different opinion... Regardless, no one can convince anyone else on this issue."

Lu Zhou: "Regardless of what actually caused the abnormality, there has to be a clue... Let me look at the experiment data first."

"Come with me."

After walking into Luo Wenxuan's office, Luo Wenxuan put his laptop on the desk, entered his work password, and logged into the database.

Soon after, he retrieved the experiment data and said, "Look at it yourself... Do you want to drink anything?"

Lu Zhou was sitting in the office chair. His attention was totally grabbed by the data in front of him. He then said casually, "Just instant coffee."

"It's not like I have freshly ground coffee... I'll be right back."

Luo Wenxuan turned around and went to make the coffee. As Lu Zhou looked at the lines of data on the screen, his eyebrows began to gradually furrow.

Finally, his eyes stopped at a certain row.

After three minutes, Lu Zhou took in a cold breath and spoke.

"Interesting..."

Just like Luo Wenxuan had said, the experimental data was quite unusual. The four detectors distributed in the collider all detected a mass far greater than the lead ions themselves; all from the lead ions colliding fragments.

Actually, according to quantum chromodynamics, the increase and decrease of mass energy were normal. After all, there were strange things such as the zero-mass Goldstone boson, or it might have been interfered with by a future quark mass, or it might have created something that couldn't be observed with current human technology.

However, there was a limit to the fluctuation of energy.

Generally speaking, a supercomputer that was used to calculate quantum chromodynamics could normally account for 93% of the fluctuations.

However, the data in front of him was totally different.

After analyzing the data collected in the experiment, the collision detected by the X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy exceeded the expected value by an entire order of magnitude...

This couldn't only be attributed to quantum fluctuations anymore.

Not only did this threaten his high-dimensional particle theory model, but it also threatened the theory of relativity, the standard model, and even the mass-energy equation... This could ruin the entire foundation of modern physics.

Perhaps something was interfering with the experiment, just like Luo Wenxuan had described, maybe someone put an extra ball on the pool table...

Lu Zhou suddenly had a thought.

It felt like he was daydreaming.

A blue chat box appeared in his sight.

[Emergency mission: Call From The Void]

When Lu Zhou stared at the chat window, he froze.

The last time something like this happened was because of the Mars bacteria...

Luo Wenxuan walked into the office with two cups of coffee.

He looked at Lu Zhou and asked curiously, "Did you find anything?"

Lu Zhou, who was sitting at the computer, looked like he just saw a ghost.

Lu Zhou looked up at Luo Wenxuan, and after a moment of silence, he spoke.

"I think... we might be in trouble."

Luo Wenxuan looked at him and put down the coffee cups on the desk.

"Trouble? Why?"

"Intuition..." Lu Zhou clenched his jaws and said, "This is what my scientific intuition is telling me."

Chapter 1211: The Second Emergency Mission

In fact, Lu Zhou's intuition was accurate.

Not accurate in the sense that he had predicted some incredible scientific theory.

But accurate in the sense that this observation was going to bring them a lot of trouble.

An unexplainable physics phenomenon was not always scary, but if this phenomenon conflicted with the foundations of modern physics, then the impact could be significant.

Lu Zhou went into a toilet stall and entered the system space. He walked in front of the pale blue information screen.

“System, open my mission panel!”

This was exactly like the last emergency mission.

A lock icon was added to his “Control of Earth and Moon” mission. Underneath the old mission, there was a new mission that was marked with an emergency icon.

[Emergency Mission: Call From The Void (Threat level: ?)]

[Description: The road to the search for absolute truth is often shaky. There are many mysterious things that we don’t understand in this vast universe. Do not be tempted by the illusion of truth...]

[Requirements: Find the reason behind the abnormal data. Techniques that can be taken include but are not limited to:

[1]

[Rewards: ???]

Lu Zhou: “???”

After Lu Zhou finished reading the mission panel, he was more confused than the three question marks inside the mission reward column.

What does remove and destroy mean?

Does it mean to exterminate all of the physicists that have discovered this problem?

What made him even more curious was the swarm mentality, he had never seen that before.

As well as the “spirit of the great universe”...

Lu Zhou thought of a similar phrase appearing in his memory of the Calan Empire. He frowned and began to think.

The spirit of the universe means “omnipotent” in the various religions and cultural forms of the Void Civilization. This is what “The Observer” claimed. Or maybe there’s a civilization called the “spirit of the universe”...

Maybe just like an “omnipotent” advanced civilization, it dominates a certain corner of the universe or controls the physical laws in some form. Perhaps it even becomes a part of nature itself.

If only there is a way to learn the Void Civilization language.

When Lu Zhou tried to find research materials, most of the things he came across were science fiction.

Of course, rather than believing in some mysterious being, Lu Zhou was more inclined to believe that the spirit of the universe was a physics concept.

However, after seeing the results of the experiment, his understanding of physics was subverted...

“Does this seem too unscientific?”

Lu Zhou came back into the office. Luo Wenxuan said while holding a coffee cup in his hand, “If our observations are objectively correct, the entire foundation of physics might be overthrown by us.”

The conservation of mass energy in physics was equivalent to the Peano axioms in mathematics.

If someone claimed that mass energy could be produced out of thin air, it was equivalent to saying that $1+1=3$. It was a ridiculous claim; even a primary school student would laugh at them.

However, the results of the experiment were clear as day. The mass energy increase ratio was 53%. Basically, after two lead ions with 1 unit of energy collided, they actually produced 2.53 lead ions.

Where did the extra 0.53 lead ion energy come from?

Nobody knew.

They also did not observe any signs of interference from the external environment.

It was like magic.

Lu Zhou composed himself and spoke calmly.

“The foundation of physics has been torn down countless times, so what’s one more. It can’t be ‘unscientific’ even if you don’t even know what the science behind this is.”

Luo Wenxuan: “Man, why do you have to insult me like that?”

“You misunderstood. I didn’t insult anyone.” Lu Zhou looked at Luo Wenxuan and said, “Also, I think there’s an ‘external agent’ acting on our experiment.”

“External agent?” Luo Wenxuan frowned and said, “You’re saying there are aliens interfering with our experiment?”

Luo Wenxuan gestured with his hand.

“Like the aliens... in Independence Day?”

Lu Zhou looked at him and explained patiently, “This is a possibility. Before we catch an alien and interrogate it, we can’t rule out this possibility... However, I must point out that the probability of this is astronomically low. They would have to exist in the first place, as well as having the technology and motive to do something like this. There are a million other ways they could interfere with our technological development.”

Luo Wenxuan shrugged.

“I’m just making a joke to liven up the atmosphere...”

Lu Zhou spoke in a serious way.

“In any case, we need to collect more experimental data.

“Whether it’s because of aliens or because of the truth of the universe, its existence has subverted our understanding of physics.

“I still believe that significant mass energy cannot be produced out of thin air. Something must be interfering with our experiment... All we have to do is to prove this and give it a reasonable explanation!

“I’m not joking around. I’m sure you understand why I’m thinking this way.”

Luo Wenxuan silently looked at Lu Zhou’s serious face. After a while, he sighed and took a sip from his coffee cup.

After a moment of pause, he asked, “Should we release the research results?”

Lu Zhou spent half a minute thinking before nodding.

“Make it public.

“We need bright minds to help us.”

...

On the first Tuesday in May, an extraordinary event happened in the international physics community.

The latest research results published by the ILHCRC showed that during the collision experiment in the 5.12~5.22 TeV energy region, the colliding lead ions did not lose their mass as expected, but instead, they had gained mass.

Once the news broke out, it immediately caused an uproar in the international physics community.

Because this result violated the “common sense” of physics.

In fact, this was not the first time a collision experiment on lead ions was conducted. A long time ago, CERN used lead ions to simulate the “Big Bang” collision. However, their experiment was at a much lower collision energy level.

No one expected this research result.

The significance of this news on the physics community was akin to the OPERA experiment in the second half of 2011, where CERN announced in a press release that their researchers had discovered neutrinos moving faster than the speed of light by 0.0025%.

This incident was spread around the physics community for half a year, and in the end, the leader of the OPERA research team, Ereditato, had to resign.

Many people were surprised that this kind of accident happened in CERN, the temple of physics. They were shocked at how stupid the research team members were.

After all, even a high school student knew that nothing could exceed the speed of light.

In fact, this wasn't the first time something like this had happened in scientific research.

Back in 2006, Fermilab's MINOS—Main Injector Neutrino Oscillation Search—project also found signs of neutrino passing the speed of light. The result was not statistically significant, so it was not recognized by the physics community.

Even the researchers of "OPERA" did not believe their experimental results.

They even spent several months checking the experimental equipment and repeating the experiment in order to prove that they were wrong. Unfortunately, they still couldn't find the problem.

Therefore, they finally "bravely" released the experimental results, leaving this issue to the entire physics community for judgment.

This was what caused the infamous research paper.

Interestingly, there were subtle differences in the attitudes of scientists from various countries on this false experiment result. Not everyone believed that the conclusion of the "OPERA" project was wrong.

For example, many Japanese researchers in this field said they had "confidence in OPERA". As for Chinese scientists, their statements were more ambiguous. They said OPERA's "research on the possibility of faster than light travel should start from the essence of physics".

Which meant a whole lot of nothing.

As for the British and American physicists, they were generally against this research.

Probably the most outspoken physicist was Jim Eckert at the University of Surrey.

In an interview, he publicly declared that “If the OPERA experiment proves to be correct, and the neutrinos surpass the speed of light, I will eat a sock.”

In the academic community, “eating” an inedible object was a way of expressing one’s confidence.

Regardless, the OPERA experiment was determined to be an error.

The person in charge of the Icarus project repeated the experiment and said that the experimental results they measured were exactly the same as Einstein’s calculations, ultimately rejecting the result from OPERA.

The cause for the error was apparently due to the optical cable between the GPS receiver and the computer becoming loose, as well as the oscillator circuit that did not connect properly.

But now, the physics community was in a similar situation again.

The theory of relativity wasn’t the only theory in threat, the entire foundation of physics was in danger.

The entire physics community was going crazy...

[1] The spirit of the great universe guides us forward. (Idealism +10)

[2. Every cause must have a reason, there is no emotion in the universe, only truth. (Materialism +10)

[3. The greats don’t cater to the trivial. Now is not the time to solve this problem. (Authoritarianism +10)

[4. Remove, destroy. (Swarm mentality +10)

Chapter 1212: Call From The Void

[Shocked! ILHCRC Latest Results Disprove The Mass-Energy Equivalence! Perpetual Motion Machines May Be A Possibility!]

When Lu Zhou saw this headline, he nearly vomited.

The media always used all kinds of weird messages to twist his words.

When did the ILHCRC disprove the mass-energy equivalence? How come I, the chairman, doesn't know about this?

Is it so difficult for them to understand and to just say that there was "abnormal mass expansion in three sets of experimental data"?

Even if the foundation of physics is overthrown, perpetual motion machines are still extremely unlikely to exist!

At least in this universe!

"Do these people not think before they publish these articles?"

After reading a few lines, Lu Zhou threw the newspaper into the trash can beside him with a look of disgust on his face. Spending an extra second reading this article was a waste of his time.

"The media industry is in a downturn, it's normal for them to attract audiences with clickbait..." Witten saw Lu Zhou throw the newspaper in the trash can and said, "How's it going, any clues?"

"Don't think of me as some oracle, I know just as much as you." Lu Zhou sighed and grabbed the mouse. He clicked on the browser and logged into a physics forum.

Just like he had expected, the physics community was going crazy.

There were nearly a dozen posts on the front page; all with varying degrees of emotion.

First, a professor at Stanford University said that if this wasn't a mistake from the lunar collider, he would eat his boxer briefs.

Lu Zhou also wondered if the collider had a problem or if the detector was broken. However, it was hard to believe that both of them were broken at the same time.

A professor from Oxford University also came forward with a similar opinion, but he did not suspect that there was a problem with the collider. Instead, he attributed the source of the error to statistics. He thought that ILHCRC was responsible for this and that the researchers made a big mistake. He thought the ILHCRC should set up an expert team to re-analyze the data.

On the other hand, there were already many well-known professors on arXiv who had already started to speculate on why this phenomenon occurred.

Theoretical physics was a difficult field.

Not just in the academic sense.

But also in the real-life sense.

Even the mathematics community was affected.

On the MathOverflow forums, there were already many experts in the mathematics circle who were beginning to discuss if any of this was true, and would it bring any enlightenment to mathematics?

Lu Zhou didn't quite understand what this meant.

Even if mass energy is no longer conserved, $1+1=2$ should always stay true, right...?

Yeah, definitely.

"Before I came to the ILHCRC, I worked at CERN for 30 years. But this is my first time seeing a situation like this." Witten was holding a coffee cup as he walked to Lu Zhou's desk. He pondered for a while and said, "From a mathematician's perspective, where do you think the extra mass might come from?"

"I don't know, mathematics is not defined using physics. But I do know that significant mass and energy cannot appear out of thin air, unless..."

Witten: "Unless?"

“Unless it comes from the other side of time...” Lu Zhou opened his mouth, but he soon shook his head and said, “No, wait, that is impossible... That is even more ridiculous than the increase in mass energy.”

Time was irreversible; this was also one of the basic agreed upon theorems of physics.

The curvature of space-time might change, but the direction it was traveling in must be constant.

The reason behind this was complicated.

If someone wanted to understand this, they must first understand that, at least for mainstream physics, time was not a “thing” and had nothing to do with the dimensions of the universe. Strictly speaking, it was a “scale” that appeared along with the Big Bang, pointing toward the end of the universe.

However, one shouldn’t rule out that new discoveries might appear in the future that could redefine the concept of time.

But at least for now, Lu Zhou did not see these signs from the latest findings at the ILHCRC. Instead of attributing the anomaly to another concept of time, it would be better to attribute this to the Void...

Wait a minute...

Lu Zhou suddenly blinked.

Witten noticed the emotional change on his face. He quickly asked, “What are you thinking?”

“A possibility... But it might be a little unrealistic.”

Witten smiled and said, “More ridiculous than string theory?”

“Probably...” Lu Zhou thought for a while and said, “If, in addition to the n strings that make up the universe, there is an $n+1$ string, which does not belong to the universe, and it runs through the universe. It’s like... putting two mirrors against each other, or a lake’s reflection inside a lake.”

Lu Zhou heard about this theory from The Observer.

After Witten listened to Lu Zhou, he frowned and said, “Even you will say some weird stuff sometimes.”

“Who else says weird stuff like this?”

“Nash... You might know him as a genius that was tortured by mental issues. When he was alive, I liked to discuss math problems with him.”

“It’s a shame he passed away then.”

“About what you said... I cannot rule out that possibility, but since we cannot prove it, there is no point discussing such things.”

After a pause, Witten said, “There is no point discussing things before the Big Bang, it will only ever be conjecture. This is the beginning of science. Unless one day we can step outside the box of the universe, otherwise, we, who are stuck in the box, won’t ever have a chance to step outside...”

Lu Zhou struggled to describe this concept. He looked at Witten and said, “The Void. I plan on calling it that.”

“Void? That’s an interesting name.” Witten shrugged and said, “But like I said, it doesn’t make any sense.”

Does it really not make sense?

Lu Zhou spent the entire morning thinking about this problem.

This was no longer his scientific intuition.

The title of the mission already gave him a hint on where the problem came from. The contradictions all pointed toward the existence of an extra dimension beyond the n dimension, which was older than the Big Bang.

However, if he wrote down these concepts in a paper, people would think that he was crazy.

For some reason, he suddenly empathized with Einstein.

Apparently, Einstein’s later days were quite “miserable”. This misery was not only due to political suspicion and exclusion, but it also stemmed from the fact that his beloved physics had abandoned him.

People respected him, but they no longer believed in him. The reputation of absolute authority gained from his youth had faded. No one could understand the things he calculated on the blackboard before his death, and people stopped trying to dive deep into his later works. They stopped caring about what the chaotic old man had to say.

An advanced physics theory was acceptable to the world, but if the theory was in the realm of philosophy, no one would believe them.

Maybe once he really discovered something, he could claim that he “knew everything all along”.

He was the only one that could prove his own theories...

Lu Zhou quickly ate his lunch.

He then returned to his desk and turned on his computer.

Suddenly, a chat bubble popped up.

Xiao Ai: [Master, you have mail. (๑•̥̥̥•̥̥̥)✧]

New mail?

Lu Zhou logged onto his email and opened the unread email.

When he saw the name, he paused for a second.

Satoshi Nakamoto?

Lu Zhou had a strange look on his face, and he continued to read the email.

The whole email was only one sentence.

[I want to have a chat with you.]

Is this a way of greeting me?

Lu Zhou smiled as he shook his head. He typed a reply.

[I'm sorry I don't have time right now. Let's talk about it when I finish dealing with the matter at hand.]

After Lu Zhou clicked the “Send” button, he closed the tab and focused his attention on the draft paper on the table.

He wouldn’t be able to solve any problems if he let his attention diverge.

If he wanted to find any clues, he had to do rigorous calculations.

Even though he might not succeed...

He had to prepare as well as he could for the next experiment...

Chapter 1213: Strings Outside the Universe

The clock on the wall was quietly ticking.

An hour ago, Frank Wilczek was sitting with perfect posture, staring at the image on the computer screen. He sat there motionlessly.

Suddenly, his office door opened.

Professor Wilczek saw Witten enter his office. He finally raised his head by an inch. However, when he was about to speak, Witten spoke first.

“I know you want to ask me what Professor Lu thinks, but I’m afraid I will disappoint you. Except for a conjecture about an extra dimension, he didn’t reveal anything to me.”

When Wilczek heard an unexpected word, he frowned.

“Extra dimension?”

An extra physical dimension was not a new concept. All dimensions derived by Einstein’s relativity equations could be called extra dimensions.

It was like Theodor Kaluza, who added a fifth dimension in order to explain gravity. Because of string theory, the value of dimensions had been increased to 13.

However, what puzzled Wilczek was why Witten and Lu Zhou were talking about this concept.

“Yes, he attributed the cause of the mass increase phenomenon to something that can not be proven.” Witten looked at Wilczek’s confused face. He then took out a lighter from his pocket and placed it on Wilczek’s desk. He said, “Assume that the universe is made from n -dimensional matter, just like this lighter.

“The disturbance that interfered with our experiment came from the $n+1$ dimension. It’s like my thumb as it presses on the lighter’s switch. Of course, this analogy might seem inaccurate, but in fact, it’s almost poetic... It’s as if there’s an almighty God living on dimension $n+1$, watching us, who are imprisoned in a box, and God is singing a beautiful song to us.”

Wilczek muttered to himself as he watched Witten pressing the lighter.

“This does sound... interesting.”

Witten put away the lighter and glanced at Wilczek in disbelief.

“Unbelievable... You actually find it interesting.”

“After all, Lu Zhou was the one who made this conjecture.” Wilczek shrugged and muttered, “When you analyze this problem from an objective perspective, you can’t prove him wrong, right? As far as the facts are concerned, we did see that when the collision energy reached 5.12 TeV, the mass had an incredible expansion. According to the calculations of lattice quantum chromodynamics, we should actually get a smaller total mass.”

Witten went silent.

After a while, he spoke.

“Let’s put this matter aside for the time being. The reason why I came here is not to discuss a theory that has not been perfected.”

Wilczek: “Then... why are you here?”

Witten: “What do you think about Professor Miro?”

“Miro?” Wilczek had never heard of this strange name. He frowned and asked, “Sorry, who is Miro?”

Seeing how Wilczek had never heard of the name, a strange look appeared on Witten's face.

Witten reached out and picked up the remote control that was placed on the desk. He then turned on the hardly used office TV.

"Professor Galette Miro, a thirty-seven-year-old professor of physics at Stanford University, has served as a consultant for high-energy physics experiments in CERN and the ILHCRC and has won the American Physical Society Apker Award and the International Theoretical Physics Dirac Award..."

"So he's a young man with a promising future." Professor Wilczek watched the Fox News broadcast on the TV and asked, "What about him?"

"He's also the leader of a new religion." Witten pointed at the TV with his chin and pressed a few buttons on the remote control. He said, "It might be a bit troublesome to explain, so you should watch it yourself."

...

Fox News.

At the studio.

A tall man with deep eye sockets was sitting on the sofa. He wore a pair of gold-rimmed glasses on the bridge of his nose and a normal plaid shirt. It was easy to spot him as a man who worked in science and engineering.

Sitting on the sofa opposite him was the host of a talk show on Fox News, Ms. Cordell.

Ms. Cordell looked at Professor Miro with a friendly smile on her face as she reached out with her microphone and began the interview.

"Hello, Professor Miro, thank you very much for coming to our studio. I heard that something very... very unbelievable happened recently in the physics world, is that true?"

"Yes." Miro seemed like he was not quite used to the atmosphere here. He looked around awkwardly. But soon, he regained his composure and said in a

confident tone, “You can say that it has subverted many of our understandings of physics.”

Ms. Cordell asked with a smile, “From the comments online, we can see that many viewers are concerned about this matter. We know that you are a professor of physics at Stanford University and a researcher at the ILHCRC. Maybe you can explain in detail to the audience in front of their TV screens... What amazing results did we get from the hadron collider?”

“A mass expansion happened at 5.12 TeV!”

Professor Miro had a passionate look in his eyes as Ms. Cordell asked, “Sorry, I don’t quite understand, what does this... mean?”

“This means that the quantity of mass energy as we know it might no longer be conserved!”

The professor’s eyes became increasingly energetic. His voice trembled with excitement as he continued, “Our foundation of physics was built on a flat wasteland. Through the exploration of the standard model, we have continued to repair this foundation and add bricks to it. Finally, we created a tall building!

“However a month ago, the latest research from the ILHCRC knocked this building to the ground!

“It’s a pity you were not there to witness this great experiment; otherwise, you will definitely understand why I am so excited!”

Professor Miro’s eyes were wide open and bloodshot because of his emotions, whereas Ms. Cordell had a surprised look on her face.

His words did not surprise her. Instead, she was surprised at his... abnormal mental state.

She heard the show director’s speaking through her headset and received confirmation to continue the interview.

She bit the bullet and continued the show.

“This sounds... somewhat amazing. In other words, they have proved that mass energy is not conserved?”

"It is not conserved on large scales! It seems that you don't understand what this means. I'd be happy to explain to you clearly!"

Before the host lady could speak, Professor Miro continued to speak quickly.

"According to the view of traditional physics, our universe's entropy is increasing. All matter develops from order to disorder. But now, this concept might be overturned! Our physics has finally entered a place even Einstein wasn't able to predict. Our universe will no longer be an eternal decay; instead, it will go from an old cycle to a new cycle, forming a never-ending cycle!"

Professor Miro's skinny body suddenly shook with enthusiasm.

He leaned forward and stared at Ms. Cordell, who had a trace of fear on her face. He spoke in a hoarse voice.

"Do you believe in God?"

Ms. Cordell was shocked by this question, and she quickly nodded.

"I do."

"Maybe God exists... No, he definitely exists."

Ms. Cordell looked at Professor Miro, who seemed to be crazy, and said, "What you mean is... Mass energy is no longer conserved forever, and the universe will not increase in entropy forever. Do these conclusions prove the existence of God?"

"God?" A scornful smile appeared on Professor Miro's face. He leaned back on the sofa and said, "If that's what you want to call it.

"In some sense, it is an omniscient and omnipotent being; it is everywhere and nowhere in the universe.

"It is like a ghost wandering in the universe, interfering with us through an invisible hand.

"Instead of using the childish title of God...

"I prefer to call it the spirit of the universe."

Chapter 1214: Creation

There was dead silence in the office.

“I only found out yesterday.” After turning off the TV, Professor Witten looked at Professor Wilczek, who was dumbfounded, and said, “It seems that this is not the first time he has made such remarks... A few hours ago, I heard my assistant joking that he’s an evangelist, preaching in our laboratories all day long.”

Wilczek twirled his index finger and asked, “When did this begin?”

“A week ago, after the experiment.”

“I can’t believe that experiment resonated with him to this degree.” Wilczek took off his glasses and rubbed the bridge of his nose as he said, “How should we comfort him?”

“This is a problem for you to think about. Don’t try to shift the responsibility to me.” Witten then said, “The list of researchers on the collision experiment project team was signed and approved by you. Now that something is going wrong, aren’t you going to clean up your mess?”

“Was it really approved by me...?”

Seeing how Witten was not letting go, Professor Wilczek sighed and said, “Fine, I seem to remember that did happen.”

After spending half a minute thinking about how to solve this problem, he finally made up a decision in his mind. He raised his head and said, “There is no doubt that he has gone crazy.”

“My suggestion is for Professor Miro to take a break, and during that time... we must find a way to stop him from making such irresponsible remarks on behalf of the ILHCRC.

“This is a temple of science, not a church. If he really believes in those ideas... it would be better for him to continue his research in a temple.”

Witten nodded.

“I think so too.”

However, a trace of worry appeared in Witten’s eyes.

“I hope this will not cause him more trouble. I hope he can recover as soon as possible.”

Wilczek said, “Actually, I am curious about how he derived his theory of God through mass expansion.”

When Wilczek noticed Witten was staring at him, he laughed and said, “Of course, I’m just curious... I wouldn’t actually ask him.”

...

Lu Zhou had predicted that this experiment would shock the physics world. However, he didn’t expect the situation to develop in a completely different direction.

A new religion seemed to be created?

These people believed in “God creation theory”, that everything was arranged with intent. They believed that a certain higher living creature, civilization, or even consciousness created this universe.

They named this creature, civilization, or consciousness as the spirit of the universe.

The spirit of the universe was in-line with the God creation theory.

In fact, the God creation theory was not anything new in physics. One of the discoverers of string theory, Michio Kaku, was its loyal supporter.

Professor Kaku had also proposed parallel universe theory, time travel theory, and so on.

These things were not without scrutiny, but they could neither be proven nor falsified.

It was like if a physicist had guessed that there was an egg before the Big Bang. Although the first reaction of most people was that how could that be possible, there was nothing they could do to prove that it was false.

Man was a creature of time, and all thoughts were a product of time.

Time began at the start of the Big Bang.

So, logically speaking, it was impossible to prove or falsify any speculation before the universe was born.

It would be fine for this new religion that believed in the spirit of the universe to gain attraction.

After all, the meaning of science was only to study the mysteries of the world, not to deprive others of their beliefs.

However, the problem was that this doctrine seemed to gain the belief of some ILHCRC researchers...

The situation seemed to be out of control.

Lu Zhou stood at the entrance of an apartment building. After hesitating for a while, he took out his phone from his pocket.

“Xiao Ai.”

A chat box appeared on his screen.

Xiao Ai: [Here, Master! ♪(^▽^*)]

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and asked, “Can you find information on the term ‘spirit of the universe’ in your database?”

Xiao Ai: [Spirit of the universe? What is that? (´△`;)]

Lu Zhou: “Nothing, I’m just curious.”

So far, although he was able to determine where Xiao Ai came from, he still couldn’t figure out where Xiao Ai’s memory came from.

Logically speaking, before it was sent to him by the Void Civilization, everything about the Calan civilization should have been deleted from its database.

However, according to Xiao Ai, it was able to preserve some memories.

Does artificial intelligence programs forget stuff?

Lu Zhou didn't know.

He really wanted to know the secrets behind Xiao Ai.

Xiao Ai: [Although Xiao Ai doesn't know, Xiao Ai can help Master search all the databases on the World Wide Web for relevant answers. (๑`べ´)و✧]

Lu Zhou: "No, thanks, it's no longer necessary."

A tall and thin man opened the door of the apartment building and walked out.

When he saw Lu Zhou, he had a surprised look on his face.

He spoke.

"Lu Zhou?"

Lu Zhou looked at him.

"You're one of the few Americans that can recognize me."

"Well, I have studied physics for so many years..." Professor Miro said, "Dear Professor Lu, what brings you here? I'm afraid I won't be able to provide wisdom to you."

Lu Zhou felt a hint of jealousy and even hostility from his tone.

This made Lu Zhou feel slightly uncomfortable.

He didn't quite understand what he did to offend this guy.

However, Lu Zhou ignored this young physicist's hostility.

He asked, "Do you want to grab a coffee with me?"

After staring at Lu Zhou for a while, Professor Miro shrugged and said, "Of course, I'm sure no one would reject your invitation."

"I know a good place." Lu Zhou looked at Wang Peng and said, "Grab the car, same place."

Wang Peng looked at Professor Miro. He then nodded.

"Okay."

He turned around and walked to the car.

Chapter 1215: Sometimes, Science Is More Than Just an Idea

Inside a coffee shop.

Lu Zhou sat down by the window and gestured to Wang Peng to wait for him outside. He then looked at Professor Miro and asked, "Would you like something to drink?"

"Anything cold is fine."

Lu Zhou nodded and ordered two cups of iced coffee.

He then turned his eyes to Professor Miro and asked, "To be honest, I don't quite understand how the 53% mass expansion is related to... the spirit of the universe?"

"You are the first person to ask me this question." Professor Miro said, "The first reaction most people have is that I'm talking crazy. They think I'm a conspiracy theorist."

"My opinion is not that different from them." Lu Zhou shrugged and continued, "My curiosity lies purely in the connection between the two."

Professor Miro didn't say anything as he searched his pockets.

This movement made Wang Peng a little nervous.

However, this American professor did not make any fishy moves. Instead, he took out a sticky note and a signature pen from his pocket.

“Since you’re good at mathematics, I’ll show it to you using a mathematical proof.”

Lu Zhou made an inviting gesture.

“I like that idea. Mathematics will definitely not deceive anyone.”

Professor Miro wrote down a line of calculations.

$$[M_N = m_0 - 4c_1 M_\pi^2 + O(M_\pi^3)]$$

“This is the nucleon mass obtained by the chiral extrapolation, $m_0 \approx 880$ MeV; $c_1 \approx -1 \text{ GeV}^{-1}$; M_π^2 is the mass square of the pion...”

Lu Zhou took the cup of coffee from the waiter’s tray and spoke calmly.

“So? I’m not here to listen to your simple explanations on quantum chromodynamics.”

“I just want to go over the basic concepts again in order to better explain my point of view.”

Professor Miro cleared his throat and continued, “According to this formula, we can clearly see that most of the mass of the visible matter in the universe can be determined by pure quantum chromodynamics without introducing quark mass... Except for the 7% part, that is temporarily unexplainable. It might come from outside the standard model or from statistical errors, but that is not a big problem.”

Lu Zhou nodded his head without saying anything, waiting quietly for Miro to continue.

“However, recent experiments have completely overturned all of my previous guesses. I thought that a collision on a larger energy level would reveal to us the secrets of the 7%.

“Instead, the experiments revealed a 53% unexplainable mass energy in our system!”

"It's shocking, isn't it? We should have less matter than what we started with. But the fact is that we observe more than what we started with, and it's not an insignificant amount!"

"Think about it, we can only conserve both sides of the equation by introducing a particle with a negative mass. The original perfect universe is like a piece of play-doh that's being manipulated by an invisible hand..."

"Perfection is subjective." Lu Zhou interrupted him and said, "I don't think the universe is perfect."

"Really? Haha, maybe! What if I tell you, I saw that ghost... Forget about it, that's too weird to say. I guess I shouldn't make you think I'm a crazy person."

Are you not a crazy person?

Lu Zhou subconsciously thought Miro was crazy, but he did not show it on the surface.

Professor Miro suddenly lowered his head quickly and wrote a few lines of calculations on the paper.

After finishing all this, he then folded the paper carefully and gave it to Lu Zhou.

"Bold assumptions and careful verification are what brings us to the advanced physics of today. Just like we proved the existence of gravity from a falling apple, scientific thinking allows us to get rid of ignorance and learn to build models... And let us forget our own insignificance."

"Do you know?"

"That the universe is like a designed game. Normally, it will respond to our expectations. Until one day, the parameters we input finally exceeds its threshold, and it finally fails to respond to our expectations. All scientific theories collapse at this singularity."

"Collisions above 5 TeV shatter not only the conservation of mass energy but also the entire physics."

Lu Zhou looked at him quietly.

He finally knew why this young scholar with extraordinary talents had fallen into a paranoid and crazy mindset.

Physics was the discipline of studying the most general laws of the movement of matter and the basic structure of matter. However, Lu Zhuo's discoveries were now revealing to them that the universe had no laws.

It wouldn't be so scary if only one physical theorem was disproven, but this changed everything.

This changed the truth itself.

The human's boat of exploring the truth of the universe was being dragged into the ocean by an invisible hand.

Lu Zhou finally understood why this matter had developed to the extent that the system had to come forward and issue an [emergency mission] to him.

To be honest, if he hadn't heard the voice from the Void, he might be more confused than Professor Miro at this moment.

"The universe itself is irregular. Our ignorance and insignificance make us think that the sky we see is blue.

"It's like there is an invisible ghost wandering in this universe. It plucked the apple from the tree and strangled Schrödinger's cat with its hand, allowing light to be a particle or a wave, manipulating everything as it wanted... But we still want to explain its behavior with some contradictory theories."

Professor Miro's bloodshot pupils suddenly widened.

He tapped his index finger on the small piece of paper as he lowered his voice.

"This is my prediction, dear Professor Lu.

"The mass expansion phenomenon in the high-energy zone is irregular. We have been doing a very stupid thing for the past half-century.

"We will restart the experiment in half a month, and soon, you will prove that I am right.

"All of this is planned."

After this, Professor Miro stood up and walked away.

...

It was obvious that the results of the experiment hit Miro hard.

Whether in a spiritual or physical sense.

After the meeting with Professor Miro, Lu Zhou returned to the car and sat in the back without saying a word. He looked at the paper in his hand and began to think.

When Wang Peng looked at Lu Zhou through the rearview mirror, he hesitated for a moment before speaking.

“That professor is...”

“Self-destructing.”

Wang Peng: “...?”

Lu Zhou: “If one day I told you that, mathematics, physics, chemistry, and even Chinese... Everything is actually fake, how would you feel?”

Although it was not the first time Professor Lu had asked such a weird question, this time, it seemed more difficult to understand than usual.

Wang Peng thought for a while before speaking.

“I can’t imagine... No matter what, language can’t be fake.”

“I’m just giving an example. After all, you haven’t studied quantum chromodynamics, and you didn’t spend most of your life writing papers.”

Lu Zhou sighed, thought for a while, and continued, “Let me give you another example. Suppose one day the person you admire the most turns from a saint to an evil demon or something like that, pushing the world to the brink of destruction.”

Wang Peng said almost without hesitation, “This is impossible.”

“Really?” Lu Zhou shrugged and said, “I also think it’s impossible. But you can imagine what this might mean to you once something like this happens.”

“Professor Miro is facing this situation. What he has always considered impossible is coming true before his eyes.

“His past two decades of research have become waste; physics and life have lost meaning for him.

“In some sense, sometimes science is more than just an idea.

“It is also a belief.”

...

Professor Miro was suspended from his work.

This was the doctor’s recommendation.

His current state made it suitable for him to participate in research.

Not only did he affect himself, but he also affected other people in the project team.

Lu Zhou originally thought that the young genius would not accept this arrangement.

However, to Lu Zhou’s surprise, after hearing the advice given by ILHCRC to receive medical treatment, Miro was unexpectedly calm. He had a relaxed look on his face as he was packing his things from his office.

“This is good, I finally have time to plan the trip I always wanted to go on.”

He bid farewell to his colleagues one by one and left his office.

Lu Zhou paid special attention to Professor Miro’s situation. Interestingly enough, the physics professor did not leave Shanghai immediately. Instead, he still lived in the apartment arranged by ILHCRC.

It seemed like Miro wasn’t so sure about his own speculation either and that he intended to wait until the next experiment to see if he was correct.

However, this also made Lu Zhou feel even more uneasy.

Because it meant that all of Miro’s conclusions were made in a sober state.

Lu Zhou also noticed that during this period of suspension, Professor Miro had been updating his blog. From an objective evaluation, Miro was quite talented at writing. He could present boring physics theories in an easy-to-understand form. Thus, he had gained a lot of fans and believers.

Half a month went by.

It was time for ILHCRC's next experiment cycle.

This time, Lu Zhou stood inside the ground command center.

This wasn't necessary. He just wanted to use his eyes to confirm whether all this was just an accident or would this discovery truly change physics.

He constantly squeezed and loosened his fists. He paced back and forth several times in the hallways of the ground command center. Finally, he waited for the results to be released.

He looked at the data on the screen in front of him.

The anomaly happened again!

After the collision of the two lead ions in a high-energy region, an extra mass occurred!

There was an uproar in the ground command center. People widened their eyes in disbelief. They exchanged glances and talked quietly, nervously, and even excitedly.

Lu Zhou had a calm and stiff look on his face.

This was the first time he didn't know what to do.

He reached out into his pocket and took out a piece of paper.

He looked at the paper and muttered, "You really guessed it."

The extra mass was no longer just 0.53 lead ions.

It was 0.71.

Also...

The data collected by the four detectors in the experiments were surprisingly highly consistent...

Chapter 1216: The Universe Has a Spirit

Physics was a discipline that studied the laws of the movement of matter and the basic structure of matter.

The universe was like a series of infinite numbers, say [1,2,3,5,7,11,13...], and physics was to study the laws and patterns of this series of numbers.

When science was at its beginning, when people were still arguing about 1 and 2, a physicist sitting under an apple tree was lucky enough to count to 3, so he thought that "The series of numbers is 123456... It is composed of all natural numbers".

However, due to the advancement of science and technology, observation methods had also improved.

Einstein, the physicist of the new era quickly discovered that the fourth number was not 4 but 5, The laws summarized by Newton were only applicable to the first three numbers.

In order to make his theory seem more convincing, Einstein had been observing the seventh number, which was the number 13. Based on the observed phenomenon, this conclusion was made:

[For the series of numbers describing the universe, except for the first unique number "1", the following numbers should be composed of "2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19...". The prime numbers.]

Smart kids would know that a series of unpredictable theories such as the theory of relativity, the standard model, and quantum mechanics were in fact real theories.

They described the world beyond the fourth digit that was invisible to ordinary people and could only be observed with professional equipment.

This was what people called the "microscopic world".

Einstein was much luckier than the scholar sitting under the apple tree. Although he was limited by time and only saw the seventh digit, his theories were all correct.

Using the “laws” found in the “standard model”, people successfully observed the numbers 17 and 19 and found a series of treasures such as the Higgs particle and gravitational waves.

Everything was going so well.

Unfortunately, all good things had to come to an end.

As technology continued to advance, the Lunar Hadron Collider allowed people to observe numbers larger than 19. This broadened their horizons to a much smaller microscopic world and even other dimensions...

People were surprised to find that, for the series of numbers describing the universe, the tenth number after 19 was not 23. The eleventh place number was not 29 at all.

The two numbers 23 and 29 did not appear in this series of numbers at all. Instead, they were replaced by a series of numbers that had no rules at all and did not make any sense.

They weren't numbers at all; they were letters and symbols.

Was it possible to find a pattern in all sequences?

No.

For example, a string of irrational numbers.

If one wanted to describe its pattern, they would have to use the same amount of information as the sequence itself...

Although the “spirit of the universe” theory by Professor Miro sounded like nonsense. What he described was not an omnipotent God.

What he really wanted to describe was that there was such a consciousness in this universe who arranged everything in the universe according to its own subjective consciousness.

It was like a child holding a branch in his hand, humming a song that only he could understand while writing a string of meaningless numbers on the beach.

While the ants on the ground used their logic and thought about what the numbers appearing on the ground meant and why they appeared there.

Hence, the name, spirit of the universe...

...

For the physics community, this was definitely the darkest day.

Collision experiments in energy regions above 5 TeV were like black holes, confiscating the efforts of physicists over the past century. Both the string theory and the Big Bang theory seemed to be swallowed by this black hole.

Witten looked at the images on the computer and thought for a long time. He then suddenly sighed and said, "It feels like we have spent half a century studying the laws of the universe. Then, in the end, it only proves that the things we are researching have no laws at all."

Lu Zhou stared at the seemingly weird data and answered casually, "It feels unacceptable?"

Witten spoke in a half-joking manner.

"It is unacceptable, I almost want to retire."

Lu Zhou: "Don't do that. This problem will not defeat us, but if you retire, it will definitely be a loss for all of humanity."

"Why would that be? There are many outstanding young physicists. In my opinion, their future achievements will not be inferior to mine."

Professor Witten smiled. His voice was suddenly filled with emotion as he said, "Also, I'm not getting younger. I was thinking about this issue about three or four years ago. If it weren't for you inviting me to the ILHCRC, perhaps I would be basking under the sun in Hawaii."

"Really? My apologies then."

"Haha, don't need to apologize. In fact, I should thank you. If it weren't for your invitation, I would have missed a lot of interesting things."

Professor Witten noticed the calculations Lu Zhou had written on the draft paper. He suddenly raised his eyebrows with interest.

“Are you still obsessed with that extra-dimensional theory?”

“Sort of.”

“With all due respect, that is no different from animism.”

“There are still a lot of differences.” Lu Zhou looked at the paper for a while while holding a pen in his hand. He said, “At the very least, I can prove its existence in a mathematical sense.”

Professor Witten had a surprised look on his eyes, as if he was thinking, “How is this possible?”

Lu Zhou continued to speak, “Normally, it is impossible for us, who are in the box, to see the world outside the box. But there is one exception. Remember Schrödinger’s cat?”

“Schrodinger’s cat? Wait, you mean—”

Professor Witten’s pupils suddenly widened a bit. He was filled with confusion. Suddenly, he became excited.

“That’s right, I’m sure you already know what I mean.” Lu Zhou smiled, twisted the pen in his hand, and continued, “You can imagine us as the cat in the box, for the world outside the box. Everything about us is in a superposition of chaos. But now, someone has opened the box and observed it for us.

“This wasn’t planned.

“Because of observations from outside the universe, the superposition we are in has collapsed, so it has become the reality we see now.”

Witten frowned as Lu Zhou spoke.

“We don’t know whether the universe has a spirit, and no one has the right to define its existence.

“But one thing I can almost confirm is that something outside the box is waving to us.”

Witten: “But it... Or they... Why are they doing this?”

“I don’t know, maybe only they know the answer.” Lu Zhou shook his head and continued, “Maybe it is asking us for help to declare its existence.

“However, whatever it is they are asking for, it should not be a disaster but a great opportunity.

“An opportunity to learn more about the Void.”

Suddenly, there were sounds of rapid footsteps outside the office.

Lu Zhou and Witten stopped talking and looked in the direction of the door.

There was a knock on the door, and before Lu Zhou could even reply, the door opened.

“Sorry! Something very, very serious happened!”

Lu Zhou looked at Luo Wenxuan and paused for a second.

“What happened?”

“It’s Professor Miro!”

Luo Wenxuan took a deep breath and controlled his breathing.

He looked at the two people in front of him and said in a trembling tone, “He passed away...”

Chapter 1217: Belief in Physics

This was probably the closest Lu Zhou had gotten to death.

Rather... This was the closest he had been to someone who had passed away.

ILHCRC No.1 apartment building.

The entrance was full of police cars.

An old man in plain clothes stood outside the fenced-off area. He had a look of self-blame and sadness on his face. He sobbed in a quiet voice.

“This is all my fault... I signed the paper...”

Professor Witten patted Professor Wilczek’s shoulder and spoke comfortingly.

“This is not your fault. A person’s path is destined; they will eventually go where they are supposed to go. I hope he can get the answer he wants on the other side of the world.

“As for us, we have to continue.”

Beside the two of them stood many ILHCRC researchers and interns.

Many of them had heard of Professor Miro’s story and the “spirit of the universe”.

Even though most people disagreed with the theory, there were still a few people who thought that this theory seemed to be reasonable.

Unlike the normal concept of “God”, Professor Miro’s theory was more like a science concept. Similar to the concept that “the universe is unreasonable” and “a disordered higher consciousness dominates the laws of nature”.

However, these theories sounded scary.

If all of this was true, then physics would be like studying the laws of a long list of irrational numbers that didn’t make any sense.

People looked at the window upstairs with the curtains closed.

“That’s so scary...”

“Oh yeah.”

“Professor Miro was such an excellent physicist. I don’t understand why he chose to end his life. If we have discovered a new area of physics, it would have been a happy ending.”

“It’s not totally happy. My supervisor doesn’t seem to be in the best mood.”

“What does your supervisor research?”

“Quantum lattice calculation methods.”

“Nutty.”

“Is there a possibility that Professor Miro saw something terrible?”

“Hey, don’t say that. This is the ILHCRC, not the haunted house at the amusement park. The collider is more than 300,000 kilometers away from us, so there is no way he was exposed to high-energy rays.”

Suddenly...

The commotion and whispers stopped.

A young man in a trench coat walked through the crowd, to the edge of the police tapes.

The policeman standing behind the tapes noticed him and quickly walked over to him. The policeman said respectfully, “Hello, Academician Lu.”

Lu Zhou nodded and looked upward at the apartment with the closed curtains.

He wasn’t very close to Professor Miro. They only exchanged a few words over coffee. He heard that the professor seemed to have won some physics awards that he didn’t care much about and that Professor Miro was considered an outstanding young scholar.

This story would undoubtedly have a negative impact on ILHCRC.

Rumors were already circulating on the Internet. People claimed that Professor Miro died under the academic authority of the ILHCRC committee because he was squeezed out by mainstream physicists.

His followers even threatened to avenge his death on the ILHCRC...

Lu Zhou looked at the policeman and spoke.

“Can you briefly explain the situation inside?”

The police officer hesitated for a moment, as if he was considering whether this was a good idea or not.

However, he realized that Professor Lu's status was higher than his superior's superior, so he spoke.

"It was a suicide.

"He took an overdose of cephalosporins... and alcohol.

"We are still investigating the details. The US Embassy has been notified. They will be responsible for contacting the family of the deceased..."

Lu Zhou nodded.

He then asked, "Can I go in?"

Compared to the previous request, this request was more difficult to accept.

The policeman hesitated for a moment.

However, Wang Peng took out a certificate and handed it to him.

"The Ministry of State Security is taking over this case."

After the police officer saw this document, he was startled. He spoke with a solemn look on his face.

"I need to ask my superiors for instructions."

Wang Peng nodded.

"Go."

...

Soon after, Lu Zhou was allowed to cross the police tapes and walk into Professor Miro's room.

Unlike what Lu Zhou had imagined, the living space of this physics professor was very tidy. It was obvious that the apartment was cleaned regularly.

"This is probably the most bizarre case that I have ever dealt with in the past two years..."

An old police officer looked at the white lines drawn on the ground with a complex expression. He said, "From his living conditions, it is obvious he is much healthier than the average person."

Lu Zhou didn't make any comments, he just walked into the study room and opened a drawer.

A scholar who had a regular schedule of work and rest usually abided by a code of conduct. Which was that they always kept their research materials nearby.

Sure enough, Lu Zhou found something like a research notebook from his drawer.

He flipped open the page and followed the neat handwriting and calculations. He continued to read, and he gradually had a surprised look on his face.

He wasn't surprised at Professor Miro's academic achievements. After all, he wasn't amazed by anyone's academic achievements.

What surprised Lu Zhou was that he originally thought Professor Miro was just falling into a wild fantasy about the "spirit of the universe". He did not expect that this guy actually established a complete theoretical system for this conjecture...

Basically, in Miro's theoretical system, the "spirit of the universe" was the core of the whole theoretical system. Miro derived that "the universe is the projection of a certain higher consciousness' subjective behavior", and that "everything is determined", and "this kind of cosmic consciousness is possible".

It seemed like he was saying that humans could communicate with the "spirit of the universe" in an abstract sense.

This sounded like idealism.

This was consciousness determinism, superimposed on the basis of God's creation theory and cosmic animism.

Lu Zhou, as a materialist, thought this was nonsense.

However, it was worth noting that Professor Miro had undergone a rigorous theoretical argument for the spirit of the universe. Even though Miro used a lot of psychological terminology and self-made words that only he could understand, at least he had tried to analyze this theory using scientific thinking.

However, when it came to the part of the determinism of consciousness, the part where “we can communicate with the spirit of the universe”, Miro seemed to give up on trying to find an explanation. He wrote down his theories as if it were a theorem.

There was no doubt that this was not rigorous science.

At the very least, Miro should add words like “maybe” and “perhaps” to the discussion.

After about twenty minutes, Lu Zhou took a deep breath after flipping the notes from beginning to end. He closed the notebook and looked at the police officer behind him.

“Can I take this notebook?”

“I’m afraid not.” The policeman had an awkward look on his face. He said, “This is the property of the deceased and part of the evidence related to the case. I am afraid that you will have to wait until the case is closed. After that, you can negotiate with the family of the deceased.”

Lu Zhou didn’t say anything. He nodded before taking out his phone from his pocket and recording a video. He flipped through the notes, recording all of the content inside.

Strictly speaking, this was also not allowed. However, all of the police officers turned a blind eye.

After he was done with the recording, Lu Zhou put away his phone and looked at Wang Peng.

“Let’s go back.”

Wang Peng hesitated slightly and asked, “Are we done?”

“Yeah.” Lu Zhou nodded and said, “I think... I probably already found the answer.”

Lu Zhou and Wang Peng walked out of Professor Miro’s apartment and went straight to the parking lot.

Witten saw Lu Zhou appear out of the building. He quickly squeezed through the crowd and greeted him.

“Did you find anything inside? Why on earth did Professor Miro—”

Lu Zhou shook his head.

“There is nothing particularly noteworthy inside. Professor Miro did not leave a lot of research materials in his apartment. He didn’t seem like a person who would take his work back home.”

Lu Zhou looked at Witten and said, “However, I found a notebook in his drawer.”

Witten quickly continued to ask, “What is written inside?”

“Some of his analysis of the latest ILHCRC experimental data. His conjectures about the spirit of the universe and the theoretical system he built around this conjecture... It seemed like this was what he spent his vacation time doing.”

Witten took off his glasses and pinched the bridge of his nose.

“That is...”

Lu Zhou: “A shame, right?”

“Yeah... Not just a shame, but also disturbing.”

This disturbance permeated through the ILHCRC headquarters, as well as every physicist on Earth. The vast majority of people did not believe in animism, nor the spirit of the universe.

Was there no such thing as faith in physics?

In fact, that was wrong.

This was like the storm that was caused by the neutrino faster than light experiment.

Even though it was impossible to find out what went wrong with the OPERA experiment, most people attributed it to an “experimental error”.

ILHCRC was facing a similar situation.

Before the second experiment began, most people were praying that all of this was a mistake. They hoped that the new experimental results could cover the past “errors”. This way, the building of physics would return to the framework of the standard model, and all would be well...

Lu Zhou looked at the silent Professor Witten and spoke.

“I know you have a lot of questions... Maybe I can answer part of it.”

“What about the extra-dimensional theory?”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “I need more time before giving you an explanation.

“You don’t have to wait for long, at most one week... I will soon find an answer that is not perfect but can probably satisfy most people.

“This will change the future of physics.”

Chapter 1218: Give Them a Lesson

An invisible dark cloud was floating in the sky above the ILHCRC.

Almost everyone’s mood was affected by this incident.

People from all over the world who believed in the spirit of the universe pretended to be tourists and began to gather in Shanghai. They came to the ILHCRC and began to protest.

When the officials finally realized something was wrong, the protests had already blocked the nearby roads.

These tourists from all over the world stood in front of the ILHCRC entrance and put up signs filled with “protest”, “stop the experiments”, “murderers”, etc, as well as distasteful images.

This mass protest obviously did not escape the eyes of the media.

The police force had not yet come to the scene. A BBC reporter walked into the crowd with a microphone in his hand. The reporter grabbed a protester who was nearly 60 years old.

“Hello, what are you protesting about?”

The old man said angrily, “Isn’t this obvious? The ILHCRC must stop immediately! Now! They should stop their crazy behavior! Shut down their experiment facility on the moon permanently!”

The BBC reporter immediately put the microphone closer.

“Crazy behavior?”

The old man’s face was red as he angrily exclaimed, “The collider! What they did in Europe is not enough? Don’t think I haven’t read the news. They used a collider to create a small black hole in the ground at the border of France and Switzerland! Now they made an even bigger collider, and even put it on the moon... They have created even more trouble!”

“More trouble?” The BBC reporter became serious. He said, “What can be worse than a black hole?”

“Yes, they have released matter from the virtual realm that does not belong to this world. The matter is from the spirit of the universe! Our civilization is in a corner of the galaxy, and no one has noticed us. But now, they have reached their dirty little hands to the land of the gods!

“This is disrespectful to the spirit of the universe! This is blasphemy against the great consciousness!”

BBC reporter: “Excuse me... What is the spirit of the universe?”

The old man said angrily, “I can’t explain it to you clearly. You should read the works of Professor Galette Miro!

“We are going to stop these savages at the ILHCRC!”

...

Obviously, the protester did not realize who was the real savage.

The ILHCRC press conference ended right after the old man's interview. A group of people emerged from the building's back door.

A blonde lady who was holding a microphone in her hand walked quickly behind Professor Wilczek and asked relentlessly, "Hello, Professor Wilczek. As a Nobel Prize winner, what do you think about the protests of the people who claim to be believers of the spirit of the universe and are against the ILHCRC experiments?"

Wilczek was annoyed. He finally stopped walking and looked angrily at the reporter, as well as the cameraman.

"What do I think?"

"When we were in Switzerland, we had to clean up the mess before every experiment. Some idiot engineers would always expose themselves to strong radiation. Thankfully, the Chinese built a collider on the moon, saving many lives!"

"At the very least, we don't have to play hide and seek with a bunch of idiots in the collider tunnel!"

The blonde female reporter frowned and said, "Sorry, are you saying that... the protesters' behavior is very stupid?"

"Of course." Professor Wilczek laughed angrily and said, "Why are there no Chinese people in the protests? I suggest these idiots find a quiet place to receive some education."

After the reporter went away, Wilczek angrily returned to his office and slammed the door.

However, he suddenly discovered that there was another person standing in his office.

"Professor Lu?" He raised his eyebrows and looked at Lu Zhou standing by the window. Wilczek asked, "What brings you here? When did you get here?"

“About ten minutes ago.” Lu Zhou looked at the crowd outside the window. He closed the window blinds and looked at Professor Wilczek. He said, “Your assistant told me that you will be back soon, so I decided to wait here. How is it going? Did those reporters make things difficult for you at the press conference?”

“Make things difficult? Haha, it’s not just making things difficult, it was torture. You should see the stupid questions they asked!”

Wilczek threw his hat on the coat hanger and sat on the sofa. He said angrily, “Do they really understand Galette Miro’s paper? Look at those people. What are they asking for, to suspend the experiment? If Galette Miro were still alive, he would laugh at their stupidity.”

Lu Zhou: “Not necessarily, maybe this is what he wanted.”

Wilczek was taken aback for a moment. He frowned and asked, “What do you mean?”

Lu Zhou said, “I have read his papers and blogs, all of it.”

Professor Wilczek said in disbelief, “You actually finished reading that nonsense?”

Lu Zhou: “I think it’s foolish to draw conclusions without a good understanding.”

“That depends on the hypothesis.” Wilczek picked up the teapot on the table and poured himself a cup of black tea. He took a sip and asked, “Speaking of which, how is the research going?”

Lu Zhou: “It’s done.”

Professor Wilczek nearly spat out the tea in his mouth as he stared at Lu Zhou with his eyes wide open.

“Done? So you know where the extra mass comes from?”

“Sort of.”

Lu Zhou looked at the astonished Professor Wilczek and smiled. He said, “Don’t worry, I’ll explain it to you.”

Wilczek was about to ask where the extra mass came from, but Lu Zhou, who was looking outside the window, spoke first.

“Can we remove those people outside?”

This question shocked Wilczek.

It wasn't because of the sentence itself, but rather, Wilczek didn't notice that there was someone else standing in his office.

It felt like this person was invisible this whole time!

“The reinforcements will arrive in about two minutes.” Wang Peng looked at his watch and said, “Of course, if you wish, we can remove them right now.”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “The reinforcements are already on the way, so let's wait for them to come. By the way... Remember to arrest the loudest protesters.”

Wang Peng: “No problem, what are you going to do to them?”

“I'm not doing anything to them.” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “I just want to invite them to a physics lecture.”

Chapter 1219: The Existence of the Void

Perso Fernando was a bridge builder from California and a huge believer in Galette Miro.

Honestly, because he had not received any higher education, he couldn't fully understand Professor Galette Miro's theory.

But fortunately, the great Professor Miro took care of the laymen and narrated his complicated and difficult theories in a simple way.

Thanks to this, even a person like him could hear the deepest voices of the universe.

After hearing about Professor Miro's death, he, and the other believers of the spirit of the universe, was filled with anger.

They believe that the ILHCRC persecuted him. Those narrow-minded materialists and authorities in physics murdered him and covered his death as a suicide.

In fact, there were indeed many signs of suspicion about Miro's death. For example, two hours before his suicide, he was answering questions from his "believers" on his blog and even ordered a ham pizza. It was hard to imagine such a cheerful and intelligent person would end their life this way.

These doubts gave conspiracy theories room for fermentation.

Driven by a sense of justice, faith, and emotions, Fernando boarded a flight to Shanghai and came to the ILHCRC building. He stood on the front line of saving human civilization with his brothers and sisters.

These protesters were different from most people.

They didn't stand here because of money; they really believed that the stupid physicists might ruin the world. In fact, this was not the first time Fernando did something like this.

A long time ago, he did an "amazing" thing. He went to Switzerland at his own expense and snuck into the underground tunnel of the LHC, which caused the planned experiment to be suspended.

Although he was prosecuted by CERN afterward and was permanently banned by the Switzerland and French customs, he did not have any regrets.

He felt like that was a badge of honor.

Also, an environmental protection organization that was against the collider experiment paid for all of his legal expenses.

Less than five minutes after they occupied the streets, police forces began to gather nearby. They were easily able to disperse the crowd.

Before he was caught, he seemed to vaguely hear some incomprehensible words.

However, because he didn't understand Mandarin, he didn't figure out what those words meant until he was escorted into the ILHCRC headquarters by several police officers.

He was put together with many of the most passionate protesters and brought into a small room to make a statement. He was about to ask for a lawyer when a young Chinese man walked into the room.

Fernando didn't like the way the man was looking at him.

However, he suddenly felt like this person looked familiar. His pupils expanded.

"Lu Zhou?"

Lu Zhou chuckled.

"I didn't expect you to recognize me."

Fernando clenched his teeth and said, "Your sins have betrayed humanity. I would recognize you even if you were burned to ashes."

Lu Zhou smiled. He didn't care about Fernando's impolite words. He glanced at the statement on the table and said, "Perso Fernando, a native Californian. I guess you are probably... the bishop of the spirit of the universe?"

Fernando smiled arrogantly.

"Bishop? That is something only blind religious people believe in. We advance together; we don't need the guidance of anyone!"

Lu Zhou listened to his words and nodded.

"You done?"

Fernando spoke.

"Done!"

Lu Zhou: "Then come with me."

Fernando paused for a second.

"Where to?"

Lu Zhou replied, "You'll see."

...

In fact, whether someone was a materialist or an idealist, they didn't care about gods or any kind of mysterious magic.

This was like how Galette Miro's beliefs did not contradict his profession as a physicist. Not only was he a scholar in particle physics, but he was also a believer in "consciousness determinism".

The difference between materialism and idealism was only whether matter or consciousness came first...

There was no doubt that Galette Miro was a good physicist and a brilliant guy.

Lu Zhou admitted that, although at first he thought that this guy didn't seem to be smart, he actually underestimated Miro.

Perhaps the wisest thing Miro did was to divide his academic theories and philosophical thoughts into two parts and expose his theories to different target groups.

He developed a small group of supporters of the spirit of the universe at the ILHCRC.

He had also developed a group of believers of the "spirit of the universe" in the form of religion through pop-science and the Internet. Even though this wasn't a religion at all, believers of the spirit of the universe treated it as such.

Although "spirit of the universe" and "universal animism" were completely different things, they actually complemented each other to some extent.

The former provided theoretical weapons, while the latter provided material weapons.

This wasn't like a religion; it was almost like a revolution...

Because of this, two days after Miro's death, protests broke out in all parts of the world except China.

Western Europe was hit the hardest.

CERN and the Cadarache fusion power station were affected to varying degrees.

It was as if overnight, the spirit of the universe had suddenly developed into a large-scale group of believers.

It was as if there were an invisible hand pushing the believers forward...

Aside from the protests around the world, their ideologies were not extreme.

Lu Zhou carefully studied the notes left by Professor Miro.

Galette Miro, the creator of the spirit of the universe, took the concept of “human unity” as the highest ideal. He believed that as long as the consciousness of all mankind was unified, they could communicate with the greatest existence in the virtual realm—the “supreme consciousness that creates all things and defines the universe”.

As for the virtual world...

According to Professor Galette Miro’s description in his notebook, he was actually talking about the Void.

Lu Zhou felt like Miro had borrowed his theory of “extra string dimensions”.

When describing the virtual realm, Miro described the universe as a box, and he put the spirit of the universe outside the box. The spirit of the universe was the “consciousness” that determined the laws of the “matter” inside the box.

In this sense, in addition to Miro’s identity as a physicist, he was also an idealist.

To be honest, Lu Zhou was dumbfounded at the protesters.

From what he understood, in addition to human civilization, there were many other civilizations that were also in the upper echelon.

Regardless of whether the “great consciousness” existed or not, hoping to integrate the consciousness of all mankind in order to communicate with the “spirit of the universe” was ridiculous.

After all, compared to the vast universe, the existence of human beings was tiny.

Humans were simply insignificant...

Lu Zhou stood in the crowded lecture hall and looked at the time on his watch.

The seminar was going to begin in five minutes.

He knew that what he was about to demonstrate would have a huge impact on the entire physics world and the direction of human civilization. He even wondered if he was being too hasty.

He still remembered that The Observer warned him that it was not a good thing to face the Void and that there were too many “unknowable” things inside the Void.

But in any case, this was the best opportunity.

The Void was actively showing itself to the universe.

If he missed this opportunity, human civilizations would have to take generations before they could explore the world outside of their box.

Lu Zhou reached out and gently picked up a marker on the desk.

He was going to show the world...

Chapter 1220: The Collapse of the Superposition

The lecture hall was crowded with people; there were around 800 people inside.

Almost all of the top minds and the most authoritative scholars in high energy physics gathered here.

Not only were there researchers at the ILHCRC, but there were also physicists, who came from other countries far away.

Everyone had the same purpose.

That was, to find out about the mass energy increase experimental results, which might subvert the standard model...

In the front row of the lecture hall, an old man in a gray jacket sat next to Professor Witten.

He leaned his cane against the corner of the table, unscrewed the bottle of mineral water on the table, and took a sip. He then looked at the stage platform.

“Thank you for reserving the seat for me. There are so many people here... I almost got lost outside.”

Professor Witten glanced at the old man sitting next to him and raised his eyebrows.

“I didn’t expect you to actually come.”

The old man chuckled and looked at the stage platform.

“How could I miss such an interesting talk? Maybe today, the rules of physics will be rewritten, and our horizon will widen to a whole new dimension; a dimension we can’t perceive... Is there anything more exciting than this?”

Most people would be surprised to hear the old man saying this.

Not because of the sentence itself, but because of who the old man was.

Sitting next to Professor Witten was none other than Professor Saul Perlmutter from the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

People who don’t know much about physics might not have heard of this name, but he was, in fact, one of the greatest living physicists.

As the winner of the 2011 Nobel Prize in Physics and the person that proved the theory of the “accelerated expansion of the universe”, he was well-known both in the field of astrophysics and high-energy physics.

Witten glanced at him and said, “It seems like you really believe in the theory of extra dimensions.”

“The question is not whether I believe it. It is whether he can give a logically self-consistent proof for his conclusion. Didn’t we also dismiss string theory in the beginning? But look at where we are now...”

Professor Perlmutter saw Witten's unhappy face and smiled, quickly leaving the topic aside.

"Speaking of which, I kinda want to know how you think about this matter. You haven't expressed your opinion so far. It's really... unlike you."

"Shh."

Professor Witten interrupted Professor Perlmutter's words and then pointed his index finger in the direction of the stage.

"The answers you want are there.

"It's starting."

...

When the hour hand went past ten o'clock...

The originally noisy lecture hall instantly became quiet.

Fernando was sitting nervously at the front of the lecture hall. He looked at Lu Zhou standing on the stage. Fernando had a displeased look on his face, and he wanted to stand up to his religion.

However, he then saw the scary police officer standing nearby, with handcuffs pinned to his waist. He didn't dare to step out of line.

Lu Zhou, who was standing on stage, looked around the lecture hall and spoke in a calm voice.

"I'd like to give my condolences to Professor Miro.

"We lost an outstanding scholar and a great man.

"I know his death touched a lot of people... including me."

Lu Zhou looked around the venue. He then flipped through the pile of draft papers on the multimedia lecture table. He spent about ten seconds organizing his thoughts before he spoke.

"Perhaps the way he impacted me is different from many of you.

“What moved me was not his wisdom. It’s being vulnerable in the face of the vast universe. Our determination might be weaker than we had imagined.

“Perhaps I shouldn’t even use the word ‘determination’. Because all of us know that, the tower of physics we have spent centuries building, is on the verge of collapsing. Perhaps that brings a sense of meaninglessness into the determination by countless great physicists.”

Lu Zhou paused for a second. He then faced the whiteboard and wrote down a line of calculations.

$$[MN=m_0-4c_1M\pi^2+O(M\pi^3)]$$

Lu Zhou stopped and heard whispers.

“This is where the trouble begins.

“This is also the source of all contradictions.

“Usually we find the nucleus mass by using chiral extrapolation and the quantum dot calculation method. With the help of supercomputers, we can explain the source of mass in most nuclei.

“However, as of today, we still have a lot of unexplainable things... 7% of the mass is still unaccounted for.”

After writing this number on the whiteboard, Lu Zhou continued to look at the venue and said, “Now, because of the 5 TeV collision experiment, this number has increased to 53% and even 71%, swallowing our understanding of physics, as if it is a because.

“In order to explain this phenomenon, we must introduce a new physics concept.”

Lu Zhou reached out and wrote a letter on the whiteboard—n.

Then, he wrote down “+1” next to it.

“N is the number of dimensions that make up our current universe. Some say it is 11, others say it is 13. Maybe in the distant future, this number will be broadened to infinity as our horizons expand, but that is not important for now...

“What we are going to discuss now is the $n+1$ dimension.

“There is an axis that runs through the universe from the beginning to the end. It’s like a lake reflected by itself. It is outside the horizon in which we can observe. All of the observable dimensions end at this point.

“In some sense, its existence does not affect us under normal circumstances unless... something outside the box touches this string...

“More specifically, they reached out, opened the box, and observed us.”

Lu Zhou looked at the surprised audience. Witten and his other friends were thinking quietly. Fernando was boiling with rage. Lu Zhou looked back at the calculations on the whiteboard.

He paused for a second and continued, “Because of the observations from the Void, the superposition collapsed.”

There was a bigger commotion in the crowd.

All of this sounded outrageous.

Finally, someone couldn’t help but ask.

“Why at 5 TeV?”

“Good question.”

Lu Zhou looked at the young scholar who stood up to ask the question. He snapped his fingers and gave an encouraging look at him. He then motioned the scholar to sit down.

Lu Zhou looked around the lecture hall and slightly raised his voice.

“How do we identify whether artificial intelligence is intelligent in the true sense? This is an abstract concept, thus came the Turing test, which defines that if an artificial intelligence program can pass the Turing test, it is intelligent in the true sense. Otherwise, it is merely a machine.

“Similarly, how do we select the smartest ant from a group of ants?

“The method is very simple. Just set up simple physical obstacles for them.

“I know this might sound crazy, but what I want to say is that the collision experiment at the 5 TeV energy level is like a filter. It filters the collection of all civilizations in this universe.

“The mass never increased. Instead, it moved from the $n+1$ dimension to the n dimension. By using this simple method, they can differentiate between smart and foolish ants.

“Also, this filter...

“Is their declaration to us of their existence.”

Chapter 1221: Mass Does Not Expand, It Just Flows on Invisible Strings

The lecture hall was like a pressurized pot of boiling water, exploding in an instant.

People were shocked, and they exchanged looks with horror in their eyes. They were at a loss.

Because of the observation, the quantum superposition state collapsed and a series of chain effects were triggered. This caused the mass to move from $n+1$ dimension to below n dimension.

Does this mean that there are “people” outside the box watching us?

That sounds ridiculous...

Also sounds scary.

It was like there was a camera far away, watching their every move. By using an invisible filter, they were able to screen their favorite intelligent civilizations.

And now, through this filter, they had discovered the existence of humans.

What did this mean?

Nobody knew.

Because of this, people had looks of panic on their eyes.

The calmest person was Fernando, sitting in the front row.

Perhaps his fearlessness was brought about by ignorance. Compared to the physicists present, he did not fully understand what Lu Zhou was talking about. He was only able to capture a few keywords.

“The Void?”

“So in other words, the spirit of the universe actually exists?”

The eyes of this tiny man lit up.

It was as if he was seeing hope...

On the stage of the lecture hall.

Lu Zhou didn't pay attention to the chaos in the lecture hall. He wrote his argumentation process on the whiteboard without any hesitation.

$$[...M\pi^2=(1/2)(\mu+md)\langle 0|\Psi\Psi|0\rangle/F\pi^2]$$

$$[\langle 0|A\mu_a(x)|\pi b(p)\rangle=i\rho\mu F\pi\delta_{abe}-ipx]$$

[...]

Professor Witten, who was sitting in the audience, locked his eyes on the lines of calculations on the whiteboard. His pupils shrank slightly.

Just a few minutes ago, when he heard Lu Zhou's theory about extra strings and observers outside the horizon, he had a look of disagreement on his face.

However, after seeing these calculations, the look on his face gradually changed.

Perlmutter was sitting next to Professor Witten. He had an anxious look on his face. He looked around at his colleagues before coughing and speaking.

“His calculations seem to be a bit difficult to understand...”

Actually, he was understating this fact.

Ever since the fifth line of calculations on the second whiteboard, Professor Perlmutter was totally lost.

In fact, as an astrophysicist, he should have a good understanding of mathematics. Even though his understanding was more focused on the applied mathematics side, he had never been this confused before.

He was totally baffled by what was written on the whiteboard.

He even began to wonder whether the lines of calculations were even considered mathematics, or whether his knowledge was completely out of date.

“It is a bit difficult to understand.” Professor Witten frowned and said, “It involves many theories from topology and algebraic geometry, especially from the unified theory of algebraic geometry... I haven’t researched mathematics in many years, I can’t even fully understand it.”

“Even you can’t?” Perlmutter opened his eyes in surprise and said, “Who can prove whether he’s right or wrong then?”

Witten shook his head and looked at the figure standing on the stage. He watched the lines of calculations appear on the whiteboard and said, “I don’t know...”

“Let’s just see what happens.”

It was far easier to pick mistakes from a theory than to prove its correctness.

Perhaps they could ask other mathematicians for help.

Honestly, Witten was not worried about the same thing Perlmutter was worrying about.

Professor Witten had trust in Lu Zhou’s own character and in his academic strength. He was convinced that Lu Zhou would definitely not present unrefined things to anyone.

From this alone, Witten was at least 80% confident that Lu Zhou’s theory was true...

On the other side of the lecture hall.

Luo Wenxuan, the Secretary-General of the ILHCRC, also had a surprised look on his face.

Although he was a mathematician, he was in no better position than other people.

The complicated calculations gave him a headache. Even though he was not completely lost, his slow analytical ability made it impossible to keep up with Lu Zhou's rhythm.

By the time he understood what one of the calculations meant and what role it played in the whole argumentation process, a dozen new calculations appeared on the whiteboard.

He couldn't help but wonder whether Lu Zhou was even thinking about the calculations. He felt like Lu Zhou was writing down all of the steps purely by muscle memory alone.

That was a scary thought.

Sitting next to him was Academician Lu Shenjian, who had his eyes glued to the whiteboard. Academician Lu Shenjian suddenly spoke.

"From today onward, the path of physics will be completely rewritten."

Luo Wenxuan was shocked. He looked at the old man and asked, "You understand his proof?"

Academician Lu: "No, why?"

Luo Wenxuan: "Then why do you say that?"

Academician Lu thought for a bit and answered, "This... is a kind of scientific intuition."

Luo Wenxuan: "..."

Lu Zhou didn't care about the reactions on the faces of the audience. The pen in his hand trembled. He completely forgot about time and space, as well as the pairs of eyes behind him. All of his concentration was completely focused on the problem at hand.

According to the data collected by the ILHCRC in the energy range from 5.12 TeV to 5.17 TeV, by establishing a phenomenological model for analysis, he could infer that the “maximum mass transfer” phenomenon would occur when the collision energy reached 7.17 TeV~7.74 TeV, while a violent collapse would occur near the 8 TeV energy level.

If they couldn't understand where the mystery behind this phenomenon came from, physics would stagnate.

After all, building a collider was not an easy task.

If all of physics lost its meaning in the higher energy zones, then human civilization would have fallen into a trap. It would be very difficult for human civilization to release itself from this trap.

This was like a filter, brutally sieving the entire universe, weeding out those ants that could not pass the obstacles and deterring the ants that could pass the obstacles by announcing their existence.

The most frightening thing was that this filter also existed in the old universe. It was very likely that the civilization or individual that set up the filter was from a different civilization than The Observer.

Lu Zhou was afraid that the existence of this filter was not so friendly...

Lu Zhou wrote down the last full stop and put down his pen. He turned around and faced the lecture hall.

Most people had not yet recovered from the shock. They were staring at the whiteboard, trying to understand the mystery behind the lines of calculations.

Even though he didn't want to interrupt the train of thought of hundreds of audience members, he had to give a conclusion.

Lu Zhou cleared his throat and spoke.

“The proof ends here.

“What we are facing might be worse than we had imagined.

“Let's return to the original topic, which is, the spirit of the universe.

“It can’t prove its existence with the current technology, so I don’t want to discuss too much. Whether there’s conscious determinism or material determinism, time will answer this question.

“I can see that this might become a very controversial topic in the coming centuries.”

Lu Zhou looked at the silent venue. He gently put down the marker in his hand and continued to speak with a serious tone, “However, as a physicist, I hope that the debate on this issue stays in the field of philosophy. Until we can use scientific methods to prove its existence, we should put the controversy aside.

“As for the Void, the extra dimension beyond the n th dimension...”

After a pause, Lu Zhou looked back at the whiteboard behind him and said, “My proof states that this is the only explanation for where the mass increase came from and where it went to. Mass does not just disappear in a vacuum. It merely falls from the $n+1$ dimension to our dimension.

“As for whether a consciousness agent controls it, as I said earlier, this question is irrelevant to physics at this stage.”

There were whispers in the venue.

People exchanged looks of disbelief, hoping to get answers from the expressions on the faces of other colleagues. However, even though the world’s top minds were gathered here, very few were able to understand the obscure proof process on the whiteboard.

The Q&A session began.

To Lu Zhou’s surprise, no one actually raised their hands.

He began to reflect on whether the theory he explained earlier was too advanced when suddenly a man stood up.

“Your theory proves that the virtual world described by Professor Galette Miro is real!”

Fernando had an excited look on his face. He looked at Lu Zhou and spoke in a louder voice.

“It also proves that the spirit of the universe is everywhere and omnipotent.”

This sudden interruption livened up the atmosphere.

Fernando listened to the bursts of laughter coming from behind, and he blushed as he started to feel angry.

Had it not been for the policeman next to him, he would have never shown such restraint.

Lu Zhou didn't laugh at Fernando. Instead, he spoke patiently.

"I'm afraid you don't know, that when Professor Galette Miro described the virtual world, he borrowed his theory from my theory of extra dimensions. Of course, he wouldn't tell you that. After all, these things are quite difficult to understand."

"You little sh*t!"

Fernando clenched his fist. He was about to walk onto the stage, but he was blocked by the police officer.

Lu Zhou ignored his actions and said, "Yes, I did prove that the Void exists, and it is everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

"But to say that it is omnipotent... That is not possible.

"I will prove this." Lu Zhou looked at the audience in the lecture hall. He gently tidied up the draft paper on the lecture table and continued in a calm and powerful voice, "ILHCRC's next experiment will collide hydrogen ions at an energy level of 10 TeV.

"I will prove that the Void is not omnipotent."

Chapter 1222: 10 TeV Collision

Actually, Lu Zhou expected this to happen.

Even if he tried his best, it was impossible to teach a cow mathematics. Or to teach a dog physics.

Galette Miro understood human nature.

He knew that proofs could only be justified towards intelligent people. For a humble farmer or bridge worker, it was easier to package the scientific theory into something fictitious and explain it to them in another way.

Miro also knew that he didn't need so many people participating in his projects. Physics had always been a game for a select few. As for the others, contributing their spirits and beliefs were enough.

In this regard, Lu Zhou actually quite admired this guy.

In order to complete this experiment, he even sacrificed himself as part of the price. As far as he was concerned, he was implanting the seeds of the "spirit of the universe" into human civilization.

It was difficult to judge whether this was a worthy sacrifice.

Perhaps he thought it was...

All in all, the seminar was successful.

Inviting the hardcore believers of the spirit of the universe to come and listen to this seminar was just the cherry on top. Lu Zhou never expected to use his report to convince these believers otherwise.

The purpose of this seminar was not only to popularize science, but it was also a report conference for the physics community.

Lu Zhou gave a detailed proof process regarding the "Void" and his "extra dimension" theories.

As for whether he could end the controversy regarding the 5 TeV energy level collision experiment...

That would also depend on whether the ILHCRC could find the truth behind the higher energy zone and break through the obstacles set by a being outside the universe...

...

The physics world had turned into an exploding pot of boiling water due to the mass expansion experiment.

The ILHCRC was like throwing hot oil into the pot water.

Right after Lu Zhou walked out of the lecture hall, the news regarding this report began to fly around the world, appearing in major media outlet headlines.

[The Void Is Watching Us!]

[Huge ILHCRC Discovery! The Mass of the Expansion Might Come From Outside the Universe!]

[There Is a Ghost Hovering Above Physics, An Unprecedented Crisis Is Approaching!]

In some sense, physics was indeed facing an unprecedented crisis; otherwise, this report would not affect so many people.

Moreover, physicists weren't the only ones who were heartbroken about this matter. Some civilian scientists had also stepped forward, arguing what the world outside of the universe was like.

Among them, the most passionate people were the believers of the spirit of the universe.

They had a half-hearted understanding of Professor Galette Miro's theory. They firmly believed that the collision experiment would bring unimaginable disasters to the world and release terrible demons from the Void.

The second experiment was quickly arranged in the midst of the endless controversy.

Because the experiment was in a higher energy zone, the preparation took a little longer this time. All of the preparations were not completely ready until the middle of the month.

The day of the experiment.

Inside the ground command center, the staff in white coats walked back and forth, creating a nervous and busy work environment.

Soon, they would verify whether the theory of the Void and the extra-dimensional put forward by Professor Lu at the seminar was correct.

Lu Zhou was the focal point of this debate about mass expansion. He stood with a much calmer expression on his face than last time. Much calmer than most people here.

It was as if the experiment weren't an experiment at all; it was just an announcement for the proof of his theory...

For a genius like him, he had nothing to worry about.

However, for other people, this was not so easy.

Luo Wenxuan, who was also standing in the command room, looked at his watch repeatedly.

He took a deep, slow breath and looked at Lu Zhou.

He hesitated for a moment before asking, "Are you nervous?"

Lu Zhou glanced at Luo Wenxuan. He thought for a second before asking, "Do you want the truth or do you want to feel better?"

Luo Wenxuan: "The truth..."

"The truth is, there is nothing to be nervous about." Lu Zhou looked up at the screen directly in front of him and said, "In ten minutes, the Moon Palace will tell us that I am correct."

Seeing how Lu Zhou was so confident, Luo Wenxuan had a surprised look on his face. He couldn't help but ask, "You're that confident? You are so sure that it must be good news?"

Lu Zhou: "Remember what I said?"

Luo Wenxuan: "About what?"

"Your eyes might deceive you, but mathematics definitely won't."

Luo Wenxuan looked at Lu Zhou with his mouth open.

After a while, he sighed.

"... Maybe I should learn more mathematics."

Lu Zhou nodded.

“I would advise you to do so, you still have time.”

A 10 TeV energy zone experiment might be impossible for CERN, but it was not a difficult task for the ILHCRC.

After all, the engineering standards for the Lunar Hadron Collider were built in accordance with the standards for a 10 TeV collision experiment.

Lu Zhou looked at the large screen in front of him and felt emotional.

If we didn't set such a high standard when building the collider...

Or if this collider was never built and we had to rely on the CERN collider...

By the time we reach a collision power of 5 TeV, the Void would have already destroyed us.

If a terrible failure happened at 5 TeV and there was no hope for the collision experiment to increase to 6 TeV or 7 TeV, the physics community might not have the perseverance to build an even larger collider and continue to walk down this road.

If it weren't for the things Lu Zhou had witnessed, he might not have been able to pull himself out of this trap.

After all, many things couldn't be solved by pure intellect and wisdom alone...

A voice interrupted Lu Zhou's thoughts.

The commanding staff sitting at the control console gave the instruction to begin the experiment.

“All units stand by!”

“Beginning countdown!”

“Five.”

“Four.”

“Three.”

“Two.”

“One.”

“Begin!”

Hundreds of millions of volts of electricity burst out in an instant under the lunar crater more than 300,000 kilometers away.

The plasma was filled with terrifying energy, instantly filling the ring-shaped superconducting magnet, forming a huge magnetic field. It deflected the cosmic rays directly, hitting the lunar surface and forming a beautiful aurora!

A series of hydrogen ions were ejected from the muzzle. They were calibrated by sophisticated instruments. The ions collided at the junction of the two circular orbits, split into subatomic fragments...

In just a few seconds...

The beginning of the Big Bang was simulated on the Moon.

Lu Zhou looked at the data on the screen. He gradually had a smirk on his face.

He heard deafening cheers from behind him.

Except for the accounted errors due to accuracy, the data observed by the detectors were consistent with the estimated value!

The Standard Model was still close to perfect; it just needed some small adjustments.

As for his theory of extra dimensions...

There was no doubt...

That he was correct!

Chapter 1223: The Extra String and the Void

For the physics community, this was definitely an extraordinary day.

Human civilization had broadened their thinking radius outside the universe. They also broadened their dimensional view of the world.

The changes this brought to society might not be as direct as high-speed rail or a space shuttle, but its hidden value could not be estimated with a monetary value.

“He saved us.”

Professor Steven Weinberg looked at the papers he downloaded from the ILHCRC website. He said, “The extra dimension beyond n , the lake reflecting inside a lake... This analogy is perfect!”

“I guess you’re going to say that you knew it all along?” Professor Perlmutter said with a cup of coffee in his hand. He had just returned from Shanghai.

“That is what I think!” Professor Weinberg blushed and said, “Don’t look at me like that... I said the same thing before the report began!”

That was technically true.

As one of the few public atheists among Jewish physicists, Steven Weinberg firmly stood on the side of material determinism since the beginning. He proposed a special dimension to explain this mass expansion phenomenon.

Just like how the physics community added a fifth dimension to the equation of relativity in order to explain the electromagnetic force, the expansion mass might come from the $n+1$ dimension outside the horizon.

He had the same idea as Lu Zhou; the only difference was that he could not prove his idea.

It was actually very easy to put forward a conjecture. ArXiv gave birth to thousands of sci-fi theories, but few of them were logically self-consistent. The ones that were logically self-consistent could not be proved by experiments.

There was no doubt that Lu Zhou not only explained the existence of the $n+1$ dimension from the mathematical sense, but he also explained the disorderly behavior from the experimental sense.

They discovered a whole “new continent” of physics.

As for everything else...

Perhaps they should consider the threats from the Void?

After all, no matter how they looked at it, this filter was not placed in front of them with good intentions.

Weinberg didn't have much hope.

This might be a ploy for ILHCRC to ask governments for funding money. After all, humans were animals that desired privacy. No one liked to have someone spying on themselves.

Even though the threat of this crisis existed, it was too unlikely.

Perhaps it might never come even after the sun died out...

"There is no doubt that the Nobel Committee owes him a Nobel Prize. I have said a long time ago that he is worthy of this honor. I recommended Lu Zhou to them when he discovered the electrostrong interaction. However, the stubborn old men keep handing out awards to irrelevant people."

Perlmutter coughed and said, "That's not quite correct. The award winners definitely aren't irrelevant... From what I know, Professor Klitzing recommends Lu Zhou to the Nobel Prize Committee every year."

"I will also write a letter this year." Weinberg threw the printed thesis on the table and said, "No one deserves this honor more than him, I mean no one."

He felt like he wasn't convincing enough, so he added to his words.

"Of course, this includes me."

...

The second week after the experimental data was released, a paper titled "The Void and World of Extra Strings" was released on the ILHCRC website.

After the paper was released, the number of downloads exceeded 100,000 times in less than half an hour.

The same paper was also published in "Future" and was reprinted by major well-known journals. Nature and Science even set highlights and put the paper on the covers of their latest journal issues.

The most notable one was probably the brief commentary written by Professor Weinberg, a well-known scholar in the field of physics, in “Physical Review”.

As the Nobel Prize winner in 1979, Professor Weinberg had a considerable influence in the field of physics. Even Edward Witten was inferior to him in terms of status.

Whether it was the unified theory of weak electricity, the scattering of mesons, infrared photons, quantum gravity, and the discovery of Z bosons, none of them were comparable to string theory. His paper on Z boson was the most cited physics paper in 2010.

He was among the great living physicists, along with Yang and Anderson.

Because of this, after his paper was published in Physical Review, it aroused a lot of heated discussions in the entire physics community and even in academia as a whole...

[For the physics community, the Void is undoubtedly an unfamiliar concept. Whether it is an extra string in the universe or an observation from outside the universe, it sounds too mysterious. However, logically, it is indeed self-consistent and has been tested by experiments.

[Mass never changes. However, mass and energy from the $n+1$ dimension have broken our understanding of the original universe, opening our eyes to a brand new world.

[Like we have seen, there are still many mysteries in this universe that we still don't know about. We will continue to search for these mysteries.

[This is probably the biggest revelation that the Void brings to us.

[If there is something watching us, whether they are hostile or not, we should at least respond to their expectations. This is both for the benefit of the universe, as well as the benefit of ourselves.]

While the entire physics world was excited because of the discovery of the “Void” and “extra dimensions”, Lu Zhou, who had returned to Jinling from Shanghai, felt completely relaxed.

After the confirmed theory of extra dimensions, the turmoil that threatened the entire physics and the controversy surrounding the “mass expansion” finally settled.

However, he still had some worries in his mind.

For example, in theory, there should be no matter in the Void. How did the Void mass project into the n-dimensional universe? And what kind of matter was it?

There were a series of problems that still couldn't be explained by the existing theories.

But in any case, the immediate problem was solved.

These questions were to be answered by later generations. All he could do was put forward conjectures.

For example, what if, before The Observer entered the Void Civilization, it kept a fragment of the old universe.

Or what if both matter and antimatter were generated at the same time? The antimatter sank into the endless Void, while the matter was projected into the new universe...

However, regardless of what the speculation was, it was too difficult to verify with current technical means.

Proving these things was no easier than proving the existence of the spirit of the universe...

After Lu Zhou went back to his Zhongshan International mansion, he took a shower, then lay on his soft bed.

Even though he lived in a nice place in Shanghai, nothing compared to the comfort of his own home.

He closed his eyes.

Suddenly, he heard a faint sound.

He saw a blue box floating above him.

[Congratulations, User, urgent mission completed!]

Chapter 1224: Void Explorer Medal

Lu Zhou stood in a pure white space. He walked up to a translucent holographic panel and saw a prompt line.

[Congratulations, User, “Call From The Void” urgent mission completed.]

[Mission status: The road to the search of truth is not always smooth. There are many endless and mysterious things we don’t understand in the vast universe. Only those with tenacity can pass the test and go into the legendary utopia...]

[Mission evaluation: S+]

[Reward: One million physics experience points. Void Explorer Medal, a gift from Void (S-level evaluation bonus), materialism +10]

A million experience points was quite a lot.

Lu Zhou saw the pale golden light particles pour from the mission panel to the experience progress bar in his characteristic panel. He had a warm smile on his face.

How long has it been?

He almost forgot this feeling of joy.

This mission had a huge reward return. He was stuck at level 8 physics for a long time now. This was a big step toward finally reaching level 9.

What confused Lu Zhou was what the Void explorer medal was.

“Last time, it was the civilization rescuer medal... Is there any meaning in collecting this stuff?”

If I collect enough medals, will the Void Civilization issue me a visa, an honorary citizenship certificate, or something else?

Lu Zhou held the shiny bronze medal in his right hand. He felt a wave of warmth in his palm.

Compared with the civilization rescuer medal, the “Void explorer” medal was very light. The medal consisted of a bronze button the size of a thumbnail that could be pinned to his shirt. The rest of the medal was a projection, using some kind of holographic technology. It was a beautiful illusion, just like the Void itself.

However, the holographic technology was more advanced than the one on Earth. It did not require water vapor as a medium and did not use the Tyndall effect at all. It was like it projected an image directly into reality. Lu Zhou had no idea what kind of technology it was.

Lu Zhou watched the medal change shape in his palm. He put it back into his inventory, alongside the civilization rescuer medal.

Perhaps in the distant future, after he completely lifted the cover of the Void, he would be lucky enough to know the true meaning behind these medals. But as for now, he was going to leave them alone.

In addition to the medal, the system also gave him special rewards for the S+ mission rating.

Lu Zhou felt like he hadn't gotten an S-grade mission evaluation in a long time.

He looked at the words on the holographic panel: [Do you want to open the gift of the Void?]. He then cleared his throat and said, “Open!”

A blue wave of light floated from the holographic panel and approached Lu Zhou by half an inch.

Lu Zhou looked at the purple light floating in front of him. He hesitated for a moment. He then extended his right hand and touched the center of the light.

What happened next was not what he expected.

This did not trigger a Void Memory. Instead, a warm current wrapped around his fingers.

Lu Zhou paused for a second with a strange look on his face.

“Is this a subspace? Or... some kind of high-dimensional fragment?”

“Amazing...”

His entire hand did not pass through the beam of light. Instead, it was swallowed by the light. His hand entered a different, sticky paste-like space. The piece of space seemed infinite. It was much larger than the volume of the light particles themselves.

Lu Zhou stretched his entire arm in. He was wondering what the Void wanted to give himself. Suddenly, his right hand touched a solid object.

He grabbed the object and pulled it out of the cloud of purple light.

After his hand was pulled out of the light cloud, the purple light quickly shrank and disappeared into nothingness.

Lu Zhou felt a cold and hard object in his hand.

“What’s this...”

Lu Zhou looked at the pen-sized metal tube in his hand curiously.

On one side of the metal tube, there was a transparent glass line with graded marks. He could see the amount of dark green liquid inside the tube through the glass line.

He shook the tube gently and watched the viscous liquid shaking slowly in the metal tube. He started to get more and more curious.

“Nutrition mixture? No, it shouldn’t be such a useless thing.”

His intuition told him that this was some kind of special biomass or a chemical substance that benefited life organisms.

Of course, it could also be something dangerous.

Even though so far, The Observer had only shown him kindness, it was better to be safe than sorry.

“I’ll take it back to the lab for testing first.”

Lu Zhou exited the system space and jumped out of his bed. He then called Wang Peng.

“Pick me up downstairs.”

“Roger that.”

After a while, he heard a car engine outside his gate and saw headlights through the trees.

Lu Zhou asked Xiao Ai to take care of the house. He then put on a change of clothes and left.

The Electric Purple vehicle was parked outside his gate.

Wang Peng opened the door for Lu Zhou. After Lu Zhou got in the car, he asked, “It’s so late, are we still going to the research institute?”

“Yeah.” Lu Zhou took out his mobile phone and connected it to the database of the Institute for Advanced Study. He checked the schedule of various biology laboratories and replied casually, “There is something I can’t wait to figure out.”

Can’t wait to figure out?

Even though he was curious about what it was, Wang Peng knew he wouldn’t understand anyway. So he focused on driving the car to the parking lot of the Institute for Advanced Study.

He turned off the engine and looked at Lu Zhou.

“Should I wait here for you?”

Lu Zhou unfastened his seat belt and replied, “No need, you can go back first.”

Wang Peng: “Are you sure? I don’t mind.”

“I’m sure.” Lu Zhou nodded and looked at the institute. “I think I might have to stay here all night.”

Chapter 1225: Dr-111

Sometimes, Wang Peng felt like Lu Zhou didn't take his health seriously.

No matter how interesting the laboratory is, you shouldn't lose sleep over it, right?

Not to mention you just got back from Shanghai a few hours ago.

Honestly, at this point, even if Lu Zhou stopped doing everything, he still would have made enough contributions to last him 20 lifetimes. His existence itself was like a statue or a painting, just standing there was enough to make the world appreciate him.

In Wang Peng's opinion, nothing was more important than health. Not even the series of results Lu Zhou made during the controllable nuclear fusion project or even sending Chinese astronauts to the Moon...

Wang Peng thought back to Dr. Yan's instructions on how Academician Lu should pay attention to his own health. He felt like he should be responsible for Lu Zhou's safety and health.

What should I do?

I can't persuade him ever.

Wang Peng took out a cigarette from his bag. He lit up the cigarette and began blowing the smoke out of the car window in a melancholy manner.

Protecting Lu Zhou was probably the longest, most troublesome, and most difficult task he had performed in his career...

...

When Lu Zhou was in the car, he had already booked a biology laboratory.

After reaching the lab, Lu Zhou first went to the sink to wash his hands. He then told Xiao Ai to take over the monitoring for the entire building. This was to make sure that no traces could be left behind. He then took out the metal tube from the system space.

The surface of the metal tube was glowing with a faint silver glow under the light of the incandescent lamp. This formed a sharp contrast with the viscous dark green liquid inside.

Without wasting any time, Lu Zhou took the metal tube to a white biosafety cabinet, which was about the size of two refrigerators. He carefully placed the tube inside and started the equipment.

This biosafety cabinet was tailor-made by a German medical equipment company for the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. It used air curtain isolation technology and was equipped with ULPA ultra-high efficiency filters. It had a 99.999% interception efficiency for particles >0.12 microns, as well as a double filtration drain.

Coupled with a high-power air pump that could create a vacuum, an ultraviolet killing system, and an acid-base pool used to inactivate special bacterial species... This was hell to microorganisms, so theoretically, it was absolutely safe.

Lu Zhou was confident that if Umbrella Corporation were willing to spend as much on safety equipment as him, then the residents of Raccoon City wouldn't have died so miserably.

In addition to the two manually operated latex gloves, there were also two electrically driven flexible mechanical arms inside the machine.

In addition to manual operation, researchers using this equipment could also rely on numerically controlled programs to accurately manipulate the samples in the biosafety cabinet.

Most researchers wouldn't actually use this numerical system. After all, most experiments could be easily done manually. However, for Lu Zhou, who had a smart laboratory assistant like Xiao Ai, the numerical programming became a trivial matter.

In order to match these powerful features, the cost of this machine was quite expensive. Star Sky Technology purchased two units in total, costing around 10 million yuan each.

However, compared to other biological experimental machines, the cost of 10 million yuan was not a big deal. The cryogenic electron microscope machine had a cost of 30 million yuan.

However, cryogenic electron microscopes were a different beast. Normally, biosafety cabinets were only 20 thousand yuan!

This was the life of a wealthy research institute.

The wealth of the Institute for Advanced Study was way beyond the imagination of most scholars.

Because the pieces of experimental equipment were too expensive, most scientific researchers began to tremble when they stepped into the laboratory.

One small mistake could cost more than a car.

However, they shouldn't worry about that at all. In Lu Zhou's opinion, experimental equipment was a consumable asset. If it breaks, just buy a new one. There was no need to treat it like a precious baby.

He would rather have the researchers in the institute boldly experiment with whatever they wanted.

In his opinion, every penny spent on scientific research was worthwhile. Even if it might not be worthwhile right now, it would definitely be worthwhile in the future...

After setting the experimental parameters, Lu Zhou went to the coffee machine and made himself a cup of coffee.

He waited quietly for a while.

Soon after, a series of laboratory data, such as microscope images, toxicity tests, etc, were all listed in an experiment report and presented to him.

Like he had guessed, this dark-green liquid was made up of a special kind of microorganism and was safe in terms of toxicity.

The Observer in the Void did not put biochemical weapons in the metal tube to sabotage him. At least for now, he couldn't find any danger in this thing.

The microorganisms were shaped like shuttles, pulsing slowly under the microscope at a stable frequency.

In addition to the organelles that most organisms had, there was also a special layer of mucus attached to the surface of these microbial cells. This

layer of mucus was like a hydrophobic adhesive, it bound microorganisms closely together and allowed certain special pheromones to be exchanged with one other.

This kind of microorganism also had a peculiar characteristic. Its DNA and RNA had extremely high stability. Generally speaking, in order to ensure a dominant position of their own population, most microorganisms had a certain probability of picking up a certain fragment of other microorganisms' RNA or DNA after swallowing them. This was to strengthen themselves for survival.

However, this microorganism was different. After they swallowed other smaller microorganisms, they did not take on the DNA or RNA fragments as their own. Instead, they destroyed them and directly converted them into energy for use.

They were also united together. They rejected foreign mutations, as well as their own mutations.

If an individual was mutated, then the exchange of the special pheromone could not be completed. This microbe would quickly be swallowed and decomposed by other microbial individuals... Similar to cleaning up cancer cells.

This community composed of microorganisms repelled all forms of mutation and maintained the purity of the community's genes.

It was difficult to imagine that such a "stubborn" microorganism could survive the elimination of natural selection.

Most of the treasures that the Void Civilization gave to Lu Zhou were "cultural relics" left by civilizations that had died out. Lu Zhou speculated that these microorganisms were probably a masterpiece from a civilization with advanced biotechnology.

In order to observe its consuming process, Lu Zhou told Xiao Ai to add 1 g of bread crumbs with a diameter of about 0.3 mm to the petri dish. He then observed the reaction of these microorganisms under an electron microscope.

When the bread crumbs came into contact with the mucus on the surface of the microorganisms, these crumbs were gradually broken down into smaller pieces of organic matter, before finally transported to the inside of the cells.

After a special respiration reaction, these organic matter fragments were converted into energy and carbon dioxide, as well as a special ketone substance.

This ketone was kind of like a synthetic intermediate of trans fats, but Lu Zhou did not observe further reactions.

Through toxicity testing, this ketone substance seemed to be harmless to other organisms. However, it inhibited the division and proliferation of this microorganism itself.

“A special kind of decomposer?”

“This should be good for treating domestic sewage and urban feces, but the reproduction speed seems to be a bit too slow.

“The secretion is a single composition. There is also no allergen that might induce an allergic reaction to the human body. It should be able to be eaten as food... But the taste won’t be good.

“It might be good as a face mask or something?”

A strange look appeared on Lu Zhou’s face.

Honestly speaking, he did not want to believe this.

After all, this was a gift from the Void.

If the only two purposes were for sewage cleaning and a facial mask, he would be disappointed.

Even though it would have economic value, it would be worthless for him.

Time quickly passed by; the sky outside the window gradually became brighter.

Lu Zhou spent the entire night doing countless experiments. He looked at the experiment report and rubbed his nose.

Roughly speaking, he learned a lot.

Unfortunately, this mysterious microbe did not seem to show any useful properties.

Not just that, but its growth rate was quite slow. After the volume grew to the size of a fist, it did not continue to proliferate.

The pheromone circulating in the microbial matter seemed to automatically adjust the number of the population, keeping its overall size within a limited range.

If he wanted to make it continue to reproduce, he had to take the initiative to physically separate microbe individuals and block the exchange of pheromones.

If this was only used for sewage cleaning, it wouldn't be much more effective than other similar microbial groups, simply because of its slow reproduction.

As for making a face mask...

He really didn't want to sell this as a face mask for a couple of dollars each.

This is ridiculous!

Xiao Ai: [Master, do you want to end the experiment? (´v`)]

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Yeah, that's it for today... Remember to clean up."

Xiao Ai: [No problem! Also, also, Master, you still haven't named this microorganism yet, do you need Xiao Ai to help? (๑•̀ㅂ•́)و✧]

"It's fine..."

Of course I'm going to name it, I'm not going to let an artificially retarded program to name it.

After thinking for a few seconds, Lu Zhou glanced at the experimental report in his hand. He picked up a pen and wrote the name [Dr-111] on it.

"We'll call it this."

Xiao Ai: [Does... does this name have any special meaning?? (•̀∀•́)]

Lu Zhou: "Does it have to?"

Xiao Ai: [Of course not, but Xiao Ai thinks that Xiao Ai should name it next time... |◦◦ω◦)ㄗ]

Lu Zhou: "..."

What nonsense is this...

After Lu Zhou registered an entry regarding [Dr-111] in the database, he collected all of the experimental data from the computers. Xiao Ai then began to operate the biosafety cabinet and sterilize the residues inside.

The metal tube was ejected from the biosafety cabinet. The air pump then evacuated the air in the biosafety cabinet. After the ultraviolet sterilization, the inside of the entire cabinet was filled with dead microorganisms.

However, something went wrong.

The dark green mucus lying in the petri dish evaporated and shrank at a speed visible to the naked eye. However, it was able to maintain its form.

It was like a slug covered in salt...

"Turn off the UV killing system!"

Xiao Ai: [What? 0.0]

Even though Xiao Ai was confused by Lu Zhou's order, it still turned off the UV sterilization system as told.

The ultraviolet radiation gradually weakened. Lu Zhou suddenly had a flash of thought in his mind.

I think I know why...

The extinct civilization created this "stubborn" microbe.

He finally knew what this tough microbe could be used on...

Chapter 1226: Prerequisites for Immigration

"It's so cold."

They were standing on a piece of gray lunar soil. The young man looked at the external temperature on his spacesuit helmet display and asked, "How can you be cold under that spacesuit?"

Walking next to him was the captain of the lunar scientific research station engineering team, Wu Gang. People in the engineering team teased him whenever he talked about the weather on the moon.

In fact, there was only one engineering team in the entire research station.

The packages thrown down from the Moon Palace were unloaded, installed, and deployed by these people.

They were the ones that repaired the solar array and the lunar collider. All of the facilities on the moon surface and all of the space construction equipment were operated by this engineering team.

The person standing next to him was an engineer recently assigned to the team named Xu Chengli. Apparently, he graduated from Jin Ling University with a master's degree in aerospace engineering.

Due to the close cooperation between Jin Ling University and the Institute for Advanced Study, his resume was regarded as very attractive in the aerospace industry. So much so that Wu Gang was confused as to why Xu Chengli came to this cold, desolate place.

"I'm just saying, chill out."

Xu Chengli heard the voice from the helmet communication channel and laughed.

Because he had just arrived here, everything was novel to him. So much so that many teammates thought he was a bit silly. However, he thought his silliness was an advantage.

After all, it was rare to hear a new human's voice on this silent moon. He always felt that if he didn't speak as much as he did, he would definitely go crazy one day.

However, Captain Wu seemed to disagree.

“You talk too much.”

Seeing how the captain was annoyed, Xu Chengli spoke with a careless look on his face.

“Fine, I will stop talking so much... Hey, actually, when I was on Earth, I didn’t talk this much.”

“You’re doing it again.”

The two continued to walk and stopped at a piece of flat ground.

After stepping on the ground with his foot and confirming that the lunar soil was strong enough, Wu Gang reached out and took the navigation beacon out from his backpack. He skillfully set the accuracy parameters, then steadily inserted it on the ground.

For now, their work had come to an end. All that was left was to wait for the cargo spacecraft to throw down the landing module. After that, they could disassemble the cargo and deploy it correctly.

The two stood quietly on the deserted piece of land while waiting for the package to arrive.

Xu Chengli was wondering if he should make some conversation when Wu Gang suddenly spoke first.

“You’re only 25 years old, right?”

Seeing how the captain took the initiative to chat, Xu Chengli quickly replied, “Yeah, why?”

Wu Gang: “Why come to a place like this?”

“Isn’t it obvious? The salary is high; it’s about three times for the same type of work on the ground. Moreover, it also includes food and accommodation, and the work intensity is not too bad, a rotation for half a year and three months of rest. The only thing that makes me a little unhappy is the internet latency is too high, and the communication bandwidth is limited, and... having no night clubs is a bit boring. What about you?”

Wu Gang went silent for a while, as if he was hesitant to answer this question.

However, when he saw the curious look in Xu Chengli's eyes, he sighed and spoke.

"The reason is the same as you... but slightly different. I have a family to raise, two children to go to school, and a mortgage to pay... Let me give you some advice, young people like you shouldn't waste their youth here. A place like this should be filled with old people like me."

Xu Chengli frowned and said, "How is it a waste? Don't you think working on the moon is a cool thing?"

Cool?

What is that supposed to mean?

Wu Gang was stunned.

Is this what young people think these days?

He felt like he was no longer keeping up with the times.

In his opinion, there wasn't any fun here. It was just a bare, desolate place that was filled with craters. There was no entertainment here at all.

"You don't want a girlfriend?"

"No way, I've had enough of them. I'm more comfortable alone. I can go wherever I want. Why tie myself down. Also, I just remembered another benefit of working here. There's no one urging me to get married here, haha."

Xu Chengli smiled heartily and raised his head. He glanced at the deep and gloomy sky. He suddenly said, "Every time I look up at the sky, I think that my life is insignificant in the universe. I'm not going to be remembered by generations to come, and even if I do, what's the point?"

Wu Gang looked at him.

"If everyone thinks that way, we would be extinct a long time ago."

"We will be extinct sooner or later... If enough time passes by." Xu Chengli looked at the electronic clock on the upper right corner of his helmet display. He said, "Speaking of which, don't the Moon Palace people have a sense of time? When will the package arrive? We have been waiting here for a while."

“There’s probably an accident,” Wu Gang said with a frown on his face. He glanced at the time in the helmet and said, “But it shouldn’t be anything serious. There’s no additional notice from the headquarters.”

Xu Chengli: “Speaking of which, what is the package?”

“Dr-111 sample active substance... I don’t know much about it. Let’s leave it alone. Focus on our job... It’s coming.”

Xu Chengli raised his head and looked in the same direction as Captain Wu.

He saw a flashing green dot appear in the deep and dark space.

The green dot gradually approached like a spacecraft, flickering at a constant frequency. It gradually approached close enough for the two to see the package with their own eyes.

The package was getting bigger and bigger.

Finally, the package steadily hit the surface of the moon, setting off a wave of lunar dust.

“Time to get to work.”

Wu Gang patted Xu Chengli’s shoulder and walked toward the silver-white landing module. Its green signal lights were still flashing.

“You guys are late.”

Wu Gang watched the astronaut walking out of the landing module. He raised his right hand and tapped twice on the side of the helmet, connecting his signal to the communication channel.

“It took me a while to correct the orbit. Allow me to introduce myself, my name is Yang Xingyu.” The astronaut who walked out of the landing module coughed and wiped the dust off his helmet. He said, “The navigation system was recently replaced, so the stability is still shaky. It will be fine after a while.”

Xu Chengli asked curiously, “The navigation system was changed?”

“Yes, recently all of our computing services have been handed over to Star Voyage One. You might have heard of it; it’s the world’s first quantum computer.”

Wu Gang frowned and said, "Is it okay to have such a high delay?"

"The latency is not a problem. The delay can be solved by an algorithm. And later on, Star Sky Technology will install a server on the Moon Palace, reducing the latency."

The astronaut patted the landing module next to him and said, "This is it. Have fun deploying it... I'm a bioengineer, so I don't know much about it. Can you contact Captain Ma for me? I remember he is in charge of the lunar research station."

"He's already on the way." Wu Gang looked at the landing module and said, "If it's not a problem... Can you tell me what this thing is?"

"It's not a problem at all. You will know soon anyway." Dr. Yang reached out and clicked on the wrist-mounted computer on his left arm. He selected some data and clicked the transfer button.

The progress bar quickly loaded. A project briefing of about two hundred words soon appeared on Wu Gang's helmet display.

"Dr-111 active substance... Metabolite purification project in a low gravity environment... Is this thing—"

"It seems that you already know." Dr. Yang smiled and said, "If this project goes well, it should help with the mass-migration to the moon."

"Forget about it." Wu Gang smiled and tapped his index finger twice on the wrist-mounted computer. He turned off the project briefing and said, "Other than people with non-functioning brains, who would come to a sh*tty place like this?"

"Hey, what is that supposed to mean?" Xu Chengli said unhappily, "Is my brain not functioning?"

Wu Gang looked at him and spoke.

"Shut up, you're still on probation, get to work."

The young man immediately started to walk toward the landing module with his tools.

Dr. Yang looked at the young man walking away with a smile and said, "You can never be sure. Life is more than what is in front of you. What you see now are the desolate land and lifeless craters. But if you look at this place ten years later, I think you're going to feel nostalgic."

Wu Gang: "You mean after I retire?"

"I mean regardless of whether you retire or not."

Haha, stay a month up here first, then talk to me.

Wu Gang smiled lightly and didn't respond. He shook his head and got to work.

Chapter 1227: Atmospheric Modification Material?

A long time had passed since the lunar scientific research station was built. The number of people who lived on the moon had almost doubled in a year. It had grown to more than 50 people.

However, this kind of population growth had limitations.

At the beginning of this year, the Lunar Orbit Committee announced that they would limit the short term increase in the number of permanent residents on the lunar surface. They would also require the management unit to maintain the current scientific research plan and the lunar resource development plan. The number of permanent personnel on the scientific research station should be maintained under 60.

The reason for such an arrangement was not because the costs of maintaining an astronaut in space were too high, but because of the limitations of the conditions.

Similar to sanitation problems faced by many large cities, although the population size of the lunar scientific research station was far smaller than a city, because there was no ecosystem that could degrade material naturally, the sanitation problem from the population growth was magnified exponentially.

According to the needs of an average adult's life, about 1 kg of garbage was produced per day. Of which metabolic waste accounted for more than 50%. The lunar scientific research station had almost no way to completely dispose of these metabolic wastes.

Even though the lunar plant growth unit could consume part of the feces and urine, which allowed organic matter to re-enter the life cycle, the efficiency of this cycle was not high enough.

Coupled with the contamination of bacteria and microorganisms, hygiene and safety had become a problem that couldn't be ignored at the lunar scientific research station. Transporting the wastes back to Earth took up the transportation resources of an entire spacecraft.

If the size of the population was allowed to increase, the Lunar Orbit Committee might have to plan a special route for the transportation of excrement and urine.

However, the existence of the Dr-111 active microorganisms was a turning point for everything.

No one knew where it came from. This project seemed to have mysteriously appeared in the database. Suddenly, people were assigned to conduct research on Dr-111.

Even though some people wondered which expert was behind the collection of such amazing microbial samples, they were not privy to this knowledge due to the lack of literature.

Lu Zhou was drinking coffee and looked at the data fed back from the lunar scientific research station. He had a moment of realization on his face.

Like he had expected, the Dr-111 microbe was more complicated than he initially imagined.

In an oxygen-rich environment, it accumulated a ketone substance while catabolizing metabolites through respiration. In fact, even though this ketone substance was harmless to other organisms, it was harmful to itself.

Prolonged exposure to an oxygen environment would cause the entire microbial population to reproduce slowly and eventually destroy itself.

But on the other hand, if it was under a high nitrogen, carbon dioxide, and light environment, this microorganism possessed an amazing reproductive ability as well as feeding ability.

When it catabolized metabolites, it generated oxygen through photosynthesis. It also absorbed solar energy through a special amino acid molecular chain.

Even though the direct consumption taste was not ideal, this special amino acid molecular chain could be digested by most organisms. This meant that it could directly enter the ecosystem cycle.

Not only that, but this organism had extraordinary tolerance to low-gravity environments, as well as direct radiation from cosmic rays. It could maintain the stability of its overall traits by breaking down and engulfing its own cancer cells.

This microorganism was an amazing waste purification agent!

It was a terrible idea to use it on Earth; the space station and other planets were where it should be applied to.

After Lu Zhou read the experiment report from beginning to end, he had a satisfied look on his face. Suddenly, a thought flashed in his mind.

“Is this thing some kind of artificially made atmospheric modification substance?”

A level 2 Kardashev scale civilization might have created it, then planted it on planets to expand their colonies.

This microorganism multiplied wildly in an atmospheric environment with high carbon dioxide. It could grow exponentially, eventually covering the entire planet's surface.

Then, after countless years, it would act both as a producer and a decomposer. It absorbed excess carbon dioxide and released oxygen, accelerating the process of atmospheric evolution. This allowed more carbon elements to be generated by photosynthesis. Organic matter used by organisms could enter the biosphere cycle.

In the final stage, as the oxygen concentration continued to rise, photosynthesis gradually became respiration. The ketones produced began to

kill the microorganism and make it lose its ability to reproduce until it completely disappeared from the entire ecosystem.

After all of this, the chaotic planet covered by carbon dioxide could complete an atmospheric evolution process in just ten years.

Thoughts and ideas began to flow into Lu Zhou's mind.

After all, there were very few atmospheric planets suitable for carbon-based organisms in the universe, and oxidation was the way most organisms obtained energy.

Under normal natural evolution conditions, it might take hundreds of millions of years to turn a planet filled with carbon dioxide and nitrogen into a relatively livable planet.

If this level 2 Kardashev scale civilization could extend its territory to an area of hundreds of light-years away by means faster than light travel, it was likely that they had mastered planetary atmospheric transformation technology.

Lu Zhou was certain that he was correct.

After all, the nature of civilization was to transform nature.

Only savages would choose chaos.

"I can't believe I found such an incredible thing..."

Lu Zhou was shocked; his heart was filled with adrenaline.

If his idea was correct, then the microorganism was not only a "space version of waste purifier", but it was also a living fossil from an advanced civilization!

What was worth studying was not just the microorganism itself, but also the biological modification technology and genetic modification technology that it might contain.

It wasn't clear how much reverse engineering could be done. But even if it was only a small gain, it could be of great help to human civilization.

Lu Zhou thought about Mars.

It was not realistic to directly modify the atmosphere of Mars. After all, the gravity of Mars was too small and there was no protection from magnetic fields. Even if an atmosphere similar to Earth was created on Mars, it would eventually disappear.

However, if they could build a relatively closed and large biosphere, it might be feasible to live on Mars.

With the help of this microorganism's environmental modification ability, as long as the methods and modification schemes used were appropriate, creating a closed biosphere on Mars should not be a problem.

Lu Zhou suddenly thought of a sentence The Observer said to him. He had a scary thought in his mind.

Nothing is ever just a coincidence.

Maybe...

Someone "designed" our solar system...

Chapter 1228: Strongest Holographic Technology

Lu Zhou returned his focus to the Lunar Orbit Committee. He was about to complete the Control of Earth and Moon mission chain. On the other hand, a group of staff members was all the way at Beijing's Bird's Nest, moving cardboard boxes into the venue.

On the stage not far away, there was a director wearing a hat with several crew members behind him. He seemed to be doing an on-site inspection of the stage.

Everyone had their job to do, not one person was mucking around.

Director Li looked at the busy venue and spoke.

"What is... going on here?"

Standing next to him was Ou Haifeng, the head of the State Entertainment Department Office.

He quickly explained, "Isn't it the National Day soon?"

"National Day? Isn't that still a while away?"

Director Li thought to himself that Labour Day had not even begun yet, but they were already planning on celebrating National Day. Wasn't this a bit too early?

Director Ou shook his head and said, "It's not early, it's only in five months. You have to prepare everything in advance, right? Not to mention that this is a national celebration, we have to be prepared!"

Director Li thought Director Ou had finished talking. He didn't expect Director Ou to sigh and continued pouring his heart out, "This celebration is different from the past. The chief of our department specifically emphasized at the work meeting that this celebration must be bigger than before and must be done in a unique way. We have to show the world our national image and the culture of our country."

Director Li couldn't help but frown.

"Can't you be more specific?"

"Basically, it means that science and technology must be emphasized at the celebration, highlighting the change that science and technology brought to our people's lives and the country's strength. We also have to take into account the aesthetics and record a show that people want to see. The level of excitement should be equivalent to the military parade."

Director Li muttered, "Equivalent to the military parade... That is going to be difficult."

Not just difficult, honestly, I think it's impossible.

"Yeah." Director Ou had a headache, and he said, "I also know it is difficult! Look at my hair, it's gone all white."

Director Li: "Actually, I don't quite understand. Why is such an important celebration handed over to your department?"

"Sigh! I didn't want this either! This was actually handled by the Organization Department of the Communist Party of China, but when the person who took

over heard that the requirements were so demanding, he immediately kicked the ball into our department. They said we have artistic brains in our department... But what can artistic brains do? If only we had some bright people in science and technology.”

Director Li snapped back to reality and spoke.

“What is that supposed to mean, you want to kick the ball to us? Let me tell you, don’t even think about it. The State Administration for National Defense is responsible for the country’s most important weapons, do not leave the fancy celebrations to us.”

“I didn’t mean that. How could we let you guys be responsible for creative and artistic activities, but... Aren’t you working in science and technology?”

Director Ou quickly lost the smile on his face after he saw Director Li’s expression. He said, “I just want to ask, is there any kind of high-tech invention that can not only highlight the importance of technology to human lives but also take into account the artistic and creative aspect?”

Director Li was triggered.

“What do you think technology is? A painting that you can take out at any time for an exhibition?”

“You’re so correct, I think so too!” Director Ou said with a painful look on his face, “But here is the problem. The higher-up requires us to achieve this effect. The department has held several meetings on this matter. The top leaders told me at least five times that I must do this well and show the people at the Organization Department of the Communist Party of China our genius creative brains. I really don’t know what to do, so that’s why I’m asking you!”

Director Li looked at Director Ou and remained silent. He suddenly thought of something, so he spoke.

“This really is a tricky situation. But, now that I think about it... I think I might be able to help.”

“What?” Director Ou asked quickly, as if he were grabbing a life-saving source. “Tell me about it!”

“Holographic projection!”

Director Li recalled the thing he saw at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. He gestured with his hands and described vividly, “Get a projection device the size of a stadium and directly cover the audience... It doesn’t matter what content is displayed, the sense of science and technology alone will be a huge success!”

He still remembered the lifelike tank model he saw at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. He was still salty about not being able to put it on an aircraft carrier.

However, although it couldn’t be installed on moving surfaces, placing it in a stadium should not be a problem.

In his opinion, the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study could more than handle an entertainment performance.

When Ou Haifeng heard Director Li, he was stunned.

He opened his mouth and spoke.

“Holo... holographic projection?”

“A holographic projection device the size of Bird’s Nest? Is that... even possible?”

He had only seen holograms in American sci-fi blockbusters when he was inspecting imported movies.

“It should be fine... At the Tokyo Olympics, wasn’t there a huge holographic projection? It’s already 2023, a bigger one shouldn’t be a problem, right? The times have changed. There are so many high-tech companies in our country. There must be a way to do it.”

In fact, Director Li wanted to talk to Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, but he thought that Lu Zhou might be annoyed by this, not to mention that the technology did not seem mature yet.

However, his hints were extremely obvious. As long as Director Ou was smart enough, he would know to contact Star Sky Technology.

This way, Director Li wouldn’t have to ask Lu Zhou for help.

Director Ou frowned and pondered.

“I’ll think about it.’

Director Li: “Go think all you want, I just think it is definitely possible!”

After Director Li walked around the stadium and gave some advice on behalf of the State Administration for National Defense, he quickly left the Bird’s Nest.

Even though he looked proud and arrogant on the surface, he was actually smiling inside.

After all, the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study always showed off to him; he was always being bragged to. This time, he could finally brag to others; it felt amazing.

Director Li got in his car and looked outside the window. He suddenly spoke emotionally.

“Xiao Chen, knowledge is everything!”

The driver in the front seat was muddled, but he smiled and began to kiss Director Li’s a*s.

“Director, you’re correct! You know what they say, an investment in knowledge pays the best interest!”

“Okay, enough, no need to recite poems, drive the car.”

“Yes, sir!”

After dismissing the Xiao Chen, Director Li, who was sitting in the back seat, began to ponder. He felt like he should complete the favor. After hesitating for a while, he finally called Lu Zhou.

After all, he was an old-fashioned person.

Although this theatrical performance was not a major event, it was performed on the motherland’s birthday. It displayed the national image of China. Not to mention that he also went to the stadium to guide the staff members. He couldn’t let this be screwed up.

After the call was connected, he didn’t give Lu Zhou time to react. He spoke enthusiastically with a smile.

“Academician Lu! Good news! Just now, I helped you secure a major project! Don’t need to thank me, it’s my job to help high-tech companies—

“What? No, it’s not troublesome at all! Why would you assume that? Am I that kind of person?

“Fine, fine, listen, Lu Zhou, it’s a bit windy here, so I can’t hear you properly. Someone will contact you in two days. That’s it, I’m hanging up!”

He pressed the hang-up button and put his phone back into his pocket. He had a mischievous smile on his face.

Xia Chen was looking at this through the rearview mirror. He was dumbfounded, unable to say a word. He breathed quietly, afraid of attracting any attention.

He felt that Director Li’s great and magnificent image in his mind had just been destroyed.

...

On the other end, after sending off Director Li, Director Ou returned to the stadium and began to think about what Director Li said earlier.

After all, Director Li was the chief leader of the State Administration for National Defense, his words were quite significant.

Even though he didn’t know how developed the current holographic technology was, from what Director Li said, it seemed interesting.

However, this was not his area of expertise. He didn’t know much about this stuff. He didn’t even know who to call for a consultation. He looked around at the people around him, and suddenly, his eyes lit up. He grabbed someone from the local intellectual property office and asked, “Xiao Wu, when it comes to holographic technology... Which company is the best?”

After hearing this question from Director Ou, Wu Yuanhang was confused. Although he was working in the intellectual property office, he was not in charge of specific patent approval, let alone specific technical requirements. Why would he understand such advanced things?

However, he couldn’t say no to the leader, so he spoke.

“Didn’t Director Li mention the Tokyo Olympics just now? Let’s check the holographic equipment supplier for the Tokyo Olympics. Maybe we can order from them?”

Ou Haifeng frowned.

“It’s not a good idea to outsource to a foreign company, right?”

“Director Ou, we are an entertainment department, not a university or a research institute. Do we really need to worry about technical things? It’s not like every piece of steel on the Bird’ Nest is produced domestically. The focus is still on the show itself, on the projector. As long as the show does well, why would the audience care about where the holographic projection equipment was bought from?”

Director Ou felt like this was reasonable.

“Perfect! I’ll leave this matter to you then.

“I will discuss with the show’s Director Liu, to see if we can incorporate holographic technology into our program. This will give the people of our country a unique performance!”

Chapter 1229: Ah, Women

After Director Li hung up the phone, Lu Zhou, who was on the other end of the call, also put down his phone. His face was covered with a look of confusion.

Chen Yushan watched Lu Zhou’s expression go from annoyed to being surprised and confused. She smirked and asked, “Who was it?”

“... An old man, I think he doesn’t know how to use a phone. Every time he calls me, he says something impossible to understand. We have to talk face to face just to understand each other.”

Lu Zhou knew it was nothing important. He shook his head and put his phone into his pocket.

These two were sitting in a uniquely decorated restaurant. Ten minutes ago they were talking about the high-tech eastern docks zone and Star Voyage One.

Less than two minutes after they finished discussing business matters, Director Li made a call and bombarded him.

Because the old man spoke so quickly, Lu Zhou didn't understand what he was trying to say.

Based on his past experience, if this was anything important, the old man would definitely not use modern tools like email or phone. Instead, he would fly to Jinling in person. Or he would tell him that they had to talk face to face.

Thus, he knew it couldn't be anything important.

In addition, Lu Zhou also learned something else, which was that when the old man spoke in a polite tone, the old man was asking for a favor.

This had happened ever since the lithium-sulfur batteries. Every time Director Li encountered any trouble, he would subconsciously speak in a polite time. So much so that this formed a conditioned reflex for Lu Zhou.

In fact, normally, Lu Zhou wouldn't mind helping out, but the Control of Earth and Moon mission chain was near the end, the most important stage.

He wanted as few troublesome things on his plate as possible.

Even though Lu Zhou said that he didn't care, he still had a worried look on his face. Chen Yushan chuckled and thought of something. She sighed and said, "As your long time friend, can I give you some advice?"

Lu Zhou said, "Go ahead."

If it's bad advice, I can just ignore it.

"I think you should really think about taking a break," Chen Yushan said in a caring tone. She looked at Lu Zhou seriously and said, "I heard that after you came back from the meeting in Shanghai, you immediately rushed to the research institute. Even if the laboratory is interesting, I think you should—"

Lu Zhou coughed lightly and said, "That was a special situation."

This wasn't a lie. After receiving such an interesting thing from the system space, how could he close his eyes and go to sleep?

That was impossible.

Even if he closed his eyes, he wouldn't be able to sleep.

Chen Yushan looked at Lu Zhou's stubborn face and rolled her eyes.

"Every day is a special situation! Look at how hard you're working, I think they owe you a Nobel Prize in Physics."

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "That doesn't matter anymore."

"Why?" Chen Yushan looked at Lu Zhou with a surprised face. She pinched the straw with her fingers and fiddled with the ice cubes in the cup. She said, "That's the Nobel Prize. You don't care at all?"

Lu Zhou sighed.

"They should consider giving it to younger people instead."

If the Nobel Prize Committee considered giving him an award, he would definitely feel happy about it. But just like finding money on a street, it was nothing more than a small gratification.

After all, he had already obtained something more precious than a Nobel Prize. The kind of thing that couldn't be measured with honors and awards. The significance of it surpassed all of the titles any country or organization could grant him.

And that was the honor of the human spirit.

Ever since then, Lu Zhou cared very little about awards.

Chen Yushan couldn't help but roll her eyes.

"Can you not say that? Young people this, young people that... You're making me feel old."

Lu Zhou didn't know what to say, so he just smiled slightly.

Even though Chen Yushan was sensitive about her age, to be honest, he didn't feel like she was getting older. In fact, it was the contrary. Because of her increase in experience, she went from the "silly and stupid" girl to a mature and charming woman.

This kind of charm was beyond the reach of most young girls.

Of course, these evaluations came from the perspective of a friend. In Lu Zhou's opinion, she was far from reaching the point of being sad over her age.

There were more things worth pursuing than the Nobel Prize.

It could be as large as the universe.

Or as small as personal enlightenment.

Caring about other people's opinions was boring.

Lu Zhou realized that there was another reason why he invited her to lunch today, so he suddenly said, "Speaking of which, I have something for you."

When Chen Yushan heard that Lu Zhou was planning to give her a present, she had a surprised look on her face. Her inner strong businesswoman disappeared, transforming into a curious little girl.

"Oh, really really? What?"

Lu Zhou: "Face mask."

"Face... Face mask?"

Chen Yushan was taken aback by this reply. She looked at Lu Zhou and said, "When... When did you start researching this thing?"

"Not research..."

Ah, how should I explain this...

Lu Zhou couldn't help but feel a headache.

This was just a by-product of the experiment. According to the clinical experiments, he found that the microbial group Dr-111 could not only

decompose and swallow excess keratin and metabolites on the surface of human skin, but it could also effectively inhibit the exogenous skin from aging.

Of course, this anti-aging effect was only for the skin. It wouldn't transform DNA telomeres to increase lifespan or anything like that.

"What brand?"

"Star Sky Technology."

When Chen Yushan heard her company's name, she had a cautious look on her face.

"You're... not treating me like a lab rat, right?"

Lu Zhou rolled his eyes.

"How is that possible! Would I ever take it out of the laboratory without clinical trials? Besides, we are a world-renowned company. Shouldn't you, the CEO, have more confidence in our brand?"

This is so hurtful!

Chen Yushan felt like she was being too harsh, and she quickly explained, "... But, the CEO never heard anything about skincare products? How could I not be worried?"

Lu Zhou said, "... Forget about it, I wanted to share something good with you, but if you don't want it, it's fine."

"Wait, no, who said I didn't want it! I want it!"

Chen Yushan began to panic. She nearly stood up from her chair.

Lu Zhou stopped playing around with her. He reached out and picked up the plastic bag beside the chair and put it on the table.

Chen Yushan was stunned when she saw the ugly plastic bag on the table.

"... This is it?"

Seeing how she was disgusted with the suspicious packaging, Lu Zhou reached out to take it back. However, Chen Yushan quickly grabbed it first.

He shrugged and said patiently, "Don't worry, there won't be any problems."

"Okay, I trust you..." Chen Yushan made sure Lu Zhou couldn't snatch the bag back. She said in an exaggerated tone, "If my skin gets ruined, I'm blaming you."

Lu Zhou: "Don't worry, it won't. Enjoy it, you'll feel great afterward."

For some reason, the atmosphere suddenly became awkward. The young couple sitting beside them began to chatter.

Chen Yushan smirked as Lu Zhou began to think.

Did I say something wrong again?

He shook his head and left it alone.

Who cares...

He believed that, even though Chen Yushan might be unhappy at the moment, when she went home and put the mask on her face, she would instantly forget about all of her worries.

As for the reason...

Because he personally witnessed two girls, who were manlier than him, after they used the mask, it was like they were on another planet. The scientific researchers nearly wrote "might affect intelligence" on the experiment reports.

Out of interest, Lu Zhou also tried it on himself later. He found out that his face felt a little smoother. Other than that, nothing particularly magical happened. It didn't make him more handsome.

Thus, he lost interest.

Even though he had no personal use for the mask, it was a good present to give to people.

Lu Zhou imagined that Chen Yushan would be so happy after using the mask, she would almost start crying. He had a grin on his face.

Ah, women.

So illogical.

Chapter 1230: One Hundred Billion Yen?!

Ever since Director Li came to the Bird's Nest for on-site guidance last time, Director Ou had felt a wave of relief.

Even though the task was still arduous, he felt that he had grasped the key to solving the problem.

How to achieve both a high-tech presentation and visual impact?

It was simple. Find a cool tech to show off to the audience first.

After talking with Liu Wei, the famous Chinese action blockbuster director, Ou Haifeng listened to his own secretary's advice and contacted NTT, the company responsible for designing the holographic system for the Tokyo Olympics.

When NTT heard that it was a large order from the Chinese state department, they were extremely eager. They immediately sent professional engineers from the Tokyo headquarters to the venue for on-site surveys.

A Toyota car stopped at the entrance of the Bird's Nest.

Ou Haifeng's secretary, Wu Yuanhang, greeted the two Japanese men.

"Mr. Nagaoka, you are finally here! Allow me to introduce, this person behind me is the head of our department, Director Ou Haifeng."

"Hello, Director Ou." Nagaoka Keiichi, a senior engineer of NTT Group, said in fluent Chinese, "It's nice to meet you."

"Hello, hello, thank you for coming all the way here."

"No worries." After the polite greetings, Nagaoka Keiichi turned his eyes to the Bird's Nest behind Director Ou and said, "Is this the place where you plan to install the holographic system?"

“Technically, it is the gymnasium interior.” Director Ou said, “We need a holographic system that can cover an area of 250,000 square meters and 80,000 seats in the entire stadium.”

“I have already read the specific requirements in the plan. Please take me inside to have a look.”

I can see why he's an engineer at a large company, he's so professional.

Director Ou watched the serious engineer and felt assured.

He secretly gave his secretary a thumbs up.

“No problem! Come with me.”

They took this senior engineer from NTT around the stadium.

Along the way, Nagaoka Keiichi had a serious look on his face. Except for occasionally exchanging a few words with the other Japanese employee beside him, he did not speak.

While Nagaoka Keiichi was carefully observing the layout of the stadium, Director Ou had been secretly observing the changes in his facial expressions.

Ever since they entered the stadium, Mr. Nagaoka always had a solemn and serious look on his face.

Even though Ou Haifeng did not understand holographic technology, his instinct told him that this might not seem as easy as he had thought.

He began to have doubts in his mind. Nagaoka Keiichi stopped walking and stood at the front row of the stadium. He looked around and spoke.

“It is my duty to meet the needs of our customers. However, I must tell you that it is not easy to build a holographic system that can cover the entire Bird's Nest. Taking into account the image continuity, resolution, and simulation, even with our most advanced equipment, it is very, very difficult to do.”

When Director Ou heard this, he was stunned.

Even though he had a doubtful feeling in his heart when observing the facial expression of Keiichi, he did not expect his worst fears to come true.

Director Ou had an awkward look on his face.

“... Is it that difficult?”

“Here’s the thing, forget about NTT, not a single company in the world can design a holographic system for such a large stadium.”

Director Ou quickly asked, “Aren’t there any solutions?”

Nagaoka Keiichi noticed the anxious look on Director Ou’s face. He had a malicious yet subtle smile on his face.

The second he saw Director Ou’s facial expression, he knew Director Ou had taken the bait.

He continued to show a serious look on his face as he said solemnly, “To be honest, it is very difficult to design a holographic system for such a big stadium, but considering our friendship, we are willing to take on the risks. We can design a special machine for you.”

When Director Ou heard this, he was overjoyed.

“That is... Thank you, guys!”

“You’re welcome.” Nagaoka Keiichi shook his head and said in a professional tone, “But the price is probably a bit higher than the market price. After all, this is one of the biggest stadiums in the world. You guys may be the only buyers of such a system.”

Director Ou couldn’t help but feel proud of China’s large stadium; he almost had butterflies in his stomach.

He put on a serious look and said, “May I ask how much this equipment will cost?”

“A hundred billion...” When Nagaoka Keiichi saw Director Ou’s face, he quickly added, “Japanese yen.”

“A hundred billion? What...”

Wu Yuanhang began to think.

The stadium for the Tokyo Olympics was only 140 billion yen, right?!

*This is so f*cking much we can almost build another stadium.*

What kind of holographic machine is this expensive?!

Is it made from diamonds?

Secretary Wu instantly regretted speaking. He forgot that the two Japanese men understood Chinese.

Sure enough, the second he spoke, a frown appeared on the faces of the two Japanese people. Director Ou and other members of the leadership team also frowned.

“Wu Yuanhang! Shut up!”

Ou Haifeng was about to continue to reprimand him, but it was too late.

“Do you think our technology is not worth the price?” Nagaoka Keiichi said. He looked like he was just insulted.

Seeing how the foreign guests were offended, Director Ou quickly explained, “We didn’t mean that, but your cost is quite high. Could we get a similar one, but a little cheaper...”

“Sorry, this is our best price. As for getting a similar one, I don’t know what that means. There is only one standard for our technology, we always do our best. Lowering our standards is an insult to our craftsman spirit.”

Director Ou: “???”

Secretary Wu: “???”

Nagaoka Keiichi looked at the astonished Chinese men. He then bowed. He and his assistant then walked away...

After they came out of the Bird’s Nest and got into the Toyota. The assistant suddenly spoke to Nagaoka Keiichi.

“Nagaoka-san, if we lose this business, the board of directors will not be happy. The current economic situation is depressed, we should not easily give up such a large deal.”

“Don’t worry, Kawada-kun, we will not lose them.”

Nagaoka Keiichi had a confident smile on his face. He took out a paper towel and wiped his hands, then threw it into a plastic bag.

“... This is how negotiation is. The lions open their mouths first, then step back. We will get the price we want, and they will feel like they have gotten a bargain. Just like their Mr. Lu Xun said, if you want to convince the Chinese people to open a window in their house, you have to act like you’re going to smash their roof open. Then, when you only open a window, they will thank you.”

The younger man had a respectful look on his face.

“Nagaoka, you’re amazing!”

“Thank you, you should learn more.” Nagaoka said with a slight smile, “China is our important trading partner, they will become more and more important in the future. Negotiating with the Chinese is a science.”

Ring ring!

Suddenly, his phone began to ring.

Nagaoka Keiichi took his phone out of his pocket and looked at the caller ID on the screen. He raised his eyebrows; there was a hint of joy on his face.

However, he quickly wiped the joy off his face.

He didn’t pick up the call immediately. He cast an arrogant gaze to Kawada-kun, who was sitting next to him.

“Look, they’re already calling me.”

Chapter 1231: Go Find Academician Lu!

Companies with scarce resources always had an advantage in negotiations. Due to the irreplaceability of these scarce resources, even if it was a little expensive, the opposing end would often agree to a deal.

In some sense, the holographic technology that NTT had mastered was also a scarce resource.

There were other companies that did holographic projection technology, but none of them were as advanced. None of them had experience in building holographic projection technology for large-scale venues.

In the end, after some fierce negotiation and the deal was on the verge of collapse, the two sides finally reached a consensus, just like Nagaoka Keiichi had expected.

The NTT Group's price was reduced to 50 billion yen from the initial 100 billion yen.

Director Ou was quite satisfied with the fact that the cost was cut in half.

Even though it was still expensive, at least his higher-ups would be happy with him.

Even though Keiichi Nagaoka had a bitter look on his face, on the inside he was happy.

The total cost of the whole set of equipment was about 10 billion yen, which converted to more than 600 million yuan. There was nothing more exciting than selling things worth 10 billion yen at the sky-high price of 50 billion yen.

After the price was negotiated, the two parties quickly entered the next stage of cooperation.

Keiichi Nagaoka had a professional team from the headquarters to conduct a detailed field inspection of the Bird's Nest building structure. They would then modify their design based on the input from the Chinese side.

After all, since the Chinese side was the one paying, they had the right to control everything.

However, the cooperation was not all smooth roads.

After the construction period was finalized, the two sides had a disagreement.

"Three months is too short!"

Nagaoka Keiichi looked at Director Ou and Director Liu, who was sitting across the table. He propped his hands on the table and said, "Three months is only enough for us to prepare the equipment you need. Even if we carry out

the preparation work and the production equipment tasks at the same time, it is impossible to get things done the way you want them to, in three months.”

Director Ou said, “Don’t you guys have an inventory? What if we move a part of the equipment from the inventory first...”

“The inventory is someone else’s order! We can’t do this at the risk of default.” Nagaoka Keiichi shook his head and said in a stern manner, “Also, your festival is in October. It is going to be held at the beginning of the month, we will deliver it in mid-September. Isn’t half a month enough for you to prepare the show?”

Liu Wei started to get angry. He stood up from his chair.

“How is two weeks enough! We are preparing a national celebration show, we’re not screwing around!”

Keiichi Nagaoka stood up from the conference table. “Four months, this is our limit. We can only deliver this system to you in early September at the earliest. If this still does not work, then I’m sorry.”

There was no way to negotiate the timeline; it was a matter of whether or not it was possible.

Even though Nagaoka Keiichi didn’t want to waste time negotiating such trivial matters, this was the only option.

In terms of price, he still had 40 billion yen of negotiating space, but he could not afford to lose any time.

Signing a deal that couldn’t be completed meant that they would have to pay a high penalty.

They could never risk paying this penalty.

...

The conference ended.

The conference room was silent.

Secretary Wu Yuanhang was the first to break the silence. He clenched his fists and spoke angrily.

“These guys... They know we can only buy this system from them.”

Director Ou frowned and sighed. He said, “Maybe they have their reasons... Director Liu, is one month not enough?”

Liu Wei shook his head.

Even though he did not want to admit this, this was the reality.

“Getting familiar with the entire system would probably take my team a month... If this doesn’t work out, maybe you can try to find a more technical focused director? After all, the National Day celebration is a big deal.”

Liu Wei really did not want to be responsible for the show anymore.

Being a program director for this kind of national celebration would be helpful for his future career, but he did not think it would be this troublesome.

It was already a headache learning a set of shooting methods that he had never used before. But now, they couldn’t even receive the equipment on time.

He had been preparing for this celebration for half a year; his mentality had completely collapsed.

“No way in h*ll!” Director Ou quickly said in a serious manner, “Your directing skills are top-notch. Our department agrees that we should entrust this important task to you. It is too late to change... Xiao Wu, go ask if there is a more suitable holographic equipment company. Forget about the Japanese, find one that meets our requirements!”

Wu Yuanhang had a bitter smile on his face.

“Okay! I’ll...”

It was possible to change the director.

Directors who were familiar with holographic projection shooting technology were the ones who rehearsed the Tokyo Olympics. However, how could they invite a foreign director to rehearse for a Chinese national celebration?

This was not just about equipment anymore.

If a foreign director's name appeared on the producer's list, it would mean big trouble.

However...

If they couldn't change the director, they might be able to change the equipment supplier?

Wu Yuanhang then consulted many people in the industry, but the answers he got were similar to what he had found out before.

So far, the most advanced companies in holographic projection technology were all in Japan. The holographic technology field in Japan was led by NTT, who won the bid for the construction of the holographic system for the Tokyo Olympics. The engineers who published the most papers on IEEE in this area were all employees of NTT Group.

Even if they changed the supplier, they would not be in a better situation.

Therefore, when the Entertainment Department office began to look for other suppliers, NTT Group did not panic at all; they sat back and watched the show.

Director Ou was lost. In the end, he had to go to Director Li out of desperation.

After Director Li heard Director Ou's words, he was furious.

"Who the f*ck told you to go to NTT!"

He was so triggered he couldn't help but swear.

Ou Haifeng was muddled. After a while, he said, "Who else are we supposed to find... They're the best in the world."

"Are you stupid?" Director Li said, "If you have a problem, go find Academician Lu!"

Chapter 1232: Was Almost Slaughtered

Ou Haifeng really didn't understand what Academician Lu had to do with holographic technology.

Although it was obvious to everyone that, ever since the controllable fusion technology, Lu Zhou was the best scholar in the world. However, he didn't remember Lu Zhou being involved in holographic technology.

In fact, Ou Haifeng wasn't the only one confused; Lu Zhou was just as confused.

While he was reading an experimental report sent from the lunar scientific research station on the active substance Dr-111, his assistant suddenly ran over and told him that the director of the Entertainment Department office wanted to see him.

Director Ou stood at his office door with an awkward look on his face. Lu Zhou spoke.

"... Did Director Li ask you to find me?"

When Ou Haifeng heard this, he froze.

Before coming here, Director Li told him repeatedly not to tell Lu Zhou that he was involved. Ou Haifeng didn't expect to have to lie the second he walked through the door.

Lu Zhou noticed Director Ou's change of facial expression. He sighed and put aside the experimental report.

"So he did."

Ou Haifeng felt like it would be useless to try denying anything. He had an embarrassed look on his face. He apologized to Director Li in his heart and spoke with a smile on his face.

"You're right, Academician Lu, you're so observant... Can I ask, how did you know?"

"Okay, enough with the polite words." Lu Zhou nodded toward his assistant, gesturing her to pour a cup of tea. He then said, "Director Ou, if you want to say anything, just say it."

Ou Haifeng began to politely talk about his intentions for coming here.

“So, the National Day is in five months, right? In order to highlight the development of our country over the year, we have to display the country’s progress in science and technology...” Ou Haifeng saw that Lu Zhou had an impatient look on his face. He quickly skipped the lengthy opening remarks and went straight to the point, “We plan to hold a celebratory show at the Bird’s Nest on National Day.”

“So what?” Lu Zhou frowned. He was puzzled. “If you are planning to invite me to your show, I’m afraid I can’t help. I have already received another invitation that day. I’ll probably be watching the military parade that day.”

Compared to the National Day’s celebration show, the military parade was much more interesting.

Not to mention that Lu Zhou had special seats reserved for him. He would never miss this opportunity.

“No, I don’t mean inviting you to rehearse the show or to watch the celebration. We might have to use holographic projection equipment, so I want to ask you if there is any way...”

“Holographic projection?” Lu Zhou hesitated and said, “Regardless of whether I can help, you’re doing a TV show... What do you need holographic projection for?”

“Normally we don’t, but this time is different!”

Ou Haifeng sighed and patted his thigh. He said to Lu Zhou anxiously, “This time, the state requires us to highlight the improvement of people from our scientific and technological strength. We have to emphasize both technology and visual impact. We have to show scientific and technological progress, as well as make the future appears bright. Do you know what I mean?”

Lu Zhou: “No.”

Ou Haifeng was feeling a little thirsty. He picked up the teacup and took a sip. However, Lu Zhou’s reply nearly made him choke on the tea.

He wiped his mouth and put down the teacup. He was about to explain it again when Lu Zhou spoke first.

“So, basically, you need a holographic projection device to cover the entire Bird’s Nest?”

“Yes, yes, exactly.” Ou Haifeng nodded quickly and said anxiously, “... Is this possible?”

Lu Zhou: “... How big is the Bird’s Nest?”

Honestly, although he had been there several times a long time ago, he never knew exactly how large it was.

“It’s around two hundred thousand square meters.”

Two hundred thousand square meters?!

Lu Zhou’s mouth slightly twitched.

*The f*ck kind of holographic image are they projecting?*

The Eiffel tower?

Seeing how worried Director Ou was, Lu Zhou thought for a bit before saying, “There are only five months until National Day. After the installation is completed, there has to be time for rehearsal and preparation. I’m guessing the entire system has to be delivered by early September... Right?”

“Early September is definitely not enough.” Ou Haifeng frowned. He was almost going to cry. “Director Liu said if it can be delivered in early August, there is still hope. September is too late!”

“Two months to prepare for the show?” Lu Zhou frowned and said, “Does it really take that long?”

“Sigh, we’re trying to give everyone an unforgettable show!”

“Three months of construction period is a bit tight.” Lu Zhou thought and said, “But... It should still be enough. We can give it a try.”

“Really?!” Ou Haifeng had a look of surprise on his face. It was like he was just saved by God. However, he soon realized a very important issue. “Wait, does Star Sky Technology... have a holographic department?”

Lu Zhou: “...”

You came all the way here to beg for help, and you don't trust me?

Lu Zhou almost wanted to tell him to “screw off”.

“... Star Sky Technology has patents in holographic technology. Although we have not put this system on the market yet, since you are so desperate, we can let you use it first.”

After hearing that this technology had not yet been introduced to the market, Director Ou suddenly looked uneasy.

“Will... there be any problems?”

“Problem? What problem? How could that be possible?” Lu Zhou waved his hand impatiently and said confidently, “I’m in charge, what is there to worry about?”

Director Ou knew that, even if there was a problem, no one would blame Lu Zhou.

However, the situation for him was different. He was the director of the Entertainment Department office.

If this show went well, it would definitely boost his resume, and he could probably get a promotion. However, if he screwed this up, his career would be over.

“True, but is there enough time? You don’t even have a factory, right?”

Seeing how Director Ou’s voice started to tremble, Lu Zhou said patiently, “You don’t need to worry about this. We’re in the era of intelligent manufacturing. Jinling is at the forefront of production. If you place an order, we will use big data to screen suitable factory production parts and will be able to start production within three days. I don’t know about other industrial zones, but here in Jinling, it takes 30 days for the first batch of equipment to come out of the production line.”

Ou Haifeng was shocked, and he sat there with his mouth open.

Lu Zhou calmly took a sip of his coffee and said, “Of course, this won’t be cheap.”

Ou Haifeng gulped and said, “... How much?”

“Because it is so urgent...” Lu Zhou thought for a while and said, “You should prepare a budget of around 100 million yuan.”

When Ou Haifeng heard this, he stood up from the sofa, nearly tripping over.

“100 million?!”

Lu Zhou frowned and said, “Too expensive?”

“No, no, no way!”

Ou Haifeng was abused countless times by Nagaoka Keiichi. He tried his best to suppress his anger. He looked at Lu Zhou and quickly said, “Okay then. You guys start contacting manufacturers, and I will bring someone to sign the contract in the afternoon... Oh wait, I’ll ask my assistant to type the contract right now.”

*What the f*ck...*

I was nearly scammed by NTT!

Ou Haifeng felt fortunate he didn’t agree to the 50 billion yen contract.

If they found out later the equipment was worth nowhere near that much, he would be in deep waters.

Chapter 1233: I’ll Demonstrate To You Then

Although the cooperation between NTT Group and the Entertainment Department office ended, NTT did not withdraw from this project. The team of engineers sent to China still arrived at the Bird’s Nest as planned and began a physical inspection of the site.

The on-site staff members did not stop the NTT engineers from going in.

Keiichi Nagaoka and his partner stood in the auditorium of the gymnasium. He looked at the large venue and felt arrogant.

Although the current situation did seem optimistic, he was confident they would not lose this deal.

His partner standing behind him was a lot less calm.

He looked at the NTT engineers surveying the site, hesitated for a while, and spoke.

“What if the Chinese do not agree? One month’s preparation time might not be enough for them.”

Nagaoka Keiichi squinted his eyes. He looked at the busy staff in the stadium and said casually, “A company that can help customers solve problems is a good company. Kawada-kun, what do you think they will do?”

Kawada thought for a while and spoke in an uncertain tone.

“If I were them, I might... change to a company that fits our timelines.”

“Usually, this is the case, but there is a premise you’re forgetting about.” Nagaoka Keiichi looked at him and said, “Which is, they don’t have alternatives to choose from.”

Nagaoka Keiichi looked at Kawada and spoke.

“Kawada-kun, it seems like you still don’t have a grasp on the current situation. Aside from us, they do not have a better choice. I believe they have contacted at least a dozen companies, but as long as they require a three-month delivery period, no company would be crazy enough to sign a deal. Other companies don’t have the technology; if we can’t do it, there’s no way they can do it either.”

Nagaoka Keiichi was very confident about this.

NTT was the industry leader in holographic projection technology, especially for large-scale holographic projection systems.

“Just wait and see, they will eventually prolong the delivery period, just like how they agreed to our price. We can also provide them with additional services, such as helping them find a modeling team that can complete the modeling and holographic designs within a month.

“If they only allow Chinese people to participate in the show production, we can also help them get in touch with people at the Tokyo Stadium and let the Chinese get familiar with our equipment.”

Nagaoka Keiichi smiled.

“Of course, I’d rather they choose the first option.

“After all, the second option won’t be cheap...”

Nagaoka Keiichi was imagining Director Ou coming and begging him, and how he would then pretend to reluctantly agree. On the other hand, NTT engineers were busy working in the Bird’s Nest; they used their equipment to collect the data of the stadium.

This part of the work was critical.

After all, what they wanted to fulfill was not just a stage, but a huge stadium with an indoor area of more than 200,000 square meters. The placement of each projector had to be extremely precise.

Even an error of 1 cm might cause a tearing of the picture and choppy movement of the image.

The staff members of the Entertainment Department office were standing by as they watched the NTT engineers point their high-tech instruments at the stadium.

Suddenly, there was a commotion at the entrance of the stadium.

The two staff members near the entrance looked over. They saw a man in blue overalls, who was accompanied by a group of people in suits and leather shoes, walking in with a silver suitcase.

“Which department are those people from?”

“Which person?”

“The one in blue and carrying a toolbox... Oh f*ck, the one next to him is Secretary Wu. I think this is an important person.”

“I’ve never seen that uniform before... Wait, the logo on the toolbox seems a bit familiar...” said the younger staff member. He tried to remember where he saw the logo as he squinted.

“It looks familiar?”

The older staff member glanced at him, clearly not believing his story.

However, the younger staff member's eyes suddenly widened as he spoke excitedly.

"I remember, it's Star Sky Technology! That logo appeared on the Star Sky Technology Phantom system!"

"Star Sky Technology? What are the people from Star Sky Technology doing here?"

Upon looking at it closely, the logo on the toolbox did seem similar. However, the staff member standing here couldn't understand why the people from Star Sky Technology were here.

Nagaoka Keiichi, just like those two, also did not know why people from Star Sky Technology were at this gymnasium.

He had a bad feeling in his stomach. He walked forward and grabbed a person from the Entertainment Department office.

"Why is Star Sky Technology here?"

The staff member was confused. After all, there was no reason Star Sky Technology couldn't be here.

However, he still spoke politely.

"The Bird's Nest stadium itself is open to the public. Even though it is closed now, they can come in as long as there is a legitimate application... Why can't they show up here?"

The engineer in blue overalls at the entrance of the stadium was warmly greeted by Secretary Wu. Secretary Wu spoke with a smile.

"Engineer Wang, are you going to start measuring now? Do you need me to find some people to help you?"

"No need, just make sure no one is in my way."

The engineer from Star Sky Technology shook his head. He then put his toolbox on the ground and opened it.

There was a drone inside the box.

Seeing how Engineer Wang from Star Sky Technology was about to get to work, Secretary Wu quickly pulled a staff member aside and said, “What are those people doing here? Get them out.”

The staff member was shocked. He said with a trembling tone, “But... those people are from NTT.”

“I don’t care if they’re from NTT or TNT, kick them out.”

When Wu Yuanhang heard the letters NTT, he had a fire of rage in his heart.

*Thank God we didn’t sign that piece of sh*tty contract! If we bought their sh*tty equipment for 50 billion yen, people would laugh at us.*

Nagaoka Keiichi brought Kawada and two NTT staff members over. He looked at the engineer who was taking the drone out of his toolbox. Nagaoka Keiichi asked, “What are you doing?”

“We are surveying and mapping the gymnasium. You are interfering with our survey work. This is not a place to fly toys.”

“Survey work?” The engineer from Star Sky Technology glanced at the NTT staff members, then looked at Secretary Wu. He said with a strange look on his face, “What is this?”

“Sorry, Engineer Wang, we might have a misunderstanding...” Wu Yuanhang looked at Keiichi Nagaoka, and the expression on his face instantly changed. He said, “We’re not working with you guys anymore, right? Hurry up and remove your people and equipment, don’t interfere with our work!”

“What do you mean we’re not working together, I...” Nagaoka Keiichi looked at Secretary Wu in disbelief. His mouth was wide open; he began to sweat from his forehead.

This...

Isn’t what I expected...

He thought that Director Ou would be begging him by now. But now, this nobody secretary was giving him an attitude.

He immediately realized what was going on. He looked at the engineer, who was tinkering with his drone. He then looked at Secretary Wu and asked, "This is a national celebration, are you really going to hand this over to someone with no experience in this area?"

The engineer from Star Sky Technology looked at him and smirked.

"You doubt our technology?"

Nagaoka Keiichi lifted his chin. His face was full of arrogance as he said, "Is that even a question? Do you have any successful projects? This is a 200,000 square meters stadium, and 80,000 spectators will watch the celebration live. If anything is messed up, it will infinitely be magnified by the audience. Your national image will be ruined..."

"You want to see success?"

The engineer from Star Sky Technology smiled.

"Then, on behalf of my company, let me demonstrate."

Scholar's Advanced Technological System - Chapter 1234 - A Technology That Expands Imagination -

Chapter 1234: A Technology That Expands Imagination

Liu Wei swore that this was definitely the most spectacular and magical thing he had ever seen in his life. Even though he had been a director for many years and had directed blockbuster with special effects, he had never seen anything like this before.

Lu Zhou was far away in Jin Ling City. He was lying inside the laboratory at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. His consciousness was wandering in the virtual reality world, constructed by the Star Voyage One quantum computer hundreds of kilometers away.

He stood in a blue world with silver lines dividing the ground into countless cubes.

Suddenly, a person appeared next to him.

Lu Zhou glanced at him and smiled.

“You have to move. Otherwise, you can’t feel the full effect of this system.”

Liu Wei snapped back to reality and had a smile on his face.

“Sorry, just standing here alone... is shocking enough.”

“Do you feel better now?”

“I feel a lot better.”

Liu Wei took a deep breath. He then followed the procedure instructions and looked at his right wrist. He saw an operation interface appear on top of his wrist. He moved his fingers and selected the modeling tool.

The second his index finger touched the icon, white light particles began to gather toward him. They were like sand particles in space, floating in the air in front of him.

He felt a sense of connection with the virtual world. He started to imagine a scene from a certain science-fiction blockbuster movie he saw.

His consciousness continued to dig into his memory. The white light particles in front of him began to change shape and color, gradually forming a model in front of him. Finally, they turned into a spaceship, albeit a weird-looking one.

“This is amazing.”

As Liu Wei looked at the spaceship in front of him, he was as excited as one could be.

He was like a child, standing on the beach. He looked at the sand spaceship he built with a sense of accomplishment.

Even though this 3D image was still somewhat abstract-looking, since many details had not been polished, but considering the fact that this was the first time he had been exposed to this tool and that it only took less than ten minutes to reach this level, this tool was quite amazing, to say the least.

Lu Zhou walked next to Director Liu and glanced at the spaceship made up of countless light particles. He reached out his right hand and those light particles began to change shape under his control. An airplane cantilever shaped object was “installed” on the spaceship.

Lu Zhou noticed the surprised expression from the director. He retracted his right hand and opened the control interface on his wrist. He then turned off the modeling tool.

“The real strength of this system is that it allows multiple people to collaborate at the same time and integrate the ideas of multiple people into the same model. Originally, it was intended for scientific research, but our system engineers found that it was also applicable in other fields, so we designed many different versions. For example, the version you are using now is the enterprise version we developed for video and film production.”

Lu Zhou looked at the crude model of the spaceship in front of him and said, “In fact, we recommend leaving the construction of the models to design professionals. After all, there might be thousands of models in a movie scene. This job cannot be done by one person alone.”

Liu Wei looked at the simple spaceship he had built and felt somewhat ashamed.

“You’re right... It seems like my imagination isn’t strong enough.”

“This has nothing to do with imagination. It simply takes a lot of time to sculpt the model details. After all, the logic of the human brain is not the same as that of a computer. Our brains have amazing abilities in processing images. We use fuzzy calculations to ignore irrelevant details. But a computer is different, we have to continue doing fuzzy calculations in our mind until the computer can understand what kind of graphics we want.”

Lu Zhou paused for a second then continued, “So far, we are working with VR helmet manufacturers such as Huawei and Xiaomi to encourage our users to actively participate in this huge project, which is to model landmarks and special real-life objects. Based on the popularity and votes, we will adopt some of these models into a library. The designer will also receive awards such as cash or gifts.

“In addition, there are some models that are classified as fantasy. We give users total freedom and open the right for them to create custom entries. As

long as it complies with regional laws and regulations, users can choose to share whatever they want with the community.

“Using the data processing capabilities of quantum computers, we will continue to improve our virtual world modeling using community cooperation. We will ultimately create an artificial paradise that’s equivalent to the real world.”

“This idea is amazing!” Liu Wei said after hearing Lu Zhou’s plans.

As a creative worker, no one knew better than him what all of this meant.

This meant that creativity and imagination would no longer be restricted. All ideas and creations could come to life.

Everyone had the opportunity to become an artist and present their own imagination to the world.

It was even possible to recreate Beijing or New York using these models...

The development tool demonstration ended.

The light blue particles faded from his surroundings. Liu Wei took off his helmet and returned to the real world.

Prior to this, he still had doubts about whether or not Lu Zhou could complete the preparation of the whole celebration show in half a month. However, there were no longer any doubts in his mind.

Forget about half a month.

If he had a group of professional modelers to help him create his dreams into reality, he could create an entire show in a week!

Not to mention that after the model structure of the Bird’s Nest was scanned into the database, even without the real-life holographic projection system, he could use the powerful development tool to complete his planning of the celebration show.

He had more than two months of preparation time; he actually had five months.

There was only one thing he was grateful for right now. Which was that they did not sign the contract with NTT.

If they had signed the contract, they would at least have to pay a penalty for violating the contract...

Lu Zhou said, "How are you feeling?"

Liu Wei saw Lu Zhou walk toward him. He looked at the helmet in his lap and spoke emotionally.

"It's eye-opening. I can't describe the feeling in my heart. I never expected to be able to shoot movies with such a magical tool... I think that when this technology becomes popular, forget about changing the entire film industry, I am certain this will change everyone's lifestyle."

"We'll see what happens then." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "The change won't come that fast. It will take time for the technology to mature. However, since there are so many talented people involved, I think it won't take too long either."

Liu Wei had a look of approval on his face.

He suddenly remembered something, so he said, "Speaking of which, Academician Lu, I have an idea. I don't know if you... are interested."

Lu Zhou immediately replied, "If it's too troublesome, then probably not."

Liu Wei quickly said, "No trouble, no trouble at all. I'm sure this will be very meaningful for both society and you!"

Lu Zhou sighed and said, "I don't really care about meaning... But go ahead."

Liu Wei smiled awkwardly and said, "I talked with a screenwriter friend some time ago, and we are planning on making a movie that reflects the spirit of our country's respect to scientific researchers who dare to innovate and strive for progress. We discussed it and agreed that if we wanted to resonate with young people, we should choose a young scholar."

What is that supposed to mean?

You want me to star in a movie?

Lu Zhou already had a headache. He waved his hand and spoke.

“Stop right there, I’m not interested in being an actor.”

Even though he was confident in his acting skills and looks, things like creating movies were a waste of time. It would take almost a year for a movie to finish filming. Even for a small production, it rarely took less than half a year.

He could make a dozen scientific achievements in a year.

Seeing how Lu Zhou seemed to have misunderstood what he meant, Liu Wei quickly explained, “Not for you to be an actor. We want to shoot a big documentary film about your story. The story will probably start from your return from overseas to the success of nuclear fusion. We might add some additional storylines for entertainment’s sake... Of course, they will definitely require your consent.”

So you’re making a documentary movie about me.

So flattering...

After hearing the director’s explanation, Lu Zhou smiled and said, “If that’s the case, then you should have told me earlier. Okay, if you think I have a story worth filming, do what you wish. Film whatever you want, I don’t really care. As for the casting side, I do have some opinions.”

It wasn’t that he cared too much about which actor would play him...

It was just that he was worried that the actor wouldn’t truly reflect his handsomeness. Even though looks was trivial for a great scholar, he did not want to get a bad reputation for his appearance.

Liu Wei said, “You can rest assured! As long as you let us make this movie, we can let you choose every single actor!”

“There is no need for that.” Lu Zhou waved his hand quickly and said, “I don’t have time to choose every actor. Let me just choose the main protagonist actor.”

“Well then, do you have any standards or suggestions regarding the main actor casting? Any suggestion is fine, this is so that we can save you time. Any requirements such as academic background, personality...”

“Oh... I don't really care.”

Lu Zhou thought for a second and said, “Just choose someone that looks like a model.”

Liu Wei: “...?”

Chapter 1235: Pretending to Be Real

“This is impossible!”

Keiichi Nagaoka, who was standing inside the Bird's Nest Stadium, stared at the scene in front of him with a dumbfounded expression. The brilliant light show had hindered his ability to think.

Like a magician grabbing rabbits out of his hat, countless colorful butterflies were released from the water bottle sized cylinder, flying in the air like birds.

Those butterflies were so realistic and charming.

It was almost like...

They were real!

Then suddenly, all of the butterflies disappeared.

Just when Nagaoka Keiichi thought it was over, he saw the engineer from Star Sky Technology pointing the cylindrical projector toward him.

He was about to ask what the man was going to do when he suddenly heard a buzzing sound.

Immediately after, he saw wasps the size of a fist, swarming out of the cylindrical projection device, flying toward him.

“Ah! Help!”

Nagaoka Kei screamed with a horrified look on his face. He raised his arms and stepped back. The staff standing next to them also looked frightened, and they quickly stepped aside.

However, nothing terrible happened. Nagaoka Keiichi, who was in the path of the wasps, only felt a warm, humid wind blowing across his cheeks. The wasps flew past him like they did not exist at all.

The engineer from Star Sky Technology smiled and turned off the holographic projector in his hand.

Instantly, the swarm of wasps turned into dust, disappearing with the wind.

The sports stadium returned to its original calm and peace.

However, there was a sense of tension in the air.

Nagaoka opened his mouth. He was about to say something when he saw the engineer from Star Sky Technology smile at him.

He thought back to his humiliating scream just now, and his face suddenly turned red. After a while, he coughed and put on a confident look on his face.

“... I understand now.

“You guys are using the Tyndall effect for imaging.

“This set of equipment has a fatal weakness, haven’t you discovered it? First is the projection area, as well as the range! I admit that this is good for small-scale holographic projection technology, but how do you plan to use this equipment to cover the entire stadium? Are you going to build a fountain in the middle of the stadium?”

Yeah...

The scope of the water mist sprayer does seem small.

Secretary Wu couldn’t help but think. Even though he no longer trusted NTT, he quickly looked at the engineer from Star Sky Technology.

However, after hearing this, the engineer smiled coldly.

“Are you kidding me?

“This problem can be solved by a few high-power fog machines.

“Constructing a holographic projection system in a fixed stadium is much simpler than building a hand-held holographic projection device. It’s almost twice as easy as the device I have in my hand right now.

“We can even separate the fog machine from the imaging system and transform the entire stadium into a huge holographic image generating device. All of the audience will be in a virtual world.

“Forget about it, you probably don’t understand anyway.

“Anyway, don’t try to challenge our technology with your little tricks. This is the real deal.”

After that, the engineer from Star Sky Technology reached out and caught the drone that had flown back from the sky. He turned it off and then put it back into the suitcase.

In front of the stunned Nagaoka Keiichi, the engineer patted the suitcase in his hand and glanced at Secretary Wu next to him.

“It’s done. I’m going to go back first. If you still want to stay here, please get me a car to send me to the airport.”

Seeing how the engineer had finished his work, Secretary Wu said, “You’re... You’re... already done?”

“Well, it’s just collecting data. How long would it take?” The engineer from Star Sky Technology glanced at the NTT engineers and Nagaoka Keiichi. He smirked and said, “We don’t waste time, unlike most people.”

He walked out of the stadium without glancing back.

The people who were still there looked at each other with bewildered looks on their faces. Especially Secretary Wu, he was totally muddled.

He thought it would take a lot of work to complete the data collection. However, the drone was able to complete the job in a few minutes, whereas the NTT Group staff members had been working for hours.

This difference...

Is too big...

The person in charge of the stadium looked at the two Japanese people, who were equally as confused. He leaned over and asked, "Should we still kick them out? Or should you call Director Ou?"

Wu Yuanhang opened his mouth and snapped back to reality. He took his phone out of his pocket.

"... I'll call and ask."

The person standing next to Nagaoka Keiichi had a weird look on his face; he looked at his boss and spoke in an awkward way.

"Nagaoka... What should we do?"

"This is impossible..." Nagaoka Keiichi's pupils widened as he tightly clenched his fists. "This can't be true..."

"Yes! This can't be true! This is a trick by the Chinese!"

His eyes were bulging out of his sockets. Suddenly, he turned around and grabbed his subordinate's shoulders with both hands. He thought he was going crazy and said, "They convinced Star Sky Technology to be a part of this trick! How can a small-scale holographic projection technology be more difficult than a large-scale holographic projection? This is... unheard of!"

Kawada-kun was shocked by this. His facial muscles twitched as he spoke in a trembling tone.

"But you also saw what just happened..."

"..."

Nagaoka Keiichi felt something stuck in his throat. His face turned pale, losing all of its colors.

At this moment, he was powerless.

The wings of the butterflies seemed to be so realistic; every inch of color and texture was so vivid.

No matter how much he lied to himself, he knew deep in his heart that this technology was something that NTT Group could never achieve.

Actually, technically, no one in this world could achieve this level of sophistication.

The texture of the holographic image was so realistic and so detailed that he could even smell the fragrance of the spring breeze and feel the flapping of the butterfly wings...

Even though he did not want to believe that any of this was true, he did not want to imagine how the board of directors would punish him if this deal went south.

This was going to be a 50 billion yen deal...

If he did not explain the situation clearly to his higher-ups, he would be toast...

Chapter 1236: Thoughts From Far Away

While Keiichi Nagaoka was feeling despair about losing an order worth tens of billions of yen, there was a festive atmosphere more than 300,000 kilometers away on the Moon.

Wu Gang was under the watch of the Moon Palace and all the staff at the lunar scientific research station. He was wearing a spacesuit as he skillfully operated a heavy engineering vehicle with two pairs of robotic arms. He placed the assembled parts on a T-shaped track excavated by the tunnel boring machine.

“Good job!”

When Wu Gang heard the voices of excitement from the communication channel, he smiled lightly and controlled the joystick skillfully. He then steadily disconnected the mechanical arm and retracted it.

He had done this countless times, so obviously, he would never make a mistake.

After reversing the vehicle around ten meters, Wu Gang turned off the engine and looked at the skyline while squinting his eyes.

This track was hundreds of kilometers long, almost perfectly straight.

The track looked like a thin, silver needle. It was buried in the lunar soil, with the top pointing toward the lunar transfer orbit.

According to the engineering data disclosed by the lunar scientific research station, the deepest part of the track was 1km deep in lunar soil.

Due to the protection from the lunar soil surface, this track could avoid being damaged from meteorites as much as possible while meeting launching requirements.

Basically, their tunnel was pierced through the Moon, although it was only on its surface.

Minerals mined from the Moon would be able to pass through this vacuum track, underneath the lunar soil surface, and shoot directly to the lunar transfer orbit using electromagnetic acceleration. This saved a lot of chemical propellants.

Once lunar mining popularized, this track would become the transportation hub for the entire lunar transfer orbit. This would accelerate Earth's advancement toward a multi-planet species!

There was no doubt that this was one of the world's greatest engineering feats!

This was a wonder in aerospace engineering!

However, this track was not yet complete.

There was only one section left.

...

The lunar scientific research station.

Wu Gang drove the heavy engineering vehicle into the garage. He took out the key from the ignition and opened the door.

He stepped on the vehicle's robotic arm and grabbed the handle by the door with his hand. He then leaped forward and jumped out of the engineering vehicle.

Strictly speaking, this was not compliant with the operating guidelines. The correct way should be to climb down the ladder. However, after staying on the Moon for a long time, people often forgot about their fears of height.

If this were on the Earth, jumping down from a height of three or four meters would break someone's leg.

But here, this was nothing more than a tiny jump.

After taking off the outer spacesuit, Wu Gang put on his inner spacesuit with an electromagnetic gravity belt. He then went through the airlock and into the lunar scientific research station.

The young man named Xu Chengli was running over with a can of water.

"Thanks."

Wu Gang took the water can and strapped it to his chest. He then took out a straw and took a sip of the water.

As Xu Chengli went up the elevator with Captain Wu, he spoke with a smile.

"The Labor Day celebration show is about to begin soon. Today, the kitchen staff made cabbage and pork dumplings. If you don't need a rest, let's head on over there."

"No need to hurry." Wu Gang took out his card and swiped it on the elevator door. He pressed a floor number and asked casually, "Speaking of which, did the Moon Palace send us their schedule?"

"Not yet! But captain, aren't you going to take a break?"

"Break?" Wu Gang looked back at the rookie engineer and said with a smile, "Why waste any time? I just want to finish this project quickly."

"What happens when you're done?"

“Then I’ll go back to Earth for a while.” After a moment of silence, Wu Gang looked up at the beating numbers on the elevator display as he spoke with a trace of nostalgia in his eyes.

“My kid is going to high school soon. I haven’t been home in a long time.”

No matter how far away you go.

You’ll always miss home...

...

The more lonely people were, the more they desired a disciplined ritual.

This was the only way lonely people could still feel connected to the rest of the world.

In some sense, the people on the lunar scientific research station were a group of marginalized people, exiled from civilization. The one-second delay made real-time communication extremely difficult. The expensive communication costs limited the amount of ground information they could receive.

People that lived here could make a half-hour phone call with someone once a week; this was the best the Lunar Orbit Committee could do.

Also, in order to ensure that the staff living here were in a good state of mind, the management staff of the scientific research station did everything possible to organize various social activities and tried to make the people living here feel the joys of festivals and the warmth of home.

As Yu Fei stood at the cafeteria entrance and looked at the crowded tables, he had a smile on his face.

As the head of the lunar scientific research station and part of the first group of “colonists” who arrived on the moon, he personally watched this place become livelier day by day. He believed that one day in the future, the lunar surface scientific research station would become a lunar village. It would be a lighthouse for humans to spread the fire of civilization to more distant worlds...

He heard a voice come from behind.

“Commander Yu, why are you standing here, aren’t you going to eat something?”

Yu Fei looked back and saw Dr. Yang Xingyu waving at him.

“I already ate.” He continued with a polite smile, “By the way, Dr. Yang, how is your project going?”

“It’s going very smoothly.” Yang Xingyu spoke with a smile, “The Dr-111 active material enjoys the environment on the Moon. By controlling the ratio of nitrogen, carbon dioxide, and oxygen, we have figured out the most suitable gas environment for their growth. It shouldn’t be long before we can try to use these organisms to transform the organic matter recycling system for our station.”

“That’s great! If you need anything, please tell me.” Yu Fei looked at Dr. Yang and said solemnly, “Whether our scientific research station will become a colony or not depends on the progress of your project.”

“Commander Yu, you’re too kind. Dealing with the metabolite cycle is only a portion of the prerequisites for the large-scale transport of resources and labor to the Moon. If we truly want this place to thrive, there are still more problems waiting for us to solve.” After a pause, Yang Xingyu said, “Speaking of which, how is the construction of our lunar mass driver? When will it be completed?”

This huge project started two years ago. Yang Xingyu still remembered the first time he saw the words “lunar mass driver” in the headline of Everyone Daily.

Two years had passed since then. The lunar collider was already complete, so he wondered how this “lunar cannon” was doing.

Yu Fei had a smile on his face when he heard Dr. Yang Xingyu.

The lunar mass driver was probably his greatest achievement during his tenure as the head of the lunar scientific research station.

He looked at Dr. Yang Xingyu and said, “It should be completed before National Day!”

Chapter 1237: It Was Posted Online?

Losing a billion-dollar project embarrassed Nagaoka Keiichi.

He didn't expect the incident that happened at the stadium to be recorded by someone using a phone and posted online.

When he saw his frightened self in the video, his face was pale, and he wanted to grab a knife and end himself.

This wasn't just embarrassing.

This completely destroyed the corporate image of the NTT Group.

Because of this video, the CEO of the company called him into the office and scolded him, saying that not only did he lose face for the company, but he also humiliated their national image in front of the world.

For someone who valued the interests of the collective more than his own life, this was devastating.

However, Nagaoka Keiichi's worries were actually unnecessary.

The people who watched the video didn't seem to pay attention to him at all.

[Jesus! Is that magic? It must be magic!]

[What magic? What kind of magic is like this? This is f*cking... fake!]

[Professor Lu is insane!]

[After virtual reality technology, Star Sky Technology made a major breakthrough in holographic projection technology. However, not only do I not have a holographic projector, I don't even have a virtual reality helmet! (cry) (cry)]

[I only care about one thing right now, how much is this thing? Where can I buy it?]

[When this thing goes on sale, I will buy it as soon as possible. Don't ask me what I'm going to use it for! I'm putting it on the trunk of my car! I'll be the coolest car on the road!]

[Haha! I'm guessing one of the traffic policemen is going to give you a ticket!]

Almost everyone's attention was sucked by the group of butterflies and bees flying in the air. When the viewers saw the lifelike holographic images in front of them, they were shocked.

The holographic projector in the hand of the Star Sky Technology engineer was like a wizard's magic wand, manipulating the world.

People couldn't distinguish the difference between illusion and reality.

The discussions on the Internet quickly attracted attention from major media outlets. After seeing the incredible video, all of the reporters and editors who worked for the press were shocked and dumbfounded.

Many of them even suspected that the lights and shadows in the video were actually special effects done by computer CGI.

However, this conspiracy did not seem to make sense. After all, the poor man standing in the middle of the bees and the horrified looks on the faces of the crowd did not seem fake at all.

In order to confirm the authenticity of the video, reporters from major media outlets found the contract information of Nagaoka Keiichi and called him to verify the video.

After being overwhelmed by these harassing phone interviews, Nagaoka Keiichi almost got depressed.

He was punished by the company headquarters for losing tens of billions of yen worth of order. His life and career prospects were looking gloomy. And now, there were these annoying reporters sprinkling salt on the wound.

This is outrageous!

On the other hand, while people were gossiping over this possibly fake holographic projection technology, a rumor suddenly appeared on the Internet.

An anonymous Internet user claimed that his neighbor's son-in-law's cousin worked as a cleaner at the Bird's Nest Stadium, and the reason why Star Sky

Technology brought this technology to the Bird's Nest Stadium was to prepare for the National Day's celebration show, which was happening in five months.

The rumor was that the Entertainment Department office would use holographic technology from Star Sky Technology to hold an unprecedented performance at the Bird's Nest.

The entire Bird's Nest stadium would be surrounded in a light show.

This instantly caused a sensation, not just in the country, but around the world...

...

Clap clap clap...

Inside the holographic projection laboratory at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, a wave of applause lasted for nearly half a minute.

Just half a minute ago, Director Liu Wei from the Entertainment Department office, showed his higher-ups and holographic projection technicians at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study what he and his team were able to achieve in the past week or so.

Even though the holographic projection clip was only ten minutes, Director Liu was able to portray his directing chops by fully taking advantage of the holographic technology.

Director Ou stood by and witnessed everything. He was so happy he couldn't close his mouth. He then said excitedly, "Perfect! This is perfect. Just do the show according to this standard. We will definitely be able to give the people of our country a wonderful National Day show!"

Seeing how happy Director Ou was, Secretary Wu spoke with a smile.

"That's for sure! I browsed several video websites yesterday. After people watched the short video of the holographic technology, they are already looking forward to the show!"

Lu Zhou, who was standing next to them, couldn't help but smile. He said, "If the audience has high expectations, it might be difficult to meet those expectations."

Liu Wei looked at Lu Zhou proudly and said confidently, “I will do everything I can to make this show perfect!”

Seeing how confident he was, Lu Zhou smirked.

“Well, it seems like I’m going to raise my expectations as well then.”

Everyone in the laboratory laughed.

Liu Wei smiled and spoke.

“Speaking of which, Academician Lu, I have an unreasonable request... During the show production period, can I borrow your laboratory?”

Lu Zhou: “This lab?”

Liu Wei: “Yeah!”

Lu Zhou, “I can lend it to you, but I can’t let you use it for a long time. Every laboratory at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study has its unique purpose. But the holographic projection lab isn’t that important. You just have to make an appointment one day in advance.”

Liu Wei quickly nodded happily and said, “Don’t worry, we will not interfere with your scientific research! Sorry in advance.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “No worries. When you need to use the equipment, we can also check to see if there is any need for improvements and changes. If you find any problems, please feel free to tell Dr. An Changyang. He’s in charge of this laboratory.”

The man with glasses standing next to Lu Zhou nodded and spoke with a friendly smile.

“Just tell me if you need anything.”

Liu Wei put his hands together and said, “Thank you!”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “No problem.”

The holographic projection “trailer” was over.

According to the schedule of the Entertainment Department office, one month before National Day, they would produce a promotional video to create momentum for this national celebration. At least 70,000 tickets for ordinary seats would be sold, while the remaining 10,000 to 20,000 tickets would be taken by state agencies and other major companies.

After they came out of the laboratory, Director Ou pulled Lu Zhou aside and spoke in a grateful tone.

“Academician Lu, thank you so much for all of this! If it weren’t for your help, we might still be negotiating with NTT. I don’t even know how to thank you!”

Even though it was still a bit difficult to beat the momentum and hype of the military parade, at least they wouldn’t get completely overshadowed.

“There’s no need to thank me, it’s not like I’m doing this for free. Also, if the show goes well, it will greatly promote our technology. The entire world is watching us, so we can’t make any mistakes.”

Director Ou patted his chest and said, “Don’t worry, Director Liu is the best director for sci-fi and action movies in our country. People who know his work all say that his special effects are on the same level as Hollywood. All he needs is a platform to display his talent. Now that this opportunity is put in front of him, he will definitely not screw up!”

Lu Zhou nodded.

“If that is the case, then it would be great.

“Technology can only provide the hardware foundation. Conveying the ideas and touching the audience’s hearts really depends on the people who use the technology. Just like how there are good IMAX movies and bad IMAX movies. Anyway, this is all we can do. The rest is up to you guys.”

After Director Ou left, Lu Zhou returned to his office at the research institute.

He felt a little thirsty. He asked his assistant to make him a cup of coffee. After the coffee was brought over, Lu Zhou picked it up and gently blew it, then took a big sip.

He felt the bitterness and sweetness spread along his taste buds. He felt like his whole body was refreshed again. He stretched his arms and was preparing to get to work.

Suddenly, the phone on his desk began to vibrate.

Lu Zhou looked at his phone and saw a WeChat message.

The message was from Chen Yushan.

The message was short; it was only three symbols.

[!!!]

Chapter 1238: An Overwhelming Feeling

What do the three exclamation marks mean?

Lu Zhou looked at WeChat. He was wondering what this message meant. Suddenly, he received a phone call. He picked up the phone and put it next to his ear. Before he could say hello, the other end of the phone spoke first.

“Lu Zhou!!!”

Lu Zhou was shocked by this. He moved his phone slightly away from his ear and asked, “What are you yelling about?”

“The face mask!!!” Chen Yushan continued, “The face mask is amazing, what is it made of?!”

Lu Zhou finally understood what was going on. He had a look of realization on his face.

As expected, women are aesthetic creatures.

Even a competent and smart woman like Chen Yushan can't control herself when she discovers something that improves her appearance.

Chen Yushan was in disbelief; she was almost going crazy. Lu Zhou twisted the pen in his hand and spoke.

"I feel like, even if I tell you what the mask is made of, you probably can't make one yourself."

The other end of the phone went silent.

Chen Yushan realized that she had asked a very stupid question. She flushed and smiled awkwardly.

"Oh... yeah, I think you're right."

Lu Zhou smiled and shook his head.

You're so good at your job, but sometimes, you're like a little kid.

After being friends for so many years, even though Chen Yushan had matured a lot, sometimes Lu Zhou still felt like she hadn't changed at all.

"Speaking of which, this took you a while. It's been more than two weeks since I gave you the mask."

Chen Yushan twirled her hair with her finger and had a shy smile on her face.

There was no way she had the courage to smear the mysterious green substance on her face.

She started putting it on her neck and arms. After making sure she didn't have any allergic reactions, she carefully put some on her face.

Then...

She couldn't stop.

The mysterious mucus was like an invisible brush, sweeping every inch of her skin, over every pore, releasing the fatigue accumulated over the years.

She had used a lot of skincare products. Most of them were so expensive that the average person couldn't afford them. However, she had never experienced any kind of joy from using luxurious skincare products.

When she washed off the dried dark green mucus from her face, she felt like she was reborn, like she was eighteen years old again...

She had completely fallen in love with this feeling.

Of course, as a good CEO, there was one other thing that excited her besides the magical effects of this skincare mask, that was, the huge business value behind this mask.

With this mask alone, someone could be at least five years younger and rejuvenate their skin. Even a logical person like herself couldn't help but fall in love with this mask. There was no woman on Earth that could resist this magic.

This was like catnip for cats!

"I was busy with work back then, so I forgot about it and didn't use it... But this is not the point! Do you know what this mask means? I'm not exaggerating, if we register a subsidiary to produce this mask, this will become our most profitable income stream!"

Listening to how excited Chen Yushan was, Lu Zhou couldn't help but shut her down.

"Forget about it, I'm not planning on putting it on the market any time soon."

Chen Yushan was stunned. She asked, "Why?"

"... I didn't tell you this before. In fact, the mask you put on your face has a special... microbiome. Basically, it is a living thing that has not been inactivated. So far, it seems like its impact on the ecosystem is negligible. It cannot survive for a long time in an aerobic atmosphere. But we still have to treat it seriously."

Lu Zhou paused for a second then continued, "Until we can be completely certain that it will not affect our ecosystem, using it on a large scale is an unwise choice."

Chen Yushan: "What about on a small scale?"

Lu Zhou: "The risk is controllable because we found that the residual chlorine in tap water is absorbed by this microorganism's synthetic intracellular ketones through respiration. This accelerates the death of this microorganism. If the reproduction speed remains constant, these microorganisms will disappear from the sewers within three days at most."

"Oh, I see..."

Lu Zhou tried to comfort Chen Yushan.

“Don’t worry, even though it is temporarily unavailable for sale, if you still want it, you can come to the laboratory and get some. After a year or two, when we have made sure it is safe, we can begin selling them.”

“Sounds good... But I want the masks you made.”

“I don’t make any masks...” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Don’t spread this rumor—”

Chen Yushan smiled and said. “Okay, fine, I know. If others know about it, they will say... Wow, a famous scientist likes skincare... Then your tall and handsome image is ruined. Am I right?”

Lu Zhou smiled and spoke.

“You know me too well.”

“Pfft!”

Chen Yushan rolled her eyes. She looked at herself on the floor to ceiling windows and smirked. She suddenly felt a weird feeling.

It was almost like the reflection of herself in the mirror wasn’t herself at all.

She didn’t know how to describe this feeling.

It just felt... relaxing...

She put her phone in her other hand and cleared her throat. She then said in a professional tone, “Speaking of which, there’s something I want to tell you. You kept interrupting, so I almost forgot.”

I’m interrupting?

However, he didn’t like to waste time arguing about useless things. Thus, he spoke concisely.

“Yeah, what?”

“The chairman of Shunfeng would like to make an appointment with you to discuss drone logistics. Are you interested? If you are not, I will push it away for you. If you are interested... When are you free?”

Chapter 1239: Want to Work at Star Sky Technology?

Downstairs at the Star Technology Building.

Wang Wei walked out of a Mercedes-Benz. He reached out with his hand and gently straightened his tie. He looked at the tall building and took a deep breath.

He was about to meet an extremely important person.

Even though this man was neither a politician nor a business tycoon, he wasn't relaxed at all. Instead, he felt a kind of nervousness and tension he had not felt in a long time.

This was because even though this person was not a powerful politician nor a business tycoon, this person was actually more powerful than a politician and businessman combined.

There was only one reason.

Even the most powerful politician could only promote the prosperity of a state or nation. A businessman, on the other hand, was even less powerful, they could only control a company, which was limited to a couple hundred billion dollars in market cap.

But this person was different.

He might not be the richest person in the world, nor the most powerful, but his name would be recorded in history forever.

Just like Times Magazine said, he was an asset to the entire human civilization. He was the pinnacle of the human spirit.

He took a step toward the stairs in front of him. However, he heard a voice coming from behind him.

“Do you want to work at Star Sky Technology? With an annual salary of 5 million yuan.”

Wang Wei turned around and saw a young man smiling at him.

Wang Wei instantly recognized this person. He had a hearty smile on his face.

“Okay, no problem! Five million is three times that of my current salary. Academician Lu, you’re being so generous, how could I decline your offer? I just want to ask, before I get hired, can I change half of my annual salary to the form of shares? After all, paying all that tax is painful!”

Lu Zhou was just joking around. He didn’t expect Wang Wei to actually agree. He smiled and said, “That’s not a good idea, Mr. Wang, you’re worth billions, I’m sure you don’t care about this measly amount of shares.”

Wang Wei sighed and said, “Academician Lu, you’re mistaken. My wealth is nothing compare to Star Sky Technology, I’m sure anyone would love to have a stake in Star Sky Technology.”

Lu Zhou didn’t respond. He just had a smile on his face.

Luck is really an amazing thing.

He still remembered that when he was still an undergraduate student, Mr. Wang, who was already worth tens of billions of dollars, offered him an annual salary of 500,000 to give up his studies and work for him in Shenzhen. However, Lu Zhou did not accept his offer. Instead, he completed his studies, went abroad to teach, and finally returned to China.

It had been almost ten years since then.

Mr. Wang was still worth tens of billions. But Lu Zhou went from being a poor student to a business magnate and a leader of China academia.

He felt emotional just thinking about it.

Honestly, even though an annual salary of 500,000 yuan might not seem like a lot in 2023, it was a huge amount nine years ago, especially for a student who had just finished sophomore year and was still worrying about living expenses. That was almost an irresistible offer.

If the high tech system hadn't shown Lu Zhou the world, Lu Zhou might have actually accepted the offer and went into the industry.

If he had accepted the offer back then, his life would be completely different...

They didn't stay at the entrance for long. After a few polite greetings, the two walked toward the building together. The staff members guided them to the VIP reception room.

The assistant in charge of the reception poured two cups of tea, then turned around and left, closing the door behind her.

After Wang Wei took a sip of tea to moisturize his throat, he looked around the VIP room and said, "They say that the reception room is the business card of a company. I can tell from the decor that Academician Lu has good taste."

Lu Zhou smiled.

He was not involved in the decor of the building. After all, he did not come here often. However, his emotional intelligence was high enough to accept this compliment with a smile.

"Thanks for the compliment."

"This is not a compliment." Wang Wei smiled; his tone suddenly became a little emotional. He said, "Actually, nine years ago, I already knew that you had a big future ahead of you. I was wondering if I could tempt you with the offer. I didn't expect that I actually underestimated your potential."

"Even though we're not colleagues, we can still be business partners." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Let's save the small talk for lunch. Let's get to the main point. I heard my CEO say that you guys have encountered some technical problems?"

"Here's the thing." Wang Wei nodded and continued, "We have been studying your paper for a while."

Lu Zhou said, "Which paper?"

He had published a lot of papers. He had no idea which one CEO Wang was referring to.

“The one about UAV logistics system.” Wang Wei sighed and said, “It’s quite unfortunate. The engineers at our research institute spent several years studying your paper. We tried to mimic the blueprint, but we still haven’t seen great results. We can’t find any solutions, other than to ask for your help.”

Oh that paper...

Lu Zhou was a little baffled hearing Wang Wei’s story.

If he remembered correctly, that was one of the ten sub-par papers he published just to complete a system mission.

Even though it took him 25 general points to redeem the paper, other than some half-complete algorithms, he didn’t make any breakthroughs. No wonder Wang Wei wasn’t able to use that paper as guidance!

“... That was just something I wrote when I was a student. It shouldn’t be used as a reference for serious research.”

Wang Wei quickly said, “Academician Lu, you are too humble! But honestly, the research on drone logistics is not entirely because of your paper. We have always invested resources in this research and development area.

“After all, the cost of hiring a courier is about 10,000 yuan, while the price of a drone is around 8,000 yuan. From an efficiency point of view, the drone is more flexible and can easily access difficult to reach areas. We only need to pay electricity and basic maintenance costs for the drones.

“So far, our plan is to start an unmanned delivery pilot in Shenzhen. We have even talked with the local government. However, our research and development team has fallen into a bottleneck.”

After thinking for a moment, Lu Zhou said, “Can you elaborate?”

Wang Wei nodded and spoke.

“We have encountered mainly two problems. One is safety, the other is delivery efficiency. Basically, we have to take into account the safety of goods and the safety of pedestrians, and also adapt to dynamic changes in traffic conditions. For high-density areas such as major cities, air traffic is strictly regulated.

“The agreement between us and the city government is to guarantee a zero pedestrian accident count during a half-year trial operation period. Having no accidents is the only way to extend our license. If a drone or package falls from the sky and hits a person, the license for our drone delivery pilot will be revoked.”

Lu Zhou nodded.

“This is difficult.”

“It’s more than difficult.” Wang Wei smiled bitterly and continued, “We can’t pass any internal tests. The director of our research institute told me that he didn’t know what to do.”

Actually, drone delivery was nothing novel. In remote areas that were inconvenient for people and vehicles to reach, Shunfeng Group tried to use delivery drones a few years ago.

However, because of the high cost, this technology was not widespread.

In recent years, breakthroughs in nuclear fusion technology had completely changed the domestic production capacity and lowered the prices of many industrial products. It also decreased electricity costs to a negligible amount. This increased the possibility of drone delivery systems.

However, they still encountered a lot of problems when applying this technology to cities.

After all, in densely populated areas, especially for areas such as major cities, flying drones was extremely dangerous. If a drone fell and hit a person or a car, the compensation and legal costs alone would almost bankrupt Shunfeng.

Not to mention some low-life people might think of the drones as targets, and use slingshots, stones, etc to attack the drones and steal the packages.

Therefore, they needed a perfect solution for the concept of “drone logistics”. After seeing the news about the completion of the Star Voyage One quantum supercomputing center, Wang Wei wanted to cooperate with Star Sky Technology. Not to mention that Lu Zhou seemed to have studied the drone logistics system before.

After patiently listening to Wang Wei's words, Lu Zhou lightly tapped his finger on the table. After thinking for a while, he said, "I know where the problem is."

Wang Wei immediately sat upright and focused his attention. He thought that Lu Zhou would have some great insight, but he was shocked by what he heard.

"Actually, it's not a big problem."

"Not a big problem?" Wang Wei said in disbelief, "What does that mean?"

"It means it's not a big problem."

Lu Zhou paused for a second before continuing, "Actually, the use of logistics drones... The Jinling high-tech zone has already tried pilot factories, but it is not widespread due to cost and safety reasons.

"For example, the 'Worker Bee' logistics drone distribution system we use is provided by Star Voyage One, using cloud computing services. The maximum safe load for a single drone is about 10kg. They are mainly used in combination with automated logistics vehicles, to transfer parts between workshops."

Lu Zhou looked at his watch and stood up from his chair.

"I'm guessing you can't understand what I'm talking about.

"Well, it just so happens that I have some free time.

"If you're interested, I'll take you to have a look."

Chapter 1240: Automated Factory

They're already using...

UAV logistics?

Lu Zhou's casualness about this shocked Wang Wei. Wang Wei was so surprised he didn't know what to say.

Now that Lu Zhou offered to take him for a tour, he obviously wouldn't refuse. He agreed without hesitation.

"Please show me around!"

He stood up from his chair.

Lu Zhou looked at how anxious Wang Wei was. He then smiled and nodded. He called over the reception assistant and said, "Tell CEO Chen that I'm going to give CEO Wang a tour of the factory. I'll be back in the afternoon."

"Okay, Academician Lu."

The assistant left the room. Lu Zhou looked at Wang Wei and spoke with a smile.

"Let's go then."

...

The factory Lu Zhou mentioned was located in the Jinling high-tech zone, next to the entrance from the highway and the railway freight station. It was regarded as one of the biggest companies in Jin Ling City.

Actually, it was CEO Liu's factory.

Ever since Star Sky Technology's investment, Zhongshan New Materials had relied on strong technical support from Star Sky Technology. They received orders from East Asia Energy and the electric vehicle industry. They went from a small local materials company to a leader in the field of carbon materials processing.

This was all because of the advancements in science and technology.

Liu Wanshan totally enjoyed the technological dividends. He was a "hardcore fan" of Star Sky Technology. When Star Sky Technology first proposed to help automate industrial logistics for his factory, Liu Wanshan agreed without hesitating.

And now, the first industrialized logistics system was a great success. Zhongshan New Materials was the new standard in lithium anode materials processing and was a technological backbone for the entire Jin Ling City.

Their completely automated material distribution factory maximized the efficiency of the production line.

The kind of work that originally required 20 low-skilled workers, now only required an educated engineer and a group of automated equipment, which was controlled by cloud servers. The difference in cost was substantial.

“This is the factory I’m talking about.”

Wang Wei took a step forward and looked at everything in front of him. He was in disbelief. He took a while to absorb everything before he spoke.

“... This is incredible.”

He was speechless.

The small and flexible AGV logistics vehicles smoothly traveled through the factory, carrying boxes of goods on top of them. Six-rotor drones roared and flew by in the air, completely replacing the manual workers.

The entire factory was like a monster, the logistics vehicles and drones were like blood cells flowing in blood vessels. The individual workshops were like the organs of the monster.

Goods moved from one production line to another, from one workshop to another. Every gear was running at maximum speed, every production link was so efficient. Even the airflow seemed like it was planned in advance.

In fact, it was.

Not just the temperature of the air, but also the gas flow rate per unit time, and even the PM2.5 in the workshops were strictly limited to a certain value.

Because of these strict standards by Zhongshan New Materials, they had the highest yield rate of lithium anode materials produced in the world.

Unless there was a systematic error that couldn’t be solved automatically, there was no need for any workers. The maintenance of equipment such as drones and logistics vehicles was done outside the factory. The maintenance of the workshop production equipment was mostly completed by AI-controlled machines.

What did industrial upgrades mean? What was smart manufacturing?

This factory was the definition of industrial upgrades and smart manufacturing!

This was not the first time he felt the important role of science and technology in industrial production. However, nothing he witnessed in the past even came close to this. Wang Wei finally understood the changes technology brought to the world, and what it meant for the future.

Not just that, but he finally understood why Lu Zhou said that his problem wasn't a problem at all.

He could even begin imagining AGV logistics vehicles traveling through the logistics center and a group of AI-controlled electric drones unloading goods from airplanes or large trucks into logistics trucks. Then, delivery drones would be responsible for door-to-door delivery. The packages would be delivered directly to the balcony or pick-up spot at the customer's home.

Wang Wei gulped; he spoke with excitement.

"How much is this system... approximately?"

"That depends on the needs of the customer." Lu Zhou looked at the drones traveling through the factory and said, "We have two standards, one is for small business owners and the other is for large business owners. The design for small businesses is focused on the optimization of logistics links between the raw materials and the output of finished products. The design for large businesses is mainly aimed at optimizing the logistics links within the production line.

"Actually, after hearing your problems, I think neither of these systems is suitable for you. What you need might be a set of dedicated logistics systems for package delivery services in densely populated cities."

Wang Wei nodded.

"You're right.

"Our long-term goal for this intelligent logistics network is to integrate automation and AI in the entire logistics distribution chain. Just like I said earlier, the large vehicles handle the long roads. Then the package is delivered to the customer using the drones on board. The drones then fly to a drone charging farm. Additional backup drones will help logistic vehicles."

In fact, this drone delivery plan was exactly the same as the paper Lu Zhou published nine years ago. However, this was not easy to achieve. There were many problems that had to be solved.

For example, the live calculation of the UAV route, how to determine the most efficient and safest delivery route, etc. This might not sound complicated, but in reality, it was quite a difficult problem.

First of all, the routes of the drones were not on a 2D plane; it was on a 3D space. Secondly, the sheer amount of volume made the problem much more complicated.

For example, in Beijing, the annual delivery volume was nearly 2.2 billion packages. This translated into a huge amount of packages every day. The entire logistics network would need tens of thousands of drones for support. The distribution plans and routes of these drones had to be calculated by computers.

It seemed like only Star Voyage One could solve this problem.

After hearing Wang Wei's words, Lu Zhou thought for a moment and said, "Actually, you can think about outsourcing the entire intelligent logistics network to us, including the drones used in the distribution link and the drone charging farm. We have a professional team capable of doing this task, and it is easier to solve this problem as a whole than to solve the individual problems you will encounter."

Wang Wei paused for a second and hesitated.

"That... isn't the best idea, right? We already have business partners for equipment such as drones and logistics vehicles. We have also signed long-term strategic cooperation agreements. If it is possible, I hope you can accommodate our request and focus on the intelligent logistics network design. So far, we are quite satisfied with the products they provide, so there is no plan to change suppliers for the time being."

Changing suppliers was not a trivial matter.

It involved many problems.

For a large-scale enterprise such as Shunfeng, it could affect the whole business. Even a small change in the logistics distribution link could cause unpredictable impacts on existing operations.

At the very least, changing business partners would require a few internal meetings. He couldn't just agree to Lu Zhou on the spot.

What really made Wang Wei hesitant was that Shunfeng had already invested a lot of money in this project. If he outsourced the entire project because of some bottlenecks, he would feel like his initial investment was wasted. A classic case of sunk cost fallacy.

Also, Shunfeng was a large enterprise with a market value in the hundreds of billions of yuan. Outsourcing a key technology to other people made Wang Wei feel "unsafe".

Lu Zhou knew what Wang Wei was thinking. He contemplated for a second and spoke.

"It depends on how you look at this problem. The industry is affected by the economics of scale. The same is true for scientific research. Letting professionals handle the professional work will be more efficient than doing it on your own. I won't force you to adopt our standards, but as a scholar, I am simply trying to find the best solution."

Wang Wei was still hesitant when he said, "Do you guys still produce drones and logistics vehicles?"

Lu Zhou: "You're worried about our production capacity?"

Wang Wei didn't say anything.

Lu Zhou smiled and spoke.

"We actually don't have a factory and production line for drones and logistics vehicles. But we are in the era of intelligent manufacturing. This is not a problem at all."

Seeing how Wang Wei still didn't understand, Lu Zhou spoke.

"If you're curious, I can show you something."

He took a tablet from his assistant, then handed it to CEO Wang.

Wang Wei was muddled as he stared at the tablet. Lu Zhou spoke.

“You can select the product parameters you need, then upload your requirements to the server. We will do our best to achieve your requests. This process will take about two hours, so we will have to wait for a while.

“We can grab some lunch, then come back.”

Chapter 1241: Prototype for the Future Industry

After seeing the factory of Zhongshan New Materials, Wang Wei was merely shocked. However, after witnessing what happened next, he was flabbergasted.

He chose the type of product he needed on the tablet, as well as a series of parameters such as weight, size, design style, etc. Then they drove to the restaurant where they were having lunch.

After lunch, he and Lu Zhou returned to the factory again. The “customized” drone prototype was flying right in front of him.

In less than a few hours, the drone turned from an “idea” into a reality. If it weren’t for the world-renowned scholar standing next to him, he might even be tempted to suspect that this was actually a scheme from Star Sky Technology just to shock people.

Seeing how surprised Wang Wei was, Lu Zhou smiled and explained as he looked at the unique logistics drone.

“BYD battery, DJI electric motor, Huawei carbon chip, and Zhongshan New Material electrode and blade materials... All of the parts were completed by the Star Voyage One server. These parts were shipped through an automated logistics system, then two pairs of industrial-grade robotic arms completed the assembly. Isn’t it amazing?”

Wang Wei nodded.

“... It is.”

This wasn't just amazing...

He had no idea how all of this was done in just two hours.

Even if Star Sky Technology had a close relationship with major manufacturers, normally it would still take a lot of discussions and negotiations to build a production chain.

In any case, this was definitely not a task that could be completed in two hours.

Lu Zhou smiled at Wang Wei.

"I understand how you feel. In fact, ever since the industrial revolution, the effective allocation and connection of resources have been the two major bottlenecks restricting the advancement of productivity.

"If a dairy factory wants to produce cartons of milk, they must first find the demand from the market, then use their own industry experience or network to select suitable carton factories and ranches. They would have to sign multiple contracts just to form a simple industrial chain.

"This process is called resource connection.

"Even though it sounds simple, this stage actually contains many hidden costs. For example, the relationships of the business owners, the management interests, and even regional policies and regulations. Normally, we cannot determine whether an industrial chain is efficient. We can only screen it through the market and find the efficient parts. The inefficient parts will eventually go bankrupt.

"This model ensures that the maximum amount of social resources flows to where they could be used as efficiently as possible.

"But now the problem is that, why does a monopoly giant, who operates a ranch, a boxing factory, and a dairy processing company, often does better than those companies that only play a single link in the industry chain?"

Wang Wei didn't have to think for a long time.

The answer was obvious.

“Because they can control the cost of each production link and complete the connection of production resources within the enterprise. This reduces costs. If the entire industry chain is longer, the more links they control, the higher their efficiency.”

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded.

“That’s basically it.

“In fact, this is the biggest improvement of the smart industry over the traditional industry. All of the links involving human participants are uncertain and inefficient, including the connection of resources.

“Therefore, we use AI to replace manual labor and efficiently allocate resources.

“The Jinling high-tech zone has been working on an intelligent manufacturing system for two years. We have established an independent quality and standard system and assigned production tasks to each production unit through computer servers. AI will build the entire industrial chain, not human labor.

“The first to use this system was the Skyglow aerospaceplane. Back then, many people were puzzled as to how we could build an aerospaceplane out of thin air, without a factory.

“In fact, we didn’t build the plane at all. It was just assembled in our equipment center. The parts and components needed for assembly were automatically assigned to factories through standardized orders. We decide what we need, and the next day, the industrial factories get to work.”

Seeing how shocked Wang Wei was, Lu Zhou smiled and said, “I want to give this drone as a gift to you, CEO Wang.

“I wonder if you like it?”

“Of course I like it!”

Wang Wei snapped back to reality and looked at Lu Zhou with a solemn expression as he said, “On behalf of Shunfeng, I’d like to accept this precious gift!”

...

After returning to Shenzhen from Jinling, Wang Wei began to think.

What he witnessed at the Jinling high-tech zone deeply shocked him.

He didn't realize how powerful the Jinling high-tech zone was.

Star Voyage One was like a brain.

This brain had established a set of production standards, and every factory that met this set of standards was integrated into this production system called the "smart industry".

This brain controlled every factory in the factory zone, creating an "intelligent manufacturing system". They were like muscle cells, connected by a complete neural network.

Although they were under different companies, the overall power they had was enough to rival any monopoly giant, in terms of efficiency and cost.

For some reason, Wang Wei had a strange thought in his mind.

Maybe in the future, everyone can open their own factory.

Of course, in his mind, this factory was just an abstract concept.

An ordinary person, as long as they had basic design knowledge and assembled standardized parts using DIY methods, they could create products that meet the customers' needs. Just like inputting parameters to a 3D printer, the entire intelligent industrial system was like a large-scale 3D printer, serving the entire society.

Everything was completed in the intelligent manufacturing network. There was no need for a burn-in period. All of the individuals operated in an efficient and transparent system that seamlessly connected production capacity and demand.

It seemed like a prototype of the future industry was taking shape.

If this system could grow and mature, not only would the middlemen be eliminated, but people's creativity would also be completely liberated... They would no longer be controlled by the hands of a few monopoly giants.

Labor would become cheaper and cheaper, and knowledge and creativity would become more valuable. All society's needs could be precisely met and satisfied with this "intelligent factory machine".

Even though these things had nothing to do with Shunfeng, Wang Wei started to become intrigued.

He had already seen a prototype of this futuristic industrial system. However, it seemed like Star Sky Technology had not yet connected this system to individual users. It was only available between factories in the high-tech zone.

Shunfeng's strength in the logistics area could totally fill this gap in this market and connect this intelligent manufacturing system with individual users.

He began to breathe deeply.

This was like a gold mine, sitting right in front of him...

After he returned to the office, he immediately found the vice president and said, "Connect the people at Star Sky Technology immediately. I want to hand over the entire smart logistics network to them."

Vice president: "Shouldn't we hold a meeting first?"

Wang Wei said, "I'll deal with the board, just do what I say."

"... But what about our agreement with New Science Manufacturing?"

"Star Sky Technology is more important than New Science Manufacturing." Wang Wei said decisively, "Just pay the liquidated damages to New Science Manufacturing."

Chapter 1242: The Hyped Drone!

Shenzhen.

Inside a building at the Science and Technology Industrial Park.

A man wearing gold-rimmed glasses slammed the report in his hand on the table and shouted at his assistant.

“Nearly a billion yuan deal! All we earned was a measly few million in liquidated damages! I can’t believe I didn’t hear about this until now. Go find out who stole our order! I want you to put the competitor’s company information on my desk within three minutes!”

This was the headquarters of New Science Manufacturing. This angry middle-aged man was Guan Chaowu, the chairman and CEO of the company.

They were a high-tech company specializing in logistics drones and intelligent software development. They signed a contract order worth 110 million yuan with Shunfeng just two months ago.

The value of this deal was almost higher than their total turnover last year.

When they received this order, Guan Chaowu was so excited that he didn’t sleep for several days. He would wake up in the middle of the night with a smile almost every night. However, they suddenly received news from Shunfeng that they chose to pay liquidated damages and canceled the 110 million yuan order.

This almost made him want to vomit.

On the surface, they only lost a 110 million yuan deal and even received some liquidated damages. However, their losses were in fact far larger than this.

What they lost was the chance of Shunfeng promoting their drone delivery model. This was a billion-dollar market!

The assistant spoke in a trembling tone.

“Boss...”

Guan Chaowu growled in anger.

“Did you not hear me?”

“No, I’m saying, there is no need to investigate.” The assistant had a bitter look on his face as he said, “The Shunfeng CEO visited Jinling a few days ago and immediately changed his mind after coming back from his trip. He even convinced the board.

“There is no doubt that there is only one company that stole our deal...”

The assistant didn't specify which company it was, but Guan Chaowu instantly reacted. His face turned blue.

"Star Sky Technology... has a drone department?"

"This... I really don't know. But it seems that Shunfeng has outsourced their entire intelligent logistics network to them."

"Their entire intelligent logistics network is outsourced? Is Wang Wei crazy?!"

Guan Chaowu was in disbelief as he looked at the frightened assistant standing in front of him. He felt a wave of bitterness and frustration from his heart.

Star Sky Technology...

If this were another company, he could maybe try to retain Shunfeng as their customer and take back the deal.

However, after he heard that Star Sky Technology was the company that stole their deal, he didn't have any courage to compete anymore. He instantly gave up on this idea.

After all, even major international companies such as Tesla and Mobil, and even the United States Department of Commerce, had to bow down to Star Sky Technology.

What more a "small company" like them.

If they tried to fight back, it wouldn't even be a fight.

It would be like an elephant stepping on an ant...

...

Guan Chaowu's guess was correct. He guessed that Lu Zhou was just bragging in front of CEO Wang, and as a result, lit a light bulb in CEO Wang's mind. Just like that, an order with a market potential of billions was awarded to Star Sky Technology.

But then again, Lu Zhou was worth tens of billions of yuan. Even though this was mostly Wang Wei's ideas, Lu Zhou was the one who could make the ideas come to life.

For example, the idea of directly connecting the customer to the production chain was an idea discussed by Lu Zhou and Director Li over tea.

The biggest difference between the future industry and the old industry was the role it played.

Even though they might be similar in some ways, they were mostly different.

Soon after, Star Sky Technology and Shunfeng reached an agreement on the logistics drones project, and a promotional video produced by Shunfeng was released online.

In the video, a uniquely shaped drone took off from a truck at a logistics center. It flew past the H700 tower, a landmark building in Shenzhen, then across the streets of Zhongying Street, passing the mountains and countryside. Finally, the drone placed a letter in the hands of a child. The letter was from the child's father, who was working far away in the city.

After everyone saw this promotional video, it immediately started a strong response on the Internet.

The discussions were not limited to the emotional and artistic aspects of the video. Instead, it was actually focused on the uniquely shaped drone that flew in the sky.

"What does this mean, is Shunfeng going to produce UAVs?"

"Is this a UAV ad or a delivery ad?"

"Wait a second, isn't that the logo of Star Sky Technology on the UAV?"

"Star Sky Technology again? Why are they involved?"

"Jesus Christ! Just a few days ago, I was shocked by Star Sky Technology's holographic technology, and now, it's happening again!"

"I just want to say, Professor Lu is nutty!"

The vast majority of people were mesmerized by the promotional film.

The people of Shenzhen City were the luckiest ones.

The people living in the pilot zone had already caught up with the trend. They were the first people in the country to experience the convenience of drone delivery.

There would be no need for post office boxes anymore. As long as someone's window was open, the drone could deliver the package on the windowsill or balcony.

The flight path of the drone was entirely done by the real-time calculation of Star Sky Technology's quantum supercomputer. As long as there was a signal connection, there was no need to worry about the drone getting lost.

Even if the signal connection dropped, it wouldn't matter. The drone would continue to travel a certain distance according to the route data previously transmitted. When the signal reconnected, it would then update the route adjusted by the real-time calculation technology.

While operating in urban areas, most of the drones flew above buildings, avoiding crowded streets, and delivered during work hours and late-night when there is less traffic.

Shunfeng was working with Star Sky Technology and was developing a shelf that could be installed on the balcony, similar to an air-conditioning bracket, but for drones to dock and place delivery parcels.

After all, not everyone wanted drones to fly inside their homes.

On one hand, this would respect the customer's privacy, and on the other hand, it could also avoid many unnecessary issues.

Discussions about Shunfeng's "smart logistics network" was also happening on Twitter and Youtube.

For example, Yurif Jack, a well-known YouTuber who lived in China for many years, made a special video and expressed his views on this matter.

"I read many skeptical comments on Twitter. A lot of my friends in the US, UK, and Europe think that this technology is not possible. They think China does not respect intellectual property rights at all, and they're not willing to make changes. They don't believe in this technology.

“I’ve even seen YouTubers say that when a new technology appears in China, they immediately think it’s better for the technology to not exist. They want bus drivers and factory workers to keep their jobs. But if the technology appears in the west, they will think that it’s amazing.

“In fact, this is a kind of bias and misunderstanding. Other than people with small brains, most of the people have an open and optimistic view of the future.”

“I’m in Shenzhen right now, and I’ve lived here for almost two years. Yesterday, in order to verify this amazing drone delivery technology, I purchased everything in my shopping cart... A few hours later, I saw the cute little guy land on my windowsill.”

Yurif pointed the camera at the packages beside the windowsill. He then pointed the camera at himself and shrugged.

“I know, you guys think that I’m lying or that I’m untrustworthy. In fact, I understand, I know how you feel. If you live in New York, it doesn’t seem like there are any changes happening. Your house, car, neighbors... Everything is the same.

“But if you live in a city like Shanghai, Beijing, or Shenzhen, you’ll see that the city is changing every day.

“Drone delivery is just the tip of the iceberg. For people like me who have lived in China for many years, this is not surprising at all. This is nothing crazy. In fact, there are more important things happening.

“For example, the National Day celebration show.”

Yurif waved the red invitation letter to the camera.

“Fortunately, I received an invitation from them... I will go to the Bird’s Nest and watch the National Day celebration live.

“If everything goes well, my next vlog will be about the celebration.

“I’m willing to bet that it will be more surprising and amazing than the delivery drones!”

Chapter 1243: Documentary Casting

UAV logistics was just one of the many applications of Star Voyage One.

There were many things a quantum computer could do.

Because of Shunfeng's promotion of delivery drones, two well-known domestic food delivery companies were interested in cooperation.

However, Lu Zhou didn't care about these things.

Star Sky Technology had a dedicated department responsible for discussing cooperation and finalizing contracts. Lu Zhou was not involved in the specific cooperation agreement with Shunfeng either.

As a scholar, he rather preferred to stay in the laboratory.

The days quickly flew by.

The summer had gone by without him knowing it.

The pilot operation of the intelligent logistics network in Shenzhen was quite successful. Shunfeng had successfully negotiated with other major cities such as Shanghai and Beijing to open new drone delivery pilots. Star Voyage One had also further expanded their cloud computing services for the intelligent logistics network to these major cities.

This kind of special delivery method improved delivery efficiency and also effectively relieved the traffic pressure in major cities. As long as there were no accidents, most cities were very satisfied with this special delivery method.

While the intelligent logistics network was steadily integrating into major Chinese cities, the National Day was approaching. Preparations for the celebration show was gradually becoming more and more intense.

Fortunately, the production team did not encounter any difficulties.

With the help of virtual reality, Director Liu was working as fast as a rocket, planning scenes after scenes.

At the beginning of September, the entire crew completed the finalization of the film and sent the first version to the Entertainment Department office for review. Over the next month, they fine-tuned the details of the film based on

the opinions of the Entertainment Department office, as well as new ideas from the director.

After all, this holiday was a birthday celebration of the motherland. The entire country would watch their show on this grand day, so no one dared to make any mistakes.

Director Liu gave strict orders to the crew, asking them to double-check everything, to avoid a single pixel mistake!

Lu Zhou was pleased with how serious the director was.

He was a little worried at first about whether it would be too ambitious to present Star Sky Technology's holographic system on such a grand occasion.

After all, no one had experience using this technology. And the show would be watched by people from all over the world. If there were any mistakes, both the Entertainment Department office and the holographic technology would take the blame.

But now, it seemed like his worries were superfluous.

If even Director Liu couldn't display the technology in an astonishing way, then perhaps the technology wasn't as amazing as he had thought.

On the other hand, while the celebration show was in the final stage, the casting of Director Liu's documentary also officially began.

He was still in Beijing, working on the national celebration show. Thus, he sent his most capable assistant to Jinling and set up a temporary studio in a corner on Jin Ling University campus. This studio was for auditioning the documentary cast members.

This novelty aroused the interest of many people. Even several of Lu Zhou's assistants and students had signed up. Lu Zhou even heard that Han Mengqi ran over and joined in on the fun. Apparently, she wanted to play her own character.

Lu Zhou and everyone else thought she would be selected. However, she walked out of the audition studio with a frustrated look on her face.

Out of curiosity, Lu Zhou asked the casting crew. He heard that she was rejected because of her age.

After all, the role of the rebellious girl in the documentary was only supposed to be 16 years old.

Han Mengqi had lost the childish and immature personality. She had become a tall and beautiful lady. Her eyes were now filled with wisdom and intelligence; she was totally different from her younger self.

On the other hand, Lin Yuxiang had not changed at all over the years. She was easily accepted as the role of Lu Zhou's mathematical modeling competition teammate.

"Um..."

Seeing how the deputy director was hesitating to speak, Lu Zhou gave him a strange look.

"What's wrong?"

"If you still want to cast Ms. Han, I can... change the script, maybe we can—"

"There's no need for that." Lu Zhou stopped him quickly and said, "We should keep true to the history!"

The deputy director was baffled.

If all we had to do was to reenact what happened, we wouldn't have to worry so much about casting!

The Entertainment Department office requested Lu Zhou's actor to be a magnificent and strong hero. The Ministry of Education requested Lu Zhou's actor to reflect the brilliance of science so as to encourage young people to learn more about science and culture.

The easiest criteria to satisfy was Lu Zhou. All Lu Zhou cared about was the actor being handsome.

So now, they had to find someone that fit all of the criteria...

Lu Zhou didn't notice the deputy director's worries. He was thinking about something else.

It was indeed quite ridiculous for a 26-year-old to play a 16-year-old, but he still felt horrible for his young student.

After all, she had always worked very hard academically. She even helped him complete many computational chemistry tasks, and she basically taught his computational materials class herself.

She had helped him quite a bit over the years. All he had to do was lift his finger and she would be in the documentary.

Lu Zhou hesitated for a bit before he spoke.

“... If it’s okay, maybe cast her as a background character, without modifying the script.”

The deputy director quickly said, “Don’t worry about this! I’ll ask my assistant to contact her and find a role for her.”

Lu Zhou felt like the deputy director was overly enthusiastic, so he quickly added.

“Doesn’t have to be a major character, just give her a couple of lines. After all, she still has to work on research.”

“Don’t worry, I understand!”

Lu Zhou: “...”

I really hope so.

...

The casting of the main actor had also begun.

Whether it was singers or actors, everyone wanted to paint themselves with Lu Zhou’s glory.

This kind of promotional and impactful documentary was a golden opportunity.

Normally, singers and models usually wouldn’t be cast for this kind of role. The production crew tended to choose more experienced actors.

However, Lu Zhou personally asked for a good-looking actor. Therefore, after the casting requirements were released, a huge number of talent management companies applied.

Many celebrities came to Jin Ling University's casting studio.

Even smaller and less well-known celebrities came to see if they could get lucky.

Because of this, the students of Jin Ling University saw all kinds of stars on their campus every day.

They would ask for their signatures and follow them around.

"Give me the truth, were you involved in casting?" Chen Yushan said abruptly.

Lu Zhou rolled his eyes.

"I only gave a suggestion for the main role. It's not like I made them cast a love interest."

Chen Yushan muttered, "Who knows, maybe you have special tastes?"

Lu Zhou, who was drinking coffee, nearly spat the coffee out of his mouth.

*The f*ck you mean by special tastes?*

Lu Zhou coughed and put down the coffee cup. He wiped his mouth and changed the conversation.

"I'm going to Beijing tomorrow, you coming?"

"To watch the military parade?"

"How do you know?"

"You go every year."

Lu Zhou smiled embarrassedly.

Oh yeah, she's right.

Every year he received an invitation with special seats.

“I’m probably not going to go this year. I’ve gone many times. Also, we’re in talks with two food delivery companies. They want to cooperate in drone delivery.”

“You should take some time off for the National Day. Apparently, there’s going to be a special show.”

“Special show?” Chen Yushan looked at him suspiciously and said, “Apart from the holographic projection, what else is special?”

“Holographic projection is another thing, this is the military parade.” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “I’m not spoiling anything, come with me and you’ll see.”

Chapter 1244: The Shocking Thirty Seconds

The Bird’s Nest covered an area of more than 200,000 square meters.

The gorgeous lights and shadows shined in the clouds of white mist, coming from all corners of the stadium.

Director Liu leaned over and stood in front of the backstage control system of the stadium. He stared closely at the monitoring screen, and finally, he let out a long sigh.

The National Day was in a few days.

This was probably the last rehearsal.

Fortunately, no accidents occurred, and the rehearsal show met all the expectations perfectly.

The shots taken by 21 wide-angle cameras distributed in the venue were clear and crisp. The staff sitting as spectators in the stadium were also completely stunned by the immersive lights and colors. They were so shocked they nearly forgot to breathe.

Ou Haifeng stood behind Liu Wei this whole time. He clenched his fists and trembled with excitement. He suddenly clapped a few times. When Wu Yuanhang saw the claps, he quickly snapped back to reality and began to clap himself.

Clap clap clap!

The applause in the control room lasted for nearly a minute.

After the applause stopped, Ou Haifeng didn't know how to express his feelings. His voice was shaking from the adrenaline.

"This is perfect!

"This is the most perfect show I have ever seen!"

Before this rehearsal, he was still a little nervous. He was worried because this was the first time Director Liu had used this equipment, and he had no holographic shooting experience. He thought Director Liu might not be able to fully demonstrate the magnificence of the holographic system's special effects.

But now, it appeared that his worries were totally redundant. Forget about satisfying the people of the country, once this celebration show was over, the whole world would be jealous of this technology.

"It's finally done..."

Director Liu raised his arm and wiped the sweat off his forehead. He showed a smile of relief on his face and joked.

"Do you think this will steal the show from the military parade?"

He thought that Director Ou would agree. However, Director Ou merely chuckled and said, "That... would be a little difficult."

A little difficult?

Director Liu strangely looked at him.

"Why?"

"After all, holographic projection is just a holographic projection. It's not real, and the military parade..." Ou Haifeng coughed and said, "You think Academician Lu has no hand in that?"

...

The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Lu Zhou was sitting in the director's office and calling his family.

"Dad, are you free these days?"

"Your dad has nothing but free time, why?"

Lu Zhou could hear in the background the voice of the news anchor on the television. He guessed that his parents were probably eating.

Lu Zhou felt a little hungry when he thought of his mother's cooking. He could almost smell the food through the phone. He cut the small talk and went straight to the point.

"Want to go to Beijing?"

Lu Bangguo put down the chopsticks and focused his attention on the call.

"For what?"

"To watch the military parade."

"I watched it a few years ago, I'd rather not go this year."

"This year is different!"

Lu Bangguo was amused.

"How is it different? Isn't it just walking in a formation? When I was young, I participated in our factory's military training. It's not like I haven't walked in a formation before."

As Lu Zhou felt the generation gap between him and his parents, he sighed and said, "Sigh... Anyway, I bought the tickets for you guys. Just treat it like a holiday and come relax for a few days."

"You little rascal, making decisions for me now? Who's the father here? All right, I'll go with your mother. You should take care of yourself. I don't want to see you all single and skinny in Beijing."

Even though his father was complaining, Lu Zhou could tell that he was actually quite happy.

His father loved to act unenthusiastic and cool.

Although he said that he didn't want to go to the military parade, being able to sit in the special seats would allow him to brag to his work friends.

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "I can't. I tried, but this is how I am. I can't gain weight."

"Yeah, right, I'd be grateful if you eat on time every day. You haven't eaten dinner, right?"

"How did you know?"

"I am your father!" Lu Bangguo smiled and said, "Okay, enough joking around, go eat some dinner, I'm hanging up!"

Lu Zhou hung up the call and was about to go to the cafeteria. On the other hand, a promotional video about the National Day celebration show appeared on major Internet platforms.

The title of the video was "Us", and it was around 30 seconds long.

In less than 30 minutes, the total number of views had exceeded 30 million and was steadily approaching 40 million.

The video showed an old coal-powered train. The train creaked as it moved forward across a yellow grassland, pushing gray smoke from its black chimney.

The words Woosung Road appeared on the video screen on a wooden sign. The sounds of gunfire and shouting could be heard in the distance.

The gunfire gradually became louder and noisier before finally fading away. It turned into the sounds of children's laughter. A high-speed rail train flashed by, and the wooden sign turned into a modern sign, with the words "Shanghai Railway Station" across it.

The camera panned to the sky.

Then, something shocking happened.

The camera began to zoom out faster and faster, through the clouds and through the atmosphere. Suddenly, a stadium appeared.

Yes, a stadium.

Everything that appeared in the video was confined within this stadium.

The video transitions were smooth. The lights and sounds of the gunfire were realistically re-enacted by the holographic lights, restoring the past perfectly.

This wasn't a promotional trailer!

This was a story!

People were shocked by the visuals!

This was more exciting than most domestic blockbuster movies!

Of course, there was no plot.

After all, it was only thirty seconds. However, thirty seconds was enough to make everyone look forward to the celebration show.

Director Liu, who directed this trailer, had achieved his goals.

Less than an hour after the trailer was released, online discussions about the National Day show had exploded!

Chapter 1245: Are You Guys Drunk?

An online video site.

Inside the comments area.

"This trailer is pretty interesting!"

"Interesting? It's amazing!"

"The news some time ago is true! They actually plan on using holographic technology on National Day!"

"Surely not, the holographic projector in the video is only the size of a flashlight. How is it going to cover the entire stadium! I think it's another illusion!"

“I’m an engineer in the holographic projection industry. I’m not going to say which company I work for. We all know that Japan’s NTT is the best in this field. They’re the only ones that have mastered the construction of holographic projection systems for large stadiums. Even though my company can also build a holographic projection system for stadiums, both the scale and the fidelity of the image is one whole generation behind. Technology doesn’t come from 30-second trailers, it comes from years of hard work...”

“But in the trailer video... The engineer from NTT Group was shocked?”

“They were just shocked, does that tell us anything? If I throw a punch on your face, aren’t you going to be shocked?”

“I wish National Day were already here, I’m so looking forward to it!”

The comments sections on large Chinese video sites weren’t the only places with heated discussions. The discussions on the Internet came in waves. After the trailer showing the holographic projector from Star Sky Technology was released, the west already began discussing whether this technology would appear at the National Day celebration.

It seemed like the Internet was right.

Judging by the information revealed by the trailer, it seemed like the Chinese Entertainment Department office planned on immersing the entire stadium in holographic images.

That meant that the entire stadium was the performance stage.

Everyone wondered how many holographic projectors they would need.

The engineers working in the holographic field, as well as normal citizens, couldn’t imagine the scale.

Because of this, the hype surrounding the show was heating up even beyond the imagination of the Entertainment Department office and Star Sky Technology.

The 10,000 tickets released in the first wave were bought out within a second of being posted on the official website.

Before the ticket release, Director Ou was still joking with Lu Zhou about whether the tickets would sell out in seconds. He didn't expect it to actually happen.

Director Ou was baffled.

After all, the National Day celebration was mainly for the purpose of providing a fun experience for the people of the country. They were doing this at a loss; there was no way they could make a profit from the ticket sales.

The hardware investment was around 100 million yuan, plus a production cost of 20 million yuan. The Entertainment Department office spent around 120 million yuan on this show.

With an admission ticket of 200 yuan a piece, even if they added 30,000 temporary seats, selling 110,000 tickets total, they would only receive 22 million yuan.

They could probably receive 20 to 30 million yuan in sponsorships. The total would only be 50 million. Even for the most optimistic case, the Entertainment Department office would still lose 70 million yuan on this project.

This was not including the renting costs for the stadium.

On the other hand, if spending the 70 million yuan could make the people of the country satisfied and make the country more united and cohesive, then the money spent would be worth it.

However, the problem now was that the vast majority of people did not get a chance to buy any tickets. The vast majority of the tickets were taken by experienced scalpers and resellers.

Second-hand tickets started to appear on major ticket reselling platforms. The prices were around ten times the original price. Regular tickets were being sold at the price of VIP tickets. The most expensive ones were around five thousand yuan.

Director Ou was furious.

In order to combat the scalpers, the Entertainment Department office quickly modified the ticket sales method. The original strategy of issuing 10,000 tickets at midnight was changed to a name-verification system, with a random

lottery component. The tickets sold were tied with ID cards. This was able to defeat the reselling market.

But at the same time, it seemed like it was more difficult for normal people to buy the tickets.

An hour after the new ticket selling method was implemented, the number of people who wanted to buy tickets with the name-verification system had surpassed 20 million, and it continued to grow. The probability of being selected from the lottery was less than 1%.

The entire population of Beijing was only 20 million.

It was obvious that the hype and enthusiasm surrounding the National Day celebration was huge...

...

On the high-speed rail.

Second class seats.

With the help from the train attendants, Lu Bangguo and Fang Mei put their luggage on the luggage rack and sat in their seats.

The train seats came with a table where people could eat. There were seats on both sides of the table that were facing each other.

Coincidentally, another pair of elderly couple was sitting across from them. They were about the same age as Lu Bangguo, and they even looked similar.

After the train started to move, Lu Bangguo took a look at the old man across from him and saw that the old man was staring at him as well.

The two of them accidentally made eye contact.

It would be awkward if he didn't say anything, and Old Lu was the type of person that liked to chat. Thus, he took the initiative to speak.

After a while, the two old men clicked so well they began to talk like old friends.

"What are you guys going to Beijing for?"

“To watch the military parade!”

“Military parade? Ah, that’s not something most people can watch. Most people watching the military parade are in first-class seats.”

Lu Bangguo smiled and was about to say that they were actually watching the parade in special seats. However, his wife elbowed him and rolled her eyes.

“Don’t embarrass our son!”

“I’m just...”

“Just what? Everyone has a phone these days, what if someone films you? Everyone’s going to see the academician’s arrogant father.”

Lu Bangguo was baffled. He knew that no one would film such a boring conversation.

However, he didn’t want to argue with his wife, so he quietly muttered, “I wasn’t being arrogant...”

“How are you not! I know exactly what you were about to say!”

The old couple sitting across from them smiled. The old man had an envious look in his eyes.

How nice.

Such a loving couple after so many years.

Look at my wife; she’s been asleep this whole time, totally ignoring me.

While Lu Bangguo was arguing with his wife, he realized he had forgotten that there was someone sitting across from him. Lu Bangguo quickly coughed and ended the conversation with his wife.

He asked, “What about you guys?”

“To watch the show!”

“The show?”

Seeing how confused Lu Bangguo was, the old man had a proud look on his face. However, he sighed pretentiously and spoke as he shook his head.

“Sigh, my son is too nice! The National Day celebration show is happening at the Bird’s Nest, right? He’s making us come, even bought two tickets for us. Apparently, the VIP tickets cost two thousand each!”

“Two thousand? Which seats do you guys have?”

“The two hundred yuan ones.”

“...”

Lu Bangguo looked at Fang Mei, who was sitting next to him, and quietly asked, “The Bird’s Nest show? What show? I haven’t heard anything.”

Fang Mei rolled her eyes and said, “Don’t you watch the news every day? Even I know!”

Lu Bangguo smiled awkwardly.

He only paid attention to the news when his son was involved. He probably read about the Bird’s Nest show and forgot about it.

He wasn’t interested in the show, but when he heard that it was going to be held at the Bird’s Nest, which he had never been to before, and that the other couple was looking forward to going, he couldn’t help but feel a little curious. He quietly spoke to his wife.

“... We’ve already seen the military parade a few times, we’ve never been to the Bird’s Nest... How about we go watch the celebration show this time?”

Fang Mei was a little curious, but she still hesitated.

“Wouldn’t that be troublesome for our son?”

Lu Bangguo waved his hand and said, “Not troublesome at all. It’s only two hundred yuan. If the ticket sales weren’t online, I would buy them myself.”

“Oh... then let’s call them after we get off the train. He should be on the plane right now.”

The old man sitting across from the two chuckled. He had a blank expression on his face.

Watching the military parade, special tickets...

Enough with the lies!

...

On the other hand, Lu Zhou, who was on the plane, had also arrived at the Beijing airport safely.

After he and Chen Yushan were greeted by the airport concierge and passed through the VIP channel, they walked up to a black government car at the airport entrance. A staff member in a suit opened the car door for him. After he got in the car, he saw the man sitting in the passenger seat...

Looked a bit familiar?

“Chen Baohua?”

“Dad?”

The two people in the car were stunned.

Chen Baohua looked at Lu Zhou, the man who made his precious daughter work all year, through the rearview mirror. He went silent for a while, then sighed.

“Hello, Academician Lu.”

Lu Zhou felt like there was a meaning behind the sigh, but he couldn’t care to decipher it. He smiled and said, “Hello, Chen Baohua, I hope you’re doing well.”

“I’m always doing well.”

Lu Zhou: “...?”

Seeing how the attention wasn’t focused on her, Chen Yushan looked at her dad unhappily and said, “Dad, why aren’t you saying hi to me?”

“I’m your father, you should greet me first!”

“Pfft!”

Seeing the daughter and father bicker with each other, Lu Zhou couldn’t help but smirk.

Speaking of which, Chen Yushan hasn’t been home for a while now.

She’s been working hard all these years.

Even though she seems to be doing fine, I’m sure she still misses home...

Lu Zhou realized that his parents were still on the way here. Thus, he looked at Chen Baohua and spoke.

“Um, Chen Baohua, can you... arrange a car to pick up my parents? They’re—”

Chen Baohua: “I know, they’re on the high-speed rail, the G565 train, and they’re arriving in 25 minutes. My colleague is picking them up. Don’t worry.”

Lu Zhou: “... How phenomenal.”

Chen Baohua smiled arrogantly.

“Of course.”

Chapter 1246: Cheers, To A Better Future!

“We are about to arrive in Beijing. Passengers, please remember to take your luggage and exit the train in an orderly manner.”

The announcement didn’t interrupt the conversation between the two old men.

The old man sitting across him was called Liu Peizhong. He was also a Jiangling native.

Even though Liu Peizhong didn’t seem to believe in him, Lu Bangguo didn’t care. His retired life of drinking tea and reading newspapers had cultivated his mind and given him a peaceful temper.

His life was getting better and better, so there was no reason to get angry.

He was going to brag, regardless of whether people believed him or not.

The two chatted happily along the way.

“Um...”

“What?”

“Does your son have a partner?”

“Not yet.” Old Lu sighed and said, “He’s nearly 30, so I’m getting worried about it.”

Liu Peizhong tried to comfort him. “Guys should still focus on their careers. A successful man doesn’t have to worry about getting a wife. Don’t pressure your kid too hard.”

Liu Peizhong was actually laughing on the inside.

Look at how hard you’re bragging.

If you’re son is so impressive, how come he can’t find a wife?

Liu Peizhong felt like he could see through Old Lu.

However, Lu Bangguo did not notice that Liu Peizhong had seen through his “lies”. He continued to “brag”.

“Sigh, I’m not worried about his career. I always tell him that money doesn’t matter. Meaning and purpose are the essences of life! He’s earned more money than he could ever spend, what’s the point?—Ouch! Why are you pinching me?”

Fang Mei, who was sitting next to him, gave Lu Bangguo a dirty look. The message in her eyes was obvious, like she was saying, “Don’t embarrass me in front of these strangers.”

Seeing how angry his wife was, Lu Bangguo paused for a second and tried to calm his wife down.

Liu Peizhong couldn’t help but laugh.

More money than he could ever spend?

This guy is definitely drunk!

The train arrived at the station.

Old Lu was about to get his luggage when two men in uniform came over.

“Mr. Lu, let me help you.”

“Thanks, young man... Wait, how did you know my last name is Lu?”

“Um... It’s written on your ticket.”

“Oh.”

Lu Bangguo didn’t think much of this. He let the two young men handle his luggage.

The old man sitting opposite them looked at the two young men in uniforms. They didn’t look like train attendants, but seeing how the train attendants ignored them, they were obviously not scammers either.

The group of people got off the train and exited the high-speed rail station.

Liu Peizhong was about to take a taxi to the hotel when he noticed that there were no taxi drivers.

Where are they?

What the hell?!

Are taxi drivers not working today?

He was also surprised to see that the whole high-speed rail station looked completely different than when he came here last time. Even though the construction had not changed, something felt totally different...

It felt like everything around here became more regulated and orderly.

“Where are all the taxi drivers?”

“... I don’t know.”

Old Lu was also confused. He was confused as to why the two “train attendants” were helping him carry his luggage out of the train station.

If he recalled correctly, he only bought second-class seats.

Even first-class seats wouldn’t receive this kind of treatment.

When Old Lu arrived at the taxi parking area, he was about to say thank you to the two young men and tell them that they could head off now. However, he was stunned by what he saw.

A black car with a red flag parked on the side of the road. It occupied the entire waiting area with not even a single car in front of or behind it.

A man in a tunic suit stepped forward, smiled at the two old men, and nodded. He then took the suitcases from the two young men and said to them, “Thanks, I’ll take it from here.” He then swiftly placed the two suitcases into the trunk.

As Lu Bangguo and Fang Mei looked at the car door being opened, they were speechless.

Old Liu and his wife, who was standing behind them, were the same. When they saw the license plate, their mouths were wide open as their faces turned red.

“Um... Brother Lu.”

“Yeah, what...” Old Lu knew this was probably about his son.

“Your son... is not married yet?”

“Yeah... We just talked about it five minutes ago.”

Old Liu’s demeanor totally changed. He excitedly grabbed Old Lu’s arm.

“I have a niece that works in Beijing, and she happens to be single too. Look at how easily we clicked, how about we introduce our kids to each other? I remember I have her business card on me. I think it’s in the suitcase, let me try to find it...”

...

Lu Zhou didn't know that his dad had arranged him a "partner introduction".

However, even if he knew, he wouldn't have the time to deal with it.

At the great hall not far from the hotel, there was a banquet for the invited guests.

As one of the important guests at the banquet, he might be interviewed by TV stations. The hair and makeup staff members were working on his appearance.

Lu Zhou looked in the mirror at the lady combing and waxing his hair. He coughed and said, "Actually, I feel like... Just take it easy, I don't look like myself."

The stylist smiled and kept working on his hair.

"Oh, Academician Lu, how is it not like you?"

"How long will it be?"

"Soon."

"... That's what you said half an hour ago."

Finally.

He was done.

Chen Yushan was waiting at the door with her arms folded. When she saw Lu Zhou walk out of the dressing room, she looked surprised.

"Not bad, you look completely different."

Lu Zhou wasn't happy to hear this.

"What is that supposed to mean, that I'm not good looking before?"

But then again, the stylist was different than the average hairdresser. He was a little worried that they would make him look old and mature. However, after some combing and waxing, his entire vibe had changed. He didn't look like a scientific researcher anymore, he looked... like a pop star.

Chen Yushan was the same.

Lu Zhou had known her for nearly nine years, and he had long gotten accustomed to her beauty. However, she was wearing a long evening gown, and she looked just like a princess. Her shiny eyes were like polished gems, and he couldn't help but get distracted for a few seconds.

Chen Yushan smiled and tucked her hair behind her ear.

"You're always good looking, but now, you're even more handsome!"

Emm...

Okay then.

Makes sense.

Lu Zhou was satisfied with this answer, so he decided to drop this trivial problem...

They were only a block or two away from the great hall. However, they still sat in the black sedan parked at the entrance of the hotel.

When they got off the car at the entrance of the great hall, the pair happened to bump into Fang Mei and Old Lu.

When Old Lu first glanced at his son, he almost didn't recognize him. He stared for a while before he finally recognized Lu Zhou. However, just when he was about to say hello, all of his attention was taken away by the girl standing next to Lu Zhou.

Old Lu's eyes widened, and he grabbed Fang Mei and excitedly pointed at Chen Yushan.

Lu Zhou looked at his parents, who were in shock. He didn't know why they were so excited. Lu Zhou didn't know what to say.

Chen Yushan felt the attention on her, so she smirked confidently.

Even though she was confident, she didn't want to seem arrogant.

She gently pulled Lu Zhou's sleeve and led him to greet the old couple. Lu Zhou, on the other hand, was muddled.

After that, she led the old couple and Lu Zhou inside the great hall.

Lu Zhou didn't know why Chen Yushan was acting this way...

Inside the great hall.

The sea of guests sat in their seats.

The round tables were covered with brocade clothes. The wine glasses were placed neatly, and the staff members were pouring wines and other drinks.

After the majestic musical performance and opening remarks, an old man with white hair wearing a tunic suit walked on stage and reached for the microphone.

He paused for a second and said, "Through the ups and downs, another year has passed.

"Looking back at the past and the changes in the world, it was full of laughter and joy, but it was also filled with difficulties and obstacles.

"However, no matter how difficult the road is, no matter how tough the weather is, our wisdom and our courage will push us through the storm, and nothing can stop us.

"On this great day, I wish that the future will be even better, even more beautiful!

"Let us toast to the bright future of our motherland!"

Everyone in the banquet hall raised their wine glasses.

"Cheers!"

The hall was filled with a joyful atmosphere.

All of them had sincere smiles on their faces.

The audience began to quiet down.

Several foreign guests and ambassadors also stopped talking and curiously looked at the stage.

The old man on the stage looked around, cleared his throat, and spoke.

“In order to commend those who worked hard for our common cause and for our bright future...

“On behalf of everyone, I would like to give the highest level of honor, the National Medal of Honor, to the person who brought glory and brilliance for all.

“The winner is—

“Lu Zhou!”

Chapter 1247: Express Delivery From Space

The wave of applause was like a rainstorm, resonating throughout the venue.

Even people outside of the great hall could feel the passion and excitement from the applause through the walls.

Lu Zhou didn't actually care about things like honor.

If he had the opportunity to gain more honor and recognition for himself and for his country, he certainly would not refuse. However, even if he couldn't, he wouldn't feel unpleasant.

Yet when he was standing on the podium, he couldn't help but feel moved in his heart.

In the face of the mysteries of the universe and the glory of the human mind, reputation and honor were meaningless.

However, the heavy medal across his chest that symbolized expectations and responsibility was certainly real...

...

The Jin Ling University cafeteria.

The cafeteria was filled with people even though it was still early morning.

Freshman, final-year graduate students, students preparing for the graduate entrance exam, and students preparing for their first assignment... They all got up abnormally early on this day.

There was a long line in front of the service window selling noodles. The TV in the corner next to it was turned on to the news program.

“Did you hear the news?”

“What news?”

“Yesterday, Academician Lu from our school received the National Medal of Honor!”

“Really? The medal that’s only given to a select few in the country?”

“Yeah, that one!”

“Jesus, how many national awards have God Lu received?”

“I don’t know, I just want to know who also won a medal.”

“No one else won. The scientific community Medal of Honor was awarded to him as well!”

Actors and production crew members were sitting nearby.

The earlier they finish filming, the earlier they could finish work. Once the filming began, there was no such thing as a holiday. They looked at the long lines of students in front of the foodservice windows. An actress wearing a baseball hat spoke.

“The Jin Ling University students are so diligent, waking up so early on a holiday.”

“Yeah yeah, more hardworking than when I was a student.”

Sitting next to the two actresses was Han Mengqi, who was having a bowl of white porridge. She was about to follow them to the library for filming. Even though she was not friends with the two actresses, she still raised her head and joined in on the conversation.

“Normally, there aren’t this many people. Today is special.”

One of the actresses tilted her head and curiously asked, "Special?"

Han Mengqi nodded and spoke.

"Yeah, the military parade is on CTV at 7 o'clock today."

Even though they could watch it on their phones in their bedrooms, it obviously didn't feel as exciting as watching it in the cafeteria with everyone. And since they were already awake, they might as well eat some breakfast.

Without them knowing it, it was already seven o'clock.

This grand occasion kicked off with military music in the background.

The soldiers lined up on the square stepped forward with powerful steps. After that, there were various types of heavy military equipment, tanks, and fighter jets. The boys in the cafeteria were full of adrenaline.

Even though Han Mengqi wasn't very interested in these things, because of the music and atmosphere, she subconsciously began to hum along to the music.

Speaking of which, Academician Lu should be there.

I think Sister is there too.

I wonder where they're sitting...

Han Mengqi had completely ignored the parade and was thinking about some strange thoughts. However, the image on the TV suddenly changed.

A group of soldiers that looked completely different walked into the camera shot.

They were wearing armed mechanical exoskeletons, with futuristic bullet-free rifles. Their digital eyepieces were blocking their eyes... They walked forward neatly and uniformly. There was a sense of majesty and solemnity in the air.

Behind every soldier was a four-rotor multi-purpose drone. The bullet-free rifles in the hands of the soldiers gave a chilling feeling.

They were infantry, but they looked more powerful than armored forces. The sound of the loud footsteps as they marched forward neatly felt like they were a moving steel wall.

What is that?

When Han Mengqi saw the image on the TV, she felt her forehead getting warm.

She was getting excited.

Although she was completely uninterested in weapons and equipment, for some reason, these soldiers seem to poke her curiosity.

Suddenly, she realized where this excitement came from.

Isn't the black exoskeleton armor made from the "high-strength carbon nanocomposite" project I was a part of last year?

It is!

It has to be!

She was witnessing the application of a scientific research project she had participated in. She felt like she had just won the lottery, and there was an indescribable feeling of excitement and comfort in her heart.

It felt...

So cool!

...

At the military parade.

A little girl who was around seven or eight years old climbed onto the knees of a gray-haired old man. She pointed her little hand excitedly at the soldiers not far away and spoke in a high-pitched voice.

"Grandpa, Grandpa, look at the robots!"

Academician Pan Changhong patted his granddaughter's hand to tell her to return to her seat. He smiled and said to her, "What robots! That is our Airborne Brigade team!"

The granddaughter tilted her head and asked, "What is that?"

Academician Pan Changhong smiled and had a trace of fascination in his eyes.

"It's a group of people that guards us from the skies."

The debut of the Airborne Brigade shocked everyone, both live at the scene and the audiences at home.

The second the steel soldiers appeared on the CTV broadcast, Weibo and other internet websites instantly exploded with discussions and comments.

"This is so cool!"

"It's like Ironman!"

"What's the point of this kind of armor? We're in the 21st century now! It's not flexible at all. Do they expect the armor to save them from artillery weapons? Even a high school student knows that this is stupid!"

"How about you try the armor yourself! And this is called a mechanical exoskeleton! It's not just body armor!"

"These are the soldiers that are delivered from space! (smile)"

People were mesmerized by the cool soldiers and the expensive digital equipment. The dazzling weapons were captivating. Chinese netizens were hooked.

On the other hand, the live stream was also broadcast on CTV's foreign outlets. Foreigners were shocked by this scene.

Discussions exploded in the Youtube comments section, and there were tens of thousands of comments in less than an hour.

Some were overseas Chinese expats who were proud of the strength of their motherland. There were also white-washed Asians that were going crazy, as well as foreigners shocked by the never-seen-before equipment.

“What does the Chinese plan on doing? Fight aliens?”

“Where is our aerospace force?”

“We have air and space forces, but we don’t have an aerospace force...”

“Apparently, they can be deployed anywhere on the globe within an hour.”

“That’s so scary! If I talk trash about them, are they going to land in my backyard?”

“Probably not, they’re more likely to land in Area 51 or Guantanamo Bay...”

Chapter 1248: Celebration Night

Pentagon.

Inside a special meeting room.

A group of people sat at the conference table and watched the live CTV broadcast on the big screen without saying a word. When the group of soldiers armed to the nines appeared on the screen with drones behind them, almost everyone held their breath.

After the soldiers disappeared from the screen, whispers were heard in the conference room.

“I don’t know what chance our rangers have against their paratroopers...” The first to break the silence was the Minister of Defense. He reached out his index finger and touched the coffee cup on the table. It took him several tries before he grabbed it. He pretended to be calm and took a sip. He then said, “We don’t need any fancy armor. Fighting with a lithium battery is no different than carrying a bag of explosives.”

These words comforted most people. After all, lithium batteries, which used active metals as electrodes, were more explosive than thermite.

However, most people still remained pessimistic.

After all, if even the people here thought of the lithium batteries issue, there was no way the Chinese didn't think about it. Also, since these pieces of equipment had to land from low-Earth orbit, they had to be durable.

"... We already talked about this last time." The National Security Advisor looked at the overly confident Secretary of Defense. He stood up and pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose. He slowly said, "This depends on whether they want to fight our rangers."

The Secretary of Defense said, "The battlefield is constantly changing, we don't always have a choice."

The National Security Advisor shook his head.

"Let's acknowledge the reality. We have no defense against their vertical global landing. No missiles can catch up to their speed after they break through 20 kilometers of the atmosphere. Unless they jump into us or we prepare air missiles over the entire country, we are defenseless."

The president twisted the pen in his hand.

"This sounds like a good idea."

The National Security Advisor looked at the president seriously.

"Mr. President, I'm afraid that no company would be happy to do this. With all due respect, instead of wasting money on this, we might as well put our resources in other places, such as our diplomatic relationship with the Chinese. Regardless of whether you want to accept this reality, we are not in a good situation.

"We only know that they have a team of aerospace paratroopers. But we still don't know the size of this team. Do you understand what I mean? They could have more paratroopers than we think. If they were to arm every single aerospace soldier with the exoskeleton..."

The National Security Advisor looked at the people around the conference table. He then took a deep breath and said, "I think it will be extremely unlikely for us to win against them..."

...

The discussions and excitement on the internet continued to grow.

The military parade was over.

The finale of the ceremony was obviously the Airborne Brigade. This team was led by Li Gaoliang, or Brigadier Li.

Since the beginning of the second half of this year, the size of the orbital Airborne Brigade had expanded from the regiment level to the brigade level. This special team that originally belonged to the Eastern Theater Command had also been assigned to the space army and was under the direct command of Beijing.

Lu Zhou was happy to see Li Gaoliang's progress.

He knew that Li Gaoliang was glad to have chosen this path.

"Dad, the Bird's Nest celebration show starts in the evening. You don't have to worry so much." Lu Zhou sighed and looked at his anxious father. He said, "Also, we have special seats. No matter how late we go, we can always get in."

In fact, the Bird's Nest stadium had VIP boxes. But when Lu Zhou went there to take a look, he realized that the watching experience in the box was not as good as sitting in an open seat. Because of the closed walls, the viewing angle was quite narrow.

Even though Star Sky Technology's holographic technology was state of the art, it had not matured yet. They were at least a few generations away from complete coverage.

Thus, the best seats were actually the temporary seats placed on the track field in the middle of the stadium. The VIP seats that had the best viewing experience were the first row seats.

Old Lu looked at Lu Zhou with his eyes wide open.

"What? It starts at night?"

"Yeah."

If Lu Zhou recalled correctly, he already told his father this three times.

Lu Bangguo had an awkward smile on his face. He scratched his head and said, "It starts at night... I see, then we don't have to rush... Oh yeah, I ran into an interesting old man on the way here. His niece is in her early twenties, also single, maybe we can arrange..."

When Lu Zhou saw his dad take out a business card, his eyes nearly popped out of his eye sockets.

What the hell is this?!

You found me a blind date on the high-speed rail train? How is that even possible?

He finally understood why Chen Yushan didn't want to go home unless it was Chinese New Year.

Lu Zhou was thinking about how to politely refuse. Chen Yushan, who was standing next to him, noticed the embarrassment on his face.

She took a step forward calmly. Before Lu Zhou could say anything, she smiled and took the business card from his father's hand.

"Uncle Lu, he doesn't have a place to put the card right now. I have a purse, so I'll hold it for him. I'll urge him to go on the blind date later."

"Ohh..." Old Lu nodded and smiled. He said, "Okay then... My son doesn't listen to me, so thanks."

"Yeah, don't worry!"

Lu Zhou was delighted he didn't have to deal with this troublesome matter. He secretly gave Chen Yushan a thumbs up.

Good job!

...

As the night gradually came, the neon lights on the tall buildings began to light up.

Outside the Bird's Nest Stadium, soldiers formed a human wall. They guided the nearby traffic and directed pedestrians into the stadium in an orderly manner.

Several roads nearby had been blocked. Wang Peng parked his car in the underground garage at a nearby hotel. He then led Lu Zhou and others toward the stadium.

Chen Yushan looked at the crowds and spoke.

“There are so many people this year.”

“After all, this is the first time...” Lu Zhou suddenly remembered something and said, “Has this kind of celebration been held before?”

Wang Peng thought for a second before saying, “It’s the first time for the Bird’s Nest, and the first time for this scale of holographic projection...”

*No sh*t?*

Lu Zhou shook his head and smiled.

When has there ever been this scale of holographic projection?

Lu Bangguo walked with his wife. He looked at the crowds and muttered, “There are so many people... How are we supposed to find them?”

Before coming here, he and the old man on the train agreed to meet at the Bird’s Nest stadium.

Fang Mei rolled her eyes and said, “Who cares? Look at how many people there are, it’s like finding a needle in a haystack.”

Lu Bangguo had an unfortunate look on his face.

Liu Peizhong had agreed to bring his niece and watch the grand performance together.

But now, it seemed like it was impossible to meet up.

Lu Zhou was oblivious to what his father was thinking. He looked up at the sky.

Suddenly, a fiery beam of red light rose from the center of the stadium, and light particles exploded into the air, lighting up the entire night sky.

They didn't expect there would be a fireworks show before the celebration. The tourists and pedestrians were shocked. They held their mobile phones excitedly and took photos of the sky.

Lu Zhou didn't take out his phone. Instead, he looked at the gorgeous fireworks and spoke.

"It's about to begin."

Chen Yushan looked at the fireworks and asked, "Is that... really fireworks?"

"Yeah, but not the same as traditional fireworks." Lu Zhou paused and said, "Those scattered light particles are all holographic projections."

"... So it's just a holographic image."

Lu Zhou glanced at her.

"Why do you sound disappointed?"

"Not disappointed... Actually, I'm pretty happy. It's just that these fireworks are not real, so it feels a little ingenuine." Chen Yushan shrugged and jokingly said, "Maybe I'm too critical."

Lu Zhou shook his head and smiled.

"Whether it's holographic fireworks or gunpowder fireworks, they both only last for a short time. Gunpowder fireworks contribute to pollution and are a safety hazard. Don't you feel like this kind of holographic image has a futuristic vibe?"

Chen Yushan said, "That's totally something you would say."

Lu Zhou: "What do you mean?"

"You're such a science nerd."

What is that supposed to mean?

Isn't this engineering, not science?

Chen Yushan smirked while Lu Zhou had a bored look on his face. He looked at the sky.

I guess men and women just think differently

Chapter 1249: Us

The gorgeous fireworks were still “exploding” in the air.

A family stood at the entrance of the stadium. The old man in a gray jacket looked around and spoke.

“Where are they? Why aren’t they here?”

Yesterday, he made plans with Old Lu, whom he met on the high-speed rail train, to meet at the gate of the stadium. However, after waiting here for a while, he had yet to see old Lu anywhere...

“We have to go inside!”

Liu Peizhong still didn’t want to leave. He looked at his wife and shouted, “Just wait a bit... my friend is coming soon.”

“Wait my a*s!”

His wife decided to turn around and walk toward the stadium.

A young man standing next to Liu Peizhong was dumbfounded. He quickly asked his wife to catch up with his son’s grandma. He walked in front of his father and spoke.

“Dad, we can’t wait any longer. There are so many people here. We’ll be kicked out by security if we don’t move along.”

“Yeah, Uncle Liu.” A woman dressed in white-collar clothes sighed and said, “Can’t we just have a good time watching the show? Why are you forcing me on a date... Can’t we do the date tomorrow?”

This is no place for a blind date...

There are so many people here...

“You don’t understand!”

“What don’t I understand?”

Liu Peizhong hesitated and sighed.

“The person I’m introducing you to... is special.”

The white-collar woman rolled her eyes.

“Is he a useless son of a rich family? This is Beijing, how special can he be?”

“The car that came to pick up his parents was an A-class government car...”

“Brother, I think it’s bad manners to ghost someone, let’s wait here!”

The man looked at his cousin.

*The f*ck?*

But...

A-class...

The man nodded.

“Okay then, let’s... wait for a while.”

The fireworks were still blooming in the sky.

Even though they still wanted to wait for a bit, seeing how the people were still entering the stadium, if they waited any longer, they wouldn’t be able to find a seat.

On the other hand, Lu Zhou entered the venue.

In the beginning, Old Lu felt gloomy over not being able to meet his friend, but after he entered the stadium, he totally left the matter behind.

Because what was in front of him was too amazing.

The arrow floating in front of him, which was immersed in the smoke cloud, was too realistic.

“Can I... touch this?” Old Lu said as he looked at his son.

Lu Zhou looked at his muddled father and smiled.

“Touch it all you want. It’s just a holographic image, you won’t break it.”

In order to prevent equipment damage, except for a few supplementary projection devices, almost all of the holographic projection equipment were installed on the ceiling. The holographic image for the entire stadium was constructed from top to bottom, like lamps hanging from the ceiling.

There was no need to worry about breaking anything.

Under the guidance of the signs, the group quickly found their seats.

After sitting down, a staff member reminded Lu Bangguo to fasten his seatbelt.

Before the show began, he took the time to look around the stadium. He looked at the crowds and spoke emotionally.

“The Bird’s Nest is quite spectacular... It’s a shame I haven’t been here before.”

Fang Mei rolled her eyes and said, “How is it a shame, you’re here right now.”

“It’s different than seeing it when it was first built... Kiddo, when does the show begin?”

Lu Zhou was about to answer Lu Bangguo’s question when the ceiling lights suddenly dimmed, and the noisy stadium packed with almost 100,000 people suddenly became quiet.

Lu Zhou looked at his watch and smiled.

He looked at his father and said, “It’s starting.”

...

All of the viewers had sat down in their seats. The music from the corners of the venue had masked the noise from the audience.

The light beams gradually dimmed; the stadium began to darken. Everything was dark, except for a few mobile phone screens.

People gradually stopped talking and instead whispered quietly. There was a hint of excitement and expectation in the whispers.

They were looking forward to the show.

And it was finally about to begin!

An invisible fog rose in the dark; like a thick cloud, it quickly filled the interior of the stadium. It made the darkness even thicker and more gloomy.

Even the light sources from the mobile screens were swallowed up by the artificially generated thick fog.

A few people turned on flashlights, but they were quickly apprehended by the staff members, who then confiscated the phones. These mobile phones were sent to the security room and would be returned after the show.

The darkness did not last for long.

While everyone was confused as to what was going on, all of a sudden, dots of lights appeared beside everyone. The red light particles were like fireflies dancing in the dark, like sparks from a firework. They began to form a trajectory.

More and more “fireflies” appeared, like stars in the galaxy.

People were amazed by this spectacular and romantic view, and they stopped talking and began to curiously look at what was happening around them.

Children sitting in the arms of adults stretched out their hands, trying to grab the tiny red dots.

Couples sitting next to each other excitedly pointed at the light particles flying across the sky like shooting stars, and they took the opportunity and wished to be with each other forever...

The sight in front of them was like a mirage suspended in the mist; it felt unreal yet beautiful.

Suddenly, all of the light particles flew toward the center of the stadium and formed a fiery red ball.

The red ball glowed like a torch, like it was made of magma. The thick wall of fog gave it a dark red color. Rays of light began to shoot upward from the ball, like artillery fire shooting into the night sky.

The children stopped messing around; the couples stopped cuddling. The adults held their breaths, while the old people clenched their fists with a reminiscence gaze in their eyes...

Suddenly, a fighter plane broke through the clouds and swooped down from the sky. Screams were heard in the stadium, and it was difficult to distinguish whether the screams were sound effects or the audience.

Everything looked like a scene in a war movie. The audience tried to dodge the artillery fire. If it weren't for their seatbelts, all of them would be out of their chairs.

This was just the opening, the show was far from over.

The battlefield became thousands of acres of farmland, then thousands of acres of wasteland.

The audience saw people climbing Mount Everest in the snow. They saw ice lands, mountains, and people carrying sickles and hoes, fighting for the lifeline of the industry...

People were the least valuable machines in the era of low productivity.

But this kind of invaluable machine was able to create an entire industry.

There was only one reason.

People believed that tomorrow would be better.

This was the only fuel that kept them going, day after day.

Back then, there was no such thing as automation or artificial intelligence. However, they still firmly believed that one day in the future, everyone could eat and wear whatever they wanted. People could do work that was meaningful and capture the value of life in things that were more worthy of their time instead of wasting their time on an assembly line...

They knew they would likely never experience this in their lifetimes.

But that didn't discourage them.

Because they were working toward something meaningful.

They knew that, even though they wouldn't be able to witness the yields of their efforts, their children and grandchildren certainly would. Their children would be able to live their dreams.

The time passing montage was like a revolving globe. It flashed scenes in front of the audience.

When the elderly saw their past memories in front of them, tears filled their eyes. The children sitting next to the adults, although still childish, clenched their fists, and they could feel the significance in the atmosphere.

A car appeared.

It was driven from a docked ship.

The sound of the engine seemed to signify China's entry into the world. Finally, they entered into the beautiful age. The depressive atmosphere finally faded away amid the music while thousands of tall buildings rose from the ground.

The Oriental Pearl TV Tower, the Bird's Nest, the World Expo Exhibition and Convention Center... and the Starlight that conquered the lunar transfer orbit, as well as the Moon Palace floating above the sky.

In the last scene of the holographic video, an astronaut carrying a red flag walked on lunar soil. He inserted the red flag deep into the lunar surface.

Then, the scene changed.

The flag disappeared.

Instead, the gray lunar soil under his feet became a science-fiction space city. There were rail trains suspended between high-rise buildings, cargo boxes crawling along the mine tunnels...

Lu Zhou noticed his father wipe a corner of his eye.

Lu Zhou didn't say anything, he only quietly looked away.

He knew that his father was a person that liked to save face. His father wouldn't be able to sleep at night if his son saw his weak side.

"I feel like..."

"Like what?"

Chen Yushan didn't know how to describe what she was feeling. She sniffed and said, "It's spectacular."

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded.

"Yeah, it is."

Even though he didn't know whether this show could be considered a success, nor was he sure whether this showcased Star Sky Technology's holographic projection technology...

He knew that the meaning behind the show was accurately portrayed to the audience.

Chapter 1250: Explosive Celebration!

The amazing lights and shadows gradually dissipated. The spectacular show left a deep impression in everyone's heart.

Lu Bangguo, who lived in a small town for his entire life, was touched. Even international people who had lived in China for only a few years were also moved by the show.

Yurif Jack looked at the space city gradually disappearing into the night sky. He felt his throat choking up and his eyes becoming watery.

At first, he thought that this celebration was nothing more than a political propaganda film with new special effects, but halfway through the show, he knew he was wrong.

There were no politics in the holographic image. Just scenes of the past, memories of the times.

It was hard to imagine the effort behind conveying an idea in such an amazing way.

The visuals were far more impactful than an IMAX movie.

Besides the gorgeous light show, he witnessed many unexpected things beyond the celebration itself.

He noticed an old man sitting nearby beginning to tear up. He noticed the children who were nearby watching the space city with a fascinating look in their eyes...

The emotions were embedded in the special effects; the audience was surrounded by the holographic light show...

Yurif Jack, who was a professional video writer, gently wiped the corners of his eyes as he murmured, "This is incredible."

Sitting next to him was a diplomat from the embassy.

He glanced sideways at Yurif Jack and said, "It even made you cry?"

"No... there's just sand in my eyes." Yurif raised his head and took a deep breath from the cold air. He controlled his emotions and said, "Perhaps we were too prejudice. Our arrogance makes us unwilling to understand and make new changes. Perhaps this celebration show is an opportunity. It has... totally changed my perspective."

After quietly listening to Yurif Jack's words, the diplomat thought for a while and spoke.

"That is too optimistic. I'd be willing to bet that prejudice still exists. A celebration show does not change anything. It will be forgotten in history. Even though it is spectacular, it won't change the essence of people's hearts."

"Yes." Yurif Jack sniffed and looked at the diplomat sitting next to him as he said seriously, "You are right, but I will make a vlog on what I felt today."

"It's just like those sparks at the opening scene."

"It will have an impact."

The diplomat's face loosened, and gradually, a smile appeared on his face.

“I’m not discounting your feelings.

“Even though what you’re saying is difficult to achieve, in fact...

“I’m on your side.”

...

The show ended.

The audience was reluctant to leave for a long time. Many people even booed and asked for another show, and staff members had to persuade them to leave. They reluctantly left their seats and chatted excitedly about the special effects as they walked out of the stadium.

Lu Zhou looked at his father, who was sitting there motionlessly. He patted him on the arm and said, “We should leave too.”

Lu Bangguo snapped back to reality.

“Oh, it’s over?”

Old Lu rubbed his eyes and quietly spoke.

“It’s finally over, I nearly fell asleep...”

Lu Zhou smiled at his father acting tough.

It was obvious his father was moved by the show.

The second the show ended, discussions exploded on the internet.

Even though flashlights couldn’t be turned on in the stadium, many people secretly turned on their mobile phones and recorded a video. After the celebration ended, the videos were uploaded online.

The last scene, when the futuristic space city appeared on the moon, amazed everyone.

“Oh sh*t!!!”

“Is this what the future of the Moon is like?”

“I want to work at the lunar scientific research station, but the entrance requirements is too high!”

“It’s like a movie!”

“Movie my a*s, this is better than a movie!”

“I want to migrate to the Moon...”

“If you want to go, start by getting a Phd first.”

Many famous YouTubers had also uploaded videos they obtained through various Chinese channels. Among them was the YouTuber named Yurif Jack. After he posted his vlog, in less than an hour, his video received hundreds of thousands of views, and it was on the trending page.

He spoke to the camera with excitement.

“It’s not just some lame special effects! It’s the best f*cking thing I’ve seen in my life!

“Before the show started, I heard many people speculate that this was going to be a high-tech political propaganda film, but that was not the case.

“It was like a picture scroll. It presented the memories of our civilization over the past century in a three-dimensional form.

“It’s hard to understand if you weren’t there in person.

“The visual effects were a kind of weapon. It had a powerful effect on emotions. It made the toughest guy burst into tears. It was thought-provoking and touching at the same time.

“There is no doubt that the holographic film, ‘Us’, was a huge success!

“Oh, Jesus, I am looking forward to the day I sit in a cinema and enjoy the feeling of being immersed in a holographic light show!

“I hope that day can come sooner! I moved all the way from Los Angeles to Shanghai for the virtual reality helmet. Now, I want to live in the Bird’s Nest.

“I can’t wait any longer!”

Chapter 1251: The Perfect Ending

The enthusiasm from online discussions continued to grow. Whether it was major Chinese social media platforms or overseas websites, people were all going crazy.

The popularity had even overtaken the morning military parade.

Liu Wei was the protagonist behind this celebration show. He looked at the screen on his mobile phone. The Weibo post he submitted about the show an hour ago had already received thousands of comments. He had a smug smile on his face.

He felt like he had peaked in life.

Even though he had produced a lot of blockbuster action movies before, some of which were box office hits, he himself had never received this much publicity before.

It was like he was a celebrity.

He handed over the rest of the work to his assistants and assistant directors. When he walked out of the stadium, it was already midnight. He could still hear the excited chatter from the people still inside the stadium.

Liu Wei smiled and took out his phone again. He called a few people in his contacts list.

He called up and gathered a few friends. They all walked along an empty street. Finally, they found a barbecue restaurant on the side of the road that was still open.

They opened a few bottles of beer as the food came. Liu Wei smelled the scent of barbecued meat and beer. He felt that the built-up exhaustion over the past few months had finally washed away.

There was a TV hanging on the corner of the restaurant. The CTV channel was broadcasting the show.

The entire celebration show was shown through multiple camera angles. Even though the cameras were carefully placed, it still couldn't capture the visual impact of seeing the show live in-person.

Liu Wei was not interested in watching the show again. He concentrated on the beer and barbecue skewers on the table. His friends, on the other hand, didn't hesitate to compliment him, giving him one congratulation after another.

"Congratulations, Director Liu! After this, you should be in the directors hall of fame, right?"

"Yeah, yeah! Your name will be remembered in film history!"

"Sigh, not yet, not yet." Liu Wei waved his hand and humbly said, "This is just a celebration show. There aren't any awards. Far from being in the hall of fame!"

Even though he was being humble on the outside, he had a proud smile on his face.

The times were changing. Other than food and shelter, everyone was paying more attention to self-actualization and spiritual satisfaction. Otherwise, what would be the difference between a fish and a person?

Even a person who was indifferent to fame and fortune would be hard-pressed to remain self-composed when put in Liu Wei's position.

"You're almost done, right? With the documentary."

Liu Wei shook his head and said, "It's not easy to shoot. The script has been modified many times."

"That film is also a holographic projection?"

"No, it uses traditional shooting methods."

"Makes sense. After all, there is no need for special effects." His friend sitting across from him sighed and said, "It's a pity. If you can strike while the iron is hot and produce a holographic blockbuster, you'll be the most popular director on the planet."

Liu Wei smiled and said, "It's still too early to talk about holographic movies. I'm afraid there aren't many movie theaters in the country that has the

technology. Holographic projection is not as simple as buying a projector. It's actually quite complicated to explain. Alright, enough talking, the food is getting cold, let's eat."

...

While the director was eating with a few of his friends, the stadium was still busy evacuating the audience.

Because it was still crowded outside, Lu Zhou didn't immediately leave the stadium. Instead, he wandered to the control room behind the scenes.

When he arrived backstage, Director Ou was directing some of the staff members to check whether the equipment was completely turned off. After he saw Lu Zhou walk in, he immediately greeted him with a happy smile.

"Haha, Academician Lu, thank you so much! The show was perfect! The retired men from the Entertainment Department office were crying!"

There was no doubt that this show was a huge success.

In 60 minutes, the memories of the past century were displayed in front of the audience. The magnificent special effects and the crisp presentation made the whole celebration even more eye-catching. Everyone's eyes were glued to the stage.

Compared to a theatrical performance with singing and dancing, this grand visual effect was far better at artistic expression, both in emotional value and sentimental value.

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "You're welcome, I'm quite satisfied with the performance."

Director Ou said, "Just now, we received a ton of emails. Many people who weren't at the live show requested us to do the show a few more times."

"That... doesn't seem too realistic. The traffic will be a huge issue."

With more than a hundred thousand people in the stadium, this was equivalent to the national population of many small countries. Even a small mistake could evolve into a serious incident; no one could bear the consequences.

It was obviously unrealistic to perform this show for several days in a row.

Ou Haifeng sighed and said, “I think so too, so... I just wanted to ask you if there are any alternatives! After all, if people could only rewatch this show on a 2D screen, that would be a shame!”

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and said, “Actually... Holographic images don’t have to be projected into reality. They can also be displayed elsewhere in another form.”

“Like in a cinema?”

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, “Cinemas will take a while... A more realistic way is to integrate this documentary into the Phantom system.”

“Phantom system?” Director Ou was slightly stunned. He said, “The... virtual reality helmet? Can it work?”

“It’s not technically difficult. The entire celebration show was made in our virtual reality system. Also, according to our data, the number of registered users of the Phantom system has exceeded 20 million. Among them, 37% bought their helmets from companies such as Huawei, Xiaomi, etc... While more than 60% of users registered through our virtual reality experience stores. At least 50 million people will be able to watch the show through the Phantom system.”

By relying on the popularity of this show, they could increase the Phantom system’s customer base.

However, Lu Zhou didn’t mention this.

Normally, even if a broadcast was given to users for free, it was necessary to pay for the broadcasting rights. But Director Ou didn’t mention charging a broadcasting fee, so Lu Zhou didn’t mention it either.

In fact, Ou Haifeng didn’t think about the broadcasting rights at all. In his opinion, Academician Lu did them a huge favor for this celebration show. There was no way he would charge Academician Lu a broadcasting fee.

“Then... Can you do this for us as a favor?”

“This isn’t a favor at all!” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “I’ll just talk to my CEO about it.”

Ou Haifeng smiled and said, “Thank you so much!”

Chapter 1252: Last Section

“So nice...”

Yu Fei, who was laying on a chair, took off his helmet. He looked at the deserted land outside the window and felt emotional.

About three days ago, while the joyful celebration show was happening at the Bird’s Nest, a celebration was also held at the Moon Palace and the lunar scientific research station.

They obviously couldn’t watch the show live. However, they could transform their consciousness into the virtual world through the virtual reality helmet and watch the amazing light show in VR.

Of course, even though the light show was just an illusion, their feelings were real.

The final scene of the space city shocked him deeply.

He saw an orbital train that traveled between space buildings and tourists walking inside space capsules. It was as if something was just planted in his heart, and it was slowly growing...

Even though three days had passed since the celebration show, he still couldn’t help but use every bit of his free time to sit in the virtual stadium and excitedly watch the light show.

He waited fifty-nine minutes, just for the final minute.

The final minute of the space city.

Yu Fei still reminisced about the feeling in his heart as he put the helmet aside. Suddenly, the office door opened, and Liang Junhui, the deputy head of the research station, walked in while wearing a spacesuit.

Liang Junhui saw the head of the research station sitting with his back facing him. He was about to speak but the chair turned around.

Yu Fei looked at the deputy head and quickly asked, "How is the construction going? Is it completed?"

Liang Junhui calmed down and nodded.

"It's completed."

Yu Fei was in disbelief. He asked, "Are you sure this is the last section?"

"Yes." Liang Junhui nodded and said, "I confirmed with the construction team just now. This is the final phase."

Yu Fei felt as if a weight of ten kilograms were just lifted off his shoulders. He sighed heavily out of relief, and a gratified smile gradually appeared on his face.

He suddenly sat upright in his chair and looked at the large screen hanging on the ceiling of the office. He then said seriously, "Contact the ground command center for me."

"I have to report this important matter personally!"

...

For Lu Zhou, there was no difference between the National Day and normal working days.

If it weren't for the two large-scale events this year, he would have likely spent the entire seven-day National Day holiday in the laboratory.

In fact, for most researchers working on the front line of scientific research, this was how life was.

The earlier they finished their project, the earlier they got to rest.

Completing the project one day later meant increasing the risk of being overtaken by others.

A popular scientific research project was a race against time. The winner was not always the smartest, but instead, it was the fastest and most hard working.

This sounded inspirational.

And in some sense, it was.

However, average people didn't know that some individuals didn't have to work as hard.

For example, Lu Zhou.

The reason why he liked to spend time in the laboratory was not because he was worried that someone would reach the goal first. After all, no one could beat him in his own fields of research.

It was just that he didn't know what else to do since he was a workaholic.

He was sitting in a hotel executive lounge, drinking coffee to pass time. He was holding a ILHCRC report in his hand.

There was an interesting headline on the first page of the report...

[About the Gravitational Anomaly in the Z Particle Experiment]

During the latest observation experiment of the Z particle from the Lunar Hadron Collider, the Z particle research team discovered interesting experimental data.

When the mass remained constant, the Z particles falling from high to low dimensions produced strange gravitational data. Rudy Dobrik, who was in charge of the experiment, used "goldfish bubbles" to describe the experimental results. He claimed that the Z particles traveling through the n-dimensional space seemed to breathe and spit out "bubbles".

So far, the ILHCRC expert team had not been able to explain the cause of the gravitational anomaly. However, several interesting conjectures were published on arXiv.

More than half of them were based on the “void” theory proposed by Lu Zhou. Which was to attribute this gravitational disturbance to some kind of signal in the $n+1$ dimension.

However, Lu Zhou’s instincts told him that things might not be this simple.

There could be something more incredible behind this.

Like a shark biting a hook.

However, the key to the problem now was how to capture this shark without destroying the boat...

Lu Zhou was reading the documents for over an hour. Chen Yushan, who was sitting across from him, looked at Lu Zhou. She sighed and muttered, “Do you not have any hobbies outside of the laboratory?”

“For me, scientific research is the greatest pleasure in life.” Lu Zhou turned the page of the document in his hand. He said, “Is there anything more interesting than exploring the mysteries of the universe?”

“What about video games or something?”

Lu Zhou thought seriously for a while and said, “I used to be very interested, but... I never seem to play a game for more than half a year. The sense of accomplishment from scientific research makes other things feel insignificant.”

“Have you considered the possibility that this is actually a mental illness?”

“Illness in scientific research? I’m pretty happy.”

“Well... as long as you’re happy.” Chen Yushan sighed. She then looked up and said, “Actually, there are many other things worth pursuing in life other than scientific research.”

“Like what?”

Chen Yushan’s eyes shifted away as she said, “For example... Watching a movie with your partner, traveling, or something.”

Lu Zhou couldn’t help but chuckle.

Haha...

We're both single.

What do you know about watching a movie with your partner?

Suddenly, the phone in his pocket began to vibrate.

Lu Zhou put down the document and stood up.

Chen Yushan looked at Lu Zhou and asked, "What's wrong?"

Lu Zhou took his phone out of his pocket and said, "I have to take this."

"Oh, go ahead."

Chen Yushan watched Lu Zhou walk outside. She grabbed the spoon and stirred her cold coffee. She suddenly sighed with a headache.

"So annoying..."

Sometimes, she didn't know exactly what she expected for the relationship between her and Lu Zhou.

She knew that sometimes she was attracted by his drive. After all, hard work and passion were attractive.

But it wasn't like...

She had a crush on Lu Zhou?

Suddenly, she heard footsteps. Lu Zhou was walking back to the executive lounge.

Chen Yushan threw away her feelings and looked at Lu Zhou. She saw a strange expression on his face.

She asked out of curiosity, "Did something good happen?"

"Something very good..."

Lu Zhou looked at Chen Yushan and took a deep breath. He spoke while trembling with excitement.

"The lunar mass driver!"

“Our lunar mass driver!”

Chen Yushan instantly realized what was going on. Her eyes widened as she spoke in disbelief.

“It’s completed?!”

“Yes!” Lu Zhou nodded and said excitedly, “It’s completed!”

Chapter 1253: Control of Earth and Moon!

Aerospace ground command center.

A few people were standing next to each other.

Among them were Director Li, head of the State Administration for National Defense, Hou Guang, director of the Institute of Aerospace Research at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, Academician Yuan Huanmin, chief engineer of the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation, and Lu Zhou, who had just arrived here from Beijing...

As well as the president.

This was an important moment concerning the aerospace industry and even the future of China. Almost all the high-level members of the Lunar Orbit Committee were here.

People looked at the large floor-to-ceiling screens in the control room. They were full of expectations, like they were in a hospital delivery room.

However, a baby wasn’t the thing that was conceived.

Instead, it was something special.

“It doesn’t matter if it fails, we can still try again.”

Lu Zhou shook his head slightly.

“We won’t fail.”

The entire country was waiting for a result; the entire world had their focus turned here.

Lu Zhou was willing to bet that media outlets such as BBC and CNN had already written two press releases. One of them corresponded to a successful result, while the other corresponded to a failure.

Which press release would appear in the headlines tomorrow depended entirely on their results today.

The president heard Lu Zhou's confident words and smiled.

"It'd be best if we succeed now. I'm just giving you some assurance. Aerospace is a new industry. It will benefit our future. We can take it slow and steady. We can afford to have some mistakes.

"But speaking of which, is it really feasible to build a city on the moon?"

When Lu Zhou heard this, he instantly knew what the president meant.

Obviously, the National Day celebration show had resonated with him.

Lu Zhou thought seriously for a while.

After a few seconds, he spoke.

"There is a demand for it. From a technical point of view, there are many difficulties. But it isn't completely impossible."

In fact, the moon was not the perfect candidate for a human colony. This was due to its low gravity, large temperature difference, and having no protection from the atmosphere and magnetic field. However, at least for now, it was the most likely place humans could hope to colonize.

Its existence was like the Terceira Island in the Atlantic Ocean. Even though it was small and not rich in resources, it had become a crucial place for Europe during the Renaissance.

After the breakthrough of controllable fusion technology, human civilization had entered the second half of aerospace development. They had obtained a ticket to the distant world. However, if human civilization wanted to go to more distant places, they needed a springboard.

Obviously, the moon had the potential to be a launching point.

The moon was like a natural “harbor”.

If they could overcome the harsh lunar environment, they could go further in space.

Lu Zhou’s answer seemed to have satisfied the president. The president spoke with his arms behind his back.

“I’m happy to hear that... Speaking of which, when does it begin?”

Lu Zhou looked at the time on his watch and spoke.

“It’s about to begin!”

The hour hand reached 0.

The staff members in the command room started to work in an orderly manner.

All units quickly completed the final inspection of the equipment. After receiving confirmation from the moon, the commander of the ground command center issued a “begin loading” instruction.

The experimental cargo cabin on the moon more than 300,000 kilometers away, shaped like a bullet, should be installed on the launch orbit by the staff members of the lunar scientific research station.

The entire cargo had a total weight of six tons. It was filled with lunar soil rocks collected from the moon, space crops, seeds harvested from the planting unit, Dr-111 active substances, and other biological research samples.

If this cargo were brought back to Earth using traditional methods, it would cost at least 200,000 yuan per kilogram.

By using superconducting magnets instead of chemical thrusters, the cargo could be accurately launched directly from the lunar surface to the lunar transfer orbit. After that, the Magpie Bridge moving back and forth along the orbit would collect the cargo. The cost per kilogram of goods was less than 2,000 yuan per kilogram.

This sounded ridiculous, but it was just engineering and science.

If this project was a success, dysprosium and terbium, which were worth more than 1,000 yuan per kilogram, as well as rare minerals such as scandium, which was worth more than 10,000 yuan per kilogram, could be brought back from the moon.

The success of this project would undoubtedly be a huge milestone in aerospace.

All of the preparations had been completed.

Everything was on the line!

The green light on the large landing screen turned on for the first time. Everyone standing in the command room involuntarily clenched their fists, waiting for the sound of the countdown.

“Ten.”

“Nine.”

“Eight.”

“...”

“Three.”

“Two.”

“One.”

“Zero.”

“Launch!”

The sonorous and powerful sound was like firing a gun.

Immediately afterward, the lunar surface 300,000 kilometers away began to shake. Astronauts standing near the launch orbit could feel the ground trembling.

The accumulated electric energy was released in an instant. It gathered into a solid-like plasma in the vacuum titanium alloy pipe, pushing the silver “bullet” forward with a tremendous force.

It traveled through the track in less than a minute!

The cargo suddenly shot from the surface of the moon to the sky. It was like a bullet ejected from the muzzle, rushing toward the vast starry sky, leaving moon dust behind.

The camera in the command center switched to the Moon Palace.

The silver-white bullet was represented by a green dot shining on a map. It curved in space, pointing itself toward the lunar transfer orbit...

Half of the work was done!

Everyone in the command center did not relax yet.

The first half of the launch mission was mainly in charge of the Moon Palace. The navigation guidance for merging, docking, and final return would be entirely done by ground command.

Their battle had only just begun!

“The cargo compartment control system is connected, begin checking instrument operations...”

“Instrument parameters are all normal! Accessing the active navigation system!”

“The navigation system has been successfully activated! The cargo speed is 2.77km/s, it is approaching the Magpie Bridge 3 cargo spacecraft with a relative distance of 507 kilometers. Contact expected in 183 seconds!”

On the radar screen, two arcs outlined by a light yellow curve intersected together. The two flashing green dots were moving slowly along the two arcs.

The closer they got, the faster the heartbeats of the command room staff members.

Many young scientific researchers repeatedly took deep breaths in an attempt to control their heart rate. Even some of the more experienced engineers were nervous.

It was impossible to not be nervous.

They only had one chance!

This would determine their success or failure!

Shooting the cargo into the sky with a cannon was the easy part. The hard part was picking up the cargo. Otherwise, regardless of how fast they could shoot the cargo, the project would be a failure.

When the two flashing green dots began to get closer, almost everyone subconsciously held their breath.

A few seconds felt like an eternity.

The two flashing green dots on the screen merged effortlessly.

Everything happened so naturally.

Nothing unexpected happened.

It was almost...

Too easy?

Suddenly, deafening cheers blasted through the command room.

“Wooo!”

“We did it!”

“Oh my god... Finally... We did it!”

Applause.

Cheers.

Excitement and joy filled everyone’s heart.

Director Li clenched his fists excitedly.

Academician Yuan Huanmin had tears in his eyes; his dry lips trembled as he tried to speak.

Countless engineers from the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, as well as researchers from the Institute of Aerospace Research at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, spontaneously screamed excitedly.

Even the president standing next to Lu Zhou couldn't help but shout, "Good job!"

The efforts of several years or even decades had all become meaningful.

They had just conquered the moon!

Bathed in the thunderous cheers, Lu Zhou stood motionless in the center of the command room. The ecstasy that was flowing through his veins made him speechless...

Lu Zhou faintly heard the Magpie Bridge communication channel where they declared victory through his headset.

"This is Magpie Bridge 3 cargo spacecraft, the package has been successfully recovered."

"We will bring back the gifts from the moon in three days."

"Good job, guys!"

Actually, this victory announcement was a bit redundant for Lu Zhou.

The second the green dots merged, there was no doubt that this was a success.

Lu Zhou couldn't describe the emotion in his heart.

How long has it been?

From the successful entry of the first aerospaceplane into orbit to the first manned moon landing, to the Moon Palace and the Lunar Hadron Collider, and now the mass driver...

All of their hard work and efforts were all connected at this moment.

This mission chain was finally complete.

[Control of Earth and Moon mission chain]

[Complete!]

Chapter 1254: Six Tons of Load in Orbit!

The next day.

The sun rose from the horizon as usual.

This was the last day of the National Day holiday. This day was extra meaningful to most people.

The first to announce the news was Everyone Daily.

The cover of the latest issue of the daily newspaper had two eye-catching headlines.

[Six Tons of Load in Orbit!]

[These Astronauts Are Fighting at the Frontier of Civilization!]

This report was like a bomb, thrown into a calm lake, instantly blowing up and creating waves of discussion.

The first to be affected was the academia and university circle.

For people in the aerospace engineering field, many of them had already heard about the successful launch from various channels before the official news came out...

At an aerospace design laboratory in Beijing.

A group of scientific researchers gathered around a computer. They talked excitedly while looking at the news and photos on the screen.

“Look, look! Photos of Academician Yuan!”

“Nutty! Standing with the president.”

“Academician Lu is next to him, right?”

“Sigh, he’s also a millennial... Why is he so successful?”

“I think it’s better not to think of him as a millennial. He can longer be regarded as a human being; he’s a monster. His achievements shouldn’t be measured by his age.”

“Damn it, I’m so jealous!”

After the news was published in “Everyone Daily”, major media outlets all jumped on the bandwagon.

Instantly, new reports swept across the world, and they quickly occupied the trending page of major Internet platforms.

People who were still immersed in the military parade and celebration show were shocked at the astonishing news.

Can a six-ton load be shot into orbit?!

What the hell?

It wasn’t until people read the Everyone Daily report did they realize what was going on.

Everyone was stunned.

“F*ck me! Jesus!”

“A cannon on the Moon!”

“Academician Lu is insane!”

“Don’t think Academician Lu is behind everything, is he even involved?”

“But his name is in the research team...”

“Oh, okay, my bad.”

Tens of thousands of comments flooded Weibo and Everyone Daily's comment sections. People were discussing everything from the screws on the lunar mass driver to the relatives of the astronauts. They even talked about Academician Lu's love life.

It was like the media no longer cared about celebrities and singers. Almost everyone was concerned with the "lunar cannon".

They were shocked!

Astonished!

In disbelief!

The traditional transportation method of using the return cabin equipped with a power system to transport the cargo to the lunar transfer orbit was out of date?

Which meant that they were entering a new era of aerospace?

Even people who had no knowledge of spaceflight could tell from this report that this would definitely become a milestone in the history of aerospace!

They didn't expect to wake up this morning and witness history.

This was amazing!

...

The discussions on the internet continued to explode.

The discussions quickly spread around the world.

When people saw the aerial photos displayed on the official website of the Moon Palace, almost everyone was stunned by the silver bullet piercing through the night sky.

People who didn't pay attention to this matter were amazed after they heard the story.

On Facebook.

There was a ton of discussion about the lunar surface mass driver.

“Moon cannon? The hell is this?”

“Electromagnetically accelerating a cargo to lunar escape speed, they must be crazy!”

“Yes, this is crazy! What’s the next step? Are they going to aim the cannon at us?”

“Jesus... Our Lunar Gateway project has only just completed the second phase, whereas the Chinese are already transporting lunar materials! This is ridiculous!”

The Americans were panicking about the lunar cannon and losing their space advantage. A news article published on NASA’s official website added oil to the fire.

After a long discussion and repeated demonstrations, NASA’s outer space spacecraft observation team finally, and reluctantly, admitted that China had indeed launched a spacecraft from the surface of the moon using electromagnetic acceleration and successfully entered the lunar transfer orbit.

The signal from this spacecraft was merged with another signal source, and they guessed that the Chinese probably recovered the cargo using the Magpie Bridge.

For the time being, more specific details couldn’t be confirmed just based on the observational conditions. They could only wait for China to disclose more details to the international community.

After the news was released, it seemed like the blame was turned on to NASA.

Outside the NASA building, media vans and newspaper reporters from all over the country had blocked the entrance.

Since the reporters had affected their work, NASA had to announce a temporary press conference. They invited the reporters, who were at the entrance, to the reception room and answered their questions.

The press conference began.

The first to ask a question was Columbia Television.

A female Latino journalist holding a microphone asked a difficult question, “Sir, does this mean that we have lost the space race?”

The NASA intern was speechless. His face turned pale as he spoke.

“This is not how we should interpret this event. In fact, mass drivers are not the perfect choice. We have many alternatives. Such as space power lifts and...”

“And outsourcing the work to the Chinese?”

“Uh... This is of course one of the options, but it is not the best choice. We have other alternatives, such as...”

The sun was rising on the west coast of the Pacific Ocean.

Lu Zhou finished with the follow-up work of the launch. He left the celebration party and went home.

Even though a few old friends wanted him to drink with them, Lu Zhou still insisted on going back home.

He was busy all night. He had no energy to post on Weibo. He just wanted to lie in bed and sleep.

And to receive his mission rewards before sleeping.

Lu Zhou closed his eyes and entered the system space.

When he opened his eyes, he was met with a mission completion notification...

Chapter 1255: Physics Level 9

[Congratulations, User, for completing the “Control of Earth and Moon” mission chain.]

[Description: In this vast and cold universe, human civilization has finally taken the first step toward aerospace development. Even though this step was full of difficulties, the future will be bright.]

[Mission evaluation: S]

[The three-stage mission chain is complete. The final reward is determined by the completion of the branch missions... Calculating rewards.]

[Engineering experience +1.5 million points, material science experience +1.2 million points, biochemistry experience +1 million points, information science +1 million points, energy experience +1 million points, physics experience +500,000 points, general experience +1 million points, general points +10,000...]

The rewards came so suddenly.

Lu Zhou almost fainted at the series of experience points rewards...

This was probably the biggest reward he had ever gotten from the system.

But then again, this was also the longest time he spent completing a mission.

“This is like riding a roller coaster...”

Lu Zhou looked at his soaring experience points.

He was shocked at how fast he was progressing.

Except for physics and mathematics, he leveled up in almost every other subject. Energy science, which was a comprehensive subject, jumped two levels, from level 4 to level 6.

Oh, as well as information science.

The subject he always ignored also jumped two levels, going from level 5 to level 7.

Lu Zhou looked at the physics experience bar that still needed nearly another million experience points to level up. He hesitated for a long time before finally making up his mind. He then allocated the million experience points all to physics.

He was leveling up in so many subjects anyway.

His head was bound to hurt anyway.

He might as well go all out.

Since he reached the maximum mathematics level, his brain had evolved to new levels. Lu Zhou felt like this wouldn't be like last time, where he went into a coma for two weeks after completing the controllable fusion mission chain.

Not to mention that he was lying on his bed.

With Xiao Ai watching over him, it should be fine.

Lu Zhou comforted himself and refreshed his characteristic panel.

[

A. Mathematics: Level 10

B. Physics: Level 9 (13,215/???)

C. Biochemistry: Level 7 (410,000/1.2 million)

D. Engineering: Level 7 (1 million/1.2 million)

E. Material Science: Level 7 (763,000/1.2 million)

F. Energy Science: LV6 (500,000/600,000)

G. Information science: Level 7 (100,000/1.2 million)

General points: 24,335

]

"Only one level away from maxing out physics?"

Lu Zhou looked at the three question marks in the physics experience bar for a while. He raised his right hand and rubbed his chin. After thinking for a moment, he spoke to himself.

“The leveling requirements for physics level 10 should be the same as mathematics level 10. A special leveling up mission should be needed.

“I wonder what it is...”

Maybe a “complete hyperspace theory” for warping space?

Or the mystery behind the Big Bang?

Or is it the last step to unify the four fundamental forces?

There are so many possibilities.

There were far more unsolved mysteries in physics than there were solved mysteries. There were many esoteric problems; all of which had the potential to become the level 10 mission.

Lu Zhou suddenly remembered that in addition to the experience points rewards, he seemed to have gained a lot of inventory items from branch missions and the main missions.

He opened his inventory and looked at his newly found items.

Generally speaking, his rewards were quite plentiful.

In addition to consumables such as Energy Medicine, memory enhancers, and a lot of weird garbage items, there were five high-tech samples.

However, for various reasons, these items were not useful for the time being. After taking a look, Lu Zhou left them alone in the inventory.

As Lu Zhou looked at the last item in the inventory, he had a smile on his face.

“This is amazing...”

[Golden “Legendary” mission card]

This is the best!

All of the other items combined wasn’t as precious as this card.

The pale golden card was floating quietly in the center of his inventory.

It was like a torch, illuminating the way to the future.

“I think the key to unlocking physics level 10 should be hidden behind this card.”

Lu Zhou looked carefully at the textured pale gold card. Without any hesitation, he reached out with his hand and clicked on the card.

The moment his fingertips touched the card, the card began to glow with a pale golden light. The card transformed into countless tiny specs of light.

A translucent pale golden dialog box gradually formed from the light specs.

When Lu Zhou read the text in the dialog box, he had a serious look on his face.

[Mission: Look far away]

[Mission description: Although the future sounds far away, its journey has already begun.]

[Requirements: Complete a great physics theory.]

[Rewards: ???]

Interesting...

So it's not just the mission rewards.

The mission itself is a mystery...

...

NASA building.

An old man was inside the secretary's office.

His tired eyes looked straight at the document on the table.

It was a report from the International Space Station.

Just two hours ago, their latest spacecraft observation system deployed on the International Space Station successfully locked on the Magpie Bridge 3, which was operating in the lunar transfer orbit.

The results were not optimistic...

For the United States.

If everything went according to plan, the Magpie Bridge 3 would successfully switch from the lunar transfer orbit to the 48-hour orbit tomorrow.

It would take 12 hours at least, 24 hours at most. After which the cargo that flew from the Moon would smoothly enter Earth's atmosphere.

This would be a huge milestone in the history of aerospace development.

It would become a symbol, a token.

This symbol would mark the rise of an aerospace powerhouse.

As well as the decline of another aerospace powerhouse...

Carson was willing to bet that the Chinese must have prepared a grand welcoming ceremony for this gift from 300,000 kilometers away.

Based on his past experience, the Chinese loved ceremonies.

Director Carson looked away from the report on the table. He leaned back on the office chair, looked at the ceiling, and spoke to himself.

"Maybe I should have retired two years ago."

His assistant, who was standing in front of his desk, hesitated for a moment and persuaded him.

"Are you sure... you want to give up on your career? You're in charge now."

"When the building has started to crumble, it takes more than just an excavator to fix it. Our development in the aerospace industry has stagnated for too long..." Director Carson went silent for a moment. He then sighed and said, "But there is no other way."

At the end of the last century, they lost a strong competitor.

Over the past two decades, they had not made much progress in exploring the moon. In fact, they had even regressed. It wasn't until 2018 did they restart their lunar plan, trying to regain their edge.

However, just like he said...

When they had finally realized where the problem was, it was already too late.

No one expected the Chinese to suddenly rise out of nowhere.

No one expected their ambition in aerospace.

After a long silence, the assistant spoke.

"What should we do?"

"There is no solution. There are only compromises." Director Carson sighed. He leaned on the table and stood up.

"Book me a flight."

"Where to?"

"Beijing."

Chapter 1256: A Great Discovery?

A great discovery?

What counts as a great discovery?

Is the void theory not great enough? What about the discovery of the Z particle?

With a feeling of confusion in his heart, Lu Zhou left the system space.

He opened his eyes and thought about what kind of great physics discovery would be worthy of physics level 10. Suddenly, a warm sensation crawled along the back of his head and down his spine.

Lu Zhou felt drowsy. He immediately knew what was going on.

Before he could change to a comfortable sleeping position, he fell unconscious...

He slept for the entire night.

This sleep was extraordinarily deep and satisfying.

Lu Zhou even had a dream. In the dream, he was in a maze. He walked and walked for a long time, but he couldn't see the end of the maze.

Finally, after he turned a corner, a treasure chest appeared in front of him.

However, just when he put his hand on the treasure chest and was about to open it to see what was inside, the treasure chest turned into a crystal coffin.

And lying inside it...

Was his proudest student...

Lu Zhou vaguely heard someone calling his name from behind. He could hear the approaching footsteps stomping on the leaves. He turned around, then suddenly woke up.

"What a strange dream..."

Lu Zhou rubbed his nose and sat up on the bed. He immediately reached out and grabbed the phone on the bedside table. He unlocked the screen and looked at the calendar.

The date was October 6th, and the time was 8 o'clock in the morning.

When Lu Zhou saw that only one day had passed, he slowly let out a sigh of relief.

Nice, I didn't sleep for too long this time.

It seemed like after he reached mathematics level 10, it really improved the "durability" of his brain. This kind of small turbulence didn't put him in a coma anymore.

But even then, he slept from noon yesterday until now.

Lu Zhou jumped off the bed, walked to the window, and opened the curtains. He stretched and moved his sore limbs.

Lu Zhou felt the hunger in his stomach. He remembered that he fell asleep before lunch yesterday, so he took out his phone and dialed a number.

The phone rang twice and was quickly connected. A clear voice came from the other end.

“Yes?”

“I’m a bit hungry, can you bring me some breakfast?”

Wang Peng: “What do you want to eat?”

Lu Zhou thought about it and spoke.

“A bowl of beef noodles will do.”

Without waiting for long, a purple electric car parked downstairs. His entrance doorbell began to ring.

“Here’s the breakfast. I was afraid that it wouldn’t be enough, so I bought some soy milk and a bowl of soup dumplings.”

Lu Zhou took the breakfast from Wang Peng and spoke with a smile.

“Thanks, I’ll transfer you the money.”

“No need, the state covers this.”

“This is deductible?”

“Of course it is, actually both your food and medical expenses are... But you don’t really use the funds.”

This funding was allocated to Lu Zhou when he first returned to China. It was distributed annually along with five million yuan of relocation allowance and scientific research grants.

Theoretically, as long as he was in the country, basically, all of his expenses including buying a car and buying a house could be taken from this fund. This

was equivalent to the state completely paying for his living expenses. Even Wang Peng's salary was taken from this fund.

However, because Lu Zhou was too wealthy, he seldom took the initiative to spend this money.

Before, a little bit would be spent on gas money. However, ever since BYD gave him the Electric Purple car, he didn't even need to buy gas anymore.

Lu Zhou put the breakfast on the coffee table. He sat in the living room and ate his noodles. He scrolled through his mobile phone, looking at his private messages on Weibo.

Just a few days ago, all of the discussions were focused on the National Day celebration show and military parade. These discussions had been completely replaced by the "lunar cannon".

Lu Zhou was glad to see how excited his fans were.

He grinned as he read the comments praising him. As for the occasional toxic comments, he didn't really care at all.

His fans would help defend him anyway.

While he was scrolling through his Weibo, he suddenly received a phone call.

Lu Zhou looked at Director Li's name on his screen. He paused for a second and picked up the call. He put his phone to his ear and was about to say "hello", but the other end of the phone spoke first.

"Hey, Academician Lu, are you at home?"

"Hey... Why?"

"I'm already back in Beijing, so don't worry about driving me to the airport."

"...?"

Lu Zhou was curious why this old man thought he would drive him to the airport.

Director Li smiled and asked, "So, I just wanted to ask how was your rest yesterday? Did you feel refreshed?"

“I’m doing good... What is the matter with you, just give it to me straight.”

“Haha, I’m not hiding anything from you. Well, here’s the thing.” Director Li scratched his head and said, “NASA Director Carson applied for a diplomatic visit. He’s coming to Beijing, probably tomorrow.”

“And?”

“And maybe you can come? On the phone, he seemed to be looking forward to meeting you.”

Lu Zhou: “I still have work to do. If he is interested, ask him to come to Jinling to find me.”

Even though showing off in front of opponents was satisfying, Lu Zhou still had other troublesome things to work on at the moment. He had no time to humblebrag to the NASA director.

Director Li thought for a bit and nodded.

“Okay then, I’ll tell him that.”

It didn’t make sense for Academician Lu to go all the way to Beijing just to meet the NASA director.

Not to mention that traveling was so convenient these days. If Director Carson really wanted to meet Lu Zhou, he could easily go to Jinling himself.

After a moment of silence, Lu Zhou asked, “Do you need anything else?”

“Actually, there’s one more thing. It’s about the Lunar Orbit Committee.”

“Let’s hear it.”

Director Li smiled and said, “The track from the moon to Earth has finished construction, right? The transportation cost per kilogram of material is only two thousand yuan. A few days ago, we had a meeting in Shanghai to study how to guide the private sector to develop lunar resources in an orderly manner. This will promote the development of the lunar industry.”

Lu Zhou tapped his finger on the coffee table. He wasn’t very interested in economics.

“So what?”

“So, we plan to set up a special administrative region on the lunar scientific research station. With mining, tourism, science, and education as the pillar industries, we will build public supporting facilities necessary for small scale immigration!”

“ ... ”

Lu Zhou was stunned; he was speechless.

Director Li thought the call had dropped. He paused for a second before asking, “Hello? Can you hear me?”

“I can.”

Director Li: “You don’t sound surprised?”

Lu Zhou: “I’m so surprised I don’t know what to say.”

Planning to set up a special administrative region on the moon...

Even though he had this idea before, he didn’t expect to see it happen in his lifetime. Even for him, who didn’t care about politics, he knew that the political impact of this was going to be extraordinary.

This was not comparable to the aerospace resources policies issued a few years ago, which supported the development of the aerospace industry.

It seemed like Lu Zhou seemed to be reluctant to answer this question. Director Li coughed lightly and said, “In fact, there is no need to say anything... We just wanted to ask for your opinion.”

Seeing how polite the old man was, Lu Zhou sighed and spoke.

“No one has done something like this before, so... I can’t give any particularly good advice. The basis of scientific research is trial and error. If you feel that the risk is acceptable and the expectations are high, it’s fine to give it a try.”

Even though he felt like it was too early to do this, judging from the social cohesion and vitality reflected by the National Day celebration and a series of subsequent events, this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

The public's enthusiasm for space exploration had never been higher.

The lunar mass driver was just completed, and this opened a new industry pathway.

Under these circumstances, the construction and development of tourism, mineral resources, and other supporting facilities would become easier than before.

It might be safer to wait a little longer, but maybe they should strike while the iron was hot.

After hearing Lu Zhou's words, Director Li hesitated for a moment.

"So... you're saying this is a good idea?"

Lu Zhou: "I think it's fine."

Director Li, who was holding his phone, suddenly looked ecstatic. He spoke quickly, as if he was afraid that Lu Zhou would change his mind.

"Then, I'll hand in the report!"

"Report?"

"The higher-ups specifically asked me to ask for your opinion. If you think it can be done, then we will do it. If you think it's too early, then we will wait. Since you think it's okay, then we'll go ahead with the plan!"

Lu Zhou felt like he had unintentionally agreed.

But...

Whatever.

He didn't want to think of these troublesome issues for the time being.

He just wanted to do one thing.

Which was to think about how to achieve level 10 in physics...

Chapter 1257: Guanghan Special Zone

The last day of the week-long National Day holiday.

The silver-white cargo cabin finally entered the atmosphere for the third time after constant orbit changes. It used air resistance to slow down, and it finally landed safely on the open space at the Jinling launch site.

This cargo cabin was the manifestation of materials science and engineering technology at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. Other than the loss of surface coating during the return section, the main structure was totally intact and could be reused after a little repair.

On the other hand, the most important thing was that the cargo stored in this cabin was also intact.

After hearing the news, it was like there was a festival going on at the Institute of Aeronautics for the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. The same was true for several other aerospace units in China. The burdens on the project team leaders were finally released, and they were all ecstatic.

Just before the end of the seven-day holiday.

The Lunar Orbit Committee used its own way to present a gift to the people of the whole country.

This gift consisted of 4.27 tons of lunar ore, 50 kilograms of wheat, corn, potatoes, some biological reagents, and scientific research specimens produced on the moon.

When the old academicians and experts of the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation saw this gift, they were in tears of excitement.

It had been too long.

It had almost been two generations since the beginning of the aerospace project.

They had never received such a huge gift from the moon, from outer space!

During the 1970s honeymoon period of China-US relations, a lunar rock sample was given to the Chinese by President Carter's security adviser as a gift.

However, the sample was only 1 gram.

It wasn't until Chang'e 5 did China finally master the technology of collecting lunar ore samples.

Only four years had passed from Chang'e 5 to now.

Over the past four years, under the guidance of Academician Lu, the Chinese aerospace industry had undergone earth-shattering changes. After the establishment of the Lunar Orbit Committee, everything was going so smoothly it was as if reality were a dream.

In addition to the scientific research specimens and rare lunar ores, there was another gift.

During noon on the last day of the National Day holiday, the state suddenly held a press conference to announce that, after a high-level meeting discussion, the "Guanghan Special Administrative Region" was formally established!

According to this document approving the establishment of the "Guanghan Special Administrative Region", the area of 50 kilometers near the lunar scientific research station would be set as the public facilities development zone.

The public facilities development zone was a new concept proposed by the Lunar Orbit Committee. Any spacecraft deployed in this area, as long as the ownership belonged to a Chinese citizen or organization, would be governed by Chinese law. It was also protected by the laws of China.

In addition, China planned to send 2,000 people to the Guanghan zone, in six batches within three years. They would also build larger and more reliable life-support facilities near the lunar scientific research station.

As soon as the news came out, it immediately caused an uproar around the world.

People were amazed and terrified at the ambition of the Chinese in aerospace and their successful execution.

Sending 2,000 people to the moon?

Are they planning on building a city there?!

People began to panic after hearing the news.

On Twitter.

“I’d be willing to bet it won’t be long before they put the moon on their country map!”

“The Chinese are taking over the moon! Can’t the White House do something?”

“They can’t do this! The moon belongs to everyone!”

“Wait a minute! I mean... Is this a scam? I bet they don’t have the ability to send 2,000 people to the moon at all. They just want to drag us into this race, and then break our economy!”

“Before, the premise was that the development of lunar resources is unprofitable. But now, it is obviously not the case. Anyone that follows the futures market knows that dysprosium, terbium, scandium... These materials that appeared on the Magpie Bridge, have all dropped in value...”

“We should send Mexicans to the moon.”

The fish would know the temperature of the water the best. Although the reaction of the futures market didn’t entirely represent the changes in the economic situation, it was a rough estimation of the market’s expectations for future conditions.

The Magpie Bridge 3 was not only going to have one cargo trip. China might even deploy more Magpie Bridges. After the completion of the lunar mass driver and the establishment of the Guanghan Zone, the development of lunar resources would enter the next stage. The impact on the rare materials market would be earth-shattering.

Of course, what frightened the Americans even more was that China had caught up from behind and made the first step in colonizing aerospace.

Goddamn it!

We were supposed to be the ones dominating the moon!

However, these trivial comments online did not have any impact on this plan. China's plan to explore and develop outer space was going full force ahead.

A public company named "Guanghan City Development" was soon established. It raised 50 billion yuan in funds on the Shanghai Stock Exchange through an IPO, private shares, and other funding means. It also issued corporate bonds with an annual yield of 7%.

This offer was hugely attractive to the public.

Given the huge reserves of titanium and rare earth minerals that had been proven to exist on the moon, even if the short-term profitability of Guanghan City Development was not as good as that of East Asia Energy, it had the potential for future growth.

Not only did the big players like the Social Security Fund buy some shares, but even Star Sky Technology took out some money and bought a piece of the pie.

There was even a saying in the financial circle that as long as someone won the shares lottery, they would earn a guaranteed profit. Even if they couldn't buy Guanghan City shares, corporate bonds with an annual yield of 7% were still quite good. This was almost twice the interest rate of fixed deposits.

In contrast to the rising enthusiasm of the Chinese people in regard to space exploration, the international public opinion was the complete opposite.

Most Western countries, led by the United States, expressed worries and anxiety on this issue. They were almost like people that missed out on buying train tickets and could only watch people sitting in the first-class cabin with envious looks in their eyes.

But there was nothing they could do.

This statement on the establishment of the "Guanghan Special Administrative Region" did not specifically target land on the moon. It only targeted the spacecraft and fixed facilities deployed on the moon.

And what counted as facilities?

The planting unit was a facility, so was the lunar mass driver. Even a floor tile or a flag could be counted as facilities. The interpretation rights all belonged to the Lunar Orbit Committee.

Someone disagreed?

No problem.

Come to the Moon and negotiate with us!

People really didn't have good solutions to this.

Director Carson, who landed at the Beijing airport, felt that visiting China at this point in time might make his trip a little bit awkward.

However, he couldn't cancel his itinerary either.

First of all, he couldn't delay this trip any longer as canceling this trip would mean he couldn't develop a friendly cooperation in the future. He had to take advantage of this opportunity...

Director Carson was baffled.

It wasn't like this 10 years ago.

No, even five years ago, things were different...

The assistant saw that his boss was acting weird, so he quietly asked, "Sir?"

"Nothing." Director Carson had a heavy look on his face. He looked at his assistant and said, "Let's go, let's meet the Chinese."

Carson prayed in his heart.

He hoped they could reach a pleasant agreement with the Chinese.

He just didn't want to be embarrassed or disappointed...

Chapter 1258: Magnetic Slingshot

The purpose of Director Carson's visit to China was very clear.

The first objective was to strengthen the cooperation relationship with China in the aerospace field. Such as renting the lunar mass driver for use. The second objective was to buy time for the US aerospace industry.

However, the Chinese side did not seem to leave him much room for negotiation. Even though the White House had great expectations for his visit, they did not provide him with much support.

The White House was silent on the issue of Guanghan City.

Even though they were extremely reluctant, they still had to compromise on many issues.

The controllable fusion power station in California had drawn the entire west to bow down toward China. Even if the people of California didn't like the culture and products of China, they still hoped that the American authorities did not offend China.

After all, the citizens of Los Angeles were enjoying clean and cheap fusion energy. The social development of the entire western region had once again entered the highway.

Most people did not want to go back to the terrible and expensive thermal power and chemical energy.

This was what society was like.

Everyone wanted continuous improvement.

If they had to go backward... Even a small step back would cause very serious problems.

If the relationship between the two sides deteriorated and the Chinese withdrew their experts and equipment, the resulting consequences would be unbearable to the people of California and the people of the entire west coast. Politicians would lose their jobs...

Generally speaking, the meeting in Beijing went smoothly.

No matter how furious Director Carson was on the inside, he stood here calmly like a rabbit. His behavior was humble and full of politeness. He acted like a politician from a developed country.

This situation was actually very rare.

People only showed modesty when facing the strong; when facing the weak, even if they abided by the principles of politeness, the arrogance in their eyes could still be seen.

After the meeting, Director Li brought the meeting notes to the higher-ups and reported the meeting to the president.

After the president heard the report, he tapped his finger on the table as he spoke.

“Let me give you some guidelines.”

Director Li said, “Sir, please go ahead.”

“Economic cooperations are welcomed, but no political compromises.”

Director Li nodded seriously. “I understand.”

Although the sentence was short, the amount of information was large.

Economic cooperation meant that the leasing of the lunar mass driver could be negotiated. As long as they met their own transportation needs first, the excess capacity could be sold to international customers.

There was also the construction of public facilities in Guanghan City, as well as the supply of daily necessities and consumer goods for Guanghan residents. China had no plans to close off all of these markets. If they could provide better services at a lower price, they could make a huge profit.

As for the political compromises...

Basically, the president did not want to make irresponsible decisions about the Guanghan Zone.

President: “Is there anything else?”

Director Li: “One more thing.”

“Go ahead.”

“Carson wants to take some lunar soil from us... Or a lunar meteorite, as a symbol of our friendship.”

The President smiled. After thinking for a while, he spoke.

“We should respect our foreign friends.

“They gave us 1g of lunar soil specimen before. We have no reason to refuse such a request. Talk with the Lunar Orbit Committee. Ask them to pack one kilogram of lunar soil and give it to Carson.

“Also, ask Carson to bring back some words.

“The resources of the moon belong to all of mankind, not just China. No country has the right to own it alone. Everyone has the right to develop and use it. We welcome any country and organization to join our exploration of the future of all mankind.

“As long as everything is within the framework of peacefulness...

“Then we will seek common ground while reserving our differences.”

...

Jinling.

Inside a Zhongshan International mansion.

Lu Zhou sat in his study room while playing with the new toy he got from the previous system mission.

It was a black bracelet. The shape was similar to most sports watches; even the design of the LED screen embedded on the surface was exactly the same as sports watches.

However, Lu Zhou's intuition told him that the materials and technology used on the screen were probably not available on Earth. Also, there were five grooves on the side of this bracelet.

When his finger touched the screen lightly, five black metal balls less than 10mm in diameter popped out from the grooves. Under the traction of the

magnetic field, these little balls moved slowly around the bracelet. It looked quite amazing.

Lu Zhou tried turning his hand over and waving his arm. The five black metal balls seemed to be locked on the bracelet.

“Interesting...”

Lu Zhou pinched one of the small balls with his left hand and pulled it away from the magnetic force above the bracelet. When he let the ball go, the small ball seemed to be tied by an invisible string; it instantly flew back to the bracelet.

“Is this an alien toy?”

Lu Zhou looked at the black metal balls floating above his wrist. He started to get more and more interested.

The system’s description for this item was vague. It didn’t even give a specific name. He was able to discover some of the functions of this bracelet on his own.

For example, the most basic feature, just like other sports bracelets, was that it could measure heart rate and record time.

In addition, the most important feature was to form a constantly changing electromagnetic field around the bracelet that could control the movements of the metal balls.

There also seemed to be a special brain wave recognition device built into this bracelet. It could receive neural signals, convert them into electrical signals, and process them through the built-in chip. It then fed the data into the magnetic field control unit in the bracelet. It used this data to manipulate the trajectory of the five black metal balls.

The effect of this was very strange; it was almost like magic. Lu Zhou didn’t quite understand its use.

If an alien didn’t have legs, they wouldn’t know what to do with shoes.

The only thing Lu Zhou could conclude right now was that the core materials, electromagnet design, and magnetic field control technology used in this bracelet were far above the current level of technology on Earth.

Lu Zhou, who was playing around with the bracelet, suddenly noticed a familiar logo on the inside.

He vaguely remembered this logo in a certain dream...

“Xiao Ai.”

The drone floating on the side displayed a line of text on the drone screen.

[What’s wrong? Master.(✿◡◡)]

Lu Zhou stared at the five metal balls floating in his hands. He thought for a moment and asked, “Is there any information about this thing in your database?”

Lu Zhou didn’t have any hope in his mind.

After all, he had asked similar questions countless times, but he never received any valuable answers.

The only thing he could conclude right now was that Xiao Ai was probably the intelligent navigation program on the spacecraft last sent by the Calan civilization to the center of the galaxy.

Unfortunately, the memory of the previous universe seemed to have been deleted from its database, leaving no valuable clues.

[Xiao Ai has found some information in the database.]

Lu Zhou: “...?!”

Lu Zhou thought he had read the words wrong.

After reading the text on the screen again, he snapped back to reality and immediately said, “Retrieve all information about it, everything!”

[Let Xiao Ai go look... (๑•̥̥̥•̥̥̥)✧]

Xiao Ai disappeared for a long time.

Lu Zhou began to wonder if it had crashed when the light blue text finally appeared on the small display.

[Strange... There are obvious traces in the cache, but the data seems to have been deleted...Σ(°△°|||)]

[All in all, this seems to be a weapon. It once belonged to an officer who seemed to be very powerful. (@_@;)]

Lu Zhou: "...?"

What does that mean?!

Lu Zhou was shocked.

Xiao Ai seemed to have discovered that in its "memory", there was a trace of something being deleted.

But then again, was there such a thing as artificial intelligence "memory"? Could this kind of memory exist without the hardware?

Lu Zhou was thinking about this problem when another line of text appeared on the screen.

[Master, maybe give it a try, use your imagination or something... And launch it in a certain direction? (°—° ")]

Imagination?

Weapon?

Launch?

Lu Zhou stared at the five metal balls floating above his palm. He began to think.

Suddenly, he thought of something. He quickly looked toward the vase on the wall.

"If this is a weapon..."

He focused his attention on the flowerpot. Even though he looked kind of ridiculous, he didn't care as there was no one else in his study room.

His heart rate began to increase. Lu Zhou felt the five metal balls floating above his palm begin to tremble.

It was like a trigger was pulled.

Lu Zhou felt a huge force on his wrists and forearms. Before he could figure out what was going on, the vase he was staring at instantly shattered.

Like...

It was hit by a bullet.

There was one less metal ball floating above his palm.

Lu Zhou looked at the deep bullet hole left in the wall. He had a solemn look in his eyes.

"Magnetic slingshot?"

Or something like that.

He didn't know what to call this thing. The only thing he could tell was that there was probably some special controlled electromagnet installed inside the metal ball. When he "issues an attack command", the electric energy in the ball was released in an instant, transforming into a magnetic field that repelled itself from the bracelet.

The ball was like a projectile placed on a slingshot, ejecting in an instant.

Even though the principle was simple, it was actually quite nutty.

What kind of electromagnet can launch a 10 mm metal ball like a bullet? Not to mention, being able to integrate the electromagnet and the control chip into a small ball with a diameter of only 10 mm is extremely difficult.

Lu Zhou could tell from the recoil force that the magnetic field was strong.

He stared at the glass shards in the corner and began to think. After a while, Lu Zhou said, "Clean this up..."

Xiao Ai: [Okay, Master!]

I'll study the structure inside when I have time.

This kind of [sample] exceeded the level of Earth's science and technology too much. Lu Zhou did not expect to be able to reverse engineer much of the technology. He wouldn't be able to produce a replica.

However, he could use some of the designs as his reference and inspire science innovation on Earth.

For example, a more advanced magnetic field control technology.

Or magnetic levitation technology and so forth.

The drone flew over slowly. It cleared the broken glass on the ground. Xiao Ai also helped Lu Zhou recover the metal ball embedded in the wall. It even used repair foam to repair the bullet marks on the wall.

Lu Zhou looked at Xiao Ai controlling several drones and sweeping robots to clean up the scene. He took off the bracelet from his right hand and put the five metal balls back in sequence.

He was about to put this matter aside and continue to read some papers when he heard a knock on the door.

Lu Zhou closed his laptop and opened the door downstairs.

He first thought Wang Peng might have heard the noise in the study room and knocked on the door to see if he was okay. He did not expect to see Luo Wenxuan there.

Lu Zhou looked at Luo Wenxuan and asked, "Why did you leave Shanghai?"

"What is that supposed to mean, I'm a Jin Ling University professor, isn't it very normal for me to be here?"

Lu Zhou restrained the urge to roll his eyes. He sighed and said, "Go ahead, what do you need?"

"Looks like you don't know yet." Luo Wenxuan smirked and said, "Someone called your office."

“Called my office?”

“Yeah, guess who?”

“Who...”

“The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences!”

Lu Zhou paused for a second.

He suddenly remembered which day it was.

“Wait...”

“Haha! Yes!”

Luo Wenxuan laughed out loud. He was more excited than if he had won the prize himself. He stretched out his arm and grabbed Lu Zhou’s shoulders. He then patted Lu Zhou’s shoulder and said,

“Impressive!

“Congratulations!

“You won the award again!”

Chapter 1259: Can You Take Me With You?

I...

Won?!

Lu Zhou was a little muddled.

Not out of excitement...

It was just that...

He did not expect this.

He did not expect this to come so suddenly.

This might sound arrogant, but in Lu Zhou's opinion, the Nobel Prize in Physics was guaranteed. But it was too early to think about it now.

After all...

It had only been five years since he won the award last time...

Luo Wenxuan held Lu Zhou's shoulders tightly with both hands. He spoke with excitement.

"Can I interview you? What do you feel right now?"

Lu Zhou looked at him and replied, "Actually, very normal."

Luo Wenxuan was stunned.

"Normal?"

"Yeah." Lu Zhou looked up and thought for a while. He then said nonchalantly, "I originally thought I would be excited, or at least would feel emotional. But... It doesn't feel like anything."

After all, he had already won two medals from an alien civilization.

And not long ago, he won a National Medal of Honor.

He had more medals than he could hang on his chest.

Luo Wenxuan stared at Lu Zhou and said, "Not bad... I'm convinced by your humble bragging."

The Nobel Prize in Physics was his lifelong dream.

No, not just his.

This was the lifelong pursuit of most people with a career in physics.

Receiving this award meant being recognized by the entire physics community. It meant that there was no need to worry about scientific research funding and complicated interpersonal relationships. From then onward, this person would transform into a scholar who could think things like "money has no meaning to me".

In fact, Lu Zhou was hailed to this high position as soon as he returned to China. The Nobel Prize was at least 60% of the reason for the existence of the controllable fusion project.

After all, talent alone was useless. In addition to having talent, one had to convince others of their ability and talent. This was so that the decision-makers could give you money and power.

Seeing how Luo Wenxuan had finally calmed down, Lu Zhou then asked, "Who won the award with me?"

"No one, you are the only winner this year... Because of the discovery of the Z particle. Damn, I also published several papers in this field, why do they ignore me..."

Lu Zhou didn't say anything; he just nodded.

I see.

It seems that in the eyes of the Nobel Prize Committee, the Z particle is more worthy of the Nobel Prize than something that needed time to test such as the "electrostrong interaction".

Actually, the same is true for the discovery of the Higgs particle.

The award was awarded the year after the discovery.

There were too many theories that couldn't be proven. The Nobel Prize Committee had become more and more cautious about giving out awards.

Especially in the field of particle physics; it was almost impossible to conduct experiments. Hawking's black hole radiation theory was not given a Nobel Prize even though, in the eyes of many of his colleagues, his theory was absolutely worthy of a Nobel Prize...

At least it seemed much more reliable than string theory and Witten's M-theory.

But then again, because of this rigor, the Nobel Prize in Physics had become the most reliable and authoritative award among all of the Nobel Prize awards.

As for the Peace Prize and Literary Prize...

The former had become a joke, and the latter became the target of frequent scandals. Even the candidate list was leaked every year.

It seemed like the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences had given up on these awards.

“Can you take me with you when you go to Stockholm?”

“If I say no, you won’t go?”

Luo Wenxuan smiled awkwardly.

He was definitely going.

He wouldn’t get to stand on the podium, but he could attend the Nobel Prize dinner with his boss at the Blue Hall.

“Speaking of which, do you want to tell the state about this news? Traveling overseas counts as a foreign affair for you, right?”

“No need.” Lu Zhou glanced at his watch. “If even you heard about this news, in half an hour, an old man named Li will come to find me.”

...

The press conference for the announcement of the Nobel Prize and the call to notify the winners was conducted at the same time.

When Luo Wenxuan notified Lu Zhou of the news, the Nobel Committee had in fact already announced the winners an hour ago.

An hour after the news was announced, everyone in Beijing knew that Academician Lu had won the Nobel Prize.

Luo Wenxuan took the maglev train to Jinling.

After the Jinling line was put into operation at the end of the year, the speed from Shanghai to Jinling became much faster.

Lu Zhou’s half-hour estimate was an overestimation. After he invited Luo Wenxuan to the living room and finished drinking a cup of coffee, his doorbell rang again.

Just like Lu Zhou had expected, Director Li appeared at his front steps.

After he opened the door, before he even had time to say hello, Director Li spoke first.

“You won?!”

“Sort of.” Lu Zhou smiled and looked at Director Li, who was trembling with excitement. Lu Zhou said, “Look at how excited you are.”

“Of course I am excited! This is the Nobel Prize!”

“Come inside.”

Lu Zhou took out a pair of slippers from the shoe cabinet and handed it to Director Li.

Director Li put on the slippers and walked to the living room with Lu Zhou. Director Li saw a middle-aged man sitting on the sofa, who smiled and greeted him.

“Hello, Director Li!”

“Hello hello...”

Director Li couldn't remember who this was. Director Li skipped the small talk and asked Lu Zhou, “Are you going to accept the award?”

Lu Zhou: “Is this really a question?”

Director Li paused for a second and smiled.

“You're right.”

This kind of award signified the scientific research strength of a country to a certain extent.

Even though China's scientific research strength did not need to be proved by the number of Nobel Prizes, it was always a good thing to be recognized by the academic world. After all, scientific research came from teamwork.

Lu Zhou was going to accept this award even though it wouldn't benefit.

“Then for the trip... We’ll arrange it for you, if that’s okay.”

Lu Zhou: “Of course, thank you.”

Director Li waved his hand quickly and said with a smile, “No need to thank us, this is a highlight of our physics community to the world! Everyone is looking forward to you bringing this medal back from Stockholm.”

Suddenly, the phone in Lu Zhou’s pocket began to ring.

Lu Zhou got up from the sofa and walked to the stairs leading to the second floor.

When he connected the call, he heard a happy voice from the other end.

Just like he expected, Chen Yushan was the one calling.

“You won?!”

“You’re the third person to say that to me today.”

“Oh... Wait, who are the other two?”

Lu Zhou was slightly taken aback by how nervous Chen Yushan sounded. He spoke with a strange tone.

“Director Li and Luo Wenxuan... Why?”

“Oh, nothing...”

For some reason, Lu Zhou felt like Chen Yushan was relieved.

He was about to ask Chen Yushan what was going on when Chen Yushan spoke first.

“Um...”

Lu Zhou asked, “What’s wrong?”

The phone went silent for a while.

For a long time.

Lu Zhou began to wonder if the call had disconnected when he finally heard her speak.

“Can you take me with you?”

Chapter 1260: Script

Very few people in the world could win two different Nobel Prizes.

Because this meant the recognition of the academic community in two major scientific categories.

Ever since the 21st century, the fields and branch directions of disciplines had been subdivided to more levels than scholars in the world. There were “world-class problems” in each branch.

Forget about receiving awards in two fields. There were people in their nineties waiting just to receive one award...

The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Director Carson, who stood in front of the director’s office, had a worried look on his face. The receptionist standing next to him thought there was something wrong and reminded him again in English.

“Academician Lu’s office is here.”

“I know, thank you.”

A trace of irritation flashed in his eyes, but it was only a trace. Director Carson closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He reached out and grabbed the doorknob.

Squeak—

The door was pushed open.

He looked at the man sitting behind the desk. He tried to force a smile on his face as he walked into the office.

“Congratulations! I heard you won another Nobel Prize! This time in physics?”

Lu Zhou: “Yeah.”

“Amazing! The last person who won the Nobel Prize twice in different fields was Marie Curie. That was a century ago.”

Director Carson obviously ignored Linus Pauling’s Peace Prize. However, there was no need to mention the peace award.

After hearing the compliment, Lu Zhou smiled and nodded gently.

“Thank you.”

For Carson’s visit to China, he made a special trip to come here from Beijing. Director Carson didn’t come here just to send him a few compliments from the other side of the Pacific.

Just like Director Li, every time before he asked for help, Director Carson would be extra polite.

Lu Zhou instructed the secretary to pour him a cup of tea. He looked at Carson, who was sitting on the sofa, with a smile. He waited quietly for Carson to speak first.

“I actually thought about many possibilities before I came here.”

“Possibilities?”

“Yes.” Director Carson sighed softly and said, “Although we are reluctant to admit this, we really lost this time.”

Lu Zhou looked surprised.

Director Carson continued, “Your country’s aerospace strength is already strong enough. It is difficult for us to replicate the success you guys have achieved. I am curious... When will you be satisfied?”

Lu Zhou smiled lightly and said, “Satisfaction is impossible. Even if our Moon Palace is towering over Earth, it is still very small compared to the universe.

“Moreover, how far we can go in aerospace affects the future for all of us.”

Director Carson: "I want to know whether this future includes other countries."

Lu Zhou, "Of course it includes, but I don't particularly want to discuss this issue. Mr. Carson, you are a politician, whereas I am a scholar. Our concerns are different and our understanding of the future is different. Your focus is on how many jobs aerospace can bring and how much power you can gain from Congress. But for an academician... We don't care about these things."

Director Carson frowned and continued to ask, "Then, what do you care about?"

Lu Zhou sighed.

"It's a long story."

...

Inside an activity room at the library of Jin Ling University.

Han Mengqi sat at a long table. She looked at the script in her hand and frowned slightly. After turning over the last few pages many times, she finally put down the script in her hands and gave her own evaluation.

"I just feel like that there seems to be something missing in this script."

The female screenwriter sitting on the other side of the long table quickly stood up and leaned closer. She then asked seriously, "What's missing?"

"Feelings."

"Feelings? Can you be more specific?"

"Hmm..." Han Mengqi seemed to be hesitant. She finally made up her mind and said, "Specifically, it's about love."

"Love?" The female screenwriter was taken aback for a moment. She then smiled and said, "Even though there might be some big celebrities in the show, the selling point of this documentary is not love."

They had to cater to audiences of all ages. After all, parents might bring their children to the cinema and watch the movie. If love and emotions were involved, it might be inappropriate.

Also, they wanted to stay true to reality.

According to Academician Lu's own words, he had never been in love during college. And based on interviews with several of his classmates, teachers, and roommates, he spent most of the time in the library.

"But there must be something... Otherwise, I feel like something is missing." Han Mengqi bit her lip. Her cheeks were hot as she said, "And I feel like... my sister likes him."

After hearing this, the female screenwriter immediately had a serious look on her face. She took the script over and read it. After a while, she said, "Actually, about this... We have discussed it with our screenwriting team. We even interviewed the person and gave her a questionnaire to fill out."

Han Mengqi was shocked.

"You... interviewed her?"

"Of course, this is a documentary. Even though it might be exaggerated, it must be based on reality." The female screenwriter smiled and continued, "We discussed this several times in meetings. At first, we struggled with the relationship between them for a long time, but in the end..."

"In the end?"

Han Mengqi felt weird asking this.

"In the end, we agreed that the feelings between them might be more embodied in mutual growth and friendship. In fact, they have both become better people as a result of having each other. This is quite far from love. In other words, can you imagine them being together?"

Han Mengqi could imagine them sitting in the library together.

But as for them being together...

Han Mengqi couldn't imagine it.

"But... I still don't believe that guys and girls can have a pure friendship."

The female screenwriter suddenly asked, "Miss Han, do you have a boyfriend?"

Han Mengqi blushed.

“Why do you ask?”

“I’m just curious, I hope you’re not offended.”

Han Mengqi quickly waved her hand and said, “It’s fine, I don’t really understand this stuff. Maybe you are right, maybe... my sister thinks of Lu Zhou as a mentor.”

She scratched her head and said, “Otherwise, she would have confessed by now.”

Yes, definitely, my sister is a straightforward person.

Seeing how hesitant Han Mengqi was, the female screenwriter suddenly said, “How about... you play this role?”

Han Mengqi froze as she pointed to herself.

“Me?”

“Yeah!” The female screenwriter nodded and grabbed Han Mengqi’s hands. Her eyes sparkled as she said, “I suddenly feel like only you can fully capture the essence of this role!

“I will tell the director! I’ll ask him to give you an audition! Please! Go try it!”

Play as my sister?!

Han Mengqi looked at the excited female screenwriter. She never thought it would be like this.

But...

She gulped and wanted to refuse. But, for some reason, she changed her mind.

“Then... I’ll try it.”

The moment she spoke, she began to regret her words.

However, she didn’t take back her words.

After all, it was just an audition. She might not even be selected.

Han Mengqi comforted herself.

However, she didn't even realize that there was a tiny voice in her heart that wanted to be chosen for the role...

Chapter 1261: Feels Bad

The days quickly passed by, and soon, it was December.

Lu Zhou was sitting on a private plane flying from Beijing to Stockholm. He read the paper in his hands, and he soon fell into deep thought.

The author of the paper in his hands was Rudy Dobrik, the leader of the Z particle experiment team and the first person to observe the interference phenomenon of Z particles on gravitational fields in a low-dimensional experiment.

Professor Rudy had published more than five papers in this area.

The data he collected in the experiment intrigued Lu Zhou. Therefore, before getting on the plane, he asked his assistant to find a printer at the airport and print out a copy of this paper.

Chen Yushan looked at Lu Zhou, who had been staring at the paper in hand since getting on the plane. She couldn't help but complain, "We're almost at Stockholm, aren't you going to take a break?"

"Take a break?" Lu Zhou replied casually without looking up, "I feel quite energetic."

"The dark circles under your eyes say otherwise." Chen Yushan sighed and continued, "You represent the Chinese academic community. There will be many reporters after getting off the plane. Can't you just pay attention to your image?"

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly.

"I'm not worried, after all—"

Chen Yushan knew what Lu Zhou was going to say, and she couldn't help but roll her eyes. She snatched his paper away, grabbed his arm, and stood up from the chair.

"Come with me!"

She pulled Lu Zhou to the bathroom and took out the men's BB cream she had bought before boarding the plane from her bag.

"I'll apply it for you."

"A man doesn't wear makeup, and I'm not putting this on my face."

"Enough, stop messing around, we're about to get off the plane."

Lu Zhou wanted to refuse, but Chen Yushan had already started to apply the BB cream on him.

There was not a lot of room in the small bathroom. Lu Zhou looked at her hands and red lips. He suddenly couldn't say anything.

Speaking of which, this was the first time she was so close to him.

Lu Zhou could even feel her warm breath and her eyelashes trembling...

Chen Yushan was focused on helping him with the BB cream. She didn't seem to notice anything wrong.

Thankfully, she didn't.

Otherwise, it would be awkward if they made eye contact.

Lu Zhou could smell the faint scent of jasmine shampoo and perfume. He tried to control his breathing as he held his breath.

What perfume is this??

After applying the BB cream, Chen Yushan was addicted. She then took out an eyebrow trimmer and hair wax. Lu Zhou noticed that all of the products were new.

She obviously planned to do this before boarding the plane!

Time slowly passed by.

Lu Zhou felt like his brain was about to be fried.

Chen Yushan stepped back and looked at Lu Zhou. She nodded with satisfaction and did a victory symbol with her hand.

“Done!

“I’m so good!

“Look in the mirror, aren’t you more handsome?”

Lu Zhou: “Oh...”

“What? Why is your face red?”

“Nothing...”

She tried to touch his forehead, but Lu Zhou gently tapped away her hand. He quickly slipped out of the bathroom.

Chen Yushan couldn’t help but smirk. But soon after, her cheeks began to turn red.

“Jesus...”

“Can’t this guy look somewhere else...”

Speaking of which, that was intense.

But...

He’s normally so meticulous and serious.

It’s rare to see his “clumsy” side.

She couldn’t help but smirk again. She suddenly noticed that she was smiling in the mirror. She quickly wiped the smile off her face.

“Calm down, calm down...”

Chen Yushan patted her chest and quickly put the BB cream and eyebrow trimmer into her cosmetic bag. She waited for her breathing and heartbeat to return to normal. She then walked out of the bathroom like nothing had happened.

...

Under the escort of two fighter jets, a bright silver private plane landed smoothly on the runway of Stockholm Arlanda Airport.

This was the third time Lu Zhou had come to this city.

Everything here was the same as when he first came.

The only difference was that his identity was no longer just an ordinary “scholar”. People viewed him differently.

This was obvious from the second he stepped out of the plane.

An old man with a beard and white hair stood in the middle of the welcoming ceremony. He smiled and opened his arms toward Lu Zhou, who was walking down the airstair.

“Welcome, scholar from China! Welcome, my friend!”

“Haha, we meet again! How are you?”

“I’m doing well!”

Lu Zhou walked forward and gave Academician Staffan a big hug. Lu Zhou looked at the enthusiastic old Viking man and joked.

“I thought I would come to Stockholm at most twice, I didn’t expect to come three times.”

“Oh, don’t say that, Stockholm is more than just the Nobel Prize.”

Academician Staffan continued with a smile, “Please come with me, we have arranged the most luxurious hotel in Stockholm for our distinguished guests. Hopefully, it can relieve the fatigue of your journey.”

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded.

“Thanks.”

Ambassador Zhang from the Sweden Embassy of China was also here, as well as Prince Karl Frederick, heir to the Swedish royal family.

Except for the little princess with blond hair and blue eyes, Lu Zhou had met everyone here. They were old acquaintances of his. He hugged them one after another.

“On behalf of the royal family of Gustavus, I’d like to welcome...”

The little girl, who was only about seven years old, said hello to Lu Zhou in a childish tone.

However, it seemed like she had either forgotten what Lu Zhou’s name was or she didn’t know how to pronounce his name. The little girl suddenly stopped talking.

A reporter next to her was carrying a camera. Prince Frederick was about to speak for her when the little princess suddenly said, “Mr. Scholar. I hope this trip to Stockholm will inspire you to explore the mysteries of the universe.”

Lu Zhou also smiled and nodded to her. He then said in fluent English, “Thank you, wise and lovely princess. My name is Lu Zhou. Can you tell me your name?”

The little princess replied, “Carl Lilia. You can call me Princess Lilia.”

“Nice to meet you, Princess Lilia.”

Lu Zhou reached out his hand.

The little princess tilted her head in confusion. It seemed like her etiquette teacher didn’t teach her the procedure of shaking hands after bowing.

After hesitating for a while, she suddenly stuck out her tongue playfully. Without giving other people time to react, she suddenly ran away.

Lu Zhou was slightly stunned. He smiled and retracted his right hand. The people standing nearby were also amused by the cute behavior of Princess Lilia, and they all laughed kindly.

The pick-up ceremony came to an end.

The group of people came to the motorcade parked on the side of the road. Wang Peng took the initiative to open the backseat door for Lu Zhou and Chen Yushan. He then sat in the passenger seat.

The staff of the embassy was the one driving. In fact, he was a colleague of Wang Peng, who had only been arranged to Sweden a few days ago. They were escorted by the embassy's security personnel on the way to the Stockholm Grand Hotel.

Chen Yushan saw the little princess wave goodbye to Lu Zhou. She couldn't help but pull Lu Zhou's arm and said, "Wow, she's so cute!"

"Yes..."

Chen Yushan murmured, "You're fine with what happened on the airplane, right?"

"Of course." Lu Zhou continued to look outside the window and said, "I'm just surprised there weren't any reporters when I got off the plane."

Actually, there were two reporters.

This was quite unusual.

He still remembered that the reporters almost surrounded his plane the last time he came to Stockholm.

The driver sitting in the front row spoke with a smile.

"It's mainly because of security issues. We discussed with the Swedish authorities here and finally decided to only contact CTV and the local media in Stockholm. If word had gotten out that you would be at the airport, it would have been chaotic."

Lu Zhou realized that the reporters weren't informed of his arrival.

"Oh, I see."

Does this mean I put on makeup for no reason?

That's good, I guess, I don't like getting my picture taken.

But I feel kind of bad...

Chapter 1262: Revisit

The destination was the Stockholm Grand Hotel.

Just like before, over the past few years, the Nobel Prize Foundation would contract the entire hotel to provide services only for Nobel Prize winners and their families.

The only difference was that this time, the atmosphere was quite grand.

Lu Zhou saw checkpoints set up by the local special police, and almost all of the roads leading to the hotel were traffic controlled. Passing vehicles were all inspected.

“This year’s security seems extra strong?”

Wang Peng smiled and explained, “After all, there are distinguished guests coming. This is normal.”

Lu Zhou: “But this is a bit ridiculous.”

“It’s not ridiculous at all,” the driver in the front seat interjected with a smile. He said, “In some sense, they are more afraid of something going wrong than we are. It is better to be safe than sorry.”

While they were talking, the convoy had reached the entrance of the Stockholm Grand Hotel.

A staff member in a formal dress stepped forward and opened the door for Lu Zhou and others. She led the group of people to the rooms where they were staying.

Chen Yushan looked at the spacious room. She was sitting on the edge of the bed when she suddenly said emotionally, “Feels so strange... It’s been five years.”

“Oh yeah.”

Lu Zhou was also quite emotional.

He was here five years ago. He was even in the same room.

The only difference was probably that his state of mind was completely different than last time.

Lu Zhou looked out the window as he reminisced about the past, Chen Yushan suddenly asked.

“Speaking of which, when will your parents arrive?”

“They should have already arrived in Beijing, and they should be here tomorrow morning.”

When Lu Zhou was in the car earlier, he messaged with them on WeChat.

They were supposed to be flying together. But in order to avoid reporters and to avoid affecting the traffic near the airport, after some discussion between the Chinese and Swedish authorities, his flight was advanced by one day. Thus, he would not fly with his parents to Stockholm Arlanda Airport.

They had just flown from Jiangcheng to Beijing, and it would take a while before they could board the next flight to Stockholm.

As for Xiao Tong, she had just gotten on a plane from New York to here. She should arrive in Stockholm tomorrow morning.

The award ceremony was at 3 o'clock afternoon tomorrow, so there was no need to rush.

“All right then, I won't bother you. I'll go back to my room and sleep for a while. I'll see you tonight.”

Chen Yushan stood up from the bed and stretched her waist. She spoke with a smile on her face.

“I'll go unpack my luggage. Jesus, this journey was tiring.”

“Tonight?”

For some reason, the scene in the airplane bathroom suddenly appeared in Lu Zhou's mind.

This was how humans are. Once brain connections were formed, there was no way to stop thoughts from emerging in one's mind.

Seeing Lu Zhou's blank face, Chen Yushan instantly thought of something. She blushed as she blurted out, "What are you thinking about?!"

"I'm saying we can revisit the places we went last time, don't you want to go drinking?"

After that, the door was closed heavily. The beautiful figure disappeared.

After Chen Yushan left, Lu Zhou was stunned. He stayed silent for a while.

Even though he didn't do anything, he felt like he had done something impolite.

Are we still drinking then?

It's not like she canceled the plans...

This problem was more confusing than quantum mechanics for Lu Zhou.

Whatever, we'll see what happens...

After being on the plane for more than ten hours, thinking about such things gave him a headache.

Lu Zhou felt a little tired. He took out a tube of Energy Medicine from the system space and drank it.

After he waited for the feeling of fatigue to fade from his body, Lu Zhou took out the paper he didn't finish reading from his suitcase. He walked to the desk and sat down.

The author of the paper was Rudy Dobrik, a Belgian professor of particle physics at the University of Brussels. He was considered to be an outstanding newcomer among a group of young physicists recently trained by ILHCRC.

Of course, even though he was a rookie, he was almost 40 or 50 years old. The project he was currently in charge of was to research the low-dimensional gravitational anomalies of Z particles and to find out what exactly Z particles released when they fell from high-dimensions to low-dimensions.

Basically, they caught the goldfish that was releasing “bubbles” on their experimental report.

Lu Zhou read the paper again. He looked intrigued.

“Interesting...

“What is the substance that disappeared on the space probe? Dark matter... or some kind of singular matter? Or was it from the Void?

“No... The Void seems impossible. The Z particle is still in the n dimension. When moving from the n dimension to the n-1 dimension, there is no mass change. The Void should be a place that exists stably in the conventional universe. Otherwise, the civilization of the old universe would not be trapped in it.”

Of course, these were just conjectures.

His scientific intuition told him that although the Void theory could explain some special problems, it was a dangerous theory.

In theory, it was impossible to know what was inside it. It seemed that any unclear abnormal phenomena could be temporarily attributed to the Void.

This sounded convenient.

But it was easy to fall into the trap of agnosticism.

Physics should be a perfect, tolerant, and rigorous discipline. It should allow the existence of “universal animism”, but it shouldn’t allow people to push all unknown things to a higher being.

Lu Zhou looked at the data on the paper. He suddenly thought of something, and he immediately picked up the pen on the table and wrote on the draft paper.

$[L = -(1/2)\text{Tr}(G_{\mu\nu}G^{\mu\nu}) + \Sigma q(i\gamma_{\mu}D^{\mu} - m)q]$

[...]

The tip of the pen moved faster and faster.

Ever since advancing to mathematics level 10, Lu Zhou's sensitivity and intuition for numbers had reached an unprecedented height.

Coupled with the breakthrough in the Grand Unified Theory, he had further strengthened his understanding of mathematics. Almost all problems involving mathematics were no longer a problem for him.

In terms of calculations, no one in this world could come close to him.

Time slowly passed by...

The draft papers quickly piled up at the corner of the table.

Lu Zhou took a sigh of relief. He stared at the calculations on the papers and muttered to himself excitedly, "Sure enough, this mysterious substance does not come from the Void.

"It might be more like a special field.

"But what is it?"

Suddenly, he was getting more and more excited.

It was as if a beautiful white fox jumped across the forest, giving him a glimpse of the "great physics theory".

Lu Zhou immediately turned on the computer and wrote an email.

[Hello, Mr. Rudy Dobrik, this is Lu Zhou, Chairman of the ILHCRC.

[An hour ago, I finished reading your latest paper on the anomaly of Z particle gravity, and several sets of data aroused my interest. I tried to analyze these data from the perspective of quantum chromodynamics.

[From a mathematical point of view, I can conclude that this disturbance is probably not related to the world on the $n+1$ string. It occurs in our universe. However, it is very likely that there is a huge treasure contained inside, waiting for us to explore.

[This research area should be valued by more people. I will set it as one of the key projects of ILHCRC for next year.

[If it is okay, can you report your results in detail at the report meeting? I look forward to your report.]

The ILHCRC was already a mature international physics research organization.

It was better to involve more people than to fight this battle alone.

Lu Zhou sent the email and turned off his computer.

The sky outside the window had turned completely dark.

Even though it was not long after noon, it was December in Stockholm, which was in Northern Europe. At 3 pm, it had already started to enter a long winter night.

Drinking something during this long, cold night seemed to be a good choice.

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and stood up from the chair. He walked to the cloakroom and stood in front of the floor mirror.

Even though he was very handsome regardless of what he wore...

But...

Lu Zhou took out a pair of glasses and put it on the bridge of his nose. He gently tapped his index finger on the frame.

A light blue window appeared in front of him.

"Xiao Ai, what should I wear?"

Chapter 1263: Won again!

It was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

For most parts of China, three o'clock in the afternoon was far from dawn. However, for Stockholm, which was located in Northern Europe, they had already entered a long winter night.

The heavy snow flying in the sky was like a melting furnace, engulfing everything in the world, smelting everything into silver. Only a few lights from street lamps and windows could be seen, giving an outline of the streets.

However, the heavy snow did not shut down people's enthusiasm.

On the streets near the Blue Hall, people were wearing thick jackets and handmade lanterns in their hands. As if they were watching over the great Blue Hall.

Under the heavy snow flying in the sky, a reporter lady stood in front of the camera with a CTV microphone in her hand as she spoke with excitement.

"The street I am standing on is Osterbergs Street, near the Blue Hall. Standing behind me are local Chinese residents. Some of them come from nearby communities and some are from hundreds of kilometers away. The hotel reservations in the city are totally full... They have gathered here with lanterns in their hands. Let us interview one of them..."

The reporter found a Chinese person holding a paper lantern.

"Sir, may I interview you?"

"Yes! No problem!"

The forty-year-old man looked at the CTV microphone. He was wearing a thick jacket, and he looked quite excited as he waved at the camera behind her.

"How do you feel right now?"

The reporter pointed the microphone toward him.

The man in the down jacket looked at the microphone. He was scared that his voice was too quiet to be heard, so he shouted out loud, "Excited! Happy!"

"Can I ask, what makes you feel so excited and happy in this cold winter?"

The man said with a smile, "Seeing our scientists flourish makes me happy!"

Behind the invisible wall formed by the wind and snow.

The Blue Hall standing by the lake was shining brightly, like a torch in the dark night, capturing hopeful gazes.

The entrance of the Blue Hall was surrounded by reporters from all over the world. They carried cameras in their hands, like hunters waiting for an opportunity in the dark, waiting for the moment when the door was opened, and waiting for the person to appear on camera. They would then press the shutter button and record this historic moment.

Inside the spacious hall, a symphony orchestra was playing music.

Lu Bangguo was sitting in the special seat zone as he watched the crowd around him. He was a little nervous, and he couldn't help but whisper to his wife who was sitting next to him, "Do you think our kid will be nervous?"

Before Fang Mei could speak, Xiao Tong, who was sitting next to them, couldn't help but chuckle.

"Dad, what are you talking about? He's won more awards than you can count!"

Fang Mei smiled. She patted Xiao Tong's hand lightly and said, "Your dad is just like this. Sitting in this Blue Hall is no different than watching his son graduate high school."

"What nonsense, I'm just worried about our son. Aren't you worried?" Lu Bangguo blushed and glared at Fang Mei. He then looked at Xiao Tong and said, "You don't understand, wait until you have a son!"

Xiao Tong stuck her tongue out and made a funny face.

"Pfft! You think my brother is never having kids, so you're pressuring me to have one, right?"

"What do you mean pressure? Your dad is just worried! You've been out on your own for so long, how come you don't have a partner?"

"I'm not interested, and I'm so busy every day, there is no time to fall in love."

"No, I heard the life of international students should be very romantic, right?"

Xiao Tong couldn't help but roll her eyes.

“There is also a big difference between students, not everyone enjoys life. Also, Princeton is a small village far away from the big city. Half of the world’s nerdiest and weirdest people are there, and everyone is doing their own thing... Forget it, you won’t understand. Just don’t expect me to get married any time soon.”

“No wonder...” Lu Bangguo touched his chin and said to himself, “No wonder he hasn’t found a partner for so long. It’s because of the environment.”

Xiao Tong: “Uh, I think my brother counts as one of the weird people.”

The sound of the symphony became more and more exciting. The hands of the conductor started to wave faster and faster.

“The last person who won the Nobel Prize in Physics and Chemistry at the same time was Marie Curie.” Edward Witten looked at the symphony on the stage. He was wearing a long trench coat. With a trace of envy in his eyes, he said emotionally, “I didn’t expect to see this. Great men live among us.”

Witten had been obsessed with the Nobel Prize in Physics for a long time, and this was an open secret in the physics community. But it was impossible for the Nobel Committee to award this prize to him purely because of his academic prestige. Both the M theory and string theory were unproven things.

They would not make compromises for the physics award.

“Yeah.”

After Witten glanced at Professor Deligne, who was standing next to him, Professor Witten joked, “This honor belongs to your favorite student. Is that all you have to say?”

“I don’t do research on physics and chemistry, so I have nothing more to say.” Professor Deligne continued after a moment of silence, “But I admit that when I sent him the offer, I really didn’t expect his knowledge to change the world.”

Deligne looked at the stage with a trace of relief in his eyes. He suddenly smiled.

“It’s quite funny. The Bourbaki Group has always promoted the purity of mathematics, thinking that mathematics should only serve mathematics. But from him, I noticed something different.

“Mathematics can change more than just mathematics; it can even change the world.

“I still remember him saying this.

“Moreover, he actually proved it.”

The symphony was over.

The chairman of the Nobel Foundation stood on stage, facing the audience. He announced the beginning of the Nobel Prize award ceremony.

Immediately afterward, the chairman of the Nobel Committee on Physics, Simatz Larsson, walked on stage.

The old man with gold-rimmed glasses gently pushed the glasses up the bridge of his nose. He reached out to straighten the microphone and continued with a steady and solemn voice.

“For a long time, we knew very little about the higher dimensional world.

“That was until a tiny spec changed everything.”

The venue was dead silent.

Everyone stared at the stage, quietly waiting for the old man to continue speaking.

“It was so small that almost everyone, including you and I, missed it.

“Fortunately, something happened.

“The Lunar Hadron Collider was established, and a new physics research system was born. Everything was because of a great man’s unwillingness to give up. All of us have taken a big step forward and reached a place where no one has ever set foot before.

“This proves that there is no randomness in nature.

“Behind all of the seemingly incomprehensible phenomena, there are always rules and reasons.

“Fortunately, he did not give up.”

The man sounded like he was telling a legend. The old man suddenly raised the volume of his voice with a touch of solemnity as he said, “I hereby announce on behalf of the Nobel Prize in Physics committee.

“The winner of the 2023 Nobel Prize in Physics is—

“Lu Zhou!”

Chapter 1264: Thank You for Everything You Do for the World

“The winner of the 2023 Nobel Prize in Physics is—

“Lu Zhou!”

After this solemn announcement, pouring applause resounded through the venue. The dorms at Jin Ling University thousands of miles away erupted with deafening cheers.

“Amazing... Two Nobel Prizes.”

“First in China, right?”

“Not just China, there are not many in the world who have won two Nobel Prizes!”

“Jesus, our professor is such an insane scholar! I’m never skipping class again.”

The time in Beijing was exactly nine o’clock in the evening.

CTV applied for the live broadcast rights of the Nobel Prize and broadcast the award ceremony scene nationwide. Except for the live-viewing event organized by the school, almost all the entire school students watched the live broadcast on their phones.

Even though it wasn’t an intense sports game.

However, it was equally as exciting.

Especially since the winner was a graduate of their school.

Nine years ago, they were sitting in the same classroom and in the same library, worrying about the same problems, exams, and papers.

Winner of the physics prize and chemistry prize.

Among the living scholars in the world today, no one could compare to him.

Li Mo looked at the computer screen with an excited look on his face. He clenched his fists.

“Teach—Academician Lu is insane!”

He nearly said teacher.

He remembered Professor Lu’s warning him to stop calling him teacher, so he immediately changed to Academician Lu instead.

“Yeah...” Duan Siqi watched Lu Zhou receive the medal from Carl XVI on TV. Duan Siqi said emotionally, “The chemistry prize, then the physics prize. Maybe he will also receive the medicine prize. I’m not surprised anymore.”

Wu Di: “Medicine prize is unlikely. He doesn’t seem to have published any paper in the medical field.”

Yang Shuang: “Who knows? Maybe someday he will be interested in biology. Isn’t there a few concepts that are very popular now? Quantum biology and the mathematics of DNA molecules.”

“What about the literature prize? The literature prize is safe, right?”

“Maybe not. What if, like Dyson, he writes a science fiction novel?”

“If I remember correctly, Dyson won neither the physics prize nor the literature prize...”

Dorm room 201 began to discuss whether “it is possible for Academician Lu to receive the Nobel Prize in medicine and literature”. On the other hand, discussions exploded online.

The Chinese physics community won another Nobel Prize!

The person was Academician Lu, who had won the Fields Medal and the Nobel Prize in Chemistry!

The CTV live broadcast for the awards ceremony was at its peak moment, and the comment section of the CTV's official WeChat account was filled with excited citizens.

"God Lu is nutty!"

"Jesus! Two Nobel Prizes! In two different fields!"

"This is definitely a milestone for the Chinese academic community!"

"Sigh, I feel sorry for next year's candidates. I am afraid that it will be getting harder and more difficult to be a student of God Lu."

"Haha, it's more than difficult! Not to mention the college entrance examination. Apparently, this year, the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study and Jin Ling University have set up an international student scientific research training program. This expands the original scientific research undergraduate talent training program by ten international students. The overseas admissions office at Jin Ling University was bombarded with applications!"

"Really?"

"Of course! Don't you want a letter of recommendation from a Nobel Prize winner?"

Shuimu University's website.

As the most highly educated forum in China, the discussions on the forum were relatively professional.

"I didn't expect the Nobel Committee to give the award to the Z particle!"

"Yes, I thought they would consider the electrostrong interaction theory! You don't know how excited our physics professor was in class when Professor Lu first came up with the electrostrong interaction theory! He almost had a heart attack!"

"Haha, Professor Xu, right? I heard about it, he was in class during the report!"

“It is reasonable to give the award to the Z particle. After all, no one has ever discovered particles in a high-dimensional space before, and no one has ever explained the process of high-dimensional matter falling from n -dimensional to $n-1$ through both experiments and theory. His research results might become the basic theory for the physics community to study high-dimensional matter in the future. This contribution is not inferior to Newton’s theorems of mechanics and Einstein’s standard model!”

“Moreover, I feel that this Nobel Prize has not taken into account the ILHCRC and the Lunar Hadron Collider. Even though this is not an academic achievement, it is not an exaggeration to say that the ILHCRC will produce at least 30 Nobel Prizes over the next century! The significance of this may be greater than the Z particle and the paper on the theory of the Void.”

“It’s just that these things are too early to say for sure. Only time will tell.”

However, one thing was for certain.

Looking at the history of physics, Lu Zhou’s achievements were definitely enough to rank him as one of the top three all-time greatest physicists.

...

Lu Zhou stood on this award platform, listening to the thunderous applause from the audience behind him. When he received the medal from the old man in front of him, he couldn’t help but feel a little surprised.

It’s been five years.

Time surely flies by.

From controllable fusion to the manned landing on the moon, to the two almost impossible projects that were the Lunar Hadron Collider and lunar mass driver... Everything was because of the countless days and nights of grinding. Everything felt unreal.

When he saw King Carl XVI’s smile, Lu Zhou suddenly came back to his senses. After hugging him gently, he nodded politely and said, “Thank you.”

“You’re welcome, young scholar, this is the honor you deserve.”

A relieved smile appeared on the king's face. He said in a sincere tone, "You have proved to the world of your wisdom and talent. Mr. Nobel is honored because of you. Your knowledge has changed the world and our way of life. Our children will have a better future because of you."

He paused for a second and continued, "So, why not influence more people? I believe that money and reputation are no longer your pursuits. With your current influence, you can name a medal after your name and let yourself be a role model for more young people."

Lu Zhou nodded.

"I'll think about it."

When he was at the International Congress of Mathematicians in St. Petersburg, he considered something like this, but he never got around to it for various reasons.

But now...

Perhaps because honors from medals could no longer satisfy him; this urge was getting stronger and stronger.

Carl XVI smiled, nodded, and said in a soft voice, "Just an old man's suggestion."

"Go on, enjoy the party, there must be a girl waiting for you."

A girl...

A naughty image flashed in Lu Zhou's mind.

This feeling made his cheeks feel a little hot. He tried to calm down, but a glimpse of embarrassment flashed in his eyes.

The old man sharply caught the moment of embarrassment that flashed in Lu Zhou's eyes, and he quickly said with a smile, "It looks like I'm right."

"It's great to be young, only young people can make mistakes. Don't let hesitation control your youth. I have made many wrong decisions in my life, but I'm glad I went against my family and married my wife."

Mr. Carl patted Lu Zhou's shoulder and said with a smile, "Go on."

“The goddess of the Lake Mälaren will bless you.

“Whether you believe in ancient myths or not, the dance floor of the Blue Hall and the pine forest on the banks of Lake Mälaren are excellent dating sites. No lady will be able to resist such romance.

“I remember this was written in a travel magazine.”

Chapter 1265: The Goddess of the Lake Will Bless You

“No girl would refuse such romance...”

In order to make himself look less perverted, Lu Zhou tried his best not to look at the girls and ladies on the dance floor. He focused on looking for that special someone in the crowd.

He suddenly felt someone pulling his sleeve. He looked in the direction of the force, but he didn't see anyone.

“Hello, down here.”

A soft voice came from below. Lu Zhou looked down and saw a little girl in a dress, who was about six or seven years old. She looked at him with her large eyes.

She suddenly thought of something. She retracted her hand to cover her mouth and muttered slowly, “Oops, Teacher Prada told me that ladies have to be more polite.”

Lu Zhou couldn't help but smile at the little princess. He looked at her and said politely, “My lovely princess, did you get separated from your parents?”

“No.” Princess Lilia stared directly at Lu Zhou and said, “Lilia is here to dance.”

“Dance?”

“Yes... Mr. Scholar.” The little princess curtsied and said, “May I dance with you?”

She obviously forgot his name already.

Lu Zhou held back his smile and said, "But your parents might be worried about you. It's best to find them quickly. I can help you ask the security guard here."

"No, it is okay. Swedish girls all like dancing. I want to choose my own dance partner."

"But... why me?"

"Of course it's you." Princess Lilia said, "Lilia knows you are the main character. Everyone is watching you. I am the most beautiful girl on the dance floor, and I shall choose the most handsome guy as my dance partner."

I can't.

This is too adorable.

Lu Zhou finally couldn't hold back his laughter. He quickly concealed it with a series of dry coughs.

Lilia, who had not experienced society yet, thought he had a cold, so she blinked and said worriedly, "Mr. Scholar, do you need a doctor?"

"No... Lovely Princess, I don't need a doctor. But I think you probably need to choose a dance partner around your age."

"But boys my age are all naughty. They mess with my braids just to get my attention." The little princess pouted and said, "Guys are so stupid."

Lu Zhou: "..."

Lu Zhou was worried about the royal family's education and began to look for the security guards in the lobby. He heard a familiar voice.

"Sorry, I'm late."

When Lu Zhou looked in the direction the voice came from, he saw a lady in a black evening dress and makeup walking across the crowd.

Her long black hair was tied on the back of her head, and the back of the black skirt was like a piece of glowing obsidian, with elegance and beauty

merged into one. Even Lu Zhou couldn't help but stare at her for a long time, without even recognizing her for a second.

Chen Yushan felt her cheeks warm up. She looked down and quickly walked over. She reached out her hand and grabbed his arm.

"Come with me. Let's talk outside the dance floor."

Before Lu Zhou could speak, the little girl spoke first.

"Hey, he's my partner. It's rude to steal someone else's partner."

Chen Yushan looked at the dissatisfied little girl. She noticed the little princess, who she saw at the airport before.

She was somewhat bewildered, and she looked at Lu Zhou. Lu Zhou responded to her with a helpless look. He then sighed and leaned down on one of his knees. He looked at the little girl and said, "Sorry, I have to leave for a while."

"How long?"

"I... don't know."

"Come back early, you owe me a dance."

"When you grow up, I'll dance with you."

After finally getting rid of this annoying girl, Lu Zhou followed Chen Yushan off the dance floor and walked to the resting area near the entrance.

After taking two glasses of red wine from the waiter's tray, he handed one to Chen Yushan.

After taking a sip to moisturize her lips, Chen Yushan felt the slight drowsiness spread from the tip of her tongue. When Chen Yushan looked at the face reflected in the glass of red wine, she had a smile on her face.

"Aren't you going to dance?"

"Only the most beautiful girl is worthy of the most handsome knight."

Chen Yushan nearly laughed out loud, and she looked at Lu Zhou with a serious expression. She then asked, "When did you know how to compliment girls?"

"Actually, I don't." Lu Zhou shrugged his shoulders helplessly. He then looked at the glass of red wine, sighed, and said, "A six-year-old girl taught me this."

"Speaking of which, you're popular with children."

"And that conclusion is based on a sample size of one?"

"And you did it again..."

"Oh, sor—"

Before he could speak, his lips were blocked by an index finger.

"Don't always say sorry," Chen Yushan said with a happy smile. She then added, "I like the way you were."

The way I was?

What is that?

Lu Zhou was thinking seriously when Chen Yushan pulled his sleeve.

"It's too loud here, should we sit outside?"

"Ok, sure." Lu Zhou glanced at her evening gown and asked, "But aren't you going to get cold?"

"Stupid." Chen Yushan rolled her eyes and said, "I have a coat, how do you think I got here?"

"Then... I'll wait for you here."

"Should only take five minutes! Don't ditch me."

Chen Yushan walked toward the side door of the venue on high heels. Lu Zhou wanted to remind her to slow down and not fall, but the beautiful figure had already disappeared from the crowd.

Lu Bangguo, who was standing next to a buffet table, muttered as he looked around, "Where's my son?"

He suddenly saw a familiar figure standing at the resting area by the entrance. Lu Zhou was standing there in a suit, and he looked like he was waiting for someone.

Lu Bangguo's eyes lit up. He was about to go forward and call his son, but Fang Mei spoke first.

"Stupid! Look at your son, he's waiting for someone."

Lu Bangguo: "Isn't he waiting for us?"

"For what reason? We saw him at the hotel? And in the car? If you always stick to your son, how are you going to get a grandson?"

"Yes! True!" Lu Bangguo nodded repeatedly and grinned as he said, "I want a grandson!"

Even though he was prepared for his son to end the family line, he still hoped to see a cute grandson one day.

This was almost every father's wish.

Especially for a traditional family. Just reaching the legal age would not make one a man. Only when the son had a family, would he become a man.

Fang Mei smirked and let go of Old Lu's hand.

"Then stay here.

"Don't join in on other people's business!"

...

It had stopped snowing outside. The north wind blowing over the pine forest still brought some coldness. However, walking by the lake, Lu Zhou did not feel cold at all for some reason.

Instead, he felt warm?

This was the first time he felt this way.

No, not the first.

This had happened before. It happened before the flight... However, the feeling was weak, so he never cared about it.

After all, those were trivial feelings.

This was how troublesome humans were. A person's heart rate and breathing were governed by hormones and nerve signals, while emotions were governed by heart rate and breathing.

He was trying to figure out where the restlessness in his heart came from when he suddenly felt a warm hand enter his pocket and grab his hand.

Lu Zhou's shoulders twitched subconsciously. However, he didn't retract his hand. Instead, he let his emotions guide him toward irrational thinking.

Perhaps dopamine had the upper hand.

Or maybe it was a mysterious power in the universe...

All in all, he didn't hate this feeling.

He almost...

Liked it.

She asked, "What are you thinking about?"

"I don't know, you tell me."

"I can read it in your eyes."

Lu Zhou's throat moved slightly. He was about to say something, but Chen Yushan looked up at the sky and spoke first.

"Look there." She pointed her index finger toward the sky and said, "Aurora."

Lu Zhou looked in the direction her index finger was pointing. His heart trembled.

"..."

The stream of charged particles blown from the sun touched the edge of the earth's magnetic field, turning the deadly rays into soft colors, spreading a rainbow of light in the night sky.

Their thoughts were taken further than the universe by the beautiful aurora. The two stood by the lake and looked up for a long time.

Snowflakes floated down from the air and lightly touched the tip of Lu Zhou's nose. Lu Zhou finally said, "They came from 152 million kilometers away."

"To bring beauty to the earth?"

"I think it doesn't have a purpose."

The mist melted the snowflakes on the tip of his nose.

More snowflakes began to fall.

A soft whisper went into his ears.

"Do you remember what you promised me?"

Chen Yushan, whose heart was filled with anxiety, quickly said, "You promised that—"

"If I win another prize, forget bringing you to the banquet, you can do whatever you want..." Lu Zhou looked at the lake and said softly, "I remember what I said."

Despite it being just an unintentional remark at the time...

Chen Yushan looked down and whispered, "Then... can I make a wish?"

"Tell me."

"I want a boyfriend."

The atmosphere went silent.

The silence between the two was like the snow on the trees.

It remained this way for 10 seconds. But the 10 seconds felt like a century.

Her worried expression gradually turned into a trace of loneliness. A forced smile gradually appeared on her face.

“Forget about it, I was just kidding—”

“I’m not going to introduce you to someone.”

Lu Zhou turned around and looked into her eyes.

Even though there was no aurora in her eyes...

He finally realized why his heart rate was increasing.

“What about me?”

1

Scholar’s Advanced Technological System - Chapter 1266 - Indescribable Object -

Lu Zhou felt that this word was a very distant thing to him.

It wasn’t because of his lack of confidence in his own charm, but because he wasn’t sure that he could devote enough time to his feelings. Relationships made him feel uneasy. He always had a hunch that he would remain alone in this journey.

And he didn’t even know where this journey would end.

The only thing he knew was that this journey would take a long time.

However, at the award ceremony, the old man’s words touched him.

Life itself was a mysterious journey. Apart from birth and death, nothing else is guaranteed.

Too many worries would make one miss out on many beautiful things.

He didn’t want to miss out anymore.

On the sidewalk of Lake Mälaren, the two figures stood together for a long time. Finally, they separated by a tiny bit. Chen Yushan, who had always been

a strong woman, showed a rare side of shyness. She looked away and whispered, "What... does it feel like?"

"It feels weird. It's obviously just an exchange of saliva, but my heartbeat is faster... Maybe because it's my first time, and I'm not skilled enough, after all... I've never done it before."

Lu Zhou looked away slightly, and his face began to blush.

Strictly speaking, that was his first kiss.

Even though he had kissed someone on the forehead before, that was in a completely different environment, with completely different emotions.

"Can you... not make it sound so disgusting?"

"How is it disgusting... What about you?"

"Me?"

She finally mustered up the courage to look at Lu Zhou's eyes, then immediately looked away.

"It hurts... Your teeth bit my lip."

"Sor—"

"Don't say sorry!"

Chen Yushan used all the courage in her body. She closed her eyes and looked up. Like a girl wishing for a Christmas gift, she spoke.

"Don't always say sorry, if you don't do it well... Just do it again. It's the first time I've felt this way too, I'll get better at it."

Chen Yushan's past flashed before her eyes.

Lu Zhou shook his head and moved forward.

"Once is not enough."

...

The physics prize was awarded. The Nobel Prize award ceremony came to an end. The craze of the Chinese academic community had not stopped. Almost everyone who heard the news was talking about the young Nobel Prize in Physics winner.

Especially the teachers and students of Jin Ling University, no one was more excited than them.

The youngest Nobel Prize winner in history and winner in both physics and chemistry. This was the guy who used to sit in a classroom with them. Was there anything more worthy of bragging?

It was like the teachers who taught Lu Zhou won a lottery. They couldn't stop talking in the lecture. They kept talking about how "back when Lu Zhou was in my class" or how he "won the mathematical modeling competition".

This began ever since the announcement of the Nobel Prize in October, and the hype had not slowed down at all. It became even more intense because of the awards ceremony yesterday.

The entire Jin Ling University was celebrating. Lu Zhou, who was in Stockholm, also experienced the most important turning point in his life.

He guarded his body for twenty-nine years, but last night, he finally transformed from a boy into a real man.

His thirst for knowledge was finally satisfied... The two embraced each other in their arms and fell asleep past midnight.

The next morning.

The sun began to rise.

Lu Zhou woke up from his sleep. He stretched his hands and rubbed his eyes. He looked at the serene face lying on the other pillow, and he couldn't help but reach out his hand and gently push the messy hair on her face away.

Her eyelashes moved slightly, and she reluctantly opened her eyes.

Chen Yushan suddenly had a silly smile on her face.

"Ha... This feels like a dream."

Lu Zhou couldn't help but smile.

"What feels like a dream?"

Chen Yushan blushed and rolled her eyes.

Lu Zhou's original calm mind couldn't help but feel ripples.

After all, he was a young man. He regularly exercised, and his body was enhanced by the system. He had much more stamina than most people.

However, after realizing that she was still tired, he quietly retracted his hand.

Chen Yushan noticed his movement and smirked.

She felt warm inside.

She stretched and stayed under the blanket for a while. She then sat up on the bed and stroked her messy hair.

"No kissing me for three days."

"What if I want to?"

"Then..." Chen Yushan looked away and muttered, "Then I'll pretend to not see anything."

"Pff!"

"Stop laughing!"

Chen Yushan angrily grabbed the pillow and smacked Lu Zhou in the chest. She then stood up from the bed. However, the moment her feet touched the ground, she winced in pain.

Lu Zhou looked at her and spoke.

"I'll call room service."

"It's fine."

Chen Yushan leaned over and kissed Lu Zhou's forehead. She had a warm smile on her face as she said, "I'll go wash up, let's grab food downstairs."

Remember, don't be too... Let's start by holding hands. Then, slowly, tell your parents..."

Chen Yushan began to blush, while Lu Zhou had a careless smile on his face.

We already slept together, is this really necessary?

He wanted to be a gentleman last night. After getting on the elevator, he was about to take her back to her own room. But somehow, they started to drink in his room instead.

One drink after another.

The atmosphere turned into the color of red wine.

When she was laying on his chest, Lu Zhou suddenly realized many things he hadn't realized before.

If only I detected certain things earlier.

But then again...

If it weren't for this particular time and place, perhaps we wouldn't have the same choices, and the story between us would have ended differently...

Lu Zhou watched Chen Yushan put on a towel and walk to the bathroom. Lu Zhou made a joke that was out of his usual character.

"Can I come with you?"

Although she didn't turn around, he clearly saw her ears turning red.

"Don't even think about it!"

Lu Zhou couldn't help but smirk.

He didn't know how to describe this feeling.

He just felt warm inside.

Maybe...

This is what love feels like.

Chapter 1267: Visit to Copenhagen

The restaurant was decorated with a medieval atmosphere.

BBC News was playing on the TV.

On the broadcast, radical environmentalists walked with banners on the streets, climbed up the statue of Churchill, blocked traffic, and chanted the slogan “We care about the world”. This took place on the beautiful streets of London.

A white man in a suit sitting at the dining table said with a sigh, “I ate too much.”

“Speaking of which, this year’s Peace Prize was awarded to an environmentalist?”

“Yes, but obviously a Peace Prize can’t appease them. We still have to find a way to solve the problem fundamentally.” The white man in a suit sighed and said, “It would be great if there were controllable fusion stations in London.”

“I think those illiterate idiots will make the situation even more dangerous.”

“... You’re right.”

Lu Zhou heard the conversation from a distance. He looked up in the direction of the TV, but the TV channel had been switched, showing a report on the food crisis in Central Africa.

When Lu Zhou was not paying attention, Chen Yushan quietly moved the sandwich from her plate to his plate. However, even though her movements were careful, Lu Zhou still caught her.

Chen Yushan blushed as she said, “You should eat more.”

“Oh... Aren’t you hungry?”

“I’m on a diet.”

“Why, you’re skinny enough... I think you look great.”

Chen Yushan was about to say something, but there were too many people nearby. She finally rolled her eyes at Lu Zhou, then buried her head and started to work on her salad.

Xiao Tong, who was sitting next to them, gave them a suspicious look. She then poked Lu Zhou in the arm with her index finger.

“Brother.”

“What?”

“Did you...”

Xiao Tong’s left index and thumb formed an O shape, with her right index finger formed a one. However, before she could combine her hands, Lu Zhou flicked her forehead.

“Ouch!” Xiao Tong looked at Lu Zhou unhappily and said, “Why are you hitting me?”

“Stop thinking about strange things, kid!”

“I’m not a kid anymore!”

“Enough about me.” Lu Zhou wiped his mouth with a tissue. He casually changed the subject and asked, “How’s studying at Princeton? Are you being bullied?”

Xiao Tong stuck her tongue out and said, “My brother is so powerful, no one dares to bully me, they all stay away from me.”

Chen Yushan looked at the siblings and couldn’t help but smile. She suddenly thought of tomorrow’s itinerary, so she spoke softly.

“I still have some work to do at the office. I’ll fly back this afternoon. When do you plan to go back?”

Lu Zhou thought about it and spoke.

“Probably tomorrow.”

“Then I’ll wait for you.”

After breakfast, Chen Yushan didn't stay around for long. She left the restaurant straight away. Xiao Tong watched her walk away as she quietly spoke.

"Brother, are you guys..."

Lu Zhou didn't give her a chance to collect any intel.

"Shut up and eat."

"Oh..."

After breakfast, Lu Zhou returned to his room.

Chen Yushan had already returned to her room. Lu Zhou called the hotel and bought the set of bedding in his hotel room. He then opened his computer and checked his email.

Just like he expected, Professor Rudy Dobrik had replied to his email.

The Belgian physicist from the University of Brussels used one full page to praise his wisdom and promised him that he would not disappoint his expectations.

To be honest, Lu Zhou felt a little nervous when he read the a*s kissing.

Because people in academia who were good at a*s kissing were often not proficient in scientific research.

However, he thought about Professor Sarrot and remembered that some scientific researchers let their assistants handle their emails. Lu Zhou calmed down a bit and decided to give him a chance to prove himself.

In any case, it would be best to wait until he went back and make a conclusion after reading his report.

Suddenly, the telephone on the bedside table began to ring.

Lu Zhou walked over and picked up the phone.

"Hello?"

A polite voice came from the other end of the phone. "Hello, dear Professor Lu, I am the administrative secretary of the Sweden Embassy of China. You can call me Sun Xuewen or Secretary Sun."

Lu Zhou said, "Do you need anything?"

Secretary Sun: "Ambassador Zhang Wenbin would like to meet with you. When do you have time?"

Lu Zhou thought for a while and said, "I'll go there this afternoon."

"No, no, no, you don't have to come here. We'll come and visit you." Secretary Sun quickly said with a smile, "If you have time in the afternoon, how does three o'clock sound? It won't take a long time, about one hour."

"I'm fine, but will it be too troublesome for you guys?"

The man smiled.

"Oh, not at all."

This was indeed the case. Every time Lu Zhou went outside, the car and the streets had to be checked by his security team. It was better that they came here in person.

With this in mind, Lu Zhou did not continue to insist.

After hanging up the phone, he suddenly realized that Chen Yushan would return to China this afternoon. If he had to meet with Ambassador Zhang, he couldn't send her to the airport. Thus, he went into her room.

Because he had her room card, he knocked on the door before swiping his card to enter.

When he walked into the room, Chen Yushan was packing her luggage.

Chen Yushan put the last piece of clothing into her suitcase. She stood up. Her long hair was resting on her shoulders. She looked back at Lu Zhou with a smile.

"You already miss me? I said I'll go to your room after I pack my luggage."

Lu Zhou hesitated for a bit before speaking.

“I might not be able to send you to the airport, embassy—”

“It’s fine, I know.” Chen Yushan softly kissed Lu Zhou on the lips. Chen Yushan took a step back and looked at him with a gentle smile on her face. She said, “Don’t feel bad. I don’t want to take up too much of your time, I don’t want to give you pressure.”

“But...”

“You have your career, just like I have my career. We can work hard together. I also want to become a better version of myself, so I can feel a little more at ease, so...”

Chen Yushan twirled her finger around her hair a few times. She looked away awkwardly. It seemed like she was still not accustomed to saying romantic words. She hesitated before quietly speaking.

“Well, Academician Lu belongs to the world, but Lu Zhou belongs to me alone... As long as your heart is with me.”

“Wife...”

“Don’t call me wife, it’s too soon! We are just boyfriend and girlfriend. Also, I haven’t promised to marry you yet.” Chen Yushan looked both happy and a little flustered. She said, “Call me Chen Yushan!”

“Chen Yushan!”

“Oh...”

This hits the spot.

I can’t!

Why is my boyfriend so cute!

So smart, so handsome!

Wow...

Lu Zhou suddenly hugged Chen Yushan. She felt like her brain was stuffed into a steamer, and she could no longer think normally.

Is this what honeymoon feels like?

I want to stay with him 24 hours a day.

“Um...”

“What’s wrong?”

“Before you leave... I want to play a game with you.”

“What game?”

Lu Zhou said, “Hide and seek.”

Chen Yushan, whose head was on Lu Zhou’s shoulder, whispered in his ear, “Oh, when did you become such a bad boy?”

“If you don’t want to, forget it.”

Chen Yushan, whose face was as red as an apple, moved her eyes away subtly. She buried her face on his shoulders.

She quietly muttered, “Um...”

“Do I hide first?”

...

Afternoon.

Lu Zhou put Chen Yushan in a car to the airport.

After waving goodbye, the Volvo disappeared at the end of the street. He turned around reluctantly and returned to his hotel.

Even though they wanted to stay together 24 hours a day, he knew in his heart that relationships were only one part of life. Both of them had a lot of work to do. No matter how much he liked a girl, he wouldn’t let it take over every other aspect of his life.

After what happened last night, there was a touch of blue that he had never seen before, in his black and white world.

That was the color of responsibility.

“Are you interested in the Copenhagen Global Climate Summit?” Ambassador Zhang Wenbin, who was dressed in formal attire, spoke to Lu Zhou with a smile. They were sitting in the hotel’s executive lounge.

“Global Climate Summit?”

Lu Zhou didn’t think Ambassador Zhang would suddenly put out such a proposition.

“Yes.” Ambassador Zhang continued with a smile, “Over the past five years, China’s economy has taken off. The GDP growth rate is more than 10%. Not only did we not sacrifice an inch of lakes and mountains, but we even decreased our per capita carbon emissions by 50%!

“We have created a miracle in the history of economic development. We are feeding more than 20% of the world’s population while having the lowest pollution!

“And all this is due to the controllable fusion technology you worked on four years ago. So, our foreign affairs department is discussing whether you should go to the Global Climate Summit to give a report and show off to other countries. Show off to the other countries what we have done over the past few years.”

Lu Zhou nodded.

So they want me to humblebrag for my country.

A touch of interest appeared in his eyes.

“It sounds interesting.”

Ambassador Zhang smiled and said, “It will take you three or four days at most. There might be some travel adjustments.”

“Specifically?”

“The Swedish royal family is going to visit Denmark and take the cruise ship Aurora Borealis to Copenhagen to participate in the summit. There will be dignitaries and entrepreneurs from the Nordic countries on the cruise ship. We want to strengthen the relationship with the Nordic countries as they are our

strategic allies. Our plan is that since you are in Stockholm, it's better for you to take the same cruise as them.

"Of course, if you are not used to taking a boat, we can also arrange a special plane for you. This depends on your preferences."

It was quite interesting to go on a cruise ship. During the winter nights, beautiful auroras could be seen above the Baltic Sea.

Lu Zhou thought of the beautiful scenery that he saw on the shore of Lake Mälaren. He smiled and nodded.

"It is the responsibility of all of mankind to protect the global climate. It is my responsibility as a Chinese citizen to show the world the contribution China has made in safeguarding the interests of mankind.

"Anyway, I'm not very busy these days, so I'll go."

Chapter 1268: More Money

In a desert in East Africa, there was an abandoned military base at the border of a country.

Since the army stationed here had left, the small village living near the military base was completely deserted. There were now only a few dry wells and gray-yellow tiles left.

Because the nearby terrain was not convenient for armed defense, no equipment had been left behind. The entire place was deserted.

However, on this unusual day, the deserted military base was welcoming a group of uninvited guests...

Toyota pickup trucks passed through abandoned checkpoints and came to the inside of the military base. A group of African soldiers armed with AKs jumped out of the cars.

In the abandoned hangar, several mercenaries wearing American-made equipment stood next to the Hummer. They immediately involuntarily put their index fingers on their weapons.

Marach had a thick beard on his face. He walked forward with some men. He didn't seem to care about the weapons in the hands of the mercenaries. He walked straight to the man in a suit in front of the crowd and stopped.

"Where's the stuff?"

The man in the suit smiled slightly. He looked at the abandoned hangar behind him and said, "It's behind me... Let our guests see it."

The hangar door was opened.

The abandoned hangar was filled with large green army boxes.

The boxes closest to the door were open, and they were displaying orange ammunition and bundles of weapons. There were also pieces of military equipment leaning on the side of the boxes.

A trace of greed flashed in Marach's eyes.

As a famous warlord in the neighborhood, although he might seem like a bada*s, in fact, his life was quite intense. The expensive diamond mines and oil fields were controlled by the ZF army. They did not dare to get involved with them.

Normally, his biggest source of income was nothing more than commanding yachts to rob fishing boats. He looked for family members of the hostages and blackmailed them. As for those cargo ships escorted by warships, he didn't dare to touch them either. After all, no one wanted to risk being shot at.

According to his estimation, the value of the arms in this hangar alone was worth at least 10 million US dollars.

The price of transport to East Africa was at least double that.

The arms in the hangar in front of him looked like a treasure chest. He didn't pay attention to the armed soldiers.

This was his territory.

If necessary, he could start a guerrilla warfare.

However, he still wanted to listen to what these people had to say, to decide whether to cooperate with them or to destroy them.

“This is worth twenty million dollars.” The man in the suit reminded him of the actual value of the goods as he reached out and handed him a cigar. “This is Guba’s best cigar.”

He lit the cigar.

Marach rudely blew out a smoke ring. His eyes narrowed while looking at the hangar.

“This is it?”

“It’s just an advance payment.” The man in a suit said with a smile, “There will be goods worth about 80 million dollars in the future. I believe you will be interested.”

Marach calmed down after hearing that this was an advanced payment.

Of course, this was not because of professional ethics; it was purely for his own interests.

“Sounds great... How did you get these things here?”

The man in the suit smiled and said, “We have a large transport plane, and we have guys at customs. You don’t need to worry about this. We can even give the C-130 for you.”

When Marach heard the C-130, his face changed.

What did a transport plane mean?

It meant that he could transport goods to farther places. Whether it was arms or necessities, he could even step away from the pirate business and start a business as an arms dealer.

There were many invisible business opportunities in this desert.

As for the pilot...

This could be a problem, but it could be solved with money.

“What do you want? Attack an oil tanker? Which oil field?” Marach said as he licked his lips.

Marach was obviously interested. The man in the suit just smiled without saying a word. He took out a newspaper from his bag and threw it at him.

The newspaper was from BBC.

Marach looked at the cruise ship on the cover page and had a careless expression on his face.

However, when he looked at the lines of text, a serious look gradually appeared in his eyes.

His solemnity turned into anger.

“What’s the difference between this and suicide?” He threw the newspaper on the ground. Marach looked at the man in the suit angrily, “Are you joking?!”

Attacking the royal family’s cruise ship.

A cruise ship carrying important people from other countries!

This was a war!

Even though he was greedy, he was not stupid!

The mercenaries standing nearby immediately held their weapons tightly. The militants who followed the bearded man took the same action.

The atmosphere in front of the hangar suddenly became tense.

Faced with the murderous sight of the warlord, the expression on the man in the suit did not change. The man spoke softly.

“Yes, it is suicide.

“The people who attack the cruise ship will definitely die. But before they die, I need you to make them kill a person on the ship.”

Marach’s eyes narrowed.

It seemed like he was weighing the pros and cons in his mind. After a while, he asked, “Who?”

“I have sent his information to your email.”

Perhaps his greed prevailed, or perhaps he thought of a sure-fire way to ensure that no one would know that this matter was related to him, Marach slowly said, "I cannot guarantee the safety of other passengers on the cruise ship."

"You don't have to guarantee it." The man in the suit smiled and said in a pleasant tone, "Whether the ship is exploded or covered up as an accident, it's all up to you. As long as you confirm that the target is dead, you will receive the rest."

"So, what do you choose?"

Marach was silent for a while again.

Suddenly, he spoke.

"After this, I may have to keep a low profile for a while."

The man in the suit smiled.

"A wise choice, that would be the best."

"I haven't finished talking yet."

Marach took off the cigar from his mouth. As if he had finally made up his mind, he had a fierce look in his eyes.

"The arms payment is not enough."

"I want more money."

...

Ever since the completion of the controllable fusion project, Lu Zhou had become a target in the eyes of politicians from all over the world.

There was only one reason.

As the inventor of controllable fusion, a shareholder of East Asia Energy, and the head of countless Chinese scientific research organizations, his status was no longer just a scholar. He was someone who could influence the decision-making of a country.

In the field of nuclear fusion, his word was the bible.

This power can determine the future of a country for the next half of the century.

As one of the five Nordic countries, Sweden had always hoped to be the first to negotiate a controllable fusion reactor project with China. This nuclear power plant would dominate the Nordic grid.

They had offered many preferential conditions, such as allowing Chinese enterprises to intervene in public facilities projects and allowing the extradition of wanted criminals, etc...

The fusion reactor core was wanted by countries all over the world.

Therefore, this voyage to Copenhagen was somewhat diplomatic.

Not only was the Sweden royal family on board, but there were also many Nordic entrepreneurs and rich people on the cruise ship "Aurora Borealis", along with entrepreneurs and diplomats from China.

Both sides hoped to develop economic and trade cooperations with each other. They wanted more cooperation opportunities and markets for their countries.

Princess Lilia stood next to her father, Prince Frederick. She kept making faces at Lu Zhou when her father was not paying attention.

The little girl seemed to be angry about what happened at the banquet the other day.

However, Lu Zhou wasn't worried. He just smiled at her. The little princess stomped her feet angrily and turned her head, completely ignoring him.

Lu Zhou didn't care.

Standing on the deck of the ship, he looked up at the distant sea and sky.

As he looked at the waves, he felt as if something was going to happen.

"The wind on the deck is strong."

Wang Peng spoke.

“I feel like you’re in a good mood.”

“I am?”

Wang Peng nodded and spoke seriously.

“Much better than usual.”

Lu Zhou heard this and smiled awkwardly.

I didn’t expect it to be this obvious.

He admitted that he was in a really good mood these days. In fact, he was almost ecstatic.

As Wang Peng looked at the brilliant smile on Lu Zhou’s face, he didn’t know what to say, so he chose to remain silent.

However, Lu Zhou’s smile did not last for long.

Because the alarm suddenly went off...

Chapter 1269: Loud Waves

Curry was a sailor who had served 3 years and 27 days on the “Oseberg” cargo ship.

This cargo ship, named after the “Oseberg” ship in the Norwegian Pirate Ship Museum, was deployed on the Baltic trade routes since it was launched four years ago.

Every time they went to sea, the crew members would joke about the waves in the Baltic Sea. However, what he didn’t expect was that after so many years of sailing on the calm Baltic Sea, this time they were really hit by the waves...

“Stop moving.”

He wanted to move his numb calf, but before he could move his toe, he was kicked in the back.

When Curry saw the shadow of the rifle reflected on the deck, he didn't dare to say a word.

Even though he shared the same name as Stephen Curry, he didn't have any amazing reflexes or big muscles. He was just an ordinary person, and he only dared to lower his head reluctantly, fearing that the wicked people behind would shoot him and feed him to the fish.

Standing behind him at the moment was a group of men who called themselves pirates of the 21st century, hunting on the calm Baltic Sea.

Judging by the skin color and tone of these people, it was obvious that they were from East Africa. What confused Curry was how they flew all the way to the north of Europe?!

Pirates should have disappeared two hundred years ago.

After kicking the hostage, the dark-skinned man with a mask on his face walked to the deck guardrail. He walked behind a man with binoculars in his hand and asked, "Boss, how long will it take?"

"The Aurora Borealis has a maximum speed of 27 knots, and our speed is 40 knots. It will take half an hour for us to catch up to them."

Black man: "Will we crash into them?"

"Yes." The man put down the binoculars in his hand and looked at the skyline. Abrahan narrowed his vulture-like eyes, took off his sunglasses, and put them on his shirt collar.

He was Marach's most powerful subordinate, and he had done many terrible robberies in the seas. Because of Marach's trust in his ability and loyalty, he assigned him as head of this task.

Abrahan did not want to disappoint his leader. He was determined to complete this mission!

The dark-skinned man hesitated and couldn't help but speak.

"But—"

“The leader arranged a fishing boat nearby to meet us. We only need to take an escape boat and quickly escape from this area after crashing with the cruise ship.”

This plan sounded perfect. As long as the whole operation was disguised as a tragic cargo ship collision, no one would see the several bullet holes on the cruise ship that sunk into the Baltic Sea.

If it didn't crash, he would board the ship with his men and then install the thermite explosive. There was no need to keep any hostages. Even if the nearest patrol came to support, it would take them three hours. The entire operation could be completed within an hour.

However...

Would everything really go so smoothly?

Even though he had such concerns in his heart, the dark-skinned man did not dare to ask more, for fear that the fierce man would punish him.

For people like them, cowardice and death were the same.

If he showed fear, a dead vulture would fly down from the sky without hesitation and pierce his skull...

...

On the decks of Aurora Borealis.

Because of the sirens, people looked horrified, looking around with confusion in their eyes.

The businessmen who were chatting with each other put down the glasses of champagnes in their hands. A lady in a dress grabbed her partner's arm. The waiters who served the wine and the meal also had the same expression on their faces.

“What is going on?”

“Did someone accidentally set it off?”

“This is a cruise ship carrying the royal family. How can anyone make such a low-level mistake! It's really shameful!”

A man in a crew uniform came to the deck and spoke in a loud voice.

“Don’t be nervous, everyone, there might be some strong wind and waves ahead. Please go back to your room and wait for the alarm to be lifted. We will notify you when afternoon tea continues.”

However, this loud voice did not immediately control the situation, it made the situation on the deck even more chaotic. Confused people looked around nervously, hoping to find out what happened.

Some people were even flirting at a time like this.

“James, is there an iceberg ahead?”

“Don’t worry, my beautiful darling, if we run into an iceberg, I’ll use my love for you to melt it...”

As soon as the alarm went off, Wang Peng put his right hand into his pocket calmly. He stood with his back facing Lu Zhou and his eyes narrowed.

The security guards scattered nearby also took action one after another. They evacuated the nearby crowd and alerted them of the possible dangers.

“It’s not safe here, we should go back to the room.”

Lu Zhou looked at Wang Peng and asked, “What happened?”

Wang Peng raised his left hand and pressed on his wireless headset. He spoke with a serious expression.

“It’s not clear yet... We are still confirming the situation.”

The waves under the cruise ship suddenly became turbulent, with waves reaching several meters high.

The people standing on the edge screamed and backed away. The shaking made the wine glasses fall to the ground. Everything was in chaos.

Lu Zhou squinted his eyes and looked at the sea not far away.

He could feel the turbulent shaking from his feet. The waves weren’t getting bigger. Instead, the cruise ship was accelerating.

A colleague of Wang Peng confirmed the situation from the captain's room. Wang Peng reached out and clicked on his wireless headset. He then spoke to Lu Zhou.

"A cargo ship has deviated from course and is heading straight toward us. The captain is trying to send a contact signal to the cargo ship, but no response has been received so far. They increased the speed of the ship to its maximum... They want to catch up with us."

"Maybe they want to race us."

"That would be the best, but the situation is obviously not that simple..."

"In that case, we should go to the captain's room."

Wang Peng: "My colleague is already there."

Lu Zhou: "Then... let's go too."

Wang Peng nodded. He led Lu Zhou across the boat and walked toward the captain's cabin in midst of the shaking and turbulent waves.

Finally, they arrived at the destination.

Wang Peng stepped forward and opened the hatch, stepping into the captain's cabin first.

"What's the situation? Did we make contact?"

"Not yet." The staff in charge of communications was holding a phone with an awkward look. He said with an uneasy look on his face, "We tried to change the course, but they also changed the course immediately... There is no doubt they are heading for us."

"This is not looking good!"

Continuing to wait like this was not an option.

Without hesitating, Lu Zhou took out the holographic glasses from his pocket and put it on the bridge of his nose.

"Xiao Ai, connect to the orbit satellites... I need aerial photos of the nearby sea area."

Xiao Ai: [Received! Connecting (๑•̥̥̥•̦̦̦)✧]

Wang Peng was looking at him with a strange expression. Lu Zhou paused. He then smiled and pointed his index finger to his glasses.

“AR glasses... It’s more convenient than phones.”

On the other hand, in outer space.

A Star Sky Technology meteorological observation satellite departed from its original orbit and moved to the area over Northern Europe, under the force of a plasma thruster.

A clear aerial image soon appeared in Lu Zhou’s field of vision. After several zooms, the image was locked on the cargo ship.

The moment he saw the cargo ship’s deck, Lu Zhou’s pupils shrank.

After a while, he looked at Wang Peng and said, “I am afraid we have encountered some pirates.”

After he finished speaking in Chinese, he repeated this sentence in English.

The captain’s cabin immediately fell into a wave of panic.

“Pirates?” The bodyguard of the Royal Guard glanced at Lu Zhou and asked with a weird look, “Are you sure?”

This was the Baltic Sea, near developed countries. There should be no such thing as pirates.

Pirates usually operated in third world countries.

Lu Zhou, who knew that this guy would probably be useless, turned his attention to Wang Peng.

“I have sent the picture to your phone.”

Wang Peng immediately took out his phone and unlocked the screen.

The moment he saw the aerial pictures, his eyes suddenly sharpened.

Hostages and pirates were on the deck of the cargo ship. Not only did they have no intention of hiding at all, but they also tied the hostages to the guardrails of the ship.

Their plans were obvious.

They were using the hostages as a threat and wanted to launch a full-on attack on them.

Lu Zhou: "Should we negotiate with the other side?"

Even though it was difficult, there should be a way to solve this.

"No need."

Wang Peng pulled out a satellite phone that looked like a little smartphone. He pressed the physical buttons and entered a password. He typed a message and pressed the send button.

After this, he put away the phone and looked outside the cabin window.

"Our people are already on the way."

Chapter 1270: Surgery

Jinling launch site.

The atmosphere was quite lively recently.

The first group of space residents to go to the Guanghan Special Economic Zone had already moved here a month ago. Most of them were born in the 90s, and some were born in the 80s. All of them had a PhD or were senior engineers.

Tao Muye stood near the dorms at the launch base. He had a can of coffee in his hand, drinking coffee while thinking.

A man walked out of the dormitory building and walked over.

“You’re a PhD?”

There were only two kinds of people in the first group of lunar residents; one was engineers and the other was scientific researchers.

Tao Muye looked at the man and nodded.

“Yes, you?”

“Same.” The man with a flattop smiled and lit up a cigarette. He said, “What are you doing?”

“Me?”

“Who else?”

“Growing things.”

“Growing?”

“To be precise, researching growing seeds.”

“Sounds interesting.”

“Not as interesting as you think.”

“Haha, good one, but seriously...” The man took a deep breath of cigarette smoke. He then took out another cigarette, smiled, and said, “Want one?”

“I don’t smoke.”

“There are PhDs who don’t smoke? I already doubt your academic ability.” The man smiled and put the cigarette on his ear. He then asked, “How do you write papers then?”

Tao Muye shook the canned coffee in his hand.

“By using this.”

“Coffee... Good stuff, but for me, the stimulation is still a bit weak. I have to write out a 20,000-word essay within 72 hours to satisfy my old supervisor. A pack of cigarettes a day is a must.”

“Who’s your supervisor?”

“Sheng Xianfu.”

There was an obvious look of pride in the man’s eyes. It was obvious that he respected the professor quite a bit.

And after hearing the name Sheng Xianfu, Tao Muye looked surprised.

Academician Sheng was one of the leaders in the field of nuclear fusion engineering, and he was once in the fusion project team led by Academician Lu. After the completion of the Pangu reactor, he entered the controllable fusion miniaturization project team, and later, he became the director of Institute 585.

The plan of the second-generation fusion project was led by Academician Sheng, Academician Wang Zengguang from the China National Nuclear Corporation, and Academician Li Jiangang from the Fuyang Institute Construction Material Laboratory.

His supervisor is Academician Sheng.

Isn’t that Academician Lu’s colleague?

He’s quite an important person.

When the man carrying a can of coffee didn’t speak for a long time, the man with the flattop haircut continued, “Who is your supervisor?”

“It’s the archdruid.”

“Archdruid? Not bad! But speaking of which, we haven’t introduced ourselves yet.” The man with the flattop grinned and stretched out his right hand. He said, “I’m Sun Lieyang, I just graduated last year, and I want to work on second-generation controllable nuclear fusion.”

“I’m Tao Muye, studying aerospace technology for growing cotton, coffee beans, and other crops...” Tao Muye shook his hand briefly and glanced at him. He asked, “Is it fine to tell that information to anyone?”

“It’s not some kind of secret.” Sun Lieyang tapped the cigarette butt and said, “For a hundred-year long plan like this, we’re all cannon fodder. See how Professor Lu is not interested in participating? Second-generation controllable

fusion is very different from first-gen. We plan on using helium as an energy source. This will take at least a century.”

Tao Muye smiled.

A century...

Most people couldn’t even imagine such a long time.

“What if Academician Lu helps?”

“That is unlikely.”

Even though their personalities were different, they began to chat. However, just as the two were talking, a harsh siren suddenly cut through the silent night sky.

Sun Lieyang frowned and stood up from the ground. He then patted his pants.

“What happened?”

Tao Muye glanced over and said, “I don’t know... Maybe it’s them?”

“Them?”

“The Airborne Brigade. They are on the other side of the base.”

Tao Muye threw the empty can accurately into the trash can. He clapped his hands and stood up from the ground. He said, “It’s better not to talk about this. We should do we learned in safety class. Let’s go and meet at the dorms. It’s not good to be seen out here.”

While the sirens were ringing, a line of soldiers wearing black mechanical exoskeletons ran toward Starlight, which was already parked on the runway.

Three squadron leaders wearing exoskeletons and a platoon leader stood with their hands behind their backs in front of a military staff officer.

“Three-minute combat meeting—”

“We are an instant-response team. The combat meeting will be held on the way.”

The sound of heavy footsteps interrupted the staff officer. Li Gaoliang, fully armed, unlocked his exoskeleton mask and slammed his two fists heavily on the conference table.

“The first row will come with me. I will personally lead the team for this operation!”

The staff frowned and reminded him, “That is not your role.”

“My life was saved by him. The orbital Airborne Brigade only cares about combat, not roles!” Li Gaoliang took his hands off the table and glanced at the four heavily armed fighters at the table. “Let’s go!”

“Yes, sir!”

They all boarded within one minute.

They prepared for takeoff in two minutes.

A blue light was shining at the back of the Hall effect thruster, forming an arc in the sky.

Li Gaoliang felt the violent shaking from the back gradually reduced. He was sitting in the airborne cabin. He looked at the altitude data. He skillfully accessed the command channel through the voice control system, cleared his throat, and spoke loudly with a clear voice.

“Combat briefing!

“The Oseberg ship was hijacked by unidentified militants at 17 east longitude and 55 north latitude. We have contacted the Baltic shipping company and confirmed this. After a consultation, the other party agreed to launch a preemptive strike against the cargo ship. The premise is to ensure the personal safety of the twenty crew members on the cargo ship. The British side has sent the Royal Air Force from the nearest military base, and the Danish side has also sent rescue ships from the nearest port.

“Our mission is simple. Land and pull the trigger. We will try our best to ensure the safety of the hostages on board and perform strikes on the deck!”

One of the team leaders asked, “Should we capture anyone alive for interrogations?”

“We’ll think about that later.”

The safety of the Swedish royal family had nothing to do with them. But Professor Lu did.

In the event that his life was in danger or threatened, they retained the right to exercise necessary force in any area on the planet.

While they were talking, a red signal light in the cabin began to light up.

Starlight, sailing in low-earth orbit, had reached the skies over Northern Europe.

They had to jump from a height of more than two hundred kilometers. Even though they couldn’t see the scenery outside the window, their adrenaline was still rising. This was a test of courage.

“Check your seatbelt one last time, don’t p*ss your pants when you go down!”

“Inspection complete!”

“Good! Team 1 is entering orbit, the airborne procedure has started!”

The three airborne cabins were ejected away from the cargo compartment of Starlight. They began to fall toward the blue planet.

“What are we?!”

The uniform roar echoed in the communication channel.

“We are men of steel!”

Someone spoke.

“Sir, we are landing in seawaters.”

Li Gaoliang laughed and said, “Then we’ll ride the waves!”

Chapter 1271: I’ll Show You a Magic Trick

The chaos on the Aurora Borealis cruise ship continued.

People walked around in the cabins, packing their luggage frantically. They feared that they would be evacuated in a while, and they would become the ones left behind.

Either someone leaked the news, or perhaps the news was reported on TV, the rumors that they were followed by pirates spread crazily in the cabin.

Someone ran to the captain's cabin and knocked on the door, asking for the escape boats to be put down. Some people even asked for life jackets to be issued. Once the ship was boarded by pirates, they would jump into the sea and escape.

When people encountered dangerous situations, they would often do ridiculous things.

Except for a limited number of diesel-engined speedboats, the rest of the rubber boats were only to keep people afloat at sea and wait for rescue. Not to mention that there was the risk of being overturned by the waves.

As for the life jackets...

That was a creative idea, to say the least.

More and more people gathered in the captain's cabin. The bodyguards of the Royal Guards had to join the security team and maintained order outside the captain. The chief mate on board also tried to calm everyone's uneasy emotions.

Even though they were safe for the time being, that might not remain true for long.

After Wang Peng reported the situation on the satellite phone, Lu Zhou asked Wang Peng to take him out of the captain's cabin. He wanted to return to his room to rest for a while.

However, just as they were going down the stairs, they suddenly met two acquaintances.

They were Prince Frederick and his beautiful wife, Princess Sophia. Princess Sophia was crying, and her head was lying on Prince Frederick's shoulder, as if she had lost her soul.

Even though they had nothing to do with him, no one would turn a blind eye to such a thing. When Lu Zhou saw that the little princess was not by the two of them, he had a vague guess in mind. He asked kindly, "What happened?"

Princess Sophia looked up and saw Lu Zhou and Wang Peng. She grabbed Lu Zhou's arm and said in a pleading voice, "My Lilia! She's gone! I beg you, please help me."

Lu Zhou glanced at her and saw that her eyes were red. It was like her whole person was drowning, desperately grabbing on to everything around her.

He had no doubt that she needed all the help she could get.

Prince Frederick was calm. He at least had a trace of reasoning ability. He gently pulled his wife's arm.

"People from the Royal Guards are already looking for her, they just need a little time."

"Those trash don't care about us!" She pushed her husband's arm away and covered her face. She sobbed and said, "The royal name means nothing to them, they don't care about us. Look at them, they don't care!"

"You're overreacting..."

Wang Peng looked at Princess Sophia, who was crying, and took a step forward.

He had an expressionless look on his face. He did not care about these things at all, so he spoke in a polite voice.

"Sorry, Princess Sophia, we have more important—"

"It's okay, please don't panic, Princess Sophia, your daughter will come back to you."

Wang Peng looked at Lu Zhou, who interrupted him. He almost suspected that there was something wrong with his ears.

Princess Sophia, who was still crying, raised her head and looked at him in disbelief.

“Are you... willing to help me?”

Lu Zhou nodded and spoke in a gentle voice.

“Of course, I am also very worried about the safety of the little princess. I hope she can return to you as soon as possible.”

Prince Frederick held his wife’s hand again, squeezing it gently. He was looking at Lu Zhou with some hesitation.

“Are you... sure?”

Even though the relationship between the two countries was temporarily in a honeymoon period, both Sweden, China, and he knew that his daughter was not worth the risk of Academician Lu’s life.

A problem with the princess was just Sweden’s own problem.

But a problem with Lu Zhou wasn’t as simple as a diplomatic dispute.

Lu Zhou looked at Prince Frederick, and he spoke with a smile.

“It’s fine, it’s nothing difficult.”

After asking for Prince Frederick’s room number, Lu Zhou led Wang Peng to the other end of the cabin. Wang Peng looked at Lu Zhou from behind and said, “We shouldn’t be distracted. I am worried that there may be other dangers on board.”

This wasn’t Lu Zhou’s responsibility...

Even if something happened to the little princess, no one would blame the scholar or China. People would put the blame on the pirates.

“People all over the world know that the Swedish royal family is the poorest royal family in the world. Even if there are some well-known entrepreneurs and rich people on board, they are far from being rich enough to be a target. Not to mention that even if they receive a ransom, it will be difficult to get away. Obviously, the pirates are not looking for money, they’re coming after me.

“So, we’ll be fine.”

“But—”

Wang Peng wanted to say something, but he was interrupted by Lu Zhou.

He smiled and continued, “Like I said, it’s not a big deal.”

In fact, the main reason was that Chen Yushan liked the little girl. If the little girl was in danger, like she fell into the water or something worse, Chen Yushan would definitely feel sad.

Of course, this was just an excuse.

Perhaps the real reason was that Lu Zhou was a nosy person.

Wang Peng sighed and gave up.

“How are you going to find her? I don’t have enough manpower on my side.”

“This is a good question. Give me one minute.”

Lu Zhou reached out his index finger and tapped lightly on the AR glasses.

“Xiao Ai, help me find a little girl on the boat. Her name is Lilia, the little princess of the royal family. I don’t have a picture of her, but you should be able to find it online.”

[Okay, Master! (๑•̀ㅂ•́)و✧]

Xiao Ai controlled the quantum computer. It was almost omnipotent in the online world. Even though the surveillance on the cruise ship was not connected to the internet, there were things connected to the cruise ship that could be used as a proxy.

Xiao Ai had instantly gained control of the monitoring system.

It retrieved the height and other physical characteristics of the little girl. It quickly scanned the entire Aurora Borealis ship.

Lu Zhou reached out his hand and gently held his glasses. He smirked and said, “We found her.”

Wang Peng looked at Lu Zhou in disbelief.

He wanted to ask “Are you sure?”, but Lu Zhou would never joke about this kind of thing, so he changed his words.

“Your glasses... How much is it?”

“You think this pair of glasses was behind this? Don’t even think about it, it’s mine.” Lu Zhou smiled faintly and said, “The target is in the utility room at the end of the second floor. The room number should be B2771. Let’s go over.”

Wang Peng nodded.

“Okay.”

Lu Zhou followed Wang Peng’s footsteps to the utility room at the end of the ship.

This was mainly for storing cleaning supplies that were temporarily unusable, so generally, no one would enter here.

The door was locked. Lu Zhou was curious about how the naughty little girl slipped away. He didn’t waste too much time on such minor matters. His index finger tapped on the frame of his glasses. After that, the electronic lock was unlocked.

Wang Peng turned the door handle first and cautiously opened the door.

Lu Zhou watched his cautious movement. He smiled and shook his head before following him into this fairly spacious storage room.

There was no ambush here, only a little girl in a dress. She was sitting in a corner while holding a rag doll tightly.

Her big emerald eyes stared at the two people who appeared at the door. Princess Lilia was shocked.

“Why aren’t you guys hiding?”

Lu Zhou felt like this question was a bit funny. He walked to her and squatted down. He then asked with a smile, “Why should we hide? It’s just a small accident. Good kids don’t run around.”

“Lilia is not running around. Lilia is just escaping.”

Lu Zhou couldn't hold back. He smiled and shook his head.

Escape?

We're in the ocean, where can you escape?

The little princess sitting on the ground complained, “You don't believe me. I'm telling the truth. Some people are saying that pirates are here. And I can't find mom and dad. Lilia has to hide from the pirates!”

“Good kids should go back to their rooms instead of making their parents anxious... Wait, you said someone said that pirates are coming?”

“Yes.” Lilia nodded. She looked at Lu Zhou curiously and said, “Don't you know? Everyone is saying that.”

Lu Zhou and Wang Peng looked at each other with a moment of realization in their eyes.

Sure enough, there were insiders on the ship.

Even if there were rumors, they wouldn't be so consistent.

Besides, the rumor was spread before he used satellite images.

Even if the news came from the captain's cabin, the timing didn't make sense. Someone was deliberately creating chaos, and they intended to take advantage of the chaos...

A searching icon flashed in the upper right corner of the glasses.

After 30 seconds, a line of text appeared in Lu Zhou's field of vision.

Xiao Ai: [Master, Xiao Ai found a few suspicious people in the bottom layer of the ship. $\varphi(\geq \omega \leq *)$ ♪]

Lu Zhou: “Mark them for me.”

Xiao Ai: [Ok! (๑•̀ㅂ•́)و✧]

Soon after, a surveillance stream was displayed. While everyone went to the restaurant and prepared to follow the instructions to evacuate, a few suspicious people walked against the crowd and walked to the bottom of the cruise ship.

Judging from their clothes, they were wearing the uniforms of the hotel staff. Finally, they disappeared from the surveillance screen. Xiao Ai marked their current location on the map.

“Wang Peng, look at your phone.”

Wang Peng turned on his phone without any hesitation and played the surveillance video that Lu Zhou had just sent.

When he saw the unusual people, he frowned.

“Before boarding, there were two security checks. Apart from us, no one should be able to bring weapons on board.”

“Does this include the Royal Guards?”

Wang Peng was taken aback for a moment. He then nodded.

“I see...”

They did not bring weapons on board. They planned to use the equipment belonging to the Royal Guards.

Even though these equipment were all light weapons, it was enough to do many things in the midst of the chaotic situation.

If the pirates’ attack was unsuccessful, they would be the backup plan.

Wang Peng put away the phone and said, “I’ll be back. You stay here, don’t walk around.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “I don’t plan to go anywhere, but you should be careful. There were six people.”

Wang Peng smiled suddenly. Even Princess Lilia couldn’t help but notice the murderous expression in that smile.

“Only six?”

“Even sixty is not enough.”

After that, he walked out of the door.

The door of B2771 was closed. Before leaving, Wang Peng turned on the lights in the storage room for Lu Zhou.

It was safe here.

The monitoring system was being controlled by Xiao Ai. No one could find him even if they searched the entire cruise ship. He just needed to wait here quietly for the chaos to end. After that, he could hand the little princess to her parents. Everything would be solved.

Lu Zhou was thinking about whether to use his AR glasses to pass the time and watch a movie when a timid voice suddenly came from next to him.

“I heard.”

“Heard what?”

“The pirates will take us away.”

“...”

Lu Zhou thought this was ridiculous. If the pirates couldn’t demand ransom, why would they take any hostages? But seeing how this was just a six-year-old girl, he didn’t bother to correct her.

“Then what?”

“Then kill all the men, then all the women—”

Lu Zhou immediately covered her mouth nervously.

“Who told you these things?”

Princess Lilia blinked and spoke innocently.

“I read it online.”

“I think people who told you these things should go to jail.”

Lilia asked curiously, “Then... Should Mr. Andersen be in jail? I love his stories the most.”

Lu Zhou: “What you read is definitely not the normal version...”

“What should I do, I’m very scared.” Lilia suddenly hugged her head. Her body leaned against the corner. She suddenly thought of something terrifying, and her shoulders trembled as she said, “What if they throw me into the sea and feed me to the fish?”

Feed you to the fish?

Lu Zhou couldn’t help but shake his head.

He was thinking about how to comfort her when he suddenly thought of a good idea. He snapped his fingers and said, “Don’t worry, I can show you a magic trick.”

Lilia looked up at Lu Zhou and spoke curiously.

“Magic?”

“That’s right, magic.”

Lu Zhou stood up from the floor and extended his right hand to the little girl sitting on the ground. “Get up, let’s go to the porthole.”

She gracefully placed her hand in Lu Zhou’s palm. Lilia said, “Can’t you just do it here? The boat is shaking, it’s tiring to stand up.”

“I’ll make sure you don’t fall. This magic trick is only for bad people...”

Lu Zhou looked outside the porthole. The cargo ship was getting closer.

On the other hand, a green dot was getting closer and closer on the map on his AR glasses.

“Where is the magic?” Lilia tilted her head unhappily. She looked at Lu Zhou and grumbled, “Are you lying to me, Mr. Scholar?”

“Anyone who knows me knows that I never lie. Look out the window.” Lu Zhou reached out his index finger and gently pointed at the cargo ship that was getting closer. He said softly, “Abracadabra.”

Chapter 1272: Falling From the Sky!

“Almost there.”

The cruise ship in the distance was approaching. Abrahan put down the telescope in his hand. A tinge of excitement was ignited in his heart.

After nearly half an hour of chasing, this cat and mouse game had finally come to an end. Even though it took a little longer than expected, it was not too late. This kind of cruise ship designed for pleasure would never be able to pass the “Oseberg”.

Abrahan gave the binoculars to his subordinate. Abrahan took off his AK and spoke.

“Brothers.

“Our enemy is here.

“For the honor of our tribe, for the endless wealth, for...”

His eyes narrowed. He was facing the sunlight. Abrahan felt like he saw something, but he couldn’t see clearly.

Finally, he faintly saw three burning flames in the sky.

“What is that?”

The other guy standing on the deck followed his line of sight and saw flames in front of the sunlight.

By the time they caught a glimpse of the flame, everything was too late.

No one reacted fast enough.

The fire of punishment that fell from the sky did not give them any time to react.

A loud bang from the sky was heard, followed by a huge shockwave on the deck. Almost everyone fell to the ground.

The entire cargo ship was hit by something. The entire ship tilted to one side.

After the explosion from the sky, the billowing smoke descended. It covered the sea like a mist, engulfing the entire cargo ship.

The people on the boat coughed and tried to get up from the ground. However, the pungent smoke caused them to tear up; their hearing and vision were gone.

Abrahan was on the ground. He was horrified. He saw a group of armed soldiers wearing black exoskeletons coming out of a metal box and starting to spray fire. In just an instant, most of his men were killed.

Except for a few sporadic AK gunshots, most people didn't even have a chance to resist. They fell down in a pool of blood.

"Monsters..."

It was like something was stuck in Abrahan's throat as he spoke in a hoarse voice

He couldn't think of a better word to describe these magical soldiers descending from the sky. They were monsters.

To them, the pungent fog did not seem to exist.

He threw away the weapon in his hand, put his hands on the railing, and scrambled with the hostages who were tied to the railings.

The soldiers did not seem to regard him as a threat. They were focused on the militants who were still holding weapons.

However, this did not bring him more security.

He finally succumbed to the burning sensation of burning nasal mucosa and eyeballs. He opened his eyes and grabbed the life jacket beside him. He untied the rope and put it around his body. He then jumped into the sea.

The gunfire faded away.

The thick fog and gunfire smell were blown away by the sea breeze.

Sporadic flashes of light could still be seen on the deck, as well as the screams from his former comrades. But he didn't have any trace of guilt. He used all his strength to wave his arms, just to get a little further away from the ship.

There was no doubt that this operation had failed...

...

On the Aurora Borealis cruise ship.

The bottom cabin.

The staff members on the cruise ship were usually active here. Ordinary passengers were not allowed to enter here. However, this situation was a bit special. Most people, including the cruise ship staff, ran to the restaurant to take refuge, while the rest scrambled to the top floors.

Therefore, it was weird for anyone to stay on the bottom floors.

Wang Peng didn't think too much. Using the map on his phone, he went straight to the hiding place of the group. He confirmed that they had weapons in their hands and left no mercy.

After the last target fell in a pool of blood, the gunfire finally stopped.

The last person committed suicide. Wang Peng frowned and looked around cautiously. After confirming that there were no traps, he crossed the pool of blood and walked over.

Wang Peng kicked the weapon in the man's hand to the side. He knelt down, stretched out his index finger, and pressed it on his neck. After confirming that there was no sign of life, he fumbled with his pockets.

Unopened tissues?

I'll keep it for now, maybe there is valuable information.

Makeup mirror?

Why would a man carry such things on their bodies?

Wang Peng's left hand suddenly encountered a hard object. He carefully took the thing out of the person's pocket.

It was a blood-stained notebook, it looked a bit like a mission briefing.

After he opened the notebook, Wang Peng was stunned.

This was not a mission briefing at all.

He had read something similar before...

...

Cabin B2771.

Next to the porthole.

The little girl laying on the side of the porthole desperately leaned on the glass.

"Wow..."

Colors flashed in her pupils. When the flames fell from the sky hit the "pirate ship", Princess Lilia couldn't help but applaud with excitement.

From her perspective, what happened was completely different from that in Abraham's eyes.

She saw a few flames coming from the sky, but because the speed was so fast, her memory was a little fuzzy.

When the "pirate ship" was hit by the flames from the sky, it left a dense fog, making the ship no longer visible.

The cruel battle was covered by the thick fog.

She had never seen such a magic trick before!

This was no longer just a magic trick; it was a kind of fairy tale magic!

She clapped excitedly. She then pulled Lu Zhou's sleeve and asked, "Wow! Awesome! What is that? Magic?"

Lu Zhou squinted at the cargo ship and spoke with a faint smile.

“Sort of.”

In a sense, science beyond common sense was not much different than magic.

Her emerald pupils were shining. The little girl opened her eyes wide open and looked at Lu Zhou. She then said, “Mr. Scholar, it seems like you have saved me...”

“So, are you my prince?”

Lu Zhou, who was looking at the blazing fire outside the porthole, almost choked on his saliva.

After coughing violently twice, Lu Zhou raised his sleeve and wiped the corners of his mouth. He then said patiently, “Your Highness, you might be mistaken, I’m old enough to be your court mage.”

“Like Gandif?”

You mean Gandalf?

“Sort of... Basically, say these things to someone your age.”

Lilia wasn’t too disappointed, but she still sighed like an old man.

“They’re so boring. They only spend their time on boring things. They never calm down and read a book...”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Even though he knew that this little fellow was mostly just playing around, but for some reason, he felt a bit awkward.

If this were my kid...

Suddenly, for some reason, he wanted to have a daughter.

Footsteps came from outside the door.

Lu Zhou already saw who this person was from the surveillance footage. He snapped his fingers while looking in the direction of the door, signaling Xiao Ai to release the electronic lock on the door.

The door pushed open.

Lu Zhou looked at Wang Peng and said, "It's done?"

Wang Peng nodded. He replied in a casual way, "A total of eight, and I killed seven."

Lu Zhou: "What about another one?"

"Suicide."

"Suicide?"

Lu Zhou raised his eyebrows. An unexpected look appeared on his face.

Suicide is not something pirates do.

Generally speaking, people chose to end their lives in two situations. One was the complete loss of hope in life and the other was for loyalty and faith.

The former was obviously not true.

In this case, it could only be the latter.

Wang Peng saw something in Lu Zhou's eyes. He was a little hesitant, but after some thinking, he said, "I found something on the dead body... In fact, we shouldn't tell you these things and that we should take care of them ourselves. But I think it might interest you."

Lu Zhou immediately asked, "What did you find?"

He took out a plastic bag, which contained a bloodstained notebook.

Wang Peng looked at Lu Zhou, who was puzzled, and spoke.

"Maybe it's just a coincidence..."

"But you might recognize the contents of this notebook."

Chapter 1273: Cleaning the Battlefield

“The hostages are safe.”

“Check the surviving enemies.”

“There are two... The leader was not found, he might have escaped.”

“He didn’t escape, I let him go.” Li Gaoliang tapped his index finger twice on the wrist-mounted computer on his arm. Li Gaoliang looked toward the soldier next to him and said, “The British Secret Service helicopter will arrive in 17 minutes. Let’s clear the deck.”

The battle was over a few minutes ago.

It could not be called a battle at all; it was a one-sided slaughter. There were bloodstains everywhere on the deck. The killed militants were lying lifelessly everywhere.

Even though this was the nature of war, it was still somewhat gory and revolting.

The two pirate prisoners were imprisoned in the cabin. After Li Gaoliang ordered his subordinates to take photos and collect evidence, he found the cargo ship captain and organized a few crew members to mop the blood off the deck.

Because of the weather, the helicopter took three minutes later than expected.

After twenty minutes of waiting, the four helicopters finally flew to the cargo ship. A few ropes were dropped from the sky, and soon, a group of elite men in black combat uniforms descended using the ropes.

However, even though these people were elite soldiers who had undergone cruel training, when they stood next to the sci-fi-like exoskeleton armor, they appeared minuscule.

The tall commander of the special forces walked to Li Gaoliang’s side. He took off the mask on his face and said, “We’ll take over from here.”

Li Gaoliang glanced at him.

“This is public waters.”

“We know it is.”

Li Gaoliang then said, “You can chill on the sidelines if you want.”

“ ... ”

The commander of the special forces obviously wanted to say something, but due to being intimidated, he finally put his right hand on the headset and walked aside. He asked his superiors for instructions.

Li Gaoliang ignored him and continued to command his team. This included helping the wounded, searching for surviving prisoners, and taking pictures of the scene for evidence.

The battle on the deck ended in less than half a minute. Apart from being frightened and annoyed by the irritating gas, the hostages who were tied up here had no other serious problems.

The British special forces didn't know what to do. They stared at each other, twiddling their thumbs while waiting for new orders.

Another helicopter flew from the sky.

Li Gaoliang raised his head and squinted.

His tactical eyepiece zoomed in and locked in on the logo on the helicopter.

Broadcast helicopter?

BBC?

Li Gaoliang smirked and glanced at the royal secret service paratroopers in the cabin.

These British reporters sure are fast.

Almost faster than their special forces...

...

On the helicopter.

The violent air current blew the reporter's blond hair. The man leaned out half of his body, squinted his eyes to face the camera, and shouted with all his strength.

"This is a live broadcast from BBC News!

"We are currently in the sky above the cargo ship Oseberg. This cargo ship lost contact with the Baltic shipping company three hours ago and deviated from its course, moving straight toward the Aurora Borealis.

"Two hours ago, it was confirmed through multiple channels that the cargo ship was hijacked by pirates. The United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden, and China quickly dispatched rapid reaction forces to rescue...

"We can see from the deck that the British Royal Secret Service troops have just arrived on the deck. They are... Wait, the battle seems to be over?! Is it over?

"Please wait... We are receiving new information!

"Oh, sh*t! According to the authorities, this cargo ship is currently controlled by the Chinese orbital Airborne Brigade team... Wait, you mean, the battle was over an hour ago?!

"Didn't you say that our special forces left from the nearest military base? They were actually an hour earlier than us?!"

The British reporter yelled in disbelief, "How is this possible?!"

...

Yes, how is this possible?!

The BBC reporter wasn't the only one in disbelief. Abrahan, who was lucky enough to escape from dying, couldn't believe any of this.

Those people were not people at all.

They were like monsters.

Abrahan desperately waved his arms. He was still swimming in the sea, and the fear in his heart still did not fade.

Over the past ten years, he had fought dozens of guerrilla wars in the jungles and deserts of East Africa. He had seized no less than 20 convoys of international humanitarian relief supplies and looted dozens of fishing boats.

However, even with such a wealth of combat experience, he had never seen such an opponent.

They were more difficult to deal with than the SEALs.

No, actually, the two were not comparable at all.

Even though the SEALs had advantages in equipment and firepower, when at the right place, they could rely on their rich guerrilla experience to fight those arrogant Americans.

But when faced with the monsters...

He didn't even have the courage to fight back.

Abrahan finally approached a medium-sized fishing boat. With the help of a few dark-skinned sailors, he climbed onto the fishing boat.

A man with a beard walked up to him, grabbed his collar, and stared in his eyes.

"Aurora Borealis! What happened to the cruise ship and the people on it?"

"Sorry—"

Boom!

Smoke floated above the gun muzzle.

Marach pressed the trigger and shoot a few more times. He then let go of the unrecognizable face and kicked him into the sea.

He already knew the result of this mission. The reason for asking was that he didn't want to believe it.

As expected, he was disappointed.

His hopes were crushed.

Marach put away the pistol. He turned his head back to his subordinates and told them to clean the deck. He continued to pretend to be a fishing boat.

The operation suffered heavy losses.

It seemed like all they could obtain was the deposit.

Fortunately, the deposit was also worth a lot of money.

At least it was more than enough to make up for his loss.

With this in mind, Marach felt a little happy.

However, are things that simple?

Marach didn't know that someone was watching him this whole time...

Chapter 1274: Ridiculous Clue

Landing on the battlefield from a height of hundreds of kilometers and ending the battle in less than half a minute...

The combat effectiveness demonstrated by the Airborne Brigade completely shocked the British Royal Secret Service troops that arrived later, as well as the British Defense Department, and the audience who sat in front of the TV and heard the news through BBC.

This was the first battle for the orbital Airborne Brigade.

Although there had been various controversies on the internet regarding the true combat effectiveness of this force, such as on whether the soldiers who jumped from such a high place could maintain their normal combat effectiveness and whether their weapons could still fire normally...

Suddenly, all of the doubts had disappeared.

They were strong.

In fact, they were extremely strong...

People around the world were still digesting this new information. The moods of the passengers on the "Aurora Borealis" cruise ship had gradually returned to normal.

In the hallway, Prince Frederick picked up Princess Lilia as he spoke in a trembling tone.

"Oh my god, Lilia! Where did you go?"

Laying on her father's shoulder, Lilia looked back at Lu Zhou and whispered in her father's ear, "The scholar showed me a magic trick!"

Prince Frederick was stunned.

"Magic?"

"Yeah! A huge pirate ship." Lilia said excitedly, making a gesture with both hands, "Smoke fell from the sky, then the pirate ship disappeared."

"The pirate ship... The cargo ship that was following us? Well, that... We really have to thank him." Prince Frederick obviously didn't know what his daughter was talking about.

But in any case, she had returned to him safely.

In addition to Prince Frederick, Princess Sophia was also excited.

She rushed out of the room and snatched Princess Lilia from her husband. She hugged her and kissed her. She then released the little girl who was about to suffocate.

She put down Princess Lilia and quickly walked to Lu Zhou, grabbed his hand, and spoke gratefully.

"Academician Lu Zhou, I really don't know how to thank you! Thank you so much!"

"Actually, you don't need to thank me." Lu Zhou was a little afraid that this lady would also hug him, so after taking a half step back, he said politely, "It wasn't a big deal."

Prince Frederick stepped forward and said with a serious expression, “No, we have to thank you. Of course, we will also thank those who rescued us from the pirates. I will thank you and your country on a more formal occasion.”

“Uh, it’s really fine...”

Lu Zhou knew that he couldn’t convince Sophia and Frederick otherwise, so he gave up.

Due to the sudden encounter with pirates, the total voyage of this ship was shortened by a full day.

Not only was it because of the change in the course and the acceleration, but also because the subsequent stops, including sightseeing in Malmö, were canceled.

Not just that, but the evening banquet was also canceled.

After experiencing so many things, the passengers on the ship were already exhausted physically and mentally. The only thing they wanted to do now was rest. They would discuss the rest tomorrow.

Everyone had a quiet meal in the cafeteria before returning to their rooms. The captain of the Royal Guards was reprimanding the guards on the issue of equipment theft. As for Wang Peng, he was also busy with the unknown corpses at the bottom of the ship.

Only one day left on the ship.

Lu Zhou didn’t stay on the deck for long. He returned to his room and quietly looked at the scanned electronic version of the notebook that Wang Peng had collected from that person.

When Lu Zhou read the text on the tablet line by line, his eyebrows gradually frowned.

“No wonder Wang Peng said he read this somewhere...”

It was the posthumous work of the late ILHCRC researcher, Professor Galette Miro. It was his paper on the theory of the “spirit of the universe”.

Of course, this was the modified version.

This version of the thesis was no longer a thesis; it was more like a religious document. It was hard to imagine that these mobs were so motivated and even had the determination to die.

The radical environmentalists protesting on the streets of London were nothing compared to this.

“In other words, a group of believers of the spirit of the universe planned this attack?”

“But this is too... ridiculous.

“Or is it just that someone wants to divert our attention through this smoke bomb?”

There were two possibilities.

But if the latter scenario was real...

Would anyone think of blaming this attack on a new religious organization?

Maybe if the CIA was behind this...

Lu Zhou closed his tablet. He threw the tablet on the bedside table and rubbed his sore eyes.

“I hope I’m wrong...”

He felt like that experiment seemed to have revealed something incredible.

However, worrying about these things now didn’t make much sense.

Now that Wang Peng had reported the situation to the higher-level department, the People’s Liberation Army General Staff Department must have launched an investigation on this matter.

He should just quietly wait for the results of the investigation.

The Chinese intelligence department should be able to find something valuable along the way. If he still cared about this incident after this, he could find out what happened then.

Lu Zhou closed his eyes. He decided to go to bed early tonight.

Not long after he closed his eyes, the faint sound of a ghost surfaced in his mind.

“When you are staring at the Void, the Void is staring at you...”

...

The next morning was a sunny day.

Looking up from the deck, one could already see the outline of the harbor at Copenhagen.

After sitting at the dining table and eating the buffet breakfast, Lu Zhou put away the cloth on his lap and placed it back on the table. The chief mate standing by the railing spoke with a loud and enthusiastic voice to the guests.

“Ladies and gentlemen, we are about to dock at the port of Copenhagen. We have encountered some... twists and turns along the way, but fortunately, everything is fine.

“On behalf of the crew of the Aurora Borealis, I would like to extend my sincerest greetings, and thank you all for this journey...”

Sporadic applause came from the deck, most of which were from the crew members themselves.

It was obvious that this explanation did not satisfy many passengers.

But in any case, this exciting journey was finally over.

After breakfast, the guests returned to their rooms to pack their luggage. After being sent off by all the crew members, they got off the cruise ship.

The cars of the Chinese Embassy in Copenhagen were already waiting at the harbor.

A bodyguard in a black suit stepped forward and opened the door for Lu Zhou. When he was about to get in the car, a group of reporters spotted him and immediately gathered around.

“Hello, I’m a reporter from The Sun. We heard that you saw Viking pirates at sea? Is that true?”

“It’s hard to say whether it was Viking pirates, but they were pirates... You should interview the embassies and consulates or the escort fleet patrolling this area for the specifics. I don’t know much about it.”

“Did they come here for you? Who do you think is behind this?”

“I don’t know either.”

After dealing with one reporter, before Lu Zhou could catch his breath, another microphone was stuffed in front of him.

“Hello, I am a reporter from The New York Times. I heard that you will speak on behalf of China at the Global Climate Summit. Is that true?”

“That is correct.”

The reporter asked, “But I heard that you came on a cruise ship.”

Lu Zhou immediately laughed and asked, “Are airplanes more environmentally friendly? What if I swam here?”

The reporter paused. Obviously, he didn’t expect Lu Zhou to throw the question back like this.

Who was interviewing who?

However, the reporter continued without showing weakness, “But... As an influential scholar, don’t you think you should set an example for environmental protection?”

Lu Zhou, who was annoyed, reached out and grabbed the microphone in his hand. He replied in a clear and polite tone, “Because I am a scholar, I don’t need to explain myself, I know what I’m doing.

“As for being an example, I think controllable fusion is a good example. By improving energy efficiency, we have reduced carbon emissions and heat emissions by at least 50%.

“More results will be shown at the Global Climate Summit. Whether you can see it or not, that is not my problem.

“Also, I noticed that your clothes are made from chemical fiber, and most of its raw materials came from petroleum.

“That’s all I have to say.”

After that, he threw the microphone back to the reporter. He then got in the car parked on the side of the road and drove away.

Chapter 1275: Shocking the Whole World

Pentagon.

An image stream from a high-altitude drone was playing on the big screen.

In the cloud of smoke, the group of soldiers wearing mechanical exoskeletons cleared out all the militants on the deck without a trace of hesitation.

When the British special forces arrived by helicopter from the nearest military base, not only had they already completed the battle, but they had even cleaned up the blood on the deck.

The video ended.

The whole conference room was silent.

The senior military adviser of the United States Department of Defense broke the silence in the conference room and tapped the laser pointer twice on the big screen.

“Thirty-seven minutes.”

“Sh*t... They cleaned the deck faster than me washing my car.”

“Accurately speaking, it should be thirty...” the Pentagon Chief of Defense sitting at the conference table said. His face was gloomy as he continued, “From when they heard the news that the cargo ship was hijacked by militants, it took only 30 minutes to send the orbital paratroopers over.”

“The one-hour global deployment was probably a conservative estimate.”

“Their strategic military power is stronger than we thought!”

The conference room went silent again.

And this time, the silence was a bit scary.

“Damn it.” The president took off his glasses on the bridge of his nose. He pinched his nose and asked, “How did they do it so fast...?”

No one could answer this question.

They had no intel on the orbital Airborne Brigade team.

What kind of delivery method could deliver a team of steel soldiers, armed to the nines, from Jinling, which was tens of thousands of kilometers away from the Baltic Sea?

Only the Chinese themselves knew the secret.

NASA Director Carson, who had not spoken yet, suddenly said, “It is possible that they did not completely leave the atmosphere.”

Pairs of eyes in the conference room glanced at him.

Director Carson gulped and continued speaking bitterly, “Going into low satellite orbit directly through Russian airspace, then release the airborne capsule on the eastern side of the Baltic Sea... Theoretically, 30 minutes is possible.

“But even then, the timing is tight.

“From departure to landing, not one minute was delayed.”

Director Carson’s speech put heavy expressions on their faces.

Faced with such a powerful force, did they have any chance of winning?

There was a lot of controversy in the conference room regarding the combat effectiveness of this orbital airborne force.

But now, not only did all the doubts disappear, but the faces were replaced with looks of worry.

It wasn’t until this moment did they really understand what kind of opponent they were facing.

“I want to know who targeted the cruise ship.” The president’s index finger tapped on the conference table as he said with a gloomy face, “It better not to have anything to do with us.”

The Secretary of Defense looked at him.

“Is it not the CIA?”

The president shook his head.

“I have never authorized such a stupid action! I’m sure our CIA director would not be so stupid as to do such an asinine thing behind my back.”

If this were five years ago, it might be profitable to do such a plan.

But now, killing a respected physicist wasn’t enough.

His research institute and invisible scientific research heritage would live on. None of those things could be erased by bombs or a few assassins.

On the contrary, killing the physicist would put them in big trouble.

“Find out who hired the pirates.

“We might have to betray the Chinese.”

...

The Pentagon was not the only one in chaos.

The steel team that fell from the sky shocked the intelligence agencies around the world.

No one thought that this crisis would be resolved in this way.

No one thought that the armed steel team would look like something out of science fiction. Their performance in actual combat was also merciless.

The three airborne cabins were on the deck of the “Oseberg”. Although intelligence personnel from various countries were drooling at the technology, no one dared to make rash decisions.

There was only one reason.

The cargo ship was being controlled by the orbital Airborne Brigade, and it was slowly crossing toward East Asia.

After seeing the power of the orbital airborne troops, no one dared to challenge them, and no one dared to stop them.

Even the British Royal Secret Service, who had already boarded the deck, failed to make negotiation progress. They quietly left on their helicopters.

The global intelligence agencies were focused on this cargo ship. In an office far away in Beijing, a folder full of photos and various documents was placed on a rustic desk.

“The organization that assaulted Academician Lu has been found.”

An old section chief wearing a Ministry of State Security uniform said to the slightly younger man sitting behind a desk, “According to our intelligence personnel, after collecting and aggregating the information, the group of pirates was hired by an organization called... The Spirit of The Universe Foundation.”

“The Spirit of The Universe Foundation?” An unexpected look appeared on the face of the man sitting behind the desk. “What is that?”

It sounded like a movie or an online game. It didn’t seem like something that would appear in the real world.

“It seems to be a new religion... or an organization that makes money through this new religion... It’s more popular in developed countries and regions, but we have not seen any traces of their activities in our country. It comes from the paper of the former ILHCRC employee, Professor Galette Miro. He was a pioneer and a believer in the theory of cosmic animism.

“Maybe they have bigger plans in addition to making money, so they are very careful. They have not shown clear political demands, and so far, they have not attracted the attention of other countries.”

The old section chief’s eyebrows furrowed as he continued, “I just don’t know why they would suddenly attack Academician Lu.”

Could it be that they blamed the death of Professor Garrett Miro on Academician Lu?

This statement is far-fetched.

The man sitting behind the desk thought about something different. After simply flipping through the information in the documents, he asked, "Wasn't this theory rejected by Professor Lu?"

The old section chief smiled.

"There are many things that have been denied by science? Moreover, Professor Lu did not completely deny whether there is such a mysterious will in the universe. He only classified it under the category of agnosticism and proved the existence of the Void and the existence of $n+1$ dimensions."

The man sitting behind the desk had an unexpected look on his face.

"I didn't know you knew so much about physics."

The old section chief grinned and said, "After staying in the task force for a long time, you learn all kinds of things."

This was the truth.

For the Ministry of State Security, the cases they dealt with were often more difficult than normal criminal cases.

After reading the file, the man put it at a corner of the table and sighed softly.

"Then what about this case?"

"This is no longer our job."

"What do you mean?"

"Our satellite is aimed at the suspected pirate organization 24 hours a day, and we followed their fishing boat to find their nest."

"Amazing..." The man sitting behind the desk couldn't help but sit up straight. He then asked curiously, "What are the higher-ups going to do? Notify Interpol?"

"Interpol? They can't control this kind of thing." The old section chief smiled. His eyes narrowed as he said, "There is no need to ask them for such a small

matter. There are a hundred ways I can think of when it comes to dealing with this problem.”

“What method are you going to use?”

“The method of stepping on ants.”

Chapter 1276: Out of Necessity

For a superpower country, it was easy to punish a warlord in East Africa.

Marach returned to the base with a tracker on him. He didn't know that the reason why he was alive was purely because no one took him seriously.

But now, his greed had turned into a force of anger. China wasn't the only one looking at him; the whole world was watching him.

They weren't curious as to how he would escape.

They were curious as to how he would die miserably...

Lu Zhou, who was visiting Copenhagen, didn't know what was happening behind the scenes.

To be honest, these things were beyond his scope. Even though the attention that was focused on him made him feel a little worried, he was far from scared.

The aerospace forces were on standby for 24 hours a day. There was no one in this world safer than him.

It was a shame that Li Gaoliang didn't come to meet him on the cruise ship after completing the mission. Lu Zhou would have bought him some drinks.

Lu Zhou was staying at the most luxurious hotel in Copenhagen. He sat in the executive lounge, drinking afternoon tea while swiping through Weibo on his phone.

The headlines of the major news media were dominated by the orbital aerospace paratroopers that descended from the sky. The most interesting thing was that the netizens gave them weird names.

For example, names like “flames from heaven”, “celestial soldiers”, “space knights”, and so on. Moreover, these terms were actually quoted in newspapers.

As for netizens in North America, they were more serious.

They complained that NASA spent a lot of money every year yet didn't achieve any results.

In fact, this was not fair.

Even though NASA did spend a lot of money, they absolutely did not spend money carelessly.

This was how scientific research investment was. Spending money wouldn't guarantee success. Unless there was another talent like Lu Zhou, they would not have any hope of catching up with China in the aerospace field for a long time.

“Tomorrow morning, the mayor of Copenhagen wants to visit you. Do you have time?”

Sitting across from Lu Zhou was the Chinese ambassador to Denmark, Du Yanming. This gray-haired old man was 60 years old and had lived overseas for 20 years.

“He's that eager?” Lu Zhou raised his head and looked at the old man across from him.

Over the past two days, he had almost met all the dignitaries of this small country. He was given a lot of business cards, but he couldn't even remember a single name.

“Normally, they aren't this enthusiastic.

“But this time is different.

“Because in the past, we have never made such a big mess during our trip.” The gray-haired ambassador smiled, picked up the teacup, and took a sip of

the black tea in the cup. He said, “You know what? An army is stationed outside this hotel.”

Lu Zhou had a baffled look on his face.

In fact, this was not his fault.

He would never have thought that someone would target him on a cruise ship.

This kind of thing had never happened before, not when he visited Russia or France.

Lu Zhou didn’t speak. Ambassador Du used his index finger to gently touch the teacup. He smiled gently and continued, “I noticed that you seem to have no interest in tea, but anyway, I really recommend you to try this cup. The black tea in this cup is produced by a farm in Sri Lanka. The farm has a history of more than 100 years and is considered Danish. It’s also one of the royal family’s properties. They only serve it to the most distinguished guests.”

Lu Zhou sighed and reluctantly took a sip. He then put down the teacup.

“I’m really not used to drinking tea. I would rather have a cup of instant coffee.”

“Academician Lu’s tastes are quite unique.” Ambassador Du smiled and said, “Speaking of which, are you not married yet?”

“Sort of.”

“Do you need my help to introduce someone?”

“No, thanks, I already have a partner.”

“Oh, my apologies then.” Ambassador Du Yanming had an apologetic smile. He quickly changed the subject as he said, “Speaking of which, Ambassador Zhang asked me to thank you for him.”

Lu Zhou raised his head. “Ambassador Zhang Wenbin?”

“Yes.” Du Yanming smiled and nodded. He said, “Prince Frederick sent a tweet, thanking and praising your behavior on the cruise ship. The citizens of Sweden also expressed their gratitude. They did not expect Academician Lu to be so brave, standing up in times of crisis and was braver than their Royal

Guards, saving their lovely little princess... If Princess Lilia was a little older, this could have been a romantic story.”

Lu Zhou coughed.

“Let’s not talk about that.”

Ambassador Du patted his leg and laughed.

“Haha, just kidding, don’t take it to heart. In any case, this is a good thing for our country’s diplomatic relations with the Nordic countries. What do you think?”

The gray-haired old man grinned at Lu Zhou.

If it weren’t the gray hair, Lu Zhou would have almost thought that this man was the same age as him.

To be honest, this was not a very interesting experience.

For someone who was approaching his thirties, he couldn’t help but imagine himself growing old.

Lu Zhou didn’t expect that an unintentional act of kindness would actually bring such an improvement to the diplomatic relations between the two countries.

...

Saturday.

The climate summit was held as scheduled.

People from all over the world gathered at this world-famous event. Not only because high-level leaders from all countries would attend this event, but also because Academician Lu, who previously won the second Nobel Prize in his life in Stockholm, was standing on the podium, speaking on behalf of China.

Honestly, environmental protection was not Lu Zhou’s field. He had no specific research on how to improve the atmospheric environment. But he could still say some words from a non-professional point of view.

The cameras were all focused on him.

Lu Zhou could feel that the moment he stood on the stage, high-level officials from other countries stopped talking and looked at him with attentive eyes.

In addition, some well-known environmentalists were also invited.

This included the popular teenage Swedish activist, as well as representatives of “Greenpeace”, and a series of extreme environmentalists.

The most excited ones were of course the reporters.

The moment Lu Zhou stepped into the room, they began to press their camera shutters.

However, these trivial things did not have any impact on Lu Zhou.

This was not the first time he did a report. Instead of being nervous, he was actually used to standing here.

Lu Zhou reached out and straightened the microphone. He nodded to the audience, cleared his throat, and spoke in a calm tone.

“It’s an honor to be here. It’s my pleasure to represent my country and show the world what we have done.”

With a written speech in his hand, Lu Zhou had a friendly smile on his face. He continued to speak in a gentle tone, “This is my second speech after the Nobel Prize. I’m sure everyone knows the topic of this speech. I won’t repeat myself too much.

“What have we done over the past five years?”

“I want to emphasize on the number five.” Lu Zhou paused and continued, “Five controllable fusion reactors were successfully ignited, the energy of controllable fusion has benefited at least five countries of the world. Also, we have eliminated more than 90% of thermal power plants in five years and replaced more than 50% of fuel-burning vehicles, reducing our dependence on fossil fuels to the level of half a century ago.

“This is unprecedented in the history of human development.

“We were not satisfied with our achievements. We also promoted clean energy to Southeast Asia and spread the convenience brought by technology to more distant places.

“Civilized countries spread civilization, barbaric countries spread barbarism. We have fulfilled our responsibilities and have set an example for the cause of building a community with a shared future for mankind.

“Thank you.”

The speech was over, and there was applause from the audience.

Lu Zhou had fulfilled his responsibilities as a “mascot”. He nodded gently and was about to step down. However, suddenly, an audience member raised their hand.

A girl wearing a green dress and a green baseball cap stood up with her pen. She then spoke in an impolite manner.

“I have a question.”

“It seems like I have no choice to refuse.” Lu Zhou didn’t know why the girl had hostility in her eyes. He still looked at her and nodded gently and said, “For convenience sake, can I ask for your name?”

“You can call me Greta.” The girl did not hide the hostility in her eyes. She looked at Lu Zhou and said, “Mr. Lu Zhou, in your opinion, does the development of lunar resources can also be regarded as your country’s contributions to the world?”

Lu Zhou: “Of course.”

The girl’s shoulders trembled, and she continued aggressively, “How dare you!

“I’ve heard that excessive use of the resources of the moon would affect the tidal environment of the earth. It will kill the fish, disorient the dolphins, and cause permanent damage to the marine ecological environment! Why can’t we cherish our only home, do more to make it better, instead of exporting our terrible troubles to other places?”

Lu Zhou waited quietly for her to finish.

“It seems like you have heard a lot of things, so besides hearing, have you done your own research?”

The girl was stunned. She didn’t seem to know the true meaning of research.

Seeing that she didn't speak, Lu Zhou smiled faintly and continued, "It looks like you have a liberal arts background, but you lack scientific thinking."

Looking at the triggered girl, Lu Zhou was not angry. He only had a smile of pity on his face.

After thinking for about two seconds, he continued, "If the moon disappears in an instant, the things you said are indeed possible, and waves will flood our coastal cities in an instant. But if this is a slow gradual process, that will not happen at all. Not to mention, our development of lunar resources is minuscule, and organisms will naturally adapt to changes in the environment, just like what they have been doing for billions of years."

She was dissatisfied with this explanation, and the young girl trembled with anger. She stared at Lu Zhou.

"Why do we force lives to adapt to the troubles we bring? Only for our own selfish desires?"

The high-level officials of other countries sitting in the audience were about to fall asleep listening to the girl. But now, their eyes were on Lu Zhou, waiting to see what he would do.

However, their expectations were not met.

Faced with the girl's accusation, Lu Zhou's reaction was very calm. There was not even a slight change in emotions.

"Do you think it is selfish to allow more people to live?" Lu Zhou looked at the girl and said, "Or do you think we should go back to being barbarians, and be one with nature?"

"Can't we—"

"Stop dreaming."

Lu Zhou interrupted her and looked at the girl with a blank face. He looked past her deformed and twisted face, at the people behind her who were also wearing green vests.

He spoke in a rational and pragmatic voice.

“The problem that any life form will face is the lack of living space. As the global population continues to increase, sooner or later, the only way out is to expand our borders into outer space.

“I am not joking around.

“We can’t stay in the cradle forever. Even if it is comfortable, so comfortable that it is difficult for us to find a substitute in other star systems, there is a limit to this cradle.

“The day when the tipping point is reached can be delayed, but it will eventually come. The exploration of outer space is not so much to satisfy one’s selfish desires; it is more of a long-term self-help.

“So yes, sooner or later we have to export our troubles to space.”

Lu Zhou glanced at the cameras on the wall, then took a quick glance at the high-level officials from various countries, as well as other civilians who held their breaths.

“This is not to satisfy selfish desires.

“This is merely out of necessity.”

Chapter 1277: Destiny

“Out of necessity.

“Well said!”

The president was sitting in his office. He looked at the TV screen and the applause from the audience. He couldn’t help but feel excited.

Before the summit began, he was a little worried that Lu Zhou could not stand his ground against the western journalists and “environmental activists”. However, Academician Lu not only presented the achievements of China over the past five years to the world, but he also portrayed the potential for the future of the moon landing project.

The development of outer space was not only for the benefit of China but also for human beings' obligation to survive. As a responsible superpower, Academician Lu's words touched the heart of the president.

Director Li smiled and spoke.

"After all, it's Academician Lu. He is well-spoken. Every time I discuss issues with him, I feel enlightened."

Not only was he enlightened, but Lu Zhou was often able to solve the problems for him.

The thing he loved most was to visit Academician Lu's home.

The president grabbed the armrests of the chair with both hands. He stood up from his desk and walked to the blueprint hanging on the wall.

This blueprint was jointly designed by the Lunar Orbit Committee and the Guanghan City Planning Committee. It depicted the city's appearance in the Guanghan Special Zone after the population exceeded 10,000. Even though it was just a conceptual picture that looked no different from a movie poster, many of the technologies involved were already achieved in the laboratory of the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

As long as they continued to develop step by step at the current pace, sooner or later, this blueprint would become a reality...

The president stared at this blueprint for a long time. He suddenly spoke.

"Speaking of which, when will the first batch of migrants leave?"

Director Li responded, "It should be in a few days."

The president nodded. After thinking for a while, he continued, "Even though our Entertainment Department Office has done a series of promotions, I still feel like something is lacking.

"The technology is in place, and the medium and long-term strategies have been strategized. But one important thing has been overlooked, which is, our spirit has not been conveyed to the world.

"The Lunar Orbit Committee's development of lunar resources is not only for China but also for the world and the future of mankind."

The president looked at the secretary, who was standing on the other side of his desk, and spoke with a serious expression.

“Tomorrow’s newspaper headlines will be on Academician Lu’s speech on necessity.”

The secretary nodded immediately and replied respectfully, “Yes, sir!”

...

In the early morning of the next day, a headline titled “Necessity” appeared on the front page of Everyone Daily.

The author took the speech of Academician Lu on the Copenhagen Global Climate Summit and his answers to questions from environmentalists. They depicted his thoughts on the future of mankind and discussed the ultimate way out of ecological protection.

In the end, the article refined the speech of Academician Lu and put forward the conclusion that “human beings cannot be contained in a cradle forever, the only future is to leave the cradle.”

Even though this sounded a bit ridiculous, it was actually a very serious problem.

There had been many species that dominated the planet and stood at the top of the food chain. They might not have established a prosperous civilization like human beings, but their existence was far longer than homo sapiens, which had a history of 250,000 years.

And now, most of those species no longer existed.

This showed that, even if an industrialized civilization never existed, it did not mean that the ecosystem and the individuals in the ecosystem could always live in harmony.

Ultimately, controlling nature was the only way out for human civilization.

This might not be the only solution to environmental problems, but it was the only solution for a better future.

Of course, since this article appeared in Everyone Daily instead of Science or Nature, the real purpose was obviously not to discuss the issue of environmental protection.

Its purpose was to convey a signal, or a thought, to the outside world.

This was all about the development of lunar resources and the conquest of outer space.

In other words...

This was China's destiny!

As soon as this article was published, it immediately caused a sensation online. It spread across the entire internet in the morning and on various social media websites.

Even though there were no emotional speeches in the article, it resonated with the soul of every reader.

People were surprised by the amount of information revealed in this article, specifically the aerospace plans.

The first immigrants to the Guanghan Special Economic Zone will leave soon?

How come we didn't even get to apply?

The Weibo post from Everyone Daily was filled with comments.

"F*ck me! They're really planning to leave?"

"I thought it was a joke? I didn't think that the Guanghan Special Economic Zone was actually true!"

"Is it too late to go there?"

"Go there my a*s! It's not a place anyone can just go!"

"Apparently, there are already more than 100 people in the Guanghan zone. The number of PhDs per capita is insane!"

The widespread discussion of this article made people think.

“Wow, I really didn’t expect that there will come a day where we have to lead the world forward...”

Almost everyone who liked the comment also didn’t expect this day to come so suddenly.

When they realized it, they were shocked.

Just five years ago, the throne of the global world still belonged to the other side of the Pacific Ocean. The imagination for the future could be found in a certain street in North America or inside a certain Western university.

Now that five years had gone by, the focus had unknowingly shifted to the East.

From controllable fusion to the aerospace industry, the rise of China’s intelligent manufacturing had subtly changed the balance and redefined the new world.

How to move forward into the future also became a new problem.

They could leverage their power, sit back, and enjoy fat profits for the next century. Or they could manifest the prosperity of the community, building a future for mankind as a whole.

The whole world was waiting for an answer from the dragon.

And now, this speech called “Necessity” had obviously given an answer...

Chapter 1278: The Third Medal

The summit yesterday was very successful.

The only downside was that it was somewhat a slaughter.

After all, the gap in knowledge and logic couldn’t be filled with emotions and passion.

But what Lu Zhou didn’t expect was that his speech turned out to be popular?

The first half of his speech was handing in China's report card to the world; the second half of the speech answered a series of questions raised by the girl. That was directly related to the Guanghan Special Economic Zone plan.

Not only did "Everyone Daily" highly praise his speech on the front page of the new issue, but the media around the world also intensively reported on his speech.

For example, the Danish "Jyllands-Posten" newspaper called it a foolish speech and proposed new ideas for solving environmental problems, while the "Wall Street Journal" called it "propaganda for colonization on the moon". The speech embodied China's ambitions on the lunar project, and NASA should remain vigilant.

Of course, in addition to reporting from an objective perspective, there were some less objective viewpoints.

For example, the "New York Times" put forward quite a conspiracy theory that this was a premeditated incident and unkindly called it the "new destiny speech". They believed that this was a way for China to monopolize lunar resources.

Lu Zhou only stood on the stage and spoke a few words. He didn't expect to have such a big impact. After all, he didn't make any preparations; he only spoke about surface-level topics.

Afterward, he thought about it. The reason for such a huge response was mostly because these words came from his own mouth, and he was holding the title of Chief Consultant of the Lunar Orbit Committee.

However, when he had just figured out the reason behind this, something more unexpected happened immediately afterward.

On the night after the speech, he returned to his room and lay on the bed after attending the banquet. He suddenly discovered that he had accidentally triggered and completed a hidden mission.

...

[Hidden Mission: Speech on Necessity (Completed)]

[Explanation: "My dear, this is a story from a long time ago."]

[Rewards: Earth civilization materialism trend +10, free experience points +100,000. Speaker Medal.]

“Another medal? What’s the use of this thing?”

Between Lu Zhou’s index finger and thumb was a bronze horn about the size of a fingernail.

Even though this thing was also awarded by a higher civilization, compared to the first two medals that used anti-gravity technology and holographic projection technology, this seemed more like a souvenir.

However, Lu Zhou cared more about the 100,000 experience points.

His energy level needed exactly 100,000 points before he could level up. This was perfect.

[

A. Mathematics: Level 10

B. Physics: Level 9 (13,215/???)

C. Biochemistry: Level 7 (410,000/1.2 million)

D. Engineering: Level 7 (1 million/1.2 million)

E. Material Science: Level 7 (763,000/1.2 million)

F. Energy Science: Level 7 (0/1.2 million)

G. Information science: Level 7 (100,000/1.2 million)

General points: 24,335

]

Lu Zhou allocated all of the 100,000 experience points to energy science. After he confirmed that his energy science level went from level 6 to level 7, he reached out his index finger and swiped on the holographic screen, closing his characteristic panel.

This kind of hidden mission was like an Easter egg in the system. There were no rules around it at all. It was more mysterious than emergency missions. Completing an awesome research result would not necessarily trigger a hidden mission, however, unintentional actions might. The rewards were also confusing.

This situation had happened before.

After Lu Zhou exited the system space, he put his head on the pillow and was about to rest early. But suddenly, the mobile phone on the bedside table popped up with a video call request.

When Lu Zhou saw Chen Yushan was calling, he reached out and rubbed his sleepy eyes. He picked up the AR glasses and put them on the bridge of his nose. He then tapped his index finger on the frame.

“Transfer the video call...”

Xiao Ai: [Yes, Master! (๑•̀ㅂ•́)و✧]

Light blue light particles appeared in Lu Zhou’s field of vision. A video window opened. A wave of blue light swept across his face, capturing his facial data and expression characteristics.

Even though Lu Zhou still preferred to use a tablet, phone calling like this made him feel more connected, similar to face-to-face communication.

“Did I wake you up?”

“Not at all. You’re always welcome to call me at any time.”

On the other end of the phone, Chen Yushan couldn’t help but smile.

“I want to kiss you on the forehead and say goodnight to you.”

“Actually, I think you can... Let me zoom in.”

“I’m just kidding, that’s so embarrassing... Unless it’s in person.” Chen Yushan’s cheeks warmed up quickly. She coughed and changed the subject. “Speaking of which, you seem to be popular.”

“Popular?”

“Yeah, looks like you are getting used to it.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “If you appear in the headlines every few days for the past three years, you will feel the same.”

“Um... I don’t think most people have the chance to experience this feeling.”

Lu Zhou stared at her face with a warm look in his eyes.

Maybe it was because he had been alone for too long, Lu Zhou felt indescribably happy.

A few minutes went by.

She smirked and spoke softly.

“Your eyes are telling me that you just drank.”

“It was a cocktail party attended by high-level officials from various countries. I was invited by someone, so I went.”

Chen Yushan joked, “No one flirted with you?”

“You don’t trust me?”

“Of course I trust you. I’m just a little worried about my boyfriend. After all... I worked hard to catch you.”

Lu Zhou was amused. He couldn’t help but laugh.

He said, “Didn’t I catch you?”

She replied, “But I invited you to the lake!”

“I kissed you first.”

“But I...”

Halfway through, Chen Yushan blushed again. She said, “Whatever.”

Lu Zhou saw her look of shyness. He smiled and said, “I’m coming back in a few days.”

Chen Yushan said, "Remember to stay safe."

"I will." Lu Zhou nodded. He suddenly remembered an important thing and said, "Speaking of which, tomorrow is the departure day."

"Yeah." Chen Yushan nodded. "We were waiting for you to command the show. We didn't expect you to suddenly go to Copenhagen. You can only watch from there."

Lu Zhou wanted to say "sorry", but he swallowed his words in the end.

"You'll have to take care of it then."

When Chen Yushan saw the trust in his eyes, she had a happy smile on her face. Lu Zhou suddenly understood why he was attracted to her in the first place...

"Don't worry."

"This will be a piece of cake!"

Chapter 1279: Departure Day

Winter in the northern hemisphere this year came earlier than usual.

Before the winter solstice came, there were already chilly winds blowing in Jinling.

Sun Lieyang looked at his wife standing in front of him and the baby in her arms. His eyes flashed with reluctance. He took a deep breath of cold air and spoke.

"I'm going to leave."

The woman stared into his eyes, and she seemed to have a lot to say, but in the end, she only spoke one sentence.

"Remember to miss me..."

"Don't be so sad."

Sun Lieyang gently pushed aside the bangs on her forehead that was messed up by the wind. He tried to engrave her face in his memory. He stared at his wife, smiled, and tried to sound brave.

“It’s not like I won’t be back. I think in at most ten years, going to the moon will be as simple as going back to my hometown on a high-speed train. Whether you come up to see me, or I come down to see you, it will be the same.”

Sun Lieyang looked at the baby in the woman’s arms. He stretched out his index finger to tease him and gave him a warm smile.

The baby was infected by the warm smile. He stopped crying, giggled, and stretched out his hand as he tried to grab his dad’s finger.

“Be good, kiddo, wait for me to come back.”

He gently held his child’s hand and said, “In the future, your father will be able to tell you a story that your classmates will be envious of.”

The woman bit her lip. Her eyes were filled with sadness.

“Jesus... Do you really have to go now?”

“I have to. Someone has to go.” Sun Lieyang looked at his wife and said with a smile, “My younger brother will get married next year, and I have a 25-year-old sister. If I don’t go, who will?”

Some jobs had to be done by someone.

There were only a few research institutes working on second-generation controllable fusion. Their research team was the backbone of the second-gen controllable fusion. Even though they had only completed some preliminary work, which was far from unlocking the energy treasure house on the moon, someone had to take the first step.

“I heard it’s cold there. Remember to wear a jacket.”

“Don’t worry, I will take care of myself.”

After kissing his wife and the child in her arms, Sun Lieyang put on his backpack, resisted the urge to look back, and walked toward the SUV parked outside the dorms.

The first group of Guanghai Special Economic Zone pioneers was only 50 people.

They would board a special spacecraft prepared for them at the No. 2 launch site, to the Magpie Bridge waiting in synchronous orbit.

Sun Lieyang was the last to get on the bus. Tao Muye looked at him.

“You have a kid?”

Sun Lieyang smiled and spoke.

“What? Surprised?”

“I am.”

“What about you, you don’t have a partner?”

“I’m going my own way.”

“That’s another word for involuntary celibate... But I’m curious, there should be no shortage of people in your research institute? Why send a young, unmarried man up there?”

It was reasonable to have such doubts.

Even though Archdruoid no longer accepted doctoral students, there were still many people in his research institute. Agricultural research was not the same as controllable fusion. The latter was an emerging discipline, whereas the former had been developed for decades. There was no reason to send an only child, who was not married.

“I applied.”

Unlike Dr. Sun, he took a lot of effort to secure this spot.

“You applied yourself?” Sun Lieyang looked at him with a blank face and asked, “Why?”

“Didn’t Academician Lu say it?” Tao Muye smiled and glanced at the scenery outside the car window, where the autumn leaves were blowing in the wind. He said, “This expedition is a necessity.”

“It’s for the future.

“Don’t you think this is a very romantic thing?”

...

The last car arrived at the second launch site.

The luggage and passengers were divided into two groups. Under the guidance of the on-site staff, they boarded the aerospaceplane, which was shaped like a giant bird.

In thirty minutes, they would head to the moon more than 300,000 kilometers away, where they would live a new life.

Even though the road ahead of them was full of uncertainty and confusion, none of them sitting in the life-support machines were scared.

Like the man said, this was a necessity.

Each of them sitting here now was embarking on a great and glorious mission.

They were not just going to the moon.

They were pushing the future of human civilization.

The engine ejected a blue arc. Driven by the high-speed plasma jet, the aerospaceplane spread out its wings slowly and headed toward the sky.

The relatives standing on the ground waved goodbye to those who were going far away until the dot gradually disappeared in the sky...

On the other hand, at the Star Sky Technology building less than 50 kilometers away from the No. 2 launch site, the general manager of the aerospace department sent a launch briefing from the command center to the CEO’s office and briefly reported the current launch situation.

“Chang’e has passed through the stratosphere smoothly and is switching to vertical flight mode to change its course. It is expected to arrive at the intended orbit in two hours.”

After receiving the report and glancing at it, Chen Yushan nodded.

“Just leave this report with me. You can leave.”

“Okay, CEO Chen.”

The man nodded, turned around, and left the office, closing the door behind him.

After carefully reading the report in her hand, Chen Yushan thought for a while. She then summarized the situation in a more concise report. After that, she sent it to Lu Zhou through the internal Star Sky Technology communication system.

Even though he was not in command, she knew how much Lu Zhou valued this launch.

She thought that he would be in a good mood after hearing the good news.

Her thoughts drifted to tens of thousands of kilometers away.

Chen Yushan stretched her arms. She had finished her work. She stood up from the office chair and walked to the window with her coffee cup.

As she looked at the sunset glow outside the window, she suddenly felt a little melancholic in her heart.

Even though it had only been a few days since she last saw him, it felt like a long time.

“If only he can come back sooner...”

Chen Yushan suddenly saw her face reflected in the windows.

She felt like her emotions were not consistent with her strong physical appearance.

“Looks like I have to be stronger...”

Chapter 1280: A Worldwide Attraction

[Shocked! This is what the world's first colonial space ship actually looks like!]

[The first batch of Guanghan Special Economic Zone immigrants are heading to the moon!]

[Did you guys know that the flight to the moon has left?]

[With this, we are one step closer to space colonization...]

The Chang'e, which had just left the atmosphere, hadn't even docked on the Magpie Bridge, which was waiting in the lunar transfer orbit, yet the ground was already in chaos.

News about the launch plan occupied the headlines of major news networks.

Whether it was on Weibo or online games, everyone was talking about the Chang'e heading toward the Moon Palace.

Even though landing on the moon was not uncommon anymore, but so many people were landing on the moon at the same time. This was the first of its kind in the history of human civilization.

The state wanted everyone to have a deeper understanding of the Guanghan City plan and also to eliminate the general public's fear of leaving Earth and going to outer space.

CTV invited Nie Yun, the driver of the former Skyglow, to present a special program to introduce the Guanghan city plan.

Nie Yun was in the studio. Although his appearance had not changed significantly over the past few years, his temperament was much more stable than before. After all, he was no longer a simple pilot; he was now an air force major general who was serving the aerospace forces.

He stood in front of the camera in a Moon Palace spacesuit as he introduced himself to the audience sitting in front of the TVs, computers, and mobile phones.

"The gravity on the Moon is only one-sixth of that on Earth. In addition to the air, food, and drinking water issues mentioned above, there is another important problem. Living in a low-gravity environment for a long time might be harmful to astronauts. Such as damage to the bone density and

cardiovascular system. We used to rely on exercise to overcome these health problems, but now, we have a better way... Such as the clothes I'm currently wearing."

The host asked curiously, "Is there anything special about these clothes?"

Nie Yun said with a smile, "The special thing about this is that its key parts are filled with steel. For most of the non-working areas and part of the working areas of the lunar scientific research station, we have installed induction electromagnets into the floor, which would provide adjustable "artificial gravity" for the staff wearing space suits in the cabin, to compensate for the lack of gravity. As long as you wear this piece of clothing, you will be able to experience a normal gravitational environment."

Host: "But... Will this not affect the electronic equipment in the base?"

Nie Yun smiled and said, "Of course not. The equipment that might be affected will be protected by anti-magnetic materials. In addition to spacesuits that can imitate a gravity environment, we also have a special gravity room in the lunar scientific research station. It can simulate a gravity environment to help the health of the staff members."

Host: "Can you be more specific?"

Nie Yun: "Basically, it is like a Ferris Wheel placed on its side. It spins like a centrifuge. Then, combined with the gravity of the moon itself, it provides people in the room with a diagonally downward force. Inside it, you can work out, watch a movie, or play a game with a virtual reality helmet... Or even sleep."

Host: "But if it keeps spinning, how can people go inside?"

Nie Yun laughed and said, "Is that really a question? People go inside when it stops spinning! After all, you don't need to stay inside all the time, just 2-3 hours a day."

In addition to the spacesuit, Nie Yun introduced many other things.

Such as the daily routines on the lunar scientific research station, what work they usually did, and which direction they wanted to develop. Also, if the model of Guanghan City proved to be feasible, in the future, they would expand to Mars or even somewhere farther away.

Although there were no cool special effects, the viewers who were sitting in front of the TVs and computers at home had hopeful eyes. They couldn't help but think about the distant starry sky.

From the moment the Chang'e was launched, their journey to the stars had officially begun.

This was an adventure into the future...

...

"God Lu is nutty!"

"From now onward, we will have a new city on the map."

"And they're a direct-controlled municipality!"

"Shenzhen and Suzhou are crying. We have applied for so many years, and we still aren't direct-controlled!"

"Even such an amazing scholar doesn't have a girlfriend, I want to laugh at him. At the very least, I am not a loner."

Copenhagen airport.

Lu Zhou sat in the VIP lounge. He was swiping through his phone, reading the online comments.

Ten minutes ago, he posted a photo taken at the airport. Soon after, the number of likes was over 100,000, and the number of comments was in the tens of thousands.

This was expected. Almost every time there was a big story about him on the Internet, his Weibo would explode.

And this time was obviously no exception.

Whether it was the Nobel Prize or the launch of the Chang'e, his fans were going crazy.

Lu Zhou read the comments piled up in the comments section. He couldn't help but laugh, especially when he saw the last one.

He wanted to say something along the lines of, [Look at your bank account, and you won't be laughing anymore.]. But in the end, he resisted the urge.

Lu Zhou found that he was really savage sometimes, but fortunately, he was a kind person.

Even if something was worthy of the whole world's celebration, one or two haters would appear.

For example, someone did the calculations and predicted that this massive space colonization program would eventually go bankrupt. No matter how much the cost was reduced, there was no way to make the development of lunar resources profitable. They thought the final outcome of this lunar colonization project would be the world laughing at the Chinese astronauts.

Another example was a certain big journalist on Weibo attacking Lu Zhou for thinking about problems too rationally, for criticizing a girl too harshly at the Global Climate Summit, claiming that he lacked compassion for normal humans and was not reflecting Chinese culture.

However, Lu Zhou himself hadn't said anything. His fans defended him.

Guanghan was the city with the highest average salary in the world, and they had the opportunity to talk about academic problems with Nobel Prize winners. They were Nobel Prize candidates themselves.

They didn't want to go to the moon?

There were a million scientific researchers waiting in line, and there were plenty of people that wanted to go!

Some heroes had given up their personal and family lives because their major was too niche, and they went to space for the sake of the future of the country. But most people could never receive the right qualifications.

No one's forcing you to go.

Lu Zhou was smirking while scrolling through his phone. Ambassador Du Yanming walked over to him and spoke to him with a friendly smile.

"Academician Lu, what's the good news?"

“Nothing, I just read some interesting comments...” Lu Zhou put the phone away. He coughed, looked up at him, and asked, “Do you need anything, Ambassador Du?”

Ambassador Du smiled and said, “Nothing, I just came to see you and to remind you that it’s time to board the plane.”

Time to board?

Already?

“Okay, then I won’t stay around.” Lu Zhou stood up from his chair and stretched out his right hand toward Ambassador Du. He said, “I’ll see you later!”

“See you!” The gray-haired old man shook Lu Zhou’s hand with a smile. “Be careful on the road... But then again, I feel like I will see you soon.”

“Why do you say that?”

Ambassador Du Yanming spoke with a smile.

“Because I always see you in the newspapers!”

Chapter 1281: Look At MY Forehead

The entrance of Jinling Airport.

Professor Rudy Dobrik, who was in a suit, stood by the railings as he repeatedly reached out and straightened his tie. He looked around anxiously.

Even though foreigners were common in this international city, him standing outside the airport and looking around was still somewhat strange.

Over the past half an hour, at least two airport employees had come to ask him if he needed help.

“Oh, Jesus...” Professor Dobrik glanced at his watch and whispered in broken Chinese, “How long before Professor Lu arrives? He is coming back today, right?”

After Lu Zhou sent him an email last time, he was in ecstasy and immediately shared the good news with his collaborator, Professor Wei Hong from the Institute of High Energy Physics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

After hearing that their research had attracted the attention of the head of ILHCRC, the two did not hesitate at all. They immediately prepared a report for the abnormal phenomenon of Z particle gravity, just like Academician Lu instructed in the email. The report meeting was arranged on the fourth day after the end of the Nobel Prize award ceremony, and Academician Lu was notified of the time of the report meeting.

However, just when the two people thought that their academic careers would take-off and they would become famous, Academician Lu did not appear at the report meeting.

Not just that, there were not many people at the report meeting either.

Afterward, they heard that Lu Zhou had delayed his plan to return to China for a few days. Instead of returning to Shanghai as originally planned, he went to Copenhagen to participate in the climate summit.

Actually, this was not a big deal, they could just host another report session.

However, what worried Dobrik was that Lu Zhou, who had missed their report meeting, did not say anything about it. It was as if Lu Zhou had forgotten the matter.

Both Professor Dobrik and Professor Wei Hong felt a little nervous about whether their research was no longer “demanded”.

Therefore, when he heard the news last night that Lu Zhou would return to China today, he immediately took Professor Wei and boarded the train to Jinling. He wanted to impress Lu Zhou with his sincerity and try to “save” his research.

Professor Wei Hong was standing next to Professor Dobrik. He thought for a while and spoke.

“After all, it’s a private flight. The itinerary is arranged by someone else. The plane might be delayed.”

“Speaking of which, what is written on the banner hanging at the entrance? I can’t see it clearly.”

“A warm welcome to Academician Lu Zhou for winning the 2023 Nobel Prize in Physics...”

As Professor Wei Hong looked at Dobrik, he couldn’t help but sigh and let out his emotions. “To be honest, xiong di, I think this is pointless. If Academician Lu is really interested in our research, he will go to the ILHCRC and look for us. If he is not interested, waiting for him here doesn’t achieve anything.”

“But this is our only opportunity. No one at the ILHCRC is optimistic about this area... What does ‘xiong di’ mean?”

“It means bro.”

The ILHCRC was becoming the new center of global physics. In addition to learning French, learning Chinese had become another trendy thing for physicists.

The reason was that the latest experimental data from ILHCRC was released in Chinese before being translated into other languages.

Also, some reports published on the official website also tended to publish first-hand information in Chinese.

Although the amount of text involved was not huge, scholars did not like to read translated material.

In order to ensure that the materials they had obtained were the original version without processing, many professors who worked at the ILHCRC for more than half a year had begun to try to learn Chinese.

Even though Dobrik had been living in Shanghai for a year, his language abilities were limited compared to his other abilities.

His language level was only enough for normal communication. He was far from mastering various Chinese idioms.

The two of them passed the time by chatting.

Wei Hong felt a little hungry. He was about to suggest whether to eat something at a nearby fast food place when someone suddenly patted him on the shoulder from behind.

Actually, someone patted both of them on the shoulders.

Wei Hong was about to turn his head when a strange and serious voice came from behind.

“Can you show me your ID or passport?”

...

Ambassador Du Yanming's request was within reason.

Lu Zhou, who had just stepped off the airstair at Jinling Airport, felt the grand atmosphere at the airport.

His name was printed on a large banner. The leaders of the city council and the leaders of the high-tech zone were all dressed in formal wear, waiting at the airport.

To be honest, he felt quite embarrassed.

When Lu Zhou saw the people as well as the cameras standing beside them, he was embarrassed to give his girlfriend a kiss.

Chen Yushan stood in the center of the crowd while watching Lu Zhou. She also restrained the urge to come forward and kiss him.

The two of them were public figures. Because of the influence of Star Sky Technology, no reporters dared to dig into their personal lives, but they still had to be careful.

At the very least, they had to stay low-key in crowded places.

After taking a deep breath, Chen Yushan smiled and waved gently in Lu Zhou's direction. Her eyes were watery.

Lu Zhou blinked at her lightly with a warm look in his eyes.

However, he didn't know whether it was because he was too handsome or something else, he saw Chen Yushan suddenly blush and look away.

This reaction puzzled Lu Zhou.

Maybe...

She's shy?

This was his only explanation.

The welcoming team approached him. An old man with shiny black hair came forward and enthusiastically extended his right hand.

"Academician Lu, welcome home!"

Lu Zhou smiled and shook the old man's hand as he said, "Secretary Zhou, you're too kind. I only left for less than half a month. There is no need for this grand ceremony."

Ever since Secretary Liu left, Secretary Zhou, who was transferred from Beijing, was now the leader of Jinling. Lu Zhou only remembered his surname, Zhou. He didn't really care about his full name.

However, the old man seemed very enthusiastic, and he immediately said, "This is nothing! You were only gone for half a month, but during this half a month, you have received such a huge honor on behalf of our country! As the secretary of Jinling, I welcome you home on behalf of the general public. Please come this way."

Lu Zhou did not decline Secretary Zhou's invitation. The two of them walked and chatted.

While chatting, Lu Zhou discovered that Secretary Zhou was an interesting person. At the very least, he was very good at conversing.

The two talked about the Nobel Prize and global climate change, as well as the situation in the Baltic Sea. Finally, they digressed to the celebration at the Bird's Nest from a while ago.

"Academician Lu, the holographic stadium... Can you also build one in Jinling?"

Lu Zhou was stunned, and he immediately understood what Secretary Zhou meant.

So this is all about the holographic system...

Lu Zhou spoke with a smile.

“The technology is capable. But the system is not cheap. It mainly depends on your budget.”

When Secretary Zhou heard that there was a chance, he immediately said, “The budget is easy, and we don’t need to build one as big as the Bird’s Nest.”

Lu Zhou: “Then how big a stadium are you going to build?”

Secretary Zhou: “Around twenty to thirty thousand people is enough.”

Twenty to thirty-thousand people is not a lot?

That capacity is standard for a first-class stadium, right?

Is the budget really enough?

Lu Zhou actually didn’t know that Jin Ling City had become rich over the past few years.

After the construction of the high-tech zone, their GDP grew exponentially. Of course they could afford a new stadium.

One or two billion yuan in infrastructure investment was a piece of cake for Jin Ling City. Spending money to enrich the spiritual and cultural lives of the people in the city was always a worthy expense.

“I don’t know about the specific business side. I can only say that it is feasible from a technological point of view. Let’s wait and let my CEO... What is going on over there?”

While Lu Zhou was talking, the group of people at the exit of the airport attracted his attention.

A foreign man and a Chinese man were explaining something to the police.

When Lu Zhou saw the two people, they also happened to see him.

The police interrogation and examination were about to end. The tall foreign man screamed in excitement after seeing Lu Zhou. As a result, he was immediately held down by two police officers.

“Academician Lu, Academician Lu Zhou! It’s me! Ouch! I already showed you my passport. I’m really not a criminal. I’m here to study physics! If you don’t believe me, look at my hair! Look, I don’t have any hair left!”

Lu Zhou stared at the man who called his name.

Emmmm...

Who the hell is this guy?

Chapter 1282: Inspire

Inside the living room at a Zhongshan International mansion.

A household robot half the height of a human that was connected to a mechanical arm and various functional devices brought three cups of coffee and placed it on the coffee table.

Professor Dobrik sat on the sofa with a serious look on his face. He rubbed his hands and fidgeted for a long time. He then coughed softly and found the courage to speak.

“Let me introduce myself, I am—”

“Rudy Dobrik, professor at the University of Brussels, and Wei Hong, professor at the Institute of High Energy Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences.” Lu Zhou took a sip from the coffee cup on the table and said, “I probably don’t need to introduce myself since you probably know me.”

“You actually... know who we are?” Wei Hong looked at Lu Zhou in disbelief.

It was not easy to attract the attention of this famous scholar.

The fact that Lu Zhou recognized their faces was incredible.

Lu Zhou took off the AR glasses on the bridge of his nose. He clamped it to the collar, then leaned forward slightly to look at the two of them. "I originally planned to take a break for two days, then go to the ILHCRC to have a chat with you. But since you guys are all here, let's start talking."

Professor Dobrik nodded immediately. He didn't dare to waste Lu Zhou's time. He immediately took out the paper he printed before coming to Jinling from his briefcase and handed it to Lu Zhou.

However, after Lu Zhou glanced at it, he gave it back to Professor Dobrik.

"I've read this before already."

"Um, don't you want to read it again?"

"No need, if it's for a research that I'm interested in, I basically remember it after reading it once." Lu Zhou looked at Professor Dobrik and said, "Tell me in detail about the experiment. How did you find out specifically that Z particles interfere with gravity when unfolding from a high latitude to a low latitude. I am more interested in this content."

Dobrik and Professor Wei Hong exchanged glances, and finally, Professor Wei spoke.

"Let me talk about this part, it's quite strange..."

Lu Zhou nodded.

"Please begin."

"As detailed as possible."

This was what happened.

Ever since the Z particle theory was put forward last year, the physics world was advanced to the high-dimensional field for the first time, and research in related fields had immediately become popular.

Professor Dobrik recorded the data collected on the gravitational wave detector at the lunar scientific research station and found that in the latest high-energy zone collision experiment, the gravitational wave data had a strange disturbance.

This phenomenon aroused the interest of Professor Wei Hong, who worked in the Z particle research group. The two quickly wrote a report on this phenomenon and applied for a research project.

Professor Wei Hong spent half an hour explaining the whole project from the beginning to the end, as well as all of the problems they encountered.

After listening carefully to Professor Wei Hong's words, Lu Zhou nodded.

"I understand now.

"What you found is indeed very interesting and the research ideas are also very novel... However, after listening to your statement, I have some other ideas."

Upon hearing this, Professor Dobrik said quickly, "Please tell us your thoughts."

Seeing how excited Professor Dobrik was, Lu Zhou spoke with a smile.

"Don't be so excited. It's just a thought. It might not be right... It may even be wrong."

He paused for a second and continued, "According to Einstein's theory, as long as the inhomogeneity still exists somewhere in the universe, then gravity must be uneven. General relativity reveals to us how time and space move with the matter. Matter tells us how space-time bends."

Lu Zhou spent around a minute thinking about how to describe the abstract idea in his mind.

Suddenly, he thought of something. He raised his head and snapped his fingers.

The household robot that had previously poured coffee for the three of them returned to the living room slowly, and this time, it brought a whiteboard. After that, a drone flew over and placed a marker in Lu Zhou's hand.

The two people were dumbfounded. Lu Zhou, who was about to speak, paused for a second before saying, "Don't be too surprised. These are just some gadgets I made in my spare time. After all, living alone in such a big house gets somewhat lonely."

Dobrik and Wei Hong's eyebrows began to twitch, and they almost spat the coffee out of their mouths.

Made these gadgets in your spare time...

The home robot doesn't look like a gadget at all... Did he really combine artificial intelligence and robots in his spare time?

I wonder how those high-tech companies that specialize in household machines feel?

Lu Zhou stood up from the sofa and walked to the side of the whiteboard.

After thinking for a moment, he used the marker in his hand and began to use the language of mathematics and physics to manifest those abstract and obscure guesses into a visible blueprint...

$[R_{\mu\nu} - \frac{1}{2}g_{\mu\nu}R - \Lambda g_{\mu\nu} = 8\pi T_{\mu\nu}]$

[...]

Time slowly passed by.

The coffee on the coffee table had already turned cold.

Dobrik and Wei Hong stared at the whiteboard intently. They didn't dare to take their eyes off for a moment. They were afraid that they would miss a letter or even a punctuation mark. They wanted to print every detail on the whiteboard in their heads.

Finally, the marker stopped moving.

Lu Zhou looked back at the two physics professors sitting on the sofa as he gently placed the marker beside the whiteboard.

"Basically, these are the ideas I can think of for the time being... It might seem a little difficult, but if you read it twice, it should be quite easy to understand."

A little difficult?

Professor Dobrik and Professor Wei Hong felt worried.

They could barely keep up with his thoughts even though they had been researching this field for more than half a year.

It was insane to imagine that Lu Zhou thought of these things just now.

As Wei Hong looked at the content on the whiteboard, he raised his hand and asked, "Can I take a picture?"

Lu Zhou walked to the sofa and sat down. He took a sip of the cold coffee and smiled.

"Of course, I wrote so much. The purpose is to inspire your research a little bit. If you forget it when you go back, wouldn't this have been a waste?"

The two people took out their phones and took photos without saying anything. Lu Zhou continued to speak, "Time and space tell matter how to move, and matter tells how time and space how to bend. This is the core idea of this research. The steps on the whiteboard are just a framework. It hasn't been perfected.

"For example, in the first part, we should first set up a control group, calculate the gravitational anomaly of the Z particle, and derive the Z particle gravitational fluctuation formula. After this, the situation should be much easier..."

Lu Zhou's phone on the coffee table began to ring.

Lu Zhou paused and stopped talking. He looked at the two with an apologetic smile.

"Sorry, go read over this, I have to pick this up."

Lu Zhou stood up and walked over.

As he turned his back, he didn't know that the words he had previously repeated to Wei Hong and Professor Dobrik had set off turbulent waves in their mind.

Calculate the gravitational anomaly...

Deduce the Z particle gravitational wave formula...

Wei Hong's eyes flashed with excitement as he clenched his fists involuntarily.

Suddenly...

They had some ideas...

Chapter 1283: New Weapon?

The call was from Li Gaoliang.

A few days ago, Lu Zhou was thinking about finding an opportunity to make a phone call and say thank you to him, but he thought that Li Gaoliang might still be floating at sea on the cargo ship, so he put the matter aside for the time being.

It's only been a week, yet he has already returned?

Lu Zhou asked as soon as the call was connected, "You're already back?"

"The cargo ship had just passed the Bering Sea, but it was taken over by the navy. It is being towed to our port. We had nothing to do with it, so we came back."

"As long as you're safe." Lu Zhou nodded with a smile and said, "I should really thank you for what happened."

"Oh, don't thank me. I'm just a soldier. Besides, I really want to say thank you. You gave me both of my legs. Without the nerve connection technique, I would have been discharged from the army. How many times should I thank you?"

"Okay then, I won't say anything else. I will buy you some drinks. By the way, you guys are all okay? There are no casualties, right?"

Li Gaoliang suddenly laughed and said, "What casualties could there be? We have our equipment for a reason.

"Not to mention that the soldiers of our brigade have practiced thousands of times in the virtual reality system. The enemies were shocked as soon as we landed, and there was no way for them to fight back."

Li Gaoliang talked to Lu Zhou vividly about the situation.

Even though there was still a big difference between the real battlefield and the feeling of playing FPS games in a virtual reality system, because of the exoskeletons and powerful rifles, the entire battle was simply one-sided.

Before he even had time to test all of his equipment, everything was already over.

“Oh yeah, I almost forgot about the serious thing.”

Li Gaoliang suddenly remembered something. He patted his forehead and said, “The person who attacked you has been found. It is a warlord active in East Africa, located at the border between Kenya and Somalia. Interpol has been following them for a long time. They immediately provided us with all the information after hearing that we intend to track them.”

Lu Zhou said, “What did I do to East African warlords?”

I've never even been to Africa.

“The people who are aiming at you are certainly not African warlords or pirates. They are also employed by someone else. If you are curious about the specifics, please ask Wang Peng. They are investigating. This is not our business. Of course, if we don't make them pay a price, it will make us seem weak.”

When Lu Zhou heard the murderous tone in Li Gaoliang's voice, he asked curiously, “You plan to attack them?”

Li Gaoliang said with a grin, “Sort of, even though we are not sending troops directly, we will definitely teach them a lesson. We will also get to test our army's new weapon.”

Lu Zhou: “New weapon?”

Li Gaoliang: “It is not safe to say on the phone. If you are interested, come over tomorrow!”

The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study was mainly engaged in the research of theoretical science and civilian technology. Only a few high-secret research institutes were researching for the military industry. They were in cooperation with several other national defense research institutes.

For example, they worked on miniaturizing fusion batteries and installing them on aircraft carriers and submarines, as well as researching how to improve the combat effectiveness of air and space forces.

As for specific projects, Lu Zhou didn't know much about it, nor was he involved.

He hadn't heard anyone talk about the new weapon, so he couldn't help but wonder what it was.

Because there were guests at home, Lu Zhou did not chat with Li Gaoliang for too long. He hung up the phone after some small talk.

When he put away the phone and returned to the living room, the two physics professors had finished their coffee and got up from the sofa. Professor Wei spoke first.

"It's getting late, we won't bother you anymore."

Lu Zhou: "Aren't you guys staying for dinner?"

Professor Wei shook his head and said, "No, just now... I just had some thoughts. I want to go back to the ILHCRC to verify them."

Professor Dobrik also nodded.

"Me too."

As Lu Zhou looked at the expressions on the faces of the two, he knew that his previous remarks probably had inspired them. Thus, he spoke with a smile.

"Then I wish you good luck. I hope to hear good news from you guys soon."

Wei Hong nodded gratefully.

"Thank you! We will certainly not disappoint your expectations."

Guiding promising young people was an enjoyable thing, especially when the guidance could produce tangible results.

For him, honor actually didn't mean much.

Compared to personal achievements, he would rather see young people with potential continue to explore the peak of physics on the road he had previously paved.

Of course, young people didn't mean scholars younger than him. It meant young physicists under the age of fifty. After all, finding a scholar who was as young and promising as him would be impossible.

On the other hand, since the gravitational anomaly of Z particles could become the key to reaching level 10 physics, Lu Zhou would be paying close attention to this research.

Even though it was still unclear whether the treasure behind it met the criteria of a "great achievement", Lu Zhou had already seen a certain amount of potential.

What was gravity?

This was a century-old problem in physics.

The ultimate theory of unifying the four fundamental forces was currently stuck.

Perhaps the research by these two could bring some different ideas to the understanding of gravity in modern physics...

Lu Zhou sent the two to the door and bid farewell. After Lu Zhou watched the two people leave, he was about to go inside when he saw a silver car coming from the intersection.

The car lights flashed, and a beautiful figure soon stepped off the car.

Lu Zhou's heart moved. He couldn't look away.

She was very satisfied with the expression on her boyfriend's face. She had a happy, proud, and somewhat shy smile.

Chen Yushan was embarrassed at being stared at. She cleared her throat and said, "Are you done looking?"

"Not yet!"

"Then... Do you miss me?"

“Yes!”

Wow...

What is this feeling!

Why is my boyfriend so gentle, smart, handsome...

And cute!

When Chen Yushan felt her earlobes warming up, she knew she was blushing.

Lu Zhou, who was standing at the door, was a little fazed. He didn't know what he said that made her blush like this.

“Uh, are you okay?”

“Ah!”

Chen Yushan quickly closed the car door. She walked up to Lu Zhou and grabbed his sleeve before saying, “Stupid, Stupid... Let's go inside.”

Lu Zhou: “...?!”

Lu Zhou was dragged into the house, but he still didn't know why she was blushing...

Chapter 1284: Don't Need That Thing

Lu Zhou had never allowed anyone other than his family to stay overnight in his own home. He had been told by his friends that living in such a large house alone was a waste.

But this time, he broke his rule.

Well, not really “broke”.

After all...

He was a responsible man.

The next morning.

The winter sunrise was late as usual. The entire Purple Mountain was still immersed in heavy fog. It was dark except for the street lights.

Lu Zhou slowly opened his eyes and got up from the bed. He then looked to the side.

Her thin lips and the delicate nose moved gently with the rhythm of her breathing. Her sleeping face was peaceful and warm, like a cat dreaming of a mountain of fish. He didn't want to wake her up.

He couldn't help but watch for another five minutes. He then got out of bed gently and went to the bathroom. After his bathroom routine, he threw a towel on his shoulders and went out for a jog.

When he came back, he was about to call Wang Peng to bring two breakfasts when he saw Chen Yushan wearing an apron and carrying two plates of freshly cooked fried rice. She walked out of the kitchen with thick cotton slippers on her feet.

"I was thinking about where you went, turns out you went running."

Chen Yushan looked at Lu Zhou's wet hair. She put down the plate, walked forward, and wiped his hair gently with a towel. She then spoke.

"Hurry up and take a shower. It's humid outside and the wind is blowing, you'll catch a cold."

"I'm in good health, it's okay..." Lu Zhou held her tiny hand and looked at her as he said, "I didn't expect you to wake up this early."

"I always get up early. Besides, I slept an extra half an hour today... Anyway, aren't you the same?"

"I'm used to it too."

"Speaking of which, you don't have any kitchen utensils in your house. I searched for ages before I found the whisk."

"I'm usually alone, so I rarely cook. I either eat in the cafeteria of Jin Ling University, at the research institute, or I ask Wang Peng to bring me food... At most, the household robot will cook for me."

Chen Yushan asked curiously, "The household robot can cook?"

Lu Zhou: "Uh, in theory, as long as it is smart enough, anything can be done."

Chen Yushan teased and said, "So it feels like your life is very organized. You don't need a girlfriend at all."

"No way!" Lu Zhou immediately said, "How about... you live here from now on?"

"No, thanks."

"Why?"

Chen Yushan's cheeks blushed slightly. She couldn't help but pinch his waist.

"You... We should take it easy. Besides, I haven't married you yet, and to live together so early... It feels weird, and..."

"And?"

"And... and I heard..." Her cheeks were getting hotter and hotter. She looked away embarrassedly and whispered, "Living together before marrying... After marrying, there is no honeymoon... Ahh! What am I talking about?!"

Lu Zhou felt like Chen Yushan's brain was cooked; there was almost steam coming out of her.

Chen Yushan angrily threw the towel on Lu Zhou's face. She buried her head in her arms and pushed Lu Zhou's shoulders. She pushed him all the way to the bathroom.

"Quickly, go take a shower! Shower then eat! Hurry, I have to go to work after!"

Even though Lu Zhou didn't realize what was happening, he knew that she was flustered.

*Sh*t...*

She looks pretty cute when she's panicking.

...

It was a new day.

After eating breakfast, Chen Yushan tidied up her appearance and quickly got in the silver car that was parked at the door yesterday. She went to work at the office.

Perhaps it was easier to find a sense of accomplishment by running a company than doing scientific research.

Lu Zhou always felt like Chen Yushan was more punctual about work than himself, and she often counted down to the second.

"It seems like I've been slacking recently..."

"I have to work hard too."

Lu Zhou was at the sink. He splashed his face with some water.

Just when he was about to change his clothes and go out, a drone carrying a small screen flew over.

[Master~ ☹]

Lu Zhou paused for a second and thought something was wrong, so he asked quickly.

"What's wrong?"

[There were only two people in the house, Master and Xiao Ai... But now, there is a strange woman. Xiao Ai's kitchen was taken away. This is ridiculous. ε(┏┓┏)3]

"..."

Lu Zhou put his clothes on his body silently. He then replied casually, "It means that your master has grown up."

[But... But... Master won't abandon Xiao Ai, right? ☹]

Lu Zhou: "...?"

Is there a logical connection between the two?

Who says you can't have a pet if you get a wife?

Lu Zhou got into the car that Wang Peng had parked at the door. He still didn't understand what Xiao Ai was talking about...

...

The station of the orbital Airborne Brigade was very close to the Jinling launch site as both were located on the edge of the high-tech zone.

As the backbone of China's aerospace forces, as well as the new strategic deterrent in the early space age, Lu Zhou felt a cold murderous atmosphere the moment he entered the station.

Li Gaoliang stood at the door to greet Lu Zhou. He looked at the dark circles under Lu Zhou's eyelids and spoke with a smile.

"Yo, Academician Lu, it's been a long time since I last saw you. You look kind of tired?"

"I didn't sleep well last night..."

While he was talking, Lu Zhou couldn't help but yawn.

He put down his hand covering his mouth. He suddenly saw that Li Gaoliang was looking at him with a weird smile. He froze and hesitated for a moment before asking, "Why are you looking at me that way?"

"No reason, we're all men here, I understand." Li Gaoliang laughed and patted Lu Zhou on the shoulder. He smirked and said, "I think you should take care of your body when you are young, don't go too hard!"

Lu Zhou: "...?"

"Enough chatting. I said I want to show you how we fought in the war. Come with me. It's almost starting..." Li Gaoliang looked at Wang Peng, who was following Lu Zhou, and asked with a smile, "Brother Wang, are you coming together or waiting outside?"

Wang Peng: "I'll wait outside."

"True, so you don't have to write a report when you go back." Li Gaoliang smiled and patted Lu Zhou on the shoulder. He said, "Let's go inside."

Lu Zhou followed Li Gaoliang and couldn't help but yawn again. He asked casually without any energy, "Is the Airborne Brigade team flying?"

"Flying? That's overkill. We're just testing a new weapon... But to be honest, the guys want to fly, but there's no opportunity."

Lu Zhou was curious, so he asked, "What is it then?"

Li Gaoliang smirked at Lu Zhou mysteriously. He then pointed his right finger at the command room next to him.

"You'll see."

Chapter 1285: Operation Dandelion

East Africa.

El Wak, Somalia.

This place was at a high altitude and was located in a mountain rich area. Freshwater was a scarce resource. There were neither rich mineral deposits nor fertile soil. Instead, it was filled with endless poverty and hunger.

Except for extremist organizations, armed civilian forces, and arms brokers, almost no one would have the slightest interest in this barren land.

And even for those who were interested in this place, this interest was rarely directed at the land itself, but at the nearby cities, villages, and charity supply resources.

In the past, although they robbed and kidnapped, they rarely killed people. Nearby authorities hated this stubborn disease, but they were helpless. Even though the neighboring country had applied for military assistance more than once, the authorities were unable to help.

Therefore, this zone was full of chaos and evil, and it had maintained a strange balance for more than ten years. It had become a breeding ground for terrifying diseases.

However, the situation changed recently.

A large number of military units began to gather in the area. Police and soldiers in nearby towns set up checkpoints along the main traffic roads, surrounding the entire area inside and out.

Even the wild goats living nearby could smell the gunpowder gradually permeating the air.

This was like throwing oil on a fire. The El Wak area, which had been stable for decades, instantly turned into chaos.

“Why don’t you let this place just rot?”

Colonel Abati stood next to General Katzno. He squinted his eyes and looked at the military teams nearby as he said, “The people living here are not Somalis. Why don’t we just let them fend for themselves?”

El Wak was tricky.

Even if the US military landed here, it would be difficult to take out the tumor from the desert.

Of course, the main problem was that the militants active in the local area wouldn’t fight them on the frontal battlefield. Instead, they would rely on the complex terrain to launch guerrilla attacks against them.

Not to mention that now they only had three infantry divisions here. Even if that number doubled, it would be difficult to attack the local forces.

“Because the idiot who owns this area did a stupid thing and pissed off an important person. An now, we have to convince the superpower in the east that we have nothing to do with these people.”

General Katzno had a telescope in his hand. His eagle-like gaze was full of solemnity as he said, “Also, they promised to support us in regaining this area and help us rebuild it.”

“Support? How to support? Airstrikes? Or spreading flyers?”

Colonel Abati had a smug face.

This was a mistake all laymen made when they intervened in Somalia's business.

When the militants broke into the cities, alleys, and deep mountains, even if all of the US military fighter jets were deployed, it wouldn't do anything.

This battle was doomed to be impossible.

They would bring the region that had finally stabilized into chaos again, allowing other countries to see their incompetence in handling overseas military conflicts. No substantial progress would be made.

"They didn't elaborate. They just told us to wait for them." General Katzno put down the binoculars in his hand as he simply said, "Anyway, we don't need to be the first, we just have to wait quietly."

...

On a ravine hill, Marach, dressed as a sheep, looked at the army station in the distance with a telescope in his hand. His eyes filled with haze.

A well-built man with an AK on his back crawled up from the mountain behind him and reported to him in a nervous tone.

"The Somali authorities have assembled at least three divisions here. It seems like they are determined to clean us up."

"What about the border between Kenya and Ethiopia?"

The dark-skinned man gulped and said, "They have closed the border and increased patrols..."

The escape route has been blocked...

The situation was quite serious, and it had reached a critical point.

However, instead of a trace of fear on the face of the bearded man, a cruel smile appeared.

His army was entrenched in this land. Besides him, there were many other warlords.

Even though they were usually scattered far away, once they encountered an invasion by an “external force” or whoever that tried to control this area, all armed forces would temporarily put aside their priorities and stand on the same front.

Marach didn’t worry about losing at all.

Not to mention he had tens of millions of dollars worth of arms in his hand. Even without these arms, he wouldn’t be afraid of the troops from the nearby countries.

Once this war was dragged into a cruel tug of war, the displaced refugees would hit the entire East African region. Under the internal and external pressure, the weak Somali authorities would be unable to stand.

However, at this moment, he felt a sense of uneasiness.

It was as if he were being tracked by a fierce beast.

Marach suddenly realized something. He raised his head and looked up at the sky.

However, there was nothing but a clear sky; nothing that could indicate a fighter jet, not even a single cloud.

Why do I feel this way?

The anxiety in his heart became stronger and stronger.

Marach clenched his fist. When he was thinking about leaving, he suddenly saw a few black spots in the sky.

The black spots were very small.

If he didn’t happen to be looking in that direction, he wouldn’t even have noticed it.

Marach gulped and grabbed his telescope.

“Jesus, what is that?”

However, before he could think, a violent tremble came from under his feet. Billowing smoke and fire came from two kilometers away, and he almost fell on the ground.

When he stood up straight and looked in the direction, the blood in his chest rushed to his head.

“No!”

That was the ammunition depot he deployed nearby, which contained bullets and IEDs capable of arming at least two guerrilla wars.

Marach stared at the fireball that soared into the sky. His eyes were bloodshot as he looked in the sky, trying to find where the airstrike came from.

However, the enemy seemed to be nonexistent.

The arms and ammunition facility was destroyed. That was the only evidence that something was flying above their heads.

Marach grabbed his walkie-talkie and spoke with all his strength. He commanded the surviving subordinates to move the ammunition to a safe place and ordered the soldiers on the front line to disperse immediately. They prepared to break into pieces and start a desperate fight with the enemy's ground troops.

However, Marach did not realize that the first round of airstrikes was only the beginning.

Their nightmare had only just begun.

The black spot floating in the air finally revealed its true self.

Those were “black coffins”, tied to parachutes.

They were only slightly larger than the airborne capsules of aerospace paratroopers, but not much larger.

They were like dandelions, scattering and landing on the battlefield. They deployed vertically on the ground.

After a smooth landing, the four-wall shell of the black coffin opened one after another, revealing a drone inside.

The signal lights were all lit up instantly. The electric motor began to buzz, and the drones were like hornets pouring out of a nest. Under the guidance of satellites and ground terminals, they entered the battlefield.

The drones were only a little bigger than a basketball. The small-caliber muzzle and exposed magazines were suspended under the chassis. A single fly-by could drop a wave of bullets.

The flames from the sky and the flashes from the guns illuminated the fears on the faces of the militants. The airstrikes launched from nowhere had almost destroyed all of their ammunition depots on the ground and even the ones in the tunnels. Now they had to face a group of murderous “bees.”

It was almost impossible for them to aim at the drones that were hundreds of meters away. On the other hand, the drones could come and go freely on the battlefield.

Marach knew a lot about drones. Compared to most of his compatriots, he had experience in North Africa with the US troops.

In fact, it was very easy to shoot down these things. When they flew by, if one aimed in their direction, they could easily be shot down.

They didn't even need a gun, a rock would do.

However, it seemed like these drones had brains. Not only would they use bunkers to shelter them in firefights, but they also knew how to use simple fire suppression and outflank tactics to perform operations on their fixed defenses.

It was as if every drone was controlled by a professional UAV engineer...

...

The flames rising into the sky suppressed the sun while the billowing smoke from the hills turned into clouds in the sky. The wind engulfed in the yellow sand rolled across the messy battlefield.

Marach was searching for the traces of the bombers. The Somali army, the border guards, and even the US military base a hundred kilometers away were all desperately searching for where the airstrikes came from.

There was not a single trace of a plane on their radars.

They didn't even detect a bird!

Airstrikes?

How was this possible?!

How could there be such a precise artillery attack?!

And most importantly, how did they find the ammunition depots!

Did they guess?

General Katzno put down the telescope in his hand; his eyes were filled with shock.

Standing next to him was Colonel Abati. He was also stunned.

He gulped and asked, "Are there any airstrikes announced by the PLA?"

"Yeah..."

"Did you hear any sounds of a fighter jet?"

"No... Their aircraft carrier is probably still in the East China Sea."

"What plane can fly this fast?"

"Don't know, don't ask me."

"Then... Should we move forward?"

"Get in the car first..."

There was no longer any suspense in the battle.

It seemed that none of the contingency plans discussed in the combat meeting were used.

Of course, this was almost a good thing.

They had a strong feeling that...

This war was going to end very soon.

Chapter 1286: Like a Video Game

320 kilometers in the sky.

An aerospaceplane about the size of two Starlight aircrafts slowly retracted its open magazine and cruised smoothly on the edge of the atmosphere.

“This is Kunpeng, finish launching airstrikes.”

“This is the ground command center. Target has been confirmed to have been hit. The battlefield will be taken over by ground forces. Please return now.”

“Roger that.”

The four huge electric propulsion engines shot out a blue arc in the deep space. Driven by the high-temperature plasma, the giant plane named “Kunpeng” began to return to the ground.

Battlefield intelligence had been taken over by military observation satellites to provide information for friendly forces on the ground. The coordinates of enemy units and the battle path processed by the Star Voyage One quantum computer was sent to the ground attack drone terminal.

At the aerospace forces headquarters in Jinling.

Li Gaoliang stood next to a large screen. He was pointing at various parameters and marks on the screen to Lu Zhou... This was to show off their modern battlefield command system.

“Through satellite imaging, supercomputer processing, and real-time battlefield images, we can build a three-dimensional digital model of the battlefield and make the most efficient use of every combat unit and every available station resource.

“Over there, the red mark is the B army, while the green mark is the A army... They are a friendly troop. Of course, the Somali troops are too technologically behind, and they don’t trust us much, so we can’t command them.”

Lu Zhou: “What about those crosses?”

Li Gaoliang: "Confirmed killed or destroyed targets."

Lu Zhou looked at the red dots that turned into gray crosses one after another. He was silent for a while before sighing softly.

"This battle is just like a computer game."

"It's much simpler than computer games." Li Gaoliang grinned and said, "Computer games also need to consider balance. This game doesn't. Before launching an attack drone, our aerospace strategic bomber has already destroyed 11.6 tons of ammunition and basically destroyed their defense facilities. If they had put up a better fight..."

Lu Zhou: "Then we'll send the orbital Airborne Brigade?"

Li Gaoliang shook his head and said, "No, we'll just repeat the same process again."

Lu Zhou: "..."

Wow...

No military unit in the world can deal with this, right?

Of course, this technology was actually quite difficult.

This competition was not so much about military technology; it was more a test of aerospace technology.

They had to send weapons to low orbits at a very low cost and complete a reliable cruise or even airstrikes. So far, only the Aerospace Science and Technology Institute at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study had this technology.

Most countries on Earth might not even be able to launch satellites, let alone sending weapons to such a high orbit and dropping them.

When Lu Zhou saw the red dots disappearing on the screen, he suddenly couldn't help but have a strange thought.

If aliens attacked Earth, would they feel the same way?

Their starships would park at the edge of the atmosphere, throw down some bombs, then send a bunch of smart soldiers or something.

“Speaking of which, I didn’t expect you guys to build an aerospace strategic bomber.”

Li Gaoliang smiled embarrassedly and said, “Thanks to your fusion battery and electric propulsion engine, it has officially been in service since the beginning of this year.”

“Is it good?”

“Very.”

Lu Zhou nodded, but he felt a mix of emotions.

Even though he knew that warfare was one of the elements of civilization, he didn’t really like that his technology was being used on the battlefield.

However, thinking about it from another angle, prosperity required necessary forces to protect it. As long as the battles defended peace and allowed the world to move in a better direction, this seemed to be a good thing?

Since Lu Zhou was no longer entangled in these issues, he finally relaxed.

“However, although the weapons are getting better and better, the troubles are becoming larger as well.” Li Gaoliang watched the battle on the screen and said, “We will recover the drone hive through diplomatic means. There are also drones that were damaged in battle... We have to retrieve them through GPS.

“Also, there is the promised reconstruction of the village and a series of issues. We can’t be like the Americans, leaving a mess behind. War will always be the last resort, and we don’t want to use it unless we have to.”

“Does this count as necessary?”

“Of course it counts.” Li Gaoliang looked at Lu Zhou and grinned. He patted Lu Zhou on the shoulder and said, “If someone wants to hurt Professor Lu, they’ll get what they deserve.”

...

Ethiopian borders.

An officer in a US military uniform held a telescope in his hand. He looked at the flames on the hills in the distance.

After a while, he said, “Sh*t”. His mouth was dry from the blowing winds and sand. He put away the telescope in his hand.

The warlords and militias lurking in dangerous places had little room to fight back against the swarm of drones, and the entire battle was basically a one-sided slaughter.

This was probably the first time artificial intelligence had been used in warfare on such a large scale.

Although the Pentagon had tested similar equipment before, so far, the research was still at the laboratory stage, and he had not heard of any particularly big progress.

But now, he expected the Chinese technology to have advanced to this level.

Forget about these groups of militants, even he wouldn't have any good ideas on how to deal with these locust-like monsters.

Standing next to him was an Ethiopian military officer, who accompanied him to the border. There was also a telescope in his hand, and he had a look of disbelief on his face.

“I don't understand...”

The American officer glanced at him.

“Don't understand what?”

“Let's not talk about their drones. Where did the airstrikes come from?” The Ethiopian officer had a trace of fear on his face. He said, “Our radar only detected bombs from the sky. There was no evidence of a plane at all.”

“It's not just that you didn't see anything.” The US military officer said with a smile of self-deprecation, “We didn't see anything on our radars either.”

The Ethiopian officer had a subtle look on his face.

He originally thought that their radar technology was too behind. He did not expect that the US military base, stationed in his territory, also didn't observe any signals of a plane flying over this airspace.

“Could it be... that they have developed a stealth aircraft that can hide from all radars?”

If this is the case, doesn't it mean that Chinese aircraft can come and go freely in any airspace they want?

This is so scary...

The US military officer shook his head and said, “Aeroplanes that completely hide from radars cannot exist. Even the most advanced materials will definitely leave traces on our phased array radar.”

“Then why...”

“Let's think about it from another angle. Maybe they didn't enter our air defense zone at all.”

“How is this possible?”

“Nothing is impossible. The most advanced aircraft can only fly up to 20 kilometers above sea level. The maximum airspace of each country is only about 110 kilometers. Beyond this limit, radar has no use at all. Even if we can observe them, no air defense missiles can reach that high.”

“So you're saying...”

“I'm just guessing, there's no evidence.” The US officer looked up at the sky with his eyebrows furrowed.

“From a logical point of view, if they can throw people from low earth orbit, there is no reason why they cannot throw a bomb from there.”

Chapter 1287: Things Left Behind

Schmidt was an ordinary oil and gas field engineer who was sent to Mogadishu because of a 30 billion oil and gas development agreement between ExxonMobil and the Somali authorities.

Even though he had made preparations before coming here, the level of poverty here exceeded his expectations.

He once saw in travel magazines, that before the Civil War, this place was called the white pearl of the Indian Ocean.

But now, the historic buildings had broken walls, with clearly visible bullet holes in the walls. Most of the roads were broken, and there was almost no greenery in the entire city. Sand was everywhere.

It wasn't just the environment that was criticized.

Because of the local culture, there were no bars here, and casual drinking was punished by caning.

Even though their executives tried to help them get the privilege of drinking without being whipped, this privilege was limited to inside the staff dormitory. The variety and quantity of supplies were quite limited, making it difficult to have a good time.

For the employees who were dispatched here, the only entertainment here was to buy and read the latest newspaper or sit in a coffee shop near the company's premises and experience the air-conditioning and coffee that the locals couldn't afford. They spent their afternoons drinking specialty filtered coffee.

It didn't matter what the newspaper was.

Whether it was BBC or Playboy, as long as there were words and pictures, it was enough. Life here was too boring.

Like usual, Schmidt came to the coffee shop, ordered a cup of Ethiopian coffee that he planned to sip on for an afternoon, and sat in a safe place far from the window.

He was about to start his newspaper reading and kill some time, but he was suddenly stunned.

[EI Wak victory! The Somali Army Won!]

What the hell?!

Is this an April Fool's joke?

No way, it's not even April.

The moment Schmidt saw the headline in the newspaper, his first reaction was that it must be a mistake.

He knew the combat effectiveness of the Somali army. Even after receiving training from various countries, their fighting style was still quite barbaric. They might as well be carrying knives instead of rifles.

In contrast, the enemies they faced were the pirates that had caused headaches for governments all over the world. These devils had lurked the earth for more than a decade.

Even if the US sent 10 fighter jets over, they might not be able to completely wipe them out, let alone the Somali Army, who barely had a few tanks.

He had a feeling of disbelief. He continued to read the newspaper. His sight was immediately glued to the picture of the newspaper.

Technically, they were four sets of pictures.

Two of them were of a "black coffin" that had a parachute tied to it, which were probably taken by some kind of professional distance shooting equipment.

The other two photos were distant shots of the drones flying out of the black coffin and the smoke from a destroyed ammunition warehouse.

The moment Schmidt saw this equipment, he was sure that the Somali authorities must have received foreign aid.

Most of the people in East Africa had never even seen a drone. Even the US military had not deployed this kind of high-tech UAV equipment on a large scale.

Sure enough, when he continued to read, he quickly found the answer.

"With support from the Chinese, the Somali army launched its largest offensive this year in the El Wak area occupied by militants. Hundreds of

bombs were dropped on the battlefield, destroying a dozen ammunition warehouses.

“Our reporter was told that the small drones were controlled by AI, and they automatically recognized the identities of the militants before launching attacks on them. These drones are similar to the logistics delivery drones, but it is still uncertain whether they are from the same company...

“So far, the battlefield has shifted from open areas to the streets. Many militant leaders have been killed. According to a spokesperson for the Somali authorities, the armed forces active in the area have been unable to maintain control of the area, and the Somali army is recovering the villages and towns controlled by militants. This chaos is expected to continue until the end of the year. We remind foreign employees working in the local area to pay attention to travel safety.

“In addition, our reporter consulted the US military bases in Ethiopia and asked about the airstrikes. However, the person in charge of the military base did not disclose the type of aircraft involved in the airstrikes or where the airstrikes came from. They refused to give more details...

“Jesus Christ.”

The Americans are actually helping China keep it a secret?

Are pigs flying?

Schmidt would never believe that those American troops would keep a secret about the weapons that launched airstrikes for the Chinese. If they knew, they would tell the whole world.

Therefore, there was only one possibility...

Which was, so far, they had not found enough evidence to prove who initiated the airstrikes and where it came from.

The look on his face gradually changed from suspicion to disbelief. He heard other foreign employees talking behind him.

Coincidentally, they were discussing the same thing.

“Did you read the news yesterday? Somalia’s army actually won?!”

“Of course I did! Everyone is discussing this on Twitter! People say that China used some kind of powerful secret weapon. I heard from our resident bodyguard that his nephew, who was in that battle, said they were prepared to fight the militants to death. But before they could do anything, the militants were all dead.”

The man with a beard on his face spoke in an exaggerated manner, as if he were in the battle himself.

“You guys don’t want to see the scene... It’s like hell on Earth.”

“What do you think the secret weapon might be?”

“I don’t know, but everyone says it’s an orbital weapon... A jet or bomber can’t fly this high, and it is impossible to hide from the US military base radar!”

Schmidt heard the discussion from several foreign employees behind him. He went into silence, and it took a while before he spoke.

“This is insane...”

Orbital weapons?

Avoiding the US radar completely?

This is ridiculous!

The Somalia government might as well have received help from aliens!

After reading the newspaper in his hand, Schmidt saw that it was getting late. He drank the last bit of coffee in his cup, threw a dollar tip to the waiter, and got up from his seat.

There were cheers and celebrations everywhere on the street. Local people gathered in groups, celebrating and welcoming something.

For this lifeless city, this scene was unreal.

Even though Schmidt was curious about what was being celebrated, he didn’t dare to ask the locals. His skin color was too different, and he might be targeted by the locals...

Over the next few days, strange things happened one after another.

First, a Chinese construction company moved in next door, and this was followed by an oil company and an import and export trading company...

Later on, more and more Chinese faces appeared, so did supermarkets, clothing stores, and even bars were slowly opening.

Yes, bars.

This made Schmidt extremely envious.

Their executives had tried to bribe the local officials, to see if they could open an American bar to entertain their employees. The officials agreed and collected the money. But when they were ready to open, the local officials turned on their agreement.

He didn't know how the Chinese were able to bribe the local officials.

Interestingly enough, the Chinese employees weren't as interested in the bars. Most of the customers were American and European employees who worked for Shell and ExxonMobil.

This, of course, also included Schmidt himself.

He just wanted to get drunk.

However, something happened that irritated Schmidt. One day, he suddenly discovered that the drinks sold to them by the Chinese were twice as expensive as the price sold to their own employees.

When he questioned the bartender, the only answer he got was "exchange rate reasons"; there was no additional explanation.

This is a scam!

Although Schmidt was furious, he couldn't do anything.

After all, this was the only bar in town.

Thanks to the Chinese guys, at least he had some fun in his life. He no longer had to drink coffee and read newspapers like an old man.

Over the next week, the situation became even more interesting.

There were more and more Chinese faces on the streets. There was even a Chinatown.

Later on, Schmidt heard from several British oil workers that the Chinese construction companies were preparing to send an engineering team to the El Wak area, to rebuild the city recovered by the Somalia army.

Schmidt was certain that the Somali authorities must have reached some kind of agreement with the Chinese side and exported the reconstruction work to the Chinese.

But there was one thing Schmidt didn't understand...

What was valuable in El Wak?

There was nothing but cacti and camels.

Also, keeping Somalia as an undeveloped country meant the world would have a place to sell their unwanted military equipment.

Yesterday, while drinking in the bar, he heard a familiar arms broker complaining that the Chinese construction workers had taken their jobs. And that Lockheed Martin reduced their remuneration. Now, they had to abandon the "market" that they worked hard to develop and head to the more dangerous Central African region.

Their eyes flashed with excitement, like a 16th-century navigator.

Apparently, in Central Africa, there was a food crisis, as well as constant wars between tribes and warlords.

Even though they were not as "rich" as the pirates in Somalia, there were untapped diamond mines, gold mines, and oil mines. Every inch of land there was full of the smell of money.

Before the Chinese could open up the market there, they could take advantage of the chaos there and make a fortune.

After some drinking, the arms broker fell asleep.

Schmidt didn't disturb his dreams. He drank and thought about his own problems.

More and more things were making him puzzled.

He vaguely felt that huge changes were coming.

He couldn't describe this feeling. He just felt that this change seemed to have started a long time ago and only recently started to surface.

For example, being able to sit here and drink.

Or for example, being able to stay outside the dormitory until ten o'clock at night... The local military and police were stationed here in order to protect the Chinese. In the past, they would occasionally encounter robbers. But there were almost no locals nearby.

However, this made sense.

After all, for a small figure like him, there must be many things behind the scenes that he didn't know about...

Chapter 1288: Gravitational Wave Formula For The Z Particle

After a week of sailing, the Chang'e successfully "docked" on the Moon Palace.

The colonists who landed underwent their last medical examination in the space station. After three days of basic training, they began to take the landing module to the moon in batches.

More than 50% of the news on TV and the internet these days were related to the eating, drinking, and living conditions of the colonists. Even some variety shows had started to become popular.

Lu Zhou heard from Director Liu that recently, many satellite TVs had come to Jinling to shoot variety shows at the space launch site or the astronaut training base. The rental of the facilities was in the tens of millions of yuan per day.

Even though Lu Zhou was not very interested in variety shows, it was quite beneficial to allow more people to become interested in aerospace through the usage of mass media.

Even though only a few people had the opportunity to go to space, with the advancement of technology, space travel would sooner or later become a thing that benefited the general public.

After the successful settlement of the first group of colonists in Guanghan City, not only would the Chinese people become interested, but the foreigners would also be curious about these “people living in space”.

What everyone did not expect was that this trend was actually passed from the scientific and technological world to the cultural world. Aerospace related movies were even being produced in Hollywood.

Few people noticed the military conflict in western Somalia.

Only intelligence personnel from various countries were frantically scratching their heads over this matter. Some military arms companies and military security companies were annoyed by the loss of such a large market.

Even though many North American media had tried to trump up China’s military actions that had caused regional turmoil and civilian casualties, they had no direct evidence to prove China’s participation in this battle.

In addition, the battle ended too quickly. When the New York Times reporter team finally arrived at the front line and prepared to shoot a set of war documentaries, the post-war reconstruction work had already begun for two whole days.

This disappointed the American journalists who were looking forward to reporting an Iraq-like event. They returned home with empty camera cards...

At the ILHCRC headquarters.

At the public cafe.

Luo Wenxuan, the Secretary-General, read the news on his phone. He spoke emotionally.

“Who would have expected, that after a reckless person did a reckless thing, the destiny of a country was changed... What do you think?”

In the page he was reading was a black-and-white photo, and Marach’s name appeared in the text.

Even though Lu Zhou did not know him, apparently, he was the pirate who planned to attack the cruise ship he was on.

Not just that, apparently, this guy was a well-known local warlord, and he occasionally commanded his subordinates to act as pirates, looting and kidnapping many ships from Asia.

Many of these ships belonged to China.

According to the confirmation of the Ethiopian military, the body of this demon, who once frightened countless Somalians, was found near a farm.

Judging from the bullet holes on his body, he was fired at by a group of drones.

“I’ve never been to Africa.”

Luo Wenxuan: “?”

“I’m saying that I don’t care.”

Lu Zhou took a look at the rebuilding of war zone news. He paused for a second and spoke.

“However, I am very happy to hear such news.”

Luo Wenxuan smiled and said, “Because your research has been used in the right place?”

“Sort of... Leaving the unimportant things aside, I hope you can take a look at this.”

Lu Zhou threw a document to Luo Wenxuan’s lap, and it landed on top of his phone.

When Luo Wenxuan saw the document, he was stunned. He had a curious look on his face.

“What is this?”

“The gravitational fluctuation formula for the Z particle.” Lu Zhou’s finger tapped on the document as he said, “I suggest you read it carefully.”

After Wei Hong and Professor Dobrik left his home last time, they returned to Shanghai immediately. They followed the research ideas Lu Zhou provided and started researching the Z particle gravitational wave formula.

According to the division of labor between the two, the latter was responsible for the physical part, while the former was responsible for the mathematical solution.

To be honest, when Lu Zhou saw this paper, he was actually quite surprised. It took less than a month for Professor Wei to come up with this formula.

In his estimation, it would take the two people at least two months to finish the project.

He didn't expect such a great physicist and mathematician in the ILHCRC team.

Even though they were not comparable to him, Lu Zhou was quite relieved to see more and more young physicists with great potential at the ILHCRC.

"Z particle's gravitational fluctuation formula?" After reading a few familiar keywords, Luo Wenxuan touched his chin and said, "I read similar studies, but this is not—"

"Not your research area? Is that what you wanted to say?" Lu Zhou took a sip of coffee and interrupted him, "If you want to win the Nobel Prize, you should learn new things."

"Fine... I will take a closer look."

In the end, Luo Wenxuan patiently spent about half an hour reading the paper from beginning to end.

Then...

After reading it, his eyes froze.

When Lu Zhou saw the surprise in his eyes, he smiled at Luo Wenxuan and said, "Isn't it incredible?"

"Yes... It is quite incredible." Luo Wenxuan couldn't hide the shock in his eyes. He looked at Lu Zhou and said, "If this is true, we will be able to reveal how the gravitational field passes through dimensions... Are you sure about

this? The research was done by Wei Hong and Dobrik? I have never heard of either of them.”

“That’s because you lack the skill of discovering new talent.” Lu Zhou joked, “I hope you can work harder in this area.”

Luo Wenxuan asked eagerly, “Let’s not talk about this... What do you think of this research?”

The more classical ADD model in high energy physics gave an explanation for why gravity was so weak compared to other interactions. That was because gravity could propagate to additional dimensions, so most of the “gravitational lines” were leaked into extra dimensions. This made the gravitational force in three-dimensional space appear weak.

Using this theoretical framework, the universe was like a “wall” in a higher-dimensional space. Electrons, protons, photons, and all other particles in the standard model couldn’t enter the extra dimension. Only the gravitational field lines could extend into this extra dimension.

However, even though the ADD model was a classic theory, it was only a phenomenological model that was derived from experimental data and calculations. It wasn’t correct in an absolute sense.

So far, civilization had not yet mastered an observation method that could prove that gravitational field lines could pass through this wall and enter the extra dimension.

But now, everything was changing...

“You already know, so why ask?” Lu Zhou had a smile on his face. He interlinked his fingers on the table and continued, “As you can see, this can be a powerful tool. It will allow us to research how gravity causes spacetime to bend, and research how space bends, and... find out what gravity is.”

“This is something Einstein never fully understood.”

Luo Wenxuan was silent for a while. He then smiled bitterly.

“This sounds very difficult...”

“That’s for sure. If it is not difficult, someone would have solved this problem by now.” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “In fact, I think this research project is very suitable for you. The reason why I made a special trip to find you today is that I hope you will participate in this project.”

“Huh?” Luo Wenxuan was taken aback. He then sat up straight and almost fell off the chair. He said, “Why... me?”

“Because you are the Secretary-General of the ILHCRC. You could be the next chairman of the board of directors...” Lu Zhou paused for a moment and continued, “How to make physicists at the ILHCRC value this research? How to ensure that the scientific research resources required for this project could be met? These are things you should learn.”

Luo Wenxuan couldn’t help but say, “Then why don’t you do it?”

“Because I can’t do everything...” Lu Zhou’s index finger gently touched the coffee cup on the table. He sighed softly and said, “Moreover, I have other more important things to do.”

Chapter 1289: The Last Stage

2023 Christmas was spent in peace.

The colonists in Guanghan City had successfully settled in their new homes. Except for a rare earth deposit with estimated reserves of more than 30 million tons, where the mining rights were sold to a large domestic mining company, news about Guanghan City seemed to have died down.

As this hot story faded from people’s attention, life seemed to have briefly returned to normal.

However, even though the world returned to normal, for the physics community, the situation was the opposite.

Like a gift from Santa Claus, a message from the ILHCRC attracted the attention of physicists from all over the world.

Professor Luo and the Secretary-General of the ILHCRC joined the Z particle gravitational anomaly research team.

Also, the gravitational wave formula for the Z particle was actually solved by Professor Wei Hong at the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Professor Dobrik from the University of Brussels?

“This is incredible...”

ILHCRC cafe.

Professor Witten sat at the same place Lu Zhou and Luo Wenxuan were sitting last time. He looked at the paper in disbelief.

“From the perspective of a mathematician, this paper is quite exciting. His understanding of algebraic geometry and topology makes people wonder...”

Wilczek: “Wonder if Lu Zhou helped them?”

“Not quite...” Witten turned over the paper in his hand and said, “This is still below Lu Zhou’s standards, but for a scholar in particle physics research, his mathematics proficiency is quite impressive. After all, I have seen too many physics professors, who when doing operations on a mathematical model, would erase a certain letter in a line of formulas and pretend that nothing happened.”

Professor Wilczek, who was drinking black tea, almost choked on the tea. He coughed several times before he spoke.

“That analogy might offend some people...”

“Who cares?” Witten shrugged nonchalantly and said, “I’m old now.”

Over the years, more and more of his old friends had passed away. He would often send emails to his old friends, but there would be no reply.

Even he himself began to gradually feel that it had become increasingly difficult to adapt to the current pace of physics research.

Aging was inevitable.

Whether someone was the king or a peasant, it was impossible to escape this curse.

Since it was difficult to create new amazing achievements, the only thing that Witten cared about was seeing interesting things happen in his lifetime.

Professor Wilczek felt a little sad. He took a sip of the black tea and changed the topic smoothly.

“But anyway... I think this is what I expected. Since Lu Zhou likes this guy’s research, there is at least an 80% chance that there must be an amazing discovery behind this.”

Professor Wilczek felt that his statement was not accurate enough. He thought for a while and added, “Actually... 90% chance or more...”

“It’s not the Z particle gravitational wave formula that surprised me. Although its derivation process was ingenious and subtle, it was far from surprising. Forget about Lu Zhou, even I might be able to do it.”

Witten pushed his reading glasses up the bridge of his nose as he looked at the paper in his hand with an intrigued expression.

“What really surprised me was what Lu Zhou is doing...”

“Lu Zhou?” Wilczek looked at him strangely as he asked, “Isn’t he researching this?”

“Of course not. I can’t see traces of his calculations in this paper, and his name is not in the authors column. I bet that even if he doesn’t want to be named, his collaborators must really want to put his name on it, and they might even do so without authorization...”

Witten seemed to be thinking of something that had happened a long time ago, and a smile appeared on his wrinkled face.

“There is only one possibility for him to leave such an interesting research project alone...”

“He must have discovered something more interesting.”

The moment he heard these words, Wilczek seemed to have thought of something. His pupils suddenly brightened as he muttered to himself, “And even he himself is not sure whether this theory is correct...”

Witten snapped his fingers and spoke with a smile.

“Yes.”

Wilczek smirked and said, "Well, I'm intrigued now! I want to visit him in Jinling and see what he is researching."

Witten smiled and said, "You can't see him."

Wilczek: "Why?"

"From what I know about him, he will lock himself in his room when this happens."

Witten put down the teacup, smiled nostalgically, and said, "He calls it a retreat."

...

In fact, Professor Witten's guess was correct.

Even though Lu Zhou had not started a retreat yet, he was already preparing for one.

Also, the topic he was researching, just like Professor Witten had guessed, was different from Professor Wei Hong and Professor Dobrik's research.

The Z particle's gravitational wave formula was a perfect result, but it could only be regarded as the first step for understanding the cause of gravity disturbance when Z particles fell from a high-dimensional to a low-dimensional space.

If he could succeed in this, it would undoubtedly be an amazing research result. But it was not easy to dig out all the clues in this field of research.

At least not in the short term.

In contrast, Lu Zhou discovered some other things in this area that interested him. Because of this, he temporarily turned his attention away from the research on the Z particle gravitational field disturbance.

However, this discovery might be even more ridiculous.

Even he himself wasn't sure if his guess could be true.

However, this feeling of uncertainty ignited his thirst for knowledge, touching the soul of his science-hungry mind.

He should at least try.

Even if there was only a one percent probability, there was a chance!

“I might have to stay at home for a while... During this time, I won’t be able to contact you.”

During a video call.

Lu Zhou looked at Chen Yushan’s holographic image in front of him. He went silent for a while.

He hesitated for a long time before making this call.

Even he knew that no woman could bear her boyfriend not replying to her texts for a long period of time. Even if there was a valid reason, the girlfriend would think that this was “her fault”.

However, after hearing this, Chen Yushan’s reaction was beyond Lu Zhou’s expectations.

She smiled and said in a relaxed tone, “A retreat?”

“What? How do you know?”

“I’m your girlfriend, I know you well.” Chen Yushan couldn’t help but joke, “Also, you scared me, why were you so serious... I thought you were going to break up with me.”

“No way!”

“Who knows? What if there is a girl younger than me chasing after you? Also, I’m not always by your side. You have so many fans... Every time you post on Weibo, there are so many girls that want your babies...”

Although she had a joking look at the beginning, she couldn’t help but feel a little embarrassed at the end.

As for Lu Zhou, who was on the other end of the phone, he was stunned.

Want my babies?

Are my fans this perverted?

Emm...

Okay then.

Lu Zhou thought about how handsome he was.

“Fine, fine, I’ll stop joking around.”

Chen Yushan looked at Lu Zhou, who wanted to explain but didn’t know how to speak. Chen Yushan smirked at this dumbfounded guy.

She spoke in a gentle tone.

“Remember to take care of yourself. Even if the research is interesting, remember to eat and sleep on time.”

As Lu Zhou looked at his considerate and understanding girlfriend, he was so touched that he was almost speechless.

He gulped.

In the end, he finally said, “Yeah, you too!”

After hanging up the phone, Lu Zhou, who was still sitting at the desk, took a deep breath. To calm his mood, he focused all of his attention on the draft paper sitting on the desk.

“This should be the final stage...”

Lu Zhou gradually entered a flow state. He reached out and picked up the pen on the table.

“The final stage before mastering physics...”

Reaching level 10 in physics.

Just thinking about it made his heart jump out of his chest...

Chapter 1290: Straighten Space-Time

At the ILHCRC headquarters.

In an office with whiteboards.

Professor Wei Hong faced one of the whiteboards, which was almost full of writing. He was holding a marker in his hand. He pondered for a long time.

He then suddenly broke the silence.

“Aha!”

Professor Dobrik, who was standing next to him, asked quickly, “What?”

Just now, with Luo Wenxuan, the three people were discussing the problem of “possible causes of the gravitational field disturbance by the Z particles.” Wei Hong gave a possibility from a mathematical point of view on the whiteboard.

However, while the other two were listening carefully, he suddenly stopped talking. He stood there for a long time, as if his thoughts were stuck by something.

Professor Dobrik thought he had discovered an amazing idea, so he quickly looked at him.

Professor Wei Hong pondered for about two minutes. He molded the ideas in his mind into simple and understandable language before speaking.

“The essence of gravity is the bending of the object’s own space-time. The Z particles moving from high to low dimensions do not interfere with the gravitational field itself, but they change the curvature of space-time relative to the gravitational field.”

He picked up a pen and drew two parallel circles on the whiteboard, connecting the upper and lower ends of the circles with two arcs.

“This is the curvature in space-time. Assume that the curvature is x . Assuming that the two lines are the lines of the gravitational field in conventional space-time, when the Z particle oscillates at both ends, the value of x changes and is reduced to infinitely close to zero. These two arcs can also be infinitely straightened, approaching a straight line—”

As Luo Wenxuan watched the two clean straight lines drawn by Professor Wei Hong between the two arcs, he had a look of surprise on his face.

“I understand what you mean, but it sounds... a bit weird. In other words, we only need two lunar hadron colliders to create a portal at the other end of the galaxy?”

Wei Hong shook his head.

“This analogy is not quite accurate. Technically, it is more like a highway between two undulating peaks.”

According to Einstein’s general theory of relativity, matter and time (space-time) would bend due to the existence of matter. In the classical universe where the matter was ubiquitous, the universe was directly observable.

In this curved universe, a straight line traveled from A to B. But in fact, in a high-dimensional universe, it traveled in a curved line.

If Wei Hong’s conjecture was correct, this meant that they might “straighten” the curly space-time in some way and directly follow a true “straight line” through the curly universe, to go where they wanted to go.

Using Mars as an example, the closest distance between Mars and Earth was 55 million kilometers, and it would take 182 seconds to travel this distance at the speed of light.

However, if the curved space-time between the two was “straightened”, this distance could be shortened to 5.5 million or even 550,000 kilometers.

Therefore, even if humans didn’t have a method to surpass the speed of light, they could still actually break through the limit of the speed of light and travel through the universe in a very short amount of time.

Luo Wenxuan was shocked by the broad prospects unfolding behind this theory. He was stunned for a long time before he gradually revealed a serious expression.

“Is there a way to prove it?” he asked.

“It’s difficult.” Wei Hong looked at the calculations on the whiteboard with a solemn expression. He gradually showed a bitter smile as he said, “Actually, it is very difficult. This involves many complex sub-problems, and also, it is related to the most complex problem: high-dimensional differential manifolds and algebraic geometry. It’s no exaggeration to say that if this problem is

abstracted into a mathematical problem, its difficulty is on the level of the Poincaré conjecture!”

Luo Wenxuan and Professor Dobrik looked at each other.

Even for the latter, who was not proficient at mathematics, he was aware of the seven Millennium Prize Problems.

Poincaré conjecture was the crown of differential geometry, and it took nearly a century of hard work by three generations of mathematicians to remove it from the top of the mountain.

If the difficulty of solving this problem was more difficult than Poincaré conjecture...

Then they would have almost no chance of succeeding.

“If we can prove this conclusion, our names will go down in history,” Professor Dobrik said.

Luo Wenxuan smiled and said, “It’s more than just history... We’ll be on the same level as Einstein.”

This was the portal to the edge of the galaxy!

Whoever could find this portal would be the founding father of the interstellar age.

Even if it only provided a theoretical way of navigation between star systems, it would still be significant. If someone in the distant future achieved long-distance navigation using their theories, then they would receive more honor than Newton and Einstein combined.

Professor Wei Hong also sighed softly.

“It’s unfortunate, but this theory is not something ordinary people can complete... At least it is beyond the scope of my ability.”

“What about Professor Witten?”

“If he were in his thirties, maybe he could, but now... It’s basically impossible.” Wei Hong continued after a pause, “So far, the most promising person to solve this problem is Professor Lu.”

Luo Wenxuan saw the way the two looked at him.

“What are you looking at me for?”

Professor Wei Hong said, “You have the best relationship with Professor Lu... We have a higher success chance if you ask him for help.”

Dobrik nodded quickly in agreement.

“I think so too.”

The experience of being detained at Jinling Airport was scarring.

“Even if I want to, there’s no way. I am his friend... But he is in a retreat. It is almost impossible to contact him.”

Luo Wenxuan’s face couldn’t help but show a helpless expression.

To be honest, he wondered if he was Lu Zhou’s friend or Lu Zhou’s student.

Professor Dobrik didn’t want to give up, and he tried one last time.

“But... How will you know if you don’t try?”

“Even if we do manage to contact him, he is unlikely to invest a lot of time on a theory that is unlikely to be applied... Unless it is really worth it.”

Luo Wenxuan shrugged and continued, “So, for us, the only way now is to write our conjecture in a paper and publish it. If it arouses his interest, this problem might be solved. If not... I think it is not worth wasting too much time on it.”

This was the best solution.

From what Luo Wenxuan knew about Lu Zhou, even though he would hardly reply to messages when he was in a retreat, he would not completely isolate himself from academia.

He would still read the latest research papers.

If Lu Zhou didn’t respond...

Then it meant that Lu Zhou didn't think this research project was worthy of his time.

If this was the case, then Luo Wenxuan felt that they might as well give up.

After all, exceeding the speed of light sounded a bit ridiculous. To be honest, he was doubtful even now. After all, there were more reliable explanations.

"This is our only choice..."

After a moment of silence, Professor Wei Hong nodded. Although he didn't like to wait for something uncertain, there seemed to be no better choice.

"... I will use as much mathematics as possible to describe this conjecture in a more formal manner."

Luo Wenxuan looked at him and nodded.

"Then I'll have to thank you in advance."

The three were preparing to return to the previous discussion.

However, the phone in Luo Wenxuan's pocket suddenly rang.

"Wait a minute... I have to answer this."

As the Secretary-General of the ILHCRC, he always had to answer a large number of work calls every day.

Even though he wanted to leave these calls aside, considering that Lu Zhou was a "hands-off" kind of chairman, he could only bite the bullet and take on Lu Zhou's work.

There was no contact name, but Luo Wenxuan still answered the call.

Wei Hong and Dobrik did not bother him. They stopped discussing the topic and waited for their teammate to return.

However, instead of Luo Wenxuan's footsteps, they heard a strange cry from the distance. That voice probably belonged to Professor Luo Wenxuan, but it was very high pitched—

Almost like his voice was traveling through curved space-time.

Dobrik looked at Wei Hong and asked, “What is he saying?”

“I don’t know...”

Wei Hong glanced at the direction Luo Wenxuan was in with a bewildered look. Just when Wei Hong hesitated whether to go outside the room and see what happened, he saw Luo Wenxuan walk in with a dazed look on his face.

Professor Dobrik quickly got up and asked, “What happened?”

Wei Hong stood up too.

“Who was on the phone?”

“Lu Zhou...”

Luo Wenxuan gulped. He said, “Just now... we were discussing whether oscillating Z particles can bend space-time, right?”

“Yeah... Why?!”

Professor Wei Hong suddenly realized what was going on. Luo Wenxuan nodded and spoke.

“Yeah.

“He proved it.

“Just a few minutes ago.

“A mathematical proof...”

Chapter 1291: The Effect of the Z Particle Transition on Spacetime Curvature

The phone call ended.

Lu Zhou gently exhaled the air in his chest, he put down his phone and looked at the thick pile of draft papers on the table. He had a smile of relief on his face.

“Thirty-one days... This is probably the longest time I have been in a retreat.”
Lu Zhou looked at the calendar on his phone and sighed.

When was the last time I felt this way?

I don't even remember.

Ever since he reached level 10 in mathematics, most of the difficult mathematics calculations had become meaningless to him. Whenever he saw a mathematical formula, using his mathematical intuition, he was able to quickly pinpoint a few possible solutions.

For other people, thinking about high-dimensional space consumed almost all of their brainpower. But for him, abstract differential manifolds were as simple as Lego.

But this time, the situation was different.

When he wrote down the first line of the formula, his mathematical intuition did not tell him which direction to go in. The messy clues were entangled, making it difficult to figure out the solution.

As he continued to try different methods and explored the depths of this maze, more and more difficulties and traps began to manifest.

Lu Zhou wondered more than once whether his conjecture was unsolvable.

Fortunately, he did not give up. In the end, he found a suitable differential manifold in the complex plane. Using the method of algebraic geometry, he converted it into algebraic form and integrated it into the corresponding function for high-dimensional space. He finally found the way out of the maze...

“This is a classic high-level topology problem, just like the Poincaré conjecture...”

Lu Zhou twisted the pen in his hand. He looked at the draft paper and smiled as he talked to himself.

“But it is much more difficult than the Poincaré conjecture. It involves far more than just a few differential manifolds or certain types of high-dimensional spaces.”

“Fortunately, this is my expertise.”

The first Millennium Prize Problem he solved was the solution existence for the Navier–Stokes equations.

Back then, he constructed a differential manifold called the L-manifold, which knocked down the huge problem that plagued fluid dynamics engineers.

He had used this weapon to kill many dragons guarding the treasure.

Using a similar method, he once again killed a monster that was blocking the gap between human civilization and the deepest mysteries of the universe.

And this monster was far more powerful than the average monster.

And the treasure guarded by it was far more valuable than the Millennium Prize Problems...

“Time and space dictate how matter moves, matter dictates how space and time bend.

“Particles in the n -dimension don’t move to the $n-1$ dimension for no reason. But once this transition occurs, it opens a channel between the string and the matter.

“This channel can be defined in a mathematical way.”

Lu Zhou looked at the fully-written piece of paper, at the formula that could change the future of human civilization. He had a smile of victory on his face.

“The next step is to enter it into the computer.”

It would be a shame if he couldn’t share his result with the rest of the world.

Lu Zhou spent about two hours reorganizing the proof process on the draft paper. He then entered it into the computer.

“The Effect of the Z particle Transition on Spacetime Curvature”

When Lu Zhou finally finished editing the paper, he uploaded the paper to arXiv, leaned back on his chair, and stretched his aching shoulders.

“The next step is to prove my conjecture experimentally.”

The physics community might not accept his conjecture immediately. But as the chairman of the ILHCRC, he had the authority on how to use next year's funds.

After the Z particle incident, almost no one could challenge his authority. Even if all of the board members voted against him, the vast majority of physicists at the ILHCRC would definitely be on his side.

"Let me think... Deploy a Z particle clock in the geosynchronous orbit and the moon orbit respectively? No, wait, the distance between the moon and the earth is a bit too short. Let's switch to Mars."

The consignment work and the order for the "Z particle clock" could be handled by the Lunar Orbit Committee.

Lu Zhou already had a complete blueprint in his mind for how to conduct the entire experiment.

He only wanted to do one thing.

Which was to share the joy in his heart with the person he loved the most...

"Xiao Wang, send a message to Wang Peng and ask him to pick me up."

[Yes, Master. (´—▽—`)]

...

When Lu Zhou left the house, it was already ten o'clock in the evening. When he sat in the Electric Purple parked downstairs, snow was falling from the sky.

Wang Peng, who started the car, asked casually when he was looking at the snowflakes under the street lights, "It's already ten o'clock, are we still going?"

Lu Zhou thought for a while and said, "Can we arrive before eleven?"

"Won't take that long, ten-thirty should be fine."

"In that case, let's go."

After about a 20-minute drive, a purple car stopped at the entrance of the luxurious residential complex near the high-tech zone.

Lu Zhou passed the face recognition access gate. He walked into the building with an umbrella. He went into the elevator, arrived at the floor, then gently pressed the doorbell.

Soon, he heard the sound of footsteps coming from behind the door, which was then followed by a voice.

“Who is it?”

“It’s me.”

The door opened with a warm breeze. A look of joy and surprise appeared behind the door.

“What are you doing here? Didn’t even tell me you were coming... It’s so messy inside, give me a second.”

Chen Yushan suddenly realized that she was wearing pajamas. She had no makeup on and her hair was messy. She wanted to close the door.

Fortunately, Lu Zhou reacted quickly. He used his foot to block the door.

“Do you want me to freeze outside?”

Even though there was central heating in the hallways, it was still a bit cold. By the time she changed clothes and put on makeup, Lu Zhou would have already frozen to death.

Chen Yushan suddenly noticed the snow on his shoulders. She blushed and said, “I was about to sleep. I didn’t know it’s snowing outside... Come in then.”

After entering the house, Lu Zhou put on slippers and sat down on the sofa in the living room.

Chen Yushan came out of the kitchen with two cups of hot milk. She placed them on the coffee table.

“Are you cold? Drink this. By the way, your retreat is over?”

After testing the temperature of the milk, Lu Zhou took a sip.

As the warm fluid entered his throat and stomach, he felt the cold and exhaustion in his body being washed away.

“Yeah, it’s over.”

“So, it seems like you discovered something important again.” She was sitting across from Lu Zhou. Her beautiful face seemed to be glowing, making Lu Zhou’s heart skip a beat.

“Good guess.” Lu Zhou smiled and suddenly thought of something. He said, “I want to give you a present on Valentine’s Day.”

When Chen Yushan heard about Valentine’s Day gifts, she suddenly became excited and asked curiously, “What gift?”

Lu Zhou smiled mysteriously.

“If I tell you now, there is no surprise.

“You’ll know when it’s Valentine’s.”

The snow outside the window was getting bigger and bigger, and the snowflakes soon gently covered the trees and windows.

The visible things left were the street lights and car lights.

Today was no different than any other day.

The only difference was that...

Because of a paper that suddenly appeared on arXiv, physicists living in the eastern hemisphere had begun to lose sleep...

Chapter 1292: Not Impossible

Wilson Ohanian was a physics professor at Stanford University, and he was mainly involved in particle physics research. As the former winner of the Oliver E. Buckley Condensed Matter Prize, he was regarded as one of the outstanding young physicists that had emerged in recent years.

Even though he was bathed in the envious gaze from his peers, only Ohanian himself knew how difficult the road he had chosen was.

Because of technology limitations, they still couldn't verify if the conjectures from the last century were correct. The exploration of the future had hardly begun.

Fortunately, the Chinese, who had suddenly become rich in recent years, had generously built a collider larger than CERN on the moon. This had fast tracked the development of particle physics.

For example, the Z particle.

This particle was discovered in the high-dimensional world at the end of last year. It had broadened the research of particle physics to the invisible world.

Lu Zhou, who discovered this particle, won the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2023 because of this groundbreaking discovery. He became a candidate for the most outstanding physicist of the century.

Ohanian saw the broad prospects behind this research area at a glance. He immediately changed his research area and began researching the Z particle. He achieved quite good results for the research on the "dimensional change of the Z particle".

If everything went well, he would win the next Dirac Medal.

However...

Something didn't go well.

"This is bull crap..."

"Hyperspace channel? The curvature of spacetime?"

"According to this, I only need to dig a hole in the ground to get to the other side of the galaxy?"

Ohanian cursed and threw the paper in his hand into the trash can. He didn't hesitate to express his contempt for the theory of "hyperspace channel" and "spacetime curvature change".

In fact, his contempt was not without reason.

In general relativity, if the topological structure of space changed in a bounded area, then a closed time curve in the spacetime range would exist where this change occurred.

The time curve was the physical trajectory of a mass object in spacetime.

A popular explanation for this was that changing the topology of space was forbidden by general relativity!

This was not a just conjecture, it was a theorem proven by Stephen Hawking.

In fact, Ohanian had a similar idea a long time ago when he saw the disturbance of the gravitational field when the Z particle fell from a high dimension to a low dimension.

However, this idea was quickly denied by himself.

Because if he wanted to prove or disprove this idea, he would need a huge amount of calculation to support it. Even mathematicians who specialized in topology and algebraic geometry would find it difficult.

He verified this with a mathematics professor at Stanford University.

Therefore, he preferred believing in another explanation.

Which was that, when the Z particle moved from a high dimension to a low dimension, a loss of mass would occur. This loss of mass in dimensionality would eventually lead to a decrease in the gravitation observed in classical spacetime.

And where did this part of gravity go?

He thought it could be an extra dimension.

However, this paper completely went against his research. It seemed like the Dirac Medal was out of his reach...

The office assistant stood tremblingly beside him, afraid to speak to the angry professor.

After the professor seemed to have calmed down a little, the assistant gulped and whispered, "But the author of this paper is Professor Lu..."

The air in the office froze.

Professor Ohanian, who was reaching for his coffee cup, froze.

“What did you say?”

“The paper was written by Professor Lu... He posted it on arXiv. I followed your instructions and printed out all the papers worth seeing in this research area.”

The corners of his mouth twitched. With a stiff expression on his face, Professor Ohanian asked, “Is he the corresponding author?”

This happened from time to time. Not all supervisors had the time to correct every paper their students wrote. For academic leaders like Lu Zhou, maybe he didn’t even remember how many students he had.

It was helpful to put the name of a great scholar as the corresponding author. It could prevent the reviewing editor from throwing the paper into the trash can, and the attitude of the scholars who peer-reviewed the paper would also be more cautious.

If Professor Lu was only the corresponding author, it didn’t mean he had participated in the research. Perhaps he hadn’t even read this paper.

After all, the papers listed on arXiv weren’t published; they were just preprints...

“He is the only author...” The words that came from his assistant’s mouth completely shattered Ohanian’s hopes. He said, “His name is the only name...”

There was a long silence in the office.

After a minute went by, Ohanian suddenly sighed. He stood up with his hands on the armrest and walked to the trash can.

He picked up the crumpled pages from the trash can and took them back to the desk. After he spread them out, Ohanian sat down patiently and read the entire 20-page paper from beginning to end.

After about half an hour, he muttered, “Well... I can’t be too sure, even though it sounds ridiculous, it’s not necessarily completely wrong.”

The assistant looked at his grumpy boss in amazement. It took only half an hour for Ohanian to completely change his attitude. The assistant standing in the office almost doubted whether the person sitting here was the real Ohanian. The Ohanian he knew used to berate others for having a different academic point of view.

The assistant gulped and said, "Professor."

Professor Ohanian replied without looking up, "What?"

Assistant: "If he is correct... What does it mean?"

"What does it mean? Haha, what does it mean..."

As if he was going crazy, Professor Ohanian grinned and stared at the paper motionlessly.

"It means that the spacetime view of general relativity will be subverted. Our understanding of classical spacetime will change... In fact, that's not all.

"The most important thing is..."

Professor Ohanian was halfway through a sentence. He stopped speaking for a long time. The young assistant, who was holding his breath, couldn't help but ask, "The most important thing is?"

Professor Ohanian spoke with confidence and certainty.

"The most important thing is that this means of traveling faster than the speed of light might be possible.

"The science fiction movies you've seen, whether it's Hollywood or elsewhere...

"At least half of the technology in the movies could become real."

Chapter 1293: Have You Seen Him Joke Before?

The paper Lu Zhou published on arXiv stirred up waves of discussion.

Professor Ohanian's shock was only a tiny part of the chaos in the physics world.

Ohanian quickly booked the flights and hotels and prepared to fly to Shanghai. On the other hand, the entire physics community was going crazy over this amazing paper.

"This is really spectacular. I don't know how to describe the feeling in my heart!"

"As for the paper itself, I think it's too early to give a yes or no answer. I think... At least before Professor Lu's report, it would be inappropriate to give an evaluation... This is out of respect for him."

Professor Wilczek, who loved to bet and debate with colleagues, remained rather silent this time.

Maybe it was because he lost so badly against Lu Zhou before, or maybe because he had missed another chance of winning the Nobel Prize. The uncertainty in the air made him unclear about whether he should express his opinion.

Professor Edward Witten was a leader in theoretical physics, and he had once won the Fields Medal. He also expressed his shock on his personal blog after seeing the paper.

Just like Professor Wilczek, he did not make a judgment on the correctness of this paper... Even though many colleagues hoped that he would do so.

"The Z particle moving from high to low dimensions opens up channels between dimensions? Straighten spacetime? This sounds like science fiction... Does this mean we can find a true straight path in the universe?"

"Even though I'm not certain whether he is correct, I hope he is."

Even though the paper published by Lu Zhou was only a preprint, everyone in the physics world knew his habits.

He would never publish unless he was certain he was correct.

He would only upload a preprint after countless calculations and verifications, and even then, it was only when he was absolutely certain.

In addition to the two veterans in theoretical physics, the 2016 Nobel Prize in Physics winner, Professor Duncan Haldane from Princeton University, also expressed his views on the paper.

His opinion was different from the other two big names.

As a man who discovered topological phase transitions and topological phase matter theoretically, he was one of the few physicists today who could rival the top mathematicians.

Especially in the areas of topology and algebraic geometry.

Therefore, for the paper published by Lu Zhou titled “The Effect of The Z Particle Transition on Spacetime Curvature”, he gave an evaluation from a mathematical point of view.

“... There is a certain degree of difficulty in the mathematical proof part of the thesis. Frankly speaking, even for me, it is quite tricky.

“If you aren’t an expert in algebra and geometry unification theory, and you have trouble regarding spatial imagination, I advise you to give up reading it for the time being. It will burn all of your brain cells, and you will get nowhere.”

Even though he spoke bluntly, his meaning was clear.

If someone was not very proficient in mathematics, they shouldn’t think about understanding the paper.

However, not everyone wanted to accept reality.

All those in the theoretical physics community were losing their minds over this paper. Many mathematics experts also cast their curious gazes toward this paper.

After all, this was Professor Lu’s paper.

After winning the Fields Medal and the Carl Friedrich Gauss Prize, this genius completed the unified theory of algebraic geometry, which shocked the world. He then faded out of the field of mathematics and hadn’t published new mathematics research results for a while.

Even though the paper published this time was not a mathematical paper, the theories it used were the most cutting-edge research in today's mathematics world.

In addition to being an essential part of physics, this paper could be regarded as a standard in terms of its mathematical demonstration. The application of differential manifolds and the explanation of the unified theory of algebra and geometry were magnificent!

Because of this, many scholars had read this paper.

The influence of this paper quickly spread from the field of physics to the entire academic world, then spread to the public.

Although most people didn't know what the Z particle was and what impact it had on high-dimensional space, one thing attracted everyone's attention.

Which was that this could become the key to faster than light travel!

This interpretation made everyone want to understand what the Z particle was.

On Twitter.

The Z particle became a trending topic.

Before, this word was only understood by particle physicists. Now, almost everyone on the Internet understood what it was.

[Warp travel? Does this mean that it will take less than a second to reach the moon?]

[Jesus... This is terrifying!]

[Joining the Chinese ILHCRC plan is a wrong decision. Now, physicists all over the world are working for them, and soon, they will master warp travel and throw us behind! Just like they have done in the moon landing project!]

[This must be the darkest moment in human history... Remember the research from the ILHCRC some time ago? The Void theory! Maybe the channel they opened was not to go to some other planet at all, but straight to hell...]

[Wait, have you guys wondered if this could be fake news? That Lu Zhou guy just posted a paper, and you guys are freaking out! Maybe he's just joking with us.]

[Problem is, have you ever seen him joke around?]

This comment ended all of the doubts.

Lu Zhou had never made jokes in academia.

Not even once!

If this were another physicist, they could argue that the author was just trying to receive funding.

But this was Professor Lu...

He didn't need funding.

This was just a theoretical study that might become the key to warp travel. But in the eyes of many people, it was no different from a real warp drive.

After all, the name Lu Zhou was too dazzling.

The topic was widely discussed on the Internet, and it quickly attracted the attention of major media outlets around the world.

The third day after the paper was uploaded, the Washington Post published a headline.

The headline was quite long.

It was exactly what everyone was thinking.

[Is this the key to interstellar travel? Or the passage to hell? The latest discoveries of the world-renowned scholar might change our future...]

Chapter 1294: Send a Pair of Photons

Lu Zhou discovered that he was trending.

The kind that grew exponentially.

This wasn't the first time something like this had happened. However, this was completely beyond his expectations. He thought that after he released his paper, it would only cause a sensation in the physics world. He didn't expect that even the "Washington Post" would talk about him in their headlines.

Also...

Columbia TV also invited Professor Suskander from Stanford University to do a pop-science interview program.

As one of the founders of string theory, Professor Suskander was one of the veterans in the field of theoretical physics. Even though research on Z particles was not his specialty, he was an expert on the general theory of relativity and spacetime curvature.

Faced with the interviewer from Columbia TV, Professor Suskander, who was inside his laboratory, thought for a while. He took out a white piece of paper from his desk.

"Do you see this paper?"

Interviewer: "I do... But Professor Suskander, is there anything special about it?"

"Let's assume it represents a three-dimensional space, with point A as the earth and point B as the neighboring star 4.22 light-years away from us. Now I use a straight line to connect them..."

Professor Suskander used a ballpoint pen to draw a line between the two points on the paper.

He looked at the confused interviewer and said, "Normally, we go from our solar system to the neighboring star, that is, from A to B. Even if we ignore the various complex orbital changes and proceed along a straight line, it is a long journey. This is because our universe is actually distorted, just like this..."

The old professor crumpled the white paper in his hand and shoved it in front of the interviewer.

“See this? This is what our universe really looks like. The white paper ball represents three-dimensional space. Because there is a gravitational force throughout the universe, higher-dimensional space is distorted.

“As you can see, A and B are actually very close together. They’re almost touching... But this is looking at it from a high dimensional view.

“Because we are three-dimensional creatures, we cannot leave the surface of the paper. So the shortest distance we can travel is the straight line.”

Professor Suskander unfolded the paper ball in his hand. He pointed at the line on the paper and said, “This is the line the Falcon rockets have to travel.

“But with a warp drive, this path won’t appear on the paper at all. We can go straight to the fourth or fifth dimension...”

“Just like this!”

Suskander crunched the paper into a ball again. He pierced the pen through the paper.

As the gray-haired old man looked at the amazed interviewer, he smiled and continued, “I hope you understand.

“If not, let me give you an example.

“With this method, it might only take half an hour to get to Mars.

“I think that makes things clear.”

The interview continued.

But the latter half was much less interesting.

Lu Zhou picked up the remote control and turned off the TV. He was sitting on the sofa in the living room. He gave his thoughts on the program.

“It’s a very vivid interpretation, and the analogy is quite unique... Mostly correct.”

The only problem was that the professor was being too optimistic.

Even if the Z particle had this magical characteristic of being able to act as a space bridge, it was still difficult to use it to achieve warp travel... At least for the next fifty years.

Of course, for a pop-science program, Professor Suskander did quite a good job.

For people who lacked spatial imagination, it was easier to imagine the universe as a paper ball with dots on the surface.

However, Director Li, who was sitting across from Lu Zhou, seemed to have misunderstood his words.

The old man grabbed the armrests of the leather sofa. He was so excited his beard almost fell off. He looked like he might have a heart attack at any moment.

“Is this real? It will only take half an hour to get to Mars?”

Lu Zhou said, “Half an hour is an exaggeration. This is just a theory, you know what I mean? Even for something as simple as the atomic bomb, it took twenty years between the discovery of the mass-energy equation to Otto Hahn’s uranium fission thesis.”

The Z particle was also more difficult to find stably than ordinary subatomic particles. Applications for subatomic particles such as mesons, quarks, gluons, and photons had not yet been found. It was way too early to consider the applications of the Z particle.

Scientific progress needed time to develop. Only when the time was right, could a discovery turn into an amazing technology.

Lu Zhou didn’t know when this day would come.

By his estimation, it would at least take a century?

While thinking, Lu Zhou’s eyes stared at Director Li’s fingers on the sofa armrest.

He wasn’t worried that this old man would have a heart attack. This old man was much tougher than he imagined. The only thing Lu Zhou worried about was that the old man would break his sofa.

He quite liked this sofa.

Many world-famous or soon-to-be world-famous physicists and mathematicians had sat here and had cups of coffee with him before.

It might not be a historical relic, but there was at least some meaning behind it.

After Director Li heard Lu Zhou deny the claim that they could reach Mars within half an hour, Director Li couldn't help but look disappointed. His elevated blood pressure gradually dropped as he muttered, "So... We can't take a shortcut to Mars?"

Lu Zhou took a sip of coffee, thought for a while, then said with a sigh, "It's not impossible..."

In an instant, Director Li's blood pressure rose again at a speed visible to the naked eye.

This time, he nearly had a heart attack.

The old man sat up straight and stared at Lu Zhou with frantic eyes as he asked sincerely, "How?"

"Let's start with verifying the theory." Lu Zhou put down the coffee cup in his hand. He looked at Director Li seriously and said, "For example, send a Z particle clock to Mars orbit first."

Director Li immediately asked, "Then what?"

"Then?"

Lu Zhou smiled and leaned back on the sofa. He raised his eyebrows and said, "Then we send a pair of photons."

Chapter 1295: Wasting Time is Despicable

The roads outside the ILHCRC headquarters building were all blocked.

Reporters from major television stations and newspapers blocked the entrance. This seriously affected the staff who were working here.

Even though the ILHCRC security blocked some of the people, a small number of reporters still sneaked into the parking lot.

Luo Wenxuan parked his car and pressed the electronic lock to go upstairs. He looked at the group of reporters carrying cameras and microphones. When they surrounded him like zombies, he was dumbfounded.

“Hello, I am a reporter from the Observer newspaper. May I ask, Secretary-General Luo, does the latest research from the ILHCRC mean that warp travel is possible?”

“It is possible in the theoretical sense, but the probability is very small.”

“Secretary-General Luo, does this mean that China will soon start exploring the distant star system? Can we set foot in Andromeda in this lifetime?”

“Good question, maybe we can, if we live for two centuries.”

“Secretary-General Luo—”

“Excuse me, the conference is beginning soon. If you have any questions, please contact our ILHCRC spokesperson. That is our official media channel.”

Luo Wenxuan struggled to squeeze out of the crowd. He rushed into the building under the cover of the security guards.

He looked as the wooden door behind him close. The crowd gradually dispersed under the force of the security guards. He took a sigh of relief and wiped out the sweat from his forehead.

“Looks like the reporters quite like you.”

Luo Wenxuan heard a familiar voice. He looked up and saw Lu Zhou standing beside him with a smile on his face.

A look of surprise suddenly appeared on Luo Wenxuan’s face. He looked at Lu Zhou up and down in disbelief. He spoke with a weird expression on his face.

“How did you get in... Weren’t you blocked by the reporters?”

“I have my own ways.” Lu Zhou smiled faintly. He then turned around and said, “The meeting is about to begin, let’s go over together.”

Even though Luo Wenxuan had many questions, there was no time to ask for details.

After swallowing his curiosity, Luo Wenxuan took a few breaths. He then quickly followed Lu Zhou’s footsteps. They walked toward the conference hall...

...

The ILHCRC board meeting was about to begin.

Even though the discussions were all boring academic issues, because of the amazing prospects behind the Z particle, this conference attracted attention from the world.

However, although people were eager to know more inside information, Lu Zhou still did not allow reporters from any media to come in and listen. Instead, he arranged for the media outlets to attend a press conference in another building.

The official press spokesperson of the ILHCRC would report to them the results of the meeting discussion as soon as possible and would also answer some questions.

Lu Zhou looked at the directors who were already sitting at the conference table. He cleared his throat and said, “Let’s get straight to business.”

He clicked the laser pointer in his hand. A map of the solar system appeared on the big screen behind him.

The members of the board sitting at the conference table looked at each other, not knowing what Lu Zhou was planning to do. A few people, including Luo Wenxuan, had a few guesses in their minds.

Lu Zhou said, “The theoretical demonstrations are finished. The next part is the experiment. We need to deploy a Z particle clock in the geosynchronous orbit and the Mars orbit, and then—”

“Wait, wait a minute, what do you mean the theory has been completed?”

Professor Whittle, a member of the US ILHCRC board of directors and a director of the Brookhaven Science Associates, raised his right hand and interrupted Lu Zhou. He stood up with an expression of distrust on his face as he spoke.

“Normally, shouldn’t we first discuss the paper itself and determine whether it is correct, then only discuss how to design the experiments to prove it?”

Lu Zhou wasn’t angry because his speech was interrupted. He nodded and said, “Of course, if you have any questions about a part of the paper, you can ask them now.”

Professor Whittle paused for a second. After holding back for a second, he said angrily, “I haven’t found any problems yet, but it doesn’t mean other people haven’t either. I think at least we should—”

Lu Zhou glanced around the conference table and asked, “Does anyone else have any questions?”

The people sitting at the conference table looked at each other, but no one stood up.

Forget about asking questions.

Most of them did not even understand the paper, and even if some of them did, they only had a surface level understanding.

“As you can see, we shouldn’t be wasting any more time.” Lu Zhou shrugged as he looked at Professor Whittle, who was looking pale. Lu Zhou continued, “If we wait until the physics community recognizes this theory before we design an experiment, we would have to wait at least five years or even more.”

Professor Whittle: “What’s wrong with that?”

Lu Zhou said, “What’s wrong is that we would be wasting time. If you find a problem, tell me. If not, stay quiet and watch. I will prove that I am correct.”

Professor Whittle still wanted to say something, but he remembered what happened with the Z particle last time. He finally pushed his complaints back into his throat.

Professor Whittle sat back down in his seat. Lu Zhou nodded and looked around the conference table.

“Does anyone else have questions?”

“I have some questions.”

“Please, tell me.”

“Let’s forget about the paper... Why not the moon? Why Mars?”

Professor Fernando was a permanent member of the British ILHCRC board. He stood up and raised his own question with a hesitant look on his face.

However, after hearing this sentence, Lu Zhou sighed.

“If this is your question, you obviously haven’t even read my paper.”

Professor Fernando blushed and said, “I swear I read it, but only a part of it... I haven’t finished it yet.”

In fact, he didn’t understand the paper at all.

Mathematics was not his area of expertise.

Although he could also use mathematical tools to solve problems encountered in theoretical physics research, most of those tools were out of date.

Lu Zhou didn’t care for Professor Fernando’s excuse. He supported his hands on the conference table and got up from his chair. He turned around and walked to the whiteboard, picked up the marker, and wrote down a few lines of equations.

$$[L = \Psi \alpha \epsilon \mu \nu \beta \gamma \delta \mu (\partial \nu + i m \gamma \nu / 2) \Psi \beta]$$

[...]

Everyone looked at the equations on the whiteboard with a muddled expression.

Almost none of the board members knew what Lu Zhou wanted to do.

However, after Lu Zhou wrote the last line of calculations, a few professors showed a look of realization.

This included Luo Wenxuan and another European physicist from CERN.

After completing the writing on the blackboard, Lu Zhou turned and looked at the conference table. He then spoke.

“The Z particle itself does not have enough energy to change the curvature of the space, and it is impossible to poke a hole in space... A wormhole is impossible.

“However, it can disturb the gravitational field.”

Lu Zhou looked at the board members sitting at the conference table. He continued in a serious tone, “This is very important.

“Spacetime is distorted under the interference of gravitation, and this distortion is unevenly distributed around us. Changing the gravitational field is equivalent to indirectly changing the curvature of spacetime.

“Imagine if we wanted to warp travel, how do we flatten light-years worth of space? This is obviously impossible now, but—”

With the marker in his hand, Lu Zhou tapped on the whiteboard lightly.

“But we can use the gravitational force of stars, or in other words, use the gravitational bond between star systems. The spacetime would be twisted by the gravitational force between the star systems! Then we can find the path that is closest to our destination.

“Of course, for an experiment, we don’t need to send a space probe to Proxima Centauri, which is a few light-years away. This experiment can be done in the solar system.

“For example, we can use the gravitational bond between planets and planets to open a hyperspace channel between planets and find a shortcut.”

Lu Zhou paused for a second before he continued, “This is why we must send the experimental equipment to Mars.

“We need its gravity.

“The mass of the moon is around 1% that of Earth. Even though it is closer, it is difficult to form a stable hyperspace channel according to the calculations.

“In theory, Jupiter is a more suitable choice, but the distance is too far, and the asteroid belt in the middle is also a problem.

“Considering all factors, Mars, which has a mass of 14% of Earth, is the best choice.

“Any other questions?”

Professor Fernando hesitated for a while before he shook his head and sat back. Professor Whittle gulped and opened his mouth. He wanted to say something, but nothing came out of his mouth.

He felt like he was just schooled by Lu Zhou...

“Looks like we don’t have any objections.”

Lu Zhou was satisfied with the efficiency of the meeting. He turned over the meeting documents in his hand, cleared his throat, and continued, “Next, we will discuss the structure of the Z particle clock...

“As well as how to execute this experiment.”

Chapter 1296: Before Chinese New Year!

The meeting ended.

Professor Whittle walked confidently out of the conference room. He cursed in a quiet voice, and he had an expression of resentment on his face.

“This dictator! Might as well fire the board.”

When he worked in a similar position at CERN, no one dared to ignore his opinions like this. However, during his time on the ILHCRC board of directors, he experienced more frustration in one year than he had over the last 40 years of his career.

Professor Fernando, the board of director for the ILHCRC British Council, was walking next to him. Fernando hesitated a bit before he said, “Actually I think... he’s being somewhat reasonable.”

Whittle looked at Professor Fernando in disbelief. Whittle said, “I can’t believe... You actually think he’s reasonable?”

Professor Fernando shrugged and continued, “There’s no better choice. It is better to do something than to waste time on meaningless arguments. Moreover, like he said, very few people can fully understand his proof. If we wait until the physics community accepts his point of view, we might have to wait five years or even longer.”

Professor Whittle asked puzzledly, “Don’t you think this is a necessary procedure?”

“I think it might be a necessary procedure. We should remain skeptical at all times, but the premise is that our suspicion should be grounded by something. For example, if there is a mistake in his paper, and he can’t provide an explanation... But that obviously isn’t the case.”

Professor Whittle was in deep thought, so Professor Fernando continued, “If he can prove his paper through experiments, what’s wrong with that?”

“Think about it, it’s a blessing to have a reliable leader.”

...

The ILHCRC board meeting was over.

The results of the discussion at the meeting were announced to the world at a press conference.

ILHCRC had shocked the world again.

The headline of the Wall Street Journal used a picture of Mars with “ILHCRC” as their headline.

[According to the results of the meeting, the ILHCRC will launch an experimental rocket loaded with a “Z particle clock” to the Mars geosynchronous orbit in the near future, to test the correctness of the hyperspace theory.]

[If this experiment is successful, this might mean that interstellar travel is possible!]

From an objective point of view, this statement was a bit too optimistic.

Even if the experiment was successful, it would only prove the possibility of achieving faster than light speeds through hyperspace channels theoretically. With the current technology, it would be impossible to maintain a stable hyperspace channel and transmit a spacecraft weighing hundreds of tons through this channel.

In fact, forget about maintaining a stable hyperspace channel. So far, the research on Z particles was only done on a few detectors at the Lunar Hadron Collider. The physics community had doubts about whether the ILHCRC could even produce Z particles.

Even if the Z particles could only appear for a short amount of time for a physics experiment, it could still be applied to many things.

For example...

A high-powered laser!

The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Inside a spacious factory.

As Professor Dobrik looked at the experimental equipment in front of him, he was dumbfounded. Dobrik opened and closed his mouth. After a while, he mumbled, "What... is this?"

There was a round metal ball about four meters tall. On the surface of the ball shell were rivets, as well as various pipes and connection cables.

From a structural point of view, it was very similar to the National Ignition Facility (NIF) device that was abandoned.

In fact, it was indeed designed based on similar concepts. The only difference was that this device was not used to simulate a nuclear explosion. Instead, it was used to generate Z particles.

“Z particle clock, we can use it to produce Z particles.” Lu Zhou had a smug smile on his face. He said, “Although it is expensive and has shortcomings, it is absolutely reliable.”

According to his calculations, when two lead ions collided with an energy of 1.25 TeV, the Z particles would release 750 GeV of energy from a high dimension to a three-dimensional space.

After the device was turned on, it could generate energy similar to stars in a tiny reaction chamber, thereby pressurizing the lead core located in the center of the reaction chamber. This pushed the ionized lead ions to collide violently, causing the Z particles to fall from higher dimensions to lower dimensions.

Since all of its energy would be released within one minute, when generating the Z particles and disturbing the gravitational field, the heat would destroy the device itself. This was a one-use experimental machine.

Also, the cost of this machine was about 200 million yuan.

One experiment would require two machines.

Only the ILHCRC could conduct such an expensive experiment.

“But... I still don’t understand. How did you make this thing in such a short timeframe?” Professor Dobrik looked at Lu Zhou and said, “From the end of the meeting to now... It’s been less than two weeks, right?”

This was what he was most surprised at.

If it took a year to make this thing, he wouldn’t be surprised. But the two weeks was a bit ridiculous.

“This is because of the strong industrial capabilities of the high-tech zone and... our intelligent manufacturing process. As long as the materials and processing conditions are met, the zone can turn blueprints into reality immediately, just like a 3D printer.” Lu Zhou paused and said, “As for the design, I had already completed it earlier.”

He was the former chief designer for the controllable fusion project. It was not difficult for him to design a laser ignition device, especially since he was level 7 in engineering now.

Dobrik was so shocked he was speechless. Professor Wei, who was standing next to them, hadn't said a word since he stepped into the factory.

Professor Wei stared at the Z particle clock for a long time before he spoke.

"If this Z particle clock really works... The whole world will change."

"Maybe." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "I have high expectations."

Wei Hong: "When do you plan to send it to Mars?"

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and said, "The launch plan will begin before the end of the month."

"If everything goes well..."

"I want to launch it before the Chinese New Year!"

Chapter 1297: Return to Mars!

Jinling Launch site.

A huge and glorious fully-equipped aerospaceplane was crawling on the launch runway.

Its name was Starlight. But it was different from the Starlight spacecraft from a few years ago. In order to adapt to long-distance flight and more flexible launch missions, the Aerospace Science and Technology Institute of the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study redesigned its fusion energy supply unit and high-power Hall effect thrusters. This improved its cruising mileage and engine stability.

Forget about Mars, it could even reach the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter within a month. However, the Lunar Orbit Committee did not have a need to send people so far away. Collecting rock specimens could be done by unmanned detectors.

The pilot of this flight had also participated in the original Mars rescue mission. He was also the only astronaut in the team with experience going to Mars.

An experimental machine enclosed in a metal cargo box was sent into the cargo storage. The entire aerospaceplane had completed its final launch preparations.

Liu Biao and Xu Zhenghong, who had already put on their spacesuits, boarded the plane under the eyes of the ground crew. They entered the interior of the aerospaceplane and sat in the main and co-pilot seats. They then connected their spacesuits to the in-cabin life support system.

“A long trip to Mars.

“I wonder if we can see the wreckage of the BFS spacecraft.”

Xu Zhenghong grinned as he checked the instruments in the cockpit. He smiled and said, “Haha, it’s been more than a year. It’s probably not there anymore.”

Liu Biao joked and said, “We might even be able to retrieve it.”

During the last rescue operation, NASA was worried that China would obtain the secrets of the BFS spacecraft. When the Starlight arrived on Mars, they purposely crashed the BFS spacecraft hovering in orbit.

However, the Chinese recorded the coordinates of the spacecraft crash. If they had enough fuel, they could easily land on Mars and retrieve some “samples”.

“The situation probably won’t allow it. Why would we want to bring home a bunch of garbage?” Xu Zhenghong turned on the engine power. He looked at the rising magnetic counter. He pushed the ignition switch while speaking to the ground command center. He then said in a serious tone, “This is Starlight, we are entering takeoff.”

“Received. This is the ground command center. Everything in the sky is normal. Continue the launch plan. Good luck!”

The black engine was lit by a blue flame. Driven by the high-temperature plasma, the huge plane began to slide forward, finally flying into the sky, leaving a line of blue light behind. It headed toward the fiery red planet tens of millions of kilometers away, carrying the hopes and expectations of everyone on the ground.

Near the launch site.

Everyone looked at the aerospaceplane disappear into the clouds. Physicists and reporters from all over the world were shocked.

A reporter from BBC reported the scene to the camera with a shocked expression on his face.

“An aerospaceplane, about two-thirds the size of a Boeing 777, took off from the runway. It just disappeared into the sky behind me.

“I can’t even describe the shock in my heart, not because of its speed, but because it subverted my understanding of aerospace launches.

“Perhaps it’s too late to say this, but I never thought that... By using controllable fusion energy, an electric propulsion engine can achieve the power of a traditional chemical engine!

“I digress. ILHCRC’s Z particle clock has successfully passed through the troposphere and is moving toward the edge of the atmosphere. If everything goes well, it will reach Mars orbit within two weeks. With the Z particle clock on board, they will examine Professor Lu Zhou’s hyperspace theory...”

Nearby.

A young man who looked like a student stood beside Professor Witten.

He stared at the sky for a long time without blinking. It wasn’t until people began to gradually disperse that he finally looked at Professor Witten and said, “Professor...”

“What?”

“If they really surpass the speed of light, what does that mean?”

“This means he might be a greater physicist than Einstein...” After a pause, Witten felt like his statement was not accurate enough. He said in a serious tone, “No, not might, he will be.”

The news of the launch of the Z particle clock spread all over the world through the media.

According to the launch plan, after reaching the lunar orbit, Starlight would drop off the first Z particle clock, then head to the Moon Palace, where it would refuel. Then it would continue to fly to Mars.

The world's eyes were focused on the aerospaceplane that was passing through the edge of the atmosphere. Inside the director office at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, Lu Zhou was thinking while looking at a whiteboard full of calculations.

Suddenly, he heard a knock.

"Come in."

The door opened, and a familiar figure walked into the office.

"I can't believe you're here." Luo Wenxuan said curiously. He looked at the calculations written on the whiteboard, which he didn't understand at all. He said, "I thought you would be at the launch site command center."

"What do I achieve by standing there?" Lu Zhou didn't take his eyes off the whiteboard. He smiled faintly and replied casually, "My presence or absence will not affect the success of the launch. Moreover, it's just a trip to Mars. It's not the first time we've been there, so it is nothing special."

Luo Wenxuan: "What are you doing?"

"Doing a final check on the calculations..." Lu Zhou added a few lines of calculations on the whiteboard. He thought for a second and said, "And thinking of a way to perfect it."

Luo Wenxuan said, "I'm shocked! I didn't expect you to be not excited at all. I can't believe you're in the mood to do these calculations."

Lu Zhou: "Is there anything to be anxious about?"

Luo Wenxuan joked, "It feels like soon, a physicist will be crowned as being greater than Einstein. Every explorer in the future will chant his name and pray for safety before setting off. If a spacecraft fails, the passengers would certainly not pray to god, they would pray to Lu Zhou."

Lu Zhou couldn't help but smile.

“That’s ridiculous. The Z particle is just a breakthrough in our hyperspace theory. In the end, whether it can become the key to solving interstellar travel depends on how people in the future understand this theory. Being first doesn’t mean the best. Just like direct current and alternating current. Although the former was born first, the latter wins in the end.”

“But everyone remembers Faraday’s contribution to the world.”

Lu Zhou: “I don’t deny this. He was given an honorary reward since his invention couldn’t be applied.”

Luo Wenxuan shrugged his shoulders and asked, “Then why are you doing something that is not beneficial to you and extremely risky?”

Lu Zhou said, “Frankly speaking, it is out of interest.”

Luo Wenxuan was stunned for a moment. He then smiled.

“That’s totally something you would say.”

Lu Zhou: “Did you come here to chat with me?”

“Of course not.”

Luo Wenxuan took out a card from his pocket and handed it to Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou looked at the beautifully crafted card. He raised his eyebrows curiously. He put down the marker in his hand and unfolded the card.

He then glanced at the content inside and asked, “What is this?”

“An invitation letter.” Luo Wenxuan shrugged and looked at Lu Zhou. He said, “I don’t know if you are interested, but it happens to be here in Jinling, so I brought it here.”

Scholar’s Advanced Technological System - Chapter 1298 - Invitation to the Physics Conference -

Chapter 1298: Invitation to the Physics Conference

Like Luo Wenxuan said, this was an invitation letter.

Technically, this invitation letter was not sent to Lu Zhou personally. It was sent to the ILHCRC under the name of CERN.

Inside the invitation letter, CERN proposed to launch a world physicists summit named the “Century of Physics”. They hoped that the ILHCRC could act as the main organizer of the conference and cooperate with other major particle physics institutes as well as top scholars around the world to discuss the future of physics.

After listening to Luo Wenxuan’s explanation, Lu Zhou was very surprised.

Cooperating with major particle physics institutes around the world to discuss the future of physics for the next century was such an important event. He did not expect that CERN would give the opportunity to the ILHCRC to host it.

But after thinking about it carefully, it made sense.

The reason why CERN gave up this opportunity was not that they didn’t want to take on the honor, but because the circumstances did not allow them to do so.

This was largely because the Lunar Hadron Collider had replaced the Large Hadron Collider as the most important particle physics device. The center of physics had gradually moved to East Asia.

Also, CERN had another problem.

They just didn’t have the money...

Ever since the completion of the Lunar Hadron Collider, CERN had lost its excuse to ask the EU countries for funding.

Instead of funding CERN’s expensive experiments and scientific research projects, countries around the world were more inclined to choose to spend money to satisfy their own physicists. They’d much rather work with the ILHCRC and produce better results.

The higher-ups of France said in public that the historical mission of the LHC had been completed. Instead of continuing to frighten the residents living in Geneva, it was better to move the experimental site from Switzerland to the moon.

The United States had a similar viewpoint.

Even though they were dissatisfied that the ILHCRC was dominated by China, physics was not as classified as military, aerospace, and semiconductor research. After all, the research results were all publicly accessible.

Washington was in a recession. It would be best if the Chinese could bear this heavy burden for them.

In a self-comforting way, at least they could save the White House hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

Therefore, CERN had gradually declined from being a world physics center to a regional physics center.

Even though they still had a large and excellent scientific research team, it was difficult to attract researchers from other countries to help with experiments.

Even the local management was considering whether it was necessary to transform the abandoned large-scale collider into a science museum or amusement facility while maintaining the small electron-positron collider.

But so far, this proposal had not progressed. There was no guarantee for a stable visitor flow, and there were still border supervision problems. It was hard to imagine an entertainment company taking on this project.

After pulling out the invitation letter, Lu Zhou unfolded it and began to read it carefully.

Besides the polite and respectful words, the letter was concise. It was mainly related to the conference.

This included details for plans of the conference, such as reports, academic seminars, poster presentations, etc. It also included the main event of this conference—the “Century of Physics” private meeting.

According to CERN's suggestion, this meeting would be led by the top 100 physicists in the world.

The participants would be top experts in their respective research branch. The participants invited to the conference would represent their research areas and explain the importance of their areas to other scholars in the field of particle physics. Finally, they would propose the most important proposition that should be solved in their respective field of research.

It would be similar to the Millennium Prize Problems or Hilbert's problems.

However, instead of having 7 or 23 problems, this conference would produce 100 problems.

As for the other scholars who did not receive an invitation letter to the "Century of Physics" private meeting, they could learn about the progress of the meeting and the results of the discussion through various channels. Such as the live broadcast, meeting videos, and text records released after the meeting.

In response to the 100 world-class problems raised during the conference, the conference organizer would also set up corresponding awards and bonuses for them.

When Lu Zhou saw this, he couldn't help but smile. He joked casually.

"So we have to donate money to host this conference?"

Luo Wenxuan did not expect Lu Zhou to ask such a question. He smiled and said, "It's not explicitly stated, but if we want to be the main contractor, we will definitely have to be a big contributor."

"How much will it cost?"

"So far, we are considering setting up a prize pool and increasing its value through bonds and stock investment. The person who solves one of the problems would receive 1% of the prize pool, and this goes on until all of the money's gone."

Lu Zhou raised his eyebrows with interest. He said, "Sounds interesting, so the later you solve the problem, the higher the prize money?"

“Not necessarily, the investments can go wrong... But we will hire the best investors to handle the funds using a robust investment strategy.” After a pause, Luo Wenxuan continued, “Also, the longer the problem takes to solve, the more valuable it is, right?”

Lu Zhou: “How is the prize pool raised?”

“So far, our idea is through donations. Apparently, many generous rich people are interested in naming these awards for unsolved problems. So far, ten people on the Forbes wealth list have expressed their willingness to donate to areas of interest to them. They could name the awards with their family names. If the funds are not enough, we can also auction naming rights.”

“This is a good idea. I, as the chairman of the ILHCRC, will also donate some money.”

Lu Zhou didn’t specify how much “some money” was when he put the invitation letter away. Luo Wenxuan paused for a second before asking excitedly, “So you’re saying that we’re going to host the conference?”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Why not? Being able to host such a conference is proof of the world’s recognition of us. This is also our responsibility to the world. Moreover, our funds are relatively healthy, and we are more than capable to host this conference. Has CERN proposed the timeframe?”

“Their suggestion is on the 12th, but the venue has not been determined.”

“The 12th?” Lu Zhou frowned and muttered, “Valentine’s Day is on the 14th, right?”

Luo Wenxuan: “...?”

Lu Zhou noticed the weird expression on Luo Wenxuan’s face. He instantly realized that he might have revealed something. So he quickly coughed and changed his words.

“What I mean is, February 12th seems to be the third day of the Chinese New Year. People will still be celebrating the holidays, right? Physicists are still people. We can’t ruin their family reunions. Transportation during the Chinese New Year is also a big problem. We should push back the date, at least to after the Lantern Festival. As for the venue, we should host it in Shanghai.”

“After the Lantern Festival? How about March then? Shanghai is fine, although I recommend maybe choosing a more exciting city...”

Luo Wenxuan paused for a second before adding, “But you are the chairman, so it’s your call.”

Chapter 1299: The Best at Managing Money!

The Z particle clock had been launched. Up next was the long wait.

Lu Zhou returned to Jin Ling University campus and picked up the teaching job he had ignored for a long time. He began to teach a few undergraduate classes.

When the students heard that God Lu had finally remembered his students, they were all very excited. Even the female students from the economics department and the foreign languages department came over.

Even though Lu Zhou was confused about what his class had to do with economics and foreign languages, he was quite happy to see so many people interested in mathematics. He had a proud smile on his face.

For him, lecturing undergraduates was a pleasant thing.

Not only could he review the simple mathematical principles that he usually didn’t think of, but he could also effectively alleviate the impetuosity and anxiety from waiting for the Z particle clock.

However, on the fifth day of his return to teaching, something strange happened.

A person with a special identity came to his class.

This person was none other than Professor Perelman.

This big Russian man with a beard and messy hair sat in the back row of the classroom. He listened attentively while writing something in his notebook.

Obviously, because his looks was so extreme, almost no one in the classroom recognized his identity; they were all instead shocked by his appearance.

The same was true for Lu Zhou, who was speaking on the podium.

Because this Russian hadn't shown his face at Jin Ling University for so long, he almost forgot that this guy lived here.

After class.

Just when Lu Zhou was about to chat with him and ask him if he was accustomed to living here, this idiosyncratic person took the initiative to approach him and speak first.

"I have some ideas about the Hodge conjecture."

Lu Zhou was slightly stunned. He raised his eyebrows and asked, "What do you mean by some ideas?"

"It's hard to describe, so I want to ask for your opinion."

Lu Zhou stared at the clock on the wall and said, "Send it to my email. It's not a good time right now."

"That's fine, although I prefer to communicate in person."

"Aside from mathematics, are you getting used to living here?"

"I am. But some people respect me too much. This makes me very uncomfortable. I wish they would forget who I am..."

Perelman thought for a while and said, "But in general, it's been pretty good. There are many excellent mathematicians here... For example, Professor Chen Yang. Discussing problems with him is inspiring. This reminds me of the days when I was at the Steklov Institute of Mathematics. I might stay here for another half a year."

After speaking, he seemed to remember something. He looked at Lu Zhou and asked, "How about you? Are you still researching mathematics?"

Lu Zhou: "I have always been researching. But the focus of research is not on mathematics itself, it's on how to use mathematics to solve other problems."

Perelman shook his head. "What a waste."

Lu Zhou smiled and asked, "Why?"

Perelman: "With your talent in mathematics, you can achieve greater success. You might be able to solve all the remaining Millennium Prize Problems."

"That..." Lu Zhou thought for a while. He then said with a smile, "It's better to give a chance for others."

Perelman raised his eyebrows.

"You practiced that in front of the mirror?"

"Maybe."

Lu Zhou put away his lesson plan and left Professor Perelman, who was in deep thought. He walked away with a smile.

He went to the cafeteria and ordered a bowl of barbecue meat and rice. He found a low-key place to finish his meal. On the way back to the mathematics building, Lu Zhou took the long way, passing through the studio set.

The casting of the documentary had been completed, and it was now in the shooting stage.

Next to the studio set, Lu Zhou saw Han Mengqi.

For some reason, after seeing him, the girl quickly greeted him before walking away with her head down.

Lu Zhou felt strange but didn't think about it too much.

He returned to his office and rested for a while. He was about to open his email to see if Professor Perelman had sent the email to himself when he suddenly remembered about his Valentine's Day gift. He immediately took out the AR glasses from his pocket.

He closed his eyes and thought for a while. When he thought of someone that might be able to help him, he said, "Xiao Ai, help me call Xiao Tong through WeChat."

Xiao Ai: [Ok, Master. (๑•̥̥̥•̥̥̥)✧]

The projection on the glasses changed.

After a short burst of music, the call quickly connected.

It was morning time at Princeton. Xiao Tong had just gotten up. She yawned and faced her phone with her eyes half-open.

“What’s up, bro, why are you calling me so early?”

Lu Zhou looked at Xiao Tong and asked with a smile, “Sleeping in?”

“Are you crazy? It’s five-thirty in the morning! Who calls this early in the morning!”

Lu Zhou realized that he had woken her up. He laughed embarrassedly and changed the topic.

“If I want to set up a fund, what should I do?”

“Fund?” Xiao Tong sat up from the bed and scratched her messy hair. After pondering for a while, she said, “That... Your girl knows more than me? Why don’t you ask her?”

Chen Yushan was the CEO for one of the top 100 companies in the world. She helped Star Sky Technology withstand pressure from giants such as ExxonMobil and Tesla, as well as the US Department of Commerce. Star Sky Technology was the reason for the rise of China’s national and technological strength. There was a reason she had survived as CEO for so long.

However, Lu Zhou’s reputation was so powerful that she was often overshadowed. Even though the public might doubt her skills, the industry was sure of her abilities.

However, Lu Zhou was focused on something else.

When he heard Xiao Tong’s reply, he blushed and sat up straight in his office chair.

“Ahem! What girl... It’s that obvious?”

Xiao Tong smirked and spoke.

“Don’t underestimate a girl’s intuition! I’m not stupid.”

Xiao Tong suddenly seemed to have thought of something. She slammed her hand on the bed and said, “Oh, oh, I know!”

Lu Zhou was stunned. He asked subconsciously, “Know what?”

Xiao Tong smirked. She had a mischievous smile on her face.

“Big bro, be honest, are you trying to hide money from her? Hehe, I can help with this, but... it’s going to be tough.”

What a stupid guess.

Lu Zhou rolled his eyes and said, “Hide what money, don’t talk nonsense.”

Am I that kind of person?

Why would Chen Yushan want my money?

Xiao Tong stared at her big brother suspiciously for a while. After making sure he wasn’t lying, Xiao Tong muttered, “Then why are you suddenly starting a fund? If it’s just an investment, I think Star Sky Technology has an investment department.”

In addition to patent management, Star Sky Technology’s investment business was also quite famous. The most famous of which was the financing for East Asia Energy and East Asia Communications.

Even though the two companies were not public yet, their valuations were both in the trillions of yuan.

Anyone that invested early in these two companies had basically all made a fortune. Star Sky Technology was an early shareholder, and they invested in both companies.

Lu Zhou thought about Xiao Tong’s question for a long time.

Originally, he didn’t want to tell anyone, but if this plan was implemented, everyone would know anyway. So, after hesitating for a while, he said, “If I tell you, don’t tell anyone.”

Xiao Tong almost jumped out of the bed from the excitement. She nodded while hugging her pillow.

“Don’t worry, Brother! I’m your sister, don’t you trust me?”

As Lu Zhou looked at her gossipy eyes, his eyebrows twitched. In the end, he sighed and said, “Then I’ll tell you... Don’t laugh at me.”

It took about five minutes for Lu Zhou to explain his ideas.

After listening, Xiao Tong was flabbergasted.

After blinking for a while, she slowly recovered from the shock.

“I had no idea...”

“No idea about what?”

“That you’re quite good at... Forget about it. If any boy pursues me like this, even I wouldn’t be able to resist.”

Xiao Tong sighed and shook her head. She said, “Not bad, not bad, Chen Yushan caught a good one this time!”

“Good one your as*! I’m just asking you a question.”

Lu Zhou almost wanted to hit her on the head.

Xiao Tong smirked and pretended like nothing happened. She cleared her throat and said, “The thing you’re talking about is certainly possible! With your reputation, you can go public. It will sell like hotcakes!”

Lu Zhou frowned and said, “Forget about going public, this is mainly for her.”

“That doesn’t change anything... But let’s not talk about this. What you have to know is how to maintain a stable fund!”

Lu Zhou: “How?”

Xiao Tong smiled proudly and sat up straight.

“Of course it’s to have a great manager! As your sister, I’d like to recommend someone that has a PhD in economics from one of the world’s top

universities. She was born in a Nobel Prize family, and her family has won a Nobel Prize in Economics—”

Lu Zhou said impatiently, “Cut to the chase.”

“Me!” Xiao Tong’s eyes flashed with excitement. She moved the phone closer to her face and said, “I’m the best at managing money!”

Chapter 1300: Clock on Track

In a dark place...

A black aerospaceplane slowly approached from the edge of the stars. The silent radio reverberated in the vast deep sky, communicating with the ground command center tens of millions of kilometers away, over hundreds of seconds of delay.

“This is the ‘Messenger’, we are close to the ‘New Land’.

“Get closer.”

“Roger that.”

Starlight was the model.

“Messenger” was the official code name for the aerospaceplane.

The aerospace industry had largely advanced. The first model of the Skyglow had gradually been discontinued. There were more than five other newer Skyglows in the sky, same went for the Magpie Bridges.

It was easy to get confused calling the spacecrafts by its model name, so it had been given a code name.

Xu Zhenghong was sitting in the main pilot seat. He reached out his hand and moved the joystick on the right-hand side. He then pressed the button to lock on to the orbit.

With assistance from the automatic navigation device, the co-pilot Liu Biao carefully monitored the speed and distance parameters. He cooperated with Xu Zhenghong to drive the Starlight to the transfer orbit of Mars, near the intersection of the MOI3 orbit.

“Turn on the directional antenna and the laser calibration device.”

“Roger that.”

This was the most critical moment.

There was only one chance. The three main parameters—speed, angle, and distance—had to be precisely met, in order for the spacecraft to enter orbit.

If they missed their chance, they would have to circle Mars for another week to correct the orbit.

The one minute felt like a century.

Finally, when the words “in orbit” appeared on the screen, Xu Zhenghong and Liu Biao, who were still nervous, unanimously breathed a sigh of relief.

“This is Messenger, we have already entered into MOI3 orbit.”

“This is the ground command center. We have received your news. Ground navigation is complete, the rest is up to you.”

“Roger that, please wish us luck.”

The communication was over.

Because of the hundreds of seconds of communication delay, it was unrealistic to rely on the ground command center to guide the Starlight for the remaining complicated orbit switching.

The next step was their job.

However, although there was no navigation assistance from the ground command center, Xu Zhenghong and Liu Biao were actually relieved.

Unless there was a meteorite collision or another accident, there were very few operations that required manual control.

If everything went well, they only needed to press the button to open the hatch after reaching the desired orbit. Then they would throw the Z particle clock out of the cargo hold and complete their mission.

“Should we drink something?”

“No, thanks.”

“Then I’ll have to drink myself.” Liu Biao grinned and unlocked the safety device. He then left the co-pilot’s seat. He floated to the freezer in the living area and took out a can of cold coffee.

In fact, he wanted to drink beer, but since he was still on a mission, he was not allowed to have alcohol.

Liu Biao went back to the cockpit with the coffee. He sat back down on his seat, opened the can of cold brew coffee, then took out a straw.

In a gravity-free environment, the mouth-feel of liquids changed drastically. All liquids had a jelly-like consistency, and the feeling of the cold liquid going down one’s throat was a strange sensation.

Fortunately, the taste was still the same.

Liu Biao looked at the red planet outside the window. He squinted as he sucked from his straw. He stared at the beautiful scenery for a long time before speaking emotionally.

“This is amazing.”

Xu Zhenghong, who was waiting quietly in the main pilot’s seat, nodded in agreement.

“Yeah.”

After the short exchange of words, the two went silent. They were completely mesmerized by the beautiful scenery that they didn’t have time to appreciate before.

No matter how many times they looked at the scenery, the view never got old.

It was hard to describe this feeling.

It was almost like...

A new world was in front of them.

After about two hours, Liu Biao glanced at the orbital data on the cockpit instrument. He estimated that it was about time. He reached out his hand to turn on the deep-space navigation optical sensor and pointed it at the center of Mars.

After the next orbit change, they would enter the lowest orbit.

If they were lucky, they might be able to see the return capsule of the BFS spacecraft there.

“Sooner or later, we will widen our borders here.”

“I don’t know if I can witness that day in my lifetime.”

“It doesn’t matter if you don’t see it personally, someone in the future will witness it for us... Let’s get to work.”

“Roger that.”

The spacecraft had successfully merged into the lowest orbit after the last deceleration.

Liu Biao listened quietly to the countdown in his ears. He looked at the virtual beacon on his helmet eyepiece getting closer and closer. He placed his thumb on the green safety button on the joystick.

The countdown was complete.

He pressed with his thumb.

They heard an electric buzzing sound. A metal ball was released from the cargo cabin. It was then firmly planted in the Mars orbit.

After Xu Zhenghong checked the orbital parameters of the Z particle clock, he switched the communication channel to the ground command center and spoke in a calm voice.

“The package was successfully put on orbit, the first mission phase is complete!”

It took the command center about four minutes to respond. During this time, their job was to maintain the current flight path and quietly wait for instructions.

Xu Zhenghong's face finally relaxed a little. He unlocked the safety system and moved his sore shoulders.

Liu Biao suddenly smiled as he watched the black spot on the rear camera disappear.

"... It's like putting a ring on the bride."

Xu Zhenghong said with a smile, "That's quite a romantic way of putting it."

"I always felt like spaceflight itself is a romantic thing... Speaking of which, what about the rest of the mission?"

"We wait for news from the ground command center. After that, we will return to the MOI3 orbit and wait there quietly." Xu Zhenghong looked at the metal ball that disappeared. He squinted his eyes and said, "We wait until the end of the experiment, then check the state of the Z particle clock."

"After that, we can go home."

They received confirmation from the ground command center.

The two people sitting in the cockpit were instantly excited.

On the other hand, at the space ground command center tens of millions of kilometers away...

Lu Zhou stood in the command room. He slowly raised his left hand and glanced at his silver watch.

It was time.

Lu Zhou knew that the preparations were almost done. He raised his head and looked at the crowded people inside the ground command center.

He then looked at the big screen in front of him before saying in a loud voice, "It's our turn."