

Scholar's Advanced Technological System

Chapter 1301: 207.1s!

It's our turn.

The second after the order was issued, the entire command room began to run like a machine. Every researcher and engineer sitting in the room began working, like gears turning a clock.

In the orbit of Mars tens of millions of kilometers away, the black metal ball was driven by a small electric propulsion engine. This controlled the position of the ball in the orbit.

A large hexagonal bulge on the clock was pointed at another Z particle clock, floating in geosynchronous orbit tens of millions of kilometers away.

A piece of the ball shell moved to the side, exposing the complex and delicate optical parts.

A solemn order was heard in the command center.

“Turn on the laser aligner.”

The signal transmitted from the ground command center was received by the alpha Z particle clock floating in the geosynchronous orbit.

After the order was received, an invisible infrared light from the laser collimator exposed on the outside shot straight to Mars and was captured by the beta Z particle clock floating in Mars orbit.

The two spherical Z particle clocks were aligned with each other's launch interfaces under the guidance of lasers. They drew an invisible line in the deep space.

The big screen showed the two metal spheres connected by the red line, as well as the constantly changing orbital parameters. The words [Calibration

Successful] were on the side of the screen. Director Li's heart was at his throat. Luo Wenxuan, Edward Witten, and other physicists also clenched their fists.

The most crucial moment was here.

Regardless of whether Lu Zhou's hyperspace theory was right or wrong, this was definitely a moment that would be recorded in history.

Even CERN had never done such an expensive experiment. Just the total cost of the two Z particle clocks and their accessories was already close to half a billion yuan.

If they were to succeed, they would create history and change the future.

And if they failed...

This would probably be the most expensive firework show ever in human history.

"Open the launch port!"

"Opened!"

"Prepare nuclear core ignition... Ignite!"

After more than two hundred seconds of waiting, the two Z particle clocks, separated by tens of millions of kilometers, trembled at the same time.

The emission array composed of hundreds of thousands of laser sources was instantly lit up. Ultraviolet light containing 13 million joules of energy was shot from all directions to the ignition target.

The interior of the huge metal ball was filled with ultraviolet light. The ignition target was reflected by the eight thousand titanium-containing phosphate glasses, evenly distributing the rays inside the spherical shell.

The outer shell of the ignition target was instantly vaporized. When it was under 100 million degrees, the internal deuterium-tritium fuel was also ignited.

The energy comparable to a star was released in an instant, pushing the lead core inside the sphere to collide, condense, and ionize. The Z particle from the high-dimensional universe was finally swayed by this terrifying power!

At the ground command center, a researcher sitting in his seat suddenly spoke.

“An abnormal gravitational signal was observed!”

The moment Lu Zhou heard this, he gave an order without hesitation.

“Start the photon source!”

“Yes, sir!”

With the help of the electric propulsion engine and the guidance of the infrared beam, the Z particle clock aligned itself to the photon source transmitter.

On the other hand, the electrons and positrons collided on the beta Z particle clock in Mars orbit.

After a string of invisible sparks, entangled photons burst out in an instant.

One of them was going straight forward along the original trajectory, while the other clock was captured by the gravitational field disturbed by the vibration of the Z particles. It traveled along a trajectory that was almost identical but not completely the same.

Time seemed to be frozen at this moment.

Lu Zhou looked at the beating timer on the big screen. His heartbeat almost synchronized with it.

Director Li stared at the beating clock intently. Director Li's mouth was moving, as if he was praying in his heart.

Secretary-General Luo, Professor Witten, and Professor Wilczek, as well as representatives of the ILHCRC council, stood behind him. They all stood there like sculptures, looking at the big screen in front of them.

Finally, when the number on the first timer jumped to 207.1s, the atmosphere in the command center froze.

The remaining second felt like a century.

When the second timer continued to beat, the atmosphere inside the command center completely exploded!

People clenched their fists excitedly, waved their fists, threw their hats, documents, and even pens up in the air.

The atmosphere was at a peak.

People of different skin colors spoke in different languages, leaving tears of excitement.

Lu Zhou looked at the second timer that continued to beat, which stopped at 270.7s. Lu Zhou's throat moved, and a relaxing smile suddenly appeared on his tense face.

The first timer was frozen at 207.1s.

In other words, the first photon to reach the receiver had traveled a total of 65 million kilometers.

The linear distance between the two Z particle clocks was 85 million kilometers. This photon "skipped" at least 20 million kilometers!

Since the speed of light was constant, there was only one explanation for this photon to reach the "endpoint" so early...

The photon control group that reached the "endpoint" at 270.7s seconds proved this conclusion.

There was a difference of 63.6 seconds!

All doubts and debates had disappeared in an instant.

The oscillating Z particle disturbed the gravitational bond between Earth and Mars, thereby changing the curvature of spacetime. It opened a hyperspace channel beyond the three-dimensional space.

Perhaps this was not the best travel channel.

It was as fragile as soap bubbles, as rocky and rough as gravel.

There must be a better way in this universe to create a more stable and "straight" hyperspace channel, which could make the photon reach Mars in an even shorter time. Or even reach outside the solar system, outside the Milky Way.

However, its existence itself was amazing enough.

This was like the first line in an epic poem.

There would be countless heroes and great men carrying on this poem, but even then, their achievements were no match for the creation of this poem.

Maybe it was too soon to talk about the future.

But one thing was beyond doubt.

Which was that, Lu Zhou, who was standing in the command center, had once again proved that—

He was correct!

“63.6s! More than a minute!”

“Hyperspace! Hyperspace! We opened the hyperspace channel!”

“Hahahaha! I knew it! How could there be a problem with Academician Lu’s theory!”

“God Lu is awesome!!!”

Cheers, whistles, and applause flooded Lu Zhou’s ears.

Lu Zhou was still immersed in joy. He was hugged by Luo Wenxuan, who firmly grabbed his shoulders with both hands, shaking him back and forth with excitement.

“Do you realize what just happened! You just changed the history of physics! And the history of aerospace! No, and the history of civilization!”

“Yeah.”

“After all that, your only response is ‘yeah’?” Luo Wenxuan almost went crazy. He said, “If you weren’t a guy, I would kiss you!”

Lu Zhou: “...?”

“Get your stun gun ready.”

Wang Peng sighed and spoke.

Luo Wenxuan looked at him and moved to the side.

“No, I’m good... I didn’t think before I spoke.”

Lu Zhou signaled Wang Peng to stand down. Lu Zhou sniffed gently and looked at the large screen nearby. He looked at the cheering researchers and engineers and said, “I want to think about all this for a while, give me a day... No, two days, two days should be enough.”

After hearing this, Luo Wenxuan suddenly opened his eyes and said, “Two days?! You can’t disappear for that long! You are the main character for the celebration tonight! We will pop champagne bottles and spray the bubbles everywhere. Everyone will cheer your name, and—”

“if you can, record the celebration and send it to me.” Lu Zhou reached out his hand and pinched his own eyebrows. He said, “I have something to deal with... It’s regarding research. Wang Peng, can you drive the car to the front entrance?”

“Okay.”

Wang Peng nodded and walked to the door.

The system kept reminding him that there was a huge reward waiting for him to collect. Even though he was interested in sharing the joy of the victory with his colleagues, he would much rather experience the world of level 10 in physics.

He had waited for this day for too long.

He didn’t want to wait a single second longer.

As for the celebration...

He had plenty of opportunities to celebrate in the future.

After staring at the big screen, Lu Zhou looked at Luo Wenxuan.

“Let the Messenger prepare for the next step.

“... You’re in charge now.”

Lu Zhou gave Director Li a wave. He then reached out and patted Luo Wenxuan on the shoulder. After that, he turned and walked toward the door of the command center.

Suddenly, he made eye contact with Edward Witten.

The old man gave him a nod and a thumbs up.

Lu Zhou responded with a bright smile as he walked away.

...

Tens of millions of kilometers away.

In the deep starry space, the titanium alloy frame and shell could no longer withstand the increasing energy.

Liu Biao, who was sitting in the passenger's seat, looked at the explosion hundreds of kilometers away. He suddenly sighed and said, "I'm guessing they're already opening champagne bottles."

"It seems like it..." Xu Zhenghong looked at the radiation value detected on the gamma counter. He replied casually, "Just now, the ground command center sent a message. The experiment was a success."

"How much did this thing cost?"

Although Liu Biao didn't understand physics, the ion thruster told him that just the two clocks with small electric propulsion engines would have cost a lot of money.

Xu Zhenghong: "I don't know, but apparently, it's in the billions range."

"... That's not bad."

When Liu Biao realized that this was a one-time experiment, he went silent.

After a long while, he spoke emotionally.

"Physicists are still the richest."

Nearby, the Z particle clock that completed its mission was swallowed by the energy.

It was scattered in the boundless deep space, into sparks of “flames”. It was slowly being pulled into the dust by the gravity of Mars.

After recording all this through a high-power optical camera, Xu Zhenghong finally stopped filming.

“The shooting is complete.”

After reconnecting the life support system to his spacesuit, Liu Biao moved his shoulders and spoke.

“What’s next?”

“... Go over and see if there is anything that can be recovered.” Xu Zhenghong checked the mission instructions from the ground command center. He then reached out and turned on the tail engine switch. He said, “If possible, collect the remains of the Z particle clock and bring back samples.”

The remaining tasks were not difficult.

The damaged Z particle clock did not explode violently. Most of the wreckage were together. Under the force of solar wind and Mars gravity, it moved toward Mars under a stable trajectory.

Xu Zhenghong carefully approached the edge of the wreckage. He controlled the Starlight and released the maintenance robot from the cargo hold.

A robot about a meter tall, with a robotic arm around two meters long, was attached to a thick carbon nano-cable. Using the push of nitrogen gas, it floated toward the nearest piece of debris, which was about 0.25 m in diameter.

Liquid nitrogen sprayed out from the spray gun. The fragment emitting a hot white light cooled down, returning to its original metallic glow.

“Package received.”

Xu Zhenghong had a grin on his face. He continued to move the joystick in his hand. He manipulated the robot and proceeded to collect four more samples in the same manner.

After seeing that there was almost no propellant left, he parked the robot in the cargo hold before closing the cargo hold door.

“Five samples should be enough.”

He raised his right hand and pressed on his helmet. He switched to the ground command center channel.

“This is Messenger. The sample recovery has been completed. We don’t have much fuel left. We might miss the best window for the return flight. Requesting permission to return.”

After more than four minutes of waiting, an answer was heard.

“This is the ground command center. The return request has been approved. Thank you for your work. We have prepared a banquet for you.”

“Roger that.”

Xu Zhenghong turned off the communication channel. He made a gesture to Liu Hong, who began the return procedure with him.

The five engines fired at the same time, giving off a blue glow.

Xu Zhenghong glanced at the fiery red planet. He suddenly had a strange thought.

He realized that in the near future, he might have the opportunity to come here again. He might even set foot on this red planet.

He wondered what his next Martian mission would be...

Chapter 1303: Physics Level 10!

Starlight had completed its orbit change and began to return to the Moon Palace space station. Lu Zhou, who had left the ground command center, had already returned to his home.

Lu Zhou stood beside the car. He looked at Wang Peng and spoke in a serious tone.

"I need to take a break for two days. Don't be surprised if you can't get in touch with me. Also, no matter who comes to see me, tell them I am busy for the next two days."

Wang Peng was taken aback for a second. He looked at Lu Zhou with a concerned look.

"Are you feeling sick? I can contact Dr. Yan and ask her to check on you."

Even though Lu Zhou often made similar instructions before his retreats, Wang Peng felt like something was different, whether it was Lu Zhou's tone or something else.

"What? I'm in very good health. Don't worry, don't need to call Doctor Yan." Lu Zhou looked at Wang Peng, shook his head with a smile, and said, "I just want to quietly think about some... Academic problems. These problems have been bothering me for a while. I don't want anyone to disturb me and interrupt my thinking. Just don't worry about me. Give yourself a vacation."

Wang Peng: "What about your food? Do you need me to bring them?"

"No, I will sort it out myself."

Lu Zhou then turned around and walked through his gate. He then disappeared behind his mansion door...

...

A while ago, back at the ground command center, when the second timer stopped, a holographic mission completion notification appeared in front of him.

Because there were too many people nearby, Lu Zhou did not enter the system space immediately. He chose to let Wang Peng take himself back home.

Lu Zhou didn't want to wait any longer. He threw his clothes on the household robot controlled by Xiao Ai. After that, he went to the bedroom and lay down.

"System!"

Lu Zhou opened his eyes again. He was already standing in the pure white system space.

Lu Zhou walked quickly to the holographic interface in the center of the system space. He reached out and pressed his index finger on it.

There was a wave of light blue ripples. The mission briefing was soon presented in front of him.

[Congratulations, User, for mission completion!]

[Legendary mission: Looking from afar]

[Mission description: Although the future sounds far away, its journey has already begun.]

[Mission evaluation: The exploration of the future is endless. This time, you made a choice with your own wisdom. The road was full of speed bumps, but perhaps just like the past, things will repeat themselves in the future. The end of the universe has been written from the moment it appeared.

[As one of the last hopes in this universe, the system believes that you can bring changes.

[So remember, always be self-aware and vigilant.]

[Mission Reward: Physics level +1, Void Memory c, a golden lucky draw ticket, 10,000 points.]

Every time a mission was completed, this system would stand from the perspective of a “God” and make a condescending comment on him or on human civilization.

Sometimes, there were jokes, satire, or ridicule, and other times, it was affirmation or even admiration.

However, this time seemed to be different from the past. Along with admiration, there also seemed to be a hint of expectation or advice.

Usually, Lu Zhou wouldn’t care about this at all. He would have focused on the mission rewards and the lucky draw.

However, after seeing so many memories from the old universe, and having talked face-to-face with the so-called “Observer”, it was obvious that he could no longer ignore the information that was revealed to him.

“Does this mean that the hyperspace channel might attract something bad?”

However, as soon as this idea appeared in Lu Zhou’s mind, he decided it was a foolish idea.

“The Calan civilization was much more advanced than the earth civilization, and according to the documentation recorded in Void Memory b, long before the construction of the ring world began, they had already mastered the use of gravitational ties between star systems to change the curvature of time and space. They had mastered the method of hyperspace navigation.

“If this kind of navigation was full of dangers, then they should have gone extinct.

“In that case, this vigilance... should be referring to the Void.”

What is hiding in the Void?

Is there anything else besides The Observer’s civilization?

Lu Zhou looked at the rewards of the mission, at the [Physics Level +1]. Lu Zhou then looked at the Void Memory c. His heart was pounding.

Suddenly, there was an urge in his heart to immediately open his inventory and activate his rewards.

However, after some hesitation, Lu Zhou decided not to.

If this memory was like the last time, where he had to complete a battlefield shooting game, he wouldn’t survive for long enough to see any clues.

The safest choice was to rest for two days. After adapting to the changes brought by physics level 10, he should go to the underground laboratory at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study and record the memory into the database using the neural interface device.

Therefore, even if he failed the “game”, Star Sky Technology would be able to utilize tens of millions of outstanding players to help him solve Void Memory c. It wouldn’t take long for him to figure out the plot.

After restraining the flash of urge, Lu Zhou took a deep breath and focused his attention on the lucky draw.

Unlike the previous lucky draw tickets, this ticket was golden.

“A golden lucky draw? What the hell?”

Even though he wanted to complain that the system might be scamming him, he was worried that his complaints would be heard by the system and affect his rewards.

“Whatever, I’ll just try it.”

Without any expectations in mind, Lu Zhou reached out his index finger and selected the button for the lucky draw.

After he pressed a button, a golden roulette wheel appeared in front of him. It spun at a speed that was too fast for the naked eye to see clearly.

Lu Zhou prayed a few times in his heart. He then reached out and pressed the stop button.

The wheel spun for a few more times before it gradually slowed down.

The second it stopped, Lu Zhou froze.

He finally understood now.

He understood why this lucky draw was golden.

While Lu Zhou was standing in the system space “gambling”, the news of the successful experiment had spread around the world, and the reporters soon gathered outside the Jinling ground command center.

The entire physics community was shocked by this amazing news.

Same for the entire academic community!

The speed of light barrier was broken by a small particle!

The whole world was shocked by this news!

Shanghai.

ILHCRC headquarters.

In order to give a clear answer to the media around the world and all the people who were paying attention to this matter, the ILHCRC vacated the first-floor meeting room one day in advance and transformed it into a press conference site.

However, what everyone did not expect was that even though they had made sufficient preparations, the press conference scene was still in chaos.

The media trucks filled the parking lot. Everyone was crowded at the entrance, squeezing through the escalators.

Everyone wanted to stand in a convenient position, and the media reporters were worried that their cameras would not be able to capture the best shot. The organizers of the conference exclaimed that everyone would be able to enter the conference venue, but that was of no help.

Honestly, this was the first time Luo Wenxuan was in such a tricky situation.

Before this, ILHCRC had also announced many spectacular results, such as the Z particle and the Void theory, but nothing was as crazy as today...

“Was it the same when CERN discovered the Higgs particle?”

Luo Wenxuan was standing next to a window. He looked at the crowd downstairs and then at the tall, skinny man standing next to him.

The skinny man shrugged his shoulders and said, “No... But a similar situation has happened before.”

The person who spoke was Epton Olet, a French professor in physics who was proficient in four languages.

He used to be the director of the Saide laboratory at CERN, but recently, CERN had not conducted any major projects. Most of the CERN researchers had been working at other institutes. Thus, he had completely jumped ship to the ILHCRC side.

As for now, he was the director of the Z Particle Laboratory.

Strictly speaking, the research project where Professor Dobrik discovered the gravitational anomaly was caused by Z particles was one of the many research subjects in this laboratory.

As for the experiment in Jinling yesterday, he was also one of the physicists who witnessed the historic moment in-person.

“When?”

Professor Olet: “OPERA. The neutrinos sent from France to the Gran Sasso laboratory 732 kilometers away were 60 nanoseconds faster than the speed of light. You should have heard of this.”

“... Wasn’t that debunked?”

“Yes, but before it was debunked, how many people were certain that it was false? People were still frightened by this result.”

“This time is the same.”

Professor Olet smiled and spoke emotionally.

“Surpassing the speed of light... This sounds like a fairy tale. But perhaps we are living in a fairy tale.”

He reached out his hand and touched Luo Wenxuan’s shoulder.

“Think about how to explain this to the laymen. They will definitely not let you off easily.”

When Luo Wenxuan thought about the crazy crowd outside, he started to get goosebumps.

This should have been Lu Zhou’s job.

But Lu Zhou was on a retreat.

Yeah, retreat!

A retreat right after the experiment!

*Bullsh*t!*

“Can’t you help me come up with some ideas?”

“No can do.” Olet looked at Secretary-General Luo. He laughed mercilessly and said confidently, “I’m not the next chairman. Why should I do this?”

After that, he turned around and walked away without looking back.

Luo Wenxuan watched him walk until the end of the corridor and disappear behind the elevator doors.

“I see...”

Luo Wenxuan couldn't figure out why Academician Lu chose to disappear at this time and use going on a “retreat” as an excuse.

But now, he suddenly understood everything.

The reason why Lu Zhou chose to leave at this important time and give him such a difficult task wasn't because of some retreat; it was because Lu Zhou wanted to cultivate and train him!

Otherwise, why would a guy like Lu Zhou, who loved to show off, let him announce this historic achievement of the ILHCRC?

Not to mention that this research was mostly done by Lu Zhou himself.

Luo Wenxuan was moved when he thought about how caring and thoughtful Lu Zhou was.

When he thought of his previous annoyance and even resentment toward Lu Zhou, he couldn't help but feel guilty.

I'm too...

Too naive!

“But then again, how come even Professor Olet knows this? Is it that obvious?”

Lu Zhou obviously wouldn't tell people who the next ILHCRC chairman was.

However, it seemed like everyone but him knew.

Luo Wenxuan was actually a little happy.

The ILHCRC had many outstanding talents, but their excellence was overshadowed by Professor Lu himself.

And he was one of those people.

No matter how many top conferences he had spoken at, and no matter how many excellent papers he published or how cutting-edge his research was, people only cared about who the ILHCRC chairman was. No one paid attention to the Secretary-General.

Even though he didn't care about this too much since he was happy to ride on Lu Zhou's back, he was still a little unhappy in his heart.

In some sense, Professor Olet's words were a confirmation of his ability.

Otherwise, he wouldn't have said it...

Luo Wenxuan gradually felt the energy in his heart.

I have to live up to the expectations of my friends!

I have to live up to Lu Zhou's trust!

I will host this conference and fulfill my responsibilities as the Secretary-General of the ILHCRC!

This is my responsibility to all of mankind!

...

The ILHCRC press conference began as scheduled.

Luo Wenxuan, the Secretary-General of the ILHCRC, was wearing a suit. He walked to the stage of the press conference, gently tidied his notes, and spoke in a clear voice.

"Good evening, everyone, I am the Secretary-General of the ILHCRC, Luo Wenxuan.

"Due to work, Academician Lu is unable to attend the press conference. I will speak on behalf of Academician Lu and elaborate on some of the important issues."

Like most press conferences, his job was basically to read the script and answer the questions from the pesky reporters.

The entire world's attention was glued to ILHCRC's experiment yesterday. There were bound to be some tricky questions.

Luo Wenxuan spent about 15 minutes reading the speech in his hand. He also took advantage of this time and thought about the questions that might be asked at the press conference.

After this, he put aside the speech and looked at the audience.

"Next is the Q&A session..."

"If you have any questions, you can ask them now."

The entire venue went into chaos as hands instantly rose up in the air.

"Hello, Secretary-General Luo, CTV here. What does the latest discovery from the ILHCRC mean? Can you give a detailed explanation for the audience in front of the TV?"

"Of course."

Faced with the flashing cameras, Luo Wenxuan tried to calm his mind. He raised his voice and said, "Using the Z particle clock designed by Professor Lu Zhou, we were able to use the interference of the gravitational bond between the planets, to create a long and narrow area with low spacetime curvature. We call it a hyperspace channel.

"It's like a highway between mountains. Its physical properties are no different from the conventional universe. The only difference is that it has a lower curvature relative to nearby spacetime. Its distance in the three-dimensional space is shorter.

"Basically, by traveling through this hyperspace channel to the two endpoints in the universe, the photons we shoot from one end to the other actually travels a shorter distance than what we normally experience... It's like a shortcut."

After the CTV reporter finished, another foreign reporter immediately reached out with a microphone and said, "Excuse me, Secretary-General Luo, if the hyperspace theory is proven to be true, what impact will it have on our world?"

“Correction, not if. It has already been proven to be true.” Luo Wenxuan continued, “The birth of hyperspace theory will have a huge impact on communications, astronomical observations, and even long-distance space activities. Of course, it might take a while before this impact affects us...”

There was a commotion in the audience.

When people heard about long-distance space activities, many of them had glimpses of excitement in their eyes.

As soon as he finished answering, another microphone was shoved into his face, not giving him any time to rest.

A reporter with long, brown hair spoke quickly.

“Hello, Secretary-General Luo, I’m a reporter for the Los Angeles Times! May I ask if this means... that interstellar travel will become a reality!”

This was something that the vast majority of reporters at the scene were concerned about.

However, after hearing this question, Luo Wenxuan’s face showed a look of boredom as he answered with a sigh, “Maybe it’s possible.

“But I must emphasize that this won’t become a reality for a century or even several centuries.

“No matter from which point of view, hyperspace theory is just a start. We are faster than we thought, and we have mastered the way to break through the limit of the speed of light.

“But it is not wise to have too many unrealistic expectations.”

A reporter extended the microphone and asked, “So, are you saying that you are pessimistic about achieving faster than light in the near future?”

Without hesitation, Luo Wenxuan nodded.

“Yeah...

“I’m very pessimistic.”

Chapter 1305: Shocked the World!

The ILHCRC press conference was over.

Through the microphones and cameras in the hands of the reporters, the sensation quickly spread to the headlines of major newspapers.

Everyone Daily: "The success of the Z particle has opened the door of physics, pushing civilization to a better future!"

Jinling Evening News: "63.6 seconds!"

Wall Street Journal: "The speed of light is no longer insurmountable!"

The Sun: "The universe is smaller than we think!"

Times Magazine: "..."

Whether it was the newspaper or television, printed or digital media, almost all of them were talking about "Academician Lu", the "ILHCRC", and the "Z particles".

What did faster than light mean?

Very few people could fully understand the academic significance of this. Most people didn't even know what the Z particle was.

However, the majority of people had the same image for the future!

One day, human beings would set foot on distant planets. One day, the seeds of civilization would be carried far away from the solar system.

The farthest space probe launched by mankind had only just left the boundaries of the solar system. With the current technology, it would take hundreds of years to reach the nearest star.

However, no one thought that the future of mankind would be forever stagnated on this blue planet.

The successful opening of the hyperspace channel opened a door for people's imagination.

Even though it was still a beautiful and distant dream, at least for now, the dream was possible.

This small particle had not only changed the physics world, but it had also completely changed the future of all of mankind!

Who could possibly remain calm in the face of such an important historical moment?

Because of this, most of the media outlets were enthusiastic about this event, and they reported it without any hesitation.

Even though the Secretary-General of the ILHCRC made it clear at the press conference that even if the Z particle successfully opened a hyperspace channel, it did not mean that human civilization could enter the interstellar age, but this did not wipe out people's hopes and dreams for the distant starry sky.

On a popular foreign aerospace enthusiast forum.

Ever since the BFS spacecraft crashed into Mars, the forum had gradually gone downhill.

However, something had changed!

After the news of the success of the Z particle experiment, the server blew up with heated discussions.

Many of the big-name experts suddenly remembered their log in details. They were shocked to see laymen registering accounts and participating in the discussion.

[This is incredible! Hyperspace channel! Do you know what this reminds me of? This reminds me of wormholes!]

[But I heard that the Secretary-General of the ILHCRC seems to have a pessimistic view on the use of hyperspace technology to achieve interstellar navigation? It is too difficult to maintain the hyperspace channels.]

[Secretary General of the ILHCRC? Luo Wenxuan? He doesn't know sh*t!]

[Hey, don't say that, although he is far behind Professor Lu, he is still an outstanding young physicist...]

[I disagree! Even if we cannot achieve faster than light navigation using this technology, we can at least achieve faster than light communication. It used to take 270.7s for a text message to reach Mars, but because we can take a shortcut, it now only takes 207.1s, which is a full minute faster! I heard that this is not even the fastest shortcut. Wait until we find the best hyperspace route using supercomputers. We'll be able to call Mars with no delay!]

[It's not just communication, but also astronomical observation. The stars we see now are the rays of light from various stars hundreds or even thousands of years ago. If we can use a method to make light or signal reach our galaxy faster, we will be able to see what the stars are like right now! As opposed to thousands of years ago!]

[The Z particle clock is not cheap. It takes hundreds of millions to create a hyperspace channel that does not even exist for five minutes. This dream is beautiful, but it is too expensive!]

[Any technology is expensive when it first comes out, but we always make it better, right?]

...

Beijing.

Changan street.

In a conference room with a solemn atmosphere, the president, who was wearing a tunic suit, read the report in his hand.

Without hesitating, he put down the report in his hand and looked up at Director Li, who was standing at his desk.

"It really only needs 207.1 seconds?!"

"It's true!" Director Li nodded seriously. With a hint of excitement in his respectful tone, he said, "I was at the command center!"

After the experiment was over, Director Li got on the maglev, which had been open for less than two months, and returned to Beijing as soon as possible. He brought the report to Chang'an Avenue immediately.

He still remembered the moment the number was printed on the screen. There was no way this could be a mistake!

The president couldn't help but ask, "Then, what about the 63 seconds? Where did it go?"

Director Li: "I don't know the specific theories behind it! It seems to involve very complicated physics and mathematical calculations. Academician Lu has talked about this with me many times, but I still don't quite understand it."

The President stared at Director Li and said, "Tell me then! Tell me what you know!"

After making a gesture with his fingers, Director Li tried to use his own understanding to give a vague explanation.

"So, basically, the earth and other planets are being pulled by gravity, right? It's like being tied by a tie. Even though gravity is invisible, it is real."

The president couldn't help asking, "What then?"

Director Li: "Then they used the Z particle and shook it in high-dimensional space, like a jumping rope. Because of the theory of relativity, gravity itself is the bending of matter to spacetime. Then this curvature vibrates. From the perspective of our three-dimensional space, the space has turned upside down. Some of the roads have become longer, and some have become shorter—"

After pondering in his mind for a while, the president said, "In other words, the photon that arrived... It just walked a shorter path?"

Director Li slapped his thigh suddenly and nodded.

"You're so smart! It took me a long time to understand this."

Haha.

Of course I'm smart.

The president sat back on his chair with a calm expression. He pondered for a while and said, "Using this thing to achieve faster than light speeds... How feasible is it?"

If we can achieve warp travel...

The impact of this thing on China will be greater than the impact of nuclear fusion!

Not only did this mean that China would be given priority to develop distant planets, but it would also mean that the Chinese civilization would transform Earth to a space civilization!

Even the president began to feel excited.

Director Li guessed what the president was thinking.

Even though he didn't want to destroy the vision in his heart, considering the advantages and disadvantages, after hesitating for a while, he answered truthfully.

"According to Secretary-General Luo, the feasibility of achieving faster than light navigation... It's unlikely. The cost of the Z particle clock is very expensive. In just a few minutes, it can burn a small fusion reactor. I'm afraid it's not a suitable choice."

"Secretary-General Luo?" The president frowned and asked, "Who is Secretary-General Luo?"

Director Li had an awkward look on his face as he explained, "The secretary-general of the ILHCRC, the one who replaced Professor Lu in the press conference to give a report."

"Oh, that young man... is a promising young man." The president nodded with a polite smile. He was silent for a while. He then said with a serious expression, "But I still want to ask for Academician Lu's opinion."

Director Li: "..."

The president continued, "Where is Academician Lu now? Can you invite him to Beijing? Or I can go to Jinling."

“Um...” Director Li’s face once again showed an awkward expression. He said, “I might not be able to contact him now.”

The president asked anxiously, “Can’t contact him? Is he sick again? Is it serious?”

This happened last time with the controllable fusion ignition.

As soon as the ignition was successful, before he had time to celebrate, Professor Lu fainted and became unconscious.

After staying at the 301 Hospital for a long time, nothing was found. Even now, the 301 Hospital had a special department responsible for studying what happened to his illness.

“It’s not that he’s sick, I think he’s very well.” Director Li was dumbfounded. He looked at the concerned expression on the president’s face and said, “It’s just that as soon as the experiment was over, he went into a retreat...”

It seemed like Lu Zhou handled this situation poorly.

Right after the big announcement, when the whole world was waiting for an explanation from him, he disappeared.

Even though he threw Luo Wenxuan to replace himself, it was clear that Luo Wenxuan could not handle the pressure.

Forget about Luo Wenxuan.

In the face of such a major news event that sensationalized the whole world, even the ILHCRC couldn’t handle the pressure...

The day after the ILHCRC conference ended...

Immediately after the president confirmed the news, two congratulatory messages were sent from Chang’an Avenue to the Jinling launch site and the ILHCRC headquarters in Shanghai.

In the congratulatory message, the higher-ups praised the aerospace engineers of the Jinling launch site and all the physicists of the ILHCRC for their great contributions to the future of human civilization.

This wasn’t just from the Chinese side.

The same happened in other countries.

High-level leaders from more than 50 countries, both from participating countries and non-participating countries of the project, told the public to pay attention to this matter. They also sent congratulations letters to the ILHCRC and Lu Zhou himself.

Regardless of whether it was genuine or not, the president of the United States also sent a congratulatory message to ILHCRC. He said that the ILHCRC was a monument of human civilization and the hope for the future of mankind.

The US president also asked the most important question, which was the question everyone was concerned about.

Which was how long before human civilization could achieve faster than light travel...

...

Zhongshan International.

Outside the front gate, a black Volkswagen parked at the entrance. Beside the door stood an excited old man with a thick neck and a driver with a smile on his face.

Director Li looked at the man standing at the gate like a steel wall. His blood pressure quickly soared as he spoke.

"I have something urgent, can't you compromise?"

"No compromises." Wang Peng shook his head and said, "He said he's not seeing anyone for two days."

"You!" Director Li angrily said, "Why can't you be more flexible? I am not looking to have a conversation, I'm in a hurry! Can you just ask him? If he agrees, it'll only take five minutes... At most ten minutes. If he disagrees, I'll leave!"

Wang Peng shook his head; his attitude didn't change.

"If he is willing to see you, he will answer your call. Director Li, you should leave."

Director Li stamped his foot anxiously. “The president asked me to come. Let me inside!”

Wang Peng’s expression stayed the same as he said, “I have to listen to Lu Zhou’s orders. How about you ask the president to fire me?”

Director Li shook his head and sighed angrily. There was nothing he could do.

Even though his rank was higher than Wang Peng’s boss, but rank was one thing, and authority was another. Also, just like Wang Peng said, standing here was Lu Zhou’s orders. If Lu Zhou didn’t want to talk, there was nothing he could do.

“Forget about it, I won’t argue with you. This kid, on a retreat my a*s—”

Wang Peng coughed.

Director Li was amused. He glanced at him.

“What? I’m not allowed to stand here and complain?”

“Um... This actually has nothing to do with me. It’s just that if Academician Lu is in the study room, he might hear you talking.” Wang Peng looked at Director Li and said in a serious manner, “I’m worried that if you continue to talk about him, he won’t come out on purpose, and we would have to wait longer to see him.”

As soon as Director Li heard that Lu Zhou might be able to hear him, he suddenly shut his mouth.

He was scared.

If Lu Zhou really decided to extend his retreat because of this and stayed at home for months, the whole of Chang’an Avenue and the world would go crazy.

“Okay! You... When did he begin the retreat yesterday?”

Wang Peng: “Five in the afternoon.”

“Okay, okay! Then I’ll come back at 5 o’clock tomorrow afternoon!”

After that, Director Li didn't linger around for any longer. He waved at his driver and returned to his Volkswagen car.

After a while, the car disappeared at the end of the street...

Wang Peng breathed a sigh of relief in his heart. He was about to continue standing at the front gate when he suddenly received a call.

He took out his phone and saw that Lu Zhou was calling.

Without hesitating, he picked up the call.

"Hello?"

"It's me... What's going on outside?"

"Director Li just came..." Wang Peng hesitated for a bit and said, "Apparently, it's urgent."

"Is he still outside?"

"He left."

"Okay, I understand."

Not knowing whether Lu Zhou was satisfied or dissatisfied, Wang Peng hesitated for a few seconds before asking, "Should I call him to come back?"

"For what? I said I'm not seeing anyone for two days."

Wang Peng smiled and said, "Okay."

After hanging up the call, Lu Zhou put his phone aside.

He didn't care if Director Li was in a hurry. He was too busy with his own affairs. He didn't have time to deal with other people's business.

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and picked up the pen again. He tried to calm his mood and continued to focus on the unfinished work in front of him.

Even though he was less busy than a few days ago, he wasn't doing nothing.

Most of his time was spent adapting to the changes brought to him by level 10 in physics.

Honestly speaking, the feeling of level 10 in physics was strange.

It was so wonderful that it was difficult to describe in words.

Leveling up to mathematics level 10 felt like abstracting the laws of everything into a world of numbers. Reaching physics level 10 was more like using pure reason to “see” everything in the world.

Why did the water evaporate?

How did the atmosphere work?

How to answer the negative sign question in quantum Monte Carlo simulation?

From high school problems to esoteric physics propositions, everything was clearly written in front of him.

Even though his intuition did not give him a direct answer, his intuition was like chess pieces falling on a chessboard, simplifying the world.

This felt extremely pleasurable.

Especially for a scientist like him.

Most of the time, what troubled people was not the cumbersome experimental process or the numbing calculations. Instead, it was the frustration of not knowing how to proceed with the research project at all.

The feeling of entering a dead end and not being able to squeeze out any inspiration... That was more painful than anything.

But now...

At least for the problems known to mankind, except for wild guesses and conjectures, even if he couldn't find the answers to the propositions immediately, he could still solve the problem if given enough time.

In addition, apart from adapting to the huge changes brought to him by physics level 10, another thing that occupied most of Lu Zhou's energy was the prize he drew from the system space two days ago.

This was thanks to the system's "golden" lucky draw.

In the past, Lu Zhou didn't believe that the system could really extract things like cosmic starships, but that had changed.

He still didn't get anything as awesome as a starship, but he did get a blueprint for a space station.

Some people might say that the space station was nothing impressive.

But if this space station was large enough to accommodate tens of thousands or even millions of people, could dock hundreds or even thousands of spacecrafts, and handle millions of tons of materials, maybe those people would change their minds.

However, even though the blueprint was impressive, it couldn't be achieved with the existing technology of human civilization.

Forget about the human civilization, even the Calan civilization would not be able to complete such a huge task without making compromises.

Lu Zhou was sure that even with the right construction technology and conditions, it would take at least half a century or even a century to create this space station...

However, even though this thing was intangible for now, it was too pessimistic to say that it was totally useless.

The pen in Lu Zhou's hand stopped. He looked at the blueprint on the table. A smile suddenly appeared on Lu Zhou's face.

A thought flashed in his mind.

He suddenly had an idea on how to use this blueprint...

Director Li was finally able to see Lu Zhou the next day.

"You're quite a special one. Didn't even reply to my messages."

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly, but he didn't give an explanation. He just pretended not to hear him and gestured at the teacup on the coffee table.

"You must be tired after driving so far. Let's drink some tea first."

Seeing how Lu Zhou had no remorse, Director Li sighed and said, "I'm not trying to offend you, but this is such a big thing, and you left without saying a word. Isn't that a bit unreasonable? Of course, I am not here to blame you, I'm just saying. The whole world is waiting for you to come out and say something, even just a few words. Surely you can manage that."

Lu Zhou: "Luo Wenxuan has already said what I wanted to say. I have watched the video of his report and he said it very well. I will just end up repeating what he said, so there's no point."

"Professor Luo is Professor Luo. Why don't you understand? Everyone wants to hear your voice, not his or someone else's."

Why does that matter?

Lu Zhou looked at how sincere Director Li was. He sighed and asked, "What do you want to know?"

Director Li immediately said, "How likely is it to achieve faster than light navigation using hyperspace technology? And if it is possible, how long will it take?"

Lu Zhou took a sip of the coffee on the table. He spoke after contemplating for a while.

"Using hyperspace technology to achieve stellar navigation is very promising. My intuition tells me that this path is probably feasible. However, if you want to make this a reality, you would have to wait at least a century."

"A century...?"

"That's right." Lu Zhou nodded while looking at Director Li, who had a disappointed look on his face. He said, "The transition from theory to reality is slow. It takes time for any theory to transition toward technology. Moreover, I don't think faster than light travel is an optimal strategic goal."

Director Li: "Why is that?"

“Because it doesn’t make sense.”

Lu Zhou put down the coffee cup in his hand and said, “It is more realistic to achieve interplanetary faster than light communication using hyperspace technology first. This research will inspire faster than light travel. Before sending a massive spacecraft to farther places, we must first figure out how to deal with photons, electrons, muons, Tau particles, etc.”

Lu Zhou saw Director Li take out his notebook and began taking notes seriously. Lu Zhou paused for a second and spoke with a smile.

“There’s no use writing this down. Even if you write them down, they are useless. No one knows what will happen in fifty years.”

“How is it useless? I remember everything you said!”

Lu Zhou shook his head. He was about to say something, but the old man, who had finished taking notes, looked at him and spoke seriously.

“What you said is very important. The CTV is planning to do a program regarding this topic. If you have time... Would you like to talk about it?”

“I’ll think about the show.” Lu Zhou changed the subject and said, “Speaking of which, now that you’re here, I also have one thing I want to discuss with you.”

When Director Li heard that Lu Zhou had something to discuss with him, he immediately said, “Go ahead!”

“No need to be so nervous.” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “From a long-term perspective, I suggest launching the Mars Project.”

When Director Li heard this, he was stunned.

Lu Zhou knew Director Li would react this way, so he continued, “Also, I’m not just talking about a symbolic launch. It should be implemented as part of the long-term development strategy of our country’s space program.”

Seeing how Lu Zhou didn’t seem to be joking, Director Li gradually reduced the surprised look on his face. His expression gradually became serious.

“Did you find something?”

“... Find what?”

Director Li sat up straight and stared at Lu Zhou's eyes. He continued eagerly, “For example, the hyperspace channel... Have you found a stable way to open it?”

Seeing how Director Li seemed to have misunderstood his words, Lu Zhou sighed and explained patiently.

“You are overestimating my ability. This kind of problem needs the focus of the entire civilization and dozens or even hundreds of years to solve. However, speaking of hyperspace channels, it is actually relevant.”

Director Li: “How?”

“Think about why there is no high-speed rail in Singapore.”

“What kind of high-speed rail does Singapore want?” Director Li said with a smile, “They're tiny, they can walk from one side of the country to another. Unless it is an international high-speed rail, there is no need to build such a thing.”

“That's it.” Lu Zhou snapped his fingers and said, “Many people don't understand the logic of technological development. It is not because of hyperspace channels that we expand to a more distant world. It's because we want to extend our boundaries that we develop technologies that can achieve our wishes.

“Science is pure, but technology is created to solve problems. When we have a real need for faster than light navigation and communication, only then can the technology be created. If we stay on Earth, there is a high probability that this problem will never be solved.”

Director Li frowned and said, “So... in your opinion, we should also plan a place on Mars similar to the Guanghan Special Zone? And create a demand for solving this problem?”

“No need to hurry, one step at a time.” Lu Zhou smiled faintly and continued in a serious tone, “But like I said, regardless of whether or not the hyperspace channel can be opened stably, Mars is an indispensable part of our space strategy. We can first consider establishing a settlement on Mars similar to the

lunar scientific research station, and after that, we can slowly advance our plan.”

Director Li asked seriously, “How long is this long-term period?”

“A hundred years.”

“Hm...” Director Li took in a deep breath and said, “One hundred years... That is quite long.”

“That’s why I have a corresponding medium-term plan.” Lu Zhou said with a smile, “So far, it is difficult for us to plan stable flights to Mars due to the changes in its orbit, and it is also difficult to ensure the safety of the Mars colonists. As a medium-term goal, we don’t need to focus directly on Mars. Instead, we can focus on the Lagrange point.”

Director Li frowned and said, “Lagrange point?”

Lu Zhou nodded. “That’s right.”

“The Lagrange point, also known as the translational point, is a special solution to the restricted three-body problem in celestial mechanics. Point L2 is the hot spot for international deep-space exploration and is located at the far point on the line connecting the sun and the earth. But what I am talking about here is not L2, but instead, I’m talking about the L4 and L5.

“As a medium-term plan, my idea is to build a permanent space station on L4 or L5 to undertake the tasks of material transfer, mineral resource processing, ship docking, repair, and even manufacturing.

“If the Moon Palace is our outpost for controlling Earth and the moon, then the base at the Lagrange point will become our outpost for controlling the solar system. Not only can it be our transit station to Mars, but it can also help us reach out to Mars. It will become our factory in space.”

As Director Li listened to Lu Zhou’s description, he was dumbfounded. He opened his mouth involuntarily and tried to say something. But he didn’t know how to describe the feeling in his heart.

After a while, he spoke.

“This is...”

Lu Zhou: "Too ridiculous?"

Director Li did not say anything.

"I admit that this plan sounds a bit extreme, but from a long-term perspective, it is definitely possible to be achieved. As I said before, we don't need to make it a three-year and five-year goal. Instead, it can be regarded as a long-term plan with a 50-year or 100-year engineering cycle.

"In the short term, this project might be at a loss, but I believe that all losses will be able to show its value in the future. This wealth will bring huge benefits to our descendants, even if it looks unprofitable now."

After a pause, Lu Zhou said, "It is not totally unprofitable. At least our aerospace industry will prosper because of this century-old plan."

Director Li was touched by Lu Zhou's words.

Director Li nodded solemnly after thinking about it for a long time.

"I will pass your words to Chang'an Avenue. I can't guarantee whether it will be successful... In fact, I am afraid that the higher-ups cannot decide this kind of thing. I can only give you a result after a meeting."

Lu Zhou nodded his head.

"Thank you very much."

Director Li asked tentatively, "Do you have anything like a plan? If you do, please make a copy for me. After all, if there is a visible plan, it will be better and more convincing."

"I knew you would say that, so I already prepared it."

Lu Zhou smiled and took out a file bag from under the coffee table. He put it on the coffee table and gently pushed it in front of Director Li.

Director Li looked at the document on the table. He picked it up from the coffee table, unwrapped the cotton thread, and casually pulled a piece of paper out of it.

"What's this..."

He suddenly froze.

Director Li looked at the content on the paper in disbelief. His eyes widened, as if he couldn't believe what he saw before his eyes.

“... An orbital habitat with a Stanford torus configuration. Every engineering parameter on the blueprint has been rigorously calculated. If the conditions are met, we can even begin construction tomorrow.”

Lu Zhou picked up the coffee cup on the coffee table. He took a sip and continued happily, “Even though it is not a plan, this... should be enough, right?”

Chapter 1308: 100-Year Road Map

This is more than enough...

This looks like a fortress!

After flipping through a few pages, Director Li could no longer describe his feelings in words. He was shocked.

From the dimensions and size of each rivet to the materials and screws, to the equipment needed for each functional module, and how many people would be needed, almost all of the requirements were listed on this blueprint.

Many things in the aerospace industry were not possible, such as a cable with a “Young's modulus of 2.07TPa and a breaking strength of 79N/m”, or a “density $\rho \leq 3.7\text{g/cm}^3$, titanium alloy material with modulus $\geq 1333\text{MPa}$ and hardness $\geq \text{HB400}$...”, etc.

However, according to the current development trend, as long as sufficient funds were invested in these research directions, it was still quite possible to produce materials that could meet the standards one day in the future.

Therefore, this was not just an idea, but rather, it was a rigorous manual!

A general road map that outlined the development direction of the aerospace industry for the next 100 years!

“This thing... Where did you get it?”

Director Li realized that he wouldn't understand Lu Zhou's explanation anyway.

Even if Lu Zhou explained it to him, it would be useless.

“I'll take this blueprint for now, I'll return to Beijing tonight!”

Director Li put the blueprint back into the document bag, wrapped it with the cotton thread, and sealed it. Director Li looked at Lu Zhou and said in a serious tone, “If it is okay, I want to show it to the experts at the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, then take it to Chang'an Avenue. Is that fine?”

“No problem.” Lu Zhou said with a smile, “I recommend you give Academician Yuan Huanmin a look at it, he will understand.”

Even though the old academician was a bit stubborn at times, his skills were unrivaled. Lu Zhou believed that after seeing this blueprint, he should be able to understand the meaning behind the blueprint.

“That's what I planned to do.” Director Li said, “If Academician Yuan feels that there are no problems, it will be more persuasive when discussing at the meeting. Okay then. I still have to drive later. I won't stay for dinner.”

Lu Zhou: “How about you wait until tomorrow? There seems to be a celebration banquet tomorrow night.”

“No can do!”

Director Li got up from the sofa and said, “The celebration banquet can be held anytime. There are important things to get done!”

Director Li got up and walked toward the hallway. Lu Zhou also got up from the sofa and took him to the front door.

Lu Zhou wanted to say that the important things could wait, but seeing how important Director Li viewed this blueprint, he decided not to persuade him otherwise.

Just like this, the blueprint of the “Stanford Torus Orbital Habitat” and plans for the Lagrange point space station and the Mars outpost were taken by Director Li and were on a maglev train heading straight to Beijing.

As for other things, Lu Zhou didn’t want to worry about it for the time being.

Before starting the third piece of void memory and the next system mission, he just wanted to take a good rest.

On the one hand, he wanted to spend some time with his girlfriend, and on the other hand, he wanted to relax his brain and think about which research area to tackle next...

The next morning.

After accepting the interview, the CTV media van drove to Lu Zhou’s mansion.

At the request of Lu Zhou himself, the interview was changed to a one-on-one interview.

Before coming here, the director of the media outlet repeatedly ordered Wu Xinran, the host in charge of the interview, to keep the interview within half an hour. This was so that they wouldn’t disturb Academician Lu’s rest.

Because of this, before coming here, Wu Xinran was still a little nervous. She did her homework a long time in advance, for fear that she might offend this “peculiar” scholar.

However, the result was unlike what she had imagined. When Lu Zhou opened the door and invited her in, he didn’t seem to be as uncomfortable as she had thought.

They sat down on the sofa. Wu Xinran watched the coffee being delivered by the home robot. She looked at Lu Zhou and said, “You look younger than I imagined. It looks like you’re in your twenties.”

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded.

“Thank you.”

“Is there any secrets to staying young?”

“Secrets to staying young? I haven’t really done anything special.” Lu Zhou said with a smile, “Perhaps it is because of the pure environment of the laboratory. I know many scholars who look very young.”

For example, Professor Tao.

Even though he was almost in his fifties, he looked like he was in his early thirties. When he was in his thirties, he looked like he was in his early twenties. When Professor Tao got married, it looked like he was walking around with his older sister.

“That’s quite enviable.” Wu Xinran smirked and said, “We won’t waste your time, can we start now? I only have half an hour with you.”

“No need to be so anxious, I’m not that busy.” Lu Zhou said with a smile, “If there is not enough time, we can extend the interview. As long as it’s before the evening. I have a banquet to attend in the evening.”

“Please rest assured that this won’t go past noon. I will try my best to control the interview time to less than half an hour.”

The host smiled at Lu Zhou, then looked at the reporter, who was carrying the camera, and nodded. This indicated that she was ready to start shooting.

All of the preparations were done; the interview officially began.

“First of all, the question that everyone is concerned about... What do you think the Z particle will bring to our future?”

Lu Zhou thought about it for a while before replying, “The future is a very broad concept, how it will affect our future depends on how long you mean by the future. If it is five or ten years, hyperspace theory will still be a very esoteric thing for ordinary people. Maybe it will affect the development trajectory of physics, but the impact on ordinary people will be quite small.”

After a pause, he continued, “However, if we’re talking about fifty or even a hundred years, its impact will be huge. Let your imagination run wild.”

Wu Xinran said, “Imagination runs wild?”

“Yes.” Lu Zhou nodded and smiled as he said, “Actually, think about it carefully. From living on farms to living in reinforced concrete buildings, it only

took thirty years. Human civilization as a whole is much more adaptable than we think.

“A century ago, people couldn’t even imagine that, one day in the future, people will sleep in tall high-rise buildings, with neighbors in all directions.

“For the same reason, things that seem unbelievable now might be nothing more than ordinary routines in the future a hundred years from now. Perhaps by then, most people will live in space stations. Resources will come from mining asteroids, extracting energy from stars, and using the infinite space of the universe to solve various problems facing our social development.”

Wu Xinran asked curiously, “How are these things related to Z particles and the hyperspace theory?”

“Everything I talk about is related to the Z particle.” Lu Zhou leaned back on the sofa, crossed his fingers on his knees, and said with a smile, “Space was a vast and distant concept before, but now, it’s been pulled near us.

“Because of the birth of hyperspace theory, we have found a shortcut from low-Earth orbit to the distant universe. Because of this, the things I said will become a reality in the near future.

“It might seem like it is too early to talk about these things.

“But time will show that I’m not joking around.”

Chapter 1309: Business Exchange

The half-hour interview ended quickly.

In the latter half of the interview, Lu Zhou said the same things as what Luo Wenxuan said at the press conference.

The only difference was that these words were said by him personally, so the persuasive power was much higher.

After some simple editing, the video of the interview was posted on the CTV channel during night time.

Lu Zhou sort of fulfilled Director Li's request. As the chairman of the ILHCRC, he finally talked about the Z particle and hyperspace theory to the public.

Even though in Lu Zhou's own opinion, he was only talking about some superficial and surface-level things, for those who were interested in the developments in Z particle research and hyperspace theory, they had been waiting a long time for this interview.

People were enthusiastically discussing how this experiment would affect the world if it succeeded.

And now, Lu Zhou, as the most authoritative scholar in this direction, finally stood up and gave a clear answer to this question.

Although this answer did not fully meet everyone's expectations for hyperspace, it still satisfied many people's expectations for the future.

On the other hand, at 1,600 Pennsylvania Avenue on the opposite side of the Pacific Ocean...

Even though he was not a fan of Lu Zhou, a man in a suit and a pair of leather shoes inside an office ordered his assistant to contact the department immediately after the interview program was broadcast and to produce an English subtitled version of the interview.

After watching the half-hour interview with subtitles across the screen, the president couldn't help but frown.

The adviser standing next to him reminded him.

"China has completely left us behind in aerospace technology."

The president cursed in his heart and said, "I know."

Adviser: "I'm not just talking about the usual problems... From this interview and some intelligence we collected before, we have reason to suspect that their choice of Mars as the experimental site is sending some kind of signal."

The president looked at him and asked with a frown, "Signal?"

"Yes." The advisor nodded and said, "Since the establishment of the lunar transfer orbit, the rare minerals transported from the moon to the earth have made their lunar project profitable. They will definitely find a way to continue to

expand this advantage. I don't know if you have noticed, but during the Mars rescue operation, the position of Mars was optimal for landing. However, they did not land on Mars. Instead, they used a smaller spacecraft for the mission."

The adviser paused for a moment and said, "But now, Mars is not in the optimal landing position. In theory, it is much more difficult to get into orbit than it was a few years ago, but they still sent a spacecraft."

"Obviously, their investment in aerospace technology has never stopped!"

The look on the president's face finally changed slightly.

After pondering for a while, he reached out and picked up the phone. He dialed his assistant and spoke without hesitating.

"Call Carson for me and ask him, as well as the person in charge of NASA's Lunar Gateway program, to come to the White House."

"I have important things to discuss with him."

...

Lu Zhou didn't know how the White House was reacting to all this. He was far away in Jinling, whistling as he put on a suit. He then went downstairs and sat in the electric car parked at the front gate.

The celebration banquet for the success of the hyperspace theory experiment was planned to be on the third day after the experiment, which was tonight.

According to the previous plan, this celebration banquet was to be held in the evening after the experiment. The ILHCRC even booked a hotel and sent out invitations in advance.

However, because of Lu Zhou's absence, the celebration banquet was postponed until now.

Lu Zhou was the protagonist, who created this milestone in the history of physics. There was no way they could celebrate without him.

After all, the hyperspace theory was his masterpiece.

Even though many other people had made great achievements in this direction, such as Professor Wei Hong's Z particle gravitational fluctuation

formula, in the face of this great discovery that changed physics, everything else seemed insignificant.

Purple Mountain restaurant.

This was the Jinling local hotel that had hosted many international banquets. After the renovation at the beginning of the year, the luxurious feeling of this hotel had risen to a whole new level.

Speaking of which, this hotel's success could be attributed partly to Lu Zhou. Because Lu Zhou himself quite liked the environment here, all of his banquets that were held in Jinling were hosted at this hotel.

Because of this, this luxury hotel had become an international tourist spot.

In the banquet hall.

The guests in formal attire stood together in small groups and chatted with one another.

Among them were physicists from the ILHCRC, engineers from the launch site, people from both political and business circles, and guests that were invited here for other reasons.

Most of the people who stood in this banquet hall were important individuals. This was obvious from their conversations.

"You actually knew this would happen," Dobrik said as he looked at Professor Wei Hong, who was standing by the long table. He continued, " You knew about the possibility of changing the curvature of spacetime."

When Professor Wei Hong showed him the conjecture on the whiteboard, his mind was filled with disapproval; he even wondered if Wei Hong had gone crazy.

However, after Professor Lu's paper was published, his opinion instantly changed. He was baffled by the ingenuity of his colleague.

Even though Wei Hong only had a vague idea.

But being able to have the same idea as Professor Lu was already extremely impressive!

“We were only pondering, not even pondering, just guessing.” Wei Hong shrugged his shoulders and said, “If a guess can be counted as a discovery, then Einstein won’t be the only person that discovered the theory of relativity.”

He had quite a good mindset.

It wasn’t that he didn’t envy Lu Zhou’s achievements, but he knew that even if he kept researching in this direction, he wouldn’t get any results.

After seeing Lu Zhou’s paper, he was certain of this.

Understanding the complex calculations was the best he could do; forget about creating an epoch-making theory by himself.

Wei Hong, who was talking with Dobrik and Luo Wenxuan, suddenly caught a glimpse of a familiar face from the crowd.

The man walked through the crowd and walked to the three of them. He smiled and raised the champagne in his hand.

“Thank you, your formula helped a lot.”

Wei Hong looked a little flattered. He quickly raised the glass in his hand. Because he was a little nervous, he almost spilled the champagne in the glass.

“Oh no, if it weren’t for you, this problem would have never been solved!”

“Don’t say that, I don’t know everything.” Lu Zhou smiled and gently raised his glass. He said to Dobrik, “Your intuition about data is impressive. This is all thanks to you for not treating the anomaly in the gravitational map as an accident. Otherwise, who knows when this problem could be solved.”

Professor Dobrik said respectfully, “I didn’t do anything special, just a trivial matter in the grand scheme of things.”

“Every step leading to the top of the mountain is important and crucial. I believe that in the near future, when people learn about what happened, they will definitely learn your name.”

Lu Zhou looked at Luo Wenxuan.

However, before he could speak, Luo Wenxuan grinned and asked, “How about me?”

Lu Zhou was stunned for a moment. He smiled and said, “We’re good friends, so let’s avoid talking about business... Come on, cheers.”

Luo Wenxuan suddenly became anxious.

“Don’t! This is also important to me!”

Lu Zhou thought for a while.

“I have nothing to say though.”

Luo Wenxuan was baffled.

“... I hope no one heard you say that.”

If someone else heard that and wrote it down.

It would be so embarrassing...

Chapter 1310: I’m Not Interested in the Nobel Prize

What Luo Wenxuan worried about did not happen.

No one took the banter between friends too seriously at this kind of private occasion.

Also, as the secretary-general of the ILHCRC, his contribution was quite remarkable.

Lu Zhou spoke in a solemn tone in his speech at the official ceremony of the banquet. He expressed his gratitude to those individuals and groups who had made outstanding contributions to the ILHCRC and helped prove the hyperspace theory.

“... Since the beginning of the millennium, all of the major achievements we have achieved in the field of physics come from the power of cooperation.

Without so many outstanding people, our work will be difficult or impossible to carry out at all.”

“Thanks to all those who have contributed to this noble cause, whether it is tedious or seemingly trivial works, I believe that they all have value and undiscovered things beneath them. And one day, perhaps tomorrow or in the future, human civilization will find these discoveries.”

“Even though fame and wealth is not our pursuit in this field, if a stone monument were to be erected to commemorate this moment, I hope all of our names will be engraved on it!”

There was a wave of applause in the banquet hall.

The atmosphere of the scene was pushed to a peak.

People clinked glasses to celebrate and commemorate this moment in history.

The gray-haired Academician Lu, who was standing at the back of the crowd, raised his sleeve and gently rubbed the corner of his eye. Professor Li Rongen of the physics department at Jin Ling University walked to the side of the old man and spoke with a smile.

“Have you thought about this before?”

Academician Lu quickly put his hand down and spoke after a cough.

“Thought about what?”

“That your student would one day grow to this point.”

Professor Li Rongen had a smile on his face. Academician Lu went silent for a while. He then sighed.

He spoke emotionally.

“I used to think that this kid has a bright future, so I tried my best to fool him into my graduate school, but I didn’t think that...”

He looked at the stage and at the young man’s face. A smile of relief suddenly appeared on Academician Lu’s face.

“Didn’t think that, in his twenties, he has already doubled all of my expectations for him.”

...

Old man Academician Lu wasn’t the only one that didn’t expect this; most people didn’t expect it.

Lu Zhou had just won a Nobel Prize medal, and in less than half a year, he made another Nobel Prize-level achievement.

Unlike other Nobel Prize achievements, this had surpassed the discovery of the Higgs particle and the Z particle; it had even surpassed the sum of the two.

Because of this, the Nobel Prize Committee was in a tough spot.

He had just won a Nobel Prize last year. Many people were still lining up in the back; many people had beaten themselves to death and hadn’t even gotten in the queue. It seemed quite unreasonable.

Also, according to the practice of the physics community, if the prize was awarded in theoretical physics last year, then this year’s prize must be awarded to condensed matter physics. Giving theoretical physics awards for two years in a row was not a good idea.

But what discovery was more qualified to win the prize than hyperspace theory?

Even the Higgs particle wasn’t as important as the hyperspace theory.

After all, the discovery of this boson had only filled the gaps in the standard model and saved a crumbling building. The discovery of hyperspace theory was equivalent to directly refreshing people’s understanding of the high-dimensional world and the concept of spacetime.

Using this special physical property, human beings even had the hope that mass could achieve a speed beyond the speed of light.

To say that it was groundbreaking was an understatement.

However, Lu Zhou did not give the Nobel Prize judges a hard time.

During a media interview after the banquet, a BBC reporter handed the microphone in front of him and asked him whether hyperspace theory would bring him the second Nobel Prize in physics. Lu Zhou answered in a serious tone.

“It would be better to give the nine million kronor and medal to those that need it more. I shouldn’t be considered a candidate. In fact, I don’t need more honors to prove anything.”

When he said this, the reporters surrounding him were shocked

The BBC reporter who asked the question earlier thought he had misheard Lu Zhou. The reporter quickly asked, “Are you being serious? You know, the Nobel Committee might hear this, if there is any misunderstanding, maybe—”

“Do I look like I’m joking?”

Faced with the countless interview microphones and cameras, Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Of course I’m serious, I very much hope that they can give more consideration to outstanding young people as their research results need more recognition and sponsorship. In fact, if they do not plan to do this, I will consider setting up an award to do this myself.”

The atmosphere exploded.

If someone else had said this, it would sound a bit arrogant.

But this came from Lu Zhou’s mouth. No one thought that he was arrogant. People even thought he was humble.

If he wanted to compete for the next Nobel Prize, there would be no doubt he would win. The Nobel Prize Committee would definitely award him the 2024 Nobel Prize in Physics.

After all, this was a discovery that would change the course of human history. Since the theory of relativity, no theory had been this groundbreaking.

But now, after Lu Zhou made such a statement, the Nobel Committee would have to reconsider.

If Lu Zhou did not participate in the selection, Wei Hong and Professor Dobrik, who found the “Z particle gravitational fluctuation formula”, would undoubtedly

become the hot running candidates for the 2024 Nobel Prize in Physics. They were the most likely people to share this nine million kronor prize.

After all, the significance of this formula was acknowledged by Lu Zhou himself. The conclusion in that paper was also cited in Lu Zhou's hyperspace theory paper.

If they couldn't award the hyperspace theory itself, giving the award to other research in this area was an indirect way of recognition.

Unfortunately, Luo Wenxuan wouldn't be a part of this.

If he had joined this research project earlier, he might have had a share of the 9 million kronor.

But unfortunately, he joined too late. He hardly had time to produce any particularly important research results. He watched on the side as Lu Zhou revealed the full potential of this research area.

The reporters at the scene, as well as the physicists nearby, were all shocked by Lu Zhou's generous remarks. The news spread around the world through media networks.

The more it spread, the less accurate the story became...

Chapter 1311: I Want to Give You a Star

["I never even touched the medal after I took it home. I am not interested in the Nobel Prize."]

[Shocked! Professor Lu "declined" the Nobel Prize!]

["I will name an award after myself to reward those young people who need help."]

[Lu Zhou: I have too many trophies, don't send me anymore!]

[...]

Lu Zhou looked at the news headlines on his phone. His eyebrows twitched fiercely as he frowned.

He just accepted an interview normally and expressed his opinion in a normal way.

Why was it interpreted like this...

It sounds like I was bragging...

Lu Zhou gave the phone to Chen Yushan, who was walking beside him. Finally, Lu Zhou asked, "Where did you find so much news about me?"

Chen Yushan blinked and replied with a smile, "They're on my app."

"How come I can't find any?"

"Maybe..." Chen Yushan thought about this for a while with her arms folded and said, "Maybe it's because you don't search your name often on the Internet?"

What does that mean?

Does this mean you search my name often?

That's...

Quite flattering.

Lu Zhou suddenly felt a little embarrassed. He looked to the side.

Chen Yushan sharply caught the change in his expression. She looked at him curiously, like she had just discovered a new element.

"Huh? Your face is a little red."

"No way, you're seeing things."

"No, it is! Wait, let me take a photo..."

Chen Yushan was about to take out her mobile phone to take a picture when Lu Zhou grabbed her phone and stopped her.

If she managed to collect evidence, his tall, handsome, and calm image would be completely ruined!

“Look at how scared you are! Even if I actually took the photo, I wouldn’t share it with other people, I’ll only enjoy it myself. Why are you so scared?”

Chen Yushan chuckled and smiled, but she didn’t grab her phone back. She said, “Speaking of which, I didn’t expect you to be so generous. Have you thought about which awards you’re setting up in your name?”

“Awards?”

Lu Zhou hesitated a bit and quickly realized what she was referring to. A somewhat embarrassed look appeared on his face.

“Awards... I think it’s still a bit too early. Although I do have this idea, at my current age, doesn’t it seem too much?”

“How come? Didn’t you see how excited people were online?” Chen Yushan smiled and said, “If you are interested, you can tell me. Even if it’s just an idea, no problem, I can help you set up a fund to manage this bonus.”

“Um... Let’s wait until later. I’m still young now, so I’m not in a hurry.”

Lu Zhou didn’t think this through yet.

They were walking on a path leading to an observatory. His mind was completely occupied by something else.

Normally, he would never be played by Chen Yushan like this. It wasn’t an exaggeration to say that he could easily outwit her using only half of his brainpower.

The two continued walking along the stairs. Soon they came to the end of the road.

Lu Zhou looked at the iron fence at the end of the stairs and the metal plate with the words “Jinling University Observatory”. He had a smile on his face.

Lu Zhou looked at how confused Chen Yushan was as he spoke.

“It’s here, we’re here.”

He took out a key from his pocket and unlocked the iron fence. He walked into the building with Chen Yushan walking curiously behind...

This observatory was in Jin Ling University's on-campus astronomical observation facility, which was located on a hill on the campus.

Although the building was not spectacular, it was equipped with a reflecting telescope with a diameter of 65 cm. The telescope was automatically controlled by a computer and was one of the largest teaching telescopes in Southeast Asia.

This telescope was the reason why Jin Ling University's astronomy department was dominant across the country.

In addition to this, there was also a professional two-meter radio telescope.

However, Lu Zhou came here today mainly for the telescope.

Chen Yushan looked at the empty hall curiously as she said, "It's so empty here, like a haunted house."

Lu Zhou took out the key and opened the door of the observation room. He smiled and said, "After all, it's the New Year's holidays. I got the key from the Academic Affairs Office. We are probably the only guests in this building."

Inside the observation room, Lu Zhou walked to the center of the room. He followed the manual instructions and meticulously operated the reflecting telescope with a diameter of 65 cm.

"Done."

After clapping his hands, Lu Zhou stepped back and looked at the masterpiece he had constructed. He nodded with satisfaction and turned to look at Chen Yushan.

"The time is perfect, and the angle has been adjusted. Come here."

Chen Yushan walked to the side of the telescope and leaned down in front of the eyepiece curiously.

The second she saw the starry sky, she had a smile on her face.

She had never seen anything as beautiful before.

The gorgeous starry sky was like a kaleidoscope overflowing with light. The shining stars were like gems in a mine, shining in the endless darkness.

After staring at the sky for a long time, she looked away reluctantly.

“It’s so beautiful...”

Chen Yushan stood up straight and looked at Lu Zhou. She spoke softly.

“I never noticed there is such a beautiful scene above us.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Because normally we can’t see that far, we can only do it with this tool. You can try to zoom in so you can see closer.”

“Can you help me?”

“Happy to help.”

Lu Zhou walked to the side of the reflecting telescope. He moved his eyes close to the eyepiece and carefully adjusted the magnification and angle of the telescope.

Chen Yushan watched him carefully. Suddenly, she felt her heartbeat speed up inexplicably.

Lu Zhou, who was carefully adjusting the telescope, suddenly asked, “Speaking of which, do you remember what day it is?”

Chen Yushan blushed as she snapped back to reality. She replied, “Ah, yes, of course I remember! The fifth day of the Chinese New Year... No, February 14th... Today, today is Valentine’s Day!”

She stuttered and nearly bit her tongue.

Seeing how panicked Chen Yushan was, Lu Zhou couldn’t help but smile. He let go of the telescope and stood up.

“I thought you forgot.”

“How could I forget such an important day?”

Chen Yushan rolled her eyes and blushed. She then lightly punched Lu Zhou in the chest.

But soon, like a Valentine's Day chocolate in the sun, her voice softened.

"Speaking of which..."

"What?"

"Going to the observatory to watch the stars on Valentine's Day, it feels... very romantic." Chen Yushan didn't know how to describe the feeling in her heart. She felt her heart beating very fast and her cheeks getting warm.

She was convinced that this feeling did not come from hormones.

Is this what love is?

She had never felt this way before.

Lu Zhou looked at her pretty face and smirked.

"Oh, really? I was a little worried you would think I'm boring."

After all, watching the stars together was different than watching a movie or shopping. Not everyone appreciated the beauty of the skies.

"Not at all. As long as I'm with you, I like it. Also..."

Chen Yushan glanced at the telescope and said, "I have never noticed before how beautiful the stars are... Can I take another look?"

Lu Zhou smiled and made an inviting gesture.

"No problem, it's yours. You can look as long as you like."

Without hesitating, Chen Yushan walked to the side of the telescope. When she put her eyes on it again, the universe was in her eyes.

It seemed like all of the stars in the universe were in one place.

She had an excited look on her beautiful face.

"... So pretty."

It was too pretty.

She didn't even know how to describe what she was seeing.

Lu Zhou walked next to her and spoke softly.

"Tau Ceti, 11.9 light-years away from our sun. I wanted to show you Proxima Centauri, but we are in the northern hemisphere, so we can't see Alpha Centauri."

"Does it have any special meaning?"

"Not really... Tau Ceti is not like other famous stars. It is just an extremely common third-magnitude faint star that can be seen directly by the naked eye. It is not even named after anyone."

Chen Yushan smirked and teased, "I thought it had something to do with love."

"Compared to supernovas, it is still darker. It was difficult finding it back in the day, so there aren't any old stories surrounding it." Lu Zhou smiled and continued, "But because of this, history has given us a precious blank page, and we can carve our own legends on it."

Chen Yushan felt her cheeks getting warm.

"Be honest, how many girls did you use this trick on?"

"You're the first."

"Hm..."

Chen Yushan was a little pleased. She turned her face and buried her eyes in the eyepiece of the telescope.

When Lu Zhou noticed her ears getting red, he smiled and asked, "You like it?"

"I told you, I like doing anything with you."

"I'm talking about the star."

Chen Yushan smirked. She said in a childish way, "Of course I do, you told me that you want to engrave our story on it."

“Then, I’ll give it to you.”

It seemed like time had frozen.

Chen Yushan looked up at Lu Zhou and blinked.

“Give it to me...?”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Remember the Valentine’s Day gift I talked about?”

“I want to give you a star.”

Chapter 1312: Star System Colonization Fund

New York.

The heart of Manhattan.

The rising sun shined on Wall Street as usual. But what was different from the past was that the busyness and orderliness were disturbed by an unexpected news.

A fast food restaurant on the corner of a street.

Most of the people sitting here were employees working nearby. Even though it was a small place with cheap prices, because of its convenience and high-quality food, many famous Wall Street people visited here.

Two white-collar workers in suits and leather shoes were sitting by the window. They were eating pancakes while discussing.

“Did you hear?”

“Hear what?”

“Tau Ceti! The headline from the Wall Street Journal! The star colonization fund already raised a capital of 10 billion! Jesus, you actually didn’t know this?”

What the hell is Tau Ceti?

The person sitting across obviously didn't understand. But when he heard the 10 billion number, he was shocked. The fork in his hand almost fell off.

"What... Ten billion? Colonization? What's going on?"

"Professor Lu, the person who discovered the hyperspace theory a while ago, the winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics last year! He registered a fund with a scale of 10 billion yuan, with the target of colonizing the Tau Ceti planets! The goal is to achieve colonization outside of the solar system within two hundred years..."

The white-collar worker continued.

"I have never heard of such an ambitious investment plan... Especially for a high-risk industry like the aerospace industry. And if someone else colonizes the Tau Ceti, or if there are no habitable planets there, won't it be a waste of money?"

Of course, even if the plan to colonize the Tau Ceti couldn't be completed, they could also adjust their strategy. They could colonize Alpha Centauri or liquidate the rest of the funds.

This was not so much a fund; it was more like a trust product. Pay now and designate future beneficiaries. The person who came up with this plan was a crazy genius...

The colleague sitting opposite him listened carefully. He then said, "Privatize a planet? Is that possible?"

The white-collar worker shook his head and said, "Why not? There is no government on other planets since no one has ever been there! The laws in a hundred years might not allow it. But according to the current laws, it is not illegal. After all, the fund is not open to the public. Even though the goal is a bit strange, it is just an investment... The laws around it are flexible."

Also, Professor Lu was considered the number one scholar in China, and the rules that govern ordinary people and companies did not completely apply to him.

As for whether the fund would still exist a hundred years from now...

That depended on the ability of the fund managers.

After hearing about this, the colleague sitting across from him slammed the table with his right fist and spoke with disappointment on his face.

“No public offering? F*ck! This guy wants it all to himself!”

The white-collar worker raised his eyebrows as he said, “What? Are you interested?”

“Doesn’t matter... What can I do even if I am interested?” The colleague shook his head and continued, “If someone else were involved, I would think it is an April Fool’s joke, but this is Professor Lu!”

The white-collar worker asked with a smile, “How do you know that Professor Lu is not joking?”

The colleague sitting opposite him asked rhetorically, “Have you seen him joke around before?”

“ ... ”

Feren was sitting nearby at another table, listening to the conversation. He was dumbfounded. It wasn’t until the two workers in suits left did he realize that he hadn’t touched his sandwich.

He’d been in the industry for 10 years.

Even though he wasn’t a particularly big player, Feren had learned and seen a lot.

But this was the first time he had heard that there was a fund whose main business was to “explore new celestial bodies and sell the naming rights of asteroids”, as well as focusing on “exoplanet colonization and development rights”, with hundreds of millions in investment.

If Professor Lu was serious...

For some reason, he suddenly remembered the hyperspace theory that made a sensation in the world some time ago.

Countless media commented on it as another revolutionary theory after the era of relativity. Even a Princeton high-energy physics professor, who once

appeared in Time Magazine, indicated that this theory ignited the interstellar era. This provided a possibility of light year travel.

If Professor Lu was being serious, it was obviously because he had discovered something that no one else had!

A crazy thought popped up in Feren's head.

He chewed down the last few bites on his plate. He dropped a hundred dollar bill on the table before quickly leaving the restaurant.

He quickly walked to the nearby newspaper stand. He finally found some change from his wallet and threw it on the table.

"Wall Street Journal, the latest issue!"

"You came at the perfect time." The old man sitting at the newspaper stand grinned and took the last newspaper off the shelf. He said, "This issue sold very well, and there's only one left."

"Thank you."

After taking the newspaper, Feren quickly returned to the company's office and spread the newspaper on the table.

He didn't need to search at all. The galaxy star with a question mark in the middle was printed as the headline on the first page of the newspaper.

The accompanying text next to it gave a concise explanation of the content of the headline.

[Tau Ceti Star System Colonization Fund, the world's first astronomical exploration fund worth hundreds of millions was born!]

The story talked about the registration of this fund, as well as listing information about the Tau Ceti. It also talked about the academic circles' opinions on the number of planets in the Tau Ceti system and whether there might be terrestrial planets among them.

If Lu Zhou chose this star, it must mean that there were valuable planets there!

After a quick glance at the headline, Feren quickly looked at the main text.

His eyes couldn't look away.

“Sh*t! What a genius idea.”

Unlike the two white-collar workers who were sitting by the window talking about this, he saw a business opportunity.

A business opportunity that could make him a fortune!

There was no doubt that this piece of news that appeared in the headlines of the Wall Street Journal would definitely cause a huge sensation worldwide. Judging from people's enthusiasm for aerospace, a huge amount of funds would be poured into the aerospace industry.

Feren's breathing gradually became faster as his eyes lit up.

If he could think of this, someone else could have thought about it too!

There was no time to waste!

He quickly got up from his chair, called his department head, and took two days off.

He then hung up the call and quickly packed his things on the table.

There was only one thing he wished for.

Which was that his actions were fast enough.

Hopefully, no one had thought of the same idea as him...

Chapter 1313: Ticket to the Star?

Feren's idea was actually very simple. It was to use his network to find a group of interested investors, copy Lu Zhou's Tau Ceti Star System Colonization Fund, and set up a similar fund.

The only difference was that he would set the target at a place other than the Tau Ceti, preferably closer to the solar system.

Also, the fund would be publicly offered.

However, this idea was too simple.

When he brought the documents to the largest commercial bank on Wall Street and was about to go through the procedures, he was surprised to see that there was already a long queue.

Judging from the clothing of the people, they obviously didn't come here to withdraw money...

Just like Feren had predicted, the news of the establishment of the Tau Ceti Star System Colonization Fund shocked the world!

"This might open up a whole new business model!"

Paul Krugman, the well-known Nobel Prize winner in economics, spoke in an excited voice during an interview with the finance and economics column of ABC TV.

"In the past, most of our investment activities were carried out on an annual basis. Except for trust products, even investment products that were considered long-term rarely lasted longer than a hundred years.

"In the short term, compared to other projects with more investment value, it is not a wise choice to invest in the aerospace field. But if you focus on a century, or even several centuries, the aerospace industry will be highly related to our future. This funding will help our aerospace industry get on track at a faster speed."

The host asked seriously, "So, this is actually a charity cause?"

"Not quite." Paul Krugman shook his head. He said, "To be precise, it is a long-term investment with charitable attributes. All of mankind will benefit from his generosity.

"When more social resources are put on the development of external space resources, we will enter the interstellar era at a faster speed.

"At the same time, although this investment is unprofitable in the short term, it can bring him huge returns in the future; there is no doubt about this."

Host: "But... How can anyone live that long?"

“This is indeed a problem.” Paul Krugman nodded and said, “But he can designate his descendants as beneficiaries.

“If hyperspace theory makes it possible to travel faster than light, we have every reason to believe that colonization of a new planet is possible in the future.

“I even have an idea. This idea actually is combined with frozen dormancy. After all, normal people might not live that long, but if you really want to devote yourself to the great cause of interstellar colonization...

“It may be a good choice for ordinary people to donate their assets to the aerospace industry in exchange for a spacecraft ticket, then freeze themselves.”

In fact, Paul Krugman wasn't the only one who had this idea.

So did Feren, as well as those investors who were lining up in Wall Street banks.

The morning after the news was published, many commercial banks in the United States issued similar colonization funds.

The ideas behind these funds were almost the same. They would choose a beautiful star not too far away and use its potentially habitable planetary system as a promotion. They used people's imagination and vision for the future to raise capital.

But what was interesting was that some companies really planned to launch a colonial ship in the future.

Considering that the competition was too strong, most of these funds decided not to choose Lu Zhou's choice of Tau Ceti. They chose the relatively closer Alpha Centauri, Epsilon Eridani, or other K-type main-sequence stars.

The prices offered by various funds varied hugely.

For example, for the colonial fund on Proxima Centauri, the slogan was that someone only needed to pay 10 US dollars to obtain a resident card of Proxima Centauri and an “economy class ticket” to Proxima Centauri. For an extra 1,000 dollars, they could enjoy first-class seats and bring one more person on board.

The price of the ticket was increased with an annual growth rate of 5%. This meant that an economy class ticket would cost 10.5 dollars the next year, and it would cost 1315.01 dollars in a hundred years.

Of course, once the ticket was sold, there would be no refunds. However, it could be traded to other interested people through the second-hand market. It was similar to the companies that sold survival tickets in 2012.

Other funds used lands as assets. For example, in addition to the ticket to the new planet, for every additional \$100, someone could get one square kilometer of land on the planet. People could build houses or grow plants on the land.

Obviously, no matter how tempting the conditions were, these were all things that could only be fulfilled after a hundred years. Also, there were still a series of risks such as “competitors taking the lead” or bad management and bankruptcy. This might turn the certificates in their hands into a useless piece of paper.

Therefore, no matter how serious and regulated the space colonization fund was, even if it was guaranteed by NASA or Space-X, it was difficult to make investors feel safe.

However, many issuers did not expect that these funds, which seemed unreliable, were attractive for many people.

Although it was almost impossible for most people to live to the interstellar age without the help of frozen dormancy, a beautifully crafted citizenship certificate for land on Proxima Centauri could be bought for \$100.

Even though people didn't expect themselves to live a hundred years, and have the opportunity to set foot on their own lands, it was still quite a bargain for those who couldn't afford to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on a house.

There were also some more serious people who carefully studied and identified which funds were really about the extraterrestrial colonization plan and which funds were purely for entertainment purposes.

For example, an old Texas farmer named Joseph spent 1 million to buy 10,000 square kilometers of land on Proxima Centauri. He gave it as a birthday gift to his little grandson, who had just turned six.

This incident caused a huge sensation in the local community, and it even attracted reporters from the city nearby.

During an interview with the reporter, the old farmer was quite happy to be able to appear on the TV show. He spoke happily into the reporter's microphone.

"This is a long-term investment. I plan to give this land to my grandson and pass it on as a family possession!"

Reporter: "Aren't you worried that this money won't see the light of day?"

"That is unlikely to happen. The fund issuing unit I chose is Citibank, and I have carefully studied their investment plans. Although their strength is not the strongest, in my opinion, they are the most promising one when it comes to succeeding in the end!"

Reporter: "What do you plan to do with the 10,000 square kilometers of land?"

"Of course for farming! This is 10,000 square kilometers! My descendants will become the richest farmers on Proxima Centauri. They will thank me!"

When the reporter saw the hearty smile on Mr. Joseph's face, the reporter smiled awkwardly and asked, "But... How do you know that the soil and climate on Proxima Centauri are suitable for farming?"

"I don't know, but my instinct tells me that it won't be harder than going beyond the speed of light."

Joseph shrugged his shoulders with a confident look on his face.

He looked at the camera and said, "New planet or not, people have to eat.

"I believe that as long as we have the technology to go so far, the scientists will find a way to solve these farming problems. We won't only be able to grow corn and potatoes, we might even be able to grow exotic crops!"

Chapter 1314: Stupid Rich People

Lu Zhou didn't expect the romantic and meaningful Valentine's Day gift he had devised was actually stolen by the investment banks on Wall Street.

In just a few days, the stars near the solar system had all been taken.

What was baffling was that the 68 K-type main-sequence stars within 20 lightyears were not enough. Some investment banks even put their hands on red dwarfs and blue giants.

In some sense, there was nothing wrong with this.

As long as someone could withstand the raging solar winds and tens of thousands of times the solar system's radiation, in theory, red dwarfs and blue giants had habitable planets.

However, it wouldn't be very comfortable to live on.

Also, there were some interesting people who regarded obtaining citizenship certificates and lands from planets as a postmodern "hobby". Even though it was something that was not legally recognized, for many people, this was pocket change.

Lu Zhou was surprised that some people were taking this seriously. Some had even spent a million dollars buying land on a nearby habitable planet.

When Lu Zhou heard about this from Xiao Tong, he was shocked.

"Then?"

Lu Zhou put down the chopsticks and couldn't help but ask, "He just... wrote a check?"

"Not quite."

Xiao Tong said, "The general manager and deputy manager of the Proxima Centauri Foundation drove to the farm in Texas in person and delivered the bill to the farmer's hand. He also gave him a specially customized space colonial pioneer medal and promised to erect a statue for him at the center of the Proxima Centauri plaza."

Because of the Star System Colonization Fund and the fact that Chinese New Year was happening soon, Xiao Tong took a vacation and came back to China.

Two days ago, she finished the work in Shanghai and returned to Jinling.

She was reporting the situation to her brother.

Even though Lu Zhou felt like an email would be more convenient, he didn't get to see his sister often, so meeting in-person was the better option.

"Brother, seriously, have you thought about setting up another public offering fund in your name and issue it on Wall Street? I bet you will be rich!"

When Xiao Tong said this, her eyes were flashing dollar signs.

"Forget about it. Having that much money is useless. And I won't scam others."

"How is this a scam!" Xiaotong said, "I believe that in a hundred years, you will definitely be able to send them there! You can also earn foreign profits for our country and support the aerospace industry! This is a great opportunity."

"A hundred years..." Lu Zhou smiled and shook his head. He said, "I might not even be here."

"That's fine! If you and Chen Yushan do a good job, your kid will also be a super-powerful scientist! Ouch! Don't hit me!"

"Stop pretending, I know it doesn't hurt." Lu Zhou retracted his hand and looked at Xiao Tong, who was holding her forehead. He said, "You don't have to worry about making money for me. Just do what I tell you. If you can't figure it out, tell me. I'll ask someone else."

"Pfft! I got this." Xiao Tong said, "Wait and see, I will make you a billion dollars in five years!"

Lu Zhou replied, "A billion... The interest from the bank is more than that!"

"Hey, this is just a conservative estimate, and we can't just consider investment income, we have to also consider supporting the aerospace industry..."

Xiao Tong scratched the back of her head embarrassingly. She then laughed awkwardly and looked to the side. She tried to divert the conversation.

“Speaking of which, bro, you are so awesome! My mentor, Professor Paul Krugman, praised you for at least ten hours in the office and on TV. How about you switch to researching economics?”

Lu Zhou: “I am not interested in money, so no, thanks.”

Xiao Tong sighed.

“Economics is not only about money, it’s mainly about the distribution of social resources. Forget about it, I won’t explain it to a layman... Speaking of which, the Star System Colonization Fund you registered recently seems to have caused a lot of trouble in academia. I want to use this as the topic of my graduation thesis.”

“Graduation thesis?” Lu Zhou looked at Xiao Tong and asked, “You’re about to graduate? Already?”

If he remembered correctly, Xiao Tong was admitted to Princeton around the beginning of 2022.

Only two years had gone by.

“Not yet... But I can prepare my graduation thesis first. If I write well, maybe I will be approved to graduate early?” Xiaotong said with a smile, “I’ll be able to help you manage money full-time!”

Lu Zhou said, “Focus on your studies. Money is not important. And this is just giving you a taste. I’ll hire a professional fund manager to look over you.”

Lu Zhou cared much less about finances than before.

But then again, money was something that would depreciate.

But knowledge would never go away.

With his current knowledge and learning skills, even if he were thrown into a completely unfamiliar era and had to start from the beginning, he wouldn’t starve to death.

After all, he was the one who created Star Sky Technology.

Star Sky Technology didn’t create him.

Xiao Tong didn't fully understand Lu Zhou's words. She thought that Lu Zhou didn't think she could manage the assets on her own, so she spoke confidently.

"Don't worry, bro, I won't let you down!"

Lu Zhou heard the confident words and sighed.

"I hope so."

The more confident Xiao Tong was, the more worried Lu Zhou was.

However, even though he was worried, Lu Zhou didn't regret giving this task to Xiao Tong.

After all, she was a top student in Princeton, and her supervisor was a Nobel Prize laureate. She also had Star Sky Technology for support, so even if there was a small mistake, there shouldn't be any major problems, right?

Also, given the status of Star Sky Technology in the aerospace field, if she wanted to research the fundamentals of a company, she could just ask Chen Yushan.

With so much support from the outside, Lu Zhou realized that even a monkey could manage this money.

Also, it was only 10 billion yuan. Giving it to his sister as play-money didn't seem like a big deal.

What Lu Zhou didn't expect was that this decision shocked people...

Chapter 1315: Not Only Physics

A strange combination existed at Princeton.

Which was Paul Krugman and Professor Albert László Barabási.

The reason why this pairing was strange was not because of what happened between the two people, but because the area they were researching was

difficult for ordinary people to understand. Even Principal Eisgruber couldn't give a fair valuation.

The story of the two people meeting each other was full of coincidences.

At first, they exchanged business cards at the dinner party after an academic conference. After that, the two people's opinions unexpectedly coincided with the proposition of where the future of mankind would go. This resulted in the quantitative analysis of this proposition using mathematical models.

It just so happened that one of them was an economist who was passionate about natural sciences, whereas the other was a physicist who was passionate about sociology. They were able to complement each other in their respective fields of expertise.

When they were in St. Petersburg, they, unfortunately, failed to recruit Lu Zhou into the team to study the mathematical model for predicting the future. However, even without the help of the world's best mathematician, the two still did not give up, and they continued to work hard in this area.

However, they had made no significant progress...

In the cafe near the teaching building.

As usual, the two sat across from each other. They enjoyed their afternoon tea and chatted about recent events, as well as complex academic problems.

"When it comes to high-speed interstellar travel, the theory of relativity determines that there is a phenomenon of time expansion in different coordinate systems. If there are a pair of twin brothers, and one day, the older brother boards a spacecraft for long-distance space travel while the younger brother stays on Earth, when the older brother returns to Earth, he will find that he is now the younger brother... Does that make sense?"

After listening to Professor Krugman's speech, Albert nodded. He said, "Yes... But what does this mean for economics?"

"It doesn't mean anything, but if we replace the twin brothers with two businessmen, the results will be completely different. You know, in business, time is an important cost. What if the profit of the space trip is lower than the regular interest rate of the bank?"

“There is a formula for this.” Krugman scribbled a line of calculations on a sticky note. He pushed it in front of Professor Albert and said, “This is where everything begins.”

$$[PE \cdot qE \cdot p\alpha / p\alpha^* \geq (C + pE \cdot qE) \cdot (1+r)^{2n}.]$$

Albert took a closer look at the formula on the sticky note. He involuntarily raised his eyebrows.

“Very strange formula...”

“It is strange, but it contains a very important theory: my first theorem of interstellar trade.” Krugman smiled and continued, “When trading goods between planets, the calculation of interest should use the time of the planetary inertia system instead of the time on the spaceship. Set the interest rate of the bank on Earth as r , and if and only if this inequality is established, then this trip won’t be a loss.”

Albert: “A very interesting idea... Speaking of which, if there is a first theorem, is there a second theorem?”

“Of course, due to the existence of trade competition, planets with the same inertial coordinate system will gradually tend to the same interest rate. This is the second theorem... However, they are all invalidated now.” The old man chuckled and said, “These theories are all based on the absolute correctness of the theory of relativity. Which means we cannot exceed the speed of light.

“Even though the theory of relativity is still correct now, we have found a shortcut to the stars... At least a theoretical shortcut. When the time does not expand and the flight time is shortened, we don’t have to think about the time dilation during the journey.

“In fact, what I really want to say is... Haven’t you noticed? Hyperspace theory affects not only physics but also economics.”

Professor Albert fell into deep thought.

After a long time, he sighed.

“You’re right. Scientific progress has brought great uncertainty to mathematical models. No matter how perfect and rigorous the calculation is, it is difficult to predict this leap in physics theory. Even if our mathematics model

successfully predicts what might happen in the next hundred years, if another person like 'Professor Lu' exists, our model will be wrong."

Krugman nodded.

"This is what I'm worried about. The study of the overall changes in civilization weakens the role of the individual, but when the role of the individual cannot be ignored, our assumptions become wrong."

Suddenly, a young man walked into the cafe.

He was wearing a gray suit and he looked a little unusual, as if he had just seen or heard something weird. The man walked straight to the side of the two professors and spoke.

"Professor..."

"Good afternoon, Dr. Milson," Professor Krugman smiled and looked up at his assistant as he said, "What's wrong? You look like you just saw a ghost."

"You asked me to collect information about the Tau Ceti Star System Colonization Fund..."

"Is there any news?"

"Yes." The assistant nodded and hesitated for a while before speaking, "That fund... It seems like Xiao Tong is in charge of managing it."

"Xiao Tong?"

Krugman froze.

It took a while before he came back to his senses. He sat up in his chair and looked at his assistant in disbelief. He asked, "Wait, you mean... that Xiao Tong?"

The assistant smiled bitterly.

"Yes... This is already public."

Krugman spoke after a long silence.

"I see... Okay then."

The assistant nodded, turned around, and walked away.

Krugman leaned back in his chair as he squeezed his eyebrows.

He wanted to find a way to get in touch with the manager of this fund and maybe have a cup of tea or something, perhaps exchange academic problems.

But now...

He really did not expect that this person was actually his student.

"I can't believe it..." Albert, who was sitting across from him, opened his mouth and looked at Professor Krugman with a dumbfounded look. He said, "It turns out that... your student is managing this fund."

This is 10 billion yuan!

This isn't just a graduation thesis!

It wasn't that they doubted Xiao Tong's abilities, but why would a normal person give so much money to a PhD student who hadn't even graduated?

"It sounds ridiculous..." Professor Krugman had a complicated expression on his face. He said, "However... It does seem like something Lu Zhou would do."

In fact, Xiao Tong was quite talented.

The only thing she lacked was real experience.

In his opinion, it would be better for her to start as an assistant. It would be too risky to start with such a difficult job immediately...

However, if Lu Zhou didn't care about losing hundreds of millions, this wouldn't matter.

I guess having a filthy rich brother is one of her advantages...

"She's unlike other students I have taught. She is one of the few who can achieve a balance between theory and applied economics. She wants to learn both of them and do everything."

Albert took a sip of coffee and asked curiously, "Is she talented?"

"Not just talented." Krugman shook his head and said, "She's also hardworking."

Also, her stepping point was higher than most people.

She was the sister of a Nobel Prize winner. Even if Lu Zhou did nothing, she still could use his prestige in the academic world and his relationships with Princeton professors.

It was like a recommendation letter from a celebrity.

Her surname itself was a very, very powerful letter of recommendation. It was the kind that was widely recognized in the academic community.

Therefore, under such circumstances, even if she didn't work hard, she would still survive. Not to mention she was just as hardworking as her brother...

"The economic model of the future is a very promising area. Compared to other fields, we have done very little research in this field. And now, it's in an era of rapid development. It is difficult for old theories to adapt to new ones... This is just like the 'Interstellar Trade Theory' I mentioned earlier."

After a pause, Professor Krugman continued, "I know that the topic of her recent thesis happens to be related to the Star System Colonization Fund. Whether it's applied economics or theoretical economics, this is a good opportunity for her."

Professor Albert: "Opportunity?"

Krugman nodded.

"An opportunity to combine theory and application and find a certain balance.

"The entire economic circle is using the Tau Ceti Star System Colonization Fund as an example for studying the future social and economic activities of human civilization. She is the manager of this example. I believe that with her insight, she should be able to discover something interesting... After all, she is the closest person to the truth; even I won't be able to gather as much information as her.

“If... And I’m saying if she can summarize the laws and discover something different about human social and economic activities after the discovery of hyperspace theory...”

Professor Krugman looked at how surprised Professor Albert was as he continued in a serious tone, “Then perhaps she has a chance to win the Nobel Prize in this lifetime...”

Chapter 1316: Strength Is the Greatest Guarantee for Peace

Lu Zhou’s name was constantly in the news these days.

From the founder of the Star System Colonization Fund to the most expensive Valentine’s Day gift in history... All of his titles were eye-catching.

Perhaps because he had become accustomed to being famous, Lu Zhou himself didn’t feel much about the comments surrounding him and the 10 billion yuan fund.

Unlike those “counterfeit funds” that were just taking the opportunity to make money, he actually intended to do this as a long-term business.

Even though 10 billion yuan was not a very large number, it wasn’t even enough to buy a building in Shanghai, and it couldn’t be compared to world-class projects as the money wasn’t just sitting in the bank. Part of it was used to invest in potential high-growth aerospace companies and to reward groups or individuals that had made outstanding research progress in the aerospace field.

Just like Professor Paul Krugman said, even though the beneficiary of this fund was only one person, far more than one person had benefited from this fund.

Their goal was to advance space technology and move toward the ultimate goal of interstellar colonization. As long as the annualized income was higher than inflation, then this money would become a huge sum of money in a hundred years. This fund could be invested in the future, helping people accomplish their dreams of colonizing the galaxy.

This was also his promise to her on Valentine's day.

He was going to leave a legend that belonged to them, on a star that no one cared about...

"I feel like something is on your mind."

Chen Yushan looked at Lu Zhou and nodded.

"Yeah."

"Can you tell me what it is?"

"It's not a secret... I'm just a little worried about Xiao Tong." Chen Yushan had her hands under her cheeks and arms on her knees. She sighed softly and said, "She hasn't participated in any business matters before... But now, she is involved. Is it really fine for her to continue studying at Princeton?"

She wasn't worried for no reason since similar things had happened before.

Lu Zhou gave an answer after thinking for a moment.

"I can't say that Princeton is special. It is not completely independent from the industry... However, there is no need to worry about Xiao Tong's safety."

She was obviously not satisfied with this answer.

Chen Yushan gave Lu Zhou a look of dissatisfaction before saying, "That's your little sister, shouldn't you worry more about her?"

Chen Yushan was an only child. She always wanted to have a younger sister or younger brother, but that was obviously not going to happen anymore.

She never imagined Xiao Tong would become her little sister, so she was very happy with this.

Thus, she was worried about whether Xiao Tong was in danger.

However, after seeing how calm Lu Zhou was, she felt stupid for being so worried.

Lu Zhou spoke with a smile.

“It’s not that I don’t care about her, there’s nothing to worry about.”

“Why? What if someone—”

“No, it’s fine.” Lu Zhou shook his head and said, “The reason why I said there is no need to worry is just that things are different than a few years ago.”

The nuclear fusion power station in Los Angeles had been completed. The lifeblood of the entire western power system was fully controlled by East Asia Energy. China had a lot of influence on the energy system of western North America.

Unless there was a diplomatic crisis, the United States would not take any risks. If China withdrew the technicians and nuclear core of the nuclear power plant, the cost of electricity consumption in Los Angeles would rise by an entire magnitude.

That would be a catastrophe.

The old energy industries were eliminated. Even if they were prepared for a crisis, it was almost impossible to fully restore to the previous energy level.

And if it turned into a military conflict, and if they forcibly detained the nuclear core and technical personnel...

Then the Pentagon and the White House would have to worry about the airborne brigade.

“Our national strength is the greatest guarantee for the personal safety of our overseas citizens, so I am not worried about Xiao Tong’s safety at all.

“She can do research as she pleases, and it will be very, very safe, no matter where she is... In fact, the Americans are more worried than us.”

Chen Yushan: “You’re so arrogant.”

“Not arrogant, I’m confident that strength is the greatest guarantee for peace.” Lu Zhou smiled and said softly, “I’m confident that I will maintain our advantage.”

Suddenly, the phone began to ring.

Lu Zhou looked at the screen of his phone. He guessed that Director Li was the one calling, so he didn't expect to see Luo Wenxuan's name. He answered the call and moved the phone to his ear.

"Hello?"

"It's me!"

"I know it's you, what's the matter?"

Luo Wenxuan: "... Did you forget something important?"

Lu Zhou: "...?"

Seeing how Lu Zhou didn't speak, Luo Wenxuan knew he was right. Luo Wenxuan sighed and said, "The Century of Physics academic conference... Didn't you say to postpone it until after the Lantern Festival? Now that the Lantern Festival is over..."

Lu Zhou slapped his forehead and said, "Oh yeah, I've been too busy lately..."

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly as he sat up from the sofa with a dry cough. He said, "Don't worry, I'll come to Shanghai tomorrow."

"I'm guessing you didn't even send out invitations to major research institutions."

"That's fine, I can write it now."

"I'll write it," Luo Wenxuan said with a headache. He said, "You can sign it."

"Okay then."

Why didn't you tell me that first then?

After that, Lu Zhou ended the call and looked at Chen Yushan sitting across from him.

"I have some work stuff to deal with."

"Do you have to leave?"

"No, I just have to go to the study room."

Chen Yushan smiled and said, “Go then, do you want something to drink?”

Lu Zhou: “Coffee is fine... Actually, I can make it myself.”

“I’ll make it, you’re busy with work... It also gives me a chance to take care of you.”

Lu Zhou felt his cheeks warming up as he quickly walked toward the second floor.

Chen Yushan watched Lu Zhou disappear at the corner of the stairs. She got up from the sofa with a chuckle and went into the kitchen.

However, just as she was about to step into the kitchen, she heard a humming sound. She then saw a small drone “holding” a cup of coffee. The drone flew over her head and flew upstairs.

She noticed a line of texts on the drone screen...

Is that an emoji?

[(^*`ω*~)]

Chen Yushan was astonished as she watched the drone disappear at the corner of the stairs. She went silent for a long time before she muttered, “It’s so smart...”

“Amazing!”

Chapter 1317: Doesn’t Look Like One Person’s Drawing

Beijing.

Office of the Director of the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation.

Academician Yuan Huanmin sat at the desk wearing reading glasses. He stared meticulously at the sketch on the desk, pondering for a long time.

Near his left hand was a thick stack of drawings, which was placed under the weight of an aerospace engineering reference book. Judging from the marks outlined on the drawings, he had obviously studied these drawings thoroughly.

Director Li was standing opposite his desk, holding his breath like a student.

It had been half an hour since he entered this office. He dared not say a word, for fear of disturbing the old gentleman's thought process.

The clock on the wall ticked by, and about ten minutes later, the old man finally took a breath, scribbled a line of comments on the blueprint, then put it away.

He finally noticed Director Li, who was standing across his desk. He quickly stood up.

"Oh, Old Li? Why are you here? Didn't even tell me you were coming."

"You called me and told me you had news? So I quickly came over..." Director Li smiled and got straight to the point. He asked, "How is it? The drawings? Do you think it is reliable?"

"The drawings are very good... No wonder he's the number one mathematician in the world."

Yuan Huanmin sighed and said emotionally, "I tried to check every calculation. There are no mistakes. The components and functional units are linked together, and the logic is meticulous. It doesn't look like... it was designed by one person."

Director Li gulped and asked, "What does it look like?"

"Like it was designed by a team of mathematicians, physicists, aerospace engineers, materials engineers, thermodynamics engineers, information engineering experts, etc... Everyone with a clear division of labor and cooperation." After thinking about it for a moment, Academician Yuan continued, "In China, the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study is the only place that can gather top talents in various industries so efficiently."

The jealousy in his heart was obvious.

If only the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation also had such a huge talent pool and an academic leader to lead the scholars... They could have been the people dominating the lunar transfer orbit instead of just playing a secondary role.

However, he knew in his heart that being jealous would not help with anything.

Academician Lu created Star Sky Technology. Its unique business model and technical strength also created the Jinling high tech zone. His influence from nuclear fusion was passed on, allowing him to form a huge scientific research and production system.

Only organizations like NASA could compare with them.

However, that was only in terms of volume and size.

When it came to strength, there was no comparison at all...

As Director Li looked at the expression on Academician Yuan's face, he felt a little weird.

There was one thing he didn't mention.

Which was that, these drawings took Lu Zhou two days to complete during a retreat...

Academician Yuan noticed Director Li's weird look, he thought he had said something wrong, so he frowned and asked, "What?"

"Nothing... That guy is a monster, so you can't think about him using common sense."

Director Li coughed and continued, "If you think there is no problem, I hope you can write a recommendation. I will take this blueprint to a meeting at Chang'an Avenue."

"No problem, I can write the letter now." Academician Yuan nodded and continued, "But this blueprint... is not finished yet, right?"

Director Li nodded.

“Yes, I asked Academician Lu. He said that many details were not added. According to him, with the current material technology, many designs cannot be built. When the materials meet the standard, they can fill in the details.”

“Oh, I see.” Academician Yuan nodded and said, “I wanted to ask what is this cable component with a Young’s modulus of 2.07 TPa and a breaking strength of 79 N/m. But now, it seems like it doesn’t exist...”

Director Li frowned and asked, “Is that thing... difficult to produce?”

“I can’t say whether it’s difficult or not. After all, he is an expert in materials, while I don’t know much.” Academician Yuan looked at the pile of drawings next to him. He thought for a while and continued, “But with enough time, everything can be solved... especially if there’s a hundred years.”

Academician Yuan Huanmin suddenly remembered something, so he spoke.

“So, can we talk about something?”

Director Li spoke.

“About what?”

“Leaving aside the blueprints... Can you ask him to figure out a way to make this kind of cable material?”

Director Li: “I will try my best... Are you in a hurry?”

“Not in a hurry.” Academician Yuan Huanmin sighed and continued, “It’s just that if this cable could be produced, it will help our construction engineering and aerospace industries.”

Director Li immediately asked, “How large will its impact be? Do you have an estimate?”

“I can only make a rough estimate.”

Academician Yuan Huanmin smiled and shook his head. After a pause, he continued, “I don’t know much about buildings and ships, so I don’t want to give random numbers, but for aerospace... it will save us at least a decade of work!”

A decade!

Director Li thought he had misheard or that Academician Yuan Huanmin was joking.

After all, ten years seemed ridiculous.

After realizing that this was not a joke, the expression on his face gradually became serious.

“I’ll go to Jinling right now! Wait, no, after I finish business here, then I’ll go to Jinling!”

“Don’t need to worry.” Academician Yuan said, “The reason I say this is because this problem is not so easy to solve. Materials, energy, and information; none of the three areas is easy to deal with.

“Especially since this is different from mathematics and physics. Inspiration alone is of no use. Only by the accumulation of time and constant trial and error could someone find a solution. Even if you ask Academician Lu for help, he might not have any good ideas. Otherwise, he would have written the solution on the blueprint.”

Director Li said stubbornly, “No harm in trying.”

Academician Yuan sighed helplessly and said, “Whatever, do what you want.”

Chapter 1318: The Third Memory

“Achoo!”

Lu Zhou was sitting on a bed next to a computer in the underground laboratory at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

A drone with a small screen flew over, as if it were scared by the sneeze.

[Master, have you caught a cold? Do you need Xiao Ai to check your body?]

“No, I’m fine.” Lu Zhou muttered to himself in a quiet voice, “I guess someone is talking about me behind my back... Let’s continue.”

[Ok. Q(´ · ω · `)]

Even though Xiao Ai was still a little worried, Lu Zhou's words were an order. The robotic arm connected to the wall handed Lu Zhou a virtual reality helmet.

Lu Zhou reached out and grabbed the helmet. He put it on carefully, then lay back on the soft mattress.

Technology was getting more and more advanced. He still remembered when the Phantom System was launched, the VR helmets launched by major manufacturers were cumbersome, and they looked like motorcycle helmets.

But now, Huawei, Xiaomi, and other companies had launched their own ultra-thin high-end helmets. Wearing them did not feel uncomfortable at all.

After setting the activation time of the neural interface device, Lu Zhou closed his eyes and muttered "system" in his heart. He soon entered a pure white space...

...

The memory began.

When Lu Zhou opened his eyes again, he was on a grassland.

However, this was completely different from the grasslands on Earth.

The grass here was blue, like an endless ocean, swaying in the wind. The grass formed a sharp contrast with the orange sky, and there was breathtaking energy in the air.

On the other side of the skyline, there was a red gaseous planet that was countless times larger than the sun. It occupied one-third of the sky.

The person standing on this grassland was motionless, like they were waiting for something. They looked at everything quietly, as if to engrave the beauty of the scene in his mind...

He could not move his limbs, but his senses were still normal. Lu Zhou was attached to this body like a spirit. He instantly knew what was going on.

The Earth-like planet under his feet should be a moon of a gaseous planet.

Judging by the terrain, the geological activities of the entire planet seemed to be stable. In addition, the ecosystem on this planet should be much simpler than Earth, and there were no traces of intelligent development.

Suddenly, the wind started to become noisy.

When Lu Zhou felt the strong wind, he couldn't help but close his eyes.

The moment he closed his eyes, a memory that did not belong to him poured into his mind like a flood.

He stood in an ancient Romanesque ring arena, and he defeated an opponent with an iron blade in his hand.

Blood splattered everywhere.

A man who looked like a referee stood in front of him. The referee raised his hands amid the cheers of the audience and declared his victory.

After that, the scene changed again. This time he was not in an arena; he was in a spacious hall.

A man dressed like a Servant of God put a stone emitting a green light on his forehead, muttering a language that even the civilization that The Observer belonged to could not translate. He then placed the stone in his palm.

From the memory fragments, Lu Zhou roughly figured out who was the owner of this memory and what happened before the memory.

Start with the most important point. This memory did belong to the Calan civilization. It belonged to a group that looked like cats, which was named the Puck civilization.

1

Their bodies were covered with fur and were between one meter and one meter fifty in height. They had flexible claws, strong feet, and upright animal ears. They looked like large cats walking upright, just without a tail.

It took a long time for them to enter the industrial age because of the lack of metal minerals on the parent planet. Their civilization was formed during the iron age.

Entering the industrial age as a single civilization had advantages and disadvantages.

Its advantage lied in the fact that the conflicts within civilization ended in the cold weapon era. Even if there were several regime changes and rises during the period, evolution had been able to smoothly resolve the small local conflicts.

The industrial machinery of the Puck civilization had never entered the military field in a real sense.

Even though there were conflicts in their civilization, their conflicts were completely different from human civilization.

For example, they were more inclined to solve problems through old fashioned weapon duels, as opposed to negotiation.

They were more inclined to advocate for honor than to regard morality as a restraint for behavior.

Their short average life expectancy made them look down on life and death, and they believed in reincarnation and the afterlife... even though their science had never really proved these two things.

Lu Zhou noticed when experiencing the memory fragments that there were a huge clergy and aristocracy in the Puck civilization.

The spiritual leader of the clergy—a profession called the prophet—played an even more important role than the king in the rise and fall of the entire civilization.

They were filled with idealism and authoritarianism. Their level of science and technology was probably in the early and mid-interstellar age. Their development ideas were completely different from the Calan Empire.

Supported by their high cultural identity and the concept of unity, they seemed to have no concept of capital punishment. Even before they mastered faster than light communication, the colony and the parent star maintained an unimaginable unity.

Instead of building homes, they tended to live alone. They were more inclined to migrate to distant and empty habitable planets and do everything possible to occupy more land, even if it was an undeveloped wasteland.

Just like the Calan people who liked to breathe the metallic air around the world, Pucks, who were as lonely as cats, could spend a whole day on the empty prairie.

The grassland planet under his feet was one of the hundreds of colonized planets in the Puck civilization.

The body that Lu Zhou was in was a warrior called “Noir”. Just a few days ago, he defeated his opponent in a duel in the name of God’s choice, becoming the Chosen.

The prophet played an important role in the historical process of the Puck civilization. The Chosen was the right-hand man of the Prophet.

The Prophet saw the future through a psychic ritual. The Prophet told the Chosen what the “future arrangement” was and instructed the Chosen to fulfill this mission.

In fact, when experiencing this memory, Lu Zhou doubted the rigor of this ritual and whether the future could really be predicted by this unreliable method.

However, the Puck civilization seemed to believe in this.

Even though there were only a few times in their history where the Chosen did the “right things” that benefited the civilization...

From this perspective, these fluffy aliens seemed to be ignorant of history.

However, as far as technology was concerned, these furry aliens seemed to be much more advanced than human civilization. Lu Zhou was in no position to look down on them...

He heard footsteps coming from behind.

The Puck opened his eyes and looked back. He saw a soft beam of light falling from the clouds as a figure slowly appeared.

Gravitational rays?

Anti-gravity?

Or... some other kind of technology?

Lu Zhou didn't know what kind of magical technology these Pucks used to travel between high orbits and the planet's surface. Lu Zhou looked at the elderly Puck that appeared from the beam of light. He tried to find clues from the scattered memory fragments.

However, something strange happened.

Even though there was a memory of this old puck in Noir's memory, his name was nowhere to be seen.

Lu Zhou was surprised by this strange situation. The elderly "cat man" suddenly spoke.

"Congratulations, warrior named Noir."

Noir humbly lowered his head and spoke.

"Thank you."

"Don't thank me. Everything is the will of the spirit of the universe."

The old Puck smiled and carefully examined the face of the young Puck in front of him. He nodded lightly and said, "Under its guidance, the bravest of our civilization has come before me. A long time ago, I was shaken by psionic rituals and oracles, but now, I am convinced that all of this is the best arrangement."

Noir did not speak. He maintained a humble attitude. He waited for the old man in front of him to tell the prophecy belonging to the Chosen.

This was the usual convention.

However, this time, the old man didn't seem to intend to say a lot. After looking at him for a long time, he vaguely summarized the whole prophecy.

"The natural disaster is approaching, and no one will be spared. There is a flame from the border to the holy land... Your task is to go to the center of this galaxy and find the way out of our civilization."

Surprised by the prophecy, Noir asked in a hurry, "How do I find it—"

"Shh."

A dry paw pressed against Noir's lips as the old man interrupted Noir's question. He looked at him and said, "When you get there, you will naturally know what to do... It's your destiny."

Noir nodded silently and did not speak.

Seeing the young man in front of him listening to his words, the old man's face showed a smile of approval.

"The spacecraft and luggage are ready.

"May you be able to find a glimpse of hope in the middle of this galaxy."

The old man suddenly stopped talking.

After a short silence, he spoke in a relieved tone.

"Even if you don't find it, you don't have to blame yourself.

"Your genes, your blood, your bones, your culture, and your language. Everything is proof that we existed. Even if the great holy land is finally swept by this catastrophe of the universe, we will not be forgotten."

"The holy land being swept? How could that be possible! The natural disaster... Did you see something? No... I shouldn't have asked this."

Noir raised his head suddenly and gently placed his right fist on his chest. He looked firmly at the old man in front of him and promised, "I will reach the center of this galaxy and find a way to resolve the crisis!"

The old man just smiled softly.

"Don't be so confident. This is a journey of hundreds of thousands of light-years. This is not just a threat from the universe itself. You may meet many travelers who are also inspired by the universe. Among them, there are many who are stronger than us. Not all travelers have good intentions. It is not easy to survive.

"However, I believe in you."

His pupils were filled with kindness.

As if he were looking at his child, the old man looked at him carefully, like he wanted to remember this last moment forever.

Noir did the same. The two looked at each other, letting the wind on the grassland blow gently.

They didn't know how long this journey would take.

Even after reaching the end, there might be no chance to come back here again.

However, Lu Zhou wasn't concerned about the sentimental moment.

Because all of his attention was completely focused on the prediction about natural disasters.

However, just as Lu Zhou was thinking hard about the clues on the natural disaster, he suddenly saw a touch of sharpness from the old man's eyes.

The sharpness wasn't easy to detect, but its existence was so conspicuous and full of violations.

His gaze was like a sharp blade; it pierced deep into his bones.

Lu Zhou was a little confused about the change in the plot.

Lu Zhou wondered why the old man suddenly looked at this "Chosen one" with sharp eyes. A strange feeling suddenly crawled on his scalp.

It was difficult to describe exactly what this feeling was and where it came from.

Lu Zhou tried to read some clues from the old man's eyes. A terrifying thought suddenly flashed in his mind.

The old man...

Is staring at me!

Chapter 1319: The Chosen One?

Lu Zhou was shocked. He burst into a cold sweat at this thought.

He knows I'm here?

How is that possible?

The entire old universe had disappeared into the Void. He was nothing more than a spectator in this memory.

How could the old man know that he belonged to the new universe?

Wait a minute...

Lu Zhou suddenly remembered that the old man in front of him was probably the Prophet of the Puck civilization; no, he must be the prophet!

Suddenly, all of the clues were connected.

There was only one possible explanation. Which was that, inside the old universe, the old man felt someone observing him. Whether through the “spirit of the universe” or the “psychic ritual”, he had a feeling that someone would see this in the future.

This feeling of being stared at did not disappear until Noir waved goodbye and stood on the beam of light in the sky.

The Prophet stared at the Chosen one for a long time. Lu Zhou felt his feet starting to leave the ground when the Prophet spoke.

“Maybe I’m wrong...”

“Maybe you’re the Chosen one.”

Noir was slightly stunned. He frowned and asked, “What are you talking about?”

A trace of sadness flashed across the face of the Prophet.

But he didn't say anything. He looked at the puzzled face gradually leaving the ground and waved his skinny paw.

"Nothing...

"Forget what I said.

"This is the decision of the spirit of the universe. I believe that all this is the best arrangement."

Lu Zhou looked at the old man standing on the grassland. He involuntarily held his breath.

If his reasoning was correct...

The last words of the Prophet were not addressed to Noir.

It was addressed to himself...

...

Lu Zhou opened his eyes suddenly, as if he woke up from a nightmare. He bounced off the bed.

After the Chosen one named "Noir" stepped onto the spaceship heading to the center of the galaxy through an anti-gravity beam, the memory fragment popped like a soap bubble.

There was a drop of sweat across his forehead. Lu Zhou took off his helmet and panted gently. He raised his arm to wipe off the sweat that had fallen to his cheeks.

Xiao Ai controlled the robotic arm and handed a glass of water to Lu Zhou's side. The drone flew in front of him; the airflow of the drone motors sending him a refreshing cool breeze.

[Master, are you okay?]

"I'm fine..." After taking a sip from the water glass, Lu Zhou looked at the LED screen. He had a reassuring smile as he said, "Compared to the previous two memories, this time, it is a lot milder."

Other than the history of the Puck civilization, which caused a certain load on his brain, the rest of the entire memory was only a gentle story.

Compared to Void Memory a, which contained confusing puzzle-solving elements, and Void Memory b, which contained action shooting, this story-only memory was quite calm and simple.

This was the first time Lu Zhou had completely synchronized the Void Memory without using the file reading system of the virtual reality system.

It was also the first time for him to encounter such a weird thing...

Xiao Ai: [Master, Master, should we add this to the “Calan Empire” game? (>▽

After thinking about this problem for a while, Lu Zhou gently shook his head.

“No need this time. There are no difficult parts that require the help of players. Just file the data directly in the library.”

Xiao Ai: [Received. (๑•̀ㅂ•́)و✧]

Xiao Ai was in charge of the quantum computer, and archiving this huge amount of data was a piece of cake.

After staying in the underground laboratory for a while, Lu Zhou took the elevator back to the ground and dropped by the cafeteria of the Institute for Advanced Study for dinner.

Along the way, people who saw him greeted him respectfully.

However, because of the things on his mind, Lu Zhou appeared absent-minded when responding. When he sat down in the cafeteria, he realized that he had even ordered the wrong meal.

After quickly eating dinner, Lu Zhou returned home with a stomach full of questions. He shut himself in the study room.

Lu Zhou took the notebook tucked in the corner of the bookshelf. He spread it out on the desk and wrote down his experience in the Void Memory c on a blank page.

“Puck civilization, label: idealism, authoritarianism...”

“The warrior who has won hundreds of duels becomes the Chosen one. Under the direction of the Prophet, he goes to the center of the galaxy to find a way to save civilization.

“The natural disaster... Another natural disaster. What is the natural disaster? Are the crises encountered by the Puck civilization and the Calan civilization the same thing? How did the psychic ritual predict the future?”

Lu Zhou scratched his head in distress. He frowned and fell into thought.

The Puck civilization was obviously far less developed and powerful than that of the Calan civilization... Lu Zhou hadn't heard about them completing any magnificent projects like the ring world, let alone creating quark stars.

The natural disaster was foreseen through a “spiritual ritual”.

Faced with an unknown threat, they decided to send a spacecraft to the center of the galaxy to find a solution.

The whole plan was full of idealism.

The Prophet didn't tell the Chosen one how to go to the center of the galaxy, nor tell him what the so-called “natural disaster” was. However, he firmly believed that doing so would surely prevent a crisis that was doomed to happen.

This journey of blind faith seemed like a pilgrimage.

“What is hiding in the center of the galaxy?

“And the spirit of the universe and the ritual for predicting the future... Is it really possible to predict this kind of thing?”

What disturbed Lu Zhou was the old Prophet's stare at the end of the memory, and that his words didn't seem to be addressed to Noir.

You're the Chosen one?

Who is that...

Lu Zhou looked at the notebook that had been filled. There were question marks everywhere. Lu Zhou hesitated for a long time and wrote.

“It seems like even level 10 physics can’t answer this question very well...

“It would be nice to be able to talk to that man.”

The man who calls himself The Observer.

He must know something.

Even though this didn’t make much sense and that the guy was not that easy to get along with, his deep and wise eyes were very reassuring.

Lu Zhou closed the notes and got up from his desk.

“Enough for the time being... It’s not physics anymore; this is occult and philosophy.”

Maybe I should find the opportunity to study Professor Miro’s notes again?

Even though Lu Zhou didn’t think Miro knew the spirit of the universe better than himself, the creator of the animism of the universe might have discovered some clues that were noteworthy yet ignored by him.

Lu Zhou suddenly remembered that he seemed to have promised Luo Wenxuan to go to the ILHCRC today to prepare for the Century of Physics Conference.

However, he spent the entire day in the Institute for Advanced Study.

When he looked out the window, the sky was already completely dark.

If he went to Shanghai now, he would have to find a place to stay the night.

Forget about it; it’s already so late now.

Let’s wait until tomorrow...

Lu Zhou reached out and turned off the lamp on his desk. He got up from his chair and yawned. He then went downstairs to rest.

Chapter 1320: Two Thousand Physics Problems

Shanghai.

Maglev train station.

Luo Wenxuan looked at Lu Zhou coming out of the exit terminal. He couldn't help but complain.

"I waited all day at the train station yesterday!"

"You should have given me a call."

"I called! At three o'clock in the afternoon and five o'clock again! But it said that you're not in the service area? What were you doing at that time?"

Lu Zhou remembered that he seemed to be at the third underground floor of the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. Because the protection measures were very strict, no signal from the outside world could be received or sent from there.

As for the missed calls...

Perhaps because all of his attention was on the memory of the old universe, Lu Zhou didn't even notice.

"This was my negligence... Let's put these things aside for the time being." Lu Zhou looked at Luo Wenxuan and asked, "Have all the invitations been sent out?"

"Yes! So far, eight major particle physics research institutes in the world have sent back letters, expressing support for our joint initiative with CERN. CERN has already arrived in Shanghai. Do you want to see them?"

Lu Zhou: "I will go later... You'll have to take care of them for now."

Luo Wenxuan spoke with a sigh.

"I knew you would say that."

Lu Zhou smiled and gave a thumbs up.

"You know me too well."

The pick-up vehicle parked at the exit of the station. Wang Peng, who was walking in front, opened the door for the two of them. He then sat in the front passenger seat.

Lu Zhou asked Luo Wenxuan during the ride about the progress of the conference.

“The preparations for the conference are done. We have booked the main venue at the International Convention and Exhibition Center. The hotel has been set at Yi Hao hotel. The duration is seven days. The Shanghai government is supportive of our work and has already prepared traffic control in advance. The plan for the security of the venue...”

Lu Zhou: “What about the physics community?”

Luo Wenxuan: “The response from the physics community is quite strong, and the mainstream is very supportive of this conference. So far, the number of applicants from all channels has reached 100,000. The number of applications for poster display space is 6,731... The venue may not be large enough. We plan to conduct a round of pre-review on the posters before arranging academic booths.”

A hint of surprise appeared on his face. Lu Zhou frowned and asked, “That many people?”

100,000 people...

Is the entire physics community coming to Shanghai?

Luo Wenxuan looked at Lu Zhou’s hesitant expression. A bitter smile appeared on his face.

“Yeah, I wonder why...”

From the Z particle to the Void theory to the hyperspace theory, the series of achievements ILHCRC had accomplished in two years had become the focus of the entire physics community.

Especially the particle physics field.

In terms of scientific research strength alone, even CERN and Brookhaven National Laboratory combined, which were second and third respectively, was not comparable to ILHCRC.

After all, almost two-thirds of the world's particle physics research results were born from the Lunar Hadron Collider or at least indirectly related to it.

The most outstanding scholar in physics issued an initiative to explore the future of physics. If the entire physics community was not interested, then it would be hopeless.

Lu Zhou looked at the expression on Luo Wenxuan's face. He smiled awkwardly.

"... This must have been a lot of work."

"It's not a lot. Even though this is the first time for a conference of this size, we have held several high-level international academic conferences." After a pause, Luo Wenxuan looked at Lu Zhou and continued, "Also, I'm afraid you'll be the one doing the most work."

"Like what?"

"Have you forgotten what to discuss at this conference?" Luo Wenxuan smiled and said, "Anyway, we're almost there. I'll show it to you soon."

While they were talking, the car had already entered the underground parking lot of the ILHCRC headquarters building.

After getting out of the car, Lu Zhou followed in the footsteps of Luo Wenxuan and got on the elevator. They came to the file room on the third floor and walked to the nearest long table.

A thick book was sitting on the table.

On the cover of this book, there was only a number.

[2000]

"Two thousand physics problems that cover all branches and research directions of physics." Luo Wenxuan looked at this thick book and said, "We took recommendations from the other eight physics research institutions and

top scholars in each research branch. Based on their opinions, the most representative or main problems were selected.

“What we have to do now... or what you have to do is to select one hundred of the most representative problems from these two thousand problems.”

Lu Zhou looked at the book that was as thick as a dictionary. He reached out his hand and picked it up from the table before flipping through it quickly.

This thing was really similar to an exercise book. The questions were labeled according to the categories they belonged to, and it even included the names of those who wrote the problems, the “sources”, and the earliest documentation of the problems.

Of course, the most important thing was the descriptions of the problems.

It was like a rigorous essay, describing what each problem was and what physics background it had.

Some of these problems could be clarified in a few words, such as “can the pairing of two Fermi atoms form superfluidity in quantum chromodynamics”...

There were also questions such as “Yangian Representation Theory and Solving Nonlinear Models” or “can the spectrum of one-dimensional Hubbard model and HS model be solved with the aid of Yangian Representation Theory”. The problems must be described clearly, and they even had certain requirements for the readers’ mathematical skills.

This was definitely the most difficult “exercise book” in the world.

Even solving one of the questions was enough to become an expert in a certain area of physics, and be recognized by the entire physics community...

Lu Zhou looked at this book of puzzles that condensed almost all of the wisdom of physicists in human civilization. Lu Zhou felt his brain go numb.

“I think this is a masterpiece...”

“I think so too.” Luo Wenxuan nodded his head and said, “I spent two weeks going through it roughly. Many of the questions in it are not simple. It also includes the thoughts of the authors. This is more valuable than the questions themselves.”

“Basically, let’s wait for the representatives from other institutes to arrive. The selection is not something I can complete alone.” Lu Zhou put down this book and looked at Luo Wenxuan. He said, “This book stays here for the time being. I plan to spend a few days going through it briefly.”

Luo Wenxuan: “That’s what I had in mind... By the way, as an independent research institution, the ILHCRC should also send a representative to participate in the selection of the 100 physics problems. Who do you think is a good choice?”

“Don’t ask me about such trivial matters.”

Lu Zhou looked at Luo Wenxuan and said in a half-joking tone, “You’re the next chairman of the board. If you can’t even handle this, then I don’t know what to say.”

Chapter 1321: The Conference Of The Future

Two thousand physics problems were more difficult than imagined.

Even with Lu Zhou’s level 10 in physics, if he wanted to go through all of these problems and have a general grasp of the problems that were described, it would take quite some time.

Of course, compared to Luo Wenxuan, his reading speed was much faster.

For an entire two days, Lu Zhou stayed in his hotel room and did not go out. All of his meals were through room service.

During these forty-odd hours, he read through the 2,000 physics problems; this was almost equivalent to reading 2,000 papers.

Lu Zhou was quite satisfied with his efficiency.

To say it was a trivial matter was ridiculous.

But it wasn’t anything too difficult.

While Lu Zhou was reading these two thousand physics problems, most of the top physics researchers in the world had already received an invitation letter from the ILHCRC.

Almost everyone made it clear that they would participate in this conference. The entire physics community fell into quite a heated discussion about the physics conference called “Century of Physics”.

One of them was the Physics Stack Exchange forum.

As one of the most well-known communication platforms for physicists in the world, the PSE forum had attracted many well-known physicists in recent years, as well as PhDs in physics from Ivy League schools.

Even several famous Nobel Prize winners had their own accounts on the forum and updated posts from time to time. As an informal publishing channel for physics opinions, one could discuss the latest physics research results in a more casual atmosphere.

However, in recent years, people’s enthusiasm for physics itself was replaced by the excitement for the Century of Physics conference.

Topics of discussion occupied the entire front page.

Physicists were extremely excited about one hundred physics problems that would be announced after the closed-door meeting. Everyone hoped that their research direction could emerge at this meeting and gain the entire physics community’s attention.

[Which problems do you think are the most promising candidates?]

[This question is too difficult; there are two thousand problems! To select the most important ones and the ones that the world could hope to solve means that you must have an understanding of at least two thousand branches of physics research. Even Academician Lu might not have the ability to do it!]

[Don’t worry, I heard that eight major physics research institutions around the world have sent representatives to participate in the voting for the one hundred questions at the Century of Physics conference. There are at least one round of primary voting, two rounds of meetings, and a final voting round!]

[Hyperspace theory and void theory will definitely have a place, and the recent disappearance of supernova remnants and the exploration of outer galaxies are two major categories in astrophysics that are also popular. There are also the quantum states of cold atoms in optical superlattices, and the research on non-Abelian statistical properties of Rana fermions is also promising; there are too many fields of interest...]

[This is simply a large-scale competition. The selected topics will become the most popular research directions in the next century; the lucky ones who pursue these directions will get the most abundant scientific research resources!]

Apart from the funds raised by the ILHCRC for these hundred problems, as well as the bonuses and awards that would be issued at the conference, major physics research institutions around the world would inevitably refer to the conclusions drawn at this “Century of Physics” conference. They would tilt more resources to scientific research that was more valuable and worthy of research.

Everyone hoped that their area of research would be the lucky one to stand out.

Not only would it mean that their area would be recognized by the most prestigious academic institutes in the physics world, but it also meant that the road to scientific research would be smooth sailing from now on!

Interestingly, physicists weren't the only ones paying attention to this upcoming event. Even mathematicians were also making fun and joining in on the discussion enthusiastically.

On the MathOverflow forum.

Even though the discussions didn't fill the front page, they had generated a lot of traction.

However, unlike the physicists on the PSE forum, physics was not their major. Thus, the topics of discussion were mostly focused on gossip that had nothing to do with academics.

[Amazing! ILHCRC wants to copy Hilbert's twenty-three questions and the Millennium Prize Problems!]

[What questions do you think Professor Lu will choose as the hundred problems at the Century of Physics conference?]

[It's hard to say, but if I were him, I would definitely focus on the two areas of void theory and hyperspace theory! Then, for the next hundred years, void theory and hyperspace theory will dominate the physics community! His school of thought will live on for at least a century.]

[That is too superficial. Besides, it doesn't have to be so troublesome. Even without this Century of Physics conference, do you think hyperspace theory will not rule the physics world for the next century?]

[Yeah, why not? People are selfish! Just wait and see.]

Whether it was scholars in the physics circle or scholars outside the physics circle, almost no one doubted the influence of Lu Zhou's opinions on the Century of Physics conference.

Although ILHCRC invited a total of eight major physics research institutions and more than twelve physics research teams to participate in the selection of the one hundred physics problems, judging from the performance of their physics experiments, the sum of their opinions wasn't worth as much as Lu Zhou's words.

Regardless of whether Lu Zhou himself was aware of this, his authority and power in the physics world had reached an unparalleled level.

Most people were curious as to what choice he would make. The Physics Stack Exchange forum even opened a poll for the two thousand physics problems.

Everyone could choose at most one hundred problems as the most important physics problem in their mind. Using this poll, the hundred physics problems that were most anticipated by the academic community would be listed.

When Lu Zhou saw the long list of rankings and the top ten problems on his browser web page, he was shocked.

All of the top ten physics problems were, directly or indirectly, related to the "hyperspace theory", "void theory", and Z particles.

Even though he was very happy that his colleagues were so optimistic about his research work, Lu Zhou's own opinion was different from the public.

The hyperspace theory was fine. Even though it was not suitable as the focus of this century's research, the broad prospects behind it were still worth researching by physicists.

But void theory...

No matter how he looked at it, Lu Zhou did not think that research in this area could produce more outstanding research results in the next century.

Compared to the theory of relativity, which had practical significance, its usage was more similar to string theory.

When human civilization's understanding of physics extended to the extra-dimensional world, the problems linked to it would no longer be problems.

But before that, no matter how much research was done, it was difficult to make more substantial progress.

"... Anyway, this is finally finished."

Lu Zhou closed the browser, leaned on his chair, and stretched out comfortably.

Because of time constraints, he hadn't had a good rest in two days. He could finally relax for a while.

Lu Zhou marked the problems he liked on his notebook and closed the notebook. He got up from his chair and called Luo Wenxuan.

"Call other representatives and have a meeting at two o'clock in the afternoon."

Luo Wenxuan was shocked.

"The two thousand problems... You read them all?"

"Sort of." Lu Zhou said, "I can't do this on my own. Let's discuss first."

Chapter 1322: Failed to Pass?

Professor Felix had been high-spirited recently.

Because not long ago, he was nominated for the American Physical Society award for the research on the origin of neutrino mass. It was also because of the invitation from ILHCRC's "Century of Physics" conference some time ago.

That invitation letter was just an invitation.

Six physicists recommended his name to the ILHCRC, hoping that he would summarize the most prominent or most important problems on the proposition of the origin of neutrino mass.

In some sense, this invitation letter was even more valuable than the awards issued by the general physics association.

Because this meant that the area he researched had been recognized by his colleagues.

It meant that his influence in this field of research had been recognized by the mainstream academic community!

Even in a place like MIT, this was something worth bragging about.

Even though asking questions wasn't as good as answering them, he felt excited when he thought that the questions he raised would be regarded as classics by tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of people over the next century.

This was even more exciting than winning a medal from the American Physical Society!

One day at noon.

Professor Felix had just finished a class. He returned to the office. Just as he was about to call his assistant to pour him a cup of coffee, the phone on the corner of the desk rang.

He picked up the phone, cleared his throat, and spoke.

“Hello??”

“Hello, this is the office of the ILHCRC conference organization department.”

Hearing that it was a call from the ILHCRC, Felix was immediately happy. Instead of revealing the joy in his heart, he leaned back on his office chair and spoke casually.

“Is there anything I can help you with?”

In Professor Felix’s opinion, the problem he recommended would definitely be chosen at the Century of Physics conference.

The mass origin of neutrinos was one of the frontier research hotspots in physics. The research ideas summarized in the paper he handed in and the problems faced in the current research were all critical research bottlenecks.

He could not think of any reason for the ILHCRC to not list his problem in one of the 100 problems.

However, just when he was so confident, the voice on the other end of the phone made his confidence drop from the clouds instantly.

“I’m very sorry, Professor Felix... We regret to inform you that your paper failed to pass the preliminary selection.”

It was like Felix had been turned into a statue, his whole body froze.

It took a long time for Professor Felix to recover from the confusion. He roared into the telephone receiver in a tone of disbelief and anger.

“Failed... The preliminary selection? Wait! What do you mean by failing the preliminary selection? Did you make a mistake?”

“I’m sorry, Mr. Felix, this was the conclusion of the judges...”

The staff on the other end of the phone spoke as politely as possible, trying to calm Felix’s emotions. He said, “According to the voting results after the preliminary selection meeting, what you raised about the proposition heavy Fermi-field triplet into the standard model does not meet our standards at the Century of Physics conference. We’re sorry—”

“I’m not here to listen to you apologize!” Professor Felix interrupted the staff member; he had almost lost his mind. He spoke furiously, “This is ridiculous! Anyone that has anything to do with physics knows the importance of neutrino mass in the particle physics research!”

The staff on the other end of the phone spoke.

“Perhaps because the proposition you put forward...”

“Impossible! Do you know the area of my research?” His beard trembled, Felix continued aggressively, “I have been researching this direction for twenty years! No one knows about this area better than me, I know the most important problem in this area! Even Professor Lu doesn’t know!”

The staff member did not know what to say.

He was just an intern. Even though his major was indeed particle physics, no one regarded him as a serious physicist. Thus he did not express any opinions of his own.

But in his opinion...

None of these two thousand physics problems were substandard.

If they wanted to find the 100 most representative problems, then 1900 problems had to be eliminated...

This was no different than ILHCRC rejecting most intern applications.

“This... I’m very sorry, I don’t know whether Academician Lu himself is optimistic about your research, but the result is the opinions of the vast majority of scholars in the review team. I hope you can understand—”

“F*ck!”

Professor Felix angrily hung up the phone; his chest was pumping violently.

He had worked in physics for a long time, but he had never felt this wronged.

The more he thought about it, the angrier he got. He stood up from his office chair.

The assistant who was standing by the desk with a cup of coffee in his hand asked nervously in a quiet voice, “Professor?”

“Buy me a ticket to Shanghai right away! The earliest flight! The sooner the better!”

Professor Felix ignored the worried look on his assistant’s face. He reached out his hand and grabbed the coat from the clothes hanger, then put it on his shoulders. He cursed as he walked towards the door.

“Not up to the standard? I’ll have to see what is considered to be standard!”

The assistant stood there with his mouth open.

Although he didn’t know what happened...

But looking at the angry look on the professor’s face, it had to be related to the ILHCRC...

Professor Felix, who left the office, drove back to his apartment and packed his luggage immediately.

Without wasting another minute, after he received his assistant’s message that the ticket was booked successfully, he immediately went downstairs and returned to his car. He then drove to the airport as fast as possible, went through the security check, and got on a flight to Shanghai.

Even though the purchase of the first-class ticket made him feel a little distressed, when he thought of the “unfair treatment” he received from the ILHCRC, his distress was immediately diluted by the anger.

He needed an explanation!

If the ILHCRC review team couldn’t explain to him, he would go talk to Lu Zhou face-to-face and ask him why his problem was eliminated!

He would not give up until the ILHCRC or the chairman of the ILHCRC gave him a reasonable explanation!

Chapter 1323: I’ll Show It to You Then

“The last problem... Regarding the mystery of the supernova, this proposition comes from the recommendation of the famous astrophysicist Jim Peebles.”

ILHCRC headquarters meeting room.

Professor Whittle, from the Brookhaven National Laboratory, stood in front of the conference table.

He was holding a piece of paper in his hand. He subconsciously glanced at Lu Zhou, who was sitting not far away. He spoke with a slightly nervous expression.

“The supernova remnants are the tombstones of stars, the remains of stars after they exploded at the end of the evolutionary process. They are like brilliant fireworks in the night sky, exuding deadly charm...”

“However, what is puzzling is that according to the calculation of the supernova explosion rate and star formation rate, there should be about 20,000 to 30,000 supernova remnants that we can observe in the Milky Way. However, we have only observed around 300.

“99% of supernova remnants seem to be missing, out of our sight.

“The research on supernova remnants will have an important impact on our research in the fields of heavy elements and galaxy evolution. If we can find out where the missing supernova remnants go, it may be able to reveal more profound physical mysteries...”

From a professional point of view, Professor Whittle elaborated on some existing progress or conjectures in this research area, as well as Brookhaven National Laboratory’s opinion on this proposition.

Like he said, if the reasons for the disappearance of supernova sites could be revealed, or if they could find the disappeared energy and matter, the research on astrophysics and particle physics would be greatly improved.

After listening to this lengthy statement, Lu Zhou thought about it for a while, then ticked a tick in his notebook.

Professor Whittle's attention was on Lu Zhou from the beginning. Professor Whittle noticed Lu Zhou's movements; his tense face finally relaxed a little as his heart was relieved.

Professor Jim Peebles was a big name recently poached by the Brookhaven National Laboratory. What he worried about the most was that Lu Zhou had a grudge against them because of past events and would deliberately reject the proposal from Brookhaven National Laboratory.

However, it now seemed that Lu Zhou was obviously not interested in doing this.

Even though Whittle was annoyed at Brookhaven National Laboratory's increasing involvement at ILHCRC, he had no better way to deal with this situation. He could only bear it for the time being.

Lu Zhou looked at Professor Whittle, who bowed slightly and sat back in his seat. He closed the notebook in his hand and stood up. He cleared his throat and spoke.

"Let's end the preliminary selections.

"A total of 522 problems were shortlisted, 22 more than expected.

"For the end result, we'll have to wait until the final vote. There are about two meetings in the coming days, respectively on Wednesday and Friday... Thank you, everyone."

There was a wave of applause in the conference room.

Lu Zhou faced the standing physicists and nodded gently.

...

After the meeting, Lu Zhou packed up the things on the table and returned to his office.

However, just after he sat down, there was a knock on the door. A young assistant walked in quickly from outside.

"Mr. Chairman, there is a strange person who wants to see you."

Strange person?

Lu Zhou raised his eyebrows and asked curiously, "Who is it?"

The assistant spoke with an awkward expression.

"His name is Felix. He claims to be a professor from the department of physics at MIT. He says that he has suffered unfair treatment at ILHCRC and hopes to meet you."

Originally, he didn't want to bother Lu Zhou with these trivial things, but the strange guy was too persistent. He stood in the lobby with a suitcase and didn't want to leave no matter what.

This guy was not a nobody, so they couldn't just throw him out. The front desk downstairs could only call his superiors to ask for instructions. Then, the issue went up the chain of command, eventually arriving at Lu Zhou's desk.

"Professor Felix?"

Lu Zhou had no impression of this name. He frowned and thought for a while, then spoke.

"... If he wants to discuss academic issues with me, tell him that I can spare half an hour at three o'clock in the afternoon. If he just wants to bother me with some boring problems, give him the contact information of Secretary-General Luo."

"Oh, okay."

The assistant quickly left the office. Lu Zhou didn't say anything else. He continued to flip through the meeting notes in his hand.

He ate a sandwich for lunch and stayed in the office until about three in the afternoon. Lu Zhou walked to the cafe downstairs and saw Mr. Felix, the man who claimed to be a professor from MIT.

From his appearance and the suitcase in hand, Lu Zhou guessed that he arrived here immediately after getting off the plane.

Also, his planet tickets were probably bought last-minute.

"Professor Felix is it? Nice to meet you."

Professor Felix looked at Lu Zhou nervously, then nodded cautiously.

“Likewise.”

Although he was very angry when he was in North America and even lost his temper in the building reception two hours ago, after seeing Lu Zhou in person, he couldn't help but lower his head.

He had no other choice.

After all, Lu Zhou's status was too high.

From the electrostrong interaction to hyperspace theory, his research results shocked the world; the problems that plagued hundreds of millions of people were a piece of cake for him.

His little amount of achievement was not even worth mentioning in front of Lu Zhou.

Professor Felix shrunk into his shell and didn't say anything. Lu Zhou paused for a second. He then smiled.

“Would you like something to drink?”

“I ordered a cup of coffee, it's not here yet.”

“Oh, really? I'll have a cup of black coffee then.” Lu Zhou nodded to the waiter, then looked at Professor Felix. He continued happily, “I'm very curious, what is it that made you come all the way from Boston to see me?”

“Because I need an explanation!” Felix suddenly became excited. His shoulders trembled as he sat up straight from his chair. He then stared at Lu Zhou and asked, “Why did you reject my proposal in the preliminary selection?”

“This was the collective opinion of the review committee. I only fulfilled my right to cast a vote. If it did not pass the vote, it is because it was not suitable—”

“You never read my paper carefully! I heard that after you arrived in Shanghai from Jinling, you only spent three days to read the problems.” Felix said excitedly, “From the beginning, you didn't intend to take our research results seriously, so why did you ask me to send a paper?”

Three days?

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly. He actually only took two days, faster than the rumors.

He looked at Professor Felix, whose face was full of excitement, and spoke.

“I carefully read every paper. I can swear by my reputation that every choice I make is from the standpoint of a scholar.”

“Oh, really?” Felix looked straight at Lu Zhou. His face was full of suspicion as he asked, “Are you sure that three days was enough for you to read all the papers?”

“Of course, I even remember your paper.” Lu Zhou smiled faintly. “Introduce the heavy Fermi-field triplet in the standard model to explain the source of neutrino quality. In other words, it is the application of the Type-III Seesaw mechanism in the study of the origin of neutrino mass. Am I right?”

Lu Zhou finally remembered.

He didn’t remember the name Felix, but after hearing him explain his problem, Lu Zhou immediately matched the name with the paper he read a few days ago.

When Professor Felix realized Lu Zhou had actually remembered his paper, he held his breath.

However, he realized that he had waited at least two hours in this cafe. During this time, Lu Zhou had time to investigate his information clearly and quickly go through the paper.

“... Did you read it before you came?”

Seeing the obvious distrust on this guy’s face, Lu Zhou couldn’t help but smile.

Read it before?

I have better things to do with my time.

“Regardless, I have indeed read your paper, and in my opinion... I voted against it. As for the reason, it is because it isn’t worth researching.”

“That’s preposterous!”

“Don’t come to conclusions too quickly.” Lu Zhou smiled at Professor Felix, who was about to stand up, and motioned him to sit down. He said, “Since you came across the ocean to see me, I’ll tell you why I did it.”

The waiter came over with a cup of coffee.

Lu Zhou looked at the steaming cup of coffee on the table. He reached out his index finger and gently touched the cup. He then looked at the waiter and said politely, “Can you grab a whiteboard from the office next to me? And a marker.”

“Yes, sir.”

After the waiter left quickly. Lu Zhou looked at Professor Felix and spoke.

“If I explain it to you in words, we’ll be here all day.

“I’ll show it to you.”

Chapter 1324: An Unresolved Controversy

Professor Felix looked at the whiteboard that the waiter was dragging. He was stunned.

Because of his doubts about the fairness in the selection of the problems at the Century of Physics, Lu Zhou actually dragged a whiteboard out here.

What does he want to do?

Is it possible to find a way to apply the “Type-III Seesaw mechanism” to solve the problem of neutrino mass, to prove that my problem is not worthy?

How is that possible?

Professor Felix was almost amused by this.

If this problem was really that easy to solve, the physics community would have solved the mysteries behind neutrinos much earlier.

Lu Zhou didn't pay attention to the weird look on Professor Felix's face. He stood up from his chair and walked to the whiteboard leisurely.

"Thank you."

After throwing a tip of 100 yuan to the waiter, Lu Zhou stood in front of the whiteboard and picked up the marker.

After only thinking for less than half a minute, he took off the marker cap and started writing on the whiteboard.

The tip of the marker swept across the whiteboard as Professor Felix watched intently.

Even though they were quiet, having such a large whiteboard in the cafe was a bit conspicuous.

Especially since the person standing in front of the whiteboard was Lu Zhou, the chairman of the ILHCRC! Winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics! The creator of hyperspace theory!

There were countless titles piled on top of his head.

People were gradually attracted by the content on the whiteboard, and many curious people left their seats, gathering nearby in groups.

"What is Professor Lu writing?"

"The expressions of the Majorana mass term and the Dirac mass term should be the mass of fermions—"

"No, that's not right! It's the Seesaw mechanism! If I'm not mistaken... He's explaining the origin of neutrino mass!"

The second this sentence was uttered, it was like a bomb was dropped on a calm lake, instantly igniting the atmosphere.

"Oh my!"

"The origin of the mass of neutrinos?!"

"There's no way? This kind of thing... can be written on a whiteboard?"

“Nutty!”

For places like the ILHCRC, the cafe itself was a place for discussions on academic issues. No one cared if they talked loudly.

Attracted by the commotion, more and more people gathered here.

Professor Felix saw the calculations flowing like water on the whiteboard. He gulped.

He didn't understand the calculations at all. In order to not feel embarrassed, he casually looked around. However, he was shocked.

People gathered all around the whiteboard, forming a circle, trapping him and Lu Zhou inside.

At the same time, Lu Zhou, who was standing in front of the whiteboard, had a rather calm expression on his face.

He had entered a flow state, his attention was completely focused on the whiteboard in front of him. He wasn't affected by the people and sounds nearby.

The realm of level 10 was mysterious.

That lines of calculations didn't seem like calculations, but rather a spell that was woven from the words of the gods. Even though it didn't have the energy to call on the wind and rain, it dominated and affected the laws of the universe.

Whenever he entered this state, Lu Zhou couldn't help but feel emotional.

No wonder the level of mathematics determined the upper limit of other subject levels.

If he didn't have level 10 mathematics as a support, it would be difficult for him to manipulate the language of the universe...

Time quickly passed by. After he leaned down in front of the whiteboard and wrote the last line of calculations, Lu Zhou stood up and took a half step back.

He looked at the calculations on the whiteboard. With a satisfied smile on his face, he nodded gently.

“Not bad.”

Lu Zhou turned around and looked at Professor Felix, who was sitting on the chair completely dumbfounded. He spoke.

“The answer you want is here. I think these calculations are enough to tell you why your paper was screened out in the review meeting.”

“Wait a minute.” Professor Felix blushed as he looked at Lu Zhou, who put down the marker, and said quickly, “I still don’t quite understand. What did you... show? Can you tell me?”

Even though he was reluctant to admit this, this was the truth.

Halfway through Lu Zhou’s writing on the blackboard, he was completely lost. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn’t keep up with Lu Zhou’s rhythm.

This sentence was heard by many people nearby; voices of sympathy gradually spread around.

Obviously, Professor Felix wasn’t the only person who had not kept up with the rhythm of Lu Zhou’s writing on the blackboard. Everyone around here was the same.

“Of course I can, I actually plan on doing this.” Lu Zhou smiled faintly. He turned around and looked at the content on the whiteboard. He spent a few seconds gathering his thoughts, then said, “The dynamics of the origin of neutrino masses has been a hot topic in the research of particle physics in recent years. This is true, but not all research is possible.

“So far, there are two possible mass items for fermions, the Majorana mass and the Dirac mass.

“If the neutrino is a Dirac particle, the mass of the neutrino can be directly given by the Yukawa interaction.

“However, our observations such as the anisotropy of the cosmic microwave background radiation show that the absolute mass of neutrinos should be less than 0.2 eV. Considering that the mass of the top quark is 172 GeV, it is obvious that only the Higgs mechanism can be used to explain this. The fermion mass spectrum cannot be applied!

“Therefore, the more common method now is to treat neutrinos as Majorana particles so that we can use the Seesaw mechanism to study the origin of neutrino mass—”

“Yes!” Professor Felix instantly became energetic. He said, “Are there any problems with my proposal paper? Didn’t I express it like this?”

Lu Zhou chuckled and continued, “Don’t get too excited. I haven’t finished yet. Using the Seesaw mechanism to study the mass of neutrinos is indeed attractive, but the Seesaw model causes inconsistencies in the unitarity of the lepton mixing matrix... Have you considered this problem?”

Whispers were heard.

Obviously, Lu Zhou’s remarks caused a lot of controversy among the crowd.

Professor Felix was overwhelmed, he was completely stunned. It took a while before he snapped back to reality.

“The Seesaw model standard will lead to the destruction of the lepton mixing matrix... This is a debate in the physics community, but it is just conjecture. How do you know that it must be true—”

“It was conjecture.” Lu Zhou raised his chin at the whiteboard behind him. He said with a smile, “Not anymore.”

There was an uproar.

The moment everyone heard this, the crowd went crazy.

People took out their phones from their pockets and snapped photos of the content on the whiteboard.

Some people were recording the whole process earlier, but people’s reactions were far more enthusiastic now.

Solved a long time debate in physics?!

Using one whiteboard?!

But there’s no way!

“This is impossible...” Professor Felix stared at the calculations on the whiteboard in a daze. He couldn’t say anything else other than repeating the phrase “This is impossible...”

If the Seesaw model led to the destruction of the lepton mixing matrix, then the Type-III Seesaw mechanism was not the best solution to the origin of neutrino mass.

So what was he researching for all this time?!

Professor Felix had a sad look on his face.

Even though he wanted to disprove Lu Zhou’s claims, to stand up and refute his opinion loudly, there was no hope in his heart.

It wasn’t because of Lu Zhou’s academic authority.

He had gradually begun to understand the calculations on the whiteboard. He gradually realized that what Lu Zhou said was true.

He simply couldn’t accept this reality.

He had been working on the Type-III Seesaw mechanism over the past ten years. He tried his best to find the piece of the puzzle that could fill the source of neutrino mass.

But the facts in front of him now told him that in the past ten years, he was spinning around in circles, complacent about some fundamentally meaningless results...

Professor Felix seemed to have lost his soul. Lu Zhou was silent for a while. He then sighed softly.

He understood the depression and sadness in Felix’s heart.

How many years are there in a researcher’s life?

The golden age of scientific research only lasts 20 to 30 years.

“Sometimes... This is how things happen.” Lu Zhou paused for a moment while looking at Professor Felix, who was ashamed, and said, “Reality is always difficult to accept because it doesn’t adhere to our expectations.

“The Seesaw mechanism might be a suitable idea, but a fatal loophole makes it almost impossible to reach the end of this road.”

“What should I do...”

“I’m afraid you have to answer that yourself. After all, I am not an expert in this area.” Lu Zhou thought for a moment while looking at Professor Felix. He said, “If the tool is broken, try fixing it.”

“Although the Seesaw mechanism has many problems, I believe this is also an opportunity for you.”

“Why not try to adjust the Seesaw mechanism in conjunction with the Leptogenesis mechanism? This model can explain the tiny mass of neutrinos and the asymmetry of the baryon number in the universe and can be tested in the Large Hadron Collider. The interaction makes it possible to experimentally test the mechanism... This is not possible with the Seesaw mechanism.”

Lu Zhou looked as Felix’s eyes light up. He then said with a smile, “Although I can’t explain why, as an alternative, I recommend that you start with this area.”

“Perhaps you will find something.”

Chapter 1325: Still Warm

Professor Felix swore that...

This was definitely the most exciting physics class he had ever experienced in his life.

This feeling had shocked his soul. He hadn’t felt this way in a long time, so it felt almost strange to him.

He vaguely remembered the professor who taught him told him that there was nothing to teach him anymore. The only way forward was to rely on himself. That was the last time he felt this way.

But now, he had this feeling again, and it shocked the depths of his soul.

Even though this was coming from a man many years younger than him...

“Unbelievable...” Professor Felix stared at Lu Zhou with an incredulous gaze. He opened and closed his mouth.

Lu Zhou had guessed what he was thinking. He smiled and joked.

“Looks like you noticed something.”

Professor Felix looked at Lu Zhou and got up from the seat. He then lowered his head seriously.

“Thank you.”

“You are welcome.” Lu Zhou said happily, “I am glad to be able to inspire your research.”

Professor Felix was obviously not the only person who was shocked.

There was still a crowd around them.

The crowd was going nuts!

Even though the physicists standing here were fairly reserved, they couldn't help but clap their hands because they were shocked by the calculations on the whiteboard.

The most excited ones were the interns.

Most of them had just arrived at the ILHCRC a few months ago, and they had never seen anything like this. This was the first time they encountered such an awesome scene.

“F*ck me, God Lu is nuts!”

“It's more than nuts... The problem of the origin of neutrino mass is one of the most cutting-edge research areas in physics! One of the most difficult ones! Our professor said that, if anyone can produce results in this area, they can brag about it for the rest of their life!”

“Looks like Professor Felix is convinced.”

“Makes sense, if someone gives me a lesson like this, I won't just be convinced, I'll be praying on my knees, calling him my dad!”

“Pfft, who wants a son like you.”

Bathed in the thunderous applause, Lu Zhou returned to his seat and sat down. He reached out and took a sip of the coffee.

The woodiness and sweetness spread on his taste buds. He nodded with satisfaction.

Not bad.

It's still warm.

...

The same night, Professor Felix returned to Boston by plane. Although Lu Zhou had asked him to wait until the Century of Physics was over, he declined Lu Zhou's invitation after some hesitation.

His head was full of inspiration for research on the origin of neutrino mass.

When Lu Zhou proposed the idea of combining the Leptogenesis mechanism to modify the Seesaw mechanism, it was as if he had entered a new world.

He didn't want to do anything else; he was not in the mood to participate in academic conferences. He just wanted to go back to his laboratory as soon as possible, take advantage of the inspiration, and go back to research.

While Professor Felix boarded the flight back to North America, what happened in the cafe spread like wildfire by the physicists.

Some people said that the physics professor from MIT came from Boston on a special trip to ask Lu Zhou about the origin of neutrino mass.

Other people said that Professor Felix got on the plane heading to Shanghai because his paper was rejected, but he was taught a lesson when confronting Lu Zhou.

There were also some bizarre rumors. For example, Lu Zhou proved the mass of neutrinos on the spot in a coffee shop, but because the whiteboard was too small, he only wrote half of the proof.

The rumors became more and more outrageous as it spread. Later on, it was also spread to several well-known physics forums, which caused a lot of discussions.

But no matter what the story was, one thing remained unchanged.

Which was the writings on the whiteboard.

Even though Lu Zhou did not prove the reason for neutrino mass, he falsified a research idea that was generally optimistic by scholars working in this research area.

If the Seesaw model on the TeV energy scale led to the destruction of the lepton mixing matrix, then the Seesaw mechanism was not applicable to neutrino mass research. Thousands of ongoing studies would have to change their research pathways because of this sad news.

What was shocking was not the significance of this research result.

It was that Lu Zhou completed all of this in less than half an hour...

Almost everyone who heard this was flabbergasted. They only had one thought in this mind.

Yep, this guy...

Is definitely not human.

The next night.

The ILHCRC cafeteria.

Luo Wenxuan carried a dinner plate and walked straight to the corner of the cafeteria. He put down the tray opposite Lu Zhou and sat down on the seat opposite him.

“That’s amazing!”

“... What is?”

“Don’t you know? At the cafe yesterday afternoon! Proving the origin of neutrino mass on the spot! Now the entire ILHCRC... No, the entire physics community is discussing this!”

Lu Zhou looked at Luo Wenxuan's eyes that were full of excitement and admiration. He then said with a light cough, "I didn't prove the origin of neutrino mass, that can't be calculated with pen and paper... I just disproved one of the research ideas about the Seesaw mechanism from the perspective of mathematical physics."

"That's amazing too! Do you know what Professor Witten said about you?"

"... What?"

"That there are at least three equations on the entire whiteboard that would take him an entire day to understand. No one has ever produced such delicate and impeccable calculations, it was like the whole proof process was not thought out, but came naturally."

Lu Zhou was a little embarrassed.

"... That is only because the old man is humble. In fact, this is not a very difficult problem. With his mathematics ability, answering this question won't be difficult."

"Humble? No way, from the physicists I know, the humble ones I can count on my hand. And Witten is definitely not one of them... By the way, do you know what they are saying about you now?"

Lu Zhou: "They?"

"The ILHCRC interns!" Luo Wenxuan smiled at Lu Zhou and said, "Professor Lu solved a world-class physics problem with a cup of coffee. In theory, as long as we supply him with enough coffee, there will be no more secrets in the world of physics."

Lu Zhou: "..."

"Seriously, when did you start researching neutrino mass? Why have I never heard you talk about it?"

"Because I didn't. "

Luo Wenxuan opened his mouth and sighed a little.

"Fine, if you don't want to tell me, just forget it, pretend like I didn't ask."

Lu Zhou: "...?"

Chapter 1326: The Grand Opening!

The early morning.

A subway station exit in Shanghai.

A man in a suit took out his mobile phone and was about to order a ride to the office. However, after opening the app, he was surprised to find that there were no cars nearby.

"That's strange, why are there no cars available?"

Are there a lot of people taking taxis today?

The man standing next to him spoke with a smile.

"Have you not heard? A conference is going to be held these few days. The main roads in the second ring are basically closed."

"The roads are closed? Why didn't I know about this?"

"There was a text message notification, did you not pay attention? Haven't you noticed there are no cars on the highway?"

The man in the suit raised his head and was shocked.

"Oh f*ck true, not a single car?!"

"Of course. Just wait for the bus honestly."

A person who looked a little older stood beside them and heard their conversation. He curiously inserted himself into the conversation.

"What conference? Why haven't I heard of it?"

"The Century of Physics conference... Everyone on Weibo is discussing this matter. Do you not go on the internet?"

“The Century of Physics conference? Oh, I don’t study physics, so I don’t know... Besides, surely it’s not as lively as the Nobel Prize ceremony.”

“It’s more lively than ten Nobel Prize award ceremonies! Do you know what this conference means? More than 100,000 physicists from all over the world came to Shanghai for it! In addition to discussing the world’s most cutting-edge physics propositions, 100 physics problems will be announced! Apparently, anyone who can solve any one of these hundred problems would receive a bonus of at least one million yuan.”

The people standing next to him were shocked.

“The f*ck! So much money?!”

“It is?” The man with glasses chuckled and said, “Maybe! But I think that for people who can solve these problems, one million is not a lot.”

Not to mention that the annual salary of the Institute of Physics at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study for senior researchers was probably higher than this number.

This was like the Nobel Prize.

Compared to the medal itself, everything else was just a bonus.

Especially for a scholar.

If they had fame and reputation, why would they worry about things like money?

Knowledge was the only thing in the world that would not inflate over time.

“But it’s just an academic conference... Is it that serious?”

The man with glasses spoke.

“You know nothing! This is a moment for the Chinese physics community to stand on the top of the world. Not to mention that even the president came from Beijing. Is blocking the traffic too much?”

The president is coming?!

The people nearby were shocked.

Most people did not fully understand what this academic conference meant to the world and to China, but if the president was coming to Shanghai, then it must be very important...

...

Lu Zhou had been in Shanghai for nearly half a month.

During this time, he was busy with the world-class physics summit called "Century of Physics".

Now, it was finally the day the conference began.

Lu Zhou looked at the crowds outside of the International Convention and Exhibition Center. He felt relieved.

Lu Zhou saw more and more people gathering. He then looked at the person in charge of the conference organization and spoke.

"Open the venue."

The person in charge of the conference organization spoke.

"But... It's still half an hour before it starts."

Lu Zhou looked out of the window and said with a smile, "Who knows how many people will be here in half an hour. If we start the security check now, we will be able to relax later. Remember, this is academia, drop the formalities. Let's welcome the scholars that came from afar."

"Yes, Mr. Chairman."

The person nodded, turned around, and walked away.

The gate of the convention and exhibition center was opened. The queue lines formed a maze in front of the convention and exhibition center.

Although major international conferences had been held here before, this was the first time for the Shanghai International Convention and Exhibition Center to host this kind of physics summit.

Shanghai had never had this many physicists in its city before.

Not even when Lu Zhou held his report here.

Fortunately, the staff here were competent. They appeared to be under control. Everything was proceeding in an orderly manner.

Eight o'clock in the morning.

It was time for the venue to be opened officially.

The flow of people at the entrance of the International Convention and Exhibition Center had reached a peak.

The world's top physicists, as well as experts working in the world's top physics universities and research institutions, were all gathered here.

It was no exaggeration to say that if someone picked up a rock and threw it, it would likely hit a Nobel Prize candidate on the head.

The first floor of the main stadium.

Lu Zhou looked at the physicists with different skin colors as he spoke emotionally.

"I didn't expect so many people to research physics."

Luo Wenxuan spoke with a smile.

"In fact, it's not that much. If we evenly distribute land to everyone, each physicist can have more than a thousand square kilometers of land."

"Is that including Antarctica?"

"Haha, there are also scientific research stations in Antarctica."

"Then you might as well count the land on the Moon and Mars."

"True... Wait, Mars?" Luo Wenxuan looked at Lu Zhou with surprise. He said, "What's the situation with Mars? Could it be—"

"Shh."

Lu Zhou put his index finger in front of his lips.

Luo Wenxuan immediately understood, and he nodded.

“I see, I get it.”

“Good, don’t say anything.” Lu Zhou saw that Luo Wenxuan seemed to have something to say. He asked, “What’s wrong?”

Luo Wenxuan smiled embarrassedly. He reached out his hand and scratched the back of his head.

“No, nothing, I just want to say that you’re awesome...”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Although the International Convention and Exhibition Center gates were opened, the opening highlight of the “Century of Physics” conference wouldn’t begin until later.

Luo Wenxuan and Lu Zhou wandered casually in the poster exhibition area.

There were a lot of people here, so it was very crowded.

The entire lobby on the first floor was filled with posters. Each poster booth was less than five square meters.

Although the space was limited, no one complained.

As the world’s top physics summit, for newcomers who had not yet achieved success, this was the best opportunity to show their work to the world and communicate face-to-face with their peers.

Whether it was a master’s student or a professor who was already well-known in the field of physics, identity did not matter here.

They were all scholars.

Because of the huge flow of people, in addition to the problem of congestion, there were also safety risks.

However, Lu Zhou was not worried about safety.

Some scholars entering the venue were well-known figures in the physics world. Even a piece of paper or a paper clip wouldn't pass through the two security checkpoints.

Coupled with the fact that Wang Peng and his colleagues were scattered around, there was no need to worry about safety. Lu Zhou could calmly enjoy this academic feast.

The posters displayed in the lobby on the first floor were very interesting.

Even though the academic viewpoints on many of the posters were still a bit naive, they contained some interesting insights, which was rare in serious academic conferences.

For Lu Zhou, these interesting ideas were sometimes even more useful than normal academic ideas. If he saw an interesting poster, Lu Zhou didn't mind stopping and exchanging a few words with the young people next to the booth. Perhaps the next top physicist could be standing there.

After all, everyone had to start from somewhere.

After walking around in the lobby on the first floor, Luo Wenxuan glanced at his watch and spoke.

"The meeting will begin soon."

"Don't worry, still fifteen minutes."

Luo Wenxuan raised his eyebrows slightly with surprise.

"Aren't you going to prepare in advance?"

"There is nothing to prepare, it's not an academic report." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Don't worry, I got this."

Chapter 1327: The Question of the Century!

The Century of Physics conference officially began.

The number one conference hall doors were closed tightly. The physicists in the International Convention and Exhibition Center gathered in the hall that was about to determine the future direction of physics.

Wei Hong stood next to the poster display area on the first floor. He looked at the large screen hanging on the wall. He suddenly asked Professor Dobrik, "What problems do you think will be selected?"

Dobrik thought for a while, then shook his head and spoke.

"I don't know... In my opinion, all of the 522 difficult problems that passed the preliminary selections are important. It is difficult to find out which one is redundant. I can only rank the few that I know... After all, I haven't researched the other problems at all."

As the discoverers of the Z particle gravitational wave equation, although the two were popular candidates for the next Nobel Prize, they hadn't won the Nobel Prize yet.

If their qualifications were stronger, they could walk into the conference room and at least be qualified to listen. But unfortunately, apart from the Z particle gravitational wave equation, they had not accomplished any particularly great achievements. They could only stand outside and wait quietly.

"I heard that the meeting is going to be broadcast live?" Professor Dobrik asked in a quiet voice while looking at the big screen on the wall.

"The announcement should be in the afternoon..." Wei Hong thought for a while and continued, "After all, the vote isn't very interesting for broadcast."

"How is it not an interesting broadcast? I bet that there is no one in the entire venue not thinking about this conference."

"I don't deny that..." Wei Hong shrugged and said, "After all, I am also quite curious."

Time slowly passed by.

Everyone expected to hear a little bit of news from the inside in advance, but it was a pity that the confidentiality of the meeting was done so well that no information was released in advance.

They waited until noon.

The doors finally opened. The reporters around the entrance immediately rushed in, but they were blocked by the venue staff. They protected the scholars as they left the meeting room.

Luo Wenxuan walked to the front of the crowd. He coughed and raised his voice.

“Every scholar with an invitation letter, please move to the meeting room number two.

“We will hold the opening ceremony of the ‘Century of Physics’ Summit there!

“And also, publish the questions of the century!”

The atmosphere at the scene warmed up. Everyone looked at the door with expectations in their eyes.

The crowd was diverted to the door of the No. 2 conference hall.

The scholars with invitation letters in their hands began to enter and sit down.

Unlike the previous group of scholars who attended the meeting, most of the scholars who attended the opening ceremony were outstanding young scholars and young physicists who had made outstanding contributions in physics.

Most of them were over the age of 30 and under the age of 50, in the golden age of scientific research. There were barely any who were over the age of 50 sitting there.

Wei Hong and Dobrik were also on this list. As great young physicists, they were seated near the front.

Lu Zhou walked to the podium. He was in a formal suit. He cleared his throat, glanced around the crowd, and spoke in a calm voice.

“It’s nice to see you all here.

“I think we all agree that the previous era of physics is over. We are standing at the intersection of the old and the new era, and you all represent the future of physics.

“Whether you are sitting here or standing in the exhibition hall, watching the conference through a big screen or watching through the internet...

“This conference has been prepared for you guys.

“What is dark matter, what is the energy that created our universe, what is the ultimate destiny of the universe... Over the past 100 years, we have solved problems that the ancients couldn't even imagine solving. But there is still a tough road ahead of us.

“Therefore, we send our most sincere wishes to future scholars. We hope that in the next 100 years, we can answer the questions that have plagued our civilization.”

Lu Zhou paused for a moment, looked at the crowded conference hall, and raised his voice.

“Therefore, on behalf of the ILHCRC, CERN... and other physics research institutions, I would like to announce the 100 Problems of the Century. We hope that they can inspire us and guide our disciplines toward a more prosperous and greater direction.

“We have invited the editors of the problems. They will help us unveil the curtain of this new era.”

Lu Zhou put down the speech draft in his hand. He picked up a small card from the table and spoke with a smile.

“As a starting point, I shall begin.

“The first problem of the Problems of the Century...

“We all know that there are four fundamental forces in our universe, strong interaction, weak interaction, electromagnetic force, and gravitational force. The first three have been linked together by the electroweak interaction and electrostrong interaction, but we know very little about the last.

“If anyone can link gravity with any of the first three, our physics world will enter a whole new dimension.”

The numerous pairs of eyes in the conference hall looked shocked.

Many people had already guessed what the first question Lu Zhou was about to announce was.

However, they couldn't actually believe it...

Lu Zhou announced in a clear voice.

"Achieving this is the pinnacle of physics and even human civilization. The perfect and ultimate theory that everyone has dreamed of since Einstein...

"Which is, the Grand Unified Theory of physics!"

"The Grand Unified Theory?!"

The atmosphere in the conference hall exploded instantly.

Wei Hong almost jumped out of his seat.

When he looked around, he found that he was one of the calmer ones.

Unbelievable expressions filled everyone's face. People stood up in disbelief.

Dobrik was sitting next to Professor Wei Hong. Dobrik looked at the podium. Dumbfounded, he said, "I... I thought he would say something about the Z particle. Is there really hope for finding a Grand Unified Theory?"

"I don't know..." Wei Hong frowned. He held the armrest of the chair and shook his head, "We should be more optimistic. Maybe it is possible. But in my opinion, the hope is pretty slim."

Unify the four basic forces!

Complete the Grand Unified Theory!

That was a long-cherished wish that Einstein never fulfilled.

If someone achieved this, they must be smarter than Einstein.

Lu Zhou paused for a while. He then continued to speak.

This immediately pushed the atmosphere of the scene to a peak.

“For the first Problem of the Century, I am willing to donate 100 million yuan to the ILHCRC bonus prize pool! This is a reward to scholars who have made outstanding contributions in this field!

“If anyone successfully solves this problem, they will receive at least 100 million yuan in prize money!”

When this news was announced...

Everyone went crazy!

Chapter 1328: The Bonus For Reaching The Sky!

“WTF!!!”

“Fuck!!!”

“100 million?!”

“That’s crazy! Has there been such a high bonus in physics before?”

“Forget about the physics world, you won’t be able to find a higher bonus in the whole academic world!”

The field of physics was an area that was far away from the real-life application. Even condensed matter physics, which was close to applied science, it was difficult to create profit and applicability in a short period of time.

Even though there were some rich people who broke away from the materialistic purchases and occasionally donated some money to scientific research, such a large cheque was still unheard of.

Even exchanging into USD, 100 million yuan was a lot of money.

Not to mention that now, the fusion power stations in St. Petersburg, Cadarache, and Los Angeles had been completed. The cross-regional power grid traversed the Asian continent. The yuan exchange rate continued to

strengthen with the support of the energy network, the exchange rate was no longer the same as before.

Thus, a hundred million yuan was quite a lot.

The atmosphere almost overturned the building. In the exhibition hall outside the conference hall and the poster exhibition area, the atmosphere was even more enthusiastic. Almost like an erupting volcano, people's excitement was exploding.

Even though many people still managed to maintain their demeanor, they were still surprised by this. Some even let out an unattractive scream.

Lu Zhou was standing in the conference room. He couldn't see the situation in the main conference hall. However, judging from the reactions of the scholars in the conference room, the effect of the 100 million yuan was quite spectacular.

Lu Zhou smiled, cleared his throat, and continued to speak.

"Next, Professor Witten will announce the second Problem of the Century.

"Professor Edward Witten from Princeton!"

Lu Zhou nodded to Professor Edward Witten, who was standing next to him. He put down the microphone in his hand. He then walked to the stage quickly.

There was no doubt that the attention of the audience was grabbed by someone.

The conference was broadcasted all over the world through the Internet. The scholars and people who were also paying attention to the Century of Physics conference were frightened by the 100 million yuan prize money.

A material science laboratory at Stanford University.

A group of engineering men and women were watching the live broadcast in front of the computer when someone suddenly exclaimed.

"A hundred million! Sh*t, how many cryo-electron microscopes can you buy with that money?"

"Jesus! How come these physicists are so rich?!"

“Is it too late to switch to physics?”

“It’s too late! Go! But speaking of it, this Grand Unified Theory... Can anyone really get this 100 million?”

“I don’t know a lot of physics, but even I know this is a difficult problem that even Einstein couldn’t handle! It’s too difficult to solve it!”

“And maybe... Einstein is not the only one who can’t figure it out.”

“What do you mean?”

“Think about it... If Lu Zhou knew the answer, would he offer a reward of 100 million for others? The electrostrong interaction was discovered by him. No one is closer to the Grand Unified Theory than him. No one knows better than him on how difficult this problem is...”

“F*ck me, now that you put it like that, it makes sense!”

Outside a classroom at Oxford University, a BBC reporter carrying a microphone stopped a physics professor who had just finished a lecture.

“Hello, Sir, are you paying attention to the ongoing Century of Physics Conference?”

The professor spoke sternly.

“I am, but I didn’t expect this to happen.”

“What do you mean?”

“Five minutes before the end of class, a scream came from the back row of the classroom. I thought there was an earthquake, but it was because of the 100 million yuan bonus!” The professor said, “These little rascals, what does the bonus have to do with them?”

The reporter said, “Okay... Then what do you think of this 100 million bonus.”

The professor said impatiently, “Nothing good. This is a bonus that no one can claim.”

“Will you consider adjusting your research direction?”

“Nope.”

“Why?”

“There is no why. Whoever wants to do the research should do it... If they think they have what it takes to get the bonus, they should try!”

The entire college circle was discussing the 100 million bonus. The opening ceremony of the Century of Physics conference was still going on. The following ninety-nine problems were announced by Witten, Wilczek, and other well-known top physics experts.

Among them were popular topics in physics such as “search for superparticles in supersymmetry theory”, which was announced by Professor Witten, and “exploring the reasons for the disappearance of supernova sites”, which was announced by the famous astrophysicist Jim Peebles.

There were also problems such as “the formation mechanism of sonoluminescence” and “the instability mechanism of spiral waves in a diffusion system”. As well as “multi-body QED in an atomic system”. These weren’t as popular, but they were of great significance.

These problems covered a range of fields from theoretical physics, to astrophysics, to condensed matter physics. They included the most popular and important aspects of all of physics. They were also expected to be solved in this century.

Although there were also millions of dollars of rewards, as well as sponsorships from rich people and scientific research groups from all over the world, what excited people was the 100 million yuan prize.

Throughout the course of the conference, apart from the physicists, the most excited people were the reporters carrying cameras and microphones.

Although they were still standing at the meeting, they had already written the headlines for the news tomorrow.

Many people even made preparations in advance. They waited for Lu Zhou to walk out of the conference room so that they could throw their questions at them.

However, they were disappointed.

They waited all day, but they were unable to see Professor Lu...

Lu Zhou turned off the wearable facial holographic projection system. He took off a pale silver necklace from his neck, stuffed it into his pocket casually, and walked out of the empty bathroom with a calm expression on his face.

Ever since he got this stuff from the system, he never worried about being blocked by reporters anymore.

Suddenly, the phone in his pocket began to ring.

Lu Zhou knew who was calling, he took out his phone and picked up the call.

“Hello?”

“Where are you?!”

Luo Wenxuan’s voice came from the other end of the phone.

Lu Zhou: “Already outside, what’s wrong?”

Luo Wenxuan was shocked.

“F*ck, why did you slip away? After the Problems of the Century are announced, there’s an opening speech waiting for you.”

Lu Zhou: “Aren’t you responsible for that?”

Luo Wenxuan vaguely felt something wrong, so he immediately asked, “Then what about the interview after?”

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly.

“... You got this.”

Luo Wenxuan: “...”

Chapter 1329: Interview with Nature

The opening ceremony was over.

As expected, the moment the door opened, Luo Wenxuan was surrounded by reporters.

“Hello, Secretary-General Luo, where is Academician Lu?”

“I also want to know where he is, but I’m sorry, he’s the only one who knows the answer to that question.”

“Hello, Mr. Secretary-General! According to our reporter’s statistics, ILHCRC promised a total of 320 million yuan in bonus today, with an average bonus of 3.2 million yuan! Is that true?”

“This is an arithmetic problem that anyone can calculate. As long as you don’t make a mistake, then it’s correct.”

“Who will bear this funding? Will the ILHCRC bear the full cost?”

“The research funds allocated by various countries bear 40%, the remaining 60% comes from donations from all walks of life.”

“Hello, Secretary-General Luo, what if these problems cannot be completed, and no one receives these bonuses in the end?”

“The ILHCRC will set up a foundation to independently operate the bonus prize pool. We will achieve a stable growth of assets using a steady investment strategy. Even if the ILHCRC ceases to exist one day, this bonus will always exist until someone earns it!

“Also, these are the questions of the 21st century. If no one solves it in this century, solving it in the next century or the century after that is the same. If you can’t do it, someone else will... Excuse me, I need to go to the bathroom now. Please leave the questions for the press conference tomorrow. Thank you.”

Luo Wenxuan’s scalp was numb because of these countless problems. He didn’t want to say a word except for “f*cks sake” at this moment. An hour had gone by until he finally got rid of these troublesome reporters.

At night time.

Like usual, the conference organizers organized a dinner for academic exchanges.

With so many people attending, it obviously couldn't be arranged in a hotel.

In order to entertain as many scholars as possible, the ILHCRC transformed the entire first floor of the International Convention and Exhibition Center into a dining hall. Participants at the conference were provided free meals.

As for the prestigious scholars and other invited attendees at the No.1 and No. 2 conference rooms, they were arranged to have dinner at the nearby Yi Hao Hotel.

Even though Lu Zhou wasn't interested in banquets, as the chairman of the ILHCRC and one of the protagonists of the Century of Physics Conference, he had to show up.

Most people came to the dinner just for him.

At the banquet at Yi Hao Hotel, Belinda, who had the honor of interviewing Lu Zhou during her internship at CERN, was lucky enough to get a ticket to the banquet and interview Lu Zhou.

About nine years ago, she was just an editor for "Nature Weekly". But now, she was the editor in chief of the main issue for "Nature".

After so many years, she changed from a charming mature woman to a mother of three children.

When Lu Zhou heard that her husband was Professor Grayer who had helped him at CERN, he had a surprised look on his face.

Back then, he felt like there was something going on between those two people, but he didn't ask any questions. He didn't expect that after so many years, the two had gone from ordinary friends into a married couple.

After hearing this, Lu Zhou couldn't help but sigh.

*Time goes by so f*cking fast...*

"I'm so jealous, you look almost the same as nine years ago." Ms. Belinda smiled and said, "I heard that there is a mysterious power in the East that can make you stay young forever. Is that true?"

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly.

He obviously wouldn't say that it was because of a prize drawn by the high tech system.

"Maybe I just age well... Of course, the same goes for you."

"Oh thank you, but I know you don't mean that, I am obviously not young anymore." Belinda teased herself and said, "This is a rare opportunity. Can I interview you for a few questions?"

Lu Zhou happily said, "No problem, please go ahead."

Ms. Belinda smiled and said, "The first question might sound a little boring, but many people are curious... Why did you spend 100 million yuan to offer a reward for the Grand Unified Theory?"

After thinking about it for a while, Lu Zhou said, "There are two reasons. One reason is that I think it is important, and the other is because... I think it can be solved within this century."

In fact, the other reason was that he had more than enough money.

However, it would be arrogant of him to say that. He wasn't a person that liked to brag.

"The physics community believes that you are the most promising person to solve this problem."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Really? Maybe, but unfortunately... I might not focus my main research on physics, especially theoretical physics."

The electrostrong interaction unification theory opened the door to the Grand Unified Theory, the void theory broadened the horizon of human civilization to the extra dimensions beyond time, and the hyperspace theory added hope to faster than light travel.

Lu Zhou felt that he could be proud of his work as a physicist for the rest of his life, or even for multiple lifetimes.

If he wanted to achieve even more, he would have to build a warp drive or stick his head into the void to see what was inside that made The Observer civilization feel so scared.

As for other physics research...

It wasn't that he was not interested, but Lu Zhou hoped to leave these growth opportunities to other potential scholars.

Belinda opened her mouth in surprise and asked, "Wait a minute, what do you mean? Are you... planning to retire from physics?"

If this is true...

This is huge news.

"That's not true." Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "It's just that I can't achieve greater success in this field; I should consider giving others a chance.

"No discipline can rely on the power of one person to achieve prosperity. Rather than creating more results in this field, I hope that my research can inspire people and let them create more miracles."

Belinda was shocked by the thoughts revealed in this sentence.

After staring at Lu Zhou intently for a while, Belinda sighed emotionally.

"Is this the reason you left the mathematics world?"

"Left the mathematics world? No, I never left the mathematics world." Lu Zhou shook his head lightly and said, "Instead of researching mathematics itself, I now pay more attention to how to strengthen its connection with other fields and how to apply it to solve more problems. This is what many excellent mathematicians like me are unwilling to do."

Lu Zhou paused for a moment, smiled, and continued, "I think, my attitude toward physics..."

"Is largely the same."

Scholar's Advanced Technological System - Chapter 1330 - Congratulations From All Over The World! -

Chapter 1330: Congratulations From All Over The World!

After the announcement of the Problems of the Century, the “Century of Physics” conference officially kicked off.

After a night of waiting, the news about the opening ceremony of the previous day was finally released.

Shanghai News: “The most valuable academic award of this century was created at the Shanghai International Convention and Exhibition Center!”

Washington Times: “An individual contributed 100 million yuan as a reward for the Grand Unified Theory. Are they confident that no one can take the bonus money? Or do they believe that this proposition will be resolved within a hundred years?”

The Sun: “Lu Zhou: Whoever can unify the four basic forces will get a bonus of 100 million!”

The Times: “The moment to start a new era in physics!”

There was hardly any suspense. The focus of the news was all on the Problems of the Century, which were announced by a hundred well-known physicists, and the huge bonus pool set up by the ILHCRC.

After the award for the Grand Unified Theory was announced, almost everyone, whether they were academia or non-academia, was shocked by the jaw-dropping amount of bonus.

On Weibo.

“F*ck! One hundred million!”

"It's not f*cking fake, right?"

"Don't @ me, I am a physicist starting from today!"

"Forget about it, are you even in college?"

"This is insane! Kneel to God Lu!"

"I can't believe it, he is a scientific researcher, so why is he so rich?! I suggest to check his account funds carefully to see if there are any hidden transactions behind this. Just a little suggestion."

"How can someone be as retarded as you."

"He is the one who created controllable fusion reactors. He's the reason your electricity costs 1 cent per hour. Why wouldn't he be rich?"

On a campus forum for a well-known university.

"A hundred million bonus! That's really terrifying."

"I still don't quite understand why Academician Lu didn't think about solving this problem himself? Or is he already confident that he can solve this problem by himself, so he deliberately set the bonus so high that no one else can get it anyway?"

"Didn't you read the interview with the Nature Editor-in-chief Belinda?"

"What did they say?"

"At the dinner after the announcement of the Problems of the Century, they did an interview with Lu Zhou himself! If you read it, you will know why he isn't solving this problem himself!"

"F*ck, what did he say during the interview?"

"He said that he should give other young people a chance... If I remember correctly, that is what he said! It's been so many years since the completion of the electrostrong interaction, any problem that has aroused his curiosity has been solved by him! He has no reason to give up on the last step. I even suspect that the Grand Unified Theory has already been solved by him!"

The whole world was shocked by Professor Lu's generous work.

The news could no longer satisfy people's desire for gossip, and various theories were circulating wildly on the Internet.

Due to the heated discussion of netizens, the Problems of the Century, initiated by a hundred well-known physicists, occupied the headlines of major online platforms overnight.

Physics went from an unpopular major, only studied by a few individuals, to a popular field that everyone talked about.

And it wasn't just that.

Even politicians from various countries had sent congratulatory messages to the ILHCRC after the news spread.

1600, Pennsylvania Avenue.

Faced with the reporters at the press conference site, the president gave a speech.

"This is a glorious moment in the history of physics, a moment worthy of being recorded in history!

"The brightest minds on this planet gathered together to discuss the problems we all face. I believe our physics, under the leadership of ILHCRC, will be able to go further and create greater miracles."

10 Downing Street.

Also faced with the reporters from all over the world, the prime minister spoke in a solemn tone.

"... Although theoretical physics is far away from our ordinary lives, looking back in history, every social change is closely related to changes in physics. I believe that we are standing at the intersection of a great era, I believe that our future will be bright.

"This is because of those great scientists."

A similar situation was happening on Chang'an Avenue.

It wasn't just a congratulatory message.

The Chinese president himself came all the way to Shanghai.

...

A five-star hotel next to the International Convention and Exhibition Center.

Executive lounge on the top floor.

Two people sat near the window, chatting about recent events and drinking afternoon tea.

“... The pattern of physics has been set for the next 100 years. With the help of the Lunar Hadron Collider and huge scientific research capabilities, the ILHCRC has unsurprisingly replaced CERN and became the new world physics center.

“For the past 100 years, the West has dominated the world academia, but now, this has changed. Our scholars can communicate with academia in a fairer environment. My work is done for now.”

Lu Zhou took a sip of tea and looked at the president sitting opposite him.

“I plan to resign as chairman after this conference.”

Even though this was an expected thing, after all, the same thing happened after the controllable fusion project ended, but when Lu Zhou said it himself, the president could not help but look surprised. He sat up straight and spoke.

“Is the work at the ILHCRC too hard? If you have any difficulties, you can tell me. We can’t help you with academic matters, but I can help you figure out solutions for things other than academics.”

“It doesn’t have to do with whether it’s hard or not.” Lu Zhou said with a smile, “It’s just that it’s already been two years, it’s time for a replacement.”

The old man sighed and said earnestly, “But the ILHCRC has achieved so much during your tenure. It is difficult to find a scholar who can lead the young physicists in China. I’m afraid that after you leave, the advantages and status of Chinese academia will vanish.

“Why don’t you stay for one more term?”

"Your worries are unnecessary." Lu Zhou said with a smile, "There are still quite a few outstanding talents among the younger generation of physicists. For example, Professor Wei will definitely receive a Nobel Prize within three years. And Professor Luo Wenxuan, although he has not achieved any outstanding academic results, his research scope covers a wide range of areas. He is also excellent at using mathematical tools and has a wide network of contacts. I trust him to be the next chairman."

Luo Wenxuan?

The president frowned when he heard this name.

He had heard this name before, but he couldn't remember where he heard it.

However, since Academician Lu was so confident, there must be something remarkable about this young man.

The president didn't say anything. He just nodded, then changed the subject and continued, "Since you think this is fine, then so be it... Speaking of which, I heard that you plan to leave the physics world temporarily?"

Lu Zhou shook his head.

"Not leave, but for me personally, it is very difficult to achieve breakthroughs in theoretical physics research."

The president asked seriously, "Then your plan is?"

"Energy, materials, and information, these are the three pillars of modern science. The former is dominated by controllable fusion, but the nuclear core supply has not met the demands of the global market. For the information field, our submarine quantum optical cable is being laid as we speak. Even if there is a major physics breakthrough, the technology has to take time to catch up."

Lu Zhou thought about it for a moment. He then spoke.

"I plan to work in the materials science field."

"I'll see if I can combine what I have learned in mathematics and physics and create something interesting."

Chapter 1331: I Will Resign From the Board of Directors!

Beijing.

Chen Baohua's home.

The family was watching TV while eating, talking, and laughing.

The TV news happened to broadcast the site of the Century of Physics conference in Shanghai. Chen Yushan put down the chopsticks in her hand, her eyes glued to the screen.

Chen Baohua noticed the shining expression on his daughter's face. He felt a little unease as he joked, "You're not going?"

Chen Yushan sighed. She then replied in a bad mood, "I planned to go with him originally... But something suddenly happened at work. I had to come to Beijing for a business trip, so he went by himself."

She had even booked the maglev tickets to Shanghai, and she was frustrated about this matter for a while.

However, Lu Zhou comforted her, saying that watching it through the TV and being at the scene were the same and that no matter how far apart, their hearts were close together.

Lu Zhou was getting better and better at talking to girls.

Just like that, the two were separated. Lu Zhou went to Shanghai, while she came to Beijing.

Since she rarely visited her hometown, Chen Yushan didn't stay at a hotel. Instead, she stayed with her parents.

She didn't like to come back here except for the holidays, because she was always urged by her relatives to get married.

But that wouldn't happen anymore.

When someone asked, she could finally say that she had a boyfriend now!

Not to mention that her boyfriend was so excellent!

“... My old friend from the Entertainment Department Office says that the whole country wants to research physics.” He looked at the TV, which was showing the president walking down from the podium and heading toward Lu Zhou. Chen Baohua said emotionally, “Professor Lu is at least half of the reason for this.”

Chen Yushan was stunned.

“The whole country...? Isn’t that a bit exaggerated?”

Chen Baohua spoke with a smile.

“Not an exaggeration. When Chen Jingrun’s story was first reported, didn’t it set off a wave of mathematicians in the country? Back then, people even put up posters at the office. Posters about Goldbach’s conjecture and ten ways to prove Goldbach’s conjecture... It’s actually quite fun to think about it now.”

“Amazing...”

Chen Baohua asked bitterly, “So, what’s going on with you and Lu Zhou?”

Chen Yushan blushed. She said shyly, “We’re dating...”

Chen Baohua stared at his daughter for a while. He suddenly sighed.

Chen Yushan asked, “Why are you sighing?”

“No reason.” Chen Baohua lit a cigarette and said, “Worried my daughter can’t get married, worried when she gets married. This is the catch22 of being a father! Wait till you’re a mother, you’ll know what I mean!”

Mother Chen looked at Chen Baohua smoking. She suddenly said, “Old man, no smoking in the house.”

“What old man!” Chen Baohua glared and said, “I’m still too young to be called old. Call me old when I’m holding my grandson!”

He put out the cigarette.

Chen Yushan blushed, not knowing what to say.

She wasn't worried about getting married. After all, both of them were so busy. Even if they got married, they wouldn't have a child any time soon.

"Dad, don't be in a hurry, there's still time..."

"Still time?!" Chen Baohua turned his head and glared at his daughter. He said, "Your mother had you in her early twenties. Look at the calendar. What year is it? Kiddo, he's an academician in his early thirties. Not to mention his career, and he's fair looking. If you say there aren't any temptations in his life, I don't believe you."

Chen Yushan became anxious. She blushed and said, "What are you talking about! He's so busy, he doesn't have time."

"It's not about whether he's busy or not." Chen Baohua sighed and said, "In fact, I want you to find a normal guy in our neighborhood... However, your relationship is your own decision. Daddy is just reminding you, don't hesitate too much; if you hesitate, the opportunity will fly away."

Chen Yushan blushed and said, "Fly, fly away?! Dad! You, I'm leaving after I finish eating!"

"Old man, what are you talking about there! You think our daughter is no match for Lu Zhou?" Mother Chen said.

Seeing how he seemed to have angered both women, Chen Baohua decided to stop talking.

However, just as he was about to change the conversation, the image on the TV shocked everyone...

...

At the Shanghai International Convention and Exhibition Center.

After seven days, this large-scale academic summit with more than 100,000 participants finally went into the final conclusion.

At the closing ceremony of the No.1 conference hall, the president stood in front of the podium. On behalf of China, facing the scholars inside and outside the conference hall, as well as the people of the world, who were sitting in

front of their TVs watching this grand event, he gave his best wishes and blessing to the physics community.

In fact, when the president appeared on stage, many people in the audience were surprised. No one would have thought that such a powerful figure would appear at an academic conference.

This showed China's respect for academia. After the president's speech was over, there was warm applause from the audience.

In midst of the warm applause, the president nodded and walked off stage. This was followed by Lu Zhou walking onto the stage.

Lu Zhou adjusted the microphone. After clearing his throat, he spoke in a clear and steady voice.

"Thank you all for coming to Shanghai, for the summit that affects the future of humanity.

"For centuries, our discipline has been able to prosper to where it is today because we understand the importance of communication and cooperation.

"Here, on behalf of the ILHCRC council, I would like to extend my highest respect and gratitude to all scholars who are battling on the road of physics and to all those who are concerned about our common cause in the future.

"The Century of Physics conference ends here!

"Let us give a wave of applause to ourselves and to the future!"

The audience burst into applause again.

The sound was like a tumbling ocean wave, smashing the entire venue.

Bathed in applause from the audience, Lu Zhou waited quietly for half a minute for the applause to subside.

Then...

Just when everyone thought that the closing ceremony was over, he spoke again.

And this time, it was like he threw a nuclear bomb...

“Also, one more announcement.

“The next ILHCRC committee meeting will be held in a week to determine the members of the ILHCRC board of directors, as well as the chairman!

“After the election and the handover work, I will resign from the ILHCRC board of directors!”

The atmosphere seemed to have been frozen.

The president, standing backstage, turned around and walked away.

Luo Wenxuan’s mouth was open. Although it was something that had already been decided, Lu Zhou’s announcement of this matter here still made it difficult for him to conceal the surprise on his face.

Dobrik, Wei Hong, Witten, Wilczek... The physicists who knew Lu Zhou but didn’t know the inside story were in disbelief.

No one thought that Lu Zhou would announce his resignation here!

The entire conference hall fell into a deathly silence.

And the exhibition hall outside the conference hall...

Was completely blown up by the cries of surprise and disbelief...

Chapter 1332: Cares More Than Anyone

Chen Baohua’s home.

Chen Baohua, who was staring at the TV, couldn’t help but say “f*ck”.

He didn’t realize that his daughter was here until he was slapped on the arm by his wife. He immediately coughed and quickly changed the subject.

“This kid... Pretty nutty, resigning from the chairman of the ILHCRC, that’s a pretty high position.”

Although Lu Zhou had done similar things before, this was the first time Chen Baohua had heard about it.

“If he wants to retire, then he should retire. He’ll be less busy,” Chen Yushan said. She looked at the TV and said, “He went on a retreat some time ago, and by the time he came out, he had lost a bunch of weight.”

Chen Baohua took a sip of water to relax. He put on a serious expression and spoke.

“The chairman of the ILHCRC is the top position in the Chinese physics community. The ILHCRC has connections to the world and has diplomatic responsibilities... Sigh, this guy! If this was a government position, it would be at least at the vice-ministerial level, right? Why did he resign?”

Chen Baohua felt his heart drop to his stomach.

He had been working for the state his whole life, but he was just some small official in some no-name department.

This kid was only thirty years old, and he had already climbed to such a high position. And now, he even resigned just for the heck of it. It made Chen Baohua feel like his own life was a waste.

“That’s a real scholar, not a power-hungry politician like you.” Chen Yushan rolled her eyes at her father and said, “It doesn’t matter, as long as he is happy.”

Chen Baohua looked at the happy expression on his daughter’s face. He felt like puking...

...

Back at the Shanghai International Convention and Exhibition Center.

At the poster exhibition area on the first floor, near the large screen on the wall...

Less than half a minute after Lu Zhou announced that he would resign from the ILHCRC, the entire poster exhibition area went crazy!

“Professor Lu wants to withdraw from the board?!”

“What is going on???”

“No way?! The ILHCRC has to have Professor Lu! Is the ILHCRC still the ILHCRC without Lu Zhou?”

“I don’t believe it! I don’t believe he will leave the ILHCRC! This is his company! He will definitely not give up on the ILHCRC!”

“Is it still heaven if God isn’t there, sigh...”

“They must have made a mistake just now! An interpretation error! For example... he actually just wanted to take a few days off.”

However, it wasn’t an interpretation error.

The Chinese scholars at the scene were equally stunned.

Resign from the ILHCRC board of directors!

Which means, he won’t participate in the next election for the chairman of ILHCRC?!

Although the ILHCRC released the news of the two-year period for the board of directors a long time ago, no one knew about this!

Because in everyone’s mind, it was almost a certainty that Lu Zhou would continue to serve as the chairman of ILHCRC. Especially after the hyperspace theory was completed, it was impossible to find a person whose contribution in physics surpassed him.

No one had ever created so many academic miracles before!

It was no exaggeration to say that half of the reason why the ILHCRC was the holy land in the world of physics was because of the hadron collider on the moon, while the other half was because of Lu Zhou himself!

He was like a compass.

Whichever direction he pointed toward was the future!

And now he actually wanted to leave?!

No one could accept this!

There was an uproar outside No.1 conference hall; the same was true inside the conference hall.

Lu Zhou turned to leave after bowing. Many people sitting in the front rows had looks of surprise on their faces. They stood up from their seats, trying to rush to the stage.

Just stay for one more term!

Even just for a few months, give us some preparation time!

After the hyperspace theory, there were still too many mysteries about hyperspace that had not been explored. Such as the extra dimension void, and whether there was a great force manipulating the universe...

He opened a brand new door for the physics world, but he also left the world alone to find out what was behind this door.

The physicists hoped that he could stay a little longer...

Looking at the chaotic venue, Professor Whittle was expressionless. He felt sour in his heart; he was not in a good mood.

He had always believed that a world-class scientific research institution was China's strongest national strength. Academic resources such as the ILHCRC and the Lunar Hadron Collider were possible because of Lu Zhou's status in the physics world. Lu Zhou's personal prestige had surpassed the ILHCRC itself.

When the Brookhaven National Laboratory and even the entire North American academia announced their withdrawals from the ILHCRC, nothing happened and no one stopped them.

But now, Lu Zhou just announced his resignation from the ILHCRC board of directors, and this triggered a fierce response; everyone wanted to stop him.

Professor Whittle, who realized this, couldn't help but feel a little depressed.

On one hand, he was jealous.

On the other hand, he was frustrated...

Professor Fernando, the British representative sitting next to him, suddenly whispered, "I can't believe it... My friend, do you think this kind of person really exists in this world?"

Professor Whittle hesitated and said, "What kind of person?"

"The kind of person who doesn't crave power and fame..."

Professor Fernando looked at Whittle and smiled. He said in a weird tone, "The position of the chairman of the ILHCRC is equivalent to standing at the pinnacle of academic authority in physics. If it were me, I would hold that position forever!"

"But maybe people like him really do exist... The people who only care about 'knowledge'."

Professor Whittle shrugged and didn't want to continue this conversation. He cast a hazy gaze on the stage and cursed Lu Zhou's name in his heart.

However, for some reason, when that figure disappeared behind the curtain, a strange feeling suddenly swept his brain.

In a short moment, he suddenly understood something.

"... Hold that position forever... I see."

His muddy pupils gradually lit up.

No wonder!

He finally understood the real reason why Lu Zhou left!

It was obvious that with the top hardware and software resources in physics, the ILHCRC was bound to become the focus of resource disputes in the academic world.

No matter who was sitting in the position of chairman, they would definitely not be willing to give up their power to others.

However, that man, choosing to leave at this time, not only set an example by himself but also put a shackle on this power.

Even Professor Lu could only be the board chairman for one term...

Then who could possibly be qualified at staying for two terms?

In the future, no matter what happened to the ILHCRC, one thing would not change. Which was that the position of ILHCRC chairman would be limited to a term of two years.

Professor Whittle looked at the empty podium; he suddenly felt a little lost. He closed his tired eyes.

Is there only knowledge in his eyes...

Obviously not...

He didn't resign because he doesn't care...

It's because he cares more than anyone else...

Chapter 1333: A Thousand waves

It didn't matter if Professor Whittle had guessed Lu Zhou's intentions correctly.

The entire physics community was exploding because of this incident.

On the Physics Stack Exchange forum.

As an internationally renowned physics forum, when the news of Lu Zhou's resignation from the board of directors spread, discussions immediately popped up on the forum.

Whether it was the chat section or the academic section, almost everyone was discussing this matter.

They were stunned by the huge amount of information.

"Professor Lu actually intends to withdraw from the ILHCRC?"

"Does he think that the ILHCRC can't keep up with his rhythm?"

“Impossible. ILHCRC is already the strongest physics research institution. After he leaves the ILHCRC, is he planning to do scientific research with aliens?”

“Could it be... he plans to retreat from physics?”

“This is impossible! He is only thirty years old! He is in the golden age of scientific research! There is no reason to quit at this time!”

“But what if... he is tired of physics?”

“Damn it! He should explain why he wants to leave!”

“Then this will definitely be the darkest moment in the history of physics!”

...

Less than ten hours after the closing ceremony, the entire physics community was stunned by Lu Zhou’s behavior. The incredible outrage even began to spread outside the academic world.

A letter signed by more than one hundred physicists appeared on the secretary-general’s desk.

The physicists group led by Professor Wilczek hoped that the ILHCRC Council could retain Professor Lu. Even if he did not serve as the chairman of the board, he should at least remain on the board.

Luo Wenxuan looked at this petition letter with a headache. He felt a trace of pressure from the long string of famous physicist signatures.

He had considered many possibilities before.

Including how to stabilize the representatives of other countries after Lu Zhou left the ILHCRC and how to deal with the restless voices that might come from other physics research institutions after Lu Zhou left.

After all, this was the center of the world of physics.

Everyone wanted to have a right to speak here and gain benefits for the academic community of their own country and culture.

However, Luo Wenxuan still did not expect that the greatest pressure would not come from opponents, but rather from the entire ILHCRC.

“... What a hassle.”

Luo Wenxuan pinched his eyebrows. He glanced at the petition, then threw it aside.

It seemed that he had underestimated Lu Zhou’s popularity at the ILHCRC.

He didn’t expect that Lu Zhou’s announcement would have such a large impact on the ILHCRC!

...

In fact, Luo Wenxuan wasn’t alone.

Even Lu Zhou himself did not expect that things would develop like this.

In addition to the physicists who were reluctant to leave the International Convention and Exhibition Center, at least five people he knew had written letters or come to him and persuade him. They hoped that he could stay on the ILHCRC board and continue to lead the physics community to more miracles.

Lu Zhou was baffled.

He just wanted to change his field and continue to climb the peak of academia. He did not expect that his resignation would cause such a huge wave in the physics world.

Inside the cafe at the ILHCRC headquarters.

Professor Witten stared at Lu Zhou for a while before saying with a strange look on his face, “Your decision was beyond my expectation... I didn’t expect you to make such a choice.”

“Really?” After taking a sip of coffee, Lu Zhou said casually, “But I decided on this a long time ago... If you intend to persuade me otherwise, please don’t waste your time.”

When the ILHCRC was first established, he actually didn’t intend to serve as the chairman of the ILHCRC. He just hoped to use the power of the ILHCRC

to use the Lunar Hadron Collider to clarify the 750 GeV characteristic peak signal.

Director Li was the one who tried to persuade him, with reasons such as “the first three chairmen have to be Chinese scholars” and “other people may not be able to persuade the public” and so on. Thus, Director Li successfully persuaded him into the position.

At that time, Lu Zhou had actually decided to serve as the chairman for at most one term.

And this was exactly the reason why he started training Luo Wenxuan as his successor right after he took office.

“I’m not going to persuade you, I know you are a person who cannot be convinced.” Witten shrugged and said, “However, I want to give you a suggestion... Or rather, I hope you consider my advice.”

Lu Zhou: “What advice?”

Witten: “The entire physics community is speculating on whether you have given up physics—”

“There is no such thing.” Lu Zhou said, “If you read my interview with Nature, you should know that. I just want to use this opportunity to branch out and spend more time to do more meaningful things.”

“Yes, you’re giving the opportunity to others, but you also took away hope.”

Witten looked at Lu Zhou and continued, “I don’t know if you have considered this, but so far, the scale of the ILHCRC has surpassed CERN. It has become an unprecedented giant in physics. No one can unite this many people together, for them to work on the same thing... Except you.”

“Even though a group of outstanding young scholars has been created in the past two years, are you sure they can take over this heavy burden from your hands? You know, not everyone grows as fast as you.”

Lu Zhou: “I am very confident in them.”

“But the problem is, obviously they don’t have much confidence in themselves.” Professor Witten shook his head and said, “I have been at

CERN for many years, and CERN wasn't built in one or two years. In four years, or even eight years, when the ILHCRC has grown to be able to operate stably... At that time, you can leave without any problems.

"But now, unless the next chairman is a very capable person, this behemoth is likely to fall apart as soon as you leave... Like a sandcastle on the seashore."

Lu Zhou was silent for a while. He looked at Professor Witten and asked seriously, "Can you tell me your suggestion?"

"It's actually very simple, you don't need to do too many things." Professor Witten said, "As a compromise, you set up a Chief Consultant position on the board of directors. If you want to get rid of the mundane work, I can understand, but I still sincerely hope that you can at least reserve a board seat. If you plan to release your hand from the steering wheel, at least hit the brake before the next driver becomes reliable enough. And maybe be in charge when the situation becomes critical."

Lu Zhou said seriously, "Actually, even if I don't have the position of Chief Consultant, I can still do this."

1

Professor Witten blinked and spoke with a smile.

"I know, of course you can.

"But sometimes, the key is not whether you can control the situation or not, but whether you can convince everyone else that everything is under control."

Chapter 1334: Advisory Committee Established!

At the Shanghai International Convention and Exhibition Center.

Two days had passed since the end of the Century of Physics Conference. Most of the posters in the exhibition area were removed. Some ILHCRC staff and physicists were still at the venue.

As well as the reporters who came here for interviews.

“This is Fox News. We are now in front of the Shanghai International Convention and Exhibition Center. The physicists from the Century of Physics conference have already left, but there are still some scholars who are not willing to leave. Let us interview them... Hello, sir.” The reporter found a tall and skinny man nearby. The reporter handed out the microphone and said, “Hello sir, are you a staff member of the ILHCRC?”

Professor Pierce pushed the glasses up the bridge of his nose. He looked at the reporter and said, “No, I am a professor of particle physics from Oxford University... What’s the matter?”

Reporter: “May I ask what happened here? The Century of Physics conference was over two days ago, why are so many people unwilling to leave?”

“I’m here because there are still some issues that have not been dealt with by the scientific research institutes at Stockholm University. I probably have to stay in Shanghai for about two days.” Professor Pierce immediately knew what the reporter wanted to know. He said, “Of course, some people stay here because... They hope Professor Lu can stay.”

Reporter: “I heard that many people in the physics circle were surprised by Professor Lu’s resignation from the ILHCRC?”

Professor Pierce: “That’s true.”

Reporter: “In your opinion, what impact might this have on the ILHCRC?”

Professor Pierce thought for a while and said, “Hard to say... But many people are gathered here because of him. Now that he has chosen to leave... At least, in my opinion, the ILHCRC has lost half or even more than half of its appeal.

“I have to say, this is tragic.”

Professor Pierce’s opinion was only one of the many voices in academia.

In fact, it wasn’t just Fox News. The answers that most media received when interviewing well-known physics scholars were more or less pessimistic.

Almost everyone was surprised by Lu Zhou’s choice.

Only a few people thought that he did the right thing, and very few people thought that his departure would not have any impact on the progress of physics.

The ILHCRC committee was undoubtedly the most stressed.

In addition to the annoying reporters, there was also pressure from within the academic community. Over the past few days, the ILHCRC was spammed with email.

The news that Lu Zhou quit the ILHCRC board of directors also occupied the headlines of major newspapers.

The BBC even made a documentary from the perspective of five physicists engaged in research in different fields. They talked about the electrostrong interaction, the void theory, the theory of hyperspace, and the reward of 100 million yuan to the physics community. As well as how his departure would affect the future journey of the physics community.

During an interview with a BBC reporter, the discoverer of the Higgs particle, old man Higgs, who was almost a hundred years old, said, "I am not optimistic about the future of the ILHCRC."

"The ILHCRC hasn't been on a smooth sailing journey since its establishment. As far as I know, there have been at least two crises that came close to dissolving this international cooperation organization.

"However, the reason why the ILHCRC was able to avoid the crisis steadily was not because of its cooperation mechanism, nor was it because of its deep foundation. It was only because Lu Zhou was able to unite people together using his academic reputation. Many North American research institutions have withdrawn from the ILHCRC, and even the representatives of the United States withdrew. However, many North American scholars have stayed as ILHCRC employees and worked on the Z particle and the discovery of a series of physical phenomena, such as the law of movement in high-dimensional particles.

"The ILHCRC losing Lu Zhou is like a building losing a support column... Who do you think can replace the chairman of the board?"

Old man Higgs smiled and joked, "Even if I were fifty years younger, I might not be able to do it."

Professor Higgs spoke of the concerns of many top scholars in physics.

In fact, most people hoped that this international scientific research organization could continue to operate for a long time.

However, this was just a wish. Wishes were not enough to support ILHCRC's continued prosperity. Many people were worried that once Lu Zhou left, no one would be able to take on the heavy responsibility as the leader of physics. They could only watch the huge ship slowly drown in the dangerous sea.

The academic world had a pessimistic opinion.

The general public was also not optimistic about the future of the ILHCRC.

But suddenly, the situation changed.

ILHCRC, who was at the center of attention, suddenly held a press conference.

And the speaker of this press conference was Lu Zhou himself!

After the news was released, it immediately caused a huge sensation in the physics community and even the entire academic community.

Professor Lu was going to hold a press conference!

Did he finally hear the voice of the people and plan to stay as chairman?!

Even though this was unlikely, many people who were worried about the future of ILHCRC couldn't help but look forward to seeing him as chairman again.

On the day the ILHCRC announced the date of the press conference, the world's media outlets all began to gather in Shanghai. They waited until the day of the press conference.

At the ILHCRC headquarters.

In the first conference hall of the annex building.

Lu Zhou was facing the cameras at the press conference site. He walked on the podium, cleared his throat, and spoke in a steady voice.

“I have noticed that the academic community is concerned about the upcoming board meeting of the ILHCRC. Many discussions can be seen on the internet.

“We heard worrying voices from the public. Considering this, we have also discussed this internally.

“And, as a result of the discussion, I will give an important announcement here.”

The press conference site was surprisingly quiet; there wasn't a trace of noise.

However, even though Lu Zhou could not hear any voices, he could clearly see and feel the tension brewing in their eyes. The reporters all held their breaths.

He turned a page from the speech in his hand and spoke.

“According to the results of the closed-door meeting of the ILHCRC board of directors, the ILHCRC will establish an independent Advisory Committee body based on the original board system.

“As the supervisory body of the board of directors, the Advisory Committee will not directly participate in the specific affairs of the ILHCRC, except when necessary.

“When and only when the ILHCRC is facing a controversial issue or is facing a serious crisis, the Advisory Committee can exercise its special rights to initiate emergency plans, including but not limited to veto power on board decisions, as well as power over the directors and other personnel, such as retirement, dismissal, and appointment of temporary directors.

“Any emergency plan will be discussed and voted on at the emergency meeting. It will be implemented if the number of votes exceeds two-thirds of the total votes.

“All retired chairmen will automatically serve for life as consultants.”

Lu Zhou announced in a calm and clear voice.

“After the board meeting and the appointment of the new chairman...

“I will become the first consultant of the ILHCRC!”

Chapter 1335: Tailor-made Mission

After the ILHCRC press conference was over, related news quickly spread on the internet and to every corner of the world.

The sensation caused by this was like a tsunami that swept through the entire physics community.

The ILHCRC established an Advisory Committee!

Lu Zhou was the first consultant!

Almost everyone was shocked after hearing the news.

On an internationally renowned physics forum.

This time, the website management team prepared in advance and temporarily added two servers before the press conference began. An hour after the press conference, the extra bandwidth came in handy.

Not only did the number of visitors to the forum double in an hour, but almost all topics discussed on the forum were related to this press conference.

“Advisory Committee?!”

“Veto power! This way it can prevent the organization from becoming rigid, and it can also prevent the new board members from making major mistakes. This is perfect!”

“Haha, I knew it, Professor Lu is still reluctant to leave the physics world!”

“Even though it is unfortunate he isn’t the chairman, at least he isn’t leaving the physics world...”

After all, there were still some differences between being a consultant and being a chairman.

The former no longer participated in the specific decision-making of the ILHCRC board of directors. They would only be in charge when a major crisis or change occurred at the ILHCRC.

However, even then, for many people, this was better than Lu Zhou completely withdrawing from the ILHCRC.

If the position of chairman was handed over to the wrong person, they still had one of the most academically prestigious consultants in physics today to look forward to. No matter what kind of error or crisis occurred, there was hope that it would be corrected.

Because of the news that Lu Zhou resigned from the board of directors, many people fell into pessimism about the future of physics and worried about the prospects of the ILHCRC. However, after hearing that Lu Zhou had not completely left, the pessimism that was in everyone's mind was swept away immediately.

Obviously, it wasn't just the physics community that had a huge reaction.

Related news quickly hit the headlines of major newspapers and online media platforms on the second day. It was also broadcast on major news TV channels.

A BBC reporter who interviewed Professor Higgs a few days ago found the old professor again.

But this time, the old man's opinion had changed 180 degrees. Not only did the worries on his face disappear, but he also heavily praised ILHCRC's decision.

"... This is a very smart choice, it is a significant change. If he had left, he would leave behind a legacy that no one could accept. But now, he gave hope to everyone at the ILHCRC.

"Although I was pessimistic before, now... I am optimistic about the future of the ILHCRC!

"If everything goes well, it will still be the center of physics in a hundred years!

"Unless there is a natural disaster or a war, or there is a stronger and larger scientific research cooperation organization that can replace it, I can't think of

anything that can rival its position... At least for now, the probability is very unlikely.”

...

At the ILHCRC headquarters.

Inside the cafe.

Professor Wilczek and Professor Witten were sitting across from each other by the window. They drank coffee while talking about recent events.

“Did you suggest he do this?”

“Oh?” Professor Witten raised his eyebrows and asked with a smile, “Why do you ask?”

“Because this is not like something he would do.” Professor Wilczek said sharply, “Although his academic attainments are unmatched, some of his personalities are actually comparable to those of many young people in their 20s and 30s. Whether he is reckless or over-confident... In short, I never expected him to put stability first.”

“People change.” Witten said with a smile, “I was not much better than him when I was in my thirties, while some people stay the same forever.”

Wilczek felt like this was targeting himself; he spoke with a dry cough.

“I’m just looking for some fun in life... Don’t look at me like I’m a gambling addict, I only bet on trivial things.”

Witten teased and said, “The bet with Dr. Lisi was trivial?”

Wilczek’s eyebrows twitched; he clenched his jaws and said, “Yes... After all, I only lost 1,000 dollars.”

That bet was the most shameful thing of his life! (See Chapter 171 for details)

As a Nobel Prize winner, he actually lost a bet to a layman who knew nothing about physics. Every time he heard this name, he couldn’t help but feel rage.

“Anyway... Do you think this is a good idea?”

“I think it’s pretty good,” Witten said. He looked at Professor Wilzek’s eyes and said, “The ILHCRC system is being perfected. The kingdom is centered around him. It will become a holy place for all physicists in the world.

“And what I look forward to the most is his personal growth.”

A smile appeared on Professor Witten’s face.

He leaned back on the chair and continued with a relaxed tone, “It is obvious that he sincerely hopes that the ILHCRC can become better. I am now more and more convinced that I was correct. Lu Zhou has good character!”

...

After the establishment of the Advisory Committee, the turmoil caused by Lu Zhou’s resignation finally subsided. The ILHCRC debacle finally came to an end.

After the ILHCRC committee meeting, which would be held a few days later for the election of the new chairman, Lu Zhou could smoothly exit from the chairman position and say goodbye to the place he worked at for two years.

The day of the committee meeting got closer and closer. This internal ILHCRC conference had replaced the Century of Physics, attracting the attention of the world.

Many physics forums at home and abroad even put up voting polls, giving countless laymen to vote and select the most suitable chairman candidates to replace Lu Zhou.

However, in the end, most of these votes turned into votes for “the most influential scholar in today’s physics world except Lu Zhou”. The chairman of the ILHCRC required more than just academic ability, thus the votes were quite meaningless.

Considering China’s current advantage in the council board, there was no doubt that Luo Wenxuan would be elected.

Lu Zhou didn’t worry about these trivial matters any more. He entered the system space after a day’s rest and opened the mission panel that he hadn’t seen for a long time.

In addition to leveling up in physics, the Void memory, and a golden prize draw ticket, the last mission reward also gave him a mission card.

He had three missions to choose from.

Lu Zhou's index finger touched the translucent holographic screen; three missions quickly appeared in front of him.

The first mission was related to information science, the requirement was to observe 10,000 sets of virtual relationship samples.

This mission sounded a bit vague, but it was actually very easy to execute. In short, he had to encourage players to log in to the virtual reality world through the phantom system and conduct online dating. He could then collect various data from these samples.

So far, the registered users of the Phantom system had reached 60 million, and it was still growing rapidly in North America, Europe, and Southeast Asia. It was easy to find 10,000 couples and assign small tasks to them. The mission rewards were also considerable.

However, information science was not a priority for Lu Zhou.

Therefore, Lu Zhou temporarily left it as a backup option.

If other missions were not cost-effective, then this mission could be an option.

The second one was about... a sand sculpture prank? The requirement was to make a prank on April Fool's Day; the more people who were affected, the greater the rewards were.

For such a retarded mission, Lu Zhou completely ignored it.

The third mission was related to materials science.

The moment Lu Zhou saw this mission, he felt a strange feeling in his heart.

It was like love at first sight!

It was like this mission was tailor-made for himself!

Chapter 1336: The Blood of Civilization

[Mission: Space Component A]

[Description: Materials are the flesh and blood of civilization. From ancient city walls to giant star rings, all magnificent wonders of the world are closely related to materials technology.]

[Requirement: Find a material with a Young's modulus ≥ 2.1 TPA and breaking strength $\geq 80\text{N/m}\dots$]

[Reward: 500,000 material science experience points, one lucky draw ticket, 1,000 general points.]

Lu Zhou's physics was already at full level. He wanted to work on the field of materials science. He had the reference to the materials required for Lagrange Space Base; it was like this mission was tailor-made for him.

"A super tensile material?"

"It sounds interesting."

A smirk appeared on the corners of Lu Zhou's mouth.

As for how to achieve this technology, he already had an idea in mind. However, he still needed to conduct experiments to verify his conjectures.

If everything went well, this mission shouldn't take him a long time.

"500,000 material science experience points... Just enough to reach materials science level 8."

After he looked at his experience bar in his characteristic panel, Lu Zhou reached out and selected this mission without any hesitation.

He saw the "mission accepted" dialog box pop up. He reached out his finger and swiped across the holographic screen, closing the mission panel.

But just before the mission panel disappeared completely, Lu Zhou suddenly noticed that there seemed to be a letter “A” at the end of the mission name.

“Does this mean... This is a series of missions?”

Lu Zhou began to think.

Since there is an A, does this mean there will be a B, C, and D in the future?

But fortunately, this mission was not the kind of mission chains he had encountered in the past; the kind that took years to complete and could not be forfeited.

Otherwise, he would have to consider whether it was worth investing so much time and cost for a mere 500,000 experience points...

...

Lu Zhou was lying on his bed in the system space. Far away in Chang'an Avenue in Beijing, inside a rustic conference room, people in formal clothes sat at the table with serious expressions.

Judging from the name tags on the conference table, the people sitting here were all important individuals. They were either the leaders of science and technology departments or the leaders of key national units.

Director Li glanced at the time on his watch and saw that there were still about ten minutes before the meeting would begin. He unscrewed his vacuum flask and took a sip of tea.

He was about to close his eyes and organize the thoughts in his mind when Vice Minister Liu, the second in command at the Ministry of Science and Technology, turned toward him and spoke.

“The cheque this time is larger than usual.”

Director Li didn't quite understand what his colleague was saying; he thought about it for a moment, then simply nodded and casually said, “Yeah.”

Two super projects were being carried out at the same time; both were large projects with hundreds of billions of investments.

Even with China's current national strength, it was quite a considerable expenditure.

Especially since both of these two projects were concentrated in the aerospace field; they were money-burning projects that couldn't make any profits in the short-term.

Perhaps it would be worthwhile in the long run and would benefit countless future generations of the Chinese people. But who could guarantee this to be true?

Most of them wouldn't survive to see that day. When the project was finally complete, most of the responsible people would no longer be alive...

Therefore, even though this plan was initiated by Lu Zhou himself, not everyone agreed with this plan.

During previous high-level meetings, this had caused a controversy.

"Do you think it is correct to do this project now?"

Director Li finally knew what his colleague meant.

So he's just trying to see what I think...

Director Li spoke with a smile.

"It depends on how you look at this problem."

Vice Minister Liu asked thoughtfully, "What do you mean?"

"I remember that Academician Lu told me some time ago that the Lagrange Space Base is a springboard to distant galaxies. The Mars Scientific Research Station is an experiment for colonizing distant galaxies. Together, the two will become a driving force for our aerospace industry. They are a catalyst for prosperity and development for the next century. If we intend to explore the distant stars, this step will have to be taken sooner or later."

"It's just a matter of sooner or later?" Vice Minister Liu sighed and said, "That's true, but I feel like... It sounds like a long journey."

Director Li didn't know what to say; he just nodded.

“Of course it is.”

This conversation seemed to have ended.

But Vice Minister Liu suddenly thought of something and asked, “I heard that when the president went to Shanghai, he met with Academician Lu?”

Director Li was taken aback for a moment; he nodded subconsciously.

“It seems like so.”

There was a trace of realization in Vice Minister Liu’s eyes. After thinking for a moment, he nodded and spoke.

“Then this meeting is going to be interesting.”

At ten o’clock on the dot, the meeting officially began.

Just like the previous discussion meetings, the president was the one in charge. However, unlike the previous few meetings, what was shown at the beginning of the meeting was not a PowerPoint. Instead, it was a... strange device.

“... What is that? An air humidifier?”

Vice Minister Liu looked at the thin mist floating out of the device.

Most people reacted the same way; they were a little confused by this oddly shaped machine.

The old man standing at the conference table smiled and explained, “A holographic projection system.

“I discovered that this set of equipment is not only used for entertainment, it can also help abstract concepts become more intuitive during presentations.”

A blue light radiated from the top of the strangely shaped machine. A magnificent space fortress appeared in the veil-like mist.

When the black space fortress appeared in the mist, people’s attention was completely taken away by it.

As the president looked at the shock and emotion from their eyes, he smiled and continued, "When I was in Shanghai, Academician Lu gave me a demonstration of this device. I was just as surprised as you guys.

"The Space Fortress we see is a three-dimensional conceptual map of the Lagrange Space Base.

"This can also display the final form of the Martian City... Just like this."

The image in the white mist changed; the light particles reorganized into a wave of yellow sand. A mirage-like futuristic space city appeared.

The president looked at the sci-fi city and spoke.

"This is a conceptual map of the Martian City... It is also the ultimate goal of the Mars Scientific Research Station. Just like our Guanghai Special Economic Zone, this will one day become a reality.

"As for whether to make it a reality, is our choice."

The light and white mist above the holographic system disappeared.

After the president paused for a moment, he smiled and continued, "I think since we are now standing in an era of rapid development, we should also be more imaginative about the future.

"And this was a young man's advice to me."

Vice Minister Liu, who was sitting at the table, suddenly had a surprised look on his face. He quietly spoke to himself.

"So he did talk with Academician Lu."

Director Li's face was also full of surprise. Although he knew Lu Zhou's influence, he didn't expect it to be so impactful.

The president on stage didn't pause. He continued in a serious tone, "We have been discussing this for a long time, so we should come to a conclusion today.

"If this is the case, then let's cast a vote!"

The voting session soon began.

Director Li looked at the voting machine on the table. He didn't hesitate before he reached out and pressed the approval button.

He had thought about this a long time ago, and his opinion had never changed.

The blueprint for the space base was deeply imprinted in his heart. He believed that with the efforts of Academician Lu and the Chinese aerospace team, the blueprint had a chance to become a reality!

Regardless of whether he had the opportunity to see the day when it would become a reality, he hoped that, at the very least, he was not the one who was holding it back.

Director Li suddenly noticed from his peripheral light that Vice Minister Liu, who was sitting next to him, also pressed the same button as him on the voting machine.

It seemed that although Vice Minister Liu's tone was full of doubt, in the end, he voted in favor.

Director Li suddenly felt a little happy.

However, he didn't know why he was happy.

Five minutes went by.

The voting results soon appeared on the big screen.

A total of 211 votes in favor, 13 votes against, and 5 abstentions.

There was no doubt that this was an overwhelming victory in favor!

The president looked at the voting results on the screen. His eyes showed a touch of approval as he nodded gently.

He looked back at the meeting room and announced the result in a solemn and calm voice.

"I hereby announce...

"That the Mars Scientific Research Station and Lagrange Space Base project...

“Is approved!”

Chapter 1337: Proposal at the Same Time!

The Lagrange Space Base and the Mars Scientific Research Station project were established at the same time!

Not just that, but the meeting also put forward a series of work schedules including the “completion of manned boarding of the Lagrange point”, the “Lagrange construction environment inspection”, and so on.

From these tight schedules, it was obvious that the whole plan was not a disguise or a smoke bomb. China really planned to do these aerospace projects.

For the aerospace industry, this was probably the most exciting news in years!

The afternoon after the meeting.

The design office at the Beijing Aerospace Science and Technology Institute.

“Have you guys heard?”

“Heard what?”

“Our country plans to build a permanent space station on the Lagrange point!”

“The Lagrange point space station? You mean Academician Lu’s blueprint?”

“What else could it be? Academician Lu is nuts! I heard that this morning there was a meeting on Chang’an Avenue. The president hosted the meeting and showed the concept map of the space station using a holographic projection device. All of the participants were shocked. The final vote was an overwhelming victory, and the two projects were launched immediately!”

One of the engineers spoke.

“Really? What does the concept map look like?”

“I don’t know! I just listened to what others said, but since the news has already come out, it’s not something that needs to be kept secret. We should have a chance to see the concept map in a few days!”

In fact, this time China did not intend to keep this a secret.

Since the successful establishment of the Moon Palace space station, China already marked its dominant position in the aerospace field. There was no need to hide any new things like before.

Regardless of whether it was the Lagrange Point Space Base or the Mars Scientific Research Station, even if the relevant departments released the blueprints publicly, other countries wouldn’t be able to use the blueprints to copy the project.

This didn’t only require industrial capabilities but also took into account the scale of a country’s aerospace industry.

So far only China, which had more than ten large-scale transportation spacecraft and successfully developed the profitability of lunar mineral resources, had the conditions to complete this grand plan.

Because this was not a confidential project, the results of the discussion at the meeting quickly spread to various aerospace research institutes in Beijing at an incredible speed.

The second day after the conference ended, all of the scholars in the Chinese aerospace industry heard about this news.

On the other hand, relevant departments also held a press conference afterward. They announced the result to media outlets all over the world.

The second the news was announced publicly, people all over the world were shocked!

NASA headquarters.

It was lunchtime; most of the engineers sitting in the office were eating sandwiches and drinking coffee while watching videos on YouTube.

A piece of news from CNN caught their attention. Everyone was stunned. They froze for a while before snapping back to reality.

The Chinese plan to build a space station base at the Lagrange point?

And a Mars Scientific Research Station?

Forget about it! They have never even been to Mars! What kind of scientific research station on Mars are they going to build?!

And the Lagrange point space station base...

That is something that only appears in science fiction movies. With the current materials science and engineering technology, it is impossible.

Because of the small scale of Earth's aerospace industry, they couldn't understand what was the point of building a space station there, whether it was for commercial or scientific research needs.

They're building a space station to look at stars?

The first reaction of many people was that this was fake news.

Some people even sneered and said that the "media lies are getting more and more ridiculous".

After all, this was CNN news.

However, they soon discovered that it was not just CNN that reported the news.

After a brief silence, the office immediately exploded.

"WTF?! The Chinese plans to build a permanent space station at the Lagrange point?!"

"A Mars scientific research station?! Sending people to Mars? Are they crazy?"

"They just set up the Guanghai Special Economic Zone, and now they want to take over Mars?!"

"And they're tackling Mars and Lagrange point at the same time..."

"There are only five Lagrange points, and only two are stable! We must report this to Congress immediately! Let them realize the seriousness of the problem!"

The office that was originally silent like a pond of water suddenly began boiling...

...

Los Angeles Daily: Lagrange Space Base project is established!

New York Times: The map to the Mars scientific research station is announced! China will launch a manned boarding program!

The Times: A war book against NASA? Or a challenge for the future! A blueprint shows the ambition of China's space strategy!

The Sun: NASA director declined to comment. Analysts say that this time NASA might not accept the reality!

Beijing Evening News: ...

The explosive articles were released one after another. This replaced the Century of Physics and the Problems of the Century discussions that appeared some time ago. This was a new hot topic that people discussed and followed.

When they saw the concept map of the Lagrange Space Base in the news, many people remembered the space fortress that appeared in the center of the Bird's Nest Stadium during the National Day celebration last year!

The towering space fortress floating in the holographic image was a manifestation of people's imagination for the future.

And now, all this was becoming a reality!

As the chief consultant and chief engineer of the Lunar Orbit Committee, Lu Zhou was certainly involved in this important news.

In fact, about five minutes after the meeting ended, Director Li called him and told him the exciting good news himself.

Director Li excitedly talked about the overwhelming number of votes in favor.

In contrast, Lu Zhou was relatively calm. The only thing he worried about was whether the old man's heart could bear the exciting news.

As for the Lagrange Point Space Base and the Mars Scientific Research Station projects, he had never worried about them at all.

As for why?

One of the biggest reasons was because, in his opinion, these projects were bound to be completed one day.

After talking with the president in Shanghai that day, he already knew this in his heart.

Even if the relevant departments temporarily decided that they didn't have the capacity for long-term future projects, they would definitely be able to see the driving effect of these two projects on the overall aerospace industry of China.

The Guanghai Special Economic Zone was now on the right track. If China wanted to continue to lead the space industry in the next century, they must implement a long-term goal.

The Lagrange Space Base and the Mars colonization plan were undoubtedly suitable choices.

As for why he wasn't busy working on the project...

Was because that, ever since accepting the system mission, Lu Zhou had been busy with the "Space Component A". He had no spare time for other things...

Chapter 1338: Three Seconds Is Enough

Jinling maglev station.

A pretty girl rushed over from the station exit and rushed into Lu Zhou's arms.

"I missed you to death!"

When Lu Zhou smelled the perfume in her hair, a reassuring feeling rushed into his heart. He obviously had a lot to say, but he didn't know where to begin.

“Me too.”

The couple hugged tightly for nearly a minute.

Lu Zhou was about to put Chen Yushan down and reach out to take the suitcase behind her. However, a small hand suddenly pulled his sleeve gently.

Right after, a heart-grabbing voice gently blew into his ear.

“... Can we hug for a little longer?”

Lu Zhou didn't say anything. Instead, he hugged her tighter.

Chen Yushan felt the warmth around her, immersed in the joy of reunion. She couldn't help but feel a little warm. She cleared her throat and asked in a playful tone, “What does it feel like to have a clingy girlfriend?”

“Oh...”

That's a hard question to answer.

But generally, it feels great.

“You have three seconds to answer!”

Chen Yushan saw Lu Zhou thinking seriously. She suddenly became a little concerned.

She realized that this question might be difficult for him to answer, so she quickly said quietly, “... Don't think about it so seriously. I just want... to hear your thoughts.”

Lu Zhou shook his head.

“Three seconds is not enough.”

If he wanted to describe all of his feelings, he would at least need three minutes.

However, it seemed like she had misunderstood his words.

Chen Yushan blushed. She buried her head on Lu Zhou's shoulder. She lightly punched him on the chest with her small fist.

“Stupid... What are you thinking?”

Gosh, darn it...

He never knew how to talk to girls before.

Why is he so good at it now...

Lu Zhou: “...?”

He looked at his sweet and shy-faced girlfriend with a question mark in his head.

However, just as Lu Zhou was about to ask what was going on, the phone in his pocket suddenly rang.

After picking up the phone, Lu Zhou put the phone next to his ear.

After listening to the voice on the other end of the phone, a look of realization appeared on his face. After saying “OK”, he hung up the phone.

“Who was that?”

Chen Yushan, whose head was still buried in Lu Zhou’s shoulder, turned her eyes toward Lu Zhou’s head and glanced at the phone secretly.

Lu Zhou put the phone back into his pocket and said casually, “The Institute for Advanced Study.”

“Is it an emergency?”

“Not really.”

Chen Yushan got out of Lu Zhou’s arms and spoke with a worried look.

“Go ahead then, I’ll take a taxi back.”

“No way.” Lu Zhou shook his head. He looked at his girlfriend and said solemnly, “No matter how important it is, I have to send you home first. Come on, give me the suitcase.”

Lu Zhou took the suitcase from Chen Yushan’s hand. He put it in the trunk of the car, then grabbed her hand and got into the car together.

...

The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

In the materials science laboratory, a group of people gathered around a chemical vapor deposition device. They were staring at a sticky black substance.

Professor Wang Qingping, the leader of the project team, couldn't help anymore. He began to curse.

"This f*cking thing... What the hell is going on? How come... it's stuck together?"

About a week ago, Lu Zhou suddenly came to the Institute of Computational Materials, grabbed a list of people, and set up a project team called "High Strength Graphene Fiber", and included himself in the team.

This incident spread afterward, and it caused quite a lot of discussion at the Institute for Advanced Study

After all, Academician Lu hadn't done any major research in the field of materials science for years. Now a project team was suddenly established, which he was directly responsible for. This was quite a rare sight.

Not long after the project team was established, Lu Zhou quickly completed the design of the mathematical model using computational materials science. He handed over the mathematical model to the project team led by Professor Wang Qingping and asked him to design an experimental process based on this model.

When Professor Wang Qingping first received this mathematical model, he was still full of ambition. He was ready to fight side by side with Academician Lu!

However, right after the project had just begun, they already encountered a big problem.

"I don't know either." The researcher in charge of this experiment almost began crying. He said with a frustrated expression, "I-I obviously designed the experiment based on the calculation results provided by Academician Lu."

“How is this possible!” Wang Qingping reprimanded the researcher, “There must be something wrong, try again!”

“B-but we have done it three times already...” The researcher whispered, “It’s the same result.”

“Then redesign the experimental process! Do it three more times!”

Qian Zhongming, who was standing next to them, couldn’t stand listening anymore. He coughed and spoke.

“I already called Academician Lu. He said he would come over here to take a look.”

“Academician Lu is coming over?”

After hearing Professor Qian Zhongming’s words, Wang Qingping looked a little nervous.

After all, his project team was in charge of the experiment.

If it turned out that there was a problem on his side, wouldn’t it be embarrassing in front of Academician Lu?

“Academician Lu doesn’t need to come... What if, we try something else? If it doesn’t work, then we can ask Academician Lu,” Wang Qingping said as he signaled at several researchers next to him.

Although they were not in agreement, they had to listen to their boss; they all nodded reluctantly.

Qian Zhongming easily saw through Professor Wang Qingping’s plan.

He had worked with Lu Zhou at the Institute of Computational Materials for many years. Even working all the way up to the position of deputy director. Even though he was nowhere near Lu Zhou’s academic ability, he was still much smarter than before.

“Don’t worry, even if something goes wrong, Academician Lu won’t blame you.” Qian Zhongming said, “Scientific research itself is trial and error. Don’t be afraid of making mistakes. Just find where the problem is.”

Professor Wang Qingping smiled but thought differently in his heart.

Easy for you to say.

You're Academician Lu's best friend, of course you'll be fine.

However, the researchers standing behind him were relieved to hear Deputy Director Qian's words.

Their job made countless colleagues jealous of them. However, only they knew the difficulties that they encountered. In a sacred academic place that all scholars wanted to be at, as the lowest-level scientific researchers in the scientific research chain, they faced a considerable amount of pressure.

While Professor Wang Qingping was worrying about what to do, the footsteps outside the door were getting closer and closer.

The door opened, and a figure familiar to everyone walked in from the outside.

Lu Zhou didn't look around. He walked straight to the side of the chemical vapor deposition device, glanced at the mysterious black substance in the beaker, then asked Qian Zhongming.

"Gloves?"

Qian Zhongming nodded and handed out the plastic gloves.

"Here."

Without saying much, Lu Zhou put on the anti-corrosion plastic gloves. He poked the black substance with a glass rod, then gently touched the surface using the rod.

Lu Zhou frowned, he put the rod and gloves aside.

"It's a bit soft..."

Qian Zhongming nodded and spoke.

"I think so too."

Lu Zhou roughly understood the situation. He looked at Professor Wang Qingping, who was nearby, and asked, "Can you tell me what happened?"

Professor Wang Qingping had an awkward look on his face. Just as he was thinking about what to say, the researcher standing next to him spoke first.

“We did it according to the calculation model you provided, but...”

Lu Zhou: “But the results were not ideal?”

The researcher pretended not to see Professor Wang Qingping looking at him and nodded seriously.

“That is correct.”

“I understand now.” Lu Zhou nodded, looked at him, and asked, “What’s your name?”

“Sun Yueda!”

“You did the experiment?”

He knew that he was probably toast, so he might as well tell the truth. The researcher named Sun Yueda nodded and spoke.

“Yes, I also designed the experimental process!”

Lu Zhou looked at the young researcher. He nodded and spoke with a look of approval in his eyes.

“Not bad, it takes skill to achieve this level.”

Sun Yueda and several other researchers standing beside him, as well as Professor Wang Qingping, were all stunned.

Did he...

Just compliment Sun Yueda?

“Is the mathematical model still here?”

“Yes...”

“Then let me see it.” Lu Zhou nodded while looking at Sun Yueda. He said, “And show me the experimental process you designed.”

“I’ll tell you where the problem is.”

Chapter 1339: Simply Amazing!

After being poked by a finger from his colleague on his back, the researcher named Sun Yueda immediately nodded.

“No problem! Please, follow me.”

He immediately walked to the front and stood in front of the laboratory door.

Lu Zhou didn’t follow him immediately. Instead, he glanced at Brother Qian and spoke with a smile.

“Want to go together?”

Qian Zhongming smiled and spoke.

“If Academician Lu wants to show off his skills, wouldn’t it be a pity if I missed the show?”

Lu Zhou said with a dry cough, “You don’t have to kiss my a*s.”

“How is this a*s kissing?” Qian Zhongming shook his head seriously and said, “One of the founders of computational materials science, the first scholar to win the Nobel Prize in this field... These are not my titles.”

The group followed the researcher named Sun Yueda from the laboratory to the office upstairs.

Professor Wang Qingping stood at the door. He looked at the messy office and awkwardly explained to Lu Zhou beside him, “Um... We are a little messy when we work, so the office space gets a little untidy. If you told us you were coming, we would have cleaned up in advance.”

“It’s fine. I stay at home for days at a time, and my study room is much messier than this. Scientific research is not a performance show. You don’t need to be constrained to any rules. Do as you see best.”

Seeing how Lu Zhou didn't seem to care, Professor Wang Qingping finally began to realize that he was overthinking about Academician Lu.

He remembered what Deputy Director Qian said before, and he couldn't help but gradually feel ashamed. He shut his mouth and stopped talking.

Lu Zhou followed researcher Sun Yueda and walked straight to the computer.

"Your mathematical model is in the computer... This is the experimental procedure I designed."

"Open it."

"Ok... Oh, yeah, do you want to look at the mathematical model or the experimental procedure?"

"I mean turn on the computer. I'll open whichever one I need."

Sun Yueda smiled awkwardly and immediately pressed the power-on button. He then offered the seat.

Lu Zhou smiled and said "thank you", then sat in the office chair. He glanced at the screen while holding the mouse, then opened the folder containing the experiment related materials on the desktop, and clicked on the mathematical model he designed a while ago.

Sun Yueda looked at Academician Lu, who was staring at the mathematical model on the screen. He suddenly thought of a rumor about Academician Lu, so he quietly spoke.

"Sir, do you need me to help you prepare a cup of coffee?"

"Coffee?" Without thinking about it, Lu Zhou nodded his head casually. "Sure, instant is fine."

"Okay... By the way, sir, do you need a whiteboard? We have them here."

"Whiteboard? No need, just give me a few pieces of draft paper."

The coffee and the draft paper were soon delivered together, but Lu Zhou did not touch either immediately. Instead, he stared at a series of data on the screen, such as the mathematical model, the experimental procedure, and the

electron micrograph of the final product. It was like he was analyzing something in his brain.

Five minutes went by.

Lu Zhou finally loosened his eyebrows slightly. He reached out and picked up the cup on the table. He then gently blew on the surface and took a sip.

“The model needs some modifications.”

Professor Wang Qingping finally breathed a sigh of relief.

Lu Zhou undoubtedly meant that the responsibility was not on them.

“Then, sir... How should we change it?”

“It’s actually very simple, just give me half an hour.”

Lu Zhou put down the cup and picked up a ballpoint pen from the table. He scribbled a few lines of calculations on the draft paper.

Deputy Director Qian Zhongming and the group of researchers noticed Academician Lu’s actions. They immediately became energetic as they stared at the pen writing on the draft paper intently, waiting for his next move.

However, Lu Zhou’s actions were faster than they had expected.

Less than ten minutes later, the two pieces of draft papers had been densely filled with calculations. Even scholars such as Qian Zhongming, who was engaged in the research of computational materials, couldn’t keep up with the calculations.

Lu Zhou put down the pen in his hand. He held the mouse in his right hand and placed his left hand on the keyboard. He used the calculation results on the draft papers to quickly modify the mathematical model software.

After the whole process was over, he let go of the mouse and got up from the chair.

He looked back at the dumbfounded researchers standing behind him and spoke concisely.

“Computational materials science is only a reference tool. No model can be directly applied without repeated testing and correction.

“The model I gave you isn’t for you to copy it directly in real life; it’s for you to make changes using the framework I provided...”

Lu Zhou saw everyone’s dumbfounded expression. He knew that they didn’t understand what he was saying, so he sighed and spoke.

“Forget about it, I will talk about these things later. I have adjusted the model.

“Use the revised model and try again.

“If it doesn’t work, come find me again.”

After that, he left the office and the people behind.

“That’s... it?”

Sun Yueda looked at the mathematical model left on the screen in disbelief. He blinked and cast a bewildered look to Professor Wang Qingping, who was standing next to him. He asked in a quiet voice, “Boss, what should we do??”

Professor Wang Qingping was in a similar state. He quickly snapped back to reality from the shock.

He pondered for a while before saying, “Follow this revised model and try again.”

“Okay... I’m going to design the experimental procedure.”

“Yeah, go ahead.”

The mathematical model was done.

The experimental procedure didn’t need to be completely redesigned; it only needed to be slightly modified to accommodate for the changes.

If they worked fast, they could get it done tonight.

Qian Zhongming was watching everything unravel when he suddenly asked, “Is there anything I can help with?”

Professor Wang Qingping waved his hand quickly and said, “No need, we can handle this trivial matter ourselves.”

Qian Zhongming nodded and said, “Okay then, if you need help, tell me... By the way, if the experiment yields results, please be sure to notify me.”

Professor Wang Qingping patted his chest and spoke.

“No problem! We should be able to get it done by tonight!”

The modification of the experimental procedure had begun.

Professor Wang Qingping’s project team had returned to work. Qian Zhongming didn’t have a reason to stay here any longer. He followed Lu Zhou’s footsteps and left.

After a busy morning, Sun Yueda and other researchers finally finished the modification of the experimental procedure before their lunch break.

A new round of experiments soon began.

After a series of complicated laboratory processes, the substance appeared in the chemical vapor deposition device. The researchers surrounding the device were stunned by what they saw.

The experiment was successful!

Lu Zhou only changed a few numbers...

This is magical!

Chapter 1340: Density Functional Method

Young’s modulus $> 2.1\text{TPa}$, breaking strength $\geq 80\text{N/m}$...

Judging from the series of required parameters, Lu Zhou first thought of a rope with high tensile strength, then he thought of impact-resistant coatings used in automobiles or aerospace equipment.

As for where this material could be used...

There were a ton of uses.

It could be used as cables on the space station or as towing ropes for fixing heat sink and solar panels. It could be used as a suspension material for engineering equipment or as arresting gear on the deck of an aircraft carrier.

All of these uses could save a ton of money.

And these were just a few uses for this kind of material.

Lu Zhou believed that this kind of material with a high Young's modulus and a high breaking strength could have countless applications that he never even would have thought of.

Back to research.

For the technical standards given by the system, the best option Lu Zhou could think of was to have a carbon-based material with high tensile strength, light in weight, and strong plasticity.

Such as carbon fiber and a series of graphite-derived reinforced composite materials.

This kind of material not only had a broad scope for development, but it was also his original field of research in computational materials science. When he started his research on computational materials, he started with carbon materials.

Therefore, for him, this task was not difficult at all.

It was as easy as a piece of cake!

After leaving Professor Wang Qingping's laboratory, Lu Zhou did not stay at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. Instead, he went straight back to his home.

When modifying the mathematical model based on the experimental results, some ideas about computational materials research suddenly appeared in his mind.

Perhaps because of the fact that he had reached level 10 in both mathematics and physics, Lu Zhou found that his sensitivity to numbers and physical phenomena had reached a new level.

Even a clue that was so small that it was almost negligible was enlarged infinitely in his eyes; it turned into a key that he could see with his mind.

Regardless of where the inspiration came from, there was only one thought in his mind at this moment.

Which was to record this inspiration before it disappeared.

Lu Zhou went upstairs to the study room. After instructing Xiao Ai to make a cup of coffee for him, Lu Zhou sat at the desk and spread out the draft paper he brought back from the laboratory.

“According to material A synthesized in the experimental process designed by the model, a soft mass forms after deposition, and the diameter of the carbon nanotubes is extremely uneven...

“The reason for this result should be that the monomer acrylonitrile undergoes inadequate free radical polymerization, and a large amount of intermediate product is formed. This leads to the insufficient progress of the third-stage reaction... Then, the soft foamy mixture forms.

“Hmm, interesting.”

The soft foamy mixture wasn't what Lu Zhou felt to be interesting; it was the phenomena he discovered when he revised the calculation model.

After thinking seriously for a while, he picked up his pen and wrote a line of text on a blank draft paper neatly.

[Implicit density functional method]

When Lu Zhou saw his inspiration form into words, he couldn't help but smile.

Generally speaking, when a problem was clearly written down, it was already half-way to being solved.

At least for him!

The implicit functional density was a computational materials science method for the explicit functional density; it was a popular research area in the theoretical field of computational materials science.

As we all knew, the exchange-correlation energy function was an explicit function that was directly represented by an electron density function. And by using a Kohn-Sham orbital wave function as a direct variable representation, the function would become implicit.

The simplest implicit function was the Fock commutative energy function, which was often called the exact correlation function in the context of density functional theory.

For molecular systems, the use of implicit functionals could achieve an accuracy equivalent to the second-order multi-body perturbation theory, with a relatively small amount of calculation. Therefore, the implicit density functional method was widely regarded as a high potential computational materials science method.

However, although there were obvious advantages, its disadvantages were also obvious. For example, the accuracy was limited, as well as the inability to accurately describe van der Waals interactions, etc. This was crucial for the study of solid materials.

Therefore, the implicit density functional method had relatively few applications in the research of solid materials, and only some progress had been made in certain fields, despite the tremendous development in computing power.

So far, the implicit correlation functional method was based on the adiabatic correlation fluctuation and dissipation theorem that had attracted widespread attention in the academic community. This was widely regarded as a breakthrough in the research to overcome the shortcomings of implicit functional density.

However, the sizes of these functions were huge, and even the most powerful traditional computers would struggle with the huge amount of calculations. Thus the current research area was still stuck in the exploratory research of simple systems.

What Lu Zhou had to do at the moment was to extend this method from a simple system to complex carbon materials research!

Once this research was a success, it would be of great help to the entire research field of carbon composite materials. Its significance could even surpass the “Young’s modulus ≥ 2.1 TPa, breaking strength ≥ 80 N/m” material itself!

The pen in his hand did not stop for one bit. After writing the title, Lu Zhou quickly went deep into the exploration of the proposition itself.

[According to the HK theorem, the ground state energy functional of the system can be expressed as: $E_G\{P(r)\}=E\{P(r)\}+\int V(r)\rho(r)dr\dots]$

[The function $E\{P(r)\}$ can be expressed as:
 $E\{P(r)\}=T\{\rho(r)\}+1/2\int\int\{\rho(r)\{\rho(r)drdr+Exc\{ P(r)\}.\dots]$

[...]

The lines of calculations flowed out under the pen tip, like a trickling stream, together with the burst of inspiration, and they formed into rivers and flowed into the sea!

All of his inspiration were manifested as numbers.

All of the materials forces and physical properties were included and abstracted into mathematical language by rigorous logic!

“Then, introduce Schrodinger equation...”

The pen by Lu Zhou’s fingertips was like a sharp dagger, piercing through the thick branches in the foggy forest.

Lu Zhou looked at the result on the paper. His pupils lit up, and his eyebrows finally loosened, showing a smile on his face.

There was still a long way to go.

However, his intuition on science told him that he was very close to the end!

Time slowly passed by.

The sun gradually moved across the sky.

The sky outside the windows turned completely dark; the street lights on both sides of the tree-lined path began to light up. Lu Zhou finally raised his head and let out a sigh of relief. He put down the pen from his hand.

“... The implicit density functional method also has broad prospects for the research of carbon composite materials. It is now much more applicable.

“At the same time, this can also be regarded as a breakthrough in extending the method from a simple system to a complex system.

“Although there is still room for further exploration behind this.

“But... let's stop here for now.”

Lu Zhou smiled and put the pen in his hand aside.

The second he put down the pen, a line of light blue text appeared in front of his eyes.

Lu Zhou blinked, thinking it was an illusion.

However, the light blue text remained there...

[Congratulations, User, for mission completion!]

Chapter 1341: Super Fiber

[Congratulations, user, for mission completion!]

[Mission completion details are as follows: 1g of special carbon nanofiber with a Young's modulus of 2.2 TPa and a breaking strength of 83 N/m... prepared through laboratory synthesis.]

[Mission evaluation: S+]

[Mission reward: 500,000 materials science experience points, one lucky draw ticket, 1,000 general points.]

“Young's modulus is 2.2 TPa? It's 0.1 bigger than I expected...”

Lu Zhou stood in the pure white system space. He was looking at the mission completion reminder that popped up on the holographic panel when he raised his eyebrows.

What surprised him was that Professor Wang Qingping's project team actually produced the results tonight by using his revised mathematical model!

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and looked at the translucent holographic screen. He spoke in a clear voice.

"System, open my characteristic panel!"

A light blue wave swept across the translucent holographic screen. His updated characteristic panel appeared in front of him.

[

A. Mathematics: Level 10

B. Physics: Level 10

C. Biochemistry: Level 7 (410,000/1.2 million)

D. Engineering: Level 7 (1 million/1.2 million)

E. Materials Science: Level 8 (63,000/3 million)

F. Energy Science: Level 7 (0/1.2 million)

G. Information science: Level 7 (100,000/1.2 million)

General points: 35,335

]

His materials science went from level 7 to level 8, but at the same time, the experience points requirement had also tripled, going from one million to three million. This was when it became more and more difficult to level up.

"Next is the lucky draw." After looking at the characteristic panel, Lu Zhou looked away and selected the lucky draw button.

The wheel began to spin.

The high-speed spinning wheel continued to spin dozens of times due to its inertia before it slowly stopped.

There was nothing exciting about this.

After all, it was just an ordinary mission. The reward for 30 energy potions was within Lu Zhou's expectations. Maybe the system wanted him to work harder using the potions, but he wasn't in a hurry.

Lu Zhou closed the lucky draw interface. He looked at the mission panel instead.

Because of the S+ evaluation, the next mission should be a reward mission.

Lu Zhou selected the icon of the mission panel. He looked at the mission interface in front of him as he reached out his index finger and touched the virtual button lightly.

Soon after, a circle of blue light rippled, spreading along the position of his index finger.

And a brand new mission panel soon appeared in front of his eyes.

[Reward mission activated!]

[Requirements: Publish a "significant" academic paper.]

[Reward: Experience points and general points based on the influence and impact of the paper.]

Publish any paper?

Paper influence?

When Lu Zhou saw this mission, he was taken aback for a moment. Then a smile appeared on his face.

This mission fits me like a glove!

It wasn't clear to him whether the implicit density functional method was considered "significant" research, but its impact on theoretical computational materials was groundbreaking. It was no exaggeration to say that the carbon composite brought computational materials science to a whole new level.

Seems like I can hit two birds with one stone this time...

...

The next day.

Lu Zhou asked someone to send a copy of the sample to his home. He then shut himself in the study room and began to compile the implicit density functional method he completed yesterday into a paper.

Just after he edited the paper and uploaded the preprint on the arXiv website, his doorbell began to ring.

A text bubble popped up in the lower right corner of the computer.

Xiao Ai: [Master, there are guests outside. (✿◡◡)]

Lu Zhou knew who came to visit him. He sighed and stood up.

“I know, open the door for him... Bring two cups of tea to the coffee table in the living room.”

Xiao Ai: [Okay, Master! (๑•̀ㅂ•́)و✧]

The drone flew out of the kitchen. The electronic lock of the front gate opened.

The two cups of tea were placed on the coffee table. Lu Zhou, who had changed his clothes, walked down the stairs. He saw Director Li, who was already sitting on the sofa in the living room.

“Academician Lu, haha, hello.”

“... Hello there.”

I knew it.

Because of the “haha” and his smile, Lu Zhou already knew why Director Li was visiting. However, he didn’t say anything. Instead, he sat casually on the sofa across from him.

“Go on, what is it this time?”

Director Li smiled embarrassedly and spoke.

“What is that supposed to mean, I can’t come to see how you’re doing?”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Seeing Lu Zhou’s speechless expression, Director Li immediately knew that Lu Zhou saw through his intentions. He concealed his embarrassment with a dry cough and continued, “Um... You’re right. I do have something I hope you can help with.”

Lu Zhou asked, “What?”

“In fact, it’s not to help me, this also has something to do with you.” Director Li patted his thigh, sighed, and said, “I showed your blueprint to Academician Yuan, right? The old man said nothing and didn’t believe that you could build the Lagrange Space Base! It took me a long time to convince him, and he finally agreed to sign the papers. You have no idea how much convincing I did...”

Lu Zhou looked at this guy with a headache. He quickly interrupted and said, “Just tell me what you want... Stop beating around the bush.”

Director Li smiled embarrassedly and said, “I’m just trying to tell you the situation clearly. I’m not beating around... beating around what again?”

Lu Zhou: “... The bush.”

Director Li: “Oh yeah yeah, you always say I do that, but when do I ever do that?”

Lu Zhou: “...?”

“Anyway, here’s the thing!” Director Li said, “I made a bet with old man Yuan. He can point at any component on the blueprint. As long as you can produce the materials needed for the component, he will believe in your plan!”

Lu Zhou asked curiously, “What if he doesn’t believe in it?”

“Um...”

Director Li didn’t know what to say.

What if he doesn't?

I guess...

Then there's nothing I can do.

The Lagrange Space Base and the Mars Scientific Research Station documents had all been signed by Chang'an Avenue already.

Even if he's not convinced...

The state will still make the two aerospace corporations work together for the deployment of the national projects.

Besides, this whole story is fake...

After a moment of silence, Director Li coughed and said, "We still need his help. If you have the ability to convince him, it is better to convince him. Then the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation will cooperate with us. Of course, if you really don't have that ability, it doesn't matter."

"You don't need to worry." Lu Zhou glanced at the old man sitting on the opposite side of the sofa and said with a smile, "Just tell me what is the component he is referring to."

"This is easy. I brought the technical standards of the material. Take a look at it first." Director Li took out the A4 paper that was folded into a small square from his pocket and handed it to Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou unfolded the paper as Director Li reached out his hand and took a sip of tea from the teacup.

When he was making up that story about Academician Yuan, his throat was dry from all the talking.

In fact, Academician Yuan wasn't against this at all. He made up the whole story.

He felt bad about lying, but when he thought of what Academician Yuan said about how important the material was, he decided it was a white lie.

After all, everything was for the greater good.

If his lie was discovered, he could just apologize.

While Director Li was thinking, Lu Zhou had already finished reading the piece of paper in his hand. He folded it up again and threw it on the coffee table.

“What do you think?” Director Li immediately sat upright and looked at him eagerly. He asked, “Will it work?”

“Should be fine.”

“Really?”

Seeing that Lu Zhou agreed so easily, Director Li was stunned. He couldn't help but wonder if Lu Zhou was messing with him.

“Of course.” Lu Zhou smiled at Director Li and said, “Sit here and wait for a while. I'll go upstairs to grab something.”

He stood up from the sofa, turned around, and walked toward the stairs.

Without waiting for long, Lu Zhou quickly returned to the living room with a sealed plastic bag containing a pile of black powdery substance.

Director Li was about to ask what the thing in his hand was when Lu Zhou threw the plastic bag on the coffee table and sat on the sofa.

“This is what you want, take it.”

What the hell?

Director Li stared at the sealed plastic bag with the mysterious black powder. Confused, he looked at Lu Zhou and asked, “What's this...?”

“Super Fiber 1, the abbreviation is SF-1... Or whatever you want to call it,” Lu Zhou said with a smile. Seeing that Director Li was dumbfounded, Lu Zhou added, “Basically, this is the thing you want.”

Director Li was taken aback for a second; even the air in the room froze for a few seconds.

He finally realized what Lu Zhou was saying...

Director Li, who was still staring at the plastic bag containing the black powder, was flabbergasted!

Chapter 1342: Terrifyingly Strong!

Early morning...

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Professor Stanley was standing on the podium, giving a lecture to undergraduates as usual.

Ever since losing to Lu Zhou in that “race” on patents for lithium-sulfur battery electrode materials, he lost ExxonMobil’s support, left the industry in embarrassment, and returned to the academic world.

However, that might have been a blessing in disguise.

Because of the research on lithium batteries, he, Professor Goodnough, and Professor Akira Yoshino won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

After receiving this honorary crown, his academic path was paved smoothly. Not only did ExxonMobil intend to repair the relationship with him, but there were even more students signing up for his classes.

Of course, receiving this award had a huge amount of luck involved.

Had it not been for the increasing use of lithium batteries in recent years, which became a cornerstone in the new electrical era, the Nobel Prize Committee might not have considered their work so seriously.

Because of this, if Lu Zhou hadn’t already won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, many people would think that Lu Zhou was more qualified to receive the prize on lithium batteries.

Many years had passed since then. A lot of things had happened, and Professor Stanley’s opinion of Lu Zhou had changed drastically from before.

Science could change the world; mathematics could change science.

He admitted that his research philosophy was somewhat influenced by that man.

Like his friends said, Lu Zhou's computation ability left him such a huge impression that he was still researching computational materials over these past few years. He hoped to find a breakthrough in the bottleneck of modern materials research...

"... Discovering and exploring phenomena, summarizing and explaining principles, this is the process of creating knowledge, this is also the essence of science.

"In traditional materials science research, most of the discoveries of new materials were the result of accidental discoveries by researchers, or the results of countless repeated attempts. It is obvious that it was a tedious process until modern computers. Since then, people have created various empirical models based on experimental results and changed to a more rational experiment design. This is what made it a science field.

"Yes, prior to all this, I don't think materials science was a science; it was more like an engineers' 'craft'. Your homework today revolves around the density functional theory I talked about in class. Write a review paper.

"That's it, folks."

After announcing the end of the class, Professor Stanley put away the textbooks and returned to his office. Just as he threw the lesson plan on his desk and was about to check his email, his student and assistant Dr. Johns suddenly stood up and walked toward him with a stack of papers.

"Professor, I want to show you something."

Professor Stanley noticed the weird expression on his student's face. He raised his eyebrows and put on the glasses he had just taken off.

"What thing?"

"This paper..." Dr. Jones passed the paper in his hand to his supervisor, then said with a weird expression, "I just saw it on arXiv..."

As if he felt like this explanation was too short, he immediately added afterward, "It's from Professor Lu."

Sure enough, the expression on Professor Stanley's face became serious the moment he heard this.

He sat upright on his office chair, reached out, and took out a ballpoint pen from the pen holder. He started reading from the first page of the paper, line by line.

However, the moment he saw the title of the paper, his whole body froze.

Implicit density functional method?

His eyebrows gradually furrowed.

Half an hour ago, he just said in the lecture that implicit density functional theory was one of the most difficult unsolved problems in the field of computational materials.

Particularly, the expansion from a simple system to a complex system was extremely difficult, whether it was for humans or for computers.

This guy hasn't researched materials science for so many years.

And now he claims to have made such a groundbreaking result.

Is this real?

Professor Stanley didn't say a word. Dr. Jones waited quietly beside him.

Time slowly passed by.

When Jones was almost about to fall asleep, Professor Stanley turned to the last page; he suddenly took a breath and closed the paper in his hand.

Jones noticed the look of surprise on his supervisor's face. He stepped forward and asked, "What do you think professor? About the paper..."

"It was well written," Stanley answered the question concisely, but he felt like he wasn't convincing enough. Professor Stanley added, "It's insanely profound."

Insanely profound...

When Jones heard these words, he gulped.

Ever since working under this big name, Jones had never heard him praise anyone this much. Not before he won the Nobel Prize, and definitely not after he won the Nobel Prize.

This was probably the first time he saw the old man's face was full of shock, disbelief, and almost admiration.

Professor Stanley returned the paper in his hand to his student and looked at him with a surprised look. He was silent for a while before he spoke.

"Implicit functional density theory is one of the most cutting-edge research in the field of materials science. Due to the inability to accurately describe van der Waals interactions and other fatal defects, it is difficult to be used to research solid materials... At least before today.

"He used some special mathematical methods in his paper to supplement implicit functional density theory. Although the modified implicit density functional theory still has some limitations, at least it is able to improve the modeling of van der Waals force. Its application has also been extended from simple systems to the research of more complex carbon composite materials."

A deep admiration appeared in Professor Stanley's face and eyes.

"With the current development speed of the field of computational materials science, forget about a few years, even if you don't keep up with the most cutting-edge research for a few months, you may be completely left behind.

"I thought that since he had left the field of materials science for so many years, even if his strength did not decrease, he would certainly not make any progress, but I didn't expect..."

Jones gulped and spoke.

"... Didn't expect?"

Professor Stanley nodded heavily.

"Yeah.

"I didn't expect it..."

"He's still so terrifyingly strong!"

Chapter 1343: The More You Know, The Less Imaginative You Are

Professor Stanley obviously wasn't the only one who was shocked.

Director Li returned to Beijing with the sample and helped Lu Zhou register the patent. He then asked someone to send it to the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation.

On the second day after the sample was sent to the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation, Academician Yuan Huanmin rushed to the State Administration for National Defense and found Director Li's office.

"The SF-1 super fiber! Which department made it?!"

Director Li looked at Academician Yuan, who was standing at the door in amazement. Director Li was just as surprised.

If he remembered correctly...

The sample was delivered to the old academician just yesterday...

"Um, drink some water and calm down first." Director Li looked at the assistant standing in the office and said, "Xiao Li, go and pour a cup of tea for Academician Yuan."

"Oh, okay."

The assistant named Xiao Li quickly walked to the cupboard where the electric kettle was kept. He poured two cups of tea and put them on the coffee table.

Director Li stood up from the desk and led Academician Yuan to the sofa. After they sat down, he said, "A while ago, you asked me to ask Academician Lu if he could make this thing, right? I casually asked him when I went to Jinling this time, and he gave me this thing."

Academician Yuan Huanmin, who was drinking tea, almost spat out the tea he had just drunk.

“Then he just gave it to you?” After he swallowed the sip of tea forcibly, Academician Yuan’s face turned red. His tone was full of excitement and disbelief. He said, “How?”

Director Li knew what Academician Yuan was thinking. He couldn’t help but smile as he said, “I know you are surprised. In fact, I am more surprised than you. After I asked him whether he could do it, it took less than five minutes for him to bring the finished product to me. You can imagine my reaction... I was probably more surprised than you are now.”

Academician Yuan nodded, then shook his head again.

What made him baffled was how exactly Lu Zhou was able to produce this thing in five minutes?!

“But how did he—”

“I know what you want to ask, but I don’t know either. I just heard that he used a computational materials science method to build a model, then the laboratory quickly did some tests... Forget about this, tell me if this is good stuff.”

“Is this good stuff?” Academician Yuan shook his head with a smile. He sighed and said, “Have you seen nylon rope before?”

“Of course I have, why?”

“Replace the polyamide fiber twisted into the nylon rope with the super fiber you gave me yesterday.” Academician Yuan said in a serious tone when looking at Director Li, “Then the tensile strength is at least a thousand times higher.”

“A thousand times?!”

Director Li was shocked by this number.

“Is it that big of a difference?”

Academician Yuan Huanmin nodded his head.

“It is.”

The Young's modulus of nylon rope was about 1.4 GPa, the unit of the Young's modulus for the SF-1 super fiber was on the scale of TPa. Even considering a series of factors such as the manufacturing process, this statement was not an exaggeration.

"It is no exaggeration to say that using this thing to make clothes would be like body armor. If turned into a rope, its tensile strength is high enough to be used on an aircraft carrier. We haven't tested its other physical properties, but in terms of tensile strength, I can't imagine a stronger material than this!"

"It's that amazing..."

"It is amazing." Academician Yuan said with a sigh, "The only restriction is our imagination, maybe..."

"Maybe?"

After imagining for a while, Academician Yuan felt like his idea was too ridiculous. He quickly shook his head and spoke.

"No, that... That would be too ridiculous."

Director Li immediately became anxious and asked, "What is ridiculous?"

What is he even talking about?

Academician Yuan Huanmin hesitated for a while and finally spoke.

"What I wanted to say is, maybe this can be used for a..."

"Space elevator!"

...

Chapter 1344: Deep into Hell!

"Unbelievable."

It was impossible to describe the feeling in Professor Gerhard Ertl's heart.

He was sitting in the director's office of the Fritz Haber Institute of the Max Planck Society. He looked at the paper in his hand. Dumbfounded, he didn't speak for a while.

As the director of the Fritz Haber Institute and the 2007 Nobel Prize winner, he was in the field of theoretical chemistry and computational materials science, specifically in the field of solid surface chemistry. He was the first one to write a letter of recommendation to the Nobel Prize Committee.

Professor Klitzing had been sitting in this office for a long time. He was playing with the tea set on the coffee table. He raised his head and looked over.

"It seems you found something interesting."

Although his research direction was not computational materials science, it was condensed matter physics, and computational materials science itself was a discipline derived from the research of condensed matter physics.

Especially for the study of multi-particle complex systems, many computational materials science methods, including first-principles calculations, used physics equations.

From this perspective, this paper not only had outstanding academic value in the field of materials science but also had considerable research value in the field of physics.

And this was one of the reasons why Professor Klitzing, the director of the Institute of Physics, made a special trip to this office.

In addition, another thing that interested him was what ignited Lu Zhou's curiosity so much that he even resigned from the ILHCRC board of directors.

But compared to the former, the latter was just a trivial matter.

"It's more than interesting." Professor Ertl said with a sigh after closing the paper in his hand, "This is beyond my imagination."

Professor Klitzing asked curiously, "What does it mean?"

"Computational materials science is now at a new level. He not only provided a new research method on the basis of the previous theory but also provides

an effective mathematical approach for the study of complex molecular systems. I think you don't know what I'm saying. This is a miracle!

"At least for me, this is a Nobel Prize level achievement... But it probably doesn't mean anything to him. It is impossible for the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences to award him again."

Gerhard Ertl suddenly stopped talking. He looked up to the ceiling and muttered, "Just now, I suddenly had some new ideas. Maybe I should learn from him... and retreat for a period of time, for two days... No, for the rest of the month, don't bother to find me."

Professor Klitzing: "You plan to go on a retreat too? But I heard... This time he didn't go on a retreat."

Ertl looked at him blankly and asked, "Where did you hear that?"

"Technically, it's my educated guess." Professor Klitzing shrugged and said, "Because it hasn't been that long since he announced his resignation from the ILHCRC board of directors... You know, I just went to Shanghai a while ago."

Gerhard Ertl went silent. After a while, he sighed. "Okay then, let's forget about it then."

"Anyway... I want to be alone."

...

Although Lu Zhou had actually expected the sensation in the materials science field, he didn't expect the reaction to be this extreme.

But then he thought about it carefully and figured out the reason.

As opposed to being surprised at his research results, people were more surprised that he actually chose to return to the field of materials science after he reached the pinnacle of achievement in physics.

This was what no one expected.

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

[The mission completion details are as follows: The unexpected return has shocked the entire materials science community. Mankind's greatest scholar

stands at the top of mathematics and physics. What changes will he bring to materials science, one of the three pillars of modern science and technology...]

[Evaluation: (no evaluation for reward missions)]

[Mission reward: One million materials science experience points, 500,000 experience points, a legendary mission card, 3,000 general points.]

A total of 1.5 million experience points and a legendary mission card; this reward was quite generous.

If it weren't for the reward mission, the research results alone would not be worthy of such a generous reward.

However, considering that the measuring function for the reward was the degree of sensation, this reward did seem to be too outrageous.

As for why...

The description of the mission made it clear.

Lu Zhou stood in the pure white system space. As he looked at the holographic panel, his materials science progress bar increased by one third. Lu Zhou thought for a while about the 500,000 experience points. He allocated 200,000 of it to engineering, bringing his engineering level to level 8.

As for the remaining experience points, they were all allocated to biochemistry, which was closely related to materials science.

After the experience points allocation was over, a layer of light blue ripples swept across the translucent holographic screen. The updated characteristic panel soon appeared in front of him.

[

A. Mathematics: Level 10

B. Physics: Level 10

C. Biochemistry: Level 7 (710,000/1.2 million)

D. Engineering: Level 8 (0/3 million)

E. Materials Science: Level 8 (63,000/3 million)

F. Energy Science: Level 7 (0/1.2 million)

G. Information science: Level 7 (100,000/1.2 million)

General points: 38,335

]

“Materials and engineering have reached level 8...

“It’s getting harder and harder to level up.”

However, this also meant that he was getting closer and closer to reaching the maximum of level 10 in all fields.

After closing the characteristic panel, Lu Zhou opened the inventory and selected the card that was glowing quietly in his inventory.

“If only it was a golden card...”

Lu Zhou sighed and reached out. He tapped on the mission card.

Soon after, a pale wave of golden ripples appeared around his index finger, eventually covering the entire translucent holographic screen. As the golden ripples gradually dissipated, a mission interface that looked unusual appeared in front of him.

[Begin legendary mission: Deep into hell!]

[Description: The Earth-Moon system has been dominated by civilization. The planted seeds will grow into towering trees. However, the human desire for living space is endless, even for an uninhabited desert...]

[Requirements: Complete the Mars manned landing plan within this year!]

[Reward: Experience points, general points, and item rewards are determined by the number of people who have landed on Mars and the time taken!]

Deep into hell?

Why do I feel like...

The moment Lu Zhou saw this mission, he had a bad feeling in his heart...

Chapter 1345: The Headache of the International Union of Materials Research Societies

"It's probably just a random thought..."

Lu Zhou looked at the golden mission panel. He shook his head and pushed the strange feeling away from his mind. He then focused on the mission again.

He had to complete the manned landing plan on Mars within this year.

This wasn't a big deal.

The manned landing on Mars was one of China's space programs this year; it was also a sub-project of the Mars Scientific Research Station.

The reward was determined by the number of successful landings and the mission time taken...

Lu Zhou looked at this strange reward metric silently.

If I put a hundred people on Mars at once, wouldn't it be possible to get tens of millions of experience points?

Of course, this was just an idea.

Forget about the technical difficulty, risks, and ethical issues, even if so many people were sent at once, the system would probably not give him more than 10 million experience points.

After all, the rewards increased with the number of people, but not necessarily linearly.

"Anyway, I just have to think of a way to send people to Mars as soon as possible... This mission should be quite simple."

Not long ago, the aerospace launch site sent a spacecraft to cruise around Mars orbit. They just had to think of a way to bring a life-sustaining device, some volunteers, and a landing module.

Lu Zhou closed the holographic panel.

Although the feeling of unease still lingered in his mind, he didn't like to worry about unknown things. After frowning and thinking for a while, he put the matter aside for the time being.

After exiting the system space, the sky outside the window was completely dark.

He looked at his watch to check the time and saw that it was already ten o'clock in the evening. Lu Zhou was about to close his eyes and go to sleep, only to find that the drone controlled by Xiao Ai was lying on the bedside table next to him.

After hesitating for a second, Lu Zhou asked, "... Is there a problem?"

Xiao Ai: [... Master, you received a call. (☆-v-)]

"Okay."

After yawning, Lu Zhou reached out and picked up the phone. He looked at the dozen missed calls and wondered who would call a dozen times at night. He called the number back.

The call was quickly connected.

Unsurprisingly, Director Li's voice appeared on the other end of the phone.

"Hello? Academician Lu, you haven't slept yet?"

"..."

Lu Zhou couldn't help but complain in his heart.

With the number of calls you bombarded me with, even if I were asleep, you would have woken me up.

But seeing how he wasn't asleep anyway, he decided not to care anymore. He put his head back on the pillow and asked casually, "What's the matter, spit it out."

"Haha, it's not a big deal."

"Then I'm hanging, talk tomorrow."

"Hey, wait, wait, don't hang up, I just want to... consult you about one thing, it won't take long!"

"Then say it...?"

"Have you heard of space elevators—"

Beep—

The phone suddenly hung up, and the voice on the other end of the phone was cut off.

"Ah... I accidentally hung up."

Lu Zhou turned off the phone and threw it aside. He then turned around and went to bed.

Director Li, who was at his home in Beijing, was bewildered by the beeping tone coming from his mobile phone.

Why did the call suddenly drop?

Did his phone run out of battery...

...

While Lu Zhou was sleeping, chaos was going on at the headquarters of the International Union of Materials Research Societies on the other side of the Pacific Ocean.

Chairman Swift was sitting in his office, chatting with the Secretary General, Professor Merri Finch, about the selection of the annual society awards.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the office door. A young assistant walked in quickly with an unopened letter in his hand.

“Chairman, this is a letter from the Max Planck Society.”

Chairman Swift put down the pen in his hand. He looked over with his tired eyes and asked weakly, “What does it say?”

“The letter is from Professor Gerhard Ertl, the director of the Fritz Haber Institute.” The assistant opened the envelope and said hesitantly, “The letter... says to hope for you to nominate Lu Zhou as a candidate for the Annual Union Award.”

Chairman Swift immediately pressed his index finger and thumb on his eyebrow as he dealt with a headache. He muttered, “This again.”

Makes sense.

Lu Zhou and the Max Planck Society always had a good relationship. Not only did he receive the Hoffman Medal awarded by the German Chemical Society, but he also cooperated with the Germans on the Stellarator project.

Professor Merri Finch, who was standing next to him, shrugged. He didn't seem surprised at all.

After all, this was expected.

Even without considering the relationship, the academic value of that paper was worthy of an award from the German Chemical Society.

They had received at least ten nomination letters from top talents and organizations in materials science, hoping that they could include Lu Zhou's name in the selection list for this year's Annual Union Award.

In fact, this wasn't a big deal.

But for Chairman Swift, this was a headache.

Even though the International Union of Materials Research Societies was a joint organization of various materials science societies, because the center of the world materials science community was in Boston, this organization was somewhat similar in nature to the ILHCRC. Both were technically international, but in reality, it was still an organization that was affected by a single country alone.

Under such circumstances, if they really considered Lu Zhou's research results, they would have to worry about the diplomatic stance of their own authorities.

Also, they had already negotiated and planned to award the Annual Union Award to Professor Colhart of Stanford University in recognition of his outstanding contributions in the field of electrochemical corrosion of complex systems.

If Lu Zhou was one of the candidates, then there would be no doubt that he would win.

"You can leave."

"Oh, okay..." The assistant, who stood at the door hesitated, left the opened letter on the cabinet next to him before leaving the office.

The office door closed. Secretary-General Merri Finch, who had been standing beside him, said thoughtfully, "It seems that our European friends are starting to feel dissatisfied with our actions."

The unfairness of the annual award was a known secret. Other societies couldn't do anything about their manipulation of this award.

After all, it was difficult to find evidence for something this vague.

Normally, the candidates they nominated were not weak, but if there were equally strong candidates, they would be more inclined to choose scholars who were in North America or who intended to work in North America.

Therefore, Professor Ertl nominating Lu Zhou in the name of the Max Planck Society was a bit tricky.

After all, for a research institution like the Max Planck Institute, even if the nominations were not domestic scholars, they were generally scholars working in Germany.

The nomination proposed by Professor Ertl did put a lot of pressure on them.

Chairman Swift looked over and asked, "What do we do now?"

"If we reject so many nomination letters, it will definitely arouse dissatisfaction with other societies." Secretary-General Merri thought for a while and said, "Let's be more generous and admit that his research is well done."

"No way!" Chairman Swift said without hesitation, "If it were someone else, it would be fine, but this is Lu Zhou... Stanford University, Professor Colhart, and Congress won't be happy."

"Not necessarily."

Chairman Swift looked at Merri Finch as he waited for an explanation.

Secretary-General Merri Finch paused for a while and explained, "Anyone can see that the United States has lost the space race and has chosen to compromise with China on a series of historical issues due to controllable fusion technology. Even NASA uses the threat of the East as an excuse to ask for funding from Congress. But haven't you noticed? The confrontation has actually become smaller and smaller."

"So what?"

"The people are getting tired of this fruitless confrontation. The White House also knows that it is difficult to rely on the short term to gain support for itself. Instead, voters will gradually lose confidence." Secretary-General Merri Finch looked at Swift and said seriously, "If Lu Zhou visits North America, maybe this can be an opportunity to restore the relationship between the two countries."

Chairman Swift frowned.

"I don't want to bring politics into academia."

"Don't forget who is supporting our funding." Secretary-General Merri Finch shrugged and said, "Besides, this is not a matter of bringing politics into academia. Do you think that his paper, a Nobel Prize level achievement, is not worthy of an Annual Union Award?"

"As for Stanford University and Professor Colhart... I don't think it is a shame to lose to Professor Lu."

This time, Chairman Swift was silent for a long time, as if he was persuaded.

After half a minute or so, he finally spoke.

“Go to the White House and ask for their opinions.

“If they plan to use this opportunity to repair relations with China...

“I believe Professor Colhart will understand our situation.”

Chapter 1346: You Should Think About Young People

Sometimes, coincidences happened.

If Lu Zhou knew what was in the mind of Chairman Swift at this moment, he would probably accept the invitation from the International Union of Materials Research Societies and participate in the selection of the Annual Union Award.

The honor did not matter to him.

If he could make a small contribution to the peace, stability, and joint cooperation of the two countries in the next ten or even twenty years, he would gladly make a trip to North America.

After all, compared to the vast universe, the politics on Earth seemed insignificant.

Also, he hadn't been back to Princeton in a long time; Lu Zhou missed his old friends.

Unfortunately, the International Union of Materials Research Societies did not imply this in the email.

Therefore, when Assistant Zhao brought the email to Lu Zhou, he just glanced at it and said, “Write a rejection letter for me.”

Zhao Huan was stunned. She looked at Lu Zhou in disbelief.

“Reject?”

Lu Zhou: “Yeah.”

At a loss, Zhao Huan looked at Lu Zhou and said, “B-but this is a nomination letter from the International Union of Materials Research Societies. The Annual Union Award is important, right?”

That’s a hundred thousand dollars in prize money.

Even though she knew that her boss did not care about money, she still felt like it would be a waste.

Lu Zhou replied casually, “Because it is important; I hope they can give it to a young scholar.”

Even though the Annual Union Award was quite an important award, it was still far behind the Nobel Prize. With these titles behind him, it didn’t make much sense to win another Nobel Prize, let alone an annual award issued by an alliance of societies.

Lu Zhou suddenly noticed the embarrassed expression on Zhao Huan’s face. He immediately understood what she was worried about.

“How about this, I’ll write the letter myself, don’t worry about it.”

Even though Zhao Huan still felt like it was a waste, she was relieved.

After all, for such a critical email, she had to express their intentions clearly. If something went wrong and she did not fully express Academician Lu’s words, then the blame would be on her.

Zhao Huan left and went to prepare for her lecture. Lu Zhou turned on the computer and logged into his email. He began to write the reply to the International Union of Materials Research Societies.

Lu Zhou thanked the International Union of Materials Research Societies for the nomination, then politely and euphemistically expressed his intention to withdraw from the award selection...

“The implicit density functional method is a computational material theory that I accidentally made when I was researching carbon materials. I didn’t expect to be able to receive any awards from it...”

“Like I said in an interview before, compared to someone like me who has lost my interest in honor and money and only hopes to reveal more about the mysteries of the universe, giving an award to me is pointless.

“I will find someone to do a report on implicit functional density theory, but forget about the medals. I hope you can give more consideration to those young people who have more potential than me and need more recognition.

“They need this honor more than me!”

Lu Zhou checked the email from start to finish. He made sure that there were no errors before pressing the send button.

Then, he thought for a while. He took out his cell phone, opened his contacts, and called his little apprentice.

“Hey.”

“... Hi?”

The other end of the phone was quiet. Han Mengqi’s voice was also very quiet. It seemed like she was in a library.

“What are you doing?”

“Studying in the library... What’s wrong?”

Lu Zhou twisted the ballpoint pen in his hand. He leaned against the office chair and said, “Well, I might have to ask you for something. Are you busy these days?”

“Huh? Busy, no, what’s the matter—”

The voice on the other end of the phone suddenly became a little flustered for some reason. Lu Zhou felt this was strange but didn’t think much of it.

“I need a report on computational materials science. Are you interested in doing it for me?”

“A report on computational materials science?”

Han Mengqi paused for a second. Her restless heart rate finally calmed down. She couldn’t help but frown.

“I can... But I switched to pure mathematics research. I haven’t touched computational materials for a long time...”

“That’s fine. Also, you can review the knowledge you have learned before. It would be a shame to forget all the things I taught you.” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “You have more than a month to prepare. If there is anything you don’t understand, you can ask me. This is if you want to. If you don’t, then nevermind.”

Although Lu Zhou was a supervisor to his students, he rarely considered himself a supervisor. Most of the time he communicated like a peer with his students.

If Han Mengqi wasn’t interested, he wouldn’t force her. Although this was a good opportunity for her to step on the international stage, her personal choices still had to be respected.

Han Mengqi sighed after thinking for a while.

“All right... I’ll give it a try.”

Over the past few days, she had been studying the transcendence of Riemann zeta function at odd positive integer points. This was a research project assigned to her by Lu Zhou.

However, this research project was just as difficult as it sounded. Although it was not as difficult as Riemann’s hypothesis, it was by no means an easy task.

Back then, they agreed that as long as she made any progress in this research area, or enough progress to be listed in a regional journal, they would allow her to get her Ph.D.

And if she couldn’t complete this task, she would never graduate. Even though she was Chen Yushan’s cousin, Lu Zhou didn’t show any mercy.

Of course, Lu Zhou also left her a way out, which was to continue her research on computational materials science.

However, Han Mengqi never thought about giving up.

Now that her research had entered a dead end, it was good to go out and relax her mind...

Han Mengqi continued to ask, "Can I ask, where am I doing the report?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "It should be in Boston. This academic report is in April, at the conference of the International Union of Materials Research Societies. I will send the relevant information to your email. Don't worry about the travel expenses. The first-class tickets and five-star hotels will be fully reimbursed. Remember to have fun. If you see my old friends, say hi to them for me."

Han Mengqi: "..."

International Union of Materials Research Societies conference...

She didn't expect it to be such an important conference.

She suddenly started to regret agreeing so easily.

Chapter 1347: Personally In Charge!

Boston.

Headquarters of the International Union of Materials Research Societies.

Chairman Swift sat in his office while Secretary-General Merri Finch looked at the email on the computer screen with a dumbfounded expression. He didn't talk for a while.

About a day ago, the White House accepted their proposal, and the United States Congress side also gave the green light. They intended to use this award ceremony as an opportunity to restore the relationship between the two countries.

Whether it was the Lunar Gateway space station or the fusion reactor in California, they were inseparable from the Chinese transport spacecraft and engineers. They couldn't continue to carry on this kind of confrontation, it would feel like a little kid making a tantrum.

All signs showed that the confrontation between them and China was over.

After all, if this confrontation continued, the people of California would start asking for independence again.

Sports could be an opportunity to restore the normalcy of diplomatic relations, as could academic activities.

The White House had already arranged for Lu Zhou's airport pick-up ceremony, as well as a presidential-level meeting. They even scheduled an afternoon tea at the White House. However, Chairman Swift and Secretary-General Merri Finch did not expect that, after they had arranged everything, Lu Zhou actually gave up the award and wasn't coming?!

Yes, he wasn't coming!

What the hell?!

"... Isn't he a young scholar himself?" Secretary-General Merri Finch said as he read the last few lines of the email.

He had never seen such bullsh*t!

Chairman Swift, who was standing next to him, obviously had the same thought in his mind. He had a constipated look on his face. It took him a while before he spoke.

"Does he have something against us?"

"Probably not? We didn't offend him... right?"

"Sh*t... What should we do now? Everything is ready already. Should we inform the White House first...?"

"Ask the White House." Secretary-General Merri Finch said solemnly, "If there is a misunderstanding, then we will be in big troubles."

In fact, Chairman Swift and Secretary-General Merri Finch weren't the only ones who were frightened. The White House was also troubled by Lu Zhou's decision.

Gradually, they began to realize that the “feud” between the two countries might be bigger than imagined. The White House tried to gauge China’s attitude through diplomatic channels.

On the third day after Lu Zhou sent the email refusing to accept the Annual Union Award...

Director Li personally visited Jinling and went to Lu Zhou’s home.

“Did you reject the Annual Union Award?”

“Yeah,” Lu Zhou said casually. He looked at Director Li, who was sitting opposite the coffee table, and said, “It doesn’t make much sense for me to receive more awards. I think we should leave the opportunity to young people who need it more. Is there a problem?”

Leave it to young people...

Director Li had a baffled look on his face.

In the international academic community, which scholar who is worthy of a nomination is younger than you?

He saw Lu Zhou’s serious look and wanted to curse.

After a moment of silence, he sighed and said, “... Nothing. Doesn’t matter if you don’t go, anyway... We can wait for the next opportunity.”

Lu Zhou: “...?”

Opportunity?

What opportunity?

I feel like I missed something very important.

Lu Zhou was expressionless. Director Li hesitated for a moment. He then finally sighed and said, “The higher-ups are saying that the confrontation with North America should end. We should forget and forgive. Improvement is what’s important. We have no core interests in America. As long as they agree to give up interfering in Asian affairs, it is a good choice to step back... What do you think?”

Lu Zhou didn't understand why Director Li suddenly discussed the overall political situation with him. He frowned and said, "I am a pacifist. You should know what I think."

Director Li sighed and said, "Good! In fact, I am also worried if you are harboring any resentment... In fact, the incident on the last cruise has nothing to do with the Americans. Surprisingly, the CIA has nothing to do with it."

Lu Zhou: "...?"

What resentment?

What does the Aurora Borealis cruise ship have to do with this?

In fact, if Director Li didn't mention it, he had almost forgotten about the cruise entirely.

Moreover, he had never been very interested in politics. He was just a scholar who worked hard to explore the mysteries of the universe, under the premise of being loyal to the country and fighting for the shared future of mankind.

If he had to pick a motivation behind all this...

It was mostly curiosity.

"I don't understand the purpose of you coming here." Lu Zhou took a sip of tea and looked at Director Li with a bit of confusion. He said, "Don't tell me you came to Jinling just to talk about politics with me."

"Of course not! You are so busy with scientific research. I don't want to disturb you." Director Li smiled embarrassedly and said, "I only asked about the award for our diplomatic department. The main reason I'm here is about the manned mission!"

Manned mission?

Hearing these words, Lu Zhou's eyes suddenly lit up.

He put down the teacup in his hand, looked at Director Li, and smiled.

"The manned mission? What a coincidence, I was planning to talk to you about this."

Director Li smiled and said, "Please go ahead!"

"The Mars project occupies a very important role in our space strategy. The manned Mars landing is the beginning of everything. This project is important, so there is no room for mistakes," Lu Zhou said seriously. He looked at Director Li and said in a solemn tone, "I want to be personally in charge of the launch plan!"

Director Li immediately showed an overjoyed look on his face. He tapped his thigh and said, "Hahaha, what a coincidence!

"I came to Jinling just to talk to you about this!

"The higher-ups have decided. If you want to, you will be the chief designer of the Mars colonization project!

"But since you already agreed, what else is there to say? Let's go to Beijing together! Then head to the west!"

China's artificial biosphere and Mars colonization experimental base were both in the Dzoosotoyn Elisen Desert, which was on the west side of China. The plans had been in preparation for a few years.

Lu Zhou stood up from the sofa and spoke with a smile.

"Okay then. Let's get going. I'll go and pack my luggage first. Wait for me for half an hour."

Director Li: "No problem. No need to be in a hurry. You should pack more clothes. Who knows when you will be back... By the way, I suddenly remembered something."

"What?" Lu Zhou asked.

Director Li had an embarrassing smile on his face.

"The call last time. Didn't I ask you about the space elevator? I just wanted to ask if—Wait wait, don't leave!"

Dumbfounded, Director Li looked at the empty living room...

Chapter 1348: Unlocking the Biosphere!
Dzoosotoyn Elisen Desert.

This was a restricted zone of life.

Years ago, Academician Lu circled this area on the map. A six-lane road surrounded by planted trees was paved here. After the completion of a closed biosphere in the shape of an egg, there were finally signs of life.

The pen in Liang Youcheng's hand stopped. He glanced at the cabin air pressure indicator on the workbench next to him, then closed the diary in his hand.

Four hundred days had passed since the biosphere was last open.

There were two things Liang Youcheng must do every day. One was to video call his wife and children, and the other was to write in a diary and record the bits and pieces of life in the biosphere.

This was the suggestion from the psychologist during training.

"... The environment on Mars will be worse than here. Long-term low gravity will put stress on the bones and organs and also cause stress on the mind. The former can be controlled by drugs, but you need to make psychological adjustments yourself. When you are bored, try to write in your diary. You can just write two sentences."

Just like this, more than a year had passed. He felt that his diary was thick enough to be published as a book. He almost didn't want this kind of lifestyle to end.

"Speaking of which, today is the day the biosphere opens."

He took a deep breath and stood up from the console.

If he remembered correctly, he was the last shift. When the colleagues in the plantation section harvested the last batch of potatoes and corn, they could pack their bags, stand in front of the airlock, and wait for someone outside to open the door.

Someone said yesterday that, apparently, Academician Lu would come today.

Any astronaut would know of the chief consultant and chief designer of the Lunar Orbit Committee.

After hearing the news, almost everyone was excited. They wondered if this meant that the time for them to fulfill their mission was coming soon...

On the other hand, outside the biosphere.

Accompanied by several troops, a group of people walked on the concrete road in the research base.

Lu Zhou looked around at the neat concrete houses on both sides of the road. He couldn't help but feel nostalgic.

"Back here again."

Director Li walked beside him. Director Li felt the same way, and he said in a rather emotional tone, "Yeah."

Including this time, this was the third time he had been to this desert. Whether it was the site selection of the base or the recovery of the Lightning airborne capsule, he was with Lu Zhou each time.

Not just that, but every time he came here, he could see the obvious changes of this lonely fortress standing in the desert.

This time, the changes he saw were even more obvious.

It felt like a completely different place.

"This place has changed quite a bit."

Lu Zhou smiled.

"Quite a bit? I can hardly recognize it anymore."

When the Garden Project was first established, he remembered that this place was still a barren desert. The military group and scientific research workers transferred from various research units were stationed here.

The conditions at that time were very difficult. They slept in a mobile room converted from a shipping container and ate dry food that was easy to store. They drank water delivered by a water truck from a hundred kilometers away.

Several years had passed, and the Garden Project had taken over this desert. The biosphere research base had become a beacon that couldn't be ignored in the China extraterrestrial colonization plan!

Professor Hu Yang walked beside Lu Zhou and Director Li. He had matured a lot since before.

The dry sand took away the youthful look of the young professor, who came from the Agricultural University, leaving wrinkles and dry cracks on his face.

No one would guess that he was only in his forties.

“Over the past two years, two research institutions have moved here, and members from international cooperation organizations have also moved in. With many people stationed here, eating and drinking have stimulated the local economy. Many locals who are around here saw the water tower built by the military and decided to build houses nearby. I am a little worried that the migration of so many people here will damage the local fragile ecological environment.

“After all, what attracts us to stay here is the dead life zone in the middle of the Dzoosotoyn Elisen Desert. We are afraid that the locals will develop tourism here, and we will have to move out sooner or later.”

Director Li nodded thoughtfully and said seriously, “I will report the situation here with the organization and guide non-researchers who settle nearby to suitable places as soon as possible.”

Professor Hu Yang sighed and said, “Thank you.”

While they were talking, the group finally reached the deepest part of the research base.

Here was the core component of the entire Garden Project: Biosphere A.

From the last experiment to now, the biosphere had been operating stably for 400 days without the input of external resources. Now that its in-progress goals had been completed, today was the time for that gate to open.

Lu Zhou and the others saw the astronauts, who were about to head to Mars, in the lounge outside the biosphere.

“Hello, Academician Lu!”

A young astronaut in casual clothes stepped forward enthusiastically and shook Lu Zhou’s hand.

Lu Zhou shook his right hand back firmly and spoke with a smile.

“Hello, hello! Staying in the biosphere for more than a year, it must have been hard!”

Dr. Liang Youcheng said with a hearty smile, “Not hard! The automation technology in the biosphere is very mature, and our work is relatively easy! We only work six hours a day. We also have Internet access. The two months of going offline for psychological evaluation was a bit difficult, but the rest was fine.”

The so-called psychological evaluation was to test the astronaut’s mental endurance ability under extreme conditions.

For example, in the last simulation, the researchers simulated that the solar flares damaged the communication equipment outside the biosphere. They cut off the connection between the inside of the biosphere and the outside world for two months.

During that time, they could not talk to their family, nor read a single thing online.

For a person who had lived in modern society for 20 to 30 years, this was torture.

Lu Zhou looked at the young astronaut in front of him and spoke in a serious tone.

“The situation on Mars will be worse than that on Earth. It’s very likely that it will be a two or three years journey. Maybe when you come back, your children will have already graduated from high school... Are you sure about this?”

Liang Youcheng straightened his back. He raised his chin and said in a confident tone, “I made my decision the day I joined the aerospace brigade. As for my son, he will be proud of his father!”

Lu Zhou looked at the unwavering expression on the face of the astronaut in front of him. He cast an approving look at him and nodded lightly.

“It’s an honor to work with you.”

“Speaking of which, Academician Lu, I want to ask you something for my teammates. I wonder if it is okay?”

Lu Zhou said, “What question?”

“Are we... leaving soon?”

Lu Zhou looked at the eager expressions on the faces of the astronauts in front of him. Lu Zhou paused for a second. He then smiled and nodded.

“Yes.

“The Mars manned landing plan will be launched within a month!”

The astronauts had joy written on their faces. Lu Zhou cleared his throat and continued in a serious tone, “The reason I came here is to check whether the colonial capsule design meets the standard, as well as to review the warriors who are about to go to space...

“Which is you guys!

“Your performance was all outstanding, and you have exceeded our researchers’ expectations! Obviously, you have passed all the tests, and with your perseverance and courage demonstrated in the experiment, you have moved everyone, including me. I hope you keep what you have learned in the experiments and spread the beautiful and outstanding character to the distant starry skies for our civilization.

“Even though we are not the first to set foot on the land of Mars, I believe that we will accomplish what others have failed.

“In the near future, because of your bravery, our flag will forever float on the land of Mars.

“We will cultivate the wasteland into fertile fields and turn the desert into an oasis!”

Chapter 1349: The Mars Landing Plan!

It had been many years since Liang Youcheng joined the astronaut brigade, and he had been in countless mobilization meetings. This was the first time he was this excited.

“... We will cultivate the wasteland into fertile fields and turn the desert into an oasis!”

Academician Lu's words pierced into his heart, causing the blood in his body to boil.

It was as if something had penetrated deep into his bones, like he was awakened by something inside of him.

The sense of destiny was urging him to spread order and prosperity to further places!

Obviously, Liang Youcheng was not the only one who was ecstatic.

As soon as Academician Lu left Biosphere a, the news that the Mars landing plan would be launched within a month spread throughout the research base.

Because this matter was deliberately not kept as a secret, even before Lu Zhou arrived in the desert area, Everyone Daily and other media outlets were already preparing to report on this news.

The science and education column of CTV launched a three-episode program. The title was “The Future Home of Mankind”. Academician Yuan Huanmin was invited to popularize science for the general public. He talked about the space program blueprint, the construction of the scientific research station on Mars, and the practical significance and future of the construction of the Lagrange Space Base.

Therefore, on the opening day of the Biosphere A, the news was spread to every corner of the country by reporters stationed in the Dzoosotoyn Elisen Desert!

The headline was printed on every newspaper!

Beijing Evening News: [Biosphere A opens again! Artificial biosphere research has entered a new era!]

Science and Technology News: [The 400-day closed experiment has achieved success! Twenty experimenters are in normal physical condition!]

Journal of China Agricultural University: [China has mastered the technology of a fully enclosed space colony capsule! Professor Hu Yang from our school participated in the project research!]

Jin Ling University News: [Academician Lu of our school is in charge as the chief designer and of the Mars landing rocket!]

Jinling Daily: [...]

The reports came one after another. A series of related terms such as “China Mars landing project”, “Biosphere A”, and “Academician Lu” started to trend online.

Just a few days ago, people were still amazed that Lu Zhou announced his resignation from the ILHCRC board of directors. They debated about where he would go next. Little did they expect that this debate would end so soon.

What followed was such a piece of amazing news.

China would launch a manned Mars landing plan within this month!

Academician Lu was the chief designer!

This was bonkers!

The biosphere at the Dzoosotoyn Elisen Desert was an international cooperation project. Therefore, Chinese scientific researchers and journalists were not the only ones who were stationed there. The mainstream media from various countries had also focused their attention here.

While the news about the initial success of Biosphere A had hit the headlines of major Chinese media, the news that the Mars landing plan would be launched within a month had also quickly spread to the Internet. This aroused widespread concern and discussion in the international community.

This sudden news shocked many people.

For the Americans who failed spectacularly on Mars a few years ago, this was like a thunderbolt from the sky. They didn't know how to react.

On Twitter.

The attention on this topic overtook the recent baseball competition in the trending page!

The reply section of a recent tweet about the observation of extraterrestrial planets released by NASA was bombarded by the shocked North Americans.

"The Chinese plans to land on Mars?!"

"F*ck! You guys have been spending so much money every year, where did the money go!"

"I don't think there is a need to panic. The Chinese are interested in Mars, so let them do it. We've already been there anyway."

"That argument does not make people feel comfortable at all. Our Mars landing was a shame! When their spacecraft came to pick up our astronauts, NASA was worried about leaking technology to China. We even intentionally crashed the BFS spacecraft!"

"... That is just China's claims, it's not proven."

"Enough! I don't think going to Mars is anything to be proud of! The key is whether they can stay on it. If they just print their footprints on it, insert a flag, then go home like NASA, I don't think it's a big deal!"

"This is China's provocation! We should immediately restart the Mars landing plan! Rebuild New Virginia on Mars!"

The discussions continued to develop on Twitter.

The opinions of netizens seemed to be divided into two factions. One side thought that China had mastered the technology of cruising in Mars orbit and the fully enclosed biosphere. They thought the Chinese could easily establish a permanent research station on Mars.

The other side held the completely opposite view. They believed that although China had mastered the technology of cruising in the orbit of Mars, it was still not an easy task to establish a permanent base on Mars.

The two sides couldn't convince each other.

So far, it seemed that the pessimistic viewpoint was more dominant.

After all, as many people had seen, although China had completed its cruise flight in the orbit of Mars more than once and successfully returned to the lunar transfer orbit, they had not planted their footprints on the surface of Mars in a real sense.

There was a difference between reaching Mars orbit and landing on Mars.

Even though the Garden Project had achieved in-progress success, the Dzoosotoyn Elisen Desert was insignificant compared to the desperate yellow lands on Mars.

The dust storm there could last for a whole year. The dust that obscured the sky would not only paralyze all solar energy facilities but could also drop the temperature of the surface of Mars to an extreme number!

Even in a fully enclosed biosphere, it was impossible to maintain the artificial ecosystem for a year purely by relying on internal resource circulation and without relying on the input of external energy.

Maybe China didn't realize how bad the situation on Mars was?

Many Americans had this idea.

After all, as the citizens of the strongest space country in the last century, this reality was unacceptable...

Compared to the opinion of the general public, the response from the American elite was far more pessimistic.

Although it was still a matter of controversy whether the Chinese could successfully complete the Mars landing and build a permanent colony on the surface of Mars, they were not as naive to think that the Chinese did not consider the extreme Mars climate.

After all, it was the Chinese who brought their astronauts back from Mars.

They were more surprised by something else.

Which was that China announced the launch of the Mars landing plan would happen within a month...

They didn't know why the Chinese people made such a hasty decision. This kind of attitude toward going to Mars was like booking a plane ticket, which shocked many people.

NASA's Facebook community.

Most of the people who posted here were engineers in the aerospace field, or at least masters and doctorates engaged in related professional fields. While the reply section of NASA's Twitter exploded, they began to discuss here as well.

"Start within the month? Jesus... Are they kidding? This kind of large-scale space exploration program takes tens of billions of dollars, yet they just made a decision out of nowhere? Without any planning?"

"Perhaps they began planning many years ago... Like the Biosphere A, when they were picking up our mess on Mars, they have already begun preparing for this plan."

"Sh*t... I feel like our astronauts were the experiment test rats."

"Not just the astronauts. I feel like the entire NASA has become their guinea pigs. Isn't there this rumor? That the black box of the New Virginia colony was not left on Mars; instead, it was taken by them!"

This speculation was not without reason.

After all, there were many doubts and uncertainties as to what had actually happened.

What was interesting was that, the second China announced the news of their Mars landing plan, the former BFS captain Johnson, who was picked up from Mars by Starlight, posted a thought-provoking tweet on his personal social media that was unacceptable to many Americans.

"... I think no one in North America knows how amazing their aerospace technology is. The difference between the BFS spacecraft and the Starlight is

like the difference between a fishing boat and a steel battleship. When we were still calculating our spacecraft energy use carefully, they had enough energy to create a coaxially rotating gravitational chamber! Even though I thought this design was superfluous, my jaw dropped to the ground.

“I think our gap is not in aerospace at all. It is in areas that are more fundamental than aerospace engineering. For example, materials and energy... Just like controllable nuclear fusion.

“I have no doubt that two or even three years ago, they were already able to send astronauts to Mars comfortably. As for why they didn’t do this, it was out of respect for life itself.

“Maybe our president should reflect on what this meaningless confrontation has brought us, apart from disasters!”

Johnson, who had been on the two spacecrafts, BFS and Starlight, before, was the person who clearly understood the gap between the two countries.

After all, in all of America, there was probably only one other astronaut who knew how he was feeling.

After that tweet was sent out, it received a considerable amount of retweets in just one hour. This made Americans gradually doubt whether there was a need for the space race to continue.

Of course, there were always arrogant people.

For example, NASA’s distinguished engineer, one of the directors of the Lunar Gateway project, Professor Phil Goethe from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology spoke confidently in an interview with the media.

“This is a rushed space program!

“I believe they have achieved a certain degree of advantage in space technology, but I still don’t see any chance of success in a rushed plan!

“If they really care about the lives of their own astronauts, it is better to reconsider the launch schedule and spend a few months researching the launch plan.

“Don’t mistake arrogance as courage. This might become the most ridiculous tragedy in human history!”

Chapter 1350: Distant Planet Colony System

Jinling aerospace assembly center.

This high-tech factory covered an area of more than 100 acres. It collected and distributed state-of-the-art aerospace equipment. The Star Voyage One quantum computer provided cloud information services and used assembly lines, multi-axis electric drive robotic arms, logistics vehicles, and automated equipment such as aerial vehicles to fully standardize and automate production.

This place was like a furnace, melting and forging the dreams of all Chinese citizens.

Director Chang Hezhi stood inside this behemoth. He was one of the people in charge of the Mars landing plan. Together with Academician Yuan Huanmin and other senior engineers and executives of aerospace technology groups, they stood there quietly and waited.

After about ten minutes.

Finally, under the escort of several military vehicles, a black car drove into the parking lot. It stopped at the entrance of the factory.

The car door opened, and a serious old man and a young man got out of the car at the same time.

Needless to say, everyone in China knew who the old man was.

As well as the young man.

His academic achievements had already conquered the international academic community. Anyone who followed relevant news in the scientific community could instantly recognize him.

They knew him as “Professor Lu”.

The president noticed the serious expressions on everyone's face, so he smiled kindly and said, "Don't be so serious, I just came here to take a look... The colony capsule is in this factory?"

Lu Zhou noticed that the president was looking at him. He smiled and nodded.

"The assembly is complete, let's go inside."

"Academician Lu, please lead the way!"

After some small talk, the group of people walked into the factory building in the very center of the aerospace assembly center.

The president looked around at the metal high-precision automation equipment. He then said emotionally, "I have seen a lot of factories all over the country. But every time I come here, I am in awe."

The logistics trucks were like worker ants, interacting with a series of mechanical equipment such as robotic arms and conveyor belts. Everything was so smooth; there was not a single pause.

The entire factory was like a clock, and every gear here was running under the coordination of AI. Its speed might not be the fastest, but it was precise to the millimeter.

It was like everything here was carefully designed.

"This is the latest industrial cloud service technology developed by our team. In addition to the aerospace assembly center, this system is currently in use for logistics centers in major cities such as Shenzhen and Shanghai, as well as the Jin Ling high-tech zone. According to our customers' feedback, standardized manufacturing through automation technology has dominated the international market!"

Lu Zhou looked at the shocked expression on the president's face. He spoke after thinking for a moment.

"AI application in industrial automation is trending. With breakthroughs in quantum chips and computer technology, we are now ahead of the world. There will be more and more automated factories in the future. The population will change from low-end industries to high-end industries. This will bring

about a series of social issues, such as employment rate, extended education time, and so forth. These are all things we must consider.”

“Employment rate is indeed a problem.” The president nodded thoughtfully and said, “It is unrealistic to hinder the development of technology. Once the technology is mature enough, this kind of automation technology will migrate to the industry sooner or later... Is that what you mean?”

Lu Zhou: “Basically.”

“Are there any good solutions?”

“Social welfare, increasing public expenditure, and developing the tertiary industry... They are all good solutions. I believe that the scholars of social sciences must be more knowledgeable than me in researching these issues.”

“Social welfare might still be a bit difficult.” The old man frowned and said thoughtfully, “Our situation is somewhat different from other countries. First of all, population is a big problem.”

“In the short term, it is a problem.” Lu Zhou nodded and said, “But I believe that as long as the productivity is sufficiently developed, even if the population doubles, we will be able to maintain the expenditure of a high social welfare.”

The president suddenly turned to look at the assistant behind him.

“Did you write that down?”

The assistant nodded and closed the notepad in his hand.

“Yes, sir.”

“Good.”

The president looked at Lu Zhou and said with a smile, “I will discuss this in a meeting after I go back. Let’s take a look at the colony capsule that is going to be sent to Mars.”

Lu Zhou said with a smile, “It’s right over there!”

Through a metal alloy door, inside an empty factory building, everyone saw a silver-white spacecraft in the shape of an egg, covered by a steel frame.

The spacecraft was about half the size of a basketball court. It did not look like a normal spacecraft.

In fact, it was more like a space station.

Almost everyone was shocked by the size of this machine.

Especially Academician Yuan Huanmin and other engineers from the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation.

Instead of thinking this was “awesome” and “cool”, they were thinking about how difficult it would be to send this thing to space.

Academician Yuan Huanmin stared dumbfounded at this spacecraft. After a long time, he couldn’t help but ask, “This... How do you plan to send it to Mars?”

Many people had the same question in their minds.

This included Director Chang Hezhi, the person in charge of the Mars Landing Project, and the leaders of the Lunar Orbit Committee. Almost everyone turned to Lu Zhou for the answer.

Lu Zhou smiled and explained, “It’s not difficult to send it to Mars. As long as it is sent to a geosynchronous orbit first, the Starlight or Magpie Bridge can take it to Mars.

“Of course, this time we don’t need to use the Starlight or Magpie Bridge. Our design institute took into account the peculiarities of this equipment when designing the colony capsule and designed a separate flight system for it.

“Including the colony capsule, the entire flight system contains more than twelve different functional components. This together forms a colonial ship with the ability to navigate to planets that are far away. We will launch these components into geosynchronous orbit in batches and complete the assembly there!”

A separate flight system?!

Yuan Huanmin was shocked by the amount of information revealed to him.

“... Colonial... Colonial ship?”

“Yes.” Lu Zhou nodded and looked at Academician Yuan Huanmin. He said, “This is not the whole ship, it connects with other components.

“Therefore, in theory, it is not only applicable to Mars, nor can it be viewed as only an artificial biosphere. It is a complete set of distant planet colonization systems designed by our researchers for extraterrestrial colonization activities.

“If the conditions are met, we could go to even further places!”

Chapter 1351: Opportunity Won’t Always Come

A colonization system for even farther planets!

Not just for Mars!

After hearing Lu Zhou’s words, the engineers at China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation, as well as other leaders who came to visit, were shocked by the information conveyed in these words.

Especially Academician Yuan Huanmin.

He thought about the Z particle and hyperspace theory. His face suddenly showed a strange expression.

Although he didn’t know much about theoretical physics, he had heard of this before.

The epoch-making theory that countless physicists called the gateway to the interstellar age.

Maybe...

The technology of hyperspace navigation has been invented?!

He wondered if maybe he should retire early and give the position of chief engineer of the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation to young people who were more capable of inventing new things...

Lu Zhou looked at the eyes filled with shock. He immediately realized that these people had misunderstood, so he explained with a smile.

“Don’t think too much. Although this set of planet colonization system is not only applicable to Mars, it is still very difficult to colonize more distant planets.

“The greatest application for this system is still in terms of experimentation. Our researchers hope to develop a relatively complete standard in the early space age, then make this standard as complete as possible with repeated verification and adjustments. This will help our colonists adapt to all the conditions that may be encountered in space.

“Like I said before, Mars is a checkpoint. So is this. Everything is building toward the more distant future... Let’s not talk about it for now, let’s go in and take a look.”

Lu Zhou gestured to the engineer next to him. He then motioned the engineer to open the front door of the colony capsule. With the amazed leadership team behind him, they stepped into the interior of the colony capsule.

“... We are now passing through the buffer room of the colony capsule. The two airlocks and exhaust facilities at the connection port adjust the indoor air pressure as needed. When leaving the cabin, our colonists will change into outer space suits here, prepare equipment and the rover, as well as perform body disinfection. The air is drawn into an approximate vacuum from the exhaust chamber... When returning from the cabin, similar operations will be performed.”

Since they were on Earth, these two gates were obviously open.

Before launch, the entire colony capsule would be disassembled into parts and packaged. After a special disinfection procedure, it would be sent to the geosynchronous orbit. Then it would be sent to the Moon Palace space station by the Magpie Bridge. The engineers there would use the space station engineering equipment for reassembly.

After passing through the two gates, the group of people entered the main cabin. The space was much narrower.

Of course, it was only narrow because of the ten or so visitors standing here. If there were only five or six people, the space here would be quite sufficient.

“After the entire colony capsule is deployed on the ground, the interior area is in the shape of a doughnut. The middle is the spare controllable fusion core and energy center, as well as the central computer room, the core of the entire Mars base.

“The outer ring structure, which is, the area where we are now, is the functional area of the Mars base. It is mainly divided into four areas; the working area, experimental area, living area, and spare activity room. The outermost ring parallel to the airlock room is a warehouse and also a protective barrier.

“In fact, what we are seeing now is only a semi-complete form. When the colony capsule is successfully deployed on the surface of Mars, the planting area contracted under the shell of the capsule will expand outwards in four directions... Just like car airbags. Our colonists will be able to grow our improved space crops in there, as well as breed small animals for protein.

“The entire colonization unit uses the ecological cycle technology tested in Biosphere A. According to the results of computer simulations, it meets the physiological needs of at least ten people and can run independently for 10 to 20 years with sufficient energy.”

Ten years was quite a long period.

Also, China would never let it independently operate without any input of resources. With the current aerospace technology, even during a non-optimal Mars landing period, it was easy to send Mars supplies from the spaceport of Moon Palace.

The tour of the colony capsule soon ended.

After briefly introducing the purpose of each functional cabin inside, Lu Zhou and the group of people climbed out.

The group of people stood in the open space in front of the colony capsule with shocked looks on their faces.

The engineers from the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation were stunned. It was as if they had just returned to earth from heaven. The technology inside had completely exceeded their imagination.

This usually didn't happen.

After all, they were one of the top aerospace giants in China, along with Star Sky Technology.

Vice President Zheng Xiangdong of the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation poked Academician Yuan Huanmin on the arm and quietly asked, “Their technology... What do you think?”

Academician Yuan Huanmin spoke with a solemn expression on his face.

“It’s strong.”

In fact, it is not a question of whether it was strong or not, but whether the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation was trying to develop this technology at all.

Before ion thruster technology was developed by Star Sky Technology, their technology was focused on rocket launching technology. Now, most of their focus was on ion thrusters as well.

Why would they develop technology for space colonization? If anything, NASA’s research in this area was more in-depth than theirs.

As for the breakthroughs in both propulsion technology and energy technology...

Star Sky Technology and a lot of weird start-up high-tech companies focused on these difficult areas. They were pushing hard to catch up in the technical field; they didn’t have the extra energy to develop new businesses.

Zheng Xiangdong scratched the back of his head, hesitated for a while, and continued to ask, “Then... Is it difficult for us to replicate this thing?”

Academician Yuan Huanmin almost choked on his saliva. He turned his head, glared at Zheng Xiangdong, and said, “Forget about it. We don’t have a foundation. Are you crazy?”

“Um, I’m not talking about the entire colony capsule...” Zheng Xiangdong scratched the back of his head awkwardly and said, “I mean, we can make the accessories or some of the equipment used, right?”

Star Sky Technology did not contact them when the colony capsule was built. They directly used the factory in the Jinling high-tech zone to complete the

production of a full set of parts. Zheng Xiangdong believed that because of the relationship between the two companies, the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation should be able to sign a production contract with Star Sky Technology.

When he was in the colony capsule just now, he heard that, in the future, this wouldn't be the only colony capsule on Mars. A lot of additional functional capsules would also be deployed on the surface of Mars.

Even though the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation was not interested in this project before, he realized how huge the market was. It was impossible to just watch it slip away from his hands.

Yuan Huanmin: "..."

Seeing how the chief engineer didn't say a word, Zheng Xiangdong became a little anxious.

"Say something..."

"It's not about whether we can produce it." Academician Yuan Huanmin pointed his chin to the robotic arm on the side, then looked at the silver-white dome. He said, "Look at this assembly center, look at this colony capsule... Can you find something that we're better at than them?"

Zheng Xiangdong was stunned; he went quiet.

Academician Yuan Huanmin looked at the company vice president and spoke.

"Star Sky Technology only does research and development, not production. So, whether it was Skyglow or Starlight, they were all OEM parts produced by us and the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, then sent here to complete the assembly.

"However, starting from the Magpie Bridge, the orders that required our participation were reduced by half."

"This... Is actually quite normal." Zheng Xiangdong awkwardly coughed and said, "The scale of the aerospace industry is expanding at such a rapid rate. The higher-ups want to expand its social potential. It's normal for the market to be separated. We can't have a monopoly, right?"

“Is that the key to the problem here?” Academician Yuan sighed and said, “You should be able to see it. With the technical support of Star Sky Technology, a large number of outstanding high-tech companies have been born in the Jinling high-tech zone. Their component processing skills are more professional than us, they are more flexible, and the speed of absorbing new technology is faster than us.

“After the withdrawal of Star Sky Technology’s industrial cloud technology service, they were the first batch of companies to implement automated production technology. From what I understand, our factory hasn’t even begun implementing artificial intelligence?”

Zheng Xiangdong’s face became more and more embarrassed. He explained in a quiet voice, “... But Star Sky Technology didn’t come to us?”

Even though his voice was quiet, it was still clearly heard by the few people next to him.

Academician Yuan was angry.

“You’re still waiting for them to find you? Are you stupid?!”

Zheng Xiangdong quickly closed his mouth; he did not dare to breathe.

Academician Yuan Huanmin wanted to say something to the nervous vice president. However, in the end, he sighed and shook his head.

“Opportunities don’t always come on their own.”

The Jinling high-tech zone was developing and expanding. The establishment of Star Voyage One had brought this zone into the industry 4.0 era, ahead of schedule. Human society’s imagination of industry would become a reality. Inspiration and creativity were completely liberated. The dependence of Star Sky Technology on these former giants was becoming less and less.

There was no doubt that this was a good thing.

Especially for China’s aerospace industry.

More and more enterprises and social resources would participate in the exploration and development of space. The train to the future would go faster and faster, leaving the past far behind.

However, some passengers weren't lucky enough to get on the train.

Academician Yuan was quite loyal to the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation. He dedicated his youth to the company. If possible, he certainly hoped that the company could leave its name on the milestones of the future.

However, this was not something that could be achieved by waiting.

Academician Yuan Huanmin looked at the silver-white colony capsule. He had a trace of worry on his face.

"Think about it carefully."

Zheng Xiangdong was in deep thought. After this, the academician closed his mouth and stopped talking. He shook his head, turned around, and walked away...

On the other side of the factory...

The President had just come out of the colony capsule. He looked back at the silver-white "dome". He then suddenly looked at Lu Zhou and asked, "... Is this the entire Mars colony?"

"Of course not." Lu Zhou smiled faintly. He pointed to the connection ports on both sides of the lower colony capsule. He said, "Do you see those connection ports?"

The President frowned. He stared for a long time before asking, "What about it?"

"That is the connection port between the colony capsule and other functional units." Lu Zhou continued after a pause, "Our initial goal is to build a scientific research base with independent scientific research capabilities on the surface of Mars, not just to send our people for planting potatoes.

"This colony capsule is the heart of the entire Mars base. It is also the most basic part of the entire Mars base. In the future, we will successively deploy new functional units to the surface of Mars and connect them with closed pipes through these ports. This will achieve the expansion of the entire Mars base!

“Like what we are doing in the Guanghan Special Economic Zone.”

“It seems that you have considered these things thoroughly.” The old man nodded with approval. He suddenly seemed to remember something and asked, “By the way, I almost forgot to ask, this colony capsule... or the colonial ship about to go to Mars, have you named it?”

“Of course there is a name.” Lu Zhou said with a smile, “According to the unanimous opinion of our Institute of Aeronautics, we decided to name it Xu Fu!”

“Xu Fu... Good name.”

The old man’s eyes were full of expectation.

“Let’s hope it will live up to its name.

“It will send the fire of our civilization to the more distant world.”

Lu Zhou nodded gently.

“It definitely will.”

Chapter 1352: Just Do What You Said!

As the schedule of the Mars landing plan became more and more urgent, the atmosphere of the entire launch site also became tense and busy.

However, no one was worried about the prospects of the launch plan.

Two weeks ago, a number of national ministerial level and bureau level departments, as well as the China National Space Administration and the State Administration for National Defense, set up a command center at the launch site. Academician Lu personally served as the chief designer for the launch plan!

This was controlled by Academician Lu!

When the news was first announced, all of the participants in the Mars landing project were excited. Their morale reached a peak!

For Chinese astronauts, Lu Zhou was no longer just a name.

It was a symbol.

From the moment it was written on the front page of the launch plan, all of the problems no longer seemed to be problems. All of the difficulties became simple.

The days quickly passed by. Soon came the day of departure.

A majestic aerospaceplane slowly moved out of the hangar under the pull of an engineering vehicle. It stopped on the runway outside the command building of the launch site. Ground crews and forklifts rushed back and forth around the plane, doing the final check for the Starlight aerospaceplane that was about to take off.

In half an hour, the first batch of components for the Xu Fu colonial ship would take off from here and be sent by Starlight to geosynchronous orbit. They would then be taken over by the Magpie Bridge, finally arriving at the Moon Palace space station.

When all of the components had been launched, the colonists waiting on the ground would embark on the last flight to board the Moon Palace. From there, they would head toward Mars, which was tens of millions of kilometers away!

The preparations were finally ready.

The ground crew in front of the aerospaceplane quickly dispersed when they heard the instructions from the tower broadcast.

The signal lights on the runway lit up, forming a straight line.

“Hatch is closed!”

“Fusion engine on standby!”

“Preheating of the plasma heating chamber is complete!”

“Ready to launch!”

“Ignition!”

There was no countdown.

When aerospace launching had become the norm, people no longer regarded fusion ignition as a special event.

Just like the pilots of aircraft do not count down for their takeoffs, the astronauts who were accustomed to going back and forth between the ground and space no longer did the countdown for their takeoffs.

The pilot sitting in the cockpit pressed the switch to release the plasma in the engine heating chamber.

Under the magnetic field, plasma of tens of millions of degrees was released from the nozzle of the engine. The hot temperature seemed to ignite the air and distort time and space.

Driven by this huge force, the silver-white giant plane began to slide forward. It finally broke away from the runway, heading toward the clear skies.

Director Chang Hezhi watched the long and narrow plane trajectory in the air. It finally disappeared into the clouds. Director Chang Hezhi was standing in the control tower.

Ever since the day he visited the aerospace assembly center, where Academician Lu showed him the colony capsule for the Mars landing project, he had been in a fantastic mood.

Compared with Director Li and Academician Yuan Huanmin, who had been involved in China's aerospace projects since the beginning of the Moon landing project, he was a newcomer appointed by the China National Space Administration to join the Mars landing program.

Prior to this, although he knew who Academician Lu was, he had only heard his name in the news and in the excited discussions of his colleagues.

What he saw and heard at the aerospace assembly center that day astounded him. The factory that assembled the colony capsule, which realized imaginations about technology, spaceflight, and the future, was contained in an area of only a few thousand square meters.

He wasn't confident for the same reasons the astronauts were.

They were confident because of Lu Zhou's name. But he was confident because of the amazing technology itself. With such sophisticated equipment, he really couldn't imagine a reason for failure.

Forget about Mars.

Even traveling to a more distant world wouldn't be a problem...

His thoughts were lost as he stared at Starlight disappearing in the sky. A staff member in uniform walked beside him.

"Director Chang."

Chang Hezhi looked away from the control tower window. He turned to the staff member standing next to him and spoke calmly.

"Yeah, what?"

"Academician Lu is asking for you."

Academician Lu?

A surprised expression appeared on his face. He already met with Lu Zhou in the morning, but Chang Hezhi didn't think much of it.

The higher-ups sent him here to cooperate with Academician Lu. If Academician Lu needed him for anything, that was his highest priority.

Therefore, he immediately spoke.

"Take me there."

"Okay."

The staff member nodded before turning around and leading the way.

Chang Hezhi followed the staff member's footsteps. They quickly walked from the command tower to the conference room on the first floor of the launch site main building. He saw Lu Zhou sitting at the conference table and staring at a document.

Obviously, Lu Zhou did not notice his arrival.

Chang Hezhi cleared his throat and broke the silence.

“Academician Lu, I heard that you wanted to find me?”

Lu Zhou noticed the voice coming from the door. He looked away from the document in his hand and looked up at Director Chang Hezhi. He smiled and stood up. He then made an inviting gesture.

“Oh, you’re here? Please sit down.”

Chang Hezhi pulled out a chair and sat down.

Lu Zhou sat back on the chair and put the documents in his hand aside. He looked at Director Chang, who was sitting across from him, and spoke in a serious tone.

“Regarding the launch plan at the end of the month, I have something to discuss with you.”

The expression on Director Chang Hezhi’s face suddenly became serious. He sat straight and spoke.

“Please speak!”

Lu Zhou nodded. He went straight to the point.

“I plan to change the number of people in the first batch of the Mars landing program from three to five.”

The conference room went silent for a second.

“F-five people?” Director Chang Hezhi was stunned and didn’t react for a while. He said, “Why five?”

Why five...

How should I explain?

Lu Zhou didn’t have an explanation. He decided to make up one.

“Because it is out of necessity.

“Three people is not enough. I have made detailed arrangements for the work of these five people. All of them are crucial!”

Chang Hezhi didn't have any doubts; he was just a little worried. He frowned and hesitated before asking, “But... is five too many?”

“No.” Lu Zhou shook his head and said, “In terms of safety, the maximum load of our colony capsule is ten adult men, and five colonists are less than half of the maximum load. Having two additional personnel supplies is not particularly difficult for the Xu Fu colonial ship. Regarding the technical feasibility, I have already discussed with the experts from the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation at a meeting just now. The conditions are undoubtedly met.”

“But if it fails—”

“That's impossible,” Lu Zhou said without hesitation as he interrupted Director Chang's concerns. “I won't allow that to happen.”

Whether it was three people or five people...

As long as he was sitting in the position of the chief designer, he would definitely not let that kind of tragedy happen!

The room was full of tension.

Chang Hezhi suddenly understood why both the engineers and commanders of this space launch site believed in his orders. The worship of him almost became a kind of religion.

The doubts in his heart gradually dissipated. Chang Hezhi solemnly nodded his head slowly.

“If you think it is necessary, then I trust your judgment.

“I will sign the document.

“We'll go with your plan!”

Chapter 1353: Assemble In Space!

At the astronomical observatory in Arizona, North America...

As a large-scale astronomical observatory built after 2020, this scientific research facility had the most sensitive radio telescope array in all of North America. Its accuracy could even track meteorite debris and space junk only half a meter in diameter, as long as it was located near the Earth and Moon system.

As the latest and most advanced astronomical observatory in North America, this Arizona astronomical observatory was a civilian public scientific research facility that belonged to the American Astronomical Society. Its funding came from the Pentagon's defense budget.

Since its funding was received from the military, the task of this astronomical observatory was not as simple as when it was first established.

According to an internal document from the Pentagon, this astronomical observatory only had 30% of its observation missions dedicated to finding habitable planets outside the solar system.

As for the remaining 70% of the observation missions, most of them were concentrated in the lunar transfer orbit. Needless to say, the purpose was obviously to monitor China's activities in the Earth-Moon system.

Professor Reston stood next to the coffee machine, quietly waiting for the coffee to be ready. Suffering from a headache, he rubbed his eyebrows, trying to relax his nervous and overheated brain.

About a week ago, China launched the first components of the Mars landing program in accordance with a timeline that was made public to the international community.

Since that day, he and the observation team he led did not take a day off. They were on standby for almost 24 hours a day.

After all, there was no guarantee that China would arrange every launch plan according to the timetable that they disclosed to the international community.

Such things were not without precedent.

After all, they themselves had abandoned their schedules countless times.

As the person in charge of this astronomical observatory and a researcher employed by the Pentagon, he only had one mission, which was to observe and track every detail of China's Mars landing plan. He had to collect as much intel as possible.

This task was personally given to him by the US Secretary of Defense at a meeting.

Because of this, from the moment he received the task, he felt an unparalleled pressure on his shoulders.

Fortunately, this period of time was finally about to be over.

The launch mission recently carried out was the third launch in China's Mars landing plan. According to the launch plan they announced, this was the last launch.

When this was over, their work would finish for the time being.

"Starlight has successfully entered geosynchronous orbit."

"The third batch of components was released from the cargo hold..."

"The recovery was successful. The Magpie Bridge is speeding up its orbit change."

"Orbit changed successfully. The Magpie Bridge has successfully moved into lunar transfer orbit!"

A series of reports came one after another.

Professor Reston stood in the control room, listening quietly.

Even though this wasn't good news for America's aerospace industry, for some reason, there was a faint feeling of relief in his heart.

All of this is finally over...

His assistant walked in from the control room.

"Professor Reston."

Professor Reston turned to look at his assistant and asked, "Yeah, what?"

“Professor Phil Goethe submitted an application to NASA. He will visit our astronomical observatory the day after tomorrow.”

Professor Reston frowned when he heard this unfamiliar name.

“Professor Phil Goethe?”

The assistant saw the confusion in the eyes of his boss, so he immediately explained, “He is a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as well as a distinguished engineer of NASA and the person in charge of the Lunar Gateway project. Not long ago, he made a high-profile announcement in an interview with the media, stating that the Chinese people’s Mars landing program was doomed to fail and that they had not made any adequate preparations for landing on Mars...”

The assistant paused for a moment. He shrugged his shoulders.

“Perhaps after seeing that the Chinese people’s plan has been going smoothly so far, he might be feeling a bit restless.”

Who cares if he’s restless?

Professor Reston had a smile on his face.

There was a hint of ridicule behind this smile.

He spoke in a cold tone.

“If he’s interested, let him come.

“But I don’t think this makes any sense.”

After that, he put the empty coffee cup on the table, walked past his assistant, and walked out of the control room...

...

On the third day that the Magpie Bridge successfully took over the components of the Mars landing program, Professor Phil Goethe arrived at the astronomical observatory in Arizona as scheduled.

The professor in his sixties stepped into the astronomical observatory and saw Professor Reston approaching him. Before Reston could even say hello, he asked straightaway, "How is the situation?"

"Which step is their launch plan at?"

"Is there anything unusual?"

"In my opinion, the whole Mars landing program is full of unusual signs. Which one do you mean?" Professor Reston shrugged as he was bombarded with questions. He said, "As for how far along their plan is, I think it is at the final stage of preparations."

Phil Goethe looked at the younger researcher in front of him with a stiff expression. He spoke with a struggling tone.

"... The final stage?"

"Yes." Professor Reston nodded and said, "About half an hour ago, the Chinese had successfully shipped the last batch of components to the Moon Palace, just like they disclosed in the original schedule. We all thought that they might temporarily adjust the launch time to circumvent our investigation activities on them, but now, it seems like they do not care about our prying eyes at all. Not only did they stick to their plan, but..."

Professor Phil Goethe said, "But?"

A bitter and helpless smile appeared on Professor Reston's face.

"... But it's as if they deliberately wanted us to observe them."

Professor Phil Goethe fell into silence; he didn't know what to say.

Half a month ago, he was confident that China's announcement of the Mars landing plan was to provoke NASA and use this to start a new round of space competition, to achieve some kind of political goal. And if they really launched according to such a hasty timeline, this immature plan was destined to be a failure.

But it seemed that was all his own imagination.

They didn't even have the intention of hiding, as if they didn't pay attention to their opponents at all.

Professor Reston looked at the silent old professor. He suddenly spoke.

“Let’s stop talking at the entrance. Since you’re already here, come on inside.

“If I’m not mistaken, they are probably thinking of a way to put those parts together into a colony ship, then send it to Mars.”

He spoke in a joking tone. The serious atmosphere around him relaxed a little because of his joke.

Everyone knew it was difficult to assemble a spacecraft weighing hundreds of tons in the lunar orbit. This was something that anyone in the aerospace industry knew.

Assembling the three parts into a spacecraft on the Moon Palace was akin to using an AK47 and shooting at a bullseye target hundreds of meters away.

There was no independent dynamical system, and its orbit was constantly adjusted according to the CCD cameras and dynamic vision measurement system on the spacecraft. If they were not careful, these components could crash into one another and become space junk.

He was more inclined to believe that the Moon Palace ship was actually a slightly smaller and fully assembled spacecraft, which had already been sent to the Moon Palace for fuel replenishment during the first component launch.

The next two launch missions were to send some simple life-sustaining devices to the Moon Palace. This would be carried by other spacecraft and launched in batches to Mars orbit for deployment.

However, while he was thinking, the three white dots floating around the Moon Palace on the radar screen in the command room gradually became closer together, as if they were under some kind of force.

Professor Reston had just brought Professor Phil Goethe into the control room when he noticed the unusual situation on the radar screen and frowned.

At first, he thought it was a problem with the radio telescope array.

However, he soon realized that this was impossible. The engineer responsible for the overhaul of the equipment this morning performed maintenance on the radio telescope array.

Professor Phil Goethe, who was standing next to him, apparently also noticed the abnormality on the radar. He muttered to himself, "... What the hell are they doing?"

"I don't know..." Professor Reston realized the seriousness of the problem. He immediately looked at his assistant and asked, "Can we apply for permission to use the Universe-2 optical observation satellite?"

The Universe-2 optical observation satellite was a space observation satellite commissioned by NASA to Space X had launched in 2022. It used high-resolution lenses to photograph the planets in the solar system.

Of course, this satellite, just like the Arizona astronomical observatory, was mainly focused on observing the Moon.

Precisely speaking, 70% of its activities were focused on the Chinese astronauts on the Moon.

"It should be okay... I'll go ask."

The assistant quickly jogged out of the control room.

He didn't make his boss wait for a long time; he quickly ran back from the outside.

"NASA approved our application!"

Professor Reston immediately said without hesitation, "Connect to the Universe-2 optical observation satellite! Focus on the Moon Palace!"

Thousands of kilometers away, a cylindrical satellite began fine-tuning its camera angle, locking its lens on the Moon Palace.

When the camera was finally aimed at the Moon Palace, everyone in the control room was stunned by the picture in front of them.

*They're really f*cking assembling a spacecraft?!*

WTF?

Chapter 1354: Envious Power

Even though Professor Reston had seen his fair share of Hollywood science-fiction blockbusters, he never thought that one day he would see such a shocking scene in real life.

Eight slender robotic arms stretched out from the edge of the Moon Palace space station like legs of a spider, moving flexibly between the three sets of spacecraft components.

Like threading a needle, more and more spacecraft components were connected together, gradually forming the outline of the Xu Fu colonial ship.

“I can’t believe this...”

Professor Phil Goethe, who was standing next to Professor Reston, seemed to have gone crazy. He opened and closed his mouth constantly, mumbling and repeating the same words.

“Assembling the spacecraft with a robotic arm on the space station... How is this possible!”

Professor Reston was just as shocked.

They assembled the spacecraft on the space station!

Using robotic arms!

This sounded like a dream.

This was not as simple as spacecraft docking. It was no exaggeration to say that it was an order of magnitude higher than the difficulty of spacecraft docking.

Without a separate power system, these spacecraft components floating in outer space were akin to space junk.

Cleaning up high-speed moving space junk was difficult enough, but assembling these scattered components with a robotic arm on the space station was even harder.

A slight mistake, such as failure to control the speed and orbital height, might cause the space station to collide with the floating spacecraft components. This could lead to a catastrophic accident!

“Could it be holographic projection technology?” Professor Phil Goethe couldn’t help but say, “I heard that they have an advanced holographic projection technology... It was demonstrated at the Bird’s Nest stadium.”

“That sounds more ridiculous than assembling a spaceship in space.”

A bitter smile appeared on Professor Reston’s face when he heard Professor Phil Goethe’s outlandish conspiracy theory.

He heard of the holographic projection performance at the Bird’s Nest. He had even watched the video on YouTube. People claimed it was a new era of film and media technology, and the pictures presented in front of the crowd were near perfect.

However, he knew that the technology needed water vapor as an imaging medium. That was obviously impossible in vacuum space.

Apart from the robotic arm that stretched out from the Moon Palace, there was one thing that puzzled him even more.

Is there really no problem with such a rough assembly method?

Manned spacecraft had very high requirements for the airtightness of the cabins. Every additional connection port increased the points of failure.

But now...

The Chinese people had dismantled the entire “Xu Fu” into large parts, with even the main cabin torn in half. Could such a casual assembly method really ensure the safety of the astronauts in the cabin?

Professor Reston was quite skeptical about this.

However, this skepticism did not last for long.

Soon, all of the confusion in his heart was dispelled by the shocking scene.

He was not the only one who saw it.

Everyone in the command room saw it.

One of the robotic arms of the Moon Palace suddenly flashed a series of faint but clear white lights. The white lights swept across the spacecraft shell.

A crazy idea appeared in Professor Reston's mind.

Welding!

They added a welding torch on the robotic arm!

Space construction was not anything novel. In the 1980s, Soviet astronauts conducted the first human extravehicular welding test outside the Salyut 7 space station. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States also carried out similar research. However, this was the first time he had seen the application of this technology on the assembly of a large spacecraft!

What happened on the Moon Palace completely subverted his understanding of the aerospace industry.

This is not just reassembling a spacecraft...

It's almost like they're building a spacecraft on the space shuttle!

Professor Reston gradually realized the seriousness of the problem. He immediately looked at the dumbfounded assistant standing beside him. He ordered in a serious tone, "Send the captured images to the Pentagon immediately!"

The assistant nodded quickly, then jogged to the command room.

Professor Reston looked at the picture on the big screen. He clenched his fists tightly as his eyebrows furrowed.

The space construction technology that China had mastered had completely exceeded their expectations.

If they could really assemble a 100-ton spacecraft in outer space...

In theory, they could easily assemble a bigger one.

...

In fact, compared to other cutting-edge technologies on the space station, plasma welding was one of the most inconspicuous ones.

However, other technologies were not as easy to be directly observed.

Even researchers working on the Moon Palace didn't know all of the ins and outs, let alone an optical satellite more than 300,000 kilometers away.

These technologies were also the reason why the Chinese people were confident in their Mars landing program.

Who would care if the technology was observed?

Even if some things were placed in front of others, it was not easy to replicate them.

Regardless of the shocks inside the hearts of Professor Reston and Professor Phil Goethe, the foreign researchers who were far away on the Moon Palace were also surprised by what happened outside the porthole.

Professor Pearson, who was from the Department of Physics at Harvard University, was staring at the Xu Fu colonial ship gradually taking form outside the porthole. He was in disbelief.

He was a professor of particle physics who came here from the ILHCRC.

Ever since the completion of the Lunar Hadron Collider, he had served on the lunar scientific research station and the Moon Palace.

Over this period of time, he had gotten familiar with all kinds of novel aerospace technologies, but at this moment, he still couldn't control the shock coming from the bottom of his heart.

He couldn't help but ask, "Those robotic arms... Are they operated by someone?"

"Of course not. Who has the ability to operate eight hands at the same time." Professor Yan Xinjue, who was also serving at the lunar scientific research station, was standing beside him. He said with a proud smile, "This thing should be controlled by artificial intelligence. Didn't the Moon Palace replace the central computer's chipset some time ago? Maybe this was part of the

upgrades... Of course, I'm just guessing. I don't know a lot about the situation either."

Professor Pearson looked away from the porthole and looked at Professor Yan Xinjue. With a look of jealousy in his eyes, he said, "China's aerospace technology is so amazing... I'm envious."

Yan Xinjue smiled awkwardly.

Even though he was not an expert in the aerospace field...

But, to be honest, the feeling of being watched by jealous scholars from other countries was quite pleasurable...

Chapter 1355: How About The Moon?

After the last piece of alloy plate was welded, the robotic arm from the Moon Palace finally retracted inside. The true appearance of the Xu Fu colonial ship was finally revealed to the world.

On the outside, it looked like a top-heavy dumbbell.

The larger end was located at the front, which was the core area of the entire colonial ship, the part of the colony cabin that had not yet been deployed. The smaller end was located at the back and was mainly composed of a series of complex and precise aerospace components such as the power system, interplanetary communication system, and energy unit.

When the colonial ship entered Mars orbit, the bulky front structure would be separated from the entire colonial ship. With the help of chemical thrusters, it would head toward the surface of Mars.

The remaining parts would remain in the orbit around Mars as a communication satellite and weather observation satellite. This would provide the land colonists with interplanetary communication, weather observation, and positioning and navigation services for at least two decades.

Although this design was not aerodynamic, there was no such thing as air resistance in space. This unique design had a cyberpunk vibe.

Professor Pearson looked at the majestic spaceship. He was standing next to the porthole and was at a loss for words. It took a while before he muttered to himself.

“How many tons is that...”

“I don’t know...” Professor Yan Xinjue’s face was also full of shock. He gulped before speaking, “But judging by the volume, it is already twice the size of the Magpie Bridge, so the weight should at least be twice as much, right? Whatever, we don’t need to guess... We’ll see it in tomorrow’s news.”

The staff on the Moon Palace weren’t the only ones who were shocked.

There were also astronomical observers at the Arizona astronomical observatory, as well as astronomical observatories located in other countries that were ordered to track the Chinese people’s Mars landing project.

Ever since the establishment of the Guanghai Special Economic Zone, in order to learn from the success of the lunar landing project from China, most countries and organizations that were involved in the aerospace field had upgraded their optical observation satellites.

Even though they couldn’t achieve the same results, they could at least learn something from the Guanghai City or Moon Palace.

Because of this, the movements on the Moon Palace did not escape their eyes.

Whether it was the flexible robotic arms or the huge ship named Xu Fu, everything deeply shocked their hearts.

This was probably the largest spacecraft capable of long-distance navigation in human history. If the Apollo spacecraft and the BFS spacecraft were sailing warships of the great voyage period, then Xu Fu was an aircraft carrier sailing in space.

If prior to this there were people who doubted the success of this Mars landing plan...

After this, no one would have any doubts about the possibility of failure during this tens of millions of kilometers expedition.

While the foreign space agencies who were lucky enough to witness the scene were shocked by the amazing operations at the Moon Palace, the atmosphere at the Jinling launch site was also full of enthusiasm.

As soon as news of the successful “launch” of the Xu Fu colonial ship appeared, excited cheers erupted in the ground command center.

Whether it was the staff standing in front of the console or the CTV and media reporters waiting at the scene, everyone’s faces were filled with excitement and joy.

Many people waved their fists excitedly, unable to control the excitement in their hearts, some even took off their hats and threw them at the ceiling.

The colonial ship “Xu Fu” was successfully assembled!

The first phase of the Mars landing plan was successfully completed!

Although this was only a small step toward Mars, it was also the most difficult step. After this, they only needed to transport the astronauts and the materials needed for living on to the colonial ship, then ignite the engine. After that, they could wait for the good news that would come from tens of millions of kilometers away.

“Everything is going according to plan.”

With a pleased smile on his face, Lu Zhou looked at the towering spacecraft on the large screen in the command room. He smiled and nodded and said, “The next step is to send our astronauts.”

Director Li stared intently at the majestic starship on the screen. He had an expression of disbelief, and he couldn’t help but ask, “How heavy is this thing?”

“Around five hundred tons.”

Director Li took a deep breath and spoke.

“Five hundred tons... This is almost heavier than all of our Long March series rockets in low-Earth orbit combined!”

“The weight doesn’t mean anything; we can’t compare chemical rockets and fusion starships. For the Xu Fu spacecraft, 500 tons is just the net weight.

When our astronauts and other supplies are loaded onto the ship, the total weight should exceed 1000 tons.”

Lu Zhou smiled and looked at the screen in the command room. He spoke with a fascinating tone.

“... But shortly in the future, thousand-ton spacecraft will be the norm.”

“Future spacecraft will be split into two categories; one is an aerodynamically designed spacecraft that sails between low-Earth orbit and ground, whereas the other will be large and medium-sized spacecrafts that only shuttle outside the atmosphere.

“The Jinling high-tech zone has already taken the lead in the former spacecraft. And after our Guanghai Special Zone is fully developed, forget about a thousand tons, even a 10,000 ton, million-ton spacecraft will be no problem!”

10,000 tons of spacecraft...

When Director Li heard this, his mouth was wide open.

Even the Saturn V, which was known as the largest rocket in human history, weighed only three thousand tons. When it stood upright, its volume was comparable to a 100-meter-tall building!

A 1000-ton spacecraft was beyond the boundary of his imagination. And for a spacecraft weighing tens of thousands of tons, he couldn't imagine what it would look like.

As for the million-ton spacecraft Lu Zhou mentioned...

Forget about it.

Lu Zhou looked at the ground command center that had fallen into a celebration. He looked at Director Chang and spoke.

“We can begin preparations for the last launch mission.

“If a CTV reporter wants to interview me, help me deal with them, or tell them to wait at my office.

“I'm going to the bathroom.”

After that, Lu Zhou turned around and left the ground command center.

However, when he walked to the first floor and was about to enter the bathroom, he saw Director Li chasing him.

Lu Zhou didn't think much of it; he thought the old man had to take care of business as well.

However, after he came out of the bathroom, he saw that the old man was following him.

Lu Zhou stopped walking, turned around, and asked, "Can I help you?"

Director Li didn't realize how obvious he was being.

Director Li, who was caught red-handed, pretended to act stupid.

"What? I'm just walking around..."

"You've been following me this whole time, how are you walking around?"

Director Li finally gave up his and coughed.

"Um, Academician Lu..."

"What?"

"Your life is going well, right?"

"As well as it can be."

"What about your relationship? There are no conflicts... right?"

"Nope."

"What about emotionally? Is there anything bothering you?"

Lu Zhou's face suddenly became serious.

"I'm actually in a bad mood because you're following me."

Director Li seemed to finally realize how weird his behavior was. He spoke awkwardly.

“I don’t want anything... But some time ago, I heard Director Chang say that you adjusted the number of the Mars landing colonists from three to five?”

“... Is there a problem?”

Director Li waved his hand quickly and spoke with a smile.

“No, no, no problem! I am definitely supporting you! It’s just that... The conditions on Mars are harsh, and the most important thing is safety. You know that only astronauts who have undergone strict screening and training are competent for this dangerous task. My advice is to wait until the time is right.”

The old man changed his tone.

“How about... you go to the Moon instead?”

Lu Zhou: “...?”

What the hell?

Chapter 1356: No Need To Elope

Because of some unknown misunderstanding, Director Li thought that Lu Zhou was going to sneak on to Mars.

Lu Zhou was baffled when he realized that the misunderstanding was quite serious. Even the higher-ups were alarmed. Director Li was instructed by the president to “watch” him and make sure he wouldn’t sneak on to the colonial ship.

It took more than ten minutes to finally clarify the misunderstanding. Although Lu Zhou felt that Director Li was not completely assured, at least he finally stopped following him nervously...

The day after Xu Fu was successfully assembled...

The governments of various countries witnessed the astonishing scene at the Moon Palace, but they had yet to fully digest what had happened. A photo with a resolution far higher than the secretly captured photos by the optical

observation satellites was released on the cover page of the latest issue of Everyone Daily.

That was a majestic starship.

The silver-white outer shell reflected a cold light against the background of the Moon.

The sturdy body and the two circular sections formed a dumbbell shape. The cyberpunk science fiction vibe made it look like it came out of a movie.

Because of this, when relevant reports and high-definition pictures were released on the official pages of media outlets, it immediately caused a huge sensation!

Less than half an hour after the news was released, the comments section under the post was swarmed by tens of thousands of comments. The number of likes was approaching the million mark.

“Academician Lu is nutty!!!”

“F*ck! This isn’t a CGI shot from a movie? Don’t tell me this isn’t a movie trailer!”

“Are you kidding? Why would Everyone Daily write an article on a movie? Look at the watermark on the photo! It’s from CTV!”

“My god, this is such a big spacecraft! Are we heading into the interstellar age?”

“Is it too late to sign up for Mars?”

“I haven’t even been to the Moon. I didn’t expect us to already reach Mars. I wonder if I have the opportunity to go there before I die.”

“Don’t worry, even if you don’t have a chance to go, your kids will definitely have that chance. Leave a letter for your family and ask them to take your ashes to Mars.”

Although many people had seen the concept image of the Xu Fu colonial ship that was released by the Mars landing team, the computer-generated image was obviously less shocking than the real thing!

In order to learn more about the Xu Fu colonial ship, those who were thoroughly interested in the news began to frantically search for information on the Internet.

Driven by this wave of excitement, related terms were quickly pushed onto the trending page.

An hour after Everyone Daily notified the country of the successful launch of the Xu Fu colonial ship, a video was released on the official website of the Mars landing team.

The length of the video was not very long; it was only five minutes.

This sped-up video was taken outside the Moon Palace's cabin. It showed how the Moon Palace used eight flexible robotic arms to connect all three sets of spacecraft components in twelve hours, completing assembly, welding, and a series of complex operations.

After seeing this video, almost everyone was stunned by this amazing technology.

Most people thought it was extremely difficult to complete the docking of spacecraft components in space. However, with the help from the eight robotic arms, the difficulties didn't seem to exist at all.

The parts were like lego blocks, easily assembled together.

Most people didn't know how to express their feelings at this moment.

Soon, the video was reposted to major video websites, spreading along the Internet.

This time, it wasn't just the internet users who were shocked.

All the governments that were paying attention to the progress of China's Mars landing plan were shocked by this incredible space assembly technology, as well as the majestic Xu Fu colonial ship...

...

Jin Ling University.

Lu Zhou sat in his office during his lunch break, drinking coffee while flipping through the papers in the database.

In order for a nervous old man to sleep peacefully, Lu Zhou decided to stay away as far as possible from the launch site before the start of the final launch mission.

But, to be honest, the landing plan had already reached its final stages. It didn't matter if he was at the site or not. When the five colonists set off from the space launch site and took the Xu Fu colonial ship to Mars tens of millions of kilometers away, the people on Earth could only pray for the safety of the five warriors.

The office door was pushed open. A slim figure walked in and gently closed the door.

Lu Zhou looked up, and before he had the chance to say hello, Chen Yushan, who was approaching him, smiled and said jokingly, "I heard you're going to Mars?"

Lu Zhou almost spat out the coffee in his mouth.

Although he could tell she was joking, he couldn't help but feel guilty.

"Who said that?"

"My dad."

Chen Yushan took a chair and sat opposite Lu Zhou. She put her elbows on the desk and her hands on her cheeks. She spoke with a smile.

"He asked me to keep an eye on you so that you don't run to Mars with some other girl."

Who spread this rumor to my girlfriend's family?

Lu Zhou was baffled. He shook his head.

"How is that going to happen?"

"You never know."

Lu Zhou couldn't help but roll his eyes while looking at Chen Yushan's silly smile. He said, "Why would I go to Mars? What could be so valuable on Mars? Even if there is, someone else could go there and find it for me, not to mention—"

"Shouldn't you say it's because I'm on Earth?"

The atmosphere suddenly became quiet.

Lu Zhou looked at Chen Yushan's gentle gaze. Suddenly, he was at a loss for words.

The silence lingered for a while.

After a brief silence, Lu Zhou spoke.

"Two minutes ago, I thought that there wasn't a treasure on Mars that was worthy enough for me to collect personally."

"But now?"

"I think I found my treasure." Lu Zhou said in a serious tone as he stared at Chen Yushan's eyes, "I want to elope to Mars with you."

Instantly, her white cheeks were stained red.

Her curious eyes turned shy. Chen Yushan glared at Lu Zhou with a blushing face and whispered in a low voice, "I thought you were unromantic... I didn't expect you to be so charming sometimes."

Lu Zhou sighed slightly and looked up at the ceiling.

"So... is that a rejection?"

"Of course not!"

After she said these words, she looked at Lu Zhou smiling and realized that she had just fallen into his trap.

But...

Because of the sweet feeling, she didn't want to leave the trap.

She bit her lip and said quietly, “What I’m saying is...

“If you want, we don’t need to elope anywhere...”

Chapter 1357: Agreement

Thinking about it carefully, Lu Zhou was thirty years old.

As per the saying, “in youth we learn; in age we understand”.

In other words, it was time to consider starting a family.

Although his mother and father had stopped urging him to marry, Lu Zhou could still feel that they were far more anxious than they seemed. The reason why they didn’t say anything during phone calls was that they were worried that it might affect his career.

He could see the eagerness and willingness in her lovely eyes.

Lu Zhou stared at her teary eyes and whispered the words, “Will you marry me?”

It seemed like time had stopped at this moment.

Her white and flawless cheeks were dyed with a layer of red.

Her eyes began to tear up as she started to panic from happiness. Chen Yushan dodged Lu Zhou’s eyes and whispered in a low voice, “... Are we going too fast? We got together in December, and it hasn’t even been half a year now.”

“But we’ve known each other for nearly nine years.”

“But... if I promise you so quickly, will you... not cherish me?”

Seeing how silly Chen Yushan was being, Lu Zhou couldn’t help but smile as he joked, “Do I look like a bad person?”

“No...” Chen Yushan shook her head immediately, but soon, her cheeks blushed again. She said, “Sometimes.”

What is that supposed to mean?

Lu Zhou pretended not to hear the second half of the sentence. He continued to speak in a gentle tone, "Then what do you have to worry about?"

"It's not that I'm worried... It's just that, we should be like everyone else. We should meet our parents first, leave behind more fond memories, then finally walk into the palace of marriage." Chen Yushan shyly lowered her head and said embarrassedly, "Then you will love me more."

Are there different amounts of love?

Lu Zhou didn't know the answer.

For him, Chen Yushan was his first love. Prior to this, he had no experience in this area, nor was he particularly interested in it, thus he hadn't done any research.

However, he was able to understand the feelings of anxiety and happiness in her heart, as well as the troubles and losses from the change of identity. Once a couple entered into the palace of marriage, many things would change.

Perhaps like she said, love could only be cemented through time.

After thinking for a moment, Lu Zhou smiled softly as he looked at the pretty face.

"How about this..."

"If you're not ready, we can get engaged first.

"By December 10th of this year, we will have been together for a full year."

Chen Yushan had a sweet and shy look on her face as she asked quietly, "Engaged?"

"Yeah, you don't want to?"

"No! It's just that, in the future... does that mean I'm a fiancée?"

"Sure."

“Fiancee...” It seemed like she had a soft spot for this word. A silly smile appeared on her face as she said, “Haha, this title... makes me feel good.”

“Then it’s settled.” Lu Zhou looked at her charming and lovely face. He smiled and stretched out his right pinky as he said, “Come on.

“Come... Pinky swear.”

“Pfft... how immature.”

Despite this, Chen Yushan happily stretched out her right pinky and hooked it tightly with Lu Zhou’s pinky.

“It’s a promise! Whoever breaks the promise has to cut off their pinky.”

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded.

“Promise!”

He had never broken or regretted a promise before.

Whether it was his career or personal life.

In this empty office room, the two of them had finally made a life-long decision. They didn’t notice that there were two pairs of eyes hiding outside the office, watching what was happening inside.

They weren’t hiding per se.

However, the atmosphere in the room was so lovely that they didn’t want to disturb the couple.

Zhao Huan and Kong Jie, the two assistants, stood by the window outside the office and witnessed the whole thing. Their eyes were glowing.

Oh my god, Academician Lu is not single anymore?

No wonder he barely comes to his campus office!

This is an insane rumor!

When Kong Jie saw the two kissing each other, she quickly pulled Zhao Huan aside and quietly whispered, "Don't tell anyone this. Academician Lu hasn't even told us about her. I guess he doesn't want others to disturb them."

"Yeah!" Zhao Huan nodded earnestly as she said, "We shouldn't spread this kind of gossip! After all, we don't have his consent."

While Lu Zhou and Chen Yushan exchanged vows, the two people outside the window also vowed that, unless Academician Lu or his fiancée disclosed the secret, they would not talk about it to anyone else.

If anyone broke the promise, they would go to hell.

Afterward, the assistants went to the library, whereas the couple went back home.

Then...

Everyone knew that women loved to gossip.

The next day, the entire Jin Ling University heard the news that Academician Lu was no longer single...

...

"Have you heard? Academician Lu is no longer single!"

"F*ck! Academician Lu found a significant other? Really?!"

"Of course it's true! Apparently, his fiancée is his old classmate... The two were in his office, and some strange things happened... Even their marriage date is set!"

"What are the strange things? Explain it clearly!"

"From wearing school uniforms to wedding dresses, this is too romantic."

"Is this true or not?! My God Lu has a partner now!"

The next afternoon at a cafeteria in Jin Ling University...

Lu Zhou stood in front of the service window as he listened to the chattering voices behind him. He didn't even notice that he had ordered pork instead of beef.

These people...

Do they not notice their surroundings when they're gossiping?

After rushing through his lunch, Lu Zhou was about to call Chen Yushan and ask what was going on, but his phone rang first.

He took out his phone and saw that his "fiancee" was calling.

Without hesitating, Lu Zhou immediately answered the call.

As soon as he put the phone to his ear, he heard Chen Yushan's voice.

"Did you post something on Weibo?"

"No." Lu Zhou said, dumbfounded, "I was going to ask if you posted on WeChat."

Chen Yushan blushed.

"I'm too embarrassed to post that stuff on WeChat."

Compared to the girls who liked to show public affection, she was more conservative and shy in terms of her relationship. She didn't like showing affection to her circle of friends.

"Speaking of which, does anyone on your side know?"

Chen Yushan replied, "Well, my roommate at the University of Pennsylvania is a good friend of mine. She just called to congratulate me, saying that she thinks we are a good match..."

Her voice became quieter and quieter; Lu Zhou could barely hear her.

"Roommate at U Penn? How did this spread so fast?!"

It's only been a day!

It hasn't even been 24 hours! How did it spread across the Pacific Ocean?

Chen Yushan suddenly realized something as she spoke.

“Wait a second, you haven’t been on Weibo yet?”

“Weibo?”

“Yeah.” Chen Yushan, who was holding her mobile phone, nodded and said nervously, “Go and read the trending page.”

With a confused expression on his face, Lu Zhou opened the Weibo app.

The moment he saw the trending page, he froze.

Chapter 1358: The Grumpy Old Man

Lu Zhou’s original plan, everything from the engagement to the wedding was going to be carried out in a low-key manner. Apart from the people they knew, it was best not to disturb anyone.

The two people were going to walk into the wedding venue quietly, exchange rings and vows in the name of love and under the blessings of their friends and relatives, then kiss each other and live a happy married life.

However, some parts of the plan went wrong; the news was leaked to the outside world.

The news of the engagement was almost like a hurricane. It spread through the entire campus at an incredible speed, then spread to the entire academic world.

Then, just like always...

He was on the trending page again.

Not only were his private messages and mentions stuck at 99+, but even his secret account was found and endlessly tagged by netizens.

Various anonymous and non-anonymous “insiders” all came out and began to tell stories from the first and third-person perspectives, gossiping about the story between the two.

The information-gathering ability of these fans was quite impressive. From the two people studying together in the library back in the day to studying abroad and attending the Nobel Prize dinner together, almost everything was dug up. There were even a bunch of false stories that were added.

Sometimes when Lu Zhou read too much gossip, he himself even couldn't help but wonder whether those stories were true.

Driven by this gossip trend, the term "Professor Lu is single" soon appeared on the trending page, the popularity had even surpassed the Mars landing plan.

Before the relevant state departments began to control the spread, the number of discussions on Weibo alone had exceeded 80 million.

Faced with such a response from the public, Lu Zhou didn't know what to say. He didn't want any of this to happen.

Even though he wanted to keep a low-profile, his fame did not allow him to do so.

However, although this gossip caused him a lot of headaches, one thing made him happy.

In Lu Zhou's opinion, his fame alone was not enough for him to attract so many people's attention to his engagement.

After all, he was not a celebrity; he was just a scholar who focused on his research career.

The reason things turned out this way...

Was probably because of the jealousy coming from his fans...

...

He could no longer stay on campus. When he ate at the cafeteria, he could hear the young students talking about him.

After some considerations, Lu Zhou temporarily moved his work location from Jin Ling University to the aerospace launch site.

It just so happened that the last launch mission was about to begin.

As the chief designer of the Mars landing plan, this was his focus of work during this period.

However, just before Lu Zhou moved his workplace, a person unexpectedly followed his footsteps to his office.

“You little... Lu Zhou! When did I agree to let you marry my daughter?”

The entire internet was enthusiastically gossiping, so it obviously didn’t escape the ears of the families involved.

Lu Zhou looked at the angry old man in front of him. His heart dropped to his stomach. He got up from his office chair and greeted him with a smile.

“Uncle Chen Baohua, come sit down, I’ll get you some tea.”

Regardless of career status, the father-in-law obviously had power over his daughter.

Lu Zhou was in the wrong here.

Lu Zhou walked to the side and poured some tea. Chen Baohua sat down on the sofa. His anger finally calmed down a bit. He was not as aggressive as when he first entered the door.

After all, he was a person who worked at a government agency, so he was relatively intelligent. Even though the two decided on such a big life-long event without him and made him feel irritated as a father, Lu Zhou’s polite attitude satisfied him.

Of course, it was also probably because Lu Zhou’s status was quite different than most people.

He didn’t even realize that, when facing this world-renowned scholar, his confidence had dropped much more than he had imagined.

Two cups of tea were brought to the table.

Lu Zhou sat on the opposite sofa. He looked at the old man drinking tea and spoke.

“Um... Uncle Chen Baohua, there is something I have to apologize to you.”

“Oh, so you want to apologize to me?” Chen Baohua smiled and said, “So you two still remember me? Getting engaged without even telling us, that’s a bit unreasonable.”

“You’re mistaken, we wanted to come over to see you, it’s just that we didn’t have enough time.” Lu Zhou sighed and explained sincerely, “The engagement... was only a private agreement between her and me. It wasn’t a formal procedure. I don’t know how, but it was overheard by someone, then it started to spread.”

After hearing these words, Chen Baohua, who was originally calm, suddenly became angry.

“What is that supposed to mean? You’re saying the engagement isn’t official? You were lying to my little girl?”

“I wasn’t—”

“Listen here, don’t think that just because you’re an academician you can do whatever you want. I... am her father! If you dare to disappoint my daughter, we’re going to have a problem!”

“Of course, of course, let me explain the reason to you.” Lu Zhou looked at Uncle Chen Baohua and said, “What I mean is, we decided on the engagement in private. After preparing the formal engagement procedures in Jinling, then we were going to go to Beijing together to explain the situation to you in person at your home. But, no one expected the news to spread so quickly.”

After listening to Lu Zhou’s explanation, Chen Baohua finally realized that the matter was not what he had imagined. He had misunderstood the situation. An awkward expression appeared on his face.

In fact, as a father, he was quite liberal.

Regardless of the choice his daughter made regarding marriage and family, he would support her decision. The only thing he worried about was that she was being cheated or bullied by someone.

Generally speaking, he was quite satisfied with this son-in-law.

After snorting proudly, Chen Baohua put on a serious expression and nodded reluctantly.

“Well, okay...”

Lu Zhou was dumbfounded, he looked at the grumpy old man and spoke.

“So does that mean... you agree?”

“Of course I agree! Why wouldn’t I agree?” Chen Baohua said proudly as he stared at Lu Zhou who was sitting across the sofa, “But if you want to have your fun and leave, I’ll tell you now that is not going to happen.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

What?

At first, he thought the old man was opposed to the marriage, but it turned out the old man was easily convinced.

Now it seemed like they didn’t have to elope.

Lu Zhou sighed in relief. He reached out and picked up the teacup. He sipped some tea to moisturize his dry throat.

However, Chen Baohua, who was sitting across from the sofa, suddenly coughed and spoke.

“So, when are you guys going to have kids?”

Lu Zhou almost spat out the tea he had just drunk. He put down the teacup with a dry cough, raised his arm, and wiped the corner of his mouth before speaking.

“This... Still depends on Yushan. Marriage is something between two people, it is hard for me to make a decision alone. However, I think that having children right after marriage is a bit too soon. Maybe after a month or two—”

“You can’t let her decide!” Chen Baohua interrupted Lu Zhou and said immediately, “When this marriage is official, have a child as soon as possible! I want to hold my grandson within a year, that’s not an outrageous request, is it?”

Lu Zhou looked at Chen Baohua. He was dumbfounded.

This was ridiculous.

One second ago, the old man asked him fiercely why he stole his daughter without saying anything, and the next, he started to urge them to have a child.

This turn of events really caught him off guard.

Besides, having a child wasn't that simple.

Lu Zhou didn't know how to respond to this strange request.

Seeing how Lu Zhou didn't object yet, Chen Baohua thought Lu Zhou had finally listened to his advice. He nodded with approval and stood up from the sofa.

"Well, that's that. I won't disturb your work any longer.

"By the way, don't tell Yushan what happened today, just act like nothing happened. When your work here is over, come to Beijing with her. Her mother wants to see you. She's been pestering me for a long time."

"Okay..."

Even though he doubted whether his acting skills could fool Chen Yushan, under Chen Baohua's trusting gaze, Lu Zhou decided that he would try his best...

Chapter 1359: Board and Set Sail!

Hundreds of thousands of kilometers away on the Moon Palace, an aerospaceplane shaped like a bird slowly approached the towering fortress.

The alloy round tube acted as a gateway to the Moon Palace. It was inserted into the open connection port on the side of the Starlight, docking successfully.

The alloy tube began to be filled with air.

As the alloy door panels on both sides opened, six astronauts in spacesuits grabbed the handrails on both sides of the corridor and moved slowly across the gateway. They entered the buffer room of the Moon Palace.

Liang Youcheng stopped at the buffer room and looked at the Moon outside the porthole with a trace of fascination in his eyes.

“On Earth, I’ve heard about how, standing on the Moon Palace, you can see the ILHCRC collider and the Guanghan Special Economic Zone.”

“Definitely can’t see it standing here.” Captain Xu Zhenghong, who was in charge of sending the five astronauts to the Moon, walked to the side of Liang Youcheng and said with a smile, “But maybe if you wait another hour.”

“Have you been to Guanghan City?”

“Been twice.”

“What’s it like there?”

“Its development is fast!” Xu Zhenghong looked at the Moon outside the porthole and said, “I remember when I went there for the first time to send supplies. Back then, there was nothing on it, only one lonely scientific research station with a few research workers stationed there. My deputy and I even doubted whether they could survive with so little supplies.”

Liang Youcheng then asked, “What about the next time?”

“The next time was for 4.27 tons of lunar ore, 50 kilograms of wheat, corn, potatoes, and some biological reagents and scientific research specimens produced on the Moon... I remember very clearly because I personally counted those goods.”

Xu Zhenghong had a smirk on his face as he said, “The current Guanghan Special Economic Zone relies on the lunar ice below the surface to independently produce fresh water and oxygen, to cultivate space crops inside the plant growth units. They can even produce rare earth minerals. I heard that there is now a space hotel open to reservations from ordinary tourists, but it is still relatively expensive.”

“I really want to take a look if I can.”

“You’ll get an opportunity.” Xu Zhenghong said with a smile, “Your team seems to change every three years. When you return from Mars next time, I’ll probably be the one taking you home. I will take you to Guanghan City then.”

Liang Youcheng smiled and stretched out his fist.

“Good, then you better be here when I come back.”

“Of course I will.” Xu Zhenghong smiled and fist bumped Liang Youcheng. He said, “You should be careful over there. Don’t make any mistakes.”

“Don’t worry.” Liang Youcheng said with a faint smile, “I promise all of the astronauts will return home alive and well.”

...

The turmoil surrounding the engagement did not last long.

Gossip was like the wind; it would come and go in waves, and everyone would eventually forget about it.

A few days later, other celebrities would get married or broken up. Soon, the netizens began to gossip on some other news.

As the “day of departure” became closer, Professor Lu’s personal life was obviously less worth talking about than the mission of all of mankind.

The last day of March.

Under the much-anticipated expectations, the colonists of the Mars landing project finally appeared in the public eye.

For various reasons, the Mars landing office did not announce the identities of the colonists who went to Mars this time.

It wasn’t until the five people successfully arrived at the Moon Palace hundreds of thousands of kilometers away and right before they were about to enter the Xu Fu colonial ship did their names and photos were finally announced.

What surprised people was that in the initial Mars landing plan published by the Mars landing office, there were only three colonists mentioned in the text.

Because of this matter, many people on the Internet discussed that the Mars landing office was actually imitating NASA's "New Virginia" plan.

However, the first batch of people had changed from three to five.

This sudden change surprised those who were paying attention to the Mars landing project, as well as NASA.

After all, bringing one more person to Mars was not as simple as adding an extra seat to the spacecraft. This not only required the artificial ecosystem deployed on the surface of Mars to have a higher capacity, but it also meant that the colonial ship had to carry extra supplies that could cover two more people.

From a technology standpoint, this was not an easy task.

Also, coupled with the fact that the Mars landing itself was an attention-grabbing event, people couldn't help but relate it to international politics.

Only a few years ago, NASA almost brought a dangerous Mars bacteria back to Earth, which almost caused a serious ecological crisis. Even now, there was still an astronaut on the Lunar Scientific Research Station that was still in a coma due to the virus.

There were exactly three astronauts on the BFS spacecraft sent by NASA to Mars, and now China suddenly announced that they would increase the number of people on the Mars landing project from three to five. It was easy for the public to form political conspiracies.

Many people regarded it as a challenge from China to North America's aerospace field.

Some people even interpreted it as a high-profile announcement by China that they had won the race for the future of mankind.

This result was completely beyond Lu Zhou's expectation; it even made him a little dumbfounded.

He swore that this was not his intention.

In the beginning, having three people to board the ship was because there would be one captain, one deputy, and one substitute. Three people just happened to be enough for most of the initial exploration work.

The reason why the timeline was shortened and the number of astronauts was changed to five people was for the system rewards. He would be able to gain more experience points this way.

He didn't expect the experts in international relations to brainwash the excited netizens and interpret this in so many ways. Not only was Lu Zhou dumbfounded, Director Li and Director Chang were also flabbergasted after they heard about the situation.

Because there were too many people paying attention to this news, in order to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding, the Mars landing office held a press conference to publicly respond and clarify these false rumors.

However, once they tried to clarify themselves, people thought that there must be some hidden secrets and messages behind it.

On Twitter.

The official account of CNN News reported on the live interview of the press conference.

The reply section completely exploded.

"China is trying to provoke us!"

"How dare they... How dare they!"

"We should restart our Mars landing plan immediately!"

"That's right! If they send five people, then we will send ten people!"

"..."

Of course, there were many rational voices amidst the excitement of the community.

In addition to those who were clamoring about restarting the Mars landing program, many people were also opposed to the Mars landing plan. They believed that the White House should focus more on the Lunar Gateway

project. They should then follow the footsteps of the Chinese and try to catch up on the Moon.

In fact, this was correct.

Even now, NASA had not completely cleared up the mess left by the last Mars landing plan; they had yet to recover from the New Virginia disaster.

Regardless of whether or not their limited resources were focused on the exploration and development of the Moon, now was not a good time to restart the Mars landing plan.

However, if they did nothing, it would undoubtedly damage their approval rate and support from the White House.

America was the pride of Americans.

They had maintained this pride for half a century.

In any case, this was not something that could be dealt with carelessly.

Chapter 1360: End This Race

1600, Pennsylvania Avenue.

It was a busy scene here since the early morning.

Thanks to the Chinese people, the persistent journalists, the representatives of civil organizations, and lawmakers had been making things difficult for them. As if this would solve the problem.

However, this wasn't what distressed the White House.

After the completion of the Earth-Moon economic integration strategy based on the Moon Palace and the establishment of the Guanghan Special Economic Zone, they had been completely left behind.

Before this, they were able to compete with China in the aerospace field, but now, it had developed to the point where they were powerless.

To put it bluntly, due to the controllable fusion technology and plasma propulsion technology, the breathing room left for chemical rockets was very, very small. They did not lose in strategy, they were simply stuck in a technology bottleneck.

But, in any case, losing was losing.

Anyone could see that they had been unable to continue the competition in this space race. The most important thing now was not how to win, but how to end in a saving-face manner.

“The latest news from the China National Space Administration... They announced the road map of the Mars colonization program to the United Nations and the International Space Organization, intending to build a 200-person permanent settlement on Mars within five years. This will be used for scientific research and exploration activities.

“In addition, according to the latest information from the Arizona Observatory, the Xu Fu colonial ship has successfully left the Earth-Moon system and continues to operate according to its current trajectory. It will reach Mars orbit at the earliest on the 14th.”

The President listened to the endless reports from his subordinates. He was sitting behind his desk, rubbing his sore eyebrow with his index finger and thumb.

Since taking office as the president, he had lost countless nights of sleep for his country.

Among the many presidents in the history of the United States, no president had been as stressful as him.

If there ever was, it would definitely be the next president in office.

“Keep paying attention... Apart from waiting for the news from Lunar Gateway, there is nothing we can do for the time being.”

After hearing these words, Director Carson, who was standing in the office, had an awkward expression on his face. He pretended not to hear him and looked to the side.

Concerned about the President's negative attitude, the Secretary of State frowned and said, "It's not a good idea to do nothing. Judging from the current state of public opinion, the people have already expressed dissatisfaction with our indifference. I am worried that this will continue..."

The President said impatiently, "Do you have any good ideas?"

"I can't say it's a good idea, but... I think it's at least a remedy."

"Oh, really?"

"Although many Americans are unwilling to admit, in fact, we have lost the competition." The Secretary of State glanced at Director Carson and said, "The lunar scientific research station and the ILHCRC collider have won the support from the international academic community. It is impractical for us to delay their economic development through the space race."

After a moment of silence, the Secretary of State continued, "We can't continue to drag on passively like this."

"My suggestion is to end this meaningless race as soon as possible so that our relationship can return to normal. If we can't beat them, then we should join them."

The office was dead silent.

Although this was the best choice, the courage required to make such a choice was beyond the capabilities of most politicians.

Perhaps it was a wrong decision to start this competition at all.

But it was too late now.

Someone had to stand up and step on the brakes for this reckless train.

After a long silence, the President finally sighed and spoke slowly.

"You're right."

"It's time to end everything."

When Director Carson heard the President say those words, he instantly felt like he was back to being a teenager.

But in any case, Carson was relieved when he heard this.

Before coming here, what he worried the most was that the President would stubbornly carry on the competition and arbitrarily implement a Mars landing plan. All of the problems would be thrown onto him.

If this had happened, it would be a disaster for the United States.

Fortunately, the President was still reasonable. And it was not too late to step on the brakes.

“We need an opportunity to repair our political relations. Something that is acceptable to the people of both countries and also gives us an opportunity to step down.”

Now that the decision had been made, there was nothing to hesitate over.

The President regained a confident expression on his face.

The Secretary of State was satisfied to see that his boss had made the right choice. He nodded with a relaxed expression and spoke.

“Yes, we need an opportunity. The award from the International Union of Materials Research Societies was a good opportunity; it’s a pity that it was rejected by Lu Zhou.”

After a pause, he continued, “However, although Lu Zhou himself can’t come, I heard that his student is going to Boston in April to attend the conference of the International Union of Materials Research Societies in place of him at the meeting, and she will report on Lu Zhou’s paper.”

The President frowned and said, “A successful scholar has many students. This is normal.”

“But there is always someone special, such as Ms. Han Mengqi.” The Secretary of State had a confident smile on his face. He continued, “According to the information we investigated, she is Chen Yushan’s cousin. And that Ms. Chen Yushan is, needless to say, the one who has gotten engaged to Lu Zhou some time ago. According to China’s culture, Academician Lu is now Han Mengqi’s brother-in-law.”

The President looked at the Secretary of State weirdly and hesitated.

“We can’t... give her the Annual Union Award.”

“Of course not! Never would the International Union of Materials Research Societies do such a ridiculous thing, but... the International Union of Materials Research Societies can find a substitute, such as setting up an award for her specifically, such as the International Progressive Young Scholars Award.”

The Secretary of State showed a smile on his face and continued with a confident tone, “Then, we can use this opportunity to invite her and other winners to a dinner at the White House, where the Chinese ambassador will be there.

“And if the Chinese side wants to repair their relationship with us.

“Everything will be much easier.”

Chapter 1361: From Now on, You Finally Have a Home

Xu Fu had left the Earth-Moon system, carrying the expectations of hundreds of millions of people, heading toward the red desert tens of millions of kilometers away.

While the future of the global aerospace industry was taken away by this majestic starship, a major event happened in the physics community.

After the ILHCRC committee meeting and the election of the new chairman, Lu Zhou, the previous chairman of the ILHCRC, stood on the podium in the conference hall as scheduled. He faced the representatives of various countries, directors, and well-known physicists as he read out his retirement speech.

During his speech, Lu Zhou expressed an optimistic vision for the future of physics. He believed that this field would usher into unprecedented prosperity in the next 100 years and radiate this prosperity to every corner of human society.

However, this optimism did not diminish the unwillingness that permeated the venue.

Even though Lu Zhou expressed more than once a long time ago that he would only serve as the chairman of the board of directors for one term, when he finally resigned, people could not help but feel nostalgic. They thought of the incredible miracles Lu Zhou had once led ILHCRC to accomplish.

Even Professor Whittle, who had had differences with him during his entire tenure, couldn't help but feel sad for his departure.

This was how people are.

They would never know what they had until it was gone.

At this moment, Professor Whittle finally understood what an old friend said: It is a blessing to have a wise leader guide the way.

From this day onward, they were on their own.

Almost everyone listened to his speech with a heavy heart, finally giving a solemn applause.

There was no excitement in the applause. It was slow and heavy, like at someone's funeral.

"... Please don't feel downhearted, you're all making me embarrassed."

As Lu Zhou looked at the faces of the audience, he felt like letting this despairing sentiment continue might not be a good thing for his successor, Luo Wenxuan.

So he coughed lightly, then made a brief summary and conclusion of his speech. He then gave the microphone to Luo Wenxuan and walked off the stage quickly.

The pressure Luo Wenxuan felt when he took over the microphone was enormous. However, the moment Lu Zhou walked off stage, he felt a sense of indescribable relaxation and calmness.

Although there were still many responsibilities on his shoulders, at least the heaviest one had come to an end.

After the final handover on the ILHCRC was finally completed, Lu Zhou took advantage of the free time he had while the Xu Fu was still on its way to Mars. He was finally able to free up time to deal with some personal issues.

After leaving Shanghai, Lu Zhou did not return to Jinling. Instead, he took Chen Yushan to his hometown, Jiangling, and told his parents the big decision that they had made.

To Lu Zhou's surprise, he originally thought that after hearing the news, even if his father and mother weren't astonished, they would at least feel slightly amazed.

However, the reality was completely opposite to what he expected. Not only did his parents look relieved, they even looked a little emotional.

Fang Mei sighed slightly.

"Actually, your dad and I noticed a long time ago... We just feel sorry for the poor girl who has to put up with you." After that, she looked at Chen Yushan, who was blushing. Fang Mei smiled kindly and said, "Yushan, ever since Lu Zhou was a little kid, he has been a straightforward person. He thinks about problems and things straightforwardly, and sometimes he might be offensive, but I can assure you that his heart is still very kind."

After hearing this, Lu Zhou suddenly became unhappy.

"Mom, what are you talking about, why am I offensive?"

Everyone from the Jinling launch site to the Jin Ling University loved to hear his speeches, and there was no scientific proof that he was offensive at all.

Chen Yushan looked at her mother-in-law with a kind smile. She blushed and said, "It's fine... Although he is a bit straightforward sometimes, I still like him."

Lu Zhou: "...?"

"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. I understand, you don't need to explain to me." Fang Mei said with a smile, "His father and I also went through the same thing."

This time, Old Lu was the one who was unhappy.

"How is it the same thing? Am I like my son? When I was his age—"

"Okay, enough, enough. You were a charming prince back then... How about you go to the market and buy a fish for your son and daughter-in-law."

Speaking of which, you're drinking tonight, right? Remember to buy two pounds of pig trotters, it'll pair well with the drinks."

Old Lu suddenly stopped talking. He happily put on his shoes and went out to buy groceries.

Chen Yushan smiled at Fang Mei and spoke.

"Auntie, I can help you in the kitchen."

"Oh, no need, just keep me company if you want. I can handle it alone." Seeing how kind her daughter-in-law was being, Fang Mei began to smile.

"Mom, I can help too."

Seeing how everyone had tasks to do, Lu Zhou was embarrassed to stand around doing nothing; he wanted to find something to do himself. However, his wife shut him down.

"There's no way three people can fit in the kitchen. Stop messing around, just wait in the living room!"

Seeing how defeated Lu Zhou looked, Chen Yushan couldn't help but smirk. She secretly stuck her tongue out at him, then followed Fang Mei triumphantly into the kitchen...

...

That night, Lu Zhou's mother, Fang Mei, cooked an entire table of delicious dishes. The family sat and ate together; the atmosphere was so lively it was almost like it was Chinese New Year.

It was rare for Old Lu to drink alcohol without being berated by his wife, so he took out the good spirits he had treasured for a long time and placed it on the table generously.

Normally, he only drank a small cup at a time, but this time, he was much more generous, pouring his son one shot after another.

Because of this, even though he had not been drunk for many years, he was totally plastered.

“... When you win the Fields Prize, I didn’t get drunk. When you won the Nobel Prize, I didn’t get drunk either. But it seems like today will be different,” Old Lu said. “Your father is getting old.”

“You’re not even sixty yet.”

“Fifties is not young either... You were just a little kid back then, sitting on a stool with your legs dangling, but now, you are taller than me.” Old Lu stared at the ceiling, as if he was thinking of something funny. He suddenly smirked and said, “The times were different back then. I still remember that when your mother wasn’t paying attention, I secretly gave you a sip of wine. After that, you wobbled around, and you could barely stand up.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

What kind of dad does that?

He didn’t even know that he had such a dark childhood.

“Pfft...”

Chen Yushan didn’t think her fiance could still be so... cute as a child. Her shoulders began to shake as she laughed, and her stomach almost started to hurt. She pretended to cough and buried her face under the table.

Fang Mei thought she was choking. Feeling concerned, she patted her back with concern. Then, she brought her a cup of hot water from the side.

“Eat slowly, be careful.”

“No... I’m fine, auntie.”

“You’re not fine at all, you’re choking.”

After downing the shot, Lu Bangguo reached out his hand toward his flask. However, instead of grabbing the flask, he grabbed the soy sauce bottle instead. If it weren’t for Lu Zhou, he would have filled up his shot glass with soy sauce.

Lu Zhou took the soy sauce bottle from his father and sighed.

“Dad, you’re drunk, take it easy.”

“Oh, come on, how many has it been?”

“... If I’m correct, this is your seventeenth shot.”

“What? Only seven shots. Your dad isn’t drunk at all... No wonder you’re a mathematician, you’re so good at counting.”

Lu Zhou smiled and didn’t say anything.

Even though Lu Zhou didn’t particularly like drinking, he had always been a heavyweight.

Naturally, this was inherited from his father. However, it was also probably because the system had helped him strengthen his metabolic function. Sometimes, when he drank too much, he did feel dizzy like a normal person, but as long as he went to the toilet and drank some water, he would be okay.

“Do you know what makes your dad the happiest?”

Lu Zhou held the kettle and filled his dad’s cup with warm water as he replied, “That I finally fulfilled your old man’s wish and came back with a wife?”

“You’re wrong, son.” Old Lu shook his head and continued with a serious expression, “Your wife isn’t the most important.”

“Oh?” Lu Zhou said casually, “Then what is important?”

“The important thing is... After spending so many years away from home, you finally have a home.”

Is there any difference between the two?

Lu Zhou silently took a sip of the spirit in the glass while he looked at his old man sipping warm water...

After thinking for a while, he still couldn’t understand what his old man was talking about.

Whatever, who cares...

Scholar's Advanced Technological System - Chapter 1362 - I'm Regretful -

Chapter 1362: I'm Regretful

At night time, the couple stayed at Lu Zhou's house.

Lu Zhou slept in his room, while Chen Yushan stayed in Xiao Tong's room. Over the years, Lu Zhou and his sister had been away from home all year round, but Fang Mei had been keeping their rooms tidy.

According to her, if her children came back someday, she wanted them to have a place to stay.

The next morning...

After eating breakfast, Lu Zhou took Chen Yushan around his hometown to take a look at the place where he grew up.

Even though she had been to Jiangling before, she only stayed for a few days and didn't take a close look at the peaceful little town near the river.

From the kindergarten he once studied at to his high school, Lu Zhou took her to see all of the places where he made his memories.

Speaking of this, a minor disturbance happened.

When Lu Zhou returned to his high school, he saw a sculpture of him near the gate. This statue seemed to have been made by the school leaders when he had just returned to China to lead the controllable fusion project, where the school asked him for a donation.

Lu Zhou still remembered clearly that he resolutely rejected the sculpture back then.

However, he didn't know if there was funding left over or if the local leaders wanted to please him, the statue was eventually built after many setbacks.

Chen Yushan was secretly laughing aside. Lu Zhou felt a little embarrassed looking at his statue. He turned around and wanted to leave, but he was recognized by the guard at the door.

Then...

The entire school was alerted of this. Even the Director of Education and the leaders of the city council committee were alarmed. They canceled their meetings and rushed over.

Lu Zhou was a little dumbfounded by the chaos in front of him. He just wanted to take his fiancée to take a look at his old high school. He didn't want to disturb the studies of the young students.

In the end, he couldn't keep pushing back the enthusiasm of the local villagers. Lu Zhou went on stage and gave a half-hour impromptu speech to the young students before he could finally escape.

Just like this, the couple spent three leisurely days in Jiangling where Lu Zhou reminisced over his youthful years. Afterward, Lu Zhou took Chen Yushan to Beijing.

She had met his parents already.

This time, it was time for him to meet her parents.

In a gated community on the edge of the 2nd Ring Road, most of the people who lived here were cadres' families, who worked in ministries and commissions.

An old man stood at the gate of the community wearing a military coat. He recognized Lu Zhou's face, so he let Lu Zhou in without making him register his name.

Normally, everyone had to register before entering the gated community, even if they were brought in by a resident. However, who didn't know who Academician Lu was?

Whether it was out of respect or something else, the security guard didn't ask him to sign in.

The couple entered the community quietly. They came to the door of Chen Yushan's house and rang the doorbell.

There were footstep sounds coming from behind the door, and soon, the door was opened.

Chen Baohua looked at Lu Zhou standing at the door. He paused for a second, then spoke with a warm smile on his face.

"Yushan, why are you suddenly here? You should have told me in advance. You even brought Academician Lu home... Come on in."

Chen Baohua invited the two into the living room. Chen Baohua gave Lu Zhou a strange look, as if this was the first time he had met Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou felt like Chen Baohua was a bit nervous, but he went along the flow.

Just like in his own home, Lu Zhou was welcomed by Chen Yushan's family and stayed in the guest room at night.

Lu Zhou put his clothes into the basket and then into the washing machine. He yawned and returned to the guest room, only to find that Chen Yushan, who should have been asleep, was sitting on his bed in her pajamas with a suspicious look on her face.

Before Lu Zhou could ask what was going on, she took the initiative first.

"Is there something you and my dad are hiding from me?"

"It's that obvious?"

"I noticed it immediately, okay? Wow, so you are hiding something!"

Chen Yushan was pouting like a little girl. Lu Zhou had a powerless expression on his face as he said, "It's not a big deal. But if you are curious, I can tell you."

"Tell me now! Or I will have to use torture to extract a confession."

Lu Zhou wanted to confess the whole story, but when he heard this, he almost changed his mind.

He was curious what kind of torture could pry his mouth open.

After some hesitation, Lu Zhou chose not to mess around.

“When we just got engaged, your father... That is, my father-in-law, secretly came to Jinling.”

“He went to Jinling?” Chen Yushan said with a surprised expression on her face, “But... Why haven’t I heard him mention anything?”

Lu Zhou: “I said he came secretly, how is it a secret if he tells you?”

Chen Yushan frowned; she was baffled.

“But... Why did he hide it from me?”

Lu Zhou said casually, “Probably afraid that you will overthink. But he was also worried that his little daughter was deceived by some handsome guy, so he came over to confront me alone.”

Chen Yushan thought about it carefully; this was indeed something that her father would do.

Chen Yushan had a worried expression on her face. She looked at him and whispered, “He didn’t say anything offensive to you, right?”

Lu Zhou: “No, he was just a little angry that we made such a big decision and didn’t tell him, but the misunderstanding was quickly clarified. Then he asked me to treat you well and don’t let you down. Also, the next time I come to Beijing with you, to pretend that I was meeting him for the first time.”

“Pfft... First time... He has seen you several times before.”

Lu Zhou shrugged helplessly.

“That’s what I thought.”

“Actually, my dad’s quite adorable.”

Perhaps it was because of the silence of the night...

The conversation suddenly ended, and the atmosphere between the two people suddenly fell into silence; everything felt so natural.

Lu Zhou pondered for a long time before suddenly speaking, "I suddenly regret doing it."

Chen Yushan's body was tense. She asked in a quiet voice, "Regret doing what?"

"Just ask me the question again."

"What question?"

"The one just now."

Chen Yushan frowned and thought about it for a while. She then said in an uncertain tone, "... He didn't say anything offensive to you... Is that it?"

"He was offensive." Lu Zhou nodded solemnly. He looked at her and said seriously, "So, how are you going to make it up to me?"

Chen Yushan was taken aback for a moment, then her cheeks flushed. She reached out angrily and punched him on the shoulder.

"Stupid a*s..."

"My parents are here... Can't you... restrain yourself?"

Although I can be quiet...

But it will feel too weird!

Lu Zhou: "...?"

Seeing how Lu Zhou suddenly stopped speaking, Chen Yushan, who mentally prepared herself, couldn't help but ask in a quiet voice, "What's the matter with you? You're not angry over this, right?"

Lu Zhou shook his head and spoke.

"No, I'm not angry. Just a bit surprised. I just wanted you to buy me milk tea tomorrow, I didn't expect your reaction to be so extreme... If you don't want to, it's fine."

"..."

For some reason, when Chen Yushan looked at Lu Zhou's face, she wanted to slap him.

Chapter 1363: The Millions of Kilometers Journey

"Where are you from?"

"Hubei."

"Hubei? In the same city as Academician Lu?"

"No, he is from Jiangling, I am Jiangcheng, a bit different."

"Jiangcheng, I see..." There was a trace of reminiscing in Liang Youcheng's eyes. He spoke nostalgically, "I remember the spicy dry noodles there were delicious."

Han Kangyu thought for a bit. His expression remained the same as he spoke.

"It's alright, I like the tofu."

Sixteen days had passed since the Xu Fu colonial ship departed. After more than two weeks of sailing, they were getting closer and closer to their destination.

This also meant that the distance between them and their hometowns was getting farther and farther.

Over the past two days, most of the conversation they had was about their hometowns.

Liang Youcheng never thought that he would miss his hometown so much.

When he was on Earth, he didn't appreciate many things. It wasn't until the moment when Xu Fu left the gravitational restraint of the Earth-Moon system did he suddenly realize that he had so many things he had yet to experience on Earth, and that living on Earth was much more pleasurable.

There was a stomach grumbling sound.

“What kind of tofu? Is it good?”

This person’s name was Fan Tong[1]. Although the name was easy to be misunderstood, by the fact that he was sitting on this colonial ship, he was obviously not a lazy person.

With a PhD in planetary geology from the Institute of Aerospace Studies at Jinling University, his supervisor’s research on planetary geology was among the best in the world.

Just like the bioengineer named Ming Wenzhe, they were temporarily advanced from the second batch to the first batch of crew members because of their outstanding performance in training. Because they did not train in Biosphere A, these two and the other three crew members had only recently just met.

Han Kangyu looked at him and began to reminisce. He thought for a few seconds before speaking.

“Dried spiced seeds, bamboo shoots, lean meat, and dried shiitake mushrooms. Fry them, then put on fried tofu covered with glutinous rice, brush with a layer of vegetable oil, then fry on high heat until golden. Each bite is full of flavor... It’s a staple of Jiangcheng, usually eaten for breakfast.”

Now, everyone’s stomach was grumbling.

Captain Liang Youcheng and the four crew members all began to salivate.

Over the past few days, they basically only ate liquid food. Even though the taste was not unpleasant, it was not as delicious as freshly cooked food on earth.

There was finally a pause. Han Kangyu said with a sigh, “Ah, I’m getting hungry just talking about it.”

“Then stop talking about it.” Ming Wenzhe immediately interrupted him and said, “I’m getting hungry too.”

Fan Tong quickly nodded his head, even though he was the one who brought up this conversation.

Han Kangyu smiled and stopped talking.

Soon, he realized that talking about food was a stupid decision. They were in space, millions of kilometers away from Earth. Liquid food was already enough of a torture, but now, it tasted even worse.

“Hubei is the southernmost place I’ve been to in my life,” said Liang Youcheng. He looked at the deep and gloomy starry sky outside the porthole and reminisced about the food emotionally. “I didn’t expect that, this time, I’m so far away from home.”

This made people fall into silence.

For a moment, the entire cabin became quiet.

“We will arrive in an hour or so.” Liang Youcheng stood up from the space chair and glanced at the wrist-mounted computer. He carefully moved his stiff limbs, then looked at his deputy Han Kangyu. “I’ll go wait at the cockpit.”

“Do you need my help?”

“No, I can handle it alone, you can do whatever you want.”

After hearing the captain’s words, Han Kangyu nodded and did not follow him.

Because of Xu Fu’s single function, it didn’t need to engage in other complex space activities. Xu Fu had a high degree of automation; tasks such as take-off and landing could be completed by AI.

Most of the time, sitting in the cockpit consisted of staring at the same scenery outside the window and being aware of the rarest accidents. Therefore, there was no reason to have two people in the cockpit.

The people in the cabin returned to their seats and put on their seatbelts.

They waited quietly for about twenty minutes in silence. They felt a slight sense of trembling; the dark deep sky outside the portholes finally had a touch of color that they had never seen before.

There was a smudge of red light.

Its surface exuded a cloud of lifeless dust, like the air left alone in the corner of a warehouse.

“It’s so beautiful...”

"Yeah, it is beautiful... I heard that billions of years ago, the ecosystem there was more lushful than on Earth, but I don't know if it's true or not."

"It's neither true nor false, it's just a conjecture." Fan Tong said, "The specific answers depend on whether we can dig into the stratum formed billions of years ago and find fossils to prove this."

While the astronauts in the cabin were chatting, the planet outline in the distance gradually became clearer.

Compared to Earth, its volume was a little smaller, but compared to the tiny Xu Fu, its size was shocking.

The cockpit door opened.

Liang Youcheng had put on his spacesuit in the cabin. He walked out with a black tablet in his hand.

"Half an hour before we enter Mars orbit.

"Communication resources are precious. Everyone will have time for only one sentence. They can say anything, whether it's to relatives or friends... Who is going first?"

The people in the cabin looked at each other; no one wanted to go first.

Seeing how no one said anything, Fan Tong suggested in a low voice, "Should we roll a dice?"

"There's no gravity nor dice here... How about by age? Start with the oldest."

"Okay! Enough, stop wasting time." Liang Youcheng couldn't stand it anymore. He reached out and entered the password on the tablet. He said, "If no one wants to, I will go first. Someone else can go next. If you don't want to, that's fine too."

The captain was going first, so naturally, no one had any objections.

The pairs of eyes all fell on Liang Youcheng's body.

Everyone was quietly waiting for him to speak, to pass the news of victory tens of millions of kilometers away back to the blue mother star.

Liang Youcheng felt the heavy responsibility. He knew how important this moment was. He went silent for a long time.

He obviously had a lot to say, but he couldn't find the right words.

He took a deep breath.

He finally made a decision and pressed the button to start recording.

Then he spoke.

“Dad, Mom... We have arrived safely.”

[1] TN: Name is similar to a slang for someone that is lazy

Chapter 1364: Arrived On Mars!

Although Mars was close by, it was too early to start celebrating victory now.

Soon, the moment Xu Fu made contact with the gravitational field of Mars, it would endure its most difficult test since it set sail.

Unlike other smaller spacecraft, it was not an easy task to accelerate or decelerate this large and complex colonial ship.

Especially deceleration.

If the speed was too low, they would not be able to catch up with Mars. If the speed was too fast, they could pass directly through the gravitational field of Mars. The window period for Xu Fu to decelerate was small. They must reduce the speed so that they could be caught by the gravitational field of Mars.

Especially since Mars did not have an atmosphere, the leapfrogging method of slowing down at the edge of the atmosphere like that on Earth was not feasible here. They could only achieve the deceleration of the spacecraft by reversing the propulsion jets.

Fortunately, for Star Sky Technology, this was not very difficult.

Once the portable controllable fusion reactor core was ignited, the temperature in the heating chamber began to rise linearly. The propellant that was sent to the heating chamber was instantly vaporized and ionized into active plasma.

The temperature in the reaction chamber and heating chamber was getting higher and higher, like a tiny sun.

The reactor's power continued to increase when it finally broke through a certain critical point. The plasma engine suddenly ejected a blue glow, lighting up the entire tail of the Xu Fu ship!

Pushed by the blue "flames", Xu Fu briefly accelerated forward for a short period of time.

However, this did not last long. Soon, the rectifier was deployed, and the plasma ejected from the outside of the cabin began to turn under the force of the magnetic field. Like a parachute, Xu Fu began to slow down as it headed toward Mars.

After more than ten hours of waiting and several orbit changes, Xu Fu finally completed its deceleration. It entered the Mars gravitational field for the last time and was successfully captured by the Mars gravitational force.

At the same time, a clear announcement came from above the heads of everyone sitting in the cabin.

"Xu Fu has successfully entered the Mars gravitational system. Assisted landing mode will be activated in half an hour. Colonists, please put on cabin spacesuits and stand by in No.1 ring area."

Liang Youcheng, who was wearing his cabin spacesuit, took off the seat belt on the space chair and stood up.

He looked back at his teammates standing up and spoke in a serious tone.

"Ready?"

The four of them answered at the same time.

"Yes, sir!"

Liang Youcheng nodded with approval and ordered loudly.

“Let’s go!”

The journey had entered the final stage.

The probes previously deployed on Mars had scanned the basic geomorphology data into the database of the Jinling launch site. They decided on the landing site long before they set off.

Xu Fu would not stay in orbit for too long. It would begin the colonization process immediately after reaching the target area.

The No. 2 ring, the propulsion system, and the main structure of the spacecraft would remain in the orbit of Mars as a temporary space station and a communication relay satellite. The No. 1 ring would be separated from the spacecraft and fall toward the surface of Mars.

The group of people passed through the narrow passage, along the outer corridor of the spacecraft, and entered the No. 1 ring area.

This was the core part of the entire colonial ship.

It was also their future home on Mars.

Liang Youcheng looked at the cabin door slowly close behind him. He silently raised his right arm and gave a military salute.

After this, he turned around and went toward the buffer room on the outer edge of the No. 1 ring with his four teammates.

This was the entrance and exit of the colony capsule. It had the strongest shell and the most complete set of tools in the entire colony capsule. It was also the place where they would wait until landing.

“Find a place to sit down and connect the life support system to your spacesuit.

“After making sure your equipment is operating normally, raise your hand so that I’ll know you’ll survive.”

The joke eased the tense atmosphere in the cabin a bit, and many people’s tightened eyebrows relaxed a little.

Liang Youcheng looked at the four raised hands and nodded. He then reached out his hand and unlatched the folded seat against the wall. After sitting on the seat, he methodically connected the seat belt and the life support device on his cabin spacesuit.

The orbit deceleration was a test of Xu Fu's capabilities.

And this was about to be a test for the astronaut's capabilities.

After waiting for ten minutes in a quiet atmosphere, Liang Youcheng, who adjusted his breathing rhythm, began to hear his own heartbeat.

Finally, a series of slight trembles came from their seats. The astronauts sitting in the buffer room were all on high alert.

Fan Tong put his hands on the armrest of the seat and said nervously, "Captain, are we landing soon?"

Liang Youcheng tried to make himself look less nervous. He smiled and spoke in a relaxed tone.

"Not yet. We just separated from the spaceship, we'll have to wait—"

Before he could finish, the familiar computer broadcast sound interrupted his words.

"Separation process begins. The colony capsule will be separated from the colonial ship, Xu Fu, in one minute. The landing process will begin in two minutes..."

"We wish you a pleasant journey."

Right afterward, the shaking under the seat began to feel more and more intense.

With a metal clicking sound coming along the alloy walls, the connections between the ring-shaped colony capsule and the Xu Fu colonial ship were ejected.

The four small chemical thrusters installed on the outer wall of the ring structure emitted flames, pushing the colonial capsule away from Xu Fu slowly, sending it toward the turbid atmosphere of Mars.

Like cutting a baby's umbilical cord off, the colony capsule was separated from the mothership's body. It ejected flames while slowly moving down toward the fiery red planet.

Soon, it was the most difficult section.

The bumpy feeling was like a roller coaster; the astronauts sitting in the buffer room were as nervous as possible.

Liang Youcheng stared at the turbid atmosphere outside the porthole. He firmly grasped the armrests of the seat. Although this did not make him more stable, it at least brought him some comfort.

Once they broke through the periphery of the atmosphere, the engine power began to increase!

For a brief moment, Liang Youcheng felt the nostalgic gravity of the Earth pulling his body.

However, the nostalgic feeling only lasted a brief moment.

The force gradually decreased with the declining altitude.

Like throwing a rock in the sand, after the final violent tremblings, all of the uncomfortable sensations went away in an instant.

Liang Youcheng looked at the flying yellow sand outside the porthole and the outline of the horizon buried in the dust. He suddenly wanted to cry.

An unspeakable excitement filled every corner of his chest.

Mars!

This is Mars!

We are finally here!

Chapter 1365: A Short Break

Beijing airport.

A girl in a cardigan and a light coat stood at the entrance of the airport with a suitcase in her hand. She said goodbye to the two people who were sending her off.

“Sis... Teacher, I have to go.”

Lu Zhou looked at Han Mengqi and gave her an encouraging look.

“Okay, safe travels.”

Unlike the emotionless Lu Zhou, Chen Yushan spoke with a worried look on her face.

“Remember to be safe, send me a message when you land, also message me every night before you sleep.”

“Okay, I know... I’m not a kid anymore.”

Han Mengqi grabbed the suitcase in her hand, turned around, and went to the check-in gate. Her petite figure soon disappeared in the crowd.

Chen Yushan watched her disappear into the crowd. She looked at Lu Zhou with worry and spoke.

“Meng Qi... is going to be fine, right? I heard America is in a mess right now.”

“Don’t worry.” Lu Zhou smiled, stopped waving, and put his hand down. He said, “Everything will be fine, this is an opportunity for her.”

Chen Yushan looked at Lu Zhou and asked confusingly, “Opportunity?”

“Well, the Mars landing plan has progressed until now, yet NASA hasn’t reacted at all. Do you think they’re secretly hiding a big move?”

Chen Yushan pinched her chin with her right hand and thought for a moment. She then suddenly raised her head.

“No, so do you mean...”

“Yes, your guess is correct.” Lu Zhou smiled faintly and nodded. “There is nothing they can do. If I’m correct, the White House should be waiting for an opportunity to release a friendly signal, to fix the tension caused by the previous space race. If everything goes according to plan, she will receive a

high-level treatment when she lands in America... There might even be a gift waiting for her.”

In fact, this wasn't his own thoughts, Director Li had told him this after he rejected the award from the International Union of Materials Research Societies.

“What gift will it be?”

“Probably an award suitable for young scholars or a similar honor. I'm not sure either. Anyway, it should be very helpful for her future career.”

Han Mengqi was already sitting and waiting at the boarding gate.

She didn't know that her trip to the United States was far more complicated than she had imagined. Even though her flight hadn't even taken off, the convoy for her pick-up was already waiting outside the airport in America...

After sending his little student to the airport, Lu Zhou took Chen Yushan to the maglev station.

They had been in Beijing for almost two weeks. Every day over the past two weeks, they were dragged by Lu Zhou's father-in-law to drink. It was the kind of drinking that didn't stop until someone collapsed.

Out of consideration for the old man's health, Lu Zhou and Chen Yushan decided to bid farewell to the old couple. When they were leaving, Chen Yushan was still talking about how he couldn't succeed in getting Lu Zhou completely plastered and how they should drink again in the future.

The couple finally sat on the maglev train back to Jinling. Lu Zhou, who didn't sleep well last night, rested his head on the seat and closed his eyes quietly. As for Chen Yushan, who was sitting next to him, she supported her head with her hands, her elbows leaning on the table in front of her, as if she was reminiscing about something.

“It feels like the past few days went by so fast.”

So many things had happened in the past few days; she felt like she was in a dream.

“Yeah, pretty fast.”

Chen Yushan didn't notice that Lu Zhou was almost asleep. She was completely immersed in her own world as a happy smile appeared on her face.

"It is almost like..."

For some reason, she suddenly stopped talking.

Lu Zhou was curious about what she wanted to say. He half-opened his eyes and looked at her face. He then asked, "Like what?"

"Don't laugh at me."

"Don't worry, when have I ever laughed at you?"

"Like all the time! Like 'how can you not even solve such a simple problem'..." Chen Yushan said. She gave Lu Zhou a fierce stare as she recalled the past.

But soon, her menacing eyes softened.

She looked down at the table and brushed her hair as she whispered, "What I wanted to say is, this is like a honeymoon..."

What...

That's it?

I thought it was something important.

Lu Zhou looked at how embarrassed Chen Yushan was. He couldn't help but smile. However, he noticed that the pair of bright eyes was staring at him.

Lu Zhou remembered that, a second ago, he promised not to make fun of her. Lu Zhou quickly removed the smile on his face and forced a serious expression on as he nodded.

"Uh, yes, not bad."

"What do you mean not bad?" Chen Yushan stared at Lu Zhou suspiciously and said, "Why do I feel like you're acting weird today?"

Because I'm holding back my laughter...

Lu Zhou sighed in his heart as he held back his smile. He gave a dry cough and quickly changed the topic.

“Speaking of which, after we get married at the end of the year, where do you want to go for our honeymoon?”

“How about the Moon? The hotel that Star Sky Technology invested on the Moon is also almost completed.”

Lu Zhou glanced at her surprisingly.

“You really invested in a hotel on the Moon?”

“Yeah! I had this idea a long time ago! Don’t you think that vacationing on the Moon sounds like a very romantic thing?”

It was like her bright eyes began to emit light.

Lu Zhou looked at her and smiled.

“In that case, we’ll go with your plan.”

Chen Yushan: “Is there nowhere you want to go? We can discuss it.”

Lu Zhou sighed and said, “I prefer to stay in the laboratory... But if I suggest this, you’ll probably slap me in the face.”

“Then why did you bring it up!”

“Because I’m an honest man.”

His phone suddenly began to ring.

Lu Zhou picked up the phone and placed it next to his ear.

Chen Yushan secretly observed the changes on Lu Zhou’s face as he answered the call. After Lu Zhou hung up the phone, she asked him out of curiosity, “Who was it?”

“The Jinling launch site.”

“What’s wrong?”

“Xu Fu has entered the Mars system. If everything goes well, it will be in orbit in a few hours. Director Chang asked when am I going back, and I told him that I am already on my way back to Jinling.”

Chen Yushan spoke with a look of dismay.

“Looks like you’re about to get busy with work again.”

“I am already busy...”

Lu Zhou looked at the series of digital advertisement billboards flying past the window as he spoke with a sigh.

Whether it was the system missions or the piles of work waiting for him, it didn’t seem like he had any spare time.

He just hoped that, by the end of the year, he could finish the work at hand.

And then, he could go back to his hometown and get married...

Chapter 1366: Unusual Geological Structure

The tires creaked over the gravel.

On the endless Mars desert, a rover slowly marched against the wind and sand flying in the air.

This lifeless zone had been undisturbed for a long time. Apart from this AI-controlled all-terrain survey vehicle, only a few microorganisms were still lingering around.

Time seemed to have taken everything away.

In this dead land, every gravel was carved with desolation.

However, today was definitely an extraordinary day for this dead planet.

The roar of the engine came down in the thin atmosphere as a silver-white ring-shaped object slowly descended from the sky. Four thick flames were

burning at its front end, blowing toward the red sand on the surface, setting off a small-scale sandstorm.

As if it heard the movement from the sky, this all-terrain survey vehicle turned its camera angle and cast a “confused” look into the air.

It recorded the thrilling scene.

Like a comet hitting the surface, when the ring hit the ground, the flames were instantly extinguished. The billowing sand and dust rushed into the sky like a waterfall, pulling away in a turbid cloud.

[Data has been collected... Preprocessing.]

[Setting is complete.]

The static words flashed on the display. The rover had lost interest in this silver-white ring and continued to move along its original route. Its owner had set up its route to survey the topography and natural resources of Mars.

It had been doing this for years, and it would continue to do so until the machine was damaged or the battery was dead. It did not have any curiosity in collecting data on insignificant things.

The colony capsule didn't care about its “colleague” who had come to Mars earlier. After landing, the colony capsule immediately began deployment.

Four or five meters long alloy rods drove straight into the ground, fixing the colony capsule firmly on the ground.

Immediately afterward, the silver-white metal shell expanded outwards in four directions. Like an inflated doughnut, it expanded out a planting area that looked somewhat similar to a car airbag.

The deployment went very smoothly.

It was just like the countless practices they did in the desert.

Liang Youcheng stood in the communication room of the colony capsule. He connected to the Xu Fu colonial ship that was hovering in orbit via the console, then briefly reported the current situation.

“This is the outpost of the Mars colony. We have successfully landed.

“The climate and environment here are worse than we thought, but fortunately, everything went smoothly... The colony capsule has been deployed. The installations have been stable so far, and it seems that there are no malfunctions.

“After a short break, we will immediately start today’s work.”

After finishing the work report as concisely and as quickly as possible, Liang Youcheng sent this briefing to the Jinling launch site and also updated it in Xu Fu’s mission log.

Next up, there would be a series of routines such as walking out of the cabin, planting flags, and taking pictures.

While these routine ceremonies were in progress, a four-wheeled Mars rover that looked like an off-road vehicle slowly drove out of the garage outside the buffer room. It was driven by planetary geologist Dr. Fan, and it traveled along a straight trajectory in the sea of gravel.

His destination was the “water source” 7.2 kilometers away from the colony capsule.

There was an underground ice layer 20 meters below the surface, located in the middle of a small basin. According to estimates provided by the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, its reserves were about 150 to 400 million cubic meters.

Although many reservoirs on Earth were much larger, relative to the water resources on the Moon, this reserve was a representation of the “great land and resources” on Mars.

For the colonial outpost, water resources were the first thing that must be obtained. Freshwater resources and oxygen were the most fundamental material requirements for the operation of the entire artificial ecosystem.

Followed by renewable resources such as solar and wind energy.

Although the thin and turbid atmosphere on Mars made solar and wind energy less easy to use, it was better to collect energy locally than to use expensive nuclear energy.

After all, the nuclear fusion technology used on space stations and spacecraft was still a bit different from that on the Pangu reactor.

The latter was a positive magnetic confinement ignition device, which released energy akin to a star. Every chain from ignition to heat emission had been designed according to local conditions and required hundreds of engineers to maintain the stable operation of the device.

Meanwhile, the former was nothing more than a pulsed fusion device based on the sonoluminescence phenomenon in liquid metal.

Although this device was countless times smaller than giants such as Pangu and Xihe, the energy utilization efficiency, total power, and cost per unit of electricity were much lower.

And this was one of the reasons why, even though the Moon Palace was equipped with fusion batteries, it still had solar panels with a surface area several times larger than the main body.

The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study was researching how to build a simplified version of the first-generation magnetic confinement ignition device on the Moon to power the ILHCRC collider and other “high-power experimental equipment” at the lunar scientific research station, as well as researching the second-generation helium trifusion technology to increase productivity on the Guanghan Special Economic Zone.

After all these years of development, the energy requirement on the Moon was increasing, so relying solely on solar panels and storage power stations was not sufficient.

And when it came to the upcoming Mars Scientific Research Station...

They could forget about having high-level energy supply facilities any time soon.

The rover stopped in the center of the basin. Fan Tong stepped down from the rover and put down the mobile drilling machine behind the rover. He measured the formation data with seismic waves, then multiple rock formations samples were taken at depths of 10 and 20 meters.

“The rock sampling is complete.”

After a series of electric noises, Captain Liang's voice soon came from the communication channel.

"How did it go?"

"It's unbelievable... I mean unbelievably good." Fan Tong looked at the tablet in his hand. He was leaning against the mobile drilling equipment behind the rover with weird looks on his face. He said, "The data provided by the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study is so precise. I can't help but wonder if they secretly came to Mars before... How did they collect such accurate data?"

Liang Youcheng was not very clear about the whole story, but he was not particularly interested in these small details. The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study was the world's top research institution, so they obviously had their own methods.

Besides, they had Academician Lu.

Anything unbelievable became reasonable in the face of that man.

"Perhaps the data was collected from the wreckage of New Virginia. That seems to be a long time ago... Who cares. Since the information is accurate, we won't have to worry about freshwater resources for the next three years."

A freshwater reserve of more than 100 million cubic meters.

Let alone three years, even if their population increased tenfold, the water could last them 300 years.

The colony capsule was eco-friendly, the demand for external resource input was small. If everything goes well, they could even achieve a complete internal circulation of water resources, but that would consume much more energy.

"Anything else?"

"Um... One more thing I have to report to you."

With a hint of excitement in his tone, Fan Tong continued, "When I was doing seismic wave testing, I found a... a large seismic crack near here."

"Seismic crack?" Liang Youcheng frowned. "Are you sure? Like an earthquake crack?"

“I am sure! It’s correct, that kind of fault structure can only be generated by natural seismic activity. Because of the relatively low terrain, it was not buried by the wind and sand! However, surprisingly, according to the information I have learned in the literature, the geological activity of Mars should have ceased billions of years ago. This kind of geological structure is commonly found in areas of active plate movement... This is very unusual. Can I go and take a look?”

Planetary geology was his major.

The excitement in his heart at this moment could no longer be described in words.

Although it was only a small fracture, its discovery could change human civilization’s understanding of Mars! As a scholar, could there be anything more exciting than this?

Compared to Dr. Fan’s excitement, Liang Youcheng was much calmer.

After thinking carefully for a while, he finally rejected this risky proposal.

“Come back first, your mission today is over, it’s better not to take on additional tasks.”

Fan Tong: “I assure you that there is absolutely no danger! Its depth is only about ten meters, I can climb up even without a safety rope... Of course, I will tie one around my waist.”

“Come back now, that is an order.” Liang Youcheng said in a serious tone, “Photograph your findings and record them in today’s work log. I will let Ming Wenzhe follow you tomorrow.”

There was a long silence, and finally, a soft sigh came from the communication channel.

“Okay... You are right.”

Fan Tong reluctantly glanced at the fracture behind him. He shook his head and threw his tool back into the rover. He then got into the rover cockpit.

Inside the communication room, when Liang Youcheng saw the positioning signal moving on his screen, he was relieved.

Confirming the freshwater resource was the last task for today.

Everything was going well, and he didn't want to have any accidents.

But having said that, he was also curious about the "earthquake crack" that shouldn't be there.

He made up his mind that, after Dr. Fan returned, he would report the situation to the ground command center. The researchers on Earth could then decide on whether to conduct further investigations...

Chapter 1367: Treasure Hunting In Hell

While Captain Liang Youcheng compiled and uploaded the mission log of the day into Xu Fu, Lu Zhou, who was on Earth tens of millions of kilometers away, also received a reminder that the mission was completed.

[Congratulations, "Deep Into Hell" legendary mission is completed!]

[Mission description: The end of reincarnation, the beginning of everything.]

[Reward: 2.8 million experience points, (500,000×5+300,000 base value), 10,000 general points, legendary mission card.]

As usual, the system left a strange message in the mission description. However, this time, Lu Zhou had no idea what it wanted to convey.

It didn't seem to be sarcastic or insulting.

But if it was advice, it seemed too vague.

Not to mention, the mission title exuded an ominous atmosphere...

Even though he received the rewards, he felt like everything was not over yet.

After thinking about it for a long time, Lu Zhou temporarily put this aside. He looked at the experience points given to him.

A total of 2.8 million experience points, enough for him to upgrade the rest of biochemistry, energy, and information science to level 8.

Of course, he had another option, which was to spend all of the experience points on engineering (0/3 million), or materials (63,000/3 million). Although the 2.8 million experience was not enough to level up, it would bring him to the cusp of leveling up.

Then, he would only need to do a mission in the material science or engineering area to easily reach level 9.

In terms of efficiency, both strategies were feasible.

However, Lu Zhou thought of the legendary mission card. After hesitating for a while, he decided on being a jack of all trades as opposed to being a master of none.

After all, the rewards for the next mission wouldn't be low.

Being able to raise his average level a bit higher would be more helpful for him in different situations.

He allocated 500,000 experience points into biochemistry, 1.2 million to energy science, and 1.1 million to information science.

After this, his updated characteristic panel appeared in front of him.

[

A. Mathematics: Level 10

B. Physics: Level 10

C. Biochemistry: Level 8 (10,000/3 million)

D. Engineering: Level 8 (0/3 million)

E. Material Science: Level 8 (63,000/3 million)

F. Energy Science: Level 8 (0/3 million)

G. Information science: level 8 (0/3 million)

General points: 48,335

]

“Except for the maxed-out mathematics and physics, the rest of the fields have all reached level 8.” Lu Zhou looked at the data on his characteristic panel and nodded with satisfaction. He said, “The next step is to see which field reaches level 9 first.”

When he looked at the list of subject levels, he felt like he was back in school again.

When he thought of those years after he graduated from college, he couldn't help but feel nostalgic.

“When I reach level 10 in all areas... it probably means that I have graduated.”

He shook his head and drove this strange thought out of his mind. He reached out his index finger to select the golden mission card in his inventory.

A string of light particles spread along the card to his index finger. A brand new mission panel appeared in front of him immediately.

However, when Lu Zhou saw the mission panel, he was stunned.

[Mission: Treasure Hunting in Hell]

[Description: It is my honor to bring this to you, whether to fulfill your mission is your decision.]

[Requirements: Witness and discover the gift from the Void, let it see light again.]

[Rewards: ???]

Lu Zhou: “...?”

So, not only is the lucky draw based on luck, but I don't even know the rewards and requirements?

...

On the second weekend of April, Xu Fu arrived in Mars orbit.

The tranquility of the morning was broken by this sudden news.

A video around ten minutes in length was posted to the official website of the Mars landing plan.

The footage came from tens of millions of kilometers away.

First was through the perspective of Xu Fu, then the colony capsule separating from the entire colonial ship was captured on tape. Then the moment the colony capsule was ignited and approached the edge of the Mars atmosphere was also shown on screen. Finally, the audience observed the colony capsule diving toward Mars from the first-person perspective.

In terms of creativity, the editing of the entire video was simple and straightforward, with almost no unique shooting techniques and no special effects. However, when the silver-white ring landed in a sea of sand from a height of 100 kilometers, people felt a shock coming from the bottom of their hearts!

Xu Fu had successfully entered orbit!

The colony capsule successfully landed!

Five astronauts had set foot on Mars!

When people watched the exciting footage of the entire landing process in front of their computers and mobile phones, they couldn't help but let out excited exclams.

"F*ck! An iron doughnut falling from the sky; it's like a science fiction movie!"

"Do you know how heavy the thing is? It's hundreds of tons, okay! Except for us, no country on Earth can send such a large mass from Earth to Mars!"

"This is insane!"

"I haven't even been to the Moon, and our astronauts have already step foot on Mars..."

"Academician Lu is awesome!"

The video on the official website of the Mars landing plan was approved for republication, appearing on major video websites.

Later on, more and more netizens participated in editing the video. They creatively added background music to the video, as well as inserting other effects such as slow-motion and camera zooms.

Through various channels, the videos spread along the Internet.

At first, people out of the loop thought it was a trailer for a sci-fi blockbuster, but later on, they discovered that this video was not for a movie.

After realizing this, many people's hearts were full of complex emotions.

Especially North American citizens.

Even though for human civilization this was indeed a time to celebrate, but for some reason, watching the Chinese land their rover on the surface of Mars didn't excite them at all...

They were even frustrated.

The Wall Street Journal analyzed the possible impacts of the Mars landing plan from an economic perspective. The New York Times published the news in their technology panel. Only the Washington Post reported the incident on their front page.

The entire North American media seemed to have made an agreement to lose interest in Mars, trying to brush over this news in a low-key manner.

This time, no one mentioned anything about the space race.

Everything was clear in their hearts.

The winner of this competition had already been determined...

...

East Coast of North America.

Boston international airport.

Han Mengqi dragged her suitcase through customs. She looked at the limo parked outside the airport with a dazed expression. There was even a concierge standing next to the convoy.

She was wondering which important person was sitting on the same flight as herself when a middle-aged man in a suit standing by the car suddenly walked toward her with a smile.

“Hello, are you Ms. Han Mengqi?”

Han Mengqi looked at the person in front of her blankly and spoke.

“Yeah... Is there a problem?”

“I am the director of the foreign guest reception office at the White House. This is my business card.”

White House?

Foreign guest reception office?

Han Mengqi: “???”

What the hell?!

“Do you have the wrong person?” Han Mengqi said. She was baffled as she looked at the business card. She said, “I just came to attend the April International Union of Materials Research Societies conference...”

“Nope, we’re certain you’re the right person. That is exactly where we are going.” The man smiled politely and said, “I believe you must have a lot of questions. I will answer them on the way to the hotel.”

Chapter 1368: First Signs

“The Thousands of Miles Journey Has Been Crossed, a Step Toward The 400 Billion Galaxies”

When Lu Zhou looked at the newspaper in his hand, a smile appeared on his face.

This was in the latest issue of Everyone Daily.

On the cover of the newspaper was a photo taken on Mars.

The five astronauts stood on a sand dune, arms around each other's shoulders. Behind them were a silver-white circular colony capsule and a red flag fluttering in the wind.

This hard-won photo was destined to be recorded in history and become one of the most important memories in the history of human civilization...

Lu Zhou folded the newspaper in his hand and quietly finished eating his breakfast.

Xiao Ai's drone flew from the side to clean up the dinner plates. Just as Lu Zhou was about to get up and go to the bathroom, his phone began to ring.

Lu Zhou picked up the phone and put it next to his ear. Before he could speak, he heard a trembling tone of a girl saying "Professor Lu".

"Looks like you have arrived in Boston safely." Lu Zhou heard the anxiety in her voice. He said with a smile, "Why didn't you call back yesterday? Yushan was worried about you."

"I... forgot."

I didn't have the time to call her!

Han Mengqi gulped and whispered in a nervous voice, "Teacher, teacher... Yesterday, what was with the convoy that picked me up outside the airport?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Convoy? That was probably to show respect for us. Attend the academic conference and do a good job at the report. Don't worry about other things too much, just take part in the meaningful events. If you're not sure, call me."

Although there was still some anxiety in her heart, she felt relieved after hearing her teacher's words.

"Um... Okay then."

Lu Zhou continued to chat with his little apprentice about the academic conference. After he hung up, he temporarily put the International Union of Materials Research Societies conference issue aside and went to the bathroom to wash his face.

It was getting late.

He still had to go to the launch site in a bit.

If colonizing Mars corresponded to going “deep into hell”, then “treasure hunting in hell” was obviously implying that the gift from the Void should be on Mars?

Or at least the clue was there.

Lu Zhou thought of his previous dialogue with The Observer. He was even more certain that something was on Mars. The only thing that worried him a little was that even though his all-terrain reconnaissance vehicle had been roaming on Mars for almost two years, it had yet to find any clues.

This made him wonder whether the gift from the Void was still there.

After all, billions of years could cool a hot planet’s core and give birth to life in a chaotic atmosphere. Over such a long time, anything could happen...

...

Jinling launch site.

Lu Zhou asked Wang Peng to drop him off at the entrance of the command tower. He then went straight to the lobby of the ground command center.

When he arrived, people were already working.

Lu Zhou saw Director Chang Hezhi walk toward him as he asked, “How is the situation at the Mars Scientific Research Station?”

“Everything is normal. According to the schedule submitted by Captain Liang Youcheng, their work today is mainly to lay solar panels.”

Lu Zhou nodded and was about to ask if there were any unusual discoveries, but Director Chang suddenly took the initiative to speak.

“Speaking of which, there is something I have to report to you.”

“Yeah what?”

“Dr. Fan Tong at the Mars scientific research station discovered an unusual fracture structure near the basin, about 4.5 kilometers away from the research

station, when he drilled a core sample from the water source. The fault structure may have been formed by an earthquake.”

“Earthquake?” Lu Zhou looked at Director Chang with a strange expression on his face. He frowned and asked, “I remember that geological activities on Mars have stopped long ago?”

“I’m not sure either.” Director Chang Hezhi shook his head and said, “Basically, according to him, the research on this fault structure is of great importance, it may even subvert academic research on the geological structure of Mars. Therefore, he submitted an application for further exploration.”

Lu Zhou: “Is the fault structure deep?”

Director Chang Hezhi shook his head and said, “It doesn’t seem to be very deep. According to the records in the work log, it is probably only a dozen meters.”

A depth of more than ten meters is considered dangerous on Earth.

But it’s nothing dangerous when it comes to Mars terrain.

“Then let him go down and take a look... Also tell Captain Liang, in the future, unless they plan to explore the crater or conduct other risky scientific research activities, trivial matters like this don’t need special permission from us. I remember that I have given him on-site command authority before leaving. He can make his own decisions on most matters. He just needs to update the records in the work log.”

Director Chang nodded seriously.

“Okay, I’ll tell him that right now.”

Lu Zhou nodded.

“That’s that then.”

...

Tens of millions of kilometers away; Mars.

The billowing dust was lifted by the wheels. A Mars rover with tires as high as the shoulders of an adult was marching on this endless sea of sand.

Ming Wenzhe sat in the co-pilot seat. He was wearing an extravehicular spacesuit. As he looked at the screen of the on-board positioning system and the green dot that was getting closer, he casually asked, "Are you sure it's an earthquake crack?"

Fan Tong, who was sitting in the driving seat, nodded and spoke in an affirmative tone.

"I'm willing to put my academic reputation on the line."

"I'm not saying you're lying... I mean, could you have read it wrong? The data on the thermal radiation image clearly shows that the geological activity of Mars has been suspended. Even if there are seismic structures, it is unlikely to be violent or on the surface, right?"

Although his major was bioengineering, this did not mean that he had no knowledge of geology. In fact, most of the people who were sent here were a jack of all trades.

Although he was not a professional, he still knew some stuff.

Fan Tong: "I was just as surprised as you. But I am sure that my judgment is correct. As for why, we will know when we get there. Look, do you see the ridge in front? It's at the foot of the mountain..."

After a pause, he spoke.

"We're here!"

They approached the edge of the ridge. Fan Tong and Ming Wenzhe got out of the rover, grabbed the safety ropes from the trunk, and hooked them on the metal locks on the waists of their spacesuits.

"There is hematite here everywhere. I don't know how the signal is down there." The PhD in planetary geology looked at his teammate and said, "If I flash the flashlight upward, pull me up."

Ming Wenzhe nodded.

"Okay."

After discussing the plan, Fan Tong walked to where he was yesterday.

However...

Something unexpected happened.

When he stopped by the side of the ridge, his whole person froze; he had a ghostly expression on his face.

Ming Wenzhe saw his face through the transparent mask. He glanced around the rugged terrain around him and asked in an uncertain tone, "What about the fractured structure?"

"Impossible..."

Fan Tong took two steps forward quickly, groping on the ground like he was crazy. No matter how he searched, he found nothing except sand.

It was like the fracture structure...

Had disappeared into thin air.

"Could it be a mistake?"

Had it not been for the thin atmosphere on Mars, he would have asked if it were a mirage.

Fan Tong firmly shook his head. He fixed his eyes on the flat ground in front of him and said in disbelief, "Impossible! It's not a mistake! I took a photo and uploaded it to the work log!"

Ming Wenzhe also saw that photo before, yet he couldn't help but show hesitation on his face.

"Is it possible... that this is the wrong location?"

Fan Tong continued to shake his head.

"Unless Xu Fu's positioning system is wrong..."

Ming Wenzhe had a strange look on his face.

A deep fault structure...

Even if a sandstorm occurs, it would take months to wipe out its trace.

It has only been a day.

This is so strange...

Chapter 1369: The Gates of Hell

“Disappeared?”

Jinling launch site.

When Lu Zhou heard the report about the seismic structure, he almost stood up from his desk in surprise.

Director Chang Hezhi looked at the surprised expression on Lu Zhou’s face. He nodded with a weird expression.

“That’s right... According to the mission log updated by our Mars scientific research station, our scientific research personnel sent a rover to the target area, but when they arrived at the fractured structure, they found that there was nothing there.

“It’s like... it disappeared overnight.”

The fractured structure more than ten meters deep disappeared overnight?

Lu Zhou had never heard of such a ridiculous thing before.

“Was there a sandstorm that night?”

“Sandstorms occur all the time on Mars, but even if it was a sandstorm, it would be impossible to fill a dozen meters deep fractured structure overnight... This is what Dr. Fan recorded in the work log.”

Lu Zhou said, “Tell me what else he said.”

Director Chang Hezhi shook his head and said, “Nothing else, that’s all he said about the fault structure. Also, there’s an application for the publication of

a paper. He hopes to make this amazing geological discovery public and let more people analyze this magical phenomenon.”

The scientific research funding of the Mars landing plan mainly came from China. The scientific research results produced by the scientific research activities on Mars belonged to the Mars landing plan office collectively. Therefore, if they wanted to publish the scientific research results, they must apply and get approval from the Mars landing plan office.

But under normal circumstances, the kind of research project that did not involve sensitive experimental content was a walk in the park. The Mars landing plan office certainly hoped that they could produce more valuable results so that their investment in the Mars project would be worth their money.

After thinking for a moment, Lu Zhou nodded.

“Just do as he said.”

Although Lu Zhou felt that it was too sloppy to publish this discovery now and that it might be more rigorous to publish it after finding more clues, Dr. Fan was right.

After all, one man’s power was small, and one brain was not as reliable as tens of millions of brains. If more people could participate in this field, there could be more hope of solving the problem.

Lu Zhou looked at the work log in his hand, at the coordinates of 14.7° south latitude and 128° west longitude. His index finger gently swept across this line.

“Speaking of which, what is the name of the mountain next to this fractured structure?”

Director Chang Hezhi: “If I remember correctly, according to the naming of the International Astronomical Union... Its name seems to come from a piece of art.”

“Artwork?”

“The Gates of Hell, the author is Auguste Rodin...” Director Chang Hezhi said.

The Gates of Hell...

This name is a bit suspicious.

That ominous premonition once again surfaced in Lu Zhou's heart.

"This name is a bit unlucky." Lu Zhou picked up the pen from the desk and wrote a line next to the copy of the work log. He handed it back to Director Chang Hezhi and said, "Change the name to this."

"Outlier 128?"

"Yeah." Lu Zhou looked at Director Chang Hezhi and said, "Raise the priority of this research project to level A. If there are any new discoveries, report it to me immediately."

...

Ever since the failure of the last "New Virginia" plan, due to the pressure from the public and funding, NASA had suspended more than 90% of its projects on Mars.

Even though NASA still hadn't recovered, it did not mean that they had given up their desire for Mars so willingly.

It was just that everything became rational again.

NASA High Resolution Imaging Science Laboratory.

This was the command center for the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter and Curiosity rover, and it was also the only research team in the entire NASA that still focused on Mars.

"Latest research materials."

Professor Astark threw a document on the desk. He looked at the middle-aged man with glasses sitting behind the desk and continued, "I don't know if you've read it before, but I suggest you take a good look."

"The latest research materials?"

Professor Comiton reached out and picked up the document. He glanced at it briefly.

However, when his eyes moved down the document, and he saw the photo attached to the text, his expression suddenly became strange.

“Seismic structures... have disappeared after they appeared? How is this possible?”

“I also think it’s very... unbelievable.” Professor Astark continued looking at Professor Comiton and said, “But planetary geology is not my research direction. I want to know how you think about this.”

“What do I think? What can I say, they’re the ones who are on Mars... If they are right, then we are wrong. The geological activity of Mars is still quite active, and the core has not yet cooled. That is the only explanation. Or there might also be a special local tectonic movement that allowed the fractured structure to heal overnight? This sounds like a supernatural event.”

Professor Comiton pushed the glasses on the bridge of his nose. He sat up straight and said, “To be honest... Aren’t these two photos photoshopped?”

The geological activity of Mars had ceased. This was a conclusion obtained through rigorous scientific analysis based on thermal radiation images taken by NASA.

All clues pointed to the fact that the geological activity of Mars had completely ceased, and the magma in the core had completely cooled.

This was a dead planet; there was no possibility of plate movement, let alone earthquakes or cracks caused by earthquakes.

At least not in the last few billion years.

It wasn’t that he didn’t want to think he was wrong.

It was just that, photoshopping a photo in the academic community wasn’t something that was unprecedented.

“I have looked for a third-party inspection agency to analyze it. At least according to the electronic files they updated on their official website, there are no obvious traces of changes in the photos... Of course, it does not rule out techniques that are so clever that we can’t detect them.”

“Regardless, this is unbelievable.” Professor Comiton sighed after putting the research materials on the table. After a long period of contemplation, he said, “It would be nice if I could go to the site and take a look.”

A bitter smile appeared on Professor Astark’s face.

Take a look on Mars...

That’s very unlikely.

The best way is to stand on Earth and look tens of millions of kilometers into the sky.

However, while the two of them were looking at the information with a headache, a voice suddenly came from the door.

“In fact, it might be possible.”

The two men raised their heads and looked toward the door.

Director Carson walked into the office.

“Sorry, I unintentionally eavesdropped on your conversation, but your voice was too loud. I’m here to find Professor Comiton for something...”

Director Carson shrugged, coughed lightly, and continued, “Due to well-known reasons, the White House intends to repair relations with China, and according to what I have learned, the two sides have reached agreements on many remaining issues... Of course, we do not need to worry about these things. The main thing is that the Chinese side agrees that for the next batch of people going to Mars, they will reserve about 1 or 2 international cooperative scientific research personnel.”

Professor Astark froze for a moment and spoke hesitantly.

“In other words... We can take the Chinese ride to Mars?”

“You could say that, but I hope you can understand it as a kind of scientific research cooperation; a win-win situation...”

Director Carson looked at Professor Comiton with a serious expression on his face.

“I heard that you seem to be very interested in geological research on Mars?”

“That’s right...”

Professor Comiton had a slight hesitation on his face. Carson threw out a proposal.

“In that case, Professor Comiton...”

“Would you like to go to Mars as a demonstration of the long-term friendship between the two countries?”

Chapter 1370: The Mysterious Missing Crack

Mid-April.

A research paper signed by the Mars landing plan office was published in the latest issue of Future.

A mysterious geological structure was discovered on Mars!

The earthquake crack mysteriously disappeared overnight!

Once this paper was published, it immediately aroused widespread concern in the international community.

People’s understanding of Mars had always been that it was a dead planet without an ecosystem and no violent geological activities. The rugged landforms formed during the ancient geological period that was eroded by sandstorms for billions of years.

However, this discovery undoubtedly subverted people’s inherent understanding of this planet.

Not only was there a suspected newer geological activity on Mars, but there might also even be special geological phenomena that were not observed on Earth!

No one had ever seen earthquake cracks on Earth that had formed and disappeared overnight, as if nothing had happened.

On a well-known international astronomy enthusiast forum.

The second the paper was published, someone translated it into English and reprinted it here. It soon aroused discussion.

“WTF? The geological structure of Mars is still active? Does that mean that it is actually possible to repair the Martian magnetic field and modify the Martian atmosphere?”

“Yes, it is possible, but the possibility is close to 0. In fact, I am more curious about how the crack disappeared. Although the picture looks strange, it does not look like it’s photoshopped.”

“Could it be an alien?”

“Haha, let’s not rule out this possibility! Maybe that crack is actually a passage to a Martian civilization?”

“That is quite creative...”

“I thought of a video I watched before. A Martian holding a picture and walking in front of the Curiosity rover... Maybe everything we know about Mars is controlled by the aliens living there.”

“I think it’s more likely to be photoshopped.”

The discussions were not only raging on amateur forums but also on Facebook and Twitter, just that it was to a degree that was not as intensive.

Combined with the reports on extraterrestrial civilizations that had flooded the media in the early years, many people were speculating whether the earthquake crack was actually a trace of aliens.

Although this speculation was unreasonable, it was unexpectedly popular.

Due to the widespread public concern about this matter, BBC reporters quickly found NASA’s High Resolution Imaging Science Laboratory.

As another “Mars authority” besides the Mars landing office of China, although their conditions were a bit inferior to the researchers on Mars, in terms of theoretical research, their strength shouldn’t be underestimated.

“We are now interviewing Professor Comiton, who graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a major in planetary geology and is currently working at the NASA High Resolution Imaging Science Laboratory...”

The camera pointed at Professor Comiton, who was sitting in the chair, as the young reporter continued politely, “Hello, Professor Comiton, as an expert in the field of planetary geology, if this seismic structure does exist, what does that mean?”

Faced with a question from the BBC reporter, Professor Comiton pondered for a while before speaking.

“This is a very interesting question.

“In fact, around April 19, our InSight probe once observed a weak seismic signal on Mars, but the signal was so weak that we could not extrapolate the internal structure of Mars from it. It is impossible to determine whether the signal was even reliable.

“If the special geological structure discovered by the Mars landing office was really formed in the last hundreds of thousands of years as they said, it will undoubtedly be an unprecedented discovery, it will change what we know of Mars.”

After noticing the key information revealed by Professor Comiton, the young reporter immediately asked, “You mean, this discovery is very important?”

“Important is beyond doubt.”

Reporter: “But there is still a point of view that... Those pictures were forged?”

“That possibility is not ruled out, but this probability is very small. In fact, I had doubted it before, but I quickly dispelled this idea. After all... They are already on Mars. They won’t play this kind of childish joke.” Professor Comiton paused and said, “Actually, from my point of view, the disappearance of the seismic structure is what’s most important.

“It doesn’t matter if it is, like the rumors, caused by aliens living in the ground or by some special bacteria that repairs geological structures...”

“I think if we can figure out the reason for this, the significance will be far more important than figuring out how the earthquake crack was formed!”

The interview was over.

The edited interview video was released by BBC in the form of a documentary and was quickly uploaded to YouTube and other video sites, which triggered discussions among netizens.

In fact, Professor Comiton’s view was the mainstream opinion in the academic world.

Which was, the seismic crack was real, formed by geological movement on Mars, and judging from the photos, the formation time should not be very long.

What everyone couldn’t figure out was why such a huge crack disappeared overnight.

Regarding the cause of this phenomenon, the opinions of the academic community were divided into two groups.

One school of thought was relatively conservative, which was that it might be due to thermal expansion and contraction caused by the huge diurnal temperature difference on Mars, causing the fractured structure to crack, which led to the repairing contraction of the cracked surface on the inside.

Coupled with the landfill effect of sandstorms, the tiny cracks exposed on the surface were filled, and the special fractured structure seemed to disappear overnight.

The other point of view was because of biogenicity. They believed that some kind of iron-eating bacteria living on hematite eroded the hematite veins at the bottom of the fractured structure.

Coupled with the drilling and sampling of the water source by the nearby Chinese Mars Scientific Research Station, the structure collapsed in the area and the disappearance of the faulted structure occurred.

However, both side’s points of view lacked an effective theoretical basis, and no one could convince each other.

In addition to these speculations that could not justify themselves logically, there were also some speculations that were completely illogical.

For example, about aliens on Mars.

A small group of people believed that simple geological movement could no longer explain this “mysterious” phenomenon, and could only attribute it to human factors.

This was probably the masterpiece of the Martian aliens!

Scholars who held this view even made further expansions based on this viewpoint.

For example, after losing the protection of the atmosphere, the Martian aliens moved from the surface to the ground; the crack was not caused by an earthquake at all but was actually the entrance to the Martians’ colony.

In short, various public opinions were divided.

In the face of this incredible phenomenon, everything seemed to be confusing.

But something unexpected to everyone suddenly happened...

Chapter 1371: Under The Crack

“Cough...

“Calling station... Coordinates 15° south latitude, 128.1° west longitude... require support.”

There wasn’t a response.

The only noise from the communication channel was the disturbing electrical buzz.

It was pitch black. The [Contact Lost] icon flashed on the screen on his right arm, reminding him that he had completely disconnected from the station.

Also, he was at least 20 meters underground.

There was also hematite that increased the attenuation of electromagnetic signals...

“Sh*t...”

A trace of despair flashed in his eyes, but the flash of negative emotions was quickly replaced by a strong desire to survive.

There were still many people on earth waiting for him to return.

He couldn't just die here...

He thought back to the survival knowledge he learned during his training at the Dzoosotoyn Elisen Desert. Fan Tong clenched his jaw and got up from the ground. After taking a deep breath, he entered the administrator password on his wrist-mounted computer and turned it off. The positioning system and communication module were useless now, so he had to conserve battery.

He was underground in Mars, in who knew how many meters deep...

Here, he could only rely on himself.

Fan Tong realized that he might miss the hot pot tonight. He gulped and took out a marker with special paint from the toolbox behind him. He found a spot on the wall of the cave and wrote down his location and some last words.

“I hope these last words will never be useful.”

From when he lost contact up until now, the base station should have realized a problem. They should have sent a rescue team long ago.

However, he did not expect too much from the base station's rescue capabilities.

After all, as far as the engineering equipment was concerned, he really couldn't think of anything that could help him climb up from dozens of meters underground.

He was still young.

He didn't have to be a “sacrifice” for science yet.

After he prayed for his own destiny in his heart. Fan Tong then took off the folded multifunctional shovel and held it in his right hand. He turned on the flashlight on his helmet and began to move forward in the cave of rubble.

Although this might not be the way out, at least it was better than staying here and waiting for death.

When he thought of the crack that opened and closed overnight, he couldn't help but feel a sense of urgency in his heart.

No one could guarantee that he wouldn't be buried by sand or something else by tomorrow.

As for why he was here...

Everything began a few hours ago.

...

Mars Scientific Research Station

The quiet morning was broken by a piece of unexpected news.

"Independent decision-making power?" After listening to the captain's explanation, Dr. Sun Wenzhe, who sat at the end of the conference room, frowned and asked, "In other words, we can decide whether to take action in the future?"

"Correct." Liang Youcheng nodded. He looked at the other four teammates who were in the room and continued, "This is the choice made by the command center for us to make more flexible decisions. If you find any special clues during the extravehicular exploration, you can report it directly to me without waiting for instructions from the command center."

Whispers were heard in the conference room.

From a researcher's point of view, this was of course a good thing; it meant that they did not have to withstand a nearly ten-minute delay to communicate with the ground command center and could more flexibly engage in their own research topics.

However, the risks were difficult to ignore.

Captain Liang Youcheng gave a light cough, then looked at Dr. Fan Tong, the only planetary geologist at the scientific research station.

After a pause, he spoke.

“In addition, the priority of the ‘Outlier 128’ project has been raised to level A.”

“The ground command center has created a new work log code-named ‘128’ in our database. If you have any new discoveries, you don’t need to report to me, just use your personal terminal and update in your individual work log.”

“Individual work log?”

After Fan Tong calmed down, he asked seriously, “Can I ask, does this mean that when researching the project, I’m directly under—”

“That’s right.” Liang Youcheng nodded and said concisely, “From now on, your research will be directly under Academician Lu.”

Academician Lu?!

Fan Tong immediately had a surprised expression on his face. He subconsciously opened his mouth.

The three colleagues sitting next to him were also showing surprised expressions. After they snapped back to reality, they immediately cast envious gazes at him.

For an ordinary scientific researcher, being able to work under Academician Lu meant not only a recognition of academic ability; they were also able to tap into resources that ordinary people couldn’t imagine!

It was no exaggeration to say that this feeling was like winning a lottery—

No, it was even more exciting than winning the lottery!

The happiness came too suddenly, and it took a long time for Fan Tong to snap back to reality.

However, Fan Tong’s heart was also full of doubts. Although Professor Lu’s research covered a wide range of fields, he had never done research in geology.

Even though the fault structure could reveal a lot of valuable clues, why did it attract his attention?

This was just a trivial matter compared to the Mars landing plan itself.

“Academician Lu... Does he also study geology?”

Captain Liang Youcheng shook his head.

“I am not very clear about the specific situation. You’ll have to communicate with him. However, I think these minor issues can be ignored. Since Academician Lu attaches so much importance to the fracture structure, I think he might have found unusual clues.”

Unusual clues?

If that is true...

Then I have to take some time and communicate with Academician Lu...

After the meeting, their day continued as usual.

Although the priority of the “128” project had been raised to level A, and he was now directly responsible for Academician Lu, he still had to complete his normal tasks.

He drove the rover to the water source and made a loop to confirm that the drilling equipment was still working normally. Fan Tong continued to conduct sampling surveys at several mineral deposits marked on the map.

After finishing these things, his work for today was over.

According to the weather information forecasted by Xu Fu, a sandstorm would pass through this area in the afternoon. Fan Tong did not waste any time; he got in the rover and started to return to the base.

Unfortunately, the arrival of the sandstorm was five hours earlier than expected.

After he had driven off for less than two kilometers, the overwhelming red sand had completely obscured the view from the rover window. The visibility was less than two meters.

Fortunately, this regional sandstorm would not last for long.

For safety reasons, Fan Tong did not rush into the sandstorm. Instead, he drove the rover to the side of the mountain less than one kilometer away from him. He found a leeward along the topographic contour on the map and stopped there.

The scratching sound of the sand raging outside the window was finally reduced a little.

Compared to the wilderness, this was a temporary haven.

Speaking of which, this mountain seems to be called The Gates of Hell?

Judging from the rough outline, it really does look like an entrance to hell.

Fan Tong turned off the engine. He was prepared to wait quietly for the “light rain” to pass. Just as he was wondering whether to do something to kill time, he suddenly caught a glimpse of an unusual shadow from behind the red sand.

His eyes couldn’t move away; he sat up straight in his driver seat.

“The f*ck? Why is it here?”

There was a hint of disbelief in his eyes.

There was a fracture about ten meters long, printed on the ground like a scar.

“How is this possible...”

When he and Sun Wenzhe came here yesterday, they drove more than ten kilometers around the edge of this mountain range and passed through this area!

If there was such an obvious earthquake crack here, he definitely would not have missed it!

Maybe...

Like the broken structure that disappeared suddenly, did this thing grow out recently?

Without hesitating, Fan Tong immediately turned on the on-board communication system and reported the situation to the base.

“Calling base station... coordinates 15° south latitude, 128.1° west longitude, the disappeared fault structure reappears here... Repeating again, coordinates 15° south latitude, 128.1° west longitude...”

There wasn't a response.

“Sh*t! Is it because of the sandstorm?”

Fan Tong closed the communication system. He opened the rover door and jumped down. He walked to the side of the crack.

The atmosphere density on Mars was very low. Even if the sandstorm was strong, the lethality was far less than the depiction in Mars movies.

However, this did not mean that the sandstorm was not dangerous at all. First of all, the impact on the field of view was one aspect, and secondly, the composition of Martian sand was similar to hematite. The iron content was extremely high, even compared to rich iron ores on Earth.

This was deadly for radio transmission.

Fan Tong walked to the fractured structure and glanced down.

The laser ranging device indicated a depth of about 20 meters...

Because of the sandstorm, even with a flashlight, the visibility at the bottom was still not high. If he wanted to know what was going on below, he could only go down and take a look.

Preferably, collect a few more rock samples and go back for lithology analysis.

However, a slight hesitation flashed in his eyes.

Maybe...

Wait until the sandstorm is over?

But what if the crack disappears...

Fan Tong thought of the decision-making power mentioned by Captain Liang Youcheng. Fan Tong finally clenched his teeth and made a decision after some hesitation.

If he just went down and took a look, there shouldn't be any problems.

He would stay there for at most one minute.

He no longer hesitated. After setting up the automatic messaging program on the rover, he got out of the rover and went to the trunk, then took out the safety rope.

Just like he had already practiced countless times, he fixed the buckle to his waist and then walked to the scar-like fractured structure.

Fan Tong thought about the secret that was about to be revealed. He couldn't help but feel excited.

"Come on, let me see what secrets are hidden underneath..."

He took a deep breath and carefully descended along the edge of the rock wall.

Everything went well in the beginning.

He slowly descended to the bottom of the fractured structure.

However, the moment his boots touched the bottom, he felt as if he was stepping on fallen leaves.

The silty ground collapsed downwards.

Out of instinct, Fan Tong's heart became tense immediately.

Maybe...

Not today.

However, just as he was about to retreat and climb up along the safety rope, the rock wall suddenly seemed to have been activated by a certain mechanism. It shook like an earthquake and moved at a staggering speed, closing the crack above him...

Chapter 1372: Can You Hear Me?

The situation was critical.

Fan Tong only had three options.

One was to use his bare hands to fight against the rock formations, the other was to climb a 20-meter deep pit in five seconds...

Or cut the rope and fall.

It only took him a second to make a decision. He immediately unlocked the hook on his waist.

In fact, his judgment was correct.

The closing rock walls didn't give him five seconds at all. It was at most three seconds before the rock formations cut off the light from above...

It seemed like the best decision at the time.

However, half an hour later, Fan Tong began to regret his decision.

The situation he was facing now, apart from being able to keep his corpse intact, did not seem to be any better than being squashed. He had been walking for almost half an hour, yet this cave seemed to have no end, making it impossible to see any hope.

"F*ck... This is like a maze."

I should have been more careful, but it is too late to say those things.

There was a slight tremor from the ground.

The place where he had fallen was already buried by the rock walls. Fan Tong took a deep breath and calmed himself down as much as possible.

In order to make himself feel less frustrated, he tried to convince himself that this was just a scientific expedition.

“The silty quartzite... It’s not hematite anymore. I didn’t expect to find such an interesting site here.

“What is this? Biomass clastic rock?”

This is an incredible discovery.

The frustration in his eyes was gradually replaced by a touch of excitement. With the multifunctional shovel in his hand, Fan Tong carefully knocked out some samples without damaging the rock.

As he looked at the treasure in his sample bag, the excitement in his eyes grew stronger.

“... It would be great if half-life testing could be done here. Then I could determine the age of the sedimentary layer in this area.”

If the current situation was better, he really wanted to share this happiness with other researchers in the base.

After packing up the tools and samples, he began to move forward along the cave.

Although doing these things did not increase his probability of surviving, at least... in the case of his unfortunate death, these valuable research materials would become a scientific research heritage.

Of course, if someone could find his body...

The path ahead was getting harder and harder to traverse.

He had to go in and out of several pathways before he found the real pathway.

He rested for a while, drank some liquid food, and looked at the few supplies left. He couldn’t help but feel a little depressed.

But what was interesting was that he noticed a phenomenon along the way. The core of Mars had cooled, but as he walked deep into the abyss, the surrounding temperature increased by about 5 degrees.

Although the surrounding environment was still very cold, it at least brought some comfort.

After recording these bits and pieces of discoveries, Fan Tong got up and moved on after taking a break.

The passage became narrower, it took a lot of effort to squeeze through.

He gradually began to wonder if he had gone the wrong way when a deep pit about five meters wide suddenly appeared in front of him.

The laser ranging showed that the depth below should be about 10 to 20 meters, which was exactly the same as the situation he encountered before.

He stood at the edge of the pit as a touch of hesitation appeared on his face.

What do I do?

Go down, or find another way?

If I continue to go down, I'll be in a deeper location, and the hope of someone collecting my body will be even slimmer.

However, even if I didn't go down, the people at the research station probably won't be able to dig my body from 20 meters underground.

He thought back to the maze-like path he had walked before and felt his scalp itch.

He realized that the situation could not be worse than it was now. He finally gritted his teeth and made a decision. With the help of the multifunctional shovel in his hand, he bravely slid down the pit in front of him.

He slid down the nearly vertical pit.

His feet touched the ground and felt something unexpected.

Maybe...

This is the real "bottom"?

While Fan Tong was thinking, he stood up and looked forward. His whole body froze.

He followed the light from his flashlight and looked at the steep corridor in front of him. It took him a long time to digest the shock in his heart. He managed to squeeze out a word from his mouth.

“F*ck!

“This... is a f*cking... bunker!”

A set of red-brown stone steles about two meters high stood on both sides of the corridor, connecting the ceiling and the ground. Intricate patterns were exposed on the surface of the stele. Although it had been damaged to a certain extent, there was still a trace of carving on the surface.

Everything in front of him could no longer be explained by simple geology.

No matter from which angle he looked at it, it was not natural.

It was a work of art...

A pile of artworks located in the ancient ruins...

Fan Tong pointed the flashlight and the camera on his helmet at the row of sculpture-like cultural relics. He pressed the shutter frantically.

If it wasn't for the lack of signal, he would have reported everything he saw here back to the base station.

All of the discoveries on the previous journey were inferior to what he found here.

There were traces of civilized activity in Mars underground!

Human civilization was not the only one in the universe!

They were not alone!

He couldn't imagine what kind of sensation this news would cause on Earth if it were made public. The excitement of discovering the treasure made him tempted to shout out loud.

“The material is the same as the sand outside, it has been weathered into hematite!

“A totem of the Martian civilization? Or some kind of artifact for religious ceremonies? Or some kind of handicraft...”

“Wait a second...”

There was a slight itch in his mouth. When he fumbled and found a damaged stone monument, he tried to knock off the oxide layer on the surface with the multifunctional tool he carried. He found that the inside of the stone monument was not completely composed of hematite.

It was the opposite...

The material was calcium carbonate, which contained almost no iron.

“Calcium carbonate... No, this should be some kind of biomass fossil, it may be very old. It looks older than the trilobite fossils on Earth.”

Fan Tong carefully sampled five rock particles of equal size from the inside and put them in the sample bag for preservation.

“... I didn’t expect that I would become an archaeologist.”

The outside was hematite and the inside was biomass fossils. He inferred that the outer shell of this thing should be some kind of iron-based alloy material and some kind of living thing was sealed inside like a coffin.

His intuition told him that this place might be similar to a cemetery.

Although there were other interpretations, this was undoubtedly the most likely one.

Fan Tong grabbed the multifunctional shovel in his hand and continued along this ominous corridor. Although the shovel in his hands didn’t bring him a sense of security, it was better than nothing.

Contrary to the situation he encountered before, as he continued to walk into the corridor, the road ahead suddenly became wider.

When he stepped into a spacious “hall”, he instantly felt a sense of relief.

However, just as he was about to move forward, he unexpectedly discovered that his knee seemed to be against an invisible wall, and he was unable to take a step forward.

Just as he was groping on the invisible wall in front of him in confusion, a strange scene suddenly happened.

His wrist-mounted computer suddenly received full bars of signal.

When Fan Tong noticed the flashing signal light, he restarted the communication module.

A series of noisy electric currents soon came from the communication channel.

Just as he looked disappointedly at the signal on the wrist-mounted computer, thinking that it was probably some kind of naturally formed electromagnetic wave, a sound suddenly rang in his headset.

“Ahem.

“... Can you hear me?”

Chapter 1373: Search and Rescue

Mars.

On the surface.

After driving the spare Mars rover to the destination, two scientific research personnel wearing spacesuits quickly jumped out of the car.

“I have reached the target location...” As Han Kangyu looked around, his face was full of seriousness. He opened the communication channel and reported to the base station, “Dr. Fan and his rover are missing.”

This was 15° south latitude and 128.1° west longitude, which was the position declared in the last message that Dr. Fan sent out before disconnecting.

Forget about Dr. Fan himself.

Even the tire marks left by the rover were not visible here.

Soon, a calm voice came from the communication channel.

“It may be because he moved to another location while avoiding the sandstorm. The positioning system caused an error due to the influence of the sandstorm... Search the nearby area.”

“Okay.”

After receiving instructions from Captain Liang Youcheng, the two immediately aimed their eyes at the nearby mountain called The Gates of Hell. If the goal was to avoid sandstorms, this was undoubtedly the best choice compared to the sand dunes in open areas.

The two immediately began to get to work and found new clues.

“The rover is here...”

The rover used by Dr. Fan was found next to a steep rock wall. Ming Wenzhe glanced at the car door, frowned slightly, and said, “No one is in the car, the toolbox is not there.”

Han Kangyu quickly walked to his side and looked at the empty driver’s seat. Cold sweat began to drip from his forehead.

He punched the tall rover tires and cursed.

“Sh*t... Where did this guy go?”

He was the deputy captain of the scientific research team that headed to Mars. If something happened on Mars, he and Liang Youcheng would bear the brunt of the responsibility.

Of course, compared to a human life, the responsibilities were trivial.

If someone died here, it would undoubtedly give those with ulterior motives who were jealous of China’s achievements an excuse to attack them. It would be a huge blow to the entire Mars colonization plan!

And now, they didn’t even know what happened to the guy.

Ming Wenzhe, who was standing at the door of the car, suddenly spoke.

“There is a possibility.”

Han Kangyu immediately looked at him and asked, “What possibility?”

“According to his message on the rover... Before losing contact, he should have witnessed the disappearing fracture structure near here. Considering the sandstorm that occurred during that time, the visibility outside the vehicle was not high and the location of the crack should be far from here. It won't be very far.”

Ming Wenzhe went silent for a while, then continued to speak the difficult-to-accept truth.

“But now, the crack is gone.”

“So what you're saying is, he jumped under the crack by himself, then the crack closed quickly after he went down?”

Ming Wenzhe nodded silently.

“That's the only possibility.”

Although Han Kangyu knew that this was the most likely scenario, he couldn't help but argue.

“What kind of structure moves so fast that it closes in an instant? Is there no chance to climb up?”

“I don't know, I'm not doing geological research.” Ming Wenzhe's expression showed a bit of bitterness. He said, “To be honest, I feel a sense of evil around here. Is it because it's called The Gates of Hell? How about we rename this mountain range?”

The two people were on the public communication channel.

Liang Youcheng, who was standing in the base communication room, had been listening to the exchanges between the two.

After thinking for a moment, he gave an order in a deep voice.

“It doesn't help to be anxious.

“Let's take a wild guess, if the crack appears randomly around the Outlier 128, there should be a large space below this area. If Dr. Fan fell, it is likely he is still alive. Of course, I am not an expert in this area, so I can only say that I think about everything in the most optimistic direction.

“Expand your searching range and search along the edge of the mountain. If he is still alive, he will certainly not sit down and wait to die. Maybe he has already gone to the opening of the next earthquake crack, waiting for rescue.

“Also, I will apply for support from the ground command center.

“... Regardless of the final result, we have to bring him back.”

It might not be difficult to drill through a rock on the surface of Mars, but it was still quite difficult to dig through a rock formation more than 20 meters deep and grab someone from below.

There might be such engineering equipment on the Moon, but it was impossible to transport it here, so all they could do was to apply for support.

In fact, applying for support was just for comfort’s sake.

Even if the support from the Moon Palace really came all the way and brought reliable excavation equipment, all they could do was collect his body for him.

As Han Kangyu listened to the captain’s instructions from the communication channel, he clenched his fists and remained silent for a long time.

Finally, he loosened his fists and sighed.

“... That’s the only option.”

Ming Wenzhe suggested, “I want to apply for permission to use Xu Fu’s optical observation module.”

Liang Youcheng: “It has been assigned to you. We will also help you observe whether there are new ground cracks nearby. Remember, if you find that... abnormal crack again, you must not act rashly, downward exploration is forbidden!

“Regardless of his current situation, we can’t afford more losses.”

...

As soon as Liang Youcheng transmitted the distress message back to Earth, the entire ground command center had entered a state of emergency due to the sudden situation.

An astronaut was missing!

Such a serious matter happened less than a week after the landing of the colony capsule. This was not just a simple space accident, but a serious political accident.

The whole country was still celebrating the success of the Mars landing.

If this news spread out, what would happen to the staff at the Mars landing office?

Inside the office.

After Lu Zhou heard the situation reported by Director Chang, he was stunned.

Although he had considered the possible risks of the “Outlier 128” project, he really did not expect this to happen.

The crack closed after the person went down?

It sounded like he was “eaten” by something alive.

After a long silence, Lu Zhou couldn’t help but ask.

“Is he still alive?”

“His status is uncertain.” Director Chang continued with a bitter expression on his face, “The problem now is that the Mars base has sent a signal for reinforcements, but even if we send rescue now, I am afraid it will not help.”

This was indeed a problem.

Even considering the most optimistic situation, Dr. Fan Tong’s supply could only last for about three days at most. Even if their Magpie Bridge was departing from the Moon Palace now, it would take at least two weeks to reach Mars.

Not to mention whether or not they could save him, even with the additional supplies.

After all, the environment on the Moon was completely different from that on Mars. Engineering equipment tailored for the Moon might not be perfectly compatible on Mars.

After thinking about it for a moment, Lu Zhou made a decision and spoke.

“Don’t send reinforcements for now.”

“But—”

“I know what you’re worried about.” Lu Zhou continued calmly after seeing the worry on Director Chang’s face, “The worst-case scenario is that we made a mistake.

“Since he is only missing, it has not been confirmed that our astronaut has died, so don’t publicize this matter for now.

“At the same time, let our outpost on Mars use all available resources to search and rescue the missing astronaut.

“If it turns into an irreversible situation in the end...

“I will take all responsibility.”

After hearing this, Director Chang’s shoulders trembled; he looked at Lu Zhou in disbelief.

After a while, he nodded his head.

“... Okay.”

The office door closed.

Lu Zhou was the only one left in the spacious room.

Lu Zhou listened to the sound of footsteps fading away outside the door. He went silent for a while, then finally sighed and turned his eyes to the smartphone on the desk.

“Xiao Ai.”

The signal light flickered slightly; a message appeared on the screen.

[Master, are you calling me? o(" '▽' ")o]

“You should have heard the conversation just now?” After a pause, Lu Zhou continued, “Connect to the Crawler for me and search for the missing astronaut.”

In less than a second, the chat popped up again.

[Yes, Master! (๑`▯´๑)✧]

Chapter 1374: The Fifth Type of Contact

Mars.

In God knew how many meters deep underground...

As Dr. Fan stood in an empty “hall”, he was completely muddled.

His common sense told him that there couldn’t be any signal here, let alone a voice.

Therefore, when the words of “Can you hear me?” echoed in his headset, he wondered whether he was hallucinating due to dehydration.

Seeing how Dr. Fan didn’t respond, the mysterious voice had a trace of hesitation as it appeared again.

“Strange... Is there something wrong with the translation device? It should be working.”

“... Translation device?”

What is that?

After recovering from the confusion, Fan Tong looked around with his torch for the source of the voice and replied, “I can hear you... Who are you?”

The terrain nearby was full of hematite, so the signal penetration was very poor. Considering that the voice was clear, the signal source should be

nearby. However, when Fan Tong's flashlight beam searched every corner of the hall, he didn't find any electronic devices.

"Stop looking." The voice in the communication channel suddenly became a bit playful. "You won't find anything."

Fan Tong realized that he was helpless; he took a deep breath and gave up his useless search.

He reached out his hand and touched the transparent wall again. He took a half step back nervously and repeated his previous question in a vigilant tone.

"Who are you? Are you..."

"Are you?"

"Are you... Martians?"

He spoke in a trembling tone.

Fan Tong waited nervously for the person's answer, but there was suddenly no response from the communication channel.

The silence lasted for about a minute.

He gradually began to wonder if he had guessed correctly and the strange alien soldiers were about to capture him when suddenly a string of harsh laughter came from the communication channel without warning.

"Hahahahaha! Interesting, I haven't heard such an outlandish joke for a long time... But, unfortunately, you don't seem to be very clever."

Fan Tong: "..."

"If by the so-called Martians, you are referring to those bugs that once lived on this planet, then I am sorry, I am not such a low-level creature." The laughter gradually reduced, and the tone of the voice was then filled with sarcasm. "I was surprised to see a civilization composed of organic Mammalia primate life forms. I didn't expect you to be from a primitive civilization that hasn't even left their mother planet. No wonder you can't find where I am."

When Fan Tong walked back nervously, the voice smiled and continued, “Don’t be nervous... I won’t eat you. Come on, take off the mask and let me see what you look like.”

“Are you crazy?” Fan Tong stared forward and said, “There is no air here.”

If it wasn’t because it was impossible for electromagnetic signals to reach here, he would have believed that someone in the research station had opened a voice changer to prank him.

He was certain that there must be a camera or something similar nearby that was monitoring him, and maybe the person hiding in the monitoring room was laughing like crazy right now.

Who is this, why are they doing this...

He felt like his brain was messed up, like a piece of broken tofu.

“Oh, true, I almost forgot... This planet has been destroyed by its former owner.” The voice murmured, “What to do? Those stupid people didn’t tell me how to distinguish between...”

Fan Tong: “What are you talking about?”

The owner of this planet?

Meaning that there really was a civilization on this planet?

And the reason why Mars has become like this is that an ancient civilization once lived here?

It didn’t matter who this mysterious voice was anymore. As an expert in planetary geology, Fan Tong was only curious about one thing.

“... What did Mars look like before?”

“What was it like before? Even if I described it to you, your level of civilization won’t be able to understand it. After all, you have only seen your home planet. This was a gentle and enviable world, in a nitrogen and oxygen-rich atmosphere. An ecosystem with strong self-healing ability. A series of factors such as environment, temperature, and humidity at different latitudes met the survival needs of advanced organisms. You can think of it as an extremely

rich ecosystem. All the organic lifeforms from the phylum to the genera family lived here.”

Advanced organisms?

Fan Tong didn’t particularly understand the concept of advanced organisms, but just by listening to this description, this was a better place than Earth.

After all, according to the extinction rate of species on Earth, it was hard to imagine that it was livable for all living organisms. If it continued to develop according to this trend, humans could become extinct within a thousand years...

“I suddenly thought of a wonderful idea.” The voice in the communication channel had a hint of excitement. “You can tell me first about how much your civilization has developed.”

Fan Tong’s face gradually became alert when he heard these words.

The voice seemed to notice the fluctuations in his mood. With a smile, the voice continued, “Don’t be nervous. We are not in the same universe. Even if we are, we’re not interested in a group of ugly monkeys living on a planet.”

“... Not in the same universe?” Fan Tong thought of the interpretations of Academician Lu’s papers and the concept of extra dimensions that he had read online before. He frowned and said, “Did you come from the Void?”

“Oh? The low-level civilization is that advanced now?” There was a hint of interest in the voice. “It seems that the Oracle has played a role...”

Fan Tong had no idea what was going on.

What is the Oracle?

Fan Tong looked at the empty hall. He clenched the multifunctional shovel in his hand and continued calmly.

“I can’t trust a person who doesn’t even want to show his face. I will not answer any of your questions about us until you explain your identity and purpose.”

“Then let us answer each other.” The voice replied in an indifferent tone, “If you think my question offends you or violates your privacy, you can choose to refuse to answer. Out of courtesy, I can allow you to ask questions first.”

“Done.”

Although there were still doubts in his heart, he was still satisfied with this sincerity.

Fan Tong organized the thoughts in his mind and continued to speak, “Then my question is... Who are you?”

“Who am I? This question is a bit abstract. I believe you are not asking for a philosophical answer from me, but my name is meaningless to you. If that is the case, then the term “Martian” will do. When they were still here, they called me the ‘Holy Relic’.”

“Holy Relic?”

“Yes, in their culture, it was probably similar to a special life form whose existence was much higher than theirs. Their understanding was indeed correct, I am indeed much more advanced than them. Well, this is all I will say. Although I don’t mind talking to you more, this involves a matter of sincerity.”

Fan Tong tried to argue, “But you didn’t explain anything clearly.”

“That’s because the question you asked is confusing.” The voice continued unceremoniously, “If you don’t want to continue wasting time, just answer my question, then our conversation can continue.”

“... Go ahead.”

“Does your communication module have a function to receive text messages? Although the problem is not very complicated, your brain may not have the capacity to remember this.”

“...”

Fan Tong pushed away the urge to get angry. He silently reached out and tapped twice on the wrist-mounted computer and soon switched the communication channel to the text input interface.

He didn't know why this voice was so familiar with the communication technology and language he used.

After both sides showed enough sincerity, he received the answers he wanted.

Soon, a text message was sent over.

However, as soon as he opened the text message, his whole body froze.

[For any $\varepsilon > 0$, there are only a finite number of triples (a, b, c) , satisfying that a , b , and c are relatively prime positive integers, and $a+b=c$, with $c > \text{rad}(abc)^{1+\varepsilon}$.]

Fan Tong: “???”

Is this...

A mathematics problem?

What the hell?!

He originally thought this guy would ask questions like “how many planets do you control” or “how many starships do you own”. Or at least questions like “how many people are there”. He was even prepared to answer those questions.

However, he didn't think that he would be thrown into a mathematics problem.

Fan Tong frowned and stared at the question carefully.

Although most of his knowledge of mathematics had disappeared since his graduation, he still remembered some.

I don't know why...

This looks like an easy problem, but I have no idea where to begin.

Seeing how Fan Tong was unresponsive for a long time, the voice gradually felt disappointed.

“Looks like you're not the chosen one.”

“... Chosen one?”

“Usually, it is the smartest one in your civilization, or at least there is a difference between them and the rest of you. Like facing a stone monument, some baboons will only pee on it, but some baboons can understand the true meaning of civilization from it and lead his tribe to get rid of ignorance and toward enlightenment... I don’t know if you can understand what I said. After all, your understanding of intelligent creatures is probably limited.”

There was a noticeable trace of distaste in the voice.

However, Fan Tong had no response.

He didn’t understand what the invisible “wall” in front of him was or where the mysterious voice came from, and how the voice knew what language he spoke...

Perhaps the person who was talking to him really came from a civilization that was powerful beyond his imagination.

At this moment, he was the baboon.

A light sigh came from the communication channel.

“Go back.

“Take my question back too.

“Find someone among your compatriots who can solve it, and let him come here to find me with the answer.

“That is, if you still want to do something good for your civilization.”

Chapter 1375: ABC Conjecture?

On an uninhabited desert.

Two rovers driving from a distance merged together.

Han Kangyu opened the car door and jumped out. He looked at Sun Wenzhe approaching him. Han Kangyu was wearing a spacesuit. He strode forward and asked with an anxious expression on his face, "Did you find him?"

With a solemn expression in his eyes, Sun Wenzhe shook his head.

"Nope. I've searched everywhere nearby. I can't even find the crack where he fell... What about you? Did you find any clues?"

After hearing the bad news, Han Kangyu had an ugly look on his face.

"Nothing on my side either."

He searched almost every corner he could find; he even ventured a short distance toward the inside of The Gates of Hell mountains. However, the result was just like what his teammate Sun Wenzhe said, he couldn't even find a crack in the ground, let alone a person.

A pessimistic mood gradually emerged from his heart, and he began to wonder whether the missing Fan Tong was still alive.

"This is not good..."

Sun Wenzhe wiped off the sand sticking to the mask of the spacesuit. He looked at the overlapping mountains nearby with a headache. "It's too unrealistic for us to search everywhere... What's the situation with the headquarters? Didn't the captain apply for support?"

"No support." Han Kangyu shook his head and said gravely, "The ground command center wants us to use all the resources available on site to search and rescue. Apart from the already deployed equipment on Mars, they have no way to support us."

"That is to say, there is no support?" Sun Wenzhe sighed. "But then again... It's a two-week voyage. Even if it arrives, he'll probably be gone by then."

Equipment already deployed on Mars...

Except for the several space probes that were deployed a long time ago, they didn't have many useful pieces of equipment deployed on Mars.

Han Kangyu looked solemnly at the time on the wrist-mounted computer. His eyebrows couldn't help but show a trace of sadness.

Almost five hours had passed.

The hope of survival diminished with every passing minute.

However, just as the two were discussing how to proceed with the rescue work, an unnatural black spot appeared behind the rolling red sand.

As the black spot approached closer, its outline gradually appeared in their eyes.

The moment they saw the outline, the two were immediately dumbfounded.

They saw the culprit who made them worry for more than five hours riding an unmanned automated survey vehicle.

“Thank you.”

Fan Tong patted the roof of the survey vehicle lightly before jumping off the roof. His body was dirty, as if he had fallen into a coal mine.

The camera on the head of the car nodded up and down. It then turned around and headed back into the desert.

Fan Tong watched the unmanned reconnaissance vehicle that probably belonged to the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. He then looked at his two dumbfounded teammates and gradually showed a trace of shame on his face. He lowered his head and spoke.

“Sorry for making you guys worried.”

“Do you know what I want to do right now?” Han Kangyu’s eyes were fixed on Fan Tong as he said, “I want to punch you in the face.”

“I know, I want to punch myself too... But now is not the time to say this.” The ashamed expression on his face gradually became complicated. Fan Tong took a deep breath and continued with a smile, “I have important findings to report.”

...

Mars Scientific Research Station

The activity room was used as a temporary meeting room. Fan Tong, who was dressed in casual clothes, sat at the meeting table with four of his teammates. He told all of his experiences in the underground world in a straightforward manner.

After listening to his story, everyone, including Captain Liang Youcheng, was stunned.

Martian civilization?

Holy Relic?

This sounds like a sci-fi blockbuster...

"You mean... You saw an alien under the ground?" Liang Youcheng reached out and pinched his eyebrow. He sorted out his chaotic thoughts and continued, "But this voice is not from a Martian. They came from outside the solar system. They have been alive hundreds of millions of years, and they told you that a civilization once existed here?"

Sun Wenzhe, who had been silent, suddenly spoke.

"Apparently, people may suffer from hallucinations in extreme environments."

"I swear it was not a hallucination," Fan Tong said with a serious tone. His teammates had obvious looks of disbelief on their faces as he continued, "We introduced ourselves to each other. It also talked about the civilization that once existed on this planet... that is, the Martians. In fact, I did find evidence of the existence of a Martian civilization in the ground. I passed through a corridor, and there were two sides inside the corridor. It was like a coffin, and it claimed it was the 'Holy Relic'."

Sun Wenzhe caught a key piece of information, and he asked immediately, "What about the samples? Don't tell me you didn't take any samples of this."

"It's in the sample library, but if you want to extract the DNA, I think you should give up on this idea. Apart from the barely recognizable row of 'coffins', most of the materials have been weathered into biomass clastic rocks. Although it has not been tested for isotopes, I can infer from experience that the age of those biomass clastics is probably older than the trilobite fossils."

Sun Wenzhe: "You never know until you try."

“It’s up to you. This is your area of expertise anyway.”

Liang Youcheng saw Fan Tong lean back on the chair. He frowned as he spoke.

“Let’s not talk about the Martian civilization first... Are you sure you were underground and saw another civilization?”

“No, not exactly. The situation was very strange. I could feel that he was nearby, but maybe he was hiding. I couldn’t find him at all. He connected directly to my communication channel. He even spoke standard Mandarin with me. Oh yeah, I also ran into an invisible wall there. The place felt evil... Don’t look at me that way! I swear on my academic reputation that it was not an illusion.”

“Forget about it, look at the evidence.”

Fan Tong took the wrist-mounted computer off his arm and tossed it on the conference table.

Han Kangyu looked at the wrist-mounted computer and asked, “What is this?”

“I mentioned this earlier. After the friendly remarks, we each asked each other a question. I asked who he was, and he gave me a math problem... This is it.”

Fan Tong had already opened the information panel in the wrist-mounted computer and read the text message.

The five people sitting at the conference table moved closer.

Xiao Hong, the electrical engineer who had not spoken yet, spoke with a weird expression.

“This looks like a high-level math problem.”

Sun Wenzhe, who was standing next to him, gave him a wry smile.

“This thing is not a high-level math problem.”

Liang Youcheng looked at him immediately.

“You can do it?”

Han Kangyu interrupted suddenly, "If I remember correctly, this is the ABC conjecture?"

"Yes, it's the ABC conjecture." Sun Wenzhe looked at the four teammates in the conference room with different expressions. He nodded with a complex expression. "We have no hope of solving it.

"But... No one on Earth can solve it either."

Chapter 1376: Top Secret Document

Beijing.

Institute of Mathematics, Chinese Academy of Sciences.

A group of people gathered in a rather small conference room.

Most of them were top leaders of major public mathematics research institutions in China and the most prestigious scholars of various schools.

As for why they were sitting here...

In fact, they don't know either.

"How come there isn't even a meeting agenda?"

Wang Shicheng looked at the mineral water bottle standing alone on the conference table and frowned.

Just when he was about to find a staff member to ask some questions, a familiar voice suddenly came from the side.

"Wang Shicheng? Haha, you were also invited?"

Wang Shicheng looked sideways with an unhappy expression. He saw Academician Xiang approaching with a smile on his face and sat down next to him.

"Us Yan University mathematics research institute is also a top mathematics research institution in China, so why won't I be invited?"

“Haha, that’s not what I meant. I was just a little surprised.” Academician Xiang looked around and lowered his voice as he continued, “I looked around. It seems that it is not just people from major research institutions. The top leaders and the top domestic experts in number theory have all been invited... I wonder what the meeting is about.”

“Wrong.”

“Wrong?” Xiang Huanan looked at him with a look of confusion.

Wang Shicheng just raised his eyes and glanced around the conference room and said lightly, “There’s one expert in the field of number theory who hasn’t come.”

“You mean Academician Lu?”

“Yes,” Wang Shicheng said after nodding his head. He continued, “He’s by far the most authoritative figure in number theory. Since he is a number theory scholar, but he is not here, I guess that this meeting is probably related to him.”

Although he didn’t particularly like the young man, he still admired the man’s mathematical achievements.

While talking, a middle-aged man in formal clothes walked to the podium in front of the conference room.

The man coughed slightly. The voices in the conference room gradually became quiet.

Although he was not in academia, as the second in command of the Ministry of Science and Technology, most scholars sitting here were familiar with him.

“Looks like this conference is important.”

After hearing Xiang Huanan’s voice, Wang Shicheng did not respond. Instead, he nodded in silence.

A conference hosted by the second-in-chief of the Ministry of Science and Technology...

Of course it’s important.

“Long story short...” After a light cough, the man standing in front of the podium quickly spoke with a serious expression, “What you are about to hear is the state’s top secret. The time frame for confidentiality is thirty years. After the meeting, discussing related issues in private is prohibited. Disclosing or divulging any relevant information about the meeting is also prohibited.

“Of course, the specific top-secret information has nothing to do with you or me. In order to facilitate the work, I will talk about the main points here.”

After a pause, the man nodded to the staff nearby and motioned him to turn on the projector.

Soon, the projector was turned on. A PowerPoint with black characters on a white background appeared on the screen.

As soon as everyone saw the slide, whispers spread in the conference room.

Almost everyone’s face was filled with unexpected expressions.

“ABC conjecture?!”

“What the hell is going on, I don’t understand.”

“They seem to be calling on everyone to solve a mathematical problem.”

“This is nonsense, is this even something that can be done by concentrating effort?”

Academician Xiang Huanan listened to the discussion in the room. He looked at Wang Shicheng after a while and spoke.

“Old Wang, what do you think?”

Wang Shicheng was totally muddled. It took him a while before he spoke.

“... I don’t know, don’t ask me.”

ABC conjecture...

Even though they didn’t know what this problem had to do with state secrets, his intuition told him that inviting the domestic experts for a meeting wasn’t enough to solve this problem.

“This is obviously a math problem. I believe that with your capabilities, I shouldn’t need to explain much. I will only talk about the key points.” The man looked around the room. The expression on his face did not change as he said, “The Ministry of Science and Technology has established a special scientific research fund with an annual budget of 100 million yuan.

“Whoever can solve this problem... this fund will go to them.”

Whoever can solve this?!

When they heard this, everyone took a deep breath.

Even Wang Shicheng, who had been retired for many years, couldn’t help but wonder.

A hundred million in scientific research?!

And that’s annually...

*Are they f*cking crazy?*

For some professional engineering academicians, a hundred million yuan fund might not be a big deal; it was only enough for two scientific research. Especially for those researchers who built rockets, even a billion wouldn’t be enough.

However, for a “poor” area like mathematics, one hundred million was an astronomical number.

The only thing they would have to worry about was how to spend it.

“What the hell happened? Why is the Ministry of Science and Technology spending so much...” Academician Xiang Huanan said as he frowned.

“I don’t know...” Academician Wang Shicheng shook his head solemnly and said, “But I’m certain that there is more to the story.”

...

In fact, the guesses of many scholars in the conference room, including Academician Wang Shicheng, were correct.

The report from Mars not only turned Project 128 into a Class A secret but also put the Mars landing office on the highest alert.

An extraterrestrial civilization...

Just a day ago, this sounded like a fantasy concept.

But now, this had become a problem that everyone had to face.

While the leaders of almost all public mathematics research institutes across the country were called to the Chinese Academy of Sciences for a meeting, a ministerial-level closed-door meeting was also going on at Chang'an Avenue.

"... Might as well directly disclose to the international community. Who cares about the losses or benefits; the risks are too high! If everything goes well, it would be fine. But if it is not handled well, ten years of hard work and achievements would have been in vain. We would be sinning for all of mankind."

"I agree with Minister Wang's. Just like global climate action, this is no longer a problem faced by our country, but a problem faced by all of mankind. Even if it is top secret, it will only remain a secret for at most 30 years. The world is too big to take on the risks ourselves. It is better to make a limited degree of disclosure."

"I object, before confirming the safety aspects, we should ensure that all choices are in our hands!"

"Second! What will happen if this becomes public? Apart from the unnecessary tension, do you really think the Americans will help?"

"I do not approve of international disclosure, but I do not approve of the situation right now either. We can disclose some information with reservations. Under the premise of controlling the channels of dialogue, we can set up an international organization to discuss countermeasures together. Not only will this help us enhance international influence, but it can also avoid the risk of a breach of trust. Otherwise, once a little bit of news is leaked, or if other countries have evidence that we have contact with extraterrestrial civilizations, it is likely that our relationship with the international community will fall into a very tricky situation."

"It's true... It's really difficult to keep a secret for ten or twenty years without revealing a little bit of news!"

Contact with extraterrestrial civilization was a matter full of risks.

This risk not only came from light-years away, but it also came from neighbors of planet Earth.

If a country was in contact with extraterrestrial civilizations alone, it meant that they had all the powers of diplomacy with extraterrestrial civilizations, including war declarations and peace talks. Other countries could only become passive recipients of the results of the dialogues.

The benefits would be taken by others, but they would have to take the risks alone. It would be nice if it could be kept secret, but obviously, this was impossible.

The President looked at the conference room. He then looked at Lu Zhou and asked, "The ABC conjecture, can't you solve it?"

Although this question seemed to have nothing to do with the meeting agenda, this was actually the most critical problem.

Being able to solve this mathematical problem seemed to be the prerequisite for dialogue with the extraterrestrial civilization.

The voices of the discussion gradually subsided as everyone in the meeting room became quiet. They were waiting for his answer.

"I don't know." Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "I don't know until I try... And my instinct tells me that even if it can be solved, I'm afraid it will take a long time."

The old man thought for a while and nodded.

"Let's not think about questions that have no answers. Now, suppose you have solved this problem. What choice do you think is better?"

"From a sincerity point of view, it is better for the problem solver to go." After a pause, Lu Zhou continued, "In the end, if it is me... and not someone else who solves the problem, I am willing to go to Mars."

The President frowned.

“Can’t you talk with them remotely?”

“It’s very difficult.” Lu Zhou said as he shook his head, “Forget about Mars, even on Earth, radio signals can’t be transmitted deep underground. Unless a communication base station is built on the ground and an optical cable is laid down... However, with the current conditions of the scientific research on Mars, it is almost impossible to achieve this.”

After a pause, Lu Zhou looked at the others in the conference room and continued, “Also, I want to go over and see what the so-called alien looks like.”

“I think it’s still too risky.” Although Director Li was touched by Lu Zhou’s selfless dedication, he couldn’t help but say, “Mars is tens of millions of kilometers away... What if something goes wrong? This is not a joke.”

“Science itself is an adventure. When did I say that I was joking around?” Lu Zhou said calmly. He looked at his old friend’s face, which was full of concern, and said, “If everything goes well, the impact of this may be greater than controllable fusion.

“Whether it is from the standpoint of a country or human beings as a whole.

“I’m responsible for going there myself!”

Chapter 1377: Concealed Report

“... Recently, during a scientific expedition to Mars, the Mars landing office encountered a sudden dust storm, which caused a scientific researcher to lose contact during the mission.

“After investigating the situation, the ground command center immediately organized rescue work, using a number of equipment including the near-Earth orbit optical observation system, unmanned reconnaissance vehicles, and other equipment to carry out emergency rescue work for the missing person.

“The entire rescue work lasted five hours and 27 minutes, and finally, they managed to successfully rescue the missing person.

“According to the person in charge of the Mars scientific research base, the researcher entered the nearby mountain range to avoid sandstorms. Due to the special landform and geographical environment of Mars, the electromagnetic wave signal attenuation coefficient is relatively large, which greatly affects the normal use of communication, positioning, and other equipment. This caused a serious safety accident...”

“More details are still under investigation.”

“CCTV reporting for you.”

The lunar scientific research station.

Sun Lieyang sat in the public cafeteria watching the news on the LCD screen. He frowned as he spoke.

“I don’t know why.”

“Why what?”

“I feel like this news is missing something.”

Missing something?

Tao Muye raised his eyebrows with interest. He put down the chopsticks in his hand.

“You mean, there are hidden things that haven’t been disclosed?”

“Yeah.” Sun Lieyang nodded and said, “You’ve received training before, right?”

“Everyone has.”

“I remember the third article in the safety manual very clearly says that, in the event of an aerospace accident, the person involved should wait in place for rescue.”

“Maybe it was an emergency.”

“A sandstorm on Mars is an emergency?”

Tao Muye shook his head after hesitating.

“I don’t know... I haven’t been there after all.”

“I think it’s a bit far-fetched.”

Due to the ultra-low air pressure on Mars, sandstorms were not a big threat at all.

Hiding in the nearby mountains to avoid a sandstorm, then losing communication due to the hematite, was like a person who jumped into a river in order to avoid the rain. Not to mention this person was a planetary geologist.

He was risking his own life.

Although Sun Lieyang knew that life was full of accidents, his instincts told him that something must have happened.

“Who cares, if there’s more to the story, we’re not privy to that information anyway,” Tao Muye said with a smile after picking up his chopsticks again. He continued, “I guess the ground command center is in chaos. Fortunately, they found the person; otherwise, this plan would have gone south.”

Sun Lieyang agreed with Dr. Tao’s point of view. Even if there was something hidden behind this, it had nothing to do with the researchers on the Moon.

Tao Muye changed the subject with a smile.

“Speaking of which, how is the second-generation controllable fusion research going? Have you made any progress?”

Sun Lieyang replied casually, “Yeah, in my dreams.”

“ ... ”

...

Originally, in Lu Zhou’s plan, the unified theory of algebra and geometry was his final work in the field of pure mathematics.

At least before all of his disciplines reached level 10, unless he encountered a problem of special interest, he probably wouldn’t refocus his work on mathematics.

One reason was to leave opportunities for others.

The other reason was that he was too busy.

Other than the maxed-out physics and mathematics, there were five other disciplines that he needed to deal with. These disciplines were areas that focused on application fields with a long research and development cycle and a large amount of uncertainty.

Especially when the research involved specific application scenarios, it was not something that could be solved by sitting in the study room with a pen and just doing calculations.

However, life was always full of surprises.

Just like how he had never thought that the Void would contact him like this...

“Why are you here?”

Jin Ling University, mathematics department building.

Professor Perelman saw Lu Zhou entering his office. He was sitting at his desk writing something. He put down the pen in his hand and cast a questioning glance at Lu Zhou.

“A question is bothering me. I heard that you are still here, so I came here...”
Lu Zhou walked in and glanced around the slightly messy office. He smiled and greeted him, “Speaking of which, are you not going back to St. Petersburg?”

“I will probably stay here for a while before Hodge’s conjecture is solved,” he answered the question concisely. Perelman twisted the pen in his hand and said, “I am more curious about the problem that puzzles you. May I ask, is it mathematical?”

“It is.”

Lu Zhou walked to the sofa and sat down. He smiled and nodded to the assistant who brought him tea. He looked at the mist rising from the cup, lowered his voice, and continued, “To be precise, it is the ABC conjecture.”

The pen in Perelman’s hand fell on the table.

Perelman frowned.

“ABC conjecture... Why are you interested in that?”

“Because of curiosity.” Lu Zhou thought for a while and said vaguely, “And some practical reasons.”

“Is it related to the meeting at Jinling University some time ago?”

“Meeting?”

“Well, I heard from other mathematics professors here.” Perelman frowned and continued, “Recently, you seem to be planning to concentrate on conquering the ABC conjecture. It seems that you have also provided a research funding of 100 million as a reward? Actually, with all due respect, this kind of problem cannot be solved by throwing money at it.”

When did that happen?

Lu Zhou was stunned.

“I’m not quite sure about this. Maybe someone else did something superfluous... But this conjecture is really important to us. Do you have any good ideas?”

Perelman: “I have read Shinichi Mochizuki’s paper.”

“Me too... So?”

“Then you should know what I’m going to say.” Perelman continued, “If Riemann’s conjecture is the Mount Everest in mathematics, then the ABC conjecture is the cloud floating above Mount Everest. There is no doubt that it is a mathematical problem that can be described in mathematical language, but it is not like a problem that can be solved by mathematics.

“Professor Mochizuki’s work is equivalent to creating a special mathematical language parallel to mathematics itself... That’s my opinion on his Abelian geometry.

“To put it bluntly, the biggest difficulty in solving this problem is that no one in mathematics today has really done research on this problem that is useful. If you really want to research this problem, you have to redefine addition and subtraction, thus redefining the whole of mathematics.

“Maybe alien mathematicians have an easier time solving this problem...”
Perelman murmured, “Of course, this is just my guess.”

Lu Zhou’s nerves tensed up subconsciously upon hearing his words.

But he soon realized that Perelman was just joking, not as if he knew the inside story.

Lu Zhou’s expression became a little more subtle.

This is tricky.

The higher-ups are still discussing whether to make this public. If it is made public, will today’s conversation make this old foreign friend feel like I’m lying to him?

After thinking about it, Lu Zhou quickly left the matter behind.

For a scholar who was obsessed with mathematics, even if Perelman knew the inner story behind it, he probably wouldn’t be interested.

“Redefine the language of mathematics like you redefine addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division?” Lu Zhou stood up from the sofa and said, “I will go back and think again.”

Perelman nodded and spoke.

“If I have any new ideas, I will communicate with you.

“In fact, I recommend that you discuss this issue with Shinichi Mochizuki or Schultz. They seem to have done more research on this issue.”

Lu Zhou nodded.

“I’ll think about it.”

Chapter 1378: “Counter-intuitive” Conjecture

The ABC conjecture was not the same as other mathematical conjectures. Its biggest difficulty was not in calculations, nor in the abstraction of the proposition itself, but the fact that its existence was completely counter-intuitive.

Simply put, let three numbers be a , b , and c , where $c=a+b$. If these three numbers were relatively prime, then to multiply the prime factors of these three numbers to get d . It seemed like d would obviously be larger than c .

For example, let $a=2$, $b=7$, $c=a+b=9$, $d=2 \times 7 \times 3=42$, d was obviously much larger than c .

However, this was completely contrary to people's intuition.

There were many counterexamples.

For example, let the triplet be $(5, 27, 32)$, $d=30$, which was obviously smaller than 32 .

Mathematicians went to the next level and modified Joseph Oesterlé's original expression, magnifying $\text{rad}(abc)$ and replacing it with a power of r greater than 1 . Which became $\text{rad}(abc)^{(1+\epsilon)}$.

For any real number ϵ greater than zero, there existed a counterexample of $d=\text{rad}(abc)^{(1+\epsilon)}>c!$

However, the number of these counterexamples was limited!

Ever since this question was raised, because of its "counter-intuitive" characteristics, it had always been a top problem that plagued mathematics.

In the algebraic sense, the interaction between addition and multiplication corresponded to infinite possibilities. Therefore, the prime factors of two natural numbers and the prime factors of their sum should not be mathematically related.

However, the magic of the ABC conjecture lied here.

It connected two unrelated algorithms in the eyes of mathematicians in a magical way and related the mathematical laws between the two.

Even if it looked wrong at first glance, no one could prove it. Based on the results of distributed computing, it was actually likely to be correct.

History showed that countless scientific conclusions such as "Newton's Theorem of Inertia" and "Galileo's Leaning Tower of Pisa Experiment", which

seemed to violate common sense at the time, were finally successfully proven.

Moreover, after these counter-intuitive theories were confirmed, without exception, they greatly promoted the development of science at that time.

Like Professor Dorian M. Goldfeld said, the ABC conjecture was not as well-known as Fermat's Last Theorem. Many people wonder why mathematicians should research a conclusion that already seemed to be true. But because of its unique counter-intuitive characteristics, its value was no less than Fermat's Last Theorem.

If this conjecture was proven, many famous Diophantine problems would be instantly solved.

And this included Fermat's Last Theorem...

After returning from Professor Perelman, Lu Zhou went straight back to his office at the mathematics department.

Compared to the environment at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study and the launch site, he still preferred the academic atmosphere for studying mathematical problems.

After asking Assistant Zhao to make a cup of coffee, Lu Zhou, who had been sitting at the desk for a long time, took out a pen from the pen holder and thought quietly as he looked at a blank piece of scratch paper.

In fact, he wasn't just worried about pure academic issues.

There was also the so-called "Holy Relic".

Compared to the Mars landing office and Chang'an Avenue, he actually knew more about the whole story.

This was not only because he was the person in charge of the Outlier 128 project, but also because he had experienced three pieces of memories about the civilization of the old universe, and he had even communicated face to face with The Observer's civilization.

All kinds of clues indicated that the Holy Relic was probably not an extraterrestrial civilization; at least, it was not the kind of extraterrestrial

civilization imagined by most people. Instead, it was an “item” sent by The Observer civilization to the solar system; one that could change the fate of the universe.

According to them, it was a gift.

But due to various reasons, just like mistakes in an experiment, this gift not only arrived in the solar system billions of years in advance, but it also fell in the hands of a civilization that had nothing to do with their plan.

Analyzing it from this perspective, it was quite possible that it came from the old universe.

According to Dr. Fan Tong’s experience, Lu Zhou made the bold assumption that the so-called Martian civilization that had disappeared might have been “enlightened” by the “item”.

After all, they called it the “Holy Relic”.

“Is solving the ABC conjecture a prerequisite for conversation?”

“I originally thought that the first conversation between human civilization and other civilizations would probably start with the dismantling of large prime numbers or other more concise questions...”

“The mathematical threshold of this conjecture is too high.”

Unlike the simple and easy-to-understand numbers such as Pi and Planck’s constant, mathematical conjecture involved not only mathematical laws but also human mathematicians’ understanding of mathematics.

In Lu Zhou’s opinion, using mathematical conjectures to converse was definitely not the best choice for communication.

Of course, the premise was that both parties wanted to communicate.

Testing the other party was another story.

Perhaps it was an illusion, but Lu Zhou, who had read the report of project 128, always felt that although the “Holy Relic” was curious about human civilization, it didn’t seem like it really wanted to communicate with them.

In his opinion, this mathematical conjecture was to “embarrass” human civilization.

Lu Zhou was thinking about it randomly while looking at a blank piece of scratch paper. A bunch of bubbles suddenly popped up in the lower corner of the laptop next to him.

[Master, you have mail!]

New mail?

Lu Zhou thought about who would send an email to himself at this time and spoke.

“Open it for me.”

The text bubbles disappeared.

The browser opened, and the email soon appeared in front of Lu Zhou.

The content of the email was short. The body contained only one sentence.

[I’ve been waiting for you for half a year. Have you finished handling the matter at hand?

[Signed by—

[Satoshi Nakamoto.]

When Lu Zhou saw this email, he was still a little bit confused. But when he saw the signed name at the bottom, he immediately knew what the email meant.

At the same time, the expression on his face became weird.

Around the end of last year, when Lu Zhou had just completed the 524-qubit computer and the “Theory of Void”, an anonymous email address with Satoshi Nakamoto’s ID sent him an email saying that he planned to discuss academic issues with him.

Lu Zhou was curious about the mysterious Bitcoin founder. He promised him at the time that he would send him an email back when he finished the matter at hand.

Then, he went to Stockholm and encountered a thrilling incident on the way to Copenhagen on the cruise ship. He had completely forgotten about the agreement after returning home.

But, to be honest, this was not his fault.

After all, he had never actually finished his “matter at hand”...

Even now.

Lu Zhou looked at the e-mail and couldn't help but feel a little embarrassed.

What do I do?

I'm not in the mood to discuss cryptography...

What is there to even discuss?

Just when Lu Zhou was wondering whether he should just ignore the email, he suddenly had a brilliant idea. He quickly typed on the keyboard and wrote an email.

[I'm sorry I didn't reply to your message in time. After returning from Stockholm, there were too many things that occupied my time, such as the research I am working on at the moment.

[Of course, if you can help me solve this problem, it would be great. I promise that I will help you with whatever you want to discuss.]

This is probably the best way to reject him.

At the end of the email, Lu Zhou typed out the ABC conjecture and clicked the “Send” button. He then closed his laptop and looked at the blank paper on his desk.

Time slowly passed by.

When Lu Zhou had gradually entered a flow state, the screen of his mobile phone suddenly flickered.

[Master, you have a reply! (๑•̀₃•́)و✧]

Reply?

Already?

When Lu Zhou looked at the text bubbles on the screen, he was stunned.

Out of curiosity about the reply, he couldn't help but open his computer and log into his email again.

Just like the previous email, this reply only had one short line.

[I have researched this problem before. If you are interested, I have attached the proof method.]

Lu Zhou: "...?!"

Chapter 1379: Five Hundred Pages of Proof

Early morning...

A car parked downstairs at the mathematics department at Jin University.

Han Mengqi thanked the driver who helped her take the suitcase out of the trunk. She then dragged the suitcase and went upstairs. However, when she was about to open the door and walk into the office, she was caught by a hand that came out from the side.

"Li Mo?"

Han Mengqi looked at the younger guy and spoke.

"What's wrong?"

Li Mo glanced at the office door and spoke with a serious face.

"Master has been in a retreat for two days, let's not disturb him."

"Two days?!" Han Mengqi was shocked. Her eyes widened, and she asked, "H-he stayed in the office for two days? What about food? He didn't come out to eat?"

“He still ate.” Ji Mo said embarrassedly, “I went to the cafeteria to bring him back food... I just brought his breakfast over. I was planning to go to the library to study... Do you want to go together?”

“Oh, as long as he’s eating...” Han Mengqi breathed a sigh of relief and suddenly said, “By the way, did he say you can call him Master?”

Li Mo: “...?”

Han Mengqi realized that her reaction was a little sudden. She coughed and explained, “I mean, this is a school and you are still in undergraduate studies. It is not good for other students to hear you call him that.”

Li Mo realized that this seemed to make sense. He scratched his head in embarrassment and admitted his mistake, “Ah... I’m sorry, I didn’t think about it.”

Seeing this junior disciple acknowledging his mistake and correcting it, Han Mengqi nodded in satisfaction.

“As long as you don’t do it again...”

She put her right hand on the doorknob of the office, opened the door carefully, and walked in.

Han Mengqi closed the office door and looked at Lu Zhou’s eyebags. She quietly spoke with a tinge of distress in her heart.

“Master... I’m back.”

Lu Zhou put down the pen in his hand. He let out a sigh of relief and put aside the thick stack of papers. He smiled and looked at Han Mengqi who was standing by the door.

“Meng Qi? You’re back already?”

Han Mengqi nodded and spoke.

“I just got off the plane.”

“Why didn’t you call me when you got off the plane? I could have asked Wang Peng to pick you up... By the way, why did you bring your suitcase here? Didn’t you go home?”

“I’ll go back later.”

She looked like she wanted to say something, so Lu Zhou spoke with a smile.

“How was your trip to America?”

“It was smooth...” Han Mengqi nodded and added in a quiet voice, “I also received an award by the way.”

An award.

Not bad.

Lu Zhou smiled embarrassedly.

“Oh? What award?”

“Young Scholar Progress Award...”

In fact, in addition to the awards given to her by the International Union of Materials Research Societies, there were also another series of events such as the dinner party at the White House, meeting with the president of the American Society for Metals, and so forth.

Other than the Young Scholar Progress Award, she basically had “no achievements” in the materials science field. All these special treatments made her feel flattered.

In fact, the reason why she went to Jin University immediately after returning to China, besides sharing the good news of her award with her master, was also because she had a lot of questions to ask him.

However, she didn’t expect to see Lu Zhou in such a tired state...

“Master...”

“What?”

Han Mengqi said with a worried look, “I heard that you haven’t slept for two days.”

“Two days?” Lu Zhou looked at the stack of more than 500 pages on the table. He frowned and said, “It’s been that long?”

Han Mengqi: "I think it's better for you to take a break."

"It's fine, it's only two days, I haven't reached my record yet." Lu Zhou smiled and continued, "I will go to rest after I reply to the email."

"Email? How about you tell me what to write? I'll do it for you."

After yawning, Lu Zhou waved his hand and picked up the breakfast on the corner of the table.

"No need, I'll write the email myself. I can't explain this to you for now. If you really want to write it, I'm afraid the sun will go down before you understand what I'm trying to say."

"What problem is it..."

"ABC conjecture."

"... ABC conjecture?!" Han Mengqi was stunned when she heard Lu Zhou's answer. She asked with a dazed expression on her face, "Why did you decide to... suddenly research this problem?"

If she remembered correctly, he should be busy on the Mars landing project.

And he seemed to have said more than once that he would not research pure mathematics any time soon...

"Life is always full of surprises... I didn't expect this either." Lu Zhou coughed and said, "Anyway, because of some special reasons, I'm researching this now. Don't worry about me. Go back and unpack your luggage. Take some rest, get rid of the jet lag, then report back here."

Han Mengqi was forced out of the office by Lu Zhou. She stood in the corridor outside the office with a dazed expression.

After hesitating, she took out her mobile phone, opened her contacts list, and dialed a number.

The phone rang twice and was connected.

A familiar voice soon came from the other end.

"Meng Qi? Are you back? I was just about to call you."

“Well, I just got off the plane... Um, sis, you should come to Jin University.”

“Jin University? Why?”

“Lu Zhou, he seems to have not slept for two days... I am a little worried about him. If you don’t have time to come over, at least call to persuade him.”

“Hasn’t slept in two days?! Are you with him now? I’ll come right now!”

Chen Yushan got up from her office chair and ended the phone call.

Han Mengqi took a deep breath and put the phone back into her pocket.

She looked back at the office and thought in her heart.

Master, that’s all I can do!

Don’t die on us...

...

Dying was not going to happen.

It was just two days of no sleep.

If Lu Zhou remembered correctly, his highest record of no sleeping was for seven consecutive days. He slept for two or three days straight afterward to recover.

That was back in Princeton. He was researching Goldbach’s conjecture or the Navier-Stokes equations; he couldn’t remember. Staying up late was normal for him.

He remembered that, one time, he felt like he was floating on the clouds; he couldn’t tell whether he was in the sky or on the ground.

But that feeling of extreme concentration allowed him to completely break through the bottleneck and enter a new level. However, he knew that he was just one step from reaching “heaven”...

“Sigh, time is not forgiving, I’m getting old too... I can’t mess around like I’m twenty anymore.”

After eating, Lu Zhou gradually felt a trace of sleepiness in his heart. He extracted a tube of energy medicine from the system space, unscrewed the bottle cap, and swallowed it slowly.

A mint-fresh coolness spread along his throat to the front of his brain. He soon felt that the fatigue that crawled all over his body was like a tidal wave, completely fading from his body.

After refreshing his spirits, Lu Zhou picked up the stack of papers from a corner of the table and found the page where he had left off. He turned on the computer and started writing the email.

Before this, he was uncertain about Satoshi Nakamoto's identity, but now, he was 80% certain that it was Shinichi Mochizuki himself[1: Shinichi Mochizuki has denied this in an interview. This is only a rumor in the mathematics circle. Don't take the plot of this novel too seriously.]

This paper on the proof of the ABC conjecture was clearly a revised version of the paper Shinichi Mochizuki previously published on the Internet.

Because it was an unpublished version, there was neither an abstract nor a title. Lu Zhou only realized after he read more than 20 pages that this paper was a bit familiar. He was certain after he read more than 30 pages. This was the "Anabelian geometry" and the "Inter-universal Teichmüller theory" that only a few people in the world understood.

In fact, Mochizuki's proof of the core idea of the ABC conjecture was very simple to summarize. It transformed this abstract problem into a more abstract elliptic curve, a special two-dimensional cubic equation.

This transformation process was actually not difficult to understand. One only had to associate the same image of each "ABC equation" with the elliptic curve whose x-axis intersects at a , b , and the origin. After this transformation, proving the ABC conjecture was equivalent to proving that there was a certain unequal relationship between the two values of the constructed elliptic curve.

This operation of transforming algebraic problems into geometric problems could transform a simple number theory problem into geometry, calculus, and other fields. This was so that more mathematical tools could be applied.

In terms of this proof alone, this set of operations was actually very classic. Wiles used a similar method to prove the core part of Fermat's Last Theorem.

Unfortunately, although the idea behind the proof was remarkable, when this idea was transformed into a paper of more than 500 pages, everything became less friendly.

Many people even commented that to fully understand what “Anabelian geometry” and “Inter-universal Teichmüller theory” was probably more difficult than solving the ABC conjecture itself.

The famous number theorist Professor Caligali even stated bluntly that this paper was a “complete disaster”.

Lu Zhou remembered that a few years ago, Schultz and his partner had visited Beijing and discussed the issue face to face with Shinichi Mochizuki, but the final result turned out to be the same. A dispute between the two sides of the field.

Schultz complained that he stood on a Penrose stairs that never ended, while Mochizuki insisted that he “knows nothing at all” and “can’t even understand the basic definition”.

As for Lu Zhou...

His opinion was the same as Schultz.

[I have read the paper.

[Although it has undergone certain modifications compared with the previous version, in my view, there are still large loopholes. Especially in the part of inference 3.12. If you want to clarify the relationship between the volume of the set, you must at least establish a relationship between the measurement standards of the volume in each different space. However, in the mapping you give, the quantity rulers are locally compatible with each other...

[In summary...

[Your proof is wrong.]

Chapter 1380: Girlfriend Card

After typing the email, Lu Zhou yawned and clicked the “Send” button casually.

Normally, even if Lu Zhou was not optimistic about someone's proof, he would not be too harsh. He would go about in a tactful way. But because he needed to rest, he didn't bother to spend time making his words more polite.

Of course, although the five-hundred-page paper did not succeed in proving the ABC conjecture in his opinion, it did not mean that the past two days were wasted.

Compared to the previous paper he found on the website of the department of mathematics of Kyoto University, this revised version had been optimized in many ways.

Although there were still many problems, it had given him a lot of inspiration.

In addition to the basic idea of transforming number theory problems into geometric problems, there were also many problems that involved rebuilding a mathematical language.

He had a rich experience in the former, but the latter was a new thing for him.

This was different from existing mathematical language compiler tools; it was almost equivalent to recreating a mathematical language used to describe the ABC conjecture.

Perhaps like Perelman had guessed, to solve this problem, it might be easier to use alien mathematics.

After the email was sent, Lu Zhou casually wrote down his inspiration in a notebook. He then got up from the chair and was about to go back home for a nap.

However, there was a knock on the office door. The door was soon pushed open.

Lu Zhou looked at Chen Yushan, who walked in. He was slightly stunned and spoke with surprise.

"Why are you here?"

"I heard that my boyfriend hasn't slept for two days, so I immediately came from the office... Where is Meng Qi?"

"She left already."

Chen Yushan looked at Lu Zhou's thick eyebags. She then sighed distressedly.

"... Promise me, don't ruin your health anymore."

"It's only two days, don't make such a big deal out of it..." Lu Zhou said with a cough, "Not to mention that it's not the first time I've been on a retreat."

"What do you mean only two days!" Chen Yushan couldn't help but rant, "Also, I didn't know you don't sleep during your retreats!"

"I don't stay up every retreat, but when I happen to be inspired, I want to take advantage of the inspiration and do what I can do all at once..."

Lu Zhou couldn't help but yawn. He then smiled a little embarrassingly and said, "Besides, I'm planning to go to rest right now, so don't worry."

"If I wasn't here, you'll probably never take a break." Chen Yushan looked at the stack of papers on the desk and said, "Is this... the ABC conjecture?"

"Yeah, after reading Shinichi Mochizuki's paper, I have a lot of interesting ideas. Although I don't know when this problem will be solved, I feel that I am very close to the entrance of the maze."

After seeing the excited expression on Lu Zhou's face, Chen Yushan spoke in a quiet voice after being silent for a while.

"I heard... After solving the ABC conjecture, you are going to Mars?"

"Who said that?"

"My dad."

I knew it...

Lu Zhou had anticipated that this would happen. He sighed in his heart.

Director Li probably told her father.

Director Li tried to play the girlfriend card, in hopes of convincing Lu Zhou not to go.

Lu Zhou couldn't help but curse in his heart.

What a scumbag! Who does something like this?

Chen Yushan said, "I want to go to Mars with you... But I don't think I can."

Lu Zhou looked at the pretty face and spoke after a moment of silence.

"If you want to, I can bring you."

"No."

Lu Zhou was surprised.

He thought that Chen Yushan would agree; he didn't expect her to shake her head and reject him.

"If I went with you, you would definitely be worried about me. If it's just for a vacation, it would be fine, but since you're doing business... I don't want to be a burden."

"I'll wait on Earth for you."

"So..."

"Promise me, you'll come back."

Although she carefully hid the feelings of anxiety in her heart, Lu Zhou still read the unspoken words from her rippling eyes.

What if... someone else goes? It'll be the same.

I have already taken on too many responsibilities that are not my own. If I share some with other people, it might be easier.

After all, I'm not young anymore...

However, this thought only stayed in his mind for a second.

After being silent for a while, Lu Zhou raised his head, looked at her adorable face, and nodded.

He spoke in a serious tone.

“I promise you...”

“I’ll come back safely!”

...

On the other hand...

Kyoto University, Japan.

After Shinichi Mochizuki read the e-mail lying in his mailbox, he was slightly unhappy. His student Hoshi Yuichiro was standing behind him with a cup of coffee. He looked at the email on the screen and spoke in surprise.

“Reading more than 500 pages in two days... How did he do it?”

The obscure and incomprehensibility of anabelian geometry was well-known in the mathematics world. Scholars who understood this field could be counted on one hand.

Hoshi Yuichiro clearly remembered that Schultz, who was said to be a genius mathematician, spent half a year in order to understand his professor’s thesis.

Moreover, he and another student, Yamashita, agreed that the German mathematician did not understand the paper at all. And that he even conflated two unrelated mathematical concepts during questioning.

“Obviously, he didn’t read my paper carefully at all and that he made a judgment based on his instinct.” Mochizuki took off his glasses from the bridge of his nose and stood up from the computer desk.

After a pause, he continued, “I will go to China to confirm this personally.”

The moment he said this, the entire office went silent.

Hoshita Yuichiro, Yamashita, and his other students and assistants all cast a glance of surprise at him.

What surprised them was not that their professor intended to go against Professor Lu; in their opinion, their professor was no worse than Lu Zhou.

What really surprised them was that the famous “introverted” Mochizuki was actually willing to go overseas?!

After gulping, Hoshi Yuichiro looked at his professor incredulously and asked in an uncertain tone, “Professor... You plan to go in person?”

“Yes.” Mochizuki nodded without hesitation. He said bluntly, “His misunderstanding of my thesis is more irritating than that of Schultz. I will clear up the confusion with him in person.”

“But you... don’t usually travel?”

In the past, the European Mathematical Society tried so hard to invite him over to give a report, but the big man sent another student to give a report. This time he actually wanted to go to China himself. In Hoshi Yuichiro’s opinion, it was like pigs were starting to fly.

“That’s because there was no need to travel before, but now there is.”

Shinichi Mochizuki looked at his students and continued to speak without interruption.

“Moreover, I happen to have a lot of questions about quantum encryption algorithms and cryptography that I want to talk about with him.

“Compared to the ABC conjecture, which I solved more than ten years ago, this is what I am really interested in.”

Hoshihiro’s shoulders trembled. Like the other students and assistants in the office, they looked at the teacher with a hint of worship in their eyes.

Professor Mochizuki...

His confidence...

His determination...

Is so cool!

Chapter 1381: Inevitable Encounter

An apartment building near the University of Bonn.

Professor Schultz was packing his luggage. Professor Stix was about to invite him out for a drink. He spoke with a look of surprise.

“Are you... planning to go to a conference?”

If he remembered correctly, there should be no academic conferences worth attending in the near future.

“No,” Schultz answered the question concisely. He chose a jacket from the closet and stuffed it into the suitcase. He then casually replied, “This is not a conference, but an invitation from Professor Lu. I plan to go to China and discuss some academic matters with him.”

“China? Professor Lu?” Stix was slightly taken aback. He hesitated and said, “But last time at the conference, didn’t Professor Lu say that he doesn’t plan on researching mathematics for a while?”

“He did say that, but it doesn’t matter.” Schultz said with a smile, “His withdrawal was a loss for the mathematics world, and now he is back in his best field; number theory. Anyway, I think this is a good start.”

Stix asked curiously, “What problem is it?”

“ABC conjecture.”

“So it actually is the ABC conjecture...”

With a look of disbelief on his face, Stix whispered in a low voice, “But this makes sense. Mathematical problems are no longer a challenge for him. Only this kind of problem that can’t seem to be solved with modern mathematics can arouse his interest.”

Schultz closed the suitcase, looked at him, and spoke.

“Want to go together? You are an expert in number theory.”

Stix shook his head and said, “No thanks, I don’t know him very well, and he didn’t invite me... I wish you a good time over there. I hope I can hear good news from the other side of the ocean.”

Schultz said with a smile, “Of course.”

...

While Schultz had set off on his journey to China, Shinichi Mochizuki was sitting in the terminal at the Kyoto International Airport on the other side of Earth. He was dozing off with his chin buried in the collar of his trench coat.

Suddenly, his phone alarm rang, waking him up from his sleep.

“It’s time already?”

Mochizuki rubbed his nose. He was a little discombobulated from his sleep. He was about to get up from his chair, but his eyes focused on the TV screen on the ceiling of the terminal.

The news from NHK TV was being shown.

In the studio, the female host announced the latest news.

“... The China Mars landing office held a press conference, at which it announced the major findings of research projects related to the Mars landing plan. At the press conference, the Chinese press spokesperson announced that, during their scientific research accident, the team discovered clastic rocks suspected of being formed by biological sedimentation in a 120-meter deep underground rock formation on Mars.”

On the TV screen, the footage was switched from the studio to the scene of the press conference.

A spokesperson in formal clothes stood in front of the camera, facing the crowd of microphones and cameras. He spoke into the microphone with a serious expression.

This spokesperson also disclosed another piece of information.

Which was that, according to carbon isotope detection and analysis, these bioclastic rocks were formed about 2 to 2.5 billion years ago.

If this research was true, this discovery would become a piece of strong evidence for the existence of signs of life on Mars. It would reveal to humans that more than two billion years ago, before the Martian atmosphere was blown by the solar wind, what kind of ecosystem existed on Mars.

Prior to this, the academic community had always held two completely different views on whether there was a complete ecosystem on Mars...

“Aliens?”

Shinichi Mochizuki looked at the news on the TV. He thought to himself.

Sounds interesting.

But...

Doesn't have anything to do with me.

Just as he was thinking about this, there was a sudden excitement from the side.

“There are aliens on Mars?”

“Amazing...”

“I wonder when our astronauts will be able to go there.”

“It's too difficult... Even NASA has failed. Sigh, if it weren't for Professor Lu, no one would have been able to go there.”

“Do you think they actually saw aliens there? It's just not disclosed.”

“How could that be possible... After all, these are specimens from billions of years ago.”

Seems like I'm not the only one interested.

Shinichi Mochizuki glanced at the TV one last time. He then grabbed his suitcase and walked quickly toward the boarding gate...

...

Jin Ling University.

An office at the end of the corridor in the mathematics department building.

“Your working environment is much cleaner than mine,” Schultz said in an enviable tone while standing in Lu Zhou’s office. He looked around and continued, “I can hardly find a place to stand. The thing I complain about the most is that I don’t know which piece of paper I need and which I don’t need... The end result is that everything is piled up together; there is no organization at all.”

Lu Zhou smiled embarrassedly when he heard this, not knowing whether it was a compliment.

To be honest, the cleanliness of his office was not because of how good his habits were. It was purely because he hadn’t been here much this year. He had only begun to show up at the university office recently.

Perelman, who had just arrived here, stood next to them. He looked at Schultz. He then looked at Lu Zhou and muttered, “I was just brainstorming, I didn’t expect you to actually find him.”

“Oh, so you guys talked about me coming here?” Schultz looked at Perelman unexpectedly. He said with a smile, “It seems that I have to thank you.”

Perelman: “Oh, no need, like I said, I was just brainstorming.”

“Regardless, we are all standing here for the same purpose.” Lu Zhou clapped his hands and spoke with a smile as he looked at his two old friends. “So, let’s not waste time in small talk. We can talk about the past over dinner later.”

“I agree.” Schultz said jokingly, “I heard that Professor Lu has made new discoveries on the ABC conjecture, so I bought the earliest flight and immediately flew over from North Rhine.”

“I’m afraid I can’t say it’s a new discovery; it’s just a little idea.” Lu Zhou smiled embarrassedly and continued, “It’s the 500-page paper from Shinichi Mochizuki.”

“The paper by Mochizuki Shinichi?” Schultz didn’t expect Lu Zhou to use that paper as the opening remarks of the discussion. Schultz raised his eyebrows slightly and said hesitantly, “Honestly, there is nothing to discuss. I proved it wrong with my collaborators years ago.”

“I know, I read your dissertation against him; it’s very good.”

Lu Zhou cleared his throat and picked up a marker from the table. He walked to the whiteboard next to him and paused for a moment. He continued, “Obviously, there is a problem with his paper and the problem is not small. There is no doubt about it. But when I read his paper the day before yesterday, I found something very interesting.”

Although there was an expression of disapproval on Schultz’s face, he noticed that Lu Zhou had picked up the pen. He decided to stay quiet and wait for Lu Zhou to continue.

Perelman was the same; the expression on his face did not change. He just stared intently at the pen in Lu Zhou’s hand.

His intuition told him that Lu Zhou must have discovered something extraordinary, so much so that he invited Schultz all the way from Germany for discussion.

Regardless of whether that meant a proof of the ABC conjecture, it was worthy of his attention.

Also, he knew that once he missed a sentence, even with his mathematical ability, it would be difficult to keep up with Lu Zhou’s jaw-dropping speed...

“Inference 3.12 is the core of the whole paper. There is no doubt about it. It turns the ABC conjecture from an abstract mathematical concept to proving a specific inequality related to elliptic curves.

“However, the root of the problem is also here.”

Just when Lu Zhou was talking about the most critical part, a dramatic scene happened.

A series of violent footsteps came from the corridor outside.

Soon, after a knock on the door, the door was pushed open.

When Lu Zhou saw the figure appearing at his door, he was stunned.

But...

Obviously, the other two people were even more stunned.

“Mochizuki?”

“Schultz?”

The two people made eye contact and stood there, stunned.

Gradually, the atmosphere began to become a little awkward.

The expressions on their faces stiffened at the same time.

Dean Qin finally caught up with Shinichi Mochizuki and jogged to the door of the office. He was holding the door frame and out of breath. He was about to introduce the visiting famous scholar of Kyoto University to Lu Zhou when he noticed Perelman and Schultz in the office.

This old man could instantly smell something wrong in the room.

“Haha, I didn’t expect you guys to be here...”

Dean Qin touched the back of his head and smiled embarrassedly. He said quickly with a dry cough, “This is Shinichi Mochizuki... You guys talk, I won’t bother you all.”

After that, the old man turned around and quickly left.

Chapter 1382: LSPM

“Professor Mochizuki, right? Nice to meet you.”

Although there was still a smile on Schultz’s face, Lu Zhou smelled the tension as soon as Schultz spoke.

Professor Mochizuki obviously realized this. He lifted his chin slightly, as if he was expressing his disdain with his nostrils.

“Hello, Professor Schultz, long time no see.”

“Yes, it’s really been a long time. After all, it’s not easy to see you.”

“Hahaha.”

Lu Zhou watched the growling between the two; he was stuck in the middle.

Shinichi Mochizuki didn't reply to his email some time ago. He thought he was "blocked"; he didn't expect this guy to come over in person.

He didn't expect such a coincidence that this guy and Schultz had bumped into each other.

Even Perelman saw that they were not friendly with each other, so he said with a light cough, "If you have something to talk about, you can discuss it privately before we continue."

"No," Schultz said with a shiny smile on his face, "I don't have any problem with Professor Mochizuki. We were just discussing the five hundred pages of wasted paper, oh, I meant thesis."

Shinichi Mochizuki squinted his eyes and stared at him for a while. He looked at Lu Zhou and spoke.

"I have nothing to say to him, I'm here for you."

Lu Zhou sighed and spoke.

"What a coincidence.

"Since we're all here, let's continue."

He turned around to face the whiteboard and started writing.

When the first line was written down, the two people who were previously fighting finally turned their attention back to academic issues.

When Lu Zhou wrote down the fifth line of equations, Shinichi Mochizuki's eyes narrowed slightly.

Anabelian geometry method!

As the creator of the mathematical language, he didn't feel too surprised by the mathematical language he invented.

What surprised him was that someone could use it so skillfully. He can't help but feel impressed.

This was probably the first time he had seen this happen outside of Kyoto University.

For the vast majority of people, the odd-looking mathematical symbols created by him alone were enough to give a headache, much less using those mathematical symbols to build up a complete argumentation process.

Ten minutes.

Twenty minutes.

Finally, half an hour passed. The five whiteboards were filled with dense calculations.

The three people standing in front of the whiteboards began to feel a little sore in their necks. Lu Zhou finally put down the marker and took half a step back.

After finally seeing the calculations on the whiteboard, Shinichi Mochizuki's face gradually became solemn, then back to being surprised.

After Schultz read the calculations on the whiteboard, a smile gradually appeared on his face. It was obvious that Lu Zhou had produced a similar result to his.

As for Professor Perelman, there was still no change of expression on his face, but there was a thoughtful look in his eyes.

"... The incompatibility of spatial measures means that the final inequality cannot be compared..."

Shinichi Mochizuki was completely lost in thought. Lu Zhou continued softly, "But if the proof is changed, as I wrote in equation 2.1, then spatial measurements will be compatible with each other."

Schultz smiled and said, "But then, this inequality will lose its meaning."

Lu Zhou nodded. "Yes, but I appreciate it if you can keep quiet for now."

Schultz shrugged and closed his mouth somewhat boringly. He glanced at Mochizuki next to him, then went to make himself a cup of coffee.

Now that the deduction had reached this point, there was no suspense.

He admitted that Lu Zhou's analysis of the problem was closer to the essence than himself.

When proving the inference 3.12, his argumentation process was infinitely close to succeeding. From this, the final result of the ABC conjecture was derived.

However, he was just a little bit "off".

It was precisely because of this mistake, the five-hundred-page thesis became a waste of paper.

Shinichi Mochizuki looked at the calculations on the whiteboard intently. He did not speak for a long time.

Lu Zhou thought for a while and spoke thoughtfully.

"The expression of anabelian geometry is a bit unique... It took me a lot of time to understand what these symbols represent. If there is no misunderstanding, this should be your 'trivial' proof process."

Shinichi Mochizuki lowered his head a little.

"Yeah."

Lu Zhou: "Do you have any questions then?"

Mochizuki shook his head.

"No."

There was no doubt that this was the most perfect derivation process he could think of, even more perfect than he expected.

That was why...

He couldn't even think of how to refute it.

Lu Zhou thought for a while and suddenly said, "In fact, anabelian geometry has many remarkable points when solving abstract mathematical problems, but the cost of mastering this is really high. I think that if a tool is to be passed on, it has to be easily understood by all people."

Shinichi Mochizuki stared at the calculation on the whiteboard with furrowed brows. He then said in an indifferent tone, "I don't care."

"Then what's the meaning of your work?"

"Meaning?"

"That's right." Lu Zhou nodded. "Most scholars are confused about your work. There are very few scholars in mathematics who understand anabelian geometry. The only people who understand your work are mostly your students or colleagues. Maybe you can still work in mathematics for ten or twenty years, but what about thirty or even fifty years later?"

"Maybe your theory is lucky. Your students finish the work you didn't complete, sorting out the obscure things into mathematical principles that can be understood and accepted by most people. A hundred years later, the new knowledge shoots will sprout on unfamiliar soil.

"However, if you're not as lucky as we assume, your students' research in this field will not surpass you. In fifty years, all the work you have done in this field will not be remembered again, as if it had never existed in this world before.

"Of course you might not care," Lu Zhou said in an indifferent tone. He shrugged his shoulders and looked at the silent Shinichi Mochizuki as he said, "I just feel a little pity for you."

After a long silence, Professor Mochizuki looked at the lines of calculations on the whiteboard and suddenly asked, "Can I ask a question?"

Lu Zhou: "Of course you can."

Shinichi Mochizuki: "Did you really only take two days?"

Lu Zhou smiled embarrassedly and said, "Sort of, although I didn't sleep much in those two days."

With a complicated expression on his face, Shinichi Mochizuki nodded silently.

This time he didn't say anything. He just turned around and walked away.

...

The meeting continued.

After listening to Lu Zhou's explanation, both Perelman and Professor Schultz agreed that this counter-intuitive mathematical problem could only be solved through counter-intuitive mathematical tools.

It was best to create a language that was independent of the existing mathematical methods, specifically used to describe this kind of special Diophantine equation problem.

As for the breakthrough point...

In Lu Zhou's opinion, it was possible to consider starting from the refinement of Baker's theorem and slowly move toward the result of the ABC conjecture.

Schultz had an unexpected interest in this problem. He decided to stay at the Jin Ling University faculty dorms for the time being.

Although Lu Zhou said that he could arrange a hotel with better conditions, he declined it because of the travel inconvenience.

As for Shinichi Mochizuki, he had disappeared since that day. He couldn't be contacted and did not return his emails.

Lu Zhou thought he had already returned to Japan. What he didn't expect was that he appeared again two days after, just before their meeting.

"You are right, I thought about it for a long time after I returned to the hotel.

"Whether it's the proof or the suggestion about anabelian geometry...

"If no one remembers my work, then all of my efforts in this field may become meaningless after I retire. If, unfortunately, I am still alive by then, it will be a torment until my death."

Professor Mochizuki pointed his nostrils to one side with a little embarrassment, coughed lightly, and continued.

"After returning to Kyoto, I will take a little time to do something I haven't done before.

"But before that, I want to stay here for a while.

“I want to put an end to the unfinished work from more than ten years ago.”

Lu Zhou looked at Shinichi Mochizuki with surprise. He didn't expect him to admit his mistakes so easily and even propose to stay at Jin Ling University for a while.

This is unlike the rumors in the mathematics world...

Lu Zhou was stunned for a while. He smiled and reached out his right hand.

“I'm glad you think that way... Also, you are welcome to join us.”

After shaking hands, Shinichi Mochizuki looked at Schultz, who was standing by the side.

“I think we have had a serious misunderstanding with each other... But don't expect me to apologize to you, this is not entirely my fault.”

Schultz smiled and folded his arms.

“That's fine, I didn't expect an apology. In addition, although your proof process has obvious problems, we all think that your idea is still feasible. We need to create a new mathematical language to describe this problem... Welcome to our research group. It seems that LSP has to be changed to LSPM.”

He smiled and reached out his right hand.

Shinichi Mochizuki frowned and hesitated for a while. However, in the end, he still shook the hand.

“Thanks...”

“This is definitely the most powerful lineup in the history of mathematics.” Lu Zhou looked at them and said, “Or at least one of them.”

“I think it is.” Schultz joked and said, “After all, we have Professor Lu.”

Chapter 1383: Big Moves in Chinese Mathematics

“Hey! Have you heard? There seem to be big moves in the Chinese mathematics field recently!”

“What moves?”

“I heard from a new international student, that the Ministry of Science and Technology seems to have issued a reward of 100 million research funding for the ABC conjecture...”

“What, how much?! A hundred million!? Zimbabwe dollars?”

“Of course it’s yuan... Apparently, the people who research number theory are going crazy! Various public institutions are even more amazed. They are offering high salaries to anyone who researches number theory. There seem to be quite a few Chinese mathematicians at Princeton who recently got an offer and returned to China, right? Apparently, that is related to this rumor.”

“ABC conjecture... A hundred million... Crazy, it’s crazy.”

Princeton cafe.

As one of the most famous news distribution centers in mathematics, there were always weird rumors about mathematics that could be found here.

One piece of gossip that had become quite popular recently was probably the news that was suddenly issued by the Ministry of Science and Technology of China. There was constantly someone in the cafe talking about it with an envious look in their eyes.

A hundred million in research funding...

They couldn’t even imagine how to spend so much money. The only people who remained indifferent to this were probably those who stood at the top of the academic world and no longer cared about money.

There were many rumors about the origin of this fund, but most of the explanations were quite far-fetched.

After all, this matter itself was a bit ridiculous.

Everyone was at a loss. It was not clear why the Chinese Congress suddenly showed such interest in a purely mathematical problem and even offered such a jaw-dropping reward.

As a result, many foreign number theory scholars in the public research institutes of China were now asking how to become naturalized and whether there were any shortcuts.

Professor Peter Sarnak, the former editor-in-chief of *Annual Mathematics*, said, “Recently, there seems to be a big move in the Chinese mathematics community.” Professor Fefferman was sitting opposite him. Peter Sarnak continued in a chatty tone while drinking coffee, “I hear a new rumor almost every day... Have you heard about it?”

“I’ve heard a little bit... But the thing I’m thinking about is different than what you’re talking about.”

“Oh really?” A look of interest suddenly appeared in his eyes. Professor Sarnak sat upright and stared at Professor Fefferman with interest. He asked, “Is there another big move?”

Professor Sarnak wasn’t the only one who smelled the gossip.

The several scholars sitting at the table next to them also lowered the volume of their speech, pretending to be drinking coffee. In fact, their ears were secretly listening.

“LSPM.” Professor Fefferman continued after taking a sip of coffee, “I don’t know if you’ve heard about it. I only saw it on Schultz’s blog last night.”

“LSPM?” Professor Sarnak frowned slightly and asked in confusion, “I haven’t heard of it. Do these four letters have a special meaning?”

“L is the acronym for Lu Zhou, S is Schultz, as well as P for Perelman and M for Shinichi Mochizuki. They recently established a research group on the ABC conjecture.”

After hearing this explanation, Professor Sarnak was shocked.

“ABC conjecture?! Are they...”

“Sounds very surprising, right? I was also very surprised. This is definitely the most powerful lineup in the history of modern mathematics. It is equivalent to an all-star team.” Professor Fefferman smiled and continued, “I bet that this game will be very exciting.”

“Is it for the 100 million yuan bonus? No, it’s impossible.” Professor Sarnak was confused. “I heard that only domestic scholars can apply for it... And Lu Zhou doesn’t seem to be short of money.”

Not just Lu Zhou.

Shinichi Mochizuki, Schultz, and Perelman; none of them seemed to be interested in money.

“Of course it’s not for money,” Professor Fefferman continued with a sip of coffee. He calmly said, “However, my instinct tells me that there must be a story behind this. Believe me, it won’t take too long. We’ll hear about it soon.”

Just like how the ABC conjecture would be solved soon.

Professor Fefferman, who had worked with Lu Zhou, had no doubt about this.

He knew exactly how powerful that man was.

Also, this strength was not only because of his talent; Lu Zhou was also terribly hardworking. Especially when it came to forgoing sleep and eat. Even Princeton’s most diligent scholar couldn’t compare to his work ethic.

Fefferman couldn’t think of someone on Earth who was more likely to solve this problem than him.

“There is one thing I don’t understand.”

Before Professor Sarnak recovered from the surprise, Professor Fefferman said casually.

“Yeah, what?”

“Shinichi Mochizuki... How could his name also appear in this research group...?” Professor Sarnak continued with a weird expression on his face, “He always insisted that he had fully proven the ABC conjecture using his anabelian geometry.”

Fefferman was slightly stunned; the expression on his face also became weird.

Yeah...

Why is Shinichi Mochizuki in this research project group?!

He hadn't thought about this problem before. But now he realized this was indeed a bit strange.

He had a sinking feeling in his stomach...

"Um... This is really a bit unusual. Wait, I'll look for that paper."

Professor Fefferman took out his new smartphone from his pocket and opened Mochizuki's personal blog. He was about to find the paper that had troubled the mathematics community for more than ten years.

However, something unexpected happened.

Professor Fefferman, who was looking at his phone screen, was stunned.

Sarnak immediately noticed the change of expression on his old friend's face. He leaned over and said, "What happened?"

"That paper... is missing."

Fefferman suddenly realized something. He immediately closed Shinichi Mochizuki's personal blog and logged onto the official website of the department of mathematics at Kyoto University.

I knew it!

I guessed it!

That 512-page paper that has been on the homepage of the Kyoto University mathematics website since August 30th, 2012...

Has disappeared as well?!

...

Ever since 2012, Shinichi Mochizuki's proof of the ABC conjecture had been full of controversy. It was precisely because of this, that when the 500-page paper was removed from his personal blog and the homepage of the Kyoto University mathematics website, it attracted the attention of the entire academic community.

At first, many people thought it was a website problem.

It wasn't until they saw his name appear in the list of the LSPM research group that this incident caused an uproar in the mathematics world.

At Kyoto University, whether it was the students or professors, whether they studied mathematics or philosophy, almost everyone was shocked by the news.

For a long time, this professor who challenged the entire mathematics circle with his own power had been a godlike existence in their eyes. Ever since he proclaimed the proof, someone would try to defeat him every once in a while, but he had stayed undefeated in the past ten years.

Those who refuted him could not produce any evidence that could be understood by others.

But now, their idol actually admitted his failure?!

There had to have been a mistake!

"I can't accept this!"

Kyoto University, Professor Mochizuki's office.

Hoshi Yuichiro, who couldn't get through to his professor's phone, snarled madly while holding his cell phone.

"Professor Mochizuki must have been threatened! Or there must be something else! Until he clarifies this in person, I will not admit that he has actually given up!"

"Please calm down."

"F*ck off! Don't hold me! I'm going to China to find the professor!"

A younger student sat in an inconspicuous corner of the office. He raised his trembling right hand.

"Um, Professor Mochizuki just updated his blog."

"Where? Let me see!"

Hoshi Yuichiro opened the browser quickly and went on Shinichi Mochizuki's blog. Other people in the office also leaned over and watched behind the office chair.

It was a video that was less than twenty seconds in length.

Professor Mochizuki sat at a desk looking pretty good. At least, it looked like he wasn't under intimidation. Hoshihiro was slightly relieved when he noticed this, but soon, his nerves tightened again.

If he's not under duress...

That means...

In an instant, Hoshi Yuichiro's face turned pale.

At the same time, the professor that he admired made a concise statement in front of the camera.

"The proof process has some problems. It may be difficult to fix them. Let's treat it as an immature attempt from me.

"Fortunately, we have found new ideas.

"My apologies for the trouble I've caused for everyone!"

Hoshi Yuichiro: "???"

Yamashita: "???"

Chapter 1384: Critical Breakthrough

Hoshi Yuichiro, Yamashita, and everyone else in the office were stunned.

Not just that, but shortly after the video was uploaded to his personal blog, the entire Japanese academic community was blown up.

Like all people expected, Shinichi Mochizuki stood up and responded to the removal of the paper from his personal blog and the homepage of the department of mathematics.

However, the response was not what people wanted to hear.

In some sense, the Japanese academic community was relatively closed off compared to the international academic community.

This was not reflected in the academic exchange itself, but the entire Japanese academic community was permeated with a xenophobic atmosphere dominated by extremely confident emotions.

Simply put, they were not targeting anyone, but subconsciously, they felt that all foreign scholars were rubbish, and no country was special.

This kind of xenophobic culture rooted in the subconscious made it difficult for foreign scholars to integrate into them. Japanese scholars were rarely willing to actively integrate into the world. Of the 22 Japanese Nobel Prize winners in materials, chemistry, and physics, none of them worked overseas.

If domestic scholars were questioned by foreign scholars, unless there was hard evidence in front of them, in the eyes of the Japanese academic community, the rest of the world was the ones that were wrong.

They rarely apologized.

Because of this, as opposed to the “academic fraud” or the “scandal” itself, the Japanese academic community felt more humiliated by the mistake being discovered in the first place.

This was obvious from the top ten list in Retraction Watch.

Among the top ten leaders, four of them were Japanese scholars.

Especially Yoshitaka Fujii, who was ranked number one. He was infamous in the academic world. From his doctoral degree in 1991 to the Dongchuang incident in 2012, he had published 212 papers, of which 183 contained falsified data.

This meant that he alone occupied 7% of the total number of retracted articles from 1980 to 2011, which caused an uproar at the time.

Even the investigation committee of the Ministry of Education, who was investigating him, couldn't stand it any longer. They wrote in the summary

report: "This is equivalent to sitting at a desk and composing a science fiction novel."

Of course, Mochizuki's paper wasn't a fraud.

Academia was tolerant of honest mistakes. Besides publishing papers on the website of the department of mathematics of Kyoto University and personal blogs, this 500-page paper had never been published in any journal. There was nothing to retract.

However, the department of mathematics at Kyoto University would take on the burden.

Ever since this scholar claimed that he had proved the ABC conjecture, the department of mathematics of Kyoto University had put his paper on their official website like a trophy. They unilaterally claimed that the conjecture had been solved.

Now that Shinichi Mochizuki suddenly changed his opinion, he wasn't the one who lost the most face. Instead, it was the people who supported him...

Not only were Hoshi Yuichiro and Yamashita stunned, but all of the students and assistants in his office also could not accept this fact.

Among all the people who knew him, only his former mentor, Faltings, who was far away in Germany, did not feel too surprised by this.

Amsterdam.

Professor Faltings, who was attending the meeting of the European Mathematical Society, was chatting with Professor Shigefumi Mori about recent events in the mathematics world. The topics of their conversation ranged from the ABC conjecture to the research group called LSPM.

Professor Faltings smiled faintly and spoke in an unsurprising tone.

"His opponent is Lu Zhou. It is obvious that he has lost. Mochizuki is an honest scholar. An honest person will only make honest mistakes. Since he has admitted his mistake, he must have completely understood where he was wrong. This is a good thing for him and anabelian geometry."

Staying immersed in one's own world for too long would make one inevitably be out of touch with the outside world. If there was a small problem that went unnoticed, it was easy to cause a bigger problem and get stuck in it.

This was also one of the reasons why people prioritized communication and discussion when solving a major mathematical proposition...

Although Professor Faltings' views were rarely pertinent, Professor Shigefumi Mori still frowned slightly and corrected with a slightly unpleasant tone.

"I don't like the word lost. In my opinion, academically, there is no winning or losing, only truth."

"It seems that you are still a bit unconvinced," Professor Faltings said as he smirked.

Professor Shigefumi Mori shrugged and left an ambiguous answer.

"I'm not unconvinced, I just think that there may be something hidden behind this... Okay, let's stop here, let's change to a more pleasant topic."

...

Since the establishment of LSPM and the announcement of the ABC conjecture as the target, Jin Ling University had been the center of attention of mathematicians from all over the world.

Not only because of this powerful lineup but also because of the statement Shinichi Mochizuki made on his personal blog.

No one thought that the scholar who was immersed in his own world would take the initiative to walk out of his comfort zone.

What was even more unexpected was that this controversy, which had lasted for more than ten years, finally ended this way.

The atmosphere of the Japanese mathematics circle was quite depressed; there was a gloomy mood.

Netizens also expressed surprise and regret for this result. Prior to this, many of them regarded Shinichi Mochizuki and his feat as a kind of pride. They couldn't expect that everything was just their wishful thinking.

Some people with more radical opinions even believed that Schultz and Lu Zhou kidnapped their Mochizuki, forcing him to make such a statement.

Shinichi Mochizuki turned a deaf ear to the uproar of discussions on the Internet. He had been living in seclusion from the mathematics community, using almost all of his time to study the ABC conjecture.

Jin Ling University also stopped the reporters who tried to interview him,

Lu Zhou felt like this guy was using Jin Ling University as a temporary shelter.

He even couldn't help but wonder whether this guy deliberately found a place with no colleagues and use Lu Zhou as a platform to step down.

Obviously, it wasn't just Lu Zhou who thought this; other people in the research project group also thought about it.

During the meeting, Schultz looked at Shinichi Mochizuki across the conference table and suddenly asked.

"Be honest, is this on purpose?"

Shinichi Mochizuki pushed the glasses up the bridge of his nose and asked, "What is?"

"Finding a place where you don't have acquaintances, then wait until the limelight passes before you go back... When you've already discovered that your proof method doesn't work."

Shinichi Mochizuki was stunned for a while. He then raised his nostrils and looked at Schultz.

"Is that necessary for me?"

"Don't be discouraged, my friend, I'm just worried about you." Schultz said with a smile, "I propose that I can buy you a drink so you—"

Seeing that the two people who had finally come to a halt were about to fight again, Lu Zhou quickly coughed and spoke.

"Enough, let's get back to business... Back to the issues we were discussing just now."

Lu Zhou looked at the serious expressions on the other three teammates. He then cleared his throat and continued, "The research progress these days is fairly smooth. Compared with the dilemma we faced when the project has just started, we have achieved considerable results on key issues."

"Starting from the refinement of Baker's theorem, the idea of gradually approaching ABC conjecture is correct."

"The key to the problem now is that we have to find a way to give a more accurate result to the upper bound of $L(a, b, c)$, and—"

Lu Zhou slid on the chair to the side of the whiteboard. He picked up the marker and scribbled a line of calculations on it.

[C

He tapped the whiteboard with the pen cap and continued.

"And how to further expand on the results..."

"There is no trickery in this part of the research. We can only find the answer through constant attempts."

Lu Zhou paused for a moment. He glanced around at the three teammates and continued with a serious tone, "Over the next few days, the intensity of our work may be very high, I hope you can stick to it."

"Next, I will assign the jobs."

"Wait a minute." Schultz's face suddenly showed interest and excitement. He raised his right hand and said, "Are we going on a retreat?"

Lu Zhou nodded.

"Sort of."

Even though this was just a habit of his own research, he did not recommend others to follow suit.

However, the expression on Schultz's face turned into a surprise. He snapped his fingers and spoke.

“Great, I wanted to ask you a long time ago about that mysterious research technique!”

Shinichi Mochizuki and Perelman exchanged glances. They seemed to be very interested too. The other students sitting in the office quietly raised their heads and cast weird glances at the big names.

Going on a retreat with Professor Lu...

Are these guys crazy?

As for Lu Zhou, he smiled awkwardly.

“No problem.

“But this process might be a bit difficult.

“If you can’t handle it, let me know.”

Chapter 1385: What Is Your Brain Made Of?

“This guy is simply the devil...”

Jin Ling University library.

The door slammed open as Shinichi Mochizuki walked out of the room with a stack of papers. His eyes were bloodshot as he muttered to himself like a crazy person.

“No... He’s hell itself.”

It had been a week since Schultz said he wanted to “try it out”.

Perelman did not participate, but he and Schultz confidently entered the room next to Lu Zhou. The door was closed for several days.

Before the retreat began, the three people made an agreement. They would stick to it if they could. But as long as they hadn’t given up, they had to follow Lu Zhou’s instructions.

In the beginning, Shinichi Mochizuki didn't take it too seriously. He didn't even think about the situation that he would be unable to withstand the workload. After all, in his opinion, anything that could be overcome with perseverance was not a big problem.

However, he soon realized how naive he was...

They ordered take-out for all three meals a day. This was not a big problem for him, who was accustomed to staying in the library all day. However, he did not expect that even sleeping would become a rare luxury.

According to Lu Zhou, if he was sleepy, lying on the table for a bit was enough. When the fatigue exceeded a limit, he entered an unprecedented realm.

This is no longer perseverance, this is pure self-abuse!

At first, the retreat was a little useful. The burst of inspiration made him feel more comfortable than ever before. However, after maintaining this kind of life for about five days, he began to lose his mind.

First, his mind started to wander, then his body issued a warning.

Finally, on the seventh day, that was, today, he felt that if he didn't come outside, he would die in the library.

Schultz, who was sitting behind the desk, saw Shinichi Mochizuki coming out of the room. He had a look of approval on his face.

"You're finally out? I knew you couldn't hold on anymore... How can a normal person not sleep for 24 hours? I have never heard of such a thing."

Unlike Mochizuki, he only held on for three days before being completely defeated. But he didn't think this was anything shameful. After all, even the best research method might not be suitable for everyone. He didn't feel the feeling of an explosion of inspiration as described by Lu Zhou. Instead, he still preferred to dive into these interesting mathematical problems in a more relaxed atmosphere.

Perelman was at his desk not far away. He twisted the ballpoint pen in his hand and looked up at the two; a hint of surprise was written on his expressionless face.

“Is it that bad?”

Schultz and Mochizuki looked at each other; a wry smile appeared on their faces at the same time.

“It is...”

“No one can stick to his pace of research... Except for himself.”

At this moment, the door suddenly opened again.

The devil they were talking about happened to walk out with a stack of A4 papers.

“When do I not sleep for 24 hours? I’m still a normal person, I still sleep okay?”

Lu Zhou couldn’t help but yawn. He then threw the stack of A4 papers in his hand on the table closest to him.

“I finished my part, what about you guys?”

Schultz’s eyes lit up at the pile of papers on the table.

However, he obviously didn’t have the time to research these new findings. He hadn’t even finished his own part yet. He didn’t want to be the one that dragged the whole team down.

Schultz: “I’m close.”

Shinichi Mochizuki immediately said, “Me too.”

Perelman thought for a while and said, “I’m almost there... Will probably be done in the afternoon.”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “Then we’ll meet this afternoon. Let’s summarize the results of our research. If everything goes well, this should be the last discussion meeting before we finish this research project.”

“Wait a minute.” Schultz raised his hand and said embarrassedly, “What about tomorrow afternoon? I have some things... I have to think about it first.”

Shinichi Mochizuki also nodded.

Although he didn't want to admit it, he was the same... He probably wouldn't be done until tomorrow.

Lu Zhou raised his eyebrows and looked at him with interest.

"Have you hit a bottleneck?"

Schultz coughed slightly.

"Sort of."

"That's normal." Lu Zhou continued, "The part you are responsible for is relatively difficult. I've finished my part. If you don't have any good ideas, you can tell me your problem and let me think about it for you."

Schultz picked up the marker and walked to the whiteboard. He scribbled down a line of calculations on it.

[D

Schultz handed the marker to Lu Zhou and spoke.

"This is the result I refined according to Baker's theorem. Using the idea you provided, I tried to gradually advance it to the ABC conjecture, but... it doesn't seem to be easy to solve."

"Interesting... I'll take a look."

An expression of interest appeared on Lu Zhou's face. He took the marker from Schultz's hand and stared at the calculation on the whiteboard quietly as he twisted the pen.

He suddenly seemed to have thought of something. With a dazed expression on his face, he reached out his hand, crossed out the line of calculation on the whiteboard, and wrote the corrected result.

[D

Lu Zhou took a half step back from the whiteboard.

"I tried to check the calculation, it should be provable... It is more accurate than the original conclusion. You can try to derive it. The specific proof process should not require my help."

Schultz stared at the calculation on the whiteboard, he was baffled.

After about 10 seconds, he finally recovered and looked at Lu Zhou like he had just seen a ghost.

“WTF?! How did you do it?! Wait... Did you already figure out the answer?!”

Because he was so surprised, he couldn't help but swear.

“Haha, of course not.” Lu Zhou returned the marker in his hand to Schultz. He smiled modestly and said, “I just happened to think of it. It's just intuition, I believe you feel the same sometimes.”

Schultz: “No, I don't. This is the first time I have ever heard about such accurate intuition.”

Shinichi Mochizuki, who was standing next to him, nodded deeply and couldn't help but ask.

“What exactly is your brain made of?”

Lu Zhou jokingly responded.

“I don't know, but definitely the same material as you guys.”

Lu Zhou cleared his throat and looked at Schultz.

“Now that the problem has been solved, are you sure that the rest will be done by tomorrow evening?”

Schultz smiled confidently and nodded.

“No problem, it should be done by tonight!”

“Really? That's great.” Lu Zhou smiled, nodded, and said, “I'll wait for your good news.”

“Don't worry, I won't let you down!”

Chapter 1386: Too Smoothly

The Princeton Institute for Advanced Study.

Professor Fefferman's office.

Professor Sarnak looked at Professor Fefferman, who was sitting behind the desk and staring at the paper in his hand. He asked curiously, "What are you reading?"

Professor Fefferman turned a page and didn't look up. He spoke casually.

"In-progress results from LSPM."

"In-progress results from LSPM?" Professor Sarnak was taken aback for a moment. His whole person suddenly seemed to be struck by lightning. With a shocked expression on his face, he said, "Already? Where are they at?"

Fefferman was already indulged in the amazing proof process. He had no time to talk to him, so he spoke dismissively.

"The printer is right there, print a copy and see for yourself."

Without taking a break, Professor Sarnak immediately walked to the printer and printed out a copy for himself.

Sarnak held the warm papers with the smell of fresh ink. It took about an hour for him to quickly read through the paper.

When he finally put down the paper in his hand, his face was filled with shock.

"Amazing..."

"It's almost equivalent to—"

"A new language of mathematics." Professor Fefferman, who had also finished reading the paper, took a sip of cold tea and said, "Although it is a simple version, it is sufficient to describe the ABC conjecture. Now... The person who came up with this idea is simply a genius, and the person who manifests it is a devil. It is hard to imagine that such an amazing result was actually made in two weeks."

"What is even more unimaginable is that they would choose to upload such an important in-progress result," Professor Sarnak said as he looked at the paper.

The result of this paper was very close to the final proposition of the ABC conjecture. They had passed the refinement of Baker's theorem to the conclusion [d

That was, if $a+b=c$ and $\gcd(a,b)=1$, then $\max(|a|, |b|, |c|) \leq (\text{rad}(abc))^2$.

How nutty was this weak form?

In a nutshell, anyone who had studied number theory could easily use this weak form to prove that Fermat's equation $x^n+y^n=z^n$ did not have a positive integer solution for $n>6$. Thus proving Fermat's Last Theorem!

In other words, if the weak form of the ABC conjecture had been born twenty or thirty years earlier, then Wiles wouldn't have been nearly as famous.

It was precisely because of this, in Sarnak's opinion, this in-progress result was only a layer from the final answer. The proof of the ABC conjecture was closer than ever before!

"This is not a big deal." Professor Fefferman smiled when he heard what Professor Sarnak said. He continued, "Even if the proof of the ABC conjecture from this weak form is only one step away, do you think someone can beat them to the finish line?"

Professor Sarnak paused for a second; an awkward smile appeared on his face.

"You're right..."

Having Professor Lu on the team was enough to prevent this from happening. Not to mention that, besides him, there were also outstanding young mathematicians like Schultz, Perelman, and Shinichi Mochizuki in the LSPM team.

If someone wanted to find the final answer before these four people, it would be as difficult as proving the ABC conjecture from scratch.

In this way, Sarnak's worries seemed to be superfluous.

"I am looking forward to it more and more now." Professor Fefferman said with a smile, "My instinct tells me that, at the end of this month, we will be able to find a conclusive answer for the ABC conjecture."

“The end of the month?” Professor Sarnak frowned. “But there is only one week left until the end of the month. Although their strength is indeed strong, and they’re close to the final proof, but...”

“Do you want to bet on it?”

Professor Sarnak coughed.

“Um... No, thanks.”

...

The early morning of April 29th.

It had been almost four weeks since the establishment of the LSPM research group.

Lu Zhou woke up and got out of bed. He went to the bathroom to wash up, then ate the omelet and sandwiches prepared by Xiao Ai before leaving the house.

The retreat ended on the 28th, or more specifically, 3 o’clock yesterday afternoon.

He hadn’t gotten a good rest recently, so he got up a little late today. He arrived at the library at nine o’clock, which was rather late.

His three teammates had been waiting here for a while.

“Sorry, I’m late.”

“It’s fine, we were still guessing whether you would wake up before noon or not. I didn’t expect that you were only an hour late...” Schultz smiled carelessly and jokingly said, “Seriously, how about you go back and sleep for a while? You haven’t had much rest these days. We only have the last step left in our work. It can be done a day later.”

“It’s fine.” Lu Zhou said with a smile, “Although this proposal is tempting, I prefer to finish everything and then enjoy the leisure time slowly... Let’s end this quickly.”

Three hours went by.

Everyone reported their research progress in turn and wrote on the whiteboard what they were responsible for.

The fragmented clues were like pieces of a broken-up puzzle. When they were recombined, all of the clues were connected.

When Shinichi Mochizuki looked at the last line on the whiteboard, his face was full of disbelief.

“I originally thought that this would take at least a few days to organize, I didn’t expect...”

Schultz: “Didn’t expect everything to go so smoothly?”

Shinichi Mochizuki nodded.

“Yep.”

“This is a good thing.” Lu Zhou had a sense of accomplishment. He looked at the whiteboard that almost covered the entire wall of the activity room and said, “It shows that we have touched the essence of the ABC conjecture itself.”

Shinichi Mochizuki frowned. He was lost in thought.

“What is... the essence?”

“It’s hard to describe what it is. Even I have to digest it for a while before I can sort it into a language.” Lu Zhou smiled and continued, “And I’m sure that the four of us think of the essence in different ways.”

If possible, he intended to finish this work before going to Mars.

Perelman, who had not spoken yet, suddenly said, “I can understand what you are saying... In fact, I also feel this way.”

Schultz nodded.

“It’s vague... but the essence does exist.”

Shinichi Mochizuki did not speak. He just frowned and fell into deep thought. Although Lu Zhou’s statement was very mysterious, he seemed to have felt a similar way.

Lu Zhou looked at the clock on the wall next to him and spoke with a smile.

“It’s about time for lunch.”

They could sort out these things on the whiteboard and publish them after lunch. After that, they could put an end to this cooperation project.

“Wait a minute.” Schultz raised his hand and suggested with a smile, “This is the ABC conjecture. To commemorate this great and glorious moment, I propose that we leave an autograph on it together!”

Shinichi Mochizuki hesitated and said, “Signatures? But wouldn’t they all be erased in the end?”

“Not necessarily.” Lu Zhou said with a smile, “I’m sure our dean will be very happy to keep the whiteboard intact.”

Although Perelman was not very interested in such meaningless things, he wasn’t against it either.

Therefore, the four people left their signatures on the whiteboard. They then stood in front of the whiteboard and took a group photo as a souvenir.

After this, Lu Zhou left the library and went to the cafeteria.

It happened to be the time at which lectures were ending. The cafeteria was full of students who had just finished class. It was so crowded that they could hardly find a place to sit.

Lu Zhou’s “special seat” in the corner of the cafeteria was taken, but Lu Zhou was not the picky kind of person. After queuing up for a meal, he casually found an empty seat and sat down.

After busy working all morning, his stomach began to growl.

Lu Zhou couldn’t wait to pick up the chopsticks. When he was about to start eating, he suddenly heard an excited conversation from the students next to him.

Student A: “F*ck! Did you watch today’s news?”

Student B: “I saw it! It’s nutty!!!”

Student C: “What news? What are you guys talking about?”

Student A: “That prehistoric relic on Mars! How do you not know this? Do you not go on the Internet?”

Student C: “I... I just sent my phone to be repaired. What is it? Prehistoric relic? On Mars?”

Lu Zhou: “...?!”

*The f*ck?!*

Chapter 1387: Using People

“Hello? Academician Lu, is your retreat finally over?”

State Administration for National Defense office.

Director Li was sitting at the desk reviewing documents when he unexpectedly received a call from Lu Zhou, making him ecstatic.

On one hand, it was because Lu Zhou had suddenly ended his retreat. He knew that the research must have made progress. On the other hand, it was because Lu Zhou hadn’t called him for a long time!

However, just when he had gotten up and was about to hear what Lu Zhou had to say to him, he noticed that the tone on the other end of the phone was a bit weird.

At least, it was different from what he had imagined.

“Enough small talk, what’s the matter with the prehistoric relic on Mars?”

“What... What’s the matter?”

Director Li was confused by this question. He had a dazed expression, and he didn’t respond for a while.

Lu Zhou realized that this statement might be misunderstood, so he took a deep breath and changed his statement.

“Okay, let me ask you in another way. During the past few days of my retreat, how did the relic of the Martian civilization and the news of extraterrestrial civilization suddenly become public?”

“Oh oh, that’s what you are talking about.” Director Li leaned back in the office chair and said with a smile, “This is quite complicated... And didn’t I tell you about this a while ago?”

Lu Zhou: “???”

What the hell?!

When?

Seeing how there was no response from the other side of the phone for a long time, Director Li couldn’t help but feel a little embarrassed. He coughed lightly and spoke.

“Don’t you remember? It was probably five or six days ago. I called you at that time, hoping that you would come to Beijing for a meeting. But you told me to ‘do whatever’ and then hung up. I heard that you were in a retreat, so I didn’t continue to call you.”

Lu Zhou had no recollection of any of this happening.

“... So you just did whatever?”

Director Li smiled embarrassedly and said, “Of course not! How can this kind of thing be taken lightly... We held three meetings, and all of the relevant experts were invited. We solicited opinions and a vote was cast. In the end, the resolution to disclose the relics of Mars was passed with 310 votes against 270 votes. So the top-secret seal was lifted.

“Although I abstained from voting at the time, I went back and thought about it afterward. The experts in international relations really made sense. In the case of unclear interests, the risk of contacting the extraterrestrial civilization is too high. Other countries will suspect us. If anything goes wrong, the diplomatic relations we have managed over the past ten years may be destroyed. Or even worse, it will be a diplomatic crisis.

“Anyway, we are the only ones who can send people to Mars. The initiative has been in our hands from the beginning. We don’t need to sneak around.

We can directly and honestly engage with the extraterrestrial civilization. This is a bargaining chip to establish an international organization that can represent the voice of all of mankind. This is the right way to build a community with a shared future for mankind!”

Lu Zhou listened to the passionate speech Director Li made on the other end of the phone. His head was getting dizzy.

Whether it was the Mars landing office or the high-level officials at Chang'an Avenue, everyone seemed to believe that the voice from The Gates of Hell belonged to an extraterrestrial civilization.

And according to their “inference”, the technological level of this civilization was high.

The ability to use technologies that were completely unknown on Earth was one reason. The ability to survive on Mars with supplies cut off was the second, and the estimated lifespan of billions of years was the third. Plus they used the proof of the ABC conjecture as a threshold for communication. They had surpassed human civilization, at least in mathematics.

And mathematics was the foundation of all scientific research.

There was nothing wrong with this analysis. If Lu Zhou didn't know the inside story, he would probably come to the same conclusion.

However, the problem was that he knew the inside story.

That sacred relic was really just an “object”, a relic left by a civilization that came from a certain time period. There was no doubt that it was an extraterrestrial civilization, but it was obviously different from the extraterrestrial civilization that most people had imagined.

Human civilization had no hope of establishing diplomatic relations with a planet a few light-years away using this “relic”...

Of course, Lu Zhou could pretend that he didn't know anything. After all, with his current power, trying to hide something wasn't difficult at all.

But now that the problem had risen to an international level, it would be more difficult if he wanted to operate secretly.

For example, the evidence of Martian relics had won China a large amount of diplomatic capital, but at the same time, it had also allowed China to take on considerable international responsibility. People all over the world were ready for the first close contact with an extraterrestrial civilization. Even if it did not affect his “treasure hunt” plan to Mars, it still added a lot of variables.

There was no response on the phone for a long time. Director Li, who had been talking for a long time, couldn't help but feel ignored. He worried that Lu Zhou wasn't listening, so he asked, “Um... Do you have any questions?”

“No...”

“You didn't call me for this, right?” Director Li said with a bit of hesitation, “You were the one who said that it didn't matter?”

“This is my fault... But you are right, there are benefits to being public.”

If he were in charge, he would definitely wait until he returned from Mars. However, the state didn't know the inside story, and he couldn't blame them too much. After all, from the perspective of national interests, this was the correct choice for China.

Lu Zhou sighed and changed the subject.

“Forget about it, let's not talk about this... There is one more thing I have to tell you.”

Director Li suddenly felt energized. He could tell something big was coming.

“Please speak!”

However, he still underestimated how amazing Lu Zhou's next words were.

Lu Zhou paused for a moment and spoke.

“The ABC conjecture...”

“We proved it.”

...

“What happened?”

Inside the LSPM research room, Schultz saw the weird expression on Lu Zhou's face when he came back. Schultz couldn't help but feel anxious.

Lu Zhou looked at these three teammates who trusted him. He took a deep breath and spoke slowly.

"There is an important thing that I have to confess to you."

Schultz, Shinichi Mochizuki, and Perelman exchanged glances. They unanimously read the confused gaze from each other's eyes.

The room went silent.

Just as Lu Zhou was thinking about breaking the silence, Schultz suddenly opened his mouth to do this for him.

"So... You are getting married soon?"

Lu Zhou, who had been hesitating for a long time, nearly choked on his saliva.

"Ahem, what? Why would you think of that?"

Schultz shrugged and spoke.

"Because your expression is too serious... In my estimation, that's the only possibility."

"I know." After staring at Lu Zhou for a long time, Mochizuki's expression gradually turned weird. He said, "What you want to say is... You are actually an alien?"

"Okay, stop with the guesses." Lu Zhou sighed and said, "I'm not an alien, but... how do I say it, the research project we did, actually has something to do with an extraterrestrial civilization."

Although he knew what the truth was, he should cooperate with the official state announcement. Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain it clearly. Lu Zhou had already made up a set of white lies in his mind, but before he had the time to tell the story, the three of them had already frozen there.

Obviously, during this period of research, just like Lu Zhou, they had no idea about the incident that had caused a turmoil in the outside world.

Lu Zhou went straight to the point.

“I’ll just talk about the key points.

“Basically, the ABC conjecture is a conversation threshold set by an extraterrestrial civilization. It is a prerequisite for us to be able to have a dialogue with each other... It may seem like I am crazy, but it is true. If you don’t believe me, just watch the news.

“So... I apologize.

“I may have used you guys.”

Perelman: “...”

Schultz: “...?”

Shinichi Mochizuki: “...?!”

Chapter 1388: The Scary Question

Lu Zhou was surprised.

Mathematics was the most academically pure discipline. He originally thought that his teammates would more or less feel a little taken advantage of. But after he confessed all of this, he was easily forgiven.

“Actually... You don’t have to apologize at all.” Schultz said, “You contributed at least 50% in solving this conjecture... or even 60%. I think it’s not just me, Perelman and Professor Mochizuki would also agree with this.”

Although Schultz was still muddled, he had recovered from the initial shock.

After hearing Schultz’s words, Shinichi Mochizuki nodded in agreement.

“On this point, I agree with Professor Schultz. It is a genius idea to use the refinement of Baker’s theorem as the starting point to construct the new mathematical language.”

Perelman stood beside them. He spoke concisely with a blank face.

“I don’t care, but it would have been better to tell us beforehand.”

Lu Zhou responded, “I wanted to, but the level of confidentiality on this has been top secret until now. Even now, only part of the information is disclosed. Also, I have been focusing on researching the ABC conjecture, so I have not paid attention to these things.”

“Speaking of which, I’m still a little bit confused.” Schultz’s tone was full of disbelief as he said, “Extraterrestrial civilization... God, I’ve only seen this in Hollywood movies. Does it really exist? Are you sure it’s not an April Fool’s joke?”

Lu Zhou spoke with an awkward expression.

“April Fool was last month... Regardless of what is going on on Mars, I am sure that this is definitely not an April Fool’s joke.

Perelman was still expressionless. He didn’t care about aliens. Mochizuki Shinichi’s eyes began to shine with excitement.

His shoulders trembled. He reached out and took off his glasses.

“It’s like...”

Lu Zhou: “Like?”

Professor Mochizuki nodded and continued excitedly, “It’s like so cool!”

“ ... ”

Lu Zhou wasn’t sure whether it was “cool”.

But one thing he was certain was that the whole world was shocked by the news that had been made public through the Chinese press conferences.

Human civilization was not alone in the universe!

Although this had always been the speculation of many astronomers and science fiction writers and had been recognized by many ordinary people, it was not until the day when the first contact occurred that this speculation changed from an unfounded guess to a conclusion based on facts.

Not just that, but after China released the first contact recordings, it caused a turmoil in the world.

ABC conjecture!

Aliens actually use the ABC conjecture as the threshold for conversation?!

What does that mean...

That they don't communicate with unintelligent creatures that can't even solve the ABC conjecture?

Whether it was Weibo or Twitter, the trending searches were unsurprisingly occupied by Martian civilization-related terms. Any news related to this was flooded with comments.

This was the first contact between human civilization and a civilization outside of Earth. It was the only contact that had received feedback so far. The idea of aliens turned into a catharsis, like a flood bursting out of a riverbank.

“Don't answer them, this must be a trap! Am I the only one who knows the dark forest axioms? If this is solved, then it gives the opposite party the motivation to destroy us. If it is not solved, it shows that we are weak! Sigh, we're dead either way.”

“Scary... No wonder it was reported some time ago that the Ministry of Science and Technology of China issued a reward of 100 million yuan for the ABC conjecture. It turned out to be because of this.”

“It's 100 million yuan per year! But mathematics doesn't need funding, right? Unless you set up a mathematics research institute, even 1 million is plenty.”

“Does anyone from mathematics understand the situation? Has this ABC conjecture been solved? Wikipedia seems to say it has been solved.”

“No, it hasn't! Although many people have claimed that they have solved the ABC conjecture, so far there is no proof that has been recognized by the academic community. The most cutting-edge work in this field is mainly done by Professor K. Gyory on the inferences about the S-unit equation on the number field. Also from the LSPM research group... Apparently, they have achieved amazing results, and Professor Fefferman spoke highly of this result, but not everyone is optimistic about it.”

“What is the LSPM research group?”

“Lu Zhou, Schultz, Perelman, and Shinichi Mochizuki... The initials of the four people.”

“F*ck, really?!”

In addition to normal discussions, there were also various conspiracy theories.

For example, some people suspected that this was a clue deliberately forged by the Mars landing office. After all, no one else could go to Mars to confirm it anyway. As for the purpose, it was to create a bargaining chip. Others were speculating that, in fact, the Martian civilization had not perished at all, but had reached an unimaginable level. The so-called ruins and clues to extraterrestrial civilization were only released to cover their existence.

These theories alone could be written into a novel.

Discussions were happening outside the internet as well.

The academic community’s opinion on this contact was also full of controversy.

Professor Yuval Harari, a history professor from the Department of History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, was interviewed by BBC.

As a high-profile emerging historian, his works included the “Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind” trilogy, which had almost become a pop-science textbook due to its unique narrative style and perspective on issues.

As for why he was invited instead of an expert on extraterrestrial civilization or astrophysics, it was because the producer of the BBC documentary felt that, for this kind of discovery that was completely new, perhaps the brains of science fiction authors would be more convincing to the general public.

Professor Yuval spoke in an intriguing tone to the camera and microphone.

“Fortunately, we found neighbors that live next to us, but this is also unfortunate at the same time. Although we finally discovered their existence, it is very likely that they have been observing us on Mars for a long time.”

The reporter immediately raised a question that they prepared beforehand.

“In your opinion, are you not optimistic about the first contact between Chinese astronauts and extraterrestrial civilization on Mars?”

“First contact? What is the first contact? Was the first contact between humans and bacteria two million years ago or after microscopes are invented?” Professor Yuval smiled and continued, “In fact, it’s as if we don’t know anything about their language, yet they can communicate with us in any language on Earth. The difference between us and them may be greater than the difference between us and bacteria.

“And what is even scarier is that, do you think bacteria is a civilization?”

“This a question we all have to face.”

Chapter 1389: Successful Conclusion!

The heated debate about the extraterrestrial civilization continued.

Lu Zhou sorted out the paper over the next few days. During this time, he heard students gossiping about the remains of the Martian civilization while eating in the cafeteria. Even his father asked him jokingly over the phone whether there were any new discoveries.

It seemed that even the old men of state-owned enterprises in small cities had begun to talk about the gossip surrounding the extraterrestrial civilization and Mars.

In fact, although Lu Zhou, who had just finished his retreat, felt abrupt after learning about this, for the rest of the world, this wasn’t abrupt at all.

First of all, China did not disclose all of the details at once. It was done over two weeks of foreshadowing. They slowly directed the public’s attention to The Gates of Hell mountains, then led to the cave where the ruins were found. It was only classified as a “man-made structure” last week, which led to the conclusion of the remains of a Martian civilization.

This slow pace of publishing news gave the international community a buffer time to digest this huge amount of information.

Lu Zhou had only learned about this recently.

After learning about these things, Lu Zhou felt that the speed of information dissemination in modern society was simply unimaginable. He only went offline for four weeks, but he felt like he couldn't keep up with the times.

If he had gone offline for longer, to maybe even centuries...

Suddenly, a trace of worries made him afraid to even think about it.

"The paper has been organized and signed by the LSPM research group. I have uploaded the preprint to arXiv and attached a temporary communication page that I made myself. The discussion mode is similar to that of BBS, the name is called LSPM. I have sent the administrator's account and password to your email. If you are interested, you can also read the opinions of other scholars in this area.

"If no one finds a serious problem, the final version of the paper will be published in the main issue of 'Future' at the end of the year. Of course, if you have other opinions, you can also put them forward and discuss them together."

Schultz smiled and said, "I don't have any opinions, just do as you say."

Shinichi Mochizuki: "Me too."

Perelman didn't speak; he just nodded.

For the four people standing here, honor and fame were unimportant things. Also, compared to the problem they were studying, trivial matters such as the journal were not even worth mentioning. They did not need to use the influence of the journal itself to make the research results visible to more people.

It was no exaggeration to say that the moment the four letters LSPM were written on the paper, it was destined to receive worldwide attention after publication.

Even if they randomly find a school journal to publish the paper, the end result would be that the school journal would be sold out...

After uploading the preprint of the paper, Lu Zhou asked Xiao Ai, who was responsible for helping in the operation and maintenance of the LSPM forum,

to open the registration for the website. This was the end of the ABC conjecture project.

In order to celebrate the successful conclusion of the LSPM research group, Lu Zhou booked a table for four people at the grilled fish restaurant near Jin Ling University. Even people like Shinichi Mochizuki, who had never been interested in social activities, came over this time.

Speaking of it, this was quite nostalgic. Although the store had been renovated several times, the owner was still the same, and the taste was still the same too. Lu Zhou still remembered that when he was studying for an undergraduate degree, Dorm 201 frequently visited this place. The owner even gave them some free bottles of beer from time to time.

Now that so many years had passed, his dorm room friends had gone their separate ways. He was the only one who was still standing around here, which was embarrassing to think about.

However, today was obviously not about nostalgia.

A large bowl of grilled fish was brought to the table. Lu Zhou raised the cup in his hand and spoke with a smile.

“Cheers, to the conclusion of the LSPM research project!”

“Cheers!”

The clink of the glasses turned into laughter. The group of people ate grilled fish while drinking beer.

“This is the most enjoyable experience of all the collaborations I have participated in... and also the most rewarding. I originally planned to stay here for half a year, but I didn’t expect that everything went so well.”

After having a drink with Lu Zhou and others, Schultz smiled and continued.

“... But, like they say, all good things must come to an end. Tomorrow, I will go back to the University of Bonn. Professor Faltings has been urging me since a week ago to go back. Now that the proof of the ABC conjecture is finally complete, I should go back to continue my lectures and research.”

When Shinichi Mochizuki heard the name Professor Faltings, his eyebrows twitched fiercely. He quickly reached out for his cup, concealing the embarrassment on his face by drinking.

However, because his movements were too stiff, he was caught by Lu Zhou.

There had been rumors in the mathematics field that this guy was a very cheerful person before entering Princeton. The reason for him being so introverted after graduation was partly because of Faltings.

Although Professor Wiles, who once proved Fermat's Last Theorem, spoke highly of Mochizuki, as did Professor Shou-Wu Zhang, another one of Faltings' savvy disciples, they said that studying under the old German was quite a test of psychological endurance.

Perhaps only Schultz, who was expected to surpass Faltings, could feel a little kindness from him.

Lu Zhou: "I wish you a safe journey."

"Thank you."

Schultz nodded.

After drinking a sip of beer, Shinichi Mochizuki coughed dryly and continued speaking, "I plan to stay here for two months before going back."

Schultz smiled and said, "Is it because of Kyoto University? If you want to wait for the limelight to pass and go back, you can come to Germany with me. It's quite interesting there. Many European mathematicians think you and your research are interesting."

"No, thanks. If they are interested, they can come to the East to find me." Mochizuki pushed the glasses up the bridge of his nose and continued, "I plan to stay here for a while not to avoid the limelight, but just to learn about quantum encryption algorithms. I still have many things I want to study... Purely out of personal interest."

Although he had never admitted his identity as Satoshi Nakamoto, in Lu Zhou's opinion, it made no difference whether he admitted it or not. It seemed that Shinichi Mochizuki didn't try to hide this fact either.

Perelman, who was sitting next to him, shrugged and told his plans as well.

“My research project is not over yet, I will stay here until it is over.”

Schultz asked curiously, “Can I ask what the research project is?”

“Of course. The Hodge conjecture. It’s not something worth keeping a secret anyway.” Professor Perelman continued, “That is what I really care about, I feel close to the finish line. If you guys have time, how about collaborating with me?”

Schultz said, “Sounds very interesting.”

Shinichi Mochizuki: “This is not my area of expertise, I am afraid I can’t help.”

“Although I am very interested, I am afraid I have no chance to help... Or wait until I come back from Mars.” Lu Zhou said with a smile, “The second batch of scientific expedition teams to Mars is about to leave. I am afraid it will be a little busy for me.”

He noticed that Shinichi Mochizuki was staring at him intently. He paused for a second and smiled.

“Is there a problem?”

“Nothing.” After being silent for a while, Mochizuki sighed, pushed down his glasses, and said, “Anyway, I plan to stay for awhile. Let’s talk when you get back.”

The four continued to drink and eat.

In addition to celebrating the paper, they wished Schultz safe travels for his upcoming departure.

While the four people were drinking and eating, they did not realize that a storm had begun to brew due to their research.

The entire mathematics community was shocked by their paper...

Chapter 1390: The Crushed Preprint Archive

The ABC conjecture is solved!

Whether it was for the mathematics field or for the future of human civilization, this was definitely a historic day.

As the manager of the arXiv preprint electronic archive, Cornell University felt this more than anyone else.

School of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Cornell University.

The tranquility of the morning was broken by a sudden accident.

The arXiv database, which had been running fairly stable for a long time, suddenly seemed to have suffered a violent DOS attack and was overwhelmed by the explosive increase in traffic.

“Sh*t! Is it a special holiday today? Why is the server stuck...”

“The number of visits has increased a hundredfold... Jesus, what happened last night?”

“God knows! Call Los Alamos National Laboratory quickly and ask them to use the backup server!”

“Already done... Forget about it, there must be a problem with such a huge amount of visits, this is definitely not normal!”

The laboratory was a mess.

The several professors who were invited did their best with the paralyzed server, but they were helpless.

Arxiv’s traffic had always been relatively stable, with one morning peak and one evening peak. Most of the time, everyone searched for new research progress in several research directions that they tracked during these two peak time periods.

Because of this, the Los Alamos National Laboratory, which was responsible for operating the server, allocated additional server resources for arXiv. However, the plan still couldn’t keep up with the changes.

The additional spare server resource was just a drop in the bucket. The surge in traffic instantly paralyzed the entire website, no one could log in...

Dr. Osmond, who was in charge of maintaining the database, was sweating anxiously. The situation was out of control, so he immediately called the Los Alamos National Laboratory and asked the engineer there to voluntarily pull the brakes on the server before starting the inspection. He began to search for the cause of the failure.

Arxiv was not the same as other non-academic databases for profit. As an open electronic preprint library, even if the traffic increased by several times, they would not use it for profit. Therefore, they had nothing to gain from this.

Dr. Osmond stopped the system engineer walking by and asked anxiously, "What about the Los Alamos National Laboratory? How is the troubleshooting of the server going?"

The expression on the engineer's face was filled with solemnity.

Although they had encountered similar situations before, it was far less serious than the situation they were facing now.

"The cause of the fault is still being investigated... There is no news yet."

"Damn it!" Dr. Osmond couldn't help but explode, "Which b*stard has nothing better to do, trying to take down our site? Go hack the federal reserve instead!"

"Maybe their paper was rejected, they want revenge?" The engineer shrugged his shoulders. However, Dr. Osmond instantly rejected the hypothesis.

"Impossible, no one would be that stupid."

It was quite difficult to be rejected by arXiv because even "folk mathematics" had a separate classification here for scholars to entertain themselves.

Only those who were not sure about the authority of their papers were to be "rejected" because of non-compliance with the norm. Thus, Dr. Osmond ruled out this possibility without hesitation.

Just when the group of people broke out in cold sweat, they heard footsteps coming from outside the laboratory.

A man in a suit walked in and spoke.

“The results from the investigation at the Los Alamos National Laboratory are here!”

Dr. Osmond didn’t hesitate for even a second. He immediately looked at him and asked anxiously, “What’s going on?!”

“The proof of the ABC conjecture...”

Dr. Osmond was stunned. He looked at him in surprise and asked, “The proof of the ABC conjecture?! What do you mean...”

“The engineer at Los Alamos National Laboratory retrieved the error log and found that almost all the traffic was directed to the same third-level domain name.” The expression on the man’s face was like he had just seen a ghost. He gulped and said, “I can’t believe it! Just one preprint, taking down the whole server... This is the first time I have seen anything like this in my life!”

...

The outage of the arXiv server was just the beginning.

The news that the ABC conjecture was proven quickly spread across the entire mathematics community on the Internet as the astonishment spread like a tsunami.

Because the arXiv server was completely down, many people who could not download the paper had to go on the LSPM forum that Lu Zhou left on his personal page, to share and exchange information about the ABC conjecture.

On the other hand, at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study.

Dr. Woolley Vernal, who was studying at the department of mathematics, walked quickly into Professor Sarnak’s office.

Because he was so emotional, he even forgot to knock on the door. He pushed open the door of the office and spoke with an incoherent tone.

“Professor!”

Professor Sarnak frowned slightly. He stopped writing and looked up at his student.

“Good morning, Mr. Vernal. What happened? You even forgot to knock before opening my door.”

“Sorry! But this is too amazing!” Vernal gulped and continued in a trembling tone, “You have no idea—”

The sound of the pen cap hitting the desktop interrupted his speech. Professor Sarnak spoke in an impatient tone.

“I hope this won’t take long, otherwise—”

“The LSPM research team! Just an hour ago, they uploaded the complete proof process of the ABC conjecture on arXiv!”

LSPM research group...

A complete proof of the ABC conjecture?!

The moment Sarnak heard these words, his eyes were as wide as a ping-pong ball. He immediately stood up from behind the desk and said anxiously, “What about the paper? Have you downloaded it yet?”

“No...” Dr. Vernal gulped. With a bitter expression on his face, he said, “When I discovered this, the arXiv website already went down.”

Went down?!

Sarnak was stunned.

It took about five minutes before he finally recovered.

He looked at the corner of the office desk. The date of April 30th was printed on a calendar.

Sarnak thought of what Professor Fefferman had said some time ago. His pupils were full of disbelief.

They really did it before the end of the month?!

I can’t believe this!

On the other hand, inside the same building.

Professor Fefferman was sitting in his office. He turned his attention to the calendar on the desk after hearing the news that the ABC conjecture was proven.

He sighed and spoke to himself.

“Damn it...”

I should have been more persistent.

If I had convinced Sarnak to bet, I would have won big!

He would have bought my coffee for at least a week...

Chapter 1391: Proof That Shocked The World!

It wasn't just the mathematics community that was in a heated debate.

After the collapse of the arXiv server, the news that the ABC conjecture was proven soon spread from the mathematics circle to the entire college circle, then to the entire internet.

In less than a day, whether it was Weibo or Twitter, whether it was WeChat or Facebook, almost everyone was discussing this matter.

“I heard that the ABC conjecture has been solved?”

“What the hell? Solved?! What's going on!”

“Already? It must be wrong, right?”

“No... It seems to be true. I heard that the LSPM research team did it; the team led by Academician Lu. They uploaded the preprint of the paper on arXiv yesterday and took down the server for an entire day.”

“Oh! So this is why the arXiv website was down! I thought it was due to maintenance. I couldn't find the computer science papers I was looking for!”

“Jesus f*ck, one paper taking down the entire library, is it that nutty?”

“It’s probably impossible for other people. After all, the value of preprints is generally not high. People are still more willing to wait for the published version, but, this paper was compiled by Academician Lu... Based on past experience, his preprints are almost the same as published papers.”

“Wait, the ABC conjecture has been solved. Does it mean that we can answer the question raised by the extraterrestrial civilization?”

“It seems like so... The second dialogue with the extraterrestrial civilization should have been arranged already!”

Everyone remembered the press conference half a month ago and the recording of the dialogue at the press conference by the spokesperson of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Proving the ABC conjecture meant being recognized by another intelligent civilization!

It meant mastering the key to open the door for dialogue!

Although there were some people who had security concerns and thought this was a trap from the alien civilization, whether it was the group that supported contact or the group that was against contact, they had reached a consensus on one thing.

Which was that displaying the achievements of human civilization was helpful for a friendly exchange between the two sides.

After all, if they wanted to communicate with another civilization on an equal footing, they must at least show their own merits as intelligent creatures.

If the other party was a primitive civilization that couldn’t even do arithmetic, most human countries would not adopt a cautious and respectful attitude to communicate with them.

While netizens all over the world were excitedly discussing the upcoming second dialogue, governments of various countries were also shocked by the sudden news.

North America.

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington.

A confidential document was placed on the desk of the President's office.

The President stared at the document with a frown for a long time. He finally raised his head after reading the document. He looked at the Chief of Staff standing at the desk and spoke slowly.

"So... The ABC conjecture has been solved?"

He couldn't understand the complicated proof process and didn't care either.

He only wanted to know one thing, which was how reliable this proof was.

"Yes..." The Chief of Staff nodded his head with a heavy expression and said quickly, "According to our specially appointed mathematical science consultant, the whole proof process is legitimate. The research team organized by the Pentagon has the same opinion. And putting these things aside, based on past experience, Lu Zhou only uploads a paper if he is certain that it is without mistakes."

In fact, China wasn't the only one that offered an award for solving the ABC conjecture.

Ever since the state of China publicized some of the dialogue recordings at the press conference, almost all countries in the world that were slightly influential in mathematics had mobilized their administrative power to a certain extent, to promote domestic mathematicians to study the ABC conjecture.

Everyone wanted to be the first to complete the proof of the ABC conjecture and use it as a bargaining chip to gain more benefits for their country. Whoever could take the lead in finding the key to converse with the extraterrestrial civilization would undoubtedly gain more power.

The chief of staff looked at the silent President and reminded him.

"Now that the Chinese have obtained the power of conversing with the extraterrestrial civilization, if we continue to delay the issue of liaison institutions for extraterrestrial civilizations, they are likely to bypass us and contact each other individually. We could be in a more passive situation than we are now."

He frowned at the map on the wall.

After pondering for a long time, the President's eyebrows loosened slightly, and he spoke in a deep voice.

"We have to agree to them."

On the other hand, on the other side of the Atlantic, similar conversations were also taking place.

An invitation letter was sent from the 10th Downing Street to the Chinese Embassy in London. A Chinese diplomat's car was parked at the entrance of the Elysee Palace. A high-level diplomatic meeting was in progress in the Kremlin in Eastern Europe. The cabinet sent an invitation for a high-level discussion to neighboring countries across the sea.

The global political arena tightened their nerves because of the proof of a mathematical conjecture...

...

North Rhine, Germany.

University of Bonn.

"I have read the paper." Faltings said to Schultz, "Let me guess, at least 50% of it was done by Lu Zhou... right?"

"Sixty percent, to be precise." Schultz sat on the couch in the office and said, "It's not an exaggeration to say that, without him, we would still be worrying about how to tackle the problem or be stuck on a trivial matter... Anyway, you should have read the paper, what do you think about the proof?"

Faltings looked at Schultz with a sore smile on his face. He took a sip of coffee and spoke casually.

"I can't find any mistakes."

So there aren't any mistakes?

Schultz thought proudly in his mind.

It's a rare sight to receive a compliment from Faltings.

Faltings frowned as he thought of the question he had planned to ask earlier. His frown disappeared as he casually asked, "I noticed that the special expression he used when describing the ABC conjecture is very interesting... How did you guys come up with it in such a short time?"

"According to Lu Zhou's own words, he used anabelian geometry, but Mochizuki himself firmly denies this. He believes that there is no connection between the two, and Mochizuki himself is the one who was inspired. I plan to go back and polish my theory." Schultz scratched his head and said, "I heard that Chinese people have the habit of being humble. Anyway, I think Lu Zhou just thought of it himself."

Just thought of it himself.

Faltings' eyebrows twitched for a second.

Unless it was Riemann's hypothesis, which even Professor Grothendieck felt was difficult, he would never express his praise toward someone solving a problem.

"There is no doubt that the proof of the ABC conjecture itself is correct, but the method you guys used is worthy of in-depth study," Professor Faltings said as he put down the coffee cup on the table.

After pausing for a few seconds, he continued, "There is one more thing I have to tell you."

Schultz: "What?"

After organizing the thoughts in his mind, Faltings said, "Ms. Karicek came here yesterday."

Schultz was taken aback for a moment. He frowned and asked, "Ms. Karicek?"

Faltings: "The Federal Minister of Education and Research. You probably don't know her, I am not interested in who she is either... Just think of her as someone who allocates funding to the University of Bonn and the Max Planck Institute for Mathematics."

The confusion in Schultz's heart grew bigger and bigger.

“What are the federal bureaucrats doing here?”

Why are they interested in mathematics?

For some reason, Schultz suddenly had a bad feeling in his heart.

Professor Faltings shrugged his shoulders and said casually, “It’s related to your paper... Whether your contribution was 10% or 20%, you were part of the reason for the ABC conjecture proof.”

He paused for a second and continued, “In short, she hopes you can represent Germany...”

“To go to Mars.”

Schultz: “...?”

Chapter 1392: Big Trouble

Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Institute of Mathematics.

Director Dai Huohong sat at the desk and read a paper. He squinted his eyes and spoke while touching his sparse beard.

“Amazing, this is wonderful!”

His reaction was different from Professor Faltings’.

After seeing the proof of the ABC conjecture, Director Dai’s reaction was quite calm. It only took him less than ten minutes to go through the paper from beginning to end.

Academician Xiang Huanan, who was sitting on the sofa, couldn’t stand listening anymore. He couldn’t help but complain.

“What are you talking about?”

Director Dai put away the paper and spoke with a smile.

“Of course about Academician Lu’s paper, what else?”

Academician Xiang: “...”

Although he wanted to say, “You don’t understand anyway, what’s so wonderful”, he resisted the urge and changed the subject.

“A while ago, I told you not to poach talents in a hurry. I asked you to wait and see the situation at Jin Ling University. But in the end, you didn’t listen. Now look what has happened. Academician Lu and the team have solved this problem by themselves. What’s going to happen to the Chinese number theory professors you poached from overseas?”

“Since I already poached them, I’ll keep them, what else can I do?” Director Dai was open-minded, he didn’t feel at a loss. He said with a smile, “It’s not like I can just kick them away? Also, the money for poaching people was from the special funds allocated by the Ministry of Science and Technology. It will not affect the resources from other projects. What if this turns out to be a good investment? You never know what can happen.”

Academician Xiang Huanan couldn’t help but complain.

“You’re quite an indulgent old man.”

“What do you mean indulgent!”

Of course, this situation was quite pitiful.

After all, whoever proved the ABC conjecture would receive the scientific research funding of 100 million yuan per year.

The 100 million yuan was not directly given to scientific research institutions. Instead, it was given to the people who could solve the problem, so the money wouldn’t directly be transferred to the professor’s account.

Generally speaking, it was first paid to the special account of the university or research institute for research funds, then reimbursed in batches.

It was common practice in academia for universities to draw a management fee from it. The proportion of the commission was determined by a series of factors such as the management rules issued by the relevant departments, the number of professors, the size of the funds, the nature of the problem, etc.

The average was about 5% to 10%. But taking anywhere upwards of 40% wasn't uncommon in China.

So why did major universities like to compete for academicians?

One of the most direct reasons was because of money!

It was a great feeling to receive a hundred million yuan in scientific research funds.

Even including the 5%-10% management fee, this money was enough to support the "sub-projects" under the larger projects, as well as the Changjiang Scholars Program.

Director Dai felt a little painful when he thought about this.

Had it not been for Lu Zhou, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, which poached talents from Princeton and École Normale Supérieure, would be the most promising place in China to solve the ABC conjecture.

Regardless of how low the probability was, it was still higher than other institutions.

But although this piece of the pie was taken, there could be other opportunities in the future.

After all, there were still more opportunities to communicate with that "extraterrestrial civilization". Seeing how they were so obsessed with the ABC conjecture, they probably had a fascination with mathematics.

Director Dai wasn't the only one who thought of this; most of the mathematics research institutions in China had similar ideas.

Perhaps someday in the future, number theory would become the first bridge of friendship between human civilization and an extraterrestrial civilization...

...

Lu Zhou had some ideas about how the proof of the ABC conjecture would affect the mathematics community before he uploaded the paper.

However, even though he considered a lot of things, he still underestimated the scale of the tsunami.

As well as the size of the impact area!

When Xiao Ai told him that the arXiv website went down on the day the paper was uploaded, Lu Zhou was even more dumbfounded.

It seemed that the whole world regarded the ABC conjecture as the key to open the door to dialogue with the extraterrestrial civilization.

The governments of various countries even convened the United Nations General Assembly to urgently negotiate the establishment of loose political alliances such as the “Human Alliance” or the “Earth Federation”, in order to seek a unified position on “foreign” issues and to study foreign affairs that were in the overall interests of mankind.

However, only Lu Zhou himself knew about the “extraterrestrial civilization”. Perhaps it did exist in a certain corner of the universe, but at least for now, everything was just an illusion.

The key in his hand was not as impressive as people imagined. What it could open was just a treasure chest left by the Void Civilization.

It would be a huge disappointment if there were only a few thousand tubes of Energy Medicine or a large pile of processed alloy ore in the treasure chest.

Judging by the way the system had screwed him over in prizes, this was entirely possible.

The greater the expectation, the greater the disappointment.

Lu Zhou only hoped for one thing now, which was that his trip to Mars wouldn't have any negative impact on the future development of human civilization.

Such as the “human alliance” or “Earth federation” organizations...

Every time Director Li excitedly asked him which name was better, Lu Zhou felt anxious.

He had to smile and come up with a lie.

After all, if it wasn't for the internal information that only he knew, this was indeed a joyous event for universal celebration. If he didn't act happy, it would be hard to explain in the future.

In addition to these large effects, there were also some small aftermaths rippling.

For example, according to Xiao Ai's report, because of the outage of the arXiv server, the number of visits to the LSPM website linked on his personal homepage thesis suddenly received a huge amount of traffic.

The average number of daily visits exceeded a million, with tens of thousands of discussion posts. This temporary discussion page became the world's largest academic exchange forum.

Lu Zhou didn't expect this to happen.

After some consideration, he finally adopted Xiao Ai's suggestion and allowed it to upgrade the website and open up several sub-categories.

One reason was to give a platform for pop-mathematic fans to discuss the paper. It also gave a place for scholars to actually discuss academic problems.

After all, Lu Zhou's original intention of establishing this discussion page was to give everyone in the entire mathematics community a chance to review the manuscript together.

As well as giving them a chance to improve the paper...

Time quickly passed by, the departure date was getting closer and closer.

After several meetings and discussions, the launch schedule was successfully implemented.

The second wave of immigrants to the Guanghan Special Economic Zone would depart in mid-May.

At the same time, the scientific expedition team to Mars would also follow this flight to the Moon Palace, where they would stop for a while, then transfer to a new colonial ship to go to Mars.

Although he felt a headache for the second dialogue that was about to begin, Lu Zhou had no better option. He just had to take it one step at a time.

However, just when he was getting ready to go to Mars, something unexpected happened.

Lu Zhou never expected that Schultz, who had just returned to Germany, was sent back to Jinling.

Moreover, Director Li came with him...

Chapter 1393: Start of Human Alliance

Jinling launch site.

The second batch of colony capsules and various equipment that would be sent to Mars was being packaged and sent to the space shuttle.

The list of the second batch of scientific expedition teams to Mars had not yet been announced, and the outside world was ignorant of Lu Zhou's upcoming journey. Lu Zhou insisted for this plan to go through.

Even though Chang'an Avenue had hoped that he could be more cautious, considering Lu Zhou's own insistence, the relevant departments ultimately did not make a tough decision to retain him on Earth.

However, the budget for this launch plan had been doubled. Many pieces of equipment that were originally scheduled for the third batch of launches to Mars were advanced forward.

Although in Lu Zhou's opinion, putting his own safety issues as a priority felt somewhat pretentious, seeing how persistent the relevant departments were, he didn't say much and quietly received this kindness.

On the third day of preparations for the launch, Director Li brought a person to the Jinling launch site.

Lu Zhou looked at Schultz standing in front of him. He had a weird look on his face. The two of them stared at each other with their eyes wide open; they didn't even say hello to each other.

Director Li felt the awkwardness of the atmosphere. He gave a dry cough and spoke while looking at Lu Zhou with a strange expression.

“Let me introduce to you. This is the representative from Germany. Professor Schultz from the department of mathematics at the University of Bonn... Forget it, I guess you know each other, so I'll shut up.”

Lu Zhou: “Why are you here?”

Schultz sighed. “It's a long story... I didn't want to come.”

Schultz spent about five minutes briefly talking about what happened in the past few days. What happened with Professor Faltings, and how the Federal Ministry of Education and Research director came to see him personally. After that, officials from the European Union also came to harass him, hoping that he could travel to Mars on behalf of the European Union.

Schultz would also oversee whether China would fulfill their promises and convey the “correct message” to the extraterrestrial civilization on behalf of human civilization.

Lu Zhou hesitated for a while and said, “If you don't want to go, you don't have to force yourself... Going to Mars is quite dangerous.”

Schultz shook his head and spoke.

“I am a German first, then a mathematician. If my country needs me, I'm in no position to refuse.”

He had a helpless smile on his face and shrugged his shoulders.

“Besides, don't you plan to go as well? If you are not afraid of accidents, I have no reason to back down.

“I'm just a lonely person, without children and family...”

Lu Zhou went silent.

He suddenly felt that this statement was a bit selfish. Although he did not have a family, he definitely wasn't alone. He had his parents, Xiao Tong, and he was going to marry Chen Yushan at the end of the year... There were so many people and things that he couldn't just let go of.

If he got into an accident, many people would feel sad for him.

“Enough enough, can you stop talking about such unlucky things?” Director Li coughed and said, “Let’s talk about the positive things. I said that the United Nations is discussing the establishment of a political alliance to deal with the extraterrestrial civilization, right? The Americans finally agreed to join.

“The name of the organization is “Federation of Human Alliance”, or Human Alliance for short. The first chairman of the board is our former Minister of Foreign Affairs. The charter of Human Alliance is currently being drafted. You guys are going to Mars representing the Human Alliance...”

Compared with the United Nations, the Human Alliance was a looser political alliance. It was a bit like the “homeowner association” of a suburb and had a certain amount of executive power.

Its main function was to coordinate countries and organizations with different political systems, cultures, and religions around the world, to establish a unified voice, and to communicate with extraterrestrial civilizations on behalf of the overall interests of mankind. As well as to exercise such power such as the declaration of war, peace talks, and open trade.

After all, there were more than 230 countries and regions and more than 2,000 ethnic groups on Earth. It was unrealistic to expect aliens to figure out the differences between Chinese and Americans, Christians and Buddhists, Nigerians and African Americans.

Having a unified voice was a must.

Then there were the words used for communication, the production of “postcards” that showcased Earth’s civilization, technology, and culture. As well as the formulation of diplomatic strategies.

This was quite a tedious process.

Looking at Lu Zhou’s face, Director Li could see that he was having a headache. He thought Lu Zhou was worried that this trouble would fall on his head, so Director Li smiled and comforted him.

“Don’t worry, this is not your responsibility. We have professionals who will handle these things. You only need to give some suggestions in your field of expertise.”

Lu Zhou sighed and spoke.

“I’m not worried about this... Forget it, so what you’re saying is, there are a few people visiting the extraterrestrial civilization?”

Director Li smiled and said, “That’s for sure. After all, we have gained a lot of benefits from the establishment of the Human Alliance. We have to show our sincerity.”

Lu Zhou: “Alright. Who else?”

Director Li: “Not much. In addition to you and Professor Schultz, who represents the European Union, there is also a British archaeologist, an American astrophysicist, and an aerospace engineer from Moscow. As well as Dr. Fan Tong, a researcher at the Mars Scientific Research Station who had been there once, and a bodyguard who will be responsible for your safety. There are only seven people in total.”

Seven people...

Lu Zhou’s eyebrows twitched fiercely when he heard this number.

*This is not f*cking much?!*

What do you mean?!

He took a deep breath and spoke.

“I have a request!”

Director Li immediately said seriously, “Please go ahead!”

Lu Zhou sorted out the thoughts in his mind and spoke to Director Li.

“In order to avoid irreversible accidents, I hope that this diplomatic mission is led by me personally.

“I hope that the higher-ups can give me the highest on-site command. Other members must strictly obey my orders. For those who ignore my orders, I will kick them out of the team.”

Director Li hesitated for a while and said, “You have the highest on-site command authority. It is certain that you are going to lead the team. But kicking people out of the team... I’m afraid I have to ask about this. It may become a diplomatic issue.

“But I promise that I will give you a satisfactory answer as soon as possible!”

Lu Zhou looked at Director Li’s sincere expression.

He simply nodded and ended the conversation.

“Thank you then!”

Schultz, who was standing aside watching them converse in Chinese, scratched his head confusedly.

Why do I feel like...

My trip to Mars is not going to end well...

Scholar’s Advanced Technological System - Chapter 1394 - Birthday Wishes -

Chapter 1394: Birthday Wishes

Inside a Zhongshan International mansion.

After finishing a day of work and returning home, Lu Zhou opened the door and watched a drone fly toward him.

Xiao Ai: [Master!]

Lu Zhou’s hair was blown to the side by the airflow of the drone. He looked at Xiao Ai with a dazed expression.

“What’s going on?”

Xiao Ai: [There is a weird woman that did strange things as soon as she walked in.]

Strange things?

Lu Zhou took off his shoes and was about to go to the kitchen. He heard light footsteps coming from the corner of the corridor.

“You’re back?”

Chen Yushan walked out of the kitchen with a plate of braised fish in her hand. She had a heart-warming smile on her face as she joked, “I’m borrowing your kitchen for a while, is that okay?”

“I’m sure every man would be fine with this...” Lu Zhou said, “You got off work early today?”

“I wanted to surprise you, so I returned early.”

“Surprise?”

“Don’t tell me you forgot your own birthday?”

Birthday?

Instantly, a moment of realization appeared on Lu Zhou’s face.

Chen Yushan smirked and spoke.

“So you did forget, at least I remembered.”

“Yushan...”

“Ah... Don’t be so cringy.” Chen Yushan couldn’t help but cringe when she heard her name. She said, “Go wash your hands and get ready to eat!”

Lu Zhou nodded and spoke with a smile.

“Okay! I’ll go right now!”

Xiao Ai: [(ˊ `□ˊ)] (ㄣ)

The candles were inserted into the cake, followed by a birthday song.

Lu Zhou looked at the number printed on the candles and made a birthday wish. He felt a little emotional in his heart.

Time flies.

Although this was not the first time he felt this way, the moment the candle was blown out, he felt like an old man.

In the blink of an eye, he had already gone from being a young student to an old scholar.

Fortunately, these past twelve years of his life were not wasted.

One could say he had accomplished quite a lot for his age.

“What did you wish for?”

Lu Zhou put his folded hands together and spoke with a smile.

“Isn’t there a saying that the wish won’t come true if I tell anyone?”

Chen Yushan said happily, “Of course not! We can achieve your wish together, isn’t that double the chance?”

Lu Zhou said with a smile, “Then I’ll say it.”

Chen Yushan nodded.

“Yeah! Say it!”

Lu Zhou closed his eyes.

He put his hands together and made the wish again.

“I want to use the money I have earned over the years to do something that is beneficial to society. For example... Like an old man suggested to me, set up an award in my own name to encourage young scholars.”

In fact, this idea was not created in the heat of the moment; it had been in his mind since a long time ago.

He made up his mind back at Lake Mälaren.

After hearing Lu Zhou’s wish, Chen Yushan pouted.

“I thought it would be related to me.”

Lu Zhou looked at Chen Yushan and smiled.

“Everything is related to you. I hope to show that through my sincerity, not just through a birthday wish.”

“When did you become so charming?”

After thinking about this seriously for a moment, Lu Zhou spoke.

“I am?”

“...”

Chen Yushan turned her head away; her cheeks were burning red.

Although she was not the type who was easily charmed, she always felt that it was very reassuring to watch him say those words seriously.

It was like turning on a switch in her heart.

Ahhhhhh...

I love him so much!

Lu Zhou: “...?”

After the candles were blown, it was time to cut the cake.

However, Lu Zhou didn’t want to eat the cake at all.

Because just a few feet away was a table full of food. Just smelling it made him salivate, not to mention the visual impact; it almost looked like something out of a cartoon.

If there was a rating system for food, Lu Zhou was certain that this would be under the “excellent” or “perfect” category.

After the sumptuous dinner, the two of them sat on the sofa with their shoulders leaning against each other, just like any other couple.

Xiao Ai was responsible for tidying up the table.

Chen Yushan looked at the TV. She seemed to be thinking about something as she suddenly spoke.

“You won’t be back until the end of the year from Mars.”

“Yeah.” Lu Zhou nodded. He turned his face to look at her and said, “We’ll get married as soon as we come back, okay?”

“No, that’s not sincere at all.”

Lu Zhou didn’t expect Chen Yushan to refuse.

“Then... What about—”

“No!” Chen Yushan’s index finger pressed on Lu Zhou’s lips and interrupted him. She rolled her eyes and glared at him. She said, “Make a promise to me!”

“Um... Okay.” Lu Zhou said with a current of warmth in his stomach, “I promise to make you happy for the rest of our lives.”

Chen Yushan smirked.

“Hm, I’ll remember this... Pinky promise.”

Lu Zhou smiled and held his right hand.

“Pinky promise.”

...

Schultz moved to the Jinling launch site and joined the training program. After the successive arrivals of representatives from other countries, Lu Zhou finally met all of the expedition members he was about to lead.

Although all of them were strangers, they got along smoothly.

After all, this was for the future of human civilization. Everyone had fully devoted themselves to the pre-launch preparations.

As the day of departure approached, Lu Zhou’s usual work started getting busier. However, he still spent as much time as possible accompanying his fiancée.

At the same time, the discussions on the Internet were constantly fermenting.

In particular, the list of “diplomatic corps” that represented human civilization to Mars for the exchange with the extraterrestrial civilization had not yet been

announced. Many people were guessing who would be in the diplomatic corps.

“I’m guessing a member of the LSPM research team must go! I don’t know if you guys have noticed, but the extraterrestrial civilization seemed to have pointed out that they will only communicate with the person who solves the ABC conjecture.”

“I’m guessing it will be Academician Lu, the pinnacle of human civilization... Apart from him, I can’t think of anyone more suitable to represent the highest level of human spirit.”

“No way! If I were high up in the state, I would definitely not allow him to go!”

“Hehe, unfortunately, you are not.”

“Could it be Perelman? We have a good relationship with Russia, and he seems to have worked at Jin Ling University. Maybe they’ll send him up.”

“Probably not him, he... doesn’t seem interested. His mental condition is also unstable. Who dares to send him?”

“Doesn’t matter if he’s interested, if I were Putin—”

“Enough enough, you can’t just force people to go to Mars.”

“ ... ”

The controversy became stronger and stronger as the scope gradually expanded.

The soon-to-be-established “Human Alliance” had also attracted the attention of many people and became a topic of interest.

Prior to this, the shared future of mankind had always been an abstract concept, but now, it had been given a realistic meaning.

Many radical social scientists even put forward bold ideas.

The exchange with extraterrestrial civilizations would not only greatly enhance the technological level of the two civilizations and promote new art forms, but could even completely change the political environment on Earth and change the concept of traditional boundaries.

For example, Professor Camilla Iwen, a well-known scholar of economics and sociology at the University of Cambridge, expressed optimistic opinions in an interview.

“All of the achievements that human society has achieved so far are driven by imagination. Contact with extraterrestrial civilizations will broaden our imagination to a new dimension. We’ll discover a group of beings smarter than us in a corner of the universe.

“And their production economics will be something we have never seen before.”

In addition to the upcoming second round of Mars landing missions, the China Lunar Orbit Committee also announced the second batch of large-scale immigration plans for Guanghan City.

This time, the scale of immigration was 500 people.

Although there wasn’t an obvious cause and effect, people still clearly felt that the discovery of the extraterrestrial civilization seemed to have made China’s development of lunar resources move into the fast lane.

Many people feel a trace of complex emotions in their hearts.

As if to cater to this sentiment, a popular article on WeChat entered the attention of most people, causing people to think about the future...

Chapter 1395: Standards of a Saint

Technically speaking, this article had existed for many years, but it was dug up recently.

Lu Zhou stood in the Mars environment training room. He was sitting on a small bench with his phone. Professor Vernal, who sent the article to him, looked at him and joked.

“It seems that doing scientific research in China is not easy.”

After closing the article, the expression on Lu Zhou’s face did not change. He spoke casually.

“After all, it only took us a hundred years from the feudal era to modernization. This is a leap in the history of civilization. Like how you guys don’t require scholars to be religious, but many of us still habitually label scholars as saints.

“In fact, what I mean is that the academic environment at Oxford University is more relaxed.

“But what does that have to do with me?”

“Fine.” Professor Vernal shrugged and said, “I was just saying, don’t take it to heart.”

Sitting opposite Lu Zhou was Professor Pansy Vernal from the Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art of Oxford University.

Although he was only thirty-five years old, judging from his sparse hair and wrinkles on his forehead, one could not help but wonder if he were cursed by the pharaohs in Egypt.

As for the article he was talking about, it was a commentary article by a Chinese-American journalist Xu Jing that was widely spread on Facebook.

Although this article was originally posted on Facebook, it quickly spread to China and became a popular article on WeChat by taking advantage of people’s expectations for the future.

The title of the article was very similar to the article “Please Slow Down and Wait for Your People” that was popular in major forums many years ago. It even included many quotes from the previous article, but the main idea was the criticism of the lack of morality in the course of economic development, and how it was a shame that “rapid advancement” in science and technology had destroyed the pastoral life. As well as a criticism of the rapid social development itself.

The article created, or fictionalized, three characters with different identities; a deliveryman who was forced to leave the Shenzhen market because of drone logistics technology, a coal miner who lost his source of income because of controllable fusion technology, and a doctor who was forced to separate from his family and head to the Moon, eventually separating with his wife.

The identities of these characters covered the three groups of underprivileged, middle-class, and elite groups. It provided an in-depth analysis of the tragic

fate of these people with different education levels and different social statuses.

When Lu Zhou read this, he made up his mind.

As expected, this is nonsense.

It was not that he didn't have sympathy, but he didn't understand how the doctor was "forced to separate" from his family.

After all, the PhD program at the lunar scientific research station was notoriously difficult to enter. International students applied for a limited number of places. Without a Nobel Prize winner-level recommendation letter and Nobel Prize-level research, there was no hope of being selected.

Forced to separate?

Wife abandoned?

*Bullsh*t.*

I'll eat my phone if this isn't made up!

"Of course I won't take it to heart." Lu Zhou just shrugged and said, "I believe that keyboard warriors aren't just a Chinese specialty. I also believe that history will give a correct evaluation. Do you think that this kind of concocted article is convincing? If it is, I'm worried about your professionalism."

Vernal laughed twice and concealed his embarrassment.

"Of course not... I'm just showing this to you. That's it."

"Good." Lu Zhou nodded. He suddenly turned around and said, "By the way, I forgot to tell you just now. According to the coach, your training results in the past few days are very bad. In order to avoid dragging everyone down in space, I hope you can stay in the high-gravity environment training room for longer. In the future, your training will end at 8 o'clock instead of 5 o'clock."

When Vernal heard that he would stay in the training room like a gym junkie, his face turned pale.

"Don't do this, friend, I was just kidding..."

“Kidding? It has nothing to do with your joke.” Lu Zhou said seriously, “This is for your safety.”

After that, Lu Zhou gave him a look that said “work hard”. He then turned around and left...

...

The days quickly went by, and the day of departure was getting closer and closer.

People at the space launch site could clearly feel that the atmosphere in the entire launch center had gradually become tense as the end of May approached.

Perhaps because Academician Lu himself was about to embark on the flight to Mars, the safety issues that were already taken seriously had become the overriding top priority.

Not only did they add two more safety inspections on top of the three original ones, from the ground crew to the cleaning lady, everyone was doing safety training every few days. They tried to eliminate the probability of failure by two more decimal places.

The logistics staff weren’t the only ones who were busy.

The training pace was gradually accelerating for the expedition personnel who were about to go to Mars.

Lu Zhou not only learned how to drive the Mars rover and operate various equipment on the spacecraft, but he also learned how to operate professional equipment in low gravity and high gravity environments, as well as exploring underground tunnels with the assistance of other personnel...

“There is a flight to Mars in mid-October that will be responsible for delivering supplies to our colonial outpost on Mars. You can take that flight back then.”

Inside the chief designer’s office at the launch site, Director Chang Hezhi, who was in charge of the next launch plan, reported to Lu Zhou on the preparations for the launch. He then continued to report the arrangements for the return trip.

After listening to this report, Lu Zhou nodded and spoke.

“No problem, is there anything else?”

Director Chang: “There is indeed one other thing.”

Lu Zhou said, “What?”

“The final press conference before the launch will be held soon. Many details about the launch plan will be made public at this press conference. If you are okay with it, we all agree that it’s best for you to host it.”

The details here included the engineering equipment and new colonization units that would be sent to the surface of Mars for deployment, as well as the list of scientific expedition teams to Mars and the “diplomatic missions” responsible for contact with the extraterrestrial civilization. All of these concerns would be answered at the press conference.

Mainstream media from all over the world would arrive in Jinling to conduct a global live broadcast of this press conference.

This historic moment would definitely be recorded in world history!

Due to the importance of this matter, a normal spokesperson’s level of understanding for the Mars landing plan was obviously not sufficient.

In contrast, as the chief designer of the Mars landing plan, no one was more suitable to be the spokesperson than Lu Zhou.

Faced with Director Chang’s proposal, Lu Zhou thought about it for a while and simply agreed.

“Okay then.

“I can be the spokesperson.

“But you guys will have to prepare the speech and PowerPoint.”

Seeing that Lu Zhou had agreed, Director Chang was overjoyed.

“No problem, we’ll handle that.

“The press conference is in three days!”

Chapter 1396: Full of Confidence for the Future

The day of the press conference.

The No.1 conference hall at the Jinling launch site was crowded with people.

Reporters of different skin colors stood here, filling the spacious conference hall.

In order to leave enough space for the interviewers, all cameras, whether automatic or manual, were arranged on both sides of the conference hall, leaving the middle of the conference room empty.

A young man in formal clothes was standing next to Director Li. He looked around as he asked, "Do you think Academician Lu can handle this pressure? There are so many people here."

He was the secretary for the State Administration for National Defense. He originally served as the spokesperson for this press conference. But since Lu Zhou agreed to attend himself, he became a substitute.

Director Li laughed when he heard the secretary's words.

"He can't handle it? Are you kidding me? This guy has been to more places than I have. We don't have to worry about him." "

It was time.

Under everyone's expectation, Lu Zhou walked onto the stage in a suit.

The audience stared at him closely. He cleared his throat as usual, then spoke in a steady voice.

"Good afternoon, everyone, I am Lu Zhou, the chief designer of the Mars landing plan.

"In our original arrangement, the second batch of scientific researchers to the Mars scientific research base will launch with the supply to Mars at the end of the year, but because we found a suspected area with traces of extraterrestrial civilization near 15° south latitude and 128.1° west longitude,

the original launch plan was revised and the second batch of personnel and equipment for the Mars landing plan were reconfigured.

“The following is the adjusted road map of the Mars landing plan and the specific work arrangement for the second contact... Please see the big screen below.”

A brief introduction to the entire Mars landing plan was given in concise terms. When Lu Zhou was showing the PowerPoint, he gave the reporters enough time to take pictures of the slides.

Soon after, the PowerPoint screening ended.

Lu Zhou nodded to the staff next to him, indicating that the first round of questioning could begin.

The news disclosure of the press conference was divided into two parts. The first half was for the specific details of the plan and the second half was the announcement for the list of “human representatives” for the second contact. A brief introduction of the identities of the representatives was given.

In order to facilitate the reporters to concentrate on their questions, the questioning session was also divided into two parts.

“Hello, Academician Lu Zhou, I am a reporter from Everyone Daily. I would like to ask what are the highlights of this Mars landing plan.”

The reporter lady from “Everyone Daily” reached out the microphone in her hand.

Lu Zhou smiled at her and nodded.

“I think there are two aspects worth paying attention to.

“One is transportation, the other is living.

“From the perspective of transportation, the all-terrain rover we deployed on Mars this time has enhanced the communication module and includes many special designs for the dust storm environment on Mars. As for the living aspect, this time we are sending additional functional colony capsules to Mars as well.

“Through these independent colony capsules as well as the pipeline connecting the core colony capsule and the functional modules, we will expand the scientific research base on the surface of Mars. In the future, we will be able to accommodate more scholars to carry out scientific research activities on Mars.”

After the reporter from Everyone Daily finished the question, another foreign reporter stood up.

“Hello, I am a reporter from the Washington Post. We noticed that you used the word ‘suspected’ when referring to the traces of extraterrestrial civilization. I would like to ask... Are there any new discoveries from the Mars landing office in regards to the extraterrestrial civilization?”

Lu Zhou: “That was only me being cautious, please do not over-interpret my words.”

Lu Zhou answered the questions from the reporters one after another.

Generally speaking, the atmosphere of the conference was pretty good.

Although some of the questions were tricky, they were all within a reasonable range. They were all questions that normal people would ask. However, when the New York Times reporter began to ask questions, the atmosphere at the press conference suddenly became weird.

The reporter was a white male.

He reached out the microphone in his hand and raised a question that had little to do with the Mars landing plan itself.

“Have you heard of Xu Jing?”

Xu Jing?

Lu Zhou frowned and thought about where he had heard the name, but he couldn’t remember.

“No, why?”

“Nothing, I’m just surprised you didn’t know her.” The reporter looked at Lu Zhou and said, “Then let me briefly introduce her. She is a reporter who once

wrote a column for our newspaper. She is active as a freelance journalist and is relatively well-known on the internet.”

Lu Zhou finally remembered who this person was. It was the author of the article that blew up on WeChat.

Lu Zhou continued with a playful expression, “Do you want to ask a question for your former employee?”

“Of course! However, it’s not because of her former employee status, but because of the question she raised. It is what we are all thinking about.”

The white reporter stared at Lu Zhou and spoke quickly.

“As we all know, China has achieved excellent results in the field of aerospace. China intends to expand the existing results to Mars. However, this space race brings us not only the waste of resources but also does not solve any other problems.

“Ms. Xu pointed out in her article that there are still many people living below the poverty line in your country. Many people have not even flown on airplanes. Do you think there is meaning in developing aerospace technology in China?”

Lu Zhou interrupted the reporter’s speech.

“Have you been to Los Angeles?”

Reporter: “... Of course, it is the largest city on the west coast. Of course I have been there. Why?”

Lu Zhou: “I have been there too, and I was fortunate enough to take the subway there. Have you considered that, when sending astronauts to space, there are many homeless people living in the subway tunnels?”

An awkward expression appeared on the reporter’s face.

He realized what Lu Zhou might say next, so he quickly spoke first.

“Of course... Our country also has its own problems. But aren’t we talking about China now?”

“There is no doubt that you are the most influential scholar in China and in the world. You have made world-renowned achievements in your field! But just like Ms. Xu wrote in the article, have you considered the social problems that your research may bring, such as poverty and unemployment.

“In your opinion, in regards to the three examples mentioned in her article, do those people not deserve happiness, or even the right to survive?”

Lu Zhou was under the sharp gaze of the white reporter. He knew all of this was rehearsed.

However, Lu Zhou was not nervous.

It was normal for American journalists to ask ridiculous things at press conferences.

Lu Zhou gave his own answer casually with a smile.

“To be honest, I never thought about it, nor do I care.”

There was a commotion at the press conference.

Even the white reporter’s eyes widened. It seemed that he didn’t expect Lu Zhou to be so direct and walk directly into his trap.

He even thought of tomorrow’s headline for The New York Times.

Director Li was a little anxious. He gestured frantically at Lu Zhou. He pulled the secretary next to him and wanted him to go to the rescue Academician Lu.

However, Lu Zhou seemed to have completely ignored Director Li.

After a pause, he continued, “You expect me to be a great and noble man.

“To resolve all your worries, make bread for you when you are hungry, cut it into slices when you are too lazy to do it, or even chew it up and feed it to you...”

Lu Zhou continued without caring for the reporter’s reaction.

“But that’s not going to happen.

“Technology is only a tool for wealth creation.

“Someone has to study new sociological theories, dive into new production relations and resource allocation methods, and lay a theoretical foundation for the new system. Because our social scientists know that this is the only approach to solve inequality.

“However, no matter how you cut up the cake, you have to make the cake first.

“The development of science and technology will inevitably eliminate backward production capacity, jobs will change, but job opportunities will never disappear. They will reappear in a more creative and modern form. We will protect those who have lost their jobs due to industrial transformation, and provide them with free training, unemployment compensation, and guide them to find their own positions in this society.

“If you don’t know what I mean by modern, you should look through your history textbooks and compare North America in the 18th century to North America now. I believe you can find the answer you want from history. If you think that the creation of lithium-sulfur batteries, controllable fusion, or quantum computers and space shuttles only deprives people of their work and has no meaning in building a utopia, then I can only feel sorry for your stupidity.

“So, this is why I don’t care about the problems you raised.

“Because that is not my research area.

“And also I am confident that people in the future will solve these problems.

“As for whether I am brave...”

Lu Zhou paused for a second then continued, “I will personally lead the team to Mars.”

The white reporter who asked the previous question was shocked.

The entire conference hall went crazy...

Chapter 1397: Please Be Safe

The press conference was a mess.

The audience sitting in front of TVs, computers, and mobile phones watching the live broadcast of the press conference were all shocked when they heard Lu Zhou announce that he would go to Mars in person.

He's going to Mars?!

What is going on?!

“Academician Lu is going to Mars himself?”

“F*ck, no way? He's really f*cking going?!”

“I think... Academician Lu is probably joking? Although he is not old, going to Mars is still too ridiculous. I remember that only professional astronauts can adapt to life there.”

“No please, God Lu, please stay on Earth!”

The discussions on Weibo were exploding.

The popularity of the topic soared rapidly, surpassing the “Mars landing plan press conference” and other terms that dominated the trending search list.

The situation on Twitter and Facebook was the same. There were also YouTube and streaming websites that were directly broadcasting the news conference. People expressed their shock in the comment sections.

Although some people had speculated before whether Lu Zhou's name would be on the list, this was thought to be an outlandish prediction.

No one thought that Lu Zhou actually planned to go to Mars himself.

No one thought that the relevant state departments would actually agree to his wish.

At the press conference, the noise covered the entire No.1 Conference Hall ceiling.

The staff desperately wanted to maintain order, but the reporters on the scene were too surprised by the breaking news. They broke out with enthusiasm and rushed toward the platform.

“Professor Lu Zhou, is this a temporary decision you made? Or is it one that you have been preparing for a long time!”

“If astronauts without professional training go to Mars, will they become a burden for frontline researchers?”

“Have you considered the danger of contacting the extraterrestrial civilization? If they show offensive behavior after seeing you, how do you plan to protect your life?”

“I heard that you are already engaged. Have you considered the feelings of your partner?”

“Will you return to Earth to get married? Or do you plan to have a wedding on Mars?”

Faced with the flood of microphones and questions, Lu Zhou started to get a headache.

It was impossible to answer all of the questions.

By the time the reporters finished asking all of the questions, it would be nighttime already.

Lu Zhou looked at the secretary standing next to Director Li, suggesting that he was ready for him to take his place. The secretary immediately understood what Lu Zhou meant. After whispering a few words to Director Li, he quickly walked toward the backstage.

Lu Zhou cleared his throat and made a shush gesture in front of the reporters in the audience.

He took this opportunity to raise his volume and speak loudly.

“Space travel itself is nothing scary. You guys don’t need to worry about me at all.

“Even ordinary people with no foundation and average physical fitness can go to space to work and live after receiving simple training. This is not much more difficult than taking a driver’s test. In fact, I have only received a month of training.

“I will prove this with my own actions.

“Next, we have our press spokesperson to announce the full list of the second batch personnel...”

Lu Zhou went backstage under the eyes of the reporters. Director Li's secretary successfully took over his position and pushed the press conference to the next stage.

The situation at the press conference was under control.

The reporters at the scene also calmed down.

But everyone knew that until the launch mission began, the heat caused by Lu Zhou's announcement would not die down.

Some people thought that his decision was too careless, some people thought that he was an unselfish scholar who made a choice between his own destiny and the destiny of mankind.

Others said that this was just a show, paving the way for a future political career. Some people even thought that Academician Lu was irritated by the reporter at the scene and decided to say something outlandish.

Perhaps next month the China National Space Administration would give Lu Zhou an opportunity to go back on his words.

The time quickly passed by while people debated whether Academician Lu would venture to Mars personally. Finally, it was the day of departure.

Many people were surprised to see that Academician Lu was actually serious about his trip...

...

Jinling launch site.

The Starlight stopped steadily in the center of the runway.

The side of the runway was full of people.

Some of them were the staff of the launch site, and some were the relatives and friends of colonists and researchers who were about to go to Mars and Guanghan City. Some were invited or voluntarily applied to come here to send off the heroes of human civilization.

The atmosphere on site was exceptionally quiet.

As if they were worried that the sadness in their hearts would be transmitted to others, people quietly hugged their friends and exchanged messages of blessings.

Luo Wenxuan, who was the chairman of the ILHCRC, spoke with a heavy heart to Lu Zhou.

"I never thought that one day you would go so far."

Lu Zhou smiled as he hugged his old friend and patted him on the shoulder.

"It's just a couple of millions of kilometers, not far."

Luo Wenxuan took a deep breath, looked at him, and spoke solemnly.

"Take care!"

"Yeah."

One sentence was often enough for male friends.

Talking too much would seem unmasculine.

Lu Zhou walked away from Luo Wenxuan. He looked at the assistants and students who came to see him. He smiled at them and spoke.

"It's quite a shame, unfortunately, I didn't help you guys much in my number theory class. I didn't even have enough time for lectures. The best I can give you guys is a blessing."

Lu Zhou looked at Li Mo standing among the students. He was the IMO competition champion he poached from Yan University. Lu Zhou continued with a smile.

"Your mathematics talent is good, but talents alone are not enough. Perseverance is the cornerstone of the math building. The former may only determine whether the road in front of you is smooth, but the latter determines how far you can go... Work hard, and there will be a place for you in the future of mathematics. If you have any problems, go to Professor Perelman. He is a person who seems introverted but is surprisingly easy to communicate with. Even simple questions he will also explain to you in detail."

“Professor...”

“Enough, no need for the kind words.”

Lu Zhou smiled and patted the young man on the shoulder. He then looked at Han Mengqi.

When he looked at her, she was also staring at him.

“Master...”

After staring at Lu Zhou for a long time, she decided not to call him “brother-in-law”.

However, Li Mo’s eyes nearly popped out of his face.

What the hell?!

Didn’t you say not to call him master?

How come you get to say it?

Lu Zhou was used to being called this, he didn’t react. He smiled and spoke.

“You are also a gifted student. Even now, I still remember that when I taught you math for the first time, you struggled with calculating an elliptic equation, but in just two to three months, you caught up with everything.

“Your academic path is beyond my expectations, and you have proved yourself with your actions. You are indeed a scientist.

“I don’t have much to teach you in terms of academic matters. You are a woman with a strong opinion. Follow the path you have identified and go forward.”

Lu Zhou gave her an encouraging look. He then walked to the side of his fiancée, Chen Yushan.

Chen Yushan’s lips trembled slightly when she looked at Lu Zhou.

Although the two sat on the balcony and talked all night, they still felt like they didn’t have enough time.

Lu Zhou looked at the pretty face and went silent for a while. He did not say anything. He closed his eyes and gave her a kiss on the lips in front of everyone.

“I have a lot more... to say to you, I believe you feel the same. But I’m afraid we don’t have enough time.

“But it’s just half a year.

“We can talk when I get back.”

“Yeah...” Her heart pumped as she stared at Lu Zhou for a long time. She gulped and said, “I’ll miss you...”

Lu Zhou gently brushed her bangs and glanced at her for the last time. He then took the helmet from the staff nearby and put it on.

He made a farewell gesture to those who came to see him but didn’t speak to him. Lu Zhou resisted the urge to look back and strode toward the boarding gangway.

The spacecraft hatch closed.

The ground crew began to evacuate the nearby crowd.

The blue plasma ignited the air and melted the cement. The scorching air current raged in the sky, and the silver-white spacecraft flew forward, eventually disappearing into the skyline.

Han Mengqi looked in the direction of the spacecraft.

As she stared at the clouds in the sky, she said, “I feel like... Master is going somewhere really far.”

“ ... ”

Chen Yushan also had a similar thought in her heart.

Her throbbing heart stopped her from speaking. She felt a sharp pain in her chest.

Chen Yushan clenched her fists and prayed.

“Please be safe.”

Chapter 1398: Planet of Tomorrow

The group of people from Starlight moved to the Moon Palace and stayed for 24 hours.

After the replenishment loading, they would take the Magpie Bridge, which had a stronger acceleration capability and was more suitable for carrying a large number of passengers and supplies, to Mars. They would land on the surface of Mars through Xu Fu, which floated on Mars orbit as a temporary space station.

Fifteen days had passed since the departure from the Moon Palace.

Since Mars and Earth were moving away from each other, it would take two to three days longer for them to go to Mars than the first colonists.

However, even then, their current location was getting quite close to Mars.

If the angle was correct, someone could even see the bright red spot hidden in the vast sea of stars through the windows...

“Two pairs, I win.”

After throwing out the two cards on the poker table, Lu Zhou leaned back on the chair happily. Across from him was Joel Aubrey, a professor of astrophysics from Stanford University, as well as Kubo Lomonov, an aerospace engineer from Moscow State University.

The two people stared at their cards with sad faces.

Wang Peng, who served as Lu Zhou’s bodyguard, as well as Professor Schultz and Vernal, were standing behind the three of them, watching the game with interest.

Professor Aubrey and Professor Lomonov looked at each other and gave up.

“Sorry, guys...”

Lu Zhou smiled and reached out for the chips.

“Looks like I win.”

A half-month-long journey was quite boring.

They could only use poker, chess, and board games to kill time. In the beginning, the nine people (including the two main and co-pilots) spent their time playing chess. Lu Zhou was bored and used algebraic geometry to model the chessboard. He found a solution that made him win almost 100% of the time. After that, no one was interested in playing chess anymore.

In contrast, poker, which had a greater element of luck, gave them a bigger chance at beating Lu Zhou.

However, this was only if all of them were playing game theory optimally.

In reality, apart from Schultz’s occasional wins against Lu Zhou, the archaeologist Vernal, who was standing behind Lu Zhou watching and studying, lost buy-in after buy-in.

“Damn... I shouldn’t have gotten it in with you.”

Joel Aubrey threw the cards in his hand on the table while cursing. He unwillingly tore off a piece of paper and carefully glued it to his forehead.

In fact, this was the punishment for losing in poker. The most annoying was not that it blocked their line of sight, but in a gravity-free environment, if the strip of paper accidentally fell and flew away, the person would have to chase after the piece of paper.

Joel Aubrey already did this once, he didn’t want to do it again.

After Vernal patted Aubrey on the shoulder, he comforted, “Just give up, my friend, why play a probability game against a mathematician?”

Aubrey said unwillingly, “I know... I just want to win.”

Professor Vernal spoke with a smile.

“I see people like you all the time in Las Vegas. It’s best to stay away from the casino.

"I go there once a year... and, occasionally, I can win some money."

Lu Zhou shook his head and put away the poker set on the table.

"There is no space to stick more paper on your face. Unless you want to stuff it in your nostrils, let's stop for now."

Lomonov, who was rather taciturn, breathed a sigh of relief. He pulled the chair away and stood up, but Aubrey spoke with dissatisfaction.

"Hey, how long do I need to keep these on my face?"

"Ten hours."

Aubrey suddenly frowned.

"Can't you be more lenient?"

Lu Zhou smiled slightly and said, "Of course I can, but only if you give up the opportunity to go underground and stay in the base station on the day of the expedition."

"Sorry, bro, there's no way I'll agree to that." Aubrey pushed his chair away and stood up. He said, "These papers don't scare me!"

Lu Zhou looked at Professor Aubrey and shrugged.

"I was just kidding.

"But remember, you lost fair and square, so you have to live up to your punishment."

In fact, Lu Zhou wasn't kidding at all.

Makes sense, of course he wouldn't agree.

I guess I'll just have to find a way to get rid of those people underground.

Lu Zhou touched the wrist-mounted computer on his right arm and began to think.

...

The eighteenth day of departure from the Moon Palace.

The fiery red planet finally appeared in front of everyone.

“We’re here!”

“Wooo!”

Excited sounds of cheers resounded throughout the cabin. They stood next to the porthole looking at the fiery red giant. Even though the planet had been observed through satellites and telescopes countless times, when they were finally in orbit and captured by the gravity of Mars, a wave of excitement was ignited in their hearts.

It was like discovering a new land.

“... Call the ground command center. This is ‘Humming Bird’. We have been successfully captured by the Mars gravitational system and we are switching to Mars geosynchronous orbit...”

“The orbit has been switched, lowering altitude...”

“This is ‘Humming Bird’, calling headquarters, we have reached the edge of the Mars atmosphere! The distance from Xu Fu is 1.27 km, we are currently approaching!”

The metal alloy door of the cockpit opened. The co-pilot wearing a spacesuit in the cabin walked in front of Lu Zhou and gave them a military salute.

“We have arrived at the station. You will follow me on Xu Fu. I will tell you what to do.”

“Wait a minute, why do we go on Xu Fu?” Vernal raised his hand and asked nervously, “Also, how do we get off?”

After hearing this idiotic question, Lu Zhou smiled and spoke.

“Do you really need to ask? Of course we bungee jump down.”

Vernal’s face turned green. Schultz and Aubrey’s faces were also a little pale. Only Lomonov, who was an aerospace engineer himself, smirked at Lu Zhou’s joke.

Bungee jump?

Think about it, does that sound realistic?

After twelve minutes of careful merging, the Magpie Bridge model codenamed “Humming Bird” finally connected a silver-white corridor between it and Xu Fu and completed docking.

Although Vernal had the thought of retreating at the last moment, he decided to clench his jaw and bravely followed the group of people through the silver-white corridor.

Inside the spacious compartment, the pilot stopped and looked back at the group of people who were about to head to the ground.

“Okay, friends, we have arrived... Under your feet is the outpost of the new world, where the dream of the relic begins. You will land in the landing pod with living supplies and new functional modules, and someone will pick you up there.

“You should have learned how to use the landing pod when you received training. It’s time for me to go now.

“So now, first connect the interface on the spacesuit in your cabin with the life support system of the landing module, then check whether each button and each seat belt is connected. Think about whether you want me to bring any words back to Earth.

“If everything is ok, then raise your hand and let me know.”

The pilot nodded with satisfaction as he looked at the raised hands.

“Good.

“Let’s go!”

Chapter 1399: Almost Like It’s Alive!

What it felt like to fall from a height of hundreds of kilometers?

Lu Zhou felt that, after this expedition, he knew this feeling better than anyone other than the people in the Airborne Brigade team.

The feeling of standing on the critical line between life and death caused the adrenaline in his body to soar. His hands held tightly onto the armrests of the seat, and he could even hear his own heartbeat.

When the landing capsule fell into the sea of sand, it was the first time Lu Zhou felt that life was beautiful.

He also felt like the Institute of Aeronautics at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study should make the landing more comfortable.

After a series of violent tremors, the heavy alloy hatch opened suddenly.

The wind engulfed the yellow sand, blowing it on everyone's suit.

Professor Vernal unlocked the connection of the life support system in the cabin. He stood up from the cushioned seat and walked out of the cabin. As he looked at the vast desert, his eyes were filled with indescribable shock.

"Jesus... It feels like being in Egypt."

"Egypt?"

"Yeah..."

Professor Vernal's knees touched the ground. He kneeled on the ground and picked up a hand full of sand. When he felt the touch of the alien planet through the spacesuit's graphene fibers, his face was full of excitement and shock.

"... I worked there for three years. From the Nile to the Sahara Desert, our archaeological team's footprints traversed the entire country... But even then, I have never seen such a spectacular scenery."

"Is there any civilization here?" Lomonov said as he stepped across the hatch and went on the ground. He squinted his eyes and looked at the heavy sand and dust. He then glanced at the gamma counter on his wrist-mounted computer and said, "... Even Chernobyl has less radiation than here."

“From an astronomical point of view, it is possible.” Professor Aubrey squinted his eyes and said, “Compared with the age of the universe, our civilization only exists for a brief moment.

“From the academic point of view, 3 billion years ago, maybe 4 billion years ago, before the core of Mars had cooled down, there used to be an atmosphere thicker than Earth. Freshwater lakes were distributed on the surface of the planet. In theory, it had the conditions for life. On the contrary, Earth was like hell back then, similar to how Venus is today.”

Lu Zhou turned on the positioning device and set the coordinates. He was the last to walk out of the landing module. He looked up at the approaching Mars rover in the distance and interrupted the small chat in the communication channel.

“Let’s stop talking about academic problems. Everyone, pack up and prepare to go to the base station.”

However, there was nothing to pack. Each person’s personal belongings was only a 26-inch aerospace-grade suitcase. This was embedded behind the shell of the landing module.

After everyone pulled the suitcase with their own number from the landing compartment, the rover in the distance drove to the side.

The door of the rover opened outward. An astronaut jumped out of the rover and walked quickly to Lu Zhou. His voice was a little incoherent from the excitement.

“Lu-Academician Lu, you came here in person?”

Lu Zhou looked at the nervous astronaut and shook hands with him. He spoke with a smile.

“It’s fine, don’t be so nervous, what is your name?”

“Fan Tong!” The astronaut continued happily, “Can I ask you for an autograph?”

Fan Tong?

The name sounded a bit familiar to Lu Zhou. If he remembered correctly, this should be the researcher of the “Outlier 128” project. Strictly speaking, Fan Tong was under Lu Zhou’s research team.

“Let’s talk about this later. Go drive, I have things to ask you later.”

“Yes, sir!”

Fan Tong quickly climbed back into the rover.

Lu Zhou turned around and began to tell others to tie their luggage to the rover. He then took the lead and got into the rover. He ordered Fan Tong to drive the rover.

Because the landing site itself was near the base station, the drive wasn’t long. When they approached the base, they saw three hemispherical domes slowly descending from the air with the help of their engines. They landed and were deployed in the open space next to the scientific research base station.

The international friends sitting in the rover showed looks of surprise on their faces. Especially Lomonov, an aerospace engineer from Russia, stared through the rover window with both eyes wide open. His whole body was stunned.

“Jesus Christ...

“How did you guys do this?”

Lu Zhou smiled and spoke casually.

“It’s actually nothing special.”

Lomonov turned his head and glanced at Lu Zhou with a strange expression.

*Nothing f*cking special?*

The colony capsules weighing tens of tons were dropped directly from the outer space orbit. The active jet engine was used for deceleration. It even landed accurately in the circled area...

Lomonov couldn’t help but feel a little sad.

Although he came to the Jinling aerospace launch site from Moscow for the purpose of studying, he still didn't expect the gap to be this big.

From aerospace launch technology to outer planet landing, he couldn't find a single domain where the Roscosmos excelled in.

These Chinese people had not only completely dominated the entire industrial chain but even achieved the ultimate level of technology in every chain that he could imagine. It seemed that they were indeed too far behind of the times.

The rover passed by the functional module that was just deployed and slowly drove into the garage of the scientific research base station.

The alloy gate closed. Cutting off the sand and wind from outside.

Cleaning fluid was sprayed out of the buffer chamber, covering every corner of the rover in all directions. Then the group of people got off the rover and was cleaned as well.

After the ventilation device filled the pressure buffer room with air, they changed out of their extravehicular spacesuits and put on lighter indoor clothes.

The alloy door on the side opened. The highest-ranking officer of the scientific research base, Captain Liang Youcheng, walked to the front of the group and spoke with a smile.

"Welcome to the Mars Scientific Research Base. I'm Liang Youcheng, the captain of the scientific expedition team stationed here. I hope that in the next month or even two months here, you will feel at home. I will take you guys to your rooms soon. Dinner time is at 18 o'clock, Beijing time. You can move around freely before then, or you can follow me for a visit inside the base station.

"Also, I have been briefed of your mission. If there is anything that needs help, just tell me directly."

Liang Youcheng looked at Lu Zhou and asked him if he had anything to add.

"That's the basics. Free time before dinner, or follow Captain Liang to visit the facilities here. I have nothing to add." Lu Zhou nodded toward Captain Liang

and looked at Fan Tong standing next to him. He said, “Dr. Fan, come with me.”

Fan Tong immediately raised his head and stood up straight.

“Yes, sir!”

The group of people followed Captain Liang to their respective rooms. Meanwhile, Lu Zhou took Fan Tong to the meeting room next to the pressure buffer room.

The alloy door closed. Lu Zhou pulled a chair and sat down like he was in his own home. He then motioned to Fan Tong to find a place to sit casually.

“Tell me briefly about the situation here.”

“What do you want to know?”

“Everything about Project 128.”

Fan Tong’s expression suddenly became serious. He nodded and spoke.

“I have been researching this over the past month.”

“In order to find out why the fractured structures suddenly appeared and disappeared, I tried to send a remote control vehicle to explore the underground cave. However, due to the limited propagation distance of electromagnetic wave signals, I could only use wired control to operate. The control distance of the vehicle is limited. I can’t go deep into the cave, but I still found a lot of suspicious things.”

Lu Zhou: “Suspicious?”

“Yeah.”

Fan Tong nodded and continued with a solemn expression.

“The terrain below The Gates of Hell mountains changes very frequently. There is a large change almost every 71 minutes and a small adjustment every 34 minutes. As for the seismic structure, it appears to be random. It doesn’t appear to follow a statistical law. At first, we thought it was a special geological structure of Mars, but based on the feedback of the distribution and intensity of seismic waves, we found that things were not that simple.

“There is no indication that the regional seismic action caused such peculiar and frequent changes in its underground structure. It is more likely to be mechanically driven.”

“Mechanically driven?” Lu Zhou hesitated slightly. He then said with a smile, “How is that possible?”

“I also think it’s impossible, but there doesn’t seem to be a better explanation.” Fan Tong’s face showed a headache. He said, “In theory, no matter how great a project is, it will still disintegrate over time. However, I really can’t think of any other explanation that can cause such strange changes in those tunnels.

“It’s almost as if... it’s alive!”

Chapter 1400: Barn of the Future

Earth, tens of millions of kilometers away.

Chen Yushan sat on the sofa in her living room, staring at the TV screen intently.

When she saw the landing module descend steadily from the air and landed on the surface of Mars, she could finally relax.

The news began to play, and the commentary from the host came from the TV.

“... According to the latest news from the Mars landing office, the second batch of boarders has successfully arrived at the scientific research base on the surface of Mars.

“According to the plan, they will take a rest at the Mars base, then set out to the ruins below The Gates of Hell mountain range in 24 hours to have a second contact with the extraterrestrial civilization...”

Han Mengqi was also sitting on the sofa. She was leaning on Chen Yushan’s shoulder and breathed a sigh of relief. She turned her face to her sister and spoke with a smile.

“Sis, I told you, Lu Zhou will be fine.”

"I hope so, but... I feel a little worried." Chen Yushan smiled embarrassedly and continued, "Speaking of which, has your movie finished filming?"

Chen Yushan had been looking forward to the movie very much.

According to the director, there would not be too many scenes of Lu Zhou's personal life, but seeing a character based on her appear on the screen still made her excited.

Especially since her cousin was playing as herself.

This made her look forward to it even more.

Han Mengqi scratched the back of her head and spoke vaguely.

"The filming is finished. It has been finalized and submitted for review. If the progress is fast, it should be done before the end of the year. The crew said that it would be released during the Chinese New Year, but it may be advanced or postponed... I am not very sure."

"Is it all finished?" Chen Yushan curiously continued to ask, "How did it feel? Are you interested in being a movie star?"

"No." Han Mengqi sighed. "I can't relate to the people on set at all. It's like we're not on the same wavelength... The laboratory and library are more suitable for me."

Maybe it was because of her relationship with Lu Zhou, she always felt that the people in the crew, from the leading actor to the craft services, were trying to please her. Because of this, it made her even more uncomfortable.

Every time she finished shooting her own scenes, she didn't want to spend another minute with the crew. She didn't even attend the celebration party after the filming.

Han Mengqi asked in a quiet voice embarrassingly, "Why are you laughing?"

"Nothing, this just sounds familiar."

Han Mengqi was slightly stunned. Her cheeks turned red.

Chen Yushan grabbed her cousin's hand and spoke with a smile.

“At the end of the year, will you come and be my bridesmaid?”

Han Mengqi snapped back to reality. The expression on her face was still a little stiff, but she still reluctantly spoke with a smile.

“Bridesmaid? Okay, okay...”

...

As the news of the success of China’s second manned boarding program was transmitted from Mars back to Earth, the three functional colony capsules deployed next to the Mars scientific research base station were approved by the staff of the research station. The silver-white titanium alloy pipes were connected together.

The scale of China’s colonial outpost on Mars had been expanded by four times. The maximum capacity had increased from 10 to 25.

As the Mars landing plan continued to develop, this number would be further expanded. When the Mars colony became the same size as the current Guanghan City, the entire Mars colonization plan would enter the next stage.

In the future, China would build a fully sustainable ecological base on Mars. This was also the ultimate goal of the road map made by Lu Zhou.

Lomonov walked past an alloy door with a transparent window. He was following Dr. Ming Wenzhe to visit around the base station. He suddenly stopped and looked inside the door.

He saw an extremely spacious greenhouse behind the door.

He could see the bottles of water tanks filled with liquid neatly displayed inside. Through the translucent shell, he could vaguely see the roots of plants soaked in the liquid.

He asked out of curiosity, “What is this?”

Ming Wenzhe explained, “Inside is the planting area, which mainly grows vegetables, potatoes, and corn.”

Lomonov showed a surprised expression on his face. He looked at him in disbelief.

“Can these crops survive?”

“Of course, why else would we spend so much effort to grow them?” Ming Wenzhe smiled and said, “These seeds are not ordinary seeds. They have undergone special breeding techniques at the lunar research base. Using an organic fertilizer, they grow very well. Although it is far from being completely self-sufficient, at least we can solve the supply of fresh vegetables by ourselves.”

Lomonov stared at the bottles and cans in the greenhouse, he went silent for a while before speaking.

“This is incredible... Achieving self-sufficiency on Mars. I always thought that this is a science fiction concept, only seen in movies.”

“This is nothing, it’s just the beginning. If you have seen the Mars colonization plan road map announced by the Mars landing office, achieving self-sufficiency is just the beginning. Our ultimate goal is not only to be self-sufficient but to also export food products. Academician Lu even mentioned in the work conference that, one day in the future, this place will become the second barn of Earth.”

Earth’s barn?

Lomonov spoke with a smile.

“How is that possible?”

“Freshwater resources, sufficient light and air... None of that is here, except dangerous cosmic rays!

“You plan to cultivate this area into ten thousand acres of fertile land? Stop kidding around, that is more difficult than turning the Sahara Desert into an oasis.”

Ming Wenzhe saw the disbelief on the Russian aerospace engineer’s face. He just smiled faintly and spoke casually.

“It is not impossible to transform the Sahara into an oasis. It is technically possible. In fact, since the breakthrough in controllable fusion technology, we have been trying to transform the deserts of the central and western regions into man-made livable areas. After the establishment of Houyi, this process

has entered the fast lane. It is expected to see results in the middle of the twentieth century.”

He paused for a moment and continued, “As for Mars, of course it is possible. We don’t plan to solve all problems in the 21st century, but looking at it in a century or even two centuries... Who knows what can happen?”

Lomonov was shocked by Dr. Ming Wenzhe’s statement. He spent a long time thinking before he slowly spoke.

“If you can really do it, it will be a miracle in the history of human civilization.”

Ming Wenzhe said with a smile, “Of course we can do it. In fact, we are already doing it.”

Just as the two were talking, the signal light of the wrist-mounted computer on Lomonov’s right arm suddenly flickered.

Dr. Ming Wenzhe cast a questioning look at him.

“What’s going on?”

“Academician Lu asked us to have a meeting, probably to discuss tomorrow’s action plan... Where is the meeting room?”

Dr. Ming Wenzhe smiled at Lomonov and spoke.

“We were just there. I’ll take you.”