

Scholar 291

Chapter 291

Therefore, he decided not to go through with the name change.

The next day, the first American Mathematics Society conference of the year kicked off at Berkeley.

The university students from California even postponed their protest to a week later, to accommodate this conference.

Although Princeton professors did not care much about politics, not all professors were like that.

For example, Professor Tao.

Although his students describe Tao as a tolerant, awkward, and humble person, he was a completely different person online. His online persona was completely different than what he was like in real life; Tao loved to discuss world politics.

Not long ago, he used logic to prove that Trump could not be a good president. Many media outlets reported on this piece of news. Trump's reply on Twitter was interesting, "Tao Zhexuan claims that I'm not a suitable president, but the liar Hillary is. The truth is that Tao Zhexuan is targeting me because he's a failed analyst. He can't even prove the Kakeya needle problem, sad!"

Of course, that was what it was.

Tao Zhexuan had not posted on his blog recently. It seemed that he was not in a good mood.

Of course, although the students and professors in California did not like this president, that did not affect the atmosphere of the academic conference. After all, academia was pure, it did not involve politics.

Lu Zhou received a pen and other small souvenirs from the entrance and walked past the poster display area. He went directly to a lecture hall on the second floor. When he found a seat on the back row, he then sat down.

He discovered that Professor Tao was sitting next to him.

Lu Zhou looked at him in surprise and asked, "You're here as well?"

Professor Tao smiled and said, "This is a good chance to look at your progress. Of course, I wouldn't miss it."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "It'd be best if you can help us solve it."

The report began.

The audience in the lecture hall stopped talking and turned their attention to the speaker on the podium.

Vera had a blonde ponytail and wore a student-looking outfit. She stood nervously on stage as she squeezed her tiny hands.

With the help from the staff, she opened the PowerPoint presentation and the thesis problem appeared in the center of the projector screen.

[Complex analysis study on the angular valley conjecture equivalence equation
$$h(z^3)=h(z^6)+\{h(z^2)+\lambda h(\lambda z^2)+\lambda^2 h(\lambda^2 z^2)\}/3z]$$

"Come on Vera, you can do this..."

Vera thought about her supervisor's expectations of herself and took a deep breath. She cheered herself on in her mind.

Then, she spoke.

“The analytic function solution in the unit disc $\{z: |z| < 1\}$ takes the form $h(z) = h_0 + h_1 z / (1 - z)$, where h_0 and h_1 are complex constants...”

Although Vera was very nervous in the beginning, as the report continued, she found out that the pressure was starting to lessen.

She felt surprised.

The ideas and thoughts were flowing out of her brain, conveying them was as easy as breathing.

She did not need to worry if the audience understood her as she could do it to the Q&A session.

Right now, what she had to do, was to portray her viewpoint to the audience in the lecture hall...

Lu Zhou sat in the last row of the lecture hall, and like the audience, he was also listening intently to the report. Gradually, a smile appeared on his face.

He could see that Vera spent a lot of effort to overcome the fear in her heart and stand on stage.

The results were quite satisfactory. She was totally in the zone.

It seemed that his worries were redundant.

Tao Zhexuan sat next to Lu Zhou and looked at Vera; his face was full of surprise.

“Are you sure this was your student’s work?”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Of course, I have been busy with computational chemistry recently. At most, I gave them a direction to work toward."

Lu Zhou had no reason to lie, and Tao Zhexuan believed him.

However, Tao Zhexuan still could not help but feel astonished. This thesis really did not look like work from a master's student. Even though Tao Zhexuan knew Vera, he was the one that wrote her Princeton recommendation letter.

Her rate of improvement was too amazing.

Tao Zhexuan said emotionally, "Yesterday, you said that you planned on making your students solve Collatz conjecture, I thought it was a joke. But now it seems that you are serious."

Lu Zhou smiled as he said arrogantly, "She is my student after all."

For this kind of young scholar reports, most of the big names were more tolerant. They would not point out anything unless it was an obvious mistake.

Mathematics conferences and MRS materials science conferences were completely different in this regard.

After answering a few questions, the report was successfully concluded and the audience broke into applause.

Vera sighed in relief and smiled at the audience to show her gratitude.

Perhaps it was because of her dazzling smile, the applause started to get even more thunderous.

Some young guys even whistled.

Lu Zhou looked at Vera on stage and smiled with satisfaction.

It was like Vera was his small sapling – one that he carefully cultivated to grow stronger and stronger.

Maybe this is one of the joys of being a professor?

Tao Zhexuan looked at Lu Zhou weirdly, and he felt something was off.

Lu Zhou noticed his friend's expression and asked, "What?"

"Nothing," Tao Zhexuan shook his head. He hesitated for a moment before saying, "Although it's none of my business... I announced my relationship with Laura after she graduated."

Lu Zhou:...?

What the hell?!

...

After the report, Lu Zhou stood outside the lecture hall and saw Vera.

The little girl's face was blushing and her eyes were sparkling with excitement.

Lu Zhou knew exactly how she felt. That kind of excitement could not be contained no matter how many deep breaths she took.

He walked over and greeted her.

When Vera heard the familiar voice, she turned around and saw Lu Zhou. Her eyes suddenly widened and she looked at Lu Zhou with a surprised expression.

She originally planned to call Lu Zhou and tell him the good news. She did not expect him to be watching her in the lecture hall!

She did not know what to say.

“Professor?! You, you are here?!”

“Of course,” Lu Zhou smiled. He then added, “My cute student finally took the courage and did a report on stage. How can I ever miss this moment?”

The little girl’s cheeks were fiery red, and she seemed to have a lot to say.

However, she could only mutter out one sentence.

“I did it, I really did it!”

“You did. Nicely done,” said Lu Zhou. He gave her an encouraging look and said, “Keep up the good work. Maybe one day you’ll be on the stage of the International Congress of Mathematicians conference!”

Vera’s golden ponytail swayed back and forth like a squirrel.

She looked at Lu Zhou with a grateful expression as she nodded: “...”

Chapter 292

However, the little girl did not listen to him.

At last, Lu Zhou gave up and let her be.

Honestly, he had never seen such a timid and fearful girl.

He was still a long way from developing her into an outstanding scholar.

Halfway through the banquet, the dance floor started to play elegant music.

With the sound of the music, the people in the banquet hall began to slowly migrate to the dance floor. Lu Zhou was finally freed from the crowd.

He took a glass of champagne and sat down.

He was listening to music while enjoying his champagne. Suddenly, a tall American girl walked over and bravely started a conversation.

“Hello, Professor Lu, I am Hannah. It is a pleasure meeting you.”

Lu Zhou replied, “Hello, Miss Hannah, what’s the matter?”

Hannah, “If it’s nothing too difficult for you... Can I sit here?”

“Of course you can,” answered Lu Zhou. He looked at her with confusion as he did not know what she wanted.

“The thing is that I’m very interested in mathematical physics. Next year, I want to apply for a mathematical physics master’s degree at Stanford,” said Hannah embarrassedly. She looked at Lu Zhou and blushed before she said, “I have always admired your story and I didn’t expect you to see you at this dinner party... Can you please write a letter of recommendation for me?”

Oh, this is what you want?

For foreign professors, writing a letter of recommendations was no big deal. Many professors would write dozens of them at the end of every semester. They did not give it out for free, but most of the time they were happy to write them.

“Of course I can, but don’t think it is going to be so easy. I can give you a chance. It is up to you to perform,” said Lu Zhou. He looked at her and smiled before he asked in a relaxed tone, “Then, are you prepared?”

Hannah was surprised by Lu Zhou’s response. She clearly was not mentally prepared. Her brain even froze for a few seconds.

“Wait? What?” Hannah was stunned. She panicked and looked around before saying, “But... Okay, I’m ready.”

She took a deep breath and calmed herself down.

Miss Hannah looked down at the table. She bit her lip and whispered, “I’m... prepared.”

Although Lu Zhou was a professor, he was not much older than her. Thus, she did not feel too much psychological pressure. In fact, she could tell that Lu Zhou liked her.

However, this was too direct, so she was not fully prepared.

However, this could be her only chance...

“OK, it seems that you are ready,” said Lu Zhou. He nodded with satisfaction. Then he looked at Vera and said, “Vera, come up with a complex functions problem to test her. Don’t make it too difficult. A question along the undergraduate level is fine.”

Vera: “...”

Hannah: ???

...

Complex functions and partial differential equations were the two foundations of physics. However, the latter was a bit too difficult for an undergraduate student. A complex functions question was more reasonable.

Although most professors would write a recommendation letter as long as the student was “sincere”, Lu Zhou felt that he should have his own unique requirements.

It should not be that easy to get a recommendation letter from him.

If someone did not know Lu Zhou personally, they would have to do a test!

Although Vera was muddled, she still followed her supervisor’s requests.

There was no paper or pen in the banquet hall, so she went to the hotel lobby with Hannah.

Lu Zhou was finally alone. He leaned back on his chair and relaxed.

However, God did not let Lu Zhou catch a break. The second the two girls left, the president of the American Mathematical Society, Mr. Francis, walked over with another man.

“Hello, Professor Lu, we meet again,” said Mr. Francis as he looked at Lu Zhou with a friendly smile.

He was the one that gave Lu Zhou the Best Young Speaker Award and \$10,000 USD in Princeton. Although they did not communicate much academically, they still had a good relationship.

Lu Zhou stood up and shook hands with him. He then looked at the man standing next to Francis.

Lu Zhou felt this guy looked familiar, but he did not know who he was.

“Long time no see... This is?”

Mr. Francis smiled and said, “Let me introduce you to Elon Musk.”

Elon Musk?

Lu Zhou was totally shocked.

He had no idea why Musk was here.

“It’s nice to meet you, Professor Lu,” said Musk. He looked at Lu Zhou and smiled as he said, “Although this is our first time meeting, I’ve admired your work for a long time.”

Lu Zhou looked at him and shook his hand as he replied, “Hello, it is nice to meet you as well.”

Elon Musk was on a completely different level.

Musk received a bachelor’s degree in economics from the University of Pennsylvania, and within a year, he received a double degree in physics.

In 1995, due to his passion for science, he enrolled at Stanford University to study a PhD in materials science and physics.

However, maybe he did not like the title of being a genius, he only stayed at Stanford for two days before leaving the campus and went to Silicon Valley.

Most people knew what happened next. Within 10 years, he founded Paypal, SpaceX, and Tesla. His name was legendary in Silicon Valley.

Whether it was online payments, renewable energy vehicles, or ambitious “Falcon 9” rockets, Musk did it all. He made his ideas come to life and changed the technology industry.

Of course, all of his ideas were on the technical side.

Musk and Lu Zhou were two different types of people in this regard. One was a CEO, the other was a genius, one was an engineer, the other was an academic.

It was like “Iron man” and “Mister Fantastic”.

As such, Lu Zhou was confused about why Musk was here.

He had never heard Musk’s name in the mathematics world.

Mr. Francis saw that Lu Zhou was confused. He smiled and said, “Mr. Musk is a sponsor of this academic conference. He heard you were attending and came all the way from Palo Alto.”

Lu Zhou looked at Musk and said, “Mr. Musk is also interested in mathematics?”

“Of course, science is inseparable from mathematical physics. Although my research in mathematics isn’t as deep as in physics, I still greatly admire mathematicians. When I was studying my physics degree at Pennsylvania, the most troublesome thing I came across wasn’t the physics problems, it was the mathematics problems.”

Musk smiled at Lu Zhou and said something surprising.

“However, I’m more interested in you than in mathematics.”

Lu Zhou:...?

Chapter 293

Musk smiled and said, “Thanks, I do want to talk with Professor Lu.”

After Mr. Francis left, Musk sat down next to Lu Zhou and spoke in a thoughtful manner, “When I was studying economics at the University of Pennsylvania, I thought about the future of mankind, the problems that mankind will face. I came to three conclusions: energy, internet, and space exploration.”

Musk looked at Lu Zhou seriously and said, “I’m an engineer, you’re a scholar. From your perspective, what is the key to solving these three problems?”

Lu Zhou felt like he was listening to Shinichi Mochizuki doing a report. They were probably the type of people that got lost in their own imaginative universe. Although there was nothing wrong with this, it was difficult for some people to understand them.

Lu Zhou thought for a bit before he said, “I’m not sure about the internet problem, but for the other two, I think the issue is on the materials.”

The bottleneck of energy and space technology was in many areas and disciplines, so it was not only materials science. However, the interesting thing was that if the materials problem was solved, many other complex problems would become a lot more simple.

Whether it was photovoltaic solar panels, nuclear power generators, lithium-sulfur, or lithium-air batteries, the most crucial part was the materials.

Musk smiled and said, “Then it seems that we have the same opinion. My engineering team also came to this conclusion. We plan on investing \$10 billion USD to build a material research institute in Silicon Valley. If you’re interested, I want to hire you as the chief researcher of this research institute.”

\$10 billion dollars?!

Lu Zhou was so shocked by this number that he did not even pay attention to the second half of Musk’s statement.

Tesla’s revenue isn’t even this high, right?

“Your idea is interesting. I believe that the materials science community will be thrilled to have a generous billionaire in the field. However, no offense, but how does Tesla plan on getting this money?” asked Lu Zhou. He remembered hearing that Tesla’s financial situation was not good.

Musk said, “We don’t have it now, but we’ll if you come on board.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

He did not know what to say.

...

Lu Zhou had to admit that for any researcher, Musk’s proposal would be very tempting.

If this was Sarrot, he would not even hesitate for a second. He would definitely take his lithium-air battery project and run to Musk.

However, for Lu Zhou...

He was not that interested.

“I’m sorry, but I’m afraid I can’t help you.”

Musk did not expect Lu Zhou to reject this attractive proposal. He frowned and said, “Are you sure you don’t want to think about it? I can promise that as long as you come on board, you’ll never worry about research funding again.”

“I’m a mathematics professor, and materials science is not my cup of tea. You should find someone else,” said Lu Zhou. He paused for a second before adding, “Also, even if you grant me a large research fund, my research wouldn’t even need that much money.”

Although Musk still wanted to convince Lu Zhou, he saw that Lu Zhou had no intentions to change his mind. Musk could only helplessly sigh as he said, "Okay then, I have to say that you just missed a chance to change the world... Of course, if you ever change your mind, you can find me."

Lu Zhou said, "Sure."

Musk gave Lu Zhou his business card. The two then continued to talk for a bit but Musk had lost his enthusiasm.

Musk had previously watched Lu Zhou's Crafoord Prize interview where Lu Zhou said that he "will use mathematics to change science". Musk then saw Lu Zhou made a breakthrough in the anode material industry and thought Lu Zhou must be the same type of person as him, but now it seemed that was not the case.

The pair continued to talk for a bit before Musk made an excuse to leave and walked away.

After Musk left, the surrounding area quieted down.

Lu Zhou poured another glass of champagne and tried to enjoy the banquet.

Suddenly, Vera and Hannah returned to the banquet venue.

Lu Zhou could tell from Hannah's excited face that she solved the problem.

Lu Zhou looked at Vera and asked, "How was the result?"

Vera nodded and said softly, "I gave her an undergrad level complex functions question. Within half an hour, she successfully solved the problem."

Lu Zhou nodded and looked at Hannah as he said, "Nicely done. Then congratulations, Miss Hannah. You've passed my test. Give me your email and tell me the supervisor you want to apply to."

Lu Zhou was a man of his word.

“Okay! Thank you, thank you so much!” Hannah excitedly nodded her head and took out a paper and pen.

Generally speaking, recommendation letters were directly sent from the professor to the supervisor. The student would never actually read the letter.

Thus, a foreign professor’s recommendation letters were more influential.

Their recommendation letters could determine the future of a student.

However, most professors were happy to recommend their students with potential. After all, watching their students grow to become a brilliant scholar was one of the joys of being a professor.

Vera looked at Hannah walking away and gently squeezed her fists.

She took a deep breath, and finally got the courage to speak, “Professor.”

Having just completed a good deed, Lu Zhou was in a good mood. He asked, “What’s up?”

Vera opened her mouth as if she was about to say something.

However, all of a sudden, a piece of farewell music started to play from the dance floor.

The people from the dance floor started to leave reluctantly.

Clearly, the dance party was over.

It was like Vera missed out on something as her big, bright eyes sadly looked away.

Vera lowered her head and said, "Nothing..."

I just wanted to dance with you...

Chapter 294

...

[White Sheridan. 35 years old, male, PhD in management from the University of Pennsylvania. Served as head of intellectual property department at Verizon, five years work experience...]

Lu Zhou placed the resume down and looked at the man sitting opposite him.

"Your resume is great. However, the one thing I don't understand is that Verizon offered you a US\$200,000 per year salary, but you decided to quit."

White shrugged and said, "Head of the Intellectual Property Department at Verizon is a good position, but it can't give me a sense of career accomplishment. There is nowhere for me to go. Compared to the other executives, I'm more like a lawyer."

Lu Zhou: "What about now? The main business of Star Sky Technology is patent management, so your work will probably be the same as before, there won't be much change."

White didn't hide his intentions. Instead, he smiled and said, "You're right. However, Star Sky Technology can give me a US\$300,000 per year salary, and Verizon can't match that."

US\$300,000 per year salary definitely counted as upper class in America. According to Glassdoor statistics, even Microsoft's Chief Development Manager only earned US\$294,000 per year.

Of course, that was only an estimate, it didn't include benefits and bonuses.

In short, a US\$300,000 salary was an irresistible offer for White.

Dreams were important, but money was even more important.

Lu Zhou was satisfied with this honest answer.

Although it would be better for White to talk about potential development plans for the company and corporate culture, he didn't do this. The most important thing about White was his impressive resume and his extensive experience in patent management.

Lu Zhou smiled and reached out his right hand.

"Congratulations on your new job. I hope we can build a better Star Sky Technology under your management."

White smiled and shook Lu Zhou's hand.

"I promise you we can definitely do it."

...

Lu Zhou originally wanted Star Sky Technology to be a company similar to Qualcomm which focused on research and development and to become the whale of the industry as well as investing all profits into scientific research.

After giving White a brief overview of Star Sky Technology's development strategy, Lu Zhou ended this meeting.

The rest could be discussed through email.

After Lu Zhou finished his work with Star Sky Technology, he put his attention back on the academic conference.

Maybe it was because one of the greatest additive number theory problems, Goldbach's conjecture, was solved, recently there had been an influx in number theory research theses.

Many scholars had done research on Waring's Conjecture using the Group Structure Method and achieved great results.

For example, a PhD student from Columbia University was reporting his research results at the conference. He used the Group Structure Method to research on the $g(6)$ value range.

Although he was far from solving the problem, his results were still inspiring, and he had received thunderous applause from the audience.

Lu Zhou was happy at all this.

Solving the Goldbach's conjecture wasn't very practical in and of itself.

However, if the tools that Lu Zhou created when solving Goldbach's conjecture could be used by many other people, then his thesis in Annual Mathematics would be in the textbooks used by the future generation.

In a blink of an eye, a week had passed, and the academic conference came to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Francis stood on the podium on stage. As usual, he used a gentle and steady voice to introduce himself to the young scholars in the venue.

"... Thank you, everyone, for coming to this mathematics conference. Thank you, Parker, Tesla... for sponsoring this event." Mr. Francis adjusted his glasses and looked at the young scholars before he said, "Now it is time to give out the best young speaker award. I'm getting old now, let's get the important stuff out of the way."

The crowd smiled and gave Francis a round of applause.

Mr. Francis cleared his throat and said, "The best young speaker of this academic conference is...

"Vera Pulyuy from Princeton!"

The crowd burst into applause.

Vera stood next to Lu Zhou; her white cheeks instantly turned red.

She wasn't prepared for this surprise at all. Lu Zhou patted her on the back and said, "Go on."

He then gave her an encouraging look as he added, "This is your moment."

"... Okay!"

Vera looked at Lu Zhou gratefully and nodded. She walked through the crowd and got on the stage.

Lu Zhou looked at her tiny figure and couldn't help but think.

It's good to be young...

Lu Zhou could still remember when he first won this prize. He was so excited that he couldn't sleep for days. Jin Ling University and Yan University both congratulated him.

In addition to the honor, the award also carried a US\$10,000 prize.

At that time, the US\$10,000 prize was a huge amount to him.

However, Lu Zhou didn't realize that among these scholars, he was one of the youngest ones, so he had no room to call Vera young...

Vera stood on the stage. Although she looked a bit nervous, she was still doing a lot better than when she first did her report.

The award presenter was the mathematics professor at Berkeley, Crafoord Prize winner, Tao Zhexuan. Vera was in Tao Zhexuan's partial differential equations class before.

Tao Zhexuan handed the certificate to Vera and said, "Congratulations, Miss Vera."

Vera nodded nervously as she replied, "Thank you."

Tao Zhexuan nodded as well.

He suddenly remembered something, so he continued to speak, "I remember that a year ago that you told me you really admired Professor Lu's work and hoped that I could write a recommendation letter for you. At that time, I thought I made the correct decision; I still think I did, but I hope you don't make me regret my decision."

Vera was stunned; she had a confused expression.

"Professor? I'm not sure what you are trying to say?"

Tao Zhexuan shook his head and said, "Nothing, I just hope that you only admire his knowledge. In fact, I admire him as well. His talent in pure and applied mathematics is one of the best I have ever seen. However, his youth is the most valuable thing he has.

"His name will likely be noted down in history.

"And your recklessness might lead to some unwanted results.

“I hope that I had misunderstood, but if I didn’t, I hope that no matter what feelings you have for him, you should wait until after you graduate before you express those feelings.”

Chapter 295

“This guy really can’t take a break. He had just completed a big project, and now, he had already found something else to do.”

Although Academician Xiang Huanan didn’t say who “this guy” was, the other person sitting in his office knew what Xiang Huanan was talking about.

Academician Wang Yuping was drinking tea as well. He then casually said to his friend, “Young people are full of energy, they won’t take a break.”

Academician Xiang placed the printed thesis on the table, smiled, and said, “Collatz conjecture.”

Printed on the A4 paper was Vera’s thesis that she submitted to the American Mathematical Society: [The equivalent equation for the Collatz conjecture $h(z^3) = h(z^6) + \{h(z^2) + \lambda h(\lambda z^2) + \lambda^2 h(\lambda^2 z^2)\}$]. And Complex analysis of

Both them knew that Miss Vera Pulyuy was a student of Lu Zhou at Princeton. Lu Zhou was the second author on the thesis.

Academician Wang Yuping was slightly surprised as he said, “Collatz conjecture? That thing is not much simpler than Goldbach’s conjecture, right?”

Although Collatz conjecture wasn’t as famous as Goldbach’s conjecture, it wasn’t much lower in difficulty than Goldbach’s conjecture. In some sense, it was even more difficult than Goldbach’s conjecture.

The reason for its difficulty was because unlike Goldbach’s conjecture, it didn’t have countless predecessors paving its path of research.

The reason why Lu Zhou was able to solve Goldbach's conjecture was due to the countless scholars that had previously built the tower of Goldbach's conjecture. On the other hand, the Collatz conjecture had no existing tower.

At best, it had a foundation.

Lu Zhou couldn't just "disassemble" the Goldbach's conjecture tower and use it to build the Collatz conjecture tower. He needed to create new bricks and new materials.

Academician Xiang smiled and said, "Who knows, I'm not a number theory mathematician. If you're curious, why don't you just ask him?"

"I'll have to ask him next time I see him. But this Lu Zhou kid is impressive, even his students are geniuses." Academician Wang couldn't help but shake his head, and he said, "It's unfortunate that Lu Zhou didn't come to Yan University."

Academician Xiang smiled and said, "How is it unfortunate? He's an internationally renowned scholar now. Compare to Yan University, it'd be great if he even returned to the country."

If foreign Chinese researchers were willing to return to China and join the Thousand People Initiative, they could earn several times the salary of domestic researchers. Many researchers who returned were granted a million USD in research funds; this was something unimaginable in America.

Although the Thousand People Initiative had achieved great results, it still wasn't attractive enough for world-class scholars.

"I'm just saying," Academician Wang shook his head and said, "Mr. Lu's teaching experience at Princeton, and his talent, combined with Yan University's resources, can single-handedly build a world-class mathematics department at Yan University. But if it was Jin Ling University instead..."

Academician Wang didn't finish his words, but his meaning was self-evident.

Constructing a building from scratch was undoubtedly more difficult than renovating a ready-built building.

Academician Xiang understood his old friend's words, but he didn't make any comments and only laughed.

In the past, he agreed with Academician Xiang; he thought that Jin Ling University was not a good choice. He even gave Lu Zhou an offer last time. But now looking back, he suddenly felt like Jin Ling University wasn't too bad of a decision.

Neither the Chinese Academy of Sciences nor Yan University could give Lu Zhou the amount of space for development as well as the freedom he needed, but Jin Ling University could.

Jin Ling University was also ranked Top 40 in the country, and like Yan University, it also had great resources.

Although Yan University had more resources than Jin Ling University, Lu Zhou chose Jin Ling University due to its creative freedom.

Maybe Lu Zhou could build an entire mathematics department himself.

No one knew for sure.

...

After the spring American Mathematical Society's conference ended, Lu Zhou finally got on a flight back home.

This time he didn't tell anyone he was coming back. He secretly bought a plane ticket, got on the plane, hopped onto the train, and got back to his home in Jiangcheng.

A bright and loud voice welcomed him back, "Oh, bro, you're back?! Let me take your luggage!"

Xiao Tong ditched her gaming teammates, climbed down the sofa, and ran toward the door.

Lu Zhou looked at her excited expression and smiled.

“Your gift’s in the luggage, go get it yourself.”

Lu Xiaotong received a gift from her brother every year; this was a Lu family’s tradition.

Although it wasn’t a particularly expensive gift, it was still a joyful experience for Xiao Tong.

Lu Zhou gave his luggage to his sister, changed into slippers, and sat on the living room sofa.

After a while, Xiao Tong found the gift and happily walked into her room.

Lu Zhou gift for her was a Swiss cosmetics brand makeup set. He didn’t know makeup well, but thankfully his student, Hardy, was surprisingly knowledgeable on this subject.

Xiao Tong came back to the living room and sat on the sofa next to Lu Zhou. She then picked up her phone and prepared to start a new match.

Lu Zhou looked at the screen and saw that her ranking in the game hasn’t increased, so he asked casually, “How were your exams?”

Xiao Tong replied proudly, “Ah, I’m obviously a genius student as university courses are way too easy.”

Lu Zhou was amused by this.

When he was in his first year, he also naively thought that the course content was all high school material.

Especially English.

The college entrance requirement was only at fourth level English, it was nothing more than rote learning.

However, the second semester came and the difficulty increased exponentially.

Then, the real struggle began when core and elective classes came.

However, Lu Zhou didn't feel the struggle at all. His three roommates were the ones that did. When he started his core subjects, most of the material was too easy for him.

"... And I'm a university student now, stop asking about my grades all day. Don't get the impression that I play on my phone all day. I'm on a holiday, do you get it? I study a lot during the semester," Xiao Tong replied before she quickly started the next game and left the spawn fountain.

Lu Zhou certainly believed his sister.

There was no way that Xiao Tong could be stuck in Bronze for an entire year when even his "mental retardation" Al, Xiao Ai, could climb out of Bronze. She had to have been studying instead of playing Kings of Glory.

Xiao Tong suddenly smiled sneakily as she teased her brother, "Oh yeah, bro, don't talk about me all the time, how are you?"

Lu Zhou didn't notice her sneaky smile when he replied, "Me? I'm okay, my career and academics are going steady..."

Xiao Tong immediately asked, "What about your love life?"

Lu Zhou: "..."

F*ck sake!

You're doing this intentionally, aren't you?

Chapter 296

Xiao Tong was looking a little depressed, so Lu Zhou left her alone and tried to switch the topic of conversation.

"Stop playing games, tell me about your university life."

Xiao Tong's eyes suddenly lit up, and she started to blabber.

Lu Zhou was surprised; although she was a slob at home, she was a "model student" at school.

She ranked first in her class and third in the year. Not just that, she was also the leader of the 2017 finance club and was given a national scholarship.

Xiao Tong was right, she wasn't a disappointment to the Lu family at all. Lu Zhou didn't have to worry about her living expenses anymore due to her scholarship, and her performance in her first year was even better than Lu Zhou's.

Normally, the national scholarship was for second-year students. To receive the scholarship as a first-year student meant that one was either really smart or had connections...

Xiao Tong obviously belonged to the former. She earned the recognition of her teachers through her relentless work ethic. In fighting for the scholarship, she spent half a month preparing the PowerPoint materials for the oral defense.

Lu Zhou was genuinely happy for her.

She was really trying her best.

It would be best not to reveal the real reason why she received the scholarship.

As long as she was happy...

...

There were quite a few changes to Lu Zhou's home.

Although it was still in the same neighborhood, the house had been renovated and looked much more beautiful than before.

In the beginning, Old Lu persisted that he would never spend the money from Lu Zhou's card and that he couldn't be persuaded.

Then around July, Lu Zhou told his old man that his salary was US\$400,000 after tax. The old man finally changed his mind and accepted his son's offering.

The timing was perfect; Xiao Tong was off to university so the old couple refurbished their house.

Actually, Lu Zhou's initial idea was to sell the house and move into a better neighborhood. However, his parents were strongly against this idea.

His father said that he had been living in this house for more than 20 years and that he was emotionally attached to this place.

In the old man's eyes, this was the best neighborhood. The environment was lively, he was familiar with his neighbors, and there was a place for him to fish nearby.

If they moved into a high rise apartment, they would have more neighbors, but it would be cold and quiet. Plus their children were not around, what if they got sick?

Lu Zhou thought about it and it made sense.

Still, he would definitely choose to live in an apartment, and he believed that Xiao Tong would agree.

Perhaps this was because of them being in different generations.

“One day, if you ever overworked yourself in that big city, you can come and rest in this home. Don’t stare at your phone all day; your father and I never use that thing, and we’re doing just fine.”

Lu Zhou was eating dinner with the family when he heard this.

He swore that he didn’t even use his phone that much. He only used it to share the joy with his fans through Weibo and WeChat.

His mother’s words should be directed at Xiao Tong instead.

Old Lu asked, “Is it cold over there?”

Lu Zhou: “It’s very cold. I got off in Shanghai and had to take my jacket off. Jiangling is a lot warmer than Princeton; it’s so nice here.”

Fang Mei was worried, and she asked, “Is it snowing there?”

Lu Zhou: “Yeah, it is. It’s been snowing since Christmas.”

Fang Mei said, “It must be very cold then, remember to put on your sweater and trousers, don’t catch a cold.”

Although Lu Zhou knew that his parents were only concerned about him, he was still a little annoyed.

Lu Zhou helplessly said, "Okay... I know."

Old Lu asked, "Is there a heater at your place?"

Lu Zhou said, "My house doesn't have central heating, but it does have a fireplace. When the doors and windows are closed, the house isn't cold at all."

Xiao Tong didn't speak for this whole time, but then she suddenly got excited and asked, "Fireplace? Bro, did you move out? How big is the new house?"

"It's pretty big, but not too expensive." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "If you want, you can take a vacation there this summer."

"You bought a house over there?" Old Lu looked at Lu Zhou in surprise as he asked, "So you're not coming back?"

Lu Zhou said without thinking, "Of course I'm coming back. Jin Ling University is still waiting for me to save them. As for the house, I can just sell it when the time comes, it's not that expensive anyway."

Old Lu said, "Oh, wow! Money really changes you, look at you showing off."

"It's a pity to sell the house. Just keep it and rent it out." Fang Mei's concern was somewhere else and she continued, "Xiao Tong can live there when she goes overseas to study."

Lu Zhou's parents were oddly attached to houses, and it made Lu Zhou speechless.

He would have to pay a yearly property tax if he didn't sell the house. Princeton's housing market wasn't looking good, and he was a "foreigner", so he couldn't take advantage of the New Jersey tax exemption policy.

It was fine if he worked there as his income tax covered his property tax. However, once he returned to China, Princeton wouldn't pay his taxes anymore.

Xiao Tong rolled her eyes and said, "Mom, how many times do I have to tell you, my major is finance, not mathematics. Even if I wanted to study abroad, I would go to the University of Pennsylvania instead, okay?"

Old Lu said, "What the heck is the University of Pennsylvania? Isn't Princeton better?"

Ever since he heard that Princeton's mathematics department was better than Harvard, Harvard's ranking in his heart had dropped significantly. In his mind, Princeton was the best.

Xiao Tong was speechless; she started to regret arguing with her parents.

Actually, this wasn't Old Lu's fault. It was difficult to explain to people the difference between university rankings and course rankings.

Thankfully, Lu Zhou coughed and ended the argument.

"Princeton doesn't have a business school..."

...

After coming back to China, Lu Zhou was finally able to relax and not worry about his work.

However, a scholar of his level couldn't escape from work.

Jin Ling University seemed to have estimated that Lu Zhou would come back for Chinese New Year, and in less than two days since he got back, he received a call from Jin Ling University.

Unsurprisingly, it was Professor Tang who called.

Old Tang smiled and said, "Principal Xu told me to ask if you were coming back for New Year's this year. So, when are you planning on coming back?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "I'm already home."

Old Tang was astonished, and he asked, "What? You're already back?"

Lu Zhou: "Yeah, I came back after the conference at Berkeley. The schedule was a little tight, so I didn't tell anyone."

Of course, the reason why Lu Zhou didn't tell anyone was actually that he didn't want anyone to bother him.

He only wanted to quietly enjoy his new year and didn't want any trouble.

Old Tang sighed and said, "I wanted to buy you a meal before New Year's Day, but now it seems that isn't possible."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Are you the one inviting me or is the school inviting me? If you are, I'll come to see you three days after New Year's Day."

"You must be kidding! How are you going to buy a ticket? Just rest at home, I don't need you to visit me." Old Tang paused for a second before he said, "Principal Xu told me to ask you when you are back because according to him, he has something to discuss with you."

Lu Zhou said in a serious tone, "Is it important?"

Old Tang said seriously, "Don't know if it's important, but it's definitely something good for you."

Lu Zhou the replied politely, "Okay then, on the fifteenth day, I'll visit Jin Ling University before I go back to Princeton!"

Chapter 297

When Lu Zhou heard him mentioned Academician Xu, he was a little surprised.

There was only one Academician Xu in Jin Ling University, and that person was Principal Xu. Although he wasn't shocked by the fact that Principal Xu was picking him up, he was still a little surprised.

Lu Zhou thought for a long time; he couldn't remember making any headlines recently.

That lithium dendrites thesis published in Nature was six months ago.

It seemed that he really had to find something to do.

...

Lu Zhou didn't want the two professors to wait for long, so he walked with Xiao Tong out of the train station.

Lu Zhou saw two black sedans parked outside the main entrance. He knew this was his ride.

Xiao Tong was a little muddled by this situation, so she nervously grabbed her brother's arm and asked in a low voice, "Bro, who are these people?"

Lu Zhou said, "It's your principal, you won't know the other people."

Xiao Tong: "Oh... What?!"

While the two were talking, the car door opened. Academician Xu and Professor Tang got out of the car and waved at Lu Zhou.

"Professor Lu, you have finally arrived."

Lu Zhou shook Academician Xu's hand, smiled, and said, "Sorry to keep you waiting."

Academician Xu smiled and looked at Xiao Tong, who was standing behind Lu Zhou. He then said with a welcoming tone, "Student Lu Xiaotong, I have some things to discuss with your brother, how about you let Teacher Hou send you back to school first?"

Teacher Hou was probably the driver in the other car.

It was obvious that the school knew that Lu Zhou would come back with his sister, that was why they sent two cars. This confirmed Lu Zhou's suspicion that Jin Ling University had something cumbersome planned for him.

As for Xiao Tong, she was completely dumbfounded.

She knew her brother was nutty, but she didn't expect the principal to know her name.

She looked at Lu Zhou. When he nodded at her, she dragged her luggage and walked to the other car.

Once Lu Zhou and Academician Xu sat in the backseat, the car started to move and Lu Zhou asked, "Academician Xu, can you give me a clue? What is going on?"

"It's actually not a big deal." Academician Xu paused for a second before he said, "A month ago, the Ministry of Science and Technology of China joined forces with several other ministries to research and introduce a new energy technology development program. They decided to develop in the direction of photovoltaic technology. Due to the 13th Five-Year Plan, the Jin Ling University is also participating in this program.

"The city bureau also supports Beijing's decision. They plan on building a high-tech development area along the Jin Ling University to Jin Ling City's subway line. This is to integrate talents from various universities in Jinling. The leadership team from Beijing took this matter seriously and sent a team down here.

The team's leader is the leader of the Energy Bureau. He heard that you are going back to Princeton soon, so he assigned you to work on the first part of this plan."

Academician Xu looked at Lu Zhou and smiled.

Lu Zhou had one reaction.

You're telling me this isn't a big deal?

Lu Zhou gulped and said, "Did he say why he wanted me here?"

Academician Xu smiled and said, "I don't know the specifics, but I promise you it is a good thing."

...

Lu Zhou certainly believed Academician Xu's words.

The squad returned to school and went to an office in the chemistry research building. Lu Zhou saw Academician Li and someone he knew.

He met him at Boston before.

"Professor Lu, we meet again," Lu Kaimin smiled at Lu Zhou and reached out his right hand.

Lu Zhou smiled and shook his hand as he said, "Director Lu, hello."

Lu Kaimin visited Lu Zhou in Boston and asked his opinions on the development of lithium battery technology.

Although this time Lu Kaimin was here as a government official, he didn't look high and mighty at all.

He was an internationally renowned scholar, therefore he was amiable enough to treat a young man with great respect.

“Don’t refer to me as director, just call me Mr. Lu.” Mr. Lu released his hands and said, “I originally planned to visit you in Jiangling, but I still had some things to do here. Thanks for coming here, Professor Lu.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “All good, I wanted to visit my old school anyway.”

Old Lu nodded and put on a serious expression as he said, “After talking to you in Boston last time, I went to Beijing and gave your opinions to the higher-ups. After consulting an expert team, our final conclusion is that lithium-sulfur batteries are the most suitable choice.”

Lu Zhou wasn’t surprised by this decision.

Compared to lithium-air batteries, lithium-sulfur batteries were undoubtedly more realistic. The country was willing to invest in this area as it was more applicable and could be implemented in the battery industry. The country didn’t want to waste money on theoretical Science and Nature publications.

Of course, Lu Zhou didn’t believe that his opinion actually influenced the country’s choice. At most, he probably slightly impacted the final outcome. After all, his vote was only one vote among many.

However, he was happy to see his vote came into effect.

Lu Zhou said, “Lithium-sulfur battery has great potential, I am happy to see the country make the right decision.”

“This is all thanks to Professor Lu’s advice.” Old Lu smiled and revealed his true intention when he said, “Actually, the reason why I wanted to meet with you was to ask for your help.”

Lu Zhou: “Help?”

“Yes.” Old Lu nodded seriously and said, “Energy development is the top priority in our country. In order to accomplish the 2025 plan, we need batteries with higher energy storage performance. The batteries have to be low cost, high production, and recyclable.”

“However, the general feedback from the industry is that many theoretical problems have to be solved in order to produce such batteries. Otherwise, safety and recyclability cannot be guaranteed.”

“Although we don’t seek hegemony, we also cannot allow anyone to set up international patent barriers that would attack our energy strategy.”

“You are an expert in this field.” Old Lu said sincerely, “We need your help!”

Chapter 298

Lu Zhou wasn’t lying, he was telling the truth.

Although the modified PDMS film solved the biggest lithium dendrites problem, the technology involved did not translate to anode materials.

For example, the electrode cycle performance was extremely poor.

The sulfur positive electrode didn’t generate lithium sulfide when it was discharged. Instead, it was accompanied by the formation of lithium polysulfide intermediate products. Lithium polysulfide would dissolve in the electrolyte, causing dissolution loss. These dissolved lithium polysulfides would diffuse to the negative electrode and then oxidized at the positive electrode.

This phenomenon would eventually cause the positive electrode material and the negative electrode to stick together. Although this issue didn’t make the battery dangerous, it made the battery non-recyclable.

And this “shuttle effect” was exactly what Professor Kerr told Professor Sarrot at the MRS Conference.

There were many potential methods to solve this problem such as from the anode material side, the electrolyte side, or from the electrode material. Although there were many paths, none of them were easy to accomplish.

Lu Zhou's high-tech lithium battery scan model was probably the highly advanced lithium-air battery, which was at least two generations ahead of the current technology.

Although lithium-air batteries also used lithium as its negative electrode, it didn't use sulfur as the positive electrode. It didn't even need electrolytes, so it didn't have the "shuttle effect".

"Of course, this burden will not be placed on you alone," said Old Lu with a smile. He then added, "This study will involve more than 20 national research institutes such as the Institute of Physics and Chemistry of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Nanoscience Research Center. This study will focus on technical difficulties in the energy field. Lithium-sulfur batteries are one of the most important aspects of our new energy development plan. Other than you, there will be many expert research groups working on this problem!"

"Our lithium battery expert professors have unanimously agreed that you are the most suitable candidate. We are not trying to change your research plan, we just hope that if you are looking for a new research direction, try to prioritize the lithium-sulfur battery direction. We will try our best to monetarily compensate you!"

Lu Zhou heard this and couldn't help but scream in his heart.

Originally, he thought that Old Lu was talking about an ordinary support policy. He didn't expect the higher-ups to take this matter as a national project.

If the former was an air-drop supply for researchers fighting on the front lines, then the latter was equivalent to an "army" composed of research units at all levels preparing for a large-scale operation on the fight for new energy.

Outsiders might not have been able to feel this impact, but for the people in the industry, this was a big deal.

This was obviously a good thing for Lu Zhou. Old Lu's statement was clear, Lu Zhou would get heavy research preferential treatment.

Although Lu Zhou didn't lack money, the support policy could still help him get rid of a lot of troubles.

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded at Old Lu.

"If this is the case, then I agree!"

...

The intention of cooperation was obvious; next was the discussion of the specific content of the cooperation.

Old Lu's proposal was to build a material science research institute in Jinling's newly-launched high-tech industrial park, focusing on the development of lithium-sulfur battery-related technologies. At the same time, the state would provide preferential policies such as five-year tax exemption, import equipment rebate, and three-year new energy research subsidies.

Part of the research funding would be subsidized by the country while the remainder was from the enterprise.

At the same time, Jin Ling University could offer experts to work at the laboratory.

Like physics, the materials science department was one of the strongest departments at Jin Ling University. Their organic and nanomaterials research were cutting-edge.

Lu Zhou was satisfied with Old Lu's requests.

However, this wasn't the main point.

What Lu Zhou cared about was the research result.

This was what any researcher would care about.

If this was natural sciences, then there wouldn't be much concern. Any research result would benefit the entire human race. However, if it was engineering-based research, not only would it benefit the entire human race, it would also benefit specific organizations and individuals.

A manifestation of the phenomenon could be seen in patents.

Old Lu thought cautiously about Lu Zhou's question before he said, "I'm not an entrepreneur. I can't give you a specific plan. However, I can guarantee that 30% of the profits in lithium-sulfur batteries will go to you."

Under normal circumstances, the government did not care about profits and losses on research projects. Therefore the researchers often wouldn't receive a profit from the research results.

On the other hand, companies would pocket the majority of the research profits. They would never give out 30%.

Because scientific research was like gambling, investing in it was a bottomless pit. Companies had to bear considerable risks when conducting research. The only researchers that would get a share of the profits were researchers that had a stake in the research fund.

The television show "The Big Bang Theory" talked about this problem. The research results that the university professors did were split in a ratio of 25% professor, 75% university.

For the profit-oriented companies, this split would be even more extreme.

Therefore, Old Lu's proposition was quite generous.

However, Lu Zhou wasn't lacking in money, and he was sure that he could achieve the results.

Although Lu Zhou knew the Old Lu was doing this out of kindness, he still refused.

“I don’t need companies to invest in this project, I can invest in it myself.”

Old Lu heard Lu Zhou’s request and smiled.

“That’s great then. If Professor Lu is willing to fund his own research, as long as this research institute is built on Chinese soil, all of the research results will go to you!”

Chapter 299

“Sure.” Assistant Zhao pointed and said, “This way please.”

Assistant Zhao drove Lu Zhou to the high-tech development park.

Assistant Zhao found a place to park, then pulled out a map with a circle marked on it. He pointed at the circle and said to Lu Zhou, “This is the concept map of the Xianlin University high-tech development zone. The first phase of the project has been completed, and the second phase will be completed within a year. Because this project has only just begun, only 13 research units have checked into this development zone. There is a lot of room to spare.

“There are several good office buildings not far from the subway station. They are still empty right now, so feel free to tell me which one you fancy.”

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, “My nanomaterial experiments have to be done with high precision equipment. Normal office buildings cannot reach these standards. I hope you can find me a piece of empty land, and I will contact an engineering contractor to build my own office.”

When Assistant Zhao heard Lu Zhou’s words, he nodded and said, “No problem. There are many pieces of land here that are yet to be sold. Tell me which one you want and I will report it to the secretary.”

Lu Zhou looked at the map for a while. He then selected a piece of land on the map. This 1.65 acres would become the research and development center.

It turned out that Lu Zhou's intuition was quite accurate.

Assistant Zhao drove them to the site, and the land was far from traffic and had a quiet environment. It was a good place for research.

As for the specific construction plan, Lu Zhou would contact the manager of Star Sky Technology, White, to hire engineering experts and conduct project bidding. Lu Zhou didn't have to worry about it.

Also, with the state subsidy policy, Lu Zhou was able to receive a large discount.

An acre of land here would cost up to 42 million yuan per square meter.

However, Old Lu promised that as long as Lu Zhou invested 200 million yuan, the state would subsidize 30% of the cost of the land. If Lu Zhou's investment exceeded 400 million yuan, then the subsidy would double. Lu Zhou's original plan was to invest US\$100 million, therefore he would receive the maximum subsidy possible.

The price given by the city bureau to Lu Zhou was around 30 million yuan per acre. With the government subsidy, he would only have to pay 12 million yuan per acre.

This way, Lu Zhou would have more money to put to the experiment and pieces of equipment.

The research institute location had been decided.

Lu Zhou gave White a call, and the rest of this matter would be handled between Star Sky Technology and Jin Ling city government. Lu Zhou didn't have to worry about these trivial things.

Before the research building was built, Lu Zhou could only use Jin Ling University's laboratory building. Thankfully the new Jin Ling University campus had many empty laboratory buildings, so they were happy to accommodate Lu Zhou.

Dean Li, the head of the chemical department, personally took Lu Zhou to Jin University to look at the laboratories.

The two started to chat while walking on campus.

Dean Li smiled and said, "Everyone says Princeton has the smartest brains in the world. You have been working there for over a year, do you have any thoughts?"

Lu Zhou thought for a moment before he said, "I think it's a pity."

Dean Li said, "Oh? What kind of pity?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "In my opinion, the freshmen at Princeton aren't smarter than students here who aced the college entrance examination. We are not falling behind in high school education. In fact, we have an advantage."

Lu Zhou paused for a second before he continued, "However, from the undergrad stage, the difference between the two will start to get bigger. Once they get to the master's level, the difference is huge."

Dean Li said, "Professor Lu, this comparison is unfair. Princeton is a world-class education institute. Even MIT and Harvard can't compare to them."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Yeah, this is why I said it's a pity."

Lu Zhou paused for a second before he said excitedly, "Actually I have an idea. We can build an Institute for Advanced Study here that is similar to Princeton's model."

Dean Li said, "This is a good idea, but it doesn't seem realistic."

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "You're right."

Copying the success of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton wasn't that easy.

Jin Ling University could build a building and hire some researchers, but it wouldn't achieve the same level of success as Princeton.

The institute would only become a second school for those pursuing their master's degree; it would be completely meaningless and a waste of resources.

Dean Li: "To be honest, if we implemented Princeton's research institute model here, it would be difficult for it to survive. Even if it did survive, it would not be able to achieve any success."

"We can still try. Maybe because I'm younger, I'm still very optimistic." Lu Zhou smiled and said in a joking tone, "How about we just call the unopened research institute the Jinling Computational Materials Science Research Institute?"

Academician Li smiled and said, "Sure, we would be honored! Jin Ling University is planning on creating a computational materials department, how about you work as the department head? I'll find some top students for you to train?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Maybe not, I might accidentally convert all of the students to mathematicians."

"Oh no, please don't!"

Both of them were joking, no one took this conversation seriously.

However, after hearing Dean Li's proposal, Lu Zhou couldn't help but take this question seriously.

The battlefield was the best training ground. The country's energy plan wasn't only a battlefield for lithium-sulfur batteries, but it was also an opportunity to cultivate research-oriented talents.

Lu Zhou didn't have to copy the model of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton; he could just invent a new model that would be more suitable for domestic academic research.

If this model proved to be feasible, Lu Zhou could extend it to mathematics and physics.

Even if the model wasn't successful, it would still be something meaningful.

Lu Zhou said in a joking tone, "Then I'll have some requirements."

Dean Li said politely, "What do you want, say it!"

Lu Zhou only said one word.

"People!"

Chapter 300

However, some people didn't feel strange at all.

A tall slim girl who sat next to Han Mengqi poked Meng Qi's arm and asked her curiously, "Meng Qi, Meng Qi, are you interested?"

The applied chemistry class one cohort only had eight female students who were split into two dorms. This young girl, Li Fang, was Meng Qi's best friend and roommate.

"Not interested..."

Han Mengqi shook her head and stuffed the leaflet into her drawer.

First of all, she wasn't interested in an internship with a thousand yuan pay for a month. Secondly, she was about to transfer majors anyway, so she didn't need this on her resume.

To be honest, she didn't understand. Most of the first-year classes were all general classes; they could barely memorize chemistry equations. What could a first-year do in a chemistry experiment?

"Okay, everyone, please quiet down and listen," said the supervisor as he clapped his hands and signaled everyone to quiet down. He cleared his throat and spoke with a loud voice, "In order to cultivate research talents and to adhere to the national new energy strategy, our department has cooperated with the Jinling Institute of Computational Materials.

"I believe you have all read your leaflets, so I won't waste my time. Simply put, this is an internship opportunity for you to research in materials science.

"The work you have to do is simple and elementary. The minimum working hours per week is 10 hours; this is mainly done on the weekends. If you are interested in research or want to do a master's, take this opportunity seriously. Undergrad students don't have a lot of research opportunities, so you guys should take this opportunity seriously as well."

Suddenly, a student raised his hand and asked, "Teacher, is this internship legit?"

The supervisor was amused, and he replied, "The director of this project is an alumnus. Do you think it's legit or not? It's at least more reliable than finding an internship elsewhere."

He's an alumnus?!

The voice of people chattering could be heard in the classroom as the students were trying to figure out who this nutty alumnus was.

Finally, someone couldn't resist and they raised their hand to ask, "Teacher, what kind of student is this nutty?"

The supervisor smiled and said, "Of course it's Lu Zhou. It's computational materials science, who else could it be?"

Suddenly, the students in the classroom held their breath as excited expressions appeared on their faces.

God Lu!

Of course, when these students enrolled in Jin Ling University, God Lu was already in Princeton. However, they were well aware of the legacy that God Lu left here.

From Zhou's conjecture to Goldbach's conjecture, from Cole Number Theory Prize to Crafoord Prize. As the youngest professor at Princeton University, this 23-year-old had already achieved more than what most people could ever hope for.

They didn't expect the director of the Institute of Computational Materials Science was this legend.

Maybe this legend was unsatisfied with mathematics and wanted to jump ship to chemistry?

When Han Mengqi heard this name, she froze.

The supervisor told the students that if they were interested they could tell the class leader. He then said some ending words, and the meeting was over.

Once again, the classroom was filled with intense discussion from the applied chemistry students in Class One.

"An older student I know said that it is good to participate in these things as it'd be useful on your resume. This counts as a scientific research experience. Also, this research institute seems to be one of the major national projects."

A guy couldn't help but ask, "Then is the competition very fierce?"

"It's mainly about participation." Another guy patted him on the arm and said, "They obviously won't give us the internship, but there's no harm in applying."

“But I think that we have to take two more mathematics classes if we get in.”

“Who cares? Anyway, it doesn’t count as credits, so your score won’t matter.”

Han Mengqi had her head down while she thought for a long time.

She was thinking of a different problem than her classmates.

She had been struggling to catch up with her tutor’s footsteps. Even though she had been trying her best, she hadn’t improved much. She was far from a Crafoord Prize or Cole Number Theory Prize.

Even though in her classmates’ eyes, she was a genius student, but she was nothing compared to Lu Zhou.

In fact, after her college entrance examination, she sent her resume to Princeton. However, she didn’t receive a reply from the admission department of Princeton. She didn’t even tell her sister about this thing.

At least, in mathematics, she knew that it would be impossible for her to follow her tutor’s path.

But it could be possible outside of mathematics...

Han Mengqi squeezed her tiny hands; the confusion in her eyes gradually disappeared.

Li Fang saw that her good friend wasn’t talking, so she asked with concern, “Meng Qi? What is wrong? Are you feeling uncomfortable...”

Han Mengqi’s suddenly looked determined.

“I am going to apply!”

...

Carbon nanomaterials research institute.

Professor Li looked at the graduation application document and sighed.

“You are the most talented among all my students, it’s a waste not to study a PhD. To be honest, I don’t want you to leave.”

Qian Zhongming shook his head and insisted, “There are places other than the university where I can do research. Plus, I am very interested in the emerging field of computational materials science, I hope you can fulfill my wish.”

Although Professor Li didn’t want to let him go, he sighed in the end and signed the document.

“Just remember to write a self-assessment and prepare your graduation oral defense. You still have to go through the official procedure.”

The salary and benefits from the Jinling Institute of Computational Materials were pretty good. They offered full-time contracts in addition to internships. Their master’s student base salary was 8,000 yuan per month and it came with bonuses and other benefits. This was much higher than the industry standard.

Originally Li Rongen planned to wait for Qian Zhongming to graduate, then get him a research and development position at Zhongshan New Materials. But now it seemed that wasn’t possible anymore.

Professor Li looked at his student and paused for a second before he said, “Go ahead, Professor Lu is a brilliant person. You will be able to learn many things from him.”

Qian Zhongming said sincerely, “Thank you.”

Professor Li nodded and didn't respond.

Saying anything more would be superfluous.

Liu Bo, who was standing silently by the side, suddenly spoke.

"Professor, I want to apply for graduation as well."

Professor Li looked at him and smiled.

"Give me the application, I'll sign it."

Liu Bo was hurt, and he said, "Professor, you don't plan on convincing me to stay?"

Professor Li joked and said, "Oh, you don't want to graduate? Great, stay here for another year."

Liu Bo panicked and said, "Oh, please don't! I already got the offer."

Professor Li smiled and waved his hand.

"Fine, stop bothering me here.

"You two can screw off together."