Scholar 441

Chapter 441: Trouble From The Royal Swedish Academy Of Sciences

If Lu Zhou could solve the controllable nuclear fusion problem, having his own research institute would be a given. In fact, Lu Zhou would receive even better benefits.

After all, China was a country good at adapting and attracting international talents was one of the highest priorities.

Furthermore, China didn't care about the domestic academic community's reactions to attracting outside talent.

It was getting closer and closer to October. The physics field weren't the only ones that paid attention to Lu Zhou. The Nobel Prize in Chemistry committee in Stockholm was also paying attention to him.

Inside a research building at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

Olof Ramstrom had just finished a Nobel Prize in Chemistry committee meeting. He sat in front of his desk, reading the thesis in his hand.

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Peter Brzezinski also attended the meeting. He looked at the thesis in his colleague's hand and said, "Physics? You really are involved in everything."

"I'm not researching physics. It's just that this paper seems to have caused quite a commotion in the physics field. I heard several professors talking about it. Therefore, I went to find a friend to get me a copy."

Olof definitely couldn't understand the mathematical formulas in the thesis. After all, he wasn't in the field of mathematics.

However, this didn't prevent him from reading Physical Review Letters, consulting the experts' comments, understanding why the thesis was brilliant, and finding out which age-old physics problem was solved.

Peter stared at the thesis for a while before he said in an uncertain tone, "Lu Zhou?"

"That's right. The guy that's a pain in the a*s." Olof paused for a second and said in a joking tone, "Maybe we'll see his name on the nominations for the Nobel Prize for Physics next year."

Olof Ramstrom was an organic chemistry professor at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology, an academician at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, and also a 2018 Nobel Prize in Chemistry committee member.

Standing next to him was Peter Brzezinski, a biochemistry expert from the University of Stockholm. He was also an academician from the Royal Academy of Sciences, and this year's Nobel Prize in Chemistry committee member.

Over the past month, the Nobel Prize Committee had spent countless hours debating about Lu Zhou. They had had several meetings about Lu Zhou but hadn't arrived at an agreement.

Interestingly, the debates weren't centered around Lu Zhou's achievements. After all, whether it was the "shuttle effect" of lithium-sulfur batteries or the problem of lithium dendrites, they were all brilliant research results.

Also, Lu Zhou's achievements went beyond the applied fields.

Last year, he established his "Theoretical Model of the Electrochemical Interface Structure" which caused a sensation in the fields of computational chemistry, surface chemistry, and even condensed matter physics. This also won him the Hoffman Prize.

However, the Nobel Prize wasn't an ordinary prize. The committee had to consider other aspects.

Even though Lu Zhou had made brilliant achievements, there were plenty of other people that made equally amazing achievements.

Many people had waited for decades to win this prize; some had even waited for their entire lives…

The opinions among the Nobel Prize in Chemistry committee members varied greatly. Some people believed Lu Zhou and his research results were too young while other people believed that age was just a number and that Lu Zhou's age didn't hinder the significance of his research results.

For example, Professor Olof believed that age was just a number.

In his opinion, the modified PDMS material and HCS-1 was debatable. After all, these two results had to be proven through industry application, and they hadn't made outstanding contributions to the chemistry field yet. However, in his opinion, the "Theoretical Model of the Electrochemical Interface Structure" undoubtedly made an enormous contribution.

Over the past year, many scholars had produced valuable research results by using Lu Zhou's theoretical model.

It was not an exaggeration to say that Lu Zhou's theoretical model had completely redefined the surface chemistry field and opened up new research ideas for the computational chemistry field.

"The 2017 Nobel Prize in Chemistry was given to the cryogenic electron microscopy. The DNA repair research that won the 2015 prize should have been the Karolinska Institute's job. I'm serious, if we don't think about what counts as true chemistry results, we might as well change the name to the Nobel Prize in Biology committee."

Professor Peter was in the field of biochemistry, and he coughed awkwardly.

"Not like this, my friend. Biochemistry is also a part of chemistry… Also, the cryogenic electron microscopy isn't totally in the field of biology. It also counts as analytical chemistry, right?"

Olof shook his head and said, “There’s no point playing with words. We all know which industry is impacted.”

Someone calculated an interesting statistic among the five sub-disciplines of chemistry. A third of the Nobel Prizes were given to the fields of macromolecule and biochemistry, 26 awards in biochemistry, and six awards in structural biology.

In contrast, there had only been 12 awards given to the organic synthesis field, and even less for the inorganic chemistry field…

If one considered a strand of DNA to be a macromolecule, then the Nobel Committee for Chemistry didn’t make a wrong decision; it was justifiable.

However, everyone knew that this wasn’t fair for chemists.

After all, the biologists should aim for the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

Now that even the cryogenic electron microscopy won a prize, the chemistry field was bound to revolt.

Peter looked at his old friend and sighed.

“I understand where you’re coming from. His work in surface chemistry has been outstanding. Although I wasn’t there for his Berlin report, I’ve talked with several Max Planck Institute professors about him, and they all have high opinions of him… But I have to say, this result is too young.”

Olof said, “What does that have to do with anything? When we gave the award for the ‘design and production of molecular machines’, were we not thinking about the future potential contributions of the technology?”

“That’s why that year’s award caused a huge amount of controversy as people weren’t expecting it. But this isn’t the focus; the key problem is his age.” Peter shook his head and said, “24-year-old nominee… If he wins the Nobel Prize, he would undoubtedly be the youngest Nobel Prize winner in history.”

Prior to this, the youngest Nobel Prize laureate was the 25-year-old Lawrence Bragg.

There were no rules regarding a Nobel Prize winner's age. However, some people didn't like it when the record was broken by a new winner.

Unless the winner was truly brilliant.

However, this was a subjective problem that was difficult to assess unless there was a surface chemistry scholar in the Nobel Prize Committee who could objectively rate Lu Zhou's work…

But unfortunately, there weren't any surface chemistry scholars in the committee.

In fact, Olof was hesitant about whether or not he was correct.

He just felt like this year's Nobel Prize should be given to a pure chemistry result.

Or rather, they should give the award for the "Theoretical Model of the Electrochemical Interface Structure".

After all, producing such an important chemistry theory in the 21st century was extremely difficult…

Chapter 442: The Human Mind Is Tiny Compared To The Universe

While the Nobel Committee for Chemistry was arguing over whether or not Lu Zhou should win the award, the PRX thesis continued to impact the physics industry.

Lu Zhou had received many calls and emails over the past few days.

Lu Zhou's physicist friends such as Professor Frank Wilczek, Klaus von Klitzing, etc., were all surprised by his work.

There were also some strangers that wanted to get to know Lu Zhou and discuss the turbulence phenomenon with him.

Additionally, there were also some invitations from academic conferences.

For example, the IAEA-Demo international conference in November. They invited him to do a one-hour report on his turbulence phenomenon research.

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Normally, Lu Zhou would have gone for it.

After all, there were many excellent controllable nuclear fusion reports at the conference. If he wanted to build the first DEMO nuclear fusion reactor by 2025, he had to utilize his international academic opportunities…

However, over the past few days, he hadn't been "in the zone".

After accepting the mission, Lu Zhou didn't immediately start working on a feasible sub-mission. Instead, he gave himself a week off.

He'd walk around campus every day or take his Ford Explorer for a ride.

Although New Jersey was small, there were plenty of tourist attractions.

Like The SusS*x County Park which was covered in red by the autumn leaves, or the 220-foot white war veterans monument on top of High Point mountain that overlooked the tristate area.

Lu Zhou suddenly realized that he had been missing out on what America had to offer. Unfortunately, he went on this trip alone, with only one set of picnic utensils.

The only partner that was always by his side was Xiao Ai.

Whether it was at the High Point State Park in New Jersey or on Princeton Campus, Lu Zhou was never fully relaxed; he was always thinking about a problem.

If the system contained all of the solutions to civilization or humanity's unsolved academic problems, then the most effective method would be to tell Lu Zhou the answers directly instead of getting him to do research and figure out the answers himself.

However, the system obviously didn't do this. Rather, it guided Lu Zhou to study these mysteries on his own.

Lu Zhou enjoyed studying, and he felt that his knowledge had increased exponentially under the system's guidance. Not only did he surpass people his own age, but he had also achieved what most could never hope to accomplish in their lifetimes.

However, what confused him the most was the motive behind the system's actions.

He had actually thought about this problem for a while now.

Is there a species of alien out there in the universe that is entertained by us low-level humans? Or does the system come from the future?

The possibilities were endless; it was even more complex than a chaotic physics system.

However, Lu Zhou felt like no matter what the motive was behind the system, it probably wasn't some kind of boring principle like "humans must solve their own problems".

There had to be a deeper motive behind this system that came from nowhere.

Suddenly, Lu Zhou had a strange idea.

What if the Zhou's conjecture about Mersenne primes is only a practice question, and the Goldbach's conjecture… or even the Navier–Stokes equation is the system giving me "homework"… or rather, "research projects"?

And the general points give me a way to buy the answers, almost like a supplementary exam.

In this case, when all of my subjects reach Level 10, will the system give me a "graduation letter" or maybe an "acceptance letter" for a higher academic level?

Thinking about it this way… I'm not a professor as I haven't even graduated from the system yet!

Lu Zhou's hypothesis was further affirmed when he recalled reading "the small fire of civilization" in the system's controllable nuclear fusion mission chain description.

He sat on a bench near Lake Carnegie as he stared at the body of water that was sparkling under the sunset. This lake had brought him a lot of inspiration. However, this time, it was unable to answer his question.

"For you, these questions aren't even questions, right?"

This wasn't the first time Lu Zhou felt something like this.

However, this was the first time Lu Zhou felt like humanity's mind and glory was so small compared to the universe…

Suddenly, a familiar voice brought him out of his daydream.

"What are you looking at?"

Lu Zhou looked over and saw Molina standing there.

Molina didn't know why, but she felt like Lu Zhou was ignoring her.

"What's… wrong with you?"

Lu Zhou shook his head.

"Nothing… I just bumped into a problem I don't understand."

"There's a problem that you don't understand?" Molina raised her eyebrows and said, "I thought there's nothing in this world you don't know."

Lu Zhou smiled when he heard this, and he shook his head.

"I don't know why you think that when there are so many problems in this world I don't understand."

Every night, sporty students and professors from Princeton would run around Lake Carnegie; Molina was one of them.

Lu Zhou would occasionally sit on the bench, and he would always see Molina running.

The two had a pretty good relationship. Not only were they academia friends, but they were normal friends as well.

At a place like Princeton, other than his own students, Lu Zhou had very few friends that were around the same age as him.

Molina looked at Lu Zhou, who was staring at the lake, and she said, “You’re becoming more and more like those people.”

Lu Zhou said, “Which people?”

“The old folks at the Institute for Advanced Study,” Molina said. “I wouldn’t be surprised if one day the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study offers you a tenured researcher position.”

A tenured researcher at the Institute for Advanced Study was different than a tenured professor at Princeton. The title itself was one of the highest honors in academia. There were less than 30 tenured researchers among the top four universities.

For example, Einstein was one of Princeton’s tenured researchers. This went to show how high the threshold was.

Also, unless there were special circumstances, a lifelong honor like this would almost never be awarded to a young scholar…

So, when Lu Zhou heard Molina’s ridiculous statement, he laughed. “Tenured researcher? I’ll take that as a hopeful wish?”

Molina smiled and said, “Of course you can, but you do realize I’m saying that you look like an old man when you’re thinking?”

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, “Don’t say that. In terms of age, you’re older than me.”

Molina: “…”

She didn’t know why, but she suddenly felt like throwing her can of coffee at his face…

Chapter 443: Fusion Starts With Superconductivity

It was getting closer and closer to the end of the month. Another huge event happened in the mathematics community, and not only did it spread across the entire academic community, but it even spread beyond academia.

Hardy was sitting in front of his computer at the Institute for Advanced Study, researching information about the conference. When he read a piece of news, he suddenly froze.

In his surprise, he nearly shouted out loud.

“Professor, the Riemann’s conjecture is solved?!”

Lu Zhou: “What?”

It was like Hardy had discovered a new continent when he said excitedly, “I saw it on mathoverflow. It says that Sir Michael Atiyah from Cambridge used a very simple method to solve Riemann’s conjecture, and he will do a presentation at the Heidelberg Laureate Forum.”

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Mathoverflow was a well-known mathematics website and many nutty mathematicians had accounts on there. For example, Tao Zhexuan was active on the site; not only did he update his blogs, but he would also frequently interact with visitors.

After hearing Hardy, Lu Zhou smiled and said in a half-joking kind of tone, “If he really completed the proof, then he undoubtedly would become this century’s greatest mathematician.”

Hardy asked, “Are you optimistic about his proof?”

Lu Zhou didn’t answer the question directly. Instead, he only gave a simple opinion.

“Sir Atiyah is an outstanding scholar; he’s also a Fields Medal and Abel Prize winner. However, the old man is 89 years old… It’s hard for me to give an accurate opinion.”

In fact, Atiyah wasn’t the first scholar who claimed to have solved the Riemann’s conjecture.

Around 2004, well-known number theory professor De Branges also claimed to have solved the Riemann’s conjecture. This caused quite a sensation at the time, but unfortunately, his proof wasn’t recognized by the mathematics community.

Even before that, English mathematician G. H. Hardy declared to have solved this problem.

Hardy hesitated for a bit before saying, “But… he’s Sir Atiyah, Fields Medal and Abel Prize winner. Would he make a claim like this if he wasn’t fully confident?”

Lu Zhou smiled as he said, “My dear friend Hardy, if you want to become a scholar, then you must remember that awards are only a type of honor, nothing more. In other words, because the mathematics community gave him the awards, he should take extra care in responding to people’s legitimate questions. People that question him shouldn’t be treated as fools.”

Lu Zhou looked at Hardy and paused for a second.

“Rather than the Riemann’s conjecture, I would like to know more about Atiyah’s progress on the non-existent complex 6-sphere.”

Hardy: “… the non-existent complex 6-sphere?”

Lu Zhou nodded and said: “It’s a famous unsolved algebraic topology problem that is related to the K-theory. Although it’s not a Millennium Prize Problem, it is still one of the most important algebraic topology problems. Around 16 years ago, Sir Atiyah gave this proposition a definitive answer. However, his thesis wasn’t satisfactory. Not only was the proof only half a page long, but he even began to talk about the history of mathematics in the fourth section of the thesis…”

Lu Zhou paused for a second and shrugged. He then said, “According to mathoverflow, he hasn’t responded to the doubts about his thesis. Therefore, the academic community is still skeptical about it.”

The thesis on non-existent complex 6-sphere was available on arXiv.

Solving the famous K-theory problem, then within two years, solving one of the most important number theory problems…

Lu Zhou obviously hoped this was real. After all, anyone in the mathematics field had a bit of a hero syndrome.

But this was a nearly ninety-year-old man…

To be honest, he didn’t have much hope.

Mathematics was a discipline for the young, and there was no such thing as old and wise in this field. Once a person got older, their memory and intelligence would decline significantly.

Therefore, there were very few mathematicians that could produce results that were superior to their younger self.

The final result didn’t matter as long as the old man was happy…

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Riemann’s conjecture was a very interesting topic. However, it wasn’t Lu Zhou’s main concern.

He set notifications on for any updates regarding the issue and focused his attention back to Fusion Light mission chain.

Designing the stellarator required a huge amount of engineering, and quantum computing technology was still far from being applicable. After taking into account all of the factors, Lu Zhou decided to choose superconducting materials as his next research project.

Honestly, superconducting materials were no piece of cake. However, it was the best matching project in terms of Lu Zhou's skill set.

Lu Zhou went to meet Connie at the Frick Chemistry Laboratory.

Because of the cooperation project with Pablo Herrero, over the past six months, he had been doing an academic exchange at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He had just gotten back last week.

When Lu Zhou saw Connie, he asked, "How is the superconducting materials project going?"

"I can't give you an accurate answer, but generally, it's going smooth." Connie handed Lu Zhou a USB and said, "I've written a summary report on the results. It's in the USB C folder. I was going to send it to your email."

Lu Zhou took the USB and nodded.

"Understood, I'll look at it later."

Connie looked at how serious Lu Zhou was and asked with excitement, "Professor, are you planning to do something?"

Lu Zhou said in a brief manner, "Yeah… Due to various reasons, I have shifted my focus from mathematics onto superconducting materials."

He obviously wouldn't tell Connie the real reason.

Lu Zhou told Connie to start working. He then sat in front of his desk and plugged the USB into his computer before he opened the report written by Connie.

He quickly finished reading the report in half an hour and gained a general understanding of the current progress of the research project.

Basically, the Pablo Jarillo Herrero laboratory was focused on researching theory such as enthalpy energy, pseudogap, nematic liquid crystals, etc.

On the other hand, the Jinling Institute of Computational Materials was mainly focused on application-based research. Their business model was to use a large number of experiments to find a way to maintain the concentration of graphene carriers in superconducting materials.

Lu Zhou had to admit that Professor Pablo Herrero was an expert in the graphene field. After receiving the US$10 million research fund from Star Sky Technology, the progress of their research had been increasing exponentially.

With the help from their theoretical progress, the Jinling Institute of Computational Materials and the Sarrot Laboratory had also produced amazing in-progress results.

However, they were still far from the final result.

Lu Zhou looked at the images on the computer screen and thought for a bit. He quickly realized what he needed to do.

He was good at computational materials science and using mathematical methods to find patterns in materials.

Therefore, the first thing he needed to do was to build a reliable mathematical model using the year-long data collected by the three laboratories.

Also, in order to speed up the progress on this project, he needed more hands.

Professor Chirik was a good candidate…

Chapter 445: Last Conference

It was October, and the streets of Stockholm were crowded.

Every time this year, this city that was near the Baltic Sea would attract attention from all over the world due to the Nobel Prize.

Although the awards were given out by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, most Stockholm citizens were still proud of this.

Interestingly, not all of them were like this.

Back when nationalism swept across Europe, many Swedes would publicly complain or even criticize a rich Swedish scholar—Nobel.

They would say how Nobel never donated his inheritance to the country, nor did he give the Scandinavians any advantage of winning the prize. What Nobel left behind wasn't a gift, it was years and years of trouble.

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Even Hans Fischer, the then president of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, complained that Nobel should have donated the money directly to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences instead of making them go through the cumbersome award-giving process. Not to mention, Nobel refused to attend the meeting regarding the process of the awards.

Fortunately, due to the relentless efforts made by Ragnar Sohlman, Nobel's trustworthy assistant, the King of Sweden finally announced the effectiveness of Nobel's will and ended the controversy surrounding the 31 million kronor.

It turned out that most people were short-sighted. Before the Internet existed, very few people had the opportunity to see the world beyond the Baltic Sea.

But looking back, that 31 million kronor was the most cost-effective investment in the world.

There had never been a city that had received this much honor due to a prize-giving process. There had also never been a Swede, not even the King of Sweden or the Prime Minister, that had left such a huge and timeless legacy to this country.

Of course, this also came with trouble.

Especially for the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, who has upkeeping Nobel's testament for over a century.

The closer it got to the fourth of October, the more lively and exciting the atmosphere in the town of Stockholm was.

Logically, the Nobel Prize winners list was prepared three days ago.

But this time, the Nobel Committee for Chemistry didn't reach a consensus.

This had happened before. Due to the differing opinions of the members of the Nobel Prize Committee, the Nobel Prize announcement was delayed until mid-October. However, there was no reason for it to happen this year.

Under the pressure from the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, the members of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry held a meeting once again.

Over the past two years, the list of committee members hadn't changed. The only change was that Snogerup Linse retired from being a chairman, while Claes Gustafsson, who had been a committee member for more than 15 years, was promoted to chairman.

The other three academicians were Peter Brzezinski, who was a professor of biochemistry at the University of Stockholm, Olaf Ramstrom, who was a professor of organic chemistry at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology, and Professor Johan Aqvist, who was a professor of molecular biology and computational chemistry.

Old Ms. Linse looked sharply at the members in the room and spoke in a determined tone.

“We’re all that is left. The Royal Academy wants us to make a decision as soon as possible, at least before the 4th.”

In fact, they’ve made a decision a month ago.

Chairman Professor Claes nodded.

“Like what Academician Linse just said, we have to make a decision. This will be the final meeting, I hope you all will give us your opinions.”

The other three members looked at each other and nodded.

This would be the last time they discussed this issue.

The last review meeting of the year…

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Objectively speaking, the decisions made by the Nobel Committee for Chemistry was bewildering. The 2017 cryogenic electron microscopy was fine, but the 2016 molecular machine was a completely new concept. Although the results were good enough, they were still a long way from knowing its application uses.

What made people astonished was the lithium battery. Every year, people would predict that the father of lithium batteries, Goodenough, would win. However, it was almost like the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences forgot he existed.

Other than the “Theoretical Model of the Electrochemical Interface Structure” by Lu Zhou, Professor Franz-Ulrich Hartl from the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry and Yale University professor Arthur Horwich who were on their intracellular protein folding research was also a worthy consideration.

Prior to this, the two big names had already won the Lasker Award, which was like a “mini Nobel Prize”. Almost fifty percent of Lasker Award winners would eventually go on to win the Nobel Prize in Chemistry or Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

In addition to this, there had been a recent strong development in optogenetics as well as motor proteins.

This showed that chemists were more likely to produce stellar biology research results.

At first glance, biology seemed to be quite attractive.

Of course, if one’s goal was the Nobel Prize…

After some preliminary exchanges of opinions, the meeting began to decide on the final nomination.

As expected, the focus of the meeting was on the “Theoretical Model of the Electrochemical Interface Structure”.

The atmosphere of the meeting was becoming more and more intense…

Olof: “No matter what, we have to consider a real chemistry achievement this year. If Mr. Nobel finds out that we have changed his most favorite Nobel Prize in Chemistry into a Nobel Prize in Biology, I’m sure he would be furious.”

Peter said in a fierce manner, “But he is only 24 years old! Younger than Lawrence Bragg! Can’t we wait until after his 25th birthday to consider him?”

Olof said, “But is there a better theoretical chemistry research result?”

Peter paused for a moment as he began to think. He then said hesitantly, “Research on molecular dynamics? Roberto Car from Princeton has made excellent progress in this field.”

Olof shook his head and said, “I admit his work is excellent, but it is far from being outstanding.”

Peter complained, “Then give it to the folding protein cells! Why do we have to narrow it down to theoretical chemistry?”

Ms. Linse nodded her head and said, “I agree with Peter’s viewpoint.”

In 2015, it was her idea to give the Nobel Prize to the DNA repair.

Now, the opinion was the same; she believed that this award should be given to biochemistry.

Olof said, “Since we’re not limiting the research field, then why are we limiting the age of the winner? Nobel has never said in his will that his inheritance has to be given to old people.”

Johan, who hadn’t spoken yet, suddenly said, “I think Academician Olof is correct. Not only is the electrochemical interface structure an achievement in electrochemistry and theoretical chemistry, but it is also a pioneering contribution to the field of computational chemistry.”

He was a researcher in computational chemistry. There wasn’t anyone else at this table who had a more accurate understanding of how excellent the theoretical model was.

However, this was the biggest disagreement in the Nobel Prize selection process.

As science continued to develop, the boundaries between disciplines became more and more blurred. However, the directions of research became further and further apart. It was extremely difficult for scholars to understand research beyond their fields; it was even more difficult to accurately compare the research results.

A “fight” seemed to have begun on the conference table.

Chairman Claes, who hadn’t said much, looked at Olof and Peter. He thought for a moment before he clapped his hands, interrupting the dispute on the conference table.

“Fine, gentlemen… and ladies. It doesn’t make sense to argue any longer. Let us use the most democratic, fair, and most traditional way to settle this.”

Everyone looked at each other.

Although there was no agreement, they didn’t object to Academician Claes’ suggestion.

When opinions differ, there was no better way than taking a vote.

After Academician Claes saw that the committee members didn’t object, he gestured for his assistant’s attention.

His assistant could tell what Cleas wanted. The assistant stepped forward and placed a piece of A4 paper in front of everyone.

Ms. Linse picked up a pen and wrote a word on the paper. She then looked at Claes with a surprised expression and asked, “You knew this was going to happen?”

“I had a feeling it would turn out like this,” Academician Claes said as he smiled and folded his paper. He gently placed the paper in the middle of the conference table and said, “We rarely reach a consensus, right?”

Chapter 447: What Do You Think Of My Daughter?

Won a prize?

Chen Baohua was stunned by Lu Zhou's words, and he asked immediately, "What prize?"

Lu Zhou answered truthfully, "Nobel Prize…"

Everyone went silent for half a minute.

Lu Zhou didn't look at his watch, but he estimated it was at least half a minute or so.

Chen Baohua looked at Lu Zhou with his eyes wide open. He then stuttered, "No… Nobel? That Nobel?"

Box..

Lu Zhou nodded. "Yeah."

Honestly, Lu Zhou was very surprised to receive the call.

Although Professor Ertl promised him that he would nominate his name to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, he never thought this day would come so soon.

He wasn't prepared for this at all.

Excited?

He obviously was.

The Nobel Prize was the highest honor in the academic world; any scholar that said they weren't interested in the Nobel Prize was plain jealous.

However, Lu Zhou was more confused than excited.

When he remembered that he nearly hung up on the Nobel Prize phone call twice, he felt a mixture of emotions. It seemed that he couldn't refuse unknown phone numbers in the future anymore. At the very least, he should answer the calls first…

Suddenly, Chen Yushan, who was just as confused, asked in a hushed tone, "Is there a Nobel Prize for mathematics?"

"Nope," Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "it's the Nobel Prize in Chemistry."

"Oh, chemistry."

Chen Yushan sighed in relief.

However, she instantly realized something.

Sh*t!

No matter what field it's in, this is still the Nobel Prize!

She always knew Lu Zhou's mathematics was strong, strong enough to be internationally famous. However, she didn't expect his chemistry to be just as powerful.

Chen Yushan didn't even realize that she had begun to subconsciously look at Lu Zhou in a different manner.

“Amazing… Little Brother…”

Lu Zhou wasn’t good at being complimented.

Embarrassed, Lu Zhou smiled as he said, “It’s okay.”

Chen Baohua: “…”

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In an inconspicuous factory complex at Jiangling, a town in China.

After transferring to the logistics department, Old Lu had been bored out of his mind every day. He’d either go fishing with his friends all day or drink tea and read the newspaper in his office.

It was a national holiday and the weather was nice. Lu Bangguo caught two humongous fish and happily invited his fisherman friends to his house.

He asked Fang Mei to grill the fish and make some appetizers. Old Lu then took out his beloved baijiu and placed everything on the dining table.

Zhou Ping was sitting across from Old Lu. He took a sip of the baijiu before he said enviously, “You’re really living the good life; fishing and drinking every day. I wouldn’t trade a life like this for the world.”

Old Lu said, “Good my a*s. All I’m doing is gaining weight. I’d be retiring in a few years; I’ll have even more free time then. I’d rather find some work at a factory.” Although it seemed that he was complaining, he had a smile on his face.

Zhou Ping picked up a piece of fish and smiled. He said, “Stop it. Don’t give Secretary Wu more trouble. The leadership team sends their condolences to a guy like him every so often. Do you really think a factory would put you back in the workforce?”

Old Lu shook his head and smiled, not saying anything in return.

He hadn't done anything earth-shattering in his life, but he knew how to manage relationships. He had spent his life doing manual labor in the factory, and his biggest achievement was his factory promotion.

There was really no reason for anyone to commemorate him.

Even though no one told him this, but he knew in his heart that he was riding his son's success.

Zhou Ping poured some more baijiu in his cup and said, "It's the national day today, why hasn't the big mathematician come back yet? What about your daughter at Jin Ling University?"

Old Lu smiled and said, "They're all busy minding their own business. I'm not worried about them at all. I'd be happy if they come back for Chinese New Year and call home every so often."

"How can you do this? They're forgetting their roots." Old Zhou couldn't help but show off his daughter. He said, "Look at my daughter, she will never leave home. Regardless of the length of the holiday, she'll always come home and visit."

Old Lu looked at Old Zhou and said, "Your daughter is studying in Jiangcheng; traveling here by high-speed rail is faster than going to the city from here. Is this really a good comparison?"

Old Zhou smiled and said, "The location isn't the focus; the heart is the important thing."

Old Lu said, "Okay then, brag about this to me when she has a partner."

Old Zhou's eyes widened, and his demeanor instantly changed. "No boy will steal my daughter from me!"

While the two old men were bragging, a piece of news was being broadcasted. They could hear it coming from a television nearby.

The news anchor had just finished with the news segment when she received a piece of paper off-camera.

After the news anchor read the contents of the paper, she had a surprised expression on her face.

However, she quickly adjusted her expression.

“We will now present a piece of breaking news.

“Today, 4th of October, around fifteen minutes ago, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences announced the list of winners for Nobel Prize in Chemistry …”

Suddenly, the news anchor paused for a second.

It was almost like she had to restrain the excitement in her heart.

It was almost like she had to try and maintain the demeanor of a news anchor.

She then spoke in a steady tone.

“Because of his outstanding ‘Theoretical Model of the Electrochemical Interface Structure’ contribution, Professor Lu, an alumnus of Jin Ling University, will become the sole prize winner and receive nine million kronor!

“At the same time, he will become the first scholar in the world to receive both the Fields Medal and the Nobel Prize!”

The news broadcast continued, but the living room was dead silent.

Old Lu hadn’t heard of the Hoffman prize or the Fields Medal, but he knew that the Nobel Prize was on another level. Even a guy like him, who had never left his hometown, had heard of it.

They remained silent for a minute or so.

Lu Bangguo's fisherman friend was the first to break that silence.

Zhou Ping: "Old Zhou…"

Lu Bangguo: "… What?"

Zhou Ping: "I heard your son hasn't married yet?"

Lu Bangguo: "Yeah."

Zhou Ping: "Are you thinking of… finding him a partner?"

Lu Bangguo looked at him and asked, "What do you mean?"

While slightly embarrassed, Zhou Ping smiled as he asked, "What do you think of my daughter?"

Chapter 448: Nobel and Fields

October 4th was the national holiday in China.

Most people were either taking a break, traveling, or playing with their phones in bed.

Other than the prize giving day in December, very few people paid attention to the names of the Nobel Prize winners.

Unless…

There was a special name on the list of winners.

The moment the news was broadcasted, or rather, there was no need for the news broadcast at all.

Box..

The second the list was announced, the news of Lu Zhou winning the Nobel Prize spread across the fields of chemistry, materials science, condensed matter physics, and mathematics at an incredible speed.

After the first news article came out online, the rest followed like a tsunami, flooding Weibo and WeChat.

After the legitimacy of the news was confirmed, almost half of China was discussing this event.

[Oh my god, a mathematician won the Nobel Prize!]

[Jesus, if I recalled correctly, God Lu won the Fields Medal at the International Congress of Mathematicians, right?]

[Winning both the Nobel Prize and Fields Medal! Scary…]

[Organic chemists must be crying right now; this year's Nobel Prize wasn't stolen by biologists…]

[24-year-old Nobel Prize winner… One year younger than the youngest Nobel Prize winner in history. This might be a world record!]

[God Lu is nutty!]

[Shuimu University sent a congratulatory message!]

[Yanjing University sent a congratulatory message!]

[Jin Ling University sent a congratulatory message!]

[…]

Lu Zhou had never been number one on trending. He hadn't even had time to share his joy with his fans, but he was already bumped to number one on trending.

What did the Nobel Prize represent?

For the country, this represented confidence as it meant that China's scientific research was on par with international research standards. It meant that more students doing the college entrance examination would major in biochemical. It also meant many other things…

At the same time, it also meant that Lu Zhou's birthplace, residence, and schools would try to develop themselves into a tourist, education, and cultural attractions.

As for Lu Zhou himself, the significance of the Nobel Prize was extraordinary.

There wasn't a single international scientific research institute in the world that would refuse the participation of a Nobel Prize winner.

The same thing applied in China.

Not just that, but he would receive an insane amount of respect, special treatment, and resources. The kind that most scientific researchers couldn't even begin to imagine.

…

They spent around two hours eating.

Chen Baohua was somewhat off his game.

He never expected Lu Zhou to win the Nobel Prize. Not just that, but he was afraid that the Communist Party also didn't expect this to happen.

A Nobel-level scholar and a Nobel Prize winner was completely different…

After dinner, Chen Baohua went back to Philadelphia International Airport. He didn't spend an extra day in Philadelphia. He was on the next flight back to China.

Apparently, the Communist Party called him in for a meeting. Therefore, he didn't want to stay here for long.

Also, he said that he would convey Lu Zhou's requests to the higher-ups.

After driving Chen Baohua to the airport, Lu Zhou drove Chen Yushan back to the University of Pennsylvania.

While getting off the car, Lu Zhou suddenly remembered something.

"Are you interested in the Nobel Prize?"

"Of course I'm interested."

"Are you available in December?"

“I am! Are you taking me there?” Chen Yushan’s eyes lit up, and she quickly nodded. However, she realized she might cause trouble for Lu Zhou, so she asked, “Can you bring people to the Nobel Prize award ceremony? This won’t cause any trouble, right?”

If it caused trouble for Lu Zhou, she wouldn’t want to go…

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “What trouble, friends and relatives can all go.”

Whether it was the award venue or the world-famous Nobel Prize dinner, as a Nobel laureate, he had powers to invite any family and friends he wanted.

Also, apparently in the past, there was no upper limit on the number of friends and family he could bring to the Nobel Prize party.

That was until 1988, when Camilo José Cela, the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, brought 68 people from his village to the dinner. His action had frightened the Nobel Committee.

Therefore, a new rule was implemented—Nobel Prize laureates couldn’t bring more than 14 relatives or friends.

However, 14 people were a bit too much for Lu Zhou.

He didn’t have that many relatives, and he was only close to his parents and Xiao Tong.

His parents and Xiao Tong definitely had to go, so that took up three spots. Because this all happened so suddenly, Lu Zhou didn’t know who else he should invite for the remaining 11 spots.

Therefore, since Chen Yushan seemed to be very interested, he decided to ask her.

Chen Yushan said in a happy tone, “Really? Then I’m going! I have never been to a Nobel Prize award ceremony before.”

Lu Zhou smiled.

It’s totally normal that you haven’t been to one.

99.9999% will never have the chance to go…

…

It was pretty late once Lu Zhou got back to Princeton.

He didn’t go to his office at the Institute for Advanced Study. Instead, he drove straight home.

After taking a shower, Lu Zhou lay in bed with his phone. When he saw the 99+ notifications on Weibo, he couldn’t help but smirk.

Should I do a Nobel Prize dinner lottery for my fans?

Lu Zhou thought about it for a bit and decided to give up on the idea.

Although it sounds interesting, the logistics are way too complicated…

His phone suddenly rang.

It was from Xiao Tong.

Lu Zhou picked up the phone.

An excited voice came from the other end of the telephone.

“Brother, brother! My mathematical modeling competition results are out! I receive a first-level national prize!”

When Lu Zhou heard the good news, he smiled and said, “First-level national prize… Not bad at all. You have potential!”

Lu Zhou was thinking about the time when he was in the mathematical modeling competition.

He hadn’t been in contact with his two competition teammates.

He wondered how they were doing.

Xiao Tong smirked at Lu Zhou’s compliment. Although Lu Zhou couldn’t see her face right now, he could imagine her narcissistic smile.

In many ways, Xiao Tong was like him.

The only difference was their levels of humbleness.

Xiao Tong laughed and asked, “Then brother, is there a reward?”

Lu Zhou smiled. “There is, how about I take you on a trip?”

“Really?” Xiao Tong’s eyes lit up, but suddenly, she felt suspicious of it. She said, “But brother, you’re usually very busy. When did you have the time to go on a vacation?”

Lu Zhou said, “It’s not just for vacationing.”

Xiao Tong asked, “Not just for vacationing?”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Yeah, it’s also to receive a Nobel Prize.”

In addition to the Nobel Prize, there was also the long-awaited Clay Institute Millennium Prize Problems.

Since he was going to Europe anyway, he might as well visit the Institut de France to receive his million-dollar reward for solving one of the Millennium Prize Problems…

Xiao Tong: “…”

Chapter 450: I Heard Someone Wrote You Into The Thesis

Won the Fields Medal.

Won the Nobel Prize.

Lu Zhou felt like his time at Princeton was worthwhile.

Honestly, if he ever decided to return to China, he would miss this place quite a bit.

Whether it was the house he spent quite a lot of effort decorating, the fireplace in his living room, his office at the Institute for Advanced Study, or Lake Carnegie.

Or the scientific research environment and the scholars…

Box..

He’d come and visit again when he had the chance.

Okay, it’s settled, I’m not selling the house.

In the morning, Lu Zhou went into the office. When he opened the door, he was rained by confetti.

“Congratulations, Professor Lu! Youngest Nobel Prize winner in history,” Hardy said with a party hat on his hand. He used the empty confetti cannon as a microphone and said, “May I ask, what are your thoughts right now?”

At first, Lu Zhou was bewildered by his students’ actions. When he finally realized what was happening, he smiled.

“My thoughts are… Someone might have to sweep this office.”

“Oh, don’t be so realistic, my dear Professor Lu.” Hardy made a helpless gesture and said, “I’ll sweep it later, shouldn’t we be celebrating right now? My suggestion is to host a party! I can do the barbecue.”

Lu Zhou: “… I’ll think about it.”

Vera stood next to them, and she was blushing as she looked at Lu Zhou with an excited expression.

“Congratulations, Professor Lu.”

Lu Zhou smiled at Vera and nodded. He then replied, “Thank you.”

For him, a normal celebration was enough. He didn’t need his students to do anything extra.

Qin Yue also congratulated him. He then asked, “Professor, when is the Nobel Prize award ceremony?”

Lu Zhou: “December 10th, still two months away.”

Hardy immediately asked, “Professor, can you bring us to the award ceremony?”

Everyone in the entire office began to pay attention after Hardy asked this question.

Even Wei Wen, who had buried his head in research documents, began to pay attention.

There weren’t many opportunities to participate in the Nobel Prize dinner, especially for mathematicians.

If one wasn’t engaged in economics research, there was basically no chance at all…

Of course, their supervisor was an exception.

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “No problem. If you want, then come with me. But I do have a condition.”

Jerick raised his hand and asked, “What condition?”

Lu Zhou said in a relaxed tone, “Anyone that wants to go must complete their graduation thesis by the end of the month. You guys have been studying for quite a long time under me, and it’s time to think about graduating.”

“Graduation thesis?” Hardy was confused, and he said, “But Professor Lu, we only received our master’s this year…”

“Then try to get your PhD by next year.” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “It’s definitely doable since the condition is very easy. I don’t need you to work under me for a long time. Just finish a thesis that I can be satisfied with.”

Hardy: “…”

Qin Yue: “…”

Jerick: "…"

How is this easy?!

…

Even at a place like Princeton, winning this Nobel Prize was a very glorious thing.

Historically, Princeton had produced 25 Nobel Prize winners and most of them were in the field of physics. No matter the field, the winners of the Nobel Prize would enter the Princeton hall of fame for future scholars to admire.

However, Lu Zhou's photo was already in the hall of fame, next to the 12 Princeton Fields Medal laureates. Obviously, they couldn't hang two photos of him.

In order to celebrate all this, the Institute for Advanced Study hosted a party for him.

Originally, Lu Zhou planned on hosting this celebration party at his house. He didn't expect the Institute for Advanced Study to take care of this for him. It was arranged to be held in Report Hall Number 1.

It turned out that this report hall, which was attached to a cafe and cafeteria, was excellent for conducting serious mathematics reports and for celebrating special celebrations.

At the party, Professor Fefferman held a glass of champagne and smiled while he cheered Lu Zhou.

"Congratulations, I didn't expect you to become the first scholar to win both the Fields Medal and the Nobel Prize, as well as being the youngest record holder for both of them… I think the Guinness Book of Records can open a new sub-category just for you."

Lu Zhou took a sip of the champagne and smiled as he said, "That's ridiculous, Guinness wouldn't create a new sub-category for just two records."

Professor Fefferman said in a half-joking manner, “This isn’t ‘just two records’. Not to mention, you’re only 25 years old. I’m sure many PhD students in history will be interested in writing about you as their thesis topic.”

According to the statistics from major journals, Lu Zhou’s theses had an extremely high rate of being referenced. However, this was the first time Lu Zhou heard about someone writing a thesis about him.

Can they really graduate with a thesis like that?

Lu Zhou had his doubts.

Professor Fefferman wasn’t the only one congratulating Lu Zhou. Even his mentor, Professor Deligne, was also here.

The old man gave him a toast as he congratulated him. He then paused for a second before he continued to speak, “I think mathematics should be pure, but I’m sure you have your own opinions about mathematics. Regardless, I have to congratulate you. You’ve accomplished a historic record at the tender age of 25.”

Lu Zhou replied sincerely, “Thank you.”

“Don’t thank me. The stuff I taught you didn’t even come in handy,” Professor Deligne, who was always very serious, joked. “We always thought Edward Witten would become the first person to win both the Fields Medal and Nobel Prize. We definitely didn’t expect you to beat him.”

Professor Witten overheard his old friend’s words, and he said with a smile, “That’s impossible. Unless I can live for another hundred years, otherwise, it is impossible to prove the M-theory with an experiment.”

It was extremely difficult to find a trace of superstring theory in a laboratory, much less finding a proof. Proving the M-theory in the 11-dimensional superstring theory space was unthinkable.

Right now, the physics world was still testing and exploring the boundaries of the standard model. They were still far, far away from entering the one-dimensional universe.

However, some problems were not meant to be solved in this century.

As long as physics continued to develop, one day there would be someone that would prove his theory.

Just like how a century later, people were still carefully testing Einstein's theory of relativity, which was how they discovered the existence of gravitational waves. Whether it would be proven or disproven, only the people in the future would know the answers to the unsolved questions left by their predecessors…