

Scholar 471

Chapter 472: Knowledge Is The Greatest Asset

Cars were coming to and fro the construction site; stifling smoke came out of the non-stop roaring excavators and cement trucks. There were engineers wearing white hats, holding design drawings. They personally came to the construction site to command the construction workers who were wearing yellow hats.

Just like the engineering machinery, everyone was working around the clock. The project was progressing at a speed that was visible to the naked eye. The construction site was roaring with action.

The environment was horrible; just standing there watching would make one's leather shoes covered with mud and dust.

However, the high ranking city council officials were standing nearby. They didn't have an ounce of disgust on their faces. Instead, their faces were blooming with joy.

A billion-dollar USD national investment was suddenly designated to Jin Ling City. This was basically a blessing from the heavens for Jin Ling City.

Especially since this was a controllable nuclear fusion scientific research project, this would greatly benefit the advanced technology industry and attract skilled talents to Jin Ling City.

Box..

Putting it straight forward, this was a huge political achievement.

Of course, this controllable nuclear fusion thing was nothing worth keeping confidential. There were plenty of research institutes around the world that did the same type of research, and they had been doing it for nearly half a century.

However, in order to prevent unnecessary worries and misunderstandings, these things were still kept low-key. Before any brilliant in-progress results came out, it was best to avoid any type of publicity.

Since the engineering part was overlooked by Commander Liao, the quality of the construction team was guaranteed.

At the current progress speed, it'd take at most six months for the project to be completed. If everything went well, it wouldn't even need to take six months; three or four months would do.

Since Commander Liao gave his word to Lu Zhou, Lu Zhou didn't worry too much about the construction project anymore. Once he told Engineer Sun some of his requirements, he began to focus his attention on the construction preparations for the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Three days before New Year's, the STAR Stellarator Research Institute was in its second week of construction, while the Jinling Institute of Computational Materials building was finally completed.

The laboratory building the chemistry department lent to Lu Zhou was finally returned to its original owner.

However, the chemistry professors at Jin Ling University weren't eagerly looking forward to its return.

Because the relocation of the Jinling Institute of Computational Materials meant that the billion-dollar high precision instruments and equipment would also be reallocated by Yang Xu and his team.

Even though the Institute of Computational Materials wasn't far from Jin Ling University, it was still outside of the university campus.

Borrowing instruments wouldn't be so easy in the future.

Dean Li of the chemistry department looked at the truck that was being driven away. As he stood next to Lu Zhou, he began to feel nostalgic. He then said, "Why are you guys in such a rush? It's not like there's someone forcing you to leave."

Lu Zhou: "This laboratory building is still the property of the school; it's not that good having it under my name."

Dean Li shook his head and said, "You're not an outsider though."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Jin Ling University is my alma mater, so I've never thought about myself as an outsider. However, it is good to separate public and private matters."

If the relationship between public and private business wasn't clear, it would cause problems sooner or later.

When he was overseas, he was careful in his every step. Now that he was back in China, he had to be extra careful.

Since Lu Zhou put it like this, Dean Li didn't say much else; he just sighed.

"You're right, you're a Nobel Prize laureate now; the benchmark of the Chinese science community. All of the spotlights are on you. There's a lot of people staring at your achievements, and also a lot of people waiting for you to make a mistake, so it's good to be careful."

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "I will."

...

Even though the research institute building was built and the instruments had been relocated, this was still only the beginning of Lu Zhou's vision for the Institute for Advanced Study.

The field of computational materials was the only research institute around; all of the other research institutes were yet to be seen.

If he wanted to make his vision a reality, he had to put in a lot more work.

Because this was a privately owned research unit, after Lu Zhou made his policy requests, he didn't want to ask the state for more money. Even though the president promised him a billion yuan interest-free loan, Lu Zhou didn't plan on borrowing this money.

Firstly, he didn't need that much money right now.

Secondly, there was still quite a bit of funds left in the Star Sky Technology China branch for him to play with.

If he didn't look at the numbers in his bank account, he would have almost forgotten that he was basically a billionaire. After he realized he had this much money to play with, he immediately invested a hundred million yuan into the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study fund.

Lu Zhou never cared about spending money on research.

After all, the original intention of Star Sky Technology was to help with his laboratory research.

Lu Zhou walked around the brand new research institute building with his most helpful assistant, Yang Xu. While he familiarized himself with the environment, he asked, "How does it feel like to move back home?"

Yang Xu smiled and said, "The laboratory is much more spacious, and there's not a lot of people around here, so it feels a bit deserted."

Lu Zhou smiled.

"Deserted is part of it. I'll quickly hire a new group of researchers and make this place lively again."

With his Nobel Prize medal, coupled with the sophisticated equipment in the brand new laboratory building, Lu Zhou didn't even have to offer a high salary to attract a bunch of hard-working researchers.

Of course, looking at it from a long term perspective, he wouldn't treat his scientific researcher poorly either.

Lu Zhou stood in the research director's office that had floor-to-ceiling windows. As he looked at the entire institute, he said enthusiastically, "This is only phase one of the whole research institute. There are three more phases to go. Not just in materials science, but also mathematics, and physics. Whether it is software or hardware, we must strive to achieve world-class standards!"

Yang Xu: "Higher standards than CERN?"

Lu Zhou: "That will happen eventually."

Bragging didn't require proofs, and what if it turned out to be true?

Yang Xu joked, "You really plan on getting a Hadron Collider?"

Lu Zhou smiled as he replied, "It's an idea, but the thing can't be built in the city, plus right now we don't have the resources needed."

Theoretical physics experiments was another funding black hole. Nothing spectacular could come from it even if he invested his entire fortune.

However, if the controllable nuclear fusion project was a success, then funding wouldn't be a problem anymore.

By that time, if he wanted to draw a circle on the ground for a Hadron Collider or place a satellite in the sky to collect dark matter, no matter what ideas he came up with, someone would give him the green light.

Yang Xu didn't think about things that far into the future; his thoughts were still on the Hadron Collider. Feeling slightly astonished, he rubbed his chin while he thought about it.

“That thing isn’t cheap, right? It’ll cost billions; where will the money come from?” Yang Xu asked.

Lu Zhou smiled, but he didn’t give this question a direct answer.

“Knowledge is the greatest asset, and our research is creating wealth.”

Lu Zhou, who looked out the floor-to-ceiling windows paused for a moment.

“Gather up all of the researchers in the institute. We will have a large conference to talk about the next steps!”

Chapter 473: Two Major Directions

“That’s everyone?”

Lu Zhou looked at the empty conference room; he wasn’t used to something like this.

When he did his report at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, the venue was so crowded that people couldn’t get into the lecture hall; they had to sit in the hallways.

But now, when he looked around, he only saw around 20 people in the conference room.

He even knew some of them.

Like Brother Qian, Liu Bo, etc...

Box..

“There aren’t many formal researchers in our institute. I thought you might want to say some confidential stuff, so I didn’t invite the temporary researchers and research assistants,” Yang Xu said while he looked at Lu Zhou awkwardly. He then immediately added, “How about I notify them now?”

Lu Zhou was stunned. He then smiled and said, “No need, it’s fine. Everyone sitting here is the backbone of the research institute, and I only have a few things to say.”

He plugged in the USB into the projector and turned it on.

Once the projector screen behind him was pulled down, he cleared his throat and adjusted his demeanor.

“You guys might have already heard that the controllable nuclear fusion project is set in Jinling.”

When Lu Zhou said this, there was a commotion in the conference room. The researchers all looked at each other in surprise and shock.

Even though they had heard some rumors before, that type of hearsay was obviously less shocking than Lu Zhou’s in-person confirmation.

If anyone else said they wanted to research some state of the art technology like controllable nuclear fusion, they would be laughed at.

However, it was different for Lu Zhou.

Not only did he solve the world-class Navier–Stokes equation problem, but he also established a mathematical model for the plasma turbulence phenomenon using the L Manifold.

When their god-like boss said he wanted to engage in nuclear fusion, even though the researchers sitting here had never even seen a stellarator, they still naturally believed in their boss.

However, what confused them was why did Lu Zhou have to talk about this here?

After all, the Institute of Computational Materials wasn't a plasma physics laboratory; their research was focused on materials science and had nothing to do with controllable nuclear fusion.

However, Lu Zhou's following words answered the question that was on everyone's mind.

"... Some people might ask, 'what does this have to do with us?'. After all, you guys have a chemical engineering background and chose materials as your development direction. And even though some of you studied condensed matter physics before, it has nothing to do with plasma and nuclear engineering.

"However, breakthroughs in energy technology is inseparable from advancements in materials technology. We need a larger magnetic field to constrain the erratic plasma. We also need a more secure first wall to withstand the light and heat from the fusion reaction."

Lu Zhou looked at the researchers and paused for a second. He then began to talk about his main point.

"Our future research will be focused on two major directions. One is the field of superconducting materials. Like what I said, we need to engineer a more concise material that has a lower superconductivity temperature. This is to strengthen our magnetic field.

"The other is heat-resistant materials. We need to build a first wall that is resistant to high temperatures and can block the plasma that escaped from the magnetic field.

"Right now, we have made some progress on the side of the superconducting materials. At the MRS meeting, the SG-1 superconducting material reached a superconductivity transition temperature of 101K. Among other superconducting materials, this number isn't anything special. However, the plasticity of graphene gives us great potential for further research."

Lu Zhou showed a list of technologies required for controllable nuclear fusion on the PowerPoint behind him.

These were all problems known to the public; the known bottlenecks of controllable nuclear fusion.

He was a one-man army. He couldn't solve all of these problems by himself. The best way was to split a big research project into smaller research projects and then delegate the small research projects to his research team.

And he would choose some of the more difficult problems to conduct research on.

In fact, many Chinese research institutes used a similar model when trying to conduct a major research project.

For example, an academician received an eight-figure yuan project funding. The academician then split that project into many seven-figure or six-figure level projects, which he delegated to scholars in the Changjiang Scholars Program. If the project couldn't be split further, then Changjiang Scholars would delegate the work to lower-ranking Jie Qing scholars. It was like building the entire project out like a pyramid...

Of course, this was an inaccurate comparison. After all, in the academic pyramid, whether it was the Changjiang Scholars or the Jie Qing scholars, they were all considered top experts by average researchers. Differences could only be seen by comparing experts among experts.

However, there was no dispute on who would be at the bottom of the pyramids. That naturally would be the noob researchers, and they would be given the most tiring job.

Lu Zhou looked at the pairs of eyes in the conference and paused for a second.

"If we succeed, we will give benefits to the country, the people, and even our entire human civilization. This value cannot be measured with any monetary currency.

"I know this isn't a project that can be done overnight, and every step of the way will be full of difficulties.

"But I am confident that we will overcome these difficulties!

“We will all try our best together!”

...

The conference ended.

Liu Bo was holding his conference notes and muttered to himself, “Controllable nuclear fusion... Do you think this stuff is reliable?”

Qian Zhongming: “What do you mean by reliable?”

Liu Bo: “Including everyone, there are only a hundred people in our research institute and that includes the undergraduate students that just came from Jin Ling University. There are only 20 formal researchers. Did you see the research project on the PowerPoint? Just the human resources part alone is making me worried.”

Qian Zhongming didn’t reply to his question. Rather, he asked, “Other than our boss, how many Nobel Prize winners are there in Chinese academia?”

Liu Bo was stunned; he didn’t know why he was asked this question.

“Academician Yang, Old Tu... Mo Yan?”

Qian Zhongming: “I’m talking in the academic community.”

Liu Bo: “Then there’s only two.”

Qian Zhongming then asked, “How many are still on the frontier of scientific research?”

Academician Yang was already 95 years old. Even though he had cultivated many talented Chinese physicists and put forward many constructive opinions for the Chinese physics community, he had clearly moved away from the frontier of scientific research.

Old Tu was the same, she was already 87 years old. She was already at the age of retirement, and she was enjoying her life. Regardless of whether or not the elderly woman was still doing scientific research, it was unrealistic to expect someone that old to produce any significant research results.

Liu Bo pondered for a bit and said, "... I think it's only God Lu."

"Yeah," Qian Zhongming nodded and said, "so do you think a lack of research talents will be a problem for him?"

If the Nobel Prize winner's research institute wanted to hire people... then the researchers in the entire country or even the entire world would be running toward that institute, and they would be trying their best to squeeze their way in.

Chapter 475: A Noob researcher

[Do you have a friend in materials science? Why not apply to the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study?
Link: [Recruitment page](#).

[PS1: All you need is a passion for scientific research. Minimum education level: PhD, with more than 12 months of experience working as a postdoc or corporate scientific researcher.

[PS2: You don't have to be a PhD in materials science. PhDs in Mathematics, physics, and other disciplines can also throw in your resumes. But please attach a formal research project application to your resume.]

At midnight, in a materials science laboratory at the University of Science and Technology of China.

Hou Jinli, who was guarding the laboratory, was scrolling through his Weibo when he saw this post. He suddenly felt motivated.

Like most people, he only followed God Lu on Weibo to see God Lu bragging about his achievements. Since this Nobel Prize winner didn't post anything on Weibo for so long, he didn't expect to see a... recruitment ad?

Box..

He looked at the comments and saw the plebeians discussing.

[Minimum PhD, 12 months of postdoc experience... God Lu, I'm still studying my undergrad, can you save me a spot?]

[This advertisement is making me uncomfortable, I'm reporting it!]

[Can a high schooler apply? I can clean the floors, pour tea, and act cute~~]

[Man, how come there isn't biology? Think about us biologists! (cry) (cry)]

[That biologist must be autistic, how about we... (evil smile) (evil smile)]

Hou Jinli: "..."

He saw the hundreds of likes and felt like there was a deep malevolence coming from across the screen; he decided not to read any more comments.

Every year, there were plenty of students that fell into the big dark pit of biology, chemistry, chemical engineering, environmental studies, and materials sciences.

The materials science research environment was the same, whether it was in China or around the world.

The profit margin was less than 30%. It was common for the product development cycle to be 7-8 years. The real question was, how many real estate buildings could be built during those 8 years? How many online companies could grow, go public, and go bankrupt in that time frame?

Of course, materials science was still relatively important in China as the industry received quite a lot of support.

Otherwise, there wouldn't be so many companies that relied on state subsidies and scientific research funding to survive.

Of course, for noob researchers in this field, doing scientific research still depended on one's passion; it wasn't just about money.

If Hou Jinli were to ask himself why he didn't change fields, it would be because of his passion for the materials science world.

At the same time, he hoped that one day he would be as successful as his PhD supervisor and that he would be driving a BMW, handling multi-million projects, and chatting with CEOs of public companies.

However, while dreams were beautiful, the reality was often cruel.

Million-dollar projects? He didn't even have his own laboratory!

His ideal future path was probably two years of postdoc. After that, he would apply for the Thousands Talents Plan. Then, he would work at a good university...

However, this was only an idea.

Like what the name had suggested, his chance of achieving this was less than one in a thousand.

When Hou Jinli looked at the Weibo post and saw the name of Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, he couldn't help but think about the matter that caused intense controversy in academia a while ago.

Lu Zhou was the chief designer of the new controllable nuclear fusion research unit in Jinling.

Even though this matter wasn't publicly reported, this was no secret among the academic community.

Some people thought Lu Zhou was arrogant; some people thought he was crazy. Some people were arguing about the possibility of the allegations being true. After all, one could argue that humans were a long way from controllable nuclear fusion technology, but one could also argue that humans were one football kick away from the winning goal.

However, it had been fifty years, and the ball hadn't entered the goal.

Hou Jinli couldn't help but think if the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study's recruitment post for materials science researchers was related to the controllable nuclear fusion project.

He curiously clicked on the link within the Weibo post and read the details.

When his eyes arrived at the compensation section, he was frozen.

Formal researcher will get a salary of 300K!

And the end of the year bonus, insurance, accommodation, and food subsidies...

Of course, what attracted his attention the most wasn't the 300k annual salary but the description after that.

According to the information listed on the page, as long as one passed the interview and finished a 1-6 month long internship, one would receive the qualification of a formal researcher!

Normally for PhDs that didn't study abroad, the usual procedure was to do a two to three-year postdoc at a university, then become assistant researcher, then associate researcher, then associate professor. This entire process would take at least six years. Also, if someone got unlucky and had a terrible, heartless boss, it could take them eight years to earn an independent research qualification.

And how many years one had in a lifetime?

A researcher only had ten golden years, and that period was the period from 30 to 40 years old.

If he could successfully become a formal researcher, he could cut down the process by at least six years.

Hou Jinli remembered that in two days, he would have stayed at the University of Science and Technology of China as a postdoc for exactly one year. His mind began to race.

If he was a formal researcher, he could have his own laboratory and could engage in independent research. He could skip the six years of exploitation he would have to endure otherwise.

Even though this scientific researcher position wasn't attractive for expert researchers, but for noob researchers like him that were still suffering, this was insanely appealing.

...

Staying up all night was the norm for Hou Jinli.

The next day, Hou Jinli filled in the experimental data on the report. He then energetically opened his laptop and downloaded the attachments from the recruitment website.

Suddenly, his friend at the laboratory walked over.

Sun Hao stood next to his friend's seat and looked at the computer screen. He then said, "... Minimum a PhD, 12 months of scientific research experience. Jesus, what kind of scientific research institute has this kind of threshold?"

Hou Jinli: “Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.”

When Sun Hao heard the research institute’s name, he was stunned.

“Jinling Institute for Advanced Study? F*ck me! You want to work for the Nobel Prize winner?!”

Hou Jinli: “It’s at least worth a try?”

Regardless, he was a postdoc at the University of Science and Technology of China; he had an advantage in terms of his academic qualifications.

Of course, he didn’t know how big this advantage was.

“Unfortunately, I still have seven months to go; otherwise, I’d apply as well.” Sun Hao looked at the recruitment post on the screen and said with envy, “Bro, if you really end up working at this Nobel Prize winner’s laboratory, don’t forget about me.”

Hou Jinli smiled. He then sighed and said, “We’ll see. I’m afraid the competition is quite fierce.”

200 spots seemed like a lot.

But if the jobs were evenly spread across China’s major universities, it wasn’t a lot at all.

Also with a salary like this, it wouldn’t only be domestic universities; even postdocs who were doing their research abroad would be tempted...

After some anxious waiting, Hou Jinli successfully received an interview invitation. He confidently sat on a high-speed train and left Luyang, arriving at Jinling.

However, after he took a taxi and arrived at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, he was stunned by the scene in front of him.

He had a hunch when he was booking his hotel room.

Now it seemed like his hunch was correct.

He looked at the crowd of people gathered at the research institute and felt hopeless at his profession for the first time ever...

Chapter 476: Talent Placement

Hou Jinli was just one example.

There were many people that had the same experience as him, and they stood downstairs at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study while holding the same dreams.

Tens of thousands of resumes were screened, and there were less than a thousand that received invitations to come for the interviews.

And only one-fifth of the people could pass the interview.

Regardless, everyone here had an equal opportunity.

It was up to them to grasp that opportunity.

Box..

Of course, other than formal researchers, there were also positions like assistant researchers, associate researchers, etc., waiting for them.

Even though the compensations from these positions weren't as attractive as that of a formal researcher, most people were willing to work here regardless of the role.

There was only one reason why.

Because this was a Nobel Prize winner's laboratory; if they were to put in the same amount of effort in their scientific research here, there would be more opportunities here than any other research institutes in China...

...

Yang Xu was the recruitment gatekeeper.

Lu Zhou was confident in Yang Xu's abilities; therefore, he left this matter to him. He only briefly reviewed resumes that weren't in the field of materials science, such as physics and mathematics.

These people were treated differently than those applying to the material science research institute. For researchers in the fields of mathematics and physics, Lu Zhou asked them to attach a research project application.

If they passed their interviews, the corresponding research project application would be considered as a thesis proposal. After being hired, their thesis proposal would also be accepted.

After they wrote their conclusion report, they would graduate from the internship.

Therefore, compared to the resume, Lu Zhou paid more attention to the research project applications.

He could extract many things from the thesis proposal that he wouldn't be able to extract from a normal resume, such as the applicant's experience in applying for research funding, etc...

While the Institute of Computational Materials was hiring 200 people, the yet to be established physics research institute and mathematics research institute would only hire around 20 people each.

Rome wasn't built in a day; the same applied to the Institute for Advanced Study. Cultivating talents couldn't be done overnight, and rapid expansion wasn't necessarily a good thing.

Even though Lu Zhou had a rough idea of how to copy Princeton, he was still in the process of figuring out the specifics.

He hoped that in the midst of this trial and error process, he could find an ideal way to build his research institute.

This wasn't an easy task, but it was worth a shot.

After three days of interviews and screening, the list of formal researchers was finalized.

Surprisingly, other than the 200 formal researchers, there were more than 500 PhDs that were willing to stay as research assistants.

After the expansion, the Institute of Computational Materials had transformed from a small 20 formal researcher institute to one of the largest materials science research institutes in the country.

Of course, this was only judging by the number of staff and equipment; it wasn't by the number of theses or research results produced.

With the talents and equipment in place, as long as the Nobel Prize winner led the team, excelling in the latter two was only a matter of time.

However, that was the future. Now that the people were hired, the placements of talents became another problem.

The city council at Jinling paid great attention to the construction of the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Even though they didn't send any direct payments, they basically gave the Institute for Advanced Study a free piece of land for the accommodation of their employees. The land was next to the major university; it was in a high-tech industrial developmental zone.

However, the new piece of land had just finished their apartment bidding, and it would take at least a year before the apartments could be handed over to the institute.

On the side of the Institute for Advanced Study, starting from January, the PhDs that passed their interviews would have to come over and start their new job.

"Just rent a place for the time being," Lu Zhou said. He was at a conference when he talked about this problem. He thought for a bit and said, "Until the construction for the employee accommodation is completed, formal researchers will be issued a 2,000 yuan monthly renting subsidy. This should solve the housing problem."

The average rent of houses near the university was around 3,000 yuan per month, so a 2,000 yuan housing subsidy was quite generous. As for the assistant researchers and other positions, they would receive around 1,000 yuan per month of housing subsidy.

However, in this case, the Institute for Advanced Study would have to spend more than a million yuan a month just on housing subsidies.

Yang Xu shook his head and said, "Making all of them rent outside is a hassle. It's difficult to manage and the housing market isn't good near the university. If they find a place far away, transport will be a problem."

Lu Zhou: "Do you have a better plan?"

Yang Xu smiled mischievously and said, "I do have a plan... But it depends on you."

Lu Zhou: "Depends on me?"

Yang Xu looked away and said, "I think the faculty accommodation at Jin Ling University has been built..."

Lu Zhou: "..."

He immediately knew what Yang Xu was thinking.

Obviously, Lu Zhou had to ask for this favor in person...

...

The next day, Lu Zhou visited Principal Xu at his office at Jin Ling University. While chatting, they happened to talk about the few problems the Institute for Advanced Study was facing.

Lu Zhou was hesitant about whether or not he should ask, and he didn't know how to phrase it. However, Principal Xu was one step ahead of him.

He smiled as he said, "That's easy. Since the faculty accommodation at Jin Ling University has just been built, it's still empty. If you need, I can lend you two buildings."

Lu Zhou: "This... isn't appropriate, right?"

"Nothing is inappropriate." Principal Xu smiled and said, "You guys are working on an important national project as well as an important city council project. Not to mention, you guys have also helped us quite a bit before, so lending you two apartment buildings is no big deal."

Even the chemistry department laboratory building was lent out for two years, so lending them the two staff apartment buildings really was nothing.

Furthermore, the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study had a close connection with Jin Ling University, and they had been cooperating on scientific research projects.

And more than that, the real reason Principal Xu didn't hesitate before making this decision was because of the one billion USD scientific research engineering project.

What did one billion USD mean?

That meant almost seven billion yuan.

Forget about Jin Ling University; even the highest funded university in China, Shuimu University, only had annual funding of 5.79 billion yuan ¹.

Other laboratories could take on research projects for Lu Zhou, thus taking a piece of the billion dollar fund.

With the strength of the physics department at Jin Ling University, they would be able to take on many research projects.

In contrast, they only had to temporarily lend out two staff apartment buildings.

It wouldn't be a big deal even if they never take back the buildings.

Lu Zhou saw how clear-cut Principal Xu's answer was, so he didn't try and decline.

After pausing for a moment, Principal Xu said with a smile, "Oh yeah, since you're here, I want to ask you for a favor."

Lu Zhou said, "What?"

Principal Xu smiled and said, “The Jinling University’s Annual Person Award Ceremony will be held in a week!”

Most of the good universities had their version of the Annual Person Award where the selected ones were all geniuses among geniuses. It was quite a prestigious award. The Annual Person Award Ceremony was one of the major university events.

In principle, one person could only win this award once. However, Lu Zhou remembered that he seemed to have won it twice; once for his undergrad, and once for his master’s.

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly and coughed. He then said, “It’s been so long since I graduated, you’re not going to give me a prize, right?”

Principal Xu smiled and said, “You’ve already won the Fields Medal and Nobel Prize, and you’re still concerned about our little prize?! We’re not giving you a prize, I just want to ask if you have the time to give the young students at Jin Ling University a medal or something.”

Oh, I’m supposed to give out prizes...

There were too many people calling him that tried to give him awards, so the thought of receiving another prize almost activated Lu Zhou’s conditioned response of rejecting the prize.

“Not concerned, just used to it.” Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly and said, “Okay then, just let me know when the time comes.”

Principal Xu nodded and said, “Okay, thanks in advance!”

Chapter 478: Another Year Of Awards

Just like the previous years, the award ceremony was held to celebrate outstanding student achievements in areas such as academic research, innovation, entrepreneurship, and cultural construction.

Other than the Annual Person Award certificate, the winners would also receive a special Jin Ling University scholarship.

Even though the amount wasn't large, it was only 15,000 yuan, but the ability to stand out from tens of thousands of students was far more valuable than the money.

After all, this was a one-of-a-kind reward. Furthermore, this was in a top C9 university. The students selected this year were stronger than ever.

Physics was the trump card of Jin Ling University, so the first to appear on stage was a physics genius student.

After the host shouted the guy's name, Lu Zhou saw a tall boy, who was wearing a suit and square glasses, walking toward the stage. He then stepped on the podium in the midst of a round of applause.

Box..

When this physics genius student received the award certificate from Lu Zhou, he held his hand with excitement as he said, "God Lu!"

Lu Zhou: "... Just call me Lu Zhou or Professor Lu."

It wasn't too weird to see it on Weibo, but when he was called God Lu in real life, he felt a little shameful.

Besides, there were so many people here.

Hu Tiancheng nodded excitedly. He then asked, "Um, God... Professor Lu, can you give me your signature?"

Lu Zhou: "Sure... Do you have a pen?"

"I do! I'm carrying it," Student Hu said. Obviously, he came prepared as he quickly took out a notebook and pen from his inner suit pocket.

The notebook was huge; Lu Zhou didn't know how he managed to stuff it in his pocket.

Lu Zhou took the pen and paper and flipped through the notebook. As he looked at the densely written calculations, he couldn't find an empty space to sign.

"Where should I sign?"

Hu Tiancheng replied excitedly, "Just sign the cover!"

Lu Zhou didn't say anything else as he put his signature on the front cover of the notebook.

When Hu Tiancheng saw Lu Zhou writing, he then awkwardly asked, "Umm... Can you give me your email address as well?"

"No problem."

Lu Zhou replied cheerfully and wrote a string of letters and numbers next to the signature.

Hu Tiancheng looked at the email address and opened his mouth again. "Umm..."

Lu Zhou: "Anything else?"

Hu Tiancheng awkwardly scratched the back of his head and said, "Can I add you on WeChat?"

Lu Zhou: "..."

The physics genius student got off stage. The next student walking on stage in the midst of the applause was a mathematics genius student.

This year, the normally weak mathematics department exploded again. They didn't expect after Lu Zhou's departure, there would be another outstanding genius student.

The curtain behind the podium presented his achievements.

Full marks for all of his 12 core subjects and the rest of the subjects were 99. Ranked first in the school for his core subject marks and miles ahead of second place.

However, it wasn't just his grades that were nutty. Even his extracurricular activities were decent as well.

The guy won three gold medals—the Qiu Chengtong Award from the Qiu Chengtong College Students Mathematics Competition, the geometric topology Shiing-Shen Chern Mathematics Award, and the Zhou Weiliang Award. Other than that, he was also the first author on two SCI theses, and according to the Chinese Academy of Science, the theses were considered top-ranking.

Even though in the minds of Jin Ling University students, his status was quite a bit below that of God Lu's, but for a normal university student, his achievements were exceptionally outstanding.

As a result, Lu Zhou even had an idea of taking him in as a student.

The person receiving the award on stage was an awkward-looking male of average height.

When he shook hands with Lu Zhou, it was like he met his celebrity crush. He then shouted with excitement, "God Lu!"

Lu Zhou was so embarrassed by the enthusiasm of this kid that he even forgot to tell him not to call him God Lu.

“Uh, hello...”

Wu Kai’s face was bright red because he was so nervous. He even stuttered slightly while talking.

“I... I grew up listening to your story!”

Lu Zhou nearly vomited when he heard this.

What the hell do you mean grew up listening to my story?

Also, you’re an adult male, why on earth are you blushing...

Lu Zhou awkwardly smiled as he said euphemistically, “I’m only 24 years old.”

Wu Kai paused for a second. His face then turned red again, and he quickly explained, “Oh, sorry, I meant when I was doing the college entrance examinations...”

“No, it’s fine, everyone gets nervous sometimes.” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “However, you should be more confident. You’ve accomplished a lot for your age. I hope you continue to work hard; the future is yours.”

“Thanks, thank you!” Wu Kai stood up straight; his face blushed again.

Lu Zhou: “...”

Why are you red again?

“And, can you let go of my hand now?”

“Oh, sorry!”

Wu Kai quickly retracted his hand. While holding the certificate, he bowed at Lu Zhou again before he wandered off stage.

Environmental engineering was after mathematics, and even though the engineering department at Jin Ling University wasn't as good as those universities up north, they were still quite good at materials science and natural environment.

Of course, compared to those science geniuses, engineering geniuses were another type of excellence.

However, the most basic thing they had in common was that whether they were studying theoretical or applied sciences, their academic grades were superb.

Lu Zhou was happy at how brilliant these young students were as it meant that his alma mater was getting stronger and stronger.

However, the only downside was that all of the people shaking his hand on stage were fanboys; he didn't even meet a single fangirl.

Most of the genius students in the liberal arts department were male; this made him very worried about the unbalanced gender ratio of his alma mater.

Finally, it was the business school award.

When the host announced the winner, Lu Zhou looked at the little girl walking toward the stage and was instantly shocked.

Xiao Tong?

The achievements of the winner were displayed on the projector screen behind them.

Full marks for ten core subjects and ranked first in the entire grade.

In addition to the straight As that she received for her summer exchange program that was offered by Oxford University, she also completed one SCI thesis during her exchange and won the national first-level prize for the mathematics modeling competition...

With these achievements, she definitely deserved this honor.

However, Lu Zhou just didn't expect his little sister to suddenly become so powerful.

Especially the Oxford University summer exchange program... She didn't even mention it to him.

Xiao Tong stood in front of Lu Zhou. When she saw how surprised he was, she had a smug smile on her face. "Haha, what do you think? Are you surprised?"

"Quite surprised," Lu Zhou replied honestly. He nodded and said, "I didn't expect you to be a genius student."

Xiao Tong grabbed the certificate from her brother grumpily. "What do you mean... I don't want to humiliate you, so I've been working very hard, okay?"

When Lu Zhou heard his sister, he was speechless.

What do you mean by you don't want to humiliate me... You should study for yourself.

Xiao Tong was still happily holding the award certificate. She wanted to take this opportunity and speak to the Nobel Prize laureate, so she spoke with a tinge of gloat in her voice.

"Bro, so... Do you think I can catch up to you?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "You're not quite there yet. Make sure you keep working hard."

Facing away from the crowd, Xiao Tong glared and said, "... Can't you just compliment me for once?"

"I don't want you to get cocky," Lu Zhou said as he patted his sister's shoulder. He then paused for a second. With a sincere smile on his face, he said, "However, I have to say... Well done!"

When Xiao Tong finally heard her long-awaited praise, the small amount of disappointment in her heart suddenly vanished.

Xiao Tong was grinning from ear to ear as she held her award certificate tightly and walked off stage with satisfaction written on her face.

Finally, it was time to give the last Annual Person Award.

Lu Zhou was a bit tired from standing on stage. He took the winner's certificate from the student union's representative and was about to wish for the award ceremony to end so that he could rest backstage.

However, while he was taking the certificate, the host announced the name of the final winner.

The second Lu Zhou heard that name, he froze.

"The last Annual Person Award goes to..."

"Han Mengqi from Class One, applied chemistry!"

Chapter 479: Buying A House

His little student was standing on the stage right now.

Her achievements and honors were displayed on the projector behind them.

In addition to the ten full marks for her core subjects, she also ranked first in the applied chemistry department.

It wasn't just her grades; she also published two SCI theses as the first author and had a year of experience doing research at the Institute of Computational Materials.

Even though she wasn't as well-rounded as the other students, who won awards in various competitions, her scientific research experience was on another level.

What did two SCI theses mean?

Box..

It wasn't a big deal for nutty master's or PhD students, but for an undergraduate student, this was a huge deal.

Meng Qi walked up the stage in the midst of the applause. When she received the certificate from Lu Zhou, she gently bit her lower lip before she said anxiously, "Teacher..."

"What?"

"Um, Can... I become your master's student?"

Would Nobel Prize laureates accept master's students?

Forget about Nobel Prize laureates, even some busy academicians didn't want master's students.

After all, in terms of free labor, it was more efficient to take experienced PhD students.

When she remembered that Lu Zhou worked at a place far, far away, she couldn't help but feel disappointed.

Suddenly, she regretted asking this.

Lu Zhou finally replied, "I'll probably come back to Jin Ling University and teach sometime this year."

He paused for a second before he smiled and said, "When the time comes, I will probably be teaching computational materials science. If you're interested in that area of research, you can become my master's student."

Han Mengqi was quite talented, especially in science. Lu Zhou could tell that from back when he tutored her.

She managed to pull her grades up in such a short amount of time, and she was able to be admitted to Jin Ling University; this wasn't something an ordinary person could do.

The teenage version of Lu Zhou might not have been able to do the same.

After all, before the system existed, he had a certain amount of talent but was nowhere near a genius level.

Therefore, being able to be admitted to Jin Ling University from an ordinary high school, where the educational resources are not the best, required serious hard work.

Lu Zhou never agreed with the saying that girls shouldn't be in scientific research.

There were plenty of beautiful knowledgeable female researchers at Princeton, such as Dr. Nieng Yan, or Molina's supervisor, or even Vera.

Meng Qi, who was anxious, became surprised. She then became excited.

As Han Mengqi held the certificate in front of her chest tightly, it was like she didn't believe what she just heard. She then spoke quietly, slightly trembling in disbelief.

"Really?"

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded.

"Of course. I mean, before you did your college entrance examination, we did make a deal."

In the crowd.

Seeing that Han Mengqi was blushing on stage, her three roommates in the crowd looked at each other.

As they clapped along with the other audience members, Li Fang said, "Am I wrong or is Meng Qi actually being shy?"

The applause gradually subsided. Su Jiawen stopped applauding and said, "I think you're right."

Luo Meng: "She knows God Lu?"

Without thinking, Li Fang said, "How is that possible? He's a Princeton professor."

Luo Meng was suspicious, and she said, "But look at her face; I think they know each other."

Li Fang: "I think you're over-reading into it."

"Didn't Meng Qi submit to SCI before? Do you think God Lu happened to be her reviewer? Also, I remember now. The chemistry department undergraduate student internship program that Meng Qi joined was at the Institute of Computational Materials. I heard the Institute of Computational Materials is owned by God Lu! Maybe..." Luo Meng was blushing from excitement as she began to imagine; her mind was already filled with a million-word romance novel.

Su Jiawen facepalmed. She looked on hopelessly at her crazy roommate before she sighed and said, "Stop reading so many novels..."

...

After the Annual Person Award Ceremony came to an end, Jin Ling University returned to its usual peacefulness.

The weather became colder and colder as it approached Chinese New Year. There were fewer students around, and the peaceful campus felt deserted.

However, compared to the Jin Ling University's quiet atmosphere, the Institute for Advanced Study next door was way more lively.

After the researchers arrived at their new jobs, the experiments began.

Also, in order to finally leave the crappy hotel room, Lu Zhou decided to take some time and let Wang Peng drive him to a real estate office.

The black car with the red national flag was parked outside the real estate office. When the sales lady saw Lu Zhou and his driver got off the car, her eyes lit up. Once she realized the status of this customer, she immediately walked over.

Wang Yalan had a professional smile on her face as she politely asked, "Sir, is there anything I can assist you with?"

Lu Zhou sat down on a sofa in the office and picked up a brochure on the table. As he flipped through the pages, he said, "I want to buy a house. Is there any good listing?"

"Are you planning to buy for living or investing?"

“Living I guess,” Lu Zhou said. He looked at the photos on the wall and thought for a moment before he said, “The main requirement is a quiet environment. Preferably already built, as I don’t want to wait too long.”

He suddenly remembered something, so he added another requirement.

“Oh yeah, it has to be a stand-alone house.”

When Wang Yalan heard the words “stand-alone”, she became even more enthusiastic. She immediately sat next to Lu Zhou and began recommending houses to him.

“Sir, are you planning on buying a mansion?”

Lu Zhou: “You could say so.”

Wang Yalan: “Then I recommend this mansion in the rose garden area. The main body of the building is made of German limestone, and it has a modern minimalist influence and classical European style. It’s unique both in terms of appearance and comfort...”

Lu Zhou looked at the photos of the mansion and felt it was pretty good. He then asked, “How big is it?”

Wang Yalan: “The building area is 1,100 square meters, and the backyard is 2,600 square meters. There’s also a lawn and swimming pool...”

Lu Zhou nearly choked when he heard this number.

It was not like he had a goddamn helicopter, so why the hell would he need such a big backyard? Was he going to be playing golf? Actually, it was not big enough for golf...

“Too big. Just recommend me something a couple of hundred square meters. Plus this is too far away. Find me a place with a better transport system, and it has to be close to the university.”

Surprised, Wang Yalan looked at him and asked, "You're living by yourself?"

Lu Zhou: "Not allowed?"

"No, no," Wang Yalan said. She then quickly flipped to another page and said, "This mansion is on the east side of the Purple Mountain, so it fits your requirements. The area is 585 square meters, with a front yard and garage. It's close to the city, and the university and high-tech zone 1 is on its east side."

That's pretty good.

As Lu Zhou flipped through the interior and exterior pages of the house, he nodded with satisfaction.

He was quite happy with it, especially with the location and transport.

"How much is it?"

"70,000 yuan per square foot."

Which meant the total price is around 40 million yuan?

Lu Zhou closed the brochure in his hand and stood up from his sofa.

"Okay then, let's go see it."