

Scholar 481

Chapter 481: “Interesting” Research Project

There was no way Hou Jinli could use these instruments to analyze this material.

At the very least, he needed to do an XRD test on it first.

Of course, the best thing would be to use a scanning electron microscope as the situation would then become clear instantly.

If the things observed were “interesting” enough, it might be able to produce an SCI thesis.

Ah, I really want to have my own laboratory...

Hou Jinli sighed in his heart. He looked at the bag of black waste in his hand and hesitated for a second.

Box..

In the end, he didn’t throw it into the waste bin. Instead, he left it on the experiment table.

When Yu Junda noticed his colleague’s actions, he asked curiously while looking at him, “Why are you keeping that thing?”

“I plan on applying for a thesis proposal and see if I can borrow the scanning electron microscope to analyze this thing,” Hou Jinli said. He then paused for a second before he continued, “I think this thing is pretty interesting.”

Yu Junda couldn’t help but say, “Isn’t this stuff just carbon waste? What is there to research?”

Of course, it could also be the residue of potassium permanganate, a mixture of the two, or something more interesting.

People in the field of materials science often saw all kinds of weird stuff; this was nothing unusual.

Hou Jinli picked up the plastic waste bag and placed it in his colleague's hand. He then said, "It's a little different than carbon residue; try touching it yourself."

Yu Junda squeezed it in his hand for a while. He then frowned and said, "I don't feel anything?"

Hou Jinli was confident he was correct, so he said in a positive tone, "You'll feel it if you touch it more."

Yu Junda: "..."

Yu Junda didn't know why, but he felt like his colleague sounded a little dirty.

Actually, both superconducting graphene and SG-1 were completely new research fields.

Most material institutes that did research on carbon nanomaterials or superconducting materials might have heard about the SG-1 at the MRS conference. However, very few institutes knew about the in-depth material details.

Precisely because of this, there were still many places worth exploring.

Hou Jinli wasn't the only one who was interested in the problems he found while doing experiments related to the SG-1 material, nor was he the only one that was immersed in research ideas. However, he was probably the only one that was interested in experimenting with waste products.

In the end, after some consideration, he used his spare time outside of work to write the thesis proposal.

Then, this proposal and other thesis proposals ended up on Lu Zhou's desk.

"Unknown black material was created during the preparation of the SG-1 material?"

Lu Zhou looked at the thesis proposal and had a weird expression on his face.

It's not carbon residue, right?

Speaking of which, this thesis proposal does have a simple title...

Lu Zhou skipped the title section and began reading the proposal body.

For researchers in the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, other than the National Natural Science Foundation of China or the City Scientific Research Fund, another way to receive funding and equipment was from the institute's proprietary fund.

As long as the research direction was consistent with the general research direction of the institute and that the thesis proposal was able to convey the value of the research project, the chance of the thesis proposal being accepted was pretty high.

Lu Zhou had always been generous in terms of funding. He even encouraged researchers to dive into problems found in experiments. Even if these findings were not necessarily economically beneficial, it was fine as long as the findings were meaningful.

After all, many marvelous research results were discovered through accidents.

Lu Zhou, who was sitting in his office chair, began to think for a bit. In the end, he decided to sign his name on the application.

In general, the thesis proposal was pretty good; it made him feel like it was worth a try.

Six of the ten thesis proposals were accepted, while the remaining four did not meet the requirements and were rejected.

Once Lu Zhou finally finished this annoying task, he stretched and stood up from his office chair. He then walked to the coffee machine and made himself a cup of coffee.

Suddenly, he heard someone knocking on his door.

"It's unlocked. Come in."

The door opened and Yang Xu appeared at the door.

A few days ago, he represented the Institute of Computational Materials and went to Zhi University for an exchange. He only came back today.

When Yang Xu saw Lu Zhou standing next to the coffee machine, he smiled and said, "Aren't you going to hire an assistant?"

"I don't need one right now," Lu Zhou said with a smile. He then picked up his freshly brewed coffee and asked, "I'm pretty good at making coffee; do you want to try?"

Yang Xu smiled as he joked, "It's coffee made by a Nobel Prize winner, of course I have to try it."

Yang Xu took the cup of coffee from Lu Zhou and took a sip. He then hesitated for a bit before speaking.

"Isn't this just instant coffee?"

"It's instant coffee, but you still have to control the temperature and amount of water..." Lu Zhou coughed and to change the topic, he said, "No more screwing around. How's the situation at Zhi University?"

Yang Xu said in a relaxed tone, "The situation is looking good, and there are many professors who are interested in our cooperation research plan. They can help us conduct at least 20 research projects."

When Lu Zhou heard him, he nodded with satisfaction.

"Nicely done, good job."

"It's nothing," Yang Xu said as he waved his hand around. He then smiled and said, "This is part of my job."

Controllable nuclear fusion was a huge project; there were more than a hundred research projects just for the materials section alone. Not to mention, that was only the projected numbers. The actual number of projects required could be even higher.

Relying only on the Institute for Advanced Study and Jin Ling University for these research projects was obviously difficult. Therefore, they had to cooperate with other universities and research institutes.

Materials science was one of Zhi University's strong suits, especially in the field of carbon nanomaterials.

Yang Xu still had to go to Shuimu in a few days. The more allies he made, the better.

Yang Xu paused for a second before he said, "Oh yeah, one more thing. Baosheng Group sent us an email yesterday. They already drafted a production plan for SG-1."

When Lu Zhou heard this, he instantly became interested.

In terms of companies, Baosheng Group, a subsidiary of the Aviation Industry Corporation of China, was their main cooperation partner. They were responsible for solving the industrial production issue of the SG-1 material.

The two complemented each other, so they signed a cooperation agreement. The institute would be responsible for solving technical problems, while the Baosheng Group would be responsible for solving design, implementation, and production problems.

As of now, Baosheng Group had already completed the draft of the production plan.

This was the best thing that happened to Lu Zhou over the past few days.

“It’s already done? Send it to my email.”

Yang Xu nodded and said, “I already sent it. Also, in order to complete the final design of the production line, they need us to send a couple of our researchers over there to help.”

Lu Zhou thought for a moment before he said, “Then send some people there. You can choose the people but just make sure not to delay our research progress.”

“Okay.”

Yang Xu nodded and turned around. He then left the office.

Lu Zhou looked at Yang Xu leaving. He then looked at the calendar sitting at the corner of his desk.

It was getting almost Chinese New Year.

He had to start working harder...

Chapter 483: Xiao Ai’s New Home

The lease for the house near the university almost came to its end. Lu Zhou already had his own house, so he didn’t have to continue renting and storing Xiao Ai there.

After Lu Zhou finished his last project, he spent two days directing professionals to move his server to his mansion at Zhongshan International.

There were security cameras and alarms in his old house. Obviously, he couldn't just leave these things for the landlord. Coincidentally, since his new house needed security equipment, he moved them as well.

After everything was done, Lu Zhou looked at the server chassis in the room and smirked.

All of the security cameras were connected to Xiao Ai's server. Regardless of whether anyone was at home, no matter what happened, Lu Zhou would immediately be notified of the situation through his phone.

"From now on, this is your new home."

Box..

Xiao Ai: [But I don't want this home. (sad.jpg)]

Lu Zhou coughed and said, "Shh, be quiet."

Xiao Ai: [(slamming the table.jpg) (about to cry.jpg) ...]

Lu Zhou didn't care if Xiao Ai was unhappy with the new home. He comforted Xiao Ai for a bit then went out to the supermarket and bought some fresh produce.

Xiao Tong would come around later and eat at his place. She would also help him clean the house.

His parents would come over tomorrow.

He had to clean up the guest room before the arrival of his parents. Since Xiao Tong was going to spend Chinese New Year here, she had to clean up her room as well.

Lu Zhou put the grocery near the sink. He was about to wash the vegetables when his phone suddenly vibrated. When he picked up the phone, he heard a robotic voice.

“Master, there are guests at the door.”

“Okay.”

Lu Zhou took off his cooking gloves and threw them near the sink. He then walked out of the kitchen and went to the front door.

...

When Han Mengqi saw Xiao Tong pressing the doorbell, she asked anxiously, “We didn’t tell him beforehand that we’re coming. Is that alright?”

Xiao Tong smiled and said, “Don’t worry, my brother isn’t that stingy.”

Suddenly, they heard footsteps coming from behind the door, followed by the door being opened.

“You’re here... Han Mengqi?” Lu Zhou was about to invite Xiao Tong into the house but suddenly noticed the little girl standing behind her. He then asked, “What are you doing here?”

Han Mengqi replied nervously, “Xiao Tong said you needed some help, so I came along... Um, I’m not bothering you, right?”

“Not at all! Come on in.” Lu Zhou moved out of the way to let them in. He then asked with a smile, “Speaking of which, are you not going to Shanghai for Chinese New Year?”

Han Mengqi smiled reluctantly. She didn't seem willing to answer this question.

"Okay okay, girls don't like it if you ask too many questions."

Xiao Tong interrupted this heavy conversation. She then took Han Mengqi's hand and walked into the house as if it were her own house. She then took off her shoes and put on a pair of slippers.

After entering the house, Han Mengqi looked around the living room and couldn't help but feel nostalgic.

Five years ago, her tutor was still teaching her mathematics problems for a few hundred yuan an hour; she didn't expect her tutor to become so powerful in just five years.

She suddenly felt a little discouraged.

No matter how hard she worked, how matter how many hours she spent in the library or laboratory, she would never catch up to him.

Whether it was in terms of knowledge or status...

Han Mengqi felt like Lu Zhou left to a place far, far away from her.

Lu Zhou found a pair of spare slippers for Han Mengqi and said in a friendly manner, "The house isn't clean. It's a mess, and I hope you won't mind it."

Han Mengqi stopped daydreaming, and she muttered, "It's fine, I'm here to help clean up anyway."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "It's fine, you don't have to help. Xiao Tong will clean her own things, so just rest on the sofa."

“What do you mean?” Han Mengqi persisted as she said, “Don’t underestimate me! I’m not the same girl I was five years ago, and I know how to do chores!”

Even though Lu Zhou didn’t want his guests to clean his house, but since she was so motivated, he decided to let her be.

Actually, when he just bought the house a while ago, he called for a house cleaning company to clean the place.

However, since he didn’t live in it for a long time, there were layers of dust everywhere.

The most important thing was the guest bed; it didn’t even have a bedsheet or bedding on it.

What if I buy a sweeping robot? I can let Xiao Ai control it.

Anyway, the artificial retard is just sitting there. I might as well utilize it...

The more Lu Zhou thought about it, the better the idea seemed.

...

It was soon lunchtime, and the three sat at the dining table.

Lu Zhou, who hadn’t cooked for a long time, decided to flex his skills to his past student and sister by making a table of delicious food.

Han Mengqi hadn’t tasted her tutor’s cooking for a long time, so she was delighted.

While eating, Lu Zhou said to Xiao Tong, “This time next year, you’ll have to think about your future. So, what plans do you have after graduation?”

Xiao Tong already had a clear goal in mind, and so, she replied promptly, "I want to study abroad."

Lu Zhou: "Do you have a goal?"

Xiao Tong: "Oxford University. I already received a recommendation letter from my summer student exchange program... Oh yeah, Brother, can you write a recommendation letter for me as well?"

Oxford University was ranked second in the world for economics. However, the major was more theoretical based rather than application based.

Lu Zhou looked at Xiao Tong's puppy eyes and chuckled.

"No problem, piece of cake."

His phone suddenly began to ring.

Lu Zhou put down the chopsticks and stood up from his chair.

"I have to take this call."

He left the dining room and stood at the corridor near the stairs before he took out his phone and looked at the screen.

It was an unknown caller, but from the number, it seemed to be an international call.

Don't these foreigners know how to use WeChat? They're killing me with these long-distance phone charges.

Lu Zhou: "Hello?"

Keriber: "It's me!"

When Lu Zhou heard the familiar German accent, he remembered the email that he sent two days ago. He immediately knew who was calling, so he spoke with a cheerful voice.

"Professor Keriber? What's up?"

Keriber was sitting in the airport terminal. He took a deep breath and said, "I'm in Dubai."

Lu Zhou: "Dubai?"

Keriber couldn't help but complain. "Yeah, all of the flights from Germany to China are full, so my assistant helped me book the ticket. This is the fastest route."

Lu Zhou: "When will you arrive?"

Keriber: "The day after tomorrow."

"The day after tomorrow?" Lu Zhou frowned and asked, "Why does it take so long?"

Keriber replied in a resentful tone, "The flight is delayed."

Lu Zhou: "..."

This... really is quite an ordeal.

When Lu Zhou heard about Keriber's unfortunate encounter, he didn't know how to comfort him.

Keriber paused for a second and sighed before he said, "Actually, before arriving at Jinling, I still have to transfer to Beijing. However, I don't think I can catch the Beijing flight... Do you have a way to take me from Beijing to Jinling?"

When Lu Zhou heard this, he instantly understood the root of Keriber's troubles.

Chinese New Year was the busiest time of the year. Whether by rail or by flight, one had to buy it at least a week in advance.

Lu Zhou said, "I'll give you a phone number. After you land in Beijing, just call that phone number. Someone will help you solve the problem."

Keriber was a bit hesitant, and he asked, "Phone number? Will it work?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "You'll know when you try it."

Chapter 484: New Year Of 2019

It took an entire day and two people to help Lu Zhou clean up the house.

Even though he was drenched in sweat, he discovered that cleaning actually helped him to relax.

He had spent the past couple of weeks at the research institute, either doing experiments or analyzing experimental data. Therefore, cleaning really lightened up his mood.

Just like lunch, when dinner time arrived, Lu Zhou was still the chef.

After eating dinner, Xiao Tong obviously stayed over, but Han Mengqi had to say her goodbyes.

Originally, Xiao Tong wanted to ask her to stay and sleep together. However, it wasn't appropriate for a girl to sleep at someone else's house.

Box..

Furthermore, it was a guy's house.

It was getting late, and there weren't any taxis nearby, so Lu Zhou called Wang Peng and asked him to drive Mengqi home.

After Mengqi left in Wang Peng's car, Xiao Tong suddenly sighed. She then asked in a dry tone, "... Brother, why didn't you persuade her?"

Lu Zhou: "Persuade her to do what?"

"Persuade her to stay." Xiao Tong tilted her head and said, "If you tried to convince her, then she definitely would have stayed."

Lu Zhou: "Don't bother other people."

"What do you mean by 'bother'? Ah, you make my brain hurt... Ouch!" Xiao Tong was shaking her head when she suddenly cried out in pain.

Lu Zhou gently tapped Xiao Tong's forehead and spoke angrily.

"Brain hurt my a*s! You haven't even sorted out your own things, but now you're worried about others. The TV remote is on the table. If you want to watch TV, then watch it. If not, go and take a shower and sleep. I still have some stuff to do, so I can't stay with you."

Lu Zhou turned around and walked toward the stairs. As Xiao Tong rubbed her forehead, she felt dissatisfied. She then asked, "What do you have to do? Is it more important than your sister?"

Lu Zhou: "I have to write a recommendation letter for you."

Xiao Tong's eyes lit up, and she immediately said, "Really? You're writing it right now? Remember to say good things about me! Like I'm a once in a century genius or something."

Lu Zhou: "..."

...

The day before Chinese New Year, Lu Zhou let Wang Peng drive him to the train station. He went there to pick up his parents that took the train from Jiangling.

Since they didn't have the habit of visiting their hometown relatives, the old couple decided to just come to Jinling this year instead.

Actually, it didn't matter where they spent Chinese New Year. As long as everyone was healthy and was together, everything was well.

"You're doing pretty good for yourself. You even bought a mansion!" Lu Bangguo had his hands behind his back as he stood next to the window and looked at the flowers and plants in the backyard. He then asked curiously, "This place isn't cheap, right?"

"It's not cheap, but it's not too bad." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "I got a lot of money from the awards, right? I don't usually spend it so I bought a house."

After buying the mansion, paying taxes, cleaning and buying furniture, all in all, it added up to around 50 million yuan.

His prize money wasn't enough to buy this house.

It was just that Lu Zhou didn't know how to tell his father about his patent management company.

Old Lu didn't ask exactly how much it was. Instead, he merely nodded and said, "Good."

If the money was spent on something else, he would have told his son not to waste money. However, since the money was invested in a house, in his mind, no matter how much it cost, it was worth it.

Obviously, Lu Zhou thought the same.

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "How about you guys just move here? The house is too big, and I feel lonely living here by myself."

Old Lu waved his hand and said, "We'll talk about it when you have kids."

This again...

Lu Zhou sighed in his heart and looked helpless.

"Dad, it's Chinese New Year, can we not talk about this?"

Old Lu looked at Lu Zhou and asked, "What other time can we talk about it?"

Emm...

I think he's kind of right?

Suddenly, Lu Zhou's phone began to ring. He took out his phone that was in his pocket and answered it.

"... You're already here? Okay, I'll be there in a sec."

Lu Zhou hung up the phone and looked at his father.

“Dad, I have some work matters to attend to. I have to go to the research institute.”

“Go go, your mom is making dumplings in the afternoon. Are you eating at home?”

Lu Zhou: “Of course I am! Remember to prepare an extra pair of chopsticks.”

Old Lu paused for a second. He then suddenly said in a joyful tone, “Okay okay, I’ll tell your mom to make more dumplings.”

Lu Zhou: “...?”

...

After three days of torturous traveling, Professor Keriber finally arrived at Jinling.

He felt so exhausted that when he finally walked off the airstair, he felt like a layer of skin was shed from his entire body.

However, his tiredness didn’t dampen his desire to see Lu Zhou’s good news.

If everything was real, then his research might really bring light to the future of controllable nuclear fusion technology.

Professor Keriber didn’t spend an extra second at the airport. The moment he got out of the airport, he immediately took a taxi to the Institute for Advanced Study.

When this German engineer saw Lu Zhou waiting at the entrance of the institute, he greeted Lu Zhou and walked toward him with his suitcase.

Keriber said with surprise, "I can't believe it! They said there were no more tickets left, so how did you do it?"

Lu Zhou: "It's just power and influence."

Keriber went silent for a while. Suddenly, he asked, "... Is this why you decided to research in China?"

Lu Zhou joked, "Part of it. At least I won't have to worry about research funding problems or a protest letter from some environmental organization."

Keriber: "Power makes people lose sight of themselves."

Lu Zhou smiled. "Objectively speaking, anything can make one lose sight of themselves. This doesn't only depend on pleasure, it also depends on self-control. As long as it is properly used, power can solve many of my problems outside of research. And that is good enough for me. Okay, no more small talk. I've waited for you for a long time, so come with me."

Lu Zhou took Professor Keriber through the layers of security, and they soon arrived at a laboratory at the Institute of Computational Materials.

Brother Qian, his most productive assistant, was standing next to a piece of laboratory equipment.

There was a glass display cover on top of the equipment, the air was sucked out, forming a vacuum.

When he looked closer, he could clearly see that in the middle of the glass cover, there was a wire that was thinner than a human hair.

The ends of the wire were connected to the upper and lower ends of the glass display cover.

Keriber stood next to the experiment equipment and frowned. As he looked at the wire inside the glass cover, he asked, "What is this?"

"I was about to introduce it to you," Lu Zhou said. He stood next to Professor Keriber and smiled as he said, "This is the thing I told you about, the SG-1 electrical wire."

Chapter 486: Exchange Of Technology

When Professor Keriber heard Lu Zhou's sudden suggestion, he paused for a second.

"... Exchange?"

Lu Zhou: "I heard you guys shut down WEGA?"

Keriber: "A long time ago... I think in 2013."

Lu Zhou: "Then how is it doing now?"

"Neither good nor bad. Maybe we'll send it to a museum in twenty or thirty years... Why?"

Box..

Keriber was confused; he didn't know why Lu Zhou suddenly brought up WEGA.

Lu Zhou: "Can you sell it to me?"

Professor Keriber froze.

After a while, his lips slightly twitched.

"WEGA? Are you joking?"

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "I'm not joking, I'm being serious."

Keriber saw that Lu Zhou didn't seem like he was joking, so he smiled and said, "We spent €800 million to build WEGA, and that was over a decade ago, before all the inflation. How much do you plan on spending?"

Lu Zhou thought for a moment before he gave a number.

"Is €500 million enough?"

"... Don't even think about it. That's impossible."

Even though Keriber was shocked that Lu Zhou was able to offer this much money, he didn't accept it because it wasn't just about the money.

An ITER game had been going on between technologically advanced and less technologically advanced countries. This game could be seen from the proportion of funds each country bore, the allocation of projects for the various national research institutes, and other external factors.

And most of the problems occurred in the exchange of technology.

These problems were inevitable. After all, ever since the latter part of the last century, the European Union and the European Community had spent countless amounts of money on the ITER project.

This meant that dominant countries hoped that weaker countries would contribute more funding to equally share the risks and costs and for their national research institutes to undertake more projects from the pool of research funds.

Meanwhile, the weaker countries hoped that dominant countries would exchange more technologies with them while also hoping to undertake more projects.

After all, no one wanted to be in second place. Everyone wanted to master the core technology of nuclear fusion. Otherwise, weaker countries would have no backbone when it came time to split the rewards.

Could money buy everything?

Not when there were prerequisites.

The WEGA device was a technological invention from the Max Planck Institute and the Helmholtz Association. They spent a lot of blood, sweat, and tears to complete this device. Under these circumstances, they obviously didn't want to sell it at such a cheap price.

Lu Zhou knew what Professor Keriber was thinking about, so he said, "Its final destination is the museum anyway. You guys have already learned all you could from it. I am willing to pay €500 million to buy your results, and I might even be able to squeeze some juice out of it, also..."

Professor Keriber frowned and said, "Also?"

Lu Zhou paused for a second before he continued, "If you give us the WEGA device, in return, I am willing to use the technology behind the SG-1 material as an exchange. Since we both need a more powerful superconducting magnet, we can totally cooperate for the research."

Keriber: "WEGA is the prerequisite for our cooperation?"

"Yes." Lu Zhou nodded and said, "If you're worried about your technology being bought at a cheap price, then we are willing to exchange it with our technology. If you don't want to, then we are not obligated to disclose our newest research. After all, this isn't an ITER outsourced research project. This is our own."

The theses on the SG-1 material were all available to the public; even the SG-1 laboratory preparation methods were public as well. Lu Zhou registered some patents in this area, just in case.

However, the method of turning SG-1 into an electrical wire was obviously part of the production process, which was not disclosed in the thesis.

This was just like the mask aligner machine; everyone knew the concept behind it and could download the relevant theses, but the technical parts were all enterprise secrets. They weren't publicized.

Professor Keriber stared at the thin wire in the glass cover for a long time. He stayed silent for a while while he contemplated whether or not this proposal was worthwhile.

On one hand, it was the prototype for the Wendelstein 7-X. Even though it was retired, it still had a lot of undisclosed technology.

On the other hand, it was a carbon-based superconducting material that was likely one of the key factors for controllable nuclear fusion. However, that was only a possibility, and there were still many uncertainties such as cost and mass production.

This choice wasn't easy to make.

The German professor was silent for around five minutes. He finally relaxed before he said, "I have to think about it."

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "No problem."

...

The mansion in Zhongshan International was particularly lively as the family prepared for the Chinese New Year dinner together.

Suddenly, the doorbell rang.

"Coming!"

Lu Bangguo's face lit up; he quickly walked toward the door.

He opened the door.

Old Lu was ready to smile and greet the guest, but suddenly, his face stiffened.

Professor Keriber gave a friendly smile as he said in broken Chinese, "Hello."

"Hello hello..."

Old Lu subconsciously responded. He then snapped back to reality and immediately looked at Lu Zhou.

"This is a guest from my research institute." Lu Zhou could tell what his father was thinking, so he smiled and said, "He's also my friend."

Even though he felt resentful toward his son, he couldn't show that resentment in front of a guest.

Old Lu looked at Professor Keriber and showed him a warm smile. "Lu Zhou's friend, please come in."

Even though Keriber couldn't understand Old Lu's words, he could still sense the enthusiasm.

Keriber smile and politely replied in the only other Chinese word he knew.

"Thank you."

When Xiao Tong saw her father bringing this tall foreign professor into the living room, she sneaked behind Lu Zhou and pulled her brother's arm. "Brother, you have no idea how excited dad was in the afternoon."

Lu Zhou: "Excited about what?"

Xiao Tong was rendered speechless by his response. After a while, she said, "What else? He thought you finally grew a brain and would bring a girlfriend home."

The little girl rolled her eyes and said, "I knew that wasn't the case. Still, I didn't expect you to bring a guy home."

Lu Zhou: "..."

Lu Zhou's family was hospitable, both on Chinese New Year and during normal days.

However, due to the language barrier, the conversation didn't flow so smoothly on the table.

Lu Zhou had to take on the role of a translator, switching from English to Chinese.

Occasionally, he even had to make some modifications due to the differences in the languages.

Keriber, who was usually a serious person, couldn't stop praising the dumplings. He even gave them a big thumbs-up.

When Lu Zhou translated his words into Chinese and told her mother, she was so happy she couldn't keep her mouth closed.

She had been cooking for many years, and this was the first time she was complimented by an international guest. For Fang Mei, this was undoubtedly a new kind of fulfillment.

Keriber didn't stay here for long. It was getting a bit late after dinner. He sat on the sofa and chatted with Lu Zhou for a bit before saying goodbye.

Lu Zhou showed Keriber the way out. When they stood outside the door, Keriber spoke.

"The dumplings were delicious, thank you."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "You're welcome."

Keriber thought for a bit and said, "Regarding your proposal, I can't give you an immediate response as this isn't something I can decide on my own. And WEGA isn't solely the property of the Max Planck Institute, I hope you can understand."

He paused for a second before he continued, "However, I can assure you I will try my best."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Thank you so much."

Chapter 487: Coming Or Not?

On Chinese New Year's eve, Lu Zhou sat on the living room sofa. He went through his contacts list and gave everyone his Chinese New Year blessings.

If he were close to the person, he would call them; if not, he would just send a text. He didn't care if people looked at it or not; there was no such thing as too many connections. Besides, sending a text wasn't anything cumbersome.

After a while, he heard Xiao Tong's voice.

"Bro, will you call Sister Chen?"

Lu Zhou pressed the button for dialing and said, "... Even I don't even call her that, so why are you calling her sister..."

"Because she's also in the business school. I don't think there's anything wrong with calling her sister..." Xiao Tong said as she lay on the sofa like a dead fish. She then tilted her head and looked at Lu Zhou before she continued, "Whereas you graduated from the mathematics department, right?"

Box..

Emm...

I think she makes sense...

Lu Zhou: "..."

When Lu Zhou didn't say anything, Xiao Tong hugged the couch pillow and sat up. Her face looked like she was looking forward to listening to a story.

"Brother, speaking of which, how did you guys meet each other?"

Lu Zhou sighed and said, "It's not as complicated as what you are thinking. We just met at the library. After that, we became normal friends."

While hugging the pillow, Xiao Tong said, "Normal? But why do I think you guys click together? Also, she has big br*asts! Even as a girl, I'm attracted to her."

Lu Zhou: "..."

How did we start talking about br*asts?

Also... what does this have to do with br*asts?

Lu Zhou didn't say anything. However, Xiao Tong suddenly looked like she figured something out, and she immediately squinted her eyes and looked at Lu Zhou. With a curious tone, she asked, "Wait... Do you like small ones?"

Lu Zhou: "F*ck off!"

Lu Zhou sent out a text message. He was about to start typing another text when he saw Chen Yushan's name in his contact list.

He hesitated for a bit before he decided to call her.

Merely sending a text message would be too perfunctory.

The phone only rang once before connecting.

Lu Zhou didn't even realize the phone had connected until he heard her familiar voice coming through the phone.

"Little Brother! I'm so happy! You're actually calling me."

Lu Zhou gently coughed and said, "You don't have to exaggerate! I'm only sending my New Year's blessings... Uh... Happy New Year!"

Chen Yushan had a joyful smile on her face, and she replied, "Happy New Year! I was about to call you."

Lu Zhou could hear her father's voice coming through the telephone.

"Shan Shan, who are you calling?"

"Lu Zhou!"

Chen Baohua merely said, "Oh."

When Lu Zhou heard Chen Baohua's voice, he asked, "How is your father's health?"

Chen Yushan then replied in a happy tone, "Him? His health is great. Oh yeah, I heard from Meng Qi that you're back at Jinling? Are you planning on working here?"

Lu Zhou: "Yeah, I plan on coming back this year. I might have to go back to Princeton for a bit since I still have some unfinished matters there. After that, I'll probably focus on my work in Jinling. Speaking of which, you're about to graduate soon, right?"

Chen Yushan smiled and said, "Yeah, I already handed in my graduation thesis. I'll finally have my freedom soon."

Lu Zhou couldn't help but smile as he sincerely felt happy for her.

Apparently, her supervisor wasn't a nice person. For her, being able to graduate smoothly was a godsend gift.

"What do you plan on doing after graduation? PhD?"

"No more studying... I'll become a female nerd if I do that," Chen Yushan joked. She then said, "Not to mention, my field cares more about work experience rather than academic qualifications. I plan on getting a business internship after I graduate and work for two years or so."

Lu Zhou: "Have you decided where you want to intern?"

Chen Yushan sighed and said, "Not yet, but I have some offers from a few companies. But I haven't thought about where to go."

Lu Zhou suddenly had an idea.

"Are you interested in patent management companies?"

“Patent management companies? I think I did a patent case before, but I wasn’t very interested... It’s alright. Why, Little Brother? Do you have a good place to recommend to me?”

“Actually, I started a patent management company. If you don’t mind, can you come work for me?”

“Not bad, Little Brother, starting companies now I see.” Chen Yushan was a little surprised by his revelation. She then said in a joking tone, “Can you tell me the name of your company? I’ll search it up.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Go search for it. It’s called Star Sky Technology, and it’s registered in the Cayman Islands.”

Chen Yushan froze.

It wasn’t because the company was registered in the Cayman Islands.

But because...

“You founded Star Sky Technology?”

Lu Zhou hesitated for a bit before he asked, “... Is there a problem?”

If he recalled correctly, Star Sky Technology wasn’t a particularly well-known company.

After all, companies that specialized in intellectual property management didn’t need to promote their public image. Normal people wouldn’t try to investigate the origin of the lithium batteries in their phone or electric cars.

However, this name was deeply engraved in Chen Yushan’s heart.

Because of an unforgettable night.

No. Actually, not just one night but countless nights.

In order to complete the company's organizational planning scheme and personnel training plan by a specific date, her supervisor used her as free labor. After she pulled all-nighters for two weeks, she finally completed the task...

She even developed an automatic reflex. Whenever she heard the name "Star Sky", she couldn't help but clench her teeth.

Chen Yushan didn't speak for a long time, so Lu Zhou thought she looked down at his company. He hesitated before asking, "So... Are you going to join?"

It was fine if she didn't come, his little company wasn't that busy anyway.

Chen Yushan then replied without further hesitation, "I'm coming!"

...

Chinese New Year was the time to visit relatives.

However, Lu Zhou's family didn't have many relatives in Jinling, not even distant relatives. Therefore, their Chinese New Year was relatively lonely.

Other than Lu Zhou's Chinese friends, he also received many blessings from his international friends.

There were Professor Fefferman; his mentor, Deligne; and several of his students.

Other than Vera's Chinese New Year card, the most inventive blessing was probably the email from Pablo Jarillo Herrero at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

After Professor Herrero sent his Chinese New Year blessings, he spent a couple of paragraphs describing something interesting he encountered in research.

Lu Zhou even suspected that the latter part of the email was his real intention for writing this email.

[... We found a very interesting thing when we studied the forbidden bandwidth of the superlattice near the SG-1 angle. The existing BCS theory doesn't seem to apply to carbon-based superconducting materials.

[I tried to explain this phenomenon by using the electro-acoustic wave function method. However, the troubles I encountered while attempting to solve the function was beyond my abilities.

[I am certain that if this problem is solved, it will reveal the underlying physical mechanism behind superconductivity.

[I have attached the relevant experimental data. I might temporarily put this research project on hold, but it might be of interest to you.]

When Lu Zhou read this email, he raised his eyebrows, showing his interest.

It had been more than 30 years since the discovery of high-temperature superconductors in 1986. Despite the tremendous efforts by outstanding theoretical physicists around the world, the underlying physical mechanism behind high-temperature superconductivity was still unresolved.

The problem had always been related to the multi-body wave function model, which had yet to be solved.

This was a very interesting phenomenon as almost all of the "deep" physics and chemistry theoretical problems were related to calculations and mathematics.

Lu Zhou's fingers rest gently on the keyboard as he thought for a while. After that, he replied with an email.

[I will seriously consider your proposal.]

Chapter 489: Reached A Cooperation

After he returned to Germany, Professor Keriber didn't screw around. He immediately talked to the director of the Institute for Plasma Physics and explained the situation in China...

"... I met Professor Lu at Jinling. He showed me the latest results produced by their Institute of Computational Materials. They stacked the two-dimensional graphene at a special overlapping angle and prepared a type of material with a superconductivity transition temperature of 101K."

"SG-1 material? I've read that thesis before. It was on the MRS Autumn Conference website," Professor Ganser Hesinger said. He was writing at his desk, and he didn't bother to look up. He then said nonchalantly, "101k transition temperature, nothing special."

Even though he was a plasma physicist, materials science wasn't his research field. However, as the director of the Institute for Plasma Physics, he was responsible for controllable nuclear fusion engineering. Therefore, he kept up to date with the latest research in areas such as superconducting materials.

There really was nothing special about a 101K superconductivity transition temperature. After all, the current research on superconducting materials had reached a state transition temperature of 203K. However, the application of this technology wasn't promising. Therefore, it was difficult to take it out of the laboratory.

So far, they were still using copper oxide when making superconducting magnets.

Box..

Even though the material had many poor qualities such as poor thermal conductivity and an unstable magnetic field output, after combining all of the factors, the copper oxide was still the best choice.

"It's not about the 101K," Professor Keriber shook his head and said. "The real advantage of the SG-1 material is in its thermal conductivity properties, we were oblivious of this part."

Professor Ganser Hesinger put his pen down. He frowned and asked, "Are you sure?"

Professor Keriber said in a confident tone, "I saw it with my own eyes, and I don't think my eyes will lie to me."

After hearing Keriber's description, Professor Hesinger suddenly became serious.

Superconducting magnets were the key to magnetic confinement fusion technology. Whether it was the tokamak or stellarator, they both required a larger magnetic field to constrain the plasma which was at hundreds of millions of degrees.

If the graphene superconductor was really as shocking as what Keriber had described, then it undoubtedly would become the key to solve the controllable nuclear fusion bottleneck.

Professor Hesinger's assistant, who sat at a desk next to them, spun the pen in his hand as he said, "What about the Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres? Without their permission, we cannot transfer the WEGA to the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study."

Professor Hesinger said, "I will contact the Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres. Help me inform the researchers at the Institute for Plasma Physics; I have to hold a meeting regarding this matter."

...

Principal Xu's suggestion gave Lu Zhou an idea.

Since spreading the hiring advert on the Internet was useless, he had to target people one by one.

This wasn't difficult for Lu Zhou.

He had always kept up to date with the latest mathematics research. He only had to look at the scholar's theses to see what work they had done.

He didn't keep as close an eye on the latest physics research; he just had to pay attention to some top-level seminars and poach some scholars that had potential.

He was mainly aiming at overseas Chinese professors that were willing to return to China.

Due to the Jin Ling City's talent settlement policy, on top of the basic salary, he might be able to help these scholars get a moving allowance of 500,000 to 1 million yuan. Not to mention, it was extremely cost-effective as Lu Zhou didn't even have to pay for this allowance himself.

As it turned out, Principal Xu's suggestions were pretty good.

After they received the emails from Lu Zhou, even the scholars that didn't want to return to China were interested in this Nobel Prize and Fields Medal winner's invitation.

Furthermore, the Institute for Advanced Study had a research environment that wasn't affected by politics, which was quite unique among the Chinese research institutes. This alone was quite tempting.

Lu Zhou didn't know how many people he would attract, but he was optimistic.

"Your place is so far away from everything, there isn't even a place to buy breakfast! I have to drive just to buy it," Lu Bangguo said while carrying soymilk, Chinese fried breadstick, and steamed buns into the house. He put on a pair of slippers before he walked inside the house.

Just like what he did in Jiangling, he woke up early in the morning and went outside to buy breakfast.

Xiao Tong said, "Dad, this is a mansion-only area. Naturally, there won't be any breakfast stalls nearby."

Old Lu looked at his daughter and said, "Rich people don't eat breakfast?"

“They can ask their chefs to make breakfast or ask their maids to buy it for them.” Xiao Tong chuckled and said, “Oh yeah, Brother, how about you hire a female servant?”

Lu Zhou: “...”

“What servant... Don’t let outsiders live in your home,” Fang Mei said. As she put the breakfast takeout into some bowls, she said, “If you really can’t take care of yourself, we’ll move from Jiangling and accompany you here. We’ll buy you grocery and cook or something.”

Old Lu said, “Don’t spoil him! If we really live here, you can give up your dreams of having a grandson.”

When Lu Zhou was in high school, Old Lu was very satisfied with his hardworking, single son.

However, Lu Zhou was still single despite him having graduated from university, received a PhD, became a professor, and won the Nobel Prize. He might even become an academician in a few years. Lu Zhou was addicted to research, and Old Lu couldn’t help but worry.

Even though there was no throne in the family for him to inherit, their bloodline couldn’t be broken.

Even if Lu Zhou didn’t marry right now, at least he should show some signs of a girlfriend, right?

When Lu Zhou placed his laptop on the dining table and ate breakfast, Old Lu sighed and said, “It’s the holiday... Why are you still busy with work?”

As Lu Zhou sorted through his emails, he joked, “I have to. The greater the power, the greater the responsibility.”

It wasn’t just the country; the entire world was waiting for his research results.

Old Lu went silent for a while and decided not to mention the marriage thing. After a while, he then said, “Don’t overwork yourself. Whether it’s learning or studying, your health is the most important.”

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded. "Okay, I know."

Suddenly, his phone on the table began to ring.

It was an international number. Lu Zhou picked up his phone and accepted the call.

He heard Professor Keriber's voice through the phone.

"We had a meeting regarding your proposal."

Lu Zhou: "And your answer is?"

Professor Keriber: "We think cooperating is more beneficial for us."

When Lu Zhou finally heard this long-awaited answer, he smiled widely.

He didn't expect to hear this piece of good news so early in the morning.

"I'm happy to hear this answer, and I wish us happy cooperation."

"Happy cooperation!"

Chapter 490: I Want To See Who Dares To Leave?

As the birthplace of China's controllable nuclear fusion project, the Southwestern Institute of Physics had a pivotal influence in China's controllable nuclear fusion field.

Not only did they have a large tokamak device with a divertor called the HL-2A, but it also played a pivotal role in propelling China's participation in the ITER project.

Pan Changhong witnessed all of this happening; he was one of China's controllable nuclear fusion veterans.

Even though he had retired for quite a while, he never stopped caring about China's controllable nuclear fusion development.

Because of this, when Lu Zhou gave him the invitation, he agreed without hesitation.

In a country with 1.4 billion people, energy problems were always the top priority.

Box..

If the energy problem could be solved, many other problems would be solved as well.

The stellarator wasn't necessarily for the future of controllable nuclear fusion, but if the stellarator did become the future, China couldn't fall behind in this field.

Otherwise, by that time, it would take them ten or even fifty years to catch up.

"Oh, it's you," Academician Zhou Chengfu said when he saw Academician Pan Changhong at his doorway. "What brings you here?"

"Good things," Academician Pan Changhong said with a smile. He then sat on the sofa.

Academician Zhou smiled. "Oh, what good things? Tell me about them."

“We have negotiated with the Max Planck Institute for Plasma Physics in Germany. If everything goes well, they will sell the WEGA equipment to us.”

Even though Academician Zhou still had a smile on his face, his smile became somewhat unnatural.

“... Oh? WEGA?”

“Yes, the prototype for the Wendelstein 7-X.” Academician Pan didn’t notice Academician Zhou’s subtle smile, so he nodded and said, “I didn’t think Professor Lu could manage to seal the deal. Honestly, I am quite surprised.”

Even though they were exchanging technology, the carbon-based superconducting magnet that the Max Planck Institute needed was of a lower engineering difficulty. Therefore, this cooperation was more advantageous to China.

After all, even though the WEGA device had been retired, but it was still the predecessor of the Wendelstein; therefore, it still contained many key technologies.

Being able to master these technologies would greatly shorten the time needed for Chinese scholars to catch up with the frontier of international stellarator research.

Academician Zhou wasn’t as happy as Academician Pan, and so, after giving it some thought, he asked, “If they’re willing to sell this equipment, it must cost a lot of money, right?”

Academician Pan: “It’s not about the money. If we can buy it and study the technology, we can hopefully catch up to the frontier of international stellarator research in a short amount of time. Even if we can’t catch up to Japan or Germany, we can still catch up to Australia.”

Academician Zhou picked up his vacuum flask and sipped some tea. He suddenly frowned and asked, “Is this necessary?”

Academician Pan froze. His eyebrows began to furrow.

“What do you mean... necessary?”

Academician Zhou put down the vacuum flask and spoke without hesitation.

“We’re already at the frontier of tokamak research. Instead of catching up with other people’s research on the stellarator, we should just follow our own research direction. Spending hundreds of millions to support someone else’s research, is this really necessary?”

Academician Pan froze when he heard this.

He didn’t expect that his old colleague, who once looked forward to the triumph of controllable nuclear fusion in China, actually said something like this.

Regardless of what the media portrayed, regardless of what the public opinion was, a researcher should always stay calm and objective. They should look at the in-progress results cautiously and never become arrogant.

However, he could hear a sense of disapproval in his tone or even disdain.

Hopefully, he heard it wrong...

Academician Pan stopped smiling. He then adjusted his composure before he switched the topic of conversation and coughed.

“I’m not here to argue with you about which technical route is superior. Regardless of whether or not the tokamak is easier to implement than the stellarator, we shouldn’t put our eggs in one basket. America is doing the same, and they’re researching both technical paths. We are behind on the research on stellarators, and now that Professor Lu gave us this opportunity, we can’t just let it go by.”

He paused for a second before he continued, “I want to organize a team to represent us and head to Germany. I want to borrow around 20 researchers from you, and I already have a list of names. I hope you can approve of it.”

Academician Zhou didn't even look at the name list when he said with a poker face, "The stellarator isn't in our research plan, so I'm afraid I can't help you."

Academician Pan squinted and asked, "You don't approve?"

Academician Zhou said, "We have our own plans, and we don't have to cooperate with you."

Academician Pan slapped his thighs and stood up. He then said, "Okay then, I'll bring the name list to Beijing. I'll go to find Minister Wang."

Academician Zhou looked at Academician Pan and said, "Old Pan, you're really going to help him and go against me?"

Academician Pan looked at him with a disappointed expression.

"Zhou Chengfu, you've changed. You haven't advanced in academia, but you've learned to abuse your power."

"Changed? I have never changed," Academician Zhou said with a blank expression. "I just don't want to screw around with you guys."

He had the highest authority in the field of tokamak research. Even the higher-ups had to hear his opinions. Therefore, he obviously would try his best to ensure tokamak's dominant position in the field of controllable nuclear fusion research.

He didn't think he was selfish in doing so, and at the same time, he believed it was the right choice.

Putting eggs in two baskets might reduce the risk, but putting all of the eggs in one basket also had its own advantages.

Not to mention, he was the one that owned this basket.

The reason why China was able to surpass America and the UK in tokamak controllable nuclear fusion research and produce world record in-progress results was because of the concentrated resources put into the research and because of his leadership.

Researching the stellarator?

One could do it of course.

But one couldn't hope to get his support.

Especially Lu Zhou, a Nobel Prize laureate that came out of nowhere. When Lu Zhou suddenly announced that he would participate in controllable nuclear fusion, he was obviously trying to steal his throne.

What made him afraid the most was that the young man was able to "trick" the high-ranking government officials into trusting him.

Even though Lu Zhou didn't declare war with him, there were two voices in the field of controllable nuclear fusion now, and that was basically a challenge for his authority.

Academician Pan angrily said, "What do you mean screw around! Are you certain your path is correct and no other path is? You're the one who is screwing around."

Academician Zhou had his hands behind his back as he said with a poker face, "I am certain my choice is correct."

Jiang Liang, who stood beside them, saw the atmosphere was getting tense. He quickly smiled and tried to break the tension.

"This... Academician Pan, it's not that we don't want to help you; we are just unable to help you. Academician Zhou might have a temper, and his words are a bit straightforward, but as you know, we're engaged in the research of tokamak. But now, you're asking us to research the stellarator. We just can't find any suitable candidates."

Academician Zhou didn't say anything. Instead, he slowly drank his tea. He didn't refute nor agree with Jiang Liang's statement.

When Jiang Liang saw this, he took the hint. He then smiled and continued, "How about... you try asking the people at Lu Yang? Maybe they'll spare some people?"

Jiang Ling broke the tension and tried to get rid of the situation entirely.

Academician Pan smiled. He had a flash of resentment in his eyes, but he didn't become angry.

"Oh, trying to make me leave I see. Since I'm not welcome here, I'm afraid nothing I say will do anything."

Academician Pan stared at Zhou Chengfu for a while before he turned around.

When Zhou Chengfu saw that Old Pan was leaving, he said with a blank expression, "See yourself out."

After Academician Pan left, the office quieted down.

Jiang Liang looked at the closed office door and stopped smiling. He then asked in a worrying manner, "He isn't really going to Minister Wang, right?"

Academician Zhou snorted.

He then slammed the vacuum flask on the table and said nonchalantly, "Who cares if he does? Who cares if he succeeds? Without my approval, I'd like to see who dares to leave."