

## Scholar's Advanced Technological System

### - Chapter 563 - Where Is My Phone?

#### Chapter 563: Where Is My Phone?

After the incident spread across the country, there was an uproar.

It had been three days since the fusion ignition of the demonstration reactor.

However, they only knew now that Chief Designer Lu of the STAR-2 demonstration reactor had collapsed.

Actually, because there was no celebration party at the demonstration reactor site, nor was there any commendation conference, a lot of people had started to connect the dots.

However, most of them were just speculating on whether or not the STAR-2 demonstration reactor was really successful or not. They didn't think that it was about Lu Zhou's health.

And now that this news broke out, everyone was muddled.

Actually, the higher-ups didn't plan on keeping Lu Zhou's condition a secret forever. They even prepared a press release speech.

It was just that no one expected him to be in a coma for this long. It had been days, and there was no sign of him waking up.

Since the public opinion was shifting anyway, there wasn't any point keeping this a secret.

China finally confirmed this news.

Everyone Daily was the first to report on this.

That press release speech was modified and was presented on the front page of the newspaper.

[Professor Lu, chief designer of China's controllable nuclear fusion project, Nobel Prize laureate, and Fields medalist. After the successful fusion ignition of the demonstration reactor, due to his work overload and fatigue, has collapsed on the worksite...

[According to his colleagues, during his most difficult periods of research, he stayed at the office for weeks at a time. He often even skipped lunch.

[He is the torch of the younger generation. He illuminated the path toward a great nation. He is a candle, burning for the cause of scientific research...

[We pray for his recovery.]

The picture in the newspaper was a candle.

It was very rare for Everyone Daily to highlight an individual's safety.

The editors and readers were all in tears.

The controllable fusion ignition was successful.

This was originally supposed to be a moment worthy of celebration.

In this celebration-worthy day, Lu Zhou was supposed to be sitting with his family, sharing the joy of his success. However, he was burned out.

Maybe he couldn't handle it anymore.

However, he still stood there, persisting until the end, until the moment fusion ignition was achieved...

Surprisingly, there weren't any haters regarding this incident.

Even when the STAR-2 demonstration reactor was successful, there were a lot of people that were using conspiracy theories to hate on their success.

But at this moment, anyone with an ounce of intelligence knew not to hate on a sensitive topic like this.

Official Weibo account of Everyone Daily...

Comment section.

There were hundreds of thousands of candle emojis...

[(candle) (candle)...]

[I wish him a speedy recovery! (candle)]

[I hope he wakes up as soon as possible. (candle)]

[...]

...

At the same time, the international community was also debating.

American representative: "Professor Lu Zhou is mankind's asset. His health isn't only China's responsibility. If China does not have the ability to cure him, I suggest to send him to The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Maryland. He will receive the best treatment there."

The French representative said, "The Saint-Joseph Hospital has world-leading experts in neurosurgery. We are willing to pay for all of Professor Lu's medical expenses, and we will ensure he will receive the best treatment!"

The British representative interrupted the French representative and said, "Saint-Joseph Hospital? Where is that? Are you joking? The Royal London Hospital is a million times better than that."

The conference table was having a furious discussion.

Finally, the Chinese representative stood up and interrupted the discussion.

"Due to our concern for Professor Lu's safety, unless he personally agrees to such a proposal, we will not agree."

The American representative said, "I hope you guys are doing a good job taking care of Lu Zhou."

Chinese representative: "We would be doing a bad job if we were to send him to you."

American representative: "What do you mean?"

Chinese representative: "You heard me." Read the next chapter on our

It wasn't just the various governments, even the World Health Organization expressed their willingness to send a medical team to Beijing for free and provide medical help for this outstanding scholar.

Finally, China decided to take a step back on this issue.

After all, out of all of the countries, China was probably the one who wanted him to wake up the most.

Since the domestic experts couldn't solve this problem, it was a good idea to consult the foreign experts.

The World Health Organization team of experts was undoubtedly a better choice than a team of experts from a single country.

Even though the possibility of espionage couldn't be ruled out, it was still relatively easy to control.

Just like that, a team of medical experts set off from Geneva and traveled to China.

However, surprisingly, the international experts weren't able to come up with a better conclusion. Even the most respected neurosurgeons couldn't diagnose Lu Zhou's condition.

Academician Castin from the UK expressed his opinion.

"I personally think this is a very interesting medical phenomenon. It can even be used as a future textbook example."

Academician Zhao Zhongji said, "Oh yeah?"

Academician Castin nodded with excitement. "Yeah, his body is normal. It's like he's just fallen asleep, but he can't wake up. If we can figure out how he fell asleep, this might be a discovery worthy of the Nobel Prize."

Before he came to China, he only regarded this mission as a political task to earn some goodwill from China. After all, the England Royal Society promised him a considerable amount of research funding.

However, he was now completely fascinated and intrigued by this situation.

Academician Zhao Zhongji was also curious about what this Nobel Prize-level discovery could be. But he was more concerned about Lu Zhou's health.

Even ten Nobel Prizes couldn't compare to the life of a scholar.

"If you dare to do any kind of experiment on him, I swear to God you'll never do an experiment again."

Academician Castin smiled awkwardly and tried to diffuse the tension.

"Don't get angry... I was just kidding."

However, Castin didn't look like he was kidding.

...

The multi-national medical expert team didn't have any good ideas. China didn't really trust them, and Lu Zhou's treatment had become more and more complicated.

Fortunately, his "condition" did not worsen.

But many people were still worried about him.

The only person that wasn't worried was Lu Zhou himself.

January 20th, snow was blowing outside the window, leaving a crystal white layer on the windows.

Chinese New Year's Eve was in four days.

Lu Zhou was still lying on a hospital bed with a medical ventilator. He looked as calm as ever, and one could even hear him breathing.

Yan Yan was sitting next to the bed, and her eyes were full of tears. She thought back to a few days ago when she faced her angry father, who slammed the door in her face.

And what her father said to her.

"F\*ck off!"

"You're not my daughter!"

His father was in the army. He was old when he had her and was now retired.

For a man who had devoted his entire life to his country, there was nothing more important to him than the interests of the country.

Not even his own daughter.

She knew why her father was this furious, it's just that she hasn't been treated like this before.

Yan Yan took a deep breath and began to tear up.

After all, she was only in her twenties.

She originally thought she was mature, but now, it seemed like that wasn't the case.

Maybe because her life was too perfect or her military achievements made her too arrogant... She always had an illusion that she could handle anything life threw her way...

When she accepted this mission, she never even thought about the possibility of failure.

Her arms rested on her thighs, and she buried her face into her hands.

However, while she was in a pool of self-pity and blame, she heard a cough.

After that, a reassuring voice could be heard.

"Where... Where is my phone?"

### **Chapter 564: Thank You!**

Translator: Henyee Translations Editor: Henyee Translations

"Why are you crying?"

Lu Zhou saw Yan Yan's red and swollen eyes. After some struggle, he managed to take off his respirator.

He then paused for a second.

He had just woken up and still felt a little discombobulated. He didn't remember offending her.

Lu Zhou didn't know if Yan Yan was excited or emotional, because her eyes became even redder.

Yan Yan used her arms to wipe away her tears. Her serious personality could no longer hold back her tears. Pea-sized teardrops soon came falling down the corner of her eyes.

"I thought... I thought you'd never wake up."

Over the past couple of weeks, she had been berated numerous times. It was torturous for her.

Even...

Even her own father didn't want to see her.

Lu Zhou: "..."

Even though Lu Zhou was touched by how much she cared about him, he felt that if someone were to suddenly come into the room, there would be a weird misunderstanding.

Lu Zhou wasn't sure if he should comfort her. He hesitated for a bit before deciding not to.

After all, she was an adult. She probably didn't need his comfort.

Therefore, he coughed and repeated his request, "Can you bring me my phone?"

"Phone, phone?"

"My phone, don't tell me it's out of battery." Lu Zhou tried to lift his arm, but he realized he was completely powerless.

It seemed like he actually had been sleeping for a long time; all of his muscles were exhausted.

Even though there were people that massaged him to prevent muscle atrophy, there was still a certain amount of tiredness left in his body.

However, with his body's metabolic capabilities, it would only take two to three days for a complete recovery.

It might not even take a day; a couple of hours would be enough.

Of course, he wanted to keep his body's capabilities low-key.

Lu Zhou was optimistic about his situation.

After all, the experiment was successfully completed, and the burden on his body was released. Staying at a high-end hospital like this wasn't a big deal since he could finally get some rest.

"I'll go get it right now."

After Yan Yan heard Lu Zhou's request, she immediately got up and walked toward the cabinet.

Lu Zhou's personal belongings were placed inside the cabinet, including his phone and his notebook, which were used to write down thoughts of inspiration. No one dared to touch his belongings.

While getting Lu Zhou's phone, Yan Yan used her phone to report to the higher-ups regarding Lu Zhou's condition. She then handed Lu Zhou his phone.

"Here."

"Thanks."

Without hesitating, Lu Zhou immediately unlocked his phone. When he saw he still had 21% battery left, he sighed in relief.

But when he looked at the date, his eyeballs nearly popped out of their sockets.

The f\*ck?

I slept for nearly a month?!

Lu Zhou remembered that when he upgraded his phone, lithium-sulfur battery technology reached a new breakthrough. Half a month of standby time was no problem at all.



Because of his OCD, he would usually charge his phone every day. Therefore, he didn't feel the effects of the battery upgrade at all.

Lu Zhou looked at the date on his phone screen and felt a little relieved.

If I leveled up in one more discipline, I would have slept for a couple more days. If I slept past Chinese New Year, everyone would've thought I died. An obituary would have been written...

Actually, considering all of the various factors, the obituary of Lu Zhou staying in a persistent vegetative state was already written. However, whether he would wake up or not, he wouldn't be able to read it.

Suddenly, a bunch of Weibo notifications popped up on his phone.

Lu Zhou saw these messages and paused for a second. He then subconsciously tapped the notifications.

He froze.

[Everyone, let's give our thoughts and prayers.]

[God Lu! Don't leave us! (cry) (cry)]

[(candle) (candle) (candle)]

[God, please help us.]

Lu Zhou: ? ? ?

Even though he was touched by so many people caring about him, he was confused by the candle emojis.

Yan Yan was scared that Lu Zhou would pass out from this surprise, so she quickly explained the situation.

"Everyone is worried about you."

It was as if she realized her statement wasn't comforting enough, so she added another sentence.

"This is a type of way... to pray for you."

Lu Zhou: “Do you think this is my first time on the Internet?”

Yan Yan smiled and didn’t say anything else.

...

In addition to his loving fans, there were a bunch of missed calls, texts, and unread emails.

Just like that little girl who was far away in Princeton.

[Professor, where are you?]

[You’re sick?!]

[I’m in Beijing right now.]

[I can’t find you, where are you?]

[My visa has expired, I have to return to Princeton... If you wake up, can you please tell me?]

When Lu Zhou saw this string of messages, he felt a mix of emotions.

He went silent for a while and wrote a reply.

[I’m fine. I’m better now. Don’t worry about me.]

Lu Zhou hit “Send” and sighed. He threw his phone on the bedside table.

No one had ever confessed their love to him before.

Honestly, even though a lot of time had passed since then, he still didn’t know how to deal with it.

If only...

Emotions are as simple as mathematics.

Yan Yan noticed Lu Zhou’s mix of emotions, and she immediately thought that he wasn’t feeling well.

“What’s wrong? Are you feeling unwell?”

Lu Zhou: "Doctor Yan, can I ask you a personal question?"

Yan Yan nodded and said, "Go ahead."

Lu Zhou said, "Do you have a boyfriend?"

The moment Yan Yan heard this question, her cheeks turned bright red.

Boy... boyfriend?

Why are you asking me this?

I don't have one...

Maybe he's suggesting something...

Yan Yan was at a loss, and she sneakily looked at Lu Zhou.

She had never thought about being with a researcher.

But now that she took a closer look at his face...

He actually looks decent...

No, actually, he's quite handsome.

Especially when he is concentrated on his research, it's strangely attractive...

Wait a second, how do I remember what he looks like when he's doing research?

Yan Yan looked at the snow dancing outside the window. Her cheeks felt burning hot, as if she were about to have a heat stroke.

She answered calmly and slowly, as if she were a robot.

"I. Do. Not."

"Oh yeah?"

Lu Zhou sighed and felt a little disappointed.

"Never mind then."

It'd be useless to ask her about my situation.

I should consult someone with more experience when it comes to relationships.

Who should I ask?

Brother Fei? Luo Wenxuan? I feel like they have some experiences, but they're in different situations than me.

This is so complicated...

Yan Yan: “? ? ?”

Wait a second, what do you mean by never mind?

What happens next?

Finish your question!

Just as she was about to ask Lu Zhou, the door was pushed open.

A kind-looking old man, who was accompanied by a man in military uniform, appeared at the door.

When Yan Yan saw these two, she immediately stood up and saluted.

The old man smiled and nodded toward her, indicating that she didn't have to be so serious. He even eased the atmosphere.

“Am I bothering you two?”

Yan Yan was still blushing, and she quickly said, “No... I mean, no.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Why did she just repeat “no” two times?

The old man smiled and shook his head.

“Miss, please excuse us, I have something to say to Professor Lu.”

“Okay.”

Yan Yan nodded and stiffly walked away.

The old man looked at Lu Zhou and paused for a second. He composed himself and looked solemn.

“Professor Lu, I am very happy to see you wake up.

“Right now, on behalf of the entire country, on behalf of 1.4 billion people, I would like to say... Thank you!

“Thank you for your contributions!”

Chapter 565: Laying out the Future

Lu Zhou looked at the old man’s solemn expression. He paused for a second and smiled.

“There’s no need to thank me. I’m just doing what a scholar is supposed to do.”

For him, studying those difficult research problems were interesting in and of itself.

It was just like solving a mathematics question.

Whether it was the exploration of the unknown or the satisfaction from walking out of the maze, all of this made him feel happy.

He didn’t care what other people thought, this was his opinion.

And it had never changed.

Therefore, even without the pressure from the system mission, he would still try his best to try and bring fusion energy to the world.

It was just that, without the pressure from the mission, it wouldn’t happen as fast...

The old man said with emotion, "Our country is honored to have such a scholar!"

Lu Zhou replied humbly, "You're too kind. If other people didn't help and if the department didn't cooperate, it would be impossible to achieve this with just me alone."

The old man smiled and didn't say anything.

Even though the Manhattan Project was the result of the joint effects of thousands of people, everyone placed their attention on Oppenheimer.

He paused for a second before saying, "Regardless, you are our country's hero. If you have any requests, please let me know."

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and smiled. He said, "They're not requests, more like suggestions."

The old man said seriously, "Professor Lu, please continue."

Lu Zhou: "The breakthrough of controllable fusion technology will inevitably impact the traditional energy industry. If these impacts are not properly cared for, it might become obstacles to the increment of the productivity of our society."

The old man smiled and said, "Professor Lu, please rest assured. These problems don't exist for us."

China was different from western countries.

There was no such thing as a Chinese "energy giant".

Whether it was the oil companies or the State Grid Corporation of China, even though they are technically public companies, they were all owned by the state.

After all, the socialist market served more than just the private sector.

In the fact of the greater good, there were only two paths to choose from. Either one could follow the trend of history, or one could be left behind.

That included but not limited to the capital.

Lu Zhou nodded.

Since the old man already thought about this problem, he didn't have to say anything else.

How to balance the interests of the parties, how to properly manage the coal-power industry... These topics were in the field of sociology and economics. He didn't want to comment too much on them. He believed that the Institute of Social Sciences had many experts that knew more than him.

What he was interested in and responsible for was only research.

Therefore, the second problem was the real problem.

Lu Zhou paused for a second and said, "The second thing is about controllable fusion itself."

The old man said, "Professor Lu, go ahead."

Lu Zhou's head was lying on the pillow as he stared at the ceiling of the hospital room and organized his thoughts. He said, "Right now, controllable fusion is using tritium and deuterium as fuel. Controllable fusion technology is headed toward commercialization. However, no matter how efficient the self-sustaining fusion reaction is, there will be an inevitable loss in tritium.

"Therefore, there's an idea in the academic world. Which is to use deuterium and helium-2 as reactants to carry out the fusion reaction. The fusion of helium-3 produces electrons instead of neutrons. This reduces the impact on the reactor material and can release more energy."

The old man couldn't keep up with Lu Zhou's words. He frowned and said, "Helium-3?"

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "If you don't understand, you can think of deuterium-tritium as burning coal, while helium fusion would be like burning oil."

This was quite an abstract example.

It wasn't academically rigorous, but it could be understood by a layman.

Old man: "The helium-3 fusion you're talking about, it's not easy to do, right?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Definitely not."

The more charge the nucleus carried, the greater the Coulomb repulsion was, and the greater the kinetic energy required for the nucleus to merge.

According to the theoretical calculations, the deuterium-tritium fusion reaction section was several times that of the fusion reaction section of deuterium-helium-3. This meant that the Lawson criterion for achieving a fusion reaction might be billions of degrees higher for helium fusion.

Using the technology available right now, it wouldn't be possible to achieve helium-3 fusion.

Therefore, helium was widely regarded as an ideal fuel for the next generation of fusion reactors.

The old man went silent for a bit and said, "But the power cost of the deuterium-tritium fusion is already low enough, and it's inexhaustible for hundreds of years. Do we really have to develop this helium-3 technology now?"

Lu Zhou: "I think it's necessary."

Old man: "Really?"

Lu Zhou said succinctly, "The helium-3 fusion reaction does not produce neutrons, which makes it safer than the deuterium-tritium reaction. Looking at it from an engineering point of view, this is the only possible way to reduce the weight and size of the fusion reactor. Also, the controllable fusion reactor has already achieved fusion ignition. The next generation of controllable fusion ignition will be created by a country within the next 20 years."

It was not the industrial era anymore. There wasn't any technology that could be permanently kept confidential.

Even if other countries created worse control schemes and anti-radiation materials, they could achieve a similar result. It was just like the atomic bomb, the latecomer always walked a smoother road than the firstcomer.

The way to maintain an advantage had never been to lock the doors, but rather, it was to walk in front of others forever.



The old man looked serious, and he asked, "What is your suggestion?"

Lu Zhou said, "Restart the moon landing program."

Of course, landing on the moon wasn't enough.

It would be best to establish a permanent research station there and colonize space...

The old man couldn't keep up with Lu Zhou's thought process. He asked, "Why are we talking about space now?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Helium-3 is extremely rare on earth and aren't suitable as industrial fuels. However, the moon has a rich reserve of helium-3. If we want to lead the world forever, we have to be at the forefront, whether it's from the technology standpoint or from the raw materials standpoint."

The old man nodded thoughtfully.

Seeing that the old man understood Lu Zhou's ideas, Lu Zhou continued to speak, "The energy problem has been solved. We have a ten or even twenty-year window to the Space Age. We are closer to the future than anyone else. It'd be a pity not to use this advantage."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Our current interests are important, but we should also build a foundation for the future."

"The sky above us will one day become the new Persian Gulf of our century. It's not just energy, but also inexhaustible minerals. From the Earth to the Moon and to the more distant Milky Way. That is our path to the universe. Whoever has control of the stellar system, has control of the future!"

Compared to international politics and financial markets, as a scholar, Lu Zhou was much more concerned about the far future.

Even though the ideas in his mind might not be possible to achieve in the short term, he still had to do something about them.

He believed that one day, he would see his ideas come to life.

Even if he didn't, he was certain that someone in the future would see them.

The old man was touched, and he looked at Lu Zhou. “We will consider your proposal.”

He looked at his watch and saw it was getting late, so he stood up from the chair.

The old man suddenly remembered something, and he spoke in a casual and relaxed voice.

“I came here to visit you. I didn’t expect to talk about national affairs with a patient. Speaking of which, Professor Lu, are you not going to think about yourself?”

Lu Zhou: “Myself?”

Old man: “Yes.”

At the beginning, the old man asked if Lu Zhou had any requests.

As long as it was within the old man’s capabilities, he would try his best to satisfy Lu Zhou’s needs.

However, Lu Zhou went beyond his expectations.

Lu Zhou looked at the ceiling and smiled as he said, “This is a difficult question. I really don’t want anything... Actually, my life is not lacking in any particular area. The only thing I wish for outside of research is probably to see my research results being used properly.”

The old man nodded solemnly. “I can promise you that.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Well then, I’m relieved to hear that.”

## **Chapter 566: Where To Broadcast?**

Translator: Henyee Translations Editor: Henyee Translations

Ten minutes after the old man left, the hospital room door was pushed open again. A group of people walked in.

“Brother!”

Xiao Tong burst into tears, and she wanted to rush over but was stopped by Yan Yan.

“His body is very weak right now.”

Lu Zhou: “Actually, I’m fine...”

Yan Yan: “No, you’re not.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Chen Yushan sat down on the side of the bed and looked at Lu Zhou with a worried expression on her face.

“You finally woke up.”

Lu Zhou forced a smile on his face. “Yeah... I kind of overslept.”

Chen Yushan’s eyes were watering, but she finally smiled in relief.

“Don’t say that. It’s not funny.”

Yan Yan was holding Xiao Tong. She kept staring at Lu Zhou and Chen Yushan. Suddenly, she had a surprised expression on her face.

Lu Zhou made a helpless expression and looked toward his parents.

Fang Mei looked at her son and said with teary eyes, “You finally woke up... You have no idea how worried your dad and I were.”

Lu Zhou coughed and said, “Sorry for making you guys worried.”

His family was worried about him the most.

Therefore, he felt the most apologetic toward them.

Old Lu looked at his son on the hospital bed, and he seemed to have a lot to say. However, in the end, he merely sighed and said, “Take care of your body, don’t overwork yourself... Who cares about that fusion nuclear stuff, I want to see you healthy. Not sleeping for a week, what is wrong with you?”

Lu Zhou coughed and said, “This is just an accident.”

Who said I didn't sleep for a week?

That's a ridiculous exaggeration.

"Sleeping for 20-something days is an accident?" Old Lu said, "Go do a body examination! Don't tell me you have radiation damage or something! I've seen that stuff in my friends' news feed, it affects your offspring as well!"

"Rest assured! Controllable fusion is safe, so don't be nervous." Lu Zhou guessed that his father probably saw some fake news in his friends' news feed, so he coughed and said, "I already did the body examination stuff."

There were countless medical machines and instruments that were used on or attached to his body when he was asleep.

Actually, he was quite curious since even the equipment from 301 Hospital couldn't find any abnormalities in his body. If it was possible, he wanted to take the medical data and examine it himself.

However, he also knew that nothing would come of it.

"Oh, you already did the examination." Old Lu looked at his son for a bit and said, "Then rest well and try to recover. Don't overwork yourself next time..."

Lu Zhou looked at his father as he muttered apologetically, "Yeah... Sorry about this."

Patient visiting time was limited to ten minutes.

Family members weren't exempted from this rule.

After the group of people left, Yan Yan pushed Lu Zhou, who was in a wheelchair, to the examination office next door for a check-up. She then made him do some less intense recovery exercises. After that, she sent him back into the hospital room to lie down again.

Lu Zhou was in a coma for a long time.

Even Superman wouldn't be able to recover immediately.

Even though his body was in good condition, it still took a while for his body to metabolize the toxins that were accumulated in his muscles.

Even though Lu Zhou felt like he had mostly recovered, other people obviously didn't think so.

Whether it was the doctors of 301 Hospital or the medical expert group responsible for his diagnosis, they all suggested him to stay in the hospital for at least another month. This was so that they could confirm there weren't any residual symptoms.

As a result, he wouldn't be able to go home to celebrate Chinese New Year.

However, Lu Zhou wasn't too sad.

His parents and Xiao Tong were nearby.

For him, home was wherever his family was.

The sky outside the window was getting darker.

Lu Zhou picked up his phone from the bedside table and was about to reply to those that cared about him.

However, when he opened his Weibo, he found out that his fans were being facetious.

[I'd be happy to trade God Lu being single for another ten years, for him to wake up right now.]

[If God Lu wakes up right now, I'll run naked in the streets.]

[Who cares about streaking, if God Lu wakes up, I'll eat a kilogram of sh\*t!]

[I'll swim in the sewage!]

These people were getting more and more ridiculous. Lu Zhou couldn't stand it anymore.

Do these a\*sholes even care about me?

He tapped his fingers on the screen and sent out a post.

[Where are you broadcasting your sewage swim?]

Within five minutes...

His entire Weibo page blew up...

...

Because of that Weibo post, the news of Lu Zhou waking up spread like wildfire. Some people were excited, some were disappointed. In any case, it didn't have much to do with him.

Also, since it was Chinese New Year soon, a lot of people had been visiting him.

In addition to the people he knew, there were also some strangers.

Among them were people he didn't know, and most were government officials.

Even though government officials wouldn't usually try to make connections with scholars, being a respected scholar was a completely different concept.

A scholar like him was on a completely different level.

In a way, Lu Zhou's opinion influenced the decisions of the higher-ranked government officials.

This alone gave people a reason to visit him.

However, this gave Lu Zhou a headache...

Academician Lu was sitting on a stool beside the bed. He happened to be attending a conference in Beijing and didn't leave yet. He came to visit Lu Zhou and even brought a bag of mandarin oranges.

Academician Lu was peeling the mandarins as he smiled and said, "The day before yesterday, my old classmate from the Ministry of Education was telling me that their last department meeting was discussing whether or not they should put your story in elementary school textbooks."

Lu Zhou said, "Please don't... That sounds embarrassing."

"Oh, you still feel embarrassed?" Academician Lu placed a peeled mandarin in Lu Zhou's hand and said, "Eat it, the doctor said that you woke up recently, and you're still in the recovery stage. The fruit is good for your health. I'm guessing you can't peel the mandarin yourself, so I'm peeling it for you before someone else eats it."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "I can still peel mandarins."

Not to mention, even if he couldn't, there were many nurses that were willing to help him. Read the next chapter on our

"You should stay in bed, and try to recover as soon as possible. After the holidays, there's still a commendation conference for you. I think you shouldn't go back home this year, just stay in Beijing."

Lu Zhou, who was eating the mandarin oranges, made a helpless expression.

"I want to go back, but the hospital won't let me."

Academician Lu smiled and said, "That's true, you're a treasure now. Experts from more than a dozen countries formed a medical team to diagnose you. This is my first time seeing this kind of treatment happen to anyone."

At the very least, normal politicians wouldn't be able to receive this kind of treatment.

Right now, a news broadcast was playing on the TV in the hospital room.

There were news about Lu Zhou's recovery and news about the movement in the international crude oil markets...

In order to stabilize the oil prices and market sentiment, OPEC made a rare promise to increase production in the next three months to stabilize oil prices. On the other hand, Russia had also tacitly stated that it would not increase oil production in the short term as they had decided to wait and see what the market would be like.

The rise and fall of oil prices had nothing to do with Lu Zhou since he had never invested in the futures market before.

However, what surprised Lu Zhou was that at the end of the news broadcast, he saw a piece of news about China's resumption of the moon landing program.

The year was 2020, and global politics seemed to have reached an inflection point.

They were all more or less related to the successful completion of the fusion reactor.

Even though everything that was happening in the news was far away from Lu Zhou, he still couldn't help but feel a sense of participation when he looked at the news anchor through the TV screen.

It was almost like he personally turned a page in the history book.

And this was just the beginning.

In the evening, after Lu Zhou ate dinner...

With the help from Yan Yan, Lu Zhou went for a walk in the courtyard of 301 Hospital.

Even though he felt like he could walk on his own, Yan Yan still insisted to accompany him.

It seemed like the unfortunate event gave her PTSD. Ever since he woke up, she didn't leave his side even for a second. She nearly followed him into the bathroom.

Since she kept insisting, Lu Zhou decided to let her be.

After all, his condition brought a lot of trouble to those that cared about him.

Coincidentally, while he was walking in the courtyard, he ran into the people from CTV.

Chang'an street was nearby from here.

An intense ministerial conference on the future of controllable nuclear fusion was happening...

Chapter 567: Cross-Regional Power Grid

Moscow.

An office in the Kremlin.



A powerful-looking man was sitting behind his wooden desk. After he heard his servant's report, he frowned.

"Woke up?"

The man who was in a leather jacket nodded.

"Yes... According to our intelligence personnel, Professor Lu Zhou has already woken up from his coma. According to the experts at the World Health Organization, there is no evidence that his coma was caused by external factors. It's likely that he was just fatigued."

Fatigue that resulted in a coma of more than 20 days.

Even though this sounded somewhat ridiculous, this seemed to be the most reliable explanation compared to the other outrageous speculations.

Mr. Vladimir walked to the window and looked at the Red Square outside the Kremlin. His facial expression made it difficult for people to guess what he was thinking.

*Lu Zhou is alive.*

*This definitely isn't good news for Russia.*

*The Russian economy relies heavily on energy exports, and China is the second-largest buyer for Russian crude oil and natural gas. They accounted for 18% of total exports.*

*If the leverage caused by the fall of oil prices caused the US dollar to strengthen in the short term, then the Russian ruble would receive an unacceptable blow.*

*However, in order to win over Russia, China will not cut the import orders for Russian crude oil and natural gas in the short term. But this undoubtedly means that the Chinese will have more leverage in the negotiations of energy imports.*

The global political situation was originally in an equilibrium state.

Now that controllable fusion was thrown into this mix, this balance was completely broken.

Suddenly, a terrible image emerged in Mr. Vladimir's mind.

*What if one day, the Siberia factories have to rely on China's power grid?*

*This is quite scary...*

*If only that kid never woke up.*

*If he passes away, his story will undoubtedly become legendary. He will be remembered as the greatest scholar of this century. Not only will the Chinese people mourn him, but so will I. Even the President of the United States will manipulatively prepare a eulogy to mourn his death.*

*But the problem is that he is still alive...*

"Mr. President."

Vladimir looked at his servant and said with a blank expression, "What?"

The man in the leather jacket lowered his voice and said, "What if we..."

"I know what you're thinking, but that is not possible." Vladimir looked away from the window and sat back down again. He said, "We can't risk the chance of offending the Chinese. Especially at such an important time. It would be asinine to do something like that."

In any case, assassination was a barbaric act. It would mean that their country was an uncivilized country.

Especially when it was the assassination of an internationally renowned scholar.

Not to mention, the other party had the ability to avenge themselves.

The man in the leather jacket stood there silently as he waited for the president's order.

After sitting at the desk for a long time, Vladimir said, "Continue to collect intelligence intel on controllable fusion energy. They are ahead of us, but we can't fall too behind."

He flipped through the document on the table. When his eyes came across a certain line, he squinted his eyes.

“He’s single?”

Suddenly, the office door was pushed open.

“Latest news!”

The Russian Foreign Minister quickly walked to Vladimir’s desk, and he said in a hurry, “China has started negotiations on cross-regional grid interconnection projects with Myanmar and Laos. Even though we don’t know if an agreement will be reached, but according to our reliable sources, the Chinese side has provided the two countries with very attractive offers...”

It was too late to ask why they didn’t knock on the door. The moment Vladimir heard this, his pupils dilated slightly.

As expected, his biggest worry came true.

Even though Russia didn’t have any interest in Southeast Asia, this still wasn’t a piece of good news.

It was Laos and Myanmar now. The question was, who would be next?

If they went south, they could expand their energy grid to Vietnam, Thailand, and maybe even Malaysia. They could control Malacca and pave their way for their power across the ocean.

Or they could go west, along the Silk Road. They could connect the five Central Asian countries and continue their power on land.

Perhaps only God knew the answer to this question.

...

Beijing.

301 Hospital.

Lu Zhou originally planned to just take a walk. He didn’t expect to bump into anyone.

When he heard the middle-aged man yell his name and run toward him, Lu Zhou looked back at him.

“Who are you?”

The man looked at Lu Zhou and reached out his hand. He smiled and said, “Let me introduce myself. I’m the CTV station director, Luo Qidi.”

*CTV station director?*

*When did TV station directors have so much free time?*

*Not to mention he’s the station director of CTV...*

Even though Lu Zhou was surprised, he still smiled and reached out his right hand.

“Nice to meet you, Director Luo.”

There were countless higher-ups that visited him over the past couple of days. Even though the CTV director was a pretty important figure, Lu Zhou wasn’t fazed at all.

“Haha, nice to meet you, Professor Lu.” Luo Qidi shook Lu Zhou’s hand and smiled. He then immediately introduced the person next to him, “This is the host of our TV show ‘Light of Science’, He Ying.”

He Ying smiled politely and said, “Nice to meet you, Professor Lu.”

“Nice to meet you, Miss He.” Lu Zhou nodded toward her. He then looked at Director Luo and joked, “Director Luo, did you come here to personally interview me?”

“Haha, I want to interview you, but I haven’t worked in the field for a long time. I’ll give this opportunity to my younger colleague.” Director Luo smiled and turned to He Ying as he said, “He Ying, please explain the situation to Professor Lu.”

“Okay, Director Luo.”

He Ying looked at Lu Zhou and said, “Here’s the situation, it’s almost Chinese New Year. The entire country is concerned with your physical condition. If you have some time, we would like to invite you to participate in a popular science show.”

Lu Zhou: “Is it about controllable nuclear fusion?”

He Ying nodded and said, "It's related to nuclear fusion, but it's mainly about you."

Lu Zhou thought for a bit before he replied, "I'm fine with anything, but you should talk to the relevant government departments about your show. After all, a lot of things are confidential and sensitive."

He Ying nodded and said, "Don't worry about this, the show will not involve confidential topics. We have already done our homework."

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Okay then, when is the interview?"

Seeing that Lu Zhou agreed, He Ying sighed in relief. She then said happily, "Tomorrow at two o'clock, our show is going to be broadcast on the day before Chinese New Year."

Their production department planned a long time for Professor Lu to make a guest appearance on their show. This included obtaining licenses from other departments, collecting questions from the public through telephones and Weibo, screening questions, etc... A lot of the preparation began at the end of last year.

Not only did the production team spend a lot of time and effort, but she also spent a lot of effort on this herself.

After all, being able to interview Lu Zhou would be enormous for her entertainment career.

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded. "Okay then, I'll be there."

Since the station director came in person, he felt obligated to accept this interview.

However, Lu Zhou felt like the real reason Director Luo was visiting him wasn't because of the TV show. It was probably the same reason as the other people that visited him over the past few days. Director Luo just wanted to use this opportunity to form connections with Lu Zhou.

However, Lu Zhou wasn't sure if their careers would benefit from being friends with himself.

Yan Yan saw Lu Zhou agree to the CTV interview and watched Director Luo and the female host walk away. She looked at Lu Zhou with a worried look on her face.

“Is your body fine?”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “I’ve basically recovered. It’d be better to go outside than to stay in this hospital. Please help me apply for the temporary discharge.”

Due to safety reasons, Yan Yan didn’t want to agree with his request. But in the end, she still sighed and agreed to it.

“Okay then... I’ll go with you when the time comes.”

Lu Zhou coughed and said, “Actually, it’s fine if you don’t want to go, I can go alone.”

Yan Yan immediately said, “No way! If an accident happens again, I’ll...”

However, she suddenly stopped talking.

Yan Yan looked at Lu Zhou and clenched her teeth. She took a deep breath before muttering, “Nothing, pretend like I didn’t say anything.”

*It’s not like I can tell him that my father nearly kicked me out of the family because of the last incident!*

*It’d be so embarrassing to tell him!*

Lu Zhou: “...?”

*What is this chick talking about?*

Chapter 568: Interview With Station C

Beijing.

Chang’an street.

The CEO of China Petroleum, Wang Yongping, attended meetings for the entire morning. When he walked out of the conference room and looked at his notes, he had a complicated expression on his face.

Since the beginning of the month, the upper management team had made a series of energy development adjustments. During the meeting, they made detailed arrangements for the development plans of several state energy companies for the next five years.

As for the content of the meeting...

It wasn't good news for China's petroleum industry.

First of all, the upper limit of offshore investment was reduced by around US\$130 billion. Secondly, the signed contracts had remained unchanged and the expansion of overseas oil and gas fields had to be stopped within three years.

Not only that, but there were also plans like "50,000 electric vehicle charging stations within two years" and "every gas station on the highway has to have four electric charging stations".

This all indicated that the state seemed to be eager to remove petroleum fuel from the hands of civilians.

In fact, he wasn't confused by the upper management's decision. After all, the amount that China spent on foreign energy imports each year was staggering.

However, even though he understood why the upper management was doing this, he was still aching.

Especially the offshore investment, which was the most profitable part.

Now that it had been reduced, he couldn't help but feel the pain.

But they didn't even receive the worst end of the stick.

They were still lucky compared to the coal companies that had been obliterated.

Just the reduction in coal production capacity alone gave headaches to countless people.

Especially for the laid-off workers and the local economy of several coal-producing provinces...

Wang Yongping had a headache just by thinking about these problems.

It wasn't just these energy mining companies; two major power grids and five major electric utility enterprises were also assigned their respective tasks.

In particular, they made adjustments plans for the residential electricity price while taking fusion power generation into account.

However, the electric companies had actually received a lot of benefits at this meeting.

In particular, the cross-regional transmission project to Laos and Myanmar.

If they could complete this project, it wouldn't matter if they could make a profit or not, it would be a huge success for China's future energy development...

If they could export energy to neighboring countries, that would mean that China would have a stronger influence in that particular country.

Wang Yongping couldn't help but admit he was jealous.

He was stuck in the same place.

But there was nothing he could do, he just got unlucky.

...

With this controllable fusion technology breakthrough, both domestic and foreign political stances would be restructured to account for this increase in productivity.

Of course, as usual, some people were happy and some people were worried.

However, the fate of each individual was often neglected in a time like this.

History was irreversible, nothing could stop it from moving forward.

The entire year of 2020 would probably be in chaos.



However, Lu Zhou, who personally kicked off this new era, was having a much better time.

He even had time to go on TV.

The day before Chinese New Year, the Light of Science live studio was filled with people.

Lu Zhou walked on stage in the midst of the applause. He smiled and waved at the audience. He then sat on the sofa.

After he sat on the sofa, he briefly looked at the audience members.

These people were relatively young, and most of them seemed to have come from local universities. Some of them might have come from high school or even middle school.

The audience all looked excited, and their applause was getting more and more energetic.

However, Lu Zhou wasn't sure if these people were actors who were hired by the program production team.

*Emmmm...*

*I'll just pretend they're not actors.*

He Ying was sitting beside Lu Zhou, and she looked at Lu Zhou and smiled.

"Professor Lu, are you feeling better?"

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded. "I've basically recovered. Otherwise, I wouldn't be sitting here with you today."

The audience chuckled.

The camera hanging above the studio gave the audience a few close-ups of Lu Zhou.

The production department hoped that they could use this opportunity to convey to the public and the international community that Lu Zhou's health was improving.

Even though Lu Zhou wasn't sure if this was the reasoning behind this interview, he still agreed to come here today.

After all, it was true that his body had mostly recovered.

He felt guilty, especially since he knew that a lot of people were worried about his health.

After some small talk to lighten up the atmosphere, He Ying smiled and said to Lu Zhou, "Before the show begins, I want to ask you a few questions that we took from our audience."

Lu Zhou rested his hands on his knees. He leaned back on the sofa and said, "Ask away, I'll answer to the best of my abilities."

"Don't worry, Professor Lu, these questions are very easy." He Ying looked at the cards in her hand and said, "The first question is from our netizen friend in Jiangsu."

"He expressed his concern about the thermal pollution impact of controllable fusion. What do you think about this concern?"

*There's someone that knows about thermal pollution?*

Lu Zhou raised his eyebrows with interest. He didn't expect this.

*It looks like these audience members are quite knowledgeable.*

*At least they didn't ask if fusion reactors are more explosive than fission reactors.*

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and said, "Global warming is a systematic topic. Let's not discuss the possibility of thermal pollution, but rather think about this from a scientific perspective."

He Ying: "Scientific perspective?"

Lu Zhou: "That's right, the frame of reference is a high school physics topic. Which is that, when one studies the motion of a moving object, one would have to choose a suitable reference frame, then study the relative motion of the object to the reference frame."

“An example is a runner. When we talk about his running speed, we don’t talk about the frequency of his steps or the speed at which his arms swing. Instead, we look at him as a whole system and compare his speed to the ground. The ground is used as the reference system so that we can calculate his displacement and time relative to the starting point.

“For a large and complex system like the earth, we can’t just isolate one aspect. We should discuss it as a whole, on both the spatial and time scales.

“Talking about the environmental impact that controllable fusion energy has on the earth is a non-scientific way of thinking about this.

“Whether it is thermal power or nuclear power, they’re all just ways of generating electricity. The metric that determines the value of social production isn’t electricity. They are needs and demands.”

He Ying: “Needs?”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “That’s right.”

Controllable fusion would accelerate the increase of productivity, but would productivity stop without controllable nuclear fusion? Obviously not.

As long as there was a need for development, as time went by, civilization would continue to develop. However, the speed of said development would be relatively slow, and there would be more obstacles on the way.

The audience didn’t seem to understand what Lu Zhou was saying, so Lu Zhou put it in an easier to understand manner.

“On a short time scale, controllable fusion technology is able to slow down global warming. The energy conversion efficiency of traditional thermal power technology is about 35%, which means that in order to produce 1 unit of electricity, we have to release 2.85 units of heat by burning coal. This release of heat corresponds to carbon dioxide and other sulfur gases in our atmosphere.

“However, controllable fusion doesn’t have this problem. Using the ferrofluid electric energy generator on the STAR-2 demonstration reactor, the energy conversion efficiency is 50%, and there is still room for improvement. Which means that for every 1 unit of electricity, we only need to produce 2 units of heat. Also, there are no greenhouse gas emissions.

“China is a huge energy consumer, we account for half of the world’s total energy consumption. If we make a difference in our carbon emissions, the whole world will follow us.”

As for looking at this from a longer time scale, then one would have to consider more than just human behavior. There were other long-term factors that were more impactful.

For example, the solar magnetic activity cycle.

The solar activity had a high probability of entering Maunder Minimum halfway through the 21st century. The heat that would reach Earth was 0.3% smaller than the maximum.

What did 0.3% mean?

In Mr. Zhu Kezhen’s History of China’s Meteorology, the four ice ages in history were just a special cycle of Chinese civilizations. And these were the four dynasties; the late Han Dynasty, the late Tang Dynasty, the late Ming Dynasty, and the early Qing Dynasty. Take the Ming Dynasty as an example. According to historical records, the Dongting Lake had a foot of ice on top of it. The Yangtze River was frozen and the moon was nowhere to be seen. This was all due to the powerful solar cycle.

The heat released by human activities was minuscule compared to solar activity.

At least for now, humans were a long way from competing against a star.

However, Lu Zhou couldn’t go this in-depth during the show, as the TV program time was limited...

Chapter 569: Creator of the World

After that, He Ying asked Lu Zhou a lot of questions on behalf of the audience, and Lu Zhou responded to them one by one.

This included how controllable fusion technology would affect the lives of ordinary people.

And what kind of positive impacts the energy breakthrough would have on the nation's economy.

Also, Lu Zhou's own personal future plans...

Of course, Lu Zhou obviously didn't talk about any sensitive technology topics.

Once they were done with the interview, some people would edit the content of the program before the program would be officially broadcasted. They would edit out those sensitive topics.

Of course, since these things were handled by the professional production team, Lu Zhou didn't have to worry about it.

In the second half of the interview, during the audience interactive session, an 11-year-old girl walked on stage. She stood next to Lu Zhou while holding a large bouquet of clove pinks.

She stared at Lu Zhou with her big, bright eyes as she handed out the bouquet in her hand.

"My teacher told us that you should put the flowers in a vase, next to your bedside table. This will make you feel better. Grandpa said that you used knowledge to help a lot of people, he wants you to get better. Also, I want to become a scientist like you when I grow up..."

It wasn't easy for the little girl to say all this, especially while holding a large bunch of flowers.

The young girl took a deep breath. She looked absolutely adorable.

"Thank you for your clove pink!"

Lu Zhou smiled and took the flowers from her hand. Even though he knew this was probably arranged by the show production team, he still smiled and said gratuitously, "Smelling the flower is already making me feel a lot better. Remember to tell your teacher I said thank you!"

The little girl blushed and nodded. She then turned around and ran off stage.

The audience erupted in applause.

In the midst of the applause, the show also came to an end.

Lu Zhou left the studio and went into the green room.

After He Ying expressed her gratitude to Lu Zhou on behalf of the production team, she continued to speak, "Professor Lu, are you free later?"

Lu Zhou: "Why, what's up?"

He Ying smiled and said, "Nothing much, I just wanted to grab food with you or something."

"Let's get food another day. I'm afraid Doctor Yan won't let me eat anything before I leave the hospital," Lu Zhou said with a smile.

Yan Yan, who was standing behind him, didn't say anything. However, she obviously agreed.

Even though she didn't have the power to control Lu Zhou's actions, as his personal doctor, she was still responsible for all of his health concerns.

Even though He Ying was a little disappointed, she still smiled. "Okay then, another day it is."

After Lu Zhou left the TV studio, he went back into his car. He was surprised to find out that the 301 Hospital guards that followed him here were gone. Instead, in came Wang Peng, who he hadn't seen for three days.

Lu Zhou was sitting in the back seat. He looked at the familiar face through the rearview mirror and said, "I thought you went home for the holidays."

Wang Peng made a helpless expression.

"No holidays for me, I'll probably lose my end-of-year bonus as well."

Forget about the end-of-year bonus.

If it weren't for his previous excellent record, he would be in even more trouble right now.

He had been constantly berated by the higher-ups over the past few days.

“No end-of-year bonus? Why...” Lu Zhou suddenly realized something and awkwardly said, “It’s not because of me, right?”

Wang Peng smiled and didn’t say anything.

It was quite difficult for him to answer this question.

Of course, he didn’t complain about the punishment. After all, it was his job to protect Lu Zhou. And now, it seemed like he had failed his job.

However, Lu Zhou, who knew the real reason of why he was sick, felt somewhat guilty. After all, he wasn’t poisoned or malnourished into a coma or something. It was purely because he leveled up his discipline. His brain couldn’t handle the information overload...

Lu Zhou decided he should do something to compensate for this.

“Oh, I see, I’ll write a letter for you and explain the situation to the higher-ups.”

Wang Peng was suddenly anxious, and he said, “Oh please don’t, please don’t do this.”

Lu Zhou said, “No, this isn’t your fault. It’s mainly because I didn’t take care of my body...”

Suddenly, Yan Yan interrupted him.

“His department has rules and regulations. If someone said that he made a mistake, then he made a mistake. There’s no debate about that... If you really write a letter for him, not only will it not help him, but it will give him more trouble.”

She was also punished in the same regard.

The reason why she wasn’t fired from her current position was that 301 Hospital couldn’t find any evidence of malnourishment.

This was also the reason why Wang Peng was able to get his job back. There was simply no evidence of sabotage.

Even though Yan Yan’s father was a veteran, she didn’t get any type of special treatment.

And she never expected Lu Zhou to get her out of this trouble.

Lu Zhou began to realize the situations they were in, so he decided not to write the letter.

Even though he still felt kind of guilty, it was what it was.

At most, he would just compensate them later...Read the next chapter on our

Lu Zhou returned to 301 Hospital and was about to go upstairs for his daily medical checkup. However, when he walked into the main building, he saw Academician Wang waiting at the front entrance.

Academician Wang's eyes lit up when he saw Lu Zhou, and he smiled as he walked over.

"How are you? Do you feel better?"

"I feel a lot better." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "It's almost Chinese New Year. Are you not going back to your hometown?"

"I was born and raised in Beijing, where am I supposed to go? My hometown is one metro stop away." When Academician Wang saw that Lu Zhou could walk on his own, he nodded in relief. He said, "I'm relieved that your condition is getting better. You have no idea how many people were worried about you."

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly and said, "I feel really bad."

"Don't say that! We're the ones who should be feeling bad." Academician Wang sighed and said, "Controllable fusion isn't an easy thing to accomplish. Especially when it comes to coordinating various research departments. Most of the critical research projects were done by you alone. Honestly... I and the old guys at the Chinese Academy of Sciences feel quite guilty."

"I'm just doing my best, no big deal." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Plus, my health is getting a lot better now."

Academician Wang sighed and said, "I'm glad you think that way. Also, there's one thing I have to tell you. While you were in a coma, we tried to achieve fusion ignition a couple more times. The STAR-2 demonstration reactor is looking good. The higher-ups personally made demands to implement the grid



connection and supply electricity to the 80 million residents in the Jiangsu province!”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “It’s going to be connected? That’s fantastic!”

Academician Wang smiled and said, “Yeah, it’s really amazing. I didn’t expect to live to see this day. But, there’s another favor I have to ask you.”

Lu Zhou frowned and said, “Is there a problem with the demonstration reactor?”

*That’s not possible!*

*Even the system recognized the success of the fusion ignition.*

“It’s not the demonstration reactor.” Academician Wang quickly explained, “It’s just that after it’s connected to the grid, we can’t keep calling it its code name, right? After all, this is the world’s first demonstration reactor. The higher-ups asked us for a new name. I don’t really care about these kinds of things, so I’m asking you, the chief designer.”

Academician Wang smiled and said, “How about you think of a beautiful name for the reactor? If you really can’t think of anything, you can use your own name. This is a good opportunity to leave your name in history.”

“Let’s not use my name. It sounds weird.” Lu Zhou coughed and said, “I’ll think about it.”

Academician Wang said, “Okay then, you think about it. I have a couple of examples here.”

Lu Zhou: “What examples do you have?”

“Oh, like Houyi, Jinwu, Daohuoze, Suiren, etcetera. There’s also the more westernized Prometheus. These were all decided through votes by the people in the army department. You can decide which one you like.”

After thinking for a long time, Lu Zhou said, “Let’s call it Pangu<sup>1</sup>.”

Academician Wang: “Pangu?”

“Yeah.” Lu Zhou nodded.

He had actually thought about this for a while.

Not only would the controllable fusion breakthrough revolutionize the energy industry, but it would change the entire world.

In some sense, the birth of this demonstration reactor was the second creation of the world.

“If you think that’s a good name, then so be it.” Academician Wang smiled and said, “Okay then, I’m not going to stay here for long. I’ll submit this name to the higher-ups and you should get some rest. The people at the demonstration reactor site are still waiting for your return. We still haven’t hosted a fusion ignition celebration party yet. We’ve been looking forward to this for the whole of last year.”

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded.

“Ok, I promise we’ll have the party soon.”

## **Chapter 570: The Third Debris**

Translator: Henyee Translations Editor: Henyee Translations

Germany, Greifswald.

Wendelstein 7-X laboratory.

Professor Keriber was sitting at his desk. He was holding a mouse in his hand while staring at his computer screen. As his cursor repeatedly clicked through the video progress bar, he had a massive headache.

The video was Lu Zhou’s Light of Science interview.

The show aired last night. Someone recorded it, added subtitles, and uploaded it to Youtube. It received millions of views.

Millions of views for a science interview was quite impressive, especially since the video quality wasn’t the best. It was obvious that the controllable fusion field, which previously had nothing to do with the public, had received widespread attention.

After Keriber saw this video, he immediately downloaded the video.

He was different from other people.

He didn't really care about Lu Zhou's thoughts on controllable fusion energy, nor did he care about the "future technical problems" that came along with controllable fusion. He only cared about one thing.

Which was Lu Zhou's opinion on the controllable fusion reactor itself!

He just wanted a little bit of inspiration, a little guidance!

Unfortunately, no matter how hard he tried, he didn't find the thing he was looking for.

Suddenly, he heard his assistant's voice.

"Professor?"

While frowning, Professor Keriber looked away from the screen and stared at his assistant, who was sitting in his office.

"What now, Price?"

"You've been staring at that video for over an hour..." Price was shocked by how tired Professor Keriber looked. He originally wanted to remind Keriber that he had a new email, but instead, he asked, "Do you need any help?"

"No need... Wait, bring me a cup of coffee."

"Okay."

Price immediately stood up and walked out of the office.

Professor Keriber continued to stare at the young man in his computer screen. He had a complicated expression on his face.

Kicking China out of ITER was a mistake.

That was always his opinion.

However, those politicians who made the wrong judgment obviously wouldn't pay for their own actions or even admit their mistakes.

The only evidence of them admitting their mistakes was their redirected focus of research resources into the stellarator projects.

Now that China had proved this technical route was feasible, they could eliminate the other technical routes, like the reversed-field pinch, inertial confinement fusion, or the tokamak.

They could also couple this with the help of the westerners who had participated in previous stellarator research projects. Not to mention, it was very difficult for large-scale scientific research projects like this to be kept completely confidential. They could find a way to reveal the secrets.

Of course, even if the state decided to increase its investment and more research institutes were involved, they knew that it wouldn't be easy to achieve what China had done.

Professor Keriber estimated that even if the whole of Europe put their resources into the Wendelstein 7-X laboratory, it would take them at least a decade to complete the demonstration reactor project.

And that was if everything went well.

If something didn't go well...

It could take two decades...

In order to advance this project as soon as possible, Professor Keriber had been tirelessly collecting information about Lu Zhou. From looking at his theses to watching his interviews... Everything he did was to find an ounce of inspiration.

However, the worst thing was that this was all a waste of time.

Lu Zhou knew more about controllable fusion than anyone else on this planet.

If Lu Zhou didn't want to reveal the secrets of the controllable fusion energy, then there was no way for the world to know those secrets.

Perhaps the only way was to ask Lu Zhou for help.

But he knew that the probability of this working was slim...

"I have to go to China..." he muttered to himself. He stood up from his office chair and grabbed his coat from the coat hanger. He then walked out of the laboratory.

Two minutes passed by.

The office door opened.

Price walked in with a freshly brewed cup of coffee. When he saw the empty office, he paused for a second.

"Professor?"

Where is he?

He was here a second ago.

...

Night of Chinese New Year's Eve.

The 301 Hospital was almost deserted.

Even though there were a lot of nurses and patients who were still here, it was quieter than usual.

Lu Zhou lay in his medical room and stared at the ceiling. He was thinking about difficult math problems to kill time.

Xiao Tong was sitting on a stool next to him, and she was playing with her phone on a small table.

They already ate their family dinner during the afternoon. After that, Lu Zhou's parents went to the CTV station.

The tickets for the annual New Year's Gala live show were sent by Director Luo, and there were five tickets in total. In addition to Lu Zhou's family members, there was also a ticket for Yan Yan.

However, only two of these five tickets were used.

First of all, Lu Zhou wasn't particularly fond of crowded and loud places. Secondly, he wasn't interested in the New Year's Gala. Xiao Tong felt the same way, so she stayed in the hospital with him.

As for Yan Yan, apparently she had been to the New Year's Gala show when she was a kid, so she wasn't interested anymore. It wasn't uncommon for kids of higher-up state officials to attend the New Year's Gala.

Lu Zhou began to feel a little bored. He suddenly remembered that he still had a lucky draw ticket. Thus, he silently whispered, "System."

His consciousness went inside the pure white system space.

Suddenly, footsteps were heard from the corridor.

Chen Yushan gently knocked on the door and walked in.

"Hello!"

She didn't want to disturb Lu Zhou, so she spoke quietly. She waved at Xiao Tong.

Xiao Tong's eyes lit up when she saw Chen Yushan. She immediately put down her phone and jumped out of her chair.

"Sis? Why are you here?"

Chen Yushan carefully made a "shush" gesture to Xiao Tong and pointed at Lu Zhou. She pointed at the plastic bag she was holding and said, "I came to bring you guys food."

Xiao Tong's eyes lit up and said, "Oh, dumplings, did you make them yourself?"

Chen Yushan said awkwardly, "Uh... I did half the work? It was mainly my grandma helping me. I hope it's palatable for you guys."

"It's definitely palatable, my brother isn't a picky eater." Xiao Tong suddenly thought of something. She smiled mischievously and said, "Speaking of which, Doctor Yan is also making dumplings. It seems like my brother is quite popular this Chinese New Year."

Chen Yushan asked, "Doctor Yan?"

Xiao Tong nodded and said, "Yes! The lady that has been taking care of my brother. The hospital organized a dumpling making event and she went. She said she'd give us some dumplings later... She'll probably be back soon."

Chen Yushan nodded.

She heard about Doctor Yan from Lu Zhou before, and her father, who was in the government, had also talked about Doctor Yan with her.

She didn't know why, but she had a hunch in her stomach.

She felt like there was something going on between Doctor Yan and Lu Zhou.

However, compared to the insignificant relationship stuff, she cared more about Lu Zhou's health.

Chen Yushan placed the dumplings on the table and walked next to the bed. She sat on a stool and quietly looked at Lu Zhou's face.

Speaking of which, this was the first time she had seen Lu Zhou asleep.

Why do I feel like...

He looks quite different when he's sleeping.

It was almost like Lu Zhou could feel someone was staring at him.

His eyelashes gently moved, and he slowly opened his eyes.

Lu Zhou looked at Chen Yushan and gently coughed.

"Why are you staring at me?"

Chen Yushan blushed and stood up from the stool.

She took half a step back and cleared her throat.

"Don't get the wrong idea, I didn't do anything when you were asleep."

Xiao Tong smirked and raised her hand. "I can testify."

Lu Zhou looked at his energetic sister and sighed. "I know... I was just resting for a bit, I didn't fall asleep."

He was doing the system lucky draw.

According to his past experience, he could feel any real-world movements while inside the system space.

However, Chen Yushan made the situation even more awkward when she tried to clarify it.

After realizing that Lu Zhou wasn't asleep at all, Chen Yushan was even more embarrassed.

She blushed and quickly cleared her throat before diverting the conversation.

"Are you feeling better?"

"Better than ever before," Lu Zhou said, "I haven't been in the laboratory for a long time, so it feels like my brain is rusting."

Chen Yushan didn't know why, but looking at Lu Zhou in the hospital bed made her feel a little distressed.

Even though she wanted to say some words of comfort, she couldn't get the words out of her mouth.

"My grandpa asked me to give you these dumplings."

Lu Zhou: "Grandpa?"

"Yeah... He saw you in the news and praised how you are the pillar of our country. Then, when he found out that we know each other, he was shocked. He urged me to come over here and bring you some food. He also told me to thank you for your scientific research contributions to the nation..."

Chen Yushan playfully looked around and said, "Speaking of which, is there a kitchen here? You and Xiao Tong haven't eaten yet, right? Since you're going through such a tough time, I'll help you cook the dumplings."

Xiao Tong's eyes lit up, and she raised her hand.

"I'll show you where the kitchen is!"

She playfully grabbed Chen Yushan's arm and walked out of the room with her.



Lu Zhou smiled and shook his head.

His head was back on the soft pillow, and he continued to look at the ceiling. He began to think about the prize he just won.

Maybe it was because of the painstaking scientific research efforts that he made, he had been quite lucky.

He finally hit the jackpot on this lucky draw this time.

The third piece of debris was quietly lying in his inventory.

Just from the appearance of the debris alone, it looked like something spectacular.

At the same time, he felt like he was getting closer and closer to revealing the secrets of the system itself.

Chapter 571: Who Cooks It Better?

Lu Zhou had only ever received two pieces of debris before.

The first debris was a battery, some kind of lithium battery. Lu Zhou used the scanner gun to verify that it was indeed a lithium battery.

The only thing he wasn't sure was exactly what the battery should be used for.

As for the second debris, it had the shape of a cube. However, Lu Zhou had no idea what it was.

Not just that, he wasn't even sure what was "broken" about the debris.

After all, that big cubed-like thing didn't look like it had anything missing. There wasn't any noticeable damage on the surface either.

As for this third debris, it actually looked like a real "debris".

The side of the meter-long cylindrical object looked like it was hit by something that left a big gap behind.

Under the broken surface, one could see a large number of messy and complex components. At the other end of the entire cylindrical body, there was a bowl-like structure that extended outward.

The whole thing looked like a white radish.

However, it was like someone had taken a bite out of the side of the radish...

The items in his inventory could be taken out of the system space and into the real world. It didn't seem to contain any mass in the real world, so Lu Zhou could orient it however he wanted.

However, before taking it out of the system space, Lu Zhou could only stare at it in his inventory. He couldn't change the appearance of the object, nor could he disassemble it and observe the internal components.

For the time being, Lu Zhou decided not to care about what it was. He stood next to the debris and began to inspect the damage.

He was more interested in the device that could cause such serious damage.

However, apart from the debris itself, there was no other useful information at all...

"Meteorite impact? Or is it some kind of... energy-based weapon?"

"If only I can take it apart and inspect it."

Lu Zhou sighed and took two steps back. He rubbed his chin and fell into deep thought.

This was different than the battery debris. This thing wasn't easy to carry around in the real-world at all.

There was no way he could take it out in the hospital.

He would have to wait until he was back in Jinling.

"Speaking of which, is this an engine? But it doesn't have an exhaust pipe or a turbine..."

*Actually, it kind of looks like an engine...*

*This thing is a bit too small for a rocket engine, but if this was some kind of high-tech plasma thruster, the size seems kind of reasonable?*

Lu Zhou didn't know what a high-tech spaceship looked like, but he had seen a Hall-effect thruster before.

He thought back to when he was researching the He3 atom probe device in the Princeton PPPL. The NASA-funded AF-MPD[1.applied-field magnetoplasmadynamic thruster] project team was doing research in this area.

However, Lu Zhou didn't inquire too much about the technical details.

First of all, it would be impolite to do so. Secondly, rocket thruster technology was a sensitive field. Knowing too much about rocket technology would put him on a list somewhere; it could even affect his travel rights.

He had always been aware of this.

Lu Zhou looked at the high-tech debris and rubbed his chin.

"What should I do?"

His intuition told him that Debris-3 was much more valuable than Debris-2.

Even if he couldn't completely figure out the underlying technology, just scraping some of the technology would have extraordinary value.

This was just like the modified PDMS film that he got from Debris-1. Even though he wasn't able to create the legendary lithium-air battery, he was able to solve the technical bottleneck of battery anode materials.

He had no idea what this high-tech thruster lookalike thing was capable of...

While Lu Zhou was thinking about this, he suddenly felt a sensation on his arm.

When he vaguely heard Xiao Tong yelling his name, he guessed that they had finished cooking the dumplings. So, he closed his inventory and left the system space.

"Brother... Brother! You better wake up, don't scare me like this."

Xiao Tong was shaking Lu Zhou's arm. Seeing that Lu Zhou didn't react at all, Xiao Tong was about to cry.

Suddenly, Lu Zhou's mouth twitched, and he smiled.

When Xiao Tong saw Lu Zhou smiling, she suddenly jumped up.

"Wow, you were trying to prank me!"

"Sorry, that expression on your face... I just couldn't help but try to scare you."

Xiao Tong said in a serious face, "Brother, did you hear the story about the kid who cried wolf?"

"Of course I have, didn't I tell you about it when I was younger?"

"Please don't mess with us like that anymore." Yan Yan sighed and removed her finger from the emergency medical button. She said, "You're giving me a hard time."

Lu Zhou: "Sorry."

He thought about it carefully and realized this joke wasn't too appropriate. After all, he was still lying in the hospital.

He admitted that he was being a little facetious, but this year's Chinese New Year's Eve was too boring, so he couldn't help but try to have some fun.

Chen Yushan was just as worried. She rolled her eyes at Lu Zhou but didn't scold him like the other two girls.

"The dumplings are ready, hurry up and eat them. It won't be as nice when they're cold."

"Ok, I'm coming."

With the help of Xiao Tong, Lu Zhou slowly sat up from his bed.

Normally, after being in a coma for more than 20 days, it would be very difficult to get out of bed. Even daily activities such as swallowing would be insanely difficult. However, Lu Zhou's recovery abilities were much stronger than the average person. He had been getting out of bed and going to the

bathroom himself. Other than some minor inconveniences, he had basically fully recovered.

Maybe if everything went well, 301 Hospital would probably let him leave the hospital.

The table was moved to the middle of the hospital room. The group of four sat around the steaming dumplings.

This was Lu Zhou's first time eating dumplings in a hospital.

Interestingly enough, Lu Zhou found out that half of the dumplings were stuffed with leek while the other half was stuffed with cabbage. Eating two kinds of dumplings at once felt a little weird...

Xiao Tong seemed to have noticed this as well, and she turned around and asked, "Brother, do you think the leek dumplings are better or the cabbage dumplings are better?"

Lu Zhou was sipping on some soup, and he replied, "They're around the same. I'm not a picky eater."

Xiao Tong said in a serious manner, "No, no. Your taste is important, you have to choose one."

Lu Zhou: "...?"

While Xiao Tong was asking the question, Chen Yushan was waiting with a look of expectation on her face.

Yan Yan didn't seem to care, but she couldn't help but pay attention to Lu Zhou as well.

Seeing that Lu Zhou didn't answer, Xiao Tong began to urge him.

"Don't care about it too much, just tell me your first instinct."

"If you really want me to say which one tastes better..."

Lu Zhou looked at the dumplings and went silent for a while.

"I think the dumplings I make are better."

Xiao Tong: "..."

Yan Yan: "..."

Chen Yushan: "..."

The atmosphere suddenly became stiff. Lu Zhou hesitated for a bit.

*Emm...*

*Did I say the wrong thing again?*

## **Chapter 572: Scientist's Nationality**

Translator: Henyee Translations Editor: Henyee Translations

The only difference between this year's New Year's Eve and previous years was that Lu Zhou ate a lot more dumplings and wasn't able to visit as many relatives.

However, even though it wasn't as lively as in previous years, he didn't feel too lonely.

Lu Zhou's grandparents from his dad's side had already passed away, and he wasn't that close with his other relatives. His relationships with his other relatives were drinking and eating together once-a-year but no contact during the year kind.

Everyone had their own things to work on, so they didn't communicate a lot normally.

The only thing Lu Zhou helped them with, was for a cousin. Lu Zhou convinced the cousin, who was studying at Aurora, to switch majors.

Even though he had never been to Aurora University, he had been a reviewer for several well-known journals such as Annual Mathematics and Mathematics Chronicle. And he had communicated with several professors in the Department of Mathematics in Aurora. Not to mention, he also had the professors' contact information.

Helping someone switch majors was a piece of cake; all it took was a phone call.

On the second day of Chinese New Year, Lu Zhou received a lot of emails in his mailbox.

Some were from Princeton, while some were from Columbia University. They were mainly his friends in the academic community.

He had to admit that his relationships with the people in the academic community were wonderful.

Even though his research had caused headaches for numerous country leaders, the overseas academic communities didn't exclude him... At least, he would still occasionally receive manuscript review invitations from Annual Mathematics. However, since he was too busy with work, he would refuse to review any thesis that didn't interest him.

At the end of the day, controllable fusion wasn't some kind of monster. The STAR-2 demonstration reactor project was fundamentally different from the Manhattan Project. Even though it affected the global political landscape, it wasn't a killing machine. Not to mention, the original intention of the project wasn't for destruction.

Looking at it from the political and governance perspective, fusion energy would reduce global carbon emissions, create cleaner energy, and better the future of mankind... Maybe the United Nations would even grant him a "Protector of The Earth" prize?

Everyone's opinion of Lu Zhou wouldn't change. Other than the people affected by fusion energy, most people's opinions would stay the same. At least, this would be the case until Lu Zhou entered the weapon design industry.

On the third day of Chinese New Year...

Lu Zhou was lying inside a CT machine, performing his first physical examination after the new year.

Academician Castin from the Royal Society looked at the intracranial CT picture and rubbed his stubble as he said, "Your physical condition is normal, and the rehabilitation process is going very smoothly... Honestly speaking, with what happened to your body, this is unbelievable."

Lu Zhou: "Unbelievable?"

“Yes.” Academician Castin said, “Letting your brain rest for more than 20 days by sleeping... You might not think this is interesting, but this is a magical thing in the medical community.”

Lu Zhou: “I don’t think it’s interesting at all.”

“Anyway, I’m leaving tomorrow.” Academician Castin took out a business card from his pocket. He had a bright smile on his face as he handed the business card to Lu Zhou and said, “If you want to figure out the secrets of your brain, you can contact me at any time you wish. I am willing to bet that this is a Nobel Prize level discovery...”

Lu Zhou took the business card and said, “Oh, I already have one though.”

“...”

Academician Castin smiled awkwardly and coughed.

“But you don’t have a Nobel Prize in Medicine, right? We can co-sign the research on your brain...”

Lu Zhou said, “We’ll do it another day. For now, my brain is still awake.”

Castin: “...”

Even though Lu Zhou was also very curious as to what happened in his brain, with the current neuroscience technology, it would be impossible to understand the mystery behind his brain.

After Lu Zhou left the CT room, he threw Academician Castin’s business card into the trash can.

After that, the phone in his pocket suddenly vibrated.

He unlocked the screen and saw Xiao Ai’s text bubble pop up on the screen.

[Master, you have mail ∇ (^∇^\*)]

Lu Zhou clicked on the link, which opened his email directly.

As he read this email, he paused for a second and had a weird expression on his face.



[Dear Professor Lu, this is Keriber. After I heard the news regarding your coma, I felt downhearted. I wish you a safe recovery...

[... Even though this might be a little abrupt, but I am currently in Beijing. I don't know if you're available right now.

[If you are, there are some things I would like to talk to you about, face to face.]

...

Professor Keriber was sitting in a cafe near the Wukesong Subway station. He looked outside the window at the crowd walking by and glanced at his watch from time to time.

Suddenly, he heard a crisp bell sound from the cafe door.

Professor Keriber looked over and saw two people walking toward him.

Lu Zhou sat across from Professor Keriber and smiled as he said, "It's nice to meet you, my dear friend."

"It's nice to meet you..." Keriber looked at Yan Yan, who was standing behind Lu Zhou. He then looked at Lu Zhou again.

Yan Yan noticed Keriber's actions and said to Lu Zhou, "Do you need me to leave?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "There's no need for that, just sit next to us."

Yan Yan hesitated for a bit and decided not to sit down. She continued to stand behind Lu Zhou.

Seeing that Lu Zhou didn't want Yan Yan to leave, Keriber hesitated for a bit and slowly said, "Honestly... we've reached a bottleneck for the stellarator research."

When Yan Yan heard the word "stellarator", she suddenly became nervous.

However, Lu Zhou's expression didn't really change. He just smiled and said, "Yeah?"

Seeing that Lu Zhou didn't take the initiative, Keriber went silent for a bit before saying, "I know this request might put you in a difficult position, but I can't think of another way other than to ask for your help... I won't let you provide us with any technical help, just a little bit of inspiration is enough. You know that fusion energy will benefit the entire mankind. I hope you can give me some research inspiration."

Seeing that this German professor was desperate, Lu Zhou went silent for a while.

Finally, he sighed.

"I'm sorry, my dear friend, if you want to talk about the plasma mathematical model of turbulence or any other mathematical problem, I would be happy to help. But I can't give you help regarding controllable fusion.

"As you said, this is a technology that will benefit mankind. Unfortunately, it was your arrogance and prejudice that led us to this situation. If the ITER conference didn't end in such a bad note, I would have had the opportunity to share this victory with everyone in the world."

Lu Zhou paused for a second and continued, "Not to mention, the STAR-2 demonstration reactor isn't my own project. It's the crystallized efforts of hundreds of research institutes. If I help you now, it would be disgraceful to those that have worked hard for me."

Professor Keriber looked at Lu Zhou with a confused expression.

"I thought you would agree that scientific knowledge shouldn't have borders..."

"Yes, I agree with that." Lu Zhou looked at him and said, "But scientists have nationalities."

The conversation fell silent.

Lu Zhou saw Professor Keriber went silent, so he continued to speak, "I understand what you're feeling, but this is all I can say. However, if you guys are really desperate for this technology, I can give you a hint."

Professor Keriber suddenly looked up.

“Tell me.”

Lu Zhou said, “Ask the politicians of your country to help you. Don’t ask them to find me, ask them to meet with Chinese politicians.

“Us scholars really have nothing to do with these things that are outside of research. You shouldn’t be the one to ask for help on behalf of your motherland.

“China is an open country. Whether it’s economy, cultural, or scientific, we have never avoided integrating with the international community. However, integration is based on the acceptance of both parties. One country shouldn’t compromise for another.

“I believe that as long as you are willing to let go of your prejudice and show us enough sincerity, there is the possibility of cooperation between us.”

Chapter 573: Ling Yun!

Lu Zhou was the one who paid for the two cups of coffee.

After thanking Lu Zhou, Professor Keriber left the cafe and took a flight back home.

Since Lu Zhou’s body hadn’t fully recovered, he didn’t go to the airport with Keriber. However, he told Wang Peng to send Keriber to the airport.

Only time could tell what choices Keriber would make and what choices Europe, as a whole, would make.

Nine days after Chinese New Year’s Eve, in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, a commendation conference was held for the successful fusion ignition of the controllable demonstration reactor. The conference opened with a brilliant speech by the host and a round of applause.

At the commendation conference, the president personally awarded the twenty-six golden 585 commemorative medals and bright red certificates to the researchers who made outstanding contributions to the demonstration

reactor project. The president also expressed his gratitude to these researchers who were fighting on the front line of scientific research.

In the spring of 1958, the Institute of Atomic Energy of the Chinese Academy of Sciences<sup>1</sup> officially established a study on magnetic confinement fusion, which began the research of controlled fusion.

Up to now, there had been more than sixty years of controllable fusion research.

It took almost three generations to finally complete this project.

The commendation conference was also a perfect ending to this vigorous scientific research project.

Academician Li Jiangang was sitting at one of the tables with a golden medal rested against his chest. He wiped his eyes as he said quietly, “Professor, we did it...”

He still remembered the year of 1982, when he graduated from Harbin Institute of Technology as a nuclear power major. His original intention was to become an aircraft carrier designer. However, his mentor’s influence completely changed his career, and since then, he had devoted himself to the field of controllable fusion research.

Forty years had passed since then. The nuclear power road used to be full of hope, but back then, he couldn’t see an end to this road. He was regretful and sorrowful. However, he persisted without hesitation and gave up his position at the Culham Laboratory in Oxford when his motherland needed him most. He returned to China to continue his controllable fusion research.

However, his mentor wasn’t able to see the glory of controllable nuclear fusion anymore.

But he believed that if his mentor’s spirit were in heaven, he would definitely be proud of the choices he made today...

Academician Wang Zengguang was sitting next to him. He touched the medal on his chest and felt a burst of emotion.

“I’ve been in the nuclear power industry my entire life. I never would have imagined that instead of seeing the glory of the fourth generation fission

power generator, I was able to witness the collapse of the third generation fission power generator.”

Fission reactor was an expensive source of energy. The electricity price was much higher than that of thermal power. It was also much more difficult to deal with its nuclear waste.

After China commissioned the Pangu fusion reactor and connected the reactor to the power supply grid, there wouldn't be any new fission reactor construction plans in China.

“Speaking of which, Chief Designer Lu isn't an academician, right?”

Academician Li Jiangang hesitated for a bit and smiled as he said, “The year of 2019 was so busy for him, so he didn't have time to become an academician.”

An academician had to go through two rounds of voting. The academicians of the Chinese Academy of Sciences would decide based on these two rounds, and this would take up a lot of time.

Since Lu Zhou was busy with the controllable fusion project for the entirety of 2019, he obviously didn't have time to be elected as an academician.

Academician Wang suddenly had a thought in his mind.

“I'll vote for him in next year's election.”

“An academician in his twenties?” Academician Li hesitated and said, “Isn't it a bit too young...”

Since his old friend was staring at him, Academician Li added, “Don't look at me that way, I was just saying. When the election comes around, I'll definitely vote for him.”

Academician Wang Zengguang smiled and said, “I guess there's still some kindness left in your heart then.”

Academician Li wasn't happy with that remark. “What are you talking about, I always had kindness in my heart. But speaking of which, it's fine for me to vote for him since I'm in the mathematical physics department. You're in the engineering department, are you really going to vote for him?”

Academy of Engineering frowned and said, "Why does Lu Zhou have to be a mathematical physics academician? Can't he just join the Academy of Engineering?"

"Old man, you're being unreasonable." Li Jiangang smiled and said, "He's a Nobel Prize laureate and Fields Medal winner, why the hell would he be in the Academy of Engineering!"

"Oh, you're looking down on the Academy of Engineering? The controllable fusion project is way more impressive than the Fields Medal or the Nobel Prize!"

"They're not the same thing! You can't compare them like that."

Their argument seemed to have ended up in a strange place.

The two men nearly started a fight over whether Lu Zhou should join the Academy of Engineering or the Academy of Sciences.

On the other hand, Zhou Chengfu was sitting at the front of the Great Hall of the People. He looked at the medal on his chest and felt a little uncomfortable.

Even though he was one of the heroes for controllable fusion research, he always felt like an outsider. He didn't feel any joy from this honor. Instead, he felt he should be disdained.

It felt like he wasn't worthy of the thing hanging in front of his chest.

Academician Pan was sitting next to him. He smiled as he said, "What now? The president gave it to you himself. Do you want to take it off?"

Zhou Chengfu didn't say anything. He had a complicated expression on his face.

However, Pan Changhong knew his friend too well.

Pan Changhong sighed and looked at the stage.

"It doesn't matter what you did, it's been fifty years. You did the hard work and this honor should belong to you. No one makes perfect choices, you were just loyal to your research."

“Also, I’m not the only one who thinks like this. Even Professor Lu nominated you.”

Zhou Chengfu looked emotional...

In addition to the 26 585 medals and the 120 individual awards as well as five team awards, there was also a special medal.

This medal was about 8 cm in diameter, cast from 99.9% pure gold, weighed 527 grams, and was equipped with red and black ribbons that could be hung on one’s chest. The main body of the medal consisted of five stars, olive branches, and light rays.

Its name was “Ling Yun”.

It was a design that never came to life. No one had ever thought that the crazy idea of a stellarator would one day come to life in the hands of a new generation of scholars. That one day, it would produce the energy of stars.

Lu Zhou couldn’t fully comprehend the significance of this medal.

After all, he wasn’t from the ’70s, and he didn’t devote his life toward controllable fusion.

However, when his fingers rubbed against this medal and he felt the delicate textures, he could somewhat feel the historical significance that was contained in this medal...

Chapter 574: You Decide

The commendation conference finally came to an end. This celebration finally fulfilled the wish of all the scientific researchers who had shed their youth and blood for this project.

Compared to other people, in addition to the Ling Yun medal, Lu Zhou also received an hour of private meeting time.

The state needed to listen to his opinion on the future of the STAR-2 demonstration reactor project.

After Lu Zhou heard the president's question, he thought for a bit before saying, "The STAR-2 demonstration reactor base has completed its mission. There's no point to continue running research at the base. My suggestion is to select some of the technical and core management staff and form a new institution. This new institution can be incorporated into an existing institution, to be responsible for the operation of the fusion reactor."

The STAR-2 demonstration reactor project was a huge scientific research project. In order to coordinate the research resources among various research institutions, it was necessary to have a large management organization.

However, now that the entire demonstration reactor project had been completed, there wasn't a need for scientific research resources, nor was there a need to coordinate various departments. Most of the management organization staff were redundant.

The president nodded.

"The people from the China National Nuclear Corporation also suggested this. Our conclusion from our meeting was that the demonstration reactor project team should be reorganized, and the important technical personnel and some management staff will form a new nuclear power company. This company will be called East Asia Energy. It will be responsible for the domestic fusion reactor project and the construction of supporting facilities for cross-regional electricity transmission projects in Southeast Asia and Central Asia."

*East Asia Energy.*

*Seems like the state is quite ambitious.*

Lu Zhou was surprised.

After all, only one fusion reactor had been built, and the southern and western China fusion reactors hadn't been established. However, the higher-ups were already talking about transmission projects to third-world countries.

However, doing this made sense.

Instead of being selfish and playing with the technology alone, it would be better to play with a group of neighboring countries. Increasing the market competitiveness of the East Asia region would increase China's influence on the market and the yuan value would rise...



However, these things had nothing to do with research, so Lu Zhou wasn't very interested.

The president said, "There is a demand for management staff at the domestic fusion reactor project. The newly established East Asia Energy isn't capable of handling it. The National Nuclear Cooperation said that some of the demonstration reactor management staff should return to their original jobs, and they can provide jobs if needed. But I feel like it's a pity to disband the demonstration reactor team. Do you think there's a more suitable arrangement?"

"It is quite a pity to disband like this..." Lu Zhou nodded in agreement as he spoke emotionally.

Not only did a huge scientific research project like that produce research talents, but it also cultivated countless management talents.

If these talents were broken up and sent back to their original research institutes, it would be a waste.

After all, the least sought after talents were management people. The management people were often only responsible to delegate work. This was why state-owned enterprises were so inefficient.

Also, these management staff had left their original work positions for so long, their vacant spots would have been filled a long time ago. They might not be able to get their old jobs back.

Lu Zhou thought for a bit. Suddenly, he had an idea.

An idea he thought of a long time ago suddenly emerged in his mind.

"Instead of letting these people return to their old positions, it would be better to let them stay, just in a different way."

The president asked, "A different way?"

"Yes." Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Can I explain what I mean?"

The president smiled and said, "Of course, I want to know your opinion."

Lu Zhou: "I did an exchange visit to Germany for a while. I think we have a lot to learn from their way of managing scientific research projects, especially

their operation tactics for medium and long-term projects. Projects that affect society and industry.”

The president asked, “Like what?”

Lu Zhou: “Like, the Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres POF funding model, like the Max Planck Institute’s open network of R&D institutions. In my opinion, these seem to help improve the conversion rate of research results from research resources. This conversion rate is exactly what we lack.”

China’s investment in scientific research definitely wasn’t small. Even using OECD’s purchasing power parity calculations, it was ranked second in the world, only behind the United States.

However, even with the huge capital investment, the scientific research results conversion rate of the Chinese research institutions was still unsatisfactory.

Logically speaking, this shouldn’t happen.

After all, China was more inclined to throw money toward engineering projects rather than pure scientific projects.

The conversion rate of scientific research results was only one of the problems; there were many other problems.

If they wanted to maintain their advantage in fusion energy, they had to keep developing and researching.

The technological advantage was a dynamic process.

In addition to the controllable fusion energy, Lu Zhou hoped that the demonstration reactor project could leave behind something more than just the research results itself.

Just like how the Manhattan Project produced the atomic bomb, but it also produced the valuable Argonne, Brookhaven, and other national laboratories that were well versed in medium and long-term research projects.

Implementing this kind of research model would make Lu Zhou’s life much easier.

“We don’t have to totally implement the German’s system, but we can learn from the good parts.

“For example, we can use the Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres system as a reference and transform the STAR-2 demonstration reactor project organization into a window that connects enterprises and research institutions.

“Using the model of this research center, we can begin long-term research projects on fields like energy, aerospace, and information technology. We can also make sure the research funds land in the hands of ‘useful projects’. At the same time, we can allow qualified foreign research units to participate.”

After hearing Lu Zhou’s suggestion, the old man thought for a long time.

“So, what you’re saying is, use the rest of the management talents to build a Chinese Max Planck Society?”

The president’s interpretation was right.

Lu Zhou already had this vision in his mind when he visited Germany.

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “Yes.”

The president looked at Lu Zhou and smiled. “I guess you really learned a lot from your foreign experiences.”

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly and didn’t say anything.

*Academic knowledge isn’t the only thing worth learning.*

The president’s finger tapped on the armrest. He thought for a bit before saying, “I think it makes sense. We can give it a shot.”

After all, letting those talents return to their old work positions would be a waste.

Instead of just letting these talents be wasted, it would be better for them to play their part in this pilot project.

If this project succeeded, then it obviously would be great.

If it did not, then whatever.

Not to mention, due to the success of the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, he trusted Lu Zhou's ability to handle this project.

After that, the old man stood up.

"Just like you said, establish... the Eastern Research Centers Association! With focuses on longer-term projects in the fields of aerospace, energy, and information technology.

"As for the specifics...

"You decide."

Chapter 575: Retire After Success

Lu Zhou just felt that it would be a waste to disband the STAR-2 demonstration reactor team. Therefore, he proposed to retain those talented people that had experience managing a large scientific research project. He would use the Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres model to open a system that connected companies and research institutes.

However, he didn't expect that the government officials would let him manage this project himself.

Furthermore, the 2.7 billion yuan leftover research funding for the demonstration reactor was also left behind as a "start-up fund".

Normally speaking, leftover scientific research funding should be returned to the investor.

With this money, Lu Zhou wouldn't have to worry about financial matters, such as employees' salaries, where the new R&D center, and other costs.

Two days after the commendation conference.

The people over at the Ministry of Science and Technology contacted Lu Zhou.

A man in his thirties wearing glasses personally came to visit him. The man looked like he was rather elegant and easy-going.

Lu Zhou learned that his name was Feng Shuqing, and he graduated from the Department of Life Science at Shuimu University. However, after he received his master's degree, he didn't look for work in his professional field. Rather, he took the national examination and entered the strategic planning department at the Ministry of Science and Technology.

He was quite a high-ranking official within the department.

According to the department, Secretary Feng was mainly responsible for two things. One was to complete the restructuring of the STAR-2 demonstration reactor project team by coordinating with the necessary departments. The other was to serve as the secretary for the soon-to-be newly formed Eastern Research Centers Association.

"The higher-ups greatly value your opinion, and they told us to cooperate with you. Our department leadership team had a meeting and decided to send me here to help you." When Feng Shuqing noticed Lu Zhou's look of surprise, he smiled and asked, "Is there a problem, Director Lu?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "No problem, I just think that you look very young."

Feng Shuqing smiled gently and said, "Maybe the higher-ups think that we are similar in age, so there's less of an age-gap in terms of communication."

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Thank you so much for helping me manage this restructuring. I might be a bit busy, so I might not be able to help much."

Feng Shuqing said, "Don't worry about it. The whole reason I'm here is to help you!"

Lu Zhou: "Okay, thanks... Oh yeah, one more thing."

Feng Shuqing: "What?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Just call me Professor Lu, I'm more used to it."

Feng Shuqing paused for a second and smiled. He then said, "Since Professor Lu is insisting, then from now on, I shall call you that."

...

After the Chinese New Year holiday ended, Lu Zhou's parents made sure that Lu Zhou's health was in good condition. After they repeatedly told him to take care of his body, they went back to Jiangling, while his sister went back to Jinling and began to apply to universities abroad.

As for Lu Zhou, because there were some matters he had to attend to in Beijing, he decided to stay here for a couple more days.

After he got out of the 301 Hospital, he had been staying in a luxury hotel near Yuanmingyuan Park. Even though he didn't have a house in Beijing, every time he came here, he didn't have to worry about finding a place to stay.

Three days after the commendation conference, Feng Shuqing went to Haizhou and began to work on restructuring the STAR-2 demonstration reactor team.

Lu Zhou's business in Beijing was almost finished, so he bought a train ticket to Jinling.

He was feeling a bit guilty. He had been a Jin Ling University professor for more than a year now, but he hadn't even interacted with the students at Jin Ling University yet. Now that the controllable fusion project was finally finished, he could finally spend some time on the things that interest him.

Dusk time, near the hotel man-made lake...

Chen Yushan was walking next to Lu Zhou when she asked, "Is your health better?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "I'm already out of the hospital, what do you think?"

Chen Yushan sighed and said, "I know you like to stay in the laboratory, but don't overwork yourself."

Lu Zhou said, "Don't worry about it. Now that the controllable fusion project is done, I won't have to be that busy. Well, not for a while at least."

Chen Yushan: "What do you plan on doing next?"

Lu Zhou thought and said, "Probably return to Jin Ling University and teach."

Chen Yushan said, "You're a chief designer now, do you still have time to teach at the university?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "I was a chief designer. Now that the controllable fusion energy project is finished, the rest of the work can be handed over to the professionals. There's nothing else left for me to design per se."

Even though he was somewhat involved with the Eastern Research Centers Association, Lu Zhou didn't want to spend too much energy on anything outside of research. Right now, he was just paving the way for his future research work.

If it turned out that Feng Shuqing was competent, then Lu Zhou would just give him a general direction and let him handle the rest.

It was quite interesting actually.

Lu Zhou found out that the road he was walking on was oddly similar to someone from the other side of the Pacific Ocean.

After the Manhattan Project ended, Oppenheimer also returned to Princeton as a dean and was no longer engaged in atomic bomb research. However, unlike Lu Zhou, Oppenheimer had been driven away from research due to his inner guilt that was caused by the war. On the other hand, Lu Zhou simply wasn't interested in a management role. Therefore, he chose to retire.

It took twenty years for Oppenheimer to receive political rehabilitation. Compared to him, Lu Zhou was receiving a much better treatment.

Whether it was being called the father of controllable fusion or the honor of the Ling Yun medal...

With these two honors on his shoulders, he could walk into any industry or field he wanted.

And that honor and prestige were something that money couldn't buy.

Chen Yushan gently kicked a stone on the road and sighed. She looked at the man-made mountain near the lake and felt a little depressed.

"That's so nice, you know what you want to do, and you know how to achieve your goals. Unlike me..."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Aren't you the same? A University of Pennsylvania offer is no easy feat."

Chen Yushan didn't seem to be comforted.

"Well, is it harder than a Princeton offer? Mr. 'Nearly became the dean of the Princeton math department'."

Lu Zhou nearly choked on his spit. "When did I nearly become the dean of the mathematics department? I don't remember anything like that."

Chen Yushan: "Who cares, if you want to become the dean, you can."

Lu Zhou: "Let's not talk about me. I'm curious, what's troubling you?"

"Oh... Actually, it's not a trouble, it's more of a self-entanglement dilemma kind of thing." Chen Yushan twirled her hair with her fingers and hesitated for a bit. She said, "My father wants me to work in the government, but I don't really like working here. I'm studying finance and an MBA, and I want to work at a multinational company with a hundred-billion market value. Wouldn't it be weird to just sit around in some government office?"

*What?*

*What do you mean just sit around?*

*That's kind of diminishing what government officials do.*

Chen Yushan smiled at Lu Zhou's expression and said, "Whatever, thank you, Mr. Big Scientist, for spending so much time to listen to my non-existent problems... Well, since you're in good condition, I'm gonna leave now."

As Lu Zhou watched her walking away, he suddenly remembered something and called her.

"Oh yeah... Wait."

Chen Yushan stopped walking and looked back at him. "What's up?"

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and said, "Remember that question I asked you last year? If I recall correctly, you promised me something..."

Chen Yushan: "..."

Lu Zhou paused for a second before he said, "If you don't have anything better to do, why don't you come work for me?"



“Even though it’s not a hundred-billion dollar company, it’s still a billion-dollar company.”

## **Chapter 576: Unexpected Cake?**

Translator: Henyee Translations Editor: Henyee Translations

Chen Yushan agreed to Lu Zhou’s invitation without any hesitation.

After she received the offer from Star Sky Technology, she immediately went to Shanghai.

The China office branch of Star Sky Technology was registered there. As Lu Zhou’s work would gradually be migrated to China, Star Sky Technology’s business center would also shift from Philadelphia to Shanghai.

Lu Zhou trusted Chen Yushan’s abilities.

Especially after he found out that she was the one who was initially responsible for the patent management of Star Sky Technology. Therefore, he confidently handed these matters to her.

After Lu Zhou returned to Jinling, he greeted Principal Xu and moved his belongings into his mathematics department office.

His number theory class was going to start in April.

Other than that, he also planned on taking over a few master’s and PhD students in mathematics and computational materials. On the one hand, this was to reduce his research load, and on the other hand, he would use this opportunity to help his alma mater train some outstanding talents.

While Lu Zhou’s work was gradually shifting to Jin Ling University, the restructuring of the STAR-2 demonstration reactor project team in Haizhou was also proceeding in an orderly manner.

What surprised Lu Zhou was that, it wasn’t just about the Eastern Research Centers Association, but the East Asia Energy company was also heavily involved.

Feng Shuqing was reporting to Lu Zhou through the phone.

“... In order to accelerate the cross-regional power grid projects in Southeast Asia, the state wants to introduce private capital to participate in the construction of East Asia Energy, under the premise that it will still be state-owned. According to the higher-ups’ instructions, we plan on going to the four major banks, the three major oil companies, and the top five electric companies in China to issue 20 billion yuan worth of shares. We’ll also publicly issue around 20 billion yuan worth of shares to raise capital.”

Lu Zhou was twirling a pen in his hand when he frowned and asked, “Is it normal to introduce private capital into a state-owned enterprise?”

Feng Shuqing smiled and said, “It’s totally normal. The stock market is our long-term goal. In addition to reducing the suspicion of other countries, the introduction of private capital can also bring social vitality.

“Not to mention, these shares do not hold management rights. How the company operates, the expansion of the company, etc, these things are still managed by the management department of the company.”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “Okay then, I understand.”

Feng Shuqing: “Oh yeah, I had to notify you of this matter, but I hope you can keep it a secret for the time being.”

Lu Zhou: “Are you guys not releasing the shares to the public?”

Feng Shuqing coughed and said, “We are... But we can’t just let everyone buy them. If the news goes out now, it’ll just increase our workload.”

Everyone wanted to jump on the money-making train.

As soon as the news spread, this few dozen billion worth of market cap would be instantly bought out.

Even though Lu Zhou didn’t ask about the specific progress of the restructuring, this still caught his attention.

After all, this was the controllable nuclear fusion.

The only company that could achieve fusion energy, at least for another ten years, was East Asia energy. What could be better than a complete monopoly?

Due to China's huge energy demands and the low costs of controllable fusion, it would be impossible to lose money on this investment.

Coincidentally, Lu Zhou didn't know where he should spend his money, so he'd rather just spend it on the construction of the national nuclear power industry.

After Lu Zhou hung up the call, he leaned back in his chair and thought for a bit. He then called Chen Yushan.

After the phone connected, he immediately asked.

"How much money do I have right now?"

Chen Yushan, who was in the Shanghai office, nearly choked, and she said, "You don't even know how much money you have?"

People like this actually exist?

What a show-off.

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly and said, "I haven't been managing the company recently, I was too busy last year... Aren't you in Shanghai? Please just look it up for me."

Chen Yushan looked at the piles of documents on her desk and sighed. She suddenly had a headache, but she still replied, "Okay, I'll send you a financial report."

Lu Zhou: "Okay, thank you."

He didn't have to wait for long.

On the morning of the next day, Chen Yushan sent the financial report into Lu Zhou's mailbox.

Lu Zhou opened the email and looked at the attachment.

He was astonished.

Last year, Star Sky Technology's intellectual property business made a net profit of US\$470 million last year! An annual increase of 37.6%!

If this were listed on the Nasdaq, it would have a market cap of more than US\$40 billion.

Lu Zhou looked at this financial report and felt emotional.

Adding to the profits from the previous years, there was US\$1.2 billion in the company accounts.

Without knowing it, he became a billionaire.

This was a different type of feeling.

Of course, intellectual property was basically the only thing that Star Sky Technology was involved in.

Other than that, there was the cooperation with Baosheng Group, the China National Nuclear Corporation, SG-1 superconducting magnets, and the liquid lithium neutron recovery system. However, those profits were tiny, and they were a few orders of magnitude lower than the rest. They could basically be ignored.

Lu Zhou read the financial report from start to finish and thought for a bit. He then picked up the phone and called Chen Yushan.

The phone rang two times and connected.

Chen Yushan immediately asked, “Did you read the financial report?”

Lu Zhou: “Yeah, I did. Also, there’s one more thing I need you to do.”

Chen Yushan: “Well, what? Tell me.”

Lu Zhou: “The STAR-2 project team is going through restructuring, and the talented management and technical personnel will be incorporated into East Asia Energy. The newly established East Asia Energy will be responsible for domestic and international controllable fusion inter-regional grid interconnection...”

Lu Zhou made a brief explanation of the East Asia Energy situation. He paused for a second and said, “It would be a pity if we missed out on this opportunity.”

The shares of private companies could not be circulated in the stock market, but there was a high probability that East Asia Energy would eventually go public.

If that happened, the stock price would certainly jump up.

And when the time arrived, even the dividends would be worth a lot of money.

Even though Lu Zhou wasn't lacking in the financial department, there was no such thing as too much money.

Not to mention, he had so many expensive projects going on, he might not even have enough.

Chen Yushan: "How much do you plan on buying?"

Lu Zhou thought for a bit.

"Just buy a billion yuan first."

Chapter 577: Scientific Research Assistant

After Lu Zhou handed over the equity acquisition to Chen Yushan, he didn't ask any more questions. He put his focus back onto his computer screen.

Even though Feng Shuqing was responsible for the restructuring of the STAR-2 project team, as the chief designer of the fusion reactor, his opinion was still very important.

Especially regarding his plans for the Eastern Research Centers Association.

The higher-ups suggested that the newly established research and development centers would focus on aerospace, energy, and information technology.

Lu Zhou planned to find one or two areas in these fields to focus on.

For example, for aerospace, he planned on developing a plasma thruster.

The reason for doing this wasn't totally because the use of Debris No.3 was still unknown. The main reason was that some of the controllable fusion technology could be applied to the research of plasma thrusters.

This was just like how the Apollo moon landing project indirectly promoted the development of gas-steam turbine combined cycle technology(GTCC). Plasma propulsion technology was inseparable from controllable fusion.

As for the energy side, Lu Zhou planned to continue to deepen his research on controllable fusion and develop the second generation of controllable fusion energy—fusion ignition with helium-3 and deuterium as fuel.

Even though this type of technology was difficult to achieve in the short term, it was always worthwhile to invest in the long-term.

As for information technology, this was slightly out of Lu Zhou's research area.

Even though he had read textbooks in this area due to the system's missions, but he was far from being a professional.

However, after some deep thinking, Lu Zhou finally made a decision. He chose carbon-based chips and quantum computers as the main areas of research focus.

The Eastern Research Centers Association was focused on medium and long term projects. As an academic leader, Lu Zhou didn't have to worry too much about achieving short term technology results.

Scientific research was unlike planting trees, investment did not necessarily mean success.

It was fine as long as the technical pathway was theoretically achievable in the long term.

Lu Zhou was halfway through writing the proposal plan when he looked at the long list of names on his screen and leaned against his chair.

"Is it ten o'clock already?"

The day had gone by without him knowing it.

Since he had to go to university tomorrow, he decided not to stay up late. He went to take a hot bath and then lay down on his bed.

Xiao Ai's drone picked up his phone from his study room and brought it inside the bedroom.

Lu Zhou lay in his bed while scrolling through Weibo. He pressed "like" on a couple of comments that called him handsome. He then yawned and gradually began to fall asleep...

...

The next morning.

Lu Zhou woke up early and did his bathroom routine. After that, he put on a trench coat and went out.

When he was walking out of the house, the black car with the national flag was already waiting in front of his mansion.

Lu Zhou sat shotgun and looked around the car. He then said, "I plan on changing the car."

Wang Peng: "Do you plan on buying a BMW or a Mercedes? I can drive anything."

Lu Zhou: "I haven't decided yet, maybe an electric one?"

The path from Purple Mountain to Jin University wasn't very far.

The two were chatting when they arrived at Jin Ling University International Conference Center.

The car drove inside the campus and stopped in front of the cafeteria. Lu Zhou took off his seatbelt and asked, "Have you eaten breakfast?"

"I ate before picking you up."

"Okay then, I won't spot you any food."

After that, Lu Zhou got off the car and closed the car door.

After he went to the cafeteria to buy some breakfast, he took the dumplings and soy milk into the mathematics building and went straight to his office.

He walked to the front of his office door and was about to take out his keys. However, he faintly heard someone talking inside the office.

Lu Zhou hesitated for a bit before knocking on the door.

He heard the sound of footsteps from behind the door.

After that, the office door was opened. A girl with bangs and round-rimmed glasses looked at him with a surprised expression.

“Oh, Professor, why are you here so early?”

Lu Zhou was more surprised than her, and he asked, “Who are you?”

The girl forcefully smiled and said, “I’m Zhao Huan, your assistant.”

*Assistant?*

Lu Zhou had a weird expression on his face. When he looked inside the office, he saw two other desks.

He saw a girl in her twenties sitting behind one of the office desks. She was looking at him with a curious glance.

“What about them?”

Zhao Huan replied awkwardly, “They are...”

Lu Zhou: “...”

After some explanation, Lu Zhou finally had a general understanding of the three girls.

The one with bangs was called Zhao Huan, and she was mainly responsible for managing classes, conferences, and academic visits. The other more mature girl was called Kong Jie, and she was responsible for copywriting, PPT, and other miscellaneous stuff. As for the other person, she was mainly responsible for answering phone calls and running errands...

*Why do I feel like she looks familiar?*

Lin Yuxiang waved her hand and said, “Hello~”.



Lu Zhou: "..."

Lin Yuxiang: "Don't be so quiet, we used to fight on the academic line side by side."

*All you did was bring me food, why are you so confident?*

Lu Zhou sighed and said, "Why are you here?"

"I'm about to graduate next year, and I plan on becoming a civil servant, so I applied to be an assistant in the school." Lin Yuxiang smirked and said, "I didn't expect the school to put me in your office, this must be fate."

Lu Zhou: "..."

*I guess this chick hasn't changed one bit.*

Lu Zhou looked around the office and said, "Since the school already arranged tasks for you guys, I won't repeat anything. Just make sure you do your work at hand and tell me if any special circumstances arise... Also, where are the application resumes of the graduate students? The academic affairs office said that they already sent it to you guys."

Zhao Huan immediately ran to her desk to pick up the resumes. She then handed the resumes to Lu Zhou.

"I already sorted them for you."

Lu Zhou nodded and flipped through the resumes.

"Ok, not bad."

After that, he didn't say anything else. He sat behind his office desk and began to flip through the resumes.

...

Since Lu Zhou's work was so busy, he understood why the school arranged three assistants for him. The only thing he didn't understand was why were they all women?

He didn't doubt the efficiency of these ladies. It was just that the job of a scientific research assistant wasn't a particularly good job.

It was considered a buffer position and one of the least attractive jobs in universities.

Compared to the post-doctoral positions that had more scientific research involvement, research assistants were mainly responsible for physical work. They received low wages and had a bleak future. The only way out was to transfer into administrative work. If they couldn't do that, then they would have to leave their jobs after a couple of years.

Honestly, Lu Zhou wasn't optimistic about these three ladies. He didn't think they had the tenacity required.

But regardless, this was already pre-arranged.

Even though he wasn't satisfied, he would have to at least wait for a while and see how they do.

Lu Zhou spent the entire morning flipping through the resumes that Zhao Huan had sorted for him. He chose a few candidates to interview in-person.

This time, Lu Zhou planned to recruit quite a large number of students.

Not just in the mathematics area, but also in the computational materials area as well as the theoretical physics area.

The reason was because of the reward mission he accepted a couple of days ago...

### **Chapter 578: Isn't It Already One?**

Translator: Henyee Translations Editor: Henyee Translations

The previous mission chain gave two mission cards; one was another mission chain, while the other one was a reward mission.

Lu Zhou thought about the time frame of the mission chain and how he could only accept one mission at a time. In the end, he decided to choose the reward mission first.

[

Reward mission: Able to give up at any time without consuming general points.

Description: The prosperity of a generation cannot be done by one alone. Stop focusing only on experiments, take on more students!

Requirements: 1. Select two courses, with a minimum of 12 contact hours each course. The final reward depends on the quality of the course. (S grade = 100,000 experience points, one lucky draw ticket).

Help instruct students to produce 5 or more theses. Rewards are calculated by the cumulative value of the impact factors. (1 impact factor = 1,000 experience points, 10 general points).

Reward: 0~??? experience points, 0~??? general points. 1-2 lucky draw tickets.

]

All in all, this mission was relatively simple.

He just had to lecture classes and take on a few students. It should take him one semester to do it. Especially for the theses part... It might not be easy for the average person to do this, but for him, guiding a few students to write a few theses was a piece of cake.

The rewards calculation metric wasn't based on the academic value of the theses. It was based on the impact factor of the journal. His students didn't have to tackle world-class mathematics problems. All that mattered was that his students' theses were accepted by a high impact factor journal.

Not to mention, he could utilize the computational materials science field.

As one of the pioneers of this field, he could go to the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study and find a few research projects for his students to work on. He could then sign the theses as a communication author, and the probability of these theses being accepted would be very high.

As for the mission rewards, it was decent.

If he was lucky, he could get two S-grade, which would result in two lucky draw tickets. If he was lucky again, he might be able to get a scanner gun?

That was probably what Lu Zhou wanted the most.

It would be quite difficult to reverse engineer the Debris No.3 with the current technology. After all, Lu Zhou had no idea what the technology behind the engine was. He wasn't even sure if it was an engine or not.

Of course, Lu Zhou had only ever gotten the scanner gun once in his life, so the probability of getting another one was very low.

Lu Zhou couldn't help but complain in his mind.

Maybe it's because I'm not a "beginner" anymore, that's why I don't even get to see the lucky draw probabilities...

Lu Zhou prepared the interview list and gave it to Lin Yuxiang, who was in charge of contacting the students. After that, he refused her invitation to eat at a restaurant and went to the cafeteria for lunch instead.

After Lu Zhou returned to the office, he began to think about his plans for the afternoon. However, Zhao Huan suddenly ran into the office.

She panted and lowered her head.

"Um... Professor, you have a number theory class in the afternoon."

Lu Zhou raised his eyebrows and looked confused.

"Number theory class? I thought my class starts on week ten?"

Zhao Huan looked guilty as she said, "Sorry, I'm really sorry! Your computational materials class starts on week ten, but the number theory class starts this week..."

Starts this week?

Even though Lu Zhou was a little surprised, he didn't put any blame on her.

After all, she was new to this job and was inexperienced. It was fine as long as she didn't make the same mistake again.

"Keep your head high, it's just one class, not a big deal. Just watch out next time."

Even though Lu Zhou didn't really mind, Zhao Huan still felt apologetic.

"How about I contact the academic affairs office and change your class schedule?"

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and said, "No need, I'll do it in the afternoon."

Zhao Huan was worried, and she said, "But... you haven't done any preparation, right?"

Lu Zhou pulled out his desk drawer and smiled.

"That's not a problem, all I need is a textbook."

...

Teaching building.

Inside the second-floor classroom at the end of the corridor.

Even though the class would not start for another half an hour, the lecture hall was already filled with people. Some students even sat on the aisle of the corridor.

The class was about to begin, and the students in the classroom were excited.

"Do you think God Lu will really teach us himself?"

"I don't know, that's what it says on the curriculum."

"It won't be a teaching assistant, right?"

"That might be possible! If I were a chief designer, I wouldn't have time for undergraduate classes! I won't even bother working on a project worth less than a billion."

"Keep dreaming, you!"

A tall and thin boy stood up in the middle of the classroom and looked around. He then sat back down.

"Jesus Christ, this is a full-sized lecture hall, how many people are in this number theory class?"

His roommate, who was sitting next to him and wore glasses, sighed and said, "This is Chief Designer Lu, Fields Medal and Nobel Prize winner. Forget about the master's students at our school, even the genius students from Jinshi University came here."

The students had to take the subway just to get here.

The tall guy said, "Why is Jinshi University here? Do they even have a mathematics department?"

"Who knows? But I think they should have one..."

Soon, the class bell rang.

As soon as the bell had finished ringing, Lu Zhou, who was wearing a gray trench coat, walked into the classroom while carrying a textbook.

His young and handsome face gave the students a different feeling from the other professors. When he stood on the podium, the commotion in the classroom became even noisier and more excited.

When a girl sitting in the front row began to take photos, Lu Zhou paused for a second and smiled.

"Student, the class hasn't begun yet, there's no need to take photos."

The girl taking the photos blushed and put her phone away.

Lu Zhou looked around at the crowded classroom and was surprised that there were so many people attending. He cleared his throat and said, "Everyone quiet down, let's start."

The moment he finished speaking, the classroom became quiet.

Lu Zhou could feel from everyone's gaze that they were looking forward to his lecture.

In order to live up to their expectations, he didn't make the students wait any longer.

Lu Zhou opened the first page of the textbook and cleared his throat.

“Number theory is an ancient field of study, its origin can be traced back to BC...

“You guys might ask what’s the point of studying these outdated things, and I can tell you now that there is no meaning.

“Whether it’s the twin prime conjecture, Goldbach’s conjecture, or the ‘1+1’ problem, it’s all just a matter of solving the permutation of prime numbers. However, through repeated scrutiny of these interesting yet meaningless propositions, we can often receive unexpected treasures from it. What treasures, you might ask. Treasures like a new mathematical tool or even a new area of mathematics...

“Turn your books to the introduction section, I will try to control the pace and start from the beginning. There’s no PowerPoint presentation, so you’ll have to write notes... I hope you guys can keep up.”

Lu Zhou turned around, facing the blackboard. He picked up a piece of chalk and began to write on the board.

The textbook he used was written by Professor Feng Keqin of Shuimu University. He was a close disciple of Hua Luogeng and one could say he personally witnessed the rise and fall of China’s number theory field.

When Lu Zhou first won the Crafoord Prize for his Goldbach’s conjecture proof, he received an invitation from his alma mater. It was to do a report regarding his Goldbach’s conjecture proof and the Group Structure Method. All of the big names in the number theory field were present at this report.

After the report ended, Feng Keqin asked for Lu Zhou’s opinion on incorporating the Group Structure Method into the textbook—Introduction To Number Theory.

After more than two years of repeated edits, this textbook was finally released last year.

Lu Zhou flipped through this book at the Jin Ling University library before and felt that the contents of this book were pretty good. It was suitable for a beginner to get their feet wet, but it also dove deep into some core number theory problems.

Even though Lu Zhou didn't think any of these students could solve some kind of world-class conjecture, but he believed that as long as he passed on some of his ideas to them, it would greatly benefit their future academic careers.

Professor Tang Zhiwei sat at the back of the classroom as he looked at Lu Zhou and muttered emotionally, "Time really flies."

Dean Lu Fangping, who was sitting next to him, smiled and said, "Yeah, you'll be seventy next year, when are you going to retire?"

Professor Tang: "I'll teach for a few more years, I'm not in a hurry."

Dean Lu said, "A few more years? If I had a disciple like Lu Zhou, I would have retired a long time ago."

Old Tang shook his head and said, "I didn't teach him anything. This kid was very assertive during his second year. My plans for him never caught up with his progress. Over the past few years, I have been thinking about how he was able to do it. But the only conclusion I had was that he was a genius who was more diligent than your average geniuses... Maybe, there's a higher-being teaching him."

Lu Fangping looked at the crowded classroom and the students taking notes in the aisle, and he asked, "Do you think that Jin Ling University will one day become the mathematics center of China?"

Old Tang smiled and looked at the young man standing on the podium.

"Isn't it already one?"

Chapter 579: The Perks Of Being Handsome?

After talking for around 80 minutes, Lu Zhou took two steps back and looked at the blackboard. He saw that there was no more space for him to write. Therefore, he looked back at the students in the classroom and put down the chalk in his hand.

"We'll end the class here."



When the students in the classroom saw Professor Lu put down the chalk, they finally sighed in relief.

Even though most professors lectured at the speed of rockets, they were nowhere as bad as Professor Lu, who went through seventy pages in just one lecture.

If this continued, this textbook would be finished in just a few lectures.

But they had to admit that...

Professor Lu's lecture ability was pretty good.

Actually, it wasn't pretty good, it was extremely good.

Most professors weren't interested in teaching undergraduate students, and their teaching abilities were almost inversely proportional to their academic research abilities.

However, Professor Lu gave them a different kind of feeling.

Even though they couldn't fully understand the ideas he used when solving problems, when he was explaining some of the more esoteric topics, they were learning things that couldn't be taught from textbooks.

Like mathematical methods.

And experience.

Those genius students sitting in the classroom were well aware that these things were more important!

A tall skinny guy who was sitting in the middle of the classroom looked at his notes and sighed. "If God Lu taught us real analysis last semester, it wouldn't have been so miserable."

For undergraduate students, number theory required a strong mathematical and logical background, and it was considered a difficult subject.

Especially for advanced algebraic number theory and analytic number theory fields, even PhD-level mathematicians wouldn't be able to understand some of the more profound problems.

The things they were learning were relatively basic, but there were many esoteric materials.

Surprisingly, after Professor Lu explained the difficult topics, they didn't seem so difficult anymore.

His roommate, who was wearing glasses, said, "After all, he was a Princeton professor, earning hundreds of thousands of USD per year. Why do you think so many people are coming to this class?"

The tall, skinny guy said, "Oh? Isn't it because he won the Fields Medal and Nobel Prize?"

"Fine, that too."

While the two were chatting, Lu Zhou began to speak.

"There's still a little time left. If there are any questions regarding the material I just went through, feel free to ask me.

"Of course, I will also answer questions outside of the teaching material. But I will not answer any personal questions."

There was a commotion in the classroom as the students began to whisper to each other.

This group of students, who didn't know mathematics at all, who only came because of God Lu, suddenly woke up and paid attention.

After a while, a genius student who was wearing black-rimmed glasses raised his hand and asked, "Professor, can you tell us how you solved the Goldbach's conjecture?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Of course I can, but not now. With your foundation now, I'm afraid you won't be able to get through the first page of the thesis. I suggest you guys set your foundation first before trying to understand the problem... Of course, if you guys are really interested, I can put this problem at the end of the course material."

The student sat down. Soon, a chubby guy in a puffer jacket raised his hand and asked curiously, "Professor, how did you move from mathematics research into controllable fusion?"

*Controllable nuclear fusion?*

*This is a difficult question to answer.*

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and said, “My research isn’t limited to pure mathematics. In my opinion, mathematics is a powerful theoretical tool, whether it’s physics or chemistry or any other fields, it can help us find answers through effective calculations.

“The research on the Navier–Stokes equations gave me a chance to research plasma turbulence. Of course, I started this problem three years ago. I was in Berlin at that time, and the German Chemical Society invited me to accept the Hoffman Prize. I met Professor Klitzing there, and he invited me to the Wendelstein 7-X laboratory...”

“As for the specifics, I’m sure you guys aren’t interested.” Lu Zhou smirked and jokingly said, “Also, it’s not good for you guys to know too much, I like to stay mysterious.”

The classroom chuckled.

Coincidentally, the class was over.

While the bell was ringing, Lu Zhou picked up the book in his hand and quickly left the classroom before the students were able to surround him.

He was walking in the hallway and happened to bump into Principal Xu.

Principal Xu noticed Lu Zhou holding the textbook and smiled.

“How is it? How does teaching feel?”

“It feels alright.” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “My biggest takeaway is that our students are much more enthusiastic than Princeton students.”

When he was teaching in Princeton, even though those students also preferred young and knowledgeable professors, they were nowhere near as enthusiastic.

After all, there were too many geniuses and big names in Princeton. Anyone standing on the podium was a potential Nobel Prize or Fields Medal winner.

Also, compared to those experienced professors, there were many lecturing techniques Lu Zhou had to learn.

Of course, that was compared to Princeton's standards.

If it was Jin Ling University's standards, there wasn't a better mathematics lecturer than Lu Zhou...

Principal Xu smiled and said, "It seems like our students quite like you. My classrooms have never been so full."

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly.

*Maybe...*

*This is the perks of being handsome?*

Principal Xu paused for a second and said, "If you have any problems or suggestions regarding your lectures, tell me. The school will try our best to find a solution."

Lu Zhou: "I'm pretty happy, I don't have any problems... it's just that..."

Principal Xu: "Just what?"

"No, nothing."

Lu Zhou originally wanted to talk about how all of his assistants were females, but he suddenly changed his mind and felt like this wasn't appropriate.

*Should I ask the school to give me male assistants?*

*Emm...*

*I feel like that will cause a misunderstanding.*

## **Chapter 580: Laboratory Three Stories Underground**

Translator: Henyee Translations Editor: Henyee Translations

Since Lu Zhou's office was full of estrogen, he didn't really want to go there.

He called Zhao Huan and told her to arrange the interviews for the master's students. He then went to the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

The Debris No.3 had been in the system space for a while now.

Every night before bed, he would go into the system space and look at it for a while. Unfortunately, he could only see the projection inside the system space, he couldn't see the internal structure at all.

Lu Zhou was eager to find out what this thing was, and he couldn't wait any longer.

He came to the main Institute for Advanced Study building and took the elevator to the sample warehouse, which was the second floor underground.

He walked to the end of the sample warehouse corridor and stood in front of a thick metal alloy door. He entered the password on the electronic lock and looked at the camera, passing retinal recognition.

The metal door slowly opened and gave him a passage to the second floor underground.

Ever since Lu Zhou received Debris No.1 from the system, he had taken into consideration what would happen if he received a larger piece of debris that was more difficult to handle.

Therefore, when he was constructing the Institute for Advanced Study, he specifically told the contractor to design a hidden private laboratory.

Of course, on paper, this was part of the sample warehouse. It was just located in a more secure place.

The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study conducted research in many sensitive areas, like the SG-1 superconducting magnets.

It wasn't abnormal to have secure sample warehouses like this.

Even if an intruder broke in, all of the cameras and security systems were linked up to Xiao Ai.

In the case of an intruder, Xiao Ai could cut off the elevator system and closed the metal doors. This would completely trap the intruder on the second floor.

If it was necessary, Lu Zhou could even turn off the air ventilation system on the second floor.

Of course, Lu Zhou felt like it probably wouldn't be necessary to do that.

After all, with Xiao Ai guarding the place, it would be impossible to enter the second floor underground without permission.

Lu Zhou walked through the third floor underground door.

When he was walking through the corridor outside the secret laboratory, two drones that were quietly laying at the door lit up with a green light and flew behind Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou stood in the middle of the spacious laboratory and took a deep breath. He entered into the system space and selected the Debris No.3.

Within a few seconds, Lu Zhou exited the system space and opened his eyes.

He saw that there was a black outline of the debris in front of him. It was filled with unknown material and the debris shell began to glow under the light...

No matter how many times he experienced the system project items turning into reality, he couldn't help but feel astonished.

This was breaking the laws of physics. Lu Zhou had no idea how the system was able to do it.

Teleportation? Or some kind of two-dimensional material expanding on the three-dimensional plane? Or some other special physical forces...

Due to safety reasons, Lu Zhou used an instrument to detect its gamma value before approaching the device.

He made sure that there were no radioactive or abnormal electromagnetic signals. He then put on some white plastic gloves and took out a flashlight and some electric wire clippers from his toolbox. He then carefully walked toward the debris.

When he found the location of the fracture, he used a flashlight to look inside the debris.

This time, he was finally able to see the internal structure.

This was different than he had imagined. He originally thought that this high-tech device was almost sci-fi like. However, he didn't expect that it was just a bunch of fragmented components and a million torn wires.

He used a high-resolution camera to take a few internal structure photos. After that, he began to start researching. Well, dissecting the equipment.

He chose a piece of broken wire and used the clippers to gently squeeze it. The wire casing quickly turned into powder, revealing a silver thin wire.

"Electric wire? Or fiber?"

Lu Zhou used the clippers to cut a section of the wire and placed it into a sample box labeled "Sample A". He wrote down the location of the wire and was going to do an analysis on the wire later.

After that, Lu Zhou put the flashlight in his mouth and walked inside the engine through the fracture point.

Lu Zhou followed the strings of wires and soon found what he wanted.

Those intricate wires were connected to a black board.

He gently reached out and pulled on the silver wires. They were easy to pull off.

He reached out and picked up the board that was broken into two pieces and slowly climbed out of the engine.

He used the light from the laboratory to carefully inspect the board.

With a frown, he muttered, "Is it a circuit board?"

There was a layer of black paint on this board.

Lu Zhou didn't know if it was because of the damage or other reasons, but the layer of black paint faded away because of a gentle touch.

Lu Zhou looked at the black stains on his plastic gloves and frowned. He pinched his fingers together and rubbed.

He felt the smooth and delicate texture and paused for a second.

“Graphite?”

Lu Zhou suddenly had a moment of realization, and he looked excited.

Carbon!

It’s carbon!

There is no reason why an engineer from a higher civilization would connect wires to a graphite board.

The graphite must be made from other carbon-based materials when the device was subjected to severe impact or high temperatures!

Following this line of logic, the unknown board in his hand had to be an “integrated circuit board” for carbon-based chips or at least something similar!

If this was all correct, then it was likely that some higher-civilizations had achieved carbon-based electric components!

The only downside was that the carbon-based electric components had all been turned into graphite...

“I guess carbon-based materials are good at keeping secrets...”

Lu Zhou placed this board into a larger sample box and sighed.

However, this wasn’t a total dead-end.

He now knew that this technical pathway was feasible, and this was an important piece of information.

After that, the Eastern Research Centers Association and the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study would begin to research and develop this technology.

When Lu Zhou looked at the debris, a flame of curiosity was ignited in his heart.

As expected, he was correct.

This thing is a treasure box!

If only he had an assistant to help him...



Lu Zhou suddenly spoke.

“Xiao Ai.”

“Yeah?”

The drone hovering behind him said.

Lu Zhou: “Do you want to have a body?”

“Body? I do! Master, Master, can I really? You’re not lying to me?” Xiao Ai said excitedly while hovering in the air.

“Yes...”

Lu Zhou took off the white plastic gloves and thought about it seriously for a while. He then said, “It’s a bit difficult to do that right now... But I will try my best.”

## **Chapter 581: This Isn’t The Body I Wanted!**

After Lu Zhou left the underground laboratory, he went straight to the Institute of Computational Materials building and found Yang Xu, as well as his team, inside the battery testing laboratory.

When he arrived, Yang Xu had just finished a set of experiments and was recording the results of his experiment.

Lu Zhou didn’t interrupt Yang Xu’s team. He waited for them to finish and then called Yang Xu aside. He then gave him the sample box.

“Help me do a component analysis.”

“Okay.” Yang Xu didn’t ask any more questions. He looked at the thumb-sized box and said, “Is it urgent?”

Lu Zhou: “Not urgent, just give it to me within three days.”

“Okay then.” Yang Xu placed the sample into his lab coat and said, “Do you have any requirements?”

Lu Zhou said, "Infrared spectral characteristic peak detection, as well as transmission electron microscopy... These two for the time being."

Yang Xu: "No problem, I can get it to you the day after tomorrow at the latest."

"Okay, thank you." Lu Zhou nodded and looked at the battery detector next to him. He then asked, "Oh yeah, what are you guys doing?"

Yang Xu said with a smile, "We're trying to improve the cathode material of lithium-sulfur batteries. We replaced the pore agent and tried to adjust the pore size of the HCS-2 material. The limited data seems to indicate that the HCS-2 can be further improved. The rate at which the polysulfide compounds diffuse into the electrolyte in the negative electrode material can increase battery life... We're still trying to verify this."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Looks like a promising project... Oh yeah, let me ask you something, do you know anything about robots?"

Yang Xu looked at Lu Zhou with a strange look. He didn't know why Lu Zhou was asking this.

"Robots? Why are you asking about this?"

Lu Zhou: "I need it for some experiments. I plan on buying a few to research. It's fine if you don't know about them, I'll ask someone else."

"Robots... I really don't know much about robots." Yang Xu rubbed his chin and said, "But I have a friend that is in this field."

Lu Zhou: "From MIT?"

"Not from MIT. He's a friend that I made during my undergraduate years. He also majored in materials, but then he transferred to automation. He followed his mentor and went onto the robotic field. I remember during our class reunion, he tried to sell me the robots that his factory was producing. He laughed and said that the Institute for Advanced Study isn't some kind of factory and that we don't need that kind of thing."

Yang Xu smiled and added, "His factory is in Jinling. If you need to, I can introduce him to you?"

Lu Zhou: "Just give me a business card."

Yang Xu: “Okay then, I think I have one in my office. I’ll go grab it.”

...

Yang Xu’s friend was called Zhao Zhongshu.

Even though it was very rude to make fun of other people’s names, Lu Zhou nearly laughed out loud when he saw this business card<sup>1</sup>.

However, even though the name was a bit silly, this person was also nutty.

According to Yang Xu, this guy was originally a materials major, but then after his undergrad, he had a career change. He jumped from the materials field and followed his supervisor to go into the robotics field.

Before the 2010s, the robotics field wasn’t particularly popular. His supervisor’s factory was mainly responsible for importing types of equipment and selling them to logistics and assembly plants in China.

Back then, he was in the so-called “real economy”. It didn’t make him rich, but it did not make him poor. He just cruised along in the factories and got his paycheck.

However, in 2015, there was a drastic change.

At that time, in order to catch up with the China 2025 manufacturing plan, one of the national strategies was to invest in the manufacturing industry. And the industrial robotic field was an important part of this. The robotics industry received hundreds of billions in subsidy funds. Just like the photovoltaic industry, money and state subsidies were swarming in.

At that time, he was still doing a postdoc, and he saw a money-making opportunity.

After some consideration, he gave up on his wish to stay in academics and started a company with some of his friends.

And the result went far beyond his expectations.

With his years of accumulated experience, within five years, he was able to grow his small company to a decent size.

Honestly, even Zhao Zhongshu was surprised by his own achievements.

After all, he only started the company with a few people...

Jinling suburbs.

Inside a bright and spacious factory.

Various types of robotic arms were displayed on both sides of the walkway. The large arms were almost three-people high. The small ones were about the same length as a human arm. There were also some other obscure equipment and a wide variety of machining tools, which were attached to the robotic arms.

Looking at the letters on the side of the machines, it didn't look like these robots were produced in this factory. At the very least, half of them were imported.

As Factory Director Zhao led Lu Zhou inside the factory, Lu Zhou looked around the factory and asked, "What kinds of models do you guys sell here?"

Zhao Zhongshu smiled and said, "We sell a lot of models. There are small multi-joint robots, and vertical multi-joint robots, which were around 5kg. There are also large ones that have a capacity of 1.35 tonnes. There are some pieces of equipment that were imported in, like ABB and YuMi intelligent robots, as well as KUKA's iiwa. However, these machines are not in stock, you'd have to order in advance."

Lu Zhou: "Do you have any good recommendations?"

Zhao Zhongshu: "It depends on what you need the robot for."

Lu Zhou: "To do experiments."

"Experiments?" Zhao Zhongshu froze. He thought he had misheard, so he asked, "Using robots to do experiments?"

Lu Zhou: "Is it not possible?"

Zhao Zhongshu smiled and said, "It's possible... But it depends on what kinds of experiments. If you're working with precise instruments and delicate tasks, I'm afraid the accuracy will be a problem."

Lu Zhou: "Can I take photos?"

Zhao Zhongshu said with a hearty smile, "Take them, it's no big deal. I was still hoping that Professor Lu can help introduce us to some big clients."

Honestly, he didn't expect Lu Zhou to buy a lot of stuff. After all, no matter how nutty a robot was, they could only do the physical tasks that wouldn't require a lot of brainpower. There was no way a robot could replace even a noob researcher.

However, the industry was often connected and linked with the academic world. This was why he was so eager to help Lu Zhou; he wanted Lu Zhou's industry connections.

Lu Zhou took out his phone and took a few pictures of the factory. He then opened his phone and sent the photos to Xiao Ai.

He didn't know a lot about robots. Instead of him choosing them himself, he'd rather let Xiao Ai choose.

After sending the pictures, he generously sent a line of text as well.

[Which one do you like?]

After a while, a text body popped up.

Xiao Ai: [This isn't the body that I wanted. o(∩\_∩)o]

Lu Zhou: "..."

*You didn't tell me what kind of body you wanted!*

*I didn't expect this guy to be so picky.*

Lu Zhou sighed and replied.

[This is all we have.]

*Earth's technology is primitive, my apologies.*

Xiao Ai: [I don't want to talk to you.jpg]

Lu Zhou: ? ? ?

Seeing how Lu Zhou was staring at his cellphone, Zhao Zhongshu asked, “If you can’t make up your mind, I can suggest some stuff.”

Lu Zhou’s mouth twitched as he continued to look at his phone screen.

“No need, give me a second.”

Even though Zhao Zhongshu was confused, he still nodded.

“Okay then.”

*Footnotes:*

**Ch \$581 Footnote \$1**

Zhao Zhongshu sounds like planting a tree in Chinese

## **Chapter 582: Seen Him Before, He’s from the Chinese Academy of Sciences**

Translator: Henyee Translations Editor: Henyee Translations

After an inducement and some persuasion, Lu Zhou was able to appease Xiao Ai and persuaded it to pick a few favorites from the existing pieces of equipment.

Lu Zhou felt that the smarter Xiao Ai was, the more annoying it would become.

However, a program was still a program. Lu Zhou’s order couldn’t be rejected.

He finally received a photo from Xiao Ai. He looked at the robotic arms in the factory and said, “The YuMi intelligent robots from ABB, as well as the 5kg, 160kg, and 1.35t six-axis robots, I’ll get two robots for each model.”

Eight robots weren’t a lot. Even though it was imported, it cost less than two million.

Since Lu Zhou was recommended by a friend, Zhao Zhongshu didn’t even take a deposit from him.

However, even though Zhao Zhongshu didn't ask for a deposit, Lu Zhou still gave one according to the terms of the contract.

"When will it arrive?"

"It will definitely be here this month."

"Okay then. Can you help install it?"

Zhao Zhongshu patted his chest and said, "Don't worry about it. Our technicians in the factory will definitely help you install them."

Lu Zhou nodded and put away the contract. He didn't spend any more time in the factory.

Since he still had some stuff to do back at the university, he refused Factory Director Zhao's invitation to lunch. He sat in Wang Peng's car and headed toward Jin Ling University.

...

This year's Chinese New Year was early. Therefore, the exams for the graduate students also came earlier.

Lu Zhou was invited by Dean Qin to be an interviewer for the graduate student interviews in the afternoon.

Lu Zhou had a bowl of barbecued meat with rice in the cafeteria. He then quickly went to the interview site.

When he arrived at the interview site, there was ten minutes left before the interviews.

Other than him, everyone else had arrived.

Dean Qin greeted him and smiled.

Lu Zhou sat down and began to drink some tea. He chatted with some of the other academicians and professors. Soon, it was two o'clock.

When the hour hand on the clock reached two o'clock, a male student, who was wearing a black puffer jacket and glasses, walked in. He had a receding hairline.

Because he looked slightly order, if he didn't introduce himself, Lu Zhou would have thought he was an interviewer.

Obviously, Lu Zhou wasn't the only one who thought this.

Professor Yang Chunhua, who was in his forties, looked at the resume and couldn't believe his eyes.

"Born in 94? Doesn't look like it."

This guy was shameless. He even smiled and said, "Maybe because I have pale skin, I look more on the young side."

Lu Zhou nearly choked on his tea.

Yang Chunhua: "No, I mean you look old."

Student: "???"

Lu Zhou put down the teacup and gently coughed. He said, "Old is good, it looks more academic."

Isn't that what they say?

The older you look, the more likely you're from the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

When Lu Zhou saw that receding hairline, he had a feeling in his heart.

He didn't know why, but he felt like his words of comfort didn't seem to work. The student looked even more depressed...

Soon, the first interview was over. The experts exchanged some opinions and gave him a fairly good score.

After that, the second student came in.

He did a customary self-introduction.

Professor Yang Chunhua was the first to speak.

"Kid, do you have a girlfriend?"



The guy smiled and said, “Not yet. If I get into the master’s program, I hope my professors can introduce one to me.”

Lu Zhou: “Who cares about that, don’t think about dating all the time if you’re in academia.”

Student: “...”

Dean Qin: “...”

Interviewer: “...”

After the interview finished, the experts exchanged their opinions.

Lu Zhou was about to give his own opinion when he suddenly received a text from Yang Xu.

[The test results are out!!!]

Lu Zhou didn’t know why he used three exclamation marks in one sentence, but he felt that the results had to be amazing. So he replied.

[I’m heading over right now.]

He turned off his phone and looked at the other interviewers.

“I have some urgent matters to attend to, I have to leave for a while.”

Dean Qin smiled and said, “No worries, go ahead.”

Lu Zhou nodded and said thanks. He then got up and left the classroom.

Outside the classroom.

Two postdocs were leaning against the corridor window. They were responsible for keeping the interviewees in order.

When they saw Lu Zhou walk out of the office, they immediately began to talk about him.

“That’s Lu Zhou, right?”

“Looks like it.”

“Why is he an interviewer?”

“Don’t know, maybe because he takes on more students and that he doesn’t trust others to interview his students, so he came along himself.”

“I heard that he recruited four students at Princeton?”

“I heard it was six. Apparently, there were two PhD students.”

“Amazing... So many students, how does he manage it?”

The postdoc had a look of jealousy on his face.

Noob researchers like them could never experience the feeling of others working for them...

They only experienced the pain of working for others.

The postdoc standing next to him shook his head and said, “God knows how he’s able to do it.”

Compared to teaching undergraduate students, taking on master’s student was a little more beneficial. After all, even complex problems needed a certain amount of repetitive work.

Compared with normal employees, no matter how hard the students worked, they would never complain about wages and work hours... There wasn’t another place with such a high-quality workforce. Therefore, professors usually were very willing to take on students.

However, even though they were willing, normally one professor would only be able to take on one master’s student every year. Some nutty professors would take on four, but that was uncommon.

Lu Zhou took on four from the mathematics department and two from the chemistry department; that was six in total. This was extremely rare.

While the two postdocs were being jealous, right after Lu Zhou had left, a girl with a ponytail and a red-and-black scarf walked over.

Han Mengqi waited outside for a bit. When she heard her name being called out, she took a deep breath and gently fixed her collar before stepping into the office.

Her resume was quite perfect. Not only did she have an internship at the Institute of Computational Materials, but because of her undergraduate research experience, she had even published in SCI and received a special scholarship.

For cases like this, as long as she completed the interview without any major problems, it was almost guaranteed that she would pass.

At the teacher's request, she made a simple self-introduction.

After that, a female professor in her forties asked, "What is your future life plan?"

Han Mengqi smiled politely and said, "I plan on going to MIT to do my PhD. After two years of postdoc, I want to stay in academia."

This was a standard answer, and almost every interviewee would answer this way.

However, the professors were bored with this standard answer.

Once the planned questions were asked, it was time for some informal questions.

Seeing that this girl was quite attractive, Professor Yang Chunhua asked, "Do you have a boyfriend?"

Han Mengqi didn't know why the interviewer would suddenly ask this. She was muddled, but she still replied, "Not yet."

It wasn't that there weren't any guys after her; it was just that she wasn't interested in those boring guys.

The female professor in her forties asked, "Do you have a plan on getting a boyfriend?"

Han Mengqi: "Not at the moment."

Yang Chunhua: "Who did you write down as your supervisor?"

Han Mengqi said, "Professor Lu..."

The two female professors immediately began to whisper to each other.

Even though they spoke quietly, Han Mengqi was still able to hear their conversation.

“She wants to become Professor Lu’s student as well.”

“Yeah, this makes sense.”

“No plans on getting a boyfriend, that fits Professor Lu’s requirements.”

“Then should we pass her?”

“Let’s pass her.”

Han Mengqi: “...”

Even though passing the interview was supposed to be a happy thing, she had a weird feeling in her stomach.

Chapter 583: Impossible Material

Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Institute of Computational Materials.

Yang Xu brought Lu Zhou to the laboratory. He sat in front of the computer with the experiment data and spoke emotionally.

“This is incredible...”

Lu Zhou didn’t ask what was exactly incredible. Instead, he asked, “What material is this thing?”

“Silver.” Yang Xu took a deep breath and said, “More specifically, silver and graphene!”

“Silver and graphene?” Lu Zhou looked at Yang Xu in disbelief and said, “This thing is silver and graphene?”

He remembered reading similar theses before.

However, because he didn't do a lot of research on metal materials, he couldn't remember where he read the theses.

Honestly, when he heard that there were only these two materials, he was a little disappointed. Even though he knew that an advanced civilization probably wouldn't build a wire with expensive materials, he still didn't expect the materials to be so ordinary.

However, Yang Xu was speechless.

"What do you mean just these two materials, this is already very nutty."

He tapped on the keyboard as if to prove his point.

Soon, a transmission electron microscope image appeared on the screen.

On the image, the black and gray sections were interlaced, and there was a neat and delicate texture interwoven in the two-dimensional space of the plane. This completely revealed the secret of the nano-scale silver wire.

Yang Xu pointed at a few key areas of the image and didn't explain a lot. He just said, "Look at these areas and you'll understand."

Lu Zhou leaned toward the computer screen and looked at the direction of Yang Xu's finger.

He saw that in the 1-5 nm particle size range, there was a single layer of graphene that had bonded together with the silver atoms.

Lu Zhou's eyebrows furrowed.

Even though he didn't do a lot of research on metal materials, he could still see the abnormality in this.

This wasn't something they could consider manufacturing.

It was a problem of whether or not they could even find the technology to manufacture this material...

Producing graphene alloys based on metal materials required bonding between metal nanoparticles and graphene.

This could only be achieved with powder metallurgy technology. However, even powder metallurgy technology couldn't bond graphene and silver nanoparticles to such a perfect degree.

It was not an exaggeration to say that this thin silver wire was a piece of art.

Seeing that Lu Zhou didn't speak, Yang Xu continued to speak emotionally, "Powder metallurgy is relatively new and unpopular, and I don't know a lot about it. However, using the current 3D printing technology as an example, the best metal powder is around 10,000 mesh, which is around 13 micrometers in diameter. The powder used in ceramic materials might be finer, but it's still on the micrometer scale.

"Even though some laboratories are able to achieve ultra-fine 20 nm powder... This is almost impossible to store under normal conditions, let alone bonding with graphene."

Not only was it difficult to prepare, it was difficult to filter the powder and even more difficult to store.

The higher the mesh measurement, the smaller the particle size, the easier it was to oxidize. Also, it was more likely to agglomerate.

The only two possible ideas that might seem to work were either to disperse it in a special way while smelting or to mix it directly with graphene crumbs while producing the powder.

Yang Xu leaned against his chair and sighed.

"As you can see, the difficult part isn't the technology itself, but rather the production process. Countless papers on composite materials like Ag/GF, AG/GO, AGFe/rGO, etc have appeared due to the rapid development of the electronic industry.

"For example, the indium tin oxide used for making mobile phone screens has fragile properties, and many scholars have proposed combining silver nanowires with graphene to develop a new generation of flexible phone screens. According to the current limited experimental data, the mechanical properties of this material are quite excellent, and the electrical resistivity is much lower than that of metals... When I was a postdoc at MIT, there was a laboratory that specialized in this research."

Lu Zhou looked up from the computer screen and asked, “Then what happened?”

Yang Xu shrugged and said, “I’m not sure, but I guess the project couldn’t continue. Indium tin oxide isn’t cheap, and silver is even more expensive. Even if the technology is made, most people wouldn’t be able to use it.”

Lu Zhou had a strange look on his face.

*If using silver in mobile screens is considered expensive, then what’s the point of using silver in electric wires?*

However, Lu Zhou remembered that if an advanced civilization could achieve space travel, space mining would probably be a piece of cake.

For a civilization that had this kind of technology, the price of silver might only be slightly more expensive than copper.

Yang Xu looked at the data on the computer screen. His eyes were filled with curiosity.

After hesitating for a bit, he couldn’t help but ask, “Where did you get this thing?”

He had the same feeling as Lu Zhou.

In his opinion, this thumb-sized silver wire was a work of art!

It was no exaggeration to say that its existence alone could change the industry’s perception of metallurgical technology.

However, Lu Zhou didn’t answer his question. He just said, “It’s a national secret, just help me reverse engineer it. It’s better if you don’t know its origin.”

Lu Zhou didn’t explain too much because there was no need.

Even before winning the Ling Yun medal, he didn’t have to explain anything to anyone.

Even if he did need to explain something, he only needed to explain it to one person—the president.

And that would only happen in a special circumstance.

Which was if something seriously jeopardized national security.

Other than that, it was not an exaggeration to say that even those responsible for his security, responsible for keeping secrets, had no right of knowing the “secret” itself.

When Lu Zhou saw Yang Xu’s look of surprise, he was secretly glad.

Thankfully, he only cut a small piece of the wire.

If Yang Xu knew that he had a pile of this kind of stuff, Yang Xu would start having doubts about his life.

“Okay then...”

Yang Xu shrugged and reluctantly accepted this explanation.

If it was actually confidential, then it would be better if he didn’t know.

Yang Xu paused for a second before he continued, “But it’s not easy to reverse engineer this stuff. At least for now, I can’t think of a way to produce this thing.”

Lu Zhou: “What about producing nanometer-scale silver particles?”

Yang Xu hesitated for a bit and said, “It’s still difficult, but if you are interested, we can try it. However...”

Lu Zhou: “However?”

“However, what’s the point?” Yang Xu said, “Even though I admit that the resistivity of Ag/GF materials is excellent, due to the sheer price of silver, it almost has zero industrial application.”

It would take a lot of effort to understand the mystery, and it would at most produce a “beautiful” thesis.

Even though this kind of thing might be of interest to normal researchers, for people like Yang Xu and Lu Zhou, there was no point.

After all, unlike mathematics and physics, materials science itself was an application-based discipline...



Lu Zhou thought for a long time.

Honestly, he was also hesitant on whether or not this technology had any value.

However, Lu Zhou made up his mind and said, “I can’t answer this question, at least not right now.

“But my intuition is telling me that this is worth researching.”

### **Chapter 584: Teaching Arrangements**

Translator: Henyee Translations Editor: Henyee Translations

Among the many materials available, only a very small subset of materials had the so-called “subversive genes”, and graphene was one of them. As one of the most popular materials, it could be combined with almost any other material.

At least that was how it was in theory.

To a large extent, what restricted the development of modern materials technology wasn’t the lack of innovative ideas. It was to find a way to realize the ideas.

With the current technology available, it would be almost impossible to achieve a composite of silver nanoparticles and graphene with a particle diameter of 1-5 nm.

Whether it was a laboratory preparation method or a developed industry technology, Lu Zhou and Yang Xu couldn’t think of any good methods. After some discussion, the two eventually reached a research consensus.

Which was, to first bond the 10,000-mesh silver powder to the single-layer graphene crumb by powder metallurgy, and if it was successful, the particle size could be further reduced until it reached the nano-scale.

At the same time, the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study had also begun to carry out research on the method of bonding small-sized metal particles and graphene chips to form alloys.

Even though the short-term application prospects of this technology were bleak, Lu Zhou still decided to spend 120 million yuan on a series of projects that were related to Ag/GF composite materials.

In addition to this, they were also doing research on carbon-based computer chips.

However, that side of research wasn't only done by the Institute of Computational Materials. The Institute of Physics at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study and the physics department at Jinling University were all involved in carbon-based computer chip research.

Regarding the computer chip technology research, Lu Zhou spent almost twice the amount of research funding compared to Ag/GF composite materials. He himself even participate in this project.

On the other hand, his research on the Debris No.3 was still going on. In addition to researching the treasures that had been retrieved, Lu Zhou still hoped to find more treasures on this piece of debris.

Of course, even though there were so many things to do, Lu Zhou didn't forget about the system mission.

Honestly, the description of this reward mission was quite interesting.

The theses required the students to have a certain degree of participation in the research project. However, the system didn't specify this requirement.

If only Lu Zhou knew about this participation requirement, it would make the mission a lot easier.

As of now, Lu Zhou could only make general speculation. If all he did was to make the students pour some tea, clean the equipment, and then write the students' names on the theses, the system probably wouldn't consider the mission to be completed.

Also, there were other researchers in the research institute that weren't his students.

Even though Lu Zhou took a lot of time to help them with their research projects, the system didn't consider them as his students.

Obviously, the system didn't give him any loophole opportunities. If he wanted to complete the mission, he still had to do it the old-fashioned way.

However, since this was only a reward mission, Lu Zhou felt more relaxed than usual.

He still had another mission card in his inventory.

That mission card should contain a large project.

By that time, he would be a lot busier.

...

Jin Ling University mathematics building.

The office at the end of the corridor.

Four guys and two girls stood in front of the office door; no one dared to knock on the door.

Other than Han Mengqi, most of the people here had only even seen Lu Zhou on television.

Seeing someone on a screen or on stage was a very different feeling than seeing them face-to-face, especially for these beginners.

As for Han Mengqi...

She didn't expect to feel nervous...

After some negotiation between the students, finally, a young man who seemed to have a little courage bravely knocked on the door.

The office door was opened.

Feng Jin, who knocked on the door, saw the lady and asked bravely, "Hello, is this Professor Lu's office?"

When Lin Yuxiang saw the students, she smiled and said, "You guys are Professor Lu's students, right? Come on in."

Assistant Lin brought the group of people into the office and gestured them to sit down on the sofa. She poured a cup of tea for each of them.

“It might be a while until Professor Lu comes back, just sit here and wait for a bit.”

When Lin Yuxiang turned around and walked toward her desk, almost all of the male students couldn't help but look at her.

A guy said, “Professor Lu's assistants are so pretty.”

The other guys said, “Yeah...”

Han Mengqi heard their whisper and couldn't help but look at her.

Where exactly is she pretty? I don't see it.

She continued to look at Lin Yuxiang for a while and went silent.

Fine.

She had to admit, that Lin Yuxiang was stronger than her in the fashion department.

However, that was only because she was normally introverted and didn't have time to dress up!

A man with thin hair walked into the office.

He saw the six students sitting on the office sofa and paused for a second.

“You guys are all... Professor Lu's students?”

“Yeah.” Feng Jin stood up and politely said, “Are you Professor Lu's assistant?”

He Changwen paused for a second and shook his head. “Assistant? No, I'm Professor Lu's PhD student.”

The other master's student said, “You're a student?”

He Changwen smiled and said, “I don't look like one?”

The six students looked at each other and nodded.

He Changwen touched his receding hairline and looked at these young students. He then smiled awkwardly.

“No worries, you’ll understand sooner or later.”

Graduate students: “...”

They sat for around ten minutes on the sofa before another PhD student came.

Compared to He Changwen, this student’s hairline was a lot better.

All of the students had arrived, but Lu Zhou, who assembled all of them, was nowhere to be seen.

When the hour hand hit nine, Lu Zhou walked into the office.

When he saw the group of students in his office, he looked surprised.

“You guys are all here?”

They all looked at Professor Lu and nodded.

Han Mengqi originally wanted to greet him, but she thought that it wouldn’t be good to show her relationship with Professor Lu. Therefore, she hesitated for a bit and decided to greet him later.

Lin Yuxiang, who was sitting at the desk near the door, smirked and said, “They’ve been waiting since half-past eight.”

Lu Zhou gently coughed and said, “I told you guys to come after nine o’clock, I didn’t say you have to come at nine o’clock...”

Originally, he wanted to meet the students one by one, he didn’t expect all of them to come together.

After that, he looked at Assistant Kong and said, “Bring me the name list.”

“Okay.” Kong Jie nodded and pulled out a list from the drawer. She then stood up and walked over to Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou took the name list from her and cleared his throat.

“Since everyone is here, I’ll do a name check. There are a lot of people, so just raise your hand when I call your name.”

Among the eight students, there were only three he could name off the top of his head.

The thin-haired PhD student was called He Changwen; he was in the analytic number theory field.

The PhD student who was quite tall was called Wu Shuimu; he studied applied mathematics for his undergrad, just like Lu Zhou. His master’s degree was in the area of functional analysis, and now, he switched to computational materials science.

As for the other six master’s students, other than Han Mengqi, who he had most definitely met before, Lu Zhou had only read their resumes. He didn’t even know what they looked like.

After Lu Zhou called out their names, he finally had a general idea of who everyone was.

He handed the name list to Zhao Huan and spoke to his eight students.

“From now on, you guys are my students. I will try my best to pass on my knowledge to you guys.

“However, I might be busy, so I won’t have a lot of time to guide you guys. If you encounter academic problems, you can send it directly to my email address. Or you can ask the other researchers at the Institute for Advanced Study.”

The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study opened an Institute of Physics and an Institute of Mathematics last year. Due to the high salary and a relaxed research environment, not to mention the glory of a Fields Medal and Nobel Prize, Lu Zhou was able to attract a group of outstanding talents.

Lu Zhou trusted that his researchers could help his students.

Lu Zhou paused for a second before he continued, “Of course, even though I won’t have a lot of time for you guys, I will definitely not allow you guys to

mess around for the next three to five years. Starting tomorrow, I will arrange all of you into different project teams, and you guys can start learning from practice.

“I really hope you all take this job seriously. I don’t have requirements for weekly theses reading. Just read the ones that interest you and benefit your research. Within half a year, I want to see a thesis written by yourselves.”

Other than Han Mengqi and the two PhD students, all of the master’s students took a deep breath.

Writing a thesis within half a year...

Most of them had just finished their undergraduate studies; they didn’t even know the format of writing a thesis. The longest thing they wrote during their undergrad was probably the conclusion reports on the course design and their undergraduate theses.

However, that was far from being a formal thesis...

Lu Zhou explained some simple things for them to pay attention to. He then paused for a second before saying, “Also, I have some suggestions regarding your courses. However, the final choice is up to you. After you have selected your classes, send it to my email.”

“Are there any other questions?”

The students shook their heads and answered, “Nope, no more questions.”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “Okay then, that’s it for today. Remember to come here tomorrow.”

“The rest can go, except for the master’s and PhD students in the computational materials field.”

Chapter 585: Thank You For Saving Me

In addition to a PhD student, two other master’s students stayed behind. The other four students left.

Honestly, the quality of this cohort was average, at least in Lu Zhou's opinion.

However, this was none other than his fault. After all, he spent the entirety of last year on the controllable fusion energy project. He didn't have time to cater to his university work, and he waited until the end of the year to post on the student admissions website.

As usual, the higher quality students were already taken by other professors during the summer.

Among the master's students group, except for Han Mengqi, who was in computational materials, and another mathematics genius called Feng Jin, most of them had no previous scientific research experience.

For example, Liu Siyuan, who was standing here, was another master's student in computational materials. Even though his fourth-year undergraduate scores from Zhi University were pretty good, his research experience was almost zero.

However, that didn't matter too much. After all, other than undergraduate experimental classes, unless someone had a special relationship with a teacher or were lucky enough to be selected into a talent training program, they wouldn't have any chance of participating in a research project.

"You used to be from Aurora?"

Wu Shuimu: "Yes."

Lu Zhou: "Who was your supervisor?"

Wu Shuimu said, "Professor Liu Xianglong. I was in the functions analysis field."

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and didn't recognize this name, so he changed the subject.

"Have you had any experience with materials science before?"

Wu Shuimu scratched his head and said awkwardly, "I have a bit of experience since our professors in the chemistry department did a project on the mechanical dispersion of single-walled carbon nanotubes. I helped them to collect data and did a mathematical model."



Lu Zhou raised his eyebrows with interest. "This is the reason why you chose computational materials science?"

"Kind of." Wu Shuimu smiled and said, "I feel like I have reached the ceiling of functions analysis. It's very difficult to create any new innovative theories. Therefore, my supervisor recommended me to switch from theory to application. Back then, I watched your Crafoord Prize award-winning speech. From then on, I made up my mind and decided to go into the computational materials science field!"

There was almost a sense of purpose in his voice.

Liu Siyuan looked at this guy with admiration while thinking about how invincible this guy was.

Han Mengqi's eyebrows twitched. She couldn't help but look away.

Lu Zhou smiled.

*Is he kissing my a\*s?*

*Who cares, it sounds nice.*

Lu Zhou cleared his throat and spoke.

"Since you already have your own goals, then work toward them. Also, listening to what you said, you should have a fairly basic understanding of computational materials. Therefore, I will try to allocate some more appropriate tasks for you."

After that, he looked at Lin Yuxiang, whose desk was closest to him.

"Give me my marker."

"Let me try to find it..."

Lin Yuxiang went through the drawer and quickly found a black marker. She happily handed it to him.

"Here."

"Thank you."

Lu Zhou took the pen from her and walked next to the whiteboard in his office. He looked at the black whiteboard for a bit before he began to write.

$$[\Psi(r_1, r_2, \dots, r_n) = \prod \Psi_i(r_i)]$$

$$[-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m}\nabla^2\Psi(r_i) + V(r_i)\Psi(r_i) + \sum_{j \neq i} \frac{e^2}{4\pi\epsilon_0|r_i - r_j|}\Psi(r_i) = E\Psi(r_i)]$$

[...]

Wu Shuimu looked at the formulas on the whiteboard and said, "This is..."

"The Theoretical Model of Electrochemical Interface Structure." Lu Zhou wrote down the last line of the equation and smiled as he said, "You should know about it."

Wu Shuimu coughed and said, "Professor, you must be joking... Anyone in the field of computational chemistry knows about the Theoretical Model of Electrochemical Interface Structure."

On one hand, there was the first principle calculation. On the other, there was the "Theoretical Model of Electrochemical Interface Structure". These two were the pillars of modern computational materials science.

When he was studying in Aurora, his supervisor, Professor Liu Xianglong, highly praised the theoretical model. He said that this model was able to apply functional analysis to the extreme extent.

Even though with his current knowledge level, he didn't know what was so "extreme" about this model, but when he looked at Lu Zhou writing down the equations, he still felt quite emotional.

Even if he had written the thesis himself, he wouldn't be able to recite every word, at most he would remember the final conclusion.

Actually, he believed that there was no way Lu Zhou could recite his thesis either.

Therefore, it was likely that Lu Zhou was deriving these equations on the spot...

The two master's students looked at the PhD student and professor communicating, and they felt that they were out of their elements.

Even Han Mengqi, who worked part-time for two years at the Institute of Computational Materials, wasn't able to understand what they were discussing. Even though she had participated in several research projects, the researchers obviously didn't give an undergraduate student too much responsibility.

Stuff like the "Theoretical Model of Electrochemical Interface Structure" was obviously a bit too advanced for her.

"Actually, this model is far from perfect. Actually, there is a lot of room for improvement. For example, the multi-body wave function can be configured to have different levels of correlation. The clustering method and the accuracy of the calculations can also be improved.

"What I need you to do is to improve on the Theoretical Model of Electrochemical Interface Structure. Even though this might seem insignificant, like modifying a window on an already complete building, but this is still important. After all, with your current ability, you are not able to build a new floor on top of this building."

Wu Shuimu nodded seriously and said, "I understand, I will do as you say."

Lu Zhou nodded with satisfaction.

*Not bad, this kid's quite obedient.*

"Try your best, if you really dive deep into this field, you might be able to write two JACS theses before you graduate."

*Two publications!*

*That's enough to get into the Thousand Talents Program!*

When Wu Shuimu heard this, he smiled and said, "Okay, I will try my best!"

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded. He then looked at the two master's students.

"As for your mission, it is to understand the things I wrote on the whiteboard.

"Once you guys have understood these basic things, I will arrange more specific scientific research tasks for you guys. If you encounter something you don't understand, feel free to ask Wu Shuimu. If he can't explain it, then ask me."

*How is this basic at all...*

Even though Liu Siyuan and Han Mengqi wanted to complain, they still forced themselves to nod.

Liu Siyuan had it even worse.

He was only an average genius student. Even though his grades were pretty good, he had no additional talents outside of academic results.

Even though he had some mental preparation before this, he didn't expect to suddenly feel a sense of struggle.

As expected, it was not easy to study under a Nobel Prize winner.

Since he didn't have Lu Zhou's extraordinary talent, the only way to keep up was to start grinding...

...

After Lu Zhou handed out the tasks, he put down the marker and announced that they could leave.

When they were leaving, Han Mengqi purposely slowed down her footsteps and stayed at the end.

After everyone else left, she looked at the door before turning back to look at Lu Zhou. She quietly whispered, "Teacher."

Lu Zhou looked at her nervous face and smiled as he asked, "What's wrong?"

Han Mengqi twirled her fingers and looked down. She then said quietly, "Um... I did it."

Even though she had a lot of words to say, she didn't know why, but she froze.

Lu Zhou: "Yeah, congratulations!"

Han Mengqi stared at the floor and couldn't help but pout.

"Do you not have anything else to say?"

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and said, "Honestly, I'm quite surprised."

Han Mengqi: "Surprised?"

Lu Zhou said, "Yeah, remember what I told you before? If you can get into Jin Ling University, I promise to become your supervisor... I didn't expect you to actually be able to do it."

Seeing how Lu Zhou underestimated her, Han Mengqi said unhappily, "What do you mean? I used to be your student, of course I can do it."

"Getting into Jin Ling University is no easy feat." Lu Zhou coughed and said, "Of course, what surprised me wasn't you getting into Jin Ling University four years ago, it was that four years later, you are still standing here."

Han Mengqi was a little confused; she didn't know what he was saying.

Lu Zhou paused for a second before he continued, "I have always thought that time can change a person. Not just a person, but it can change everything, including the fundamental particles that make up the universe.

"Time can theoretically solve any problem... And you! You gave me another perspective."

Han Mengqi tilted her head and said, "Another perspective?"

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Yeah, which is that there are some things that time can't change. Just like how you told me that you liked mathematics, I didn't take that seriously back then, I thought you were just joking around. I didn't expect you to persist until now and to become my master's student... Honestly, I am shocked."

Lu Zhou was filled with complex emotions.

*If there are things that even time can't change...*

*Then the concept of allowing time to solve a problem is flawed.*

"Actually, it's not only mathematics..." Han Mengqi scratched her cheeks awkwardly and looked at her shoes. She said, "I'm also interested in chemistry."

Lu Zhou had an unnatural smile on his face.

“Yeah, scientific research is also a very interesting thing, I hope you will continue to like it.”

“I definitely will!” Han Mengqi looked up at Lu Zhou and nodded. She looked up at the ceiling and said, “Um, there’s one more thing I want to tell you...”

Lu Zhou said, “What?”

Han Mengqi: “In August last year, my parents divorced...”

Han Mengqi looked at Lu Zhou’s look of concern and smirked.

Even though she didn’t want to talk about this sad topic, she still continued, “If this were before, I would probably cry my eyes out. I definitely wouldn’t be able to leave my room, and I would miss out on a lot of interesting things...”

Her face burst into a cheerful smile.

“Even though this might be four years late... I still want to...

“I still want to say thank you!”

*Thank you for saving me...*

Han Mengqi turned around and quickly ran out of the office.

Lu Zhou looked at her leave and paused for a second. He shook his head, and he felt a lot better.

He didn’t expect that helping others would be such a joyful feeling.

Honestly, when he was still tutoring her, he didn’t think about this aspect at all...

## **Chapter 586: Meeting on the Moon Project**

Translator: Henyee Translations Editor: Henyee Translations

Lu Zhou basically spent all of his time at Jin Ling University, the Institute for Advanced Study, and in his Zhongshan International mansion.

He taught two classes per week to Jin Ling University undergraduate mathematics students. The rest of his time was spent helping his graduate students in his office, keeping up with the latest physics, mathematics, and materials research, as well as researching the debris in his underground laboratory.

He finally had some schedule in his life. It more or less gave him the feeling of when he was still working at Princeton.

Honestly, the more Lu Zhou came in contact with undergraduate work, the more he realized that Jin Ling University, and other universities in China for that matter, were still a step behind from internationally renowned universities.

Objectively speaking, the scientific research strength of domestic universities had risen quite a lot over the past decade. However, there was still a certain gap when compared to other universities around the world.

Lu Zhou couldn't figure out the exact reason why.

Other than the well-known factors, such as academic commodification, the industrialization of papers, the conversion rate of scientific research results, and the lack of attention for undergraduate teaching, there were still a lot of problems that he could vaguely sense... but he couldn't say exactly what it was.

The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study and the Eastern Research Centers Association were the country's attempts in creating suitable models for the development of domestic universities.

At the very least, it could make certain changes within a limited scope.

Jin Ling University hospital.

Yan Yan was wearing a white coat. She then handed a medical report to Lu Zhou.

"Your body is recovering well, but you should pay more attention in the future. You should avoid greasy and spicy food, and eat more vegetables and fruits to supplement your nutrition. As of now, 301 Hospital hasn't made a clear conclusion regarding your illness. No one can guarantee that a similar situation won't happen in the future."

Lu Zhou briefly looked through the medial report. He then folded it and stuffed it in his pocket.

Since the beginning of February, Doctor Yan had given him two physical examinations, and no obvious signs of abnormalities were found.

Honestly, even though Lu Zhou knew that their effort of trying to find a cause of his coma was useless, he still cooperated with their work.

After all, it was just a blood test and some urine tests, it wasn't a big deal.

"Okay okay, I understand." Lu Zhou tried to divert the conversation away from his health and said, "Speaking of which, when did you transfer to the university hospital?"

Yan Yan replied briefly, "The higher-ups arranged this. It will be more convenient if I work here. After all, I'm guessing you're not too happy with me following you all day."

She paused for a second before adding, "Of course, if you plan on traveling, I hope you can inform me beforehand, or at the very least, inform Wang Peng."

"Okay then, but I probably won't be traveling any time soon."

Suddenly, the hospital room door was pushed open. An old man, who was wearing a wool vest and looked like he was in his seventies, walked in.

Lu Zhou looked at the old man and felt that he looked familiar, but he wasn't able to recognize who the old man was.

He stared at him for a while and a name suddenly popped up in his mind.

"Academician Ren?" As Lu Zhou looked at this old man, he was surprised. "How come you're here?"

Academician Ren Changming!

Former Chinese designer of the lunar exploration project!

Lu Zhou hadn't seen this man in years. Compared to when he first saw him at the mathematical modeling competition, Lu Zhou could clearly tell that this academician had aged a lot.



Five years ago, he was still standing on the lecture hall podium talking with students, but he probably couldn't do that anymore.

Seeing how Lu Zhou still recognized him, Ren Changming smiled and said, "Chief Designer Lu Zhou, you still remember me?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "I met you just a few years ago, of course I remember you."

At that time, this old man wanted to recruit him to Beijing for aerospace engineering.

"It's been six years, quite a long time." Ren Changming sighed and spoke emotionally, "Time really flies. It's only been six years and my old body can't even lecture anymore."

Lu Zhou smiled gracefully. Ren Changming paused for a second before he said, "But I'm very pleased to see you. The student that was ecstatic about winning the Higher Education Society Cup was able to win a Nobel Prize."

"Those medals are kind of meaningless." Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly and changed the subject. He asked, "Speaking of which, what brings you to the university hospital?"

Ren Changming smiled and said, "I was strolling around the mathematics building and Old Tang said you were here, so I came over. I heard you were seriously ill a while ago, how is your recovery process?"

Lu Zhou said, "I wasn't exactly seriously ill, just in a coma for a few days. I'm feeling great now."

Yan Yan, who was sitting next to him, rolled her eyes.

Being in a coma isn't seriously ill?

Not only was the entire country worried about his health, but even the World Health Organization sent a team of experts to help him.

"Being in a coma for more than 20 days isn't seriously ill?" Ren Changming shook his head and said, "You're still young, but if you don't pay attention to your body, you'll regret it when you reach my age."

Some time ago, he was also sick and had to stay in a nursing home until now. If he weren't sick, he would have visited Lu Zhou when Lu Zhou was still in Beijing, as opposed to waiting until now.

Lu Zhou made a helpless expression.

"You didn't come to Jinling just to scold me, right?"

"I did come because of you, but not just to scold you." Ren Changming smiled and said, "I heard that we restarted the moon landing project, and your opinions are highly valued by the leadership team. As an ex-chief designed by the lunar project, I have to say thank you."

Even though the moon landing project had been constantly mentioned by the media, the actual launch mission wasn't on the timetable of Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center. The associated plans also hadn't been approved by the government.

However, this time was different. Academician Ren could clearly sense that the relevant plans for the moon landing project were quickly being launched and its national strategic importance was rising...

Even though he wasn't clear about the specific situation, a lot of people in the industry were spreading rumors, that this all had to do with Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou said, "There's no need to thank me, I'm just a scholar, putting forward my own opinion."

"It's fine if you don't think I should thank you, but I still have to give my thanks." Ren Changming smiled and said, "However, you were the one who brought up the idea of the moon landing. The project, astronaut training, and everything else are all being arranged. Are you not going to manage the project?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "I'm not in the aerospace industry, why would I manage the project? Whenever you need to build a nuclear fusion generator for the spacecraft, come find me."

Ren Changming: "But you can't just leave it alone, right? There's going to be a moon landing meeting in a few days. It's going to be held at the Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics. Not only will the academic community come, but so will the industry experts. Are you going to come?"

Lu Zhou: "What's the specific date?"

Ren Changming: "6th of March, if you want to come, I'll let the conference organizers send you an invitation letter."

Lu Zhou thought for a bit. He realized he probably wouldn't have any other plans, so he replied, "Okay then, I'll take some time out and attend the conference."

Chapter 587: Xiao Ai's New Body

Early March.

The industrial robots that Lu Zhou ordered from Zhao Zhongshu finally arrived.

Under the supervision of several security guards, two large trucks entered the campus of Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. The workers inside the trucks finished unloading the goods.

Zhao Zhongshu patted the meter high boxes and smiled.

"YuMi intelligent robot, produced by Switzerland ABB, able to achieve an accuracy of 0.02mm. The other six-axis general-purpose robots can reach an accuracy of 0.1mm. They can handle normal assembly, cleaning, and welding work. Even though I don't know what kind of work you plan on doing, anything that can be done by industrial robots, can be done by these robots as well."

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "I'll see for myself. Please start installing them now."

"Okay!"

Zhao Zhongshu immediately told the engineers and workers who accompanied him, to begin installing the equipment.

These pieces of large equipment were no air conditioner or TV; it was impossible for them to go through the elevator.

Especially the six-axis universal ABB robot, produced by ABB with a load capacity of 1.35t. The servo motor and reduction drive were integrated into one and couldn't be disassembled. The entire machine was completed on the assembly line.

Lu Zhou took into account the size of the debris. When he designed this laboratory, in addition to the normal elevator, there were also lifts specially designed for transporting cargo that weighed more than 1 ton. The elevator could be accessed from the garage of the Institute for Advanced Study.

However, this lift could only be accessed through the underground laboratory.

As Zhao Zhongshu stood next to the boxes and looked at the slowly descending lift, he curiously looked around.

"This is like a military defense building, is it easy to use?"

Lu Zhou simply said, "I'm more concerned about safety and confidentiality."

When Zhao Zhongshu heard the word confidentiality, he immediately stopped asking questions.

He didn't want to be involved with government secrets.

For a normal guy like him, it would be better to not know too much.

...

The third floor underground laboratory was probably one of the most secretive places in the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, second only to the servers used for the research backup data.

However, Lu Zhou wasn't worried about these people coming in.

He had obviously made some preparations.

However, even if someone were to see something, it wouldn't matter.

Even Lu Zhou wasn't entirely sure what the Debris No.3 was; he could only study the secrets bit by bit. If these people could tell that this device was unusual, they could quit their engineering and security jobs and directly work for Lu Zhou instead.

Being Lu Zhou's assistant was much better than working as an engineer at some unknown small factory.

As Zhao Zhongshu followed Lu Zhou into the laboratory, he didn't ask about the thing that was covered by a black cloth. He looked at the large open space in the middle of the room and said, "Where do you want to install it?"

Lu Zhou pointed toward the wall and said, "Just install it over there."

Zhao Zhongshu: "Where's the assembly line?"

Lu Zhou: "We don't have that here."

Zhao Zhongshu: "Okay then..."

*If you don't have an assembly line, what's the point of having robot arms?*

*Building sandcastles?*

Zhao Zhongshu decided not to think about it too much.

What his customers did was his customer's business, it had nothing to do with him. He just needed to put things in order.

However, due to a force of habit, he couldn't help but ask, "Do you want to buy a logistics robot?"

Lu Zhou: "Logistics robot?"

Zhao Zhongshu: "Yeah, like an automated guided vehicle. It's mainly used for carrying things. I don't see a conveyor belt here, so if a few industrial robots aren't enough, you'll still have to carry things by hand!"

When Lu Zhou heard Zhao Zhongshu's explanation, he suddenly had a moment of realization on his face.

He had totally neglected this part.

After all, he didn't plan on building anything here, he only needed Xiao Ai to give him a helping hand. But after listening to Factory Director Zhao, an automated guided vehicle seemed to be necessary.

Lu Zhou didn't speak yet. Suddenly, his phone that was in his pocket began to vibrate furiously.

Xiao Ai, who was connected to the drone in the corner of the laboratory, had heard their conversation.

*Well, this is quite an innovative way of asking me for stuff...*

Lu Zhou shook his head and smiled as he said, "Okay then... Do you need to place an order?"

"No need, we have them in stock at our factory." Zhao Zhongshu smiled and said, "If you are interested, I can send them over. They're not expensive, only 70,000 yuan per machine."

Lu Zhou: "Then send them... I'll buy four for now."

Zhao Zhongshu just received another 280,000 yuan in orders. Obviously, his face was full of joy as he said, "Okay, I'll make a call and tell them to send the machines from the factory."

Since there was no signal in the laboratory, he had to go outside to make the call.

After Zhao Zhongshu told the engineers how to install the equipment, he followed a security guard to the elevator and went back to the ground level. He also took the unboxing material with him.

Lu Zhou still stayed in the laboratory. He was watching the engineers install the equipment.

Ever since his engineering reached level 5, he found out that these engineering problems were extremely simple to learn.

Just by standing here and observing, he could basically remember all of the installation steps. He even felt like he could do their jobs.

Of course, improper installation of the equipment might affect the accuracy of the robots, so Lu Zhou decided not to intervene with the installation.

After the automated guided vehicles were shipped from the factory, the installation of the eight industrial robots was finally completed.

After the on-site engineers copied the operating system onto the control terminal, the group of people left the laboratory, leaving Lu Zhou inside the laboratory alone.

He looked at the wall with eight robotic arms and couldn't help but smirk.

All he had to do now was to connect the control terminal to Xiao Ai.

With help from these tools, his research work on the debris could be cut in half.

At the very least, he wouldn't have trouble physically turning the piece of debris upside down.

"What do you think, are you satisfied with this body?"

Lu Zhou didn't care if Xiao Ai was satisfied or not, he was quite satisfied himself.

His phone vibrated.

Lu Zhou knew Xiao Ai was sending him pictures again.

[I don't want to talk.jpg]

Lu Zhou coughed and said, "Okay, stop being upset. This is the most flexible body on the planet. If you want the Gundam Transformers type of robots you see in movies, there's nowhere to buy that."

Xiao Ai: [Master, can you buy something for me? (๐•̂•̂๐)]

Lu Zhou: "What thing?"

Xiao Ai didn't reply.

After a while, a bunch of links appeared.

Lu Zhou clicked on the link and saw that the shopping cart was full of hardware tools, aluminum alloy plates, screws, and some other parts.

Lu Zhou had a weird expression on his face.

*Is this thing...*

*Planning to build its own robot body?*

*Whatever...*

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and said, "Okay then, I'll buy them for you."

Xiao Ai: [Ok! Master, you're the best! (´▽`)]

*This thing is pretty easy to satisfy...*

Lu Zhou looked at the line of text and couldn't help but smile.

He didn't expect these simple words could melt his heart.

### **Chapter 588: The Shortcut for Overtaking**

Translator: Henyee Translations Editor: Henyee Translations

The control terminal for the industrial robots was connected to Xiao Ai's server. After Lu Zhou told Xiao Ai not to mess around with the underground laboratory without permission, he left the laboratory.

The list that Xiao Ai gave him didn't contain materials that were difficult to get; Lu Zhou didn't even have to search online for them.

After Lu Zhou placed an order in the name of the Institute of Computational Materials, he moved the materials to the underground laboratory.

Xiao Ai didn't even say thanks. It immediately began to start tinkering with its new toys.

Lu Zhou was standing on the side, and he watched Xiao Ai operate the six-axis mechanical arm skillfully. It opened the toolbox and pulled out a hammer, then the arm picked up an aluminum alloy plate that was sent from an automated guided vehicle(AGV). After that, it began to start banging on the aluminum plate with the hammer.

Lu Zhou looked at the mindless operation and didn't know what Xiao Ai was doing.



His eyebrows twitched when he heard the banging sound, but after a bit of thinking, he decided to let it be. After he told Xiao Ai not to break anything, he turned around and left the laboratory.

He had to go to a meeting in Beijing in a couple of days, and he didn't have time to bother with this.

Lu Zhou just hoped that when he was back, Xiao Ai wouldn't turn his laboratory upside down...

...

Morning of the 6th of March.

A red banner was hung at the entrance of the Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, welcoming the attendees of the moon landing seminar.

The organizers and participants of this conference all came from special backgrounds, so the topics discussed at the seminar was bound to be important. Security measurements had been taken; all the way from the school gate to the school auditorium.

Two young ladies curiously looked at the explosion-resistant police car parked on the asphalt road as they chatted while walking past the library.

"Is there someone important surveying the campus?"

"I don't think so, apparently it's a manned moon landing conference or something."

"Manned moon landing?" The tall girl was confused, and she asked, "When are we able to put people on the moon?"

"I don't know... Maybe because we can't, so that's why they're having a meeting about how to send someone up there."

Suddenly, they heard a gentle voice.

"Hello, how do I get to the school auditorium?"

The two ladies stopped walking.

The taller girl looked at the guy and asked, "Are you attending the conference?"

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Yeah, I guess so."

The taller girl pointed to the road on the right and said, "Go straight along this road and turn right at the second intersection."

Lu Zhou looked toward the direction she pointed and said thank you. The more petite girl suddenly asked, "Wait a second, are you... God Lu?!"

Lu Zhou was a little shocked at her excitement, and he awkwardly smiled.

"Just call me Lu Zhou or Professor Lu."

He didn't expect to meet his Weibo fans in real life, what a coincidence.

The petite girl stared at him excitedly and said, "The auditorium is quite far from here, you might not be able to find it. How about I take you there!"

Seeing how enthusiastic she was, Lu Zhou couldn't help but say, "There's no need for that, I can just walk there myself."

He thanked the two people and turned around, walking along the road the girl had previously pointed.

The petite girl looked at Lu Zhou walking away and said with emotion, "It's actually God Lu!"

Suddenly, she had a look of regret on her face. "Ah! I forgot to ask for his signature!"

The tall girl was speechless. "What's the point of having his signature?"

"Do you really need to ask this? It's so that I won't fail my classes!"

"..."

...

Lu Zhou walked along the road and quickly found the auditorium without much effort.

He presented his conference card and passed through the security check. He then walked into the venue.

He looked at the logos in the venue and saw the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation and the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, two major state-owned aerospace companies. He also saw the three giant tech companies—Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent—and various other private high-tech enterprises.

The once unpopular private aerospace companies were affected by Space-X. It became more popular than ever.

Even though aerospace-related technologies were basically monopolized by the two major state-owned enterprises, the promotion of military-civilian integration had become a national strategy over the past few years. The government had also created relevant policies to support this strategy.

For example, the first Chinese private space company, OneSpace, or Penguin's Satellogic, or the "Tmall international" communication satellite and "Candy Pot" mini space station that Alibaba was expected to launch. The aerospace exploration of private enterprises was gradually becoming more and more important.

For innovating technologies in an advanced field, the performance of private enterprises was indeed better than that of state-owned enterprises.

Because this was clearly the case, the higher-ups had been progressively freeing the aerospace market, allowing private enterprises to participate.

Lu Zhou was about to find a place to sit down when he suddenly heard someone shout his name.

Lu Zhou stopped his footsteps and looked behind him. He saw a man in his fifties wearing a suit while walking toward him with a smile.

Lu Zhou looked at him for a while and remembered his name.

Xu Yuanming, second-in-command at the Ministry of Science and Technology.

He talked to this person before, at the controllable fusion commendation ceremony.

“Secretary Xu?” Lu Zhou smiled and shook his hand as he said, “I haven’t seen you in a long time.”

“Haha, it’s only been two months.” Xu Yuanming enthusiastically shook Lu Zhou’s hand and smiled. He then said, “The conference is about to begin, let’s head on over there first.”

Lu Zhou walked with Xu Yuanming toward the auditorium.

Through talking with Secretary Xu, Lu Zhou gained a rudimentary understanding of the current Chinese aerospace situation.

The part he cared the most was the budget.

Overall, the situation didn’t look good.

At present, the Chinese Aerospace budget was only about US\$2 billion per year, and this was the budget aggregate of the Long March, Beidou, Sui, Shenzhou, Tianzhou, and other domestic rocket projects.

Back in the day, the total cost of the United States Apollo program reached a staggering US\$22.5 billion, accounting for 0.57% of the US GDP at that time! It wasn’t easy to calculate how much the US\$22.5 billion would be worth in today’s dollars, but back then, US\$22 billion would be more than enough to build a fleet of aircraft carriers.

This was how expensive aerospace programs were.

Not to mention, there were other underlying aspects that money couldn’t solve, like various technical problems...

Secretary Xu sat next to Lu Zhou.

After they sat down, he slowly said, “We are not inferior to the west in terms of small rockets, but there’s still a big gap between us and the United States and Russia, in terms of the carrying capacity for large rockets.

“The long-range orbit carrying capacity of the Long March 5 is 25 tons, only 18 tons for the synchronous orbit, and only about 8 tons for the earth-moon transfer orbit. The take-off weight of our Shenzhou 11 manned spacecraft is already 8 tons. Considering the fact that the moon landing spacecraft must be redesigned for the moon’s magnetic field environment, it must carry at least

an additional 3 tons of components and more than 5 tons of living space. The final weight of the entire moon landing spacecraft will exceed 20 tons.

“With our current rocket technology, it would be impossible to complete a manned moon landing.”

Lu Zhou nodded thoughtfully.

Rocket engines were a whole different field, it wasn't something that could be solved overnight.

He suddenly had an idea.

“Why don't you consider ion thrusters?”

“Ion thruster?” Xu Yuanming paused for a second and shook his head as he said, “The ion thruster barely has any power. It might be able to change the orbit path, but there's no way it can launch a spacecraft into orbit.”

Lu Zhou said, “We can build an electromagnetically accelerated land-based mass transmitter on the ground, and use that to send unmanned parts to low-Earth orbit. Then, we push it to the moon using a plasma engine.”

Because the controllable fusion power generator was already built, the cost of electricity wouldn't be too high. Even though this sounded like science fiction, it was technically possible.

After all, the United States was even thinking about using a cannon to shoot satellites into space...

Xu Yuanming: “Then how will astronauts go up?”

Lu Zhou: “They can get on board from the space station.”

Even though China didn't have the ability to send people on the moon, they could send people into the space station with no problem.

Xu Yuanming was shocked by this proposal. He went silent for a while before saying, “This sounds interesting, but it's also a bit too ridiculous.”

Lu Zhou smiled and didn't deny his claim.

“How can we achieve anything without some imagination?”

Xu Yuanming wasn't a professional engineer. He only knew a little about aerospace engineering due to his job. Therefore, he didn't discuss the technical side with Lu Zhou.

He paused for a second before he continued, "As of now, our strategic focus is still on the construction of cross-regional power grids and controllable fusion generators. The upper management thinks it's more important to be down to earth and focus on the current problems rather than the problems of a distant future.

"A lot of people have proposed to postpone the moon landing project until 2030. However, the leadership team values your opinion. Therefore, they decided to come up with a compromised plan."

Lu Zhou asked, "Compromised plan?"

Secretary Xu smirked and didn't explain anything. He looked at the stage and said, "The conference is about to begin, they will discuss the matter in a moment. Just keep your ears open."

Chapter 589: Strategic Finesse

The conference officially began.

The spokesperson of the conference stood on stage and read out the main contents of this seminar.

Lu Zhou didn't have to wait long before he heard the part he was curious about.

The first was regarding the funding; the country's annual aerospace project would increase from 14 billion yuan to 30 billion yuan.

This part wasn't really relevant for private sector companies. It was mainly for state-owned enterprises.

So far, even though private companies had mastered certain rocket technologies of their own, large thruster rockets that were used for moon

landing were beyond their capabilities. Even with the supporting government policies, private companies did not have the capital nor the guts to research large thruster rockets.

Because of this, when the spokesperson began to read out the funding policies, most of the people in the venue were uninterested.

However, when the spokesperson began to read out the second policy, everyone's spirit was lifted.

The policy was that, in order to promote the aerospace industry and moon landing project, companies that invested in the domestic aerospace industry would enjoy tax benefits.

Simply put, if a company spent 30 million yuan on satellites, as long as the party that undertook the launching of the satellite was a Chinese company and the launch mission was completed on Chinese soil, then the parent satellite company would receive 30 million yuan of tax relief.

For large tech companies like Penguin<sup>1</sup> and Alibaba, which paid hundreds of millions of taxes, this offer was quite tempting.

Their businesses had a need for satellites, and now, the state had almost completely waived their launch costs in the form of tax relief. Even though this wasn't a direct form of subsidy from the state, it was no different from a direct subsidy.

When the spokesperson was reading out the second policy, Lu Zhou could clearly see that all of the private and state-owned representatives were all filled with excitement, and they had a shining twinkle in their eyes.

No one even paid attention to the spokesperson reading the third policy.

Actually, the third policy really wasn't worthy of paying attention to. It was just a verbal agreement that had legal effect.

Which was, for the next ten years, enterprises, research units, or individuals who managed to establish a permanent or semi-permanent scientific research station on the moon would enjoy franchising rights for up to 70 years. At the same time, they would also receive tax reliefs in scientific research and other aerospace-related projects, such as tourism and space resource exploitation.

This was guaranteed by the state.

When the spokesperson finished reading the policy, there was a commotion in the venue.

Compared to the irrelevant first policy or the verbal promise that was the third policy, the large companies here were much more interested in the attractive second policy.

If the cost of launching satellites could be converted into a form of tax relief, then they could greatly reduce their cost of launching satellites.

Of course, the third policy wasn't entirely unattractive. Even though no one knew what would happen after ten years, even though it was just an empty promise, it would still bring them a considerable degree of benefits.

China was stepping forward into the aerospace field, and they were among the participants.

These few policies were enough to give the wealthy investors a world of imagination...

Just like these companies, Lu Zhou was equally surprised by the policies of the state.

However, he wasn't surprised by the extent of the policies. Instead, he was surprised at the other aspects...

"Does the state want to use aerospace to control the United States?"

When Xu Yuanming heard this, he was even more surprised than Lu Zhou.

"I thought you didn't do any research on the international political situation."

Lu Zhou looked at Xu Yuanming's look of surprise and coughed as he said, "There's a difference between researching and understanding. I'm not very interested in these things, but that doesn't mean I don't understand them."

Xu Yuanming smiled and said, "Is that so? But you're only half-correct. Even though the moon landing plan is a type of international strategy, we also have other expectations."



Xu Yuanming put on a more serious expression as he continued, "According to our intel, the United States, Russia, the European Union, and other countries have already established a technical route for developing their respective controllable fusion demonstration reactor projects. Their progress is still unknown, but like you said, as long as they are determined enough, they will catch up to us. It might take ten or twenty years.

"In order to maintain our advantage, the state has decided to fight on a new battlefield. At the same time, we will continue to maintain our advantage in fusion electric generator and cross-regional power grid projects."

Lu Zhou: "This new battlefield is space?"

Xu Yuanming nodded and said, "Correct."

Lu Zhou connected the dots and finally had an understanding of the state's intentions.

In a world of information technology, there was no such thing as a secret. With the foundation built from several industrial revolutions, the western countries wouldn't take long to catch up.

In order to maximize the national advantage, China obviously wanted to delay the time frame of other countries acquiring this fusion technology.

Making the opponent fight on two battlefields at once was undoubtedly a strategy that would produce this effect.

Just like Secretary Xu said, looking at it from a long-term perspective, it was not necessary to board the moon. The moon landing project wasn't urgent.

The real purpose of this project wasn't to allow China to set footprints on the moon. Instead, it was to control the technological research focus of western countries.

Putting it this way, this was quite the stratagem.

By that time, the second generation fusion project would also be underway, putting even more pressure on other countries.

Lu Zhou finally understood why his Eastern Research Centers Association idea and his plan on a second-generation controllable fusion energy technology was able to be implemented so quickly by the higher-ups...

The higher-ups were probably drawing up this plan while he was still in the hospital.

*Smart.*

*Really smart...*

Even though Lu Zhou felt like he was being used, he couldn't help but admire the sophistication of this plan.

Of course, even though this trick was clever, achieving the expectations wouldn't be easy.

China's current rocket launching technology was even worse than the United States and the Soviet Union's technology back in the 1960s. Even though NASA's annual budget was reduced, catching up to America was no easy feat.

To put it bluntly, even if China wanted to start a space race and pave the way for the second-generation fusion technology, NASA might pretend to go to war with China, but they might not view China as a scary opponent.

*So...*

*China needs a strong academic leader to represent the space program.*

Lu Zhou didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

*Are they planning on making me lead this project?*

*I really want to put someone on the moon, but I don't want to be involved in a political fight...*

Lu Zhou couldn't help but ask, "You guys aren't going to make me the chief designer of the space project, right?"

"Um... It depends on you. Even though I think it is appropriate for you to take this position, but if you really don't have the time," Xu Yuanming smiled slightly and said, "you can at least be a chief consultant?"

Lu Zhou sighed and said, "I don't really mind, but I'm afraid I won't be able to do much. Also, if you plan on publishing some misleading theses in my name, then I'm afraid I can't help you."

As a scholar, he had a certain moral barometer.

He would spare no effort to fight for the truth that he believed in. Even if he was wrong, it would be an honest mistake. Similarly, he didn't have the conscience to lie for things he was against.

If a scholar did not seek for the truth, then was he really a scholar?

That would be more like a political puppet...

Xu Yuanming smiled and said, "Rest assured, we will not make any public statements in your name. Your academic reputation is our honor and pride, and this will never change."

"Okay then, if you think it's appropriate, I will be the chief consultant." Lu Zhou joked, "Since I'm the chief consultant, are you going to consider the mass driver I just talked about?"

Xu Yuanming coughed and said, "Um... Even if I agree with you, I can't change anything. Have you heard about our state's orbit facilities?"

Lu Zhou: "I've heard a bit about them."

"There is not much publicity about this in the media. In fact, the mass driver you talked about is similar to the country's orbital facilities. The project passed a feasibility demonstration test a while ago, but guess what was the problem?"

Lu Zhou: "Funding approval?"

"Correct, this project was cut." Xu Yuanming nodded and said, "Its estimated budget was 2 trillion yuan. And that's just the estimate, god knows how much it will actually cost... Do you think it's worth it?"

As expected, it was stuck on the funding approval stage.

*This two trillion yuan...*

*Even with an academician vouching for this project, it would be extremely difficult to receive approval.*

*The 2018 and 2019 27 high-speed railway projects only added up to one trillion.*

*If this two trillion is spent on railways, god knows how insane our infrastructure would be...*

## **Chapter 590: Chief Consultant of the Moon Project**

Translator: Henyee Translations Editor: Henyee Translations

There was a huge demand for energy in China, but there wasn't a demand for aerospace.

Even if the success of the controllable fusion project could save the country more than 2 trillion yuan per year, this money wouldn't be placed into aerospace projects.

Where the money would be spent and what kind of effects it would bring, these all had to go through a rigorous decision-making process.

Especially with rocket recycling technology, space launching costs were not what they used to be.

Taking the launch of a low-Earth orbit satellite as an example, Space-X's Falcon rocket was able to achieve a price of US\$1,141 per kilogram. Compared this to NASA's design of the Delta 4 rocket in the 1990s, which had a cost of US\$11,660 per kilogram. The cost had been cut by nearly ten times.

The launching cost of the Chinese quick-reaction Kuaizhou rocket, which was the most commercially advantageous rocket in the world, had dropped from US\$10,000 per kilogram to about US\$5,000 per kilogram.

If a manned mission to the moon required a spacecraft with a mass of around 50 tons to be sent into low-Earth orbit, ignore the fact that the spacecraft wasn't a satellite and couldn't be separated into ten different launches, the launch cost could theoretically be restricted to around US\$250.

Therefore, if they only needed to go to the moon, there was no point in inventing a feasible mass driver.

However, Lu Zhou didn't only want to send people to the moon and erect a flag. He wanted to establish a permanent scientific research station on the moon... or even a resource mining base.

Due to this long-term goal, it was quite necessary to find a theoretical lower-cost way to transfer mass into low-Earth orbit.

If people kept using chemically powered rockets, when the number of launches reached the five-figure range, space exploration would transform from a scientific research field to an industrial field. The costs would be astronomical, and there would be environmental consequences.

Rocket fuel, which was made out of dinitrogen tetroxide and dimethylhydrazine, was indeed poisonous.

However, Lu Zhou also knew very well that it would be impossible to convince the higher-ups of this trillion-dollar project, especially since there wasn't an urgent need for aerospace projects.

However, he believed that once he produced enough results, his case would be more convincing.

The conference was divided into two parts. There was an intermission announced at noon. After everyone ate a simple lunch, they would continue the conference at half-past one.

The afternoon part of the conference was mainly centered around researchers and engineers. The content of the discussion was more focused on the technical side.

During the meeting, representatives from major research units spoke enthusiastically and put forward their own viewpoints.

In addition to the Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation's concept of the Long March 9 rocket, many other people had also come up with interesting technical ideas.

For example, high-level researchers at the Space Science and Applied Research Center of the Chinese Academy of Sciences showed a concept model of the mass drive ion thruster. The acceleration technology concept was different from Lu Zhou's idea, but nevertheless, it was still a very interesting idea.

Lu Zhou didn't talk a lot at this conference; he only briefly spoke about his idea of the Hall-effect thruster.

Some of this was purely his own opinion, and some were inspirations that he managed to glean while talking to researchers of the AF-MPD project team during his time as a consultant at the PPPL.

He thought his opinion was already sci-fi and experimental. He did not expect that some people's opinions were even more sci-fi than his. Someone even brought up the concept of an EM Drive.

In fact, EM Drive wasn't entirely fictional. NASA had done research in this area, and these theses could even be found on arXiv.

After all, no one had any idea what was possible in the future. Even the most outstanding scholar couldn't make any absolute assertions of the future, even for things that might seem impossible.

But in any case, this EM Drive technology was something in the distant future; it didn't belong in this conference.

Everyone laughed at the concept and didn't pay too much attention to it.

There wasn't any prohibition in a seminar like this. It was a free-for-all. Anyone could say anything, there wasn't anyone that stood against a technical route.

As for which technical route would be implemented, that would depend on the result.

During the middle of the year, there would be a meeting to discuss which heavy-duty spacecraft would be used for the moon landing plan.

Whether it was a rocket or a space shuttle, anyone that could deliver at least 30 tons of payload from the earth to the moon and safely come back, had the hope of winning the bid.

The most promising spacecraft seemed to be the Long March 9.

However, the earliest possible flight time would be in 2028. Even without any delays, that was eight years away.

The state might wish to complete the manned mission to the moon within five years, in order to achieve the strategic goal of putting pressure on the United

States and Europe. Therefore, the Long March 9, which was still stuck in the design stage, would probably miss the battle.

Any other company that could create a low-cost solution in a short time frame would be a competitive bidder.

As for whether Lu Zhou should join in on this moon landing party...

He hadn't made up his mind yet.

He was only in the research stage of ion thrusters. Even if he could reverse engineer the debris, he might not be able to use it on Earth's atmospheric environment.

What if this piece of debris was some kind of component on a space station? It might not be able to break through Earth's atmosphere and launch into orbit.

This was all possible.

In short, before he was certain of his abilities to achieve this technology, he would not make any promises and only express his viewpoints. As for the bidding war, he probably wouldn't participate...

After the conference ended, Lu Zhou walked out of the venue.

He suddenly discovered that there was a huge crowd surrounding the venue.

Looking at the cameras and microphones, these people were undoubtedly reporters.

When the representatives from Penguin and Alibaba stepped out of the venue, the reporters swarmed like a group of sharks that smelled blood.

When Lu Zhou looked at these reporters, he couldn't help but flinch. Just as he felt lucky enough not to be surrounded by reporters, suddenly, a reporter noticed him and quickly ran toward him.

Even though Wang Peng was standing in front of him, the microphone was still shoved in his face.

"Professor Lu, hello, we are reporters from the CTV technology channel. I heard you were the one who proposed the manned moon landing project?"

“Professor Lu, hello, we are reporters from the Penguin technology channel, there are rumors online that China will soon achieve space travel, what do you think?”

“Rumors say that you are the chief designer of the aerospace project, is this true?”

Lu Zhou had a headache from all of the questions, but he couldn’t find a way to escape. He quickly grabbed the closest microphone and angrily said, “It’s not true.”

Reporter: “Uh... then, may I ask...”

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and said, “The launch of the manned moon project isn’t entirely due to my suggestion, it’s also because the country has a strategic demand. As for the chief designer of the project, I don’t know where you heard this rumor, but as far as I know, the relevant departments have only invited me as a chief consultant.”

Secretary Xu, who was standing next to him, smiled and said, “Chief consultant.”

Chief consultant!

These two short words completely shocked the reporters...

Chapter 591: Prologue of the Space Race

Lu Zhou was sitting in a restaurant near the Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics. He looked at his phone while waiting for his food to arrive, and he had a somewhat unnatural look on his face.

[Shocked! Professor Lu, the chief designer of the controllable fusion project, is in charge of the moon mission?!]

[Lu Zhou: Our next journey is in the sea of stars!]

[Lu Zhou accidentally revealed secrets!]



[Chief Designer Lu said that the moon landing will be for him?!]

Lu Zhou: “???”

*Didn't I tell them I'm not the chief designer?*

*Do these reporters not listen to people speak?*

Xu Yuanming noticed Lu Zhou's stiff face and smiled as he said, “Our journalists are optimistic, it's good.”

*Positive energy rumors are good, right?*

Lu Zhou put down his phone and looked at the braised pork and beans on the table. He sighed and said, “You're really a troublemaker.”

“Let's stop talking, eat. This pork won't taste as good when it's cold.” Xu Yuanming pretended like he didn't hear anything. He picked up the chopsticks and smiled as he said, “This place has good food. I often came here when I was still studying here. It's been so many years, but the flavor hasn't changed.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

*This change of topic is too abrupt.*

*However, since he is the one treating me to this meal, I'll let it go...*

After Lu Zhou finished dinner, he bid farewell to Xu Yuanming. He then got in his car.

“Send me to the train station.”

Wang Peng was driving the car, and he asked, “We're going back to Jinling?”

Lu Zhou: “Yeah, I've been away from the laboratory for too long, I'm worried.”

Wang Peng smiled and said, “Aren't you on a holiday? Why are you so busy?”

Lu Zhou smiled and didn't say anything.

He obviously wouldn't say that he was not worried about some experiment and that he was actually worried about an artificial retard playing around with its new toy in his laboratory.

Of course, even if it wasn't for Xiao Ai's shenanigans, it was time for him to go back.

The secrets of Debris No.3 were still sitting there, waiting for him to explore.

If it went well, it might become the key to solving the manned moon landing project...

Lu Zhou arrived at the train station and got on the next train from Beijing to Jinling. After a couple of hours, he got off at the Jinling Southern train station.

Lu Zhou sat in his black car with the erected red flag. He didn't ask Wang Peng to send him home. Instead, he went to the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Because a lot of the experiments needed to be monitored 24/7, the institute never closed its doors.

After Lu Zhou told Wang Peng to head off, he walked into the main institute building alone. He walked past the metal alloy door at the end of the second floor underground sample library and headed toward the third floor underground laboratory.

When he walked into the laboratory, his entire body froze.

*The f\*ck?*

*Bumblebee?*

...

After the Chinese manned moon landing project was reignited, not only did the three government policies cause a sensation in the domestic media, but it also attracted a lot of attention around the world.

In particular, the British Daily Mail reported the news with a rather intriguing headline.

[China Wants to Go on the Moon! Is This a Prologue for a New Space Race?!]

Inside the Tri Alpha company building...

Benderbauer sat in the office of the chief technology officer. He read the newspaper in his hand and frowned.

After a while, he murmured, "This isn't good news."

"They're still a long way from a second-generation controllable fusion, you don't have to worry at all."

That was Professor Burton Richter, particle physics expert at Stanford University in Palo Alto. In addition to his role as a professor, he was also a member of the advisory board of the Tri Alpha company as well as the winner of the 1976 Nobel Prize for Physics.

He was well informed of this matter. However, he didn't read it from the Daily Mail.

Just a few hours ago, China announced a set of specific measures to implement the manned moon mission. China announced its plan to establish a permanent scientific research station on the moon in order to explore the helium-3 reserves on the moon.

It was widely speculated that this was paving the way for the second generation of controllable fusion technology. However, Professor Richter knew how difficult it was to achieve helium-3 fusion. He knew that these speculations regarding China were nothing but bragging.

"No, I'm not worried about the second generation controllable fusion reactor." Benderbauer put down the newspaper in his hand and leaned back against his chair. He pinched his forehead and said, "I'm worried about the Congressional Budget Office..."

After China announced the successful ignition of the STAR-2 demonstration reactor at the beginning of the year, the United States also quickly launched its own national controllable fusion project. A giant demonstration reactor was going to be built between Los Angeles and San Francisco. Just for the first phase of the project, the US government had allocated tens of billions of dollars in funding.

For this newly launched demonstration reactor project, Tri Alpha had successfully defeated its competitor, General Atomics, and obtained orders for

the reactor heating parts. This was due to their excellent heating performance of their field-reversed configuration.

If everything went well, this contract would bring in hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue for his company. This would bring him more than US\$100 million in market capitalization growth on the Nasdaq.

However, now that China suddenly announced its moon landing project, and it even announced a strategy for the exploration of the moon's resources, this would undoubtedly impact the demonstration reactor project in California.

After all, there was a limitation to scientific research funding. There wasn't a single country on Earth that could conduct two large-scale scientific research projects without compromising.

The United States didn't want to fall behind, both in terms of controllable fusion and in terms of space exploration.

It was foreseeable that once the United States was drawn into this space race, Congress would almost certainly re-examine the budgets for the existing research projects. To ensure NASA had plenty of resources, they might cut down their funding on some less urgent projects.

For example, they might cut down on the costs of plasma heating components...

The demonstration reactor project might even be postponed.

This was obviously bad news for Benderbauer.

He could imagine the people of NASA cheering once their budget was increased.

NASA didn't have to worry about its budget anymore. The country on the other side of the Pacific Ocean gave them an excuse for more funding.

While Benderbauer was flipping through the newspaper, his hands suddenly froze.

His eyes locked onto Lu Zhou's interview in the newspaper.

"Plasma engine..."

He muttered something and gradually became excited.

“Plasma engine! That’s it!”

Benderbauer threw away the newspaper and stood up from his office chair. He paced around his office as he said excitedly, “Ion thruster, controllable fusion, it works perfectly! We can combine these two projects together!”

At the very least, he would be able to create a PowerPoint presentation to convince people.

“Sir, I’m not discouraging you but...” Burton Richter looked at him with a weird expression and said, “We haven’t even solved the controllable fusion problem, yet you’re planning on miniaturizing a reactor and using it as a plasma thruster.”

Benderbauer stopped and looked at Professor Richter.

“My dear Professor Richter, of course I know you have to make the cake before you can eat it.

“But before we make the cake, we have to make people believe that we can do it!

“This is the most important thing!”

Link Chapter 592 Here:

Chapter 593: Clear Technical Route

Institute for Advanced Study, dean’s office.

When Lu Zhou saw Yang Xu walk through the door, he stopped writing and looked at him.

“Is the analysis result ready?”

Yang Xu took out a USB from his pocket and placed it on the desk. “The data is inside.”

Lu Zhou said, "What about the original copy?"

Yang Xu: "It's in the backup database... Is there a problem?"

Lu Zhou: "Delete it."

Yang Xu paused for a second. He didn't ask why, he only nodded.

"Okay."

After Lu Zhou's office door was closed, he plugged in his USB into the laptop and opened the folder. He began to carefully examine each picture.

After he came out of the underground laboratory yesterday morning, he took a few samples from the circular double-layer structure between the fuel tank and the heat exchanger. He gave it to Yang Xu for him to do an infrared spectrum characteristic peak analysis and to take some transmission electron microscope images.

Looking at the pictures alone, it seemed like his speculation was correct.

Since the fragmented nano-ceramic composite material had been embrittled, it was very difficult to calculate the original structural characteristics. However, looking at the internal carbon residue, one could conclude that it was an anisotropic heat-resistant composite material that had high-temperature resistant properties.

Through the images taken by the transmission electron microscope for the inner layer material samples, he could clearly see that there were hydrogen residues inside several samples.

As far as Lu Zhou was concerned, there were two possible scenarios that could cause something like this.

One scenario was that the hydrogen atoms came from the material neutron decay.

The other scenario was that a high-energy proton beam broke through the inner wall of the material and remained inside the material.

The hydrogen particles and the swelling inside the material were basically distributed in a concentrated area. By comparing the penetration force of neutron and the proton beam, Lu Zhou could basically infer that a large

probability of the swelling of this structure was mainly caused by the proton beam.

In this case, the debris of the Hall-effect thruster lying in his underground laboratory was 90% likely to be using nuclear fusion energy.

The power came from the fusion reaction between protons and helium-3!

“It is fusion batteries!”

Lu Zhou’s speculation was confirmed. He slowly looked at the images on the screen and was filled with excitement.

Not only that, but he could use the limited clues to roughly deduce the technical route of this gadget.

For example, looking at the closed structure and the damage to the inner wall of the reactor, the small fusion reactor was probably disposable.

Which meant that the fuel was directly integrated into the nuclear core and that the entire core was directly discarded after one use.

This might sound a bit wasteful, but in fact, this was the most feasible approach.

If one didn’t care about the pounding high-energy proton beams, the small amount of neutron-induced radiation damage to the materials, and the long-term economic benefits, a lot of complex systems like the liquid lithium neutron recovery system could be omitted.

Not only would this reduce the difficulty of the project, but it would also save a lot of space.

After all, every square inch on the spacecraft was valuable space.

As for shielding materials, heating components, heat exchanger systems, and the nuclear core monitoring system, these expensive components could be integrated into the engine itself, serving as the “battery section” of the nuclear core.

Thinking about it this way, the engineering difficulty of this one-time fusion power supply shouldn’t be too high or ridiculous...

Of course, this concept wasn't ridiculous if one compared it to a second-generation controllable fusion technology. It was only ridiculous when compared to the current technology available.

If someone designed a second-generation controllable fusion reactor with the one-time-use disposable concept in mind, the engineering difficulty wouldn't be very high. It might even be easier than the STAR-2 demonstration reactor. However, the cost of generating the electricity would be astronomically high.

It would be like using aerospace fuel to power a civilian's house...

"The entire design concept is to integrate the fuel inside the nuclear core and control the power of the engine by controlling the volume of the intermediate reaction chamber and the fuel consumption rate through the two-layer structure... So the nuclear core shouldn't undergo constant ignition. Instead, it should undergo fast ignition.

"But the fusion battery on the Hall-effect thruster debris is probably not done by magnetic confinement, it should be done by way of another technical route."

Even though he found a structure similar to a superconducting magnet on the Hall-effect thruster debris, the amount was obviously not enough to confine hundreds of millions of degrees of high-temperature plasma. Moreover, in space, the superconducting magnet would be in contact with the ionization chamber, and its real function was probably to provide an alternating magnetic field for the Hall propulsion unit...

*So, is this inertial confinement fusion?*

Lu Zhou used a pen to draw on the draft paper. His eyes began to lit up.

*Fast ignition, inertial confinement fusion...*

*The technical route is clear to me now!*

He restrained the excitement in his heart and scrunched the paper into a ball. He then stuffed the paper ball into his pocket. He took out his phone and quickly dialed a number.

It rang three times. When it was connected, he heard Secretary Feng's voice.



“Hello?”

Lu Zhou said, “It’s me.”

Feng Shuqing smiled and said, “Professor Lu, what’s up now?”

Lu Zhou: “How is the restructuring of the STAR-2 demonstration reactor team?”

After Feng Shuqing heard this question, he replied, “The staff reallocation, inventory check, and property rights allocation has basically been completed. The relevant documents have been submitted to the SASAC<sup>1</sup>. I’ll wait for them to inspect the situation. If there are no big problems, it’ll take a week at most for East Asia Energy to split from the STAR-2 project team.”

Feng Shuqing smiled and said, “Are you ready to get in the car? If you aren’t, we can wait for a few days.”

*Get in the car?*

Lu Zhou paused for a second. He didn’t understand what Feng Shuqing was talking about.

However, this was obviously not the time to ponder about this, so he ignored it and continued to speak.

“Make sure to look over the operations at East Asia Energy, just follow the higher-ups’ instructions. The reason I called you today is to talk about something else. I have a new research project in mind. I need to transfer some people from the STAR-2 project.”

Feng Shuqing didn’t ask questions. He merely said, “Okay, give me their names.”

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and said, “It might be a long list. It’ll be difficult to communicate through the phone. I’ll make a name list and send it to your email.”

Feng Shuqing paused for a second.

“How many people do you need?”

Lu Zhou: “Not a lot, around ten.”

*You think that's not a lot?*

Feng Shuqing smiled and cautiously asked, "Can I ask what project is it?"

Lu Zhou thought for a bit before he replied, "It's regarding the miniaturization of controllable fusion."

Feng Shuqing: "???"

### **Chapter 594: To Go or Not to Go?**

Translator: Henyee Translations Editor: Henyee Translations

Miniaturization of controllable fusion?

WTF?

Feng Shuqing nearly dropped the phone in his hand.

The demonstration reactor was just recently released, and he's already thinking about making a miniature version of it?

Even though he wasn't in the nuclear fusion field, he was still a student from Shuimu University. Not to mention, he had worked at the Ministry of Science and Technology for many years and was also responsible for the restructuring of the STAR demonstration reactor project team. He had a certain understanding of the nuclear fusion research.

Lu Zhou noticed that the phone went silent. He paused for a second before asking, "Is there a problem?"

"Nothing... Just send the name list to my work email." Feng Shuqing hesitated for a bit before saying, "Miniaturization of controllable fusion... Isn't it a bit early to do this? I think a second-generation controllable fusion is more reliable."

Scientific research was difficult.

Even though he knew Lu Zhou was nutty, he still couldn't help but warn Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou immediately knew what he was thinking about, but he was too lazy to explain in detail, so he briefly explained, "Nuclear batteries are also considered to be a small fusion reactor, but there's quite a difference between nuclear batteries and a real controllable fusion reactor. If you don't understand the difference, you can think of it as the fission reactor and a radioisotope battery. I'm well aware of my research capabilities, so you don't have to worry about it."

His reply was quite impolite.

However, since Lu Zhou spoke in such a confident manner, Feng Shuqing felt a lot more comfortable.

There were many scholars in the Ministry of Science and Technology, and they spoke in roughly the same manner. They were just too lazy to explain things in detail to laymen.

However, one thing for sure was that there were two possible scenarios for these scholars. There was a 20% chance that they would be stuck in a research pit, and the other 80% was the chance of success.

Feng Shuqing felt like Lu Zhou wasn't the type of person to be stuck in a research pit.

Therefore, it had to be the latter...

Lu Zhou didn't really care about Secretary Feng's opinions.

The energy was the main problem of the Hall-effect thruster. If Lu Zhou didn't want to reduce the thrust power, the only option was to increase the energy.

After Lu Zhou hung up the call, he made a name list on his computer and sent it to Feng Shuqing's email.

After that, he quit his browser and opened a blank Word document. He sat in front of his computer while contemplating for a while. He then placed his hands on the keyboard and began to type.

The staff problem was easy to solve; he just had to transfer researchers and engineers from the STAR-2 project team.

The demonstration reactor project trained a large number of experts in plasma physics and controllable fusion. All he had to do was to look through the STAR-2 demonstration reactor project's staff list, and he would easily find anyone that he would need.

With help from these researchers, his research on the fusion battery would become much more feasible.

Of course, since controllable fusion was now a sensitive technology, he had to report this to the government.

Even though fusion batteries were completely different from fusion reactors, there was a lot of overlapping technology.

Especially if he decided to go the route of inertial confinement fusion. It was very likely that he would use laser ignition. Not only could the laser ignition be used for plasma research, but it could also be used for nuclear testing.

Due to its involvement in many sensitive areas, Lu Zhou couldn't conduct this research without cooperation from the state.

However, getting cooperation from the state was an easy thing for him.

He looked at the title on the screen and smirked.

[Application Prospects and Technical Feasibility of Controllable Fusion Miniaturization Technology in the Aerospace Field]

He believed that once he handed in this thesis proposal, he would definitely be able to establish this project...

...

Haizhou.

Demonstration reactor site.

Sheng Xianfu was sitting in his office, filling out forms at his desk.

Since the STAR-2 demonstration reactor project was successfully completed and the commendation conference was over, his life had been quite enjoyable, to say the least.

Not only did the success of the demonstration ignition give him a shiny medal, but it also gave him respect and status.

According to the restructuring arrangements of the project team, the STAR Institute would probably be merged with the East Asia Energy Company, and Secretary Feng, who was responsible for the restructuring work, gave him two options.

One was to go into the company, which was, to stay in the newly established East Asia Energy as the chief engineer and vice president of the technology department.

The other option was to return to the Southwestern Institute of Physics, where he would serve as the director and had full control of the institute.

Sheng Xianfu thought about this for a long time.

Due to the future development prospects of East Asia Energy, the company would definitely have higher career potential. Once he received enough qualifications, he could transfer to the parent company and become the vice president of the whole company. His level would be equivalent to oil giants.

Going to the Southwestern Institute of Physics and becoming the director would give him short term power and status, but the development space was much smaller. Even if he became an academician in the future, it wouldn't be better than to stay in the corporate world.

If this were an average person making this decision, most of them would choose the former.

However, after some contemplating, Sheng Xianfu chose the latter.

The reason was simple.

Compared to working in a corporate environment, he much preferred to work in a research institute. Being a scholar wasn't his career, it was his life.

Also, back then, he quit his job at the Southwestern Institute of Physics to work on the STAR-2 project, and a lot of people gave him dirty looks because of this.

Even though no one was insulting him in front of him, he was still well aware of this. The choice that he made in the past was infamous among his ex-colleagues.

If he returned now as the director, it would probably make a lot of people shut their mouths.

When Sheng Xianfu thought about the scene, he couldn't help but smirk.

It was true, he wanted to brag.

After all, bragging was part of being a human being.

Even though he was still sitting in this office, his mind was thousands of kilometers away, all the way in Rongcheng.

Suddenly, he heard knocking sounds from his office door, and this interrupted his train of thought.

Sheng Xianfu put down the pen in his hand and looked at the door.

"Come in."

The office door opened, and a stranger walked in.

Judging from this guy's posture and movement, he didn't look like a researcher. Instead, he looked more like one of the soldiers who were guarding the site.

Sheng Xianfu looked at the stranger and paused for a second. He then asked, "Who are you?"

The man made a brief self-introduction.

"I'm from the State Administration for National Defense."

From the State Administration for National Defense?

Sheng Xianfu paused for a second and said, "Do you need anything from me?"

The man said, "Professor Lu is looking for you."

Sheng Xianfu: "Is there a project?"

"Yes."

Sheng Xianfu was baffled at this short-sentence speaking guy. He smiled and said, "Can you tell me what the project is?"

The man shook his head and said, "The research project is confidential. I cannot disclose any specific content. You just need to tell me if you're going or not."

"So I have a choice?"

"Of course."

Sheng Xianfu went into deep thought.

On one hand, he could serve as the director of the Southwestern Institute of Physics. On the other hand, he could work for Professor Lu in scientific research... He didn't even know what the specific project was.

Should I go or not?

He was in a dilemma...

Chapter 595: Let Me Read It Again

Beijing, in a conference room.

There were a lot of people sitting in this conference room. There were officials from the Ministry of Science and Technology, military officers with badges on their chests, academicians from the Academy of Engineering, as well as experts from the aerospace field.

An inch-thick conference material was handed to each person.

The cover of the conference material was a title.

## [Application Prospects and Technical Feasibility of Controllable Fusion Miniaturization Technology in the Aerospace Field]

This thesis contained a certain amount of information regarding the application of the miniaturized controllable fusion reactor as well as the Hall-effect thruster in the aerospace field. It also contained rigorous calculations, which demonstrated its feasibility possibility.

However, the argument for its feasibility was subjective.

Not to mention, this was a highly-advanced concept...

“Complete gibberish!”

Academician Wu slammed the thesis in his hand and shook his head. He said impolitely, “Just looking at the specific impulse alone, the ion thruster is indeed much stronger than the chemical thruster. However, it isn’t without weakness!”

“Ignoring everything else, even the VX-200SS ion engine that we completed the trial run for last year can only achieve 200KW, and total thrust is only 5N! Even if we multiply this by a hundred times, a thousand times, there would be no way we could use this power to send a spacecraft to low-Earth orbit! We can’t even send an egg to space with this power!”

“I think the person that wrote this thesis is mental!”

“Pigs will start flying before this thing can send satellites to outer space!”

When Old Wu was speaking, there was an awkward atmosphere in the conference room.

However, this was just how elderly scientists were.

But did he really have to compare it to...

Pigs flying?

The leadership team from the Ministry of Science and Technology couldn’t take it anymore, but the president didn’t seem to mind. He thoughtfully said, “Is it not solvable?”

Academician Wu shook his head and said, “Unsolvable!”



As for the miniaturization of controllable fusion, he wasn't well versed in the field, so he didn't want to comment too much.

No one knew what kind of technology the future would bring.

In the beginning, the nuclear fission batteries were the size of a house, no one had hopes of putting it on a spacecraft.

However, in just a few years, around the 1970s, the miniaturization problem was solved. As of now, the smallest battery was as small as a coin<sup>1</sup>.

However, the demonstration reactor at Haizhou was only three months old. Planning to put the reactor on a spacecraft now was kind of laughable.

When Ren Changming heard this thesis being criticized, he had an awkward look on his face, and he tried to diffuse the situation.

"The ideas presented in this thesis are indeed somewhat optimistic. I agree that it is really difficult to achieve the technology mentioned in this thesis, but I don't think it's impossible, right?"

"You've been away from scientific research for a long time. I'm not going to argue with a layman." Academician Wu waved his hand and pointed at the thesis as he said, "Who wrote this thesis? Find the person, I'm going to have a conversation with them!"

Ren Changming didn't know what to do.

The Ministry of Science and Technology leadership team exchanged glances with Xu Yuanming, who coughed and said, "Chief Designer Lu wrote it."

The conference room went silent for a second.

The silence was scary.

Old Wu had an awkward look on his face, and he picked up the thesis again.

"Let me read it again."

After a while, he had a moment of realization. He began to mutter about the miniaturization of controllable fusion.

“Umm, I seemed to have missed a few points. The thing with ion thrusters is that the thrust strength depends on the power. Traditional batteries cannot provide this power, electricity is a bottleneck. But with fusion batteries, it might be possible, I don’t know...”

Xu Yuanming: “...”

Everyone in the conference room: “...”

Every proposed project was subject to be reviewed by an expert team, even if the proposer was a Nobel Prize winner and Ling Yun medalist.

However, it was difficult to find someone to review a proposal written by an academic big name like Lu Zhou.

The boundaries and levels within the academic community were obvious. No one wanted to publicly comment on someone that had a higher academic status and prestige than themselves.

Because they were worried that this would happen, they intentionally removed Lu Zhou’s name from the thesis.

However, no one expected that Academician Wu, former chief designer of the lunar exploration project, suddenly put his head down after hearing Professor Lu’s name.

However, judging from his previous reaction, this technology was indeed quite difficult to achieve.

Otherwise, he wouldn’t have had such a strong reaction.

Suddenly, a man with an epaulet on his shoulder spoke calmly.

“Can I give my opinion?”

President: “Please do.”

The man paused for a second before he said, “I don’t know a lot about the aerospace industry, so I won’t comment on that side. However, even if we don’t consider the Hall-effect thruster and the ion thruster, miniaturization of controllable fusion is quite necessary.

“According to this thesis, if controllable fusion miniaturization technology can really be invented, its application might not only be in the aerospace field, it can also be applied in our submarines or even our aircraft carriers.”

A lot of the people sitting around the table had a serious look on their faces.

The president went silent for a while and then nodded. Visit on our

“You’re right, regardless of whether or not this technology can be achieved, regardless of its aerospace applications, this project is worth attempting.”

He paused for a second and picked up a fountain pen. He slowly wrote on the meeting document.

“Project approved.”

He thought for a bit and felt like it wasn’t enough, so he wrote another line.

“All relevant departments must fully cooperate.”

The president looked at these two sentences and nodded with satisfaction.

However, he suddenly remembered something, so he spoke.

“Oh yeah, ask Professor Lu, if he doesn’t mind, we should publish this thesis.”

He smiled and said, “We’ve already thrown a smoke bomb at America, we should let them know we’re getting to work.”

...

Jin Ling University.

Lecture hall No.1.

After the class bell rang, Lu Zhou closed the textbook in his hand and turned around before walking out of the classroom.

Ever since his number theory class began, his lectures had been completely filled with students. Not only were the undergraduate students from other classes attending this class, but some master’s students, doctoral students, and even mathematics professors occasionally came to listen.

As for Lu Zhou, he loved to talk about problems with these students.

Thinking about simple problems was a unique way for him to relax his mind.

After the lecture was over, if he wasn't busy, he would spend twenty minutes to half an hour of class time to answer the students' questions.

Unfortunately, he had to attend a conference on the miniaturization of controllable fusion today, so he didn't have time for the after-class questions.

Lu Zhou was walking toward the mathematics research building before he suddenly returned to the Institute for Advanced Study. He wanted to return the textbook to his office and help out some of his graduate students.

However, his phone in his pocket suddenly began to ring.

Lu Zhou took out his phone and saw it was Yang Xu who was calling. He picked up the call and placed it next to his ear.

"Hello?"

Yang Xu: "There's an old man who claims to be an academician from the engineering department of the Chinese Academy of Sciences... Do you know him?"

*He's here already?*

When Lu Zhou heard that the academician had arrived, he had a strange look on his face. The conference was going to begin at five o'clock, and he thought that the experts he invited would arrive at four-thirty. He didn't expect this old gentleman to come so early.

It seemed like he didn't have time to go to his mathematics research building office.

"I invited him. Bring him to the C1 Institute of Physics conference room."

Yang Xu: "Okay."

Lu Zhou hung up the call and opened his contact list. He then called Wang Peng.

"Where are you now?"

Wang Peng: “Near the campus entrance, do you need a ride?”

Lu Zhou: “Yeah, come find me at the lecture hall building.”