

## Scholar 61

### Chapter 61

Wang Xiaodong got up and took his plate. With a smile on his face, he said, "Thank you."

Naturally, Lin Yuxiang smiled back. She then walked next to Lu Zhou and said, "This one's yours."

Lu Zhou did not raise his head as he replied, "Put it aside. I'll eat it after I finish calculating this."

"Okay!"

It was nine o'clock at night when Lin Yuxiang yawned and went back to the dorm. Wang Xiaodong went back at around ten o'clock. As he was the main force for tomorrow, he had to get a good night's rest.

At this point, other than Lu Zhou, there were only a few people left in the computer room.

The genius mathematics student Luo Rundong was also there with Liu Rui.

There was also a third-year genius statistics student next to Liu Rui.

Their team configuration was special. The captain was responsible for programming and part of the modeling but did not do calculations. Most of the modeling was done by Liu Rui who then directed another person to do the thesis.

The third-year genius statistics student asked, "Is that guy in your dorm?"

Liu Rui nodded, "Yeah."

The genius statistics student said casually, "That guy is insane. I briefly looked at him when I went to the bathroom. He chose question A. They'll have a lot fewer competitors than us."

Liu Rui asked curiously, "Then why didn't we choose question A?"

Liu Rui has been solving question B for a while now and he did not feel like it was easy at all.

The genius statistic student said impolitely, "Because I have you guys for this year. Do you think I wanted to choose question B?"

Liu Rui: "..."

The other guy in his team: "..."

At three o'clock in the morning, only five people were left in the computer room.

At four o'clock in the morning, Lu Zhou was the only person still sitting in front of a computer.

By the time the sun started to shine through the window, Lu Zhou finally finished writing the last line of calculations.

When Wang Xiaodong opened the computer room door and walked in, he asked, "Finished?"

"Finished..." said Lu Zhou. He sighed in relief before saying, "The basic modeling is completed. The rest is programming, plotting, and sensitivity analysis by observing changes in the simulation. When you're done, I'll start writing the thesis."

Wang Xiaodong nodded his head and said, "I got this. Go and rest."

"Okay."

Lu Zhou pinched his eyebrows, shook his head, and stood up before he walked out of the computer room.

Compared to his all-nighters during the summer, this was nothing.

Lu Zhou could not remember how he got back to the dorms. He just remembered that he opened the door and without even taking his clothes off, he went to sleep.

When he woke up, it was already dusk.

Lu Zhou sat up in bed and rubbed his messy hair as he took out his phone from his pocket to take a look at the time.

He recalled that he got back to the dorm around six in the morning.

“I slept for twelve hours...”

The next time he could sleep would be after the competition.

Lu Zhou went to the bathroom and cleaned himself up before heading towards the computer room.

When he arrived at the computer room, Wang Xiaodong was already writing the last line of the program.

Lin Yuxiang was away but she had brought food. The food was still hot. She probably left recently.

Lu Zhou opened the plastic bag and was about to grab a pair of chopsticks when he saw a piece of paper in the bag.

He slowly unfolded the paper.

[Try your best ~ ^.^ ~]

Lu Zhou: "..."

Lu Zhou crunched the paper and threw it in the rubbish bin before opening the disposable chopsticks to begin eating.

When he finished eating his dinner, he went to the bathroom and along the way, he threw the takeaway box away.

When he came back, Wang Xiaodong pushed his glasses. He stood up and started talking, "I've already finished writing the program. The code I've used for the three questions have been sent to your QQ. I'll come back at three in the morning. You'll have to do the thesis."

"Ok, set an alarm. Don't forget."

"I know," said Wang Xiaodong as he nodded his head and left.

Lu Zhou was the last relay runner. He sat in front of the computer and stretched.

It was seven o'clock at night and they still had 37 hours till the thesis submission time.

Within the next 37 hours, he had to summarize all of the calculation processes, modeling ideas, procedures, and answers to the three questions, all into a 20-30 page thesis.

No matter how exquisite the model or how ingenious the program, the judges would only judge by the thesis presentation. If the thesis could not be understood by the judges, then there was no hope for the prize.

Therefore, this last step could not be done sloppily!

Lu Zhou went into his working mode and he had completely forgotten about the time. His attention was entirely concentrated on the computer screen and his typing and thinking were operating at the speed of light.

The abstract and keywords had to be written in one page according to format requirements. Lu Zhou edited his abstract and even then, he barely made the cut.

No one knew his model thought process better than him. Therefore, this stage was easy to do.

The next was the cumbersome process of proof and reasoning. This was the main part of the entire thesis. Although it did not take up too much space, it was the most time-consuming part to complete.

The main reason was that not only did it involve mathematical modeling ideas, it also involved programming.

Lu Zhou was comfortable with mathematics but he needed to communicate with the coder for the program part.

Time slowly past by and the sun fell down and rose again. Once again, it shined across the horizon.

When the night was over, Lu Zhou had finished the last part of the question answering section.

He stretched and started at the thesis with his sleepy eyes before yawning as he started to talk to himself.

“... Next up is the reference and appendix. Finally, it’s almost done.”

Lu Zhou placed his hands on the keyboard and he copied the title of the cited documents.

[

... Moon soft landing gravity turning track design and analysis (C), Huaguo Aerospace Association deep space exploration technology professional committee second academic conference. 2005.

... Research on the detection and evasion scheme of manned lunar surface obstacles, Space Return and Remote Sensing.

In total, he cited six Chinese theses, and one English thesis.

For the final step, Lu Zhou copied Wang Xiaodong's code into the appendix.

Wang Xiaodong stood behind Lu Zhou. As he pushed his glasses, he looked at the texts on the screen and asked, "Finished?"

"Yeah, all finished. Help me check for errors. If there are no errors, convert it to PDF format," said Lu Zhou while standing up from his chair. He shook his groggy brain and said, "I'm going to sleep. I'll delegate the md5 hash check and uploading work to you."

"Go rest," said Wang Xiaodong. He paused for a second before saying with a concerned voice, "Be careful on the road. Don't trip."

"Ok," said Lu Zhou as he nodded his head before he walked out of the computer room.

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Once he finished sending the messages and put on his backpack, he was about to return the dorm key when his phone rang.

It was from Chen Yushan.

When he picked up the call, a sweet voice came through, "Lu Zhou! What do you feel like?"

Lu Zhou, "I feel okay."

Chen Yushan immediately asked, "I heard the question was very difficult this year. Which question did you choose?"

Lu Zhou, "A, the one about the Chang'e 3."

Chen Yushan heard Lu Zhou's answer and opened her eyes in surprise as she asked, "You chose that one?! Did you understand the question?"

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and responded, "It's okay. Although the proposition of a space question is scary, it wasn't that difficult to convert it into a mathematical problem."

"So, you don't think that it's hard," sighed Chen Yushan. She said, "I have a roommate that also participated this year. She wanted to get the first prize and earn a chance to enter a master's programme. But as soon as she saw the question, she was dumbfounded."

The mathematical modeling competition can help towards entering a master's programme!

Lu Zhou was amazed.

No wonder Lin Yuxiang was desperate for us to carry her.

I see. This makes sense.

Lu Zhou asked, "Which question did she choose?"

Chen Yushan, "Question B, the folding table one."

How unfortunate.

Lu Zhou thought in his heart.

At least seven teams in the computer room chose question B. He did not know about the other three. It was likely that Lu Zhou was the only team in the entire computer room that chose question A.

“Then how did she feel about the question?”

“Very difficult. It involved structural mechanics and ergonomics. In short, very troublesome and cumbersome. She was complaining about this stupid table,” sighed Chen Yushan. She added, “The specialize group questions were normal. Design a pig farm and design a medicine storage cabinet. I won’t talk for long, go and eat. You probably just woke up. I’ll go and comfort my roommate.”

“Ok, see you later.”

Just as Lu Zhou hung up the call, he saw a message from Lin Yuxiang. It said that the md5 hash check and thesis upload was complete. She and Wang Xiaodong already went back to the school and that he should feel free to ask her for favors in the future. She also said she wanted to buy him food as a show of thanks.

Lu Zhou thought and replied, [You are welcome].

The competition was already over. Even though she dragged the team down, she could still be counted as a “support” and so, she was kind of useful.

There was no point complaining about her.

The school bus already left and the next one would be coming tomorrow morning.

The old campus dorms were pretty crappy. Lu Zhou did not shower or change for three days and he did not want to stay here for another second.

He put on his backpack and walked to the school gate where he ate some noodles outside the gate before taking the train back to the new campus.

...

“One two one, one two one...”

“Move your arms! Move your legs! Move, move, move!”

Shouting sounds came from the track field where a group of first-year students was being trained by instructors.

Lu Zhou saw the crowd of energetic young people and sighed. He missed being young. He then walked towards the dorms.

When he went back to his dorm and opened the door, the three animals surrounded him.

“Zhou, how was it?”

“Are you confident that you did well? Liu Rui said he screwed up again.”

“I really screwed up,” said Liu Rui. He smiled, “Why don’t you guys believe me? I saw the two questions and was stunned, I thought the second one looked slightly easier. My programming and modeling teammates had to carry me. I’ll be happy with a provincial award.”

Impatient, Shi Shang interrupted the guy, “Okay, okay, cool. If you didn’t screw up, I wouldn’t respect you. Move aside, I’m talking to Zhou.”

Huang Guangming came over and asked, “Zhou, how did you do? Is question A hard?”

Lu Zhou casually said, “It’s okay... Liu Rui, how about you?”

“Way too hard... A lot of the problems can’t be solved with mathematics,” said Liu Rui as he shook his head.

That was inevitable.

Whether it was mathematics or programming, they were only tools to solve problems. The core idea of the mathematical modeling competition was to reward those who were good at using mathematics to solve practical problems.

That was why the national prize is valuable.

It was different than a mathematical exam. A mathematical model did not have much content to talk about.

Lu Zhou’s two roommates had plans to enter the competition next year and so, they bombarded him with many questions. When he was finally able to get rid of the animals, he climbed up the ladder and opened his laptop in bed.

He was AFK for so long. If the progress bar did not move at all, he would be pissed.

However, when Lu Zhou opened the laptop cover and looked, he was furious.

F\*ck you!

The progress bar had only moved a tiny tiny bit.

F\*cking machine! Waste of electricity!

Lu Zhou was angry. He immediately closed his laptop, grabbed two programming textbooks, and went to the library.

...

After the mathematical modeling competition ended, Lu Zhou finally had some free time to relax.

He had two textbooks on him every day – [Data structure] and [Artificial intelligence programming paradigm]. He would pay attention to maths and physics classes and would do his own stuff during other classes.

That was the advantage of the university. He was the master of his own time.

Other than those deans or old professors, most professors only cared about lecturing. At most, they would do a name check of the people in the class but they would not care about what the students were doing in the class as long as they did not interrupt the lectures.

Lu Zhou would either be in class, studying in the library, or in his dorm playing with artificial intelligence Xiao Ai. By sheer accident, Lu Zhou discovered that talking with Xiao Ai improved the progress bar and it was much more efficient than being away from the computer.

Therefore, Lu Zhou wrote a small program in Python. He connected the interface between Xiao Ai and QQ. He then registered a QQ number in Xiao Ai's name and named it "Eye".

This way, he could use his phone to send messages to Xiao Ai. The Python program read his message and entered it into Xiao Ai's dialog box.

This was equivalent to using a third-party chat tool to indirectly interact with Xiao Ai. Xiao Ai had absolute control of the mobile workstation and he could even remotely control his laptop.

He could ask Xiao Ai to execute a program and Xiao Ai would do it.

For example, if he told Xiao Ai to shut down, Xiao Ai would turn off his laptop.

Lu Zhou felt that was pretty cool.

Of course, for security reasons, he added a security lock to the Python program. Only the QQ messages sent by him would be read by Xiao Ai.

Therefore, if someone found Xiao Ai's QQ account, they still could not do any damage.

After all, Xiao Ai could only identify Lu Zhuo's account.

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Honestly speaking, Lu Zhou did not have an idea as to how to monetize the app. This was his first attempt at starting a business and he was very confused.

His original plan was to increase the number of users of the app and then get some fundings or simply sell it to a big company.

As of now, not a single company was interested in his app. However, a lot of headhunting companies found him.

Although the young userbase was of high quality, the group of users was only "active" at certain times. The value was low... This was what Lu Zhou learned when he tried to contact internet venture capitalists.

As expected, it was too difficult for a person to run a company alone.

He had no experience nor energy.

Lu Zhou was contemplating if he should use the 500,000 yuan to hire a professional manager. However, the problem was what kind of manager would want to work at a place that did not even have an office?

Emm...

This question is still unsolved.

Lu Zhou put aside the company affairs for a while. Anyway, the users were inactive and there was no way to make them active.

Finally, in early October, when Lu Zhou received a presentation reply from Professor Liu, he finally stopped worrying.

Normally, getting a presentation reply meant at least a provincial first level prize, which was also the first level area prize.

According to the rules of the mathematical modeling competition, each competition zone would send the first level prize of the area to the national organizing committee. According to the unified standard, the national organizing committee would hire experts to form the national evaluation committee. The first level and second level national prizes would be selected by that committee.

The first level national prize would also be considered for the special award such as the Higher Education Society Cup or the Matlab Innovation Award.

The Higher Education Society Cup was a very prestigious award.

If the first level national prize added credit towards a master's entrance, then the Higher Education cup would guarantee a master's entrance.

Lu Zhou did not care too much about the Higher Education cup. His goal was the first level national prize. If he could not even get that, he was scared that he would have to wait till next year to finish the mission or that he had to use general points and cancel the mission.

Lu Zhou did not waste his time. He opened the notebook, inserted the USB, and started to prepare the presentation powerpoint.

At this moment, a knock came from outside the dorm. Huang Guangming who was playing on his phone stood up and walked over.

It was the class leader Tian Jun. He had a name list in his hand when he asked, "Is Liu Rui in your dorm?"

"Here!" said Liu Rui. He was washing clothes on the balcony and when he hurried back into the dorm, he knocked over Huang Guangming's feet washing bucket before he hurriedly asked the class leader, "What's up, what's up?"

Actually, he already knew what was up.

In the morning, Liu Rui's teammate mentioned something about a provincial second level prize. Liu Rui did not think much of it as he was only trying to get experience so that he could enter again next year and try to get the national prizes.

"Congratulations," said the class leader with a smile. He pulled out a certificate and said, "Second level provincial award!"

When Huang Guangming heard him, he stopped playing on his phone and shouted, "Oh sh\*t, Liu Rui, you're nutty."

Shi Shang followed, "Nutty nutty, second level provincial prize. You almost got the first level!"

"Who else got a prize in our class?" asked Liu Rui as he quickly looked towards Lu Zhou's direction.

"And Luo Rundong I think. He won the first level provincial prize," said Tian Jun. He smiled and continued, "The second level prize is very good, much better than us idiot students that didn't even participate!"

"No, no. I just got lucky. Haha," replied Liu Rui modestly even though he was happy in his heart.

Although Liu Rui was jealous, he did not talk much with genius Luo, so there was not too much imbalance in Liu Rui's heart.

What surprised him was that Lu Zhou did not even get a prize!

Number one genius student in the mathematical department only got a participation medal!

What a big upset!

This made Liu Rui happier than the prize made him.

No, I can't laugh out loud.

Liu Rui cleared his throat and acted as if he cared when he asked the class leader, "What about Zhou? Did you miss his certificate?"

"He's not on the name list. I'm not sure..."

Tian Jun did not have Lu Zhou on the list. Lu Zhou was a genius student, so he checked a couple more times but still could not find Lu Zhou. He asked Lu Zhou, "Zhou, how about you go and ask the counselor? Maybe my name list is incomplete..."

"Yeah, why isn't there Zhou's name on the list. It makes no sense," said Shi Shang as he nodded.

Although Shi Shang was always infuriated by Lu Zhou's words, he still respected the man's talent.

In fact, Tian Jun was right. His list was incomplete.

The list that was given to him by the teacher responsible for training only included the teams that registered through the school's official website.

Lu Zhou was not managed by the school. He was part of the special training team arranged by the departments. Naturally, his name was not on the list.

“You don’t have to search for it,” said Lu Zhou while he searched for powerpoint material.

His prize would eventually come. He was not in a hurry and he did not know why these people were so anxious to see a piece of paper.

Shi Shang saw Lu Zhou’s dissatisfied face and misunderstood, “No! What if the name list is actually wrong?!”

Huang Guangming agreed and he followed by saying, “Yeah, even Liu Rui got a second level prize. How could you not get one?”

Liu Rui was pissed and he insulted Guangming in his heart.

However, no matter what Liu Rui thought, he still pretended as if he agreed with them.

“It’s really fine,” said Lu Zhou as he shook his head. He added, “That thing will be sent sooner or later.”

Tian Jun was confused and asked, “Sooner or later?”

Lu Zhou replied, “Yeah.” He opened up the browser and clicked on the email as he said, “Professor Liu already notified me of the presentation. The certificate will be sent soon so I’m not in a hurry.”

There seemed to be a deviation in understanding.

The atmosphere in the dorm went quiet for three seconds.

Finally, Shi Shang said in shock, “F\*ck me! Lu Zhou, you’re nutty!”

Huang Guangming placed his arm on Lu Zhou’s shoulder and said, “First level provincial prize! You must’ve been entered into the national prize! Buy us dinner, Lu Zhou!”

Lu Zhou slapped his arm like a mosquito. He looked away and said, "Go away, leave me alone. I'm not gay. I have to do my powerpoint. We'll talk about dinner after I get the prize money!"

Class leader Tian Jun sighed and closed his name list. He smiled and said, "I told you. I knew that Lu Zhou would get the first level prize! I guess Professor Liu has it. Okay then, I'm leaving."

Liu Rui: "..."

Liu Rui smiled reluctantly even though he actually wanted to cry.

Finally, I felt good about my self for once, but now the feeling is gone...

#### Chapter 64

The powerpoint was simple and he just had to copy things down from the thesis.

Lu Zhou had already rehearsed the presentation multiple times and so, he would not panic when he went up to the stage.

The presentation stage was divided into two parts. The first part was to explain the thesis while the second part was to answer the questions from the judges. It was around eight minutes per stage and it was mainly to test the authenticity of the thesis to see if there was any signs of a ghostwriter.

Lu Zhou quickly presented his powerpoint and explained his mathematical modeling process. In the second stage, the expert judges asked two questions and Lu Zhou answered the questions without any problems.

Finally, that old professor who was the president of the Jiangsu Aerospace Technology Research Association smiled and gave him a thumbs up. He then signaled that the presentation was over and that Lu Zhou could leave.

When Lu Zhou came back from the stage and passed the captain of the next presenting team, he felt relaxed.

Lin Yuxiang came over and excitedly said, "Captain, you're so good that the professor even gave you a thumbs up!"

Lu Zhou replied, "It's probably convention, right?"

Lin Yuxiang snorted and said, "No way!" She said with a joyful tone, "When you guys were preparing, I secretly looked at other people's presentations. The professor had the same expression for the whole time, but when it was you, he changed his expression!"

You noticed this?!

Lu Zhou thought about it seriously.

Finally, he said with an uncertain tone, "Maybe... It's cause I'm too handsome."

Wang Xiaodong: "..."

Lin Yuxiang: "..."

They rode the school bus back to campus.

Lu Zhou noticed that Luo Rundong was not too happy. Maybe he did not do well in the presentation because he was not speaking with his teammates.

As for the other people, they were mostly discussing the presentation.

"How was your presentation?"

"It's okay, but the questions the professor asked is too hard."

“Yeah, yeah. It’s caused he’s trying to punish us for choosing question B.”

“That’s funny. Do you think he didn’t torture us that chose question A? At most, he asked you the dimensions of your table but he asked us how to fly to space!”

“Anyway, the presentation is only to verify if the paper was actually written by yourself. It wouldn’t add extra marks to the competition so it’s fine as long as you passed.”

“I think it still counted a little. I heard there are a limited number of national awards and they will take the presentation into account...”

Lu Zhou did not join their discussion. Instead, he laid in his chair and closed his eyes.

It was around five o’clock in the afternoon when the school bus returned to the campus of the University of Jin Ling.

When Lu Zhou went back to his dorm, he did not even put his bag down before his three animal roommates surrounded him.

Huang Guangming took the lead and asked, “Zhou, how was the presentation? Can you get the first level national prize?”

Lu Zhou replied ambiguously, “It was okay.”

He had not expected that the three animals would disappear after hearing him.

Liu Rui, “Stable.”

Huang Guangming, “Stable. he’s definitely buying us dinner.”

Shi Shang, “Lu Zhou’s ‘okay’ to us equal to Rui’s ‘failed’. We get it now.”

Liu Rui was unhappy and he slapped the table and said, “F\*ck, why are you bringing me into this?”

Lu Zhou: ? ? ?

...

The list of winners was released.

There was no suspense this time. He got the first level national prize!

However, contrary to Lu Zhou’s expectations, the mission had not completed yet.

After he heard the news of the prize, he entered the system space multiple times but the mission was still in the [In progress] stage.

Maybe I need to have the certificate?

But the thesis mission last time was completed before it passed the review process.

Just when Lu Zhou was suspecting that his system was stuck, Professor Liu gave him a call and asked him to come to his office.

While he walked to Professor Liu’s office, Lu Zhou was confused,

When Professor Liu saw Lu Zhou walked in, he smiled and gestured him to sit down.

“The works of your team have been selected by the national judges and you are invited to Beijing to participate in an expert review. Go and talk to your teammates, and pack your stuff. You will leave in three days outside the school gate. I’ll drive you guys to the train station.”

Only first level national prizes got to participate in expert interviews. After the interview, the judges would announce the winners of the Higher Education Society Cup and the Matlab Innovation Award. The selection of these two trophies would not be divided into AB questions, only the undergraduate and specialize degree groups. This meant the champion and runner-up.

“Expert interview? Which means I have to present again?” asked Lu Zhou. He was dumbfounded.

Why is the mathematical modeling competition so troublesome?

“Yes, prepare your powerpoint and do some minor corrections. This time it’s in Beijing, Yan University, and you’ll be interviewed by the National Organizing Committee!” said Professor Liu Xiangping with a smile. He drank some tea before saying, “Try your best to come back with a Higher Education award.”

He was confident in this team.

Especially the captain, he was very satisfied with him.

Maybe it was because he was talented, or humble, or able to listen to the opinions of others. Although there were some flaws in his personality, like Old Tang said, the pros outweighed the cons.

When Professor Liu saw Lu Zhou’s reluctant face, he put down his vacuum flask, smiled and said, “What’s the matter kid? You’re not happy? The school will pay for your ticket and send you on a vacation in Beijing for three days. If I were you, I would be ecstatic!”

I see...

Is it because the competition has not ended yet, so the system determines that the mission is incomplete?

Which is saying, getting the first level national prize is only the basic condition of the mission?

If I want to earn a better mission evaluation, I have to get a better award.

Using this logic, the Matlab Innovation award should correspond to an S evaluation. As for the Higher Education cup award that symbolizes the champion... The evaluation is an S+!

Lu Zhou took in a deep breath before he looked at Professor Liu and said, "I understand. I'll notify my teammates!"

Teacher Liu nodded his head in satisfaction and said, "Go. Don't forget to get a permission slip."

Chapter 65

"... The experts have already selected the prizes before the interview. The interview is just a test of the authenticity of your thesis." Not far away, a seemingly awkward genius leaned back in his chair as he chatted with the teams, "I've been here three times already."

The few listeners were surprised, "That is, the winners have already been selected?"

"They already wrote the press release scripts!" said the genius with a smile.

"God, where are you from?"

"Wudaokou."

Expressions of admiration appeared on people's faces.

Wudaokou's genius is different than the rest!

Winning three national first level prizes. How impressive!

Maybe this guy is coming after the Higher Education Society Cup?!

But I thought Wudaokou university didn't participate in the National Mathematical Modeling Competition as they only cared about their inner competition?

Maybe they participated after all...

Lu Zhou sat nearby and he had an astonished look on his face.

Is this true?

He thought that the expert interview was similar to the presentation and he did not know that he was only here to show his face. He had spent three days fixing his powerpoint but no one even cared.

Lu Zhou did not know whether to laugh or cry.

Even though he was just here to show his face, he could still gain something right? After all, geniuses around the country were gathered here. If he could make friends with people of this level, it would help in his future career development...

However, that was just theory and it did not always apply to real life.

Geniuses were all arrogant. A bunch of arrogant people would not be able to make friends as they could not even communicate properly.

Lin Yuxiang felt uneasy and uncomfortable sitting amongst this group of people.

She was used to being stuck between the two geniuses. However, now that there were dozens of geniuses surrounding her, as a dumb student, she felt incompatible and she was under immense pressure from it!

The sweet and innocent smile became stiff and unnatural.

Lu Zhou was reading the thesis in his hand in preparation for the upcoming expert interview when a young female reporter came over with a cameraman.

“Sir, hello. Are you Lu Zhou?”

When Lu Zhou raised his head and saw the microphone, he had some suspicions in his heart but he merely nodded and said, “Yeah.”

“I’m a reporter from the Beijing Daily. Can I interview you?”

“Sure, what do you want to ask?”

“Thanks for your cooperation,” said the female reporter with a grin. She continued, “How do you feel about this mathematical modeling competition?”

Lu Zhou thought and said, “It’s alright.”

That was all he said.

“...” The female reporter smiled politely and continued to ask, “It’s alright? Can I ask if you felt like the questions were difficult?”

“It’s... Okay,” said Lu Zhou.

Close!

I nearly said “It’s alright” again.

Lu Zhou silently praised his intelligence.

Female reporter: "..."

After Lu Zhou finally sent the reporter away, he was preparing to calm down and read his thesis when a man walked over.

The man was wearing a suit that stood out and he looked educated. Lu Zhou thought that he was decent looking. His vibe was similar to Wang Xiaodong but fiercer.

When the handsome guy walked over, Lin Yuxiang's eyes lit up. She used her phone as a mirror and fiddled with her bangs.

The awkward part was that the guy did not even see her. He did not even see Wang Xiaodong as his eyes were locked onto Lu Zhou.

"You're Lu Zhou, right?"

Lu Zhou raised his head and said, "... You're?"

"Wei Wen, from Yan University," said Wei Wen as he extended his hand. He continued, "I saw your thesis on [Optimal Inversion Theory of Linear Operators and Linear Functionals], it was very well written."

Lu Zhou smiled as he shook his hand and said, "You're too kind."

"Don't need to be humble," said Wei Wen as he released Lu Zhou's hand. He then said, "Of course, your thesis might be good but I'm the one winning this competition."

Lu Zhou: ???

After Wei Wen said this, he turned around and left.

As Lu Zhou watched the back of the guy, he was confused.

What the hell? He came all the way over here and shook my hand, just to talk sh\*t?

And I spent all this time analyzing why he came over.

Am I the only normal person here?

Lu Zhou shook his head and continued to review his thesis. It was at this moment that the venue ringed.

The presentation had begun!

...

In the venue, the judges sat professionally on the judges' table.

Lu Zhou was already numb to all their titles.

He played the powerpoint as planned.

The powerpoint presentation finished.

Lu Zhou was waiting nervously for the questions from the organization committee when one of the old gentlemen sitting in the middle left opened his mouth.

“What’s your prospect of landing on the moon?”

What?

Is this question related to the thesis?

However, Lu Zhou did not hesitate and he immediately responded fluently.

“It’s meaningful.”

“How meaningful? I think it’s a waste of money,” said the old gentleman. He continued to ask, “Some time ago, I was discussing this with my old friends. In many rural parts of our country, children don’t even have desks. The landing cost tens of billions of dollars a year. Compared to the Americans, or the Russians, how meaningful is it?”

Lu Zhou looked at this old gentleman strangely. He did not know what he meant by asking these questions. Was he asking about the future of aerospace technology? The scientific value of landing on the moon? If the space program increased the national spirit?

He was unsure.

Lu Zhou secretly observed the other judges and saw that they were watching with great interest.

When Lin Yuxiang saw that her captain did not speak, she could not help but feel anxious. However, Wang Xiaodong stood behind Lu Zhou and was expressionless. Maybe he thought that the captain will have an answer or that he did not know how to answer either.

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and opened his mouth.

“Do you think that the Great Wall has any meaning?”

The old man’s eyebrows jumped as he had not expected the answer. He smiled and said, “Of course it has meaning. What kind of Chinese person would disagree?”

“That’s now but what about before?” asked Lu Zhou as he smiled as well. He looked at the old gentleman and said, “More than 1000 years ago, many people protested against wasting resources and gave up on many great projects. Emperor Shi Jingji was criticized for thousands of years for this. Now, if we think it’s a waste of money and thinks that missiles and satellites are enough, won’t we be criticized as well? Like we gave up on the universe?”

The judges’ table went silent.

Although Lin Yuxiang held her breath, she still had a smile on her face. Wang Xiaodong was still expressionless but his fists were squeezed tightly.

The old gentleman looked at Lu Zhou and suddenly laughed.

“Hahaha, yes! Good answer!”

It’s over?

Lu Zhou could not believe it. This judge actually let him go.

What about the thesis? Isn’t it necessary to examine the authenticity of the paper? Why were the important steps skipped? Instead, I was asked something that isn’t relevant.

He did not believe that this old man did not know the meaning behind aerospace.

After the judges signaled Lu Zhou to leave, he took his USB and left the venue with his two teammates.

Before leaving, he glanced at the old gentleman’s nameplate.

He was shocked.

Ren Changming!

Of course, it was not the name that scared him but the title behind the name.

Former Chinese designer of the lunar exploration project!

After Lu Zhou and his team left the venue, Ren Changming looked at the old man next to him and said with a smile, "Old Wang, are you happy with this answer?"

"Oh, why did you bring our discussion onto the stage? What would a student know? He was full of himself," said Wang Zhongyi. Although he was dissatisfied, from his facial expression, it seemed to be different.

Wang Zhongyi paused and asked, "What's the student's name?"

Ren Changming unscrewed the vacuum flask and sipped some hot water before he smiled and said, "Lu Zhou."

Wang Zhongyi frowned and said, "I think I've heard of his name before..."

...

When the three people went back to the hotel in the evening, they gathered in front of the television in Lu Zhou's room.

The winners would be announced on the television.

It seemed that the expert interview was indeed just for the teams to show their face. The winners had already been decided before the interview began. Otherwise, it was impossible to decide the champion in such a short amount of time.

They would not even have the time to exchange opinions!

"It's very good to get the national first level prize," said Lin Yuxiang while she looked at the television. She whispered, "I saw a lot of geniuses in the lounge."

"Yes," said Wang Xiaodong as he nodded his head. He added, "I saw a few familiar faces in the lounge."

"Familiar?" asked Lu Zhou.

"Yes," nodded Wang Xiaodong. He said with an expressionless face, "I saw them at last year's National College Student Programming Contest."

No wonder!

Then that really was a gathering of geniuses.

Lu Zhou nodded and continued to stare at the TV.

A competition like the mathematical modeling competition had fewer viewers and so, CCTV did not spend much time reporting it. Instead, they inserted it between the news segments.

"This afternoon, the last expert interview of the National Mathematical Modeling Competition came to a successful conclusion. There were more than 70,000 undergraduate and specialist college students in the country, and a total of more than 300 national first level prizes."

"From the 300 national first level prizes, there are also two special awards for the Higher Education Society Cup and the Matlab Innovation Award."

It's here.

Lu Zhou squeezed his fists as he held his breath and looked at the screen.

This deciding moment for my mission evaluation is here!

The list of winners was announced.

The Undergraduate Higher Education Society Cup winners were...

Lu Zhou, Wang Xiaodong, Lin Yuxiang (University of Jin Ling)!

Chapter 66

Ah...

Lu Zhou was on another level than Liu Rui.

The dorm room door was pushed open and class leader Tian Jun rushed inside. Following closely behind him was school committee member Li Tao and genius Luo Rundong.

Tian Jun walked in and shouted, "F\*ck dude, did you see it? Our school won a Higher Education Society Cup!" He tried to find Lu Zhou but did not see him.

Luo Rundong asked, "Where is Zhou?"

Shi Shang had a cheerful smile as if he had won the prize himself, "He's in Beijing and he'll come back tomorrow."

Li Tao said, "Brother Zhou is too nutty. I wonder if he's joining the competition next year as well. Maybe he can carry me."

Li Tao played too much video games last semester and as a result, his grades for advanced algebra at the end of the semester were horrible. If he asked Lu Zhou to carry him in the competition, he would have gotten a guaranteed master's entry spot.

That is the Higher Education Society Cup!

The University of Jin Ling has won the national first level prize many times, but this is the first time they ever won the championship.

Liu Rui said, "Piss off. Did you support him from the beginning? You don't have the right to speak. So go and wait aside."

Huang Guangming said, "Brother Rui, why are you so jealous? Do you need some medicine?"

Liu Rui: "..."

He wanted to fight someone.

...

[...]

[Undergraduate MATLAB Innovation Award winners: Wei Wen, Cui Jing, Yang Wanhong (Yanjing University)]

"How is this possible!"

Wei Wen stood up angrily and stared at the TV.

Runner up...

I got runner up!

In the venue, he scouted out all of the opponents that he thought were strong.

The three-time national first level prize genius from Wudaokou, the original team that won the championship 13 years ago, the student from the University of Jin Ling accused of being academic cancer...

Wei Wen thought Lu Zhou's thesis were horrible.

Lu Zhou was the most unlikely to win the prize. However, it was HIM that won.

It was not as if Wei Wen disrespected him.

Wei Wen admitted that Lu Zhou was strong and Lu Zhou even managed to surprise the professors from Courant of New York University. Wei Wen was unsure of Lu Zhou's modeling abilities, but in the field of mathematics, Lu Zhou was stronger than him.

However, mathematical modeling was a group competition – a semi-academic group research competition. It was not even a mathematics exam competition! Modeling, programming, and thesis must be completed in a rigorous division of labor. If one of the division fell below par, the rest would fall.

Wei Wen saw Lu Zhou's teammates and did not even consider him a threat.

The programmer was an expert, but at most he was a second rated expert, not top of the line. As for the female teammate, she was so useless that he could instantly see through her.

On the surface, it was a 3v3 when it was actually a 3v1.9.

Wei Wen saw their lineup and was sure that the national first level prize was as far as they were going to go.

However...

What happened was exactly the opposite of what he expected.

The championship did not belong to him, or any team that he considered a threat but it landed on that person...

When the news segment ended, Wei Wen's handsome face was filled with disdain as he bit his lip and sat back in his chair.

Compared to the Higher Education Society Cup, the MATLAB Innovation award was just to comfort the losers. There used to be an IBM-SPSS Innovation award which did the same thing. It basically meant that your programming was good, but your modeling was still slightly worse than the winners. Try better next time...

Most people would be happy with the result.

However, for him, anything other than the championship was meaningless.

The girl with bangs sat next to him and stared at the TV as they both remained silent.

After around ten minutes, Wei Wen suddenly spoke.

"... Xiao Jing, give me the computer."

"Okay," said Cui Jing as she nodded. She walked to the desk and took the tablet computer before handing it to her captain.

Wei Wen took the tablet and went on the official website.

The winner's thesis would be publicly displayed on the website. It would be used as a sample for the others to learn and to tell the losers why they lost. It was also to let the public review the fairness of the game.

Lu Zhou's thesis was ranked first and Wei Wen found it quickly.

He downloaded the winner's thesis and opened the PDF file. Wei Wen frowned as he stared at the screen and carefully read from the first word to the appendix.

"..."

He went silent for half an hour before he relaxed and sighed.

"I did lose..."

There was a luck aspect in the mathematical modeling competition. If the thesis was written in the appetite of the review professors, even if the thesis was average, it could still win the second or even the national first level prize.

However, in the selection of the "Higher Education Society Cup", which symbolized first in the country, luck did not exist. Every nominated thesis would be reviewed by every single judge.

The judge that sat in the middle? He was a former Chinese government chief architect for the lunar exploration project. He personally influenced the design of Chang'e 3. There was no one else who was more educated in aerospace.

Wei Wen finished reading Lu Zhou's thesis and was sure of one thing.

The programming side was indistinguishable from his own. Maybe his was even better, but he lost the mathematical model side. Without a doubt, he had also lost in the thesis part.

Wei Wei noticed that the mathematical model and the thought process of the thesis was the same.

Therefore, he was sure that Lu Zhou did the modeling and thesis work all by himself.

Although some weaker teams would use the tactic of one person carrying, there had never been a team that won the Higher Education Society Cup by using the one man carry tactic.

The time for the competition was only three days and it contained a high amount of modeling and thesis writing work. If a person just did one of them, they would be exhausted. A person who did both was absolutely insane. That person would have to sacrifice eating and sleeping just to guarantee the quality of the modeling and thesis.

However, the reality was that the guy named Lu Zhou did both.

This guy is a monster...

Wei Wen's lip went blue from the biting.

It was not because of jealousy.

It was because he felt humiliated by the opponent.

"What are you going to do?" said Cui Jing as she stood behind him.

He went silent for a while.

"I don't plan on doing anything. It's only a defeat."

Wei Wen put the tablet down and stood up.

In his eyes, depression and sadness were swept away. In their place, a burning passion appeared.

Being able to compete with such an opponent is a great thing.

This is only one defeat.

Next time, I will definitely not lose!

Wei Wen paused for a second before he took a deep breath and said calmly, "Don't forget I still have the US Competition in February!"

Cui Jing stood behind him and smiled softly.

This was the Wei Wen that she knew.

The guy that never gave up.

"Okay."

...

Lu Zhou received many calls tonight.

Some were from dorm 201, which called him "Brother Zhou, Brother Zhou," and asked him to buy them dinner.

This was the only time that this group of animals respected Lu Zhou like this.

Dean Zhang called as well to congratulate Lu Zhou. Then he started complimenting himself and said that he was the same when he was younger.

Lu Zhou was dumbfounded when he heard Dean Zhang.

If this guy was not a professor, Lu Zhou would have hung up.

There were people from the school that called as well.

Dean Lu, Professor Tang, and Professor Liu.

Professor Liu did not care about his image and laughed out loud, “Nicely done. Higher Education Society Cup! Our school had had a couple of national first level prizes and a couple of teams managed to go to Beijing. However, this is the first time that we won the Higher Education Society Cup!”

Professor Liu said up until here and sincerely admired Lu Zhou as he said, “You’re pretty strong. I can’t believe that you won without trying that hard. Go get the O award in the US Competition next year.”

The O award was short for Outstanding Winner which was also the grand prize. The F prize was chosen from M prizes (the first level prize), then the global O award was chosen from the F prizes. At most, there were 20 O awards.

The O award also came with awards from associations and companies and so, it was roughly equivalent to the Higher Education Society Cup. Although the titles were similar, the treatment was very different. For example, Double Siegel invested USD10,000 as a bonus for winning the O award. However, it was only for the US teams...

“It wasn’t just me. Without the code from Wang Xiaodong, I wouldn’t have won,” said Lu Zhou as he smiled humbly.

“Oh yeah, for sure,” said Professor Liu. He smiled and continued, “The school is ready to give you a 10,000 yuan bonus. The principal just talked to me on the phone and asked for my opinion. He said that since Captain Lu Zhou did both the modeling and thesis, he should just get the 10,000 yuan by himself. However, from what you’re saying, I guess I should split this \$10,000 in half and give it to you and Wang Xiaodong.”

Lu Zhou was unhappy when he heard this.

“Teacher, I’ve thought it about it carefully,” said Lu Zhou. In a serious tone, he said, “Although Wang Xiaodong’s efforts were outstanding, I think that without my delegation and working up to 30 hours continuously, we wouldn’t have won this championship. Therefore...”

“Hahahaha, stop faking,” said Professor Liu. His laughter interrupted Lu Zhou and he said, “Professor Tang was right. You’re quite sneaky.”

Lu Zhou saw that Professor Liu saw through him and so, he coughed and said, “Then... At most give him a third. Half is a bit unfair. I didn’t sleep at all the second night when I was writing the thesis.”

“I’m just kidding. Principal Xu said that this money is all yours so don’t worry,” said Professor Liu with a smile. He added, “If you’re bored with Beijing, come back soon.”

Lu Zhou asked, “I’m going on the train tomorrow. Is there any urgent matter?”

“There’s no urgent matter. I just need to do a photo-shoot of you.”

Photo-shoot?

The photo certificate for the award is also online. Why do I have to take another photo?

Lu Zhou asked suspiciously, “What photo?”

Professor Liu said with a smile, “So we can stick your photo on the trophy on the wall!”

## Chapter 67

Sure enough, the national first level prize was the minimum requirement to complete the mission. The Higher Education Society Cup and MATLAB Innovation award corresponded to an evaluation of S+ and S respectively.

He had only received the S evaluation once, so the rules were unclear to him.

However, now that he got the S+ evaluation, he was sure that getting an S or above meant he would receive a reward mission!

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and commanded.

“System, open my characteristic panel!”

[

Core science:

A. Mathematics: Level 1 (2000/10000)

B. Physics: Level 1 (2100/10000)

C. Biochemistry: Level 0 (0/1000)

D. Engineering: Level 1 (0/10000)

E. Materials science: Level 0 (0/1000)

F. Energy science: Level 0 (0/1000)

G. Information science: Level 1 (0/10000)

General points: 1175 (one lucky draw ticket)

Mission: None

]

Mathematics limited the upgrade of other subjects. Therefore, it was Lu Zhou's focus. Then there was engineering and information science where these two subjects were the easiest to make money with. Lu Zhou decided to give up on physics and just leave it alone.

Now, next...

Is the thrilling lucky draw!

Lu Zhou took a deep breath, reached out, and pressed the lucky draw button. When he saw the familiar prize wheel appearing in front of himself, he said, "Spin!"

The wheel began to spin at a speed that was impossible for the naked eyes to follow.

Lu Zhou repeated "good prize, good prize" in his heart several times. He shouted with his eyes closed.

"Stop!"

The wheel's inertia caused it to spin a few more turns before it slowly stopped.

Lu Zhou opened his eyes and looked at the screen...

[Congratulations user, you received garbage.]

Goddamn it!

Does the system hate me?

Lu Zhou looked at the "garbage" text and screamed in his heart.

However, the system still did not care about him.

[Received: A can of coffee.]

“...”

Lu Zhou looked at the icon on the screen quietly as he realized that the system did not care about his feelings.

Lu Zhou left the system space and sat in his bed. He put out his right hand and said in his heart, “Coffee, coffee...”

There was a flash before his eyes.

Without any warning, a brown can appeared in his hands. It was like something out of a movie.

However, Lu Zhou was already accustomed to the magic of the system. Unlike the first time, he was not surprised. Instead, he was calm as he wondered, “Is this a Future again? Same brand as that coke, right? Why didn’t they give me a can of sprite instead?”

Lu Zhou turned the can over to find the production date but he could not find it.

“I’ve tried futuristic coke. Let’s see what futuristic coffee tastes like.”

Lu Zhou opened the can and poured it into his mouth.

Emm...

It felt like the taste of ordinary instant coffee but it was very smooth.

It was indescribably delicious and he wanted to drink another can.

This type of unexplainable satisfaction was similar to the “Future” coke’s feeling.

Lu Zhou licked the corner of his mouth, wiped the can clean, and stuff it into his bag. He planned to find a rubbish bin outside tomorrow to throw it out. The hotel check-in information was linked to his citizen ID and it was better to be low-key.

He went to the bathroom and washed his face before he laid back in bed, closed his eyes, and went into the system space.

It was time for the reward mission.

[Reward mission begin!]

[

Mission: Reward mission (Able to cancel anytime, no general point penalty will be given).

Requirements: One SCI thesis.

Reward: Subject experience (Experience value is determined by the academic value of the thesis, minimum 1000 points. Experience type is determined by the content of the thesis.) One lucky draw ticket (50% sample, 50% blueprint)]

]

Not too good, not too bad

The reward and difficulty are average.

It seems that S+ evaluations corresponded to a reward mission. Not all reward missions can unlock technology branches. But this lucky draw probability is the best as I can only get a blueprint or sample. Both are pretty good.

As for the content of the mission, it was similar to his second mission.

The only difference was that the lower limit of his second mission was 100 points, whereas this mission was 1000 points.

Basically, what it said was that even if he just casually submitted to some random journal, as long as it passed review, he could get 1000 experience points.

“Minimum 1000 experience points... I wonder what the maximum is. If it’s determined by academic value...”

Lu Zhou remembered his blueprint that contained Zhou’s approximation proof.

“Last time I was afraid to use it but it should be fine this time.”

Full marks in mathematical analysis and advanced algebra, mathematical model national champion, submitted 10 theses in a month, etc. Lu Zhou had proved that even if he solved this 20-year-old problem, no one would question him.

I just have to go back to school and spend some time typing up the thesis.

Lu Zhou left the system space. He laid in bed and closed his eyes before he went to sleep.

Time slowly passed by...

The clock on the wall ticked.

Lu Zhou tossed and turned around.

After a while, he opened his eyes and stared at the ceiling while he laid on the bed.

Emm...

I'm not tired at all.

Lu Zhou took out his phone and squinted his eyes to look at the time when his eyebrows suddenly twitched.

F\*ck, it's two in the morning already?! It doesn't feel that late!

Maybe...

It's because of the can of coffee?

Lu Zhou's expression changed.

F\*ck sake!

I totally forgot. I just drank it for fun!

Lu Zhou could not breathe because of his heartache and he buried his head in the pillow.

I lost big! I should've used it for intense studying session!

Chapter 68

He thought for a while before tapping on the screen and started typing.

[Today I went to Yan University and won the Higher Education Society Cup. It feels okay.]

[Photo (screenshot of official website award certification)]

It was the first time he sent a blog post and he felt like a primary school student writing an essay.

Screw it, who cares!

Lu Zhou clicked Send.

He went on trending and saw that they were all about boring celebrity gossip. Once he was bored, he went back to his own page.

He had not expected to have dozens of comments already.

Don't these people have better things to do?

Lu Zhou was interested in the comments and so, he clicked them open to see what his fans said.

[What is the Higher Education Society Cup?]

[Master, are you going to the US Competition next year?]

[God! If you act like this, you won't have any friends!]

[I'm studying the graduate entrance exam right now. I'm unfollowing.]

[Once again, I'm looking at someone else's university life.]

[I clicked the unfollow button and pretended like I didn't see anything. I'm scrolling past. (dog)]

[Excuse me for bothering.]

Lu Zhou: ? ? ?

F\*ck, why are my fans turning on me?

Lu Zhou refreshed and saw that he lost 10 followers. He was speechless.

...

Early in the morning, Lu Zhou washed his face before he left the room with his backpack.

When he walked into the lobby, he saw Lin Yuxiang.

"You... Okay?" asked Lin Yuxiang when she saw Lu Zhou's dark circles. She was surprised and asked, "I have an eye bag cream... Do you need it?"

Lu Zhou yawned, "No need."

He did not care about his dark circles. All he wanted to do was to get on the train and sleep.

The three people called a taxi and bought the train tickets at the train station. Lu Zhou fell asleep twice while waiting for the train. The first time he woke up was because of a kid while the second time was because of Wang Xiaodong.

"We're about to board."

"... Already?"

Lu Zhou rubbed his eyes and looked at the screen above the ticket gate. It was less than 10 minutes until their boarding time.

“Didn’t sleep well?”

“Yeah... I’m going to the bathroom.”

Lu Zhou actually wanted to say.

It’s not that I didn’t sleep well, I didn’t sleep at all...

Wang Xiaodong looked at Lu Zhou yawning and nodded his head.

It was the first time he had ever won a national championship and he was very excited last night. He talked to his family over the phone for more than an hour and took two hours to fall asleep in bed.

Lu Zhou went to the bathroom to wash his face before he went to line up for the ticket check.

He passed the ticket check and went on the train where he continued to doze off. When he was woken up by Lin Yuxiang, he was already at Jinling station.

The three days trip in Beijing ended like this.

...

Lu Zhou rode the subway back to school. When he entered the dorm, he was surrounded by his roommates.

“Where’s the trophy?”

“Zhou, I mean, Brother Zhou! Can I touch your trophy?”

Huang Guangming said with a smile as he reached out to take Lu Zhou’s backpack.

“Go away, go away,” said Lu Zhou. He moved aside and said, “The trophy isn’t here. It was sent directly to the school. Don’t ask me. If you want to touch it, go and ask the instructor.

“Who cares about the trophy... What about dinner?”

“I’m buying. Wait till I get the prize money!”

Normally speaking, the mathematical modeling competition only had a certificate as the award. Only the national champion would receive the trophy. The school had to pay for the trophy and so, it was customary for the trophy to be kept in the school.

The school would keep the trophy and put a photo of the three winners to record their honor.

On the way back, Lu Zhou received a call from Professor Liu. He was told to go to the Academic Affairs Office to take photos there.

Wang Xiaodong and Lin Yuxiang probably already went. Lu Zhou did not want to hold them up, so he returned to his dorm to throw his backpack down before he left.

When Shi Shang saw Lu Zhou leaving, he said, “I think Zhou is leaving us. He’s going too far.”

“Yeah, winning the Higher Education Society Cup as a first-year student. I feel more and more useless,” said Huang Guangming while he played games on his phone.

“But Zhou is still a loner. What do they say? That even if you’re not a genius, you can still receive love and youth?” said Shi Shang with a tone full of emotion.

When Huang Guangming heard him, he nearly dropped his phone.

“F\*ck me, Brother Fei, let’s talk about it properly. I’m a little afraid for you... How about I bring you to a doctor?”

“What’s the point of a doctor? The guy probably ate the wrong medication,” said Liu Rui while he was doing his physics homework. He did not even bother to lift his head.

“Stop calling me Brother Fei. Call me Brother Shang,” said Shi Shang. He was unhappy to hear his new nickname. In a serious tone, he said, “You wouldn’t understand that feeling.”

Liu Rui: “...”

Huang Guangming: “...”

Shi Shang said slowly, “So, what I’m trying to say that it’s impossible to excel in academics. That guy is a wizard. But in terms of feelings or emotional intelligence, we may not be worse off than him, so don’t belittle yourself too much...”

Liu Rui suddenly said with a cold tone, “That may not be true.”

Shi Shang asked, “What?”

Liu Rui said, “During the summer, I went to the library and saw him studying with a girl.”

When he heard that, Shi Shang’s expression was awkward and he coughed before saying, “He’s just studying. I’ve studied with girls before...”

Liu Rui continued, “Then, I saw them eating together in the cafeteria. I think the girl paid for him.”

The atmosphere in the dorm was quiet.

Shi Shang and Huang Guangming looked at each other before turning to stare at Liu Rui silently.

Huang Guangming, "... Is that girl ugly? I heard those female geniuses are ugly."

Liu Rui shook his head, "Nope, the opposite actually. She was pretty..."

Huang Guangming: "..."

Shi Shang: "..."

They were completely defeated.

Not only were they defeated in IQ, but they were also ruthlessly crushed in EQ.

"Guangming, I feel like my life is full of darkness," said Shi Shang. He sighed, "Why is my college life so different than others."

"It's okay, I feel the same," said Huang Guangming as he threw his phone aside.

"Tomorrow... Let's study?"

"Don't talk about tomorrow, I'm going right now," said Huang Guangming as he climbed down the ladder.

## Chapter 69

All of these were done before he went to Beijing. He felt bad for always taking a leave of absence, so he finished all of the questions in the exercise book and gave it to Professor Li.

As a result, Professor Li Rongen was interested. He glanced at the homework and then told Lu Zhou not to hand in homework anymore as it would only be a waste of Lu Zhou's time.

"Finished?" said Liu Rui. He was shocked, "You didn't even go to class. When did you write it?"

"Before I went to Beijing. When I was doing the powerpoint."

Liu Rui did not believe him. He took out the challenging question that he copied from class and said, "Then, can you teach me?"

"Wait a second."

Lu Zhou placed his clothes into a laundry tub on the balcony. When he returned, he took a look at the question.

[The normal specific heat of the mixed gas has the mass of  $M_1=3.0 \times 10^2 \text{kg}$  and the mixed gas  $M_2$  has  $3.0 \times 10^2 \text{kg}$  of hydrogen at normal temperature.]

The question was short and seemed simple.

However...

Lu Zhou said, "This question is super hard. It's normal that you can't solve it."

It was a challenge question that Li Rongen arranged in class and Liu Rui probably did not even notice.

Liu Rui: ? ? ?

Lu Zhou saw that Liu Rui was confused and laughed before he continued to speak.

“At normal temperature, diatomic gas molecules and water vapor molecules can be regarded as rigid molecules. Despite the fact that their covalent bonds still vibrate, most of the molecules’ vibrational levels do not change, and they do not contribute to the constant volume heat capacity. Therefore, the conclusion is the same as considering vibration. The physics textbook probably didn’t mention this, but it is mentioned in inorganic chemistry.”

Liu Rui: ? ? ?

Of course, knowing this was not enough. It was also necessary to know the molar heat capacity of the rigid diatomic molecules and the molar heat capacity of the water molecules, as well as a series of data what was not given in the question.

There was no chemistry class in mathematics, so this problem was expected to stump many people. If a person could solve it, that person either learned inorganic chemistry by himself like Lu Zhou or participated in high school physics competition training.

Professor Li Rongen came up with this question to cultivate students’ ability to learn independently. After all, not everything was taught in college classes. It was important to learn outside of class as well.

Of course, this depended on the student’s motivation.

If the student just wanted to cruise through, not listen in class, and cram before exams, they could still graduate.

“Therefore, you can get...”

Lu Zhou took the pen and started to write in the draft paper.

$[Cv1=3R, Cv2=5/2R]$

[The heat capacity of the mixed gas:  $C_{total} = (M1/u1) Cv1 + (M2 / u2) Cv2]$

[The specific heat of the mixed gas:  $c = C_{\text{total}} / (M_1 + M_2)$ ]

[From  $u_1=0.018$ ,  $u_2=0.00$ ,  $R=8.314\text{J}/(\text{mol}\cdot\text{K})$ ]

[With the above data, get  $5.86\times 10^3\text{J}/(\text{kg}\cdot\text{K})$ ]

The calculation was very simple, even a middle school student could do it. What was hard was the theory.

Lu Zhou gave the pen back to Liu Rui and said, "This question is quite simple. If you change the absolute value of the internal energy, you must include the vibration energy of the molecule. But this kind of question definitely won't be on the exam. Let physics majors worry about these questions."

Liu Rui: ? ? ?

When he saw Liu Rui's confused expression, he said, "Don't you understand? Maybe I'll explain..."

"I understand," said Liu Rui as he nodded. He looked at him and asked, "Where did you learn these things?"

Are we at the same university?

Liu Rui could not help but doubt his life.

Lu Zhou said, "I learned it in the library."

Liu Rui did not say anything but he silently began to pack his stuff.

Lu Zhou was confused and asked, "Why are you packing your stuff?"

Liu Rui looked up at the ceiling with eyes that were filled with sorrow as he said, "I think my level of knowledge is too low. From today... I'm studying at the library every day."

Without saying another word, he carried his backpack and walked out

...

The next Monday afternoon at a lecture hall, it was so packed full of people that not a single free seat was left.

Captain Lu Zhou stood on the stage and was about to give an award speech.

He looked at the crowd and he knew that most of these people were from the Student Union and Committee.

Everyone's an adult now, who has time to listen to my speech?

The crowd of confused college students held a notepad in their hands. They were prepared to take notes for Lu Zhou's speech. Lu Zhou did not know if his speech would help them.

If the students wanted to be Lu Zhou, their college life would be filled with frustration...

There were several media outlets in the hall, mainly from school newspaper and local newspapers. The highest level was the Jin Ling City TV station. The university invited all of them.

When Lu Zhou saw the supporting eyes of Dean Lu, he thought, "It's hard to make money." He then cleared his throat and put his mouth closer to the microphone.

"Teachers, deans, students, good morning!"

"I am very honored to have this opportunity to cooperate with my two teammates to participate in this unprecedented competition and to fight side by side and get the "Higher Education Society Cup." First of all, please allow me to thank the national members of the competition. The organizers, sponsors, national instructors, and all the people who have worked hard for the competition. I express my most sincere gratitude..."

Lu Zhou talked for more than 10 minutes on stage. He talked about the insides and outside of the competition, from mathematical modeling to various study methods, then even talked about his half a million yuan offer and his life plans.

He ended the speech with, "1% talent, 99% hard work."

This was no longer Lu Zhou's first interview, so he was not nervous at all. Naturally, he faked his way to the end.

Clap clap clap!

The applause was thunderous.

Some of them probably were not genuine, but the students with their notebooks applauded energetically.

"... Thank you, everyone!" bowed Lu Zhou. He then handed the microphone to Professor Liu before he walked down the stage.

When Professor Tang saw Lu Zhou walk past him, he smiled and said, "Pretty good speech."

Lu Zhou smiled, "Professor Tang, when will the school send the prize money?"

"Latest next week. Why? Are you in a hurry?" asked Professor Tang. With a smile, he continued, "How are you now? What are you researching?"

Lu Zhou thought and said, "Number theory... Mersenne primes."

"Mersenne primes, you're still researching that," sighed Professor Tang. There was a bit of regret in his tone.

Number theory was a special field and the entrance threshold was low. It was so low that many theorems and formulas could be understood by middle school students. It was also why number theory had become popular amongst the general public.

Legends had it that the number of letters the general public wrote to The Chinese Academy of Sciences was so many that it could wrap around Earth. The gatekeeper of the Chinese Academy of Sciences had nine math questions in his hand. If a person could not answer the questions, he or she would not even be let in through the door.

Therefore, succeeding in number theory was a lot harder than it seemed. Not only did it required a solid foundation in mathematics, but it also needed extraordinary mathematical talent.

The reality was cruel as there was no other field that required talent as much as number theory.

Without talent, a person could research number theory for his entire life and still achieved nothing.

Even though Professor Tang knew this, he did not say anything.

That was because he knew Lu Zhou's personality.

Irritable, utilitarian, eager for success.

After Lu Zhou dipped his feet into the water of number theory, he would naturally back off.

Chapter 70

I'm embarrassed...

After he finally got rid of the students, he carried his laptop bag and went to the library.

Chen Yushan was studying politics for the past few days. As it was mainly rote learning, she did not go to the library.

Perfect, Lu Zhou did not have the time to speak to her anyway.

Although the theorem was printed in Lu Zhou's mind, it still took a lot of effort to sort out the argument process. It would take three to four A4 pages just to write it all down.

If he wanted others to understand his theorem, he would have to understand it himself first.

The final thesis could not be three or four pages long, but it had to be twice as long so that people could understand.

Moreover, Professor Tang's research was not about number theory, so this time there was no one available to edit his thesis. If he wanted to pass review the first time, he had to give 100 percent of his focus and restored every vague theorem given by the system, so the academic reviewer could not find a single mistake.

[Discussion On The Distribution Law Of Mersenne Prime Numbers And Proof Of Zhou's Conjecture]

[Abstract: This paper studies the distribution law of Mersenne prime numbers and proves that when  $2^{2^n} < P < 2^{2^{n+1}}$ , MP has  $2^{n+1}-1$ , prime numbers are established. Based on this argument, it is proved that when  $2^{2^{n+1}}$ , Mp has  $2^{n+2}-n-2$  prime numbers. ]

Lu Zhou typed a space in the thesis body before he jumped to the cited documents and typed a line of text.

[Citation: The distribution law of Mersenne prime numbers [J]. Zhou Haizhong. Journal of Yixian University (Natural Science Edition). 1992 (04)]

He only needed to cite one literature.

For twenty years, countless mathematicians and researchers in number theory had repeatedly tried to verify this theorem, but none of them succeeded. Even Mr. Zhou, who made this conjecture/approximation himself, who had been studying for so many years, could not give a proper proof of this conjecture.

This was the charm of number theory. Number theory was like an apple on the tree. Both mathematics and math enthusiasts were fascinated by its red color. Eventually, a tall man would come and pick the apple.

Lu Zhou stopped typing and picked up a pen.

He entered a special state where he forgot about everything else.

The only thing that existed was the paper and the pen.

The infinite prime numbers were magnified under his pen tip and converged into an equation. Numbers and symbols merged into a spell that weaved magic and described the truth of the universe.

Time slowly passed by.

Pieces of fully written draft paper slowly covered the table.

Soon, it was time for lunch.

The guys who were studying for the graduate entrance exam stretched and they were ready to get up and go to the cafeteria to eat. Suddenly, they noticed the draft paper laying on Lu Zhou's table. When they saw the calculations on the paper, they were shocked.

What question is this nutty?

Why does it take so many pages to calculate it?

He looks young, probably an undergraduate student. Is there such a difficult undergraduate mathematics question?

He looked over and saw that it was a number theory problem. However, when he looked further down, he could not understand it. On one hand, Lu Zhou's handwriting was like a dragon dancing 1. On the other hand, he did not research number theory, so he was not well-versed with it.

He was full of curiosity and was about to ask what Lu Zhou was doing when he suddenly noticed the title of the document on Lu Zhuo's laptop.

Zhou's conjecture?

His curiosity was gone.

Oh, a crazy person.

Another idiot who is obsessed with mathematics.

That guy said in his heart before he took his backpack and left.

Although it not the direction of his research, he still knew a little about this topic.

For twenty years, number theory mathematicians all over the world had studied more or less the special prime numbers of Mersenne twin prime and Fermat prime. After all, this was a key topic of the century. Anyone that had studied Mersenne primes had tried to prove Zhou's conjecture.

Not a single person succeeded.

Before one could even think about picking the apple from the tree, one had to know that no one even brought a ladder!

It would be impossible for an undergraduate student to proof it.

Lu Zhou was completely immersed in his calculations. He did not even notice the guy next to him. He barely even noticed time or hunger. Those external factors were all annihilated by the mathematics calculations.

Lu Zhou did not know when it began, but he was used to this unhealthy way of studying.

By the time Lu Zhou wrote down the last calculation, the view outside the window was completely dark.

Breathing a sigh of relief, he leaned back in his chair and felt as if his whole body had collapsed.

On the one hand, he was tired.

On the other, he was hungry.

“I can’t believe I forgot about eating... It seems that I’ve become an immortal.”

This thesis was much more difficult than [Optimal Inversion Theory Of Linear Operators And Linear Functions]. The academic value of this thesis was also higher. Fortunately, the core of the thesis had already been done. Now, he only had to copy the content on the A4 papers onto the computer and his thesis would be done.

Lu Zhou rubbed his stomach. He was about to stand up and tidy the draft papers when a list of numbers on a draft paper caught his attention.

What?

Lu Zhou took his pen and circled the numbers on the draft paper. He then started to arrange them.

The two sets of numbers after alignment were all twin prime numbers.

Lu Zhou frowned and clicked his pen.

He wrote down two equations before quickly crossing them out.

The famous Polignac conjecture had an infinite number of prime pairs  $(p, p+2k)$  for all natural numbers  $k$ . When  $k=1$ , it was a twin prime approximation. The study of the distribution law of Mersenne prime numbers, in a certain sense, also provided an idea for solving the problem of infinite twin prime numbers.

He seemed to have discovered something while trying to prove Zhou's conjecture.

He pinched his glabella and felt a headache.

I don't have a train of thought at all...

His flash of inspiration was gone and he had missed the opportunity.

F\*ck sake!

As expected, number theory isn't something ordinary people can play with.

"System, give your user some inspiration."

Lu Zhou said in his heart but the system did not respond.

Fine.

Guess vague problem solving was not part of the system's abilities.

"Student, the library is about to close."

Lu Zhou suddenly realized that the librarian was standing next to him. He looked around and saw that he was the only student left in the library.

"Oh, sorry, I'll pack up right now," said Lu Zhou as he smiled apologetically and reached for the draft papers on the table.

He could not study for much longer anyway.

I'll go out and eat something.