

I Can Meet with Dead Scientists #Chapter 11 Little Niu's 2 Birthdays (Part 1) - Read I Can Meet with Dead Scientists Chapter 11 Little Niu's 2 Birthdays (Part 1)

Chapter 11: Chapter 11 Little Niu's 2 Birthdays (Part 1)

The simplified drawings Xu Yun saw were very simple, but the information they revealed was also quite obvious:

Little Niu was already curious about universal gravitation.

In terms of its nature, this was undoubtedly a 'milestone' level 'painting'.

However, for Xu Yun, who was playing the role of the apple, the feeling in his heart was slightly subtle.

Of course.

At this time, although Newton had a vague premonition in his heart, he still had a long way to go before fully deriving the law of universal gravitation.

Readers who weren't driven mad by their physics teachers should know this concept:

Gravity and universal gravitation are different.

Gravity is the force that an object experiences due to Earth's attraction, while universal gravitation refers to the tendency for objects to accelerate towards each other.

Moreover, the direction of gravity is always vertically downward, not necessarily towards the center of the Earth—only at the equator and the poles does it point towards the center, while the direction of universal gravitation is towards the center of the Earth.

As far as the Earth's surface is concerned.

The gravitational force on an object is a component of the universal gravitation between the object and Earth, with another component of universal gravitation providing the centripetal force required for the object's rotation with Earth.

Therefore, gravitational acceleration is greatest at the poles and smallest at the equator.

This is also why the derivation process of universal gravitation requires using three concepts:

First, Kepler's Three Laws; second, the Fluxion Technique derived by Little Niu himself; and third, Hook's elliptical orbit.

That's right.

The first to judge the Earth's gravity hypothetical experiment was not Little Niu, but Hook, who later had a love-hate relationship with Old Niu.

This hypothetical experiment was actually quite simple:

If an object is thrown horizontally from a high tower, assuming the Earth is penetrable and without resistance, then what should be the object's final trajectory.

Little Niu proposed that the object's trajectory should be a spiral, ultimately resting at the Earth's center.

Sir Hook believed that if the object didn't lose any energy, it should follow an elliptical orbit around the Earth and return to its original position.

Of course.

Hook made an intuitive guess of the elliptical orbit, but he didn't derive it—he only derived the inverse-square law with Hewgins, which is based on treating planetary orbits as circles rather than ellipses.

So, students who failed this section in high school, don't blame Old Niu, blame Hook.

However, Mr. Niu was quite cunning; in response to Hook's opinion, he accepted it internally but didn't show it externally.

Then he went on to calculate in secret.

At the time, Little Niu had already developed the Fluxion Technique, so with the last piece of the puzzle in place, universal gravitation was thus, or finally, derived by him.

Therefore, the derivation of universal gravitation wasn't as simple as getting hit by an apple; unless Xu Yun lists a bunch of derivations like $\dot{A}=dA/dt$, merely implying 'why am I falling down' doesn't mean anything.

Moreover, if you want the proud Little Niu to quietly watch you derive, without some kind of friendship, it's absolutely impossible:

Just five months before Little Niu returned home, a girl from Trinity College wanted to ask Little Niu a question, and because she wasted some time, she got a face full of ink from Little Niu.

This incident was recorded in the archives of Trinity College, and as a side note, Little Niu had a dozen similar records, truly incorrigible.

So, again, Mr. Niu's academic standing is as high as Mount Everest, while his character is as low as the Mariana Trench...

Xu Yun's mission was to become friends with Little Niu, and in terms of difficulty, it wasn't much less than deriving the law of universal gravitation.

Moreover, considering the nature of that halo, Xu Yun doubted whether he could flawlessly write out the entire derivation process—time travel has already happened, so a speech suppression spell isn't such a big deal.

Therefore, the same saying holds: everything must be planned long-term.

Xu Yun then moved his gaze from the manuscript to a metal pedestal.

The main part of the metal pedestal was a cross, about thirty centimeters tall. The base seemed to be made of copper, with a number engraved on it:

1642.12.25.

12.25, which is Christmas Day.

At the moment Xu Yun saw this number, a flash of insight crossed his mind, but he still asked knowingly:

"Mr. Newton, may I ask what this is..."

Little Niu touched the top of the cross and said calmly:

"As you see, my birthday."

Little Niu's answer was somewhat casual, like introducing 'those are the flowers I planted last year' to a guest without expecting any particular response.

But to his surprise, Xu Yun showed a hint of astonishment on his face:

"The 25th of December? Isn't that Christmas?"

So Mr. Aiksa and Jesus share the same birthday?"

Then he pointed to the "Holy Bible" on the desk that had knocked him out and said with a smile,

"Mr. Newton, in my distant homeland in the East, someone like you is generally considered a blessed child.

Perhaps in some years, you will also, like that person, be revered in a certain field."

Upon hearing Xu Yun's words, Little Niu was taken aback at first and then showed a hint of excitement, his tone carrying a slight tremble:

"Blessed child? Fat Fish, are you serious?"

Xu Yun nodded affirmatively and explained:

"Of course it's true; such blessed children sometimes have a nickname, called 'the destined one.'

In their youth, they might face hardships like annulled engagements, bullying, betrayal, or even being rejected by their parents.

But once the right moment arrives, they will soar high, shining as dazzling as the stars, terrifying as they are!"

After hearing this, Newton's eyes immediately brightened:

Initially, he thought Xu Yun might be flattering him, but as he listened to the latter part, he became convinced Xu Yun spoke the truth!

Because, apart from annulled engagements, all the other events had occurred in Little Niu's childhood!

And he could be certain that he had never interacted with Xu Yun before, and Xu Yun had neither the means nor the need to inquire about his past—after all, he was just an ordinary university student, hot-tempered and friendless, who would bother to dig into his history?

Thus, there was only one possibility:

He was indeed the destined one Xu Yun spoke of!

Of course.

The reason Newton arrived at this conclusion wasn't because he was under some intelligence-reducing halo, but rather because it involved a secret he never divulged, only mentioned in a letter to Fumisa in 1719:

He was a veteran adolescent fantasy enthusiast who believed until his death that he was a chosen one bestowed with a divine mission.

And all of this began to bud from Little Niu's birthday—two birthdays assigned to different points in future calendars.

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Note:

Today, I asked a friend to find out, and surprisingly learned that the internet access at the University of Oxford's Bodleian Library has scanned versions of Newton's manuscripts, totaling over 170 letters. I just downloaded them all.

By the time you read this Chapter, I'll still be downloading, the VPN is frustratingly slow, only 23kb per second....

Chapter 12: Chapter 12 Little Niu's 2 Birthdays (Part 2)

As a famous figure in the history of physics, Little Niu's birthday has a special twist in the 21st century.

Because if you check, you'll find he has two birthdays:

January 4, 1643, and December 25, 1642.

This situation is due to calendar issues, and actually, both birthdays are accurate.

However, December 25 uses the Julian calendar, and January 4 uses the Gregorian calendar.

The so-called Julian calendar was a calendar issued by the ancient Roman dictator Julius Caesar in 46 BC—that's the one that got kicked by some bat spirit.

The Julian calendar is a solar calendar, taking the Earth's orbit around the Sun as the year, known as the tropical year.

But people familiar with geography know that the tropical year is not a whole number in days; it's 365.2422 days.

The Julian calendar sets a year as 365 days, slightly less than a tropical year, and introduces a leap year every four years, with leap years having 366 days.

On average, this adds up to 365.25 days per year, which is 0.0078 days more than a tropical year.

According to simple arithmetic multiplication, the Julian calendar accumulates an extra 3 days every 400 years, leading to a 10-day discrepancy after over 1500 years.

So in 1582, Pope Gregory issued a command:

That year, you skip 10 days; the day after October 4, 1582, was not October 5, but October 15.

He also changed the method for determining leap years: any year divisible by 4 is a leap year, but century years must be divisible by 400 to be leap years.

This way, the average year is 365.2425 days, only 26 seconds more than the tropical year, resulting in a 1-day error every 3000 years.

This new calendar is called the Gregorian calendar, which is the modern calendar we use today.

The Gregorian calendar was implemented in 1582, but the United Kingdom, not being a Catholic country, did not follow the Pope's command, and thus delayed adopting the Gregorian calendar until 1752.

That means when Little Niu was just born, the UK was still using the Julian calendar.

Hence, in English literature, Newton's birthday is usually cited as December 25, 1642, according to the Julian calendar.

Moreover, many countries adopted the Gregorian calendar later than the UK, such as Russia, which didn't switch from the Julian calendar until 1919.

For example, the October Revolution in Russia historically occurred on November 7, 1917, but why is it named October?

Because at that time, Russia was still using the Julian calendar, making that date October 25, 1917, in the Julian calendar.

However, after other countries switched to the Gregorian calendar, the Eastern Orthodox Church in countries like Russia persisted with the Julian calendar.

So, there's an interesting thing that happens in these countries:

They actually celebrate Christmas on January 7 in the Gregorian calendar. (Those interested can look it up; the author once embarrassed himself over this issue...)

Born on Christmas, bullied in his youth, and always a devout believer.

Hence, during the years when Mr. Niu was alive, he firmly believed himself to be one of the few chosen by God, with the duty and obligation to restore the altered scriptures to their original state.

Mr. Niu wrote roughly one point six to seven million words in various studies throughout his life, about 84% of which were theological works, so he was inherently a great theologian, studying physics to better prove the existence of God—Old Niu's theological journey was even regarded as a separate subject in later academic circles, with a considerable citation index.

However, due to Old Niu's beliefs differing slightly from current doctrine, Little Niu still being a youthful version with no say.

So he dared not reveal his inner thoughts to the public, pretending to be an ordinary theology-loving student and quietly enduring.

But unexpectedly today...

His hidden secret coincided with what a foreigner said about 'this child'?

This foreign culture's definition of 'this kind of person' was undoubtedly a potent stimulant for Little Niu!

It's like using phosphor to imitate ghost fire for someone with scientific knowledge, it would be exposed in minutes, but for the superstitious, it's 'sorcery.'

Hence, unprecedentedly, Little Niu's look at Xu Yun changed...

He even patted Xu Yun on the shoulder, which was rare, and in his excitement, his wig nearly shook off.

If Newton's fondness for Xu Yun was a progress bar, it should've jumped up by 20% with a whoosh.

In a great mood, Newton couldn't resist touching the bronze base again and then turned to Xu Yun, saying:

"Fat Fish, let me show you around."

Xu Yun, naturally, did not decline:

"Then I'll trouble you, Mr. Newton."

Thus, under Little Niu's guidance, they left the room for the first time.

In 1665, the UK had yet to undergo the industrial revolution; coal hadn't started becoming a common fuel, and the infamous "smog" had not yet appeared.

Therefore, the main source of domestic fog was due to the warmer North Atlantic waters meeting the cooler waters around the British Isles, creating sea fog and land fog as large amounts of warm air from the sea met cooler air masses over the islands.

This natural fog, while still thick, didn't bring a sense of hopeless suffocation, nor did it come with blood, tears, and sin.

Plus, the weather today was decent, so at a glance, the countryside atmosphere of the 17th century was quite strong.

Of course, the 'scent of life' was equally strong—a particular odor emanated from Little Niu.

After all, body odor isn't something that stays away just because you're a physicist.

According to records from Michael White's compilation of Old Niu's manuscripts, Mr. Niu used to bathe about once every month and a half in public baths in London when studying, the rest being baptism during mass.

The current Lincolnshire lacked such bathing facilities found in London, hence the unique smell on Little Niu.

Perhaps due to Xu Yun aligning with his heart in his description of 'this child,' at this moment, Little Niu's attitude was quite enthusiastic compared to before.

He pointed north of the house, taking the initiative to introduce:

"Fat Fish, in that direction is the only windmill in Woolsop; each family grinds their flour there to make bread."

"But it's best to queue early if you want to grind flour, or you'll have a group of grannies watching you, and some of those village women are quite talkative—especially with your Eastern appearance, which is so... exotic."

Hearing these words from Newton, a previously composed Xu Yun suddenly had mental images of a crowd of grannies pointing and gossiping about him:

"Look at him, Mrs. Lennon, his appearance is even more peculiar than Benjamin next door."

"Auntie George, stop your foolish groundhog behavior, it's very impolite!"

"Oh my dear God, you don't fancy this lad, do you? Uncle Henry would go crazy if he saw this!"

Thinking of this, Xu Yun immediately broke out in a sweat:

Goodness, the village grannies are truly the unsolvable entities across time and space...

Then Little Niu introduced some of the less noticeable spots before giving Xu Yun a firm pat on the shoulder:

"Fat Fish, come with me."

Xu Yun then refocused and obediently followed Little Niu a few steps to a low storage room.

There, Little Niu retrieved an old key from his person, rough in appearance with a touch of decaying rust—modern pin tumbler locks wouldn't be invented by Linus Yale Jr. until 1860, so earlier locks lacked craftsmanship.

Then Little Niu turned the lock a few times, pushed open the wooden door, and took out two axes.

Seeing Little Niu with the vibe of a Liangshan Hero, Xu Yun couldn't help but grow curious:

"Mr. Newton, are we going to...?"

"Chop some wood, and then take you to meet my uncle. We'll be having lunch there, don't worry; my cousins are lovely."

"Oh, uncle's place..."

Xu Yun instinctively nodded, but the next second, something dawned on him, and his eyes widened to an impressive thirty-one Li Ronghaos:

"Wait, cousins?"

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Chapter 13: Chapter 13 William Asku

Woolsop Village is located in the north of the United Kingdom, where the commonly seen tree species in the wild are generally three types:

oak, poplar, and cherry trees.

Among them, poplar is often used as kindling in the northern countryside areas without conifer coverage due to its fast growth and low density.

This time, Little Niu is also looking for poplar, as a sort of preparation for the upcoming visit.

After heading west from their dwelling for about a few hundred meters, Little Niu and Xu Yun finally selected a short poplar tree approximately 1201 millimeters tall.

There's no need to elaborate on the tree-cutting process, after all, this isn't a fantasy novel, so there won't be any bizarre creatures like tree demons or tree spirits appearing.

A poplar tree as thick as a roll of paper stood helpless before the two grown men, eventually being cut into several pieces of wood.

The only troublesome matter during this was that Xu Yun felt a bit uncomfortable in his feet — he was wearing Little Niu's high school shoes, which were about size 40, somewhat ill-fitting for his size 42 feet.

As everyone knows, even a mere 0.5 centimeters of tightness in shoes can be a devastating blow to comfort.

Therefore, with a few twists and bends of his waist and hips, the ankle joint supporting Xu Yun's foot quickly developed a patch of red swelling due to pressure.

Seeing this, Xu Yun couldn't help but slightly shake his head — this bit of chafing wasn't much of an issue, but it reflected the numerous difficulties yet to come.

In short, the beginning was tough.

After about an hour, Little Niu and Xu Yun finally processed all the firewood they needed to prepare.

It's worth noting that Little Niu did not slack off at all during the whole process, nor did he order Xu Yun around like a servant or slave.

He wore Xu Yun's shoes but earnestly helped Xu Yun share the work, even occasionally chatting with him.

This slightly incongruous scene is somewhat a reflection of the social thoughts in 17th-century England, between the bourgeois revolution and the Glorious Revolution — that is, between 1640 and 1688.

To be more precise, it could even be seen as a conflict in legal cognition.

Of course.

Understanding is one thing; Xu Yun himself found it rather difficult to immediately connect with this train of thought.

After all, the gap between the 17th century and the 21st century isn't just nearly four hundred years in number, but a comprehensive transformation in political, economic, and cultural spheres.

Therefore, it can be foreseen that in the coming days, the clash of worldviews will continue.

On this occasion, Xu Yun and Little Niu organized two bundles of firewood, each carrying one bundle and heading eastward like shepherd boys descending the mountain.

At this moment, due to an argument with his mother, Little Niu had moved to that garden, and from the fluency of his introduction to the house, it was evidently not the first time this had happened.

Little Niu's accommodation and study are completed in the garden house, with two of the three meals a day besides breakfast solved at his uncle's home.

Indeed.

17th-century Britons often had three meals a day, and some nobles even added an afternoon tea — one of the benefits of colonial expansion, as some later scholars believe Britain completed the optimization of a new generation during this phase.

After all, the difference between bathing every three days versus every thirty is primarily superficial, but the nutritional gap between two and three meals a day could potentially impact many physiological data of future generations.

This point is actually very evident in the homeland at present:

The post-2000 generation is noticeably superior in physique compared to the post-1990 generation, especially in some southern regions, where the height of the new generation is truly shooting up.

Thus, those arguments against eating meat, eggs, and dairy are utterly foolish, their intentions reprehensible!

Returning our gaze to the original position.

Before the industrial era, the British countryside was void of noise, with only the sound of shuffling footsteps and the cries of waterfowl, giving a sense of harmony and nature.

Absent were the hustle and bustle and splendor of the city, the pale blue sky seemed to stretch endlessly to the horizon, with tranquil villages looming in the thin mist...

Xu Yun suddenly felt a pang of nostalgia.

Having grown accustomed to the urban clamor, who still remembers the country lanes?

The duo walked roughly a kilometer, and after rounding a mountain forest, a house enclosed by a fence came into view.

The house was built entirely of red bricks, with thick mortar joints, and the plinth, voussoir, lintel, coping, and window sills were made of grayish-white stone.

This house, too, was of a low-rise design, and from the triangular ridged roof, it could be judged as having an interior layout of a one-story house plus a two-story storeroom, its overall area being more than six times that of Newton's residence.

Judging from the style and layout, this should be considered a very typical 17th-century English countryside cottage.

It lacked the grandeur of the noble architecture within London City but exuded more of a lived-in feeling.

To the right of the cottage's main entrance stood a simple cattle shed, where a man was busily engaged in something.

After reaching the fence, Little Niu first laid the firewood he carried on a broken horse post.

Then, adjusting his breath, he called out to the man in the cattle shed:

"Uncle William, Uncle William, could you please open the door?"

Hearing Newton's voice, the man in the cattle shed instinctively looked up, allowing Xu Yun to see his face clearly.

This was a middle-aged man about forty-five or forty-six years old, tall in stature and with a hint of brown-black skin.

He wore a plain-colored, sleeved coat, an apron tied around his waist, and had a short haircut, quite rare for that era.

In appearance, he somewhat resembled Captain Olga — of course, he would look even more so if he were lying prone on the ground.

Little Niu was notoriously indifferent in social interactions, seeing most people as either foolish or somewhat foolish.

In Old Niu's entire life, there were only two "Williams" whom he would proactively speak to with enthusiasm:

One was the William Coin, personally minted by Old Niu in 1714.

The other was his uncle:

William Asku.

William had always liked Newton. Besides being very close by blood, he can also be counted as one of the benefactors in Little Niu's life:

William Asku graduated from the University of Cambridge, academically a senior to Newton, and if it hadn't been for his joint persuasion with Little Niu's headmaster, Stock, Hanna would never have let Little Niu attend the University of Cambridge.

It could even be said:

William's persuasion back then changed the course of the entire world.

If he hadn't persuaded Hanna back then, the founder of classical physics might have had to find another Gao Ming.

At this moment, William Asku's identity was that of a materials merchant, traveling between Italy, Spain, and France, primarily trading in cotton, linen, and pig iron.

Yet due to the rampant plague in the Netherlands and Great Britain, William's trade chain had abruptly been interrupted shortly before.

Though he still had a batch of cotton and linen materials on hand, he lacked sufficient financial reserves.

According to the records in Old Niu's letters.

Up until 1668, William's family life was somewhat difficult.

Including him, William's family consisted of six people, and the fact that he could still allow Newton to come over for meals speaks volumes about their close relationship.

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Chapter 14: Chapter 14: That Legendary Cousin! (Trial Recommendation Tomorrow, Please Support!!)

In the cowshed.

Upon hearing Little Niu's greeting, William was first taken aback, then overjoyed:

"Hallelujah! Little Isaac? Why are you here so early today?"

As he spoke, he quickly set aside the fodder clamped under his arm, wiped his hands on his apron, and walked briskly to the fence.

He first skillfully took the firewood from Little Niu's hand, gently embraced Little Niu, and, after parting, turned his gaze to Xu Yun standing behind Little Niu.

He glanced over Xu Yun's attire, pausing for a moment on those gold-rimmed spectacles, and asked somewhat politely:

"Isaac, this is..."

Little Niu subtly exchanged glances with Xu Yun, then followed their pre-arranged script:

"This is my friend from the East whom I met at Trinity College. His parents are merchants from the Netherlands.

After losing contact with his family on the road while leaving London, he temporarily came to Woolsop to find me and is now planning to stay in the garden house for the time being.

Look, this pair of shoes I'm wearing is a gift from him."

As soon as Little Niu finished speaking, Xu Yun cupped his hands toward William:

"Hello, my name is Li Feiyu. My ancestors hail from the East's Wind Spirit Moon Shadow clan, currently residing in the Netherlands."

"Hello, I am William Asku, Isaac's uncle."

William stepped up and gave Xu Yun a simple hug, a somewhat subtle expression on his face:

"Mr. Feiyu, right... It's unexpected that little Isaac, after staying in London for a few years, has managed to make a friend from abroad. This is truly delightful news.

Mr. Feiyu, on behalf of the Asku family, I welcome you to Woolsop. Though this little village isn't as prosperous as London or as luxurious as Amsterdam, please trust me, you will fall in love with it."

Xu Yun chuckled awkwardly and nodded, though his eye twitched involuntarily:

Gosh, again with the Feiyu.

Do these British folks always prefer the second tone? Isn't the name Feiyu good enough?

While Xu Yun and William were conversing, a person suddenly opened the door of the house behind William, and out stepped a seventeen or eighteen-year-old blonde girl.

This girl had an ordinary appearance, with some freckles unique to Europeans on her face, but she exuded a youthful vigor from head to toe, appearing very lively:

"Dad, Mom is asking where you put the whetstone?"

William turned and looked at her, thought for a few seconds, then said:

"Check behind the cupboard, it should be next to that white flag model I brought back from France last time."

The girl gave an "oh", then jogged back inside the house.

William turned back around and smiled apologetically at Xu Yun, saying:

"Sorry, that's my daughter, Lisa. She's a bit loud and brash, I hope you don't mind."

Xu Yun was about to make a simple courteous remark, but upon hearing the name Lisa, his pupils shrank instantly.

Gradually, a tingling sense of witnessing history climbed back into his heart.

Those slightly familiar with Old Niu know that this Great Scientist remained a lifelong bachelor.

But bachelorhood aside, Little Niu's romantic life had become dramatically exaggerated by some people in later generations.

In the rumors.

Little Niu's first romance originated during his time at King's School, Grantham. He boarded at the local pharmacist William Clark's home and got engaged to the pharmacist's stepdaughter Annie Stoller before leaving for the University of Cambridge at 19.

Later, due to Newton's devotion to his studies, the love cooled, and Miss Stoller married someone else.

However, in reality, this was just an introduction made by Eric Temple Bell and Ives in "The Great Mathematicians."

There are two significant errors therein:

First, Little Niu never got engaged.

Second, the girl Little Niu actually liked was never named Annie Stoller.

William Stickley, a contemporary friend of Newton's, recorded in "Memoirs of the Life of Sir Isaac Newton" that Stickley visited Mrs. Vincent after Newton's death, who was then Miss Stoller, Newton's romantic interest.

Mrs. Vincent's name was Catherine, not Annie. Annie was actually her sister. (I found a scan of Stickley's original manuscript in the Bodleian Library, and later contacted Men Zhiwei, an expert on Newton from Ji Da, to confirm this. I've been busy with single updates for the past few days because of this matter.)

At that time, how old was Annie Stoller?

Three years old!

An age where not just secondary sexual characteristics but even clear speech can't be expected.

Little Niu's surname is Isaac, not Joseph "Love Pants," who would have a romantic interest in a three-year-old, no way.

Eric Temple Bell penned "The Great Mathematicians" in 1934, a full two hundred years after Little Niu. Hence, the credibility regarding Little Niu's emotions is indeed low.

However, all currently circulating versions refer to Annie Stoller, and only a very few mention the name Catherine Stoller, including a certain foolish author who was deceived for over a decade,

Even taking a step further, there's no telling how much unverified but long-since solidified information continues to spread without dialectical scrutiny.

Back to the original topic.

Besides Catherine, Little Niu had another very 'famous' romantic experience:

Allegedly, once, Little Niu fell in love with another girl but when proposing, his mind wandered, leaving only the endless series of the binomial theorem in his mind.

At that time, Little Niu was smoking a pipe. He grabbed the lady's fingers, mistook them for a pipe cleaner, and tried to stuff them into the pipe.

The girl screamed in pain, shouted dramatically "you don't care about me at all" and left him, leading Little Niu to remain unmarried for life.

This rumor lacks specifics like time, place, and people. Moreover, the storyteller claimed to read Newton's mind at that moment, which is simply too fantastical.

After later extensive research, not only were no ladies found, but even no pipe ashes were discovered.

Aside from this one true, one false rumor, Little Niu's most famous romantic affair left is...

A romance with his cousin.

It's suggested that Newton fell in love with his bright, studious, and thoughtful cousin while he was sheltering from the plague at his uncle's home in 1665.

The cousin was equally fond of this learned, insightful, and persuasive university student.

They often walked together, as Newton loved to impromptu give lengthy speeches, the content of which usually involved his current studies and research endeavors.

Although the cousin didn't understand, she patiently listened, seemingly finding it interesting, allowing feelings to develop between the two.

Being inherently shy, Newton never expressed his love for his cousin in time.

After returning to the University of Cambridge, he once again immersed himself intensely in scientific research.

He never paid much attention to personal life, whereas his cousin mistook his focus for disinterest, eventually marrying someone else out of disappointment.

The truth of this relationship remains unknown, but, in the words of many content creators, the name of Newton's cousin is sometimes mindlessly ascribed to the same name as the aforementioned proposed lady.

However, unlike that woman who wasn't found in any documents, Newton's cousin did indeed exist.

Her name was Lisa Asku (sourced from the Bodleian Library Newton—manuscript—1712 13th letter handwritten manuscript scan)

Newton did frequently visit his uncle's house during his time at Woolsop. Importantly, Old Niu bequeathed part of his handwritings and inheritance to Lisa Asku's children before his death — none of Hanna's children or his uncle William's other three children received such treatment.

Additionally, based on the personal account of Newton's friend, Edmond Halley, discoverer of Halley's Comet, Little Niu did mention to him the story of his cousin romance.

Therefore, from a documentation perspective, it's quite probable that Little Niu once had such an unresolved love affair.

It demonstrates that—

Long-distance relationships don't tend to have good outcomes...

What, you don't even have a girlfriend for a long-distance relationship?

Then never mind.

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Chapter 15: Chapter 15: No Wonder They Are Relatives...

After introducing themselves and recognizing each other's identities, William Asku quickly brought Little Niu and Xu Yun into the house.

Friends familiar with history should know that the 17th century is considered a crucial turning point in the history of the United Kingdom.

In 1637, the bourgeois revolution erupted, and by 1688, the UK finally established a constitutional monarchy system, and capitalism began to develop rapidly.

The current time point is 1665, and the Victorian architectural style that became popular globally with the constitutional monarchy has not yet appeared, so most rural buildings still have a very strong Netherlands style.

For example, this house where William and they live.

In addition to the red brick material previously noticed by Xu Yun, it also has a steeply pitched roof, crenellations, chimneys, and so on, in its architectural outline.

These additional modules have many indentations and protrusions, are asymmetrical externally, and most of the windows are large square windows.

The arrangement of the windows is also quite random, and you can see some climbing plants.

However, the exterior of this house looks somewhat bourgeois in style, but if you observe carefully, you will find that many parts already show stains or even aging, and the actual condition of the entire building is far from as luxurious as it appears at first glance.

As a physics nerd from the future, Xu Yun certainly knows William Asku's life trajectory:

Now, to put it bluntly, William Asku is a non-entity.

After his sister Hanna Asku, Little Niu's mother, married Nabas Smith, William borrowed about 20 guineas from her to start a horse trading business.

And he soon made a small fortune, the exact amount unknown, but historically recognized to be between 40-50 guineas.

So, William spent quite a bit of money building this house, spending just over 10 guineas, which is about fifteen years of income for an ordinary family.

As a result, two years after the house was built, William began a seven-year spell of financial loss.

According to Old Niu's records in some letters.

Over the years, William has been involved in ironmaking, construction, fruit trade, shipbuilding among five or six industries, none of which were profitable.

The most recent business William engaged in was the transportation of cotton and pig iron previously mentioned, for which he already found a buyer and just had to deliver the goods to get paid, changing his luck in one go.

Unexpectedly, the Black Death swept through London, temporarily halting the shipping routes.

Of course.

Though unlucky, William's character is still good.

At present, it's a period of colonial expansion in the UK, and as a University of Cambridge graduate, William actually has connections to get involved in the slave trade, which is notoriously profitable.

His friend Robert Kuniya once approached him, asking for only five guineas – about three hundred thousand today – to buy in.

However, because William is genuinely a devout believer, he ultimately chose to reject Robert's proposal and continued with his legitimate business.

Whether or not William regretted twelve years later when Robert Kuniya became the deputy governor of the South American Guyana Colony is unknown.

William's life trajectory can be seen as either brainwashed or devout, but from the perspective of facts, he truly is a conscientious merchant in line with the definitions of doctrine and ideology.

Crack—

The wooden door of the house made a long, old sound, as if welcoming the new guests with an alternative wind chime.

William's house did not have a noticeable entrance hall; after all, apart from Switzerland and Italy, even in later times, many European and American countries did not have the habit of changing shoes:

They either walk around the house with shoes or with socks or bare feet.

This habit has some connection with the difference between stone and wooden architecture, whether it's good or bad depends on the rhetoric.

For instance, normally we would say that our country's long-standing culture, such as rituals like sitting, makes not changing shoes unsuitable.

But some people who've taken money can twist it into saying that foreign roads are very clean, so there's no need to change shoes at home.

Alright, let's return our gaze to the original subject.

As Xu Yun walked into the house, along with the creaking sound of the wooden door, came a peculiar smell mixed with various odors.

There was body odor, mold, dampness, and so on...

Like drinking water steeped with the mat a 500-pound fat man slept on for three months in the summer without air conditioning, it's quite shocking for modern people.

Fortunately, Xu Yun is pretty resilient in this aspect, so he quickly adjusted and began examining the interior layout.

Unlike the exterior's strong English rural style, the interior of William's house was incredibly dilapidated:

The entrance connects to a rectangular living room with a marble floor. A fireplace was chiseled into the left wall of the living room.

A painting with a missing corner, seemingly related to religious doctrine, hung above the fireplace, surrounded by a few wooden chairs and a lounge chair.

From the slightly blackened animal fur on the lounge chair, it's clear these were all furniture William purchased before he lost money.

Apart from that.

The living room had only a few boxes holding pots, pans, and other miscellaneous items, as well as the triangular pitched roof at the top.

The aging white walls were cracked in places, with the sediment marks left by water seepage visible.

No eaves, no purlins and brackets interlocking, and no yellow tiles covering the roof, all so ordinary it's somewhat dull.

At the end of the living room, it splits into two paths, one leading to a room with a narrow entrance. Judging by the sink-like structures and wooden buckets on the floor, it seems to be a back kitchen or similar area.

The other end was obscured by something, making it impossible to see beyond. But without surprise, this would most likely lead to the bedroom or study.

And while Xu Yun was assessing the interior arrangements, a slight sound suddenly came from behind him.

Instinctively, Xu Yun turned his head, and in the next second, he locked eyes with a pair of adorable big eyes.

The owner of the eyes is a little girl about five or six years old, with golden hair draping over her shoulders, her clothes a bit tattered and thin.

At the moment, the girl's face was covered with a lot of dirt and wood chips, seemingly just back from playing outside.

Upon seeing this, Xu Yun couldn't help but murmur to himself, wondering what was so fun outside on such a cold day.

But despite the internal complaints, the little girl's sellable appearance was so endearing and healing that he naturally pulled out a smile:

"Hello there, little sister."

The little girl blinked her adorable big eyes, the corners of her mouth turning up ever so slightly, and then she pulled out a blackish blob from behind her back.

And before Xu Yun could make out what it was, she waved her small hand...

Only to hear a smack.

The object landed right on Xu Yun's head.

By the way, Xu Yun is quite familiar with this, having played with it many times during childhood, though he has never been slapped in the face with it.

It's called...

Cow dung.

....

Chapter 16: Chapter 16: Xu Yun's Punishment.

As a modern person with normal XP, Xu Yun definitely has no inappropriate thoughts about a little girl of five or six.

After all, he's not some kind of obsessee—he's a staunch supporter of Tifa.

But likewise, naturally, he wouldn't have too much defense, especially when the other party appeared in Little Niu's uncle's home, clearly as a family member.

Unexpectedly...

This young man launched a sneak attack upon meeting, hurling a lump of cow dung face-first?

Thus caught off guard, Xu Yun was flabbergasted as the cow dung splattered all over his head.

Seeing this situation, William Asku beside Xu Yun immediately turned pale with anger.

He quickly helped Xu Yun dust off the cow dung with one hand while shouting furiously in a high G pitch:

"Li——la——ni——!!!"

As Newton's closest elder—literally the only one, how could William not know how socially reclusive his nephew is?

If fighting counts as intimate contact, Little Niu is definitely the King of the Sea, invincible throughout Lincolnshire in that regard.

But setting aside the fights for proper friendship discussion, Little Niu truly has not a single friend to greet.

Therefore, when he first saw Xu Yun—especially with that bandage wrapped around Xu Yun's head, William's first reaction was that Little Niu had provoked some noble child and brought him over to ask for medical expenses.

And this distinguished 'VIP' guest was greeted by his young daughter with a headful of cow dung?

At this moment, William had only one thought:

Oh my god, it's a disaster!

However, facing her aggressive father, the little girl named Lilani showed no fear.

She cheekily stuck out her tongue and bounded off towards the end of the living room:

"Mama, sister, the monster has caught brother Isaac!!!"

Xu Yun and William and Little Niu:

"...."

Then William snapped back to his senses, quickly dusting off the cow dung from Xu Yun, and kept apologizing:

"I'm sorry, Mr. Feiyu, I sincerely apologize to you!"

That is my youngest daughter, Lilani Asku. I've been away for years, unable to discipline her, causing this mess now.....

Oh, rest assured, I will definitely teach her a good lesson!"

Xu Yun kept his head down, frantically shaking off the cow dung, while helplessly raising a bitter smile:

I was wondering who it could be, turns out it's this naughty child.....

Lilani Asku, the youngest daughter of William Asku.

In a letter Newton wrote to Stukeley in 1703, Old Niu once mentioned a mischievous act by this little rascal:

At that time, William Asku was hosting a guest from Sweden, and due to the esteemed status of the guest, William began preparations early.

Upon learning of this, Lilani Asku somehow got her hands on a big bucket of cow dung and gave the guest a sudden 'justice from above' upon arrival.

Old Niu didn't elaborate too much about what followed, but the scene must have been quite awkward, and Lilani likely couldn't escape a round of mixed hand-slapping from both parents.

Unexpectedly, after my own crossing, this event that should have happened at the end of 1667, happened to me instead?

Careless.....

Meanwhile, with the commotion at the door, the people waiting inside the house were also gradually alarmed and came out:

The first to appear was Lisa Asku, whom we saw earlier.

At this moment, the girl was carrying the runaway Lilani Asku, with Lilani holding up a white flag made in Gaul, waving it wantingly to surrender.

Lisa Asku originally carried this little troublemaker with ease, like lifting a chick, but her expression froze upon seeing Little Niu and she quickly released her, assuming a reserved posture.

Following her was a pair of twelve or thirteen-year-old twins, with a rather thin build, seemingly somewhat malnourished.

The four sisters appeared from the left passage, chirping and chattering a few words, and finally Lisa Asku said something towards the room that seemed to be the kitchen.

Soon, a slightly plump middle-aged woman came out:

She was wearing an apron, holding some water-soaked wild vegetables in one hand, and a knife of West Garden Temple World size in the other:

Obviously, this was William Asku's wife, and since I couldn't find out her name, we'll just call her Mrs. Williams.

Seeing this scene at the entrance, Mrs. Williams blinked and quickly walked up:

"Dear, what happened?"

William nonchalantly took a piece of cow dung from behind Xu Yun's ear and pointed at Lilani across the way:

"She, guest, cow dung."

The concise three words immediately made Mrs. Williams understand what happened.

So, this matriarch didn't bother greeting Little Niu and joined in on the poop cleaning battle.

As for Little Niu.....

He simply dusted off a few bits for the sake of face and then stood aside, exchanging flirtatious glances with Lisa Asku, wishing his eyeballs could pop out....

Fortunately, this time Lilani threw relatively dry cow dung, and the hit area wasn't Xu Yun's face.

Thus, after a good deal of chaos, Mrs. Williams brought two buckets of freshly heated hot water, leading Xu Yun outside to give his head a quick rinse with blueberry juice.

Everything cleaned up, Xu Yun followed Mrs. Williams back inside.

By now, William's whole family, including Little Niu, had gathered by the fireplace, with William sitting in the center looking stern, the twin sisters quietly waiting at the side, while Little Niu and Lisa Asku continued their eye-flirting game.

As for Lilani.....

The little girl stood alone beside William, her reddened eyes indicating that the little troublemaker had already received a round of bamboo-stick punishment.

Seeing Xu Yun enter, William hurried to his feet and led Lilani to his side:

"Lilani, apologize quickly!"

Lilani pouted, rubbed her left arm, and gloomily said:

"I'm sorry, Mr. Feiyu."

Beside her, William took out a piece of sea buckthorn tree wood—with many thorns on its branches, which could easily scratch skin:

"Mr. Feiyu, according to Commiss Law, you may now administer no more than 20 strokes to Lilani."

Xu Yun had originally planned to be tactful, but upon hearing this, he paused and remembered something:

Oh, right, this is the United Kingdom, where bizarre laws are as common as grass!

As the birthplace of common law, the UK's legal system has had a profound impact on countries worldwide.

UK laws are among the most enduring and ancient in the world.

Some current laws were enacted hundreds of years ago, incredibly bizarre, and remain in effect to this day.

For example, the 1848 "Treason Felony Act," under which, if a postage stamp bearing the British Queen's image is affixed upside down, it would be considered treason.

There's also the 1998 "Terrorism and Conspiracy Act," which states that any British citizen who detonates a nuclear device to mutual destruction, regardless of at home or abroad, will be subject to life imprisonment.

And if a whale dies on the beach, its head automatically belongs to the Queen, with the Queen having first rights to the whale's tail. (Recommended reading: "The Strange Laws of Old England," it's really fascinating).

Therefore, it wouldn't be surprising for the British in the seventeenth century to come up with a disciplinary law for naughty children.

However, although the law permits, Xu Yun, adhering somewhat to modern values, felt that disciplining the naughty child might not be good for her...

So Xu Yun thought for a moment and came to a decision.

He extended his right arm into a fist, lifting the little troublemaker's left hand toward his own right hand in parallel.

Then, picking up the bamboo pole, he struck with moderate force, three times.

After three blows.

A large and small, yellow and white arm both bore three superficial but bleeding welts.

Then Xu Yun pointed to Lilani's arm and told her:

"This is the punishment you deserve, considering your young age, I only hit three times."

Then he pointed to his own bleeding right hand and said earnestly:

"This is my self-punishment for disciplining a little girl, unrelated to the law, but concerning morality."

Opposite him, Lilani, usually fearless, suddenly froze in surprise, gazing bewilderedly at her arm, her mouth moved, but she said nothing.

Chapter 17: Chapter 17 Terrible Lunch and Night (Part 1)

As the birthplace of common law, the 17th century United Kingdom, in some respects, was actually somewhat similar to the Qin Dynasty of our homeland:

It defined relevant laws for all possible occurrences, essentially adopting what could be described as brute force enumeration.

From igniting wars to petty household matters, even calling someone an idiot could find related punitive measures.

Right is right, wrong is wrong; wrongdoers must be punished, with no room for empathy or consideration.

However, as a modern person of the 21st century, Xu Yun's concept of 'punishment' was clearly different from that of a 17th century British person.

He wasn't a Holy Mother, but from a normal person's perspective, punishing a five or six year old child with twenty lashes for splashing some cow dung seemed excessively harsh.

In colloquial terms, it was overly severe sentencing.

But if he chose to do nothing and simply forgive her, whether Xu Yun would be satisfied was another matter, but would Lilani truly realize her mistakes?

That was clearly impossible.

Let's not forget, in the actual historical context, there was another unlucky soul who was once pranked by this mischievous child, and back then Lilani was two years older than she is now.

Therefore, such behavior cannot simply be explained away as an 'unintentional mistake'.

After much thought, Xu Yun finally made his previous decision.

The severity of evil varies, and the three lashes on Lilani represent Xu Yun's assessment of the degree of her wrongdoing.

And the three lashes on himself represented Xu Yun's stance:

No matter what, Lilani is ultimately just a child, so out of his moral integrity, he chose to share the punishment with her.

Of course.

Xu Yun could have used the so-called reason of 'a cousin standing in' to let Little Niu take the whipping on behalf of the young girl, and by the way, retaliate for the beating he received.

But after all, he wasn't Wang Qiang, and couldn't bring himself to say such shameless words.

In summary.

After modern 21st century concepts were repeatedly bombarded by the socio-cultural elements of 400 years ago, Xu Yun finally made his own voice heard in this era.

Even though this voice might be very small, almost unheard after today, its significance remains undeniable.

At least at this moment, everyone present was stunned by Xu Yun's conduct.

Of course, while they were stunned, everyone's reactions were somewhat different.

Mrs. Williams and the twins' gazes were quite pure; they were simply surprised by Xu Yun's unexpected actions, arising from preconceived notions.

However, Lisa Asku's expression was more complicated, carrying an air of pondering with half-understanding.

As for William Asku and Little Niu...

Their expressions were not exaggerated, but their eyes conveyed more information than those of the women.

Currently, British thought was at a time of intense clash and change, so although Xu Yun's actions seemed a bit unconventional, for individuals like Little Niu, Lisa, and William, who had received educational enlightenment (William was also a high-achieving graduate of the University of Cambridge), it wasn't something they couldn't comprehend or would internally curse as foolish.

After a while, William looked deeply at Xu Yun.

He walked over to Lilani's side and rubbed her head:

"Lilani, why don't you thank Mr. Feiyu?"

Lilani was silent for a moment. This five-year-old girl's little mind was filled with questions and feelings she couldn't understand, but in the end, she murmured:

"Thank you, Mr. Feiyu."

Xu Yun nodded with a pleased expression like he was teaching a promising child, and at the same time discreetly placed his hands behind his back, with a strong thought in his mind:

Damn it, I whipped too hard, it hurts like hell...

.....

Seeing a potentially harmful prank being resolved in a relatively perfect manner, William, while exhaling lightly, also regained his patriarchal authority.

He cleared his throat and turned to ask Mrs. Williams:

"Dear, is lunch ready today?"

Mrs. Williams pointed to the wild vegetables on the table:

"The wild vegetables and lentils are almost washed, it will take no more than ten minutes to start stewing — today's lentils are very fresh, they're perfect for sandwiches."

William then nodded in satisfaction:

"Alright, then you go ahead and prepare, I'll sit with Mr. Feiyu for a while."

Mrs. Williams obliged, re-tied her apron, picked up the wild vegetables, and returned to the kitchen.

William Asku led Xu Yun to sit by the fireplace, pointed to his four daughters and said:

"Mr. Feiyu, you've already met Lilani and Lisa, they happen to be my youngest and oldest daughters.

The remaining two are Elura and Andrea, as you can see, they are a pair of twins, and they are exactly 12 years old this year.

Elura, Andrea, quickly greet Mr. Feiyu."

Compared to their elder sister and younger sister's liveliness, Elura and Andrea were much more shy, and the sisters softly bowed to Xu Yun:

"Hello, Mr. Feiyu."

Xu Yun responded with a nod:

"Hello, nice to meet you."

Elura and Andrea were very frail-looking, resembling two small bean sprouts, hardly having matured.

The reason for this situation was actually quite simple:

Their growth period coincided with William's financial downturn, leaving them with little opportunity to nutritional intake.

Unfortunately, this also affected their future life course — due to malnutrition, the sisters passed away one after the other at ages 38 and 41 respectively.

Of course.

There were also emotional factors, which are not elaborated upon here.

After introducing his daughters, William became quite curious and started chatting with Xu Yun — like Little Niu, he knew of the existence of Eastern People but had never interacted with them.

Although their worldviews were separated by four full centuries, William was, after all, a graduate from the University of Cambridge, with a view and intellect that ranked among the top-tier people.

Coupled with the fact that during these years, although he didn't make much money, he traveled to many places, so when it came to conversation, he was like an old fellow adept at fishing, knowing a bit about everything.

Therefore, after a pleasant chat, Xu Yun found himself unexpectedly hitting it off with William.

What, you're asking what Little Niu was doing at this time?

Of course, just sitting there munching away...

Approximately twenty minutes passed this way.

Mrs. Williams emerged from the kitchen, carrying a steaming pot with both hands and taking small steps.

....

Chapter 18: Chapter 18 Terrible Lunch and Night (Part 2)

Inside the room.

After coming out from the kitchen, Mrs. Williams first placed the cauldron on the table, wiped her hands on her apron a few times, and then turned to Lisa Asku and said:

"Lisa, portion out the bread."

Lisa quickly stopped her blinking eyes, got up, and responded:

"No problem, Mom."

Then she led Sister Elura to the dining table, swiftly retrieved a small basket covered with a white cloth from under the table.

She lifted the white cloth and began distributing the bread.

Mrs. Williams then returned to the kitchen, and shortly afterwards, brought out a smaller cooking pot.

Setting up the dining table was actually quite simple, but it seemed joyful—because there were guests present this time, Mrs. Williams deliberately prepared an additional meat dish.

The chirpy voices of several young girls, mingling with the warm temperature from the fireplace, gradually warmed Xu Yun's spirits considerably.

In 17th-century England, apart from the aristocracy who employed servants, the cooking rights in ordinary households were primarily in the hands of women, who sometimes would even drive away the men who wanted to help.

Therefore, while Mrs. Williams and Lisa were setting up, William remained calmly seated by the fireplace, telling stories about the blue skies of Manchester.

When everything was ready, he finally led Xu Yun and Little Niu to the dining table and invited him to sit:

"Please sit here, Mr. Feiyu."

Hearing this, Andrea, one of the twin sisters, instinctively walked behind Xu Yun and pulled out a chair for him.

Xu Yun politely thanked her, and as he sat down, he used the corner of his eye to take in his first lunch in the seventeenth century:

The dining table was located to the right of the living room, a rectangular shape about two meters long and one point two meters wide, made of wood, with one support leg slightly damaged, its base propped up by a bundle of cotton cloth.

William and Mrs. Williams sat alone on the narrow ends, while the others sat three to a side:

Sister Elura, Lisa sat on one side, Xu Yun, Little Niu, and Lilani on the other.

In front of each person was a piece of bread, somewhat poorly made, resembling that kind of handmade bread not made with a mold, but looking quite hearty.

Xu Yun's plate was hastily crafted while chopping wood earlier, not polished or refined, but having been washed multiple times in a small stream by Xu Yun, it barely sufficed to hold things.

In front of the plate was a jar of butter, with about 30% of its content remaining, whether intentionally or not, the jar was positioned closest to Xu Yun's seat.

Directing his gaze inward, to the center of the table were two iron pots placed on cotton-linen heat pads, one larger than the other.

Both pots contained stews, a cooking method loved by the British—just as everything back home can be paired with pepper, in Britain, anything could be stewed.

The more famous ones are Lancashire Hotpot and Liverpool Stew, which don't emphasize the pot base, as long as there are onions and potatoes, you can even stew a shoe in it and it would still be edible.

It's rumored that when Li Hongzhang first visited England, he saw a British woman put eight ingredients into a pot to stew, hence the British stew is also known as "Hodgepodge Stew," ahem...

The small iron pot in front of Xu Yun seemed to contain a medley of vegetarian dishes, upon a quick glance, he could see lentils, cauliflower, wild greens, and Bramley apples.

Perhaps due to being soaked in chlorophyll, the entire soup appeared grayish-green and was continuously bubbling.

The contents of the large pot were relatively simple, just a straightforward stewed eel.

As an island nation, the UK had always had a thriving fishing industry; even in the seventeenth century, fish was quite inexpensive.

Therefore, the often-said notion that meat resources were scarce in 17th-century Britain actually referred to land-based red and white meats; if you wanted fish, it was still quite accessible.

For example, now with the William Clan, even if the entire family couldn't produce a single Guinea, they could still frequently consume fish, which indeed is one advantageous aspect of being an island country.

Once everyone was in place.

William clasped his hands together, leading everyone in a simple thanksgiving prayer.

Xu Yun was not a believer, but out of respect for the era's culture and the William family, he followed, closing his eyes in a gesture.

Three minutes passed, and the prayer was complete.

Upon opening his eyes, William stood up and scooped a small bowl of fish and broth from the large pot, handing it to Xu Yun:

"Mr. Feiyu, here's your fish soup. Be careful, it's a bit hot."

Xu Yun politely accepted it, then watched as William served the soup to each person in turn.

Before entering the pot, the eel had been skinned by Mrs. Williams, and the large chunks of fish were quite convenient for swallowing, though aesthetically lacking...

Xu Yun glanced at the somewhat murky fish broth in his bowl, his gaze lingered on the bowl's edge for a few seconds.

Finally, gathering his courage, he gently took a sip.

Five seconds later.

Xu Yun quietly set down the small bowl, his stomach churning wildly, tightly clenching his back molars, forcing himself to keep composure.

Hmm, how to say this...

It's quite similar to Laoshan snake grass water.

It had been mentioned before.

Xu Yun had cultivated his culinary skills during his exchange student days in the UK, so he was quite familiar with British sea fish.

Thus, upon tasting the fish broth, he immediately discerned where Mrs. Williams had gone wrong:

Firstly, the fish hadn't been marinated with scallions, ginger, garlic, cooking wine, or salt, resulting in unyielding and fishy meat.

Secondly, the black membrane, gills, and throat bones of the fish hadn't been cleaned—these are sources of the fishy taste. When processing fish, a cut at the location below the gills can remove the tendon. Then, by gently tapping the fish with one hand and pulling the tendon with the other, the tendon can be extracted.

This method can effectively reduce the fish's fishiness.

Setting down the bowl, Xu Yun silently sighed:

There, the fish soup seems impossible to drink.

Then, he once again directed his attention to those seated at the table.

At this point, William, having finished distributing the fish soup to his family, was quickly stirring the vegetarian medley with a spoon, leaving him no time for conversation.

Little Niu and Lisa continued to engage in their playful banter, their feisty bickering brother was quiet now, resembling a portrait...ahem, quiet as a calm picture.

Sister Elura was animatedly conversing with Mrs. Williams, occasionally waving her small hands for emphasis.

Lilani remained quietly silent...

Meanwhile.

Xu Yun noticed another peculiar detail:

On the table, besides a spoon and a dining knife, there wasn't even a trace of a fork.

Chapter 19: Chapter 19 Bad Lunch and Night (Part 2)

As everyone knows,

The light of civilization in the East is Huaxia, while the West also has one, which is Italy.

Italy is called the light of Western civilization firstly because of the Roman Empire, and secondly because it was the birthplace of the Renaissance.

One aspect of the latter is its influence on European culinary culture.

A typical example is the fork.

The fork first appeared in Italy and was introduced to France by Catherine de Medici in the 16th century. It wasn't until the 18th century that forks became popular in England; before that, there were mainly two kinds of tableware:

Spoons for soup and knives for cutting food.

Apart from that, the British used....

their hands to eat.

Yes, hands—this can be seen in many early British paintings, such as "The Peasant Wedding Feast" preserved in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, Austria.

This habit hadn't changed in some regions even later on, as witnessed by a certain failing writer called Novice Fisherman, who once saw a British person put instant noodles directly into a bowl, zap it in the microwave, and then eat it with their hands...

Well, it's not exactly meant to belittle them; John Bull over there really doesn't care much about the intricacies of eating.

Of course, there is also a theory that knives and forks were introduced to Europe by the Huaxia people.

But this theory doesn't have any particularly strong evidence; just know about it.

Let's return our gaze to the dining table.

Some classmates might have a misconception about the fishy taste of eel, believing that only river fish require a de-fishy process, while eel does not.

There are actually two errors in this statement:

First, British eels are actually river fish; they live in the Thames River—which in the year 19 had eels 'revolting' due to high levels of benzoyl, caffeine, and cocaine in the river water.

Second, the fishiness of British eels is certainly not any less than that of river fish like carp. Those interested can search for or try jellied eels, the king of British dark cuisine, rivaling Stargazy Pie.

In summary,

to someone like Xu Yun from modern times, untreated eel soup is undoubtedly hard to swallow. Yet, in a 17th-century British commoner's household, it could be considered one of the top delicacies.

"Phew-ha—"

With a gulp of hot fish soup, a hint of enjoyment appeared on William's face.

Putting down the bowl, he picked up a piece of bread with his left hand and directly grabbed a piece of cauliflower from the serving plate with his right, rubbing it with the gray-green soup on the bread before stuffing the entire bread into his mouth, letting the juice drip onto the table.

No maid servants, no wine, no candlelight—primitive to only slightly better than eating raw (because they were too poor to season the food with salt), this was Xu Yun's first meal in the seventeenth century.

Though unable to drink the eel soup, Xu Yun felt compelled to give the host family some face, so after hesitating for a few seconds, he finally picked up the bread in front of him and simply spread some butter on it.

The bread made by Mrs. Williams was somewhat like the local steamed bread made with strong flour, dense and hard with a grainy texture, dry yet immensely filling.

Xu Yun had spent some time in Wendeng, Ludong Province, eating strong-flour steamed bread and cornmeal buns for several months, so he was quite accustomed to this kind of bread.

Unlike the local tradition of "not talking during meals and not speaking during rest," John Bull loved chatting at the table, with the only requirement being an empty mouth.

So, after a couple of sips of fish soup, William took the initiative to speak:

"Mr. Feiyu, how long do you plan to stay in Woolsop this time?"

Thinking for a moment, Xu Yun replied according to his task requirements,

"Probably one to two months. Now with the plague rampant, the passages between Britain and the Netherlands are blocked, and I fear it may take some time to send a letter to contact my grandfather, Sir Zhang San."

Hearing the word plague, a trace of worry appeared on William's face as well:

"The plague...hopefully those in authority come up with a solution soon. Though it's God's will, if it continues like this, there might really be trouble..."

Watching William make the sign of the cross on his chest, Xu Yun shook his head slightly.

Be it the plague or cholera, the real discovery of the source of transmission of these diseases took place only in the recent one to two hundred years.

For instance, the culprit of the plague, *Yersinia pestis*, wasn't formally isolated until 1894 by Alexander Yersin.

And in the 17th century, while Europeans were aware that quarantine could slow the spread of the plague, they had no understanding of its underlying pathology—after all, the concept of cells was discovered by Hook.

Thus, most people's understanding of the plague was...

Divine Punishment.

Some astrologers even attributed bubonic plague to a malicious alignment of Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars, a theory with considerable traction.

Similar things occurred locally as well; for example, the infamous Five斗米 Sect rose to power by exploiting the panic caused by the plague among the people.

Oh, speaking of the Five斗米 Sect, here's an interesting fact to enlighten you:

Tao Yuanming has a famous saying, "I cannot bend my back for five斗米, to lick the boots of petty village officials," which many believe indicates Tao Yuanming's unwillingness to bow for a meager salary, and some online encyclopedias also record it this way.

However, this interpretation has a glaring flaw—The monthly salary of a Ming Dynasty County Magistrate was seven石 and five斗 and was considered meager, yet a Jin Dynasty County Magistrate had only five斗?

That's clearly impossible.

In fact, the term five斗米 here refers to the Five斗米 Sect, the earliest sect of Taoism, with which officials had to maintain good relations.

When Tao Yuanming served as the Jiangzhou Sacrificial Officer, there was conflict with his superior who believed in the Five斗米 Sect, Wang Ningzhi, and even the inspector visiting was a person of the Five斗米 Sect. So rather than compromise, he chose to resign.

Though both interpretations aim to express Tao Yuanming's integrity, the phrase itself satirizes quite different incidents.

Alright, back to the main topic.

Upon hearing Xu Yun planned to stay in Woolsop for two months, William Asku showed little reaction, but Mrs. Williams raised an eyebrow:

If he were to stay here for two months, wouldn't it mean he'd be freeloading meals with Little Niu every day?

If Xu Yun were named Xu Yun this could be manageable, as a girl wouldn't eat that much, roughly comparable to Lisa.

However, Xu Yun is currently a young boy in the prime of his life, and as the saying goes, a growing boy can eat you out of house and home—this poses a major challenge to the Williams family's food stockpile.

Presently, William was heavily in debt, with barely any money left under the pillow for emergencies. While the family still had some wheat flour and potatoes, it was only enough to barely sustain them till January of the following year.

Assuming Xu Yun's appetite matched that of the combined Ailula sisters and Lisa, then the household's grain might only last until early December. If by then the plague was still uncontrolled...

At this thought, Mrs. Williams's expression subtly changed.

...

Chapter 20: Chapter 20 A Terrible Lunch and Night (End) (6,000-Word Chapter— Please Continue Reading!!!)

Mrs. Williams' expression changed subtly, but Xu Yun, who had been watching the Williams couple, noticed it.

As a future visitor well-versed in history, he quickly thought of what Mrs. Williams was worrying about:

Most likely, the rice jar at the Williams household was about to be empty.

According to the normal historical trajectory.

The plague of the Black Death, which William initially thought would last only two or three months, fermented further after the new year, lasting far beyond the economic limits the family could bear.

Therefore, out of necessity.

Young Niu was forced to move to the home of Hanfley Babington to tutor Hanfley Babington's younger brother..... ah, I mean, to provide guidance.

It was a half-work, half-boarding situation where he engaged in research, continuing the outcome in the latter part.

And William's affection for Little Niu was beyond words; he treated Little Niu as if he were his son.

The fact that Little Niu was forced to move out showed the dire state the Williams family was in at that time.

Therefore, the choice now facing Xu Yun was:

To help or not to help?

Emotionally speaking.

The Williams family gave Xu Yun a good impression, and helping them would undoubtedly gain some favor from Little Niu.

Logically speaking.

If Little Niu moved to Hanfley's home, it would present a problem for Xu Yun on how to follow along.

Thus quickly, Xu Yun made a decision in his mind:

Of course, to help!

Although according to the task's hint, he shouldn't easily involve himself in historical events he wasn't a part of.

But this limitation should ultimately affect the task score, rather than being a direct rule-based denial.

In other words, if his main task completion is high enough, this part of the score should be offset—equivalent to an early-stage investment loss.

Improving the economic conditions of William and Newton personally + giving Newton an academic enlightenment at the right time, if still not managing to become friends with Little Niu, then Xu Yun would have nothing more to say.

Of course.

Though that's easy to say, the specific entry point needs careful consideration.

At least some non-essential or historically impactful things shouldn't appear—those who understand, will know, so there's no need for more elaboration.

After all, although this is a parallel universe, Xu Yun still hopes that the local side won't be affected too much by his "butterfly wings."

Returning his gaze to the original scene.

Although the household's food reserves were already scarce, the only ones truly aware of it were Mrs. Williams and the two female members, Lisa and the young one.

And since Lisa was still intermittently click-clacking with Little Niu at this time, the atmosphere of the meal wasn't somber; instead, it was somewhat cheerful.

The hospitable William introduced many of his business experiences to Xu Yun:

For instance, he once slipped on a trip to Liverpool, losing a replica crown he was going to give Lisa, and that he had been to Milan, where he really liked the champagne...

Xu Yun also shared many stories from Central Earth:

For example, in Central Earth's Sichuan Province, every household owned a creature called "Gungun," and neighboring Jin Province had vinegar flowing from their taps...

Mrs. Williams was more interested in Chinese cuisine and asked a few questions similar to Little Niu's, but she didn't suggest that Xu Yun cook—clearly, she still had some doubts about Xu Yun's cooking skills.

Thus, a less-than-ideal lunch ended in a relatively happy atmosphere.

Afterward, Mrs. Williams and her daughters cleared the dishes, while William took Xu Yun and Little Niu out of the house.

"Oh, Mr. Feiyu."

After stepping out, William hesitated for a moment and finally said:

"Mr. Feiyu, three days from now is Sunday, would you like to join us at the town chapel?"

"Uh, chapel?"

Xu Yun blinked upon hearing this, instinctively ready to refuse, but suddenly thought of the national situation in the United Kingdom at the time:

The National Church had detached from the Catholic Church nearly 100 years ago, and the vigorous Protestant and Catholic Thirty Years' War was in full swing, and both Little Niu and his family were devout believers.

Moreover, since the Black Death hadn't reached Woolsop, gathering crowds wasn't much of an issue.

Therefore, Xu Yun considered it and changed his soon-to-be spoken decline to say:

"No problem, I will be there on time." (Originally, I didn't want to affect everyone's reading experience, but to prevent misunderstandings, I'll state first, I respect all beliefs, so I won't bash or promote any domestic or foreign religion. Xu Yun goes to worship to fit in with the situation and a subsequent plot, not to join the faith. I didn't explain this in a similar plot before and was misinterpreted by those with ulterior motives; by the time I noticed, it had already been three hundred comments high.)

William was overjoyed at the response and patted his shoulder:

"Hallelujah! Mr. Feiyu, God will surely be pleased with you!"

Xu Yun gave a dry laugh, choosing not to respond further.

Subsequently, he and Little Niu politely bade farewell to William and left.

As he turned to wave, Xu Yun caught sight of a figure by the attic window still click-clacking towards Little Niu—speaking of which, it's puzzling how those two managed to keep their split a secret, the rest of the five members of the Williams family must be star-level players?

Under normal circumstances, shouldn't Little Niu have already been sent to Germany for some orthopedic consultation by William's cargo ship?