

Full Time 321

Chapter 321: The Troubles of Growing Up

Chen Gu couldn't help but ask again, "So, for this promotion, are you planning to ascend again to the Third Energy Level?"

Chen Jixian, however, shook his head. "If successful, I will ascend to the Sixth Energy Level."

Chen Gu immediately realized the problem. "Very dangerous?"

"Yes," Chen Jixian answered earnestly after a moment of silence. "Therefore, a large amount of resources is needed, far exceeding what's typical for a Fifth Energy Level advancing to the Sixth Energy Level. Probably only the Bureau could afford it."

However, he didn't take the opportunity to tell Chen Gu about the promise Aviloya had once made to him.

Nor did he mention why he had risked deciding to advance to the Sixth Energy Level. Once successful, as a great master of the Sixth Energy Level, he obviously couldn't continue to stay in a small place like Wuzhaoyin City; he would surely be recruited by the Capital Star. He didn't say that either.

Chen Gu couldn't help but ask, "Is there any way to improve the success rate of the advancement?"

Chen Jixian didn't seem concerned. "Since the Bureau has promised you, they will definitely offer their full support. After all, they also hope to see another Sixth Energy Level practitioner emerge."

Chen Gu nodded, then suddenly brought up another topic. "I want to get into the Tiangong Military Division."

Chen Jixian didn't even lift an eyelid. "You won't pass."

Chen Gu: "..."

"I was three points short myself back then," Chen Jixian said, somewhat nostalgically.

Chen Gu left his son's place feeling quite dejected, and only then did he remember he still had to return to school. He had missed quite a bit of class this time, and Teacher Dai was already somewhat disappointed with him. Seeing him return, Teacher Dai just nodded faintly, unwilling to say much more.

This, in turn, made Chen Gu feel rather guilty.

With this year's college entrance exam not far off, Chen Gu returned to his seat and opened his textbook. His academic performance was actually not bad; after all, he had the experience of two lifetimes. But to get into the Tiangong Military Division... it was indeed far from sufficient.

But things are different now, a thought flashed through Chen Gu's mind. With Isabella Wu's memories attached, did a Brain Domain Hacker even need to worry about grades?

In his previous life, Chen Gu had seen sci-fi movies where aliens or robots read incredibly fast; WHOOSH, WHOOSH, WHOOSH, the pages of a book would fly past, and they would have memorized its entire contents.

Chen Gu's current state was pretty similar. He rapidly read and copied all the textbooks, reference books, and exercise books into his brain. Then he closed his eyes and, relying on his super-powerful brain functions, began to understand and absorb them just as quickly.

This didn't even require the use of his Professional abilities; it was simply the inherent power of a Professional.

Besides Isabella Wu's memories, Chen Gu also had the memories of another great scholar: Derek Kun Shen.

After quickly learning the entire foundation of high school education, Chen Gu then attached the memories of the Quantum Wizard. He experienced an "ascension" in all basic subjects, especially physics.

The substitute teachers on the podium saw Chen Gu sitting bolt upright, yet with his eyes closed! They all shook their heads privately and chose not to scold him further.

The exams were approaching. At this time, every student was under immense psychological pressure, so the teachers had adopted a laissez-faire approach to avoid adding to their stress.

At the end of the day's lessons, Chen Gu casually found some past college entrance exam papers on the interstellar quantum network, finished them quickly, and then estimated his scores—more than enough to pass the Tiangong Military Division entrance exam.

As for the other physical assessment, he had even less to worry about.

Thus, Chen Gu revealed a smile and went to the military training corner to visit Darkray and the others.

The military training corner had also quieted down. Some students who had already been accepted into colleges weren't coming to train anymore. They were focused on "cramming" academic subjects at home, believing that even last-minute efforts could make a difference.

Those left behind felt somewhat uneasy, as they would likely end their academic endeavors after high school graduation.

In the current era, they would inevitably be assigned a job by the Star Nation. Survival wouldn't be an issue, but their lives would likely be limited to just that.

The entire school was filled with an oppressive and tense atmosphere.

The moment Chen Gu appeared at the military training corner, Darkray, who was still training hard, leaped up. Overjoyed, he rushed over and gave Chen Gu a hearty hug. "HAHAHA, Brother Chen, you're back!"

Chen Gu looked around and saw that of the few military trainees he knew well, only Darkray was still here. He asked with a smile, "What about the others? Why isn't Mao Yisheng here either?"

Darkray shrugged with resignation. "Everyone went back to study. Mao Yisheng's family is somewhat well-off. Lately, it seems they've been trying to arrange something for him, hoping for a better future for him after he joins the Behemoth Alliance."

He then said cheerfully, "I'll call everyone. Let's get together at Xianwei Residence tonight."

"Sure, it's on me."

Darkray knew he had money, so he didn't stand on ceremony and went to make the calls.

Chen Gu, however, noticed the training weights Darkray had been using. They far exceeded his previous training levels, and Chen Gu couldn't help but frown slightly.

After a while, Darkray came back. "They've all agreed, Brother Chen. Shall we head over there first?"

Chen Gu pointed to the surrounding equipment. "You'll easily get injured training like this."

Darkray gave a forced smile and waved his hand. "Let's not talk about that. Let's go ahead and reserve a private room."

But Chen Gu pulled him back. "What's going on? Talk to me."

Darkray was also very frustrated. He had a straightforward personality and couldn't keep things bottled up. Chen Gu's question was the perfect opportunity for him to vent. "... I'm still not resigned to it."

He stomped his foot. "Who among those who come here doesn't want to go to the Tiangong Military Division?"

"I had already arranged to go to a college, but its ranking is very low. After graduation, if I'm lucky, I'll just come back to be a P.E. teacher. Although that's not too bad, it's still different from my dream. I... I want to give it one last try."

Chen Gu remained silent. He understood Darkray. So many young, passionate people harbor grand dreams, only for reality to tell them: you're not capable enough.

So, the vast majority accepted their lot, followed the so-called arrangements of fate, and led an ordinary life.

People like Darkray, unwilling to accept their fate, were the exceptions.

But talent... sometimes, it's truly not something effort alone can overcome.

He patted Darkray on the shoulder and said softly, "Let's go. We'll go book the private room."

Xianwei Residence was always at its busiest this time of year. Being close to the school, everyone chose to have their graduation gatherings here.

Soon, everyone had arrived. Mao Yisheng was the last. He was very happy to see Chen Gu, yet an undeniable anxiety was etched between his brows.

At the end, Chen Gu pulled Mao Yisheng aside and asked privately, "What's wrong?"

Mao Yisheng gave a bitter smile. "It's nothing much. I just feel like I've let my family down."

Chapter 322: Golden Thigh in the Eyes of Others (1)

"After I was chosen by the Battle Fire Club, my dad was very happy. He's been trying to buy some medicaments lately, hoping to improve my physical fitness and ensure I can have better development after joining the club."

"But the medicament specifically for giant beast partners is so expensive—it's killing us. My dad pulled several strings and finally found one, but it's priced at eight million Starshields."

"We do have some money at home, but we're only a bit better off than the average person. Eight million Starshields would wipe us out."

"My mom opposes what my dad is doing. She even wants me to just go to university. She says so many people are chosen every year, but how many of them really make it big?"

"But my dad won't agree. It was his dream when he was young. He's determined to support me, even if he has to sell everything. He's been contacting people to sell off some assets these past few days. My mom has argued with him several times..."

Mao Yisheng sighed, "I'm really lacking confidence right now. If my dad invests everything to support me, but I don't succeed in the end... Sigh!"

Chen Gu didn't know how to comfort him, so he could only pat his shoulder and join him in the silence.

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At ten o'clock in the evening, Chen Gu returned to his deserted residence. He thought for a moment and decided to call Bai Yunpeng first.

Bai Yunpeng sounded a bit drunk, making Chen Gu silently shake his head in disapproval.

After listening to him, Bai Yunpeng laughed heartily. "Military academy special admission? No problem! Xiao Chen, which school do you want to go to? Let me tell you, I don't even need to intervene. Just based on your status as the Director of the 745 Research Institute, you could get into the Tiangong

Military Division as a specially admitted graduate student. But I bet the Tiangong Military Division would have you teach a tactical course or two to the undergraduates, hahaha..."

Chen Gu said, "It's not for me; it's for a classmate. His grades are... well, quite ordinary."

"Oh, I see," Bai Yunpeng muttered, then asked, "What about you? Don't you want to attend a military academy?"

"I do," Chen Gu replied. "I want to test into the Tiangong Military Division."

"Test in?" Bai Yunpeng hesitated. "Your grades... Let me tell you, for special admission, it's best to contact them in advance..."

Clearly, the military had also investigated Chen Gu and knew his grades weren't great.

Chen Gu couldn't be bothered to waste words. "I know what I'm doing. Regarding what I just mentioned, does Marshal Bai have a solution?"

"There's definitely a way, but if his grades are just average, even if I get him in, he won't be able to keep up. Then, even if he graduates, it'll be hard for him to establish himself in the military."

Chen Gu knew this too. "No one knows what the future holds. I just want to give him a chance."

"Alright, since you're the one asking, of course, it's no problem. Tell him to wait for news."

"Okay, thank you, Marshal Bai."

After hanging up with Bai Yunpeng, Chen Gu searched online for the Battle Fire Club. The first news item that popped up made his heart sink:

The Battle Fire Club had actually changed owners.

An obscure investment company had acquired the struggling Battle Fire Club.

Discussions about this on the forum were quite heated. As Chen Gu read more, his brow gradually furrowed. Mao Yisheng's situation is indeed not looking good.

This investment company was obscure because it had only just been established—to be precise, it was formed specifically for this acquisition.

However, there were many resourceful people on the forum, and they had already dug up information on the ultimate boss behind this investment company: a top wealthy second-generation heir, Shangguan Jiuyi, who was famous throughout the Confederation.

His father had single-handedly founded the Zhendan Group, with a market value exceeding one hundred trillion Starshields. Shangguan Jiuyi was the third child in the family, with an older brother and an older sister. There was no way the group's leadership would fall to him, so he had always cultivated the image of a maverick with wide-ranging interests. He'd wanted to buy a Giant Beast League club for a long time but hadn't found the right opportunity.

Now that he had bought the Battle Fire Club, rumors were flying everywhere. Several star players were said to be connected to them. It was now certain that before the new season began, the Battle Fire Club would acquire at least two star players.

This wealthy heir lacked the patience to slowly cultivate new talent himself. Having acquired the Battle Fire Club, it was like getting a new toy; he wanted to see results as soon as possible.

So, what was his solution? Throw money at it, of course.

Mao Yisheng's future prospects at the club don't look too good.

Even Chen Gu felt powerless to help in this situation and could only decide to wait and see how things unfolded.

However, I might be able to find a way to spare Mao Yisheng's father from having to sell everything he owns.

He called a few old buddies. Unexpectedly, it was Gorilla who had the right connections this time.

"Which kind do you want? The cheapest I can get you costs one hundred thousand Starshields per dose, but that medicament is barely better than nothing. Good ones go for five hundred thousand, one million one hundred thousand, or even two million Starshields. Anything more expensive than that can't be solved simply by spending money," Gorilla said.

Chen Gu thought for a moment and said, "Hold on a second."

He called Mao Yisheng again. "Which medicament is your dad trying to buy?"

Mao Yisheng didn't know what Chen Gu was up to, but he still answered, "The Linker II from Changed Destiny Medicament Laboratory."

Chen Gu hung up and asked Gorilla, "How much for the Linker II?"

"Five hundred thousand Starshields. It's somewhat effective."

"What about the two million Starshield one?"

"The Linker IV."

Chen Gu thought for a bit, then called Mao Yisheng back. "The Linker IV for two million Starshields. Do you want it?"

Mao Yisheng was clearly stunned. "Really?"

"Absolutely certain."

Mao Yisheng immediately went to discuss it with his father. Two million Starshields wouldn't require selling off their assets; the family could manage it if they really tightened their belts.

"Yes, we'll take it! Thank you, Brother Chen!"

Chen Gu got the contact information from Gorilla and gave it to Mao Yisheng, letting them contact each other directly.

After he hung up, Mao Yisheng's mother looked worried. "Ah Sheng, this classmate of yours... is he reliable? Your dad pulled so many strings and called in so many favors, and the Linker II still costs eight million Starshields. This is the Linker IV, and it's only two million? Don't get scammed!"

Mao Yisheng was a little upset. "Mom, why do you always assume the worst of people?"

Mao Yisheng's mother glared. "How am I assuming the worst? Isn't your classmate also just a high school student? Does his family have some powerful background? Why else would someone sell it to *him* so cheaply? That's two million Starshields! What if we get scammed?"

Hearing this, Mao Yisheng's father also grew apprehensive. "Maybe we should go take a look tomorrow. If it doesn't work out, we'll forget it. We can still buy the one my friend recommended..."

"That one is eight million Starshields," Mao Yisheng's mother grumbled, clearly dissatisfied. However, she didn't want to argue about it again; things at home had been too exhausting lately.

Mao Yisheng remained silent. What kind of background does Chen Gu's family have? I don't know. But he could sense that Chen Gu was different from everyone else. And he believed Chen Gu wouldn't deceive him.

He was still young, after all. Sometimes he couldn't understand the wariness of adults, who had been battered by life. In his eyes, Chen Gu was proactively offering to help him, and his mother's suspicion made him very uncomfortable.

Chapter 323: Golden Thigh in the Eyes of Others (2)

The next morning, Mao's father dialed the number Chen Gu had given him. Mao's father was very cautious, but the person on the other end didn't seem to take it to heart. "Oh, that matter? There's no problem with Mr. Gao's connection. I'm at 69 Tan Road, District 31. You can just come over directly."

"Alright," Mao's father agreed. He felt even less assured now.

His friends had exerted a lot of effort to find this kind of potion, and he had repeatedly begged them before they agreed to sell it to him. It was clearly very precious. So how come here, it seemed... not to be taken seriously at all?

"Son..." Mao's father began, but seeing his son was already prepared to leave, he changed his mind. "Let's go."

He had already cleared his schedule for the day and had no other arrangements, so they might as well go take a look.

On the way, young Mao Yisheng, being extra cautious, searched the address on the interstellar network. Then, he raised an eyebrow and showed his father what he found.

Mao's father was also surprised. The "Mercy World Building" at 69 Tan Road was well-known throughout Empire River Star. Its owner, the Mercy World Pharmaceutical Group, was the most capable medicinal agent corporation on the entire planet, holding the distribution rights for many famous brand medicines there. The Life-Changing Potion Laboratory was among them.

However, Mao's father's brow furrowed. There were too many scams like this. Scammers often intentionally set up meetings in such places, using the name of Mercy World Pharmaceutical Group to lower people's guard, when in reality, they weren't affiliated with the group at all.

Upon arriving, Mao's father called the other party again. The person still sounded relaxed. "I've informed security. Go find them, and they'll bring you up."

This was different from the scam I anticipated, Mao's father thought. Normally, at this point, a scammer would pretend to coincidentally bump into them in the building and then, under some pretext, take them out for tea to discuss business. Because scammers weren't actually employees of the building, they generally wouldn't let their victims actively contact the building's staff.

Could they have bribed a security guard? Mao's father wondered. He still approached a guard, who immediately replied, "Ah, Director Wang's guests. Please follow me. I'll take you up in the private elevator. Director Wang's office is on the top floor and isn't accessible by the regular elevators."

Mao's father was completely baffled. The top floor? He knew this type of building. Mercy World Pharmaceutical Group wouldn't occupy the entire structure; many parts would be leased out. However, the headquarters of Mercy World Pharmaceutical Group, or rather, the group's true leadership, would certainly be on the top floor.

Could this not be a scam? Could it be real? He couldn't help but glance at his son again. What kind of background does this classmate of his actually have?

The private high-speed elevator quickly reached the top floor. There, security handed them over to a young, beautiful secretary. Mao's father, along with his bewildered son, found themselves in "The Chairman's Office."

Chairman Wang had clearly used many advanced potions, looking handsome and young, with a perfect physique.

He greeted them with a smile. "I owe Mr. Gao a significant favor. A single potion isn't a big deal, but I must show Mr. Gao respect."

He motioned to his secretary. "Take them to get the potion."

"Yes, Boss," the secretary's voice was soft and sweet, indescribably pleasant to the ear.

Mao's father was dismissed before he could quite grasp what was happening. However, he understood one thing: this Chairman Wang had agreed to meet him only as a favor to Mr. Gao. Otherwise, who was he, some insignificant nobody, to be worthy of the distinguished chairman of a major corporation's time?

The secretary expertly led them to a fully metallic, sealed case and said with a smile, "Originally, the boss wanted to give this to you as a gift, but Mr. Gao didn't agree. Please inspect the product, and then I'll take you to make the payment."

"Okay," Mao's father quickly agreed. He opened the sealed case, then paused and said awkwardly, "Uh, there seems to be a mistake. We ordered the 'Connector IV,' but this is the 'Connector V.' We... didn't bring enough money."

With a professional smile, the secretary said, "There's no mistake. When Mr. Gao called yesterday, we indeed only had 'Connector IV' and lower types in stock. The boss initially wanted to give it to you for free. However, since Mr. Gao didn't agree, the boss had this 'Connector V' brought in overnight. He's selling it to you at the price of the 'Connector IV'."

Mao's father was stunned. This was an enormous favor he owed...

After he paid, the secretary personally escorted them out. Mao's father was still dazed even as they got into the car and it drove away.

Luckily, the maglev car had autopilot; otherwise, Mao's father, in his current state, would surely have caused an accident.

"Dad, are you okay?" Mao Yisheng asked. That'll teach them to doubt Brother Chen! he inwardly rejoiced.

Mao's father took a deep breath and said earnestly, "Yisheng, in the future, you must make an effort to stay in touch with your classmate Chen. If he needs help with anything, no matter how big or small, make sure to do your utmost. This is a huge favor we owe. I'm not capable of repaying him. It's all up to you—whether you can become a star player in the future will determine if we can..."

The implication was clear: if Yisheng couldn't become a star player, they would never be able to repay this debt in their lifetime.

"I understand, Dad," Mao Yisheng replied.

Mao's father looked at him. The boy still doesn't understand, he thought. Is this a simple exchange of favors? A classmate like this is an invaluable connection; you must hold onto him tightly and never let go!

When Chen Gu called to inquire about the "Connector IV" potion, Zhao Ji took the opportunity to schedule dinner with him for three days later.

The dinner was scheduled for three days later because as soon as Tao Tao had received the news previously, she had immediately rushed to Capital Star to handle the bidding process.

However, as the one in charge of the Tao family's project this time, her main purpose for this trip was to express gratitude and visit key individuals who had played a crucial role in the bidding, such as "Uncle Delos."

Three days was sufficient time for her; the specific follow-up tasks would naturally be handled by her subordinates.

Dinner was set in a discreet, low-key club. Zhao Ji and his wife arrived early. Tao Tao wore light makeup that day; she wasn't dazzlingly beautiful, but her demeanor was dignified and graceful.

Zhao Ji, on the other hand, was dressed rather flamboyantly. Before leaving home, he had even told his wife, "I need to show those idiots the power of being a kept man!"

Ossosa and Chen Gu arrived together. Knowing Chen Gu was also invited, Ossosa had adamantly refused Chen Gu's request to "bring our daughter." Later, upon learning Ken would also be there, Ossosa firmly insisted his wife stay home, and he came alone.

Ken was the last to arrive. Ossosa, who had always disliked Ken's habit of putting on airs, was about to make a few sarcastic remarks. Suddenly, a stunning figure emerged from behind Ken and gracefully sat down right next to Chen Gu—in the seat Ossosa had intended to take—quietly nudging Old Ossosa aside.

Chapter 324: Golden Thigh in the Eyes of Others (3)

"Mr. Chen, long time no see," it was Man Suling.

Chen Gu even noticed that the young woman sniffed him lightly with her nose!

Tao Tao's eyes lit up. "Man Suling? I really like your songs..."

The men were momentarily left out in the cold as the two women chattered excitedly. Ossosa looked at Gao Mengjiu in astonishment. "Gorilla, you actually agreed to bring Man Suling out?"

Everyone knew that Gao Mengjiu had personally groomed Man Suling. When Chen Gu was away, their group would get together, and Ossosa often joked, asking Gorilla to bring Man Suling to sing a song to liven things up.

But Gorilla never agreed.

Gao Mengjiu rolled his eyes and glanced at Chen Gu. "She wanted to come herself."

Instantly, Ossosa understood. Thinking of his own daughter, he said to Gorilla with shared sentiment, "You better keep a close eye on her. Don't let some pig snatch her away."

Chen Gu was speechless.

Zhao Ji opened a bottle of good wine and poured it for everyone. After they all had a drink, he still couldn't help but ask Chen Gu, "How well do you really know that Qiao Shuangmu?"

"I have a business deal with him—why do you ask?"

Zhao Ji stealthily glanced toward Tao Tao and said in a low, sympathetic voice, "Tao Tao seemed a bit down after returning from Capital Star. Apparently, she didn't get to see General Delos."

"Tao's Industries' backing in the military collapsed some time ago. In recent years, they haven't received any new orders from the military. Tao Tao was probably looking specifically for Delos this time. However, it's clear Delos only granted the meeting as a favor to Qiao Shuangmu and had no intention of getting involved with Tao's Industries."

Chen Gu understood and said with a smile, "You really are a kept man who dotes on his wife."

"Of course!" Zhao Ji took pride rather than offense. "A pure gold meal ticket like this is hard to find."

Tao Tao overheard and snapped, "Zhao Ji, what are you saying?"

"Nothing, nothing, just joking. Give me some face in front of everyone." He immediately begged for mercy. Tao Tao giggled and turned back to pump Man Suling for celebrity gossip.

Zhao Ji then asked Chen Gu, "Could you help make a connection?"

Chen Gu wasn't unwilling to help. However, he had a good idea of what kind of person Qiao Shuangmu was. Their relationship was purely transactional, and Chen Gu was likely no longer of value to him. Approaching Qiao Shuangmu again might just lead to a dead end.

After some thought, he asked, "Is Tao's Industries willing to spend money?"

"No problem," Zhao Ji responded. "How much?"

"This isn't about Qiao Shuangmu," Chen Gu shook his head. "Forget it, I won't discuss this with you; you're a complete blockhead and know nothing about these things. Get your wife over here to talk to me."

Zhao Ji became wary. "What are you trying to do? I'm telling you, you can fancy Old Ossosa's daughter or Gorilla's goddaughter, that's fine. But you can't covet my meal ticket..."

Chen Gu laughed and cursed, "Get lost! This is serious business!"

Tao Tao quickly came over; she had a clear sense of priorities between entertainment and business.

Chen Gu considered for a moment and, without revealing any secrets, said, "There's a project that I believe has more than a seventy percent chance of success, but Tao's Industries will have to provide the initial funding. I can't say how much the return will be, but it will definitely help re-establish your relationship with the military."

Tao Tao pondered for a moment and then asked for details. Chen Gu helplessly replied, "That... involves classified information. I can't disclose it."

Tao Tao then asked, "How much do you estimate the initial investment will be?"

Chen Gu couldn't give a clear answer. He realized his impulsive idea was too ill-considered, so he stood up. "I'll go make a call to verify some things. You guys go ahead and eat."

As soon as Chen Gu stepped out, he called Bai Yunpeng. "Marshal Bai, regarding those spacecraft from our last encounter, is the military interested in exploring them?"

Bai Yunpeng knew he was talking about the "ferries" used by those extraterrestrial mechanical species.

"Of course, we are. However, the military currently lacks the budget for it." Bai Yunpeng smiled. "We've only hauled back the wreckage that crashed on the planet and sent a small team to planet JM662 to locate the hidden base. We've set up an observation post there. Why, do you have something in mind?"

Chen Gu replied candidly, "My best friend, Zhao Ji, is married into the family behind Tao's Industries. I have an idea: Tao's Industries could fund the exploration, and both parties would share any findings. What do you think?"

Bai Yunpeng pondered for a moment. "Tao's Industries? They're an established military contractor. Yes, we could collaborate."

He thought for a little longer and then said, "How about this: have their person in charge come see me, and we can discuss the specifics."

"Alright."

Chen Gu hung up and went back inside. Tao Tao immediately looked at him. Chen Gu smiled and said, "Go find Marshal Bai Yunpeng to discuss the details. The military is interested; now it's up to you to convince them."

Tao Tao was thrilled. "Bai Yunpeng? Marshal Bai from the Central Operations Room? The young rising star of the Bai family?"

Chen Gu nodded. "I'll give you his private contact information later."

Overjoyed, Tao Tao hugged Zhao Ji beside her and gave him a forceful kiss. Zhao Ji was dizzy with happiness, while Ossosa and Gorilla looked at Chen Gu in astonishment. "Kid, since when are you so chummy with military folks?"

All this was earned by risking my life, Chen Gu sighed inwardly.

But these were things he couldn't share with everyone. He raised his glass. "To my success in the college entrance exams, and to my admission into the Tiangong Military Division as I wish!"

Everyone had already raised their glasses, but upon hearing him, they put them down again. "No need for that. With your abilities, you have no chance with the Tiangong Military Division."

Truly my goofy friends, Chen Gu inwardly praised.

After dinner, Tao Tao and Zhao Ji got into their car. Tao Tao's expression turned serious. "Chen Gu is no simple character. You've helped him a few times, and in such a short period, he's already discussing business with Qiao Shuangmu and important matters with Bai Yunpeng."

Zhao Ji didn't have a clear concept of what the names "Qiao Shuangmu" and "Bai Yunpeng" signified within the Confederation. He said nonchalantly, "Is Bai Yunpeng that impressive? Aren't there many marshals in the Confederation?"

Tao Tao rolled her eyes at him. "You! You don't pay attention to anything or care about anything. You really should learn more."

Zhao Ji responded confidently, "With such a capable wife, what do I need to learn? Isn't it great just living off you?"

Tao Tao was amused by him again but still explained, "There are many marshals, but Bai Yunpeng is from the Bai family. The Bai family has deep-rooted influence in the military, with a marshal emerging in each of the last four generations."

"When Bai Yunpeng was young, he was reckless and unruly, leading everyone to assume he was just a good-for-nothing heir. Surprisingly, he joined the military twenty years ago. In that short time, he rose to the rank of marshal purely on military merit. Moreover, he's now one of the three giants in the Central Operations Room, a core military department."

"He is definitely one of the most powerful and influential young figures in the military today. If this collaboration succeeds and Tao's Industries solidifies a partnership with Marshal Bai, our company can rest easy for decades to come."

Chapter 325: The Secret Spy

Zhao Ji didn't take this matter too seriously. He had only approached Chen Gu today out of concern for his wife.

So even after Tao Tao gave a long explanation, Zhao Ji still remained indifferent, carelessly saying, "I have no idea how Chen Gu got to know Bai Yunpeng, but no matter what he becomes, he's still my goofy best pal."

Tao Tao rolled her eyes speechlessly. Zhao Ji just loved this cute gesture of his wife and immediately started getting frisky. Tao Tao scolded, "We're still in the car."

"There's no one else here, and it's not the first time in the car anyway."

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Before they knew it, there were only three days left until the college entrance exam. The prospective candidates on Empire River Star had been given vacation days, as per the traditions of the star.

The afternoon before, Chen Zili brought over some exam supplies for Chen Gu.

"My sister went to Capital Star," Chen Zili said. "Teacher Gao Mengjiu went with her, saying it's the final preparation before the album release."

Chen Gu knew about this. Gorilla had mentioned it to him during their last meal, but he was still annoyed. That brute Gorilla is now also called "Teacher"?

And if my granddaughter isn't here, he has to send my grandson? Don't I have a son?

"Alright, just put them there."

After placing the exam supplies down, Chen Zili hesitantly asked, "Which school are you planning to apply to?"

Chen Gu didn't want to talk about it. Being ridiculed by that goof Gorilla and the others is one thing, but if my own grandson mocks me as well, I might lose control and resort to domestic violence.

So Chen Gu asked in return, "What about you?"

Chen Zili's blood boiled with enthusiasm. "I want to apply to the Tiangong Military Division!"

"PFFT—" Chen Gu, who didn't want his grandson to mock him, ended up mocking his grandson.

Chen Zili's face turned red. "I knew it, you all look down on me!" He stormed out and slammed the door. Chen Gu chased after him, grabbing his arm. "Why are you getting so worked up?"

"HMPH!" Chen Zili was still fuming, suddenly letting out all his frustrations. "All you ever care about is my sister. What's wrong with wanting to apply to the Tiangong Military Division? Can't a person have their own dreams?"

I want to fight bravely on the battlefield like Dad. I want to become a hero, to single-handedly turn the tide!

Why doesn't anyone believe in me? Do you even know my grades? As soon as you hear Tiangong Military Division, you think I'm boasting and that I definitely won't get in?"

Chen Gu calmed down. It was indeed his fault. Wasn't he doing to Chen Zili the very same thing others did when they mocked him?

He asked seriously, "How are your grades? What are your chances of getting in?"

The previously impassioned Chen Zili suddenly deflated. "Probably only twenty percent."

Instead of disappointment, Chen Gu was surprised. The Tiangong Military Division had an extremely high admission score, topping the entire Confederation. Having a twenty percent chance indicated that Chen Zili's grades were actually quite good—good enough to get into a top-tier university.

"But... I remember your grades used to be poor, right?" Chen Gu was puzzled.

Chen Zili rolled his eyes. "How long has it been since you last visited school? People can change a lot in a short time, you know!"

Chen Gu nodded. Twenty percent is indeed quite low. This isn't something I can ask Bai Yunpeng for help with, but I have other methods.

"What are your thoughts on the physical assessment?" he asked.

Chen Zili said, "There should be no problem. Dad gave me five potions, and I feel much stronger than those military academy cadets now."

"So, the real difficulty lies with the academic subjects," Chen Gu murmured.

In this era, physical fitness was no longer a problem. Many potions could achieve the ancient effect of "bone cleansing." However, they were expensive, so families like Darkray's couldn't even dream of affording them.

Moreover, the Tiangong Military Division cultivated the very best military talent, individuals who were both brave and wise, so the academic score requirements were also very high.

Chen Gu thought for a moment, then, with a gentle smile, affectionately patted his grandson on the shoulder. "Now is the time to test you, Zi Li. How much can you sacrifice for your dream?"

Chen Zili's blood boiled with enthusiasm. "I can give up everything!"

Chen Gu nodded, then asked pointedly, "Truly everything?"

"Everything?"

"No regrets?"

"No regrets!"

"Alright then." Chen Gu still smiled, but Chen Zili somehow felt that his grandfather's smile was somewhat strange before he suddenly lost consciousness.

His brain had crashed.

Chen Gu, drawing upon Isabella Wu's memories and abilities, instantaneously "paralyzed" his grandson. Then, using his professional skills, he started cramming knowledge into Chen Zili's brain.

This was far quicker than Chen Zili's own rote memorization, not inferior to the read/write speed of ancient "computers."

However, knowledge gained in such a way is definitely problematic, lacking the process of understanding.

This method was sheer cheating! From the memories of Isabella Wu and Derek Kun Shen, Chen Gu knew that historically, some top-scoring prodigies had seemingly lazed around, playing and sleeping as they pleased. Yet, they always managed to ace their exams. Some of them were Brain Domain Hackers.

However, few used this method to help others. Besides, Chen Gu himself didn't know how much Chen Zili would ultimately benefit from knowledge forcibly crammed in like this.

He copied as much knowledge from various subjects into his grandson's brain as possible, without causing any harm.

During this process, Chen Zili's brain—this "meat machine"—was almost defenseless against his grandfather. So, if Grandpa accidentally stumbled upon some of his grandson's little secrets, you can't blame me, right?

Oh my, this kid has secretly watched quite a few "little movies." TSK TSK, and they're all immersive experience films too! The teenagers of this era are truly fortunate.

Who's this girl? She looks a bit familiar... from Class One, maybe? Her looks are just average. This kid has no guts, crushing on her but not daring to confess. And just like a little boy, he keeps bothering her all day? Foolish...

Huh? This kid even has an Oedipus complex? Hmm... I'd better not tell my grown-up son about this.

What are these fragments? Oh, memories of wet dreams...

What's with these memories? Why is this grandson of mine so afraid of me? I'm such an approachable and kind grandfather! Sheesh!

...

Chen Gu had not yet realized that he was being influenced by Isabella Wu's odd habits, enjoying peaking into the psychological secrets of others.

...

Chen Zili woke up groggily, feeling dizzy and a soreness in his neck, as if a huge iron sphere had been forcibly stuffed into his brain.

He looked at Chen Gu in confusion. "What...what just happened to me?" Then he suddenly noticed the time. "Ah? Three hours have passed? I have to hurry back."

Without another word to Chen Gu, he quickly pulled open the door and bolted out.

From behind, Chen Gu said, "Study more when you get back. Maybe this time your dream will come true!"

Chen Zili didn't look back, just waved his hand and ran off quickly.

Chapter 326: Farewell

Chen Gu watched his retreating back, the teasing smile on his face gradually fading. Truthfully, even Chen Gu himself didn't know if what he had done was right or wrong. But Chen Zili's passion had influenced him, and he didn't want to see his grandson disappointed.

Forget it... He sighed and settled down to prepare for the exam in three days.

Even in this era, this time of year remained the most critical and agonizing moment for the entire family of a candidate.

Needless to say, for commoners, this could be considered one of the rare opportunities in their lives to "leap over the dragon gate."

Even for privileged families, these exams were of great significance.

The exams were spread out over three days: academic subjects on the first two days and a physical skills assessment on the third.

Upon entering the examination hall, Chen Gu encountered his grandson. Chen Zili appeared distracted and paranoid. Chen Gu could guess the reason but couldn't find a way to console him. He felt increasingly unsure whether his actions towards his grandson had been right or wrong.

But he was just an ordinary man; as a professional, he didn't have much experience and truly couldn't predict what the outcome would be.

During these three days at home, Chen Zili reviewed his books and mysteriously found himself extremely "familiar" with the content! All the knowledge points were crystal clear, even though he clearly hadn't remembered some of them before.

What on earth was going on!

He spent three days reviewing all his textbooks and discovered he actually knew everything. This made him rather uneasy...

As the electronic prompt for the start of the exam sounded, Chen Zili cast aside his stray thoughts and diligently began to answer the questions.

The three days of exams finally passed. As many candidates walked out of the exam hall, they showed a sense of immense relief.

The ordeal was over, and at this moment, the final results were no longer within their control.

Chen Gu strolled out easily, confident that he would have no problem being accepted into the Tiangong Military Division. Especially on the last day, during the physical skills assessment, he hadn't even used his full strength and had already outshone everyone.

Now, he would wait three days for the results.

With nothing else to do during this period, Chen Gu decided to submit his report to advance to the Third Energy Level.

The department would probably delay it, but Chen Gu wasn't concerned. He had no grand expectations in the short term. However, as soon as an opportunity arose, he was determined to find a way to urge the department to approve his application.

My son is about to advance to the Sixth Energy Level. As his old father, I need to step up.

Because he wasn't busy, he spent extra time at the 745 Research Institute, dealing with a large batch of accumulated complex problems that day.

However, Zhao Zhenhuai was not at his post; he had returned to Empire River Star to accompany his son for the exams and had not yet come back.

Chen Gu understood this and didn't press him.

Zhao Junzhi, though a despicable person, hadn't troubled him recently.

Qing Ruyan had been with Chen Gu on Empire River Star. As soon as the exam was over, she came to him, saying, "Don't worry, everything has been arranged with the National Second Agricultural and Forestry University. They will admit you exceptionally. For this matter, you should thank the Director-General. After all, it's a university on Capital Star. She personally stepped in to settle this for you."

Chen Gu snorted inwardly but said, "Oh, I thank her."

I thank her whole family.

"Pack your things. The admission notice has arrived. We'll leave right away."

Afterwards, the class organized a farewell banquet, and the military section organized one as well, both held at the Xianwei Residence. Many students couldn't hold back their tears after drinking too much.

Quite a few also took the opportunity of being drunk to muster the courage to confess their feelings.

Most of these confessions led to nothing, as everyone was about to go their separate ways, their futures unknown and filled with uncertainty. They did this merely to ensure their youth was without regrets.

What surprised Chen Gu was that he received confessions seven or eight times! Among them was even one from a male student from another class, which scared him so much he fled on the spot.

The day before the college entrance examination scores were released, Chen Gu suddenly received an anonymous message: "Enjoy your college life!"

Chen Gu paused, then suddenly understood: it was Liu Shichan.

He sighed softly. He wanted to trace the message but felt it was meaningless. They had escaped to another Star Nation; even if he found the source of the message, what point would it serve?

While Chen Gu was feeling melancholic over the unexpected message, his phone suddenly rang. Melincha excitedly told him, "Hurry, the Chief has been released!"

Chen Gu immediately drove to the division building and rushed into the Special Service Fifth Team's small office. Laughter echoed from within; Marcus was joking with everyone.

Charles and his two team members arrived as well. Chen Gu couldn't help but step forward and give Marcus a strong hug. Marcus pushed him away. "You bastards! Did you all think I wouldn't get out? Plotting to usurp the throne, were you? Eyeing my team leader position? HA HA HA! I'm back! You little rascals will have to keep working diligently under me!"

Chen Gu laughed awkwardly but said nothing more at that moment.

The group was very excited. The 'little demoness' Selena raised her hands and proposed, "I suggest we go out and celebrate tonight!"

"Great!" everyone roared in approval. Chen Gu smiled and said, "You pick the place. It's my treat tonight."

Selena's eyes lit up. "Then we must find the most expensive place!"

Later that evening, when everyone was well into their cups, Marcus suddenly fell silent. Despite the lively atmosphere, he felt an overwhelming sense of loneliness. He stood up abruptly, patted Chen Gu on the shoulder, and said, "Chen, come outside with me for a moment."

The two stepped out of the nightclub, the booming music slowly fading behind them. Marcus led him to the roadside. A cool breeze was blowing. Looking at the traffic flowing overhead, Marcus sighed. "I'm afraid I won't be able to work with everyone in the future."

Although he had seemed full of bravado during the day, Marcus was keenly aware of his situation.

"I reckon the Section Chief will call me for a talk tomorrow. A transfer to a desk job is inevitable. After all these years... suddenly no more field assignments, just stuck in the division building all the time... Heh, I don't even know if I can adapt..."

Chen Gu offered what little comfort he could. "Things will turn around. You're experienced; the bureau will always have a use for you."

Marcus patted his arm firmly. "Chen, the Fifth Team will be yours from now on. I'll recommend to the Section Chief that you take my place. You haven't been in the bureau long, but everyone has seen your abilities. Melincha and the others... none of them are suitable to be team leader..."

Chen Gu gave a wry smile and waved his hand dismissively. "Chief, after the college entrance examination, I'll be transferred to Headquarters."

Marcus paused, taken aback. He opened his mouth as if to speak, but then could only let out a regretful sigh. Then, he smiled again. "Right. Capital Star is where the real future lies. Congratulations."

Chen Gu couldn't explain. The two stood silently in the night wind, neither of them in particularly high spirits.

Chapter 327 Double Subject Scores

The next day, Chen Gu checked his scores. In this era, the entire Confederation and the whole Star Nation used unified exam papers. The total score for cultural subjects was 900, and the full score for physical skills tests was also 900. For top-tier institutions like the Tiangong Military Division, scores in both categories needed to be above 800 for an applicant to even stand a chance of being admitted—and that was just a possibility. Furthermore, it wasn't an average of 800. Both categories had to be over 800 to ensure students didn't specialize in one to the neglect of the other.

Then, an average score of 850 or above in both categories would make admission relatively secure.

As for other well-known first-tier schools, an average score of 700 or above was needed for both categories. Military academies, emphasizing both literary and martial prowess like the Tiangong Military Division, also required scores above 700 in both, not just an average.

Chen Gu's score in cultural subjects was 890, and his physical skills score was 900.

There was no suspense.

He knew he would definitely be admitted, and he was certain to achieve a shockingly unconventional score. Indeed, that was the case.

He had cheated using "Brain Domain Hacker," so nailing the cultural subjects was almost a given. As for his physical skills score... He was a Second Energy Level practitioner, and his physical constitution had already reached the peak of the Fourth Energy Level. It could be said that in the entire history of the Confederation, there had never been an examinee with such strong physical prowess.

Next was filling in his university preferences. Chen Gu, of course, only chose one: Tiangong Military Division.

If they don't admit me with these scores, it would only be Tiangong Military Division's loss.

Unexpectedly, after the results were released, those who normally had good relations would usually call to inquire. However, it seemed everyone had tacitly agreed not to call Chen Gu, possibly because they were worried about him "losing face." After all the bragging about getting into the Tiangong Military Division, if he couldn't even get into the Capital Star institutions...

Qing Ruyan didn't call either. Anyway, no matter Chen Gu's scores, he could still attend the National Second Agricultural and Forestry University.

Moreover, Qing Ruyan could sense that Chen Gu didn't like that school, so she didn't want to rub salt in the wound.

"Forget it. If nobody calls me, I'll just call others," Chen Gu curled his lip and made the first call to his "old-aged son," intending to ask about his grandson's scores.

But Chen Jixian's phone went unanswered. Chen Gu muttered to himself before calling his grandson. "My dear grandson, how did you do?"

Chen Zili automatically filtered out the "dear grandson" and growled excitedly, "I did it! I really did it!"

Chen Gu could even picture his grandson on the other end of the line, fists clenched, his face brimming with a 'ferocious' triumph.

"So, what were your scores?"

"Cultural subjects total 837, physical skills total 840!" Chen Zili was exuberant, but Chen Gu frowned. As expected, the effect wasn't as good as with me. After all, his was passively received.

Still, these scores represented a huge leap for Chen Zili, who had previously been considered mediocre at best.

This leap was the result of Chen Zili's own diligent efforts during his final year, as well as the intensive "cramming" from Chen Gu. If analyzed seriously, Chen Zili's own efforts accounted for at least seventy percent of the achievement.

"What are you so excited about?" Chen Gu dampened his spirits. "Scores over 850 in both categories—that's what really secures a spot. Your scores are awkward. Even if you get admitted, it won't be to a good specialty. You probably can't expect to be a Mecha pilot or battleship gunner after graduation. Maybe you'll end up in logistics."

Chen Zili was suddenly at a loss for words. Are you really my grandfather? Can't you let me be happy for a little while longer?

Chen Gu waited for a while, but his grandson didn't proactively ask about his grandfather's scores and instead sulkily hung up the phone.

Chen Gu uttered, "Eh?"

That very afternoon, a piece of news appeared on the Interstellar Quantum Network: The Confederation's ninth candidate with a perfect score in physical skills had emerged!

A nationwide discussion erupted, with many believing this person to be a future ace Mecha pilot, perhaps even a future marshal of a starfleet.

The news release stated the candidate's name was Chen Gu, yet, for some unknown reason, it didn't mention his specific planet of origin.

Those around Chen Gu still had no idea what had happened. Even if they saw the news, they probably assumed it was someone else with the same name.

In this era of vast populations, the number of people with identical two-character names was staggeringly high.

Qing Ruyan waited all day but received no call from Chen Gu. She guessed he probably still didn't want to go to the National Second Agricultural and Forestry University. Feeling some sympathy for him, she decided to call the Director-General. "Your Excellency, I have an idea."

"Chen Gu's physical skills score must be very high. Even if his academic scores aren't up to par, with some maneuvering, he should still be able to get into some fairly good schools."

Aviloya interrupted her, "Of course, I know that. But his current state is such that he really shouldn't be too high-profile. I want him to go to the National Second Agricultural and Forestry University to lay low for a while. This will hide him temporarily until we figure out the secrets he's carrying. Whatever he deserves, the Bureau of Mystic Security will ensure he receives it."

Qing Ruyan had nothing more to say.

The Director-General's concerns were very reasonable. Chen Gu had already attracted military attention. With Bai Yunpeng constantly trying to poach him, Aviloya was already struggling to cope. If he attracted any more attention, the Bureau of Mystic Security might genuinely not be able to protect him.

"Yes, you have a point..." Qing Ruyan conceded. But before she could finish, she suddenly heard Aviloya say something on the phone that sounded like... cursing?

How can you, the goddess of all men in the Star System, be cursing? A goddess like you should be too perfect to even defecate!

Qing Ruyan was baffled by this sudden outburst. Aviloya immediately sent a news link. "Look into this."

Aviloya hung up. Qing Ruyan opened the link. "Hmm? A candidate with full marks in physical skills? Chen Gu? Impossible."

It also mentioned that his academic scores were frighteningly high... how much... 890!

Impossible. That kid... hehe.

But Aviloya trusted her intuition; she believed there was a ninety percent chance this person was Chen Gu. Why? Because she had personally witnessed Dr. Meng Ji conduct a physical assessment on Chen Gu. People like Qing Ruyan were not privy to the details; they only had a rough understanding that Chen Gu's physical condition was exceptional, even among other professionals.

Just based on Chen Gu's physical capabilities, equivalent to the peak of the Fourth Energy Level, he would get a perfect score even if he held back.

This kid loved to show off, so Aviloya wasn't surprised by him achieving a perfect physical skills score. However, the mention of an academic score of 890—that was the real issue!

In fact, Aviloya had anticipated Chen Gu achieving a perfect score in physical skills. The reason the report didn't disclose the candidate's planet was due to some "precautionary measures" she had already put in place.

She knew how shockingly unconventional it was to get a perfect score in physical skills. She had originally wanted to suppress it to prevent Chen Gu from "blowing his cover" prematurely.

However, some issue must have arisen, as this "sensational news" was still dug up by the media. That's why Aviloya couldn't help but curse...

Chapter 328 Raising Eyebrows and Sighing in Relief

Qing Ruyan still followed the Director-General's instructions and made a call to Chen Gu. "The candidate with full marks in physical techniques in the news has the same name as you."

Chen Gu replied indifferently, "Oh, that must be me."

Qing Ruyan had been expecting Chen Gu to say, "Yeah, there are so many people with that name," and then she would tease him a bit and casually mention that he should prepare to enroll at the National Second Agricultural and Forestry University.

Instead, Chen Gu's response left her stuck, and it took her a while to react, exclaiming loudly, "It's you? It's you? Is it really you?"

"You scored 890 in total for the cultural subjects?"

Chen Gu remained indifferent. "Yeah, it's too hard to get full marks in cultural subjects. You know, with essays and the like, they always deduct a little bit." He was already ecstatic. So you all looked down on me, huh? Thought I'd end up at the National Second Agricultural and Forestry University? Bet you're all stunned now! Hmph!

Qing Ruyan had excelled in both academics and conduct since she was young and was regarded as a peerless student by everyone. She had always aimed for the Tiangong Military Division, but her final scores for both subjects still fell short by over twenty points.

She knew the difficulty of getting into the Tiangong Military Division. Every year, billions of candidates in the Confederation vied for a place. Yet, how many were admitted? Only 12,000.

She desperately wanted to ask Chen Gu how he did it. You were clearly a slacker! How could someone like me, with both brains and beauty, fail when you succeeded?

Oh, right, you're good-looking too. Scratch that part.

But after a turmoil of emotions, all she managed to say was a faint, "Congratulations."

After hanging up, Qing Ruyan suddenly realized there was a problem. Now the Director-General is the one with the headache. Chen Gu, no matter what, can't be kept hidden anymore.

The thought of the Director-General furiously cursing, and then having to frantically deal with this situation, brought an inexplicable sense of pleasure welling up from the bottom of her heart, and she couldn't help but smile.

While Qing Ruyan was looking for Chen Gu, various media outlets in the Confederation were also searching for him, including the one that first leaked the news online about a candidate with full marks in physical techniques.

At this time every year, news about these "special" candidates with "terrifying" scores was immensely popular.

This year, they had used their connections to access the system and had just found a candidate with full marks in physical techniques. They saw the name and total score for the cultural subjects, but before they could clearly make out the rest of the information, the system hid everything about the candidate!

They didn't know that this was due to Aviloya's arrangements. Aviloya, after all, was somewhat removed from the educational system. She had asked a few people to put in a word for her, and they hadn't taken it very seriously at first. Only after the scores were released did they remember this particular matter, so they blocked Chen Gu's results. They were a step too late; someone had already dug up Chen Gu's scores and name. Puzzled, they suspected a "scandal" and immediately grew excited. This is big news! We have to dig deep!

Media integrity and professional ethics? That was all nonsense. Unearthing the story generated buzz; it could rocket them to fame!

It wasn't just them. All media outlets sprang into action, using all kinds of connections to probe for information about this candidate.

Aviloya had made some additional arrangements. However, as she was only in charge of the Bureau of Mystic Security, the media's power couldn't be underestimated, and some information still gradually leaked out.

Qing Ruyan returned Aviloya's call. "It's him."

Aviloya let out a long sigh, hung up the call from her subordinate, and then suddenly realized something. She quickly opened Chen Gu's file and looked for the "Profession" category. When she saw the last entry, "Brain Domain Hacker," she slammed her fist on the table. "A mistake..."

A small oversight had wasted all her prior efforts. If she had realized earlier that this guy also had the profession of Brain Domain Hacker, Aviloya would have known his college entrance exam results were bound to be heaven-defying.

But upon further thought, Aviloya realized that this was something she probably couldn't have stopped. Even if she had become aware of this earlier, what could she have done? Talk to Chen Gu and ask him to give up the Tiangong Military Division to go to the National Second Agricultural and Forestry University? Would he agree? Impossible.

And if she made any excessive moves, this kid would undoubtedly turn around and defect to Bai Yunpeng.

"This little thief—" Aviloya gritted her teeth in frustration.

However, what she needed to consider now was how to deal with the various troubles that would inevitably arise.

Chen Gu was rather displeased. That damn ungrateful brat! He still hadn't called to ask about his old man's scores.

The main reason was that he'd just enjoyed showing off to Qing Ruyan, and it felt fantastic. He wanted to experience it again, but no one was presenting themselves as an audience for his act.

Suddenly, the phone rang. He excitedly picked it up, only to see that it was Zhao Ji. Known as the 'King of Spongers,' his voice boomed over the phone, "You finished the exams? Come out and party, man!"

"Tao Tao has already discussed things with Marshal Bai, and they'll be signing the agreement soon. She called me, saying she wants to thank you specifically when she gets back. I thought you might find it tiresome, so I figured, why not get together while she's away? I've invited Ossosa and 'the Gorilla' too."

Zhao Ji was probably worried that if his wife got involved, the friendly gathering would turn into a formal business dinner.

Chen Gu agreed happily, "Sure, that sounds great. You plan it, and I'll be sure to eat my fill at your expense."

"No problem! My wife's been in a good mood lately, and she increased my monthly allowance by quite a bit."

This fellow, far from being ashamed of freeloading off his wife, actually flaunted it everywhere.

That evening, the four buddies gathered at a distinctive restaurant Zhao Ji had found. The food was genuinely good, yet Gao Mengjiu, always looking to stir things up, insisted the place was dull. He argued that it was pointless for four men to dine together without some excitement, and that four men together, if not interested in each other, should be out carousing.

Zhao Ji was dead set against carousing.

Midway through, Ossosa suddenly remembered. "Chen Gu, what did you score? Don't be too embarrassing; after all, you did go through high school twice."

"Me?" Chen Gu casually swirled the red wine in his glass and began his performance. "Not bad, I suppose. Barring any surprises, I should be this year's top scorer in the college entrance exam..."

"PFFT—" The other three burst out laughing simultaneously. Gao Mengjiu, with wine still in his mouth, sprayed Zhao Ji, who was sitting opposite him.

Zhao Ji glared at 'the Gorilla,' wiping the wine off his clothes with a napkin, then said to Chen Gu, "Among the four of us, when it comes to shooting the breeze, you take the crown, Old Chen!"

Chen Gu fell silent. His performance hadn't had the desired effect.

"I'm telling the truth."

All three laughed. "Yeah, yeah, it's true, it's true! We're all a bit drunk today anyway, so we believe you!"

Chen Gu was speechless.

Just then, Chen Gu's phone rang. It was an unknown number. He couldn't be bothered to answer and casually hung up, but the caller was persistent and kept calling back.

Chen Gu, having no choice, answered, "Who is it?"

The person on the other end asked cautiously, "May I ask if this is Chen Gu?"

"It's me."

Chapter 329: Exclusive Interview

"Awesome!" The other party was ecstatic. "We finally found you! We're from Xinmenghua Network's news department, and we want to conduct a thorough interview with you. Your dual-subject scores are unprecedented. As long as you agree, we can negotiate a fee. Our editor-in-chief has already approved a hefty budget, hoping to secure the exclusive rights to your interview."

The three gorillas stared at Chen Gu, stunned. No way, did that silly goose really not bluff just now? Is it true?

That's not right. If he scored that well, his IQ has been officially certified. He's been removed from the silly goose ranks. Then only the three of us remain.

Chen Gu pondered for a moment. If you want to talk money with me, then we've got something to discuss.

"How much are you willing to pay?"

"Five hundred thousand Starshield, what do you think?"

I don't think much of it. It's a bit on the low side. But every little bit helps. Why not take what's earned for free?

But as Chen Gu was about to agree, he was stopped by Xingxing. "Leave this to me."

He spoke for Chen Gu, "Alright, we'll think about it." Then he hung up the phone.

Zhao Ji and Ossosa were about to speak, but Xingxing cut in. "Exactly how many points did you score?"

"My total score for the academic subjects is 890, and a full score in physical skills," Chen Gu replied indifferently, relishing the incredulous looks on the three silly geoses' faces.

Zhao Ji slapped his forehead. "So the student with the full score in physical skills that everyone's talking about online is you?"

"That's me!" Chen Gu was somewhat exasperated. "The report had my full name: Chen Gu! When you guys saw this name, didn't you have the slightest thought that this person might be your outstanding and excellent friend?"

The three silly geese shook their heads in unison, neatly and uniformly.

Chen Gu: "..."

Ossosa remarked with emotion, "Indeed, anything is possible. Even a silly goose has its day of turning smart."

Xingxing pushed Ossosa aside and said to Chen Gu, "Don't mind him. Let me tell you, the exclusive interview rights can't sell for less than three million!"

Chen Gu widened his eyes. "That much?"

Xingxing laughed. "Leave it to me. I happen to be free these days; I'll work as your agent for a bit."

He suddenly stared at Chen Gu for a while, then pulled Zhao Ji and Ossosa over with both hands. "Take a look, would you consider Chen Gu a handsome guy?"

Having spent so much time together, they had subconsciously overlooked each other's looks. Once Xingxing brought it up, the three of them seriously evaluated and, despite the lack of compliments, they all realized: yes, Chen Gu was quite good-looking.

Xingxing laughed again, slapped the table, and declared, "Settled, five million!"

「The next day」

Chen Gu's phone was nearly blown up with calls.

Xingxing accompanied him throughout. It was the first time Chen Gu realized how formidable his silly goose friend was in his field of expertise. In just one day, he managed to sell the exclusive interview rights to various major media outlets for the staggering price of six million seven hundred thousand Starshield!

Then Xingxing extorted a fine bottle of wine from him but still had to put him down. "This is all small business. Let me tell you, by my standards, a deal involving such petty cash isn't even worth my time. You know the celebrities under me; any one of their endorsements is worth hundreds of millions. The starting price for Man Suling is two hundred million..."

Chen Gu clicked his tongue. "That little she-wolf is so rich!"

He seriously began to consider whether he should give in to the little she-wolf and learn from Zhao Ji how to be financially supported by a woman. Money wasn't important; what mattered was that his stomach had been upset recently.

By evening, Chen Zili's phone call came. He demanded, "Is it you? Is it really you!"

Chen Gu smiled. "If you're asking about this year's college entrance exam top scorer, then yes, it's none other than your glorious and imposing grandpa."

SNAP! The brat hung up on him again.

On the other hand, Chen Zili was close to becoming depressed. That darned old man! No wonder he took the initiative to ask about my grades. I thought he genuinely cared about me. Turned out he just wanted to show off! Luckily, I didn't give him the chance last time. No wonder there was disdain in his voice when he heard my scores... as if he had any right to be disdainful. Ah, it's so frustrating.

The exclusive interview took up Chen Gu's entire day. Since he was well-compensated, he was very cooperative, revealing a lot about his personal life and inventing many "effective study methods."

But what followed left Chen Gu somewhat bewildered. By this time, major universities had already started enrolling students. With his scores, Chen Gu should have been among the first batch to be accepted by the Tiangong Military Division. His acceptance should have appeared online early on. However, Chen Gu had refreshed the page from morning till dusk and had not found his name on the admission list.

Could it be Aviloya? That's not likely. We've reached this point; she has no reason to do this now. Have I offended some important figure, someone powerful enough to heavily influence the esteemed Tiangong Military Division and prevent them from admitting a top scorer like me? That doesn't seem likely either...

Amidst these doubts and unease, Chen Gu was startled to discover that he had become famous. No matter the era, good looks always provide a certain advantage. Besides, the interviewers had paid a significant sum, so they naturally wanted the coverage to be perfect.

With a perfect score in the physical skills test, perfect looks, and an inspiring narrative, the new college entrance exam top scorer, Chen Gu, immediately garnered a large following.

As the three episodes of the exclusive reports aired one after another, Chen Gu's popularity soared. Riding the wave of topics related to the college entrance exam, he could almost match the fan base of certain celebrities.

Xingxing even came directly to him. "Why don't you debut as a celebrity while continuing your studies?" With just the two of them there, Xingxing spoke more freely. "Having a career as a professional isn't very stable. Man Suling and I have been relatively steady over the years, largely because we're well-known. Now you have that opportunity too."

He chuckled. "I happen to know that Aviloya is now the Director-General, and you've fallen into her hands. Becoming a celebrity could add another layer of protection for you."

Chen Gu scratched his head. In his past life, he had been an actor, so making a comeback was no trouble at all.

In his recent three interviews, his ability to draw in fans was also due to his excellent on-screen performance, befitting a top actor. It was graceful, witty, and humorous, and he showed a great sense of camera presence, always displaying his best side.

But for some reason, I suddenly can't muster much interest in it anymore. Chen Gu puzzled over it himself. Why is it that my dream from my past life doesn't evoke any desire in this one? This is arguably the closest I've come to 'making it' in either of my two lives. But my heart is as still as water.

"Let me think about it some more," Chen Gu said.

Chapter 330: The Strange Status of Admission

High school admissions were in full swing, but Mao Yisheng had nothing to do with them anymore. The end of the college entrance exams also signified that the new season of the Beast League was about to start, and he would soon need to report to the club.

During this time, a staff member from the club had been in touch with him, taking care of all matters.

This could hardly be called "valuing" him, since the club's head coach and manager hadn't even shown their faces. It also reflected that the gossip Chen Gu had seen on the forums wasn't baseless—Battle Fire Club was indeed in contact with some star players, and all their attention was on them.

But Mao Yisheng wasn't disheartened and was still full of confidence.

He had a clear understanding of his position—he wasn't some "Chosen One" who could cause a sensation across the Alliance as soon as he joined. He was talented, but not spectacularly so.

What he needed to do was proceed steadily and aim to be one of the stable main players in a major club.

That path was long and full of hardship, but now, with Chen Gu's help, he felt even more confident. During this time, he had been strictly following the training plan given by the club's staff.

As the final deadline for admissions approached, Mao Yisheng also knew that the moment to truly part ways with everyone was imminent. He called Darkray, "How's it going on your end? Did you get in?"

His original intention was to invite Darkray out and treat Chen Gu to a meal—without saying anything, the gratitude would be clear.

Mao Yisheng understood Darkray's predicament all too well: he couldn't get into the good schools, and the lesser ones weren't enough to satisfy his ambition.

The two had been on the phone often these last few days, with Darkray frequently venting his frustrations. But today, Darkray said incredulously, "I—I got admitted to the Seventh Engineering Military Academy on Capital Star!"

Mao Yisheng obviously knew about the Seventh Engineering Military Academy and exclaimed with surprise, "You mean *the* Seventh Engineering Military Academy that trains Mecha pilots and is ranked among the top five in the entire Star Nation?!"

"Which other one could it be?" On the other end of the phone, Darkray rolled his eyes. "But... I'm really confused. You know my grades. Even if I had been hopeful and aimed a bit higher, I would have applied to some third-rate military academies, but the Seventh Engineering Military Academy is a top-tier military academy! I... I didn't even dare to apply, and my scores were far from enough, so how did I get admitted?"

Mao Yisheng said excitedly, "Why worry about all that? That's the Seventh Engineering Military Academy, man! Hahaha, you're going to become the Mecha pilot you've always dreamed of!"

"But... what if there's been a mistake and they kick me out..." Darkray started to worry.

Mao Yisheng scoffed, "Don't be so negative! Come out for dinner tonight. Let's invite Brother Chen too."

"Okay." Darkray figured staying home alone would just make him more anxious, so it was better to go out and gather with friends.

This time, they finally didn't meet up at Xianwei Residence but chose a restaurant closer to Chen Gu.

Upon meeting, Chen Gu immediately asked Darkray, "Did any military schools admit you?"

Darkray smiled strangely. "Actually, yes. The Seventh Engineering Military Academy."

Mao Yisheng, more attentive, noticed that Chen Gu had specifically asked about "military schools."

Chen Gu nodded. Marshal Bai really delivered. The Seventh Engineering Military Academy... quite impressive.

Seeing Chen Gu's lack of surprise, a bold guess popped into Mao Yisheng's mind—he wouldn't have entertained such a speculation if Chen Gu hadn't gotten him the Connector Type-V.

"Brother Chen, was it you who helped out?"

Darkray was startled. He remembered telling Chen Gu how unwilling he was to settle for less, but Chen Gu was just a high school student. Could he really have arranged admission to the Seventh Engineering Military Academy? He looked at Chen Gu with confusion.

Chen Gu, in turn, thought for a moment and decided to clarify things to avoid any issues after enrollment.

"I did ask someone about it," Chen Gu nodded, looking at Darkray. "But I'm afraid that's all the help they can provide. Once you're in the Seventh Engineering Military Academy, everything is up to you. If you fail too many courses and get kicked out, there's nothing I can do."

"It really was you..." Darkray was greatly surprised and then nodded repeatedly. "Don't worry. Even if it costs me my life, I *will* graduate successfully. Being a Mecha pilot—that's my lifelong dream! I won't let this opportunity slip through my fingers, no matter what."

Chen Gu gave a slight nod. It was good that Darkray was sensible.

Just at that moment, Mao Yisheng's private account emitted a crisp notification sound. He accessed it, appearing quite surprised. Darkray asked, "What happened?"

With a swipe of his hand, Mao Yisheng projected a screen in front of the two, displaying the official social media account of the Battle Fire Club he was following.

In a very short time, the official social media account posted two updates in quick succession. The top update read: Battle Fire Club has just signed two star players, "Thunderbolt" Meng Guangzhi and "Storm" Kostia, for massive transfer fees of 240 million and 210 million, respectively!

Both were Alliance front-line stars, just short of superstar status, and Battle Fire Club suddenly became much stronger.

Following that very eye-catching news, there was another update: next season, the club would relocate to Capital Star.

Mao Yisheng was mentally prepared for the club signing star players and didn't react much to the first piece of news. Instead, he was delighted with the second. "Hahaha, the three of us can reunite on Capital Star again!"

Darkray cheered. They all assumed that Chen Gu had surely already been accepted by the Tiangong Military Division, so they didn't even bother to ask.

However, a pall of gloom couldn't help but settle over Chen Gu's heart.

「The next day.」

Upon waking up, Chen Gu's first action was still to check the admission page of the Tiangong Military Division. It hadn't been updated for a long time, and his name still wasn't there.

This is surreal, Chen Gu thought. Am I going to be the first top scorer in the history of the college entrance exams to be rejected?

What exactly went wrong?

Today was the last day for admissions, and Chen Gu was starting to lose his nerve. If the Tiangong Military Division doesn't want me, other schools... would be fine too, I suppose.

But he had only applied to the Tiangong Military Division. When he checked his admission status again, it was still blank. Presumably, other schools also didn't expect the Tiangong Military Division to reject me.

Does this mean I'll really have to attend some place like National Second Agricultural and Forestry University...?

He waited until evening, but his name still hadn't appeared on the Tiangong Military Division's admission page. Unable to wait any longer, Chen Gu braced himself and made another call to Bai Yunpeng. "Marshal Bai... do you know someone at the Tiangong Military Division?"

He had already troubled Bai Yunpeng several times, and it was truly a bit embarrassing to ask again.

Bai Yunpeng was quite forthright. "What's the matter?"

"Could you help me find out why I haven't been admitted yet?"

Bai Yunpeng's answer, however, surprised him. "You've already been admitted!"