

## Scavengers 361

### Chapter 361: Bleeding from Being Scammed

Actually, selling insurance is pretty much like selling goods; if you show a face that screams you want to buy, they'll definitely jack up the price. But the moment you show a hint that you don't want to buy, they'll immediately latch onto you and say the price is negotiable...

What's this called?

This is called playing hard to get!

So, after Ji You turned around and walked back, she purposely put on an air that she really didn't feel like setting up the fighting ring again, saying, "Director Wang, I have to be honest, my entire fortune isn't even enough for 100,000 credit points. So if you ask me to come up with 600,000 to start a fighting ring, that's just impossible, it'll never happen in this lifetime. Hence, I've decided—that's it, I'm not setting up the ring!"

That's right.

You've got to be that decisive.

Against such a sly old fox, if you try to get sneaky or play tricks, you're definitely not going to outsmart him. Therefore, Ji You simply put on a tough and impenetrable front.

—That's it, I'm not setting up the ring!

What about it?

Can the school do anything to her?

Losses?

It's just a bit of face she'd lose, and Ji You wasn't planning on keeping hers anyway, so she doesn't feel like there's anything to lose.

Director Wang watched Ji You with her nonchalant attitude, and his ever-calm expression showed a slight crack, but he quickly recovered and said with a smile, "Not setting it up? Are you sure?"

Ji You nodded vigorously: "Absolutely sure."

Director Wang suddenly turned stern, "Where do you think you're putting the face of the entire school? Ji You, I must tell you seriously that Lanyue Star Military Academy is a very dignified and solemn institution, and we absolutely do not tolerate such behavior!"

Ji You's lips twitched into a forced smile, "But I don't have the money."

Hearing this, Director Wang's stern tone shifted to a gentle one, "Money issues aren't unsolvable."

Upon hearing this, alarm bells went off in Ji You's head.

This—

Director Wang wouldn't suddenly ask her to take out a loan, right?

After all, there was precedent with the insurance sales. It was quite possible that he'd switch to offering loans...

Ji You mulled it over, on guard.

Director Wang glanced at Ji You's expression and knew what she was thinking. He scolded jokingly, "What do you take your teacher for? Am I that kind of person? Private lending is illegal and can land you in jail."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You scratched her head and chuckled, "Director Wang, you've misunderstood me. I never thought you would grant me a loan, how could that be? Someone as noble and upright as Director Wang would never do such a thing."

Director Wang smiled, "It's good that you think that way."

Ji You: "..."

So—

Director Wang really isn't your average person. Others would at least feign modesty when they hear such flattery, but he just took it all in stride.

This is going to be tough.

A bad premonition in Ji You's heart grew stronger.

She had a feeling she was about to take a big financial hit today.

Director Wang's face was all smiles as he said, "Since you want to set up the fighting ring publicly, which can help facilitate student interaction and learning, it's a very good thing. Thus, the school will appropriately assist you. Of course, we won't lend you money or have you do anything illegal. However, support aside, the school's rules and regulations must still be adhered to and can't easily be broken, so the 600,000 credit points rental fee won't be reduced by a single point."

Initially, Ji You's face lit up with joy as she listened, but upon hearing the last part, the happiness immediately disappeared.

This—

Might as well have said nothing.

"But—"

Director Wang continued in a friendly tone, "I have a compromise here, which won't require you to borrow money or do hard labor. This method is to use Alliance University's points for the deduction."

"Ah?" Ji You was startled, "You can also use points to offset the cost."

Director Wang nodded: "Mmm."

Ji You asked, "Director Wang, how much would that be?"

Director Wang stretched out a finger.

Ji You asked in a low voice, "1,000 points?"

Director Wang paused, his voice filled with annoyance, "Nonsense!" Where does it come that cheap?

Ji You tentatively inquired, "1...10,000?"

Director Wang's face turned even darker: "You girl, why are you always trying to take advantage of the school?"

Ji You: "..."

Ji You took a deep breath and straightforwardly said, "Please, Director Wang, give me a straight answer—how much exactly?"

It was then Director Wang's anger turned to laughter, "The school won't take advantage of you, just 100,000 will do."

Ji You's hand shook: "!!!"

100,000?

That's not taking advantage?

What is it then?

Isn't this basically daylight robbery?

Ji You's hand trembled as she stammered, still in disbelief, "100...100,000 points???"

Director Wang's face was all smiles, "Look at you, kid, how can you be so feeble-hearted? Crying over 100,000. Is 100,000 a lot? It's not. The school isn't taking advantage; in fact, we still have to cover some losses."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You gritted her teeth, struggling to squeeze out a smile, "Director Wang, you...you just said you see all students as your own children, please have mercy, spare this child... she still wants to see tomorrow's sunshine."

Director Wang: "..."

Director Wang raised his hand, pointing to the door, "The door is right there, either agree or leave now, but I will only say this once, if you walk out that door and come back, I will have to raise the price."

Ji You: "..."

Threat!

This is a blatant threat!

Damn it.

Her bad premonition was indeed correct, today was a day meant for being fleeced and bled dry.

Ji You bit her lip, her hand shaking as she said, "I agree." Not agreeing was not an option, now Ji You also completely understood: Director Wang's purpose for all these tactics today was just for her 100,000 points. If Ji You continued to resist and refuse to agree, what awaited her would only be more elaborate schemes and tricks.

With that being the case, why bother with all this trouble?

So, Ji You simply agreed, to free up time for herself to review more of the Material Department's knowledge.

Upon hearing her agreement, Director Wang's face broke into a smile, his expression was as genial as a gentle spring breeze, "Good child, you have a bright future."

Ji You gritted her teeth, "Thank you for your kind words."

Soon, the rental agreement was signed.

Ji You stared at the electronic agreement, thinking about the 100,000 points deducted from her account, feeling her heart bleeding, but still, she had to suppress the heartache and smile, "Director Wang, thank you."

Director Wang smiled, "You're welcome, serving the students is my honor."

Ji You: "..."

Dammit.

As soon as she left, Ji You clenched her fists, her teeth grinding with a creaking sound, someday, she was definitely going to secretly put a sack over Director Wang's head and give him a good beating.

Definitely!

Chapter 362: He's the Mastermind!

Academic Affairs Office.

As soon as Ji You left, within a few minutes, Director Wang, sitting with his legs crossed, began dialing Principal Hong's contact number with a smile in his eyes.

Principal Hong answered quickly.

Principal Hong asked, "Old Wang, did it work out?"

"It did," said Director Wang, looking at Principal Hong in surprise, and said, "Wow! Old Hong, guess how many points this girl has in her hands?"

Principal Hong, shaking his leg, asked, "How many?"

Director Wang slapped the table and said, "260,000!"

Hiss—

Principal Hong's eyes bulged, no longer shaking his leg, he couldn't help but ask, "How many?"

Director Wang withdrew his crossed legs and said: "Over 260,000! If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I wouldn't believe it. This kid has a bright future ahead! How long has she been enrolled? Just halfway through the semester, and she's already amassed so many points. What a promising student!"

Principal Hong's eyes narrowed, saying, "That means she still has 160,000 in her hands? That won't do. We need to find a way to drain all the points from her, empty them out."

Director Wang said with a smile, "If I had known she had this many, I would have fleeced her for more! Only 100,000, we really sold ourselves short."

Hearing this, Principal Hong was left somewhat speechless. He originally thought Ji You had at most about 100,000 points, thinking that this time Old Wang could at most fleece her for 50,000 or 60,000. Taking 50,000 or 60,000 would already be quite ruthless, extremely greedy.

To his utmost surprise, Old Wang demanded 100,000.

And even more unexpectedly, the girl really coughed it up.

Thinking about it, he really wasn't suited for managing finances. Such an unscrupulous job, indeed, was more fitting for an old fox like Wang Lianfa.

Of course—

All of these thoughts went through Principal Hong's head, but none of it showed on his face. He cautioned, "Old Wang, Leave this matter to you. Find a way to spend all the girl's points. A young girl with so many points can easily slack off and wait for graduation without worries, that's not conducive to her development. Doing nothing breeds laziness and a lack of motivation."

Director Wang said with a laugh: "Don't worry, leave it to me."

Principal Hong smiled slightly and said, "I would really be uneasy entrusting this to someone else. But, Old Wang, I have a hundred and twenty percent confidence in you."

No other reason.

He had just taken action and had skimmed 100,000 credit points off Ji You. In the whole school, who is more adept at skinning someone than Wang Lianfa?

No one.

Wang Lianfa would dare claim to be second, but no one would dare to claim to be the first.

Director Wang said with a laugh: "Old Hong, you're not being upright. Unloading these despicable and provoking tasks on me—if that's not intentionally making the students hate me, what is?"

While speaking—

Director Wang suddenly sneezed hard, he raised his hand, touched his nose, and cursed with a laugh: "It must be that girl cursing me behind my back just now, who knows how ugly her words are."

Principal Hong said with a smile: "The capable have to do more work. It's because you're suitable for the job that I entrusted it to you."

Director Wang waved his hand and said, "Stop blowing smoke, do you think I don't know what kind of person you are?"

Truth be told, had Principal Hong not suddenly told Director Wang about batch 131 self-funded student Ji You having a large amount of points and instructed him to figure out how to extract them, Director Wang would not have suddenly taken such a hard line on fleecing Ji You.

All things considered, it was Principal Hong's fault, but the blame fell on Director Wang.

Regarding this, Director Wang had come to accept his fate.

After all, isn't it just yet another unfounded accusation about finances he's been unjustly shouldering for over a decade? What's one more to the count?

At this thought, Director Wang suddenly asked, "That girl you mentioned just now, did she really win so many points in the Alliance University Cyber Competition? And she rose out of nowhere to 99th on the East District leaderboard?"

Principal Hong replied, "Is there any doubt about it?"

In reality, 'Alliance University official' does not refer to a single school, but signifies all the universities within the Alliance. This organizational entity is directly under the jurisdiction of the Alliance Education Bureau. Every year, both offline and online, numerous subject competitions are hosted by the Education Bureau and officially presented by the Alliance University. However, the two most significant competitions are the annual Cyber Competition and the annual Offline Competition.

The Cyber Competition begins with selections in September when the new academic year starts and concludes in November. Being an anonymous contest, all students, regardless of school or region, compete only representing themselves. The purpose of this competition is to preliminarily filter and gauge the general capabilities of the new generation of students in the Alliance.

The Idle Contest starts every year in March of the second semester and ends in May. In this contest, students are categorized by school, region, and their affiliated star systems, and the results of their competitive efforts represent not only their own merit but are also fought in honor of their schools. This competition further refines the individual strengths of the new generation across the various star systems and regions within the Alliance.

In summary—

Both competitions are very meaningful.

Even though the cyber race is anonymous and the real identity of the students who participate must be kept confidential, every attending student must use their real student registration number to access the internal network of Alliance University for verification. The network connects to the student's school to confirm authenticity.

Therefore—

If the senior leadership of a school is really determined to investigate, they can find out exactly how many and which students from their school have participated in the cyber competition.

After learning that Ji You had participated in the competition and achieved a notable ranking, becoming a forum sensation, Principal Hong speculated that she might possess a substantial amount of points.

So—

Principal Hong began to scheme.

After leaving Director Wang's office, Ji You kept cursing under her breath. Suddenly, she shivered and sneezed several times in a row.

Ji You tilted her head, "Strange??? Why suddenly sneezing? The weather hasn't changed at all."

Could it be—

Someone is up to some mischief?

Xu Siyu?

Lin Lele?

Or who?

Or, could it be Director Wang?

No matter how hard Ji You racked her brain, she couldn't guess that it would be Principal Hong.

Continuing to grumble all the way to her dormitory, Ji You stopped in her tracks just before entering. After thinking it over carefully, she felt she hadn't slipped up in any way. When transferring money to Director Wang, she had purposely covered her tracks to prevent him from peeking at the exact amount of her assets, ensuring that Director Wang hadn't seen a thing.

It... It shouldn't be Director Wang, right?

That leaves only Xu Siyu.

Ji You guessed that Xu Siyu must be plotting how to embarrass her after learning that Ji You was challenging the entire school. So, she must be scheming in secret.

But what is there to fear?

Having decided to create a spectacle, Ji You had already prepared herself mentally.

In any case, one counters soldiers with generals and stems water with earth. All their schemes and machinations are just paper tigers!

And with that, Ji You pushed the door open and entered.

### Chapter 363: Xu Siyu's Reaction

After returning to the dormitory, Ji You immediately brewed herself a cup of Cloud Mist Milk Tea. With tweezers, she meticulously measured the Cloud Mist Tea into the scale, ensuring that she picked out exactly 1 gram before boiling it.

No way around it, this stuff is expensive, and what's more, it's hard to find on the market, so it must be used sparingly.

While the milk tea was simmering, Ji You first logged into Star Network and entered the internal network of Alliance University. She wanted to check the latest information on the online competition. After reading it, Ji You felt a wave of relief in her heart.

Following the 100-person melee, the rules for the advancement tournament had changed again. The upcoming match would not be a multiplayer one, but a one-on-one duel. However, players couldn't freely choose their opponents; they would be matched randomly by the system.

If you're lucky, you might get paired with someone slightly weaker. But if you're unlucky and get matched with someone in the top ten of the master's list, then you can only cry and accept your fate.

However, those who have advanced to this point are unlikely to be weak.

Anyway, Ji You was not about to let her guard down.

To Ji You's relief, the next random matching game would start in three days. In three days, the competition would become extremely fierce; losing three matches in a row would lead to direct elimination.

This also left Ji You with time to compete in the challenge from the Material Department.

Since she didn't need to worry about the online competition for now, Ji You was about to log off when suddenly, she inadvertently caught sight of a somewhat familiar figure and couldn't help but follow.

However, the slim figure disappeared into the crowd with a few swift moves, vanishing without a trace.

Ji You rubbed her eyes, feeling that she must have seen things. Otherwise, in this vast sea of people, how could she be certain that the person was weak chicken?

Yes.

Ji You suspected that the dim figure, skinny as a monkey, was weak chicken.

Ji You raised her hand and clenched her fist, cursing: "Weak chicken, wait until I catch you, I'll slaughter you myself!"

After saying that.

Ji You chose to log off.

On this side.

Amidst the surging crowd, a dark nape of the neck appeared, and then, a whole face was revealed: who else could it be if not the weak chicken?

Weak chicken patted his chest and let out a long breath: "My God... that was scary... How is the Rag Queen's perception so sharp?" Just now, unexpectedly encountering her, the weak chicken immediately thought of ducking for cover.

Fortunately—

Weak chicken's reaction was also swift. With a quick rush, he slipped into the crowd, finally hiding his figure.

Alas!

Weak chicken scrolled through his blacklist, regretting having added her to it. If this keeps up—sooner or later, he'll be caught.

Even just thinking about the consequences of being caught made weak chicken shudder uncontrollably.

Weak chicken was anxious until he made sure Ji You had left. Only then did he dare to swagger out and wander about...

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Lanyue Star Military Academy.

As Ji You was diligently reading the Material Department information given by Sister Lingzhi, on the other side, in the Nolan Laboratory, Xu Siyu, wearing a white lab coat and sporting a clean face, was quietly doing data recording.

The slightly large lab coat made her already slender and fragile figure seem even more delicate and beautiful, giving off a vibe of Liu Fufeng (willow in the wind). The two male researchers watching Xu Siyu hesitated to approach and disturb her.

Until—

Xu Siyu closed her notebook and took the initiative to look up towards the door, asking softly, "Seniors, do you need something from me?"

The leading male student pushed his glasses up in a somewhat anxious tone, "Si Yu, have you heard about a junior from the 131st cohort publicly challenging you?"

Xu Siyu was taken aback, looking puzzled: "What is it?"

Seeing her expression, the male student realized she didn't know, and said: "I thought as much. You really don't know."

Xu Siyu noticed the expressions of the two researchers from Nolan Laboratory and asked with extremely puzzled eyes: "What is it? Has something serious happened?"

Before the leading male student could speak, the other male next to him hurriedly said, "Si Yu, it's a bit troublesome. The one who publicly challenged you is Ji You, who was once caught plagiarising your work and had her admission revoked by the school."

Seeing his comment intercepted, the leading male showed slight displeasure. At this point, he stepped forward and added: "Yes, this person named Ji You seems to have a big grudge against you. We're worried that you might run into trouble, so we wanted to give you a heads-up."

Only then did Xu Siyu appear to have an epiphany. She showed a faint smile on her face and said softly, "Thank you for your concern, seniors. I've taken note of this, and I will be careful."

The male student finally felt somewhat reassured and said, "Good that you know. Si Yu, according to our investigation, this person named Ji You, after having her admission revoked, managed to enroll again as a self-funded student. She has been all out to trouble you within half a year of her enrollment. We suspect her intentions are not good, you must be prepared. Although we all believe you will definitely not lose to her in a normal, regular competition. What if this girl resorts to despicable tactics to cheat?"

"Exactly... that's very possible, Si Yu, you must be cautious. The best way is to ignore her! Let her perform a solo act!" The other male student chimed in.

"My advice is also for you not to accept it! Just let her kick up a fuss on her own!"

After listening to the two male students, Xu Siyu was silent for a while, sighed, and said: "Thank you, seniors. I will consider whether to accept her challenge carefully. Additionally... this student Ji You was actually my deskmate before. We used to be very close. I... I really don't understand why she has turned out this way now? Just thinking about her makes me very upset, very upset..."

She paused for a few seconds, her eyes revealing a deep sadness, "I... that's also why I haven't taken the initiative to look for her since the start of the term, because—I don't know what attitude to face her with? Her becoming like this... I also have my responsibility... If only I hadn't discussed my material processing ideas with her, then... there wouldn't be all these issues."

As she spoke, Xu Siyu covered her mouth, seemingly too pained to continue.

The two gentlemen, upon hearing her words and seeing Xu Siyu looking frailer and frailer, wished they could bear the suffering and sadness for her.

The leading male student frowned and said loudly, "Si Yu! You don't need to feel sorry for that kind of person! Nor do you need to feel sad for them! You treated her as a friend! Yet she treated you as an enemy, so, you can completely disregard her! She's not worth it!"

"Yes! She's not worth your care!"

"Si Yu! Don't overthink it, just ignore her when the time comes."

Chapter 364: Accept or Reject?

Xu Siyu listened to the indignant remarks of the two boys, a trace of difficulty showing on her face.

Silence.

A few seconds later, the boys seemed to realize that they had made things awkward for Xu Siyu—a beautiful, kind, and sensitive girl—so they stopped.

The leading boy said, "Si Yu, we came over just to inform you so that you wouldn't be in the dark and get outwitted by Ji You. Now that you know, we won't disturb you any longer. You're in charge of managing the material construction in Senior Nolan's lab, and you have a heavy workload, so we won't add to your troubles."

"Yes. Si Yu, we'll leave you be. Take care to rest, and remember to balance work with leisure," the other boy added.

Then—

The two boys finally left Xu Siyu's workspace.

Once they were gone, Xu Siyu's delicate face instantly darkened.

She had been aware of the message delivered by Lin Lele and others on Ji You's behalf a few days earlier, including today's speech in the cafeteria. She had known right from the start, pretending to be clueless simply to maintain her image.

Xu Siyu frowned tightly.

The current situation was rather bad.

Xu Siyu was very clear: regardless of how the outside world slandered or insulted Ji You, including the derogatory comments her own fans made—saying Ji You was overambitious and arrogant—Xu Siyu herself was well aware that Ji You's talent in materials wasn't as poor as others claimed. On the contrary, Ji You was so talented it was enviable.

Did Ji You now suddenly make such a grand gesture because she was confident she could defeat her?

Or?

But—

As she knew, wasn't Ji You forced to leave the classroom by Professor Ye Hong and hadn't attended a full lesson yet? Moreover—hadn't she switched to the Combat Department?

How come all of a sudden...

And—

She was not just challenging her alone; she was challenging all students of the Material Department in their first and second years.

How presumptuous was that?

Even Xu Siyu herself wouldn't dare to say she could beat so many people on her own.

Lanyue Star Military Academy was the strongest school in the Sixth Star System and was also the one with the deepest research in materials, its reputation hardly inferior to that of Main Star's First Military Academy.

After entering the academy, Xu Siyu realized how profound its heritage was. Whether it was the instructors or the students, there were simply too many formidable figures hidden within...

If it weren't for the unique theoretical idea and preliminary results she proposed during the entrance examination, Xu Siyu wouldn't have received such attention, nor would she have built her current reputation. And—Xu Siyu knew the truth about herself: the person who proposed this theory was...

Therefore—

That's why she found Ji You so terrifying.

If Ji You dared to say such things, did she have enough confidence to defeat her?

No!

No!

No!

Absolutely impossible.

Xu Siyu shook her head, her frown deepening.

The trickier part is, if Ji You were only challenging me alone, I could completely ignore her. If Ji You relentlessly pursued and pestered me for a challenge...

The outside world would only criticize Ji You's character and would certainly not trouble me. If I then acted forgiving and inclined to reconcile, the public would praise my character even more.

But—

Ji You isn't just challenging me; she's challenging everyone and doesn't care whether or not I accept her challenge.

This complicates things.

Xu Siyu's complexion turned sour: If I truly don't go, Ji You could spout nonsensical claims on the stage, and the world would think I was too cowardly to answer her challenge.

If I do go—

If I win, of course, that's great; my reputation will soar even higher.

But if I lose...

Impossible!

Xu Siyu shook her head quickly, finding her thoughts at that moment somewhat terrifying.

Then, a resolute light shone in Xu Siyu's eyes: No matter what, I cannot let Ji You control the direction of public opinion. Even if I don't accept the challenge, I must keep the narrative in my hands.

Just as her thoughts emerged, the door to the studio was suddenly pushed open.

Xu Siyu looked up instinctively and her face immediately showed a tender smile upon seeing the handsome young man who walked in: "Senior Nolan, what brings you here at this time?"

Nolan Augustine saw the girl in the lab, a flicker of light passing through his blue eyes, and he spoke warmly: "Si Yu, you're still working so hard so late, I appreciate your efforts."

Xu Siyu shook her head gently, replying, "It's not tough at all, not the slightest. I consider it an honor to be able to contribute to your endeavors, Senior Nolan."

Nolan chuckled: "You really are the best, always thinking of me, always considering the lab."

Xu Siyu's lips curled into a playful smile, saying: "Senior Nolan, that's not quite right. What I'm doing, it's not just for you—it's also for my dream. I deeply believe that what you are researching now will definitely change the world, change history. If our ideas truly succeed, the creation of Soul Devices would no longer be limited. This is so important for the Alliance and the future development of humanity! It's because I share the same dream as you, Senior, that I am willing to stay in your lab."

Listening to Xu Siyu speak, Nolan Augustine's smile became even broader, and he couldn't help saying: "Si Yu, knowing you feel this way, I'm truly happy, very happy. You are right; we are working towards our own dreams, the dreams of humanity."

"Exactly!" Xu Siyu nodded vigorously, adding: "To fight for our dreams."

Nolan looked at Xu Siyu, his heart unavoidably filled with emotion: Initially, he recruited this somewhat famous junior to handle some basic material processing, but unexpectedly, not only did she excel at processing materials, she also took care of other trivial matters. Moreover, to obtain more Soul Device data for him, she even took the initiative to persuade Professor Ye Hong to write a recommendation letter.

Furthermore, that low-level soul artifact she once provided for free was of great significance for Nolan's research...

...

In short, Xu Siyu's current assistance was truly immense, and she was also actively involved in the lab's affairs. Nolan obviously welcomed such an active employee, but—

Thinking of something, Nolan suddenly furrowed his brows and said: "Si Yu, have you encountered some troubles lately?"

A moment of struggle flashed in Xu Siyu's eyes: "Not at all."

Nolan smiled and said: "You've become a complete workaholic now, oblivious to what's happening around you. There is a junior at school openly challenging you."

Upon hearing this, Xu Siyu smiled and said: "Even you know about it, Senior. This matter seems to have made quite the commotion."

Chapter 365: Terrifying Companions

Nolan was taken aback: "Oh? You already know?"

Xu Siyu smiled and said, "Yes, Wu Xing and Senior Huang Chao just came over and told me."

Upon hearing this, Nolan understood and asked, "You know now, what do you plan to do?"

Xu Siyu knew that his question about plans referred to acceptance or rejection. She pondered for a moment, a clearly visible sadness appeared on her face as she softly said, "Senior... actually... I don't really want to compete with her."

A confused look appeared in Nolan's blue eyes as he asked, "Why not go?"

Seeing the sad expression in Xu Siyu's eyes, Nolan suddenly realized. He thought for a moment and said, "I see, are you afraid of contacting that junior? I heard she once plagiarized your work?"

Xu Siyu's eyes were still filled with sadness, but she gathered her spirit and said, "Ji You and I, we used to be classmates and very good friends, but I didn't know she would do such a thing. If I had known, I would have stopped her, even... even give her my..." She did not finish her sentence.

Nolan understood, he raised his hand, interrupting Xu Siyu, and said, "If you have such thoughts, that is wrong of you, Si Yu. In my view, knowledge can be learned and exchanged mutually, but it shouldn't be handed over to someone else. What is your achievement should remain yours, you absolutely shouldn't give it to someone else. This is not only disrespecting yourself but also disrespecting your friend."

Pausing briefly, Nolan continued, "Your friend, since she did this, it shows she did not respect your friendship or your achievements. The consequence of being expelled was caused by herself, you can't blame others. So—Si Yu, you shouldn't feel sad about this."

"Senior, I... I know everything you said is right, but I... occasionally think about it and still feel very sad," Xu Siyu said, bowing her head and covering her face with her hand.

Nolan said, "Feeling sad is a normal emotional release, but you shouldn't let this emotion control you forever, so, beautiful girl, try to forget about this matter."

Xu Siyu nodded lightly, but still covered her face with her hand.

Nolan said, "Since she wants to challenge you, Si Yu, you should boldly accept it. I believe that in handling materials, you are unique in the entire school."

Xu Siyu finally raised her head, but her face still showed distress.

She was truly upset.

Senior Nolan came from a good family background and was a good person, which is why the more she interacted with him, the more she felt she couldn't easily conquer him, and moreover, there were too many, too many excellent girls around him...

Moreover—

Senior Nolan actually suggested she accept Ji You's challenge?

This was a bit unexpected for Xu Siyu, a hint of hesitation flashed across her face as she said, "Senior, I actually really want to accept, but—our current experiment is at a critical period, if I suddenly stop here..."

Nolan waved his hand, smiling and said, "I'll give you half a day off, just go, leave the rest to Wu Xing and Huang Chao."

Xu Siyu had no choice but to nod, "Okay."

...

On this side, Ji You was earnestly studying the material knowledge obtained from Xie Lingzhi. These materials, recorded comprehensively in one document, meticulously categorized the origin, development, classification, etc., and were fully organized.

Ji You actually already knew these.

What made Ji You delighted was that the document organized and planned all the current methods of processing materials on the market, clearly marking their advantages and disadvantages. Moreover, it contained many organizers' ideas and previously failed data.

Ji You and Xiao You, upon reading this, began to study tirelessly, and if not for the custom alarm prompting several times, she would not want to go to sleep immediately.

During the intense study, three days blinked by.

Saturday.

Ji You, dressed in a tank top, opened the door of the dormitory, and immediately encountered an excessively beautiful and bewitching face.

Today, Sheng Qingyan wasn't wearing his school uniform but was dressed in a well-tailored white suit, with a pink tie around his neck. The pink tie matched the pink earring on his white earlobe, creating an unexpectedly harmonious look.

The key is—such a feminine outfit, when worn by Sheng Qingyan, didn't look tacky or sissy at all. Instead, it made him look like a prince charming straight out of a fairy tale—

Dreamy!

For a moment, Ji You's pupils shrank, thinking she had recognized the wrong person. Standing in front of her was clearly a graceful and handsome young man.

Then—

Sheng Qingyan spoke: "Hey, poor dead, why did you get up so late today? People have been waiting for you for minutes..."

Instant regret.

Misunderstanding.

Ji You realized it was all her misunderstanding.

This person in front of her is not some graceful and handsome young man; he is clearly the reigning king of Spicy Eye!

Ji You rolled her eyes and said, "Why are you standing in front of my door all in white? Are you trying to scare me to death?"

Upon hearing this, Sheng Qingyan immediately got upset and said, "What are you talking about? This outfit looks very nice on me..."

Ji You smirked, "Nice, my foot."

Sheng Qingyan was upset and said, "That's heartless of you... I wore this outfit just to make you look good... to save face for you..."

Ji You was shocked, "Make me look good? Save face?"

Before Sheng Qingyan could reply, another person came walking over, also in a white suit and neat leather shoes.

—It was Chu Jiaojiao.

Not to mention, Chu Jiaojiao looked surprisingly good in this outfit, which held both feminine beauty and a masculine charm, blending two different temperaments harmoniously, making her look aggressively handsome.

But—

Shortly after, two more people showed up behind Chu Jiaojiao, also in white suits, Yue Qiguang and Yue Qiyuan. Yue Qiguang was pulling at his tie while muttering curse words, "Wearing this is already annoying enough, and Dad making me wear a tie, it pissed Dad off, I quit!"

Next to him, Yue Qiyuan said indifferently, "No one forced you, and no one asked you to follow. You can leave now."

Yue Qiguang: "..."

Yue Qiguang loudly said, "Kidding! It's such a rare opportunity to laugh at fool number 4444, how could Dad let that pass? Absolutely not."

Yue Qiyuan said, "So, you can shut up now."

Yue Qiguang glared at him and snapped irritably, "Dad loves to talk, no one can control that."

Following the twin brothers, there was the silent Shen Changqing, who was also dressed in a neat white suit. Compared to Sheng Qingyan's flamboyance, Chu Jiaojiao's handsomeness, Yue Qiguang's wildness, and Yue Qiyuan's low-key luxury, the all-white Shen Changqing looked more subdued, gentle, and harmless...

Of course, everyone's attire was very handsome and good-looking.

However—

Looking at this scene, Ji You's mouth twitched: "What on earth are you guys trying to do?"

Chapter 366: The Comedic Squad

Chu Jiaojiao swiftly approached with a lunge, smiling as she said, "Classmate Ji You, we all came here to be your bodyguards."

"Bodyguards?" Ji You's tone couldn't help but rise, "Are you sure you're here to be bodyguards for me? Not the other way around?" She glanced down at her own black tank top, utility pants, and sneakers.

Clearly, she looked more like a bodyguard, right?

To those unaware, they might even think they were headed to a fashion week runway.

Chu Jiaojiao grinned and patted her chest, "Classmate Ji You, you're quite the joker. Of course, we're here to be your bodyguards! Don't worry, as long as Chu Jiaojiao is here, no one will dare to bully you!"

Ji You: "..."

Ji You glanced at her white suit and said, "With those clothes on, can you fight? Aren't you afraid of getting dirty?"

Chu Jiaojiao's smile stiffened at the corners, but she still said, "Of course I can! Rest assured, I fight by settling matters with the opponent from a meter away. I won't let them come close and dirty my clothes."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You retorted, "Oh—so you plan on overwhelming them with your presence and scaring them off?"

Hearing this, Chu Jiaojiao couldn't restrain herself. She rolled up her sleeves and began to take off her tie, saying, "I knew this white outfit wouldn't do! Guys, I'm out, going to change!"

She left immediately after speaking.

Ji You: "..."

The rest of the group: "..."

Yue Qiyuan glanced at Shen Changqing, hesitated a moment, and said, "Should we also go change our clothes?"

Sheng Qingyan was the first to object, "If you want to change, go ahead, but I'm not changing! I look so good in this... It's stunning amidst the crowd..."

He was clearly very proud of his looks and enjoyed it.

The others ignored Sheng Qingyan. After a brief ponder, Shen Changqing said, "I think it's better to change." Actually, Shen Changqing also disliked dressing like this to go out.

When Yue Qiguang heard Shen Changqing was also changing, he immediately declared, "Let me be clear, later on, I'll wear whatever I want, no caring about what you guys think. Don't even try to make me wear this lousy suit and tie again!"

Having said that, Yue Qiguang turned and left.

Once he left, Yue Qiyuan and Shen Changqing no longer hesitated and followed suit.

And thus—

Only Sheng Qingyan was left by himself.

Ji You gave him a sideways glance and said irritably, "Are you sure you want to prance around looking like a flamboyant peacock?"

Sheng Qingyan rolled his eyes, "No taste at all... A poor dead is always just that."

Ji You shrugged and chuckled, "Suit yourself. I'm going for a run, aren't you running today? Sure you don't want to change?"

When Sheng Qingyan thought about his old man, the corners of his mouth twitched, and he spat resentfully, "Wait for me a moment, I'll join you after I change into sportswear..."

Shortly after waiting for a bit, Sheng Qingyan came back in changed clothes. In less than a moment, Chu Jiaojiao, Yue Qiguang, Yue Qiyuan, and Shen Changqing also came back.

Upon raising her eyes and seeing them, Ji You's mouth twitched again.

Black sunglasses! Black suits! Black leather shoes...

They were dressed like a gang of unruly social misfits; truly leaving one at a loss for words.

Ji You raised her hand, rubbing her temple as she said, "You guys... can't you dress a bit more normal? Like our school uniform, isn't it pretty good-looking?"

Chu Jiaojiao insisted, "That won't do! We must stand out from the other students in the school, we need to look distinguished, domineering, powerful! Our mere presence should intimidate and stun the crowd!"

Ji You: "..."

Taking a deep breath, Ji You conceded resignedly, "Alright then, as long as you're happy."

Chu Jiaojiao clapped her hands in glee, "Since that's the case, we're going with this outfit! We should never have listened to Sheng Qingyan and worn those white suits, we look much more domineering in all black!"

Ji You: "..."

Ji You said, "I'm going for a run, you guys do as you please."

As soon as her words fell, she lifted her foot to leave.

But—

Behind her, four silhouettes suddenly appeared, each standing on either side of her. Ji You was startled and didn't understand the situation, "What are you guys doing?"

Chu Jiaojiao said matter-of-factly, "Protecting you, of course."

Ji You: "..."

She paused for a few seconds then waved her hand, "I don't need your protection right now. Go do whatever you need to do."

Chu Jiaojiao wouldn't relent, saying, "Right now we're just practicing and getting familiar with it. After eight o'clock we'll start our shift right away."

Ji You: "..."

Her fingers trembled slightly, and she was close to collapsing, but Ji You managed to maintain a calm facade and said, "As long as you guys are happy."

What else could she say?

However—

Despite her internal complaints, Ji You was genuinely touched by her righteous classmates. She knew their intentions were good, just that their methods were incredibly peculiar.

...

Ji You started running laps around the dormitory area, with Chu Jiaojiao and the others silently following.

One lap.

Two laps.

Three laps.

...

Ji You meticulously completed four laps within the set time before stopping.

Chu Jiaojiao came over, handed her a towel, and said with concern, "Classmate Ji You, hurry and wipe your sweat. You've sweated so much, it pains me to see it."

Ji You didn't refuse her kindness, casually saying, "It's normal to sweat during a run. The more sweat we shed today, the fewer tears we'll have to shed in the future."

This statement made sense somehow, and Chu Jiaojiao nodded vigorously, her eyes infatuated as she said, "Classmate Ji You still looks so captivating today that I can't take my eyes off you!"

Ji You: "..."

Meanwhile.

Shen Changqing watched Ji You, who had stopped running, along with Sheng Qingyan, then glanced around at several dozen other self-funded class students, with a thoughtful look.

After a moment, Shen Changqing suddenly said, "Classmate Ji You, starting from tomorrow, I'll join you in running."

Ji You's eyes widened, thinking she heard wrong, "Huh???"

Shen Changqing nodded and said, "I want to try out this primitive form of running and see if it has different effects compared to the precise training in the training room."

Ji You realized, "Oh—"

Shen Changqing continued, "Yes. I'll keep a record of it."

Ji You: "..."

Facing such a sincere and diligent kid, she really didn't know what to say and could only respond, "Since Classmate Shen Changqing has decided, I won't persuade you otherwise. So—let's give it our all and run together from now on."

Upon hearing this, Chu Jiaojiao also became interested and laughed, "Then I'll run with you guys tomorrow too."

And then.

Yue Qiyuan pondered for a moment before saying, "I'll join as well."

Yue Qiguang was indifferent to the type of training, whether it was running or solitary training in the training room, it didn't matter to him. So when he heard everyone had decided to run together, he said, "If that's the case, Dad will also reluctantly join you for a run, but—Number 4444, your physical strength is really weak. Running 4 laps in an hour is just pathetic. Tomorrow, Dad will show you what real speed is!"

Chapter 367: Awkward

The morning incident involving Chu Jiaojiao, Sheng Qingyan, and others didn't affect Ji You's appetite. After breakfast, she immediately rushed to the Material Department auditorium.

When she arrived, it was neither more nor less, exactly eight in the morning.

However—

Standing on the grand stage of the auditorium, looking down, Ji You's face looked a bit strange.

The grand auditorium, capable of accommodating nearly 50,000 people at once, was now sporadically seated. Counting from front to back, there were barely 600 individuals, among which 500 were student management personnel arranged by Director Wang, specifically responsible for maintaining order and stability at the event.

In other words, the total number of audience members was less than 100.

Truly—

Even to describe it as pitiful wasn't quite appropriate.

Silence.

A deathly silence.

After a moment, Yue Qiguang swaggered to a chair with a backrest, sat down, and, swinging his legs, said: "What are you all standing around for? Sit down! Looking at the situation, seems like we won't even need a few bodyguards for protection."

Following him, Yue Qiyuan sat down and said, "Indeed not needed."

Isn't it obvious? Less than 100 spectators, but there are 500 to maintain order, do you still need bodyguards? To protect what? The tables and chairs in the auditorium?

Chu Jiaojiao cautiously glanced at Ji You, noticing her expression was strange yet calm, Chu Jiaojiao heaved a sigh of relief. Raising her hand, she pointed to a seat not far away and told Ji You, "Ji You, I'll go sit over there for a while. If you need anything, just call for me."

Then, Chu Jiaojiao took a seat, and Shen Changqing followed suit.

Only Sheng Qingyan remained. He was always lazy; preferring to sit if possible, lie down if he could. He wouldn't exhaust himself in any situation. Instead of joining Chu Jiaojiao and the others, he sat down

next to Ji You, yawned, and said, "You poor dead, I'm going to take a nap here. If I fall asleep, you're not allowed to wake me up, got it?"

Ji You: "..."

Sheng Qingyan spoke, then laid his head down on the table and fell asleep.

Ji You: "..."

Suddenly—

Sheng Qingyan, who had just laid down, suddenly lifted his head, his eyes a groggy haze, and said, "Also... don't wake me up for anything... If something comes up, get those bulky guys over there to do it..." With that, he pointed towards where Chu Jiaojiao, Yue Qiguang and a few others were seated.

After pointing them out, Sheng Qingyan completely laid down again.

Not long after, soft snoring sounds could be heard around the venue.

Ji You: "..."

Even Ji You, who prided herself on being experienced and knowledgeable, was feeling a bit embarrassed face to face with the current scene...

Awkward.

A kind of 'awkward' element, the moment Ji You stepped in, began to spread gradually around, and soon, it pervaded every corner of the auditorium, every inch of the land and air.

"Cough cough..."

Looking at the time, Ji You struggled to maintain her composure and looked around, saying: "Hello, everyone, I am Ji You from class 131's self-funded program. I'm glad you all could join my open challenge. Without further ado, shall we begin? Is there anyone here who would like to come up and compete with me?"

Once she said this, the place remained incredibly quiet.

So quiet, you could hear a pin drop.

Ji You: "..."

Embarrassed.

At this moment—

"Applaud!"

Chu Jiaojiao suddenly barked out the command, followed by Yue Qiyuan and Yue Qiguang reluctantly clapping their hands. Shen Changqing, however, took it very seriously, trying hard to clap and cheer for Ji You.

\*Clap Clap Clap\*...

After Chu Jiaojiao and the others took the lead, scattered clapping of various intensities broke out from the audience, barely saving the situation from being too awkward.

What did Ji You feel about this scene? It was probably akin to the absurd sensation of 'Damn it! I've already stripped, and you're making me watch this?'

To prepare for today's competition, she had been burying herself in research since three days ago, afraid of any slip-ups. Because of that, she had even eaten double portions this morning, all to shine today!

But what was the result?

Not a single soul showed up.

This—

How could 'awkward' even begin to describe it?

In any case, Ji You's complexion went from red to purple, to black, and then turned white... before gradually regaining calm. Her heart shifted from the initial embarrassment to something akin to recklessly smashing a broken pot!

No audience? So be it!

The show must go on without them! Otherwise, the 100,000 points swindled out of her by Director Wang would have just created this little spectacle?

Speaking of which, where was Director Wang?

Don't tell me he sneaked off after seeing the low turnout?

Just as she was considering this, a tall girl in a uniform walked out from the crowd maintaining order. She had a round face, pitch-black eyes, fair skin, and a high ponytail. In short, she had a brisk and valiant look about her.

The girl came over and, with a somewhat uneasy expression on her face, said to Ji You, "Hello, Ji You. I am the student leader in charge of maintaining order at the scene. My name is Cheng Jing. If you have any instructions today, you can call me directly."

Ji You flashed a standard, eight-tooth smile and said, "Hello, Cheng Jing. Thanks for your hard work today along with the other students maintaining order."

Upon hearing this, Cheng Jing felt a bit uneasy. With such a small crowd, there was no real need to maintain order. Talking about hard work... what hard work was there, really?

Cheng Jing had a rather thin skin, so the scene also made her feel extremely awkward.

But—

Cheng Jing still said, "It's no trouble, this is the responsibility of our student council office."

After saying this, Cheng Jing looked at Ji You, pondered her words carefully, and then said, "Ji You, I just received a call from Director Wang, who said he's busy right now and will come over later."

Ji You: "Huh???"

Cheng Jing's round face was on the verge of turning as red as an apple as she confessed, "Director Wang's exact words were that since no one is challenging Ji You at the scene, he will come over when there are challengers."

Ji You: "!!!"

Shameless!

Utterly shameless!

This is reaping the benefits without doing the work!

After saying this, Cheng Jing felt like she could hardly stand there any longer and quickly looked for an excuse to leave, saying, "Ji You, I'm going to maintain order now. Call me if you need anything."

Ji You quickly asked, "Wait a minute... What about the judges Director Wang promised to invite? Why hasn't a single one shown up?"

Cheng Jing hesitated, "This... this..."

Ji You already had a bad feeling, "Don't tell me—the judges also think no one will challenge me and decided not to come at all?"

Cheng Jing's face tensed up, trying to explain, "No... that's not it... The two judges really had something come up and will be late."

Ji You trembled with indignation, "You're... bullying people..."

Cheng Jing hurriedly scooted off, "I'm going to work now."

Chapter 368: Letting It All Go

Ji You: "..."

What can Ji You say to this?

Audience?

The audience isn't reliable.

Judges?

The judges are not to be relied upon.

Director Wang?

This bloodsucker, Director Wang, was all talk, but now he doesn't even want to show his face.

Faced with this barrage of challenges, Ji You couldn't help but cover her face with her hand: How can she step down gracefully? Is it just going to end like this?

Suddenly——

A faint sound of footsteps approached quietly, and someone raised their hand to lightly pat Ji You's back, asking softly, "Ji You, shall we... head back now?"

It was Chu Jiaojiao. She was peering at Ji You's expression cautiously as she spoke, fearing that Ji You might suddenly do something irrational.

Ji You lifted her head, her teeth gritted: "Go back? Why go back? I spent a full 600,000 credit points to set up this competition!" 600,000!

Of course, Ji You did not mention that she used points to pay the bill.

Chu Jiaojiao hesitated and said, "But... but no one's coming."

Ji You clenched her fist and said, "No one? Who says no one? Aren't there still 100 people?"

Saying this, she raised her hand and pointed towards the crowd beneath the spectator seats. Then, she saw some of the 100 spectators, who were originally sitting properly, ready to watch a challenging competition, now seeing the situation and guessing the competition might not start, lost their patience to wait and planned to leave.

At first, it was one or two people.

Then, it became groups of four or five leaving together.

After that, groups of more than a dozen headed toward the exit.

...

In the blink of an eye, out of the original hundred spectators present, fewer than fifty remained, with more than half leaving in just a few minutes.

Ji You: "..."

Ji You took a deep breath and said, "There are still 49 people left." Her eyes were as sharp as a computer's, counting the exact number of those remaining with just one glance.

Chu Jiaojiao hesitated again, saying, "But... but they are just spectators. No one... no one is willing to come up and compete."

What's the most important part of a competition?

The competitors, of course.

This—

Without competitors, there's no competition.

Ji You's mouth twitched slightly, then she took another deep breath and said, "It's fine, let it just be the audience. Since no one is coming to challenge me, I will just change the rules myself."

Chu Jiaojiao still wanted to persuade her further, but Ji You raised her hand to stop her, saying, "I know what I'm doing."

Chu Jiaojiao did not try to persuade any further, but felt truly sorry for her. To think that Ji You, who always looked so attractive, had now fallen to the point where no one attended her event.

Ah!

Chu Jiaojiao took a step back and returned to her previously chosen seat.

At this moment—

Ji You turned on the loudspeaker to ensure that everyone in the auditorium could hear her. Then, standing tall with the poise of pine and bamboo, she slightly lifted her head, her gaze sweeping towards the spectator seats below:

"Fellow students, there was a slight mishap, and up to this moment, not a single student has come up to compete with me. Since that's the case, we cannot delay any longer, so I will perform a show for everyone."

Audience: "..."

A show?

So—

Now, they were here to watch a performance, not a competition?

As soon as she said this, many of the quietly seated spectators began to squirm on their seats, contemplating whether to leave.

To leave or not to leave?

That is the question.

While the audience was hesitating, Ji You's clear voice rang out again from the stage. She chuckled lightly, then continued, "Of course, when I say a performance, I don't mean singing a song or dancing for you, nor am I going to do splits or anything..."

Audience: "..."

Audience A: "She sure has a sense of humor."

Audience B: "If it's about singing or dancing, I don't have time to watch; I'm busy."

Audience C: "Right, I came to watch a thrilling duel, not a boring song and dance show."

Audience D: "So, what is she talking about when she says 'performance'?"

...

For a moment, the restless spectator seats suddenly became stable again, as everyone moved their buttocks back and sat down firmly.

Ji You caught all the reactions of the audience below in her eyes, feeling neither disappointed nor desolated, but energized, and said: "Since this is a material processing competition, I believe most of the audience present are students from the Material Department, so the performance I will give is about material processing."

Eh?

The moment she uttered these words, the 49 spectators instantly became interested.

Without further delay, Ji You said, "I won't waste any more words. On this display table, we have three types of materials: liquid, solid, and gas. All are very basic material properties that are commonly available on the market, and I will start processing them now; please remain quiet."

With that, Ji You became silent.

Most of the spectators in the audience were students from the Material Department, who undoubtedly knew the importance of silence during material processing, so no one intentionally made any noise to disturb Ji You.

The students responsible for maintaining order were also very professional and did not make noise to interrupt Ji You.

Then——

Ji You, standing on the platform, slowly sat down. She put on gloves, a mask, and other protective equipment and began her silent work.

minute.

minutes.

minutes.

...

The auditorium was equipped with holographic devices, and even spectators who were too far away could clearly see every movement of Ji You. Her hands, clearly articulated and calloused with cocoons, seemed to possess a magical ability at that moment, and in just a few short minutes, they had the power to turn decay into something miraculous. The liquid material was being decomposed, reassembled, decomposed again, and reassembled...

minutes later, the 10 milliliters of liquid material transformed into a colorless, odorless, transparent liquid. It was encased in a transparent glass tube, making the tube appear almost empty.

But——

The audience on-site instantly widened their eyes.

No one dared to overlook this tube of transparent material, for everyone knew, indeed, it existed.

After processing, Ji You casually placed the tube of liquid material to one side and then raised her hand to pick up another piece of solid material.

Suddenly——

Someone shouted loudly, "Wait!"

Hmm?

Ji You's fingers paused, and she looked toward the source of the voice, finding that the speaker was a male student, who, seeing Ji You looking over, said urgently, "Can we test the material you just processed first?"

As soon as the male student spoke, several people next to him quickly chimed in, "Yes! Don't rush to process the next batch of material; let's go through the data for the previous one first and show us."

If they continued with the next material, it would take another half hour before they could know the results of the liquid. As students from the Material Department, they all knew well that what Ji You had just demonstrated may seem simple and uncomplicated, but it actually required very sophisticated skills.

Chapter 369: Stunned!

At this moment——

The atmosphere in the entire auditorium became subtly charged due to Ji You's recent operation.

Ji You raised her eyes to meet the slightly impatient gaze of the boy, then slowly curved the corners of her lips, smiling and saying, "Of course you may."

The boy sighed in relief, sincerely saying, "Thank you."

Ji You appeared calm, but inside she was a little thrilled; this was called setting the hook. Wanting to fish and just after setting the hook, like you wished, a fish bit the bait.

How could she not be happy?

Ji You's pretense of not testing the data was to catch the attention of the audience present, wanting them to take the initiative to ask.

Her distinct knuckles grabbed the tube of material, gently placing it into a testing device. These devices were not brought by Ji You, but were originally equipped in the auditorium of the Material Department.

The auditorium of the Material Department, used for various activities, lectures, etc., was thus equipped with a complete set of equipment used by the Material Department.

When Ji You started the test, 49 pairs of eyes in the audience were fixed on Ji You's hands, not blinking for fear that they would miss crucial information in the blink of an eye.

second.

seconds.

seconds.

...

Ding—

Two minutes later, the test results timely appeared: [Product Name: Snow Juice—Adhesive, Effective Utilization Rate: 98%...]

Behind the test results, there was a long list of data, but upon seeing an effective rate of 98%, everyone's eyes in the hall widened immensely, too shocked to look at the other data...

Even the students responsible for maintaining order, who were unrelated to the Material Department, also widened their eyes in shock!

How—

How is this possible?

How was this achieved?

At the scene, someone exclaimed, "It must be fake, right? Is the testing device malfunctioning?"

Once this was said, many people chimed in: "The testing device must have malfunctioned, how else could this be possible?"

"Snow Juice as an adhesive has been active on the stage of materials even before the Alliance was established, but after hundreds to thousands of years of development, it only managed to increase its effective utilization rate to 95%.

This is the high effectiveness rate that countless ancestors worked together to achieve over a long time, and some have asserted that due to its material characteristics, Snow Juice could only achieve up to 95% at most.

But—

But what about the data presented before them?

A feat that world-renowned experts couldn't accomplish, a mere freshman managed to do it, how could they accept this?

Impossible!

Absolutely impossible!

So—

The test data must be incorrect.

Immediately, someone stood up and said, "I suggest bringing in a new testing device and retest!"

"Yes!"

"I agree!"

"I also agree!"

"Retest!"

...

In this fair and harmonious world under the clear sky, they would absolutely not tolerate anyone falsifying results in front of so many people!

Absolutely not!

Before Ji You could speak, Cheng Jing, who was in charge of maintaining order, stood up and said loudly, "What are you all doing? This is the auditorium. By questioning the results, are you questioning Ji You's cheating, or are you questioning the school?"

With these words from Cheng Jing, the noise at the scene slightly subsided, but someone still boldly spoke up, "We are not questioning the school, we are questioning a person. If she is innocent, if she really did it, then she should come forward voluntarily to take everyone's test. I believe if it's true, even with a different testing device, the result will not change."

"Exactly!"

"Ji You, dare you face everyone and retake the test?"

The demands made by the audience, though not excessive, placed Cheng Jing in a difficult position, thus he turned towards Ji You—

Hearing this, Ji You remained extremely calm, and with a smile said, "Of course, everything I have done is public and transparent, so I don't mind anyone supervising the final result."

Her words were magnanimous and left no room for further comment.

Thus—

Led by a few from the audience, contact was made with other students, and soon, two new inspection devices were brought in.

Along with these equipment, dozens of students who had heard about the results and were curious also hurried over.

These people transported the devices, and the auditorium's auxiliary robots moved the equipment onto the stage, Ji You did not operate them herself but looked at the dozens of additional spectators, her smile deepening in her eyes: "How about this, to ensure the fairness of the results, I myself will not participate in the testing. How about we appoint two students from the audience seats instead?"

Upon hearing this, everyone's eyes lit up, and someone immediately said, "I sign up to participate."

"I will too."

"I'm suited for this task."

...

For a moment, everyone was babbling, eagerly wanting to go on stage to handle the testing.

Cheng Jing, seeing this scene, took the initiative to say, "To ensure the fairness of the results, our Student Management Office should also send a representative up, so we can supervise each other and ensure the results are fair."

"Agreed," said Ji You.

"Agreed," the audience also agreed in unison.

Thus—

After a brief chaos, the audience finally selected their representatives, a female student and a male student. The boy was named Xia Dong and the girl named Shi Yin.

From the Student Management Office, a representative chosen was also a female student, and a student from the 131st batch of the Material Department, named Jiang Tong.

Xia Dong, Shi Yin, and Jiang Tong together turned on one of the testing devices, and with solemn faces, they placed the treated Snow Juice by Ji You inside—

What followed was a brief but tense wait.

One minute later, the result was out.

The moment they saw the result, all three showed expressions of shock, and the girl named Shi Yin couldn't help but open her mouth wide, exclaiming, "It's actually an effective utilization rate of 98.453%!"

That's right.

The data not only did not decrease but increased!

Of course, the device in the school auditorium rounded down, thus the final result was set at 98% only, so the results from the two devices were not too far off.

But—

**BUT!!!**

Both the audience in their seats and the few people on stage were all momentarily speechless.

Silence.

A deadly silence.

...

The brief silence was broken by a very abrupt and very harsh clapping sound, and as everyone looked towards the source of the clapping, they found it was Chu Jiaojiao dressed in black.

Chu Jiaojiao stood up from her chair, clapping vigorously, and not just that, she fixed her eyes tightly on Ji You, almost wishing she could immediately hoist Ji You and spin her around, "Ji You is really impressive! I knew Ji You would shock everyone."

Chu Jiaojiao was smiling so widely that her eyes were nearly invisible.

Following—

Yue Qiguang, Yue Qiyuan, and Shen Changqing also joined in the applause.

Then—

Nearly a hundred spectators at the scene also stood up at this moment, applauding.

Chapter 370: Heated Atmosphere

But—

The authenticity of the core data was re-verified by Jiang Tong, Shi Yin, and Xia Dong, who brought out another detection device to meticulously retest everything together.

The results were obvious. Although the three detection devices all had slight discrepancies, the data they detected all exceeded 98%. So, what does this mean?

There was no fraud.

Absolutely none.

For a moment, the way people looked at Ji You changed. No longer contemptuous or mocking, but serious.

Yes.

Serious.

Regardless of how Ji You did it, this undoubtedly proved she had the capability to increase the efficiency of Snow Juice, which had hit a bottleneck, by more than 3%.

Don't underestimate this 3% improvement. The more stable and agreed upon the result, the more fixed an item is, the harder it is to break and improve it!

Watching the various complex expressions directed at her, Ji You maintained her composure, with the grace of someone undaunted by honor or disgrace. She flashed a standard smile, showing eight teeth, and said, "Actually, it's quite simple. You all thought Snow Juice couldn't be improved, so you never attempted to think about it. I just broke through the rigid thinking and simply decomposed and recombined Snow Juice several times."

To put it in perspective, it's like a standard-sized screw. Whether you are building a house or making mechas, machinery, or vehicles... this screw meets your requirements, so of course, you wouldn't think of replacing it with another size.

—This is rigid thinking.

Ji You changed the way Snow Juice was processed, which in fact, changed this kind of rigid thinking. Normally, people only decompose and recombine Snow Juice once because after one time, you can achieve a 95% efficiency.

But Ji You? Ji You decomposed and recombined it three times, still only achieving a 95% efficiency each time. Even so, at this point, she didn't give up but decomposed Snow Juice again, and after it completely solidified, she recombined it once more. However, for this step, she didn't use the traditional method for Snow Juice but instead, she used a method for processing gases.

Xia Dong opened his mouth: "But...achieving an improvement isn't that easy. Before, there were also students in our school who wanted to increase it further, but all failed."

Ji You chuckled, "If you replay the process I went through, you'll understand where they failed. Everyone is accustomed to handling Snow Juice as a liquid, but the method I used just now actually began with three steps as a liquid, with only the last step using a gas approach."

"The first three steps repeatedly purified the various molecules of Snow Juice. When it came to the fourth step, I changed the processing method, using the gas processing technique, which many of our predecessors have also used, known as the superposition method."

Superposition method—is about using several existing material processing techniques in conjunction, hoping to produce a qualitative change in effect.

Most of the audience present were students from the Material Department, and Ji You didn't need to elaborate; everyone understood the implications of her words.

For a moment, everyone's eyes lit up.

Then—

Without any prompting, they all started to replay the scene of Ji You preparing Snow Juice.

The venue once again fell silent, no one in the audience made a sound, and everyone closely watched every move Ji You made on the screen, afraid to miss any important detail.

After a while,

The quiet audience area revived into a lively discussion atmosphere:

"I see it now, I know how to do it."

"Me too, I can't wait to try it right now."

"Yes, I also want to try it for myself, to see if I can succeed."

...

Many people stood up from their seats, eager to leave. Those majoring in materials science inherently have an exploratory spirit and would even be willing to bury themselves in the lab incessantly researching without food or drink if they have a breakthrough in thinking.

At this moment, Ji You's processing method ignited everyone's thinking, no one could sit still, and they wanted to go out and experiment immediately.

Then—

A clear voice rang out above everyone's heads, tinged with teasing: "Ladies and gentlemen, are you going to discard this after just one use? If you all leave, should I even continue the competition?"

Audience: "..."

Ji You blinked, deliberately showing a bitter smile, "I can't just entertain myself, can I?"

Audience: "..."

Then, a burst of laughter erupted in the venue:

Audience A: "Indeed, let's wait a bit longer. Ji You still has two more batches of Material to process, right? Let's wait another half an hour."

Audience B: "I'll wait, too. Even though I'm itching to leave right now, I don't mind waiting a bit longer."

Audience C: "This is truly amazing! Snow Juice, being a solidified material, can still be improved so much. This means, don't all our existing materials potentially hold the same promise as Snow Juice, waiting for us to discover?"

Audience D: "I was thinking the same. I was about to go back and experiment with each one."

...

Everyone chatted animatedly for a while but soon returned to silence, which frankly was a spontaneous act of respect for Ji You's proven competence.

Ji You watched this scene with satisfaction and slowly said, "How about this? I know many students would like to experiment on their own now. I happen to have three batches of Snow Juice remaining, perfect for inviting three students up here to create it on the spot. What do you guys think?"

Wow~

As soon as she said this, she spurred the enthusiasm of all the audience, everybody agreed, and they eagerly signed up.

"Pick me!"

"Pick me!"

"Pick me!"

...

In a hall that could accommodate 50,000 people, there were only less than 600 people, including a mere 98 audience members. It was already an awkward situation, but after Ji You displayed her skills, the atmosphere immediately shifted. Despite the low numbers, it felt no longer cold, as the audience's responses became fervent, wishing to be chosen by Ji You in that very moment.

Watching this, Cheng Jing and others responsible for maintaining order couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief. Thankfully, thankfully, Ji You does have genuine talent, and even if she was initially met with coldness, it was temporary.

Ji You said with a smile, "Let's do this to ensure fairness. I'll draw three people based on the seat number cards. Who's number 44? Please come to the stage!"

Upon hearing, number 44 jumped with joy, quickly responded, "It's me, it's me! I'm coming!"

Saying so, he leaped forward.

Then, Ji You randomly called out two more numbers, and swiftly, two other people were selected.