

Scavengers 531

Chapter 531: Life or Death Struggle

Ji You publicly challenged Xu Siyu, and this piece of news spread like wildfire throughout the entire Material Department of Lanyue Star. Both of them are celebrities within the department, one gaining the favor of several professors upon admission due to their innate talent for material processing. The other, self-funded, entered with a disgraced reputation but had recently publicly challenged the entire Material Department's freshmen and sophomores, capturing impressive attention...

There were entanglements between the two individuals...

Therefore, before Ji You and her group even arrived at the Material Department auditorium, the hall was already filled to capacity with students. Looking around, it was a densely packed sea of people, almost all in motion.

Ye Hong, Jiang Yulan, and several other professors and teachers from the Material Department took their seats directly in the front row. Ye Hong had a solemn look and a tightened face throughout, and the expressions of the others were also very serious.

The surroundings were noisy.

A few students from the student management office also rushed over in no time to maintain order.

Soon after, the venue quieted down.

On the stage, there were only Ji You and Xu Siyu; below the stage, countless pairs of eyes were fixed on them.

Xu Siyu slightly lowered her eyes and then raised them to look at Ji You, saying softly, "I'm glad that Student Ji You can continue studying material processing. I've agreed to this competition, and I really hope that our focus is on communication and learning from each other..."

Hmph?

Not even started, and already looking for a way out?

Ji You narrowed her eyes and smiled, "No! Sister Xu Siyu, you are wrong. The moment I stood on this stage to compete with you, there was no friendly exchange, nor friendly learning from each other. What we have is—only life or death!"

Boom—

With those words, a torrent of shock erupted.

What did Ji You mean by that?

What was she trying to do?

Is this really going to be a matter of life or death?

Among the spectators, many were Xu Siyu's classmates and supporters, who were not familiar with Ji You to begin with. Hearing Ji You's boastful words, they quickly took a dislike to her.

Listen~

How well Xu Siyu spoke, competition comes second, friendship first, for students, communication and learning from each other shouldn't be so serious, right?

This Ji You, obviously knows nothing of propriety.

Just as many were thinking this way, suddenly—

Ji You looked around and said in a loud voice, "Here and now, I, Ji You, make a promise to everyone—if I lose, I will leave the Material Department forever and never again touch the discipline of materials in my life."

Boom—

At these words, the audience, who had been gaping and chattering about Ji You, collectively fell silent.

Leave?

Never again touch material processing?

This—

This—

This is really, very terrifying.

You see, the majority of the students present were from the Material Department, all aspiring to dedicate their lives to this field. Many expended energy to study, not just for the sake of securing a future livelihood, but out of a genuine love for the discipline. To ask them to leave? That would be even more cruel than killing them!

Now, Ji You was prepared to make such a big commitment in her competition with Xu Siyu...

For a moment, those who had been vociferously pointing at Ji You were all open-mouthed, unsure of what to say.

On the stage, Xu Siyu heard Ji You's words, her gaze flickered slightly, and she was about to speak.

Ji You said loudly, "If I win, my only demand is that Sister Xu Siyu publicly apologizes to me in front of everyone."

Wow~

What does that mean?

What is Ji You trying to convey? By asking Xu Siyu to apologize, is she hinting that Xu Siyu is the one who made the mistake?

For a moment, the audience was as quiet as chickens, all staring at Xu Siyu.

Xu Siyu opened her mouth and said, "Ji You, I don't understand what you're talking about, I don't think I have anything to apologize to you for."

Ji You smirked and said, "Alright, then I'll change my request. If I win, my request is for Senior Xu Siyu to become someone who embraces the sun."

Xu Siyu's brow furrowed slightly.

The audience gaped, blinked their eyes?

What the heck?

Embracing the sun?

Why does that sound a bit odd?

As Ji You was about to explain, suddenly—

"Cough cough..." Jiang Yulan couldn't take it anymore and immediately interjected, "Less nonsense, let's begin."

Ji You had to stop talking and looked towards Xu Siyu, "This battle concerns both of our professional careers, please, Senior Xu Siyu, do your best and fight with all your strength."

Xu Siyu's expression didn't look good.

Soon.

Service robots placed and arranged all the necessary equipment and materials.

According to the professors' requirements, the first competition topic required both of them to process the same materials, and whoever produced the best quality would be the victor.

Once it began, Ji You cast aside her previous flamboyance and became incredibly focused.

Next to her, Xu Siyu gritted her teeth, swearing not to lose, and knowing Ji You was highly talented in material processing, she didn't dare to be careless and also quickly immersed herself in the task.

Neither of their hands stopped.

The audience, through the large holographic screen on stage, could see every move clearly.

Xu Siyu's processing was very professional, relying on tools, almost every measurement was just right, not a bit more, not a bit less. In a short time, she had convinced many students below the stage, thinking truly worthy of being the talented woman of the Material Department.

Then, many shifted their gaze to Ji You, and upon seeing her actions, they were shocked!

What exactly is Ji You doing?

They saw Ji You mix up several different materials, combining them all together haphazardly...

This?

Is this processing materials?

This is like a child playing demolition! You must know many materials can't just be mixed together; even forced combinations could destroy the original properties of the materials, and in severe cases, cause injuries...

For a moment, the onlooking students were speechless, and even the professors sitting in the front row seemed a bit disapproving as they watched Ji You's actions.

Xu Siyu, focused on her work, sneakily glanced at Ji You from the corner of her eye, and noticing Ji You's disorderly actions, she slightly relaxed.

Suddenly—

Ji You moved.

She stretched out her distinct hands and started her own processing methodically. In that instant, her hands seemed to possess magic, unbelievably fast yet every step, every move was smooth and clear to see. Then, the pile of chaotic, damaged materials deemed by the audience, at that moment, suddenly appeared rejuvenated...

Ji You's processing method was magical, unconventional, filled with imagination and creativity. Once the students locked their eyes on her actions, they were enchanted, unable to shift their gaze.

Ding—

Time's up!

Chapter 532: An Easy Victory

Time's up—

The processed materials from Ji You and Xu Siyu are already laid out on the platform, clearly visible to both the front and back rows of the audience. Judging by appearance alone, these two materials looked similar. However, Xu Siyu's piece seemed more translucent, while Ji You's was darker, so dark it even seemed a bit dull.

Below.

Student A: "Just based on appearance, Xu Siyu is a notch above."

Student B: "Xu Siyu's piece would have an efficacy rate no lower than 95%."

Student C: "This Ji You, so arrogantly brash, doesn't seem to amount to much after all."

Student D: "Not so great in actual skill, but quite good at making a spectacle with fanciful gimmicks."

...

The students buzzed with comments, and it was clear that they weren't optimistic about Ji You's piece. Of course, these students also acknowledged that Ji You's performance on stage, which resembled an acrobatic show, truly took them by surprise. However, material science is fundamental, whether it concerns Mecha, Starships, spaceships... all need materials. The foundation must be stable and solid; there is no need for flashy fluff.

The assessment was managed by the Student Affairs Office, Material Science Department, and several teachers overseeing the process, eliminating any possibility of cheating.

Soon.

The results were announced.

The announcement was made by Cheng Jing of the Student Affairs Office. The senior sister wore a serious expression as she looked around and said, "The first piece, from Xu Siyu, the result is: efficacy rate of 98.6%."

Shushed sounds filled the audience, their eyes wide: "!!!"

"Incredible, that's Xu Siyu for you. If it were me handling such materials, I could get at most 80%."

"Even 80% would be high. If it were up to me, I'd probably just ruin it."

"Such talent from a talented woman, truly deserving of her reputation!"

Next, the big screen displayed the complete data of Xu Siyu's processed material, which elicited even more admiration from the audience.

Ji You was also slightly surprised by the results.

Achieving over 98%, Xu Siyu had clearly put in tremendous effort. The fact that Xu Siyu could ride on the coattails of Xiao You's achievements to gain her current reputation also proved that Xu Siyu did have some skill. If Xu Siyu were willing to buckle down and earnestly improve her techniques, even if she couldn't cause a sensation upon entering the school, she would become renowned for her skills over time.

But—

She always looked for shortcuts instead of taking the right path.

Xu Siyu, upon hearing the results, breathed a sigh of relief and then lifted her head to look at Ji You with a swiftly passing smug look of assured victory.

Ji You kept silent.

Cheng Jing continued: "The second piece, from Ji You. The result is..."

At this point, Cheng Jing suddenly stopped.

The audience craned their necks, looking over.

Cheng Jing took a deep breath and said, "I can't say it, you'll have to see for yourselves."

The audience: "Huh?"

Was the result too dreadful?

Cheng Jing didn't beat around the bush and directly put the results on the big screen. Many of Xu Siyu's supporters, mouths agape, about to scoff, froze as their gaze landed on the big screen: "!!!"

Displayed was: [Efficacy Rate: 100%!]

"Impossible!"

"How could this be?"

"Are my eyes deceiving me?"

...

Cheng Jing declared: "The result is verified as accurate."

The audience: "..."

Xu Siyu's face turned ashen in an instant.

How—

How could this be possible?

Ji You smiled, looking at Xu Siyu, and said, "I've been outdone! I've been outdone!"

Professor Ye Hong, who was seated in the front row, suddenly snorted coldly, saying, "Next time, cut out those flashy moves."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You quickly defended herself, saying, "Professor Ye, my actions just now were all necessary, without a single superfluous move."

Professor Ye Hong: "Humph."

After the huff, Professor Ye Hong suddenly looked up, glancing at Xu Siyu, who was pressing her lips together, but didn't say anything.

Xu Siyu gritted her teeth.

Then.

The second round.

This time, Xu Siyu was even more diligent. She had no mind to pay attention to Ji You, completely engrossed in the material processing.

And Ji You?

Ji You stood quietly aside, in no hurry. Only when Xu Siyu was almost done did she begin to move. But in just a moment, the audience felt that she had finished as soon as she started.

In the second result, Xu Siyu was defeated again.

Audience: "..."

The third time.

The fourth time.

The fifth time.

...

If at first Xu Siyu could keep her composure, after repeated failures, she began to panic. It was clear to the audience that not only was her rhythm disturbed, but she also made frequent mistakes.

Next to her, if Ji You initially seemed indifferent, the more the competition progressed, the more engrossed Ji You became. She quietly processed the material in her hands, producing one impressive result after another, each one astonishing.

By the end, Xu Siyu was completely disordered while Ji You was still immersed in her work. Her technique captivated the onlooking students, inadvertently drawing them into her concentration.

...

Ji You stopped her hands, slightly annoyed, muttered to herself, "Using the Disassembly Method to divide the material in two, to use each part as separate pieces, is indeed a bit difficult."

Audience: "..."

But everyone already knew that this was not a show of skill -- this was the diligence expected of a researcher, the pursuit of excellence, the continuous exploration...

"Ji You is really strong, are we sure she's only a freshman?"

"I'm a junior, and I feel far inferior to her."

"I... I'm a senior, about to graduate, and I'm in trouble, feeling like I haven't mastered the skills."

"Is she strong because of her technique? No! She's strong because of her creativity."

"No! It's not just her creativity; it's her confidence! Ordinary people would not dare to use her methods. Today was truly an eye-opener. I now realize I've always been too rigid, afraid to try..."

Hearing the voices below and feeling the gaze of those around, Xu Siyu clenched her palms and forced a smile, proactively saying, "Ji You, congratulations on your victory. I... I'm very happy. The field of materials needs fresh blood and more talented people to innovate together. Really, I'm genuinely pleased you don't have to leave."

She wanted to appear magnanimous, so at least to score some impression points and show her supporters the grace of her defeat.

Indeed—

"Si Yu actually performed very well today."

"Si Yu was a bit mentally unstable today. Otherwise, she could have performed better."

"Si Yu was deliberately going easy on Ji You! She's just too kind-hearted. Otherwise, with her skills, how could she make a mistake?"

"Si Yu actually retained a talent for the material field with her own loss..."

"I, too, think Si Yu was deliberately going easy on Ji You."

...

Listening to the voices below, the corners of Xu Siyu's mouth quietly curved upwards.

Ji You's eyes turned cold.

At this moment—

Chapter 533: With Integrity and Honor

Ji You's eyes turned cold as she looked towards the audience and said, "Those shameless words up there, making excuses for Xu Siyu's defeat, are not surprisingly from those who are close to her, like Wu Xing and Huang Chao, especially Wu Xing who was the most gleeful among them."

Ji You was about to speak with cold eyes when—

At that moment—

Professor Ye Hong, who was sitting in the front row, suddenly stood up, turned to the group of people behind him, and scolded: "To lose is to lose; there aren't so many excuses! If you can't even admit your own failure, then leave this place on your own initiative!"

Xu Siyu's group of supporters were reprimanded by Professor Ye Hong and all of them meekly closed their mouths.

Professor Ye Hong snorted coldly: "Lanyue Star does not cultivate incompetents, nor do we cultivate the cowardly!"

The group of students not only shut their mouths but also hung their heads down.

Professor Ye Hong looked at Xu Siyu and Ji You on the stage, his gaze lingered on Ji You for a few seconds before saying, "The winner is decided, with such talent at hand, don't waste your own abilities! Study hard in the future, that's what matters."

Ji You declared loudly: "Yes!"

"As for this competition, it's dismissed on the spot," Professor Ye Hong said dismissively, obviously about to leave, but before departing, his wise eyes stared at Xu Siyu, causing her to subconsciously shrink her neck, as Professor Ye Hong was about to speak—

Ji You suddenly said, "Teachers and fellow students, before we disperse, please allow me to say a few more words."

Professor Ye Hong, with a stern face, said, "Speak."

Ji You glanced at Xu Siyu, then turned to Wu Xing, Huang Chao, and the rest of Xu Siyu's supporters, and said loudly: "I, Ji You, won against senior Xu Siyu by rightful means. Senior Xu Siyu lost in front of everyone, with no question of her deliberately throwing the match. Therefore—"

Wu Xing, Huang Chao, and others had just been personally scolded by Professor Ye Hong and now called out by Ji You; they all lowered their heads, with some of the thinner-skinned turning red with shame.

Xu Siyu's face also showed a tinge of paleness.

Ji You turned toward Xu Siyu again and said, "Therefore—since senior Xu Siyu has lost, please become someone who embraces the sun from now on."

No sooner had her words fallen, Chu Jiaojiao was the first to jump up, raised her hand, and loudly asked: "Ji You, what does embracing the sun mean? Why ask her to be someone who embraces the sun."

The corners of Ji You's mouth twitched, but knowing that Jiaojiao was deliberately standing up for her, she didn't want to snub Jiaojiao's good intentions and immediately said aloud: "As we all know, the sun was a star during Ancient Earth. It shines and gives warmth, with no darkness, burning bright until its energy is exhausted. Hence, I hope senior Xu Siyu can embrace the sun, from now on being upright and open-hearted."

Wow~

The surroundings: "..."

What a sharp tongue.

After hearing the explanation, Chu Jiaojiao chuckled and clapped approvingly, immediately applauding forcefully: "Well said by Ji You! This place deserves an applause!"

Clap!

Clap!

Clap!

Next to Chu Jiaojiao, Yue Qiguang, Sheng Qingyan, Shen Changqing, Yue Qiyuan, Xuzhou, Zhang Ye... all forced a smile, clapping vigorously, followed by the rest of the students who also started clapping.

Thus—

Amid this odd atmosphere, the clapping went from sporadic to resonating through the entire auditorium...

Xu Siyu's face looked terrible; she could not hide her embarrassment. Already her reputation was going to be greatly affected after this competition, but even more so after what Ji You had said...

Xu Siyu suddenly clenched her fists.

Suddenly—

Professor Ye Hong, who was about to leave, turned to Xu Siyu and said, "Xu Siyu, come with me immediately!"

Xu Siyu started, "Professor...what is it?"

Ye Hong snorted coldly and left with a flick of his hand.

Professor Jiang Yulan explained with a smile, "Follow me, there are some things I need to inquire about with you."

Xu Siyu's face panicked, "Professor Jiang..."

Jiang Yulan didn't say anything more but turned to look at Ji You with a smiling face, "Student Ji You, if you plan to change your mentor, you can come to me anytime. I'm a very enthusiastic mentor, you know."

Ji You grinned and hurriedly said, "Okay, okay, I will seriously consider it."

Smooth-talker~

Jiang Yulan hummed in her heart, glancing at Ji You, she said, "What Professor Ye Hong said is right, your talent in material processing is exceptional. Don't waste your talent; you should study hard, understood?"

Ji You responded loudly, "I will heed the teachings of my mentors."

Ji You herself was more interested in fighting, in Mecha, in making Soul Devices, but Xiao You's lifelong dream was to become a Master in the field of materials, so even for Xiao You's sake, Ji You would not give up the subject of materials.

The reason Professors Ye Hong and Jiang Yulan said these words to Ji You was just because they were worried that Ji You would be too focused on combat and neglect her talents and gifts in materials...

One should know, balancing the two is an extremely difficult task.

Mechanical Warriors need to spend a lot of time training; there are no shortcuts for every step...

Material processing also requires a considerable amount of time, rooted in the laboratory, and there's not a single bit of shortcuts either...

How much energy can a person put into two things?

Professors Ye Hong and Jiang Yulan watched Ji You on stage, meticulously working with materials, turning out one astonishing product after another, and they couldn't help but feel surprise upon surprise, yet deeply vexed! Such a talent, yet unable to focus solely on the Material Department.

How troublesome can it be?

Just after leaving the Material Department hall, Professor Ye Hong couldn't hold back and sent a sarcastic message to Mu Jianling: [Destroying one's future, hardly qualifies as a Master!]

On this side.

Finally, after a day of intense training, Mu Jianling was lying on the couch, hoping to watch a TV drama in peace, when Ye Hong's sudden message frustrated her greatly.

She frowned and angrily retorted: [Ye Hong, don't think you can say whatever you want just because you're older. How have I destroyed someone's future? Make yourself clear! If you've gone senile, go get treatment and stop barking nonsense!]

Ye Hong: [You know what I mean.]

Mu Jianling was so angry that she was shaking all over, and yelled: [Looking for a fight, huh? Bring it on! I'm up for it!]

Ye Hong: [I have no interest in talking to a brute.]

And after that, there was no further reply.

Mu Jianling was furious!

Immediately, she grabbed her coat and was about to storm out and have it out with Ye Hong!

But just as Mu Jianling was about to step out, she suddenly received a message from Jiang Yulan: [Jianling, no need to rush out. Old Ye and I have some matters to deal with here and can't entertain guests.]

Mu Jianling's face darkened completely.

Jiang Yulan: [Old Ye is always like this. It's been many years; just endure it... It will pass if you endure.]

Mu Jianling: [Every time he goes crazy, he barks at me. It's better to advise him to get treatment sooner than to tell me to endure!]

After speaking, Mu Jianling stopped replying, opened the door, and walked out!

"This is bad," looking at Mu Jianling's message, Jiang Yulan turned to Professor Ye Hong with a smile and said, "Old Ye, this time, you might have really angered Jianling. You know her temper; why bother provoking her?"

Ye Hong's face was stern as he let out a cold hum.

Chapter 534: Retrial

Students gathered in the auditorium began to disperse one by one as Ye Hong, Professor Jiang Yulan, and others left...

But—

The battle between Ji You and Xu Siyu was destined to be a topic of great interest among Material Department students for a long time.

Previously, when students mentioned Xu Siyu, the first thought that came to mind was that she was a student with strong creativity and high talent. But now, if Xu Siyu is mentioned, Ji You will inevitably come up as well.

Because—this student is even stronger than Xu Siyu!

Her talent, foundation, creativity... all significantly higher than Xu Siyu's!

As for the initial plagiarism squabble between the two, there hasn't been a conclusion yet. Aside from a small number of Xu Siyu's supporters, the majority of students have decided to discuss and speculate only in private and not bring it up openly. As for the ultimate truth?

They're just waiting for the school to investigate and for the truth to emerge like rocks revealed by receding water.

Therefore—

Most students remained quiet as they cleared out from the venue.

Having won this battle, and won it splendidly, Ji You wasn't as relaxed as she appeared on the surface; her spiritual power had been greatly depleted, and she looked somewhat wilted. However, Ji You still straightened her back...

As Ji You and her entourage silently left the auditorium—

Yue Qiyuan suddenly said, "4444, do you think the matter has been resolved?"

Ji You stopped in her tracks.

Yue Qiyuan's expression was grave as he said, "This matter has not actually been resolved."

Shen Changqing also had a grim face, saying, "Without concrete evidence proving that the senior plagiarized, even if your performance is outstanding and strong, it can't stop people's gossip."

Yue Qiguang grabbed a handful of his hair, angrily saying, "Exactly! That's what I hate about these things! Why can't we just settle it with a fight and be done?"

Chu Jiaojiao rolled her eyes, saying, "As if you could! When it comes to fighting, you're not even able to get a hand in."

Yue Qiguang retorted, aggravated, "Chu Jiaojiao! Don't test my patience!"

Seeing that the two were about to come to blows, Sheng Qingyan immediately jumped a few meters away, covering her mouth, gloatingly saying, "Fight, oh! Start fighting now, oh!"

Chu Jiaojiao, Yue Qiyuan, Yue Qiguang, Shen Changqing, and others all turned their heads in unison: "Shut up."

Ji You, seeing her friends getting rambunctious after just a few words, couldn't help but twitch at the corner of her mouth, saying, "Everyone—please, quiet down and let's hear what Ji You the Boss has to say."

Upon hearing this, everyone turned around collectively: "Bullshit boss! Shameless!"

Ji You: "..."

Beside her, only Xuzhou was seriously looking at Ji You, softly saying, "Go ahead, what do you want to say?"

Ji You grinned, showing her teeth, saying, "Little Zhouzhou is the most considerate one in my family."

Xuzhou: "..."

Xuzhou firmly turned her face away.

"Cough, cough..."

"Now it's Boss's turn to speak, please be quiet," Ji You said, ignoring everyone's speechless expressions, and mustering a serious face: "Of course, the matter cannot just end unclearly like this, so, I have already submitted all the evidence I could gather, requesting the school administration to reinvestigate my original plagiarism case, to clear my name as soon as possible."

Why didn't she request a reinvestigation from the beginning?

Because Xu Siyu had already become famous throughout the school, and even in the materials community, she was a rising star, what about Ji You? Ji You was not well-known and even carried a stigma. To propose a reinvestigation, she would have to present enough evidence, but what she lacked was evidence strong enough to conclusively pin Xu Siyu. Moreover, Xu Siyu wasn't stupid and wasn't likely to confess voluntarily...

So—

Ji You had to find a way to publicly challenge Xu Siyu. Only by confronting her openly and defeating her through ability could Ji You gain a sliver of say in the matter.

Everyone fell silent for a moment after hearing Ji You's words.

Shen Changqing was the first to speak: "I believe the school will uphold justice and ascertain the truth. If you need any help, Ji You, just say the word."

Yue Qiguang rolled up his sleeves and said, "If there's a fight, count me in anytime."

Yue Qiyuan rolled his eyes at his silly brother before turning to Ji You and saying, "Call me anytime you need help."

Sheng Qingyan yawned and added, "Hey, poor dead, just holler if you need help..."

Xuzhou and Zhang Ye also glanced at Ji You and said, "Count me in too."

Chu Jiaojiao gazed at Ji You's fair and flawless face, saying dreamily, "I will always stand behind Ji You, be her steadfast support. I just hope Ji You takes good care of her face."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You had been touched until these words completely killed the mood. She glared at Chu Jiaojiao and bared her teeth, "Thank you very much."

Halfway back to the dormitory, she happened to encounter Mu Jianling's luxurious Floating Car.

Ji You and the others stopped in their tracks to greet their teacher: "Good evening, Teacher Mu."

Mu Jianling stopped his car and stared at Ji You for a moment, then said bluntly, "What are you standing around for? Aren't you getting in?"

Ji You squeezed out an ingratiating smile: "Teacher... may I be so bold as to ask, what do you need from me at this late hour?" To be honest, Ji You was afraid of Teacher Mu Jianling who held a stack of her debt contracts in his hands.

The invitation from the creditor in the middle of the night was something Ji You inwardly rejected.

With a stern face, Mu Jianling cursed, "Are you getting in or not?"

Ji You, with trembling hands, climbed into the car.

Watching Ji You get into the car, Chu Jiaojiao and Yue Qiguang couldn't help but ask, "Teacher... should we get in too?"

Mu Jianling glanced at them and responded, "Go back where you came from."

Upon hearing this, they immediately bounced away joyfully, disappearing in the blink of an eye.

Ji You: "..."

What happened to all that support?

What happened to all the promised help?

...

These people, seeing trouble, had quickly abandoned her and fled. Surely, all their promises were nothing but air, not to be taken seriously.

Mu Jianling maintained a stern face throughout the ride, obviously in a terrible mood. Ji You was curious, but she didn't dare to ask rashly and just sat obediently and properly inside the Floating Car. The vehicle headed straight for the administrative office...

When they arrived, Mu Jianling got out of the car first.

Ji You followed, leaping out.

Without acknowledging Ji You, Mu Jianling directly entered a grand-looking building. Ji You hesitated for a moment—was this the—

Campus Police Station?

Seeing that Ji You had not followed, Mu Jianling cursed again, "Are you coming or not?"

Ji You hurried after him with a jog.

The two passed through numerous checkpoints and entered an office of about one hundred square meters. Upon entering, they saw Ye Hong, Professor Jiang Yulan, and several teachers from the Material Department with stern faces, Principal Hong with a serious demeanor, Director Wang with a sly smile, the gentle and amiable Dr. Luo, as well as several professional law enforcement robots, and an employee from the police station...

And—

Xu Siyu.

Chapter 535: Interrogation

Mu Jianling and Ji You stepped into the room, and the atmosphere inside instantly shifted.

Professor Ye Hong was the first to frown, asking, "Mu Jianling, what are you here for?"

Mu Jianling, arms crossed with a stern face, retorted, "It concerns my student's reputation. You're asking what I'm here for? Should I stand aside and let you maneuver in the dark?" Having said this, Mu Jianling glanced coldly at Xu Siyu standing aside, implying more than his words conveyed.

Hearing this, Xu Siyu's face turned pale, and she bit her lip slightly.

Dr. Luo hurriedly stepped forward to smooth things over. She pulled Mu Jianling aside with a smile, saying, "Listen to yourself, with so many eyes watching, who would dare tamper secretly?"

"Hmph~"

Mu Jianling sneered and turned his scorn towards Ye Hong, Jiang Yulan, and several other Material Department teachers, saying, "It's quite obvious who would rig things, considering it involves a once-in-a-century outstanding student from the Material Department. A bit of protection is understandable, isn't it?"

Jiang Yulan's eyelid twitched as she said, "Sword Spirit, that's a bit wide a swipe to take. Don't make baseless accusations."

Mu Jianling snorted disdainfully, "Hmph~"

Professor Ye Hong's face darkened immediately. What did Mu Jianling mean by this? Clearly targeting all staff in the Material Department, and by extension, himself? He abruptly stood up—

Principal Hong suddenly interjected, "Everyone sit down! How does it look, making a ruckus in front of the students."

Though Principal Hong's tone was moderate and his voice not loud, the tense atmosphere in the room eased somewhat once he finished speaking.

Mu Jianling sat down with a grunt.

Ye Hong also sat down with an unhappy expression on his face.

Ji You, witnessing this, wondered whether she should say something or do something.

Suddenly—

Principal Hong looked up and said to Ji You, "As one of the parties involved, you should be here. Please take a seat first."

Without needing to guess, Ji You knew this must be a matter concerning the senior management of the school investigating the plagiarism case.

This was precisely what Ji You had hoped for. Settling down, she found a seat, looked at the professors, and politely said, "Thank you, teachers."

Xu Siyu, who was hanging her head, remained silent throughout, seemingly lost in thought.

Then.

Principal Hong said, "This matter is very grave, affecting both the school and individual students significantly. Therefore, we must clarify the facts as soon as possible. Let me make this clear: before the truth is revealed, no one is allowed to protect their own students!"

Saying this, Principal Hong purposefully glanced at Mu Jianling and Ye Hong.

Mu Jianling had a grim expression.

Ye Hong had a tight face.

Both looked displeased and miserable but said nothing, evidently out of respect for Principal Hong.

Principal Hong continued, "Dr. Luo, take it from here."

Dr. Luo stood up, her gaze primarily on students Ji You and Xu Siyu, looking quite stern as she said, "The security department has introduced the latest model of a lie detector from the Alliance. I have just personally tested it and it does not affect the body. You two will later explain everything you know as requested by security."

Ji You blinked: Is there really such an advanced lie detector? Would there be no errors?

A glint of light also flashed past Xu Siyu's eyes.

Seeing the expressions of the two, Dr. Luo continued with a stern face, "The device utilizes the latest mental linkage technology, detecting all the numerical values, especially the fluctuations of the Spiritual Silk produced while you speak and your brain waves activate. Rest assured, there will be no errors."

Ji You immediately felt relieved.

Dr. Luo said, "Words can be fabricated, expressions can be fabricated, brainwave activity levels can be controlled in advance, but! A person's Spiritual Silk will not lie! Therefore, the results of this lie detector are absolutely accurate."

With that statement, Ji You widened her eyes: "Is it really that miraculous?"

Dr. Luo responded noncommittally: "You are quite welcome to try it."

Beside her, Xu Siyu, throughout the entire time, kept her gaze down, not uttering a word.

Dr. Luo gave both of them a glance, her words were not only about explaining the device but also to exert psychological pressure on the two students: whoever was the true plagiarist should, upon hearing her words, abandon any hope of luck, step forward to admit their fault, and strive for leniency, which would be the right approach at this moment. Otherwise...

The school's review team was not to be trifled with.

After Dr. Luo finished speaking, at this moment—

Director Wang stepped forward and said, "In addition to the lie detector, the school will also re-examine all the evidence submitted by you. Rest assured, no one will be wronged, nor will anyone be shielded."

Another authority figure stood up and said this, calming Ji You's heart instantly. Ji You stood up proactively and asked, "Teachers, when will the review begin?"

Principal Hong glanced at Ji You but did not answer her question; instead, he surveyed both Ji You and Xu Siyu back and forth.

Tremendous pressure!

An incredibly terrifying pressure.

When Principal Hong's gaze swept past each of them, it was as if carrying the sharpness of a Blade, filled with a frightening deterrent power, leaving one unable to muster any resistance.

Ji You shrank her neck, not daring to make the slightest move.

Beside her, Xu Siyu, by this time, had already turned pale, with a forehead covered in sweat... Clearly, under Principal Hong's intimidation, Xu Siyu could hardly hold on; her figure swayed...

It was then that Principal Hong retracted his pressure and spoke, "Before the formal review, I'll give you a chance to admit your mistakes voluntarily, so the penalty could potentially be reduced."

Having said this, Principal Hong fixed his gaze sharply on the two.

second.

seconds.

seconds.

...

Ji You straightened her spine, facing all scrutinizing eyes, and loudly said, "I, Ji You, have always walked a straightforward and honorable path in my life, fearless of any scrutiny."

Xu Siyu's shoulders trembled slightly, imperceptibly. After hesitating a few seconds, she also said, "... I also fear no scrutiny."

"Very good."

Principal Hong uttered two words, gazing at them, his eyes cold, "I hope that one of you is not harboring any hope for luck."

"Let's start."

Once Principal Hong finished speaking, the professional personnel from the security department immediately began making arrangements.

Firstly, robots removed any devices, including both their Light Computers, that could possibly affect the digits. After a series of stringent screenings, finally, it was arranged for both to undergo the test.

The entire process was conducted under the supervision of several school administrators and security personnel, ensuring it was conducted publicly and transparently.

Ji You followed the instructions and cooperated with all the examinations.

...

About two hours later, the testing finally ended. Ji You walked out of the lie detector, and the first thing she saw was Xu Siyu's pale face.

Chapter 536: Never Forgive

Ji You and Xu Siyu walked out from the apparatus separately, exchanged a glance, Ji You looking directly at Xu Siyu with an indifferent expression, while Xu Siyu's face slightly paled, her lips quivering...

Suddenly—

Xu Siyu rushed forward and knelt down before the stern-faced teachers and police officers:

"Professor..."

"Teacher..."

"I...I..."

The tears in Xu Siyu's eyes fell like pearls off a string, splashing down, and when she looked up again, her face was tear-streaked. She covered her face and said, "It's...it's my fault, I was confused at first, I beg you teachers to give me another chance."

Silence.

A deathly silence at the scene.

No one spoke.

Even Ji You was surprised to see what Xu Siyu had done.

She actually—

Actually admitted it voluntarily!

Now that the moment truly arrived, Ji You somehow felt a surreal sensation:

Is it...

Is it real?

Really?

How could it be?

How could Xu Siyu so easily admit to it?

Ji You stared blankly at Xu Siyu, her heart experiencing waves of unusual trembling: Is this—

Xiao You?

Is Xiao You crying?

...

Xu Siyu, with her face covered, continued to sob and speak, "When we were desk mates that year, Ji You shared her ideas with me, I didn't intend anything at the time, but when she showed me her manuscript and the results, I...I lost control, then..."

"I..."

"I have wanted to tell the truth countless times, but..."

"But..."

Xu Siyu's body shook with sobs, unable to utter a complete sentence.

Principal Hong, Mu Jianling, Jiang Yulan, Dr. Luo, Director Wang, Professor Ye Hong... All the people present had dark clouds over their faces, as black as the bottom of a pot...

Professor Ye Hong suddenly stood up with a loud shout, "Nonsense!"

"Nonsense!"

"Nonsense!"

Thrice cursing was still not enough to describe the disappointment and anger in Ye Hong's heart! His slightly hunched back shook violently, obviously very angry. Dr. Luo, who was nearby, hurried over, advising, "Old Ye, please calm down..."

Mu Jianling, with her arms folded, coldly said, "Don't worry, an old man who doesn't die is but a thief, such a small blow won't kill him."

Dr. Luo disapproved, "Sword Spirit, shut your mouth."

Ye Hong had no interest in paying attention to Mu Jianling's sarcasm anymore, his hands trembling as he pointed at Xu Siyu: "You! You! You!"

In truth, Ye Hong's feelings were extremely conflicted inside, very difficult to articulate. On one hand, Xu Siyu was a student he valued highly, and he went against many opinions to give Xu Siyu a lot of resources to train...

But on the other hand, Ji You had also proven her talent and insight with her actions. Whichever student was the real plagiarist, the loss would be especially great for the Material Plane.

Therefore, Ye Hong was deeply distressed.

Xu Siyu raised her head, looking at Professor Ye Hong: "Professor..."

Ye Hong's face was stern: "Don't call me!"

Xu Siyu lowered her head.

Ye Hong glowered at Xu Siyu, scolding: "You originally had talent; why did you choose to take such a crooked path?"

Xu Siyu opened her mouth: "I..."

Seeing her apparently unrepentant demeanor, Ye Hong grew angrier, suddenly pushing back his chair and leaving with a swish of his sleeve.

As Professor Ye Hong seemed about to leave, Xu Siyu, in a panic, opened her mouth: "Professor... please... please forgive me."

Ye Hong paused, without turning his head said, "Whatever the school's punishment is, I, Ye Hong, will not interfere as per the school's regulations."

Leaving those words behind.

He strode away.

Xu Siyu's figure swayed as she hastily chased after him for a few steps, only to find that she couldn't catch up at all. Besides, several police robots in the vicinity were blocking her way; she simply couldn't leave...

Xu Siyu clenched her teeth, suddenly turned towards Ji You, and knelt down fiercely: "Ji You... please forgive me."

Ji You clutched her chest tightly, where her heart was beating violently, trembling...

Tears from the corner of her eyes slipped down inadvertently...

She raised her hand, touched it, and realized they were real tears.

Ji You blinked, pushing the tears back, and said with a cold face: "Xu Siyu, I will not forgive you."

Xu Siyu looked up sharply.

Ji You said coldly: "Everyone, no matter what they do, must take responsibility for their actions."

After that.

Ji You said no more.

Xu Siyu's mouth hung open; not knowing what to do, her heart was in turmoil, and she had no choice but to turn to Principal Hong and the police department staff.

Principal Hong didn't spare a glance at Xu Siyu, turning instead to the police department staff and said, "Xiao Chen, please announce the results first."

Police officer Xiao Chen gestured, and then a police robot displayed two sets of results.

First came Ji You's report, dense with a series of data comparisons, and it wasn't until the last page that the result appeared: [Upon verification, the thoughts, wishes, and words of the student are 100% consistent with the brainwave and Spiritual Silk fluctuations, with no deceit detected, ruling out any suspicion of the crime.]

Inside the Spirit Space.

Xiao You was still sobbing, curled up, her shoulders trembling lightly...

[Be good~]

[Let's not cry~]

Ji You pursed her lips, clutching her palms tightly to maintain calm.

Then—

It was Xu Siyu's verification result.

[Upon verification, the thoughts, wishes, and words of the student are only 58% consistent with the brainwave and Spiritual Silk fluctuations, thus highly suspicious of deceit and cannot eliminate the possibility of crime.]

Boom—

At the sight of the result, Xu Siyu's entire being nearly crumbled. Before the test, she had been clinging to a sliver of hope. During the process, the persistent and overwhelming scrutiny made her sense trouble was coming.

But—

But she couldn't actually escape the scrutiny.

Xu Siyu covered her face with her hands.

Only then did Principal Hong speak: "Whether it's the school or the police department, there has been no precedent of forcing confessions, no coercion or enticement. Everything is done by adhering to the law and according to the rules."

"Also, bring out the evidence submitted by both parties for review."

Following that—

It was the review result of the evidence. After it came out, Xu Siyu nearly fainted...

At first, when slandered Ji You, Xu Siyu tried to erase all traces as much as possible, but after all, she was young and inexperienced; her arrangements were not so tight as to be flawless. If there was a real investigation, it was entirely possible to uncover everything.

All the teachers present had solemn expressions, waiting for Principal Hong to announce the punishment results.

In a panic, Xu Siyu knelt down suddenly: "Principal... I..."

Principal Hong said: "I have said, don't harbor any delusions of luck. A preemptive admission of guilt can be considered for more lenient treatment."

This meant—

She had to accept the most severe punishment...

Xu Siyu bit her lip and anxiously looked at Ji You, saying, "You... considering our many years as classmates, could you... could you forgive me?" You... she had always been soft-hearted; as long as she could win You's forgiveness, the school would surely consider lessening her punishment.

Xu Siyu's only hope now lay with Ji You.

Ji You remained expressionless.

In her mind, Xiao You was still crying.

Ji You: [Would you forgive her?]

Xiao You suddenly shook, stopping her tears: [Sister... I...]

Ji You: [Would you forgive her?]

Xiao You: [I...]

Ji You sighed slightly: [I'm sorry, but this time, I won't let you decide by yourself. My choice is to never forgive!]

Ji You no longer paid attention to Xiao You; she stared at Xu Siyu and said directly: "Absolutely not."

Chapter 537: Punishment

"I will never forgive you."

After saying this, Ji You stared unwaveringly at Xu Siyu, speaking, "You must pay the price for everything you've done."

With those words,

Ji You tensed her face, refusing to look at Xu Siyu again.

Xu Siyu's figure swayed as if about to fall. She extended her hands, trying to step forward, but several robots beside her stopped her. Opening her mouth, Xu Siyu turned to the others, but without exception, no one spoke to plead for her.

After a long pause,

Professor Jiang Yulan sighed, "Why bring this upon yourself?"

If Xu Siyu had been willing to admit her mistakes voluntarily before the examination, such a situation would not have arisen. Yet she insisted on indulging in wishful thinking...

Why indeed?

Knowing Old Hong's temperament, it was impossible for him to relent.

As expected—

Just as Jiang Yulan opened her mouth and said, "Though Xu Siyu's character is despicable, considering she confessed at the last moment and does possess undeniable talent, why not impose an additional penalty instead of expelling her? What do you think?"

Another teacher from the Material Department also said, "The Material realm has been lacking new talent for a century. If she sincerely admits her mistakes, let's not expel her."

Mu Jianling, arms folded, snorted coldly, "Talent without morality is like rot to humankind, a great disaster, nothing more!"

Jiang Yulan and several other Material Department teachers, upon hearing this, opened their mouths but everyone else remained silent. Jiang Yulan was about to say something more...

Principal Hong raised his hand, interrupting her, "There's no need to say more, let's act according to rules and regulations."

Jiang Yulan sighed softly, glanced at Xu Siyu, and then remained silent.

Xu Siyu shook violently, her shoulders drooping despondently.

Principal Hong's face was solemn as he said, "Since the founding of our school, we have always focused on nurturing excellent talents who possess both character and capability for the Alliance. Such an egregious incident has never occurred. I have repeatedly emphasized that confessing voluntarily can lead to leniency, but Xu Siyu is steadfast in her ways, showing how utterly incorrigible her character is. Such a 'talent' cannot be fostered by our school."

The words of Principal Hong, each and every one, pierced Xu Siyu's heart like the tip of a blade, her face growing paler by the moment.

Principal Hong declared, "According to the school's rules and regulations, she shall be expelled."

Xu Siyu abruptly raised her head: "I..."

Principal Hong, his voice cold, continued, "Furthermore, the school will cooperate with the Police Affairs Department, handing over all evidence to the police bureau."

Boom—

This is it!

Not only did the school want to expel Xu Siyu, but they were also going to pursue legal action against her.

This!

If she truly faced legal consequences, Xu Siyu would never be able to rid herself of this stain for the rest of her life.

If the mention of expulsion by Principal Hong made Xu Siyu feel as if it was all over, all over, all over... at least she could still breathe. But now, hearing that legal actions would be pursued, Xu Siyu felt as if the sky had collapsed.

The sky...

truly had collapsed.

Xu Siyu abruptly knelt down, frantically kowtowing to Principal Hong, "Please forgive me, Principal. Please give me a chance to live..."

Police Affairs Officer Xiao Chen, looking at Xu Siyu like this, also felt some pity, but—

The law is the law. If exceptions could be made for everyone, then what is the law for?

Officer Xiao Chen said, "Ms. Xu Siyu, please understand that your actions have violated Alliance law, constituting a criminal offense, not something that can be revoked through forgiveness or pleas."

Xu Siyu, with her mouth open, her face streaked with tears.

But Officer Xiao Chen looked away, turning toward Principal Hong, "Principal Hong, we will take care of the next steps at the Police Affairs Department."

Principal Hong, with a stern face, nodded, "Thank you for your trouble."

After speaking, Principal Hong looked toward Jiang Yulan, Mu Jianling, Dr. Luo, Director Wang, and the other teachers, "Dismissed."

Mu Jianling was the first to stand up and leave the meeting.

Before stepping forward, she glanced at Ji You and said, "What are you still standing there for? Aren't you leaving?"

"Oh—"

Ji You scratched her head and hurried to follow Teacher Mu Jianling.

Professor Jiang Yulan looked at Xu Siyu with slight pity, shook her head, and also stood up to leave.

The others also stood up one by one and left...

The police station was left with only the despairing Xu Siyu, and the staff of the police station.

After leaving the strict police station, Ji You seemed a bit distracted, trying to climb onto Teacher Mu Jianling's Floating Car using her hands and feet. However, Mu Jianling slapped her away, cursing, "What are you following me for? Go back where you came from!"

Ji You opened her mouth: "Ah? What... Teacher, aren't you giving me a ride?"

Mu Jianling said, "In your dreams! Get off the car now."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You squeezed out an ingratiating smile and said, "Teacher... just give me a ride, just one ride... It will only delay you a little bit, just a little bit of time..."

Mu Jianling crossed her arms and said coldly, "I'll count to three. If you don't scam, I'll kick you off!"

"3!"

Raising her foot—

Then a loud—

Bang!

Ji You was sprawled on the ground, rubbing her sore buttocks, and looking at the luxurious Floating Car with a wronged expression, she said, "Teacher, that's cheating! Didn't you say you'd count to three?"

Mu Jianling glanced sideways and cursed, "Do I look like I have that much free time?"

Ji You: "..."

Mu Jianling started the Floating Car, and with a swoosh, sped off into the distance...

Ji You opened her mouth: "I have never seen someone so unreasonable!"

Forget it.

Forget it.

Forget it.

Who made her a big shot? There's still a long way ahead. For now, I can't afford to offend, better to play it safe.

Cowering in front of a big shot isn't shameful.

It's called—following the path of your heart.

Ji You naturally found a perfectly good excuse for her own timid behavior.

...

The police station was quite a distance from Ji You's dorm, a 10-minute ride by Floating Car, but if she were to run on her two legs, it would probably take about 20 hours... Ji You, enduring the heartache, prepared to spend a few credit points to find a self-service Floating Car...

At that moment—

From the depths of the Spiritual World, a soft and trembling voice of a young girl came through: [[Sister... sister...]]

Ji You's heart quivered: [[Xiao You... do you blame me?]]

Faced with Xu Siyu's pleas for forgiveness, Ji You remained cold-hearted, not taking Xiao You's opinion, and directly refused on her behalf. To be honest, Xiao You is so naive and kind... Ji You truly feared her excessive compassionate nature would overwhelm her...

Xiao You whispered: [[Sister... I... I don't blame you, and I will never... never blame you.]]

Ji You: [[I'm sorry, I didn't ask for your opinion.]]

Xiao You: [[Sister... It's me, I made you worry. Just now... I thought about it for a long time, and I also wanted to tell you, sister, I... I will not forgive Xu Siyu.]]

Xiao You added: [[My choice is the same as sister's.]]

Ji You pursed her lips and smiled: [[Xiao You, always remember one thing, we do not actively harm others, nor should we tolerate bad people continuing to elude justice. Xu Siyu must pay the corresponding price for everything she has done.]]

Xiao You: [[Mhm!]]

Chapter 538: A Good Deed a Day

Communicating with Xiao You in the Spiritual World, Ji You simply gave up the idea of fixing the self-service Floating Car.

As they walked, they talked.

The night deepened.

The surroundings were empty, and the stars shone brilliantly.

To be honest, even Ji You did not expect this issue to be resolved so easily; it was hundreds of times easier than she had anticipated. Indeed, Ji You had braced herself for a drawn-out struggle...

But—

Unexpectedly, it took only a few hours to resolve.

Not just for Xiao You, but even Ji You herself felt a bit stunned.

Xiao You: "Sister... am I dreaming?"

Ji You kept a straight face: "No! You are not."

Though she also felt it was somewhat dreamlike.

Xiao You's voice, soft and sweet, said gently: "But... it really feels like a dream. Turns out, I could clear my name and restore my innocence."

After saying this, recalling that she had even committed suicide over this, Xiao You felt an inexplicable sense of despondency and hung her head.

Ji You asked softly, "Xiao You, do you regret giving up on life so easily now?"

Ji You had always wanted to ask this question but refrained from doing so, considering the fragility of Xiao You's heart.

In the confined space, hearing this question, Xiao You suddenly looked up at the pitch-black sky, at the sole source of light—

There, was her sister's spiritual power.

She knew.

This was the only light in the dark world.

And the only light in her own life...

A smile appeared at the corner of Xiao You's lips as she said softly, "I regret it."

A smile bloomed on Ji You's lips as she said, "Regret is right! Life is wonderful! To give up one's life so easily is to be cruel to oneself and to blaspheme against life."

Xiao You: "But—I also don't regret it."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You's face darkened a bit: "Still don't regret it? If you dare do it again, I'll beat you!"

Having said that, Ji You heard a soft laugh echoing in the Spirit Space, crisp, sweet, soft, and even a little sheepish...

Xiao You: "I don't regret it, because I met my sister."

Ji You, mouth agape, ready to deliver a mix of headteacher and parental scolding, found herself speechless upon hearing Xiao You's words.

This—

This—

It was somewhat embarrassing to hear.

Then, the honest, innocent, and pure girl Xiao You seemingly felt it wasn't sappy enough and continued, "Sister... it's so nice to have you."

"Really nice."

"Really nice."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You, with a stern face, said seriously, "Don't butter me up with sweet talk; I won't fall for it! I will still scold you, and it will be a stern scolding!"

Hearing Ji You's words, the girl seemed to think of something and let out another sweet laugh: "Sister..."

Ji You: "Hmm?"

Xiao You: "It's so nice to have you."

Ever since her parents passed away, and later when she was bullied by her uncle's family, making her reluctantly return to live alone in Zone 10 of the garbage planet, Xiao You had dreamed of having a family member by her side.

Someone in the family to stand up for her...

That wish had come true.

She—

Was no longer alone.

Even trapped in this isolated space with no one else, she felt not the slightest bit of loneliness anymore.

Thinking about it, a smile unconsciously spread across Xiao You's lips.

Ji You's face finally blushed as she listened to Xiao You's repeated words.

A cool breeze brushed against Ji You, her hands in her pockets as she walked at a leisurely pace towards the dormitory, moving silently.

...

Suddenly—

A figure appeared ahead, crouched by the side of the road, hugging their knees and seemingly doing something. If Ji You weren't so observant, she might not have noticed them.

Ji You mustered her courage and approached for a closer look—it was indeed a person!

As long as it wasn't a ghost, it was all good.

Aha~

In such a world under the bright sky, there couldn't possibly be ghosts.

Ji You initially wanted to pretend not to have seen, but fearing the other person might truly be in trouble, such as a sudden heart condition, she thought it over and asked, "Classmate, do you need help?"

Upon hearing Ji You's query, the person unexpectedly lifted their head.

Ji You: "Looks a bit familiar..."

The other party: "Ji You student..."

That voice—

Ji You leaned in for a closer look and suddenly realized: "Are you Fu Feng? Liu Fufeng?"

Liu Fufeng slightly lowered his head: "Yeah."

Ji You turned around and walked away.

Liu Fufeng: "..."

Wasn't he asking if I needed help?

This—

He just asked a question and then left?

But after watching Ji You walk a few meters away, Liu Fufeng could no longer squat down. He stood up and called out to Ji You: "Ji You student, I... I really need help... *cough*..."

"*Cough cough*..."

What followed was a series of violent coughing sounds.

Ji You: "..."

Ji You turned around with a darkened face: "What on earth is wrong with you? Where do you feel uncomfortable?"

Liu Fufeng raised his hand, clutching his chest: "*Cough cough*..."

By the looks of it, is this an asthma attack?

Or epilepsy?

I mean—this is the interstellar era already, haven't diseases like these already been conquered?

Indeed—

A neighboring country's dethroned crown prince = trouble!

Getting involved with him means huge trouble, nothing good ever comes from it.

How could a double-loser like myself get mixed up with someone like a crown prince? If things go south, I could easily be taken care of by the hidden assassins around the crown prince. My numerous little lives would not be enough to survive.

But—

Blame it on my own kindness; I can't stand by and watch someone die.

So—

Let's call an ambulance for him out of goodwill, then.

Ji You opened her Light Computer, preparing to call for an ambulance right away...

Liu Fufeng suddenly raised his hand to stop Ji You's action and said, "I... I am not sick."

Ji You slightly disagreed: "If you're sick, go get treatments, don't try to tough it out."

Liu Fufeng: "*Cough cough*..."

Liu Fufeng coughed violently, his body convulsing: "*Cough cough*... Um... Ji You student, could you possibly lend me 10 points."

Ji You's finger paused.

For a few seconds.

Ji You stared at Liu Fufeng speechlessly and said, "You're saying, even as a crown prince, you're just asking for money? It's quite annoying."

Liu Fufeng: "..."

A trace of red appeared on Liu Fufeng's fair face as he corrected: "It's the former crown prince."

"*Cough*..." Not wanting to rub salt into wounds, Ji You felt a bit awkward and said, "Ah ha... almost forgot, well... if there's nothing else, I'm gonna get going."

Are you kidding me? Can points just be lent out willy-nilly?

Liu Fufeng, clutching his chest, suddenly coughed again and then abruptly squatted on the ground.

Ji You: "..."

Ji You raised her hand to her forehead: "Little bro, what's the deal with you?"

The squatting Liu Fufeng lifted his head weakly and whispered, "I... I can't walk any further."

After class, he meant to return to the dormitory, but the classroom was really too far from the dorm. Liu Fufeng couldn't use credit points on campus, nor did he have any points, so he couldn't take a self-service Floating Car...

He could only walk.

He had been walking for hours now, yet he still hadn't reached the dormitory. Liu Fufeng was in despair, hoping to ask fellow students for help, but he had just started school today, didn't know anyone, nor did he have their contact info...

Unless he sought help from school teachers or management.

Liu Fufeng didn't want to do that.

Ji You was taken aback: "You walked here all the way from the cafeteria?"

Liu Fufeng's face was red: "Yes."

Ji You clicked her tongue: "Big brother! I'm impressed! Are your legs still okay?"

Liu Fufeng hung his head: "Not... not so good."

Seeing him in such a pitiful state, Ji You couldn't just ignore it. Since she was about to take a self-service Floating Car herself, she might as well perform a good deed and give Liu Fufeng a lift.

So, Ji You gestured and called for a Floating Car, and as soon as Liu Fufeng saw it, he was no longer acting delicate or lifeless. In the blink of an eye, he climbed into the car.

Ji You: "..."

Indeed—

Am I just too kind-hearted?

Chapter 539: Little Master of Curses

Liu Fufeng slickly climbed onto the Floating Car. The speed was so fast that Ji You couldn't quite catch up, and she couldn't help but wonder, "Didn't you say your legs hurt and you couldn't walk?"

Liu Fufeng reached out, pretending to rub his leg, a slight sheepish smile on his lips, "It hurts! But I was afraid you'd change your mind and not give me a lift, so..." So despite the pain, that's why he climbed up so quickly.

Ji You: "..."

Ji You curled her lip: "Little bro, you really are honest, aren't you?"

Liu Fufeng slightly lowered his gaze, revealing a shallow smile.

Just as Ji You was about to climb aboard, she suddenly caught a glimpse of a mess of scribbles on the floor where Liu Fufeng had been squatting...

Ji You paused, asking, "What's this?"

Liu Fufeng's neck retracted slightly, and he explained somewhat uncomfortably: "Nothing...it's nothing."

Ji You wasn't short on anything except for an overload of curiosity. She simply squatted down and closely examined the chaotic lines drawn with a stick on the ground. But even after looking, she still couldn't understand.

She was about to leave when suddenly—

She recognized a few characters. Ji You halted in her tracks, bent over, and followed the writing, reading it out unintentionally, "You big meanie, I...I draw a...what? Huh? A circle curse on you?"

Boom—

Aboard the Floating Car, Liu Fufeng's head went blank, his snow-white face instantly turning tomato red.

Ji You looked at Liu Fufeng, clicking her tongue, "Did you draw this?"

Liu Fufeng bit his lip, "No."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You didn't believe it.

She bent over again, preparing to decipher it more closely, then heard Liu Fufeng urging, "Ahem...Student Ji You, can...can we leave quickly? My leg... It really hurts, I'm so tired..."

Ji You kept her gaze on the ground, muttering, "Curse you! Curse you! Curse you!"

Liu Fufeng's whole face was beet red, the blush spread to the roots of his ears, and down his neck.

Ji You gestured for a nearby cleaning robot to come over, signaling it to clean.

The cleaning robot's electronic eyes took in the scene and immediately expressed disapproval: "Who vandalized and deliberately damaged the school environment? That's so uncivilized."

Ji You patted the robot's big head and pointed at Liu Fufeng, saying, "It was this fellow right here."

Liu Fufeng: "..."

The robot turned to Liu Fufeng and promptly performed a scan.

Ding—

Robot: "Student Fufeng, you are hereby given a serious warning. Repeat this offense and points will be deducted."

Liu Fufeng's mouth twitched, and from the corner of his eye, he saw that Student Ji You beside him was actually grinning from ear to ear...

Liu Fufeng lowered his gaze, repentant attitude on show, "Yes... Mr. Robot, I won't dare again."

Robot: "I've got you recorded."

Liu Fufeng: "..."

Swoosh—

The Floating Car started up, slowly heading toward the dormitory area.

Thinking about how he'd been officially logged by the school's cleaning system, Liu Fufeng was filled with gloom.

Ji You felt no guilt whatsoever, and instead curiously pressed on, "Student Fufeng, who were you cursing with that circle?"

Liu Fufeng raised his eyes, his beautiful pupils silently staring at Ji You, mute.

Ji You pressed on: "Who is it? Just tell me, I just want to laugh."

Liu Fufeng said: "Teacher Mu Jianling."

"Phew—"

"Cough—"

Ji You choked, almost spraying saliva all over Liu Fufeng's face, her body convulsing as she nearly laughed herself into a fit! Ji You shook her shoulders and with wide eyes said: "You... You're not crazy, are you?"

Liu Fufeng: "..."

Not crazy.

Also—

Liu Fufeng silently added: Don't worry, next time I'll draw a circle to curse you.

Ji You coughed violently for a while before finally catching her breath, having nearly choked on the saliva stuck in her windpipe. For a moment, Ji You looked at Liu Fufeng's face, which was more beautiful and delicate than a girl's, rather speechlessly, and said, "Buddy, next time before you tell a joke, could you give me a heads-up? It's literally killer funny."

Liu Fufeng pursed his lips.

Ji You gave him a sideways glance and said, "You actually dare to secretly curse Teacher Mu Jianling. Be careful, I might tell her."

Liu Fufeng fell silent.

Ji You frowned and said, "That's not right. What has the teacher done wrong for you to curse her?"

Liu Fufeng, who had been sulking in silence and saying nothing, suddenly said, "She punished me by forbidding me from using credit points, leaving me penniless and unable to borrow any points. I had no choice but to walk back to the dorm. My legs hurt so much I couldn't help but draw little circles..."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You opened her mouth but, being tactful, shut it again.

This guy—

Is he a primary school kid?

Is he even an adult?

How can his thoughts be so childish?

No!

That's not it!

He must be trying to play the pity card in front of me to borrow points.

No way!

Any scheme to extract money from me is a paper tiger!

After Ji You saw through Liu Fufeng's ploy in a second, she closed her mouth and did not speak again.

Liu Fufeng stole glances at her and realized she was indeed not saying another word; for a moment, he felt disappointed.

The Floating Car followed the tracks, passing through buildings, through forests, through... and finally arrived at the dormitory area. Unfortunately for Liu Fufeng, he also lived in the self-paying students' dormitory area, but unlike other students, he lived alone in a villa, which came with a swimming pool, training room, garden... everything was all-encompassing, simply incredible!

Ji You was astonished.

After dropping off Liu Fufeng, Ji You, holding back her curiosity, directly drove away in the Floating Car!

This down-and-out Prince of paupers, better to stay as far away from him as possible.

Ji You didn't feel the slightest urge to cozy up to him.

After returning to her dormitory and with the rest time arriving, given she had cleared her name and experienced too many emotional ups and downs through the day, Ji You fell asleep in bed as soon as she touched it.

The next day.

After the morning Physical fitness class ended, a crowd ran to the canteen; Ji You managed to grab some natural food and was just about to sit down and eat when Lin Lele suddenly came over and looked at Ji You.

second.

seconds.

seconds.

...

Ji You felt bizarrely scrutinized, to the point her scalp tingled. She lowered her eyes to the piece of meat in her bowl and couldn't help but swing her elbows out, defensively guarding her plate while righteously stating, "Lin Lele, I admit you have big eyes, but you shouldn't stare at my meat. It might give me the wrong impression that you're trying to steal it."

Lin Lele: "..."

Lin Lele's mouth twitched, not knowing what to do; she glared at Ji You and suddenly took off.

Ji You muttered, "How strange."

Lin Lele's footsteps paused, but she continued to stride away.

Then—

Apart from Lin Lele, quite a few others passed by Ji You's side with sneaky glances or stopped to stare at Ji You for a few moments.

Again and again, being gawked at as if she were a gorilla, this feeling wasn't too pleasant.

Ji You furrowed her brows, feeling even the meat in her bowl wasn't appetizing anymore.

Beside—

Yue Qiyuan said, "Number 4444, the school just posted an announcement."

Ji You: "Huh?"

Shen Changqing said, "It's related to you."

Yue Qiguang said brashly, "Why say so much? Let this idiot check the official website herself!"

Ji You had a vague guess.

Chapter 540: Dust Settles

A school announcement published on the official website?

Ji You had a suspicion, she put down her meal tray, opened her Light Computer, entered the school's official website, and after reading, blinked slightly in surprise. She hadn't expected the school to act so swiftly.

The content of the announcement mainly concerned the punishment of Xu Siyu from Class 130 of the Material Department. It detailed Xu Siyu's misconduct and the results of her punishment. The most severe penalties for Xu Siyu were twofold; one was the school's direct announcement of her expulsion. The other was Lanyue Star court's verdict that Xu Siyu must compensate Ji You for physical, emotional, psychological, and actual damages, totaling a sum of 2 million credit points in compensation.

Chu Jiaojiao laughed boisterously, slapping the table without any concern for her image, "That's great! The real plagiarist got expelled. Absolutely satisfying! Congratulations, Ji You!"

Shen Changqing turned to Ji You and said softly, "Congratulations."

Yue Qiyuan also said, "Congratulations."

Yue Qiguang cursed Xu Siyu, saying she got what she deserved, and added, "Congratulations."

Sheng Qingyan glanced at Ji You, and with a twist of his mouth said, "Poor dead, congratulations... To celebrate reclaiming your innocence, maybe you should loosen your grip on that braised pork a little bit..."

Ji You: "..."

Still guarding her meal tray, Ji You shot back with a sidelong glance, "You expect me not to steal my meat? I'd have to be haunted to believe you."

Sheng Qingyan, with a look of disdain, retorted, "Those measly bits of meat in your bowl, I wouldn't even bother with them."

Saying so, he picked up a juicy, meaty rib from his own plate, stuffed it into his mouth, and clicked his tongue as a gesture of disdain towards Ji You.

Ji You chuckled and said, "Thanks, guys. Times are tough right now, so bear with me. Treating everyone to a meal will have to wait till next time! Next time!"

Everyone: "Stingy!"

Ji You: "You get used to being thrifty."

Everyone: "..."

The group finished their meal and was about to leave when they suddenly ran into Wu Xing, Huang Chao, and others. It seemed that these few people had intentionally sought them out, and as soon as they saw Ji You, they headed straight for her.

Ji You didn't have a deep impression of these two, only knowing they were Xu Siyu's mindless fans and bootlickers. Seeing them, she acted as if she hadn't, turned her head, and walked away.

But who would have known—

Wu Xing suddenly said, "Ji You! Si Yu might have made a mistake, but can't you be a bit more forgiving? Why did you have to hurt her so badly? Is your heart black?"

Ji You paused mid-step.

Seeing Ji You stop, Wu Xing's voice grew louder, "Mercy to those who are mercy-worthy. You forced Si Yu to drop out, you've completely ruined her! How can you be so cruel?"

Ji You's icy gaze fixed on the foolishly thick-skinned Wu Xing, her voice cold, "Do you even know what you're talking about?"

Wu Xing glared at Ji You fiercely, grinding his teeth, "Of course I know what I'm saying."

Ji You shook her head, "No! You don't realize you're talking nonsense."

Wu Xing flushed with humiliation and anger, "I may not be as articulate or as malicious as you, but I only hope you can show some leniency and spare Si Yu."

Ji You looked at him, then at the crowd behind Wu Xing, feeling incredulous inside. She had no idea what kind of delusion Xu Siyu had fed these people; Xu Siyu herself had admitted her guilt, yet these people were blindly defending her.

Around them, due to Wu Xing and the others' antics, more and more onlookers were gathering.

Ji You looked around and after a deep sigh, raised her voice, "Senior Wu Xing, I hope you understand a few things. First, Xu Siyu admitted to plagiarizing my work, which can't be faked. Second, when she plagiarized and slandered me, putting me in trouble, did she ever consider me? Did she ask if I was willing? Third, all the punishments she's now facing are consequences of her own actions! Fourth, as an adult, I feel your brain development is incomplete, lacking in morals and legal knowledge. You should improve your cognition, rather than spouting nonsense in front of me."

Having said that, Ji You didn't even spare Wu Xing and the others a glance.

Wu Xing, Huang Chao, and the rest of them turned pale and red as they listened to Ji You's words. Wu Xing even wanted to step forward to argue with Ji You but was held back by Huang Chao behind him. Because a crowd of students was watching them, talking amongst themselves.

Chu Jiaojiao clenched her fists, glared at Wu Xing and Huang Chao, and warned, "Dare to come over! I'll beat you to a pulp."

Ji You turned her head and said, "Jiaojiao, come back quickly. We don't talk to unreasonable people who don't distinguish right from wrong."

Chu Jiaojiao hopped and skipped to catch up with Ji You, "Hey! Coming."

The group left, and along the way, no one stopped them again.

...

The slander and plagiarism issues with Xu Siyu were resolved.

In the following days, Ji You did not see Xu Siyu in school again. She heard that Xu Siyu had accepted the punishment and left the school the same night, but Siyu did not disclose where she went.

Ji You received 2 million in fines paid by Xu Siyu. After consulting with Xiao You, they decided to publicly donate the money for charity.

This money, how to put it?

It was compensation provided by Xu Siyu, which Ji You couldn't just not accept, but once she did, she didn't want to keep it. After a careful consideration, since it was essentially a compensation for Xiao You's life, spending it didn't sit well with her. Hence, after seeking Xiao You's opinion, they decided to donate it to those who truly needed help.

Ji You herself could manufacture Soul Devices and had tens of millions of credit points on hand. Despite being in debt for 500 million, she firmly believed that as long as she was willing to strive hard, she would surely be able to pay off her debts sooner. Therefore, she did not need the 2 million compensation.

That settled it.

Back in the day, Xu Siyu's plagiarism and slander of Xiao You's work, along with imposing a severe financial punishment that left Xiao You almost with no chance to turn things around—if Ji You hadn't decided to return to Lanyue Star Military Academy, if she hadn't made up her mind to take on that challenge, this matter might have been buried forever.

But despite all Xu Siyu's precautions, she didn't anticipate Ji You's willingness to shoulder a massive debt to reenter the Lanyue Star Military Academy, which meant this matter was also doomed not to be covered up...

Such is the unpredictability of life.

With this issue resolved, Ji You invested herself fully in training.

Finally—

Ji You was once again beaten black and blue by the small machine, but thankfully—her Physical Strength had broken through the barrier and upgraded to class C!

Ji You was ecstatic, hands on hips, and she laughed wildly: "Hahaha... I, Ji You, have finally made a breakthrough! Hahaha... Indeed, I am destined to be the ruler standing at the World's Peak! Hahahaha..."

All students in the Combat Department: "..."

"Is she insane?"

"A class C nobody dares to call themselves a ruler?"

"Let's all be a bit more tolerant. After all, for a waste of space like her to improve this much isn't easy."

"True, it isn't easy."

"Let's all be more generous."

Ji You, still in high spirits, couldn't take others pouring cold water on her. She put her hands on her hips and said: "I ask, among all of you present, who has improved faster than me? I've gone from class E to class C, a whole two grades! Who among you has leveled up faster? Anyone? Anyone?"

Mu Jianling put away her Light Computer, pointed at the nearby Strength Tester nonchalantly, and said, "Throw a punch, give it a try."

The Strength Tester mainly measured strength. Ji You still remembered the huge humiliation she suffered after her first test with it—it was so bad she couldn't hold her head up high even to this day.

This time, she was determined to wash away the previous disgrace!

Ji You rubbed her fists with a sense of vengeance and smashed a hard punch!

Boom—

After a loud bang, the data was released...