

## Scholar 391

### Chapter 391: Back To China

By the time Lu Zhou finished his errands at Princeton, it was already the 28th.

Lu Zhou gave himself and his students a month-long vacation and asked Jerick to drive him to Philadelphia Airport.

On the way to the airport, Lu Zhou was scrolling through his Weibo when he suddenly received a phone call from Yang Xu.

“Boss, you’re coming back to China today?”

After seeing his friends’ news feed, Yang Xu had immediately called Lu Zhou to ask about it.

Lu Zhou replied, “Yeah, I’m on the way to Philadelphia Airport.”

Box..

Yang Xu said, “I’ll pick you up at the airport tomorrow, when do you land?”

Lu Zhou said, “No need, I’m flying directly to Beijing this time. I’ll come to Jinling in mid-January.”

“Beijing?” Yang Xu suddenly realized something, and he smiled as he said, “Is it...”

Lu Zhou replied, “Yeah, the conference on the 8th.”

“Nutty! Did you win some kind of award?” Yang Xu asked.

He couldn’t help but envy Lu Zhou.

The conference on the 8th was obviously the State Science and Technology Awarding Meeting of the People’s Republic of China.

He wouldn’t be able to win the Highest Science and Technology Award, but he might win the State Technological Invention Award or the State Natural Science Award.

Each of the five state awards was legendary; any research institute would welcome a state award winner with both arms open.

Lu Zhou smiled as he replied, “No one has told me what the prize is. I don’t know yet, but I’ll know when I get there.”

“Boss, you’re going to a prize ceremony! Don’t forget about me in the future,” Yang Xu joked. He then said, “I’ll ask on behalf of our research institute; is there going to be a year-end bonus for us?”

Lu Zhou said, “Of course there is.”

“How much?”

“You’ll know when I get there!”

Once Jerick dropped Lu Zhou off at the airport, Lu Zhou then walked into the terminal with his suitcase.

He and Chen Yushan had made plans to meet up through WeChat messages.

Lu Zhou walked inside the airport and instantly recognized a familiar person.

Her rimless glasses perched on her delicate nose and her smooth black hair brushed against her coat. She was wearing a black cotton skirt and pantyhose as well as a pair of brown boots that made her look both fashionable and youthful.

It was almost like Chen Yushan could tell Lu Zhou was nearby. The moment she looked around, she made eye contact with Lu Zhou.

Her eyes lit up, and she began to wave at him before she dragged her suitcase over to meet him.

As Chen Yushan stood next to Lu Zhou, she patted her chest and sighed in relief.

“You scared me; I thought you were going to ditch me again.”

Lu Zhou asked, “Why do you make it sound like I always ditched you?”

Chen Yushan stared at Lu Zhou with a pair of bright beautiful eyes.

“Haven’t you?”

Emm...

I think...

I haven’t, right?

Lu Zhou had ditched people too many times. Even though he couldn’t remember ditching Chen Yushan, he wasn’t so sure anymore...

...

There wasn't much time left, so Chen Yushan and Lu Zhou quickly went to get their boarding passes.

Lu Zhou thought that Chen Yushan would be flying first class; he didn't expect her to be in business class as well. They then chose to sit together for the flight.

Even though her family was wealthy, it didn't seem like she was reckless with money.

As for why Lu Zhou didn't buy a first-class ticket...

It wasn't because he didn't want to spend the money. He just didn't care. Unless someone else bought the ticket for him, he would stick to business class.

The pair got their boarding passes and went through the security check. They then walked at a brisk pace through the terminal and successfully boarded the plane.

Lu Zhou sat in the middle seat while Chen Yushan sat by the window.

He was about to close his eyes and nap for a while when a man, who was holding a briefcase, sat down next to him while he continued to talk on the phone.

The man was talking loudly, and people began to look at him.

However, the man wasn't aware, and he kept blabbering.

A flight attendant came over.

"Sir, the plane is about to take off, please turn off your phone."

The middle-aged man frowned and looked dissatisfied. However, he still followed the order.

Lu Zhou was watching this unfold from the side. He then sighed in his heart.

He was going to have a bad time with a person like this sitting next to him.

The man who had just turned his phone off looked bored, and he looked around to find someone to talk to. Suddenly, he noticed Lu Zhou, who was sitting next to him, and he asked, “Bro, what do you do for a living?”

“Mathematics.”

“Oh, mathematics teacher? Middle school or high school?”

“University.”

The middle-aged man was stunned, and he looked at Lu Zhou in disbelief.

“You’re teaching college students? I don’t believe it.”

Lu Zhou didn’t bother arguing with him.

The middle-aged man wasn’t happy with being ignored. He then looked around, and soon, he noticed Lu Zhou’s watch.

“Bro, what brand is your watch?”

Lu Zhou said, “I don’t know, someone gave it to me and didn’t tell me the brand.”

Middle-aged man: “The friend that bought you the watch must’ve bought a replica, right?”

Lu Zhou: "...?"

Is this guy retarded?

When Lu Zhou didn't answer him, the middle-aged man laughed and said, "Look at the color, it's obviously not pure silver."

Lu Zhou wanted to ignore him, but he was suddenly interested in something. He then looked at the man and asked, "You can tell?"

The man laughed and said, "Of course! I've been doing sales for many years, so I can tell."

"Then guess who gave this watch to me."

"How am I supposed to guess that? Why don't you just tell me?"

"The American Chemical Society."

The man looked at Lu Zhou like he was crazy.

"Bro, at least make your lies realistic. You said you do mathematics, but now you're a chemist. Why don't you say the United Nations gave it to you?"

Lu Zhou chuckled. "Mathematicians can also study chemistry."

The man laughed. "Stop bragging! Do you think I haven't been to university? Okay then, since this watch is from the American Chemical Society, then tell me... Why did they give this watch to you?"

"Because of the Adams Chemistry Prize?"

“Haha, bro, you’re being ridiculous!” The man laughed and said, “Come, tell me, when did you win the Adams Chemistry Prize, I’ll search it up on Google.”

Lu Zhou chuckled. “It was around April this year.”

The man turned on his phone and started to google it. He was ready to expose Lu Zhou’s lies.

However, the search results weren’t what he expected, and he started to look confused.

He clicked on a news article and found a photo.

The man looked at the photo. He then looked at Lu Zhou, and it was like he just saw a ghost.

The f\*ck?

This... This is real?!

Lu Zhou smiled and ignored him. He then closed his eyes and tried to fall asleep.

The flight attendant noticed the phone and walked over again.

However, this time she gave a warning.

“Sir, please turn off your phone. If you insist on disturbing the plane’s operations, we will have to ask you to leave the plane. Sir? Can you hear me?”

Obviously, the man could hear her, but he was too shocked to reply.

When Chen Yushan saw the man’s face, she couldn’t help but burst out in laughter.

Her stomach began to hurt from the laughing...

Chapter 393: Special Treatment

Lu Zhou thought that he wouldn't have a place to stay in Beijing since he didn't have many relatives or friends here. However, what he didn't know was that everything has already been arranged for him.

Their destination was an elegant small hotel surrounded by a small man-made lake. There was nothing extravagant about the hotel's decor itself, but the hotel was located next to Old Summer Palace, making it extra special.

However, Lu Zhou felt like this place should be a retirement home.

The old people could look at the plants and rocks near the lake or listen to the water flowing. It would be as if time was slowing down.

Ma Gaoyang took Lu Zhou to his room and asked, "What do you think, Professor Lu, is this place good?"

Lu Zhou smiled and replied politely, "It's very nice... You're too kind."

Box..

Ma Gaoyang smiled. "Of course! Given that you're our national treasure, this is the least we can do! If there are any issues, you can contact the manager here, and he'll forward the issue to me."

The lobby manager who was behind Ma Gaoyang smiled.

"If you need anything, Professor Lu, just ask me."



Lu Zhou smiled. "Thanks."

Normally, a national treasure wouldn't enjoy such treatment or be personally escorted by the head of the Ministry of Talent. However, Lu Zhou was no ordinary national treasure. He was the catalyst for the government's energy initiative!

If it wasn't for his modified PDMS material and HCS-2 material, it would be a lot more difficult for the Chinese government to achieve an energy density of 350Wh/kg by 2020.

If Lu Zhou merely solved the Goldbach's Conjecture and won the Crafoord Prize, then he wouldn't receive this kind of treatment.

But the situation now was that he had also solved the lithium-sulfur battery problem...

Therefore, he received the highest level of special treatment.

Lu Zhou ate dinner at the hotel. Although the food was nothing fancy, it was still quite healthy and delicious.

Lu Zhou thought that Director Ma would talk to him about attracting outside talent. After all, that was Director Ma's job.

Lu Zhou didn't expect to only talk about interesting international news stories. After their dinner, Director Ma said goodbye and left.

Since Lu Zhou had nothing else to do, he walked along the man-made lake behind the hotel.

To be honest, living here was comfortable.

In comparison, Princeton was like a monastery; researching there was like practicing spirituality.

Actually, although Director Ma didn't say anything when he left, Lu Zhou could tell that the old man wanted him to "stay" here.

Whether it was due to orders from the higher-ups or purely out of Director Ma's own heart, Lu Zhou could tell Director Ma was treating him nicely.

However, now was not the time.

Lu Zhou wasn't materialistic, but he still hoped and craved for something more.

It was getting late, so Lu Zhou cast one last look at the lake before he walked back to his room.

When it was eight o'clock at night, Lu Zhou unpacked his luggage before he gave his family a call.

The call connected almost immediately.

Lu Zhou: "Dad, what are you up to?"

Old Lu: "I'm watching TV with your mom. Does this phone number mean that you're back in China?"

Lu Zhou had two phone numbers; a Chinese one and an American one.

Lu Bangguo immediately knew that his son was back in China.

Lu Zhou replied, "Yeah, I'm in Beijing right now."

"Beijing? Why are you in Beijing?"

It was his mom who spoke this time. It seemed like they were on speaker.

Lu Zhou smiled as he explained, "I have a meeting in Beijing, so I might stay here for a while. I'll come back to Jiangling at the end of January... How are you guys?"

Old Lu smiled. "Good, how are you? Are you exercising?"

"I'm in good shape; I've been running at night. Oh yeah, Dad..."

"What's up?"

Lu Zhou hesitated for a second before he said, "How about... you retire now? I've made a lot of money."

"Don't give me that," Old Lu said as he interrupted his son. He then continued, "Why would I retire? So that I can become a farmer? I know you're earning big American dollars, but just live your own life, you don't have to worry about me!"

Fang Mei said, "Yeah, don't worry about us. Your dad might as well be considered to have retired since his job is nothing demanding. But I'd still prefer to have him go to work than be bored at home. Otherwise, he'd be running around with a fishing pole all day."

Old Lu wasn't happy, and he retorted, "What do you mean I'm basically retired? The boss moved me from the front line to the second line! Although my job is easier now, I'm still contributing. I'm only giving the young people an opportunity."

Fang Mei rolled her eyes and said, "Yeah, right. What kind of young person would want to work at your factory? They should just shut it down and save the taxpayers' money. Ever since you were transferred from the technical department to the logistics department, all you've been doing all day is drinking tea and eating sunflower seeds. Look at how much weight you've gained."

Lu Zhou could imagine the sight of his parents arguing, and he couldn't help but smirk.

Being in good shape was the most important thing.

Lu Zhou was relieved to hear that they were healthy.

Lu Zhou chatted with his parents for a while before he ended the call.

As he laid on his soft bed, he yawned and was about to go to sleep.

However, the phone in his hand suddenly flashed. A line of text popped up.

Xiao Ai: [Master, what is a parent? :^) ]

Lu Zhou looked at the line of text and paused for a second.

It was such an obvious question.

However, he quickly realized that there was no easy answer to this question.

Lu Zhou thought for a bit before he typed.

[Parents, the people that created you.]

Xiao Ai: [Then, master, do I have parents? (๑••๑)]

Lu Zhou looked at the line of text and went silent. After a while, he sighed softly.

[I think you do?]

Xiao Ai: [What a cursory answer.]

Is this...

Artificial retard becoming smarter?

Lu Zhou recalled that he had never talked about such a deep topic with Xiao Ai.

The relationship between AI and ethics was a very profound proposition. Lu Zhou wasn't well versed in the social sciences and couldn't think of an answer.

However, Lu Zhou was curious about something else.

Xiao Ai's parents... Do they exist in this universe?

Maybe one day, he would meet Xiao Ai's parents... or rather, its creator...

Lu Zhou couldn't imagine what that would be like, but he felt like that day would soon come.

While he was thinking about this problem, his phone flashed again.

It was another notification from Xiao Ai.

[Master, you have mail!]

Artificial retard is back.

Lu Zhou looked at the notification. Using a finger, he swiped across his screen and opened the email.

The mail was from Connie.

A few months ago, Lu Zhou sent him to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a visiting scholar to study the topic of superconducting nanomaterials with Professor Herrero.

It's been a while. Lu Zhou wondered how Connie was doing.

He opened the email and read it.

Then...

Lu Zhou froze.

There was only a short line of text that ended with three exclamation marks.

[We did it!!!]

Chapter 394: Poaching

Lu Zhou turned off his phone and immediately got out of bed. He sent a video call request to Connie, who was at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Although Lu Zhou could probably guess what Connie was talking about, he still wanted to confirm it.

"What did you guys do?"

"Your guess was correct! After countless experiments, we have successfully discovered that the twisted double-layer graphene can achieve superconductivity under 1.7 kelvin. This is amazing!" Connie said in an astonished tone, "Professor, you're a god!"

Connie started to think in his mind.

Maybe...

Box..

This is the so-called “scientific research intuition” that nutty people have?

Lu Zhou stared at Connie’s look of worship through his phone screen as he said, “I just made a random guess; it wasn’t based on science.”

Connie shook his head and said, “No, Professor Lu, science isn’t needed for intuition. Some people can communicate with the heavens, and this doesn’t even require science.”

He paused for a second before he continued, “We will publish the thesis in Nature. Professor Herrero said that he will send you an email tomorrow to inform you. As for what’s happening right now, we’re about to get wasted at a bar. Unfortunately, you’re not here, so I’ll have to drink your portion of the drinks.”

Lu Zhou said, “Have a great time.”

“Of course!” Connie smiled and said, “We’ve been working throughout Christmas! We spent the entire Christmas holiday inside the laboratory! Thank God, it’s finally done!”

This research was a collaborative study between the Sarrot Institute and the Pablo Jarillo Herrero research group. The Jinling Institute of Computational Materials also took part in the research and helped with many issues; this was why the thesis was completed so quickly.

Although this thesis alone wouldn’t create any patents, Lu Zhou was still very excited to hear this news.

Confirmation of a superconducting carbon nanomaterial could provide a new research path for superconducting materials.

Also, carbon nanomaterials had great plasticity and strain properties compared to alloy and metal compound materials. This meant there would be even more research paths available for superconducting materials.

This was a small step toward “room temperature superconductivity” as well as a small step toward controllable nuclear fusion...

...

A night of rest later...

The next day, Lu Zhou slept until nine in the morning.

Once he finished washing his face, he went down to the hotel restaurant and ordered a bowl of rice noodles. While eating, he was thinking about his plans for today when a beautiful waitress came over.

“Mr. Lu, someone is here for you.”

“Who?”

“He didn’t reveal his identity. He only said he was sent by Director Ma. I told him to wait for you at the hotel lobby. If you want, I can ask him to come over.”

“No need,” Lu Zhou said. He then put down his spoon and stood up before he continued, “I plan on going out anyway. I’ll head over there myself.”

The waitress then replied politely, “Okay, Mr. Lu.”

The hotel had every facility Lu Zhou could hope for; it was like a high-end sanatorium.



However, for Lu Zhou who had to stay here until the 8th, it did not take him long before he started to get bored.

Since Shuimu and Yan University were close by, he felt that it would be a shame not to drop by for a visit.

Lu Zhou met up with the person who claimed to have been sent by Director Ma.

Lu Zhou instantly felt a special vibe coming from the man.

He couldn't describe what the vibe was, but the man looked like an undercover cop from the movies, or at least someone with a military background.

When the man saw Lu Zhou, he stood up from the sofa and reached out his hand as he said, "Hello, Professor Lu, I am Wang Peng, the driver of the Organization Department of the Communist Party of China. If you need to go anywhere, feel free to ask me."

They are giving me a personal driver?

Is this necessary?

Lu Zhou looked at Wang Peng and shook his hand.

"Thank you in advance, Brother Wang."

Wang Peng immediately said, "Don't call me Brother Wang. Otherwise, the leadership team will tell me off. Just call me Xiao Wang."

"How can that be? You're clearly older than me! In that case, I'll just call you Mr. Wang..." Lu Zhou said. He then went silent for a while before he coughed and said, "I'll listen to you then."

Wang Peng sighed in relief and said, "Thank you for cooperating with me. Are you going out now?"

Lu Zhou said, "I'm just going for a walk nearby."

"Okay, this is my contact number. If you need to be picked up or dropped off, or if you run into any trouble, you can contact me," Wang Peng said while handing over a business card from his pocket.

There was no name on the business card. There was only a phone number written on it.

Lu Zhou looked at him and asked, "Do you know mathematics?"

Wang Peng was stunned. He then coughed awkwardly and said, "This... isn't within my scope of abilities. I apologize, but my abilities are limited..."

...

Lu Zhou walked out of the hotel and walked around using the map on his phone.

Soon after, he was at the campus of Shuimu University.

Due to the New Year's holiday, as one of the sacred academic places in the capital of the country, Shuimu University's school gate was surrounded by many tourists.

Lu Zhou didn't know if someone made arrangements beforehand because the guard seemed to have recognized him.

People without a campus ID were forbidden from entering. However, when Lu Zhou walked over, they let him go without any issues.

Lu Zhou walked along the asphalt road covered with green trees on the side while he thought about where he should visit first. He decided to visit the Qiu Chengtong Mathematics Center.

Old Qiu had always been a patriot. While he was a tenured professor of mathematics at Harvard University, he was also the director of the Institute of Mathematical Sciences and the director of the Mathematical Sciences Center of Qiu Chengtong at Shuimu University and Xiangjiang University.

The old man once said that he would use Harvard University's teaching philosophy to create a mathematics center in Asia. Although there was still a long way to go, Old Qiu's experience from working at Harvard was apparent.

Although Old Qiu wasn't in Beijing, Lu Zhou still wanted to visit the center.

If Lu Zhou wanted to use the experience he gained from Princeton to build a Chinese version of Princeton, then he had much to learn from the elders.

When Lu Zhou saw a tall guy walking by, he asked, "Bro, where is the Qiu Chengtong Mathematics Center?"

The tall guy looked at Lu Zhou and felt that Lu Zhou looked familiar.

"It's near the spring gardens, you can ride a bicycle all the way to the south. You'll see it around there."

Lu Zhou replied, "Oh, thank you."

The tall guy then said, "You're welcome, but are you a new student?"

Lu Zhou smiled. "No, I'm just here to visit... What do you do?"

The tall guy with glasses said, "Me? I'm doing a post-doc in materials research."

Lu Zhou's eyes lit up, and he asked, "Yeah? What field?"

“Carbon nanomaterials and polymers...” The tall guy suddenly looked at Lu Zhou suspiciously and asked, “Why do you ask?”

“Nothing, I just wanted to...” Lu Zhou said, “ask you about someone.”

The tall guy asked, “Who?”

Lu Zhou said, “Professor Sun Hongbiao.”

Sun Hongbiao was the only polymer materials professor that Lu Zhou knew at Shuimu University.

Lu Zhou had a deep impression of him.

“Professor Sun?” The tall guy was stunned. He then said, “My supervisor! Wait a minute, didn’t you want to go to the Qiu Chengtong Mathematics Center? Who are you?”

Lu Zhou coughed and reached out his hand as he said, “Nice to meet you, I’m Lu Zhou.”

“Lu Zhou... F\*ck?! Lu Zhou! You’re really Lu Zhou?” Lou Fan finally realized why Lu Zhou looked so familiar.

“That’s right.” Lu Zhou coughed. He wanted to make a sneaky offer, and so, he said, “Bro, are you interested in working at Jinling? We’re the ancient capital of the six dynasties, plenty of talented people who are talented at research, and the rent is also cheaper...”

Lu Zhou was suddenly interrupted by a loud voice.

“Professor Lu, it’s not nice of you to do this!”

Chapter 396: Prize Conference!

Jin Ling University, Institute of Computational Materials.

The period between 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. was the quietest time at the research institute.

Liu Bo sat in front of his office desk as he searched for journals containing their relevant research keywords. Once he confirmed that there wasn't a clash in research, he downloaded several interesting theses on arXiv into a folder.

This process took a long time. By the time he was finished, it was already 10 o'clock at night.

Liu Bo stretched. He then stood up from his chair and walked over to Qian Zhongming's desk. Looking at his computer screen curiously, Liu Bo asked, "Oh, why are you watching the morning news?"

"It's the National Science and Technology Award Conference," Qian Zhongming said as he looked at Liu Bo. He then clicked on the computer, making the broadcast fullscreen, before he added, "It's the CCTV live broadcast, not the news."

Box..

Liu Bo suddenly remembered something and asked, "Award conference? Oh yeah, isn't Lu Zhou there?"

"No sh\*t, did you just realize? He's been back in Beijing for nearly two weeks now."

The national anthem began to play on the screen.

The camera panned away from the big names and gave the audience a bird's eye view of the venue.

Liu Bo was jealous of all of the nutty people at the venue.

“What award do you think God Lu can get?”

Qian Zhongming stared at the computer screen and didn't answer the question.

He didn't know how to answer the question.

While these two were talking about this question, in an office of the Computational Materials department, someone else was giving their own opinion...

“... First-level prize is difficult, second-level prize is possible.”

Academician Lu was sitting on the sofa while he watched the television. He had his legs crossed and was smoking a cigarette.

Academician Xu smiled and said, “Just the Goldbach's conjecture alone isn't worthy of a first-level prize?”

“It's not about worth; it's about if it's appropriate.”

Academician Lu lit another cigarette. He then smiled and said, “The State Natural Science Award is more focused on physics than mathematics. After all, the award organizer isn't an academic institution. They would consider more than just academic achievements.

“If his achievements were made while working in a domestic research institute, then his chances of winning would be higher. If he had a decade or two of working in domestic research institutes, then he would definitely win the first-level prize.”

Lu Zhou was Academician Lu's best master's student ever.

Talent aside, the more important thing was the effort and courage to explore.

He would remember that CERN report for many years to come.

Academician Lu had asked himself; if he were in Lu Zhou's position as an intern, would he have the courage to stand on the report stage and challenge the entire physics community.

In Academician Lu's opinion, it didn't matter if the kid won the first-level prize.

Because Lu Zhou had infinite potential; the medal was just a piece of evidence of that.

Academician Xu remarked, "What a shame."

Academician Lu smiled. "It's good. After all, the kid still has a long way to go. He'll only be forty by the time you and I go six feet under. If he doesn't win it this year, he'll definitely win it before he hits thirty."

Academician Xu smiled as he said, "You old f\*ck! Are you saying I'll be dead in twenty years as well?"

Academician Lu noticed that his statement was somewhat wrong. He coughed and tapped the cigarette on the ashtray before he said, "It's just a metaphor, we can easily live another forty years... Okay, stop screwing around, it's about to start."

It was exactly ten o'clock.

Once the national anthem ended, the venue was dead silent. The annual Science and Technology Award Conference had finally officially begun.

The scholars in the crowd were all from top research backgrounds that ranged from everything from natural sciences to engineering and technology. Everyone was quietly listening to the spokesman's speech on stage.

After a while, the most important part of the conference finally began— the awards ceremony.

By convention, the list of winners was announced first.

The first award was the 2017 Highest Science and Technology Award.

The winners were Academician Wang from the Jinling University of Technology, and Academician Hou from the Chinese Academy of Epidemic Prevention and Control Center.

The former was a leader in the field of military explosives and had made great contributions to the national military industry. The latter was the main founder of Chinese molecular virology, modern medical biotechnology, and various modern infectious disease prevention and control systems.

After the two names of the winners were announced, the scholars in the crowd gave them a warm round of applause.

After the Highest Science and Technology Award was the State Natural Science Award.

Compared to the Highest Science and Technology Award, which was a type of “lifetime award”, the Natural Science Award was aimed toward those that had made significant contributions to fundamental applied research.

The Highest Science and Technology award was divided into two levels. The first-level award was awarded to those that had made the most outstanding research results for the country.

Last year, the person who received this honor was the leader of the “Daya Bay Reactor Neutrino Oscillation Experiment” which was led by the Institute of High Energy Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The discovery was sensational and affected the entire international theoretical physics community.

The project alone was worthy of the glorious award!



The venue was exceptionally quiet; everyone was waiting for the announcement of the winners.

“Agricultural production is an essential part of the national economy. Only by consuming nutritious food can we build a better future. The molecular catalyst and design of the ‘high-yield high-quality rice traits’ led by the Institute of Genetics and Developmental Biology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences achieved a breakthrough in rice production...

“The first-level award winner is Academician Li Jiayang!”

The crowd erupted in applause the second the name was announced.

Wang Haifeng, who was sitting in the crowd, clapped his hands enthusiastically.

He didn’t care who won, as long as it wasn’t that kid Lu Zhou!

The announcement of the second winner was also made, and the winner was Academician Tao Benzong, who was awarded for his “aggregation-induced luminescence technology” project.

When Professor Wang heard the second name, he smirked as the knot in his heart was finally untied.

Normally speaking, there were more than 40 second-level State Natural Science Award winners, but there were very few first-level winners.

For example, there hadn’t been a first-level winner from 2010 until 2012.

The last time a first-level prize was awarded twice in succession was back in 2006.

As for three first-level winners...

The last time that happened was in the ’80s.

After the applause ended, Wang Haifeng picked up the vacuum flask on his desk and sipped on some hot water.

He really wanted to see what Lu Zhou's reaction was.

However...

Just when everyone thought that the first-level prize for the natural science field was finished, another announcement was made...

"The Goldbach's conjecture is a crown jewel of the number theory building, and the Chinese number theory community left a splendid proof on this proposition..."

Wang Haifeng froze.

His heart was instantly shattered.

It was like he was turned into stone as he sat in his chair and muttered to himself, "How is this possible..."

There are three first-level prizes this year!

This is impossible!

Wang Haifeng wasn't the only one stunned.

The people that wanted Lu Zhou to win the first-level prize, the people that didn't, even the people that didn't care...

Everyone froze for two seconds.

Everyone was in shock.

However, the announcement continued in spite of the emotional fluctuations in the crowd.

“... The Goldbach-Lu theorem is a monument of the human mind and spirit. It is a gift from China to the people of the world...”

The spokesperson paused for a second.

Then, he spoke in a solemn voice.

“The third award winner is...”

“Lu Zhou!”

Chapter 398: State’s Dinner

The next day, various news outlets reported on the award ceremony.

[Famous scholar, Lu Zhou, won the first level State Natural Science Award!]

[The youngest first level State Natural Science Award!]

[Shocked, this year’s first level State Natural Science Award was given to three people! One of whom is only 24 years old!]

[The highest honor in China academia, the first level prize State Natural Science Award that you didn’t know about.]

[.....]

Box..

Just like the Crafoord Prize, Lu Zhou received an enormous amount of attention for the State Natural Science Award.

Whether the media was trying to create a public image or hype Lu Zhou up for content, Lu Zhou's name as plastered over the news.

Other than Lu Zhou's achievements, people were also talking about Lu Zhou's age.

Most people thought that Lu Zhou deserved the award and that the award committee made the correct decision.

Of course, there were some people who disagreed.

Some people thought that this decision was sloppy. After all, it was ridiculous to award a person under forty a State Natural Science Award.

This discussion wasn't happening only on the internet; it was also happening in various universities.

At the cafeteria of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Two researchers who had just received their PhD were eating lunch while discussing the sensational academia news.

"Did you hear? This year three first-level State Natural Science Awards were given."

The researcher in glasses said with emotion, "I heard that this was the first time this has happened since the '80s, and I'm guessing that the award committee made a difficult decision. There were no winners in the past few years, and three this year. There are so many nutty people."

The chubby researcher raised his eyebrows and looked at him.

"You think this is a good thing?"

"Why is it not a good thing? The strength of our country's science and technology is getting stronger and stronger, and it's becoming more and more influential in the international academic community, how is this a bad thing?"

The chubby researcher asked, "But isn't he a Princeton professor? Does he count as one of us?"

The researcher, who was wearing a pair of glasses, put a slice of meat in his bowl and shook his head.

"The rules of the first-level State Natural Science Award are clear. The award winner has to be a Chinese citizen. The award criteria are major achievements. He has never given up his Chinese citizenship, so why shouldn't he be able to win this award? Deline was working at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study when he was knighted by the King of Belgium. You're only seeing the surface and not the essence!"

The chubby researcher asked, "How do you know he will return to China later?"

The researcher in glasses was amused.

"Let me put it this way. With his abilities, as long as he wants, he can become a citizen in any country in the world. But he still has his Chinese citizenship, and he's still holding a Chinese passport. This proves his loyalty. Compare this to the professor that received the academician title and left the country..."

"His glory is the nation's glory, his brilliance is Chinese academia's glory. Spend your time doing something else rather than picking a bone with him."

The chubby researcher frowned and said, "But his age..."

The researcher with glasses said, "What about his age? This is good for us young people! The State is saying that as long as you are good enough, age is not an issue. What is wrong with you?"

The chubby researcher smiled and didn't say anything.

Your words seem right...

But the problem is that we're not good enough.

Am I not supposed to be envious?

...

There were still photoshoots after the award; the ceremony ended at night.

The state's dinner would be held the following evening.

This was different than the Stockholm party as this dinner was classier and more ceremonious.

Also, this was the first time Lu Zhou had truly seen an extravagant party.

There were various cuisines, each of which were divided into different categories. Each dish had its own characteristics, and the only unfortunate thing was that Lu Zhou couldn't taste all of the dishes.

As the winner of the first level State Natural Science Award, it was inevitable that he received a huge amount of attention.

Lu Zhou responded politely to all of the scholars that tried to talk with him.

Other than the normal scholars that tried to talk to him, the other two State Natural Science Award winners, Academician Li and Academician Tang, also conversed with Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou didn't know much about agriculture, so he only exchanged a few words with Academician Li before they wished each other the best on their science journey.

Academician Tang's research direction was polymers, and he had much to talk about with Lu Zhou...

"Professor Lu, what have you been researching lately?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Do you mean the materials science side or the mathematics side?"

Tang Benzong was surprised, and he said, "Researching mathematics and materials science at the same time?"

Normally speaking, researching in two different directions was extraordinary. Researching in two different fields was unheard of.

When Lu Zhou saw Academician Tang's look of astonishment, he smiled and said, "Not both at the same time. The materials side is mainly done by my research team at Silicon Valley and Jinling and also by cooperating with the research team at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The theses have already been submitted to Nature. As for the specific content, I'm afraid I can't disclose it before publication. I can only say that it's related to superconducting materials."

Academician Tang smiled and said, "Superconducting materials? I'll be looking forward to the next issue of Nature then!"

...

After the state's dinner ended, Lu Zhou climbed into a Mercedes.

Driver Wang Peng started the car and skillfully drove out of the parking lot.

Lu Zhou felt the cold wind blowing on him through the window. He felt like he wasn't as drunk anymore.

He then asked Wang Peng, "Have you eaten yet?"

Wang Peng said, "Not yet, I plan on eating in a bit."

Lu Zhou said, "Oh yeah, can I ask you something?"

Wang Peng said, "Go ahead."

Lu Zhou asked, "When do I have to leave the hotel?"

Wang Peng, who was holding the steering wheel, smiled and said, "Professor Lu, you can stay there for as long as you want."

"I can't do that, that'll cause too much trouble for you guys," Lu Zhou shook his head and said. He then added, "Check out once I head off to Jinling."

Wang Peng: "..."

Actually, there was no such thing as checking out the room.

Because that hotel wasn't open to outsiders; only important national guests or special military personnel could live there.

Even money couldn't buy one a spot at the hotel.



After Lu Zhou went back to the hotel, he hung his clothes on the hangers before he went to take a shower. Once he dried his hair, he then lay down on the bed.

When the state's dinner ended, it also meant that his work in Beijing was completed.

Also, because of his first level State Natural Science Award, his system mission was completed. Originally, he planned on receiving the mission rewards yesterday, but he was too busy.

He couldn't procrastinate any longer.

Lu Zhou went into the pure white system space and walked in front of the translucent information screen. He then walked up and read the text in the center of the screen.

[Congratulations, User, for completing the reward mission!]

Chapter 399: Fruit Flavored "Garbage"?

[Congratulations, User, for completing the reward mission!]

[Mission completion details are as follows: Win the first level State Natural Science Award.]

[Mission evaluation: None (reward missions have no evaluation)]

[Reward: 100,000 free experience points. One lucky draw ticket. (???)]

Lu Zhou looked at his characteristic panel and thought for a bit. He tapped the information screen and spent all of his experience points on mathematics.

A blue light swept across the screen.

Box..

Lu Zhou's characteristic panel was soon updated.

[

A. Mathematics: Level 6 (244,000/600,000)

B. Physics: Level 4 (33,215/200,000)

C. Biochemistry: Level 3 (24,000/100,000)

D. Engineering: Level 2 (0/50,000)

E. Materials science: Level 4 (13,000/200,000)

F. Energy science: Level 2 (0/50,000)

G. Information science: Level 1 (3,000/10,000)

General points: 3,475 (one lucky draw ticket)

]

100,000 experience points made quite a dent in the 600,000 experience points requirement.

However, Lu Zhou still had a long way to go from Level 6 to Level 7.

Although spending the 100,000 experience points on engineering or energy science would increase their levels, these subjects were useless for Lu Zhou, at least for now.

Also, the more research Lu Zhou did, the more important mathematics was.

If he ignored mathematics because of the level up requirement, then he would never level up.

Lu Zhou finished the experience allocation, and it was time for the exciting prize draw.

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and prayed in his heart. He then pressed the lucky draw button.

The wheel began to spin, and not long after, Lu Zhou pressed stop.

The inertia of the wheel caused it to spin a couple more turns.

Lu Zhou stared at the wheel pointer and felt like something big was about to happen.

He squeezed his fists as he stared at the screen.

Soon after, a line of text appeared on the screen...

[Congratulations, User, you have won the "Garbage" prize.]

Lu Zhou: ???

[Received: Nutrition Juice.]

Lu Zhou: "..."

Oh well, a lottery is a lottery.

Lu Zhou never expected to get rich from this thing.

Speaking of which, he hadn't gotten any garbage in a while.

This was probably a result of the accumulation of his bad luck.

Lu Zhou closed the lucky draw panel and immediately opened the mission panel.

[Mission 1: Resistance

Description: Advanced superconducting technology is crucial for both the controlled nuclear fusion and the Hadron Collider. Therefore, material constraints are not only constraining the frontier of civilization but also the frontiers of civilizational imagination!

Requirements: Discover a carbon nanomaterial that is superconducting at temperatures over 100 Kelvin.

Rewards: 100,000 materials science experience. 50,000 biochemistry experience. 500 general points.  
One lucky draw ticket.]

]

[Mission 2: Unpredictable fluids

Description: The Navier-Stokes equation refers to a motion equation that describes the conservation of momentum in a viscous incompressible fluid. Whether there is a smooth solution to the three dimensional incompressible Navier-Stokes equation is one of the great mathematical problems of the 21st century.

Requirements: Give a logically self-consistent answer to the existence and smoothness of the Navier-Stokes equation.

Rewards: 1-??? experience points. 500 general points. One lucky draw ticket.

]

[Mission 3: Wake up, loners have no future.

Description: This is a gift for loners, don't miss it!

Requirements: Unlimited time to complete the mission. Find a willing spouse and excrete your DNA into her. (Friends with benefits, prostitutes are invalid.)

Rewards: (amount of days single \* 10) experience points. 500 General points. Physical strengthening medicine. (7 bottles, 8 hours effect).

]

Lu Zhou: "..."

F\*ck sake!

What's wrong with being single?

Who cares if I'm single?

Lu Zhou felt a sense of maliciousness from the system missions.

Assuming that he had been single for 34 years, that was only 8,760 days, which was less than 90,000 experience points.

The other rewards were also unattractive to him.

Lu Zhou ignored Mission 3 and focused on Missions 1 and 2.

He could tell from the description of the system mission that Mission 1 was special.

This mission was difficult, but it wasn't impossible.

Therefore, the system thought that it was possible to have a superconducting carbon nanomaterial at normal temperatures.

Also, this feasibility was based on his Level 4 materials science and Level 3 biochemistry.

Lu Zhou's eyes lit up; he was interested.

As a researcher, being able to confirm the correctness of a research idea was a valuable skill.

But of course, although Lu Zhou was interested in the potential of Mission 1, after some careful consideration, Lu Zhou still chose Mission 2.

First of all, the Navier–Stokes equation was his focus. Second, this was a good opportunity for him to level up his mathematics.

Compared to Goldbach's conjecture, the "existence of a smooth Navier–Stokes equation solution" was more valuable, which was why it was listed as one of the seven Millennium Prize Problems. The influence of the Navier–Stokes equation had far surpassed the partial differential field and spread to other areas of mathematics.

Therefore, the experience points gained from solving the Navier–Stokes equation would be undoubtedly higher than Goldbach’s conjecture!

But of course, studying superconducting materials was also important. Lu Zhou wouldn’t easily forget such an important clue that was revealed by the system.

Although he didn’t have time to participate in the superconducting materials project, the Jinling Institute of Computational Materials could carry out the project on his behalf...

...

Once Lu Zhou selected Mission 2, he left the system space.

He then sat on his bed as he looked at the silver bag in his hands.

He originally thought that the nutrition juice would be some kind of powerful thing, and he didn’t expect the packaging to be so low-key. It looked like Jell-o from the supermarket.

There was no product information or anything on the packaging.

Lu Zhou unscrewed the bottle cap and took a sip.

Emm...

Fruity flavor?

The taste was quite good, so Lu Zhou drank the whole bottle at once.

What surprised him the most was that his hunger was instantly gone.

This really came from an advanced civilization.

Even eating is so efficient.

Lu Zhou thought about it for a moment before he formed his own opinions.

This thing can be conveniently transported and used in space stations.

But I'd go crazy if I had to eat this long term...