

Scholar 461

Chapter 461: Most Crowded Dinner In The World

Nervous?

A bit.

But I don't feel anything anymore.

Excited?

Of course.

This was the highest scientific glory, also the greatest honor a scholar can receive from the academic community.

Box..

What the Nobel Prize can bring is far beyond the value of the nine million kronor prize money.

Even the Fields Medal is inferior in this aspect.

Lu Zhou walked steadily on stage in the midst of the thunderous applause.

He made brief eye contact with the chemistry committee; Academician Claes smiled at him; Academician Olof nodded; Ms. Linse was expressionless; Academician Brzezinski... seemed to be a little unhappy?

Obviously, even now, there were conflicts between the members of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry.

But in any case, this thing was a done deal.

With the crowd and media watching from all over the world, Lu Zhou received the gold medal and award certificate from the hands of King Carl XVI Gustaf.

Carl XVI Gustaf shook hands with Lu Zhou and smiled.

“Congratulations, young scholar, I’ve given out many Nobel Prizes, but you are the youngest one.”

Lu Zhou nodded politely and said, “Thank you. I promise, there will be younger people in the future.”

Carl XVI Gustaf smiled and said, “Haha, I hope so, I hope science is always youthful!”

The audience stood up and paid tribute.

The applause echoed throughout Stockholm Concert Hall.

It lasted for a long time...

...

After the award ceremony.

By convention, all of the winners and guests would move to the Blue Hall at the Stockholm City Hall for the famous Nobel Banquet.

Lu Zhou looked at the red brick building located next to the lake. He walked up to the stairs and suddenly said, "Actually, I wanted to ask something the last time I was here."

Academician Staffan said, "What do you want to ask? Maybe I can answer for you."

Lu Zhou looked around and said, "Why is it called the Blue Hall? I didn't notice anything that's blue."

When Academician Staffan heard this, he smiled and said with a funny tone, "A lot of people have asked me this question. Apparently, the designer of the City Hall intended to paint this blue in order to match with Lake Mälaren. However, after it was built, everyone thought the red brick looked more solemn."

Lu Zhou said, "Which is saying... the construction of the Blue Hall isn't finished yet?"

Academician Staffan smiled as he replied, "From an architectural perspective, yes."

Regardless of whether or not it was "finished", the Nobel Prize had been held there for more than a century. Not only were people in the academic community interested in this ancient ritual, but the people outside of academia were also interested.

Every year, there would be tens of thousands of people that wrote to the Nobel Prize Foundation, asking to attend the banquet. However, the probability of being chosen was no different than winning the lottery.

Lu Zhou sat down inside the Blue Hall and looked around.

He saw people sitting between the long row of tables; it was even more crowded than an academic report seminar.

If there was one difference between this and the Crafoord Prize ceremony, it was the size of the crowd.

1,300 people would be eating at the same time. After all of the guests were seated, each person was basically seated shoulder to shoulder. Apparently, the dining space per person was only 40 cm.

However, Lu Zhou felt like it was even worse than he had imagined.

Soon after, the first dish arrived. It was a bottle of unlabeled champagne.

The bottle cork was opened, and a line of dense air bubbles formed from the bottom to the top of the bottle. It seemed to take forever for the bubbles to disappear. Other than the elegant floral and fruity aromas of the wine, it also carried a scent of burning oak barrels.

Staffan poured some into his and Lu Zhou's goblet. He smiled and said, "Fourny, special French farmer champagne. It has a special sweet, sugary taste. In order to meet the demands of more than a thousand people, the Nobel Foundation had to reserve an entire farm."

Lu Zhou looked at the clear liquid and smiled. "You guys really know how to enjoy life."

"It's not just enjoyment, it's also to pay respects." Academician Staffan raised his glass and said, "Cheers."

Lu Zhou tapped his cup. "Cheers!"

Like what Academician Staffan had said, the liquid tasted exceptionally sweet in the mouth, leaving a strong aftertaste.

Perhaps, this was the taste of victory?

...

The atmosphere inside the Blue Hall was animated, and the same was reflected outside the Blue Hall.

Even though the Northern European sun had already gown down, it was far from bedtime.

Many local citizens of Stockholm would walk around Lake Mälaren and look at the red brick building.

The local Chinese students did the same.

If there was anyone happier than Lu Zhou and his family, it would undoubtedly be the local Chinese community.

Other than some extreme examples, there wasn't anyone else that could empathize more strongly with Lu Zhou's achievements.

As early as October, when the Nobel Committee for Chemistry announced the list of chemistry winners, the entire Chinese community in Stockholm held a celebration.

However, now, it seemed that their celebration was only a preview of today.

Because there were a lot more people gathered here today.

They were holding red lanterns in their hands as they stood outside Stockholm City Hall, completely filling the streets.

Some local citizens were curious and joined in.

It looked like a parade or some type of festival.

This all was obviously captured by the reporters.

With the camera pointed at the crowd gathered outside Stockholm City Hall, the female CTV reporter faced the camera and spoke enthusiastically.

“It’s the Nobel Prize night, and the locals, overseas Chinese, and Chinese students are gathered outside Stockholm City Hall. They’re holding red lanterns in their hands, hoping to use a special way to give the warmest, most sincere blessings to Scholar Lu Zhou.”

“Let us interview them and see what they’re thinking!”

She stopped a young Chinese pedestrian and asked in a pleasant voice, “Hello sir, are you a student here?”

The guy with a puffer jacket nodded and said, “Yes.”

“Is it always this lively on December 10th?”

Guy: “It depends, Stockholm City Hall is always lively this time of year, but this year is particularly lively.”

The reporter smiled and asked, “What do you think about Lu Zhou winning the Nobel Prize?”

The guy smiled heartily and said, “Well, after seeing Professor Lu, I finally understood the difference between me and a Nobel Prize winner.”

The reporter had a polite smile on her face.

No shit?

The reporter mocked the guy in her head.

The guy coughed. He then changed his facial expression and continued, “Of course, other than that, what affects me the most is that I can see the progress and development of the Chinese academic community from him.”

“The new era of talents is growing, and maybe there are still some shortcomings. However, I believe that one day, Professor Lu won’t be the only Chinese scholar to walk on the international academic stage, mark my words!”

Chapter 463: I Promise, It’s More Interesting Than Lithium Batteries

What would happen when two rookies dance?

Lu Zhou, who accepted Vera’s invitation to a dance, didn’t think about this problem.

But now, he finally had a deep and painful understanding of this problem.

“Move your feet to the right, around 3cm... Yes... Don’t be so close to me, move more naturally. Yes, okay...”

Lu Zhou’s toes were stepped on, and even though the little girl was very light, he was still in pain.

Vera noticed Lu Zhou’s reaction and retracted her feet. She then panicked and apologized profusely.

Box..

“Sorry, sorry.”

Lu Zhou pretended to stay calm as he said, “It’s fine, it doesn’t hurt.”

He finally realized how difficult it was for Madeleine to maintain a smile and avoid the awkwardness after being stepped on...

Vera was blushing after the song ended. She lifted her dress and gave Lu Zhou a slight bow. She then turned around and quickly ran away.

After Lu Zhou was finally freed from this “ritual”, he sighed in relief and walked off the dance floor.

Suddenly, he saw an acquaintance.

This was none other than the director of the Max Planck Institute for Physical Chemistry, Professor Gerhard Ertl.

When Professor Ertl noticed Lu Zhou, he smiled and said, “Long time no see.”

“Long time no see.” Lu Zhou looked at Professor Ertl and said solemnly, “Also, thank you for the nomination letter.”

“Don’t thank me. Actually, I’m not the only one that recommended you to the Nobel Committee for Chemistry.” Professor Ertl smiled as he continued, “However, I am surprised by their decision. I didn’t think Academician Claes would make this decision. When I saw the news, I was so surprised that I dropped my sandwich on the table.”

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly. “This... I don’t know what to say.”

“It’s fine, the sandwich still ended up in my stomach,” Ertl laughed and said. “In any case, congratulations!”

Lu Zhou didn’t step foot on the dance floor for the second half of the dance.

He followed the other guests and left the Gold Hall. Just like the other Nobel Prize laureates, he walked toward his designated car. However, he was ambushed and surrounded by the reporters who were waiting outside.

It was too dark and they were noisy; he couldn’t see which media outlets there were.

However, as long as the question was serious, he would give a simple answer.

CNN reporter: "Professor Lu Zhou, how do you plan on spending the nine million kronor prize money?"

Lu Zhou smiled as he replied, "I haven't thought about that yet. Maybe I'll use it to improve my life, maybe I'll fund more research projects... or maybe I'll just put it in the bank."

CNN reporter: "May I ask what your next research project is?"

A lot of people cared about this question.

Or rather, most people that cared about him, also cared about this question.

When Lu Zhou heard the reporter's question, he didn't give a clear answer.

"It's an interesting research project that's difficult to achieve, but if it's feasible, it will change everyone's lives."

The reporter's eyes lit up; she immediately began to follow up on the question.

"More interesting than lithium-sulfur batteries?"

It wasn't just Tesla cars, BYD batteries, DJI drones, and Apple phones... Ever since the lithium-sulfur battery technology breakthrough, high energy density batteries had been integrated into every aspect of society.

Two years ago, it was normal to watch videos while charging your phone. Now, people were used to charging their phones once every three to five days.

Not everyone knew the person behind all this, but the academic community would never forget that person.

Lu Zhou laughed at the reporter's question, and he replied, "I promise this research project is much more interesting than lithium-sulfur batteries!"

After that, even though all of the reporters used up all their tricks, Lu Zhou didn't reveal anything.

He finally escaped the reporters

Lu Zhou got into his designated car and went back to the hotel.

In the hotel lobby, he saw Chen Yushan, who already changed out of her evening gown and into casual wear.

Chen Yushan saw Lu Zhou as well, and her eyes lit up before she immediately walked over.

"Where did you go? I tried looking for you."

The seats at the banquet were separated. The Nobel Prize laureates, royal members, and political figures sat at the main table. Everyone else was scattered at various corners of the venue.

The banquet was crowded, and not everyone was interested in dancing. Therefore, some people might have accidentally followed the crowd and left the venue.

Lu Zhou: "Didn't you go to the Gold Hall?"

Chen Yushan: "Gold Hall?"

Lu Zhou nodded.

“There’s a dance after the dinner at the Gold Hall that’s next to the Blue Hall...”

When Chen Yushan realized she had missed the last part of the banquet, her expression was like she just lost her wallet. “Ah, why didn’t you tell me!”

Lu Zhou was speechless. “I thought you knew.”

This is common sense, right?

Emm...

I think it is.

Chen Yushan: “Then... Did you dance?”

Lu Zhou nodded, “Yes.”

Chen Yushan asked, “With who?”

Lu Zhou: “Princess Madeleine.”

Chen Yushan’s eyes lit up. “Princess? Is she pretty?”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “Kind of...”

Chen Yushan looked regretful, and she sighed before she said, “Ah, I’m jealous, I want to go as well.”

Lu Zhou looked at her silently.

It's just a dance with the princess, what is there to be jealous about?

Chen Yushan suddenly looked at him with hope reflected in her eyes.

"Is there another chance in the future?"

Lu Zhou looked at her hopeful eyes and blurted, "This is the Nobel Prize, you want to come here again?!"

Chen Yushan asked, "Can't you win it again? I don't remember there being a rule against winning it more than one time."

Lu Zhou sighed and said, "It's theoretically possible, but it's insanely difficult."

There had been people in history that won two Nobel Prizes, but one could count them on a hand.

Their ability was unquestionable, but luck played a big factor in whether or not they would win the prize.

This also applied to the medal inside Lu Zhou's pocket.

If at the final voting stage, Academician Claes had some doubts about Lu Zhou's age, he would have to wait another year for a chance of winning the prize.

Lu Zhou was well aware of how difficult winning the Nobel Prize was.

Chen Yushan said, "But it is possible, right?"

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "It's astronomically unlikely."

Chen Yushan laughed and said, "It's a done deal then. If you win it again, you have to take me here!"

Lu Zhou smiled nonchalantly and jokingly replied, "Sure, if there is a next time, not only will I invite you to the banquet, I'll give you whatever you ask for."

Lu Zhou didn't usually make promises.

But he was confident at his slim chances of winning the Nobel Prize again.

Chapter 464: I Warned You

While it was already night time in the city of Stockholm, on the other side of the globe, China's sky was still shining as brightly as ever.

The China Central Television set the tone of the Nobel Prize. After a night of editing and changes, the final decision was to put it on the six o'clock domestic news broadcast and eight o'clock international news broadcast.

Due to the time zone difference, unlike the European media, CTV didn't do a live broadcast of the Nobel Prize ceremony. However, CTV spent the entire news broadcast session covering this moment worthy of national celebration.

The television screen showed Lu Zhou, who was in his tux, receiving the Nobel Prize from Carl XVI and showered by applause.

When the people saw the crowd standing up and applauding, some were excited, and some even began to tear up.

Especially the students from various universities, PhD graduates that recently entered the academic world, and the struggling scientific researchers...

Box..

Not only did that see the glory of the Nobel Prize on that young man's body, but they also saw hope.

The Chinese academic community was rising, scholars of China were spread across the world, and the voice of China was redefining science.

What could the people in academia be more excited about?

Unsurprisingly, due to the intense discussion online, Lu Zhou's name was on trending on Weibo again.

After the CCTV's Weibo account posted the news broadcast, the comment section instantly blew up.

[Nutty!]

[God Lu is nutty!]

[F*ck me, 9 million kronor! How much yuan is that?]

[China is the best!]

[My supervisor said the golden stage for a researcher is from 30 to 40 years old. A 24-year-old Nobel Prize winner, that's insane.]

[The scariest part is that even though he's only 24 years old, he's able to produce outstanding results every year. Even Einstein only reached his miracle year at age 26. But ever since he was 20 years old, God Lu hasn't stopped...]

Of course, even though this was a delightful event, there would inevitably be one or two flies flying around, showing off their sesame sized brains.

Especially on a diverse platform like Weibo, anyone with a keyboard was part of the leadership team.

The difference was that these people looked at the country's problems from the perspective of a politician. However, they weren't cultured at all; they lacked the sophistication of politicians.

These people pretended like they knew everything about socialism and capitalism. When in reality, their knowledge of politics and science came from Red Alert and Age of Empires...

Therefore, in between the waves of blessings, there were some ridiculous comments.

[Trash! It's just a Nobel Prize, who cares about some prize given by white people! Haha, it's just like that Yang physicist. All he knows is how to write theses, doing pure research all day, what's the point? Can he make bombs or aircraft? If not, don't bother coming back to China! Wasting our food and money!]

These types of posts represented the views of a certain group of people.

Fortunately, this group of people wasn't the majority.

Not only did he not receive any approval, but he was quickly overwhelmed by criticism.

[I'm shocked, did you eat bombs and aircraft growing up? What type of bomb did you use to type this comment?]

[Nine-year compulsory education has a long way to go.]

[Holding the national flag, fighting against the national flag. Obstructing the country in the name of patriotism. These types of retards are way too common. Also, what gives you the right to judge Old Yang?]

[Now comes the question, what's your use? Other than wasting the country's food?]

[User's mom be like—"I accidentally gave birth to him, I'm... sorry."]

[...]

At last, the Weibo comment was gone.

It might have been deleted by the administrator, or the original poster saw his comment had caused public outrage and deleted his comment to avoid trouble.

This showed that even if it was something the entire country was overjoyed with, some people wouldn't like it.

Some people were just venting while being ignorant.

Others were doing it for their own interests.

For example, Wang Haifeng was probably one of them.

Lu Zhou winning the Nobel Prize was basically a piece of horrible news for him.

He would get furious whenever he walked on campus and heard those dumb undergraduate students talked excitedly about the new Nobel Prize in Chemistry winner.

However, his emotions didn't affect the world at all.

Ever since Lu Zhou won the first-level State Natural Science Award, Wang Haifeng had completely lost his power from going toe to toe with Lu Zhou. Not to mention, Lu Zhou now had the Nobel Prize.

In a chemistry laboratory building at Zhi University...

Wang Haifeng sat in his previous supervisor's office and looked at the newspaper on the table. He then asked, "Does Lu Zhou have any plans to return to China?"

"What do you mean plan to?" Academician Liu smiled when he heard Wang Haifeng's words. He then said, "His family is here, and it's almost New Year's, where else is he going to go? Your house?"

Wang Haifeng: "What are you talking about? I asked if he planned to return to China, not for New Year's!"

"I know what you're saying; I'm just lazy to answer your question," Academician Liu said. He then smiled and asked, "Regardless of whether he's coming back, it's his body. Are you're going to control where he goes?"

Wang Haifeng was anxious. "But, do you really think it is a good thing for him to come back? You saw it! Back at that meeting on lithium-sulfur batteries, Director Lu almost treated his words as decree!"

Academician Liu looked at Wang Haifeng calmly.

"Good or bad, it's not something you or I can decide on."

The second Wang Haifeng heard this, he was stunned.

He soon felt a sense of powerlessness in his heart.

Like what Academician Liu had said, there wasn't anyone other than Lu Zhou that could make this decision.

He couldn't compare himself to a Nobel Prize laureate, whether it was from the influence or connection perspective.

As for Wang Haifeng's background...

Who didn't have a strong background in the circle of C9 schools?

The difference between this guy and the guy that controlled the education world was probably experience and the fact that Wang Haifeng wasn't interested in things outside of academia.

Of course, these were all secondary.

Whether it was the academic community or cultural community, as long as this community was in China, nothing Wang Haifeng could say would defeat Lu Zhou...

"Black cat or white cat, any cat that can catch a mouse is a good cat. The fact is, Lu Zhou actually did it, and this is worthy of recognition," Academician Liu said while looking at his former student. It was like he suddenly understood something.

He paused for a while before he slowly said, "Oh yeah, let me tell you something."

Wang Haifeng said, "What?"

"Have you heard of Ma Changan?"

Wang Haifeng frowned and carefully thought for a bit, but in the end, he shook his head.

"Nope."

Academician Liu smiled and said, "It's normal that you don't know him since he's not in our university and not in the materials science field. He's only a mathematics professor."

Mathematics professor?

Wang Haifeng frowned. He seemed to be puzzled as to why Academician Liu suddenly brought up this guy. In any case, the gap between mathematics and materials science was way too big.

Academician Liu looked at Wang Haifeng, who was frowning. He then spoke.

“A while ago, probably two weeks ago after that International Congress of Mathematicians ended, he ran into some researching funding issues and was quietly removed by Aurora University.”

“Removed because of funding issues?” Wang Haifeng said, “He must have offended someone, right?”

The management of scientific research funding was quite strict; it was overkill to the point where it would make people furious. The possibility of having funding problems was very small. Unless someone was very poor or extremely scummy, otherwise, very few professors would be dumb enough to steal money from the funds.

Unless...

It was something dodgy that happened in the past.

Academician Liu smiled and said, “I don’t know who he offended, and I don’t know what’s going on with Ma Changan right now since I didn’t pay attention. But what’s interesting is that, guess who taught Ma Changan?”

Wang Haifeng: “I... don’t know.”

Academician Liu smiled as he said, “The old man was a legend among the mathematics community.”

Wang Haifeng was shocked when he heard this.

The old man?

Even though he didn't know the mathematics world, he had been in academia for a long time, and he knew the main characters in the mathematics world.

And the old man had to be one of the higher-ups at Aurora University.

Even though he had been away for six years, he still had a ton of influence.

Wang Haifeng didn't know about Ma Changan's connections in Aurora, but anyone that could get rid of Ma Changan so easily had to be at the level of a Fields Medal...

Wang Haifeng suddenly felt cold sweat dripping down his back.

"I don't know what the beef is between you and him, but even if you don't let it go, I hope you don't do anything stupid," Academician Liu said as he looked at Wang Haifeng, who was rendered speechless. He then put down the teacup in his hand and said, "I'm warning you!"

Chapter 465: Nobel Lecture

"I warned you!"

The words from Wang Haifeng's former supervisor made him turn white.

When he left the office, he was walking in a zombie-like manner, almost like he was a puppet being controlled by ropes.

He thought back to Academician Liu's facial expression and suddenly realized how dangerous his behavior was.

Maybe because Lu Zhou was too young, even younger than his own students, he almost forgot the rules of academia.

The only fortunate thing was that Lu Zhou wasn't a revengeful person.

Box..

Otherwise, Lu Zhou could easily destroy him.

This was the first time he had gotten so lucky that his enemy ignored him as if he was nothing but an ant...

...

Actually, Wang Haifeng overestimated himself.

If Lu Zhou didn't meet him at the State's dinner, he wouldn't even have remembered this person.

As part of the Nobel Prize award ceremony, after the Nobel Banquet, there would be a series of Nobel Lectures the next day.

At 2 pm, UTC+1 1 , Lu Zhou came to the lecture halls at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. He would conduct a thirty-minute lecture on "The Mystery Of Numbers In The Microscopic World".

The lecture hall was crowded when he first arrived; it was even more packed than the Nobel Banquet. However, no one was complaining.

Not only did chemistry scholars from all over the world come to attend this lecture, but there were also students from the University of Stockholm, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, and even some local citizens who were interested in science.

Due to the nature of these Nobel Lectures, the lectures weren't completely academic. Even if someone didn't have knowledge in a particular field, they could still understand what the people on stage were saying.

Of course, the lectures weren't completely simplified.

Simply put, the purpose of the Nobel Lectures was to enable scholars in the same field but in different branches of the field to get a glance of what the Nobel Prize winners had done or were doing. To let them understand the meaning of the work done and what it meant for academia.

This sounded simple, but it wasn't easy to do at all.

After all, ever since the second half of the twentieth century, the development of academia went from primitive to the sophisticated refinement of different categories. Electrochemistry scholars might not necessarily understand research in the physical chemistry field, and biochemistry scholars might not be able to read theses in either of those fields.

And this applied to any academic discipline.

In this report, Lu Zhou didn't use any overcomplicated formulas to explain his arguments. He only talked about the problems he faced when researching HCS-2 and some of his thoughts on the abnormal situations that occurred.

Although he didn't use any overly passionate language, the live audience was eager to listen.

One reason was out of respect for the Nobel Prize.

The other was their admiration for this Nobel Prize winner's knowledge.

Most people could spend their entire lives working and only be proficient in one area.

Building on the basis and making small progress was the mission of a scholar.

Actually, modern science was progressing in this fashion.

However, this rule only applied to normal people.

For him, whether it was theoretical electrochemistry or applied lithium-sulfur batteries, these problems that would take many people to solve were solved by him alone...

Lu Zhou's speech soon came to an end. He paused for half a second before he made some simple ending remarks.

"... I remember hearing a phrase from a long time ago; when you've made all the mistakes there is made in a field, you become an expert in that field. Because by then, you know which hypotheses are destined to be wrong.

"In my opinion, the mathematical tool is equivalent to providing a unique perspective. It lets us bypass accumulate experience and allows us to stand in the perspective of the gods and think about the unknown phenomena.

"What is science?"

Lu Zhou looked at the crowd and stopped for a second before he spoke in a confident manner.

"In my opinion, it's rational thinking. It's the answer to the unknown."

Thunderous applause echoed throughout the venue.

The crowd stood up and showed their tributes.

Lu Zhou bowed slightly before he turned around and walked down from the stage.

...

There were several civil servants in suits standing outside the lecture hall in the corridors of the Royal Academy of Sciences. They were led by a middle-aged Chinese man.

The middle-aged man's eyes lit up when he saw Lu Zhou walking out of the lecture hall. He smiled and walked toward Lu Zhou.

"Professor Lu's vivid language really brought us an exciting speech!"

When Lu Zhou heard this unexpected compliment, he looked at the stranger and smiled. "Thanks, you are?"

Zhang Wenbin smiled and reached out with his right hand as he said, "I'm Zhang Wenbin, an ambassador at the Sweden Embassy of China."

Ambassador?

Lu Zhou didn't expect to see this person. He shook his hand and said, "Honored to meet you, Mr. Ambassador."

"I'm the one that is honored," Ambassador Zhang said as he shook Lu Zhou's hand. He then said with a smile, "Also, congratulations, Professor Lu! The honor you won on stage is huge for the Chinese science community!"

"You're too kind." Lu Zhou smiled humbly and said, "There's a lot of outstanding scholars in the Chinese academic community; one Nobel Prize is only the icing on the cake."

"You're too humble! If a Nobel Prize is only the icing on the cake, then there is no such thing as a praiseworthy glory." Ambassador Zhang paused for a second before he asked, "Can I ask if you have any plans after your Stockholm trip ends?"

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and said, "I might have to go to France."

Ambassador Zhang said, "France?"

Lu Zhou smiled. "Yeah, there's a Millennium Prize Problem award there, and since it's on the way, I plan on accepting it."

Accepting an award because it's on the way...

Millennium Prize Problems...

This guy...

The embassy staff members cringed when they heard him.

Even Ambassador Zhang, who had seen a lot of stuff in his lifetime, couldn't help but raise his eyebrows.

But he quickly coughed and tried to hide his emotions.

"I only thought athletes would get sick of medals; I didn't think this would happen in academia as well. Professor Lu, you're very... surprising."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "I guess."

Including the Fields Medal he won a few months ago, it was true he won quite a lot of awards this year.

Ambassador Zhang immediately asked, "Then what about after France?"

Lu Zhou thought for a bit and made sure he had no other plans before he said, "Other than going home for New Year's, nothing else planned."

Ambassador Zhang smiled brightly when he heard this. He then proposed with a smile.

“Before you go home, can you please drop by Beijing?”

Lu Zhou: “Beijing?”

“Yes,” Ambassador Zhang smiled and said, “someone wants to see you.”

Chapter 467: Three Word Answer

Lu Zhou’s answer was beyond the expectations of Academician Wu.

In Lu Zhou’s meeting with Ambassador Zhang, he revealed that he wanted to talk about the problem of new energy in this meeting.

However, everyone didn’t think much of it. They only thought he was going to talk about the future prospects of lithium-sulfur battery technology or what kind of support he needed from the country for his research.

Because of this, Wu Shigang was invited to be the “academic translator” for this meeting.

However, nuclear fusion was a scientific research project that had systematic risk...

Undoubtedly, this was beyond the scope of his abilities.

Box..

Academician Wu noticed the old man looking at him, so he hesitated for a bit before he asked Lu Zhou with a serious expression, “Can you elaborate?”

Lu Zhou nodded. "All of the earth's energy sources, whether it be petrol, wind, or water... All of them come from the sun, and the sun gets its energy from fusion.

"Like what I just said, from a technical perspective, as the previous industrial revolutions have shown, the key to productivity and production is energy.

"If we can solve fusion energy, that means we have solved the sun, that means we will have mastered the future!"

The compound went completely silent for a minute.

Lu Zhou also stayed silent for a minute.

He knew that these people had listened to hundreds of exciting and passionate speeches, and they had learned their lessons.

But he also knew about the significance of a Nobel Prize and the power behind the words "nuclear fusion".

Fusion power generation was cleaner than fission power generation and accepted a much wider source of raw materials.

There were 0.03 grams of deuterium in one liter of seawater. The nuclear fusion energy provided by that deuterium was equivalent to burning 300 liters of gasoline.

The earth's resources were abundant. There were more than 45 trillion tons of deuterium in the sea; it was almost inexhaustible. As for how to get the expensive deuterium, a simple "heavy water" industrial method would suffice.

If they could master controllable nuclear fusion, then all of the industrial energy problems would disappear.

What did it mean for energy problems to disappear?

It meant that one could build a reinforced concrete tower in the barren desert or grow an arable land on the bottom of the sea where the sunlight wouldn't reach... At least in theory.

Because when that time arrived, electricity would no longer cost money.

Of course, Lu Zhou was the only one that could see these things happening. In other words, he believed that these things could happen.

Compared to those far away fantasies, politicians had to think about the present and something more realistic.

Academician Wu and the old man thought for a long time. They looked at each other before they looked at Lu Zhou.

Academician Wu then spoke slowly.

"The controllable nuclear fusion project has been around for a long time, but there hasn't been any obvious progress so far. Actually, our country plays a very important role in the ITER project, so we are very aware of the value of this technology and are willing to invest in it. However, the main question is, what is your level of certainty? And whether or not you think it is worth it..."

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "Unless the technology is already there, there is no experiment that can be done to test the value of the technology. Science is trial and error, that's the same in any scientific field. You're an academician, you should know this."

"But the cost of trial and error for controllable nuclear fusion might be too big."

Wu Shigang suddenly felt his palms drenched with sweat.

It was both because of how nerve-wracking the topic of fusion was and because of the young man sitting across from him.

This would at least be a hundred million dollar project.

And there was no limit on how much it could potentially cost.

Before the technology could be implemented, the project would just be a money-burning black hole. No one would know how much it would cost...

Lu Zhou acknowledged Academician Wu's question and nodded.

"That's right, it is expensive, but it will generate benefit for all future generations."

Perhaps it was after careful consideration, or perhaps the old man was touched by Lu Zhou's sentence.

The old man thought for half a minute before he slowly said, "What kind of support do you need?"

Lu Zhou said in a confident manner, "Funding, people, and cooperation with relevant departments."

The old man nodded and didn't even ask for specifics.

Instead, he only said two words.

"No problem."

...

While the conversation was going on inside the courtyard, Academician Pan Changhong from the Southwestern Institute of Physics was hosting an important meeting.

The focus of the conference was the breakthrough in Wendelstein 7-X plasma confinement time that happened a month ago.

The person that did the meeting report was Professor Sheng Xianfu, who just came back from an academic exchange in Germany. In the report, he mentioned the problem of the stellarator's water-cooled divertor and how the Max Planck Institute for Plasma Physics solved this problem. He also highlighted Lu Zhou's thesis.

"Professor Lu's calculations played a crucial role in the stellarator research. His role could be seen from the Wendelstein 7-X control plan update..."

In the PowerPoint, Professor Sheng presented the relevant technical information and quickly went through the graphs.

In the end, he placed his hands on the table and spoke in a confident manner.

"We have to pay attention to this issue. We're already behind on the stellarator research. If we don't take this issue seriously, we will fall behind."

Suddenly, a researcher had an objection.

"However, even so, the tokamak is more succinct from an engineering perspective. Furthermore, it is still the mainstream international nuclear fusion research project."

Professor Sheng nodded and proposed a counter-argument.

"I know the tokamak is still the mainstream project, but that doesn't mean it is correct. Before this technology could be invented, all possibilities have to be considered!"

Suddenly, another researcher gave his own opinion.

“The technical problem with the tokamak is the plasma constraints, right? How about we ask Professor Lu to help us design a control plan?”

Professor Sheng shook his head and said, “The tokamak’s plasma problem is much more difficult than the stellarator. Theoretically, even if a control plan like that exists, it will be difficult to have the matching hardware.”

That researcher said, “How can we know that without trying?”

Professor Sheng was annoyed, and he said, “Then why don’t you write him a letter yourself?”

The researcher didn’t know what to say, so he smiled and shut his mouth.

He didn’t have the authority to ask some Nobel Prize winner for a favor.

The conference went into intermission.

Academician Pan walked outside in the corridor, and as he thought back to what Professor Sheng had said during the report, he lit a cigarette.

“I have a feeling that the tokamak isn’t feasible.”

Compared to the Chinese media, who celebrated every small EAST 1 achievement, Academician Pan, who was an expert in this field, was much more cautious.

Most things were exciting from an outsider’s perspective, but for insiders, they didn’t even count as in-progress achievements.

Professor Zheng Gaoming stood next to Academician Pan and asked, “Why do you say that?”

“No special reason,” Academician Pan said as he shook his head and flicked the cigarette butt. He then said, “Just a feeling.”

Suddenly, the phone in his pocket began to ring.

Academician Pan put out the cigarette and took out his phone to answer the call.

“Hello?”

Academician Pan went silent for a while and didn’t say anything. In the end, he simply nodded.

“Okay, I understand.”

Zheng Gaoming had been looking at Academician Pan’s expressions during the phone call. He couldn’t help but try to figure out what was going on.

“... What happened?”

Academician Pan put the phone back into his pocket and looked at Professor Zheng.

“The person we were just talking about is in Beijing right now.”

Chapter 469: Just Buy One

The high-ranking officials at the government spent multiple days holding meetings. Over these few days, Lu Zhou had been busy as well. He had met many Chinese controllable nuclear fusion scholars that were recommended by Academician Pan.

Strictly speaking, Chinese universities didn’t have a controllable nuclear fusion major.

Most experts in this field were professors in plasma physics or nuclear engineers.

The situation in China was different than that of Princeton; the research institute that did research on the stellarator device basically didn't exist. When Lu Zhou was at PPPL, he could easily assemble a research team.

But now, he had to utilize his connections with Academician Pan to find talents scattered around the city.

Of course, other than human resources, there was also another important problem he had to solve.

Box..

He had the rice, and he had the chef; the only thing he lacked was a cooking pan.

Academician Pan gave Lu Zhou an organized list of names and said, "If you plan on researching the stellarator, having just talents and funding isn't enough. We need to get our hands on a stellarator device first. This is more crucial than anything else. How do you plan on solving this problem?"

There were only eight stellarators in operation around the world, including the H1-Heliac that Yuhua University got from Australia. As for the "first cyclic symmetrical stellarator" project by China and Japan, they only signed the contract last year and would take several more years for the construction to begin.

China could wait, and the world could also wait. After all, controllable nuclear fusion was a hundred-year long project.

However, Lu Zhou couldn't wait.

If he couldn't successfully implement the DEMO machine by 2025, then he would have failed his Fusion Light mission chain. The high-tech system had been relatively fair, and he wouldn't lose the experience points he already gained from the branch missions, but there would be no doubt that he would have to say goodbye to the mission chain's final reward.

Lu Zhou accepted Academician Pan's list of names and thought for a bit. He then said, "Germany has a discontinued stellarator—the WEGA. It's the prototype for the Wendelstein 7-X. We don't have to build one from scratch. We can buy one and modify it."

Academician Pan was in disbelief. "You plan on buying the WEGA?"

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Spending money is a must in this field."

Lu Zhou originally thought Academician Pan didn't want the country to waste money. After all, a stellarator wasn't cheap at all; even the retired WEGA would cost quite a bit.

However, Academician Pan wasn't worried about money at all.

"This isn't about money. Is this something they're willing to sell?"

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "Hard to say, but we can negotiate with them. I have some connections with the Max Planck Institute for Plasma Physics, so convincing them to sell their retired equipment shouldn't be a big problem."

Actually, the WEGA machine had been unused since 2013. The Max Planck Institute for Plasma Physics put all of their research focus onto the new Wendelstein 7-X. As such, there was hope in convincing them to sell the WEGA.

Lu Zhou paused for a second before he continued, "After everything is settled here, I'll personally fly to Germany and try to get this done."

Pan Changhong looked envious.

He didn't have many international connections in academia.

In order to fill in their blank page on the stellarator, in 2017, Yuhua University had to send inspection teams on three occasions to The Australian National University. They finally came to an agreement and spent AU\$35 million buying the “small” machine.

Which was the so-called H1-Heliac...

Australia’s research on the stellarator was definitely behind that of Japan and Germany’s research. The H1-Heliac was designed and assembled by The Australian National University; therefore, it was far from being advanced.

If they could choose, they wouldn’t have chosen the H1-Heliac machine. However, they had no choice.

If somehow, Lu Zhou was able to buy the retired WEGA from Germany...

This thing alone would be considered a great achievement for the Chinese nuclear fusion community.

...

Lu Zhou brought two huge gifts when he came back to China.

The first was the Nobel Prize, and the other was a piece of the nuclear fusion pie.

However, this pie was still uncooked. Everyone could look at it but couldn’t eat it. However, Lu Zhou was confident he could cook this pie well.

China welcomed Lu Zhou’s two gifts and responded with their greatest attention.

After more than 2 weeks of discussions, the two academicians decided to give the green light for the stellarator research project.

After consulting Lu Zhou's opinion, the project team would be named "STAR" and would continue in parallel to the EAST tokamak controllable fusion reactor program.

The state was quite generous with its funds, with a total of one billion.

Since most of the stellarator equipment had to be imported, this one billion was obviously in USD...

Southwestern Institute of Physics.

When Jiang Liang heard the news, he couldn't help but grumble.

"A billion USD, that's too much money."

Even though the project was the same level as that of EAST, this was enough to fund several EAST projects.

A Nobel Prize isn't worth that much, right?

Zhou Chengfu sat in the middle of the office reading newspapers. He didn't look up when he spoke with a blank expression.

"Regardless of how much money it is, he earned it himself. It's none of our business."

Even though this was true, this still affected Jiang Liang's mental condition.

Researching controllable nuclear fusion was a money-hungry project, but the country's funding still had a limit.

Even though Academician Zhou's expression didn't change, Jiang Liang could still tell that the old man wasn't in a good mood.

After all, he used to be the leader of China's controllable nuclear fusion field.

But suddenly, there was a young man that came from nowhere, fighting for his throne. Obviously, he couldn't help but feel displeased.

However, this Nobel Prize laureate's aura was... a bit too dazzling.

Jiang Liang could guess what the old man was thinking, so he said, "About Academician Pan, even though he's a veteran of the ITER cooperation team, the efforts weren't done by him alone. Not to mention he's retired now. You should be the main person in charge of the controllable nuclear fusion project.

"Lu Zhou wants to engage in controllable nuclear fusion but doesn't consult you. Instead, he went to Academician Pan. Isn't that a bit disrespectful?"

"Go do your own work, this is none of your concern."

Once Academician Zhou saw Jiang Liang shut his mouth, he continued to speak without hesitation.

"He can do his own thing, and we'll do our thing. The stellarator is not part of our expertise anyway. If we can, we'll cooperate with them, and if we can't, then it's not our problem. We have our own conditions. What? Is he going to blame us?"

Jiang Liang understood. He then smiled as he replied, "Dean Zhou, you're correct, I get it now!"

Chapter 470: You Guys Really Only Talked About Mathematics?

Controllable nuclear fusion wasn't some kind of aircraft or cannon, nor was it an atomic missile. Even though it contained the words "nuclear fusion", it wasn't something that was classified.

Therefore, the location of the research unit didn't have to be a secret.

The people involved also didn't have to be classified.

Same with the communication.

This was just like the International Space Station program; these types of large projects often required more than just one country or organization to accomplish. The controllable nuclear fusion project was the same; competition always existed in ITER, but yet, cooperation would still be there.

If going to a meeting meant having to take multiple flights and rides, then this meeting probably wouldn't happen.

Box..

When the Chinese Academy of Sciences wanted to research the tokamak, they set up shop around a beautiful island in Lu Yang city.

Lu Zhou felt like Jinling was pretty good; therefore, he drew a circle around the Purple Mountain in Jinling, which determined the project location.

The official documents would take a while to process. Before that, Lu Zhou planned on going back to his alma mater.

First of all, the building for the Jinling Institute of Computational Materials, which he spent a hundred million yuan on, was finally completed. Secondly, he still needed support from Jin Ling University for his controllable nuclear fusion plan and his vision of a Chinese version of the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study.

Manager Wang followed Lu Zhou to the hotel entrance and asked with a smile, "Professor Lu, are you not going to stay for a few more days?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "No, I'm not. Work is too busy, and I can't take a break. I'll see you soon."

Manager Wang: "Take care."

Lu Zhou nodded and walked toward his black government-issued car.

His suitcase was already in the car trunk; he didn't have to worry about these things.

Wang Peng was sitting in the driver's seat. When he saw Lu Zhou put on his seatbelt, he started the car.

"Where to?"

"Airport!"

...

At the administrative building at Jin Ling University...

Principal Xu was wearing a pair of glasses as he sat in front of his desk and meticulously handled his administrative duties.

Suddenly, he heard knocking sounds at the door.

Principal Xu put down his hand and cleared his throat.

"Come in."

The door was pushed open, and someone unexpected stood in front of the doorway.

When Principal Xu saw Lu Zhou standing in front of the doorway, he was stunned. He put down the pen in his hand and smiled as he stood up from his office chair.

“Professor Lu? What brings you here? Please come in.”

Lu Zhou looked at the documents on Principal Xu’s desk. He then smiled politely and said, “The timing is a bit sudden as I just got off the plane. I didn’t interrupt your work, right?”

Principal Xu smiled and said, “Since a Nobel Prize laureate is visiting our school, obviously we have to welcome him with both arms open; how is this an interruption? However, your timing is quite sudden. Why didn’t you tell us beforehand? We didn’t prepare anything.”

“There’s no need for any preparation. I’m just here to see my alma mater, and there’s no need to make it so troublesome.” Lu Zhou smiled, and as he placed the pack of tea on the table, he said, “I brought some tea.”

Principal Xu said, “I can’t accept such a valuable gift. Take this to Old Tang or Old Lu.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “What do you mean valuable? It’s just two packs of tea. I also brought some for Professor Tang and Academician Lu, so please accept the gifts.”

After some small talk, the two sat down on the sofa.

Principal Xu told his assistant to make two cups of hot tea.

Lu Zhou spoke in a serious tone.

“I’ll probably leave Princeton and come back to China around next year. If it’s okay with you, Principal Xu, I’ll have to trouble you in the future.”

“What do you mean trouble?” Principal Xu smiled and said, “If you want to come back, I’m willing to let you take over the principal’s position.”

Lu Zhou quickly said, "There's no need for that. I'm finding a research institute director, but let's not make me manage a university."

His research was already busy enough. If he really became a principal, he'd have to clone himself to handle all of the work.

Also, he was against using administrative power to eliminate talents.

Lu Zhou sipped some tea to moisten his throat. He then changed his demeanor and began to speak about serious matters.

"I just got back from Beijing; I met the president."

Principal Xu suddenly looked stern; he put on a serious expression.

"What did you guys... Is it okay to ask?"

"Nothing secret. The documents will probably be released soon, so it's fine talking about this in advance."

Lu Zhou paused for a second before he said, "... Other than some technical things, we mainly talked about academia and the history of mathematics."

Principal Xu: "History of mathematics?"

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "That's right."

Ever since the Renaissance, mathematicians had been a group that was extremely sensitive to the environment. The last century's mathematicians mostly centered around Europe, and the French Bourbaki scholars and the German Göttingen scholars had had an equal share of academia influence and attainment. However, in less than a quarter of a century, the Göttingen scholars had almost been

completely annihilated, and the Bourbaki scholars were also declining. The world center of mathematics had since moved from Europe to North America.

Lu Zhou explained, “Over the years at Princeton, I’ve learned quite a lot of things, whether it’s knowledge itself or the academic culture.

“After learning from history and real-life experiences, my biggest takeaway is that academic prosperity is inseparable from an open academic environment. Therefore, I told the old man that I plan on building a Chinese Institute for Advanced Study in Jinling for purely academic research. It was also to separate academia from bureaucratization and politics.”

When Principal Xu heard Lu Zhou’s words, he nodded.

He had a background in scientific research, so he was well aware of the impact of bureaucracy on scientific research efficiency.

He was a supporter of education reform, and he had made previous efforts on reforming the education system.

Even though he might not agree with some policies, but he fully supported Lu Zhou’s point of view.

Especially for Lu Zhou’s plan on building an institute in the style of Princeton Institute for Advanced Study in China. They had talked about this plan a long time ago, and he also showed support back then.

However, support was just support. To actually implement it might be a little difficult...

“I agree with you, but this is very difficult to implement; especially the depoliticization. With the situation in China right now, this is basically impossible...”

Lu Zhou: “The president agreed.”

Principal Xu’s eyes were wide open as he looked at Lu Zhou in disbelief.

Lu Zhou paused for a second and said, "He said that since it's my research institute, I can do whatever I want. If I mess up, then it's whatever, but if I succeed, I can expand in a limited range."

This limited range obviously meant Jin Ling University.

Actually, Lu Zhou didn't really care if he expanded or not.

He didn't think of himself as an educator; he was only a scholar.

What he needed was a comfortable academic environment which would allow him to quietly engage in his own research.

He didn't have any political demands nor was he interested in making them.

However, it seemed that Principal Xu simply didn't believe in Lu Zhou's words.

Especially at the high-level government official's response; this was simply ridiculous for him.

Principal Xu couldn't help but ask, "You guys really only talked about mathematics?"

"Of course it's not just mathematics," Lu Zhou smiled and said. He then continued, "Before that... we were talking about controllable nuclear fusion."