

## Godfather Of Champions

### Chapter 15: George Wood's Family Part 1

Because the next League One match wasn't for fourteen days, on January 18th, Tang En gave the team two days' leave after the FA Cup. On the first day of the leave, Tang En wasted his time with seeing a doctor, handling reporters, and abusing Nottingham's poor security.

Fortunately, he had some pocket change on him, otherwise he wouldn't have had the fare to get home.

The next day Tang En went to the bank to report the loss of his credit card, and then went to the police station to report the loss of his identity card. With his time wasted for most of his day, while everyone else was having their afternoon tea, he dragged his tired body home. Thank goodness for his semi-reliable memory, otherwise he would have no idea where to go or who to look for.

When he reached his doorstep, he saw a boy standing there.

He was almost the same height as Twain, but with a child's face.

Tang En did not understand what this boy was doing here, standing at his doorstep, his face a little dirty, with brown hair, and tan skin. Is he a burglar acting as a lookout? He glanced at his door and found that it was tightly shut, and that there was no sign of damage.

When the boy saw Twain walking over, he just kept his eyes on him, but said nothing. Tang En did not like his look, so he stared at the boy and sidestepped him to head inside his house.

At this time that boy spoke. "Are you the Forest team manager, Tony Twain?"

He just directly called my name. There was no "Mister." Also no greeting. Real lack of manners!

Grumbling on the inside, Tang En still stopped in his tracks and looked at him out of the corner of his eyes and said, "I am. I'm not in the mood for an autograph if that's what you want."

The boy looked down and dug out a black wallet from his pants pocket. "I'm not here for an autograph. This is your wallet."

Tang En hesitantly took it and found that except for that hundreds of pounds missing, the credit card and ID were still inside!

Even though he spent the day dealing with it, getting the wallet back immediately put Tang En in a better mood. Now he looked at the boy in a different light, and there was a smile on his face. "Oh, you found this? What a good kid. Thank you so much!" He patted his pockets, but found that the loose change was too pathetic to take it out and offer as a reward.

"I'm really sorry, but I don't have much money on me now. Come back tomorrow, I will give you a good reward."

"No, I don't want a reward." The boy shook his head.

The first thought that flashed through Tang En's mind was England had a selfless model citizen, just like Lei Feng! The boy was decent, though his clothes were worn out and his face was dirty. However, he looked like he was driven. Must be from a poor family. He might be poor, but he did not lack will. Lots of promise, very promising indeed!

The boy continued, "I think your team should sign England's best footballer."

That explained it, he turned out to be a loyal fan of the Forest team.

Tang En grinned. "Are you referring to David Beckham? I'm sorry, we are a small club. The big stars will not consider us." He was going to reach out and touch the boy's head. He was so adorable. Although he's about the same height as me.

Tang En did not expect the boy to dodge his hand. "Who's that? The best footballer in England is right here!"

Tang En looked all around and found no one.

"Where are you looking? Right here, in front of you!" The boy spoke earnestly and pointed to himself.

The corner of Tang En's mouth twitched a little, and he burst into laughter. He then reached out his hand again, intending to pat the boy's head. "What a delightful boy."

This time the boy directly swatted Tang En's hand away. "I am not joking! I'm serious!"

It was a little awkward to be swatted away by a boy. The smile on Tang En's face froze, and then he gave a cough. "All right, please tell me. Where are you playing now?"

"I've never played."

Tang En stared at him for a good while, "Are you joking?"

The boy tightened his lips and earnestly said, "I haven't played now. It doesn't mean I won't play in the future. As long as I can receive training, I will definitely be the best footballer in England!"

Tang En's tone softened. "Listen... What's your name?"

"George, George Wood."

"Listen, George. I very much appreciate you bringing back my wallet. But professional football is not as simple as you think. Thank you for returning my wallet. I'll take you home. Where do you live?"

George Wood was silent for a moment, lowered his head, and said, "Sneinton."

Tang En searched his mind and found that this place was a well-known ghetto in Nottingham. Blacks, Indians, descendants of all kinds of ethnicities inhabited this area, as well as students. It was the place with the most public disorder, despite being only hundreds of meters away from Nottingham's most upscale residential area.

Looking at Wood's clothes, Tang En suddenly felt a little sympathetic. Any country would have areas with poor and rich people, even Britain's famous business centers and a handful of industrial cities like Nottingham would have these two levels.

"Well, tell you what, I'll get you back." As it turned out, a taxi was dropping off a passenger nearby. Tang En flagged it down. Sneinton was on the east side of the city, and his home Wilford was on the southwest side of the city. God only knew how the poor boy got there.

The taxi stopped next to them. Wood did not show any objection and followed him into the car. He did not speak in the taxi; the atmosphere was a little awkward. Tang En decided to find something to say.

"George, why do you have to play football?"

"To make money."

Tang En took a look at Wood. This sort of answer corresponded with his background.

"Then you can go to work. Wait, you should be in school now? How old are you?"

"Seventeen. I don't want to go to school. Can't make money by going to school. And I have a job, but it doesn't make enough money."

"What's your job?"

"A mover for a moving company."

In the United Kingdom, a mover's income in a moving company was £10 each job, which was neither high nor low. The job was simply to load the customer's things into the truck, and then unload them from the truck at the destination. This kind of work required a person with a physically strong body to do it. Tang En shot a glance at Wood, wondering if this boy really did this for a living. Looking at the muscles, they were not like a seventeen-year-old boy's.

The minimum hourly wage in Britain was £4.5. Wood's wages were more than double this. Tang En did not understand why he would think that the money was too little.

"What do you want so much money for?"

Wood did not answer this question, and the atmosphere in the car suddenly became somewhat awkward again.

Tang En, who who was born and grew up under the Red Flag, was taught that seventeen-year-olds should be educated at school rather than go out to work. So, he stressed, "I think you should go back to school."

"I hate school," Wood stated coldly.

Tang En realized that this boy was just like his former self, a clog in the toilet—stubborn and annoying. Unable to get through to him anymore, he no longer said anything and turned his head to gaze out the window.

The world outside the car window was sunny with a clear blue sky over bustling streets and lively shopping malls, packed with tourists. Tang En could even see Chinese tourists from the taxi. With the sun shining in the 21st century, could one imagine a place like the ghetto still existed?

But it truly was here, in this city. The landscape outside the car window gradually changed, driving past the most magnificent residential area, where Tang En could still see mansions worth millions of pounds inside the decorative cast iron railings, flickering through. This area used to be Nottingham's textile factories and warehouses and had a very pretty name, "The Lace Market."

Even Twain, a professional club manager, could not afford to live in an area like this. The place where Twain now lived was considered the most common type of residential area in Nottingham, where common folk and the working class lived. Except for the two-story houses with private courtyards, it was no different from the ordinary residential areas of China.

Britain had poor people. But in a society with high welfare, their lives are not too terrible. One could live a carefree life if one lived frugally. Sneinton, where George Wood's house was, wasn't really regarded as a ghetto. It was more like "poverty-stricken." In Britain, areas where there were clusters of people of other ethnicities and illegal

immigrants, were considered as “ghettoes” without exception. Manchester now had the largest ghetto in Europe. Impoverished white people would still be better off than other poor ethnicities because of the racial discrimination.

George Wood was multiracial and would also be considered black. It was not surprising he lived in a place like Sneinton.

In Nottingham, ghettos didn't just mean poor. The term also implied “chaos.” Public security was the biggest headache for the local police department in Nottingham. One could see the guns and ammunitions stores selling to the public on the streets, groups of hooligans wandering the streets and maliciously eyeing the passersby, robbery, theft, drugs, prostitutes, violence... That was what went down in this type of place. They were the gray areas of the city, the no-go areas that many people wanted to keep as far away from as possible.

Leaving the magnificent upscale residential area behind, the taxi ride became noticeably bumpier. There were no more traces of those decorative magnificent buildings to be found outside the car window. Instead it was replaced by shabby red-bricked houses, peeling wooden window frames and mottled walls. As the taxi went deeper into the neighborhood, the number of even more dilapidated houses grew, and the shady characters who were just loitering around increased as well.

A streetwalker, with cheap jewelry and heavy makeup that was meant to make her look attractive, but couldn't disguise her tired crow's feet, leaned against a doorway to smoke and solicit clients. An aggressive-looking man (or boy?), wearing a black jacket, had coarse tattoos on his thick arms. Passersby hurried down the street with their heads down. A group of three or four kids noisily chased each other. They were on a narrow road with asphalt patches of unevenly covered potholes. The wind whipped discarded multicolored plastic bags and newspapers everywhere, whirling them over people's heads. The lives of the people here were like this colorful trash, numbly drifting where the wind blew. Eventually they would drift and fall in the gutters, forgotten with no one to mourn them.

Tang En was checking out the world outside the car, and the people of that world stared back at him with malicious intent, as if they had seen a pile of pound sterling or buttered bread.

Wood directed the driver to park in front of a red brick house, and Tang En paid the taxi fare. The driver quickly drove away. He only stopped for a moment, and there were already a few kids hitting his car windows repeatedly. He was afraid of what would happen if he stayed any longer.

Wood was somewhat surprised that Tang En followed him out of the taxi. “I thought you'd take the taxi straight back.”

"I thought so, too. But I'm used to getting off when the car stops." Tang En was avoiding the kids' dirty hands, they were looking for money from him.

"Mister! Give me one pound, just one pound!" A child about five or six years old with a runny nose shouted.

It was not that Tang En had no compassion. He had no cash in his wallet. He still had about £50 of change on him now, which was his return fare. If he were to give it to these kids, what was he going to do?

Just as it was about to get too uncomfortable, Wood brandished his fists at the kids. "Beat it!"

The kids made faces at him, gave the middle finger, and then scattered.

To be honest, Tang En did not expect Wood to be so unkind to the kids living in the same ghetto. "You're really unfriendly."

"They are not friendly to me, either." Wood stopped walking when he realized Twain was just standing at the street looking around. "There's nothing to look at. This is where I live. Must be a shock for you."

Tang En looked back at the teenager and grinned. "It's okay. Can you take me to your house?"

Wood nodded and took out his key to open the door.

It was a two-story brick house. Through the door was a narrow corridor and stairs which Wood went straight up. Tang En, still at the door, spoke, "Sorry to bother you."

"The first floor is another family; my place is on the second floor." Wood looked back oddly at Twain. "That family comes home late."

Tang En touched his nose in embarrassment and followed Wood upstairs.

Hearing their footsteps, a woman's voice called out, "George?"

"I'm back, Mom."

Tang En whispered from behind, "Where's your father?"

"He's dead." Walking ahead, Wood did not even turn his head around to answer.

"Uh... I'm sorry."

"Do we have a guest?" Tang En heard the woman asked.

“A football manager.”

During the question and answer, the two of them had come to a door of a room on the second floor, which seemed to be a dining room. A dark-haired woman sat at the dining table, peeling potatoes. The curtains were tightly shut, the lights were not turned on, and the room was dim, but Tang En thought the woman was the only glow in the house... because she was beautiful. Honestly, seeing George Wood's square face, he did not think that the boy's mother would be so beautiful, so youthful, such a young woman in such a chaotic environment, raising a child alone, enduring how much hardship? He felt sympathetic toward this woman.

Petite and pale, she seemed to be ill. But the sickliness somehow enhanced her beauty. She also seemed to be multiracial. How could he describe all it... since Tang En entered the ghetto, the desolate area seemed to be dominated by gloom, until he saw this woman. She was the only source of light in this plain room, the only color in the world...