

## Godfather Of Champions

### Chapter 20: The Hearing Part 2

The three men left the café. It was already noon. They had casually found a restaurant to have their lunch and had taken a break, and were now driving to the location of the Football Association: Soho Square.

Tang En had never been to the English Football Association, both as Tang En or Tony Twain. He searched for Soho Square using the common sense he would use in China along the way. But when the car stopped, the lawyer, Landy, got out of the car while Tang En was still inside.

“Mr. Twain?”

“Oh? Have we arrived?” Tang En got out of the car and looked at a small green plot of land, where a few London plane trees were planted. Their branches almost covered the entire square. It was now winter. Had it been summer, perhaps only thick leaves would be seen when one raised his head to look up.

This is the square, huh? Tang En felt that compared to the two football field-sized squares built in his country, this was more like the size of a small embankment in his hometown.

“Well, this is my first time here, and besides, it’s not very impressive...” he explained. The square was surrounded by very short buildings, and Tang En noticed that he had hardly seen any towering skyscrapers since he had entered London. Most buildings were three or four-story high Victorian buildings. The Football Association building in front of him was almost the same, but the facade had undergone some facelift. It was said that those modern buildings were located in the new district on the east side. But obviously the Football Association was not there; it was always in the center of London, on the north bank of River Thames and the south side of Oxford Street, a famous shopping destination.

“The English Football Association,” Landy introduced this place to the two visitors, “is a governing body that was established by eleven clubs in England after they held a meeting on Fleet Street in 1863 to be responsible for the management of all football affairs in England. It is the oldest football association in history, older than both the UEFA and FIFA.”

Tang En sneered behind him, “But I can only smell something rotten.”

Evan turned back and gave Twain a glance. “Great minds think alike.”

“Mr. Twain.” Landy stopped in his tracks, turned to Twain in the foot of the glass entrance and said, “Your current attitude is not conducive to your hearing, which is about to begin.”

He knew what the lawyer said was right, but Tang En could not stand his superior tone. He chuckled. “Mr. Landy, I didn’t know you are a part-time tour guide, too.”

For the first time since Landy had become a lawyer, he thought he might not beat a football manager in an argument. Because of this, he simply remained silent. After all, he could also be counted as his employer.

The three men had just set foot in the Football Association when a professionally-dressed woman walked up to them. She saw the three men enter and asked, “Mr. Twain?”

Tang En stepped forward. “I am Twain.”

“How do you do?” The woman smiled and extended her hand. “I am Faria Alam. Please follow me.”

Tang En was startled when he heard this name. He then set his gaze on the woman facing him again. He wanted to take a closer look at how a 38-year-old woman had the charm to seduce two famous men into bed and turn the English Football Association upside down.

Her shoulder-length black hair, appearance of distinctive mixed-blood features, skin tone, and eyes. It was said that she had once been a model. Tang En’s evaluation of her was that she was sort of ordinary; not as captivating as he had imagined, but not bad-looking either.

“Mr. Twain?” Alam found that Twain had only stared at her, not followed her. She was delighted that this man had such a reaction, as it showed that she was still attractive. But how would she know what Tang En was truly thinking?

“Uh, sorry. I was distracted.” Tang En shook his head. Evan snickered behind him.

Alam was pleased with men’s reactions. She had just started work at the Football Association for only three days. She was highly ambitious, and she did not want to just be an ordinary secretary. The expressions of these men who saw her filled her with confidence for her future. I, Faria Alam, still possess a sex appeal that men are fatally attracted to.

Tang En followed Alam to the site of the hearing. From behind this woman, he observed the woman’s coquettish way of walking with her hips swinging. He could not resist feeling disapproval of her flirtatious walk. He could imagine how logical the incident could have been if it happened later. But how would he know the significance of him

meeting Alam, the new secretary of the Football Association today, and how it would become the sex scandal that shocked the British football world in the future?

Tang En had never imagined what an English Football Association hearing would be like, and whether it would be the same as the courtrooms he saw on television. But when Alam opened the door for him, he realized that it was only a slightly larger meeting room.

“Please enter, Mr. Twain.” The man who rose to greet him looked a little familiar. It was the Chief Executive of the English Football Association with whom Faria ignited the spark of passion—Mark Palios.

Palios saw Faria Alam, who had opened the door, and was stunned for a moment. Then his gaze rested on the body of this retired model. Tang En took in all the reactions of this big shot and suppressed a smile. Did you two adulterers meet because of me? Excellent, excellent!

With such a thought, he threw aside the worries he had surrounding this hearing. There was a sense of achievement. The world-famous tabloid scandal had originally started here, and had began because of him.

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In short, when Tang En recalled what he saw and heard today at the Football Association, the only scene he could deeply remember for a long time after was the meeting between Palios and Alam. Their chemistry was indeed earth-scorching, like tinder ignited by raging flames. Tang En and his hearing had become secondary. During the hearing, Tang En had repeatedly observed Palios’ eyes casting glances at Alam standing by the doorway. With an extraordinary model’s figure, the age of the 38-year-old might not let her be as fresh-faced and charming as a young girl in the prime of her youth, but it added a touch of sophistication to her.

The lawyer, Landy, who was still worried about Twain’s attitude at the beginning of the hearing, was greatly surprised by Twain’s behavior. Twain, who was dismissive of this organization outside the Football Association building, was lovely and docile like a sheep during the hearing. Not only did he admit to his inappropriate use of words, but he also sang the praises of the Football Association under Palios’ leadership, and stated that what he had said in his interview had been taken out of context by the media; he had no intentions of going against the Football Association. It was a completely irrational display of a new acting manager who was under immense pressure after the loss. After he sobered up, he fully realized what a terrible mistake he had made, and had looked forward to the hearing being held a long time ago. Because Twain felt that he could not fully convey his remorse and regrets through the media, the club’s fax machine, or even over the phone, he felt he had to see the Football Association in person to apologize. He believed that the oldest football authority in

history, led by Palios' strong leadership, would surely progress from one glory to another.

Watching Twain's performance, Landy, who had specifically been asked by the club to help solve this thorny problem, became a spectator. He suddenly felt that he had been deceived by that man. Evan saw the expressions of the FA officials who had been taken in and tried to keep his laughter to himself. It was supposed to be a serious and tense hearing, but instead Twain had turned it into a British-style satirical comedy. The serious confession of his remorse and his irrelevant praises really did have a sense of black humor.

Flattery would get you everywhere. Twain's performance left a very good impression on the Football Association. Consequently, when the decision for his punishment came out, it was a lot lighter than what Landy had anticipated. He had originally thought the Football Association would have issued a super-penalty of an eight-game suspension and a fine of one hundred thousand pounds. He did not expect the punishment to be only a two-game suspension and a fine of twenty thousand pounds. It was almost like a slap on the wrist.

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"Mr. Twain..." After the hearing ended, Tang En and Evan were heading back to Nottingham. Just as they were about to leave, Landy did not know what to say about today. He had accepted his employer's money and wanted to use his professionalism to help his employer solve the problem. It had never occurred to him that he could become a spectator in the end.

Tang En was delighted to see the arrogant lawyer look like he was at a loss for what to do now. But one must not be too extreme. This was his "rebirth." After his comprehension of the principle, why could he not succeed in his former life? It was because he was too unyielding, left no margin for error, and as a result he had hit walls everywhere he went in this society. He held out his hand first and firmly shook hands with Landy. "Mr. Landy, thank you for your advice. I hope next time—" He suddenly realized his inappropriate words. "Ah, hell! I hope we never meet again!" After those words, he laughed.

Landy knew what Twain meant, so he laughed too. "With all due respect, Mr. Twain, I think we will have an opportunity to meet in the future. If you need a lawyer, please call me." He handed a business card to Twain. Tang En took it with both hands.

"I'm sorry, I don't have a business card for you..."

"If I want to find you, I can go to the newspaper office. I'm sure they must know a way to contact you."

"Huh?"

“You will become a newsworthy figure.”

Tang En shrugged. “I don’t know if that’s fortunate or unfortunate.”

Both men suddenly burst into laughter.

After leaving Landy, Evan, who had not spoken, said to Twain, “The two of you seem to have a good relationship, as if you are old friends.”

Tang En opened the car door. “You know, Evan, I had no idea how to conduct myself in society previously. I was completely immersed in my own world, as if I was living in some kind of virtual reality. Until I...” He touched the back of his head, and Evan knew what it meant. “Now I’m starting to understand! Just this hearing for example, if it were me in the past, I would play hardball with those suits, and I wouldn’t admit I was wrong. I wouldn’t apologize either; I wouldn’t care how they punished me. But in fact, you saw it too. The matter has been resolved perfectly.” After he finished his thought, he got into the car.

Evan also sat back in the car. “Yes, it’s perfect. You had abused the referee and the FA, vented the discontent you had inside you, but it seems as if you have not received any punishment. I think when this decision is announced, the referee you abused and the West Ham manager will surely feel like they have been cheated.”

Amidst their laughter, the car slowly left the Football Association building, and began its journey home.

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While Tang En and Evan were still driving on the M1 highway, the Football Association held a simple press conference to announce the final penalty decision for this incident.

Palios personally attended this press conference, while the person who placed a microphone and glass of water around him was the new entrant to the Football Association, who had begun working three days ago. It was the retired model, Faria; she smiled as she faced this scene, calm towards the situation, which multiplied Palios’ favorable impression of her. There was a reporter who inadvertently captured Palios’ smile and Alam’s gaze in that moment. The two’s somewhat ambiguous smiles were freeze-framed in that shot. Even the photographer himself had quickly forgotten this photograph. But who could have known what kind of high price he could fetch for this image just one and a half years later.

The leading character of this press conference was certainly not the still unknown Alam, but Tony Twain. When Palios announced that the Football Association had suspended the acting manager of Forest with a two-game suspension and imposed a fine of twenty thousand pounds, sounds of numerous debate broke out in the press conference. With

the media adding fuel to the fire before, the Football Association was deeply furious. They did not expect the result of that fury to become perfunctory.

And who had become the beneficiary of this farce? Maybe it was only Palios, who had met Alam for the first time. But if this issue were to be discussed one and a half years later, Palios might actually say that he was the biggest victim.