

## Champions 401

### Chapter 401: The Pride of a Professional Footballer

The joy of victory brought back from Glasgow had not even dissipated before Twain received another piece of good news.

“Are you sure?” asked Twain as he stared at Fleming, the team doctor, in his office.

Fleming nodded his head, “I’m certain.”

When Twain heard him say so, he looked down at the stack of papers in his hands again.

It was the latest report on Eastwood’s physical recovery. The team’s medical unit did a follow-up observation of Eastwood’s body. They checked him every day to keep on top of it.

The conclusions drawn from the report were gratifying.

“We all agreed that after more than a month of recovery and training, Eastwood has reached the requirements of being able to play in a formal game.

Even though Eastwood had already trained with the team these days, Twain had not been able to send the Romani Gypsy to play in a game without the doctor’s say-so.

Twain turned to look out the window at the training ground. Eastwood was in training with the team.

“Have you told him yet?”

Fleming shook his head. “We had to inform you first.”

“Okay...”

“However, although his body is able to cope with competing, his fitness is still not good enough for him to play for ninety minutes.”

“Of course.” Twain nodded and said, “Forget ninety minutes, even forty-five minutes will be impossible. Let him get used to the pace and feeling of playing in a game first....”

Fleming nodded in agreement.

Twain rose from his seat and walked out with Fleming.

This was the last day of training before the next competition, and Twain needed to announce the starting lineup for the game.

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The day’s training was over, and everyone could relax. Eastwood was joking with his teammates. With him around on the team, there was more laughter than before. He was a likable young man who could enliven the mood.

Twain and Fleming walked onto the training ground. Eastwood was called over by Fleming, and everyone knew that it must have something to do with him.

“I’m going to announce the starting list for tomorrow’s game.” Twain flapped the piece of paper in his hands and everyone on the training ground quietened down.

“The goalkeeper is Edwin van der Sar. The fullbacks are Sun Jihai, Bale, Chimbonda, Piqué, and Pepe. The midfielders are Wood, Demetrio, Ribéry, Young, Lennon, and Arteta. The strikers are...” Twain looked up at the crowd when he read to this point.

“Anelka.”

The Frenchman smiled lightly as he was not surprised. He was now the first striker in the team. Wouldn’t it be a joke if I couldn’t get in the starting list?

“And Bendtner.”

The Danish teenager was also used to getting on the main list and starting lineup. Due to Eastwood’s injury this season, he had received more opportunities for appearances. Although he scored less than Anelka, he also seized quite a good number of opportunities to score.

As expected, the two players would be the starting strikers in tomorrow’s game.

In the previous Champions League game, Anelka and Viduka were the starting forwards. On that occasion, Twain had preferred Viduka’s experience in the European arena. However, Twain needed Bendtner’s drive and stamina in the domestic league.

Twain had already reported fifteen names out of the sixteen players on the main list. The one remaining name should be the substitute striker.

Twain put aside the list and looked at everyone as he said the last player’s name, “And Eastwood.”

Whistles could be heard from the team.

When Eastwood heard his name, he stared wide-eyed at his teammates, who congratulated him. He could not believe it himself.

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“According to the official lists that we have just received from both teams, we found that the Forest striker, Freddy Eastwood, who had been absent for ten months due to his injury, has appeared on it.”

“Ten months... In all honesty, I’m curious as to whether Eastwood can return to his former state. Just look the changes in Ronaldo before and after his injury. The Forest fans will not want to hear what I have to say, but I still have to say that I’m not optimistic about Eastwood’s future career.” As the guest commentator for this match, Mark Lawrenson was doomed to be hated by the fans of the Forest team.

John Motson, in charge of the commentary, cleared his throat. “Mark, this is not the BBC’s Match of the Day program.”

Lawrenson shrugged. “Nobody likes to hear the truth. For a player who underwent three surgeries on his right knee within two years, I think it’s too hard to get back to his former playing condition. It’s

almost impossible. I'm very touched by Manager Twain's concern for his players, but I think he should consider introducing one or two strikers to the team this summer."

His remark was actually quite tactful. What Lawrenson meant was that Twain should give up Eastwood and look for a new striker to replace the Romani Gypsy's position on the team.

Motson shook his head. "I don't think Manager Twain will do as you say."

"Professional football is cruel. Very cruel." Lawrenson shrugged. "It's already a miracle that Eastwood is back on the field. I think the Forest fans should be happy that they're able to see him at the City Ground stadium."

Motson was unwilling to admit it out loud, but he could not help but think that Lawrenson was right in what he had said. Aside from the emotional factors, Eastwood really could not return to his former self after going through such a serious injury. How could he play as if nothing had happened? His body could not support such fierce confrontation with his condition in doubt. Therefore, how would Tony Twain face that problem?

Would he seek a replacement for Eastwood during the summer transfer market? Or would he continue to use the Romani Gypsy, who did not know when his body would go wrong?

Would he be responsible towards the player? Or would he be responsible towards the club? What else could he feel responsible for?

While Lawrenson commented on Eastwood, Twain was in the locker room assigning tasks to his players and did not hear his comments. Otherwise, he might have flipped out on Lawrenson right on the spot.

As he looked at the manager arranging the specific tasks for each member of the starting lineup in the locker room, Eastwood sat aside. Even though there was nothing for him, he still smiled.

He enjoyed everything about this. He had not heard the chief's spirited speech in the locker room for ten months.

So even if he was just an audience, it did not matter to him. He did not care if he was not allowed to play, as long as he was here and in the sixteen players' list. It meant that he was a member of the team and no one had abandoned him. He did not care what the outside world thought about his re-entry to the game's name list, because the decision did not come from the people out there. It was made by the manager and teammates here.

Sitting in the locker room, listening to the chief talk, watching him vigorously wave his arm to inspire morale, his spittle almost seemed to spray towards the ceiling ...All of that already felt a little unfamiliar.

"In the first half of the league tournament, we lost to Newcastle United. Today, it's their turn to taste the same! We'll show them, boys!" Twain grinned and clenched his fist.

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Eastwood sat on the substitutes' bench, surrounded by the media. They aligned their cameras and camera lenses towards Eastwood, wearing his jacket. As a player who had returned after ten months from his injury, it was perhaps just as Lawrenson had said: Regardless of whether he could return to his former state, it was already an enormous victory for him to be able to re-appear on the sidelines.

The media was focused on him now. It was admirable to be able to stand up again after three knee surgeries in two years. As to whether he could still play football...

Everyone tacitly refrained from discussing it—Is there a need to make it awkward for him? Isn't it obvious? Just ask the Nottingham Forest supporters. How many people would naively think that their "Romani Rooney" can keep scoring goals for the team to win? Perhaps the most they will say is: "We're just glad to see him again."

Everyone in the City Ground stands happily gazed at Eastwood sitting on the substitutes' bench, wrapped in a thick coat. But underneath their happy facades, there was probably pity.

He's unable to get back to the top, so he can only be a substitute. We're satisfied that he can still be here and occasionally play on the field.

On camera, Eastwood smiled at the reporters in front of him, and then he looked past them to turn his attention on the field. The game was about to start.

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After the game started, Eastwood stopped smiling. He stared at the field with a serious expression. It was one of concentration.

He wanted to familiarize himself with the rhythm of the game as soon as possible. He wanted to be acquainted with the atmosphere and the feel of the game. He did not know when he would get the chance to play. It could be this game, or maybe the next one, or the one after the next. But he firmly believed that he would play. And when that time came, he wanted to show his strength. He did not have the luxury to wait until his warm-up before a game to get the feel of the game.

Eastwood was aware of his current situation. Due to his health, the chief could not give him too much time. If he did not seize the opportunity within the limited time, then what was the point of him? What team would keep a loser? No matter how deep their friendship was, there would still come a day when the contract expired.

Eastwood had signed a five-year contract with Nottingham Forest. Two years had already passed. It was customary for the club to sit with the player and the player's agents a year before the contract would expire to discuss the renewal issue if both parties had the intention to renew. In other words, there were still two years to determine Eastwood's future. Those two years were not too short or too long.

The Romani Gypsy knew that he could not go back to the way he had been before his injury. He had to make some changes if he still wanted to survive in professional football. Before, he could rely on his skills and speed to do a good job. Perhaps he would need to rely more on his brains than his legs in the future.

And he was going to start from this point on.

Eastwood rested his chin on his hand and carefully observed the players on the field, mentally outlining a new plan for himself in his mind.

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The game progressed smoothly. Nottingham Forest dominated Newcastle United and Anelka scored a goal during the first half. The French striker had already scored thirteen goals and was ranked fourth in the league's top goalscorer list behind the Manchester United striker Ruud van Nistelrooy, the Arsenal striker Thierry Henry, and the Chelsea midfielder, Frank Lampard. That was unexpected for those who had opposed the introduction of Anelka before this season.

In this game, Twain made some localized rotations, such as replacing Chimbonda with Sun Jihai as the starting right back and Leighton Baines with Gareth Bale as the starting left back. Sun Jihai and Bale were both stronger in offense than defense. Twain's intention was clear. He wanted to attack on their home ground and defeat Newcastle United with offense.

Before the game, Twain told two players, Sun Jihai and Bale, to press on and assist as boldly as possible. They did not have to worry about the defense. There was George Wood, who could handle two players' job alone. What's there to be afraid of? Just boldly press on!

During the game, those two players really played according to Twain's instructions. The repeated plugins and assists from the fullbacks made Newcastle United's defensive line unable to defend effectively, causing them a huge headache.

Originally, the Forest team's two wingers were already very powerful. Attacks from the flanks had always been the Forest team's characteristic and tradition. And now, in addition to the assists from the wingers, the Forest team's two full backs also unleashed their strength. The tide was coming in wave after wave, and the waves were relentless.

And what about George Wood? Keeping watch at the rear, he could be seen in every corner of the rear half of the field. Sometimes he acted as the fullback and sometimes he entered the penalty area as the center back to lift the siege with a header. Most of the time, he was of course in the midfield to block the counterattacks from Newcastle United.

Newcastle United had initially thought to obtain one point at the City Ground stadium, which would be considered a victory for them. Instead, they were overtaken. In this way, if they did not attack, they would leave Nottingham in defeat. But if they did attack, they might continue to lose control of the ball. The Forest team's aggressive offense in the game made them hesitate.

Even though Newcastle United had a world-class striker like Owen, he had no way out when faced with the more forceful George Wood. Wood's rough defense naturally made Owen's supporters loudly abuse him. However, as long as the referee did not cry foul on the field, these were defensive actions allowed by the rules.

"Let's take a look at Owen. After he came to Newcastle United, he was often injured. He's no longer what he used to be." Lawrenson was also a former Liverpool player. With his remarks, one might think that his previous comment about Eastwood might have had nothing to do with the feud between him and Twain.

"As a lean and weaker center forward, it was impossible not to be injured after having to frequently meet the other strong defensive players head to head. If Owen continues to play this way, he will suffer more injuries."

Lawrenson calmly analyzed Owen's current situation and future. But to the Nottingham Forest fans, it sounded as if he was talking about Eastwood's present and future.

On the field, George Wood successfully defended against Michael Owen, whose condition was in decline due to his injuries. Once an agile young kid and England's golden boy, when faced with Wood, he could only walk away with his head bowed and panting for his breath after a hasty shot. Based on the stubble around his chin, it was hard to tell if this was Owen's new style or if he had no time to take care of his looks.

A lot of people did not know how to feel when they saw that scene. Eastwood, whom the Nottingham Forest fans were once so fond of, would become like this someday soon.

The Forest team had the overall advantage in the first half and repeatedly threatened the Newcastle United's goal.

When they heard the whistle to end the first half, Eastwood and his teammates on the substitutes' bench stood up and chatted delightfully about the first half of the game. With the team leading, everyone felt very relaxed.

The television broadcast gave Twain a close-up shot, and then turned to the substitutes' bench to fix the shot on Eastwood's face. It followed him until he entered the players' tunnel.

During the halftime interval, Twain did not say anything except to praise the players for their first-half performance and encourage them to maintain it for the second half.

Everyone was in high spirits. It seemed quite easy to take down the second half. Eastwood just sat in front of his locker, laughing as he watched everyone.

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When the second half of the game started, it was clear that Newcastle United did not want to leave Nottingham that way. They stepped up their offense. It was not a change in their formation or lineup, but their firm determination. They were determined to regain the situation in the second half.

The game was not going to end as easily as Nottingham Forest had imagined.

Twain had to make some adjustments.

Firstly, he replaced Arteta with Albertini to use the veteran's experience to stabilize the midfield. Then he brought Aaron Lennon on to replace Ashley Young to continue strengthening the offense on the flanks.

Both sides were in a deadlock on the field, and it looked like Newcastle United had a chance to equalize the score. But with the efforts of George Wood, Pepe, Piqué, Edwin van der Sar, and the other defenders, the score remained fixed at 1:0.

Starting from the moment Albertini was brought on, David Kerslake called all the players on the substitutes' bench to go warm up. Eastwood was no exception.

Twain looked at his watch in the technical area. The match had been going for seventy minutes. There were still twenty minutes before they would enter injury stoppage time at the end of the game.

“David, call the Romani back.”

Kerslake had not anticipated that. He was a little surprised and did not get up until Twain repeated himself.

“Huh? Uh... Okay.”

Kerslake got up and went to the area where the players warmed up. He did not yell and call back the warming-up players with a wave as he usually did. Instead, he walked straight over to pull Eastwood back.

The first to realize it was not the television broadcasting camera, but the fans watching the game in the City Ground stadium. Some of them screamed.

Then the television camera quickly cut over, and those Forest team fans who were watching the game on television saw the team’s assistant manager, David Kerslake, holding on to Eastwood as he bent his head down to say something.

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“I’m going out?!” Eastwood was taken aback. He had not expected to get a chance to play so soon. He had initially thought that he was just here to re-familiarize himself with the competitive atmosphere in today’s game.

Kerslake nodded. “Tony told you to go back.”

Eastwood hurried over to the technical area.

Twain, who had just bent down to take the tactical board, saw Eastwood run back. He stood up and smiled. “You still haven’t warmed up enough yet? No rush, no rush.”

“You want me to play, chief?” Eastwood asked haltingly.

Twain nodded. “Yes, we need to make some changes to break the balance in the game. I think it’s a good idea to bring you on. What do you think, Freddy?”

Eastwood stared blankly for a moment and then nodded. “I agree, chief!”

Twain laughed as he looked down at the tactical board in his hands and then tossed it aside. After that, he pulled Eastwood over and the two men stood on the sidelines to look at the stadium.

“Freddy, even though I haven’t heard it yet, I think at this moment there must be a lot of people questioning my decision: letting a footballer who has just recovered from his knee injury play in this situation. What do you think?”

“They’re wrong.”

“Why?”

“Because you let me play right now, chief. If the team were ahead of the game by a lot and you let me play, then it would prove them right.”

“But that’s quite a nice way too. An easy game for you to slowly get into the rhythm of the game, recover step by step.”

“But then they would think that Freddy Eastwood was a useless player who could only play during garbage time. Even if I wanted to tell them I wasn’t, I couldn’t prove it.”

Twain turned his eyes towards Eastwood. The Romani Gypsy stared intently at the field.

“I know what those reporters thought when they surrounded me and took pictures before the game. I don’t want to give them what they want. Chief...” Eastwood suddenly turned his head to look at Twain and said, “If you also look at me with that kind, pitying expression, I think I’ll announce my retirement the next day. It’s no big deal, I can go back to my dad’s and sell used cars. I’m used to living in my caravan. Thank you but no thank you.”

Twain opened his mouth. He wanted to say something but did not know what to say. At last, he realized that there was no need to say anything.

He patted Eastwood on the back, pointed to the field and said, “Do you see our situation on the field now? Both sides are entangled, and we can’t shake them off.”

Eastwood winced, “That’s really terrible.”

“When you go up, try to get close to our opponent’s goal without being noticed. Then, once you spot the opportunity...” Twain clenched his hand that pointed at the field and slammed down. “give me a beautiful shot!”

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Once the ball was out of bounds, the fourth official raised the signboard for the substitution. The number 9, Nicklas Bendtner, was to be replaced by the number 11, Freddy Eastwood!

Loud cheers and applause erupted in the City Ground stands.

A loud voice in the live broadcast shouted, “Let’s welcome back the Romani Gypsy who has been out for ten months due to his injury. Freddy...” The announcer dragged his voice out.

The fans smoothly followed up and answered, “Eastwood!!”

When Bendtner walked off the field, he high-fived Eastwood and said, “Go get them, Freddy!”

Eastwood nodded and ran onto the field.

After he high-fived Bendtner, Twain looked up at the stands and turned around. Everyone stood up to applaud Eastwood’s return. But how many of those people still held the same expectations of Eastwood as they had before?

In the past, when the Romani Gypsy had played, it had usually meant a goal. Everyone had wanted to see the smiling kid appear on the field.

And now?

His return was welcomed, and him playing again was considered a miracle!



Twain had heard such voices.

He thought about what Eastwood had just said to him again.

Those people might not mean harm, but that kind of sympathetic applause was even harsher.

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As Eastwood ran onto the field, his teammates ran over to high-five him.

“Welcome back!” was the most commonly said phrase.

When it was Wood’s turn, he said nothing. He just extended his hand and gave Eastwood’s palm a hard slap. The Romani did not dodge it.

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“I didn’t think Tony Twain would really let the Eastwood play,” said Motson as he glanced at Lawrenson next to him.

Lawrenson remained silent. He used his hand to constantly stroke his bare upper lip.

When he saw that Lawrenson did not respond, Motson had to continue the topic alone. “This was his last substitution quota, and it’s also a risk...”

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“Eastwood received the ball from Albertini’s pass, with his back facing the opponent’s goal. But he passed the football again, seemingly afraid to make a move. The shadow of his knee injury hangs over him...”

“I said so before. A player with a severe knee injury cannot play like he used to.” Lawrenson finally spoke. He was relieved that Eastwood’s performance was in line with his expectations.

Ten minutes later, the game entered its last ten minutes. There was no change in Eastwood’s play. Both sides continued to entangle together. Newcastle United seemed to have a chance but still could not equalize the score. And if the game ended with this score, it was a fairly good result for Twain’s team. But for another person, it would be a failure.

At the 82nd minute, as Eastwood dribbled the ball along the front of the penalty area to look for an opportunity, he was pushed down by a Newcastle United player. His fall caused some chaos. The Forest players surrounded the offending player and glared at him. The Newcastle United players were obviously reluctant to let their own player be bullied by others. Both sides were really entangled this time. The loud hissing in the City Ground stadium fueled the conflict, and the source of this conflict, Eastwood, did not participate in it. Instead, he pulled back Gareth Bale, who came up to take the free kick.

“I’ll take the kick,” He said to Bale.

“But...” Bale hesitated. The manager said he had to take any free kicks that could directly threaten the opponent’s goal.

“Let me do it! Bale!” Eastwood intensified the urgency of his voice.

Bale looked at the fierce-looking Eastwood and let go of the football.

Eastwood gave Bale a weak smile. “Thank you.”

George Wood, with his captain’s armband, was right in the middle of the clashing crowd. The referee showed the yellow card to him. He and the player who had committed the fouls each received a yellow card.

If it was not for Albertini’s quick action, Wood’s right hand would have been on the other player’s neck.

At that time, it was not a matter that could be resolved with a yellow card.

When the conflicting parties were scattered, those who needed to form the wall went to do so and those who needed to interfere with the wall did so too. At that point, everyone realized that the person standing in front of the football was not the usual Gareth Bale, but Freddy Eastwood.

Everyone’s first reaction when they saw the scene was one of shock. Had anyone seen Eastwood’s direct free kicks in a game?

It was a rare sight.

Twain stood up from the technical area but did not walk to the sidelines. He just stood in front of his seat, even blocking part of Kerslake’s view.

“Eastwood stands before the ball, and it looks like he’s going to kick it. This... is a complete surprise.” Motson did not know what else to say. He did not have any statistics on Eastwood’s free kicks.

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At the front, a five-man wall was lined up by Newcastle United. Eastwood stood behind the football alone. There was no one to cover for him to do a feint and run.

Once the referee saw that the wall was formed properly, and the distance was also in line with the requirements, he then moved back as he blew the whistle.

Eastwood ran up and swung his right leg to shoot.

His knee, which had undergone three surgeries, drove his calf to kick a curved ball.

The football bypassed Newcastle United’s wall and accurately drilled into the goal.

The goalkeeper, Shay Given, faced the goal without any reaction.

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“GOOOOAL! GOOOOAL!! GOOOOOAL!!! Freddy Eastwood!!”

The loud “boom” which erupted in City Ground stadium was like a thunder.

Twain raised his arms high and tightly clenched his fists.

Next to Eastwood, Albertini was the first to rush up. He hugged Eastwood and lifted him up.

In the commentator's box, Lawrenson was completely silent. Only Motson yelled into the microphone, "This is his first game since his return to the stadium after ten months and he has scored a goal! It's too perfect! Too perfect! I don't know how to describe this moment, but he has surprised us all!"

Eastwood broke away from the old team captain's embrace to raise his arms to the sky. He brandished his fists and hollered.

I can't return to my former self? What a joke! Why should I return to the past? I was just a used car salesman with a broken leg in the past, playing for fun in amateur matches ... Why the hell should I return to that?

So, it's just enough for me to come back?

This legendary striker wants to score goals, and I want to score a lot of goals!

### **Chapter 402: Advancement Part 1**

The stands in the City Ground stadium reached a fever pitch as the crowd watched the football go into the net.

"Everyone has been guessing when Eastwood's first comeback game would be. No one believed that Eastwood could return to his former standard after his recovery. They all thought that it was a miracle for the Romanito return to the field at all. But! Freddy Eastwood used this goal to tell us that all our speculations were wrong! Ten months later, he's still the same Freddy Eastwood!"

Motson fired away at the microphone like a machine gun.

Mark Lawrenson was completely silent. This goal seemed like a slap in his face. Conventionally, it was very difficult for a seriously wounded player to return to his previous level. He had not expected Eastwood to fly in the face of convention!

"Look at Tony Twain's excitement. That young manager was the one who cared the most about Eastwood during his injury. And now Eastwood repays all the care that Manager Twain has given him! The 2:0 lead over Newcastle United is like a buy one get one free giveaway. He has gained a healthy and perfect striker; this is the most important thing!"

Eastwood broke away from Albertini's embrace and shook his arms as he shouted. But soon he was swamped by more Forest players. He was tightly held in the middle, with only one arm still raised high.

"Holy s\*\*t, David, this is terrific!" The substitutes' bench was full of cheers. Twain could not help but swear. "Can you imagine a more perfect comeback?"

Kerslake laughed as he shook his head.

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Currently, it was no longer Souness of the previous half of the season coaching Newcastle United. As the results could not satisfy the Magpies fans, Souness was forced to leave the St James' Park stadium. The

Newcastle United chairman, Shepard, had chosen to let the club's youth-development manager, Glenn Roeder, be the caretaker manager.

Twain and the man were old acquaintances. He was Twain's first opponent when he had coached for the first time. He defeated Twain that time, but then the circumstances of both men were polar opposites to what they were now. Twain did very well as the manager of Nottingham Forest, whereas Glenn Roeder was still only a manager of a youth team and caretaker manager, moving from West Ham United to Newcastle United.

Tang En's arrival changed a lot of things, but he could not turn a good-for-nothing into a genius, so Mr. Roeder did not change at all.

He wanted to equalize the score but lacked specific ideas. In the end, Nottingham Forest scored another goal and issued the verdict for the game.

What made it even more unbearable for him was that his failure became Eastwood's glorious comeback. No one cared about Newcastle United's performance or result for this game. Everyone was currently talking about one person: Freddy Eastwood.

However, Newcastle United was also a traditionally strong team in the North. Playing a supporting role to a player was an indignity.

Although the game was not over yet, the City Ground stands had already begun to celebrate in advance. Watching those jubilant Nottingham Forest fans, Manager Glenn Roeder was ashen-faced.

He was not incapable of accepting defeat. He just could not stomach that he had lost to that man again.

Although it had been three years, he still remembered what Tony Twain had said to him as he shook his hand at a press conference after the FA Cup: "You'd better pray that your team will not be relegated." He had never met such a thoughtless manager. And what made him even angrier was that what this tactless man had said came true! After the season had ended, West Ham United could not escape the misfortune of relegation despite their efforts to catch up on the points in the second half of the season. His West Ham United team was probably the relegated team with the most points in history.

He believed this was all credited to Tony Twain's curse.

The grudge was firmly lodged in his heart.

If the West Ham United team he had led eventually stayed in the Premier League after a half-season reversal, would his personal coaching career change and progress in a better direction? Roeder certainly believed this would be the case because he had done something which even his predecessor was not optimistic about. It could be called a miracle.

He did not think that due to that man's "curse", his miracle came to nothing. Success, honor, and money all vanished. Now, seeing how Twain was more and more successful, he was even more indignant. He felt as if Twain was stepping on his corpse.

Losing to this man again today made him even more disgruntled with him.

However, Twain could care less about Mr. Glenn Roeder's mood and thoughts. Roeder loathed him so much, but Twain might have forgotten about the enmity between him and Roeder.

Who's Glenn Roeder?

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As soon as the game was over, Eastwood was surrounded by a crowd of reporters who had flocked around him. Once again he became the focus of the media. But this time, no one looked at him with sympathy in their eyes; only with respect, admiration, and some amazement.

No one would say that he was the poor guy who could only play during garbage time. He had proved with his actions that he had not sunk to that point.

After three knee surgeries, Eastwood could score the moment he played. He was even more powerful than ever!

He was the hero who had turned the game around and saved his team!

"The Romani Rooney" was back!

Those must have been the thoughts in everyone's mind.

Question his ability? You must be joking; have we ever questioned it?! We've always believed in him.

Twain watched the reporters and the photographers carrying their cameras. It was like watching a bunch of flies around a buttercream cake.

He grinned and walked away from the noisy stadium.

Although he hated this kind of thing, he knew clearly that the football world was cruel and only cared about results. If Eastwood's performance was mediocre in this game, then those countless questioning voices would not only have crushed Eastwood after the game, they would have overwhelmed him. But as long as one scored a goal, no matter how they performed at any other times, just one goal could let people forget one's mediocrity at other points. As long as one scored a goal, they had succeeded.

What was the criterion to measure success? It was the result, not the process.

Fortunately, Eastwood proved his ability, upheld his dignity, and had not become a sacrificial victim of such rules.

The next day, the photos of Eastwood after he scored the goal were in all the major media outlets. Practically everyone was unanimous in their surprise that he was able to score in his first comeback game after ten months. Because of that, some reporters went to the Royal Hospital of Nottingham University to interview Dr. Stephen Albert who had treated Eastwood. The Notts County fan expressed disdain for the media's surprise, "What's so strange about that? I'm not surprised that he can score. Some people would be devastated after ten months of continuous surgery and treatment. But he never thought to give up. It's perfectly normal that he was able to score in his comeback game!"

The papers which publicized the matter the most were obviously the local Nottingham media. "The Nottingham Evening Post" reporter Pierce Brosnan mocked Mark Lawrenson, who had repeatedly put down Eastwood before the game, "Luckily, he did not bet that if Eastwood scored a goal, he'd have to shave his head."

## Chapter 403: Advancement Part 2

Eastwood's return gave Twain great confidence. Confidence to go further in the Champions League.

Now the team basically had no major injuries. Everyone was in good shape. Twain could finally arrange his players and set the formations without having to factor in injuries this season.

After defeating the Rangers team in the away game, Twain met with the coaching team to readjust this season's goals, which were to not compete for the title in the league tournament, letting Chelsea defend their own crown. It was good enough as long as the Forest team could maintain its current ranking. They would mainly focus on the Champions League. As for the FA Cup, their opponent for the next round was Chelsea. Twain decided to still send the players with few appearances to play in this game, regardless of the outcome. It would certainly be nice if they could eliminate Chelsea. But he would still be fine if they could not.

Where was the best stage to become famous? It was not a domestic league and definitely not the middling "oldest cup in history," but the UEFA Champions League, favored by the television broadcasters.

Of course, as a former Chinese fan, Tang En still had a bit of a "Champions League Complex."

This goal was consistent with Evan Doughty's. Therefore, he was also very supportive after Twain told him the team's future direction. Nottingham Forest no longer had the need to prove themselves in the domestic league. Now everyone recognized the Forest team's ability as a first-rate domestic team. Twain now needed them to prove themselves internationally to the European continent and the entire world. Let everyone know Nottingham Forest through the Champions League. Let AC Milan, Inter Milan, Barcelona, Real Madrid, Bayern Munich, Juventus... Let all those big guys know that from now on, they have another powerful opponent. We'll take their money. Yes, Robin Hood is here to rob them of their money and honor!

So, even though there was another game, the Rangers team's ending had already been determined.

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Before the second leg of their match with the Rangers team, the Forest team lost to Everton in an away game for the league tournament, but no one was surprised by it. Twain had hidden away most of the main players. Even the main goalkeeper, Edwin van der Sar, who had played in the league tournament ever since he first started, was put on the bench. Twain's thoughts were known to everyone.

Eastwood, who had scored the winning goal in the last game, was not in the starting lineup. Instead, he continued to sit on the substitutes' bench and watch the game.

Twain gave him fifteen minutes in the game and his performance was quite satisfactory. The Romani Gypsy striker still lacked a rapport with the team, but he did not have to prove himself with a goal. He had already done that in the last round of the league tournament. Now no one doubted his ability anymore.

Moyes's team sent his strongest lineup to face Nottingham Forest with half of its main force. Perhaps Everton never forgot that Nottingham Forest had surpassed them in the final stages of last season and become the fourth team to represent England in the UEFA Champions League.

Seeing how impressive the Forest team was now, the Everton side would inevitably think, If that were us, we would be just as impressive!

As a result, the game with Nottingham Forest had some special significance. They had lost to the Forest team in the away game in the first half of the season. This time, back at their home ground, Moyes did not want to lose again.

It was as he wished. The final score of the match was 1:0. The home team, Everton, defeated Nottingham Forest. Even though Nottingham Forest had deliberately retained their strength, the points were valid and solidly fought for. Nothing was more important than that.

After the game, Moyes was in a good mood. When he shook hands with Twain as friends, he wished the Forest team all the best in another tournament.

"I think the best result will be for Everton to be second in the league at the end of the season and for you to be the champions of the Champions League."

Twain laughed when he heard that. He was not the slightest bit upset that he had lost the game. "You're so unambitious, David. If it were me, I would say this: the best result will be that we become the Premier League champion and you become the Champions League champions. We'll all be happy."

Moyes also laughed. "No, that's not your style, Tony."

"No?"

"Well, your style is more like..." Moyes lowered his voice and said in a gruff voice, "The best result will be that we get the league title at the end of the season and then also win the Champions League."

Twain scratched his head. That day was still a great distance away from him. Even though he wanted to say that, he and the Forest team did not have that kind of stamina yet.

Due to their loss to Everton and Manchester United's away victory of 2:1 over Wigan Athletic in the same round, the gap in points between Nottingham Forest and Manchester United had narrowed from nine to six points. Ferguson's team was so aggressive, but Twain was currently too occupied to take it into consideration.

Three days later, at the City Ground stadium, the Nottingham Forest fans anticipated their round 16 opponents: the Scottish Premiership team, Rangers Football Club.

Nottingham Forest played with ease. All of the conditions were favorable to them. Their morale was running high and the Rangers team was under immense pressure. The game was very difficult for the Rangers team. They not only had to beat the Forest team, but they also had to score big.

Nottingham Forest's three away goals were like three mountains pressing down on top of the Scots.

That was not the worst thing to happen.

The match had only been going for three minutes and forty-one seconds when the home team scored a goal.

The player who scored the goal was Arteta. His long shot drilled through the Rangers goalkeeper's ten-finger catch.

The City Ground stadium immediately went crazy. Twenty-seven thousand people seemed to send out the cheers of two hundred and seventy thousand people.

"4:2! Nottingham Forest has extended its lead to two goals! The Rangers are in trouble now. Before Arteta's goal, they needed to win two goals against the Forest team in this game. Now they need to score three goals without letting the Forest team score again! But look at Nottingham Forest's condition and momentum. I think that's an impossible mission."

That goal shook the Rangers players' confidence; it had come so fast that they were completely unprepared mentally.

In the next ten minutes or so, the visiting team desperately tried to score goals. They kept attacking the Forest team's penalty area. But they played haphazardly. The Scottish team's play was simple and crude and consisted of long balls. In the face of defenders like George Wood, Piqué, and Pepe, they were not afraid of such physical attacks.

In fact, the Rangers players might ask themselves when they attacked: The home team has already scored three goals, is it still possible for us to stop them from scoring? We can't do it at all!

Consequently, they really could not do it.

The game completely fell into Nottingham Forest's rhythm ten minutes after the start of the second half. The home team recklessly passed the ball and the Rangers players were aggressive in their interceptions but to no avail. The Forest players were already in the zone and coordinated well.

At the 79th minute of the game, Mark Viduka scored the second goal of the game in a positional play, completely locking in the victory.

The Rangers players gave up on the conviction that they could continue to resist, and the game went into garbage time.

The score of 5:2 was like a completely insurmountable mountain in the visiting players' minds.

In the last ten minutes of the game, the intense battle suddenly dissipated. The Rangers players did not know how to charge forward and rob the ball that was controlled by Nottingham Forest in the field.

The Nottingham Forest fans in the stands had already started celebrating.

They shot into the top eight in their return to the UEFA Champions League after twenty-four years. It was truly a great achievement!

The television cameras started to give Tony Twain frequent close-ups. This was the man who had created everything in front of them. The revival of Nottingham Forest had officially begun the day he took the Forest team manager's position.



“The game is over! The leading dark horse of this UEFA Champions League is born: Nottingham Forest eliminates the Rangers and advances to the top eight! The scene from twenty-four years ago seems to have emerged in front of our eyes again: when Brian Clough led the small team to first appear in the European Cup, who paid any attention to them? Did anyone take them seriously? Did anyone think that they would threaten their teams? And what happened in the end? From now on, those European powerhouses must think long and hard about those questions!”

#### **Chapter 404: An Official Publicity Part 1**

For Forest, which was not a powerhouse club yet, to be able to advance to the Champions League quarter-finals was considered a great achievement. Several days after that game, the Nottingham local media was still full of various reports and news articles about the team’s advancement to the quarter-finals. Many posts about the Champions League also appeared in the fan forum on the Nottingham Forest club website. Everyone was in high spirits. Many people looked forward to the start of the next round of the Champions League. Even though Nottingham Forest’s opponent was the Serie A powerhouse team, Inter Milan, they were not afraid at all.

However, for the team to advance to the quarter-finals, perhaps the biggest beneficiary could be Twain himself.

By now, Tony Twain was no longer a stranger to the English people. The fact that his Nottingham Forest team could be ranked second in the league was not just luck. In England, Twain was already a rather famous manager and was even called a “genius manager” on more than one occasion. Some people already called him “the celebrated manager.”

But no matter how popular he was in England, he was not widely recognized in Europe.

In the European football world, managers like him—people who were a success in their home country, and then became tired and feeble when it came to the European tournament—were a dime a dozen. He was not unusual. After all, the domestic leagues and European tournaments were completely different in style.

Many teams could make a splash in the domestic league, but they ran out of firepower when they came to the European tournament.

However, to be able to get into the Champions League quarter-finals clearly explained Twain’s level. He was different from the coaches who were “experts in domestic competitions and laymen in international tournaments.” A Champions League game certainly did not prove anything. A flash-in-the-pan manager was not unheard of.

Would Tony Twain be a flash in the pan?

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Twain’s cell phone had been ringing nonstop recently; it rang anytime and anywhere. He eventually turned his phone to vibrate. There was always this or that media outlet that wanted to interview him. He knew it was because of his team’s performance. This was his first time leading the team to play in the

Champions League, and being able to advance to the quarter-finals in one stretch was unexpected for many people.

The vast majority of the media that wanted to interview him was outside of the United Kingdom.

What did that mean? It meant that he had begun to make a name for himself in Continental Europe.

That was a good thing; Twain was not terrified of fame. On the contrary, he could not wait to become famous. If not, why had he decided to forsake all the other choices to go on this path?

However, he still had to choose to accept the media. He knew that the more successful he became, the more reserved he had to be so as to help maintain his worth. He must keep his practice of accepting as few media interviews as possible to ensure that the outside world thought of him as inaccessible and proud. The harder he was to get to, the more everyone wanted him. The fewer media interviews he accepted, the more he would be able to keep the media focused on him.

He still remembered sitting in "The Chief" Brian Clough's car and what the old man had said to him: "Learn to make use of the media." He was doing that now.

On that day, just after a day of training, Twain received a strange call. He had become accustomed to it.

It was the UEFA official who had called him this time.

Twain was a little surprised when the other side introduced herself over the phone.

"Don't be nervous, Mr. Twain. This isn't the UEFA disciplinary committee." The female voice on the phone laughed happily.

"Um..."

"We're from the Champions League Magazine agency under the UEFA, responsible for promoting the UEFA Champions League, Europa League, and other UEFA tournaments. Nottingham Forest is the biggest dark horse in the Champions League, and you're the youngest manager leading a team to advance to the quarter-finals. We think you're a worthy subject. There will be a lot of people interested in your experience and your team, so..."

Twain recalled when he had gone to the ceremony for the quarter-finals draw; he had had a conversation with someone from the UEFA Champions League Magazine about his interview, but...

"I remembered the person who interviewed me being a guy..."

The female voice over the phone laughed again, "Can't we just substitute the person, Mr. Twain?"

He did not understand why, but every time the woman laughed he a little awkward. He cleared his throat. "Of course... Well, of course, you can. But be careful, madam, you have only two substitutions left."

A tinkle of silvery laughter rang out again on the other end.

"You're very funny, Mr. Twain. In that case, let's talk about the exact interview time, okay?"

"Of course. I think... you can do it anytime."

“Well, that’s just it, Mr. Twain. This is not a simple interview. It’s not the kind where I use a microphone to ask you questions and you sit on the couch to answer them. It’s not going to be like that. We want to give our viewers comprehensive coverage on your team and yourself.”

“Comprehensive coverage?” Twain listened to the pleasant voice from the other end and made a cheeky association. “Including my... personal life?”

The woman laughed again. “Stop that, Mr. Twain!”

This voice sent shivers down Twain’s spine. She sounds so flirtatious...

“Oh, how rude of me. I haven’t even asked for your name yet.” Twain sat back at his desk and put his feet up on the table. He was steadying himself for a “chat” with this madam or young lady with a nice voice.

“Clarice. Clarice Gloria.”

“Mrs. Gloria...”

“I’m not that old yet, Mr. Twain.”

Twain seemed to be able to see the pleasant-sounding Clarice Gloria winking at him. He raised his eyebrows. “All right, Miss Gloria. Let’s talk about business. You know, I don’t have too much time for interviews.”

“Yes, we all know that you never accept media interviews easily.”

“Yes. So I hope you can draft a good schedule for the interview and shoot and then fax it to me. We’ll agree on the time together and I’ll let the team work with you. But I also hope your work won’t interfere with our normal training and competitions.”

“Of course. That’s not a problem. In that case, we’ll fax you the timetable tomorrow.”

“Very well. If there’s nothing else, I think I’m going to get off work.”

“OK, I’ll be in touch tomorrow. It’s a pleasure chatting with you. Goodbye, Mr. Twain.”

“Goodbye, Miss Gloria.”

Twain hung up but did not rush to leave. Instead, he kept both his feet on the table.

Her voice sounded really nice. But a nice-sounding woman might not be pretty in person. In fact, Twain had seen quite a few people who sounded nice but were plain-looking in person, both in China and Britain.

## **Chapter 405: An Official Publicity Part 2**

The next day, Clarice faxed over the detailed schedule for the shoot. It was indeed very detailed. Twain took it and went to look for Evan Doughty. Evan was very satisfied and thought it was a great opportunity to publicize the Forest team. With the new replacement of the club chairman, the rising Nottingham Forest needed a chance to let the world get reacquainted with them. It was also a form of

publicity that Twain had led the team to win repeatedly on the field. However, the official publicity from the UEFA was a more powerful weapon that would save their efforts and lead to better results.

The club chairman decided on the matter right away, and the rest was simple. Miss Barbara Lucy, who was in charge of external communications, formally informed the UEFA Champions League Magazine program unit that they could come to Nottingham for the filming and interviews. In addition, with Twain's consent, they were given permission to enter the locker room and shoot.

After that, the message was posted on the official website of Nottingham Forest and then republished by more media.

Very soon, everyone knew that Nottingham Forest had received the attention of the UEFA officials.

Clarice and her team worked efficiently. After they received the confirmation and notice from the Nottingham Forest Club, ten of them arrived at the London Heathrow Airport the next day with various equipment and luggage. In the afternoon, those people already appeared on the sidelines of Nottingham Forest's training ground with their cameras on their shoulders.

"You guys are really dedicated in your jobs, Miss... Gloria." Twain met the lady from the phone call at the sidelines of the training ground. He stuttered a little because he was surprised when he saw her appearance. He had thought about this young lady's appearance. She had a pleasant voice, but he often met people who did not look as nice as their voices. He had not expected Clarice Gloria to not only sound nice but also look as pretty as her voice. Was that a surprise?

She was young and beautiful, with a head of bouncy, curly blond hair, blue eyes, and a perfectly straight and slightly upturned nose. She also had a pair of very nice lips. What attracted Twain the most was her eyes. When she smiled, her eyes curved like the crescents of the moon and twinkled expressively.

At that moment, Clarice Gloria regarded Tony Twain with that pair of expressive eyes.

"How did you recognize me, Mr. Twain?"

"Simple." Twain looked at the busy production crew milling around, "You're the only woman among all of these strangers."

Gloria giggled. Her lips opened to reveal her white teeth, and they glittered in the afternoon sun.

Twain turned his gaze. It reminded him of a Colgate commercial.

After she laughed, Gloria turned to look at the training ground. The team was in training under the guidance of Kerslake.

Although the manager and assistant manager were present on the sidelines, the arrival of the production crew still affected the team's training. The players were somewhat distracted and looked around. Their gazes finally settled on Twain and Clarice Gloria.

"Mr. Twain..."

"Yes?"

"I just noticed you're wearing sunglasses, but the sun today is too glaring..."

Now that Twain had taken his sunglasses off and put them in his pocket, he said, "I admire your observational skills, Miss Gloria. It's just a personal habit of mine."

"That is interesting, a manager who wears sunglasses to direct training." Clarice Gloria nodded.

Twain also noticed that the players had lost their concentration and were looking in his direction. He knew that the boys were not looking at him, and must be looking at Clarice Gloria.

Ah, what a headache. The production crew has promised not to disturb the team's normal training and competition, but who would have thought that such a beautiful woman would show up? Even if they really don't want to disturb the team's training, it's hard to not to distract the players with such a woman on the sidelines.

"I'm sorry, Miss Gloria..." Twain pointed to the training ground.

Gloria expressed her understanding. "OK, I'll let you get back to work. We also have to start working. I guarantee we won't disturb you."

Twain gave a wry smile. It's already disturbed...

After he took his leave of Gloria, Twain turned and walked back to the training ground, while he took his sunglasses from his pocket and put them back on.

"David, gather the team." He waved to Kerslake.

The production crew set up the equipment on the west side of the field. Twain brought the team over to the most eastern side. Everyone gathered in a circle with him standing in the middle. He did not speak loudly, just enough for the people around him to hear.

"As you can see, we have a group of guests here. I'm sure you all know that they're here to do something. I gave them permission to shoot in the locker room, so..." Twain extended his index finger, "If you don't want to be reprimanded by me in front of the camera, then do well in training. Look at your behavior just now. It's just a blonde lady, and you can't move your legs to run. Are you guys children who saw a woman for the first time?"

The players hooted with laughter.

The laughter spread to the other side of the field where the production crew was. They could not hear what Twain had said, but they could guess it was related to them. Gloria stood next to her colleague. She currently had nothing to do and was content to be idle and carefully observe this mysterious manager.

Before she had come here, she had read up on a lot of information about him, including some of the interviews he had accepted before he became famous.

Her final conclusion was that she was unable to draw any conclusions. She could not define the manager, and could not determine the subject of this filming.

Perhaps only by coming to Nottingham, England, personally seeing the manager who currently on the television screen, personally experiencing working with him, and interacting with him, would be able to draw her conclusion.

As a result, she tasked the production crew with shooting everything they saw, like filming a documentary. They had to record every second and minute of the manager at work, and then they would go back, cut and edit to summarize.

“Clarice.” A man walked over, the head producer of his interview. He was the one who had agreed on this interview with Twain at the draw ceremony in the first place. “Did you see something?”

“No.” Gloria shrugged. “We just met. It’s not in-depth yet. But...he’s a very interesting person. I’ve met a lot of people in football; players, coaches, club chairmen, general managers... He was the first one to make me feel like he’s not a part of that circle.”

The man looked at the Forest team in a distance. Twain was surrounded by his players and was barely visible. But everyone knew he was the focus of all eyes. It was not because he was the manager of the team and not because he was the subject of the interview. It was because he seemed to have something special about him that attracted people to get close to him and to want to get to know him.

In the spotlight, Twain gave a lecture to his team to keep them in order as usual.

“I know it’s a little hard for you to treat so many people like they’re invisible. I just hope you don’t let these things outside the field affect your performances. We’ve all undergone interviews before. Only this time, it’s longer. Okay, guys, stop acting like you’ve never seen a woman before. If you lose the game because of that, you’re going to be a laughing stock all over Europe!”

There was another burst of laughter.

Twain waved his hands and Kerslake continued to lead the team in training while he stood on the sidelines. He did not go back to Clarice Gloria to strike up a conversation. Instead, he watched the team’s training as he normally did, as if there was not a production crew of up to ten people working on the sidelines.

#### **Chapter 406: Call Me Clarice Part 1**

It could be said that the shooting schedule Clarice Gloria gave was very detailed; but in fact, it was very simple. It was not possible for so many people on the production crew to stay with the Forest team for long. Twain would not give them too much time. The shooting time was only five days.

Gloria’s plan was to shoot a few days of training and then shoot a game with the Forest team so that the training and game were all captured on film.

The filming of the training portion was routine. Gloria looked forward more to the game. Her only concern was...

“All the newspapers reported that your team is currently in trouble, Mr. Twain.” Gloria took a copy of The Sun and flipped to the sports section. Nottingham Forest had not won in the last two rounds of the league tournament. They had lost to Everton in the 28th round away game and tied with Manchester City in the 29th round away game. As a result, the media voiced that the Forest team’s situation was not good.

Twain sniffed. "I don't think so, Miss Gloria. I think looking at it from a different perspective proves that the Forest team is very strong."

"Oh?" Gloria's interest was piqued by his remark.

"We didn't win for two rounds in the league tournament, and the media started saying that the Forest team was a goner. Don't you think that just means that they're used to seeing the Forest team win?"

Gloria smiled until her eyes curved into crescent moons.

Today's training was already over. The players came out of the locker room in succession and headed for the parking lot. Their work had ended. The crew members were also busily packing up their equipment as their day's work was over.

Gloria followed Twain to his office to discuss the filming of the game the next day, as it involved the question of shooting in the locker room.

"Well, let's get down to business, Miss Gloria. Generally, the team's locker room is definitely off-limits to the media, let alone the camera-toting media."

Gloria nodded to indicate that she knew of that practice.

"But... I had allowed a big group of fans in the locker room to help me teach the players a lesson during the halftime interval, so it's no big deal to put a bunch of cameras in there. It's just that you can't shoot the entire process. I can only give you a few minutes."

Upon hearing Twain say that, Gloria tilted her head to the side. "A few minutes? Mr. Twain, that's too short for us to even set up the equipment."

"You set up the equipment inside ahead of time. In fact, the preparation time before a match and the halftime interval are not very long. Even if you shoot the entire process, you won't be able to shoot much. Besides, there are some things I can't say in front of TV cameras."

In the course of filming the training, even though Twain had said that the club would always cooperate with the entire process, in actual fact, the production crew were only allowed to film the physical recovery training, stamina training, technical training, and so on. Once it involved tactical drills, it was necessary to politely ask the production crew to leave the training ground.

Therefore, Gloria also knew.

"Well, I understand, Mr. Twain." She pretended to sigh with regret. "It's a pity we can't get the most remarkable stuff on footage."

"The most remarkable?"

"I've heard a lot of stories about you raining abuses on your opponents in the locker room to stir up your players' morale."

Twain scratched his head, "All the more you can't film that. That's a private story in the locker room."

Gloria raised her hands. "Yes, chief!"

She had also learned the players' name for Twain during these few days of filming the team's training.

Twain was momentarily taken aback when he heard Gloria suddenly address him like that.

Gloria laughed playfully when she saw Twain's astonishment.

Still laughing, Gloria stood up, walked over to Twain, and extended her hand, "We're leaving Nottingham the day after the filming ends. I think we'll be busy packing all kinds of equipment and luggage at that point. And Mr. Twain, you must want to be with the team. We will not have much time. So, I'd like to invite you to have dinner together this evening. Will you have the time?"

Twain looked up at Gloria standing in front of him. She truly was a beautiful woman.

Then he looked down at the delicate pale hand.

"An invitation from a beautiful lady; the honor is mine." Twain reached out and gently grasped Gloria's petite hand.

Let Dunn settle his own dinner alone.

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Although Gloria said it was her treat, as a host, how could he let a guest treat him to dinner? Consequently, the meal was still Twain's treat.

Since it was Twain's treat, Twain decided on where to have dinner. Tang En was not very interested in Western cuisine. Even if he was into it in the beginning, his interest had waned after eating it for so many years. Lots of Indian restaurants had sprung up in Britain, but Tang En could not stand Indian food and the taste of curry. There was nothing tasty about English food in Tang En's view. As for the French cuisine? It was better in France.

Most importantly, of course, was that Tang En was a Chinese man who had transmigrated here and preferred Chinese cuisine. Therefore, he naturally chose a Chinese restaurant for his treat. Although the Chinese restaurant in Nottingham was expensive and not authentic, it was better than eating Indian food.

Besides, Clarice Gloria had not had authentic Chinese food before, so she could not distinguish between the good, the bad and the authentic.

As a result, Gloria ate happily and thought that she had finally tasted the legendary cuisine. Watching this beautiful television host show her satisfied expression like a young girl, Twain snickered. Such "gourmet" is common in China. Almost every restaurant is able to make it... The foreigners are really ignorant!

"I've read some of your bio. It is said that you're very fond of Chinese culture. I did not expect you to know so much about Chinese cuisine."

"I can also speak fluent Mandarin. But there's little opportunity for me to use it here."

"Don't you have a Chinese player on your team....Sun?"



“Yes, but I never speak Mandarin to him.” Twain spoke the truth. Since Sun Jihai’s arrival in the team, he only spoke English to the Chinese player, whether it was during the team tactical layout meetings or private chats, even though they both could speak Mandarin. They just did not use it. Twain now only spoke in Mandarin and not English in one situation; that was when he spoke with Dunn at home. When Dunn first came to England, he wanted to speak in English. In the end, Twain had told him they would communicate in Mandarin when it was just the two of them at home.

Twain felt that he was somewhat unaccustomed to seeing a Chinese face speak to him with a fluent non-native language. Twain certainly had not considered whether Dunn would be accustomed to seeing his previous Caucasian face speak in the non-native language too.

“Why is that? If you can speak fluent Mandarin and so can Sun, isn’t it more convenient to communicate that way?”

“Of course, it would be very convenient. But Sun does speak and understand English. That way, I don’t have to translate in the locker room. Everyone speaks English, whether they are Spanish, French or Italian. When they joined Nottingham Forest, the first thing was to learn the language. If I and Sun speak Mandarin, it would give people an impression that he’s not a member of this team. That’s not good. Different languages are one of the main causes of miscommunication problems. I don’t want to make people think that Sun Jihai is special, or that he doesn’t fit in with the team.” Twain shrugged his shoulders. “He is a Nottingham Forest player, and that has nothing to do with his nationality or language.”

Gloria was silent for a moment after she listened to those words.

Twain could sense the awkward silence and decided to tell a joke to enliven the atmosphere, “Speaking of the players’ languages and nationalities, I thought of a joke. Would you like to hear it?”

Gloria’s contemplative gaze brightened, and she nodded with a smile.

“We all know that after Abramovich took ownership of Chelsea, he brought a lot of money to the club so that they could buy the best players in the world, as long as they wanted to. But in fact, before that Russian billionaire, Chelsea was well-known in the English Premier League for their multinational team. At that time, the team, coached by Gullit, once created a record: there was not one English player among the eleven players in the team’s starting lineup.” Twain deadpanned as he recounted. From the sound of it, this joke was not funny at all. He appeared to be telling Gloria the history of football. “Then, Chelsea had a new coach: the Italian, Ranieri. He was a successful coach in both Spain and Italy, and an Italian. The first problem he faced when he took over the team was not the team’s tactics, formation, or transfers, but the language. Chelsea had too many foreign players. At that time, the media laughed at Ranieri’s bad English: when he wanted to explain the tactics to the main players, he usually told the assistant manager Gwyn Williams first, and then Williams would relay it to the English players in English. Then Ranieri himself would speak to Zola in Italian, and after that he would use Spanish to speak to the Spanish, Argentine and Uruguayan players again. For the French players, Ranieri would use Italian to inform Desailly who had played in Italy first, and then the French player would repeat it to his countrymen. Everyone had to repeat the same words many times. No one knew the final meaning in the end. Have you ever played that game, Miss Gloria?”

**Chapter 407: Call Me Clarice Part 2**

“What kind of game?”

“It’s the kind where a person conveys his message to a second person using body language. Then the second person uses body language to pass on the gist of his understanding to a third person, and so on... Finally, the last person will use words to describe what he has understood to see how much he can match up with the first person’s message. Often times, the difference is as far as the distance from the UK to China. The first person might have said: ‘Hey, do you think the clothes that I’m wearing today look good?’”

Twain stood up and demonstrated as he spoke. He pointed to his clothes and did a turn as if to show off his new clothes to his friends.

“Then the second person nodded and turned to the third person to pass on the message, ‘Do you think there’s something dirty on me?’”

Twain turned in a circle and briskly twisted his head left and right to look behind him.

Seeing this, Gloria began to laugh.

“The third person understands and nods. He turns to the fourth person and says, ‘I’m a little dizzy from spinning around.’”

Gloria threw her head back and laughed.

“The fourth person says to the fifth person: ‘I like to exercise with the hula hoop!’” Twain stuck his tummy out and swung his hips.

“The fifth person says to the sixth person: ‘Don’t do strenuous exercise when you’re pregnant!’” Twain drew an arc with his hands in front of his stomach this time and then raised his arms to wave.

This time, Gloria leaned over on the table, her shoulders shaking with laughter.

“Then we’ll ask the sixth person: ‘Do you know what he said to you just now?’ The sixth person nods confidently and says: ‘I’m very fat, don’t abandon me!’”

Gloria leaned against the back of the chair again as she laughed loudly.

Twain sat down and grinned at her, waiting for her laughter to subside.

After a long while, Gloria said intermittently, “Mr. Twain, you’re...really... Luckily I did not have food in my mouth just now.”

Twain winked at her.

Gloria finally stopped laughing, pressed her sides and leaned against the back of the chair, gasping. “You’re really entertaining.”

Twain scratched his head and did not know what to say.

Looking at his childlike gesture, Gloria smiled. “Do you know, Mr. Twain? When I decided to do this exclusive interview with you and your team, as the anchor and producer, I especially studied your profile

information, including your coaching experience, and the media coverage on you over the years. I could not arrive at a conclusion. With most people, I can gauge what kind of person they are based on some impression, and his or her image will be formed in my mind. But I found you different. Well, how do I put it? When I first started my research, I thought of you as a particular kind of person, and that image had been established in my head. However, as I dug deeper, I found a new image that was different. They are complete opposites. Contradictory. But they're still the same person. I don't understand. In the end, all the previously established images are gone. I don't know what kind of image of you I should have."

Twain pretended to be a profound thinker and said, "Your question is profound, Miss Gloria. With regards to 'Who am I,' that's the ultimate philosophical question. I actually don't know who I am, where I come from, and where I'm heading..."

Gloria laughed again. "Cheeky!"

Twain laughed as well.

In fact, he did not know how to respond to Gloria's words. If he answered seriously, the mood would be heavy. If he responded flippantly, he would seem discourteous. So, he muddled through it in a light-hearted manner.

Besides, Twain never thought about needless questions like, "Who I am, where do I come from, and where I'm heading?". He did not reflect on "What kind of person am I?" So, what if I figured it out? And so what if I did not figure it out? I am who I am. Would I improve my life and let my bank account grow if I understand that?

Gloria looked askew at Twain and narrowed her eyes to carefully appraise the man. She had already been filming in the Nottingham Forest Football Club for three days. She not only observed this person but also interviewed a lot of people in the club, even including the old guard at the gate. Anyone who mentioned this man would say that he was incredible. Nobody had thought the team would be so brilliant when he took over. Some people even thought that there must be some secret behind Twain.

In short, this is a man that makes you want to get close to him, but when you get close to him, you find him harder to fathom.

What kind of man is he exactly?...

He's an Englishman with a passion for Chinese culture, a man whose disposition changed due to a concussion, a young and promising man, a man who looks a lot younger than his actual age. But those are just some of his many facets. He's like a man with a thousand faces. You will not know whether he's showing you a real and complete picture, or just one side of himself.

A man with a thousand faces... does that describe Tony Twain?

Twain realized that Gloria had suddenly stopped speaking; she just stared at him until he was a little spooked. He asked, "Penny for your thoughts, Miss Gloria?"

Gloria snapped out of her thoughts and refocused her gaze on Twain's face. She suddenly asked, "Mr. Twain, do you have a girlfriend?"

Twain was taken aback by the unexpected question. He paused a little and then asked, "You've read so much information about me. None of the information mentioned that?"

Gloria gently shook her head, "Your private life is very well-protected. Even the British media don't know too much about your life outside of football, let alone me."

"If the private life of a football manager becomes the focus of the newspapers' hype, that would be abnormal, wouldn't it? A manager is not a football star. He's not handsome, there will be no companies to sign any endorsement contracts with him, so there's no hype value."

"That's why I wanted to ask, Mr. Twain. Do you have a girlfriend?" Gloria repeated the question.

Twain's digression was thwarted. He hesitated as the names of two people flashed across his mind. It was clear that they obviously were not. He shook his head. "Not yet."

Gloria was surprised. "Incredible. An outstanding man like yourself, how can you not have a girlfriend?"

"At present... perhaps football is a good girlfriend for me?" Twain used a quizzical tone because he was not sure himself.

"Are you asking me, Mr. Twain?" Gloria astutely perceived that. She winked at Twain.

"Oh... No, it's just that... I'm quite demanding. I've never met someone who meets my requirements." Twain said offhandedly.

"So, what are your specific requirements, Mr. Twain?" Gloria rested her chin on her hands as she asked.

"My requirements..." Twain suddenly came to his senses and decided to counter. "Are you planning to apply, Miss Gloria?"

"I'm just interested in a fascinating man's criteria for a girlfriend." Gloria smilingly defused Twain's counterattack.

The two people chuckled together, and neither raised the topic again.

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After dinner, Twain insisted on sending Gloria back to her hotel. How could he allow a lady to return to her hotel on her own?

When he sent Gloria back to the hotel, the two of them said goodbye at the entrance.

"I have one more question, Miss Gloria."

"Please go ahead, Mr. Twain." Gloria stood at the hotel entrance. She wore a white dress and looked like a quietly blooming lily in the night breeze.

"You said you didn't have a conclusion of what kind of person I am. What about now?"

"Right now..." Gloria deliberately dragged her words as her gaze drifted around to tease Twain. Her gaze eventually rested on Twain. "I still don't have one."

"Ah... That's a pity." Twain sighed exaggeratedly.

“Do you have any other questions, Mr. Twain?”

“I think... That’s all.”

“Well, good-bye then.” Gloria gently waved, like a lily swaying in the wind.

“Goodbye, Miss Gloria.” She rested her finger against Twain’s lips, which brought a womanly fragrance to Twain’s nose as he breathed.

Twain was a little startled. Gloria smiled and said to him. “Call me Clarice.”

“Goodbye... Clarice.”

Satisfied, Gloria took back her hand and turned to walk into the hotel lobby.

Twain lifted his hand to touch his lips and then turned to walk back to the taxi, where the driver, Landy, was waiting for him.

“Who’s she, Tony? Is that your girlfriend?”

Sitting in the car, Twain turned around and looked out of the car window at the brightly lit hotel entrance. He shook his head. “No, she’s not. Let’s go. Back to my place, Landy.”

#### **Chapter 408: What Relationship? Part 1**

Having eaten dinner alone at home, Dunn asked Twain where he was as usual when he saw him come home. Twain did not completely tell the truth, and his answer was ambiguous. “I had dinner with the production crew.”

Clarice Gloria was part of the production crew, so having dinner with her could naturally be considered “dinner with the production crew.”

He did not wish to tell the truth to Dunn because Dunn knew a lot about his personal affairs already.

He suddenly could not bear Dunn looking at him with that expression- the sort of expression that was without any meaning and was just looking wordlessly. Twain did not understand what it meant and it was a bit annoying.

Dunn did not ask any further. It would not correspond with his character.

After a brief chat, Twain went straight upstairs to take a bath and rest.

After being with Dunn for a long time, the two of them had influenced each other. Influenced by Twain, Dunn gradually became livelier and would take the initiative to speak. And Twain’s daily routine became more regular under the influence of Dunn.

Clarice Gloria ran into the program’s head producer, John Trafalgar, at her room door.

“You still haven’t arrived at a clear conclusion?” Prior to that, Gloria had said to Trafalgar that if the answer could not be found during the course of the normal shooting, she would not mind using unconventional means. “I thought I wouldn’t see you here tonight.”

Gloria shrugged. "No. But I figured it out. It doesn't matter if there's one or not. Maybe he's just a person who can't be defined. But..." Looking Trafalgar leaning against the door, Gloria smiled slyly. "I almost let him take me to another hotel."

Trafalgar rolled his eyes.

"But..." Gloria swung her small satchel to her back and placed her hand on Trafalgar's shoulder. She looked at him and said, "He's not good for a one-night stand."

"Why?" Trafalgar looked at her and asked.

"Because that would be a waste."

Gloria winked at Trafalgar and turned to open the door to go in.

"Good night, John."

"Nite, Clarice."

And the door closed between them.

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The next day, the production crew started work as always. Twain and Gloria loudly greeted each other on the sidelines and went about their respective busy schedules. Gloria addressed Twain as "Mr. Twain," and Twain still called her "Miss Gloria."

As tomorrow was the game, there was not much training today. It was only half a day and mostly focused on tactical drills. Therefore, the production crew only filmed for fifteen minutes before they left the training ground.

They certainly did not disperse to return to the hotel. There was another important job: interviewing the club chairman.

As the person who had once fired and re-hired Twain, Evan Doughty was destined to carry his "crime" of error in judgment for a lifetime. The machination that he and Allan had pulled must not be publicized; or, to be accurate, it absolutely could not be revealed at this time.

"...You're asking me for my thoughts on Tony Twain? I only have one thing to say: I want to thank him."

Those were Evan Doughty's heartfelt words.

For Clarice Gloria, who had interviewed many football celebrities, it was not surprising to find that conflict existed between a club chairman and a manager in the football world. Even the incumbent managers would have some complaints about their own club chairmen. No matter how much they praised each other when they were in front of other people, one could feel the dissonance somewhere behind the false fronts.

However, as Evan Doughty faced the camera, he offered no exaggerated exaltation nor were there any long-winded clichés. He only gave a plain and simple "I want to thank him." It was rare.

Gloria believed the young club chairman was sincere.

What was the secret to Nottingham Forest's resurgence? An unknown secret? When a team, from the chairman down to the ordinary players, were united in solidarity, when the relationship between people was simple and happy and they had the same goal, would it be difficult to create good results?

To apply an often-used sentence, Tony Twain and his Nottingham Forest and his club chairman were in a honeymoon period. During this time, the team's performance was good and there was no discord in the locker room. Everyone was flushed with success. Fame and money followed as well. It was the natural course of things. When there was no interference from messy external factors, the players could play to their fullest potential on the field.

Those teams that had achieved brilliant successes in history must have been in such a honeymoon phase.

A few examples like Barcelona in the last two seasons, AC Milan in the early 90s, "The golden age era" of Inter Milan, and Manchester United's feat of a treble in 1999.

As to why every dynasty could not last long, it was because people always changed. Gloria did not know how long the honeymoon would last for Twain and the Forest team. That was not what the program wanted to investigate.

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The next day's game was held at the City Ground stadium. It was the 30th round of the English Premier League game, which belonged to the "let the viewers get to know all about the new Nottingham Forest" section in the plan. In addition to the daily training, a game was the natural next step to getting to know a team. Normally, the viewers watched a game from the perspective of a television broadcaster. The shooting angle of the production crew was not focused on every minute of the game, but the technical area, substitutes' bench, locker room, and the stands.

Gloria's filming plan covered two games. One game was the domestic league and the other was the next round of the Champions League on March 29th, which was Nottingham Forest's away challenge against Inter Milan.

Nottingham Forest's home game against Bolton Wanderers was not chosen by Sky TV for a national broadcast. However, there was still a lot of media. That was not due to the official influence of UEFA, nor a special phenomenon of the game. The English media had long understood that, as long as there was a Nottingham Forest game, it was important for them to pay attention, regardless of whether it was a national broadcast or not. Nobody knew when the manager would create new news and antics.

Letting slip the news would be to go against the national readers.

Gloria looked at the media, which there was more of than she anticipated. She exclaimed at the rising influence of Twain in England.

The game went well. Perhaps it was because the players were exceptionally energized with the presence of the UEFA Champions League Magazine. It could also be that they had not won for two consecutive rounds and that that put some pressure on the team, driving their desire to win.

In short, Twain's team decisively won by 4:1 over Bolton Wanderers at home and used the victory to fight back the people who were in doubt.

The camera of Gloria and her crew recorded everything that happened in the jubilant City Ground stadium. She did not expect the frenzy shown in the City Ground stadium, which could only hold twenty-seven thousand people, during and after the game. She felt that the atmosphere was not like winning a normal league game, but more like winning the league title.

## **Chapter 409: What Relationship? Part 2**

After Twain ended the press conference when the game ended, he did not immediately get on the team bus. Instead, he went to send off Gloria and her crew.

Gloria mentioned the atmosphere of the match, which Twain felt was normal. "Almost every home game is like this," he said. "As long as we win the game, it will be like this. What you just saw was no exaggeration. As for the reason... I think it probably has something to do with the Nottingham Forest fans being suppressed for too long. For a team who had been the defending champion of the Champions League twenty-five years ago to struggling in the lower level league, the psychological gap between their ideals and reality grew over time. Now, they've just found a way to vent."

Gloria was satisfied with his answer. She smiled and said, "I suddenly understand why you hold such a high status in their minds."

Twain shrugged and disagreed. "Any manager who can bring victory to his supporters will have that status. The rules of the world are simple: the winner rules."

Gloria flicked her golden hair and extended her hand to Twain again. "We're on the flight tonight, but now I'm a little reluctant to leave Nottingham. Our time together has been very short, but I want to thank you for working with us. Before I came here, a friend of mine in the media was kind enough to remind me that Tony Twain is a very difficult person to get along with. But from the moment I called you, I thought he was wrong. You're easier to get along with than anyone."

"Thank you very much, Miss Gloria." Twain also extended his hand. "It's been a pleasure working with you too."

After they shook hands, Gloria took out a business card from her bag and handed it to Twain. "This is my contact number. I think we'll stay in touch often in the future, Mr. Twain."

Twain patted his pocket. "I'm sorry I don't have a business card on me to give to you, Miss Gloria. I always forget to make my business cards. But you must have my cell number."

"Of course." Gloria laughed. "I'll be in Milan too when your team is playing there. It's the last part of the filming plan. Try not to lose, Mr. Twain. That would not make a perfect show."

The two said their goodbyes in the noisy City Ground stadium.

Clarice Gloria and her colleagues left the United Kingdom.

And Twain went on with his life.

Other than some people on the team who were not used to not having a blonde woman standing on the sidelines, there was no difference from the usual.



It was just an ordinary interview, but some people did not see it that way.

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Twain suddenly discovered that he had become the focus of media attention overnight. This time, he was under the limelight not because of a victory or defeat. It was because of his private life.

When Twain was asked by a reporter at the team's regular Wednesday press conference, "Mr. Twain, may I ask- what's the relationship between you and Clarice Gloria?" he realized that the story between him and Gloria was not done yet.

The reporter who asked the question had the latest edition of The Sun, which was full of photographs and very little descriptive text.

Though it was not in front of him, Twain could still recognize that it was a series of photographs of him and Gloria out having dinner.

There was a photograph of the two of them in front of the restaurant, holding their hands out to wait for a cab. A bunch of photographs of them at the hotel entrance saying goodbye to each other, and even one in which Gloria put her hand on his lips.

Twain was suddenly reminded that he lived in the United Kingdom, with the most developed media and the most rampant paparazzi.

"What do you say our relationship is, Mr. Reporter?" Twain calmly asked in response.

Ever since The Sun had vilified Twain for bringing Shania to Spain and other despicable acts, he had not read that newspaper. He also never accepted any interviews from The Sun, and The Sun reporters would not even appear in such routine press conferences. But the influence of the United Kingdom's biggest tabloid on him was still everywhere.

It looked like he had been unknowingly followed by someone. That enraged Twain. He was trying to suppress his anger. Twain liked to be famous, but he liked to be in control of his fame. He did not like to publicize his private life. In that case, how was it any different from a reality television show? But now, without his knowledge of the situation, he was secretly photographed, which was worse than a reality television show. This was almost like "The Truman Show!"

He was kept in the dark and subjected to the viewers' wanton commentary!

He found it intolerable.

This reporter was not a novice. He was able to see that Twain was angry, but he still wanted to deliberately provoke him. How could there be news if Twain was not incensed?

"I don't know either. That's why I'm here to ask you, Mr. Twain."

Twain interrupted his words. "Did you just say, 'here to ask'? Very well. This is the team's regular weekly press conference, and I will answer any questions about the team. The relationship between me and Miss Gloria? What's that got to do with Nottingham Forest? If you want to know what my relationship with Miss Gloria is, you can call my agent. Forgive me, I'm not here to answer that type of question."

The reporter in question was confused. Since when did Twain have an agent? There was no news that Tony Twain had an agent. "But, Mr. Twain, you don't have an agent."

"That's correct," Twain said gruffly.

"But you said—"

"What I meant is that you shouldn't even ask me that at all!" Twain was finally unable to suppress his anger and roared, "You go ask The Sun! Go and ask the son of a b\*\*ch reporter who followed me all the way while he took my photos! If I said there was not a damn thing between Gloria and I, would you believe me? Are you going to honestly publish my words as they are in the press? Do you think I don't know what you want to hear? If I don't admit it, you'll say I'm hiding something! You already have the answers in your heads, so why do you still have to ask?"

Twain got angrier as he spoke. At this point, he simply stood up.

"That's it for today." He even swore under his breath while he was leaving.

Looking at the back view of Twain leaving in a rage, a few of the reporters hooted excitedly. The press conference had just started, and the first question to be put forward was that. Everyone wanted to know about the relationship between Twain and Gloria. Not many people cared about the team.

Pierce Brosnan sat in his seat and looked at his excited peers around him, feeling somewhat awkward. He knew that he could not call Twain for at least another week. If he did not want to be implicated, he'd better not do anything for the moment.

He had a peculiar relationship with Twain. On the one hand, they could be friends. On the other, because of his special status as a reporter, Twain would sometimes take it out on him. He was helpless about it. He could not give up his job to get Twain to like him, just like he detested behaving like a paparazzo just so that he could cater to his readers.

However...

Brosnan looked down at the newspaper in his hand. It was the same newspaper that was in the hands of the reporter who had asked the question. It was the latest edition of The Sun, which featured the series of photographs that had angered Twain. Looking at the photograph in which Gloria had made that intimate gesture, Brosnan sneered.

I also want to know what your relationship with her is, Tony.

#### **Chapter 410: The Number You Have Dialed Is Not in Service Part 1**

Twain brusquely refused the reporter's question at the press conference. He just swore and left. Would the matter be over just like that?

No!

Of course not!

Things had just begun for the British tabloids.

In reality, they had only had one meal together. However, for people who did not know the inside story, the only way they could understand it was through the media. Whatever the media reported, that was how they viewed it. When the media said that the relationship between Twain and Gloria went beyond a platonic friendship or working relationship between a man and woman, then that was what the readers would think. They would not consider the whole story themselves. They could not do so, because they did not have enough clues. The media were always smart enough to conceal things which were unfavorable for them, and to exaggerate and embellish the favorable things.

Twain was aware of all that. He kept his silence now only because he wanted Clarice to come forward and explain. A woman's words should be more convincing than a man's. However, the problem was, when the media called Clarice Gloria, they discovered that she had turned off her phone!

When one person out of the two could not be reached, the other would naturally bear more brunt.

Now, the reporters lingered around the training ground and the stadium every day. People discussed the "relationship" between Twain and Gloria online and in the newspapers as if they had been confirmed as a couple.

Gloria was Europe's famous and beautiful female anchor. She was only temporarily employed by UEFA this time. She was not just a pretty face who relied on her looks to get to the top seat. She was truly capable and successful. Hence, the "coupling" between her and Twain was made more interesting. Everyone knew that Gloria was not the kind of woman who would use her looks for hype. She had high standards and taste, which could be deduced from her previous singlehood. Therefore, the media could not be blamed for the fuss they showed over the scandal between her and Twain.

In the past, everyone had always been interested in Twain's private life. The 37-year-old Tony Twain had never even had a nominal girlfriend. The Brazilian model, Shania, who was often seen with him, was a child. The Sun had publicized the two people's "Tour of Spain" before. But when they found out that Shania was just a 14-year-old child and there was nothing between them, they lost interest.

As for Wood's mother, Twain protected Sophia well. No one was aware that he knew such a woman. Twain understood that if his unique experience with Sophia was exposed in front of the media, then perhaps it would be a terrible thing for him, Sophia, and George.

Everyone felt that it was abnormal for the 37-year-old Twain to not even have a girlfriend. Only the appearance of Clarice Gloria could cause this kind of media attention.

When the media was speculating on Twain's "relationship," they never wondered why a football manager's romance would receive this extensive level of attention. It was reasonable to say that only the star players would receive this kind of treatment. Had anyone ever seen the media care about the private life of a manager before this?

Nevertheless, Twain was now the focus of media attention because of his private life.

Perhaps his presence had changed something that people were accustomed to.

Clarice's cellphone was turned off. The reporters could not get in touch with her. Nottingham Forest, where Twain was located, suffered. The reporters' interest in the matter had gone beyond the event

itself. The media and readers no longer treated Twain as a professional football manager but as an entertainment celebrity.

Not only the sports media but even the entertainment gossip media had gotten into the mix. The enthusiasm shown by the reporters for the incident had already greatly affected the team's normal training.

The away game against Liverpool was a very important game for Nottingham Forest, and what was worse was that the game was immediately followed by another away game: the Champions League away game with Inter Milan. Given that the Champions League game was a knockout challenge and therefore more important, Twain did not send all his main players into the game against Liverpool.

As a result, the team lost 2:3 to Liverpool. Although they lost the game, they did not lose too badly. The players worked hard. Twain had nothing to complain about. But in the post-match press conference, a reporter asked whether the defeat was due to the impact of the matter with Clarice. Twain flew into a rage on the spot and only said "goodbye," before he made an early exit again.

The next day, Twain explained the reasons for his angry exit in his column. His team had played very hard in the game. Although they lost, Liverpool did not win easily. All the players' hard work was negated by that damn reporter's gossipy question. They only focused on the silly gossip between a man and a woman and did not recognize the assiduous efforts of the players who desperately wanted to win but had failed to do so. He found that to be the most intolerable.

"If I were to answer that sonofab\*\*ch's question, it would be a betrayal of my players. My players competed in the field and tried incredibly hard, and you bastards only wanted to know what my relationship with Gloria was. Whatever my relationship with her is has not one ounce to do with Nottingham Forest's game with Liverpool!"

The Nottingham Evening Post published his text word for word; even Twain's swear words written in agitation were not deleted. Thanks to Twain, the Evening Post, which was originally only on sale in Nottingham, was now sold as far as Newcastle. Therefore, the Nottingham Evening Post took Twain's side in this matter. They did not hype up the scandal and go against Twain. In fact, they did not need to hype it themselves. With Twain, who liked to fire away in his column, around, the matter would automatically be hyped.

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After their return to Nottingham at the end of their trip to Liverpool, the team would fly to Milan the next day for their first leg of the Champions League quarter-finals.

Initially for Twain, going to the game in Milan was something that made him very happy. That was not because they were there to challenge the Serie A powerhouse team, Inter Milan, but because he would have a chance to see Shania, whom he had not seen in a long time.

Nowadays, Shania seldom returned to the United Kingdom. After Shania was listed as one of 2006's top ten up and coming models in the magazine that Twain saw during the Christmas season, Shania had become a hot commodity. Now, she shuttled more between Italy and France. She had even rented an apartment in Milan with plans to stay there for long term.

She had not visited her aunt in Newcastle for a long time. As for her studies, they were put on hold indefinitely.

In the beginning, Twain told Shania that that was a good thing; it showed that the young girl had grown up. Twain later regretted it because she was so busy. He did not expect that a model would have so many events after she became famous. He had thought that a model just needed to walk the runway. How many fashion shows could there be annually? He did not realize there were spring, winter, and fall shows.

Later, he discovered that Shania's work was not just walking the catwalk in fashion shows, but that it included many more brand endorsements and various commercial activities.

He and Shania basically had no chances to meet, and could only keep in touch online and through their cellphones.

Shania really did not like modeling because it was tiring. Every time she felt tired, she would call Twain or chat online. Twain would comfort and encourage her as much as possible since he could not do anything else. He could not tell Shania to quit.

Just as Shania's father had said to him, Shania had trained as a model since she was young, and becoming a model now was in line with her mother's expectations. Therefore, if she did quit as a model, Twain really could not think of what Shania could do.

As a result, Twain lent his ear to Shania's complaints. They included dissatisfaction with her work; the fact that, even though she was friends with her girlfriends, they were also secretly competing with each other; and the interesting stories behind the glamor of models. Shania would tell all those things to Twain. She was actually a very sensible child. Although she did not like her job and felt very tired and full of complaints, she would still dutifully do her job after she vented to Twain. Perhaps she also knew that she had nothing else to do but to be a model.

However, it was not as enjoyable to chat all the time over the phone. Twain had planned to take time out to bring Shania out for a meal or something. After they eliminated the Rangers, Shania had also specially called to congratulate her "Uncle Tony" and had looked forward to their time in Milan.

But now...

Due to the stir caused by the English media, Twain's calls to Shania went unanswered.

On the eve of their expedition to Italy, Twain dialed that familiar phone number repeatedly, but there was always one sound which came from the earpiece: "The number you have dialed is not in service."

After dialing ten times in a row, Twain tossed his phone onto the couch.

Dunn looked at him sympathetically next to him.

Twain gave Dunn a sideways glance, pointed at him, and said, "You'd better not make me mad!"

So, Dunn turned his gaze back to the television screen.

"You're such a bore!" Twain rushed up to turn off the television. "You're constantly home and watch TV all day long! You're not even bothered!" He snapped at Dunn.

Dunn continued to look at him sympathetically. Although he did not say a word, his eyes said it all. Still waters run deep with this guy!