

Champions 861

Chapter 861: After getting the crown

For whole of 12th May, Nottingham was full of jubilation. There had been numerous reports in the local media about Nottingham Forest's success in defending the league title, and countless media outlets had gathered in the central English city to interview the newly crowned Premier League champions.

On 11th May, the Football Association (FA) officials presented a replica of the trophy to Nottingham Forest, and local media were critical of the FA's contempt for Nottingham Forest. As a result, on the next day, the FA replaced the replica with the actual trophy. This change was swift and it made them speechless.

After winning the championship, Twain gave the team a day off, but he reminded the players before the break that there were still two important games left so they could not go all-out and play.

The players were on holiday so Twain also gave himself a day off. On this day, he spent time with his wife. He did not go anywhere, choosing to rest at home instead. Shania enjoyed the time because on the last moments of yesterday's match, she had really been scared to death.

Watching her husband get nervous for a moment, then excited, then finally devastated for a while. Even as a bystander, her heart could not handle the strain, much less= Twain who had previously underwent a heart surgery?

Fortunately, the nuclear-powered heart was very strong and there was no problem. Otherwise Shania would rather have Twain's team achieve nothing at all the whole season than having her Uncle Tony suffer.

Shania still had a lot to worry about, even the next day.

Twain naturally knew this, so he had to make amends to Shania on this day. So he asked, "Where do you want to play? What do you want to buy?"

Shania came over and stuck onto him, blowing towards the tip of his nose and playfully said, "Don't want to go anywhere, just let me hug you."

Twain straightened his face, "I'm not your Totoro doll!"

Shania just ignored it, and hugged her husband like a doll, "Let me hug you, let me hear your heartbeat. I'm scared that this is all just a dream," she murmured.

Twain did not struggle any longer, he placed his chin gently against Shania's forehead.

"That's a strong heartbeat." Shania looked up and smiled at Twain. "I'm relieved!"

Twain did not roll his eyes, he gently rubbed Shania's hair. There was much he wanted to say but no words left his lips which only twitched a little.

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As Shania and Twain were hanging around at home, Bale was knocking on Shannon's door with a gift.

The girl seemed to be still angry with Bale, so she only opened the door wide enough to see Bale but not let him in. So Bale, with gifts and flowers at the door, was waiting for almost the entire day when he finally convinced her to open the door and her heart.

"I don't think you love me at all." Although Bale had entered her room, her mouth was still unyielding.

Bell smiled and stuffed flowers and gifts into Shannon's hand, then hugged her from behind and said, "Who told God to forsake me to be a professional soccer player? Sometimes you need to give in a little, you can't be jealous. You should know about our coach? His superstar wife did not like him coming into contact with football because she's worried about his heart."

Speaking of Twain and Shania, the girls would give in. When Twain married Shania, who was twenty years younger than him, he had attracted many guys' jealousy, but on the girl's side, it was the envy of many people and Shannon was no exception. Although she was not a fan, but as a Nottingham citizen, she also knew about the story of Tony Twain.

She snuggled up in Bale's arms, looking forward to her boyfriend being able to also give them an unforgettable romantic experience.

"Then... other than football, you are not allowed to love any other girl." The girl started to act coquettishly.

Bale kissed her earlobe gently, "Okay, I swear."

The girl laughed with satisfaction, as she just followed Bale onto the bed without hesitation.

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"The weather is nice, George."

Sophia sheltered her eyes with her hands as she squinted up at the sky. She was being supported by her son for a walk outside to bask in the sun. Her pale face was coated with a warm color of sunlight, as she regained some spirit.

Wood hummed in agreement.

"It's nice to win the league, aren't you happy?"

"Hm, I am."

"It's good that Mr Twain doesn't have to eat the table and make a fool of himself. . . In the last few minutes, I was really worried that he would suddenly fall on the sidelines. It was lucky that nothing unfortunate happened." Sophia bowed her head as she said softly.

Two people walked till they were tired as they sat down on a bench to rest.

Sophia turned and looked at her son. He was looking at the walkers in the distance.

He looked like there was much weighing on his mind.

Sophia did not want to disturb him, as she leaned against the back of her chair to enjoy the sun. She felt like she owed her son a lot. At this time, his teammates must have been busy dating their girlfriends, going out shopping, going to nightclubs, bars or other entertainment venues. Only George himself needs to accompany herself as she was useless as a human being.

Perhaps it would be better for George if she died?

It was a pity that she could not bear to leave George behind. She loved George and thought she was the one who loved George the most in the world, and she did not want to leave George alone. Unless there was another woman in this world who loved George more than she does, she would always stay with him.

Wood was startled as he realized that someone was leaning on his shoulder. He discovered that the person to be his mother.

Her mother at this time was like a little girl snuggling up to himself. With her eyes closed, mouth slightly uplifted as it conveyed happiness. The morning's rays were spilled onto her face, as a colorful glow was shown on her face.

Wood was a little stunned, as his mother has not had such a radiant expression for a long time. She was not well, so she had been in a bad state of mind. Maybe it was because of the sun?

He froze his body, and did not dare to move, in fear of disturbing his mother.

Maybe she was having a nice dream?

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Kenny Burns was standing alone in Nottingham city centre square in front of the bronze statue of Brian Clough. A number of bouquets had been placed at the base of the bronze statue. It was a lot more lively now compared to before. It was all because Nottingham Forest had successfully won the championships and the City stadium needing to be demolished, which reminded everyone about the memories of the past.

Just as he was standing here, several other fans came to lay flowers. Without exception, they were white-haired old men.

What they did not recognize about the old man who stood next to them, was that he was actually one of the architects of Nottingham Forest's first glory days, having won FWA Footballer Of The Year Award Today. Burns looked no different from an ordinary old English man, in which you simply cannot see the glory of the past that once belonged to him.

Just after yesterday's game, he and his former companions came here again, as they shared a picture together. But that was only a well-arranged activity by the media. He returned here again today, because he suddenly had something to say to his coach.

"Three league titles, coach. There might be a third European title and a third trophy of the season ... He's really not bad right, coach? Maybe better than you, even..." Burns looked up at the sky. It was crystal blue and there was absolutely no chance of a bolt of lightning slicing onto his forehead.

After discovering his reflexive movements, Burns laughed, "Ha! "

He remembered coach leaving them in September 2004 because of stomach cancer and died at the age of sixty-nine at Derby City General Hospital. The 69-year-old Ferguson was still leading the team to the Premier League and winning the Champions League. It was the second European Championship of his coaching career.

Now a decade was about to pass by in the blink of an eye.

Ten years ago, Nottingham Forest sent away the number one nobleman in the club's history as they welcomed the second. The coincidence in the numbers were really signifying a cycle with a flavor of fate in it.

Ten years ago, Burns really did think he would be alive, as he could see Nottingham Forest re-emerge as if it were a dream. A rookie coach who was knocked out of the head by a player on the sidelines had suddenly become Europe's hottest champion.

After standing for a little longer, Burns said goodbye to his coach and turned to walk away.

Behind him was Clough dressed in a cardigan, with his hands clasped together and his head raised. It was a scene when he decided to retire and bid farewell to tens of thousands of fans at the city's stadium, which was now permanently fixed by metal.

Beneath the bronze statue, there were still fans who came forward to send flowers and missed the moments. Some people, like Burns, stood in front of Clough's bronze statue and talked about the years of the past, and about their present glory. It was just like talking to an old friend.

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Despite being waiting at London's Heathrow Airport, Mr Bendtner, who was returning to Denmark, was still wearing sunglasses and still being able to be recognised. The "man of the round" of the round just made a huge appearance as he was unable to keep a low profile.

He was dragging his luggage to the gate as he was stopped by several people halfway through.

"Hey, Nikki!"

Those people were calling Bendtner's nickname, as he could not help but stop walking.

"Ha, it's Nikki! It's really you!"

Several people came together, and Bendtner instinctively wanted to refuse the interview. But he found out that those were not journalists, because they did not carry the interview bag, the camera in their hands were too amateur, their faces were very pleasantly surprised, this type of surprise was not the type of surprise when one seen a live news material, but the kind of joy that came directly from the heart.

He found it strange, did he have fans in London also?

Not wanting to disappoint the fans, he smiled as he waited to meet the other side's signature and photo requests.

As a result, the four men had no intention of taking a picture with him or asking for autographs. They just gave Bendtner a thumbs up, “Well done, those two goals! We watched the show, they were really wonderful!”

“Yeah, well done, Gini . . . Cough, it’s been too long, I’m really not used to it...”

“To tell you the truth, I had no hope for you guys. But I’m glad I was wrong in the end!”

Several enthusiastic fans loudly praised Bendtner as they patted him on the shoulder and arms and then left.

Bendtner turned to look at their backs, they were walking on their heels as if they were flying. He then suddenly realised that these guys were Nottingham Forest fans!

After thinking about this relationship, he then grinned silently.

Last time, whenever he returned to the city stadium, what greeted him were the loud boos and rants of Nottingham Forest fans. Like Judas, he was written in a Biblical story for future generations to scold him hundreds of millions of times, and had no opportunity and power to appeal for himself.

Now the situation was completely reversed and he actually got a heartfelt compliment from Nottingham Forest fans. They even shout nicknames that were only used to be only called in the past, and even patted his shoulders and arms.

Nottingham Forest winning the title was because of himself, it was really a plot in a drama. He did not want to help Nottingham Forest win the championship, he just did not want to be looked down upon.

Standing in place and lamenting his fate, Bendtner dragged his suitcase and continued to search for his waiting area. Yesterday’s exciting game was almost left behind by him. The joy of the Nottingham Forest man was too far for him.

The red memories were already getting blurry, he had his own future, which was unrelated to Nottingham Forest.

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After yesterday’s game, Wenger locked himself in a study as soon as he got home, he did not even want to get close to his wife. It was a special way for him to express and vent his anger — not wanting to eat or sleep, to lock himself up. No one knew what he was going to do, but when he came out from this isolation, most of it would show that his mood was back to normal.

This time, he came out from the study by dawn and gave his wife an apologetic smile.

His eyes were blood-shot, presumably from staying up all night. His wife was busy preparing dinner for him, as he sat alone on the sofa, keeping his eyes closed to rest.

After a night plus a day, the scene of failure was still clear, once he closed his eyes, he could remember it clearly. He had a higher chance of winning, but he lost the championship, what went wrong? Bentner was not marked down? He specifically called attention onto him, but he only needed to take two chances to score. This really could not be explained by common sense. Tactically he did not make a

mistake at all, and it was reasonable to say that he should not have gotten that ending. But this was football, it was unpredictable.

Fortunately, his heart was a little bit tougher than Twain's, and there's nothing wrong with that stimulation. In fact, those that looked more civilized would have a bigger reaction than those with a worse temper, once they are under huge pressure.

He closed his eyes, trying to banish the scene in his mind, and gradually felt fatigue wash over him.

When his wife came to him with dinner, she found that her husband had fallen asleep and was snoring slightly...

She put down the dinner, pulled a blanket, and gently covered her husband.

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Today, Shania was particularly passionate. She was moaning exceptionally happily as she closed her eyes while hugging tightly onto her lover, all ten of her fingers scratching marks onto Twain's back. It was as if she was afraid that once she let go, her lover would disappear. Only whilst closely holding him tightly in her embrace, feeling his warmth and heartbeats, listening to his breathing, enjoying his every thrust, would give her the sense of security.

For Bendtner and Arsene Wenger, the intense season was over, no matter if it was effortless or devastating, they could only accept this outcome.

But for Twain who is still battling without rest in bed, it was only a start to his most exciting summer. His heart would still need to continue to go through relentless tests..

Chapter 862: Please Eat the Table

Nottingham Forest really managed to defend their title, this made someone feel as if he was sitting on a bed of needles.

When the Forest players were on leave for a day, Carl Spicer was in a very bad mood since he woke up. He had left his mobile phone switched off since the end of the game yesterday to prevent people from disturbing him as he would definitely receive many calls from the media asking him when did he intend to make good on his promise the moment he switched it on.

Eating a table?

You've got to be joking! Is that something that a human can eat? I'm not a mouse!

He had no time to regret his bet with Twain then, he had to rack his brain to come up with a way to avoid this embarrassment.

At this moment, he heard the doorbell.

A staff from a logistics company was at the door smiling at him, "Mr. Carl Spicer?"

“Er, I am.”

Spicer had just woke up not too long ago and he was not dressed properly yet, he had not shaved and the tired look made him look a little haggard.

“There’s something for you.”

The courier pointed to a large box behind him.

Spicer could already guess what was inside it. If Twain had lost the league title, he would have also received such a package at his door, the only difference would be the sender would be different.

At that instant, a trace of anger flashed over his face and he wanted to deny it, “Er, I’m not...”

Before he could finish, more than a dozen reporters armed with hand-held cameras and video cameras popped out from the bushes at the side and started to take pictures of him.

Someone held a microphone and shouted at him, “Mr. Carl Spicer! Let’s talk about your thoughts! Nottingham Forest has won the title...”

That bastard Twain!

Spicer cursed him ferociously in his heart. He was not a fool, he knew that this courier and the reporters who ambushed him were all arranged by Twain who just wanted to embarrass him.

He could not deny his identity now.

The courier was also shocked by the reporters who popped out of nowhere. He turned to look at the people behind him and smiled. He was a football fan and he knew about the differences between Carl Spicer and Tony Twain.

“Mr. Carl Spicer, please sign here,” he tried to keep a straight face as he turned to talk to Spicer.

Since denying his identity did not work, Spicer could only sign his name on the delivery order.

The courier had no intention of helping Spicer move the box into the house — Spicer had hoped that he would do that so that the media at the door would not be able to watch the show.

But the courier left after receiving the signed document.

Spicer had no choice but to move the box himself and he realized that the box was too heavy to be moved by him alone. After a few tries, he looked at the reporters watching the show around him knowing that these people would never help him.

“Why don’t you open it, Mr. Spicer?” A reporter asked loudly.

“If it’s a table, it would be more convincing to eat it here.”

“If it’s not a table, we’re not interested to waste our time here either...”

Spicer had an uncertain look on his face. There was the sender’s name on the delivery order, what else could Tony Twain send him other than a table?

The reporters who only wanted to see chaos kept egging him on to open the box in front of them.

Spicer finally gave up, he could not escape this anyway...

He slowly opened the package. What shocked him was that the first thing that he saw was not a wooden or a metal table, but a huge cake box instead.

What's this?

Spicer looked at the box which had a faint scent of cream in a daze. The reporters also did not expect the box to contain something like this.

Could Twain have custom made a huge cake for Spicer?

Spicer had already thought of something. He opened the top of the cake box and laughed as he saw what was inside — Just as he expected.

A life-sized chocolate cake of a table which still had the smell of cream and chocolate in the morning air.

Even the reporters who were standing 10 steps away could smell it. They looked at each other as they did not understand what was going on — If Tony Twain wanted to embarrass Spicer, why would he send an edible “table” to make things easy for Spicer?

Could they have decided to take advantage of this opportunity to reconcile their differences?

That was too boring!

Ferguson had already retired. Wenger had the intention to retire, Mourinho had not returned ever since he left and now Carl Spicer and Twain were going to reconcile their differences, were they trying to put the news worker out of a job?

Carl Spicer did not care about the feelings of the reporters, he was feeling very happy then, as happy as when he cleared his bowels which had been constipated the whole night early in the morning. He took a whiff of the tempting scent of the cake and suddenly felt hungry — It was time for breakfast.

“Ha, it's a very nicely baked cake!” Spicer laughed and rubbed his hands. He looked at the reporters and asked, “Care to join me for breakfast my friends?”

The reporters all shook their heads with an unfriendly look on their faces — This was not what they had hoped to see. They could only wait for Spicer to have a bite of the “table”, take a picture of that and leave. They did not have the mood to have breakfast with him.

Spicer was in no hurry, he returned inside to make some milk, then tied a napkin around his neck and reappeared with a fork and knife in front of everyone.

“What a pity... I can't finish such a big cake myself...” He even acted sympathetically with an expression that made the reporters grit their teeth in anger, he was really taking his undeserved gains for granted.

Just when he was about to enjoy the cake, he realized that there was a card next to it. It was hand-written by Tony Twain.

Dear Mr. Carl Spicer,

The best chocolate cream cake, I hope you'll like it. I wish to take this opportunity to show you my token of goodwill and reconcile all our differences in the past. We'll just be giving those reporters a show to watch if we continued to be at each other's throats. Can you see them? They should be just in front of you, right? Look at their eyes, you have the same look in your eyes when you're at a circus looking at the clown, don't you? We have no need to sacrifice ourselves to entertain them. Finally, I would like to apologize for my comments towards you in the past.

Your dearest friend, Tony Twain.

Tony Twain was actually backing down!

This was sensational news and Spicer had already decided to flaunt this on his own show. Even though he was forced to eat a "table", it would be good to take back some of his honor like this... At the same time, he was thinking — Maybe Tony Twain was not so bad after all...

Spicer wiped the card clean and placed it in his shirt pocket before starting to eat with a smile on his face. He used his knife to cut a piece of cake then used his fork to put it in front his open mouth.

The reporters were very cooperative as they took out their cameras and video cameras to take pictures and videos of him "eating a table".

When the reporters are done with their pictures, Spicer put the cake into his mouth, gave a thumbs up as he chewed and raised his eyebrows. Even though he could not speak, he used his expression and action to praise the taste to the cake.

To prove that he was not faking it, he had a few more pieces before finally eating with his hands, sucking his fingers and licking the chocolate and cream off them when he was done. Next, he pointed with his index finger and played a fool in front of the reporters.

His expression was really annoying, and the reporters felt like they were pranked by Twain and Spicer together. They were not interested in watching anymore, there was no show to watch at all and they packed up and left.

Carl Spicer was so pleased that he brought a chair over and continued to sit in front of his doorstep, eating the "table" that Twain send him.

Looking at how satisfied he was, it was as if he wanted more reporters to take a picture of him.

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The news of Carl Spicer eating a table as he promised appeared on the papers, news station and on the internet in the afternoon. Everyone was shocked to see Spicer sitting at his doorstep, enjoying the table cake. The news stated that this was specially sent by Tony Twain and the readers had the same question as the reporters then — Why would Twain send an edible table to Spicer, did he not want to see Spicer embarrass himself?

To this, the media had their own guess.

"...Maybe Twain was tired of his spat with Spicer and wanted to take this chance to reconcile their differences."

This was a logical explanation and many people believed it.

A small group of people insisted that Twain could never back down after winning a bet. In their impression, Tony Twain would always try to do bad deeds and still wanted to have a good reputation. If he had a hold over someone, then he could only prepare to die a horrible death, with his body strung up on the city's gate and whipped for everyone to see. He loved to beat his opponent to the floor and give him a few hundred million stomps until his opponent were totally stomped into the ground.

That was why so many people hated him. He did not know how to give people a leeway, was arrogant, full of himself, considered everything to be beneath him, become arrogant once he had the advantage... It was really not easy for all these negative values to be concentrated on a single person. Yet many people loved to follow him and liked him, the reason is simple — Because he would always win. He had the rights to be arrogant.

That the "table eating" incident that everyone was looking forward to ended so pointlessly was quite boring.

This incident was not newsworthy, and the media decided to let go of Spicer. He could finally switch on his phone again without fear of being disturbed by the media.

The first call he got after switching on the phone was from the producer of "Football Matters". He said laughingly to Spicer, "Looks like you got away this time Carl. Okay, enough about this, there's not much value in this anyway. Come in to prepare for tonight's live show. It's the end of the season special, there are many things that you need to decide on."

Spicer hung up and drove out, satisfied.

In the end of the season special, the champions were the stars of the show. Nottingham Forest would have a lot of air time since they were the champions. Luckily for him, Twain gave him a way out this morning, so he was in a good mood. He decided to cut down on his mocking of the new league champion as a favor to Twain.

He decided to feign sincerity and congratulate Nottingham Forest even though he planned to place the emphasis on the match between Arsenal and Manchester City as that was the match that ultimately decided the winner of the league title. The match between Forest and Sunderland had no suspense at all, nothing worth paying attention to in particular.

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After 300 rounds in bed with his wife in the afternoon, Twain fell into a deep sleep, only waking up when the lights came on. Shania was making dinner in the kitchen.

She heard his footsteps and did not even turn back before saying, "Go watch some TV, dinner will be ready soon."

"Do you need help?"

"No," Shania turned and smiled at him, "You have a good rest today, you don't have to do anything."

Twain smiled back at her and left the kitchen to the living room and switched on the TV.

Looking at the time, it was already almost eight.

This was the golden period of the TV station as all kinds of interesting programs were aired at this timing. However, Twain was not interested in most of the TV program, with the remote in hand, he switched channels aimlessly. If he saw something that he vaguely had some interest in, he would stop to watch for a while before losing interest and switching again.

He switched channels for a while before his muddled brain that just woke up finally cleared up a little.

He remembered something. This was a very important thing.

So, he switched channel to Sky plc's sports channel.

Then looked at his watch.

The TV was still showing advertisements. He had already forgotten about dinner...

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If possible, Carl Spicer would really love to put his job down and rush to the toilet — Even though this was already his eighth time there, he could not stop the desire to defecate that stemmed from the depths of his stomach.

The producer looked at the pained look on Spicer's face worriedly. He knew what was wrong with his host of course, he got food poisoning, but he had no choice. This was a live show, he could not possibly cancel it at the last moment just because the host had an upset stomach otherwise the sponsors would have him for lunch.

"I'm fine, I'm fine..." Spicer continued to read the script for the night.

The producer slapped him on the shoulders, "It'll start soon, you can go once more."

Spicer rushed out immediately once he said that.

There was a scream from a lady that got knocked down and Spicer's apologies coming from a distance outside the door.

When Spicer reappeared in front of the producer with an exhausted look on his face, the producer did not say anything. He merely gave him a pat on the shoulders and indicated that it was time for him to go out.

Spicer suddenly had a look of a person entering his execution ground. He gritted his teeth and walked into the broadcasting room with determination.

In front of the camera, when he hosted the show with his habitual sardonic smile, his lower body kept shifting around on the chair while his stomach kept making gurgling sounds.

"...Tony Twain's team won the league title as they aimed for... Their... Hmm... Their journey to the title was very thrilling. Even after their match had ended, the league title still belonged to Arsenal..."

The attentive audiences must have already noticed that the Carl Spicer who was normally so good with words and spoke so quickly that he could overwhelm people who second-guessed him, was especially

slow with his speech today. He tried his best to make it look like he was deep in thoughts, but in the eyes of the audiences, they only felt that something was off with him today, yet they could not tell what was wrong.

“...Nobody expected Bendtner... to score in the final moment to help Manchester City grab a draw with Arsenal. Nottingham Forest won the title dramatically... At this point, I have to congratulate Nottingham Forest...”

Spicer said while grinding his teeth. At the same time, he was scolding and screaming hysterically in his heart.

“Damn bastard! Tony Twain! What was in that cake that you gave me?! You despicable, shameless, devil who deserves to go to the 18th level of hell and cut by a thousand knives! I curse you to never have any offspring!!!”

His stomach suddenly made another gurgling sound. Hearing this, Spicer’s face turned green...

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The audiences in front of the TV would not know why was Spicer acting weird tonight. But one man knew, because he was laughing very happily in front of the TV.

“What are you laughing at, Uncle Tony?” Shania asked out of curiosity after hearing the laughter. Then she saw Carl Spicer on the TV screen.

“Oh, that man... Didn’t you send him a table cake? Why do I get this feeling that he looks rather unwell?”

Twain explained to Shania as he laughed, “Ah, I ordered that thing a few days too early. And you know, there is no refrigerator big enough to keep such a big cake. The weather is also getting hotter...”

Shania understood and a smile appeared on her face as she watched the show, “Ah —— Uncle Tony, you’re evil!”

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The next day, Carl Spicer criticized Twain’s despicable and shameless move in his column furiously as he recounted his tragic experience of getting an upset stomach by eating expired cake.

However, not many people sympathized with him.

On the contrary, he became the new laughingstock of England.

There were even people leaving comments under his column asking if he shat his pants when hosting the show.

The evils that he brought upon himself were the hardest to bear

Chapter 863: A New Journey

A day's rest was very short, and everyone made full use of the time to enjoy a momentary break because they were going to face two intense finals soon.

On the day they returned to training, Twain was waiting for the players at the training grounds with a smile on his face as he greeted every single one of them while observing their expressions. He was very satisfied with the results. The players did not go too crazy during their break and they still remembered that they had two finals waiting for them even when they were relaxing in their day off.

From the 13th to the 17th, the Nottingham Forest's training was not focused on Tottenham Hotspurs. Twain was extremely familiar with their FA Cup's opponent. They would have to play each other twice a year at least and there were no secrets between the two teams. The match would be very intense and exciting as they would not pull any punches.

While preparing for the FA Cup, Twain was thinking more about the Champions League final.

La Liga was not over yet, although it was inevitable that Real Madrid would win the league title. Even though they did not have the chance to win the Copa del Rey, it would be impressive to win the double nonetheless.

The Spanish media was already analyzing the odds of Real Madrid winning the 10th Champions League trophy in their club's history. They gave an example from history to prove that this season's Champions League belonged to Real Madrid — In the year 2000, Real Madrid eliminated Barcelona before finally winning 3:0 against Valencia to win the eighth Champions League trophy.

The English media was not one to give up without a fight and the historical case study that they pulled out was equally compelling. During the times of Brian Clough, Nottingham Forest successfully defended their UEFA Champions League trophy at the Bernabéu. It can be said that Real Madrid's Bernabéu stadium was their lucky ground.

Everybody seemed to care very little about the FA Cup.

For Tottenham Hotspurs, things were much simpler. The FA Cup was the only trophy that they still had a chance to fight for, it would be a good thing for them if Nottingham Forest did not pay much attention to it. They could focus all their attention on winning the FA Cup and getting the rights to compete in next season's Europa League. Their league placing was not up to their expectations that season and if they wanted more glory and earnings for next season, they could only fight for the FA Cup.

There were even some Tottenham Hotspurs fans who indicated that the ideal result would be for them to win the FA Cup and Nottingham Forest to win the Champions League.

But...how could a sparrow know the will of a swan?

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The match was not for a few more days, but Twain could not bear the loneliness and initiated the war of words. When taking an interview with a reporter, he kept talking about the Champions League, about Real Madrid and the Bernabéu, but he did not mention the FA Cup or his FA Cup opponent.

In the end, the reporter interviewing him could not take it anymore and he asked, "What do you think about the upcoming FA Cup final Mr. Twain?"

Twain thought it was weird and he asked, "Do I need to think about it? It's an opponent that we meet twice a year at least, we're very familiar with them. I don't think that a FA Cup final can make them change into a team of a higher level like Arsenal. There's nothing to worry about." He smiled at the reporter confidently.

This attitude and opinion infuriated Tottenham Hotspurs. Their fans must be kicking themselves for supporting Forest to overcome Arsenal to win the league title during the last round together with Portsmouth.

Harry Redknapp was an old timer in the English football scene, and he could be considered as someone with reputation. Now that his team was humiliated by someone of the younger generation, he had to show up and say something.

"Of course, I would hope that Tony Twain thinks that way. Because that would give us a higher chance of being the Champion. In fact, I can't wait for Twain to continue thinking this way.

He expressed his displeasure by taking the initiative to show weakness.

His players were not so cultured though.

Fabian Delph, a talented player formally from the ranks of Leeds youth team joined Tottenham two seasons ago. Now, he was already one of the key players of Tottenham. He told reporters, "I've always looked forward to competing against manager Twain during such an important match. I don't want to high my thinking... I want to defeat them!"

"A team of Arsenal's level? A team of that level lost the league title too. Why would we want to become a level like that? Tottenham is Tottenham, we don't have to become anyone else to defeat Nottingham Forest." Ledley King, whom have been playing for Tottenham all this while, not only rebutted what Twain said, he even made use of the chance to mock Arsenal for losing the league title. A Tottenham old guard indeed, his hatred for the Gunners was deeper than anyone else.

"We've defeated Arsenal before, and we can defeat Nottingham Forest now too!" Brazilian goalkeeper, Gomes, also hoped to get his first champions' trophy since he joined Tottenham.

There was actually some history between Tottenham and Forest because there were two ex-Forest players in the Tottenham ranks now. One of them was center-back Michael Dawson and the other was Jermaine Jenas.

The latter did not have much feelings for Nottingham Forest because he left the team before Twain took over. Initially, he had the title of "England's highest valued youth player", but he did not particularly do very well and was now a peripheral player in the team. Michael Dawson used to be a center-back with bags of potential, but he was too injury-prone and lost his position in the national team. However, he was still better than Jenas in the sense that he would still be a key player in the club if he was not injured.

Jenas did not feel much for Twain and he participated a bit in the war of words. Dawson was grateful for Twain's part in developing him as a player and he did not participate. However, he would not think that way during the match. He would definitely do his best for Tottenham and defeat Nottingham Forest.

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After poking the hornet's nest for Tottenham and causing so much chaos, Twain left. He was acting during the interview. Not only did he not look down on Tottenham, he thought very highly of them. In these few days, other than analyzing Real Madrid, the team did trainings specially catered for Tottenham.

If one had to find something special about the FA Cup, it would be because it was the final match and their opponent would have even stronger will and energy than usual. These energies could cover the distance between the powers of these two teams. If Forest was not careful, they might still lose due to carelessness.

Since Twain was going for the treble, he definitely would not allow losing due to carelessness to happen.

When it was only two days to the match, he wanted the whole team to watch the videos of the last five Tottenham games, to familiarize themselves with their opponents while he analyzed every single detail for them, including Tottenham's usual tactics, the technical specialties and loopholes, how to make use of these loopholes, their method of doing so...etc.

The training durations were deliberately shortened for these two days and watching videos became a compulsory activity for everyone.

Who said that Twain was underestimating his opponent? If his opponent really thought so, they would be in for a show.

Watching the videos familiarized the team with their opponents and get themselves ready.

Next, Nottingham Forest only needed to wait for the match to start.

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On May 15th, the Forest team set off from Nottingham on their bus towards London and stayed in a hotel to prepare for the FA Cup final on the 17th. That was the first time Twain led the team to the FA Cup final and the club treated the game with utmost importance. The chairman even put down his work and specially rushed over to London to cheer the team on. He also announced that there would be a cash prize if the team won the FA Cup.

The club chairman motivated the players using money whereas Twain used discipline to ensure that the players would be in their best form. He requested everyone to sleep before 11pm and wake up before 8am for breakfast. There must be a break of one hour in the afternoon and there was to be no pork in all their meals, and no alcohol for the two days. These regulations were not just for the players, the coaches had to enjoy the same "treatment". It was still okay for them to have a set timing for bed and to wake up, but asking these Englishmen to not drink felt even worse than killing them.

Twain told the coaches during the coaching staff's internal meeting that there was no better way to manage a team than to lead by example. If you want your players to follow the regulations that you set, then you have to follow them first in order to convince them. Take Wood for example, he was always the most hardworking one in training and he was also the most serious one in matches. That was why he was still held in very high regards in the team even though he was not good with his words. That was the power of "leading by example".

He treated this FA Cup final very seriously and he would not allow even the smallest error.

This was Tony Twain's first time after all...

He had experienced many first times in his life, but this first kept eluding him.

Even though he had already won many different champion's trophies, he was still a little nervous when facing the FA Cup. It was as if he was a scholar taking the Imperial Examinations in the capital city in the past, he would not know whether he would be pass or fail the examinations the next day.

The other reason why he was so serious about the FA Cup was simple — This was the second trophy in the treble. If they lost the FA Cup, they would have failed to achieve the objective that they worked so hard for that season. This was the same logic as with the league, there was no room for failure.

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One day before the match, when the teams went to check out the venue at Wembley, both managers participated in a press conference.

No one could tell that the two of them were just engaged in a war of words when Redknapp and Twain sat together.

They were both very polite, Twain gave his senior in the industry enough respect while Redknapp seemed to have forgotten that Twain looked down on Tottenham previously.

They only talked about themselves and not their opponents. This press conference was so boring that it disappointed many people. Those reporters who came because of the news and wanted to incite some reactions between them were left wanting as the two wily foxes of different ages did not bite. They did not want to meddle with the other's affairs.

If the reporters insisted to asking Twain about what he said a few days back, Twain simply shut up and did not answer. It was not his first time doing so and he did not find it difficult at all.

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On May 17th, there was a slight drizzle in London since early in the morning. The temperature was four degrees lower than the day before and the atmosphere was comfortable. A drizzle should not have much effect on the pitch, however, Twain still requested for the coaching team to prepare two sets of boots for the players.

The rain was still coming down when they went to the stadium in the afternoon. Twain looked at the faraway sky before boarding the bus. The sky near Wembley was so white that it was shining, the rain would probably still fall for quite a while.

On the bus, Twain received a text from his wife reminding him to not stay out in the rain too long during the match in case he caught a cold.

The players were more relaxed and some of them even started playing poker at the back. Twain did not stop them, it was good for them to relax a little now.

Twain merely turned back to look at his players, then looked down at the message on his phone again.

If there was anything that could calm him down during this nervous moment which could trigger anytime, it had to be the care and concern of his wife.

When the Wembley Stadium appeared in the sights of everyone, the people who were playing cards, resting their eyes, listening to music, or texting, all looked up to witness England's iconic stadium.

This was their final battleground.

Twain also looked away from his phone to look at the massive stadium under the overcast skies.

This was not his first time competing in Wembley, but it was his first time managing a FA Cup final. There should be not much difference.

He closed his eyes to go through every one of his opponent's players once in his mind. He firmly believed that both him and his team were well-prepared, and the FA Cup would definitely belong to them.

The bus stopped at the exclusive lane and the fans nearby all rushed forward to witness the players at the earliest moment.

Kerslake was the first to alight, and he said in the rain, "Get down, get down!"

The players alighted one by one and they even had the mood to react to the fans' cheers.

Twain was the last to alight and he was stopped by the reporters who insisted that he reply some questions.

Twain remembered Shania's message and he put on a stern face and said, "No questions about prediction of the match, no questions about prediction of the score, no questions about the tactical arrangements, no questions about the starting lineup..."

"What can we ask about then?" One of the reporters protested.

"Oh, so there are not other questions? I'll be leaving then," Twain turned around and left after making a fool out of the media. He had no intention to stay out in the rain with the reporters who were in raincoats and holding umbrellas.

"Hey..."

"Mr. Twain, please stay..."

"He got us again!" Complaints from the reporters rang out all around them.

"Fine, he better pray that his team doesn't lose in the FA Cup final, otherwise I'll not let him off easily in the papers!"

"I think he better pray that his team will keep winning, otherwise none of us will let him off easily..."

Twain did not hear the vicious cursing of the reporters as he hurried into the tunnel to prevent himself from being drenched.

Even if he heard them, he would not pay much attention to them. It would not be so easy for those reporters to get the goods on him. He would not give his opponents a chance so easily.

Want to watch me embarrass myself? Not even in ten thousand years!

Chapter 864: One More Needed

Not everyone would be seated on the stands waiting for the match to start before the match.

When the referee blew the whistle signifying kickoff, there were still people entering the stadium, looking for their seats.

Just when these people were still looking down in the rain, looking for the seat numbers that corresponded to the numbers on their tickets, they heard a booming cheer coming from next to them. It felt as though a tsunami was coming, or an earthquake was occurring at that time and they could not even maintain their balance.

“Boom—!!”

These people looked up in a daze, saw the people surrounding them jumping around with their arms raised and they looked towards the pitch.

What did they see?

The team in red sprinting in excitement!

There was a voice from the live broadcast which drowned out the cheers, “1:0, Nottingham Forest takes the lead! The scorer is Aaron Mitchell!”

These people finally realized — When they were still busy looking for their seats, Nottingham Forest had already scored!

“This is really too fast! The TV broadcast wasn’t able to keep up with it... We can only look at the replay. After the kickoff, Şahin passed the ball back to George Wood, who distributed the ball to the flank... Fernández continued forward after an one-two with Gago and Gago lobbed the ball forward very accurately and beautifully! Fernández received the ball... He crossed it! Aaron Mitchell’s diving header! The ball’s in — It’s a goal!! Barely 20 seconds into the game! This is the record for the fastest goal in the FA Cup final, it’s also the record for the fastest goal for a cup final played in Wembley!!”

The commentator roared in excitement.

Twain pumped his fist in the rain and celebrated the goal with the people around him.

Back in the changing room, he told his players to get the first goal, a quick goal would bring the match towards their rhythm, but he did not expect the team to give him such a great surprise — They actually scored after 20 seconds.

“No matter what’s the results of this match, Nottingham Forest and Aaron Mitchell have already etched their names in the history of the FA Cup with this goal!”

Mitchell sprinted towards the stands where the majority of Forest fans were at in the rain. He egged them on with his arms, asking them to shout louder and louder. He loved to hear this kind of cheers.

Tottenham did not expect Forest to score so early in the game. The match had just begun, and their defense were not organized yet. Forest took advantage of this small window of opportunity and hit Tottenham where it hurts.

Harry Redknapp's face was darker than the London skies then. He could not say anything about conceding a goal like this at the sidelines.

He had thought that Forest would take it slow in this match after a sequence of high intensity matches, using a strategy of drawing their opponents out before hitting them on the break.

He did not expect Tony Twain's team to be so determined in attacking right from the start, that was totally beyond his imagination.

Such an early goal had some element of luck of course. However, what was the point of saying that his opponent was just lucky at this point in time?

It's a fact that they were trailing, and that their opponent was leading. There would be peculiar changes in the match due to such happenings.

The worst thing that could happen in a match against Twain's team was to give them the lead. Forest could choose to continue attacking next or play a defensive game and hit them on the break. No matter what they do, it would be akin to torture for their opponents.

How should Tottenham deal with it?

Attacking?

Redknapp was not that stupid. Pressing up in attack would be like opening their doors for a few more Forest goals. He decided to shore up their defense first. After all, trailing by a goal was nothing, they just needed an opportunity to level the score.

He had to stabilize his players' state of mind first, they must not lose their cool and panic, they must not give Forest another opportunity to take advantage and score another goal. This match would be difficult if they were to trail by two goals.

He stood at the sideline and shouted towards the pitch, asking his players to calm down with hand signals at the same time.

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After 17 minutes, Tottenham levelled the score from a corner kick. The scorer was Michael Dawson. He did not show any mercy against his former club with an accurate and powerful header. Akinfeev did not even react to it as a group of people watched the ball fly into the goal. Some of the players even got their eyes blurred by the water splashing up.

Tottenham levelling the score made the fans doubly excited. When they were trailing earlier, these people were worried that the trophy would be given to Forest just like that, but it seemed like Tottenham did not want to give up yet.

Twain had no intentions of shoring up his defenses after Tottenham scored. Instead, he encouraged his two full backs to continued attacking from the sideline.

Redknapp could tell Twain's intentions too. Since Forest was attacking, there would bound to be spaces behind. That was why Tottenham had to attack too, how else could they take advantage of these spaces?

One of the most exciting battles in the history of FA Cup finals has begun.

In the 39th minute, Tottenham Hotspurs took advantage of an opportunity to attack after Forest's right-back Rafinha did not manage to rush back in defense in time and launched a quick counterattack. Pavlyuchenko made a feint when one-on-one against Akinfeev which made Akinfeev lose his footing and lost the best opportunity to dive on the ball. Pavlyuchenko rounded Akinfeev easily and put the ball into the empty net.

Tottenham had come from behind to lead 2:1!

The cheers of the Tottenham fans rang out from the stands. When Forest scored right at the start of the match, they could not imagine that Tottenham could come from behind to lead in the first half.

However, their cheers only lasted two minutes. In the 42nd minute, Mitchell used his individual skills against three Tottenham defenders, but he got pushed to the ground by Dawson. The referee blew for a direct free kick in the attacking half for Forest.

Bale stood on the ball and the Forest fans started singing the "Song of Bale".

The ball was about 28 meters away from the goal and the wall was very compact. As a team in the English Premier League, everyone knew about the threat of Gareth Bale's free kick.

George Wood and Gago did their best to squeeze into the wall, positioning themselves near the near post of the goal. It looked like Bale would be shooting from this angle towards the goal later, hence the Tottenham players pushed towards the near post, trying their best to squeeze the two Forest players out.

When the referee blew the whistle, Wood and Gago left the wall as expected, but the empty spaces left behind were covered by Tottenham players almost instantly... However, nobody expected Bale to not go for the near post, choosing to shoot towards the other side instead. The ball flew around the wall from the other end straight into the far corner of the goal!

That was obviously one of the free kick routines which they practiced countless times.

The goalkeeper Gomes was deceived by the wall and the tactics of the Forest team. When Bale took the free kick, he even moved his center of gravity towards to near post. As the ball flew towards the goal from the other side, he could do nothing but watch the ball fly into the far corner of the goal!

"2:2!! The first half is not over yet and there are already four goals between the two teams! What an exciting first half!"

The Tottenham fans kept mum, this time, it was the Forest fans who sang in the rain.

Of course, there were also some Forest fans who thought that it was weird. Tony Twain usually did not find it hard to resort to conservative tactics in important matches, why did he suddenly choose to play an attacking game against his opponent? They were worried that if this went on, Forest might fail instead.

Twain's thoughts were very simple. He wanted to make use of this match to check on his team's attacking prowess. Against a team like Real Madrid, it would not be sufficient to be able to defend.

When the first half ended, the two teams were level with the score at 2:2. The match was played in a very quick rhythm from the start and the fans got their money worth.

Many people did not expect such an exciting match to be played out in a FA Cup final. Nowadays, football had become more and more practical and finals were usually a boring affair. Especially so if Nottingham Forest was involved in the final.

They did not expect Twain to suddenly have a change of heart which made it difficult for everyone to get used to it.

Was he going to raise the flag of attacking football and play an open game with Tottenham?

Redknapp must have thought so, because he told his players during the halftime team talk to continue pressing the attack and take advantage of the spaces behind when Forest attack in the second half.

However, at the same time, in Nottingham Forest's changing room, Twain smiled and told his players, "We'll play on the break in the second half."

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The changes in the situation of the second half were beyond Redknapp's expectations too.

His team pressed up in attack, but he soon realized that Nottingham Forest did not come forward in attack too. Instead, they retreated to the back and started to position themselves to play on the counterattack...

The commentator was very disappointed at this change and started to insult Twain again, "Tony Twain must be afraid, afraid that his team might continue conceding goals and lose morale or even the game if he continued to play an open game with Tottenham. I think he can't take this failure and therefore chose to play a more conservative game... What a pity, only the first half of this final is exciting..."

Redknapp was not dumb. He knew Twain was going to play on the counterattack when they drew back their defensive line, if he continued pressing forward, he would have been asking for it.

Hence, he drew back too.

No wonder the commentator sighed and said that the first half was more exciting.

After 20 minutes of boring football, Redknapp finally could not take it and launched the attack first.

They bombarded the Forest goal for ten minutes without any result while the Forest team turtled in a total defensive formation.

Just when Tottenham was going to take a breather, the dagger that was hidden in Forest hands suddenly shot out!

Akinfeev did not pump the ball up, choosing to throw the ball out to start the attack. This was a counterattack with a purpose.

Gago sprayed a long ball to the flank after receiving the ball. Moke received the ball quickly and he did not continue bringing the ball forward. Instead, he took a look at the situation in front and chose to play a direct, diagonal ball towards the front of the penalty area.

Mitchell followed the ball with his long legs with Michael Dawson following him beside him!

The pass that Moke played was a rolling ball and it was very fast on the wet grass. Mitchell was not a fast player, but he was still fast enough when compared to a center back, and he had long legs which was a very useful advantage. For example, now...

Moke's pass was a little bit forward, it was difficult to receive such a ball, let alone control it.

However, Mitchell did not even think about controlling it!

When the ball reached the arc of the penalty area, the 2.02 meters tall Mitchell suddenly jumped and slid towards the ball!

Michael Dawson did not expect this tall fellow to slide towards the ball from outside the penalty area! He was stunned momentarily and lost track of his target just like that.

Gomes originally wanted to come out for the ball but dropped back after realizing that Dawson was following his target also did not expect Mitchell to choose and slide after the ball from outside the penalty area...

Why is he sliding the ball? He's not a defender!

The football told him about Mitchell's plan in the next second.

Mitchell successfully reached the ball and the ball flew directly towards the goal after changing direction!

Earlier on, it was established that the ball would roll especially fast on the wet grass. Gomes did not expect Mitchell to shoot directly...a sliding shot from outside the penalty area!

Gomes could not dive in time and the ball rolled past his fingertips! It rolled towards the goal on the grass very quickly...

Dawson ran past Gomes and ran towards the ball, planning to clear it.

He was just a step too late and he kicked air as the ball rolled past him, hit the post and went into the goal.

"3:2! A brace for Mitchell!"

Mitchell became the hero of the Nottingham Forest fans. He raised his arms and thanked God for giving him such an opportunity — To score a brace in the FA Cup final!

His childhood dreams were being fulfilled one by one.

The Nottingham Forest's players were all very excited as they surrounded Michell, slapping him on the head and shoulders.

Their target this season was the treble. They had already won the league title and they were leading Tottenham by 3:2 in the FA Cup final with victory in sight. Two trophies would definitely improve their morale and confidence greatly.

But Twain was only happy for awhile before shouting at his team to focus and not let out in their attack. A lead of one goal was not safe...

Redknapp knew that Twain would do that. Taking the chance of Forest scoring, he waved his hand —— Tottenham was to continue attacking. They must score before Forest scored again!

He almost succeeded.

A long shot from Modric was out of Akinfeev's reach but it came back off the crossbar and out.

The Forest Fans broke out in cold sweat from the shock.

The rain started to fall heavier.

Twain had already forgotten his wife's instructions before the match. He stood straight on the touchline and allowed the rain to drench him with no intentions of moving back. He encouraged his team using this method.

His players were playing in the rain, as a manager, he had to brave the rain with them.

The teams started to play an intensive game after 20 minutes of a quiet game as the match became more exciting.

It might be because of the weather condition, the excitement of the match deteriorated. Mistakes became much more abundant following the drop in energy level and the match after that was difficult to watch.

However, Twain and Redknapp were still very focused. They were not looking at what was happening on the surface, but what was happening on a deeper level. Everyone was making mistakes, it was all about which side could capitalize on the other side's mistake now.

On the 81st minute, Nottingham Forest capitalized on Tottenham's mistake first. Agbonlahor, in as a substitute for Mitchell assisted from the flank and Şahin followed up from the middle and fired the ball into the goal.

This goal basically pronounced the death sentence for Tottenham.

Following that, Tottenham struggled for a while more, but they could not break through the Forest goal. This was because Nottingham Forest shamelessly played with everyone in defense after taking a two goals lead and did not give Redknapp's team any chance at all.

When injury time started, the Forest fans started to sing and dance on the stands in the rain. They were singing Queen's "We are the Champions", announcing their victory ahead of time.

When the referee blew the whistle for full time, the fans' singing became thunderous cheers.

The Forest bench rushed onto the pitch with Twain leading them as they embraced the players on the pitch.

"Congratulations, Tony Twain! He finally got the first FA Cup trophy in his managerial career! In all the competitions that he had participated in, other than the UEFA Europa League, he has won all the trophies that he could win! This is really a historical moment! The most successful manager in England for the past decade has etched his name on this trophy with the longest history in English history! His team and him are creating history!"

Twain was lifted by his players above their shoulders and paraded.

He extended his arm and pointed towards the sky — Just one more trophy!

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The day after the match, the media used a photo of him doing this, with a caption:

Nottingham Forest, pointing their sword towards the UEFA Champions League!

Chapter 865: Confess

When Tony Twain returned to Nottingham with the Football Association Challenge Cup, everyone knew what his next goal would be. At this juncture, he would be letting the two previous championship titles down if he did not win the Treble.

Like the league tournament, Twain gave the team a day off after winning the title to allow the players and coaches to have a break before they got ready to take on a strong opponent.

Having won two championship titles, Tony Twain once again became the focus of media attention. The reporters were unwilling to give up any opportunity to get close to him and interview him. Even if he was on vacation, he still had reporters who wanted to interview him.

Pierce Brosnan was one of them. He had one advantage over the other reporters—he had Twain's personal cell phone number, and he could contact him anywhere at any time, while the other reporters did not have that privilege at all. Twain disliked the media. Even though he would not have been successful and arrogant had it not been for the media, he still would not show face to the media. Therefore, when the other media wanted to interview the manager, Tony Twain exclusively, they could only submit applications to the club and then wait for a reply. Their applications usually did not receive a positive response, so Twain had been called "England's most difficult manager to interview" and ranked first on the "reporters' most unpopular manager list."

Brosnan planned to contact Twain on his private line today to request for an interview.

But he made three calls in a row from 8 o'clock in the morning, and Twain's cell phone was turned off.

Brosnan shook his head in puzzlement. He thought for a while and could only put the reason down to Twain must still be in bed with his wife, either sleeping or making love and so he did not turn on his cell phone.

It looked like it was difficult to interview this man...

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Brosnan thought Twain must be doing a morning exercise with his wife. But in truth, he was wrong.

At eight o'clock, Twain went out alone in his car while Shania was still asleep in bed after a night of passion.

Even if Shania had awoken, Twain would not bring her along. For the place where Twain was going and the matter that he needed to settle, he did not want anyone else to disturb, even if it was his wife, the most important person in his life. In order not to be disturbed by others, he even turned off his cell phone.

The place he was heading to was south of Nottingham, near Clifton. Like the north of Nottingham, there was also a large dense forest. Behind a church on top of a hill was a cemetery hidden from view in the woods.

Gavin Bernard, the first fan in George Wood's life, laid in rest here.

In fact, Twain came here, not long ago. Although he was Briton, he still had not forgotten some of the traditional Chinese customs deep within him. For example, every year on the Qingming Festival, he would come back here to make offerings to Gavin. On this day, Twain would certainly take time out to make a trip here. If the team had a game on day of the Qingming Festival, he would come here a day ahead or the day after the game. The people around him did not quite understand why he chose to visit Gavin at this time, because there was no Qingming Festival in the Western countries.

Coming back here again in a little more than a month, Twain brought Gavin two pieces of good news.

"The league tournament and the Football Association Challenge Cup ." Twain stood at Gavin's gravestone and said to him, "Everyone out there is going nuts with happiness. Do you know how many years it has been that Nottingham Forest have not won a Football Association Challenge Cup ? Fifty-five years. It's half a century. Heh, to be honest, I didn't think of this issue before the game. But when the reporters asked about it after the game, I only found out then that we had not won the Football Association Challenge Cup for so long. All is good now. Fifty-five years of resentment is finally over."

"Have you watched those two games? It was so hard to win the league tournament. I almost gave up... Truthfully speaking, I'll only say these words to you alone, Gavin. No one else knew... I really wanted to give up in the final three minutes. I even figured out how to deal with the nasty reporters. To eat a table?! I'll easily eat a table made of chocolate cake. Anyway, I did not state the material of the table! Ha!"

Twain laughed smugly.

"It's really tiring to be a manager. I almost ended up down there to accompany you. But I'm tough. So many people want me to die but I refuse to die. So, I'm still alive, and I'll continue to win championship

titles for you. But ...” Twain thought for a bit, “There’s something buried in my heart for almost a year, and I didn’t tell anyone, not even my wife. Now I’m going to tell you, because I know you won’t blabber to anyone... I’m going to give them a big surprise when the time comes!”

Twain turned to look around. There was no one else in the small cemetery but himself. The wind blew from the forest through the cemetery and the sound of rustling leaves was the only sound that could be heard.

Twain got down on one knee and held the gravestone as if he were stroking Gavin’s head. He bent his head down and wriggled his lips beside the tombstone, but no sound came out.

With that, he stood up again, with a smile on his face and said, “What do you think of the idea? I really look forward to seeing their surprised expressions by then. But I have to say I’m sorry to you... Well, you’re not going to be the chairman of the Nottingham Forest club anyway. If you really could, I would still be in that position even if I were to be ninety-eight years old. Sometimes I look forward to that day and I’m excited just thinking about it in my mind.”

Twain cocked his head, as if he was fantasizing about a future like that.

“But...” He looked away and his gaze focused again on the tombstone. “I can only think about it in my mind.”

“There’s only one championship title left.” Twain sighed, “I suddenly have a kind of tiredness that appears at the end. Do you feel that way, Gavin? After you’ve run a marathon and saw that the end is near, but your body doesn’t feel right—you don’t want to run, your legs are running out of energy, you can’t breathe as if you’re just going to stop. Because you’re tired.”

Twain simply sat down, face to face with the tombstone.

“I really don’t want to run, but I can only say this to you here. I can only whine to you. If I really were to fall before the finish line, I’ll kill myself. Regardless of the outcome of the next game, at least I can’t give up until the end of the game. You know what, Gavin? So many people are looking to me. My players, my colleagues, my boss, my supporters, my opponents... Countless eyes are on my back and I can’t make any mistakes. My supporters will be disappointed if I make a mistake while my opponents will clap their hands in delight. You’re going to say why do I have to go head to head against so many people, don’t you? I can’t help my lousy temper. I really can’t pretend....to be a nice guy. A tepid-like character is not suitable for me. I’m extreme. Either I die or they die...I’m forty-five years old and still act like a child.”

“Well, actually I’m not that old...” Twain coughed. He felt uncomfortable once he stated the age. “I’ll tell you a little secret, which is something that not even the closest person to me knows about. I... Well...” He looked up and glanced around. There was still no one else around. “I came from another time and space. In that time and space, I’m not the Forest manager. I’m not even English. I’m very ordinary, and I don’t know you either. If I hadn’t come here, you wouldn’t be lying here, would you?”

Twain shook his head and said, “Let’s not talk about this. I will lose my fighting spirit after talking too much about some stuff.”

While he was still chatting to Gavin as he sat on the ground, a person had turned in from the entrance of the cemetery.

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George Wood bought a bunch of flowers outside the church and asked for a card. He wrote on it with a crooked handwriting, "For Gavin, your George."

He only wrote "George" the best, which was trained from signing autographs all the time for the fans.

As he wrote on the card, he remembered how Twain had laughed at his ugly handwriting.

"Look at the words you wrote. It's worse than a grade school student's handwriting!"

Wood inserted the card into the bouquet and picked it up as he went out of the florist.

It was at this point that the owner of the florist dared to ask him in a whisper, "Are you really George Wood?"

When Wood walked in through the door, he thought he was seeing things.

Wood did not say much. He just picked a bunch of lilies, asked for a card, paid, and left. The entire proceeding took less than a minute from the moment he stepped into the shop and he only spoke two sentences.

"Please give me a bouquet of lilies and a card."

"Thank you."

Wood did not have a habit of wearing sunglasses to hide his identity when he went out. But he would not take the initiative to expose himself either. The florist did not react at first because he did not think that George Wood would come to his little flower shop. It was not until Wood left that he reacted.

"What's he doing here?" He frowned and muttered in puzzlement.

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As Wood walked into the cemetery, he saw a man sitting in front of his destination, as if he was saying something.

When he got closer, he recognized the man sitting on the ground and it was the boss.

Twain also realized that Wood was nearby. Neither of them was surprised to see each other here.

Twain stood up and gave way to Wood, who stepped up to put the bouquet in front of the gravestone, close to the bouquet that Twain had placed before him.

"Do you want me to give you some privacy?" Twain was going to leave first.

Wood shook his head and said, "No. I have nothing to say."

"You're so heartless, George." Twain began to tease George.

Unexpectedly, Wood replied, "I don't know what to say."

Twain stared blankly for a moment and then waved his hands. He said, "Then let's go. I'll give you a ride back."

Wood nodded his head.

The two men glanced at Gavin Bernard's gravestone at the same time and turned to leave.

"Aren't you going to buy a car, George? You're now a big star. People may laugh at a big star without a car."

"I've no use for it at the moment."

"You have such low expectations in life... Are you not going to find yourself a girl? How old are you, George?"

"Twenty-seven."

"Twenty-seven and you still don't want to look for a girl. Do you want people to say you're gay?"

"I love my mother."

Twain turned to give Wood a glance and said nothing.

No one would believe it if it was known that a twenty-seven-year-old star was still single. But it was to be expected and reasonable when it came to George Wood. There seemed to be room for only one woman in his life, and that was his mother. The child with an Oedipus complex could never imagine how it would be like to have another woman share his love. Even Twain had a deep-rooted belief that it would be a strange sight if one day a woman who was not his mother, were to be by Wood's side...

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When he sent Wood home, Twain met Sophia.

Sophia was also delighted to see Twain. Her face was even flushed. She wanted Twain to stay for lunch, but Twain tactfully declined because he had to go home to spend time with his wife. Shania must have made lunch and waited for him.

Sophia was a little disappointed, but her look of disappointment was soon covered up.

Twain did not even go inside the house. He would be in a complicated mood every time he faced Sophia. He knew how Sophia felt about him, but he was a man with a wife, and he did not think it was appropriate for him to be with Sophia. In order not to continue to let Sophia labor under this delusion, sometimes he deliberately kept his distance. It would certainly hurt Sophia a little. But it was better that than to lie to her.

While Sophia was urging Twain to stay for lunch, Wood stood at the side and said nothing.

Twain recalled Wood's words and felt strange. He did not linger and directly said goodbye to the mother and son.

In his heart, he only hoped that Sophia and George would live on happily.

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Pierce Brosnan intended to call all day. However, Twain's cell phone was always turned off. He was confused. Twain's cell phone was rarely switched off. Even at two or three o'clock in the morning, a call

to him would still go through. Of course, it was also unsurprising that he would be scolded by him after the call had connected and then be hung up on.

He thought of a lot of possibilities in his head. The more he thought, the worse it got, and he decided not to think about it.

He did not get through until after 9 p.m.

When he heard that the sound coming from the line was not prompting him with “the number you have dialed is not in service” message, but the “beep-beep-beep-beep” tone of waiting to answer, he almost felt the impulse of excitement.

“I’ve been calling you all day, Tony!” Brosnan cried excitedly on the phone.

“Are you trying to woo me? Unfortunately, I don’t like men, Mr. Reporter.” Twain joked with Brosnan.

“I wanted to ask you for an interview. Now that you are a red-hot star, I was afraid that I would be too late, and you would be snapped by someone else ...”

“I’m not a merchandise... All right, I promise you, but not right now, not tomorrow, and not the day after tomorrow... I will not take any interviews until the Champions League final. I have rejected all the applications sent to the club for interviews. You’re no exception as well, even though we have a good friendship .”

“Is it so that you can prepare for the Champions League final with a peace of mind?”

“Of course. Actually, I’m doing you a favor, Mr. Reporter. When I win the Champions League, it’s going to be difficult for you to ask me for an interview.” Twain said seriously on the phone.

Twain was putting on airs, but Brosnan did not care, as long as Twain had promised him an interview.

“Well, that’s great. I wanted to confirm this... Well then, I’ll leave you guys be...” Brosnan hurriedly hung up because he heard Shania’s laughter on the other end of the line.

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Shania could not help but laugh when she saw that Twain’s straight face as he put on airs.

Twain put down his cell phone and opened his hands to Shania.

Shania immediately came closer and leaned in her husband’s arms.

“Where do you want to go this summer, Shania?” Twain gently smelled Shania’s hair and asked.

“Aren’t you going to be busy? Is BBC asking you to do the commentary for the World Cup in South Africa? When the World Cup is over, the team should be training again, shouldn’t they?” Shania asked strangely.

Twain smiled instead and said, “Who can say what’s going to happen in the future? Where do you want to go?”

Shania curled her body in Twain’s arms and closed her eyes as she enjoyed Twain’s caress while she muttered, “Anywhere is fine, just as long as I’m with Uncle Tony...”

Twain lovingly stroked Shania's hair and said nothing.

Chapter 866: Madrid

The team flew from Birmingham to Madrid after undergoing training for four days at their training grounds at Wilford.

Twain was very familiar with Spain's capital. He has been in Madrid numerous times before.

The moment the team stepped out of the airport, they could tell that the city was gearing up for the Champions League finals.

Promotional banners and posters were hung on the walls by the sides of the roads all the way to the hotel that they were staying in.

The team might not have stepped foot in the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium yet, but they could already envision the sort of scenes that they would see there.

Besides the promotional banners and posters for the Champions League finals, the respective team flags of the two finalist teams were also hung in the air.

There were significantly more Real Madrid flags than Nottingham Forest flags. That is to be expected, since they were playing in Madrid, and this is the home advantage that Real Madrid gets to enjoy. If they were to be playing in a 'neutral' venue however, the number of team flags should be the same for both teams.

The entire city of Madrid was basked in excitement over Real Madrid's qualification for the Champions League finals. The Real Madrid fans all believed that their team has a 85% chance of winning the match.

Their beliefs were not unfounded. Real Madrid would be playing on their own home grounds, and the fact that they are playing in the Bernabéu Stadium would undoubtedly spur the players on and make them play at their best. After all, it is not often that a team gets to play on their own home grounds in the Champions League finals.

As the bus that Forest rode on drove past the downtown area of the city, the team saw numerous Real Madrid fans congregating around the streets. Such sights could be seen throughout the city, and their numbers would only increase as the day for the finals draw close.

The Real Madrid fans waved at them upon seeing the bus. They did not appear to be hostile, and there does not appear to be tension in the air either.

However, Twain knew very well that the expressions on those fans' faces would change the moment his team creates trouble for Real Madrid in the finals.

It was not as if he has not heard the ear-splitting boos from the Real Madrid fans in the Bernabéu Stadium before. He knew that they are capable of showing hostility towards opposing teams.

Nonetheless, boos would not perturb Twain in the slightest, since he was someone who attracted boos wherever he went, and he has grown used to them.

“Look at that. Look at how they are smiling at all of you. Wave back, lads. You are not going to see such amiable smiles during the match for sure.”

Twain said to his players, and laughter instantly rang out within the bus.

The bus turned and stopped before the entrance to the hotel. There were many reporters who were already waiting before the doors.

The reporters from all over the world have all gathered here in Madrid to provide the fans with timely updates regarding the Champions League finals.

The Forest players have all grown used to being in the spotlight and seeing large crowds of reporters surrounding them. Thus, they paid the reporters no attention when they alighted from the bus, and they walked straight into the hotel.

Some of the more popular players were still stopped by the reporters, however. They were asked a few questions, but the reporters quickly changed their target when they noticed that Tony Twain had finally alighted from the bus after everyone else did, and they collectively flocked over towards him.

Twain felt as though he was looking at a pack of drooling wolves when he saw the reporters charge at him. He whistled in response.

“Mr. Twain. Is this your first time playing a match in the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium?”

“I don’t know. I don’t remember.”

“Can you predict the results of the match?”

“Sorry, I have never predicted the results of any match.”

Twain might have said that, but the reporters did not think that he was speaking the truth. They had their ways to make him talk.

“Mr. Twain. Firstly, I’d like to congratulate you for achieving the Double by clinching both the Premier League trophy and the FA Cup trophy. So... Are you confident of clinching your third trophy?”

“We made it into the finals. How could we be fighting for second place?”

Twain flung his hands out.

He said he was not going to predict the results of the match earlier, but didn’t he just predict the match with those words of his?

The reporters laughed in satisfaction.

“How would you describe Real Madrid as a team? They too have won the league title this season...”

“Real Madrid is a very strong team. They are the strongest team in Spain. I am very happy that we can face such an opponent in the finals, and not some other never-heard-before team.” Twain appeared to have shown enough respect for Real Madrid.

“Are you worried that the stress of achieving the Treble would affect your team’s performances now that you are so close to achieving it?”

Twain smiled. “I am worried about them not being able to sleep well at night. I’m also worried that they will get injured during the match. And, I’m also worried that our plane back to England would be a little late... But, I’ve never worried about them performing badly on the pitch. Performing badly? What the hell is that?”

Twain oozed of confidence as he dealt with the reporters’ questions with ease. If there were any fan girls of his standing by the side right now, they would have shrieked in joy at his behavior.

“You look like you are full of confidence, Mr. Twain. We all know that Franck Ribéry was a player whom you brought over to England from the French Ligue 2. But he has betrayed you now...”

Twain cut the reporter off. “I’m sorry. This is something that happened many years ago. Please do not ask questions that have nothing to do with the match.”

“Uh... Are you worried that he would score against you in the finals?” The reporter hesitated for a moment before phrasing his question as one that seemed to have something to do with the finals.

“He is a Real Madrid player right now. Would it be surprising if he scored against me?” Twain looked at the reporters who had anticipation written all over their faces and paused. “He is a brilliant player and he has performed well in Real Madrid. I am very pleased to know that I didn’t make the wrong judgment back then.”

When he finished his words, he pushed away the reporters and thronged towards the security guards. He was then escorted into the hotel by them.

“Mr. Twain! I still have another question...”

“Manager Twain! Manager Twain!”

The question about Ribéry caused Twain to remember the past, and that upset him, because he did not like to reminisce about the past before the public.

Twain ignored the shouts from the reporters behind him and he briskly made his way into the elevator. When he turned around, there was not even a twinge of a smile on his face. His expression remained unchanged right up till the moment the elevator doors closed before the horde of reporters.

The expression on his face was a clear sign to the reporters that he was angry and that the interview was over.

In truth, he has almost forgotten about Ribéry ever since the latter left the club for Real Madrid. The two have not kept in contact since then, and the last time the two communicated with each other was when Ribéry left Twain a letter after his departure.

However, that very letter had been ripped up and scattered into the morning breeze at Wilford by Twain himself.

The British media is very egotistical. They would not report about a particular player once he stops playing in England. They show total indifference to the footballing matters that happen in other

countries, but they are willing to report about even the smallest of things related to British football. Hence, it is not easy to read news reports about a particular player who is playing in La Liga.

When Twain first learned of their opponents in the Champions League finals, he thought of Ribéry.

He feels a mixture of emotions towards the lad. He really likes Ribéry as a player, since he was the one who brought him over to England from France, and he was also the one who personally groomed him into the player that he is today. However, he still resents him for abandoning him and the club back then.

There might not be many players left in the club who used to play in the same team as Ribéry right now, but Twain was still intent on teaching Ribéry a lesson for what he did all those years ago.

Despite being 31 years of age this year, Ribéry is still able to find a spot as a starting player for Real Madrid. His pace might have gone on the decline over the years, but his technique, experience and fight makes up for his lack of pace.

The fact that Ribéry is still able to play as a starting player for Real Madrid when van der Vaart left years ago is proof of the difference in status between the two players during their time in Forest. Ribéry was the core of the team, whereas van der Vaart was just a starting player for Forest.

Twain took the elevator to the 11th floor. Kerslake was waiting for him at the lobby, and he waved the room key at Twain when he walked out.

“Your room’s 1101.”

Twain received the room key from Kerslake.

Kerslake asked, “Have you thought about what you are going to say to Ribéry when you see him?”

Twain shrugged. “If his team loses to us, I’d hug him. If they win... Ah, damn. It’s bad omen to talk about such things before the match!”

He walked into his room with the room key in his hand.

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Ribéry was receiving a massage in the physical therapy room at Valdebebas due to a slight back ache. The team doctor did not make any comments about his back ache, but Ribéry insisted on getting a massage for it because he did not want to jeopardize his chance to play in the finals.

He lied on the bed and quietly enjoyed the masseur’s service. A while later, he suddenly felt tired and he closed his eyes a little.

The memories in the recesses of his mind began surfacing against his wishes when their opponent for the finals was decided, and they have been surfacing a lot more actively these few days with the finals drawing close.

He remembered those days when he was in Nottingham Forest.

His footballing career prior to being a player at Nottingham Forest was not worth remembering. In fact, he has almost forgotten about them by now. He would certainly not disagree if anyone were to say that his professional footballing career only started when he joined Nottingham Forest.

Nottingham Forest, Nottingham Forest...

How many years has it been since I left? It's been almost 5 years.

Ribéry has not faced off with his former team on the pitch ever since he left Forest. He could not believe that the very first time he is going to meet them would be in the Champions League finals.

Destiny sure is cruel.

One cannot think of Nottingham Forest without thinking about its leader, or their boss Tony Twain.

Ribéry was certain that the current Forest members still refer to Twain as their 'boss'. Over here in Spain however, footballers do not refer to their manager as the 'boss'.

It is a feat that his ex-boss is able to stay and manage Forest for the past 10 years, given his temper. It is truly something that only happens in England's footballing scene.

Twain might not really understand the life he has had in Madrid since, but Ribéry has been paying attention to everything that Twain has done. For example, he knows that Twain got the last laugh in his bet with Spicer in which either of them had to eat a table upon losing, and he also knows that Forest just won the FA Cup.

It was not difficult for him to learn about news regarding Twain, because the media frequently reports about him. The Spanish media does not report about footballing matters from other countries often, but Tony Twain is an exception. He has always been able to attract interest from the various media outlets, and the reporters are always on his trail.

Actually, Ribéry is looking forward to facing off with Nottingham Forest. He has always wanted to go against his ex-boss at least once. There is a strange feeling within him that makes him long for a battle against his ex-boss and his team, but Ribéry does not quite know what that feeling is exactly.

Just when Ribéry was about to doze off, the massage ended.

The masseur gently patted him on the shoulder, and that jolted him out of his half-asleep state.

"Franck, all the best for the match two days later!"

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Twain noticed an interesting phenomenon that can highlight the kind of image that others have of him.

This image of his would only change a little when he faces off with Juventus in a match, because the Old Lady was just like Nottingham Forest when it comes to playing style. They were both teams who played counter attacking football, and they were also teams who were very solid with their defense. Their defense would always frustrate their opponents to no end.

Many pundits all over the world have made appearances one after another on TV to express their opinions about the Champions League finals match over the past few days.

Some of them claimed that Twain's team was like a thief, "... What those thieves care about isn't football. It's about winning. To them, the only thing that they want is victory, and they will use whatever method they can to achieve it. I believe that this kills the game of football... It's a shame that we'd see such a thief in the Champions League finals this year."

Others were in favor of Real Madrid simply because their style of football was much more pleasant to the eyes.

"Míchel González's style of football is truly one that is pleasant to watch. As a member of the La Quinta del Buitre and an ex-manager of Real Madrid's youth academy, he knows very well what Real Madrid's football is all about... It is clearly much better for a guy like him to be in charge of Real Madrid as compared to any of those world renowned managers. When Míchel first took over Real Madrid two years ago, he was hailed as 'Real Madrid's Guardiola'. I'm very glad that he is currently walking down the path that Guardiola once walked on. I might be a Barcelona fan, but I have to applaud the kind of football that Real Madrid is playing right now."

The person who made the aforementioned comment was Barcelona's 'godfather', Johan Cruyff. His team might have been eliminated by Real Madrid, but he still praised and applauded them as a team. Clearly, the kind of football that Real Madrid plays is brilliant.

Real Madrid might have taken a detour for a while, but now they are back on the right track.

Their offense is made up of five talented attacking players. Firstly, they have Franck Ribéry, an ex FIFA World Player of the Year and recipient of the Ballon d'Or, who transferred to Real Madrid in the January transfer window in the 2008-09 season. Next, they have Cristiano Ronaldo, who transferred to Real Madrid in the 2012-13 season.

Besides those two superstar players, Real Madrid also has 31 year-old Klaas-Jan Huntelaar, 26 year-old Benzema, and 26 year-old Higuaín in their team.

All these players form the foundation needed for Real Madrid to play an attacking style of football.

Not only does Real Madrid possess the ability to attract the world's superstars to play for them, they are also a team who is able to play an attacking style of football. It is no wonder that Cruyff praises the football that they play as a team.

If we were to look at Forest however, their star player at the moment would be George Wood, and what the Spaniards find hilarious is the fact that the team's star player is playing as a defensive midfielder. It accurately sums up Forest's playing style and strength...

Ibišević is the top striker in Forest, but he cannot hold a candle against the likes of Benzema and Huntelaar.

As for the midfield...

It would be better if we do not bring it up.

How can such a Nottingham Forest team compete against the star-studded Real Madrid team?

How can they expect to win without relying on counterattacking football?

If Twain actually dared to go head-to-head with Real Madrid at the Bernabéu Stadium, then everyone in the world other than him would think that he was just digging his grave.

But, the moment Twain chooses to play counterattacking football, all fingers would be pointed at him and they would criticize him for his playing style.

What logic.

Nobody thinks there is anything wrong for thinking the way that they do, because ultimately, they are things that are happening with a person named Tony Twain.

Which should Twain choose? Becoming champions or gaining reputation?

Twain tossed the newspaper aside.

The question was too stupid, and he refused to answer.

Chapter 867: Red Cloth

Raúl González had some regrets – if he had retired a year later, he might have been able to use the club's 10th European Champions Cup as a gift for his retirement. Now he is the manager of Real Madrid, mainly responsible for communication between the senior management and the players, hence many times he was still within the team, just like a player who wore a tuxedo.

When the team was training, he stood on the sidelines and watched with Coach Michels, he usually do not express his opinions unless Michels tells him to.

But today he had more things to say.

"Michels, for tomorrow's game..." Raúl started to frown.

"Do you want to ask me how sure I am to win?" Michels smiled. "I don't know."

"No, I was worried that Nottingham Forest's style of play would restrain the style we were good at." Raúl shook his head gently.

Michels heard what he said, and hesitated for a little, then said, "It's a problem... But that was what Real Madrid's football is all about, no matter what opponents we face, we would still use our usual style to contest. What suggestions do you have, Raúl?"

Raúl obviously had no good advice, as he shook his head and stopped talking.

"Our scouts had come up with the latest information about Nottingham Forest, they had also used all-out tactics in the first half of the FA Cup final against Tottenham Hotspur and I think that might have something to do with us." Michels was still talking to himself. He suddenly turned his head and looked at Raúl, "Maybe Twain wants to fight offense with us in Bernabéu."

Raúl, who was focusing on watching the team's training, was taken aback by his claims.

"Fight in offense against us?" As soon as the remark repeated, he started laughing. "That's crazy."

Yes, there are few teams in the world that dare to play against Real Madrid in Bernabéu, maybe Barcelona is one. But definitely not Nottingham Forest.

“I don’t think that is likely ... Nottingham Forest’s playstyle is defensive counter-attack, and Coach Twain had always believed that championships are won from defense. He fight against us head on in an offensive battle in such an important game, a defensive counterattack has high odds though.”

Michels smiled at Raúl and said, “Why didn’t you choose to be the head coach after you retired, Raúl?”

“Me?” When asked upon suddenly, Raúl didn’t respond, “I don’t think I’m fit to coach.”

“Not as a head coach. You can be a youth training supervisor... If you want to do it, I can recommend it to the head manager.”

“It’s not the difference between a head coach or a coach.” Raúl thought about it before saying, “At Real Madrid, I think it’s too tiring to be a coach...”

He didn’t continue afterwards, but Michels already knew what he was trying to say. He nodded silently.

Raúl mentioned the key point. Do not look at the fact that Michels had done a good job at Real Madrid over the years, he had always been subjected to checks and balances at the top of the club, which was a tradition in most Spanish clubs, but in an elite team like Real Madrid, the restrictions on a head coach is especially high. For an introduction and transfer of a player, he had only the right to advise, but not the right to decide. There are too many factors for a club like Real Madrid to buy a person to consider, hence the competitive aspect did not feel as important.

In the management of the dressing room, the manager’s actions were also limited. Dressing room factions were inevitable for any big team, but in this aspect the Premier League manager were better than them, because the Premier League manager had absolute authority, the factions in the dressing room does not triumph over a head coach, the authority of the Premier League manager comes from their football tradition and the support of the club’s senior management. The players are in awe of the head coach like a bunch of kids under their captain. The coach of La Liga would have it worse, if they have a tiff with any faction in the training room, then his authority would be greatly challenged. Coupled with the small actions behind the backs of the top management group, the head coach is sandwiched between the higher management and the players, where both sides would be unhappy with him.

Michels was doing well at Real Madrid because he has met a good general manager, Valdano. Think of the former Mijatović, any head coach under him would be torture. Valdano knew fair authority delegation would be beneficial for the club, hence he would not pick on the transfer list that the head coach proposes. And hence came the revival of Real Madrid.

Otherwise, this team might be still be continuously stuck in the top 8 which would be the laughing stock of everyone.

Both Michels and Raúl had put these problems behind them, as they do not need nor have the capacity to have such troubles now. Otherwise they would not have been able to reach the Champions League final. Tomorrow’s game was a good opportunity, a game to prove Real Madrid’s value to the world, an opportunity for Florentino to rebuild his Real Madrid empire. Such a game cannot never be lost.

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Twain did not have time to complain to others about the chores of a head coach, he was taking the team through the tactical drills of free kicks. In such an important game, free kick is definitely not something to be neglected. Twain had predicted that the match in Bernabéu with Real Madrid, the team would face tremendous pressure, perhaps free kicks would be the key to crack Real Madrid's door.

After all, there was such an excellent free kicker in their team called Gareth Bale.

Chris Kerslake was explaining the coordination in a free kick on the field, the coaching team designed many variations of strategies behind a free kick, hoping it would be useful during the game.

The team was training on the Bernabéu stadium, which was a suitable training ground.

The turf in Bernabéu was a lot better than the City stadium, but there was no obvious difference. And Twain did not dare to guarantee that the workers would not pour too much water onto the field on the second day...

The reporters had been ousted by him, and the team's training content must not be known to outsiders. For this, he also emphasized to Bernabéu in particular that he did not want Bernabéu to have any equipment to film their training content, he knew this was home ground for Real Madrid, it was difficult to ensure that Real Madrid would not play tricks. His repeated reminders and persistence had angered the staff at the Bernabéu, who in their eyes Twain was totally questioning their work ethic. Real Madrid, was a club that valued its reputation, has made it clear that the Club is dismissive of doing such a thing.

Twain then shamelessly and reluctantly gave up his persistent pursuit.

It's a typical petty man's heart – He would always do it in his own city's stadium, there was no reason other clubs would not do the same.

But in fact Real Madrid really did not place any cameras nor spies in Bernabéu stadium, as what the staff member said, the great Real Madrid were dismissive of the despicable use of this vile means to help the team to victory.

Twain was still looking into the stands, searching for suspicious people.

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At the afternoon press conference, Twain was "besieged" by the Spanish media.

The Spanish and English media were clearly divided. The Spanish media were keen to ask questions that would embarrass Twain, such as, "The outside world is optimistic that Real Madrid will win the title, will you be affected by this prediction?" "

Another example would be, "The outside criticism of Nottingham Forest's football is conservative and utilitarian, will you consider changing that?" "

The Spanish media have apparently studied Tony Twain, knowing that he was a man with a bad temper and an unobstructed mouth. So they deliberately stimulated him to be able to receive the unique effects, allowing them to obtain groundbreaking news.

But their research was not professional, they only wanted to stimulate Twain, but had forgotten that Twain himself was not a porcupine, which would roll up as self-defense against such a siege. He was a cunning wolf, and if you dare provoke him, you need to get ready to take his anger.

For the first question, Twain's performance was very dismissive: "If the outside world is optimistic about Real Madrid, then Real Madrid must win the title? Then, we don't have to play in the Champions League final, let the outside world announce that Real Madrid won the title, okay?" Twain opened his hand and coldly stared at the Spanish journalists.

This rebuttal made Spanish journalists look difficult.

As for the second question, Twain was surprised: "Why should I change this situation?" I can win the championship now, why should I give up the championship in order to satisfy the wishes of the outside world? I think... No one with a normal brain would make that choice, wouldn't they?"

When he said this, he stared at the reporter asking the question with a smile, as if to say to him, "Only someone as abnormal as you can ask such a mentally r*tarded question, Mr. Reporter."

The Spanish journalist, was embarrassed for a while, as he finally sat down.

"But you don't have to play well to win a championship, Twain." Another reporter stood up.

Where is the press conference? This is clearly the Champions League version of the debate wars.

"I don't have to take a more risky approach to winning the championship. Besides, in my opinion, playing well is equal to the runner-up." Twain was intentionally provoking those Spanish who were arrogant because of their home ground advantage.

Fortunately, Michels had finished his press conference beforehand, otherwise if the two people sat together, there might be another conflict brewing.

"So do you mean your tactics tomorrow would be defensive counter-attacks?" A middle-aged bald man stood up and asked, his face slightly pale. He was trying to link the question to the Nottingham Forest's second day's tactics.

Of course Twain knew what he was trying, no way he was trying to get information on his strategies for the next days during this chaos! "That's not certain, maybe tomorrow I'm going for a full-on attack or defence?" Twain showed his hands again. "Don't you just think I'm going to do defensive counter-attack? Oh my, I think it'll be interesting to fight offense with Real Madrid..."

"Don't you want a championship, Mr. Twain?" The middle-aged man, without changing his face, continued to argue with Twain.

"Of course I want to. Why wouldn't I?"

"Then you said that playing well was the runner-up..." the man who thought he triumphed over Twain in this discussion, started to laugh. Around him, many people started to laugh as well, those were all Spanish reporters.

In their minds, it was a dead cycle – Twain thinks he cannot win a championship if he plays well, but he also wants to win the title, so he is definitely playing conservative football, but he does not want to

admit to playing conservative football and says he's going to play offense against Real Madrid. So let's see how he talks this out!

They did not think that Twain would suddenly relax and said without hesitation, "Playing offense against Real Madrid, I still have confidence of winning."

As soon as that was said, the journalists present, whether if they were from Spain or England, were taken aback.

A reporter wanted to continue asking, but Twain stood up and signaled the press conference to the end.

"Mr. Twain..."

"Mr. Twain, please wait! "

"Coach Twain..."

"Hey, Tony! "

A group of reporters panicked, so what were they doing before? Arguing with Twain, in the end what they gotten was only some useless information.

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David Kerslake was sitting in his room, sipping the fragrant coffee and flipping through the newspaper with his glasses. He knew nothing about Spanish but luckily there were several pictures, it was better than nothing to pass time.

"Half football, half bullfighting, Spaniards' hobbies are really limited..."

The assistant coach muttered, as he suddenly heard a soft noise from the lock, and he looked up alertly, staring at the door. He only saw the door slowly slide, which opened a gap, and then a hand reached in, its fingers displayed a few stances, which followed by a quick shake, magically throwing out a scarlet cloak.

The door opened, Twain proudly raised his head, as he danced rumba on the way into the room, the mouth also humming "one dada two dada" in rhythm, the strong and firm body spun on the same spot for two rounds before ending with an aggressive pose, "Ah! Come! Madrid Bull!"

The poor assistant coach pounced forward, the coffee from his mouth flew into the newspapers and tables in his hands, while others flowed down the corners of his mouth and chin, dripping and splashing on the newspapers in his hands. The newspaper's Ribery was opening his mouth to Chris Kerslake, as a drop of black coffee fell on his white teeth, it made his picture seemed like he was missing a tooth...

Chris Kerslake scrambled to wipe the coffee off the side of his mouth and his chin, as he used the newspaper to wipe the table, whilst asking Twain, "You went to watch bullfighting this afternoon?"

"No, I went to the press conference and bought this on the way back. " Twain shook the cloak in his hand as it made a loud noise.

"Tourist souvenirs ...huh? "

Twain shook his head and smiled, "Isn't the souvenir the Champions League trophy? This cloth has its special use." After saying that, he did another signature move of a bullfighter. He waved to his left and his right as he elegantly spun a round, mimicking an angry bull just passing by him. The wind created by his waves blew Kerslake's hair. "How do you feel about my learning progress?"

"I've never seen such an old bullfighter. " Chris Kerslake finally cleared himself of the mess, and he looked at Twain and laughed. "What the hell are you going to do with it?" "

"Secret, secret." Twain blinked at him, as he chuckled again.

Chapter 868: Chen Jian's Troubles

After Nottingham Forest crashed its way through the semifinals, Chen Jian received a ticket to the finals. On the eve of the final game, he also received a round-trip ticket. The Nottingham Forest football club had taken care of everything so that not only did the players who came to watch the final game not have to worry about the cost of making the trip there, but they also did not have to worry about their accommodation. The club had arranged everything for them.

When they arrived in Madrid from various places, they would stay together in the same place and then head to the game together. Following which, they would choose whether to make the return trip or go somewhere else, when to go back and other return details.

Chen Jian's agent, Mr. Xia, had booked his room in the hotel where Chen Jian was staying so that it would be easier. After the two of them arrived in Madrid, the capital of Spain, they took a taxi together to their hotel. After they deposited their luggage, Mr. Xia stayed in Chen Jian's room to chat. Naturally, other than chatting about the Champions League final, the talk was certainly more about Chen Jian's future.

"I asked around, Xiao Chen. They don't want to think about the contract renewals for the players at the moment. Everything has to wait until after they have played the finals. Even Tony Twain's contract renewal has not yet been signed..." Speaking of which, Mr. Xia frowned and looked worried.

Chen Jian did not make any comments. He was somewhat quiet. The topic about his future felt a little heavy. It was not good for him to make any hasty remarks.

"Never mind, there's still one more year anyway..." Mr. Xia sighed. He did not know what to do. Now they could only wait for the Champions League final to be over before and see what happened next. "Nonetheless, if they're still going to put you on loan to Volendam next season, you must remember to say no. Volendam has been relegated to Eerste Divisie. There's already nothing for you to learn there and you won't be able to gain any experience there."

"Then where should I go?" Chen Jian asked.

"Go to Spain." Mr. Xia thought for a moment and said, "Go to a team in La Liga. In fact, if it were possible, letting you play in the English league is the best option... what a pity."

Indeed, if he wanted to develop more at the Forest team, then it was best for him to play in the English league. On the one hand, the Forest team's coaching staff could get a closer look at Chen Jian, on the other hand it would let Chen Jian adapt to the style of English football.

As it happened, Chen Jian could not get a work permit ...

Starting from when he was put on loan to Volendam, Chen Jian had been heavily hyped by the media for some time, during which time his fame at home was still very big. Any Chinese fans who were concerned about Chinese football and Chinese players who played abroad knew that there was such a young Chinese player in Volendam, the Netherlands. He could become the future hopeful of Chinese football. News about him might also gradually die down and he could fade into obscurity.

Although Chen Jian played at Volendam and hailed from the European champions, Nottingham Forest... the Chinese national team had not taken an interest in him. For more than two seasons, the national team had played in countless games and he had never been called up once. There was no shady business behind it. In fact, the national team thought that Chen Jian's strength was not good enough, his level was not good, and he had not reached the level where he could play for his country.

Counting down the list more closely, there were a lot of Chinese players who went abroad to play. But most of them played in the middle to the lower stream teams in the lower-tier league tournaments. There was little attention. The levels of the teams and league tournament were not high. The national team would rather take those players who play in the country than to risk recruiting the players who played abroad. Because at least they were more familiar with the domestic players. They could also get together a few times a year to train together, so their tacit understanding was not a problem. As for the players who played abroad...they might consider those geniuses who appeared out of the blue and could play steadily.

When Dong Fangzhuo was at Manchester United, in order to make up enough number of appearances for the work permit application, the national team gave extra care to him. Chen Jian was also to play for the Forest team, but there was no treatment such as the one given to Dong Fangzhuo. Because unlike Dong Fangzhuo, he did not enough connections and relationships in the domestic football circle to help him establish contact through the upper and lower levels.

He was just an ordinary person selected from a commercial talent show. He did not receive training from any club at any level in the country before going to the Forest team. He also did not know this or that person in the domestic football circle. He was purely from the grassroots. Even though he was not corrupted by those bad practices in the domestic football circle, he also did not have the resources to climb up. Naturally, no one would run all over the country to help him get a work permit. Mr. Xia was also not a very driven agent. Otherwise he would not be Chen Jian's agent.

As he was not able to be selected for the national team and unable to play in the international top flight tournaments, he obviously could not apply for a work permit and thus not able to play for Nottingham Forest, which was why Mr. Xia wanted Chen Jian to have a showdown with the club and leave on a free transfer. He did not care where Chen Jian wanted to play. He only cared that Chen Jian must play at a higher level of competition to boost his popularity so that he could make more money.

Ah, the work permit, the work permit... damn the Premier League rule. The English Football Association really had nothing else better to do, they are the same as the Chinese Football Association!

Mr. Xia cursed viciously in his heart.

At the thought of the work permit, Chen Jian was even more silent. Of course, he was aware that he won't have a chance to apply for a work permit if he did not play for the national team. But the national team was not interested in him. So, what was the solution? He could not simply run begging to someone to recruit him into the national team, could he?

He was now suddenly pinning all his hopes on Manager Tony Twain. He felt that the omnipotent man must have a way of getting him a work permit. At the thought of the letter which Mr. Twain wrote to him, he vaguely felt that the eccentric man was very special to himself..

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Chen Jian did not expect to meet Twain so soon.

That evening, when he and Mr. Xia had finished dinner after they went shopping in the streets, they found that it was lively at the floor of their hotel rooms. Gathered in the hallway of the several rooms next door which belonged to the Forest team were the players who were out on loan. They all surrounded one man and Chen Jian must be familiar with that man, because it was Tony Twain.

"What is he doing here?" Next to him, Mr. Xia obviously did not expect to see Twain here.

Twain had just finished chatting with a few other players. With a smile on his face, he looked like an old friend who was very approachable at will. He could name every player here and knew these players' positions and about their performances while they were on loan this season. It made those players happy. Twain had captured the hearts of some people. If there were one or two people within this group who could finally qualify for the Forest First Team, then they would certainly become Tony Twain's most loyal supporters.

Chen Jian did not gather up but stood in the distance and quietly observed.

When Twain ended his conversation with those people, he turned to see Chen Jian, who was standing in the distance.

"I came to look for you first, but you were not there." Twain came up and communicated with Chen Jian in Mandarin. The people around them did not understand what was being said, so they had to go back to their rooms.

"I had dinner with Mr. Xia and went shopping after..." Chen Jian introduced his agent to Twain.

Mr. Xia shook Twain's hand and wanted to say something, but Twain stopped him from speaking first. He looked at Chen Jian and continued, "I want to hear what you think, Chen Jian. Do you want to stay with the Forest team or go somewhere else?"

Mr. Xia gave a hard-meaningful look to Chen Jian next to him. He hoped that Chen Jian would choose to "go somewhere else."

Instead, Chen Jian said, "Of course I want to stay in the Forest team to play, but I have no way of obtaining a work permit..."

Twain nodded his head. The kid was telling the truth. He did not expect the Chinese national team to be so picky and not be interested in Chen Jian whom he had his eye on. With more than two seasons, three years would have nearly passed, and Chen Jian had not even played in a national team game. He had not even participated in the national youth team game. He was not even selected for the squad list.

“Well, have you given more thought to my suggestion of changing your nationality?” Twain stared at Chen Jian with a grin.

Chen Jian shook his head like a rattle-drum.

“In that case, I will choose to play somewhere else, Mr. Twain. Anyway, the contract is over in a year’s time. The club won’t offer a new contract for a player like me, will it?”

The answer was what Mr. Xia hoped to have. He now looked at Twain with great anticipation, hoping that Chen Jian’s unyielding words would successfully provoke Twain, and then the thunderous Twain would decide to let Chen Jian leave on a free transfer when his contract expired.

But he was disappointed.

The smile on Twain’s face was even wider. He seemed to like to tease the young man, only because the boy was extraordinarily stubborn.

“Well, actually, Chen Jian. I’m here today to offer you a new contract... A new four-year contract.”

Without waiting for Chen Jian to say anything, Mr. Xia eagerly stepped forward and said, “I’m sorry, Mr. Twain. Can I interrupt you for a moment? You offer Chen Jian a new contract, but how do we resolve his work permit?”

“He will be put on loan to the Netherlands or Belgium...”

When he heard Twain said so, Mr. Xia turned to look back at Chen Jian. The kid’s face was expressionless. While he himself was extremely disappointed.

“I’m so sorry, Mr. Twain. I don’t think my player can continue to drift like this. He’s already twenty-three years old. If he can’t get a First Team position in your team, then we’d rather find him a new team that is willing to give him that position, even if it might be in Europe’s second tier league tournament.”

Twain glanced at Chen Jian and found that his expression had not changed. It seemed that the agent was the one to make the decisions.

So he faced the agent and extended his finger to say, “I am offering Chen Jian a few options: First, to continue playing football in the Netherlands so as to reach the length of residence for a Dutch citizenship and then become an EU citizen to automatically obtain a work permit; Second, marry a British wife, change your nationality to receive the United Kingdom nationality and you can even save on applying for a work permit. Third, play football on behalf of the Chinese national team till you meet the standards to apply for a work permit and obtain a work permit. Fourth, appeal for a work permit through the special genius clause.”

Twain put up four fingers and showed one by one to Mr. Xia to see. He said, “These four choices, each more difficult than the other. Chen Jian has already lived in the Netherlands for three years, and he can apply for Dutch citizenship in another two years. By that time, he will be a citizen of the European

Union, and he would not need a work permit to play in the English Premier League. Nottingham Forest can naturally recall him to come back and play. At that time, he will only be twenty-five years old, and he will be in his prime.”

“With regards to getting married to an English wife, I’m unable to give Chen Jian any advice on this sort of private matter.”

“Third, the summon of the national team ... You haven’t played a minute for the Chinese team, have you? Chen Jian.”

Chen Jian nodded in reply, “No.”

“Maybe you can in the future. But it’s absolutely impossible to apply for a work permit for you now.” Twain’s straight face vividly conveyed how cruel this reality was.

“Fourth, the special genius clause ... To tell you the truth, Chen Jian, you don’t meet the requirements of this clause at all. You have not participated in the national team competition, you have not been selected in the national youth team, there is no hint of you being a genius during your development and experience, I can’t find any famous footballers to vouch for you...Your submission was unconvincing and in the end, it was only denied by the Football Association.”

What Twain said was true, but it did not sound convincing in Mr. Xia’s ears...

“Since Chen Jian has no such potential in your eyes, why did you tell him to abandon everything to come to the United Kingdom in the first place?”

Twain somewhat disliked this agent, so the tone of his voice was not so friendly as he said, “I was very clear in what I said to Chen Jian at the time. It did not mean that he would certainly succeed when he came to the United Kingdom. I merely gave him a chance, but I couldn’t help him whether to make his dream come true.”

Mr. Xia was rendered speechless by his words.

“The master teaches the trade, but the apprentice’s skill is self-made.” Twain spoke of a Chinese proverb. “I gave Chen Jian a chance. And Chen Jian, you also successfully played professional football, but you are not satisfied with it. You want to have greater pursuit. As for the level you can reach... The decision lies with you, Chen Jian. Whether you finally decide to leave Nottingham Forest to play for another team or agree to renew your contract and wait for the opportunity, I have no problem. That’s your path. You have to choose your own way.”

Twain looked at Chen Jian as he spoke.

“You can call me after you think it over.” Twain stuffed a business card into Chen Jian’s hand and walked alone to the elevator.

After Twain disappeared behind the elevator door, Chen Jian was still in a daze with his business card in his hand.

Mr. Xia frowned next to him and said, “Do you see it, Xiao Chen? They don’t take you seriously at all. I tell you, don’t foolishly wait here and waste your youth. What’s the point of signing a four-year contract only to be put out on loan? You’ll always be a fringe figure. When you endure to the end...Can you make

it to the end? What if you get a labor permit? What happens then? Well, even if your performance for the next two years suddenly let the Chinese Football Association, that group of people open their eyes, and they recruit you into the team to play as the main force. You get to play in enough games, and then get the work permit. How old will you be in two years' time? Twenty-five and you've just got a work permit. Do you think you really have the ability to compete with George Wood and Gago for the main player spot? Do you think those big clubs will play the same set of lineups for ten years? And that they won't go looking for younger and more talented players than you to develop? How long will you endure days like these before it is the end?"

As Mr. Xia spoke, the more agitated he got. If Chen Jian was determined to stay in the Forest team, his livelihood was basically over.

"Don't be foolish, Chen Jian. The Englishman's lies sound beautiful. Anyone can speak the general truth. But do you know what's on his mind? He has lied to you for four years, and he wants to try and lie to you for another four years! It is already very difficult for Chinese players to land in England. Not to mention a championship team. Listen to me, have your head screwed on right and keep your feet on the ground... Shall we play football somewhere else?"

Mr. Xia looked at Chen Jian with great sincerity.

Chen Jian knitted his brows. He felt a headache. He was imbued with so much information at once that anyone's head would hurt.

"Excuse me, Uncle Xia. I have a headache... Let me rest for a bit and think about it again?" Chen Jian rubbed his temples and had a pained expression.

Mr. Xia sighed and said, "Okay. I won't bother you. You have an early rest. Let's watch tomorrow's game and talk again."

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Chen Jian was lying alone in bed, tossing and turning. He could not sleep. He thought what Mr. Twain and Mr. Xia said were reasonable. But who should he listen to? His parents knew nothing about professional football and could not help him in that regard. So, he did not have to ask his parents for their opinions.

He had to rely on himself to make the choice.

He wanted to succeed in the Forest team, but Mr. Xia's words seemed to have poured cold water on him – even if he obtained a work permit and could finally play for the Forest team, would the Forest team still want him to play at that time? New talent cropped up every day in the football world. Would Twain wait a few years for him alone? That was impossible since he was not the main character in a novel.

So where exactly would he go from here?

He really did not know.

The seventeen-year-old, who was initially bent on playing professional football, would never have such troubles in his mind. People grew all the time, and their ideals grew as well. Now he was not content

with the simple dream of playing in a professional league. He wanted to play in a higher level of league tournament. He wanted to be a star player and not a meteor.

Putting aside Nottingham Forest's background, could he succeed if he were to go play for an Eredivisie team or Belgian First Division A team for a few years? Was it also not impossible for him to completely decline, slowly end up in worsening situations, simply end up in the lower leagues, and then finally no one would remember him? Following which, he would simply run back to China, go to China League One and then China League Two to make a living. He did not know how he would feel at that time when he recalled the brief period in Nottingham Forest a few years ago. Would he feel numb, or unwilling to resign to his fate, or wonder about regrets?

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In order to keep his mind alert tomorrow, Twain went to bed and rest early. He did not receive any calls from Chen Jian until he went to sleep. He did not take it to heart either, because it was not something he should be bothered with. What the future held for a young Chinese player had little to do with him.

He only had tomorrow's final game on his mind now.

It was the most important day of his life.

Chapter 869: A Wonderful Night Begins

Fat John and Skinny Bill woke up from their sleep and realized that it was almost eleven o'clock in the morning. They rushed out of the door to knock on doors. Soon, the hallway went from quiet to noisy. A group of Englishmen yawned as they came out of their rooms in succession. They all drank too much alcohol last night and found that their heads was still somewhat throbbing in pain. Fat John and Skinny Bill woke up from their sleep and realized that it was almost eleven o'clock in the morning. They rushed out of the door to knock on doors. Soon, the hallway went from quiet to noisy. A group of Englishmen yawned as they came out of their rooms in succession. They all drank too much alcohol last night and found that their heads was still somewhat throbbing in pain.

"Damn it. It's eleven o'clock? I'm going to be late for work this time..." Some people were still confused about where they were at the moment. "Wake up, Gary. We're in Spain now! In Madrid!" John knocked on the muddleheaded fool's head.

"Madrid?" That muddleheaded fool stared blankly for a moment, then held his head and cried out, "Champions League final!!"

The man next to him laughed when he saw him wake up from the daze.

The laughter also dispelled the rest of their sleepiness.

"Well, guys, today is the day of the holy battle! Rouse yourselves. Go wash up, and then we're going out for a meal!"

This was not a high-quality hotel. A group of ordinary people from a small city in central England could not afford to stay in a four- or five-star hotel. But it was not even easy to find such a small hotel like this. The Champions League final was held in Madrid, which directly drove up the occupancy rate in the hotels here.

John and his group were staying in a hotel, south of Madrid, which was located in a relatively backward part of the city's economy. The hotel environment was not very good, but the price was low. It was the best choice for those people who were not rich.

As soon as John and the others stepped out with Nottingham Forest scarves around their necks, they caught the attention of the Spaniards around them.

But the Englishmen were not nervous. They even shouted to those Spaniards, "Nottingham Forest will win!"

It was not a provocation, because they were not drunk. Rather, it was meant to curry favor. Then came the Spaniards' response, "F**k Real Madrid!"

This was a group of Atlético Madrid fans. Even though they were Spaniards and people from Madrid, they wanted to see their arch enemy lose at home the most.

"We found a good place." John laughed and said, "Come, let's go eat, guys!"

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Javier Thomas, a history teacher at a high school in Madrid, was a Frenchman. However, he was now a Real Madrid fan.

During Real Madrid's most brilliant period ten years ago, he was still teaching in France and had no interest in football. At the time, Real Madrid had many superstar players. The team was star-studded and known as the "Galácticos." They won two European titles in three years and were unparalleled at the time. It was the greatest team in the world.

He came to Madrid in 2005 to continue teaching. He had already heard of Real Madrid's football fame before, but unfortunately the Real Madrid he saw was the one with the new lease of life after its calamity. It was like a once-golden palace that had now turned into a ruin with thick overgrowth.

But his social circles were still full of Real Madrid fans. He was puzzled and surprised by this. So, he decided to explore the root causes of all this. As he was a history teacher, he began to study its history. Real Madrid's history was the worthiest of their pride. While he studied its history, had close interactions with the Real Madrid fans, personally went to watch the Real Madrid games live, the tall Frenchman who wore glasses and was refined in his manner, had since become a Real Madrid fan.

But what really made him fall in love with Real Madrid was not the glorious history, but the character and fighting spirit that Real Madrid showed in the following seasons. They could reverse the situation and take the title in a game trailing behind Barcelona with fifteen minutes left, showing the spirit of Real Madrid, which had been overlooked for years. When he saw Higuaín score a goal in the final minutes at the Bernabéu and reversed the game to win a 4:3 victory over the RCD Espanyol team, this mild-mannered and good-natured gentleman was also thrilled and could not help himself as he roared in the stands and hugged strangers around him.

Such an exciting reversal was far more than one or two games, and he had fallen in love with such a team ever since.

Today he was an unwavering and fanatical Real Madrid fan. He had a dual identity. Normally, he was a mild-mannered teacher in school and never argued with people. Even his body language was very gentle. But when the weekends came, he was transformed into an easily excitable dangerous figure, and everyone had better stay away from him.

Even his wife of twenty years could not understand his transformation.

She could only blame football for being a sport that made people crazy. Fortunately, their child was a daughter. If their child were to be a son, she would definitely keep him away from football ...

"It's finally going to be over." The wife sighed as she watched her husband check the "preparations" done for watching the game this evening over and over again in the room. For her, her husband's regularly intermittent mental illness could recover spontaneously. Her husband was just a Real Madrid fan and not a fan of the French national team nor a fan of the Spanish national team. So, the World Cup this summer had nothing to do with him. Today's game would be Real Madrid's last game of the season. Whatever the outcome was, her husband would soon be back to normal.

Her husband came out of the bedroom when he packed and got ready. He looked at his wife and daughter, who were sitting in the living room. He came up to stroke his daughter's head.

"Don't think about taking her to the game." The wife became alert.

"I'm just touching her head." Thomas laughed wryly, "Don't look at me like you're looking at a mental patient, Selena."

"You're a mental case on this day."

Their six-year-old daughter watched curiously as her parents argued over what she could not understand. She liked her mother and her father, but she seemed to have two fathers and two mothers. On a day like this, her gentle and beautiful mother would suddenly become nervous, and her always smiling father would become bad-tempered. Her young mind sometimes remembered that her father would suddenly lose his temper and throw stuff. She did not know the reason. There were also times when her father would suddenly be very happy, buy her gifts, accompany her to play games till late, or hug her tight which made her a little uncomfortable. She also did not know why.

Thomas did not want to quarrel with his wife on such an important day. He chose silence.

His wife also did not want to deal with him. She sat on the side and held her daughter as she watched her favorite cartoon.

Thomas sat for a moment like this. He felt that the atmosphere was very awkward. He wanted to open his mouth to say something, but his wife would immediately glare at him. So, he simply decided to go out early, walk around, find a bar, drink together with the Real Madrid fans to discuss the evening's game and set off together to the Bernabéu when it was near the time of the game.

Then in these two hours, he would completely forget that there was his wife and child at home. He could enjoy the football which brought joy to him and of course, there might be pain too...

He did not forget to kiss his wife and daughter on their foreheads before he went out. This time, his wife did not shy away.

"I'll be back early." Thomas finished saying this and opened the door to walk out.

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"Ah... Madrid in two colors. You don't often see the city like this. To the north is Madrid in white color and to the south is Madrid in red. Now they will all mingle here, even though the red color does not come from the south..."

A tour guide said to the crowd behind him in front of the Bernabéu stadium. A group of East Asian tourists with Asian skin tones and dark hair faces held their cell phones, cameras and digital videos took photographs and filmed the magnificent Bernabéu stadium continuously as they made sounds of exclamations. No one cared about what the tour guide said.

"Hey, look at those guys, they're not Spanish, they're fans from England... Don't take photographs of them! Don't point the camera lens at them!" The tour guide hurriedly gestured for the curious people to put down the camera equipment in their hands.

"English fans, God knows if each of them has just gulped down ten gallons of beer. Drunk English fans are the most dangerous!"

As if to coordinate his words, the policemen on duty around them slowly got closer to the group of English fans in red jerseys to separate them from those people around them. The English fans did not mind the treatment. They even saluted the policemen and shouted slogans in English.

"What are they shouting?" Some of the tourists asked questions.

The Spanish tour guide shrugged and said, "Nottingham Forest will win... something like that. It is the UEFA Champions League final tonight. But unfortunately, you don't have tickets. Otherwise I'd be happy to bring you to a football match of the highest quality in Europe."

In fact, he would very much like to watch the final, but he had to bring the tour group around ...

"Mr. Martin, can we still get tickets now?" One of the tourists asked again.

Martin smiled at the person who asked the question and said, "The tickets for this game were sold out a week ago." He pointed to a shady spot under a tree not far away, where a lot of people, differently dressed men and women, were standing. The only thing they had in common was they each held a sign with the words "I need a ticket."

"Come on, ladies and gentlemen. Our next stop is Fuente de Cibeles..." Martin looked back at the Bernabéu in the afternoon sun, with its glaring white walls in the sun. He was really reluctant to leave. He was really sorry that he could not watch the game in person as a Real Madrid fan.

After settling the group down in the evening, he must find a chance to sneak off to watch the live broadcast.

There were also a few tourists who looked back at the Bernabéu longingly. They really came here at a bad time. If it was a day with no match, they would have a chance to get a glimpse inside the stadium in

person, visit the hall of honor at the Bernabéu and see how it compared with Nottingham Forest's hall of honor...

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"The weather is great today. It won't rain in the evening, and maybe there's even a cool breeze." Pierce Brosnan sat with a cigarette in his mouth outside the cafe across the street from the Bernabéu. Next to him was the assistant who had come with him to cover the game.

He appeared cool and laid-back, while his assistant was covered in sweat. Such an exciting match was approaching every second and minute, making him nervous and excited.

"Mr. Brosnan, do you think the Forest team will win in the end?"

"How will I know that?" Brosnan shook his head and said, "I am not a prophet, nor a magician with a crystal ball."

"Why don't we head to the hotel and wait. There's no news to be covered here." The assistant was exceptionally talkative. He looked really nervous and excited.

"You've worked for me for two years, Paul. Do you still not know the kind of person we interviewed?" Brosnan glanced at his assistant with a somewhat disappointed and displeased look in his eyes. He said, "On such an important game, Tony Twain will be sure to drive away the reporters who surround the hotel entrance, like he's shooing away a swarm of flies. He protects his team like an animal nursing its young. He doesn't allow anyone to walk near his team. You want some news? There's nothing new to write other than to describe how rude and insolent Tony Twain is over and over again. The readers are long tired of reading about this."

"In that case, we'll wait here, have some coffee... and admire the scenery?"

Brosnan nodded and said, "Have a break and relax. You're going to be busy tonight, kid."

In front of Tony Twain, he behaved as if he were an intern reporter. But in front of a real rookie, he would still rediscover the feeling and dignity of "a journalist."

The young man muttered a few words and drank the coffee a gulp. Then he turned to look at the growing number of fans in the streets. His eyes were gradually fixed on the minority of female fans. After half an hour of research, he came to a conclusion that Real Madrid had the majority of female fans and that the young female fans were also mostly pretty. He even saw female fans who were clearly not of European faces... These people were crazy, coming all way from the other side of the world to watch a final match.

By contrast, most of the Nottingham Forest fans were from England. They did not have the international influence like Real Madrid, even if they had won more titles. On the one hand, their football was not nice to watch and on the other hand, Tony Twain's unique personality cost them to lose a lot of neutral fans. Thirdly, it was because Nottingham Forest was still a small club, with no money to expand in the global market and no money to spread its influence globally. The fourth reason was... Real Madrid could woo fans by constantly buying superstar players, while who was Nottingham Forest's biggest player? George Wood, the serious and unsmiling robot...

It was really a contest of wide disparity... and Nottingham Forest is completely defeated.

The result was really frustrating – there are so few beautiful women in this group. The young reporter lamented in his mind.

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After 5:30 p.m., two buses set off from two five-star hotels.

The white bus was followed by a group of media outlets, which closely followed the bus towards the Bernabéu, like the sharks behind the slave boats.

The red bus had nothing else other than a few police cars on the road. As Pierce Brosnan had stated, the reporters who surrounded outside the hotel were driven away by Twain. He did not want his team to be disturbed in such an important game. When those reporters cursed Tony Twain under the scorching sun as they left helplessly, Brosnan and his assistant contently sipped coffee under the shade of the umbrellas, admired the beautiful women and enjoyed a leisurely afternoon.

Brosnan looked at his watch, patted the assistant on the shoulder, and got up. He said, “It’s time to work, kid.”

In the square in front of them, a commotion suddenly broke out.

Very soon, a white bus appeared in people’s line of sight in the afterglow of the sunset. The milky-white body of the bus was dyed ivory yellow by the sun. The fans became excited, and waves of roars began to spread in the square.

These sounds ignited the excitement around the Bernabéu, and Brosnan finally felt the atmosphere of the Champions League final approaching.

The two men walked quickly across the road and ran to the square. His assistant was holding the camera and changing the lens while he was looking for the best position.

The bus in which the Real Madrid players traveled on slowed down in the square, with the players waving to the fans, triggering a burst of screams. It was as if everyone here was a Real Madrid fan.

“That’s the home-field advantage...” muttered Brosnan. The assistant next to him kept taking pictures.

Javier Thomas was also in the crowd, waving excitedly at the players in the bus.

“Long live, Madrid!”

Such roars were heard around the Bernabéu, where tens of thousands of Real Madrid fans gathered to witness the glorious night that belonged to them.

Soon after, Nottingham Forest’s bus arrived, and the Nottingham Forest fans who greeted them were about ten thousand people. Their voices were much smaller than the Real Madrid fans. Coupled with the fact that the police at the scene kept a tight grip on the extent of the English fans’ range of activity, they could not even get close to the Forest bus. They could only watch the bus from a distance as it moved unobstructed through the square before it turned to the parking lot behind the stadium.

John and Bill led their own people in the crowd and shouted a few sentences, "Nottingham Forest will win!" and shut their mouths. They looked at the unfriendly looking policemen and spat on the ground as they said, "We'll teach you a lesson when the game starts!"

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Martin could still hear shouts from the Bernabéu, even though his position was more than a dozen kilometers away. He was now worried about how he was going to get rid of a group of Chinese tourists and go watch the game. If the group of tourists came to him and wanted to check out Madrid at night after they had dinner, he really did not know if he should refuse.

As he was alone worrying in the bus, he heard the sound of knocking on the window.

A Chinese man in the tour group stood outside the bus and smiled at him.

"Have you finished eating? How's the food? This is the best Chinese restaurant in Madrid!" Even though Martin's face still looked worried in the last second, he smiled attentively at the moment. He said, "I'm not lying."

"The food is really authentic. No doubt, it's the best Chinese restaurant in Madrid, Mr. Martin. But tonight, we would like to..."

Martin's mouth twitched for a little bit. His worst fear came true. Ah, ah! At the thought of not being able to watch such an important game made him hate his career. In the Champions League final at the Bernabéu, one of the participating team was his favorite team, Real Madrid! How many times could he meet with such an opportunity in a lifetime?

"Ah I see, where would you like to go? How about going shopping on Calle de Serrano? It's the best famous street in Madrid! If you don't want to go there, you can still go..." Martin interrupted the other person and began to gush with recommendations, doing his duty as a tour guide.

The Chinese man quietly listened to Martin introduce all the places worth visiting in Madrid before he shook his head and said, "We don't want to go to those places, Mr. Martin. We actually discussed and want to look for a cheap but lively place to spend the evening and experience Madrid's most common nightlife. Especially on a night like this..."

The Chinese man had given enough hint and Martin was not a fool. He replied with a bright smile and said, "I have a good idea! How about taking you all to a bar with the best atmosphere in Real Madrid for drinks and to watch the game? There are beautiful and friendly Spanish girls, and more passionate than them are the football and beer! Ha ha!"

It was a truly wonderful night.

Chapter 870: The Heart of Champion

Martin, the Spanish tour guide who was proficient in Chinese, took a group of curious Chinese tourists into a pub near Bernabéu stadium.

When they walked into the pub, they saw a large team logo of Real Madrid on the wall in front of them.

They didn't find noisy music and hot girls in this pub. Unlike the description of Martin, the tourists only found a big TV and many fans who were looking up and fixing their eyes on the screen.

"This is my uncle's pub. All of you could enjoy...half-off here!" Martin made a decision before seeking advice from his uncle. If his decision was unacceptable for his uncle, he would make up the price difference with his own money. In order to watch a Real Madrid match in peace, he spared no expense.

After getting those Chinese tourists settled, Martin walked into the crowd and started to watch TV by throwing his head back after ordering a glass of beer.

On the screen, players from both teams hadn't run onto the pitch yet. The grandstand was full of fans. Those who could enjoy the match in the stadium were envied by those who could only watch the match in front of TV. Martin kept smacking his lips as he watched the TV screen.

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All seats in the Bernabéu Stadium which had room for up to 80,000 spectators were occupied. It was impossible to find even one empty seat in it. Although the match hadn't started, the fans in the stadium were as passionate as flames. They were singing, cheering and clapping their hands loudly. The entire stadium was noisy with voices. The pitch was lit up by those towering spotlights. Field staff were busy tiling the round flag of the logo of UEFA on the center circle. The journalists were waiting for the players from both teams at both sides of the corridor. A trophy, which was shiny silver, was placed in front of them. It was the highest honor of all European clubs – the European Champion Cup.

It was not a replica in a club's trophy room. It was the genuine "Big Ears".

After the completion of warm-up, players from both teams had gone back to their clubhouse. The managers of both teams were making final preparations for the most important match of this season.

It was not the time to talk about the tactics again. And they didn't have time to do that now. At this time, some managers preferred to keep silent and leave time to the players. Some managers kept chattering without stop. The result of the first 45 minutes of the match was always decided in a few minutes like now. Therefore, it was inevitable for any players who were about to take part in such an important match to feel nervous.

Even the players from clubs like Real Madrid and Nottingham Forest were no exception.

Unprecedentedly, Raúl González walked into the locker room. He had never entered the locker room before a match since his retirement. But he did that today, which meant the match was very important for him.

Michels stood on one side and said nothing. It was the time for Raúl to make a speech. This former captain was still quite influential in the locker room.

Raúl's speech was not long. "This is my long-cherished last match. It is a pity that I can't fight shoulder by shoulder with you in the pitch!" He said as he looked at his former teammates affectionately. "But I am very glad that my teammates could stand here at last! When I look at you, I really hope I could be 10 years younger...It has always been my dream to pick up the 10th European Champions Cup for our club. Now, I hereby request you to realize this dream for me!"

After saying that, he said goodbye to Michels and walked out of the locker room.

Then, the locker room of Real Madrid dropped into silence. As Raúl's teammates, they couldn't forget how unreconciled Raúl was when he decided to retire in the last season. That year, Real Madrid lost the champion of domestic league and failed to get past the quarter-finals of the UEFA Champions League. It was the intense pain before Real Madrid's reinvigoration, which should be deemed as the darkest hour before the dawn. It was a pity that Raúl had to experience those difficult days.

Raúl would have a chance to sign a one-year extension. But he decided to retire at the last moment. If he renewed his contract for 1 more year, he would be 37 and he really didn't know what he could do in the pitch. Would he become a pet doll who sat on the club's bench to receive the reverence from his fans? He was not a man who was reconciled to sit on the bench. A man with a heart of champion would never accept a fact like that.

So, he would rather retire.

Now, he might have some regrets...as long as he could take part in a match like this, he would be willing to sit on the bench for an entire season!

However, these were just people's speculations. Nobody knew what Raúl was thinking about now.

After leaving the locker room, he walked into the VIP box on the stand alone, where he would watch the match with his family.

Unlike Real Madrid's solemn locker room, the atmosphere in Nottingham Forest's locker room was a little bit more casual. The players, who were sitting or standing in the room, fixed their eyes on their boss who was leaning against the wall. Like a group of soldiers who were about to step into the battlefield, they expected their officer to motivate them loudly by telling them everything would be OK when he was there. And they could go home after this battle.

Twain was standing against the wall. When he looked at these players in front of him, an unusual feeling welled up in his mind. He felt he was not leading a team but an army. Among his soldiers, some veterans had fought north and south and hadn't been home for many years. From their unshaven face, the cigarettes in their mouth and their cynical expression, he knew these veterans gave no thought to life and death. He also saw some baby-faced rookies who were so nervous that they couldn't even grasp their gun firmly. Their lips were trembling as if they were murmuring to themselves or praying to God. His army was about to fight a crucial battle in the war. Their victory would result in the reversion of the war. His main force would attack Berlin directly. His armored force would crush all obstacles on its way. But if they lost this battle, none of them would go back alive.

There was a moment that Twain fell in to a trance. He just wanted to say, "Stay alive and I'll take you home after this battle!"

Twain shook his head to dispel the illusion in his mind.

Everything in front of him became clear again. The men in front of him were his players instead of sloppy Allied soldiers of World War 2 who wore tattered uniforms and shabby helmets. They were not in a dirty and stinky trench but a bright and modernized locker room in the Bernabéu Stadium.

However, the feeling of battlefield didn't dissipate but became more intense.

Twain said as he scratched his head, "Actually, I really don't know what to say! Just now I had a dream which only lasted for a short time. But I can remember it clearly till now!"

His words attracted those players' attention immediately. I didn't see our boss was sleeping just now. How could he say he had a dream? Is it possible to have a dream when people sleep standing up?

"I found we were in a battlefield. Fighters were roaring above our head!" Twain continued to say as he made a gesture, "We could hear the engines of our tanks behind us. Shells were exploding around us. The battlefield was very noisy! All of you were standing around me like now. Our enemy had taken a high ground. We had to fight them off by launching our last charge. If we could take the high ground, our main force could press forward to the enemy's capital. If we failed, all of us would be buried there!"

"It seems to be a quite absurd dream!" Twain waved his hand to dispel the misty dreamland. "But that feeling is still lingering in my mind and tells me it is not a dream! Several minutes later, the most important match in our career will begin. This is a life-and-death matter for us and I am not exaggerating. We can pick up the trophy alive, or...we will and be forgotten by the world!" He said as he shrugged, "That's it! We don't have a third way to go! In the battlefield, we will face Life or death. Here, what we have is champion or loser! Think about how we could come this far! And forget the 2 champions we have won! They are useless in today's match!"

Twain said as he pointed at the luxuriously decorated locker room, "This is the locker room of the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium, which is more beautiful than the locker rooms of the City Ground. But don't you be fooled by its shiny appearance. We are now in the hell. Guys, please trust me. We might be beaten the living shit out here. Or, we could do our best to win glory!"

Twain stopped looking around and started to stare at the players in front of him in their eyes.

"We could walk out of this hell by holding our head high. But I can't do that for you now. In fact, I am too old..." he said as he touched his grizzled sidebums. "Sometimes I could even be frightened by myself in a mirror when I forgot to dye my hair!"

Actually, a 45-year-old man was not old at all. However, Twain used to have a cardiac disease which consumed too much vital force. Since then, Twain looked older than his age...

"When you grow old slowly like I do now, everything will leave without you, even those trophies. In fact, this is a part of life. When you lose something, you will know how precious it is because it is an irreplaceable memory in your life! No matter how many years have passed, you could still tell people proudly, 'I took part in that match and we won at last!'" Twain said proudly with his chest out and jaw squared.

“This is the way of life. And it also applies to soccer. I mean we shall never give up any moment of glory no matter in our life or on the pitch even we have to pay dearly for such a moment! This is a war, guys! You shall do your best in each offense and defense and fight in every minute! Yes, I admit we don’t have a shiny all-star formation like Real Madrid. Compared to them, we are just like hillbillies coming from countryside. But soccer is a sport of 11 people! It is a team-working sport! So, our advantage is that we are a unit! We are a team! I believe everyone in this team is willing to sacrifice his life to achieve victory for the team! And you will fight restlessly for each ball!”

Twain started to say with emphasis as he waved his arms.

The players were motivated by his words and their eyes were filled with flames.

“I know the winner of every battle will be those team-workers who dare to sacrifice themselves! This is also the way of a soccer match. You will be unstoppable in this world when you are united and your heart is filled with the belief of triumphalism. I also know we are 100 times more powerful than that glittering bulb, because we are a team! I know even better that teamwork is the watershed between a winner and a loser! It is also the watershed between life and death!” Twain’s players also started to yell by following him.

“Let me tell you a truth. People who care about teamwork will always win at last!” Crack! He broke off the marker pen in his hand suddenly. The sound was echoing in everyone’s mind.

“If you are in a state of disunity, you will end up like this pen! When you are in trouble, when you have to confront the most powerful enemy in the most disadvantageous situation, you can always count on your teammates around you! Now, look at your teammates! Look at them, look at them in their eyes! They will be your most trusted men in the next 90 minutes! You are comrades-in-arms who share a foxhole and go through thick and thin together! When you are running off the ball, you know they will pass the ball to you. When you lose possession of the ball, you know they will grab the ball back. When you are facing your opponents’ offense, you know you are not alone, because they are just behind you! If you give up, you will put them in peril. You are willing to sacrifice your life to protect and help your teammates. This is not my request. It is because you know when you are in danger, they! Your teammates! They will also do that!!” His words were sonorous and forceful like a war drum. Everyone was motivated by his words and gestures.

“This is...teamwork! Gentlemen!”

Twain spread his hands as he looked at his players. His tone was softened. His heart-stirring speech reddened his face and made him pant heavily. However, it seemed his nuclear-powered heart was still quite efficient. Now, his life was not in danger.

Hearing his exciting words, the players started to look at their teammates around them. From their eyes, a message was quite clear – Hey, buddy, we are teammates!

“Now, you have an opportunity to leave the most precious fortune to your life. You have an opportunity to fight for the same goal together with the best professional footballers in the history! This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. You will never have another opportunity like this if you miss this one! Fight as if this is the last match in your life!” Twain said as he pointed at the door of the locker room, “No matter

how powerful your enemies are, they can't rival you! They are just a heap of loose sand. And you are the best team in the history!"

"We are the best!" A player, who couldn't restrain the excitement in his heart, shouted at this time.

"I love soccer! I love this sport so much! Because of you, I can always relive my young years. When you are running and fighting on the pitch, I know my life is meaningful because I can still enjoy this passion! This is my career motivation! I hope you can still take me back to my young years tonight...don't worry about my heart!" Twain said and shook his head as he placed his hand on his left chest, "It is still beating vigorously, like you! It longs for a victory and a champion, which has never been changed! Remember, guys, this is a nuclear-powered heart of champion! And you are the energy source of this heart!" Twain said as he pointed at his heart and the players in front of him.

"I heard people said...Nottingham Forest is not qualified to win the championship and the Treble! Because we don't have star players and we look weak! Now, I am very glad that we have the opportunity to mock at their ignorance and stupidity to their face!" Twain said with a smile, "We are born to stand against others. If we are not qualified to win the championship, who else can do such a thing?" Twain looked around as he widened his eyes, "Who else? Who else is more qualified to win the championship than us?"

After taking a short break, he continued to say, "Now, let's win our championship and let them say what they may. I have finished talking. What are you going to do?"

The players who were sitting stood up. Then, all players started to shout as they raised their arms, "Win the championship! Champion! Champion!"

"Treble! Treble! We will win the Treble!"

Huge roar, which was echoing in the locker room, was kept amplifying in this confined space. Also, it was echoing in everyone's heart. Twain looked at those excited players with a solemn look.

Even George Wood who was always apathy turned around and looked at his overexcited teammates with his lips pressed together tightly. Raging flames could also be seen in his eyes. Actually, the flame was even more blazing deep in his heart.

At the very beginning, he played soccer to earn money to cure his mother's sickness. Now, he enjoyed this passion of pursuing success very much.

As Twain said, he loved soccer because he enjoyed this passion! It was just like drugs in his life which was totally irresistible...

Florentino Pérez shook hands with Evan Doughty on the podium of Santiago Bernabéu Stadium. In his stadium, although he was courteous and ceremonious, he couldn't conceal the sense of superiority and pride from the depth of his heart. After all, he was the most successful President of Real Madrid in the past 20 years. Compared to him, Ramón Calderón, Vicente Boluda and Lorenzo Sanz were just like clowns.

Indeed, Nottingham Forest was not on the same level with Real Madrid. In this dazzling and shiny white palace built with marbles, he was just like a proud king who was waiting for the audience of a visitor in his throne quietly.

Evan Doughty was like a foreign diplomat who was humble and inferior.

Evan didn't like this feeling at all. In this place, almost everyone was looking forward to the victory of Real Madrid. Nottingham Forest had better be an excellent opponent to bring out the 10th champion of Real Madrid. It was just like the relationship between the red flower and green leaves.

Evan Doughty felt very lonely now. Even Allan Adams who was sitting beside him couldn't bring him any sense of security. At this moment, they were just like 2 sheep who were trapped in a wolf pack.

When Evan saw Tony Twain came out from the corridor and walked to the coach seats of the visiting team, his discomfort disappeared gradually.

We are not making a pilgrimage in the greatest club in the 20th Century now. We are not interested in paying a visit to the 5-star toilet in this place. Tony, remember that and never forget it! Don't let me shake hands with Florentino like this after 90 minutes!

Pull him down from his damned throne!