

## All R. Artist 201

### Chapter 201: So What

The name is quite ordinary.

But a short story doesn't necessarily require a high-flown name. What really worries Wei Long is the content. After several disappointments, all Wei Long hopes now is that Chu Kuang's works can maintain its usual standards—

Just keep being consistent.

Chu Kuang is a general!

Although there is a boost from Feng Hua's blog, Wei Long's literature tribe still has the ability to compete if their overall level does not lag too much. Anyway, short story lovers do not only read one story. This is the only excuse Wei Long can use to comfort himself.

He clicked it open.

Wei Long started reading.

The story was launched from the perspective of a beautiful but poor woman who, due to poverty, got married to an ordinary clerk. The couple lived a stingy life.

The woman pursues materials.

Because of the bleakness of her house, the roughness of the wall, the antiquity of the furniture, and the banality of the cloth, she was always filled with sorrow. She dreamed that she could wear gorgeous servants, have countless servants to use at will, and enjoy delicacies at will...

Wei Long thought for a moment.

He roughly guesses that the purpose of Chu Kuang's story is probably to revolve around the topic of material, which was in line with Chu Kuang's previous short story routine. He liked to achieve a certain satirical effect through short stories, which was a high-level sense in the eyes of Wei Long. His expectations are slightly higher.

Keep reading.

One day.

The man is quite pleased to bring out an invitation for his wife to see: "The leader has the honor to invite Mr. Wang and Mrs. Wang to attend the evening party held at our institution building on Monday, January 18th."

Mr. Wang thought his wife would be happy as it had cost him a great effort to get this invitation.

Not everyone in the education bureau was invited by the leader to attend the party.

But his wife got angry out of nothing.

At least this little clerk in the education bureau cannot understand his wife's rage.

It turns out that Lady Wang felt she didn't have decent clothes to attend this grand party.

"The most humiliating thing in the world is to show poverty among a heap of rich women."

This is Lady Wang's explanation.

Mr. Wang was helpless and could only offer to pay some money and let his wife buy appropriate clothes.

The wife said: "Four hundred yuan is enough for me to own such clothes."

Mr. Wang's face was slightly pale.

Because he was saving this amount to buy a gun, so he could hunt birds in the plains with a few hunting friends on weekends this summer.

“Four hundred yuan?”

Wei Long roughly calculated in his mind and then probably found the era corresponding to the value of money.

In Chu Kuang’s novel, although it does not explicitly state which era the story is from, clues can always be found through details in the article.

However...

Isn’t Lady Wang too materialistic?

Lady Wang indeed has a nearly pathological pursuit of material, because that is decency in her eyes. After making her clothes, she even went to a rich female friend of hers to borrow a necklace—

It was a necklace made with diamonds.

In Lady Wang’s eyes, this necklace was truly beautiful, and this is where the title came from:

Necklace.

Wei Long couldn’t help but think of a popular term today, known as “money worshiper.”

Speaking of which.

Mr. Wang is not any better.

He had four hundred yuan, but he only wanted to buy a gun to hunt, instead of saving the money to make life more decent...

Let's look back at the earlier part of the story.

The couple had even hired a servant at home.

The couple was already living a strained life, yet they still hired a servant?

Pretentious.

Dead for face, live to suffer.

This is Wei Long's current sensation, which reminds him of the story "The Gift of the Magi."

Both stories focus on a couple.

But in that story, both the man and the woman were willing to give up their pursuit of materials for each other, which was the complete opposite of Mr. and Mrs. Wang!

How would Chu Kuang satirize it?

Would he let this woman find a rich leader at the party, resulting in the man being abandoned?

Maybe there will be a twist.

The leader got tired of the woman and abandoned her. The woman could only return to the small clerk's side...

If this is the case, there seems to be something missing in the story.

Wei Long couldn't help feeling worried.

This is a habit many novel readers have, which is to subconsciously anticipate the follow-up plot.

At this moment.

The party began.

Lady Wang made a big success.

She was more beautiful, fashionable, and charming than a general female guest. She constantly smiled and was ecstatic.

The male guests were all staring at her, hearing her name, trying to introduce themselves to her.

All the personnel from the secretariat wanted to dance with her, and the leader also noticed her.

She danced in ecstasy and with excitement, she was intoxicated with joy, she was pleased with her face's victory, pleased with her accomplishment's glory, she was surrounded by happiness.

However, after the party ended, she had to return to her original position.

Her life did not change because of this, and the glory of this night could probably only remain in her memory.

The couple found a broken minivan in the bitter wind and returned home.

She had to face reality again.

But what happened next was even crueler.

The necklace, incredibly, was lost!

This is the turning point of the entire story.

Only at this moment does Wei Long discover the real purpose of the title "Necklace".

“Interesting...”

We Long’s eyes lit up!

It’s not the cliched story of family ethics, betrayal, and infidelity.

What Chu Kuang wrote, perhaps, is about a couple paying a huge price for the vanity of that night!

And indeed, it was.

This was a forty-thousand-dollar necklace!

Especially after Wei Long thought about the prices at that period, he understood deeply how enormous an amount forty thousand dollars was to Mr. and Mrs. Wang of that era!

What will they do?

Wei Long contemplated many possibilities.

Perhaps this couple would deny their debt... Perhaps this couple would return a counterfeit...  
Perhaps this couple would end up in court over this...

The final outcome was none of these.

This couple, astonishingly, purchased an identical necklace and returned it.

At this moment, Wei Long gained some respect for Mr. and Mrs. Wang.

He even had an epiphany:

Whether one is wealthy or not, does not determine their moral character. When faced with a problem, Mr. and Mrs. Wang chose to confront it.

Even though the price was indeed too high:

To buy the necklace and return it to the owner, Mr. Wang borrowed countless amounts of money, practically risking his entire latter life, and both he and his wife emerged with astounding heroism.

They decided to repay these debts in full without omission!

Mrs. Wang experienced the authentic life of the impoverished.

This unfortunate couple dismissed their maid, moved houses, and rented a cheap attic under a rooftop.

She began doing various manual household chores.

She washed dishes, scrubbing the oil stains at the bottom of the pots and pans, wearing out her rosy fingers.

Underwear and rags were all hand washed with soap by her before being hung on the line;

She got up early every day; she carted the garbage downstairs and carried water upstairs. Each time she finished a floor, she had to sit down on the staircase to catch her breath, and she was dressed like a common woman.

She went to the vegetable shop, grocery shop, and butcher shop with her basket, haggling over prices, getting scolded, making every effort to protect her pitiful little cash penny by penny.

She paid off quite a few IOUs every month while making new ones to delay the deadlines.

Her husband wrote accounts for a businessman in the evening, often copying books at a rate of five cents per page until late into the night.

This life continued for ten long years.

Yes.

Mrs. Wang's gloriously radiant night had cost the couple ten years of life under colossal monetary stress!

Mrs. Wang seemed to have aged.

Now, she had become a robust, coarse, and resilient woman of a poor family.

She tied up her hair haphazardly, wore her skirt crookedly, showed her reddened hands, spoke loudly, and mopped the floor with heavy basins of water.

But sometimes, when her husband went to his office, she sat alone by the window, and she would reminisce about that evening party.

The dancing party, where she was so beautiful and so happy.

If she hadn't lost that piece of jewelry, what would her present life be like?

Who knows?

At this moment, the story was not yet over, yet Wei Long felt an endless aftertaste, realizing that it was an excellent short story.

Chu Kuang was still the same Chu Kuang.

He used a necklace, and a party, to sketch the melancholic half-life of a young couple.

"The price paid for excessive pursuit of material things and vanity, is perhaps too much."

Wei Long had countless reflections in his heart.

At the same time, Wei Long continued reading the remaining content in one sweep.



He had thought that the story ended after the couple endured a harsh decade. But...

Seemingly, it wasn't so.

Mrs. Wang once again met the friend who had lent her the necklace, and this friend was just as elegant and charming as she was ten years ago.

But by this time, Mrs. Wang had changed due to those ten years of hard work to the point where her friend could barely recognize her.

The two greeted each other.

The friend was inevitably astonished, why had Mrs. Wang changed so much in just ten years?

Mrs. Wang naturally spoke of the reason with a bitter smile.

Who would have thought that the friend would be even more shocked? She took Mrs Wang's hand and said, "Ah, my poor sister, do you know, that diamond necklace I lent to you was a fake, worth at most five hundred dollars!"

The story ended here.

But Wei Long, who was reviewing the draft in front of his computer, felt as if he had been struck by lightning, causing him to be completely dumbfounded!

It's a fake...

The necklace is a fake!

So, the debts that Mr and Mrs. Wang had nearly risked their lives to repay were actually just a misunderstanding!

Realizing this, Wei Long suddenly felt a chill at the back of his neck!

He stood up abruptly, using too much force, causing the chair behind him to suddenly fall to the ground.

“Bang.”

The chair fell a meter away abruptly, this sudden noise garnered the attention of countless people in the department. Even Han Jimei from the inner office couldn’t help but peek out to see what was happening.

Just as someone was about to inquire about Wei Long’s situation, Wei Long suddenly yelled out a phrase. The voice resounded throughout the entire department:

“How about a three-horse carriage then!”

Chapter 202: The Eternal God

The reaction of Wei Long naturally drew everyone’s attention.

But Wei Long’s phrase “What about the three horse carriages” was rather arrogant, unintentionally sparking a lot of debate.

However, no matter the dispute, it couldn’t suppress everyone’s curiosity—

What sort of draft was it that made Wei Long lose his composure to such an extent, almost to the point of exaggeration?

Therefore, a meeting was naturally organized within the department.

Calling it a meeting was less accurate than calling it a novel reading.

Freshly printed copies of “The Necklace,” smelling faintly of ink, were distributed to every staff member at the editor-in-chief level and above.

A five thousand-word text wouldn’t require much time to read through.

Han Jimei was also reading “The Necklace.”

She was the first to receive the printed copies, so she was the first to finish reading.

But when she finished the entire novel, she fell silent for a whole minute.

It was unclear whether she was replaying the story in her mind or waiting for the comments and views of the other editors-in-chief.

Gradually.

In the meeting room.

The other chief editors began to finish reading one after the other.

Instead of mirroring Han Jimei’s silence, everyone was in agreement, and there was even someone who cautiously stood up from his seat expressing his admiration to Wei Long: “This short story...”

He opened his mouth, wanting to critique it using specific terms but found himself lost for words.

It was Wei Long who calmly added two more words: “Classic!”

There was an uproar in the conference room.

“That’s right, it’s a classic, a real masterpiece, especially the ending, it’s as amazing as ‘The Gift of the Magi’!”

“The twist at the end is simply astonishing!”

“Even without the plot twist at the end, the story of a woman spending her whole life trying to pay off the cost of a fake necklace she thought was precious for a moment’s vanity is already very well written!”

“The ending is the cherry on top, raising the entire story to a new level!”

“This is the first short story to show the cost of vanity in such a detailed way!”

“In the face of this kind of story, even Feng Hua would be overwhelmed!”

“I underestimated Chu Kuang. We were all anxious and worried, unaware that the strongest was among us!”

“In terms of reputation and seniority, Chu Kuang can’t compete with Feng Hua, but if we compare the story, it’s hard to tell.”

“First, we likely can challenge them head-on!”

Everyone looked at Han Jimei.

Han Jimei was the most composed.

Everyone couldn’t help but admire her mentality as the Chief. No doubt she’s a leader. She shows no change of color even when Mount Tai collapses in front of her—

Unless one of her exquisite red false fingernails hadn’t broken off due to excessive force.

“Prepare for battle.”

Han Jimei calmly hid her broken fingernail, suppressing her surging emotions and said, “Focus on promoting ‘The Necklace’!”

“Understood!”

Everyone responded thunderously.

That night in the Tribe Literature section, a large banner was raised on the homepage saying:

[Get ready for the grand new masterpiece by superstar genius short story author, Chu Kuang]

The promotional banner took up a quarter of the screen.

This was the grandest promotion ever in the history of Tribe Literature.

After entering the topic, readers could see countless comments from the editors about this novel. All of them were praises and introductions to Chu Kuang's previous works, without any spoilers...

Unsurprisingly, this promotion garnered much attention.

"Such a grand pomp, can I ask, who is Chu Kuang?"

This comment was obviously from someone in Qi Province.

Naturally, netizens from Qin Continent introduced, "Chu Kuang is a fantastic new author and considered a rising star in the area of short stories. You can check out his previous works. I personally recommend 'The Gift of the Magi', it's one of the top three classics in my eyes!"

"Chu Kuang is indeed great, but don't you think his promo is a bit too much?"

"A lot of big name short story authors are participating in Tribe Literature's March event called Blossoming Dreams, there were many but judging from the treatment Chu Kuang seems to have the highest status, equal to Feng Hua from the blog novel section..."

"Is Chu Kuang more prestigious than teacher Wen Da?"

"On the side of Tribe Literature, the only ones who should be on par with teacher Feng Hua would probably be Wen Da, Shen Gongfang, or teacher Yue Mei."

It was like deploying troops and perfecting armaments.

The Blog Novels highlighted Feng Hua, whose position and strength were obviously the leaders among the short story authors there.

However, over at Tribe Literature, to everyone's surprise, it was Chu Kuang. Naturally, some readers were confused.

There were many great teachers in Tribe Literature as well.

The main promotion shouldn't be Chu Kuang, although Chu Kuang is no longer a complete newcomer in the field of short stories, he did have a few excellent works, but this couldn't cover up the fact that he was still relatively new to the circle.

"I have to say, it really piqued my interest."

"Is Chu Kuang's new work really good enough to rival Feng Hua?"

"That's one of the three horse carriages."

"I hope Tribe Literature isn't just blowing its own horn. If they're making such a big fuss, but the quality of the novel isn't up to par, it will be embarrassing."

It wasn't so much doubt, anticipation was indeed aroused, but readers were inevitably hesitant, wondering if Tribe Literature was just playing a savvy marketing game.

In contrast.

Over at Blog Novels, they indeed felt a little scared. Would Tribe Literature have arranged such a grand promotion without being confident?

"Aren't they afraid that when the work comes out, it would not meet the readers' expectations?"

"It scared me so much that I had to read teacher Feng Hua's draft again to calm down."

"Teacher Feng Hua probably finds it strange too, what gives Tribe Literature the confidence?"

“I guess Chu Kuang really did write a great piece. I think Chu Kuang’s potential is terrifying. I tried to bring him over previously, but unfortunately, I couldn’t find his contact information.”

“Having Teacher Feng Hua is sufficient.”

Overall, they are more at ease with blog novels.

It’s not that they are looking down on Chu Kuang, they have so much confidence in Feng Hua!

At this moment.

The authors from the Literature Tribe also began to express surprise, with many discussing the matter in chat groups. A few of those with louder voices expressed their opinions—

Yue Mei: “Is our main promotion going towards Chu Kuang?”

Shen Gongfang: “I thought it would be Teacher Wen Da.”

Wen Da: “There must be a reason for it. Let’s see, I am quite looking forward to Chu Kuang. What if he really beats Teacher Feng Hua?”

No one was really dissatisfied.

Anyone facing Feng Hua would feel intimidated.

Since Chu Kuang was chosen, that can only mean one thing. Literature Tribe believed, among all the manuscripts this time, Chu Kuang’s work was the best!

So, instead of dissatisfaction, everyone was more curious to see just how good Chu Kuang’s manuscript was?

Carrying many people’s curiosity, March finally arrived as scheduled.

For ordinary people, this March is nothing special.

But for short story enthusiasts, this is a rare celebration.

Thus.

As soon as the pre-dawn morning passed, with the Literature Tribe and Blog Novels simultaneously publishing new works from famous short story authors, the traffic of both platforms suddenly increased!

Among these people, most readers couldn't wait and directly opened Feng Hua's work!

Long Fei is a short story enthusiast.

Long Fei is also a fan of Chu Kuang!

As a fan, Long Fei follows the competition between Literature Tribe and Blog Novels quite closely. He also knows that the Literature Tribe has championed Chu Kuang, directly pitting Chu Kuang against Feng Hua, one of the three leading voices in the short story realm.

Besides, the first work Long Fei opened was by Feng Hua.

Long Fei felt there was a hint of probing the enemy in his actions.

The work of Teacher Feng Hua is titled "Bianlian" (Face Changing).

The beginning of the story was not surprising in the least, merely about an ordinary case taken on by a patrolman—it was an unleashed dog that bit a passerby.

Being a patrolman, they naturally sought justice for the victims, so he begins inquiring about the situation, preparing to hold the dog's owner responsible.

As a result, a passerby said the dog belonged to a certain general's family...



Upon hearing this, the patrolman changed his complexion, firmly stating the passerby was at fault, even accusing him of kicking the dog and that he was committing a crime against animals!

Then another passerby spoke up and said the dog doesn't belong to the general's family.

The patrolman changed his complexion for the second time, deciding to kill the dog.

Then someone else asserted that though the dog is not the general's, it was raised by the general's brother...

For the third time, the patrolman's face changed.

His stance several times flipped back and forth according to the bystander's words.

By the end, somebody from the general's family came to take the dog away.

Unexpectedly, the dog wrenched free from its owner's hand and bit the patrolman's leg.

As a result, the patrolman angrily cursed at the first passerby who got bitten, claiming that he had enraged the dog!

The story ends here.

In this very short story, just three thousand words in length, the language is engaging, especially the several face changes the patrolman went through, vividly portraying his hypocritical nature.

At the end, where the dog bites the patrolman, there are some thoughts to be provoked while finding it amusing.

Long Fei ruminated on this for a long time and finally sighed involuntarily.

The story is very clever!

Feng Hua truly deserves to be one among the three prevailing forces.

Such a simple plot, yet, through the patrolman's several face changes, an ironic artistic vibe is brilliantly portrayed!

This kind of story reminds Long Fei of Chu Kuang's previous piece, "Death of a Small Civil Servant."

They both play with satire, but Feng Hua's skill is by no means inferior to Chu Kuang's!

Long Fei even feels that this story is a bit stronger.

Especially when considering Feng Hua's status in the industry, his portrayal of satire can easily provoke readers to ponder, and the more they think, the more intriguing it becomes...

"Impressive!"

Long Fei couldn't help but exclaim. However, in the midst of his admiration, Long Fei couldn't help but feel worried for Chu Kuang.

When he logged into Literature Tribe.

Long Fei opened Chu Kuang's new piece, a story called "Necklace."

As he read through this work, Long Fei thought to himself:

"Chu Kuang is still young. Even if his work is not as good as Teacher Feng Hua's, as long as the difference is not too great, it will still be a victory!"

After all, the opponent is one of the three leading forces.

And when the story is nearly finished, Long Fei's mood gradually relaxed a bit.

It's a delightful coincidence.

Chu Kuang also plays with satire, focusing on the material and vanity. Compared to Teacher Feng Hua's "Bianlian," the story is slightly stronger in narrative.

Despite missing by just a bit...

Long Fei's mind suddenly halted as he read the last sentence of "Necklace." Suddenly, the whole story took a dramatic twist!

Simultaneously.

In a fan group on Long Fei's computer, a crazy fan of Chu Kuang, who liked him even more than Long Fei did, posted a code for a red envelope:

"Chu Kuang, forever the god!"

Chapter 203: The Fourth Carriage 1

Chu Kuang, a perpetual deity?

Long Fei was startled for a moment. After internally comparing the quality of the novels by Chu Kuang and Feng Hua, he hesitated for a while. He found both stories to be incredibly exquisite to the point that he couldn't distinguish which one was better—

A tie?

Long Fei was suddenly shocked.

On the blog side, Feng Hua's "Changing Faces" triggered a flood of reader comments as soon as it was released. Regardless of whether they were Feng Hua's fans or just short story enthusiasts, no one held back their praise:

"As expected of Feng Hua!"

“Indeed, one of the three leading chariots!”

Changing Faces’ is a form of dramatic art. Everyone knows that an actor on stage can change faces in a matter of seconds. The brilliance of Teacher Feng Hua lies in using the art of face changing to satirize the images of people in real life who are soft bullies...”

“The ending is the most ingenious.”

“I found it hilarious yet somewhat sad that the dog ends up biting the patrolman. I wonder if the patrolman, having been bitten, would choose to punish the dog owner or accept the situation?”

Not by coincidence.

The readers who had read “The Necklace” were also captivated by this story about materialism and vanity. After all, how could the representative work of Maupassant, one of the most famous short story maestros on Earth, not be excellent?

“What a sharp satire!”

“So he is Chu Kuang!”

“Indeed, Qin Province is a place full of talent. A rookie short story writer, with only a short period since his debut, can write such mature text. Now I remember Chu Kuang. This is one of the most stunning short stories I have ever read.”

“The cost of vanity.”

“Mr. and Mrs. Wang spent half of their lives for a fake necklace. Ten years changed their lives completely. I wonder if Lady Wang’s memory of that dazzling night will become a beautiful past or an everlasting nightmare?”

“The price was too high.”

“I feel that the prowess of this story lies in its inability to judge the specifics of gains and losses. Of course, the couple lost a lot, but in fact, they gained a lot too. At least Lady Wang and Mr. Wang didn’t choose to escape, but bravely faced up to their responsibilities. This kind of character is the most precious, showing the integrity of the terms of their agreement. This is true for both women and men.”

“Exactly.”

“Vanity and honesty can coexist in the same person. It is wrong to be vain, but we should not deny a person because of vanity. Pursuing material things is a lifestyle, and it is not necessary to deny all about a person because of it.”

On the Tribe literature side, “The Necklace” stood out, stunning countless readers. Even the short story writers who published their work at the same time as Chu Kuang were speechless before such a masterpiece.

On the blog side.

Feng Hua’s “Changing Faces” was also a standout. In comparison, other short stories on the blog seemed to become complementary. The two major literary sections in early March had roughly equal traffic!

Even more so...

The simultaneous publication of these two novels led to a debate about which work was better. This, in the eyes of many, should have been a foregone conclusion, but at this moment, this debate was indeed happening.

The readers divided into two camps.

Some people liked Feng Hua’s work: “In life, we often come across such people. They blend in well with any crowd, are adaptable and have excellent social skills. We can’t criticize this way of engaging socially as improper, but it unavoidably gives an impression of being too slick. The repeated face changes and references to the dog in this story are a profound satire of such people.” Correspondingly.

Some people liked Chu Kuang's work: "The complexity of human beings is not one-sided. The story itself is exquisite. While satirizing vanity and materialism through the story of a fake necklace that changes the couple's life, the plot begins to paradoxically show Mr. and Mrs. Wang fulfilling their commitment to repay the debt, even if the cost may be their future. Perhaps after repaying the debt ten years later, Mr. and Mrs. Wang will not be without gain."

Not just readers.

Even within the field of short stories, many writers are discussing who is stronger, which has also resulted in a rough tie. This was unbelievable to many people because the issue was no longer about whose story, Chu Kuang or Feng Hua's, was better. The truly astonishing point was that people were seriously comparing Chu Kuang with a short story writer of Feng Hua's caliber...

Chu Kuang is a new favorite in the circle.

Feng Hua is one of the three brahmins.

The former, whether in terms of experience, qualification, or fame, lags behind Feng Hua. Nevertheless, his works are now being compared with those of Feng Hua, and nothing could be more incredible than this!

While everyone was immersed in this emotion.

Teacher Changqin, one of the three brahmins in Qin Province's short story field who is now retired but highly respected in the circle, suddenly shared her thoughts on the tribal platform: "I personally think it's a tie. Both stories have different structures but are equally fascinating. The talents of Feng Hua and Chu Kuang are undeniable. Perhaps the short story field in Qin Province is about to have a fourth carriage."

Even Changqin was moved!

However, what people cared more about was Changqin's evaluation-

Is Chu Kuang qualified to become the fourth carriage in the short story field?

The significance of this matter has far exceeded the competition between Chu

Kuang and Feng Hua. In other words, Chu Kuang has already won!

What he won was recognition and popularity!

For many people, it's taken for granted that Feng Hua would perform well. However, as a rising star in the literary world, the fact that Chu Kuang could break even with a stalwart figure is a pleasant surprise!

It's very unfair to the old man.

But all fields are like this.

Because you are extraordinary, it is only natural for you to perform well in the eyes of many.

Chu Kuang has been in a situation of being questioned before. Whether it's fame or qualifications, he's inferior to his opponent. So when he surpassed everyone's expectations and took on Feng Hua without losing, he had already won in a certain sense!

However...

Some people inevitably disagreed with the term "the fourth carriage" as Chu Kuang's works are too few.

In terms of work quality, he indeed has the potential.

But how many more high-quality works he can write in the future is key in determining whether he can truly become the fourth carriage in Qin Province!

Feng Hua has more than just "Changing Faces".

His profile is filled with excellent short stories.

It's different for Chu Kuang who, all told, has only a handful of works, with

“The Gift of the Magi” being the most talked about.

The evaluations of Chu Kuang’s other two works, “Death of a Small Civil Servant” and “Artificial Beauty”, were indeed good, but always fell a little short.

Of course, now there is an addition of “The Necklace”.

In terms of quality, the quality of “The Necklace” is also excellent.

Everyone believes its classic status is no less than that of “The Gift of the Magi”!

In general, the question mark still needs to be placed behind the fourth carriage.

But what is undeniable is that Chu Kuang has now become the person closest to the three leading forces in the short story field in Qin Province!

Chapter 204: No Problem

In his spare time from filming, Lin Yuan naturally paid attention to the impact

of his short story.

As expected, ‘The Necklace’, as a work of Maupassant, received undeniable recognition.

This made Lin Yuan happy.

As for the debate about whether his work or Feng Hua’s work is stronger, Lin Yuan was aware of it, but the person who is actually competing with Feng Hua is not Chu Kuang but Maupassant. Therefore, Lin Yuan did not feel strongly involved.

On the contrary,



■The Necklace’ in the second ‘Writings from a Dream’ event of the Tribe Literature held a substantial lead in reader votes, sitting firmly on the champion’s throne. This made Lin Yuan feel very involved –

He envisioned a million-dollar prize was beckoning him!

At this moment, Lin Yuan suddenly felt somewhat relieved.

Because, judging from everyone’s comments, if the work ‘Face Off’ was not published on the blog novel but participated in the ‘Writings from a Dream’ event, Lin Yuan’s champion position would probably be in danger.

He had deliberately read ‘Face Off.

In the boundless space-time, there are people with connected minds as if they have established a connection with the cosmic galaxy.

Feng Hua’s work was remarkably like the classic Chekhov work ‘The Chameleon’ that Lin Yuan had read in his previous life!

This is Blue Star.

This is the artistic height of Blue Star!

In this world with advanced artistic standards, even bringing out a novel of the level of ‘The Necklace’, he could not be certain of winning!

However, thinking about how his songs often could not win the season championship, Lin Yuan felt much better.

This is a world with no shortage of stunning talents.

The classic works on earth were also written by humans, and they were not invincible even on earth, let alone on Blue Star.

But it is rather the fun part of it.

What Lin Yuan didn't know was that the current status of the blog novel is chaotic.

“How is that possible!”

“Chu Kuang actually tied with Teacher Feng Hua?”

“I thought Teacher Feng Hua was invincible...”

“Did this let Tribe overturn the game? For us, having Teacher Feng Hua in charge and still tying with the opponent is equivalent to being overturned.” “Although I don't want to admit it... Chu Kuang is really strong!”

“Can we dig up Chu Kuang?”

“It's hard, Chu Kuang has cooperated with Tribe Literature several times already...”

On the side of the blog novels, they are struggling.

On the side of Tribe Literature, they can't wait to celebrate!

Looking back now, Wei Long's phrase “What about the three-horse carriage” was indeed a bit rash.

The three-horse carriage is still the ceiling!

But Chu Kuang has touched the ceiling!

Teacher Changqin's comment about “the fourth carriage” while not definitive, had left a mark in many people's hearts!

At least....

From now on, when people mention Chu Kuang, they will not think of a newcomer in the short story field, but a genuine talent, a person who is infinitely close to the ceiling.

The significance of this incident does not stop there.

In the recently published 'Literature and Art Gazette', the short story contest between Chu Kuang and Feng Hua was also reported. The newspaper described it this way:

"Teacher Changqin said that Chu Kuang could be the fourth carriage in the short story field of Qin Province, this statement may be somewhat controversial, but if we say that Chu Kuang is one of the writers in Qin Province who is closest to the three-horse carriage, this claim is irrefutable!"

"One of the writers in Qin Province who is closest to the three-horse carriage!" This time it really sealed the deal, as the 'Literature and Art Gazette', as the first publication in the literary circles after the merger of Qin and Qi, with official organizations backing it, this kind of endorsement of recognition was enough to break over seventy percent of the controversy!

In addition...

Riding on the popularity of Chu Kuang and Feng Hua, the 'Literature and Art Gazette' also formally released a ranking of writers in the short story field. This list includes the top one hundred short story writers from both Qin and Qi!

Chang Qin ranked first.

Second place was a Qi Province writer.

Third place was also a Qi Province writer.

Fourth place was Feihong, one of the three chariots of Qin Continent. Feng Hua, who had a dispute with Chu Kuang, was ranked sixth on the list. As for Chu Kuang...

He was ranked tenth.

Although the ‘Literature and Art Gazette’ said Lin Yuan is one of the most formidable short story writers under the three chariots of Qin Province, but “one of” after all, is not “the only one”.

In the two places of Qin and Qi, there are other “one of” on the list.

Someone has counted that there are fifty-three writers on the list from Qin Province, and the remaining forty-seven are from Qi Province.

It is estimated that when other continents also merge in the future, this list will undergo quite a bit of change.

At this point,

The attention Chu Kuang has attracted is even higher. In just a few days, Chu Kuang’s tribal fans have surpassed thirty million!

The comments on Weibo have also greatly increased.

However, two-thirds of Chu Kuang’s fans are readers from the fantasy novel circle, and the remaining one-third are from the short story field.

After all, the influence and reader coverage of fantasy novels is much greater than that of short stories.

It is with this ‘The Necklace’ fire, in addition to Chu Kuang being featured in the newspaper, entering the top ten of the Qin Qi short story field, that recently attracted so many short story lovers to pay attention to his tribal account.

It’s worth mentioning that...

Thirty million fans on the tribe are just a drop in the ocean.

Because the highest fan following on the Tribe has already exceeded one billion, and with the merger of Qin and Qi, this number is estimated to not take long to rise to a new level!

Normally, Lin Yuan wouldn't pay attention to such a thing.

The reason he specially looked up other's fan numbers was mainly because, as his Tribe fan followings shot up, he suddenly received a system alert: [In view of the sudden merger of Qin and Qi, the task that the host led Starlight Music division to rise is reset, only changed to a simple disciple recruitment task, successfully recruiting three disciples and completing their teaching, the task reward remains unchanged.]

"I see."

The system pinged again: "In addition, congratulations to the host for triggering the system's new task. If the host can get Chu Kuang's tribal account to reach over a hundred million fans within a year, he will receive a Silver Treasure Chest and three Bronze Treasure Chests!"

"Accept."

This was the reason why Lin Yuan was checking other people's fan followings. He needed to understand the concept of breaking a hundred million fans on the Tribe.

"Does it seem not difficult?"

There are accounts with over a billion followers, it shouldn't be difficult for him to aim for a hundred million, right? But this means he needs to make Chu Kuang's identity more active.

Simply put, he needs to start a new book!

A new book following 'King of the Net' and 'Zhu Xian'!

It seems like the system is subtly stimulating him to spend more money.

But because Lin Yuan was craving the reward of the treasure boxes, he had no choice but to spend more money. So, Lin Yuan called out the system. "Customize a new book, requirement is just to not exceed ten million in price!" Lin Yuan had been spending money like running water lately.

He intended to put the new book on hold for a while, but with this task, Lin Yuan felt like he had rested enough.

“System customization is in progress...”

“Congratulations to the host for acquiring the work ‘Ghost Blows Out the Light’, the customization price is ten million!”

The customization price of ten million, indeed did not exceed ten million, makes sense?

Chapter 205: Fish and Its Offsprings

No freaking way...

This System is really ruthless, even more so than me!

Could you, please, be a little kinder?

Before, 01' Zhou said that the investment for “Flirting Scholar” must not exceed 10 million. Lin Yuan had reported 9 million, leaving quite some leeway for the company.

But the System didn't leave any breathing space at all!

It was at this moment that Lin Yuan realized how kind he actually was.

But fair is fair, Lin Yuan was quite satisfied with the novel given by the System.

After he conducted quantum reading, the contents of the novel were already clearly emerging in his mind.

At the same time.

Combining with some memories from his past life, Lin Yuan was very clear about the value of this novel.

This novel was really good!

And it was very in line with the System's penchant for making him pioneer new genres.

The System was like a brick.

Wherever the market lacked, it would make up for it.

The only question was, would "Ghost Blows Out The Light" still be considered a fantasy novel?

You should know that most fantasy novels tend to be rather youthful, which is why adventures in other worlds are so popular.

With this thought in mind.

Lin Yuan looked online for information and, as expected, found that Blue Star didn't have any novels on the theme of tomb robbing.

So "Ghost Blows Out The Light" as a new type, placed in fantasy novels, shouldn't pose any major problems.

As long as it's something young people like, it's all good.

And in his previous life, "Ghost Blows Out The Light" was a work much loved by many young people.

Moreover, Lin Yuan was confident that the audience for this work was likely not just limited to the younger generation.

It was "Grave Robbers' Chronicles", which followed the trend and achieved great success later on, that had a bigger impact among young people. After all, this derivative work had a stronger commercial atmosphere...

“Cut.”

While Lin Yuan was mulling over things, Yi Chenggong’s voice came from afar.

This was the set of “Flirting Scholar”, where Lin Yuan had been hanging out recently.

After all, he was now one of the heads of the composition department.

As a manager, besides having a substantial pay rise, he was even allowed to play hooky without repercussions.

Moreover, Lin Yuan was also the film’s scriptwriter, which gave him even more reason to skip work, without even needing to use the excuse of going out for research and inspiration.

Wu Yong was very straightforward too.

As Lin Yuan’s assistant manager, he basically took care of everything on the ninth floor for Lin Yuan, leaving him with not much to worry about.

At this time.

After shooting for a while, “Flirting Scholar” was nearing its end; it was estimated that the filming would wrap up in about a month.

However, even so, Lin Yuan still didn’t have the time to be frequently at work.

He couldn’t even casually drop by the production crew anymore.

Because...

Qin Art’s school had started!



The low-key second semester of his third year had just started. Lin Yuan showed up at the set just because it was the weekend.

At the moment.

Yi Chenggong had announced that the production crew could knock off for the day. He approached Lin Yuan and smiled, “Mr. Lin, do you have any ideas about the post-production? Our movie is almost done filming, it’s about time to think about the post-production...”

“Leave the score to me.”

Lin Yuan said, “As for other aspects, just keep an eye on them. Everything should follow the script. Don’t let the editing break the rhythm of the story.”

The Memory Pill isn’t used in vain.

After reading countless film and television books, Lin Yuan is now a theoretical expert, so he’s very clear about the significance of editing for a movie.

“Understood.”

Yi Chenggong was already familiar with Lin Yuan’s style. As the director, he unconditionally agreed with all of Lin Yuan’s decisions.

It was still early.

After the production crew had finished for the day, Lin Yuan looked at the sky and simply had Gu Dong drive him to the company. Gu Dong, as Lin Yuan’s assistant, tended to accompany Lin Yuan wherever he went, so she spent most of her recent time on the set.

Arriving at the company.

The two of them headed up to the ninth floor.

The staff in the department greeted Lin Yuan as they saw him, and he returned with a nod, then headed into his own office. Then, he asked Gu Dong to call Wu Yong over. He wasn't entirely lacking in responsibility; he should keep an eye on the status of his department.

"Mr. Lin."

Wu Yong arrived promptly.

Lin Yuan was slightly surprised. Wu Yong was wearing a suit. Apart from being a bit dark-skinned, he was emitting an aura suggesting that he was trying to pay tribute to 01' Zhou. This was completely different from the Wu Yong that Lin Yuan remembered.

Wu Yong had never worn a suit before.

Wu Yong coughed a bit, seemingly guessing Lin Yuan's thoughts: "As a deputy manager, I should maintain some authority..."

"How is work going?"

Lin Yuan didn't linger on the topic.

Wu Yong responded seriously: "In April, we on the ninth floor have a song to release. The company has high hopes for it. It's sung by our company's leading female singer, Shen Tingyuan. I estimate that this song will enter the top five."

Lin Yuan asked, "Who wrote the song?"

Wu Yong showed a smile: "The composer is your apprentice, Xue Liang, Mr.

Lin. As your apprentice, Xue Liang has composed a song of a very high standard. Would you like to have a listen?"

"Fine."

Lin Yuan spoke.

Wu Yong directly sent the song to the device and then turned on the speakers.

This was a pre-recorded song; after all, it was to be officially released in April.

The song followed a sentimental style.

Ballads were a relatively popular style.

The melody of the song was also very good, at least Lin Yuan personally liked it. But before Lin Yuan could say anything after hearing the song, the system suddenly gave a prompt: “Congratulations to the host’s first apprentice on completing his training!”

[Name: Xue Liang]

[Composition: 666]

[Relationship: Master-Apprentice]

[Status: Completed Training]

[Evaluation: Xue Liang has already acquired the abilities of an ace composer. What he lacks is a work to prove himself. We hope the host can treasure each of his apprentices, as their works can also bring prestige to their master.]

It seemed that the system couldn’t predict the future either.

The merger of Qin Art had forced the system to reluctantly reset the task, which showed that the system was incapable of predicting the future. The system only gave the corresponding evaluation after Lin Yuan had listened to Xue Liang’s song.

“Great, right?”

Wu Yong laughed: “But there are two things I want to discuss with you, Mr. Lin. The first is that Xue Liang does not plan to release songs under his real name. He has decided to take up an artistic name similar to Xian Yu.”

“What is it?”

Wu Yong made a strange expression: “Carp.”

When Wu Yong first learned about Xue Liang’s decision, he was also baffled. Xue Liang must have chosen this name to pay tribute to his master, right?

If Mr. Lin takes on multiple apprentices, wouldn’t there be a bunch of fish-related names in the Qin Art music scene?

Lin Yuan paused for a moment and said: “I see. What’s the second thing?”

Wu Yong said, “The second thing is that the company has registered a Tribe account on behalf of Xian Yu. They suggest that you post some content on the account when you have time. The account details and password will be sent to you later.”

“Oh.”

Lin Yuan has always been using the “Chu Kuang” account.

He didn’t expect that the company would register a “Xian Yu” one as well.

Wu Yong sighed: “The competition between Tribe and Blog is too intense. Both sides are vying to invite celebrities because the fan effect that celebrities bring about is very influential...”

Lin Yuan nodded.

Wu Yong reminded, “Now that you have a Tribe account, it’s certain to attract some fan attention. I suggest you promote Xue Liang’s work, since he is your apprentice after all.”

“Okay.”

Lin Yuan nodded in understanding. It looked like he would have to frequently switch accounts from now on.

If he uses the Xian Yu account to promote Chu Kuang’s new book, he’ll get caught for double-dealing.

Wait...

It seems he doesn’t need to double deal. As long as he posts with one account and promotes the posts using the other account, it should be fine. But he’s unsure how many followers the Xian Yu account can attract?

Chapter 206: King of the Net in Comics \_

Evening.

Using the username and password given by the company, Lin Yuan logged into Xian Yu’s Tribe account.

As soon as he signed in, a series of notification sounds came from his computer, most of them being private messages.

Lin Yuan was not unfamiliar with this.

Chu Kuang’s Tribe account was like this, too. He received countless fan messages every day. He would like to reply but it was simply too much, so he could only give them a cursory glance every time.

He adeptly turned off the sound notifications.

Lin Yuan looked at Xian Yu’s follower count.

To his surprise, even though Xian Yu’s account had only just been created less than a day ago, it already had over ten million followers...

Obviously,

The Tribe's official account had used big data to drive the stream.

Otherwise, even with Xian Yu's popular identification, not everyone would be immediately aware of the account's existence.

The account name was simply Xian Yu.

The bio read: [Top Composer, head representative of the composition department on the ninth floor of Starlight Entertainment.]

He opened the comment section.

Lin Yuan found the comment section quite lively.

"The real Envious Fish?"

"I'm happy, my idol has finally made a Tribe account, the official verification must be legit!"

"Ah I love 'Red Rose' so much!"

"Many celebrities have recently joined Tribe, a long live to Teacher Admirable Fish, it has been so long since I heard Teacher Admirable Fish's new songs!"

"Song request!"

"Add one more for song request!"

"Thank Tribe for providing a public platform for fans to request songs from

Teacher Admirable Fish!"

“Envious Fish’s fans, please join group xxxxxxxx.”

Song requests weren’t unusual.

On Lin Yuan’s Chu Kuang account, the messages he received every day were all requests for updates.

Same idea.

After searching for Chu Kuang, Lin Yuan followed him with the Xian Yu account, and then he posted a status update using Xian Yu’s account:

“Hello everyone, I’m Xian Yu. A song composed by my apprentice, Carp, titled

‘Forest’, will be coming out in April. Stay tuned.”

The song by Xue Liang was named “The Forest”.

However, the fans’ focus wasn’t on the song at all...

“What!”

“Carp?”

“Xian Yu’s apprentice?”

“Hahaha, why am I laughing?”

“So because the master is a Fish, the apprentice is a fish too?”

“I’ll support it simply because your apprentice is also a Fish.”

Lin Yuan, barely looking at the comments, then shared Xian Yu's status update with Chu Kuang's account, with only two words:

“Excited!”

Chu Kuang, having been influential for quite some time now, already had over thirty million loyal followers. So, this repost had quite a significant effect.

“The old rascal Chu Kuang actually posted a status update?”

“I'm astonished, is Chu Kuang still alive?”

“Good grief, finally posted an update after so long, turns out it's just a promotion for someone else?”

“Wait... is this Xian Yu's Tribe?”

“That songwriter, Xian Yu? He opened a Tribe account?”

“Let's follow for now.”

“Does Chu Kuang old rascal know Xian Yu?”

“What the hell, the only account Chu Kuang follows is Xian Yu, this must be true love!”

“Who is Xian Yu?”

“You can just search for Xian Yu's song and you'll find out.

Fans who follow Chu Kuang know well that this old rascal barely uses Tribe, and is even too lazy to promote his new books there.



Even when Biyao's death caused an uproar among his readers, there wasn't a single response from Chu Kuang's Tribe account!

Some people even doubted whether Chu Kuang had forgotten his Tribe account's password.

And yet today...

Chu Kuang finally updated his status!

Moreover, it was promoting a new song for Xian Yu's apprentice!

What intrigued readers more was that Chu Kuang didn't follow anyone before today when he followed Xian Yu who just joined Tribe!

Following only Xian Yu?

Is Chu Kuang fan of Xian Yu?

Or do they know each other in real life?

Fans couldn't resist their curiosity and started speculating. Some clicked on Xian Yu's account to check, and they all were stunned.

Because...

Xian Yu also followed only Chu Kuang!

If it weren't for the fact that their fields of interest widely differing, people would suspect they are actually the same person!

But everyone knows this can't be the case.

How can a novelist like Chu Kuang be the same person as Xian Yu?

Everyone knows Xian Yu is a music composer.

As people started noticing this phenomenon more, curiosity increased even more and people couldn't resist asking questions in the comment sections of both accounts:

“Do you guys know each other?”

“Are you good buddies offline too?”

“What positions do you guys use?”

“Who's the dominant one? Who's the submissive one?”

“...Wait, does anyone know the genders of Chu Kuang and Xian Yu?”

“It seems like both of them are quite mysterious, they never reveal anything about their personal lives, not even their genders. It's possible that Xian Yu and Chu Kuang are actually girls, right?”

“Wouldn't that be even more exciting?”

Lin Yuan logged into Chu Kuang's account on his phone while using Xian Yu's account on his computer. After following each other and reposting each other's posts, he felt a bit embarrassed because of this identity split. But after seeing the hilarious comments from the netizens, he couldn't help but be caught off guard by the reactions.

However, he didn't have any intentions of explaining it.

Because Lin Yuan noticed something interesting.

A lot of Chu Kuang's fans started following Xian Yu.

And Some fans from Xian Yu's side also followed Chu Kuang's account.

The two accounts were supporting each other?

If there was more interaction between the two accounts, would the effect be even better?

Lin Yuan seemed to have found a shortcut to complete his tasks!

The only pity was that the followers of Xian Yu's account couldn't be added to Chu Kuang's follower count.

Otherwise, it would be a two-for-one effect.

Another point Lin Yuan noticed was that many followers of both accounts were from Qi Continent, showing that people from Qi Continent were slowly getting acquainted with Xian Yu and Chu Kuang.

Since the merge of Qin and Qi, things were slowly starting to consolidate.

That's the benefit of having a common language-no barriers to communication.

Just then,

Lin Yuan suddenly had a clever thought. He now had a way to increase his reputation in painting—

He could register a new account on Tribe specifically for publishing his artwork!

Normally, posting some artwork on Tribe would hardly gather any attention. But what if there was someone influential backing it?

Chu Kuang and Xian Yu were both such influential figures...

And these two accounts would only grow more popular in the future.

If those two accounts both promoted his own artwork, it would be seen by many more people!

In this way...

His reputation in painting could skyrocket!

But it's usually hard for ordinary people to appreciate.

So he must figure out a way to make his painting captivating enough for fans to stick around.

At this point, Lin Yuan thought of Manga.

He asked the system: "Manga is also considered painting, right?"

The system answered: "Yes."

Lin Yuan smiled. He didn't even need the system's help to create an already existing Manga, and that Manga was...

Chu Kuang's "King of the Net"

Chapter 207: Chu Kuang Also Likes Eating Egg Yolks!

Lin Yuan has professional drawing skills, which is why he is also great in creating manga, a branch of painting. He just needs to learn digital drawing to create a manga version of "King of the Net".

Just so you know...

Before getting published as a novel, "King of the Net" was originally made as a manga by Chu Kuang!

If the manga becomes famous, not only Lin Yuan's reputation in painting would skyrocket, Chu Kuang would also benefit from it as the original author. For instance, he might gain a bigger fanbase?

After all, some people prefer to read manga over novels, and vice versa.

This is an undeveloped territory with much potential!

This brainwave incidentally came from an innocent chit-chat between Chu Kuang and Fish during a tribe get-together.

The more Lin Yuan thought about it, the more interesting it sounded.

Anything related to the copyright of “King of the Net” belongs to him, so he can draw freely without the permission of Silver Blue Books.

And publishing manga online is a common practice.

Having made up his mind...

Lin Yuan started making plans right away.

He bought a bunch of digital drawing tutorial books online. With the memory pill and professional drawing skills, he believed that learning a new skill wouldn't be too difficult.

However...

In the future, he would still need to work with the System on creating manga, “King of the Net” would just be a quick fix—albeit undoubtedly a considerable saver for Lin.

But this meant that the launch of “Ghost Blows Out the Light” would have to be postponed.

It definitely couldn't be launched in April.

Yet a delay of a month or so wasn't a big deal to Lin. His mission to help Chu Kuang reach a billion fans had a one-year deadline—which was plenty of time for Lin Yuan to get creative with his approach.

At this moment...

Lin Yuan received a message from Zhong Yu, "GOAT seems to have gone back to school. Why hasn't he shown up at our painting club? Many people want to sign up for his tutoring..."

Indeed...

Although Lin Yuan returned to school as normal once the Qin Art term began, he hadn't visited the painting club in a while.

There were probably quite a few students accumulated.

But after thinking about it, with his plate full of manga, juggling writing, worrying about the movie, and simply not having much free time, Lin replied, "I'm busy at the moment, I'll get back to you."

Zhong Yu replied, "Alright."

A thought suddenly struck Lin Yuan.

Perhaps in the future he could take Zhong Yu on as an apprentice. Zhong Yu's painting skills were quite good and he seemed to have some talent...

But that was for the future.

Lin Yuan's current apprenticeship task was music composition. Since Xue Liang had finished his training, he should start looking for a new apprentice.

"So many things to do..."

Lin Yuan mused. He figured that soon he would have to rely on the System's energy potion. Between the several roles he had to play, he found it increasingly difficult to maintain a proper time-management schedule without the help of the energy potion—

The Energy Potion wouldn't harm his body.

No wonder the System provided so many special items.

Seems like it expected him to obediently foot all the bills in the end.

Fortunately, all the money spent was donated by the System, which was a consolation to Lin.

Just focus on one thing at a time.

Once ordered, online purchases are typically delivered quickly. Lin Yuan ordered the books in the evening, and they arrived the next day.

Just back from his daily courses, with books in hand, he headed straight for his bedroom.

After taking a memory pill, Lin Yuan started to read.

He started with a book titled 'Beginner's Guide to Digital Drawing', reading rapidly with efficiency.

"I need a digital drawing board..."

"My drawing skills are not a problem..."

"Coloring? Isn't it just like mixing paint, the difference being that I don't have to mix it myself, but just select it with a mouse from the color library..."

It took him only ten minutes to finish one book.

But those ten minutes were fruitful for Lin Yuan.

To master one is to master everything.

He had professional-level drawing skills.

So, while reading the book, Lin Yuan realized that turning the comic into a webcomic was not as complicated as he had imagined. All he needed to do was to familiarize himself with the drawing tools and understand the basic rules...

With a basic understanding, Lin Yuan continued reading.

“So, I can get an assistant?”

“In manga, many scenes need technical operation rather than creative thinking, so they don’t necessarily need to be done by the main creators. The main creators are mainly responsible for the storyboard creation process, and the following tasks could be delegated. This can not only save the creator’s energy, but also train newcomers...”

I need an assistant.

This was Lin Yuan’s first thought after learning the role of an assistant.

For instance, in the creation of buildings and other aspects irrelevant to the main storyline, he could delegate to an assistant, saving himself lots of time and concentrating on the storyboard.

The story was simple, as the original was “King of the Net”.

However, creating a manga is tough work, otherwise serialization would not be so slow.

Unlike writing a novel where typing on a keyboard suffices, one must take the time to carefully draw each line for a manga. It’s impossible to accelerate the process unless resorting to special tools.

But using tools consistently would be cost-prohibitive. Having an assistant, on the other hand, is a much cheaper option.

As for who to serve as his assistant...



With such a large drawing club, he felt it wouldn't be difficult to find someone interested in creating a manga.

In fact, a portion of students in the Fine Arts Department at Qin Art chose to become manga artists as their post-graduation goal.

With that in mind,

Lin Yuan spent a long time reading until he got the call for dinner from downstairs, and grudgingly paused his reading.

The reason he was grudging was that the time effect of the memory pill lasts one hour.

If he didn't fully utilize the one hour, it would be a waste.

However, everything has pros and cons.

Because of the time he spent procrastinating, Lin Yuan found out that by the time he sat down to dinner, his sister and younger sister had eaten all the meat. All that's left were vegetables.

His sister joking said, "Here's a strip of meat left."

Lin Yuan:"..."

Of course, his mother cooked the dishes.

His mother is a busybody. Although she lived in a mansion now, she would keep herself busy every day with chores such as cleaning or cooking.

"Eat more vegetables," his mother said seriously.

Feeling even more helpless, Lin Yuan could only hungrily eat his rice, occasionally picking up some vegetables to eat.

Just then,

His sister, Lin Xuan, suddenly asked, “Do you know Chu Kuang?”

Lin Yuan was taken aback, “Why do you ask?”

Lin Xuan eyed him suspiciously, “Don’t tell me you don’t surf the internet. Didn’t you both follow each other on the tribe? You only followed Chu Kuang on your Fish account, and Chu Kuang only followed you.”

“That’s because Chu Kuang...”

As Lin Yuan was about to explain,

His sister abruptly interrupted, “Also likes to eat egg yolks?”

Chapter 208: Fish Generations

Despite his sister’s sudden interruption, the topic was skillfully brushed aside.

However, when Lin Yuan went upstairs after dinner, he couldn’t help but feel something was off about the way his sister looked at him.

He didn’t think much about it.

In the following days, Lin Yuan’s routine was normal. He read some books and attended school.

He also bought a bunch of comic creation tools online, but considering he might need an assistant in the future, Lin Yuan thought it might be inconvenient.

Was he supposed to invite the assistant to his own home?

He simply asked Gu Dong to find a place that could serve as his comic studio.

Having an assistant was very convenient; at least Lin Yuan didn't have to bother Senior Sun Yao Huo for every little thing.

He felt embarrassed always troubling others.

Gu Dong was efficacious. By April, she had found a studio near the company.

"This is it."

Lin Yuan looked around the environment and nodded.

Initially, Gu Dong wanted to ask what Lin Yuan was planning to do with the studio, but she swallowed her question and instead reminded Lin Yuan, "The drama group is about to wrap up filming."

Lin Yuan nodded.

Gu Dong continued, "Xue Liang's new song has been released. It is currently the fifth on the April new song list. Unfortunately, the singer he collaborated with is just an ordinary second-tier. If it was a top-tier singer, this song could have made it into the top three."

Lin Yuan nodded again.

The song Xue Liang wrote was not bad. After all, his level was not lower than that of the top-tier. In fact, Lin Yuan noted that his music prestige value had been rising.

It was all thanks to Xue Liang's song "Forest".

What Lin Yuan didn't know was...

Since Xue Liang was Xian Yu's apprentice, the industry was curious and wanted to know the standard of an apprentice taught by Xian Yu.

As a result, when the song "Forest" was released, many people were shocked.

Those who knew their music could recognize the composition standard of this song!

“Isn’t this the level of a top-tier composer?”

“But this Carp, isn’t he a rookie?”

“Is it really a case of the apple not falling far from the tree?”

“Can Xian Yu already teach apprentices to become top-tier composers?”

“Is composition that easy to teach?”

“It’s just one song, we can’t rule out the possibility of a fluke. We still have to observe.”

“Could Xian Yu have also contributed to the composition?”

II II

The industry’s reaction was mostly of surprise and uncertainty. If Xian Yu could teach an apprentice to become a top-tier composer, it would indeed be terrifying!

Composition isn’t something that can be easily taught to a high standard.

Even a maestro-level composer wouldn’t dare to say they could definitely teach an apprentice to become a top-tier composer, right?

But what’s undeniable is...

The composer Carp, who also belongs to the “fish” generation, has begun to gain recognition in both Qin Continent and Qi Province.

Some people even dug up Carp’s previous works.

Xue Liang, who composed under the name Carp, did not completely hide his identity.

As a result, comparing Carp's earlier works, people in the industry were even more surprised.

"Did one person write this song?"

"Carp's previous works and the one he published after becoming Xian Yu's apprentice are completely different! They're like night and day!"

"Did Xian Yu really teach all this?"

"In an interview yesterday, Carp said he's only been studying with Xian Yu for less than a year."

"Turns out, he's a lucky Carp?"

Meanwhile, inside Starlight-

Seeing Carp's excellent performance within the season, many composers were shocked.

Didn't everyone know Carp was from a branch company?

And the level of those composers from the branch company was common knowledge in the industry.

For a moment, people couldn't tell if Xian Yu was an exceptional teacher or if Carp was naturally a genius, with Xian Yu just giving him a little nudge.

For the first time in his life, Xue Liang experienced flowers and applause!

With his inaugural work released under the name Carp, he scored a huge success, instantly becoming a star figure in the Ninth Floor's composition department!

At this moment, Xue Liang was thrilled and grateful.

What would his life have been like without his master?

Xue Liang didn't dare to imagine, and thus he was increasingly grateful for his master's kindness.

No matter how the outside world speculated, Xue Liang knew clearly in his heart that his success was all due to his master's excellent teachings!

Including when his colleagues within the department asked, Xue Liang gave the same answer.

Otherwise, he would not have used the word "Carp" as his composer identity.

As such, when Lin Yuan came to the company again, Xue Liang specially bought him a good quality tea. He had already made inquiries, Deputy Manager Wu Yong told Xue Liang that Mr. Lin was a fan of tea.

At this time,

Lin Yuan, naturally, was extremely satisfied with Xue Liang's performance. He even had the impulse to immediately take on another apprentice!

The effects of Yang Zhongming's character card and Teacher's Halo were really good to use..

However, he didn't immediately get to this task.

There were many people in the department, Lin Yuan planned to consider the candidates and then decide who would be the second apprentice.

As for Xue Liang...

Lin Yuan did not directly give him a free flow; he decided that when Xue Liang had a new song to release in the future, he would use Yang Zhongming's character card and then give him pointers on his compositions.

Lin Yuan asked the System.

Although he couldn't use Yang Zhongming's character card to compose, after his apprentice finished a piece, he could use Yang Zhongming's character card to give some suggestions, which was not an issue.

As for the tea from Xue Liang, Lin Yuan did accept it.

No one blames a person for being overly polite.

Moreover, this was a gift from his apprentice.

Just as Xue Liang had walked out of the office, Wu Yong came in and asked, "Mr. Lin, are you planning on making any moves soon?"

"What's wrong?"

Lin Yuan was puzzled.

He didn't have a song to release recently.

Wu Yong grimaced, "Xue Liang got the fifth place, which is good, but now the market is changing so fast, haven't you seen the new song chart for this season?"

Lin Yuan shook his head.

Wu Yong helplessly said, "The top song is from Thunderbolt Entertainment, the second is from Seven Star Entertainment, and the third is from Linfeng, a newly established entertainment company, but they have strong capital behind them..."

"The old top three from Qin Continent didn't make it into the top three?"

Lin Yuan finally realized the crux of the matter.

Wu Yong nodded heavily, “The best result from Starlight is Xue Liang’s fifth place, the forth is Silver Light, and Sand Sea has fallen to the ninth place. The companies are shuffling their decks. The authority of us, Starlight, and the other two old rivals in the music scene, are declining...”

“Because of personnel changes?”

Lin Yuan knew about the situation of companies poaching one another’s talent previously.

Wu Yong explained, “Yes, all of them have trump composers now. Although Starlight has a few Maestros sitting in our camp, these few Maestros aren’t fast at composing. They have very high requirements for the quality of songs, if they are not sure of securing the first place, they basically won’t release songs.”

“I also don’t plan to release any songs recently.”

Lin Yuan cut off Wu Yong’s expectations, because he was running low on money on his card. He’d been spending a lot lately, so he had to reserve some funds for unexpected needs.

“Alright...”

Wu Yong hesitated for a moment and said, “So when will you be able to release a song? If Maestro doesn’t make a move, Starlight really needs you to step forward. Otherwise, if our season ranking doesn’t go up in a few months, we will let the companies from Qi Province and some new companies take the lead. This will affect the prestige and morale of our whole composition department.”

“Let’s wait and see. How many trump composers do we have left?”

“Not many, currently there are thirty-eight in total.”

“So many have left?”

The previous Starlight had far more than just this number of trump composers.



Wu Yong explained, “Although we have lost a large number of trump composers, we have also poached a lot of television and film talents. No one can take advantage from a global perspective, so the current market is so unpredictable.”

Lin Yuan understood.

He decided to wait a bit longer.

It's better to release a song after the situation gradually clears up. He can't release a song every month, so try to choose a key moment to release a song. Besides, he is really busy at the moment. As always, one thing at a time.

Next, releasing a comic seems a better move.

He has already created a Tribe account, just waiting for his assistant to take their position..

Chapter 209: The Phoenix is Inferior to the

Shrimp

April 8th.

Lin Yuan finally arrived at Qin Art's Drawing Society.

This is Lin Yuan's first visit to the society since his return to Qin Art.

As soon as he came in, many people stood up, staring at him intently, and someone asked:

“The GOAT is back. Are we having a class today?”

Lin Yuan shook his head.

He didn't come today to teach a class.

The crowd was somewhat disappointed, but they did not pester Lin Yuan, their gaze unconsciously followed him...

There is an exhibition wall inside the society, covered with works by the members of the drawing society.

Back when Lin Yuan was still around, his works were often posted on it, but lately, this has not been the case.

Lin Yuan stood in front of the exhibition wall, glanced at the works on it.

He now needed an assistant, an assistant who could truly help him with his drawings.

This assistant must at least have the strength to have his works displayed on the exhibition wall.

The names of the artists were listed under each drawing.

Lin Yuan was familiar with some of them, because some artists were regulars on the exhibition wall, just as Lin Yuan used to have his works hung there from time to time...

"Luo Wei?"

Lin Yuan's eyes locked onto one of the drawings.

He had taken notice of this Luo Wei a few times before.

She specialized in traditional Chinese painting, and her skills were no weaker than Lin Yuan's, reaching a professional level!

However, this time, what Luo Wei displayed was not a traditional Chinese painting, but a colored sketch of a character.

A non-realistic style.

This is a typical manga-like character:

A beautiful young girl in a gorgeous long dress with her crown tipped on her head, trailing on the red carpet with indifferent and arrogant facial expression.

The background seems to be a palace.

With finely painted beams and rafters, exquisite tea cups, and the natural rumples in the girl's dress, the eyes are immediately captivated.

"The President's painting is really amazing!"

A voice of admiration came from the side, Lin Yuan turned his head and saw that it was Zhong Yu.

"When I heard the GOAT was coming, I came right away." Zhong Yu explained, laughing.

Lin Yuan nodded and then asked, "Who is the president?"

"Don't you know, GOAT... Alright, the president rarely comes to the Drawing Society because she always has to retake exams... Of course, you're not interested in this kind of thing. Luo Wei is the president of us, the Drawing Society." Zhong Yu introduced.

Lin Yuan nodded in understanding.

Just then, another voice came from the side, lazily and casually: "Who is talking behind my back that I'm always retaking exams? Oh, it's Zhong Yu, this year I've failed only three subjects."

The words were spoken proudly.

Zhong Yu's face instantly changed, turned to look at the girl who was speaking, and smiled bitterly, "President Luo, you are so quiet when you walk..."

“It’s because you were too engrossed in my painting.”

The girl who was speaking had long hair casually draped over her shoulders, a natural melon-seed face, a perky nose, big black eyes, coupled with a tall figure and outstanding figure, she has quite the aura of a straight-haired beauty. Even in an artistic institution like Qin Art, she is among the top in terms of appearance.

The only regret is that there seems to be a black mark on her right cheek.

Those who frequently draw sketches should know that it is left on the face accidentally after wiping their hair and such when doing high-density sketches.

She is Luo Wei, the President of the Drawing Society.

“Your face...”

Zhong Yu kindly reminded her.

Luo Wei was stunned for a moment, then asked a girl behind her for a mirror to check, and then asked for a wet wipe to clean it up.

Then, a flawless beauty appeared.

She looked at Lin Yuan and took the initiative to say, “Hello, I am Luo Wei, I have heard of you a long time ago, and I have always said I wanted to meet you, and today I finally met.”

“Lin Yuan.”

Having introduced himself, Lin Yuan curiously looked at her: “Are you very good at drawing manga?”

Luo Wei confidently said: “I can draw all kinds of paintings, and what about you?”

Lin Yuan said: “Me too.”

Luo Wei raised an eyebrow, but before she could say anything, Lin Yuan suddenly said, “Can you be my manga assistant?”

Whoops...

A strange sound came out from Zhong Yu.

Not only Zhong Yu, many members of the Drawing Society who were paying attention to Lin Yuan and Luo Wei showed astonished expressions.

Lin Yuan actually asked the president to be his assistant?

Doesn't he know who the president is?

Or Zhong Yu, who was afraid that Lin Yuan would feel embarrassed, couldn't help but remind him, “GOAT, President Luo is a very famous painter, well-known both online and in the current art scene...”

“Oh.”

Lin Yuan nodded.

Just when everyone thought Lin Yuan was going to give up, it seemed like he had made a somewhat difficult decision and stared at Luo Wei again, asking, “What about a salary of ten thousand Yuan a month?”

People held their foreheads.

Luo Wei laughed, “I can become a mangaka myself. Furthermore, I can earn this amount just by taking any orders online, why should I be your ‘manga assistant’?”

Lin Yuan sighed with some regret, “Alright.”

Luo Wei's painting skills were very high, meeting Lin Yuan's standard for a manga assistant, but he couldn't afford her. He could only look for other candidates.

"Actually, I've got something to ask you too."

Luo Wei laughed and looked at Lin Yuan: "Would you like to take over my position and become the president of the Drawing Society?"

"No."

Lin Yuan decisively shook his head.

He had too much to do, with no time to be the president of the Drawing Society.

But the members of the Drawing Society weren't too surprised. The presidency of the Drawing Society was indeed a good position, but it was only attractive to ordinary people. It was quite normal that Lin Yuan, being a GOAT, wasn't interested.

Luo Wei frowned.

Suddenly her eyes lit up, and she said with a hint of seduction in her voice: "But you wanted me to be your manga assistant, right? Why don't we make a bet?"

Chapter 210: The Phoenix is Not as Good as the Shrimp

"What's the bi?"

Lin Yuan seemed interested all of a sudden.

Luo Wei was inwardly thrilled, though she managed to maintain a straight face. "Oil painting, sketching, gouache, traditional Chinese painting, let's draw lots to pick a style. We compete in whichever one we draw..."

"And the stake?"

“Let’s set the rules. If you lose, you will be the president of the art society. You’re a junior now, with two years left until you graduate, so you’ll be president for two years. If I lose, I will be your comic assistant for two years, free of charge!” Luo Wei said, grinning.

“Deal!”

Lin Yuan didn’t hesitate.

Luo Wei’s traditional Chinese painting was of a professional level.

Looking at the cartoon character in front of her, he guessed that her gouache wasn’t inferior either. Their abilities were evenly matched, so Lin Yuan had a fifty-fifty chance of winning.

Even if he lost, he wouldn’t lose anything. At worst, he would be the president of the society.

If he won, he would have a free comic assistant!

Luo Wei snapped her fingers and said, “Fine, Zhong Yu, make a few slips of paper for us to draw.”

“Okay!”

Zhong Yu was excited.

Members of the Art Society were shouting excitedly. Luo Wei, as their president, was indisputably number one in the Art Department of Qin Art, holding top place for sketching, gouache, traditional Chinese painting, etc. throughout the year!

Lin Yuan, meanwhile, was a mysterious GOAT...

Everyone knew that Lin Yuan’s sketching and gouache skills were extremely strong.

It was hard to say who would win if they competed in these two styles!

Regardless, everyone would be happy whether he won or lost...

In fact, many wanted to see Luo Wei lose, since her undefeated status in the Art Department of Qin Art had become legendary!

And Lin Yuan?

If he lost and became the president of the art society, everyone would still be pleased since this would mean Lin Yuan would have more time to teach them!

It was a win-win situation!

Some even began analysing his chances enthusiastically.

“If he draws sketching, I think Lin Yuan has a higher chance of winning.”

“With gouache, it’s probably fifty-fifty?”

“If traditional Chinese painting is picked, I suspect Lin Yuan would have no hope. Although I don’t know what his traditional Chinese painting level is like, everyone in the Art Department knows Luo Wei’s skill is stronger than the professors’!”

“Oil painting would probably be fifty-fifty as well?”

“Yeah, oil painting is similar to gouache in nature. If Lin Yuan’s good at gouache, there’s no reason his oil painting would be inferior. And there’s no need to talk about Luo Wei, as she has won a lot of awards for her oil paints.”

If II

While this was being discussed, somebody couldn’t resist stirring the pot, and sent a message in the group: “Luo Wei is going to have a paint-off with Lin Yuan, the GOAT!”

“What?”



“Luo Wei and the GOAT are competing?”

“I’m coming!”

“Didn’t you go out with your girlfriend...”

“Even if an asteroid was hitting the Blue Star, this is way more thrilling than hanging out with my girlfriend!”

“Be there in a sec!”

“This is a big showdown!”

Zhong Yu had just finished preparing the slips of paper, and before long, more people flocked into the art society, obviously students from the Art Department who had heard the news.

“Who will draw?”

Zhong Yu looked at Lin Yuan and Luo Wei.

Luo Wei shrugged her shoulders: “Doesn’t matter.”

Lin Yuan added: “You go ahead and draw.”

Zhong Yu let out a smirk, “Then I’ll do it, I’ll hopefully draw sketching for the GOAT!”

He then pulled out a slip of paper.

“What is it?”

Everyone stared at Zhong Yu.

Zhong Yu even attempted to build suspense, taking a sip of water and showing no hurry to reveal the result.

Luo Wei asked Lin Yuan, “Do we need a judge?”

Lin Yuan shook his head, “There are enough judges already.”

Indeed, everyone in the art society could be a judge.

Luo Wei nodded, understanding, “If there is controversy, we can get a professor or a teacher to testify, but I don’t think it will be necessary.”

Lin Yuan agreed.

Both he and Luo Wei had professional-level abilities. Generally speaking, by looking at the other party’s painting, they would know who won and who lost.

“The secret’s about to be revealed.”

Zhong Yu played up the suspense, waiting until everyone had grown impatient before he leisurely opened up the paper. As soon as he saw what was written on it, Zhong Yu’s face changed, and he said regretfully:

“GOAT... I’m sorry.”

The crowd clamoured, “What is it?”

Zhong Yu unfolded the slip, and it read:

Traditional Chinese painting!

Everyone paused, then immediately buzzed with excitement:

“What the actual?”

“Traditional Chinese painting?”

“This is Luo Wei’s home turf!”

“This is what Luo Wei excels at!”

“Can the GOAT even do this?”

“Didn’t the GOAT say he could do traditional Chinese painting too?”

“Of course, I believe that the GOAT knows traditional Chinese painting, but the question is, do you have any idea of Luo Wei’s level in traditional Chinese painting?”

Luo Wei chuckled and said to Lin Yuan, “Would you like to switch to oil painting? You have no odds in traditional Chinese painting.”

Lin Yuan thought for a moment and responded, “I’m afraid it’s me who might be taking advantage.”

Luo Wei was perplexed, “How so?”

Lin Yuan was honest, “You can’t beat me in traditional Chinese painting.”n

However, for Luo Wei, this sounded like a provocation, stirring up slight dissatisfaction, “You think you can defeat me in traditional Chinese painting? This is not sketching and not gouache.”

Lin Yuan nodded.

Since the other party had given him a way out, he should reciprocate the favour. “At least for today, you can’t beat me.”n

Lin Yuan was speaking the truth.

However, Luo Wei found this somewhat irksome, since traditional Chinese painting was her forte and her pride: “Well, you might regret this. The works on the exhibition wall do not fully reflect my ability.”

Lin Yuan nodded in acknowledgment.

Seeing Lin Yuan’s calm demeanor, Luo Wei’s had a stir in her heart, thinking perhaps this opponent was worth going all out against.

‘GOAT, you...’