

All R. Artist 371

Chapter 371: The Painting that Swept Across the Web

With the business abilities of Sea of Blood and Pacific Saury, it's evident how fucking terrifying the quality of "Death Note" is —

It's at the hegemonic level!

Don't be puzzled, "Death Note" is indeed at the hegemonic level of manga!

From artistic techniques to plot, everything is indisputably top-tier!

There are some works in the manga world that, right from their publication, emit the unique aura of being masterpieces!

Such works are something that neither Sea of Blood nor Pacific Saury could create.

This is the ability possessed only by the most top-notch manga artists!

However, what Sea of Blood and Pacific Saury are racking their brains to understand is:

How did Shadow's "Death Note" make such drastic progress from his previous work!

The two of them had also seen "Food Wars: Shokugeki no Soma".

And Shadow's "King of the Net" was not unfamiliar to them either.

But the artistic skills displayed by Shadow in "Death Note" are simply incomparable to these two works!

Where can one even start to explain such a phenomenon?

Equally bewildered are all the members of the ChuLand manga circle.

Because the impact of Shadow's manga hits the entire ChuLand manga circle!

“What's going on?”

“The plot is explosive, no doubt about that, it's definitely a top-level work that can create a huge sensation. But how did he manage to improve his artistic skills to this level overnight?”

“Bullshit! You think this is fantasy manga, are artistic skills something you can break through all of a sudden?”

“Obviously Shadow hid his true ability before!”

“You say this isn't fantasy manga, but now he claims to have deliberately hidden his abilities. This is clearly because he didn't draw seriously before.”

“Is this even humanly possible?”

“Before, when he wasn't drawing seriously, it was already so good. Now when he really means business, his technique is godly!”

“That depiction of hell is just showing off! And it's the type where you know he's showing off, but you can't help but admit that his painting technique is absolutely invincible!”

“His art is unbeatable!”

“I feel only Teacher 22 Cuts' art skill can be a match for him right?”

“...”

All the ChuLand manga artists are discussing.

A great majority of discussions have mentioned 22 Cuts.

22 Cuts is recognized as the best illustrator in the Chu Land!

At the same time, the story of 22 Cuts is also sensational. Position-wise, 22 Cuts is like the ceiling of the ChuLand manga world.

However.

While discussing Shadow in a particular group, 22 Cuts himself surprisingly popped up.

He only sent one message:

“Just speaking about the art of manga, Shadow should be the top in Blue Star. I am not his match.”

A simple sentence, but it dropped like a bombshell!

Causing explosions everywhere!

Creating a meteor shower!

The whole group went silent for a moment.

Five minutes later, statements from the real 22 Cuts started to be crazily screenshot and spread amongst various big manga groups in ChuLand.

More groups fell silent.

Some people even forwarded the screenshot to some big manga groups in Qin and Qi lands, which caused such a big impact that people doubted their own eyes:

“Is it really 22 Cuts who admitted it?”

“Holy shit, Shadow is so fucking awesome!”

“Words can’t do justice to describe his awesomeness anymore, haven’t you seen the name used by the fans? They used to call him Teacher Shadow, but now he’s called Master Shadow.”

“Master, do you get it?!”

“He’s already the number one in Blue Star!?”

“Damn, I’m a bit choked up with how the Chu people have behaved, but now I can’t help but feel that they have a tough time too. First they were beaten in music, and now even their strongest field-manga, has been suppressed by our Qin people.”

“Shadow is from Qin?”

“Maybe Shadow is a Chu person!”

“Shadow hasn’t mentioned where he comes from, but I have a feeling that Shadow could be from Qi Land.”

“Bullshit, Shadow started publishing manga in Qin land, he’s definitely from Qin!”

“Just because he published manga in Qin land proves he’s from Qin?”

“...”

Well, the situation has somehow escalated into everyone arguing about which side Shadow is from.

...

The impact brought about by “Death Note” has not ended here.

Many fans have directly cut some wonderful scenes from “Death Note” and reposted them on platforms like Tribe.

Some people even posted it in their friends’ circle.

Two words: super hype!

This is the late night of August 1st.

At this time, there are usually many night owls wandering on the internet, many people are mindlessly scrolling through Tribe.

For instance, Hua Qi.

Hua Qi is a female high school student.

She doesn’t like to read comics, so she has no idea who “Shadow” is, let alone what “Death Note” is.

Her biggest hobby is actually reading about celebrity gossip online.

She’s the type that just lurks and enjoys the drama without saying a word.

But that night, she stumbled upon a particular post.

It was posted by a popular blogger that she follows:

“High-resolution screenshots of Shadow’s new work, ‘Death Note’. Starting from Hell, it’s chock-full of energy!”

There were five pictures attached.

The first picture was a terrifying, foggy, cyan-grey hell, filled with grotesque demons emerging one after another. Some were enduring horrible torments, some had black hair billowing out, and some were wandering souls...

Hua Qi's eyes went wide.

This was beautifully drawn, wasn't it?

Even though she didn't understand comics, she could tell how amazing this illustration was.

She even had this kind of feeling: "So this is what Hell looks like!"

There were four more pictures.

The second picture.

It depicted a long-haired man, with a cold smile playing at his lips. He held a notebook with a skull cover in his arms, and in his right hand he held up a pen. Behind him were obese figures, shackled figures, skeletal figures... all dead, forming a sea of corpses and blood!

The third picture.

A young man with dark circles under his eyes, feet propped up on a chair, wearing a long shirt that covered his knees. In front of him, the glow from a computer screen. There were little gadgets on his desk; although the scene wasn't anything special, it gave off an impression that this young man was formidable.

The fourth picture...

The fifth picture...

There were five pictures in total, all seemingly related to the comic's plot.

Even Hua Qi, who had never read a comic before, could feel the visual impact of these comic images.

The illustrations were simply magnificent!

They completely overturned Hua Qi's perception of comics!

It was indeed filled with energy!

She couldn't help but download one of the images – a picture of Yagami Light in the dark, exchanging glances with Lin Yao Yao – and set it as her phone wallpaper.

Of course, Hua Qi didn't know the names of these young men, she just thought the image was so cool.

These characters had such distinctive personalities that were so captivating.

Actually, a lot of people do this.

They search the internet for beautiful images to use as their wallpaper. The image could be from an animation, a movie, or a comic.

They don't need to know the source of these images.

As long as they're attractive, as long as they're cool or handsome, they save them.

Hua Qi did the same, and she couldn't help but comment in the comments section, "Where can I read this comic?"

As she commented, Hua Qi noticed many others were also asking about "Death Note" in the comments.

Someone quickly replied to Hua Qi:

“Tribe Comics, ‘Death Note’, it’s a new piece by Master Shadow.”

Even the blogger replied to Hua Qi:

“These images are screenshots from ‘Death Note’. Every chapter has one such level of image as a mini-cover, stunning beyond words!”

Indeed, stunning beyond words!

From that moment onward, many screenshots of “Death Note” began circulating all over the web!

Many people were reposting them.

Many people were admiring them.

That particularly popular image of hell was even enlarged several times by some bloggers and studied over and over!

After the image was enlarged, many people were stunned to find that the image didn’t collapse!

In fact, many previously unnoticed details were brought to light as the image was magnified!

For instance, in one corner of the image.

There was a weird rock.

And underneath the rock, a group of peculiar insects were crawling around. It was really creepy; each insect feeling so lifelike.

In another corner.

There was a face with a weird expression, half-smiling, half-crying. If it weren’t for the enlargement, no one would have noticed.

“Gave me the creeps!”

“Scared me into a cold sweat in the middle of the night!”

“This drawing skill, truly master-level!”

“Even after being magnified so much, it still holds up. It even seems more amazing. It’s nothing short of a masterpiece!”

“Reading this kind of comic is a dual pleasure, both visually and emotionally.”

“Is this still a comic? It makes me want to learn how to draw.”

“...”

And one of the comments was:

“Now I get why Xian Yu and Chu Kuang follow ‘Shadow’. Birds of a feather flock together, freaks really do play with other freaks!”

This comment appeared just five minutes ago and it already had over a thousand likes.

Chapter 372: This Boss is So Capricious

It’s a well-known fact.

Xian Yu, Chu Kuang, and Shadow are the Three Bros.

This was something Shadow himself admitted during the pre-release interview for “Food Wars: Shokugeki no Soma”.

They do not pay attention to other celebrities or peers, only to each other, forming a perfect cycle. Therefore, netizens often tease their relationship.

But...

Even though the trio's focus is interconnected, for a very long time, everyone's attention was completely focused on Xian Yu and Chu Kuang.

A well-suited phrase to describe Shadow's state would be: The excitement is all theirs, I have nothing.

Just as there's always a "transparent" member in many groups.

Xian Yu of the South, Chu Kuang of the North.

Even though Shadow had a good relationship with the two, he seemed to be like an overlooked outsider. Netizens who paid attention to all three simultaneously often joked about him being:

Invisible.

This was tied to their individual accomplishments in their respective fields.

Xian Yu was recognized as a genius in the world of music composition and was also talented in scriptwriting for films. His crowning achievement was a masterpiece like "Mariage d'Amour".

Chu Kuang, on the other hand, had a wide range of literary works, considered as a monster by many of his peers, he swept through the realm of mystery with multiple classic short stories, fantasy novels, and even "Murder on the Orient Express".

Shadow, in the world of manga, though a significant figure, wasn't at the top tier.

Even some believed...

That Shadow gained his fame thanks to Chu Kuang's "King of the Net".

Of course, the subsequent success of “Food Wars: Shokugeki no Soma” proved that Shadow could achieve good results in the manga world without relying on Chu Kuang.

But it ended there.

Therefore, many people had the vague feeling:

That Shadow simply didn’t measure up to the other two.

Shadow being friends with Xian Yu and Chu Kuang was simply a stroke of luck.

His inclusion in their interconnected attention cycle was him punching above his weight.

However, the emergence of “Death Note” completely shattered this perception!

Everyone’s views on Shadow were turned upside down overnight!

That’s why this highly upvoted online comment, “I think I understand why Xian Yu and Chu Kuang keep an eye on Shadow. Like attracts like, birds of a feather flock together, a pervert will only hang around with other perverts.” struck a chord——

This sentence perfectly expressed the subversion everyone felt at the moment!

“That’s so true, like attracts like, birds of a feather flock together, a pervert will only hang out with other perverts!”

“Who dares to say now that Shadow playing with Chu Kuang and Xian Yu is punching above his weight?”

“How does the old saying go? If you want to know what level a person is on, just look at who they’re friends with. Shadow’s friends are Chu Kuang and Xian Yu, do you need to say what level he’s on?”

“That’s right, can someone who’s Bros with Xian Yu and Chu Kuang possibly be weak?”

“From now on, who dares to say Shadow is invisible!”

“Shadow: I lay my cards on the table, I can’t pretend anymore, actually, I am also the GOAT.”

“There isn’t really anyone out there who thought Shadow was invisible, right? Surely not, surely not?”

“Turns out Shadow is so cool, why didn’t he show his colors before, allowing everyone to tease him for so long?”

“Maybe this is the mindset of a GOAT, they simply do not care.”

“Shadow: Fine, I’ll also start playing the game using my hands.”

“Insightful! Judging from ‘Death Note’, Shadow was really just playing around before.”

“There are no younger brothers in the Three Bros, they’re all bloody elder brothers!”

“...”

It doesn’t matter if you don’t understand manga.

As long as you have eyes.

Anyone who has seen Shadow’s drawings is impressed!

There’s no need for any professional perspectives to judge, simply describing it as “the drawings are too good looking” is enough.

But netizens couldn’t figure out why Shadow didn’t show his skill earlier if he was so talented?

Could it be that he really was just too lazy, as netizens had speculated?

So he was just too lazy to take drawing seriously?

Even though this was the only explanation that made sense, it seemed absurd to everyone——

Or even ridiculous.

And then, the very next day, many people's questions were answered.

Someone came forward to explain exactly why Shadow's art style in "Death Note" suddenly became extraordinarily magnificent!

This person was Shadow's main manga assistant, Luo Wei.

Luo Wei's online name was "Luoli".

She was a famous mangaka in the doujinshi (fan work) community.

"Mangaka" and "GOAT" carry the same meaning, both terms are used to refer to doujinshi authors with respect and admiration.

Aside from this, Luo Wei had also been Shadow's assistant under the pseudonym "Luoli", hence she had a say in "Death Note".

Luo Wei released a long post:

"Seeing everyone discussing why Teacher Shadow's drawing skill has suddenly become so good, as someone involved, I think an explanation is needed."

"First, I want to correct a misunderstanding. It's not that Teacher Shadow's drawing skills suddenly improved or that there was some sort of breakthrough, but rather his drawing skills have always been tremendous!"

“The reason I originally agreed to be Teacher Shadow’s assistant was because I was won over by his drawing techniques.”

Luo Wei was referring to her past experience competing against Lin Yuan in Chinese painting at Qin Art, but she didn’t disclose too many details.

In Luo Wei’s view, Lin Yuan’s level of Chinese painting could crush her own!

Therefore, even though she was initially shocked at Lin Yuan’s frightening manga techniques, after remembering how her Chinese painting was outperformed by Lin Yuan, she suddenly understood why Lin Yuan’s manga drawings could also outperform her own.

But what was crucial was her following explanation:

“Actually, Teacher Shadow is a very easygoing person in private and even a bit lazy. He often provides the storyboard, does a simple line drawing, and then hands off the main drawing task to me, his assistant. Therefore, everyone would think that Teacher Shadow’s previous works were not as good as they are now, because in ‘King of the Net’ and later ‘Food Wars: Shokugeki no Soma’, a lot of the content was drawn by me. That’s why there were some jokes online saying that Teacher Shadow must have found an assistant to ghostwrite for him in the past, it wasn’t entirely wrong, it just wasn’t that exaggerated.”

“In fact, ‘Death Note’ was also supposed to be completed by Teacher Shadow and me together.”

“We had accumulated drafts for two months, and the quality of the drawings didn’t differ from the previous two manga works.”

“But just before ‘Death Note’ was about to be released, Teacher Shadow suddenly rejected our previous drafts and personally hand drew a new version, the version that everyone is now seeing. The new version had such superb drawing skills from Teacher Shadow that I was not able to keep up, and could only assist from the sidelines.”

“As for why Teacher Shadow suddenly decided to redraw ‘Death Note’, maybe everyone can guess even without me saying.”

“I will upload the first version of ‘Death Note’, the drafts that were discarded by Teacher Shadow, in a moment. I’ve randomly taken screenshots from a few pages of the content, so everyone can get a feel.”

“...”

After the long post was published, Luo Wei indeed uploaded the first version of ‘Death Note’ onto Tribe.

As for the first version of ‘Death Note’, the discarded drafts, the quality of the drawings were indeed around the same as Teacher Shadow’s first two works...

Netizens were dumbfounded.

This GOAT has such an air of incorrigibility!!

Chapter 373: The Three Brothers Stand Side by Side

After hearing the explanation from Luo Wei, the manga assistant, everyone finally understood...

Apparently, Shadow had not originally intended to make “Death Note” so phenomenal!

You can tell from the first version of “Death Note”.

Shadow hadn’t planned to take it seriously before, just like his previous two manga, this guy is a slacker!

Even though he has the ability to carry the weight, if he can slack off, he does so with peace of mind!

If it weren’t for Pacific Saury and Sea of Blood’s mockery and innuendos, along with the public opinion influenced by regional disputes, you probably wouldn’t have seen such a stunning artwork in “Death Note”!

For the reason that made Shadow take his work seriously, Luo Wei, of course, did not explicitly mention.

If mentioned explicitly, it would seem that Shadow lacks grace, and at this point, Pacific Saury and Sea of Blood are probably feeling quite deflated, so there wouldn't be any point in walking all over them again.

They were already ground to dust.

However, anyone with a slight comprehension can see what Luo Wei is hinting at—

Netizens have even retraced Luo Wei's initial thought process:

“Because Pacific Saury and Sea of Blood's innuendos got on Shadow's nerves, Shadow decided to deal with these two?”

Logical, flawless reasoning.

And just like Luo Wei's initial reaction, everyone suddenly felt a little sorry for Pacific Saury and Sea of Blood.

Why on earth did you two bother him?

He's a seemingly harmless giant dragon who's actually just taking a nap. Once the dragon wakes up, who can withstand its powerful tail swing!

Haven't you seen the Twenty-Two Blade stream, known for its exquisite artwork, feeling a bit inferior?

But on the other hand.

If it weren't for Pacific Saury and Sea of Blood's ill-conceived provocations, would Shadow have taken “Death Note” so seriously?

After all, this big shot is too lazy to really put effort into creating artwork.

The fact is, this big shot can leisurely create artwork and have it dismissed by the readers, whom he leaves none the wiser, thinking that Shadow is quite impressive.

From this perspective, shouldn't everyone be thankful for the provocations of Pacific Saury and Sea of Blood?

If Pacific Saury and Sea of Blood hadn't aggravated Shadow, would Shadow have been so diligent and shown his true strength?

He probably would have continued to slack off.

From now on, there should be more people like Sea of Blood and Pacific Saury to stimulate Shadow.

"So, we really should be grateful to Pacific Saury and Sea of Blood!"

"If it weren't for Teacher Pacific Saury and Teacher Sea of Blood's self-sacrifice and dedication, we probably would have been hoodwinked by Shadow again!"

"The key is, even if Shadow casually hoodwinks people, his level still crushes eighty percent of manga artists!"

"Pacific Saury and Sea of Blood deserve eternal recognition!"

"With merits so great, I suggest giving Pacific Saury and Sea of Blood a commendation!"

"..."

Luo Wei, seeing these comments, couldn't help but laugh.

These current netizens are too unpredictable, full of bizarre speculations.

However, on second thought, wasn't it also bizarre speculations when Pacific Saury and Sea of Blood previously mocked Shadow?

Uh-huh.

Spare the rod and spoil the child, nobody is spared by fate.

As for the purpose of Luo Wei's article, it was actually to disgust others in return.

Shadow can stay quiet, but himself as an assistant must do something else, otherwise the artwork of "Death Note" would have been wasted.

Of course.

Even if the artwork isn't compared, "Death Note" is a very classic work.

On some rating websites, some people evaluated "Death Note" as follows:

This is a work with a narrative so classically S-ranked, and a never-before-seen artwork reaching the unprecedented SSS-rank!

...

Thanks to Sea of Blood?

Thanks to Pacific Saury?

Thanks to whom, exactly!

Sea of Blood and Pacific Saury, after reading Luo Wei's article and seeing netizens' weird comments, completely lost their composure, as Luo Wei predicted, even developing psychological shadows...

This wave of defeat is complete!

However, Sea of Blood and Pacific Saury felt wronged.

Who could have imagined that a popular work like “King of the Net” was just Shadow being slack.

Who could have thought that the exquisite artwork of “Food Wars: Shokugeki no Soma” was merely Shadow drawing casually?

This is not scientific at all!

However, this generation of netizens is indeed full of twists and turns.

Some people even made animated GIFs based on the videos of Sea of Blood and Pacific Saury mocking Shadow previously.

The scenes of these two mocking Shadow as an unremarkable entity, and then bursting into laughter afterward, have become the latest favorites in many people’s collections of emoji.

Even some netizens went to Chu Kuang’s tribal comment section to stir up the situation:

“Shadow didn’t even bring out all his strength when drawing your ‘King of the Net’ manga version, how can you tolerate this, Chu Kuang, you old rascal?”

“I wouldn’t tolerate it anyway.”

“Chu Kuang the old rascal is not that good of a person either, he has fooled many readers with his Narrative Trickery.”

“Birds of a feather flock together, the wisdom of the ancients is truly deceitful. Chu Kuang deceived the readers, Shadow fooled the readers, both of these guys are swindlers!”

“I hope Xian Yu doesn’t pick up bad habits from these two.”

“Teacher Admirable Fish is very steady, how could he be as despicable as these two.”

“...”

Because of the enthusiasm of the netizens, Shadow, Chu Kuang and even Xian Yu's tribal comment sections are exceptionally lively.

At the same time.

Riding the momentum of “Death Note”, the number of fans who follow Shadow have skyrocketed, and in just one week, it surged to nearly fifty million!

There's still a long way from Chu Kuang's breaking hundred million mark.

It is also a significant number away from Xian Yu's current ninety million.

However, Shadow did start late in putting in his effort, so no one says things like Shadow is an unnotable entity anymore.

Does your unnotable entity look like this?

Is your unnotable entity the top artist in the manga world?

Yes.

With the spread of “Death Note”'s popularity, Shadow's artistic skills have been recognized in the industry.

After all, the Twenty-Two Blade Stream admitted that their art is inferior to Shadow's.

And the art that can make the Twenty-Two Blade Stream concede is only the best in Blue Star!

When it comes to manga, the importance of art and storyline is the same.

Being number one in Blue Star in either aspect is a remarkable achievement!

In addition.

Some netizens wrote a short script for the Three Bros Xian Yu, Chu Kuang, and Shadow, which also became widely circulated in many places:

“The Chu people say they are number one in music, Xian Yu laughs.”

“The Chu people say they are number one in manga, Shadow laughs.”

“The Chu people say they are number one in novels...”

“Chu people: Shut up, we never said that!”

It just so happened.

Xian Yu was the first person to shatter the Chu people’s confidence in music.

While Shadow was the first person to shatter the Chu people’s confidence in manga.

And it happens that these two are bros.

For this, some netizens are hoping: “Hopefully someone can give Chu Kuang a run for his money in the future, the Three Bros should stick together!”

Some even joked: “By your standards, are the Three Bros on track to represent the artists of Great Qin in sweeping the six continents?”

Of course, sweeping the six continents is only a joke.

The Three Bros can’t represent the art of Great Qin, they are just individuals with very high personal levels of achievement. The art level of the other continents can’t be underestimated because of this.

However, one undeniable fact is, “Death Note” has put Shadow on track to being a god in the manga circle.

By now, Shadow has completely banished the label of being an unnotable entity, and has gained the qualifications to stand beside Xian Yu and Chu Kuang!

Chapter 374: Above the Master

Of course.

It’s not only the art of “Death Note” that shocks the readers, but also its plot.

The reason why everyone is talking about the artwork is that the artwork of this comic is really impressive!

It’s just like when an actor gives a great performance in a movie, yet his own attractiveness even overshadows his acting skills.

But if this actor truly has talent, then as long as you keep watching, you’ll gradually see past his good looks and appreciate his perfect acting skills.

It’s, after all, a unprecedented SSS-rank drawing skill, and it is undoubtedly attractive.

Compared to this, although the script and setting of the comic are also excellent, they received an S-rank evaluation.

Don’t underestimate S-rank.

In terms of plot, an S-rank is already a top-level evaluation.

This is also related to the short serialization period of “Death Note.”

During these days of serialization, although Shadow updates quickly, the story line of “Death Note” has not yet fully unfolded, so there’s less discussion about the plot than the artwork. It’s just because—

The plot needs space to unfold.

The artwork, however, can be seen from the very first image.

Situation improved gradually beginning from the third week of the serialization of “Death Note.”

Because the plot began to unfold.

Readers, having grown accustomed to the artwork of “Death Note,” began paying more attention to the plot and thus more comments were generated—

“Ever since this comic was serialized, almost everyone was chatting about the artwork, but few discussed the plot. In reality, the plot of this comic is also very exciting. It is logically rigorous in every aspect. From the beginning to the currently serialized storyline, they are all impressive. From the standpoint of plot quality, it’s worthy of such a top-notch artwork.”

“What I wanted to say has been stated by the person above. Guys, do not overlook the plot. The plot of “Death Note” truly is awesome!”

“This comic has more text than others, from the beginning to the current plot, it has been in a tense battle of wits the whole time. This is my favorite type. I, however, don’t fancy Yagami Light’s personality. He’s too cold and too ruthless. Lin is more likable.”

“The two primary male characters confronting each other and their endless reversing plots of wits watching it is really enjoyable!”

“The plot has a bit of reasoning taste. The discussion about what is justice raises the level of the work. Originally, Yagami Light attempted to overcome legal barrier to assist the vulnerable in punishing offenders, which was a well-intentioned move. However, the hope to create a utopia with an individual’s extreme abilities is the biggest problem. Unfettered power can hardly avoid causing problems. I have a feeling that Yagami Light will eventually become completely dark.”

“The topic of personal enforcement of the law reminds me of Chu Kuang’s “Murder on the Orient Express.” It’s the same choice of personal enforcement of the law, just that Yagami Light is more extreme. In Chu Kuang’s novel, the practice of using violence to suppress violence is out of helplessness. Maybe Shadow and Chu Kuang discussed this topic privately, so their works both happened to discuss the issue of justice. Poirot finally chose to forgive, but Yagami Light has plunged too deeply. I wonder if Shadow will also choose forgiveness?”

“Explosive style, explosive plot!”

“This comic is telling a truth; human issues should be resolved by humans themselves. They should not resort to the power of god. Some people knowledgeable in religion can think clearly about this. My world view says that we, humans, come to this world for cultivation and eliminating evil deeds is a major part. If we resort to the power of god to remove this evil, it’s actually the equivalent of burying one’s head in the sand; not having solved the problem at all. It’s an irresponsible way of self-deception. Therefore, Yagami Light is the antagonist. I’m very curious how the author will arrange the subsequent plot.”

“...”

It was outside of Lin Yuan’s expectation.

The controversy over Yagami Light’s actions was not particularly high among the readers.

Perhaps this has something to do with the relatively young age of comic readers.

The process of judging a case in a detective novel is relatively dry; young readers do not have the patience to read through it. Most of them would consider it boring after reading half of it, so the overall age of the readers tends to be older.

Comics are different.

Though many people see Yagami Light as a character who goes to the dark side right from the start who has a problematic worldview, there are also countless numbers of readers who worship him because of this.

Perhaps it is for this reason, considering this factor, that the comic ultimately arranged for Yagami Light’s death to lead readers in the right direction.

If Yagami Light did not die, the value orientation would be incorrect.

Having checked the ratings on the website, “Death Note” received a current rating of 9.4.

This rating comes from Starry Sky Network.

As the most objective rating site recognized by Blue Star, the rating of “Death Note” is higher than that of Douban in Celestial Dynasty.

There are two reasons.

The first one is that System slightly adjusted the quality of the plot of “Death Note” to make the logic of the content stronger.

The second is that the artwork of “Death Note” had surpassed the original and had reached the ceiling of the comic artwork!

Furthermore.

With this wave, Lin Yuan’s drawing reputation also improved significantly, increasing from the original 300,000 to over 400,000 now.

Maybe when this comic finishes, his reputation might go up even more!

Not only that.

“Death Note” also ranks high on the various popularity leaderboard on Tribe Comics.

Although it hasn’t made it to the top spot, it has begun to show promise!

Of course, it’s not possible to rush to the top spot directly. After all, the longer a comic is serialized, the more popular it becomes.

It's hard to imagine a comic that just launched can beat Dead Sea of Fire at its peak.

This world doesn't have comics like Dead Sea of Fire, but there are works of the same level that a comic like "Death Note," which has been serialized for less than a month, can't topple.

However, according to the trend of popularity growth, if "Death Note" does not fail, it will undoubtedly become a pillar of the industry in the future!

This is beyond doubt.

This is the terrifying influence of Master-level drawing!

This is also the first time Lin Yuan has received a Master-level reward.

His other abilities, such as calligraphy skill and piano playing ability, are all at the professional level.

His professional piano playing ability was the first ability that Lin Yuan obtained, but he has not had the chance to elevate it to the Master level.

Instead, it was his drawing ability that later surpassed others and first reached the Master level.

That's why Lin Yuan's drawing reputation has been able to grow so rapidly.

That's the power of a Master!

It actually makes Lin Yuan look forward to his other abilities reaching the Master level.

Only those who have experienced it would know how big a gap there is between the Professional and the Master level!

System once said.

Master level is not the limit, and there is a Perfect level above the Master level.

Lin Yuan couldn't help but wonder, if the Master level is already so impressive, is the Perfect level still human?

Alright.

According to System, Perfect level is indeed not human. The limit of human abilities is the Master level.

Like how the most skilled go player can't beat AlphaGo.

Perhaps the so-called Perfect level is like AlphaGo, at the level of artificial intelligence?

Chapter 375: Ten Years

Let's review.

The treasure chest is divided into four levels:

Bronze, silver, gold, and diamond.

The awards with the Perfect Level Ability are contained only within the diamond treasure chest.

So far, the highest level treasure chest that Lin Yuan has obtained is Gold Level, so he certainly isn't expecting any Perfect Level abilities for now.

For a 'person', being a master is already enough.

For example, let's take the "Six Shrimps" painting that Lin Yuan previously completed using the character card of Qi Baishi.

If before, Lin Yuan needed the character card to produce such a piece of work, now, he can create similar quality work purely by painting seriously, without needing to borrow any character cards at all—

This is mastery!

With the serialisation state of the “Death Note” gradually stabilising, the fervent discussions online eventually quieted down some.

In contrast on the Tribe forum, there was a sustained enthusiasm from fans in Shadow’s comment section

And because of the recognition of Shadow’s abilities, many netizens have consciously linked Shadow with Chu Kuang and Xian Yu, whenever they bring up the latter two.

The connection of the Three Bros, therefore, gets driven even deeper into the hearts of people.

Laughing about it, Jin Mu comments: “Because Shadow’s comics gained big popularity, the connections between the three aliases became stronger, and there’s a ton of online jokes about the boss’s three aliases.”

Lin Yuan nods.

Jin Mu then speaks: “Already there are animation production companies inquiring about the copyright of ‘Death Note’...”

“So soon?”

Lin Yuan is somewhat surprised, as it was only once his prior two comics were halfway in their serialisation that there was interest in their copyrights.

This time, with ‘Death Note’ still only a bit into serialisation, companies are wanting to turn it into an animation already.

“Indeed.”

Jin Mu curves his lips: “On one hand, it’s due to ‘Death Note’ doing really well, and on the other, it’s because the animations based on the boss’s previous two works were really successful. Hence everyone believes that the boss’s third comic can also be adapted well.”

“Hmm.”

Lin Yuan knows, in the anime circle, that there’s a saying called “suffered from animation adaptation”.

The meaning is that, sometimes, a comic or novel with a splendid original plot ends up having a very poorly-made animation adaptation.

That’s when netizens would give the comment of “suffered from animation adaptation”.

Luckily, the animation companies Lin Yuan has chosen to work with are all reliable. Until now there hasn’t been a case where the animation adaptation falls short, to the point that the influence of the animations surpasses even the original comics.

“Don’t sell first, wait till the heat goes up a bit more.”

As the ‘Death Note’ can gain more popularity later, by then the copyright will be more valuable. Therefore, Lin Yuan doesn’t wish to hastily sell the copyright now.

Jin Mu nods, “That’s what I was thinking too.”

Continuing the discussion, Jin Mu then adds: “I’ve already sent the new manuscript of the Hercule Poirot Series to Silver Blue Books; it will be published on the first of next month.”

“Oh.”

The Poirot Detective Collection Series has already started a serialisation schedule of one episode each month.

As far as Lin Yuan's writing speed is concerned, penning one Poirot mystery story each month hardly takes up much time.

And as the serialisation continues, Poirot's popularity grows steadily.

Lin Yuan believes that, when Poirot's influence thoroughly erupts, this gentleman with a mustache will become a true Detective Conan in the world of mysteries in Blue Star!

...

On the 23rd of August, Lin Yuan came to the company.

Hearing the news, Wu Yong, who was the Assistant Director on the ninth floor, hustled over with an excited expression: "Boss, you're finally visiting the company!"

Lin Yuan paused for a moment: "Am I caught skipping work?"

Wu Yong gave a wry smile: "Who dares to monitor the boss's attendance? I meant that time is running out. Jiang Kui and Teacher Sun Yaohuo are waiting for your move."

"Oh, tell me about the situation."

The reason Lin Yuan came to the company was precisely for this matter.

When he came to the company at the end of last month, Wu Yong had already mentioned this issue to Lin Yuan.

"Here's the situation."

Wu Yong spoke: "Jiang Kui's new song is ranked third in this month's chart, an excellent achievement indeed, while Sun Yaohuo's new song is ranked eighth. Although its rank isn't particularly high, its popularity has been holding up well. However, without a song of enough weight, it's impossible for them to break into the top tier before the end of the year, so..."

Wu Yong chattered on and on for quite some time.

After listening to Wu Yong's explanation, Lin Yuan roughly understood the situation.

The efforts of Xue Liang and Feng Shuo were not in vain. Under the nurturing of the company and through efforts of these two disciples, both Sun Yaohuo and Jiang Kui are advancing steadily towards first-tier singer status this year.

If one were to use a progress bar as an analogy, Jiang Kui is probably only about 10 percent away from becoming a first-tier artist.

Sun Yaohuo is slightly behind but is also only about 20 percent from achieving first-tier status.

However, with the progress bar, the closer you get to the finish line, the harder it becomes.

Xue Liang and Feng Shuo have already reached their limits.

They are unable to provide Sun Yaohuo and Jiang Kui with songs that would allow the pair to completely break into first-tier status.

If they continue to give Sun Yaohuo and Jiang Kui songs to sing, they could at best barely manage to keep the two from dropping out of the top ten positions.

Therefore, it is essential for Lin Yuan to step in at this point.

Because to be able to advance into first-tier status, it isn't enough just to stay in the top ten; one must have an achievement like a season champion to finalize it!

This is a display of dominance!

"The boss shouldn't feel too pressured,"

After explaining, Wu Yong slightly slowed down his pace of speaking:

“Most of the other composition departments have not completed their tasks either. So far, they have basically only cultivated one top-tier artist each, while the company’s requirement is for each of us to foster two. We’re just lagging the most; we haven’t been able to push anyone into top-tier status...”

“I understand.”

Lin Yuan says: “Notify Teacher Sun Yaohuo to prepare to visit the company and start recording.”

“Huh?”

Wu Yong is taken aback.

He thought Lin Yuan would choose Jiang Kui because she is closer to first-tier status, but Lin Yuan chose to promote Sun Yaohuo first.

This Sun Yaohuo truly is favored by the boss.

But, is there enough time for this?

“Boss, can’t we let Jiang Kui go first?”

“This song suits Sun Yaohuo.”

“I see.”

Wu Yong hesitates for a moment before he finally leaves the room to make the phone call.

After Wu Yong leaves, Gu Dong, the assistant, comes forward to refill Lin Yuan’s tea, and then tactfully reminds him: “Boss, if you want to elevate Teacher Sun Yaohuo to first-tier status, one song may not be enough...”

“It’s alright.”

Lin Yuan dismisses it offhandedly.

Back at the end of last month, after Wu Yong mentioned this issue to Lin Yuan, he has been contemplating which song to arrange for Sun Yaohuo.

Since this song must carry a certain weight, he has deliberated on this for a long time.

And, back some time ago, he had already found the solution; even the small sample piece of the song was produced to avoid any delay. After all, it's already late in August by now, and time left for Lin Yuan to help Sun Yaohuo with the song recording is pretty limited.

Luckily, there's a song that suits Sun Yaohuo perfectly.

Both the vocal range and tone are an ideal match.

And this song is called: "Ten Years".

Chapter 376: The Path of the King of Singing

That's right, it's "Ten Years".

As is well known, this song also has a Cantonese version called "Next Year, Today".

And it was thanks to this song that Eason Chan first gained recognition in Xiangjiang.

However, back then, Eason Chan was only well-known on a regional level, with low recognition in mainland China.

That remained until a certain month in 2003 in the Celestial Dynasty.

Eason Chan's management company, Emperor, decided to have him sing the Mandarin version of the song, "Ten Years".

Initially, Eason Chan refused.

He felt he had already sung the Cantonese version “Next Year, Today” thousands of times, and the idea of singing a Mandarin version felt like selling second-hand goods to him.

But Emperor didn’t give up; they presented Eason Chan with a rosy prospect if he agreed to sing the Mandarin version, a promise that it would dramatically raise his profile in mainland China!

Unable to resist their persuasion, Eason Chan performed the song.

And as we all know, the song was released and Eason Chan’s popularity in mainland China skyrocketed.

Since then, the song “Ten Years” and Eason Chan are inseparable.

Every time Eason Chan holds a concert, “Ten Years” is bound to be on the set list.

Whenever the melody of “Ten Years” quietly starts, the emotional defenses of the audience crumble in an instant. Countless emotional stories gently flow with the music, leaving the audience utterly moved.

It can be said that “Ten Years” is one of the most classic songs among the Xiangjiang sentimental songs.

In the must-play song list of countless people who go to karaoke bars, “Ten Years” is invariably present.

Not only is it a preferred song choice for contestants in various talent shows, but it’s also an emotional echo that resonates with both middle-aged individuals and young people.

From a melodic standpoint, “Ten Years” isn’t a lively or upbeat song.

Unlike “Red Sun,” whose intro is enough to liven up the entire audience.

But, “Ten Years” has a calm sadness that stands for chaotic feelings and endless bitterness.

The two songs have different styles, but both are equally classic!

Considering Yao Huo's predicament, Lin Yuan thought this song was the perfect choice.

After all, Yao Huo needs a hit.

Luckily, Yao Huo had previously performed "Red Rose".

That song is also one of Eason Chan's classics.

With a similar style, Yao Huo would be able to handle it effortlessly.

As for Jiang Kui...

Lin Yuan was considering whether to let her sing "Nervous".

"Nervous" was a song Lin Yuan had drawn from the Bronze Treasure Chest.

As a "divine song", the quality was undoubtedly top-notch.

In the last life, in the Celestial Dynasty, "divine song" was a derogatory term.

But while "Nervous" was also labeled a "divine song", it was used ironically, as the song was truly amazing.

However, the song was extremely difficult to perform.

The legendary singer Wang Fei had tried to cover it, but had given up and even posted about it on her microblog.

Lin Yuan wasn't sure if Jiang Kui could handle the song.

If Jiang Kui could indeed pull it off, this song would do the most to showcase her singing skill.

So Lin Yuan decided to have Jiang Kui give it a try first.

If Jiang Kui couldn't handle it, Lin Yuan would arrange another song for her.

...

In the composition department on the ninth floor, the composers were working when there was suddenly a noise at the door.

"Thud."

Everyone looked up to see Yao Huo awkwardly getting up from the floor, brushing off the dust from his clothes nonchalantly:

"Sorry to disturb.", he said.

He received a call from Wu Yong and hurried to the office, almost running a red light in his haste.

When he made it to the ninth floor composition department, he stumbled and fell due to his fast pace, a greatly embarrassing episode.

"..."

At the moment, Wu Yong was chatting with a composer in the corridor. When he turned his head and spotted Yao Huo in this quite embarrassing state, he couldn't help but sigh.

What merits did this guy have to be so highly regarded by Mr. Lin?

He lacked the demeanor of a star.

Wu Yong said irritably: "Mr. Lin is waiting for you inside."

"Alright, alright."

Yao Huo flashed a smile and quickly walked up to the office door, clearing his throat, then adjusting his appearance before knocking.

"Come in."

A voice said from inside.

Only then did Yao Huo push the door and go in. Before he pushed open the door, he could faintly hear his employees' snickering, which made his steps feel a bit heavy.

The employees in the ninth floor composition department burst into laughter as they watched Yao Huo's retreating figure.

"Of all the male singers in the company, why does Mr. Lin choose to promote him?"

"He's a typical case of a singer whose songs are popular but he himself is not."

"So many of Mr. Lin's songs are wasted on him. Anyone else would have been famous by now."

"..."

These murmurs were not well concealed.

As they spoke, some were covertly glancing at Wu Yong. Everyone knew that Wu Yong was not satisfied with Sun Yaohuo.

However, to everyone's surprise, Wu Yong suddenly growled:

"Shut up!"

Wu Yong's face was serious as his gaze swept over everyone. He said coldly, "If anyone dares to badmouth Sun Yaohuo behind his back again, they can fucking leave!"

Upon hearing this, everyone was shocked, exchanging glances and lowering their heads to avoid Wu Yong's gaze, their hearts full of uncertainty.

What's going on?

Doesn't Wu Yong dislike Sun Yaohuo?

Why does everyone's criticism of Sun Yaohuo provoke this deputy director's dissatisfaction?

Wu Yong huffily returned to his office.

Wu Yong's assistant followed carefully, apparently having the same doubts, and whispered, "Director Wu, don't you dislike Sun Yaohuo as well..."

"Whether I like him or not is not important, what's important is that Mr. Lin likes him!"

Wu Yong looked at his assistant indifferently, "Sun Yaohuo was chosen by Mr. Lin. I didn't dare to say a word, let alone these useless people outside."

The assistant was taken aback.

Meanwhile, in the office.

Sun Yaohuo discreetly took out some items:

"Junior, this white watch is for your sister, the red one is for your girlfriend, and this bracelet, I think it's suitable for your aunt."

Lin Yuan felt a bit awkward, "This must cost quite a lot right?"

Sun Yaohuo laughed casually, “Actually, money is just a number to me, what’s important is that your family likes them. Last time when your sister ate in my hotpot restaurant, she mentioned that it was inconvenient for your sister not to have a watch during exams. I figured that she can’t bring an electronic watch to the exam hall...”

“Thank you, senior.”

Lin Yuan thanked him and then pulled out the prepared score and sample of “Ten Years”:

“This song is for you, senior. You need to familiarize yourself with it in the next few days, as we need to release it before September.”

“No, thanks.”

Sun Yaohuo’s smile faded slightly, “Junior, you don’t need to look out for me and give me all the good songs every time. Maybe the company has someone more suitable than me. I won’t waste your good songs anymore.”

Lin Yuan was surprised.

If it were before, Senior Yao Huo would definitely accept it without hesitation, and then excitedly run off to practice!

Lin Yuan believed that such excitement couldn’t be faked.

Senior Yao Huo truly loved music, just like himself before his voice had been damaged.

But today, was Senior Yao Huo doubting himself?

The situation was a bit serious.

Lin Yuan’s gaze became serious, and he said earnestly, “Senior, you’re the most suitable person for this song.”

“Junior, actually I don’t mind.”

Sun Yaohuo had a complicated expression, “I just don’t want people to criticize you because of me. I’ve held back the ninth floor. Every other department has at least launched one front-line star. Give the opportunity to Jiang Kui. I don’t want to hold you back anymore. We need to be content with what we have. Otherwise, it will seem like I’m greedy. Besides, I’m not cut out for this anyway, it’s just me not admitting...”

“Senior.”

Lin Yuan began, “Do you trust me?”

Sun Yaohuo nodded.

From the moment Lin Yuan insisted on letting him sing “Red Rose,” Sun Yaohuo had never doubted Lin Yuan.

Lin Yuan said, “Then just sing well.”

Sun Yaohuo was silent for a moment, then said softly, “I’ll sing.”

“Mm.”

Lin Yuan showed a natural smile.

At this moment, he suddenly heard a system prompt:

[Host has triggered a new mission]

[Mission name: Road to the King of Singing]

[Mission goal: Make Sun Yaohuo the King of Singing within two years]

[Mission reward: Gold Treasure Chest]

[Mission note: The higher the completion rate of the task, the richer the reward in the Gold Treasure Chest]

Lin Yuan was stunned.

Actually, he had planned to help Senior Yao Huo become the King of Singing anyway, but he didn't expect to get a system task out of it?

Senior Yao Huo is awesome!

Chapter 377: Changing Affection

Two days later, on the 25th, Sun Yaohuo entered the recording studio to officially record "Ten Years".

Of course, the recording studio belonged to the company.

Starlight started as a music company, and although it also produces films now, its music equipment remains top-notch.

An outsider may think that all recording studios are somewhat similar, but they are actually very different.

For instance, matters like room reverb configuration, sound insulation setup, and sound absorption setting etc.

The better the recording studio, the more its details are carefully considered, even including the size of the room, which is also strictly planned.

We ordinary folks, when recording songs with singing software, often feel an abysmal difference between us and professional singers.

And when we use apps like Everyone's Singer, we get the feeling that the boys and girls in there are not only good looking but also sing well...

But it's not always that exaggerated.

The versions of songs released by singers are all produced in recording studios.

Some mediocre singers basically only become proficient with sound cards, and even in live performances, they are just a little superior to the most skillful singers found in karaoke bars.

A person with a decent singing ability can show good results after being meticulously worked on by a professional sound engineer in a recording studio.

In fact, they may not even need to be autotuned.

The recording studio is such a magical place.

Of course, this only applies to average singers.

An excellent singer is indeed incomparable to an ordinary person.

You can think of whoever you want, as this is quite subjective.

However, no matter how good the recording studio is, if the singer does not have enough skills, they won't be chosen by Lin Yuan.

The reason Sun Yaohuo is trusted by Lin Yuan is the proficiency of his skills.

Today, as soon as Sun Yaohuo started recording, Lin Yuan was taken aback.

"If these two words did not tremble, I would not have realized that I'm in pain, saying it out loud is nothing more than a break-up..."

Breath, pitch, language sensitivity, and emotion are all criteria for evaluating singing skills.

If there were a grading scale for singing skills, with 100 being the maximum score, Lin Yuan would have given Sun Yaohuo a 75.

In comparison, Jiang Kui would score at least 80.

But today, the singing skills that Sun Yaohuo demonstrated have exceeded 80.

He has improved!

Lin Yuan is 100% certain that during this lengthy period in which he has not been working with Sun Yaohuo, Sun Yaohuo must have been quietly putting in hard work; otherwise, Sun Yaohuo could never have made such great progress.

Without a certain amount of effort, such a remarkable improvement would not be possible.

If you don't have a specific concept of improvement in singing skills, you can listen to the level of singing at the early stage of Zhang Jie's career and compare it with his performance at later live events...

After a few takes, it felt pretty smooth.

The recording engineer said: "This song doesn't have high requirements for vocal range or singing skills. The phrase 'Why not when leaving' in the lyrics requires a major sixth interval change in resonance location. You just treated it too evenly."

Sun Yaohuo just nodded.

The main points of this song are intonation, detailing, and emotional transition. He has basically mastered it in a few days of practice.

He looked at Lin Yuan: "Do you have any suggestions, junior?"

Lin Yuan usually likes giving suggestions, but he seems to not have interrupted his performance today.

After some consideration, Lin Yuan said: “Sincerity.”

Sun Yaohuo could get reminders about technical aspects from the recording studio, and he was professional enough, but the understanding of the emotion had to come from the singer himself.

Sincerity...

Taken aback, Sun Yaohuo paused for a moment, then nodded and said, “I’ll try.”

Soon enough, a new round of recording started.

Sun Yaohuo slightly closed his eyes, tilted his head slightly lower with his right hand covering the headset, and his slightly husky voice rang out, “If these two words did not tremble, I wouldn’t realize I’m in pain...”

The recording engineer was stunned. The atmosphere suddenly became somewhat melancholy.

However, Lin Yuan’s eyes lit up just the slightest.

“If there are no hopes for tomorrow, holding hands is like touring...”

There was a hint of bitterness in Sun Yaohuo’s voice.

The song is a typical love song, but it reminded him of the conversation he had with his junior a few days ago.

He was ready to give up on music, but his junior urged him to persist.

Would he keep on singing without his junior’s insistence?

Sun Yaohuo didn't know.

He just found himself somewhat upset and reluctant.

The woman in the lyrics reminded him of what music meant to him.

"If a hug cannot last, why not enjoy and shed tears while leaving..."

All emotions seemed to be embedded in the lyrics.

Sun Yaohuo's voice wasn't loud but had an endearing power at this moment:

"Ten years ago, I didn't know you, you weren't mine, we were still next to a stranger, walking past a street that gradually became familiar, ten years later, we were friends..."

Sun Yaohuo's eyes turned red.

He didn't know whether he was moved by the cliché love story from the lyrics, or whether the sadness stemmed from his imagination of giving up music a few days ago and what he might face ten years later.

"Only after years of being friends with you, did I realize that my tears are not for you alone, but also for others."

In the end, the man misses the woman.

Sun Yaohuo sang while feeling lost. Uncontrollably, tears began to stream down his face.

When he snapped out of it, he suddenly saw that the staff in the monitor room were giving him a thumbs up.

"That's it."

Lin Yuan nodded at him with a smile.

Sun Yaohuo quietly clenched his fists and forced a grin.

Is this the sincerity?

There is no need for him to go through a decade-long love affair for one song. No singer can achieve this.

If they do, things could take a turn.

The so-called sincerity is merely letting their emotions be conveyed through the music.

The woman can be taken as a symbol in the face of these emotions, which can be a woman, or anything else –

As long as it is something you can't bear to leave yet can't resign to holding onto.

What Sun Yaohuo thought was the music, he didn't know that this expression of emotion resembled a phenomenon in performance called transference.

For example, when an actor needs to perform a crying scene, if they can't cry, they can mobilize their emotions by thinking about something sad.

And Lin Yuan's intention is to locate the emotional fulcrum for Sun Yaohuo.

But Lin Yuan couldn't tell him straight out.

If he did, simply by telling Sun Yaohuo to think of something sad would seem too forced.

This kind of guidance on emotions should be natural.

As the facts proved, Sun Yaohuo is emotional, and having rich emotions is actually a good thing for singers, actors, and many other fields of art.

Lin Yuan can genuinely praise:

Among all their collaborations to date, “Ten Years” is the most perfect work that Sun Yaohuo has ever recorded.

Only when you touch your own heart, can you touch your audience’s.

Chapter 378: Song Release

“Has Sun Yaohuo gone to record another song with Xian Yu?”

“Yes, in the number one recording studio. I saw them go in with my own eyes.”

“All the other floors have produced at least one leading singer, but the ninth floor’s composition department still hasn’t managed to bring one up. Isn’t Xian Yu worried? And he is still wasting time with Sun Yaohuo?”

“Who knows what Xian Yu is thinking about? Why not just focus on promoting Jiang Kui? Jiang Kui has a much shorter journey to becoming a leading singer than Sun Yaohuo does.”

“...”

In a large company like Starlight, with its many employees, the gossip among them can get quite lively.

Especially among the several floors of the composition section, each of which is now striving to fulfill the company’s beginning-of-the-year talent promotion objectives. Naturally, they all pay close attention to the ninth floor’s performance.

There’s no lack of communication between the different departments.

Everyone knows that the ninth floor’s performance has been the poorest.

With only a few months left in the year, the rest of the composition departments are all wondering – can Xian Yu promote a leading singer before the end of the year during this final sprint?

“Looking at the situation, it seems the ninth floor probably won’t be able to promote even a single lead singer this year.”

“If Xian Yu left Sun Yaohuo and focused on promoting Jiang Kui during these last few months, there might still be some hope.”

“September to December, a total of four months, including December’s ‘dead group’. It’s going to be difficult.”

“The key thing is, on the current new song charts, not only are other companies pushing forward, but there is also often internal competition from Starlight. After all, all the floors are pushing.”

“...”

All the while, the company was abuzz with speculation.

In one of Starlight’s artist lounges.

Zhao Ying Ge scoffed: “Wouldn’t it have been better if Teacher Admirable Fish had simply chosen me for the ninth floor? It would have saved us from all of this passive waiting.”

The assistant chuckled: “I bet Teacher Admirable Fish now regrets not choosing you back then.”

Zhao Ying Ge was already predicted to make it onto the elite list, and it was considered as good as done.

Supported by the tenth-floor composition department, Zhao Ying Ge had indeed become one of the leading singers.

“Does he actually regret it?”

Zhao Ying Ge appeared somewhat delighted: “Does that mean Teacher Admirable Fish has noticed me? If I asked him to write a song for me next year, would he agree?”

Assistant: “...”

Turns out you’re working so hard just to get Teacher Admirable Fish’s attention?

“What’s wrong?”

Zhao Ying Ge glanced at her assistant.

The assistant laughed: “Nothing, I was just thinking about how much pressure must be on the ninth floor right now.”

“Hmph.”

Zhao Ying Ge, full of assurance, said: “If he had chosen me, I could easily have helped him complete the company’s assignment. Plus, the company has plans to make a King of Singing. Next time he’ll surely choose me!”

The assistant was puzzled: “Why does it have to be Xian Yu? Isn’t the tenth-floor composition section good enough?”

Zhao Ying Ge chuckled: “The tenth floor is indeed very good, but I just like Teacher Admirable Fish the most. I enjoy the feeling of his attention on me. I just want to sing songs he’s written.”

The assistant grinned, “The way you say this could easily lead to misunderstandings. You don’t actually have feelings for Teacher Admirable Fish, do you?”

“No, no, no, it’s not a misunderstanding. I indeed have feelings for him.”

Zhao Ying Ge looked at her assistant curiously: “Don’t you have feelings for Teacher Admirable Fish?”

The assistant was taken aback: “If you put it that way, any woman in the company, whether she’s single or not, who would dare to say she’s not fascinated by Teacher Admirable Fish. But the problem is, he has no interest in me.”

Zhao Ying Ge bit her lip, “How would you know if you haven’t tried?”

“...”

Lin Yuan had no idea about Zhao Ying Ge’s thoughts.

Of course, even if he did know, he probably wouldn’t care too much.

He had gotten used to such matters after dealing with them frequently.

The recording and post-production of “Ten Years” took some effort.

By the time the song was fully completed, it was already the end of the month.

To complicate matters, because of the frantic demand to finish within time, there hadn’t been much promotion for the song by the company, and it was released subtly at the dawn of September.

Initially, not many people paid attention to this song.

September wasn’t a period where fierce competition was common, so there weren’t many fans eagerly awaiting the release.

But over at Starlight, some people from the composition section were quite interested in Sun Yaohuo’s new song. Many of them deliberately stayed up to listen to it.

In the early hours of the morning.

When Sun Yaohuo’s song was released, the chat groups among Starlight’s composition teams lit up:

“It’s twelve o’clock!”

“Sun Yaohuo’s new song is out.”

“Tsk, tsk, let’s see if he’s wasted another good song from Xian Yu this time.”

“I predict this will be another situation where the song is popular but the singer is not.”

“I guess the song should be good, after all, it was written by Xian Yu. I’m just curious about how Sun Yaohuo will perform.”

“This is the one who can’t even be promoted by Xian Yu.”

“...”

Meanwhile.

At home, in her bedroom, Zhao Ying Ge quickly removed the mask from her face and reached out to her bedside laptop.

She opened the player, skillfully put on her headphones, and found Sun Yaohuo’s new song.

Song title: Ten Years

Lyrics: Xian Yu

Composer: Xian Yu

Singer: Sun Yaohuo

With quick movements of the mouse, Zhao Ying Ge clicked on play, then adjusted the pillow at the back of her head and comfortably closed her eyes.

What she was looking forward to was not Sun Yaohuo's voice, but Xian Yu's melody.

In the darkness of her closed eyes, a slightly hoarse male voice rang out, laced with slightly bitter undertones.

"If those two words hadn't trembled, wouldn't have found out that I'm in pain, to say it out loud, it's just a breakup."

Was it really Sun Yaohuo singing?

Zhao Ying Ge opened her tightly closed eyes, her gaze flashing with clear surprise.

The song in her ear was still playing, maintaining its slow rhythm:

"If there are no expectations for tomorrow, holding hands would have been just like a tour, among countless doorways, one of them has to leave first."

In her daze, Zhao Ying Ge seemed to see a mismatched man and woman, standing on a broad street.

The light from the street lamps along the road was dim and lonely, casting long shadows of people.

"Since the embrace can no longer linger, why not let the tears flow while enjoying the goodbye..."

The two did have their reluctance. Otherwise, they wouldn't have been in an embrace.

However, something was already broken, so like the sudden blow of the night wind, it was blown away.

They parted ways.

The man went left, and the woman went right. Neither one of them looked back.

The music suddenly took an upward turn, and the voice in her ear was tinged with a cruel touch of tenderness:

“Ten years ago, I didn’t know you, and you didn’t belong to me, but we were still the same, walking through the familiar streets with a stranger by our side...”

The street scenery in the moonlight.

Time went by.

Some things really hadn’t changed.

It’s just that some things only seemed unchanged.

“Ten years later, we can still say hello as friends, only, that warmth can no longer be found within an embrace, lovers at last, inevitably become friends.”

Zhao Ying Ge gently sat up.

Meanwhile, in the internal chat group of Starlight’s composition process, the atmosphere remained quiet for a full ten minutes before someone posted:

“Xian Yu is still that Xian Yu.”

Immediately thereafter, he added another phrase: “Sun Yaohuo doesn’t seem to be the previous Sun Yaohuo anymore.”

Chapter 380: Fish Disaster

It’s been over half a year, and Xian Yu hasn’t appeared on the season’s chart for a long while. Plus, there aren’t any major singers in September. So, many musicians expected to release songs in September fantasized about grabbing the top spot—

Everyone had a shot at the title.

The championship was filled with suspense!

That's why many insiders weren't too excited about the September season's chart.

But for those musicians dropping new songs in September, it's still an honor to be the number one for the season, no matter how shabby the competition is.

That spot was too tempting!

However, as they were about to make their move, when they saw the name 'Xian Yu', all the musicians set to release songs in September were dumbstruck.

A wake-up call!

They were stunned one after another.

This surprise attack is deadly, potentially fatal!

"It's over."

"The fish has arrived!"

"What a bully!"

"I was such a fool, really. I only knew that there were no A-listers in September but did not anticipate the fish calamity..."

"Worthy Maestro Junior, instead of messing with those A-listers, why do you compete with us bottom-tier folks for the first place!"

"With this fish around, even A-listers will have to kneel!"

“Did I step on dog poo when I left the house today? Why did Xian Yu choose to return in September?”

“Guys, the fish calamity is here.”

“It’s over, I’ve got fish-phobia.”

“Fish phobia+1...”

“Fish phobia+2...”

“Fish phobia+10086...”

“I’ve had fish phobia for ages! I’ve run into Xian Yu twice when I released songs! Who’s worse off than me!”

A rather famous second-tier singer, who had a shot at the top spot, lamented.

Soon another singer popped up complaining:

“I’ve encountered him three times, have I uttered a word? My manager said I’ve reached terminal stages of fish phobia!”

Such frustration!

September was supposed to be a peaceful month when scrubs could peck each other, with everyone having a shot at the crown, but then this fish unexpectedly jumped out!

If only we knew about Xian Yu this month, we could have released our songs later, right?

There’s no thought of resistance.

This fish has put Maestro and ‘King of Singing’ through their paces. Isn’t it light work for him to hammer a bunch of weaklings just by pressing his hand down?

Alright then.

These people really have bad luck.

Because the release of the song ‘Ten Years’ was slightly rushed, and the company didn’t even have time to promote it properly, many insiders were not aware of Xian Yu’s plan to release a song in September.

Sun Yaohuo did promote the new song on social media, but he didn’t mention Xian Yu.

No mentioning of Xian Yu, so who cares about Sun Yaohuo?

With Xian Yu’s apprentice’s help, Sun Yaohuo has been either releasing songs or preparing for it all year round.

Although he scored well each month, we’ve never seen him capable of being number one.

But now, Xian Yu is back, so the peaceful September skirmish between chickens has turned into a “fish calamity”.

On the new song chart, there’s a collective outbreak of fish phobia.

At this point, fish phobia is showing tendencies of becoming a prevalent disease in the music industry.

Whenever they encounter a fish calamity, everyone can simply be ready for their downfall.

Because so many A-list singers, even ‘King of Singing’ and Maestro have proved a fact, which is when encountering Xian Yu, don’t struggle.

They’re all doomed.

...

On the new song chart, the stone tossed by Xian Yu caused all the ripples.

As the new song chart turned upside down, insiders gradually accepted the fact of Xian Yu's king-like return:

It's September now.

The end of the year is near.

Xian Yu is back.

The good times for some are over.

"In February this year, Xian Yu swept the music scene, then in March, Yang Zhongming had a massacre, after which, subsequent seasons seemed like eggplants hit by frost, with no more works that could bombard the season's chart. However, as the end of the year approaches, the yearly supernatural showdown in the music scene is about to begin, Xian Yu has already started warming up."

"He started warming up a bit too early. He struck in September, that's brutal."

"Hopefully Xian Yu won't release songs next month, I am planning to release my song then."

"Hard to say, 'Starlight' looks like it's on steroids this year, throwing all their weight behind their artists, and Xian Yu, who has exclusive control over the composition department of Nine Buildings, undoubtedly was given a mission. It looks like the upcoming months won't be peaceful."

"What's terrifying is not Xian Yu joining the season's chart. We can just hide when Xian Yu enters the fray. The scariest thing is that Xian Yu shoots without warning. Who can endure that?"

"Guess it's due to the urgency of releasing songs that he didn't have time to promote, so all the people in September ended up as the unlucky ones."

“...”

The stir caused by Starlight is common knowledge inside the industry.

This year, Starlight have been consistently pushing for their stars relentlessly, the insiders have more or less figured out the true situation based on these news.

This had cast a shadow over many insiders' hearts.

The so-called fish phobia, it's not limited to one or two people.

In this music world, there's no shortage of souls that have been trained by Xianyu Army.

As for the song 'Ten Years', insiders could only lament, well-deserving of the man who singlehandedly built the Yu Dynasty.

“The lyrics and composition of this song are superb, and Xian Yu's skills hasn't diminished a bit.”

“A very classic bitter-sweet love song, what surprised me most is that the performer of this song, Sun Yaohuo, seems to have had a breakthrough. The singing and song's artistic conception perfectly match, making Xian Yu's support for him all this while worthwhile.”

“I feel there is a signal here, Xian Yu's return as a king may not just be with 'Ten Years'.”

“If everything goes as expected, Xian Yu will make another move in this year's showdown among the gods.”

“Nowadays, Xian Yu is becoming more and more like Maestro. Every time he makes a move, it's a classic starter.”

“More than that, 'Ten Years' would be no less outstanding even if it was released in the December God-of-war showdown. I even feel it's a pity, Xian Yu should have waited until December to release this song, by then Starlight could have arranged a King or Queen of Singing to perform it, and he might have reached the top spot.”

“I disagree with that. Sun Yaohuo’s rendition of ‘Ten Years’ is already perfect. Replacing him with a ‘King of Singing’ may not necessarily improve.”

“...”

The discussion about Xian Yu’s song this time was different from before.

When Xian Yu used to release songs, the focus of the discussion was always on Xian Yu himself. People didn’t talk about the performers much.

But this time, facing the song ‘Ten Years’, many insiders mentioned Sun Yaohuo.

Which meant, many people approved of Sun Yaohuo’s rendition of ‘Ten Years’.

The one thing that proved this best was the sudden surge in Sun Yaohuo’s social media followers by several million.

Also.

Shortly after ‘Ten Years’ hit the top spot, the company received countless high-end event invitations for Sun Yaohuo.

But Sun Yaohuo rejected them all.

Many people speculated about the reason. Only a few people who had access to Sun Yaohuo knew that his eyes were swollen for some reason, and they were considerably puffy, like duck eggs.

It seemed like he got beaten up last night.

This look made it a hassle even to go outside, let alone to be the face of some brand.