

All R. Artist 501

Chapter 501: Third Broadcast

The next day...

The third day...

The fourth day...

After the system issued the lifespan task, Lin Yuan began writing comfortably. Of course, the location of his writing was in his manga studio, allowing him to serialize his manga during his breaks. The situation of manga serialization wasn't complicated either. After being instructed by Lin Yuan's Teacher's Halo, Luo Wei was barely able to take over the drawing again for him. With the help of several manga assistants, it didn't take too much effort. Additionally, the master-level drawing skills not only enhanced the quality but also significantly improved the quantity. With the same amount of time as before, Lin Yuan's drawing speed was almost three times faster.

Swish Swish Swish.

Tap Tap Tap.

Between manga and writing, Lin Yuan achieved balance and kept busy until the fifth day of this week, when he temporarily paused to consider the song for the fourth competition. Just then, he received a call from the program director Tong Shuwen.

"What's up?"

"I have a suggestion."

Tong Shuwen chuckled: "The Literature and Art Association wants to make the fourth stage a special show for the judges. Of course, we let the singers volunteer to see if they're willing to choose a song from the judges' previous work. You are the first singer I've contacted because all the other singers have submitted alternate song lists. However, your situation is a bit special since you've always written and sung your songs. Would you be interested?"

Lin Yuan was taken aback.

He had intended to release another new song for the fourth stage, but he didn't expect the program team to consider this. If this was in the past, he would have hesitated. But now, with his enhanced vocal skills, he didn't worry about it:

"No problem."

Lin Yuan had listened to the works of all four judges, and he liked some of the songs. Two singers had already performed his song "Big Fish" on this stage, so he could definitely perform the work of other singers or composers. He even thought that the show's arrangement suited him perfectly.

"Great!"

Tong Shuwen laughed: "Then I'll contact the other singers. Mainly because the judging panel will change slightly during the battle round, so we are also giving the audience a surprise."

"Mmm."

After hanging up the phone, Lin Yuan chuckled. Now, he didn't need to worry about which Earth song to use for the fourth stage. It would be like taking a casual break, as there were plenty of classic works by the four judges to choose from. The choice for singers, especially those like Lin Yuan who could sing in three different voice ranges, was extremely broad. If necessary, they could also rearrange the judges' works. As for whose song he would choose, Lin Yuan almost didn't need to think, an answer had crossed his mind. This was what he found interesting about this arrangement –

Maestro Yang Zhongming!

There were many reasons to choose Yang Zhongming, but the most important one was actually related to Lin Yuan's personal preferences. For Lin Yuan, Yang Zhongming was like his half composition master. He had learned a lot of composition knowledge from Yang Zhongming's character card provided in the system's virtual space. Even though Yang Zhongming didn't know about this, Lin Yuan respected him and even regarded him as his half teacher. Singing his song on stage could be seen as a tribute.

“Hmm...”

Having decided to sing a song by Yang Zhongming, the question was which one to choose. As one of the top maestros on Blue Star, Yang Zhongming had numerous classic works, and the original singers were usually the King or Queen of singing.

“Got it!”

Lin Yuan suddenly thought of a song called “Leaving”. It was one of Yang Zhongming’s early works, representative of his initial compositions and was very suitable for the stage. Lin Yuan had a precise grasp of the competition’s situation. He felt that choosing this song would secure his position in the top three. It’s noteworthy that the original singer of this song was Fei Yang. At that time, Starlight and Splendid had a collaboration, so Yang Zhongming’s song was given to Fei Yang, who was a top singer at the time.

“I’ll go with this one.”

After deciding on the song, Lin Yuan stopped thinking about it. He had no particular ambitions for the next round of the competition. He didn’t necessarily want to be first; he just didn’t want to be eliminated. After all, only one person would be eliminated in the next round, and there was no risk of that happening to Lin Yuan, who had had a leap in his singing skills.

Meanwhile, on the internet.

Those who kept discrediting Prince of Lanling showed no signs of stopping. As the third episode approached, the voices grew even stronger, especially among Yuan Xi’s fans, who led various discourses.

The only surprise was:

Leng Quan seemed to have stopped?

Why had Leng Quan, who had been discrediting Prince of Lanling and riding on his popularity, suddenly fallen silent? He had participated in the recording of the third episode, so was his silence now due to confidentiality about the recording situation?

That must be it.

Nobody thought much of it. Amid the bustling noise from the outside world, time finally moved on to Sunday, and the much-anticipated third episode of “The Masked Singer” was officially aired!

Streaming!

Countless spectators started watching. The first scene presented to the audience was the Prince of Lanling getting off his car and receiving off-field cheers from fans who rushed from all over the country. This was followed by his utmost silence after entering the door...

Comment section.

On the internet.

Many people were watching the show and discussing at the same time: “I feel that the state of the Prince of Lanling is not right in this episode. He was pretty quiet during the first two episodes, but at least he wasn’t as silent as he is today.”

“Poor thing.”

“He’s isolating himself.”

“Not uttering a word.”

“He must have been affected by the online trolls. Although I also don’t fancy the Prince of Lanling, I don’t dislike him as a person. What he said is pretty much the same as the judges, the only difference is that he’s not a judge.”

“Serves him right!”

“He criticized our Yuan Xi in the program, and he doesn’t want us to mock him online? This Prince of Lanling is the type of gamer who is mediocre but loves to trash talk.”

“Going down!”

“Bracing the Chill, recalling your moonlit memories from afar, the Prince of Lanling’s first song has already foretold his ending, the prophecy from Leng Quan is nothing, this is the real great prophet!”

“...”

Some were lamenting.

Some were mocking.

Some were worried.

Some were enjoying the drama.

During the previous shoot, the production team used a cold wind special effect for the Prince of Lanling’s room, but today they had added a frost effect. Other singers’ rooms were still lively and cheerful as always, warm and bustling. Only the Prince of Lanling’s room was as cold as an ice cave, and gave an intense cold feeling even through the screen!

“Hissing.”

Even some of Yuan Xi’s fans couldn’t help but shiver for no reason. The next moment they burst into laughter because the Prince of Lanling drew number one. He would be the opening singer for the third episode!

“That feels good!”

“That feels good!”

Yuan Xi’s fans began to comment repeatedly. Some of Zhao Ying Ge’s fans also followed. As the fans of both parties were joyfully commenting, the voice of the Prince of Lanling exploded like a cannon blast!

Booming!

Coupled with the extreme depression displayed by the Prince of Lanling in the opening, countless audiences in front of the screen suddenly felt goosebumps all over their bodies. The fans of Yuan Xi and Zhao Ying Ge were completely dumbfounded...

In the center of the stage!

The Prince of Lanling's mask, which was frightful yet almost splendid, was facing the central camera. His slightly husky and smoky voice was echoing on the stage of The Masked Singer!

It exploded in an instant!

Chapter 502: Fully Armed

"Oh my god!"

"Prince of Lanling is fierce!"

"This battle is full-on!"

"Fans of Yuan Xi, come out and take a beating! Is this the 'useless' you were talking about? Is this the 'crappy but love to brag' you were referring to?"

"Too awesome!"

"I'm down on my knees!"

"His level is on par with the first round, even more exhilarating, it's explosive!"

"This song is invincible!"

"I knew it wouldn't be ordinary the moment I heard the drum beat at the start. The way he handled the pipa was masterful. His voice hit me like a rush of blood to the head. This is definitely the most explosive performance since the start of the season!"

“...”

The comments were flooding in!

There was so much discussion!

Yuan Xi's fans were dumbfounded, Zhao Ying Ge's fans were also dumbfounded. The most underestimated performance of Prince of Lanling actually took the whole stage by storm!

The green room.

All the singers' reactions were caught on camera, followed by the four judges, the audience and the review panel. The emotional tension was extremely palpable—

Doubts?

Contempt?

At least in the face of such a song, any negative comments prove meaningless. Meanwhile, the audience really got to feel Prince of Lanling's third voice!

A smoky timbre!

That smoky timbre had already appeared in the second episode during the performance of “Boy,” but it didn't prompt much discussion back then, partly because the song's response was mediocre and partly because only a few lines were sung in that smoky voice. But this song featured a smoky voice all the way!

So exhilarating!

So heroic!

Zhao Ying Ge's fans disappeared on the spot, they even felt there was no need to continue their quarrel with Prince of Lanling, given that the fan club was calling for calm and saying 'let's keep things peaceful'.

Simultaneously.

Yuan Xi's fans also backed off. They realized they couldn't touch this round's Prince of Lanling. However, they retreated strategically to avoid his edge, waiting for later games to make a comeback. Yuan Xi's fans would not give up easily.

The rest of the audience kept on watching.

The performances of the subsequent singers were also good, maintaining the consistent standard of "The Masked Singer", but Prince of Lanling's performance left the deepest impression. So much so that when the director announced at the end of the program Prince of Lanling was this week's number one, many screen comments all expressed the same four words:

"Well-deserved!"

During this process, Leng Quan's small interruption finally made everyone laugh, bringing the audience the greatest off-stage fun, particularly when Leng Quan clumsily tried to hide himself, the screen echoed with countless laughs. People finally understood why Leng Quan stayed silent....

For the sake of the program's secrecy?

This guy is just afraid of losing face!

But you can't just hide to avoid losing face. As soon as the program ended, Leng Quan's 'tribe' comment section was instantly bombarded, Prince of Lanling's fans rushed over like they were on steroids...

"Quit hiding."

"We see you."

“You had the guts to predict, don’t hide and don’t talk. I know you’re watching, are you satisfied with this round’s result?”

“The clown is actually me!”

“Who wins and who loses, only heaven knows!”

“Teacher Leng Quan, how many times have you listened to ‘A Laughter in the Sea’? Teacher Prince of Lanling wants you to go back and listen to this song more.”

“...”

Leng Quan still didn’t respond.

Nor could he respond.

If people pay close attention, it seems that the crowd of fans of Prince of Lanling has grown somewhat since before?

The show ended!

Public opinion reversed!

No one mentioned that Prince of Lanling was not up to standard. Everyone’s discussion had shifted from whether Prince of Lanling can do it or not to Prince of Lanling’s smoky voice, and his vocal skills, even to his emotional quotient.

“His EQ is pretty high!”

Someone commented: “‘Listen to this song more,’ this sentence may not be explicit enough but obviously people have gotten countless answers from it. Some people think it’s a mockery, some think it’s a generous remark, and others think it’s wise. Perhaps this is just a testament to Prince of Lanling’s high EQ....”

“High emotional quotient?”

Many netizens laughed: “If Prince of Lanling’s EQ were as high as you say, he wouldn’t have criticized Male Lion, also known as the famous singer Mu Shi, who was eliminated this round. Mu Shi was already eliminated and yet he added insult to injury, saying Mu Shi had a problem with breath mcontrol. Isn’t this rubbing salt in the wound?”

“Well...”

“I also think there’s a problem with Mu Shi’s breath control, it’s too frequent and lacks rhythm. I don’t know if Mu Shi was nervous or something, anyway what Prince of Lanling said is true, his comments these episodes are all faultless.”

“...”

A new point of controversy emerged!

Prince of Lanling’s performance this episode had indeed conquered many, but his mouth had also offended many, especially the fans of Mu Shi, the well-known singer!

“Too much!”

“Prince of Lanling is malicious!”

“Show-off as soon as he won!”

“Mu Mu just underestimated his opponent, he didn’t anticipate that Prince of Lanling would do so well this round. If Mu Mu prepared better, he would certainly not be eliminated. Prince of Lanling should apologize to Mu Mu!”

“There’s something wrong with this guy!”

“Do you have no problem with your breath control?”

“If you dare to take off your mask, we Mu Mu’s fans will definitely rip you to pieces. You should know that you can eat whatever you want, but you can’t speak recklessly!”

“...”

Mu Shi fans were furious!

Many neutral netizens were amused. Since the show started, Prince of Lanling has been an endless topic, and he never stops commenting on other singers, offending one singer in each episode!

He offended Yuan Xi in the first round!

In the second, it was Zhao Ying Ge!

Mu Shi was the victim in the third round!

The show has only aired for three episodes, yet he managed to offend a diva and two top-tier singers! Are you secretly the fifth judge of the “The Masked Singer”?

Controversy!

Controversy!

Even many passersby were subtly divided into two factions. Some felt that Prince of Lanling should be more restrained; others felt that Prince of Lanling should remain this candid, without Prince of Lanling, the show would lose a third of its fun.

Thankfully...

Although there were controversies about the person Prince of Lanling, his talent had gradually gained everyone’s recognition. This time nobody was making speculations about Prince of Lanling being eliminated in the next episode. As it stood, Prince of Lanling was not someone who would be easily eliminated.

“Haha!”

At Lin Yuan’s home, his sister, holding her stomach, laughed: “Prince of Lanling takes first place. This should have been the moment when online public opinion completely reversed. However, his big mouth manages to offend Mu Shi’s fans again. You should know that Mu Shi was essentially eliminated by Prince of Lanling. Wouldn’t Mu Shi’s fans hate Prince of Lanling to death?”

“He came first.”

His sister looked at Lin Yuan: “Only you predicted this round correctly. But ‘A Laughter in the Sea’ is indeed worth the first place. I think this is the best song you’ve written recently.”

Lin Yuan didn’t speak.

He was deep in thought.

His way of speaking had always been so direct. Why could everyone accept it before, but as soon as he put on the mask so many people disliked it?

Chapter 503: Here Again

The following day.

Lin Yuan arrived at the TV station to record the fourth episode.

Before entering, he paused out of habit, waved to the cheering crowd outside the venue, then entered the music hall.

“Prince of Lanling’s fanbase has grown,” observed an observer.

Tongtong laughed, she could tell just how loud the cheers for Prince of Lanling were.

There were significantly more people cheering for Prince of Lanling today than during the third episode.

“Mhm.”

Lin Yuan was in good condition today: “Let’s rehearse.”

Tongtong nodded: “Let’s head over.”

The rehearsal wrapped up after around half an hour. Lin Yuan had little trouble mastering this song.

The main appeal of “Departure” was its pleasing melody and mid-level difficulty; it was a typical song for a baritone.

Before Lin Yuan’s voice broke, he had been a baritone, and it is a range he is comfortable with.

However, an interesting thing happened when they drew lots:

Tongtong drew for Lin Yuan, and drew the number one lot again!

“Pfft!”

The cameramen couldn’t help but laugh.

Tongtong was just too unlucky!

In the first episode, Tongtong drew the third lot, which was right behind the Swan!

In the third episode, Tongtong drew the first lot, which meant opening the show!

In the fourth episode, Tongtong drew the first lot again, continuing to open the show!

Only the lot for the second episode was decent, with Prince of Lanling being the last to perform...

But the issue was!

The lot for the second episode was drawn by Prince of Lanling himself, having nothing to do with Tongtong!

“Ahhhhhh!”

Tongtong was devastated: “My luck is terrible, next time Prince of Lanling should draw himself!”

Lin Yuan: “...”

In a sense, Tongtong truly was unlucky. He never knew anyone could be this unfortunate, though he didn’t really care about the order of performance.

Not long after,

The recording began.

Lin Yuan and Tongtong walked onto the stage.

The audience’s gaze was locked on Prince of Lanling, curious about the song he would perform this time.

Surprisingly, when Prince of Lanling started singing, it turned out to be a song by Yang Zhongming?

Facing the judges,

Mao Xuewang and the others laughed and turned to Yang Zhongming, “It’s your song.”

Yang Zhongming nodded without saying a word; he was listening attentively.

“You wanted me to be there, yet you were the first to leave...”

“That loveless glance as you turned around, disappearing into the sea...”

“Please depart, taking your so-called love with you; let’s guess each other’s thoughts as the evening winds blow away the dust; you have no expectation for the future; the sunset waits as memories try to let go... So, it turns out that departure was your unexpected arrangement...”

This song “Departure” was quite familiar to Blue Star.

Lin Yuan made a few minor amendments to the original song to better fit the stage atmosphere; he didn’t change the main melody though, choosing instead to alternate between male and female voices.

This trick was really effective on the audience.

There were quite a few cheers at the scene.

After the performance,

The applause began.

The stage was not as explosive as when “Sea Laughter” was performed, but the audience didn’t expect Prince of Lanling to be explosive in every episode.

The duet between the male and female voices was very appealing.

The host turned to the judges, “Let’s start with Teacher Yang Zhongming’s evaluation this time.”

Yang Zhongming nodded, surprisingly gave a slight smile, “I wasn’t wrong. It’s clear that your singing skills have improved in these few episodes, especially this song. Your interpretation of the song is even better than the original singer, Fei Yang...”

The studio immediately became lively!

Normally, even if the judges thought Prince of Lanling sang well, they would only comment subtly “on par with the original singer”.

Or “each has its own merits”.

After all, Fei Yang being the King of Singing is a regular judge in other shows; saying someone sang better than him would certainly offend him.

But this show was different!

Maestro Yang Zhongming could speak his mind without worrying about who was the King or Queen of Singing; Fei Yang had to listen to it!

Of course,

Some of Fei Yang’s fans in the audience quietly grumbled a bit, but eventually shut their mouths.

Unhappy?

Hold it in then.

Even the song is written by Yang Zhongming!

The other three judges also found it quite amusing.

Wu Long couldn’t help but add, “I’ve heard Fei Yang sing this song, in a live performance no less. The truth is, it wasn’t as good as this version. The main difference lies in the vocal delivery. The three different tones of the Prince of Lanling are truly powerful. This time he used the two most fitting and harmonious ones.”

Quite obviously.

Wu Long wasn’t afraid either. His position in the industry might not be equal to Yang Zhongming’s, but it wasn’t far off.

“Hmm.”

Lin Yuan thought for a moment, then said, “I think Fei Yang sang this song perfectly. The song really fits his voice.”

The judges are surprised.

The host is surprised.

Everyone is surprised.

The Prince of Lanling, who usually never compliments anyone, was actually praising someone? He even learned how to be humble?

Did he realize that he was likely offending a lot of people and decided to be tactful?

Everyone was a tad taken aback...

Just then.

The Prince of Lanling added, “There may be some flaws in his rendition of other songs, but at least with this one, I think there’s nothing wrong.”

Huh?

Brother!

Are you complimenting or insulting him?

The scene suddenly erupted in a cacophony of whispers after an awkward pause.

Just when we thought the Prince of Lanling had changed his ways, one comment managed to upset Fei Yang again. The Prince of Lanling hasn't changed at all – he thrives on stirring controversy!

Fei Yang, oh Fei Yang!

That's the King of Singing we're talking about!

The backstage situation wasn't much different.

The robotic voice gradually intensified, "Here he comes, here he comes! He's coming with his critiques!"

The White Swan shook his head, "The Prince of Lanling's criticism may be late at times, but it's never absent. I thought I was bold, but this guy truly has guts of steel."

The substitute singer from the last episode, Rose, let out a wry smile, "Here we go again!"

"That's quite... ahem..."

Pufferfish seemed to want to say something, but decided to swallow his words.

Even An Hong, the host known for maintaining a stone face, struggled to keep a straight face and his comical look was quite ridiculous...

"Alright then!"

Yang Zhongming laughed heartily, "You're right in saying that he sang this song pretty well. After all, not everyone has as many voices as you. However, his new song 'Simple', which he released a few months ago, was sung too complicatedly. The excessive technical modifications stripped the song of its charm."

"Right."

The Prince of Lanling agreed.

You're still agreeing over there!

The audience nearly lost it, some laughed, some shook their heads, and some slapped their thighs.

Fei Yang's fans had turned red with anger.

This Prince of Lanling, he's pushing his luck!

“...snort.”

This time, neither Liu Xu nor Mao Xuewang dared to interrupt. They couldn't control their laughter as well as An Hong and ended up snorting.

Could they not laugh?

This Prince of Lanling was just like a mobile turret!

Firing shots every episode!

All right!

Now, the King and Queen of Singing and the top-line male and female singers are all here!

Are you collecting stamps or what?

Yang Zhongming laughed, “Alright, that's enough for now. Thank you for singing my song, I really liked it.”

Almost forgot this is a stage show...

Got so engaged in discussing music with this kid...

I'm not the one wearing a mask...

Wu Long chuckled, "Wearing that Prince of Lanling mask of yours is like tossing a joke around. I suspect you might even get beaten up on the street."

Lin Yuan: "..."

After yet another round of interactivity and comments, the Prince of Lanling exited the stage.

But there was no doubt.

Once the show aired, he would once again become the focus of attention for this episode!

Chapter 504: Prince of Lanling, a Terrifying Thought

"Prince of Lanling..."

Tongtong was looking at Lin Yuan in a trance.

"Hm?"

Lin Yuan was also looking at her.

Tongtong fell silent for about ten seconds, then sighed: "Nevermind."

Lin Yuan nodded.

The rest of the performances were also good. Everyone sang the judges' songs, making the judges quite moved. Liu Xu and Mao Xuwang even wiped their eyes. The atmosphere on the scene was very warm.

This was probably the least competitive round.

Today, there were no strained performances, all were heart-rendering.

But...

No audience found it boring.

After three consecutive high-flyer rounds, the gentle warmth of the fourth episode was like a healing session, reminding everyone of the classics, and the splendid days of the judges in the past.

Of course, they are still glorious now.

It's just that their ages have caught up with them.

And the singers were performing their works from their youth.

Among them.

The sixth substitute singer to take the stage caught Lin Yuan's attention.

This person, who called herself Mermaid, but in her voice, Lin Yuan heard a familiar tone—

Jiang Kui?

Lin Yuan was somewhat uncertain.

The likelihood of meeting acquaintances in this competition seemed not low.

Lin Yuan pondered.

After the performance, it was time for the rankings announcement.

Everyone walked backstage into the gathering hall.

“You sang well.”

Pufferfish looked at Mermaid.

Mermaid nodded: “You too.”

Huh?

Something seemed off with the atmosphere?

The other singers detected a faint taste of gunpowder.

“We should know each other?”

“The possibility is indeed quite significant.”

Mermaid and Pufferfish were still talking.

When everyone sat down, however, the two deliberately avoided each other, choosing sofas far apart.

“...”

Did they clash in terms of image, so they couldn’t stand each other?

It shouldn’t be that extreme.

The singers contemplated quietly.

At that moment, Tong Shuwen walked in and announced the results of today’s competition in his familiar, stuttering manner:

Swan first.

Prince of Lanling second.

Robot third.

Mermaid fourth.

Pufferfish fifth.

Rose was eliminated.

Perhaps because this round was not inherently competitive, Rose did not show much sorrow. She just smiled and said to the Prince of Lanling:

“Show me some mercy.”

Everyone burst into laughter.

Lin Yuan nodded. He hadn't planned on saying much. Rose sang quite well, but she lacked distinctive features.

But this was not the singer's fault.

Nevertheless, Lin Yuan offered a suggestion: “You'd be better suited to singing some movie and television theme songs.”

Mainly OSTs.

Rose was taken aback, then seemed to be in deep thought. Eventually, she nodded:

“Thank you.”

Rose went to unmask.

This time, it was a second-tier female singer named Yang Yang.

Interestingly, this second-tier female singer was known for her aptitude in singing movie and television theme songs!

Everyone's eyes naturally turned to the Prince of Lanling.

In a sense, the advice he had just given was very accurate!

"I'm feeling the chill too."

Yang Yang said with a smile. Seemingly, saying "Bracing the Chill" had become a tradition for the singers after unmasking.

"Congratulations to all of you!"

Tong Shuwen looked at the remaining five singers:

"After four rounds of fierce competition, you have formed the first team of 'The Masked Singer'. You can all have a good rest for a while."

The robot asked, "How many teams are left?"

Tong Shuwen laughed and said, "This is also to be announced to everyone. There are three more teams. That is to say, our show will select the members from four teams four months later, a total of twenty singers. At that time, we will adopt the form of team-to-team duel. For more specific details, please wait for the announcement from the program team."

"Understood."

When it came to the dueling stage, the speed of singer elimination would increase.

For now, the focus is still on performance, and there would be only one singer eliminated per episode unless anything unexpected happened.

Following the end of the competition.

Lin Yuan returned to the company by car. The next few months would be quite leisurely for him.

The competition was temporarily not his main concern.

...

There wasn't much to summarize this time. After the competition concluded, Lin Yuan continued to write his novel.

Life was quite calm and peaceful.

But this tranquility didn't last for many days.

On Sunday.

When the fourth episode aired, the internet exploded once again!

"Holy shit!"

"Prince of Lanling is picking a fight again!"

"This time he takes it directly to Fei Yang!"

"Hahahaha, I love Prince of Lanling's mouth!"

"The expression on An Hong's face on the side just cracked me up!"

“Singer King Fei Yang, Song Queen Yuan Xi, first-line male singer Mu Shi, first-line female singer Zhao Ying Ge, Prince of Lanling has pissed off four big-name singers in four episodes. What a lineup, all brought down at once!”

“There will be no Prince of Lanling in the next episode... I feel somewhat reluctant when I think about it.”

“I hope the next batch of singers can step it up!”

“I don’t know if the next batch of singers will step it up or not, but I do know that without the Prince of Lanling, there won’t be any explosive topics anymore.”

“.....”

Meanwhile, as expected!

Fans of Fei Yang were furious!

After the fan clubs of Yuan Xi, Zhao Ying Ge, and Mu Shi rebelled, the fans of Fei Yang also started to revolt!

“Wait until you reveal your face!”

“Do you dare to talk smack without the mask?”

“You dare to mess with the King of Singing!”

“Brothers, attack him!”

“For our singing king, Fei!”

“No one can bully the singing king Fei...except Xian Yu!”

“Charge, charge, charge, rush to the tower and kill him!”

“.....”

Well, there’s nowhere to go.

Because there’s no competition from the Prince of Lanling later.

As Prince of Lanling has not revealed his identity, even if Fei Yang’s fans want to fight, they can’t find a place to do so. They can only keep hitting the topics of Prince of Lanling hard on some forums and badmouth Prince of Lanling together with the fans of other singers who were criticized before.

There are signs of forming alliances?

But netizens seemed to have grown accustomed to these singers’ fans’ excitement and did not respond much. Instead, some netizens summarized the four episodes’ performance of Prince of Lanling:

“The strength of Prince of Lanling is a bit confusing now, as everyone hasn’t shown their true selves yet!”

“The judges have said that Prince of Lanling’s singing is improving every competition. Can this also be understood as him gradually revealing his real strength?”

“Setting aside the singing skill, I think the fact that Prince of Lanling loves to fire shots indirectly proves his strength.”

“Right, looking at the end of the fourth episode, it’s fascinating when Prince of Lanling was advising Yang Yang to sing more soundtracks for TV dramas in the future. As Yang Yang was unmasked, we all know that this advice is solid. Yang Yang is indeed very suitable for singing movie and TV soundtracks. But we came to this conclusion after Yang Yang’s unmasking, while Prince of Lanling understood the other’s strengths and weaknesses before their face reveal.”

“Terrifyingly insightful!”

“I’d like to talk about the first episode again. All the people at the competition venue, including us viewers before the television, believed that Robot was first-rate. However, only Prince of Lanling and Father Yang, upon hearing Robot’s only one performance, concluded that the other party was the Singing King. This proves how insightful Prince of Lanling is, as precise as Maestro!”

“Plus, Zhao Ying Ge said she was willing to accept criticism...”

“Looking back, everything Father Yang said is very similar to what Prince of Lanling said. But Prince of Lanling is not copying Maestro. Many times, he even spoke before Yang Zhongming.”

“Yes, Prince of Lanling is just outspoken, but everything he said, I believe, are facts!”

“There is a problem with how Fei Yang sings some songs, and not only Prince of Lanling has pointed it out. Some big names in the industry have hinted at it before as well. When Prince of Lanling pointed it out on the scene of the competition, Father Yang agreed with him, and Teacher Wu Long also nodded in agreement.”

“That being said, why do I feel like Prince of Lanling is kind of awesome?”

“At least in terms of commentary, he is indeed very professional!”

“Hey, what a pity Prince of Lanling won’t be in the next episode...”

“...”

Surprisingly enough.

No matter whether they liked Prince of Lanling, they didn’t like Prince of Lanling, or they were neutral audience members, after seeing the later competition plan of the program, they all felt a sense of discomfort.

Moreover, for the past month, they had been arguing about Prince of Lanling’s topics every day, and many people had grown used to it.

Knowing that they would not be seeing Prince of Lanling for a long time, many netizens even felt a strange sense of regret.

The first day without Prince of Lanling.

Missing him...

Meanwhile, in a certain company.

Fei Yang slowly took out his phone, raging:

“I don’t care, I want to participate in ‘The Masked Singer’. No matter how many people there are, I want to participate in the first season. The second season doesn’t have the Prince of Lanling, so it doesn’t make sense!”

Chapter 505: Curtain

Actually, Fei Yang had a decent temperament. Among the Kings of Singing across the continents, he was seen as the cool and handsome type—

Plus, he was a guy who cared about his face value too.

Although he had been criticized occasionally in recent years for his singing style becoming greasy, it didn’t diminish Fei Yang’s reputation as the King of Singing.

Until later.

Fei Yang met Xian Yu.

The title ‘Perennial Runner-up’ was directly tied to Fei Yang.

A phrase started circulating in the music industry:

“People remember only the champion, never the runner-up. The exception is Fei Yang.”

Because of this phrase...

Fei Yang, without lifting a finger, instantly became a sensation throughout Qin, Qi, Chu, and Yan.

Other Singing Kings had to appear more in public. They worked hard to sing well and produced some excellent new works to gradually get themselves known to audiences in the other three continents.

But for him, Fei Yang, he rose to fame in all four continents without even leaving home!

Many peers of comparable standing were envious of him.

But Fei Yang was in agony...

He couldn't bear to let go of the title 'Perennial Runner-up', yet it also pained him.

It wasn't exactly a pejorative term. There was no disrespect attached to it. It was just light-hearted teasing. Surprisingly, it had boosted his singing career substantially, and his agent was secretly laughing all the way to the bank. Fei Yang was no fool!

But to accept it silently...

Fei Yang, being a man who values his pride, felt bitter when people kept teasing him as the 'Perennial Runner-up'.

So he resisted and struggled.

But, up until today, he hadn't succeeded. Instead, it deepened everyone's impression of him as the 'Perennial Runner-up'.

Well!

If I can't beat them, I could at least avoid them, right?!

Fei Yang decided that he would avoid Xian Yu at all costs. He really wanted to concede.

He executed this plan quite well initially.

He didn't even participate in The Masked Singer, fearing that he might suddenly spot Xian Yu among the panel of judges when he was performing!

Who would've known...

Xian Yu didn't even show up for the show at all!

Instead, a mysterious singer named Prince of Lanling criticized that he was a poor singer!

Damn!

This infuriated Fei Yang.

Being criticized by Father Yang was one thing.

He was a maestro, even scarier than Xian Yu.

But on what grounds did Prince of Lanling do it?

Who do you think you are?

Do you really think because I'm the "Perennial Runner-up", that means I suck?

It's because I, King Fei, competed against Xian Yu!

Try replacing him with another opponent.

I can beat the shit out of him, believe it or not!

Yes, I'm talking about you, Prince of Lanling!

As a mere mortal, I can easily crush you!

What angered Fei Yang even more was:

The piece where Prince of Lanling was criticizing him was made into a gif!

Because of An Hong's face trying to hold back a laugh in the background, it was so wicked that it was being shared all over the internet!

Which means...

Now people in Qin, Qi, Chu, and Yan all know that the mighty King Fei was criticized by Prince of Lanling!

But that's not what infuriated Fei Yang the most.

The biggest, most infuriating point for Fei Yang was actually the person behind Prince of Lanling.

Xian Yu!!

Prince of Lanling participated in four competitions--

Except for the fourth one being somewhat peculiar, Xian Yu wrote the songs for Prince of Lanling in the first three!

Xian Yu!

Prince of Lanling!

The two of them getting together!

Both old and new grudges combined, Fei Yang exploded!

Although he's wary of Xian Yu, he's not afraid of Prince of Lanling.

This is a competition of singing skills!

No matter how good your song is, it's pointless without singing skills!

Live performance and leaderboard of the season are not the same concept!

Fei Yang decided that he would participate in this competition, regardless! This might be his only chance to get back at Xian Yu. Even if he won't end up as the champion, Fei Yang would still unleash his most terrifying strength to give his opponent a taste of his power!

Just at that moment.

Fei Yang came across a popular comment on the internet:

“Have you guys noticed a mysterious phenomenon?”

“What phenomenon?”

“Prince of Lanling sang Fei Yang's song and then secured the second place.”

“Holy crap! The power of being second is awesome!”

“Compared to Chen Zhiyu, King Fei outperforms his predecessor, while Prince of Lanling is just singing his songs and is destined to be second!”

“...”

Fei Yang: “Damn!”

He freaking placed second just because he sang my song.

This must be a coincidence!

You guys are not human, you’re truly dogs, I will now go and win the first season of The Masked Singer to show you guys!

Somewhere else.

Of course, Lin Yuan didn’t know that King Fei was furious, let alone plotting to outdo him....

The competition was put on hold for now.

In the following days, Lin Yuan started to focus on writing his novel.

He could write at home, in the studio, or even on the set of the Spiderman film.

The filming process was progressing quite fast.

This is a characteristic of superhero films.

The shooting isn’t complex, most of the movie scenes are actually shot in front of a green screen.

What really takes up the time is the post-production of the film.

However, that is the case on Earth.

The development of special effects technology for film in Blue Star is much more advanced than Earth, so the time for post-production special effects can be greatly shortened...

Of course.

As Lin Yuan was putting all his effort into writing his novel, he was making rapid progress, this was his first attempt at non-stop writing around the clock—

Swiftly and steadily!

One story after another from the Hercule Poirot Series came to life under Lin Yuan's pen.

This was also related to Lin Yuan's recovery.

Lin Yuan's current health was absolutely great.

In the past, he could write up to fifty thousand words a day, after which he would feel quite tired.

But now, he could write up to a hundred thousand words a day. Even if he didn't feel incredibly energetic afterwards, at least he wasn't in low spirits.

Moreover...

Being healthy brought Another benefit to Lin Yuan: he didn't need to keep a fixed sleep schedule any more.

In other words:

Lin Yuan experienced the joy of staying up all night writing.

However, Lin Yuan had good self-control, generally staying up until midnight, and then he would obediently go to sleep.

In System's words...

Even if one is healthy, they need to take care of themselves, if they overdo it, health problems may still emerge.

Under such circumstances, Lin Yuan definitely wouldn't dare to overdo it.

He knew better than anyone else how precious health is to mankind.

Just like that.

Time entered the month of March.

On that day, at nine forty in the evening.

Lin Yuan was about to finish writing "The Hercule Poirot Collection".

Next, he was going to write the final story of "The Hercule Poirot Collection".

This was Poirot's final case.

The name of the case was "Curtain".

Yes.

Hercule Poirot was about to greet the last case of his career.

However...

When Lin Yuan prepared to write, he hesitated.

This was the first time Lin Yuan hesitated.

He even felt somewhat uncomfortable.

In the past few days, while writing those previous cases, his hands moved quickly, his fingers on the keyboard were like phantoms.

But at this moment.

Lin Yuan's hand stalled in the air above the keyboard, as if someone had pressed the stop button.

It wasn't that he couldn't bear finishing "The Hercule Poirot Collection".

Lin Yuan, under the pseudonym "Chu Kuang," had ended too many classic stories, he'd never hesitated, and he'd never felt uncomfortable when writing the grand finale.

But...

This novel will be the first time Chu Kuang cruelly kills the male protagonist...

Yes.

Poirot, will die!

Chapter 506: Distributing razor blades

It's somewhat ironic.

This year, with the help of the system, Lin Yuan's body became incredibly healthy.

However, his Poirot, the endearing detective with the proud little mustache and gray brain cells, is now growing old.

When Poirot began to make waves in the detective world...

When Poirot gradually became a myth in the hearts of mystery readers...

When Poirot used his wisdom to punish evil criminals time and time again...

Who could have imagined!

What such a proud man would look like in his old age?

Who could have imagined!

Poirot in his last case of his life, embracing his own...

Death?

So, Lin Yuan hesitated.

He even wanted to petulantly change the ending and let Poirot officially retire, giving him a happy old age!

He didn't know if it was because his voice had healed or because of some other influence.

Lin Yuan felt that he was becoming increasingly sentimental.

He suddenly sighed lightly, as though a sigh would bring him relief.

His eyes flickered.

But finally, Lin Yuan gave up this capricious idea.

He didn't know what sort of struggle Agatha Christie had when she wrote 'Curtain'.

But in a certain sense, rather than letting the readers imagine the figure of the aging Poirot, perhaps death is the release.

People always deliberately evade some facts...

For example, people will die.

Indeed, anyone who is alive will die.

Even if Poirot is a 'god' in the eyes of some mystery fans, it is the same.

Although Poirot's death was not from natural aging or illness.

"Huh."

He let out a long breath.

Lin Yuan no longer hesitated and began to type the keyboard at a fast speed:[Doesn't everyone experience the same sort of dreamlike state when they re-experience feelings from the past, or revisit the same emotions from the past?]

Poirot invited Hastings back to the manor where they first collaborated on a case.

The manor has now been converted into a luxury hotel.

What surprised Hastings was that Poirot had become old and weak.

He could only sit in a wheelchair, and he had dismissed his many-year-old servant George...

Typing sounds.

It stopped at eleven thirty-two.

Lin Yuan looked at the document, and finally typed the three words "The End".

As he was about to close his laptop, Lin Yuan suddenly paused.

After Poirot, it should be a story about Holmes...

These two characters should have no connection in the background because the authors are not the same person at all.

But in Blue Star, these two works should both be written by Chu Kuang.

Therefore, why not let the two brightest characters in detective history have some connection?

This connection can be very shallow.

But the two should intersect at some moment.

This can also be regarded as an indirect new book teaser.

The readers will understand.

After Poirot, there is another man who will achieve outstanding success in the same field.

“Let’s just do this...”

Lin Yuan started typing on the keyboard, adding a few strokes.

It was at Poirot’s funeral.

After Hastings presented flowers and bowed, as he was preparing to leave, he noticed a mysterious man wearing a bowler hat, nodding his head in respect at Poirot’s tombstone.

...

The second day.

Lin Yuan directly sent the completed ‘Hercule Poirot Series’ to Jin Mu.

“You finished it?”

Jin Mu knew that Lin Yuan was planning to finish the ‘Hercule Poirot Series’ recently.

But when he received so many manuscripts, he was somewhat shocked. “How many words have you written these days?”

“I don’t know.”

“Your typing speed is really...”

Jin Mu sighed for a few moments, then said, “I’ve sent the novel over to Silver Blue Books for publishing. Now that the entire book is done, we should make a Poirot compilation.”

Lin Yuan had no objections.

That night.

Lin Yuan suddenly received a phone call.

The call came from Cao Dezhi, the Chief Editor of the Mystery Department at Silver Blue Books.

Normally, Cao Dezhi would contact Jin Mu, but this time, perhaps because it was urgent, he directly reached out to Chu Kuang.

Indeed, it was pretty urgent.

The voice on the other end of the phone couldn’t help but sound excited: “Mr. Chu Kuang, you can’t do this!”

For once, Lin Yuan comforted him: “Calm down.”

Cao Dezhi seemed to realize he was being overly emotional.

He swallowed, lowered his voice slightly: “I don’t mind you concluding the ‘Hercule Poirot Series’, even if you don’t write detective novels anymore, but why did you kill off Poirot, and in such a way ...”

Lin Yuan pondered and said: “This is Poirot’s life.”

Cao Dezhi opened his mouth, but eventually, he said nothing.

He stayed silent for a long time before asking, “So, the mysterious figure who appeared at the end of your story ...”

“Is the protagonist of my next book.”

“So you’re planning to continue writing mysteries?”

“Why wouldn’t I?”

“I understand.”

In the end, Cao Dezhi didn’t manage to persuade him.

Actually, Cao Dezhi was also aware that he probably wouldn’t be able to change Chu Kuang’s mind.

When had this person’s ideas ever been influenced by an editor?

Him making this call today was less out of his identity as an editor, and more as a reader.

Because he not only supervised the ‘Hercule Poirot Series’, but he himself was also a hardcore Poirot fan!

As a hardcore Poirot fan, it was hard for him to accept Poirot’s death, especially in such manner.

Although he understood that the ‘Hercule Poirot Series’ had already been long enough.

Poirot’s death didn’t mean a cliffhanger or unfinished story, but rather made Poirot’s character image clearer and easier for readers to remember.

“This old rascal, still handing out blades to readers even after it’s over ...”

Cao Dezhi grumbled in his mind, but he didn’t dare to say it out loud, even though Chu Kuang’s fans often call him that.

That night.

Silver Blue Books officially announced this shocking news:

“The classic detective masterpiece, ‘Hercule Poirot Series’ by Mr. Chu Kuang will officially conclude in three days!”

Boom!

As soon as the news came out, the mystery field was instantly shook!

Even the entire novel community was shaken up!

This is the treatment that the ‘Hercule Poirot Series’ deserves!

There were too many who adored this series!

Within the whole mystery field, this novel was undeniably a classic masterpiece!

And now, such a classic will be concluding.

For a while, everyone was discussing it!

However, the most affected by this news were the readers of the Poirot series ...

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

The comment section on the official announcement was immediately flooded with countless comments from readers, the vast majority of whom expressed a similar sentiment:

Reluctant to let go!

Many people had gotten used to following the Poirot series, it was the spiritual sustenance for many mystery fans.

But now, Chu Kuang was about to cut off their supply.

However, although the readers were regretful, they accepted the fact that this novel was about to come to an end.

It's not the first time that old rascal Chu Kuang has done this!

No matter how popular the novel, if the old rascal wanted to conclude it, he wouldn't be merciful.

Following the old rascal's novels, you should be prepared for this!

As long as the ending is satisfying for everyone, even if regret is there, they would have to accept it.

With this regret, everyone began to anticipate the official release of the novel in three days.

Then.

Three days had passed ...

The conclusion of the Poirot series was officially released!

Chapter 507:

March 3rd.

The major bookstores finally started stocking the “Hercule Poirot Series”.

As the book was officially released, Jin Mu, Lin Yuan’s agent, who had previewed much of Chu Kuang’s serialized content, remarked, “The benefits of being the boss’s agent is you get to read the updates earlier than the general reader...”

At this moment, he opened the last story of the Hercule Poirot Series.

This story was called “Curtain”.

Next to it was a bracket, “The Final Case”.

Jin Mu’s mood suddenly became complicated.

Even more so when he read the opening content of “Curtain”.

Poirot invited Hastings back to Styles Court—

The place where Poirot and Hastings first met.

Unlike his original vigour, this Poirot was now old and even confined to a wheelchair.

According to the timeline of the story, this was perfectly normal, people get old.

But as a reader, Jin Mu inevitably felt a bit sentimental...

With this sentiment.

Jin Mu continued reading.

Times change.

The estate where Poirot and his assistant first met was now converted into a high-end hotel.

There were a variety of people living in the hotel.

This was a classic opening to a Poirot story—

Arranging a group of people in a fixed space from which Poirot needs to find the murderer, Poirot never misses!

Indeed.

Meeting the assistant Hastings, Poirot took out a stack of clippings reporting on five murders.

Poirot stated:

“There is some connection among these people staying in the hotel and the people involved in the previous murder cases.”

Classic start!

Familiar to the point of intimacy, the following part should also be a classic Poirot-style investigation, right.

This is so Poirot!

Thinking so, Jin Mu felt an expectation which took form as a smile on his face.

But the subsequent development of the story left Jin Mu stunned.

A victim with a suspicious cause of death showed up.

It was clear to discerning eyes that the victim was murdered, but Poirot insisted it was suicide!

This even led to a dispute between Poirot and Hastings.

“Why?”

All familiarity was gone.

Jin Mu suddenly felt suffocated.

Poirot was acting a bit off, to the point it didn't seem like him.

Could it be because Poirot had gotten old and his mind was not able to keep up?

Jin Mu gritted his teeth.

This story was a bit heavy.

But at this point, the following description made Jin Mu shiver, as if he had taken an unexpected hard blow!

Poirot was dead!

Just as the cases were still shrouded in mystery, Poirot suddenly—

Died!!

Heart attack!!!

At this moment, Jin Mu's hand holding the book trembled, and he instinctively yelled out:

“Impossible!”

The final case had only just begun and it was still unsolved, and Poirot died?

What kind of bizarre development was this!?

The author actually killed off the main character!!

Feeling numb and rigid, Jin Mu began breathing heavily. He got up and paced for a long while, striving to suppress his emotions—

It's over!

Jin Mu was clearly aware what it meant to the readers that the boss had killed off Poirot, the super popular main character!

Shock!

The more Poirot fans there were, the more terrifying this shock would be. No one would be indifferent to Poirot's death!

Even he finds it hard to accept Poirot's death at this moment!

But Poirot is indeed dead —

No narrative trickery involved, the story straightforwardly tells all readers that Poirot has died.

His body is icy cold!

Even the funeral was held!

Grief swept over Jin Mu in an instant. Not only was he Poirot's agent, but he was also a fan of Poirot.

He can only force himself to continue reading.

He wants to know if the story will take a new turn —

Indeed, there is a new development.

Poirot's death may have been a homicide.

Because Hastings realized that Poirot's heart disease medication bottle had gone missing.

A heartbroken Hastings decides to find out the truth.

The atmosphere is oppressively stifling.

It used to always be Poirot seeking the truth.

But this time, Poirot himself has become the victim.

And Hastings, as Poirot's assistant, has to find the truth himself.

In the end.

Hastings was unsuccessful.

The one who solved the case was still Poirot himself!

Undeniably, Poirot is dead; this fact cannot be changed. But he left Hastings a will.

This will revealed all the truth:

It turns out Poirot had found out who the real killer was a long time ago.

But this killer was unique, he never killed anyone himself, instead, he manipulated others' psychological weaknesses and subtly induced them to commit murder.

These crimes were conceived and orchestrated by him.

Yet, he always managed to stay outside the circle of suspicion —

Or rather, he could keep himself out of the circle of suspicion.

The innkeeper, because of a story this man told about a gun accidentally going off, intentionally made it look like a hunting rifle went off accidentally and shot his domineering wife; he just didn't hit her vitals because he went soft at the last moment.

It was again this man who induced Mrs. Franklin to murder her husband for her own convenience to remarry.

However, because the table was rotated, Mrs. Franklin unwittingly drank the poison coffee. To prevent the innocent Mr. Franklin and Hastings's daughter Judith from being suspected, Poirot declared the woman had committed suicide...

Yes.

The reason why Poirot argued with Hastings was simply because he wanted to protect his good friend's daughter.

Then ...

This man led Hastings to misunderstand that his daughter had been seduced by a rogue, which almost led Hastings to kill the rogue!

Luckily, Poirot discovered it in time and drugged Hastings to make him sleep early so he couldn't carry out his plan.

Poirot was furious.

His upright and kind friend was taken advantage of by the killer's psychological tricks, and almost became a murderer himself!

Poirot felt he can no longer tolerate it!

Unable to bring the killer to justice through legal means, Poirot made a dreadful decision!

He decided to eliminate the real villain himself —

Norton!

After killing Norton, Poirot hid his own heart disease medicine and let himself die from the outbreak of his illness.

He was prepared to accept divine judgement.

Yes, Poirot chose suicide after killing the killer; he killed the killer at the price of becoming one himself.

There was a feeling of suffocation in Jin Mu's heart.

And when he saw Poirot's last message to his assistant, his chest felt even more congested:

"Hastings, I'm not sure if what I've done is right or wrong. I am confused. I do not believe that a person should hold the law in his own hands... But on the other hand, I am the law. Do remember, many years ago, while I was still a policeman, I once shot a desperate criminal who was shooting at

people from the roof. A state of emergency was about to be declared then. By taking away Norton's life, I have saved other lives — the lives of innocents.

But still, I really don't know...

Maybe it's better that I don't know, I'm always so certain — overconfident even... But now, I feel very inferior. I can only say to you like a child, 'I don't know...' Goodbye, dear friend. I have removed the bottle of amyl nitrite from beside my bed. I would rather leave myself in the hands of God. He might punish, he might forgive, I wish it would come soon! We will not be together to punish criminals anymore. Our first case was here, and the last is here as well... Those were good times. Yes, those were always my best times..."

plop.

Tears fell.

Unbeknownst to him, Jin Mu's tears have overflowed.

Chapter 508: Riot

Jin Mu was not the only reader who shed tears over the tragic death of Poirot.

As everyone joyfully bought the latest "Poirot Case Collection", more and more readers gradually came to the ending.

In fact.

When the first batch of readers confronted Poirot's unexpected death in the closing section, they all had similar reactions—

Their suffering simply came a little later than Jin Mu's.

But the intensity of their feelings was no less intense.

It was as if their hearts were suddenly clutched by an invisible hand.

Anguish and sorrow, ushered in by Poirot's death, stormed into their hearts.

As if a horde of horses were galloping in their chests!

The mental state of countless people shattered in that instant—

The old rascal Chu Kuang is at it again!

It's hard to pinpoint exactly when it all started.

The sadness and emotional catharsis brought about by Poirot's death suddenly swept the Internet—

Forums!

Tribes!

Blogs!

With the publication of the grand finale of the "Poirot Case Collection," the anticipated uprising of countless readers took place!

"Aargh, die, old rascal Chu Kuang! You actually killed my beloved Poirot!"

"Why did you have to write Poirot's death?"

"I won't accept this ending!!!"

"I sneakily read the big finale in class and bawled my eyes out, even the teacher came to comfort me!"

"A petition signed in blood by ten thousand people, will you change the ending!"

“Poirot didn’t die!”

“You Chu Kuang, only a novelist, what do you understand about Poirot!”

“Chu Kuang the unrepentant old rascal, I will smash your windows tonight!”

“The rascal never changes!!!”

“I’ve been anticipating the big finale for ten thousand years, and you’re feeding me razor blades?”

“Is it that whoever we readers like, you have to kill off!?”

“Chu Kuang, I’m going to fight you!”

“This old rascal is too despicable. Back then, he wrote about Biyao’s death, and I just managed to calm myself down, now he’s killed off my beloved Poirot again. Does he think our hearts are made of iron?”

“...”

Chu Kuang’s tribe comment section fell in a very short time, attracting all sorts of readers here.

The ones who curse.

The ones who cry.

The ones who are angry.

The ones who are wounded.

An array of emotions united into an ocean, filling the comment section to the brim, all venting without restraint.

The readers have gone insane!

At three in the afternoon, #Poirot's Death# topped the hot search.

By five in the evening, #Poirot'sDeath# had become the number one hot topic in the tribe.

In addition.

Four of the top ten hot searches on the Tribe were also related to Poirot.

Meanwhile.

The number one hot search term on the blog section was shockingly “Die, old rascal Chu Kuang”!

The readers' resentment was boiling over!

And a lot of readers who hadn't seen the finale yet were dumbfounded by this sudden spoiler—

“What a joke, Poirot is dead?”

“How could Poirot die!”

“It's impossible for Poirot to die!”

“I don't dare to keep reading, Chu Kuang the old rascal is so hateful!”

“I can no longer control my razor blades from flying out!”

“I can accept spoilers, but I can't accept Poirot's death!”

“...”

Silver Blue Books.

Mystery Department.

Cao Dezhi sat in front of the computer with a bitter smile.

From the doorway, urgent voices rang out sporadically—

“Chief Editor, the department’s phone lines are about to be blown up by readers!”

“Chief Editor, a reader just spent ten minutes insulting me on the phone, how is that my fault?!”

“Chief Editor, I can’t answer all the calls, they’re all demanding Chu Kuang to change the ending.”

“Editor in chief, perhaps we might consult with Teacher Chu Kuang...”

“Editor in chief, the readers are demanding refunds and calling our office, but this is a matter for the bookstore...”

“Editor in chief...”

Cao Dezhi slammed his office door closed with a bang.

Stop calling me!

Does it help to call me?

What the hell is going on?

Just then.

Cao Dezhi's mobile rang.

After answering the call, a familiar voice emerged from the other end of the line; it was Ol' Xiong from the Fantasy Department: "Things must be crazier on your end, huh..."

"You're here to laugh at my misfortune, too!"

Cao Dezhi's mood was emotional and unstable.

Ol' Xiong sighed, "I ain't here to enjoy the spectacle, just to remind you this ain't the first time our department has gone through this."

Cao Dezhi was silent for a moment.

Ol' Xiong helplessly continued, "This isn't the first time Chu Kuang has tormented his readers. His 'Zhu Xian' was so popular, but it plunged when he ruthlessly killed off Biyao. It affected sales for several months, so count yourself lucky that he chose to play this last card in the grand finale."

"And how did it all end up, eventually?"

Cao Dezhi had heard of the incident before.

Ol' Xiong sneered, "What can you do but ignore it, let the readers vent, they'll eventually accept it. Since when has Chu Kuang heeded our opinions? Besides, I think the ending is not necessarily a bad one."

Cao Dezhi: "..."

I wish the readers saw it your way.

To be honest, Cao Dezhi didn't think there was anything wrong with the ending.

But...

Emotionally, it was hard to accept.

Some readers even claimed Chu Kuang killed Poirot himself!

Well then.

That theory holds water.

Also.

Regarding the finale, where Poirot turns into a criminal to fight crime, the plot has stirred up innumerable debates. Most of the anger toward the ending stems from this:

“How could Poirot be so extreme!”

“Chu Kuang’s plot twist is simply too cruel!”

“I’d rather see Poirot die of natural causes, instead of dying in such a tragic way. He went against the very law he spent his whole life protecting.”

“How could this be...”

“Why did it have to be this way...”

“I can’t believe that Poirot would have no alternative to the killer, damn it, I’ve run out of tissues. This is the first time I’ve cried so much over a fictional character.”

“...”

While the readers were all in uproar.

Leng Guang, who had once initiated a Literary Duel against Chu Kuang and was defeated by the sharp counterattack of “Murder on the Orient Express”, had suddenly posted three intermittent statuses.

First: “Chu Kuang broke the rule that a detective must not be a criminal!”

Twenty minutes later.

Second: “Having read the ending again, it’s not without understanding.”

An hour later.

Third: “This is the best ending for Poirot.”

From initial criticism to reconciliation, Leng Guang seemed to have undergone a complex psychological struggle. In the end, he too conceded to the finale of “Collection of Poirot’s Investigations”.

What the hell!

The netizens were all dumbfounded.

What’s this all about?

Chu Kuang killed Poirot off and made him a killer, breaking your own rules...

And yet you say the ending was good?

Aren’t you notorious for your bad takes, Leng Guang?

Don’t you hate it when people write like this?

Didn’t expect you, with your smug face, to betray us?

Non-stop notification alerts!

Angry netizens began to confront Leng Guang, among them, the comment with the most likes was:

“You’ve been sweet-talked by Chu Kuang!”

Unexpectedly, Leng Guang responded to this comment:

“With Poirot’s ability, he could have made Norton’s death look like a perfect crime. But he didn’t. Poirot was forced to make a tough choice: either forsake his cherished friend and many innocent lives in the future, and let this evil man continue to break the law; or lift his gun of righteousness against his own principles. As for those who say Poirot could never do such a thing, I suggest you reread ‘Murder on the Orient Express’ and observe Poirot’s choice then!”

The netizens were stunned.

Shortly after, it was as if they woke up from a dream!

Chapter 509: The Pit Was Dug Long Ago

Yes, everyone has come to this realization!

Among the cases Poirot solved, the most famous, and the one that readers enjoyed the most—

is “Murder on the Orient Express”!

In “Murder on the Orient Express”, Poirot chose to let the murderer go.

Because the law could not punish the murderer who was beyond its reach, a group of people took up the butcher’s knife and killed the murderer using a stunning collective crime methodology.

Fight violence with violence!

After uncovering the truth, Poirot hesitated for a long time and eventually decided not to turn this group in.

Poirot's handling of the case at the time caused controversy.

However, in "Curtain", there is another murderer who can't be punished by law.

This murderer exploited other people's psychological weaknesses to instigate them to kill, while he stood far away, watching.

A real outlaw!

He even incited Poirot's good friend Hastings to kill!

If it wasn't for Poirot's perception, Hastings would've become a murderer.

If Poirot can't control the other party, they will continue to go crazy.

Under such circumstances, Poirot made the same choice as the murderers in "Murder on the Orient Express"—

Fight violence with violence!

Be it right or wrong.

This act, at least, didn't violate Poirot's characterization. Instead, it made Poirot's character more solid!

Indeed.

He could forgive those people because he, too, would make the same extreme choice in the darkest hours!

However, the difference is that...

Poirot could pardon others for fighting violence with violence to punish murders, but he could never forgive himself for using the same method.

So after he killed the murderer, he committed suicide.

He countered the murderer, sharing the same fate!

And this is exactly the greatness of Poirot!

After realizing this.

Many people were silent.

The torrent of abuse aimed at Chu Kuang quieted down all of a sudden.

Due to the story mentioned, many people's grievances were no longer valid.

Surprisingly.

It turns out that Chu Kuang had hinted at this in "Murder on the Orient Express". He had been setting the trap all along.

The difference is, after fighting violence with violence, that group still wanted to live on.

But Poirot chose death as his redemption.

He felt guilty for himself.

He broke the principle he had adhered to all his life.

When he made this decision, he negated what he had adhered to most in his detective career.

But that's Poirot!

The depth of this arrangement can shake people's hearts!

These seemingly unrelated stories actually formed a complete chain of thought due to two choices that had the same effect—

It all adds up!

And when making these two choices, Poirot was repeating four words.

“I don't know...”

He didn't know how to deal with others, nor did he know whether his choice was correct.

No case could stump Poirot.

Only the contradictions of human nature could.

Can you accept this ending now?

The readers didn't even know.

But the criticism was certainly quieter.

The readers' rebellion gradually simmered down due to Leng Guang's mention of “Murder on the Orient Express”.

At that moment.

Someone suddenly said: “I don’t support Poirot’s approach, but it doesn’t stop me from continuing to love him. He will always be the king of detectives in my heart.”

Like a chain reaction.

More and more readers expressed their agreement:

“In Poirot’s own words in the book, perhaps this is his retribution. As the long-anticipated gun was raised when the law lost its meaning, Poirot, representing his concept of justice, fired.”

“I love him even more.”

“But this ending is indeed too cruel for Poirot. He has been pursuing the truth all his life, but ultimately, he is pursuing legal justice, only to exit the stage in the most tragic way.”

“He was already in his old age, still so wise, but his body could no longer support him.”

“It is people like Poirot who keep us standing under the Sunlight at all times.”

“I really love Poirot!”

“...”

There might still be controversy.

But compared to the readers’ violent rebellion, everyone seems to have calmed down and accept Poirot’s choice.

They also came to accept the ending.

It’s worth mentioning that when Agatha wrote “curtain”, she had already passed away, so there was no case of readers jumping up and down.

But...

As the readers jokingly put it, “dead crimes can be forgiven, crimes committed alive cannot”.

No matter how Chu Kuang handled the ending, he can’t change the fact that he sprung a surprise on the readers in the grand finale.

“This old rascal is too vicious!”

“He totally played us.”

“I bet he is feeling smug right now. Look, in ‘Murder on the Orient Express’, he had already hinted at Poirot’s fate, that Poirot was bound to receive his own redemption.”

“I hate the old rascal!”

“Press him down the next time he tries to put a knife in!”

“Damn, this has become a meme now. Every time when creators attempt to give out daggers in film and television series you’d see comments saying, ‘Quick, hold Chu Kuang’s hand!’”

“...”

That too is a fact.

Right now, in the readers’ eyes, Chu Kuang’s image somewhat resembles that of the Earth’s Urobuchi.

Urobuch refers to the Japanese playwright and novelist, Urobuchi Gen.

Because his stories are all relatively serious and have a strong logical editing ability, people are provoked to think critically after reading his works, thus he is highly evaluated by the readers.

However, this is indeed a double-edged sword.

While Urobuchi's work is exciting, his work is fundamentally dark. He is not comfortable unless he's serving pains to his readers, which always keeps them on edge. You never know when your favorite character will die..

Isn't that also the case with Chu Kuang?

The readers never imagined that Poirot would die in the end of "Poirot Detective Collection"!

How could he?!

How dare he?!

Poirot's popularity among mystery fans is top tier. Normal authors wouldn't dare to play with such risks.

Only Chu Kuang dares to!

This not only tired out the readers but also left many authors and editors speechless—

"This is terrifying."

"The title of 'old rascal' fits him well."

"I thought him writing Biyao's death was his limit, I never thought he would dare to write Poirot's death."

"Biyao was not the protagonist after all. So her death was passable, but I didn't expect him even to harm the protagonist!"

"The key is, Biyao's popularity was not high before her death, Poirot's popularity was at its peak when he died!"

“Chu Kuang is truly wild and arrogant. He is indeed the man who single-handedly took on nine people!”

“This is so savage!”

“Most authors these days are careful and aim to please the reader, only Chu Kuang is messing with readers’ nerves constantly.”

Someone concluded:

There have been two readers’ uproars in the novel circle. The first one was because of Chu Kuang, and so was the second one.

Chapter 510: Out with the Old, In with the New

“Finally, it has calmed down.”

When departmental phone calls ceased and the constant clamor of his subordinate editors finally quieted, Cao Dezhi could finally breathe a sigh of relief.

He thought for a moment, flipping through the pages of the “Poirot Case Collection” next to him and focused on the last paragraph.

[Hastings suddenly spotted a man.

The man must have been over one meter eighty, holding a bowler hat in his left hand and bowing to Poirot’s grave.

Hastings had never seen this man before and couldn’t help but approach him.

“May I ask who you are...?”

The man had a slicked-back hairstyle, a defined face like a polished diamond, and a thick and long eagle hook nose made him look especially alert and resolute. Hastings, for some reason, found something eerily familiar about him.

“Sherlock Holmes.”

The man took off his bowler hat and introduced himself.

“You’re a friend of Mr. Poirot?”

“Merely a mourner who has heard many of his tales and traveled from afar to pay his respects,” the man named Holmes replied.

As the man turned to leave, Hastings, staring at his retreating figure, finally understood where his sense of familiarity came from—

His eyes, they resemble Poirot’s.]]

This was the final scene of the “Poirot Case Collection” written by Chu Kuang.

Cao Dezhi had confirmed with Chu Kuang that this would be the protagonist of Chu Kuang’s upcoming mystery novel.

This excited Cao Dezhi. Poirot’s death was undeniably distressing, but the fact that Chu Kuang was still willing to write detective stories was great news to him as the editor-in-chief of Silver Blue mysteries.

“But the information is too sparse. There is only a physical description and the character’s name to go on.”

Cao Dezhi mused.

Not just Cao Dezhi, many others also took note of this paragraph.

On the internet.

As everyone began to accept Poirot's death, many gradually shifted their attention to the new character that appeared at the end of the story, sparking many speculations –

Obviously –

Poirot's death shook everyone, so initially, all discussions were focused on Poirot.

No one mentioned this new character.

Furthermore, even though this person appeared at the end of the "Poirot Case Collection", his description was extremely brief.

It was only when everyone began to calm down that they noticed the exceptionality therein.

"Why would such a character suddenly appear at the end?"

"Does this man have no connection to Poirot?"

"What about Hastings's feelings? It must be noted that the narrative suddenly shifts from Hastings's first-person perspective to a third-person perspective, stating in the original language that this Sherlock's eyes resemble Poirot's."

"Could Chu Kuang be implying that Poirot isn't dead?"

"If that's the case, though it's just a hint, I have to say that the old rascal does have moments of conscience."

"Wait a minute."

"I thought of a larger possibility. Could this man be the protagonist of Chu Kuang's next novel?"

"No way."

“Like a sequel to the ‘Poirot Case Collection,’ Chu Kuang wants to replace Poirot with a new protagonist?”

“Impossible.”

“I only accept Poirot, not others. Nobody can replace Poirot.”

“Same here.”

“My heart has already died with Poirot. Chu Kuang, don’t even think about replacing Poirot with a new character.”

“...”

There were small-scale discussions on the internet about this issue.

Because the signs weren’t clear, many people couldn’t guess what the appearance of this man named Holmes signified. Everyone vaguely felt that there was more to come from this story.

Because in terms of character directions, it made no sense.

Unless, for some reasons, this appearance would become meaningful, but what could be behind that?

...

The same question was also asked by Jin Mu: “Who is this Sherlock?”

“The protagonist of the next book.”

Lin Yuan didn’t hide anything, he had told Cao Dezhi earlier.

Jin Mu was taken aback, then asked with a frown. “You plan to write another detective protagonist like Poirot?”

“You’re only half right.”

Lin Yuan said, “Sherlock and Poirot are both detectives, but their personalities, methods of solving cases, and many other aspects are vastly different. The only thing they share is their relentless pursuit of the truth.”

“I see.”

Jin Mu smiled bitterly. “So you didn’t actually tire of writing Poirot’s story, prompting you to end it abruptly?”

“No.”

The story was, in fact, finished.

Moreover, Lin Yuan knew that Poirot’s death would cause a major upheaval among his readers.

But clearly, Lin Yuan had underestimated the scale of this uproar, as well as the depth of people’s feelings for Poirot.

It’s good that people still have their sensibilities.

After comparing with the previous text, everyone accepted Poirot’s death.

Because Poirot was getting old anyway.

For a heroic figure like him, it’s hard to imagine him growing frail. Letting him live forever in the readers’ hearts in this way wasn’t too bad.

“As long as it’s not that.”

Jin Mu said with relief, “Take it easy in the future. Don’t throw curveballs out of nowhere. After finishing the novel, even I wanted to smash the windows of your house.”

“Antarctica is on guard.”

Lin Yuan seemed to think carefully for a moment and then gave a very sincere answer.

Jin Mu, “...”

Of course, he knew that Lin Yuan had a pet dog, Antarctica, who had acted in the movie ‘Hachi: A Dog’s Tale.’

The dog was a real movie star.

He didn’t dwell on this topic with Lin Yuan, instead changing the subject:

“The protagonist of your next detective novel won’t end up dead too, right?”

Lin Yuan was silent for a few seconds before answering, “No.”

In fact, in the story, Holmes was indeed written as dead at one point, but ultimately, he was resurrected.

Jin Mu took a step back instinctively: “Boss, were you serious just now when you hesitated?”

“And were you serious just now when you took half a step back?”

“You can’t do this, I’m sincerely and solemnly advising you to be kind-hearted!”

“...”

Being resurrected doesn’t count as dying.

Jin Mu sighed, “Anyway, you judge for yourself. But with the readers, everyone needs comfort and reassurance. Why not say something?”

“Sure.”

Lin Yuan also felt that the readers needed some comfort.

He logged onto Chu Kuang’s Tribe account, confirmed it was the right one, and posted a message:

“New book announcement, it’s still a mystery novel, ‘Great Detective Holmes’.”

The news that he was going to publish a new book could probably make the readers happy—

Lin Yuan could distinctly feel that whenever he announced a new book, the readers’ mood would improve.

This was the best consolation he could think of.

He surely couldn’t claim to be a “warrior of love” like Urobuchi did, stating that his “creative purpose is to bring warm, healing stories to everyone,” right?

But then.

After Lin Yuan posted the message, Jin Mu suddenly looked alarmed: “Boss, how could you do this? Do you realize what your actions are implying?”

“Implying what?”

“It’s provocation.”

The Prince of Lanling being so hated wasn’t without reason!

You wrote off Poirot and then immediately sought to replace him in the readers' hearts with a new character?

Are you implying that without the old, the new will not come in?

Will the readers accept it!?