

## All R. Artist 781

### Chapter 781: Master's Touch

In the following days, Lin Yuan had spent countless efforts and finally completed the painting with the artistic conception of Xu Beihong, "Gallop"! It was now noon. After having lunch at home, Lin Yuan took the painting and headed for the company. Not in a hurry to give the painting to the chairman, Lin Yuan spread the painting out by the window of his office for one more admiration, then nodded in satisfaction. With Lin Yuan's current level, there weren't many paintings that could satisfy him. Yesterday he was also in a good state. If Lin Yuan were to paint "Gallop" again today, it probably wouldn't be as stunning as this one. Even Xu Beihong himself, after so many paintings of horses, could not guarantee that each one would be of the same caliber. For a moment, Lin Yuan was somewhat reluctant to give this painting away. While Lin Yuan was narcissistically admiring "Gallop," suddenly there came some noises from the doorway. "Little Fish..." It turned out to be Zheng Jing. Among those Lin Yuan knew, only Zheng Jing would call him "Little Fish." "Aunt Zheng," Lin Yuan turned around and greeted her; the two seniors he respected the most in the company were Yang Zhongming and Zheng Jing. "Black tea." Zheng Jing said to Gu Dong, who was standing by, then looked towards Lin Yuan: "I came to tell you something about the twelve consecutive championships." "Hm." "This morning, Teacher Yang Zhongming told me that Lu Sheng is releasing a song in November. You should be careful not to let him break your streak." Zheng Jing's expression was very serious. Lin Yuan was stunned. Lu Sheng? That was one of Blue Star's top-ranking Maestros. In the eyes of some netizens, Lu Sheng's level was even higher than Yang Zhongming's, though Lin Yuan felt that this statement was a bit unreliable. Lu Sheng was likely still not as good as Yang Zhongming. He had asked the System about it. The System had vaguely revealed this idea as well. However, it was undeniable that Lu Sheng was a very powerful Maestro, and his plan to release a song in November certainly warranted his attention. "I got it." Lin Yuan understood the purpose of Zheng Jing's reminder; she wanted him to be mentally prepared: "Thank you, Aunt Zheng." "I thought you'd panic, but you seem not to worry at all," Zheng Jing said with a smile as she looked at Lin Yuan. "It's okay." Lin Yuan was fully prepared to face all sorts of opponents since he aspired to achieve twelve consecutive championships. After all, Lu Sheng wouldn't release his song until November. It's only August now. He still had two months to prepare. "The enemy intelligence I've gathered isn't just this. Otherwise, I wouldn't have specifically come over. There's another thing that you should pay attention to. Lu Sheng's new song in November will be a classical-style song, just like 'Dong Feng Po'." Zheng Jing seemed to be well-informed. Yet, Lin Yuan felt a slight stir in his heart. Like "Dong Feng Po"? Isn't that a Chinese-style song? "Classical style, 'three old and three new,' that's the unique classical style created by 'Dong Feng Po.' Lu Sheng's work in November must have learned from your song's creative technique, which I don't doubt. That guy has a strong ability to learn; he can even master almost all of Teacher Yang Zhongming's creative techniques..." Zheng Jing's voice seemed to hold a hint of emotion. "Teacher Yang Zhongming?" "You might not know, but before Lu Sheng became famous, he actually studied music with Ol' Yang for a while. He's kind of like Yang's half-apprentice. But this isn't known to the public, and you don't have to spread it around." Lin Yuan was taken aback for a moment, then nodded. He hadn't expected Lu Sheng to have such a connection with Yang Zhongming. Coincidentally, he also considered himself half a disciple of Teacher Yang Zhongming. He still used Yang Zhongming's character card to learn some musical knowledge to this day. "You should be

aware that the greatest challenge for the twelve consecutive championships is the Battle of the Gods at the end of the year. But if you lose to Lu Sheng in November, winning the Battle of the Gods won't mean anything, because the streak for the championships will have been broken." Zheng Jing really hoped Lin Yuan would succeed: "Compared to that, September and October should be easy for you. There probably won't be any strong musicians challenging you these two months. After all, you've already won for eight consecutive months, and there's no great benefit to competing against you anymore. It would only result in a bad reputation. Besides, many people know that Lu Sheng will make his move in November." Lin Yuan understood. This was rather good news. If there were no significant opponents in September and October, his pressure would be lighter. Although his repertoire was filled with classics, Lin Yuan couldn't guarantee a win every time. Now it seemed, his focus should be on November and December. Let's not talk about December's Battle of the Gods. He must first overcome the challenge posed by Lu Sheng. If the opponent was composing a Chinese-style song, he should counter with a song of the same genre. At this moment, Lin Yuan already had an idea of what song to release in November. "It seems you already have a rough idea." Zheng Jing took a sip of the tea prepared by Gu Dong, relaxing her demeanor: "You shouldn't stress too much, just handle Lu Sheng well in November. December will be the toughest time. The Zhong Continent might take action then, to be precise, someone from the Zhong Continent team will definitely make a move. There are many prodigies over there, some of whom even Ol' Yang would have to face with all his might." "Hm." The Battle of the Gods would undoubtedly be hellishly difficult. But Lin Yuan also had a plan for what to release in December. If he lost in December, Lin Yuan would accept his defeat. He had already prepared ample ammunition for that month. "I've delivered the message, so I'll be heading back now," Zheng Jing took another sip of tea, then stood up to take her leave. Lin Yuan nodded his head. Zheng Jing waved her hand, preparing to turn around and leave, but at the moment she turned, her footsteps suddenly halted. The next moment, she looked towards the window and let out a surprised shriek of delight! It was a shriek filled with a girlish tone, a subtle feeling, even with a hint of coquettishness, as if a girl in love had just seen her heartthrob! Her whole demeanor shone with excitement! Lin Yuan followed Zheng Jing's gaze only to realize that what made Zheng Jing scream was the painting of "Gallopng Horses" he had just spread out by the window. Zheng Jing's visit was so sudden. Lin Yuan had forgotten to put the painting away. Whoosh. Zheng Jing rushed over and stopped in front of "Gallopng Horses", staring fixedly at the painting, her eyes filled with unbounded desire! "Where did this painting come from?" Zheng Jing turned her head, and the intensity in her eyes gave Lin Yuan a start. "I have a friend..." Lin Yuan coughed, and his tone became smoother, "A friend of mine painted it." "Was it painted by Shadow!?" The painting had no signature or date, yet Zheng Jing guessed half the truth. Lin Yuan felt increasingly nervous, but upon further thought, it seemed normal. His only well-known friend with impressive painting skills was Shadow. "Yes." With that realization, Lin Yuan admitted it. Staring at the "Gallopng Horses", Zheng Jing was profoundly shocked; she had never expected such a piece to come from the hands of a comic artist. Indeed. Because of Xian Yu, Zheng Jing was aware of Shadow, but she didn't know much, only that he was a fairly skilled comic artist. She had never imagined that this comic artist could have such mastery in traditional Chinese painting. Meanwhile. Gu Dong leaned in close to Lin Yuan and whispered, "Teacher Zheng Jing is a painting fanatic. Her passion for painting even surpasses her love for music..." Lin Yuan understood. Reminded by Gu Dong, he remembered hearing rumors within the company. It was even said in the industry that Zheng Jing loved painting profoundly. If it weren't for her limited talent in painting, she might have already been deeply rooted in the art world, working hard, instead of achieving today's success in the music scene. Even so, Zheng Jing was still madly in love with

painting. She had even held her own personal painting exhibition, but unfortunately, due to her average talent, her artwork hadn't caused much of a stir. "Little Fish..." Zheng Jing didn't hear Gu Dong's mutterings; she was completely captivated by the "Gallop of Horses"! After examining the painting closely for quite some time, Zheng Jing was extremely careful, even with her breathing! Her gaze never shifted, but her voice rose with a touch of longing and nervousness, "Aunt Zheng wonders if I might ask you for a favor?" For someone like Zheng Jing to say the word "ask" was truly not easy. Lin Yuan was no fool. He had a vague idea of what Zheng Jing was about to say next, "Aunt Zheng likes this painting?" "Love at first sight!" Zheng Jing answered without hesitation. Lin Yuan smiled, "Then it's yours." Although he had intended to give the painting to the chairman, seeing how much Aunt Zheng loved it, Lin Yuan chose to do a good deed. After all, this elder had always taken good care of him. As for the chairman, if he was in good form another day, he could just paint another one for him since Lin Yuan's painting skill was well established. "For me!?" Zheng Jing finally moved her gaze away from the painting, a motion that seemed particularly difficult for her, but she turned to Lin Yuan with an earnest expression, "Do you know the value of this painting?" "Roughly." "Alright, it's settled then!" Zheng Jing, as if afraid Lin Yuan might go back on his word, confirmed it immediately, then felt a bit embarrassed. She seemed to have lost her composure. "Aunt Zheng won't take advantage of you for nothing, you can name a price." "If it's a gift, naturally I can't take money for it." Lin Yuan liked money, but once he said he would give it away, he wouldn't go back on his word. "If you put it that way, I would seem mercenary to haggle, Aunt Zheng owes you a favor. If you ever need anything, just ask," Zheng Jing took a deep breath, "Shadow's skill in traditional Chinese painting is truly incredible." In the midst of speaking, Zheng Jing carefully packed up the painting, treating it like a treasure, as if worrying that any exertion might wrinkle the artwork. Lin Yuan smiled. He was pleased to hear others praise his painting. "Oh, by the way," Zheng Jing suddenly said, "Would Shadow mind if I took this painting..." "Since it's a gift to Aunt Zheng, naturally you can do as you wish with it." "Good boy, this is a big favor Aunt Zheng owes you. Rest assured, I will treasure this painting like a jewel. I won't waste the effort of a master level artist!" Lin Yuan: "...". He felt almost bashful from all the compliments.

## Chapter 782 Exhibition (Part 1)

In Qin Continent, August is the hottest month of the year, when the sun spews tongues of flame, searing the earth. Even Antarctica, who usually loves the bustle, seems to have lost the desire to go out and play, choosing instead to stay quietly in an air-conditioned room most of the time. On this day, Lin Yuan stayed at home playing with Antarctica when his cellphone suddenly rang. It was a call from Jin Mu. "It's Saturday today, does the boss want to see an art exhibition?" "Art exhibition?" "A Butterfly's Love for a Flower is being displayed at this exhibition..." "No, I won't go." Lin Yuan firmly rejected the offer. In such scorching weather, Lin Yuan had no desire whatsoever to go out, not to mention that A Butterfly's Love for a Flower was not a work he was particularly proud of. Jin Mu didn't insist any further. Just because Lin Yuan didn't want to go out didn't mean others felt the same; people are often driven by some motivation or force. At that moment. In an art center in Su City. A medium-sized art exhibit was taking place. In Blue Star, a place with a rich artistic atmosphere, visiting art exhibitions is a reason some people choose to go out on a Saturday, even if they inevitably arrive at the venue sweating profusely after walking a few hundred meters because cars can't get through. A promotional board was displayed at the entrance of the exhibition. The board listed information about the painters whose works were on exhibit. This was a medium-sized traditional painting exhibition. Most of the exhibiting painters were moderately famous within the circle, known to traditional painting enthusiasts but not yet among the top tier.

"Yulian's works are on display." "Ren Feifei is here, too." "Yuan Liu's work as well, I saw it last year at a high-end exhibition—very impressive skill level." "I'm familiar with Shi Xiang, a promising figure in the traditional painting community. I came today just for him." "This exhibition has a decent scale." "There aren't any top-name masters, but none of the participating painters are obscure." "Especially Yulian, who won a big prize last year and received accolades from many top artists." "... The crowd around the promotional board exchanged thoughts. At that moment. Suddenly, one of the onlookers exclaimed with surprise, "Shadow's work is also on display?" Everyone was startled. Soon enough, they indeed found Shadow on the promotional board. And in a moment. There was a buzz among the crowd. "Isn't Shadow a comic artist?" "A comic artist can participate in this kind of formal traditional painting exhibition?" "Why would the organizers put works from a commercial comic artist in here?" "That's interesting; as far as I know, Shadow's painting skill is actually quite remarkable." "I didn't expect Shadow to be part of this traditional painting exhibition. I happened to see some illustrations Shadow did for Chu Kuang Novelist's stories, and the person's foundational skills are truly solid, with a very lavish style. It makes sense for them to do traditional painting." "What's the meaning of this?" "Having a nice appearance and conveying artistic conception are two different things, just like comics and traditional paintings are not the same concept. The presence of Shadow has brought down the prestige of the exhibition." "Disappointed." "What a joke, works from a commercial comic artist can be exhibited, the organizers must have been looking at Shadow's fame, right?" "Shadow must have paid the organizers a bribe." "I have no good feeling towards these commercial artists. His presence is simply a desecration of traditional painting; all they know is to create eye-catching imagery and now they dare to dabble in traditional painting?" "... Although Shadow has a decent reputation among online followers. At this kind of exhibition, many people actually feel indifferent or even hostile towards him as a comic artist. The reason is simple. They are not the same community. Those willing to brave the August sun to view the exhibition are traditional painting enthusiasts who consider themselves to have refined tastes. These people generally don't read comics. They often possess a strong sense of artistic superiority, capable of discussing various masterpieces at length. They appreciate high art, so how could they be interested in a commercial comic artist? It's not only the painting enthusiasts who think this way. Even in Blue Star's professional artistic community, comics are often seen as the lowest rung on the esteem ladder, with many traditional artists looking down on pure commercial illustration. This is somewhat reminiscent of the literary community on Earth. Earth's literary world, traditional novelists, and those who live by traditional literature also look down upon online writers. It's the general environment. Whether it's prejudice or generalization, such views and notions are deeply ingrained in many people. Therefore. The presence of Shadow at this exhibition irritates many, their faces plainly displaying disdain as if their own prestige has been diminished. ... Meanwhile, behind the noisy crowd, under an umbrella, a middle-aged man spoke indifferently: "Do you see? This is the attitude our traditional painting community has toward comics." Standing beside the middle-aged man, a woman with her hair tied into a bun retorted discontentedly, "Everybody else's daddy supports his little girl, so why do you always have to rub salt in my wounds?" What's wrong with comic artists? Did they steal your rice? Eh? Maybe the comic artists really did eat the rice from home since she herself was a comic artist. "Luo Wei..." The man spoke with a hint of frustration, "Daddy isn't trying to discourage you, he is just afraid of you taking the wrong path!" Indeed. The woman with the bun was none other than Luo Wei. Today she wore a blue floral dress, looking uncharacteristically ladylike and charming, unlike her usual disheveled image as a tomboy when working on comics in her studio. And the man was Luo Wei's father, the master of traditional painting, Luo Cheng! Luo Wei pouted and replied,

"No matter what you say, I've already acknowledged Teacher Shadow as my master. You've always taught me since I was little that 'one day as a teacher means a lifetime as a father', so you two are both my dads." "You..." What outrageous nonsense! What a bizarre analogy! Luo Cheng felt an urge to hit someone, his heart sour beyond measure. That person called Shadow had even become the father to his precious daughter? Who's taking advantage here! And yet Luo Cheng had always been extremely indulgent towards his cherished daughter, never uttering harsh words. All he could do was to swallow his discomfort, maintaining a stern face as he said: "Then I'll see what level your teacher is at in a moment. If he's just a charlatan seeking fame, your whims end here!" What a joke! The Luo family is a renowned painter family in the Qin Continent, and throughout its history, many master painters have emerged. Yet, his own daughter is learning from a manga artist, even acknowledging this manga artist as her mentor? This was something Luo Cheng could not accept. Where would that leave Luo Cheng's face if word got out? Today, in front of his daughter, Luo Cheng was determined to thoroughly assess Shadow's work, to show his daughter, whose painting skill was still immature, just how much Shadow, who liked to play the teacher, really weighed. "Hmph." Luo Wei defiantly lifted her head. Her father had his motives, and she had hers. She intended to show her father Teacher Shadow's skill in traditional painting today, and make him see just how outstanding her teacher was, or else the old antique at home would always be biased against manga artists. This was a war between father and daughter. As father and daughter were having their conversation, suddenly a passerby exclaimed in surprise: "Are you Teacher Luo Cheng?" As soon as this voice sounded, the crowd ahead turned around all at once, their gazes turning towards Luo Cheng with immense enthusiasm. "That's me." Luo Cheng smiled slightly, not surprised to be recognized. There were many lovers of traditional painting at the exhibition, and Luo Cheng had always held a significant status in the world of traditional painting, his skill easily overshadowing the artists who came to exhibit their work today, having been famous for nearly thirty years. All at once! The crowd became excited, no longer discussing Shadow! "Teacher Luo Cheng, I'm a fan!" "Did Teacher Luo Cheng come by invitation today?" "Are there any works by Teacher Luo Cheng exhibited today?" "Could Teacher Luo Cheng sign something for me?" "Teacher Luo Cheng, how about we take a photo together?" "Teacher Luo Cheng, I love you!" "Teacher Luo..." "..." Luo Cheng was surrounded by warmth and excitement. Usually, Luo Cheng didn't like this kind of attention, but today, with his daughter by his side, he seemed quite pleased, even deliberately glancing at her a couple of times as if to flaunt his status in this world. Luo Wei pursed her lips. Meanwhile, at the height of the crowd's excitement, a woman's voice suddenly sounded from the side: "Teacher Luo, long time no see." Luo Cheng was taken aback for a moment, his gaze moving through the crowd to the woman. His eyes then brightened, and he called out instinctively: "Teacher Qiu!" This woman, named Qiu Yu, had just turned forty, with long hair cascading over her shoulders and a face not deeply marked by the years, exuding an intellectual aura. She was a goddess-like figure in Blue Star's painting world. "Teacher Qiu Yu!?" Following Luo Cheng's gaze, the crowd also turned to look at the woman speaking, and as soon as they saw Qiu Yu's face, ripe with mature charm, everyone became excited! Young men's faces even flushed with excitement! The goddess of the traditional painting circle, Teacher Qiu, had arrived! This goddess recognized by the painting circle was even more beautiful in person than in her photos! No one had expected that this modestly scaled exhibition would attract two big names from the traditional painting circle at the same time! "Teacher Qiu, I don't want to work hard anymore... ah, that's not right, please sign an autograph!" When Qiu Yu appeared, she was immediately surrounded just like Luo Cheng had been, with the crowd even more frenzied, and she was quickly enveloped. There was a tendency for the crowd to grow, and for a while, the entrance to the exhibition was

jam-packed. The crowd around Luo Cheng quieted down quite a bit all of a sudden. "Your goddess?" Luo Wei teased her father, poking his arm without any formal respect. Luo Cheng's heart skipped a beat, and he replied irritably, "My conscience is clear, I simply admire Teacher Qiu Yu for her skill!" "Oh." Luo Wei rolled her eyes. Luo Cheng coughed and said, "Don't tell your mom." Luo Wei replied with a smile, "Weren't you clear in your conscience?" Luo Cheng: "...". Fortunately, the crowd considered themselves to be cultured, and after a round of adoration around Qiu Yu, they gradually made way. "Shall we go in together?" Qiu Yu, gracefully walking along the path the onlookers had parted, spoke to Luo Cheng, who was feeling somewhat left out at her side. Luo Cheng nodded, "Let's go." The two of them entered the exhibition side by side. The crowd didn't hesitate, decisively following behind these two authorities! Many were already taking photos with their phones and boasting on social media about meeting the masters of traditional painting at an exhibition, naturally following in step. "???" Luo Wei was taken aback for a moment, realizing her father had already gone inside. This man had actually forgotten his own daughter at the entrance! Damn it! Luo Wei felt like giving the middle finger, but in the end she held back. Taking out the ticket for the exhibition, she quickly slipped inside, and while doing so, Luo Wei noticed a commotion behind her. It seemed like... Reporters had arrived? It was quite normal for journalists to come to a medium-sized exhibition, especially since her father and Teacher Qiu Yu were there, attracting the attention of some reporters. The exhibition was much more lively than she had expected. But for Teacher Shadow, this was a good thing. Luo Wei curled the corners of her mouth, entered the exhibition hall, and quickly made her way to her father. Her father had come because of her. She wondered why Qiu Yu would be present too? Was the scale of this exhibition enough to invite someone as influential as Qiu Yu? Luo Wei knew just how formidable Qiu Yu was, her skill no less than that of her own father. Under normal circumstances, only large-scale exhibitions could invite big names like her father and Qiu Yu to attend at the same time... Forget it. No point in wondering anymore. After all, this was Teacher Shadow's debut in traditional painting, and it was more interesting with a grand setup.

#### Chapter 783: Art Exhibition (Part 2)

Inside the exhibition hall. The temperature set by the air conditioning is comfortable, feeling pleasant against the skin. Displayed on the walls all around are the works exhibited at this art show, each professionally framed. Luo Cheng and Qiu Yu walk ahead. Bystanders attending the exhibition follow behind, chatting quietly as they move. No one wants to explore alone; everyone tacitly follows the two masters as if by doing so, they can share the same insights as the esteemed duo. Luo Wei stays on the periphery, not moving closer to the front but making faces at her father instead. "Why would Mr. Qiu come here?" Luo Cheng ignores Luo Wei and stops by the first painting, casually starting a conversation with Qiu Yu. Qiu Yu brushes her hair aside, "A friend asked me to come and have a look, mentioning there was a very impressive painting here. Though it seems she herself has been delayed." "A remarkable painting?" Luo Cheng raises an eyebrow, "Now you've piqued my curiosity. If they're all on the level of what we're seeing now, then this trip today would be a waste." As he spoke, Luo Cheng nodded towards the first painting. Qiu Yu glanced at the signature and the artist's introduction next to it, then casually laughed: "So it's a work by Ren Feifei; no wonder the style looked familiar. The flaws are the same as her previous work—too much craftsmanship." The two spared no criticism for the first painting! Even with a crowd following behind, these two big shots didn't hold back at all, discussing as if no one else was there. Behind them. The crowd's expressions brighten at the uninhibited comments of the two big shots! This is the very reason they wanted to follow the two masters! They can listen closely to the evaluations

the experts give these artworks! But no one expected the two titans to be so direct—the first painting they saw was immediately criticized. You have to know. The author of the first painting, Ren Feifei, is also a painter with considerable fame in the Chinese painting circle. Of course. These two big shots hold extremely high status, akin to venerable figures in the realm of Chinese painting, and are certainly qualified to critique the works at this exhibition. If we were to translate this status into the music industry: Luo Cheng and Qiu Yu would be the equivalent of maestro-level composers. And Ren Feifei, along with the other artists at this exhibition, would be akin to ace composers in the music industry. Moving on. The two proceed to the second painting. At this moment, the exhibition organizers send someone over: "We didn't expect Mr. Luo and Mr. Qiu to grace our exhibition. Your presence truly honors our event. If you wouldn't mind, may I offer you a guided tour? You can also ask me any questions you may have." "Sure," Qiu Yu replies with a smile. Luo Cheng does not refuse either. The employee from the exhibition brightens up, "In that case, allow me to introduce this painting. It's by Mr. Yuan Liu, and the theme concerns landscapes..." "No need for introductions," Luo Cheng interjects abruptly, his words unsparing, "I don't care who the author is. The ink shades are so heavy—are you worried that I'm nearsighted and won't see them clearly?" The employee's face stiffens. Are you here to cause trouble? Criticisms fly in the employee's mind, but they dare not voice them aloud, instead looking helplessly at Qiu Yu for rescue. "The painting is too deliberate," Qiu Yu sighs and moves towards the third painting. Employee: "...". Subdued, the employee watches as the works at the exhibition receive harsh critique from the two honorees, but the crowd is thoroughly enjoying the commentary! "I like Mr. Luo Cheng's straightforwardness!" "Mr. Qiu Yu didn't spare the painter's feelings either." "Why spare feelings? Chinese painting is all about skill!" "If artists only knew how to flatter each other, that would be truly dull." "Yuan Liu's painting is indeed not up to par." "Ren Feifei's work, as Mr. Qiu said, is indeed too craft-heavy." "...". Actually, Luo Cheng is usually even-tempered, but today he's disgruntled, so his words are less diplomatic than usual. Perhaps it's because this exhibition includes works by Shadow? Because of his daughter, Luo Cheng currently holds a very poor impression of that Shadow! "No need to introduce this painting, it must be Shi Xiang's work, right? He likes to combine elements from oil and Chinese paintings—a fine concept that he utterly botches in execution." Affected by his mood, Luo Cheng critiques the third painting directly. "There are aspects to commend, yet, overall, it is as you say," Qiu Yu adds, sensing Luo Cheng's foul temper but not minding it. As long as the critique is reasonable, that's what matters. They continue onward. Continuing their critiques. Luo Cheng leads the way today, pointing out flaws without hesitation; no artwork is spared: "Copying the beauty of nature verbatim, capturing the form but not the spirit." "Messy; the work lacks focus." "The muscular lines of the male and female rabbits are a bit rigid." "Another animal portrait, and this phoenix is not even as good as what my daughter could paint." "...". Qiu Yu supplements with explanations at Luo Cheng's side, but similarly, she doesn't offer a single compliment. The employee breaks into a sweat. If every painting is criticized by these two authorities, the exhibition will be ruined! There are still two days of visitation ahead! Fortunately, Luo Cheng isn't here to wreck the show, nor is he nitpicking. His critiques are emotional, true, but they are substantial. When a painting titled "Tiger Descending the Mountain" appears in front of Luo Cheng, he finally halts his critiques. "This is interesting." He examines it for a moment and murmurs softly. The employee, hearing this, feels like someone who has miraculously survived a catastrophe and hastily says: "This is a work by Mr. Yulian. This painting..." "No need for an introduction, we know," Qiu Yu says with a smile, "Yulian has improved rapidly. He also painted tigers last time and even won an award—pity though, his excessive pursuit of vigor made him overlook the vividness of the image." "He deserved that award," Luo Cheng interjects, "But it was

also because his competition that time consisted of clueless painters." Qiu Yu nods. Luo Cheng nods, a rare smile playing at his lips: "But Yulian's work today is really not bad. Though he still tends to deliberately pursue pomp, it should still be considered the best of today's exhibition. Mr. Qiu, the friend that mentioned a striking painting at this exhibition—were they referring to this one?" "I'm not sure." Qiu Yu frowned. Was it this painting? She didn't think this painting was good enough to warrant a personal visit. Her friend might have just average painting skills, but her aesthetic appreciation and taste were definitely at the Master Level. "Then let's keep looking." Luo Cheng moved forward again, even Yulian's painting had only held his attention for three minutes. The paintings that followed made Luo Cheng furrow his brows even more. Just when he was about to lose patience and ask his daughter directly where Teacher Shadow's painting was, a work up ahead suddenly caught Luo Cheng's attention. "Huh?" While Luo Cheng was drawn in, Qiu Yu also saw the painting! An unusual light flashed in her beautiful eyes! It was a landscape painting. In the painting, there was a pale yellow flower. At the top of the stamen, a butterfly was flapping its wings. A Butterfly's Love for a Flower! The composition was incredibly simple, yet it instantly attracted her and Luo Cheng! "Such a unique color combination, the flower isn't intricately carved out, but it has a sense of natural perfection as if the scent of flowers is wafting out of the painting!" Qiu Yu couldn't help but exclaim. A stir went through the crowd behind them. Previously, Luo Cheng spoke while Qiu Yu added comments. This was the first time Qiu Yu had taken the initiative to comment on a painting, and she started with such high praise! What surprised everyone even more was that Luo Cheng actually nodded: "This butterfly seems like it's about to fly out of the frame. It's not easy to achieve such lifelikeness with traditional Chinese painting!" "Better than Yulian's, right?" "Hmm, it seems I made conclusions too hastily. Today's best should indeed be this 'A Butterfly's Love for a Flower'." Luo Cheng rarely showed a smile. For a while. The commotion within the crowd became even more pronounced! Everyone started to scrutinize the painting carefully. And upon closer inspection, many were captivated! It wouldn't be right to say this group was just there to show off. If it were just for show, they wouldn't have come to the exhibition on such a hot day. They really had a bit of appreciation! And those with a bit of appreciation could of course discern the extraordinary aspects of this painting! "Such a beautiful painting!" "This butterfly is so lovely!" "How did they achieve this? The flower is sketched so simply, but it doesn't feel rushed, it has a particularly natural feel." "Impressive!" "Better than Yulian's 'Tiger Descending the Mountain'!" "Teacher Luo Cheng is right, this must be the best work of the day!" "Who painted this?" "There's an artist's introduction below!" "..." Each painting had a small introduction below it, but the print was small and one needed to get quite close to read it. This was to ensure that the audience saw the painting first and not the artist's name, to prevent overshadowing the artwork. "Everyone!" The staff finally saw a glimmer of hope again! He hadn't expected such a simple painting to draw such widespread praise. What a relief! The exhibition was saved! Seeing everyone curious about the artist and wanting to get a closer look, the staff finally puffed out his chest: "No need to look closer, everyone, this 'A Butterfly's Love for a Flower' is a piece by Teacher Shadow, who is a comic artist. This is the first time he has publicly presented his own traditional Chinese painting!" The staff's voice was loud and proud! As if he was sharing in the glory! The two big shots' high praise for the painting had given him enormous confidence! However. Just as his voice fell, the surroundings went silent! Swish, swish, swish! Countless expectant faces froze on the spot! Even some wondered if they had misheard! Unfortunately. They hadn't misheard. Some had already seen the small print in the artist's introduction section: The word "Shadow" revealed under the painting wasn't hard to recognize. This was Shadow's work!? Had they just praised this piece!? Luo Cheng's face suddenly turned bright red, shifting his feet uncomfortably, actually taking a half step back! In his eyes, a



trace of embarrassment surfaced! For a moment, the scene turned exceedingly awkward! "... Why did it suddenly become so quiet? The staff member was somewhat bewildered by everyone's reaction. Had he said something wrong? "Pfft." From a distance, Luo Wei finally couldn't hold back her laughter. She had been observing her father's expressions since everyone arrived at 'A Butterfly's Love for a Flower'. And at this moment, she finally saw her father looking deflated! Of course. She also noticed the unpleasant faces of the group of painting enthusiasts who had previously criticized Teacher Shadow so harshly. That'll teach you to underestimate my teacher! Luo Wei couldn't help feeling a little smug inside! Actually, Luo Wei's family had Lin Yuan's early creation 'Six Shrimps', but she had never shown it to others, since her teacher had expressed the wish to keep a low profile in the past. But now, it obviously wasn't necessary. She would show her father after he returned home! His reaction would definitely be even more interesting then, because this 'A Butterfly's Love for a Flower' was not such a big deal for her teacher! ```

## Chapter 784 Art Exhibition (Part 2)

"Shadow's work..." Qiu Yu stared blankly, a flicker of surprise passing through her eyes, almost shattering her perception of comic artists. In fact. It was everyone's understanding of Shadow that this painting shattered. Seeing Shadow's name on the publicity board at the entrance, many people were dissatisfied. Why should the work of a commercial comic artist be featured in such a professional traditional painting exhibition? However. Upon seeing this A Butterfly's Love for a Flower, many faces began to flush with heat. No one had expected that Shadow's skill in traditional painting would reach a professional level, even surpassing that of many professional traditional painting teachers! Luo Cheng hadn't expected it either. But after all, Luo Cheng was one of the big names in the traditional painting world. Although he felt a twinge of embarrassment, he quickly adjusted his mood. In the silent exhibition hall. Luo Cheng spoke again, "It is indeed rare for a comic artist to possess such level of traditional painting, yet while this painting is beautiful, it still lacks a certain charm. The criteria for judging the quality of a painting is not just how closely it resembles the subject. Otherwise, why not just take a photo? What would be the point of us painters? This is probably the regret that comes with his identity as a comic artist..." Luo Cheng wasn't deliberately changing his tune. The painting indeed, as he said, was not without flaws. In terms of artistic realm, it fell short of the top tier. For a moment. Everyone seemed to take Luo Cheng's words as the golden rule, echoing him in order to alleviate the awkwardness of the situation: "Exactly!" "Well said, Teacher Luo Cheng!" "This painting isn't flawless." "It's just that the other works in this exhibition aren't that great, which is why this one stands out." "Comparing with the works of master traditional painters, there's still a significant gap." "After all, it's the comic art world; there's some skill, but that's about it." "It's a limitation inherent to the comic industry itself." "In traditional painting, aside from resembling the subject, we also pursue a certain artistic conception. Shadow's work lacks that conception, that charm Teacher Luo Cheng speaks of!" "... Hearing the words of Luo Cheng and the other onlookers, Qiu Yu frowned: "Isn't Teacher Luo being a bit too demanding of Shadow?" This was a mid-level art exhibition. The quality and level of A Butterfly's Love for a Flower had already crushed the entire competition. Yet Luo Cheng insisted on judging it by master-level painting standards! Indeed. Qiu Yu admitted that Luo Cheng's words had merit. But the problem lay in the fact that these criteria were intended for top-level traditional paintings. And if you used the standards of a master-level painting, A Butterfly's Love for a Flower really wasn't particularly breathtaking. But the question was: Was it necessary to set the bar so high for an exhibition of this caliber? If those top-level standards were applied, an exhibition of this caliber was doomed to fail. Though more isn't always better. "Just stating the truth," Luo Cheng

said, aware internally that his expectations were too high, but he simply didn't like Shadow. If this A Butterfly's Love for a Flower had not been Shadow's work, he probably would have given high praise to the artist, even offering guidance. If it was Shadow... It still wasn't enough. Such work, such skill level, was not enough to warrant his daughter's admiration, let alone being considered a teacher! Despite that, Luo Cheng still took several more looks at the painting, the intensity of his gaze and the duration of his attention far exceeding that for Yulian's work. Qiu Yu raised an eyebrow and once again focused on enjoying the painting, saying no more. Although she was unaware of the relationship between Luo Cheng's daughter and Shadow, she had a clear understanding of the situation at hand. It was nothing more than the inherent bias of traditional painters and lovers of traditional painting against comic artists. "Commercial draftsmen." "I don't understand art," "Reeks of money." When comic artists are mentioned, some traditional painters always turn up their noses like this, so although this painting of A Butterfly's Love for a Flower was already very well executed, people were still reluctant to readily acknowledge its excellence. This scene was a microcosm of the industry's disdain hierarchy. The crux of the issue was ultimately the identity of Shadow as a comic artist. And in the midst of this slightly eerie ambiance, a familiar voice suddenly rang out in Qiu Yu's ear: "Sorry, little Yu, I got caught in traffic and am late." Qiu Yu smiled and turned to the newcomer: "I thought Sister Zheng had stood me up." "How could I?" The newcomer spoke and glanced behind Qiu Yu, laughing, "It's quite lively here, isn't it?" "It's Teacher Zheng Jing!" Someone recognized the woman who had greeted Qiu Yu. The crowd immediately livened up. Zheng Jing, a Maestro-level figure from the music industry, definitely counted as a celebrity, and it was unexpected that not only could one meet two Master Level artists from the traditional painting world at this art exhibition, but also encounter a music industry Maestro! Indeed. The newcomer was Zheng Jing. The art exhibition was exactly what Zheng Jing had invited Qiu Yu to come to see. Luo Cheng turned his head: "Teacher Zheng Jing, is this the friend Teacher Qiu mentioned?" "Yes, Mr. Luo Cheng." "I know." Zheng Jing smiled and greeted Luo Cheng, then turned to look at the painting of A Butterfly's Love for a Flower on the wall, exclaiming in surprise: "This painting is beautiful!" Qiu Yu smiled wryly: "Sister Zheng doesn't need to play coy, you specifically invited me here to show me this painting, didn't you?" "Not at all." Zheng Jing shook her head: "Although this painting is nice, the one I wanted you to see is absolutely incomparable to this one." Zheng Jing said with extreme confidence! Qiu Yu was taken aback, not this one? Luo Cheng also looked surprised; could there be an even better piece than A Butterfly's Love for a Flower at this exhibition? As if he thought of something, Luo Cheng's smile suddenly blossomed, saying with enthusiasm: "May I ask Teacher Zheng Jing to lead the way, I am most curious about this painting you mention." "Sure." Zheng Jing readily agreed. The crowd following behind widened their eyes and got excited too! Originally, because Shadow's A Butterfly's Love for a Flower overshadowed everything else, it left a bad taste in many people's mouths; suddenly hearing Zheng Jing say there was a better piece here, of course, everyone was happy! Meanwhile, in the distance, Luo Wei furrowed her brows slightly. There was a better piece than Teacher's at this art exhibition? She couldn't help but feel worried. It would be so unjust if Teacher's work got overshadowed by someone else's. Luo Wei knew all too well. The Teacher hadn't been entirely serious when painting A Butterfly's Love for a Flower; it did not represent Teacher's true level of skill! She even considered bringing over Six Shrimps from home! But obviously, she couldn't just casually bring out Six Shrimps. Many students from Qin Continent Art Academy would recognize that painting as Lin Yuan's work. Once it was made public, it would be easy for Teacher Shadow's identity to be exposed. Feeling more and more conflicted, Luo Wei followed the large group being led by Zheng Jing towards the front. In this manner, the group of people passed seven or eight

paintings and finally stopped in front of a work. It was a traditional Chinese painting themed around "horses"!

## Chapter 785: Shadow Again

Yes. Zheng Jing had brought out Teacher Shadow's "Gallop Horse" for the exhibition! For this, she specifically invited her friend from the Chinese painting circle, Qiu Yu, to come and appreciate the painting together! In Zheng Jing's view, this painting should not remain unknown! At this exhibition, with Qiu Yu, a leading figure in Chinese painting, just a few objective comments could definitely make "Gallop Horse" and its creator, Teacher Shadow, famous in one fell swoop! That was Zheng Jing's goal. The moment the staff saw "Gallop Horse," they almost instinctively said: "This is also a Shadow..." As the words reached his lips, the staff member stopped. Today, whatever he said seemed wrong, so he might as well not say anything at all. However, the people didn't care about the staff member. To be precise, everyone's attention was completely captured by "Gallop Horse"! The horse was outlined with robust, rounded lines, and the thick ink merged into calligraphy styles of Wei steles and cursive script; The horse's head left large white spaces to create highlights, enhancing the three-dimensionality and the solid texture of the head; Using heavy and direct strokes, the brisk touch depicted the robust yet flexibly twisting posture; The body was washed with slightly lighter ink, clearly defining the mass of the torso; With vigorous lines, highlighting joints and solid hooves; The horse's mane and tail were most imposing, with sweeping broad strokes that burst forth with a flying momentum! Seeing this painting, everyone instinctively held their breath! A few seconds later. Today, for the first time! Before Luo Cheng and Qiu Yu could speak up, a group of Chinese painting enthusiasts started excited discussions, bringing the exhibition its first climax of viewership! "This painting is amazing!" "The muscle lines on this horse are so beautiful!" "The ink rendering is just right, with a spirit that could swallow mountains and rivers!" "I used to think that Yulian's 'Tiger Descending the Mountain' was full of momentum, but compared to this painting, that tiger seems to have no momentum at all!" "This is what you call momentum!" "Elegant and energetic, high-spirited, the background is just a piece of rice paper, yet these few horses bring limitless imagination!" "This truly is a great painting that embodies both spirit and form!" "The artist with his exuberant strokes fully expressed his emotions, capturing the essence of the warhorses with direct and vigorous lines as if conveying his uncontrollable passion, simply masterful!" "... A masterstroke! Luo Cheng was slightly lost as he stared at this "Gallop Horse," forgetting Teacher Shadow for a moment, his entire mind immersed in the painting. "It completely washes away the mediocrity of all other horses forever!" Shock filled Qiu Yu's beautiful eyes, and after a long while, she uttered such an exclamation, "I didn't expect to see such a master's touch at this small exhibition, no wonder Sister Zheng esteemed this painting so highly!" Zheng Jing smiled. The reaction of the crowd was within her expectations; this painting indeed had the power to enchant those who understood art! "The greatness of Chinese painting lies in its pursuit of embodying nature." Luo Cheng finally came to his senses, he took a deep breath, "This is why I said before that 'A Butterfly's Love for a Flower' was not good enough, a truly complete work should be like these horses, which possess everything nature has endowed them with, not only vigorous energy but also a noble spirit, through this painting, we can feel the freedom and passion of the artist!" He was somewhat overwhelmed! This painting almost overturned the traditional techniques of painting horses, expressing realism with romantic ideals. Resembling, yet not pursuing complete likeness. The painting maintained a realistic style while not losing the traditional Chinese painting's ink charm, arguably portraying the heroic grace and strength of the horses to perfection!" "Who is the artist of this painting?" "Why is there no signature on the painting?" "..."

The frustration of the painting enthusiasts over "A Butterfly's Love for a Flower" was instantly swept away! At last, a cartoonist hadn't come out on top at a traditional Chinese painting exhibition! Immediately after, new perplexity surged within their hearts. This was a painting without a signature. Someone tried to look for the artist's introduction at the bottom of the painting. Luo Cheng and Qiu Yu also looked curious, glancing at the artist's column. However, When everyone clearly saw the small font of the artist's introduction beneath the painting, everyone was stunned! Faces frozen, expressions silly, as if locked in time! Shadow! Shadow!! This painting was also made by Shadow!!! Zheng Jing, with a smile in her eyes, looked at the incredulous faces of Luo Cheng and Qiu Yu, "Yes, such a painting came from the hands of the cartoonist Shadow, who is a hidden master of traditional Chinese painting!" Boom! When the already known fact was spoken from Zheng Jing's mouth, the scene instantly erupted! "Oh my god!" "How is that possible!" "Another work by Shadow?!" "Isn't Shadow a cartoonist!?" "Such a perfect traditional Chinese painting was made by a cartoonist?" "His painting skills are too terrifying!" "Is this the cartoonist I remember?" "Damn!" "Why the slap in the face!" "Just when we encountered a painting better than 'A Butterfly's Love for a Flower', this one turns out to be made by Shadow too!?" "..." All the painters were stunned into silence! Cries of astonishment rose one after another! They felt their conventional understandings being shattered by Shadow's relentless approach! Pride? Taste? Grace? All the superiority of these painting enthusiasts turned into a complete joke in front of this painting of a horse! "Shadow, oh..." Qiu Yu was somewhat lost. Inside Luo Cheng's heart, however, a storm surged, his chest heaving dramatically! The more knowledgeable the person, the more they understood what this painting meant. Was Shadow truly a genius!? At this moment, Luo Cheng could no longer entertain the thought of preventing his daughter from considering Shadow as her teacher. This painting, and even he himself, felt an overwhelming sense of inadequacy. He didn't even know that his precious daughter had only just found out that this painting was made by her own teacher! "So Teacher Shadow also has other works on exhibit?" Luo Wei's eyes widened upon hearing the answer, then her brows danced, and her eyes sparkled with laughter. I knew it! "A Butterfly's Love for a Flower" couldn't possibly represent the teacher's level! Using such a painting in the exhibition would have been far too perfunctory! Looking at this painting of a horse again, its level is entirely not inferior to "Six Shrimps", and even surpasses it to some extent because the creatures depicted are more complex! Amidst everyone's shock, this traditional Chinese painting exhibition was completely stirred up by a cartoonist!

## Chapter 786 Zhao Continent

Lin Yuan had no idea about the stirrings at the art exhibition, but the commotion was too big to escape the attention of reporters. Especially involving Shadow and two traditional painting bigwigs, and after Zheng Jing, the Maestro! That very noon. Shadow's traditional painting works in the exhibition caused a tremendous shock and garnered high praise from two traditional painting bigwigs—this news was broadcast by the media! "Shadow can do traditional painting too?" "A great masterpiece by Shadow spotted at a traditional painting exhibition!" "Traditional Painting Sage Qiu Yu highly praises Shadow's entry: A master's strokes!" "Traditional painting bigwig Luo Cheng: Shadow changed my impression and views about manga artists." "Shadow's first Traditional painting show: Galloping Horses!" "At an art exhibition, Shadow's traditional painting debut 'Galloping Horses' stunned the audience, attracting countless painting enthusiasts!" "..." Along with the news report, a professionally edited image aiming to restore the original look of "Galloping Horses" also appeared online! Suddenly, netizens were shocked! "Damn, is this Shadow's traditional painting?" "This 'Galloping Horses' looks quite imposing!" "The manga world can no longer

contain Shadow God, is he now invading the traditional painting circle? This painting is freaking amazing!" "Even though I don't understand painting, this painting is indeed beautiful!" "The vibe it's giving off, seems even better than many masters' works!" "The bigwigs in the traditional painting world always looked down on the manga world, didn't they? I remember some bigwig publicly blasting the manga world before, saying they're not real artists but just businessmen. Now they've been slapped in the face by Shadow God, right?" "Damn, even I feel slapped in the face, Shadow is too strong!" "Traditional painting and manga aren't the same thing; I always thought Shadow God's painting skills were about manga, but he paints traditional paintings just as well as his manga!" "This news is ridiculous, would those traditional painting enthusiasts actually praise Shadow?" "Hehehe, whether they praise him or not, 'Galloping Horses' is enough to shut all those traditional painting enthusiasts up!" "Weren't traditional painting enthusiasts saying that manga artist's works are unbearably vulgar?" "... The netizens were not oblivious to the disdain within the painting world. Those traditional painting enthusiasts, always flaunting their high profile, have always scoffed at manga. Even Shadow, known as the top figure in the manga world, might not win their approval. Perhaps there would even be people specifically disparaging Shadow to elevate their own sense of superiority. However... No matter how much they looked down on manga, in front of this "Galloping Horses", those traditional painting enthusiasts had to hold their noses and accept it! This, the netizens could guess without needing any media reports! Not to mention... Soon, people who were at the scene began to share the story of what happened at the exhibition online. It should be noted, not everyone at the scene claimed high-profile status as traditional painting enthusiasts; there were also a few fans of Shadow. These fans of Shadow had been suppressed by the traditional painting enthusiasts at the exhibition, not daring to speak up. Now that "Galloping Horses" was out, they couldn't hold back any longer! The sequence of events that took place at the exhibition was completely narrated by some netizens who were present. Some conversation records revealing the truth were forwarded across major chat groups. Suddenly, the online world heated up even more! "Pfft!" "Was there such a story?" "I can imagine the scene then." "So there was also a piece by Shadow titled 'A Butterfly's Love for a Flower' at the scene!" "Shadow God really did it, he ended with such a piece—'A Butterfly's Love for a Flower'!" "Those traditional painting enthusiasts must've been mortified, right?" "Hahahahaha, a bunch of traditional painting enthusiasts, trying to discredit 'A Butterfly's Love for a Flower', went crazy praising 'Galloping Horses', and then realizing that 'Galloping Horses' was also Shadow's work, they looked so stupid at the moment!" "That's what happens when they act high and mighty; they need a harsh slap in the face!" "These people always looked down on us manga enthusiasts, saying we only like flat paper characters and are dead fat nerds, today Shadow God really gave our manga circle a severe venting of anger!" "... The disdain chain is everywhere. Many traditional painting masters do not regard manga artists highly, and those who love traditional painting also look down on manga enthusiasts. This has been happening for a long time. Both sides have been in conflict for many years. Yet the appearance of Shadow's "Galloping Horses" has in some way struck a blow to traditional painting enthusiasts, even some traditional painting masters! For a time. Many traditional painting enthusiasts were silent. Damn! There's no justice! A manga artist, to have such mastery in traditional painting! Not just that. Many big names in the painting industry were shocked by the level of "Running Horses", as a master level painting skill is no joke! "Was this painted by Shadow?" "Is there such a level of artist in the comic scene?" "With such impressive skill, why bother with comics? It's simply a waste of talent!" "This Shadow really has some skill, yet insists on creating comics, a true self-degradation." "I think comics are also a form of painting, and shouldn't be dismissed outright. Over the years, comics have developed quite well, producing a considerable number of excellent works."

"Comics are ultimately minor, the reason why Zhao Continent's paintings are world-renowned is because they are not commercial!" "Who says painters from Zhao Continent aren't commercial?" "Are those exorbitantly priced works from Zhao Continent just for show?" "... In the traditional painting circles, some debates even arose because of "Running Horses". But it was undeniable that with the shocking debut of "Running Horses", Shadow had successfully taken his first step into the realm of traditional painting! ... Inside the studio. Jin Mu excitedly said to Lin Yuan, "Right now, you're just starting to make a name for yourself in the traditional painting circles; wait till you become a big name, your paintings will then really become valuable!" "Aren't the works of painters only worth something after they're dead?" Lin Yuan smirked. Jin Mu paused: "What kind of theory is that? Although a painter's works do become more valuable posthumously, that's because the works become posthumous creations. Most impressive painters, while alive, have already sold their works for very high prices." "Really?" Lin Yuan was not very knowledgeable in this area. Jin Mu chuckled, "Of course, you know about Zhao Continent, right?" "Yeah." Zhao Continent would be joining the merger with Blue Star in a few months. Lin Yuan had some understanding of Zhao Continent; he had browsed information about it online when he was bored. The most distinctive feature about Zhao Continent was: Its admiration for ancient styles! It was said that even ordinary residents liked to wear ancient attire during festivals. Not just clothing culture. Zhao people also particularly enjoyed zither, chess, calligraphy, and painting. Especially in calligraphy and painting, the Zhao people were exceptionally skilled. The classical arts passed down from ancient times were well preserved in Zhao Continent. Even the ancient architecture was maintained quite excellently by Zhao people. This resulted in people from all over Blue Star enjoying trips to Zhao Continent. The ancient temples and towers, old towns, and other well-preserved ancient buildings were endless! Lin Yuan was also thinking about visiting Zhao Continent whenever he got the chance. When Blue Starans mention Zhao Continent, they often remark, "In Zhao, it feels like you can touch the traces of ancient life. Their way of speaking is even classical." This connection to the traditional pursuits of Zhao Continent through the years was significant. Jin Mu said, "Since you know about Zhao, you should know that the Painting Sage from Blue Star was a Zhao person. Although the Painting Sage lived hundreds of years ago, his works are extremely popular, with one classic painting auctioned off for nearly a billion, setting a record in the painting world. The buyer was a wealthy person from Zhao Continent!" Lin Yuan: "Isn't it still after-death value for his works?" Jin Mu shook his head, "I am just describing the passion for painting in Zhao. In reality, many contemporary renowned painters from Zhao also have valuable works, with several famous individuals whose auction prices have exceeded a hundred million!" Lin Yuan was astonished, "Contemporary works auctioned off for over a hundred million?" Jin Mu smiled, "That was twenty years ago; the market isn't so exaggerated now, but there are still works selling for millions, even tens of millions, and they are all from contemporary artists." Lin Yuan: "... Jin Mu continued, "Every year, Zhao hosts a huge painting and calligraphy auction that catches the attention of the whole of Blue Star. Every year, artworks by contemporary painters fetch sky-high prices at the auction, disproving your theory that an artist's works only gain value after their death. However, it's true that only Zhao's auctions frequently feature such high-priced works, with traditional painters from other continents falling short in comparison." At this point, Jin Mu expressed his longing, "At the auction, works by contemporary renowned artists from Zhao draw fierce competition from mysterious wealthy buyers, continuously refreshing record-high prices. It's a sight to behold, and I've once experienced it. It's truly staggering. Unless you're in the middle of it, it's difficult to comprehend their extreme pursuit of calligraphy and painting, that top-tier wealthy scene where fortunes are spent on a scroll or a painting isn't commonly witnessed." "... Lin Yuan remained silent, but the keywords "Zhao

Continent", "painting and calligraphy auction", "wealthy bidding" had already deeply rooted themselves in his heart. This grand event, should he have the chance, could he not participate? That being said, with his own popularity, even if he brought out some classics from Earth, would those wealthy individuals, even the super-rich, really take interest? Suddenly, Lin Yuan found himself looking forward to Zhao Continent's integration. "You can imagine, once Zhao Continent becomes integrated, painters and calligraphers from all over will flock there. Who wouldn't want their works to be sought after at Zhao's painting and calligraphy auctions?" Jin Mu asserted confidently. Lin Yuan nodded. Blue Star was a magical place, each continent with its own artistic uniqueness, and Zhao Continent seemed to align perfectly with Lin Yuan's abilities. After all, Lin Yuan possessed not only the master level painting skill but had also just acquired the master level calligraphy skill! And both these skills were highly esteemed and pursued by the people of Zhao!

#### Chapter 787: Mitsui Hisashi's Exclusive BGM

Of course. Zhao Continent had not yet joined the merger. It was still too early to start considering the book and painting auction in Zhao Continent. Lin Yuan quickly set this matter aside. As for the media's erroneous reports that "Gallop Horse" was Shadow's debut traditional painting, Lin Yuan couldn't be bothered to correct them. To Lin Yuan, this wasn't something very important. In the days that followed, however, there were a few occurrences that were of some significance to Lin Yuan. By late August, the animation "One Piece" officially aired. Simultaneously, the "Naruto" animation was also launched. Three days after the first two animations aired, "Detective Chu Yu" made its grand debut. Even "The Kindaichi Case Files" had been outsourced to another animation company for production by Starlight! There was no helping it. Resources were limited. The animation department's workload was heavy. Apart from the three newly launched animations, "Dunk" was also being serialized amidst much fervor. In such a situation, it was difficult for Starlight to take on "The Kindaichi Case Files" as well, so they simply outsourced it to another company since this title's popularity couldn't quite compare to the others. Following the airing of these animations, the response had been extremely enthusiastic! Audiences had expressed a high degree of approval for Starlight's production quality! This was all within expectations. Just look at how many people in the Alliance were following updates of "Dead Sea of Fire" to know. Besides, Starlight had invested a lot of money in these three animations, the chairman had personally participated in supervising, and they had even poached some highly skilled animators from Chu Continent, showing utmost dedication. As long as the production team accurately adapted the storylines, maintained a consistent art style, and had effective voice actors, success was inevitable. However, speaking of popularity, the current hottest animation was still "Dunk"! This title, due to its simultaneous release in both animation and manga, its leveraging on the Bluelympics, and controversies and promotions involving Shadow, Tribe, and He Dajun, began with an exploding popularity! A work that had everything in its favor. Under immense attention combined with these days' serialization, "Dunk" had indeed become the hottest animation across the Zhao, Qin, Chu, Yan, and Han Continents! Especially among young viewers, they deeply loved this work! Every week, countless people would discuss the latest plot developments of "Dunk." Shadow's title as the number one in comics had thus become even more well-deserved. Perhaps in the future, the popularity of this animation might be surpassed by "Dead Sea of Fire." But at least for now, "Dunk" was unrivaled among all contemporaneously serialized animations! In the world of anime and manga. Such works were referred to as dominant! The most direct manifestation of dominance was that, following every update of "Dunk," Lin Yuan's older sister and younger sister would always catch up immediately. It should be noted that both his sister and his younger sister were girls. Yet this "Dunk" was an

animation aimed at male audiences. Its ability to be loved by countless female viewers exemplified the charm of this animation. It was also because "Dunk" was too hot. Lin Yuan couldn't help but consider leveraging this animation. It was related to the ranking of the season in September. It was already late August, and Lin Yuan had to consider the matter of the September season's chart. Which type of song would be the steadiest to hit the charts? Numerous practices told Lin Yuan that what really decided the rankings on the seasonal chart wasn't just the quality of the song itself! The fame of the composer, the fame of the performing artist, and the background of the song were all indispensable factors! Among these. The fame of the composer and the fame of the performing artist, Lin Yuan could ensure. As for the background of the song representing whether it had any connection to a certain work, Lin Yuan could also create those conditions for himself. For instance: Could his song in September ride on the popularity of "Dunk"? Leveraging his own heat. This move was something Lin Yuan had already become quite skilled at. And so, as Lin Yuan pondered this, he truly found a way to ride the wave of popularity. At this point, "Dunk" had updated to its twenty-sixth episode. In the twenty-seventh episode, there would be the iconic scene where Mitsui Hisashi says, "Coach, I want to play basketball." Along with this iconic scene, there would be a song called "Until the End of the World"! This song was widely considered to be written specifically for Mitsui Hisashi in "Dunk," constituting Mitsui's exclusive background music! In the animation "Dunk." The most outstanding track was "Until the End of the World." Even among all the background music in the world of animations, this song was considered a rarity! The opening bass guitar and drum rhythm gave the audience a broad sense of space, the lyrics were beautifully emotional, and the rendering was powerful. The song itself was of high quality and, combined with the plot, it was regarded as a divine song by many Dunk fans, evoking a feeling of youth as if looking back suddenly after many years. And in the animation. Whenever Mitsui Hisashi began to show off his moves, this classic background music would play, awakening the passion in countless people! Actually, many works have reflected similar situations. Classic characters always have their own exclusive BGM and such. For example... Indeed, the famous scene "Coach, I want to play basketball" had already been updated in the manga version of "Slam Dunk" a while ago. However, the anime is slower than the manga, and the anime viewers haven't seen this episode yet, even those who have read the manga have certainly never heard this song. And Lin Yuan had already prepared this excellent song before the anime even started broadcasting. The singer is none other than Liang Ziyuan, the singing king of Chu Continent who previously sang "I Want to Shout Out Loud That I Love You". "How about we use this song to hit the charts in September?" This was not hard for Lin Yuan to manage, he just had to ensure that the 27th episode of "Slam Dunk" would broadcast on the first of September. By then... This "Until the End of the World" could logically join the competition for the seasonal charts. Releasing a new song on the stage of the hottest current animation in the five continents and pairing it with one of the most climactic classic scenes in the "Slam Dunk" anime, Lin Yuan could definitely ride the wave of popularity to the fullest! In fact, this was not the first time Lin Yuan had thought about leveraging the popularity of his own anime. Just last month... Lin Yuan initially even planned to have Jiang Kui sing the background music "Bluebird" from Naruto. Unfortunately, things didn't go as planned. In the end, Jiang Kui sang a song called "Diao" and claimed the title of best female singer. Now that he thought about it, "Bluebird" was not suitable. It wasn't an issue with the song itself but in the Naruto anime, this song wouldn't appear until after 200 episodes. It was a song meant for "Naruto Shippuden". Borrowing it earlier would be too forceful and didn't fit well with the storyline. Unlike "Until the End of the World," which could currently be postponed to correspond with the relevant plot. "The usual rule, keep one backup song." Although Lin Yuan felt the song by Mitsui Hisashi was great and could help "Slam Dunk"



win the September seasonal charts, he feared the unexpected. Lin Yuan had prepared another song just in case. If things went south, he would take out the backup song to hit the charts. Once the preparations were finished, Lin Yuan especially went to the chairman to discuss this matter. "Arrange for the 27th episode of 'Slam Dunk' to broadcast on September 1." If Lin Yuan didn't notify him, this episode would have aired on August 30th, and then it couldn't participate in the September seasonal charts. "You mean to..." The chairman guessed Lin Yuan's intention right away! The 27th episode of "Slam Dunk" was special. Accompanying Mitsui Hisashi's redemption, there would be a very explosive song that would appear, which had deeply moved the chairman when he heard it! Lin Yuan: "Yes." The chairman was really astute. The matter was settled in a simple conversation. Not long after, the news that the next episode of "Slam Dunk" would be broadcast on September 1 was officially announced. "Dang it!" The audience was not happy! How could Starlight delay it further! The next episode was clearly supposed to update on the 30th! The grief of those eagerly awaiting the update instantly filled the screen. Many were dissatisfied. Especially the readers who had read the manga: "The next episode features Mitsui Hisashi's famous scene, how can Starlight delay it at such a critical moment!" "Update on September 1, doesn't that mean I have to wait an extra day?" "Dude, wake up, August has thirty-one days." "What, why does August have thirty-one days, who decided that!" "Isn't every month thirty days!" "So you're telling me, that line 'Coach, I want to play basketball' has to wait two more days?!" "After reading the manga, what I anticipated most was this episode in the anime!" "No choice, just wait." "... Discontent is discontent. Everyone could only wait. And in this waiting, time finally approached September. Ding-dong. Midnight on September 1st. The much-delayed "Slam Dunk" finally updated! At the same time... Someone noticed that Xian Yu's new song had been released.

## Chapter 788: Until The End Of The World

Audiences, whether they had read the manga or not, all immediately took notice of the updates to "Slam Dunk"! "It's updated!" "They actually released two episodes!" "Awesome!" "This one's worth it!" "Even waiting another two days would be worth it!" "I've read the manga, this episode is iconic!" "Mitsui, here I come!" "... Although the connection between the manga and the anime is deep, the addition of voice actors, visuals, and music in anime makes it far more engaging than the manga, which is why many manga only explode in popularity after being adapted into anime. Therefore, even those who had read the manga were still full of anticipation for the anime! Of course, most were viewers who hadn't read the manga. Take Lu Bin, for instance. Lu Bin was a high school student from Chu Continent. He loved "Slam Dunk," and although he hadn't read the manga, he'd been spoiled by those who had. He knew Mitsui held a very high regard in the hearts of manga fans. About this, Lu Bin was doubtful. Because in the previous plot, Mitsui had already appeared. This guy with the long hair, surrounded by a bunch of delinquents, started a conflict with Sakuragi Hanamichi and others, beating Rukawa Kaede and his teammates until they were bloody. A total villain image! Anyway, Lu Bin couldn't bring himself to like a character like Mitsui and even disliked him a bit. Why then was Mitsui so revered in the hearts of manga fans? It must be because the character was redeemed later in the manga. Many works use this technique: starting with a disgusting villain and then redeeming them. This was one of Lu Bin's least favorite tropes. Yet, annoyingly, it worked. Many redeemed villains often ended up more popular than the heroes. About this, Lu Bin said: It's just the creators' tactics. Go ahead and redeem him, if I end up liking the character, then I'll concede defeat. With this subtle resistance, Lu Bin clicked on episode twenty-seven. This episode didn't involve any physical conflicts. The plot mainly consisted of verbal conflicts and Mitsui Hisashi's flashbacks. At first, Lu Bin sat with his arms crossed, a stance that

read "I'm just going to watch how you try to redeem him." However... When Lu Bin saw Mitsui getting injured while scoring for the team; When Lu Bin saw Mitsui in the hospital, looking lost because he couldn't compete; When Lu Bin saw Mitsui ignoring the doctor's advice, struggling with all his might to return to the court; When Lu Bin saw Mitsui standing outside the court, turning away lonely and melancholically; When Lu Bin saw... Mitsui's youthful memories came flooding in like a tide, silently but overwhelmingly stirring up tumultuous waves. The quiet room. Unknowingly, Lu Bin's crossed arms had dropped. With eyes slightly stinging, a sudden pang of sympathy stirred within him, Sympathy? Lu Bin suddenly shook his head vigorously! It's just Shadow's creation tactics! Realizing this, Lu Bin continuously reminded himself, as if brainwashing himself, still unwilling to easily accept the character's redemption! "Mitsui is a villain!" No matter how much you redeem him, that fact can't be changed! While Lu Bin was internally conflicted, the flashbacks and reality kept overlapping on the screen. "You've never actually given up on your love for basketball!" "It's you who is trapped in the past and can't get out!" Questioning and counter-questioning, arguments and struggles, the plot took a turn with the appearance of Coach Anzai. The door clicked open. In the glaring light, the coach stood there and said two words: "It's you." Mitsui's expression changed instantly. The young ace who had made a name for himself by leading his team from defeat to championship victory with his solo endeavor in the county finals, had received offers from prestigious basketball schools. Yet, he resolved to follow Coach Anzai to the obscure Shohoku... All because of the coach in front of him. Coach Anzai, the man he respected the most in his life. In a daze, Mitsui felt as if he was back on the court. Coach Anzai's teachings echoed again in his ears: "You mustn't give up hope until the last moment because the moment you give up, the game is over." At that time, he had picked up the basketball resolutely and charged into the crowd. ... In front of the screen. Lu Bin's face changed. His heart was churning like never before! It felt as if countless ants were crawling over his heart, a sensation that was slightly painful yet tingling. Then, The ants crawled over his head and skin, making his scalp tingle and his body break out in goosebumps! His eyes stung again. Hold on! It's all a trope! He desperately tried to stop that overwhelming feeling, but it was to no avail, as if something was choking his throat. Just like the once arrogant boy on screen, no matter what, he couldn't hide the injuries he suffered after leaving the court. That face, once filled with negativity and disdain, showed pain and regret for the first time. Trembling face, tears of self-reproach slid down the face and chin. Memories began to flash back again. In Lu Bin's desperately constrained emotions, a surging song suddenly erupted as if to pierce through his soul! "Until the end of the world, (Until The End Of The World) I won't part from you (I won't wish to be separated from you) I hoped, (Countless nights I wished) through thousands of nights (Made my wish) only the irretrievable time (Time that never returns) why does it shine so brightly? (Why is it so radiant?) ..." Like a dam releasing a flood, breaking through the last line of defense, Lu Bin's tears completely burst forth amidst the intense fluctuations in his chest! In the surging song, Mitsui knelt before the coach, his hands scarred, supporting the ground and sobbing uncontrollably: "Coach... I want to play basketball." Whether it was the influence of the song or the shock of the scene before him, Mitsui's sudden realization at that moment became a scene Lu Bin could never forget. Who hasn't made mistakes? Who hasn't taken detours? Who hasn't felt lost and disheartened? And who else, like him, would cast aside all dignity and pride for a distant, dazzling dream, to dive in recklessly once more? For the first time, Lu Bin completely fell in love with this character! And at this moment, there were countless Lu Bins shedding tears around the world! Even if they had read the manga and were mentally prepared, it was useless! When that song "Until The End of The World" played, nobody could remain indifferent! Let alone the many viewers who initially felt indifferent or even negative towards Mitsui, they were instantly

mesmerized in the blast of the last wave of the song! ... Tribes. The emotions brought by the song and Mitsui crazily spread! "Even if I read the manga, watching the animation again still made me cry, and I cried harder than when I read the manga!" "What is that song?" "The moment I heard it, I couldn't help but cry!" "This song is so tear-inducing!" "That insert song had just started one line, and I couldn't take it!" "Ah, I thought having read the manga and watching the animation wouldn't move me as much, but I was broken down a second time by this song!" "... " Meanwhile, Blogs also fell one after another! "Thank goodness I prepared tissues in advance!" "A prodigal who returns is more precious than gold, Mitsui is a real man!" "This song is so apt, willing to give up pride for a dream, well done!" "In the song, Mitsui kneeling didn't lose dignity, instead, he earned everyone's respect, not everyone has his courage to start over from scratch!" "I really like this song!" "This song is even better than 'I Really Want to Shout Out I Love You!'" "What's the song title?" "... " All netizens were shocked! Amidst this massive shock, finally, someone in the chat provided the song information: "This is Fish Papa's new song, titled 'Until The End of The World,' I've downloaded it!" The animation hadn't completely ended yet. Netizens were already rushing to open their music players! At the same time, The comment section of this song exploded! "The only song that makes me want to cry from the first line!" "This is Mitsui's exclusive BGM!" "Combined with the plot, this song made me cry terribly!" "Beautiful, so beautiful!" "Fish Papa's song must top the charts!" "This is one of the best songs among all the anime background music I've heard!" "I love basketball, I love Mitsui, Until The End of The World!" "... " No one has ever fully counted just how many fans of "Dunk" there are, but the fact that the download numbers for this song soared to the top of the seasonal charts is an undeniable fact! This isn't just from the song's own quality! It's also because it soared high together with the anime's popularity! In fact, Even some who hadn't seen the animation listened to this song, but some feelings are consistent, and some even became interested in watching "Dunk" after learning the background story of this song! Some thought so, and some actually did so. And when they saw the latest updates, they only fell deeper! For a time, The entire network was discussing Mitsui and this song! The long-missed line "Coach, I want to play basketball" swept across the screen again, even more tumultuous and fierce than before! Even... Due to countless topics and discussions, even the anime "Dunk" got even more popular!

#### Chapter 789: A Unique Fan Meeting

After dawn! News was flying everywhere! "Xian Yu Season Chart could win nine consecutive crowns!" "Dunk's Spirit: Until The End Of The World!" "Xian Yu's new song 'Until The End Of The World' is a huge hit!" "A song that has moved countless people to tears!" "Xian Yu creates textbook-level anime background music!" "Xian Yu has won nine consecutive crowns, can the tenth be far behind?" "... " Xian Yu was blatantly riding the wave of popularity, yet no one had anything to say against it. Not to mention his relationship with Shadow, just the quality of the songs he produced was enough to win everyone over! Regarding this. The industry was abuzz! "He's got 'Slam Dunk' fans on board the charting battle wagon too!" "I must say, Xian Yu's ability to write songs for film and anime themes is really strong. 'Slam Dunk' fans' admiration for this song easily secured its top spot on the September season chart!" "He's always very good at creating custom music!" "Wasn't 'The Seventh Chapter of Night' also a song that completely capitalized on the Sherlock Holmes trend? That time, it was the power of the Holmes fans that propelled the song, with the Three Bros fans seemingly in full agreement." "Riding on the popularity of dominant anime for charting is quite a clever strategy." "What are you joking about? Xian Yu didn't take any shortcuts. In fact, it's not as simple as you think; if his music didn't fit the theme of the work, it would have been pointless." "That's true." "If others tried to copy this tactic, they'd likely sink into a quagmire instead." "The

most typical example is 'The Black Emperor'. So many people have wanted to create theme music for that work, but over the years, hardly anyone has succeeded. Both the anime and TV drama versions keep using the original theme music created by two big names from Zhong Continent back in the day; fans simply don't accept anything else." "Few dare to touch the theme music of that work these days." "... Xian Yu's song was considered one of the custom music types. Everyone in the industry knew that custom music wasn't so simple; this kind of popularity wasn't something just anyone could ride on. Especially with top-tier works. One careless move and you might end up losing more than you bargained for. This was also why many people in the industry didn't think Xian Yu was taking shortcuts. What was more impressive to the industry was: Xian Yu had unwittingly won nine consecutive crowns! Although September hadn't ended yet, 'Until The End Of The World' had easily topped the charts on its first day, making it very unlikely for any other song to surpass its momentum afterward. And when Xian Yu declared his goal for twelve consecutive crowns, who could have imagined he would reach this point? Keep in mind. Xian Yu was formidable, but so were the maestros of the Qin, Qi, Chu, Yan, and Han states on Zhong Continent. Yet the reality was, in the nine months that started this year, many maestros had made their moves, but not one had been able to successfully end Xian Yu's streak for twelve consecutive crowns! "Even if Xian Yu's streak was broken in October, he would still have much to be proud of." Privately. A certain King of Singing spoke softly, with a hint of respect: "In the era of Blue Star's big merger, when top musicians from five continents competed on the same stage, topping any season chart is quite an accomplishment, let alone his continuous dominance over the season chart for nine months..." "I feel like no one can stop him in October either." A prominent music producer next to him spoke with certainty, "The real challenge for Xian Yu will probably be in November or even at the end-of-year Battle of the Gods." The King of Singing was curious, "I can understand the Battle of the Gods, but who in November?" The music producer lowered his voice, "I've heard some rumors that a top maestro from Blue Star will make a move in November." "Someone from Zhong Continent is aiming to take down Xian Yu before the Battle of the Gods?" "Not from Zhong Continent, but a man who has contended with Zhong Continent without falling short." The King of Singing's expression sharpened upon hearing this. ... As 'Until The End Of The World' successfully topped the charts, Lin Yuan let out a sigh of relief. He didn't need to release his backup song. Nine consecutive crowns were indeed a very impressive achievement, even Lin Yuan himself felt that the chart battles over the past half-year had not been easy. Thinking of taking a break, Lin Yuan skipped work and went straight home. However, on the way, Lin Yuan suddenly received a call from Sun Yaohuo. "Senior Yao Huo, is there something you need?" "I have good news for my junior!" "What's the good news?" "Our 'Plants vs. Zombies' game is officially going live on the Lang Yue gaming platform at seven o'clock tomorrow!" "Ah?" Lin Yuan had almost forgotten about this, but thinking about it, 'Plants vs. Zombies' should have been launched already, so this timing was actually quite late. "It was supposed to be launched earlier." Sun Yaohuo laughed, "But when it was about to go live, we encountered some issues during testing, which took some time to resolve. After that, there was the whole process of getting approvals, which also took a while." "Okay." Lin Yuan responded. This game was just a whim; he hadn't paid much attention to it, and hearing this news didn't stir any particular emotions in him. But on the other hand. It was, after all, the first game he had designed. If the game were to be successful, he could gain some fame, which did stirred a slight sense of anticipation in Lin Yuan. The next day. After Lin Yuan got up, he logged onto the Lang Yue gaming platform and searched for 'Plants vs. Zombies'. As expected, the game had gone live, and it cost ten yuan to download. However, since it had not been long since the game's launch, there weren't many downloads yet, and the comment section was sparse. People are usually cautious

about paying for games. He figured that over time, people would discover the charm of this game. Lin Yuan wasn't too concerned and downloaded the game to play for a while before setting it aside. Just then. Someone knocked on the door. Lin Yuan opened the door and saw his sister, Lin Yao, at the doorway. "Brother." "Sis." "I got my diploma today." "Diploma?" Lin Yuan smiled, "Congratulations on your graduation." Lin Yuan knew his sister had been busy with her thesis work recently, as they had discussed it a few times at family dinners, and it seemed she had successfully passed. "Yeah." "So, what do you want to do after graduation?" Lin Yuan was enthusiastic, showing interest in offering advice, "You majored in painting, are you interested in drawing comics, or do you prefer traditional painting?" Lin Yao shook her head, "I don't want to." "You don't like it?" "I don't have the talent." She rolled her eyes, "You have a friend! He's really good at drawing. I've compared his work with mine, and it's a level I'll never reach in this lifetime." Lin Yuan: "... The influence of family on children is indeed immense. "Then what do you want to do?" "I'll tell you when I've figured it out," said his sister. "Right now, all I want to do is chase stars." "Who are you chasing?" "Jiang Kui. I'm going to her fan meet-up." "Wait a moment." Lin Yuan closed the door and made a phone call. Twenty minutes later. In the Lin family's villa. Jiang Kui and Lin Yao sat staring at each other. It was a fan meeting like no other.

#### Chapter 790: The water is too deep, you can't grasp it

No matter for Jiang Kui or for Lin Yao, this fan meeting was destined to be unforgettable. When she left the Lin family's place, Jiang Kui looked utterly bewildered. Who am I? Where am I? What am I doing? If it weren't for the selfie with Lin Yao on her phone, Jiang Kui would have thought it was all a dream. Right. It seemed she had made plans with Zhao Ying Ge today, to hang out at her place. Getting into the car, Jiang Kui set off. Half an hour later, Jiang Kui arrived at Zhao Ying Ge's home. Zhao Ying Ge, dressed in a silk red pajama set that left little to the imagination, greeted Jiang Kui with a complaint as she opened the door: "I thought you stood me up, why did it take you so long to get here?" The relationship between Yu Dynasty's singers depended on Xian Yu, sometimes good, sometimes bad. When things were good, the girls were like besties, occasionally meeting in private. Today, the two of them were on very good terms, sitting together in the same little boat of friendship. "Sorry." Jiang Kui stuck out her tongue and explained, "I had to make a last-minute trip to Teacher Admirable Fish's place, which caused some delay." Boom! Upon hearing this, Zhao Ying Ge seemed as if she had been struck by lightning, standing frozen with her normally large eyes now bulging, the phrase "went to Teacher Admirable Fish's house" echoing ceaselessly in her mind. Jiang Kui stamped her foot: "Let's not talk about that, I need to use the restroom." "Take your time thinking!" "I'm asking where your bathroom is!" "Figure it out yourself!" Zhao Ying Ge said coldly. The little boat of friendship had just capsized. Eventually, Jiang Kui still found the bathroom and had a huge relief. Coming out, feeling refreshed, Jiang Kui looked up to meet a pair of deep, dark eyes. Jiang Kui got a fright: "What's your problem, Zhao Ying Ge? You actually hang around sniffing while someone's using the bathroom?" "Did you really go to Teacher Admirable Fish's place?" "Yes." Jiang Kui thought back to the awkward eye contact with Lin Yao at Teacher Admirable Fish's home, her expression becoming complex. ... I've never been there! Zhao Ying Ge felt sour inside. As far as she remembered, only Sun Yaohuo had been to Teacher Admirable Fish's place within the Yu Dynasty. Suddenly, she stepped forward and grabbed Jiang Kui's hand: Jiang Kui stepped back half a step, her face wary: "What are you trying to do?" "You have designs on Teacher Admirable Fish too, don't you?" "I don't!" Jiang Kui's face immediately flushed red. Zhao Ying Ge shook her head: "Kui, don't blame me for being blunt, but because you're young, you don't understand, you're not as clear on these things as your sister here." Jiang Kui: "... We're about the

same age. If you had to say what's bigger about you than me... Jiang Kui glanced down at her own flat chest, then looked back up at the other's Mount Everest, sighing inwardly. "Kui." Zhao Ying Ge tightened her grip on Jiang Kui's hand, speaking earnestly: "Listen to your sister's advice, a lot of things are illusionary, the waters here are deep, you're too young to handle it, let sister take care of it for you." Jiang Kui: "???" You taking care of it for me, sure. I think you're just daydreaming. With a huff, Jiang Kui shook off Zhao Ying Ge and said with a pout, "Although I also like Teacher Admirable Fish, my liking doesn't quite have the same yellow trashy quality as yours. I went to Teacher Admirable Fish's place because her little sister is a fan of my songs." It's the influence of the family environment. Jiang Kui was completely disinterested in romance. After staring at Jiang Kui for a few seconds, Zhao Ying Ge revealed a joyful smile, and the ship of friendship made its return, although she still felt a sour twinge about Teacher Admirable Fish's sister liking Jiang Kui: "Come on, beauty, log in, let's game!" "So you called me over just to play games?" "You haven't played it, you don't understand, this game is so much fun. Sun Yaohuo recommended it to me. At first, when he said this game was very interesting, I didn't believe him, but once I started, I was totally hooked, I couldn't stop!" "What game?" Jiang Kui followed Zhao Ying Ge to the computer and then saw the name of the game, "Plants vs. Zombies." "Is it fun?" "Give it a try." Ten minutes later, Jiang Kui sat in front of the computer, a screen with ghastly green font appeared, accompanied by a spine-chilling laugh: "The zombies have eaten your brains!" Jiang Kui was startled. Was this damn thing actually a horror game? Her body was small, but her spirit was defiant. Another round! Meanwhile, next to her. Zhao Ying Ge was also trying hard to clear levels; she had several computers at her home. Before long. The same words appeared on her screen too. "Brains eaten by zombies again." Zhao Ying Ge said in frustration, "This level is really hard, but the game is so much fun." "It is fun, but what about the team-up we talked about? Don't bull me just because I'm not a bookworm, how are we supposed to team up in a single-player game?" "Just wait." Zhao Ying Ge turned her head and pulled back the curtains. In the pitch-black room, Zhao Ying Ge said with a smile: "Team up!" Jiang Kui: "...". Another hour passed. The two of them became full-blown internet addicts, thoroughly enjoying themselves, their cheerful laughter echoed through the room, and they were constantly sharing their gaming insights and experiences with each other. "How come this zombie is shielded by doors and windows from bullets!" "Doors and windows are nothing, this zombie is even wearing armor!" "This one's awesome!" "Ah, Zhao Ying Ge, you're so dirty!" "What are you thinking? Who is dirty here? I'm talking about that dancing zombie, it's clearly doing Teacher Admirable Fish's Moonwalk. Could it be that it's based on Teacher Admirable Fish himself? I just wonder if they paid the royalties, there's even a damn zombie doing backup vocals!" "Hahahahahaha!" "What's so funny?" "Don't you think that the zombie doing backup vocals for the Moonwalk zombie looks a lot like Sun Yaohuo? Hahahahahaha!" "Pfft, it really does!" "Was this game recommended by Sun Yaohuo? Could it be that he paid to make it himself?" "He wouldn't know the first thing about games." "...". The two were completely immersed in the game. Besides the main campaign, they also discovered the adventure mode, which included many interesting mini-games. It was different from the campaign mode, but it was just as refreshing and highly playable! Of course. Every time the zombies ate their brains, they sighed in dissatisfaction, then rallied with even more determination. At the same time. Online, platforms had set up some small ads to promote the game. Soon, people began to discover the appeal of "Plants vs. Zombies." For just ten bucks to download, there were always people willing to give it a try, and once they did, many quickly became addicted to it. Fun! Fresh! And a little thrilling! After playing the game, some sharing enthusiasts immediately began passionately recommending it to their friends! And so it

went. One told ten. Ten told a hundred. As more and more people discovered "Plants vs. Zombies," the game finally began to gain popularity online!