

F. University 601

Chapter 601: ACM International College Student Programming Competition

The ACM International Collegiate Programming Contest is clearly a competition for college students worldwide.

But there must be a quota for the competition.

With so many higher education institutions in the country, Mist City Arts and Science University, as a private institution, is practically unranked.

There are quite a number of high-ranking higher institutions in the field of computer science.

Not to mention the likes of Qinghua and Yancheng University, other universities such as Haicheng University of Transportation, Zhecheng University, Huazhong University of Science and Technology are top-notch computer science institutions.

"I wanted to say earlier, in the ACM International Collegiate Programming Contest we can only send three teams from our country."

Xu Bin replied.

"Just three?"

Ding Yue frowned upon hearing this.

Goodness me!

With only three spots, it might not be so easy for Mist City Arts and Science University to secure one.

After all, universities like Qinghua, Yancheng University, Haicheng University of Transportation, Zhecheng University, Guangcheng University, Huazhong University of Science and Technology will definitely be competing for these three spots.

"Haicheng University of Transportation and Zhecheng University are both powerful competitors, both have won the ACM International College Student Programming Contest before!"

Xu Bin added.

"Ah, this..." Ding Yue felt the difficulty had increased. He looked at Xu Bin and asked again, "Bin, are you really confident?"

"Ahem, I am confident!"

Xu Bin coughed lightly, "Didn't I design Big White's Human-like Brain Intelligent Programming? I'll use this programming technology in the preliminary competition, and hopefully, it should secure us a spot."

"That makes sense, your Human-like Brain Intelligent Programming technology is quite impressive!" Ding Yue immediately found renewed confidence in his good friend Xu Bin, "So what is the process of this ACM contest?"

"Firstly, you need a team, usually made up of no more than three computer programming members," Xu Bin replied.

"Have you found the other two yet?" Ding Yue asked.

Xu Bin immediately nodded, "Yes, we have many talents in our Computer Science Department. You already know Chen Jun, right?"

Ding Yue knew Chen Jun, who was a helpful assistant when Bin was writing various programs.

Xu Bin once mentioned that the most promising student in the Computer Science Department was Chen Jun, who possesses a high talent for computer science.

"And who's the last person?"

Ding Yue asked.

Usually, it's a three-person team, Bin surely wouldn't go against the tide and only have two people? That would certainly be at a disadvantage.

"Another member of my computer team is Ouyang Chen, who is adept at cracking various program flaws. He's suitable for the ACM contest."

Xu Bin shrugged and said with a smile.

Ouyang Chen?

Ding Yue hadn't heard of him, but he didn't often come across students with compound surnames. Since he was selected as a team member by Xu Bin, there was no doubt that he must be highly skilled.

"As long as the team is settled, the first step is to see if we can secure a spot in the national preliminary competition."

Ding Yue carefully analyzed the situation of the ACM contest, finding it difficult for Mist City Arts and Science University to get one of the three spots.

But considering Bin's possession of the Human-like Brain Intelligent Programming Technology, there might be a chance.

"So Bin, have you guys registered?" Ding Yue asked curiously.

"I have already registered and submitted all the computer programming technical information of our school to the domestic committee."

Xu Bin smiled and said, "How could I miss such a big competition!"

"You're very efficient. All right, then. I look forward to hearing good news from you," Ding Yue looked forward to.

...

Yancheng.

The Office of the National Committee of ACM International Collegiate Programming Competition.

"Chen, how many universities have registered for ACM this year?" A member of the committee and a professor asked in the office.

"27 universities, 8 more than the last time," Chen answered, then looked at Liu, "There's a particularly interesting university."

"Oh? Has it caught your discerning eye, Chen?" Liu asked curiously.

Chen nodded instantly: "Indeed. It's a private university. Have you heard about Mist City Arts and Science University?"

"Mist City Arts and Science University?"

Liu muttered, feeling it sounded familiar as if he had heard of it somewhere before.

A moment later, Liu sighed: "Oh, is it the one that has established a cooperative relationship with the Yancheng University's Artificial Intelligence Science Department? I heard their computer department at Mist City Arts and Science University is quite strong."

"They must have some skills, or else how could they collaborate with Yancheng University's Artificial Intelligence Science Department?" Chen nodded.

"Interesting, this is the first time I've seen a private university participating in the ACM in all these years. Can it compete with those Double First Class universities?" Liu joked: "I assume that Haicheng University of Transportation and Zhecheng University have also registered as usual this year?"

"Yes!"

Chen glanced at the computer program materials submitted by Mist City Arts and Science University in the email: "Human-like Brain Intelligent Programming?"

"What?" After hearing Chen's murmur, Liu looked over curiously.

"The computer program design submitted by Mist City Arts and Science University," Chen replied.

The ACM domestic preliminary selection is different from the ACM competition method. Universities submit computer program designs, and the Committee Office evaluates them. Ultimately, the merits of the computer program designs will determine the three quotas.

The design submitted by Mist City Arts and Science University was one of Xu Bin's previous works - Big White's Human-like Brain Computer Program design.

This is a computer programming design with a strong orientation towards artificial intelligence and unquestionably of immense difficulty.

This immediately caught the attention of Chen and Liu.

Then Liu quickly called over the other computer professors in the office, and everyone took a look at Mist City Arts and Science University's Human-like Brain Intelligent Program.

"The ability to design a program with this kind of logic chain demands solving countless difficult program bugs. Such talent is rare!"

A computer professor reviewed the computer program design materials (Human-like brain intelligent programming) submitted by Mist City Arts and Science University.

"As I recall, only Yancheng University conducts research in this field," another computer professor stated.

"Zhang was right just now. To be able to design such a program requires resolving countless difficult design problems. The ACM competition requires team members to collaborate under strict scrutiny from multiple expert judges, classify the difficulty of programming problems, infer the requirements, design the testing platform, and build a software system, all to ultimately solve the problem successfully," Liu sighed.

"What do you all think?"

Chen looked at the other computer professors in the Committee Office again.

Everyone either nodded or showed their approval of Mist City Arts and Science University's computer program design from their expressions.

Seeing this, Chen felt reassured: "Well, we can confirm the three places in the upcoming meeting."

Almost simultaneously, universities worldwide, from various countries, registered for the ACM International Collegiate Programming Competition.

After all, the ACM aims to unite educators, researchers, and practitioners worldwide in the field of computer science to carry out joint professional exchange activities, share resources, and solve industry challenges.

With its absolute leadership position, the ACM consistently strives to implement the highest industry standards, recognize outstanding technical talents, strengthen overall team building in the computer industry, and provide lifelong learning, career development, and networking opportunities to its members, supporting them in making significant progress in their respective professional areas.

If a university can become the overall champion at ACM, its computer capabilities can gain recognition globally to some extent.

Therefore, all the prestigious universities, such as Moscow State University, University of Melbourne, Stanford University, California Technology University, Prague Charles University, Johns Hopkins University, and the up-and-coming talent of Mist City Arts and Science University, are all actively preparing for the competition.

Chapter 602: Why are they all beauties?

Three days later.

The computer science team from Mist City Arts and Science University successfully received the notification from the ACM International College Student Programming Competition's domestic committee.

The [Human Brain-Like Intelligent Program] submitted by team members Xu Bin, Chen Jun, and Ouyang Chen had successfully attracted the attention of the professors on the competition committee.

And in the end, one of the three competition slots was awarded to Mist City Arts and Science University.

"Hahaha, Yue, we've secured our spot in the competition!"

Ding Yue was in his usual workflow in his office as the university's president, when Xu Bin burst in with laughter.

In the past few days, securing a spot in the ACM competition was the most important matter for the computer science department at Mist City Arts and Science University.

Ding Yue had been following it closely.

Although he had great confidence in Xu Bin, it was uncertain how the competition committee would decide.

After all, Ding Yue didn't have such connections with the domestic competition committee, so much so that he couldn't even get a hint about their decision.

They could only wait for the group of professors from the competition committee to make their decision.

It was indeed a fluctuating factor whether they preferred to give it to prestigious domestic universities or a private one.

When Bin announced that they had won the spot, the stone in Ding Yue's heart settled down, and he immediately asked, "What about the other two spots?"

"The ACM domestic competition committee has already announced that one spot goes to Haicheng University of Transportation and the other to Northwestern University of Science and Technology," Xu Bin replied.

"Haicheng University of Transportation was expected, but I didn't expect the other spot would go to Northwestern University of Science and Technology instead of Zhecheng University."

Ding Yue remembered the initial discussion about the ACM competition, where he thought the most promising chances belonged to Haicheng University of Transportation and Zhecheng University.

Indeed, Haicheng University of Transportation secured one of the spots as expected, whereas Zhecheng University didn't participate in the ACM competition this year.

"Northwestern University of Science and Technology is pretty good too, after all, it's the strongest university in the field of computer science in the northwest region!" Xu Bin's evaluation of Northwestern University of Science and Technology was quite high.

However, it's an institute in the northwestern region, and compared to coastally located colleges like Haicheng, its strength would be somewhat diminished.

Haicheng University of Transportation is among the top universities in the country, with comprehensive strength and an extremely high-ranking computer science department.

"So, are Haicheng University of Transportation and Northwestern University of Science and Technology our main competitors?" Ding Yue curiously asked.

"No," Xu Bin immediately shook his head, "The three of our universities will compete together in the ACM competition, aiming to win the global championship! In fact, our enemy is those prestigious foreign colleges that are strong in computer science."

"Sounds like a lot of pressure."

If Ding Yue were to look at the competition in a global context, it doesn't seem easy to win the ACM International College Student Programming Competition.

Moscow State University, University of Melbourne, Stanford University, California Technology University, Prague Charles University, Johns Hopkins University, Nanyang Technological University and other schools are all pretty strong in computer science.

Moreover, without a doubt, all of these institutions will also participate in this year's ACM competition.

"Yue, this is our first time competing with institutions from all over the world. If we can make it through, it will certainly boost our morale and reputation!" Xu Bin also clearly understands the significance of participating in the ACM competition this time.

Whether the computer science department of Mist City Arts and Science University can become famous overnight depends on this ACM competition.

During the chat with Xu Bin, Ding Yue checked the list of participating institutions announced by the ACM international competition committee online. After inhaling deeply, he said to Xu Bin, "Moscow State University, Stanford University, California Technology University, Johns Hopkins University, these are all renowned universities in the world. Bin, can we do this?"

Honestly speaking, when it comes to overall strength, any university on the list announced by the ACM International Competition Committee could easily outshine Mist City Arts and Science University.

Ding Yue felt a little doubtful.

I hope they aren't just participating in the ACM competition as a formality!

"Yue, don't be intimidated by the names of these universities. Yes, they are indeed among the top universities in the world, but in the field of computer science, we at Mist City Arts and Science University are not necessarily inferior to them!" Xu Bin was very spirited.

Listening to Xu Bin's words, Ding Yue found some truth in them. Although they couldn't surpass foreign colleges in overall strength, they did have the highly competent Xu Bin in the field of computer science, who was capable of challenging these international institutions!

For a moment, Ding Yue's confidence was boosted by Xu Bin's high morale: "Good, then it's up to you guys when the competition will start?"

"By the end of December, so we have more than a month to prepare."

Xu Bin replied.

"Okay, prepare well. Whether we can shine internationally depends on you." With renewed confidence, Ding Yue expressed his hopes to Xu Bin.

At that time, students of Mist City Arts and Science University learned about their participation in the ACM International College Student Programming Competition.

Because of this, the students were excited, claiming how classy it was for their alma mater, the Mist City Arts and Science University, to participate in an international competition.

"Did you hear that our computer science department is qualified to participate in the ACM?"

"Holy shit! That's pretty impressive!"

"As a freshman in the computer science department, I feel very proud and honored. Our seniors are indeed brilliant. I must strive to be as good."

Chapter 603: Why are they all beauties?

"Wait a minute, there are senior girls in the Computer Science department?"

"Hahaha, what a shocker!"

"Our Computer Science class is all guys."

"There are girls in the Computer Science department, right?"

"Asking because I have no clue, what's ACM?"

"ACM, or ICPC, is an International College Student Programming Competition, where leading programmer teams from universities around the globe compete each year. Without a doubt, those who participate are the best programmers!"

"Fellow Computer Science majors, we are future great programmers."

"Uh, aren't we destined to be programmers working until midnight?"

"So the question arrives, are there senior girls in the Computer Science department?"

"In many universities, the Computer Science department is mostly male. Few girls choose to be programmers. As for senior girls in our school, wouldn't that be the sophomores? Are there really any girls majoring in Computer Science in the sophomore class?"

Students from Mist City Arts and Science University quickly derailed the discussion topic.

It started with a soul-searching question from a student in the group chat: Are there senior girls in the Computer Science department?

Soon, students from the entire school began the discussion, in various student chat groups, as well as on the official forum and other social media platforms.

Eventually, after some sophomore guys spilled the beans, the perplexed students of Mist City Arts and Science University got their answer: there really is a senior girl in the Computer Science department.

But!

There's only one!

That's right!

Just one!

Among the hundreds of students in the 2020 class of the Computer Science department, i.e., the current sophomore class, there is only one girl.

At this moment.

In the girls' dormitory of the Computer Science department, Zhao Xia, seeing various WeChat groups and the official school forum all discussing her, couldn't help but chuckle at herself.

"Xia, you're our only senior girl in the Computer Science department. The whole school is talking about it."

"By next September, the three of us will be senior girls too."

"Right, right, next year, I'll be a senior girl too."

This is a four-person girls' dormitory with Zhao Xia, a sophomore Computer Science student, being the only girl in her class.

The other three are freshmen this year, also in the Computer Science department.

Initially, Zhao Xia was the only one living in this room. After this year's recruitment, the Computer Science department has added three more girls.

Since there were more enrolments this year, the dormitory allocation could not be as liberal as the previous year. After all, arranging accommodations for more than thirty thousand students in a way that satisfies their needs and does not waste the dormitories was a challenge. So, after obtaining Zhao Xia's consent, the school placed these three new girls in the same room.

These four students represent all the girls in the two years of the Computer Science department at Mist City Arts and Science University.

Zhao Xia is studying software design. Over the past year, her grades have continuously improved, and she has gained certain software development skills.

But Zhao Xia knows that among her sophomore classmates in the Computer Science department, there are many who are much more capable than her.

Talents like Xu Bin, Chen Jun, and Ouyang Chen naturally wouldn't need any more mention. They are the three best students in the Computer Science department.

This time at the ACM International College Student Programming Competition, Zhao Xia hopes they can achieve a good result.

Thus, Zhao Xia, as the only senior girl in the Computer Science department of Mist City Arts and Science University, sends her best wishes to the team participating in the ACM competition.

Not only Zhao Xia, the only senior girl in the Computer Science department.

Even students from other departments are cheering for Xu Bin and his team, creating plenty of promotional items.

For example, students from the Film and Media department even produced a support video compiling the heartfelt wishes of students from all departments across the school for Xu Bin's three-person team.

Almost everyone at Mist City Arts and Science University is aware of the Computer Science department team's eligibility to participate in the ACM competition.

However, as the ACM competition is not very popular online outside computer science circles, there has been little discussion about it.

But.

The buzz of Mist City Arts and Science University online was in no way diminished recently.

Ever since the official release of "Blue and White Porcelain" by Lin Zhirou, a music student from the Arts department on Double Eleven, the song has been trending almost every day.

The reason is simple, the song is just too popular.

The sales have been incredibly explosive!

The morning of November 21st.

Ten days have passed since the release of "Blue and White Porcelain".

As the principal of Mist City Arts and Science University, Ding Yue is constantly swamped with all kinds of matters big and small. Thus, after following the first three days of sales for "Blue and White Porcelain", he hadn't paid much attention to it afterwards.

"Principal Ding, big sis Jia is here."

Wen Ruohan had been busy in the office in the morning. When she returned from a trip outside, she brought An Yujia with her.

"Miss An?"

Upon seeing An Yujia, Ding Yue immediately thought this must be about a matter from the Feiyue Group needing consultation or decision.

"Principal Ding, "Blue and White Porcelain" has broken fifty million in sales!"

The moment An Yujia walked into the office, she reported this achievement directly to Principal Ding.

"How much?"

Upon hearing this, Ding Yue involuntarily blinked, disbelieving, and asked.

"More than fifty million!"

An Yujia said, boasting a confident smile.

"Fifty...fifty million..."

Ding Yue couldn't help but gasp.

The previous two songs had sold in the tens of millions, but "Blue and White Porcelain" had exceeded fifty million in just ten days?

Each sale equates to one yuan, which means that in only ten days, Lin Zhirou's "Blue and White Porcelain" has earned Mist City Arts and Science University fifty million yuan!

"Oh my God!"

Upon hearing this, Wen Ruohan also exclaimed incredulously, "I haven't been following the sales of "Blue and White Porcelain" for a while, and the total has actually skyrocketed like this?"

Wen Ruohan understood—songs that exceed ten million in sales are all major hits.

"The sales are excellent, breaking all kinds of records for new songs. It's safe to say, student Lin ZhiRou's "Blue and White Porcelain" has become a nationwide sensation!"

An Yujia said excitedly.

As for the last song that swept across the country, An Yujia could hardly remember what it was.

"Nationwide sensation?"

Ding Yue muttered. How come he hadn't sensed this?

If this was true, shouldn't every city be blaring "Blue and White Porcelain" in every shop lining the streets?

But Ding Yue hadn't heard "Blue and White Porcelain" being played in any shop.

Ah!

Ding Yue then realized, ever since he attended the NTS Gala in Yancheng, he'd been cooped up in his university, never leaving the campus.

That explains it!

Besides, music sweeping across the streets belongs to a bygone era. Ding Yue felt he might be stuck in the wrong time.

This is 2021!

So, Ding Yue pulled out his phone and first opened TikTok.

Oh boy!

Just as he opened TikTok, a "beauty" short video popped up, with "Blue and White Porcelain" as the background music.

When he switched to another short video, it was still the BGM of "Blue and White Porcelain", but this time it wasn't the original Lin Zhirou's version, but a cover by somebody else.

Ding Yue switched between several TikTok short videos back and forth.

"Why are all the videos of these beauties? Has TikTok become so vulgar...no, it's probably because I'm watching too much, hence the recommendation. No problem then."

Ding Yue wondered, the vast majority of the short videos he swiped through used "Blue and White Porcelain" as their BGM.

"Miss An, has our song been licensed for use on the TikTok platform?" As he continued to scroll through TikTok, Ding Yue looked up and asked An Yujia.

If TikTok is using "Blue and White Porcelain" as BGM, it obviously counts as commercial use. And if it's for commercial use, then they definitely have to pay copyright fees.

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"Principal Ding, we have negotiated the licensing fee with TikTok and signed an authorization agreement," An Yujia promptly replied.

"Oh, good." Ding Yue gave a slight nod, figuring that since it was already authorized, there should be no issue.

Otherwise, if TikTok had arbitrarily used Lin Zhirou's "Blue and White Porcelain" for commercial BGM, it would have undoubtedly been an infringement.

Ding Yue had already prepared to let Huang go through another legal battle.

However, on second thought, with a company as significant as TikTok backing them, it's unlikely they would infringe on music rights. He should have thought to ask if they had negotiated the rights. An Yujia just hadn't had the chance to tell him yet.

Aside from most of the "beauties" on TikTok using "Blue and White Porcelain" as their background BGM, Ding Yue opened another app.

It was Bilibili, the one that both Huang and his sister, Ding Xiaoyou, liked to use!

As a content creator, Ding Yue preferred to check on Bilibili if there were any news about "Blue and White Porcelain".

Only then could he verify if "Blue and White Porcelain" was genuinely as popular nationwide as An Yujia had claimed.

He wasn't sure if it was due to "big data" or what, but as soon as Ding Yue opened Bilibili, the first recommended video was about "Blue and White Porcelain".

[Music Major Analyzes the Lyrics and Tune of the Hit Song "Blue and White Porcelain"!]

[Viral Across the Web, Have You Heard This Traditional Song?]

["Blue and White Porcelain", Ten Days and Over Fifty Million in Sales, Why is it So Popular?]

[UP Main Covering "Blue and White Porcelain", Come in and Listen~]

Looking at the increasing number of Bilibili videos about "Blue and White Porcelain", Ding Yue now believed it was indeed popular.

He didn't notice before because he rarely wasted time on mobile apps like TikTok or Bilibili.

"It seems it really is popular."

A smile unwittingly spread across Ding Yue's face as he turned to An Yujia.

In that case, it seems that Mist City Arts and Science University's Lin Zhirou, who is a music major, has been quite successful.

"Indeed, Principal Ding. Our student Lin Zhirou is quite popular now, many netizens call her a new generation's musical talent," An Yujia said, nodding with a smile.

Without a doubt, after the great success of "Blue and White Porcelain", the most economically benefited was Ding Yue's Feiyue Media, and the most popular naturally became Lin Zhirou.

After all, Lin Zhirou was the one who performed "Blue and White Porcelain", impressing netizens with her singing skills and the song itself.

"New generation's musical talent?"

Hearing these words, Ding Yue replied with a composed smile, "Not a bad image. Miss An, you can have Feiyue Media build this image for Lin Zhirou. In the future, she may become one of the top musical artists in Feiyue Media."

An Yujia made a mental note of Principal Ding's words. Although the media entertainment business wasn't as profitable as media film and television, the market was extensive.

For a singer as beautiful and talented as Lin Zhirou, with one good song after another, her future potential is undoubtedly immense.

Although An Yujia hadn't managed a media entertainment business before, ever since joining the Feiyue Group, she had taken over all of its departments and formulated a proper plan for the development of Feiyue Media.

With Lin Zhirou opening up the music market, the motion picture market had also been set on a promising track with "Super Combat Team".

As for the Film and Television College's "A Bite of Xia Country", the documentary had received excellent reviews.

So far, all of Feiyue Media's operations had been quite profitable and well-received. Few media companies in the country had managed to achieve both at the same time.

An Yujia also believed, as Principal Ding had mentioned before, that if Feiyue Media expands, it could provide countless employment and development opportunities for students from relevant majors at Mist City Arts and Science University.

An Yujia once again appreciated Principal Ding's saying, "Rather than improving employment, create employment".

It was quite reasonable!

"Regarding Feiyue Media, Miss An, you might want to visit the Art Department, the Film and Television College, and other departments more often. I believe that there will definitely be a lot of talent among this year's new students," Ding Yue reminded An Yujia.

Feiyue Group, striving to grow bigger and provide more funding for Mist City Arts and Science University, needs to continuously look for exceptional students in various professional fields from Mist City Arts and Science University.

With proper training, they will surely shine in the future.

Like the mechanical engineering students Ding Yue is currently training - Tong Yihang and his team.

However.

Ding Yue still felt it was not enough.

Looking at Mist City Arts and Science University's Mechanical Engineering department, which was currently the most advanced, there were only a few noteworthy individuals like Tong Yihang and Liu Tiefei.

"The road to building and developing Mist City Arts and Science University is long and arduous!"

Ding Yue silently lamented in his heart.

As Ding Yue and An Yujia discussed matters about Mist City Arts and Science University and Feiyue Group, An Yujia's phone suddenly rang.

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"Principal Ding, I have a phone call, excuse me."

An Yujia took out her mobile phone and seeing that the caller was neither a familiar person nor marked as a harassing call, hesitated for a moment before deciding to answer the call.

"Okay."

Ding Yue nodded, indicating that An Yujia could answer the call.

So An Yujia stood up, took her mobile phone and very politely walked out into the corridor outside the principal's office before answering the call.

"Hello, how can I help you?"

"Hello, are you the person in charge at Feiyue Media?" A middle-aged woman's voice came from the other end of the phone.

An Yujia was stunned for a moment, then answered, "Yes, I'm An Yujia, the CEO of Feiyue Group and I'm also responsible for the business of Feiyue Media. May I know who is speaking?"

An Yujia had no idea who the caller might be, as it was impossible to tell from the voice.

Moreover, the caller did not introduce herself.

However, she was very precise in seeking herself out, that is, the "person in charge of Feiyue Media" she mentioned.

At this stage, the Feiyue Group's business is not too broad, so An Yujia is indeed responsible for many matters of Feiyue Media.

"Hello Miss An, I am Li Hongyan, the director and producer of NTS." The middle-aged woman on the other end of the phone finally introduced herself.

Li Hongyan?

An Yujia felt that this name seemed a bit familiar, as if she had heard it before, or even seen it somewhere.

And the woman worked for NTS?

An Yujia's first reaction was whether Li Hongyan was looking for Principal Ding, and because she did not have Principal Ding's private number, she called her instead.

But something didn't seem right!

The caller had asked if she was the person in charge of Feiyue Media, so it was obvious that she was contacting her regarding Feiyue Media.

"Hello Director Li, may I...wait, are you the director of the annual Spring Festival Gala, Director Li?" Just as An Yujia was about to ask what she was seeking her for, she suddenly remembered.

Li Hongyan!

The director of the Spring Festival Gala of NTS in Xia Country for several years in a row!

The reason An Yujia was able to remember so quickly was because she used to watch the Spring Festival Gala every year when she was abroad during the Spring Festival, the most important festival in Xia Country.

And for the past several years, the majority of the Spring Festival Gala programs were directed by Li Hongyan.

No wonder An Yujia felt that she had seen this name somewhere. Didn't she see it when she watched the Spring Festival Gala?

"That's me." The middle-aged woman on the phone chuckled in response.

"Oh my goodness, so it really is Director Li. I used to watch the Spring Festival Gala every year when I was abroad. The recent ones you directed were quite good."

An Yujia exclaimed excitedly.

"Thank you, Miss An. The reason I'm seeking you out is to discuss something about this year's 2022 Spring Festival Gala."

Director Li Hongyan said with a smile.

"Ah? What is it?" An Yujia was so excited that she didn't know what Director Li Hongyan was referring to when she said she was seeking her for something about the 2022 Spring Festival Gala.

"Well, your company has a music artist named Lin Zhirou who recently released a traditional song called 'Blue and White Porcelain,' correct?"

Director Li Hongyan asked.

"Yes, that's true." On hearing this, An Yujia most likely guessed the reason for Director Li Hongyan's call.

"In just ten days' time, this song has become a phenomenal success throughout the country. It's a high-quality song that perfectly combines traditional and modern pop music, which I personally really like, and is loved by countless listeners. So, I would like to invite Lin Zhirou to participate in the rehearsals for the 2022 Spring Festival Gala."

Director Li Hongyan explained her intentions.

Wow!

An Yujia felt quite excited at the news.

She didn't expect that the director of the Spring Festival Gala would personally call to invite Lin Zhirou to the Spring Festival Gala. This was definitely good news.

However!

For such important matters, An Yujia couldn't make a decision on her own and respond to Director Li Hongyan without consultation.

"Director Li, thank you for giving Lin Zhirou this opportunity. I will discuss this matter with Lin Zhirou immediately and reply to you as soon as possible. Does that sound okay?"

Once An Yujia had calmed her inner excitement, she spoke to Li Hongyan very composedly.

"Alright Miss An, we'll wait for your decision, but we need it as soon as possible," Director Li reminded her, "Because we're already starting to prepare the show."

Now that it was November, more than a month away from New Year's Day, and the Lunar New Year of Xia Country was approaching, it was perfectly reasonable that NTS was starting preparations for the Spring Festival Gala.

"Understood!"

After hanging up the phone, An Yujia took a deep breath, then immediately turned around and headed for the principal's office.

For such matters, An Yujia would definitely report to Principal Ding right away.

Moreover, it would ultimately be up to Principal Ding to decide if Lin Zhirou would accept the invitation to attend the Spring Festival Gala's dress rehearsal and related activities.

"Principal Ding."

Upon entering the principal's office, An Yujia immediately called out.

"Hm?"

Ding Yue had been looking down at his phone, but when he saw An Yujia returning from her call, he lifted his head and asked, "What's up? Did something happen on that call?"

Ding Yue only made a rough guess.

As it turned out, he guessed right.

An Yujia nodded and said, "Principal Ding, that was Director Li Hongyan from NTS."

"Director Li Hongyan from NTS?" Ding Yue didn't have a deep impression of her and might not even recognize her without mentioning her identity.

After all, Director Liu was the only one he was familiar with at NTS.

"What, is it about the second season of 'A Bite of Xia Country'?" Ding Yue asked, then muttered to himself, "That's not right, Zhu Youzhao, the head of the Film and Television Department, should be the one handling this."

A quick shake of her head from An Yujia: "No, Principal Ding, this Li Hongyan, she is...."

Before An Yujia could finish speaking, Wen Ruohan suddenly exclaimed, "My, isn't Director Li Hongyan the head director for the Spring Festival Gala?"

"Huh?"

Ding Yue paused, then turned to look at An Yujia.

An Yujia nodded.

"The head director of the Spring Festival Gala at NTS?" Ding Yue became even more confused. Why would such a person seek out An Yujia: "What did she want with you?"

"Well, Principal Ding, Lin Zhirou's song 'Blue and White Porcelain' has become a huge hit, and Director Li really likes it. She feels it carries significant meaning, so she wants to invite Lin Zhirou to the Spring Festival Gala to perform it."

An Yujia immediately told Ding Yue the purpose of Director Li's call.

"Seriously!"

Ding Yue was taken aback.

Then, he was overjoyed!

This was great news!

"Inviting Lin Zhirou to the Spring Festival Gala?" Ding Yue laughed heartily: "Excellent, excellent, this is great news!"

For any singer or star, being able to perform on the stage of the Spring Festival Gala is undoubtedly a great honor and a great affirmation from NTS and the audience.

Getting on the Spring Festival Gala isn't easy!

Yet Lin Zhirou, with her song 'Blue and White Porcelain', had successfully attracted the attention of NTS's head director and even received a personal invitation for the gala.

This indicated that the head director Li Hongyan took Lin Zhirou and 'Blue and White Porcelain' very seriously.

If Ding Yue remembered correctly, this song also appeared on the Spring Festival Gala in its past life on Earth.

"So, Principal Ding, do we agree?" An Yujia asked.

"Absolutely!"

For Lin Zhirou, this was undoubtedly a tremendous opportunity, and Feiyue Media as her contracting company, and Mist City Arts and Science University as her alma mater, how could they not give Lin Zhirou this opportunity.

Plus, Director Li had personally called to invite Lin Zhirou to perform at the Spring Festival Gala. Could they really reject this without offending her? Only someone completely clueless would make such a decision.

"Call Lin Zhirou here immediately!"

Ding Yue excitedly declared.

It felt like a long time since he last saw the beautiful school flower Lin Zhirou.

Chapter 606: Library Management System

Knock, knock, knock!

At the door of the principal's office in the Administration Building, Lin Zhirou nervously knocked on the door, unsure of why Principal Ding had summoned her this time. What could it be?

"Enter."

The voice of Principal Ding came from inside the office.

Soon the office door opened, revealing Secretary Wen Ruohan in view of Principal Ding.

"Zhirou, you're here."

When Wen Ruohan saw Lin Zhirou, she quickly took her little hand and walked into the office.

The relationship between Wen Ruohan and Lin Zhirou was really good. After all, when Lin Zhirou participated in the competition, Wen Ruohan had always been with her.

"Um, what does Principal Ding want from me?" Lin Zhirou quietly asked Wen Ruohan with a curious tone.

"It's good news." Wen Ruohan's face was filled with joy as she felt happy for Lin Zhirou.

That's because Lin Zhirou would have an opportunity to perform at the Spring Festival Gala, which was truly enviable.

"Good news?"

Upon hearing that it was great news, Lin Zhirou relaxed a bit. Lately, she had been practicing her dancing and singing skills at school, and didn't even dare to check the sales of her song "Blue and White Porcelain".

However, a few days ago, Miss An Yujia from Feiyue Media had told her that "Blue and White Porcelain" was selling well and was quite popular.

All of this, Lin Zhirou owed to Principal Ding.

If it weren't for Principal Ding's friend, who was a songwriter, creating such great music, along with her efforts to improve her singing skills, she never would have been as popular as she is today.

"Come, come, Xiao Lin, have a seat."

Upon seeing Lin Zhirou, Ding Yue warmly invited her to sit down for a chat.

"Principal Ding, Miss An." After Lin Zhirou came over, she greeted them as she noticed that Miss An Yujia was also here.

"Sit." An Yujia patted the sofa next to her, indicating for Lin Zhirou to sit beside her.

Both at Feiyue Media and Mist City Arts and Science University, An Yujia held Lin Zhirou as her own little sister.

Although they were supervisor and subordinate at work, with An Yujia leading the operation and management of Feiyue Media and Lin Zhirou being a contract artist of Feiyue Media, An Yujia treated her people without a superior attitude, instead, she was very approachable.

"Xiao Lin, the reason I called you over is for good news. But first, congratulations on the great success of 'Blue and White Porcelain'."

Ding Yue said, smiling at Lin Zhirou.

Lin Zhirou had always respected Principal Ding, she politely nodded her head in response to his congratulations: "Thank you, Principal Ding."

"A moment ago, Director Li Hongyan, who is in charge of NTS's Spring Festival Gala, called Miss An to invite you to the Spring Festival Gala. One of the acts is to perform 'Blue and White Porcelain'."

Ding Yue didn't beat around the bush and directly told Lin Zhirou about this matter.

So she wouldn't get overly anxious guessing, Ding Yue felt a sense of pity looking at Lin Zhirou's slightly nervous expression.

She couldn't help it, Lin Zhirou was the first school beauty of Mist City Arts and Science University, her look would be highly regarded nationwide.

Lin Zhirou had many fans, who could be categorized into three groups.

One group were fans of Lin Zhirou's songs and became fans because of her music.

The second group were fans of Lin Zhirou's extraordinary beauty. Everyone enjoys seeing beautiful girls, it's a common truth.

The third group both admired Lin Zhirou's beauty and enjoyed her music. Overall, it was quite natural for people to like a high-quality music singer like Lin Zhirou.

If people didn't appreciate a singer with both appearance and abilities, would they prefer a singer who sings, dances, and raps, play basketball?

"So, Principal Ding called you over to hear your thoughts, to see if you accept the invitation from NTS's Spring Festival Gala Director."

At this point, An Yujia also spoke to Lin Zhirou, smiling.

Lin Zhirou was stunned in the moment.

Her dull expression was quite endearing.

"Really...really?" Lin Zhirou couldn't believe it. She had been invited to participate in the Spring Festival Gala, and she was asked to sing a song at the Spring Festival Gala.

This was undoubtedly a great honor!

"Of course, it's true. How about it? Xiao Lin isn't willing to go?" Ding Yue said, smiling.

"Ah no, no, I'm willing, I'm willing to go!" Seeing what Principal Ding said, Lin Zhirou immediately got flustered, like a little bunny darting about in all directions.

"Hahaha."

Both Ding Yue and An Yujia burst into laughter.

"Indeed, no one would refuse such an opportunity." Ding Yue nodded slightly and continued: "In that case, Xiao Lin, we will officially reply to Director Li Hongyan, and you need to be ready to follow Director Li Hongyan's orders at all times. You're going to have to attend dress rehearsals for the Spring Festival Gala over and over again."

Seeing Lin Zhirou agreeing, Ding Yue advised her.

As she was representing Mist City Arts and Science University and Feiyue Media to participate in the 2022 Spring Festival Gala, it was essential that she would perform well.

"Yes, Principal Ding, I will work hard!" Within Lin Zhirou's eyes, there seemed to be determination shining alongside a hint of gentleness.

Chapter 607: Library Management System

Lin Zhirou behaves in just this manner. When faced with her own affairs, she is remarkably resilient, yet she is also a very gentle girl.

As Lin Zhirou said, being invited by Director Li Hongyan to participate in the Spring Festival Gala is of great honor to her, as well as a significant opportunity.

Therefore...

Upon her return, Lin Zhirou took her daily training more seriously and strived hard to improve herself.

In the blink of an eye, it was already December.

The weather was getting colder, but at the expansion site of Mist City Arts and Science University, the workers were as busy as bees.

In truth, the ones with the most zeal weren't the workers from Tianfu Construction Group, but the students from the College of Architecture at Mist City Arts and Science University.

Because the expansion of Mist City Arts and Science University involved so many buildings and covered such a wide area, students from almost every major in the College of Architecture had the chance to put their knowledge to practical use.

Measurement, drawing, construction, all of these aspects included the participation of students from the College of Architecture at Mist City Arts and Science University.

On December 10th, the construction of two major structures at Mist City Arts and Science University—the Central Sports Ground and the Central Sports Stadium, officially commenced.

The design of the Central Sports Ground and the Central Sports Stadium was undertaken by Liu Chuanjie and his team from the College of Architecture.

Moreover, designs for the Archive that was previously proposed by Zhao Chi from the architectural design major, and plans for the ancient architectural group that Mist City Arts and Science University intends to construct have now entered the final design stage.

Whenever he gets some time, Principal Ding would personally visit the construction site for an inspection.

Observing how one building foundation after another is laid, and how more and more teaching buildings and dormitory buildings are rising from the earth, Principal Ding feels a fiery surge of excitement in his heart.

The expansion of the campus at Mist City Arts and Science University lays the foundation for the development and construction of the university.

Only with a well-functioning campus that can accommodate more students to explore the ocean of knowledge, can the overall teaching strength of Mist City Arts and Science University rise to the next level.

Aside from the teaching buildings, dormitory buildings, Central Sports Ground, Central Sports Stadium etc., which have started construction successively, other buildings, under the planning of

the College of Architecture and the Tianfu Construction Group, have also started working one after another.

These include the on-campus hotel, hospital, shopping center, and science research base center of Mist City Arts and Science University.

Building these facilities doesn't actually cost that much, since the land is all zoned for educational use, and the construction simply involves material and labor expenses.

But if these buildings are to be completed perfectly, that will incur substantial costs.

For example, to fully equip the on-campus hotel, there will be a need for various hotel facilities and staff.

The on-campus hospital isn't as much worry, because Principal Ding has allocated funds for the purchase of teaching equipment in the medical school, which can be put into use in the on-campus hospital in the future.

As for the shopping center, necessary basic facilities will suffice.

Once Mist City Arts and Science University reaches a student population exceeding one hundred thousand, there won't be any worry about attracting businesses to the shopping center.

After all, with a student population scale of a hundred thousand—most of whom possess decent purchasing power, its allure is undoubtedly huge.

The majority of students at Mist City Arts and Science University come from financially stable families.

As a private university, the tuition fee is much more expensive than the several thousand charged by public universities, suggesting that the families of the attending students are somewhat affluent.

Of course, there are also students whose families are financially strained, like Liu Ping and Yang Chen, who has already become a national athlete.

For those impoverished students, Mist City Art and Science University offers various forms of financial aid such as student loans and scholarships, which can assist these students in completing their education without much difficulty.

The biggest financial drain, however, lies in the Science Research Base Center, which needs various types of research equipment for different specialities; this indeed burns cash.

Take the Photolithography Project due to be installed at the Science Research Base Center as an example, the amount of investment required cannot be underestimated.

In short, the Science Research Base Center is—A Money Pit!

By the end of the year, the teaching mission of Mist City Arts and Science University was being steadily carried out under the leadership of Qi Chunsheng, the head of the Academic Affairs Office.

The sophomores started to grasp more knowledge in their field of study, and some departments even began practical training.

Qi Chunsheng once more than expressed to Ding Yue that, the students of the Mist City Arts and Science University, might not be the smartest students, but they are the most passionate about learning, the most disciplined, and the most promising students he has ever seen.

That day, as usual, Ding Yue was in the principal's office listening to Qi Chunsheng's teaching report.

This teaching report should be the penultimate one of this term. After this teaching report, they will start preparing for the end of this semester, and then it will be the final work report after the final exams.

"Principal Ding, this is the statistical data for the library this semester." Qi Chunsheng handed a set of data to Principal Ding.

"The library also collects statistical data?"

Ding Yue asked curiously.

Qi Chunsheng promptly nodded his head: "Yes, after all, apart from their daily courses, students have plenty of time. Many students who are passionate about learning will spend their time in the library."

"Hmm, well said." Ding Yue agreed that Qi Chunsheng was right: "My sister also loves to stay in the library. Since our school's Book Ship Library was built, students can continue to supplement their knowledge in their spare time. Very good, very good."

After speaking, Ding Yue then lowered his head to look at the statistical data in his hand.

"The Book Ship Library has a daily occupancy rate as high as 99%?" After seeing this data, Ding Yue was startled and looked up at Qi Chunsheng.

Qi Chunsheng nodded and replied, "Yes, Principal Ding. The library management performs data statistics every day. Interestingly, the library management system we are using was developed by Director Xu. It's very convenient."

"Really? It even calculates the occupancy rate?" Ding Yue was quite interested.

The library management system developed by Bin is quite interesting.

"Yes, it seems that it uses data captured by the library's surveillance cameras at each seat for calculations. This 99% occupancy rate is a calculation of the peak time periods. If it is counted at other times, it is not that high, but it usually at least maintains more than 80%."

Qi Chunsheng then explained how the statistic was calculated.

Ding Yue understood. It seems that Bin used the library's surveillance system to monitor and collect library seat data during peak periods and ultimately derived this 99% occupancy rate.

Actually, these techniques are not difficult for Xu Bin to implement, and he also developed a library management system, which makes it even more convenient for library management staff.

"What about the old library?"

Ding Yue suddenly asked.

As the iconic building of Mist City Arts and Science University, the Book Ship Library having such a high occupancy rate is not surprising.

However, Ding Yue also wanted to know the situation of the original library.

"As for the old library, due to its inferior conditions compared to the new library, its occupancy rate is a bit lower. However, it is still very high, with a peak occupancy rate of 93%."

Qi Chunsheng responded.

"Does the old library also use the library management system developed by Director Xu?" Ding Yue asked.

"Yes, it also uses the same library management system."

Ding Yue nodded approvingly: "In the coming few years, Mist City Arts and Science University is planning to build one to two more libraries. By then, this library management system should also be employed."

"Understood." Qi Chunsheng nodded and said, "I heard that the third library, the one designed by Zhao Chi from the architecture school, is the Archive? I find it very interesting. If combined with the ancient architectural complex, it will be another characteristic of our school."

Qi Chunsheng was right.

Modern perfect architectural design has the Book Ship Library, and then the Archive represents the ancient architectural design of Xia Country.

Each has its distinct significance and features.

The reason why Ding Yue chose to build the Book Ship Library first instead of the Archive was that there was no plan to build an ancient architectural group at the time.

Now that the 5000-acre campus expansion plan includes an ancient architectural group, the Archive naturally has a fitting context and will not seem particularly abrupt.

"By the way, how about the preparations for issuing graduation certificates to the first batch of our school's students advancing their graduation dates that I mentioned to you last time?"

Having understood the library matters sufficiently, Ding Yue suddenly asked about this more important issue.

Chapter 608: The First Batch of Students Who Can Graduate Early

Last time, Xia Qing, a student in the Department of Physics, completed his credits and finished his thesis defense, applying for an early graduation.

Originally, Ding Yue was to present him with a diploma, while also asking Xia Qing to continue his studies at Mist City Arts and Science University.

However, Ding Yue later considered that there were actually several students in various departments of Mist City Arts and Science University who, like Xia Qing, could complete their studies this year.

Such as Tong Yihang and Liu Tiefei of the Mechanical Engineering Department.

And Chen Jun from the Computer Science Department.

Of course, Ding Yue had already informed Huang Youjie and Xu Bin to prepare for their thesis defenses.

Huang Youjie, as the standout in the Law major, performed well in both earning credits for his specialized knowledge and in practical operations.

Huang's case, which undoubtedly concerned the case of Liu Ping's father, Liu Yongzhi, was a very successful example.

Additionally, since Huang had almost enough credits, he also qualified for early graduation.

Xu Bin goes without saying.

These two did not disappoint Ding Yue.

Given this, Ding Yue asked the Registrar's office to prepare for the presentation of Xia Qing's diploma, hoping to do it together with these other students.

Presenting the first batch of early graduation diplomas all at once could greatly incentivize those students still studying diligently.

At the same time, it would show those paying attention to Mist City Arts and Science University that the institution is capable of cultivating "geniuses" in specialized fields.

Early graduation is quite difficult in itself, and if someone can graduate so much earlier, aren't they a genius?

Most importantly, these students have displayed, through their accomplishments, that they indeed have the capability to graduate early.

"Principal Ding, this is the list of students who will receive their diplomas along with Xia Qing. Some have already passed their thesis defenses, while others are still preparing."

Qi Chunsheng promptly pulled out a list and presented it to Principal Ding.

After receiving it and taking a look, Ding Yue indeed saw his two friends, Huang Youjie and Xu Bin.

Beyond them, the Mechanical Engineering Department had the most students this time around.

Tong Yihang, Liu Tiefei, and Yang Jie were the three.

Aside from Xu Bin, the Computer Science Department also had another student: Chen Jun, who Xu Bin thought highly of. Chen Jun had essentially become Xu Bin's reliable aide in computer software development.

These two core departments of Mist City Arts and Science University thus had five students able to graduate early this semester.

For the Law Department, there was only one, Huang Youjie.

For the Arts Department's Music major, undoubtedly it was Lin Zhirou. Throughout the year 2021, in addition to diligent training, she didn't miss any courses and earned all her credits. Considering Lin Zhirou's current accomplishments, it wouldn't be hard for her to graduate early.

The Architecture Department had one person: Liu Chuanjie, the designer of Bookship Library. Liu Chuanjie's roommate, Cui Hai, also had the chance to be in the first group to graduate early. However, he had not yet finished his credits, so he could only wait for the next group.

Adding them all up, out of the over 9,600 students who registered for the 2020 academic year at Mist City Arts and Science University, nine of them could be the first batch to graduate early, not including Principal Ding himself.

"So when are we planning for their small graduation ceremony, when the nine of them receive their diplomas?"

After examining the list, Ding Yue asked Qi Chunsheng.

All of these things needed to be arranged by Qi Chunsheng, the Director of the Registrar. Ding Yue was only responsible for signing his name as the principal on their diplomas, and attending their small graduation ceremony to present them.

The reason why Ding Yue called this early graduation of nine students a "small graduation ceremony" is that the first large-scale graduation ceremony of Mist City Arts and Science University was clearly slated for the early summer of 2024.

These nine students were graduating early. In order to motivate the other students, Ding Yue had decided to hold a "small graduation ceremony."

"Principal Ding, because the nine students have different schedules for their thesis defenses, we can't confirm a date yet. After all the students complete their defenses, we in the registrar's office will arrange it at the earliest opportunity. By that time, I will report to you, Principal Ding, immediately."

Qi Chunsheng replied.

"Alright!"

Principal Ding nodded, then asked Qi Chunsheng about the third significant matter related to teaching.

This matter was also connected to the most important task Principal Ding was currently undertaking.

"Director Qi, how is the progress of our work in establishing cooperation and exchange relationships between Mist City Arts and Science University and other universities? I'm not talking about the Computer and Mechanical departments, but about the Medical School and School of Architecture," Ding Yue asked.

The reason he did not mention the Mechanical and Computer departments was because the departments had already met the "[Key Major Level]" task requirement.

Correct!

After establishing cooperation and exchange relationships with the Mechanical Engineering department at Qinghua University and the Artificial Intelligence Science department at Yancheng University, due to mutual exchange and cooperation amongst the professionals, these two departments had already achieved 100% of the task progress.

Out of five departments, two had completed their tasks, a progression of 2/5.

The "[Key Major Level]" was a large task, and a progress of 2/5 was not an easy feat already.

Moreover, barring any unexpected circumstances, the Medical School and the School of Architecture should soon meet the requirements too.

"Principal Ding, the School of Architecture and East China Architecture and Engineering University are in close and frequent contact, and as for the Medical School, after establishing a cooperative and

exchange relationship with Mist City Medical University, our teaching strength has greatly increased. In addition, considering the substantial budget that has been allocated for the purchase of equipment, advancements in teaching hardware were further realized," Director Qi reported seriously to Principal Ding.

At the same time, Principal Ding also reviewed the task progress of these two departments.

One was at 98%, the other at 94%.

They were also closing in on completion.

"What about the Animation department?" Principal Ding asked again.

That left the fifth major that Ding Yue was planning to develop, namely the Animation Design and Production major.

"The main work of the Animation department is actually closely linked to Feiyue Animation Studio. For specifics, I still need to speak with Teacher Xu," Qi Chunsheng seemed not to fully understand the situation of the Animation department.

Perhaps it was because the Animation specialization was quite unique.

After all, the student talents of the Animation department had all entirely entered Feiyue Animation Studio, and the situation of Feiyue Animation Studio represented the situation of the Animation department.

And Feiyue Animation Studio was essentially under the control of Xu Jiuge.

"No need, I'll call Xu Jiuge over to report to me personally," Principal Ding thought for a moment. Since whether the Animation department could be rated as a provincial key specialization by the system was crucial to his successful completion of the task, it was better to inquire about the situation himself.

"Okay," Hearing this, Director Qi could only nod in agreement.

"Secretary Little Wen," Principal Ding turned to his secretary, Wen Ruohan.

"Eh, Principal Ding, may I assist you with anything?" Wen Ruohan, upon hearing Principal Ding calling her, immediately ran over.

"Please call Xu Jiuge of the Feiyue Animation Studio," Principal Ding instructed.

The Animation department of Mist City Arts and Science University had laid a robust foundation, with the successful precedent of "Super Combat Team."

Therefore, Principal Ding selected this major as the fifth provincial key specialization.

To reach the standards set by the system, it was necessary to expand aspects such as the teaching and influence of the Animation department.

Only by improving these aspects, could the progress at the system evaluation end be advanced.

The current real-time progress of the Animation department was 84%.

Indeed, when compared to the two departments that had already been completed, and the two nearing completion, it was lacking.

It seemed.

Principal Ding had to put in some more effort to complete this big task as soon as possible. Wouldn't it be delightful to receive the reward for the task?

Chapter 609: New Project in Animation Major

December, approaching the end of the year.

The teaching work at Mist City Arts and Science University is proceeding methodically.

Xu Bin is actively preparing for the ACM International Collegiate Programming Contest together with Chen Jun and Ouyang Chen.

The venue for this ACM International Collegiate Programming Contest is in Zurich, the largest city in Europe.

At that time, Ding Yue will personally lead the team to participate in the competition in Zurich, Switzerland.

During the ACM preparation period, Xu Bin also took out the time to complete his graduation thesis and successfully defended it.

The first batch of nine students who are about to graduate have all been successively completing their theses and defenses.

Ding Yue hopes to be able to hold a small graduation ceremony for the first batch of students who would be graduating early and issue their graduation certificates after returning from the ACM competition in Europe, before the New Year's Day.

However.

The thing Ding Yue wanted to deal most before embarking on the ACM competition in Europe is still about the animation major.

Because with the growing in-depth exchange and cooperation between the School of Architecture and the School of Medicine at Mist City Arts and Science University and East China Architecture and Engineering University as well as Mist City Medical University, the strength of the two faculties has greatly improved. The School of Architecture has gained several honorary professors from East China Architecture and Engineering University.

The School of Medicine, on the other hand, purchased a batch of advanced equipment, and further tightened their cooperation with Mist City Medical University, so the system's evaluation of these two faculties' tasks also successfully reached 100%.

The current progress of the "[Key Major Level]" task has already realized 4/5, just one last major is needed.

Yes.

This last major is Animation Design and Production.

The day before heading to Europe, Ding Yue once again came to Feiyue Animation Studio.

After a long period of rest and everyone having received a substantial bonus, the dozens of members of the Feiyue Animation Studio were once again full of energy.

Even without any project at the moment, everyone is striving to improve their animation design and production skills.

"Principal Ding, what brings you here?"

Upon seeing Principal Ding come to Feiyue Animation Studio, Xu Jiuge immediately got up from her desk and went to greet him.

"I came to have a look."

Ding Yue casually said, then looked at everyone's condition, and it seemed that they were all in pretty good shape.

Those who initially came to Mist City Arts and Science University with Xu Jiuge are now basically the teachers of Animation Design and Production major. Some of them should be teaching classes to the animation major students in the classroom.

With the admissions in 2021, the number of students in Animation Design and Production major has expanded significantly, reaching four classes along with the previous batch.

The film Super Combat Team was released in October and became a huge hit. It is estimated that the number of students in the animation major might explode by this time next year.

There are undoubtedly a great number of students nationwide who love animation. With the Feiyue Animation Studio and the outstanding hit of "Super Combat Team" by the Animation major of the Mist City Arts and Science University, countless people will be scrambling to enroll next year.

This is good news for the animation major, and for Ding Yue, the more students who sign up, the better.

Mist City Arts and Science University has already started its comprehensive infrastructure construction. When the expansion of the 5000-acre campus is completed, it will have a capacity of more than 100,000 or even tens of thousands of students.

At that time, wouldn't it be afraid of having an additional few hundred to thousand students in the animation major?

For each additional one, a good tens of thousands yuan in tuition fees and other expenses can be collected each year, isn't it pleasant?

Xu Jiuge glanced at Principal Ding, even though he said he was here to have a look, the smart Xu Jiuge naturally knew what Principal Ding was here for.

"Principal Ding, as you said last time that we need to improve the hard strength of our animation major, I thought about it, and starting with upgrading the teaching staff is the easiest."

Xu Jiuge followed beside Principal Ding, and said seriously.

"Hmm."

Ding Yue nodded and asked, "Any progress yet?"

"I contacted my former professors at Guangcheng Media University and invited them to affiliate with our Mist City Arts and Science University, but discussions are still ongoing." Xu Jiuge replied.

Currently, there isn't a proper professor in the Animation Design and Production major. Ding Yue's thinking was such that the system evaluation of the progress of this major definitely greatly values the teaching staff.

So Ding Yue lets Xu Jiuge start with inviting professors in the animation field to the Mist City Arts and Science University as a breakthrough.

Xu Jiuge's network is naturally good since she herself came from the animation major at Guangcheng Media University. Among her teachers, there are no lack of professor-level figures in the field of animation.

However.

Ding Yue knows that inviting professors from Guangcheng Media University would not be easy at all.

When Ding Yue invited Professor Luo Xiang from Xia Country Political and Law University, it took so much effort; inviting animation professors from Guangcheng Media University would basically not be any easier.

Of course, sometimes, as long as the money is given, and based on the foundation of Mist City Arts and Science University Animation major's work, "Super Combat Team", there is also a certain attraction for animation professors of Guangcheng Media University or other universities.

"Are your teachers unwilling to leave Guangcheng Media University? Or do they think that the money offered is too little?"

Ding Yue asked quite directly.

After hearing it, Xu Jiuge thought for a moment, then replied, "The conditions offered by the school are already very generous. I think the reason why my teachers are still hesitating should be because they are under pressure over there."

After all, not every professor can easily adjunct at other universities. Firstly, whether his own school allows it is also a problem.

Otherwise, the only option would be to resign and rejoin Mist City Arts and Science University.

However, Mist City Arts and Science University, after all, is a private university. For those professors, Guangcheng Media University not only possesses societal status and stability, but also a sense of formality.

If they leave Guangcheng Media University for Mist City Arts and Science University, it would be equivalent to switching from a regular army to a ragtag group.

"Well, indeed there are many influencing factors, but it's best to decide as soon as possible," Principal Ding was impatient to advance the animation department to accomplish the mission progress and thereby complete the "[Key Major Level]" grand task, followed by a generous reward.

He wondered whether this generous reward could be claimed before the end of the year.

If it could be claimed, it would be equivalent to a great way to kick off 2022. What could be a better gift than the reward for this task?

Apparently, there was none at present.

"Principal Ding, I will try hard to negotiate with the teachers," Xu Jiuge spoke earnestly.

Principal Ding naturally trusted Xu Jiuge's capability of handling matters. However, he pondered that apart from the recruitment of professor-level personnel in the animation department, there might be another way to increase the task's progress percentage.

That is, to initiate a new project.

Launching a new project implies that the animation department and the Feiyue Animation Studio will invest capital and personnel into producing a new piece of work for the animation department at Mist City Arts and Science University, which might also enhance the task's progress percentage.

Besides, the Feiyue Animation Studio has been idle for quite a while, and it is about time for a new project to be put on the agenda.

After all, a new project, from conception to production and then to completion, could take a few months or as long as a year and a half.

At the end of 2021, discussing the creation of a new project could be considered starting to plan for 2022 at Feiyue Animation Studios.

There is also a chance to increase the percentage of the task's progress—it would be killing two birds with one stone.

"Jiuge, while the matter of inviting professors needs to be hurried, there is something else we need to consider thoroughly at Feiyue Animation Studio," Principal Ding said, walking over to a chair and sitting down.

"Principal Ding, you mean..." Xu Jiuge seemed to grasp Principal Ding's meaning.

She is a clever and vibrant girl who, from Principal Ding's tone and his previous sentences, deduced that Principal Ding was planning for the future of the Feiyue Animation Studio.

Since its establishment a year ago, the Feiyue Animation Studio had released its first work, "Super Combat Team", which was very successful.

But of course, the Feiyue Animation Studio obviously couldn't just rest on its laurels from past success.

At least one high-quality piece every one or two years, or even one each year—this is the basic guarantee of an excellent animation studio.

This is the case with several Hollywood animation studios, as they are able to put out a quality animation piece almost every year.

"Exactly, it's the end of the year, and it's about time our Feiyue Animation Studio considered a new project," Principal Ding said with a smile and a nod.

"Principal Ding is right. A top-quality animation studio needs to produce notable works every year to secure its position in the industry. What's more, the potential of the domestic animation market is huge, and there are no dominating giants like Hollywood so far. Therefore, if we maintain good development momentum, the domestic animation market will definitely be ours in the future, and we can go international!" Xu Jiuge spoke in agreement with Principal Ding from a very rational perspective.

Hearing this, Principal Ding found Xu Jiuge a rather visionary girl. She didn't confine herself to her current success but insisted on maintaining sound development processes, first piercing into the domestic animation market, then marching onto the international stage.

She is indeed the person I, Ding Yue, picked!

"But... Principal Ding, about the new project..." Xu Jiuge, who had just spoken so passionately, suddenly spoke in a discouraged tone.

It makes sense to say such things.

But what should the new project be about?

The "Super Combat Team" featured Big White, a healthcare robot, which was then adapted into an animated film.

First of all, the healthcare robot Big White was popular and well-liked by the public even before the animated film came out.

For the new project, it's clear that making a "Super Combat Team 2" right away wouldn't work, would it?

Making sequels is usually frowned upon in the industry, because they seldom surpass the initial production and can even damage its reputation. Moreover, making "Super Combat Team 2" immediately would look like an obvious money grab.

"So you don't know what to make?" Principal Ding asked calmly.

Xu Jiuge, being quite honest, nodded and responded, "Yes, it's indeed hard to choose a theme and a creative source at the moment..."

An animated piece needs to have a creative source, right?

Many domestic animation companies frequently produce animations based on topics such as Sun Wukong from Journey to the West, the Three Kingdoms, and others. Of course, there are original pieces too, but the first thing to do is set a premise.

This premise is—what to make?

However, Principal Ding already had an idea before he came here. This time, Feiyue Animation Studio would launch a new project, doing something unconventional.

For animated films, having already succeeded with "Super Combat Team," releasing another animated film in 2023 with a year's gap might be a good idea.

As for 2022, Principal Ding had a new idea.

"This time, we will not make an animated film, but an animated short film series."

Chapter 610: First Expedition to Europe!

"Not making an animated film anymore? But an animated short series?"

Xu Jiuge was somewhat surprised upon hearing this.

Because Xu Jiuge thought the new project Principal Ding was talking about referred to making another animated film.

Yet, Principal Ding said they wouldn't be making an animated film, but instead an animated short series?

Could it be seen as an animated series?

Under normal circumstances, studios or companies that have made successful animated films would not venture into animated series.

Because the investment for animated series is typically less than that of animated films, and the resulting quality and feel can't compare to animated films.

"Exactly."

Ding Yue smiled and nodded, glancing at the surprised Xu Jiuge. "I have a friend who has been writing some short stories lately, and I think these stories can perhaps be adapted into a series of animated shorts."

There it is, Ding Yue's friend may be late, but he never misses.

"Oh, so Principal Ding has already found the material."

Xu Jiuge understood a bit better after hearing Principal Ding's words.

As long as they have the material and the stories are good, the animation works produced by Feiyue Animation Studio will end up being exceptional.

Xu Jiuge's initial surprise came from Principal Ding just stating that they wouldn't be doing an animated movie but an animated series instead; this decision seemed somewhat rash.

But now it seemed that Principal Ding had been plotting this all along.

"Tomorrow, I'm off to Zurich, Switzerland, to participate in the ACM International College Student Programming Competition. Later, I'll get some basic character information from my friend to give to you. During my time in Europe, you can work on initial settings based on the information. I hope to see excellent results from you when I return."

Ding Yue calmly told Xu Jiuge.

"Alright, Principal Ding, don't worry, let me wish you well in advance and hope you bring back a big prize."

Xu Jiuge nodded and smiled.

Ding Yue decided not to tell Xu Jiuge what kind of story collection his friend was working on just yet. After getting back, he would set the tone for this matter and finalize the project.

After all, in 2022, the Feiyue Animation Studio would rely on this project to maintain its leading position.

For Mist City Arts and Science University's entire animation major, this project was quite important.

"May your words bring good fortune."

Ding Yue smiled slightly, stood up, and prepared to leave. "Keep an eye on your email. I'll send you some material."

After saying that, Ding Yue left the Feiyue Animation Studio.

Only Ding Yue was in the Principal's office that afternoon, as Wen Ruohan wasn't there as she had an important class to attend.

Even though Wen Ruohan had already landed a job as Principal Ding's personal secretary, she still needed to complete her studies in secretarial science. Therefore, she had to attend some classes, or else she might not earn enough credits.

At Mist City Arts and Science University, if you don't earn enough credits, you cannot graduate.

"Big White."

Ding Yue awakened Big White, who was charging.

"Principal, I'm here," Big White replied.

Ding Yue had Big White scan and enter the conspectuses for the eighteen stories he had prepared.

Subsequently, using the method Big White had used to create "Wandering Earth" last time, Ding Yue turned these eighteen story outlines into eighteen independent stories.

However!

After seeing the first draft, Ding Yue found that the eighteen stories Big White had created didn't quite match his memory.

As a result, Ding Yue revised the story outlines and had Big White recreate the eighteen individual stories.

In the second draft, eight of the stories were approximately what Ding Yue had expected. They could be given to Xu Jiuge and his team as material for the animated shorts.

As for the other ten, Ding Yue was still not satisfied.

Therefore, he asked Big White to generate the third draft.

After the third draft was completed, Ding Yue felt something was still missing. But after picking through them, he selected three stories that felt satisfactory.

That left seven more to work on.

In this way, Ding Yue spent about an hour, and finally had Big White create all eighteen stories.

And all of them were to Ding Yue's satisfaction.

Following this, Ding Yue sorted out some player data from the eighteen stories and gave them to Xu Jiuge so that they could attempt to draw and create character models. After he returned from the ACM competition in Zurich, Switzerland, he would see how Xu Jiuge and his team did.

If they did well, then Ding Yue could give all eighteen stories to Feiyue Animation Studio and begin this new animation project.

If their work wasn't satisfactory, Xu Jiuge and his team could make some adjustments.

However, Ding Yue was confident that as long as he organized the character information thoroughly, Xu Jiuge and his team would not disappoint him with the character models they created.

At five in the afternoon.

Ding Yue emailed the organized character information to Xu Jiuge.

Upon receiving the email from Principal Ding, Xu Jiuge immediately called his teammates over and began to pore over the material sent by Principal Ding.

With this task completed, Ding Yue could now peacefully prepare to depart for Europe tomorrow.

Knock Knock Knock!

At that moment, someone knocked on the door of Ding Yue's office.

At that moment, Wen Ruohan was not there, and nobody was there to open the door, so Ding Yue had to get up and go towards the door. His colleague asked him, "Who is it?"

Clang!

The door was pushed open, and it was Huang, who walked in: "Yue, it's me."

"Huang? How did you get here? I thought...aren't you defending your thesis today?" Ding Yue, seeing that it was Huang Youjie, asked.

"I've completed my thesis defense, and I passed successfully." Huang Youjie, hands on his hips, proudly announced.

"Very well, once I return from Europe, I can personally hand you your graduation certificate."

Ding Yue excitedly reached out and patted Huang on the shoulder.

"About going to Europe, that's why I came. Can I join you?" Huang, elated, raised an eyebrow at Ding Yue.

"Really, you want to go too?" Ding Yue furrowed his brows and asked.

"Of course, Bin is competing, and as a good friend, I need to personally cheer him on at the venue. Also, Yue, it won't hurt to have me along as well, right." Huang stands tall, looking proud.

"True."

Ding Yue nodded.

Anyway, Huang had completed his thesis defense, and he momentarily doesn't have any other important matters to attend to.

As for the logistics department, Huang's secretarial assistant can handle everything.

Given the circumstances, it's perfect that Ding Yue, Xu Bin, and Huang Youjie have not gone out together in a while. This time, they could all go to Zurich, Switzerland together and passionately cheer for Xu Bin and his team at the competition.

Ding Yue does not lack the budget to bring an additional person to Europe.

"Okay, I'll get Wen Ruohan to buy your plane ticket and reserve your hotel room later. Booking an additional hotel room shouldn't be a problem, but when it comes to the plane tickets, it's possible that we might not get tickets on the same flight."

With a shrug, Ding Yue said to Huang.

"Not a big problem, eh? Secretary Wen isn't here?" Only then does Huang look around in Yue's office. Every time he visited in the past, Secretary Wen Ruohan would be there, but today, it's just Yue and the robot Big White.

"She's in a class." Ding Yue explained.

"Oh, Big White~" After seeing Big White, Huang Youjie couldn't resist going forward and interacting with Big White, "By the way Yue, I heard that you've been focusing on developing a few key specialties recently, how come our law specialty isn't included?"

"Ahem, Huang, do you seriously not have an idea whether your current law specialty is worthy of being a key feature of the school?"

Seeing Huang ask this, Ding Yue jokingly replied.

"Ha ha ha ha, right, there's some logic to that!" Upon hearing that, Huang Youjie burst into laughter.

In comparison to the mechanical engineering specialty, computer science specialty, architecture specialty, medical specialty, and animation specialty, the law specialty is lagging behind in both scale and faculty strength.

The important thing is, the number of law students at Mist City Arts and Science University is much fewer compared to these other key development sectors.

Old Huang definitely understood this, he was just asking out of boredom.

Six in the evening.

After Wen Ruohan ended her class, Ding Yue immediately informed her to book a plane ticket and a hotel room for Huang.

"Principal Ding, is Director Huang also going to Europe with us?"

"Yes, he is."

"Okay, I understand. I'll go book the tickets, our flight should still have seats, but...even if there are seats, they'll be in economy class."

"Ha ha ha, then economy class it is!"

On hearing this, Huang's face turned green.

You can't be serious, you guys are in first class, and I'm in economy class...

I get it!

Love can disappear, right!

That night, Ding Yue packed his luggage.

Because they were going to Zurich, Switzerland to participate in the ACM International College Student Programming Competition this time, although the competition itself only lasts five hours, including the preparation time, arriving to Zurich in advance, time for sightseeing after the competition, or getting ready to return, it takes at least three days, plus the time to adjust to the time difference.

The next morning, Ding Yue, together with Huang, his secretary Wen Ruohan, Xu Bin, Chen Jun and Ouyang Chen, six people in total, arrived at Elegant Garden Apartment.

The school bus was parked downstairs, ready to take the six of them to the airport.

However, there's more than just the school bus and the driver waiting for them downstairs. There's a group of students as well.

The number wasn't that large, around dozens, holding a banner - ["Wishing our Computer Science Team the best of luck in Europe, return victorious!"]

Are students seeing them off again?

Ding Yue couldn't help but recall the time when the Mist City Arts and Science University's mechanical and computer science specialties went to the National University Student Robot Contest and the National Science and Technology Innovation Exhibition. There were many teachers and students bidding farewell at the school gate.

This time, the crowd was evidently smaller, and the location wasn't the school gate, but just downstairs of Elegant Garden Apartment.

"Yue, these are our Computer Science students." Xu Bin came to Ding Yue's side and explained it to him.

"Oh, I see!" Ding Yue muttered under his breath and then took a few steps forward and loudly said to the Computer Science students, "Students, when we win in Europe, we will bring back a something as a memento. It's so early in the morning, you must be tired."

"Principal Ding, we are not tired."

"This ACM contest is an honor for our Computer Science specialty!"

"Go Chen Jun!"

"Director Xu, fight on!"

The students were full of passion.

Ding Yue felt happy. He waved his hands at these computer science students, then he said to the others, "Get in the van, let's go!"