

Hidden 621

Chapter 621: The Biggest Competition Was Himself

Gong Shangze persisted, "Even though I have tried my best, but the likelihood of us winning this time is quite low. The award is so important this time around. I am sure that David will definitely choose my favorite work."

Ning Xi's face darkened. To Gong Shangze, this was an arduous battle. Because his competition was not anyone else; it was himself.

"Don't worry, as long as you've done your best, that's enough. Even if you don't make it this time, there will be a next time and another next time. One day, you will definitely defeat your demons from the past. You have unlimited possibilities, while the other rival only has a pile of design drafts that will run out one day. There is nothing to be afraid of, Gong Shangze!"

Gong Shangze looked at the girl's shining eyes and felt recharged with gusto. He nodded at her confidently.

"Okay, rest well then. There's still a hard battle to fight tomorrow!"

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The next day at the Golden Award venue.

As the highest honorary award of Chinese fashion design, the venue was decorated luxuriously and had a magical vibe to it.

The seats were hung a meter above the ground and the lights were divided into five colorful strobes, glowing onto the T-shaped stage that was inspired by Noah's Ark.

Passes to the competition were hard to get since everyone present was well-known within the fashion circle. Even Ning Xi received an invitation only because she was the owner of the studio which submission was shortlisted and not because she was a celebrity.

Ning Xi walked in with Gong Shangze and Han Momo, poised. Just a few steps into the venue, they found that the path ahead of them had been blocked.

The competition had yet to start, but the photographers and reporters were already crazily surrounding the hot designer highly anticipated to take home the award, David. The shutters of their cameras clicked away and they were scrambling to ask him questions.

"David, are you confident to win the award this time around? Everyone's saying that this Golden Award will definitely be yours!"

"We heard that the last Golden Award winner, Teacher Lee Ming, also predicted that you would take home the award! Is that true?"

"This time, there are many seniors from the entertainment circle present and a number of them are your fans. They are even wearing your designs here to support you today. Do you have anything to say about that?"

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David looked overbearing and confident in his straight posture. Facing the reporters surrounding him, he looked calm as he answered, "Every design is my heartfelt work. Naturally, I am confident about them. However, it is, after all, a competition, so we still need to leave it to the judges' evaluations! As for Teacher Lee Ming, he is also a senior that I respect very much and I thank him for his compliments. And, of course, not forgetting all the love from the beautiful ladies!"

When they heard this, Ning Xi and Gong Shangze didn't react but Han Momo exploded, "Pfft! This person is so shameless! What heartfelt work? Whose heartfelt work is it really?"

When she was first hired, Han Momo did not know who Gong Shangze was. It was only after she saw his designs that she thought they looked familiar.

Due to the fact that plagiarizers were deemed the scum of all designers in the world of design, she could not help but harp on Gong Shangze copying David's style and other malicious things. She started to look down on Gong Shangze. Despite his assistant's negativity then, Gong Shangze did not rebut at all and he continued to design from dawn till dusk.

After interacting with him over some time, she slowly realized that something was not right. Gong Shangze was practically designing with his life at stake. That did not seem like what a plagiarizer would have done.

It was only after she bugged Ning Xi for a long time that she knew the ugly truth...

Chapter 622: The Most Perfect Work

No thanks to David, the doorway was blocked for over 10 minutes before the reporters finally dispersed to interview the other participants.

Gong Shangze was an unfamiliar face to the industry, plus he wore a mask since he was not feeling well that day, so naturally, no one paid him any attention. Nevertheless, the trio was happy to be left alone by the media vultures and they immediately rushed backstage to get prepared.

When Gong Shangze passed by, David eyed his back suspiciously. However, he kept his gaze short and continued to chit chat to the surrounding designers who were brownnosing him.

Backstage, models were busy getting dolled up and some even walked around in their underwear only. There were many male designers and assistants present, but everyone was already used to it.

Because this was a new situation to Gong Shangze, some distress rose in his eyes. However, when he started to turn his focus on the clothes the models paraded, his hawk eyes shone brightly.

"Wow...so many models with such amazing figures! Even a girl like myself is drooling!" Han Momo swallowed, her head whipping about to catch everyone in their glory.

At that moment, a bold model walked towards their direction in skyscraper heels and snapped, "Move it! Don't block the way!"

The model who was getting changed in front of Gong Shangze was shoved by her and her dress was about to be stepped on...

It was a good thing that Ning Xi was quick with her hands and feet. She grabbed the model by the waist and stabilized her as she wobbled. Not only would she have tripped, even the dress would have been ruined otherwise.

"Hey! What's wrong with you? You almost ruined our dress!" Han Momo was high-strung as she immediately pulled the offending model to a halt.

The snobbish model looked at their outfit. Just a single glance was obvious that their design was close to David's. She instantly looked condescendingly at them and sneered, "Just a piece of junk that was so obviously ripped off! You'd best believe that I can disqualify you from the competition at the snap of my fingers! Move it!"

Han Momo wanted to argue but then recognized her as the world famous model, Angie. She was a familiar face in the industry and was closely connected to the organizers of the award. On an occasion such as today, insulting her was the last thing to do, so she could only purse her lips and suppress her anger.

"Angie, dearest, come over quickly. It's time to change!" someone called for her from afar.

Angie immediately broke into a smile and walked over. "Oh my, Director David, this dress is unbelievably gorgeous!"

"Isn't it? I told you so. You'll definitely love it!" David clapped his hands in delight.

"Mmm, I love it, alright! Only you can surprise me every time! No wonder even Teacher Lee said that the Golden Award will definitely be yours this time!" Angie purred, then she looked over at Gong Shangze and continued, "But the standards of the Golden Award is really deteriorating over the years. After all, how can a piece of work look like so similar to this too? Just now, someone wanted to pick a fight with me, but their dress was obviously a copy of your style! Way too funny!"

David adopted the attitude of an experienced professional and laughed generously, "Haha, the industry is like that, you'd best get used to it!"

Angie played around with the material of the outfit in her hand and fell deeper in love with it the more she looked at it. "Teacher David, you're amazing, every dress you create is so different! You were practically born to design! You deserve Teacher Lee's praises. You're always getting copied but no one can ever surpass you!"

...

The moment he saw the outfit in David's hands, Gong Shangze instantly turned pale.

"What's wrong, Director Gong?" Seeing Gong Shangze not looking quite right, Han Momo quickly peered at him worriedly.

Ning Xi frowned. "This David is really ruthless. He actually chose the same one..."

Gong Shangze had mentioned that outfit to her before. She even remembered how thrilled and proud he looked when he mentioned that design.

Chapter 623: Even If Bitten, I Will Report!

Gong Shangze quavered as his hands trembled slightly, "That was a design from the peak of my inspiration and it was my most perfect work. The theme of it is life and there are six outfits from that series. David had just enough of them to use for this competition..."

Ning Xi wanted to console him, but Gong Shangze took a deep breath and calmed himself down. He consoled Ning Xi instead, "Boss, the competition is about to start. You go out first, I'll come after!"

Seeing his calm confidence, Ning Xi patted his shoulders. "Okay, call me if there's anything. Momo, you look after him well. If he's feeling sick or uncomfortable anywhere, immediately inform me!"

"Understood, Sis Xi! Even if Director bites me, I will be determined to report him to you!"

"Good, report all you want, Sis Xi will support you!"

Listening to the two of them, Gong Shangze looked helplessly at them, but in his cold-blooded bones, he felt a ripple of warmth.

He carefully took out the outfit for the competition and his radiance beamed from his face...

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The competition was about to begin and the venue was bustling with anticipation.

After the reporters had finished interviewing the participants, they clambered to interview the famous names from the industry.

Recently, 'The World' was heavily promoted to be showing in theatres soon. As the main female character, the probability of exposés and topics about Ning Xueluo was naturally very high. Plus, just as David was the predicted winner of the Golden Award, Ning Xueluo was the owner of History, so most of the reporters had surrounded her.

"Miss Ning, how did you discover David? Could you share your story with us?" the reporters quickly asked what they thought would be the largest scoop for the public to feast on.

Ning Xueluo smiled demurely and said, "If you really want to talk about being a good judge of talent, it's actually not me. My boyfriend first discovered David. It was only later on when I looked and decided that he was not too shabby, so after some discussion with him, we decided to invest..."

"That's actually such an interesting story! That means you and your boyfriend are really connected telepathically! Even both your judgments are spot-on!"

"'The World' has yet to be released but there is already so much attention given to it. The box offices will definitely sell well then! In fact, we heard that 'The World' will be nominated for quite a few prestigious awards. Wow, Xueluo, you've got a fantastic harvest this year!" one of the more familiar reporters complimented.

"Hahaha, yeah, I've even thought in advance about the headline for when Xueluo wins the title!"

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The reporters only went back to their seats when the host announced that the competition was going to begin.

Ning Xi was slightly further from the main sitting area, leaning in a corner. While the host started her opening script, she had closed her eyes to rest for a while when suddenly an annoying voice was heard.

"Eh...isn't this Ning Xi, the big star, Ning Xi? Are you here to watch the competition too? Didn't you know that you need an entrance ticket for today? Be careful not to get chased out for crashing!"

The person who spoke was Li Yueling and she was holding on to Ning Xueluo's arm.

Vexation from being disturbed flashed across Ning Xi's lazy eyes and she slowly raised her gaze to look at Li Yueling, exaggerating with a shocked expression, "Miss Li, have you switched jobs to become part of security now?"

Li Yueling was stunned, then she shouted angrily, "You're the one who's the security guard!"

Ning Xi nodded like realization just dawned on her. "Oh, sorry, turns out I'm being a busybody. I misunderstood."

"You...!!!" Li Yueling sputtered in indignation.

Ning Xueluo reminded kindly, "Ning Xi, Yueling is just being nice. All the seats are reserved, you can't simply sit anywhere you like..."

Chapter 624: Wait For The Results

Ning Xi just shut her eyes, weary to waste another second on these people.

Li Yueling pulled Ning Xueluo away and walked towards the VIP seats. "Forget her, since she will be the one embarrassed and not us! I can't believe she would dare to come to a place like this. Does she even know what fashion is?"

Ning Xueluo hesitated, "Maybe she really did receive an invite?"

Li Yueli immediately said with a convinced expression, "No way! Today's seats are hard to come by, even my mother only got it after begging from so many people. I almost couldn't accompany you here!"

"Her relationship with Lu Jingli seems pretty good..." Ning Xueluo said intentionally.

Li Yueling's face stiffened. "I don't think so. Otherwise, with Lu Jingli's capabilities, he could have definitely arranged a front row VIP seat. Why would she sit in a nook like that?! These kind of people are simply disgusting! She's everywhere!"

She scoffed, "Okay, let's not talk about her anymore. Xueluo, when the award ceremony is over later, let's go straight to the Royal Jazz Hotel. I've already booked a room for you guys to celebrate!"

Ning Xueluo shot her an angry look. "We still don't know if we'll win the award!"

"Why don't you know? I've already asked around. Among the shortlisted works this time around, your designs are the most talked about one. The highest award must be yours!" Then, she closed in towards Ning Xueluo's ear mysteriously and said softly, "I've gotten my mom to inquire for you, the Golden Award this time is David's. Don't worry!"

Ning Xueluo's eyes gleamed when she heard this but she was still humble. "Best to talk after the results are out!"

As she said this, David took his seat too. Li Yueling immediately teased him, "Hey, our talent is here! After winning the award this time, tons of people will try to hire you, won't they?"

"Beauty Lee, look at you. My boss is the reincarnation of my parents! Even if I had wings to fly to the sky, I would never leave the boss!" David had always been an opportunist and his brownnosing skills were top notch.

On the other side, Gong Shangze and the assistant sat beside Ning Xi.

"Everything settled?"

"Mmm." Gong Shangze nodded, he had done all he could. Now, he could only wait for the results.

Very soon, the host's opening speech had ended and the competition officially began.

On the T-shaped stage, after a round of the dazzling lights twinkling, the first participant's designs were paraded on stage.

The screen displayed a lengthy paragraph by way of introduction. "Yagyu, the winner of the 17th Chinese fashion Golden Awards. Member of the Chinese Fashion Designer Association, Member of the Art of Fashion council, previously granted the titles of 'Outstanding Fashion Designer' and 'Top Ten Best Fashion Designers'."

Yagyu's theme was the 12 Chinese zodiacs totem elements, catching the attention of everyone.

However, after a short burst of admiration, everyone immediately sensed that they seemed very familiar.

"Pfft, even Yagyu is out of talented designers? This is obviously David's style!"

"Since David made the Chinese style trendy, everyone started to follow suit with Chinese elements. It's so overdone!"

"The point is that those people were intentional with their designs. Look closely and you will notice that they are all not outstanding, they completely missed David's natural flow and spontaneity!"

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As Han Momo listened to the criticisms around her, she felt herself breaking out in cold sweat. Just impersonations were already abused like that. Wait till Director Gong's designs came out. How harshly would they be criticized?

Chapter 625: Do Your Designs Have To Be So Good?

The trio watched the other participating designs patiently and soon, it was finally their turn to display their pride and joy on stage.

However, to their utter confusion, the next girl that strutted on stage was not their model but another participant's!

"What's happening?" Ning Xi stared incredulously.

Han Momo quickly said, getting to her feet, "I'll go backstage to ask!"

Very soon, Han Momo returned with tears welling up and said between pants, "The organizers said that we have been rearranged to be the last to go on. When I asked them why, they actually dared to tell me that going last will be even better since we can be the finale. But, the second from the last to be on stage is David. Our design is already very similar to theirs and now they have intentionally put us right after them. Forget about winning any award; we will definitely be criticized to ashes!"

They had no doubt that this move was probably executed by that model, Angie. That woman was notorious in the industry for being rude and unreasonable. One wrong move and she would stir trouble up for you.

At last, it was Gong Shangze who consoled them nonchalantly, "No problem, if my designs are really considered to be the work of plagiarism, the arrangement doesn't really matter anyway."

The competition was based on points system on the spot. The six judges would total up an average score assigned to the design. Thus far, out of all the designs that had been presented, five of them had already received scores above nine. The competition was very tight among all of them and tension was high.

Unfortunately for Yagyu, even though he had put in a lot of thought to his work, he only received seven points. It was apparent that the judges did not really like his mere following of the trend.

At that moment, the venue suddenly burst into a frenzy of whoops of admiration and the rapid clicking of cameras.

It was David's turn to shine.

Even Ning Xi, Han Momo and Gong Shangze himself were very fascinated by the models on stage. Of course, the most dazzling piece was worn by Angie. The long dress was loaded with flowers like the coming of spring, instantly giving the onlookers an energetic vibe. The vintage embroidery combined with modern dimensional tailoring worked to fuse the old and the new as well as the East and the West, successfully showing off the perfect merging of traditional culture and modern fashion. It also fully corresponded with the theme of "Life".

With such an internationally acclaimed model as Angie, high-quality brocade material, and one of the finest silks in the world, the star piece stood out and dulled everything else. Ning Corporation sponsored the jewelry worn by the models and the bling on them only served to highlight how avant-garde the line was. David's entire line could only be described with one word: perfect!

Every dress made the crowd have the urge to buy it on the spot. The female celebrities and socialites already started to get their connections to order the clothing from the series.

Even though it was Gong Shangze's design, Ning Xi was aware that the more the designs were praised, the worse Gong Shangze felt.

Just as she was about to console him, she saw a huge and frightening burn mark on his hand. She asked sternly, "What's wrong with your hand?"

Gong Shangze instantly shrunk. "Nothing, I was just not careful..."

"You were just checking the pieces. How could you carelessly burn your hand like this? Momo, what happened?" Ning Xi turned to ask Momo with a threatening glare.

Momo looked lost. She rambled, "Uhh, I don't know either! Just now, Director Gong said he had a little more to wrap up, so I came over to look for you first. I don't know what happened either..."

"Boss, it's really nothing!"

As they were talking, David's score was revealed.

Han Momo looked at the score and was instantly filled with hopelessness. "Nine...nine point nine! Director Gong, should I praise you? Do your designs have to be so good? There's been so many designs out already but there has never been such a high score. The highest score was only nine point six! You...you're just too much!"

Chapter 626: The Last Participant

Ning Xi did not know whether to laugh or cry. It seemed like being too talented was also a frustration!

Gong Shangze's work not only had a solid theme, it even included the appreciation of culture, making it perfect for a huge award like this. With such the team's strength and the best resources, it was no wonder the judges loved it.

The applause in the venue was becoming increasingly thunderous and half of the people offered David and Ning Xueluo a standing ovation in between congratulations. All the reporters had also turned their cameras towards him, ready to shoot the scene of him going up the stage to accept the coveted award.

David looked delighted as he stood up and thanked everyone, launching into humble courtesy words, "You all have held me in too high of a regard, this is the outcome of the entire team's efforts! Especially my boss, Miss Ning Xueluo. If not for her, there would not be the David you see today!"

Ning Xueluo smiled. "Don't be so humble, you are the soul and core of our studio."

Now that David had snagged such a huge award, Ning Xueluo would naturally be kinder in order to make him stay and be loyal to her.

Just as David rearranged his outfit and was ready to step out to receive his award, the host suddenly announced, "Everyone, please don't rush, we still have one last participant!"

"What? There's one more? What's happening?"

"Just give out the award already! Isn't this a waste of time?"

"There's no choice. That's how competitions are. We're too impatient, let's just wait for the entire show to finish! The results are set after all and I could use this time to prepare the content for the interview later!"

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When he heard the host, David stopped mid-step to the stage and he looked slightly awkward. Then, he suddenly remembered that Angie had secretly told him that she moved the copycat to be the last. When he recalled this, he regained his good-natured expression and sat down again.

When that participant's work appeared on stage, not only would it be a good opportunity to make him look better, he could also use the opportunity to shut down the other crazies who kept copying his trends, thus killing two birds with one stone.

Ning Xueluo also did not seem rushed at all. After all, the award was already in the bag. The few participants who could be deemed any competition had already finished earlier, so what was left would just be a sideshow to elevate their performance.

All the female celebrities and socialites present were cozying up to Ning Xueluo while the designers surrounded David and the cameras were solely focused on David. Even the judges had already started packing up and were preparing to leave.

When the final participant's work came on stage, almost nobody paid it any attention...

Gong Shangze did not seem very well; his fever had worsened while his breath began to come in ragged pants. The burn mark on his hand had not been treated either, probably because he kept hiding his pain.

Ning Xi held him up as he was shaking unstably. "Hold on for a little while more, we can go home very soon!"

She had wanted Momo to bring him home immediately, but she knew very well that he would definitely want to see the final outcome.

She had seen Gong Shangze's participating design and was blown away by it. If "Life" had not been presented, he definitely would win the first place. But with "Life" going up before them, not only would they not bag any awards, they would even fail horribly...

With a loud zap, the bright lights that were meant to complement the theme of "Life" previously suddenly dimmed down. The music also changed into a low and deep tune, which was almost depressing, making those who listened to it feel uncomfortable.

Chapter 627: Full Score Ten Points!

Shortly after the prologue, the music suddenly turned into a high and the venue started to turn dark.

The first model then stepped out.

The classic red gown was elegant and bedazzling as if what was worn on her was not a dress but a blood-red sun setting on the horizon. The details were a result of Gong Shangze's expertise with Chinese elements such as traditional embroidery and cloud motifs.

Even though it was very attractive, when compared to David's luxurious design earlier, it was practically a wallflower, even making the crowd tired of evaluating the aesthetics.

Everyone present just skimmed a look at it before scoffing. However, when the dress came into the brighter area and its entire look was revealed, everyone's gaze was fixed onto it!

Even Ning Xi was shocked herself. "How!?"

Gong Shangze's designs that he had submitted were still his originals. They were Sunset, Aurora, Cherry Blossom, Waves, Snowy Forest, and Starry Night Sky. Six types of dresses carrying elements of nature as the color palette, supplemented by Chinese traditional techniques.

However, what was special was that every dress had different degrees of burns...

The trace of burns did not look like flaws. In fact, it unexpectedly displayed an unusually special decadent elegance, instantly stealing everyone's attention!

After a while, everyone finally regained their senses and started clapping. The awed photographers used their keen skills and quickly aimed their cameras towards the stage.

"Oh, wow. Burn marks! The ones on that red dress are so beautiful! It gives me the feeling of a princess who is lonely but remains elegant!"

"That sea blue mermaid dress is so gorgeous too! The tail has been burnt to almost nothing, but it's tragically beautiful! Makes me think of the tale of the little mermaid princess!"

"So unique! But how did they think of this?"

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More and more people started looking towards the stage, every one of them astonished.

After a while, the screen flickered with the theme of the participating work: Nirvana.

"Brilliant! Too brilliant!" One of the judges immediately stood up emotionally, holding his hand to his chest and tears welling up in his eyes.

"It is indeed a wonderful idea. It's been so long since we've seen such spirited work!"

"Haha, this newbie's got guts! But I like it!"

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Because of the way it was presented, everyone's attention was focused on how brilliant the theme was and no one noticed the Chinese elements.

Ning Xi was moved beyond words. No wonder Gong Shangze's hand was burnt, he had actually...

How much determination did he need to personally burn his hard work of more than half a month?

Giving it life after death was deserving of the meaning of the designs and its new theme: Nirvana Reincarnated.

The host of the award ceremony came from a fashion design background. He stared at the last design for a long time before regaining his senses and remembering he had a job to do. He lightly coughed and said, "Up next, let's see the scores from our judges!"

One after another, the judges raised their scoreboards.

The first judge: 10 points!

The second judge: 10 points!

The third judge: 10 points!

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There were five 10 points in a row!

Finally, it came to the last judge, Qu Guanyang, who had the reputation of being a picky Chinese designer.

Earlier for David's work, he had given the lowest score. He had been a judge for the past eight events and was famous for being stringent. He had never once given a full score!

At that moment, everyone's gaze was fixed on Qu Guanyang's hand.

After a torturous wait, he slowly revealed his scoreboard: 10 points!!!

Chapter 628: My Baby Ze Is Awesome

"10 points! Our final contestant's score...is a full 10 points! Oh my God! It really is 10 points! This is amazing! Even our strictest judge, Teacher Qu, gave full marks! This is unexpected! A dark horse has appeared at the end of our competition!" The host was really excited.

Han Momo screamed from her seat and hugged Gong Shangze tightly. "10 points! It's 10 points! Wow! This is unbelievable! Director Gong, you're really amazing! I'm going to be a die-hard fan of yours from now on!"

Ning Xi gave Gong Shangze a pat on his shoulder, beaming impressed. "My baby Ze is awesome!"

"After numerous rounds of fierce competition, our Golden Award winner has emerged. Now, we'd like to invite our last contestant, Mr. X, to come up to the stage and receive the prize! That's right, this contestant used an anonymous name to enter and I'm really curious who this mysterious contestant is!" The host was very experienced at stirring up the crowd and already started creating a hot topic for everyone to gossip about.

Everyone at the scene started to return to their senses.

"Wow! What's happening?"

"Who's X? Where did he come from?"

"Who knows, the screen only says 'the design director from Spirit Studio' and nothing else, not even his real name!"

"Spirit Studio? Who's the owner? I've never heard of it before!"

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The competition allowed anonymous entries and many people used pseudonyms as well.

Ning Xi did not really delve further into it when Gong Shangze mentioned that he wanted to use a pseudonym for his entry. She let him decide, thinking that he probably wanted to only announce himself after he became successful which was understandable.

"X..." Han Momo thought for a while, then she realized in excitement. "Wow! X! Sis Xi, it's your initial, isn't it?"

"Huh? My initial?" Ning Xi did not think about it at all.

"Mm hmm." Gong Shangze nodded shyly.

"Oh dear, my little baby is such a sweetheart!" Ning Xi was genuinely touched.

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The moment the score was up, David stood up with his mouth quirking in fury, his veins visibly bulging out on his forehead.

He was staring straight at the six dresses and as he zoomed into the tiny details on the dresses carefully, his eyes were filled with fear.

These designs were so familiar...especially how the details were handled...

X...

Could it be...

No! Impossible!

Gong Shangze knew nothing aside from design, so he could not have possibly survived by himself. He did not even have a penny on him when he left. He was probably chased out by the landlord and begging on the streets by now, so how could he be back here participating in the Golden Award?

Plus, he was a design major and would never do something as shady as this.

"How could it be?! David lost!" Li Yueling exclaimed in shock.

"It was just some outlandish work!" David clenched his teeth in irate anger.

Ning Xueluo did not care about the designs at all. She was only concerned about the results. She was embarrassed and glared at David coldly. "Didn't you say there wouldn't be any problems? How could you lose to a nobody?"

Chapter 629: By One's Capabilities

David clenched his teeth and hid his panic. "I'll handle this, Ms. Ning, don't worry!"

He then signaled to a few people in the crowd. The few designers who had been relying on David's resources understood what he meant and they started to complain...

"Objection! So one can win an award by plagiarising another's design and burning it? Isn't it too easy?"

"That's right! Anyone here could burn some clothes! Shouldn't everyone get a prize then?"

"That was just some outlandish design!"

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After the string of complaints was released, the other designers could not keep it down anymore. They might still be alright if they were to lose to David, but it was harsh on their pride to lose to a newbie and they started to suspect the competition's fairness.

"What are the judges doing? Were they bribed?"

"I'm disappointed, I didn't think Qu Guanyang would stoop this low as well!"

"We want a rematch!"

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The host was at a loss. He tried to calm the audience down but failed awkwardly. Following David's planting of the complaints, chaos ensued. A few judges panicked and looked at Qu Guanyang.

"Teacher Qu, what do you think we should do? Should we reassess the designs?"

"We were really surprised just now, but now that I look at it, awarding a full 10 points doesn't really seem appropriate!"

"That's right, David has a big influence in the industry and it might affect this award's reputation if we handle this badly!"

...

Qu Guanyang sneered at them, "Are you guys okay? Who are the judges, us or them? If all of them were experts, then why are we needed here? And why are you guys even sitting up here? Just a few words are enough to change your decision. What kind of judge are you?"

The few judges were embarrassed and stopped talking.

Later, Qu Guanyang picked up the microphone, "Well, well, it seems like someone's questioning my judgment!"

"That's because you're being really unfair this time! This is obviously plagiarism! Some random burning isn't enough to cover it up!" someone from the crowd expressed, full of rage.

Qu Guanyang looked at the crowd coldly and declared expressionlessly, "Firstly, all of you have been talking about plagiarism, but what's the definition of plagiarism? Chinese trends, traditional elements, anyone can come up with these. This is a publicly available theme, not an exclusive design. It's based on one's capabilities to make it look exceptional.

"Secondly, can all of you burn it too? Did any of you think about it? Who thought about it? What did you do? Why didn't you do it before if you have thought about it?"

Qu Guanyang's question rendered the designers speechless.

They realized they were being unreasonable. While it was true that anyone could do it, it was difficult to come up with the idea and execute it, which was why it caught everyone by surprise.

"Even if you say so, based on overall abilities, that anonymous X is nowhere near David!" someone yelled out, still not convinced.

Qu Guanyang used an even harsher tone and stared coldly into the crowd. "As designers, all of you don't understand what you are doing. What is the purpose of this award?"

Chapter 630: Who Is It?

Qu Guanyang had a powerful aura and the crowd murmured quietly, "Fashion design..."

"That's right, it's an award for fashion design! The most important part of this award isn't about the model, the materials, or the skills. It comes down to ideas and creativity!"

"The Golden Award selects the best designer, not the best model, the most expensive materials, or the most famous designer! If it were based on those criteria, anyone can become a designer! Why would all of you be needed? As decoration?"

Qu Guanyang was really sharp-tongued, he did not hold back at all. Everyone could not look at him straight in the eye.

He then stared at David's direction and loudly stated, "The Golden Award has been organized for the 23rd year in a row. Our processes are transparent and will not be affected by any third parties. It was like this in the past, it is how it is now and how it will be continued in the future. We detest those who try to manipulate the results. Anyone is welcomed to oversee our judging process!"

His words were clearly meant to criticize David's behavior for attempting to change the results using his power and network.

Anyone could easily imagine that a new designer from an unknown studio could not possibly bribe all six judges, while David was forcing the judges to change the result in his favor.

Suddenly, the other contestants and photographers saw the sense in what Qu Guanyang was saying. They all looked at David critically...

"Qu Guanyang is right. The designers who were voicing out their opinions just now were trying to look for trouble! Even laymen like us were surprised. How could you say the design was bad?"

"I've always felt that David was too arrogant. What's wrong with following the Chinese trend? Even if it was trending because of him, he was not the first one to create it. It's just as Teacher Qu said -anyone can do it! He made it sound like he invented it and anyone who follows is plagiarising him!"

"The award he expected to fall into his lap just disappeared. Of course, he'd panic! Do you know how much this award can bring to him?"

"Hmm...it makes sense. Most of the awards are so superficial nowadays but Golden Award is one of the more prestigious ones!"

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After Qu Guanyang spoke up, the other judges who panicked from the uproar started to calm down. They then explained their reasoning behind the score they assigned and a unanimous conclusion was made.

"With that, all of us decided that this Golden Award goes to designer X from Spirit Studio!"

A thunderous round of applause roared throughout the venue.

Some of the invited female celebrities were really excited. The fashion industry was used to quick changes. As soon as a fresh new design was presented, it instantly caught their attention and everyone would want to get their hands on a piece of it.

The celebrities who were gathering around Ning Xueluo just now were now waiting to see who this mysterious designer was.

The host cleared his throat and invited, "Now, we'll have designer X to come up onto the stage!"

The female host was smiling with the trophy in her hands, expecting the designer to be a tall, handsome man.

At that moment, everyone was looking around, curious to see who this dark horse was.

Especially David who could not suppress his abhorrence towards the winner.

Who? Who was it?!

It was impossible that he did not know such a person within the industry!