

Superstar 1371

Chapter 1371: The encore finale: 'Ashamed'!

The performance ended.

The audience was screaming!

"That was awesome!"

"Oh my God!"

"This is what heavy fucking metal should sound like!"

"I feel all of the blood in my body pumping!"

"This is our very own style of heavy metal!"

"What a great Teacher Zhang!"

"What a great 'Dreaming of the Tang Dynasty'!"

"Zhang Ye!"

"Zhang Ye!"

"Zhang Ye!"

"Zhang Ye!"

Many of the Chinese international students were chanting Zhang Ye's name!

Many of the foreigners also started chanting. Things were going out of control in the arena!

Many of the participating bands were also dumbfounded from listening. Several white band members looked at one another in shock. The song that was just performed had opened their eyes. This heavy metal was clearly quite different from their styles, with many of its own elements added in. In fact, these elements were what amazed them; it was detailed and added in a cultural style. After they finished listening to the performance, it felt like they had benefited from the experience as well. This was very novel and quite high level. They did not know if it was a false impression, but they actually felt that this Chinese guy's heavy metal music had "surpassed" theirs by a great deal! It was astonishing! This song did not even seem like it belonged to this era of heavy metal!

Several of the Korean bands looked disgusted. How could this be?! They were just mocking the fact that China did not have its own brand of heavy metal, but their faces were smacked swollen by Zhang Ye? Zhang Ye? So this was the Chinese Heavenly King who had beaten up one of their Korean stars, Lee Anson? Where on earth did this guy pop out of!

...

Zhang Ye leaped off the stage.

The Spring Garden members followed close behind.

The following performers, a Japanese band, went onstage next.

The music festival continued.

...

When they got backstage, the members of Spring Garden burst into excitement!

Xiaodong exclaimed, "That was so kickass! It was so fun!"

Li Xiaoxian said excitedly, "This, this song is awesome!"

Amy grabbed Zhang Ye by the shoulder. "Teacher Zhang! My brother! My dear brother! That was so impressive of you! This song is godly! It's so fucking godly!"

Xiaodong said, "I think I've fallen in love with heavy metal!"

Amy let out a guffaw. "We've really made an impression this time! We've earned glory for the Chinese rock 'n' roll scene! This is the first time that the Chinese rock 'n' roll scene has shouted its own voice on an international heavy metal music stage! It's so awesome! Teacher Zhang, are we going to be popular?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Who knows? As long as we enjoyed ourselves, that's enough."

Li Xiaoxian said, "We'll definitely be popular. Just look at the audience's response. All of them went crazy!"

Xiaodong marveled, "Yeah, there were several thousand people who raised their right hands. That sight was so stunning! Even the foreigners are shocked by our performance!"

Currently, several other bands were also backstage with them.

A Finnish band member looked at them and politely smiled.

A Dutch band member gave them a thumbs up.

Zhang Ye and the others smiled back at them.

Taking a bottle of water and drinking, Zhang Ye then said, "Get some rest. That was really tiring."

Amy said excitedly, "What was so tiring about that? I had such a great time."

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "You might not be tired, but I am. I'm hoarse!"

He did not have a voice trained for heavy metal and had to force it for today's performance. The difficulty of this song was extremely high and not just anyone could sing it. Zhang Ye had to expend a lot of energy just to be able to perform it.

One song.

Two songs.

Three songs.

The final performance ended.

The setlist for the International Heavy Metal Music Festival was completed!

Zhang Ye smiled. "Let's go!"

The members of Spring Garden were also getting ready to leave.

However, the organizers came over and informed everyone that in accordance to the past music festivals, when all of the bands finished performing, there would be an encore finale. The band with the most cheers would get the opportunity to perform the final song of the night, just as how it had been done every year.

Zhang Ye shrugged it off since he didn't feel like they would be the ones to get the chance.

But when they heard the shouting coming from inside the arena, he and the Spring Garden members were stunned!

The screams were deafening!

The crowd was shouting their names one by one!

"Storm!"

"Zhang Ye!"

"WI99!"

"SS Band!"

"Zhang Ye!"

"Zhang Ye!"

"Zhang Ye!"

At the beginning, they were shouting for all the different bands. The cheers for the more popular bands were also very loud. But towards the end, the minority group of just over a hundred Chinese international students were shouting so loudly that they covered up the screams of everyone else. Their shouting became louder and louder, more and more in unison. In the end, even a lot of the foreigners shouted along with them!

"Zhang Ye!"

"Zhang Ye!"

"Zhang Ye!"

Cheers rang out all over the arena!

Zhang Ye pointed at himself. "Are they shouting for us?"

Amy said, "Yes, it's us! It's us!"

Xiaodong said, "My God, they're really calling for us?"

Li Xiaoxian said anxiously, "So are we going on or what?"

Zhang Ye laughed. "Since everyone is showing so much support for us, let's do one more song!"

Xiaodong said, "You have another Chinese metal song?"

Amy could not believe it either. "There's another?"

Zhang Ye smiled but did not say anything.

Another?

Get rid of the question mark and you have your answer!

In the VIP seating.

Chen Guang was stunned!

Zhao Wuliu was so excited that he nearly cried!

Big Qi said startled, "The foreigners are shouting for Zhang Ye?"

Xu Meilan gasped and said, "They're calling for him to return onstage for the encore. Teacher Zhang's song won over the audience!"

Chen Guang said in a surprised and nervous manner, "B-But does he know any other songs?"

Zhao Wuliu shook off his surprise. "Uh, yeah, where's he gonna find another song?"

Jiang Hanwei looked at the empty stage. "They still haven't come back onto the stage?"

Xu Meilan said worriedly, "Do they really have no more songs to perform?"

"Zhang Ye!"

"Zhang Ye!"

They still weren't coming out?

As a result, the audience in the arena roared even louder!

In Seoul, in the arena of an international music festival, over 10,000 people were shouting a Chinese person's name in unison. What kind of a visual was this? What kind of an honor was this?

Many of the foreign bands were dumbfounded!

The faces of the Korean band members looked even darker!

They were playing in their own country tonight!

This was their home turf!

But everyone was actually cheering for a Chinese band to play the encore?

How could something like this even happen!

Suddenly, the screams exploded!

“Ah!”

“They’re here!”

“Zhang Ye!”

“It’s Zhang Ye!”

“Spring Garden!”

“One more song!”

“One more song!”

“One more song!”

Onstage.

Zhang Ye led the group out and leaped onto the stage with a flourish!

One more?

Alright then!

I can even sing ten more songs if you want!

Then the guitar, bass, and drums played together!

When Zhang Ye opened his mouth, his voice ¹ explosively filled the entire venue again!

“Yo ohhhh, ohhhhhhh!”

“Yo ohhhh, ohhhhhhh!”

It was crazy in the audience!

Everyone was rocking out!

Zhang Ye sang loudly.

“In the middle of the crowd, there stands you and me!

“Meeting and getting to know each other!

“In the middle of the crowd, there stands you and me!

“Pretending to wear honest smiles!

“There’s no need to speak, you know exactly!

“What it is that you and me both want to do!

“There’s no need to care so much or feel sorry!

“Someday, I’m sure you will understand me!”

Chen Guang no longer knew what to say!

Zhao Wuliu got so excited that he couldn't control himself!

Ning Lan cheered!

Big Qi howled!

There was another!

There really was another song!

Well done!

Teacher Zhang, well done!

Zhang Ye sang loudly, "Not gonna believe!"

Xiaodong got into the flow of the song. "Believe whatever the reasons are!"

Zhang Ye and Amy shouted together, "People have become so indiffere-e-e-e-ent!"

Zhang Ye sang, "Not gonna remember!"

Li Xiaoxian sang spiritedly, "Remember the past!"

Zhang Ye, Xiaodong, Li Xiaoxian, and Amy sang, "I'm no longer the person I wa-a-a-a-as!"

The crowd sang so hard they went hoarse. They were waving their arms like crazy!

Some people even started crying listening to the song!

All of a sudden.

The guitar played quieter.

The drumbeat disappeared.

The sound of the bass also died out.

One second.

Two seconds.

Zhang Ye clutched the chest of his Chinese jacket and closed his eyes.

"I've felt lonely before.

"And I've been shunned too."

Suddenly, he opened his eyes and sang out loudly with a determined but uncaring look, "But I've never felt ashamed to show my fa-a-a-a-a-a-a-ace!"

The arena blew up!

Nobody could control their emotions anymore!

Screams!

Howls!

Craziness!

No one was spared!

This final verse speared the hearts of each and every member of the Chinese celebrity team!

They had been lonely.

They had been snubbed.

But they had never been ashamed!

Zhang Ye!

Just what kind of a person was he?

Chapter 1372: Experiencing a rise in the Asian popularity score!

On that night.

The event came to a successful end.

The International Heavy Metal Music Festival concluded with Zhang Ye's singing.

However, the nearly 10,000-strong audience in the arena were reluctant to leave. They were still in a state of elevated emotions as they continued shouting a name crazily—it was the name of a Chinese person!

"Zhang Ye!"

"Zhang Ye!"

"Zhang Ye!"

"Zhang Ye!"

"Zhang Ye!"

With "Dreaming of the Tang Dynasty"!

And with "Ashamed"!

It gave the attendees of the event goosebumps!

It was great!

It was awesome!

...

On the returning bus.

Zhang Ye had a lingering look on his face.

Tang Dynasty's song.

Black Panther's song.

He had brought them out today and it felt great! It was so fun!

Zhang Ye might not be a professional rock 'n' roll musician, but he did have a rock 'n' roll heart!

On the bus.

Zhang Ye and the Spring Garden members got "surrounded" by everyone!

Big Qi gave them a thumbs up and said excitedly, "There's nothing I can say except that it was awesome! It was so impressive! Did you all see the atmosphere in the arena? Nearly 10,000 people were chanting your name! Nearly 10,000 people were screaming and shouting! This sort of atmosphere isn't something that we usually experience in a normal concert back at home. Such a level of craziness can only be felt in a heavy metal performance like this! I got so pumped up listening from the audience. Old Chen, Old Zhao, and I screamed until we were hoarse!"

Zhang Ye laughed. "Haha."

Amy exclaimed, "I had such a good time too!"

Xiaodong said happily, "Today was such a nice outlet!"

"Yeah!" Li Xiaoxian said, "Who says that China doesn't have its own form of heavy metal!"

Xu Meilan then laughed. "Today, I finally understood where the nickname of 'Face-smacking Zhang' came from. In the past, I didn't really pay much attention to it and kept wondering why people were always calling him that."

Amy said, "Haha, you're only learning this now, Sister Lan? Teacher Zhang has been walking the path of smacking faces for so many years! He's even expanding it outside of China!"

Ning Lan laughed and said, "I never used to listen to heavy metal music. Listening to the others perform today only sounded like I was listening to noise. It really pained my ears to hear them sing. But when Teacher Zhang sang his song, I didn't find it annoying at all. I even found it rather entertaining, so what was with that? That is what our Teacher Little Zhang is capable of! Haha!"

Zhang Ye pretentiously waved it off. "Sister Ning, let's be more modest, more modest!"

Zhao Wuliu gasped and said, "Director Zhang, I really have to take my hat off to you today. I'm entirely convinced! Just what do you not know? You can even come up with a Chinese style heavy metal song? And it was even created on the spot? Do you know how many bands in China could not make it in the scene even after many years? If we had known, we would have come to you for guidance long ago! Then China's rock 'n' roll scene would've been able to proudly say its name on the international stage several years earlier!"

Zhang Ye said, "I was just helping you out back there. I'm not a professional at this."

Chen Guang belly laughed. "How was that just helping out? You absolutely killed it, you know? With today's performance, it's opened a new chapter for China's heavy metal! Those two songs of yours are the stepping stones to the empire of China's metal scene! It's an extremely valuable contribution! It has also set a direction for the Chinese heavy metal bands who are still struggling to find their way in the international metal scene. This is as good as being the founding father of the industry. When future generations play metal, who can avoid being linked to you? In the future, when people mention the development of metal music in China, the first name they will bring up is yours! They would all talk about the 5th International Heavy Metal Music Festival! This will benefit all future generations!"

Zhang Ye exclaimed, "It's not that great, it's not that great."

When Xiaodong heard this, she rolled her eyes playfully. "Hey, hey, what about us? Why isn't anyone mentioning us?"

Amy also said unhappily, "Right, right, what about our contributions?"

Everyone hastily started to flatter them as well.

"You guys were great too."

"Right, your names have already gone down in history!"

"Haha, Sister Dong's bass playing was great!"

"Amy's drumming was also very on point."

"That's right, it's very difficult to imagine that you guys had only refined the details just before getting onstage."

"The singing was very good too!"

"That ending shout that the three of you did, that was so heavy metal!"

With this, the three ladies of Spring Garden got extremely spoiled by the compliments.

Amy puffed out her chest. "From now on, the three of us have also become rock singers!"

Xiaodong also joked, "That's right, we've switched genres and won't be carrying on as an idol group!"

Zhang Ye and Li Xiaoxian were speechless.

Everyone was amused.

But today really was an exhilarating day for all of them!

The four of them had really done China proud!

...

Elsewhere.

Somewhere in Seoul.

At Lee Anson's office studio.

"Oppa! Oppa!"

"What's the matter?"

"That Zhang Ye is in Seoul!"

"What? What is he doing here?"

"I think it's for tomorrow's charity banquet. But just a while ago, he and the Chinese celebrity team members attended the International Heavy Metal Music Festival. He even went onstage and outdid our famous Korean Storm band, as well as the other foreign bands! The venue's atmosphere was totally crazy! It was simply unbelievable!"

"How is that possible!"

"It's true! One of our staff members was present at the venue!"

"How would a Chinese guy know how to sing heavy metal!"

...

On a Korean social network.

"The video is out!"

"Let me recommend a clip to everyone. All of you, have a listen to this!"

"What is it?"

"It's a song that was performed at the heavy metal music festival!"

"Wow, this is a great performance!"

"What a stunning performance, I can feel my blood surging from listening to it!"

"Who is he?"

"This is a Heavenly King from China. He's also an Asian A-list celebrity!"

"I don't know this person."

"I don't know him either."

"Ah? Isn't that the world number one in Go?"

"Yes, that's him!"

"Oh, oh, oh! I remember him now that you mention it!"

...

Japan.

Online.

“That was such a classic!”

“Those who like heavy metal music should all listen to this!”

“It’s really difficult to believe that this song was performed by a Chinese guy!”

“Who is Zhang Ye?”

“It’s that teacher from the Chinese university. He led some students to scold our countrymen some time ago.”

“Ah? It’s him!”

“He even knows how to sing?”

“Yeah, I heard that this person is one of the top celebrities in China!”

“Right, he’s also on the Asian A-list rankings!”

...

The media in Asia also followed up with reporting this news!

The reporters in Asia were very shocked!

This news was indeed quite unbelievable to them!

“The International Heavy Metal Music Festival Opens!”

“A Chinese celebrity amazes the venue with a spectacular performance!”

“China’s heavy metal music comes to Asia!”

“‘Dreaming of the Tang Dynasty’ sweeps an entire music festival!”

“A Chinese celebrity steals the limelight!”

“Zhang Ye: An Asian A-list celebrity with a tainted past!”

...

The clip from the music festival went viral!

The two songs that were recorded live went viral!

Instantly, Zhang Ye’s name became common knowledge across Asia!

And this was even Zhang Ye’s first time stepping onto a stage abroad. It was also the first time he used this method to introduce himself to the citizens and media of Asia!

On this night.

The Asian Celebrity Rankings Index was updated.

On the rankings, Zhang Ye’s popularity score had actually increased by quite a bit!

1373 The news spreads back to China!

On the morning of the second day.

Back in China, people gradually caught wind of the news.

At Zhang Ye's Studio, everyone was coming in to work as usual.

"Morning."

"Morning, Director Ha."

"Brother Zuo, you're here already?"

"Good morning. Nothing happened during the night, right?"

"No, nothing. Ever since Director Zhang reached the summit, there have been fewer people scolding him these days."

"Eh, what's the matter? What's with this?"

"What is it, Little Wang?"

"Look, why has Director Zhang's popularity on the Asian Celebrity Rankings Index suddenly gone up?"

"It's very normal for it to rise by a little, isn't it?"

"It's not just by a little, it's risen by quite a bit!"

"What? That can't be."

"Yeah, isn't the charity auction going to happen tonight? Besides, Director Zhang's activity this time is only for him increase his exposure in Asia. He's only going to take part in the regional activity to let those who do not know him yet learn about him a little. We aren't exactly expecting him to gain much of a rise in popularity at all!"

"Let me have a look!"

"Damn, it really has risen!"

"What's with this? What happened?"

"Did Director Zhang kick up a fuss abroad again?"

They were all confused. They did not understand what had happened and quickly went to find out.

...

At a newspaper firm.

"What?"

"Are you serious?"

"Zhang Ye has done something to shock the foreigners in Korea?"

“At a heavy metal music festival?”

“What the heck! There was even an incident like that?”

“The Asian media outlets have already reported about it?”

“Hurry, hurry, hurry! Go and find out about the events!”

“Why would Zhang Ye participate in a heavy metal music festival!”

...

At Central TV.

“Such a thing happened?”

“What? Something this big happened last night?”

“Are there any sources?”

“Are there any sources from the music festival?”

“What do you mean by no?”

“Go and seek it out! Hurry!”

“You must get your hands on the video of last night’s music festival!”

...

At Zhang Ye’s parents’ house.

In the neighborhood.

“Old Zhang!”

“Ai, Big Sis Sun.”

“Your family’s Little Ye is in the limelight again!”

“Ah? What happened?”

“Didn’t you watch the news? He sang in Korea and shocked to the foreigners!”

“What did he sing?”

“I’m not sure either!”

...

Meanwhile.

The news was spreading all through China!

It wasn’t because of the time zone difference, nor was there a blackout in the news. The key issue was that the Chinese media was not paying any attention to the International Heavy Metal Music Festival.

After all, everyone knew that China's heavy metal bands did not have much of a status in the international scene. It could even be said that they had no status at all, and that would not be putting it too harshly. They did not even have a heavy metal music style to call their own. Over time, the media stopped paying attention to it. This was just like how the Westerners did not really pay attention to table tennis. As they were not good at the sport and always lost whenever they played, who would want to concern themselves over that?

As such, this news arrived late to China!

That was why the Chinese were the last ones to find out!

After learning about the events that happened during last night's music festival, countless people became really curious. Simultaneously, they found it hard to believe. Just what songs did Zhang Ye sing? What songs did he perform? From the news in the Asian media, they found out that Zhang Ye had actually led Spring Garden onstage and outperformed all of the other heavy metal bands from the other countries? He had dominated the chance to sing the encore finale? And became the most popular band that the attendees wanted to watch at last night's music festival?

Was this some kind of tall tale?

Was this some kind of nonsense?

When did China's heavy metal scene reach that level?

What was going on!

Clips?

Sources?

A live audio recording?

They still didn't know if they could get their hands on those since it happened in another country. If it had been in China, that would not have been a problem at all. One of China's greatest strengths lay in the acquisition of pirated resources. It led all of the other countries in the world, and Chinese netizens were feared for their ability and awareness of where to look for such resources.

Very soon, they were found by those extremely resourceful citizens!

In fact, there was even an HD video of the entire International Heavy Metal Music Festival!

Countless people in China started watching it out of curiosity. In the end, they were all shocked by what took place in the arena!

...

On Weibo.

A lot of metalheads were in an uproar.

"Oh my God!"

"That was godly! Zhang Ye sang it in such a godly way!"

"That was truly scary!"

"I'm getting the goosebumps!"

"That Zhang Ye fellow can even sing heavy metal?"

"And it was in Chinese too! Heavens! Tears are streaming down my face!"

"It's in Chinese! It's really a heavy metal song in Chinese!"

"We finally have our very own metal! Ahhhhhh!"

"How exciting! This feeling is indescribable!"

"'Dreaming of the Tang Dynasty'?"

"Fuck! How can it be so stunning!"

"Shouldn't it be Old Chen and Zhao Wuliu going onstage to perform? I heard about this music festival, but I don't remember that Zhang Ye was invited for it? So why did he perform? And there's even Xiaodong and the others too?"

"I heard from one of the Chinese students studying over there. There was a Korean band who resorted to dirty tricks and sang the song that Zhao Wuliu was slated to perform. Old Zhao only had one song prepared, so he didn't get to sing it when the time came. It was Zhang Ye who led Xiaodong, Amy, and Li Xiaoxian to save the day. Who could have thought that by going onstage, they would end up shocking everyone!"

"That was so impressive!"

"Damn, I'm fucking impressed as well!"

"Regarding Zhang Ye, a lot of people are still scolding, criticizing, and doubting him. He has been attacked by a lot of people these few years, yet why can he still get to the top of the entertainment circle by making it into the S-list step by step? Why is it that even after scolding him, everyone still loves him to death? Because in these crucial moments, people still have to fucking depend on him. You have no choice but to be impressed!"

"Zhang Ye is on fire again!"

"This fellow is going to be on fire all across Asia this time!"

"Was it really that good? I don't really enjoy it."

"Previous poster, go listen to it a few more times. It's really good!"

"Yeah, these two songs signal the rise of China's heavy metal scene. They carry tremendous meaning to them!"

"Face-smacking Zhang has returned!"

"He's gone and slapped the faces of those in Asia!"

"Hahahahahaha! How satisfying! It feels so good!"

"I just like this grumpy temper of Zhang Ye's!"

"That's right, pfft! He always ends up smacking the faces of others out of the blue!"

Quite a few people also felt that the songs were average, because not everyone was able to accept metal and rock music. But whatever everyone's evaluation of them, no matter what the disagreements were, they all loved to hear about how Zhang Ye had shocked the foreigners with his performance on the Asian front!

How uplifting!

How vaunted!

He's shown the might of our country!

...

At Zhang Xia's house.

"Mom, have you watched the news yet?"

"Hur hur, I did."

"Teacher Zhang is really capable."

"Well, he just can't sit idle for longer than a moment."

...

At the Princess of Love Songs, Xue Kaiqi's home.

"Sister Xue, have you heard them yet?"

"Yes."

"How were they?"

"Those songs are what heavy metal should sound like!"

...

At musician Huang Cheng's office studio.

"Teacher Huang, what do you think?"

"Zhang Ye is really good. Compared to our country, there are more people in Asia who listen to heavy metal, especially in Japan and Korea. The acceptance level there is much higher and more professional as well. If even they were so shocked by Zhang Ye's songs, then it clearly states his abilities. There really is no one out there who can touch him!"

"I like these two songs as well! I always get goosebumps each time I listen to them!"

...

A rock band in China.

“These are really the stepping stones of our country’s heavy metal scene!”

“It’s so awesome!”

“All of us have Zhang Ye to thank for that!”

...

Among the people.

In the media.

Within the industry.

In the rock scene.

Across Asia.

There was only praise!

Chapter 1374: The charity banquet begins!

Noon.

12:30 PM.

Seoul, Korea.

The air here was clear and smog free. Other than this difference, the surrounding skyscrapers and traffic almost made it seem like back home.

At a restaurant emblazoned with Hangul, the Chinese celebrity team that was now abroad did not behave too conspicuously. They simply found a random restaurant close to the hotel and went in.

Some Koreans were pointing at them and whispering.

“Eh.”

“Look.”

“Those women are so pretty.”

“Are they celebrities?”

“They don’t look like they’re from our country, right?”

“They’re Chinese celebs!”

“Ah, that person is Zhang Ye.”

“Right, I saw a video of him yesterday!”

“It’s really him!”

“According to the news reports, he’s a hooligan.”

“He has a really bad reputation back in China.”

“Yeah, Anson-oppa was beaten up by him before.”

“During the Japanese delegation’s visit to China, he also scolded them.”

“But his singing is quite good.”

When the Chinese celebrity team first arrived in Korea after their flight, the people at the airport did not know Zhang Ye, and no one gave him much attention either. But just a day later, when the Chinese celebrity team appeared in public on the streets of Seoul and in the restaurant, already some people could recognize Zhang Ye without his shades on. This was such an obvious difference from before and was also reflective of Zhang Ye’s increase in popularity on the Asian Celebrity Rankings. Although this change was not enough to cause a qualitative change yet, it was still a good start. This indicated that there was still a lot of room for improvement in Zhang Ye’s Asian popularity. His fame was slowly rising. Zhang Ye’s trip to Korea had already exceeded his target of just making an impression on the Asian stage.

They ordered food.

Then started eating.

Ning Lan was pointing behind Zhang Ye with her chopsticks and smiling. “Are those people talking about you?”

Zhang Ye laughed and said, “Who knows, I can’t understand what they’re saying.”

Xiaodong giggled and said, “Look at our Director Zhang. He’s always so charming and capable. He gets famous wherever he goes to, and even the Asian market has opened its doors to him.”

Zhang Ye pretentiously waved it off. “Keep it down, keep it down.”

The accompanying female interpreter arched her brows. Turning back to take a look, she could not bring herself to tell Zhang Ye that they were mostly speaking ill of him.

Hooligan.

Bastard.

Fighting.

Scolding.

Which of those words had a positive ring to them?

Chen Guang asked, “Eh, where’s Sister Lan?”

Amy said, “She went off early in the morning to take care of some business. I guess she might be picking up the others right now?”

Li Xiaoxian said, “I’ve already sent Sister Lan our location. She’ll be coming over in a bit.”

As they were talking, the others arrived.

Outside, the two Heavenly Queens arrived side by side.

One of them was Xu Meilan.

The other one was Zhang Yuanqi.

There were another five or so other Chinese celebrities behind them. They were all going to take part in this year's Asian Charity Banquet and had probably arrived today on the same flight as Zhang Yuanqi. Huo Dongfang was also among them. But other than Old Huo, Zhang Ye was not familiar with the rest of the group since he hadn't had any dealings with them before.

Zhang Ye greeted, "Old Zhang, Old Huo, you're here?"

Huo Dongfang smiled and said, "You guys have already started eating? Why didn't you wait for us?"

Zhang Ye said, "Who knew when you would arrive?"

Huo Dongfang went over and sat down beside Zhang Ye. He said, "You're on fire again. Everyone back home just found out about what happened last night. The media dropped a bunch of reports, and there was a heated discussion on the Internet as well. Just before we boarded our flight, the news was still describing how you laid the stepping stones of the Chinese rock scene. You're the man! You can't even rest when going abroad."

Zhang Ye said happily, "Well, I couldn't not do anything about it since there was a chance to win some glory for China, right?"

Zhao Wuliu laughed. "Right, when it comes to gaining glory for China, it's a task that's best left to Teacher Zhang."

Zhang Yuanqi also came over and sat down. "When we get to the charity banquet's venue this afternoon, you'll be walking down the red carpet with me."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "The two of us, together? Sure."

Xu Meilan grinned. "I was arguing with Sister Zhang all day on our way here about that."

In the lineup of this Chinese celebrity team, the three most popular celebrities back home were Zhang Yuanqi, Xu Meilan, and Zhang Ye. They were all S-listers, so in accordance with previous arrangements, two of them would be required to walk down the red carpet side by side. As Zhang Yuanqi and Xu Meilan were both female, it wouldn't be that suitable for the two of them to walk together. So Zhang Ye definitely had to pair up and hold hands with one of them while walking down the red carpet to keep a male-female pairing. From the looks of it, they had made the choice before arriving.

Zhang Ye was very happy about it. "Was it really worth it? To argue for so long?"

Huo Dongfang spoke, "Yeah, in the end, they had to settle it with a match of rock-paper-scissors."

Zhang Ye belly laughed. "Looks like Sister Zhang has got the better luck."

Zhang Yuanqi said, "How was I lucky? I was the one who lost."

Zhang Ye was taken aback. He said, “Ah? So you mean that the person who lost has to walk down the red carpet with me?”

Zhang Yuanqi laughed and looked at him. “What did you think?”

Zhang Ye was speechless.

Everyone had a good laugh!

After the meal, everyone started getting busy.

Makeup.

Doing their hair.

Changing clothes.

Some of the celebrities brought along their own teams, while others did not. The charity banquet organizers had also gotten a professional team of makeup artists for the guests. Zhang Ye did not use the organizer’s makeup artists to help him with his makeup, but latched onto Zhang Yuanqi’s team instead to have their makeup done together. Zhang Ye’s makeup was easy to do and only took half an hour to complete. The rest of the time was spent waiting on Zhang Yuanqi. It was now that he realized how troublesome it was for a female celebrity to have their makeup and hair done, taking two full hours before she was ready.

At 4 PM.

The Chinese celebrity team arrived at the perimeter of the venue.

The reporters had already flocked here, with the Japanese, Korean, and Chinese media all gathered around the red carpet, ready to take photographs.

A bit away, the Korean celebrity team started making their way into the venue. Among them, Zhang Ye spotted a familiar face he had not seen in a long time—Korean star Lee Anson.

The Korean celebrities walked down the red carpet group by group.

The Chinese celebrity team was watching from afar and listening to Zhang Ye’s rambling.

Zhang Ye was muttering, “Lee Anson is still around in showbiz? I thought that he’d have already retired. How nostalgic it is to see a familiar face. I really miss the time I sent him flying with a kick.”

Zhang Yuanqi was speechless.

As was Chen Guang.

And Huo Dongfang.

Over there, a female Korean celebrity tripped over on the red carpet!

The reporters went crazy as they rushed to snap as many photos as they could!

Zhang Ye scoffed. “That was so unprofessional. That falling over motion was so fake. You can just see that her acting is not good. That was clearly done to increase the discussions about her. Look, you’d

have to act better if you want to look like you've twisted your ankle. If you had fallen over after twisting it, I could have given it to you and considered you a pro. But who would just lie down on their side? Do you think you're lining up on the runway for a takeoff or something?"

All of Spring Garden was speechless.

After the Korean celebrities finished walking down the red carpet.

It was time for the Japanese celebrity team to do so.

However, the first female Japanese celebrity to walk down the red carpet also fell over within her first two steps. The male celebrities around her rushed over to help her up, with the female celebrity looking completely embarrassed.

The reporters went into a frenzy again!

Kacha!

Kacha!

Flashes were going off everywhere!

Zhang Ye clapped and praised, "That's a good one! This one's a real pro! Just look at how she fell over. I bet she practiced it over and over many times. From head to toe, I can sense professionalism all over her. All of her toes were in on the act as well, with drama bursting out of every cell of hers! There's absolutely no sign that it was a fake fall! Even in the international sporting arena, the strictest of international referees would have to give her a free kick if they saw that! It was flawless!" He looked at the Chinese celebrity team. "Which soccer team does that female celebrity play on?"

Big Qi: "..."

Xu Meilan: "..."

Jiang Hanwei: "..."

"The Chinese celebrity team: "..."

Soccer, your sister!

She's a renowned movie actress in Asia, alright!

Everyone was at a loss!

This mouth of Teacher Zhang's, there's really no one like him!

Do you have to be so sarcastic?

Huo Dongfang clapped him on the shoulder. "Teacher Zhang, I finally know why Sister Zhang and Sister Lan were so unwilling to walk down the red carpet with you."

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "Why?"

Amy said, "Because everything you say is likely to offend someone. Anyone else might have a chance of setting things right after offending another person. But for you, everything you say is always so extreme

that it leaves no room for any backpedaling! If you let those female celebrities hear what you say, there's no doubt that they'll get so angry that they'd fight you!"

Li Xiaoxian giggled, "Pfft!"

Chen Guang also laughed, "Hahahaha!"

Chapter 1375: Zhang Ye's prepared auction item!

Within the venue.

The decor was exquisite and brilliant.

The Asian Charity Banquet was into its umpteenth year. It was held on a nearly annual basis and was always a grand affair. However, it was slightly different this year as it would be partially broadcast live. The red carpet event would not be shown, with the signal only coming on when the main auction event began. Be it for the Korean, the Japanese, or the Chinese sides, as well as the rest of Asia, the live broadcast would all be done over the Internet.

Four types of people were present at the event.

The staff.

The celebrities.

The reporters.

And businesspeople from all different industries.

They would all come together and share a feast.

After the red carpet event was symbolically held, the Chinese celebrity team was met by staff from the Asian Red Cross Society and brought to two adjoining tables to be seated.

Chen Guang was also attending the event for the first time as his popularity last year wasn't high enough. He craned his neck around. "There's really quite a lot of people from the business world."

But for Xiaodong and the others, they had been present at this event every year in recent times. "Yes, we're mainly depending on them for the charity auction bidding. There are businesspeople from China as well as other countries."

Huo Dongfang laughed and said, "I can see quite a few people that I know. Is that the boss of Northern Pharmaceuticals? And isn't that Sun He Wine Industry's CEO? Eh? Even Boss Qian is also here?"

Amy said in surprise, "Boss Qian?"

Li Xiaoxian looked over. "Qian Haitao?"

Big Qi also said in surprise, "You mean the richest man in China?"

The list of those from the business world was also very glamorous. There were many influential CEO's attending the event, and even the richest man in China was here. As the biggest annual charity event in

Asia, the Chinese businessmen were all extremely supportive of such events, whether it was for their corporate image or for their own personal ideals.

Many of them were old acquaintances and started chatting the moment they came into the building.

Zhang Yuanqi, Xu Meilan, Ning Lan, and Jiang Hanwei also went over to greet the people they were familiar with.

Zhang Ye didn't really know anyone here and wasn't interested in getting to know them either. So he sat by himself, humming and messing around on his phone, showing zero awareness or interest in expanding his network. As someone who was an Asian A-list celebrity, he was easily the only one who acted like this in the entire building.

Big Qi asked, "Teacher Zhang?"

Zhang Ye looked over. "Ai?"

Big Qi laughed and said, "What item did you prepare for the auction?"

Zhang Ye asked in return, "What did you guys prepare?"

Rather embarrassed, Big Qi replied, "Well, I painted an ink wash painting¹ to put up for the auction."

Impressed, Xiaodong said, "Oh, Brother Qi even knows how to paint?"

Big Qi laughed and said, "Haha, I just know a little bit. I learned when I was young, but of course I can't compare to professionals. I'm just in it for the ride but didn't know what else I could bring for the auction."

Li Xiaoxian gave a bashful smile. "We're not here today to compare how pro we are. We just have to show up to aid the cause and do our part for the donation drive."

Amy said, "But you still have to know a little. Otherwise, if we lower the standards of the auction, that would be so embarrassing." Then she giggled and said, "Xiaoxian, don't worry, if no one wants what you wrote, I'll bid for it so that you won't look bad."

Li Xiaoxian slapped Amy's arm. "You're always cursing me."

Amy laughed, "Hahahaha."

Zhang Ye asked, "What did you write, Xiaoxian?"

Li Xiaoxian answered in a reserved manner, "It's just a simple calligraphy piece. I've always liked it."

Huo Dongfang said, "Eh, doesn't Teacher Zhang also know calligraphy?"

Big Qi asked, "What's Teacher Zhang's calligraphy like?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Not too bad, I guess."

But Li Xiaoxian said, "How is it only not too bad? Brother Qi, you just haven't seen Teacher Little Zhang's calligraphy before."

Big Qi said interested, "Really?"

Zhang Ye waved it off. "I'm just writing whatever. It's not meant to be displayed."

Actually, they did not really know much either and were just praising him. No one knew how skilled Zhang Ye's calligraphy had gotten. In fact, a lot of people did not even know that Zhang Ye knew calligraphy at all.

Zhang Ye said, "The auction item that I brought is just some tea leaves."

Chen Guang's eyes lit up. "Da Hong Pao?"

Zhang Ye said happily, "Yeah."

Amy clapped. "Nice, then our Chinese celebrity team will definitely be getting the top honors today. The items that we brought to the auction are basically just filler, but Teacher Zhang's item is on a different level. It's the best tea since ancient times, and it's something that only Teacher Zhang has. It's such a valuable item."

Zhang Yuanqi and the others came back to the table at this time.

Ning Lan heard what they were talking about. "How much did you bring?"

Zhang Ye said, feeling pinched, "Five grams."

Amy was floored.

Xiaodong was speechless!

Nobody knew whether to laugh or cry!

Xu Meilan said in a stunned manner, "Only five grams?"

Zhang Yuanqi laughed. "This guy is such a cheapskate that it's incredibly difficult to just get five grams of Da Hong Pao off of him. The sun rose from the west today!" It was still Sister Zhang who knew him best.

But Zhang Ye did not like hearing that. "Did you guys think that I brought cabbages to auction off? That the tea leaves I bring would have to be measured in catties? This tea of mine only goes by the gram. Five grams of tea leaves is enough to make a pot of tea."

Everyone scoffed.

Zhang Ye harrumphed. "Don't think that I'm being cheap here. I only have a few tea trees that don't even produce a few catties of tea leaves a year. If each and every person wants some of them and I gave away half a catty each time, would I have any left? How many of you haven't had some of my tea?"

Li Xiaoxian covered her mouth and giggled. "It's pretty good indeed."

Amy instantly changed her tone as well and gave him a thumbs up. "Lord Zhang is a loyal friend!"

Zhang Ye said, "That's more like it."

Big Qi was envious. "Lord Zhang, I haven't tried it before."

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Alright, come and get some from me when we get back."

Big Qi immediately said, "How generous! Then I'll help myself!"

Chen Guang said, "We can't depend on Zhang'er's tea leaves to bring home the top honors then. It's only five grams, so even if it goes for a high price per gram, it won't be much money. I guess the enormous responsibility will still have to go to Sister Zhang or Sister Lan."

Amy said excitedly, "Right, we have to auction off an item for the highest possible price!"

Ning Lan said, "It would look good on us if we can get first place."

Xu Meilan laughed. "Alright, then Old Zhang and I will give it our best."

Zhang Yuanqi checked her watch. "It's almost time for the live broadcast, right?"

"Yes, it's starting right away," said her female assistant beside her.

...

Online.

Quite a few people in Asia were already waiting at their computers.

The Japanese netizens.

"Has it started yet?"

"It's about to."

"There will be a lot of celebrities today."

"Yeah, let's see who walks away with the highest honors."

"It was Korea last year, wasn't it?"

"It's time for our Japanese celebrity team to get it this year."

...

The Korean netizens.

"It's starting, it's starting!"

"From the pictures taken earlier at the red carpet event, there seem to be a lot of new faces, doesn't there?"

"Yeah, the Asian Celebrity Rankings Index is always changing, every day, so the people attending it each year are always quite different from the past years."

"This year's most expensive auction item will definitely be ours."

"Haha, that's right."

"Let's see what these Asian superstars will put up for auction this year."

...

The Chinese netizens.

“Have you guys seen the photos?”

“Zhang Ye walked down the red carpet with Sister Zhang.”

“Haha, look at that fellow acting like he’s all famous. It’s just because he is overseas and people don’t really know him yet. If this were back home, everyone would be booing him for sure.”

“Hurry up and begin already! I’m just waiting for the live broadcast to start!”

“They are doing real-time interpretation on the stream this year, right? It’s getting more and more advanced these days.”

“It’s time for the Chinese celebrity team to showcase their talents!”

“Come on, let’s get the top honors!”

“We have to depend on Sister Zhang for that!”

...

The Asian Charity Banquet had always been held very successfully. Through promotions, hype, and the branding, it had slowly built itself into a grand charity banquet in all of Asia. It attracted great attention, and people all over the region welcomed it greatly! There were even people who started treating this banquet as a variety show, with it trending higher and higher each year as everyone guessed who would take home the top honors. Under these circumstances, many Asian stars and businesspeople started participating in the event willingly. With this virtuous cycle, the Asian Charity Banquet got better and bigger each year. The attending celebrities and entrepreneurs also garnered quite a bit of attention from it.

Furthermore, this was attention from all of Asia!

The celebrities and entrepreneurs who won the top honors would also receive a special reward from the organizer, on top of the huge amount of attention they would get, as a form of appreciation for their contributions to philanthropy. As for what the special reward was, it was always different each year. But from past experience, this special reward often had great value attached to it and was priceless.

Everyone wondered what it would be this year!

Chapter 1376: Auction!

The livestream began.

The Asian Charity Banquet officially started.

Many of the netizens from countries all over Asia couldn’t wait any longer.

The master of ceremonies was a famous comedian ¹ in Korea. His lines were very quickly translated during the broadcast by the interpreters to the different countries in Asia. “Esteemed guests, good evening. The annual Asian Charity Banquet has begun once again, and I’m very honored to be chosen as

the host of this event. This year, we invited 63 celebrities from all over Asia, as well as the elite businesspeople of each country's business world. The auction will be starting very soon, so let me once again thank every celebrity who has traveled here from afar and for providing us with their personal effects to be put up for auction. We would also like to thank each and every businessperson for taking the time to participate in the auction."

A heated discussion was already taking place on the Internet.

...

Seoul.

At the venue of the charity banquet.

Dinner had been served. There was even red wine. Closed captions and real-time interpretation were available on the livestream back home, but this wasn't the case at the venue. The onstage host was speaking, but Zhang Ye did not understand a word. He wasn't really interested in the auction today and only showed up at the event to be present. He had no intentions of being in the spotlight today and was scarfing down the food, head down. A glass of wine was served to him, and upon tasting, it turned out to be surprisingly good too.

Xiaodong was speechless. "Is it yummy, Teacher Zhang?"

Zhang Ye pointed at the plate. "Not bad, why don't you have a taste too?"

Xiaodong couldn't think of a reply.

Amy also said in a speechless manner, "Did you really come here to eat?"

Zhang Ye was taken aback. "If you aren't here to eat, then what are you doing at a banquet? It's not like I can understand what the host is going on about."

Li Xiaoxian gave a smile and said, "Even though it's called a banquet, how many people do you see picking up their utensils? Everyone's mainly going through the motions. What if the camera turns to you and you're seen with your head down and gobbling up the steak like that? It wouldn't look decent at all. For this sort of banquet, it's about putting on a show."

Chen Guang grunted in agreement.

Zhang Ye turned to look at Zhang Yuanqi, Ning Lan, and the others and found that none of them were eating either.

Zhang Ye simply scoffed. "Alright then, continue being hungry and pretend all you like. That's right, sit up straight and stiffen that spine. Yes, keep that posture and hold it. I'll just eat by myself."

Xiaodong rolled her eyes at him.

Amy was nearly driven mad.

Zhang Ye had always behaved rather unrefined and would never be constrained by rules. He would always do whatever pleased him. If he was hungry, why would he have to pretend not to be so? He could only put on a show after he had his fill!

Onstage, the first auction item was brought out.

The live broadcast camera cut to focus on the female celebrity who had provided the auction item. She was a Japanese sports star and a famous tennis player in Asia. The item she put up for auction was a tennis racket she had used many years ago. Very quickly, the people on the floor started bidding. Every guest at the venue was given a number plate ², including the celebrities as well. Every time it was raised, it would represent a bid increase, with no cap to the upper limit. The final transaction price would not include any “commissions” that were present in commercial auctions. The entire bid would go towards charity, so the final value of the bids for such charity auctions were often higher than the true value of the items. This was because everyone was participating in the auction for charitable causes and not to profit. But of course, your item would have to be worthwhile in the first place. If the item you put up for auction was too crappy, no one would be crazy enough to spend several million to bid on it.

\$1,000 USD.

\$3,000 USD.

\$5,000 USD.

Sold!

The first auction item was sold rapidly, with a Japanese businessman winning the bidding. This was only a warmup for the rest of the night’s auction since the people on the floor didn’t seem too interested in the first item. However, the transaction price still went far beyond the tennis racket’s value.

The second item.

The third item.

The fourth item.

The auction items were displayed in turn.

Big Qi’s ink wash painting was the fifth item to be put up for auction.

There wasn’t a lack of people who knew about paintings at the venue. Even among the Japanese and Koreans, there were people who were hobbyists in this field. When it came to calligraphy and paintings, there really weren’t any national borders. When everyone saw it, they looked speechless.

A Japanese businessman shook his head.

A Korean businesswoman laughed without saying anything.

What is this?

It isn’t even good enough to be considered an amateur piece!

China is a giant in the world of calligraphy and paintings, so what is with this skill they were seeing?

However, Big Qi still had quite a bit of reputation in Asia. A lot of people had watched his movies, especially the Chinese businesspeople who were also very supportive of him. They kept bidding until the price of the ink wash painting was finally closed at \$6,000 USD. It was a Chinese businessman who

walked away with the item, and Big Qi seemed to know him personally. All of this was done as a show of support for the actor.

Big Qi laughed and said, "I thought that my item would fetch at least tens of thousands of dollars."

Huo Dongfang said in amusement, "Perhaps you thought too much of yourself, Old Qi?"

Big Qi pouted. "Was it really that bad?"

Li Xiaoxian opined, "It wasn't too bad."

Big Qi looked at Zhang Ye. "What do you think, Teacher Zhang?"

Zhang Ye clenched his teeth and answered supportively, "It's not bad."

Big Qi sighed. "See, it's them who don't know how to appreciate art."

Zhang Ye nearly bust a gut.

Not bad, my ass!

I wouldn't buy this lousy painting for 10 yuan!

Ink wash painting is the hardest to produce among the different kinds of paintings out there. Do you think that you can just pick it up with a few days of practice?

Soon, it was time for Xiaodong's item to be put up for auction. This item was quite a special one. It turned out that Spring Garden had once released an album with only four songs on it. Further, this album did not get distributed in the market and could not be bought, with the reason being that the record company had closed down back then among other reasons. In the end, plans for the distribution of the album ran aground. Although the songs on it were later adapted and reissued several years after their debut, this album was out of print. No one had seen it before!

The bidding immediately became intense.

"5,000!"

"10,000!"

"11,000!"

"20,000!"

"30,000!"

"40,000!"

Xiaodong, Amy, and Li Xiaoxian were all quite surprised.

The final transaction price reached \$50,000 USD, which converted to slightly less than 400,000 yuan. It was the most expensive item thus far in the auction, and they felt very honored.

Ning Lan said, "Nice."

Xiaodong blushed and said, "I never expected that it would fetch that much."

The Korean businessman who won the bidding was also very happy. He went onstage and gave a speech, talking about how he was a longtime fan of Spring Garden.

Xiaodong was also invited onto the stage. She gave her speech in English and expressed her thanks to the Korean businessman.

Chen Guang said happily, "We're in first place for now."

Amy said, "It's just for the time being. The highlight of the event hasn't arrived yet."

Big Qi smiled and said, "But it's still a good sign."

Many of the Korean and Japanese celebrities cast glances at the Chinese celebrity team.

Although there were many countries in Asia, only the celebrities from China, Japan, and Korea were considered successful in making a name for themselves. As a result, the competition today was mainly between them. Due to many historical hatreds, ethnic differences, and political clashes, the three countries had always had an intense rivalry. It was the same for their celebrities, and no one wanted to lose to the others. Since this was an occasion with a first place, no one wanted to get second place. All of them were hoping that their auction items would get an astronomical bid. First, this would bring honor to their country, and second, it would boost their own popularity. Walking away with the top honors on a stage that was broadcast live to all of Asia?

How incredible would that be!

Chapter 1377: Who will walk away with the top honors? (Start)

At the venue.

The auction's atmosphere was building up.

Another three items in a row were put up for auction. One was an item that belonged to a female Japanese star, one of them was from Chen Guang, and the other one was from a Korean soccer star. The final transaction values of these items did not exceed that of Xiaodong's Spring Garden album.

Then Lee Anson's item was put up for auction.

But no one at the venue saw any item placed on the auction block.

After the host explained the item for a while, some people on the floor finally raised their paddles to bid.

"40,000!"

"60,000!"

"80,000!"

It instantly surpassed the highest value the Chinese celebrity team had set!

Amy said in a stunned manner, "What is he auctioning off?"

The Chinese celebrity team's interpreter said, "Lee Anson is auctioning a beginner's guitar lesson that he'll teach personally."

Zhang Ye said, "Is that all?"

Xiaodong laughed and said, "Lee Anson is really going all out."

Big Qi said regretfully, "We've been surpassed."

Amy said, "If someone gets tutored by Lee Anson for even one lesson, they would brag about it forever. This is definitely worth bidding for."

Zhang Ye shook his head and smiled. He only cared about gorging himself and continued eating.

Xiaodong said, "Teacher Zhang."

Zhang Ye did not even raise his head. "What? I'm eating."

Xiaodong said, "Hey, Teacher Zhang."

Zhang Ye said, "Speak."

Xiaodong said, "Isn't that my steak you're eating?"

Zhang Ye was taken aback. "Didn't you say you weren't going to eat?"

Xiaodong was speechless.

Li Xiaoxian giggled, "Pfft!"

Finally, the bidding for the item ended with a high price of \$95,000 USD. After conversion, that would come up to over half a million RMB. The winner of this auction item was a Korean father-daughter pair. Clearly, by the look on the daughter's face, she was most likely to be a diehard fan of Lee Anson. With this present that her father had given to her, she could not be any happier.

The Korean celebrity team was tentatively in first place!

The four tables of Korean celebrities broke into applause!

"Bravo!"

"Anson-oppa!"

"Well done!"

Lee Anson was also all smiles.

Korea was their home field, so they wouldn't want first place to go to anyone else.

Finally, it was Zhang Ye's turn to have his item put up for auction. No one knew if the organizers had done this on purpose or if it was purely just a coincidence that his turn came right after Lee Anson's. The Da Hong Pao was revealed, and the onstage host recited from a cue card to introduce the origins of the tea leaves.

The camera cut to Zhang Ye.

Amy hurriedly reminded him.

Xiaodong also anxiously kicked his leg to get him to take note of his image.

But to their surprise, Zhang Ye, who was holding his utensils and devouring food a moment ago, was now sitting upright with his knife and fork placed neatly back onto the table. The corners of his mouth had been wiped clean as well. He was even giving a smile to the camera as though he had been paying attention to the auction all this while.

Xiaodong was speechless.

Big Qi was speechless.

Chen Guang was speechless.

Everyone was looking at him in shock!

Masterful!

How truly masterful!

Isn't your reaction speed too fast?

If they had not seen it for themselves, they wouldn't have believed it. They finally understood why Zhang Ye had dared to eat and drink without a care under the scrutiny of all the cameras during a live broadcast that was shown all over Asia. So this fellow had long since been prepared for this!

The auction of the tea leaves began.

The Japanese and Korean businesspeople paid close attention to it.

"5,000."

"10,000."

"30,000 from me."

"I'll bid 33,000."

When the price went above \$30,000 USD, the businesspeople from Japan and Korea placed their paddles down while shaking their heads. They weren't going to participate in the bidding for this item anymore as they found it to be too outrageous a price.

It was only five grams!

All it could brew was a single pot of tea, and it was just a small pot!

Even a diamond wasn't this expensive!

However, the Chinese businesspeople knew the true value of Da Hong Pao. This best tea since the ancient times had a reputation. If they saw this item at any other auction, they might not bid for it. This was because they wouldn't know if it was authentic. But they dared to bid for it today because they were not at all worried, since this Da Hong Pao was put up for auction by Zhang Ye himself. In the entire world, only so many parent trees of the Da Hong Pao tea leaves existed, and all of them were the

personal property of Zhang Ye. The Da Hong Pao that anyone else might bring out could possibly be fake, but not if it was Zhang Ye. To be able to have a sip of the best tea since the ancient times and still do their part for charity, why not?

CEO Sun turned his head. "Boss Qian, aren't you going to bid for it?"

China's richest man, Qian Haitao, smiled. "I won't be taking part for this item."

CEO Ci smiled and said, "I thought that you enjoyed your tea, Old Qian?"

Qian Haitao said, "Haha, it's because I've had it before. When Teacher Zhang gave some of it to the Station Head of Beijing TV, I approached her shamelessly to ask for some to brew a pot myself."

CEO Ci asked, "How good is the tea?"

Qian Haitao praised with a sigh, "It's worthy of being called the best tea since ancient times."

CEO Ci slapped his thigh and raise his paddle immediately. "40,000!"

In the end, the tea leaves were won by the Chinese businessman with a bid of \$40,000 USD.

This dumbfounded many of the foreigners. Five grams of tea leaves for \$40,000 USD? Are you people crazy? Don't you have something better to spend that money on? Do you need to go that far?

The Da Hong Pao was sold for an astronomical price and had set a new record for the auctioning of tea leaves.

But \$40,000 USD did not even put it within the top three items of the charity auction. It was far from the price of Lee Anson's guitar classes. For now, it was still the Korean celebrity team that was in first place.

Lee Anson narrowed his eyes and gave Zhang Ye a haughty look.

Zhang Ye ignored him and went back to eating.

The auction continued.

The competition was becoming more and more intense.

Then Jiang Hanwei's auction item was brought out. It turned out to be a trophy for an Asian film award he had won many years ago. This trophy was plated in gold and had high value as well as great significance.

Xiaodong said in surprise, "Uncle Jiang, are you going all out?"

Amy said, "Aiyo, that's something really worthy!"

Jiang Hanwei laughed heartily. "Aren't I trying to grab the top honors for our Chinese celebrity team? Of course I have to give it my all!"

Zhang Ye said evenly, "You call that lousy trophy giving it your all?"

Jiang Hanwei rolled his eyes. "It's still better than your five grams of tea leaves, in any case."

Zhang Ye stared at him. "Are my tea leaves ordinary tea leaves?"

Jiang Hanwei harrumphed, "This trophy isn't ordinary either."

The two of them had fought before. When Xiaodong saw this, she tried to intervene. "Aiya, Uncle Jiang, Teacher Zhang, don't fight. Look at where we are. At a time like this, our Chinese celebrity team should be united. We've gotta band together to fend off the other countries."

Zhang Yuanqi and Xu Meilan, who were seated at the other table, looked over.

The auction began. The trophy was coveted by many of the Asian businesspeople as they bid for it crazily.

80,000!

100,000!

120,000!

The Chinese celebrity team reclaimed first place!

"Bravo!"

"Beautiful!"

"Uncle Jiang is almighty!"

"That's impressive!"

They applauded and celebrated!

But before they could even be happy about it, a male star from the Japanese celebrity team also brought out the big guns and auctioned off his item, an electric guitar that he had kept with him for many years, at the high price of \$130,000 USD. As a member of a band as well as a famous Japanese singer, it was very rare for any of his used guitars to be sold on the market, even if they were from the early days of his career. Bringing it out for the auction was clearly to show they intended to bring home the top honors. The Japanese celebrity team also coveted first place to gain some glory.

The Japanese celebrity team.

"Bravo!"

"Yoshida-kun!"

"Great!"

The other people were symbolically clapping for him.

It was mutual respect!

Sometimes it would be you, sometimes it would be them!

The parties of the three countries looked at one another. The atmosphere at the venue turned heated. Smiles were on everyone's faces, but the rivalry was boiling over in their hearts!

Only Zhang Ye seemed to be out of the loop as he did not appear bothered by what was going on. This fellow's sense of patriotism was very strong, but he did not care much for a collective sense of honor. Whoever got first and second place was unimportant to him. Wasn't this a charity auction?

...

China.

Online.

"Xiaodong, good job!"

"Old Jiang has also given his all!"

"Aiya, we got surpassed again!"

"Quickly, catch up to them!"

"It's only Zhang Ye who hasn't contributed much! What's he doing?"

"Yeah, that fellow is totally not contributing to the efforts at all. The Da Hong Pao tea trees are all his, but he only brought five grams of the tea leaves for auction? Are you trying to feed cats?!"

"How exasperating!"

"Zhang Ye is such a cheapskate!"

"If he brought out half a catty or one catty of tea leaves, who could compete with us? The top honors for the charity auction would surely have gone to the Chinese celebrity team! There isn't a doubt about that!"

"Hahaha, one catty? For a miser like Teacher Zhang, bringing ten grams for the auction would be akin to taking his life!"

Chapter 1378: Who will walk away with the top honors? (Middle)

In China.

At Zhang Ye's maternal grandma's house.

Zhang Ye's parents, grandparents, uncles and aunties, along with his sisters had all gathered together to watch the live broadcast. All of them were getting frantic from watching.

"Aiyo, I'm dying of anxiety!"

"What's wrong with our brother!"

"Little Ye only brought five grams of tea leaves?"

"It's over, we're done for."

...

At Old Wu's parents' courtyard house.

Wu Changhe and Li Qinqin were also watching the livestream.

"This Little Ye, what is he doing!"

"What are you going on about?"

"Since it's a matter of outdoing the Japanese and Koreans, he should have done more than what he did!"

"It's just an auction."

"Just an auction? This is a matter of national pride!"

...

At Central TV.

In the News Channel's office.

"Has it ended?"

"Not yet."

"When the results come out, quickly write the draft. We're waiting to report about it on the news."

"OK, understood. Hai, Zhang Ye is not contributing to the efforts."

...

Seoul.

At the venue of the charity banquet.

The auction was coming to an end.

The items for auction from several heavyweight Asian celebrities were slowly revealed!

An Asian S-list celebrity from Korea brought out the original manuscript of the lyrics for his new album to be auctioned off. It was a manuscript that he repeatedly wrote and polished the lyrics to and was an extremely valuable item as there was only one copy of it.

"150,000!"

"200,000!"

"210,000!"

It was auctioned for an astronomical sum!

They reclaimed first place!

Chinese Heavenly Queen Xu Meilan's auction item was a pair of her own earrings. Just the market value of the earrings alone was \$50,000 USD. It received yet another round of crazy bidding.

“160,000!”

“170,000!”

“190,000!”

Unfortunately, it couldn't cross the \$200,000 USD mark.

Xiaodong shouted, “Aiya!”

Amy said, “This is bad!”

Big Qi said, “It was so close!”

The Chinese celebrity team was sighing with regret.

Finally, Ning Lan's auction item was revealed. However, the auctioned price wasn't high and it only went for \$10,000 USD. The main issue was that the item she had put up for auction was rather boring. Ning Lan's attitude was similar to Zhang Ye's. These two people did not have a strong collective sense of honor and were mainly here just to participate.

Li Xiaoxian's calligraphy was brought out at this moment.

The words were clear and she wrote in a running-standard style.

Huo Dongfang commented on it even though he did not seem to know much about calligraphy. “Good writing.”

Li Xiaoxian blushed. “It was just my attempt at calligraphy.”

Jiang Hanwei smiled and said, “It's really not bad.”

Big Qi said, “In the future, there's going to be a great calligrapher in our entertainment industry.”

Li Xiaoxian was getting praised so much that she felt rather embarrassed.

Zhang Ye looked up to take a look. However, he did not say anything and carried on with what he was doing. This running-standard did look rather beautiful at first glance. But in his opinion, it had no soul. All of the words looked lifeless to him. Zhang Ye guessed that this must be because she had been imitating the running-standard of famous ancient Chinese calligraphers. By doing so, she had lost the grace of her own writing. This kind of calligraphy was at most amateurish or slightly better than how an amateur would write, although it was still pretty good.

Quite a few people at the venue knew calligraphy as well.

Over with the Japanese, a man in his 50s gave a look of disdain.

A female Japanese star asked, “Master Miyamoto, how is this calligraphy?”

Miyamoto shook his head. “It's a bunch of scrap paper.”

A male Japanese star laughed and said, “If it's compared to your work, wouldn't all other calligraphy be unacceptable?”

Li Xiaoxian's calligraphy was auctioned off for \$6,000 USD, which was quite a good price.

In the end, they still needed to depend on Zhang Yuanqi.

Zhang Yuanqi's popularity was at the top, be it within China or in Asia. Old Zhang had put up the same item to be auctioned off as she always did in previous years. It was a bid for a date with her. Whoever bid the highest would get enjoy lunch with her. Further, Old Zhang would be the one treating. The winner could bring however many people they liked and order as many expensive dishes they wanted. This was the standard item Old Zhang put up for auction every year at the Asian Charity Banquet. However, this year, Zhang Yuanqi added on an item for the auction. With the "buy one, get one free" gimmick, she also brought out a calligraphy piece to be included with the lunch date.

The auction item was displayed.

It was calligraphy with only one character: I!

Zhang Yuanqi stood onstage and said with a smile, "Everyone, please don't laugh at me."

Endless applause came from the audience.

Li Xiaoxian said in surprise, "Sister Zhang knows calligraphy too?"

Amy said, "What an imposing word!"

Big Qi said, "Great! It's great!"

Zhang Ye also found it quite surprising. The calligraphy was indeed pretty good, or at least much better than Li Xiaoxian's writing. It was at the level of a professional calligrapher. Heh, Old Zhang, not bad!

Getting to dine with her?

And to have her treat?

And even get a calligraphy piece from her?

This was as good as buy one, get three free!

Quite a few people were showing great interest in the item!

A Japanese businessman shouted, "100,000!"

A Chinese businessman shouted, "150,000!"

Another Chinese businessman shouted, "180,000!"

A Korean CEO shouted, "200,000!"

Finally, Qian Haitao made his move.

The richest man in China raised his paddle and calmly said, "300,000."

The venue burst into an uproar!

"Wow!"

"It's higher than last year's bid by \$100,000 USD?"

"How generous!"

"This is the highest bid of the night!"

"The richest man indeed!"

The Chinese businesspeople looked at one another and put down their paddles, all smiles. There was no need to keep bidding.

The Japanese and Korean CEOs hesitated for a bit before falling silent.

The host dropped the hammer.

\$300,000 USD! The Chinese celebrity team reclaimed first place!

Xiaodong applauded. "Sister Zhang, impressive!"

Amy said, "We still have to depend on Sister Zhang in critical moments!"

Huo Dongfang smiled and said, "We're definitely going to win!"

Ning Lan laughed and said, "Sister Zhang was even forced to bring out calligraphy of her own. If we still don't get the top honors, that would be unjustifiable."

Big Qi cheered. "Yes, the Koreans don't have any other celebrities left to front their auction items. \$300,000 USD, that's almost 2 million RMB. At last year's charity auction, the highest hammer price was \$240,000 USD. Unless some spendthrift stepped forward to bid for the remaining items, it's really difficult to catch up to us."

At the Korean celebrity teams' tables.

Lee Anson was shaking his head.

The others started smiling bitterly knowing that there was nothing left to compete for.

Those on the Japanese celebrity team were also looking at one another. There was nothing else they could do.

But it was at this moment that a voice rang out!

Miyamoto stood up dismissively and said, "Can you even call that calligraphy?"

The crowd was stunned. Everyone turned to look at him.

When the camera cut to him, countless people all over Asia who were watching the live broadcast were slightly taken aback.

"Who is this person?"

"I don't know."

"I know him! That's a Japanese calligraphy master!"

“Ah? That’s Miyamoto?”

“Yes, it’s him! He just won an Asian gold award for calligraphy!”

“One of the world’s best calligraphers? Miyamoto Shinshou?”

“Damn, he’s a calligraphy master!”

“Why is he also here this year?”

The people at the venue were pointing and whispers could be heard.

Somebody popped up and poked his nose in, and no one was prepared for it. Zhang Yuanqi and Li Xiaoxian’s calligraphy were not good enough? Of course it was not good enough. They were not professionals, after all. This was a charity auction where everyone would contribute to the cause and have fun. If you really wanted to nitpick their work, then more than half of the items put up for auction tonight would have to get taken out to the dumpster. This auction was mainly to raise funds and not a place to compare professionalism.

Zhang Ye narrowed his eyes. “Who is this bastard?”

Li Xiaoxian recognized him and immediately introduced him to everyone. “This is a true calligraphy master. Sister Zhang and my work definitely lack luster in his presence....”

Amy cried out, “But he still shouldn’t undermine the efforts of others in this way!”

Jiang Hanwei was also slightly angered. “It’s live, what is he thinking?”

But Miyamoto Shinshou was unrelenting. It was like he had sand in his eyes that he could not rub out. He walked onto the stage and said, “Can we add another item to the auction?”

The interpreter also walked on to communicate with the host.

The Korean host smiled. “Of course you may. The auction has not ended yet.”

Shinsho Miyamoto said with a straight face, “Alright, I don’t have anything with me today, so let me make a calligraphy piece on the spot. I’ll show everyone what calligraphy is all about and also do my part for charity!”

“What?”

“Make a calligraphy piece on the spot?”

“This’ll be interesting.”

“We’re in for a good show.”

Many people were waiting to watch the spectacle.

The Korean celebrity team was delighted by this turn of events.

The Japanese celebrity team members were also getting excited!

The organizers held an emergency discussion, and soon, the Four Treasures of the Study were brought onstage.

Everyone turned their attention to the stage.

The cameras also focused on the table on it.

Calligraphy existed in Japan and Korea as well and was spread by China. But even so, some differences existed between the calligraphy of each country. For example, in Japan, they focused on improving their writing techniques until it reached the “Dao” of the skill. Their calligraphy was generally split between two styles, with one being regular script that pursued a powerful execution in writing, and the other being cursive that pursued elegance and Zen. This was in line with the sentimentality ingrained in the Japanese people.

Grinding the inkstone.

Picking up the brush.

Miyamoto Shinshou began writing with no emotions on his face!

There were similarities between both the Japanese Kanji and Chinese characters, with the former looking much more like traditional Chinese. However, there were also slight differences, although it was still generally understandable when read. The content of the writing did not carry too great of a meaning. It was nothing more than describing X person, doing X activity, in X year. It might have been a famous story that happened in ancient Japan and described in detail, but that was not the focus. It was something other than this ancient story!

It was the words!

When Miyamoto Shinshou put the brush to paper and started writing, voices of praise sounded around the venue!

“Great artistry!”

“This is what real calligraphy is!”

“Now that’s a true master!”

“His writing flows so naturally! This is what art truly is!”

“Hai, calligraphy done by a master is just different. Just watching him move the brush is a sight to behold.”

“The gulf between a pro and an amateur is enormous.”

“The Chinese stars’ calligraphy pieces can’t even be considered amateur works.”

“Nothing stands up well to comparison!”

Chapter 1379: Who will walk away with the top honors? (End)

Onstage.

On the live broadcast.

Miyamoto Shinshou wrote with swift brush strokes!

Zhang Yuanqi watched calmly.

Xu Meilan whispered to her.

Li Xiaoxian had a look of admiration on her face.

Meanwhile, Amy was quite angry. "Is this old man crazy!"

Xiaodong said, "He's very crazy."

Huo Dongfang frowned. "Isn't he doing this on purpose? When did Sister Zhang and Xiaoxian ever offend him? What is he acting all arrogant for? Is he trying to show off?"

Big Qi asked, "How is his writing?"

Li Xiaoxian sighed. "It's like the unity of Heaven and Man, unparalleled!"

Xiaoxian had a much kinder personality and still gave it very high praise.

Big Qi said, "Didn't calligraphy originate in China? So why is a Japanese guy also so good at it?"

Li Xiaoxian said, "There are also calligraphy masters in Japan. In the international auction scene for contemporary calligraphy works, all of Master Miyamoto's works have fetched sky-high prices."

Xiaodong asked, "But compared to the calligraphy masters of China?"

Li Xiaoxian gave it some thought, then said in a low voice, "He's only better, not worse."

Xiaodong gasped. "He's that impressive?"

Li Xiaoxian gave a bitter laugh. "Even in China, I'm afraid that only Master Wu and Master Lian might be able to stand shoulder to shoulder with him. Their calligraphy skill should almost be the same, but I don't know about anything more specific than that. I've only heard about it, but Master Miyamoto's writing is closer to that of China's semi-cursive, which is slightly different from the style that is often seen in the Japanese calligraphy world. However, they might not call it semi-cursive over there, I'm not sure about that. Anyway, Master Miyamoto has already reached the pinnacle in this area."

Zhang Ye took a glance at it.

Semi-cursive ¹ ?

Now that it was mentioned, it really did look a bit like semi-cursive.

One minute.

Five minutes.

Miyamoto Shinshou laid the brush down.

The camera cut to the work. It could also be seen clearly on the big screen at the venue.

When the people at the venue saw it, whether they had any suspicions about Miyamoto Shinshou's motives, many of them could only give their loudest applause to this piece of calligraphy!

Some of the Japanese businesspeople even gave a standing ovation!

"Bravo!"

"Well-written!"

"Master Miyamoto truly deserves his reputation!"

"I've finally seen him write a calligraphy piece with my own two eyes!"

The dozen-odd businesspeople from Japan were all very excited. Even for them, it was very difficult to get their hands on a calligraphy piece by Miyamoto Shinshou. In the international auction scene, Master Miyamoto's calligraphy pieces were always very popular and in demand. If it wasn't a bid with a 50-80% premium on the appraised price, it would be very difficult to win it at auction.

Based on the length of the scroll.

And also the writing.

The prices would vary.

And for today's calligraphy scroll, be it the size, length, or quality, it was impeccable. It could be called one of Master Miyamoto's works at the peak of his prowess. Moreover, it was guaranteed that this was an authentic piece by him since he had only just finished writing it in front of everyone. He even signed off on it, so that would increase the value of the piece even more!

A Japanese businessperson asked loud enough to be heard, "Master Miyamoto, are you really putting this calligraphy up for auction?"

Shinsho Miyamoto said proudly, "Of course."

Quite a few people could no longer sit still. They were all requesting a closer look at it onstage.

One person.

Ten people.

Twenty people.

More and more people gathered around and were praising it to no end.

"This is really good!"

"We weren't wrong in coming here today."

"Nicely written! It's so wonderful!"

Even some Chinese businesspeople were moved by it.

The host announced, "We will begin the bidding now, so would everyone please return to their seats?"

As soon as he finished speaking, bids were being called out!

“300,000!”

“I’ll bid 500,000!”

“550,000!”

“580,000!”

The starting bids had already greatly exceeded the hammer price of Zhang Yuanqi’s lunch date and calligraphy piece. Furthermore, the bids were still rising, which dumbfounded those watching at the venue and the people across Asia watching the livestream!

“600,000!”

“700,000!”

“I’ll bid 750,000!”

The competition was intense!

It was a bloodbath!

In the end, only several Japanese businesspeople remained in the bidding war!

Eventually, the gavel dropped and the final bid price for this piece of calligraphy ended at \$1.1 million USD. This was almost equivalent to 10 million RMB ² ! This price was definitely much higher than the market value of the item, yet the Japanese businessman who won the bid certainly felt that it was worth it. He loved this calligraphy piece!

...

Japan.

Online.

“Master Miyamoto has made his move!”

“”The Japanese celebrity team are in first place!”

“Uh, is Master Miyamoto considered part of the celebrity team?”

“I guess.”

“Yeah, in any case, he’s one of us.”

...

Korea.

Online.

“What an astronomical price!”

“What’s there left to compete on?”

“The top honors will surely go to the Japanese!”

...

China.

All the netizens were cursing his name.

“He’s crazy!”

“Why’d he pop out of nowhere?”

“You’re a calligraphy master to begin with, so what is there to be smug about even if your writing is better than Li Xiaoxian’s and Sister Zhang’s? Idiot! Why don’t you compete with Sister Zhang and Xiaoxian in singing!”

“Right, if you’re that good, compete with them in singing!”

“This old man is bullying people on purpose!”

“He should chill the fuck out! This is just a charity auction!”

...

At Zhang Ye’s maternal grandma’s house.

His eldest younger sister said angrily, “What kind of master is this!”

His third sister spat, “Ptui!”

Zhang Ye’s mother said, “This old man is such a wet blanket. Look at this, there’s nothing left to compete for!”

...

Lots of controversy was happening outside the building.

People were praising it, people were scolding it.

At the venue, the charity auction continued. Or rather, the auction was coming to an end. With an astronomical price of \$1.1 million USD, no one remained who could compete with Miyamoto Shinshou.

Ning Lan shook her head. “How pointless.”

Zhang Ye also lost interest. “Let’s go, it’s time to leave.”

Amy looked at Li Xiaoxian. “Xiaoxian, ignore him.”

But Miyamoto Shinshou still refused to step off the stage. He stood next to his calligraphy piece and looked at Li Xiaoxian and Zhang Yuanqi. He said, “Both of your calligraphy skills lack refinement.” He turned around and pointed at Li Xiaoxian’s calligraphy piece that was still on the auction block and scolded, “Calligraphy is not a child’s game. It’s not something that anyone can do if they want to. Look at these words, they’re dead and lifeless. To think that the host dared to introduce this as a calligraphy

piece? I won't acknowledge it. This kind of work can't be called calligraphy. Calligraphy is not as simple as you think it is!"

A senior teaching his juniors a lesson?

That was understandable.

But it still had to be done at the right time!

And besides, it wasn't targeted at the right people either!

Li Xiaoxian was extremely embarrassed. Her eyes reddened from all the criticism, but she still did not say a word. She could only bite her lip and listen to the criticism.

Xiaodong was getting annoyed!

Amy was furious!

Xu Meilan's face turned cold!

What is this?

Are you done yet?

Zhang Ye had been getting ready to leave. But when he heard all that, he stiffened and turned back to look at Miyamoto Shinshou, who was up on stage. He raised his eyebrows at the sight of him.

However, Miyamoto Shinshou was still going on. "China's calligraphy skill is—"

The Korean host felt that something was amiss and quickly interjected, "Are there any other items that anyone wants to put up for auction? Anyone?"

This was just to change the subject, and the host did not expect anyone to respond to his question.

No one at the venue thought that anyone would say anything either. With a master calligrapher and an astronomically priced calligraphy piece right there, there was no longer any meaning in bringing out another item for auction.

And yet, a voice rang out without warning.

"Xiaoxian and Old Zhang are both just amateur calligraphy hobbyists and can't even be considered practitioners of the art. If you wish to have a 'discussion' on the subject, then fine, I'm up for it!"

It was Zhang Ye!

The person who spoke up was Zhang Ye!

Li Xiaoxian was stunned!

Xiaodong jumped!

Zhang Yuanqi and Xu Meilan looked at him!

Everyone at the venue stared at him in shock!

What is the meaning of this?

Li Xiaoxian and Zhang Yuanqi are both amateurs?

Then do you mean that you're a professional?!

Chapter 1380: 'Preface to the Orchid Pavilion' debuts!

Everyone was bewildered!

Miyamoto Shinshou was also surprised. He did not expect that anyone would dare to challenge him.
"Who are you?"

Next to Zhang Ye, an interpreter translated, "Who are you?"

Zhang Ye smiled. "Save the formalities, surname's Zhang."

Amy was speechless.

Chen Guang was speechless.

Xiaodong, who was very angry just a moment ago, was tickled pink.

The Japanese interpreter grew nervous and translated the reply.

Miyamoto Shinshou looked speechless. Save the formalities? Who's trying to be polite with you! But when the interpreter whispered him Zhang Ye's full name, Miyamoto Shinshou could be seen narrowing his eyes. He obviously knew who Zhang Ye was and could not help but cast him another glance. So it was he who led the students at China's Peking University to scold their countrymen some years ago? A hooligan like that had actually made it to the ranks of the Asian A-list? How could that be? Surely there was a mistake somewhere? How could someone like him not be banned back in his home country? How was he allowed to get to the Asian stage? And why was he still getting more and more popular?

The Korean host asked, "Mr. Zhang Ye, do you have an item to put up for auction too?"

Zhang Ye calmly replied, "Yes, I would like to join in the fun as well."

The Korean host asked, "What item do you have?"

Zhang Ye said matter of factly, "Calligraphy, of course! Is that fine?"

The Korea host said, "Uh, well, of course it's fine."

...

China.

At Zhang Ye's maternal grandma's house.

"Ah, it's Bro!"

"Damn, why did Bro step forward?"

“What is Little Ye doing?”

“Does he know calligraphy?”

“He does, but isn’t it just something that he does for fun?”

...

At Yao Jiancai’s house.

“Dad, come quickly!”

“What’s the matter?”

“Something has happened at the charity banquet! Uncle Zhang has come forward!”

“Damn, is something finally going to happen? I knew it, I knew there’d be trouble when this kid was allowed to travel abroad! He always tussles wherever he goes!”

“Aiya, don’t trample on Uncle Zhang. Come and see this!”

...

On Weibo.

“Damn, go and watch the charity banquet’s livestream!”

“Face-smacking Zhang has been annoyed!”

“What is he trying to do?”

“That’s Miyamoto Shinshou, a world-class calligraphy master!”

“Good job, Teacher Zhang! Get him!”

“That old fogey, he’s really fucking annoying!”

“Right, how can he bully Xiaoxian in this way? She’s such a nice person!”

“With that bit of calligraphy skill, can Zhang Ye do anything about it?”

“Even if he can’t, he still has to stand up to him! This is not something that can be tolerated!”

...

In the Chinese calligraphy world.

Several calligraphy masters happened to be throwing a get-together.

“Teacher Wu, this—”

“Why did Zhang Ye come forward?”

“That’s Miyamoto Shinshou, a great calligrapher who is on equal standing with Master Wu and Master Qi!”

“What is Zhang Ye even thinking?”

“Who has seen Zhang Ye’s calligraphy before?”

“I’ve not seen it before.”

“Me neither.”

...

The Japanese netizens.

“Hahahahaha!”

“What an absolute joke!”

“He’s overestimating himself!”

“He’s just a singing star. What can he possibly know about calligraphy?”

...

The Korean netizens.

“Is this the Zhang Ye who sang ‘Dreaming of the Tang Dynasty’?”

“He’s biting off more than he can chew!”

“Why is he trying to show off now?”

“He dares challenge Master Miyamoto?”

“Has he gone mad?”

...

The news spread!

From mouth to mouth!

More and more people learned about this news and quickly turned on their computers to watch the livestream. The number of online viewers across Asia jumped by many times. There was no helping it. The people were only interested whenever something interesting happened. It was the same all over the world. Once something happened, many of those who had not been interested in the Asian Charity Banquet were now rushing to catch the live broadcast!

Zhang Xia.

Fan Wenli.

Yao Jiancai.

The Chinese calligraphy world.

The Japanese calligraphy world.

All of Asia turned their attention to it!

...

At the venue.

A new set of the Four Treasures of the Study was brought out onto the stage.

This was requested by Zhang Ye. He wasn't going to use the same ink and brush that had been used by a foreigner.

Miyamoto Shinshou went to the sidelines and folded his arms with a sneer.

Offstage.

Amy tugged at Zhang Ye. "Lord Zhang, didn't we agree to not cause any trouble while we're here?"

Zhang Ye laughed. "We're just going to have a discussion about calligraphy. How is that causing trouble?"

Chen Guang did not know whether to laugh or cry. "He's a calligraphy master. How can you possibly discuss anything with him? What's there for you to discuss with him? You'd just be embarrassing yourself!"

Zhang Ye said in amusement, "When have I ever embarrassed myself before?"

Li Xiaoxian also said, "Teacher Zhang, I'm fine, really, I'm fine. Since he's a calligraphy master, he was only making some remarks because he wasn't satisfied with our calligraphy. You—"

But Zhang Ye said, "I know what I'm doing."

Zhang Yuanqi laughed and said, "You sure about this?"

Zhang Ye smiled. "Of course."

Xu Meilan also came over. "How is your calligraphy?"

Zhang Ye chuckled and said, "It doesn't count if I speak."

Was he confident? If this were a week ago, he wouldn't be so sure. Because, even though he had "eaten" a lot of Calligraphy Skill Experience Books to the point of almost maxing out the skill, the skill was still not considered to be the highest level. But it was different now. In the previous lottery draw that Zhang Ye had played to test out his luck, he received quite a few advanced level versions of the Calligraphy Skill Experience Book. His calligraphy skill was no longer the same as before. More crucially, with his high level of skill, he could finally bring out the piece he had not dared to bring out before!

The ink and brush were prepared.

The camera pointed straight at Zhang Ye, even giving him a constant close-up.

Zhang Ye smiled and then rolled up his sleeves. He slowly walked onto the stage.

Around him, he could hear the whispering voices of the foreigners.

“Does he really not know who Master Miyamoto is?”

“Who knows what this Chinese Heavenly King is thinking?”

“Hur hur, we’re in for a show.”

“I would love to see just what kind of a calligraphy ‘discussion’ he can hold with Master Miyamoto!”

Even quite a few of the Chinese businesspeople in the crowd looked at one another.

When he arrived onstage, Zhang Ye looked down and swept his eyes over Miyamoto Shinshou’s recent work. He was standing very close to it and could see it in much greater detail. The Japanese calligraphy style was indeed in the same vein as Chinese calligraphy, yet it had a distinct style of its own. This old man’s writing was also very good, and it might not be too much to say that he was already at the pinnacle.

His brush strokes.

The way the characters flowed.

The imposing air of the writing.

It had all the characteristics of China’s semi-cursive. It was stunning and breathtaking!

Miyamoto Shinshou’s pride was indeed backed up by his skill.

With such a skilled technique, perhaps no other living person who also wrote in semi-cursive was a match for Miyamoto Shinshou. China’s Master Wu, Master Kong, and a few others, Korea’s Master Kim Seongju, none of them specialized in semi-cursive. So it wasn’t easy to compare them. Miyamoto Shinshou had indeed reached the pinnacle, and there wasn’t anyone above him.

Semi-cursive?

Did you really think that you’re invincible?

Zhang Ye laughed. It wasn’t just a laugh, but a mocking laugh!

He was laughing at the lack of insight from this world’s people!

He was laughing at how the mice came out to play when the cat was away!

When were the Japanese allowed to have the final say on who was the best at writing in semi-cursive?

Zhang Ye picked up the brush and closed his eyes. When he opened his eyes again, his entire aura had changed. It was as though he had become another person!

His gaze!

His expression!

Everything about him was different!

Miyamoto Shinshou was stunned!

Xiaodong was startled!

Li Xiaoxian stared at Zhang Ye in surprise!

The people watching at the venue and over the live broadcast could also clearly feel this change!

What was going on?

What just happened?

Zhang Ye pushed the nib down and landed it onto the paper!

At this moment, countless people across Asia were gazing at Zhang Ye's brush. What are you going to write in? Regular script? Cursive? Or clerical script? In any case, in their opinion, Zhang Ye would definitely not write in semi-cursive or running-standard ¹. He definitely would not write in either of those two styles in front of Miyamoto Shinshou.

However, the moment Zhang Ye wrote the first character, everyone was dumbfounded!

Yong!

It was the yong character!

But this was not the reason that left them dumbfounded!

What they were dumbfounded by was the style in which Zhang Ye had written in!

It was semi-cursive!

He just had to write it in semi-cursive!

Li Xiaoxian couldn't stop smiling wryly. "This is bad, th-this—"

Amy did not understand. "What's the matter?"

Zhang Yuanqi narrowed her eyes. "It's written in semi-cursive."

Xiaodong asked, "What?"

Chen Guang nearly fainted. "Teacher Zhang must be doing this out of spite!"

Huo Dongfang also understood Zhang Ye's nature. "He's definitely doing this on purpose!"

Big Qi facepalmed. "There's really no one with a temper like Teacher Zhang's!"