

Superstar 1441

Chapter 1441: The comic gets very popular!

Doing the laundry.

Making dinner.

Drawing comics.

The days passed.

Most people would do nothing when they got a break from work. But for Zhang Ye, he couldn't be busier. This fellow could never stay idle for long. Even if he had nothing to do, he would still find something to be busy with. Just look at how this fellow had become so fascinated with cooking, coming up with new dishes every day to surprise his wife.

Meanwhile, Zhang Ye's friends and family were the ones bearing the brunt of it.

On set.

At a filming location.

The director said, "OK, let's get ready to roll the cameras."

The assistant director said, "Everyone, silence your phones."

Everyone turned off their cell phones, only to hear Yao Jiancai shout, "Wait, wait, wait, I have to take a call." Then he answered the phone in a speechless manner: "What is it?"

On the other end of the line, Zhang Ye said: "How do I stir fry eggplants?"

"You're already calling me for the third time today!"

"I don't know how to make it."

"Just put in some oil and fry it."

"It doesn't work. The oil disappears the moment I add it in and the eggplant dries."

"Aiya, why are you so stupid? Since eggplants soak up oil really fast, you can just add more oil."

"Damn, you should have said so earlier. I'm hanging up then!"

After hanging up, everyone in the film crew looked at him. Yao Jiancai helplessly waved the phone in his hand. "It was Zhang Ye. That fella is learning how to cook."

Everyone chuckled at that.

Shanghai.

Backstage at a concert.

“Teachers, please get ready to go on stage.”

Xiaodong and Amy were both ready.

Only Li Xiaoxian was still on the phone. “Teacher Zhang, I’ve to get on stage.”

Zhang Ye said anxiously: “Tell me first. The pan is already hot. Hurry, hurry, hurry!”

Li Xiaoxian could only say: “You’ll have to blanch it first to remove the blood.”

“I still have to blanch it?”

“Of course. Otherwise, it won’t taste good.”

Xiaodong rolled her eyes.

Amy pressed, “Xiaoxian, hurry up. We have to go on stage. Ignore Teacher Zhang. He’s called you eight times over the past few days. He’s just not the type who can learn how to cook!”

Beijing.

At the venue of a commercial performance.

Fan Wenli had just finished performing her song and did not even have a sip of water yet when the call came in.

“Old Fan, how do you make sweet and sour mandarin fish ¹ ?”

“Huh?”

“Hurry up and tell me, I’ve already slaughtered the mandarin fish ² !”

“Come off it. You can’t even cook stir-fried tomato and scrambled eggs properly and you want to make sweet and sour mandarin fish? How can you learn to run if you haven’t even learned to walk?”

“Heh, don’t underestimate this bro, alright?”

Li Xiaoxian.

Zhang Xia.

Fan Wenli.

And so on.

As long as they were his friends and knew how to cook, Zhang Ye harassed them an ungodly amount over the past few days. Their phones would ring nearly every time mealtime approached. This annoyed and upset everyone. Further, you couldn’t get impatient and say things to spite Zhang Ye either. Because once you did that, he would become even more eager to prove you wrong. So how were they suppose to handle this?

Meanwhile, Zhang Ye was having lots of fun himself.

He would prepare several dishes each day and wait for Old Wu to praise him after eating. Whenever that happened, Zhang Ye would always feel a sense of accomplishment and be overjoyed.

Of course, he did not forget about his proper work either.

Zhang Ye was going after a spot among the Asian S-listers, after all.

Each night after Wu Zeqing turned in, he would head to the newly set up drawing studio and drink a cup of coffee or strong tea to charge up before starting to draw. Once he got started, he would draw into the wee hours of the night. When he felt normal or got too tired, he would just draw one chapter a day. If he was in better condition, he could draw up two to three chapters a day. The stockpile of One Piece's chapters was increasing. However, the release rate of the serialization in Japan was still too slow at one chapter per week. Finally, when Zhang Ye felt that he had too many chapters stockpiled, he got his studio to liaise with the publisher to see if he could up his release rate to two or three chapters per week by releasing joint chapters.

...

Across the sea.

Japan.

A new issue of Shōnen Magazine had gone on sale.

One Piece's second chapter had landed.

If the first chapter was an introduction of the backstory with memories serving to lead the readers into the main plot, then the second chapter was the official start of the story.

"Wow!"

"They've started fighting!"

"He's a rubber man!"

"This is fun, this is so fun!"

"Luffy is so cute!"

"There's a new character."

"It's getting better."

"This comic is not bad. I think it's worth reading."

"This new serialization brings about a very refreshing feeling. I've already recommended it to my friends."

"Hai, it's just that the character design is too ugly."

...

A week later.

The third chapter of One Piece was released.

"What a good read!"

"I'm starting to anticipate it more and more!"

"I'm gonna die! I suddenly find the character design to be very nice!"

"Me too, I've actually gotten used to it!"

"This character design is too unique."

"I'm still going to vote for it in this issue's popularity poll."

...

Shōnen Publishing.

In the editorial department.

The results of the new issue's popularity poll were released.

All of the editors, including Seto Kyoko, had gathered in anticipation to have a look. When they saw it, all of the editors guffawed.

"It's One Piece again!"

"It's in first place again?"

"It's gotten first place for three consecutive issues now."

"This must be this year's biggest black horse."

"Kyoko, treat us."

Kyoko was all smiles at heart. However, she said, "What treat? I'm worried to death. Teacher Aoi's representative has called to nag me several times already. They said that releasing one chapter per week isn't enough and were hoping that we could increase our pages for them to have two or three chapters released per week instead. There has never been a precedent like this."

The editors nearly vomited blood!

"What?"

"He finds it not enough?"

"Three chapters a week?"

"Kyoko, you've made it big!"

"Hey, why don't I have such a dedicated cartoonist under me!"

"I'm so envious of you, Kyoko. The cartoonists under me are all experts at procrastinating til the deadlines for their submissions. They'd never make any progress at all if it weren't for the deadlines. I always have to nag every one of them for their work. Sometimes, I even have to lose my temper with them. Why, why can't I meet a cartoonist as dedicated as yours!"

"Ahhh, it's really such torture to compare people with one another!"

“Kyoko, you’re going to cause a big upset this year!”

“One Piece already has the makings of an extremely popular comic series. It’s almost definite that it’ll get a standalone release. If those sales are good, it will surely be animated too.”

At this moment, the editor-in-chief arrived.

Kyoko anxiously said, “Editor-in-chief.”

The editor-in-chief acknowledged her and said, “It’s in first place again?”

Kyoko said with a smile, “Yes.”

The editor-in-chief thought for a bit. “How many chapters of One Piece have been submitted thus far?”

Kyoko said, “I’ve received 30 chapters so far. I don’t know how many assistants Teacher Aoi has hired, but his work rate is too fast. Furthermore, I looked through the work many times. The quality of every one of them is top-notch.”

The editor-in-chief nodded and said, “About that matter you brought up previously, let’s have a meeting to discuss it. There might not be any precedents, but it doesn’t mean that we can’t do it.”

Kyoko said in surprise, “Are you saying?”

“We can give it a try.” The editor-in-chief said, “There’s a comic series that just ended this week, so we can allocate its spot to One Piece. We’ll see if two chapters a week will work out well. If it doesn’t, then we can always cut it back down to one chapter a week.”

And with that, One Piece began to release two chapters a week.

The popularity of One Piece also swept across the whole of Japan with lightning speed!

Chapter 1442: A stunning sales figure for the standalone volume release!

Japan.

Online, on the streets, on public transport, in the schools.

The discussions about One Piece could be heard everywhere.

“Today’s issue has two chapters in it!”

“It was so enjoyable to read it!”

“My Luffy! He’s so cute!”

“The fighting is so hot-blooded!”

“This is the best comic I’ve read in recent years!”

“I want to buy the standalone volume of it!”

“Me too, when will it get released?”

“I’ve already read it four times!”

Chapter 4.

Chapter 5.

Chapter 6.

The serialization of One Piece continued.

Furthermore, because of the double chapters released per week, the number of pages for One Piece very quickly reached the necessary requirements of a standalone volume. The regular thirty-two page format ¹ was also known in Japan as a “new edition” and was around 180 pages in length. So Shōnen Publishing had no choice but to bring forward the plans for a standalone volume of One Piece.

Promotions.

Printing.

Cover design.

The quantity for the first print was also being discussed.

In one of the meetings at Shōnen Publishing, everyone had differing opinions.

“Let’s talk about it. What numbers should we go with for the initial print run?”

“I think we should try with 100,000 copies first?”

“Isn’t 100,000 copies too few? Based on the current popularity of One Piece, I think we should have at least 200,000 copies as a minimum requirement. It could go higher than that too.”

“200,000? Impossible.”

“It’s only the first volume. 200,000 copies would be too much. Besides, only the top cartoonists get such treatment.”

“But One Piece is the most popular comic series in the whole of Japan right now!”

“The standalone volume has not even been released yet, so we still don’t know how the sales will do. It’s too early to say for sure whether the comic is really the most popular or not.”

“Let’s go for a compromise. I suggest we run a print of 150,000 copies.”

Some people were optimistic.

But others, not so.

One Piece was ranked very high in the popularity polls and had been continuously getting first place for many weeks in a row. However, acclaim was just acclaim, while sales figures were sales figures. They had to be looked at separately. It wasn’t like there weren’t any comics that received critical acclaim but were immediately knocked off their perch the moment their standalone volumes were released. Acclaim was just one part of the equation, while sales figures accounted for the final results.

Zhang Ye's Studio sent its personnel to Japan.

...

On this day.

In the morning.

Beijing time: 6 AM.

Tokyo time: 7 AM. The time difference was an hour.

Zhang Ye was in the kitchen making breakfast. With his other hand, he was taking a video call from Ha Qiqi on his cell phone. In the call, Little Sun was talking to his sister while Ha Qiqi was exuberant.

Zhang Ye smiled and said: "You've arrived?"

Ha Qiqi said: "Little Sun and I have reached Japan. Today is the release date of the first standalone volume of One Piece, and it'll be going on sale very soon. You might not know this, but if we didn't come here and see for ourselves, we really wouldn't know how hot One Piece has become. I'll put it this way: I can understand how One Piece is pronounced in Japanese. On the way here, Little Sun and I heard other people bring up the name at least four or five times!"

"Haha, that's pretty good."

Ha Qiqi smiled happily and said: "Little Sun and I will head to the bookstore first. We'll update you again in a while."

Zhang Ye said: "OK, thanks for the hard work."

Ha Qiqi said: "It's no big deal. This is what we should be doing. You can draw more and take good care of Chief Wu. Leave the rest to us."

"Alright."

After ending the video call, Ha Qiqi and Little Sun immediately set off.

But when they walked up to one of the larger bookstores nearby, the two of them were dumbfounded. They saw that the line extended outwards by more than a hundred meters.

One Piece!

One Piece!

They kept hearing the same words being repeated!

Little Sun was stunned. "They're all here to buy One Piece?"

Ha Qiqi was also a little doubtful. "Surely not, right?"

They weren't sure and dared not assume so. They turned around and went to another, smaller bookstore. They found the same thing happening here. Everyone was lining up!

What is this all about?

What are they here to buy?

At this moment, it was time!

When that bookstore opened its doors for business, the people in the line rushed inside. Although they were orderly and unlike the chaos that was often seen back in China, everyone was fast walking. They were all rushing in one direction—towards the comics section!

“One Piece!”

“I want a copy of it!”

“Give me one!”

“Has One Piece arrived yet?”

Little Sun was shocked!

Ha Qiqi was enraptured!

They weren’t full of themselves! Everyone was truly here to buy One Piece!

...

Osaka.

At a point of sale.

“Do you have One Piece?”

“Can I have a copy of One Piece’s standalone volume, thank you.”

“Is Volume 8 of Martial King out yet? No? Oh, then give me a copy of One Piece.”

...

Hokkaido.

At a bookstore.

“What?”

“You’re out of it?”

“Why don’t you have any left?”

“I’ve been lining up since early morning.”

...

Kyoto.

At a supermarket.

“Where’s One Piece?”

“Isn’t the standalone volume going on sale today?”

“It’s been sold out?”

“So quickly?”

“There isn’t even one copy left?”

“Ahhhhh! I came too late!”

...

Meanwhile.

In the editorial department of Shōnen Publishing.

Someone from the marketing department suddenly came running in. He was panting and shouted loudly, “One Piece is selling like crazy! Who is the editor in charge of One Piece?”

Seto Kyoko stood up dumbfoundedly. “That would be me.”

The person from the marketing department said, “Quick, get ready, we’re going for an additional print run!”

The other editors were stunned.

“Additional print run?”

“But it was just released!”

“Why is it getting an additional print run so quickly?”

“What kind of results did it achieve?”

They couldn’t understand what was going on.

Getting an additional print run was a big deal. Usually, the standalone volumes would have to sell out before they could use the figures to decide on how many more copies to print. So why did the additional print run get brought up just two hours after it went on sale?

Everyone had confused expressions on their faces.

The person from the marketing department said, “What do you all know! The 150,000 copies from the initial print run of One Piece sold out within two hours of release!”

Kyoko was stunned!

All of the others in the editorial department were stunned!

It was sold out?

All of it?

150,000 copies?

The deputy editor shouted, “Holy shit!”

A male editor was floored. “Does it have to be that ridiculous?”

Someone shouted, “Quick, quick, inform the editor-in-chief!”

Everyone understood that something big had happened!

This was no longer just a big deal for Shōnen Publishing. This was a big deal that affected the entire Japanese comic world!

How many years?

How many years had it been since Japan had had a comic that could achieve such results?

...

Two days later.

One Piece received an additional print run for 150,000 copies.

It sold out within three hours!

...

A few days later.

One Piece was given another print run for 200,000 copies.

The 200,000 copies were snapped up again!

...

Additional print run!

Sold out!

Additional print run!

Sold out!

In the end, the sales figures of the first volume of One Piece reached an astonishing 1.01 million copies to break the record of the sales for the first volume of a comic series.

Shōnen Publishing went crazy!

The other comic publishers also went crazy!

All of Japan went crazy!

Thinking back to around six years ago when the national comic The Awakening of the Races ended, there hadn’t been another comic series that caused such a craze in the Japanese comics industry. The explosive popularity of One Piece had come about so suddenly that no one was prepared for it. Many of the Japanese were caught off guard by its appearance!

Six years!

It had been six years!

And now, the new national cartoon they had been waiting for finally arrived!

Chapter 1443: The animated version gets released!

The Japanese media blew up!

“The birth of a new national comic!”

“One Piece breaks sales records for first volume debuts!”

“Teacher Aoi becomes the most sought after cartoonist in Japan!”

“Teacher Aoi’s identity a mystery?”

“One Piece creates phenomenal buzz!”

On the Japanese Internet.

“This is amazing!”

“1.01 million copies sold! My God!”

“Where did this cartoonist pop out from?”

“Yeah, I can’t believe that this was drawn by a rookie artist!”

“I can imagine One Piece leading the entire comics scene for the next few years!”

“With these sales figures and popularity, there’s no other series in the comics industry that can compete with it. Moreover, this series looks like it can probably go on for at least three to five years!”

What was a national cartoon?

It meant that it was liked by people of all ages, regardless of their age. Although One Piece was still very “young,” it had already achieved this. And those who had read One Piece knew that this was actually a comic that gradually became popular. It was the type that would get much more exciting and interesting later on. So even though not a lot of time had passed, the title of being a national cartoon was bestowed upon it. Furthermore, there was hardly anyone who raised an objection to that. A lot of people had very high hopes for One Piece!

There was a flurry of heated discussions!

The sales figures were off the charts!

However at this moment, another exciting piece of news came through!

Shōnen Publishing announced then and there that they would be partnering with an animation studio to start production work!

One Piece's animation would soon be released!

The Japanese people were anticipating this greatly.

"It's finally coming!"

"This is great!"

"The cartoon! The cartoon!"

"I want to watch it so badly!"

...

On this day.

In China.

Early in the morning, Zhang Ye had gone out to the market to shop for groceries.

A stall owner smiled and said, "Teacher Zhang, you're here again?"

Zhang Ye smiled. "Yes."

The female owner asked, "What are you getting today?"

"Do you have ground pork? I'd like to buy some to make dumplings."

"Sure, I'll chop some up for you. I won't use the machine, so it's guaranteed to be fresh."

As soon as he left the market after buying groceries, he saw a few middle school students in their school uniforms walking past him in laughter. The school was close by.

"Xixi, let me recommend a comic to you."

"What comic?"

"One Piece."

"Ah, I've heard of it before. It seems like it's really popular. Is it good?"

"It's amazingly good. Go read it for yourself when you get home. The cartoon will be airing soon as well."

"Then I'll just wait for the cartoon. It's too tiring following the comics."

"What do you know? The comics are where the essence is."

"Are you serious?"

"You'll know when you read them. I've recommended it to a lot of people and they say that it's good too."

"Alright, I'll have a look then."

Zhang Ye was slightly taken aback as he gazed around. He smiled and gave them a few more glances. This was the first time that he heard anyone talking about One Piece back in his own country.

After reaching home.

He placed the groceries down in the kitchen and took his laptop out to the yard. There, he sat down on the bench, basking in the sun, while checking the Internet. When Zhang Ye saw it, even he was shocked. At some point in time, a Tieba for One Piece had been set up. Moreover, the extent of the bar was huge too!

He did a detailed search.

Comic resources.

Scanlations for download.

Story discussions.

All sorts of One Piece-related information was everywhere.

Online, a lot of people were chasing updates.

"Is the latest chapter out yet?"

"It's been released."

"Link please!"

"Translations please!"

"This comic is like a drug! When I first started reading it, I felt that the character design was atrocious. But the further I read, the more interesting it became!"

"Right, comics like this rarely appear in Japan in recent years."

"It's such a joy to read. I started reading since the fifth chapter and have been catching up to the latest chapter."

"The crucial thing is that this Aoi updates really quickly. Other authors do a weekly release, but this fellow actually does double releases every week. He's unflappable. I believe he should be hailed as a model worker of the comic world!"

"The animation will also be released soon."

"It's going to start showing next week. I'm looking forward to it!"

"Fucking awesome! Release more chapters!"

Zhang Ye couldn't help but roll his eyes at that. However, he was smiling at the same time. This is great. The comic's influence has spread to China? Oh yes, what about the other Asian countries?

Korea was also going through the same situation.

The discussions regarding One Piece were increasing.

“This is a really good comic.”

“It’s rare that we can get such a new and unique setting.”

“Yeah, it’s no wonder that it became so popular.”

“This comic has already been labeled as the new generation of national comics in Japan.”

“I like to read this.”

“I hope that the animated version won’t let me down.”

...

With the great anticipation of the masses.

On this day, the first episode of One Piece’s animation was broadcast.

In Japan, a lot of people were waiting at their televisions.

The atmosphere at Shōnen Publishing was like one of celebrating the new year. The editors were all in the office with their eyes glued to the screen. They were all waiting to witness this important moment.

Online.

“It’s starting!”

“Wow, it’s not bad.”

“It’s just as I imagined!”

“Great, it doesn’t deviate from the comic’s storyline!”

“I find Luffy even more adorable now!”

“The voice talents are all top-class!”

“That’s Aiko’s voice! Luffy is voiced by a woman!”

“What an extravagant lineup. It matches the expectations really well!”

The reception from the Japanese viewers was fantastic.

Across the sea, netizens from the rest of the Asian countries were also waiting.

“Is it out yet?”

“I need a link!”

“Requesting a download link, requesting subs!”

“Hurry up, I can’t wait!”

“Where can we download it?”

“Where’s the subbing team?”

The results of One Piece's first episode were revealed very quickly!

When the television station announced the viewership ratings, the industry blew up once again!

It exploded!

Another record had been broken again!

The viewership ratings for the first episode of One Piece had steamrolled all the other popular Japanese dramas and variety shows during the same time period. It took the top spot for that day's time slot viewership ratings! In China, if the ratings of a cartoon had outnumbered that of other television shows? Such a scenario was simply unthinkable. But in Japan where the comics and animation industry was extremely advanced, such a thing was very possible. At least, One Piece managed to do it!

And not only that!

Not only in Japan!

If the comic helped One Piece make a name for itself in other Asian countries, then the animation was what truly lifted One Piece up onto the altar. Outside of Japan, it was clear that the animation's influence and spread were much quicker and wider.

China.

Korea.

India.

The downloads of One Piece's animation continued to soar!

10 million!

30 million!

50 million!

A 100 million!

A lot of people had been captivated by it!

More and more people started joining the camps that kept chasing updates!

One Piece was becoming extremely popular all across Asia at an astonishing rate!

After the buildup from the comic's serialization, One Piece had blown up almost overnight. No one expected that One Piece would become so popular in Asia. Remember, this comic was almost dropped by the editorial department at Shōnen Publishing right at the beginning!

Shōnen Publishing did not expect it!

Zhang Ye's Studio did not expect it!

Zhang Ye himself also did not expect it!

A lot of people were shocked silly by the explosiveness of this comic series!

Chapter 1444: Come on out, Naruto!

One Piece continued its explosive breakout.

The comic.

The cartoon.

The merchandise.

They were so popular it was terrifying!

Zhang Ye's plan to break into the enemy ranks was proceeding smoothly and quietly. But perhaps because it was too quiet, the people and media at home could not get used to it.

...

On Weibo.

"Has Teacher Zhang really gone on break?"

"Yeah, there's really no activities from him this time."

"I'm so not used to it."

"Lord Zhang, come out and show your face!"

"Face-smacking Zhang has not been smacking faces for so many days, and it's leaving me with no gossip to read about."

"There might always be major incidents happening in the entertainment industry, but when compared to having Zhang Ye around, all of that is no big deal."

"Isn't Teacher Zhang trying to reach the status of Asian S-lister? Is it really OK to rest for so many days? His Asian popularity hasn't dropped yet, but it's also not moved for some time as well, isn't that so? At this rate, his goal of reaching the summit of Asia will get further and further away. At the very least, he can't do it within this year."

"I don't think that Zhang Ye will ascend to the summit of Asia. Although I like him a lot, compared to those celebrities who're already at the top of Asia, Teacher Zhang is still too eccentric. He can't possibly be thinking of reaching the top with scolding, can he? It might sound interesting, but there's no way he can deliver on that. On the Asian Celebrity Rankings, the higher you go, the more difficult it becomes. It's already a miracle that he advanced to this point with his fighting. Right now, Lord Zhang has got a terrible, terrible reputation in Asia. Although his way of earning popularity was very effective in the past, that is such a fucking self-damaging strategy to execute!"

"I feel that Lord Zhang is already at his limit."

"Zhang Ye, stop cooking. Hurry up and make your comeback!"

"Do you still wish to get to the top of Asia? Come back already!"

The people were discussing.

The experts joined in.

This topic was discussed with great relish by everyone.

In the Asian S-list rankings, there were a total of fifteen spots.

Five Chinese celebrities were on it, while Japan had one representative. The other nine spots were taken by Korean celebrities.

This was the ceiling of the Asian entertainment industry. Those who could reach the top were people with the best reputations, with influential works, and had a large and wide-spanning fanbase. Historically, these three factors were indispensable when one was making an attempt at the top, but what about Zhang Ye? He wasn't too bad in China, but be it his reputation, his works, or his fans in the Asian region, none of them were good enough. He could not account for any of these three factors, and you could even say that he had nothing on it at all!

If he could still reach the top this way?

Then how many people would vomit blood over it!

But for some reason, despite knowing that it was unrealistic and impossible, many Chinese citizens still felt a hint of unexplainable anticipation deep in their hearts. They truly hoped that Zhang Ye would surprise everyone. Perhaps, this was because everyone just wanted to have something to look forward to, especially when it didn't affect them at all!

The media was also joined in the buzz.

"When will Zhang Ye return?"

"Chinese citizens looking forward to Zhang Ye's return!"

"Asian S-list rankings this year may not see any changes!"

"Who will be the next Chinese celebrity to ascend to the top of Asia as a Heavenly King (Heavenly Queen)?"

...

Later that afternoon.

At home.

Old Wu went to take a nap.

Zhang Ye was in the study holding a video conference call with his studio's staff.

At the other end of the call, Ha Qiqi said: "Director Zhang, we've received the money. It's the payment from the comic series, animation, and merchandise of figurines and illustrations. I didn't dare to give them our bank details in case they find out who we are, so we routed the payment through Little Sun's elder sister and another person's bank accounts before we transferred the money back to China."

Zhang Ye laughed and said: "Is it a lot of money?"

Ha Qiqi said happily: "Now that you mention it, it's quite a bit."

Zhang Zuo joked: "It's time to hand out bonuses, Director Zhang."

"That's of course," Zhang Ye approved.

Little Wang suddenly asked: "Director Zhang, have you gone online yet? There's a lot of talk today about whether you stand a chance of reaching the summit of Asia. A lot of people are not optimistic about your chances."

Little Zhou giggled and said: "That's because they don't know how amazing Director Zhang is. Who would've thought that during this time while Director Zhang is on a break from work, he has actually taken hold of Japan silently."

Zhang Ye smiled and said: "What do you mean by silently? This is called attacking when they least expect it."

Ha Qiqi thought about it and said: "The problem right now is that they don't know that One Piece was drawn by you. We had a glance earlier and saw that our Asian popularity is no longer growing. It's stuck in the middle of the Asian A-list rankings. Now that One Piece is on fire, don't you think that it's time we make the announcement? Shouldn't we quickly redirect this wave of popularity back to us? It's accumulated by quite a bit."

Zhang Zuo said: "But the restriction orders have not been lifted yet."

Ha Qiqi said helplessly: "That's true."

Zhang Zuo said: "With the restriction order still in place, if we were to announce that the comic was drawn by Director Zhang, who knows what actions the Japanese authorities would take against us? They might just halt our comic series indefinitely."

Everyone expressed their views.

There were those who agreed with announcing it.

While others objected to that course of action.

Zhang Ye did not participate at all. When they finished talking, he laughed. "It's not the right time to announce it. We aren't even close to doing that."

Everyone was stunned. "What do you mean?"

Zhang Ye smiled. "This is just the beginning."

Nobody understood. "Just the beginning?"

After the video conference ended, Zhang Ye sat in the study room and sipped on his tea. Everyone at the studio thought that having One Piece become popular throughout Asia was the ultimate goal. But in reality, no one knew that this was only the first step of Zhang Ye's plan!

How much popularity could a comic get him?

Enough to advance two places on the Asian A-list? Three places?

That wasn't minor at all, but it was still far from enough!

His goal was to reach the top of Asia, one of the 15 spots at the summit of Asia. Causing such a small stir was obviously not enough to satisfy him. Furthermore, with the restriction order still in place, if they were to announce the truth at this time, he might be able to gain a huge increase in his popularity, but there would be nothing left for him to achieve after that!

He had to do something greater!

Something that would astonish and shake the world!

One Piece was on the right track, and many chapters were stockpiled. He didn't have to worry about any other things. So then, he could now move on to the second step of the plan.

Through his observations and understanding in recent days, Zhang Ye had become much more familiar with the Japanese comics industry. He also read many of their classic works and discovered many things through them. Actually, the One Piece in his previous world was not a comic that took off as soon as it appeared and became super popular everywhere. It only slowly became popular as it went on, and Zhang Ye was quite sure that he didn't remember this detail wrong. However, in this world, One Piece had garnered a shocking amount of praise and enthusiasm right off the bat. It was only after he gained an understanding of the industry here that he discovered that this world had much worse comics and cartoons. It wasn't that there weren't enough comics, but rather, there weren't enough quality works to speak of. To find a publicly acknowledged national cartoon, one had to go back to six years ago to identify it. So as long as you could come up with a quality work in this market that was hungry for a successful series to appear, there was practically no need for any reputation buildup. It would immediately stand out from the rest of the series.

What a time!

What a market!

If he didn't try to pull off a big one here, how could he forgive himself?

One Piece's popularity was guaranteed, and it wouldn't fade easily. In fact, it would grow even further, so he could cash in on the popularity from it at any time. What Zhang Ye needed to do now was to release as many comics as possible to round up as much of the popularity that he could muster from them. He needed to cause the biggest wave that he could before collecting all of the popularity at once!

What sort of a concept was that?

What kind of a situation would it be like?

Just thinking about it, Zhang Ye was almost unable to get ahold of himself!

As for what would happen at that time, Zhang Ye did not care about it. This fellow was still thinking that the commotion would not be loud enough. How the situation would be wrapped up at that time was none of his concern!

What should he draw?

Which comic series should he bring out this time?

Zhang Ye naturally did not bother with the average comic series that he knew about. He only wanted something that was among the most popular ones.

In the drawing studio.

Zhang Ye circled around the room with his hands behind him.

Five minutes.

Ten minutes.

Alright, I choose you!

Suddenly, with an idea in mind, he went over to the computer and sat down. Then he took a deep breath and narrowed his eyes before picking up the stylus and slowing drawing onscreen.

Come on out!

Naruto!

Chapter 1445: POO Studios gets a surprise!

Drawing.

Cooking dinner.

Washing the dishes.

Drawing again into the night.

Within a day's time, Zhang Ye had already churned out three chapters.

Only he could do this. He had the stamina, the speed, and could bear the loneliness of it. If it were anyone else, they might get crazy tired from just drawing one chapter in two days.

Back at home.

Zhang Ye started a video conference call.

Ha Qiqi and the others were already waiting on the other end.

Everyone asked: "Director Zhang, is something the matter?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said: "Check your emails. I've sent something to everyone."

Ha Qiqi was taken aback. "What's the email about?"

Zhang Ye said: "The comics, of course. I just drew another series. Get someone to submit it immediately. Remember not to expose your identity."

Zhang Zuo was stunned. "What? Another series?"

Little Wang stared with wide eyes. “Ah?”

Little Sun was dumbfounded. “You have the energy to do another series?”

Zhang Ye smiled and said: “I have nothing to do at home anyway.”

When Ha Qiqi heard that, she got all excited. She finally understood what Director Zhang meant when he said those words yesterday. This was the real deal. “Alright, I’ll see to it immediately. Don’t worry about it, Director Zhang!”

Zhang Ye told her: “Little Sun’s sister has represented us before. Don’t let her do it again, or she’ll get found out. Oh right, is Little Sun’s brother-in-law free to do it?”

Little Sun said: “Ah, he’s free.”

Zhang Ye replied: “Alright, then I’ll be troubling your brother-in-law for his help?”

Ha Qiqi asked: “Then what pen name will you use this time?”

Zhang Ye thought for a bit. “Let’s go with Ozawa.”

Everyone looked at one another suspiciously.

Ozawa?

Aoi?

What kinda names are those!

...

The next day.

Tokyo, Japan.

POO Studios.

This was one of the top three publishing studios for weekly comic magazines in Japan.

The mood in the editorial department was very gloomy.

The editor-in-chief pointed at everyone and said, “Why aren’t there any good comics out there? Huh? I don’t believe it! At a huge publishing studio like ours that employs so many cartoonists, how can there not even be one comic series that can compete with Shōnen Publishing’s comics? Find it! All of you find it even if you have to dig three feet underground! Find it no matter what!”

One Piece had become too popular!

And Shōnen Publishing was now ferociously leading the industry!

A gap had always existed between POO Studios and Shōnen Publishing. Whether it was their sales figures or influence, Shōnen Publishing was always ahead in first place while they placed second. So now that a national cartoon like One Piece had appeared, that lead was extended even longer. They were

already finding it difficult to keep up with the pace of Shōnen Publishing. With just One Piece alone, Shōnen Magazine's sales figures had spiked by 30%!

What was there still left to compete on?

How could they still chase after them?

This crisis of their survivability was imminent!

After the meeting.

The editors were also looking downtrodden.

"What should we do now?"

"Shōnen Publishing is so lucky."

"That's right, it's a national cartoon that only appears once every few years. But somehow, those series always end up with Shōnen Publishing. There's no justice in that."

"Stop talking. Hurry up and go through the manuscripts."

"Go through them for what! There are too few good comics around."

"Titles on the level of a series like One Piece might not even appear once every five years."

The telephone on the desk rang.

Fujiwara Koji picked it up listlessly.

"Hello?"

"Fujiwara, someone wants to submit a manuscript."

"Is it by a newcomer?"

"Yes, they're downstairs."

"Alright, I'll go down to meet them."

After hanging up, Fujiwara wasn't really looking forward to meeting the person and proceeded downstairs without haste.

He was an idler who was an insignificant member of the editorial department. The truly experienced editors all had big authors under them, while he was still in charge of the newcomers' submissions after having worked here for several years. Every day, there would be these newcomers coming to submit their manuscripts. These newcomers were always unknowns who had not debuted yet, so their works were usually not very professional. The quality of their manuscripts was uneven and could not even claim to have met the criteria. There were always a lot of flow errors and mistakes that he had to point out to them one by one. It was always such a headache for him every day.

A good comic!

Where is the good comic that I am looking for!

Downstairs.

In the reception room.

In one of the partitions, Fujiwara spotted the person.

“Editor, nice to meet you.”

“Please take a seat.”

“This is the manuscript.”

“Alright, let me have a look.”

Fujiwara was not really interested and flipped through the manuscript without a care like he usually did. However, when he flipped to the fifth page, he was stunned. He sat bolt upright and breathed in deeply. Then he hurriedly flipped backwards to read it again from the beginning!

One page!

Five pages!

Ten pages!

Fujiwara was dumbfounded!

He became a little excited and was somewhat in disbelief. Then, he reread it again!

Ten minutes later.

Upstairs at the editorial department.

Fujiwara ran back here at full speed and shouted, “I’ve found it! I’ve found it!”

All the editors turned to look at him.

“Fujiwara, what’s going on?”

“What did you find?”

“Look at how excited you are. What just happened?”

Fujiwara said loudly, “Quick, come and read this manuscript!”

An editor said, “Aren’t you in charge of the manuscripts submitted by newcomers? How good of a comic can a newcomer possibly create?”

“Aiya.” Fujiwara anxiously said, “Read it before you speak further!”

At this moment, the editor-in-chief also came over. “Let me see it.”

All the other editors stood up and came over as well.

Ozawa?

Naruto?

“What sort of an art style is this?”

“It’s indeed by a newcomer.”

“The supporting characters are all designed pretty well, but what’s with the main character?”

“Yeah, Uzumaki Naruto? Why does he have whiskers?”

“The whiskers are so ugly.”

“Fujiwara, is this the good comic that you were talking about?”

At the beginning, everyone was talking as they went through the manuscript. But the more they read, the quieter they became. In the end, the entire editorial department had fallen unexpectedly silent!

They finished reading it!

All the editors were shocked!

The editor-in-chief said dumbfoundedly, “Was this really submitted by a newcomer?”

Fujiwara hurriedly said, “Couldn’t be truer!”

The editor-in-chief said, “How did you reply to him?”

Fujiwara said, “When I told him that his manuscript was quite good, he said that he was looking to serialize it. So I told him to go back and wait for the news while I discussed it with you first. I’ve gotten his contact details, though it didn’t seem like the other party was the author himself. He should be the author’s representative instead. He sounded like he was unwilling to reveal the author’s identity, so perhaps it might not be a newcomer but some well-known cartoonist who wishes to change their pen name? That could be a possibility, I don’t know.”

The editor-in-chief patted him on the shoulder, then took a deep breath and said, “Well done. From now on, you will be in charge of this cartoonist. Contact him immediately to discuss the contract. We’ll start publishing the serialization of Naruto under POO Studios this week. Tell him that we’ll give him the best recommendation and treatment. Just don’t let him go to any other magazine publisher!”

Fujiwara said excitedly, “Understood!”

The editor-in-chief looked at the other people and said, “About this serialization, I don’t think there’s a need to have any discussion about it, right?”

“There’s no need for that!”

“It’s very good!”

“If this doesn’t get serialized, that wouldn’t do it justice.”

“With it, we’ve finally got something on our hands to compete with One Piece!”

“Can it really compete with that?”

“Of course! This comic is definitely no worse than One Piece! And Naruto does the pacing of the lead-in to the main plot even faster than One Piece!”

“Our patience has finally paid off now that this work has come to us!”

“Hahaha, luck is on our side this time!”

“Ahhh! We’re gonna make a comeback with this!”

Chapter 1446: Why has another national cartoon appeared!

A few days later.

The new issue of POO Studio’s comic magazine went on sale.

The newly serialized comic had officially landed.

...

Naruto.

Chapter 1: Uzumaki Naruto.

Once upon a time, there lived a fox spirit with nine tails who was so powerful that a shake of the tails resulted in landslides and tsunamis.

The suffering people gathered the greatest shinobi clans to fight this menace.

One ninja risked his life to imprison the demon’s soul. In doing so, he laid down his life.

That shinobi was the Fourth Hokage.

“Lord Hokage!”

“What’s wrong? Some new outrage by Naruto, I presume?”

“That young devil is graffitiing the mountainside images of all the heroes of our village—your honored forebears! In PAINT!”

...

Online.

“Have you read One Piece yet?”

“I read it yesterday. It was really exciting!”

“It’s getting better and better.”

“I’m only reading Shōnen Magazine now. I no longer buy the other comic magazines.”

“Me too, it’s all about One Piece now.”

“I read a very amazing comic today!”

“Which one?”

"It's called Naruto!"

"I've never heard of that before."

"It's a new serialization by POO Studios. The first chapter was just released, and it's fantastic. If you haven't read it yet, hurry up and go read it. You definitely won't regret it. It's as good as One Piece!"

"I've read it too. It's so damn good!"

"Yeah, there are so many hot-blooded scenes in the first chapter!"

"There's comedy, emotion, and hot-bloodedness. It's awesome!"

"I have a feeling that Naruto will be popular!"

"This new serialization from POO Studios is too strong!"

"Are you serious? I'll go have a look!"

On this day.

POO Studios released the popularity poll results for their serializations. The newly serialized Naruto actually crushed all of the other titles by an overwhelming margin to take first place in the poll! What did an overwhelming margin mean? It meant that it had gotten three times as many votes as the title that came in at second place! This sort of crushing was almost never seen before at the level of the large-scale comic publishers. Even One Piece did not manage such a result at Shōnen Publishing!

For a moment, the entire industry turned its attention to them.

However, it was just their attention. No one at this time believed that a new serialization like Naruto could possibly compete with One Piece.

POO Studios.

The editorial department was a scene of elation.

"It's on fire!"

"I knew it!"

"But it's still not enough."

"Yeah, it needs a further push!"

"Hai, if only Teacher Ozawa can match the two chapters a week release rate by Teacher Aoi. The rapid explosion in One Piece's popularity also has a lot to do with his update speed."

"Forget it, how many crazy people like Teacher Aoi can there be in the world?"

"True. Other than him, no other cartoonist can update at a speed of two or three chapters a week."

Everyone felt a tinge of regret.

Meanwhile, Fujiwara Koji, who was taking a call close by, froze.

When he put down the phone and heard the conversation between everyone and the editor-in-chief, he couldn't help but cough. Then he said dumbfoundedly, "Teacher Ozawa's representative just called to say that he can update two or three chapters a week. His stockpile is already at over a dozen chapters!"

Everyone was stunned!

Then they were pleasantly surprised!

"What?"

"Is that true?"

"Holy shit! God is on our side!"

"This is great! This is the best!"

"There's actually someone else who can do three chapters a week?"

"Oh my God, are the rookie cartoonists these days all so aggressive?"

"Teacher Ozawa is mighty!"

"Down with Shōnen Publishing!"

"Take down One Piece!"

With another boost from this news, POO Studios no longer had any worries!

Elsewhere.

In the editorial department of Shōnen Publishing.

They were very concerned about their competitor's moves. After the emergence of Naruto, they also went to read it for research.

"What the heck!"

"Yeah, in so many years of reading comics, this is the first time I've come across a youthful main character with whiskers. What kind of character design is this? It can't do well!"

"This is bad! I've just received some news!"

"What news?"

"Naruto is going to be updated with two chapters a week as well!"

"Holy shit!"

"They can release two chapters a week too?"

"Isn't Teacher Aoi the only person capable of doing that?"

"Who is this Ozawa person?"

"They're trying to provoke us!"

“Motherfucker, they’re coming straight for us!”

“Hmph! It’s just a new serialization. How can it possibly compete with us?”

“Is there going to be a battle soon? Alright then! We’re up for it!”

And just like this, the two biggest comic publishers in Japan began their war.

...

One day.

Five days.

Ten days.

One Piece was still as popular as ever!

Meanwhile, Naruto’s results were gradually climbing upwards!

A lot of Japanese people were also divided into two camps and taking each other on!

“Naruto is such a fun read!”

“Yeah, I never expected that POO Studios could bring out such a good series this year!”

“Supporting Naruto!”

“Get lost, One Piece is the best!”

“I love One Piece to death!”

“I’ll only support Naruto!”

“Those who like Naruto are dumbasses!”

“Those who like One Piece are fools!”

“Fuck, stop arguing. They’re both very good series.”

But in the end, it was still the results that spoke. The sales figure of a million copies of One Piece’s standalone volume had broken countless records and laid the foundations for it to be labeled as a “national cartoon.” No matter how good the word of mouth on Naruto was, the foe they had in front of them was just too great. Even with so many people supporting it, it was still unable to be mentioned in the same breath as One Piece. What dictated this was always the market itself.

And on this day.

Naruto finally reached enough chapters to get released as a standalone volume.

The first volume of Naruto went on sale!

The industry insiders turned their attention to it.

The media was reporting about it.

Shōnen Publishing was waiting to see them make a fool of themselves.

But on this day, an unbelievable event occurred. The same scene from the time One Piece attracted tens of thousands of people to line up and make a mad rush to buy its standalone volume happened once more!

...

Tokyo.

At a bookstore.

“Give me a copy of Naruto!”

“Naruto!”

“I want one too!”

...

Nagoya

“Do you have Naruto?”

“It’s sold out?”

“How did it run out of stock so quickly when it only just got released?”

...

Osaka.

“Oh my God!”

“It’s been sold out?”

“I’ve been in line since 6 in the morning!”

...

These scenes were taking place all over Japan concurrently!

The employees at POO Studios were shocked by this!

Shōnen Publishing and the entire comics industry were shocked silly as well!

It was insane. This wasn’t just about buying comics anymore. This was a fucking stampede to get the comics!

Additional print run!

Additional print run!

And another additional print run!

The machines at the printers kept spinning without stop. In the end, two of the printing machines even had to be scrapped. It was only through this that they could manage to keep up with the demand of the fans' intense buying!

Finally, the sales figures were released!

This was a number that stunned the entire comic world!

Sales of the first standalone volume of Naruto: 1.09 million copies!

It had actually done better by some tens of thousands of copies than the first volume of One Piece. Although it didn't do better than the 1.2 million copies sold for the second volume of One Piece, Naruto still set the record for the most copies of the first volume of a comic series sold in Japan by knocking One Piece aside!

POO Studios.

The editorial department went crazy!

"Heavens!"

"It's on fire! It's really on fire this time!"

"This is too frightening!"

"1.09 million copies?"

"This isn't a dream, right?"

Immediately, POO Studios announced their plans for an animated version of Naruto!

Shōnen Publishing.

The people here were trembling with anger!

"How is that possible!"

"They really caught up?"

"Where the heck did this comic pop out of?"

"It's so well-drawn, and it can even match Teacher Aoi's crazy release speed? Damn them! Where did POO Studios find a cartoonist like this?"

The industry blew up!

"Unbelievable!"

"Why has another national cartoon appeared?"

"We're in the golden age of comics!"

"A national cartoon has not even appeared once in the past six years. But look at what we have now! Two such series have popped up one after another within a span of a few months? And they were both created by rookies?"

“Yeah, and they’re both young adult comics ¹ too. What’s more, the quality is very high and it’s really difficult to say which is better. The comics world is experiencing the birth of a genius generation right now!”

Naruto!

One Piece!

The whole of Japan had been taken over by these two comics!

All of Asia was turned upside down by these two comics!

This was a matter that shocked and excited everyone at the same time!

Since when did national cartoons become so freely available like cabbages in the market, popping up every now and then?

Chapter 1447: I choose you, Detective Conan!

It was the weekend.

In China.

“Have you watched Naruto yet?”

“I watched it. It’s awesome!”

“I’ve downloaded it and started following the series.”

“I’m watching both One Piece and Naruto. They’ve both captured my attention!”

“What’s the big deal? The cartoons’ progress is too slow. I’ve already caught up to the latest developments in the comics. Want some spoilers? It gets even better later on.”

“Spoilsport, get lost!”

“Hahahahahaha.”

...

Korea.

“I can’t stop reading.”

“I love Naruto.”

“I love One Piece as well.”

“They’re both good works that rarely appear these days.”

“Right, I’ve heard that the whole of Asia has had their attention captured by these two cartoons.”

“I’m looking forward to how the plot unfolds.”

...

Back at home.

It was a school holiday today and Zhang Ye's younger sisters had come to visit.

His eldest younger sister, Cao Dan, was the most sensible of the three. The moment she came in, she asked her sister-in-law, "Sister-in-law, how's your leg? Are you getting better?"

Wu Zeqing smiled. "It's much better already."

His second sister, Cao Tong, blinked. "Sister-in-law, can I listen to the baby?"

"Sure." Wu Zeqing smiled and beckoned her over. "Come here."

His third sister, Cao Mengmeng, yelled excitedly, "I want to listen too!"

And so, the two of them carefully placed their ears onto Old Wu's belly and listened to it for a long time. No one was certain if they really heard anything, but their expressions of shock and bewilderment seemed to suggest so.

Zhang Ye started chatting with Cao Dan. "So how are the short videos coming along?"

Cao Dan gave a wry smile. "I'm still practicing. It's really not easy to make them."

Zhang Ye nodded and said, "You haven't graduated yet, so there's no rush."

Cao Dan said, "I've recently gotten quite into cartoons. I've been watching them almost every day."

Zhang Ye's eyes lit up. "Oh? What do you watch?"

Cao Dan said, "One Piece and Naruto, ah!" She suddenly remembered that her brother was a nationalistic young man and was fighting against Japan and Korea, so she immediately shut her mouth.

However, Zhang Ye didn't seem bothered by it and said with a chuckle, "What do you think of them?"

Cao Dan said, "They're fine, but they don't really suit us girls. There's too much hot-bloodedness and fighting in them."

The two of them chatted for a quite a while.

The speaker spoke casually, while the listener was all ears.

It was time for lunch.

"Wow!"

"Brother, your cooking is pretty good!"

"Yeah, it's quite tasty."

"Brother, you really know how to cook?"

His three sisters were very surprised.

Zhang Ye was amused. "Of course. After cooking for so many days, even a fool would learn how to do it. But my skill is limited. I still have a lot to learn from my wife."

Wu Zeqing smiled. "It's pretty good. You're better at cooking than I am."

After lunch, his three sisters left. They were only here to scrounge a free meal.

When Old Wu went to take a nap, Zhang Ye returned to the drawing studio and thought about what Cao Dan had said. She was indeed right, China could not compare to Japan. For example in China, comics were still not as widely accepted as they were in Japan. They still preferred watching the animation over reading the comics, and the genres they liked were also different. One Piece and Naruto were both considered hot-blooded hero types, but were loved all the same by everyone in Japan. However, in the other Asian regions, it wasn't as appealing to most of the female audience. This was something that he needed to consider. He was intending to use the comics to make a wave, so there couldn't be any flaws in his plan. He couldn't walk forward with just one leg, so it was natural to want to have as wide an appeal as possible. It would only work if a lot of people were reading them. Thus, Zhang Ye sank into deep thought.

Five minutes.

Ten minutes.

Suddenly, the drawing studio was filled by Zhang Ye's shouting!

"I choose you!"

"Detective Conan ¹!"

...

On the same night, Zhang Ye created two chapters of the comic.

The next morning, he held a video conference call with the studio staff.

The studio staff had only just arrived at work when they got a scare from Zhang Ye's voice over the conference call.

Ha Qiqi was stunned. "What?"

Little Wang was floored. "Another series?"

Little Zhou yelled: "You want to do three comic series?"

Wu Yi said: "Are you an ironman or something?"

Zhang Zuo wiped off his sweat and said: "Director Zhang, surely that's already enough? One Piece and Naruto have become so popular all over Asia. The popularity from them should be more than enough, right?"

Zhang Ye laughed and said: "No way. We have only just begun; this is still far from what I want. Hurry up and get it done. I've already sent the final copy to your inboxes."

Little Sun said anxiously: "But my sister and brother-in-law are already—"

Zhang Ye blinked. "Is your uncle free?"

Little Sun was dumbfounded. "Ah?"

Little Wang laughed. "Pfft!"

Little Zhou also burst out laughing!

Is there some kind of enmity between you and Little Sun's family!

Do you have to rip off their whole family like this!

Ha Qiqi asked: "What will you be called this time?"

Zhang Ye answered: "Call me Hatano."

...

Japan.

Shōnen Publishing and POO Studios were both in the midst of a furious competition with each other!

The sales of the Naruto comic had set a new high!

Very quickly, One Piece broke that record again!

Later on, Naruto caught back up again!

It was the same case for the cartoons.

Finally, the battle escalated even further!

The two comics started competing on their release rates!

One Piece started updating at three chapters a week!

This was an update speed that had never been seen before in comics, and it came as a huge shock to many people!

But to no one's expectations, Naruto followed up closely and started updating at three chapters a week as well!

Many of the cartoonists in Japan sobbed.

"Holy shit!"

"Do you two really have to be like this!"

"How do you expect us to go on?"

"Those two freaks!"

"Fuck, if you two are so great, make it four chapters a week instead! Four chapters a week, I dare you!"

Similarly left in tears was Shūkansha. As one of the top three publishing studios for such weekly comic magazines, Shūkansha was feeling non-existent. The editors who came to work every day had nothing to

look forward to and might as well knit. Faced with the intense competition from the other two comic magazines, they could do nothing about it.

The office was idle.

In the editorial department, everyone was busy doing their own thing.

Right now, the sales figures of their comic magazine were decreasing with each passing week.

Down by 2%.

Down by 3%.

The sales figures dropped to a new low.

The editor-in-chief was nearly going insane. He sat there mumbling to himself every day. "Heavens! Why can't you bless me with a national cartoon as well!"

At this moment, an editor came running over, crying out in surprise.

"It's here! A good comic has arrived!"

"What?"

"Where?"

All the editors reacted as though they had been shot with adrenaline!

That editor waved a manuscript about in his hand and shouted, "It's a manuscript submitted by a newcomer! It's spectacular!"

"Let me have a look!"

"Bring it over here, quick!"

Everyone gathered around to read it.

When they were done reading it, all of them started screaming excitedly!

"Holy fuck!"

"It's finally here!"

"The wheels of fortune keep on turning. It's finally our turn!"

"Fuck! It's finally our fucking turn!"

"Detective Conan! You're exactly what we've been waiting for!"

Then that editor added something that made everyone cry in joy. "Furthermore, Teacher Hatano mentioned that he can also release three chapters a week! That won't be a problem at all!"

At this moment, the editorial department of Shūkansha celebrated like it was the new year!

"We've gotten exactly what we wanted!"

“We’re going to be so popular!”

“Listen to what he said! That! Won’t! Be! A! Problem! At! All!”

“Domineering! I have to admire cartoonists with a temper like that!”

Soon.

Detective Conan was officially serialized!

Chapter 1448: This doesn’t make any sense at all!

Detective Conan’s serialization.

File 1.

At night.

In a mansion.

“That’s right. The perpetrator made his escape by moving from window to window before anybody who heard the victim’s screams had a chance to rush over here. That’s why there aren’t any footprints outside the window.”

“H-How is that possible? There’s five meters between the two windows!”

“But it’s not even two meters if you climb up the walls to the roof. However, that wouldn’t occur to you unless you knew the unique construction of this mansion. And there’s only one person who could have moved around inside the house without arousing any suspicion at that hour.”

“Who did it! Who killed my wife?”

“It was—her husband, you!”

...

The Japanese people were shocked!

“Aiya!”

“It’s yet another good comic!”

“A detective comic? I like it!”

“Why have there been so many good comics recently?”

“Who knows!”

“Eh, why are there so many pages?”

“Yeah, why is one chapter of this comic equivalent to three chapters of the other comics?”

“What do you know? They’re updating three chapters at one go!”

“Three chapters a week!”

“What? Aren’t Teacher Ozawa and Teacher Aoi the only ones who can achieve that speed?”

“Fuck, another freak who does three chapters a week has shown up!”

“Another one?”

“Heavens! What kinds of animals are they!”

Shūkansha, always the bridesmaid, had burst onto the scene without any warning!

POO Studios and Shōnen Publishing both trembled in fright. Many of the editors were stunned by it as well. One Piece and Naruto might be updating at three chapters a week and still competing for more, but there was still a lead-in to that release rate prior to this. They had both started from one chapter a week, followed by two chapters a week, before edging upwards to three chapters a week! Fuck, you’re starting off with three chapters a week? Do you have a death wish?! You might as well ascend straight to the Heavens!

When they finished reading the comic, the editors of both publishing studios were so frightened they broke out in cold sweat!

It was too good!

It was so wonderful to read!

This was the pinnacle of detective comics!

Surely it couldn’t be, right? Did they really have another competitor? There was going to be another national cartoon joining them?

No, it was still too early to say!

...

The days passed.

Detective Conan continued its fiery run!

It managed to forcefully grab a piece of the market from under Naruto and One Piece’s noses. It had developed into a three-horse race!

The Japanese public had high praise for it.

“It’s good!”

“It’s very suitable for girls to read!”

“Right, my boyfriend is always following the updates!”

“Is the new chapter out yet?”

“Who’s gonna die this week?”

The reception from the people was very enthusiastic.

However, the title of national cartoon wasn't so easily given by the industry insiders. This was because they were still waiting for the comic to be market tested. To say anything now would be too early. Moreover, they couldn't give out the title so recklessly. One Piece had already been named a national cartoon. Naruto was also named a national cartoon. And now, they had to confer the title upon another comic again? Wouldn't that dilute the number of national cartoons around?! So if there weren't any results to show for this time, a lot of people wouldn't even dare to utter the words "national cartoon"!

They didn't dare give it out so easily anymore!

They couldn't afford to!

But on this day, the results came out!

The sales figures of Detective Conan's first standalone volume was astonishing!

Tokyo.

Hokkaido.

Osaka.

Long lines could be seen appearing in many regions.

Moreover, it was obvious that the majority of the people in line were female.

"Do you have Detective Conan?"

"I want a copy of Detective Conan."

"How much for Detective Conan?"

Additional print run!

And another additional print run!

Fortunately, Shūkansha was well-prepared this time and did not get caught panicking!

The final sales figures for Detective Conan stopped at 680,000 copies. It was nothing compared to One Piece and Naruto's results but was leagues ahead many other comics! Usually, this figure would've been more than impressive. In any other year, this result would have taken the top honors as well. But it was different this year in that the comics industry had too many sparks. It was flourishing. First, there was One Piece. It was followed by Naruto. Both series' first standalone volumes had achieved over a million copies in sales each, so that took the shine off of Detective Conan's sales figures. It was also an excellent series, but it wasn't the best out there!

Shūkansha was a little disappointed.

"It didn't surpass a million copies?"

"Is it because the release rate is too fast?"

"Hai, detective comics are indeed not as popular as those hot-blooded comics!"

"We really can't outdo them?"

POO Studios and Shōnen Publishing also heaved sighs of relief.

“They did worse than us by quite a bit.”

“Fortunately for us.”

“I got such a scare.”

“It probably can’t be considered a national cartoon yet, right?”

“Yeah, it was just a false alarm.”

“Hur hur, I knew it! How could there be such an abundance of national cartoons everywhere.”

“Yeah, it’s already a miracle that two appeared this year. If there was another? That would be insane!”

This was what a lot of people were thinking as well.

Even Shūkansha themselves were finding it regrettable.

However, as things would have it, the development of things sometimes did not go according to expectations. Detective Conan naturally went the way of getting an animated adaptation as well. With an elite lineup of voice talents and a top-tier soundtrack, many people had high hopes for it. Everything related to it was made according to the most sophisticated standards. And when the first episode of Detective Conan’s cartoon was broadcast, when the viewership ratings of this week was revealed, everyone was shocked to find out that something big had occurred in the comics and animation industry!

No one could have expected it!

No one predicted it!

The viewership ratings for the premiere episode of Detective Conan’s animation had absolutely crushed that of both One Piece and Naruto’s!

Yes, it was a crushing!

A crushing of several magnitudes!

And what was even more worth mentioning was the performance of Detective Conan in the other Asian countries. It attracted even more eyeballs than One Piece and Naruto!

Children!

Boys!

Girls!

All of them acknowledged Detective Conan!

Detective Conan had a very wide audience base as it attracted all kinds of people!

...

China.

"I like Kudo Shinichi so much!"

"How handsome!"

"This is the first time I'm watching a cartoon. It's really good!"

"My boyfriend is always watching that Naruto or One Piece whatever you call them. I couldn't even make myself finish one episode of them. I still prefer a cartoon like Detective Conan."

"Me too, me too. I don't like all that fighting and killing."

"Damn, don't people die as well in Detective Conan?"

"They do, but that's different."

...

Korea.

"Wow, it's a new animation!"

"I like detective shows!"

"This one's interesting!"

"What's going on in Japan these days?"

"I don't know. Why have so many good cartoons appeared?"

"Haha, the more the merrier, of course!"

...

Detective Conan took Asia by storm!

All of Asia was enveloped in the wave of Detective Conan!

And right at this moment, the industry in Japan was forced to admit a shocking fact!

Detective Conan: yet another national cartoon had appeared!

Shūkansha was dumbfounded!

POO Studios was stunned!

Shōnen Publishing was shocked!

The industry insiders went crazy!

One Piece!

Naruto!

And now, Detective Conan?

Each was more popular than the other?

Each was more influential than the other?

Six years ago, only one national cartoon existed. But they were only six months into the year and there were already three of them?

What the hell!

Th-This doesn't make any sense at all!

Chapter 1449: There can't be a fourth lunatic!

The Japanese comics world was in disarray.

The entire industry had been shaken up.

At a small comics magazine publisher, a rookie cartoonist had come for an interview to submit his manuscript.

"Editor, please have a look at this."

"Alright, let me see."

"Uh, is it OK?"

"It's not too bad."

"Th-Then can my work get serialized?"

"How many chapters can you update per week?"

"Ah?"

"Can you update at three chapters a week?"

"Nani?!"

"If you can't do three chapters, how about two?"

In the end, the rookie cartoonist walked out of the comic publishing studio in tears. Update three chapters a week? Two chapters? Even one chapter a week is already asking for my life! Who can fucking do three chapters a week!

Uh...other than those three lunatics!

Those three cartoonists are simply not human!

Aoi.

Ozawa.

Hatano.

Their blazing speed of release every week had whetted the readers' appetites and disrupted the rhythm of all the comics magazine publishers. It had muddied the waters of the Japanese comics world. Many of the comics magazine publishers these days were adding all kinds of new regulations when taking in submissions of manuscripts. They wouldn't accept cartoonists who drew too slowly and were looking for them to hit at least two or three chapters per week to qualify. It was easy to set these rules, but how many people in the entire comics world could fucking draw two chapters a week, much less three!

The readers were raising a ruckus.

"Hurry up and update the chapters!"

"This is so slow!"

"Martial King, can you make it?"

"There's only one chapter per week? Are you sleeping or what?"

"To the author of Yuki-chan's Dormitory, don't you feel embarrassed publishing just one chapter per week? Can you not be so lazy?"

Of course, there were some who didn't think that they couldn't do it.

For example, there was an author from POO Studios who clenched his teeth and increased his speed to two chapters a week. During the first week, everything still seemed pretty normal. But by the second week, that author was hospitalized and remained undischarged as of now. Then, there was a cartoonist from Shōnen Publishing who also tried to keep up with the pace of the times. Envious of One Piece, Naruto, and Detective Conan's success, he set off on a path of no return by releasing two chapters per week. By the second week, his comic's plot had fallen apart. It fell apart so badly that it became unrecognizable. It was such an earth-shattering failure that the protagonist's development had been written into a corner!

Chaos!

The entire industry could only be described as chaotic!

A lot of cartoonists started coming forward to denounce this trend.

"It was all started by them!"

"The readers have all gone crazy because of them!"

"We cannot allow such disruptive behavior to continue and mess up the industry any further!"

"Everyone, let's boycott this trend together!"

"Right, how can you demand speed when it comes to drawing comics!"

"Those three people are exceptions. No one else can do what they're doing!"

"That's right, there can't be another fourth person who can do three chapters a week!"

"Bring the comics industry back on track!"

Many cartoonists joined the cause.

Some cartoonists and rookies even held up signs in demonstration outside the entrances of the comics magazine publishers.

On this day, the readers and cartoonists went to war.

The two groups of people were quarreling over their disagreements.

Regarding whether a comic should have more releases per week, and whether it was possible to do so, everyone was trying to debate this to reach a conclusion. Finally, the industry insiders and editors calmed down a little and joined in the discussions. Everyone brought up a lot of examples, like the production process of a comic series, the time required to do it, the number of assistants required to work on it, the ideas, the drafts, etc., all of which were to support the argument that drawing comics was not a task that could be rushed. It was a very time-consuming job, and it was impossible to finish drawing without putting in the effort to do so. Meanwhile, they claimed that those three crazy cartoonists were just an exception. People like them had never appeared in the past, and they were not likely to appear in the future. It was just a coincidence that these three speedy types had somehow gotten their comics serialized at almost the same time, so what they could do was not really something that any other cartoonist could achieve.

Only then did the readers reluctantly accept their reasoning.

The Japanese cartoonists could finally heave a sigh of relief.

The unhealthy obsession with increasing the weekly release rate finally began to ease off.

...

But right at this critical juncture.

China.

In Zhang Ye's neighborhood.

Zhang Ye, who was coming back from grocery shopping, heard the neighbors talking.

They were two housewives.

"I've got nothing to do at home recently, so I got into watching cartoons."

"Me too, I watched Detective Conan."

"It's pretty good, but I always have to wait for the kids to go to bed before watching."

"Yeah, I'm the same. My child is only seven years old, so I dare not let him watch a cartoon where there's always someone dying. I don't feel that's a good influence on kids."

"Yeah, that's right."

Zhang Ye listened and took it to heart. Right, there are children to consider as well. Whoever said that children cannot contribute to his popularity? Don't look down on these young kids. In an Asian family, the children are the ones who enjoy the most elevated status in a family unit. Every parent sees their

child as the center of their world. If your children liked watching something, would you as the parent not watch it together with them? He had to win the hearts of the children and at the same time capture the hearts of their parents!

He returned home.

In the drawing studio, he let out a shout.

“Come on out!”

“Doraemon!”

...

That same night.

Old Wu’s parents came over.

While chatting, Li Qinqin laughed and said, “It seems that cartoons are getting pretty popular these days. There are so many people I know watching them.”

Wu Zeqing smiled and looked at Zhang Ye. Then she said to her parents, “Did the two of you watch any?”

Wu Changhe harrumphed. “Those things are full of Japanese elements. Who wants to watch it?”

Li Qinqin added, “Right, we still prefer something with our Chinese elements in it.”

Right!

Chinese elements!

Zhang Ye stood up and walked off.

The two elders were taken aback.

But soon after, a shout came from the drawing studio upstairs!

“Come on out!”

” Dragon Ball ¹ !”

Li Qinqin was dumbfounded. “What happened to him?”

Wu Changhe was bewildered. “Has that kid gone crazy?”

Wu Zeqing just smiled.

...

The next day.

In the morning.

Zhang Ye was woken up by a sound outside.

“Pass it to me, pass it to me!”

“Catch!”

“Shoot it!”

“Hahaha.”

Several kids were outside playing basketball.

Zhang Ye’s sleepiness instantly disappeared as his eyes lit up. Oh yes, how could I have forgotten about sports comics? The upcoming wave needed the greatest potential, so no details could be missed!

In the drawing studio.

Zhang Ye shouted!

“Come on out!”

“Slam Dunk!”

In the bedroom.

The sound of the basketball game outside did not wake Wu Zeqing up, the sound of Zhang Ye getting out of bed did not wake Wu Zeqing up, but this loud shout of Zhang Ye’s woke Wu Zeqing right up!

...

Noon.

It was time for lunch.

Zhang Ye and Old Wu were chatting as they watched television. The topic on TV was touching on the recent wave of cartoons in Japan.

The host was saying, “Japanese cartoons are moving fast and furious these days as the past two months saw the emergence of many exciting works. In the past, almost every genre of Japanese cartoons has had a representative title to call its own, except for the sci-fi genre. The cartoons’ influence in the Asian region is widespread and has already triggered a phenomenal amount of discussions.”

Eh?

Zhang Ye raised his head, startled.

Except for the sci-fi genre?

There wasn’t a national cartoon to represent sci-fi comics in this world?

Hey, how could that be allowed!

This bro has them!

However many you guys want!

Without even finishing lunch, Zhang Ye threw down his chopsticks and hurried upstairs to the drawing studio.

Wu Zeqing knew that he was busy with work, so she didn't stop him.

Soon after, Zhang Ye's loud voice reverberated from upstairs!

"Come on out!"

"Gundam!"

Chapter 1450: Zhang Ye's law!

At Zhang Ye's Studio.

The video conference call was in session.

But the entire conference room was silent. Ha Qiqi, Zhang Zuo, Wu Yi, Little Wang, Little Sun, and everyone else was staring in shock at Zhang Ye, who was grinning in the video call.

"What?"

"What did you say?"

"You drew another four new comic series?"

"I'm gonna faint, four?"

"You're playing with fire with so many of them!"

"You already have three titles serialized!"

"Director Zhang, that's enough already! Enough!"

Having woken up this morning, they found four newly drawn comics waiting in their inboxes. Could you imagine just how shocked these people from Zhang Ye's Studio were? All of them were floored!

There were three titles before this!

And now, another four titles are going to be added?

That's a fucking total of seven titles!

Just how big of a ruckus are you planning!

You've come up with comics for all the different demographics: sports, high action, teenage boys, teenage girls, children, young men. You're truly carrying out a strategic bombing with no intention of leaving any room for the people to escape!

But Zhang Ye just smiled and said: "We'll do it the usual way."

Ha Qiqi gave a bitter smile. "Alright."

Zhang Ye looked at Little Sun: “Little Sun, your uncle—oh, your uncle represented us the previous time. Then, is your aunt free?”

Little Sun nearly broke down in tears. “She’s free.”

Zhang Ye blinked. “Your sister-in-law’s brother and sister also settled down in Japan, didn’t they?”

Little Sun knew deep down in his heart that none of his family members were going to be spared, so he might as well answer him. “They’re all free.”

Free? My ass, they’re free!

Who stays at home all day and doesn’t go to work?!

Zhang Ye nodded and said with a smile: “Great then, I’ll be troubling them. Little Sun, thank your family for their contributions to the comics industry. The Asian people will forever remember them.”

Everyone at the studio didn’t know whether to laugh or cry.

Please don’t flatter other people like that!

Their whole family has basically allowed you to scam them over and over again!

If you come up with another two more titles, Little Sun would have to dig up his ancestral grave already!

...

Japan.

At a small comics magazine publisher.

A scream rang out in the editorial department!

“Ahhh!”

“It’s here! It’s arrived!”

“It’s time for our turn!”

“The Heavens have not forsaken us!”

...

At a midsize comics publisher.

“Holy fuck!”

“This is it! This is the one!”

“We’re gonna prosper!”

“Quickly get that serialized!”

...

Several days later.

At a restaurant.

Quite a few well-known Japanese cartoonists had gathered today, with more than 30 of them attending the gathering. All of them were respected teachers within the comics industry.

Martial King's author was present.

And also a few authors from the slightly smaller publishers.

"Come, let's eat."

"We can finally take a breather."

"Yeah, that Aoi, Ozawa, and Hatano are really too unruly. They've totally messed up the industry and misled the readers into thinking that it's very easy to draw comics. I can't help but get angry when I hear that! How is it easy? Why don't they come and try it for themselves! It's easier said than done!"

"That's right, that sort of an atmosphere was really unhealthy."

"We've finally managed to explain it to them now."

"Yeah, it was all thanks to the editors of the comics publishers backing us up."

"That's right. Otherwise, we wouldn't have been able to clarify it."

"Hai, where did those three rookies pop out from? They're really too uninformed of the industry rules. They're so rude and don't give us seniors any respect at all. So what if they're doing well? Even so, they still have to abide by the rules. Otherwise, with the industry messed up, would we still have the capacity to create proper works? Hmph, I'm so uncomfortable just thinking of it. Everyone else is on a one chapter a week schedule, but look at them. They just have to make it two or three chapters a week? It's like they're trying to show that they're better! My guess is that they've got a lot of chapters stockpiled. They couldn't do that if they really had to draw three chapters every week! That would be bullshit! No one can possibly do it!"

"That's right, that's right!"

But at this moment, a cartoonist received a call.

Everyone was toasting and eating. Eventually, they saw that person with a dumbfounded look on his face!

After hanging up, that person said angrily, "My God!"

Everyone quickly asked, "What is it?"

That person was cursing. "Fucking hell!"

Everyone said, "What happened?"

That person was turning green with anger. "Another four titles have fucking appeared and are on a release rate of three chapters per week!"

"What?"

“What did you say?”

“Three chapters per week?”

“Four titles?”

“Holy motherfucking shit!”

“Do they want to die!”

“Motherfucker! Where the hell did all these people pop out from?!”

The cartoonists got such a fright that they nearly sprayed blood!

Everyone in the restaurant could hear the group cursing and scolding!

What was face smacking?

This was a face smacking!

This group of cartoonists had just banded together to explain that the creative process of drawing comics was not easy, and they had been backed up by the well-known editors of the industry as well. After a full week of arguing and debating, they barely managed to convince the readers that Ozawa, Aoi, and Hatano were just one-off cases with a crazy work pace. They also guaranteed that a fourth such person would not appear again in the future. But in the end?

Not only did the fourth such person appear!

The fifth, sixth, and seventh persons also appeared!

Four of them appeared all at once!

At this moment, the comics world in Japan broke down!

At this time, those cartoonists even started doubting themselves. Was it really because they were too slow at drawing? They were all getting anxious!

The readers in Japan also blew up!

“Holy shit!”

“Those liars!”

“Who said that there wouldn’t be a fourth person?”

“Yeah, who said it?”

“Look! Open your eyes and see! Other than Teacher Aoi, Teacher Ozawa, and Teacher Hatano, there’s now Teacher Muto, Teacher Iijima, Teacher Nishino, and Teacher Takagi! If there were only one or two such cases, then we might be convinced. But what about now? There are seven! Seven such cases are happening right before our very eyes! So many of these teachers don’t seem to have any trouble updating at three chapters a week! So what explanation do you all have now! You’re just finding excuses for your own laziness!”

“Those lazy bastards!”

“That’s right, the editors have ganged up with the cartoonists and lied to us!”

“You all better hurry up and release more chapters!”

“You lazy bastards! Hurry up and update!”

The readers were rebelling!

Eventually, even the publishers couldn’t bear it anymore. This was the voice of the people. The pressure was enormous. Immediately, the comics publishers started to change their serialization format. They started urging the capable cartoonists to follow the examples of those seven teachers. As such, many of the cartoonists could only follow suit and add more pages and chapters.

Thus, tragedy ensued!

Some people screwed up their comics within the first week!

Some people started doubting their own speed and pondered how they could draw even faster. From that, they embarked on another path altogether!

The entire Japanese comics world was plunged into an appalling situation. Almost all of the serialized comics had become unworthy of reading!

There was mourning all around!

The pages of the failed comics were strewn all over the place!

A well-run comics industry had somehow collapsed!

...

China.

When the staff of Zhang Ye’s Studio saw this, they facepalmed in speechlessness. At this moment, they suddenly remembered Zhang Ye’s other nickname!

Shit stirrer!

A shit stirrer that only appears once in 10,000 years!

Indeed, Director Zhang always brought misfortune to whichever industry he went to!

For this reason, a lot of Chinese people had named the phenomenon as: Zhang Ye’s Law ¹ !

Just look! This law had been proven true once again!