

Superstar 1571

Chapter 1571: The fearsomeness of Zhang Ye!

On the same day.

The news spread like wildfire.

“Astonishing turnaround!”

“In the Name of the People bucks the trend to take the top spot!”

“A double-win in both reputation and viewership ratings!”

“The biggest dark horse appears in the TV industry!”

“Has springtime arrived for political dramas?”

“Shock! Commercial dramas unable to beat a political drama?”

Back at home.

Zhang Ye’s phone was exploding with calls.

Xu Meilan called.

“Zhang’er.”

“Hey, Sister Lan.”

“Thanks.”

“Haha, you’re welcome.”

“Oh you, you’re great. Congratulations.”

Soon after, Supervisor Ke from the Central Publicity Department also called.

“Teacher Zhang, have you seen the viewership ratings yet?”

“I’ve already seen it, Supervisor Ke.”

“It’s amazing! No one expected that the viewership ratings would be so high. Great work, Teacher Zhang. The higher-ups are praising this production of yours nonstop and giving it their affirmation. We knew that it was definitely the right move to choose you as the director.”

“It was nothing. You all put in the money while I put in the effort. It’s only fair.”

Xiaodong called.

“Teacher Zhang, hurry up and tell me about what happens later on in the story.”

“I can’t do that. It’s a secret.”

“Aiya, you’re making me so anxious.”

“Haha, the next episodes will be broadcasting tonight.”

In the evening, In the Name of the People, Heavens of the Gods, and Age of Kingdoms’ third and fourth episodes broadcast again at the same time. The three dramas were facing off against one another once more!

...

In the Name of the People’s third episode.

Beijing.

Dijingyuan Villas.

On the wall, under the blanket, there were stacks and stacks of money!

“Chief Hou, everything is here. I was too scared to spend a single cent.”

“Does your wife know about this house and all this money?”

“She doesn’t know, I didn’t tell her about it. I was afraid that she’d worry about me. Chief Hou, do you think I’ll get leniently dealt with? My son is still young. What would happen to them if I went to jail for this?”

“If you knew this would happen, why did you do it? You’ve only been chief for four years, but you got greedy—just how much is this?”

“266,576,400,40 yuan.”

“You remember it perfectly, don’t you?”

“I kept accounts. I recorded every single transaction. But I was too afraid to spend it. Not even a single cent.”

...

Meanwhile.

A few of the supporting cast members of In the Name of the People gathered together.

“This is so impactful!”

“The plot is so tense.”

“The storyline is very good too. It’s amazing.”

“It didn’t feel like this when we were filming it. It felt like a very ordinary shoot at the time, with us changing the shooting venue after every few scenes were completed. It was a very rushed process like we were on a guided tour, so how did it end up looking so good? It was the case for yesterday, and today’s two episodes as well.”

“That’s why Teacher Zhang is the director.”

"I just wonder how Director Zhang is so good at everything!"

...

Elsewhere.

At Li Shao's studio.

"Our episodes today were quite good."

"Right, we can go higher in the viewership ratings for sure!"

"Can we catch up to In the Name of the People?"

"It will definitely catch up. Actually, there wasn't much of a difference between us for the first two episodes."

"That's right. A political drama has limitations. How many past examples have proven that a political drama does not last? They only managed to do it this time because of the hype surrounding Zhang Ye's victory on I Am a Singer. The momentum from that led to all the attention on his drama. That was the reason why they managed to secure an opening victory. I don't believe that every episode of In the Name of the People will get higher viewership ratings than us. Let's see how long they'll last!"

"We'll be able to know that by the end of today!"

...

At Chi Hao's studio.

Everyone was getting anxious as well.

"Let's go for first place!"

"We have to catch up tonight no matter what. Otherwise, it will be too late."

"How can it be possible that our popularity doesn't match up to Zhang Ye's? That makes no sense at all!"

"I'll admit that the first two episodes of In the Name of the People are good. But this is Zhang Ye's first time shooting and acting in a drama production. It must be full of flaws. They wrapped up filming in just 10 days, so it's impossible that every episode can be that good. We'll wait and see. There will definitely be mistakes later, and we'll be able to catch up!"

"Right, a political drama doesn't have such a long lifespan anyway."

...

An hour.

Two hours.

The third episode.

The fourth episode.

Slightly before 10 PM, the three dramas finished their broadcast.

On Weibo, the netizens started predicting the viewership ratings again. The viewership ratings figures had been the focus of everyone. Zhang Ye had won the first battle yesterday after emerging victorious in a way that left everyone gobsmacked. Right now, everyone just wanted to know who would get the last laugh in this second battle.

“Heavens of the Gods was really great today!”

“Yeah, although Li Shao’s acting was a little off, he’s too handsome!”

“That speech at the end was so domineering.”

“Age of Kingdoms was really good too.”

“Chi Hao’s allure is different from Li Shao’s. It’s charming on a different level.”

“It’s going to be a close fight for today’s viewership ratings.”

“Yeah, there’s no reason why Zhang Ye will keep winning against the commercial dramas.”

“Tonight’s results are very critical. It’s likely we will find out how each of the three dramas will do after today.”

“Hai, I still have a feeling that Li Shao and Chi Hao won’t win against Zhang Ye.”

“Surely not, right? Shanghai TV has increased their promotions for the show.”

“Let’s wait for the results and see.”

“They’ll have to get it sorted out this time.”

...

The next day.

In the morning.

Under everyone’s attention, the three dramas’ viewership ratings were finally published!

When the viewership ratings were announced, the media, the industry, and the public were instantly left at a loss for words!

Heavens of the Gods:

Episode three, 1.12%

Episode four, 1.09%

Age of Kingdoms:

Episode three, 1.01%

Episode four, 0.96%

In the Name of the People:

Episode three, 2.67%

Episode four, 2.69%

On Weibo.

“Heavens!”

“W-What’s with this?”

“They’ve gone mad! They’ve fucking gone mad!”

“How could something like this possibly happen?”

Heavens of the Gods and Age of Kingdoms’ viewership ratings plummeted, with Age of Kingdoms’ fourth episode dropping below 1%. This left everyone in disbelief. Meanwhile, the viewership ratings for In the Name of the People practically defied the Heavens for yesterday’s broadcast. The 1.62% viewership ratings for the premiere broadcast was already a figure that no one had expected, yet the viewership ratings had surpassed 2.6%. It even got infinitely close to 2.7%! It had only broadcast four episodes so far!

...

At Li Shao’s studio.

“We’re done for!”

“Motherfucker!”

“Zhang Ye, your sister!”

...

At Chi Hao’s studio.

“What steroids is he on?”

“The combined viewership ratings of Heavens of the Gods and Age of Kingdoms are not even higher than his?”

“Why! Just why!”

...

At Heavenly King Guan Zhaohua’s studio.

“Li Shao lost.”

“Chi Hao lost as well.”

“Don’t tell me that In the Name of the People’s viewership ratings might actually break our record from last year?”

...

At one of the advertising partners of In the Name of the People.

"That was so impressive!"

"We're gonna earn big bucks this time!"

"I knew that it would be alright as long as we followed Teacher Zhang!"

"We have to invest in Teacher Zhang's advertisements no matter how much they cost!"

...

Within the industry.

"Hai."

"The outcome has been determined."

"Zhang Ye's comeback has practically frightened everyone to death!"

"I don't know if it frightened everyone to death or not, but he has definitely frightened me to death!"

...

Some people cried.

Some people laughed.

Some people were hopping mad.

After four years.

The current day's entertainment industry was once again reminded of Zhang Ye's fearsomeness!

Chapter 1572: The viewership ratings break 6%?

In the Name of the People was on fire!

In the matter of a night, it became extremely popular all across the country!

Heavens of the Gods and Age of Kingdoms were now out of the running. The talk of the town was In the Name of the People!

In the morning.

Zhang Ye's phone was constantly ringing.

A production company came looking for him.

"Director Zhang."

"Boss Liu."

“Can we work with you on a show?”

“We’ll see. I have no plans to take on any show right now.”

“We’re willing to invest up to 200 million RMB. Is that enough? The entire production will be your call, from the script to the casting to the filming. We guarantee that we won’t interfere with it, so do give it some consideration.”

“Hmm? Let’s talk about it another time.”

A call came from Central TV as well.

“Teacher Zhang, what show do you plan on making next?”

“Station Head Sun, how could I possibly have another show?”

“Hurry up and take one.”

“What are you planning on?”

“We’ll buy your show after you’ve finished filming it. We’ve known each other for so many years; surely you and our Central TV are old friends, right? You have to let us have the rights to your next production, alright?”

“We’ll see about that, I have nothing planned at the moment.”

“Let us know when you have any plans, deal?”

After taking all the calls, Zhang Ye saw the messages that were directed to him on his cell phone.

In the Celebrity Goof Group.

Shu Han: “@ZhangYe I’ve been approached so many times to act in other shows.”

Dong Shanshan: “I’ve been asked by six productions to join their cast. It seems like all of them are pretty good, but I can’t decide on which to take.”

Ning Lan: “I’ve been approached quite a few times as well. Some are pretty reputable production crews and some, not so.”

A former A-list celebrity said in envy: “You guys have really become popular this time.”

Shu Han sent a smiley face in the chat. “I’m just making a living by following Director Zhang around.”

Zhang Ye appeared at this moment and said: “Don’t accept any jobs yet. If you want to take any of the projects, wait a bit longer before you do so.”

Dong Shanshan: “You think there’s a chance to raise it by a level?”

Shu Han: “You’re not really thinking that the viewership ratings will surpass 3%, are you? That’s one of the highest records in recent years. It was set by Guan Zhaozhu’s drama last year.”

Zhang Ye: “I know it’ll be the case. Right now, the viewership ratings still have not exceeded what I’m expecting.”

Shu Han: "You're even thinking of exceeding 4%?"

Ning Lan: "It's already quite good to be able to exceed 3%."

Zhang Ye smiled but did not say anything.

3%?

4%?

If this were the variety industry, Zhang Ye would not be able to say anything to that. After all in this world, the variety industry was only so big. At that time Zhang Ye dabbled in that industry, he had more or less reached the upper limits. Perhaps there was still a possibility of the viewership ratings going higher, but there really wasn't too much room to grow it any further. But it was a different matter this time. This was the television series industry, and it was much bigger than the variety industry. As such, Zhang Ye's expectations raised as well. Moreover, he also knew how high the final viewership ratings figure of In the Name of the People had reached back in his previous world.

That was a really frightening viewership figure!

A viewership ratings figure that none of them could possibly imagine!

Therefore, Zhang Ye might as well not tell them in fear that he would give them a bad shock.

...

Jiang Hanwei's house.

Old Jiang's wife was extremely excited.

"Old Jiang, should we treat Zhang Ye to a meal?"

"Treat him for what?"

"The two of you had such a bitter feud back then. Maybe it would be better if we try to ease things a bit?"

"There's no need for that."

"You're such a stubborn fool. Why are you always like that? Regardless of who was right or wrong back then, Teacher Zhang still came to you to get you to star in his series the moment he got released from jail. Why didn't he get someone else? That's because he trusts your acting. Look at how many television productions have approached you just today. This is only possible because of his help, so we have to thank him."

"There's no need for that. If Zhang Ye were someone who could be handled with just a meal or two, would he have had such a bad reputation and social network in show business years ago? I know what I'm doing. He helped me out this time, so I owe him a favor. There's no need to keep harping on this matter. I'll definitely repay him in the future."

"Oh, you!"

...

At a gathering in the industry.

"We've gotten such a surprise."

"Li Shao and Chi Hao have stumbled."

"Yeah, who could have thought that the viewership ratings would be like this? With I Am a Singer and In the Name of the People, Zhang Ye has totally defeated the male idols with his comeback. He has also slapped the faces of those people in the industry who weren't optimistic of his chances. I suppose Zhang Ye will become the most hated figure among the male idols."

"Actually, my opinion is that most of the male idols have to thank him."

"Why?"

"If Zhang Ye didn't leave the entertainment industry three or four years ago, those male idols wouldn't have become so popular. Just by the performance of this drama alone, it can be deduced that if Zhang Ye were still around all these years, none of the male idols would be a match for him. It was only because of his departure from the industry that gave them the break, so shouldn't they be thanking him instead?"

"This fellow is such a freak of nature!"

"Yeah, if he were around back then, who would dare say that they could outdo him?"

...

In the advertising world.

"There are really no principles left in this advertisement placement by Zhang Ye."

"Yeah, he's basically captioning the slogan and adding in the graphics, then calling it an advertisement! This is totally forced advertising!"

"But the effects seem to be really good. In fact, it's different from product placement advertising since it is standalone and doesn't interfere with the plot of the show."

"He's really too unorthodox and always manages to come up with things that no one else would dare to think of."

"I have a very strong feeling that the advertising strategy of In the Name of the People will catch on as a new trend. The advertisers on other TV series might start resorting to this method to advertise their products from now on."

...

At a production company.

"What is it that makes this drama so successful?"

"I think it's due to the script and the actors' skills."

"In the current day, do people really still care about acting?"

“In these recent years, the effect that the hot, young male stars had on showbiz was too great. A lot of the industry’s standards have been led awry by them. Zhang Ye has schooled everyone this time. Not every TV show needs to depend on a male idol to earn money. If the script and filming are good, if the actors are good, a TV series can still sweep the competition aside.”

...

On Weibo.

The netizens were also predicting the viewership ratings.

“We’re going to have a broadcast again today.”

“Could it exceed 3%?”

“It should be able to?”

“That might not necessarily happen. Is its momentum sustainable?”

“The battle between the three dramas has clearly been won by In the Name of the People. The only thing we don’t know is how much In the Name of the People will win by and how far ahead they will come out against the competition.”

...

One day.

Three days.

Five days.

The television series continued their broadcast run.

The viewership ratings were announced with every episode.

Each day, everyone’s jaws continuously dropped!

Everyone was almost constantly getting stunned to death each day by the viewership ratings of In the Name of the People!

In the Name of the People’s viewership ratings:

Episode six: 2.82%

Episode seven: 2.98%

Episode nine: 3.21%

Episode 13: 3.78%

Episode 15: 4.33%

Episode 20: 5.10%

Episode 23: 5.69%

Episode 25: 5.86%

There were still over a dozen episodes to go, but In the Name of the People's viewership ratings had nearly surpassed 6%. From the looks of it, there was still the possibility of it going higher!

The media went crazy!

The male idols went crazy!

The production companies went crazy as well!

The highest viewership ratings figure in recent years had been set by Guan Zhaohua's blockbuster drama from last year at 3%. However, Zhang Ye had almost doubled that statistic of the television series industry in one go!

Your sister!

A lot of people wanted to swear at this!

It was way too high. How could anyone fucking expect to make a mark on this industry in the future!

Chapter 1573: In the Name of the People comes to an end!

In the Name of the People had broadcast for several weeks now.

The entire Chinese market had been turned upside down because of one man and his TV series.

As the plot unfolded, the actors in the thriller also became more and more popular.

...

At a production company.

"We have to sign this big name of the theater industry no matter what."

"Yeah, although he didn't have too many parts in the series, the viewers were all very convinced his acting.

"The first three episodes were basically held together by him. Just look at how he ate that bowl of mincemeat noodles with soybean paste. He really brought the role to life."

"And that scene where he leaned over the stack of money, he acted so well for that."

"Give him an offer and see if he has any intention of developing a career in the television and film industry."

...

Ning Lan's former talent agency.

"Sister Ning acted as Gao Xiaoqin so well!"

"She brought the character to life. She's such an amazing actress!"

“That’s a best actress winner we’re talking about!”

“Why did our company let Sister Ning go?!”

“God knows.”

“This time, Ning Lan will become popular again. No, I should say that she’s already become very popular again!”

...

On set at a film location.

“Old Jiang is still so good at acting?”

“Wasn’t he declining?”

“For this production of ours, Jiang Hanwei’s agent had originally approached us with his client’s requirements for the role. He was asking for very little at that time, but the director ended up not using him as the male lead.”

“I guess the director must really be regretting it now.”

“Jiang Hanwei’s asking pay must have doubled at the very least.”

“Be quiet, don’t let anyone hear you.”

...

On Moments.

There were traces of Yao Jiancai’s emotes ¹ everywhere.

Everyone was chatting in the group chats and sending emotes as they competed on who could do better.

“Yoyoyo.”

“What can I do? I’m in despair.”

“Professional scapegoat of 30 years.”

“Please start performing.”

“My eyes are slits I’m so happy.”

...

On Weibo.

The netizens were having a laugh.

“The two episodes last night were great fun.”

” Secretary Dakang ² was made the scapegoat again!”

“Hahahaha, Secretary Dakang’s narrowed eyes are too good!”

“Old Yao’s acting is superb!”

“I like Sister Ning as Gao Xiaoqin.”

I like Dong Shanshan as Lu Yi’ke.”

“Shu Han also acted very well in her role as Zhang Ye’s wife.”

“I think I’ve finally realized something. There isn’t really an absolute lead in this show. Zhang Ye’s role as the male lead is only to connect the entire plot and characters together. In actual fact, everyone is the lead in this drama. Every episode is a performance opportunity for these veteran actors. How cool!”

“Zhang Ye has made such painstaking efforts for his long-time friends.”

“That’s right, Zhang Ye is a very loyal friend indeed.”

“I like Zhang Ye so much! This fellow might be very hated, but he can be so charismatic as well. He can direct, act, and even do it with such efficiency. He finished filming such an astonishing blockbuster drama in just 10 days, so who dares to fucking say that Zhang Ye has become old? I can laugh at this joke for a year!”

“Pfft, I can laugh at it for two years!”

...

Shanghai Television.

Quite a few people looked listless.

“What is Heavens of the Gods’ viewership ratings like?”

“It’s already dropped to 0.8%.”

“Hai, what’s wrong with it! Why has this happened?”

“We can only blame ourselves for having bad enough luck to run into Zhang Ye’s drama.”

“Did you guys see how it’s going for Age of Kingdoms? They’re in an even worse state than us.”

“Zhang Ye’s drama is going to put the TV series industry at an impasse. Its highest viewership ratings so far have hit close to 6%. How are the other TV stations going to go on from here? What about the future of all the other production crews? How will the production companies survive in the future? There won’t be another TV drama that can surpass his drama for the next 10 years!”

“Surely it won’t be for that long, right?”

“Why wouldn’t it? Just looked at the variety shows these days, and the documentary films as well. Many of the viewership ratings records were set by Zhang Ye four to five years ago. He was locked up in jail for so many years, yet nobody was able to break his records. The only viewership rating record that was surpassed belongs to I Am a Singer. But even that show was created by Zhang Ye in the first place. It’s been five years now; what about in another five years’ time? Who would dare guarantee that they could

break his records set in the variety show industry and the documentaries industry? It will be the same for TV series!"

"Fuck, it's too scary now that I think of it!"

...

Within the industry.

At a meal gathering.

"The viewership ratings figures are too terrifying to look at."

"I only have one wish."

"Director Sun, what wish do you have?"

"I just hope that the viewership ratings for In the Name of the People will stop here. It had better not go any higher, or we will really be left with nothing to play for."

"Yeah, 6% is already more than enough."

"The grand finale will happen soon, so we don't know how high it can still go."

"Hai, may the Heavens bless us!"

"I hope that their ending sucks!"

"Right, hopefully, it will be a shitty ending!"

"Pfft, Director Xu, Director Zhou, aren't you two being too ruthless? We're industry peers, so please don't speak like this."

"Who's an industry peer with that freak? This is just his first time shooting a TV series. In the past, I found it amusing whenever I saw him fighting and causing trouble in the literature world, the crosstalk world, the hosting world, and the variety world. Only now do I understand how this guy destroys an industry the moment he steps into it. It's a viewership ratings figure of 6%; which industry can tolerate him causing trouble like that? It would be a wonder if his industry peers do not fight with him!"

"Hai, some people are unable to keep a low profile by nature."

"Yeah, indeed. I would like to be as high profile as Zhang Ye too. But I really don't have the skill to do so."

...

On this day.

In the Name of the People finally ushered in its grand finale.

"Monkey³!"

"You, me, our feud is over!"

"I'll repay Chen Hai's life!"

“But no one in this world can judge me!”

“Fuck you, cursed Heavens!”

Bang!

The sound of a gunshot.

With this gunshot, the fate of many characters in the show were sealed.

Zhao Dehan.

Gao Xiaoqin.

Gao Yuliang.

All of them were tried in a court of law.

Chen Hai regained consciousness.

The old procurator-general passed on.

When the ending theme song played again at the end, some people were filled with emotions, some people burst into tears, and some people stared at the screen with their blood racing. This drama was a special one. There had never been a television series that could touch their hearts in this way.

The next day.

The viewership ratings for the grand finale of In the Name of the People was released.

Episode 42: Nationwide viewership ratings of 7.01%

The industry burst into an uproar!

The media burst into an uproar!

The people burst into an uproar!

...

Online.

“It broke 7%!”

“I’m so astonished that I don’t know what emoticon I should use!”

“I’m already numb.”

“It’s such a good show!”

“Is there going to be a sequel?”

...

Within the industry.

“Zhang Ye, your grandpa!”

“We’re done for! The motherfucker has surpassed 7%!”

“What drugs is this guy on!”

“How are we going to carry on filming dramas in the future?”

“There’s no fucking way that we can survive! This is 7% we’re talking about!”

“Why didn’t he screw up the ending? Why!”

...

At 12 AM sharp.

The Chinese Celebrity Rankings Index was refreshed.

Zhang Ye still did not appear on the charts as his ranking was currently inactive.

However, a lot of people’s names were now appearing at the forefront of the rankings.

Ning Lan returned to the A-list!

Shu Han was only a step away from making it into the A-list!

Jiang Hanwei jumped to the forefront of the B-list rankings!

Dong Shanshan made it onto the A-list rankings!

The most exaggerated improvement was for Yao Jiancai. Previously, he had dropped down to the C and D-list rankings. However, in the matter of just one night, he had now jumped up to the bottom of the A-list. His popularity right now was even higher than years ago!

Even they themselves were unable to believe it!

The media and the entertainment industry’s people couldn’t believe it either!

Ning Lan?

Jiang Hanwei?

Yao Jiancai?

Some of them were old.

Some of them had retired.

Some of them had given up on taking on the industry again.

But because of a drama, because of a former Heavenly King who had returned after a long time, a miracle had been created. It helped a bunch of “old people” no one was optimistic about regain a footing and shock the entire entertainment industry. This was a completely unprecedented event. The main cast members of a drama had been restored close to their former glory of years ago from the has-beens they had become? Some of them were even more popular than they were before?

This was too frightening!

This was truly too frightening!

Looking at those familiar names.

Looking at their names that had returned back to the forefront of the index.

At this moment, countless people could not help but be reminded of the song Zhang Ye had sung on the stage of I Am a Singer. Its lyrics were echoing in their minds!

Oh, fleeting time!

What can you do?

Oh, fate!

What can you do?

Chapter 1574: Martial arts master, Yang Shu!

On this day.

In the morning.

With the drama finished, Zhang Ye's time was freed up. He slept well and only woke up around 9 AM. After he got up, he realized Old Wu and Sisi were both not around. He was the only one at home. In the living room, Old Wu had prepared breakfast for him and left it on the dining table. But it was already cold. There was also a note beside it.

"I will send the child to school today. Heat up the food before eating. Oh yes, go to the garage and have a look after you've eaten. I have a surprise for you."

—Wu Zeqing.

Zhang Ye was taken aback. He immediately headed outside to the garage. After opening the garage door, this fellow was dumbfounded by what he saw. A brand new BMW was parked inside of it. He did not know which X series this was because he had become so out of touch with the world. He was no longer aware of what the latest BMW models were. But when he tapped on the car window, Zhang Ye obviously knew that it was a bulletproof car. It should be the latest generation of the BMW X5 bulletproof car he owned a few years ago!

Daaamn!

What the hell?

Zhang Ye called his wife immediately.

"Hello, Old Wu."

"You're up already?"

“Whose car is that?”

“Hur hur, it’s yours. Do you like it?”

“I love it! But where did you get the money?”

“Have you forgotten about the game you created for Fat Sis?”

“Plants vs. Zombies?”

“The third game in the series has come out, and we get royalties from the sales of the game every year. But since you haven’t been around, my sister deposited it straight into my account. I topped it up with some of my own money and bought you a new car.”

“Aiya, why didn’t you discuss it with me earlier?!”

“I was afraid that you would feel bad about spending such money on a new car.”

“Hai, my wife still treats me the best.”

“Alright, I have to go to a meeting. Go give the car a test drive.”

“Alright, I’ll go pick you up after work tonight!”

Muah! Muah! Zhang Ye blew some kisses to his wife over the phone. After hanging up, he got into the car excitedly and drove off without eating breakfast.

This power!

This speed!

It was so fun!

Zhang Ye loved it so much that he drove straight to the studio.

Along the way, he suddenly glanced at the rearview mirror and saw a car that seemed like it had been following him since he came out of the neighborhood. It kept its distance from him throughout the journey and did not look like a paparazzi’s car.

He reached the studio’s neighborhood.

The moment Zhang Ye parked his car, he saw the other car park a distance away. He got out and strode towards it.

The person in the other car did not try to hide. However, he did look a little embarrassed.

Zhang Ye stood beside the car. Then he tapped on the window.

The window rolled down to reveal only one person in it.

Zhou Xiaohe gave a sheepish smile and said, “Boss.”

Zhang Ye gave him the side-eye. “Why are you following me?”

Zhou Xiaohe said, “Since I’m your assigned guard, I have to ensure your safety.”

Zhang Ye said impatiently, "I've said before that there's no need. Hurry up and leave!"

"That was before." Zhou Xiaohe insisted, "Your safety was guaranteed when you were based at the research institute. After your release, there wasn't a need to worry about your safety either since some news has yet to be announced. But it's different now. General Li and Fellow He wanted me to inform you that it's almost time. Many of the people who were involved in the research projects are going to get a performance review over the upcoming days. At that time, there will be no way to keep the matter a secret anymore. Every country will get wind of the news, and your safety will be compromised."

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes and said, "I will be responsible for my own safety. As a celebrity, why would I have an armed guard following me around wherever I go? How would that look?"

Zhou Xiaohe said, "But what if something happens to you? That will be a great loss to the country."

Zhang Ye said, "I have my own bodyguard. Go back and tell Old Li to stop bothering me!"

When he heard the word "bodyguard," Zhou Xiaohe revealed a mocking look as he muttered, "The bodyguard that you're referring to are just amateurs. 10 of them can't get past me."

Zhang Ye was amused. "It's best you don't brag about this."

Zhou Xiaohe smiled and said, "You're talking this way because you haven't come across an expert yet. Usually, the bodyguards that most celebrities' have are not very reliable. They're at most retired military personnel, that's all. I can easily take on five of them without breaking a sweat. If you don't believe me, ask your bodyguard to come over some day to spar with me. You're always looking down on those of us who came out of the Central Security Bureau. We're actually very professional."

As they were speaking.

A woman's delighted voice rang out from an open window above them.

"Senior Bro!"

Zhou Xiaohe looked up.

Zhang Ye looked up as well.

It was Yang Shu.

She has grown older.

And become more beautiful as well.

Zhang Ye said happily, "Hey, speak of the devil!"

Yang Shu shouted, "Senior Bro, wait for me!"

She slammed the window closed.

Zhou Xiaohe was dumbfounded. "That is?"

Zhang Ye said, "Uh, my bodyguard."

"Your bodyguard?" Zhou Xiaohe said in a speechless manner, "A woman?"

Very quickly, Yang Shu raced downstairs at her fastest speed.

“Little Yang.”

“Senior Bro!”

“When did you come back?”

“I just got back this morning!”

When she ran up to him, Yang Shu excitedly hugged Zhang Ye like a child.

Zhou Xiaohe looked at them strangely.

Zhang Ye coughed. “Alright, alright, just a short hug will do.”

Yang Shu’s eyes were brimming with tears. “Senior Bro, you’re finally back! When I knew that you were released, I wanted to return to Beijing immediately. But Master Rao did not allow me. She insisted that I calm down and continue with my cultivation. You don’t know this, but I went to the prison that you were held in custody at quite a few times over the years. But...” She murmured, “But I couldn’t get any opportunities.”

Zhang Ye exclaimed, “Ah? What were you thinking?”

Yang Shu said, “I wanted to break you out of prison!”

Zhou Xiaohe was speechless.

Zhang Ye did not know whether to laugh or cry. However, he knew what his junior sister’s character was like. She was naïve, stubborn, and not very smart, while her EQ was relatively low too. Other than practicing martial arts, the only other thing she cared about was her senior bro. So when Zhang Ye heard that, he felt quite touched. It wasn’t so bad having a junior sister like this.

Zhang Ye chuckled and asked, “You haven’t forgotten your kung fu after all these years, have you?”

Yang Shu stiffened. “Of course not.”

Zhang Ye asked, “What level have you attained with your practice thus far?”

Yang Shu replied excitedly, “Master Rao said that I have mastered the use of divine skill ¹.”

Zhang Ye narrowed his eyes. “Not bad.”

Kung fu?

Level?

Mastered the use of divine skill?

Listening to their conversation, Zhou Xiaohe couldn’t help but sneer unceasingly. Brag, carry on bragging!

Yang Shu had rolled up her sleeves by now and starting boasted, “Senior Bro, let me show you!”

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Alright." Then he turned around and looked at Zhou Xiaohe. "Little Zhou, watch carefully. This is my bodyguard. Don't judge her by her appearance. Her skills are..."

As he was speaking, he caught sight of Yang Shu standing in front of his BMW in his peripheral vision. He got a bad premonition.

Yang Shu had already raised her fist!

Zhang Ye roared, "Fuck!"

Before he could stop her, Yang Shu threw a punch!

Crack!

The BMW's side window shattered!

Zhou Xiaohe was also startled. "Why is she so strong?"

Smashing a glass window?

With a bare hand?

Zhou Xiaohe had also practiced martial arts before, so he naturally knew how much force this required. Although using tools, one could easily break an ordinary car's tempered glass windows, a certain technique was still needed to do it successfully, not to mention smashing it with one's bare hands. That required the force to be exerted at one point in order to break through the protection of a piece of tempered glass. Zhou Xiaohe was also capable of doing this. But seeing a woman use a punch to create such large cracks on the car window, it still gave him quite a shock. He couldn't tell that Teacher Zhang's bodyguard was actually quite skilled.

Over there, Zhang Ye rushed up to her. "Yang Shu! Fucking get over here!"

Zhang Ye was infuriated!

When Yang Shu saw him like this, she immediately turned tail and ran away.

"Senior Bro, you were the one who asked me to demonstrate it to you!"

"But I did not ask you to fucking smash my car's window!"

"Didn't you smash it as well?!"

"What I smashed was someone else's fucking window! This is my new car!"

The moment he caught up to her, Zhang Ye raised his leg and landed a kick on Yang Shu's butt!

Yang Shu shrieked in pain and continued running!

"Senior Bro, why are you hitting me!"

"Get over here!"

"I won't!"

"Don't you fucking run!"

“You can’t stop me from running!”

“Just because you’ve mastered using concealed power, you’re getting all arrogant!?”

“I’m not!”

One was running away while the other kept chasing.

Everyone in the neighborhood was alarmed by this!

Zhang Ye’s staff from the studio hurriedly came down to stop the fight!

This was a truly strange scene to behold. Everyone had known Zhang Ye and Yang Shu for a long time, so they knew that Yang Shu must have gotten on the nerves of Zhang Ye.

“Little Zhang, what are you doing!”

“Auntie Sun, don’t worry about this. It’s none of your business!”

“Aiyo, Little Yang can be a little stubborn sometimes, but do you have to go this far?”

“Why are you fighting with a girl?”

A crowd of people was holding Zhang Ye back. Everyone was siding with Yang Shu on this.

Over here.

Zhou Xiaohe shook his head and gave a wry smile. He did not join in the commotion. Instead, he walked up to the BMW and examined the cracks on the car window.

That punch was quite strong.

But it was still not strong enough.

Zhou Xiaohe believed that if it were his punch, it would definitely be a much harder punch than hers. He tapped the car window and was about to turn and walk away. But he was stunned. He turned around in shock and tapped on it again. With a deep breath, he landed a heavy hit on it once more!

The window did not budge!

Zhou Xiaohe tried a strong punch on the unbroken window!

Even though his fist had turned red from the punch, there were no changes to the window!

Zhou Xiaohe nearly spat out a mouthful of blood!

Fuck your sister!

This isn’t tempered glass!

Th-This is fucking bulletproof glass!

How is that possible!?

Who is that woman?!

Zhou Xiaohe could not believe it. He looked at the car and took out his cell phone to check the Web for which model it was. As it turned out, it was indeed BMW's latest bulletproof car!

Checking the model!

Looking at the bulletproof glass type!

Reading the test specifications of the bulletproof glass window!

Zhou Xiaohe cried. He knew that even if he shot at it with a gun, it would be impossible to recreate the effects of that woman's punch. He turned around to look at Yang Shu, who was being chased by Zhang Ye and threatened to get beaten up by him. His knees wobbled, and he nearly kneeled to her. He knew that he had encountered an expert today!

He raised his cell phone and called his former squad leader who taught him close quarters combat.

The call connected.

"Squad leader."

"What's up, Little Zhou?"

"You mentioned that there is a kind of power in internal styles known as concealed power?"

"Yes."

"What sort of force does concealed power have?"

"I've never seen it before. But I've heard that if one manages to master concealed power to a certain level, one could leave a fist imprint on a five-mm thick steel plate with just one's bare hands. However, there are less than ten martial artists in all of China who have achieved this. You can't find them easily."

"B-But I saw one today."

Chapter 1575: The number one person in the entertainment circle?

In the call.

His former squad leader was startled. "You saw it happen?"

Zhou Xiaohe wiped away his sweat and said: "Yes."

His former squad leader asked anxiously: "Where did you see it?"

Zhou Xiaohe said: "It happened not far away from me."

His former squad leader gasped. "Such masters don't usually show up in the public. How did you manage to coincidentally run into one? What is that martial arts master doing? Teaching others kung fu?"

“No.” Zhou Xiaohe stuttered as he related what was happening. From his location, he could see Zhang Ye chase after Yang Shu for several hundred meters: “She’s getting chased after by someone who wants to beat her up.”

His former squad leader did a spit take. “Ah?”

Zhou Xiaohe found this scene to be very “beautiful.”

...

After about 10 minutes.

Back upstairs.

In Yang Shu’s apartment.

The three of them returned here.

Zhang Ye was still scolding fiercely, “You prodigal woman! My wife just bought me a new car and you’ve already damaged it! Do you know how much it costs to repair it? Do you know how much replacing the glass costs? Huh? How am I going to answer to my wife when I get back! Sit up straight!”

Yang Shu quickly stiffened.

She lowered her head like she was repenting.

Zhang Ye said angrily, “It was only because the uncles and aunties were holding me back. If it weren’t for the old neighbors protecting you, I would have killed you to clean up the sect!”

Zhou Xiaohe hurriedly tried to smooth things over. “Bo—Professor Zhang, don’t be angry, don’t be angry.”

Only then did Zhang Ye look at him. “Hey, what are you still doing here? Didn’t I ask you to go back?!”

Zhou Xiaohe was silent.

He thought to himself that it might really be better to leave.

With a martial arts master like this beside him, no one would probably even be able to get close to Professor Zhang. At least in China, which had strict gun control, there shouldn’t be a need to worry about the safety of Zhang Ye. However, Zhou Xiaohe was also extremely puzzled. He couldn’t understand why a martial arts master like Yang Shu who knew how to use concealed power would want to be Zhang Ye’s bodyguard. Wasn’t this too degrading? Even if it were those other chief figures he knew, they wouldn’t really have a martial arts master as their bodyguard, would they? Further, Professor Zhang even treated her with such a fierce attitude? He could hit her or scold her as he wanted? And why didn’t Master Yang retaliate? What did she mean when she addressed him as “Senior”? Could it be that she was also a graduate of Media College? Was she Zhang Ye’s junior in broadcasting? Hence, the explanation for her not daring to speak out to Zhang Ye?

Zhou Xiaohe left.

Chenchen came over.

The moment she entered the apartment, Chenchen said excitedly, "Zhang Ye, I heard that your car has been smashed? Who was the hero who did that?"

Zhang Ye glared at her.

Yang Shu hurriedly gave Chenchen a tug.

...

At the studio.

Everyone also knew about what had happened earlier.

The moment Zhang Ye came over, all of them chipped in to speak up for Yang Shu.

"Director Zhang, don't scold Little Yang anymore."

"Yeah, Yang Shu has always been saying that she wanted to go and break you out from prison for the past few years. If it weren't for Big Sis Rao holding her back, she would probably have done it already. She really cares a lot about you."

"Director Zhang, don't be angry anymore."

"Pass me the keys, I'll go and repair for you."

Zhang Ye's temper had always come and gone very quickly. Moreover, his junior sister had always been rather silly, so what could he do? Zhang Ye waved it off and handed the keys to Little Wang. Then he gathered everyone else to the conference room to discuss their future plans and business.

In the conference room.

Everyone was high-spirited.

"Director Zhang, we've become really popular this time!"

"Yeah, even Teacher Yao has been promoted to the A-list."

"Your popularity has probably been restored by now. No, it must definitely have been restored."

"When are we going to reopen our popularity ranking?"

"The staff from the Chinese Popularity Rankings Index checked in with us again yesterday, asking if we wanted to reopen our ranking. As long as we agree, they can get it back up immediately. Then your latest popularity score will be recalculated and be shown on the rankings index. I feel that the spot of a Heavenly King is definitely within our grasp."

"I think we can possibly do better than the past."

But Zhang Ye just smiled and said, "Let's hold it off til a little later."

Ha Qiqi asked, "You still want to wait? In the Name of the People has finished broadcasting, and we don't have any work left on our schedule, so why are we still not reopening our spot on the rankings index?"

Zhang Zuo said, "I also think now is an opportune time."

Zhang Ye said, "Sister Lan is still in last place on the S-list rankings at the moment. If I were to reopen my spot on the index, what if I really made it into the S-list and caused Sister Lan to drop down to the A-list? I cannot stab her in the back, so let's wait it out. Sister Lan will have a movie premiering soon. Shu Han and Old Yao have a part in it as well. They're really popular right now, so it should be able to give a boost to Sister Lan's new movie. When Sister Lan's spot on the S-list has stabilized, it still won't be too late for us to reopen our spot on the index."

Wu Yi said with a sigh, "There's really no one as loyal as you in showbiz nowadays."

Ha Qiqi smiled and said, "Alright, it won't take more than a few days anyway."

Zhang Ye said, "Furthermore, restoring our popularity is only the beginning of our comeback. Surely we don't want to stand still in our original position, do we? Surely we don't want to stay in the same spot as before, do we?" He chuckled and said, "I've already thought about it. Our next step will have to be getting to the top of the domestic entertainment circle."

Everyone was startled!

"Ah?"

"You want to reach the summit of the domestic entertainment circle?"

"You want to be the number one person in the popularity rankings?"

The number one person in the country!

The number one person in the entertainment industry!

That was the highest position in the Chinese entertainment industry!

In the Chinese popularity rankings, there were still just seven spots in the S-list. To an ordinary celebrity, reaching the S-list was equivalent to getting to the top. This was the summit of the entertainment circle to them. However, only those who had reached this position would know that there were still differences between the statuses of the Heavenly Kings and Queens. Those seven positions at the top of the entertainment circle were still ranked according to the different popularity scores.

Four years ago, Zhang Ye had reached the summit of the Chinese entertainment circle, although he only hovered around sixth or seventh place of the S-list. But compared with Zhang Yuanqi and Xu Meilan, the difference between them was still huge. Four years had since passed, and the entertainment industry had gone through turbulent changes. Zhang Yuanqi had retired, while Xu Meilan had dropped to seventh place on the list. The remaining former Heavenly Kings and Queens had all dropped off from the S-list rankings as they got replaced by the current crop of male idols. Zhang Ye felt that he had to take down this top spot of the entertainment circle no matter what since that was the most coveted spot in the Chinese entertainment circle.

Ha Qiqi asked, "I have confidence that we can regain the throne of a Heavenly King if we were to reopen our spot on the rankings. But to become the number one person with the highest popularity score in the domestic entertainment circle? That'll be really difficult."

Zhang Zuo said, "What's your plan?"

But Zhang Ye answered, "I don't really have a plan."

Tong Fu said, "Then how are we gonna make a charge for the top?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Wait and see."

Wait?

What do you mean by that?

Are you just going to wait for your popularity to increase?

The Heavenly Kings and Queens you'll be facing are all the most popular celebrities of the current era!

But then, they heard Zhang Ye say with a laugh, "Did you guys think that I've just been serving my time in prison for the past three to four years? Actually, this bro hasn't been idle. I've done something that might be able to boost my popularity score. Haha, I guess you'll find out in a few days."

Everyone looked at one another in confusion.

Did something?

What was it?

What could you have possibly done in prison?

Chapter 1576: Zhang Ye gets shortlisted for the country's State Science and Technology Prizes!

Noon.

It was break time, and the studio staff were seated together, having lunch and chatting.

On the television, the news surrounding the State Science and Technology Prizes was increasing.

"The State Science and Technology Prizes ¹ will be announced soon!"

"Will there still be no recipients for the Highest Science and Technology Award this year?"

"The Highest Science and Technology Award has not been awarded to anyone for two years running!"

"Our self-developed fighter jet will be entering service soon!"

"The first self-developed fighter jet in China will be unveiled soon!"

"The list of newly appointed research fellows of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering ² to be revealed soon!"

"The celebrity scientists will be making a collective appearance at the event!"

Online.

The netizens were getting extremely excited.

"We're coming to the 'tech month.'"

"The fighter jet will be entering service? It's happening so soon?"

"We're finally getting our own fighter jet!"

"It was researched and developed independently by our own country too. This is the result of our country's grand efforts!"

"Military enthusiast here expressing that I cried tears of joy!"

"This is such exciting news."

"The key issue is still the engine technology. Since when did we gain expertise in that? There was absolutely no news about something like this in the past. I've never heard of any breakthrough in technology surrounding our engine manufacturing process either."

"Yeah, when it was announced that we were going to conduct a test flight of our self-developed fighter, I was stunned by the news. How did we manage to deal with the issue of the engine in the first place?"

"The media didn't report about it either."

"I guess it was some genius who did it."

"There's going to be a lot of attention on the State Science and Technology Prizes this year. I'll be watching it closely."

"I don't think they still won't give out this prize again this year, right?"

This year was such a great year for the citizens of China. Not mentioning anything else, just the successful test flight of the latest self-developed fighter jet alone had shocked everyone both at home and abroad. And now, it was even announced that this fighter model had passed all of the tests and would be put into service soon. What did this mean? It meant that the military strength and technology of China had taken a big step forward. Furthermore, this was a key step forward!

...

Japan.

Online.

"China's self-developed fighter jet is entering into service?"

"This is too fast!"

"This—"

"It's impossible that they have the technology to do this."

"When they said that they were conducting a test flight, I thought it was just a bluff."

"So it is really entering service soon? Will it translate into combat power for them?"

"China is developing too quickly!"

...

Korea.

Online.

"China has its own fifth-generation fighter jet too?"

"Their aircraft engine was self-developed too?"

"How did they do it?"

"Could this be a smokescreen? Fake news?"

"I also think that it's too soon."

Could a foreign expert have helped them?"

"That's impossible. There aren't even that many countries that have fully mastered the development of a fifth-generation fighter jet on their own."

...

America.

Online.

"Did they really manage to do it?"

"The Chinese are so scary."

"In just a few short years, they had managed so many breakthroughs in technology?"

"The Chinese scientists are such geniuses."

"Who's the lead scientist behind the development of their aircraft engine?"

"I don't know."

Countless countries around the world.

And many military enthusiasts were shocked by this news!

...

At Zhang Ye's Studio.

Ha Qiqi smiled and said, "This is such great news."

Zhang Zuo said as he ate, "There's so much meaningless news being reported these days, so this news is finally something to get excited about."

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "You're right. Only when our country gets strong will we as citizens and celebrities rest easy. This is why the celebrity scientist is the true celebrity." These were the exact same

words that someone had used to dupe him with years ago, and it was reproduced in its whole now by Zhang Ye over here. Moreover, this fellow believed deeply in what he had just said.

All of a sudden, someone knocked on the door.

Tong Fu was the closest to it, so he opened the door. "Eh?"

A woman who looked slightly familiar was standing outside.

Ha Qiqi recognized her. "Professor Xin?"

The visitor turned out to be one of Wu Zeqing's few good friends. She was also a mathematics professor who came out of Tsinghua University and one of the well-known young mathematicians in the country.

Zhang Ye put down his bowl. "Yo, Professor Xin."

Xin Ya narrowed her eyes and looked at him. "How have you been, Professor Zhang?"

"Please, come in." Zhang Ye said in delight, "What brought you here today?"

Xin Ya said, "I just got off work from the research institute and happened to pass by your office, so I came over to have a look. I haven't seen you in four years. Why haven't you bought me a meal yet?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "You've already applied to the Chinese Academy of Sciences and soon will be the second woman appointed as a research fellow, so shouldn't you be the one buying me a meal?"

Ha Qiqi said in surprise, "Aiyo, congratulations."

Zhang Zuo also smiled and said, "Congratulations, Professor Xin."

But Xin Ya was startled. She looked at Zhang Ye and choked out, "How do you know?"

"Ah?" Zhang Ye was taken aback. He said, "Didn't they announce it?"

Xin Ya looked at him. "The application hasn't even been approved, and no discussions have happened at the Chinese Academy of Sciences yet, so how could it have been announced!"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "My wife, she's—"

"I haven't told Old Wu about this matter either!" interrupted Xin Ya.

Zhang Ye coughed and said, "Eh, then who did I hear it from? I can't seem to remember."

Xin Ya pressed, "Where did you hear it from?"

"I've really forgotten," Zhang Ye continued lying.

Xin Ya wasn't stupid. She didn't believe the bullshit that was coming out of Zhang Ye's mouth for a second.

It wasn't that he didn't want to say it, but that he could not talk about it yet. This was because he had signed so many confidentiality clauses. He had to keep a lot of matters a secret until the time was right to talk about them. Actually, Zhang Ye had even taken a look at Xin Ya's application to the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The reason for this was that Zhang Ye was currently a research fellow with the

Chinese Academy of Sciences. At the academy, with the exception of a special case like Zhang Ye, all applications to become a research fellow had to pass through the unanimous voting of the relevant academy's research fellows. Therefore, for most research fellow applications related to the field of mathematics that had been submitted, every research fellow at the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Academy of Mathematics and Systems Science would have to have a look at it. As it happened, Zhang Ye had come to know many of the Academy of Mathematics and Systems Science's research fellows over the past few years, so he even helped to canvass votes for Xin Ya from them. However, none of that needed to be mentioned to her.

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "In any case, treat me to a meal."

Seeing his lips were sealed, Xin Ya couldn't do anything about it. She knew that as a mathematician, she couldn't possibly outtalk a person like Zhang Ye. As such, she took out an invitation and said with a smile, "It will be the State Science and Technology Prizes Award Ceremony in another few days. I just received the invitation this morning. It says that I can bring a person along. Considering you're Old Wu's husband, what say you about going with me? I, Sister Xin, will bring you along to broaden your horizons."

Everyone laughed. They knew that the two of them were just kidding.

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "Oh, thank you."

Xin Ya smiled and said, "You're welcome. We're friends, after all."

Suddenly, there was another knock on the door.

Ha Qiqi went to answer the door this time and saw that it was a courier. "Director Zhang, it's for you."

Zhang Ye asked, "What is it?"

Ha Qiqi opened up the package and was surprised. "An invitation?"

Hearing that, everyone gathered around her out of curiosity. Even Xin Ya came over to have a look.

It was a very simple invitation letter that was red in color.

—The State Science and Technology Prizes Award Ceremony!

It was exactly the same as the invitation Xin Ya had received!

Xin Ya said in surprise, "Ah? Why did you get one too?"

The studio staff were also confused. "Yeah, this doesn't make sense."

Zhang Ye snorted as he opened the invitation letter to read it. "And why can't I get one too?"

"Which row are you in? We're both in the field of math research, so we should probably be sitting next to each other?" Xin Ya stuck her neck out to have a look at his invitation. When she saw it, Xin Ya got so surprised that her eyeballs popped out of their sockets. "Damn, you're in the first row?!"

Zhang Ye didn't understand what she meant, so he reactively asked, "Which row are you in?"

Xin Ya said in a daze, "I'm—row sixteen."

Ha Qiqi said in amusement, "Director Zhang's seat is right up front?"

But Xin Ya knew! How was this as simple as sitting at the front!

The first row!

And the second row!

The people sitting in these two rows were clearly—

Suddenly, Wu Yi, who was watching the news, exclaimed, "Come and see this! It's the announcement of the nominees for the State Science and Technology Prizes Award Ceremony! There are a total of 102 people shortlisted for it!" He turned to Zhang Ye in astonishment. "Director Zhang, what the fuck! You...you...why is your name also on it?"

Ha Qiqi was dumbfounded. "Could it be someone with the same name?"

Wu Yi pointed at the television and said, "It's not! There are even the details of their birthdays beside their names. This is clearly referring to Director Zhang!"

Zhang Zuo said, "What?"

Xin Ya asked, "Did you really get shortlisted for the awards?"

Chapter 1577: The entire country watches!

The nominees were revealed!

It blew up online!

"What?"

"Why is Zhang Ye's name on the list of the 102 shortlisted candidates?"

"Is it him?"

"Yes, the birthday is the same!"

"Damn, what this guy sticking his foot in for!"

"That's true, this fellow has been locked up in jail for four years, so how did he manage to get shortlisted for the State Science and Technology Prizes? What field of study in science and technology was he involved in?"

"Could it be that global mathematical conjecture from before?"

"Possibly."

"But that conjecture has already been solved for four years."

"That's right, why would he get shortlisted only after four years?"

"Teacher Zhang must have taken a back door to gain entry!"

“This fellow probably resorted to some trick again. Hai, I really have to take my hat off to him!”

“Pfft, can you not put it that way?”

“This fellow is probably here to round off the numbers.”

“It must be. No one thinks that he can get an award.”

“The Highest Science and Technology Award hasn’t been given out for two years in a row. Will anyone win the award this year?”

There were over a hundred names on the shortlist, but most of them were unknown to the public. Unless it was a really famous celebrity scientist who often appeared on television or in the textbooks, the rest of the names were unfamiliar. But how could they not know who Zhang Ye was? A lot of people immediately realized it was him at the moment they saw the name. Such lists always included the candidates’ birthdays so as to avoid repeated names being mistaken for one single person, and to inform everyone about the ages of the scientists. Meanwhile, the birthday listed behind Zhang Ye’s name clearly indicated that it was the shit stirrer they were familiar with!

Everyone was stunned.

Zhang Ye’s nomination was indeed a little odd.

What kind of an award ceremony was this?

It was the State Science and Technology Prizes!

There was the most prestigious award that one could receive in China’s scientific field with no other awards coming close!

This was the highest honor in the discipline of science in China and winning it would be an honor that would follow the recipient for a lifetime!

To be shortlisted for the awards, a strict set of guidelines had to be followed. The recipient must have:

1. Made major breakthroughs in contemporary scientific or technological frontiers, or have outstanding achievements in the development of science and technology.
2. Created huge economic or social benefits through scientific and technological innovations, achievements, or high-tech industries.
3. No personnel who only works in organization management or assistant services in any project of scientific research or technological advancement may be a candidate of any national award for science and technology.
4. Any candidate considered for the Highest Science and Technology Award shall love their homeland, shall have good scientific ethics, and is still active in the modern scientific and technological frontiers and is engaged in scientific research or technological advancement.

There were a total of four criteria to follow, but which of them did Zhang Ye adhere to?

Scientific research?

Outstanding achievements?

Good scientific ethics?

Active in the modern scientific and technological frontiers?

Looking through the criteria, this fellow probably only qualified for the nomination based on the word “active.” In terms of being active, the remaining 101 candidates wouldn’t be a match for Zhang Ye even if they were to unite against him. Who could be better than him when it came to stirring up things? But your activities aren’t in line with the criteria at all. What does the science and technology world have anything to do with you?

Medical doctors.

Botanists.

Biologists.

Geneticists.

Guided missile experts.

Mathematicians.

Of the shortlisted 102 scientists, they all hailed from many different fields of studies. No matter how everyone thought about it, they could assume that Zhang Ye had been nominated through his work in the mathematics field. After all, even the mathematics world would have to admit that Zhang Ye was the best mathematician in the country, with his name even included in the global mathematics hall of fame.

On Weibo.

“Why are there traces of Teacher Zhang everywhere?”

“I wanna laugh whenever I see him.”

“This fellow is too active. He just finished producing a drama, and now he’s messing around in science and technology!”

“Yeah, he’s even meddling in the State Science and Technology Prizes now!”

“He still hasn’t reopened his popularity rankings. Do you guys think that he can get on the S-list rankings if he reopens it?”

“It’s too difficult to predict at this moment.”

“No one knows what kind of popularity he has now.”

“I’m also waiting for him to reopen his spot on the rankings index.”

“The State Science and Technology Prizes is a really awesome award. It’s also authoritative too. That Highest Science and Technology Award will even be personally presented by the President of the Academy. Just getting shortlisted and attending the event alone should be able to bring quite a bit of popularity to Zhang Ye.”

“Zhang Ye is the pinnacle, and there’s only one of him in all of China. Be it a celebrity, an academic, a novelist, or a professor, Zhang Ye should be the only person to have been awarded so many prizes in history, right? In music, crosstalk, the literary field, variety shows, mathematics, calligraphy, he’s dabbled in all of them before! And now, this fellow has even been fucking shortlisted for the State Science and Technology Prizes? Does he intend to win an award in every industry once?”

“These awards really don’t seem like it has anything to do with him.”

“I know. But it’s still quite impressive. Just look at who the scientists who have been nominated along with him are. They’re all research fellows from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering!”

...

Spring Garden’s studio.

“Teacher Zhang has been shortlisted for the awards ceremony?”

“Pfft, he really can’t stay still, can he?”

“This is hilarious!”

...

At Guan Zhaohua’s studio.

“Him?”

“Why would he be a part of it?”

“Why does it seem like he’s everywhere!”

...

At a Heavenly Queen’s studio.

“I really have to take my hat off to him.”

“I’ve never come across a celebrity like this before!”

“That’s also a skill.”

...

Back at home.

“What? Our son was shortlisted?”

“There’s even such a thing?”

“Like our son knows anything about the sciences! He’s always been the superstitious type since childhood! He even threw his shoe to help him decide which university to apply for!”

...

At the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

“Zhang Ye is on the list of shortlisted candidates?”

“Ah?”

“Who approved of it?”

“I think it was our Chinese Academy of Sciences who nominated him.”

“Impossible. I’d believe it if you said he can fight, but what could he possibly know about science? Are you fucking kidding me?”

“Mathematics is also considered a scientific discipline though.”

...

“Zhang Ye shortlisted for the State Science and Technology Prizes!”

“The names of 102 shortlisted candidates are revealed!”

“Zhang Ye’s nomination gets the attention of many!”

“Who will be the most watched celebrity scientist this year?”

“Zhang Ye’s nomination questioned by the industry!”

“The State Science and Technology Prizes shortlist is a sham?”

There was a constant stream of news.

The scientific community was in fervent discussions.

The public held heated debates.

...

At the studio.

Everyone was very excited.

Ha Qiqi said excitedly, “I’ll go and pick out your attire immediately!”

Zhang Zuo said, “This is such a big deal!”

But Zhang Ye said, “Leave it. Why is there a need to pick out an attire? It’s not like this is an awards ceremony in showbiz. There won’t be a red carpet, so don’t get all fancy or I’ll end up becoming a joke.”

Ha Qiqi smiled and said, “You think I don’t know that? Don’t you worry, I’ll get in touch with the designer to tailor make a tunic suit that will be fitting for the occasion.”

Zhang Ye approved, “Great idea!”

Xin Ya looked at him from nearby. She was still very confused by all of this. “How did you get shortlisted for the awards? I’ve had a look at the nominees, and there are only five mathematicians who were

nominated this time. All of those five people are research fellows at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. You're just a civilian, so why did the State Science and Technology Awards Commission select you?"

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "Who's just a civilian?"

"You!" Xin Ya said without hesitation.

Zhang Ye said, "Goodbye."

Xin Ya said, "In any case, we'll go there together on the day of."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "You wanna bask in my glory?"

Xin Ya sneered. "What glory do you have to bask in? You were only nominated, alright? You won't be receiving an award. Do you really think that the country is crazy enough to hand you the Highest Science and Technology Award?"

Zhang Ye chuckled and said, "Maybe?"

Chapter 1578: The awards ceremony begins!

On the day of the awards ceremony.

In the afternoon, at home.

Wu Zeqing was helping Zhang Ye style his hair and put on makeup.

"Don't move around."

"Aiya, there's no need for the makeup."

"I'll just put on some light foundation."

"It's good enough to just style my hair."

"That won't do. It's a formal occasion today."

"It's not like I've never attended an awards ceremony before."

"Hur hur, but today's event is different."

Zhang Ye had never liked putting on makeup, being the type who didn't pay much attention to his appearance. If it weren't for Old Wu buying him clothes or nagging at him to get a haircut, he probably wouldn't even have had a full set of clothes in a year.

His parents were also here.

And so were Old Wu's parents. All of them had come to visit their child today.

His father said with a stern look, "Listen to Zeqing."

His mother curled her lips and said, "What kinds of awards ceremonies were those that you attended in the past? They were just the entertainment circle's awards ceremonies. And where is the awards ceremony today held at? The! Great! Hall! Of! The! People!"

Li Qinqin smiled and said, "That's right, you ought to put on makeup if you're going there."

"He won't win an award anyway, so why the fuss?" Wu Changhe said unbothered by their concerns.

Li Qinqin didn't like hearing that. "He still has to be more serious. Although there isn't going to be a live broadcast today, the TV stations will still broadcast the recording. When Central TV's News Channel shows it later, and with our Little Ye so popular, the reporters and the media will surely have their focus on him even if he doesn't win an award. It won't be good if he is dressed too casually."

His clothing was prepared.

His makeup was done as well.

Zhang Ye shrugged as he looked at himself in the mirror. He turned to look at Sisi, who was staring at him, then said with a smile, "My dear, is Daddy handsome?"

Sisi immediately nodded. "Daddy is handsome!"

Zhang Ye said in amusement, "How handsome is Daddy?"

How old was Sisi? How could she possibly describe it? After stuttering forever without being able to express herself, she blushed.

"Don't get cocky." His mother gave him a look. "It's time for you to go."

Honk.

Honk.

A car was sounding its horn outside the villa.

Wu Zeqing smiled and opened the door. She said to Xin Ya, who was in the car, "He'll be coming out soon."

Zhang Ye then said, "Alright, my chauffeur is here. I'll be leaving now. Wait for the news of my victory!"

Outside, Xin Ya seemed to have heard him. She couldn't help shouting, "Who's your chauffeur?"

...

In the car.

Xin Ya looked at him and said, "Why are you so overdressed?"

Zhang Ye said, "Old Wu insisted that I dress well. I couldn't get her to stop."

"It's not like you're going there to receive an award." Xin Ya couldn't help laughing as she spoke.

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "I'm still a nominee."

Xin Ya rolled her eyes. "Goodbye."

...

Online.

The citizens couldn't wait any longer.

"Has it started yet?"

"Not yet."

"I don't think they're gonna have a live broadcast of the event."

"There will probably be updates from the awards ceremony very quickly though."

"How many awards will be given out this time?"

"I think there will be at least seven or eight?"

"Yeah, things like honorary awards or contribution awards. It seems like there will be quite a few awards given out. But the most important award that everyone has their attention on is still the Highest Science and Technology Award. The other awards are merely consolation prizes that the relevant technologies' leaders will be presenting. Only the Highest Science and Technology Award will be presented by the President of the Academy!"

"Will it remain unawarded this year?"

"We'll find out soon."

...

At 10 AM.

Tiananmen.

The Great Hall of the People.

This was also Zhang Ye and Xin Ya's first time attending such a formal event. The moment their car arrived, the event staff immediately came over to check their invitations. Then they went through two rounds of security checks before they were allowed in.

Up ahead, more and more people had gathered.

A lot of people were here to attend the awards ceremony.

Xin Ya was a little nervous. In the field of mathematics, she was at most considered a well-known, young mathematician in China. In terms of qualifications, she couldn't even be considered one of the top mathematicians in China. As such, she couldn't be blamed for not feeling confident. Practically all of the awards ceremony's attendees were older than her, and were considered the elites of the scientific and technological community. Together with the pressure of being in the Great Hall of the People, Xin Ya became somewhat restrained in the way she walked.

But it was different for Zhang Ye.

He was exactly the opposite of Xin Ya. This fellow was calm and serene.

In the industry, how many people could be more experienced than Zhang Ye? There really weren't too many of such people. What awards had he not won before? What hadn't he been through before? Just his status as a world-famous mathematician alone was enough to let him swagger around, not to mention his other titles.

The venue was up ahead.

The two floors of the auditorium that could seat close to 10,000 people.

Xin Ya walked in as though she was overwhelmed by the venue. She looked at Zhang Ye. "Don't you feel nervous?"

Zhang Ye turned to face her. "Why would I be nervous?"

All of a sudden, Xin Ya saw an old man. She hissed, "That's Fellow Liu!"

It was Fellow Liu!

Fellow Liu Qiwei!

He was a research fellow at the Institute of Physics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. He was one of the most prestigious research fellows of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and an extremely famous scientist in China, as well as an idol of Xin Ya's.

Then Xin Ya whispered, "It's Fellow Chi!"

Chi Xue, the only female research fellow of the Chinese Academy of Sciences!

Following, Xin Ya spotted yet another idol of hers from her childhood.

It was Fellow Han, a research fellow at the Chinese Academy of Engineering. His main research area focused on information technology and electronics engineering. He had taken part in several projects that contributed to key technological breakthroughs in China, so he could be considered a very famous senior figure in the scientific community. He was also the winner of the Highest Science and Technology Award ten years ago!

Xin Ya was bedazzled by this lineup of attendees.

There were so many scientists here she had heard about but never had the chance to meet!

When Zhang Ye saw her acting all excited and astonished, he couldn't help but ask, "What's with you?"

"I'll talk to you in a bit!" Xin Ya hurriedly ran over to Fellow Liu and said, "Fellow Liu, good morning."

Fellow Liu was startled by her greeting. "And you are?"

Xin Ya hurriedly said, "My name is Xin Ya, and I'm in the field of mathematical research, I've read your papers and found them extremely helpful. Because of your paper, I nearly transferred to the Physics Department when I was still attending university."

Fellow Liu pointed at her. "Xin Ya? I've heard of you before and think that you're quite capable. I heard from Little Chi that you've been part of several math projects that the country has undertaken? The world right now belongs to you youngsters."

Xin Ya replied, "No, no, I'm nothing compared to you."

Fellow Liu said, "Hur hur, you don't have to be so humble, young lady."

Xin Ya said, "Can I get your autograph?"

"Fellow Liu smiled and said, "Sure. Hmm? I don't have a pen."

Xin Ya felt around and realized she didn't have a pen either. So she turned around and shouted to Zhang Ye, "Do you have a pen with you?"

Fellow Liu followed her gaze and saw Zhang Ye as well. He trembled as a wave of anger surged through him.

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Why would I have a pen?" Then he saw Fellow Liu and waved to him. Under Xin Ya's dumbfounded gaze, he said, "Old Liu, how have you been?"

Old Liu?

Who are you calling Old Liu?

Xin Ya was stunned!

Fellow Liu said in anger. "I would've been much better if I didn't see you!" He then told Xin Ya, "Comrade Little Xin, come look for me later and I'll sign an autograph for you."

He turned and walked away.

Xin Ya was dumbfounded. "Old Liu!? What Old Liu?"

The commotion had attracted quite a bit of attention. Some people were looking at Zhang Ye with complex emotions.

Zhang Ye happened to meet the eyes of Fellow Han from the Chinese Academy of Engineering. He greeted, "Old Han, how about a drink tonight? At my place."

Fellow Han pretended not to have seen him and rolled his eyes as he walked away.

Zhang Ye curled his lips and said, "You still hold a grudge against me?"

Fellow Han turned around and said, "Stay away from me."

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "I've got some really good wine at my place. Don't you want to try it?"

Fellow Han harrumphed, "Drink your wine? I don't want you poisoning me!"

Zhang Ye spotted yet another familiar face. "Old Ma."

Fellow Ma hadn't seen him at the start. When he heard the voice calling him, he realized who it was without even having to look. Then he quickened his pace and rushed far away in an instant!

A lot of people were watching in surprise.

What was this?

Who was Zhang Ye greeting?

Old Liu?

Old Han?

Old Ma?

Fuck! All of them were famous veteran scientists of China!

What kind of social relations did this guy have?

Why did those veteran scientists all run away to hide the moment they saw him?

Xin Ya was also stunned. Even a fool could see that he knew them from the way he addressed them and spoke to them!

What is happening?

When did this fellow's network become so widespread?

Didn't he get locked up in prison for four years? Why does he seem to know more people than me?

Zhang Ye was also left speechless. He thought about why they were all avoiding him!

At this moment, Chi Xue came walking over from afar. Even though Zhang Ye knew a lot of the people here at the venue, Chi Xue was probably the only one who was willing to talk to him.

Xin Ya was startled to see her. "Fellow Chi?"

Chi Xue smiled and said, "Professor Xin? Did the two of you come together?"

"Two of you" was clearly referring to her and Zhang Ye.

Xin Ya said, "Oh, yes."

Chi Xue smiled and said, "I'll give you some advice: Stay away from Professor Zhang in the future."

Xin Ya said, "Ah?"

Chi Xue said, "His relations within the scientific community are terrible."

Xin Ya knew that Zhang Ye's social relations with others were bad, but she didn't know that his reputation was so notorious in the scientific community as well!

Zhang Ye didn't like hearing that. "What about me? What's so bad about my relations?"

Chi Xue rolled her eyes. "What do you think?"

Those who didn't understand the situation would probably have no idea of what Zhang Ye's name meant to the scientific community. But those who were privy to the inside story, like Fellow Han, Fellow Liu, Fellow Ma, and the others who had dealings with Zhang Ye, probably couldn't wish more than to direct a loud "damn you" at him from the bottom of their hearts!

In these four years, they had all suffered so much in the hands of Zhang Ye!

In these four years, they had finally realized why so many people called him a shit stirrer!

This fellow was too good at causing trouble!

It was so in show business!

It was so in the crosstalk world!

It was so in the comic world!

And it was so in the scientific community!

At the research institutes.

At the research bases.

In the laboratories.

In the test sites.

Due to work requirements, Zhang Ye had been to many of these places and worked with many of the scientists as well. But any scientist who worked with him only had swear words reserved for him. Before Zhang Ye came to them, their research institutes and laboratories were all peaceful and doing fine. But after Zhang Ye's arrival, when he took over the relevant project, those scientists and the leaders finally learned what chaos really meant!

Requesting pay raises!

Requesting days off!

Requesting better food!

They would carry out demonstrations!

They would go on strikes!

—All of these were instigated by Zhang Ye!

This fellow was too eloquent at speaking. He had a tongue that was too wicked and too great at incitement, to the point that the researchers employed under them would only listen to Zhang Ye!

The people at Fellow Liu's research institute went on strike for three days and caused all projects to be stalled!

Fellow Han's office was blockaded during a demonstration that went on for a whole day and night, and he couldn't even go to the bathroom!

Fellow Ma had it even worse. Zhang Ye led the researchers in singing "Tears Behind Prison Bars" every day below his office. They accused him of restricting the personal freedom of the researchers and asked for additional annual leave to go back home. Furthermore, all this happened while there was an inspection at the institute by the higher-ups, so it was needless to describe how chaotic the scenes were. Fellow Ma was so angry that his blood pressure shot up and he had to be hospitalized for more than two weeks. In the end, he had no choice but to approve the researchers' applications for leave.

How hateful!

How exasperating!

Before Zhang Ye came into the picture, everyone was getting along fine. The political thoughts and collective honor of the researchers were impeccable. But after this fellow came over, everything changed. All that the researchers were talking about these days were human rights and the law. Their judicial awareness was even higher than that of fucking American lawyers!

It was at this point that the directors finally remembered who Zhang Ye was. He was a qualified lawyer, and someone who had passed the judicial examination¹ with a perfect score!

They had also taken measures against Zhang Ye!

Complain about him?

Report him?

Protest his actions?

But all of that was useless!

Zhang Ye was the deputy chief designer of the project!

His leadership authority alone was much higher than these scientists. To a certain extent, they even had to take instructions from Zhang Ye and listen to his commands!

So what could they do?

They could only endure it!

And as it went, they ended up tolerating him for more than three years!

Chapter 1579: A research fellow of the Two Academies—Zhang Ye!

In the auditorium.

Everyone was pointing at Zhang Ye while whispering.

“What’s happening?”

“I don’t know.”

“Why are Elder Liu, Elder Han, and so many others avoiding him?”

“I suppose Zhang Ye has offended people again?”

“Then we oughta stay away from him as well.”

“That’s right, that’s right.”

No one dared to come within 10 meters of Zhang Ye.

Xin Ya asked in confusion, "Why do you know so many scientists?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Am I not allowed to have a few friends?"

"Friends?" Xin Ya was floored. "Are you really so respectable now?"

Everyone is avoiding you!

Everyone is ignoring you!

And you can still say that they're your friends?

Zhang Ye waved to her. "I'll go and get seated."

"See ya." Xin Ya also went to the back to look for her seat. They weren't going the same way as she was in the sixteenth row, which was really far from Zhang Ye's first-row seat.

In the front row.

Zhang Ye found his seat and sat down heavily.

Seated beside him was Lü Yi, a young research fellow from the Chinese Academy of Engineering. When he saw Zhang Ye sit down beside him, Lü Yi said in a respectful manner, "Fellow Zhang, long time no see."

Zhang Ye asked, "You've been nominated as well?"

Lü Yi laughed in derision. "I'm just here as part of the crowd. Even if the Highest Science and Technology Award does get awarded this time, there are only those few people who are expected to win it. We all know who they are."

"That's right." Chi Xue came over and sat down beside Zhang Ye as the two chatted. "Little Lü and I are just here to join in the fun. But as for you, you really do stand a chance of winning."

Zhang Ye waved it off. "Me? Come on, I've offended so many people in the scientific community."

Upon hearing this, Chi Xue and Lü Yi both gave wry smiles.

Yeah, that's right, who had he not offended in the scientific community? Sometimes, they really had to take their hats off to Zhang Ye for his troublemaking abilities.

Before he went to jail, Zhang Ye had debuted in the entertainment industry four years ago. But in that four-year timespan, how many incidents had taken place? How much trouble did he cause? Even the most veteran entertainment reporters would probably need a while before they could recount all of it. From fighting and scolding to instigating and causing trouble, there were countless examples of such incidents. And after he was sent to prison, Zhang Ye had spent a full four years in the science and technology field. Based on this fellow's character and temper, it would be a wonder if he didn't cause a lot of trouble during this time!

...

At Yao Jiancai's house.

“Dad, it’s the awards ceremony today, right?”

“Yes, it’s the State Science and Technology Prizes Awards Ceremony.”

“My Uncle Zhang has been nominated as well.”

“It should be starting soon?”

“It’s a pity there won’t be a live broadcast. Let’s wait for the results to be announced.”

...

Dong Shanshan’s house.

Four of their old classmates were here today.

“Shanshan, are there any updates yet?”

“The awards presentation should be starting soon.”

“What’s the point of watching for updates? Don’t tell me you guys expect Zhang’er to go on stage for an award?”

“Yeah, what kind of an occasion is this? What kinds of awards are they giving out? I doubt that he can even get a consolation contribution award. The Dale’s Conjecture he solved was five years ago.”

...

On Weibo.

“Someone’s posted a photo.”

“I think it’s about to begin.”

“Do you guys think that a celebrity scientist can get on the domestic celebrity rankings?”

“Of course there’s a chance. The popularity rankings are based on one’s popularity, after all.”

“I have a feeling that there will be some heavyweight celebrity scientists emerging in the future. They could even reach the C-list. The trends nowadays are in the field of scientific and technological development.”

...

At the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

“I hope the Highest Science and Technology Award will be given to a research fellow of our Chinese Academy of Engineering.”

“Of the veteran research fellows at our academy, only Fellow Qi and Fellow Meng have the greatest hope of winning it.”

“Yeah, those two veteran fellows have made significant contributions this year.”

“Has the ceremony started yet?”

“It should be starting soon.”

...

At the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

“Fellow Sun has a chance.”

“Yeah, I think so too.”

“We can only say that there’s a chance. There are too many variables.”

“We’ll see who the commission ends up selecting.”

“Even basing it on qualifications, achievements, and academics, it’s still very difficult to make a choice.”

...

Everyone watched intently.

The media blew up.

China’s leaders also arrived at the Great Hall at this time.

The huge auditorium hushed up. Then continuous applause was given to them.

One person.

Five people.

Ten people.

There were people from the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The China National Space Administration ¹.

The Central Military Commission ².

The leaders gradually entered and got seated.

Soon after, a leader from the Ministry of Science and Technology ³ went onstage and gave a speech with a microphone for more than 10 minutes. Afterwards, the awards presentation was announced.

The atmosphere at the venue turned serious.

Xin Ya took a deep breath.

Chi Xue kept her eyes on the stage.

Lü Yi got quite nervous.

Countless people had their eyes on the podium.

The first science and technology prize to be announced was: The State Natural Science Award.

At the podium, a leader announced, "I hereby announce the scientists who will be awarded the State Natural Science Award are—" He lowered his head and read out from the winner's list, "—Zhang Heng, Li Xicheng, and Yu Lei!"

Applause erupted.

The three people stood up in surprise and shock. Without an exception, the three were scientists above the age of 50. The oldest one was Li Xicheng, who was 72 years old. When he heard the announcement, tears streamed down his old face. He had been waiting for this moment for God knew how long.

Several of Li Xicheng's students were also tearing up.

"Teacher!"

"Congratulations, Teacher!"

"You've finally won it!"

"This is great! This is really great!"

The three of them went up onstage to receive their award and give an acceptance speech.

Zhang Heng held the microphone and said, "Thank you, thank you."

Then he passed the microphone to the next person. Li Xicheng also said, "Thank you for the trust that the Party and the people have placed in me and for giving me an affirmation of our efforts."

The speech was very short.

Zhang Ye was somewhat unused to this. "Their acceptance speech is so short?"

Chi Xue said in a speechless manner, "Do you think this is like an awards ceremony in showbiz? All of the winners here today have spent their entire lives on research. Did you expect that they would be as eloquent in speech as you?"

Zhang Ye said, "True. But the speech is very concise and to the point, so that's pretty good."

The next award was announced.

At the podium, the leader announced, "The winners of the State Technological Invention Award are—"

Zhang Ye held a little bit of hope for winning this award.

Will I win it?

Will this bro get a chance to go up onstage?

The leader announced loudly, "Han Cheng and Bai Xiaoyan!"

Zhang Ye gave a smile in his head and conceded.

Bai Xiaoyan covered her mouth in excitement and started crying.

Han Cheng was in disbelief as well as he sat there dumbfoundedly. He couldn't react until his research institute's colleague who was sitting beside him offered his congratulations in surprise. It was only then that he rushed up onto the stage.

The other awards were announced.

In the end, there were even prizes given out for different classifications of projects.

Electrical studies.

Medical studies.

Engineering studies.

And so on.

...

In the back row.

Xin Ya was chatting with the people beside her.

"Fellow Meng has won the State Science and Technology Progress Award."

"That means to say he won't be getting the Highest Science and Technology Award."

"Yeah, I thought Fellow Meng stood the best chance of winning that too."

"Elder Qi has won the Engineering Studies Award. That should be considered one of the consolation prizes, right?"

"The veteran fellows who were the favorites to win it are all out of the running?"

"Why did it end up like this?"

"Then who will the Highest Science and Technology Award go to?"

"There are still a few veteran fellows who have a chance of getting it."

Xin Ya and the others analyzed this for a long time but couldn't come to any credible conclusions.

...

In the front row.

Lü Yi gasped. "It's time for the last award!"

Chi Xue was also holding her breath. "It's time!"

Zhang Ye looked at the stage. "But there's no one at the podium."

At the next moment, they saw it. The leader who had been on stage announcing the winners had stepped down from the podium. Then, from the audience, someone slowly stood up before walking onto the stage with a smile.

The people around were already starting to whisper.

“It’s the president!”

“The president is going to give out the award?”

“That means there will finally be a winner for this year’s Highest Science and Technology Award!”

“Who will it go to?”

“Who will the winner be?”

At the podium, the president adjusted the microphone.

Everyone in the audience had quieted as they looked at the stage with wide eyes.

The president opened the winner’s envelope and spoke in a stately pace. He smiled and said, “Next, I will be announcing the winner of the Highest Science and Technology Award.” With a pause, he read out, “The research fellow from the Chinese Academy of Engineering—

The audience blew up.

Everyone started exchanging whispers.

“The Chinese Academy of Engineering?”

“It’s someone from the Chinese Academy of Engineering!”

“Who though?”

“Is it Fellow Liu?”

The president continued, “—and the Chinese Academy of Sciences—”

Everyone was stunned.

Xin Ya was also taken aback.

“A research fellow from the Chinese Academy of Engineering? And the Chinese Academy of Sciences?”

“Holy shit!”

“A fellow of the Two Academies⁴?”

“There aren’t many Two Academies fellows!”

“Yeah, the Two Academies fellows who are still alive can be counted on one hand!”

“So who is it?”

Everyone started looking around in curious amazement.

The president looked into the crowd and read a name that nobody could believe!

“—Zhang Ye!”

Chapter 1580: Zhang Ye's acceptance speech!

Onstage.

In the audience.

It was dead silent!

It felt like time had momentarily stopped!

Everyone stared at the podium in shock. No one could believe what they had just heard. After a whole three seconds, the crowd erupted into an uproar!

"Zhang Ye?"

"Zhang Ye?!"

"Was that the name that was announced?"

"I think so!"

"Think so? The president indeed said 'Zhang Ye!'"

"Is there another person called Zhang Ye? Is it someone with the same name?"

"No, there's only one Zhang Ye on the candidates' shortlist!"

"That's impossible, what the fuck!"

"This, this—"

"What's happening? Can anyone tell me what's happening?"

"Why was the Highest Science and Technology Award given to Zhang Ye!"

"Yeah, isn't this such nonsense?!"

"My ass! As if he knows anything about science and technology!"

"Besides, they've gotten the title totally wrong too!"

"That's true! A Chinese Academy of Sciences fellow? A Chinese Academy of Engineering fellow?"

"As if he could possibly be a research fellow! What's more, a Two Academies fellow?"

Everyone went crazy!

Xin Ya was also so shocked that her jaw fell to the floor!

Zhang Ye?

The Highest Science and Technology Award?

Are you fucking kidding me!?

At this very moment, the majority of scientists at the venue were stunned!

Only a few veteran scientists who knew about the inside story were left rolling their eyes. They were exceedingly speechless. So they really decided to give it to this guy?

At the front row.

Zhang Ye was also very shocked. "Ah? Me?"

Chi Xue patted Zhang Ye on the shoulder and said, "It's you! Your name was the one that was announced!"

Lü Yi also got very excited. "Fellow Zhang! It's really you! They really gave it to you!"

Zhang Ye found it a little hard to react.

Chi Xue said, "This is the highest honor that can be granted in our country's scientific field!"

Off to the side, a middle-aged mathematician also said anxiously, "Professor Zhang, hurry up and collect your prize! The president is waiting for you! Stop staring, it's you!"

Zhang Ye stood up. The attention of the crowd was now focused on the podium.

The president held a very special trophy in his hands. It was a trophy made out of very ordinary materials and looked unremarkable to the naked eye. The trophy of an award that was handed out in the entertainment circle, even if it was an award that no one really cared about, would still look much better, more beautiful, and more valuable than what they saw here right now. This was the trophy for the Highest Science and Technology Award. It was an honor that could only be achieved once in one's lifetime!

In the audience.

The Chinese Academy of Sciences' people looked at one another.

"That's impossible!"

"Did they get it wrong?"

"Is Zhang Ye a part of our Chinese Academy of Sciences?"

It was about the same for the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

"He's a research fellow of our academy?"

"I didn't hear about it before!"

"Yeah, why didn't I know about it either?"

"Did they get it wrong?"

"If they really awarded the wrong prize, that would be a huge mistake!"

Still, not too many people believed it.

Xin Ya nearly fainted. You're really going up onstage? This absolutely has to be a case of reading the wrong name, right?

On the stage.

Zhang Ye had come to a stop in front of the president.

The president smiled and handed the trophy to him. "Congratulations."

Zhang Ye hurriedly took it from him and said graciously, "Thank you, Mr. President."

The president said, "The country thanks you, and so do I."

Zhang Ye was overwhelmed and flattered. "It's what I should do. I'm just doing my part for the people."

The president was very happy to hear that.

When the people in the audience heard this, they were even more surprised.

What was the meaning of this?

What did the president say?

He thanked Zhang Ye?

The country thanked Zhang Ye?

But why??

Why did the country have to thank him for a global mathematical conjecture that was solved a few years ago?

However, the next moment, the big screen behind Zhang Ye lit up. Just as it had happened for the earlier award winners, their names, birthdays, résumés, and achievements were all listed on the big screen. When everyone hastily looked up at it, many of them were so shocked that they nearly jumped out of their chairs!

Screams rang out one after another!

"Ah!"

"Heavens!"

"This—"

"What is this!"

Zhang Ye:

Chinese Academy of Sciences' research fellow.

Chinese Academy of Engineering's research fellow.

World-famous mathematician.

Deputy chief designer of the new generation fighter jet.

“During his sentence, he single-handedly led his team to overcome all kinds of difficulties and developed the technology for the new generation of fighter aircraft, including the U2 technology and over 10 key projects for the country. He has participated in the research and development of the new generation fighter aircraft, radar system operations, launch directives’ data framework, and broken the international monopoly on these technologies. Alone, he has tackled more than 30 technological bottlenecks and acquired over 20 international, leading technological patents, of which many are world’s firsts. In the field of military affairs, information technology, and computing operations, he has made great contributions by working together with many scientists. In just a span of three years, he has created one technological miracle after another.”

A lot of the scientists who went on stage to accept their awards had introductions generally limited to a hundred words or so. Some of them even had their résumés and achievements condensed to around 40 to 50 words. But for Zhang Ye, his résumé and list of achievements went over 2,000 words!

One!

Ten!

Twenty!

All of the projects that he had participated on were listed on the big screen!

There were even a lot of technological projects with names that a lot of the scientists at the venue could not understand that flashed on the screen!

Xin Ya was dumbfounded!

Everyone was stunned!

Major breakthroughs in dozens of technologies had been made?

International, leading technological patents?

Scientific research that were world’s firsts?

All of those details were astonishing!

“The aircraft engine was designed by him?”

“And there are several dozen other international, leading technologies too?”

“Technologies that even Europe and America don’t have?”

“Absurd! How is this possible!”

“The technological breakthroughs we’ve had these few years were all led by him?”

“That’s so fearsome!”

“So he didn’t go to jail!?”

“Yeah, so he had been away doing research all these years?!”

“Isn’t he a mathematician? Isn’t he a hacker? I believe that he knows math, I believe that he knows programming, and I can also believe that he knows information technology. But why does he even know physics, dynamics, and mechanical engineering too?”

Everyone was shocked!

This was too scary!

If Zhang Ye really had such a résumé, it could be described as an extremely great feat!

Xin Ya quickly looked at a veteran scientist not far away. “Elder Han! J-Just what is this about!”

Another young mathematician also asked, “Yeah, why does Zhang Ye—”

Elder Han clearly knew a bit of the inside story. He said, “I worked with Zhang Ye last year because of an important project for the country. Zhang Ye truly deserves his reputation as the smartest person to exist in the world for the past few centuries. In these few years, he has done a lot of things, things that we would never even dare to imagine in our lifetimes. The president is right. The country should be thanking him, and so should the citizens.” He looked at the stage and said, “This Highest Science and Technology Award belongs to him without a doubt.”

Nearby, a middle-aged research fellow sighed. “It’s just that this guy is too brash and keeps inciting the researchers to hold demonstrations at every turn. Our research institute was nearly smashed because of him!”

Elder Han laughed and said, “But that project at the end, who was the one who supplied the technology to you all?”

That middle-aged research fellow rolled his eyes and kept quiet.

It was really him?

All of this was really because of him?

Everyone couldn’t be more shocked!

Xin Ya was visibly moved!

But this shouldn’t be. He wasn’t someone who could sit down and do things in a proper way. He didn’t like being controlled and restricted by others. Wasn’t he bent on making it in the entertainment industry? Didn’t he just want to be a celebrity? To sing and act? So why? Why did he suddenly do so much all at once for the nation?

This wasn’t like him.

This wasn’t his style.

Everyone stared at Zhang Ye in stupefaction.

At this moment, Zhang Ye was holding a microphone, about to give his acceptance speech.

Like the others, his acceptance speech was very short.

Holding the trophy aloft, he looked into the audience. The experiences he had been through these past few years were all still very vivid in his mind. He did not regret his contributions to China in these few years. Even though he couldn't get to see his child, his wife, and his family, Zhang Ye always believed that since some things had happened, he would have to come to accept them and just do it. He had the obligation to do so.

Zhang Ye recited into the microphone calmly.

"Snow on Mt. Tian in May,

"No flowers, instead cold and gray.

"I hear the flute play the Song of Sorrow,

"And am reminded of a spring I've never seen.

"The beating of drums and gongs calls dawn battle;

"In the evening, clutched are jade saddles.

"But I long to use the sword I carry,

"For the State, oh, the barbarians I'll bury!"

He finished speaking.

Zhang Ye gave a slight bow and walked off the stage.

The president was looking at him.

Many of the higher-ups were looking at him.

The scientists in the audience were also staring at him in amazement.

A short and simple poem had left countless of them trembling with excitement!

"But I long to use the sword I carry?!"

"For the State, oh, the barbarians I'll bury!"