

Superstar 571

Chapter 571 A new job arrives!

In the following few days.

The Peking University incident was getting increasingly worse!

Although the television media tried to do damage control of any negative broadcasts of the incident, with some television stations not even mentioning a word of it and some stations glossing over the details, but with this incident being such a serious and unprecedented one, it was of course impossible to totally cover it up. At least on the internet, it was still actively discussed everywhere. It had already been a few days since the incident happened at Peking University's Centennial Hall, but whenever it was brought up, it still attracted heated debates from everyone.

"Support Zhang Ye!"

"Count me in!"

"Face-smacking Zhang showed his prowess!"

"Support Teacher Zhang's 'Three Central Themes to Patriotism'!"

"F**k, it's already been several days, why is everyone still talking about it? This is all I've been seeing on the internet for the past few days! Is there nothing better to talk about than this? If you all have the time, why not send me some erotic pictures instead? That is the more important thing that we should be doing! We have to sort our priorities well, comrades!"

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The next morning.

Zhang Ye woke up and was fumbling around in his bed trying to light a cigarette to kick start himself, but when he remembered that "World No Tobacco Day" was just around the corner—his previous world's "World No Tobacco Day" was on a different date to this world's—and with the increased airing of those gross "quit smoking" public service commercials recently, just the thought of them had made him lose the desire to smoke. He threw aside the cigarettes and yawned lazily. Leaning against the headboard, he took out his phone to check on Weibo to see what the netizens were discussing.

There are still people who are scolding me?

Oh, there are more people who support me.

Zhang Ye browsed through everyone's comments and was suddenly delighted when he saw a group of his fans giving him yet another nickname: Speech Demon!

What kind of nickname was that!

Did they have to make it sound so terrible!

Suddenly, he received a call from the Eastern Publishing Firm.

There was a feminine voice at the other end. It was the editor of the publishing house, Li Mei, who had been to Zhang Ye's house before. "Teacher Zhang, it's me, Little Li. Are you still sleeping?"

Zhang Ye sat up and chuckled. "No, I just woke up."

Li Mei said, "Your novel Legend of Wukong will be on sale at all major bookstores starting from today."

Naturally, Zhang Ye knew about this matter. "How are the sales figures?"

"I'm at Books Building right now, but the exact sales figure has not be tallied yet since they have only just opened for business a short while ago. From my onsite observation, I can only make an estimation, but in any case, the dozen or so youngsters walking past the shelf where your novel was displayed seemed to have come here specially for your Legend of Wukong. There were some people who bought it immediately without even browsing through the book, while there were also some others who read it in the store. The display area is already surrounded by quite a lot of people now."

"That's not bad."

"It's only because it is your book."

"Hur hur, you've worked hard. Come to my place if you are free. My mom keeps nagging for you to come over."

"Sure, sure, I miss Auntie too. Teacher Zhang, I'll go busy myself with work for now. I was just getting someone to communicate with the staff of Books Building and the other major retail outlets. Since you have entrusted the copyrights of Ghost Blows Out the Light, Zhang Ye's Compilation, and those fairy tale stories to us, we're thinking of setting up an exclusive display counter for you because the second print of the books is almost ready. With so many people coming to buy your books, it will be quite convenient for them to find your books."

"Alright, you've worked hard."

"Listen to what you're saying. This is part of my job."

Li Mei's tone was a joyful one. As she was the one who won the copyright for Legend of Wukong from Zhang Ye by fending off other major publishers, Li Mei's reputation in the industry grew overnight. Her current task was to handle publishing matters for Legend of Wukong, or to be more precise, she was Zhang Ye's assigned editor now. Books like Ghost Blows Out the Light and his other books came under her charge. Li Mei would handle him on a one-on-one basis and need not deal with any other authors. She would only need to be responsible for Zhang Ye, a decision made by the publisher's upper management. Since Zhang Ye was the type of author who could write anything and still have a best seller; it was only natural he be accorded such special treatment.

After the call ended, Zhang Ye wanted to know how he was doing in the Celebrity Rankings. Although the Peking University incident caused a lot of controversy and he received a lot of criticism over it, there were still a lot of people who supported him. As such, he felt that it would gain him quite a bit of fame. As a result, he checked on his ranking.

The Celebrity Rankings Index was updated.

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C-list Celebrities:

1. Shi Yu.
2. Zhang Ye.
3. Chen Fanghua

As expected, his ranking rose as his popularity score surged!

Just a few days ago, after Zhang Ye proved the mathematical conjecture, his popularity soared and that pushed his Celebrity Rankings placing to the front of the C-list. At that time, he was still ranked fourth or fifth place on the C-list Celebrity Rankings due to fluctuations, but today, he had reached second place. Importantly, as the rankings moved closer to the top of the index, it became harder to move up since the popularity scores between each place increased exponentially. As the number of people lessened, the gap would widen. Thus, even if Zhang Ye had only risen to second place from fourth or fifth place, the gain in his popularity score was in actual fact very large!

He was finally in second place, so that meant that Zhang Ye only needed to move up one more spot and then squeeze pass the last rank of the B-listers by overtaking that celebrity's popularity score. He could end up being well ahead of completing his goal of becoming a B-list celebrity which he had set earlier this year.

He was just a step away!

He was really just a step away now!

Of course, even though it was just a step away based on the rankings, if Zhang Ye analyzed the popularity score needed to move ahead, then he was still far behind. In the B-list celebrity rankings, which of these artists were not people who were well-known to all in the country? Even the lowest ranked B-list celebrity would not be a pushover. That was why Zhang Ye was not blindly optimistic about his chances. He knew that there was a long road ahead and it would not be easy, especially since he was taking an unusual route to his goals. For others who were born with it, he would need to work a hundred or thousand times harder to achieve it.

Out in the living room, his mom shouted for him.

"Son!"

"Yes."

"Wake up! It's time for dinner."

"Coming!"

Zhang Ye went to wash up before sitting down at the dining table with his parents.

Mom peeled an egg and then gave it to him. "Here, for you."

"Thanks Mom." Zhang Ye took it and ate it.

His father's eyes narrowed as he said, "He's already an adult and you're still peeling eggs for him? Why can't he peel it for himself? All these years and you have never peeled any for me."

His mother rolled her eyes and said, "My son is an associate professor now, so of course he gets special treatment."

Zhang Ye said in amusement, "Don't mind, Dad. Let me peel for you, let me peel for you."

When his father took the egg from his son, he nodded and said, "That's more like it." He then opened his mouth to swallow it before asking, "How's work these days? Any job offers?"

His mother switched on the television.

Zhang Ye responded, "Nothing yet."

His mother cocked her head. "Why not? No one contacted you yet?"

Zhang Ye threw his hands up. "Yes. It's already been a few days but there's been nothing at all."

"Heh, these bunch of people have eyes but cannot recognize Mount Tai." His mother said unhappily, "In the past, there were always companies who tried to headhunt you, wanting you for this or that, but now that you've gotten more famous, they don't come looking for you anymore? Son, is the Peking University incident causing this? Are they going to ban you again? That can't be. Didn't your new novel go on sale today? I still saw your Brain Gold advertisement last night and it wasn't banned!"

His father said, "After creating such a big mess, he is already very lucky to not get banned. Why would you think that anyone from the television stations would come to find him? Those people are probably in a wait-and-see mood at the moment."

Indeed, Zhang Ye could also see this. In fact, because the speech had helped to increase his popularity quite a bit and gained him a number of new fans, he also did not get banned but was only suspended from teaching. Looking at it on the surface, it did not affect him much and even seemed like he was thriving as he continued doing whatever he wanted. But actually, it was not as simple as it looked. After all, the incident had involved some sensitive issues and no one would know whether Zhang Ye would really escape any punishments. He might be safe today but if a television station invited him to host a new program today and the authorities clamped down on him the next day, then the television station would definitely have wasted their resources on him. It might even implicate them somehow. So, to many people right now, Zhang Ye was a ticking time bomb who might suddenly explode at any moment.

That was one reason. Another reason was Zhang Ye's short fuse. Once again, this Peking University incident had made more people aware of that. Even if there were no political reasons involved, Zhang Ye was still a ticking time bomb. No one even knew when or where he would explode and cause some disastrous results. And so, incorporating all these reasons, everyone had grave worries about him! There were no doubts about his abilities and no one could deny his capabilities. Everybody could recognize them. However, the most worrisome factor was his terrible temper. Only the most courageous television stations would ever think of recruiting Zhang Ye.

This was the overall situation right now.

Zhang Ye was in an awkward plight.

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On the internet, there were also plenty of people who were concerned about Zhang Ye's whereabouts.

"Where has Teacher Zhang disappeared to for the past few days?"

"Where did Zhang Ye go?"

"Has he started on a new job yet?"

"His classes have been suspended, so I can't even view Zhang Ye's lecture videos online anymore. I've already read Legend of Wukong on the internet and Teacher Zhang has not had any other recent works, so why are there no updates on his activities?"

"Wasn't he unbanned?"

"Yea, he was unbanned."

"Really, are there really no television stations that will take Teacher Zhang?"

"What are the television stations thinking? Hurry up and sign Zhang Ye. Teacher Zhang has done so many programs and is proficient at being a host and program planner. Every one of his new programs had excellent ratings without fail, so what are you all still hesitating for? Even if you give him a salary of 8 million, you wouldn't be making a loss! So why haven't any of the television stations made a move yet?"

"Pfft, how unpopular can you get, Teacher Zhang?"

"I hope that Zhang Ye will host a variety show this time, he's too humorous!"

"Don't! I hope Teacher Zhang will continue to do an academic program like 'Lecture Room'. I am anticipating these type of programs which can increase my knowledge."

"I prefer music programs."

Countless netizens were enthusiastically anticipating Zhang Ye's next work.

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Meanwhile, at home.

After waiting for some time now, Zhang Ye received an offer for an unexpected job.

Chapter 572 To help or not to help?

Morning.

With the "World No Tobacco Day" approaching, a news report was attracting extensive concern.

The news came from Central TV's live broadcast studio. It was related to the new regulations of public service announcements. The authorities had passed several new regulations regarding PSAs. It stated very clearly on the document that public service announcements that brought awareness to the adverse effects of smoking on televisions commercials were banned from using real human organs as examples. There were also three or four similar new regulations along these lines. When this direct order was

released, Central TV along with other provincial and satellite channel were not greatly affected since they were more or less able to conform to the new regulations. With only some slight adjustment and modification of the images based on the new policies, it would be sufficient to meet the new standards. But Beijing Television and some other BTV provincial channels would be greatly affected.

Beijing Television's quit smoking public service ad would directly get axed!

Of the World No Tobacco Day advertisements of two other provincial channels under Beijing Television Station, one would get axed, while the other had still not passed the censorship check. A lot of money used for the production fees were wasted, resulting in a heavy loss.

The netizens were puzzled.

"It is so strict?"

"Why did they suddenly come up with such a policy?"

"Yea, PSAs are not-for-profit anyway and are usually funded out of the television station's own pocket. If they are being so restrictive, won't the television station suffer?"

"Don't you all know that some time ago a nonprofit organization had protested the PSAs shown on television for displaying unsuitable images? Seems like it happened at the end of last year. A commercial depicted the blackened lung of a smoker, who was suffering from advanced-stage lung cancer, in an operating room being cut open. A survey showed that most audiences could not accept such images, especially the juveniles and non-smokers. Actually, quit smoking advertisements were primarily targeted at smokers, but because television broadcasts were unable to filter this to the target groups, it ended with the non-smokers and juveniles getting terrified before the smokers could get the message. Images of an overly gory and bloody scene must be controlled so as to cover all aspects of the viewers' comfort."

"So that's why."

"That is true. I was watching the Beijing Television commercial that showed the blackened lungs just yesterday. It wasn't actually frightening since I have seen it so many times. Quit smoking commercials are always more or less the same, always giving statistics on the number of fatalities, infertility, black lungs, and all that. I get bored just watching them, since this has no effect on a hardcore smoker. I've seen my fair share of such commercials and am already immune to them. Such images no longer scare me into quitting. If they have the time to show those commercials, they might as well show other types of commercials.

"Right, the current quit smoking advertisements are pretty much the same."

"Few years ago, I felt uncomfortable when I saw it for the first time and even quit smoking for a few months, but after watching it more often, it became pointless and meaningless with no value added."

"Beijing Television Station will have a headache because of this."

"The 'World No Tobacco Day' is tomorrow, so let's see how they're going to change it."

"Tomorrow? It'll be too late. If they don't make it in time, won't they incur a fine? The current policies are very strict. When it comes to public service, the television stations are expected to meet a minimum requirement, but if they don't, they get fined a hefty amount."

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At another place.

At home.

While Zhang Ye and his parents were chatting, a call from Hu Fei arrived.

"Little Zhang, it's me," Hu Fei said.

Zhang Ye replied, "Hey, Brother Hu, what's the matter?"

Hu Fei spoke hesitatingly, "About that...I have something to discuss with you."

"Just be direct." Zhang Ye took the remote control and lowered the television's volume. Beside him, his parents also stopped talking.

Hu Fei said, "It's not convenient to speak over the phone, let's meet up and talk."

"Sure, where do you want to meet?" Zhang Ye agreed. He had no hesitation when it came to his friends and benefactors.

Hu Fei considered for a moment before carefully saying, "You're almost a B-list celebrity now, so I think it's a little inconvenient for you to be out in public since you might get spotted by your fans. Why don't you come over to Beijing Television Station instead. You know, since you left, you have not come back for a visit yet. Besides, Dafei, Xiao Lu, and the others are all thinking about you. Why don't you come over and we'll catch up, alright? Anyways, you do not have a job currently, so shouldn't you have time?"

Zhang Ye blinked, roughly understanding what was going on.

Without giving him a chance to speak, Hu Fei immediately said, "Ha, it's settled. Send me a message when you're almost there. I will be waiting for you. Bye."

The call ended before he could say anything.

Zhang Ye was a little speechless. He turned to the side and said, "Dad, Mom, I'll be heading to Beijing Television Station for a while."

His mother stared at him and said, "Beijing Television Station? Why are you still going there?"

"Hai, a friend has something to discuss with me. Maybe he needs my help on something." Zhang Ye was already changing his clothes. "I won't be having lunch at home then."

His mother said unhappily, "You were fired and thrown out by them last time, but now that there's something they need your help for, you'll go at their beck and call? Have you forgotten about the matter regarding Wang Shuixin? It was all that Wang Shuixin's fault that his son misbehaved in the office and even started a fight. He kept making things difficult for you and even corruptedly handled matters. Father Wei who was such a nice fellow was even driven to death by him. When you upheld justice, the

television station ended up firing you instead. How is that fair! I am so angry just bringing this matter up!”

Zhang Ye said, “Aiya, Wang Shuixin has already been sentenced anyway. The television station fired me not because I was wrong to uphold justice, but because I made trouble during the live broadcast.”

His mother said angrily, “You’re still speaking up for them?”

Zhang Ye smiled dryly. “I wasn’t speaking up for them. At that time I was fired, I was also unhappy about it, but I understand the television station’s decision. My way of doing things was somewhat inappropriate.”

“You damned kid!” his mother said in anger.

Zhang Ye quickly soothed her, “Mom, don’t be angry, don’t be angry. I know what what I’m doing.”

His mother said, “What do you know!”

His father started to speak up, “OK, let our son settle his own matters. What are you getting so worried for?”

Zhang Ye feelings for Beijing Television Station were so complicated that even he could not explain it. Having worked for some time now in the industry, the worst relationship he had was with Beijing Television Station. When he was there, he was involved in a fight, detained at a police station, scolded his leaders, made trouble during a live broadcast, and was finally fired by them. If it were anyone else, they would surely not have fond memories of this place. Zhang Ye also had a similar experience but the difference was that he held a deep and special appreciation for the television station.

First, as someone born and bred in Beijing, not only did he grow up watching Beijing Television, he also watched BTV Arts Channel, BTV Sports Channel, BTV Science and Education Channel as well as other local provincial channels which did not broadcast to other provinces. These kind of feelings were indescribable. Second, this was the place that nurtured him and where he had gained his first achievements. Hu Fei was the one who invited him to join them and gave him the chance to make his first appearance on TV. Having hosted a program like “Lecture Room,” which turned out to be the crucial step in helping him become popular, he could not just disregard the kindness Hu Fei had shown to him.

When his mother finished speaking, Zhang Ye had not expected that he would actually speak up for Beijing Television Station. After thinking over for a while, he realized that he had already let bygones be bygones.

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Half an hour later.

Beijing Television Station building.

Zhang Ye parked his car in the parking lot and got out, wearing his sunglasses. Zhang Ye walked right up to the building’s front entrance, then looked up to see the once familiar office building before walking in with big strides.

In the lobby, someone had noticed him.

“Eh.”

“This person looks quite familiar.”

“Aiyo! Could that be Zhang Ye?”

“It is Zhang Ye!”

“It really is Zhang Ye!”

“What is Teacher Zhang doing here? Is he here for a program’s guest role? Or is he here to do a program? I didn’t hear about this!”

“Recently, Teacher Zhang has been on the cusp of the news, but there were no rumors of him having signed with any television stations. I suppose everyone is still observing the situation before making any moves?”

Without standing on ceremony, Zhang Ye made himself comfortable and sat down on the sofa in the lobby’s resting area. He casually picked up a copy of a magazine while waiting.

A youth waved at him from a distance. “Teacher Zhang, long time no see.”

Zhang Ye looked over to the person and found him quite familiar looking, but he was unable to recall his name. He only remembered that he was a staff member of a program team from one of the bigger departments. “Hello.”

“Teacher Zhang, you getting more and more handsome!”

“Teacher Zhang, do you still remember me?”

“You appearing here today—does it mean...that you’re returning to the station?”

Some staff members who had crossed paths with Zhang Ye before but weren’t particularly close to him went up to greet him enthusiastically. Two reporters from the BTV News Channel hurried over when they heard he was here. They were trying very hard to fish for some first-hand information from him. Because even fools knew that Zhang Ye couldn’t have appeared here without reason, especially since there were some very unhappy dealings between Zhang Ye and Beijing Television Station before. Everyone was curious and thought of many possibilities of his return with their rich imagination as they continued asking him for an answer.

At this moment, Hu Fei arrived.

There was a youth with beard stubble, looking quite lethargic, who came along with Hu Fei.

When Hu Fei saw so many people crowding around Zhang Ye, he said, “Make way, please make way.” Then he casually greeted Zhang Ye and soon the three of them went upstairs from another side of the building. “See, you are still very popular. Even after you left Beijing Television Station for such a long time, everyone is still thinking about you.”

Zhang Ye could feel that he implied more than that and chuckled, "Brother Hu, just tell me directly what you wish to say."

Hu Fei decided not to beat around the bush any longer, so he introduced the person on his left. "This is Sun Han. He's our station's manager of public service ads and just started work last year. He's also a son of one of my old colleagues."

Sun Han reached out his hand and said, "I've heard a lot about you."

Zhang Ye shook hands with him and said, "Nice to meet you."

Hu Fei, seemingly looking a little embarrassed, said, "I asked you here because of the matter of our public service announcement. I suppose you have already seen the morning news. This time, the station's public service ads have all been axed but since tomorrow is the 'World No Tobacco Day,' the new public service ad has to be approved by tomorrow. This is very urgent and Little Sun's side is unable to come up with any ideas. After their department deliberated for a long time, they still couldn't settle on a basic concept as there was no idea they could come up with at all."

Sun Han rubbed his beard stubble and said, "The past few days have worried me to death. When the new policies were passed so suddenly without warning and all our advertisements had to be withdrawn, it left us with no backup plans. Teacher Zhang, you are an alumnus of the station and have even helped out on the 'Save Electricity' public service ad before. Surely you know that in our department, we are not professional creatives. The department was set up two years ago and our main responsibilities cover coordination work, funding, and supervising, while most of our production work is outsourced to external advertising companies..." He spent a long time highlighting his difficulties.

Zhang Ye already guessed that it was this matter before he came over, so he asked, "Then why didn't you get an advertising company to do it?"

"None of them would accept the job," Sun Han said, looking very worried. "After we received the notifications at around 6 or 7 AM this morning, we immediately contacted the advertising companies to reshoot more World No Tobacco Day PSAs to replace the ones that were axed. If they couldn't do a full production, we were willing to settle for a concept and work on it on our own. However, as we did not have enough funds left due to having spent most of it on those previous 'quit smoking' advertisements, we ended up having apply for additional funding from the leader. But while some of the advertising companies rejected the job due to money issues, most of them rejected it due to the urgent timeline of the project. They felt that it was too tight for them to complete the project within a day and they would need at least three days to plan and produce it instead. But three days? Three days later, the World No Tobacco Day would have already passed by then! As for buying a concept, after asking some of these companies, they also told us that they wouldn't be able to give us any as there was a high demand for such quit smoking public service ads. So having sold them to the other bidders, there were no concepts left to sell to us."

As they spoke, the three men had reached the fifth floor.

Zhang Ye asked, "Why don't you just submit a simple advertisement which can meet the regulations first?"

Sun Han helplessly said, “That won’t work since it would never get passed at the approval stage. Besides, the station won’t agree to it since a public service announcement also showcases the quality of a television station. Although Beijing Television Station is not one the highest rated in the industry, it is still among the top television stations. We can’t just bumble our way through it. Besides, the new policies were only handed down recently. I’m afraid we couldn’t fool them even if we wanted. Who knows? If we did that, we might get made an example out of as the first warning to others.

Zhang Ye kept silent.

Sun Han looked at him and said, “Anyways, that’s what the situation is like. Our time is short and we are really at our wits’ end now. When we asked several advertising industry insiders and the staff in our Public Service Announcement Department, all of them highly recommended a person to me—you, Teacher Zhang.”

Zhang Ye glanced at him and said, “We have to create a fifteen to twenty second public service ad within a day when there isn’t much money, manpower, or concepts to begin with? If you are asking for a sloppy end product, that might still be possible, but if you want a well polished and detailed announcement that also has elements of creativity, then that is basically an unrealistic target!”

Sun Han said in a serious tone, “I know this matter is very difficult, but I am left with no choice. I could only think of getting Uncle Hu to ask for your help. Although I have not been working in the industry for a long time, I still know of your name in the advertising industry. Every single one of your creations, like the Save Electricity commercial, ‘I’ll Speak For Myself’ promotional teaser, and the Brain Gold commercial, is classic textbook material in the advertising industry. There is no one else who can do except you!”

Hu Fei chipped in a word for Sun Han, “Little Zhang, I know that the station had been too harsh on you the last time. But at that critical time, the station was also forced to make a decision they did not want to make. I believe you know the station might face a great loss in reputation and also be fined heavily. Don’t leave us in a lurch! Take it as giving face to me by helping us out! Besides, since your reputation in the media has been suffering a little recently with so many negative reports of you, if you get involved with a PSA, you will surely able to turn the tide a little. So if you have any other requests, just speak.”

Sun Han added, “I can assure you that you will not be working for nothing. The fees are negotiable. As long as you can help the station tide over this crisis, I believe the fees...”

Zhang Ye waved his hands and interrupted him. “I don’t want any money.”

Sun Han was a little taken aback. Doesn’t want money? He said, “But...”

Hu Fei interjected, “Listen to Little Zhang.”

“If you want my help, it’s not impossible.” Zhang Ye said, “But I have a request.”

Sun Han immediately answered, “Please speak.”

Zhang Ye said, “I will call the shots on the overall planning for this project, including the delegation of manpower and use of funding. Everything will be decided by me—that is my only request.”

Sun Han promised, "Rest assured of this. You are free to command everyone in our department including me."

Zhang Ye nodded. "Alright then."

Sun Han asked, "Then...it's settled?"

"I will accept this task. Let's enjoy working together." Zhang Ye shook hands once again.

Sun Han heaved a sigh of relief, giving an excited handshake. "With you leading us, we will certainly not have any worries anymore. Thank you so much, Teacher Zhang. You have really been a great help this time!"

Zhang Ye shook his head and said, "I cannot promise that I will be able to help for sure, since the time given is really too short."

Hu Fei patted Zhang Ye's shoulder and said, "However it turns out, thanks Little Zhang."

Zhang Ye laughed. "You're welcome. Since Brother Hu has spoken, I will definitely do my best to complete it even if I have to climb a mountain of swords or dive into a sea of flames."

"I like what you said." Hu Fei said, "In any case, I owe you one now."

Zhang Ye smirked. "Come on, with our relationship, do you still need to say that? So where will we be working? There's not much time left. Let's get started right away!"

Sun Han led the way. "Over here, this way. Come with me."

Hu Fei stayed where he stood and said, "You guys go ahead. I'm only here to link the both of you up. Now that my task is completed, I'll be leaving."

Chapter 573 The most frightening 'Quit Smoking' advertisement in history?

At the television station.

Fifth floor, Public Service Announcement Department.

Sun Han pushed open the door to the office and proclaimed, "Alright everyone, please stop what you are doing for now. I have invited someone with authority in the industry to assist us on the project for the quit smoking public service ad." Saying that, he gestured to the person beside him. "I don't suppose Teacher Zhang needs any introduction, right? You all should know him. Before we get started, I need to inform everyone that Teacher Zhang is here to help out in a private capacity and will not receive any compensation. This ad's planning will entirely be handled by Teacher Zhang. Before tomorrow's ad approval deadline, every one of us in the Ad Department will follow Teacher Zhang's instructions! Any questions?"

"No!"

"Teacher Zhang?"

"Great!"

"Teacher Zhang's ads are well-known throughout the country!"

Other than Sun Han, who was the manager, the department had four other people. An old man in his late fifties sat to the left, while a girl who looked to be around 18 or 19 years old sat on the right. It was hard to tell whether she was an employee of the television station or just an intern since she looked so young. In addition, there was a youth wearing a face mask sitting down and coughing intermittently, probably because of the flu. Finally, the remaining member of the team had a cast around his arm. He looked he had suffered a fracture.

When Zhang Ye saw this lineup, he suddenly felt like he had been thrown into the situation without knowing anything beforehand.

Old!

Young!

Sick!

Crippled!

What an awesome quartet!

Zhang Ye asked, "It's just the few of us?"

Sun Han felt a bit embarrassed and said, "Our department's setup is just this, but I've already applied for additional manpower from management. There will be others from the advertising department coming over later to help out."

Zhang Ye, left with no choice, said, "Time and tide wait for no man. Let's get started."

Sun Han said, "Right, let's show Teacher Zhang our previous ads first."

"It's right here." The intern girl brought over the files and said, "These are the ads that got axed."

Zhang Ye scanned through the footage and said, "I already know the standards that we have to adhere to. Basically, we cannot show real organs or overly frightening illustrations. What about the duration required for the ad?"

The old man replied, "The required duration is fifteen seconds."

Zhang Ye asked again, "What is the desired effect it must achieve?"

Sun Han hesitated. "Since it is a quit smoking PSA, it should certainly make people feel scared. It can only achieve its objectives as a quit smoking PSA if people are truly scared from the bottoms of their hearts. However, the problem we have now is that the new policies do not allow for those traditional ideas that everyone had always been using. The even older ways, such as showing statistics of death rates due to smoking, won't be effective in spreading the message at all if they're not supported by images. Besides, that method is also outdated, so that's why we're having a difficult time handling this quit smoking PSA. On top of that, we even have only one day left to complete it. We..."

Zhang Ye said, "Scaring people? We do not necessarily have to resort to blood and gore or use real imagery or blackened lungs. Those visual tricks are the lowest form of scare tactics."

When Sun Han noticed that Zhang Ye seemed to be forming some ideas, he hurriedly said, “Teacher Zhang, I am not a professional in this field, so everything will be done according to your ideas. Just tell us what you need and we’ll do it.”

The awesome quartet also nodded.

At this moment, someone knocked on the door and came in.

“Little Sun, we’re here to help out.”

“Manager Sun, the head instructed me to come over.”

“Manager Little Sun, you needed help? I can help out until 3 PM. Oh, Teacher Zhang? Why is Teacher Zhang here as well? Are you handing this advertisement now?”

“Yo, Teacher Little Zhang?”

Gradually, the colleagues from the other departments started to arrive. Approximately 11 people had come, clearly mobilized from their department’s work groups. The head of Beijing Television Station was probably quite worried as well. Otherwise, there wouldn’t have been so many staff members sent over to try to help save the situation! When they saw that Zhang Ye was here too, everyone was surprised for a moment and then had a clear understanding about the current situation. They found out that Beijing Television Station had turned to Zhang Ye for help to try to overcome the problem that they were currently facing. But those who had worked at the station last year all knew about the disagreements between these two parties, so they were still surprised that the station had actually invited Zhang Ye to help them out. Also, Zhang Ye had agreed to help them!

However, Zhang Ye did not have the time to explain anything. He was here with only one purpose in mind. As he had promised his friend he would help out, he only wanted to make sure he could complete the task. He thought of nothing else!

There was only a day’s time!

Without much funding!

He couldn’t go with traditional concepts!

It couldn’t have blood and gore!

It must not scare the non-smokers.

Yet, the key was that it still had to be frightening??

In Zhang Ye’s mind, he was racing through ideas as he filtered them with the conditions required. Very quickly, a classic ‘quit smoking’ public service announcement from his previous world presented itself to him—it was ad shown on Central TV from his previous world. At that time, compared to many other outstanding and creative quit smoking ads both locally and abroad, it was not the most humorous, nor was it the most interesting, and it did not even have a singular emphasis on creativeness or topic of interest about it. By analyzing the ad’s structure, it did not even seem to fall under the creative advertisement category. Overall, it was very dry and boring ad! But precisely because it was so simple, this quit smoking announcement that lasted for about a dozen seconds without even having a line of

narration in it was regarded by most smokers in that previous world of his as the most frightening quit smoking PSA in history. Countless smokers were so scared by that advertisement that, ever since they had watched it, they never took another puff again. This advertisement had at that time caused countless discussions!

This would be the one!

It did not even need an outdoor shoot, it had low production fees, did not require much manpower, and was simple to produce!

After comparing the dozens of quit smoking PSAs in his mind, Zhang Ye picked this advertisement without any hesitation. He stood up and quickly assigned tasks. "I need two people! Get me at least a thousand cigarettes. Most of the cigarettes can just be the ordinary yellow filter-type cigarette. But I need a hundred that don't have any clear markings on the filter and should be a solid yellow!"

"Ah? Solid color filter?"

"So you mean cigarettes without words and branding on the filter?"

"What did you mean by that?"

The first instruction had already left everyone unable to make heads or tails of it.

Sun Han immediately said, "Old Xu, Brother Hu, may I trouble the two of you in getting what Teacher Zhang needs?"

Two staff members from another department said, "Sure, since the head told us to come over to help out, we will follow your arrangements accordingly. It's best if the thousand cigarettes have no markings on the filters? Alright, leave it to us!" The two of them went off to get it done. Since they were both hardcore smokers, they knew exactly which brand of cigarettes to look for.

Zhang Ye continued, "Next, I need royalty-free background music so that I can use it as I please. The required music must sound gloomy, be slow, and feel sorrowful."

A youth raised a hand and said, "Let me handle that. It's my specialty."

Zhang Ye added, "I will need at least twenty samples of background music. After you have gathered them all, come to me so that I can decide which to use!"

A middle-aged woman from the advertising department said, "I'll help with that as well."

As the office could not accommodate so many people, the two of them went off to do their task after getting it.

Zhang Ye said hastily, "Reserve a recording location for me. As for the computer animation, design, and post-production equipment, get the preparations for those done as well. Everyone get back to their own respective working positions and make sure the tools are accessible at any time. Finally, the most important thing. I need a few of you who know 3D modeling, at least five of you, to help arrange these hundreds of cigarettes into the most realistic 3D model of the lung!"

Chapter 574 Unable to finish?

The tasks had been assigned accordingly.

But everyone was still a little confused.

Sun Han was a little taken aback. "Using cigarettes to make a 3D model?"

The old-young-sick-injured group's Comrade Old said, "And making a lung?"

"Yes. Everyone please make the most of your time now," Zhang Ye said. "I have to say this beforehand, but whoever can work overtime today, please do so. Also, if there's no compelling reason, could the four of you from the Public Service Announcement Department stay overnight? I will be staying myself as well, so let's be prepared to work all the way till morning! This will be a difficult battle as we don't have much time until the deadline, so we can only sacrifice our rest and sleep!"

"Alright then."

"I'm fine with that."

"I will follow Teacher Zhang's instructions!"

The four of them all acknowledged the need to work overtime.

His request for overtime was actually only directed towards the Public Service Announcement Department employees as the others who came to help with the production still had their basic duties to fulfill at work and it was unfair to ask them to do the same.

Soon after, everyone started getting busy in the office.

Lungs?

Using cigarettes to create a 3D model of lungs?

No one understood Zhang Ye's intent nor could they see what this advertisement would be about, but everyone executed their tasks accordingly as given by Zhang Ye. If Sun Han or any other person had given the orders, it might have been possible that not everyone would have put in their full trust and simply followed the instructions. But it was who Zhang Ye stood before them. First was his reputation and fame as a calligrapher, advertiser, literature writer, world class mathematician, etc, a whole host of titles to his name. Second, everyone knew he had a bad temper; even the newcomers to the television station felt intimidated. In the group of personnel which had come to help out, there were two people who had just joined the television station this year. When they started, Zhang Ye had already left the station. Even though they had not met or worked together before, they had still heard the countless stories concerning Zhang Ye—when he chased off a guest teacher during the lecture on the Three Kingdoms, his scolding of the leader, beating up the leader's son and creating trouble during a live broadcast. All of this led to his reputation preceding him. He was a legend to them.

With a variety of other reasons, many people instinctively feared Zhang Ye, knowing that he would even scold their mothers if it came to such a point!

"Where's the machine? Where is it?"

"Don't gather around here! It's too crowded!"

“Old Zhou, bring the guys and go to table three to work.”

“Someone get me a pen. Mine’s out of ink!”

The office was filled with the sounds of people working. Zhang Ye did not slack off either. He got Sun Han to bring him to the soundproofed recording studio where the ad would be filmed. By rights, the studio was not booked for the Public Service Announcement Department today, but after getting special approval from the station, Zhang Ye brought along his team to claim the recording studio for his own use after some haggling. Although the props were not ready yet, he had already begun outlining the settings as he took a notepad and pen out to do the storyboarding.

He opened up the game ring to buy a Memory Search Capsule and ate it to speedily find the original ad from his previous world. When he opened his eyes again, Zhang Ye immediately proceeded to draft the storyboard. He divided it into five key panels, sketching it out on the notepad. It was drawn very simply and crudely and looked like something that only Zhang Ye himself would understand. Every panel was labeled with some numbers, like time durations and other notes. All of this information would help him to better plan his production work. Since it was not the first time he was involved in advertisement production, he was familiar with all the tasks and planning involved. As such, he appeared very professional in handling his work.

“Teacher Zhang, does this background look suitable?”

“That part won’t do. Use a computer to create the background instead. I need it to look gloomier. Get them ready and don’t forget the smoke effects that need to be composited in. I need more variations of the smoke effects too. This is what both of you specialize in, right? OK, I will tell you in detail how the smoke should look like. It has to appear wispy, a little lighter, not too concentrated...”

In the blink of an eye, it was already time for lunch.

Some of them went downstairs to eat lunch while Zhang Ye and many others continued to do their work in the office. When Sun Han saw this, he got someone to order takeout to be delivered over so that everyone could eat.

Afternoon.

They finally got their hands on all the cigarettes.

“Unpack them!”

“Unpack everything.”

“Place them one by one into this box.”

Zhang Ye had to split his focus, sometimes checking on the progress at the fifth floor office, and at other times, heading to the recording studio to supervise the prop modeling.

Eventually, the background music was finished and ready. Two staff members brought three melancholic sounding arrangements for Zhang Ye to listen to. But after listening to them, he rejected them all and said, “These aren’t acceptable. I’ve already said I want at least 20 pieces of music to pick from. Please try a little harder! I need the music to be even slower!”

The female staff said, "But there are only these few music pieces in the library that fit the requirements you mentioned."

Zhang Ye said, "Then don't get them from the library." He looked at Sun Han and said, "Let the relevant departments in the station help out with this. Compose a piece of suitable music that we can use."

Sun Han was already sweating from fatigue. "Alright, I will try my best to get them to do so."

Zhang Ye quickly told him, "Don't try your best. You need to get it done no matter what. The ad will be a standalone piece and won't involve any narration, so I don't think I need to highlight the importance of the background music. The music will unite the whole ad and set its tone. It is the most important piece of the finished product, so we can't mess this up. Tell the station that we need some technical people to help us out on this. When you find them, let them come look for me. I will explain the requirements in detail to them. If even they can't do it, then we will pay an external company to get it done!"

Seeing Zhang Ye be so serious, Sun Han also straightened up. "OK, leave it to me!"

Zhang Ye's attitude had infected the others and made everyone feel very tense.

This was who Zhang Ye was. No matter what the issue was, whether it was his own problem or a problem he promised to help someone else with, he would not prioritize one over the other. He was the type of person who would do his best at whatever he did. This attitude of seeking perfection was rooted in his fundamentals since he debuted. He did not like to fool others, and had his own understanding and pursuits, especially when it came to art. Everything else could be discounted, but this was not one of them!

One hour...

Three hours...

Five hours...

It was already evening and time to clock out.

A large group of the staff from the other advertising department had already left. From 3 PM in the afternoon until 7 PM now, people had been gradually leaving and only a handful had voluntarily stayed behind to help out. It was only because Sun Han had spent all day talking and persuading many of them that they did not all leave at once. But this was clearly not a good long-term plan. At around 8 or 9 PM at night, many of the television station's departments had already switched off their lights and left work. The 5 or 6 people from the other departments who had stayed behind to help out could no longer endure it. After working on such a high tension job with a tight deadline for hours on end, who could endure it!?

They left as well.

Only Zhang Ye, Sun Han, and his team of the "awesome quartet" stayed behind.

Zhang Ye was not distracted by any of these issues as he continued to work on the 3D lung model which had already taken shape. He tweaked it a little here and there but was still unsatisfied with how it looked!

It didn't seem right!

It just didn't feel right!

The model was very similar to the one that was shown in the PSA from his previous world. The shape looked almost the same but it somehow lacked the same feel. This was a model of a pair of lungs that were made from thousands of cigarettes stacked together, but it obviously did not portray the feel of what lungs were like. Zhang Ye turned it around, looking at it from different angles, and even used a camera to test shots of it from multiple perspectives, but it still did not seem right!

Finally, Zhang Ye discovered the problem!

There was something wrong with the depth layering! This lung's arrangement looked too precise from the front! The cigarettes displayed at the front of the lung should have been unevenly layered, but right now it was just a flat surface. It had lost the essence of a three-dimensional object. That's why it did not have the feel of a lung!

They were done for!

A problem cropped up!

Zhang Ye took a deep breath and couldn't help admitting that this was a very big error on his part. He had thought too simply of it when he conveyed the requirements to the modelers. As it took time for the model to be assembled, Zhang Ye hadn't notice this problem earlier. But it seemed like it was too late now as the cigarettes used for modeling the lungs were fixed one-by-one onto a frame with glue. This made it almost impossible to do any modifications to it now as the glue had already dried and the cigarettes were all solidly in place!

Sun Han looked at him and asked, "What's the matter?"

The employee with the flu said, "Teacher Zhang, what happened?"

Zhang Ye did not look too good as he explained, "There's a flaw in the design. We can't use this prop anymore. We have to remake it!" This demonstrated how difficult it was to create an advertisement, because the tasks thought to be simple and easy to execute would sometimes turn out to be utterly difficult. It would have to be done all over again, and sometimes, it wasn't even as simple as redoing it once!

Old: "Ah?"

Young: "What?"

Sick: "This...this looks quite good though."

Injured: "Yeah, what's wrong with this?"

The four of them were dumbfounded.

It was getting so late already. Midnight was soon approaching. They had spent the entire morning and afternoon rushing, but now it looked like their hard work for the entire day had gone to waste?

Zhang Ye said, "We will redo this!"

Everyone was in despair now. They knew it was over, that this task would not be completed on time. A day was indeed not enough. Up until now, they still did not know what the ad would look like. But more importantly, the only prop to be used for the ad was even facing a design flaw? Wasn't this adding fuel to fire!

Sun Han also blanched. "The modelers have already left. H-h-how will we be able to remake this now? Besides, we've run out of cigarettes too. We wasted quite a lot of them when we were creating this model! Why don't we just make do and use this to finish our task first!"

Zhang Ye shook his head and said, "That won't do. Even if we use this model for the shoot, it won't have the desired effect. I know everyone is tired, but let's endure a little more!"

The intern girl clenched her teeth and said, "I'll go get the cigarettes! I know this brand and I've seen it at the 24-hour convenience store downstairs!"

The other staff members meanwhile continued busying themselves with work but it was obvious they had also felt the despair because of this problem, and were no longer holding out much hope for the project. So many of them had spent the entire day and night to make this model of the lungs, but there were only a few of them left now, and they felt totally drained and tired. Further, the modelers had left the office as well, so what else could they do? They couldn't even finish if they pulled an all-nighter, right?

Chapter 575 Tempting Fate!

At midnight.

The digital clock in the recording studio beeped to signal the time.

The cigarettes that were meant for the reconstruction of the model were brought back to the office as well. The awesome quartet had just started unpacking the cigarettes from their packs. Without the manpower from the morning and afternoon to help out, even the simple task of opening the packs to take the cigarettes out had taken them a long time to do. The more packs they opened, the more dispirited and tired they became.

Zhang Ye took a cig from the pile.

Sun Han lighted it for him then took one for himself as well.

At this time, Sun Han's phone rang. He answered the call and said, "Hello, Brother Chen....Has it been recorded already? Alright, alright. Thanks, you guys....OK...OK. I'll definitely treat everyone to a meal, definitely!"

Zhang Ye asked, "The background music is complete?"

Sun Han used the software in the recording studio to retrieve the music files. "Two of my friends from the station completed it after working overtime. There. I've received the files. Have a listen and see if they're alright. I think they've created them according to your requirements."

There were a total of 3 pieces of background music.

When Zhang Ye heard the first one, he rejected it. When he heard the second piece, his eyes narrowed and he said, "Good, this will be the one! I don't need to listen to the third one anymore!"

Sun Han heaved a sigh of relief. "That's good then, at least we have completed one task, but the others..."

Zhang Ye and Sun Han turned their heads and looked over to the few of them at the other side opening cigarette packs and taking out cigarettes. The oldest one of them was already lying down horizontally across a few chairs, the injured one with a cast was also reclining in a chair and had fallen asleep while nodding his head, looking like he would fall off the chair at any time.

Sun Han said, "I'll wake them up!"

"Forget it." Zhang Ye stopped him and looked at the others. "Everyone has been battling hard for more than 12 hours now. Even if they were ironmen, they wouldn't be able to bear it. If they're tired, just let them rest."

The staff member who had the flu clutched his forehead and said, "Brother Sun, Teacher Zhang, I can't take it anymore too. I'm sick and feel crazy dizzy." He stood up to excuse himself. He looked like he wasn't even unable to stand properly.

The intern girl was also at her limits, her eyelids drooping as she tried to battle her fatigue.

If they had been able to finish up everything just now, they might have been able to hang on a little more. But the problem now was that there was an issue with the prop and they were only several hours away from the morning deadline. They knew they couldn't make it in time. Exhaling their last breath of hope, their spirits were crushed as weariness took over completely.

Zhang Ye said calmly, "Go and rest."

The girl said, "I will just nap for half an hour. Then I'll be able to work again."

Zhang Ye looked at Sun Han who was also trying to hold out and told him, "You too. Go and rest."

"What about you?" Sun Han did not move.

Zhang Ye stamped on and extinguished his cigarette, then said, "Don't worry about me. I once recorded a program for more than 12 hours without stopping, so don't try to keep up with me like this."

Sun Han waved his hands and said, "That won't do. If you aren't going to rest, then I'll stay up together with you. Just let me know whatever you need me to help you with. It was already quite unsuitable that I called you to help us with this in the first place, so how could I leave you to work while I sleep? That doesn't make sense." He was about to light another cigarette to wake himself up a little more.

"Don't smoke anymore." Zhang Ye said without explaining. "You can go and nap for half an hour as well. I can see that you're feeling dizzy too. If you try to help out with the modeling, which requires steady hands, it'll be more troublesome if you're feeling dizzy. You won't be able to do much in your state, so go on and rest. I will wake you up in a bit."

Sun Han thought over the suggestion and could only reply, "Then...Alright, I'll get 30 minutes of shuteye. Remember to wake us up."

Zhang Ye nodded.

Sun Han then found a corner and pulled over a few chairs, placing them close together before lying down on them. He had only closed his eyes for a few seconds before he started snoring. He was that tired.

When Zhang Ye saw they had all fallen asleep, he went over to the intern girl to cover her with a jacket, afraid she would catch a cold. Although he said that he would wake them up in 30 minutes, he wasn't actually planning on doing so. They were already at their limits, whether it be physically or technically. Whatever work there was left, he was better off doing himself. He would just do whatever he could since he was used to working overtime anyway, and still had the strength to go on.

Let's get started then.

Zhang Ye walked over to the model frame and started to affix the cigarettes one by one. The previous design flaw had taught him a lesson and he already knew what the problem was, so he was sure that he wouldn't make the same mistake again. And so, using the flawed model as a guide, Zhang Ye started stacking up and affixing the cigarettes to a new frame again. It looked almost the same as the earlier model, except that it had a layering effect in the depth of the cigarettes. For example, the bottom of the lungs shouldn't stick out as much compared to the middle. With this added depth, it made the model appear three dimensional. Even though it was simple to explain, when it came to making the model, it was still a very complex operation. His hands needed to be very steady to make sure the cigarettes stuck well on the first try. Once the glue dried, there was no way to move it again. When that was done, he had to put another cigarette on top of the other. He did every step carefully.

One cig.

Ten cigs...

A hundred cigs...

Again and again.

Two hours passed.

Sun Han and the others were all sound asleep. Two of them were even snoring loudly, creating quite a good rhythm between themselves.

At 2 AM in the morning, Zhang Ye suddenly felt light-headed and started seeing spots in his vision. His hand were shaking so badly that a cigarette he was holding dropped to the floor. He also lost his balance for a second!

He was at his limits!

He could not hang on any longer!

Zhang Ye quickly drank a sip of water as his face turned pale. What should he do? There was no time left, but should he just give up like that? Just throw it aside so it would be out of his hands? How could he do that! If he hadn't promised them, it wouldn't have mattered to him. But he had already promised Hu Fei that he would do it, so how couldn't he finish it! He had to be credible!

He was getting increasingly tired and sleepy by the second!

Even for an ironman like Zhang Ye, he could not continuously focus with such intensity on a task for 13 or 14 hours straight. There were also times where he would feel tired as well.

Oh yes, there's that!

Suddenly, Zhang Ye remembered an item he had gotten from the lottery draw the last time. Other than the 1-Up and Fruit of Agility, he had also drawn 20 bottles of Strength Potion. Based on his experience with using the Health Potion and getting healed when he was involved in a fight with Wang Shuixin's son at Beijing Television Station, he felt that the Strength Potion would also let him regain his strength in the same way. He wondered if it would be useful in this situation!

He opened the inventory menu to retrieve a bottle of Strength Potion and gulped it down quickly.

The next moment, he felt a warm stream of energy surging from within and his blood flow seemingly increasing throughout this body. Zhang Ye's eyes brightened up as he balled his fists knowing that the potion had taken effect immediately. He recovered much of his strength and perked up again!

He continued to work!

121 cigs!

122 cigs!

Aiya, this one was a little out of place! He quickly removed and carefully stuck it on again!

144 cigs!

In the entire recording studio, he was the only one busy working.

.....

Outside.

The corridor had several sections where the fluorescent lights were dimmed. Other than the departments on duty, the whole building of the television station was almost fully dark. There were not many lights on in the silence of the night.

5 AM.

It was almost daybreak.

At the end of the corridor, some footsteps thudded.

"Station Head, I'm sorry we had to trouble you and make you come down here in the middle of the night over some small issues."

"If it has the potential to affect the television broadcast, then it is no small issue."

"You're right. This is my fault. I did not make the staff to get the equipment ready in advance."

"Hur hur, it's fine. Has it been fixed?"

"Yes, it's been fixed. The signal will restart in a short while."

"Alrighty then."

"You should hurry and go back to get some rest."

"I'm not going back again. I no longer feel tired."

A man and a woman were walking from a distance away.

The man who was in his forties looked like he was an assistant.

The woman was an old lady in her late fifties with a headful of white hair which did not look dirty or messy. Her short hair was neat and permed, making her look very spirited. Suddenly, the old lady spotted something ahead. "Oh, why are the lights on over there? That's the recording studio, isn't it? There's still someone doing a recording at this time?"

The middle-aged assistant was stunned. "That can't be. Maybe they forgot to switch off the lights? Who would be recording a program in the middle of the night?"

When the two of them approached, they saw that doors to the recording studio were left opened. Peeking in casually, they saw 4 or 5 people lying down on some chairs and a young man who was still awake. He seemed fully focused on a strangely shaped model, a pile of cigarettes at the side, though they did not know what he was doing.

The old lady asked curiously, "That kid looks familiar. Is he Zhang Ye?"

The middle-aged assistant was taken aback but replied, "That's him. Why is he...Oh, I know. Our station's 'quit smoking' PSA was withdrawn from airing. But since today is the World No Tobacco Day, and we were unable to come up with another ad in time, I heard that someone had requested that Zhang Ye come and help save the situation. He has been here since yesterday morning handling the ad's production." He had heard about Zhang Ye's time at the station from others. After all, Zhang Ye was one of the top C-list celebrities and was closely related with the television station due to the many incidents between them. Of course his presence at the station would not be kept hidden. Many people had even been talking about him yesterday during work.

The old lady said, "He started yesterday morning?"

The middle-aged assistant nodded. "When I came to work in the evening, I saw him busy working at the Advertising Department."

"It's almost the next morning now." The old lady glanced at her watch.

The middle-aged assistant anxiously replied, "Yes, why is Zhang Ye still working now? It's just him? He has been working continuously for the last 20 hours? Even a god wouldn't be able to take it! He's really risking his life for this!" He also knew that the station's quit smoking advertisement had been withdrawn and that they were in trouble. But even so, why would he tempt fate this way by working for 20 hours straight? And you're the only one left to do all the work? You...just what are you thinking!

The old lady asked, "How much did we pay him to take this urgent job?"

The middle-aged assistant gave a wry smile and said, "I think...nothing? He was asked by one of our satellite channel's producers to do a favor for the station. I heard from them that Zhang Ye did not ask for a single cent."

The old lady asked again to confirm, "Volunteering?"

"I suppose so," the middle-aged assistant answered ambiguously. Voluntary? Was there anyone who would tempt fate for a voluntary job! If something happened to you while you were incredibly tired, would it be worth it? Afraid that the station head had forgotten some past issues, he added, "Ever since Wang Shuixin's incident, Zhang Ye's relationship with the station hasn't been that good anymore. It was Deputy Station Head Wan who signed the letter firing Zhang Ye, so because of that, his relationship with us became quite bad. I'm still wondering why he agreed to help the station in this matter. He's even doing it so earnestly..." He spoke such, still unable to wrap his head around what was going on.

The old lady smiled and said, "I've heard a lot about this Zhang Ye, but this is the first time I've seen him at the station. From what you've just told me, I find that man quite interesting." She paused for a moment. "Go on ahead, Little Wu. You still have some work to do, so there's no need to keep accompanying me."

The middle-aged assistant said, "Station Head, what about you?"

A sparkle of curiosity glimmering in her eyes, the old lady said, "I'm going to stroll around a bit."

Chapter 576 Ad finished!

It was past 5 AM.

The effects of the Strength Potion was already wearing off. Although he had recovered quite a bit of strength in the middle of the night, that did not mean it wouldn't be used up. Zhang Ye was starting to yawn continuously but kept pinching his brows with his fingers to keep himself up so that he could continue sticking the cigarettes onto the prop.

One cig.

Another cig.

Just a little more!

Nearly there! Almost done!

Suddenly, Zhang Ye glimpsed the silhouette of a person who had appeared beside him at some point, which ended up sending shivers down his spine. He half screamed, "Woah!"

It was an amiable looking old lady with a headful of white hair.

Xu Yuhong said with a smile, "Did I give you a fright?"

Zhang Ye said casually, "I did get frightened since you didn't even make a sound when you walked in."

"It's not that I didn't make a sound, but rather because you were perhaps too focused," said Xu Yuhong.

"That's true." Zhang Ye continued his work and said, "But it was a good fright. I was almost unable to hold off my sleepiness any longer, but I'm good now since you got me there."

Xu Yuhong asked, "Why are you not resting?"

Zhang Ye looked at the cigarette in his hand before sticking it on, and answered her without turning to face her, "I would've slept if I could've. The problem here is that I can't since there's still a bunch of work that's waiting for me to finish. Which department are you from?"

Xu Yuhong spoke, "Me? I'm from upstairs."

Zhang Ye said, "From the Equipment Department? Are you working overtime or did you just get to work?"

Xu Yuhong smiled. "I've just arrived. You could say that I have an early shift today."

Zhang Ye said, "Then it must be hard on you. You haven't retired yet?"

Xu Yuhong sighed, "I can't retire yet, but I've still got some strength left in me. Besides, my grandchildren are still depending on me to raise them."

Zhang Ye said, "You still have some strength? At your age, you should be relaxing instead."

Xu Yuhong laughed. "I'm still healthy and in good shape."

"Really?" Zhang Ye looked at her.

Xu Yuhong nodded. "I just did a checkup at the beginning of the year. I'm as good as you young'uns."

Zhang Ye clapped and said, "You're that healthy? That's good then. Aunty, quick. Since you're here for work early and have nothing to do yet, do you see this box here? Help me take the cigarettes out one by one. When I glue one onto this model here, you pass a new one to me." Having said so, he had already designated a task for the old lady. "It'd be nice if you just took it out lightly and not squeeze it until it gets bent. Thanks, Aunty. I'll buy you a meal sometime. I'm afraid that I won't have enough time to complete this if I do it by myself. This task is really urgent!"

Xu Yuhong was stunned. "Huh?"

Zhang Ye said, "Please, Aunty."

Xu Yuhong said, "...Sure." She was tickled by what was happening here. She bowed over to take a cigarette out of the box, and gave it to him. "You're Zhang Ye, right? I've heard that you don't have a terribly good relationship with Beijing Television Station. This is their problem, so why are you so bothered about it?"

Zhang Ye took the cigarette from her and stuck it onto the model. "Heh, I'm not doing this for the television station. It's just Beijing Television Station, what's it got to do with me? If they were the ones who looked for me to help them, I wouldn't have cared even if they offered to pay me. This bro's advertisement productions cannot be bought by just money alone."

Xu Yuhong glanced at him and offered the next cigarette to him. "Then why?"

Zhang Ye said matter-of-factly, "For a friend. Brother Hu was the one who brought me into the television industry. Back when I had offended the radio networks and had no place to go, Brother Hu helped me by roping me into Beijing Television Station. It was right here that I managed to have a program of my own and raise my name. Do you think I would forget about it? Just a call from Brother Hu and I would agree to help him no matter what. There are some favors that one must repay no matter what. Moreover, I did not ask for a single cent from Beijing Television Station. Do you know why? Because I'm repaying the love I have for the station. That's why I agreed to take on this project. If I don't accept any money from them and in turn do them a favor, then I will no longer owe the station anything. I will have paid my dues. It doesn't matter if others care about this or know about this at all. As long as I'm comfortable with myself, it's good enough. I'm the kind of person who others may let down, but I must never let others down!"

Xu Yuhong narrowed her eyes and said, "So you still have some love for the station?"

Zhang Ye casually remarked, "I'm a born and bred Beijinger too. Since childhood, I've watched the programs on this station, so even if I say that I don't have any feelings for it, I doubt anyone would believe me. But what happened later definitely made me a little bitter. It's a complicated matter, yeah, but it's already in the past."

Xu Yuhong continued handing him the cigarettes as she said, "There isn't much time left till tomorrow's final approval deadline, right? You haven't even completed the prop yet and you're talking about recording the ad? It's almost dawn. I doubt you'll be able to finish it. Forget it. Why don't you drop what you're doing and let's sit down to have a chat." She turned to look for a chair.

Zhang Ye said, "Heh, didn't you say you were in good health? That you were as good as us young'uns? But you've just been here for a short time and you're already feeling tired? Don't tell me you were just boasting?"

Xu Yuhong: "....."

Zhang Ye said, "Aunty, help me for a little longer, won't you. A healthy lifestyle depends on exercise and this isn't even be considered heavy lifting. It's good for your body to move about and around."

"There's definitely not enough time," Xu Yuhong said helplessly.

Zhang Ye said with determination, "There's definitely enough time."

Xu Yuhong raised her hand and showed it to Zhang Ye. "Look at the time yourself."

Zhang Ye still smiled, and then said, "I don't need to see. There's definitely enough time."

Xu Yuhong asked, "Why are you so sure?"

Zhang Ye said, "Because I promised a friend I would do it. Besides, this ad doesn't involve me alone, so there can't be any mishaps. I've already made the promise, so I must carry it out. Would I have any face left otherwise? When Brother Hu helped me last time, he did not make any excuses or exploit me by taking advantage of my situation. Besides, I'm still full of energy now, so how can I just drop it like that? Even at the eleventh hour, I must do it even if I have to pay for it with my life!"

Xu Yuhong looked at him, then walked back again and took out another cigarette to pass to him. "You haven't slept in 24 hours already, right? You're tempting fate now. Are you sure you can handle it?"

"Yes." Zhang Ye's tone was very light but also quite determined.

Xu Yuhong acknowledged him and said, "Then I will help you all the way to the end."

One cig followed by another.

As he chatted with another person, Zhang Ye did not feel as sleepy anymore. The number of mistakes he made due to lack of concentration was also reduced. With every movement, he became more familiar with the repetitive motions which also helped speed things up.

91%!

93%!

96%!

Finally, the 3D model of the pair of lungs was complete!

Zhang Ye did not know what time it was nor did he bother to check. After he completed the model, he anxiously did a 360-degree check for any problems before also taking a camera and recording the full structure of the prop once over!

Finished!

Perfect!

Xu Yuhong looked at the model. "Is this a model of a pair of lungs? How are you intending to make this ad? The quit smoking ads these days are all quite similar. How can there still be any fresh ideas?"

Zhang Ye laughed. "You'll know when the video is done."

Xu Yuhong contemplated for a moment before saying, "What I'm curious about right now is how you intend to use the 3D model. You've spent so much effort to make this with pure manpower? Why didn't you use CGI instead? Why didn't you make a computer model? Isn't that more convenient? After you've completed the model, don't you still have to digitize it for the final shot?"

Zhang Ye was already setting up the video camera, "That's different. A computer is not everything. Some effects can only be realistically shown by using an actual item!"

All preparations done!

He switched on the camera and started recording!

He started off with a shot from the front, zooming in slowly. Next, for the partial shots, he experimented with many different angles to capture the footage. Even though Zhang Ye was not a professional camera operator, he still knew some of the skills. Besides, the ad footage was really simple to begin with since it did not involve any people nor any narration. There was just this prop model of a pair of lungs, so it didn't need a real professional camera operator to record the footage. It was a piece of cake!

After the initial shots were filmed, it was time for a more troublesome step. It was a long continuous take, so there couldn't be any hiccups. If he got it wrong, it would be a disaster as he would then need to build a new model again to reshoot the footage. After thinking about it for a while, Zhang Ye had a stroke of genius. He decided that he would experiment on the previously flawed model first.

He retrieved some props he had gotten others to prepare for him earlier and then laid out the storyboard he had "planned" to identify three ignition points on the 3D model pair of lungs. He then began. He first lit a part of it to test the self-assembled inhaling mechanism. It seemed to not work too well at first, so he made some adjustments after which everything went smoothly. Then he lit the second and third spots. All three ignition points were supposed to have different amounts of cigarettes that had to be lit and could not be the same as the others. Some needed two cigarettes to be lit while another spot needed ten.

10 minutes later, the test run was done.

Xu Yuhong, observing the whole process, had gradually revealed an amazed expression. "Little Zhang, I think I know what effect you're trying to achieve."

Zhang Ye was getting a little nervous at this point. "The next one will be the actual recording. I have to get it right in one take."

Xu Yuhong went up to him and said, "Let me help you with the camera. You look inexperienced and probably don't know how to operate it." She placed her hand on the equipment and switched some controls with a few clicks and clacks, pressing some buttons and then adjusting the screens, her actions not understood by Zhang Ye, but were definitely those of a professional.

Zhang Ye's eyes brightened. "Aunty, I'm depending on you then."

Xu Yuhong smiled and said, "Just pay attention to what you're doing over there and leave the rest to me."

Zhang Ye reminded her, "You better not miss the shot."

"Don't worry."

"Don't forget to press the record button."

"...I won't forget to do that."

"Are you really going to be OK?"

"...Are you going to light it or not?"

"Yes."

Zhang Ye gave a few more worried looks before finally kindling the fire. He was being very careful. At this moment, he held his breath, knowing that all the hard work in the past 24 hours was for this one take!

The fire lit!

The three ignition spots started to burn!

Xu Yuhong adjusted the lenses, slowly changing focus while signaling with her hand.

Seeing that, Zhang Ye pressed button on the self-assembled inhaling mechanism and the ignited spots burned brighter, adding a more dramatic feel to the burning sequence. Inhale. The ignited spots burned brighter. Inhale again. The ignited points burned brighter again!

Soon after, the recording was completed!

Zhang Ye quickly ran over to check out the finished product. When he saw that the old lady had perfectly recorded everything he had wanted, he couldn't conceal his excitement any longer. He retrieved the recorded footage and quickly went into a workstation to do the post-production! Most of the remaining work was done earlier by the technical staff from the Advertising Department. All he needed to do now was put them together!

Zhang Ye furiously tapped away at the computer. His capabilities in network technology needed no mentioning. After all he was the famous "2", a globally wanted hacker. But when it came to ordinary technical skills like 3D object manipulation, they were not something he dared flatter himself on. He was only as good as the typical student doing a non-computer related major.

Seeing his clumsy handling, Xu Yuhong couldn't help but say, "Come on, let me do it instead."

"You even know how to do this?" Zhang Ye was a little stunned.

Xu Yuhong smiled and replied, "I worked as a reporter, an editor, and many other related jobs in the television industry when I was young. Although I don't use them often, my basics still exist. So this won't trouble me at all. Just sit down beside me and tell me what your concept is. You are the supervisor while I edit it according to your concept."

Zhang Ye thought to himself, wondering why an old lady who was in charge of equipment would be so versatile and talented in so many areas??

Chapter 577 This old lady is the Station Head?

Morning, 7 AM.

The sun had risen.

The day shift hosts, cleaners, and others were trickling in for work. The various departments in Beijing Television Station were starting a new day. Each department's offices lighted up.

.....

In the recording studio.

Zhang Ye put away the props and equipment one by one and cleared the room. There were still other teams who needed to use the recording studio afterwards as they had only booked the studio until 8 AM. This was why he made space for them by clearing his team's stuff away. After more or less cleaning the studio, Zhang Ye sat down in a chair feeling totally exhausted. He felt as though his hands and feet did not physically belong to him anymore. Yet as he sat there, his eyes did not show a hint of tiredness. In fact, they even gleamed brightly because he had completed what others thought was an impossible task!

Finished!

The ad production had been completed!

Zhang Ye turned to the side and said, "Auntie, I just want to thank you for all your help. I'll let the team know to put in a good word for you and give you the credit you deserve for helping out in the production of this ad. Hopefully, the Equipment Department people will give you a promotion as well, ha."

Xu Yuhong smiled and said, "There's no need for that."

"Of course I need to. You've been such a great help," Zhang Ye insisted.

Xu Yuhong shook her head. "I can't be promoted anymore."

Zhang Ye said, "Yo, you've offended someone upstairs too? Who did you offend?"

Xu Yuhong said in amusement, "I should be asking you instead. Who did I offend?"

"Then why can't an old employee like you who oversees the equipment get promoted? They should at least give you a pay raise. Don't be bothered by me. I will definitely help you get a raise. Although I may not have a good relationship with the station and my personal relationships with people are also kind of poor, a small matter like that won't be an issue." Zhang Ye said, "Besides, you're an old lady with such well-rounded technical skills while at the same time so versatile and talented. It's such a waste staying in the Equipment Department."

Xu Yuhong laughed lightly. "Thank you for your praise."

Suddenly, the snoring nearby stopped.

Sun Han woke and quickly sat up in his chair. His first instinct was to look at his watch, but when he saw the time, he was stunned. He exclaimed loudly, "Aiyo! It's almost 8 AM!"

With this loud voice shouting for all to hear, the others were also roused.

The old-young-sick-injured quartet who were just transitioning from waking up were also freaked out by this!

"Teacher Zhang!"

"It's morning already?"

"You, why didn't you wake us up!"

"Yeah, didn't you say you'd rouse us after 30 minutes!?"

Even though Sun Han and his team knew that if the ad was not completed on time, they would receive some form rather heavy punishment while Beijing Television Station would also face a hefty fine or a warning from the authorities. But punishment was just punishment. However, attitude was something else. If Zhang Ye was willing to come volunteer and help out for free without even getting any rest, then how did they deserve to rest for a good six to seven hours? It did not seem right at all.

But Zhang Ye did not make much of it and just said, "It's fine. I saw that you were all really tired. And since you guys wouldn't be able to help much even if you were awake, I decided not to wake you all up."

Sun Han looked apologetic. "With the deadline we were facing, yet we still..."

The intern girl was also flushed from embarrassment. "We are so sorry, Teacher Zhang. We made you do all the work by yourself. Have you been working all this time without rest since midnight?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "I can still take it. I'm used to working overtime anyway."

Although the ad could not be completed, Sun Han was also thoroughly convinced by Zhang Ye about this matter. There were stories about Zhang Ye and his incidents that were talked about within the station. It was known that he had always been a very disputed character. There were also a lot of criticisms of him, but when face-to-face and having interacted with Zhang Ye directly, Sun Han realized that Zhang Ye was totally different from hearsay or his preconceived notions. From just this incident alone, it could be seen that Zhang Ye was a person who valued friendship a lot. When his ex-leader called him and requested his help, he immediately got down to working, and did so for 24 hours straight without rest or any grumbling. Even though the ad was not finished, he had still tried his best till the very end. Sun Han felt that if he had a friend like Zhang Ye, he would surely be considered a lucky person.

"Sorry, Teacher Zhang. We made you work so hard for nothing." Before he could finish saying what he wanted, Sun Han suddenly caught sight of someone in the corner of his eye. It was an old lady!

Eh?

Why does this person look so familiar?

Suddenly, Sun Han wore an expression of shock. "...Station Head!?"

The old-young-sick-injured quartet also saw her and called out in unison, "Station Head!"

When Zhang Ye heard this greeting, he suddenly felt as though he did not understand what the situation was. Dammit! What the hell is this? Station Head? What station head? Her? This old lady??

Xu Yuhong laughed for a bit and said, "Good morning. All of you have worked hard."

Sun Han quickly answered, "It's nothing, it's nothing. This is our job. What...what brought you here?"

Xu Yuhong said, "Me? I was just passing by; it's nothing important. I'm going back now." After that, she did not say anything else and just strolled out of the recording studio.

Only to leave Zhang Ye staring with his eyes and mouth wide open at the old lady's retreating image!

The leader of Beijing Television Station, Station Head Xu Yuhong...that was her??

Zhang Ye was of course not unfamiliar with this name since he had heard it before. But as he had never seen her before, he could never have expected that the old lady from the "Equipment Department" he had been dealing with was in fact the Station Head of Beijing Television Station. But didn't she mention something about working upstairs? Thinking about it now, it wasn't just the equipment room upstairs. The upstairs of upstairs of upstairs of upstairs was exactly where the the station head's office was at! F**k! No wonder! No wonder this old lady was so well-versed in using the computer and even knew all

those technical skills among other things. If he had thought about it earlier, he should have known that she couldn't possibly be someone who took care of the equipment! An old lady at that age, how could she have had so much knowledge on complex issues like these? How could she have such strong learning capability? She definitely must have been from one of the early batches of university students in China! Being a university student at that time was a very different concept to the current university student. Anyone who was good enough to qualify for university at that era was definitely a rarity, a (wo)man amongst dragons and phoenixes. They were surely not your typical everyday people. Even if they didn't do too well, they couldn't possibly be relegated to only taking care of the equipment, right?

Good god!

The person he ordered around for several hours to do menial jobs turned out to be the highest-ranking leader in all of Beijing Television Station? He had been making the station head do things for him? He had been instructing her to do this and that all this while? Oh, in the whole of the television station, no, in any industry, no one else would have dared to do that!

When Zhang Ye remembered that he even mentioned that he would put in a good word for her to get her a pay raise, even he couldn't help but find it amusing. The salary of a station head was decided by the country, so how could he even have a say in something like that!

How mean!

That old lady was truly too mean!

When the station head left, Sun Han immediately felt more comfortable and quickly asked, "Teacher Zhang, why did the station head come over here? Was she here to supervise the quit smoking ad production?"

"Ah, yes." Zhang Ye said ambiguously. He was definitely too ashamed to tell them that he had been ordering her about for the past three hours.

Sun Han and the awesome quartet all looked at each other, thinking that they were surely done for this time. Even the Station Head had attached such importance to this PSA and they had yet to finish it. They were definitely going to get into trouble this time!

Zhang Ye said, "Let's pack up and go back to the office for now."

As their things had already been sorted, everyone just took a box and carried them upstairs.

Chapter 578: Petrified!

At the television station.

On the fifth floor where the Advertising Department was located.

The "World No Tobacco Day" public service announcement was expected to be released around noon, so the deadline was between 8 and 9 AM. They were to submit the end result for approval. Only after that would the ad be allowed to be broadcast on TV. Hence, at this moment, there were already two leaders from Advertising Department waiting there. This was a first time 'public service announcement crisis' for Beijing Television Station. Because of this, those two were anxiously waiting for the Public Service Announcement Department to submit the finished product.

“Where are they?”

“Why aren’t they here yet?”

“Are they at the recording studio?”

“Are they still recording?”

“It’s over. They won’t make it on time.”

Some staff members of the Advertising Department who had helped out yesterday afternoon deliberately arrived at work earlier to see if there was anything more they could do to help. When they saw that there was no one in the office and sensed the atmosphere, they felt that they were probably not needed anymore, since there was probably nothing they could do anyway.

Sun Han carried a box and proceeded upstairs.

“Little Sun.” One of the Advertising Department’s deputy heads said anxiously, “How’d it go? Everyone is waiting for the ad. Did you guys manage to complete it?”

The deputy director of the Advertising Department asked with a serious face, “Is it not finished?”

Sun Han sighed and answered, “Leader, I’m sorry, it’s my fault.”

The deputy director’s expression changed and said, “Didn’t I send over a lot of help yesterday? Why did it still...never mind.” As he spoke, his tone also calmed. As a leader of an advertising agency, he certainly knew how much time and effort was required to produce an ad. Even with a day’s time, a roughly put together advertisement would be difficult to produce, even more so for an advertisement that had to be reshot to fit the new regulations. Before they had started on this project, everyone had already believed that this was an impossible task. This was a project that no advertising company wanted to take on. So no one had actually placed much hope on it being completed. Now that it hadn’t been, it was still completely within reason.

The intern girl who had followed them upstairs said, “Teacher Zhang has already tried his best and had worked without sleep for 24 hours!” Most people would probably be able to survive without sleep for a whole day and night, but one prerequisite was the absence of physical and mental exertion. Just compare watching movies that interest you for 24 hours straight while taking breaks to work for a bit, versus working intensively for 24 hours straight. These two were totally different notions similar to the difference between heaven and earth.

When the people from the Advertising Department heard that, they drew a deep breath.

“24 hours just to battle against the deadline?”

“Zhang Ye really risked his life for this!”

“Hai, it wasn’t easy for Zhang Ye either.”

“No one could’ve completed this task since the time given was too short.”

“We’re done for. We’ll surely get fined this time.”

"When the media starts to report on this, the reputation of Beijing Television Station will surely be affected. It feels like these new policies were targeted at us."

"Stop grumbling. Just count ourselves unlucky."

"If we had another day's time, there might've still been some hope."

"Don't say anymore, hai. We've already done our best."

"Yeah, we did all that we could've done. If we can't complete it, then that's that. It's life."

The people from the Advertising Department were ready to disperse.

When the person in charge of submitting the ad for approval saw this, he also sighed and turned to leave with the other leaders.

But right at this point, Zhang Ye came upstairs. Noticing everyone's behavior, he felt very surprised and said, "Huh, why are there so many people here? What's the matter? Where're you guys going?"

The person in charge of the approval process comforted him by saying, "Teacher Zhang, thanks for your effort. When we were faced with such a difficult situation, you still came back to help us." He had worked with him before, during the electricity conservation public service announcement. Even though they did not know each other very well, they had still spoken a little before.

Sun Han also said, "Thank you."

It wasn't known when Hu Fei had arrived, but when he did, he walked straight up to Zhang Ye and said, "Little Zhang, you've already done your best."

Zhang Ye was nearly confused by them, and didn't know how to respond. Then he said, "What are you all talking about? When did I say I didn't finish the ad?"

The intern girl was shocked. "Ah?"

Sun Han blinked a few times and said, "Weren't there some problems with the prop?"

"There was." Zhang Ye laughed. "But overnight, I completed another prop which met the requirements. Oh, aren't you already carrying it in that box in your hands? Didn't I already state that since I'd agreed to handle this project, I would make sure that it would be completed and done to its best? So why did you all think that I wouldn't finish it?"

Hu Fei said in surprise, "What?"

Sun Han was overwhelmed with excitement and said, "You, you did it all by yourself?"

"Not only that." Zhang Ye said confidently, "In fact, it is also the version I am most satisfied with. At least I feel that it is hard to find fault with."

The deputy director of the Advertising Department quickly asked, "Where is it?"

Zhang Ye waved the laptop in his hand around.

"Quick, let's have a look at it!" The leader also had not expected that he would really manage to do it.

Everyone walked to the office where there was a proper projector and display screen equipment.

Suddenly, there were seven or eight people coming over from the opposite side. When everyone took a look at who it was, they were surprised to see Station Head Xu Yuhong, walking over along with two station leaders and staff members from the Station Head's office.

The station leaders were coming!

"Station Head!" everyone quickly greeted.

Xu Yuhong smiled and asked, "Is the final version of the ad ready?"

The deputy director of the Advertising Department said, "Teacher Zhang Ye said that it's finished. We were just going to have a look at it. If it's good enough, we'll send it for approval and then arrange the broadcast."

Xu Yuhong nodded. "OK, let's watch it together then."

As even the station head had joined them, when the director of the Advertising Department and many other leaders of the other departments learned of it, they also hurried over to join them. The whole station's middle and upper management team, together with the people from the Advertising Department were all gathered in a large office, seated and waiting for the showing of the PSA.

Zhang Ye glanced at Xu Yuhong and nodded to her.

Xu Yuhong smiled lightly and nodded back at him.

Zhang Ye tested the equipment, then connected the signal feed. As it was necessary to hook up the amplifier as well, he tinkered with the configuration for a few minutes.

While everyone sat there waiting, a station leader asked for permission from Xu Yuhong, and seeing her give nod of approval, he lit a cigarette. A few of the other leaders who were also heavy smokers also secretly lit their cigarettes.

A while later.

With the background music drifting out from the speakers, the PSA began!

"It's beginning!"

"Everyone, quiet!"

"Put your cell phones on silent."

Everyone stared at the big screen not blinking, curious to see the final product. Although Zhang Ye had claimed that the ad was completed, they still wouldn't quite believe it unless they saw it with their own eyes. In just such a short time, in a situation where only Zhang Ye alone was left working on it, what kind of public service announcement could he have possibly made? The staff who were involved in the ad's production knew that there was not a single line of narration nor any character scenes in it. It only had one unique prop, of which no one could understand purpose of, in the ad. If this was the one and only prop used in the PSA, would it work? No one knew what kind of style Zhang Ye's ad would have!

At the next moment, the ad was unveiled!

It was introduced by a gloomy sounding piece of music, done according to the original PSA's background music in his previous world. Sun Han had found some people from the station to help create it by working overtime. As they had spent a lot of effort on it, this effort could also be felt when it was presented in this final copy of the ad.

The first image appeared showing a shot of part of a cigarette.

The second set of images showed the cigarettes being stacked on top of each other but nothing much could be deduced from this.

Sun Han wiped away his sweat and said, "What is this?"

The awesome quartet asked, "What are these images trying to show?"

"I don't understand it." The other advertising professionals also showed some expressions of disappointment. There was no narration, no characters, no "smoking is hazardous to the health" statements. There weren't even any statistics of the millions of deaths each year, so how could this still be called a quit smoking public service announcement? How could there be such a quit smoking announcement!

They began whispering among themselves.

Several of the leaders from the Advertising Department also had some suspicions about it. This was the first time they had doubted the standard of Zhang Ye's advertisement product, because from the first five seconds of this ad, it showed just how odd it was. It was really too off from the beaten path. Up until here, they could not even see how this was a quit smoking ad. Besides, how long could a public service announcement run for? Their task this time had stated that the ad would be limited to about fifteen seconds, of which five seconds had already been wasted up for this? They were no longer expecting much of the effects of the latter part of the ad!

However, just as everyone was revealing their disappointed expressions, at the very next second, an image silenced all the gossiping in the audience!

Everyone fell silent!

Because a pair of lungs composed of cigarettes had appeared on the screen and looked overly realistic. Even though they knew the lungs were formed out of cigarettes and was fake, the 3D composition and situational meaning of it left many shaken and stunned. In addition, the densely packed cigarettes formed an intense image that left anyone with a fear of holes too afraid to look!

At this moment, the cigarettes started to burn!

One spot flared up, followed by a second and third point flaming!

On the lungs, the parts where it had been lit started to give off faint wisps of smoke. What chilled everyone to the bone was the introduction of a breathing track laid over the background music!

Ssh!

Huu!

Ssh!

Huu!

A station leader who was smoking suddenly felt shivers go down his spine. The cigarette in his hand fell to the ground!

With every slow breath, the three points aflame on the lungs reacted like how a cigarette would burn brighter with every breath. The cigarettes burned constantly, with the tendency to spread to the other cigarettes. At the beginning, it was only one cigarette burning, then along with the breathing track, the other cigarettes making up the rest of the “lungs” also started to burn, increasing the range of the smolder. As the cigarettes burnt out bit by bit, the formation of the ashes also got wider!

Breathe in...

Burn...

Breathe in...

Burn...

The entire “lung” started to emit smoke!

A few others who were smoking in the office also broke out into cold sweats and quickly threw away the cigarettes in their hands as their faces quickly paled!

F**k!

What the f**k was this ad!

Towards the end, the “lungs” fully burned out, followed by a coughing track before a few lines appeared across the screen: “Please quit smoking. Give life a chance, make a new choice”!

The end.

The PSA ended. 1

Chapter 579 I’ll have a smoke to calm my nerves!

[collapse]

When the PSA ended, the entire office was in a state of utter silence!

If one described this situation in detail, it was perhaps not the type of excited silence you’d expect from watching your favorite ball team winning the championships, nor the silence you’d get from being shocked from witnessing something extremely amazing happening before you. More accurately, it should be similar to the experience of you being yourself and doing whatever you were doing for one moment, when suddenly, you receive a medical update about yourself from the hospital that tells you that you only have a few days left to live—this was the atmosphere that was spreading throughout the office at this very moment!

One second...

Two seconds...

Finally, someone made a sound!

The old comrade from the Public Service Announcement Department suddenly cried out without warning, “Aiyo, my god!” and then abruptly clutched his chest as if his lungs suddenly hurt!

“Why is there the smell of cigarettes?”

“Quickly open the windows to air out the room!”

“Stop smoking! The harmful effects of secondhand smoke are greater than smoking itself!”

“Yea, stop smoking! Damn, that really gave me a fright!”

“This ad is just too...it just leaves me totally speechless with no reply!”

“I can’t take it anymore! I feel like my lungs are on fire right now! How is this even a PSA? It won’t be held accountable if any of us get scared to death! And it’s not even scaring us visually! This really terrifies me on a visceral level! When I used to watch horror films, especially those Japanese horror films, I’d never even experienced this kind of feeling before. Not only does it feel fearful, there’s even a feeling of disgust and a chill that spreads throughout my body, as though there’s something crawling in my lungs!”

“That’s right. If you’re a non-smoker, you won’t understand that feeling! I was still wondering! I wondered why Teacher Zhang would ask to make such a prop! So that was how he planned to use it!”

“This...”

“This PSA is too ‘bloody’!”

“There’s no blood nor any images of a real blackened lung, but why is it that even though we know it’s just a model lung, it feels even scarier than a real lung!”

“I can’t take it anymore! I need a break!”

“Having made so many ads before, this is the first time I’ve seen one like this—after watching it once, I do not wish to ever see it again!”

“Does it need to be so aggressive!”

“How exciting!”

“They’ve really upped the ante this time!”

For someone who didn’t usually smoke, it was still fine. But for those who were regular smokers, especially the hardcore ones, they had at this time started to panic. They could feel something disturbing enveloping them and couldn’t shake the feeling no matter what. With every breath, they would inadvertently remember the PSA and those lifelike burning lungs with the nauseating looking ashes embedded within them. That sense of fear was really difficult to describe in words!

Sun Han was also frightened quite badly by it. Only now did he understand the reason why Zhang Ye had given those series of tasks for them to do in the production process!

In just a day!

For a 15-second duration!

A full ad was made without any flaws!

He swore that, even among other foreign quit smoking ads, he had never seen a public service announcement that had been done this way. An ad that could be made in such a way—could it even be considered a creative ad? Technically speaking, it simply did not fulfill the criteria for creative advertising, but Sun Han knew that this was really creative advertising. It wasn't even the normal kind of creative advertising but one that would make others shout, an amazing, ground-breaking new form of creativity!

How extreme!

This PSA was really too damn extreme!

Many of the people had now turned their focus to Zhang Ye, wondering how his mind had developed to such a level. Could it be that the structure of his brain was different from any other normal person's? A PSA that could even be called an exemplary global public service announcement, an ad that no other creative professional had ever produced. And yet, all of these had come from a person who wasn't even considered a creative professional? It was in fact produced by someone who was a broadcast host?

Suddenly, Xu Yuhong slowly stood up and started clapping while smiling.

When the others saw this, they stood up quickly and started clapping as well. In the blink of an eye, applause echoed through entire office! The other station leaders were still unsure of what to think, but when they saw the station head clapping, they also followed suit. However, the staff from the Advertising Department were truly impressed and were really clapping sincerely for this PSA and for Zhang Ye, a man who had offered his hand out to them when they were in trouble, who had still battled on without conceding even when others had given up, who had produced an ad so great that it left them industry professionals in the dust! He was too awesome!

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Looks like everyone is satisfied with it. That's good enough."

The auditor on the approval board was also very excited. "I'll send it in for approval immediately and report it to the authorities. If this ad doesn't pass, then I doubt any other ad would get approved!"

Sun Han was very emotional as he went forward and shook Zhang Ye's hand. "Teacher Zhang! Thank you! Thank you!"

Zhang Ye waved his hand and said, "It's not my credit alone. The colleagues from the Advertising Department who came to help out yesterday, you and your team, the staff members who helped to compose the background music, it was all due to everyone's hard work. If had just been me alone, then I couldn't have completed it even if I had worked nonstop for three days and night without rest. So don't thank me."

Sun Han said, "Without you, we couldn't have finished it at all!"

The intern girl whose eyes were already reddening said, "We really did it!"

"That's right!"

"We really did it!"

Many of those in the office were unable to hide their excited state, especially Sun Han and the others from the Public Service Announcement Department. This impossible task was delegated to them and they were responsible for it. They participated in the entire production and understood better than anyone else how difficult this process had been. At midnight, they were still battling to complete the ad, but after realizing that there was a problem with the prop, it could be imagined just how they felt when they suffered this setback. Today, at the very last second, with the help from Zhang Ye, they had miraculously completed the PSA. The feelings they had now were probably only understood by them.

"Thank you!"

"Teacher Zhang, thank you so much!"

"You're really too awesome!"

"Compared to us, you are the one who seems more like an advertising professional!"

Many of the staff from the Advertising Department also came to thank Zhang Ye as the Public Service Announcement Department was considered to be part of it. Zhang Ye's offer to help the PSA Department for free was equivalent to helping the Advertising Department. Having worked a whole day and night without rest, they definitely needed to thank him for all the hard work.

Over at the other side, Xu Yuhong suddenly asked without warning, "Little Zhang, you did this voluntarily?"

When Sun Han heard this and noticed the station head's concern, he immediately answered for him, "Yes, that's right. Teacher Zhang didn't ask for a single red cent. We had initially wanted to pay him for the production fee, but..."

Zhang Ye said indifferently, "Since this is public service, why would I want money for it?"

Xu Yuhong nodded lightly. "Then how about this: We will make a small edit at the end of the advertisement. Let's add a 'produced by Zhang Ye' at the bottom of the screen or something similar to that."

Zhang Ye eyes widened. Eh? A great offer like this exists?

One of the station leaders did not quite agree with this and said, "Station Head, there's no precedent to handling PSAs that way."

Another leader also added, "Yes, using a person's name in a PSA. Is that...acceptable?"

Xu Yuhong explained, "In the conditions of a company sponsorship, they can add their name into the PSA, as long as it doesn't exceed the recommended duration, so it should be the same for individuals. I understand that this idea came from Little Zhang and he was also the one who contributed the most to

its production, so we can consider this ad as sponsored by him. As a member of the public, that shouldn't be a problem at all."

With the station head's approval, no one else dared to say anything.

But Sun Han was very satisfied with this outcome. At least they hadn't let Teacher Zhang do all this for nothing. It might only be a credit roll for him, but the meaning of it was very significant. Since he knew Zhang Ye's ambitions laid in the entertainment circle, having additional exposure would guarantee the advancement of his fame and career. Besides, because of Zhang Ye's involvement in the Peking University incident a few days ago, he had been targeted by many from the media, as well as expert academics, who criticized him for crossing the line this time. With his contribution to this public service announcement, it would help reclaim a little bit of reputation for him. In short, this was surely a good thing for Zhang Ye.

The station leaders left.

There were still quite a lot of people who stayed behind to add the finishing touches to the ad. As a whole, there was nothing that needed changing, but some of the finer details that could be improved were improved. The end credit "Produced by Zhang Ye" was added in as well.

The advertisement was screened for the second time.

Some of the more cowardly smokers chose to leave the office before it started.

"You guys can continue working on it."

"There should be enough manpower, right?"

"Since we have enough people here, I will go back first. I still have some work to handle."

"Ahem, this...I, I need to go to the toilet."

Even if some one of them knew it was their job, they did not want to see the PSA a second time. They were afraid that if they did they wouldn't be able to fall asleep at night!

However, Zhang Ye did not seem to have any reaction to this. Up until now, he had resisted the fatigue as he did not want to waste another Strength Potion. With every bottle he drank, he had one less in his inventory. Even though each bottle had only cost him 100,000 reputation points, these items were easily used up, so he had to treasure each and every one of them. He had to use them in the right situations, and as such, could only use cigarettes to battle his drooping eyelids. He took one out and lit it, and was soon exhaling clouds of smoke from his mouth.

A few people beside him immediately distanced themselves from him.

Sun Han was dumbfounded. "You can still smoke while you're watching this ad?"

The awesome quartet also expressed their shock at this. "Teacher Zhang, aren't you scared?"

All the other Advertising Department staff members watched.

Zhang Ye looked at them and said, "Me? Of course I'm scared!"

Hu Fei, who had stayed behind, asked in a speechless manner, “Then why are you still smoking?”

Zhang Ye said confidently, “It’s precisely because I’m so scared that I need to smoke this cigarette to calm my nerves.”

Sun Han: “.....”

Hu Fei: “.....”

The old-young-sick-crippled group: “.....”

Everyone else from the Advertising Department: “.....”

This is indeed an example of the talented being bolder!

Chapter 580 Scaring the whole country!

9 AM in the morning.

Zhang Ye’s parents’ home district.

Zhang Ye got out his car very tired. He continuously yawned as he tried to stifle it with his hand. He slowly stumbled into the apartment’s corridor and proceeded to head upstairs. On the way up, he took his cell phone out to check on the latest news. Since he did not see any interesting headlines, he entered his own name using one hand and made a search. When the search results were displayed, he saw a headline in the news section which matched what he was searching for. It wasn’t an eye-catching news headline but was posted on a web portal three hours earlier. It was possible that the number of people who read it didn’t number that many either as the news content wasn’t too interesting.

—“Zhang Ye Appears at Beijing Television Station”

Some of the pictures posted in the article were taken in the television station’s lobby.

The content of the article was nothing more than the usual gossip as it recounted the feud between Zhang Ye and Beijing Television Station. One by one, examples were listed, and at the end of the article, it also expressed doubts and speculated unreliably about Zhang Ye’s appearance at the Beijing Television Station’s lobby.

Although this news article did not attract much attention, Zhang Ye still felt quite happy when he saw it. The reason was very simple. He had become more aware now that his popularity was no longer the same as before. Back when he had debuted, even if Zhang Ye had some amazing accomplishments, he couldn’t get onto the headlines. Later on, he managed to get onto the headlines more whenever he caused trouble. However, those were still limited to the times when he caused a big enough incident to be mentioned. But now, even when Zhang Ye did not do anything for the past two days and only showed his face at Beijing Television Station, he still caught the media’s attention and they reported on this news. Disregarding the fact of whether anyone would read this news or not, the simple fact that they even bothered to report it showed that his popularity had risen by a lot!

If someone could only get onto the news after causing big trouble, then they could only be considered a common celebrity. However, if you could even get onto the news without doing anything, then you would be considered as a successful celebrity, and that was exactly what Zhang Ye was right now!

At home.

His mother was at home today as it was her day off.

"Why didn't you come all of last night?" His mother stared at him.

Zhang Ye said, "Hai, I was helping a friend with something and had to work overtime."

His mother reminded him, "Next time remember to give us a call if you are not coming back. Don't make us stay up for nothing. We wanted to call you but were afraid you might be busy."

"I know, Mom, it's my fault." Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Don't say anymore. I have to catch up on sleep. Wake me when it's 12."

His mother glanced at him. "What do you want for lunch?"

Zhang Ye sweet-talked her, "I like any food you cook."

"Go to sleep. Don't always work overnight in the future," his mother said.

When he got to his room, Zhang Ye removed only his shoes and pants. He didn't even take his shirt but immediately dropped onto the bed instead and fell into a deep sleep. Zhang Ye was very obviously worn out.

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In the afternoon.

Warm rays of sunlight shone through the window.

Zhang Ye was sound asleep and even smacked his lips in satisfaction as he slept, rolling around in bed comfortably. Then someone suddenly knocked on the bedroom door and he heard his mother's voice.

"Son!"

"...Mmm."

"Time for lunch."

"...Mmm."

"Wake up quickly."

"Uh, I'm coming."

Obviously, Zhang Ye hadn't had enough rest yet but he still climbed out of bed to eat lunch. When he came out, he immediately switched on the television and tuned in to BTV-1. He definitely wanted to check out the results of the production that he worked so hard on for 24 hours without rest. It could also be considered attending the "premiere" of his PSA.

His mother noticed and asked, "What news are you waiting for?"

Zhang Ye smiled. "A public service announcement. Just wait and see."

His mother asked, "The one you did?"

“Yeah, this is the ad I am most satisfied with so far, hurhur.” Zhang Ye laughed as he ate and said, “However, others might not like it.”

His mother was a bit speechless. “Then why are you so happy?”

Zhang Ye laughed wickedly. “Well, it’s supposed to make them dislike it after watching. This is a quit smoking public service announcement. If people do not feel scared after watching it, then what is the purpose of having this PSA? Just watch. I can’t say that it will scare everyone, but I can guarantee that at least half of those who watch the PSA will have their hearts shiver!

His mother also looked forward to watching it after hearing her son say that. She picked up the landline and made some calls to a few relatives. “Hello, Little Ye’s Third Aunt...are you at home? Hur hur, Little Ye has released another work. It’s a PSA on BTV-1. I just wanted to tell you...Right, starting soon....OK.”

Whenever Zhang Ye had new achievements or works, as long as they weren’t scolding people or fighting sorts of things, his mother would always inform her friends and family.

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On the internet.

Since it was “World No Tobacco Day” today, there was definitely no lack of this topic online. This topic was also the trend of news reports and discussions as many media outlets published information on the dangers of smoking.

But the netizens were not interested in such things.

“Hai, I am sick of watching all these.”

“It’s the same old meaningless stuff every year.”

“Yeah, every year, they show nothing more than the usual crap. Who doesn’t know smoking is harmful to the health? Those who wanted to quit have already quit. Even if you talk till someone’s head falls off, those hardcore smokers still won’t be able to quit. This has always been my point of view. These public service announcements are not effective at all. Who would quit smoking after watching a PSA? This is bullshit. If my smoking addiction strikes, even if you keep showing these lousy ads for 24 hours, I’ll still want to smoke.”

“The main reason is still because there is lack of quality with all these quit smoking PSAs.

“You’re quite right. The current quit smoking PSAs have already reached a saturation point. Any practical idea had already been used up some years ago. Now, they can only keep on reusing the ideas and maybe just change the way it’s presented. But it’ll eventually becomes useless.”

“Unless there is innovation.”

“It can’t get any more innovative.”

“Who can still innovate? This is the only approach.”

“Besides, if we want creativity, we must look abroad first. The public service announcements from overseas are really so much better than our local ones, but their PSAs are also more or less following the

same ideas, so how can you still expect our local advertisement producers to have any new ideas? It's not like I'm worshipping all things foreign, but it's the truth. The quality is not the same, so don't expect too much from the PSAs in this country."

"The constant broadcast of quit smoking PSAs in these few days is too intense. It's the same on every channel and it's already making me numb to them. I don't feel any pressure to quit at all when I see such advertisements while smoking.

"Me too."

"Haha, I feel the same."

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A bit past noon.

After a news broadcast, the staff lined up the ads to be broadcast. First up was a shampoo advertisement, then a mineral water advertisement, and finally Zhang Ye's Quit Smoking PSA!

At this moment, quite a lot of viewers sat in front of their televisions. Most of them had just finished watching the news. They were not really bothered by the advertisements playing or too concerned with them.

Some were eating.

Some were cooking.

Some were preparing to change channels.

There were also some who had probably just finished watching the local news on the satellite channels and had just switched channels to BTV-1 when the other channel went to a commercial break.

The satellite channel had nationwide broadcasting signals. Although not every location could receive the signal as the coverage was not 100% yet, it still had most areas covered. So compared to the previous time when the Save Electricity public service announcement was broadcast on the BTV-Arts Channel, this quit smoking public service announcement that was broadcast over the satellite channel had a viewership that was countless times higher. It was similar to the "Brain Gold" advertisement that was broadcast throughout the country!

Suddenly, on screen, this year's Beijing Television Station quit smoking PSA, unified across all their channels, was broadcast!

Cigarettes!

Densely packed cigarettes!

As the music played, consecutive deep breathing sounds could be heard. On the television, a ghastly looking replica of a pair of human lungs made out of cigarettes could be seen burning along with the rhythm of breathing and cigarette inhalation, while the "lungs" could be seen going through a shocking transformation.

Inhale!

Exhale!

Inhale again!

The sound of breathing from the television became intolerable to the ears!

Towards the end, the only words of the advertisements appeared: "Please quit smoking. Give life a chance, make a new choice"!

At the very end.

In the bottom right corner.

Produced by Zhang Ye.

After the PSA ended, a milk advertisement seamlessly followed.

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At a public housing apartment in Beijing.

A young man was looking at Weibo with his head down, discussing with his internet friends how the recent Quit Smoking PSAs were utter rubbish. Suddenly he looked up and called out to his mother, laughing and saying, "Mom, I'm hungry!"

His mother smiled and said, "What do you want to eat?"

Her son said, "Anything will do. I'm so hungry I could eat a horse!"

His father, who was smoking a cigarette, said, "I'm also hungry, I have to work overtime tonight, so I must eat more this afternoon. Do we still have any of the preserved meat left over that Old Zhang brought from his hometown? Let's have that."

Beside him, BTV-1's PSA appeared on the television.

The young man looked over and was shocked into a daze.

The father saw the PSA as well. As the PSA played out, a fascinating number of facial expressions appeared on his face. The cigarette between his fingers, his hand started trembling and he threw the cigarette onto the floor all of a sudden and stamped on it. He couldn't help letting out a curse, "F**k your grandfather! Who made this ad!"

Their son who was also a smoker took a few breaths and for a moment felt he could not breathe naturally. His rhythm of breathing was all messed up. "Mom, I-I'm suddenly not hungry anymore!"

His mother said, "Ah?"

His father said, "I also...don't want to eat anymore."

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In the northeast.

In a hairdressing salon.

“Holy shit, it’s those PSAs again!”

“Today is World No Tobacco Day. We can’t avoid it.”

“I’m tired of seeing all these PSAs. There’s nothing new at all.”

As there was hardly any business today, a few of the hairdressers were smoking and chattering away with jovial moods. Then, with every passing second the PSA played, their voices suddenly got softer and softer, and eventually everyone went silent. They were staring at the new LCD television which was installed a few days ago with their eyes and mouths wide open, rooted to their spots.

A skinny man stamped out the cigarette butt and said, “I-I’m going out to get some fresh air.”

“Wait for me. I’ll go together with you!” The moment he stepped out, another, slightly fatter youth was panic-stricken and held his chest tightly while flicking the cigarette butt in his hand onto the road, not daring to take another puff. Looking at his facial expression, it was obvious that he was very shocked. He said in disbelief, “Who the hell is so wicked! Making such an ad! Curse him and his eighteen generations of ancestors! I nearly could not catch my breath!”

The skinny man, now pale-faced, said, “I need to quit smoking!”

The fatty touched the cigarette pack in his pocket and felt that he had lost the desire to smoke for at least the next two hours!