

Superstar 591

Chapter 591 A Singing Program?

In the evening.

His mother called for him from the living room.

“Son.”

“Yes?”

“Time for dinner.”

“OK, I’m coming.”

Zhang Ye came out of his room feeling more refreshed than before. His face did not show any signs of struggle or hesitation, like he had already made up his mind.

His father was already eating when he asked him, “Did you manage to sleep?”

“I did sleep for a while.” Zhang Ye also started to eat.

His mother looked at his expression and said, “Have you decided?”

Zhang Ye gobbled up his food and said, “Yes, I have. I’ll make a trip to Beijing Television Station tomorrow.”

His mother said, “Do you intend to go back?”

Zhang Ye calmly said, “No, I will go and discuss something.”

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The next day.

Early morning.

As it had rained last night, the temperature was cooler by four or five degrees today. Before Zhang Ye left the house, his mother reminded him to put on additional layers. He drove to Beijing Television Station, having arranged a meeting with Hu Fei. However, when he reached the television station, he was welcomed not only by Hu Fei but also a few others who he knew very well.

Xiao Lu screamed from a distance away, “Teacher Zhang!”

Zhang Ye waved and greeted, “Xiao Lu, long time no see. You’ve become prettier again.”

The first person to come forward was Dafei. Without saying anything, he gave Zhang Ye a bear hug and then said, “I really missed you a lot, Teacher Zhang!”

Zhang Ye laughed. “Me too.”

Hou Ge also came. He pulled Dafei away before giving Zhang Ye a bear hug as well.

When Xiao Lu saw this, she also hugged Zhang Ye happily and said, "Come back quickly, Teacher Zhang. We don't have any motivation to do programs without you."

Hu Fei asked, "Have you decided yet?"

Zhang Ye nodded and replied, "Yes I have. Let's go in and talk."

"I hope it will be a positive answer," Hu Fei said.

Zhang Ye followed them and entered the new office of the new program team at the satellite channel. Upon entering, he said, "I'm sorry, Brother Hu. I may have to disappoint you."

When everyone heard that, they could only muster an "ah." Suddenly, all their happiness and hopes disappeared without a trace.

Xiao Lu said anxiously, "You're not coming back?"

Dafei asked, "Why?"

Hou Ge said, "Please reconsider again. Don't rush to answer."

Hu Fei did not say anything and waited for Zhang Ye to explain.

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "I'd already decided yesterday, no, to be honest, I had already decided on this matter a very long time ago. After I left Beijing Television Station, I did not plan on coming back again, at least not now when the time is not yet ripe. Everyone, don't try to persuade me anymore. You all know how stubborn I can be. Since I've already made up my mind, it will not change. I have my own way of persisting."

Hu Fei looked at him deeply and said, "When you agreed to come back to help with the public service announcement, I knew that you still had deep feelings for Beijing Television Station. But your decision now leaves me confused. Since you do not have any better place to go to for now, with such a good contract offer, why are you still refusing to come back?"

Zhang Ye organized his thoughts and said, "I do have feelings for this place but it is not like how Brother Hu put it. If I must describe it, I think that these feelings are from my memories and the blood running through me. From childhood, I've grown up watching Beijing Television and other local Beijing stations. Those cartoons, soccer matches on BTV-Sports, BTV's Spring Festival Gala, BTV-Entertainment news and programs on Beijing's street and food culture. Those emotions are all engraved into my memories and are very difficult to describe with words. I love Beijing Television Station and that is not something anyone can change, because I'm from Beijing and it's that simple."

Hu Fei said, "Then you ought to come back."

Xiao Lu said, "That's right, that's right."

Zhang Ye said from the bottom of his heart, "I am confident to say and guarantee that some day from now, I will surely give my best and most excellent television program to Beijing Television Station, my hometown television station. But for now, I can't come back. It's not the right time either."

Hu Fei sighed lightly, "It's useless to say anything more then?"

“Yes. I’ve already made up my mind,” Zhang Ye said.

Hu Fei smiled bitterly and said, “Alright, then I also will not say any more. I know some people in the industry. After this, I will call up some old friends and ask them to help link you up with the other television stations.”

Zhang Ye said, “No need, Brother Hu. If they’d wanted to contact me, they would have already done so, it’s not something that can be forced. I will just wait at home and take whatever comes.”

Xiao Lu turned around and walked over to the other side of the room and slumped into a chair, wiping away her tears.

Zhang Ye was shocked and said, “Woah, what are you doing and why are you crying?”

Xiao Lu ignored him.

Hu Fei sighed, “The station has added to our burden during this period of time. We have such a good broadcasting time slot, but the new program is still not ready, so everyone is very stressed. We were hoping that if you came back to join us, you would be put in charge of program planning and become the executive director. Forget it, there will be a solution somehow.”

Zhang Ye asked, “What kind of program did the station request?”

Hu Fei smiled helplessly, “A singing program.”

Hu Fei was promoted, together along with his team in Beijing Television, and even secured the critical spot of Friday’s primetime slot. Because of that, there were many voices of doubt at the station. Everyone held their breaths and tried to produce a good result, but the outcome did not meet their expectations, the reason being simply because there were too many singing programs on the market. They found out that, in the short span of half a month after they had decided to do a singing program, six or seven other satellite channels had also launched their singing programs at the same primetime slots from Friday to Sunday.

One or two were still acceptable.

But five or six? Seven or eight?

Moreover, this situation was not a recent occurrence as there were already signs of such a trend beginning since a year ago.

No matter how high a saturation level the market could accept, it still couldn’t have so many similar programs together at once. Even the most hardcore singing show lover would be bored to death!

Hu Fei explained to Zhang Ye and said, “A singing program is easy to do, the template is simple to follow and even if the program ratings are not considered high, the worst it would do is still acceptable. It makes for a very safe choice. That’s why many television stations love to do these kinds of programs. But as it coincidentally turned out this time, all those television stations had the same ideas, leading to so many similar programs flooding the market. We were one step too late and didn’t seize the opportunity. If we just broadcast like this, our program ratings would surely be very poor. That’s why I had been enduring the pressure from the station and did not start on the recording of the program even though the equipment and stage settings were ready.”

Zhang Ye took out a tissue and handed it to Xiao Lu.

Xiao Lu took it and wiped away her tears.

“Hur hur, don’t cry anymore.” Zhang Ye patted her shoulder and said, “Earlier, as everyone kept on asking me about my reason, I could not finish what I had to say.” Since he had come to the station today, he was of course not intending to only reject their offer in person, because if that were the case, he would not have needed to come in person. A call would have sufficed since a face-to-face conversation would have made it even more awkward. Since Zhang Ye chose to come to the television station, he naturally had his own plans. He said, “I only said that I wouldn’t be coming back, but I never said that I wouldn’t help everyone plan a new program, right?”

Hu Fei looked at him.

Xiao Lu also stopped crying and turned her head with teary eyes.

“Teacher Zhang, what’s the meaning of all this?”

Hou Ge also added, “If you are not coming back to work, how are you going to help us do a program?”

Zhang Ye said, “Since there are professional program production companies that sell their programs to television stations, I can do the same. Hur hur, but I won’t be selling a program. Instead, I will help everyone plan a program and be fully responsible for the initial stage. If it is acceptable and everyone goes along with my program plan, I can guarantee that the program ratings will not be poor. I also do not need any payment in return, except for my most basic copyright fees.”

Actually, the reason why Beijing Television Station was so desperate to sign Zhang Ye was not because of his hosting ability. That was a secondary priority. The more important factor was because of his program production skills. The station wanted Zhang Ye to come back to help them make a signature program that could compete with the other satellite channels! If the program was bad, even if one had strong hosting abilities, it would be useless. But if the program was well produced, no matter who the host was, as long as he or she was not too bad at it, the host might even become popular as a result of the primetime program. This was why it also showed the quality and the indispensable side of Zhang Ye. It was not for his hosting ability but for his production strength.

“Ah?”

“How can that be?”

“Is this...is this a good idea?”

Everyone was hard pressed for ideas on how to make this singing program into a good one. And with the current program it was replacing slated to end soon, they were getting anxious. Although they were nervous, they were still rational. If Teacher Zhang Ye really signed with television station and came back, they would surely accept it as his program production skills were top-notch in the industry. If he did not make an effort, then the others would definitely not agree to it. But now that Zhang Ye had rejected the contract with the station, even if he wanted to help out as a friend by giving a free program structure and plan, Hu Fei would absolutely not accept it. Zhang Ye was a friend indeed, so he could not be ungrateful either.

"This will not do." Hu Fei rejected directly and said, "I appreciate your kindness, but..."

"Brother Hu, please let me finish." Zhang Ye coughed and said, "I do not have any demands for the monetary side of things except for the copyright fees. As for the other aspects, I have a request that might be very unacceptable to the station, and that would be my one and only request for helping the station plan a program."

"Oh?" Hu Fei blinked. "Let's hear it."

Zhang Ye pondered for a while and said, "I would like to appoint my choice of host for this primetime program. The station must sign her and let her be the host. That is my one and only condition."

Hu Fei asked, "Who is it?"

Zhang Ye said, "You all may not know her, but her name is Dong Shanshan."

"Dong Shanshan?" Hu Fei repeated after him.

Xiao Lu exclaimed, "I know her! Back when you were hosting the talk show, you mentioned her several times. She was your old classmate and was also a host at the online television station!"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "That's right, it's her."

Hou Ge exclaimed, "I also know Dong Shanshan! She is very beautiful and goes down the path of sexiness. But isn't she not exactly well-known in the hosting industry? About that..."

In the small community on the internet, the number of Dong Shanshan's fans was not too bad at all and she had many diehard fans as well. But on a large platform like the provincial satellite channels, Dong Shanshan was obviously a nobody and most people would not be able to recognize her.

Hu Fei said, "No wonder you say the station will find it very hard to accept. A satellite channel that broadcasts nationwide on a Friday primetime slot letting an inexperienced and average rookie host such a heavily invested, top-rated program—I believe that there are no satellite television station that would have such courage!" Saying that, Hu Fei also delightfully remarked, "Unless the station is mad."

Zhang Ye said, "That's right."

Almost immediately, Hu Fei's tone changed and he said, "But I believe for your program plans, the station is willing to be mad for once!"

Zhang Ye said, "What do you mean?"

"I do not have any problems on my side, but I need to seek approval from the upper management. I can't make that decision alone." Hu Fei turned to leave just like that as he said, "Wait for my news."

Zhang Ye nodded and said, "Alright!"

Chapter 592 Do You Remember

After waiting for half an hour.

"Teacher Zhang, what exactly is this program about?"

"I'll share it in a while."

"Aiyah, please just tell us first."

"Hehe, I have to wait until the station accepts my request."

"You already have a program?"

"Of course, it's all in my brain."

From outside the office, many people started streaming in.

Hu Fei returned with seven or eight men and women. There were station leaders, the bosses of the relevant departments and some program approval board staff members, and others. It seemed that the station highly valued this new program. After all, this was a primetime slot program.

One of the bosses walking ahead of the rest said immediately after coming into the office, "Teacher Little Zhang, we've already heard from Old Hu. Actually, we still hope that you can join us back at Beijing Television Station, but if you don't wish to come back, we will of course find it regretful. Old Hu said you have a very good proposal for the new program?"

"Yes." Zhang Ye smiled.

A person behind said, "But for the appointment of a designated host, there has never such a precedent. Moreover, the host is a little-known rookie. Why not change your condition instead? If this program really does as well as expected and can outperform all the other singing programs, then the station will give you a bonus on top of your copyright and production fees, it will certainly be a satisfactory offer."

Everyone sat down to discuss.

Zhang Ye shook his head and said, "That won't do. I've already said I only have this one small request."

That boss said, "That was not a small request. Besides, you should also know that the station does not have any worries about our own hosts as all of them are very outstanding. Once the new program is out, we can use our most familiar and outstanding hosts for it. Purposely headhunting for a rookie to join us...there really has been no such precedent? Why don't you tell everyone about the program proposal and we'll decide if the program will make it or not, then we can discuss that issue later."

"Right, let's hear about what the program is like."

"That's right, Teacher Zhang, tell us first."

The other two people also said the same.

However, Zhang Ye flatly refused and said, "No, that won't do."

Just as the situation was in a stalemate, another four people suddenly entered the office. Among them walking in the middle was an old granny who was also the station head of Beijing Television Station, Xu Yuhong.

"Station Head?"

"Why are you here?"

“Station Head Xu!”

“Station Head!”

Everyone stood up.

Xu Yuhong calmly said, “I heard about the matter. I’m also very interested in Little Zhang’s suggestion, so I came over to take a look. What have you all discussed so far?”

That boss explained it once over.

Zhang Ye had quite a good impression of this old granny. On the day when he did the advertisement, he kept calling her Auntie and even ordered her around to do this and that. Even so, that old granny did not even get angry, showing that she had a very good temper.

When Xu Yuhong heard everything, she looked at Zhang Ye and said, “There has really not been a precedent of not using our own station’s hosts before. But, Little Zhang, I can promise you. Tell us first about the concept of the program. If it is feasible and not similar to the templated concepts of the singing programs of the other stations, and our professionals judge it as a marketable segment, then we might still be agreeable to your condition of hiring the rookie.”

That was as good as an agreement.

When Zhang Ye heard that, he said, “Station Head is indeed large-hearted.”

Xu Yuhong laughed and said, “Don’t praise me yet. Let’s hear about your plans. Since singing talent show programs are already being overdone, how can you be so sure that your program will work?”

Zhang Ye said, “I have to correct myself. I didn’t say that it would be a talent show.”

“Eh?” Several of the station’s staff were dumbfounded.

Hu Fei also never thought of that and said, “Not a talent show? Then how can it be called a singing program?”

One of the bosses said, “Then where is your selling point?”

The singing programs of this world had only created a stir in these past few years. These programs were more or less the same, with hardly any more creativity and had already developed into a bottleneck. As a person living in this world, they would be naturally restricted with their ideas. But Zhang Ye was different from the rest. In his previous world, although some of its variety show programs were not comparable to this world, but for singing programs, they were many years ahead in development than this world.

Zhang Ye looked at them and said, “The name of this program is: Do You Remember. We will allow all citizens to sing karaoke songs, with no entry barriers, with the aim to create a national coalition of karaoke singers. The rules are simple and there’s only one condition: Who can sing the lyrics correctly. This is not a competition of vocals nor stage performances, it is competing on who has the best memory. As long as you can sing the song correctly with the designated lyrics, you will win—this is the core of the program and its selling point.”

After he finished speaking, everyone fell silent.

They were not shocked but instead felt like they were struck by lightning!

Lyrics?

Remembering lyrics?

How could this be called a f**king television program!?

Xiao Lu was shocked and said, "Surely you can't be serious, Teacher Zhang?"

The boss said, "Little Zhang, you better not be joking."

Hu Fei also had doubts and asked, "Remembering lyrics shouldn't be considered a selling point, right? I can't see anything in that which would attract an audience to such a program."

One of the program approval board staff members who looked like he had his brain shaken by huge waves even thought to himself: "Remembering lyrics, your sister! How idiotic!"

Hou Ge laughed and said, "Teacher Zhang must be doing his crosstalk and teasing us."

Zhang Ye said helplessly, "I'm not joking, I'm being serious here."

Hou Ge: "..."

"Let Little Zhang finish talking," Xu Yuhong said.

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Actually, as long as this program is not done up, just my explanation alone will not make everyone fully understand it. I can only use a general overview to explain simply in words about why I want to design such a program. If you just listen to it, a competition-styled program that emphasizes remembering lyrics might sound terrible, alright, maybe even atrocious, but this atrociousness might just be from your personal point of view that is based on your mindset. However, if you think about it in a different way, you'd know that such a program might not have the competitiveness and tension of a reality television singing program, with not as many handsome men and pretty women and even without powerful vocals. When we compare it in this way, it would be edged out on more than a dozen avenues by those other singing programs, yet Do You Remember has something too that would beat them by a dozen avenues, and that is the fact that it is simple. In fact, it is so simple that anyone can join in!"

Hu Fei was deep in thought.

The rest were also thinking hard.

Zhang Ye said, "What you all think of as lame, simple, low class are in fact not the flaws of this program. Instead, they are the most competitive factors and advantages of Do You Remember. The other singing programs all either have handsome guys or pretty ladies who can hit high pitches with their singing voices or have good dancing skills. The audience can't participate in them because they don't have the qualifications to do so, but is there anyone who can't remember lyrics? Even a three year old can memorize some songs. Anyone can join, participate, or even sing along with the lyrics in front of their televisions. Is there anything more marvelous than having all the citizens participate in an event?"

Hu Fei finally understood and said, "This really could be another way to do it!"

Dafei said, "Will...that work?"

Zhang Ye said, "All the other singing competitions are comparing who is better looking, who can sing the best, or who has a good backstory. I call that as walking the 'path of talent'. But in this new program of mine, I want it to walk on the path of the common people. Just as I said earlier, anyone can participate in it and even register to participate in the live competition. There are no entry barriers, no complicated procedures. As long as you want to participate, anyone can have a high chance of being shown on the live broadcast on television, even if you are tone-deaf!"

Xiao Lu was shocked, "What? People who are tone-deaf can also join?"

"Of course they can. The program is about remembering lyrics. That is all that will be competed on. Even if you sing very badly, you can still participate and win." Zhang Ye said, "Let me add something right here. I intend for some tone-deaf people to participate so that they can create a topic and have a common touch with the citizens. The audience watching at home on their televisions might laugh at or scold those tone-deaf people, thinking 'how they could even get on TV? I'm better than him!' This is also a selling point that would encourage audience participation and improve program ratings. All of you are industry professionals, so I don't think I need to get into the details on how to manage it."

Xu Yuhong said, "Are those the only selling points?"

"Of course not." Zhang Ye looked around, then walked towards a whiteboard and picked up a marker and started to write on the board. He explained, "This program needs two hosts, a man and woman who will be responsible for the humour and help regulate the atmosphere and involve the audience in the show. The hosts do not be too experienced nor need to constantly make witty remarks. On the contrary, the more affable they are, the better it will be due to the style of this program. We will also need a lead singer as that is also one of the key factors of this program, so how do we choose the lead singer? Let me go through it all one by one..."

From the stage to the lighting.

From the lead singer to the audience selection.

And even the critical scenes to be shown on the screen were described in detail.

Finally, he said, "The template is like such because it is the most basic structure to the program. As you all had mentioned earlier, because this program is not a talent show, there might be a less receptive mood for it. So to make up for this, at every month's end, we will implement a countrywide 'mic-dominator' contest, dividing the cities into north, south, east, west, and central regions and pitting them against each other. We will spread this battle fervor across the country, which will later lead to a city versus city tournament. Since the audience will naturally support their own cities, this will up the atmosphere and competitiveness naturally as it happens. In the end, there will be a final showdown where only one city would be declared the winner. As for how to select, and how to plan the PK competition, let me explain further in detail..."

They discussed for another twenty minutes.

Those people from the television station were totally stunned and could not say anything at all. They thought of bringing up some misgivings, but when Zhang Ye was explaining, they realized that he had already thought of all the problems of the entire process. Their doubts were answered by Zhang Ye even before they could bring it up. Even the concerns of how the audience would feel when the concept lost its novelty were addressed by Zhang Ye who had already thought out the necessary adjustments from the hosting style to adding new rounds to the program to maintain its program ratings.

When other program planners made a proposal, their initial ideas would just be an idea or a concept, which would then be discussed further upon. It would slowly be edited bit by bit, making changes here and there before the final proposal would be set. Then when the program was broadcast on television, the audience reaction and program ratings would be considered and changes would be made as necessary. A strategy made today could be changed again the following week, but as for Zhang Ye? He had submitted a proposal which extended six or seven years into the future. He even thought of every single detail and the physiological changes of the audience. It was really flawless!

Chapter 593 Launch of a new program!

In the morning.

10 AM.

Zhang Ye's throat was dry from all the talking. He asked in a hoarse voice, "Do you have a drink?"

"Yes, of course." Xiao Lu immediately ran to get a bottle of mineral water. "Here, Teacher Zhang."

"Thanks." Zhang Ye took it and chugged half the bottle immediately. When he saw the others in a state of pondering, he said, "That is the general concept of it. If I did not forget anything, that should be all of it, so if there's any questions, you may bring them up now and I will address them."

The manager of Hu Fei's program asked a critical question that would be put across to all new programs, "What is your estimation of the viewership ratings?"

Zhang Ye laughed, "Which type of viewership rating?"

There were many types of ratings, like the 50 cities viewership ratings, the local viewership ratings, as well as nationwide viewership ratings.

Local viewership ratings only measured the total viewership of a single city. For example, when Zhang Ye was hosting Lecture Room at BTV-Arts Channel, the ratings of 7% or 8% were all local viewership ratings and only reported on the statistics within Beijing city itself. As BTV-Arts Channel only broadcasted in the region of Beijing, that was the reason why such ratings were used, and because it was a locally broadcasted channel dedicated to an audience who belonged to the same area, the viewership ratings for a local channel would definitely be high.

For the 50 cities viewership rating, it basically meant the top 50 cities' viewership rating, not including the rural areas. This was the most commonly used statistic.

The most objective statistic would be the nationwide viewership ratings as this had the largest sample size and so would give a smaller percentage rating. But if a program could hit 1% viewership ratings nationwide, then it would still be considered a very popular program since 1% would mean that one out

of a hundred persons in the country were watching the program. With the total population of China, one could only imagine the total viewership numbers!

The manager said, "The nationwide viewership ratings."

One of the others also looked at Zhang Ye, waiting for his response to the question.

Zhang Ye thought about it for a moment, and then answered, "I can't give you an estimation for the first episode as it depends on the promotions and other factors and that would leave too much to chance. If we're talking about the average ratings after enough episodes, then my estimate for Do You Remember would be at least 0.6% for the nationwide viewership ratings to 1% tops."

An employee immediately said, "That's impossible!"

Xiao Lu's jaw had dropped. She said, "It would be that high?"

Hou Ge said in surprise, "Reality television singing programs these days at other television stations have at most ratings of 0.5%. If it's low, it can even be around 0.3%. This is because these programs' broadcasts have cannibalized each others' viewership ratings as there isn't any particularly outstanding one. If Do You Remember can really hit 1% viewership ratings nationally, then it would be too awesome!"

Zhang Ye categorically stated, "It would only be more and not less than what I said, but of course, that is based on my point of view. Since it is just an estimation, everyone has their own opinions on this."

Do You Remember was a very popular program some years back in Zhang Ye's previous world. It was not the type of program that experienced overnight success but one that slowly climbed up to become a popular one. At that time, Zhang Ye was just like them and could not understand how a program that used remembering lyrics as its selling point and felt so inadequate could have a viewership rating that wasn't too bad. Only after he had watched a few episodes of it did he finally understand that every program that was successful would have its own reasons. Yes, even though this evergreen program had suffered a viewership ratings drop in its later years, at the beginning, Do You Remember had still done brilliantly, although its viewership ratings weren't exactly that outstanding or mind-blowing. But it could still be considered successful. In the nationwide viewership ratings for the same time slots, it was a common occurrence to be placed first or second. This was an extremely worthy and valuable program.

Why did he choose it?

Because Zhang Ye had his own considerations as well.

First, Do You Remember had very good viewership ratings.

Second, this program was of no use to Zhang Ye. Not only did the style of the program not fit Zhang Ye's development path, even if the others felt that its viewership ratings were good, Zhang Ye was still not too interested in it. What Zhang Ye needed was not just success, but to be the best in the industry. And so, these were the reasons why this program did not matter much to him since he had no intentions of hosting it. If he wanted to host a similar program, there were much more and much better programs for him to choose from. But if he just left this program unused, it would really be a waste. The originality and style of this program was still very worthwhile, especially at a time when reality television singing programs were at a developmental bottleneck.

He had already explained all that he could. Zhang Ye was only waiting for their reply now

The manager, along with Hu Fei and a few of the program planners, began discussing, at times whispering, at times nodding and shaking their heads. They were discussing intensely about the whole proposal.

A while later.

Zhang Ye could not wait any longer and said, "The program rundown is as what I have explained. I have already given the proposal to you all, with in-depth details up to a few years ahead in the program's lifespan. If all of you think that it is OK, use it. But like I've said, I only have a small request and that is for Dong Shanshan to be the designated female host. I don't care who the male host is."

The manager fell silent.

Another station leader made no sound.

Zhang Ye continued to say, "If you think that it would not be good or the viewership ratings might not hit everyone's estimates, then just take it like I hadn't said anything. I'll be leaving then?" He stood up and prepared to leave.

When the satellite channel's manager heard this, he quickly stopped him. "Hey, hey, hey, Little Zhang, don't go yet. Aren't we all discussing right now? It's not that we think the program is not good!"

"Don't go, don't go. Take a seat first. We did not say we did not want it," another deputy director said.

The manager looked at Xu Yuhong and said, "Station Head, what's your opinion?"

Xu Yuhong waved him off and said, "I won't interfere with your department's matters. Make the decision on your own." She did not say much since the beginning and was more of an observer.

The manager understood and then looked over to Hu Fei. "Old Hu?"

Hu Fei revealed a wide smile and said, "I feel that it is a very good proposal and different from the rest of the programs out there recently, so it should definitely stand out from the rest. For us, I do not think that there will be any better programs. We can save a lot of money this way since we no longer have to invite any big name celebrities as guests. With this out of the budget, we can use the money in other ways to raise the overall standard of the program." The reality television singing programs these days were all about inviting big names or S-list singers which sometimes could command appearance fees of up to tens of millions. Compared to all the other required costs, this was the main bulk of it!

But this requirement was not needed for Do You Remember! All that money would be saved!

It was good since there wasn't really much of a budget for their program!

The manager nodded and laughed. "I feel the same as you. This program is really fitting for our satellite channel's Friday primetime slot. I have finally seen for myself just how good Teacher Little Zhang's program planning abilities are. Whether it is Lecture Room or Zhang Ye's Talk Show, your reputation is fully justified. So many of the program planners and staff in our television station had been meeting for many days and still could not come up with something, but just a short while with you has already

provided us with such a perfect program proposal. You've really helped us out when we needed it the most."

Behind him, one of the program planners was also utterly convinced and said, "Teacher Zhang, why don't you come back? If this program is hosted by you as well, then it would be perfect!"

The manager immediately said, "Yes, Little Zhang, come back and join us."

Zhang Ye said, "Let's talk again in the future when we get a chance."

The manager said regretfully, "Alright then, we won't ask any further. Let's just settle this program first. Teacher Little Zhang, we are going to go ahead and take this Do You Remember. As for the price...Are you OK with 3 million RMB?"

Zhang Ye shrugged and said, "I've already said that I have no requests for the price."

The manager hesitated a little and then turned to a staff member behind him and said, "Tell Old Wang from the HR Department to contact Teacher Dong Shanshan. He must definitely get her to join us! We will pay for her contract to be voided as well!"

Zhang Ye interrupted and said, "There's no need to pay the compensation since Teacher Shanshan is currently without a job. She is not contracted to any television station currently as she left her last job two days ago."

The manager said, "Then that's even more convenient."

Zhang Ye sincerely said, "Thank you very much."

The manager raised a hand and just said, "Don't say that. If there's any thanking to be done here, it should be us thanking you."

A good program was much more valuable than a good host. With his proposed program, Zhang Ye had already completely impressed all of Beijing Television Station!

At some point in time, Xu Yuhong had disappeared and left the meeting.

With the station head gone, the atmosphere had also become much more relaxed.

The manager and Hu Fei continued raising quite a few more questions and program details. Since Zhang Ye had already accepted the role of the program planner for this, he would surely have to do his part. But he probably only had to do this today, for once the program begins production, Zhang Ye would no longer need to do much more. All of the issues should be handled by Hu Fei's team from there and because Zhang Ye had no plans of returning to Beijing Television Station to work, he could only do the program planning without joining in the actual production work.

Soon after, the manager left with his team.

Hu Fei then started delegating the tasks. The new program team no longer only consisted of Xiao Lu and the others; it had expanded to include quite a number of other employees as well. He said, "Starting from today, the program for Do You Remember is officially launched. Xiao Lu, go and mock up a promotion proposal. Dafei, the stage layout will need to undergo some changes. A lot it will need to be

modified to follow Teacher Little Zhang's design for the stage, so please go and coordinate this with the recording studios..."

Chapter 594 Dong Shanshan and her family are shocked!

At this moment.

In a county that was neither big nor small.

It was just past 11 AM when Dong Shanshan, who was now back at her family home, was still lying in bed in her rather cramped room. On the wall were some old and dog-eared posters which looked pretty aged with a yellowish tint. The layout of the room was also from the time when Dong Shanshan was still in middle school. It was clear that this was where she was born and stayed at but also a place she hadn't come back to often in many years.

Dong dong.

The bedroom door was being knocked on very lightly.

Dong Shanshan raised her head and said, "The door's not locked."

Mother Dong opened the door and looked in, asking, "Why are you still not up yet?"

"I've been working too hard on my shows recently, so I'm a little tired." Dong Shanshan smiled and stretched herself in bed, moving her feet like a spoiled child. She said to her mother, "Mom, help me massage my legs please?"

Mother Dong sat down on her small bed and started lightly massaging her daughter.

"How comfortable, my mom is the best in the world," Dong Shanshan said with a big smile.

Mother Dong looked at her and said, "Tell me honestly, did you come back this time because something happened at work?"

"No, work is going very smoothly and the leader also takes very good care of me. I came back because I was worried about you and Dad, and wanted to come home to visit the both of you. I will be going back in some days when I start working on my new program. Right now, I have a break since my old show has already finished its broadcast. Don't worry about me, I'm fine," Dong Shanshan explained.

Mother Dong shook her head and said, "I gave birth to you and raised you. Wouldn't I know if you were really fine? Everytime I ask, you always say that everything is good and that you are safe. The more you say it like that, the more worried your dad and I become, because we don't know which of your words are the truth and how you are really doing. Compared to hearing that, we prefer to listen to you tell us what is really going on. So tell Mom now, did you meet with some trouble this time?"

Father Dong also came into the room from the outside. "If you are really having some problems, you can always come home. Don't go away anymore. Just because you majored in broadcast doesn't mean that you must be a host. Of all your classmates, how many really ended up becoming hosts? This industry is too murky with its unspoken rules. Our family are just ordinary people. We can't compare to those who can pull strings with their relatives."

Dong Shanshan said, "But I want to develop my career as a host. This has always been my ambition and my thoughts have never wavered. Besides, I am not doing too bad either now. My career has just taken off. Even though an online television station is still not as influential or has as many audiences as a traditional television station and can even be considered several levels lower as a platform, but one can't accomplish great things with just one single effort, can they? We have to do it step by step. I have just made some results for myself and you want me to give up now? Hur hur, that's not going to happen."

Father Dong said, "Then why did you come back this time?"

Mother Dong also said in worry, "Shanshan, can you just be honest with us for once?"

After a brief silence, Dong Shanshan stroked her ponytail and said, "Alright, I'll tell you both. I had a quarrel with the online television station and submitted my resignation this time. I've also sent out quite a number of résumés to the television stations in the country who were looking to recruit television hosts. But the larger television stations and satellite channels totally ignored a minor thing like me, like my résumé was simply thrown into the ocean. They all think that my qualifications are too little and that I am not popular enough. The smaller local television stations I submitted my résumés to did consider me for a position, but after communicating for a while, it all came to nothing. As they are all small local television stations that do not attract much viewership, they did not and also could not plan for a variety program, so they definitely did not require a host like me. This is why I came back. The rental for the apartment in Shanghai was too expensive at several thousand a month. I could no longer afford to stay there. So, I decided to come home to work things out." After explaining the situation, Dong Shanshan laughed a little. "Well, that is the truth that you both insisted on hearing."

Father Dong said angrily, "Why did they not want you? Didn't you do quite well when you were still working at the local channel back then?"

"They didn't think they had a suitable show for me." Dong Shanshan shrugged and continued, "Although I've already said that I was very willing to try out any new shows even if it wasn't a variety-based one. It could be a cooking program; I would still be willing to give it a shot. But then, they still maintained their stance and told me that they had their own considerations as well and did not want to take the risk."

Mother Dong said scornfully, "Employing you would be a risk? It's their loss that they didn't get to employ you!"

Dong Shanshan laughed gently and said, "Well, that is...what I think too."

"How can you still laugh like that now." Mother Dong who was already feeling very anxious for her daughter, asked her, "Then what will you do now? Are you going to continue sending out your résumé?"

Dong Shanshan nodded and said, "I've sent them out to whichever places have put up hiring notices for hosts. I've even tried for other online television stations as well. Right now, all I can hope for is to get a good program that I can work on since it hasn't been easy to get to the popularity that I have now. I can't just let it go to waste like this. I must get a long-term contract as a host, otherwise when this popularity declines, I will have to start all over again in the future. That is just how cruel the entertainment industry can get."

Father Dong immediately said, "It's OK, your mom and I will take care of you, so just stay at home."

"Thanks Dad, but I have no problem taking care of myself. At most, I would take up more commercial hosting to feed myself even if the pay is unstable." Dong Shanshan rolled across the bed to her mother's lap and said, "But that won't be my long-term plan, right now..." She yawned and continued, "I just hope to find a good enough hosting job."

Mother Dong stood up.

"Where are you going?" Dong Shanshan's head slid off her mother's lap back onto the bed.

Mother Dong said, "I will go and burn some incense to pray for you."

Dong Shanshan smiled and said, "Sure, then I am going to depend on Mom for this."

Father Dong was almost at a loss for words. He remarked, "Such blind superstitions!"

Mother Dong turned a deaf ear to it and just walked out to the altar and lit the incense, and then started chanting almost inaudibly with a muttering of words.

Father Dong said to his daughter, "You should have stopped her. All she knows is to burn incense every time until the house is full of the smell of sandalwood."

"That's all that my mother likes to do, so just let her be. If you don't allow her to burn the incense, she would definitely take it up with you," said Dong Shanshan when her cell phone suddenly rang.

The phone was ringing and vibrating!

She had a look at the caller ID. It was an unknown number calling.

Dong Shanshan flipped over and sat up against the headboard wondering who could be calling. She accepted the call and said: "Hello, who is this?"

On the other end was the voice of a young man who sounded like he was in his twenties, but of course he could be thirty or so as well. "Hello, may I know if this is Teacher Dong Shanshan's number?"

Looking for me?

There was a response to my application?

Dong Shanshan immediately said: "Yes, that's me. Who is this?"

Father Dong was also listening closely beside her.

The youth said cheerfully: "I am from the HR Department of Beijing Television Station. You can call me Liu."

When she heard his introduction, Dong Shanshan was slightly taken aback. Beijing Television Station? She did not remember sending in her résumé to them.

Then the young man continued: "It's like this, Teacher Shanshan. Beforehand, I would like to ask if you are currently contracted to any television station?"

Dong Shanshan said honestly: "No, I've already left my previous job."

The young man said: "Then your management agency..."

Dong Shanshan said: "I don't have one either."

The young man said: "Alright, that makes things much simpler then."

Dong Shanshan was still clueless as to what was going on, so she asked: "Tell me about it."

"Sure, as long as there's no contract involved, I will just speak directly. Our Beijing Television Station's satellite channel, also known as BTV-1, would like to invite you to join us!" said the young man, whose words surprised her!

Beijing Television Station?

And it was even the satellite channel??

How could this be possible!?

Dong Shanshan hesitated for a bit, wondering if the other party was making a scam phone call to her.

"Mr. Liu, if I remember correctly, I don't think I submitted my résumé to your station?"

"Résumé?" The young man said: "I don't know about that, Teacher Shanshan. We did not contact you due to any résumé, and as the overall situation is a little complex, I'm not too sure either. All I know is that the program team from the satellite channel got us to contact and inform you regarding their intent to work together with you. As for what kind of program and its details, perhaps you can discuss it directly with the program team's manager or the related personnel. I don't have all the information with me since I am just handling the contract."

Dong Shanshan asked in disbelief: "Beijing Television?"

The young man said: "Yes."

Dong Shanshan asked again: "Could you tell me in general what kind of program we are talking about?"

The youth: "It's a large-scale variety singing program."

Dong Shanshan: "What time slot?"

"Friday..." The young man said: "...Friday's primetime slot at around 9 PM."

Friday?

Satellite channel?

Large-scale variety program?

And it's even at a primetime slot?

How could something so good be true!

Dong Shanshan was a little befuddled by this and was beginning to feel that this really was a scam phone call. She made up her mind that as long as the person started asking for money or to make a credit transfer to them, she would hang up immediately!

"Then what do you need me to do?" Dong Shanshan asked.

The young man answered: "You...you don't need to do anything. I would like to understand if you have any requests before I proceed to let you know about the details."

"I have no requests whatsoever!" Dong Shanshan said.

The young man laughed and said: "Alrighty then, it should be easy to discuss. The general situation right now is that we have a new program segment that urgently needs to take over a current program slot, so the recording schedule is also quite urgent because of that. The team has already started prepping today and will start with the production tomorrow. So if you are fine with it, it's best we have a face-to-face meeting today to settle the contractual agreements. If it's convenient, could you make a trip to the television station today?"

"To Beijing Television Station?"

"Yes."

When she heard this, Dong Shanshan was pretty sure that this was not a scam phone call.

Dong Shanshan immediately replied: "I am out of Beijing at the moment, but if I set out immediately, I should be able to get to Beijing by the afternoon."

The young man said: "That would be great. Since we're on this issue, let me give you the details about the contract. We are preparing a 1+1 contract for you, with an annual salary of 200,000 RMB excluding bonuses, welfare, and other standard payments. This contract will offer whatever is expected, yes, so you can make your decision on the way here. If there are any parts of this offer you're not satisfied with or have any special requests, we can talk about them when we meet later. As long as it is related to the contract, I am in charge of it and we can negotiate. As for any program-related requests that you might have, the program team will go through the details with you later as well."

Free to negotiate?

Everything can be discussed?

Aren't they being too polite!?

Dong Shanshan finally asked, "How many hosts will there be?"

"Two, a man and a woman."

"The other person is?"

"It has not been confirmed yet. At the launch of this program, only two things has been confirmed. One, the program's name will be called Do You Remember, and the other is the choice of the female host!"

The program details were still being worked on!

Yet the designated female host is me??

Chapter 595 The host who never needed a script

After the call ended.

The room was in complete silence!

Although Father Dong who was beside her could not clearly hear every word that was said, he could still grasp some of the details he heard from the faint voice on the phone. He was also stunned at that moment.

After Mother Dong had finished burning incense in the living room, she returned to the room and asked, "Eh, what happened?"

Father Dong grabbed onto his spouse and said, "Shanshan has found a job!"

"Ah? So fast?" Mother Dong said in surprise. "What kind of job?"

Dong Shanshan was a bit stunned as she subconsciously blurted out, "Beijing Television invited me to be the female host of a large-scale variety show that will air every Friday at the primetime slot of 9 PM."

Mother Dong was pleasantly surprised and asked, "Really?"

Dong Shanshan said, "It sounded real, not fake."

"Aiyo, that's great, that's so great!" Mother Dong was so excited she didn't know what else to say. "That is a one of the country's more reputable satellite channel stations, the highest-rated television station in the north and it's even a Friday primetime slot? Shanshan, looks like there are still some people with foresight. Who says there are no television stations who want you!" Mother Dong paused for a moment and then claimed credit by saying, "Old man, see that? That's why I said we must always burn incense and pray to the gods! And you still say that I'm superstitious!"

Father Dong said, "...What has all this got to do with burning incense!"

Dong Shanshan sat down, stood up, and sat down again. She could not calm her mind down and said, "But it can't be, why would they look for me? They could have looked for anyone else, it shouldn't even be my turn yet, is this sis' reputation that great? I could even alert a big station like Beijing Television?" She was still quite aware of the weight she could pull. So she was becoming even more perplexed at all that was going on. She then said, "They had only just confirmed the name of the program and the female host has already been designated as me? From the way they offered me the job, it seemed like it had to be none other than me?"

Mother Dong smiled and said, "That shows just how much they admire you!"

"It's too ridiculous," Dong Shanshan said. She had already begun packing her luggage. "But...I must still go no matter how ridiculous it sounds. If I miss this opportunity, I will jump off a building!"

Mother Dong went to help with the packing and said, "I'll help you pack."

Dong Shanshan said, "Dad, Mom, I will go to Beijing to discuss with them. If it is a fake offer, I will come back again. The distance between Inner Mongolia to Beijing is not that far anyway!"

Father Dong kindly smiled and said, "Go on, just do what you need to do and don't worry about the matters at home."

In a short while, Dong Shanshan was done packing her luggage. Actually, most of her stuff was still inside since she hadn't taken them out when she had returned home.

"I'm leaving!" Dong Shanshan left quickly as she was the type of person who got things done very quickly.

"Be careful on the way."

"I'll call back if the job is confirmed."

.....

Later in the afternoon.

At Beijing Television Station.

At noon, Zhang Ye scrounged a meal from the station before leaving. Hu Fei and his team started to get busy as they were racing against time to speed up the preparations for the program. No one from the program team lazed around.

"Do we have any candidates for the male host?"

"What about Teacher Li?"

"I thought Little Li went abroad for training?"

"How about Teacher Yu?"

"Teacher Yu still has a program so he's not available. Besides, Old Yu's getting up there in years and won't suit this program."

Hu Fei, Xiao Lu, and a few people were discussing, when suddenly, someone came in from outside. It was Little Liu from the station's HR Department. Beside him stood a long-legged beauty.

When Hou Ge saw her, his eyes shone brightly and he said, "This is?"

Hou Di and Dafei also stopped what they were doing and looked over together.

In fact, all of the male colleagues in the office area appeared to suddenly focus their attention onto the figure of this long-legged beauty...or her legs.

This was Teacher Zhang Ye's old classmate?

She was even prettier in person than on television!

Especially that pair of long legs. How could they be so long! Did you connect another joint on it by yourself!? Is this the legendary "nine-heads-tall figure"?

That HR Department young man gestured to his side with a smile and said, "Let me introduce her to everyone. This is Teacher Dong Shanshan. Her contract has already been signed and the joining formalities are being processed at the moment. From today onwards, Teacher Dong Shanshan will be a staff member of Beijing Television. Brother Hu, I brought her over already and I will hand her over to you now."

Hu Fei led the applause.

Dafei, Xiao Lu, and the rest also applauded in unison!

“Welcome, our new colleague!”

“Teacher Shanshan, we were all waiting for you.”

“We warmly welcome you!”

The atmosphere of Hu Fei’s new program team was excellent. This was the kind of style that he built up in any of his teams. He didn’t allow or condone any of his program team colleagues to have friction or conflicts between them. Hu Fei set a good example for others. He was always dedicated to all of his subordinates. At the same time, he also requested that they should build a good relationship between themselves. No matter how famous or highly experienced you were, you could not put on airs or be lazy. He felt that only a relatively harmonious team could be the best soil to grow a good program upon.

Zhang Ye also started out in this sort of culture in Hu Fei’s team. This was also imbued deep in him. Although Zhang Ye had worked at many places and offended many leaders and units, even to the point of not seeing each other anymore, after he left Beijing Arts Channel, he still maintained a close relationship with Hu Fei and his team that just a call was enough for him to come back and help out.

Dong Shanshan was not at all affected by all the eyes staring at her now. Judging from her demeanor and aura, she was totally unlike a rookie who had only debuted for a year. She greeted, “Hello everyone, it’s my first day today, so please take care of me.”

Hou Ge immediately said, “Sure, sure!”

As expected from brothers, Hou Di also said in unison with his brother, “Sure, sure.”

The HR Department young man laughed heartily. “Brother Hu, the task that was passed to me has already been completed with all the necessary work. When the program starts broadcasting, I’ll be waiting to join in your celebratory feast.”

Hu Fei patted his shoulder like a close friend and said, “Alright, thanks, Liu’er.”

“You’re welcome. I’ll leave now as I still have some matters to attend to.” The young man turned around and walked away.

Hu Fei looked at Dong Shanshan and finally put out his hand for a handshake and said, “Welcome, I’m Hu Fei, the executive producer and executive director of Do You Remember.”

Dong Shanshan smiled and shook his hand, saying, “Hello, Executive.”

Hu Fei smiled and said, “Don’t address me like that. Just calling me Brother Hu or Old Hu will do. Come, let me introduce the team to you. This is Xiao Lu, this is Dafei...”

She was getting to know the team members in quick succession.

Finally, Hu Fei said, “Teacher Shanshan, we will be officially starting the production of the program tomorrow, but I have not planned your hosting script nor is there a draft yet as the program concept had only been fixed this morning. For the matter of the hosting script...let’s talk about it later. I need to find someone to write it on an ad-hoc basis for now.”

Dong Shanshan immediately got into gear and was ready to start working. She asked, “Will it be ready on time if it gets written at the last minute? Why don’t you give me the program outline and requirements for the hosts and I will try to write it instead.”

Hu Fei acknowledged and said, “Alright, then we’ll trouble you to put in some hard work first until I manage to borrow a screenwriter from the other program teams to write up hosting script for you. We will discuss again with you and the unconfirmed male host once this is settled.”

Dong Shanshan blinked and said, “Borrow someone? Did our program team’s screenwriter resign?”

Xiao Lu who was at the other side smiled and said, “It’s not like that. It’s just that we never had a professional screenwriter for the hosting script in our program team since the Arts Channel.”

How could that be?

No script?

How could a program be done without having a script then?

Realizing Dong Shanshan was unable to comprehend the situation, Xiao Lu laughed, “Because we have never needed one before as we once had a host who didn’t have a need for any script!”

Chapter 596 – The Appointed Host!

Dong Shanshan was a little taken aback. “No need for a script? Were the scripts prepared ahead before recording the program then?”

Hou Ge laughed and said, “They weren’t prepared ahead of time, but he never, ever needed a script when he did a program recording. Even if it’s a live broadcast, he just goes up and does his hosting without any script. There are 12 urban legends in the internal departments within Beijing Television Station that are being spread around and this is one of them. Why these are called urban legends is because even if we tell anyone outside the station about it, no one would believe them. Only our own internal staff knows that these are, in fact, truths and not urban legends.”

Hu Fei patted him on the back and said, “Don’t be talking about those useless things anymore. Discuss the program concept and hosting details with Shanshan. Everyone else is starting to get busy, so don’t just stand around!”

“Yes.”

“OK.”

“As you command!”

Everyone dispersed as the party was dismissed.

Hou Ge and Dong Shanshan walked to a workstation in the corner where he took out a stack of documents and place them one by one onto the table, and started explaining the program to Dong Shanshan.

As a professional host who had graduated from the most prestigious broadcasting college in the country, Dong Shanshan naturally had her own judgement of programs. While she was on the way to

Beijing, Dong Shanshan had considered many things. She repeatedly considered the possible reasons Beijing Television had for signing her, a half-rookie with not much of a name carved out in the industry, as a host for such an important program segment. All her considerations only pointed to one thing, that the program needed someone like her who could be a “vase” to attract the viewers. Dong Shanshan’s mission was probably just to stand on stage and occasionally make some remarks or say a few words and then let the show continue on its own. For this program, the hosts were simply there to be eye-candy and not much else. Dong Shanshan thought this was the only possibility, but she still came and signed the contract after just listening to the offer without a second thought. This was because, even if she were going to be a host who could be disregarded and ignored on stage, this was still the “Northern Big Brother” Beijing Television’s variety program in a primetime slot. Even if she only had a bit part to play every week, she was willing to do it as this platform was too good!

But when Hou Ge had finished explaining the whole concept of the program and the role of the host, Dong Shanshan discovered that what she had initially concluded couldn’t be further from the truth!

Vase?

Not much screen time?

A bit part host?

Bullshit! The responsibilities of the host in this program turned out to be much more important than she had imagined! Although the program’s main focus was still on the contestants, city PK, or the leading singer, the host was also a key part of the whole setup and couldn’t be ignored. The host was extremely important and would have a lot of screen time since they would be needed to string together the entire show by appearing on screen and leading and setting the atmosphere of the live audience!

It wasn’t a group of them!

It wasn’t a partnership of a main host with four or five co-hosts!

It was just two hosts, a man and a woman, and that female host was Dong Shanshan. As she would be the only female host as well, there was basically no one else to share the screen with her at all!

Hou Ge looked at her and said, “Teacher Shanshan, that’s generally how it is.”

Dong Shanshan came back to her senses and said, “Ah? OK.”

“It wasn’t clear? That’s fine. If you did not understand any of that, just ask,” Hou Ge explained patiently. When it came to how he treated a pretty woman, he was always quite meticulous.

Dong Shanshan laughed and said, “It’s not that, I understood it all. But I’m wondering about how very heavy the responsibility of the host is. That makes me feel very pressured. Since the station and the program team value me so much, have put such an important task on me, and given such a good program and time slot to me, I will definitely do it well.”

Hou Ge said kindly, “Don’t worry about that. Just relax and do your job.”

Dong Shanshan said, “But how do I relax? Honestly speaking, this is my first time hosting such a large-scale variety program and it’s even one on a satellite channel at a primetime slot. I don’t know what the program teams sees in me to have invited me to join you all and given me such preferential treatment.

So I'm afraid I won't be able to do well and end up getting withdrawn from the role." She spoke about how pressured she was feeling and what not, but somehow it felt more like she was trying to lead the conversation to something else.

When Hou Ge heard this, he smiled and said, "Listen to me, Teacher Shanshan. Don't worry and rest assured. There's no need to fret about anything else. Let me tell you something. The program Do You Remember could fire me or fire anyone else on the team, but they would never fire you for sure."

What?

Fire you and I would still be here?

Did I hear wrong?

Dong Shanshan was taken aback and could only say, "Huh?"

Hou Ge said, "Anyhow, just relax."

"What did you mean by that?" Dong Shanshan looked at him.

Hou Ge mumbled a few words, knowing he had said too much in the presence of the pretty woman in front of him, and recovered his composure. He coughed and said, "I don't mean anything, it's nothing. I was just randomly saying a few things, so in any case, just don't feel too pressured and you'll be alright."

Dong Shanshan said, "Hou Ge, since this is what everyone calls you, I will address you like this as well."

"Sure, you can call me whatever you like," Hou Ge said with a smile.

Dong Shanshan, weaving some lies into truths, said, "You look especially like a cousin of mine. That's why I feel comfortable being around you. I've always been quite sociable, so I won't take you as an outsider."

Hou Ge said happily, "You mustn't take me as an outsider. Don't stand on ceremony with me. If there's anything you need, just come to Hou Ge. Hou Ge will definitely answer to your calls without any hesitation!"

Dong Shanshan's eyes had been filled with perplexity since this morning. She could not figure it out while she was on the way here, but her female intuition told her that a meat pie dropping out of the sky into her lap like this was definitely not without a reason, so she asked, "Alright then, the thing I need to know is: why is it that anyone else can be fired, but not me? And there's something else I can't understand all this while here. Why did the station look for me to assume the important role of the female host for such a large-scale production?"

Hou Ge glanced left and right, before saying, "About this..."

Dong Shanshan said, "Don't forget you promised that you wouldn't hesitate to help me out."

Hou Ge laughed bitterly and then whispered, "It's not that I don't wish to say it, but that I am not allowed to say it."

"Is it Zhang Ye?" Dong Shanshan was very clever and just brought up the name directly.

Hou Ge hesitated. "Erm, I did not say that."

Dong Shanshan observed his expression and said, "It must be him then. Didn't you all just say that there was a host who did not need to use any scripts? That was Zhang Ye, wasn't it? He and I were old classmates and also colleagues who have worked together before. About his ability to go off script and even doing that for a live broadcast, it was something that I witnessed with my own eyes as well. Zhang Ye is the only person I know so far who is crazy enough to dare to do a live broadcast without a script. Other than him, there couldn't be anyone else who was brave enough to attempt that. So that would mean that our program team was previously the team for the Arts Channel's Lecture Room program, right?"

Hou Ge knew that he could no longer keep this under wraps, so he confessed, "Correct."

Dong Shanshan asked, "Did Zhang Ye recommend me to the station?"

"What Teacher Little Zhang did was definitely not a recommendation." When he said this, Hou Ge also had a strange smile on his face. "Let me tell you this, but don't say that I was the one who said it."

Dong Shanshan nodded. "Naturally."

Hou Ge said, "Originally, the station had intended to ask Teacher Little Zhang to come back by offering him a long-term contract so that he could help plan a few programs for the station and to help bring up the viewership ratings as well. But as you should also know, Little Zhang used to have disagreements with the station on certain matters before and wasn't exactly on good terms either until recently. But even so, Little Zhang still did not have any intent of returning to the station, at least he claimed not for the time being. By rights, up until this point, there should no longer be anything to explain, but Teacher Little Zhang suddenly offered to do a program proposal for the satellite channel by selling it to the station. He did not request any monetary recompense and was fine with any offer, but he did make a request, and that was also his one and only condition for the station. It was..."

Hou Ge did not finish.

Dong Shanshan had already put his words together. She took a light breath and continued, "...was to let me be the female host for this program!"

"That's right." Hou Ge smiled and said, "As you can see, the station has agreed to this in the end. It was something that had not happened before as well. First, this was because the station's bosses and the relevant teams had judged that Do You Remember was a variety singing program that could stand out from all the other singing programs and make a name for itself. This program was something they had to get from Teacher Zhang no matter what, so that it wouldn't be sold to another television station either. Second, since everyone knew of Teacher Zhang's hosting reputation, the station leaders also trusted that Teacher Zhang's classmate which he had strongly pushed to be appointed would definitely not be a wrong choice. So rather than saying that this was a recommendation, it might be better to say that you were the designated host by the station and program team. This was effected by the station leader, and so anyone else can be fired, but not you!"

Dong Shanshan, "..."

From the other side, someone called out to Hou Ge, "Old Hou, we need your help over here."

“OK, I’ll go over right now,” Hou Ge responded to them and then turned to Dong Shanshan again and said, “I’ve already shared with you all that I can. Our team and Teacher Zhang enjoy a very good relationship. Since you’re Teacher Zhang’s classmate, you are naturally our friend and a part of us as well. As all of us used to watch Teacher Zhang’s talk show very frequently, we’ve also heard of him teasing you before. Haha. So we aren’t that unfamiliar with you. In the future, let’s get to know each other well and communicate more often.”

Hou Ge walked off.

Dong Shanshan was still digesting what he had told her.

Plainly speaking, this program only existed after having an appointed host. If Dong Shanshan was not the female host, then this program would also cease to exist! At this time, all the doubts and mysteries in Dong Shanshan’s mind finally disappeared. She finally understood why a large-scale production like this primetime program on the satellite channel would approach her in the first place. This was all due to her old classmate helping her sneakily behind her back and not telling her anything about it!

Chapter 597: An old classmate’s appreciation!

At night.

It was already dark.

At his parents’ house, Zhang Ye reclined on the sofa with his legs crossed and lit a cigarette with one hand while holding a porcelain tea cup in the other. With every puff, he had a few sips of tea and was feeling laid back and relaxed. There were no signs at all that he was an unemployed person who was unable to find a job after so many days.

Next to him, her mother rolled her eyes. “I’ve never ever seen anyone with such a big heart.”

Zhang Ye took exception. “There’s no urgency regarding the job. I will wait another few more days.”

“I’m talking about Beijing Television’s new program.” His mother said, “If you’ve even planned out all the details for them and taken every step into consideration, why didn’t you just do it by yourself?”

Zhang Ye snickered and said, “That program did not suit me.”

The amount of variety programs in his head were too many that even if he were to randomly pick one, he would get a program that would do quite well in the ratings. But as his energy was limited, together with the other objectives and personal requirements, he would definitely not want to do all of them. If there was one that he would choose, of course he wouldn’t choose one that would just do quite well. Given the choice, he would only choose the best of the best, an irreplaceable program that would leave all the other television stations in the dust with its success!

His father was less critical of his son’s employment issue and instead pointed out to him, “Smoke less.”

“Understood.” Zhang Ye sat up straight and extinguished the cigarette butt.

His mother suddenly pointed at the television and said, “Son, is that the program that you planned? Oh, you had only just submitted your proposal this afternoon and it’s already starting to get promoted by the evening?”

Zhang Ye looked over as well and said, “They’re really quite efficient, but it’s really not too many days away till they air when the other program ends. Brother Hu and the others must be getting worried too.”

.....

At Beijing Television.

The logo with large font depicting Do You Remember flashed impressively on screen before a public call for everyone in the country to register as contestants or lead singers. It was done in the very standard publicity technique and style. This publicity campaign was all done in-house by Beijing Television with no input from Zhang Ye at all. As he wasn’t a part of the television station anymore, he was only in charge of the program format while everything else had nothing to do with him. He did not wish to concern himself with too much of these issues and couldn’t do it even if he wanted to. As they say, don’t meddle in affairs that aren’t part of your position.

—This was the promotion the television aired.

On the internet, Beijing Television Station’s BTV-1 website was also promoting the upcoming segment slated to replace the current program in the primetime slot. The promotion was much more detailed and gave a lot of details. At the end, there was even a tentative list of staff on the program team. For the positions that had not been filled yet, they were just left blank.

Do You Remember

Executive Producer: Hu Fei

Executive Director: Hu Fei

Program Planner: Zhang Ye

Assistant Director: Hou Liang

Host (Female): Dong Shanshan

Host (Male): T.B.C.

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On Weibo, discussions about the topic began.

“Is Big Bird, Big Bird ending already?”

“Ai, that program’s quality started to become really bad towards the end. It wasn’t too bad at the beginning.”

“Beijing Television’s standards have been dropping of late. There’s nothing creative about their programs anymore. I heard that the program next in line is even going to be a singing program? Haven’t such programs already been overdone already? Are they not sick of it yet!? Ever since Teacher Zhang Ye left BTV-Arts Channel, I hardly watch Beijing Television Station’s channels anymore since the programs are all somewhat similar to each other and have nothing special to look forward to. How I miss those days when Teacher Zhang Ye was still at the Arts Channel. Lecture Room opened up a new style of

programming format and those episodes in which Zhang Ye talked about the Three Kingdoms set a new local viewership ratings record for education style type programs which are unlikely to be surpassed anytime soon!”

“There are rumors that Zhang Ye will be returning to Beijing Television Station?”

“Is that true?”

“I’ve heard so too, but I don’t know how true those rumors are.”

“The rumors were already refuted today at noon. Didn’t you all read the Weibo of an official from Beijing Television Station? Didn’t that person post something about something being regretful and a pity? That must have been referring to Teacher Zhang Ye.”

“Ah? Zhang Ye’s not going back?”

“Yeah, Beijing Television had invited him to rejoin them, but Zhang Ye did not accept the offer.”

“Then doesn’t that mean Teacher Zhang will still be unemployed?”

When it started, only a small number of people, about a dozen, were discussing this topic, but at one point, a lot of people suddenly joined in to talk about it as well.

“Quick, take a look!”

“Zhang Ye has a new program! Do You Remember!”

“Ah? I just saw the promotions for this program on Beijing Television too, but didn’t Zhang Ye decline the offer to join Beijing Television Station?”

“He’s not the host, but he created this new program for Beijing Television. Here’s the link, just go and take a look at the program team listing! Please don’t ask if this could be a coincidence where it’s just someone with the same name. This was his old team and old employer, and besides he is the program planner, so this Zhang Ye can’t possibly be anyone else!”

“It’s really true!”

“Teacher Zhang has done it again. Even though he’s not going to be the host, nor taking part as the director or producer of the show, I am still very hyped about it!”

“What is this program really about?”

“Remembering the lyrics? What’s so interesting about that?”

“Yeah, I don’t understand it either. Is that really something Zhang Ye would do? It doesn’t feel like it, it just doesn’t feel like him at all. A program that sounds so terrible, how could it have a good viewership rating?”

“Did Zhang Ye get water into his brains? There’s are so many singing programs in the market now. At least 5 or 6 of them can be easily seen whenever you switch on the television. The audience is long sick and tired of this. I’m sure everyone will be tired soon by all of these. At this time, what we need is a innovative new program, but still, you can’t just innovate senselessly. Remember the lyrics? How can

there be any watchability in something like remembering the lyrics? Do you think the audience is crazy to want to watch you remembering lyrics? Beijing Television is also getting dumber and dumber. If Zhang Ye wants to do something as stupid as this, then did you all have to follow along and do it as well? Why would you guys even allow such a pointless program to take the primetime slot? I'm speechless!!"

"And who is that person called Dong Shanshan? A newbie? I don't think there's any host by that name at Beijing Television Station, right?"

"I haven't heard of her before either. They're even so daring in using people."

"I know who she is. She's Zhang Ye's old classmate and also the host of Online Talents."

"Just knowing that it's about remembering lyrics already sounds uninteresting to me."

"Uh, no comment."

"It might really be possible that this new program team has someone else by the name of Zhang Ye."

"That's right, this shouldn't be the standard that Zhang Ye would come up with. Whether it was Lecture Room or Zhang Ye's Talk Show, they were all all unprecedented examples of television programs in the industry. But what is this about remembering lyrics? Competing on how good someone's memory is? Why don't you make them compete on remembering punctuation or character strokes instead. This program sounds so odd and terrible! Just the name of the program alone gives people a sense of powerlessness and makes them feel sleepy!"

"Zhang Ye, what happened to you?"

"Did he lose his touch already?"

"Looks like Beijing Television has made a very wrong move this time!"

"Do You Remember? If this program can get any viewership at all, I will twist my head off!"

"Hahahaha, this program is such a joke! How can anyone even take memorizing lyrics and make it into a show?"

The netizens were also having their doubts.

Fellow peers were also ridiculing such a program.

People from the media were criticizing.

All kinds of interesting opinions were raised!

This was Zhang Ye. No only was he a controversial person whenever he spoke or did something, even the programs he did were full of controversy!

It was the same reaction as when Zhang Ye had presented this idea for the program to Beijing Television Station's staff. All of the netizens could not understand and barely any of them had any expectations for this program. Moreover, they did not even understand what this program would be about and what the selling point was. However, Zhang Ye knew exactly what this program would be about, just like how Beijing Television had also understood after Zhang Ye explained it to them. As such, all of these voices of

doubt that were spreading around online did not disrupt their confidence in the program. Instead, after reading all those comments online, it even stirred the fighting spirit of Hu Fei's team as they all looked forward to giving everyone a surprise on the day the program premiered!

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It was already pretty late.

His parents were asleep.

Zhang Ye went back into his bedroom and laid down on his bed. He switched off the lights and got ready to sleep, when suddenly, his cell phone rang. It was from Dong Shanshan.

Zhang Ye smiled as he answered the call: "Hello, old classmate. Did you call me so late at night because you missed me?"

On the other end, a feminine voice laughed: "Since my job issue has been solved, of course I must give you a call to give my thanks. A satellite channel's primetime slot, how generous!"

"Ah? What job?" Zhang Ye played dumb.

"What do you think?" Dong Shanshan said.

Zhang Ye said: "What are you talking about?"

Dong Shanshan: "Alright, don't pretend anymore, I know everything already." Saying that, she laughed and continued: "You're even keeping it from me because you were afraid that my pride would not be able to handle it? When you called me yesterday, did you already know about my departure from Weiwo Online television station? You even tried to keep it a secret by making the Beijing Television Station's staff not mention a word about this to me? Let me tell you, my ego is not as big as you made it out to be. In fact, it's rather small. If I had known that you had such connections, I would've already gone to your house to stop you at your front door and make you pull some strings for me."

Zhang Ye knew that Dong Shanshan was just spouting nonsense to him. Having been classmates for so many years already, how didn't he know that Dong Shanshan had a huge ego? Otherwise, would Zhang Ye have to go through all that trouble just to hide it from her? Would Dong Shanshan have needed to make all those excuses over the phone, saying that she was still working and not mentioning anything about her resignation? But Zhang Ye still smiled and said: "Hai, then you should have just said so earlier. Alright, alright, it was I who helped you. Tell me then, how are you going to thank your Big Brother Zhang?"

Dong Shanshan said: "You're really not holding back, are you? You've even become Big Brother Zhang now?"

"Yes, of course," Zhang Ye said.

"Shouldn't it be natural to help out an old classmate of yours? You're even putting on airs now, hur hur," Dong Shanshan said belittling his deed. "Tell me then, how can I thank you?"

Zhang Ye said in rare, serious tone to her: "Just host the program well and I will guarantee this will bring you places."

Dong Shanshan said: "Don't worry, we're both from Media College and besides, did you forget that I did better than you in school?"

Zhang Ye said: That's true, that's true, School Belle Dong was so famous in school back then. Actually, with your capabilities, it's more than enough for you to join a satellite channel station. I was just being a busybody by offering to help. Actually I didn't do this for you. I did a program proposal for Beijing Television because first, I wanted to help Brother Hu and the others. Second, I haven't been doing too well recently, so it was good that I had this chance to earn some spare money. Third, I intended to use Do You Remember to further my potential for program planning so that those television stations which can't make up their minds about me yet would quickly decide and contact me to join them. Since I am jobless now, I really need to find another employer as soon as possible. I am not one to turn round to graze on an old pasture like Beijing Television Station, so Do You Remember was also a step that I had to take before I could make my next move. It was to help increase my chances of attracting a better television station and offer, but somehow the timing was just right and you had just left your previous job as well, so I just helped to recommend you to them since it was just a by-the-by thing."

Dong Shanshan said: "Was it just a recommendation?"

Zhang Ye pretended: "Yeah, what else would it be?"

Dong Shanshan laughed: "That couldn't have been just a recommendation. I heard that...you specified me? That you said if they did not agree to using me as the host, you would not even sell the program proposal to them, which would mean that this was a host-bound program?"

When Zhang Ye heard this, he cursed and said: "Heh, those bunch of people. I had already reminded them over and over before I left to not say a word of this, but they still let the cat out of the bag? Who told you about it, Shanshan? Who was the one who had such loose lips? I am so hurt by this! What's trust even worth these days? The most basic trust between two human beings!"

Dong Shanshan was amused by this and said: "Of course I won't tell you who told me about it. But I already know all that I need to know now, so Classmate Zhang, I owe you one."

"Come on, don't be so polite with me." Zhang Ye said: "I find it hard to get used to you if you speak in this way. Besides, didn't I promise you before that when you had a new program, I would definitely help you with it? Now that I've fulfilled my promise, do we still need to be so courteous with each other?"

Dong Shanshan said: "That's true."

Zhang Ye changed the subject and asked: "What do you think of the program?"

"If I simply just hear about it, it isn't much. But when I found out about all the details of each segment of the program, I believe that the viewership ratings shouldn't be bad at all. On top of that, there's no other program that's more suitable for me than this. I had left the online television station precisely because I did not want my progress to stall. I knew I needed to seek something that would allow me to progress and transform myself, so this new role in a satellite channel station and even hosting a program in the primetime slot is good enough for at least 2 years of my development." Dong Shanshan sounded very satisfied and continued: "I must say that this old classmate of mine is really very thoughtful by thinking out every aspect for me. You're a true friend."

"But of course. When we're out in the working world, we can surely depend on our classmates." Zhang Ye asked again: "Are you fitting in well with the program team? Brother Hu, Brother Hou, and the others are all my old friends and good people. I'm pretty sure you'd like this sort of a work environment."

Dong Shanshan acknowledged: "Everyone's quite nice and the environment is good too."

Zhang Ye warned: "Yes, but there's also a lot of single guys, so watch out for yourself." He predicted that there would be quite a number of people who would want to go after Dong Shanshan, as it would be the same anywhere else.

"That's a valid point. I came here in a rush today and only wore a very plain skirt that probably reached down to my knees. Even so, my legs were viciously attacked by wave after wave of stares from the new colleagues."

"F**k, could you exaggerate more?"

"It's not overstated."

"Those bunch of people are really too direct then."

"I've always wondered. Doesn't your old classmate, I, have good looks too? So why is it that every time you men see me, the first thing you look at are my legs? I'm very curious about it, but where do you usually look first when you see me?"

"Me? I'm different from them."

"You look at my face first? Or the way I'm dressed? My hair?"

"I notice your eyes first!"

"Woah, that's so pure of you!"

"Yeah, of course. If your eyes did not notice me, then I look at your legs!"

Dong Shanshan: "..."

Chapter 598 The Upgraded Effects of the Lucky Halo!

In the warmth of spring, flowers were blooming.

Another brand new day had begun.

On this morning, Zhang Ye was awoken by a phone call. When he answered the call, there was no response from the other end even after he said hello for many times. Then, it got disconnected, probably due to a bad signal. On the second call, it eventually connected.

"Is this Zhang Ye?"

"Yes, may I know who is this?"

"I'm from Qinghai Television Station's Channel 5."

"Oh, hello."

"I heard that you're still out of a contract for a hosting job, so we would like to see if you'd be interested in working together with us."

"I'm sorry, maybe next time."

"Please do reconsider. Although we are just a local television station and our coverage is only within Qinghai, we can work together on a program first. If you get a better offer next time, you can still go at any time since we are fine if you do not want to sign an annual contract. We can have a program-based contract instead."

"Never mind, thank you."

After hanging up, Zhang Ye went to wash up.

Actually, it was not that he had no job offers in the past few days. There were some people who had found out his contact information and called him directly, while others got Zhang Ye's friends to contact him for them. These were mostly commercial performance related work, for example, ribbon cutting at a company's opening ceremony, being the host at company dinners or some company leader's wedding, etc. Zhang Ye never took up these offers as they were often meaningless to him since it would not raise his popularity. There were some more invitations from smaller scale television stations such as local channels, city channels which could only cover up to a province area and were unable to broadcast to the entire country. With Zhang Ye's current popularity, even if he accepted their offers, it wouldn't mean anything to him. He couldn't possibly keep living in the past.

And so he rejected them and did not accept their offers. Zhang Ye was only waiting for the effects from the broadcast of Do You Remember, to let those satellite channels or Central TV re-evaluate and judge his ability in program production. His target right now was only at those television channels with a nationwide broadcast coverage. As for the rest, he would not even consider them.

But since Do You Remember had only just started its production, there would still be a period of time before it could be broadcast. Zhang Ye did not wish to sit idly at home for these remaining days while waiting for things to happen, so he took the initiative to contact some platforms or asked his friends to inquire about any television station gala night events, celebrity guest appearances on variety shows, or film crews to see if there was any position he could take. If there were any suitable job offers, he would accept them for the time being since such opportunities were never considered too much. But from the looks of it, there was no such luck for the time being.

It'd already been a few days now, so he could only stay at home for now.

After heating up his breakfast, Zhang Ye just took a few mouthfuls of it before losing his appetite. Because his job progress was not smooth, he could no longer bear the waiting anymore.

He decided he was not going to wait around any longer!

He had to think of another way!

It's not like this bro only had this path to take, he also had other unorthodox methods he could depend on.

He put down his chopsticks and went over to sit on the sofa. With his legs crossed, he activated the game ring on his left pinky, opened up the virtual game screen and went straight into the merchant shop. The first thing he looked for was the upgraded version of the Lucky Halo. Ever since Zhang Ye had received this item from the lottery draw, he had not used it at all as the usage of the item was too expensive, even for him. The old version of the Lucky Halo only cost 10,000 reputation points per second, which he was still able to accept. After it got upgraded, though the effects of the Lucky Halo increased manyfold it came at the cost of greater consumption of reputation points. Enabling the effect of the upgraded Lucky Halo would cost him 100,000 reputation points per second now. Even at the rate that Zhang Ye was earning his reputation points with his current popularity level, it was still too much for him to handle.

As for Difficulty Adjustment Die, it was also an option, but since he was only trying to find a temporary job, there was no need to use it. Zhang Ye only had one Difficulty Adjustment Die left now. If he used it here, there would be none left. Although this item only cost a hundred thousand reputation points to get from the lottery draw, its value was naturally much higher because of its unique ability. This was Zhang Ye's trump card. If he was not at his wits' end, he would never resort to using it.

Considering it all, the most suitable item to use right now was still the Lucky Halo. He couldn't worry too much anymore, so he would just use it this once. At such a time, he could no longer afford to be so stingy. As he has not been getting any media exposure for many days, if it continued on like this, his popularity would also start to decline and his fans' passion would be reduced. That would be the most fatal outcome!

Purchase!

Activating the Lucky Halo!

Zhang Ye activated the Lucky Halo a little unwillingly and it came into effect almost immediately. A white halo hovered over his forehead and emitted a bright glow that rippled out towards the walls and windows, as though Zhang Ye was at the center of the universe spreading a warm pulse outwards. The radiating glow was also very rhythmic as it rippled outwards constantly at every second.

The activated Lucky Halo looked very beautiful!

His reputation points also decreased at the speed of running water.

-100,000!

-100,000!

-100,000!

His reputation points decreased by 100,000 with every second which Zhang Ye shudder with fear when he saw this. He could only clench his teeth and bear with it as he couldn't possibly deactivate the Lucky Halo after only a few seconds. Based on his past experiences, the Lucky Halo would require some time to accumulate its effects. For example, the first time when Zhang Ye was at the Golden Microphone Awards, the Lucky Bread was activated for five minutes. If it had only stayed activated for a few seconds, then just the trophy would have been broken, and when the effects of the Lucky Bread ended, Zhang Ye's and Zhāng Yě's names would not have been mistakenly swapped by the award presenters!

He had to bear the pain of seeing his reputation points dropping so quickly!

At the very least, he had to keep the Lucky Halo activated for the next three to five minutes!

-100,000!

-100,000!

.....

At the same time.

In Shanghai, in a villa.

“Brother Shui, how is your new movie going?”

“We wrapped up the filming yesterday.”

“It must have been hard on you for this period of time.”

“That’s right. I have injuries all over my body and my arm is still in pain now. Come, brothers, we have not gathered together for more than two months already. The purpose that I asked everyone over today is so that we all could have some fun.”

“Are you suggesting that we’re going to...take a sniff?”

“Yeah, I have it all prepared.”

“Heh, Brother Shui is truly loyal to friends.”

“It’s my treat today, come on, come on!”

A short while later, the sound of police sirens wailing echoed as two police cars surrounded the villa!

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On the other side.

At Zhang Ye’s parents’ place.

60 seconds!

120 seconds!

150 seconds!

300 seconds!

Zhang Ye deactivated the upgraded Lucky Halo and the countdown timer immediately stopped. Looking at his almost vanished reputation points, Zhang Ye was close to tears. In just five minutes, it had already cost him 30 million reputation points. It had almost wiped out all the accumulated reputation points he had earned from the Peking University and public service announcement incidents since upgrading the game ring system and using the upgraded lottery draw.

It was too expensive!

This was too f**king expensive!

However, just what kind of effects would there be? If there was a great surprise waiting for him, then it would be worth it no matter how many reputation points were spent. After all, wasn't the reputation points he earned and accumulated meant to be used in precisely such situations? As long as they could help to increase his popularity, it wouldn't matter to him how many reputation points were spent!

Chapter 599 Invitation from the crew of Grandmasters!

[collapse]

At home.

He kept waiting and waiting for the Lucky Halo's effect to happen. But from the morning until afternoon, then evening, after god knows how many hours had passed, he still did not experience any changes at all!

Phone call? There weren't any!

News? He didn't get reported about either!

The doorbell? It stayed quiet!

Everything was just as it was before!

There wasn't even a message on his phone telling him he had won a prize to offset his cell phone bill!

With 30 million reputation points spent, of course Zhang Ye would have some expectations. But after waiting left and right for something to happen, he could no longer just sit around waiting anymore. So many reputation points had already been used up, so how could it be that he did not even see a hint of its effects? What's happened? Could it have been a scam? Zhang Ye, who had been waiting in front of the television, felt that the news on television might be too limited and so decided to return to his room to check the internet instead. He wanted to see if there were any news related to himself as he wasn't convinced that the Lucky Halo did not have any effect at all. It must have caused something to happen, somewhere, just that he wasn't aware of it yet.

There were no updates on Weibo.

There was also nothing on the forums.

Any news of him was still related to Do You Remember since the past few days Zhang Ye had not had much of a presence in public except for his new program. As Zhang Ye was not the only person in this crowded entertainment circle, the media couldn't possibly only revolve around him alone. There were many others who were much more popular and well-known, as well as more newsworthy than him. News about whoever was having an affair, involved in a scandal, switching agencies, committing suicide, and what not, there was no lack of news going on around the entertainment circle. Every day, there were all kinds of celebrities getting involved in all kinds of incidents. Zhang Ye was just a small part of these very common incidents of the entertainment circle. Like right now, the biggest news today was about a celebrity who was caught in a drug crackdown operation.

"Shocking! 'Brother Shui' caught in a drug crackdown!"

“Chang Chishui was arrested in his house!”

“The eighth case of the year. Is drug use becoming fashionable among celebrities?”

“Grandmasters wraps up filming, Brother Shui gets arrested. Grandmasters’ film crew gets dealt a heavy blow!”

Zhang Ye wasn’t exactly interested in such news, but was slightly taken aback when he caught mention of Grandmasters. So he clicked on the link. Old Zhang had mentioned to him that she had taken part in its filming. Production was wrapping up, the post-production stages already taking place. The film crew had also announced at its celebratory feast that a premiere would happen soon, with a date seemingly set as well.

The news stated very clearly that this was not a rumor. The police had also verified that the arrest had been made. Even the urine test results had been exposed by the media, and coincidentally, Chang Chishui who had previously won a best supporting actor award for his role as a junkie was now arrested for drug abuse. He had been doing quite well in the film industry and was cast as an important supporting role in the film Grandmasters, so it could be said that he was irreplaceable. If the media reports were true, then according to the SARFT’s Decree #43, if the Grandmasters film did not delete the scenes in which Brother Shui appeared, then it would surely be faced with the danger of being unable to get released in theaters.

The netizens also reacted chaotically.

“Impossible! How could Brother Shui be abusing drugs too?”

“Are there any good people left in the entertainment circle?”

“Hai, what a pity, another star has fallen!”

“I don’t care what happens to Brother Shui, I’m more worried about Grandmasters. I’ve been waiting for this movie for a year already, for my Sister Zhang and Dalong. It shouldn’t affect the premiere right?”

“It’s done for unless they delete all the scenes that Brother Shui appears in.”

“He’s the third male lead? How could they delete anything then!”

“If they delete his scenes, then this movie would become unwatchable and the whole story would become incomplete!”

“How exasperating! Damn this Chang Chishui, causing so much trouble for everyone!”

“I heard that the Grandmasters film crew is already studying the possibility of that. Sister Zhang had flown to the south yesterday after finishing all her scenes to attend several television program recordings to do promotions for the movie. But I understand that she was recalled this afternoon to the set. The director is really anxious and furious about the whole incident! Hai, to have this kind of an incident happening, who wouldn’t be frantic with worry? It was already so close to the premiere, but somehow, it might not even make it to the big screen now!”

“What can be done?”

"I was really looking forward to watching Grandmasters!"

"This movie had an investment of 50 million RMB, right? If it really gets pulled, then it would be such a pity with all that money going down the drain. I don't think the actors would be able to bear such a loss too!"

After reading a little, Zhang Ye already understood what was going on. He got off the internet as he really couldn't be worried about others now. He was only thinking about where the effect of the Lucky Halo had gone too now. With so many of his reputation points spent, there surely had to be an answer!

His parents were still not home from work yet, so Zhang Ye paced around the house with his hands behind his back.

Where was the luck?

Where did my job go?

Suddenly, his cellphone rang.

When Zhang Ye saw the caller ID, he was a little surprised, because the person calling was none other than Zhang Yuanqi. Zhang Ye wondered why she would call him now in the midst of all that was going on, instead of focusing on her own problem.

Oh well, just answer it.

Zhang Ye thought that Old Zhang was looking for him to drink with her again, and since he didn't have anything to take his mind off his worries, he was ready to have a drink as well. He answered the call: "Hello, Sister Zhang, are you refusing to take part in some social event again? I've already read the news. No worries, just come and we'll have a drink together, but it's not convenient at my place today, so why don't you suggest another location instead?"

However, Zhang Yuanqi stiffly rebuked him: "Why are you always thinking about drinking?"

"Ah?" Zhang Ye almost fainted, remembering how it was her who forced him to drink with her the previous time!

The next moment, she said: "There's a temporary job that just came up. Do you want to take it?"

Zhang Ye wondered what it was about, so he asked: "What job?"

She simply said: "The film crew for Grandmasters has decided to cut all of Chang Chishui's scenes from the movie after some discussions. They need to reshoot all those scenes and need a replacement actor. Do you think you can do it?"

When he heard this, Zhang Ye nearly died from happiness: "I can! Of course I can! What role is it? Is it an important character in the movie? It's not a bit part, right?"

She coldly replied: "If it's not an important character, they'd have just deleted the scenes and that would be it. Would they still need to find someone to be a replacement? This character places fourth overall in terms of importance and screen time in the whole movie. It is the third male lead, and also the antagonist in the movie!"

“Third male lead? Antagonist?”

“Do you want to take the role or not?”

“Yes! I will take the role!”

“Alright then, I will recommend you to the director. Come over tomorrow for an audition.”

“Sure then, thanks so much, Sister Zhang. You’re really something!”

“The crew has called a few other professional actors to try out for the role, so you might not even get the job. I can only recommend you. I don’t care about the outcome.”

“Alright.”

“I’m hanging up now. My manager will send you the details about the timing and location.”

After hanging up, Zhang Ye laughed loudly. He quickly went online to check out the overall situation and information for Grandmasters. As expected, this was a big production; production had started in the middle of last year, with the filming taking up a good six months of the schedule. The amount invested into this movie was 50 million RMB and seemingly needed an additional 20 million RMB in additional funding later on, coming up to a total of 70 million RMB. As for how much it really cost to make this movie, no one really knew the exact figures as every industry insider would know that these numbers were generally exaggerated. However, it was still safe to say that it was a big production, since the director was also quite well-known, having helmed two movies that had box office earnings of at least a few hundred million RMB before. Together with the Heavenly Queen Zhang Yuanqi and popular movie star, “Dalong,” “Brother Shui,” and many others, it helped to garner even more attention to the movie prior to its release. It could be called as one of the few big productions in recent times.

Large investment.

Big name director.

An impeccably assembled cast.

Even if the movie did not turn out to be as good as expected, or even if it turned out terrible, under the commercial business decisions and appeal to the market, the box office earnings would definitely not do worse than 100 million RMB. With Zhang Yuanqi holding the fort, it was as good as guaranteeing a good box office earning!

For such a big production, actors would definitely fight for their right to get cast. Zhang Ye, being an outsider to the film industry, had actually gotten a chance to fight for this right to be the third male lead? He had a chance now to formally step into the film industry? For Zhang Ye, this carried a great significance! Yes, although it was just an audition tomorrow in which his chances to secure the role were still not guaranteed, he had to grab this opportunity at all costs!

This was just too rare of an opportunity!

It looked like his decision not to accept those small commercial performances were correct. Just look at this, look at it! Didn’t he finally get a great surprise by waiting patiently?

Eh? Surprise?

Wait, could it be?

Zhang Ye was suddenly stunned as he seemed to remember something. He went online to check the news and purposely clicked on the link to a news report about Brother Shui's arrest. He found out the exact time that Brother Shui had been arrested at home.

In the morning at 8:25 AM?

Wasn't that the same time as when he had activated the Lucky Halo?!

Zhang Ye suddenly understood what was going on. It was the damned Lucky Halo's effect that had gotten this chance for him. He was still wondering why the old version of the Lucky Halo's effect had been so obvious, while there was seemingly no effect from this upgraded version.

When he made a comparison.

It was truly worth every reputation point spent!

In the past, whether it had been the Lucky Bread or the old version of the Lucky Halo, the effects had all been quite useful and helped Zhang Ye through many situations before. For example, like how the wrong name was announced for the Silver Microphone Awards, the time when "Woman Flower" was played in error at Lee Anson's concert which helped to further smack his face, and also all the times when he activated the Lucky Halo during his lottery draws to get the items that he really needed, and many others. But now that Zhang Ye's reputation had become much greater, he was also on a different level from before. If he continued using those items for their minor effects of good luck, then it would surely not be enough to satisfy Zhang Ye's requirements now. Play a song in error to smack someone's face? That was nothing. Gaining a better chance at the lottery draw? Because it did fail him a few times before, Zhang Ye was especially looking forward to using this upgraded version of the Lucky Halo. Looking at the effects of using it today, he was totally not disappointed!

It might be expensive to use!

But its effects are vastly different from the old version!

Zhang Ye was only a host, and at times also considered a poet or a mathematician, so even though he had done some acting before in The Great Pugilistic World, that was only considered the most trivial of trivial roles. It wouldn't be too far to even consider him just an extra in the crowd. Strictly speaking, it could not be considered his movie debut as his name didn't even appear on the main cast list. Logically, a big production like this should not possibly have even let him try for the audition as there were surely many more candidates out there who were better qualified for the role. Yet a cast member had gotten into some trouble thus giving Zhang Ye a chance to audition for the role. This already explained the effect the upgraded version of the Lucky Halo had and how it was well suited to his current work environment level!

Unfortunately, though, the reputation points it consumed were really too high. Otherwise, Zhang Ye would have used it a few more times to enable him to get a role in a big production every now and then or even become a lead actor for a movie that could have a box office earning of hundreds of

millions of RMB. A film was considered a top distributed mass media in the entertainment industry, so if that happened, wouldn't Zhang Ye's popularity shoot through the roof??

Chapter 600 Acting audition?

The next morning.

At the largest movie production studio in the suburbs of Beijing.

Previously, Zhang Ye, who had also played a bit part in the movie *The Great Pugilistic World* on the recommendation of Zhang Yuanqi, had been here when he was still not well-known. Today, he was driving here again with much more familiarity. Zhang Ye's reputation was no longer the same as before. He was here for an audition for a major supporting role this time. His task today was to land the acting role so that he could start paving a way for himself in the film industry and to ease the embarrassment of not having a job recently while also attempting to use it to push his advance into the B-list celebrity rankings.

He reached his destination.

"Teacher Zhang."

"Yes?"

"You've arrived? Please follow with me."

"OK."

After he got out from his car, a film crew staff member met him and led Zhang Ye inside. After many twists and turns, they finally came to a filming location inside the studio. The soundstage was decorated in a modern setting and it seemed like there was an explosion scene planned as the props for it were all ready and kept at the side, so it was not likely they would be doing that shoot elsewhere. This scene could only be shot at the movie studios. The place appeared to be bustling with activity. There were many extras who were being briefed by the film crew staff who looked very nervous, probably because they would have to confirm the replacement actor by today and start the reshooting of the scenes again immediately after that.

In the workshop on set.

Someone was already being auditioned.

When Zhang Ye walked in, he saw the director, Wang Chengpeng, and the assistant director together with some of the film crew staff at the innermost part of the set. A male actor was having his audition as Zhang Yuanqi, Dalong, and the rest of the main cast stood around watching the proceedings.

That staff member whispered, "Teacher Zhang, please wait for a while."

"Alright." Zhang Ye nodded.

Zhang Yuanqi looked over, then smiled and said, "Little Zhang?"

Zhang Ye quickly walked over and greeted, "Sister Zhang."

“Long time no see.” Zhang Yuanqi candidly reached out her hand.

Zhang Ye held her pretentious hand and thought to himself, What do you mean by long time no see? Didn't you just come to my place two days ago? And you still haven't paid me for the bush lily either!

Zhang Yuanqi smiled and asked, “How have you been recently?”

Zhang Ye also smiled back and replied, “Not too bad. I've been resting at home.”

The two of them chatted for awhile and seemed very polite with each other. If anyone saw this, they would surely think that they didn't have too close a relationship. Since many people already knew that Zhang Ye had written some songs for Zhang Yuanqi before, it wasn't surprising to them that they knew each other. However, in reality, Zhang Ye's and Zhang Yuanqi's relationship was the type that surely no one could have expected. Zhang Ye was in fact not used to seeing a kind and gentle smile on Old Zhang, as she was the type who would act one way in public and another in private.

From the other side, the second male lead also came over and greeted, “Zhang Ye.”

Zhang Ye looked at him, then shook his hands and said, “Hello.”

The second male lead smiled and said, “I've heard so much about you.”

“I'm the one who has heard more about you,” Zhang Ye replied politely.

Zhang Ye had read up on the cast list and knew that he was Tian Xuetao. He was very young, probably only older than Zhang Ye by a few years. He only had a sudden burst of fame in the past two years and had probably debuted for many years already, usually acting in bit or supporting roles in the past. He just started getting better roles in these two years and was considered a late-bloomer in the film industry. He was very handsome, the pretty boy kind of attractiveness, with a slim physique and had the standard celebrity looks.

As for popularity, Tian Xuetao was likely on par with Zhang Ye but would lose out a bit on the overall popularity rankings since Zhang Ye was more versatile, able to host, produce advertisements, and teach. However, if they were compared in terms of popularity in the film industry, Tian Xuetao was obviously much more popular than Zhang Ye. Zhang Ye wasn't even considered a rookie in the film industry whereas Tian Xuetao, having lurked around for so many years in the industry, would already have a certain box office appeal. Although his acting skills were not fantastic, his fan base was quite loyal and strong, otherwise, he wouldn't even be acting as the second male lead in such a big production.

Tian Xuetao asked curiously, “You also came for the audition?”

“That's right.” Zhang Ye smiled and said, “I came to try to see if I could cross over into the film industry since I have been lounging around at home without any work anyway.”

Beside him, a staff member walked over and handed Zhang Ye a script. “Teacher Zhang, please take a look at this first.”

“Alright.” Zhang Ye took it and read.

Beside them, Zhang Yuanqi had already walked off. Dalong had a glance at Zhang Ye from where he was standing. He did not come over but simply continued observing the actor's audition in the center of the

area. As the first male lead, although Dalong was not on the same level with Zhang Yuanqi, and even though not yet considered a heavenly king, he was the real deal as an A-list celebrity. He was an established actor who had already been famous for many years in the film industry and was from the same agency as Zhang Yuanqi. He was about the same age as her, but because he debuted much later, Dalong was considered junior to Old Zhang. Whether in terms of seniority, popularity, or experience, whenever Dalong saw Zhang Yuanqi in person, he would still have to greet her politely.

The director said, "Little Yu, can you try to look more ruthless?"

The actor auditioning immediately nodded, changed his expression, and repeated the same lines that he said earlier, "Don't try to bullshit me! In this era, who still dares to claim they are grandmasters? Your master can't claim such, so you...are even less deserving to claim so!"

The director nodded and said, "Alright, that's enough."

That actor reverted back to his own expression and asked, "Director Wang?"

Director Wang Chengpeng shook his head and said, "Little Yu, this role is not too suitable for you since you don't look ruthless enough to bring out the spirit of the antagonist."

The assistant director added, "Little Yu is more suited playing the roles of protagonists with a good image and will do very in any of those roles he plays." He said this with the intent to politely reject the actor for the role.

That actor said with a smile, "It's alright, I understand."

Wang Chengpeng said, "You go back first. I still have another movie this year with a role that I have already reserved for you. It's a good role too, so let's keep in contact."

"Sure, thank you Director Wang for taking care for me." That actor turned around, greeted Dalong, and then cheerfully greeted Zhang Yuanqi as well. He did not leave, but instead remained behind to observe the next one up.

Wang Chengpeng shouted for the next person, "Little Qu."

A man who was standing in the corner went up and asked, "It's my turn, Director Wang?"

"It's your turn." Wang Chengpeng said, "Let's have you throw some punches first."

The martial arts director of the film crew went forward a few steps and demonstrated some moves.

Director Wang Chengpeng said, "Just do the same as what you were shown and we'll see how it turns out."

That actor did accordingly and immediately imitated what he saw from the martial arts director's movements. He threw a punch, did a roundhouse kick, and spun around to give a palm strike. The movements were not difficult but he still managed to do it quite choppily.

He continued trying out for a few more scenes.

Ten minutes later, the director called for a break. "Little Qu, take a rest first." He did not give any indication of whether it was good enough or not, but from the looks of it, he was not too satisfied, but

no one knew exactly either. Wang Chengpeng had a big mustache with a goatee, and was reserved, a man of few words. Whether because of the ongoing production crisis or his character was like that, Wang Chengpeng's expression did not look good and his eyes were filled with a sense of urgency.

The director asked, "Are there anymore auditionees?"

The assistant director said, "There's one more person. It's Zhang Ye."

The director looked around and asked, "Has Teacher Zhang arrived?"

"I'm here, Director Wang." Upon seeing that it was his turn, Zhang Ye went forward immediately.

All of the working staff at the set turned to look at Zhang Ye at that instant.

Earlier, Wang Chengpeng called the first auditionee Little Yu, and the second one Little Qu, both of which were quite casual ways to address them. Even when he addressed the male lead actor, he called him as Dalong directly and was not too formal about it. Logically speaking, there was little difference in the popularity of Zhang Ye with the two auditionees, and all of them could not compare to Dalong as an A-list celebrity. Even if the director called Zhang Ye Little Zhang, it would still be acceptable and appropriate, yet he addressed him as "Teacher Zhang."

A staff member of the film crew who was not familiar with Zhang Ye was stunned by this and turned his head to ask the person beside him, "Who is he? Why is the director being so polite to him?"

That man asked back, "You don't know him?"

"I do know him. He's a host, right? But why did the director address him as teacher? Even for the type of S-list celebrity like Sister Zhang, Director Wang does not address her as teacher?" The person was very concerned and said, "Does he even call for such a respectful tone?"

That person smiled and said, "The circumstances are different as his identity is rather special."

"Special? How special can it be?" He did not understand what was going on at all.

"It is because he's also a professor at Peking University."

There was an explanation to this.

Zhang Ye was not the same as the others celebrities. With Wang Chengpeng's status and experience, it wouldn't matter how he addressed those celebrities who acted in movies or shows, but Zhang Ye was different. Not only was he a host, he was also a famous literary scholar, world-renowned mathematician, as well as an associate professor in Peking University's Math Department. Even though he was suspended now, he was not stripped of his position, and an associate professor was still an associate professor. With the title of professor in a top educational institute in the country, it was not wrong for the director and assistant director who did not know him well to address him as Teacher Zhang in such circumstances. Anyone who knew the details would not find it strange either.

But the other celebrities?

Of course they would not be addressed this way.

The assistant director asked, "Have you read through the script yet?"

Zhang Ye nodded and said, "I've read it. I'd simply just scanned through it a bit."

The assistant director said, "Then let's try out some lines and get you into the feel of the character's role..."

"Let's try out the acting skills first," Wang Chengpeng interrupted.

The assistant director acknowledged and then said to Zhang Ye, "Let's try out your acting skills first."

As for the rest of the actors, they were already very familiar with them as everyone had already worked in the film industry for such a long time. Some of these actors had worked with them before, and for those who they did not work with before, the film crew had mostly watched their movies or performances before too. Whether they had any acting skills or not, everyone knew from the bottom of their hearts. Only when it came to rookies would they have an audition for acting skills, while for most celebrities who were already well-known, they would be asked to act out the character's role directly.

For Zhang Ye, they only knew about his achievements in other industries, but as for his work in the film industry? His acting chops? Since no one knew what Zhang Ye's standard was, when it came to the auditions, he would naturally be treated like a rookie. They had to see whether his acting skills were passable, and if he couldn't even clear this hurdle, then there was no need to go on for the rest of the audition as the movie wouldn't be using him anyway. This was why it was so rare for celebrities to cross over from other industries. There were some things which were not determined by popularity and fame alone as there were still thresholds to meet to be able to get into the different industries. If someone wanted to succeed in this industry, then they had to abide by the standards of the industry.