

Superstar 601

Chapter 601 Are you, like, a professional actor?

[collapse]

In the studio.

The first round of auditions for Zhang Ye began.

Zhang Yuanqi, Dalong, Tian Xuetao, and the rest stood around and observed the audition quietly. The film crew was also looking curiously at Zhang Ye. Some of them had doubts in their eyes, especially the actor who was auditioning just before him and another pending candidate for the role. They were both wondering why the film crew would find an amateur actor, or rather a layman who in his daily life and work had totally nothing to do with movies and acting!

Some people were whispering quietly among themselves.

“Can Zhang Ye do this?”

“No idea.”

“Who invited him to join the audition?”

“I think it was arranged by the assistant director, but I’m not sure on whose recommendation.”

“He’s only a host, or at most you can consider him to be someone who also deals with literature and mathematical work, so for this urgent and important role, why would they get Teacher Zhang to audition for it? If it’s just a normal comedy movie, it’s understandable since those do not require too much acting skill from a person, but Grandmasters is not the same as those.”

“It’s even an antagonist’s role which makes it more difficult.”

“Shh, it’s starting, let’s watch.”

Zhang Ye heard a little of these scattered conversations from the people around him, but was not bothered by it at all. He was also not feeling a shred of nervousness. He might not be so confident at other things, but acting? When he had gotten those Higher Mathematics Skill Experience Books back then, he had also received 141 Acting Skills Experience Books along with them. These experience books were all “eaten” by him at that time and digested as knowledge and experience into his mind. However, he had not had a chance to use it until now. When Zhang Yuanqi called him to ask if he wanted to be recommended for the audition, this was the reason why he agreed to her offer without any hesitation, because he already knew what he could do.

What kind of concept was 141 books?

Even if he could not reach the top level like Zhang Yuanqi, Zhang Ye’s acting skills would certainly not be worse than those other actors!

The assistant director said, “Set yourself free, become a tiger!”

Zhang Ye did not even hesitate and reflexively went down on all fours while making an explosive roar of a tiger, “Houuuu!!!!”

That was too loud!

And too sudden!

The assistant director, director, and Tian Xuetao along with the others were all caught off guard and jumped up in fright when they heard the roar. Not only were they frightened by the sound of his roar, even the fierce expression of the “downhill” tiger sent shivers through their spines! In the artistic field of painting, tigers could generally be divided into two types. One was the “uphill” tiger which depicts a tiger that was returning back to its lair after a satisfying meal, having an expression of content and serenity. However, Zhang Ye’s depiction of the tiger was a “downhill” one, the look of hunger as it went out to search for its next prey. A “downhill” tiger was one that was the fiercest and the most scary looking!

Zhang Yuanqi also looked at Zhang Ye in surprise.

Tian Xuetao and the second female lead both looked at each other.

The assistant director clapped and cheered as goosebumps broke out all over him. “What a great ‘downhill’ tiger impression! That’s good enough, Teacher Zhang!”

Zhang Ye stood up and dusted off his hands, looking as though he didn’t do much. His throat was feeling a little hoarse since the part of his vocal chords that he used to make the roaring sound was a little different from the normal speaking part. It felt very abrasive and not just anyone could come up with such a sound.

His performance had really left everyone, including the directors and actors, stunned. Usually, when an actor was asked to set themselves free, even an acting student would know how to do it, not to mention a professional actor. Even if you grabbed a random performing arts student from Beijing Film Academy or Shanghai Theater Academy, they would be able to do it quite well. But the performing arts focused more on acting—whether the expression and spirit were like that of a real tiger, the sound part was secondary. But for Zhang Ye? Not only did he perfectly portray himself like a tiger, the finishing touch was really at the point when he roared angrily in hunger. Just between all these professional actors who were present today, none of them made a sound like that!

Why were they not able to do so?

It was down to the reason of their professions!

Zhang Ye’s acting chops were enhanced by his consumption of the Acting Skills Experience Books, but his broadcasting background was entirely trained with great practice. At the Media College where he graduated from, Zhang Ye had specialized in vocal performance, so what the others could not do was no problem for him. This was an advantage he had over the others based on his training, and also something that he wouldn’t do poorer than others of the same profession, not to mention these laymen who only specialized in acting. Since vocalization was his specialty, the foundation techniques behind this roar was down to the hard training of three to five years. The frictional changes in the vocalization,

with the adjustments of the vocal tract to how to change the frequency after a sound has been made—all of these were due to his knowledge!

The assistant director gave another topic, “Wolf. A wolf that is calling out to its pack.”

Having seen the previous performance, everyone seemingly had some kind of expectation now. All of them were staring at him without blinking.

Zhang Ye did not rush this time but slowly mimicked a wolf lowering its body, looking left and right and not making a sound for a few seconds before taking a few steps to the front and looking around again. Thereafter, he stretched his neck upwards and raised his head towards the sky as he slowly let out a continuous howl, “Awoooooo...”

One second!

Ten seconds!

From low to high pitched!

This breath and this sound actually lasted a full 17 seconds!

A few of the film crew staff even got goosebumps on their arms all of a sudden. The feeling was indescribable, except maybe calling it something similar to primal fear!

Everyone was once again stunned by Zhang Ye’s performance!

How similar! It was just too similar! Not only did the expression look the same, even the howl sounded like a real wolf’s howl!

A female staff member from the film crew who grew up on the prairies in Inner Mongolia cursed in her mind when she heard Zhang Ye imitating the wolf’s call. This was as good as the real thing and if a wolf had poorer vocalization means, it might not even be able to howl as well as you!

The other actors only acted out the form and spirit of a wolf.

But it was Zhang Ye who added on the vocalizations that had married form and spirit to display a lifelike portrayal of a wolf!

With Zhang Ye’s display, many of the professional actors around were thoroughly convinced of his acting skills. They could do the same as him, except for the vocalization part!

The assistant director continued on to the next topic, “An eagle that is...”

Director Wang Chengpeng interrupted him and gave a wave of his hand. “There’s no need to go further than that.”

The assistant director nodded. It was true that it wasn’t necessary to go on anymore. A basic acting skill like this needed no extra testing since none of those present could do any better than Zhang Ye. He knew that Zhang Ye’s broadcasting foundations had given him the bonus points, so he said, “Then let’s move to the second part, character portrayal.”

Zhang Ye nodded and said, “Alright.”

The assistant director said, "You can prepare a little to get into the mood of the character. Just follow along with the script that we gave to you earlier. You can just let me know whenever you're ready."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "I'm ready. We can start anytime."

For any actor to get into character, as long as it wasn't a character similar to their own, they would definitely have their own methods to get into character and it was a very common thing to do. The assistant director had noticed that Zhang Ye did not do any preparation at all, but still claimed that he was ready, so he gave him a second look and said, "Alright, then start from the ninth scene for the third male lead's first line." The assistant director held his script and read from it, "The scenario is at the top floor of a skyscraper, the line is 'I don't care...'"

But Zhang Ye expression suddenly changed to a very cold look at this moment. The chill was expressed through a soft smile, yes, not a cold smile but a gentle-looking smile. He was still able to depict the lofty austerity with such an expression and it made people have a choking sense of tension when they saw it. He did not let the assistant director finish his words and directly started his portrayal by reciting the lines from the script, "I don't care where you came from, all I know is where I want to go. Even your teacher can't stop me, so who do you think you are? All that's left of Xingyi Fist now are your teacher and you. How pitiful, how regrettable, and how sad! But, heh, your teacher is still more blessed than I am. At least he has a disciple who is promiscuous, unlike me who is all alone in this world now!"

The assistant director was a little stunned, but immediately said, "The 15th scene where the lines say 'Don't try to...'"

Zhang Ye's expression changed again. This time, it showed a trademark antagonist's villainous look. He said, "Don't f**king try to bullshit me! In this era, who still dares to claim they are grandmasters? Your teacher can't claim so, and you, you are even less deserving to claim so!" The original lines of the script were not exactly like that as Zhang Ye added in a vulgarity as well as adding function words to the ending part that went "you are even less deserving to claim so." He did all of this based on his own sense of artistic portrayal of a character's performance.

The assistant director breathed in hard and said, "The 33rd scene."

Zhang Ye held his chest tightly as he took his last breaths. "When...I die...my martial arts...cough...will really be lost for good....That's good, might as well...cough. In birth...we bring nothing..." up until here, the script made no remarks of anything, but Zhang Ye suddenly increased his volume and shouted in a hoarse voice that made what he said a little inaudible, "In death, we take away nothing. Hahahaha!!"

It was loud laughter in the moments before his death!

The last bit of insolence in his life!

The second male lead, Tian Xuetao couldn't help but be moved by this!

The other staff members of the film crew were all quite dumbfounded by this!

The assistant director who was stunned, said, "Did you memorize all of the lines already?"

"Yes." Zhang Ye broke out of character very quickly as well as he immediately "walked" out of the scene. He did not have much thought about the acting he did earlier, but he understood that the 141 acting

skills experience books he ate were not for nothing. It seemed like the effect was much better than he had expected. He said, "I memorized it already. Wasn't I just reading from the script just now?"

The martial arts director beside him said, "You've only gone through it once but already got it all memorized?"

Everyone could remember that Zhang Ye had only arrived at the studio a short while ago. Wasn't it just 10 minutes ago? That would just barely be enough time for him to go through the script once over! He only browsed through it and memorized every line in it?

Zhang Ye said matter-of-factly, "That's but of course. It's not like the lines are really complicated or something, so why wouldn't I be able to memorize it?" He answered in a rather impatient manner as he felt that they were all looking down on him like they were insulting his professional standards. If I couldn't even memorize these lousy lines after one look, then how the f**k could I still be a host! Are you all really taking me to be an ordinary actor? This bro is a professional host who could even do a live broadcast off-script! If I didn't have the ability, would I dare claim that I could do it! Isn't that question too degrading?

Director Wang Chengpeng, however, asked a good question. He looked at Zhang Ye and asked, "How did you think of adding that laugh at the end? It wasn't mentioned in the script, right?"

Zhang Ye said, "For a crazed martial arts master and an ambitious man, even though he was already tasting his own defeat at the end of his life, it would not fit him if he just went silently like that. I am a novel writer myself, if I may praise myself a little, and the sales of my books are doing quite well in the domestic market, so I am still quite sensitive and experienced about how the story should be set up and its character developments. In my opinion, this person would not just go away so quietly like that. It shouldn't be the case either. If he had to end it there, then surely he must make it a grand exit. A laugh and a final bit of insolence seemed to be the best way out!"

Wrote novels?

Oh yes, this person was also known as a famous author!

This person really carried too many titles on him, so if he didn't bring them up, everyone probably couldn't remember it either.

When he heard this, the screenwriter who was seated at the back, said, "When Teacher Zhang mentioned this, it really does feel better if it were done like how he acted out earlier. It feels more complete than when Brother Shui had acted out the role and could be considered as a reeling in the character and also a sublimation of the role. It also brings to point that in this movie Grandmasters not only were the male and female leads grandmasters, but even the antagonist who got his just deserts was a grandmaster in his own right, just that he had taken a different path from them."

The assistant director also nodded and said, "It was very well played out. The feeling I got was really good!"

And so, this audition of Zhang Ye's had left the whole studio stunned!

His expressions...

His acting skills...

His understanding of the characters in the movie...

F**k!

At the side, a few actors and those two celebrity actors who had come for the audition couldn't help but cry out in their minds as they felt that, when compared to them, why does it feel like Zhang Ye was the professional actor instead!!

Chapter 602 Zhang Ye's Eight Trigrams Palm!

[collapse]

At the site of the audition.

The atmosphere of the audition was becoming a little difficult to perceive.

"So awesome?"

"Where did Zhang Ye learn how to act like this?"

"With that level of acting, he should already be considered a professional actor."

"It's even more than that, I think he's even more professional than a professional actor. If I didn't already know that Zhang Ye was a graduate from Media College, I would have thought that he attended Beijing Film Academy instead!"

"It would be good if he gets this role."

"Right, it shouldn't be a problem at all to age him by ten years with some makeup."

"Teacher Little Yu does not look ruthless enough and is more suited for an honest character, but Teacher Zhang clearly looked like an antagonist and it didn't feel weird when he stepped into character. It's as though he was just acting as himself."

"..."

"F**k, be quiet. Don't let anyone hear you."

"Hai, why is Zhang Ye able to do everything!"

"Yeah, why are there traces of him in every industry? Not only does he like to cross over to other industries, the key is that it even feels like he belongs right at home in whatever industry he jumps over to!"

Some of the film crew staff on set were exchanging whispers.

The first round of auditions was over.

The second round was also over.

Now, there was only the third and final round to go—martial arts scenes.

The actor who went before Zhang Ye in the previous round was put on pending status at this round. That actor did not need to go through the acting audition and instead started directly at the character portrayal audition. He did rather well, about as good as Zhang Ye. The leaders of the film crew were also quite satisfied with his performance. However, in the audition for the martial arts scenes, he did not impress at all and that led to the director hesitating to decide if he would use him as the replacement or not.

There were many actors, and a lot of them were also good actors. However, for martial arts actors or even martial arts stars, there were only a handful of people who could be called that. If this was just an ordinary movie production, it would be fine even if they just got any ordinary actor as the replacement. All they needed to do was just act out a fight scene with some fake motions, or at most use a stunt double. Most martial arts movies could always be acted out somehow, sometimes “cheating” a little by adding some special effects, all of which were fair game. But this particular production was different, as the core of the movie was focused on the title Grandmasters. It was a movie about Chinese martial arts and realism was its priority, or at least, realistic enough to the viewers. They couldn’t possibly do it in a way that would leave the audience spitting in disgust when a fight scene was played out in the theaters. That would greatly impair the whole viewing experience.

The male lead, Dalong, was a professional martial arts star.

The female lead, Zhang Yuanqi, did not have many fight scenes, but Old Zhang had a dance background, so her physical conditions were all there and she only needed to act a little to make it feel real.

The second male lead, Tian Xuetao, wasn’t good at acting or martial arts, but as he had a body double who looked very similar to him, his role was not a problem either.

As the third male lead, who was also an important antagonist, would have multiple fight scenes with Dalong, they couldn’t just find any actor who had style and no substance in martial arts. There was no time left for them to pick a double who could fight well and also look like the actor. Even as they were faced with the possibility of not being able to wrap things before the premiere, they still could not take things so lightly, especially not when it was also such a big production film. This was the reason why the film crew was so picky with Brother Shui’s replacement; not only would they have to be able to act, they also had to be able to handle martial arts scenes.

“This will be difficult.”

“The martial arts have to be for real. Even acting can’t fake it.”

“Yeah, the foundations for such martial arts movies are the most difficult. Many of the actors started learning since they were young, training hard with every move done repeatedly. These days, it’s really getting hard to find an actor who can also do fight scenes.”

“What to do?”

“Yes, it’s more important to find a replacement at this point in time. The candidate has to be confirmed today and we can’t drag this any longer.”

“Zhang Ye is an academic who works in literature and the arts. I think he wouldn’t do as well as the other actors when it comes to executing the basic stances for fighting. It’s still unclear who the director

will choose. If he places an emphasis on the popularity, quality, and acting chops of the person, then surely Teacher Zhang Ye has an advantage over the others. But the antagonist has many important fighting scenes and those take up more than fifty percent of this character's appearances, so that is clearly the more important factor. Zhang Ye surely can't handle that."

"Let's see how it goes. I've heard that Zhang Ye frequently gets into fights with other people, like that Wang Shuixin's son, or that Korean celebrity, Lee Anson. Didn't he beat them up before? Right, there was also that plane hijacking incident. Wasn't that when Zhang Ye had to fight the terrorists to take control of the situation? I remember that was what was reported in the news!"

"That was him, but that's a different thing altogether."

"Yea, how is fighting and martial arts the same?"

"True that."

Everyone was observing the auditions and exchanging views with one another.

At the same time, a few important people of the film crew were also speaking in low whispers, exchanging their views on the audition.

Would Zhang Ye do?

Let him try it out first.

The assistant director said, "In the final round, we'll test out your punch and kicks."

At first, everyone thought that Zhang Ye would have difficulties with this round, so no one expected it when he just rolled up his sleeves and adjusted his shirt before standing there and saying, "Sure."

The assistant director said, "Take some time to get ready first."

"There's no need, I'm ready." Zhang Ye wondered to himself just how ready he had to be? Was it necessary to do some warm ups? Stretch his arms and legs? He did not need to do any of that, so he just said, "I'm ready anytime."

The assistant director nodded and then looked to the martial arts director.

Under everyone's watchful eyes, the martial arts director strode over to face Zhang Ye and was about to do a set of movements for Zhang Ye to follow along with so that he could understand his foundations.

But a scene played out in front of them that no one could have expected!

Zhang Ye had actually gotten into an opening form that no one could recognize, relaxingly moving his hands and feet into a stance that no one could understand. He said, "Punches and kicks have no eyes, please be careful."

Ah?

Be careful? What?

What were you even intending to do??

The martial arts director was also taken aback. He had come across many different styles of martial arts, even those that had branched into different sects from their original styles. As an industry insider, he had many more opportunities than the average person to be in contact with martial arts. However, even with his vast knowledge, he could not make out this opening form that Zhang Ye was displaying. It was like nothing he had ever seen before!

What style of martial arts was this?

Hai, it was probably something randomly made up by him!

The martial arts director did not take this to heart and just looked at Zhang Ye in a speechless manner, saying, "What's the meaning of this?"

Zhang Ye was confused and said, "Aren't we going to spar?"

Pfft!

Everyone who was watching was wondered whether to laugh or cry when they heard this. Who were you intending to spar with? That teacher from the film crew could be considered as one of the top martial arts directors domestically, a true martial arts expert. He had real martial arts background and had been trained in Xingyi Fist, Eight Trigrams Palm, and some other styles since his childhood. He was even ranked in some national freestyle combat competitions before, having made it to the round of 32 when he was younger.

And here you are, saying things like "punches and kicks have no eyes"?

You even want to spar with him?

You're really too funny. What the assistant director meant was not for you to really spar with the martial arts director, but to follow the previous actor and imitate the martial arts moves so that they could evaluate if your physical movements are of a good enough standard!

Dalong laughed.

Tian Xuetao also couldn't help but laugh ironically at this.

"We're not going to spar." The martial arts director smiled and said, "We're just going to go through the motions of it. Ten of you wouldn't even be able to handle one of me since I am a real practitioner of martial arts. I am different from you all in that my execution and toughness of my moves can be really heavy. That is what you would truly refer to as 'punches and kicks have no eyes.' What if we sparred for real in the auditions? Then we might accidentally hurt people and if that happens, how would we be able to go on with the filming? What I need is just for you to imitate the martial arts moves."

When Zhang Ye heard this, he also laughed and said, "Then I have misunderstood."

However, on the topic of what the martial arts director had claimed earlier, he kept his reservations about it. Ten of me wouldn't be able to handle one of you? You're even afraid of hurting me? Zhang Ye could only laugh to himself about this. Don't try to boast to me. If it really came down to us sparring, I wonder who would be the one to get hurt. If this was any other situation, Zhang Ye would have seriously considered taking it up with him. But since he was only here for the audition today to try to land the role

in the movie, he knew what his priorities were. As a result, did not argue with the martial arts director over it.

The martial arts director demonstrated the moves and said, "Watch carefully."

"OK." Zhang Ye kept his eye on the martial arts director's movements.

The martial arts director began. With his first move, it looked full of vigor and extremely powerful. It was like the wind followed with every move of his fist, whistling along with each movement!

He struck out his palm!

Then pulled it back!

Next was a side palm strike!

He thrust his palm upwards!

This set of palm techniques was similar to what he had shown and tested the previous actors with. It seemed like it was of the same style of martial arts, yet still felt very different as the angle of the palm movements and the translational motions were not the same as before.

After a round, the martial arts director came back to the same spot as he had started. He finished off with a closing form and said, "Teacher Zhang, did you see clearly? I know that you're more of an art person and have not dealt with martial arts before, but just do your best to imitate what I had just shown to you. Don't worry too much, it will be fine."

Zhang Ye finished observing.

Do my best?

Imitate it as much as I can?

What the was this? Didn't you just demonstrate the Eight Trigrams Palm!?

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Alright then, I'll give it a try?"

The martial arts director made a gesture for him to get started and then took a few steps back.

Instantly, everyone's eyes now fully focused on Zhang Ye.

The director, assistant director, Zhang Yuanqi, Dalong, Tian Xuetao, and everyone else were all waiting for Zhang Ye to start his movements. None of them thought that Zhang Ye would be able to do it like the martial arts director but were still curious at how well he could imitate the movements. When the previous actor had imitated the moves, the martial arts director had already informed Wang Chengpeng how it wasn't too bad even if there was barely any power in the movements and looked a little stiff. The movements were not standard, but were at least followed in a general sense. If not for those factors, it wouldn't have even worked out to an acceptable imitation. Now to them, Zhang Ye was unlikely to do any better than the previous actor.

Zhang Ye breathed in without showing any signs of pressure or nervousness, looking very relaxed. As he began imitating the martial arts director's movements from earlier, his feet started moving beneath him and he took the first step in the footwork of the Eight Trigrams Palm.

It was a simple step.

And also looked like a natural step.

However, this step was not noticed by everyone.

Except for the martial arts director, who, when he saw it, was a little shocked. Damn, you're just a layman, but how did you also manage to imitate the steps of the Eight Trigrams Palm? This step was too precisely executed. It was as standard as it could be and that left the martial arts director in disbelief with what he had just seen!

What was the Eight Trigrams Palm about? Everyone would think that it was about palm strikes, but they couldn't be more wrong. That would be the conclusion of a layman, but in actual fact, the core of the Eight Trigrams Palm was not down to its palm strikes but its footwork. The Eight Trigrams Palm was also known as Swimming Bagua,¹ Linking Palms. The "swimming" portion, also known as the footwork, was actually the base of the style. For example, when the two actors were auditioning for the role earlier, they had only concentrated on the movements of the arm and copied it in form while moving around blindly. The martial arts director did not take this to heart as he knew that they were only ordinary actors and different from martial arts practitioners like himself. It would be unreasonable to apply his standards to them as actors since it was already quite a big deal that they could remember how to execute the palm techniques.

But that was not the case for Zhang Ye!

The martial arts director knew that this step made by Zhang Ye was the real thing in the Eight Trigrams Palm footwork. The direction at which his feet pointed, the control of his steps, and more importantly, the change in his center of gravity, it was all flawless. The movements were exactly the same as when he had demonstrated it. Because of what he saw, it had left him a little shocked!

This...

Is impossible!

Chapter 603 Landing the Role!

[collapse]

Huu!

Zhang Ye struck out with his palm, his footsteps following immediately after. Slanting his heel, he briefly held back before taking his next step. What followed was his second palm strike!

It caught everyone's attention!

That was really great!

He's following the moves as though they were really his own!

Yes, it felt a little weak. Why didn't he use more power? There wasn't enough power in it!

Eight Trigrams Palm? Zhang Ye definitely did not know the Eight Trigrams Palm personally, but there was a person close to him who knew it. Rao Aimin was the Senior Sis of the Eight Trigrams Palm style of her generation. In this word, he didn't know how many classes and sects of the Eight Trigrams Palm there were. The style of Rao Aimin's Eight Trigrams Palm was a little different from that of the martial arts director's style. However, the basic techniques and core of the martial arts style was more or less similar. Zhang Ye had seen Rao Aimin practicing countless times before and even had a taste of the landlady's Swimming Bagua, Linking Palms himself, and knew that her style of the martial arts was much more gentle and not as powerfully sharp as the martial arts director's style. However, the strength of power was definitely there as Zhang Ye could still feel the pain of it from the receiving end. This was why even though Zhang Ye did not learn this martial arts style before he could still understand it very well and manage to execute the movements with exact imitating without any pressure at all!

In the audition area.

Zhang Ye could be seen moving around and executing his palm strikes!

Pierce!

Thrust!

Chop!

Everyone was already in a trance as they never expected that Zhang Ye, as a professional in the literary and artistic fields, would be this good at it and could even execute these few techniques.

Zhang Ye continued but did not execute the moves as powerfully as the martial arts director. It was like he did not exert too much strength at all, using a graceful and gentle style of the technique with free flowing movements. Every strike of his palm was preceded by a step, and every step was taken in the most stable manner!

Uppercut!

Cross!

Ram!

Hook!

Toss!

Shove!

The rest of the film crew probably could not see it but the martial arts director was already getting more and more shocked by what he was seeing. Zhang Ye did not even make a mistake in his routine for the Eight Trigrams Palm footwork and palm techniques. The moves were all perfectly executed, whether in terms of the angle or amplitude of motion; they were all flawless. Moreover, Zhang Ye's Eight Trigrams Palm gave the martial arts director a type of different feeling, like his verve and movements.... Why did they look like the style of that person who had disappeared from the Chinese martial arts world so many

years ago? Legend has it that there was a master whose Eight Trigrams Palm exercised a combination of firmness and flexibility while still maintaining a grace about it!

The martial arts director thoughts went wild.

The other staff of the film crew were all watching without knowing what was going on.

Dalong could also be considered as half a martial arts practitioner and he knew what he was looking at right now. At that moment, he was looking at Zhang Ye in a strange way, seemingly having some doubts about him yet thinking that he seemed to be quite good at it?

Zhang Ye came back to his original spot, albeit facing the opposite direction, just as he finished executing the techniques and movement. He footwork was precise to the millimeter, and after executing the movements, he relaxingly cooled down without a closing form. Closing form were usually meant as a cool down, not just for the sake of appearances. Since Zhang Ye did not actually know the breathing and energy flow techniques of the Eight Trigrams Palm and was just imitating the look of it, he naturally did not need to do a proper cool down. It was not an action that he could imitate from the martial arts director anyway and there was also no need to do so. He was well versed in the breathing and energy flow techniques for Taiji Fist, but as they were not general purpose cool down techniques for the different styles of Chinese martial arts, it would be unprofessional to apply them here.

Phew, that was still quite tiring in any case.

And why was there no applause?

Zhang Ye smiled and asked, "Was that alright?"

The assistant director did not know whether it was good enough, so he said, "It...seemed alright and you've imitated it well generally, but the only issue is that the movements did not have any power to it and thus, did not feel quite right. If we shot the movie with that kind of effect, the presentation would be quite lacking and without fervor, so that would be a problem." He said so while looking slightly disappointed.

Ah?

Fervor?

What sort of fervor?

Zhang Ye had wanted to explain it by saying that they were too layman to understand it, but as he felt that it would probably fall on deaf ears since they would not understand it even if he explained, he simply said, "I have no problems putting more power into my movements." Didn't he simply just need to use more power? Could it be any simpler?

The assistant director said, "You can do that? Give it a try then."

"Alright, no problem." Zhang Ye adjusted his arm, ready to give a demonstration once more.

In the end, the martial arts director stopped him and said, "Teacher Zhang, you don't need to do any more, it's enough." Then, he walked quickly beside of the director and assistant director and said, "I don't think we need to test him any further."

Tian Xuetao looked regretfully at Zhang Ye.

The assistant director nodded.

Wang Chengpeng looked at the martial arts director and said, "Zhang Ye couldn't make the grade too? Then we'll just have to find someone else to audition!"

The screenwriter, along with many of the film crew staff members, were now left with headaches. One couldn't make it while another was also lacking by a bit. Who else could do it? They did not have much time left!

"Hai."

"This is really troublesome."

"All three of the auditionees are unable to make the cut?"

But over at that side, the martial arts director said in a stunned manner, "What do you mean by Zhang Ye couldn't make the grade? That's not it. Teacher Zhang is good enough." When he saw the stunned director and the assistant director, the martial arts director added, "In fact, he is far too good!"

Everyone was stunned.

"Ah?"

"What do you mean?"

"Zhang Ye is good enough?"

"Surely not? Weren't those movements too lacking in power?"

"Right, even though he managed to generally imitate the moves correctly, there still wasn't enough strength or an imposing manner, so..."

The other two auditionees who still held some hope were in an even greater state of disbelief at the martial arts director's words. You call that good? Isn't that setting the bar too low! If his kind of soft and weak moves could pass, then we could do it too! Surely we did better than him, right?

The director asked, "Just what do you mean by that?"

The martial arts director explained, "What the assistant director had just brought up is not a problem at all. It's not that Zhang Ye couldn't exert any power, but my strength comes from the muscles while his strength comes from the palms, so the style of exerting power is not quite the same and just differed by a little bit. I believe if we ask Teacher Zhang to display a style or technique that looks more powerful, he would surely be able to do it. Besides, I'm not sure whether it was because of Teacher Zhang's good memory, but he could follow exactly the way I demonstrated my moves earlier. Not only the palm stance and angle, even the footwork was the same. My Eight Trigrams Palm emphasizes a lot on footwork, so even the way the feet are pointed can't be slightly off. If they are it will affect the stability and position of releasing the palm strikes. However, what Teacher Zhang had managed to do...has totally left me in disbelief!"

Everyone could only look at each other in shock!

Zhang Ye said in a low key manner, "My memory is indeed quite good."

The martial arts director praised, "Not only do you have a good memory, you're also very talented!"

The director asked, "How many marks will you give him?"

Without even thinking, the martial arts director answered, "Full marks! It was flawless! Such a talented actor with martial arts abilities is totally competent enough to be the third male lead with all those fight scenes! There will surely be no problems at all! However, based on Teacher Zhang's image and physical condition, I'd have to re-choreograph his fight scenes and not fully use Brother Shui's style for him. Some of the moves need to be slightly refined."

The assistant director slapped his thigh and exclaimed, "Great, that's really great!"

Wang Chengpeng also stood up without any objections, pausing for a moment before proclaiming, "I hereby announce that Zhang Ye will officially become our replacement for the third male lead's role in Grandmasters!"

Applause started to echo in the studio.

Tian Xuetao and the others clapped to welcome their new colleague.

Zhang Ye also clasped his hands together and said, "Everyone, please take care of me."

Wang Chengpeng reached out his hand and said, "I hope we can work well together. The next few days of work will all depend on you now. Rushing the filming schedule can be quite tiring, so please feel free to let us know if you have any requests."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "I do not have any requests. I will do my best and cooperate fully."

Tian Xuetao went up to congratulate him and gave him a thumbs up.

The assistant director had already prepared a contract and went through it simply, explaining the clause and conditions once over before Zhang Ye signed it.

He finally landed the role officially!

Chapter 604 The consciousness of a teacher of the people is higher

At the scene, everyone was starting to get busy.

The director and staff of the film crew were giving out their instructions for the shoot.

"Get in place, everyone, get in place!"

"Camera 1, pull back."

"Once the actors are done with their makeup, we will start immediately."

"Will the extras take note: please remember to stay behind the yellow line as there will be a explosion scene later. Although it won't be dangerous, everyone should still take note not to stray past the yellow line."

"Is Teacher Zhang ready?"

“Not yet, but he’ll be ready soon.”

“Alright, we will start rolling the cameras once Teacher Zhang finishes getting touched up!”

.....

In the studio.

A female makeup artist quickened her work on Zhang Ye as she applied makeup on his face here and there. Very soon, Zhang Ye could see himself aging 10 years in the mirror, but perhaps due to the fact that he had only very average looks, it did not make him look too different. He would probably still be recognized by his fans immediately.

Drawing his eyebrows.

Applying some eyeliner.

He was still quite unused to all this. As a host, he never had to do such makeup to make him appear more villainous looking. At most, he needed to apply some foundation to take the shine off his face for the camera.

Zhang Ye had already changed into his costume for the role, similar to that of a Chinese tunic suit.¹ He did not just sit there doing nothing, but was going through the script repeatedly. This time, he wasn’t going through the script for his own role, he was going through the overall screenplay for the whole movie which had all the information of the characters, including their age, where they were born, their background, character developments, etc. To enable him to play his role well, he had to know the full screenplay as it would aid him to better understand the intertwined relationships and plot. With this information, he would know what emotions to portray and at which time to do it.

This was the first time that Zhang Ye had seen a full screenplay, and to be honest, it left him a little confused as there was simply too much information in it. The plot was also very rich, with many subplots happening at the same time. It even included a list of alternative plots and script lines. As the filming had actually already wrapped a few days ago, a lot of these backup plots were deleted since they were not used or cut from the final version of the movie. Because of this messy editing in the screenplay, when he saw it, it also left him unable to comprehend what was still valid or what was already invalid. It felt like a good movie, but it also felt like it might not be too good. He didn’t know for sure.

Back in his previous world, Zhang Ye was a movie buff as well. Every time he had finished watching a film, he would always discuss it for a whole day with his friends. They would point out what they felt were errors, or a part of the movie that was not well shot, a part of the story that wasn’t logical, or even say something as extreme as how a movie was so bad that it shouldn’t even have been produced. Thinking about it now, it was really easy making those comments as an audience member. Only when he was put into the situation himself did he realize just how complicated a movie production was. Just this screenplay alone had given him a lesson on how difficult it was. As the saying goes, the insider knows the ropes, while the outsider just comes along for the ride. That couldn’t be more true, as everything was always easier said than done.

The female makeup artist stepped back and adjusted her head as she observed her work, then with a sudden snap of her fingers, she said, "It's done, Teacher Zhang." She turned around and shouted, "Director, Teacher Zhang's makeup is done."

Zhang Ye put down the screenplay, stood up, and went outside.

"Alright, everyone, get into your positions," Wang Chengpeng said loudly.

The assistant director said, "Teacher Zhang, take your position over there."

Wang Chengpeng instructed him, "Remember, you need to be more expressive with your emotions later on. When Old Zhang and Dalong walk over, you need to have aggression in your eyes. Don't hold back on that."

"Sure." Zhang Ye got into position and sat in the armchair, at the center of all the extras. He held up a cup of tea and sat up straight.

Wang Chengpeng had his own style of directing. He used a megaphone and ran through the plot for this scene. Even though the actors were already very familiar with it, he did not leave out a single word and explained in detail about the entire scene. This was to help the actors relax and at the same time lead them quickly into their character roles.

"Three.

"Two.

"One.

"Action!"

Suddenly, the air was filled with the din of clashing gongs and cymbals.

Many of the extras were putting in the best efforts for this scene of celebration at a martial arts school.

Zhang Yuanqi was dressed in a long white robe, while Dalong was in his martial arts attire as they walked slowly over. The two of them were already in character. Zhang Yuanqi had an icy expression while Dalong was all smiles as he laughed and joked as he walked beside her. Soon after, a smile appeared on Zhang Yuanqi's face and she gave Dalong a look.

The three of them met.

Zhang Ye was covering his tea cup as he raised his head to meet their eyes.

Zhang Yuanqi and Dalong were both standing in front of him at this moment.

Suddenly, Zhang Ye's eyes narrowed as the tea cup lid lightly knocked against the tea cup!

"Cut!" The director called out.

Zhang Ye looked over.

Only to hear Wang Chengpeng say, "Little Zhang, that's not good enough. You need to express more with your eyes, show your aggressiveness. The way you're looking at them is correct, but it needs to be more intense because it's not enough to carry it from real life into reel life."

Zhang Ye understood and said, "Alright, I'll take note of that."

Dalong and Zhang Yuanqi both said nothing and went back to their own positions.

Wang Chengpeng shouted, "Again, action!"

And so, the second take was over and done with.

Next up was the explosion scene. Zhang Ye did not have to do much for this scene and only had a line in it. It was very simple for him as this scene had more focus on Zhang Yuanqi and Dalong. The both of them had already shot this scene before, but because a few cuts needed the third male lead, Zhang Ye, to appear together on screen with them, they had to redo this scene's shoot again. Of course, the reshoot was only done for the critical cuts. Those parts that did not have Zhang Ye appearing would use the original footage instead.

As it was a little dangerous, the preparations for this scene were also more troublesome and took a little longer. Dalong's errors led to two cuts; two extras who didn't portray the right expressions also made the director call for a cut three times. When one of Zhang Ye's lines did not communicate the mood of the scene, a cut was also called. For this whole scene, it took almost an hour before the the director was satisfied with the outcome!

When the director finally called for a stop and gave it the "pass," all the actors breathed a sigh of relief and went for their breaks. With this, some people from the film crew went ahead to settle the payouts to the extras since their work was done here.

Dalong came up and asked, "Director Wang, are there still any scenes for me?"

Wang Chengpeng considered for a while before saying, "There's nothing left for today. You and Old Zhang can go back first."

"Alright," Dalong said.

Zhang Yuanqi smiled and said, "I don't need to be around either?"

"It's fine, I just need your double to be around. The key shoots will be tomorrow." Wang Chengpeng said, "There should be some scenes tomorrow morning, but I will need to see how the shooting will turn out this afternoon first to see if we can wrap the planned scenes by today. Zhang Ye doesn't have much experience in filming, so I won't be able estimate how long it will take. This afternoon's scenes are going to be the problem."

Zhang Yuanqi laughed and said, "Little Zhang shouldn't have a problem with that."

Dalong said, "I'll be leaving first then. If there's anything, you can just give me a call. I'll keep my cell phone on." As the film crew was going through its most difficult period now, everyone certainly had to work extra hard together to ensure a successful outcome.

The two leads left while Wang Chengpeng went to find Zhang Ye. Having already known him by now, he no longer addressed him as Teacher Zhang and instead just called him Little Zhang. "Little Zhang, how's it going?"

Zhang Ye dipped his head in greeting and said, "Quite well."

"Being cast into a lead role on your debut, it is already great that you can perform this way up until now. At least, you've exceeded my expectations for a rookie actor." Wang Chengpeng praised, but reminded him and said, "This afternoon and evening, we have a few scenes planned for filming. There will be day and night scenes, so I suggest you follow and stay with the film crew for the next few days. See if you require anything like a change of clothes and let me know. I will get someone to help you out with that, or you can get someone from your family to send them over."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "That's not necessary. I'm not particular about such things. I just need to give a call to my mother to let her know about my schedule."

Beside him, the assistant director said, "We're going to have to go into the mountains tonight. It's going to be a tough shoot."

"No worries," Zhang Ye said.

The assistant director asked, "Do you have any diet preferences for lunch and dinner? I can get someone to prepare it for you."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "I can eat anything. A box lunch is good enough."

The assistant director said hesitantly, "We do not know what time we'll be shooting until tonight, so you..."

"I'm fine with whatever time we shoot until." Zhang Ye said with a shrug, "Even if I have work round the clock, 24 hours without sleep, I should be able to do it. No problem. Just let me know your arrangements. As long as we can complete the filming properly, I have no objections. You'll have total control of me for the next few days."

The directors asked so many questions because, these days, celebrities were putting on airs more and more often. These days, it was a market of commercial productions. A movie's attractability mostly started with an actor. If the actor was a big-time celebrity, it wouldn't be easy to get them to join the movie. Even if they did, their temperaments were difficult to handle. For example, Dalong had many requests when it came to meals. For meats, he only took mutton, and would not have any chicken or pork. He was also very picky with any other side dishes and the film crew had to specially get those individually for him. Then, for Tian Xuetao, his conditions were that he has to go home everyday to sleep and not stay with the film crew. No matter how late it got, as long as they were in the vicinity of Beijing, he must be allowed to go home. If they were out of the city or country, he would request a hotel so that he could go back to it after filming. Together with some other celebrities with thousands of strange requests and conditions, nothing was really too odd and they had almost seen it all before.

This time, since they had to find a replacement to save the situation as the matter was very urgent, leaving them with not much of a choice, they naturally placed great importance on Zhang Ye's participation in the shoot. They would have given him much better treatment and would try to satisfy

him in whatever ways they could. That was the reason why they asked so many questions of him, since they did not know Zhang Ye well and what special requirements he had of the film crew.

But Zhang Ye?

He had no special requirements whatsoever!

He was fine with anything! Everything was alright with him!

This made Wang Chengpeng nod positively to no end. He waited until Zhang Ye walked away before becoming unable to contain himself and said to his assistant director, "Intellectuals and artistic people alike are indeed much better to work with."

The assistant director felt the same, so he said, "Yes, Teacher Zhang is almost a B-list celebrity now, but for a person of that status to still maintain that humility, it's really rare. I heard from a friend in the industry that Zhang Ye really gives it his all when it comes to work. He had even recorded a show for over ten hours continuously for seven or eight days straight. There was also the case where he worked 24 hours without rest to help Beijing Television Station complete their public service announcement. He had really risked his own life for that! Hai, the consciousness of a teacher of the people is much higher than most people. If only our actors were like Teacher Zhang, then the duration of our production would have sped up by at least 30%!"

The screenwriter who was behind them blinked and said, "Zhang Ye is quite...different from what the rumors say about him."

The assistant director turned around and said, "Yes, he's really quite different from them."

The Zhang Ye in the rumors had too many nicknames!

The maggot of the literary world!

The oddity of the entertainment circle!

The hooligan of the educational world!

To many of the staff on the film crew who had heard about Zhang Ye before, they felt that he was a person who had a very bad temper and was someone who would beat up or scold others without even resorting to talking things through. However, the reality now was that they saw him in an entirely different light compared to what they had heard about him. Zhang Ye was not only unlike how they imagined him to have no respect for others, he was also someone who worked very hard, was professional, and dedicated to his work. Just look at it. When the box lunches arrived, everyone else was eating their lunch and resting while Zhang Ye sat further away, reading his script for the next scene as he ate.

They did not know that Zhang Ye had always been like this. If he decided to do something, he would be determined to finish it. He would always take his work seriously and do his best, not allowing himself to make any errors or be negligent. He was the type of person who would work so hard that he would risk his own life.

Chapter 605 Authentic Taiji Fist!

Afternoon.

The box lunch was very simple. It just consisted of rice with two side dishes. It also came with a bottle of mineral water.

“It’s this again?”

“Hai, just make do and eat it.”

“This box lunch is hardly edible at all.”

“They really need to change the caterer. This is really terrible.”

“Yeah, it’s not even better than what I can make. Just looking at this leaves me with no more appetite. How can you stir fry winter melon in this way? This is basically just a box of everything mixed together.”

Around the area, some of the more important extras and two body doubles were together eating lunch with the film crew staff, complaining as they ate. Some of them were not even intending to eat at all.

Zhang Ye tasted a bit and felt that it was just as they had said, very average tasting, but not to the point of unpalatable yet. Even if it were unpalatable, could it compare to what they served him in the dark room at the police station? When he had been arrested back then, he didn’t even pick at his food, so being here, he just finished his lunch in a few mouthfuls and then washed it all down with the mineral water. After that, he continued to read his script.

When an extra saw this, he was a little lost for words.

Similarly, the other small-time actors and extras also looked one by one at Zhang Ye. When they saw the empty lunch box, they could only look at each other for a moment before lowering their heads to finish up their own lunch. No one else complained or said a word after that. If a top-ranked C-list celebrity, a position they all knew they would never, ever reach, did not mind the food, who were they to say anything?

A double took a few more looks at Zhang Ye. This was seemingly just a small action, but reflected a lot more about how things were. This double thought to himself that it was no wonder Zhang Ye who had only debuted for about a year would achieve so much in this short time. He was someone who often got scolded by the media for this and that, a professional that was so frequently doubted by the industry insiders, but somehow still managed to be so popular among the people. He knew that there was a good reason for all of that now.

In the afternoon.

Zhang Ye called his mother on her cell phone.

“Mom, what are you doing?”

“I’m at work.”

“Heh, I’m just calling to let you know that I won’t be home for the next few days. I have work to do.”

“What work is it?”

“I got a role in a movie.”

“Well done, my son.”

“That’s true. This is a big production and I will be following the crew around for these few days. Tell Dad about it as well. I will only be going home when the filming wraps up.”

After he hung up, the martial arts director also came over and said, “Teacher Zhang, have you finished eating?”

Another double also followed behind him. One look and it was clear that he was Dalong’s double. Even though his face did not look similar, his body proportions were similar. He greeted, “Teacher Zhang.”

“I’ve already finished my lunch.” Zhang Ye switched off his phone and stood up. He said to them, “Please don’t call me Teacher Zhang. There’s no need to be so courteous. Just call me Little Zhang or Little Ye. That’s good enough.”

The martial arts director smiled and said, “Alright, forgive me then.”

But the double said, “It’s better that I stick to calling you Teacher Zhang. You’re an intellectual and an associate professor at the university. I can’t possibly call you Little Zhang. Even if I wanted to, I just can’t do it, so I think I’m more comfortable calling you Teacher Zhang.”

Zhang Ye did not argue with this.

The martial arts director said, “Why don’t you warm up a little first? We should begin our preparations for the fight scene that will be filmed this afternoon. Why don’t we practice some of the movements first before finishing it with a final runthrough before the shoot.”

In a martial arts movie, the most important core for attracting viewers was definitely its fight scenes. These were also the most exciting parts of the movie, so they couldn’t be done sloppily. It was very troublesome to film a fight scene well, so sometimes effects would be added in post-production with modern advanced methods. However, the most basic movements of the actors exchanging punches and kicks needed to look real in the first place and nowhere at this stage should any effort be saved. They would have to practice the movements first before moving on to a fight sequence practice between the actors. One would punch, one would kick; all of these needed to be practiced and drilled into them with no room for errors.

Soon after.

The three of them went to an empty area to start their practice.

The martial arts director stood in the center and said, “You have a good memory and your physical condition is quite good as well. I could deduce that when you did your audition just now. So let’s do this like we did earlier. I will give an overall demonstration of the fight scene’s basic sequence and you follow after me. Hopefully, you’ll remember everything.”

“Sure,” said Zhang Ye.

The martial arts director said, “The style of martial arts that your character uses is Taiji Fist. Watch carefully!”

Hearing this, the double showed a face of concentration, while Zhang Ye looked at the martial arts director in anticipation.

Zhang Ye had read the screenplay several times already and knew that the third male lead was the one and only descendant of the Taiji Fist school of martial arts. In this world, Zhang Ye had found out from Rao Aimin that Taiji Fist was lost many years ago. The first time and last time it appeared was already several hundred years ago. Moreover, whether this martial arts style had truly existed before was also legend in itself. Those who had even heard about it before were in the minority and treated it as a myth. However, only those who were true practitioners in the Chinese martial arts world knew that Taiji Fist was not fictional and that it had existed before. It was known to have impressed for a period of time those several hundred years ago when the descendant of Taiji Fist defeated many martial arts grandmasters, making it a renowned martial arts style.

A martial arts style that had been lost for hundreds of years now. How would you demonstrate it? Unless you knew it?

—That was what Zhang Ye was curious about ever since he saw the screenplay, curious about how the scenes involving Taiji Fist would be shot. He was full of anticipation and did not even blink his eyes as he watched patiently!

When the martial arts director said that he would demonstrate for them, he only meant that he would do a few simple movements. He raised his hands in preparation and did a horse stance at a very odd angle. It would make anyone watching feel like they understood it, even though they didn't, and also looked like it was a mysterious martial arts style of some kind.

Zhang Ye: "..."

The martial arts director showed a domineering face as he threw a punch.

Zhang Ye: "....."

The martial arts director gave a long laugh before he kicked his leg out sideways!

Zhang Ye: "....."

As there was no opponent to spar with in the demonstration, the moves that the martial arts director displayed were quite disconnected. Only after he had gone through the moves for a routine did he finally finish off with a closing form by clasping his hands together.

The double watched with admiration and went over to say, "I've heard before from some friends in the martial arts world telling me that this style of martial arts used to really exist. From just now, I've been meaning to ask you. Do you really know this style of martial arts?"

The martial arts director smiled a little and said, "A little bit, I guess."

The double looked at him, overjoyed, and said, "Then could you teach me a little? Oh, I am too straightforward. This is too abrupt. I understand that it is not something that can just be taught to others even if I wanted to learn it. I understand the rules."

"It's not a matter of rules at all." The martial arts director smiled and explained, "I am really unable to teach this to you since I only know it generally and only have some simple moves to show for. I heard

from my teacher that the real Taiji Fist does not have any standard moves and has never been passed down before either. There are no descendants of this style anymore. It has been lost for a long time already. My teacher had learned a few moves from some master who in the past had researched Taiji Fist from the anecdotal evidence found in the martial arts world and pieced it together. That is why I only know those few moves myself, but if you really want to learn it, that was all that there is to it. As for the other moves and the core teachings behind Taiji Fist, I do not know about any of that since the real Taiji Fist had disappeared hundreds of years ago!”

The double said excitedly, “Even if it’s just a few moves, it’s enough for me. This is Taiji Fist that we’re talking about here. So many practitioners want to learn but could never find a way to even begin learning it!”

The martial arts director felt quite good about the compliment another gave him so he said, “Alright then, I will show you the moves once more. I believe Teacher Zhang did not get a good look at it earlier, so watch and learn!”

“Thank you! How great is it!” The double’s eyes brightened at this.

The martial arts director displayed the same posture as earlier and said, “Remember, this is the opening form of Taiji Fist. You will need to keep your hands up and out in front, regulate your breath, sink it down to the lower half and get into a forward leaning horse stance posture!”

The double immediately followed him and imitated his stance.

The martial arts director started to swing his arms and instructed as he did so, “Taiji Fist emphasizes on the balance and interconnectivity of yin and yang. These two energies move in a continuous cycle of endless succession. This, is yang, and it needs to be strong!”

The double tried his best to follow along with each movement.

“This is yin.” The martial arts director locked his wrist and hooked his fist. “And it must be gentle!”

The double followed along closely, imitating almost perfectly.

Between the two of them, one was teaching and the other one was learning, and they spent an inordinate amount of time on it.

Finally, when they both finished with their closing forms, the double bowed deeply to the martial arts director as a form of respect. He then clasped his palms together and said, “Thank you so much. To have learned so much about the real Taiji Fist. I...I can’t even come up with words to describe how I feel. Ever since I was young, I’ve always heard about the legendary Taiji Fist. So many people wanted to witness Taiji Fist for themselves in these several hundred years, yet died with a lifelong regret of not being able to see it at all. I can only say that I am very honored.”

The martial arts director smiled and said, “Since you like it, practice it well. The knowledge of Taiji Fist runs very deep.”

“Yes, I will definitely practice well!” The double had seemingly found a precious jade stone, and afraid he would forget about it, once again started to go through the movements for “Taiji Fist” in high spirits!

The martial arts director still stayed by his side to give him guidance. "Right, that's right, you need to wave your hands a little. Move them up and down. That's right, very good!"

Zhang Ye had been staring at them from where he was, looking at them moving about as they practiced. From the start until now, he did not say a word at all, because he was really at a loss as to what he should say!

Practice well?

Practice your sister!

Taiji Fist?

Taiji your grandpa!

Zhang Ye nearly vomited a mouthful a blood, wondering to himself just what sort of style of Taiji Fist the martial arts director was teaching!

Keep your hands out in front? What was the meaning of placing your hands out in front? Did you think that you were guiding the traffic!? Regulate your breath and sink it down to the lower half? Were you getting ready to fart? And what do you mean by leaning forward while doing the horse stance? This was the first f**king time I've heard that an opening form for Taiji Fist has to be a forward leaning horse stance! Why didn't you just lie down on the floor for your opening form instead? You're even mentioning waving the arms and legs? Wave your grandma! Were you turning into a butterfly? Is this what they would call the damned Urgent Peeing Fists??

Zhang Ye utterly had his hands tied by this martial arts director. If you did not know it, then you should just say it. What the heck are you boasting for? You just believe whatever anyone says when they show you some Taiji Fist moves? This is the dogshit kind of Taiji Fist! If you don't know it, don't act like you know it. Yet here you are, even teaching someone else and spreading the "glory" of the martial arts style?

The martial arts director suddenly said, "Teacher Zhang, do you still remember what I just showed? Alright, then I'll let both of you give it a try to get a feel for Taiji Fist."

Brother, please don't mention the word Taiji anymore, OK?

What the both of you did just now really was not Taiji Fist at all!

The double quickly lunged forward and clasped his hands, bowed his head, and said, "Teacher Zhang, please forgive me in advance. My fists might be a little heavy, but I will make the necessary adjustment in strength and not hit you for real. Just come at me with all you've got. Don't be afraid of hurting me, because you won't be able to anyway."

Zhang Ye: "..."

Come at you with all I've got?!

Just based on your external style of martial arts, if I used only 10% of my strength on you, you'd still end up in the hospital!

However, Zhang Ye did not say that out loud and just returned the bow. He could no longer watch just like that and was ready to teach them a small lesson today—about what authentic Taiji Fist was really like!

Chapter 606 Now this is Taiji Fist!

In the movie studio, many people had their attentions caught by the movements over at the practice area.

“Eh?”

“They’ve already started their practice?”

“The fight sequence has already been choreographed? Have they finished learning it already?”

“It can’t be that fast. Those scenes require the two actors to slowly learn and repeat until they get it right.”

“Let’s go over and take a look. I wonder how Teacher Zhang is handling it. Learning the movements is entirely different from practice sparring with an opponent. To be able to get the effect like they were fighting for real, they have to wear protective gear under their costumes and actually spar hand-to-hand. Otherwise, if they use quick cuts to conceal some actions in the scene, it won’t look too believable anymore. How fast Teacher Zhang can pick up the fighting sequences will affect how quickly our afternoon’s shoot will progress. If he’s slow or can’t pick it up at all, then we might not even be able to finish this afternoon’s planned scene by night time, and that would roll over to the next scene as well.”

Quite a number of the film crew’s staff went over to where they were practicing.

When the director and assistant director saw this, they walked over there to watch as well.

Wang Chengpeng asked the martial arts director, “You’ve already taught them the fight sequence?”

“More or less. I’m letting them try it out first to get a feel for it,” the martial arts director answered.

Very quickly, over 20 people surrounded the practice area. They were basically done with their own tasks and were just waiting for Zhang Ye’s practice to finish so that they could carry on with the filming. Since they had nothing to do, they might as well join in and observe how it all was going. Everyone had surrounded the practice area and formed a circle as they pointed at them, discussing what they were seeing.

In the middle of the practice area.

Zhang Ye and the double were already in position.

Seeing that so many people had gathered around, including the director and assistant director, the double got an adrenaline rush from the attention he was receiving. Having just learned a few moves of the legendary and long-admired martial arts style, Taiji Fist, his desire to perform well in front of all them was swelling. He said, “Teacher Zhang, may the best man win. Watch out, I’ll make the first move now!”

Zhang Ye calmly said, “Come on.”

The martial arts director reminded, "Watch your movements. They must be standard."

When the double heard this, he immediately committed to a horse stance and followed the instructions that were taught to him earlier. His horse stance was slightly tilted to the front, making his whole body look angled while his hands were even more standardized as his hands were placed straight out in front. In giving an opening form of Taiji Fist, he felt he looked very valiant and was enjoying every moment of it.

Around them, the people's eyes all brightened up a little. Previously, the role of the descendant of Taiji Fist martial arts style was played by Brother Shui. They had already seen his acting before. But an actor was just an actor at best, especially since Brother Shui was also not a professional martial arts actor, so there was surely a difference when compared to a stunt double who had martial arts skills. From just a move, although Brother Shui's Taiji Fist opening moves were quite scary and domineering, his aura was just outwardly strong but inwardly brittle. He could only depend on post-production effects to be added, like having some music overlay, the sound of wind moving his clothes, or leaves flying around from the shockwaves whenever his feet landed on the ground, all of which could help to play up his abilities. However, the stunt double in front of them had only made a stance, which was good enough to not need any special effects and still had the oomph factor—this was what real martial arts was about.

But in contrast, when they looked at Zhang Ye?

Zhang Ye also got into a opening form, similar to the one that he showed in the studio earlier which no one knew. There wasn't much distance between his feet while his hands superficially made some movements without exerting additional strength, like someone could just break his form by tugging at his hands a little. His shoulders were also drooped and that made him look somewhat listless. All in all, his overall form looked terrible!

"What is that stance?"

"Did the martial arts director teach him that?"

"Why does it not look impressive at all?"

"A positive and negative. The difference is too great."

"Don't ask for such high standards. The stunt double is a professionally trained martial artist and has some skills while Zhang Ye's a literary and arts worker, so how can he match up to that?"

"That's true."

When the double saw Zhang Ye's form, he was dumbfounded. What the hell was this?

The martial arts director was also left absolutely speechless by what he saw. This Teacher Zhang! Didn't he already go through the moves for Taiji Fist several times? Why was he still unable to remember it? Did he forget the opening form? What kind of an opening form was he displaying now then? It looks like it's incredibly weak and full of openings. Whether it be internal style martial arts or external style martial arts, neither of them would ever have an opening form like yours. If anyone rushed over to attack, you'd be flattened in no time!

“Teacher Zhang, it’s not done that way!” the martial arts director said, and thought to himself that a layman would always be a layman. It was a chore just trying to teach them. He asked him, “Where is the horse stance? Why are you not leaning forward!”

But Zhang Ye did not move.

The stunt double glanced at him and said, “That form of yours won’t do. If I just attack once, you won’t even be able to withstand a strike from me. That opening form is full of weakness. We won’t be able to practice our sparring properly this way.”

The assistant director gave them a word of caution and said, “Please be careful. Don’t get hurt, especially Teacher Zhang. You have to take extreme care not to get hurt, otherwise, there won’t be any more replacement actors to take your place!”

Zhang Ye casually said, “No worries, just come at me.”

“I’m afraid I will hurt you,” the stunt double hesitated.

Zhang Ye laughed and said, “That might not be the case.”

When the stunt double heard him say that, he might just as well abide and said, “Alright then, I’m coming for you!” As his words trailed off, he attacked according to the martial arts director’s teachings. He struck out a palm with a weird trajectory, with a slight feint to make the move look very beautiful. He knew that Zhang Ye would not be able to stop this attack and thus, adjusted his strength and lowered it by 60 or 70%. He put the remaining 30 to 40% of his strength into the attack at Zhang Ye!

The martial arts director praised, “Good movement! That is what they call the Taiji parry!”

Parry?

Zhang Ye could only shake his head in his mind. His arm went up, and suddenly, the form that was full of openings earlier had turned into a different form. Zhang Ye’s hand had already received the attacker’s arms!

Smash!

The two of them collided!

Everyone was staring with their eyes wide open, enjoying what they were seeing. However, a scene they could never have expected happened right before them and it left them all dumbfounded. After the first clash, Zhang Ye was left unmoved from the spot he was standing in while the double who had executed a very beautiful looking technique had lost his balance and stumbled to the side a few steps. He had lost his momentum there and then, and was unable to execute the next move!

The stunt double was a little confused. “This...”

Zhang Ye smiled and thought to himself that what his opponent did was not parrying, but his own move was.

The martial arts director was slightly taken aback at first when he saw this, but quickly smiled and said to the double, “Teacher Zhang still has quite a bit of strength, so you don’t need to hold back too much.”

Only then did the crowd understand. Oh, so it was because the attacker was not being serious.

The double reacted and said, "OK, Teacher Zhang, again!"

He came near Zhang Ye once again, but used his legs instead, this time in a different stance. The strength of the kick was even greater and felt like it would be quite a strong one!

As the kick came flying in!

Zhang Ye blocked it again!

Crash! The fist met with the kick, but no one noticed that a technique had been executed in the few milliseconds when Zhang Ye raised his wrist slightly and bent it a little, which made the double's center of gravity shift. Because he had put in a lot of power into his attack, he lost his balance greatly as he staggered a few steps away and hurriedly tried to regain his footing. He was already sweating heavily at this moment!

What happened?

What was this situation about?

The double was dumbfounded and wondered why his Taiji Fist did not seem to work. And what was that martial arts style Teacher Zhang Ye was using? Why was he able to negate half of the strength in my attack in such an odd way? Not only did he negate a part of it, it actually felt like he used that negated force against me? Otherwise, why would I have lost my balance? Only those who had experienced it for themselves would be able to understand how terrifying it was. The double was already in a daze and feeling confused. This move by Zhang Ye seemed like martial arts, yet it also did not seem like martial arts. No one had seen such a style before!

Zhang Ye smiled and asked, "Still coming?"

"One more time!" The stunt double was getting a little pissed and still not convinced that he was losing. If his opponent was also a martial arts practitioner, he would definitely be convinced, but right now, this opponent was a literary and arts worker, so it was impossible that he would have such advanced martial arts. He felt that Teacher Little Zhang had definitely just gotten lucky. Chinese martial arts really weren't as fantastic as the layman thought, since after all it was just a skill consisting of some techniques. As the saying goes, even an old master can be downed by an accidental punch. This was as true as it sounds. Consider a person who knows a little bit of martial arts and a person who doesn't know martial arts but has great strength. If these two fought, you'd never be too sure who'd win it. Who knows? If your attack was a little too light, your reaction was a little too slow, the ground was a little too rocky, or even if you were just standing in the headwind, all of that could lead to the other person winning. Nothing was absolute at all.

Whoosh!

The double came at him for the third time!

Zhang Ye calmly stood there and took on the attack at a speed that was neither too fast nor too slow. As the stunt double was ready for this, after his move had been parried, he closed in on Zhang Ye. When Zhang Ye saw this, he followed through with the momentum and went near him as well!

With a slight lean of his shoulders.

The double was pushed back four or five paces, wearing an expression of surprise!

“Again!” He was getting a little frustrated!

However, Zhang Ye just smiled and said, “Sure, as you please.”

Hur hur, again? No matter how many times you try, it’s useless!

The double rushed in again, using the Taiji Fist techniques he learned from the martial arts director. What he did not know was that those moves that he had picked up were in fact not Taiji Fist at all. They were not even anything close to Taiji Fist. He was facing Zhang Ye, who was a true Taiji Fist expert, perhaps not an expert if he were in his previous world, but in this world right now, Zhang Ye was the only person who knew Taiji Fist!

A counterfeit of counterfeits style of Taiji Fist coming up against an authentic style of Taiji Fist. This was a gap that couldn’t even be compared!

The stunt double kept attacking!

Zhang Ye kept negating his attacks without breaking a sweat. He was only putting in 10 to 20% effort to deal with him for now as he did not wish to hurt someone or to expose his foundations in Chinese martial arts since he did not fully understand the situation of the martial arts world of this world yet. It was better not to provoke any trouble because of this situation. For now, he was just demonstrating his ability as the only person who knew Taiji Fist in this world, to show the martial arts director and stunt double that Taiji Fist was not as simple as they thought. What they were practicing could not even be called Taiji Fist at all!

Upward deflect!

Side deflect!

High parry!

Low parry!

The double felt trapped in a bog right now, and in front of him was a huge mountain or perhaps a wide river. No matter how he tried, he felt like he was a clay oxen going out into the sea, never to return. He couldn’t at all muster any more strength from his own body!

Wang Chengpeng: “.....”

The martial arts director: “.....”

The assistant director: “.....”

The film crew’s staff around them were all dumbfounded by what they saw!

Chapter 607 You guys win!

It became a bit quiet.

There was a state of confusion.

“What’s going on?”

“Was the stunt double dancing? Why didn’t he use any strength?”

“How did Zhang Ye manage to do that?”

“Why couldn’t Dalong’s double even match up to an artist like Zhang Ye?”

“This display is so beautiful that I’m afraid to look at it! What’s the situation?”

“Hello, double bro, did you seriously try to fight at all? How could you still not break through after three stances? Are you afraid of hurting Teacher Zhang Ye?”

Everyone was busily chattering and discussing away!

None of them could accept this scene that played out in front of their eyes!

The stunt double was nearly in tears. I didn’t fight seriously? He swore that he had really given his best and even used up all his strength for it. For some reason, even though he felt that his opponent was not strong and had a form that was full of openings, he still could not bring him down!

Wang Chengpeng’s expression was full of curiosity.

The martial arts director was also surprised.

Zhang Ye spoke at this moment, “Still want to have another go?”

“No! I’m not fighting anymore!” The double quickly admitted defeat and said, “My techniques are not good enough yet as I just learned Taiji Fist a short while ago.”

Your technique? Taiji Fist?

Zhang Ye was at a loss for words. He decided that he was not going to carry on with this farce any longer.

In the end, the double quickly defended himself because he felt a loss of pride. He said, “If I had used my specialized external style of fighting, the results would not have been the same. The strength of my blows would certainly increase by thirty to forty percent and my stances would not have any openings. Then you couldn’t have handled it.” Actually, he was not purposely giving an excuse, as he really thought that this would be the case as well. Having just learnt Taiji Fist, he was unfamiliar with it. Besides, it would require day after day and year after year of practice to hone his skills before the effects of his training would manifest itself. Internal style martial arts were not like external style martial arts. They required patience in training and needed to be nurtured slowly. He felt that if he had used his external style of fighting against Zhang Ye, the outcome would have turned and Zhang Ye would definitely not have been able to take three stances from him!

Zhang Ye looked at him. Do you really think that if you had used an external style of fighting instead, it would’ve been enough? Hur hur. But he eventually did not say another word since he did not want to deal another blow to his opponent!

Wang Chengpeng and the rest of the film crew understood after hearing the explanation.

“So that’s the reason!”

“That stunt double only has a superficial understanding of Taiji Fist since he had only just learnt it.”

“Just like I said. If he had used his specialized martial arts, how couldn’t he win against Teacher Zhang? So the reason was that he did not put in too much effort and was just doing an exchange of skill with Teacher Zhang.”

“That explains it.”

“That gave me a fright. I really thought that Teacher Zhang was a hidden Chinese martial arts expert but it was just an illusion and the stunt double was only messing around with him.”

The martial arts director seemingly realized something at this point, nodded vigorously, and then said to the double, “Go back and train some more. That’s what internal style martial arts are like. Unless you spend a few years in training, you won’t see any results since it is unlike external style martial arts which can be picked up very quickly. Besides, Taiji Fist is already a lost art with the mnemonics, breathing techniques, and meditation ways missing, so this path will surely be tougher to walk down. I can only teach you up to here. As for the rest, it will have to depend on you.”

Zhang Ye thought to himself, You want to continue practicing just based on this technique alone? Even if you trained until your arms fell off, you wouldn’t be able to learn anything!

The double clasped his hands together and said with a smile, “Thank you!”

The martial arts director pointed out, “But for the reason of shooting the movie, we just need to show the movements of Taiji Fist and it will be good enough. Teacher Zhang, I saw your technique from earlier.” Saying so, he turned to Zhang Ye and advised, “Although it looked pretty good, you need to know that it’s not because the forms were good but because your opponent used a set of techniques that he wasn’t good at. Even if anyone else were to spar against him, it would have been a similar outcome. Your technique is too messy and doesn’t have a focus at all with no proper stances. You were only moving around clumsily in all directions with no objective, like a move that someone would pull out in a street fight. I don’t know where you learned that from, but in any case, as long as it helps strengthen your body, it’s fine with me. But still, we can’t possibly use that in the movie. The techniques are too crass.”

Crass?

His techniques were crass?

Zhang Ye nearly rolled his eyes. Your sister! This bro was kind enough to show you guys that Taiji Fist was not done that way, but you all turned it all around to teach me a lesson instead? Initially, he had thought of using the authentic Taiji Fist style to shoot the movie, but who could have expected that these bunch of people were complete amateurs. Even if the real Taiji Fist that has been lost for several hundred years were displayed before your very eyes, you would not be able to recognize it!

The martial arts director said, “I will demonstrate Taiji Fist once more, so watch carefully, Teacher Zhang. You have to remember it well this time as it will be needed for this afternoon’s shoot.”

The assistant director exhorted him, "Little Zhang, it will be hard on you."

Zhang Ye helplessly said, "OK."

"Observe carefully." The martial arts director demonstrated again his version of the so-called "Taiji Fist."

It looked very powerful with the large movements!

Several of the staff members of the film crew continuously sang the praises of it!

"Good one!"

"Amazing!"

"This is what real martial arts is about!"

"Taiji Fist is indeed worthy of its reputation. Earlier on, the stunt double did not do too well with it, but the martial arts teacher is truly a professional. His demonstration of Taiji Fist is too mesmerizing!"

"That's because he was ranked in a national free combat competition before."

After the demonstration, the martial arts director said, "Teacher Zhang, you try it once."

Zhang Ye imitated it without any spirit at all. This time, it was different from earlier when he imitated the Eight Trigrams Palm which he had seen before. But for this this idiotic style of "Taiji Fist" was something he had never even come across before, so how could he imitate it well? He could only roughly execute some techniques while stumbling through the moves!

The martial arts director said, "That's wrong! Taiji is classified as yin and yang and it is shown in the opening form of Taiji Fist. That is the key and no mistakes can be made at this point!"

Zhang Ye: "..."

The martial arts director continued, "The depth of Taiji Fist is so profound that you won't be able to understand it even if I explain further. Just remember my forms and follow accordingly. There's no need to know the reason."

Zhang Ye: "..."

The martial arts director said, "No, that's not it! Why are you still executing the same unorthodox moves like earlier? Taiji Fist's parry move is not done like this! You should push it outwards!"

Zhang Ye: "..."

The martial arts director said, "You're getting there, that's right, try again."

Under everyone's watchful eyes, Zhang Ye was executing the moves one by one while learning from the martial arts director.

The moves were looking more and more alike!

The moves were looking more and more alike!

The moves were looking more and more alike!

The martial arts director finally praised him, "That's how it should be!"

The assistant director agreed and said, "You are a quick learner."

Wang Chengpeng also nodded and said, "It's getting more similar. If we shoot the scenes this way, it will definitely turn out well."

Upon seeing Zhang Ye's "improvement" and "growth," the film crew was delighted and the martial arts director was even happier. He felt that Zhang Ye was a promising student and worthy of being taught. If not for Zhang Ye's towering reputation, he would be interested in taking Zhang Ye as his disciple and imparting all of the Taiji Fist techniques to him so that he could do his own training.

Finally, with each stroke and movement, Zhang Ye surprisingly mastered most of them with his moves looking basically the same as the martial arts director's moves. Of course he also felt a tinge of sadness and pain as his familiarity at "Taiji Fist" improved while his intelligence was also rapidly decreasing at an alarming rate!

Whatever!

You guys win!!!

Chapter 608 Countdown to the movie's release!

A week later.

On this afternoon.

Zhang Ye's parents were throwing a grand feast at home. Naturally, it was only a feast for their own relatives as it had been awhile since they'd had a gathering, so this was also an excuse to have a meal together.

His uncles and aunties were seated comfortably and having tea together.

His three cousins were romping about, as well as shouting and screaming.

Cao Tong asked, "Why isn't Bro back yet?"

Cao Mengmeng remarked, "I'm getting hungry."

His mother laughed and said, "Little Ye called to inform that he'll be back by noon, so it should be soon."

His father said, "Let's not wait for him if everyone is hungry. We can eat first."

"No, no." First aunt said, "Little Ye has not been home in a week already, following the film crew around all this while. We definitely have to wait for him come home before we start the meal. Sister-in-law, did our Little Ye take part in the filming of Grandmasters? Together with Zhang Yuanqi, Dalong and the rest? The news mentioned this movie before. It's a big production with a famous director and the main cast is also quite magnificent. Since Little Ye is playing an important role in the movie, his popularity will surely shoot up very quickly."

His mother answered happily, "Yes, he was filming for that movie. I don't know what the movie is about, but since he told me about it himself, it shouldn't be wrong?"

Outside, the jingling of keys opening the door could be heard.

“Ah!”

“He’s back!”

“Let me get the door, I’ll go get it!”

Before the three sisters could get to the door, it had already opened.

Seeing so many of his relatives in the house, Zhang Ye exclaimed, “Whoa, everyone’s here? First Uncle, First Aunt, Second Uncle, Second Aunt, Third Uncle. Why is everyone here today?” He looked a little worn out, but was still in great spirits although he did feel quite tired. It seemed like the past few days spent with the film crew had worn him out. After he came into the house and greeted all his relatives, he took off his shoes and sat down directly onto the sofa, not wanting to get up anymore. He said loudly and tiredly, “Mom, hurry up and start cooking the meal. I haven’t had anything good to eat for a week already!”

His mother, feeling sorry for her son, said, “I’ll go and prepare it immediately!”

His Second Aunt asked, “Was the treatment so bad over there?”

Zhang Ye sighed and said, “It wasn’t that great. We had to go into the mountains, make camp, and sleep in tents. A few days ago, when we were in the south for a shoot, we were even caught in the rain and got trapped in the mountains. I couldn’t sleep or eat well, and there were times when I couldn’t take a bath too, so let’s not mention it again!”

His eldest younger sister poured some tea for him and asked, “Bro, did you get to see Dalong?”

Zhang Ye took the tea from her and smilingly said, “How could I not have seen him? I have three scenes together with him.”

“Dalong’s Battle at Huangsha Port is my favorite move!”

“Bro, did you ask for his signature?”

“I heard that Tian Xuetao is also one of the main leads in the movie. Does he look as good in person as he does in the movies? I have a few classmates who like him very much, but I find him to be just so-so.”

His sisters chimed and chirped.

While his mother was preparing the dishes, he shared his experiences with the film crew to his relatives. Everyone listened with intent as he related, “...When I got there, they wanted to test my acting abilities and even taught me some moves which they claimed were ‘martial arts.’ I was so amused when I saw it. That kind of lousy martial arts and lousy moves, I could just close my eyes and play along with them, easy peasy. At first, I wanted to choreograph my own moves to let my character’s fight scenes look more realistic, but they insisted that my techniques were too crass. Heh, those words nearly made me rage at them. They really don’t know what’s good for them and it seemed like what I said was falling on deaf ears, so I thought about it for a while and decided, whatever, why should I be putting in so much effort? After all, I’m not the main lead of this movie. If they insist on those moves and think that it looks better, I will just follow accordingly. It’s not like I’ve suffered a loss anyway.”

His youngest sister said with a grin, “Bro, why do I feel like you’re boasting again?”

The eldest and second sisters were covering their mouths and secretly laughing at him too.

Zhang Ye said to them, “You guys just don’t know how great your brother is. If you all knew about my martial arts skill, you’d surely fall to your knees and look up at me in admiration!”

The critical truth was, even if Zhang Ye didn’t want to follow the film crew’s choreography, he could not do so. In his previous world, everyone knew what Taiji Fist was. They liked seeing it and felt that it was a very strong set of martial arts, but only because they already had a certain understanding of it. However, in this world, no one had ever seen the real Taiji Fist or understood anything about it, so even if Zhang Ye were to show his moves, they would not accept it as they had never come across anything like it before. Subconsciously, they would immediately judge it as not good enough, but that was how it was, as appreciation for something was also down to habitual conditioning. Besides, even if Zhang Ye tried to argue his point, being a rookie actor, the third male lead, his voice wouldn’t be loud enough to make any impact. The entire movie was already planned and filmed. So Zhang Ye, being the new guy, wouldn’t have the clout to get the film crew to make changes as he saw fit. No one would have listened to him.

And so, being cast in his first role as one of the main roles made Zhang Ye grow a lot. He learned much about the film industry, and felt that if he had another chance in the future, he could look at developing in this area, but of course it would be best that he could be the director himself. Otherwise, he would have to listen to whatever the film crew said. That would be too constraining. If he were the director instead, he could shoot however he wanted with whatever moves he liked. On top of all that, he would surely leave the overall lead role for himself too. How awesome would that be?!

.....

After the meal.

His relatives went home.

Zhang Ye went back to his room and checked on the recent Celebrity Rankings Index.

C-list Celebrities:

First: Shi Yu.

Second: Chen Fanghua.

Third: Zhang Ye.

After the Peking University incident, Zhang Ye garnered a lot of reputation from the nationalistic youths with his “idiots” scolding and jumped up in rank to second place on the C-list rankings above Chen Fanghua. But ever since then, he did not make much appearances in the public anymore, so his popularity score didn’t move much and even declined a little. Together with Chen Fanghua having some new works and news coverage, she moved ahead of Zhang Ye in terms of popularity gained, again making him now one step further away from getting to the B-list.

From this, it could be deduced just how important having exposure was!

But overall, it wasn't an issue for Zhang Ye since he believed that he could bounce back in the next few days due to the impending release of Grandmasters! Of his last minute addition to the cast of the movie, Zhang Ye had rather high expectations of it. First, because he had spent almost all of his reputation points to activate the upgraded version of the Lucky Halo to get this job, he wanted to gain them back. Second, since this movie was officially his debut in the film industry, it was an important opportunity for him to expand his fan circle. He was looking forward to this movie paving a new path for him, to help to grow his fan base and expand his foray into new areas of work.

He was not like those other celebrities who only had simple goals, concerned only with their small group of fans and scrounging off of them for the rest of their lives. Zhang Ye had great ambition and an even bigger appetite. He wanted to move on to the global stage and needed fans and support from people who were not limited to his work on variety programs, Weibo followers, or poetry lovers. In the near future, he was planning to move into other areas to fight for the new achievements that no one else could accomplish.

The television industry.

The film industry.

The music industry.

The mathematics field.

The literary field.

The computer technology field and so on.

When he has gathered achievements in seven areas of work, Zhang Ye would then be able to summon Shenron! 1

Of course, his current short-term developmental direction was still geared towards becoming a television station's host. After all, that was his old profession and he had yet to become the best in that industry. Having not hosted on a satellite channel before, he was clearly still far from the pinnacle of the hosting world. At the very least, he was targeting hosting a few top television programs that he could list as his achievements before he would consider himself to be at the peak! Only then would he dare to proclaim that he had seen success in the field of television!

This was also Zhang Ye's reason for working hard this time. He wanted to raise his popularity rankings through his role in Grandmasters, hoping that he could break past the barrier and into the B-list. Then with Beijing Television's Do You Remember, he would showcase his potential in program planning, allowing the more elite television stations to learn about him and seek him to join them. Zhang Ye wanted to use his own capabilities and popularity to cover for what others thought of as his "character deficiency." But of course, Zhang Ye did not believe there was anything wrong with his character in the first place. Instead, he felt that it was the characters of others that sucked!

.....

On the internet.

The trailer for Grandmasters was back and showing on several online video hosting websites again. The key word being “again” because this movie has already done a round of promotions, but was put on hold after Brother Shui’s arrest and subsequent inclusion on the SARFT’s list of banned artists. The fact that the trailer could air again also cleared any doubts that Grandmasters could not be released!

“Let me see.”

“I’ve been waiting for this for too long!”

“There hasn’t been any news for a week now. But better late than never. I’m so looking forward to this movie. Oh, anyone know what happened to the antagonist’s role that Brother Shui was playing?”

“It’s going to be released so soon? Did they just cut all the affected scenes? That can’t be? If they did it that way, the plot would be full of holes. No matter what, Director Wang is still a renowned director, surely he wouldn’t degrade his own reputation like this?”

“Ah! Quickly take a look at this!”

“This...this person is?”

“Damn it! Did I see wrong?”

“Oh my god, why is Zhang Ye in this!”

“Although he looks much older, his face still looks the same, just that he has a mustache and beard added on. This is really Teacher Zhang, no doubt about it!”

“What? Zhang Ye was the replacement?”

“Teacher Zhang, damn it, you’re crossing over into other industries again?”

“What the heck, isn’t this crossover too big of a jump?! He’s even cast as one of the main roles?”

“What’s wrong with Director Wang? Did he get so anxious that he just went with a random replacement? How would Zhang Ye know how to act? It might have been alright if you just let him do a cameo scene, but you’re actually casting him as the antagonist? The main antagonist? Just how bold did they all get? He’s only a host by profession, if you put him in the movie, wouldn’t he just look confused?!”

From the trailer, countless viewers had now noticed the presence of Zhang Ye in the movie. Many people had already predicted earlier that the film crew of Grandmasters would definitely find a replacement to reshoot the scenes that the main antagonist appeared in and had made a list of possible replacement actors. From the most likely to the least likely, 10 names were included as everyone guessed who would be the replacement to save this production. But it ended up with no one making the correct guess at all since the replacement turned out to be the infamous Zhang Ye, that same person who had recently led a large group of Peking University students to scold and chase off a Japanese delegation!

Some people still did not quite know who he was.

“What’s this antagonist actor’s name?”

“He looks familiar, but I can’t remember his name right now.”

“Who is Zhang Ye?”

“I know him. He’s always being mentioned on the news, but I’ve never really paid attention to him before.”

Grandmasters had started its production a year ago and was highly anticipated by everyone because there was a famous director helming the film with a star-studded cast. When the news of Brother Shui’s arrest was announced and subsequently, negatively affected the movie’s chances of being released, all kinds of news had helped increase the attention on the movie. Because of that, many people who did not know about Zhang Ye previously were suddenly searching for his name when they saw this trailer, wanting to find out more about this actor who helped to rescue the release of Grandmasters.

The topic was being hotly discussed!

Grandmasters was being hotly discussed again, with a large part of the discussions being doubts!

“This is too unbelievable!”

“I’m totally disappointed by this movie now. Why did they find a layman as the replacement?”

“Zhang Ye was definitely a wrong choice!”

“Haha, who says that Teacher Zhang is not good enough? Teacher Zhang has always been known for his successful crossovers in the entertainment circle. Although he is a host, he is also doing very well in the mathematics world, so who can guarantee that he does not know how to act? In any case, I strongly support Teacher Zhang!”

“After reading the comment above, I am unable to make a response to it.”

“Pfft, that’s really quite true!”

“I still do not believe that Zhang Ye can act well!”

“I’m so irritated by Zhang Ye! Boycott him!”

“How does this person keep coming back on the news? Hasn’t it only been a week since he disappeared after the incident?”

Suddenly, at around 2 PM in the afternoon, a number of actors from the cast of Grandmasters began updating their Weibo.

Zhang Yuanqi’s Weibo: “Please look forward to the movie. There’s a surprise in store for Grandmasters the movie.”

Dalong’s Weibo: “Posting the Grandmasters trailer here. You can participate in the lucky draw for a chance to get my autograph.” A link was posted along with his update.

Tian Xuetao’s Weibo also posted a joke to Zhang Ye: “I saw earlier that there were many people scolding Zhang Ye. @ZhangYe Teacher Zhang Ye, in the past, I heard that you have a very poor reputation but it

wasn't something that I was convinced about. Now I've realized the rumors are true. It seems like you have offended quite a lot of people! Ha!"

Yao Jiancai also appeared from nowhere and replied: "What did I miss? When did Little Zhang join a cast and film a movie?"

Peking University's Teacher Su Na forwarded the post on Weibo.

Radio host Wang Xiaomei Liked the Weibo post.

Dong Shanshan also made a post on Weibo: "Wishing the crew of Grandmasters a record breaking box office earning!"

The director of Grandmasters, Wang Chengpeng, had not intended to say anything at first. The actors were all busy posting on Weibo and appearing on television station programs to promote the movie. Wang Chengpeng was also not slacking as he had more work to handle than them. However, when he saw such heated discussions regarding Zhang Ye online, he felt he had to say something to address everybody's criticisms.

A few minutes later.

Wang Chengpeng's Weibo updated: "We've already wrapped up filming and production for Grandmasters. The recent scare has left us all really shaken, and having met all these difficulties and faced with the possibility of the movie being taken down, I can only sum it all up with one phrase—the road to success is strewn with setbacks. I would like to thank one person here. Thank you Zhang Ye, for coming to our rescue when the film crew was in its most difficult period. Without any requests, demands, or conditions, you just worked as hard as we needed you to. In the past week, as we reshot the footage for your scenes, all the other actors had their chance to rest, except for you. In every scene, we needed Zhang Ye's participation and that in turned led to him only getting about four hours of rest each day. On one of the days, he even got only an hour of sleep. But what really moved me was that, from the start, no one from the film crew, including me, heard Zhang Ye complaining about being too tired to carry on. In fact, he even did his job in the most perfect and outstanding way and completed his role's scenes with utmost professionalism. For an actor like that, I can only admire and give respect to him. Those who doubt Zhang Ye's acting skills can watch Grandmasters first before commenting on it. I believe no one will be disappointed, as Teacher Zhang joining the cast of Grandmasters only served to improve the film's quality!"

With that post, he had given Zhang Ye his highest praise!

When the netizens saw this, they were left wondering in doubt.

"Is he really good?"

"I'm skeptical about it."

"If Director Wang can say that, then it must not be bad."

"I'm really anticipating the movie now. I wonder if I can attend the movie premiere!"

"It shouldn't be too many days away now?"

“It should be soon. They’re promoting it as the film is getting reviewed at the censors. Once that is done, they can distribute the film to all the movie theaters. But I believe that the schedule for its release has already been arranged.”

.....

On websites and in forums, the promotions were overwhelming all possible channels.

There were promotions in the form of trailers as well as posters that were put up all over the major cities in the country. The posters for Grandmasters were put up at the bus stops, subways, and shopping malls. Nobody even knew if the movie has already been approved or not, since the release date was also printed on the posters. On the posters, there was a picture of Zhang Ye on the far right side, in his role as the antagonist and with a fake mustache. This was actually the first time his image was publicized in such a manner, and across all the major cities, helping him gain even more popularity.

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On this night.

It was just past midnight. The Celebrity Rankings Index had just been updated. In the newly released rankings for the next day, Zhang Ye had once again surpassed Chen Fanghua and went up to second place out of the C-list celebrities. It was possible that their popularity scores were not that different to begin with, but the promotions for Grandmasters surely helped a lot as well.

Anyhow, Zhang Ye’s popularity score was now considered to have stabilized at last.

Not only that, there was even a slight increase as he began his chase for the number one spot in the C-list rankings!

The Zhang Ye who was forever unwilling to step out of the limelight and stop in his march had made his comeback again after one week of lying low! With his new role and work, he was now charging forward for the top spot!!

Chapter 609 Day of the Premiere!

On the day of the premiere of Grandmasters.

Morning, around 9 AM in Beijing.

Hall 1 of Xianglong UME International Cineplex.

Backstage, a staff member was helping Zhang Ye put on makeup, while most of the other actors had already done their own makeup at home or at their companies to prepare for the red carpet walk. The scale of the premiere was clearly going to be quite large but as Zhang Ye did not have a management team or agency, and certainly no makeup team, he had to get the makeup artist from the film crew help him after he arrived. He was holding his cell phone in his right hand and talking to someone as his makeup was being done.

“Brother, we have arrived!” his third sister said.

Zhang Ye said, “Then come in. It’s going to start soon.”

His second sister snatched over the cell phone from her and said, "They are not letting us in because we don't have any tickets."

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "OK, I got it. How many of you are there?"

His second sister replied, "There's five of us. Me, Big Sis, Mengmeng, and two of her classmates. Brother, come out quickly to receive us, hurry up! I can't wait to see the celebrities!"

"I'm still having my makeup done now and can't go out yet. Wait a little while, I'll get someone to bring you in." After hanging up, Zhang Ye made a call. "Hello, Little Wang, it's Zhang Ye. I have some relatives coming for the premiere and they are at the entrance now. Can you help bring them in for me?"

Little Wang immediately said, "No problem, no problem!"

Zhang Ye said, "They're five young girls so it should be easy to spot them."

"Don't worry, Teacher Zhang, leave it to me," Little Wang answered promptly.

"Thank you and sorry for the trouble, Little Wang," Zhang Ye said.

For these kinds of movie premieres, most people couldn't get ahold of the tickets even if they were willing to spend money to buy them. They would still need to call in favors to purchase the tickets as they were so highly sought after. However, as one of the main cast members of Grandmasters, it was not a problem for Zhang Ye to bring some family members to attend as long as it wasn't too many people. They did not need any tickets either. And, at most, if there were no seats to accommodate them, they could just bring in some extra chairs, so it was not a big deal at all. His three sisters were crazy about chasing idols and liked to attend such activities as well. Since yesterday, they had been pestering Zhang Ye to let them come to the movie premiere. Since it was his sisters' request and not difficult to agree to, Zhang Ye naturally would not refuse them.

.....

At the venue of the movie premiere.

The reporters were all in position.

The audience was also fully present. The venue was packed.

Little Wang, who was part of the organizing team, brought Zhang Ye's sisters in from the side entrance and led them directly to the seats in the 4th row, close to the front. Although the area was slightly to the right, the location was still quite good as they could see the stage in front of them quite well.

The eldest sister, Cao Dan said, "Thank you, Brother Wang."

Little Wang smiled and said, "You're welcome. Have a seat. Come and look for me if you need anything." With that, he went to busy himself with his work.

Cao Mengmeng's classmate, Little Qian exclaimed, "Wow, we even get to sit so close to the front?"

Cao Mengmeng's other classmate, Little Wen said, "Mengmeng, your brother is so marvelous! This is the first time that I'm attending a movie premiere. This feels so awesome! I'm so excited!"

Cao Mengmeng chuckled and said, "Of course, who do you think my brother is?"

His second sister was also said very excitedly, "It's starting, it's starting!"

The movie premiere began.

One by one, the actors walked down the red carpet and came into the venue. First was Zhang Yuanqi, followed by Dalong and Tian Xuetao. Finally Zhang Ye also strolled in casually. This was his first time walking the red carpet and it actually felt quite good. As he slowly walked up to the stage, he waved to the left and smiled to the right at the audience.

Applause was coming from every direction.

Especially from his three sisters who were clapping their hardest until their hands nearly turned a dark shade of red!

"Brother!"

"You are so handsome!"

"Oh!!"

On seeing so many celebrities and even the Heavenly Queen herself walking past them, Cao Mengmeng's two classmates blushed, feeling as though they were in a dream. They were furiously clapping away too!

The last person to appear was Wang Chengpeng, and as the movie's director, he received the loudest applause from the audience. As he went up on stage, he took the microphone and made an opening speech. "Thank you everyone. Thank you to our friends from the media, our dear audience and friends for attending the opening premiere of Grandmasters. After ten months of production, with an investment of..."

The proceedings of the movie premiere went on step by step.

The opening address, the actors' speeches, a media interview, an audience lucky draw, and so on.

When it came to the media interview, Zhang Yuanqi, being a Heavenly Queen, managed it with ease. She had already been through such situations dozens of times, if not at least close to a hundred times. Dalong did not like to speak much to the media as that had always been his character. He quickly ended his interview with just a few words. When Tian Xuetao and the second female lead went up on stage for their part, they looked visibly nervous. Somewhere in the middle of the questioning, Tian Xuetao said something wrong but quickly reacted and changed his answer and managed to get through the interview. The second female lead nearly fell down when her high heels gave way as she staggered some distance away, scaring many of the audience as they were worried that she would fall off the stage.

The reporters kept focusing their cameras onto them, looking for flaws or mistakes. That was what they wished to see, since if everyone were flawless and behaved perfectly like Zhang Yuanqi, would there would even be any news at all?

Tian Xuetao and the second female lead might be considered quite popular and have acted for quite a number of years already. However, since acting and life were different things, even if they did not get

nervous while filming the movie, it wouldn't mean that they would not get nervous when faced with so many people from the media and audience. Moreover, as it was such a big occasion and a big production that they were taking part in for the first time, coupled with their young ages, you could say that their experience in handling this interview segment was definitely incomparable to a mature artist like Zhang Yuanqi's.

They got off the stage and returned to their seats in the front row.

Tian Xuetao was slightly embarrassed and said, "Ai, I was too nervous."

Zhang Yuanqi comforted him like an older sister would and said, "It's not a problem. I was also nervous just now when I spoke." She turned her head to look at the second female lead and asked, "Juan'er, is your ankle alright?"

The second female lead said, "It's fine, Sister Zhang. I got the wrong size shoes. They're too big."

Upon hearing that, Zhang Yuanqi said, "Hur hur, my shoes are coincidentally a little too small for me. They're size 36. Come, try wearing mine."

"How can I do that? No, no, no." The second female lead felt overwhelmed by the attention from the Heavenly Queen.

"I do not have athlete's foot, so you can wear them without worries." Saying so, Zhang Yuanqi had already took off her shoes graciously.

When the second female lead saw that, she could only exchange the shoes with her. Feeling very touched, she said, "Thank you, Sister Zhang."

This scene was captured by some of the reporters who were beside them, but no one was particularly surprised. In the entertainment circle, Zhang Yuanqi had always had good relationships and took especially good care of others. She never had any conflicts with people. Even when those celebrities with poor reputations met Zhang Yuanqi, they would still greet her politely. The reason for that was for all to see, as Sister Zhang always knew how to handle issues, conduct herself personably, and never put on airs.

However, when Zhang Ye saw that, he did not say anything at all. He knew exactly what kind of character Old Zhang had.

On the stage.

The host smiled and said, "Who's next?"

Wang Chengpeng looked to his left and called out, "Teacher Zhang, it's your turn."

"It's my turn already? Alright." Zhang Ye straightened his suit and walked up to the stage with a smile

The host handed the microphone to him.

Zhang Ye took it and said with a smile, "It's finally my turn, but before the questions start, let me first say a few words." Zhang Ye stopped a reporter who was just about to ask him something, "Actually there is a profound meaning behind Director Wang's arrangement for me to be the last one to come up

on stage. Someone recently gave me a nickname, calling me the 'Speech Demon'. They say that there will be trouble the moment I hold a microphone..."

With that, the audience in the house burst out in laughter!

Wang Chengpeng laughed as he pointed to him.

The second female lead was also tickled.

Some time ago, the Peking University incident had caused an uproar and basically everyone knew of that incident. When they heard Zhang Ye self-ridiculing himself the moment he went on stage, everyone thought it was hilarious.

Zhang Ye continued on, "Actually, I do not have any confidence in myself. At this big event today, I had better not say anything wrong again, in case it brings trouble to Director Wang and the film producers. So then, for the questions that our reporters have for me, let's just make do with one question. One is enough. I'm afraid of getting in trouble if I say too much."

Everyone laughed again.

The female reporter stood up again and asked, "Alright then, Teacher Zhang, I will only ask one question. Earlier, my fellow reporters have already asked the questions about the movie and its production, so let me ask a private question instead. The character that you portray in the movie is an antagonist who leads a solitary life. What I would like to ask is, are you also like that? Do you have a girlfriend yet? Can you share with us your love life? I believe there are many people who are very concerned about this question. That is all I would like to ask."

With that, she sat back down.

The audience applauded and whistled enthusiastically, waiting for Zhang Ye to talk about his love life.

Everyone was always interested to know about celebrity gossip and scandals. But unfortunately, those were also what the celebrities were most unwilling to discuss, because it was not easy to answer, and sometimes, there was no way to answer it either. Admitting or denying also did not help, so that was why a question like that at this moment would test the professionalism of a celebrity.

Tian Xuetao looked up to the stage.

The second female lead and the rest of the actors were also waiting to see what Zhang Ye would say.

Zhang Ye smiled and looked at that female reporter before answering, "How is that one question? Your sentence consisted of three questions, and they're even such blunt questions. Do you have a grudge against me?"

The female reporter smiled and waved her hands.

Zhang Ye said, "Actually my love life is a history of blood and tears!"

Everyone's interest perked. What do you mean by a history of blood and tears? Hurry up and tell us!

Zhang Ye followed up immediately by explaining further, "I've bled! I've cried! And I've been through shit!"

When they heard that, the audience and reporters nearly vomited a mouthful of blood. Pfft! There were blood, tears...and even shit? Just how dirty was your love life!

Wang Chengpeng was also spoiled by the humor!

The second female lead even covered her mouth and laughed away heartily!

Zhang Ye stood on the stage and chewed the fat with everyone for some time. Everything he said was getting funnier and funnier and everyone was enjoying listening to him. However if anyone were to think about it, Zhang Ye had actually not said anything related to his love life at all.

After Zhang Ye got off from the stage and returned to his seat.

Dalong glanced at him.

Tian Xuetao also looked over to Zhang Ye.

As the saying goes, actions speak louder than words. Compared to Tian Xuetao's and the second female lead's nervous and mistake-ridden interviews, Zhang Ye's handling of the question was impeccable and of a totally different standard to them. There were no signs of nervousness, and instead, even teased the reporter and himself with ease. Every one of his words carried a little joke in it as he raised the entire atmosphere of the movie premiere. What was most critical was that he did not even answer the sensitive question and skipped over it skillfully.

This clearly showed the difference between a host and an actor. While an actor's primary job was acting, Zhang Ye was a versatile host who had skills to handle situations both inside and outside of acting!

Chapter 610 Grandmasters' box office earnings!

After an hour.

The ceremony was done and the movie started playing!

The lights in the venue slowly dimmed after they were switched off before fading out. All the recording equipment was brought outside while the reporters were invited to take their seats as the invited guests and audience watched closely at the screen in Hall 1. Although the premiere and public screening were scheduled on the same day, the opening premiere was screened ahead of the public screening which was scheduled for a later timing. For the selected first batch of viewers watching, their mood was naturally different. The atmosphere in the theater had a sense of grandness to it.

The music started.

This was the melody of the movie theme song that was sung by Zhang Yuanqi. But as it was used for the opening of the movie, there was no singing and only the melody was gently playing to signal the start of the movie.

Starring: Zhang Yuanqi

Starring: Wu Feilong

Featuring: Tian Xuetao

Featuring: Zhang Ye

Zhang Ye's name was the fourth to appear, and considerably near the beginning.

In the introduction, with the flickering images and music playing, Wang Chengpeng's name and introduction as the director appeared the screen and faded out. The scene cut to a group of children who were gathered together.

"My ball! That's my ball!"

"Haha, how dumb."

"Don't give it to him."

"Give the ball back to me."

"Come and get it from us then."

"I will definitely get it back! Give it back!"

"Ah! How dare you hit us!"

The child character of Dalong's role appeared on screen.

Following that, the child form of Zhang Yuanqi's character also appeared on the bridge. It wasn't known where they found the two child actors, but they really looked quite similar to Zhang Yuanqi and Dalong.

The beginning scenes and plot moved a little slow as they were mainly used to build up the characters' story. About ten minutes into the airing of the movie, the children had grown up. This was where the first conflict in the movie appeared. With a couple of lines, the plot slowly unveiled itself but part of the main plot was still hidden from the audience at this moment.

In the first row in the theater, Zhang Ye was watching intently and enjoying the movie. As he did not follow the film crew from the beginning of production but was thrown in at the end to rescue the situation when the movie was threatened with being taken down, he had not watched the final version of the movie in full. At this premiere, it was his first time watching it and he felt that it was really quite different from what he had expected.

At the 30-minute mark of the movie, Zhang Ye's character finally appeared for the first time!

"Who are you?"

"Guess."

"Do you know my teacher?"

"It's your teacher who knows me."

.....

At the 52nd minute.

“I don’t care where you came from, all I know is where I want to go. Even your master can’t stop me, so who do you think you are? All that’s left of Xingyi Fist now are your teacher and you. How pitiful, how regrettable, and how sad!”

.....

60th minute.

“In this era, who still dares to claim they are grandmasters? Your master can’t claim so, and you, you are even less deserving to claim so!”

.....

74th minute.

“When...I die...my martial arts...cough...will really be lost for good....That’s good, might as well...cough. In birth...we bring nothing....In death, we take away nothing. Hahahaha!” His character died at this moment and even laughed as he went.

Below stage.

Cao Mengmeng was thrilled. “The main character is so evil! Why did he kill my brother!”

Cao Tong also said angrily, “That Dalong is so annoying!”

Cao Dan said in a speechless way, “It’s our brother who is the villain! Sister Zhang and Dalong are the main leads instead!”

Mengmeng’s two classmates said together, “Mengmeng, your brother’s acting is really good!”

Around them, many reporters and film critics couldn’t help looking at each other, surprised by Zhang Ye’s acting quality. Having appeared in scenes together with an experienced action star like Dalong, Zhang Ye seemed to have managed to hold his own and was not put down by Dalong’s acting. He portrayed his character very well. And of Zhang Ye, who was just making his debut in acting, this was a totally unbelievable performance. Everyone knew that Zhang Ye was not a student of the performing arts!

A female reporter took a deep breath and said, “His acting is really good.”

“Zhang Ye’s character is a bright point in the movie! He really got our attention!” a film critic praised.

Another film critic also nodded. “Honestly speaking, I’m really amazed that Zhang Ye’s acting can be so good. The character’s development was done so well too!

“The fight scenes were also well done.”

“Yeah, the fight scenes were beautifully choreographed.”

“It was really well-arranged.”

“Did Zhang Ye use a stunt double?”

“It didn’t look like it.”

“I had thought that Zhang Ye would mess things up, but who knew that I was in for such a surprise! This person could really act well!”

With the antagonist dead, the plot was already at its conclusion. As the scenes went back to Zhang Yuanqi and Dalong’s characters, the movie’s ending played out. Soon, the lights in the theater were turned on and slowly lit up the entire venue.

The credits rolled just as the main theme song started.

Wang Chengpeng along with the main cast stood up and faced the audience, bowing to them once.

The audience and media reporters broke into applause!

“It was really quite good.”

“This movie is more than alright.”

“The box office earnings shouldn’t be too bad. With such a plot, cast, and quality, it should easily get a hundred million RMB in ticket sales. It looks like it has the potential to hit several hundred million at least.”

“Yeah, it’s a really good watch.”

“I only find it alright. There’s not enough screen time for Sister Zhang and that makes her feel like she was just making a cameo, although her acting was really good. But overall, I wasn’t too entertained by it.”

“Tian Xuetao’s acting hasn’t improved at all.”

“Zhang Ye’s performance was quite unexpected.”

“Yeah, I think Zhang Ye’s acting was quite surprising.”

After the movie ended, the audience was still talking in whispering voices, exchanging their views on the movie. Besides Zhang Yuanqi’s and Dalong’s names getting mentioned often, Zhang Ye’s name was also brought up numerous times.

Everyone began streaming out of the venue.

Wang Chengpeng smiled and said to the actors, “Let’s go and get ready as well. The internal team celebratory dinner has dragged on for too many days already and it’s time to fulfill that today. Everyone has worked hard.”

The actors were also talking with each other.

Only Zhang Ye was relatively silent. Compared to when he was acting his role out and when he was watching the movie, he had very different feelings. Overall, Zhang Ye was quite satisfied with his own performance in the movie, but while he was watching Grandmasters as an audience, he noticed some mistakes, such as his expressions and actions, which he felt could be done better. He had also always thought that the martial arts movements were flawed; those dogshit-like moves of “Taiji Fist” were too flamboyant. All in all, he knew that there were many areas in which he could improve. However,

whatever! Since this was only his first time acting in a movie, and being inexperienced, to have done what he did was already his limits. He would just have to work harder in the future.

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All over the country.

Public screenings of Grandmasters were beginning.

A big name director, a big production, and a big lineup which included Zhang Yuanqi and Dalong helming the cast. There was no lack of Grandmasters being scheduled for screening at every cinema. In just the past two days, tickets for Grandmasters were already 30% booked on the online ticketing systems. On the day itself, in every cinema, the same scenes of huge crowds lining up for tickets could be seen as every movie buff turned up to watch the blockbuster title.

“Yo, Old Sun.”

“Old Xu? You came too?”

“Yeah. Are you here to watch Grandmasters as well?”

“Yes. I’ve been waiting for it for a month already and it’s finally playing now.”

“The opening premiere has just ended, but I’ve already seen the film critics giving their reviews online. It seems like they’re all recommending it, so I came to take a look for myself. I’m mainly here because I want to see Zhang Ye, since I like him better.”

“Whoa, does Zhang Ye know how to act?”

“The film critics say that he’s pretty good.”

“Really? How can that be!”

“I don’t know either. That’s why I’m here.”

“Let’s go. It’s time to go inside.”

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One by one, the screenings starting.

One by one, the screenings ended.

On this opening day, the topic regarding Grandmasters was constantly climbing in rank on Weibo. Although a large part of these topics were discussing Zhang Yuanqi or Dalong, there were still quite a number of discussions surrounding Zhang Ye. At least, compared to Grandmasters’ second male lead, Tian Xuetao, he had much more attention!

“Wow, Zhang Ye did really well!”

“Teacher Zhang’s acting skills are so great they blinded my eyes!”

“That final crazed laughter was really the crowning glory!”

“I never would have expected Teacher Zhang’s acting to be so good!”

“@ZhangYe awesome!”

“The movie’s not bad. It didn’t disappoint me!”

“Initially, I had thought that the film crew were left with no choice when they selected Zhang Ye to be the replacement. Who knew that Zhang Ye’s acting was actually this good! He did not screw up at all in this critical moment!”

“I like Zhang Ye’s role of being the villain. From the start, he was already very hateable, I really wished that he would die quickly, but when he really died at the end, I felt somewhat at a loss. I guess it was because of Zhang Ye’s acting that the character came to life for me. What’s more, something worth mentioning here is that Zhang Ye seems well-suited to play such antagonistic roles as well. It felt like he was just being himself. In reality, isn’t Teacher Zhang also the type of person who leaves people gnawing their teeth over him?!”

“Congratulations on your successful debut, Teacher Zhang!”

“Congratulations!”

“Zhang Ye, you’re so handsome! I’ll support you forever!”

Several scattered newspaper reports had also praised Zhang Ye’s acting in Grandmasters while many other film critics were also full of praise for him. Only a few film critics were harsher as they pointed out the problems that Zhang Ye had in his acting. This outcome was in contrast to before the movie was released. Just a few days ago, many of the media and film critics were full of doubt and questioned Zhang Ye’s joining of the film crew for this movie. However, after the movie was released, most of these criticisms were overturned as most of them had now given their approval to Zhang Ye’s acting skills.

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The next day.

Grandmasters’ opening day box office earnings were tabulated: 31 million RMB.

This results were slightly lower than the predictions calculated by the film producer and film crew, but not by much and was still considered acceptable and within estimates. Besides, the reviews of the movie were pretty good. There were also enough commercial opportunities, so the box office earnings after the opening day would not be too bad and even had room to grow.

24 hours later, the second day’s box office earnings were released: 38 million RMB. It was actually even higher than the opening day’s numbers. Such a situation was not seen often in the market, so it was clear that Grandmasters was garnering better than expected acceptance from the viewers. It belonged to the late-bloomer type of film!

There was no doubt the final box office earnings would cross 100 million!

Crossing 200 million? That was likely too!

As for whether it could join the 300 million box office earnings club, it still remained to be seen, though it was unlikely. However, in the gloom of a market downturn in the film industry, having these results right now was already very good and the film producers had also reached their goals. On this matter, Zhang Ye's contributions were very prominent as he gave such a good performance even under the urgency of a rushed filming schedule. That credit could not be taken away from him!