

Superstar 631

Chapter 631 The troublesome Little Chenchen!

After the introductions.

There were two staff members that even Producer Fu Sihong did not know too well, probably because they were only transferred here today as well, and so they introduced themselves when it came to their turn.

Seeing all the new colleagues, looking at the view outside the windows and the well-equipped office, Zhang Ye was feeling extremely satisfied with everything. Central TV Department 1 was just as its name suggested. The way they spent their finances was shown clearly by the resources littering the office and work area. The workplace's environment could be said to be the best in the industry and also the largest. Standing here, Zhang Ye could not find any faults at all. Other than satisfied, there was still satisfaction! Compared to this place, his previous departments at his old workplaces were basically just kennels!

Fu Sihong said, "Teacher Zhang, why don't you familiarize yourself with the team first, I will go out to bring a few more people over. Some of them are still not here yet."

Zhang Ye turned around and said, "Sure, please do what you need to."

Fu Sihong turned around to leave the office.

When he left, several of the team also livened up. From that, it seemed that Fu Sihong wasn't really a person anyone could easily talk to.

Assistant Director Zhang Zuo said, "Teacher Zhang, I've always liked your programs. When I heard from the leader yesterday that you would be doing the program planning for our new Thursday evening program, I was the first one to register to transfer over."

Assistant Director Ha Qiqi also said cheerfully, "If we're talking about who was the first one to be confirmed for this new program team, then it has to be me. Even before the program team had been formed, my name was already on the list, but it was just a normal transfer for me as my previous program has already stopped airing. I really hadn't expected that Teacher Zhang would join us, but as long as we follow Teacher Zhang's command, then nothing will go wrong for sure. Didn't all of Teacher Zhang's past program productions all get popular wherever he went?"

Technical Director Wu Yi nodded and said, "I think we won't even need to use our brains to work anymore. As long as we follow Teacher Zhang's commands, everything should go smoothly and the ratings will surely be great!"

As they were all meeting for just the first time, they did not really know what to say, nor did they know how Zhang Ye was like as a person. To be on the safe side, they simply said some words that would suck up to Zhang Ye and that would ensure nothing was said wrong.

Zhang Ye was enjoying it too. Well said, really well said.

Chenchen glanced at them, then glanced at Zhang Ye and smirked a little. "Hur hur."

Zhang Ye: "..."

Everyone: "..."

Ha Qiqi asked, "Who might this beautiful little girl be?"

Zhang Ye said, "She's my relative. I will be taking care of her for a few days as there's no one available to look after her."

Ha Qiqi smiled and squatted down, saying, "This little one is really too cute. I've never seen such a beautiful child before." These words of hers sounded more sincere compared to earlier.

"Chenchen, greet her," Zhang Ye said.

Chenchen listlessly greeted her, "Auntie."

Ha Qiqi said, "What a good girl!"

Zhang Ye said helplessly, "What's so good about her? This kid is always so troublesome."

Being criticized in front of so many people, Chenchen did not like it, so she said, "Zhang Ye, you're the one who's troublesome. There are always news reports of you 'fighting' with others."

Pfft!

When Ha Qiqi heard that, she nearly burst out laughing!

The others were also trying to hold in their laughter, not daring to laugh at all. The kid was indeed right. When it came to being troublesome? Who could be more troublesome than the famous face-smacking Zhang of the entertainment circle!

Zhang Ye was very embarrassed by this. Damned kid, why was she so disobedient. It's only my first day at work and you're already dragging me down? He snapped at her, "Shoo, shoo. Go and play somewhere by yourself."

Chenchen who was waiting exactly for this opportunity immediately slipped away to the row of windows in the office and stuck her neck out to look down. When she got tired of standing, she found a chair for herself and sat there beside the windows.

Zhang Ye told his colleagues, "This kid is a little different from other children. Don't judge her by seven or eight year old age. She's really more like a little adult and doesn't like to talk much or play. I don't even understand what she's thinking of all day. In any case, I will be bringing her around for these two days, so if she offends you guys in any way, please accept my apologies in advance. Don't take it up with her, and if possible, could everyone also keep an eye on her and keep her from running around?"

A young male staff member quickly said, "Teacher Zhang, look at you. Why do you need to be so polite with us? Children are all like this. It's normal."

Wu Yi said, "Yes, it will be fine."

Ha Qiqi, seemingly going with the flow, said, "When you're not around, I'll help you look after the child. Leave it all to me."

Zhang Ye said, "Is that really alright, Sister Qi?"

Ha Qiqi happily said, "Since you're already addressing me as Sister Qi, even if it's not OK, it has now become OK." With just a few exchange of words, she had already observed Zhang Ye as someone easy to get along with. Indeed, Zhang Ye did not have any airs about him and was very polite when speaking. As a result, Ha Qiqi also opened up a lot more and said, "Don't worry, I'll definitely take good care of her."

Zhang Ye quickly said, "Then I give you my thanks." He knew that he couldn't possibly keep an eye on Chenchen all day. With someone like Ha Qiqi helping him, Zhang Ye was also less worried now.

For the next half hour, Zhang Ye continued conversing with his colleagues, as other than chatting, there was no work to do at the moment. They talked about everything under the sky, but the conversation still mainly revolved around Zhang Ye. For example, they asked him for the meanings behind certain poems, the truth behind the Peking University incident, or the reason why he beat up Lee Anson after the Spring Festival Gala this year. After all, many of them had only known about Zhang Ye from the news and media. They didn't know the details or the insider's point of view. Since they did not know—or to better phrase it, did not know the full story—they were naturally more curious as well. Seeing how Zhang Ye was such a easy person to talk to, they started asking one by one, not knowing that Zhang Ye would really answer them and do a tell-all.

With these conversations, their relationships were also pulled closer together. Not only did Zhang Ye's relationship with them get closer, even the relationship between themselves got better. As this group of people were all from different departments, even if they had seen each other before in the past, today was their first day as a new unit, so they surely had to slowly build up their trust and relationships with each other. A good conversation was often one of the best ways to pull people closer together.

Eventually, they only stopped talking when Fu Sihong arrived back at the office with two new colleagues. They got to know these two newcomers a little before getting ready to unpack and arrange their things again. Things like the Wi-Fi password and intranet login details all needed to be reconfigured again, and there were still many other things that they had to do.

Zhang Ye called out to Chenchen again, "Come here."

Chenchen did not go over. She said, "But I'm looking at the buildings."

Zhang Ye said, "Then don't you run around carelessly in the office. When you get bored, come to my office and look for me. Right, remember to do your homework, didn't your teacher give you some for the weekend? Where did you put your bag?"

Chenchen patted on the bag she had put on the windowsill. "I know."

Ha Qiqi laughed and said, "Teacher Zhang, leave it to me, don't bother yourself anymore."

"Sure, then I'll leave it to you." Zhang Ye then went into his new office.

Once he entered the room, Zhang Ye immediately liked the place. There was a genuine leather sofa set, a genuine leather swivel chair, as well as an abstract piece of art hanging on the wall that he did not understand. He took a seat behind the large office desk and felt really comfortable there. In the past, Zhang Ye had worked at quite a number of places, but strictly speaking, he had never before had a

standalone office for himself. This was a first for him. As Zhang Ye climbed up the social ladder, his status and recognizability also increased. This fellow's situation was becoming better and better!

Not bad!

Not bad at all!

He switched on his computer and messed around with it for a while, then looked through some books at the bookshelf as well. After trying out everything for a while, Zhang Ye calmed down and started arranging his stuff too. He took out his stationery—such as a notebook and a fountain pen, as well as some tea leaves—and placed them in a spot he could easily reach. Of other miscellaneous items, he did not bother with them as the unit would be sure to provide them.

After sitting there for a moment, Zhang Ye pushed the door open to go outside, hoping to familiarize himself with the situation around the office and the other departments. When he had just stepped out of the office, Zhang Ye saw something that left him “vomiting blood”!

He saw Chenchen holding her small bag and walking past the staff members one by one, handing out something to them.

Chenchen: “Uncle, help me with my Chinese homework.”

The young man smiled and said, “Sure, pass it to me.”

Chenchen: “Auntie, help me do my composition.”

Ha Qiqi didn't know whether to laugh or cry but said, “Let me give it a try then.”

Chenchen: “Uncle, help me do my math homework.”

Zhang Zuo cleared his throat and nodded. “Alright, let me take a look.”

In a short moment, Chenchen had already delegated all of her homework. Finally, she even instructed, “Don't tell Zhang Ye about this. He doesn't let me to get other people to help me with my homework.”

Zhang Ye was furious. He shouted, “Rao Chenchen!”

Chenchen turned around and saw him, then sighed like a little adult and turned back around. She walked to the front of the aunties and uncles, very consciously taking back the workbooks one at a time from them.

Everyone was tickled by the look on Chenchen's face.

Only Zhang Ye could not find any fun in this. He said, “You're even commanding people to do things now!? They're all busy and yet you want them to do your homework for you? What did I tell you before we came here?”

Chenchen did not say a word.

A female staff member said, “Teacher Zhang, it's just a small matter.”

Ha Qiqi also said, “Yes, the child is just playing around with us.”

Many of the staff in the office were speaking up for Chenchen. It seemed that she was rather popular with the people here.

Zhang Ye said to Chenchen, "This is your last chance. If I find you doing that again, I will leave you at home alone." Saying that, he finally stepped out of the office and went outside to take a look around.

After about 20 minutes, when Zhang Ye returned he discovered Ha Qiqi speaking to Chenchen. An empty desk that Chenchen had "occupied" was now littered with all sorts of snacks—chips, chocolate, soda, milk candy, etc. He didn't know who gave them to her, but the kid was basically just hugging the soda bottle and drinking from it, holding the chips and munching on them. What a harvest she'd had.

Zhang Ye said, "How much do you intend to eat?"

Ha Qiqi smiled and said, "It's given to her by our female colleagues, just let her have some if she likes it."

"Have you thanked the sisters and aunties?" Zhang Ye looked at Chenchen and asked.

A female colleague laughed and said, "She's already thanked us."

Chenchen put down the cola and jumped down from the chair. She said, "Zhang Ye, I need to go to the bathroom."

Ha Qiqi stood up and said, "It's not so convenient for Teacher Zhang to bring you. Come with me, let auntie take you instead."

Chenchen hesitated a little but still went over to Zhang Ye's side. She tugged at Zhang Ye's arm and urged him, "Zhang Ye, I need to go to the bathroom."

"Get Auntie Qi to go with you?" Zhang Ye asked her.

Chenchen said, "You take me."

Zhang Ye said, "You're still shy around strangers?"

Ha Qiqi said, "Hur hur, the child is really sticking to you."

Zhang Ye said, "She only thinks of me when there's a problem." He pulled Chenchen's hand and said, "Come along, I've just familiarized myself around here. There's a separate restroom over there. I will bring you this once, but you go there by yourself after that."

Chenchen nodded.

Sigh.

Looks like the whole morning would be wasted on looking after this child!

Chapter 632 Entirely new program birthed!

Afternoon.

After lunch.

The morning was spent taking the child around, unpacking personal belongings, and familiarizing himself around the place. After getting lunch at Central TV's cafeteria, he went back to the program team's new

office. Today's main work was finally going to be officially started. The first round of transfers to the new staff of this program team were all finally here.

In the meeting room, more than a dozen people were seated, and fully filled the room.

Fu Sihong kicked off the meeting first and said, "From today onward, our new program team has been officially formed. Many of you were transferred here from the other departments of Central TV Department 1, while some others came here from the other channels. We also have two new members of Central TV who have many years of experience at their previous job. Some of you know each other from before while some of you are meeting for the first time, but overall, our new program team is still quite young and there is a lot to work on together to deepen your mutual understanding. I hope that—in the course of our work from now on, with the guidance of Teacher Zhang and me—everyone can get along well and work seriously so that our new program will flourish and be good."

Bba bba bba.

Everyone clapped softly.

Fu Sihong looked to his side and said, "Teacher Zhang, why don't you say a few words as well?"

In this newly set up program team, the core leaders were in fact made up of just two people. One was Fu Sihong, the other was Zhang Ye. As for the others, like the assistant directors and assistant producers, they were not considered to be leaders in the team yet. Even though the positions were only different in that one had the word "executive" in it, the differences were as wide as the distance between the sky and the earth. Whether it be at a television station or in a film crew, an assistant director had little authority and would be managed like they were just a clerk or assistant handling administrative duties.

Zhang Ye nodded and gave his first speech as a leader. "Since I am in charge of the production, let me talk about the program. The station has given us a direction already and we are allowed to do any type of variety program without restriction. The station head has very high expectations of us and is willing to provide us with very good funding for the program too, so I would like to hear about everyone's opinions and discuss the kind of a program we should be making."

Zhang Zuo said, "According to the market trend, the audience still leans toward the singing shows. At the very least, if we did that, we would not have to worry about the viewership ratings at all. It is definitely a safe choice."

Ha Qiqi said, "But the viewership ratings won't be high either."

Zhang Zuo nodded and said, "That's true. That is a difficulty facing new programs nowadays. The genres of shows that have already been acknowledged by the market and audience are all highly sought after by the various larger television stations. The competition is tough and the audience base is also scattered as a result of this. But even if we do some other type of lesser-known program, the audience would not really accept it."

Wu Yi said, "The singing shows are really getting more and more difficult to make."

A female staff member said, "But the program that Teacher Zhang planned, that Do You Remember, has received very favorable ratings. It has always been the first or second place program in the same time slot for nationwide viewership ratings."

Ha Qiqi nodded and said, “I’ve watched Do You Remember before and it’s really good. It’s something innovative and has entertained the audiences to its best potential. If we could get the copyright for that program, then we could also do a similar type of show.”

Similar type?

This was obviously not what Zhang Ye was going after.

Zhang Ye said, “Is there anything else that anyone wants to bring up?”

Everyone freely spoke their minds. The overall consensus was more inclined towards a singing program. However, they were also very wary and hesitant of the potential pitfalls of such a show, so there was also quite a lot of disagreement over it. They were unable to come to a conclusion about it at this moment. Actually, what many of them had on their minds was how Central TV should have signed Zhang Ye earlier. If that were the case, then Zhang Ye would not have sold Do You Remember to Beijing Television and it would end up as a program on their own Central TV Department 1’s channel instead. However, they didn’t know that—even if Zhang Ye had joined Central TV Department 1 earlier—he would not have gone on to produce Do You Remember. But if he did, he would not have made himself the host of the show or treated it as a hit program. Because to Zhang Ye, although Do You Remember was a rather good program with rather good viewership ratings, it was still at best described as “rather good” only. What Zhang Ye was chasing after was not to be “rather good” but to be the best. He wanted to make a successful program that would break the viewership ratings, something that would be a blockbuster-type of a program. Do You Remember did not qualify as that to him.

Zhang Ye had a limited amount of energy and time. His year also consisted of 365 days like any other person, so if he wanted to replicate every idea of a program that he had in his mind into this world? That was obviously impossible. If Zhang Ye wanted to produce and host a program all by himself, he would surely use the most successful and blockbuster-type of program from his previous world and produce it for this world’s audience.

The meeting ended.

Zhang Ye and Fu Sihong were walking together, discussing the meeting and the new program. It could be determined from their conversation that Fu Sihong was also inclined to do a singing show as the market demand of variety programs in current times was quite poor, with the viewer ratings often averaging quite low. It was no longer like five to ten years ago when the genre was enjoying its peak with high viewer ratings. So if they were forced to pick the best out of whatever was given to them, they would surely end up choosing a singing show that was also the biggest slice of the pie left, followed by reality television programs, and other types.

Gathering everyone’s opinions and viewpoints, Zhang Ye had formed a general idea in his mind. They all preferred a singing show? Alright, let’s make one of those then!

Difficult to innovate?

This was clearly not a hurdle that would trouble Zhang Ye.

After Zhang Ye came out from Fu Sihong’s office, he announced to those outside, “Who can help me with a few surveys? I would like to know about the other satellite channels’ singing program’s

viewership ratings and market share, from their first episode to their latest one. It would be best if we could do up concise research on this. Oh, yes, I'll also need information about their celebrity guests and key contestants, or champions and runner-ups. Best case would be video clips of them."

Ha Qiqi was a little taken aback. She said, "You're sure that you want to do a singing program?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Tentatively, yes."

Ha Qiqi said, "Alright then, I'll go and prepare the data."

Wu Yi said, "I'll help you, Sister Qi."

Zhang Zuo said, "Then I'll get the others to search for the information about the celebrity guests and competitors."

Zhang Ye said, "Great, thanks for the trouble, please get them as soon as possible."

This program was very important to Zhang Ye and he also placed a good deal of focus on it. He couldn't just handle this program proposal like he did for Do You Remember. Since that was meant to be sold to others, he did not put too much attention into it and could naturally leave all the work to the people at Beijing Television Station and not do anything himself. But this new program was meant to be done by himself with him as the host, so he definitely had to make the best preparations he could. This was the debut show of Zhang Ye at Central TV Department 1, he could not afford to slack or take it too lightly. That was the reason why he wanted to gather information and news on all the other television station's singing programs. He needed to know in detail the overall setup of this world's singing shows so that he could make the necessary adjustments to his program proposal.

As the proverb goes, know yourself as well as you know the enemy.

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In the executive director's office.

Zhang Ye came back in and saw Chenchen sitting in the genuine leather swivel chair. As she was still quite short, she had trouble holding the mouse and was awkwardly controlling and clicking it. Zhang Ye went around behind her to have a look and saw that she was playing games. It was some sort of a puzzle game, one that required the player to clear the bubbles from the game screen. Whatever it was, Zhang Ye did not really understand.

"Go away, I have work to do," Zhang Ye said, trying to chase her off.

Chenchen did not look away from the computer screen and said, "Let me play a little while more."

Zhang Ye rushed her and said, "Hurry up, I have serious work to do here."

Chenchen did not want to listen and said, "Zhang Ye, I'm going to play for a bit more. I've already finished my homework."

"Are you serious? Let me have a look." Zhang Ye saw the workbooks beside her and picked them up, flipping through them. She had really finished them, so he said, "OK then, you did well. Alright, I'll let

you play for a while longer.” He could only go over to the guest sofa beside the door and sit there, taking out his fountain pen to work on the program proposal.

A while later.

Ha Qiqi came into the office and reported, “The data has all been gathered.”

Zhang Zuo had also finished his task and come into the the office. “The information you needed from me has also been collected.”

Zhang Ye took it from them and said, “That’s good, let me have a look.”

When Ha Qiqi and Zhang Zuo both noticed that Chenchen had already occupied and taken over the office desk, leaving Zhang Ye sitting in a corner. They couldn’t help but look at each other and laugh a little. From this alone, they could see that even though Zhang Ye kept complaining about Chenchen, he was actually also very generous to her.

After looking through the data and research, Zhang Ye’s heart was set. Having gotten to know this world’s singing programs better now, he knew that the singing shows’ development here was indeed quite different from his previous world’s. If he wanted to say who was doing it better, then there was really no way to give an answer to that, since both worlds had their positives. Zhang Ye’s previous world did better in that they had a better diversification of presentation and style. The same types of programs were all done differently by tweaking the sequence and formats. For this world, it stood out in terms of the audience numbers and their fervent support for singing programs. Even if there were four or five program slots a week that were packed with singing shows, no one got sick of them and continued watching. However, each program’s viewer ratings were not really high and were only at around 0.5% to 0.6%. But when all the singing programs’ market shares were added together, it became a frightening figure.

Overall, this world’s singing programs market and audience were considered to be enormous, with many people doing such shows as well. Inadvertently, the market share was also spread that way accordingly as its viewership ratings showed. This was what led to the embarrassing situation of having such average viewership ratings now. If—which was a big if—there were an incredibly outstanding singing program that could put to shame all of the other satellite channel’s singing programs, then that huge audience base would definitely come together and be reflected on this outstanding program’s viewership ratings!

But was there anyone who could achieve this?

The unification of all singing programs?

—This was actually what Zhang Ye was aiming for!

If he wanted to launch a singing program in this world, but was not bold enough, then the program would definitely be smothered and killed by all the other singing shows of the other satellite channels! Besides, just because others could not achieve it did not mean he could not achieve it. This market did not lack an audience base. In fact, the audience base was very large but what it lacked was a program that would shine in the eyes of everyone watching it; while back at Zhang Ye’s previous world, due to the critical tastes of the audience, there was a lack of audience base, but no shortage of wonderful programs!

If he had the program?

And there was an existence of a good audience base in this world?

Then these two worlds were surely made for each other!

And the matchmaker for the two of them was naturally going to be Zhang Ye!

His debut program on Central TV this time was going to be broadcast nationwide. It was a totally different platform compared to his previous platforms. This was Zhang Ye's important step towards the A-list celebrity rankings, so then what sort of a program should he bring out this time? What sort of a singing program would be most suitable for this situation? Not only must the show have a good reputation and viewer ratings, at the same time, it also had to showcase Zhang Ye as a host. For most talent shows like that, the role of the host was usually minimal and negligible. The main focus would usually be on the contestants and celebrity guests, so that would mean Zhang Ye's program of choice was even more limited now.

Which should he choose?

Which was the better option?

Suddenly, Zhang Ye looked towards Chenchen and said, "Chenchen stop playing already how long has it been since you've started don't overdo it Uncle still has work to do!"

Due to the Fruit of Agility's effects, as Zhang Ye did not control it well due to a lack of concentration, the signals from his brain were fired too quickly which accelerated his speech, like a trace would be left behind. Even though he spoke extremely quickly, each of his words could be heard and were also enunciated very clearly.

Chenchen looked at him and asked, "Zhang Ye, why have you been talking so quickly for the past two days?"

When Zhang Ye heard this, he pondered for a moment and then suddenly slapped his thigh with a loud laugh!

I got it!

It's gotta be you!

My The Voice of China!

Chapter 633 The Speed of Zhang Ye's Writeup of the Program Proposal!

A classic singing program?

Must have a good reputation?

Must have a ridiculous viewer rating?

The host must not act as just a supporting role?

There was only one answer and it was probably the only program that could meet the criteria. If this was the past, Zhang Ye would seriously not dare to use this program because he was afraid that he would do

it badly since he did not think he could do justice to the details in the program. To destroy such a classic program from his previous world which was so popular across the country.... No, it should be said that it was so popular around the world instead. So if it were destroyed in the hands of Zhang Ye, then he would surely have become a sinner by spoiling something so great. But now, Zhang Ye dared to do it, not because of anything except the reason of having eaten those hundred-plus Fruits of Agility he had gotten from the lottery draw.

When he received the Fruit of Agility prize from the lottery draw the first time, he felt that this item was useless to him. When he won it again in the latest lottery draw, Zhang Ye still did not make much of it until today, when he realized that it had another effect—the Fruit of Agility could affect his talking and reaction speed. As Zhang Ye had majored in broadcasting, his talking speed was not slow to begin with. At the very least, he was still a bit faster than the average person, but that was not good enough. Compared to his previous world's host of The Voice of China, Hua Shao¹, he was still way behind him. It wasn't even unfair to say that he was not comparable to some of those crosstalk actors who could do speed recital well. Because talking speed was more dependent on talent and genes than on training, there was nothing anyone could really do about it. If your reaction speed was already slow to start with, even if your brain fired countless of signals at once, your body would still be restricted to its reaction speed. If you wanted to increase your speed by one percent more, it was already very difficult, not to mention if you wanted to suddenly increase it by 50 to 70%! This was not something that could be trained!

But now?

Zhang Ye could do it!

His reaction speed had already increased multiple times and his talking speed was no longer the same as before, so why would he still have any doubts about it now? For him, The Voice was definitely the best option! There were no other programs which were suitable for the current situation and condition!

It's settled!

He proceeded to write the program proposal quickly. Even without the help of the Memory Search Capsules, Zhang Ye could write the proposal in detail. He couldn't help it; this program was way too popular. Zhang Ye had even watched it many times over.

Chenchen asked, "Zhang Ye, do you need to use the computer?"

"No, no need." Zhang Ye was busily writing something.

Hearing that, Chenchen continued holding the mouse and said, "Then I will continue playing."

Zhang Ye did not forget to remind her, "Don't place your head too close to the monitor screen, and try to protect your eyesight. If in the future you become nearsighted, you will suffer."

Chenchen said, "Zhang Ye, you nag so much."

Zhang Ye grunted, "Then why are you always making people worry? I'm almost your dad at this point."

One page!

Two pages!

Three pages!

The more he wrote, the more excited he became!

He was not getting excited over the writing of the proposal, rather because of the anticipation that this extremely reputable program would soon be produced by his hands. He could not wait any longer. In the past, whether it was for Lecture Room or any inspired talk show like Tonight 80's Talk Show and Mr. Zhou Live Show, compared to the viewership ratings of The Voice, they were leagues apart. That was why Zhang Ye's expectations and drive were also very different!

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Later that afternoon.

1:30 PM.

Director Jiang Yuan of Central TV Department 1 came over to inspect the progress. Actually, it couldn't be considered as inspecting the progress as the new program team had just been established, so he only came to have a look around. This program team was under Director Jiang Yuan's charge and he was very concerned about the team's transition and whether the viewership ratings of new program could achieve the desired results.

"Director Jiang."

"Director."

"Director Jiang."

Everyone stopped what they were doing.

Fu Sihong also came out of his office.

Jiang Yuan smiled and said, "Everyone's busy? Getting used to the new environment yet?"

Ha Qiqi said, "Yes, we're getting used to it. This new office is much better than the variety channel's office. It's definitely much better to work with Director Jiang." She hadn't been working at Central TV Department 1 but with Central TV's variety channel before being transferred over here.

Jiang Yuan shook his head and said, "You have such a glib tongue." Then he looked around and asked, "Where's Little Zhang?"

Zhang Zuo answered, "Teacher Zhang is in his office studying and researching the singing programs of other satellite channels."

Jiang Yuan asked with interest, "Oh? Singing programs?"

Fu Sihong said, "We still don't know what the final concept will be. Should I call him over?"

"There's no need to." Jiang Yuan stopped him and said, "Let Little Zhang continue with his studying. When he gets a good grasp of the other similar programs, he will be able to draw up a better program, so there's no need to rush him." Additionally, he also reminded them, "These next few days, I hope everyone will put in more effort to help Little Zhang finalize the program proposal. Once we have the

proposal and after I approve it, the funding will be released to the team. Since this program will be made in-house and not bought from a production company, the funding will be relatively better too, so don't have any worries in that regard."

Zhang Zuo said immediately, "You can rest assured too, Director Jiang. We will definitely cooperate well to get things done."

Fu Sihong also said, "We already have some general direction and will try our best to quickly finish the first draft of the proposal." Normally, there would be several drafts for a television program proposal. If the first one did not work, they would do it a second time, and if that also could not work out, then they would do it a third time. The possibility in getting an approval after the first attempt was close to zero as it needed to be altered several times according to new inputs and restrictions before the final proposal would be completed. It was sometimes possible that a proposal which started as a singing program would end up becoming an interview program. Fu Sihong added, "Give us three days, We will submit it to you in three days at the latest."

Jiang Yuan nodded and said, "Alright, work hard on it, all of you."

As they were talking, the executive director's office door opened and Zhang Ye came out holding some handwritten papers. He said, "Eh, Director Jiang? Did you come to inspect our work?"

Jiang Yuan nodded, "I came to take a look."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Then your timing is perfect." Waving the papers in his hands, he continued, "I've already written the new program's proposal."

Upon hearing this, Fu Sihong was stunned.

Jiang Yuan was also stunned.

Ha Qiqi, Zhang Zuo, and the rest were also quite dumbfounded at this.

What did you say? It's already completed? You took such a short time to write it all down? Just a while ago, Executive Producer Fu was still assuring Director Jiang that the program proposal would be completed within three days but you only took less than an hour to do it? That's even faster than a spaceship! Regardless of whether it was other television stations or Central TV, a proposal for such a major variety program would surely have needed a minimum of three to five days to complete, right? That was already accounting for the best case scenario. For those with a much more detailed program proposal, it would be common to take up to half a month to write out. But you? You completed it in less than an hour? How could you come up with a good program proposal if you did it so hastily?

Everyone was at a loss for words.

Jiang Yuan remained silent for a very long time before he was finally unable to hold back and said, "Aren't you being too efficient?"

Zhang Ye took it as a praise and said, "That's right, I've always done my program proposals quickly since I'm never indecisive about my ideas. I will just write when I've given it enough thought, so that doesn't take too much time to do."

Fu Sihong said in disbelief, "You have really finished it?"

“I can’t possibly be lying, right?” Zhang Ye called for an administrative staff member and passed the papers to her. He said to her, “Little Wang, go make some copies of this and distribute them to everyone.”

Little Wang replied clearly, “OK.”

The copier sounded noisily as the copies were made.

A short while later, the copies were completed. Little Wang passed a copy to Jiang Yuan first, then to Fu Sihong, and finally to the rest of the colleagues.

Everyone quickly took it and had a look. Their first reaction was...how stunning! It was not the content that was stunning—they did not have enough time to read through it yet—but on first glance, they saw neatly lined up words written with fountain pen ink on paper. That harmonious feeling even seemingly gave “life” to the paper. Looking at the program proposal was literally an enjoyment as the words were too beautiful. There was no one else at Central TV who could write with such beautiful handwriting!

Ha Qiqi could not help complimenting him, “What nice handwriting!”

Zhang Ye smiled and said, “Thank you.”

Zhang Zuo, Wu Yi, and the others all looked in the direction of Zhang Ye in surprise. They could not understand how such a careless person—who always went around scolding and fighting with others, creating fear in others of the entertainment industry—could have such a beautiful handwriting. It was rumored before that Zhang Ye had a high level of accomplishment in calligraphy? Now, it looked like those rumors were not fake! They could tell that just from the handwriting!

Chapter 634 No Optimism for The Voice?

Everyone read the proposal.

Beside them, Zhang Ye explained, “This name of this program will be tentatively titled The Voice of China, or simply just The Voice. This is a large-scale singing talent show. The competition format is the same as other traditional singing programs, starting from the preliminary auditions, then letting the coaches choose their contestant students before proceeding to the group stages, and the finals after that. That’s the general process of the program.”

Jiang Yuan raised his head.

Fu Sihong and the others all looked at him as well. They no longer read from the proposal and were just listening to Zhang Ye explain it directly.

Zhang Ye explained fervently, “But if you all think that the program is just going to be this simple, then you’ve got it wrong. The program’s format might be the same as the traditional singing show format, but it’s core and selling point are different. When we do the studio setup, the seats of the four coaches are the key. During the auditions, the coaches’ seats are all facing with backs to the stage. They won’t see the contestant and won’t know their gender, height, or looks. They will only be able to hear their voice and singing talent, using these factors to decide if the contestant will pass or fail. This is also why the program’s name is The Voice!”

How does that sound?

Everyone must be stunned?

Everyone must be shocked? Right?

After Zhang Ye explained his proposal, he looked at them in satisfaction and waited for their reactions. He had predicted that everyone would feel shocked and clap or bow in amazement, but contrary to his expectations, the outcome was very different from how it played out in his mind. Everyone was shocked alright, but they were shocked from being horrified!

Zhang Zuo: "..."

Fu Sihong was badly shocked. "Are you serious?"

Zhang Ye said, "Of course."

Ha Qiqi also drew a gasp and said, "This...how can this work!"

Zhang Ye asked, "What's the matter? Is there a problem? Is this program's proposal so difficult to understand?"

Fu Sihong said, "Although you claim that it is different, but to me, it sounds just the same as any other singing program that the other television stations are doing. At most you have an additional segment where the chairs turn around?"

Zhang Ye said, "The turning around of the chairs is just a means and strategy of the show. But with this additional segment, it would give the audience a totally different feel and experience while they watch the show. We're basically telling them that our The Voice chooses the contestants based not on their backgrounds, their stories, their height, and especially not their looks. As long as they have a good voice and can sing well, they can show themselves to the world on the stage of The Voice! Essentially, this program's aim is to go back to the basics of singing. We do not care about looks or stories, we will only listen to the voice!"

Zhang Zuo said in a stunned manner, "Only listen to the voice, this..."

Fu Sihong had a different view from him as he shook his head vigorously, saying, "But have you thought about this? If the stage will be adorned by only short, fat, or not good-looking contestants, then it would greatly affect the quality of the program. The image and effect would be totally shattered, so why would the audience want to watch that? In this industry, a competition-based program's bottom line—if I may put it honestly—is the requirement of the contestant being a talking point. We need them to have outstanding appearances and great singing ability so that they can hold the stage and attention of the audience. If we're talking about the program that you did earlier, that Do You Remember, then maybe this can be overlooked, since it isn't a talent show program. But as long as it is one, then we can never escape that. A singing competition that does not have handsome guys or pretty women taking part—I do not see why the audience would want to watch something like that on their TVs. That is why I find this proposal to have very serious problems as it goes against the rules of a variety program!"

Zhang Ye shook his head and said, "Why can't a talent show escape association with handsome guys and pretty women? That is only the mindset of the industry professionals; it's a cage that they've placed

themselves in. This program of mine precisely wants to target that mindset by not following those rules. It will be precisely because of this that the audience will want to watch, and like to watch, the program. Besides, I have never stated that the stage for The Voice will not have any good-looking people gracing its stage, did I? If the contestant can really sing, and also look good at the same time, then naturally it would be fine. But the only thing about the stage for The Voice is that the proportion of good-looking people might be smaller since the contestants would mostly still be fairly average-looking people.”

Fu Sihong insisted, “I feel that this program will not do well!”

Zhang Ye did not get angry at this but said, “The singing shows these days are unable to bring excitement simply because every other such program is doing exactly the same thing, being trapped by their traditional mindset. How I judge whether a program will be successful is not to see how the industry insiders analyze it with their performance indicators or experience. What I am looking for is the viewpoint of an audience on such a program.”

Fu Sihong retorted, “For a program producer, experience is the most valuable asset that they can fall back on.”

Zhang Ye looked at him and said, “Experience is molded from learning and references and is limited to this moment while the pace of innovation and the wisdom of humans are the only things that are limitless. If the ancient people based everything on their experiences, then they would never have believed that there would be a day when humanity would go to the Moon. Do you think that what their experiences told them was correct then?”

The two of them wrangled over the matter, both making a stand for their own side of the argument.

But it was clear that after a few exchange of words, Fu Sihong had succumbed and could not outtalk Zhang Ye.

When Zhang Zuo, Ha Qiqi, and the others saw this, they simply decided not to retort at all. They knew very well that they were not as eloquent as someone who was a professional host like Zhang Ye and would not be able to outtalk him even if they combined their efforts together.

Honestly, Zhang Ye could not understand their concerns either. Why would anyone feel that such an innovative idea like The Voice would be bad? Wasn't that an international joke? It seemed to him that, even if they felt at the proposal stage that the talk show was not be good enough, it would be acceptable. After all, there was no precedent of an entertainment program like a talk show in this world. If they also felt that Do You Remember was not going to be good, that was also acceptable since this world did not have a low-barrier entry variety program for citizens to join and compete in an all-out PK match with other people. But that was not the case for The Voice at all. This program had such mass appeal and the features of the show could be clearly seen too! So why would a bunch of television industry professionals not understand that?

How odd!

Were their standards really that low?

Zhang Ye pondered over this for a very long time before finally coming to a conclusion. In Zhang Ye's previous world, when he was considered an audience member and outsider of the television industry,

he immediately started looking forward to The Voice of China when its trailers began airing. Thinking about it now, it was probably not because his standard was higher than Fu Sihong, Ha Qiqi, and everyone else's, but more likely had to do with the understanding of his previous world's people's understanding of singing programs compared to the people here.

In Zhang Ye's previous world, The Voice was already very famous before it started its broadcast in China. This program was also shown on Dutch and American television where it did very well. When the television station in China purchased the rights to do The Voice, the local audience base was already built up due to foreign influence. Zhang Ye was also one of those people who already knew the format of the program, and as a result, anticipated its airing in China. Another point was that the singers from Zhang Ye's previous world came in the form of good-looking people as well as not good-looking people. Even those top singers, whether they looked good or ugly, were not too different in popularity from each other. Was Han Hong good looking? Was Sun Nan good looking? Was Wang Feng good looking? Was Hu Yanbin good looking? Was Huang Qishan good looking? Was Xiao Huangqi good looking? Was Zhao Chuan good looking? Was Lee Zhongsheng good looking? Some of them had very average looks, some of them were really not too good looking at all, yet they all got very popular based on their talent and vocals, even though there was an element of luck at times too.

However, in this world?

Those A- or B-list singers were basically all good-looking men and women, among whom were scattered some who were not pretty or handsome, but couldn't be considered ugly either and were above average looking. If it really had to be insisted that there were ugly singers, it was also true, but such singers were really few and rare.

Those were the differences between the two worlds!

The perception of singers was different to the people of both worlds!

In this world, whether it be the programs or the media, they had always been advocating that you should have good looks if you wanted to be a celebrity. That was the bottom line before the focus would shift to whether you could sing or not. There was just such an unhealthy tone in the overall environment of the industry. Their understanding of a singer was different and Zhang Ye could understand this deeply, since he had also experienced being judged on his looks in his first interview back at Beijing Radio Station and was deemed unsuitable for the role. But if you thought about it, what was the point of a radio host being so good looking? Shouldn't it be fine as long as he wasn't bad looking? But that was not how they saw it. That was just how their perception in this world was, and thus resulted in the current state of the entertainment industry!

Fu Sihong and the others believed that a talent show had to be judged on looks first and foremost; the contestants' vocals were secondary, so if the proposal stated that the program would only care about the vocals and not the looks, they felt that it was just asking for it to fail since this concept itself was basically challenging the cognitive mindsets of how singing program should be!

But was it really asking to fail?

Would the audience really dismiss it?

Only Zhang Ye knew that this would definitely not be the case. It was just because the industry professionals believed that the audience would not accept it. Yet back in Zhang Ye's previous world, this had already been proven that the audience were accepting of such changes. Not only did they accept it, they even praised and recognized such types of shows. There were many people who specifically liked a show which portrayed the average-looking contestants in a competition since it more closely related to them! Zhang Ye wanted to tell Fu Sihong and the others that the audience was not as fragile and simple-minded as they thought. All those other singing programs were in themselves unhealthy existences in the entertainment industry!

However, whether The Voice would be accepted by the audience in this world was still unknown to Zhang Ye. But Zhang Ye was also an example himself. Didn't he look very ordinary? Wasn't he also not a handsome guy or pretty boy? But look at him now. He could still stand on the national stage and be recognized and loved by many people in the country. That of itself already explained something. The environment and history of this world might have changed, but the hearts of the people remained!

There was silence in the office.

Nobody knew what to say.

Ha Qiqi, Zhang Zuo, and the others were all looking at each other.

This type of program was indeed controversial. If you said it was good? It was too extreme and would break all the rules of a talent show! But if you said it was bad? It sounded like a very innovative way of doing a show by basing it only on the voice, where the coaches would not be to see the contestants. This idea was totally unheard of in all singing programs at television stations all over the world!

Finally, Jiang Yuan spoke. He looked at Zhang Ye for a long time before he said, "In this industry, everyone says that you're bold, daring to do the things that no one else dares even think about. I can say that I've finally seen that boldness for myself today."

But Zhang Ye said, "To be honest, I've never had much courage. The reason why I dared to say that and want to do it is because I have one hundred percent certain that it will work out."

Fu Sihong said in a speechless manner, "Why can you be so sure? You're being too absolute!"

Jiang Yuan looked at Zhang Ye and said, "I've already mentioned to you our expectations when the television station invited you to join us. What we need is a program that will receive high viewership ratings consistently. Although you're the executive director—and we've also agreed that the program production will be fully dictated by you—there is a clear disagreement right now about this proposal, which also shows that there is a problem with it. Why don't I do it this way instead? I will bring a copy of the proposal back to discuss with the other leaders before I give you an answer. But it's for the best that you also prepare another new proposal if The Voice does not pass the management's approval, so then at least we can still have a backup." From the sound of it, it also seemed like he did not have much confidence in the proposal.

Zhang Ye shook his head and said, "There's no need to prepare another proposal. The Voice will not have any problems, that I guarantee. As for the quality of the program, everyone can judge it once it has finished recorded. Director Jiang, although I am a host, I am also a professional program planner and

producer. Whether it be the programs or advertisements that I have done up before, I have never disappointed. You have to believe my most basic judgment as a professional.”

Having listened to all of this, Jiang Yuan could only say, “Alright, I’ll see what I can do.”

Chapter 635 The show is approved!

[collapse]

Jiang Yuan left.

Fu Sihong also went back to his own office.

Ha Qiqi suddenly said, “Teacher Zhang, are you really serious about making this program?”

“Of course I’m serious,” Zhang Ye said in frustration, “Do I look like I’m joking?”

Zhang Zuo proposed an idea, “I have a suggestion, but don’t take it in the wrong way, Teacher Zhang. Actually, we can modify the format of The Voice a little so that it looks to the audience that the gimmick of not seeing the contestants is real, but we will continue doing it the way we would for similar talent shows. We would still invite only the better-looking contestants to join the competition and secretly let the coaches know so that they have some idea of the contestants before choosing them, so that the ones who are chosen are the ones picked for their looks, attractability, and have a good talking point to them. That way, we would still be able to achieve our objectives.”

Wu Yi snapped his fingers and said, “That’s a very good idea!”

However, without even thinking, Zhang Ye immediately said, “When the television station does a program, we’re doing it to catch the hearts of the audience. We do that by leading them step by step into liking our program to achieve our objectives, but leading them in does not mean lying to them. Don’t think that the ways and means you believe are great would definitely be able to lead the audience in a certain direction. They are not fools and you should never look down on the wisdom and judgement of the masses. I should make myself very clear here: the singing programs now, and even the singing industry, are all not developing in a healthy way. My reason for doing this new program is not to make a statement, nor is it to lie to the audience by superficially reforming the industry. What I want to do is to make a program that will topple the traditional singing show and talent shows of the past!”

As their mindsets were too deeply ingrained in traditional thinking, Zhang Ye could not get it through to them even after explaining forever, so he decided to leave it at that and walked back to his office. He still had a lot of work to do, like planning the program trailers, making the designs of the set, and many other things, all of which he wanted to plan in advance. There was no time to waste on nonsense!

When he left, Zhang Zuo asked, “Do you think it’s feasible?”

Ha Qiqi shook her head and said, “I don’t know.”

Another director said, “This program is very dangerous to do.”

Wu Yi sighed and said, “Yeah, it’s too radical of a change, so I suppose it’s really risky as well.”

“But it’s possible that we cannot see what Zhang Ye sees.” Ha Qiqi added, “No matter what, Teacher Zhang is still a specialist at program production, so he’s surely looking at something bigger than we are. If Teacher Zhang can propose such a program and say that it is good, then he surely has his reasons and considerations.”

Zhang Zuo pessimistically said, “Hopefully.”

Ha Qiqi said, “Let’s wait and see how the leaders decide.”

Because this new show also determined the futures and careers of the program team’s staff, they were definitely worried about it and did not want it to be done sloppily.

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At another place.

In a meeting room.

After Jiang Yuan went back to his office, he got his secretary to gather the planning team and related staff for a meeting. Everyone who was there were all veterans of Central TV Department 1 and were all very experienced, having done countless programs between them. They were all considered the core members of Central TV Department 1’s production team.

Jiang Yuan got his secretary to pass out Zhang Ye’s program proposal to each one of them and said, “Take a look. This is the program proposal written up by Zhang Ye. Let’s discuss it.”

Everyone started reading it in detail, and gradually, in succession, their faces formed some sort of startled expression.

“This...”

“What is this nonsense?”

“It’s very innovative, but this is too radical!”

“Other than the vocals, this singing talent show does not consider any other factors? Just what kind of bold person would dare to write up a proposal like that!? This would subvert the entire singing industry and related singing shows!”

“How audacious!”

“Only Zhang Ye would dare to do something like this!”

“The talented are bolder. I think this idea is worth a try.”

“What’s there to try? This is obviously not going to work. It is completely out of line with the market trends and practices. Do you think that just basing the show on vocals alone would attract the viewers? The gimmick of judging a contestant based on just their vocals would be able to prop up the entire talent show? This is not a variety program that would last one or two episodes; it’s a competition that stretches over at least two months. I won’t say that using vocals as an attraction is not innovative, but it is not strong enough to carry the show. The audiences might not be able to accept it either. We know

that just by looking at the other singing shows. The hotly discussed champions and runner-ups always do well in the looks department! That has clearly shown where the audience's taste lie at."

"How the other satellite channels are doing it does not reflect the problems at all. If the idea of only focusing on the vocals of the contestants were conveyed to the audience beforehand, the mindset of the audience would also be different when they watch the show and they might accept Zhang Ye's selling point for the program. But of course, there's no guarantee for that since there isn't any precedent of something like this."

"I don't think it will work."

"I feel that it might just be a thin line between failure and success. As there's no way to predict this based on our experiences without any precedent to fall back on, if there's something that we can learn from and judge upon, then it has to be that regardless of Zhang Ye's character and temper, he really is a very capable person. The programs he handled previously have had no precedent of failure yet and have even gone on to do quite well. So from those examples, I have to admit that Zhang Ye's vision is surely better than most people's."

"That's true. If it were any other program producer who submitted this proposal, I would surely reject it. But because this proposal was written up by Zhang Ye, I am unable to make any judgment on it. Most of us here are professional program producers too, but if we compare the results of the programs that we've all worked on, then our results and qualifications are truly unable to match Zhang Ye's. I've also heard that there are some foreign television stations who have shown interest in the copyrights for Zhang Ye's Talk Show?"

"I've heard about that too. I think those foreigners are really interested in it, but then I don't know if they have approached Zhang Ye regarding the copyrights yet. If he is really able to sell it to them, then this will be a historical first for foreign television stations buying our Chinese television copyrights. We would finally have foreigners approaching us to learn from us! How uplifting! This would also give our Chinese television and variety industry a boost, since we'd finally have a world-class program!"

"But The Voice and Zhang Ye's Talk Show are different. The talk show cuts a figure of being Zhang Ye's creative whim, but singing shows have already been heavily produced and are very well-established in our industry. Now that Zhang Ye is intending to defy the market trends and go against everything that we've known, will it work?"

Everyone here was also having their disagreements, some suggesting to give it a try while others rejected it outright.

Jiang Yuan looked at the program proposal and lowered his head in silence too. His viewpoint was the same as what someone had mentioned just now. If the proposal was submitted by anyone else, he would have rejected it directly without a thought. However, the problem here was that this proposal was submitted by Zhang Ye, who was known as the man who repeatedly created viewership miracles!

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At around 4 PM in the afternoon.

Jiang Yuan returned to the new program's office. He called out, "Little Zhang?"

Hearing that, Zhang Ye came out from his office.

Fu Sihong, Ha Qiqi, and the others were also beside him, knowing that the decision was probably made at the meeting.

Jiang Yuan's first words to Zhang Ye were: "Are you very sure that this program will work out?"

"I am sure. In fact, I guarantee it," Zhang Ye said without any sign of hesitation.

Jiang Yuan nodded and said, "You have been given the go-ahead to do The Voice, but if the average ratings fall below 0.8%, what would you say to that?"

Zhang Ye said, "0.8%?"

Jiang Yuan said, "Yes."

Zhang Ye was amused at this question, so he said, "Then I will pack up and leave."

That was exactly what Jiang Yuan wanted to hear. He said, "Alright then, from today onward, The Voice of China will formally begin its production. I hope that the final product that you all come up with will be something satisfactory."

Zhang Ye laughed, "Just wait and see."

Fu Sihong interrupted, "Director Jiang."

Jiang Yuan stopped him and said, "Don't bother saying anymore. It's been decided."

Thinking how Zhang Ye had already put his job on the line, Fu Sihong also did not say anything more. From his point of view, he believed that Jiang Yuan was also likely to not have too much confidence in this new program.

Jiang Yuan said, "I want you guys to come up with an application documentation later so that I can bring it to Finance and inform them. For the initial funding, I will be setting aside 20 million RMB for your team."

When Zhang Ye heard this, he couldn't accept it. He said, "Director Jiang, 20 million is definitely not enough. In fact, it's far from enough and won't be enough to support this program."

Jiang Yuan said, "I've already pushed very hard for the go-ahead for this program at the meeting earlier. The disagreements over this new program proposal were raised by many people, so you must know that I'm also facing a great deal of pressure."

Zhang Ye said, "20 million is not enough to invite a few proper guest celebrities as coaches, not to mention that we still need a budget for the set, stage facilities, and a live band for the show. Director Jiang, didn't you say earlier that you have plenty of funding for us?"

Jiang Yuan said noncommittally, "That is all I can give for now. If you need additional funding in the future, we'll talk about it again. What I need now is the promotional trailer for the show so that we can release it to the public and get some feedback. If it gets a warm reception, then we can discuss the additional funding."

Only when he said that did Zhang Ye stop talking.

20 million?

It's not too much even if its 200 million!

Forget it, it's better to take it slow. If he were to ask for 200 million from the station now, the whole of Central TV Department 1 would probably vomit blood and treat him as a madman. After all, according to what Zhang Ye knew, the Central TV Department 1 of this world had never ever invested so much funding into a program before. 20 million was already considered to be a large investment into a program. Some of the other Central TV Department 1 programs only had a budget of several million RMB. For some interview programs, if not taking into account the host's salary or not inviting any big shot guests, then even if it aired 4 times a month, it would only have a budget of 1 million, which was really cheap. But variety shows were not the same; those were part of a genre that basically gobbled up money. No matter how much was spent, it was never enough.

Jiang Yuan left.

Zhang Zuo, Ha Qiqi, and the rest were left in a predicament!

Zhang Zuo was feeling a little dizzy. "0.8% for viewership ratings?"

Ha Qiqi also did not look too good. She said, "Even the most outstanding and well-received singing program this year, Do You Remember, only received 0.8% for its highest-rated episode. When it was low, it only got 0.7% or less. To demand of our new program a viewership rating of 0.8% when it's just going to start? And it's even the average rating? Teacher Zhang, weren't you promising to leave too easily earlier?"

If they could not hit the requested viewership ratings, then Zhang Ye would automatically quit?

Even though the team was supposedly led by Fu Sihong, everyone knew that the real leader was actually Zhang Ye. Everything revolved around Zhang Ye's existence. If he went, then the program would be canceled as well. The team's members would all face an uncertain future from here on out.

An average of 0.8%!

There hadn't been any singing program this year that had hit that number yet!

Even if the later episodes of Do You Remember finished airing, the average would surely not hit 0.8%! At most it would be 0.7% or so.

Ha Qiqi said, "Teacher Zhang, you should have made a bargain just now."

Wu Yi also added, "Yeah, a nationwide viewership rating of 0.6% was still possible to work toward, but 0.8% is really too difficult. If they really want a viewership rating of 0.8%, that would mean the program would have to place first in the same time period across the nation, and it's even going to have a large lead over second place! Can we accomplish such a task?"

Everyone was feeling extremely stressed.

Fu Sihong also kept shaking his head.

However, only Zhang Ye looked like he was not bothered by it and even appeared very relaxed. He kept his smile without seeming the least bit worried because he did not feel that a viewership rating of 0.8% was demanding at all. Instead, he even felt that this was low, so low that he nearly laughed at it!

Hur hur!

0.8%?

Can't hit that number?

You guys are insulting me! You're all too looking down on me, Zhang Ye!

If The Voice really gets a viewership rating of 0.8%, then would I still have wasted so much effort to try to do this program? If you used 0.8% and doubled it, that would be more like it! That's the figure that should be used as the estimate and goal. But of course, Zhang Ye would not tell them all this. Because only Zhang Ye knew of the logic defying viewership ratings of The Voice back in his world. Even if he told people that, they would definitely not believe him!

It was not a viewership rating that should be described with a zero point rating! The Voice of his previous world was to be described with a viewership rating that broke past the zero barrier!

Let's wait and see!

When the viewership ratings for The Voice come out, all of you will understand just how expansive the sky is!

First place for the same time period? First place for the entire term of all variety programs—that was what Zhang Ye's expectation for The Voice was!

Chapter 636 Public outcry!

Later that afternoon.

It was time to leave from Central TV.

Fu Sihong had gone home, but Zhang Ye stayed behind and also asked the others to stay as well and called them to a spacious performance studio. This was the studio that Central TV Department 1 had allocated for their new program and was pretty large in area. It was previously being used by a talent show program and the place has not been cleared out yet. There were still some light boxes lying around on the ground and in some corners. In terms of its size, Zhang Ye was quite satisfied with it. A station like Central TV did not have a lack of venues. Compared to those other satellite channels, at which some programs had to share a venue between themselves and two or three other programs, Central TV's standout points were that they had large places, a good policy, as well as many employees.

"I'm afraid that it will be too rushed tomorrow, so I want to delegate some tasks first. It probably won't take up more than 15 minutes of everyone's time." Zhang Ye asked, "Has the green light for the funding been given?"

Ha Qiqi said, "It's been given. We have 20 million."

Zhang Ye nodded, then pointed around the venue and said, "This is where our program will be filmed. The station still takes quite good care of us since they've allocated the largest performance studio to us. I won't do things like asking everyone to shout some team motto or whatever. There's no need for unnecessary stuff like that. Everything still boils down to what we show by our practical actions, and because I'm still unfamiliar with what every one of you here specializes in, I took the initiative to plan out the tasks first. If any one of you is responsible for the job I mention or think that you're up for it, please tell me."

"OK."

"No problem."

"Just give us your instructions, Director Zhang."

Everyone listened intently.

Zhang Ye said, "These tasks relate to the progress of the program's production, so I need everyone to do them well. The first thing is in regard to the website. Our new program will need to have a microsite on the website of Central TV Department 1 or have a standalone website of its own. Its purpose will be promoting and updating the latest news on our program and act as a platform to interact with the public. In the future, there will also be spontaneous polls for audiences to take part in, so I don't think I need to emphasize how important this is. I want two people to be in charge of the content for this and to network with the main Central TV website team to get it up and running."

A female editor said, "Let me handle it, that's my specialty."

A young male editor looked to his left and right before he raised his hand and said, "Count me in too. I was from the department that handled the official website before I came here, so I know quite a few people who I could get help from to code the microsite and prioritize it for us."

Zhang Ye said, "Good, thank you then."

The female and male editors said together at once, "You're welcome."

Zhang Ye continued, "The next thing is in regard to the preparations for the preliminary auditions. Sister Qi, I leave this to you. Please approach the station first for some marketing and promotional resources, like the reservations for a television commercial slot or website advertisement banner position so that we can put out information like the registration contact number and application methods. After that, set aside a time and arrange for the applicants to come in waves for the preliminary auditions. Although the actual audition will be done in the studio and recorded, there is still a need to do a preliminary audition so we can pick out the contestants who fit the vocal requirements of show."

Ha Qiqi responded, "Sure, just leave that to me."

Zhang Ye gave her a heads-up on this and said, "Your task will be the most difficult one, but it's also the most important and critical part of the program. If you need more help, you can allocate more people to your team."

Ha Qiqi laughed and said, "Good, it's good timing since we're expecting more people to join our program team tomorrow."

“Then last but not least, the venue layout and equipment.” Zhang Ye looked at Zhang Zuo and said, “Brother Zhang, I leave this recording studio’s work to you, so please help us to take control of that.”

Assistant Director Zhang Zuo said, “Sure, what requests do you have?”

Zhang Ye said, “How is the quality of the audio equipment of our Central TV Department 1 as well as the studio equipment?”

Zhang Zuo blinked a few times and said, “It’s pretty good. It won’t be any lousier than the other satellite channel’s equipment at least. Most of what we have are professional grade hardware, with some of it being internationally top-tier equipment. They were fitted just last year, but some others are a little older, though still considered higher-end equipment in the country. Overall, it’s not too shabby.”

When Zhang Ye heard that, he shook his head, “That’s not going to cut it. The stage for our new program depends greatly on the audio quality, so even if just some of it is not too bad, that means it’s still not good enough. If that’s the case, then it would mean our setup is just so-so. My principles when it comes to making a program is to either make it the best in the industry or not do it at all. That’s why, when it comes to the equipment and setup, we need it to be the very best. I won’t accept any shortcomings, especially in the area of audio quality. If Central TV has the necessary hardware to support our requirements, then we will borrow them. If not then we will have to find something we can rent, but if they aren’t even available for rent, then we will buy them!”

Zhang Zuo received a fright from this. “Buy it ourselves?”

Ha Qiqi also said nervously, “But we don’t have enough budget to buy them.”

Zhang Ye, who was also not too familiar with the market price, asked, “How much do we need?”

“You might not be aware of it.” Zhang Zuo said, “If you really intend to get brand new, top-tier equipment, then the whole setup would cost over 10 million, minimum. That’s already a very conservative estimate, and would include having already borrowed some items from the station. The kind of setup you’re aiming for would burn a big hole in our pockets, so if you want something that is the very, very best, it could amount to several tens of millions. On top of that, there’s also the troublesome portion of the technicalities. Since it would be a totally new setup, our staff would still need some time to pick up and learn how to operate it. With the 20 million in funding from our station, it’s...”

Zhang Ye frowned. Even with the scenario of the program team borrowing most of the top-tier equipment from the station, it would still cost over 10 million??

It was too expensive!

It was too damn expensive!

But Zhang Ye still said firmly, “Try to borrow first. If that doesn’t work out, buy them!”

Zhang Zuo said, “Then wouldn’t we have no money left over to do other things?”

Zhang Ye said, “The equipment must be ready before everything else, so the pressure will be on your side. No matter what it takes, the props and equipment must be the best. Don’t you all worry about the funding, I will think of a way. Let me handle whatever that needs to be handled on the backend.”

'OK, I understand.' Zhang Zuo was also turning steadfast now that Zhang Ye had given his word to back them up. He did not have to bother about anything else anymore, so he said, "I will communicate with the Equipment Department tonight and write a list of items we require. If Central TV does not have them, I'll get their purchasing manager to help quote a figure."

Zhang Ye nodded and said, "Good, then that's about it. Since the tasks have been allocated, everyone, please go home and rest well. Starting tomorrow, we will have a tough battle to fight."

Wu Yi was a little surprised. He said, "Director Zhang."

"Yes?" Zhang Ye was still quite unused to being addressed in that way.

Wu Yi asked, "Is that all for the tasks? What about the promotional copy..."

Zhang Ye said, "Oh, I will handle that."

Wu Yi said in surprise, "The invitation for the coaches to join the program..."

Zhang Ye said, "I will contact them."

Wu Yi was becoming even more surprised now. So he said, "Then the advertising copy..."

Zhang Ye said, "When the website is ready, I will write it."

Wu Yi said, "Then would you also possibly be handling the participating and title sponsors..."

Zhang Ye said, "Leave that to me as well."

"Ah?" Ha Qiqi looking a little embarrassed, said, "How can you handle all that by yourself? Those tasks are too broad. Why don't you delegate some to me. I still have the capacity to handle a little more."

The other members of the program team also scrambled to offer their help to Zhang Ye.

However, Zhang Ye waved them off and said, "There's no need for that, we'll talk about it again."

For some of the more important and trickier to handle tasks, Zhang Ye decided that he would take them on himself. Even though he was already an executive director, he did not leave all the work to others. Why would he let others do all the dirty work while he sat in the office sipping tea and relaxing? If he did that, the others would not be convinced by him. So Zhang Ye decided that he would get down to work as well. Besides, he was not the type who could sit around doing nothing and not feel bored. With The Voice of China about to make its imminent premiere, he was also itching to do as much as he could. Even if he were forced to rest, he couldn't do it since he was well known for being a workaholic!

The meeting ended.

Most of the team's staff left work, while some voluntarily stayed behind to clock some overtime, for instance the assistant directors, Zhang Zuo and Ha Qiqi. Since Zhang Ye was already very clear with his instructions, they couldn't slack off either. A viewership rating of 0.8% was too great a goal. The pressure they were facing was enormous, so they knew that they had to try their very best this time!

Zhang Ye did not work overtime because Chenchen was still with him at the television station. He didn't mind working late or staying behind in the office, but Chenchen couldn't, so after he prepared a simple advertising copy for the preliminary auditions for Ha Qiqi, he took Chenchen home for dinner.

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That night.

The official website of Central TV Department 1 started running a promotional ad for a new program.

“Central TV Department 1 joins hands with Zhang Ye. Auditions for a large-scale singing talent show are beginning!”

Below the title was an introduction for the program: Regardless of looks, height, age, or occupation, as long as you're blessed with a good voice and hold a strong passion for music, come and register for the auditions immediately. What are you still waiting for?

Registration Hotline 1: 400-8XXXXXXX.

Registration Hotline 2: 400-8XXXXXXX.

Liaison: The Voice of China Program Team.

Actually, the ad was placed in a spot that wasn't too good. After all, this wasn't some television commercial. However, it was exactly this inconspicuous program ad that had created a stir online. Just one minute after the ad was posted, already a new thread had been created with an accompanying screenshot!

“Heavens! Zhang Ye has a new program!”

“Oh my god! That's too fast!”

“Yeah, didn't Zhang Ye just started work at Central TV Department 1 today? How could he already have news of a new program in the evening when he only started work in the morning? What kind of efficiency is that! Teacher Zhang is indeed the celebrated 'fastest draw' in the industry. Whether it's in producing programs or advertisements, there's only one way to describe it—fast!”

“But why is it a singing talent show?”

“Zhang Ye is making yet another singing program?”

“Dammit, I was still predicting that he would do a reality show! How did it turn into a singing talent show? Why did it turn out to be a singing talent show? It's a totally different genre from what I had expected!”

“The Voice of China? What a terrible name!”

“F**k, could this really be Zhang Ye's new program?”

As the thread heated up, countless netizens rushed over to take a look!

This included many television industry insiders as well! They were all very concerned about this topic.

A verified industry insider from Beihe Provincial Television Station said: “Regardless of looks? Regardless of occupation? Regardless of age? Can a talent show be done in such a way? What’s the selling point of the program then? At first glance, it feels like this is a very innovative idea, but if this is a talent show, then the program would barely be watched by anyone. At most, it would be a program that would gain a cult following. I believe the viewer ratings won’t pass 0.4%!”

Another industry insider also said: “To be honest, I’m quite disappointed at this. Having seen Zhang Ye’s previously proposed program Do You Remember, I ended up having great expectations for his new program to be another innovative work just like his Zhang Ye’s Talk Show and Do You Remember, but what is the meaning of The Voice of China? Regardless of looks and age? That has to be some sort of a gimmick, right? It’s impossible that a television station would dare to go against the market trends and practices like this. This program will surely end up just like any other traditional singing talent show that is no different from the others, therefore I cannot understand why Zhang Ye would still jump into such a genre when such programs are so abundantly broadcast with up to four or five such shows per month. Isn’t the audience already getting sick of them?”

A third industry insider said: “I don’t get it either. For someone who is able to create such an innovative show like Do You Remember, why did Zhang Ye not choose to take another path and instead walk a road that is packed with countless other competitors? If this were the case, then why did he sell Do You Remember back then and not leave it for himself instead?”

Someone raised a doubt: “Based on Zhang Ye’s experience, it’s impossible that he did not take that into consideration. Could it be just as they had advertised it, that the singing program will only be focused on vocals alone?”

“That’s quite impossible!”

“Yeah, no one would dare to do such a thing.”

“If it were really a talent show that only focuses on vocals alone, who would want to watch such a show? That would be worse than the current singing programs that we have, wouldn’t it?”

The television industry insiders were generally quite pessimistic about the chances of this new program, similar to how those veterans at Central TV Department 1 felt earlier.

The netizens’ reactions were much more diverse. Zhang Ye’s hardcore fans were supporting the new show without any hesitation.

“Supporting Teacher Zhang!”

“It won’t go wrong if it’s Zhang Ye’s production!”

“Haha, looking forward to Teacher Zhang’s new show!”

“Experience tells us not to doubt Teacher Zhang’s decision no matter what. Otherwise, once the dust clears, you’ll find that your face has become swollen!”

“Right, although I also do not understand where the profoundness of The Voice of China lies at, I will still support Teacher Zhang unconditionally. There’s nothing else to say except to tune in to the program on

time. Teacher Zhang's show will definitely be a good watch. He has never disappointed us before in the past, present, and will not disappoint us in the future either!"

"Well said!"

"Zhang Ye's fan club has gathered!"

"Let's help Teacher Zhang promote and forward it!"

However, there were also other netizens who were not optimistic about it.

"A talent show that only focus on vocals? That won't get much of an audience at all!"

"That's right. If there's someone who looks terribly ugly with a height of 1.4 meters, even if he sings really well, no one could like him, right? Who wants to look at someone like that? If I watch that, I want it to be a pretty lady!"

"Agreed. Just listening to the vocals is not too reliable, right?"

"Although I would like to agree that a singer should have good vocals as a main attraction, looks are still very important. They are public personalities no matter what, so they need to look friendly to others at the very least, isn't that true?"

"Is Zhang Ye intending to undermine the traditional singing talent show genre?"

"I agree with what the industry insider said earlier. It's definitely a gimmick that they're claiming that only the voice will be used to judge the contestants. It's just a bluff that's being used to confuse everyone. The show will still be carried out in the old way."

"Then there's even less reason to watch it."

"Yeah, there are too many singing talent shows these days!"

"What is Zhang Ye trying to do? What is Central TV Department 1 doing?"

"Zhang Ye is indeed Zhang Ye! The way he does things has always left everyone unable to understand why he does them that way!"

Just a tiny banner ad on the Central TV website had created such a big reaction from so many people on the internet. It was probably only Zhang Ye who could invoke such a reaction, as that guy's name itself already represented controversy. No matter how famous he was or how much he had achieved, just his personality that dared to do what no one else dared to was enough to put him in the same breath as "controversy." Nothing could be done about this. After all, this was how the entertainment industry worked!

Chapter 637 Pulling for Advertising Sponsorships!

The next day.

In the morning.

"Zhang Ye, wake up." Chenchen pushed him.

Zhang Ye rolled over and said drowsily, "Don't disturb me."

Chenchen pushed harder and said, "Zhang Ye, get up. Zhang Ye, get up."

Chenchen was like a little alarm clock and proved to be more effective than any other alarm clock. Zhang Ye was so affected that he could not sleep anymore and helplessly got out of the bed while yawning away. He then went out to buy breakfast for Chenchen without even washing his face.

At a stall selling breakfast outside the district.

Many people were sitting in the open air area and enjoying their breakfast.

"Yo, Little Zhang."

"Teacher Zhang, you're awake?"

"Good morning, Teacher Zhang."

"Brother Zhang, you're here for breakfast?"

The old neighbors and the vendor of the breakfast stall greeted Zhang Ye in the way they always did.

Some of the people who did not live around here or were just passing by and having breakfast here for the first time were clearly clueless about what was going on. When they saw Zhang Ye's sloppy image walking leisurely toward them, some of them nearly peed their pants from being shocked and dumbfounded. F**k, wasn't that Zhang Ye! They could even bump into a B-list celebrity while having breakfast? Their first reaction was that they must have seen something wrong. How could a B-list celebrity dress so sloppily and come out onto the streets! Besides, who had ever encountered such a big shot celebrity eating their breakfast at such a dirty, everyday stall? Were they shooting a TV drama or a movie? But why were there no director or cameras to be seen anywhere? There were all kinds of thoughts.

Zhang Ye greeted the old neighbors and then said to the vendor, "I'll have three fried dough sticks and two bowls of tofu pudding. Carryout." Then he took a seat listlessly.

At this moment, a reporter who was lying in ambush at a nearby spot came running out towards him. Holding out a recording pen, he interviewed him, saying, "Teacher Zhang, I'm from Entertainment Weekly Magazine."

Zhang Ye said as he fought his droopy eyelids, "Oh, hello."

The reporter said, "I heard that after you joined Central TV Department 1, the new program The Voice of China is already undergoing production preparations, but many industry insiders and audience members do not seem to acknowledge it. They've raised many doubts and feel that it would be a mistake to subvert the concept of the talent shows and that it would conflict with the market trends."

Zhang Ye said, "Oh."

The reporter immediately asked, "What is your view on that?"

Zhang Ye said, "Nothing much."

The reporter exclaimed, "Are you confident about your new program?"

"—Passable." Zhang Ye said.

The reporter was shocked and said, "Ah? What do you mean by passable? Are you not confident about it at all?"

"—So-so," Zhang Ye said.

That reporter was puzzled. This shouldn't be Zhang Ye's style. Shouldn't he be more outraged? Wasn't he supposed to come up with a poem or two to scold those doubters? Wasn't he supposed to give a strong and spirited comeback at those people? What the heck was with this attitude? Why was he so dispirited today? This was not his style at all! As an entertainment reporter, he was not used to Zhang Ye's current indifferent attitude. After a barrage of questions, Zhang Ye was answering like he was still half-asleep and had absolutely no fighting spirit.

Doubts?

Criticism?

Zhang Ye was already numb to all of these. Not only him, as long as they were in the entertainment industry, no one could escape from it. Wasn't Zhang Yuanqi famous as well? Wasn't she reputable? Wasn't she popular? Those who scolded her would still scold her every day and those who doubted her would still continue to doubt her, let alone Zhang Ye. He was more interested in getting his breakfast and going back to sleep awhile longer before heading to work.

.....

Later in the morning.

At Central TV.

When Zhang Ye led Chenchen into the office, they heard someone speaking in a loud voice.

Fu Sihong said, "We are spending all of the 20 million on this?"

Zhang Zuo grunted, "Uh."

Fu Sihong asked, "Was it even necessary to use all of that 20 million to purchase the equipment?"

Zhang Zuo replied, "It was instructed by Director Zhang."

Zhang Ye also joined in and asked, "Brother Fu, what's the matter?"

When Fu Sihong saw Zhang Ye, he had a face full of displeasure. Then he said, "Teacher Zhang, you might be in charge of the program production but for such a big matter, but shouldn't you at least discuss it with me beforehand? If all of the 20 million was going to be spent on equipment for the set, then what about the other expenses? How would we be able to invite the coaches? How can we pay for the contestants' transport, food, and accommodation? And as for all other miscellaneous expenses, how will we deal with those? Your decision this time was too rash!"

Zhang Ye said, "Yesterday, I wanted to meet with you on this but you'd already left, so I intended to tell you about it this morning. We can't scrimp on what's essential and must spend on what's necessary. We cannot afford to be indecisive on such things as this is also a responsibility for the program and audience."

Fu Sihong retorted with a question, "How do we solve the lack of funding then?"

Zhang Ye said, "I'm preparing to apply for more funding from Director Jiang."

Jiang Yuan happened to be just outside the office and heard a little of their conversation, so he asked, "What do you want to apply from me?" It was a habit of his to make the rounds at the respective program teams every day before he started work.

When Fu Sihong saw that the leader had arrived, he immediately reported to him about the situation.

After hearing about the situation, Jiang Yuan was also very shocked. He said, "You're going to spend 20 million on purchasing the equipment for the stage's set?"

Zhang Ye nodded and said, "Yes."

"Is there really such a need?" Jiang Yuan could not understand his motivation.

Zhang Ye said, "This is a must if we want to guarantee a high viewer rating. We can't save on this amount of money because what we're selling is the quality of vocals."

Jiang Yuan said, "We already have the basic equipment in the station, are they really so different from those top-tier equipment? Most people would probably not be able to differentiate it, right?"

Zhang Ye shook his head and said, "This was something I did some research into last night. During the television broadcast transmission, if the equipment used is different, the quality and performance of the sound and other aspects would not be as good. That is also the reason why those top-tier equipment are so expensive. Director Jiang, you have to trust me on this and leave the production of the program to me. Give me a little more funding for the program and I will surely return the trust with a program that exceeds all expectation in terms of the viewership ratings."

Jiang Yuan immediately said, "You've spent 20 million just like that, so no matter how much more is given to you, it won't be enough!"

Zhang Ye shouted, "But you can't just make a horse constantly run without feeding it. The station has set a 0.8% viewership rating as a target. Everyone knows that this number will be difficult to hit, but if we want to reach this target, then we must invest proportionately. In fact, the amount invested now will be returned by multiple times that in the future. But if the investment now is discounted, then the future viewership ratings will also be discounted."

Jiang Yuan spoke, "The details of the new program and auditions were already released yesterday. You should have seen the response online. Other than your fans, everyone else did not have high expectations for this program. The overall market response was also quite negative. I know that the program is still in pre-production and the final product is not out yet, so no one knows how it will turn out. But the reaction of the audience and their expectations are also a kind of feedback, so me

approving more funding to you really puts me in a very difficult situation. I'm unable to make the decision on my own."

Zhang Ye wasn't too happy either. Oh, before he came here, he was promised to be given full control with complete support and extensive funding. But when he was ready to produce the program, he was given all sorts of excuses? Why was it so difficult just to get some things done!

He knew that Central TV had its advantage in that it had a huge amount of resources. But similarly, it also had its disadvantage: the traditional thinking of the organization. They always sought stability in their projects and were afraid of bearing responsibility. With such a culture, it would be difficult to do anything and things would surely get delayed!

Fu Sihong asked, "How much do you still need? You have to at least give us an estimation."

Zhang Ye honestly said, "At least 60 million more."

Jiang Yuan immediately responded, "That's impossible. Even if the response from the audience is good, the station will still not grant 80 million RMB in production fees. Do you know the total budgeted production expenses for this year's Central TV Department 1's programs? So how can just you alone take up so much of it just like that? Unless you can sell the title of the program and get the money ahead of the broadcast, then with advertisement revenue injected, the funding you require will be met. But these days, singing programs are saturating the market, thus leading to a market downturn. In the eyes of those companies, it would not be wise to buy a title. For other similarly performing singing talent shows with good viewership ratings, the title money can only fetch around 20 million RMB or so, while many others can only price their titles like a cabbage at the market and sell it for less than 10 million RMB with the advertising rights fee even less. That is the current situation of the market, so even if you manage to land a 20 million title sponsorship, it is still not close to your requested amount and would not be enough for you to use."

10 or 20 million?

The title sponsorships of this world were that low?

That might also be true. If there were no good programs and with variety programs continuing to be in a downturn while the market shrank and the audience base dispersed, the title sponsorship rights would also naturally decline in value.

But what if there was a good program? What if there was a television program that could sweep all the other programs off their feet in the variety world? Then the title sponsorship would definitely not be something that was worth just tens of millions! Zhang Ye believed, no, to be accurate, he knew that The Voice would be a world-class program which defied all logic. That was why he had high expectations of the title sponsorship and already had designs on this large piece of the pie.

Zhang Ye immediately said, "Director Jiang, so what you mean is that the title sponsorship can directly be injected into the program team's funding and be allocated freely by me?"

Jiang Yuan looked at him and said, "Your program hasn't even been finalized yet, so how could you find any sponsors?"

Fu Sihong looked at Zhang Ye as though he were a layman and said, "Normally, we would have to at least confirm the core team and guests for the television program before we contact the sponsors and advertisers. Right now, we only have a program plan and the coaches have also not been decided yet, so which company would dare buy the title sponsorship? That would be too hasty. Besides, if they bought the title sponsorship at this point, the price would also not be very high. At most it would work out to a base price."

Zhang Ye probed, "But it will be our funding, right?"

Jiang Yuan said, "Yes, as long as you can sell it, I can decide to give you the full sum of the title sponsorship. But as for the fees other than the title sponsorship, like the advertising rights fees, all of those must go to Central TV Department 1. You can't touch it, and neither can I."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Alright then."

That's just what he wanted to hear.

If you aren't going to be supportive? Then I will think of a way by myself!

At this moment, Zhang Ye felt that it was time to work on his eloquence. The amount of money he needed to bring in would be dependent on how well he used his mouth. If he could really restore that world-renowned program, The Voice, from his previous world back as it was, and do it well, he definitely couldn't skimp on the production costs. Otherwise, he would be better off not doing it at all!

Chapter 638 Would you believe it?

Day.

The leader left.

The program team's office of The Voice was filled with whisperings.

"Teacher Zhang is really eyeing the title sponsorship?"

"But it hasn't even started production yet. Where's he going to get that from?"

"Even if he could get some company to sponsor it, it wouldn't be much. It's definitely not going to be enough for Teacher Zhang's budget, so what's he going to do? The remaining money that we have is not even enough to sign a few B-list celebrities as the program's coaches, right?"

"The station is also to blame. Why don't they just give us a little more?"

"Actually, 20 million is already a lot. If not for the station giving us the green light, just look at the other programs' production costs, they're not even close to 10 million, right? It's just because Teacher Zhang's ideal program requires too much money. I wonder what kind of coaches Teacher Zhang is intending to invite when he said that he wanted 80 million in total production money? Could he be thinking of getting some Heavenly Kings and Queens to be the judges and coaches? Being able to sign those S-list celebrities....It would be difficult to invite them even if we had a lot of money, isn't that so?"

"We definitely won't understand what Director Zhang is thinking."

"Teacher Zhang is really trying too hard to chase perfection."

“I just hope that the program will become popular, or else the money we spend will really all be lost.”

“Ai, I guess we can only leave it to Zhang Ye from here.”

Ha Qiqi, Zhang Zuo, and the others were still relatively calm in this situation; in contrast the other editors and writers were unable to sit still any longer.

.....

In the executive director’s office.

Little Wang came in and asked, “Were you looking for me?”

Chenchen grabbed Zhang Ye’s cell phone and went to the sofa to play some games. Zhang Ye said to Little Wang, “Yes, Little Wang. Help me to compile a list of big companies that we can contact, preferably those enterprise- or corporation-level companies, like the ones that sell herbal tea or milk. If you don’t have their information, find the relevant Central TV department to request for a copy. I need to contact some of them regarding the title sponsorship matter, so please hurry on that.”

Little Wang responded, “Sure.”

About 20 minutes later, the list of companies and contact numbers was ready.

Zhang Ye browsed through the company names but as he was still quite unfamiliar with the companies of this world, he did not know which one was better, so he decided to just give them all a call.

“Hello, is this Daily Milk?”

“Yes.”

“I’m calling from Central TV Department 1’s The Voice of China. This is the executive director of the program team speaking.”

“Oh?”

“We are currently preparing a new, large-scale singing talent show and the exclusive title sponsorship is still available, so I would like to ask if your company is interested. I can tell you more about our show....”

“Sorry, we are currently not looking for any opportunities in this area.”

“Alright then, thank you.”

“If we are interested, we will contact you again.”

“OK.”

Then he made the next call.

This time, Zhang Ye wised up. He began to speak persuasively with charm.

“Hello, is this Almond Tea?”

“Yes, and you?”

“I am Zhang Ye from Central TV Station.”

“Ah? You’re Zhang Ye? Which Zhang Ye?”

“I should be the Zhang Ye that you’re thinking about.”

“Aiyo, why did you call us for?”

“Our new program has just started production on our new program. It’s going to be on Central TV Department 1’s Thursday evening slot, but the title sponsorship has not been confirmed yet. Although the competition between the corporations is getting quite heated, we are still not too satisfied with them as the product’s image does not mirror our program’s image. That is why someone recommended your company to us. And since I’m also a frequent customer of your product and find it quite delicious, I called to ask if your company would be interested.”

“Oh, I understand. Please wait a moment, I will check with my leader.”

“OK.”

“...Sorry to have kept you waiting, Teacher Zhang. Our leader has informed me that our company has just taken an advertising deal with Central TV Department 1’s Friday drama slot. We don’t intend to do any advertising during a singing program for now since the market for variety programs isn’t too good currently.”

“Oh, what a shame then.”

He made a continuous seven or eight calls.

Zhang Ye only had one strategy, and that was to first tell them where he was calling from, then with a flurry of words, he would persuade them with praises first, such as saying how he felt that their company was the one who among others was the best or telling them how this was a once in a lifetime opportunity that had arrived at their doorsteps and that they should really grab at the chance or else live to regret it. In any case, he just tried to sell them the title sponsorship using praises and talk of wasted opportunities.

However, not one of them responded positively!

When they heard that it was a variety program, everyone rejected his offer!

In the end, when Zhang Ye got tired of making calls, he gulped down a few glasses of water. He was quite angry at this outcome, thinking of what the hell was going on. Did anyone even know what sort of a program this was? This was The Voice! The reputable and famous program worldwide that was called The Voice! Back in Zhang Ye’s previous world, the title sponsorship for The Voice was a sky-high figure which did not even need anyone to go around begging others to buy it. Without stepping out of the television station’s door, the advertisers would make their interest known and try to outbid each other for the rights to the title sponsorship! But now? Zhang Ye’s mouth was already worn out from all those calls but none of the companies were interested in buying the title sponsorship. Some of these companies even assumed Zhang Ye to be a scammer and hung up on the phone immediately. That made Zhang Ye not know whether to laugh or cry!

You fail to see the great product!

You people really don’t consider the steamed bun stuffed with sweetened bean paste to be food!

A program like The Voice that had conquered people's hearts all around the world was now in such a sorry state? But that was not surprising at all since there was no precedent of a program like this in this world. It wasn't his fault that the values of this world's singing programs were totally different from his previous world! The emergence of a new product was always going to face doubt and resistance since no one understood it well enough!

But what could be done now?

Sell it for cheap? That's not possible!

Even if everyone did not know the great value of being the title sponsor to The Voice, it did not mean that it had no value. Even if he had to hold it in his hands, Zhang Ye would not consider selling it for cheap. This would be disrespecting the hard work of his predecessors. But if he had to sell it for cheap, he would sell it to someone he knew.

Someone he knew?

Oh, right!

Zhang Ye suddenly thought of a person. Wu Mo! Now that was really someone he knew well, what with Wu Mo being Wu Zeqing's nephew as well as the CEO of the Brain Gold company!

Zhang Ye's eyes lit up as he immediately grabbed his phone back from Chenchen, saying, "Stop playing."

Chenchen would not have any of it and said, "Zhang Ye, give it back."

"Uncle has some serious work to do now." Zhang Ye scrolled to Wu Mo's contact in his contacts and gave him a call.

Du du du. It only took three rings before Wu Mo's spirited voice came from the other end: "Hahaha, Brother Zhang! My benefactor's has called!"

Zhang Ye laughed and said: "CEO Wu, what are you busy with?"

Wu Mo said happily: "Nothing, I'm just lazing around at home."

"Whoa, you're that free? That's good then. Let's go out for a drink, I have something that I need to discuss with you." As Zhang Ye was considerably close to him, it was also easy for him to talk to Wu Mo.

Wu Mo did not hesitate and said: "Sure, I'll pick you up."

Zhang Ye said: "But you're a tycoon worth billions. How would that be suitable?"

Wu Mo said, "Brother Zhang, aren't you making me feel disgraceful now? Without your endorsement and advertisement, would your brother be here today? I will go pick you up, that is a must. It has been a while since we've met and I also intended to go look for you anyway!"

"Fine then. So shall we meet at the entrance of Central TV Tower?" Zhang Ye asked.

"Oh, I just remembered. You've gone to work at Central TV now. Sure then, I'll be there in twenty minutes." Wu Mo ended the call after he said that.

When Zhang Ye put down his cell phone, he was already preparing his speech for later. He should have really thought of Wu Mo earlier. Ever since that viral advertisement, Brain Gold's sales figures had risen like it was attached to the top of a launched rocket. It went from being an enterprise on the verge of bankruptcy to becoming the market leader of health products. It was rumored that the management of Wu Mo's company had an internal target to be listed at the end of two years. With the business developing at such a rapid pace, Wu Mo's net worth was now staggering, though Zhang Ye did not know what the exact figure was. If Wu Mo bought the title sponsorship, it would first solve Zhang Ye's pressing problems of getting additional funding, and second, ensure that the benefits of the deal would not be given to any other outsiders. It would allow Brain Gold to ride on the coattails of The Voice's imminent rise and certainly allow its sales to be increased several fold more. As Wu Zeqing's unpublicized boyfriend, there was no reason not to take care and look out for her nephew.

After calming Chenchen down, Zhang Ye got Ha Qiqi to help him look after her and went out to meet with Wu Mo.

.....

Underneath the tower.

The two of them met up.

"Brother Zhang."

"CEO Wu, it looks like you've been enjoying life?"

"Hai, I've been eating too much lately."

"Come, let's get in the car to talk."

"Sure, let's find a coffee house."

After getting into Wu Mo's new luxury car he had swapped to recently, they drove off.

Wu Mo spoke as he drove, "What did you want to tell me about?"

"Well, let me be direct with you then." Zhang Ye laughed a little and continued, "I don't know how familiar you are with the title sponsorship and related advertising opportunities on television programs."

Wu Mo blinked and said, "Title sponsorship? How could I not know about that? Didn't the success of our Brain Gold product happen all because of the extensive advertising campaign?"

Zhang Ye said, "Then it will be easier to explain."

Wu Mo heartily asked, "What about it? Your new program is seeking a title sponsor? Then that won't be a problem at all. How much is it? I just need a word from you. My Brother Zhang's program definitely won't go wrong!"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Don't promise me too soon. I suggest you listen to what I have to say first. Yes, I am thinking of roping you in to join as the title sponsor, but my program's title sponsorship won't be sold for anything less than 100 million RMB."

Screeeech!

The car came to a screeching halt by the side of the road!

Wu Mo asked dumbfounded, "What? Please say again?"

Zhang Ye cleared his throat and said, "100 million."

Wu Mo was nearly close to tears when he spoke, "Brother Zhang, I'm not well educated, so don't try to fool me. But what sort of program are you producing? Even if it's an advertisement during News Simulcast, it shouldn't cost 100 million, right? I think I saw some news last night about the program that you're doing for Central TV Department 1. It's a singing program? I didn't remember incorrectly, right?"

Zhang Ye nodded and remarked, "You're right."

Wu Mo said, "But the market for singing programs is in a downturn at the moment, isn't it? As far as I know, the exclusive title sponsorships are generally in the range of 10 to 20 million RMB at most. But of course, I know that your program will surely be different from theirs. They have got nothing on you, so I think that 30 million RMB should already be a ballpark figure."

Zhang Ye shook his head and said, "That's far from it."

Wu Mo was still extremely trusting of Zhang Ye, so he stated, "I'm sure you wouldn't say that without a reason. Why don't you tell me what the situation is like instead?"

Zhang Ye explained, "I won't touch on the program's technicalities and the market trend issues for now since even industry insiders do not seem to grasp that fully, let alone you. But what I can tell you right now is that this program that no one has any expectations of will gain a viewership rating that you cannot even begin to imagine. If you become the title sponsor of this program, I can assure you that, even with 200 million, you would not be making a loss!"

Wu Mo asked, "What sort of a viewership rating are we talking about?"

Zhang Ye said, "Think big."

Wu Mo said, "0.9%?"

Zhang Ye said, "Even bigger."

Wu Mo said, "1.3%?"

Zhang Ye said, "You can up that a bit more."

After holding it in for a long time, Wu Mo daringly said, "Could it be 1.6%?"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "If I told you that the figure of 1.6% is just for the start, would you believe it?"

Chapter 639 The Voice's Astronomical Title Sponsorship Fee!

[collapse]

Ah?

For a start?

The 1.6% viewership ratings is just the starting figure?

Wu Mo was stunned in astonishment, "How can a singing talent show program have that high of a viewership rating? In the past two years alone, I believe that none of them has garnered more than 1% of the viewership ratings before?"

Zhang Ye shrugged and said, "The key here is that my program has the potential to have such a high viewership rating. What you should be aware of here is that if a program can hit 1.6% and above, it will generate a different effect and discussion for its advertisers. Compared to those programs with only 0.5%, it is definitely not an effect that can be combined by stacking them together, but something that is exponentially better. So if we calculate it this way, based on three singing programs that have viewership ratings of 0.5% each, their total title sponsorship fees should be around the region of about 50 million RMB. With that, even if I were to double the final figure, I don't think I'm asking for too much, am I?"

Wu Mo nodded and said, "If you calculate it that way, then it's really not a lot, but..."

Zhang Ye did not wait for him to finish, but added on, "The problem right now is that the program has not even started airing yet, so there're no viewership ratings or market response data available. Even if I were to persuade you with all that I have, it is still only my words and perspective that you can take. Other people might perceive what I say to them as boasting or touting my own program's potential, so choose not to believe me. That's why it is useless for me to talk too much with them. If they don't wish to believe me, they will not believe me."

This was also the current embarrassing state of Zhang Ye and The Voice. If others did not believe him or chose not to buy the title sponsorship, what could he do about it? He couldn't possibly hold it and just wait for the program to start broadcasting first, right? But without the title sponsorship fee, how would he be able to produce the program? There was no way it would make it to broadcasting, so this was a dead-end situation. Everything depended on this.

Wu Mo was silent.

Zhang Ye smiled and stated, "But CEO Wu, you should know what kind of a person I am. When it comes my work, I never boast about what I can achieve. If I claim that I can make the program hit that viewership rating, then I can definitely do so and it won't get any lower than that, only higher. Today's not the first day you've known me. We've even worked together for some time now, so whether or not there's any qualifications to my claims, I'm sure you know better than anyone."

Wu Mo agreed, "We did more than just work together. Everyone outside says that I had the vision and luck to have met Zhang Ye and was so brave to have used that brainwashing advertisement. But only myself and some of my company's internal staff know that I didn't have the courage or vision they claimed. If it were not for you assuring me at that time that this advertisement would surely save my company, if not for your constant persuasion to force me to use it and even offering to return the endorsement fees if it failed, then I wouldn't be here today enjoying the success of the Brain Gold product. That was why when a few people suggested in a recent company meeting to change the Brain Gold advertisement after it ran for some time, I only responded to them with this: 'Zhang Ye has said before that the Brain Gold advertisement could be used for another 10 years without change. When it comes to advertisements, I only believe in Zhang Ye and no one else!'"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Thank you."

Wu Mo glanced at him and asked, "Can I believe in you as well this time?"

Zhang Ye explained, "You can rest assured. The core of the program is the voice, to allow singers to return to their basics in the music industry—"

Wu Mo said, "Don't explain to me the technicalities of the program. Just give me your word."

Zhang Ye pondered for a moment before saying firmly, "You can fully put your trust in me. On this matter, I would never cheat you. Even if I were to cheat someone else, I would not do it to you." He was speaking the truth, as after all, if he cheated Wu Zeqing's nephew, his girlfriend would surely come looking for him. "I will also be honest with you here because we're friends. The reason that the title sponsorship fee costs 100 million RMB is because our program team requires the money urgently to start production while Central TV is being very conservative with the budget and did not approve of our request to increase the funding. It ended up with me having to find my own ways to get more production budget. If we did not lack any money, even if you offered us 50 million for the title sponsorship fee right now, I would not say anything about it. Of course, I'll add that if you really buy it from us at 100 million, this money would definitely still be worth it. With more money, we can increase the quality of the program and the viewership ratings will also be better, which would also serve your advertising much better too. On top of that, your company will surely claim this year's label of title sponsorship king, so that would benefit your group in terms of the advertising effect too."

Having listened to everything, Wu Mo smiled and acknowledged, "Alright then, I will listen to you on the matters of advertising. Not only are you my spokesman for the Brain Gold advertisement, you're also our company's advertising planner and consultant. If it's 100 million, so be it! When can we sign the contract? Why don't you go get it ready and I will sign it anytime!"

Seeing him agree so readily, Zhang Ye began to feel a little embarrassed. He said, "Why don't you think about it some more first?"

Wu Mo gave a wave of his hands and said, "There's no need to consider. To be honest, the money that the company has now was only earned because of your advertisement campaign. If I think of it that way, I don't feel any pinch at all no matter how much you want us to invest."

Zhang Ye smiled cheerfully and stated, "In a month's time, not only will you not feel the pinch, you'll feel a cramp from your mouth instead."

Wu Mo wondered, "Cramp from my mouth because?"

Zhang Ye quipped, "—of smiling too much!"

"Haha!" Wu Mo laughed heartily and said, "Now that you've put it like that, I am rather looking forward to seeing the results. Honestly, with the explosion in sales for our Brain Gold product the past few months, it has really made us a lot of money without needing to do much and I have nothing to worry about at all. But it's also true that a few months have gone by now, and when we checked our market statistics, it showed that even though sales are still strong, the growth has already tapered off and are starting to slow. At most, during any holiday, the figures would increase a little more, so our company is also finding another way to increase our advertising efforts, which was why we had that meeting last

time and discussed whether we wanted to change the Brain Gold advertisement which I rejected. But now—having bought the title sponsorship to your new program, although the price is truly still a big shock to me, after the shock wears off—I have a sense of stability which I can't explain. I am sure my Brother Zhang's program will be good, so after it gets broadcast, with the popularity of the program, it will surely let our Brain Gold product get even more popular again. Of all that, I'm pretty confident!"

Zhang Ye reached out his hand and said, "Then may I thank you for your trust in me and let's have a happy partnership?"

"To a happy partnership!" Wu Mo also played along and reached out his hand to shake Zhang Ye's hand.

With Zhang Ye's constantly rising popularity, the number of people who doubted him also increased as more people started to learn of him. But at the same time, the number of people who believed in him also rose, and at a greater rate than those who doubted him!

Like this scene which had just played out, even when Wu Mo had only found out about the program called The Voice of China today, without knowing the specifics of it or asking about the production timeline, with just Zhang Ye's reputation and the hallmark of his name, Wu Mo dared to agree to such an astronomical sponsorship fee and sealed the deal with just a handshake! From this alone, it could be seen just how strong the brand of Zhang Ye had become!

Chapter 640 Coaches invited to join!

Midday.

At a famous tripe shop in the city, Zhang Ye was wearing his sunglasses while Wu Mo was in his suit as the two of them walked out from the restaurant with their hands rubbing their bellies.

Wu Mo laughed and said, "We've just sealed a 100 million RMB deal and yet we only had 45 RMB worth of tripe and flatbread for lunch?"

"Isn't it better to have what you love to eat rather than what is good to eat?" Zhang Ye commented, feeling satisfied by the meal.

"Now that's true." Wu Mo remarked, "This is exactly what I love eating."

Zhang Ye said, "Alright then, when I get back later, I will get someone to prepare the contract and send it over."

Wu Mo opened his car door. "Sure, let's go then. Do you need me to send you back?"

Zhang Ye waved him off. "I won't bother you, I still have some work to handle. This title sponsorship fee has given me some pressure now, so I will need to quickly settle the program's guest coaches and invite a few big shots over or else the show can't be carried. Only then will it do justice to your 100 million RMB title sponsorship fee."

Wu Mo said just before he left, "Then I'll leave the advertisement copy to you as well?"

"No problem." Zhang Ye agreed immediately. "I'll get it done before the recording of the show. At that time, all you need to do is to add a slogan placement like 'Drink Brain Gold, Support The Voice!' in your

advertisements. We will do a cross promotion of the product and the show, but let's talk about the details at a later date."

Wu Mo said, "OK then."

To know where a new program ranked, the most practical way to assess it was to take a look at the investment amount.

If 10 million was invested? Then it was just a normal-sized production.

If 20 million was invested? It should be a mid-sized production.

If 30 or 40 million was invested? Then it would be a large-scale production.

But if the investment was over 100 million? Then surely it would be called a mega-scale production! In this world, much less singing talent shows, even other types of variety shows that had 100 million RMB in investments were unheard of. No television stations dared to play it so big and no teams would risk such an amount of money. After all, the common figure for title sponsorship fees were around the region of 10 to 20 million RMB. Any higher than that and the investment sum would not be earned back at all as the return on investment was not proportional. So for any television programs that had an investment of 30 to 40 million RMB, they would already be considered as having a large production budget.

But as Zhang Ye was going for broke this time, he knew that the production costs for The Voice would not be any less than 80 million RMB. Now that the title sponsor was settled, Zhang Ye anticipated the final product even more. He was prepared to spend all of the 120 million RMB budget so that the program would not fall short. He was going to place everything he had into it to create a mega-scale singing talent show!

Equipment? They must be the top-tier ones!

The stage? It must have the best design!

Promotions? They needed the best time slots!

Contestants? They would be given the best treatment and accommodations!

As for the guest coaches...they had to be the most elite in the industry, of course!

Wu Mo had just left when Zhang Ye's cell phone rang. The caller ID indicated it was from his own office. Needless to say, the only person who would dare to use the telephone in his office would be Chenchen. It wasn't like any of the staff would dare to do so.

"Hello?"

"Zhang Ye."

"Chenchen."

"When are you coming back?"

“I’m working outside now, so I’ll only be back after noon. Oh yes, I nearly forgot about you. Get Auntie Qiqi to take you to the cafeteria for lunch. Don’t wait for me.”

“—OK.”

“Be obedient while you’re at the office.”

“Understood.”

Having comforted Chenchen, Zhang Ye eagerly rubbed his hands together as several faces appeared in his mind. He was not prepared to go back to work yet. With a boost in the program’s funds, he was much more emboldened and surely would have to get things done now. If he could settle the guest coaches and get them to join the show, then the pre-production tasks were more or less completed, and his mission would also basically be done.

Who to find?

Who was most suitable?

An average celebrity would surely not do. If they were not professional singers, it wouldn’t work either.

On this front, Zhang Ye had really given it some thought. When he determined that he was going to do The Voice, he had some ideas and thoughts about the guest coaches. But since they did not have enough funds earlier, he did not take any action yet. Now that he had so much more to work with, Zhang Ye could do what others did not dare, and even make it a reality. For example, inviting celebrities others could not convince or had no money to invite!

In this way, he made the first call.

Zhang Xia: the famous songstress of China who had been awarded the country’s highest honor in singing. Many people grew up listening to Grandma Zhang Xia’s songs as she was from the first generation of singers in China. Other than her reputation and qualifications, even though the youngsters these days did not consider her their favorite artist, there were no doubt about her status and ability in the singing industry. She has been singing all her life and just comparing the basics of singing, Grandma Zhang could outdo all of those Heavenly Kings and Queens. Regarding how to use her voice, tonal adjustment, and understanding of music, Grandma Zhang had the most experience. The key was that she could handle singing different genres other than bel canto¹, as shown when she performed the “Woman Flower” written for her and Zhang Yuanqi by Zhang Ye. Based on her relationship with Zhang Ye, and taking everything into consideration, it felt like Zhang Ye’s The Voice of China would definitely need to reserve a place for Grandma Zhang!

Du du.

Du du.

The call connected.

“Little Zhang?” Zhang Xia answered the call. He could hear the sound of a fan, probably because she was cooking. She said, “Wait a minute, let me turn off the heat, I was just cooking.”

A moment later.

Zhang Xia laughed, "What's the matter, Little Zhang?"

Zhang Ye said, "Why don't you have your meal first and I'll call back later?"

"You can go ahead, I'm not in a rush to eat," Zhang Xia replied in a friendly tone.

And so, Zhang Ye explained, "Grandma Zhang, I am currently working with Central TV Department 1 and making a program called The Voice of China."

"I've heard about that, I saw it on the news." Zhang Xia said, "I was still thinking of taking some time to call you these few days. Are you really serious about creating a talent show that is only focused on the contestants' voices?"

"Yes, what do you think of it?" Zhang Ye asked.

Zhang Xia laughed a little before responding, "I think it's a good idea. Disregarding the specific audience base and the viewership ratings, at least I think that this program should be quite meaningful. Compared to all those other singing talent shows, there's a much more positive energy in it and feels much healthier for the industry, so you should do it. I'll support you for sure. Don't listen to what others say."

Zhang Ye was cheered up and said, "That was what I wanted to hear from you, Grandma Zhang, but don't just use your words to support me."

Zhang Xia was a little taken aback as she was just casually remarking on the issue. She did not expect Zhang Ye to take it so seriously, so she asked, "Hur hur, then how should I support you? Help you by posting on Weibo? Or help you to promote the program within the industry? Or have you laid eyes on one of my disciples? You would like me to get a few of them to appear on your program?"

Zhang Ye said, "That's not it at all. What I wish for is for you to join The Voice of China as one of the four guest coaches. Are you able to fit it into your schedule?"

Zhang Xia sounded very surprised at this. "Oh? Why are you inviting me? My reputation isn't that great and can't be compared to those younger singers these days. Their fans easily number in the tens of millions. Isn't the program that you're making meant to reach out to the younger crowd? The contestants would mainly be involved in pop music, right?"

Zhang Ye said, "Your reputation isn't that great? How many people from our generation do not know about you? The parents and relatives of the people from our generation mostly grew up listening to your songs too. If you say your name is not well-known, then I don't suppose that there are any big names at all in the whole of China. As for the music, our program is not only focused on pop music. The program welcomes all kinds of contestants who dabble in any kind of musical style. Besides, I've said that our program only focuses on the voice, so we naturally also need a coach who is very experienced with vocals and singing techniques on our side. You've been singing most of your life and I really can't think of anyone who is more suitable than you for this role!"

Zhang Xia forced a laugh. "But I'm already so old and my children have been asking me to retire. Right now, the only thing that I can't put down is singing, but I've already let go of all professional work schedules since a long time ago. I won't hide this from you. Just last month and at the end of last year, there were two singing programs that approached me to join them as well, but I rejected them. Regarding such television variety shows and talent shows, I have a certain resistance of them."

Zhang Ye said, "Heh, Grandma Zhang, you're really not being true to your words. Didn't you just say that my new program is very meaningful and that you would support me? But now in the next instant, you're being resistant to the idea already? You told me you were unable to put down singing, and our program is made exactly to let people go back to the roots of singing. The direction of this program does not conflict with your beliefs. If you join us, you will be helping the newcomers by discovering and training a group of people who have been forgotten or ignored but have good singing abilities. This is a job that's benevolent beyond measure since you'll be grooming the future talents of the singing industry."

Zhang Xia: "..."

Zhang Ye lauded, "If you don't take up this role, then we young ones will surely not be qualified either. In the field of music, your experience is the most valuable treasure to us. Without you paving the way for the later generation, they could easily take the wrong path or direction."

Hearing that, Zhang Xia was indeed feeling rather flattered. "Child, you have quite the glib tongue."

Zhang Ye declared, "Grandma Zhang, as the executive director of The Voice of China, I would like to once again formally invite you to join us."

After pondering for a few seconds, Zhang Xia answered, "You've already laid it on me quite thick, so I don't think I can reject you, right? Alright then, I promise you that I will join your program as a guest coach."

Zhang Ye happily replied, "That's really good news."

Zhang Xia said, "But I want to say this beforehand. If there're any fixed results or a designated champion, I will not want to take part in it. I will just listen to the vocals and say whatever needs to be said."

"To be honest with you, Grandma Zhang, that is exactly what I want from you. I give you my word that, as long as I helm the program team, there will absolutely be no underhanded results fixing! If I find out that it happens, then I will deal with them one by one! There will be no room for discussion!" Zhang Ye promised her.

Zhang Xia was very satisfied with that. She said, "That's better."

Suddenly, Zhang Ye thought of something. "Oh yes, we have yet to discuss the joining payment..."

"I'll leave that to you." Zhang Xia sounded indifferent to this.

But the more someone put it this way, the more Zhang Ye was unwilling to leave it unspoken. He said, "How much did the two programs that approached you before offer to you?"

Zhang Xia replied, "Several million I guess, I'm not exactly sure either."

Zhang Ye said, "They wanted to invite you with just a few million? Then they were really insincere in their offer. How about this Grandma Zhang, we will offer you a joining payment of 10 million RMB. What do you think?"

Zhang Xia said, "Are you taking me to be Yuanqi? Why would I need that much?"

Zhang Ye laughed and noted, "You're being too modest."

"That won't do, that won't do." Because of their friendship from the song "Woman Flower," Zhang Xia had never treated Zhang Ye as an outsider. "A few million is enough. Even the other singing talent shows are only offering that amount for their joining payment, yet you are thinking of giving 10 million? I know that Central TV is notoriously stingy, so why are they being so generous this time?"

Zhang Ye said, "They are them, I am me. The funding this time was provided by me. I'm also in charge of the program, so all the decisions will be made by me. It's settled then, 10 million will be your joining payment. I will get someone to prepare the contract later. Grandma Zhang, let's keep our personal relationship personal and business as business. That's that then."