

Superstar 971

Chapter 971: Breaking 100 million views!

A call came in.

It was from Zhang Ye's former boss at Beijing Television, Hu Fei.

Hu Fei: "Little Zhang, you are way too ballsy!"

Zhang Ye laughed. "Not too bad, right?"

Hu Fei also laughed and said: "This time you've torn a hole in the sky!"

"This was exactly what I wanted," Zhang Ye said.

Hu Fei said: "I'm calling just to tell you that no matter what, your former colleagues at the BTV Arts Channel are all proud of you!"

Zhang Ye was surprised. "Thank everyone on my behalf."

But Hu Fei said: "It's us who should be thanking you this time."

...

On the Internet, the commotion was still ongoing!

"That's too frightening!"

"Is there anyone who has not watched it yet? Quickly share it with them!"

"Ah!"

"It's gone! It's gone again!"

"Damn, why was it deleted again?"

"What's going on? Didn't they restore the video just now?"

"Why did it get taken down again?"

"What are these people doing?"

"Ah, it's up again!"

"It's up again! It's up again!"

"Ah, it's gone again!"

"Ah, it's up again!"

...

At an online video hosting company.

In the general manager's office that was responsible for liaisons.

The phone kept ringing. Ring ring ring, ring ring ring.

Director Yan picked up the phone with a smile and said in a friendly tone: "Hello, Chief Wang....Yes, yes, yes....OK, OK, OK....You're very right, we'll take it down immediately....OK....OK....There won't be any problems....We'll handle it as the executives instruct."

The call ended.

Director Yan called his secretary over at once. "Quick, take down the documentary on air pollution!"

The secretary nodded and went to get it done.

A few minutes later, the phone rang again.

When Director Yan saw the caller ID, he quickly answered the call with a smiling face. "Hello, Division Head Sun....Yes, yes, yes....OK, OK, OK....You're very right, we'll immediately restore the video....OK....That's for sure....We must give our fullest support to public service documentaries!"

The call ended.

Director Yan called his secretary over again right away. "Quick, restore the documentary!"

The secretary grunted, "Yes."

Ten minutes later, yet another executive called!

Restore it back!

Take it down!

Restore it again!

Take it down again!

Finally, Director Yan was enraged!

Fuck your third uncle's grandma! This is fight between you gods! Who have I offended to deserve this?!

Similar situations occurred at numerous online video hosting companies and other media outlets. Some people even turned off their cell phones and went into hiding. Some of them put on two faces, trying not to offend anyone. Some were so frightened by the situation that they simply feigned illness and checked into the hospital!

At this moment, the industry was in a state of extreme shock!

A fight had started! The executives above them had started to fight!

The entire country was turned upside down all because of a documentary!

....

On the same day.

It was as though some people had discussed beforehand as they suddenly popped out of nowhere together!

A medical professor publicly issued a statement to condemn Zhang Ye. "Don't get deceived by Zhang Ye. He is completely misleading the public. He says that smog is related to lung cancer? That smog can cause lung cancer? Science has not shown any links, so what is he talking about?! Isn't that trying to deceive the people?!"

"Fuck off!"

"How much evidence has already indicated that there is a correlation between smog and lung cancer? How many organizations have conducted research that show that smog is a possible cause of lung cancer? No scientific links? That's right! Indeed, there are no organizations that have successfully researched how smog causes lung cancer. But we're misled exactly by people like you! By simply saying that science has shown no links that smog causes lung cancer, what signals are you trying to send to the people? The first impression that everyone gets is that there is nothing harmful about smog! That smog definitely does not cause lung cancer! You all are tricking people!"

"Deceiving the people? The ones who are deceiving the people are the lot of you!"

"You people come forward to make a statement when we have yet to bother with you?"

"Idiots!"

The people were enraged!

Elsewhere.

A scientist from the Chinese Academy of Sciences fired shots publicly at Zhang Ye. "It's just scaremongering and complete nonsense! What's the point of saying all this? What motives do you have? Have you thought of the consequences? The air pollution is an inevitable product of human development. It is the price to pay for societal development. We must definitely govern it, but how do we do it? Are we really going to stop the steel mills from operating? Do the people really have to stop using heating? Are we going to scrap all the cars? Do you want to revert back to a primitive society?"

Another scientist from an atmospheric pollution research facility posted: "@Zhang Ye Stop talking nonsense if you don't know anything. Governing and controlling the air pollution is not as simple as you think. There are many complicated issues behind it. Right now, I am seriously doubting the motives for Zhang Ye to create this documentary!"

A steel company's CEO posted on Weibo mockingly: "Zhang Ye is still driving his BMW X5, right? Get rid of your car first before talking to me about other things!"

The netizens were fuming!

Countless people immediately gathered around online!

"Get rid of his car? Why should he need to dump his car!?"

"What kind of fucking logic is that?"

"Based on what you said, people who are calling for charitable activities to be performed would have to donate their houses first, don't they? Are they all going to have to sell their houses away? So that they can devote themselves into a career of public welfare? Fuck!"

"Why are there idiots like you in society?"

"Let me tell you this! Teacher Zhang Ye is not a scientist. He is a documentary director and a host. Must he come up with a solution to solve the air pollution issue by himself? And he even has to find a way to do it so that everyone would accept it? Using the most proper way? Only then is he allowed to speak up? Only then can he announce the truth? Fuck you all! Isn't that what you experts and scientists must think of instead? Zhang Ye has shown the truth behind the smog to all of us. Even though what he can do is limited, he has already done his best to declare war against air pollution. What about you all? I would like to ask just what you people are doing! You people are unable to think of ways to govern the air pollution or come up with any research findings, so you started to scold him instead and nitpick? Fuck you!"

Thousands and thousands of criticisms came flooding in!

Several experts and scientists were instantly stunned from being scolded!

Immediately, another group of experts and academics came forward to cast their doubts on the documentary. They brought up claims of data fraud, baseless reports, and scaremongering. These accusations were all targeted at Zhang Ye!

But the next moment, they were drowned out by the criticism!

Their entire screen was filled with criticism!

Every time it refreshed, thousands more would come flooding in!

When someone jumped out to scold Zhang Ye, they would get scolded off!

When another jumped out to scold Zhang Ye, they would get scolded off too!

Zhang Ye's fans and even majority of the populace were all standing on Zhang Ye's side!

Zhang Ye was unlike Chai Jing from his previous world. There was no dispute about his nationality and his documentary did not involve any foreign organizations either. Moreover, for a Professional Korean Insulter like Zhang Ye and his case of chasing away the Japanese delegates with his scolding, to say that he was an agent of some foreign powers plotting to destroy China's development? They would probably not believe it themselves either! Zhang Ye's background was extremely clean; there was no disputing it! And most importantly, Zhang Ye's popularity was much higher than Chai Jing's in his previous world. He also had a much greater influence than her. Furthermore, the people of this world were basically uninformed about the smog, so even Zhang Ye had probably not expected them to give him their support with such little reservation!

The documentary was taken down again.

After a while, it was back up again!

The views on the video were soaring!

Five hours passed very quickly!

To the shock and horror of the industry insiders, the total views of Zhang Ye's Documentary on Air Pollution in China had already broken 100 million!

This was insane!

This was fucking insane!

"Carry out strict inspections on the offending corporations that cause pollution!"

"Hand over the murderers!"

"Who are the ones sacrificing our lives to make money?"

"We will not remain silent anymore!"

"Hand over the murderers!"

"Return us our white clouds!"

"Return us our blue skies!"

On this day, seven of the top ten Weibo hotly discussed topics were related to either Zhang Ye, the smog, or Department 14!

On this day, the regional centers 2 of the Ministry of Environmental Protection from all over the country received a total of 110,000 calls and over a thousand complaints lodged by the populace against the organizations that had violated the emissions standards!

On this day, environmentalists and the people surrounded an organization that had issued fake emission level certification labels for heavy vehicles, which had violated the emission standards and was exposed by the documentary. After a full three hours, they witnessed the CEO of the organization and a group of people involved in the case getting taken away in police vehicles!

On this day, the people awakened.

On this day, a lot of things happened.

On this day, Zhang Ye raised his head up in the streets and felt that today's sky...seemed a little more blue than before!

Chapter 972: Who in these lands don't appreciate you!

The next day.

At home.

Breakfast was ready.

Zhang Ye did not need to be woken up today. He had gotten up early by himself and washed up before coming out to the living room. When the steamed buns and millet congee was served, he immediately sat down at the table and started eating heartily.

"Mom, the congee tastes quite good!" Zhang Ye praised.

His mother was rather speechless. "Why do you sound like you're in a such a good mood?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "It's not too bad."

His mother stared at him and said, "But everyone says that you've gotten into big trouble this time!"

"I only spoke the truth, did what I wanted to, and did what I had to." Zhang Ye smiled and said, "I have a clear conscience regarding it, so what do I have to be afraid of?"

"Well said!" When his father heard that, he nodded vigorously. "That's my son!"

His mother rolled her eyes. "What's so good about that? Just look at it." She picked up a dozen newspapers that she had bought just this morning and threw them onto the table. "That documentary of yours has caused chaos everywhere! Those corporations, the people from the relevant industries, and the experts, which of those people are not cursing at you now? With the way it's going, in another three to five years' time, everyone in the entire world will have been offended by you at least once!" Taking a breath, his mother continued, "But fortunately, your popularity still went up!"

On top of the pile of newspapers that were thrown onto the table, a bright red headline read, "Zhang Ye's Popularity Ranking Rises"!

During yesterday's midnight update of the latest Celebrity Rankings Index, Zhang Ye had used an unprecedented way of releasing his documentary to push himself off the bottom of the A-list Celebrity Rankings. In just one night, he rose up one place and even got within distance of the next spot above his new ranking. He was now getting closer to Jiang Hanwei, the martial arts star who had been popular since over a decade ago. He might not even be that far off anymore! Jiang Hanwei had taken over a decade to reach his current position. Including the time he took to get into the industry, he might have even taken 20 years or more! But what about Zhang Ye? He only took two years to get to where he was today!

What sort of notion was that?

This was something that had dumbfounded the entire entertainment circle!

In one night!

In just a single night!

Zhang Ye had gotten even more popular again!

From a certain perspective, Zhang Ye's Documentary on Air Pollution in China, which was released yesterday, had already greatly surpassed his previous documentary—A Bite of China—in terms of popularity and attention! Some industry insiders had given their evaluations about A Bite of China after it ended its broadcast run. They said that there would be no other documentary after A Bite of China

that could surpass it, not even if it were another documentary made by Zhang Ye. However, in a short span of two months, Zhang Ye had used this new documentary to shock the industry and country again.

Could a documentary even be released this way?

Such a dogmatic public service documentary could even attract such topicality?

Every point that it raised was too shocking!

Every point that it raised was never seen before!

...

At Central TV.

Although Zhang Ye was suspended, he still came to work.

Compared to the sensation and controversy caused by the documentary, Zhang Ye's popularity ranking rise was no longer able to attract any attention. Today, everyone was still discussing that documentary. In their discussions, Zhang Ye's name kept coming up, as well as the name of Central TV.

"I really have to give it to him!"

"He even dares to publish that documentary without any scientific basis to back it up?"

"Zhang Ye's way of thinking is totally different from everyone else!"

"But the way he put it yesterday sounded so convincing. I was there at the press conference and listened to Teacher Zhang talk about the subject onstage. It really terrified me so much that I'm unable to describe that feeling. I guess this is probably what it means to be charismatic. He's really such a unique celebrity of the entertainment circle that I doubt there will ever be another like him! As of yesterday, I became Teacher Zhang's fan!"

"There are definitely some issues with what he has brought up. It's just not scientific at all."

"Then why are you still wearing a face mask today?"

"Uh, I was scared into doing so."

"And that is to Zhang Ye's credit!"

On his way to work today, Zhang Ye had a smile on his face. This was because he could see many people on the streets wearing face masks. He felt an indescribable feeling. Was it satisfaction? Or was it gratification? Zhang Ye just felt that his words had been effective in scaring the people awake, so perhaps that was the reason for the smile on his face. Even if he were to get more criticism, he believed it would be worth it.

Yan Tianfei also came to work today.

In the hallway outside Department 14, Zhang Ye and Yan Tianfei bumped into each other. When their eyes met, they both suddenly laughed out loud.

Yan Tianfei said, "I knew that you would not let me down, Teacher Little Zhang."

Zhang Ye said, "Thank you, Director Yan."

"You're welcome," Yan Tianfei said.

Zhang Ye said, "If it weren't for you, the management would not have allowed me to hold the press conference."

Yan Tianfei said cheerfully, "We've worked together for so long now. Do you think that I don't know what you're like? We have an unspoken understanding of each other."

Zhang Ye had earlier asked Ha Qiqi and the others to request for approval from the management regarding the press conference. The reason he wanted to hold it was because the people and media had their concerns about it, so he wanted to give a proper explanation to them. But that reason to hold the press conference was actually quite far-fetched, and since Zhang Ye and Central TV's relationship was in such a bad state, why would they allow him to do it? Why would they need to give him face? So this matter was actually handled by Yan Tianfei. It was he who helped Zhang Ye fight for the press conference to be held. That allowed Zhang Ye the chance to stand onstage and deliver the documentary! Before the press conference, in all of Central TV, perhaps only Yan Tianfei knew what Zhang Ye might be planning. Just as Old Yan had said, there existed an unspoken understanding between the two of them.

In the office.

The colleagues all gathered around.

Ha Qiqi said angrily, "Director Zhang, our documentary...was still deleted in the end!"

Zhang Zuo added, "A document was issued from above to affirm your contributions toward public service, but the reason for taking down the video was that it lacked proper scientific evidence."

Zhang Ye smiled. "Alright, I understand."

Little Wang hesitated for a moment before saying, "Will you...get into any trouble? The people you have offended this time are all people who have much at stake. They will..."

Zhang Ye said happily, "You make it sound like the people I have offended in the past were all just ordinary folk or something."

When he said that, Little Wang gasped, but also grinned.

This was Director Zhang. He would never let anything, no matter how big, bother him. He only cared about whether he could say what he wanted, but as for the consequences, he never considered them at all.

The tone of events was set!

It was set the moment the documentary was taken down!

How intense would this game get? How serious had the matter become? What were the executives' attitudes toward it? What were the relevant departments' feelings about it? A lot of people still did not know as they could only get a glimpse into what was happening through the news reports. It was

difficult to get an overall picture and discover the truth behind it. But there was one thing that everyone found out immediately, and that was the attitude of Central TV. A document released by Central TV caused a commotion once more!

On the same day.

Central TV had called for an emergency meeting.

After the meeting, Central TV made a decision and publicly indicated that they would disavow Zhang Ye's documentary due to its imprecision. They made it clear that the release had nothing to do with Central TV and that it was Zhang Ye's personal decision to do so. Finally, Central TV announced that they would terminate Zhang Ye's one-year contract with them with immediate effect!

In plain speech, he was fired!

Actually, Central TV was just afraid of trouble. They had truly been terrified by Zhang Ye and finally realized something. Freeze him? Ban him? Those actions were totally meaningless. As long as Zhang Ye remained in Central TV, this fellow could cause a million other problems for them. Furthermore, all those problems would be on an extremely shocking scale. Hold him back by keeping him with them? Fuck your grandpa! It's better that you just hurry up and leave! Every second that we keep you, we'll just be living in constant fear!

This lunatic!

This was the craziest guy of them all!

Right now, Central TV just did not wish to see Zhang Ye a moment longer!

But the netizens were enraged!

"What the hell?"

"Firing Teacher Zhang at a time like this?"

"Everyone knows that Teacher Zhang's contract is coming to an end and he will be leaving soon. But to fire him at this point in time? What's the meaning behind that?"

"They're such fucking bullies!"

"Fuck! What has Zhang Ye done to you guys?"

"Central TV's reaction is too extreme, isn't it? No one at the top has said anything yet, but you people already can't wait to draw a line between yourselves and Zhang Ye? Are you trying to place all the blame on him?"

"I could turn a blind eye when Central TV wanted to forcibly take away the copyrights of The Voice! I could turn a blind eye when Zhang Ye was frozen! When Central TV transferred Zhang Ye to the documentary channel? I could still turn a blind eye to that! But I'm unable to do so anymore this time! Teacher Zhang should be allowed to leave in a blaze of glory! He should be able to strut out of Central TV's gates with his chest held high! By doing this, you're making it look like Teacher Zhang has done something wrong! It's like you're painting him as a failure! What is this? What the hell is this?"

"Damn, I'll never tune into Central TV's channels anymore!"

The netizens' reactions were very strong!

It was the same for the people of Department 14!

"Director Zhang!"

"This...this..."

"How could they do this!"

"They did this on purpose!"

But only Zhang Ye did not seem angry. Instead, he looked rather happy. "I was going to leave anyway, but I was waiting for my contract to expire. It's great that it was terminated in advance, so it's time for this bro to quickly find another job!"

Ha Qiqi flatly said, "I'll quit too!"

Zhang Zuo said, "Me too!"

Little Wang shouted, "Let's all quit together!"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Just continue working for now and wait for my message. If there're any good projects coming up, I'll contact everyone. At that time, we can whip up another storm and score another big one, haha!" With that, he turned around. "Alright, I'm off."

After he packed his things.

Zhang Ye leisurely walked out of the office.

Outside Central TV, group of reporters were already camping there as they'd received the news in advance.

"He's coming out!"

"Zhang Ye is coming out!"

"Teacher Zhang!"

"Were you fired?"

"What do you have to say regarding this incident?"

"I heard that you've already been banned?"

"A lot of the TV stations that contacted you before to join them after your contract ran out seem to have all withdrawn their offers now? There's no more news about it? Is it true that you have been banned again?"

"What are you planning to do for your next project?"

"If there's no job that comes knocking on your door, what will you do?"

"Teacher Zhang, what is your opinion of Central TV?"

"Do you feel very wronged over how things turned out?"

"The documentary has been taken down and you were fired by Central TV too. What would you like to say most at this moment?"

A lot of them were pointing their microphones and audio recorders at Zhang Ye while surrounding him and not letting him leave.

Zhang Ye knew that if he did not give them a response here, he wouldn't be able to leave. He turned around to look at the Central TV Tower, then looked at the reporters with a smile. "Who told you guys that I feel wrong? Who said that I feel bad because of this?"

Today's weather was a little odd.

Clearly, spring had already arrived, but the skies were constantly downcast. There were even some snowflakes drifting down gently, and mixed among them was some rain falling from the sky.

It was snowing?

It felt like a farewell to Zhang Ye!

Zhang Ye smiled and suddenly thought of a poem from his previous world.

He looked at the reporters, then looked up at the gloomy sky that seemed to be starting to clear up. Zhang Ye softly opened his mouth.

"Vast snow clouds darken the skies.

"The blowing north winds drive the geese and snow.

"Worry not that close friends won't appear on the road ahead.

"Who in these lands don't appreciate you?"

This was Zhang Ye's current mood.

This was the poem he was gifting himself.

"Sending off Dongda 1" from his previous world had been changed to "Sending off Myself" by him!

Zhang Ye then swaggered away.

He left the group of reporters frozen in place!

Worry not that close friends won't be on the journey ahead!

Who in these lands...don't appreciate you?

Chapter 973: Zhang Ye's apartment gets wrecked!

Today.

Zhang Ye had officially departed from Central TV.

The poem he recited when he left had caused a sensation throughout the country!

When a video was released and the news reported about it, the netizens, who were enraged by Central TV's sacking of Zhang Ye just a moment ago, all started cheering for him in the next moment!

"That was so cool!"

"Yeah, Zhang Ye was really cool there!"

"Worry not that close friends won't appear on the road ahead? Who in these lands don't know about you?"

"How domineering! Teacher Zhang's brazenness just shot through the roof! Hahahahaha!"

"Right, this is Central TV's loss!"

"Those idiots! Where else can you find celebrities such as Zhang Ye!? How could there still be people so anxious to suppress him all the time? Freeze him? Fire him? I'm laughing so hard! What a useless bunch of idiots!"

"I really like this poem a lot!"

"Composing a poem when he departs from a job has become routine for Teacher Zhang."

"How charming!"

"This is who Zhang Ye is!"

"That's right, this is exactly who Zhang Ye is!"

"Teacher Zhang! There must be someone in this world who understands you. Who in the world could possibly not appreciate a person and celebrity such as you?"

"We are all your close friends!"

"Right, we all are!"

"Teacher Zhang, thank you!"

"Thank you, Zhang Ye, for letting us know the truth!"

"We all know how much you have sacrificed for the benefit of so many people! We all will remember everything that you did! We are not eloquent as you, so there are some things which we do not know how to properly say to you. But if you see this, I would like you to know that a lot of people have always been extremely grateful to you. You've helped and inspired a lot of people—we salute to you!"

"We salute to you!"

"We salute to you!"

"We salute to you!"

In an instant, Weibo was filled with these four words!

The "Salute to Zhang Ye" post on Weibo reached the front page and stayed firmly in the headlines. Numerous people followed up by posting their comments of "We salute to you" on Weibo as well!

This showed the people's gratitude for Zhang Ye!

Since they couldn't really do much for Zhang Ye, they could only express their gratitude to him.

Expressing gratitude might seem like a simple gesture. But at times, the weight behind it was immense!

...

At a newspaper firm.

This was the first newspaper firm that decided to publish the video of Zhang Ye's press conference and reported on it. At the time, they had a huge disagreement internally and there was an argument about the news for a long while. In the end, it was the chief editor who gave his approval to publish the news.

The editorial department had already seen that Weibo post.

The chief editor smiled at one of the editors and said, "Didn't you say that the people were all ignorant?"

That person looked slightly embarrassed.

The other people from the editorial department kept quiet as well.

The chief editor pointed at that Weibo post and said, "Just look at this. The people are actually not stupid at all. There's no need for others to tell them who has treated them well or done things for them. They all know it themselves."

A reporter sighed. "But Chief Editor, there are still some things that we cannot say without proper consideration, and not everything should be told to the people. Like the example of the smog news this time. You have seen for yourself. The entire country is in disarray, the commotion online has blown up, and a lot of departments in the government offices had to call for an emergency meeting during the night. In the end, Department 14's documentary was still taken down. The people might know the truth now, but a lot of officials were dismissed and many businesses got shut down. Meanwhile, Zhang Ye had to take on all the pressure himself and got fired, and someone might even take revenge against him. His future is probably over and he still has to bear the criticism from his doubters. Tell me, did Zhang Ye win? I don't think he did. In fact, he has lost!"

The chief editor thought for a moment, then looked at that reporter. He smiled and said, "At least this time, the truth has won, hasn't it?"

When everyone in the editorial department heard that, they gave it some thought.

Yes.

At least the truth has won!

...

At a villa.

At Chen Guang and Fan Wenli's home.

Chen Guang thumped the table and praised, "This poem was written so well!"

Fan Wenli nodded. "But the trouble that Little Zhang has caused this time might only be beginning. The documentary has been taken down and he has departed from Central TV as well, so it looks like things ended, but it is actually far from finished. A lot of people are probably staying silent for now, but who knows when they'll jump out to attack Zhang Ye again."

Chen Guang said, "Hai, I'm actually very similar to Zhang Ye. I'm also very righteous and unafraid of trouble. But why am I not as popular as him?"

Unexpectedly, Fan Wenli's response stabbed into him like a knife.

Fan Wenli giggled and said, "Because you don't know how to compose poems."

Chen Guang could say nothing.

Fan Wenli smiled and said, "He was clearly fired from Central TV. But in the end, Little Zhang used a poem to announce his departure to the world and left coolly like a winner instead, making the entire country's people cheer for him. He is the only person in the entire entertainment industry who is so talented and has such charms. Can you even compare?"

Chen Guang coughed. "Forget it. I'll just stick to writing my new song."

...

At night.

At home.

The moment he opened the door when he reached home, his mother asked, "It's time for you to look for another job?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "You already know about it?"

"You don't say." His mother pointed at a stack of newspapers on the table and said, "I bought a newspaper by the by and there's news about you. You're still in the mood to compose a poem?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Wasn't leaving my job just a matter of time anyway? It's fine that they made it sooner."

His mother said, "I'm just afraid that it won't be easy for you to find another job now!"

"Never mind that. Things will eventually sort themselves out," Zhang Ye said indifferently.

His mother asked, "I also heard that there are people looking to take revenge on you?"

Zhang Ye shrugged. "Let them come! I'll be waiting!"

Having just said that, his cell phone started ringing.

Ring ring ring, ring ring ring. It turned out to be Chenchen's number. That little rascal had previously taken the latest model of a high-end phone from Zhang Ye and even made him buy her a SIM card afterwards.

Zhang Ye answered the call. "What's the matter?"

On the other end, Chenchen's voice sounded neither fast nor slow. "Zhang Ye, my aunt asked you to make a trip here."

Zhang Ye asked: "What for?"

Chenchen said: "Someone smashed the windows at your place."

Zhang Ye was startled. "Which place?"

Chenchen said: "The place where your junior martial sister is staying."

Only then did Zhang Ye manage to react. "What? Dammit! I'll be right there!"

The call ended.

His mother asked anxiously, "What happened?"

"It's nothing. I have to head out for a while!" Zhang Ye did not explain to his parents nor did he want to let them know. He quickly drove away and headed straight for Rao Aimin's place.

It was only a ten-minute drive.

When he arrived, police vehicles were already parked downstairs.

"Ah!"

"Little Zhang is back!"

"Teacher Zhang!"

"You're finally back!"

Many of the neighbors and residents who knew Zhang Ye from the time he lived here had gathered in the area and formed a crowd to catch a glimpse of what had happened. When they saw him, chatter broke out.

Several of the policemen also looked at him.

An old policeman called out, "Teacher Zhang."

Zhang Ye walked over briskly. "Hi, what's going on here?"

The old policeman asked, "You are the resident of the apartment?"

Zhang Ye immediately said, "Yes, I rent the place."

A moment later, he spotted Rao Aimin and his freeloading junior martial sister, Yang Shu.

Zhang Ye shouted, "Are you alright?"

Yang Shu asked, "Who are you referring to?"

"You, of course," Zhang Ye said.

Yang Shu said, "Oh, I'm fine."

He was just glad that no one was hurt. Zhang Ye looked up and saw that both the windows at his rental apartment were completely shattered. It looked very serious!

Zhang Ye immediately cursed, "Fuck their grandpas!"

If it were any other public figures cursing and swearing openly in public, people would sure have taken videos of it and posted them online. It would definitely cause a heated discussion and some news too. But as it was Zhang Ye who did the cursing, the people around did not even have look surprised and just watched calmly. It would definitely be big news if it were any other celebrity who cursed, but since it was Zhang Ye? That would not even be news. Even if they sent videos of him cursing to the media outlets, no one would run a story on it.

The policeman tried to placate him. "Teacher Zhang, please don't worry. No one was hurt and there wasn't much monetary damage either. We have already caught the culprits and will investigate the matter properly!"

Zhang Ye was stunned. "You caught the culprits?"

"They are over there." The policeman pointed.

Zhang Ye noticed three young men being handcuffed and led into police vehicles by the cops. From what he remembered, very few people would stroll around the area at night. In addition, the neighborhood was not in an enclosed location. There were several exits and the security guards did not conduct 24-hour patrols either. The three of them could have easily ran off after smashing the windows, so how did they get caught?

Zhang Ye asked, "Were they caught by the neighbors of the neighborhood?"

The policeman gave him a strange look. "No."

A different young policeman gave an admirable look at a woman and said, "She was the one who caught them. When we arrived, two of the three criminals were already beaten unconscious and the other one laid on the ground, unable to get up."

He followed that gaze to Yang Shu.

Ah?

It was Yang Shu?

Zhang Ye was shocked. "You were walking around the neighborhood at the time?"

Yang Shu looked at him and said, "No, I was at home."

Zhang Ye said in surprise, "Then how did you catch them?"

Yang Shu pointed to the windows upstairs and said, "I was watching TV at home when the windows suddenly got smashed by someone. I looked out from upstairs and saw these three people trying to get away, so I jumped down and went after them."

When the people around them heard that, they were all floored!

What?

You jumped out from the windows?

Damn, how many floors is that!

Zhang Ye nearly vomited blood. "Do you not want to live anymore?"

Yang Shu explained, "There are those air conditioning units hanging out from the windows outside, so I used them to break my fall as I made my way down."

Rao Aimin shook her head repeatedly and said, "This junior martial sister of yours is really reckless!"

Yang Shu was puzzled and justified, "I had to catch them no matter what since they smashed Senior Bro's windows. Otherwise, how was I going to answer to him?"

Chenchen came over quietly and glanced at Yang Shu. "Are you dumb?"

Yang Shu stared at her. "You're the one who's dumb."

"You're definitely the dumb one!" Zhang Ye got angry. "They're just 2 fucking window panes. I can buy four of those with 50 RMB! Are you out of your mind? You actually jumped down from such a high place? What if you fell and broke your leg? Huh?"

But Yang Shu said stubbornly, "I would still catch them even if that happened! What gave them the right to smash your windows?"

Zhang Ye said, "You could have at least taken the stairs!"

Yang Shu gazed at him. "If I went by stair, they would surely have gotten away."

Zhang Ye was exasperated by her.

Several policemen wryly smiled. One of them said, "Comrade, my dear...big sis, can you please act according to your abilities the next time you play hero? What you did just now was really too dangerous! Y-You're risking your life that way!"

Yang Shu replied, "But I was acting according to my abilities."

The police were speechless.

Hai, just what sort of person was this!

Teacher Zhang Ye was already a wondrous enough person, but who could have thought that the resident in his apartment was also such a fucking wondrous person as well!

You're even brave enough to jump down from such a high floor?

And actually fucking did it too? And you're even fine after all that?

The criminals with bruised and swollen faces were sitting inside the police vehicle and crying silently. They had truly been dumbstruck today. They just thought of escaping after smashing the windows and that was exactly what they did that. But they never could have expected that at the next second, someone would actually jump out of the windows and catch up to them, even giving them a good beating. The three of them still looked like they had seen a ghost!

Chapter 974: Tang Bohu's "Deathbed Poem"

In the neighborhood.

The apprehended criminals started to shift the blame.

"Comrade Policeman! We've been wronged!"

"That woman started beating us up the moment she jumped down!"

"Yeah, see how badly she's beaten us up! Arrest her! Quickly arrest her!"

"Sh-She's such a bully!"

When these three people started protesting, before Yang Shu and the police could even react, the onlookers and neighbors used their spittle to drown the culprits! Some of these neighbors only arrived after Yang Shu had rounded up the criminals, but some of them had witnessed the entire scene unfold in front of them.

A grandma said, "Ptui!"

A grandpa said, "I saw you three little bastards throwing stones at Teacher Little Zhang's windows. My apartment is right below Little Zhang's place and one of the stones nearly even hit my apartment windows. How dare you all claim to be innocent? This is what you three deserve! You deserved to get beaten up by this young lady! I'm an eyewitness to the entire situation! Comrade Policemen, it was they who did it! I saw it with my very own eyes! When that young lady jumped down from above, the three of them wanted to fight her. In the end, they were all taken down by her!"

"Right, I saw it too!"

"These sorts of people ought to be shot!"

"How awful!"

"Smashing Teacher Little Zhang's apartment windows? Why don't you three go to hell instead!"

"Yeah, Little Zhang is such a good person!"

"Arrest them! Lock them up for eight to ten years! Don't let them out!"

"They were definitely sent here to retaliate against Teacher Zhang!"

"That's right! Teacher Zhang has revealed too much of the truth this time in his air pollution documentary. Too many people have been offended!"

The crowd was in a frenzy as everyone pointed at those three people and shouted at them!

The three criminals still protested.

Zhang Ye looked at the three of them who smashed and broke his apartment's windows, then sneered at them. He thought to himself that they should just be content with the outcome for now. Don't you three know who you bumped into? The person you encountered was a martial arts master who wasn't too far from achieving concealed power, and also the true successor to Taiji Fist. Oh, right! Perhaps you didn't know this, but even though this apartment was rented by me, the owner of the apartment is staying just across the hall. You were trying to wreck a martial arts grandmaster's property, so you should be counting your blessings for being able to sit there unscathed!

Zhang Ye walked up to them. "Not happy about it? Shall we have a chat then?"

The three criminals immediately wilted and dropped their tough act!

"Close the car door!"

"Quick, close the car door!"

The incidents involving Zhang Ye beating up people had been reported in the news on more than one occasion.

A few of the police officers hurriedly tried to stop him. "Teacher Zhang, don't lower yourself to their level. Please don't lower yourself to their level." He turned around to the person in the police vehicle and said, "Quickly, start the car. Get them out of here for now!"

The police car drove off but the crowd watching the commotion still did not disperse.

The police officers looked at Zhang Ye. "We questioned those three people just now, but they did not reveal anything at all. Teacher Zhang, can you try to remember if you have offended anyone? They clearly came here with a purpose since they already knew your address. This was a premeditated crime for sure, so we have to investigate their motives for carrying out the act."

Zhang Ye glanced at them, then said, "Who I have offended?"

"Yes, please let us know in detail." A cop had already taken out pen and paper to take down notes.

Zhang Ye simply nodded and said, "The Writers' Association, the literary world, the Redology world, the education world, the mathematics world, the calligraphy world, the crosstalk world, the Koreans, the Japanese, oh, and the entertainment circle, the scientific community, the steel making industry, and the coal industry. I have offended all of them before on the whole and probably some other industries that I can't remember right now."

The police officers wiped at their sweat.

The neighbors around them were amused. "Pfft!"

Actually, the police were just following protocol when they asked him that question, but when Zhang Ye answered them, they eventually remembered something that made them not know whether to laugh or cry. This was Zhang Ye they were talking about. He was the hooligan of the entertainment circle. Just listen to the way this fellow had chosen his words when asked about who he had ever offended. He did not answer by saying what people he had offended or offering up any specific names. The moment he opened his mouth to talk about it, all the different types of industries, communities, or circles got mentioned! Yes. This fellow had really offended way too many people. There were so many that not only could they not remember who, even Zhang Ye himself could hardly remember them. If there was really a need to come up with a list of people he had offended, they might not be able to complete the list even if they were given three days and nights. The amount of people he had offended would number in the millions, if not the tens of millions. Asking Zhang Ye such a question was meaningless in the first place!

An old cop coughed and asked, "Then, to put it another way, who have you offended lately?"

Zhang Ye gave it some thought and said, "Probably someone involved in the incident regarding the air pollution documentary, I guess."

The old cop acknowledged, "I understand."

After a while, the rest of the police left.

The neighbors around him cautioned Zhang Ye out of good intentions.

"Teacher Zhang, you must be careful."

"We will help you keep a lookout!"

"Right, just be careful for yourself. They might be trying to take revenge against you!"

"Those bastards!"

"You have really offended too many people this time!"

Zhang Ye smiled and gave a fist and palm salute to them. "Thank you everyone for your concern, thank you!"

Back upstairs.

Zhang Ye and the others came back upstairs to his rental apartment.

Yang Shu said unhappily, "Senior Bro, I didn't do anything wrong. Why did you criticize me?"

Rao Aimin signaled Zhang Ye with her eyes and gestured her chin at Yang Shu.

Chenchen looked at Yang Shu like she was looking at some fool.

But right now, Zhang Ye could not bear to scold her at all. He stood beside one of the broken windows and peered down. At this height, even he could not guarantee that he would not get injured. Although his martial arts were much better than Yang Shu's, he had never before jumped from such a height. He could not understand how it would feel to do that. Looking at his junior martial sister who he couldn't really take seriously, Zhang Ye felt quite touched at this moment. She might be a little rash, dumb, and

foolish, but when she encountered trouble, she was still rather capable at handling it! Speaking of which, she and he had become fellow disciples for just a few days, but look at what she was already doing for him. She was not careless at all, as she'd rather jump down from a height to ensure that she could capture those three criminals and give Zhang Ye an explanation.

It was at this moment that Zhang Ye truly saw her as his junior martial sister!

Zhang Ye said, "I'm not criticizing you. I was just worried that you'd get into trouble. If something like this happens again, you must be more careful. Don't be rash anymore, understand?"

Yang Shu nodded when she heard him say that. "I understand."

Rao Aimin looked at him and said, "What is it? Is it really connected to the air pollution documentary?"

"I'm quite sure it is," Zhang Ye said.

...

Such news was definitely not going to be containable.

Before long, the news was reporting on it and the Internet blew up again!

"What?"

"The windows of Zhang Ye's home were smashed?"

"Damn! Damn! Damn!"

"They're totally trying to provoke him!"

"No, it is definitely a warning, a threat!"

"Motherfucker, who the fuck is responsible for it?"

"Nobody knows. The police station is still carrying out their investigation. I heard that the people involved were hired by someone to cause trouble, but they didn't manage to find out who was behind it!"

"It's clearly connected to the air pollution documentary!"

"Those bastards! The retaliation has already started this soon?"

"Is Teacher Zhang alright?"

"I heard that he's fine. He wasn't around when it happened."

"The audacity of those people! Teacher Zhang, you must be very careful!"

At this moment, a rather popular Weibo user with the handle of BigV said: "@ZhangYe Be careful. I just heard from some friends about this and it seems like there's someone who has spread the word that they would be dealing with you soon. It might not only be a single person. I even heard that someone has explicitly said that you could start preparing your will in the meantime! I don't know how true that is, but just be careful anyway."

The netizens were getting anxious.

"Then what can be done?"

"Yeah, what can we do?"

"Can Teacher Zhang really handle this by himself?"

"Th-These people are way too lawless!"

"Prepare his will? Fuck!"

"Do you guys think that the rumors are true? If it is, the police better be informed!"

"Right, we need to quickly protect Teacher Zhang!"

At the apartment.

Zhang Ye's friends started calling him anxiously.

"Zhang'er, did your apartment get wrecked?"

"It was only a few window panes."

"Did you see what they said online? Someone spread the word that they would be dealing with you soon!"

"I haven't read that yet."

"Quickly go and have a look then!"

Zhang Ye went online and had a quick browse. He saw those comments and simply laughed it off. He immediately posted: "You people want to deal with me? I'll be waiting."

Following that, he threw out yet another Weibo post that stunned the entire country!

A will?

Hur hur.

Zhang Ye typed coolly:

"Those born in this world must sometime retire.

"Why not return to the land o'th' expired?

"This world and the other are two the same.

"It's just wand'ring 'round in a foreign shire."

The world-famous poem by Tang Bohu from his world, "Deathbed Poem," was thrown out by Zhang Ye!

This was Zhang Ye's attitude to the threats!

It could be seen clearly from this poem!

"How awesome!"

"Teacher Zhang!"

"I give you a perfect score for this poemmmmmmm!"

"Why not return to the land o'th' expired? It's just wand'ring 'round in a foreign shire?"

How domineering!

How fucking cool!

Chapter 975: Zhang Ye comes to the music industry?

A few days later.

Everything was back to normal.

The window panes at his rental apartment in Jiaomen were replaced. After the police had finished investigating, they connected it to an official and a few corporations. In the process, Lu Yuhu had intervened and helped to expedite the investigations after Rao Aimin called him. Afterwards, the involved personnel were all either taken away or locked up. In the following days, no one else came to seek revenge against Zhang Ye. They could have been waiting for the right opportunity, or perhaps it was the brazenness of the "Deathbed Poem" that shocked them into inaction, or it might even be due to the attention from the media and citizens regarding the case that made them take a backseat for now and not dare to get on the bad side of Zhang Ye at this sensitive time.

In any case, incidents as a result of the air pollution documentary gradually subsided.

No subject could be heatedly discussed forever.

The criticism lessened.

The controversy lessened.

The topicality dropped.

The news no longer reported on it.

Zhang Ye and that sensational Documentary on Air Pollution in China was not seen on the Weibo trending page anymore, while the video of the documentary's press conference also disappeared from the Internet. It was as if it had never existed before.

But a lot of people knew that even though the footage was gone, the legacy of Zhang Ye and his documentary would forever stay with the citizens. Everyone's environmental awareness and their attention to the smog could no longer be compared to before. Before going out on the streets every day, whether it was going to school or going to work, the first thing that a lot of people would do was to open their windows to have a look at the skies. They would check their cell phones for the day's PM2.5 index before deciding on how they would get to work, if they should go to the park, or whether to wear a face mask—all of this were a testament to Zhang Ye's legacy.

Some people might not feel grateful for Zhang Ye.

Some might even scold him.

But Zhang Ye did not care. To him, this outcome was good enough.

...

At home.

Zhang Ye was still living his daily life as normal. These days were the most relaxing he had had so far this year. He would go out for a jog after waking up, take a leisurely stroll in the neighborhood, and then come back home for breakfast. Sometimes when he felt like it, he would brew a pot of Da Hong Pao and enjoy the tea, watch television, go online, or water the plants. It couldn't get any more comfortable and relaxing than this. He was a free man right now without a job to hold him down, so of course he could do whatever he wanted.

While he was enjoying his freedom, his mother was having none of it.

His mother criticized, "Hurry up and find a job already."

"There's no rush." Zhang Ye lowered his head and sipped some tea, even smacking his lips in satisfaction.

His mother said, "It's no rush for you, but I'm worried."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "And why are you worried?"

His mother angrily took away the open Da Hong Pao tea box and locked it away in a drawer. She said in annoyance, "If you don't go back to work soon, whatever tea leaves we have left at home will be used up by you! Do you know how much that cup of tea you're drinking costs? Do you?"

His father rolled his eyes.

Zhang Ye was floored. "Oh, so you're just worried about the tea leaves?"

His mother said, "Enough with the drinking and get back to working."

"Alright, alright, I know what to do," Zhang Ye said in a speechless manner.

Look for a job?

That was easier said than done!

The situation that Zhang Ye was currently facing was quite similar to the previous time, yet a little different. Back when Zhang Ye had been banned, it was just like now. No companies dared to hire him and no television stations dared to employ him either. But the circumstances now had one difference. The attitude that the entertainment circle adopted toward Zhang Ye was very strange and ambiguous. A lot of the television stations wished to have him in their ranks and a lot of films wanted to have him in their casts, but no one dared to take this risk because none of them could grasp how the higher-ups viewed Zhang Ye. At this moment, there was no clear indication from any of the agencies or officials that they wanted to ban Zhang Ye. Even the SARFT did not say a word about it, yet Zhang Ye's documentary

was taken down and the news about him was controlled. These actions could not help but convey a certain attitude that left even the entertainment industry unable to comprehend things, much less Zhang Ye himself. As a result, everyone just stuck to observing the situation for the moment.

Zhang Ye called Rao Aimin. As his agent, she was now basically in charge of all work affairs relating to him.

"Hello, Old Rao."

"What?"

"Has anyone contacted me about a job yet?"

"There's not a lot."

"Isn't that still a few then?"

"A TV station was looking for you to take a behind-the-scenes role, but will not allow you to get onscreen. Are you willing to take that job?"

"Why would I want to take that job!"

"An animated film wants you to voice act for them, and the money is good too, though there's one requirement. If there are going to be any problems or if the higher-ups disagree with your participation in the film, they will get someone to replace you and only pay you 10% of the agreed pay. Do you want to take that job?"

"Take, my ass!"

"Therefore, there are no offers."

"It's only these two?"

"What did you think? There aren't even any businesses looking for you!"

"Damn, can I really be that unpopular?"

"You've torn a hole in the sky this time. Even if there are people cheering and saluting you, do you think that those people from the film companies and TV stations would be convinced? Do you think they're stupid? Right now, everyone is still trying to get a read on the ambiguous attitude from the higher-ups toward you."

After hanging up, Zhang Ye felt very helpless about the entire situation.

In the past, Zhang Ye had planned not to do documentaries anymore after leaving Central TV or take any hosting jobs in the interim. Having done so for such a long time, he was beginning to get tired of it. Besides, it would be difficult to continue progressing as a host. From a purely popular point of view, he had already reached the pinnacle of his field. There would be limited developmental opportunities in it and the audiences probably preferred to see something new too, so Zhang Ye knew that he urgently needed to change. He wanted to try out something that he had never done in the past so that it could help him further his popularity. At the level of the A-listers, every step was filled with difficulty. If he were to solely rely on making shows and being a host, even if every one of the shows he hosted were

extremely well-received, it wouldn't make much of a difference to his popularity. As the entertainment industry of this world was quite similar to his previous world, he knew that there wasn't a place for a host among the Heavenly Kings and Queens. That level was not a place that a host could just work hard towards, moreover, an average-looking celebrity like him?

He had a bigger goal. He knew that he couldn't stay in the same spot and rest on his laurels!

He needed a change.

But right now, more than needing to change, he needed to sustain himself first. If there wasn't even a single job looking for him to be a host, whatever talk of changing or breaking out would just be empty talk!

Ring, ring, ring.

It was a call from Xiaodong.

When Zhang Ye answered the call, he heard a few people laughing happily. It was likely that all three members of the famous idol group of the country, Spring Garden, were on the line.

Xiaodong said: "Teacher Zhang, thanks!"

Zhang Ye wondered: "For what?"

One of the other members of the group, Li Xiaoxian, said: "The demo of our new song has been released. It's the one that you wrote and composed for us, 'Super Star.' It was just released yesterday but has already been heard by over 10 million listeners! It's at least two times more listeners than our last album's title track!"

Amy giggled: "Heehee, the full version will be out in a few days."

Zhang Ye laughed and said: "Congratulations to you girls then."

Xiaodong took the phone. "Teacher Zhang, when the full version gets released, we might need you to record a short video to support us. It could be you offering us a congratulatory message or perhaps you talking about your inspiration when writing the song. You must help us when the time comes, OK?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said: "I can definitely do that for you girls, but I think it's best not to use my video clip to promote you. I'm in big trouble at the moment, so I don't want it to spill over to you."

Xiaodong asked in worry: "About your air pollution documentary, is it really that serious?"

Zhang Ye said: "I have yet to get a job offer still, so what do you think?"

Xiaodong squeaked: "Uh..."

Li Xiaoxian said: "If there's anything we can help you with, just let us know."

Zhang Ye replied: "No one can help me with this problem, hur hur. But I appreciate your kind thoughts."

Online.

Spring Garden's new song had attracted quite a good response!

"It sounds so nice!"

"Xiaodong is too cute!"

"I like Li Xiaoxian! She's so graceful!"

"The song is really good!"

"When will the full version be released! I can't wait anymore!"

"This song's melody is fantastic! Although there isn't any intension, it sounds really vibrant! It matches up great with the style of Spring Garden! Who wrote the song? Was it by their exclusive songwriter, Qi Hailong? It doesn't sound like it. This great a song does not sound like Qi Hailong's work!"

"Ah, it's Zhang Ye!"

"What Zhang Ye?"

"Lyricist and composer!"

"Damn, it was Zhang Ye who wrote the song for them?"

"How unexpected! Teacher Zhang doesn't usually write songs for just anyone. His songs are usually reserved and meant for people like the Heavenly Queen, Zhang Yuanqi! And he might not necessarily give her his songs either!"

"But this song doesn't sound like Teacher Zhang's style?"

"What kinds of styles do Teacher Zhang's works not cover? Haha!"

"True that. Zhang Ye is really a very awesome person!"

"I heard that Zhang Ye has not found a job yet?"

"I don't know. I haven't seen any news regarding him for a few days already."

"Hai, the incident with the air pollution documentary this time has really affected him greatly!"

"Hehe. Actually, with Zhang Ye's talent, he can think about getting into singing. What do you guys think of my suggestion? Shall we drag Teacher Zhang into the music industry!?"

"Your idea is good, but I think you're overthinking things."

"Pfft, with Zhang Ye's lousy voice, how do you reckon that he'll be able to sing?"

"But he still managed to get onto the Top Chinese Music Charts once."

"Wasn't that owing to the special circumstances of Beijing TV's Spring Festival Gala? That 'A Letter to Home' depended on its emotional factor, lyrics, and the crosstalk to gain a place on the charts. But if you really analyze Zhang Ye's singing and voice, that song is really impossible to listen to. Moreover, Teacher Zhang isn't really handsome either, so it's definitely a no-no."

"Yep. I can still accept a host with the looks of Teacher Zhang, but if he were to be a singer? I doubt that would work. The people won't accept it, that's for sure. And besides, Zhang Ye has always been a

comedic celebrity. Scolding others and talking nonsense are his trademarks. Can he stand on a stage quietly and finish singing a song? He definitely can't!"

"Stop talking about the impossible. Zhang Ye will never join the music industry as a singer."

"Haha, I was just tossing the idea around, that's all. Of course I know that Teacher Zhang won't come to the music industry as a singer!"

"But if Zhang Ye were to really come, the music industry would certainly become a very lively place!"

"Yeah! Wherever Teacher Zhang goes, trouble ensues! Everything that happened in the past can tell us one thing—no industry can stand up to Zhang Ye's antics!"

Just because of a new song by Spring Garden, the netizens were all happily conversing!

Chapter 976: A new job?

That afternoon.

Someone knocked on the door.

Dong Shanshan had come to visit and even brought some fruit and health supplements with her.

His mother beamed. "Hi, Shanshan, you've come?"

Dong Shanshan smiled and said, "Aunt, Uncle."

"Come in, come in." His father went to welcome her. "Why did you buy so many things again?"

His mother pretended to be unhappy and said, "I've told you before that you don't need buy anything when you come visit. Child, why are you always so polite to us? Come, come on in."

Dong Shanshan looked around, searching for someone. "Where's Zhang Ye?"

A voice came from the bathroom. "I'm sitting on the throne."

Dong Shanshan covered her nose and said, "Hurry up. I have something important to discuss with you."

"OK," came the reply from inside.

As the weather warmed, Dong Shanshan dressed prettier. She was wearing a long skirt today and had tied her hair back in a simple ponytail. Her black hair seemed to have been dyed, sporting brown highlights.

As the door was not closed, an old neighbor standing outside stuck her head in to have a look.

His mother blinked and said, "Third Sister?"

The woman said in pleasant surprise, "Aiyo, it's really Dong Shanshan!"

Dong Shanshan turned around and smiled to her. "Hello."

The woman came into the house uninvited. "I really like your show. Can I take a picture with you?" She took out her cell phone as she said this. "Old Zhang, take a picture for us."

His father smiled and said, "Sure."

Click! Click! The shutter sounded.

Zhang Ye came out of the bathroom and said in amusement, "Third Aunt, how come you haven't asked to take a picture with me?"

The woman glanced at him. "I watched you grow up from a baby. So what's the point of taking a picture with you? I won't disturb you guys any longer. I'll be off now." She then clutched her cell phone and left in delight.

Dong Shanshan had gotten very popular now as more and more people knew about her, to the point that they could already identify her by name. Apparently, a big company had recently approached her for a major endorsement deal. Inside of one year, her value had increased severalfold. Although Zhang Ye was much more popular than her, his social ties were obviously not on the same level as hers. Dong Shanshan had a clean background with no scandals nor stains on her reputation. Every company would be willing to approach her, and she was the favorite of every television station that knew her, unlike Zhang Ye, whose reputation was stained and sullied and was an out-and-out troublemaker of the entertainment industry.

After chatting for a bit in the living room.

Zhang Ye led Dong Shanshan into his bedroom.

He closed the door and sat down on the chair, pulling out a chair for her as well. But Dong Shanshan did not sit down on it. She smoothed her skirt before sitting down on the end of the bed.

Zhang Ye asked, "You don't have work today?"

Dong Shanshan shrugged. "Don't you know that Do You Remember is going to be taken off the air soon?"

"Taken off the air?" Zhang Ye was stunned.

Dong Shanshan explained, "Last year, when The Voice came out, it propped up the market for singing shows. But the audience's demands also became higher along with that. Although Do You Remember and The Voice do not fall under the same category, it was inevitable that it'd be affected. Last month's viewership ratings of Do You Remember dropped again. Although it has maintained the standard of around 0.75% of the viewership ratings, the station still decided to stop broadcasting. Brother Hu and the program team staff also felt the same regarding the decision. Nobody wishes to be stagnant. They all hope to make a new show so that we may make a push. Who doesn't wish to get the number 1 spot in the nationwide viewership ratings at least once in their lifetime?"

"Number 1 spot in the nationwide viewership ratings?" Zhang Ye laughed and said, "That's no easy feat."

Dong Shanshan bluntly said, "That's why I'm looking for you."

Zhang Ye gave a wry smile and said, "You really think highly of me?"

"That's right." Dong Shanshan considered him. "We don't have the talent to achieve it, but you do. If you could even get the number 1 spot in the nationwide viewership ratings and trample on all the variety shows with a documentary, who else should we look for but you? I'm here to invite you to make a comeback and offer you a job as well."

Zhang Ye narrowed his eyes. "Is this your station's intention as well?"

Dong Shanshan smiled. "Yes, so will you take the offer?"

Zhang Ye said honestly, "But I don't really feel like making another show."

"Then what are you going to do?" Dong Shanshan said, "You still haven't found a job yet, right? Can't you tell the industry's attitude toward you now? They're all trying to keep as far away from you as possible. From what I know, no TV stations are brave enough to accept you, the 'Mess,' since they're all afraid of trouble."

Zhang Ye asked curiously, "Then why do you guys have the courage to ask me?"

Dong Shanshan smiled and said, "You know our Station Head, don't you? The old lady said that when Beijing TV was faced with difficulties, it was you, Little Zhang, who buried the hatchet and came to turn things around. You stayed up day and night without sleep and came up with the Quit Smoking PSA. Now that you, Little Zhang, have met with some difficulties, there is no reason for us not to offer you some help—oh, those were her exact words." Then she said, "The Station Head is a very good person. She has actually always been meaning to invite you back to join us."

Zhang Ye went silent for a moment. "Thank her for me."

"You should thank her yourself. I'm not qualified enough to speak directly with the Station Head since I'm not as important as you." Dong Shanshan said, crossing her legs, "The management has said that if you agree to go back, you would be placed with the same old team of Brother Hu and the others to re-establish a program team for a singing show. But this time, we must make it a big affair. The funding will not be a problem, so long as you are handling it personally. They are willing to invest a lot of money into this. You'll assigned as the executive director and executive producer. As for the hosts, we can have a man and a woman, so we can finally team up and appear onscreen together this time."

Zhang Ye asked, "What if an order is issued for me to be banned?"

Dong Shanshan replied, "If you can't be the host, we'll invite you as our guest."

"What if I can't even be a guest?" Zhang Ye asked.

"We can give it a try first. If there's really no way out, we can talk about it again when the issue has died down. The show can be pushed back for a month or two. The higher-ups can't possibly keep their eyes on you forever, right? There'll surely be a day when things pass." Dong Shanshan then used the tip of her high heels to nudge Zhang Ye's slipper. "So how about it? Give it some consideration."

This was a huge help indeed. With no one in the industry daring to involve themselves in this, Beijing Television had actually stepped up and offered him a position? It was even a rather good position and they were willing to delay the show just to wait for him? Just from the intention of this alone, Zhang Ye

had to accept it. This was undoubtedly a timely assistance for him and he knew that Beijing Television was definitely taking a huge risk on him!

However, it was difficult for Zhang Ye to change his mind once he had decided on something. He really did not want to be a host in the short term. However, if he was going to be the host or appear on camera, then it would be pointless for him to be the program's executive director. A behind-the-scenes job was obviously not possible to support the minimal exposure required of an A-list celebrity.

He considered for a few minutes.

Zhang Ye said, "Shanshan, thank Brother Hu and the Station Head for me. I think I'd rather not cause any trouble for you guys."

Dong Shanshan said, "You're really not going to join us?"

"Let's forget about me being the executive director and host. But I'm willing to help with the planning of the show." Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Don't worry. I'll accept the job as the producer. For you, Brother Hu and the Station Head, I'll definitely come up with a good show for everyone."

"Why don't you reconsider it?"

"There's no need to."

"You really do not want to team up with me as hosts?"

"That's not what I mean. It's just that I'm getting tired of being a host. I have to put on a cheery face every time I go onstage, and I don't even get to say what I really want to say. It's really getting meaningless, so I just want to have a change of scenery for a while."

"Then what will you do?"

"I don't know."

"Alright then, inform me immediately when you have found a new job."

"Why?"

"I would like to see who would be so bold as to employ you."

"Damn, listen to the way you're putting it."

"What? Isn't that so?"

Indeed.

Who would be so bold as to invite him to join them at such a time?

At present, it was very difficult for Zhang Ye to get an appearance onscreen as even any news related to him was being controlled and restricted. Though he was a big shot A-list celebrity, what was the point of hiring him if he was unable to appear onscreen?

Hai.

What should he do?

What could he do?

Chapter 977: King of Masked Singers attacks!

In the following two days, Zhang Ye kept thinking about what show he should make for Dong Shanshan and the others. He could easily list out many potential shows, but none were suitable once he gave it some serious thought.

They wanted a singing show, but it was impossible for Zhang Ye to bring out many of the most successful singing shows that he had. It wasn't that he was reluctant to use them, but that he wanted to keep them for his own use in the future. Although Zhang Ye did not plan to do any hosting work in the short term, it didn't mean that he would stop doing it forever. He would still get back into it and bring out those successful variety show one by one when the time came, so he needed to keep them for himself. As for the remaining second-tier singing shows, Zhang Ye found them to be unsuitable as well. He felt that he couldn't bring them out as it might lead to only average viewership ratings. If that were to happen, Zhang Ye wouldn't look good either, and he might also interfere with the plans of Dong Shanshan and Beijing Television.

This was tricky!

Which show should he use?

Zhang Ye was in a dilemma as he paced around the house.

His mother was getting annoyed. "You don't have a job, so why are you still thinking about other people's problems?"

"Since they came looking for me, I feel that I should give them some help." Zhang Ye said, "She's my classmate, and Beijing TV has been quite good to me too."

His mother asked, "What about your job then?"

"I'm still looking." Zhang Ye gave her a perfunctory answer.

His mother shook her head and said, "How many days has it been now? If you still don't appear onscreen soon, everyone will forget about you."

But his father said, "There's no rush. Things will eventually sort themselves out."

"You put it so lightly!" His mother stared and said, "How will things sort themselves out now? Everyone is pissed at my son after he offended that many people. How can it be sorted out? That lousy air pollution documentary would have been better off not made. His popularity might have soared, but his future is in shambles!"

His father frowned. "The air pollution documentary was made for the good of the future. Why should he not have done it?"

"Good of the future, my ass." His mother said in annoyance, "If it was for the good of the future, why is he still unable to get a good job right now? So what's good about it?"

Zhang Ye said, "Will the two of you knock it off? Don't worry about me. I know what I'm doing."

Back in his own room.

Zhang Ye was also actually feeling unsure about the situation.

Well, whatever. Let's play a lottery draw first and get a change of perspective. The air pollution documentary had given Zhang Ye a large amount of Reputation Points recently. He had gained another bout of Reputation Points after having spent it all during the National Martial Arts Conference and no longer had to worry about running low. Time for the lottery draw!

He brought up the game ring's virtual screen with great familiarity.

Should he play the Lottery Draw (One)?

Or the Lottery Draw (Two)?

Zhang Ye's mind was actually not on this. He just played the lottery draw to get a change of perspective. He wasn't really thinking much and simply tapped on the Lottery Draw (One) without even activating the Lucky Halo.

Purchase.

Begin.

The wheel began to spin.

Without looking, he instantly bought some additional stakes!

Total Additional Stakes: 500. He spent a total of 50 million on that. This was now considered small change to Zhang Ye. He was just playing the lottery draw for the sake of it.

It spun and spun.

The needle slowed.

Ba da. The needle stopped in the Stats Category region.

Zhang Ye was startled when he saw this. Please don't. Why is it this again? He had received the Fruit of Stamina, Fruit of Strength, and Fruit of Agility from the Stats Category during the National Martial Arts Conference and had already maxed out his stats of these three Fruits in the Lottery Draw (One). To level up further in those three stats, he would have to try to get the Lottery Draw (Two) versions of the Fruits. If he were to receive them again in the Lottery Draw (One), that would be as good as a waste since those Fruits wouldn't add any more stats for him. Even if he was just drawing for the sake of drawing this time, 50 million Reputation Points were still no small sum. If they went down the drain just like this, Zhang Ye would feel the pinch.

The Treasure Chests (Small) appeared!

Zhang Ye opened up the treasure chests in an uneasy mood!

[Fruit of Charm (Voice)] × 500: Permanently increases the player's voice's charm.

What?

Fruit of Charm?

Voice?

Zhang Ye remembered that he had gotten this item in a past lottery draw. The very first time he received it, it was several Fruits of Charm (Eyes). After that, he received several Fruits of Charm (Voice). Although he didn't eat many of them at that time and the effects were not that obvious, it was still somewhat effective.

He had received it again this time?

Eat! Eat! Eat!

Without another word, he just ate them!

One by one, he put the Fruits into his mouth!

Finally, Zhang Ye gave it a try and said something, "Ah, ha, wu."

As a result of that, even he himself jerked back a bit when he heard it. He could feel that his voice had clearly become quite different. The difference was even quite a big change. Although anyone who heard him talking would still know that it was Zhang Ye, his voice now included a rather magnetic tone. Compared to his previous dry and low voice, there was more depth and a greater three-dimensional feel to it! There seemed to be not much of a change, yet at the same time seemed like a huge change. So this was the effect of 500 Fruits of Charm?

How awesome!

This stuff is great!

Zhang Ye was a celebrity and charm was naturally a very important attribute for him. Furthermore, a host like him depended greatly on his speaking abilities! For something like that, having more of it would never be too much. According to the experience he had with the strength, stamina, agility variants of the Fruits, eating 1,000 Fruits should max out the stats?

Alright, then let's max it out!

Thinking of this, Zhang Ye simply activated the Lucky Halo (Upgraded) as he wanted to max out his stats using the Fruit of Charm (Voice). He just wanted to do so in advance, upgrading whatever stats that he could since all of these were definitely of use and likely to be of help in the future.

The Lucky Halo was activated.

A bright, pulsating glow rippled outward!

-100,000!

-100,000!

His Reputation Points were quickly dropping.

Zhang Ye also quickly pressed the lottery draw and added 500 additional stakes to it!

The wheel started spinning!

The needle kept colliding against the wheel's pegs revolution after revolution!

Maybe the Lucky Halo went on strike today, or maybe it was normal circumstances. When the needle slowly came to a stop, it did not stop in the region of the Stats Category. Instead, it landed in the Skills Category!

What?

Zhang Ye gave a bitter smile and quickly deactivated the Lucky Halo.

Thinking about it, even though this Lucky Halo was the upgraded version, it could only fulfill whatever Zhang Ye's maximum luck potential was. It couldn't help him achieve whatever results he wanted just because he wanted something very badly! Or get something specific that he asked for! That would not be realistic and Zhang Ye knew that he had expected too much.

Ai, this lottery draw might just be a waste of Reputation Points after all.

500 Treasure Chests (Small) appeared.

Zhang Ye could do nothing but take a deep breath before opening them. However, when he saw the items inside, he was instantly stunned, unable to react and frozen in place.

[Singing Skill Experience Book] × 500: Enhances the player's singing technique.

Singing Skill?

Also known as singing technique?

Such a skill experience book actually existed?

1 book...

10 books...

100 books...

The 500 skill experience books were devoured by Zhang Ye. They dissolved into glowing light particles and the learning surged straight into Zhang Ye's brain!

First he received the Fruit of Charm (Voice)?

Then he received the Singing Skill Experience Books?

Fuck, where is this headed? Are you trying to make this bro become a singer?

Although he didn't max out his stats, it still wasn't a small sum with 500 of each item. This was absolutely enough to qualify him as a professional singer, wasn't it? He probably would not get to the level of Zhang Yuanqi, Chen Guang, or Fan Wenli, but it should be at least enough to bring him into the world of professional singers, right? Uh, although he wouldn't actually know for sure since he had not

tested it out. This lottery result had really made Zhang Ye's jaw drop. He had just been playing the lottery for the hell of it, but who could have guessed that he would receive those two items?

Singing?

Become a singer?

Zhang Ye had entertained this thought before, but his singing had never been good, not as a child and not now. Although he didn't sound terrible, he had never practiced singing before either. Sometimes at home, he liked singing a little bit, but he knew that he didn't really sing well. As such, he had dismissed this thought.

But now?

What was the meaning of this?

This bro can finally become a singer too?

Just this thought alone was enough to excite Zhang Ye. Damn, why can't I sing? I've been a calligrapher, a mathematician, and even excelled as a crosstalk comedian and skit actor, so why can't I sing? Wasn't this a great chance to have a change of scenery like he wanted? Uh, but how should he cross over? No one dared to let him appear onscreen at this point in time! He had no team to produce a music album either! Even if he could produce one, would the higher-ups allow him to release the album? It was too uncertain, but based on the current atmosphere, it was highly unlikely! Although there was no clear indication of a ban, but by not allowing Zhang Ye to appear onscreen, that was essentially the industry's attitude on the matter. Someone in the higher-ups must have spread the word, but probably did not mention the word "ban" due to fear of negative feedback and backlash by the citizens. But this was fundamentally no different from a ban—and that was the reason why Zhang Ye found himself in such circumstances that he couldn't even get a job!

Couldn't appear onscreen?

Couldn't make mentions of his name?

Couldn't release any new works? Well, no one could know that it was him at least?

Suddenly, Zhang Ye's eyes lit up!

I got it!

How could I have forgotten about that!

Zhang Ye suddenly remembered a show. After worrying over what show he would help Dong Shanshan and the others make and about his job situation, he finally thought of this show. He immediately felt himself brighten up. Alright, it shall be you!

That's right!

There was no other show more suitable than this!

Although Zhang Ye wasn't sure he could truly sing yet, this fellow had always done things without a second thought. He would just do something once he thought of it. He was someone who would execute things immediately!

He called Dong Shanshan right away.

The call connected.

On the other end, Dong Shanshan said: "Zhang'er, what's the matter?"

Zhang Ye laughed and said: "I've thought of the new show for you guys."

Dong Shanshan's ears perked up. "Oh? What is it about?" Then she hurriedly turned to her colleagues who were noisily talking around her and said, "Quiet down for a bit. Zhang'er has thought of something for our next show."

Hu Fei ran over. "I want to hear about it!"

Xiao Lu said excitedly, "That's great! We've been waiting for some time!"

Dafei said, "Switch to speakerphone, Sister Dong."

"Alright, I'll put it on speaker." Dong Shanshan switched the call to speakerphone.

Hu Fei said: "Little Zhang, we've been waiting for your call for many days."

Everyone in the office quieted down.

They were all looking at Dong Shanshan's cell phone in extreme anticipation. This was because Zhang Ye was on the line. He was that legendary figure who used a documentary to sweep away the entire television show industry!

Zhang Ye said: "It is according to your requirements of a large-scale singing show that can fight for first in the viewership ratings."

Hu Fei took a breath and asked: "What's the show called?"

Zhang Ye smiled and replied: "We'll tentatively call it—King of Masked Singers!"

Chapter 978: The return of Zhang Ye!

The next day.

At Beijing Television.

In the program team office of Do You Remember.

Hu Fei, Dong Shanshan, Hou Ge, Hou Di, Dafei, Xiao Lu, and the rest of the program team were seated in the office. They looked up at Zhang Ye, busily writing on a blackboard that he had pulled over as he spoke bombastically.

Zhang Ye drew a picture on the blackboard. "The Do You Remember set can be reused, but we cannot scrimp on the funding for it. It still requires many changes, like the expansion of the stage. What we have right now is not going to work. We must change the overall atmosphere of the set to become darker as it is currently too bright. These changes won't be terribly difficult as it should be quite simple to implement them without requiring us to do too much work. Then, about the production budget for the show, this time we will need at least 100 million as the base amount!"

Everyone was dumbfounded.

"Ah?"

"100 million?"

"Do we need that much?"

Hu Fei was also very astonished by this figure and silently wiped at his sweat.

Their Beijing Television was not considered an elite station among the provincial television stations. Their viewership ratings were quite good, but not actually that high. That was the reason why their variety shows were more conservative as they did not have as much money as Central TV. As such, they had never been willing to put such a large sum of money into their productions. When they heard the proposed figure of 100 million, everyone became a little flustered.

Dafei asked, "Teacher Zhang, just what kind of show is this?"

"Yeah, King of Masked Singers? We don't really get it," Xiao Lu said.

Hu Fei added, "How would they be masked? Who would be masked?"

No such show had appeared in this world before, so everyone was confused by it.

But Zhang Ye had forgotten this detail. "OK, I didn't explain it clearly. Let me talk about the show's content first. The core of the show will be to invite some celebrities, singers, actors, or hosts—perhaps even some athletes if necessary. The only requirement is that they must be well-known and can sing well. Then we get a designer to design some masks, headaddresses, or costumes to cover up the faces and/or easily identifiable parts of these celebrities. We'll have them face off against each other on the same stage, with the winner not required to unveil themselves and moving on to the next round, while the loser can choose whether or not to take off their mask. As for how the specific elimination and advancement system works, I will explain in detail later. At the same time, we'll invite those heavyweights of the industry as judges and guests of the show. We can make them the guessing panel, where they'll give their reviews and try to guess the contestants' true identities!"

Everyone was once again dumbfounded!

A few newcomers on the program team were slack-jawed!

King of Masked Singers?

So that was what it meant to be masked?!

Zhang Ye said, "The selling point of the show is this: If these celebrities were standing onstage, we would know who they are. But if they have a mask on, and we can only hear their singing voices, we would have to guess their true identities while enjoying their singing. That's what makes it explosive!"

Hou Di swiftly brought up a problem. "But a lot of singers have very special and unique voices."

Zhang Ye replied, "We can ask them to slightly alter their way of singing, or to change their vocal placement a little, all of which can be easily achieved."

Hou Ge raised another issue. "But won't they be exposed the moment they speak?"

Zhang Ye laughed. "There are voice changers nowadays, which we can directly connect to the microphones. After the voice changer is in effect, even our own parents couldn't recognize our voices."

Hu Fei stood up agitatedly. "Celebrity face off? What if those singers who've been famous for a long time are concerned about losing to the newer singers? They might find it embarrassing and decide not to take part, no?"

"Use the appearance pay and tempt them. Besides, I just touched on that." Zhang Ye said, "The loser can choose to keep their mask on and just depart from the stage. As long as their identity stays hidden, as long as the internal team keeps it confidential, no one will find out who they are. Regarding this point, we'll need all of the staff to work together, but I suggest that only the director alone knows their true identity. We just won't tell anyone else. And make them wear their mask during the rehearsals and recording! We must not allow their identities to be exposed! If we allow that to happen, our show's selling point will lose its support! That is most definitely not acceptable!"

Zhang Ye's explanation was already enough to form the structure of the show!

Everyone listened in awe, looking at each other at times and seeing the surprise in each other's eyes!

A rookie gaped and asked, "In the past, singing shows have always had the structure of a talent show. We've always had amateurs taking to the stage to showcase themselves. But I have never, ever heard of celebrities taking to the same stage and competing against each other before. Th-This is too big a clash! No one has ever done something so excessive before! Would anyone really come and participate?"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Don't worry about that."

Everyone gasped.

A celebrity face off? Compete on stage? Only Zhang Ye would dare to come up with something like that! This idea had probably not even crossed the minds of others before! No wonder it required 100 million RMB in production fees. How much would it cost just to invite those participants? Then there was still the stage setup and the guessing panel of industry insiders?

That would be too excessive!

Wouldn't he be going for broke this way?!

This would surely turn the music industry upside down!

A woman rookie said, "I-Is that really going to be alright?"

Dong Shanshan suddenly raised her head. "I think it will be good!"

Hu Fei suddenly slapped his thigh. "Good? This will be great!"

Instantly, many of the program team staff felt excited. Just imagining Zhang Ye's description of the show and stage was already making their blood course!

Whether it was creativity.

Whether it was the scale of the show.

Whether it was the competition format.

Whether it was the professionalism.

All of them were unheard of in a variety show in the history of television shows!

In the past, every show that Zhang Ye proposed could not be understood by others when they first heard the proposal, and they would always think that it would not work out. Like for Do You Remember. What was so good about a show that required people to remember the lyrics? Like for Zhang Ye's Talk Show, what in the world was a talk show anyway? Like for A Bite of China, what kind of waves could a documentary set off? But as always, the results proved that Zhang Ye was right. His vision and knowledge were much greater than anyone else's. He was light-years ahead of the industry!

But today, when Zhang Ye brought up the King of Masked Singers show, almost no one doubted him. When they heard the summary of the show, they immediately knew that it was going to be spectacular!

Hu Fei was in a great mood. He laughed heartily and clapped Zhang Ye on the shoulder. "Sure enough, Teacher Little Zhang, we really needed you to take charge after all! You can come up with an idea for a show so easily. That's what makes you different from everyone else! Who else in the entire industry could have come up with a show like that? Just how does your mind work!"

Xiao Lu also exclaimed, "We can finally work alongside Teacher Zhang again!"

"With you back, we're all feeling very confident again!" Dafei went up and gave Zhang Ye a long-awaited bear hug. "We really missed you! Teacher Zhang, welcome home!"

Hou Ge went over. "Welcome home!"

Hou Di also gave him an emotional bear hug. "Teacher Zhang, we've waited for your return for a long time! Welcome home!"

Zhang Ye had gained his fame at Beijing Television, but was also driven away by Beijing Television. He had had his share of grudges, gratitude, and friends in this place. Too much had happened in these two years.

But now, Zhang Ye had returned.

He had returned and brought with him a television show that could possibly set the entire country alight.

Chapter 979: On fire even before the broadcast!

Translator: Legge Editor: - -

King of Masked Singers.

It did not exist in this world.

This was a world-class television show from Zhang Ye's previous world that was extremely successful and known throughout Asia. The original Korean version of the show swept the viewership ratings chart everywhere it was broadcast, unable to get dethroned by any other shows. It could be said that this was one of the representative works among variety shows. However, even though mainland China's domestic broadcast version of King of Masked Singers did quite well in the viewership ratings and was very popular with the viewers too, it was still lacking quite a bit when compared to the original Korean version. It could be considered a show that didn't translate well from a particularly successful franchise, which was a pity.

Zhang Ye had analyzed the reasons for this, and the reasons were probably numerous.

For example, the competition format: The Korean version required their contestants to reveal their identities upon getting eliminated, while the winner of one episode's match would have to accept a challenge from a different singer the next episode, with the winner of the challenge taking the throne as the Masked King. There were a lot of differences in the details of the show. The Chinese version would have the winner of a competition reveal their identities and then retire from the overall competition until the finals were held. In terms of the format, the Korean version was clearly more logical and interesting. Zhang Ye didn't know the motives behind the change in the Chinese version, but he deemed it a failure.

Another example was the masks: The Korean version went for full battle regalia, with the contestants covered from head to toe in a mask and costume. They were so well concealed that even if their own parents were standing in front of them, they would not be able to identify them. This undoubtedly increased the suspense of the identity and made it interesting by making it hard to guess their identity. Meanwhile, the Chinese version had masks that revealed too much of the contestants' features, while the costumes were designed with aesthetics as the priority. Some of the contestants would have their legs revealed, some would have their arms revealed, some would have their double chins seen. Their close friends in the industry would not even have to listen to their singing to know their true identity, yet they had to act like they didn't know and look like they were finding it difficult to guess who it really was. There was basically no point in designing it that way.

And then there was the issue of the number of eliminated contestants. Korea had many more artists, while the domestic market in China was unable to muster up enough due to various circumstances. They could not implement an elimination of all contestants other than the winner as there were not enough artists in the country who could sing well. Even if there were, not everyone would be available, and thus, the show's freshness was not as good as the Korean version. This was something that Zhang Ye had considered too.

Listing out all the pros and cons.

He made the necessary changes and went mainly with the Korean version of the show, while retaining some standout points of the Chinese version. After all, each country's situation was different and he couldn't just copy it wholesale without changes.

The amended changes were as follows:

1. The winner would not reveal their identity.
2. The losing contestant could choose whether to take off their mask.
3. The number of eliminated contestants needed to be increased, but would be adjusted based on the number of contestants.
4. The masks and costumes must conceal the entirety of the contestant.

These changes were something that Zhang Ye was trying out, but he was still very confident. For such a highly popular show from his previous world, he couldn't possibly give up on it just because the Chinese version was not produced too well. From the results of the Korean version of King of Masked Singers, this was definitely a variety show which had the potential to become popular in the entire country! The Korean version of King of Masked Singers even surpassed the viewership ratings of the Korean version of I Am a Singer! Just what kind of notion was that? And besides, even if the Chinese version of King of Masked Singers wasn't produced too well, its viewership ratings were still very high. If there weren't any other world-class variety shows competing in the same time slot, the results would definitely have been even better! Even if a world-class variety show was produced badly, its results were definitely not something that any other normal variety shows could match. It would still be spectacular!

...

The program proposal was quickly submitted to the station.

The director of Beijing Television was shocked!

The station heads were also shocked!

The moment they read the proposal, many of the heads of Beijing Television felt extremely excited. They had not expected that after the era of The Voice, during which singing shows were done to death, someone could still come up with something as original as this. The station heads only felt more relieved when they found out that it was Zhang Ye who put forward this proposal. They gave wry smiles as they thought of how Zhang Ye was without a doubt the best guy in the TV show industry. It was probably only Zhang Ye who could surpass Zhang Ye!

The station immediately gave their approval!

The program proposal?

Approved!

100 million?

Approved!

They did all that without objection!

After the success of Beijing Television's Spring Festival Gala, the ambitions of the station grew. There was only one request and expectation of this show: Take the nationwide viewership ratings' top spot!

Beijing Television had always come up short in the area of variety shows. Once upon a time, many years ago, disregarding the nationwide viewership ratings' top spot, the number of times they were ranked top in the daily viewership ratings could be counted on their fingers. And this was even due to those days having no other good shows scheduled. As for their results in the nationwide viewership ratings for variety shows? There was no way they could compare! There was simply no place for them in the top few spots!

But right now, today, Beijing Television was feeling full of confidence. Everyone could feel a sense of simmering strength. They could all feel a sense of surety deep down inside!

Because that person had returned!

Because that legendary host who used to be part of their station had finally returned!

...

Do You Remember's program team.

Hu Fei received the approval order and came back to the office. "The management has approved it!"

"This is great!"

"They're really going to allocate us 100 million?"

"Holy shit!"

"This is the real deal now!"

"If we mess it up, we're going to be screwed!"

"Don't say such discouraging things! We have Teacher Zhang on our side!"

"True, true, true! We have Teacher Zhang around!"

Everyone was chattering excitedly. Every one of them here had, in fact, never been part of such a large-scale variety show before. Who would be content with working very hard every day on a show that would not get famous? But anyone would be willing to make a hit! And today, that chance had arrived!

Zhang Ye said helplessly, "Please don't expect so much of me, everyone. I'm only here to help. Everyone needs to work hard on it together." He looked at Hu Fei and said, "Brother Hu, what are the expectations of the management?"

Hu Fei smiled and said, "Nationwide viewership ratings' top spot."

Zhang Ye nodded. "Which day do we broadcast on?"

"Feel free to choose."

"Time slot?"

"Feel free to decide."

Zhang Ye said, "Alright, I understand."

They could get however much funding they needed; they could ask for any day and time slot for broadcast as they wanted. Such treatment was unprecedented. Almost everything was given the green light!

Everyone knew that this was not due to the hard work that the Do You Remember program team had put in for the past year. It was purely based on the reputation of Zhang Ye as the best television program director and producer in the industry!

Zhang Ye immediately started giving orders. "Let's hurry up and make full use of the time. If the show can begin earlier, then let's push it out earlier and not drag things out. Start publicizing the show and put up a front for now. But don't reveal the content of the show. We'll explain in detail when the production work is done, so as to prevent others from copying us. Dafei, take a few people with you and start identifying the suitable candidates. Then write up a list and invite them one by one. Remember to keep it secret!"

Dafei replied, "Roger!"

Zhang Ye looked at Hou Ge. "Hou Ge, there's a lot of work to be done for the stage setup, so I'll leave that to you. You must supervise it well and get the workers to quickly finish the task!"

Hou Ge thumped his chest. "Leave it to me. Don't worry!"

Zhang Ye said, "Shanshan."

Dong Shanshan smiled. "Here."

Zhang Ye said, "The host this time shall be you, and the style..."

Zhang Ye had a great presence. Wherever he stood, everyone would listen and wait for their instructions. But suddenly, Zhang Ye froze midway as he was talking. He looked at everyone in embarrassment and said, "Eh, I don't think I'm the executive director this time."

Dong Shanshan was amused. "You've finally realized?"

Zhang Ye smiled sheepishly. "Hai, I was too used to it. I'm sorry about that, Brother Hu. You're the executive director, so I think it's better for you to delegate. I will just keep to my planning and not involve myself in other things."

But Hu Fei said, "Your delegation was pretty good. This show is yours and the experience you have in organizing a large-scale variety show is more than mine. You're still the most suitable candidate for the executive director position as well as the host...."

"I mentioned it to Shanshan already." Zhang Ye waved his hands and said, "I'll forgo the position of executive director since I'm involved in some trouble. It's probably a bigger mess than you guys think it is, so it's better not to have my name linked to the show's executive director role. Whether our show can successfully be allowed to broadcast is still a big question mark, so it's better to have it this way. I'll just handle the planning and earn a commission through the copyright. If there are any other matters that I can help with, I will definitely do so. However, I must definitely not take the role of executive director."

Everyone kept on persuading him.

But Zhang Ye did not agree and still rejected them.

First, he did not wish to cause any trouble for his old friends.

Second, he had something more important that he needed to do!

...

Before long, the news was released.

Some of it was purposely publicized by Beijing Television, while some was unintended. Afterwards, news of Zhang Ye's return to Beijing Television quickly gained wings!

"Someone saw Zhang Ye outside Beijing TV!"

"What?"

"What do you mean by that?"

"Zhang Ye's going back to Beijing TV!"

"For real?"

"What do you mean for real? The news has already talked about it! Go and have a look for yourself!"

"Zhang Ye's new show lands on Beijing TV!"

"Sources say it will be a singing variety show!"

"Title yet to be decided, but production cost set for 100 million!"

"Zhang Ye to be executive producer of new show, but not executive director!"

"Beijing TV's new show to be fully produced by Zhang Ye. Dong Shanshan confirmed as show host!"

"Hahaha!"

"After so many days, Teacher Zhang's new show is finally coming!"

"Do You Remember is going to stop broadcasting? Teacher Shanshan's influence is really great. Even Zhang Ye has come to produce a show for her! Why don't I get to have such an awesome ex-classmate!"

"Support!"

"I'm anticipating this to death!"

"Why isn't Zhang Ye going to be the host!"

"I heard that it's because he's been banned from the industry! They won't allow him to be onscreen!"

"Just what kind of a singing show will it be? Please explain!"

"But singing shows are already overdone. What is there to look forward to? Could it be the second season of The Voice? That can't be, otherwise Zhang Ye himself would be the host, right?"

"An entirely new show?"

"As long as it's made by Zhang Ye, I must watch it!"

"Start broadcasting already! I can't wait any longer!"

"Yeah, the days without Zhang Ye in the variety show industry have been way too boring!"

It was bustling online!

A lot of people were making a racket and looking forward in anticipation!

King of Masked Singers was on fire even before the broadcast!

No, to be accurate, the audience did not even know what the show was about or what it was going to be titled, but the show was already on fire before the broadcast!

Why?

There was no reason why.

It was simply because this was Zhang Ye's new show, that's all.

Chapter 980: Stop pretending to be an oil worker, you!

A few days later.

At home.

Zhang Ye received a call from Chen Guang.

"Zhang'er, King of Masked Singers has invited me."

"I know. I was the one who recommended you."

"The show's content has been explained to me by the production team. It sounds really good. It's making my pulse race a bit. But I have some big concerns that are holding me back from joining."

"You can sing so well. What do you have to worry about?"

"Don't you know how many people are in the music industry? Those newcomers are all better than the last at singing. Their vocals are so good, so how can I not be worried?"

"They can even sing better than you?"

"If we're all going to be masked, then that might just be the case. Since we can't depend on our popularity and our looks, we'll purely be pitting our singing skills. Besides, the choice of song plays a very important role too. Hai, but you don't know about singing, so I can't really explain it to you. Forget it. I think I need to mull this over. If I can't participate, I'm fine with being on the panel of guest judges. The production team has also given me that choice if I don't choose to participate in the actual competition."

"Sure. Give it some consideration then."

"Lemme ask you this. Will the show succeed?"

"This show is produced by me. Whatcha think?"

"Alright, I understand."

...

At Beijing Television.

The last episode of Do You Remember finished broadcasting. The actual recording was completed a week ago, and the Do You Remember program team was officially renamed to the King of Masked Singers program team today. It still consisted of the original team as its base, but over a dozen other employees were transferred from other departments to join them as well.

The King of Masked Singers program team officially began production work.

In the office space, each person was working without rest.

Hu Fei was making a call. A woman was on the other end of the line.

"Teacher Li, I am Beijing Television's Hu Fei."

"Yes, hello, Director Hu."

"Regarding what we discussed two days ago, have you made a decision yet?"

"I'm still thinking. I'm not ready to make a decision yet."

"If it's about the appearance fee, we can still increase it some more."

"Don't misunderstand. It's not about the appearance fee. I think this show is really good and personally I would like to join. But I'm afraid that the pressure would be too great on me, which is why I have some hesitation."

"With your talent, you definitely won't have a problem on this stage. You're the first celebrity I called because I've always loved your songs."

"Thank you, Director Hu. Then..."

"Come join us. We'll definitely keep your identity a secret!"

"Well...fine."

"Great. So it's decided?"

"Ai, I'm going to have to go all-out this time."

He hung up.

Hu Fei laughed loudly. "I got one!"

Dong Shanshan blinked. "That woman?"

"Right, it's that woman!" Hu Fei and she were speaking in riddles.

When a few of the rookies on the team heard this, their curiosity was piqued. But they didn't have the courage to ask who it was, although they knew that this woman was definitely someone extremely popular and a big shot from the expressions on Hu Fei's and Dong Shanshan's faces!

Dafei suddenly exclaimed from where he was, "Brother Hu, I reeled in one as well!"

Hu Fei hurriedly went over. "Who?"

"That actor," Dafei said mysteriously.

But Hu Fei seemingly understood and kept saying, "Good, good, good!"

Dafei said, "But it's only rumored that his singing is very good, as no one has actually heard him before. So I was a little worried and requested that he send us a demo."

Hu Fei nodded and said, "Right, if it were a professional singer, that wouldn't be necessary. But for celebrities from other industries, it's better to play it safe by asking for a sample of their singing. Otherwise, if we spend money inviting them and it turns out that they can't sing well, it wouldn't be too appropriate to replace them at that time. It'd also be too late to do so."

Dafei said, "Let's listen to it."

Hu Fei beckoned to everybody. "Come here, everyone. Let's listen to it together."

The program team staff all came over.

The audio clip, which was simply titled "demo," was played.

Right at the start, a melodious male voice drifted out.

"I once loved a woman.

"Her smile, ever so innocent.

"One day..."

Everyone was astonished!

"That was really good singing!"

"This is great!"

"Is this an actor? Isn't this just like how a professional singer would sing?"

"Who is this? Brother Fei, please tell us!"

"Yeah, you're making us so curious! Who is it?"

"I can't identify him by his voice at all!"

Dafei simply smiled knowingly. "That's classified."

Hu Fei approved, "It's confirmed! This teacher has made the grade!"

Dafei said, "Alright, I'll go and contact him immediately!"

Hu Fei reminded, "Remember to keep it a secret!"

"Understood!" Dafei promised.

One...

Five...

Eight...

The number of approved celebrities kept growing!

This greatly exceeded the expectations of the program team staff. They had initially thought that it would require a great deal of persuasion and talk to convince those celebrities to join. But as it turned out, when they explained the show's internal workings to the celebrities, a lot of them became very interested upon hearing how the show worked. There was even a veteran singer who hadn't appeared much in public for over ten years who agreed immediately when invited! The celebrities weren't dumb. For some shows that were destined to have very little viewership, they wouldn't join even if they were offered a lot of money for the appearance fee. But if they heard about a show they believed would get extremely popular throughout the country, even if the program team did not invite them, some of them would surely come looking for the program team instead. Even if the appearance fee was low, they would surely agree to join. And this King of Masked Singers by Zhang Ye was clearly such a show!

"Brother Hu, I have a demo here for you to listen to."

"Coming."

"How is it?"

"This is good! This sounds really clean!"

"Then should I contact them?"

"Who is this?"

"A celebrity who came up through the ranks of a talent show."

"Go ahead!"

Suddenly, Dafei fell silent while holding a stack of papers of the recommended participants.

"What's the matter, Brother Fei?" a rookie named Han Qi asked.

Dafei asked curiously, "Who recommended this person? Why is there only a contact number on it? There's no name?"

Han Qi was one of the few staff members of the program team who had access to this recommendation list. "I don't know, it wasn't me." Turning to another colleague, she asked, "Brother Sun, did you put them in?"

Sun looked over the list. "It wasn't me."

Hu Fei also came over to have a look. "Give them a call and ask who it is. The people on this list are all celebrities and big shots."

So Dafei handed the paper to Han Qi. "I still have a lot to do here. You can handle it."

"OK." Han Qi got very excited. The chance to have direct contact with a celebrity could count toward her qualifications. She immediately called the number.

...

At home.

Ring, ring, ring.

Zhang Ye's other phone started ringing. This was the new cell phone he had gotten from the Central TV annual staff party's lucky draw. Just a few days ago, he had slotted in a new SIM card he had just bought.

Zhang Ye purposely disguised his voice and answered: "Hello."

"Hello, Teacher. How are you?" On the other end, Han Qi spoke with caution.

"Ah, I'm good."

"I'm calling from the King of Masked Singers' program team. Has anyone contacted you before this?" Han Qi somehow felt that this voice was very strange.

"Yes."

"Someone has already done that?"

"Yes."

"Apologies, but we don't seem to have a record of your name. May I know who you are, sir?"

"Just an ordinary person."

"Uh, what's y-your surname, sir?"

"It's confidential."

"How old are you this year, sir?"

"Not old."

"What's your occupation, sir?"

"I'm a worker."

"Ah! You're a worker?"

"Yes."

"Huh. Th-Then are you sure you were invited to participate on King of Masked Singers?"

"Yes."

"If you're not a professional singer, we require that you send us a sample of your singing. Can you provide us with that, sir? You can just send it to our email."

"Sure."

"Thank you very much."

"You're welcome."

The call ended just like that.

Zhang Ye smiled to himself. He wasn't purposely trying to keep it from Hu Fei and Dong Shanshan, but had to do so because he needed to participate anonymously.

A sample of his singing?

Was this a screening?

Then what song should he choose?

Zhang Ye hesitated for a bit, then chose a song at random to record his sample. He did not have any professional equipment at home and did not know how to play any instruments either, so he chose to sing a cappella for the recording. At most, he might need to do some post-processing to it, but he could do that at home anyway. As this was just a sample clip, there wasn't really a need to do any major fixes to the recording.

After clearing his throat, he began.

This was the first time Zhang Ye seriously tried to record his singing, so he felt rather diffident. But when he opened his mouth to sing, even he was taken aback by his own voice!

...

Back at Beijing Television.

The King of Masked Singers' program team.

Han Qi said in a speechless manner, "Who could have recommended him? Why did someone contact him?"

"Did you find out who it was?" Hu Fei looked over.

"He wouldn't say!" Han Qi said angrily.

Dafei was surprised. "Wouldn't say?"

Han Qi said, "He didn't want to reveal anything at all. When I asked him what his profession was, he actually told me that he was a worker!"

"Pfffft!" Xiao Lu, who was drinking some water, did a spit-take. "A worker?"

Hu Fei didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "The names on this list are all big shots. How can there be any ordinary workers on it? Was he just teasing you?"

Han Qi said angrily, "That man was so awful. He spoke in a strange, gravelly voice, like he was afraid that someone would recognize him. It's like he thinks he really is some big shot or something."

Hou Di pondered this for a moment. "If he really did try to disguise his voice while talking, then he might really be a big shot. Perhaps he might actually get recognized easily if he speaks in his natural voice?"

"Ah?" Han Qi was startled. "Are you sure?"

Xiao Lu was cramping up from laughing. "Would a big shot call themselves a worker? This is clearly a prank on our Little Han! Hahahaha, I'm dying of laughter!"

Han Qi started blushing and became even more angry. "I asked him to send us a demo. I want to hear for myself just what kind of a worker he really is!"

A rookie suddenly said, "Oh, an email just arrived? Is it this one?"

Han Qi quickly ran over and pointed at the screen while gnashing her teeth. "Yes, yes, yes, it's him!"

Hu Fei laughed and said, "Come, let's all have a listen."

Dafei was getting very curious. "I really want to find out who this could be."

"I wanna listen to it too." Xiao Lu scrambled over as well. "Heehee, which big shot is so playful that he's willing to tease our rook?"

Han Qi's face was getting hot. "Sister Lu, please don't ridicule me."

Xiao Lu said, "Sure, sure, sure. Big Sis will help you denounce him. Will that do?"

"Yeah!" Han Qi replied.

Having encountered such a weird person!

Everyone in the program team came over in delight upon hearing about this amusing incident.

The rookie clicked on the email attachment and started playing the recording.

There was no melody.

There were no instrumentals.

Everyone was surprised. Was it a cappella?

However, when the singing started, everyone was shocked by the vocal weight and technique. As the tune played, Xiao Lu got the goosebumps!

"Land as pretty as a picture!

"Our native land built on the backs of steeds!"

It was bel canto! But the voice was magnetic and sounded very young! What song was this? An oldie? But it couldn't be. Otherwise, why hadn't they heard of it before? Was it an original?

Damn!

Who was it?

Which famous person of the music industry was this?

The timbre of some singers' voices was recognizable right at the first word they sang. Although this man seemed to be purposely disguising his voice, those seasoned vocals could not be concealed! Everyone in the program team had already heard quite a few demos submitted by the celebrities and professional singers. But they had to admit that this unknown big shot's singing that was playing right now was definitely one of the best they had heard today!

The vocals.

The technique.

The control.

All of them were at the professional level!

A lot of them were drawn into the singing as they listened!

Hu Fei exclaimed, "Who is this!"

Dafei shouted, "Damn!"

Xiao Lu said, "This is a heavyweight contestant!"

Han Qi stood there dumbfounded, slack-jawed. She didn't expect this tight-lipped celebrity she was just on the phone with to actually sing this well!

Following this, however, everyone was floored!

The lyrics this man sang next made everyone feel like they were going to vomit blood!

"Land as pretty as a picture!

"Our native land built on the backs of steeds!

"How glorious it is to be an oil worker!

"Wearin' a hard hat and trav'lin' the world!"

Pfft!

Pfft!

Pfft!

Everyone in the office burst out laughing!

"Snow from Tianshan falls overhead!

"Facing the Gobi's desert storms!

"Greeting the rising sun on the banks of the Jialing River!

"Sending off the sunset at the foot of the Kunlun Mountains!

"Fearing nothing!

"And no one!

"Let it thunder and snow!

"I offer oil to my homeland!

"Wherever the oil is, that is where my home shall be!"

Han Qi's legs wobbled!

Offering oil to the homeland?

I'll offer your little sister's oil!

"Fluttering red flags welcome rosy clouds!

"Heroes whip their horses of war along!

"How glorious it is to be an oil worker!

"Wearin' a hard hat and trav'lin' the world!

"Erecting oil rigs in the vast grasslands!

"Bottom of clouds cover the wells!

"Underground crude oil meets the sky!

"My native land blooms with the gift of oil!

"Fearing nothing!

"And no one!

"Looking over the world with our great ambition!

"I offer oil to my homeland!

"With oil for my homeland, my heart blooms happily!"

The song ended.

The demo finished playing.

Everyone in the office was looking at each other!

Suddenly, Hou Di slapped his thigh and collapsed onto the table, belly laughing. "Hahahahaha hahahaha!" He was sprawled out on the table, unable to get up!

Dafei burst into laughter!

Xiao Lu was crying with laughter. "Aiyo!"

Only Han Qi looked embarrassed. She nearly burst into tears!

Hu Fei couldn't help but pat Han Qi on the shoulder. "It's been confirmed. You were the victim of a joke."

Han Qi was angered to tears. "Brother Hu—"

"Hahahaha!" Hu Fei couldn't hold it in any longer and started laughing too.

A worker?

You're a worker?

Bull fucking shit!

As a big shot celebrity and a professional singer with such good singing, why on earth are you pretending to be an oil worker!

You even offer oil to the homeland?

Why don't you dig some coal for your homeland instead!

At this moment, everyone had determined the nature of this voice's owner!

Just look at the other invited participants! Which one of them were not taking this competition seriously? Which of the interested participants of their show did not send in a serious sample of their singing that would exhibit their best points? But this guy? Not only did he not give his name, he even claimed that he was a worker? He even made up some song about offering oil to the homeland? Most importantly, he still fucking sang with such excellence?

This was an old pro!

This fellow was definitely a seasoned pro of the industry!

But who could it be?

Why couldn't they figure it out from his singing?

Dafei said, "Brother Hu, what do we do about this person?"

Tears streaming down her face, Han Qi said, "Must we invite him?"

"What reason is there to not invite someone who can sing with such skill?" Hu Fei said with excitement, "No matter who recommended him and whether or not he wants to reveal his identity, this man...must definitely be invited onto the show!"

Han Qi groaned, "Ugh."

Dafei nodded. "Alright, understood!"

Han Qi spoke hesitantly, "Brother Fei, I..."

Dafei made a decision and said with a snigger, "Little Han, you'll be in charge of contacting this guy. We'll leave it to you to call him, notify him, and take care of his costume from now on."

Han Qi said tearfully, "Brother Fei, can you not?"

"Hahaha, you can consider this to be part of your training!" Dafei said, "Usually, someone who's such a hooligan has self-confidence, and is a very big shot in the industry. Getting few more connections will do you no harm. I'm doing this for your own good, Little Han."

Han Qi was skeptical. "Seriously?"

Dafei said solemnly, "Of course."

Han Qi made a noise in acknowledgment and moped, "OK, alright. I'll do my best."

Due to the special nature of the show, every participant on King of Masked Singers would need to have a dedicated assistant to take charge of their makeup, costumes, masks, communication, and other related tasks. But no matter how Han Qi thought about it, she felt like she had been deceived. Having been assigned to such an unreliable singer, she felt that her future was utterly bleak! But even she had to admit that this man's voice and singing were really amazing!

Just who could it be?

Was there even such a person in the music industry?