

Superstar 1011

Chapter 1011: I wanna walk from south to north!

In the studio.

Everyone was waiting in breathless anticipation!

The house band took their place and was joined by a group of folk musicians.

Intrigued, Chen Guang said, "Folk music?"

Amy wondered, "And what is he going to sing?"

Zhang Xia had already stopped talking. She was carefully observing the stage and waiting for The Clown to start singing.

Famous host Chen Yidong sat up straight. "I've been waiting for him for a long time. It's finally his turn again. As long as he uses his real voice, we can match it against those celebrities on the B-list and above, and we'll most likely guess who he is. I don't even wish to find out who Petal Shower and Sunflower are anymore! All I want is to know who The Clown is!"

Famous lyricist and composer Wang Zhuishu, who had a list of names in front of him, said, "For those on the B-list and above, ruling out all the female celebrities and those who cannot sing, there are only a few dozen possibilities left. I don't believe that I can't find out who he is. Even if he continues to hide or change the tone of his voice, there has to be a limit to how much he can do it. He can't possibly change it too much." But unbeknownst to him, he had already excluded that man right from the start.

Yao Jiancai interjected, "What if he's actually a woman?"

Amy burst out laughing, "Crossdressing?"

The Clown walked onstage.

Instantly, the sound of applause flooded the entire studio!

"It's starting, it's starting!"

"It's The Clown!"

"Hurry up and sing! I've been waiting for him!"

"Me too. Ever since his match with Petal Shower in the first round, I haven't had any interest in anything that happened afterward. Sunflower didn't manage to perform up to his potential either!"

"The key is that we know he's at least a B-list celebrity now, so that's really intriguing!"

"Right, who could it be!"

"Let's just listen to him sing first. He's recovered from his cold, and his voice seems to be back too. We couldn't hear him properly earlier because he sang in falsetto, but once he starts singing in his real voice, we'll definitely get a hint of who he is."

"Yeah, let's listen first."

"We have find out who he is, or else I won't be able to sleep!"

"That first song called 'Opera' was wonderful!"

"Rather than wonderful, it was spectacularly scary, OK?!"

"Yeah, even the godly Petal Shower was crushed by him!"

The contestants backstage were thinking the same.

Petal Shower was waiting with her eyes closed.

Sunflower in the Starlight was staring at the TV.

Sunset Glow did not blink as the names of a number of male celebrities popped into her mind, but all were shot down by her one by one.

Center stage.

Zhang Ye gripped the microphone as he glanced over to the judging panel and the audience. From the unbridled stares of the crowd, he could read many things. Everyone was waiting for him to start singing to find out who he was. A smirk emerged from the corner of his mouth beneath the mask. Do you guys really think that you'll be able to identify me? Do you really think you can hear my voice and guess who I am?

The spotlights sparkled.

Everyone was focusing on him.

Zhang Ye could already feel himself falling in love with this stage.

Here, no one recognized him.

Here, no one knew who he was.

He had come alone and would leave alone. This was a really great feeling!

The music played!

First, the notes of a dizi gently floated in.

Next, a guzheng melody harmonized with it.

They were obviously folk music instruments, but the tune that played was clearly rock, its rhythm standing out!

Just this intro alone was enough to give the audience a high!

Startled, Chen Guang said, "This is rock?"

Amy was stunned. "Surely not? Folk music paired with rock?"

"It's definitely rock!" Chen Guang himself was a rock singer and he'd definitely know it if he heard it. He was absolutely sure that this was a rock song, which was the reason why he was startled. He had never heard of someone using a rock rhythm in folk music, and there wasn't even a drummer or guitarist playing? Weren't the folk musical instruments just for supporting accompaniment? They were used for the main melody instead?

Could it even be played this way?

Could rock actually be done in such a way?

Deng deng deng.

Deng deng deng.

Deng deng deng, deng di, deng deng.

Under the gaze of over a thousand sets of eyes, The Clown tightened his grip on the microphone and placed it close to his mouth.

His voice instantly resonated through the studio!

"I wanna walk from south to north.

"I wanna walk from day til night.

"I want people to look at me,

"But not know who I am."

It was really rock!

He was really singing a rock song!

You want everyone to look at you, but not know who you are?

The audience was stunned!

"If you see me a li'l tired,

"Please pour me a bowl of water.

"If you've fallen in love with me,

"Then please plant a kiss on my mouth."

The title of the song was displayed on the screen overhead the stage.

" Fake Monk 1 ."

What song was this?

It was another song that no one had heard before?!

What the fuck! From where did you get so many originals?

The judges were all going a bit crazy!

Especially Wang Zhuishu, who was a famous lyricist and composer in the industry. He knew a lot of people and as long as it was a slightly more well-known lyricist or composer in the scene, he knew them. Just from the beginning of this song, he knew that it was absolutely not a simple piece and definitely not a song that could be written by a newcomer. So what was going on? Just what on earth was going on with these songs that would give anyone who heard them the goosebumps!?

"I have this pair of feet and legs. I have this far and wide journey.

"I want the all of everything, but not hate or regret.

"If you wanna love me, don't fear regret!

"Cuz one day I'll be going far away!

"I don't wanna stay in one place,

"Nor want others to follow me."

Chen Guang was about to erupt. "Just who the hell is this!"

This song was so good!

The lyrics were so good!

The Clown had already performed three songs on this stage, but the one that Chen Guang liked best was the one he was currently listening to. Although it was his first time listening to it, Chen Guang could already feel the rock 'n' roll blood in him surging with excitement!

Wang Zhuishu quickly scanned through the list of names. "Which guy is it? Which celebrity could it be?"

Amy asked anxiously, "Have you found out yet?"

Yao Jiancai said, "Is there anyone that matches his profile?"

Chen Yidong was also checking who could sing from the list of celebrities on the B-list and above. "Li Yu? No, it's definitely not him. Old Huo? It's not his voice either! Old Li? But he's currently on tour in Hong Kong! Who! Who is he!"

Wang Zhuishu said in exasperation, "Why don't any of these names match!"

The Clown used his explosive and impactful voice to continue singing.

"I wanna walk from south to north.

"I wanna walk from day til night.

"I want people to look at me,

"But not know who I am."

The audience was infected by the music!

This song was exceptionally fit for the stage!

Everyone could see him but did not know who he was!

With "Fake Monk," he had once again shocked the audience!

A lot of those in the audience no longer knew how to describe their current feelings!

The Clown was still singing. In fact, his voice was getting even higher. His real voice was different from that of his falsetto. It was not as clear, but when used in this song, it was the perfect combination!

"I just wanna see how pretty you are,

"But not know you are suffering!

"I wanna obtain Heavens' rains, but with none of your tears.

"I don't wanna believe there are really demons, or fight anybody."

The Clown walked forward a few steps and pointed upward.

"Don't try to figure out just who I am,

"And don't try to see through this lie of mine."

Every word in The Clown's lyrics seemed to be sung to them, but also felt like they were sung for himself!

In the waiting room, Petal Shower exclaimed, "He's singing great!"

Sunset Glow said in astonishment, "He can even sing rock?"

The already eliminated God of War who had come through from a talent show was also convinced now. Losing to someone like that was nothing to be ashamed about. Suddenly, he felt a little lucky that he had faced a slightly less capable Sunflower today. If he had been matched against The Clown in the first round, he might even have lost 500 to 0 during the voting! That would truly have been embarrassing and he might not have had the courage to take off his mask if that had happened!

Freaks!

These were truly a bunch of freaks in the music industry!

Especially The Clown, who was the freakiest of the freaks!

Amy was already standing up, slapping the table in front of her and shouting, "Aiyo! Just which senior came to this stage to tease us?"

The Clown sang with a smile.

"La la la la la la la.

"I want people to look at me,

"I want people to look at me,"

The music came to a stop.

It was silent onstage.

With a pause, The Clown closed his eyes and used his slightly magnetic voice to sing in a cappella:

"I want people to look at me,

"But not know...who...I...am."

He sustained the last few notes before breaking off!

The song ended!

The Clown straightened and smiled, slightly bowing.

A burst of cheers erupted!

"Ahhh!"

"Bravo!"

"I love him to death!"

"Me too!"

"Isn't this song just fascinating?"

"How does he sing so well!"

"Who the hell is The Clown! Why can't I figure out who he is even after listening to his real voice!"

"I want to know so badly that I'm gonna go crazy!"

"His falsetto is unmatched, and his real voice is this amazing too?"

"The main thing is that his song is good too! It's really good!"

"The Clown! I dare you to take off your mask! Do you dare!"

"Aiyo, damn! I really want to know who the fuck he is!"

Backstage.

Petal Shower was nodding in approval and clapping!

God of War, who had already taken off his mask, was also clapping. He clapped so hard his palms turned red. "Bravo! This song is so perfect!" Then he looked at the camera and said to himself, "I'll definitely come back in the revival round! It would be such an honor to share a stage with this godly senior!"

Han Qi was shouting excitedly inside the studio, "The Clown! The Clown!"

The audience was screaming.

"The Clown!"

"The Clown!"

"The Clown!"

The Clown had left the stage.

Dong Shanshan retook the stage. "Thank you for performing, The Clown."

She had wanted to calm the audience down before inviting the second contestant to come out onstage. The next contestant was Sunflower in the Starlight, who was already waiting in the wins.

However, the audience's emotions could not be calmed at all.

"The Clown!"

"The Clown!"

"The Clown!"

A lot of people were still screaming!

Dong Shanshan had no choice but to keep quiet and wait for the audience to calm themselves down.

Sunset Glow, who was third in line to take the stage to battle for Masked King, smiled wryly when she saw this. The Clown was much too popular. How could they possibly compete against him?

A song without lyrics!

And a rock song!

At least for today, the stage belonged to The Clown. With those two songs, there was basically no question about who would be crowned as the Masked King today!

Among the present audience members, at least half of them had already become fans of The Clown!

The skills required to sing the song with no lyrics?

The spirit and idea behind "Fake Monk"?

Even if Zhang Yuanqi had worn a mask and come onstage, she might not necessarily have been able to beat him today!

Chapter 1012: The Clown's live rendition of 'Our Villagers'

After leaving the stage.

The Clown walked off with the audience cheering him on.

Han Qi was almost jumped in excitement. "Teacher! That was a really great song!"

With his performances complete, Zhang Ye could finally talk without hesitation. "It wasn't too bad. I think I did alright." He felt rather satisfied.

The song was not that easy to sing. In fact, it would be easier to sing some other songs that required the belting of high notes. In contrast, this song's high notes were not that obvious and there weren't many

pitch changes either, so that made it very difficult to sing and would require a greater skill to execute well.

It was a song that didn't exist in this world. But in Zhang Ye's previous world, "Fake Monk" was a very illustrious song by Cui Jian 1 . It was a decades-old song and enjoyed quite the high status within rock music and music industry. It was known by virtually everyone, and later often performed by many people on various variety shows and singing talent shows as one of the more classic songs around. Celebrities like Tan Weiwei 2 , Phil Chang 3 , Jeff Chang 4 had all covered it before, even Yu Qian 5 . It could be seen from this alone just how important and enchanting this song was to people of that era

Zhang Ye also liked "Fake Monk" a lot. The original version of the song used folk music instruments for its accompaniment as well. As one review had praised, Fake Monk had gone against tradition in the name of tradition with its accompaniment. Zhang Ye retained this arrangement as well as adding in some other things according his own understanding before presenting the song on this stage.

On the way back to his waiting room.

A continuous stream of program team staff were giving him the thumbs up.

Some of them even approached him to ask for a photograph.

"Teacher, can we take a picture together?"

"Please take a picture with me, Teacher Clown."

"I like you so much!"

"That song was great!"

The song had touched quite a few people, especially the older ones who had a rush of emotions evoked from listening to the song!

Thinking of those songs The Clown sang during the audition in front of the program team, everyone nearly vomited blood!

How glorious it is to be an oil worker?

As a fifty-year-old pro driver, you are all smiles?

Bullshit!

That was all just pretentious shit!

This was the real Clown!

This was who The Clown really was!

While Zhang Ye took a few pictures with the employees here, Sunflower in the Starlight's voice came from the stage behind him. His song selections today didn't seem that good as he couldn't perform to the best of his ability.

"Living in this tedious world.

"What am I meant to do?"

"Vastness, loneliness, companionship."

However, a lot of the audience were still happy with Sunflower's performance and trying to guess who he was.

As Zhang Ye was not exactly considered as part of this world, and he wasn't too familiar with the people here, he gave up on trying to guess. At least he was quite sure that he wasn't familiar with who Sunflower was, although nothing was definite since they were all wearing masks. So on this point, Zhang Ye himself did not want to confirm anything.

...

10 minutes later.

"We're here,

"Dancing in the wind."

Sunset Glow also finished singing.

The applause was enthusiastic!

There were cheers coming from everywhere in the audience!

Dong Shanshan came onstage at this moment and said, "Let's welcome The Clown and Sunflower in the Starlight back onto the stage."

Sunflower, who had been waiting in the wings and listening to Sunset Glow's performance, returned to the stage very quickly.

Meanwhile, The Clown made his way back from the waiting room and took a bit longer to get back.

As Sunset Glow was the last contestant to perform, the judges started giving their opinions about her singing first.

Zhang Xia said in astonishment, "I've come to realize that Sunset Glow's singing is really amazing. She has performed perfectly to her potential. I listened to those two songs in pure satisfaction!"

Sunset Glow laugh lightly and said, "Thank you, Grandma Zhang."

Wang Zhuishu agreed, "Sunset Glow seems to be the type of singer who slowly warms up as her voice silently starts to infect us. When you first hear her sing, it doesn't seem like much, but it really does get much better every time we listen to it. It can really touch people's hearts, so that's really good. I've come to rediscover Sunset Glow today, and I believe that she's definitely a professional singer!"

Chen Guang added, "Sunset Glow's weapon is not belting out high notes but sentiment and subtlety. There aren't many like her in the music industry."

Amy stared hard at her and had a niggling feeling that she was very familiar. "Do we know each other?"

Sunset Glow laughed. "Guess."

Amy said in annoyance, "The problem is that I can't guess at all!"

The audience laughed.

Yao Jiancai could sense something, so he said with a chuckle, "Amy, from what she's saying, I think the two of you must know each other."

Amy said, "I already have a candidate in mind, but I can't be sure!" She stared at Sunset Glow and said, "Are you the person I'm thinking of?"

Sunset Glow shook her head. "I don't know who you're thinking of."

Amy looked at her and said, "I'm very close to that person, so close that we've even shared the same skirt before. But that person's voice isn't as low as yours and her singing style is different too. Did you change your vocal register on purpose?"

Sunset Glow stopped answering and just laughed.

Amy immediately said, "That won't do. I better give her a call now and see if she answers!"

Amy then took out her cell phone on the spot and dialed a number.

Du du du.

Du du du.

After five or six rings.

Amy set her phone down in shock. "She didn't pick up! Could you really be her?"

Zhang Xia laughed and said, "Stop speaking in riddles. Just tell us who it is."

But Amy did not speak.

Next was Sunflower's turn.

Chen Yidong was still praising Sunflower as usual, with only the utmost praise for him.

But Zhang Xia said, "Sunflower still sang very well, but I'll reserve my opinions on his song choices for today."

Sunflower chuckled and just nodded.

Amy analyzed, "From his accent, I think he's a singer from Hong Kong."

Wang Zhuishu said, "Yeah, I feel the same. There's a 70 to 80% chance. Although his accent isn't that obvious, the pronunciation habits of singers from Greater China are very difficult to change."

Amy bluntly questioned, "Are you a singer from Hong Kong?"

The synthesized voice of Sunflower sounded. "The director won't allow me to tell."

The contestants' answers were all very conservative as they did not want anyone to so easily guess who they were.

Finally, the conversation shifted to The Clown.

Dong Shanshan asked, "Do our judges have anything to say about The Clown's performance?"

Chen Yidong said, "There's nothing much left to say. All I can say is that I'm convinced!"

Wang Zhuishu smiled wryly and said, "He's definitely an excellent singer! The two songs today were good in both lyrics and melody, but the singing was even better. There's absolutely nothing to pick on! It was amazing!"

Amy asked anxiously, "Teacher Clown, which industry senior are you really? Can you stop teasing us like that? Just hurry up and let us know already!"

The Clown laughed.

Amy quickly asked, "Then can I ask you a question?"

The Clown thought about it for a bit before nodding.

Amy pointed at herself and asked, "Do we know each other?"

The Clown hesitated for a moment then gently nodded.

"We do!?" Amy scratched her head. She was going crazy. "Who on earth are you!"

Chen Guang quickly followed up, "Then do we know each other?"

The Clown coughed and then nodded again.

Chen Guang was going crazy too. "Among the people I know, there's not a singer who has a style like yours! I'm generally quite familiar with all the Mainland China singers, but there are some singers from Greater China I don't know. Could it be that you're from Hong Kong?"

Zhang Xia waved it off and said, "That can't be. How can he be with that kind of an accent?"

Chen Guang said, "He might have deliberately hidden his accent?"

Amy also said in surprise, "Oh yeah, he might really be from Hong Kong! We might know each other, but there's also a possibility that we don't know each other well?" Then she asked The Clown, "Are you a celebrity from Greater China?"

Wang Zhuishu asked, "Where are you from?"

Chen Yidong also continued questioning, "Right, where is your hometown? Can we ask that?"

Everyone was looking at The Clown, wanting to know the answer!

Dong Shanshan was about to help him fend off the questions.

But no one could have expected that The Clown would raise his microphone and start singing through the voice transforming microphone in Cantonese!

"My ol' home, hey, is right in this hamlet!

"I was born and raised here in this hamlet!"

The people in the audience were floored!

But the more The Clown sang the more animated he became.

"Though our village isn't much, we have hills, rivers, and forests.

"The villagers are friendly and everyone gets on well.

"So many things have happened inside this hamlet.

"Thinking back on them, it's speshly funny.

"If you friends are in-ter-est-ed, I can show you, show you around, and have you meet our villagers!"

Amy burst out laughing!

Chen Guang was floored!

Zhang Xia, Yao Jiancai, and a few others cramped up with laughter!

Beside him, Petal Shower's shoulders were shaking uncontrollably. She was obviously laughing beneath her mask as well!

Your ol' home is right in this hamlet?

Does Hong Kong even use the term hamlet at all?

Get lost! Just get lost! Who wants to meet your villagers!

And besides, doesn't your Cantonese sound too non-standard?

The audience was doubled over in laughter!

"Aiyo, I can't take it!"

"You can even come up with these sort of things on the fly?"

"I'm dying of laughter, hahahahaha!"

"Bro, what are you trying to do, imitating a Hong Konger like that!

"Pfft! I can see right through you and know that you don't have a rural residence!"

"Why is The Clown such a tease!"

"Who is he really?"

"I don't know!"

The program team staff were also amused. They thought to themselves about how these people did not see for it themselves when this person sang that "as a fifty-year-old pro driver, I am all smiles" song. He was truly an out-and-out troublemaker who could really come up with all kinds of nonsense! He pretended to be a worker once, and now, he's even pretending to be a citizen from Hong Kong?

Zhang Xia said with a laugh, "He's definitely not a singer from Hong Kong!"

Amy had to take her hat off to him. "Senior, don't pretend anymore. Really, stop pretending already!"

Yao Jiancai said, "If that's the accent of a Hong Kong singer, then I'll be flying out to Australia for a concert tomorrow! That Hong Kong accent of yours was way too pretentious!"

Amy laughed, "Hahahahaha!"

Chen Yidong said, "This personality of his has confused me even more!"

Amy said while laughing, "Yeah, this makes it even harder to guess who he is!"

A Cantonese version of " Our Villagers 6 " from Zhang Ye's world had tickled the judges and audience funny here!

Finally, the voting began!

The audience picked up their voting devices.

"The Clown!"

"The Clown!"

"Sunset Glow!"

"Sunflower!"

A lot of people were shouting the names of the contestants that they liked.

When the judges and contestants looked at the real-time tallies on the big screen, they couldn't help but give a wry smile. Right from the start, the difference between tallies pulled away!

The Clown was far ahead!

In the end, the results were decided!

Sunset Glow: 142 votes.

Sunflower in the Starlight: 101 votes.

The Clown: 257 votes!

The second episode's Masked King was crowned!

It was still The Clown!

The Clown continued to hold the title of Masked King!

The audience erupted into cheers!

The judges stood up and gave him their applause!

Chapter 1013: The Clown gets popular!

Saturday.

At Zhang Ye's maternal grandma's house.

Today, Zhang Ye came over right after picking up his parents from the airport after they returned from their Hainan vacation. His grandparents had asked for their children to gather today for a meal as they missed them, with the food already prepared. In truth, Zhang Ye was planning to send his parents home first to sort out their luggage and rest for a while before coming over, but their flight was delayed. When they finally arrived, it was already five in the afternoon. Then, he got recognized at the airport by some fans and was trapped there for a long time. With the protracted delay, Zhang Ye was forced to go over right after picking up his parents.

"Brother!"

"Little Ye."

"Grandma, First Uncle, Little Sis."

"Why are you so late?"

"Hai, the flight got delayed."

"First Aunt and Uncle, how was the Hainan trip?"

"Hur hur, it was quite good. The air there was particularly refreshing."

"First Aunt, I'll take your luggage for you!"

"Look at our Dandan, she's becoming more and more sensible."

The entire extended family had essentially gathered by now. The moment they met each other, they started prattling and babbling on.

Zhang Ye greeted his grandpa and grandma, then enjoyed some time chatting with them. Shortly after, his three sisters approached him all atwitter.

His third sister giggled, "Brother, are you still unemployed?"

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "Yeah."

His eldest sister blinked and said, "Why haven't you caused any trouble then?"

"Cause what trouble?" Zhang Ye asked, not understanding.

His second sister said, "In the past, during times like these, you would always come out to scold and bombard those people who had offended you. It's not your style to keep quiet like this!"

Zhang Ye didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "Just why do you three have such a terrible impression of me? Why would I scold people without a valid reason? I'm no longer the same as before."

His third sister looked down her nose at him. "C'mon, you?"

His grandma tapped her in disapproval. "Young girl, how can you speak to your older brother in that manner?"

His third sister shouted, "Quick, come and see. Grandma's playing favorites again!"

Everyone laughed.

Zhang Ye was currently the most precious child at home. If his parents even dared to say a bad thing about Zhang Ye in front of his grandparents, they would glare at them, much less his three sisters.

Zhang Ye was also quite enjoying these rare family get-togethers. The competition yesterday had really tired him out. Not only had he worried about his vocal chords, it also took a lot of his concentration. He appreciated getting a rare chance to relax like this.

Dinner was ready.

They split into two tables as there were too many people.

His first uncle suddenly asked, "Little Ye, I heard that the show you produced is getting quite popular these days?"

His third sister immediately said, "It is not just quite popular, it's very popular!"

His mother swallowed a mouthful of food and said, "You don't say. The singers they invited this time are incredible! Their singing is each better than the last. I think that Sunflower and Petal Shower are pretty good!"

His first aunt said, "I like Sunflower too!"

His second aunt said, "Their songs are too complicated, so I prefer Sunset Glow."

His eldest sister spoke up, "The Clown's very good too. He was voted to be the Masked King in the first episode."

His second sister shook her head and said, "The Clown isn't that good. The media's talked about how he won in spite of his talent."

His third sister suddenly banged the table. "Aiyo, I nearly forgot. The second episode of King of Masked Singers is about to start. It's already 7:50! Quick, turn on the TV!"

"Oh yeah, let's watch it!"

"Yeah, we nearly forgot about it with all that talking just now!"

"Little Ye, who will become Masked King today?"

"Hur hur, watch for yourselves."

"It's definitely going to be Petal Shower."

"I think it'll be Sunflower."

"Sunset Glow's chances are quite high too!"

Almost everyone in the family had watched the show, and they all had their own favorite singers they supported.

The only thing that made Zhang Ye feel dejected was that no one seemed to be supporting The Clown. This fellow felt quite helpless as he was wondered if it was because of the songs he selected being a

little too non-mainstream? That the song's target audience was too niche? Should he attempt a more mainstream song for the next episode then? Speaking of which, as he was not considered to be someone from this world, all the songs that he brought out had never been heard before by the people of this world. This was his disadvantage, as well as his advantage. He had to slowly figure it out with every step that he took, without having any past experience to fall back on when choosing. Selecting which song to perform was very much like a test to him.

He would wait and observe what happened today.

To see what the reaction was after today's episode.

...

On Weibo.

It was whirling online.

"It's about to begin!"

"Holy shit, Petal Shower's popularity has reached 300,000 votes!"

"That's too fearsome!"

"She's been chosen internally as the Masked King for this episode, right?"

"More or less. The disparity is too much!"

"Did any news get leaked? Who got eliminated? Who took off their masks?"

"The Clown is sure to get eliminated, yeah?"

"There's no hope for him anymore. There's been too much negative press about him, with both the media and people bombarding him."

"Actually, I feel that The Clown is decent. Although his singing wasn't that good, that was due to him performing with a cold. We should try to understand that."

"He only became Masked King because of the pity votes cast by people like you! So what if he had a cold? This is a competition. It has to be fair."

"Let's see how it goes. It doesn't matter what The Clown does in this episode. Everything will depend on the performance of my Petal Shower!"

Suddenly, a Weibo user appeared.

That person posted with a chuckle: "I'll tell you guys something unfortunate. The Clown has retained his crown as the Masked King for this episode."

"Pfft!"

"Can you please stop teasing us?"

"That's impossible!"

"Don't go around spreading rumors!"

"Anyone can be the Masked King except The Clown. He's been criticized so badly it's impossible for him!"

However, someone else appeared out of the woodwork. "The Petal Shower you guys thought would be the favorite was eliminated by The Clown in the first round. Ai, just watch for yourselves, I don't have the heart to strike you guys with another blow."

"Are you kidding?"

"For real?"

"Even if The Clown resorted to his previous tricks or sang a song with even better lyrics, it's still impossible that the audience would buy it a second time."

"I don't believe it!"

"Fuck, I also don't believe it!"

"Petal Shower's popularity has exploded, with Sunflower in hot pursuit behind her. Even Sunset Glow's popularity is much higher than The Clown's, so how can it be possible for him to be the Masked King!"

"Don't believe the rumors."

"Don't believe the rumors+1!"

"Don't believe the rumors+1000!"

Nobody believed it.

Then the second episode of King of Masked Singers was broadcast for everybody's viewing pleasure!

The first contestant to sing was Petal Shower.

"Wow!"

"My Petal Shower is coming on!"

"She's gonna sing, she's gonna sing!"

"Ahhh, I love listening to her singing!"

"It's still her style of singing!"

"I love her to death!"

"Masked King, she must definitely get crowned as this episode's Masked King!"

"It has to be her!"

"The Clown is next?"

"Hahaha, it's so unlucky for him!"

"Yeah, there's no more suspense in this matchup!"

Online, wave after wave of exclamations erupted as the netizens all praised Petal Shower's singing.

Next, The Clown took the stage.

When The Clown began to sing, Weibo fell silent without warning!

"Ahh, ahh.

"Ahhhhh, ahh.

"Ahhhhh, ahhhhh.

"Ahhhhh, ahh."

...

At Zhang Ye's maternal grandma's house.

His three sisters were dumbfounded!

His parents, uncles, aunts, and everyone else's hairs stood on end when they heard him sing!

"This!"

"H-His cold is gone?"

"Why doesn't this song have any lyrics?"

"Aiyo, I can't handle this. I'm getting the goosebumps!"

"What's going on? What's with this song?"

...

Zhang Yuanqi's house.

A couple of her good friends in the scene had come over for a dinner party.

The latest episode of King of Masked Singers was playing on the television, and they were analyzing it.

Zhang Yuanqi smiled and said, "Who do you girls think Petal Shower sounds like?"

Ning Lan, sitting cross-legged, said, "I can't tell since I'm not involved in the music scene."

The Heavenly Queen's manager, Fang Weihong, swirled her glass of red wine. "This show is quite popular, and is very fun to watch. Sister Zhang, you can tell who she is?"

Zhang Yuanqi laughed. "I have a rough idea of who she is, but I can't be sure."

Then they heard different singing drift from the television.

At the start, they were not paying much attention to the show as they chatted among themselves. But gradually, their conversation came to a halt.

Fang Weihong was dumbfounded!

Ning Lan looked at the television in shock!

Zhang Yuanqi was slightly stunned as she turned to look at the television!

"Ahhh, ahhhh.

"Ahhh, ahhhh."

The voice filled the entire room!

Fang Weihong exclaimed, "Who the heck is this! Oh my god!"

Ning Lan was also in extreme shock. "Can this singing be any better than it is already?"

Fang Weihong asked, "Which song is this?"

Zhang Yuanqi replied, "There's no such song in the music industry!"

"It's an original?"

There were no lyrics!

Not a single line!

But they were completely caught off guard by the images that were conjured up in their minds!

...

A lot of the netizens on Weibo were going crazy!

Many of those who had called out The Clown last week for using lyrics to gain pity points were now feeling as though their faces had been slapped swollen. This was done on purpose! This man was definitely fucking with them on purpose!

"A song without lyrics?"

"Holy shit!"

"He sang it to such a godly level!"

"So this is what The Clown's real voice sounds like?"

"Dammit, this song made me cry!"

"Is it that good? How come I don't feel that way?"

"I didn't feel anything either, but his singing was amazing!"

"Didn't feel anything? You have to calm yourself when listening to this song. I was also moved by it. This song is simply an enjoyment to listen to! Who said that The Clown needed to rely on lyrics to win? Fuck their granny!"

"This face smacking is ruthless! I can already feel the pain on those media people's faces!"

"This song is fantastic!"

"Not even a single line of lyrics?"

"Who is this guy? Who is he?"

Many netizens threw a fit in an instant!

...

Within the music industry.

At an entertainment company.

A vice president was eating with his company's staff and some fellow industry professionals. When they heard that voice coming from the television in the room, they were all dumbfounded!

One second.

Two seconds.

The vice president shouted, "Little Li, go and check who that is! You must figure out who he is! If he's not contracted to any company, make sure to sign him to our company at all costs!"

The secretary, Little Li, hurriedly replied, "Understood!"

But it didn't take long before the question asked by the panel of judges was shown on television.

"Are you above or below the B-list?"

"...Above."

The table of people went quiet.

The vice president laughed bitterly. "Never mind. Don't bother trying to find out who he is. It's impossible that a big name who's at least a B-lister like him would not have a company."

A musician in the industry and seated at the table gasped. "Which famous person in the music industry went to compete on the show?"

King of Masked Singers was very popular!

It was so popular that many of those in the music industry—whether they be established singers or newcomers, including even the Heavenly Kings and Queens—were watching the show on TV!

A lot of people were shocked by the "Opera" The Clown had sung!

But without exception, no one was able to guess who The Clown really was!

Chapter 1014: Becoming famous!

The tables had turned!

Countless people who were previously calling out The Clown and showing disdain for him fell silent when "Opera" was performed. The media outlets vomited blood at the turn of events! Quite a few people were touched by this song, while there were many others who did not get affected by it. But even those who did not like this song could not say that this man's singing was not good. His falsetto had reached the stage of perfection!

"B-list?"

"There are only a few possibilities on the B-list and above!"

"Fuck, who is this guy!"

"I think I've become a fan of his!"

"Me too!"

"From hater to fan! He's amazing!"

"Ah, The Clown won!"

"He beat Petal Shower!"

"Poor Petal Shower!"

"Yeah, if Petal Shower had faced any of the others, she would've won!"

"Could The Clown have really been crowned Masked King?"

"Quick, quick, quick! When will The Clown sing his next song?"

The show continued.

However, the audience seemed to have been affected by the lyricless song. A minority of the audience was not even interested when the other contestants came on nor cared about the identity of whoever was taking off their masks. They were simply waiting to watch The Clown sing his second song!

Finally, the second episode's Masked King battle began.

The Clown was the first to perform!

He was using his real voice this time!

"I wanna walk from south to north!"

"I wanna walk from day til night!"

"I want people to look at me!"

"But not know who I am!"

The moment "Fake Monk" was performed, it made quite a few viewers' pulses race!

"It's someone famous!"

"This definitely has to be a famous person in the music industry!"

"I don't like this song. It doesn't sound good."

"It's clearly very good!"

"I like this song a lot! It's so good on a spiritual level!"

"Me too, I love this song to death!"

"Petal Shower was unexpectedly sent into the elimination round, and Sunflower did not fulfill his potential either with a very average choice of song today. There's no one else who can compete with The Clown on today's stage!"

"'Fake Monk' is a good song!"

"This song alone can sweep everyone aside!"

"He put so much emotion into his performance!"

"I'm not so smitten with the song. Although the lyrics were very well written, the melody was run of the mill. But for some reason, when The Clown was singing this song, it kinda got to me. If I was at the studio, I would definitely have voted for him! This guy is super charismatic!"

...

Within the music industry.

Quite a few key decision making people were shocked!

On a phone call:

"Old Hu, go and watch Beijing TV!"

"What's the matter? I'm recording a new song right now."

"Go and listen already. The latest episode of King of Masked Singers is really godly!"

"Who's godly?"

"The Clown!"

"With that voice of his, how godly can his singing possibly be?"

"Go and listen to it then! Listen to what his voice sounds like after he recovered from his cold! When did such an experienced veteran appear in the music scene! Go listen to it and tell me if he's one of our old friends."

...

At Zhang Ye's maternal grandma's house.

His mother and aunts did not feel much for this song.

But his father and uncles were mesmerized.

His second uncle said, "This song...is so well-written!"

His third sister suddenly shouted, "I'm defecting!"

"Ah?" His eldest sister did not get what she meant.

His third sister replied, "I'm not gonna give my support to Petal Shower anymore. From today onwards, I will support The Clown!"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "You can understand this song?"

His third sister said, "I don't understand it, but I like it anyway!"

His eldest sister said, "I like 'Opera.' His singing is so amazing. Brother, who is he? Hurry up and tell us!"

"I don't know either," Zhang Ye said happily.

his second sister said, "You must know who he is!"

Zhang Ye smiled but did not say anything.

His father suddenly spoke up. "Little Ye."

Zhang Ye turned around. "Yes?"

His father said, "Get two tickets to the live recording of King of Masked Singers for your mom and me."

Zhang Ye was stunned. "What for? Do you plan to go and watch?"

His father nodded.

His mother immediately said, "Right, get us two tickets!"

This was his mother's usual behavior. Zhang Ye was already used to it. But his dad, who was a calmer and more traditional person, had almost never asked for anything from Zhang Ye before. Since his dad surprisingly made such a rare request today, he naturally agreed to it.

Zhang Ye nodded. "Alright."

His third sister's eyes lit up. "Brother, I wanna go too!"

Seeing this, his second sister went over and tugged Zhang Ye's arm and said coyly, "Brother."

His eldest sister coughed and also said a little embarrassed, "Me too."

They tugged at Zhang Ye for a long time before he finally smiled and said, "Alright, alright, everyone will get a ticket each."

As the matter of the tickets was settled, the Masked King battle on the television came to an end as the three singers finished with performing.

His family immediately shifted their attention back to the TV, wanting to see who would be crowned Masked King this episode. But they got a surprise instead!

The Clown opened his mouth to sing again!

This was a song he came up with on the spot!

...

"Are you a singer from Hong Kong?"

"Where is your hometown?"

The netizens were made speechless at the next moment!

Their jaws dropped as they saw The Clown raise his microphone and singing passionately into it.

"My ol' home, hey, is right in this hamlet!

"I was born and raised here in this hamlet!

"Though our village isn't much, we have hills, mountains, and forests.

"The villagers are friendly and everyone gets on well.

"So many things have happened inside this hamlet. Thinking back on them, it's speshly funny. If you friends are in-ter-est-ed, I can show you, show you around.

"And have you meet our villagers!"

This Cantonese song blinded everyone who heard it!

A group of people were doubled over in laughter!

"Hahahahaha!"

"Aiyo, I can't take it!"

"How can he be so funny?"

"Where is this joker from?"

"Can he really be a celebrity that's above the B-list?"

"Pfft, judging from his manner, this fellow is probably bullshitting! You even proclaimed yourself to be from Hong Kong? Hong Kong, your sister! Aren't you just making things up! Hahahaha, I guess he's lying about being at least a B-lister too!"

"That's also possible. There isn't any celebrity above the B-list who matches his profile!"

"Masked King!"

"The Clown has been crowned Masked King!"

"Amazing!"

"He really deserved the win this episode!"

"Yeah, The Clown was truly without equal today!"

"I'm looking forward to the third episode!"

"The next episode will be even more exciting!"

"Yeah, Petal Shower and Sunflower were not in good shape this episode, but they'll definitely fight back in the next episode!"

"That was really exciting!"

"Why I can't find 'Fake Monk' online?"

"'Opera' can't be found either! What's going on here?"

"They're originals, so they can't be found online."

"Ah?"

"Does The Clown intend to sing his originals for the entire competition?"

"No way, right? His company or his musician friends should've only written these four songs that were good enough for him perform onstage. Once there are no more originals left to use, he'll have to start covering the songs of other singers."

The broadcast ended.

Night fell.

But the discussions online and in the homes of the country's people did not stop.

...

The day after.

Sunday.

The viewership rating for the second episode of King of Masked Singers was out!

It was a figure that would send the industry into an uproar again—2.98%!

At Central TV.

Department 1.

Director Jiang Naixiong was silent.

Scowling, Jiang Yuan lost his temper with his subordinates. "How many episodes has our new show been broadcasting for already? Huh? Why are you all just unable to bring up the viewership ratings for it? Just have look at the viewership ratings for yourselves! Ah?"

The Department 1 staff did not dare make a sound.

There's nothing we can do even if the viewership ratings are poor!

It was all because of your insistence on fighting that lawsuit with Zhang Ye and freezing him that led to this!

If our station had not forced him away, the King of Masked Singers would definitely have been ours! What's the point of blaming us now?

On the Top Chinese Music Chart.

The songs that were performed on the King of Masked Singers were doing brilliantly on the chart!

The Clown's "Opera" and "Fake Monk" had already climbed up to the top three spots of the daily chart, while Petal Shower and Sunset Glow's songs from yesterday's television broadcast had climbed into the top six spots!

The songs were on fire!

The entire music chart had almost become wholly occupied by the King of Masked Singers' songs!

The entire music industry's attention was now focused on King of Masked Singers!

And the most unexpected thing was that The Clown's Cantonese song he performed at the end of the episode called "Our Villagers" had also shot up to the top 15 songs on the daily rankings. Many of the netizens were repeatedly playing it, laughing as they listened to it each time! The song was hilarious! It was totally a prank!

At home.

Zhang Ye's popularity score was still slipping on the Celebrity Rankings Index.

In contrast, his Reputation Points in the game ring were increasing rapidly. It seemed that with glancing minute, his Reputation Points would shoot up. Since no one knew that he was The Clown, the popularity gained by The Clown would naturally not be added to his name. But the game ring did not have this limitation. Everyone who liked The Clown would give Zhang Ye additional Reputation Points without fail!

This was great!

He would just carry on like this!

It looks like this bro's decision to cross over into the music industry was the right one!

Chapter 1015: Zhang Ye proposes! (First half)

Monday.

In the morning, his parents arranged to have a day out at the Summer Palace with two neighbors.

Zhang Ye was bored and stayed home to practice his songs over and over again. As Mother's Day fell on this weekend, he incidentally thought about the song for this week and if he should perform one that transmitted a message of love for mothers. However, he did not have a specific idea of what to sing yet since there were still five days to go, and there was no rush to decide that quickly.

He checked the show's official website.

The Clown's popularity has leaped to first place!

First: The Clown (470,000 votes)

Second: Petal Shower (410,000 votes)

Third: Sunflower in the Starlight (320,000 votes)

Fourth: Sunset Glow (290,000 votes)

Although The Clown had jumped from fourth to first in the popularity poll, the gap was actually not that much. Besides, Zhang Ye had won the crown of the Masked King twice in a row. His momentum was ruthless, which made it difficult for him to lag behind in the competition.

Quite a few people were leaving comments on the official website.

"Who does everyone think will get crowned as Masked King in the third episode?"

"The Clown, of course. I love his songs so much!"

"I doubt it'll be him."

"Yeah, he's already gotten it twice."

"Right, everyone knows how strong he is and will therefore have higher expectations. The audience might be disappointed if he doesn't perform his next song perfectly, or if his chosen song is not that great, or maybe even if his next song is not another original. Considering all that, it's gonna get quite difficult for The Clown for the rest of the competition."

"We can't expect that every one of his songs are originals and that they'll be that good, can we?"

"Then does that mean Petal Shower's chances are better now?"

"Sunflower and Sunset Glow have some hope now."

"They're all pros and can sing really well, so that makes it really difficult to say who'll win."

Reading the reviews, Zhang Ye turned things over in his mind. He thought that the netizens were correct. In his current position, it was indeed very difficult for him to make any additional progress as no one person could keep getting crowned as Masked King forever. It wasn't a matter of singing skills, but the expectations of the audience. However, luckily for this fellow, he still had a trick up his sleeve. A very classic song from his previous world had yet to be revealed by him and was meant to be a backup. From the looks of it, he had to choose a more generic song this time—perhaps one that everyone would like the moment they heard it?

Which song?

It was really difficult to choose.

All of a sudden, his cell phone rang.

The caller ID displayed: Wu Zeqing.

Zhang Ye broke into a grin and answered immediately. "Old Wu."

The gentle voice of a woman came from the other end of the line. "Hur hur, you sound like you're in a good mood?"

"Haha, more or less," Zhang Ye said. "Isn't today Monday? What's the matter? Not working?"

"I just got back from a business trip and took a day off to rest."

Zhang Ye knew that she had gone on a business trip for many days. It was related to the aftermath of the air pollution documentary. At that time, Wu Zeqing had helped him hold off endless pressure from all sides and kept the air pollution documentary online for an extra day or two. She'd offended a lot of people and then left Beijing on a business trip. He didn't need to ask to know for sure that she must have gotten implicated in this matter. "Did the air pollution documentary cause you a lot of trouble?"

She laughed. "It's already been settled. It wasn't too troublesome."

On these official matters, Zhang Ye did not know much. But since Old Wu said it was already settled, then it must have really been settled. Unlike Dong Shanshan who was always deceptive, Old Wu would give it to him straight.

Zhang Ye felt reassured. "You're at home?"

"Yes."

Zhang Ye asked: "I'll go over to look for you then."

"Sure. What would you like to eat?"

Zhang Ye bluntly said: "Deep-fried mandarin fish and sautéed pig's kidney. You know how to cook them?"

"Yes."

"Alright, wait a little for me," Zhang Ye said.

"OK, then I'll go and buy the groceries."

Having not seen Old Wu in a while, Zhang Ye was very much so looking forward to seeing her again. He took a shower and changed his clothes, then groomed himself in front of the mirror for the longest time before finally going downstairs to his car and driving off.

Perhaps due to the morning rush hour, there was a small traffic jam outside.

Before a traffic light intersection, more than a hundred vehicles were stopped and could not move.

At this moment, Zhang Ye heard a man singing from a car beside his that had its windows rolled down. "I wanna walk from south to north! / I wanna walk from day til night!"

Has "Fake Monk" really become this popular?

It's only been two days and there were already people who knew how to sing it?

But then again, big bro, the traffic is all snarled, and you're still thinking of going from the south to the north? I'd bow to you if you could even make it to the traffic lights up ahead! But there was still a chance that you might be able to go from day til night!

All the best!

...

At 10 AM.

Taoran Pavilion's East Gate, Old Wu's place.

In the villa, Wu Zeqing was sitting on the sofa and reading the papers.

The door opened. When Zhang Ye entered the house, he immediately took a look at his girlfriend. The weather was getting warmer and warmer, and Old Wu was dressed in a more relaxed qipao today. It wasn't the type of long qipao she wore in the spring and autumn, but the short version of it. The color was very plain, but at the hem of the qipao above her knees, a pair of supple thighs were exposed and looked particularly alluring. The chest region fabric in the top half of her qipao looked like it full to bursting.

Zhang Ye swallowed hard. "Old Wu."

Wu Zeqing turned to him and said with a smile, "You're here?"

"There was a traffic jam, otherwise I'd have gotten here even earlier." Zhang Ye walked over. "What are you reading?"

"News regarding King of Masked Singers." She flapped the newspapers in her hand.

"You've watched the show too?"

"I have. It's quite good."

Zhang Ye blinked and asked, "Who do you like?"

"The Clown and Petal Shower, I guess. They're both pretty good."

Zhang Ye was very happy.

Look at this, just look at this!

It was still his girlfriend who had good insight!

Sitting down on the sofa, Zhang Ye took the newspaper from her. "Let me have a look." After flipping through a few of the pages, he didn't feel comfortable enough. He turned his head and glanced at Old Wu's thighs, then coughed and unceremoniously laid down onto them. Half of the back of his head was cushioned by the qipao, while the other half was lying directly on her thighs. His left ear vaguely touched her skin and he could feel the cooling smoothness and softness of it.

How comfortable!

Zhang Ye was enjoying it to the fullest extent.

Wu Zeqing did not say much and just smiled. "What have you been up to recently?"

Zhang Ye read the newspaper while lying down. He remarked, "I've just been staying at home."

Wu Zeqing said, "There aren't any TV stations willing to hire you?"

"Yeah," Zhang Ye replied.

Wu Zeqing gave a noise of acknowledgment. "I'll make some arrangements for you later."

"There's no need to, there's really no need. I've worried you enough already, and even given you a lot of trouble. There's no need to bother yourself with this problem for the time being. This bro can solve it by himself." Zhang Ye put the newspaper down and looked up at her. He did not manage to immediately see Wu Zeqing's face. From his angle, all he could see was Old Wu's dress protruding out in the region of her chest, and his view of her face got blocked. "I've been doing something that's been keeping me quite busy, so I can't actually find time to deal with other work. But as for what it is exactly, I'll keep it a secret for now. Haha, you'll know about it in time anyway."

"Really?"

"Just watch what I can do. Have I ever let you down before?"

"Alright, I'll wait and see then."

Since Zhang Ye wanted to keep her guessing, Old Wu did not continue with a line of questioning.

This was how the two of them had interacted for the duration of their relationship.

Keeping it simple.

Trusting each other.

Chapter 1016: Zhang Ye proposes! (Second half)

Before noon.

A little after 11 AM.

Zhang Ye was still lying across Wu Zeqing's thighs with his shoes off. He was jiggling his arched legs and browsing Weibo on his cell phone with one hand. He would turn his head to the left for a bit, and after he got tired in that position, he would nudge his neck upward. His neck, ears, and face were all resting on a soft surface that felt far more comfortable than laying on a pillow. Zhang Ye was enjoying it so much that his eyes were just a thin line.

That was how good it felt!

That was how blissful it was!

Old Wu was conversing with him all this while.

"The issues with the air pollution documentary have almost blown over."

"OK."

"But you should stay low for a while. You've offended too many people this time, so some time needs to pass."

"No problem. I was already mentally prepared for this."

"The new policies have become much stricter, so take caution. Be it writing poems or novels, it will be best if your works don't involve too much pessimistic content or mention things like 'death' or 'massacre' in the title of the poem."

"New rules?"

"They're not out yet, but it should happen sometime soon."

"Alright, I understand."

"Is Ning Lan your friend?"

"Ah? I guess so. I do know her."

"She's wrapped up filming for her new movie, and it's been sent in for review. But it was not approved due to some scenes violating the policies."

"Then what can be done?"

"We've already told them to cut those scenes."

Mostly, it was Wu Zeqing who did all the talking while Zhang Ye listened. There were some matters that not even the talent agencies of celebrities could know about, but Zhang Ye would get firsthand information of it ahead of time. He was the only person in the entire entertainment industry who had such a privilege.

As he listened, Zhang Ye's neck got tired from the laying and he switched to a different position. This time he blinked before turning his head to face Old Wu's stomach, rolling his body over as well. With that, his face was now directly facing her qipao's slit and his eyelashes reflexively stirred as they came into contact with the fabric at the slit. This was how close he was to her.

His heart was pounding.

He also started breathing a little faster.

He now felt Old Wu shift. Then her long hair cascaded down and fell next to his ears and face, making him itchy.

Old Wu bent over and said, "Alright, it's time to make lunch."

Zhang Ye said, "There's no hurry. Let me lie here a bit more."

Old Wu did not say anything.

This made Zhang Ye even ballsier.

After laying there for another five minutes and having finally seen enough, Zhang Ye got up from her legs and sat up on the sofa. He breathed in through his "burning" nose and felt a little heated.

Wu Zeqing slowly stood up. "Go wash your hands and wait for lunch."

Zhang Ye said, "I can help you cook?"

"There's no need." Old Wu headed to the kitchen and got down to business.

It was an open kitchen on the first floor. Zhang Ye's gaze did not leave her. He simply switched to a different spot on the sofa and faced the kitchen as he stared at Old Wu, who was busy cooking. Having not seen her in a while, Zhang Ye really missed her quite a bit. He felt that it was not enough no matter how much he looked at her. After looking at her face, he looked at her hands; after looking at her hands, he looked at her legs; after looking at her legs, he looked at her feet; after looking at her feet, he looked back up at her hair. It felt to him that every part of her was just too beautiful.

How he loved her!

How he really wished to marry her!

Zhang Ye remembered asking Old Wu last year about getting married in the next year. She had not rejected him at the time, and it was now the next year. His thoughts were suddenly aroused again. Wu Zeqing was definitely someone he wouldn't find anywhere else in his entire life even if he tried his hardest. If he did not hurry, she might get away from him at some point in the future! Although Wu Zeqing was much older than him and was in the civil service, Zhang Ye was an A-lister now. Moreover, he had many statuses, such as associate professor at Media College and Peking University, poet, writer, famous host, famous TV show director, famous TV show producer, famous crosstalk actor, and so on and so forth. So he should be quite compatible with her, right?

The only thing was that there would be a conflict of interest.

Zhang Ye was from the entertainment industry.

And Old Wu happened to manage the entertainment industry.

Upon reflection, there were certainly a lot of problems with this. Would the SARFT allow it? Would Old Wu's family agree to it? Even Old Wu herself, would she agree to it?

Zhang Ye was utterly clueless and was in a bind.

Would it work out?

Would it not?

Would it work out?

This problem weighed heavily on his heart for a long time.

Suddenly, a delicious smell reached his nose. Only then did he realize that the food was served.

Wu Zeqing smiled. "Lunch is ready. Let's eat."

When Zhang Ye saw the food, he exclaimed as he walked over, "Wow, just looking at it makes my mouth water!"

"Have a taste." Old Wu undid her apron and placed it on the back of a chair. Then she sat down. "I don't usually eat kidney flowers 1, so I seldom cook them. Try how they taste."

Zhang Ye grabbed some of the piping hot kidney flowers with his chopsticks and blew on them for a while before eating them. "Hoo, it's delicious!"

This cooking was the best!

How could it be so delicious?

During these days his parents were away at Hainan, Zhang Ye would either order takeout or cook himself a simple meal of instant noodles, whichever he could make do with. That made him lose interest in eating recently as he did not have an appetite for whatever other food he came across. But when he sampled the food cooked by Old Wu today, he nearly burst into tears. It was so delicious it was worth crying over!

He gobbled up the food at once and rambled as he ate, "It tastes great! Whoo...it's so delicious! The deep-fried mandarin fish is delicious too! Hoo...it's so savory!"

Wu Zeqing smiled gently. "Eat slowly."

"I can't." Zhang Ye did not listen as he ate even faster. Eventually, he realized that he was almost full, whereas Old Wu had barely touched her food. "Eat some too, Old Wu."

"I will," Wu Zeqing said as she ate her portions slowly.

Zhang Ye sighed and said, "If only I could taste your cooking every day, how nice would that be?"

Old Wu said as she slowly ate her food, "You can come over to eat anytime."

Zhang Ye looked at her. "You're usually busy working, and I have many things to handle too, so it's not easy to find a day where both of us have free time. Besides, even if we were free, it still isn't appropriate to come by your house so frequently. What happens if the neighbors see us? How would you explain it if your relatives and friends came to visit?"

A strong desire suddenly overcame him.

Zhang Ye readied himself as he picked up some kidney flowers with his chopsticks and put them into Old Wu's bowl. He did not know where he found the courage, but he said very suddenly, "Old Wu, why don't we get married?"

Wu Zeqing was startled, then broke into a half-smile.

Zhang Ye asked, "Shall we?"

Wu Zeqing said, "Is this a proposal?"

"Ahem, yes, it is," Zhang Ye said.

She pointed at the kidney flower in the bowl with her chopsticks and said, "This is the first time I've seen someone use a kidney flower to propose."

Zhang Ye felt extremely embarrassed!

Other people would either use a diamond ring or roses to propose. At the very least, he should have followed that classic scene in the movies of breaking off the pull tab of a soda can to use as a ring for the proposal, right? But just see how great Zhang Ye was to even try to propose with some kidney flowers! In fact, this fellow did not think or plan much at all. He was someone who did something whenever he

felt like it. Despite being quite witty most of the time, he was actually quite a dense person when it came to romantic affairs.

"About that, um..." Zhang Ye just grinned as he did not know what else to say. Should he go out to buy a ring and come back afterwards? But that would be too late!

Wu Zeqing did not say a word.

Zhang Ye was quivering inside.

Old Wu lowered her head to continue eating. She picked up the kidney flower from her bowl and put it into her mouth. After chewing a little, she swallowed it, then ate some rice. A moment later, Wu Zeqing looked up at him.

She calmly spoke, "OK."

Zhang Ye was stunned. "Ah? What do you mean by OK?"

She said, "Didn't you propose to me?"

Zhang Ye said in a startled manner, "Yes?"

Wu Zeqing replied, "So I've agreed to it."

Aiyo!

You've agreed?!

Zhang Ye could feel the blood in his entire body coursing hotly. He used his pinky to pick his ear and said in disbelief, "Old Wu, can you say that again?"

Old Wu smiled. "I've agreed to it."

Zhang Ye slammed his chopsticks onto the table, at a total loss for words!

He had acted on impulse today and did not have any hope of achieving anything definite. All he had was only the strong intent in his mind, which was what made him propose. For anyone who was even a little prepared, they would never propose with kidney flowers. But he could never have expected that Old Wu would actually say yes! At this moment, even that mouth of Zhang Ye's that could bring someone back to life was unable to muster up any words to express himself!

Hahahaha!

He did it!

His proposal was a success!

Whoever said that roses had to be given when proposing?

A kidney "flower" was still a flower!

Chapter 1017: A Masked Singer's identity is exposed!

Friday.

On the day of the recording.

In the morning, while his parents were still sleeping, Zhang Ye strolled downstairs, bought breakfast, and brought it home. Then he woke his parents up for breakfast, even humming a little ditty as he did.

Our people!

Are so happy today!

He had been humming this tune for several days now.

His mother wondered, "What's gotten into you?"

Zhang Ye asked, "Wha?"

His mother said, "You're like a completely different person these days, buying breakfast and doing the laundry. Did something happen to you? Tell us if you have any problems so that your dad and I can mentally prepare. I'm so unused to seeing you this hardworking out of the blue."

Zhang Ye laughed. "What problems could I possibly have? Mother's Day is coming up, so of course I've got to do a little something for you."

His mother did not believe his drivel. "Is it money you need? I still have some money in my account. Tell me if you need to borrow some. Don't feel embarrassed."

His father nodded and said, "Right, your mom is rich."

Zhang Ye was floored. "Why would I need to borrow money?"

His father said, "There's no shame in asking."

Zhang Ye saw red. "I don't feel ashamed!"

His mother asked, "So how much do you need?"

"I need...why would I need anything? You two have confused me." Zhang Ye did not know what to say or how to react. He spoke, "Alright, you two should eat breakfast quickly. I have to go to Beijing TV now to see how the production is going. I've already told them about your ticket requests, so you two can head over right after breakfast."

"Alright, we understand."

"I'll get going first then."

"You really don't need any money?"

"...I really don't need any!"

He shut the door behind him.

Zhang Ye was both amused and annoyed as he headed downstairs to drive off to the office.

But before he could drive out of the entrance to the neighborhood, he received a message on his cell phone. He received a 10,000 RMB transfer from the account with the last four digits of XXXX. This account number looked quite familiar and probably belonged to his mother.

Zhang Ye really had to take his hat off to her!

She was serious about lending him the money?

He was currently unemployed and had never taken any commercial appearances, so didn't have too much money, but at the same time, he didn't exactly spend money! He wondered to himself just how lazy he was in his parents' eyes. All he had done was by breakfast and do the laundry for two days, but his parents were already starting to get suspicious of him?

Where could he seek redress from?

He had just been really happy for the past several days since his proposal had succeeded, with Old Wu agreeing to marry him. Even when Zhang Ye was promoted to the A-list, he did not feel as excited as now. This was Wu Zeqing we were talking about here, the wife he had been dreaming of all this time. By achieving it just like that, he felt like he was dreaming. Even though the details of wedding planning, how to introduce their parents, and of when exactly to get married had yet to be decided, the decision to get married was already set in stone. Old Wu could no longer slip out of his grasp. As such, Zhang Ye felt the load on his mind being lifted. He was now full of energy and had never been so full of fighting spirit before! This sort of attitude naturally affected his daily life. It even ended up making his parents misunderstand him!

Some people would give presents or money during Mother's Day.

But not only did he not give anything to his mother, he even received a sum of money from her.

Hai, whatever, he should just accept it. Since it was a token of love from his parents, Zhang Ye shamelessly accepted it. It just so happened that his car needed some maintenance, so the money would come in handy.

...

At Beijing Television.

In the rehearsal room.

Zhang Ye had long since changed into The Clown's mask and costume.

"Musicians."

"Hi, Teacher Clown."

"Teacher Clown, you're here?"

When they saw The Clown, the band members went up and greeted him with great enthusiasm.

The Clown choked his voice and said, "You guys aren't busy, are you?"

The guitarist said, "No, Teacher Petal Shower's rehearsal isn't for another hour. Although we finished rehearsing with her yesterday, she said that she still needed another round or two of rehearsals to help her get into the rhythm."

The Clown said, "Then can you give this hour to me?"

The guitarist smiled and said, "Sure."

The Clown said, "I would like to rehearse another two songs."

He handed the scores to them.

Music Director Bai Yuanfei and the band members were stunned.

Curious, Bai Yuanfei asked, "Didn't you rehearse two songs yesterday?"

The Clown said, "I would like to add two more songs as backups since I haven't decided which songs to sing yet. I'm still considering."

"You really are striving for perfection." Then Bai Yuanfei looked to the band members.

The band members thought for a while before readily agreeing, "No problem, let's do it!"

Among the masked singers, only The Clown had truly gotten to know the band members. Be it "Wild Rose," "Wolf," or "Fake Monk," all those songs suited their tastes quite well. Since they had all started out by dabbling in rock music, and since only The Clown had performed a rock song on this stage, they naturally felt that they had something in common.

In the audience, Han Qi watched them nervously.

The rehearsal began.

During this rehearsal, The Clown once again did not sing the lyrics and just hummed along to the music. He mainly wanted to get a grasp of the rhythm to refine any details and problems with the arrangement. Zhang Ye was the type of singer who liked to do things spontaneously and would habitually surprise and shock the audience. As a result, he did not like to reveal the lyrics beforehand as that would make his performances meaningless. To the other singers, this sort of rehearsal was simply unbelievable. How could he just go onstage without even singing once? Only a person with such strong self-confidence as Zhang Ye would dare to do that. Back when he was still hosting, this fellow was famously known as a madman. He even had the courage to go on a live broadcast without preparing any lines or script to speak from. There was no one like him in the entire industry!

An hour later, Petal Shower arrived.

Zhang Ye ceded the rehearsal room to her.

Following, Sunset Glow came to do her sound checks.

Just when everyone was preparing for the afternoon's recording session, something happened in the outside world that no one could have expected. Zhang Ye, along with the other masked singers and the King of Masked Singers program team, were dealt a sudden blow!

A masked singer had revealed his identity!

...

The origin came from Weibo.

After King of Masked Singers became popular, many people started guessing who the masked singers were.

The Clown, Petal Shower, Sunflower, and Sunset Glow had continually dominated the last two episodes of the show, and had undoubtedly garnered the most attention from the audience as well. The netizens were all guessing as to who they were.

"I really can't figure out who The Clown is!"

"He's the hardest to guess!"

"At least a B-lister? But there's no one that matches!"

"He might only be joking and is probably not a B-list celebrity."

"Could Petal Shower be Zhang Yuanqi?"

"No."

"How is the singing of Spring Garden's Xiaodong?"

"Uh, she sings very well. But since I haven't heard Xiaodong singing these types of songs before, the chance of her being Petal Shower isn't that high."

"Sunflower in the Starlight has to be a singer from Hong Kong."

"Right, I'm 90% sure about that as well."

"A Hong Konger who can sing this well? Li Yu?"

"It's possible!"

"Or it could also be Li Nianhe!"

"Li Yu was a big name A-lister in the past. Although he has dropped to the B-list now, he is still extremely popular. Would he have come to compete? Surely not, right?"

"He hasn't sung any Cantonese songs yet, so we still can't identify him from his voice."

Everyone made all kinds of guesses.

Finally, someone went straight to Li Yu's Weibo to ask if he was Sunflower. In truth, there were several netizens who went to ask some of the other Hong Kong singers if they were Sunflower. Their guesses did not focus on Li Yu alone. Perhaps even those netizens did not expect Li Yu to actually reply on Weibo.

Li Yu posted on Weibo: "You could even guess that?"

He actually admitted to it!

This came without any warning!

With that reply, it exploded online!

The media reacted like they had been injected with adrenaline!

"It is Li Yu!"

"Damn!"

"Sunflower is Li Yu!"

"A former A-lister?"

"W-What a big name!"

"Oh my god! They even managed to invite Li Yu to the show?"

"He must be the most famous singer on King of Masked Singers!"

"That's impossible. If he really is Li Yu, with his talent, if there aren't any other big shots of the music industry like Zhang Yuanqi or Chen Guang on the show, shouldn't he be crowned Masked King every episode? Would he even have any competition? So why has he not come within reach of Masked King even though the third episode is about to air?"

"Are you dumb? That's because he hasn't sung any Cantonese songs yet!"

"Yeah, Cantonese songs are what Li Yu is best at!"

"He can still perform on par with those singers by singing Mandarin songs. If he had sung Cantonese songs instead, the throne of Masked King would definitely have been his!"

"I'm really looking forward to it!"

"It's really Li Yu!"

"Ahhh, I'm a braindead fan of his! I will definitely support him!"

"I'll be attending the recording today as I won a ticket from a lucky draw. Hahahaha, no matter what song Li Yu sings, I'll vote for him! I've always liked his songs and movies a lot!"

Awhile later, Li Yu posted on Weibo again. "I'll perform two songs to my best for everyone today. Thank you for your support!"

The fans went crazy!

"That's for sure!"

"We'll definitely give our support!"

"My idol, I love you!"

"Teach them a lesson!"

"Right, teach them a lesson!"

"The Masked King's crown will surely be yours!"

"We'll all vote for you!"

"So it's Sunflower who is the hidden god-tier contestant!"

"So will there be any suspense in this upcoming episode?"

Chapter 1018: Petal Shower gets mad!

This had come about too suddenly!

It came so suddenly that even the King of Masked Singers program team was caught off guard!

Hu Fei immediately flew into a rage. "What the fuck is he thinking!"

Hou Ge said angrily, "What is Teacher Li Yu trying to do?"

Dafei could not understand either. "W-Why did he admit to it just like that? No one really said anything much at all! Everyone was just wildly guessing! No one could have been so sure that Sunflower was him!"

Xiao Lu's expression shifted. "Isn't he trying to make trouble then? We told them before the show went into production that the contestants are not allowed to expose their identities! Even if others can guess it, they can't admit to it until the moment they take off their mask. It's written in the contract and the contestant is obliged to cooperate. What the hell is Teacher Li trying to do!"

"This..."

"This will be tricky to handle!"

"How can we deal with this? We can't hide it anymore!"

"Can we say that his account was hacked? Would anyone believe that?"

"Aiyo, he's totally making trouble for us! We're about to start recording!"

"Is Sunflower really Li Yu?"

"Yes."

In reality, most of the program team staff did not know who Sunflower was. But after they saw the Weibo post and then looked at how Hu Fei, Hou Ge, Dafei, and some others reacted to it, they knew that it had to be true. Sunflower in the Starlight was definitely the famous singer and movie star from Hong Kong who had been popular for many years, Li Yu!

Hu Fei yelled, "Is Sunflower here yet?"

"Not yet," the employee who was assigned to liaise with Sunflower replied.

Hu Fei immediately picked up his cell phone and contacted him.

The call went through, but it was Li Yu's assistant who picked up the phone.

Hu Fei bluntly said, "Assistant Xu, please inform Teacher Li Yu to delete his Weibo post. It's not too late to remedy the situation. Let's try to do whatever we can to turn this situation around as much as we can!"

Assistant Xu said, "But why?"

Hu Fei explained matter-of-factly, "Our show's selling point is that all of the contestants are masked. It's also stated in the contract that they are not allowed to reveal their identities to anyone. Otherwise, how can we still make the show? If everyone already knows about Teacher Li Yu's identity, what's the point of wearing a mask? Can we still produce the show that way? This will greatly affect the show's recording and broadcast. Besides, it's also unfair to the other contestants since with Teacher Li Yu's status and reputation in the music industry and with him being established, how can the other contestants possibly hope to compete against him? Would they even need to sing anymore? Teacher Li Yu might even get crowned as Masked King in every episode from now on!"

No one production would always be smooth sailing. There were always shows that encountered celebrity problems, people acting like a diva, finding fault with little things, or arguing. A lot of these problems were unpredictable, but if they happened, it could usually be resolved with some communication. However, the program team and Li Yu's assistant were unable to come to an agreement.

After Assistant Xu listened to his speech, she said, "Director Hu, first things first, it was the fans who guessed Teacher Li Yu's identity and not us who actively volunteered the information. Teacher Li Yu has never been one to speak against his conscience or to ignore his fans. Even if you want him to lie, he won't be able to do it, which was the reason he admitted to it. Second, you said that it would affect the show, which I agree with. However, it is a positive effect here. With Teacher Li Yu's reputation, your show's viewership rating will definitely increase! So I don't understand what it is you're unhappy about?"

With that, Hu Fei flew into a rage!

What sort of pretense is this!

Do you think we're stupid?

Hu Fei said, "Don't you talk to me about that. Our program team decides how the show is designed and how the arrangements are made. Am I the director or are you the director? Delete that Weibo post immediately!"

Assistant Xu said, "I can't make that decision. I can only inform Teacher Li Yu about it, so I don't know how things will turn out. I'm hanging up then!"

Du du.

The line was suddenly cut!

Hu Fei's face darkened as he let out an angry huff.

Next to him, Hou Ge had heard everything. He said angrily, "If he doesn't want to cooperate, then let's just disqualify him!"

Dafei said, "Right, it was Li Yu who violated the contract first!"

Hu Fei looked at them and said, "How can we disqualify him? It's going to be such negative press that it'll certainly affect the viewership rating!"

"Isn't he getting too cocky?" Xiao Lu said, "I actually used to have quite a good impression of Teacher Li Yu! How can he do this! He's really being too disrespectful to the others like this!" She held up her cell phone's screen which was displaying Weibo and said, "Look, not only did Li Yu give away his identity, he even publicly asked for votes and for everyone to support him. Isn't that as good as asking the audience who will be here today to vote for him? This, this..."

Music Director Bai Yuanfei and the house band's members rushed over upon finding out.

When Bai Yuanfei heard what happened, he said, "The way I see it, we might as well cancel the recording today and just crown him as Masked King. We won't even need to record the show from now and just give him the trophy for the finals as well!" Bai Yuanfei did not care about Li Yu's status at all as he also was a very big name in the music industry. "The idea behind the show was to wear a mask, and compare who can sing better without caring for an individual's popularity or looks. Now that that Sunflower has revealed himself, he's even asking for votes! What competition is left!"

If Hu Fei had known this was going to happen, he would never have invited Li Yu onto the show!

Bai Yuanfei said, "Now that the other contestants have found out as well, I don't even know how to explain to them. Director Hu, why don't you talk to them instead."

Suddenly, Xiao Lu cried out, "There's an outcry on the Internet as well!"

Everyone's heart pounded as they jogged over to have a look.

...

Online.

There was a constant stream of news updates!

"Sunflower's real identity exposed!"

"Li Yu joins the King of Masked Singers!"

"King of Masked Singers' cut and dry champion—Sunflower in the Starlight!"

In the short span of an hour, just one single hour, the popularity of Sunflower in the Starlight on the official website had soared from third place to first!

Sunflower: 1.1 million votes!

The Clown: 670,000 votes!

Petal Shower: 540,000 votes!

Li Yu was already way out in the lead!

This was how popular he was. This was the result of his fans swarming in with their support!

Most important, there were many of Li Yu's good friends in the industry who helped him drum up support.

A famous movie star from Greater China said: "Haha, so Li Yu has gone to compete in King of Masked Singers, and he's actually Sunflower. He sings really well, so everyone, please give him your support."

Another celebrity said: "Teacher Li, I'm cheering you on. And here I was thinking about why Sunflower could sing so well. So it turned out that it was you. That completely answered my question. Since you didn't take it seriously the first two episodes, I believe you'll be serious in the third episode? Who can compete with you then? Remember to get crowned Masked King as much as possible!"

Quite a few celebrity friends voiced their solidarity for Li Yu.

And in turn, it created even greater support for Sunflower. His popularity votes kept rising!

Meanwhile.

Li Yu's fans started something.

"Go Teacher Li!"

"Love you to death!"

"What was wrong with the last two episodes? Why wasn't Li Yu crowned as Masked King?"

"There must be some conspiracy on the show, right?"

"Does the live audience there even know how to appreciate music? How could they crown The Clown as Masked King? Who is he to deserve that? Can he even compare to Teacher Li Yu?"

"Sunflower sang really well!"

"Right, The Clown, Petal Shower, and the others are nowhere good enough!"

"That Sunset Glow is nothing either. I don't even get it. How did she beat Teacher Li Yu by so many votes last week? That must have been because Teacher Li Yu did not take you guys seriously!"

"Hahaha. Now that we know Li Yu is Sunflower, do you guys think he'll become Masked King for every episode from now?"

"Definitely!"

"That's a must! Teacher Li Yu is incredibly popular!"

The opinions were totally skewed.

The people were also giving him their support.

Sunflower in the Starlight was garnering more and more support!

But this action of Li Yu's had created a negative impact on the King of Masked Singers. He was basically destroying the show that they all had worked so hard to make! His action was all for his own selfish purposes in a bid to create an advantageous situation for himself. But for the show and the other contestants, what he did was full of malice!

...

But there were also people in the industry who were understanding of the situation.

At an entertainment company.

Fang Weihong found Zhang Yuanqi. "Sister Zhang, Sunflower is Li Yu?"

Zhang Yuanqi said, "I heard that it."

Fang Weihong spread her hands. "He admitted it himself? What does that mean?"

"It means that Old Li cannot afford to lose," Zhang Yuanqi replied.

A female celebrity from the same company who was beside Zhang Yuanqi added, "He did not get crowned as Masked King for two episodes now, so Li Yu couldn't bear that any longer and decided to expose himself in hopes that it would aid him in becoming the Masked King? But would the program team allow that? Ever since Teacher Li dropped off the A-list celebrity rankings, he has been a bit anxious to make himself famous again. He must intend to make use of this show to get back into the A-list? Since King of Masked Singers has gotten really popular, his team must have given him that idea, I guess?"

Fang Weihong shook her head. "Even if they know he's up to no good, there's nothing they can do. With his popularity, as long as he doesn't sing badly, he'll certainly become the Masked King. Unless the other contestants can come up with spectacularly outstanding performances or also give away their identity, there isn't really any way they can compete against him."

...

At Beijing Television.

In the dressing room.

Chen Guang frowned, "What's there left to do now that this has happened?"

Wang Zhuishu grunted, "Is he really Li Yu?"

Chen Yidong was having his makeup done by a makeup artist. "Perhaps it won't affect the show as much as we think? The live audience members might not necessarily be Li Yu's fans."

In the dressing room next to them.

Zhang Xia kept shaking her head. "Looks like we'll be welcoming a new Masked King today."

Amy said, "I really couldn't tell from Sunflower's singing that it was him!"

Backstage.

In a small conference room.

Hu Fei, Hou Ge, and the others had gathered the show's contestants except for Sunflower for a meeting.

When they all got there, Hu Fei immediately apologized, "Sorry about this, everyone. I did not handle this problem well, so let me first apologize."

Sunset Glow's light voice came from under her mask. "Are we still carrying on with the competition?"

Hu Fei sighed. "We'll still go ahead and record the show, that's for sure. We've also considered disqualifying Sunflower from the show. But the fallout of that would be too great, which we know the station will definitely not approve of."

A new replacement masked singer asked, "Then does that mean we deserve this?"

It was a man's voice. His stage name was Yesterday's Daylily and he had a yellow flower on his mask. It was both quite unique and odd at the same time.

Hou Ge quickly said, "That's not what we mean. We understand that this is very unfair to all of you as contestants, but..."

The other new replacement masked singer was a woman.

Her stage name was Spinach.

Spinach said, "Could we get Teacher Li Yu himself to back out from the competition then?"

Hu Fei said, "He's currently staying in his waiting room and completely unwilling to communicate with our people."

Yesterday's Daylily said, "Isn't he cheating this way?"

Dafei, influenced by Zhang Ye, was more straightforward with his speech. "Right, he's cheating! And we can't do anything about it!"

Petal Shower did not say anything.

Sunset Glow was just listening.

The Clown was drinking tea and thinking about something else.

Yesterday's Daylily said, "This is a variety show where we pit our talents against each other. It's either we win or we lose. Does he have to go that far with those underhanded methods? And he's even a big name A-lister?"

"Former A-lister," Spinach corrected. "He was knocked off the list by Teacher Zhang Ye."

Yesterday's Daylily snorted. "Serves him right. With his behavior, he can't compare to Zhang Ye at all. They're on totally different levels."

The two of them were not very big names in the entertainment circle, or might even be newcomers to the industry, but they talked about this matter without any care or scruples.

Hu Fei apologized again, "I'm so sorry."

Spinach said, "Director Hu, it's not like this is your fault."

Yesterday's Daylily added, "We're just unhappy with his unscrupulous methods. We'll definitely record what we must, but his behavior has broken the rules of the show. Is there no way we can make him answer for it?"

Hu Fei did not say anything.

Petal Shower finally spoke up.

When she opened her mouth, what she said shocked everyone at the table. "The program team can't disqualify him? And Sunflower won't take the initiative to pull out of the competition?"

Hu Fei said, "Well..."

Petal Shower nodded and went on, "Alrighty then, why don't we just eliminate him instead?"

Everyone was dumbfounded!

Eliminate?

Get who eliminated?

Sunflower? Li Yu?

Damn, who can possibly do that? He's already revealed who he is! Even if he sings like shit, there will still be people in the audience voting for him!

Petal Shower tacked on, "When we draw lots later, I'll switch lots with whoever gets matched against Sunflower!" Petal Shower then got to her feet and left the conference room.

Sunset Glow looked at her and giggled.

Spinach gasped.

Yesterday's Daylily was too stunned to react.

Hou Ge, Hou Ge, Dafei, and the others looked at each other!

Eliminate Li Yu?

That would of course be the best way out!

But then, could that really happen? Would Petal Shower be able to do that? Could she really beat Li Yu who had already revealed himself? Fine, even if there was a one percent chance of that happening and Petal Shower really won, what about the round after that? Li Yu would surely still win in the elimination round! Who could stop him?

The Clown also chuckled. He was becoming more and more certain that Petal Shower was an old friend of his. Her temper was exactly what he liked!

Chapter 1019: Showdown!

At Beijing Television.

In the recording studio.

The audience gradually arrived and entered the studio.

Zhang Ye's parents and three sisters did not have to line up to get in. Xiao Lu had gone out to bring them in via the staff entrance. She politely invited them to the back row where it was less conspicuous. She even gave each of them a bottle of water and some snacks.

Zhang Ye's third sister said, "Thank you, Sister Lu."

Xiao Lu smiled and said, "You're welcome."

his second sister asked eagerly, "Sister Lu, is Sunflower really my Li Yu?"

"Li Yu is yours?" his eldest sister said in annoyance.

His second sister said, "But I'm his fan!"

Xiao Lu simply acknowledged, "It's him. Didn't he already say so himself?"

His second sister slapped her own thigh and exclaimed, "That's great! I didn't come here for nothing then!"

His third sister shouted, "I like Li Yu too! He's so handsome!"

His eldest sister said, "Didn't you say that you support The Clown?"

His third sister replied, "Hehe, I've defected."

Zhang Ye's father said, "Xiao Lu, go on and get back to your work. There's no need to stay here with us."

Xiao Lu said, "Alright then. You can find our staff anywhere, so if there's anything you need, just approach one of them." Just as she was about to leave, she spotted some people coming in and holding LED placards with Li Yu's name on them.

She immediately went up to them and said, "Hey, you guys can't bring that in!"

Those girls were very unhappy to hear that.

"Why!"

"You can use the contestant's stage names, but not their real names. If the cameras capture it, it will mislead the audience."

"How would it mislead the audience? Everyone already knows that Sunflower is Brother Li Yu!"

"This won't do. You guys can't bring the signs in."

"Why are you being so troublesome!"

"If you're here to attend our show, please respect our show's rules. Otherwise, we have to deny entry to you."

"I'm going to bring it in. What about it? Who are you trying to scare!"

A squabble broke out.

Several employees and security guards immediately ran over to take control of the situation.

Just one post from Li Yu on his Weibo had caused so much trouble to the program team's work. A well-planned King of Masked Singers was now screwed up by him from the inside out!

...

In a backstage hallway.

The other program team staff also had a squabble, this one with Li Yu's assistant.

Hou Ge asked, "When are you all going to delete that Weibo post?"

Assistant Xu was being quite unreasonable about it. "Are you all just going to keep harping on that?"

"You all have already affected the show from being recorded normally!" Dafei said angrily. "Just because of one person, the program team is now busy putting out fires. The other contestants were also badly affected by this. It's you who needs to get this clear. This show does not belong to you all, nor is it here to serve one person! Can you guys give some respect to others?"

Assistant Xu pointed at him and said, "Young man, don't speak to me in that angry tone. When I started out in the entertainment industry, you weren't even born yet. Do you think that the appearance fee that your show is paying us is a lot? Teacher Li only agreed to join the show because he thought you all were sincere. He doesn't usually participate in these Mainland China variety shows. The viewership that Teacher Li alone can bring to your show is greater than everyone else combined!"

"You broke the rules!"

"Teacher Li is helping your show get more popular!"

Their argument got fiercer and fiercer, with both sides' tempers flaring!

The employees on the program team felt a little grossed out by such behavior. They really could not accept that Li Yu could suggest that they were doing this for the good of King of Masked Singers and their program team when it was so blatantly obvious that he was just using them for his own gains by violating the rules with underhanded methods and asking for votes!

Wasn't this too hypocritical?

A former A-list celebrity would actually resort to something so despicable?

All of a sudden, Hu Fei came walking over from afar. "Don't bother trying to reason with them. It's about time to start recording, so let's get down to work!" He did not even look at Assistant Xu as he led the others away.

Hou Ge said angrily, "Brother Hu, aren't they pushing it too far like that?"

One of the staff members said, "I just heard from my friend that Li Yu's team has been buying and running PR campaigns to help promote their cause. There were already several media outlets predicting that the overall champion of King of Masked Singers would be him. All those reports were due to them dumping money to create hype! They even bought and ran campaigns here at Beijing TV!"

It was no wonder the media had reacted so quickly!

It was no wonder the public opinion had switched over to Li Yu so one-sidedly!

Hu Fei told them, "I've already reported this to the station. From now on, Beijing TV will no longer have any dealings with Li Yu and his team!"

However, that would be something for the future.

But right now?

What were they going to do about the show right now?

Now that they had arrived at this point, they could no longer use any unseemly means to kick Li Yu off the show. They were forced to let him continue taking part in the recording. Even if he were to take the crown of Masked King for every episode from now, they would still have to continue recording the show as usual. Li Yu and his team had probably accounted for this, which was why they were so daring and unscrupulous in their methods!

...

The drawing of lots began.

The contestants were all sitting in their individual waiting rooms and watching their TVs.

The first person to draw lots was Sunflower in the Starlight. But after knocking on his door for a long time, no one responded until the female producer shouted from outside, "It's time for the drawing of lots!"

The door immediately opened with that.

Assistant Xu allowed her and the cameraman to go in.

The female producer was furious. So you people were inside all this time? Then why didn't you open the door just now? Why did you act like you didn't hear us? What kind of people are these!

Sunflower's mask was already on and he was no longer indifferent as before. When the cameraman came into the waiting room, Sunflower's laughter rang out. "Am I the first to draw lots?"

The female producer said, "Yes, please draw lots to decide your order of appearance."

"OK." Sunflower put his hand into the box and took out a ball.

Number 2!

It wasn't exactly a good or a bad position.

The female producer nodded, then turned around to leave without saying another word.

The other contestants could observe the entire process on their televisions.

Yesterday's Daylily let out a quiet curse.

Spinach's face sank. She started complaining incessantly to the employee assigned as her liaison. She was not worried as this part would not be broadcast.

Sunset Glow was silent.

Petal Shower was calmly drinking from her thermos, possibly something she had brought to soothe her throat. With the mask covering her face, any expressions she made could not be seen.

The Clown was just as calm.

Before long, the draws to decide the order was complete.

Number 1: Spinach.

Number 2: Sunflower in the Starlight.

Number 3: The Clown.

Number 4: Petal Shower.

Number 5: Sunflower.

Number 6: Yesterday's Daylily.

Spinach was on the verge of tears.

First to appear?

And her opponent was going to be Li Yu?

There was practically no chance of winning. For a moment, she even thought about not going onstage. What battle could be fought against Li Yu, an elite singer who had cheated?

However, someone pushed opened the door to her waiting room not long after.

It was someone wearing a flower mask.

Petal Shower extended the ball in her hand and said with a smile, "Wanna switch?"

Ah?

We're really switching?

Spinach was startled. She thought that Petal Shower had just been making a passing remark back in the conference room!

The camera linked to the internal transmission cut to the scene in this room.

The other contestants could all see this!

When Sunflower saw this, his eyes narrowed. What was the meaning of this? Switching their order of appearance? Petal Shower intended to meet me in the first round? He found it a little funny and let out a laugh. He already knew about Petal Shower's singing. She could sing very well and her falsetto was very good too. However, she was at most as good as him. Now that he had revealed himself, and with the media talking about it, he knew that no one could beat him in this episode, in the next episode, and even the following episode. Even if the other contestants revealed themselves, he didn't feel that he would lose. He believed that he was the contestant with the best fanbase on this stage.

When the program team staff saw this, they did not say anything. There were no rules stating that the contestants could not change their order of appearance. They just needed the contestants themselves to agree to the change.

Spinach stood up quickly. "Big Sis, is this, is this really alright?"

Petal Shower nodded. "It is, although my number isn't that good either. Do you still want to switch?"

Petal Shower's number was matched against The Clown.

However, when Spinach heard that Petal Shower wanted to switch numbers, she immediately nodded furiously like a chick pecking at seeds. "Yes, yes, let's switch!"

"OK." On camera, Petal Shower and Spinach switched the little balls with their numbers.

Spinach said gratefully, "Thank you, Big Sis."

"You're welcome." Petal Shower twirled her hair and took large strides while walking away without any hesitation.

Everyone knew that Petal Shower had been angered. However, no one thought that she would win because they all felt that her opponent was too strong. Further, her opponent's identity had been revealed as well.

...

In The Clown's waiting room.

Han Qi was also very angry.

Today's main attraction should have been The Clown. Teacher Clown had taken the throne of the Masked King in two consecutive episodes and his popularity was the highest as well. In this third episode, he was initially the favorite to win. But with that stunt from Li Yu, the people's attention immediately shifted to him instead. No one cared about the other contestants anymore, whether it was The Clown, Petal Shower, or Sunset Glow. They had all become supporting characters to Little Yu, as everyone was shouting that Li Yu was the true Masked King!

Han Qi said aggrieved, "If Sunflower gets eliminated, that'll be such a face smacking!"

The Clown chuckled, "Yeah."

Still, Han Qi got discouraged again. "However, that's going to be impossible."

The Clown laughed. "It's not impossible."

Han Qi said, "Do you think that Teacher Petal Shower can win?"

The Clown thought for a moment before answering, "I don't know who she is, but I have an inkling of who she might be. If, and I'm saying if she is the person I think she is"—He then paused—"then the serious her will definitely win!"

Han Qi was surprised at this. "Really?"

Zhang Ye nodded.

But the prerequisite had to be that Petal Shower was that woman.

Could it be her?

Zhang Ye stood up. "Come, recording hasn't started yet, so let's go to the studio to watch."

Han Qi said, "I heard that Petal Shower has made a last-minute change for her choice of song. I wonder if the band can accommodate her."

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Then all the more reason we ought to cheer her on."

The other contestants had the same thoughts as him.

Sunset Glow, Spinach, and Yesterday's Daylily also went to the studio to watch. Faced with Li Yu's despicable behavior, they no longer cared about their victory or defeat against each other. They were all hoping for a miracle, that Petal Shower would beat Li Yu, then for Li Yu to make some mistakes in the elimination round and get eliminated as a result!

But what were the chances of that?

Ai, none of them wanted to think about it.

Chapter 1020: Petal Shower...surpasses the gods!

In the recording studio.

The recording had not started yet; the equipment was still being tested.

But in the audience, a lot of people were already starting to warm up.

"Li Yu!"

"Li Yu!"

"Li Yu!"

"Li Yu!"

Someone shouted!

As a result, a number of others joined in and shouted!

Zhang Ye's second and third sisters stood up and shouted along with the others. Before Sunflower in the Starlight even sang or appeared onstage, his popularity was already through the roof. There were also many in the audience who were not Li Yu's fans, but when they saw what was going on, they got influenced by the atmosphere and started anticipating him as well. They were beginning to think that Sunflower would definitely be the Masked King today and thought that none of the other contestants could compete against him.

"He's really popular."

"Right, that's Li Yu we are talking about!"

"Looks like Petal Shower, The Clown, and the others will just be filling in today."

"This former A-lister is indeed deserving of his reputation!"

"Why isn't it starting yet?!"

"Will Li Yu be singing Cantonese songs today?"

"If he sings in Cantonese, he'll have no match!"

Zhang Xia, Chen Guang, Yao Jiancai, and the other judges had already taken their seats at the guessing panel and were whispering among each other. Although they knew exactly what had happened, as well as how Li Yu was a sore loser, they were still very uncomfortable with his underhanded behavior that was as good as cheating. With the trouble that you stirred up, how can the others continue competing? Who can compete for the Masked King against you? Will there be any point to this competition? It might as well be an individual stage for you to perform on?

Yao Jiancai asked, "Have the lots been drawn already?"

Zhang Xia said, "Seems so."

Chen Yidong smiled and said, "The first to perform will be Spinach, followed by Sunflower."

Amy spoke up, "It's no longer that order. I heard that Petal Shower swapped places with Spinach. She'll be the first to perform now."

Chen Guang was startled. "Huh?"

The others did not know about this either.

Zhang Xia was taken aback. "What's happened?"

Amy coughed. "Seems like Petal Shower has gotten angry!"

Angry?

She initiated a challenge against Sunflower?

Indeed. With Li Yu's antics, who wouldn't get angry!

Chen Guang smiled wryly.

Zhang Xia said, "She wants to stop Sunflower from being crowned as the third episode's Masked King? By bringing him down?"

Wang Zhuishu sighed, "Her courage is admirable, but Petal Shower's just about as talented as Sunflower. Although I've always liked her, I'm still not optimistic about her chances against Sunflower. Who can beat Sunflower today? Petal Shower won't be able to do it; The Clown's even further out of the equation." Then he turned to the camera and said, "Please edit this part out."

Suddenly, Dong Shanshan walked onto the stage with a smile after exchanging some quick words with the program team staff through her earpiece.

When the audience saw this, their cheers loudened!

"He's about to come on!"

"It's starting!"

"Li Yu!"

"Li Yu!"

Dong Shanshan said amid the cheering, "Welcome, everybody, to the King of Masked Singers brought to you by our sponsor, Bright Fruit Cocoa." She bent her knees and gave a playful curtsy to the audience. "I'm your host, Dong Shanshan."

Along with the explosive viewership ratings and the show becoming a hit, Dong Shanshan's popularity soared. But today, it seemed like no one was paying any attention to what clothes or glasses Dong Shanshan was wearing and what hairstyle she had. There was only one thing on everyone's mind: What song would Sunflower be singing and how he was going to get crowned Masked King!

After a string of advertising messages.

Dong Shanshan handed the stage over. "Then let's invite our first singer today—Petal Shower."

Petal Shower walked out onto the stage.

A few of the other contestants were standing in the corridor leading to the stage.

Spinach said, "Big Sis, all the best!"

Yesterday's Daylily said, "Please defeat Sunflower!"

Sunset Glow and The Clown were watching Petal Shower from behind.

Zhang Ye felt that Petal Shower had turned into a different person today. It felt like she was full of fighting spirit and that the anger suppressed within her was about to explode at any moment!

This was something to look forward to!

You had better not lose to him!

The audience still applauded for her.

"It's Petal Shower."

"Her singing is quite good."

"But it's only her falsetto that is good. How else can she compare to my Li Yu?"

"True that. Li Yu is a singing god in Greater China!"

"Yeah, there are only a handful of domestic singers who can be mentioned in the same breath as Li Yu. But I think it's unlikely that those people would come and compete on King of Masked Singers."

Zhang Ye spotted where his parents were sitting in the audience.

His father had a serious expression on his face.

His mother and sisters were very excited and shouting about something, but Zhang Ye was too far away to hear them clearly.

The lights dimmed.

The studio suddenly fell silent.

However, not everyone knew how to respect others. In the middle of the audience, a few girls were waving their LED boards and actually shouting Li Yu's name when Petal Shower took to the stage!

"Brother Li Yu!"

"Sunflower, go for it!"

"Li Yu, I love you!"

Then they started to giggle and laugh.

Executive Director Hu Fei's expression darkened!

The band had no choice but to stop and delay the start of the musical accompaniment.

A program team employee immediately ran over and gave them a warning!

In the wings, Li Yu's assistant gave a slight smile as she didn't find anything wrong with it. Look at this! This is what Teacher Li Yu's popularity is all about. In his presence, it will be useless no matter who comes!

Zhang Xia frowned.

Amy kept shaking her head.

What kind of behavior was that? Their impressions of Li Yu got worse!

Spinach said angrily, "Aren't they trying to stir up trouble?"

Yesterday's Daylily said, "All this happened because of Li Yu's Weibo post!"

However, Zhang Ye could see that Petal Shower was not affected by this. She stood at center stage and closed her eyes. Then, all of a sudden, she raised her microphone! With the ruckus occurring in the audience and with the studio not exactly quiet, no one expected Petal Shower to start singing in a cappella!

"Have you ever seen the sun rise?"

"It's warm and cozy.

"When one day you see someone singing into the sunrise,

"Well, that might just be me."

In an instant, everyone in the studio fell silent!

Zhang Xia was taken aback!

Amy nearly jumped!

Wang Zhuishu was dumbfounded!

Waiting in the wings, Spinach, Sunset Glow, and Yesterday's Daylily were all dumbfounded!

The music played!

Petal Shower sang loudly.

"Have you ever seen the blue skies?"

"They're clear and they're real.

"When one day you see someone laughing under the blue skies,

"Well, that might just be me."

It was her real voice!

Petal Shower was using her real voice!

Even Sunflower, who was in his waiting room, was a little shocked!

This voice could truly be described as a keen blade. When the first word was sung, it stabbed right into the hearts of the audience, followed by thrust after thrust. This voice was very special!

And it was powerful!

It was a kind of power that most female singers did not possess!

Zhang Xia figured out who she was!

With this voice and singing style, there wasn't anybody else like her among the female singers in the music industry!

It was her!

She actually came to the show!

Everyone's hair stood on end as they got shocked. All of them thought that Petal Shower could only sing well in falsetto and that it was her greatest weapon. But when Petal Shower started singing with her real voice, many of them were unprepared for the shock!

How was that possible?

It turned out that her real voice was even better than her falsetto!

So Petal Shower had not been serious all this while!

She had just been "playing around" all along!

Even Li Yu's fans who were causing trouble earlier were dumbfounded by what they heard!

Petal Shower was singing higher and higher.

"Have you ever seen the dark clouds?"

"They're thick and gloomy.

"When one day you see someone roaring under those dark clouds,

"Well, that might just be me."

The audience was so stunned their jaws dropped!

Zhang Ye's parents gasped!

Zhang Ye's three sisters went slack-jawed and forgot themselves!

How amazing!

This singing was unparalleled!

Zhang Ye closed his eyes and could feel goosebumps rising all over his arms!

Spinach and Yesterday's Daylily had been stunned for a while already!

Meanwhile, onstage, Petal Shower went another octave higher!

"Have you ever seen the sunset?"

"It's dusky and quick to vanish.

"When one day you see someone shouting their last cry into the sunset,

"Well, that might just be me.

"No, that's definitely me!"

Suddenly, her voice jumped another octave!

"Ah!"

"Oh, ah!"

"Oh!"

"Ah, oh!"

"Hey, ahh!"

"Oh, ahhh!"

Anger!

Tenacity!

Despair!

Petal Shower's cries took this song to its climax!

Many of the audience members could feel their bodies drenched with sweat!

It was spectacular!

It was wondrous!

Right then and there, the audience erupted!

Many of them stood up!

Many of them began to scream!

"That's Me" was not considered a popular song in the music industry but had blossomed because of Petal Shower's cover. She sang it in such a godly manner!

No one was a match for today's Petal Shower!

She had surpassed the gods with this song!