

Superstar 1021

Chapter 1021: Petal Shower vs. Sunflower!

"Petal Shower!"

"Petal Shower!"

"Petal Shower!"

"Petal Shower!"

The excitement in the studio was hitting a fever pitch!

Many in the audience were shouting her name!

Petal Shower did not say anything. She just bowed and exited the stage.

Zhang Xia openly commented, "That was fantastic! There's only one such female singer like her in the music scene!"

Yao Jiancai quickly asked, "You've recognized her?"

Zhang Xia smiled and said, "I'm quite certain of it."

Chen Yidong said, "But her voice doesn't sound familiar to me. Why can't I tell?"

Wang Zhuishu had also more or less guessed who she was. He was astonished. "She changed her vocal register on purpose and made her voice sound different." He looked to Zhang Xia and said, "Is it really her?"

Zhang Xia said in amusement, "Don't ask me, ask Old Chen."

Then, the judges looked over to Chen Guang.

Chen Guang scoffed and threw his hands up, saying, "I don't know anything. Why would you ask me?"

Amy said excitedly, "There's something to look forward to now! It's gonna be difficult to predict who wins and loses!"

Wang Zhuishu gave a wry smile and said, "Yeah, Petal Shower just showcased her specialty. If we considered just this performance, no one could beat her except The Clown since he's always so unpredictable. Since no one can predict what he's going to do, we shouldn't count him out." The vague meaning to this was not spelled out clearly, but Petal Shower had turned in a heaven defying performance with this song. However, with Li Yu exposing himself and with so many fans supporting him, it would be difficult to predict how the audience would vote in the end.

In the corridor to the backstage.

Petal Shower was returning.

Spinach said excitedly, "Big Sis, y-you were amazing!"

Yesterday's Daylily said, "That was so cool! Senior Sis, could it be you?"

Petal Shower looked at him. "You are?"

Yesterday's Daylily said, "I'm a newcomer to the company. Uh, if I haven't misidentified you, we even dined together at Dongzhimen last month."

Petal Shower laughed. "Oh, it's you."

Yesterday's Daylily was shocked. "So it's really you then? Aiyo!"

But Spinach still could not recognize her. She hurriedly asked, "You are?"

Sunset Glow didn't seem to have figured it out either and was looking at her deep in thought.

The Clown did not say anything and ignored them. He already knew who she was, so he was even less inclined to speak as he was afraid that he would get recognized.

Onstage.

Dong Shanshan was saying, "Let's welcome our next singer—Sunflower in the Starlight!"

At this, the audience raised another racket!

"Ah?"

"Li Yu is next?"

"He's facing off against Petal Shower?"

"Aiyo, this is so exciting!"

"Uh, this..."

"Brother Li Yu, you can do it!"

"Li Yu!"

"Li Yu!"

"Let's go! Li Yu will definitely win!"

Many of Li Yu's fans were screaming their hearts out!

Sunflower walked onto the stage slowly as the crowd cheered him on. There was a sense of heaviness in his stride. After he came to a standstill, he took two deep breaths. Petal Shower's amazing performance had pressured him too much. He really had not expected that Petal Shower could sing a rather unknown song so well. It was an incredibly heaven defying performance and whoever took the stage afterwards to face her would have it quite hard. If this as before, Sunflower knew that he would have lost to her for sure. But it was different today, since everyone knew who he was. With his popularity, as long as he could perform up to par, he would definitely become the Masked King!

Sunflower was convinced of it.

Besides, he had chosen a song that would flatter him today!

The lights dimmed.

The music started playing.

The title of the song appeared on the display overhead the stage: "Mother Said."

"It's a Mandarin song?"

"Why isn't he singing a Cantonese song?"

"Li Yu is definitely saving that for the finale! Haha!"

"It's almost Mother's Day, so this song is a good choice too!"

"But isn't it a rather niche song?"

"Anything that Li Yu sings is good. So what if it's niche? The song that Petal Shower sang was even more niche!"

The audience was getting quite enthusiastic.

However, when Spinach and Yesterday's Daylily saw the title of the song, they felt even more contempt for Li Yu. He had broken the rules, cheated by soliciting support, and even chose this sort of song to resonate with the audience on Mother's Day? He could really resort to any kind of method just to become the Masked King? How could he still have the cheek to sing a song about a mother's love!

Sunflower sang.

"Mother, oh mother.

"I've always kept your words in mind.

"I finally understand why you told me to be wary of those around me.

"Mother, oh mother.

"I've always kept your words in mind.

"You said that life is like an abyss that none of us can escape."

This was a very gloomy song.

It portrayed the singer's sense of confusion.

"Loneliness.

"I've gotten used to it.

"Hurt."

"I've suffered it.

"Can you tell me those words again?

"Mother, where are you right now?"

In the studio, some people started to cry.

Zhang Ye's mother also felt a little touched and kept sniffing.

Zhang Xia, Amy, and the others nodded lightly. Disregarding everything else, Sunflower's singing was really one of the best in the music industry. The potency of his high notes was striking, and his technique was good. He could consciously control his voice to insert a slight sobbing tone, which made his singing particularly catchy!

The song ended.

Applause rang out through the studio!

"Li Yu!"

"Li Yu!"

"Li Yu!"

A lot of young ladies were so moved by the song that they screamed as they shed tears!

As today was Mother's Day, this song had clearly resonated with the audience!

Sunflower was very satisfied with himself. He smiled to the audience while waving at them and bowed to show his appreciation.

Dong Shanshan went back onstage and invited Petal Shower back on as well.

Finally, the tensest moment arrived. The voting was about to take place!

Spinach watched, not blinking.

Yesterday's Daylily got butterflies in his stomach.

Hou Ge, Xiao Lu, Dafei, and others from the program team were all looking in that direction too. They were also looking forward to the results of the voting, but could not do anything to help. None of them wanted Sunflower to win and were wishing that he would get eliminated in this episode. Otherwise, if Sunflower really became Masked King for every future episode, King of Masked Singers would end up a personal stage for him to build up his popularity. That would defeat the purpose of having their contestants appear in masks!

But then, could Petal Shower really beat him?

Could she really beat Li Yu's popularity?

And so, the judges would play their roles to their greatest effect.

Zhang Xia said, "I like Petal Shower's performance. The only word that can describe her singing today is 'perfect!'"

Yao Jiancai commented, "Although Sunflower's song was nice to listen to and the sentiment behind it is just right, it's just too pessimistic and depressing. I also prefer Petal Shower's 'That's Me,' especially that

last verse with the 'last cry.' It was the best! To be honest, I've never heard someone who can sing this well!"

Amy expressed, "Comparing the two of them, Petal Shower's performance was the more outstanding one today."

The judges unanimously preferred Petal Shower.

Petal Shower nodded in thanks.

Sunflower remained silent. He did not seem to care what the judges were saying as he still did not think that he would lose, so he let them say whatever they wanted.

However, when the voting began, Sunflower's expression finally changed!

The moment it started, Petal Shower went into the lead!

It was not much, just seven votes!

Li Yu's fans in the audience were infuriated!

"What the heck!"

"Do you people even understand music?"

"Give your votes to Li Yu!"

"Give them all to Li Yu!"

"Li Yu!"

"He should be the Masked King!"

Li Yu's fans flared up as his vote count soared!

Sunflower overtook Petal Shower and went into the lead by more than 20 votes!

The program team staff looked peeved!

Spinach and Yesterday's Daylily stamped their feet in frustration!

The judges' comments were very professional. To be fair, Petal Shower's singing was really leaps and bounds better than Sunflower's. But due to Li Yu's despicable tricks, many of those present in the studio disregarded the point of voting. They no longer cared about the singing and whether the song performed was good. Some of these audience members were even explicitly supporting the person and not the performed piece. No matter what Li Yu sang, they would give their votes to him!

Sunflower looked at the tallies and smiled.

Petal Shower did not even turn around to look at the votes.

Fortunately, there were still plenty of people in the audience who were rational.

Zhang Ye's eldest younger sister said, "I'm definitely voting for Petal Shower!"

His father said, "Right."

His mother disagreed, "But Sunflower sang very well."

His third sister said, "I didn't like Li Yu's song as it was too pessimistic. Why does it paint everything in life so darkly? Why must we be cautious of the people around us? Although I like Li Yu, I still think that Petal Shower sang better today!"

The burst of votes from Li Yu's fans was only temporary. For that moment, a lot of people gave their votes to Li Yu, but it could not gather enough momentum!

Petal Shower had sung too godly!

She was so amazing that some of Li Yu's not terribly diehard fans defected and voted for Petal Shower instead!

Both their tallies kept rising!

Finally, the results were out!

Dong Shanshan said, "I hereby announce that the winner is—Petal Shower!"

Petal Shower: 252 votes!

Sunflower: 248 votes!

It was only a difference of 4 votes!

Petal Shower had won!

Chapter 1022: 'Life's More Than the Grind'!

This result shocked many people!

Sunflower's expression darkened!

Assistant Xu was dumbfounded!

Spinach was so astonished that she nearly screamed out loud!

Yesterday's Daylily and the employees on the Beijing Television program team nearly laughed out loud!

She won?

She really won!

What a release! This was a great way to vent their anger!

"Li Yu lost?"

"That's impossible!"

"Who on earth is Petal Shower!"

"Sunflower revealed himself, yet he still couldn't win?"

"Why didn't he sing a Cantonese song!"

"If he sang a Cantonese song that he's skilled at, he would definitely have won!"

"Yeah, Sunflower probably intended to save that song for the battle for the Masked King? How could he have known that he would run into a freak like Petal Shower! And make an early exit?"

"It's over! Li Yu can't fight for the crown of the Masked King in this episode!"

"He'll definitely make it through the elimination round, though, so he has to wait until the next episode."

"Ai, he underestimated his opponents!"

"But there's really nothing to argue over about this win by Petal Shower!"

"If Li Yu had sung a Cantonese song, Petal Shower probably wouldn't have won."

A lot of the audience members were giving their objective evaluation of the outcome.

But a lot of Li Yu's fans did not accept this result.

"What the heck!"

"There's a conspiracy!"

"Do they even understand music? How did they vote?"

"It was clear that Li Yu sang better! Why does it seem like no one understood that?"

"Just like Teacher Li Yu had sung in his song, life really is like an abyss. We're surrounded by so much darkness that even if we try our hardest, no one gives us any recognition!"

"I'm pissed off!"

"How could Petal Shower win?"

"My heart aches for Brother Li Yu!"

Seeing that Li Yu had lost, some of his female fans were heartbroken for him and crying!

Crestfallen, Sunflower left the stage in a terrible mood!

A few of the judges looked at each other, finding it rather funny.

Executive Director Hu Fei felt very happy!

Deliberately planning for this to happen? To checkmate everyone? And even spending money on a PR campaign in the media? And openly soliciting votes on Weibo? But as it stood?

He had lost in the first round!

This was truly a slap to the face!

This was truly painful!

Zhang Ye laughed. That was beautifully done. Leave the rest to me.

The uproar in the studio lasted for five minutes.

After Dong Shanshan finally maintained a semblance order, she said, "Let's welcome the next contestant—The Clown."

The Clown was the third to appear and was matched up against Spinach.

This dragged everyone's attention back to the stage.

Petal Shower did not return to her waiting room. She stood with Spinach, Yesterday's Daylily, and the others in the wings and waited to see The Clown's live performance. They were all very curious about this mysterious singer who had taken the throne of the Masked King twice before, curious about his unguessable identity. There was not even a candidate they could think of. It was as though this godly person had suddenly appeared out of nowhere in the music industry, so much so that even Petal Shower dreaded him a great deal.

Amy clapped. "It's The Clown's turn!"

Yao Jiancai had been looking forward to this and said, "Is he going to sing yet another original?"

"I'm not sure." Zhang Xia stared at the lyrics teleprompter but did not yet see the title of the song displayed.

The audience looked to the stage.

Spinach was nervously observing The Clown.

The Clown walked over to the house band and exchanged a word with them.

Bai Yuanfei was taken aback. "You're really going to choose this song to perform?"

The Clown gave a determined, affirmative grunt.

The guitarist said, "This song is too monotone and isn't a good choice."

The Clown smiled. "It's fine. I'm choosing it."

The house band replied, "OK."

This song was one of the four songs Zhang Ye had chosen. Before this, he was still undecided on which to perform, but he could now make a decision.

Looking at the stage.

Zhang Ye's mother exclaimed in surprise.

His father turned to her. "What's the matter?"

His mother pointed at The Clown. "Nothing much, but Little Ye also seems to have that pair of shoes he's wearing."

His father said, "Oh, really? I hadn't noticed."

His mother said, "I bought them for our son. They're pretty expensive."

His second sister added, "Of course, celebrities usually wear brand name stuff since they're all loaded."

None of them cared, nor did they think anything of it.

The studio quieted.

One second.

Two seconds.

The lights slowly dimmed.

A nursery rhyme-esque melody played by a harmonica floated into the air.

Zhang Ye stood at center stage with his eyes closed and smiled. He did not know why he was smiling. Thinking about Sunflower's "Mother Said," which Zhang Ye had heard for the first time, he could honestly say that he really didn't like the song. Life was an abyss? Life was about suffering? Be wary of others? Get used to loneliness?

Why was it like that?

This wasn't what life should be about.

This isn't what a mother's love should be like.

At least, my mother's love is not like this.

Zhang Ye thought of how his mother was stingy, long-winded, and loved bragging. He would never forget his first day at university when his mother went with him to report to the campus. She carried so many big and small suitcases along with her while looking for Zhang Ye's dorm room with him and even helped him fit the bed sheets, pillowcase, and blankets. When she realized that the bed sheets were not properly fitted, she took them off and fit them again.

After that, his mother's eyes inexplicably reddened.

Zhang Ye had attended Media College in Beijing and he would be back home every weekend. It wasn't actually that bad since he was allowed to go home. Even Zhang Ye himself was looking forward to his time away from home and did not feel unsettled by having to stay away from home for the first time in his life.

But his mother very nearly cried.

Study hard—she left after saying those words.

At that time, Zhang Ye felt that his mother was just making a fuss.

Zhang Ye did not understand what his mother had felt even when he was in his final year at university. But just now, as he stood on this stage, realization dawned on him. Zhang Ye understood what had gone through his mother's mind at the time and understood what his mother had meant by "study hard."

The guitar strummed.

It drifted through the air with a youthful spirit.

Zhang Ye opened his eyes and sang in a gentle voice 1 that resonated through the studio.

"Mother sat at the door,

"Humming to flowers and kids she'd cared for.

"Although it has been years,

"I still recall her tears.

"Those dark and gloomy years,

"That tenacity and those fears.

"At the door before departing,

"Mom looked into my eyes, imparting."

The drums kicked in.

Zhang Ye sang.

"Life's about more than just the grind; poetry and distant fields we can find.

"You were born into this world with bare hands; to strive for that sea you cast off from lands."

In the audience, his mother was stunned!

The judges were stunned!

The audience was stunned!

You're singing a song related to your mother as well?

Life's about more than just the grind? Poetry and distant fields we can find?

These lyrics...

His third sister put a hand over her mouth. "Oh my god!"

His eldest sister said excitedly, "This song is so beautiful! How can this type of song exist!"

During the rehearsal, The Clown had just hummed through it. So the house band was hearing The Clown sing the lyrics for the first time as well. They were instantly moved!

The Clown smiled.

"She sat across from me,

"Head down, bidding farewell.

"Although it has been years,

"I still recall her tears.

"Times of those joyful beams,

"Times of those vows and dreams.

"Parting beside the street,

"She hugged me tight and said,

"Life's about more than just the grind; poetry and distant fields we can find.

"You were born into this world with bare hands; to strive for that sea you cast off from lands."

His mother's eyes suddenly reddened!

Amy looked deeply touched!

Zhang Xia was affected by the images conjured by the song!

An audience member was half-listening to it when all of a sudden, she covered her mouth and started crying. She had been brought back to her teenage years when she insisted on coming to the capital city to chase her dreams. Her father had strongly disagreed and locked her up at home. Not even a hunger strike could change his mind. But she would never forget when her mother quietly unlocked her door one night and handed her an already packed suitcase along with 2,000 yuan. She told her, "Your dad fell asleep, so hurry and leave. If you don't make it in Beijing, just come home."

This was what a mother was!

The greatest person in the world!

The Clown had a very gentle tone that was not intended to show off his singing. It was as though he were reading a story, narrating at an appropriate clip. But it was exactly this plain singing, coupled with those poetic lyrics, that somehow managed to bowl them over and make their hearts flutter a bit!

The story was still moving forward.

The Clown was still singing.

"I've traveled far and alone."

"Now I have a kid of my own.

"He is growing day by day,

"And will leave home someday.

"Watching as he grows up,

"Watching him toughen and look back.

"I know that there will be a day,

"I'll smile to him and say."

All of a sudden, The Clown jumped octaves.

"Life's about more than just the grind; poetry and distant fields we can find.

"You were born into this world with bare hands; to strive for that sea you cast off from lands.

"Life's about more than just the grind; poetry and distant fields we can find.

"You were born into this world with bare hands; to strive for that sea you cast off from lands!"

Faith.

Hope.

Dreams.

Love.

Legacy.

They were all mentioned in this song!

Spinach smiled bitterly.

It was her turn next, but could she win?

With this guy singing this song, how could she possibly win!

Many people were even more astonished because they had thought that Sunflower's defeat by Petal Shower was already quite face-smacking, but none of them expected for The Clown to take the stage after that and give another vicious faceslap! Sunflower's song had been about life's abyss, darkness, loneliness, and hurt. But The Clown had outright rejected him by attacking him with his song!

Life's about more than just the grind!

Poetry and distant lands we can find!

Chapter 1023: The Clown admits defeat!

The music stopped.

The song ended.

The Clown bowed and turned to walk off the stage.

There wasn't any screaming in the studio nor the explosive atmosphere like after Petal Shower had performed. There wasn't even any shouting like after Sunflower in the Starlight's performance. This was a reflective song, one that was not sung in hopes of competing on this stage. However, a lot of people in the audience suddenly started to silently stand up.

One clap.

Two claps.

Han Qi was clapping as she wiped away her tears!

Music Director Bai Yuanfei was clapping with a smile on his face!

Hu Fei, Hou Ge, Dafei, Yao Jiancai, Amy, Chen Guang, Zhang Xia, and everyone else were clapping!

It became a round of constant applause that didn't stop for a long time!

Some of their eyes were brimming with tears.

While some of them had a sad look in their eyes.

This song had given them such a swirl of emotions that it was very difficult to speak or scream to express what they were feeling inside. Those who had similar experiences were moved by the song, whereas those who hadn't gone through such a stage in life and had been affected by Sunflower's gloomy and dark "Mother Said" were now baptized by this "Life's More Than the Grind." They felt like their lives were suddenly brightened by an influx of indescribable emotions that felt very comforting.

"The Clown is so great!"

"I like him, I like him so much!"

"Me too! His songs are just so full of feeling!"

"But this song was neither intense nor lively. Will others be able to understand it?"

"Uh, this song is not exactly suitable for a competition and was not a good choice."

"I don't care about others. In any case, I understood it and I think it's wonderful!"

"I can't use words to describe how much I love The Clown. In my eyes, he poured in every ounce of his emotions into singing this song!"

The audience was chattering away.

A wry smile hung from Chen Guang's lips. "He's sung so many songs, but no one can identify him from his voice?"

Zhang Xia shook her head. "I can't think of who he might be!"

Amy said irritated, "I can't tell from his voice either!"

Yao Jiancai spread his hands and said with a laugh, "If you people from the music industry can't identify him, then I definitely can't guess who he is."

There were no deafening high notes.

There was nothing uncontrolled in his technique.

The Clown used his extremely magnetic voice to tell a story without any hint of showing off.

This song was so advanced!

This singing was so advanced!

"Life's More Than the Grind 1" was performed by Xu Wei in Zhang Ye's previous world and Gao Xiaosong was the songwriter, with both the melody and lyrics written by him. Zhang Ye had not planned on singing this on today's stage and had prepared it as a backup piece. But when he took the stage, he could not suppress the thought of it. He just suddenly wanted to sing this song, so he sang it.

In the waiting area.

Petal Shower, Spinach, and the others were all there.

As the applause did not stop, Dong Shanshan did not invite the next singer onstage even though she was already there herself. She was simply waiting for the atmosphere to calm down.

The Clown returned to the waiting area.

Petal Shower looked deep into his eyes. "That was amazing."

The Clown changed his vocal register and said, "Thank you."

Sunset Glow looked at him. "I really liked that song. Can I cover it?"

The Clown laughed and said, "Sure."

Spinach smiled bitterly. "You, you guys are too good! Godly seniors, please lead the way for us!"

Yesterday's Daylily asked, "Teacher Clown, which big name in the industry are you?"

The Clown chuckled. "I'm just a newbie in the music industry." He really wasn't lying.

But how could others believe him? In fact, they were floored!

A newbie?

Stop pretending already!

To Spinach and Yesterday's Daylily, The Clown and Petal Shower both belonged to the type of singers with elite singing skills, even if they had completely different singing styles. It was very difficult to judge who was better and more of a case of beauty being in the eye of the beholder. But compared to themselves, these two teachers would definitely annihilate them in a singing competition.

Spinach pulled a long face and said, "I don't want to go out on stage anymore."

The Clown smiled and said, "Sing well and you're sure to win."

Spinach said, "Please don't try to comfort me. Who can beat you after that song?"

Yesterday's Daylily suddenly said in amusement, "Teacher Clown's song was such a divine stab!" He could not prevent himself from bursting into laughter. "Aiyo, I'm dying of laughter!"

Spinach, Sunset Glow, and Petal Shower burst into laughter as well.

Indeed. This stab was really too vicious!

A coincidence?

Bullshit! What coincidence?

How could there be such a coincidence? Sunflower had just finished singing a song about how life was dark and a grind, and then you came along and sang about how life's more than just the grind. The Clown must have definitely done this on purpose!

Li Yu is probably in his waiting room, his face green with anger!

"Teacher Petal Shower is also amazing!"

"Yeah, she straight up prevented Li Yu from advancing to the next round!"

"Hai, but Li Yu will still be able to make a comeback next episode."

"Yes, he won't be stopped in the elimination round."

"If he sings a Cantonese song, then..."

"Yeah, it's difficult to say who'll end up as the eventual winner if that happens."

"Li Yu is really good at Cantonese songs."

The masked singers were on quite friendly terms as they chatted. Li Yu's backstabbing had led the other contestants to become wholly united against him and they grew close as a result.

...

Onstage.

The audience was still applauding.

Dong Shanshan had no other choice but to smile and speak into the microphone, "Shall I tell everyone a joke?"

Only then did the applause lessen.

Dong Shanshan said, "There was once a host who wanted to tell a joke to her audience, but the audience did not laugh. That's all. That's the joke, so let's welcome our next contestant—Spinach!"

The audience was tickled.

"Pfft!"

"What a bad joke!"

"How is that a joke!"

"Hahahaha!"

But with that interruption from Dong Shanshan, the audience was drawn away from the emotions brought on by the song.

Spinach took a deep breath. "I'm going on!"

The Clown said, "Break a leg."

Yesterday's Daylily looked at her with sympathetic eyes. "Just do your best."

Spinach forced a smile and quickly walked onto the stage.

The music started.

The melody was very familiar.

When Zhang Ye heard it, he got slightly surprised and then smiled.

Spinach sang softly.

"To my dear Mom and Dad. How are you two?

"Have you been busy working? Are you healthy?

"I'm in Beijing, it's pretty good.

"Mom and Dad, don't you worry for me."

It was "A Letter to Home," which Zhang Ye had sung at Beijing Television's Spring Festival Gala.

The audience was stunned!

She was singing really well!

She was singing it incredibly well!

Zhang Ye, Yesterday's Daylily, and the others had not expected that Spinach could sing so well either. Her singing style was very silky, her crystal-clear voice sounding fantastical. When she sang "A Letter to Home," it felt completely different from Zhang Ye's version. It carried a unique flavor!

After the song was over, some of the audience were in tears.

Soon after, The Clown was invited back onstage.

Dong Shanshan smiled. "Let's first have the guessing panel of judges say a few words."

Chen Yidong was the first to speak. "Spinach's singing and voice were quite good. The emotions were on point and I was moved when she sang that last part of the song. But compared to The Clown, she's probably not at his level yet."

Spinach humbly bowed. "Thank you, Teacher."

Zhang Xia asked, "Spinach, have we ever worked together?"

Spinach coughed. "Yes."

The audience gasped.

Zhang Xia immediately probed further. "Was it at that gala last year?"

Gala?

What gala?

Nobody could understand what she meant.

Spinach smirked and said, "The director isn't letting me answer."

"Alright, I get it." Zhang Xia said, amused, "So it really is you. No wonder you can sing this well."

But Chen Guang was not in the know. "Who is she?"

Amy said, "Grandma Zhang, please tell us."

Zhang Xia smiled and said, "I can't say who she is aloud, but I can give you a hint. This young lady is not considered as someone from the music industry or someone with a musical background." Then she told Spinach, "You sang very well, and us two are like old friends. But if I had to vote, I would still vote for The Clown. Please don't blame Grandma."

Spinach laughed and said, "It's fine, Grandma Zhang."

The judges' attitudes were very obvious.

The audience felt the same.

Spinach was indeed not bad. She could sing well, her song was good, and her singing touched people. But The Clown's song had already reached a level where it couldn't be distinguished between good or bad. He had sung to another plane!

...

In the waiting room.

Sunflower watched the television, utterly uninterested in the results. He knew that The Clown would definitely win. In the next round, Sunset Glow was certain to get through as well. Then only he, Spinach, and Yesterday's Daylily would be left to compete in the elimination round. Since it came down to that, he knew that he would still be able to win even without singing. Therefore, he was not worried at all. He was in a terrible mood right now and had not expected that things would turn out this way, nor that Petal Shower would perform so exceedingly well.

He had not managed to fight for the position of Masked King today!

Then he'd just have to leave it for the next episode!

Or the episode after that!

In any case, he still had plenty of future chances. He would stop underestimating his opponents' talent in the future and sing the Cantonese songs he was best at to sweep everyone aside!

...

In the studio.

Dong Shanshan nodded and said, "Alright, please get ready to vote."

There wasn't much suspense to the voting, though.

The Clown was going to win this for sure.

In the wings, Hu Fei started talking with his coworkers.

Dafei asked, "Brother Hu, do you think that Spinach can eliminate Sunflower?"

Hu Fei shook his head. "There's no chance of that."

Hou Ge added, "Even if Spinach excels, she's still not a match for Li Yu. Moreover, there are so many Li Yu's fans in the studio today."

Xiao Lu said, "Yeah, don't expect too much from Spinach and Yesterday's Daylily. Even if Sunset Glow somehow loses and goes into the elimination round, she still won't be a match for Li Yu. He is a tenor singer and his next song will definitely be a Cantonese one. Even if Petal Shower went up against him again, I think it would still be difficult to beat him!"

Han Qi came over. "Then wouldn't Sunflower still act smug onstage tomorrow? He's so annoying!"

Dafei said, "Then what should we do? Petal Shower defeating Li Yu even when he had all the advantage was already a miracle. Other than Petal Shower and The Clown, who amongst the other contestants can stop him?"

But a voice shocked everyone!

The Clown suddenly spoke up and his words dumbfounded everyone in the studio!

"Please wait a moment." The Clown lifted his microphone as he said with a chuckle, "Spinach sang admirably this round. If the voting begins, I'm afraid that the votes would be too disproportionate and I would lose badly. So why don't we skip the vote and I admit defeat instead!" Then he looked at Dong Shanshan and asked, "I am allowed to admit defeat, right?"

Dong Shanshan was stunned!

Hu Fei was shocked!

Zhang Xia, Yao Jiancai, and the other judges were surprised!

In the waiting room, the look on Li Yu's face became one of thunder!

The audience exclaimed!

Han Qi was dumbfounded!

Petal Shower and Sunset Glow were stunned!

Spinach nearly fainted on the spot!

Admit defeat?

You're admitting defeat?

A second later, realization dawned on many people!

He was doing this on purpose!

He was definitely doing this on purpose!

Petal Shower had gotten rid of Li Yu in the first round!

And now, The Clown wanted to follow up on it by taking him on in the elimination round!?

Dammit!

Have you gone crazy?

Isn't this as good as going for broke?

Chapter 1024: A sudden turn of events!

On Weibo.

Li Yu's fans were all laughing happily.

"Have they finished recording the show yet?"

"I have no idea."

"Brother Li Yu is definitely going to be the Masked King."

"Right, recording might have already ended."

"Just based on Teacher Li Yu's reputation alone, who can best him?"

"Ah, I really wanted to attend the recording and listen to Brother Li Yu sing!"

The media was still plugging this news.

Many of the PR campaigns that Li Yu's team had spent money on were still bombarding the public space with news.

"No suspense as to who will become the third episode's Masked King!"

"Li Yu: The darling of the music industry!"

"Sunflower has been holding back in the competition all this time!"

"A Sunflower that sings Cantonese songs is unbeatable!"

"Only a matter of time before Li Yu returns to the A-list!"

"Sunflower's popularity to usher in a career high if he becomes grand champion of King of Masked Singers!"

The speculation in the outside world was getting intense.

Even the onlookers started to believe that Li Yu would definitely become this episode's Masked King.

But unbeknownst to them, Li Yu had already lost the right to compete in the third episode's battle for the Masked King. Neither did they know that the recording studio was currently in chaos!

...

At the studio.

The Clown's words had shocked everyone!

Dong Shanshan forced herself to calm down and said, "You want to admit defeat?"

The Clown nodded. "That's right."

Dong Shanshan asked, "Are you sure?"

The Clown said, "I'm quite sure."

"There aren't any rules about this, so I can't make the decision. I'll need to ask the program team." Dong Shanshan immediately looked to Hu Fei and the others in the wings.

Many of the audience members stood up looking confused.

"Why is he admitting defeat?"

"Afraid that you'll lose by too much? You must mean to say that you're afraid you'll win by too much!"

"Why did The Clown do that?"

"He clearly sang really well!"

"This song can easily sweep Spinach aside!"

"Yeah, The Clown would definitely have won. So why did he admit defeat?"

"Didn't all the judges only have good things to say about him?"

"This fellow must have gone crazy, right?"

"If he admits defeat now, he'll have to go into the elimination round and take on Sunflower. Sunflower will definitely sing a Cantonese song, and then wouldn't The Clown get eliminated? Then he'll have to take off his mask!"

"Yeah. Although I also want to know who The Clown is, it's just the third episode. I don't wish for him to be eliminated so early in the competition!"

His mother was also stunned. "What's going on?"

His eldest young sister said anxiously, "I don't know."

A lot of people were confused by what was going on.

But some people understood exactly what was going on.

Hu Fei and the others could vaguely guess what The Clown was thinking. When The Clown decided to admit defeat, it set their pulses racing with excitement!

Li Yu had become a ticking time bomb that could bring everyone down with him. The program team could not wait to get rid of this cancerous tumor. But during their earlier discussion, they had concluded that among all the contestants, only Petal Shower and The Clown had a chance to put up a fight against him and that it was impossible for the others to win. Even though Petal Shower's and The Clown's chances of winning were very slim, with Petal Shower performing exceedingly well and eliminating

Sunflower in the first round, the program team staff thought that this was the best possible outcome and a miracle as well. They had not expected that anyone would be able to kick him out of the competition in the upcoming elimination round.

But The Clown came forward!

No one could have known this would happen!

Hou Ge said excitedly, "Teacher Clown!"

Dafei stammered, "This, this..."

Xiao Lu was extremely touched. "How righteous! Teacher Clown has such strong sense of justice!"

Han Qi was panicking. "No! He absolutely must not do that!"

Another staff member said, "What if The Clown loses? Then..."

"He's planning for it to be a deathmatch!"

"We're not talking about the first round here! This is the elimination round! Whoever loses will get eliminated!"

"He's going all out!"

"The Clown is quite interesting!"

"How brave would you need to be to do that?"

"Fucking hell! This is super exciting!"

"Director Hu, what should we do?"

"Director Hu, everyone is waiting. How are we going to handle this?"

The program team staff congregated and were in complete disarray!

On the stage.

Spinach experienced the most complicated of feelings as she finally understood what The Clown meant when he said "Sing well and you're sure to win" before her turn to take the stage. At the time, she thought that The Clown was just comforting and encouraging her as he was afraid that she would be too nervous. But she understood now that even before she'd gone onstage, The Clown planned to concede the match. The Clown knew that Spinach was definitely not a match for Li Yu, so he wanted to take him on by himself!

Before the competition started, Petal Shower had said it.

Why not just stop Li Yu from advancing to the battle for the Masked King?

Why not just get Li Yu eliminated from the show?

No one took her words seriously then. But now, they were getting closer and closer to realizing those words, especially after The Clown announced that he would concede his match!

They've gone mad!

One was Petal Shower, who clearly knew that her opponent was Li Yu, but still switched spots with Spinach!

The other was The Clown, who clearly knew that Li Yu would sing a Cantonese song to the best of his abilities in the elimination round, yet still took the risk of possibly revealing his identity by admitting defeat so that he could knock Li Yu out in the elimination round!

These two were lunatics!

These were two lunatics who had very strong self-confidence and were fearless!

Spinach quickly said, "Teacher, I..."

The Clown waved it off and laughed.

Dong Shanshan communicated through her earpiece, "Alright, alright, I understand."

The program team staff had come to a decision.

At once, everyone's eyes landed on Dong Shanshan.

Amy was so anxious she was already standing. Honestly, she really liked The Clown a lot and did not wish for him to go up against Li Yu. If that were to happen, The Clown would be more or less done for!

Li Yu's assistant was staring from the wings.

Dong Shanshan spoke, "The program team has decided: They will allow the contestant to admit defeat."

Everyone flew into an uproar!

The audience blew up!

Dong Shanshan announced, "I hereby announce that the winner of this match is—Spinach!"

No one applauded.

Seeing this, The Clown started clapping very hard and gave Spinach a thumbs up. Then he raised his hands and gestured for the crowd to give her their applause.

With that, applause started to ring out in the audience.

Spinach hurriedly bowed to give her thanks.

However, Li Yu's assistant could not accept this!

Assistant Xu went straight to Hu Fei and the program team and sought them out. "What is the meaning of this? Does the show have a rule about being allowed to admit defeat? Isn't this messing things up? He clearly did that on purpose!"

Hu Fei looked at her. "Are you the director?"

Assistant Xu choked.

Hu Fei shouted, "This is our Beijing TV show! Do I need you to tell me what to do?"

Li Yu and his team's arrogance had infuriated the program team staff beyond recognition. It was our show to begin with! You people breached the contract by taking the liberty of revealing who he was, broke the rules, used underhanded methods to ask for votes, and paid for PR campaigns! Yet you still have the balls to accuse us of messing things up? Breaking the rules?

Fuck off!

Who the fuck do you think you are!

Did you think this show belongs to you? That you could do whatever you liked?

Assistant Xu was also angered and wanted to argue with them!

Hou Ge called over the security guards. "Throw her out of here!"

Dafei said, "Who let this person in? This is a workplace for our employees and restricted for non-staff. Guard this place closely in the future and don't just let any Tom, Dick, or Harry enter!"

Tom, Dick, or Harry?

I'm Li Yu's assistant!

In the music industry, who doesn't talk to me courteously and politely?

Assistant Xu was furious. "Great, great, just watch!"

Xiao Lu spit out, "What an asshole you are!"

Assistant Xu said angrily, "Who are you insulting?"

Xiao Lu pointed at the assistant's nose and said, "I'm insulting you!"

What sort of a television station was this?

What sort of a program team was this?

Assistant Xu yelled, "You're going to speak to me like this? Ah? Do you believe I won't expose you to the media!"

Xiao Lu stalked toward her like a little tigress and said, "Go ahead and expose us! Do it!"

Dafei sneered, "You're fortunate that Teacher Zhang Ye is not around today. If he were around, with that temperament of his, you'd probably leave this place on a stretcher!"

They were all Zhang Ye's old colleagues. In fact, their behavior and temperament were not like this in the past. Even if they were faced with some annoyance, they wouldn't have lambasted someone like they had now. Further, this person was even a former A-listers' assistant. It was only after they had been around Zhang Ye for a long time that they had changed a fair bit, so it was inevitable that they got influenced by some of Zhang Ye's bad habits. They might not have even been aware of this themselves.

So perhaps this was where Zhang Ye's unique charms lay.

Chapter 1025: 'I Really Hate You'?

In the waiting area.

As soon as The Clown and Spinach came back, they were surrounded by Yesterday's Daylily, Petal Shower, and Sunset Glow.

Petal Shower said in shock, "Are you serious?"

The Clown laughed. "Yeah."

Sunset Glow gasped. "How sure are you that you can win?"

The Clown shook his head. "I don't know."

"You don't know but you still did that?" Yesterday's Daylily had to take his hat off to him in admiration.

Petal Shower thought for a moment before saying, "If Sunflower's first song had been a Cantonese one, I probably wouldn't have won. I've checked with Bai Yuanfei and Sunflower's second song is gonna be a Cantonese one, so be careful." She had always known that in order to eliminate Sunflower today, it would take more than her alone because she could only face off against Sunflower in one round. She needed someone else who could sing as well as her to finish the job. But Petal Shower did not make this clear as she could only ask this of herself, not the others.

She did not expect that someone would understand her intentions.

And all the more did she not expect that someone to be The Clown!

This man had always felt especially mysterious to Petal Shower. He seemed familiar, like he was someone she knew, yet was somewhat unfamiliar because she had no impression of anyone like that at all.

The Clown was quite calm. "I will."

Spinach clenched her teeth and said, "You must win!"

The Clown chuckled, "OK."

Could he win?

Zhang Ye wasn't sure, but he was also too lazy to think about it. He just found Sunflower to be unpleasing to the eye and so wanted to knock him out. This was Zhang Ye's style. Even with a mask on, his attitude was the same as before. If this fellow saw something that he didn't like, he would have to get involved. Could there be anything more enjoyable than this in life?

...

In Sunflower's waiting room.

Assistant Xu came rushing back in anger.

The camera in the waiting room was turned off as they requested not to be filmed.

Assistant Xu said, "That Clown did it on purpose!"

Sunflower grunted. "I know that."

"If he goes to the elimination round, his next opponent would b-be you?" Assistant Xu said in worry.

But Sunflower simply smiled. "Do you think that I'll lose today?"

Assistant Xu said, "But the first round..."

Sunflower said, "I'll be singing in Cantonese for my next song."

Assistant Xu immediately rested assured!

Cantonese?

Then the win would be a sure thing!

Even if The Clown was a amazingly talented singer, he wouldn't be able to use a Mandarin song in today's' setting and atmosphere to beat Li Yu, who was going to sing a Cantonese song. As the news had already spread, many of those who came to attend today's recording had the mentality that they would be listening to Li Yu sing a Cantonese song. With such anticipation, there would surely be an outpouring of emotion once Li Yu appeared onstage. At that time, it wouldn't matter who took the stage!

...

In The Clown's waiting room.

On the television, the match between Sunset Glow and Yesterday's Daylily began.

Han Qi came back in all angry. "Teacher, you're taking a huge risk!"

The Clown smiled. "It's not that bad."

Han Qi said anxiously, "But this is Li Yu we're talking about! He's the biggest name of all the contestants here!"

The biggest name?

That wasn't true now, was it?

Zhang Ye chuckled but did not say anything.

Everyone thought that Sunflower was the biggest name of all the contestants on King of Masked Singers. But in reality, nobody, not even the program team, knew that this unknown Clown was actually a much bigger name than Sunflower!

Comparing who was more popular?

Would I be afraid of you?

Zhang Ye even had the confidence to say that if he were to take off his mask and reveal his identity, even if he were to sing " The Hottest Ethnic Trend 1 ," he could take the throne of the Masked King. But there was no meaning to that. Zhang Ye did not come here to compete with popularity; he was not here

to swagger before others. The point of the show was for the celebrities to cast aside their popularity and reputation to compete solely on talent. But of course, he didn't dare take off his mask at this time. He was afraid that it might halt the broadcast of the show. As such, when faced with an arrogant Li Yu who had resorted to using his popularity to beat the others, Zhang Ye despised him.

I didn't use my popularity against you, yet you want to use your popularity to stifle me?

It had been Zhang Ye who personally knocked Li Yu off the A-list Celebrity Rankings.

So Zhang Ye found it rather amusing.

Hmm, which song should I choose?

Which song would be most suitable?

Zhang Ye started pondering. He had prepared a total of four songs today, and "Life's More Than the Grind" was just used. Now there were three songs remaining.

That one?

Or that one?

Should he combat him indirectly?

Or clash with him head on?

He was a little undecided as it was difficult to make a choice.

So he simply gave up on thinking. Zhang Ye turned his attention to the television to watch the match between Sunset Glow and Yesterday's Daylily.

He didn't feel anxious, but Han Qi said in panic, "Teacher, what are you doing?"

Zhang Ye said, "Watching their match."

Han Qi said in disbelief, "We're faced with elimination yet you're taking things at your own pace? What if we get eliminated in the next round? Have you thought of which song you'll sing? I heard that you rehearsed four songs?"

Zhang Ye laughed. "Let's think about it when the time comes."

When the time comes?

But it's coming right up!

Han Qi gave up. She truly believed that The Clown didn't have much of an advantage. If she were to be blunt about it, today's stage was Sunflower's home field. Even if The Clown could sing a little better than Sunflower, he still couldn't beat him, unless he was like Petal Shower who could crush him with both her song and singing skill!

Singing skill?

Everyone knew that The Clown had that!

But as for the song choice?

What song could take on the Cantonese song that Li Yu was going to sing?

...

Sunset Glow and Yesterday's Daylily finished singing.

The voting began.

The results were decided very quickly.

Unsurprisingly, Sunset Glow won by a huge margin!

Yesterday's Daylily was not surprised. He smiled sadly as he congratulated Sunset Glow.

This match was very exciting to watch and the audience got quite a bit of enjoyment out of it. But when they thought about how the elimination round was coming up, much of the audience got distracted once again.

Sunflower?

The Clown?

Yesterday's Daylily?

Of those three, two had to leave the show? Only one of them could remain?

How cruel was this! Can this episode get any more exciting than this?

The Clown and Sunflower were currently the two contestants with the highest popularity. In the eyes of many, these two were supposed to be fighting for the crown of the Masked King and were both capable enough to do that. But today, these two had ended up fighting for the right to "survive" on the show? One of these two had to be eliminated? This development came out of left field!

The elimination round was about to begin!

The audience was getting so excited it was like they were on an adrenaline rush!

"It's starting!"

"The first round is over! It's time for the elimination round!"

"Li Yu!"

"Li Yu!"

"Li Yu will prevail!"

"There's no suspense to this! We don't even need to watch!"

"Haha, Li Yu's going to perform the songs he's best at!"

"Cantonese songs!"

"Come and sing the Cantonese song!"

"Yeah, we've been waiting so long!"

"We came here today just to see Li Yu sing in Cantonese!"

The studio was heating up.

Many of Li Yu's fans were waving their fluorescent glow sticks to cheer on their idol!

At the panel of judges.

Zhang Xia asked, "Who do you guys think will win?"

Chen Yidong smiled and said, "Definitely Li Yu, I guess."

Wang Zhuishu thought about it. "Actually, I'm hoping that The Clown will win. But I can't think of a reason why Sunflower would lose. He has the advantage of being in just the right place, at just the right time, and as the just right person."

Amy was worried. "The Clown is in danger!"

Yao Jiancai did not quite understand. He asked, "Didn't Petal Shower beat him just now?"

Chen Guang explained, "Sunflower will be singing a Cantonese song. As a Hong Kong singer, him singing in Cantonese and Mandarin are two totally different things!"

Yao Jiancai simply said, "Oh, so it's like that."

Onstage.

Dong Shanshan raised her cue cards and recited some advertising messages. Then, with a smile, she said, "Next we head into the elimination round. Let's welcome our first competitor—Sunflower in the Starlight!"

Cheers erupted instantaneously!

"Li Yu!"

"Li Yu!"

"Li Yu!"

He was incredibly popular!

Even before he started to sing, a lot of those in the audience were already standing!

Then, the title of the song was shown on the teleprompter screen overhead. When some of the audience members saw it, they screamed even louder!

This was a purely Cantonese song!

It was a love song!

It was one of Li Yu's representative works!

"I Really Hate You."

Lyricist: Xu Fei.

Composer: Li Yu.

This was Li Yu's debut song. Back then, the song wasn't terribly well-known but held a very special meaning for Li Yu. He performed this song at almost every concert. Since then, many fans gradually became familiar with the song and also started liking it!

"This is great!"

"I love listening to this song!"

"Li Yu's maiden work! I'm looking forward to it!"

"There's no hope for The Clown now!"

"That's right!"

Chapter 1026: The Clown vs. Sunflower!

Onstage.

The man with a sunflower mask took to the stage slowly.

There were screams and shouts coming from the audience, each one louder than the last!

Zhang Ye's mother said, "I rather like this guy."

His father nodded. "Mhm."

His second sister said in anticipation, "His Cantonese songs have always been great!"

"It's starting, it's starting!" His third sister held her breath.

The music played and the studio turned quiet. The audience was very cooperative and accommodating toward Sunflower. Those girls who had been making a racket during Petal Shower's performance were now covering their mouths, afraid that they would cause a disturbance and affect their idol.

Cello strings.

Piano keys.

A familiar melody floated on the stage.

Many in the audience were so familiar with this song that they started humming along to it in their heads.

Sunflower raised his head and gripped the microphone.

"I really hate you."

"Those memories...

"I really hate you.

"Have forgotten me."

A female fan looked enchanted!

A lot of people had closed their eyes to listen to the song. They were enjoying it to the utmost!

It was wonderful!

This was what a Cantonese song should be!

Previously on this stage, only The Clown had performed a Cantonese song. It was done informally as he sang something about a "hamlet" or something, talking about the "villagers" and "goats and cows." At that time, his singing pronunciation was rather inaccurate and had badly shocked many people. Thus, the Cantonese song Sunflower was presently performing would be considered the first true Cantonese song to be sung on King of Masked Singers. Compared to Zhang Ye's previous world, Cantonese songs occupied half of the industry's market share here and wasn't considered a niche market. The reason that no one had yet to sing a Cantonese song on this stage was not that Petal Shower and the others thought Cantonese songs niche, but that they couldn't sing them. Performance of these songs largely depended on the singer's hometown. If there were any signs of bad pronunciation during the song, it could easily cause the listeners to lose interest in the entire performance.

But as Li Yu was a born and bred Hong Konger, there was no need to talk about his pronunciation. Moreover, he had started out singing Cantonese songs, and more than 80% of his released albums were in Cantonese. Since this was his livelihood, it would be a wonder if he couldn't sing it well. The audience was very receptive to his performance!

At the judging panel.

Chen Yidong praised, "Great singing."

Amy agreed, "It is pretty good."

Li Yu was considered a veteran in the entertainment industry. When everyone learned he was going to perform a Cantonese song, they all knew that it wouldn't be bad even without listening. He had the ability to sing well, and the song was good too.

Zhang Xia commented, "There's no surprise here."

Chen Guang stated objectively, "It's good, but I've heard him sing this song too many times and it's always much the same. It's not a song that can really raise our spirits."

Wang Zhuishu said, "Sunflower today seems?"

Zhang Xia replied, "Yeah, he's fairly average."

Yao Jiancai turned around to look at the audience's warm reception and said, "But the audience seems to be buying it."

Yes, a lot of the audience members were convinced by the performance. As long as it was Li Yu singing, they'd think it was good. They did not care about whether the tenor of this song was appropriate or if the particulars of the singing were handled well.

On the stage.

Sunflower knew it himself. He had been affected by the previous round, thinking that he should be fighting for the throne of the Masked King today. But with Petal Shower stopping him, he was in an awful mood and rather upset as well. He regretted not singing the Cantonese song he was best at in his first appearance, which would have ensured his victory. He had underestimated his opponents. These thoughts kept running through his head even while he was performing, and it definitely affected how well he was doing. But fortunately for Sunflower, he was very experienced and had a good singing technique. That was enough for him to handle today's situation. As he got to the latter half of his performance, he actually sang better!

"I hate you, hate you, I hate you.

"Why can't I forget the past.

"When you said you loved me,

"It was so beautiful.

"Why did you leave me in the end?

"I really hate you.

"Those memories...

"I really hate you.

"Have forgotten me."

Some of the female audience members were screaming at this point!

They stood up and clapped, thrashing their fluorescent glow sticks!

Several of the judges on the guessing panel were stunned by this. They hadn't expected that Sunflower could readjust his emotions and handle the latter half of the song so exquisitely. If they had to give him a score, they would give him 85 points out of a 100 for this performance. This was a very good performance, much better than the Mandarin song he had performed!

Zhang Xia, Chen Guang, and the others looked at one another.

This was the end for The Clown!

He didn't stand a chance!

Sunflower was relying on his popularity with the audience. Even the Mandarin song he sung averagely almost evened out with Petal Shower's amazing performance, although he narrowly lost at the end. With this "I Really Hate You," The Clown's chances of winning had nearly fallen to nil. No one was optimistic about his chances.

...

Backstage.

In the waiting room.

Zhang Ye was listening to Sunflower's performance, not speaking.

"I Really Hate You"? He didn't like this song either. Perhaps his values were far too different than Li Yu's, and they were two people who didn't go well together. So Zhang Ye stopped focusing on listening.

Now that he was by himself in the waiting room, he found his bag and took out his cell phone which he kept on silent mode. He had wanted to check the netizen's comments about the contestants but saw some unread text messages that his mother had sent to him instead.

His mother: "Son?"

His mother: "Where are you? Why don't I see you anywhere?"

His mother: "Didn't you get here really early today?"

Zhang Ye immediately replied: "Yeah, but I'm busy right now."

Very quickly, his mother texted back: "Did you get the money?"

Zhang Ye smiled. "Yes. Thanks, Mom. It was quite an achievement to get 10,000 yuan out of you."

His mother: "You rascal, don't spend it recklessly now. When you find a job, you must pay me back. It'll be a loan to you for now. By the way, Mother's Day is coming soon, but you don't have to worry about buying me anything. I don't need anything, and I don't like anything either. Consider that as a heads up in case you're thinking of planning something, got it? Also, if you have the time to do that, quickly find a job. Go out and network some more, ask around too. If there's still nobody who wants to hire you, then screw those idiots and come back and rest at home. You won't have to do anything anymore! You can even save yourself their incompetence!"

Zhang Ye felt his heart warm. "I understand."

His mother: "OK, I'm gonna stop talking now. Your dad and I are listening to Sunflower sing and I think it's pretty good."

Behind him, the door opened.

Han Qi came into the room. "Teacher, you're almost up."

"Alright." Zhang Ye placed his cell phone back into his bag and exhaled. Then he turned around and walked out.

Sunflower had finished singing, but the thunderous applause in the studio could still be heard backstage.

Han Qi was very nervous. "You can do it, Teacher!"

Hu Fei saw The Clown approach. "The Clown, break a leg."

Dafei cheered, "Teacher, go get him!"

Xiao Lu added, "You'll definitely do well!"

Petal Shower looked at him.

Sunset Glow nodded at him.

Spinach raised her hand and gave him a thumbs up from not too far away to cheer him on!

However, in comparison to that overwhelming applause in the studio for Li Yu, everyone's cheers for him felt underwhelming.

Could he win?

A lot of the program team staff sighed.

Today's Li Yu had turned completely shameless!

Paying for PR campaigns in the media!

Exposing himself!

Asking for votes!

Causing trouble!

And he even performed his breakout song!

Unless The Clown had an even more astonishing song, he wouldn't stand the ghost of a chance of competing against Li Yu. What could he possibly do?

So did Zhang Ye have such a song?

The answer was a resounding yes!

He definitely had one! In fact, he had many!

The other times he was onstage, Zhang Ye had performed some of the less mainstream songs in the competition. But this did not mean that he didn't know how to sing mainstream songs. He just didn't bring them for the audience to hear because he thought it wasn't time for that yet. But today, Zhang Ye did not plan to hold back anymore. He was ready to bring one of them out to compete against Li Yu!

Which song should he choose?

He considered the song that Li Yu performed.

Cantonese?

"I Really Hate You"?

Instantly, Zhang Ye made a decision!

That one!

Chapter 1027: The Clown's Cantonese song!

Onstage.

Dong Shanshan smiled and said, "Let's welcome our next singer—The Clown!"

Applause rang out.

"He's comin'."

"It's The Clown."

"How unlucky of him to have to appear after Li Yu."

"Haha, it doesn't matter what he sings now."

"Li Yu sang really well."

"But of course. That's his signature song."

"Li Yu is still the best when he sings in Cantonese!"

"No one can sing Cantonese songs on this stage except for Li Yu. That in and of itself is an overwhelming advantage for him. Even if The Clown performs exceedingly well like Petal Shower did today, it's unlikely that he'll win in this round like she did in the previous one. This round will be decided by the type of song, and even if The Clown sings really well, a lot of people won't compare his song to Li Yu's Cantonese song. There's no way to compare them as they are totally different styles and languages. Since there's no comparison, it won't matter who sings better. No one will be able to distinguish whose singing was better, so the only thing left to compare is their popularity. And how many people in the studio today don't know Li Yu? Who wouldn't spare him some face!"

"Then is The Clown definitely going to lose?"

"Of course."

"He can only blame himself for admitting defeat just now."

The audience was applauding, but it did not sound very enthusiastic and felt more like a symbolic welcome. Although there were still a lot of people who were not Li Yu's fans looking forward to The Clown's performance and wondering if he would be singing yet another original, the outcome of this round was already very obvious to many of them.

Li Yu did not return to his waiting room and just waited around at the holding area. He looked at The Clown and sneered internally. He even admitted defeat on purpose so that he could try knock me out in the elimination round?

Alright then!

Bring it on!

What kind of Mandarin song are you going to sing this time? I'm all ears!

The Clown took the stage and walked straight to the house band.

The band looked at him and asked, "Which song will it be?"

The Clown replied, "The third song we rehearsed."

Music Director Bai Yuanfei was shocked. "Are you sure?"

"I'm quite sure." Zhang Ye smiled.

The band's guitarist said in a speechless manner, "Why are the songs you choose always the ones we don't feel optimistic about? Of the four songs you rehearsed, it was the other two songs we were optimistic about. So why did you choose these two songs to perform?"

Zhang Ye said, "Because you guys haven't listened to me sing it yet."

Indeed, The Clown had just hummed along to the melody during the rehearsal. He did not actually sing.

The drummer said, "Are you sure?"

Zhang Ye said, "It must be this song!"

Bai Yuanfei nodded. "OK, you're the singer, you decide."

After changing scores, the band did a little warmup.

The audience became confused when they saw that.

Looking at the stage, Zhang Ye's father asked, "What's the matter?"

His eldest sister wondered, "Could he have only just decided which song to sing?"

His mother replied, "Can you even do that?"

His eldest sister said, "Generally, no one does that because it's too risky."

At the judging panel.

Zhang Xia sighed and said, "If The Clown gets eliminated, it would really be such a pity."

Amy felt that this discussion of theirs would not be aired, so she did not hold back. "More importantly, it's unfair. This isn't a music and singing competition anymore. With Sunflower's antics, it has turned into a popularity contest."

Chen Guang said, "The Clown has a chance to win."

Yao Jiancai asked, "Oh? How?"

Chen Guang said, "He can also reveal who he is by removing his mask onstage."

Amy gave a bitter smile. "The Clown would never do such a thing!"

Chen Guang spread his hands. "That's why he won't win. Under the premise that Li Yu had already exposed himself as a Hong Kong singer, and with this atmosphere, it's almost impossible for him to win if he uses a Mandarin song to verse Li Yu."

Amy said, "There's no hope for him then."

Everything was ready onstage.

The band nodded to The Clown.

The lights dimmed.

Everyone instantly focused their attention on The Clown.

One second.

Two seconds.

The music did not start yet because The Clown was still adjusting his breathing.

Several of those female fans of Li Yu's started shouting again without warning.

"Hurry up!"

"Why isn't it starting yet?"

"Let's go, Brother Li Yu!"

"Li Yu is the best!"

In the silence of the studio, those voices cut through the air!

When they finished shouting, they looked at each other and laughed!

In the wings, Li Yu was smiling.

Backstage, Assistant Xu was gloating.

However, the judges frowned.

Some of the nearby audience members looked at them in disgust!

Zhang Ye, though, was in no rush to begin and did not seem to hear the commotion. He was no longer bothered by the outcome. All he could think about was his mother's messages from earlier. He couldn't refrain from raising his head and looking in the direction of where his parents were seated. He couldn't quite make them out in the distance, but he still managed to locate where they were sitting.

His parents were looking at him as well.

At this moment, he suddenly felt a pang of guilt.

As Zhang Ye was in a good mood these days, he had helped them buy breakfast for two days and did the laundry twice. But in the end, his parent's behavior nearly made Zhang Ye laugh. They thought that there was something wrong with him? They thought that he was in need of money? They thought that he had something to ask of them? And they even quickly transferred 10,000 yuan to him?

It was truly a very funny incident.

But right now, Zhang Ye could not muster up a smile at all.

He felt very guilty about how little his contributions to his family were. That just by doing a few minor chores at home, his parents felt overwhelmed by his actions. Thinking back on things, Zhang Ye felt very embarrassed as he suddenly thought that he had not been a good son. All of a sudden, he felt like he had a lot of things that he wanted to say!

The music started.

It was very soft guitar strumming.

The title of the song was projected onto the teleprompter screen.

The moment when they saw the title of this song, many audience members were stunned!

"I Really Love You 1"!

Zhang Xia was stunned!

Chen Guang was surprised!

Petal Shower and Spinach were both taken aback!

Li Yu was dumbstruck and a dark expression spread across his face!

The audience stared and their jaws dropped!

"I Really Hate You"?

"I Really Love You"?

Zhang Ye was facing his parents. He gently raised his microphone. The moment he sang the first line, everyone in the studio—including the program team, judges, contestants, and the audience—were dumbfounded. They could not believe what they had just heard. Some of the audience members even jumped out of their seats in shock!

The Clown sang softly.

"Those hands that cannot be beautified.

"Forever warming me from behind.

"Nagging but still caring for me.

"I'm guilty of not seeing your love."

Amy screamed, "Ahhh!"

Zhang Xia stared, slack-jawed!

Chen Guang stared wide-eyed!

Petal Shower said in a speechless manner, "What?"

Spinach said in a daze, "He, he..."

Hu Fei was dumbfounded!

The audience was also dumbfounded!

A Cantonese song!

The Clown was singing a Cantonese song as well!

And why did his Cantonese sound so fucking standard?

Why?

Oh my god!

Oh my god!

Everyone in the studio looked like they had seen a ghost!

The band playing the accompaniment was shocked!

The Clown closed his eyes and sang.

"Absorbed in music she did not like.

"But a mother's love never dies.

"With tenacity and joy, I strive.

"To return your love at last.

"Your lessons and gift still warm my soul.

"Looking after me without complaint."

Suddenly, the guitar accompaniment stopped!

Half a second later, the drumbeat kicked in as the guitar accompaniment came back along with the bass and drum set all at once. The music exploded through the studio!

The entire studio was shocked!

Everyone felt like their blood was erupting with energy!

The Clown pointed into the audience.

"It's you!

"With those loving eyes!

"You taught me to face the future with grit!

"You urged me not to quit when I fell down!

"I can't explain how to return your love!

"Your immense love is endless!

"So, please, permit me to say 'I really love you!'"

Dad.

Mom.

I'm not too good with words and don't know how to express myself that well. I can talk a lot with other people. When I meet my friends, I can chat with them day and night. If someone offends me, I can scold them for three days and nights. But in front of you two, I sometimes can't even speak a single word. I don't know what to say or how I should express myself.

But...

I really love both of you!

I, I really love both of you!

In the audience, his mother suddenly burst into tears. For some reason, she had started to cry!

Zhang Xia was also in tears as she looked at her pair of aging hands. Tears streamed down her face for whatever reason. When she reached up to wipe them away, she realized that her tears were increasing even as she tried to wipe them away.

In the studio, a lot of mothers were crying!

Many children clenched their teeth!

They did not know what was happening to them, just that they thought this song was amazing!

It was really great!

Zhang Ye continued singing.

"Those hands that cannot be beautified.

"Forever warming me from behind.

"Nagging but still caring for me.

"I'm guilty of not seeing your love.

"I still recall your loving hands.

"Taking care of me unchangingly.

"My dream has finally come true; I hope I can share the glory.

"Your lessons and gift still warm my soul.

"Looking after me without complaint."

The music stopped!

And exploded again!

Zhang Ye sang loudly.

"It's you! With those loving eyes!"

At this moment, a lot of people could not help but stand from their seats and wave the fluorescent glow sticks in their hands to the rhythm. A lot of them were shocked and had tear stains on their faces. No one could believe that The Clown could actually sing such a song!

"You taught me to face the future with grit!

"You urged me not to quit when I fell down!

"I can't explain how to return your love!

"Your immense love is endless!

"So, please, permit me to say 'I really love you!'"

Screams!

Applause!

He was about to upend the studio!

Suddenly, the music stopped again.

There was no sound at all!

The audience unconsciously stopped clapping and covered their mouths. Hypnotized, they stared at The Clown onstage as the entire studio went eerily quiet!

The Clown raised his microphone.

Dad.

Mom.

Thank you.

Thank you for bringing me up.

Thank you for teaching me right and wrong.

I...

I..

The Clown raised his microphone again and lowered it again.

One second.

Two seconds.

Everyone was looking at him.

The Clown raised his microphone for the third time:

"So please permit me...

"...to say.

"I really love you."

Chapter 1028: Professional face-smacking athlete!

The Clown's final line in a cappella unleashed an outpouring of emotion from many in the audience!

Some of them started crying!

Some were desperately holding back their tears!

They all understood the song as its lyrics had triggered tears in many of them. The Clown was not singing "I really love you" or "I'm telling you that I love you very much" or even "do you know that I love you." What he sang was: "Please permit me...to say...'I really love you!'"

Please permit me!

It was completely different from telling you!

It was completely different from asking to say it!

"Please permit me" had an apologetic tone that carried a sense of guilt!

Especially during that last line The Clown sang in a cappella. He had raised his microphone twice and lowered it twice because he could not manage to sing it. It wasn't until the third time that The Clown raised his microphone that he was finally able to sing it! That kind of emotional struggle, that sense of guilt and reservedness were all thoroughly portrayed in this moment. This was no longer a matter of singing skill anymore, it was a sublimation of emotions!

There was no pretentiousness to it!

There was no affectation!

It was all natural!

The emotions he displayed throughout the song were so real that everyone found it hard to believe! No one knew that The Clown's parents were actually seated in the audience!

The music started and ended with a cappella.

The Clown lowered his microphone and bowed deeply.

The performance ended.

His mother stood up crying!

Zhang Xia also stood up in tears!

Applause erupted!

Cheers rang out!

"That was great!"

"That was so unbelievable!"

"It was a Cantonese song! It was actually a Cantonese song!"

"The Clown wanted to compete against Li Yu with what he's best at!"

"I don't know what to say! Oh my god! Isn't this song too good? And it's even an original? Who the fuck wrote this song? Who wrote it?!"

"Earlier, I thought that Li Yu would win. But I'm thinking differently now!"

"Me too! Who said that The Clown would lose?"

"There are two songs I've listened to this year that have made me cry. The first one was 'A Letter to Home' that Zhang Ye sang on the Spring Festival Gala stage; the other is this one. I'm not attracted by the singing, but by the lyrics and emotions poured into the song. It was so great and so amazing!"

"Is this who The Clown is? Everyone has underestimated him!"

"I have no words! I can no longer express what I'm feeling!"

All of a sudden, someone shouted, "The Clown!"

Then shout after shout sounded!

"The Clown!"

"The Clown!"

"The Clown!"

"The Clown!"

The shouting was syncing up!

The voices were getting louder!

Zhang Ye walked off the stage.

Han Qi rushed over to him.

Spinach, Sunset Glow, and Yesterday's Daylily, and the others went up to him together!

Her cheeks stained with tears, Han Qi exclaimed, "You're incredible! That was fantastic!"

Looking shocked, Petal Shower said, "How'd you do that?"

Sunset Glow stared at him and said, "There are only two possibilities as to why he can sing a Cantonese song so well. The first possibility is that the singer already knows Cantonese, so he naturally wouldn't have a problem with the language. The second possibility is that if he is a singer who doesn't know Cantonese, he sings this song repeatedly and continually. He would have to listen to the original version hundreds to a thousand times and then practice it dozens to hundreds of times to be able to have such a good pronunciation! Teacher Clown, you're way too astonishing! How'd you manage to do it?"

Though she'd been in the competition for a long time now, this was the first time that everyone heard Sunset Glow talk so much. She was usually a reserved person who didn't talk much.

Yesterday's Daylily said anxiously, "Yeah, h-how did you manage to do it?"

The Clown did not answer. He just laughed it off.

Dozens of times?

Hundreds of times?

Surely it was even more than that!

This song was extremely famous in Zhang Ye's previous world. All those songs he had sung would not have the reach and influence that this song possessed even if they were all grouped together. How could Zhang Ye have only listened to it several hundred times? He would sing this song every time he went out for karaoke and would hear it at all kinds of places from time to time. If it were any other Cantonese song, Zhang Ye would probably not know how to sing them because he really did not know Cantonese. He could only understand some simple sentences and his pronunciation was not good, in addition. But if it was "I Really Love You 1," he could handle it without any problems! It would be impossible to get the song wrong!

In truth, Zhang Ye had not intended to use this song. It wasn't that he didn't like this song, but because this song would seriously make him look like a bully! He had wanted to use a song that was mainstream, yet how was this considered a mainstream song? It had already surpassed the boundaries of mainstream. It was a well-known classic in his previous world! But if Li Yu wanted to play dirty? If he wanted to bully others by using his popularity? Then Zhang Ye had no choice but to bring this song out! Moreover, Mother's Day was approaching. He had really wanted to sing this song so that he could convey some words to his parents. There were some things that Zhang Ye could never say to them under normal circumstances. Since he could not say them, then he would use this stage and song to tell his parents!

The crowd was still applauding!

"The Clown!"

"The Clown!"

"The Clown!"

In the waiting area.

Li Yu's face turned green with rage. He never expected that The Clown would choose to sing a Cantonese song! Not only him, no one else expected it either! Logically, as Li Yu was a Cantonese singer from Hong Kong, it was normal for him to sing a Cantonese song. Since that was his mother tongue, he could sing such songs almost effortlessly and had been doing so for a decade now! Even if they thought with their feet, no one should have used a Cantonese song versus Li Yu in the crucial elimination round!

But that was exactly what The Clown did!

And his Cantonese was not even any worse than Li Yu's!

It was too professional!

His pronunciation was too standard!

Even if it were Li Yu who went out to sing, it wouldn't get any better than this!

Why?

What the fuck was this?

How did he know how to sing a Cantonese song?

Li Yu had no way to understand it! No one could understand it!

Could this person really be a singer from Hong Kong? But that was impossible! That was absolutely impossible!

Everyone had thought that The Clown would not win because they had taken today's atmosphere and circumstances into account. Everything was advantageous for Li Yu and nothing indicated that The Clown, who sang in Mandarin, could secure a victory. This was because Cantonese and Mandarin songs were two different musical genres that could not be compared. As long as they could not be compared, even if The Clown's singing were better and he performed exceedingly well, things would be meaningless. A lot of the audience members would support Li Yu based on their feelings because of his popularity!

But what shocked everyone was that The Clown had fucking sung a Cantonese song!

And even the title of the song was smacking Li Yu's face!

The Beijing Television program team staff saw that The Clown had left the stage and were looking at him in astonishment, as if they were seeing some kind of kind!

It's similar circumstances to your last song!

He sang about how life was dark and a grind?

While you sang about how life's about more than just the grind?

He sang a Cantonese song!

You also sang a Cantonese song!

He sang "I Really Hate You"!

And then you fucking sang "I Really Love You"!

Fuck your big brother!

Are you a professional face-smacking athlete?

Are you planning to bash his face so hard that it becomes swollen?

This is slapping him to his fucking death!

Chapter 1029: Double play!

In the wings.

Yesterday's Daylily sighed and said, "It's my turn."

Spinach cheered, "Break a leg, Brother Daylily."

"What kind of name is that?" Yesterday's Daylily said, "Hai, do I even need to go onstage?"

Spinach smiled and said, "You can't make it through regardless, so let loose and sing."

Yesterday's Daylily looked at her, speechless. "Are you trying to console me?"

Spinach nodded. "Well, yes."

Yesterday's Daylily almost burst into tears. "Thanks a lot."

It took a lot of effort for the audience to calm down.

Then Dong Shanshan immediately announced that the next contestant take the stage.

Yesterday's Daylily took a deep breath and strode out onto the stage. He knew that he definitely stood no chance today. Whether it was against Sunflower or The Clown, they were both much better singers than he was. Moreover, the two of them had already accumulated a lot of popularity on this stage. As a result, Yesterday's Daylily let himself go since this was his last song on the stage. All he wanted now was to show the best side of himself.

Going into the performance with this thought, he managed to do much better than expected when singing his song!

The judges were surprised.

The audience was also surprised.

Even Yesterday's Daylily did not expect it. He had sung his second song much better than his first, surpassing his usual level!

The elimination round performances ended.

Dong Shanshan smiled and said, "Alright. Now let's welcome Sunflower and The Clown back on stage."

Sunflower and The Clown returned.

When the audience saw them, they gave them a thunderous round of applause!

"The Clown!"

"The Clown!"

"Li Yu!"

"Li Yu!"

The shouting started again!

Dong Shanshan maintained order. "Hur hur, everyone, please calm down. Shall we have the judges give their comments? Who are you cheering for in this round? Who do you think will make it into the next episode?"

The judges were silent for a bit.

Dong Shanshan named one of them. "Teacher Yao?"

Yao Jiancai chuckled and said, "I'm just a layman, so I can't make any professional judgments here. Let's listen to what the other teachers have to say first."

Zhang Xia spoke, "I'll talk about Yesterday's Daylily first. I still can't recognize who you are, but I think that you should be somewhat well-known in the music industry. You were a little nervous during the first song and overly cautious about making mistakes, so you didn't manage to perform to your potential. But for the second song, you sang very well and the choice of song was good as well. You gave me the feeling that you're like a younger version of Chen Guang and full of potential."

Yesterday's Daylily bowed his head. "Thank you, Teacher Zhang Xia, but I don't deserve to be compared to Teacher Chen."

Zhang Xia thought for a moment. "Then, for Sunflower in the Starlight, a lot of people already know who you are. For you to be sing like that, I completely expected it. But of course, it did not manage to surprise me as a result. I believe that you did not manage to perform to your best today. As for The Clown, I still have nothing else to say besides the fact that you're outstanding. This "I Really Love You" truly made me cry. Thanks to you and the team behind you for writing such a song!" She was speaking without bias and on the performance itself.

But Amy's comments were more skewed. "If I were to choose, I would definitely pick The Clown. Whether it's his singing or the song, they raised the bar over the other two performers. And I was disappointed with Sunflower's performance today. Although it was nice to listen to, it did not reach that quality I was looking for!"

Sunflower did not say anything.

The Clown kept quiet as well.

Actually, Sunflower did not perform as poorly as Amy had said. It was because of Li Yu's behavior and extreme methods that Amy didn't have a good impression of him. How could you expose yourself outside the show? Paying for PR campaigns? Asking for votes? Using your popularity to muzzle the other contestants? Alright then, us judges can do the same to you and restrain you on the show! Haven't you heard the saying "only the official is allowed to light the fire"?

Some members of the audience were not having any of this.

"What the heck!"

"What are you saying!"

"Li Yu sang so well!"

"What lousy song was The Clown even singing!"

"Is there something wrong with your hearing?"

"What kinds of judges are these? Are you sure they're professionals?"

"Ptui!"

Some of Li Yu's fans were annoyed by the judges' comments!

Chen Guang did not care about the commotion in the crowd. He asked, "The Clown, are you actually a singer from Hong Kong?"

Wang Zhuishu also asked, "Are you?"

When The Clown sang the Cantonese version of "Our Villagers," his pronunciation was not too standard. It was even so funny that it made a lot of people double over with laughter, and no one thought that he was a Cantonese singer. But with today's song, he had confused everyone again!

Who could he be!

Just where was this singer from?

Chen Yidong stared at The Clown. "Can you give us some clues?"

Amy asked as well, "You mentioned that you were at least a B-lister? Is that true? Also, where are you really from?"

They were very curious!

They were so curious about who this man was that they would die to find out!

The Clown thought for a moment before raising his microphone and singing.

"My home's in the northeast!

"On the Songhua River!

"There are hills and dales covered with soybeans and sorghum 1 !"

He could switch between two different accents!

The judges and audience fainted!

Bro!

Could you please stop messing around?

Just stop it!

What the heck was even happening!

You were just a Hong Konger, and now you've become a northeasterner!?

Everyone had to take their hat off to this person. They were completely taken in by this person's ability to sing spontaneously about anything, and he could even do it so convincingly!

Dong Shanshan didn't know how to react as she stood beside him.

What sort of person was this?!

Why does he never say anything truthful?

Sunflower's eyes underneath his mask were staring coldly at The Clown!

Yao Jiancai looked at him curiously. This person was really too wondrous, wasn't he? In the entertainment circle, other than his long-time partner Zhang Ye, was there another person who was like this?

Dong Shanshan quickly said, "Alright, let's begin the voting. As this is the elimination round and there can only be one contestants who stays in the competition, everyone should consider their votes carefully before casting them!"

In a heartbeat, the atmosphere turned tense!

Sunflower looked into the audience.

The Clown did not say a word.

"Give it to Li Yu!"

"Give it to The Clown!"

"'I Really Love You,' that's the best song I've ever heard!"

"Do you even know Cantonese?"

"The lyrics were shown on the big screen, can't you read?"

"'I Really Love You' is the only song that I fell in love with immediately after hearing it! It's goddamn amazing! It even suits the occasion well! Mother's Day is coming up! These two songs of The Clown's were incredibly touching! I could hear from his performances that he truly sang them from the bottom of his heart! I used to think that The Clown was very godly during the last two episodes, but I've realized that he's even more godly in this episode!"

"I liked that 'Life's More Than the Grind'!"

"Hurry up and vote already!"

"Ah, Li Yu's ahead!"

"What?"

"The Clown!"

"The Clown!"

"Li Yu!"

The audience members were nearly coming to blows!

Zhang Ye's father didn't really know how to operate the voting device. He was getting on in age after all, so it was difficult for him to pick up something new. As a result, he handed the voting device to Zhang Ye's eldest sister and said, "Dandan, help me to vote."

His eldest sister said, "Sure. Who do you want to vote for?"

His father didn't hesitate. "The Clown!"

His mother also said, "Help me too."

"Who do you want?" His eldest sister looked at her.

His mother said, "The Clown."

His third sister exclaimed, "What? You're all voting for The Clown? Then me too!"

His mother said seriously, "Even if Zhang Yuanqi were to come today, or whichever Heavenly King, I would still give my vote to The Clown!"

His second sister said, "Me too! I was actually here to support Li Yu, but when those two Cantonese songs were sung, it was too obvious who sang better! The difference between those two songs is too obvious!"

"I Really Hate You"?

It was just a petty love song.

But "I Really Love You"? This was a song about a great love!

The tallies were ever changing!

Sunflower had taken the lead and never relinquished it!

The Clown was in second.

Yesterday's Daylily was in last place.

10 votes...

50 votes...

100 votes...

When Li Yu saw this, he heaved a sigh of relief. He thought to himself how his popularity was still holding up. No matter what The Clown sang, he shouldn't lose. He used to be an A-lister after all, a big name who was famous throughout the country, so how could he possibly lose to an anonymous singer whose identity no one knew?

However, when the voting was coming to a close, Li Yu expression finally changed!

The Clown was catching up!

Then, The Clown overtook him!

Li Yu's expression instantly darkened!

What was happening?

What the hell is this?

Keep voting for me!

All of you, give me your damn votes!

What the hell are you people doing? Just what?

Hurry up!

Hurry!

The Clown, on the other hand, did not turn to look at the big screen and just stood there quietly.

Close to the end, Li Yu was too scared to watch. His dark look was facing the audience and he was really panicking now. He had chosen to offend Beijing Television and the other singers by revealing himself, which had led to this situation, all because he wanted to get to the throne of the Masked King and become the grand champion of the show. He had wanted to use King of Masked Singers to garner more support and make his return to the A-list Celebrity Rankings! But right now, even he himself did not know why he wasn't in the versus round for the crown of the Masked King. Instead, he was actually facing the risk of elimination? How could this be possible?! This...this didn't make any fucking sense!

Finally, Dong Shanshan announced, "Alright, voting has ended!"

The entire studio fell silent!

A lot of people looked angry!

But many others were gasping!

"The winner is..." Dong Shanshan announced, "The Clown!"

Instantaneously, applause filled the studio!

Sunset Glow felt excited!

Spinach was screaming!

Hu Fei shouted, "Great!"

Han Qi was so excited she nearly cried. "He won! He won! Teacher Clown has won!"

My god!

This was too unbelievable!

Petal Shower took the first round while The Clown handled the second round!

It was a double play!

The two of them had killed off Li Yu!

The task that had seemed impossible to everyone had been completed by Petal Shower and The Clown!
The Beijing Television program team staff did not know what to say!

Some of them could not believe it!

Some of them were dumbfounded!

Assistant Xu, who was backstage, almost smashed the things around him! Son of a bitch!

Onstage, Li Yu couldn't breathe!

Why?

How did this happen?

Petal Shower?

The Clown?

Who the fuck are you people?!

Dong Shanshan suddenly said, "Teacher Sunflower, Teacher Yesterday's Daylily, sorry, but you have been eliminated. The two of you did quite well, and the judges have given both of you their comments. Right now, you can choose whether to reveal yourself or not. Would you like some time to think?"

Sunflower's face stayed under the cover of his mask.

Dong Shanshan had to ask again.

Sunflower said, "I choose not to take my mask off!" He stormed off the stage without even making a speech!

How embarrassing!

How face smacking!

Right now, Li Yu no longer had any face left to reveal himself!

His face had been smacked "swollen"!

Chapter 1030: Troublemaking fans!

Sunflower left the stage dejectedly!

When many of Li Yu's fans saw this, their hearts broke!

"Brother Li Yu!"

"Li Yu!"

"How could you eliminate Li Yu?"

"This is such a shady show!"

"They were trying to take down Brother Li Yu!"

"Unfair! This is unfair!"

Some of his diehard fans were having none of it. They started shouting and screaming as though they were intent on causing trouble!

When Hu Fei and the program team staff saw this, they could only shake their heads lightly. This was indeed a case of a celebrity having fans of similar temperament. Li Yu's integrity was already questionable as he had started doing things unscrupulously. In order to fight for the crown of the Masked King to garner popularity for his status, he resorted to underhanded methods. Looking at his group of fans, it seemed that many of their characters were the same as his. They did not know of the severity of their actions, nor did they care about respecting others.

The program team staff then thought about Teacher Zhang Ye.

Looking at Teacher Zhang's fans, they didn't usually show much support for him in normal times. Whenever he met with trouble, his fans would always appear to gloat at him first by fooling around and ridiculing him. But once Teacher Zhang encountered real trouble, his fans would always gather their support and contribute their strength without a moment's hesitation. This was because they knew what respect was and could differentiate between the severity of an incident. They understood when it was right to make jokes or fool around and when not to do so. They knew better than anyone!

This was where they were different!

And this was the only difference between their fanbases!

...

Yesterday's Daylily took off his mask!

The judges were all shocked!

"It's you?"

"Hey, so it's you!"

Chen Guang knew him.

Amy also knew him, but was not really close.

Yesterday's Daylily was not exactly a rookie in the industry. He had debuted in the music industry around four years ago but hadn't made much of an impact so far. He wasn't that well-known but was given some songs to sing for a few movies and television dramas in the past year. Lucky for him, those projects were very well-received and his songs became popular along with them. Perhaps not many would know his name, but if there was any mention of those songs, most people would immediately recognize them!

"I've heard his songs before!"

"I like him!"

"His singing's actually not that bad."

"Right, it was simply because his opponents were too strong that he got eliminated!"

Many of the audience members gave him their applause!

However, Li Yu's fans started booing, with a lot of them noisily leading it. Beijing Television could only send someone over to give them a warning!

In the wings.

The Clown had just returned.

Petal Shower, Spinach, and the others met up with him over here.

Petal Shower put out her hand. "Nice teamwork?"

The Clown shook her hand. "Nice teamwork."

Spinach exclaimed, "You two were really shocking!"

The Clown and Petal Shower both shook their heads and laughed.

That was Li Yu!

That was fucking Li Yu, goddammit!

He was knocked out the show just like that by these two people? He got eliminated?

Especially The Clown, who faced the former A-lister who specialized in Cantonese songs. This...this...just who the hell was this guy? He managed to bring Li Yu to the point where he didn't even dare take off his mask?

Actually, if The Clown had beat Li Yu by just singing normally, Li Yu might not have ended up leaving the show in such a way. After all, he had come onto the show to garner more support. If he had taken off his mask, that would surely have helped him gain more popularity even though he had lost the competition. But as things turned out, Li Yu did not take off his mask. There was no way he could do it, because The Clown had really been too much of a jerk! First, he took a hit while he was down. Then came another two blows! "Life's More Than the Grind" and "I Really Love You" had given Li Yu a hard slap one after the other! He even destroyed him with a Cantonese song, the area Li Yu was supposedly most skilled in! If it were someone else, they would have chosen not to take off their masks too!

How could they!

Just why would they want to take off their mask?

Han Qi came over. "Teacher!"

The Clown looked at her. "Hey."

Xiao Lu came up to them in astonishment. "Teacher Clown, did you really win?"

Han Qi was finding it difficult to express herself. "I...you..."

Dafei also came up to them. "'I Really Love You' made Little Han cry again! In fact, it also made me crying. It was so good, that song was so damn good!"

Han Qi and Dafei often listened to songs, but had never cried because of one. They never once thought that anyone could possibly cry because of listening to a song. It wasn't until they heard The Clown perform live, and after listening to Petal Shower's and the others' performances, that they finally understood that listening to people sing live was a totally different experience. The song, "I Really Love You," that The Clown had performed today was earth-shattering!

Sunset Glow suddenly asked, "Did your agency write this song for you?"

Zhang Ye did not say anything. He just laughed.

Spinach said in amazement, "What kind of a musician can write a song like that?"

Petal Shower suddenly said, "Could Zhang Ye have written them for you?"

Zhang Ye was startled and couldn't help letting out a chuckle, although he still did not say anything.

Sunset Glow said, "Yeah, Zhang Ye is very good at writing songs, but he doesn't write them for just anyone." Then she looked at The Clown and said, "Well, it's fine if you don't wish to tell us. We won't ask anymore."

They had a lot of guesses, but none of them could have expected that the man standing in front of them was Zhang Ye himself!

Not far away, Dong Shanshan could be heard saying, "Next up, let's head into this episode's battle for the Masked King."

...

An hour later.

The recording of the show ended.

At some point in time, Zhang Ye, who had already changed out of his costume and taken off his shoes and mask, was walking around among the program team staff.

Many of the staff greeted him.

"Eh, Teacher Zhang!"

"Why didn't we see you around all this while?"

"Did you watch the recording today? It was wonderful!"

"Petal Shower was the Masked King in episode three!"

"You know, The Clown stood a chance as well."

"Teacher Zhang, I think Director Hu was looking for you."

Show recording was a very busy process and there were a lot of things to handle, so no one really took note of Zhang Ye and did not think much of his sudden disappearance or appearance.

In an office.

Zhang Ye found Hu Fei and went inside. When he came in, he saw that his parents and cousins were around as well. Obviously, Hu Fei brought them over from the studio after the recording ended.

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Brother Hu."

Hu Fei pointed at him. "Your parents have been looking for you for the longest time, but you couldn't be found anywhere."

Zhang Ye said, "I was watching the recording studioside the entire time. Mom, Dad, let's go."

His parents stood up and said their goodbyes to Hu Fei.

Hu Fei smiled and said, "Auntie, Uncle, feel free to come by often." Then, he turned to Zhang Ye's cousins. "Come by whenever you want to watch a live recording of our show. Hur hur, there's no need to bother your cousin in the future, just come and look for me and I'll bring you in." Such treatment was not even afforded to the assistant directors. In the entire program team, only Zhang Ye's family members would have such preferential treatment. No one could raise any objections against it.

His third sister exclaimed, "Thank you, Brother Hu!"

Zhang Ye raised his chin and said, "What? Just once is enough. Do you really think you'll be coming here every episode?"

His second sister pouted. "Brother, you're really petty!"

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "Do you think that other people do not need to work? Stop giving them unnecessary trouble."

Hu Fei said in amusement, "Don't listen to him. If you all wish to come, just come. I am the boss, and the entire program team listens to my decisions!"

The sisters cheered!

Then they left the office.

His mother exclaimed, "I got such a kick out of watching the performances!"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "It's not too shabby, right?"

"It was great!" His mother had experienced many emotions today. "Especially when The Clown sang that 'I Really Love You.' Aiyo, I just bawled." Then she glanced at her son and shook her head. "Look at him, then look at you. When will you sing something like that for your dad and me?!"

His third sister teased, "With that lousy voice my brother has, even if he tries to sing, would you want to listen?"

His mother nodded in seriousness. "True. I guess he better not sing then."

His family all laughed.

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes again and tapped his third sister on the head. "How dare you trample over me?"

When they were about to reach the exit, they could suddenly hear arguing.

People were squabbling outside the door!

There were over a dozen young men and women shouting and screaming outside!

"This is such a shady show!"

"You people rigged the results!"

"This episode's Masked King should have been Li Yu!"

"How can you eliminate Brother Li Yu?"

"Ah! This is pissing me off!"

"We need an explanation today!"

"When Brother Li Yu left the stage, he was so crestfallen! You people were such bullies!"

"Get your boss out here right now!"

"Right, call your boss out here!"

These dozen or so people blocked the staff exit and did not budge for anyone. With them there, none of the staff could leave!

A few employees on the King of Masked Singers program team staff were trying to talk sense into them.

"What are you doing?"

"This is a staff zone!"

Someone had called the security guards and they came over.

When the security guards were about to chase them away, Li Yu's fans started shouting!

"Don't you dare touch me!"

"The security guards are hitting us!"

"Someone, come here!"

"Are there any reporters?! This program team is shady as fuck!"

They were completely shameless!

More and more people had gathered by now!

It didn't matter if anyone came to chase them off or talk with them!

His third sister said, "What kind of fans are these?"

His eldest sister shook her head. "These people are so awful."

His father knitted his brows. "Right when we're about to go home too?"

Nobody could leave. Some of them were pointing at the door, while others could not hold back from complaining angrily.

However, that group of Li Yu's fans did not seem to hear anything and linked arms to blockade the exit. "If you people don't give a proper answer to Brother Li Yu, don't even think of leaving today!" It was the same bunch of people who had created trouble during the recording.

No one could do anything. Such irrational fans were the most difficult to deal with!

Zhang Ye could no longer sit back. He squeezed through the crowd and pushed forward.

His mother was taken aback. "What are you trying to do?"

His father said, "Little Ye!"

Beijing Television staff spotted Zhang Ye coming to the front and made room for him. "Teacher Zhang, look at them. Aren't they just trying to make trouble?!"

Being shady?

Even if there were someone being shady, it would be Li Yu!

Here, in full view of the crowd, Zhang Ye made his way to those diehard Li Yu fans who had formed up a human chain to block the exit.

When they saw that it was Zhang Ye, all of them were stunned and instinctively took a step back.

Zhang Ye simply stood there and stared at them without saying a word.

"You!"

"Uh..."

"Cough, ahem."

Those people immediately lost their hostility.

A boy in the group tried to speak. "Brother Li Yu was—"

A companion next to him quickly pulled at him. "Let's go."

The boy said angrily, "Why do we need to leave?"

That person whispered, "That's Zhang Ye."

Zhang Ye.

The hooligan of the entertainment industry that everyone was afraid to encounter!

Causing trouble? Beating someone up? Scolding others? He had done all of that before!

They knew that they could be unreasonable with other people because they were sure that Beijing Television's security would not risk laying a hand on them, and neither would the staff in front of them try to do so. But Zhang Ye was different. If he decided to get rough, he would even curse at the president!

"This isn't over!"

"W-We'll talk about this another time!"

"Just you wait!"

A few of them acted tough and shouted a few threats before turning tail!

Zhang Ye turned around to his parents and three sisters. "Alright, let's go."

A bunch of the bottlenecked staff didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

"Thank you."

"Thank you, Teacher Zhang."

"Teacher Zhang still commands the most respect around here."

"Director Zhang, thanks for your hard work."

"Haha, your appearance still works best!"

They had shouted at the troublemaking fans, called security, and even threatened to involve the police, but none of that worked. In the end, when Zhang Ye came over and stood there, the fans left without uttering another word!

His third sister blinked hard, then giggled. "So your reputation really is that infamous, huh, Brother?"

Zhang Ye had no response. What are you even saying!

When the staff around them heard that, they broke into fits of laughter!

"Pfft!"

"Hahaha!"