

## Mr Han 1671

### Chapter 1671: Not a Single Fan

At this moment, amongst the audience, each person's fans had their own seating area.

Everyone brought along some items to show their support.

Some of them raised banners, and some brought lighted flashboards with their idols' names. It was a bustling sight.

Xu Ningxian led the fan club consisting of members that were increasing and maturing day by day, occupying many seats.

Before the competition officially started, they cheered in unison, "My Man! My Man! My Man!"

Fans of other people were displeased the moment they heard it. They could not fall short, so their fan club presidents also rallied their fans and quickly started cheering as well.

Within moments, the venue had become bustling and lively.

As if they were singing folk songs.

"My Man is strong, My Man is cool, My Man is invincible!"

The moment Fu Kaiqi's fans heard that, they immediately cheered, "Lovely Qi! Lovely Qi! We love you!"

Over on that side, Li Zeyu's fans refused to be outdone and cheered, "Dear fans, let us all cheer out loud!"

Hence, cheers erupted once more. "Zeyu, you are our ocean of stars[1]!"

The cheers from the fans grew louder with each wave.

Whenever another camp's cheers overpowered one's own, one's camp would immediately have to buck up and cheer even louder.

No one in the venue was cheering to support the people from the exchange team.

They might like them, but they were ultimately not their bias.

The people on the exchange team felt for the first time that they were actually so unpopular here. They did not have a single fan!

Finally, the lights in the hall dimmed down, leaving only the lights on the stage.

The host went up on stage and introduced the exchange competition, as well as the guests and judges.

There were quite a lot of people who were curious as to who the judges would be for this competition to be made as fair as possible.

They did not expect that they actually invited the famous theater director Xu Jiashan and the famous theater actress Tan Xiaoyun.

In current times, when the theater industry was not doing very well, Director Xu Jiashan's plays were always full house and tickets would be sold out at pre-sales stage. It was impossible to wait until the official sales' opening.

And as long as there was a play directed by Xu Jiashan, there would definitely be the country's top actors playing one of the roles in it.

These actors were all quite hard to invite, be it for plays or films.

As long as they acted in it, it would be a guarantee of its reputation.

It was the same with Tan Xiaoyun. She had always been working with Xu Jiashan. Over time, her acting skills also received recognition.

The other two judges were invited over from Broadway by the exchange team.

"Famous Broadway actor, Robert Spicen; famous Broadway actor, Hayer Clement," the host introduced in a grand manner.

Most of the people at the event had not been to Broadway to watch a performance there personally, and they did not know why they were so famous.

But since they were so famous, the actors that came from there would surely be capable, even if they were not internationally famous.

The audience who bought their tickets to watch did not expect the judges to be so amazing this time.

It's true that both sides took fairness and professionalism into consideration.

But they were still worried that if all the judges were locals, there would be bias in judgment.

And the judges they found all had an impeccable reputation.

The audience at the scene all felt that they'd earned a good deal. They could actually watch these god-like celebrities from such a close distance.

After introducing the judges, the host announced the first group to perform on stage. It was the team of students from Donghua Film Academy.

The host introduced Donghua Film Academy in both languages, citing the accolades the school had received over the years.

Afterward, the host went down the stage, and the lights went off for a while.

### **Chapter 1672: Harming Others Does No Good to Yourself**

When the lights came on again, the backdrop on stage had already been set up.

DFA's students performed pretty well. It was clear that they really put in a lot of effort during this period.

But they still had many areas to improve on.

The judges gave pertinent critiques as well.

“The performance is still too choppy. Although I don’t understand Chinese and can’t understand many of the subtleties in your language, I can simply judge your acting skills based on your expressions, actions, and the pauses in between your lines. For these aspects, there are still things that are lacking,” Robert said, commenting on the students from Donghua Film Academy.

“For instance, when you ran over just now, your facial expression relaxed a little. You are going to send off your lover whom you might never ever meet again. Don’t think that just because you ran very fast, the audience cannot see your facial expression clearly. If you think a performance is just a performance, that it’s just acting, and carry such an attitude, you will never be able to improve and present a good production. You aren’t just simply performing, you have to integrate yourself into it. You may be standing on a stage right now, but the moment you stand up on stage, the stage becomes your world, and you are your character. Never forget this. The audience doesn’t want to see the character you play, but that character itself.”

After that, it was the performance by Donghua Academy of Drama.

Donghua Academy of Drama’s performance was about the same standard as that of Donghua Film Academy.

Xu Jiashan said, “There was a scene just now when Student Yu here did not face the audience from start to end. This is a stage—there are no multi-directional cameras provided for you guys—so it won’t be able to toggle between different angles like when you’re filming dramas. You guys can only find your own positions. You have to let the audience see you guys, or else, no matter how well you’ve portrayed the emotions or how exciting your performance is, it’s useless if the audience can’t see it. To put it plainly, your whole performance is based on teamwork. This isn’t just about a single person among you guys, so the student acting along with that person must take note as well. The moment you notice such a situation, don’t focus solely on wanting to show your face so that the audience can see you clearly, thinking that it’s for the best if the audience can’t see her. You have to bring her along with you. When she is talking, you have to give her the spotlight. In situations like these, don’t just steal the spotlight.”

After seeing the performance of the previous two schools, it was clear that their chances of winning were near zero.

Xu Jiashan pointed out all the petty little schemes concealed on stage with just a few words.

DAD’s Principal was fuming with rage.

This was about teamwork. If they won, everyone would win. If they lost, everyone would lose.

What’s the point of plotting such schemes in such situations?!

Harming others does no good to yourself!

Actually, this principal understood very well that the student might probably be thinking, since the team was bound to lose the team competition anyway, he might as well enhance his own performance so as to make the others pale in comparison to him. This might even leave a deep impression on the judges.

After all, the judges today were no average people.

The organizers had kept the judges' list a secret until the very end. Only today did the students participating in the competition know who the judges were.

That student probably only thought of such an idea right before going up on stage. His reaction was pretty fast, though.

Alas, he was too smart for his own good.

Did he really think the judges below could not see through his schemes?

In this way, he actually left a worse impression on the judges.

This was especially so for Xu Jiashan as a director. He really disliked those who acted in a manner that put their own interests above that of the team, and above that of the production as well.

Needless to say, for the two other actors from Broadway... did he think they would bring him over to Broadway?

### **Chapter 1673: You're Quite Protective of Her**

How deep were their ties?

Why would they possibly put in so much effort for a student they saw only once?

It was not like his acting was super outstanding to make people feel that it would be a pity to miss out on him.

DAD's principal was utterly embarrassed by this student and did not know where to show his face anymore.

Next, the host invited the students from the NDA up on stage.

When it was time for the National Drama Academy to perform, the situation finally improved, but there were still points that were unsatisfactory.

"We can tell that everyone here put in a lot of effort for the performance," Hayer said politely. "You guys still have a big room for improvement. Don't feel dejected or give up."

Donghua Academy of Drama and Donghua Film Academy's principals shook their heads with sullen expressions. They glanced at Principal Zhang and Principal Liu.

Both of them expected such a performance standard from NDA, so they could only say at this moment, "It's not bad already."

Principal Zhang smiled woefully. The two principals turned to Principal Liu and said, "Old Liu, you're the only ones left. The rest depends on you guys. You really have to stand up for us!"

"Yeah." The principal of Donghua Academy of Drama said, "At least your school has Lu Man. You guys definitely have to win to live up to your name of being the 'Chinese Arts Championships' champion."

Principal Liu felt uncomfortable hearing those words. "Does one capable person mean that the whole team is capable? When I let Lu Man participate, all the leaders and teachers in our school have already said that it would be good as long as she did her best. We cannot pin the responsibility for winning on

her alone. Just like what the judges said just now, this is about teamwork. If she's the only capable one but the others can't match up, it would be no use as well. If you guys lost and didn't perform well, you can't push all the pressure onto us just because of that."

"You're quite protective of her, huh," Principal Zhang retorted sourly.

"I will have to protect any student in our school," Principal Liu said bluntly. "If you think that Lu Man alone can prop up a whole team, then you can ask Lu Man to go over and help you guys out when there's such a thing again next time. Let's see if you can win then?"

Principal Liu's words shut the other two principals up completely. They did not say anything more.

They too knew very well that no matter how capable Lu Man was, she would not be able to carry a whole team of people.

Wasn't there a saying?

Don't fear a god-like enemy, fear a pig-like teammate.

If that's inflicted on you, no divine god can help.

Over at the exchange team, they saw that the students that have already performed had returned to their seats at the participants' seating area.

Howard glanced at them scornfully and said to Luzern, "Just look at the standards of these people. What do you have to worry about? Even if I only perform with one-tenth of my usual standard, I can easily crush them."

Luzern's expression remained dark and he did not speak. He really disliked Howard's attitude, but after watching the previous three performances, even if Luzern treated the competition very seriously at the start, worried that some mishap would happen such that they would be outperformed by these students, he too could calm down now and had to admit that Howard was right.

Those three performances added together would still be no match for their exchange team.

They could win even with their eyes closed.

But Luzern said, "Enough. The competition hasn't ended yet. Nothing is set in stone. The NFA hasn't gone up on stage yet. Don't be too relaxed."

Howard pursed his lips, still not thinking highly of it.

The seats of the various schools were arranged quite closely together, so they could all hear Howard's words clearly.

They all stared at Howard angrily.

This person, he was too condescending!

Aside from touring the NFA, the exchange team from New York had naturally gone to the other three schools as well.

**Chapter 1674: Spotlight**

But they did not stay as long as they did at the NFA.

On top of the existing conflict with Lu Man, Howard had the most direct conflict with the NFA.

Meanwhile, the experiences of the students from the NFA were much deeper than the students from the other three schools.

“How ridiculous!” someone said in a hushed voice.

But they would not be afraid to say it out loud either. They would not understand anyway.

The other students were fuming as well. They hoped that the NFA would be competent enough to win against this Howard with complete dominance!

At that moment, they heard the host announcing on stage that it was finally time for the NFA’s team to come up on stage.

The lights on the stage dimmed once again. When the lights came on again, the stage backdrop had changed to that of a school.

A few students walked around, Lu Man cleaning the school grounds amid them.

Right after that, the scene changed and the big screen at the back continuously changed backgrounds, from a school alley to the roadside, and then to the club where the female lead works at night.

When the whole scene ended, everyone realized in surprise that in that whole scene, all the characters had very few lines.

They all expressed themselves through their actions and expressions.

They only paired it with one or two lines occasionally, just to create a sense of flow.

The kinds of laughter had even more variation than the lines.

Like that of the lighthearted, bright laughter heard in schools.

At the club, however, the kinds of laughter became those of sophistication, sarcasm, mockery, bitterness, and even crying while laughing.

Without lines to steal the show, these sounds of laughter actually became so noticeable.

It evoked peoples’ thoughts to try and analyze what these sounds of laughter meant and represented.

The students in the school wore youthful clothes, but when the scene changed to the club at night, the outfits became sexy and racy, presenting a clear juxtaposition.

The number of lines spoken on stage was close to zero. It was so silent that it was as if they’re watching a silent film.

The audience below the stage were actually also quietly watching, as if they were holding their breaths, watching the performance on stage closely.

They did so right until the performance ended, and the students on stage rushed down to bow.

Robert and Hayer suddenly took the lead to clap.

Both of them clapped especially hard and agitatedly, even their faces were reddened from agitation.

Xu Jiashan smiled hearteningly as he clapped.

When the host stepped up on stage to invite the judges to comment, Xu Jiashan said, “This was an exciting performance. You all performed really well. Although there were still some bits lacking here and there, at least you guys knew to hide these inadequacies as much as possible, to reduce their presence, akin to promoting one’s strengths while avoiding one’s weaknesses. And Lu Man’s stage presence here was way too amazing.”

“The moment she came out, she subconsciously drew everyone’s attention to herself, but she did not do this on purpose. She was only acting out her character well, but she just had that charm that would make people subconsciously stare at her,” Xu Jiashan said. “This kind of charm, for an actor, is very, very precious. It is precisely because of this that the other actors’ shortcomings in the performance were minimized to the maximum, because the audience is mostly focused on her. What’s left that we can pay attention to would be the merits you want us to notice.”

“Of course, the other students performed very well as well. As there were almost no lines spoken, everything relied heavily on your body language and expressions to be conveyed. This made your acting skills even more pronounced, and the key points that you guys wanted to convey were not detracted because of your lines. The person who came up with such a presentation method is really highly skilled.”

Xu Jiashan laughed and said, “This show was performed really well, and the credit goes to you all. But it was directed very well too! The director who directed this performance for you all is ingenious—and really amazing too!”

### **Chapter 1675: Above Standards**

Tan Xiaoyun nodded. “There are many factors that determine whether a show turns out good or bad, and not a single factor can be left out. The actors need to portray the character in flesh and blood, stripping oneself of one’s unique characteristics, and turning one completely into the character in the play. It also requires the director to amplify your strengths based on his unique directing methods, to connect all these pieces together and draw the attention of the audience to this.”

Robert said emotionally, “This brings me back to the days of silent films, which is very refreshing. Your performance might have certain parts that are a bit choppy, but in this show, the choppy performance actually turned into the highlight of the show. The director’s skill in this show cannot go unmentioned!”

Hayer agreed and said, “He could also downplay your flaws and turn the flaws that cannot be downplayed into your strengths. The thought process of this show is also filled with novelty, and it shows good mastery of the pace and details of this show. A stage play is different from a filmed drama. Many details need a little more effort to be put in and shown so that the audience can see. But if it is overdone, it would backfire. On this aspect, you guys managed it very well. I believe, this show contains your hard work and effort, as well as the efforts of the director.”

Hayer added passionately, “I really want to know, who’s the director that directed this for you all? Which teacher from your school is it?”

Seeing the situation, the host directly gestured to Lu Man to speak on behalf of the students.

As their clothes all had mics attached, there was no need for another handheld mic.

Lu Man smiled and said, “Thank you, judges, for the praises. Our performance was able to get everyone’s recognition certainly because of our hard work. In this one week, the students in our team had all been making use of all the time available to practice, and we hated that we could not use our sleeping time to practice as well. The teachers in charge of guiding our performance are Teacher Yao and Teacher Hong—”

Lu Man gestured with her hand towards the audience.

Teacher Yao and Teacher Hong did not expect that they would be introduced by Lu Man.

As teachers, they did not go up on stage. They just quietly gave their efforts behind the scenes and had long been used to that.

No matter how famous their students became, no one knew who they were.

But now, Lu Man actually specifically introduced them.

Just like during the Chinese Arts Championships previously, Lu Man had even asked them to be guest performers.

Although they would go and perform in some plays when they had no lessons...

It was not an exaggeration to say that it was precisely because of Lu Man that more and more people got to know them.

Both of them quickly stood up and waved at the audience to make themselves known.

“Both teachers also sacrificed all their personal time to come and guide us. Be it the teachers, or ourselves, we all hope that we can present a decent production to everyone,” Lu Man said.

“How is it just decent? You are too humble.” Tan Xiaoyun smiled and said, “Although this show is short, it is definitely above standards.”

If more professional actors were to perform in this, the effect might be even better.

It was actually because Lu Man’s classmates were still awkward and lacking in some aspects of acting.

But this was negligible. They were only students, after all, so they would only get better and better later on.

“And the four judges mentioned just now as well that our performance could be so successful because of our play director,” Lu Man said slowly. “Indeed, a big thank you must go to this director, for portraying our unique characteristics to the best possible extent. If not for him, we would not be able to achieve such a good effect with our performance. We are aware of our own flaws. Normally, when Teacher Yao and Teacher Hong are teaching in class, they would always imperceptibly guide us towards recognizing our flaws, just that we still needed time to train and practice.”

**Chapter 1676: Even Felt Like Laughing Thinking About It**



Lu Man smiled and divulged, “And it’s all thanks to Director Deng Xu this time. The reason our scene was so successful and got the approval of the four judges was because of him.”

“The sequence is a segment from Director Deng’s new film in cinemas now, *After Sunset*,” Lu Man explained.

Xu Jiashan exclaimed, “You guys were actually directed by Director Deng! No wonder you all were excellent! No wonder...”

Xu Jiashan wanted to laugh. “That’s true, such a perfect control and arrangement cannot be achieved by anyone, and there are only a few local directors who can do it.”

Robert immediately chimed in, “By Director Deng Xu, do you mean the one who just received the Golden Film Award?”

“That’s right.” Lu Man nodded.

“My gosh! I really like this director, his shows are amazing. He could always bring out the different sides of the actors!” Robert gushed.

The emcee seized the chance. “Director Deng’s now sitting among the guests.”

“Director Deng, could you come onstage and speak a few words?” the emcee asked.

Deng Xu rose; the audience didn’t expect to see this great director here.

There were many famous directors within the country, but the one who was most acclaimed and who won the most awards internationally was Deng Xu.

Deng Xu clapped his hands together and bowed towards the audience before shaking hands with the four judges.

Robert and Hayer both expressed their respect for Deng Xu shortly but delightedly.

After Deng Xu went onstage, the emcee said surprisedly, “Frankly, I believe everyone here, including me, didn’t expect the National Film Academy to actually invite Director Deng! It’s too lavish!”

Inviting Deng Xu over to direct a short 20-minute stageplay was too extravagant!

Below the stage, Principal Zhang felt his face burning. Needless to say, this had to be the work of Han Zhuoli and Lu Man.

Lu Man being a student of the National Film Academy was tantamount to letting the academy have a huge advantage!

It wasn’t like the National Drama Academy didn’t approach any of the famous directors—there were more than enough of them who graduated from the National Drama Academy.

But everyone was busy, their schedules tightly packed.

Who knew the National Film Academy would not only manage to find one but would also even successfully invite Deng Xu over?!

What's more, Deng Xu graduated from an overseas school before coming back to develop his career; he had no links whatsoever with the National Drama Academy.

There was no reason for Principal Zhang to kick a fuss.

The directors from Donghua Academy of Drama and Donghua Film Academy did not possess this complicated relationship like Principal Zhang did.

Since the National Drama Academy themselves had pushed Lu Man away in anger while Donghua Academy of Drama and Donghua Film Academy didn't, they even felt like laughing thinking about it.

Now, the more glory the National Film Academy had, the more it highlighted how foolish Principal Zhang was then.

"Old Liu, how mean you are, inviting Deng Xu without saying a thing to us," Donghua Film Academy's principal said.

Principal Liu laughed. "No matter what, we're still competitors. This is a competition, so obviously I can't reveal it."

"Actually, we couldn't have done anything even if you'd told us," Donghua Academy of Drama's principal replied. "We can't invite directors like Deng Xu. Not to mention people of his grade, we can't even get those mildly famous ones. They're busy making money, who'd care about such a trivial thing like this?"

Principal Liu didn't bother hiding the fact that it was thanks to Lu Man. "Sigh! You think we managed to invite him using our own means? After deciding to engage a famous director, I dialed a whole bunch of numbers that night, and none of them agreed. I didn't even bother to call Director Deng."

#### **Chapter 1677: Thought It's Possible Now**

"The director is so good I didn't harbor any hopes, so I didn't try at all," Principal Liu said, laughing. "And then we had a meeting and I related our circumstances to the participating students, and who'd have thought Young Master Han would bring Director Deng with him out of nowhere, saying Director Deng had three days free to direct our students?"

"Frankly, even if I'd approached other directors, I thought that it'd be good enough if they could spare a couple of days to teach our kids since it's really unrealistic to ask them to stay for a whole week. We aren't some bigshots! But Director Deng actually spared three days straight away. From choosing a show to settling on roles to the final rehearsal, Director Deng participated in them all," he continued. "It's all thanks to Lu Man. If it wasn't for her, Young Master Han wouldn't bother with such matters."

The other two principals felt that Principal Liu wasn't explaining to them, he was boasting!

How could he have such luck as to have Lu Man as a student?

What's more, Lu Man originally chose the National Drama Academy, not the National Film Academy!

It was only because the National Drama Academy had burned all bridges that Lu Man came to the National Film Academy.

Otherwise, it would have had nothing to do with Principal Liu anymore.

Thinking of this, the two principals couldn't help but look towards Principal Zhang.

They were curious as to how he felt every time the National Film Academy benefited because of Lu Man.

How he felt?

Obviously irritated!

Principal Zhang was beyond exasperated by their gazes!

Ever since the moment when the judges praised the team from the National Film Academy, both of them had been looking at him as if he was a fool.

He obviously knew that letting Lu Man go was a mistake—no need to be reminded constantly by their gazes!

He's already dying inside here!

Principal Liu was all smiles and totally unpressured.

For no matter whether they won or lost, losing this time wasn't terrible—it even felt glorious.

Even if the exchange team won, it wouldn't be an easy victory, it would be by a bare margin.

Principal Liu was confident about this.

He knew the capabilities of the exchange team clearly.

Lu Man and the others performed exceedingly well today. It was far above their usual standards.

Probably because Howard and the others were too arrogant, constantly triggering the students.

Because they yearned to pay them back, the students put in their best efforts. The spirit was almost as high as when they took part in the college entrance exams.

Moreover, Principal Liu thought, they might even win against the New York exchange team for real.

Winning was something Principal Liu thought was possible now.

He didn't dare hope before, but looking at the performance by the National Film Academy's students now, he actually reckoned that winning wasn't all that out of reach.

Especially since, before the competition started, Howard had gone to make trouble for Lu Man and Shi Xiaoya and got irritated after Han Zhuoling gave what's coming to him.

His emotional state meant that he couldn't perform well.

And the standard of the exchange team fell.

When one's performance fell below standard and the other's exceeded expectations...

His National Film Academy had a chance of winning.

Meanwhile, onstage, Deng Xu replied after hearing the emcee's question. "I didn't know there was this competition originally. It's Young Master Han who approached me, asking if I had some time to spare to teach the students. After I heard about it, I thought that it's not a bad idea—it's time to really cultivate the new generation. I'm more than happy to help our local entertainment industry."

### **Chapter 1678: Challenge**

"Just like the movies I've filmed, I wish to let more people in the world know that our country's different now, that it's not the undeveloped and backward place they thought it was. In order to make themselves seem deep, many films always make their characters go down and dirty and travel to the remote and poor rural areas. As if the more they filmed how difficult life was, the more depth a movie would have. I'm not saying these places don't exist and not to shoot such movies, but what I wanted was to integrate the conflict between the rich and the poor, the developed and the undeveloped. It's something really charismatic when you change your angle on it."

"Similarly, I also hoped to develop more outstanding young actors. New faces keep appearing in many shows. Their acting might be stiff, but if you think about it in another way, they had unpolished areas. Don't let the audiences keep seeing the same faces over and over, it'd be boring."

"So I came," Deng Xu said.

Though some words were left unspoken, everyone knew in their hearts that what Deng Xu said was one side of the case, but if it wasn't for Han Zhuoli, he probably wouldn't have come.

There were many chances to develop new talents, and for great directors like Deng Xu, he never lacked young actors who were eager to try.

He didn't have to especially find new talents when countless actors already wished he could notice them.

All in all, it was still thanks to Han Zhuoli.

"From what I know, this scene is from your new film, *After Sunset*, currently showing in theaters," the emcee said, "so why did you choose this part for the performance? I'd gone to see it when the film first showed, and the whole movie was interesting and thought-provoking. There were even more intense and outstanding scenes. Why didn't you choose those?"

Deng Xu smiled, saying, "When I chose the scene, I didn't know there would be people from Broadway in the judging panel. I just felt that since the exchange team didn't understand Mandarin, even if there were subtitles on the screen, the nuances in our language would be lost. It would even make our guests distracted by looking at the screen and not focus on the performance on stage."

"So I chose this scene and discussed with the others, tweaking some more to further reduce the lines and focus on the expressions and movements. Even without speaking, these could portray another type of language and allow everyone to pay attention to their performance," Deng Xu explained.

"Precisely because there were almost no lines, the audience would be more eager to understand the performance through their expressions and body language—what they're trying to say. The audience would then be naturally immersed in the acting. This was also a great challenge to the students at the same time."

The emcee said, "I was watching from the side and thought this was so difficult. Without the help of spoken lines, the audience had to guess many details, using the students' acting to imagine it. But their imaginations might be wrong too, maybe from misunderstanding a certain part of the performance, and thus affecting how much they liked the whole skit. It's plausible to dislike the performance because of misunderstanding it. This was such a high expectation for the students."

"That's true." Deng Xu nodded. "If we wanted the best results, the performing difficulty had to increase. It's great that the students are all hardworking and did well. But most of the difficulties fell on Lu Man's shoulders."

### **Chapter 1679: Are You Interested to Try?**

"Just like what Director Xu said just now, Lu Man's appearance put her in the spotlight, letting people unknowingly put their attention on her. That's Lu Man's charisma. Similarly, because everyone was focused on her, the burden on the other actors lessened considerably, allowing them to perform above standard and better than when they're under stress."

"But this meant that the stress was on Lu Man, and because everyone's scrutinizing her, any mistake on her part would have ruined this show," Deng Xu said. "I was worried at the start too, putting such a heavy burden on Lu Man might stress her out too much, and it's a great risk. Since if she mishandled any parts, the whole show would fall apart."

"But both teachers of Lu Man were confident in her and felt that we could completely trust her. I reckon that her teachers would know better than me, so I agreed. Who'd have thought, Lu Man really did marvelously," he continued. "What's more, she's not worse than any of the experienced actors I've worked with in the past."

This was high praise indeed.

Since Lu Man was still a student.

And actors who had worked with Deng Xu were all well-known, highly skilled actors.

Every one of them had won several national and international acting awards.

And Deng Xu saying that Lu Man was as good as them implied that he was more than satisfied with her acting.

"That's right, Lu Man has this quality about her. As long as she's on stage, she'd shine like a sun even if the spotlight wasn't on her." Xu Jiashan nodded. "During the performance just now, there was a close-up shot of Lu Man's face on the screen. I saw that her eyes were so expressive."

Tan Xiaoyun also nodded in agreement at the side.

Robert and Hayer listened to the interpreter beside them who translated what was said to them, and they nodded vigorously too.

Xu Jiashan actually invited Lu Man on the spot, "I'm preparing a new stage show currently. After seeing your performance, I think there's a character especially suited for you, Lu Man, as if it was created just for you. Might you be interested to try?"

Many did not expect Xu Jiashan to hand out an invitation to Lu Man directly right then and there.

Many felt upset.

They had gone to many different auditions yet failed to land a role.

And Lu Man didn't have to lift her pinky and a role was offered to her.

Though Xu Jiashan was a director for theatrical performances, his actors were all big-shot film actors.

Those actors joined the theater whenever they were free purely for acting and for polishing their skills.

Similarly, this meant that not anyone could join Xu Jiashan's shows.

The barrier of entry to his shows might be even higher than when shooting a film.

At the very least, you had to do respectably well in the films with good word-of-mouth before you could join his shows.

His plays not only involved good actors within the entertainment industry, they also involved renowned veteran actors who had long since not appeared onscreen. It was applicable to call these veterans "artists" too.

If one could participate in Xu Jiashan's play, it was extremely beneficial in expanding one's connections.

"Rest assured, it's not a small role I'm giving you, she has many scenes." Xu Jiashan said. "But you don't have to be afraid of not having enough time, because plays require at least two actors for every character so they can rotate between performances. You can be a special guest and just turn up for a few performances."

### **Chapter 1680: Good Foresight**

"Director Xu," Tan Xiaoyun reminded him with a smile, "let's wait until after the competition before extending invitations. The competition's still going on, how eager are you!"

Inviting her on the spot wasn't enough, he even started to think of ways to convince Lu Man, afraid that she'd disagree.

If he was given the time to continue, the competition would end immediately.

It's almost like he wanted to persuade Lu Man to sign the contract right then and there.

Tan Xiaoyun could only remind Xu Jiashan helplessly.

What's more, Lu Man had Han Zhuoli behind her.

What if she wanted to discuss this with Han Zhuoli?

They couldn't fight with Han Zhuoli no matter what, could they?

Xu Jiashan finally remembered and slapped his head. "Look at me, always forgetting where I'm at every time I see a great actor, always wanting to engage them before doing anything else."

Xu Jiashan laughed. "Alright, we'll continue discussing after the competition ends. Consider it, Lu Man."

“Okay!” Lu Man agreed with a smile.

Old Mrs. Han, who was sitting in the guest row, said to Shen Nuo, “This director has good foresight!”

Shen Nuo nodded in agreement. “Indeed, booking Man Man early now. Otherwise, when Man Man becomes an award-winning actress, he won’t have a chance of approaching her.”

“That’s right, Man Man’s acting skills are this.” Old Mrs. Han put up her thumb. “She hasn’t even graduated and so many great directors like her already. When she’s officially taking on shows, she’ll win the best actress title in no time, so quickly that no one would know how to react. So he can only do it now. Otherwise, with Man Man’s ability, she’ll soar immediately.”

Xia Qingwei was seated beside them, and even if she was Lu Man’s biological mother, she was embarrassed hearing how Old Mrs. Han and Shen Nuo praised her.

The mother- and daughter-in-law pair had more confidence in Lu Man than Lu Man had in herself.

Even if Lu Man was here, she’d be embarrassed to say that Xu Jiashan would have no chance of engaging her in the future if he didn’t seize the chance now.

Shen Nuo nodded, then said with slight disdain, “This Deng Xu needs improvement. Man Man acted so well, he should know that well being the director. Why didn’t he make her the lead role for his next show in advance? Such a great director, but with poorer foresight than Xu Jiashan.”

“True, true.” Old Mrs. Han nodded vigorously. “He needs help!”

They were seated in the guest row, but the guest row had other people too!

All heard the pair’s conversation.

Everybody: “...”

There were rumours circulating that life in the Han Family for Lu Man wasn’t as glorified as they thought.

Since she was a penniless Cinderella with a bunch of ridiculous relatives, any wealthy family was likely to look down on such a daughter-in-law, especially as Lu Man married into the Han Family with nothing to her name.

The most likely reason was that the elders in the Han Family couldn’t stop Han Zhuoli from liking her.

From the things Lu Man had done previously, it was obvious that she was a scheming person with good tactics. Who knew what method she’d used to attract and keep Han Zhuoli?

Everyone’s still guessing about Han Zhuoli’s and Lu Man’s relationship, about whether they were merely putting on a show to increase their popularity.

But everyone was certain that the Han Family was dissatisfied with Lu Man.

They had no proof, but thought it common sense. How could a big family like the Han Family have no negative opinion of Lu Man?