

## **Superstar 1311**

Chapter 1311: Who will the Spring Festival Gala's executive director role fall to?

The news blew up!

On that same afternoon, the news started spreading!

"The Spring Festival Gala's executive director quits?"

"Director Li clashes with the leaders!"

"Li Ke calls it quits!"

"Central TV has confirmed the news!"

"A gloom cast over the Spring Festival Gala. No one to take the job?"

"The public calls for the Spring Festival Gala to be canceled!"

"Where will the Spring Festival Gala go from here?"

Central TV issued a statement very quickly.

Immediately after, Li Ke also issued a statement. He simply explained his reasons for withdrawing from the Spring Festival Gala's production team, albeit being relatively tactful about it. But reading between the lines, it could be felt that Li Ke was rather emotional about it.

At this point in time the previous years, Central TV's Spring Festival Gala would already have assigned a director for the job. In fact, the first approval session would even have almost been completed. However, this year, the appointment of the executive director was still not confirmed, much less the first approval session. They had finally convinced Li Ke to take the role after dragging on the matter for a long time, but it still ended up with him quitting. Did they have to do everything all over again?

To restart the process of selecting a director?

To redo their plan anew?

To invite the performers from the beginning again?

They hadn't even gotten the stage setup ready yet!

Would there still be enough time to get everything together?

As such, when this news was revealed, it caused quite a stir in the country. The public's view of this matter was more pessimistic. They already did not have much hope for this year's Spring Festival Gala, but this news put even more doubt into their minds.

On Weibo.

"Even Director Li has quit?"

"He never wanted to take this 'hot potato' of a job in the first place!"

"Yeah, Director Li is already doing very well on his films. He should just stick to that and not get his hands dirty by taking the Spring Festival Gala job. That's only finding trouble for himself."

"Well now, they don't even have an executive director to handle things anymore!"

"Who else can they get?"

"I don't know, they've probably approached everyone that they could already."

"Yeah, they're really shuffling through a lot of people for the Spring Festival Gala's executive director role in recent years. They've already used almost every first-rate director in the country, even getting those famous directors from the film industry and those who are based overseas. Just from the Central TV system alone, there's already Old Hai, Old Qu, and Old Li. Who hasn't been considered for the role before? But as it stands? They're all getting worse and worse with each passing year. The same goes for the viewership ratings and the reputation of the gala, both of which are declining as well. There are almost no examples of an executive director getting reelected for the role in the following year. Everyone who takes the job would only end up taking the rap for the poor showing, and then that repeats for the next person in line after that."

"They're probably not going to be ready in time this year, right?"

"I think so too. There might not even be a broadcast of the gala anymore."

"That's not going to happen. The Spring Festival Gala will surely take place."

"But there's no one left to choose from anymore. The big directors have all been used already."

"But there are still many smaller directors around."

"There may be a lot of them, and they are surely eyeing the directing of the Spring Festival Gala as well, but the higher-ups would have to be willing to settle for them first. This is not a job that anyone can do. If you want to direct the Spring Festival Gala, you have to have some achievements first, don't you? You have to show some capabilities and results first, right? Otherwise, who would be convinced by you? Actually, a lot of people might be criticizing and flaming the Spring Festival Gala harshly each year, even threatening not to watch it anymore. The organizers are also often ridiculed year after year too. I remember that such things have been going on for the past four to five years already, hasn't it? But in the end? When we come to the night of Lunar New Year's Eve, aren't we all still always sitting in front of our televisions and waiting there eagerly? Hai, everyone still has feelings for the Spring Festival Gala, after all. That's why we're so pissed about it. We all have our expectations and just hope that it will be well produced."

"Yeah, my childhood memories are all of the Spring Festival Gala."

"Yup, those were the days. I really miss them."

"Let's see who they get this time to save the day."

"In any case, I can't think of a suitable candidate."

On Weibo.

In the discussion forums.

On the social networks.

On the streets.

In the companies.

The people were heatedly discussing it!

Then the media joined in!

The people's attention of the Spring Festival Gala reached a peak. All the citizens were paying attention to the developments of the matter and were waiting for the latest news updates to come from the top!

...

There was also chaos within the arts circle!

At Zhang Ye's Studio.

Ha Qiqi, Zhang Zuo, and the others were all frowning.

Little Wang didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "Director Li is really not going to continue working? Then what should we do?"

Zhang Ye said, "Who knows what we can do?"

Tong Fu said, "We don't care who becomes the director. All we want is for them to let us get on the Spring Festival Gala."

Ha Qiqi said helplessly, "The problem is that other than Director Li Ke, none of the other big directors in the country are on good terms with Director Zhang, right? Even if they do give face to our Director Zhang, they wouldn't possibly stand their ground to invite Director Zhang against Central TV's wishes, would they?"

Zhang Zuo said angrily, "Just tell me, what is this? The show was all prepared and the script was nearly approved too. With Director Li leaving at this time, everything will have to restart from scratch. The invite list to the performers that Director Li drew up definitely won't count anymore. To think that we were still banking on the Spring Festival Gala to push us to the S-list!"

Then, Zhang Ye's cell phone rang.

It was from the famous skit actress, Ci Xiufang.

"Auntie Ci."

"Boss Zhang, I heard that you were there when it happened? What went on in there!"

"I'm not too sure either. Old Li seemed like he got into a fight with the higher-ups and then suddenly said that he was quitting. I couldn't persuade him since he wasn't willing to listen at all."

"Hai, then what will happen to our show?"

"You were invited as well?"

"Yes, that's why I am so anxious about this. So do we continue preparing for it or not?"

"Who knows!"

Afterwards, Zhang Xia also called.

Zhang Xia was also one of the invited performers for this year's Spring Festival Gala.

"Zhang'er, has Central TV contacted you yet about the show matters?"

"Not yet, how about you?"

"They didn't contact me after that either. I've already asked, but they've been plunged into chaos over there."

"Hai, all the plans have been messed up!"

"Yes, this came too suddenly. There were no signs of it happening at all. We can only wait for the new director to be appointed before the new program list gets drawn up again."

"I guess we can only wait then. There's no other way about it."

...

At the organizing committee for the Spring Festival Gala.

In the large conference room, several dozen people were in a terrible fix.

There were people from Central TV in here, as well as comrades from the Ministry of Culture and leaders from the SARFT. Every one of them was worrying over the Spring Festival Gala's executive director role!

"Old Li went too far!"

"Yeah, how can he just quit like that!"

"There's no point arguing about it anymore. What candidates do we have? Please make a few recommendations!"

"Chief Chen, what do you think of Director Wang Qi?"

"Wang Qi is not good enough."

"Yes, he doesn't have enough experience."

"What about Li Chaoran?"

"Little Li is a masterful director in the world of theater, but that's too different from the stage of the Spring Festival Gala. It's too big of a jump, so appointing Little Li to head the Spring Festival Gala would make it into a laughing matter for sure."

"Then there really isn't anyone else!"

"Yeah, there are only so many best directors we have in the country. They can all be counted on two hands. Even if we were to lower the requirements, there shouldn't be more than 20 people we can consider. A majority of these people have already taken the Spring Festival Gala job before, but their results weren't exactly good either. What's more, perhaps due to there being too much criticism afterwards which affected their reputations, many of these top directors are no longer willing to take on such a 'hot potato' role. All of them are hiding as far away from it as possible."

"Is there really no one else?"

"In the camp of top directors, there really isn't anyone else."

"That might not be true."

"Oh? Old Han, who else is there?"

"That person...forget it. Take it that I didn't mention anything."

"What's with the suspense? Hurry up and say it."

"That person's status is a little bit special."

"Special? Is he a top director?"

"He is a top director. In fact, he's definitely one of the best in the country. He's also quite different from Li Ke. Although Li Ke is a top director in the film industry, he cannot be considered the best. At most, he is one of the top three directors in film. But that person is definitely the top in his industry, without anyone coming close."

"He's number one?"

"Yes."

"Is there a big difference in his role in the industry from the gala's director role?"

"Not much. In fact, it might even be a smaller jump than a film director's role."

"So who is it? Don't keep us in suspense, Old Han!"

"But that person...well, his temper isn't really that good."

A silence fell upon the large conference room!

Everyone gasped!

"You're talking about him?"

"It's him?"

Everyone was looking at each other, clearly having guessed who Old Han was referring to!

Chapter 1312: Zhang Ye takes charge of the Spring Festival Gala!

The next day.

At the studio.

It was 9 in the morning when Yao Jiancai arrived wearing a down jacket.

"Teacher Yao, you're here?"

"Where's Director Zhang?"

"He's upstairs on the balcony basking in the sun."

"Heh, what sun can there be in the middle of winter?"

"The work progress for the Spring Festival Gala has been shelved, so there's nothing for Director Zhang to do at the moment."

"I'll go look for him."

Out on the balcony.

Zhang Ye really was basking in the sun in a chair.

Yao Jiancai said in a speechless manner, "Kid, aren't you cold?"

"Old Yao, you're here?" Zhang Ye crossed his legs and put on the demeanor of an artistic youth. "Of course I'm cold, but it can't be colder than what I'm feeling in my heart. In this cold wind, I can feel the loneliness of the world."

Yao Jiancai rolled his eyes. "Why are you quoting some essay?"

"Then what should I do?" Zhang Ye said idly.

Yao Jiancai asked, "You didn't arrange any events?"

Zhang Ye shrugged. "For the Spring Festival Gala, I'd turned down all of my other work. There's nothing for me to do in the coming two months, so I can only lay here and bask in the sun."

Ding dong.

Ding dong.

The doorbell rang from downstairs.

Yao Jiancai asked, "Is that Shanshan?"

Zhang Ye shook his head. "I don't know."

Then Ha Qiqi shouted from downstairs, "Director Zhang, we have guests."

"Who is it?" Zhang Ye shouted downstairs.

Ha Qiqi said, "It's an executive from Central TV."

Central TV?

And it was even an executive?

Zhang Ye and Old Yao were stunned to hear that.

When they went downstairs, Zhang Ye saw who had come. It turned out to be a deputy station head of Central TV. He went by the name of Hong, and Zhang Ye also knew him too. However, they'd never crossed paths back at Central TV. This Deputy Station Head Hong should be the only executive at Central TV who hadn't had a falling-out or quarrel with Zhang Ye. Deputy Station Head Hong brought quite a few people along with him. There were men and women, totaling around eight people.

What was with this group?

What were they here for?

Zhang Ye wondered.

Ha Qiqi, Zhang Zuo, and the others were also confused.

Zhang Ye smiled and stretched out his hand. "Station Head Hong, what brings your important self here?"

"Boss Zhang, you're too polite." Deputy Station Head Hong shook hands with him. "I hope I'm not bothering you?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "No, I'm not doing anything at the moment. What brings you here, Station Head Hong?"

Deputy Station Head Hong said, "I'm here today regarding the Spring Festival Gala."

Zhang Ye was taken aback. "The Spring Festival Gala?"

"Yes." Deputy Station Head Hong looked around the office. "Can we talk somewhere?"

Zhang Ye called out to his assistant, "Little Wang, get the conference room ready."

Little Wang answered, "Got it!"

The two groups of people proceeded to the conference room and sat down across from each other.

Before the guests could speak, Zhang Ye started rambling, "Station Head Hong, I would also like to talk about the Spring Festival Gala with you all. Just what is going on? Are we still supposed to continue rehearsing our act? Will the first approval session still be held? Everyone is really confused. For a good person like Old Li, you all should have just allowed him to work. But look at this, he got driven away in anger by you all. It's not that I'm trying to put the blame on you, Station Head Hong, but this matter was really not handled well."

Deputy Station Head Hong said, "Hai, we also have our hands tied regarding this matter. Boss Zhang, the truth is that the decision-making process for the Spring Festival Gala is no longer under Central TV's jurisdiction, but we still have to abide by the guidelines issued from above. We'd gone through the few proposals that Old Li wrote up, and I agree with him on one or two of them too. Central TV is actually very supportive of him, and we would also like to make those changes and innovate. But as long as the higher-ups don't agree to it, we won't be able to implement them. The Spring Festival Gala is not just a simple gala. There are too many levels of decisions involved that aren't easily explainable with a few words."

Zhang Ye threw his hands up. "Then what about our act?"

Deputy Station Head Hong said, "As long as the executive director is not appointed, the issue of the acts will be left hanging."

Zhang Ye didn't care about anything else. All he wanted to know was whether his act would be chosen for the Spring Festival Gala or not. "Then why don't you all quickly appoint someone for the role? There isn't much time left."

"That's right."

Zhang Ye said, "Yes, that's right."

"Yup."

What are you yupping about?

I'm getting anxious over here!

Zhang Ye looked at him bewilderedly.

Only to see Deputy Station Head Hong pondering for a long time. Then he said in seriousness, "This is why I brought my team here today. Boss Zhang, after getting a recommendation from the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee, and going through a selection and voting process, we received an approval from the higher management's leaders. On behalf of the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee, I officially invite you to take charge of this year's Central TV Spring Festival Gala!"

His words were too shocking!

Yao Jiancai was stunned!

Ha Qiqi was stunned!

Zhang Zuo was stunned!

The staff of Zhang Ye's Studio were dumbfounded!

What?

Get Zhang Ye to take charge of the Spring Festival Gala?

What the fuck, are you all crazy?

Dead silence fell upon the entire conference room!

Deputy Station Head Hong called out, "Boss Zhang?"

Zhang Ye pointed at himself with wide eyes. "Me?"

Deputy Station Head Hong nodded. "Yes."

"You guys are inviting me?" Zhang Ye immediately said, "Can you not tease me?"

One of the chiefs who had come along said with a bitter laugh, "Boss Zhang, we're not joking. The higher-ups have already given the nod, and the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee has also held



a meeting to discuss this. You're the most suitable candidate, so as long as you accept the job, you'll become this year's Spring Festival Gala's executive director!"

Zhang Ye said dumbfoundedly, "But I've never taken charge of a gala before!"

A female executive adjusted her glasses and said, "You might not have experience in directing a large-scale gala, but that won't stop an excellent variety show director like you. No, calling you excellent does not describe it well enough. You're now the best director in the country when it comes to variety shows, a director who can be considered one of the very best across the fields in the industry. Since we could invite Director Li Ke to take the role, why can't we extend our invitation to you? You're both top directors in your respective fields. And if we consider the difference in jumps between the fields, be it your I Am a Singer or The Voice, those competitions and show formats are all closer to a gala's style than directing a film."

Zhang Ye waved his hands, then covered his face and rubbed it. "Let me get over this. I'm still quite shocked."

Deputy Station Head Hong said, "Boss Zhang, do accept the invitation. It's very chaotic, and the media is speculating as well. Everyone is in a panic regarding the executive director's role being empty, and that's delaying all the work related to the gala." With a pause, he said, "I also know that the executive director role for the Spring Festival Gala is not an easy job since there are so many rules to adhere to and there's a limit to how much you can control for the event. But I feel that this would be a good test of your directing skills, and I'm sure that there would be no problem if we have you leading the production team."

No problem, my ass!

You're putting it so simply!

Who do you think you're fooling!

Zhang Ye said, "I like the Spring Festival Gala very much too. I've watched it since I was young and have a lot of feelings for it, but how can I possibly handle this job? This is not a situation that can easily be saved! Just look at Old Li. Even before he could start directing the Spring Festival Gala, he had already been so harshly scolded! Look at how badly he has been criticized! If I were to accept the role, if I finish directing the Spring Festival Gala, then wouldn't I get scolded like a dog?! What will happen to my reputation then? My honor is at stake here!"

Deputy Station Head Hong: "..."

The accompanying staff: "..."

They were all speechless at this!

Reputation?

Since when did you have any reputation!

Getting scolded?

You're speaking you don't be scolded just because you're not directing the Spring Festival Gala!

But of course, they couldn't say that out loud.

Deputy Station Head Hong said, "Boss Zhang, don't joke with us. You're so battle hardened. Surely you don't care about a little criticism, right? If you say that Old Li is hopping mad after getting scolded by people, I'll believe that. If you say that the other Spring Festival Gala directors can't bear to be criticized by people, I'll believe that too. But you, Boss Zhang? I really don't believe it. You've been through so many more storms than everyone else. How could that gossip and chatter possibly bother you? Surely it doesn't!"

Zhang Ye's temper rose!

Your sister!

You're putting it as though I'm really that thick-skinned!

This bro has got pride too, alright!

Zhang Ye said, "I have to consider it first."

Deputy Station Head Hong said, "Sure, of course you have to."

Zhang Ye looked at them. "Then why don't you all leave—"

"That's not necessary, Boss Zhang." Deputy Station Head Hong said, "We'll wait right here. Just let us know after you've decided. It'll be easier for us when we go back to answer to the management."

Zhang Ye was taken aback. "No, I was saying that you all should leave first."

Deputy Station Head Hong said, "This is an urgent matter that has to be decided immediately. Even if we go back, there's nothing for us to do. Just take your time to consider it while we wait for your news."

Zhang Ye could only say, "Little Zhou, entertain the guests for a bit."

Little Zhou stayed behind to attend to them.

Zhang Ye and the others went outside and headed upstairs to discuss it.

"What do you all think?" Zhang Ye immediately asked them when they were upstairs.

He had thought that his group would object to it, but who knew that it was actually the opposite!

Little Wang shouted, "Accept it!"

Tong Fu said excitedly, "Of course you should take the job!"

Zhang Zuo was panting excitedly. "Director Zhang, this is a great chance. If you can direct the Spring Festival Gala well, that would immortalize your reputation forever!"

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes, "Immortalize my reputation? I'm just afraid it would condemn me to eternity!"

Yao Jiancai said, "But you're already condemned anyway. Even if you don't direct the Spring Festival Gala, you're still getting scolded by so many people every day, isn't that so? So how bad can it be? Other people are afraid of ruining their statuses and wasting their accumulated reputation, but you have nothing to be afraid of! You've none of that!"

Zhang Ye said angrily, "Fuck you!"

Ha Qiqi could barely hide her excitement. "Director Zhang, take the job!"

"Yeah!"

"Let's do it!"

"Who's afraid of who!"

"Such an opportunity only comes once in a lifetime!"

"There are so many people who wish to direct the Spring Festival Gala but don't have a chance to do so!"

"Right, let's accept it first and see how it goes!"

This was a huge affair!

This was much bigger than anything Zhang Ye had ever done before!

This was the Central TV Spring Festival Gala and the role of the executive director that they were talking about. The higher-ups would be watching, the media would be watching, the citizens would be watching, and all of the Chinese people around the world would have their attention turned here. If it was directed well, that wouldn't be so bad. But if there were any slip-ups, wouldn't Zhang Ye become a cultural sinner? Honestly, Zhang Ye only wanted to perform in a skit or do a crosstalk on the gala. He had never thought about anything else. As a result, he was totally unprepared for this. The invitation has come too suddenly! Even though he has always been a very decisive person in the past, he was now hesitating!

Should he take it?

Should he really accept the job?

The studio's staff were staring at him, waiting for him to make his decision.

Zhang Ye clenched his teeth. "Then let's leave it to science to decide!"

Science?

What science?

Everyone was taken aback.

Then Zhang Ye took a coin out of his pocket and piously flipped it up into the air. "Believe in science. If it lands heads, I'll take the job. If it's tails, I'll reject it."

Clink, clink, clink!

Under the speechless gaze of everyone, the coin landed!

It was heads!

"Wow!"

"It's heads!"

"Take it!"

"Take the job, Director Zhang!"

Zhang Ye hesitated. "Why don't I flip it again?"

Everyone went silent.

Zhang Ye heaved a deep sigh. "Alright then, it's only the role of the Spring Festival Gala's executive director, isn't it? It's just a role that requires me taking the rap, right? I've already taken the rap for plaza dancing anyway, so it's not like I can't take another! I'll accept it!"

Chapter 1313: How did this fellow get appointed!

In the evening.

At Zhang Ye's parents' house.

When Zhang Ye came home from work with a heavy heart, dinner was already prepared.

His parents were sitting on the sofa and watching television. On it, there was a discussion going on about the Spring Festival Gala. This topic had already been in the news for several days, and his parents were no exception in paying attention to it every day. Zhang Ye's family was a typical traditional Chinese family. They would have dumplings every holiday when it called for dumplings, and eat sweet glutinous rice balls during the Mid-Autumn Festival, never missing out on celebrating the traditional holidays. It was the same for Chinese New Year's Eve too. They would have dinner together while watching the Spring Festival Gala, and this was always what they did as a family since Zhang Ye was born. As such, the words "Spring Festival Gala" were as important as anything could be to many families, as well as in the hearts of the elderly.

"Son, you're home?"

"Has Old Wu knocked off yet?"

"She's not back yet."

"I'll give her a call to check then."

"No, don't call her. Zeqing is busy with her work. She'll come back when she's done."

Zhang Ye picked up a cup to drink some water, but something else was going through his mind.

The television was showing the news and there was a reporter conducting a street interview at the moment.

Reporter: "May I ask if you'll be watching the Spring Festival Gala this year?"

Passerby: "I will. It's a custom in my family to watch the Spring Festival Gala on Lunar New Year's Eve. But right now, I'm quite worried about it. Didn't they say on the news that the executive director role

hasn't been filled yet? Every year in the past, the stage would have almost been completed by this time of the year. That's why I'm worried that they won't be able to meet the deadline this time."

"Do you have any hopes and suggestions for the Spring Festival Gala?"

"I just hope that the acts can be more exciting and not always similar to what we've had in the past. At least, they should come up with something that will make our eyes light up? But of course, this is what the executive director has to take into consideration. It wouldn't help even if I gave all the suggestions I have. I just hope that they can find a good director to do the job this year. Otherwise, if they keep doing the same things over and over, and the viewership ratings keep dropping lower and lower, I'm afraid that there will be a day when my family will finally stop watching the Spring Festival Gala."

Zhang Ye was starting to feel very pressured. "Mom, change the channel."

"Why? I'm watching it." His mother said, "Who do you think will be the executive director for this year's Spring Festival Gala? Why isn't there any news about that yet? Aren't they anxious about it?"

His father commented, "This won't be an easy role to assign."

His mother said, "Yeah, there aren't too many top directors in the country who are capable of directing a gala."

His father said, "Let's wait for Zeqing to come home so that we can ask her. She should have some news about it."

His mother nodded. "That's right, she's from the overseeing authority, so she'll definitely know. Our son's act is still waiting to be approved for the Spring Festival Gala, but that's now up in the air."

Hearing that, Zhang Ye said feebly, "There's no need to ask her."

"What's the matter?" His mother glanced at him. "You know something about it?"

Zhang Ye took another sip of water and placed down the cup before saying, "Regarding the executive director role for this year's Central TV Spring Festival Gala, the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee approached me during the day. I accepted their offer."

A silence fell over in the house.

His mother said, stunned, "What did you say?"

Zhang Ye shrugged. "I'm the executive director for this year's Spring Festival Gala."

His father was extremely shocked. "Don't joke!"

"Why would I joke about that? I've already signed the agreement," Zhang Ye said.

The doorbell rang.

"Old Wu is back; I'll get the door." Zhang Ye quickly went to open the door. It was indeed Wu Zeqing. "You're finally off work? It's so late."

Wu Zeqing smiled. "I was caught in a bit of a traffic jam."

Zhang Ye said, "Let's start dinner."

Wu Zeqing changed out of her shoes and stepped into the living room. "Dad, Mom. Eh? What's the matter?"

Both of them looked rather shocked.

His mother immediately said, "Zeqing, Little Ye says that he's going to be the Spring Festival Gala's executive director!"

Wu Zeqing looked at him. "Hmm? You've accepted the job?"

"I've accepted it." Zhang Ye couldn't compose himself in this moment. He was unsure if his decision was the correct one. "Why? You didn't know?"

Wu Zeqing smiled and said, "I heard that you were one of the shortlisted candidates, but since I'm not directly overseeing matters regarding the Spring Festival Gala, I didn't ask."

His father stood up and said loudly, "Son! Are you really going to be the Spring Festival Gala's executive director?"

Zhang Ye threw his hands up. "It's not that I'm going to be, I already am."

His mother exclaimed, "This is marvelous! It's great! This is the Spring Festival Gala we're talking about! The Spring Festival Gala! And my son is going to take charge of it?"

Zhang Ye said bitterly, "What's so great about that? I'm worried that I'll mess it up for them."

His mother said without a care, "If it gets messed up, so be it. Worst comes to worst, you'll get a scolding. What else can they do to you?"

"Whoa, you're speaking like that because you won't be the one getting scolded." Zhang Ye didn't know whether to laugh or cry. He said, "In any case, I've already made plans for the worst case scenario. Dad, Mom, Old Wu, let's eat dinner quickly. I think this will be the last day that I'll be able to eat in peace for a while."

That same night.

The matters surrounding the Spring Festival Gala that had captured the entire country's attention finally got some new developments. Compared to the common folk, the people in the arts world and entertainment industry were the first ones to catch wind of it.

...

At Ci Xiufang's Skit Studio.

A middle-aged man answered a call and was stunned after taking it!

"Ah!"

"Old Hu, what's the matter?"

"Uncle Hu, what happened?"

"Where's Big Sis Ci?"

"Big Sis Ci is studying the script."

"Quickly inform her about this! The executive director for the Spring Festival Gala has been hired!"

"Who is it?"

"Zhang Ye!"

...

At a song and dance troupe 1 .

Some singers were having a meal together and discussing the Spring Festival Gala. They were also unsure of how many of them who were seated at this very table would have a chance of taking to the stage and singing.

Then someone came in from outside.

"Aiyo, why are you all still here eating?"

"What is it, Teacher Chu?"

"Didn't you all hear?"

"Hear about what?"

"The executive director has been hired!"

"What? Who is it?"

"Zhang Ye!"

"What!"

...

At a folk art 2 troupe.

Tang Dazhang and several crosstalk actors were currently going through their scripts.

"This is bad! Something terrible has happened!"

"What's the matter?"

"I've just received news about the executive director for this year's Spring Festival Gala. They—they—"

"What about them?"

"They—"

"Say it already!"

"They've invited Zhang Ye to take the role!"

"Holy shit!"

"What?"

"Impossible! That's impossible!"

"It's true! The news has already spread!"

"This...this..."

"It's over! We're doomed!"

Tang Dazhang and those crosstalk actors blanched!

...

At Grandma Zhang Xia's house.

Chen Guang and Fan Wenli were visiting today.

"Hai, I wonder what's going to happen to the acts."

"We can only wait. There should be a conclusion soon."

"With a change of directors, will our song act still get chosen for the gala?"

"We'll have to see who the director is first."

At this moment, Zhang Xia's phone rang. When she answered it, she got a surprise. "Alright, I understand. Thank you." After hanging up, she looked dumbfounded.

Chen Guang asked, "What's the matter, Grandma Zhang?"

Zhang Xia looked at them and said, "The Spring Festival Gala's executive director has been confirmed."

Fan Wenli said in surprise, "Who is it?"

Zhang Xia paused for a moment before saying, "Zhang Ye."

Fan Wenli snorted in surprise when she heard!

Chen Guang said dumbfoundedly, "What?"

...

Abroad.

In the hotel the film crew was residing in, Zhang Yuanqi was currently soaking in the bathtub.

Her manager, Fang Weihong, faced her and said, "Sister Zhang."

"What is it?"

"Are you preparing to take part in the Spring Festival Gala this year?"



"I'll start preparing after we get back to the country, but hasn't the executive director not been decided on yet?"

"It's been decided."

"Oh? Who is it?"

"Haha, you definitely won't be able to guess."

"Who?"

"Zhang Ye."

...

The industry was rocked to its core!

This news was simply too shocking!

Nine out of ten industry insiders were left dumbfounded after hearing the news!

Zhang Ye?

Zhang Ye?

How could it be him!

Why did this fellow get appointed!

Chapter 1314: The most powerful person in the entertainment circle!

...

At Jiang Hanwei's studio.

"Why is it him!"

"Yeah, they could have gotten anyone else to do it!"

"Then do we still have to make preparations for our act?"

"What do you think!"

"What's there left to prepare for!"

...

At his old classmate's house.

Yu Yingyi's jaw dropped!

"Holy shit!"

"Zhang'er is going to be the executive director?"

"That's so awesome! He's going to soar to the skies again!"

...

At Central TV.

"Ah!"

"Heavens!"

"Zhang Ye?"

"Someone tell me this isn't true!"

"Why did they get him!"

"No, please, no!"

...

What was the Spring Festival Gala?

How important was the executive director of the Spring Festival Gala?

Just what kind of an important role was this?

This didn't need any explaining at all. This was the leader of the Spring Festival Gala's production team who would be in charge of the stage production, personnel arrangements, screening of acts, production of the event, as well as making approvals. All of those matters would have to go through the executive director! Even if any of the upper management raised an objection, they wouldn't be able to directly intervene on specific matters of the event, nor bypass him to make any decisions. They would have to communicate and discuss this thoroughly with the executive director!

This was a role that the entire world's Chinese population was most concerned about right now!

Yet they had appointed Zhang Ye to the role?

Many of those in the industry who had offended Zhang Ye were unable to accept this!

Especially to those from the crosstalk world and entertainment industry, this was simply a disaster. The images of the recent call for an industry-wide boycott on Zhang Ye were extremely vivid, so if Zhang Ye were to become the Spring Festival Gala's executive director, would their group of people still be able to get onto the Spring Festival Gala?

As if that would still be possible!

They would surely be destroyed instead!

The crosstalk world was plunged into chaos.

Quite a few crosstalk actors quickly held emergency meetings.

"What should we do?"

"How are we going to handle this?"

"What else can we do? Just carry on doing whatever we've been doing."

"We've already been preparing for half a year!"

"There's nothing confirmed yet, and if there are enough people objecting to it, the higher-ups might even change their mind!"

"Right, we'll have to leave it to the media from here!"

"Let's see how the media will criticize him!"

However, whatever they had in mind did not happen at all!

The news arrived first to the industry.

Then the news started reporting about it.

"Watch out, Spring Festival Gala. Zhang Ye is coming!"

"The Spring Festival Gala's executive director role falls to Zhang Ye!"

"The Spring Festival Gala will be helmed by the best director of television variety shows!"

"Zhang Ye in danger! Will he be able to turn the tide?"

"Zhang Ye's debut on the Spring Festival Gala turns out this way!"

"Zhang Ye to bring a new look to the Spring Festival Gala!"

"Zhang Ye's Spring Festival Gala leaves us in anticipation!"

On this night, there was a surprising consistency not only among the smaller tabloids and social media news blogs, but also the attitude through mainstream media. There were no criticism or doubting voices, with the mainstream media almost giving their full support to Zhang Ye. Some of the media even listed Zhang Ye's achievements all the way back from Lecture Room to the present. They were all reaffirming Zhang Ye abilities in directing as though they had discussed it beforehand and were greatly anticipating his directing of the Spring Festival Gala!

The people from the crosstalk world were dumbfounded!

Tang Dazhang and several older crosstalk actors nearly vomited blood!

"Anticipating? Your sister!"

"What's with the media!"

"Why are they giving him so much support?"

"Zhang Ye is just a variety show director. How can he be experienced enough to direct a gala!"

"Aren't these media outlets lying through their teeth!"

"Yeah, didn't the media always gang up against Zhang Ye whenever there was any news related to him? Didn't they always question and criticize him at the earliest available moment?"

"That was all in the past. Have you all forgotten who his wife is? Ever since the merger of the SARFT and GAPP 1, the newspaper media has also come under the jurisdiction of the SARFT. Do you think the media are crazy enough to do that in these circumstances? Knowing that Zhang Ye is the husband of their overseeing authority's leader, would they still dare to tread around as recklessly as they did in the past? Do you think they're idiots?"

"They're just swaying in the wind!"

"Shameless! Shameless to the extreme!"

"These media outlets really don't have any principles at all!"

The wheel of fortune is always turning. They could never have expected that this fellow with no artistic integrity who on kept fighting them would suddenly become the husband to the leader of the SARFT in just a few years. And now, he was even going to direct this year's Spring Festival Gala and have the final authoritative say in its matters?!

How could they accept this?

They were completely unable to accept it!

To be honest, it would be a lie to say that they didn't regret it. The crosstalk world had to swallow this insult and humiliation in silence and couldn't voice their bitterness. Just think about it; why did they have to take it up with Zhang Ye all the way back then? Couldn't they just have ignored him? In the end, they were the ones who made such a big enemy for themselves. This was such a terrible defeat for them. And most importantly, if they had managed to face smack Zhang Ye just once in the past, it would have appeased them slightly and made them feel less terrible now. But in every fight they had with Zhang Ye, they'd never come out on top once. Not even once!

So what had they been fighting for then?

As such, many of the crosstalk actors couldn't help but be unhappy with Tang Dazhang over this matter. It was all because of you! You were the one who led us against him, you were the one who picked on things. It was you who provoked the enemy, it was you who brought us the catastrophe. Look at this! Is the entire world going to have to be buried together with you? Why should that be the case!

...

When the news got out, excitement ripped through the Internet!

The netizens were all expressing their disbelief!

"Oh my God!"

"It's really Zhang Ye?"

"They've gotten him to direct the Spring Festival Gala? This is such a big move!"

"How could this be!"

"If it's really him, then the Spring Festival Gala this year might be interesting to watch!"

"Yeah, this fellow can kick up a storm wherever he goes!"

"Why are all the media outlets praising him?"

"I'm also not used to this. Didn't they always speak badly of Zhang Ye in the past?"

"Starting from today, Zhang Ye's door sill will soon be trampled flat. All of the acts' chances of getting onto the Spring Festival Gala are now in Zhang Ye's hands!"

"The crosstalk world is gonna cry!"

"How domineering!"

"What's so domineering about that? Why does Zhang Ye even want to get involved in a mess like this? He's too bold!"

"Yeah, there's nothing to criticize about Teacher Zhang's directing skills. Everyone can see that for themselves. But the executive director role for the Spring Festival Gala is really just to take the rap when it fails, so appointing any other person would be the same. It doesn't matter who takes the job. The Spring Festival Gala is still going downhill no matter what, and nothing can be done to reverse that. The viewership ratings will still continue to drop. I'm just worried that Zhang Ye will gain nothing out of this, or even worse, end up getting blamed for it. If that is the case, then wouldn't it have been better not to take the role in the first place? There's no point in having a moment of glory if it ends up with him suffering a defeat. How could he wrap it up at the end? Zhang Ye has already made a name for himself, so why would he still take such a risk?"

"Well, at least he'll have tasted glory once!"

"I'm in support of Zhang Ye doing a good one for the Spring Festival Gala!"

"I'm not optimistic about it."

"Me neither."

There were many different opinions among the people, with everyone saying different things about Zhang Ye's appointment as the executive director of the Spring Festival Gala. However, the majority of the opinions were pessimistic. After all, the Spring Festival Gala had already "hurt" everyone too much!

Year after year of anticipation!

In exchange for year after year of disappointment!

As such, the people were no longer hopeful of anything!

...

Back at home.

In the bedroom.

Zhang Ye powered off his phone and went to bed early.

A news bombardment?

His industry peers in chaos?

The people in an uproar?

He couldn't see all of this, nor did he want to know about it. This was because Zhang Ye knew very well that tonight would be the last night that he would get a good night's rest. Starting tomorrow, he would officially be taking charge of the Central TV Spring Festival Gala. At that time, it would almost be impossible for him to get a proper night's rest. From tomorrow until Chinese New Year's Eve, Zhang Ye would be the busiest person in the entertainment circle. But of course, at the same time, he was going to be the most powerful person in the entertainment circle!

Chapter 1315: The Spring Festival Gala is timeless!

The next day.

In the morning.

The entrance of Central TV was jam-packed with reporters from television stations and newspaper agencies. All of them had surrounded the entrance with hardly any space to maneuver. No one knew how long they had been waiting for.

Suddenly, a car drove towards them from afar.

"He's here!"

"It's the BMW X5!"

"It's Zhang Ye's car!"

"He's arrived!"

"Director Zhang!"

"How do you feel about taking over the Spring Festival Gala job?"

"Can we interview you?"

"What plans do you have to make the Spring Festival Gala good?"

"Do you have the confidence to do well for this year's Spring Festival Gala?"

"What is the first step that you'll be taking after getting appointed?"

40 to 50 reporters had surrounded Zhang Ye's X5, so the car was forced to stop since it couldn't move forward. A few of Central TV's security guards immediately came over to disperse the crowd, but to no effect even after shouting themselves hoarse. The reporters from all the major media outlets and newspapers were simply not going to allow Zhang Ye to leave. This was because everyone in the country had their attention on the role of the Spring Festival Gala's executive director. Furthermore, Zhang Ye was the youngest executive director in the gala's history. So the news of Zhang Ye's first day on the job was definitely not going to be missed being reported about by them. Some of the reporters had even been waiting here since midnight!

But unnoticed by anyone, a sedan drove into the premises from a side entrance.

When it stopped in the parking lot, the doors opened. Zhang Ye, Ha Qiqi, Zhang Zuo, and the others got out.

Zhang Ye turned his head back to look. "Good thing you guys were smart."

Ha Qiqi smiled and said, "Of course. You're the center of attention, so we definitely have to consider such situations happening. Things are no longer the same as before."

Zhang Zuo looked up at the television tower. "We're back again."

Little Wang sighed. "I kinda miss the days we spent at Central TV."

Tong Fu blinked. "Does this count as a homecoming then?"

Ha Qiqi said happily, "That's not the proper phrase to use here."

"Then what should I have said?" Tong Fu asked.

Zhang Ye stepped forward and went in, saying as he did so, "We're here to wreak havoc in the Heavenly Palace."

Tong Fu got a fright. "Director Zhang, please don't scare me like that."

Zhang Zuo didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "Can you not always be saying such terrible things? When those words come out of your mouth, I feel really scared."

Little Wang giggled, "Pfft!"

Zhang Ye called out to them, "Let's go."

Today's Zhang Ye was somewhat different.

Compared to yesterday, his composure had changed drastically.

...

Upstairs.

At the temporary holding office of the Central TV Spring Festival Gala's production team.

"Uh..."

"Director Zhang."

"Good morning, director."

"Director."

"Morning, director."

He was getting looks from everyone along the way. Their eyes shone with a complex swirl of emotions. The look in their eyes was really indescribable.

Was it anxiety?

Speechlessness?

Strife?

Or guilt?

In any case, it was definitely a negative emotion.

The roomful of people on the Spring Festival Gala production team were all experiencing an unmentionable sense of bitterness. Thinking about the day Zhang Ye had come to attend the initial meeting with his act's script, he was so sarcastic that they couldn't bear it. None of these people in the room missed out on getting hit with that sarcasm of his and were almost pushed to the brink by him. But now? Just several days later, Zhang Ye had somehow turned from Central TV's greatest adversary into the executive director of the Spring Festival Gala? He had become their immediate superior?

Where could they go to reason against this!

A few of the those who were in charge came up to him.

"Director, my name is Li Liyi, I'm in charge of the stage setup."

"I'm in charge of the dance acts."

"I'm the manager of the screenwriting team."

"Director Zhang, nice to meet you. I'm in charge of the music."

Everyone took turns introducing themselves.

There were several dozen staff members on the production team who covered all aspects of the gala's requirements. It was a very well-rounded team.

It consisted of Central TV's current executives who were the top experts in the industry, as well as the most outstanding people from the relevant fields. This was likely a gathering of the most elite people for a gala team in the country, with everyone being the best of the best in their own capacities. One would simply not be able to be part of the Spring Festival Gala team if they didn't have some ability to speak of.

Zhang Ye memorized the names and roles of each of them.

A lot of people wondered what Zhang Ye's first task would be following his appointment. The answer was actually very simple. It was to integrate everyone so that they would be able to perform as a united front. The waters of the Spring Festival Gala ran too deep. With pressure from the top and the selection of the acts, this was already enough to give them headaches. If the production team was also a mess internally, then it would be impossible to get any work started. Therefore, the first task Zhang Ye had to do was get the production team under his control!

So he decided to say a few words to them.

Zhang Ye said, "Good day, everyone. I'm sure you've all received the news that I will be taking over the Spring Festival Gala production team starting today. You all know my temperament too. I'm a very



straightforward person, so I'll say anything as it is. I personally know many of those who are here today, and some of you have had disagreements or quarrels with me in the past, while there are also some who have scolded me on the Internet before."

Hearing that, quite a few people in the production team looked embarrassed.

Zhang Ye spread his hands. "But that's OK. All of that happened because of work matters, so I can understand. We'll let bygones be bygones. You don't have to get stressed over it since I'm not a petty person. Starting today, we'll be colleagues. As long as it's for work, as long as everyone puts in the effort, anything goes!"

"Of course!"

"Don't worry about it!"

"Definitely!"

"We will listen to your orders!"

There was a scattered response from those in the production team that sounded very good, but their tone did not come across as too enthusiastic.

Zhang Ye looked at them, then said, "Actually to be honest, I did not want to take this job at first. Many of you here have been part of the Spring Festival Gala's production team many times, with some of you taking part twice, some thrice. But rather than gaining any credit for your work, you all received quite a fair share of the blame. I believe that a lot of you have a very mixed feelings about this like me. Some of you would be hesitating, some would feel quite bitter over it. To put it bluntly, this job that we're doing can simply be summarized as—a thankless task."

Everyone smiled wryly.

That's right.

It might sound very glorious to be on the Spring Festival Gala production team, but it really wasn't a good job at all.

Zhang Ye continued, "The viewership ratings for the Spring Festival Gala are falling, while the people's criticism is getting louder and louder. And who is that blame pinned on? It's always blamed on the Spring Festival Gala production team. At the previous gala, I was also one of those who showed a disgraceful side of me. I led the flaming of the Spring Festival Gala and on you guys, so let me first offer my apologies to you. When the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee invited me to take the role, my first reaction was to hide. I had to avoid it as far as I could. I didn't want to accept the job, I really didn't." With a pause, he said, "But as it is, here I am. At first, I was thinking of what a foolish mistake I'd made and why I had accepted the role. Why did I accept it like I had been possessed by a ghost or something?"

Everyone listened on curiously.

Zhang Ye suddenly laughed. "I went to bed very early last night. The moment I opened my eyes this morning, I understood. I suddenly knew why I chose to stand here. It's because I still have feelings for the Spring Festival Gala. I love it as it is a part of my memories. This is also a beautiful memory that

many of us Chinese will never be able to forget. I didn't want it to meet its end just like that, I didn't want it to get scolded so terribly by all the citizens and be criticized by everyone on the same day every year!"

A few people were visibly moved.

A few people stayed silent.

How could they not have that same feeling for the Spring Festival Gala?

Zhang Ye said loudly, "I'm someone who doesn't believe the lies! No one is optimistic about this year's Spring Festival Gala? Well, I won't believe that! So all the more I want to create a Spring Festival Gala that will catch the entire world's Chinese population by surprise! My abilities and standards are limited, but today! I will throw all hundred pounds of myself at the challenge! I will show them all! I want everyone to open their eyes and see it for themselves! The Spring Festival Gala is timeless!"

The Spring Festival Gala is timeless?

Everyone took a deep breath as they felt a certain emotion stirring deep within the recesses of their hearts!

Chapter 1316: An unprecedented sponsorship for the Spring Festival Gala?

Later that morning.

Zhang Ye officially took control of the Spring Festival Gala production team.

The people on the production team gradually reported on their work progress.

The operating expenses.

The personnel.

The stage.

The list of acts.

The time of the first approval session.

All kinds of difficult issues were waiting to be solved!

All kinds of difficulties were waiting to be overcome!

But after that motivating speech by Zhang Ye, a lot of the production team staff were feeling motivated and pumped up. They no longer had that worrisome look they had when they first met Zhang Ye, nor was there the crushing anxiety and pressure from their work that had stalled. Some of them immediately got down to work, some of them rekindled their spirits, and some of them were full of energy!

That's right!

Who says that the Spring Festival Gala is kaput?

Who determined such a thing?

...

In the Spring Festival Gala's executive director office.

Zhang Ye was announcing the team appointments. "Sister Ha, you'll be the assistant director."

Ha Qiqi nodded firmly. "Alright!"

Zhang Ye said, "Brother Zuo, you too."

Zhang Zuo said, "No problem."

Zhang Ye said, "Little Wang, you will continue to be my assistant."

"As you command, Director Zhang," Little Wang said obediently.

The team that he brought along were assigned to roles in the production team. For the next two months, there wouldn't be a need to staff too many people at the studio since Zhang Ye would not be taking any other jobs for the time being. The core of his team could all be of use here in the Spring Festival Gala production team instead, so he brought them along with him. Ha Qiqi and Zhang Zuo were both originally from Central TV and were directors themselves. Putting aside their skill level, at least they had been working together with him long enough to have a good mutual understanding of each other. They understood his temper well and were familiar with his working style too. This was also where Zhang Ye needed them as he would require them to communicate his work assignments to the rest of the team.

Tong Fu said excitedly, "Director Zhang, what will we be doing this time? Just tell us your instructions!"

Little Wang also said with enthusiasm, "We will surely execute this year's Spring Festival Gala beautifully and let everyone know how strong our team is!"

Zhang Zuo laughed and said, "Right, let's shock them all!"

Ha Qiqi said, "Our names will be forever immortalized."

Hearing that, Zhang Ye was startled. "Immortalized? How?"

Ha Qiqi said, "By making sure that the Spring Festival Gala does well of course."

Zhang Ye was taken aback. "How are we going to make sure it does well?"

Everyone was dumbfounded.

"Ah?"

"How would we know?"

"Didn't you say it yourself earlier?"

"You said that the Spring Festival Gala was timeless!"

However, Zhang Ye's reply nearly made Ha Qiqi and the others faint on the spot. He said, "It's not like I'm God or something. In all the past years of the Spring Festival Gala, did you guys think that the executive directors were amateurs? That none of them had any true skill? For a problem that cannot be solved even after so many years of hard work by people like them, how do you expect me to suddenly solve it the moment I arrive? How is that possible! Aren't you guys too naïve?"

Us? Naïve?

The group of them vomited blood!

Ha Qiqi said, "But we weren't the ones who claimed that!"

Tong Fu said, "Director Zhang! You were the one who said it yourself!"

Zhang Ye stared at them and said, "I was just sweet talking them and you believed me?"

Little Wang said, "Ah?"

Zhang Zuo said, "Sweet talk?"

Everyone was baffled!

Damn! So you were just talking big?

So you didn't actually have a plan at all?

Aiyo, why are the words coming out of your mouth so unreliable? We thought that you were really brimming with confidence!

Soon after, the few of them left with a sense of uncertainty, leaving Zhang Ye alone in the office to go through some documents with an unceasing headache and a frown on his face. A plan? Like he would have a plan! That solemn speech he gave earlier was purely to reassure the team and increase their morale so that their fighting spirit could be raised. What was a speech? To put it plainly, a speech was just a tool used to fool people. The words Zhang Ye had said did not even sound convincing to himself. He didn't have any confidence that he could make the Spring Festival Gala good. He could only take it one step at a time and solve whatever difficulties that laid ahead of them.

The funding issue!

This was the most pressing matter to address!

It was also the biggest issue that had to be resolved first!

As everyone knows, the Spring Festival Gala does not actually pay an appearance fee to its performers. It was unlike those variety shows on the local and satellite channels where an invitation for a bigger name celebrity to join a show could cost up to tens of millions of yuan. Even a small-timer could cost them several million yuan to invite. This was what a joining fee was, and even an interview would have to pay a celebrity some money. But this wasn't necessary for the Central TV Spring Festival Gala. On this stage, the celebrities were basically made available like cabbages in a market. Zhang Ye could choose from any celebrity from all over the country and it wouldn't cost a thing!

Pay them?

That would be overthinking things!

All they needed to provide them with were two boxed meals a day!

They could make claims for their train rides to get here, but not if it was a business class ticket!

Claiming the expenses for a plane ticket would only be limited to an economy class seat, while first-class seats were out of the question!

You could count yourself lucky if they paid you 2,000 yuan for the appearance fee. Even if they only paid you 350 yuan, you would have to accept it. To them, the performers were all treated the same and there was no preferential treatment given to the bigger names.

So by all rights, since they didn't have to spend any money on appearance fees, they shouldn't be lacking money. But as it stood, it was the exact opposite. They lacked money, and they lacked it by too much. Why did Li Ke quit from his role? It was simply because he couldn't carry on working anymore. Without money, without a budget, they weren't even able to get the stage set up. Unless they continued using the same old stage from the previous years and made slight modifications to it while adding some new equipment, there was just no funding available to get them a bigger one. Regarding that stage, Zhang Ye also knew about it. Other than it being a very large venue, the equipment facilities and technology supporting it were lacking by a lot compared to the variety show stages used on the local and satellite channels. This was supposed to be Central TV's Spring Festival Gala! It was the biggest gala in the world. But why was its stage not even comparable to that of a randomly picked variety show? How could it be like that? So of course it would be a wonder if the audience liked watching the gala! Therefore, this problem with the funding was a matter that Zhang Ye definitely had to solve!

He started running through the figures!

...

At the deputy station head office of Central TV.

"Station Head Hong."

"Hi, Boss Zhang."

"Can you all come up with a bit more money for the Spring Festival Gala's budget?"

"Aiyo, you're making things difficult for us that way."

"It's only at 80 million RMB. What is that enough for us to spend on?"

"This was the figure approved by the higher-ups. The budget for the Spring Festival Gala would have to be run past them first."

"But, Old Hong, this is really too little!"

"I also know that this isn't a large sum, but it has always been this figure for all the past galas. If we increase it, it won't make it past the audits. Besides, we also can't come up with that kind of money."

"Why can't you come up with that kind of money? Old Hong, don't you play dumb with me. It's not like I've never done a show at Central TV before. A budget of 100 to 200 million should be child's play!"

"That's because variety show can generate profits back for us. If we invest 200 million RMB into it, we can still earn that back later on. But the Spring Festival Gala does not earn any money for us. However much we put into it would mean the same amount has been spent. If you want 80 million or 100 million, we are still able to take that out of our pockets. But any more and it won't be up for discussion at all."

...

At the audit office 1 .

In the chief's office.

"Chief Qian 2 ."

"Yo, Director Zhang?"

"Can you please approve an increase to the Spring Festival Gala's budget?"

"It's already at the limit."

"But it's not enough at all. It's definitely not going to work out."

"How about this, Director Zhang? I have also known Chief Wu for a long time now, so I will definitely give face to you regarding this matter. I will personally give the green light and increase your budget by another 20 million to make it a total of 100 million RMB. You can source it directly from Central TV, but any more and I can't do anything about it. I don't have the authority to do so either."

"That's too little!"

"How much do you need then?"

"At least 800 million!"

"Whoa! That's impossible. Don't talk about Central TV or us, which organization out there would be able to cough up that kind of money!"

...

No approval!

No money!

They couldn't dispense that sum at all!

After going around for an entire day to seven or eight departments and meeting with their heads, the answer from everyone was the same.

In the office of the Spring Festival Gala production team.

There was chattering.

"Director, this is what the situation is right now."

"Director Li also wanted to have a higher budget to work with to solve the issue with the stage, but he wasn't successful in getting it at the end."

"Your influence is already massive since you've managed to get another 20 million RMB. Director Li went around for so many days but wasn't even given an additional 1 million to work with!"

"There isn't any more time left. If we can't get more, let's just make do with this amount."

"Director, the leaders are already pressing us to quickly start work!"

"Hai, this is always how it ends up every year."

Everyone was giving suggestions.

But Zhang Ye was still very stubborn. "This amount of money isn't even enough to feed the birds! So what are we starting work for? As long as the money does not come in, I won't be moving a single plank! It's either I don't do it, or I'll do it to the best of my ability!"

This is the Spring Festival Gala we're talking about, alright?

The stage is too important!

It's the most crucial issue of crucial issues. We can't be sloppy about it!

You all can't come up with the money? Alright then! I'll think of a way myself!

Zhang Ye had already come to a decision. He immediately went to look for the leaders of the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee to convene an emergency meeting.

In the conference room.

The executives were all very anxious.

"Director Zhang, has work started yet?"

"Please quickly get the stage set up."

"There isn't much time left."

But Zhang Ye said, "I can't do anything if there's no money."

The audit office's leader said, "There's no one who can cough up the money that you want."

Zhang Ye nodded. "I know the money issue is very troublesome. But have any of you given it any thought before? About why the Spring Festival Gala is getting worse with each passing year? The funding is actually one of the main reasons for it. With the rapid pace of technological development, many of the television stations have upgraded their equipment. But us? We're still stuck in a time where we're still using the most traditional stage and set designs. This sort of backwardness directly leads to the viewership ratings dropping. The world around us is advancing, so the Spring Festival Gala must also change with the times. We have been dragging our feet for too long year after year, and there's no time anymore. If we don't introduce the changes now, the Spring Festival Gala is finished for sure!"

"But what about the money?" the chief from the audit office said.

A leader from the Ministry of Culture said, "What suggestions do you have?"

Zhang Ye looked at everyone and said, "I have a proposal here that, as long as it's approved, will ensure that money will no longer be an issue. Not only will the funding issue be resolved, but we will also be able to upgrade the stage into a world-class one. On top of that, mass profits could be generated too. And by that, I mean that the profits will keep rolling in year after year. At that time, everyone will no longer have to worry about the issue of funding anymore, and the stage will only get bigger with each passing year!"

Everyone was stunned. "What proposal is that?"

Zhang Ye handed out over a dozen copies of documents to them.

When the executives on the organizing committee flipped through them, all of them inhaled sharply!

The people from the SARFT were shocked!

The people from the audit office were shocked!

The people from the Ministry of Culture were shocked!

Advertisements!

Oh my god!

He was actually thinking about getting advertising sponsorships!

In Zhang Ye's previous world, the Central TV Spring Festival Gala already had a standardized mode of operation. However, in this world, the Spring Festival Gala had still not been introduced to the advertising format. Ever since the first gala, there had never been any appearance of an advertisement in it, never! So, when the executives saw this proposal, they were all very shocked. They were shocked by Zhang Ye's out of this world courage!

You actually dared to think of something like that?

In the entire country, only you would dare to think up of something like this!

This was a big deal. It was a huge deal!

"But there's no such precedent!"

"I know."

"Have you thought about the consequences?"

"I've considered them."

"Do you know how big of a controversy this will cause?"

"I know."

"What if something goes wrong because of this?"

"I will take full responsibility for it!"

"So you're serious about this then?"



"Yes, I'm serious about it!"

Zhang Ye had a determined look in his eyes!

The Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee executives all looked at one another!

Chapter 1317: The most daring executive director in the history of the Spring Festival Gala!

Meetings!

Debates!

Disagreements!

Voting!

Two days!

The higher-ups spent two entire days discussing it!

At this time, the Spring Festival Gala was becoming a very pressing issue. The previous appointment of the executive director had already been dragged on for too long. In fact, it was one of the latest appointments in all the past years. In the end, that executive director did not even take a few days before he decided to step down from the role. After another period of dragging on, they finally invited Zhang Ye to take charge of the Spring Festival Gala. The timing was so tight that every minute and second was extremely precious and couldn't be wasted. Yet the higher-ups spent these two days cooped up in a meeting to decide on the possibility of implementing an advertising format for the Spring Festival Gala. From that, it showed how important this matter was!

No one dared to make the decision!

No one was willing to bear this infamy!

But now, Zhang Ye had stepped up. He would be responsible for all the consequences. Further, he even submitted such a shocking advertising proposal and had also worked out the preliminary negotiations with the other party. After the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee saw this proposal, they were all astounded. And even the executives above these executives could not help but feel impressed by Zhang Ye's idea when they learned about it—he was truly a prodigy at advertising and marketing. If they adopted this advertising plan by Zhang Ye, not only would they be paid the advertising fees, it could even drive up the Spring Festival Gala's viewership ratings and popularity!

Should they go ahead with it?

Could they allow such a precedent?

The higher-ups were hesitating!

For such an important matter, even the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee executives were unable to make a decision about it. It would require someone even higher up, or even the higher higher-ups to approve of the plan!

...

In the office of the Spring Festival Gala's production team.

Zhang Ye was busy preparing the set design proposal.

"Director, this won't work."

"It will work if I say it does."

"But this would cost too much money."

A bunch of stage designers were arguing back and forth.

Zhang Ye was actually waiting as well. He had already been waiting for the past two days. Without money, all these set design proposals would have been done for naught. It wouldn't get translated onto the set at all.

Were they still undecided?

Was it really not possible?

He was getting really anxious.

Suddenly, Ha Qiqi ran in. "Director Zhang!"

Zhang Ye looked at her. "How goes it?"

Ha Qiqi exclaimed excitedly, "It's been approved! They've approved it!"

Zhang Ye immediately said, "How did they say it would be done?"

Ha Qiqi quickly explained, "There can only be a maximum of five advertisers and we mustn't exceed on that number. Of the advertisement money received, 1 billion yuan will be disbursed to us for our operating expenses. The leader has requested that every single yuan be used wisely. As for how the money should be spent, you can decide on it as long as you submit the requests for approval!"

Instantly, the Spring Festival Gala production team's staff screamed!

"What?"

"The higher-ups have really approved it?"

"This is great!"

"Ahhhh!"

"We finally have money! We're rich!"

Some of the women on the team got so emotional that they almost cried!

There was a time when these people on the Spring Festival Gala production team were laughed at and called the poorest production team in the industry by their peers. They had the biggest gala stage to work on, but didn't have the budget of a large scale variety show. They couldn't afford to buy or get anything done, didn't manage to have their plans approved, and even had to miserly calculate if they

had enough money left when ordering equipment. If they spent a little more than it looked necessary, they would get criticized by the media for recklessly spending the taxpayers' money. As a result, the higher-ups became very cautious and managed their spending very carefully. Who could understand what they went through? It was simply unbearable to look back upon that!

However, it was different now!

Their executive director's proposal had been approved by the higher-ups!

This would mean that they would be getting the funding very soon, and it wasn't just 100 million or 200 million they were talking about. It was 1 billion RMB! And it was even money from sponsors, so they wouldn't have to worry about others wagging their tongues about how they spent it! They were about to turn from the poorest production team into the richest one in the world!

What did that feel like?

They felt as though they were soaring to the skies!

Zhang Ye also suddenly became very confident. "Old Ha, quickly contact the advertisers. Make an appointment with them to get the contracts signed so that we can immediately execute the advertising proposal!"

Ha Qiqi replied, "OK, I'll get to it immediately!"

Zhang Ye said, "I only have one request for them!"

Ha Qiqi said, "What is it?"

Zhang Ye said, "That they disburse the advertising fees within a week!"

Ha Qiqi said, "Alright, I'll talk to them about that!"

Everyone got down to business!

Some of the people were full of energy, while others had a bitter look on their faces.

Director Zhang was playing with fire this time. Was the Spring Festival Gala really going to advertise now? What kind of a result would that garner? Right now, no one dared to make any predictions!

...

In the outside world.

The media was getting restless.

It has already been two days, but there was still no sign of any activity regarding the Spring Festival Gala. They had spent the past few days waiting for Zhang Ye's first move since his appointment as the executive director. However, there was still nothing that came out of that. A lot of the reporters could not believe this. This was Zhang Ye they were talking about, the well-known hooligan of the entertainment industry. If it were any other executive director who stayed quiet after their appointment, they might still believe it! But to see Zhang Ye not making a move? That was just

impossible! He didn't pick a fight with anyone? He didn't scold anyone? When had this fellow ever been so composed? This was not his style!

Beijing Times.

The editorial department was abuzz with conversation.

"The Spring Festival Gala production team is too quiet."

"Yeah, it's so quiet that it's scary."

"Why do I feel like a storm is brewing?"

At this moment, someone ran in!

"Not good!"

"What's the matter, Little Li?"

"I just got back from Central TV. Something big has happened with the Spring Festival Gala!"

"What is it? Say it quickly!"

"Zhang Ye is—"

"What did he do?"

"He's turning to advertisements!"

"What?"

"Holy shit!"

"I knew it, I knew that something big would happen!"

...

At Xinhua News Agency.

"Something has happened! The Spring Festival Gala is going to advertise!"

"Get lost, that's impossible."

"It's true!"

"Hur hur, who would dare advertise during the Spring Festival Gala?"

"Zhang Ye dares!"

"Damn, are you serious?"

"It's verified to be 100% true! This news has been confirmed!"

"What?"

"Has Zhang Ye gone crazy?"

...

People's Daily.

The editorial department was in utter silence!

"Holy fuck!"

"This—"

"This is crazy!"

"This is insanity!"

"They're going to have advertisements on the Spring Festival Gala?"

"Heavens!"

"This year's Spring Festival Gala is going to be chaos!"

"That's what they get for appointing a reckless man like Zhang Ye to take charge of the gala!"

...

The media was stunned!

The industry was puking blood!

After two days of waiting and inaction, the first thing that Zhang Ye did for the Spring Festival Gala had stunned the entire country's citizens! Zhang Ye was indeed still that same old Zhang Ye. When he didn't make a move, everything was fine. But the moment he did, it would always be earth-shattering. The Spring Festival Gala was going to have advertisements in it? Other than him, who would even toy with that sort of idea!

The people were dumbfounded!

"Are you serious?"

"Oh my God!"

"Zhang Ye is too bold!"

"He fucking has the courage of a lion!"

"I knew that there would be trouble the moment they said he was taking charge of the Central TV Spring Festival Gala. Just look at this. It's only been a few days, but the Spring Festival Gala is going to take advertisers? If this continues for another two months, the Spring Festival Gala will surely get dismantled by Zhang Ye! Aiyo, goddammit, there have never been advertisements on the Spring Festival Gala before!"

"Pfft!"

"Zhang Ye is such a scammer!"

"This is great. He's dragged the Spring Festival Gala down!"

“He’s capable of causing trouble everywhere he goes!”

“This has turned into something big!”

“How could he bring what they do on variety shows onto the Spring Festival Gala!”

“If the Spring Festival Gala has advertisements on it, how much would the advertising fees cost? Just having a brief moment of screen time would cost at least a 100 million, right?”

“What a scammer this Zhang Ye is! They appointed you to be in charge of the Spring Festival Gala so that you could improve it, not earn money for it. Aiyo, this is so funny!”

“Hahahahaha!”

“Zhang Ye is indeed very unconventional!”

“The higher-ups too, why would they approve a proposal like this?”

“Yeah, the higher-ups are really giving a lot of face to Zhang Ye.”

“This year’s Spring Festival Gala will definitely be different from the previous years.”

“That’s right. With Zhang Ye around, how can there not be any controversies?”

“The world can’t stop our Lord Zhang!”

“Just let him do it. The past years have always been too traditional because everyone was so concerned with their statuses. It’s not bad to have Zhang Ye introduce some chaos into the equation. Who knows, he might just be able to come up with a few tricks. Furthermore, this year’s Spring Festival Gala bears his name. It won’t matter how much of a mess it gets into. Zhang Ye will be totally responsible for it. He must have considered the consequences before going ahead with this plan.”

People were praising it.

People were sarcastically poking fun at it.

People were scolding it.

People were criticizing it.

Zhang Ye’s actions had caused a great uproar in the country!

The news also started being reported about in the nation!

Even the Asian media outlets started picking up on the reports. For a world-class stage like the Spring Festival Gala, there was also a lot of attention given to it in Asia. Besides, Zhang Ye was also an A-list celebrity in the Asian Celebrity Rankings, so even if he was still not that appealing to people in Asian countries, he was still known to many of them!

He was getting a mixed reception!

There was a continued controversy about this!

But there was an opinion that seemed pretty unified across all the media outlets!

All of them unanimously agreed that Zhang Ye was: the most daring executive director in the history of the Spring Festival Gala!

Daring to advertise also required courage!

Further, on a stage like the Spring Festival Gala?

This was a decision that no any ordinary person could make!

Chapter 1318: Arrival of the five rip-off cards of fortune!

When the 1 billion RMB was received.

Work on the stage began.

The advertising negotiations were carried out.

The program list was drawn up.

Preparations for the first approval session began.

The Spring Festival Gala's production team led by Zhang Ye suddenly got busy.

Meanwhile, there was no lack of doubting voices from the outside world.

Little Wang reported, "Director Zhang, there is quite a lot of scolding directed at us outside."

Zhang Ye said, "I know, just leave them be."

Tong Fu was slightly surprised. "Aren't we going to issue a response?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "There's no need. If they keep talking about us, it proves that there is a lot of attention given to the Spring Festival Gala. That's much better than having no attention at all, isn't it? It can also be seen as a different form of publicity. Besides, this isn't even that much of a scolding. They still have not started with the serious scolding." There was a deeper meaning to his words.

Everyone was dismayed.

"Ah?"

"Have not started yet?"

"What do you mean by that?"

"Is it because of the advertisements?"

"Are there going to be problems with the advertisements?"

They kept up with the questioning. The Spring Festival Gala production team members did not have the same strong mental fortitude as Zhang Ye.

However, Zhang Ye did not give them a direct answer. He simply gave a sheepish smile and said, "You'll find out when the time comes."

For the Spring Festival Gala's viewership ratings, Zhang Ye had resorted to using his killer move. This killer move was the kind that would sacrifice a 2,000-strong army to defeat an army with only 1,000 enemies. It was one of the most controversial marketing cases in Zhang Ye's previous world but an extremely explosive technique that was very deceitful as well. The people of this world would surely not know about it, but if it was mentioned to anyone in Zhang Ye's previous world, eighty percent people would surely jump up and start cursing at it!

That's right!

It was just such a deceitful marketing technique!

And now, Zhang Ye was getting ready to introduce it to this world!

...

The days passed.

The production pace of the Spring Festival Gala started picking up.

...

On this day.

The country was in an uproar!

Everyone had been stunned by a sudden piece of news!

The Spring Festival Gala's advertising partner, one of the country's largest payment processors called "Unipay 1," had announced some extremely shocking news. With a cash prize pool of 200 million RMB, the Spring Festival Gala's "Five Cards of Fortune Collection" campaign was launched.

And what were the five fortunes?

The prosperity and strength card of fortune.

The harmony card of fortune.

The friendship card of fortune.

The patriotism card of fortune.

The work dedication card of fortune.

The rules were: A user who adds ten new friends on Unipay will stand to receive three cards of fortune. The remaining two cards could be gifted or exchanged between Unipay friends, and the users who managed to gather all five cards of fortune would stand to win an equal share of the 200 million RMB cash prize. This was not simply a chance at winning the prize money, but a definite one as long as you could gather all five cards of fortune. So that would mean that if only one person could gather all the cards, then that person would win the entire share of the 200 million RMB. If two people each managed to gather the five cards, the 200 million yuan cash pool would be split equally between them!

It was cold, hard cash!



This was as fair as it could get!

The Spring Festival Gala's official Weibo shared the post!

This campaign was widely advertised across all the major forums!

Unipay's promotions instantly covered every nook and cranny in an overwhelming fashion!

When had the people ever witnessed such a strong marketing push before? They were dumbfounded!

"Holy shit!"

"200 million RMB?"

"I didn't read it wrong, did I? Has Unipay gone crazy?"

"Is this what the Spring Festival Gala's advertisement is?"

"Haha, I like this advertisement!"

"No shit, who wouldn't like it since it involves money to be won!"

"Are they really going to give out 200 million yuan in red packets?"

"Did they have to make such a big move! Isn't this a little too much?"

"This is fucking 40 times higher than the prize money for those sports lottery tickets!"

"My God!"

"Ahhhhh! 200 million! It's 200 million!"

"Great showing, Unipay! Nicely done!"

"200 million, here I come!"

"Get lost, it's mine!"

"I'm gonna give it a try!"

"Hurry, add me as a friend! Quick!"

"If we're too slow, it'll be gone. Requesting ten contacts to add!"

"Let's help each other out, comrades!"

"This is so exciting!"

Everyone was bursting with excitement!

The red packet war had started!

...

At Tsinghua University.

In a classroom.

An English teacher was currently giving a lecture from the front of the room.

"How do we play this?"

"Add me as a friend first, then I'll tell you."

"Wow, I've already gotten three fortune cards!"

"Me too, I'm just short of another two!"

"Who has the work dedication card of fortune? I'll trade the prosperity and strength card of fortune for it!"

"Shh, be quiet. We're in class."

...

At a company.

"Old Li, I've already gathered four cards of fortune."

"What cards of fortune? Why are you gathering them?"

"Don't you know? There's 200 million yuan to be won!"

"Ah?"

"Quickly sign up for a Unipay account."

"Alright, let me give this card gathering thing a try too!"

...

In a restaurant.

The waiters were huddled together in groups of two and three.

"Give me a patriotism card! Hurry, hurry, hurry!"

"I only have two cards of fortune!"

"I'll trade the harmony card with you!"

"Alright, I've sent it to you!"

"Where's the work dedication card?"

"I don't know! No one has it!"

...

In the crosstalk world.

"What are you all doing?"

"We're gathering the five fortunes."

“Whoa, you guys are also playing such games at your age?”

“There’s no chance for us to get on the Spring Festival Gala anyway, so we might as well just give it a try. Who knows, we might end up winning the red packet prize.”

The number of people collecting the cards of fortune was increasing!

Even the old comrades from the crosstalk world had joined in, so just imagine what kind of a situation this was!

...

On one of the days.

A Weibo photo went viral.

The first person in the country to gather all five of the cards of fortune finally appeared. That person posted a screenshot with the five cards flush with color 2 , while the comments below were all envious voices.

“That’s amazing!”

“You’ve gathered them all so quickly?”

“Big Bro, please give me a share of your prize!”

“This is worth 200 million, bro!”

“If no one else manages to gather them all, the entire 200 million RMB prize will belong to you!”

“Damn, where’s the work dedication card!”

“I’m also looking for it. There are too few of them!”

“Fucking work dedication card, show yourself!”

“Collecting the work dedication card, paying 50 yuan for one!”

“I’ll pay 100 yuan!”

“Whoever has the work dedication card, please PM me. I can act cute for you and warm your bed too!”

“Could this poster end up winning the entirety of the prize money?”

“No way, right? There will definitely be others who can gather all five of them as well. In fact, I heard that there will be an indication of how many people have managed to gather all the cards of fortune during the live broadcast of the Spring Festival Gala on Lunar New Year’s Eve. The hosts will also be handing out cards of fortune that will be up for grabs to the viewers, so there should still be quite a few work dedication cards getting released. We can only depend on luck to see if we can get them!”

“What? It will be a concurrent event with the Spring Festival Gala?”

“That’s right.”

“This advertising campaign is really fun and gimmicky!”

“Zhang Ye is so devious!”

“Yeah, the campaign was thought up by him in the first place!”

“Pfft, Zhang Ye is too good at business. I was still wondering why he was suddenly open to taking advertisements for the gala. So it was because the advertisements could help increase the viewership ratings and bring in viewership for the Spring Festival Gala!”

“I don’t care about the gala. All I want is the work dedication card!”

“I’ll be the girlfriend of whoever gives me their work dedication card!”

“Damn, previous poster, are you serious?”

“I hope the Spring Festival Gala gets broadcast soon. I can’t wait anymore!”

“I hope they’ll give out a few more of the work dedication cards during the Spring Festival Gala!”

One spread to ten.

Ten spread to a 100.

Some people were doing it for the red packets while others were doing it purely for the fun of it. There were also people who saw their friends asking for cards of fortune who ended up joining in the activity as well. A propagation like this through social media was extremely frightening. Once a user started gathering the cards of fortune, the ten friends they added would also know about it. When those ten friends joined in to gather the cards, they would then bring in another 100 friends with them. The 100 friends would then bring in 1,000 friends, and the 1,000 friends would bring in 10,000 friends. This would go on and on until no new users were left!

It was a form of viral marketing!

In just a short period of time, the entire country was caught up in the craze of the Spring Festival Gala’s Five Cards of Fortune Collection!

That’s right!

It was crazy!

It was an unparalleled madness!

...

Elsewhere.

Zhang Ye had been on the receiving end of countless phone calls from his relatives and friends in recent days.

His mother called.

“Son.”

“Mom, I’m busy at work.”

"Wait, I haven't even said anything yet."

"Go on, go on."

"Send me a work dedication card."

"Ah?"

"The work dedication card! Hurry up!"

"But I don't have it."

"The cards of fortune are given out by the Spring Festival Gala, so how can you not have any when you're the executive director?"

"I really don't have any. They're handed out by Unipay; we're just their partner."

"Alright then, I'll go check with others."

Rao Aimin called.

"Little Zhang!"

"Big Sis Rao, what's the matter?"

"Send me a work dedication card."

"What? You're playing that too?"

"There's money to be won. Only a fool would not play!"

"But you're already so rich. Anyway, I don't have it."

"Rascal, don't you give me that bullshit. Hurry up and get me the card!"

"I really don't have it."

After hanging up, Zhang Ye gave a wry smile. Then he looked at Ha Qiqi, Zhang Zuo, and the group of people from the Spring Festival Gala production team who were on their break. A lot of them were whispering to each other, and it could be seen that they were all trading cards of fortune with one another. They were really enjoying it, and it could be seen that even the Spring Festival Gala production team had fallen into the craze of gathering the five fortunes!

The entire country had fallen!

No one was spared!

They had all been taken in by the scam!

It had gotten big!

It had gotten huge!

Zhang Ye shuddered in fear on the inside. He wiped away his sweat and called Ha Qiqi over. "Sister Ha, uhh, come over for a bit. I have something that I need to talk to you about."

“Coming, Director Zhang.” Ha Qiqi quickly traded a card of fortune with Little Wang before coming over. “Is the noon break over? Should I notify everyone to start working?”

Zhang Ye coughed and said, “Were you the one who liaised with Unipay?”

Ha Qiqi nodded. “Yes, I’m in charge of that.”

Zhang Ye cleared his throat and stammered, “Umm, so, tell them quickly that I said to let them come up with another promotion to create another prize pool on the day of the Spring Festival Gala. It doesn’t have to be much, just tens of millions, or a 100 million would be fine too. Or they could also work with some of the artist studios and invite the celebrities to join in. They can then hand out red packets in the name of the celebrities or stuff like that. This would not require the use of the cards of fortune, nor will there be any limitations on who can grab the red packets. Everyone is allowed to take part, and it’s best that everyone can participate in it. When the time comes, we’ll also help them to promote it here on the Spring Festival Gala.”

Ha Qiqi was taken aback. “That shouldn’t be necessary, right, Director Zhang? This Five Cards of Fortune Collection campaign has taken off so crazily that everyone is trying their hand at it. Why is there still a need to directly give out additional red packets? The publicity effect is in place, and the advertising world is totally shocked by this advertising and marketing push that you’ve started!”

Yes!

They were all in shock!

But what was even more shocking was still to come!

This marketing push was a complete scam. It was a bottomless pit!

Zhang Ye said, “Just do as I say.”

“Alright, understood. I’ll get in contact with them about it,” Ha Qiqi said.

Zhang Ye said, “Tell them that this is to earn goodwill for them, so don’t be afraid to spend. They’ve already spent 200 million anyway, so this amount should not really matter that much.”

Ha Qiqi went to carry out his instructions. “OK.”

This proposal that Zhang Ye was suggesting was actually to help Unipay dig its way out of the pit. Once the campaign ended, Unipay should be able to benefit quite a bit from it, and the Spring Festival Gala would not be implicated either. Be it the Five Cards of Fortune Collection or grabbing of the red packets that the celebrities would be giving out, all of that would help to boost the Spring Festival Gala’s viewership ratings. As such, the Spring Festival Gala was the party that stood to gain the most out of this campaign. So when you thought about it, the blame would only fall onto Zhang Ye. Not only was he the executive director of the Spring Festival Gala, he was also the manager of this advertising and marketing proposal. This fellow could already imagine how many people would curse at him on the day the campaign ended!

Hai, come at me then. He was already mentally prepared for the backlash that he would receive over his “scamming” of the entire country’s citizens in a bid to boost the viewership ratings of the Spring Festival Gala!

The five fortunes?

Five fortunes, my ass!

This was more like the five deceptions!

But the thing was, nobody knew what it was yet!

Chapter 1319: Zhang Ye resorts to cheating!

At the outside world.

The cards of fortune continued taking the country by storm.

And on this day, the Spring Festival Gala held its first approval session.

...

At Central TV.

In the morning.

At the venue of the first approval session.

In a large studio, only several dozen people were seated in the first two rows of the audience seating. Zhang Ye sat right in the middle with a group of executives from the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee on either side. Behind them were several assistant directors and staff participating in the approval session, while the remaining seats were all empty. Meanwhile, the backstage was filled with the waiting celebrity artists and song and dance troupes from the various government branches. Together with the staff of Central TV's Spring Festival Gala, the backstage was bursting with people.

First up was the review of the singing acts.

Zhang Ye flipped through the list of acts and commanded, "Let's get it started."

Ha Qiqi read out loud, "Will the first group of performers please stand by."

The leaders and staff participating in the approval session picked up their pens, ready to give scores.

The list of acts for today's approval session was actually not changed from the previous one that Li Ke had drawn up when he was in charge. Of course, a majority of the performers were in the "guaranteed" groups, which consisted of the song and dance troupes nominated through the various government branches. Zhang Ye did not make any changes to it and followed with this list of acts for the approval session. The main reason for this was simply because there wasn't enough time. Zhang Ye had taken over the Spring Festival Gala event in a rush when it was almost time to hold the first approval session, so he could only follow with what had been drawn up for the time being. He would have to observe how it went before making any further decisions. As for the acts, he would have to filter through them afterwards to make selections. Zhang Ye needed to first understand what the standards of the performers and acts were.

Chen Guang.

Fan Wenli.

Zhang Xia.

Spring Garden.

Team VAA.

Singers from a song and dance troupe.

The performers appeared on stage one after another.

"This one isn't too bad."

"This one is good."

"This song is a little old, isn't it?"

"Isn't Team VAA's performance too simple?"

"That performance by Spring Garden won't do."

The members of the approval board for the first approval session were whispering. As the performers sang on stage, they discussed among themselves in the audience.

Then it was time for the dances.

Teachers from a song and dance troupe.

Students from a dance school.

There were a total of eight art troupes.

"It's a little boring to watch."

"Who recommended this group?"

"It's the Naval Song and Dance Troupe 1."

"It's not really that great to watch."

"Yes, it feels very similar to the dance they did two years ago."

"Hai, this definitely won't do."

"That student group's dance performance was somewhat interesting."

Acrobatic performances: There were a total of three acts.

Stage magic tricks: There were also three acts.

They were followed by ten language performances.

There was crosstalk.

Skits.



And even a three-person talk show.

And so on.

“This skit is pretty good!”

“Teacher Ci is still going strong after all these years.”

“The script still needs a little fine-tuning. There are areas that can be improved upon.”

“This talk show is no good.”

“Right, I agree. Let’s take this one out.”

“Director Zhang is the creator of the talk show genre, so performing a talk show in front of him is indeed putting on a performance in front of a professional.”

“The three-person talk show might be a rather refreshing idea, but it’s a little too nondescript.”

“Eh, what about Director Zhang, Yao Jiancai, and Dong Shanshan’s skit?”

“Director Zhang is the main judge of the first approval session, so how would he have the time to get on stage to perform. He can only put it aside for the time being and might perform it during the second approval session.”

An hour.

Five hours.

Ten hours.

From morning until night.

From dawn until dark.

After an entire day of work, the Spring Festival Gala’s first approval session finally came to an end.

The performers had all left, and many of the staff also returned home to rest. However, Zhang Ye and the other approval board heads stayed behind at the venue in their seats in the first row.

Zhang Ye was silent.

Ha Qiqi looked at him.

Zhang Zuo blinked several times, unsure of what Director Zhang was thinking.

Ever since the first performance started during today’s approval session, Zhang Ye did not say a word. He did not express any attitude to any of the performances. Was he happy? Was he satisfied? No one knew exactly what he was thinking. They were all evaluating the performances and pointing about as they wrote down scores. Only Zhang Ye did not have any reaction throughout.

An executive on the Spring Festival Gala’s organizing committee glanced at him. “Boss Zhang?”

“Boss Zhang” was clearly just a form of address they had for him since Zhang Ye couldn’t strictly be considered a boss. Based on these executives’ statuses and ranks, there wouldn’t be anything wrong if

they just addressed him as Little Zhang. However, not anyone could call him that as they liked. This was because Zhang Ye's wife was Wu Zeqing. From the perspective of ranks, the two highest-ranking leaders on the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee were only of equal status with Wu Zeqing, while the rest of them were ranked lower than her. And since the office was a place where seniority was considered important, when they were faced with Wu Zeqing's husband, they couldn't address him as Little Zhang, could they? So calling him Boss Zhang or Director Zhang was the most suitable form of address.

"Director Zhang, what do you think?"

"The acts for the first approval session have all performed. What do you think about them?"

The organizing committee's executives were all seeking his opinion.

In the end, Zhang Ye came up with a startling response.

He said, "I only have one thought right now. Is it too late to say I quit? 'Cause, you know, I still have some matters to attend to at home. Why don't you check again with someone else to see if they can take the role of executive director?"

Everyone was floored!

"Ah?"

"Director Zhang, please don't joke like that."

"You cannot be talking like this. You mustn't joke about such things!"

"Aiyo, what's this about?"

"Boss Zhang, please calm down, calm down!"

The executives got scared!

The production team staff were dumbfounded!

What the heck!

Even Zhang Ye is thinking of calling it quits?

But Zhang Ye was feeling even more scared than them. He pointed at the stage and asked, "Those are the best acts that were 'carefully selected' from all across the country? Every one of you saw it earlier too, right? You all watched every act without missing a single one, right? If you all say that these acts are especially wonderful, so wonderful that you'll want to applaud them, then I will feel that it is an insult to me as an artist. I'd have nothing to say!"

Some people had a wry smile on their faces.

Some of them were slightly embarrassed.

A leader said, "Boss Zhang, don't be angry. I admit that this year's acts are indeed lacking when compared to the previous years'. But isn't it just the first approval session? There's still a lot of room for improvement. Didn't the higher-ups invite you to take charge because they needed you to help with

improving the acts? I know that you're not happy about there being so many nominated song and dance troupes from the government branches and feel that it is limiting you. We can still discuss it further. If there are any acts that you still find unsuitable after watching, and which we also think is average, then we can cut it from the program list. All of that can be discussed."

"Yes, we can talk about it."

"Those acts performed by the song and dance troupes this year are indeed a little poor."

The executives on the Spring Festival Gala organizing committee were a little less restrictive about things this time.

What were the reasons behind Li Ke's resignation?

One of them was that he could not secure the funding that he needed!

And the other reason was that of the list of acts!

What about the funding?

What about the stage?

What about the promotions?

All of those were just auxiliary!

Only the acts mattered. The Spring Festival Gala was dependent on its content to attract viewers in the end. If the acts were not good, everything else would be done in vain. Zhang Ye finally understood why Old Li had quit from his role. If he knew about the situation with the list of acts, he would never have agreed to take the job either!

What the heck were all these acts!

Zhang Ye had already reviewed the past Spring Festival Galas of this world.

The previous year.

The year before that.

And even the ones from 10, 20 years ago, he had gone through as many as he could!

Sometimes, Zhang Ye wondered why the Spring Festival Gala was getting worse year after year. Was it really because the quality of acts was declining? He didn't feel so. Looking at the past years' program lists and being honest about it, from the technical level of the staff to the complexity of the stage, things had always been improving year after year. What contributed to the poor reputation that the Spring Festival Gala was suffering from was the nitpicking of the audience. The audience's expectations had become higher. If you could get on the Spring Festival Gala, everyone would know that you got there because you were good. So expectations would be raised. Even if you disappeared into thin air onstage, the audience would not be surprised by it. In fact, they would even think that this was the norm. But if you don't disappear? Then the audience's expectations of your show would not be met. They would start thinking that you were not good enough and that the show was just as bad.

So what could they do about that?

This was asking too much of them!

Besides, this nitpicking could even be said to be extremely harsh!

In all fairness, if those acts that were performed for the first approval session were used in any event other than the Spring Festival Gala, they would surely get a lot of cheers and be praised as wonderful. But since they were going to be on the Spring Festival Gala, they were simply unacceptable. On the stage of the Spring Festival Gala, they were just too ordinary! There were no surprises!

This would not do!

It would not work out!

If it was like this, then this year's Spring Festival Gala would just be as bad as the previous years'!

Everyone was getting anxious as they came up with all kinds of suggestions.

"If it's not good enough, let's add a few more acts."

"What about the backup acts? Maybe we can bring them in?"

"Let's invite another few big names?"

"There's not much time left until the second approval session. Will it be too late?"

"We still have to do it even if there's no time. I agree with Director Zhang's opinion; the acts we saw in the first approval session only have a pass rate of 30%. The remaining ones are totally unsuitable!"

"But the issue is that there aren't any good acts!"

"Where are the writers? Maybe we should employ more of them?"

"The writing team is already very strong at what they do."

"Get them to write another few acts that are good. The performers' standards and technical levels are actually very outstanding. As long as they can write something good for them, there will surely be someone who can perform up to standards. The problem right now is that there aren't enough good scripts. On top of that, even if we feel that some of these scripts are good, the common folk will not necessarily feel the same way as us!"

"Yeah, that's what makes this really difficult."

The meeting went on until past 10 in the evening.

Everyone was feeling very pressured and exhausted.

Finally, Zhang Ye spoke, "Let's end it here today. I'll come up with a list of acts tomorrow!"

"You're going to plan one yourself?"

"Yes."

"For which kinds of performances?"

“All of them!”

“All of them?!”

Everyone was stunned!

At this point, no one seemed to have realized how great of an impact Zhang Ye’s words would have. They did not know how determined he was. At the beginning, Zhang Ye had hoped to count on the works of this world. He thought that based on the size of China, it shouldn’t be too difficult to uncover a few wonderful acts in the country. He didn’t want to touch the works from his previous world at all. Such works would only decrease in number every time he used one of them. Those who knew him would know that he was extremely “miserly.” All of the works were supposed to be left for himself, and he rarely would take them out for others to use. Even if it were Zhang Yuanqi approaching him for a song that he wouldn’t sing since he wasn’t a woman, Zhang Ye would never willingly give away any of them and would always grumble about this and that.

But he couldn’t do that this time!

Zhang Ye had been forced to show his hand!

The acts were not good enough?

They really couldn’t come up with something good?

Alright then, I’ll do it!

Dance?

I’ll choreograph it!

Songs?

I’ll write them!

Crosstalks?

Let me handle it!

Skits?

I’ll write the scripts!

Magic?

Let me plan some tricks!

Acrobatics?

I’ll direct it!

The acts that I won’t be using or are unsuitable for me, I’ll write them down, choreograph them, and teach them to all of you one by one. I’ll bring out the acts that are most closely followed and talked about in my previous world, the ones that have been market tested, and present them to all of you one by one. I’ll redo all of the gala’s acts from start to finish!

Fuck!

I won't fucking believe it!

I won't believe that this year's Spring Festival Gala will end in failure!

The cornered Zhang Ye was finally about to resort to cheating!

### **Chapter 1320: An entirely new program list rolls out!**

The next morning.

News was spreading through the grapevine.

"A situation at the Spring Festival Gala's first approval session?"

"No acts were passed at the first approval session?"

"The Spring Festival Gala's program list could be cast aside! "

"The Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee is extremely unsatisfied with the acts!"

"Zhang Ye loses his temper in public!"

"Where will this year's Spring Festival Gala go from here?"

"The most difficult year of the Spring Festival Gala!"

"Will Zhang Ye be able to save things?"

...

At Central TV.

In the office of the Spring Festival Gala's production team.

Zhang Ye stayed overnight. This was the fifth night he spent at Central TV. He did not step out of Central TV during the day either. He ate, slept, and worked there. As long as the production team or organizing committee had any matters to resolve with him, they could always find him in his office or on the stage. This was who Zhang Ye was. When it came to work, he would risk his life. For the Spring Festival Gala, he was really throwing all he had into it.

The brand-new program list was out!

Only the names of the acts could be seen. No description of their contents was available. Only he knew all about them for the time being.

But this was the most brilliant program list that Zhang Ye felt that he had come up with after racking his brains all night. He had deliberated repeatedly and changed his choices until he thought it was the most appropriate and brilliant program list there was!

An opening dance?

Acrobatics?

Magic?

Skits?

Crosstalks?

It had all of that. In fact, even the order of the acts was rudimentarily decided upon!

If the people of this world had a look at the program list, they would definitely find it rather odd and not understand it. But if it were the people of Zhang Ye's previous world who saw it, they would surely be dumbfounded. This was because all of the acts listed were the most closely watched programs in all the years of the Spring Festival Gala in that world. They were the most hotly debated and talked about acts of all. To put all of these earth-shattering acts into one gala, just what kind of an impact would that have? No one knew, and not even Zhang Ye himself could predict it!

With the program list out, all that remained was to find the performers. Some of these performers were easy to get, but some were not. Many of the new acts on this list required him to pick out the performers very carefully. Not only would they need to have skill, their statuses, image, and presence would also need to fit together. This was what was so difficult.

Zhang Ye called out, "Old Ha."

"Director Zhang, you're calling for me?"

"Where's Little Wang?"

"She's at the main stage."

"Get her here. I need you both to go out with me for a bit."

"Now?"

"Yes, now."

"Alright!"

Then Zhang Ye called over Assistant Director Zhang Zuo as well and gave him some instructions. After that, he left with Ha Qiqi and Little Wang. Right now, Zhang Ye didn't need to stay put at Central TV in his capacity as the executive director. Only one month was left until the second approval session, which was also the final one before the rehearsals, so there was a need to get all of the acts finalized before that. What Zhang Ye had to do now was to find the performers and make sure that he could get the acts out one by one!

It was a fine day today.

After having not been out for so many days, the sun was very piercing to his eyes.

Little Wang was driving. "Director Zhang, where are we heading?"

Zhang Ye handed her his cell phone. "Just follow the GPS."

"Th-This is a construction site?" Little Wang was stunned.

Ha Qiqi said startled, "Why are we going to a construction site?"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "A song on my new program list requires two people to sing it."

Ha Qiqi said floored, "And those two people are at the construction site?"

"That's right," Zhang Ye said calmly.

Ha Qiqi was speechless.

Little Wang was speechless.

Both of them were a little confused.

Half an hour later, the car reached the location.

Loud singing reached their ears.

Zhang Ye rolled down the car window. "Stop the car and park it to the side."

Little Wang steered to the curb and stepped on the brakes.

Ha Qiqi pricked up her ears.

Two voices were coming from that direction. They were singing songs that Zhang Ye had performed on King of Masked Singers.

...

"There are times I feel like I'm a small, li'l bird.

"I wanna fly, but no matter how I can't fly high.

"Perhaps I'll one day perch on the branches,

"Yet the hunters I've incurred.

"Only when I flew into the blue sky did I discover,

"that I had nothing upon which to rely."

...

"Arise!

"ye pris'ners of starvation!

"Arise!

"ye wretched of the Earth!"

...

One song.



Two songs.

Three songs.

Two people were singing as they carried steel beams.

They were blood-related brothers. One was called Zhang Guang, the other was called Zhang Fang.

Their nearby coworkers were listening in enjoyment and even sang along with them at times.

In the car.

Little Wang exclaimed, "It's the Laborer Brothers!"

Ha Qiqi looked at Zhang Ye in surprise. "You're here to look for the Laborer Brothers?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "You two know them as well?"

"Of course, we know them really well." Little Wang said, "They're really popular online. It was around the end of last year when a passerby recorded a video of them and put it up on the Internet, which ended up going viral. That song was especially touching. I heard that a lot of people came from afar just to listen to them sing. They've been calling them the Laborer Brothers. In terms of laborers, the two of them are the most well-known. But I wonder why they're still working at the construction site?"

Ha Qiqi said, "That's because their singing is not up to standard. Do you think everyone can sing as well as Director Zhang? Just listen to them. Even though they're not singing out of tune and have quite an alright vocalization technique, would it be proper to describe it as an earth-shattering performance? Is their singing really that exquisite? I really don't think so. We can pick any professional singer, and they would all sing better than them. Besides, they're too lacking in their image as well. If they're thinking of making it in show business? That possibility is too far-fetched."

They continued listening for a while longer.

Little Wang nodded. "You're right. They're really not comparable to pros."

Ha Qiqi said, "Director Zhang, you've heard them too, right? Let's go. They can't sing your songs, and they're also not popular enough. Right now, you have the entire entertainment circle's performers and singers to pick from."

Zhang Ye chuckled. "But they're who I've picked."

Ha Qiqi said, "Are you serious?"

"Little Wang, go approach them," Zhang Ye instructed.

Little Wang didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "You're sure about this?"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Of course! Why else would I come all the way here for? Do you think that I have a lot of time on my hands?"

The Spring Festival Gala has been too routine in recent years. Other than celebrities, it was still celebrities. Other than big name performers, it was still big name performers. It seemed to suggest that only they could support the stage of the Spring Festival Gala. It was as though the audience would only

recognize them. Actually, that wasn't how things worked. They simply could not understand how powerful it was to subvert expectations.

So what if they were laborers?

So what if they didn't have the looks?

So what if they weren't professional singers?

Their voices could still be just as impressive!

At the site.

Zhang Guang and Zhang Fang sat down for their break. Both of them had not eaten breakfast yet and wiped their hands before picking up a large bun each and pairing it with some pickled vegetables, chewing on the food. They changed their lifestyle much ever since they became famous.

Their coworkers were chatting with them.

"The Spring Festival Gala is almost here."

"Yeah, I heard that they're still selecting the performers."

"Zhang Guang, Zhang Fang, it would be great if you two could get on the Spring Festival Gala."

"That would really cheer us up as well!"

Zhang Guang gave a wry smile as he waved it off. "Us two brothers are just singing for fun, so how could we possibly dare to think of getting onto the Spring Festival Gala's stage?"

Zhang Fang chewed on his bun and whined, "I wish I could though."

Zhang Guang rolled his eyes. "Stop dreaming."

Zhang Fang snorted, then simpered, "We have to have dreams."

In the distance, a pretty girl came walking over.

The workers looked over.

"Eh?"

"It's someone from the city?"

"She must be here to listen to Zhang Guang and Zhang Fang sing."

No one found this strange.

Little Wang walked up to them. "Are you Teacher Zhang Guang and Teacher Zhang Fang?"

Zhang Guang hurriedly put down his bun and stood up. "We're not teachers, we're not teachers."

Zhang Fang was also taken aback by this term of address.

Little Wang said, "Hello, I am from the Central TV Spring Festival Gala production team. We would like to invite both of you teachers to take part in the Spring Festival Gala this year. Would you be interested?"

They were stunned silly!

The other workers present were dumbfounded as well!

Zhang Guang exclaimed, "Ah?"

Zhang Fang did not believe it. "Us? On the Spring Festival Gala?"

Little Wang smiled. "That's right."

Zhang Guang furiously waved his hands and said, "That's impossible, impossible."

Zhang Fang said, "Are you teasing us?"

Little Wang said, "Come with me to the car and you'll understand."

Some of their coworkers cautioned them.

"Don't go! She must be lying!"

"Yeah, you two might get sold off and still be clueless as to how it happened."

"Yeah, there are a lot of scammers in the city these days."

"You must not get into the car!"

The group of them nearly surrounded Little Wang!

A scammer?

Sell them both off?

Little Wang nearly fainted. You two are rugged, grown men. Who would possibly want to buy you two!

Zhang Ye, who was inside the car, was quite amused. He opened the car door and got out, saying, "Little Wang, I only asked you to do a simple task, but look at this efficacy of yours."

Little Wang said anxiously, "You can't blame me for that, Director Zhang. They don't trust me."

Zhang Ye said with a grin, "That's because you look like a bad guy."

Little Wang got angry.

Ha Qiqi also got out of the car in laughter.

An uproar occurred at the construction site!

Zhang Ye!

It was Zhang Ye!

The executive director of this year's Spring Festival Gala!

Zhang Guang and Zhang Fang were stunned!

At this point, their coworkers should surely know that this was for real even if they were idiots. These people were really from Central TV!

"Alright, let me say it." Zhang Ye looked at the two brothers. "Do you wish to go on the Spring Festival Gala?"

Zhang Guang's eyes reddened. "Yes! We wish to!"

Zhang Fang also stared with wide eyes as he nodded furiously.

Zhang Ye said, "Alright then, I've got a song here. If the two of you can perfect it before the Spring Festival Gala's second approval session, I'll leave a slot open for the two of you on this year's gala."

Zhang Guang was so excited that he almost went crazy. "Thank you! Thank you!"

Zhang Fang said, "We, we'll definitely sing it well! Definitely!"

Zhang Ye said, "During this time, there will definitely be a need to practice, go to the approval session, and attend the rehearsals. As such, from now until Lunar New Year's Eve, the two of you might not exactly have much time to work. I'll say this first. The appearance pay for the Spring Festival Gala is not much, probably amounting to only several thousand yuan. So if you two have any difficulties or requests, please let me know in advance. I can help you to handle the issue in private. Be it if you need assistance in your daily lives or financial help, it's all fine with me."

Zhang Guang and Zhang Fang immediately looked at one another.

Ha Qiqi smiled and said, "Just speak. You don't have to stand on ceremony with Director Zhang."

Zhang Guang said hesitatingly, "We don't lack any money, we have enough to use."

Zhang Ye said, "What about any other difficulties? You can request anything you want."

Zhang Fang said, "Anything?"

Zhang Guang tugged at him.

Zhang Ye nodded. "Yes, anything is fine."

Zhang Fang cautiously said, "I'm really gonna say it then?"

"Go ahead." Zhang Ye grinned.

Zhang Fang suddenly said, "Can you send me a work dedication card of fortune?"

"What?" Zhang Ye sounded like he had misheard.

Zhang Fang quickly said, "I can use the prosperity and strength fortune card to trade for it!"

Zhang Ye was floored!

Little Wang giggled, "Pfft!"

Ha Qiqi was speechless.

Those five rip-off cards of fortune had even made its way to the laborers and the construction sites?