

Superstar 1321

Chapter 1321: The Disabled People's Performing Art Troupe!

Later that afternoon.

At 2 PM.

In the car, Zhang Ye was looked at the new program list in his hand as he and his team rushed off to the next location.

"Have you informed them?"

"Yes, we've informed them already."

"Alright, then let's hurry over."

"Are we selecting the dance acts this time?"

"Yes, there's a dance acts that I lack performers for."

"Weren't those dancers at the first approval session pretty good? They're the best of the best in the entire country."

"They're not good enough."

"Uh, alright then."

...

At the China National Ethnic Song and Dance Ensemble 1 .

The dance troupe was in chaos. People were running all over the place and shuffling could be heard everywhere. It looked like there was a lot of activity going on.

"Where's Team Two?"

"Hurry up!"

"Where's the coach?"

"Call Little Zhou over here!"

"Team Three's members, step forward!"

"All of you, look more spirited. The people from the Spring Festival Gala production team will be here very soon!"

The Spring Festival Gala production team was coming over to do a selection. As they had just received the notification, they were completely unprepared. After catching wind of the news, the ensemble's general manager immediately called for an emergency meeting and was extremely concerned about the news. Everyone was instructed to fully cooperate with the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee.

The assistant general manager, Sun Jie, soon received the orders and assured the leader that they would definitely get their members onto the stage of the Spring Festival Gala this year!

Their original act had been canceled after the first approval session!

This was their one and only chance!

Sun Jie was busy commanding the place, shouting, "Everyone, listen up. This is the last chance for our dance troupe to get on the Spring Festival Gala. Everyone has practiced for so long, and it's finally time for our big test today. All of you had better give 110% to secure a place in the gala!"

"Yes!"

"Yes!"

"Yes, Manager Sun!"

"We will definitely complete our task!"

Everyone replied loudly and energetically.

Only one team, which was standing on the sidelines, did not make a sound.

This team's coach was called Qi Xiaomei. She was also feeling very anxious. Seeing the anticipating looks of those girls behind her, she clenched her teeth and quietly pulled several of them to the front.

As a result, they got noticed by Sun Jie. "Teacher Qi, what are you doing?"

Qi Xiaomei bit the bullet and said, "W-We would also like to—"

"Aiya, that's enough. Stop causing more trouble," Sun Jie said, waving her off. "Stand farther in the back. Where's Team Five? Team Five, step forward. Where are my little ladies? Why are you all still posing around at a time like this? This is the Spring Festival Gala, the largest stage in the country!"

Team Five's members squeezed forward.

"Please make way."

"Teacher Qi, can you move further back?"

Qi Xiaomei and her team were pushed to the back. They stood in the corner, feeling very anxious.

Several of the girls kept signing to her with their hands.

Qi Xiaomei bit her bottom lip and signed back to them.

When the girls saw, they bowed their heads in despair.

Then someone started shouting.

"They're here!"

"They've arrived!"

"The Spring Festival Gala production team is here!"

Sun Jie composed herself and led the dance troupe's coaches over to welcome them.

Qi Xiaomei tiptoed over and looked forward. The children standing behind her also did the same, but they couldn't see a thing. They were standing in a location too out of the way.

Across the room.

Zhang Ye, Ha Qiqi, and Little Wang came in.

Sun Jie smiled as she stretched out her hand. "Director Zhang, I've heard so much about you. I am the assistant general manager of the National Ethnic Song and Dance Ensemble, and I head the dance troupe around here."

Zhang Ye smiled and shook her hand. "Hello, Manager Sun, you've worked hard."

Sun Jie said, "Oh no, it's nothing, just doing my job."

Zhang Ye looked with some doubt at the people standing behind her. "And these?"

"Oh, they are our dance troupe's teams, the very best of the best," Sun Jie rattled off. "These are the young men and women of Team One. Their average age is 22, and they're the best in the country in terms of their physical fitness and condition. They've won first in many of the major national competitions and also performed overseas before. Teacher Wang, what are you still standing there for? Go on and show our leaders from the Spring Festival Gala production team what you girls are capable of!"

Teacher Wang ordered, "Get ready!"

The young men and women of Team One started dancing.

Elegance.

Agility.

They completed their dance in one go.

Sun Jie smiled and said, "What do you think, Director Zhang?"

Zhang Ye nodded. "They're pretty good, but—"

"We still have Team Two!" Sun Jie said at once. "Team Two is more adept at classical dances!"

When Team Two's coach clapped her hands, a group of dancers behind her began performing. The music and dance were very gentle and beautiful.

Ha Qiqi was amazed and astonished.

Little Wang had also had her eyes opened to something new.

Assistant General Manager Sun was right. They were indeed the elites of China.

Their figures?

Strength?

Demeanor?

Flexibility?

There was nothing to pick on!

Team Three...

Team Four...

Team Five...

At the request of Assistant General Manager Sun, the teams showcased their dance routines one by one.

Qi Xiaomei was getting really anxious. She kept stamping her feet, wanting to push her way to the front. However, she didn't dare.

Another group had finished their dance routine.

Sun Jie asked, "Director Zhang, how was it?"

Zhang Ye nodded. "They're all great, fantastic, even."

Sun Jie said, "Then which team did you like most?"

Zhang Ye paused for a moment before saying, "Are there any others?"

"There are," Sun Jie quickly answered. "Team Eight and Nine have yet to perform. But the children on those teams are new here and not old enough yet, and then there's also the backup team—"

Suddenly, Zhang Ye looked towards an inconspicuous corner. "What about those girls over there?"

Hearing that, Sun Jie was startled. "Them? Oh, they are the disabled people's dance team."

Ha Qiqi was taken aback. "Disabled?"

Sun Jie acknowledged, "Yes, they're deaf-mutes."

Little Wang said in amazement, "The deaf and mute can also dance? But how do they that when they can't hear the music?"

Sun Jie smiled and said, "That's something you don't know about. We have a coach who signals them from offstage every time the music comes on. When the children see the signals, they'll know when to perform which movements. All of this is only possible through years of training."

Ha Qiqi said in surprise, "Even that can be done?"

Sun Jie said, "Of course. These girls might look young, but they've actually been part of the ensemble for many years. The youngest one is already 20 years old. It's just a shame that their physical condition is not as good as the others." She continued, "Director Zhang, shall I get Team Eight's members to show you their dance?"

But Zhang Ye kept looking at those deaf-mute girls. "Can you let them show me their dance?"

“You’re curious about how they manage to dance, right? Sure, no problem.” Sun Jie said, “Teacher Qi, why don’t you all put on a little performance for Director Zhang?”

Qi Xiaomei got excited at the mention. “But the music, Manager Sun?”

Sun Jie said impatiently, “There’s no need for the music. Just a simple routine is enough.”

Ha Qiqi smiled and said, “We’re just curious, sorry to trouble you.”

“It’s no trouble, no trouble at all.” Qi Xiaomei inhaled and quickly turned around and signed to the young women.

It’s finally our turn!

Go for it!

Kids, do your best!

Qi Xiaomei was silently cheering in her head.

In a flash, the dozen-odd girls broke out into a dance.

Qi Xiaomei gave them a signal.

Five of the children separated from the group.

Qi Xiaomei gave them a different signal.

The girls on the other side performed a movement in a magically uniform motion!

This was the first time that Little Wang was seeing deaf-mute people dance. It was very eye-opening to her.

Ha Qiqi was enjoying the performance very much.

Only Zhang Ye stayed silent throughout as he stared unblinkingly at each of them. He was watching their every move, looking at each for a very long time.

The dance ended.

Qi Xiaomei put her hands down.

The dozen-odd deaf-mute dancers stood still and looked at Zhang Ye.

Sun Jie smile and said, “That’s roughly how they do it, by depending on the signals given by Teacher Qi. Alright, Director Zhang, shall I get Team Eight and Nine onto the stage then? You can slowly pick after that. There’s a lot of good young talent amongst them.”

Qi Xiaomei looked disappointed.

The dozen-odd girls bowed their heads in dismay.

But Zhang Ye laughed. “That won’t be necessary, Manger Sun. I already have a decision in mind.”

Sun Jie's eyes lit up. She said, "Oh? Which team is it? Team One? Or Team Two? It's fine, pick whoever you prefer. We'll surely do our best to cooperate." She turned her head and called for those from Team One and Two to come over.

Qi Xiaomei's team had once again been pushed to the back.

Qi Xiaomei bit her bottom lip.

But the next thing that happened stunned everyone!

Zhang Ye strode forward and went past the crowd. He walked in front of the deaf-mute dancers. "Are you the coach? How do I address you?"

Qi Xiaomei was stunned. "I-I'm Qi Xiaomei."

Zhang Ye smiled and nodded. "Hello, Teacher Qi. I have a dance here that is already choreographed with a piece of music, and the costumes are also readily available. I would like to give the dance to your team. If you can practice this dance until I'm satisfied, I'll leave a spot for them on this year's Spring Festival Gala!"

Stunned!

Everyone was stunned!

Sun Jie said dumbfoundedly, "Director Zhang, we have more suitable teams for your—"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "There isn't anyone more suitable than them."

"But their physical conditions are much better than—" Sun Jie said.

Zhang Ye repeated, "I want them!"

Little Wang hesitated. "Director Zhang, you—"

Zhang Ye cut her off. "Don't try to convince me. The choreography for my dance only suits them." He looked at Qi Xiaomei and said, "Teacher Qi, there isn't much time left. Do you think you guys can do it?"

Qi Xiaomei covered her mouth as tears welled up. "Yes! We can do it! We can do it!" she sobbed. "Thank you! Thank you!"

The deaf-mute girls did not understand.

What was going on?

Why was Teacher Qi crying?

Upon that realization, the girls hurriedly signed to Teacher Qi to ask her.

Qi Xiaomei immediately signed a long sequence back, her hands trembling!

The dozen-odd girls were stunned!

It's us?

Us?

Director Zhang chose us?

We've been chosen...to perform at the Spring Festival Gala?!

Six or seven girls broke down into tears!

Another three girls screamed and ran over to hug Qi Xiaomei!

"Wu wu wu!"

"Ah wu!"

"Ah woo!"

They couldn't speak and were making unintelligible sounds!

Sobs!

Shouts!

Hugs!

Jumping for joy!

The sight was very touching!

Qi Xiaomei hugged the children and cried loudly. She said loudly, "You girls are the best! I knew it! I knew that you were the best!"

Eight years of hard work!

Eight years of waiting!

Eight years of looking forward to this!

They finally managed to get onto the stage of the Spring Festival Gala after waiting for so long!

...

Zhang Ye left as he still had other acts to finalize.

Leaving behind Sun Jie and the group of dance troupe members and making them confused.

Why?

Why was it them?

Some people were envious!

Some were jealous!

Some sighed in disappointment!

Qi Xiaomei and her team were still crying. They were still immersed in the jubilation and were in disbelief at what had just happened!

At this moment, Sun Jie shouted angrily, "What are you all doing! Get out of here!"

Everyone looked at Qi Xiaomei.

Qi Xiaomei got so scared that she quickly dried her tears and dragged her team with her to head outside. "We'll get back to practicing immediately!"

Sun Jie was taken aback. "But this is the practice room, so where are you headed off to, Teacher Qi?"

Qi Xiaomei was used to getting scolded all the time. Hearing that, she was startled. "Ah?"

Sun Jie glared at all of the other teams' members and said, "I was talking about all of you! What are you all looking at me for! Can't you see that Teacher Qi and her team still need to practice? Standing here and looking at them won't help with that! Hurry up and clear this place for Teacher Qi! Let me say this: Starting from today, whoever dares disturb Teacher Qi and her team from practicing will be kicked out by me personally! Starting today, all activities in the dance troupe will center around Teacher Qi and her team!"

Everyone was dumbfounded!

Qi Xiaomei was also stunned!

Sun Jie walked over and patted Qi Xiaomei on her shoulder amiably. "Teacher Qi, well done. Your team did very well. I knew that you girls would definitely make it!"

The members of Team One and Two were nearly in tears.

Damn!

How did you change your attitude so quickly!

Chapter 1322: The one and only successor to the art of cross-gender acting!

In the evening.

Night had fallen.

At a theater, some performances were currently going on. It was the end of the year, and more and more of such performances were everywhere. The audience was mainly made up of the common folks, and entry fares were not expensive.

The car came to a stop.

Zhang Ye, Ha Qiqi, and Little Wang got out.

Ha Qiqi wondered, "What is this place?"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Little Wang, go buy three tickets."

Little Wang complied and went to purchase the tickets.

The ticket booth's window was already closed.

The employee saw her and said, "The performances began half an hour ago."

Little Wang took out money. "Are there still any seats left?"

"Well, we do still have some seats," the employee said.

Little Wang said, "Then please give me three tickets. It's fine even if the performances have already begun."

The employee hesitated for a moment. "Alright, as long as you guys don't mind."

With the tickets in hand, the three of them entered the theater.

This was one of Beijing's largest theaters. However, to someone like Zhang Ye and those around him who were accustomed to seeing much bigger events, such a stage was still comparatively small. It was so small that even if anyone were to offer them free tickets, they wouldn't have come.

In the back row.

The three of them found an isolated spot to sit.

There were many seats in the theater, but it was only half-filled.

Ha Qiqi asked, "Director Zhang, talents can even be found in a small place like this?"

Zhang Ye smiled. "Maybe."

Little Wang asked doubtfully, "If it were anyone capable, they surely wouldn't come here to perform, would they?"

Zhang Ye said, "That's why we'll have to review it first. I'll only believe what my eyes tell me."

Ha Qiqi and Little Wang said nothing else. They knew that Zhang Ye wouldn't bring them here for no reason. He had to have someone in mind.

There was a lot happening onstage.

The audience members were chewing on melons seeds and shouting while watching.

Two-people rotation 1 .

Crosstalk.

Singing.

All kinds of performances were lined up.

The performances at such theaters usually wouldn't last for very long. When Zhang Ye's group arrived, half the performances had been co. The acts followed one after another. Soon, they arrived at the finale performance.

The performer came out onto the stage!

When this performer appeared, the entire audience became very lively.

“Gao Xiliang is here!”

“He’s here, he’s appeared!”

“Haha, I was waiting only to see him!”

“Show us something good!”

There were whistles!

And screams!

The audience was laughing heartily after waiting so long for this performance to begin.

On the stage was an actor dressed as a woman. Wearing a classical dance costume, he started dancing. He even recited a poem in a woman’s voice!

“The great Yangtze gushes east,

“Sweeping away heroes of times past.

“West of the ancient fort,

“They say, is Zhou Yu’s Red Cliffs of Three Kingdoms’ fame.

“Jagged rocks pierce the sky,

“Massive waves pound the shore,

“Churning up thousands of snowdrifts of foam.

“The land, pretty as a picture,

“Once the locale of countless a hero!”

It even ended with some light singing at the end.

This was Zhang Ye’s poem, but the melody was composed by the actor himself.

Little Wang was shocked. “Gao Xiliang?”

Ha Qiqi also knew him. “That cross-gender celebrity? I remember that he’s a D-list celebrity, but this man is a very controversial figure.”

Gao Xiliang. A domestic D-list celebrity. Such celebrities were a dime a dozen in the entertainment circle. There might not be a thousand of them, but there were definitely at least 3 to 500 of them. However, to the common folk, it was actually very worthwhile for them to come to such a theater to watch a small-time D-list celebrity perform. This was also the reason why the organizers had designated Gao Xiliang’s act as the final performance.

The audience watched as they chatted.

“He really looks like a woman.”

“Heh, he’s so androgynous.”

“This cross-gender act 2 is pretty boring.”

“Yeah, wouldn’t it be better to get a real woman to come here and dance?”

“Haha, I actually quite enjoyed it.”

“What do you think he stuffed in his chest?”

Some people were relished watching the act.

Some people were scornful of the performance.

Some people were constantly laughing.

Only Zhang Ye did not blink as he paid attention to the performance very seriously.

Every move and action.

Every frown and smile.

They were all exactly like how a woman would behave.

Even Zhang Ye was pretty shaken by it.

Little Wang suddenly said, “Isn’t he similar to Qian Pingfan from The Voice?”

Zhang Ye couldn’t help but shake his head. How could you people understand? How are they the same? Qian Pingfan only had a childish voice that sounded feminine. But from head to toe, there was no hint of cross-gender. But this man standing in front of them was the real thing! He was a true master at it!

I’ve finally found you!

...

The performance ended.

Backstage.

Gao Xiliang was removing his makeup.

His wife, Zhao Ke, who was also his agent, helped him pack his stage costume. She asked, “About the Beijing TV Spring Festival Gala, did you receive an answer yet? Did you get selected?”

Gao Xiliang stayed silent.

Zhao Ke asked, “You got rejected, didn’t you?”

Gao Xiliang answered her with a sigh.

Zhao Ke clenched her teeth. “Why don’t you try approaching Liaoning TV?”

Gao Xiliang answered evenly, “I’ve already done that, but there was no response from them.”

“Old Gao.” Zhao Ke looked at him heartbroken. “You’ve worked hard for so long and been scolded for as many years. Can you really continue down this path?”

Gao Xiliang pondered for a moment. "I don't know."

"Then you—"

"But this is what I love doing."

"You're saying that again. You love it, but who will love you? You've been learning the art for over a decade and started acting in cross-gender roles since you were young. You and your teacher have put in so much hard work, but look at what that resulted in. The audience still can't accept it." Zhao Ke's eyes reddened. "Old Gao, why not—why not just forget it? I-I really can't watch you getting scolded by others anymore!"

Gao Xiliang said with a sinking voice, "Ever since Teacher passed away, the only successor left is me. If I quit too, who will be responsible for handing down this art form? Little Ke, I cannot retire from this. Otherwise, this art form is finished!" He paused. "I'll try again. I'll try for Tianjin TV's Spring Festival Gala."

Zhao Ke said, "You already tried asking them last year, and the year before that!"

Gao Xiliang hesitated. "Perhaps it might work out this year."

The door wasn't closed and someone entered at this moment.

That person was wearing a pair of sunglasses. "You don't need to go to the Tianjin TV Spring Festival Gala anymore."

Gao Xiliang looked at him suspiciously. "You are?"

Zhao Ke also frowned and looked at him. "What are you implying?" She often complained about her husband too, but wouldn't stand for anyone who looked down on him. "What do you mean by there's no need to go to the Tianjin TV Spring Festival Gala anymore?" Are you saying that Old Gao is not good enough for them? Who do you think you are? We're talking amongst ourselves here; what business is it of yours? Do you think we need you to give us advice?" she spoke fiercely.

Gao Xiliang stopped her and said, "Little Ke, what's gotten into you?"

Zhao Ke said angrily, "This man is crazy. He's too nosy!"

Zhang Ye got showered with scolding and didn't know whether to laugh or cry. He adjusted his wording and said, "I was saying, there's no need to go to the Tianjin TV Spring Festival Gala anymore." He looked at Gao Xiliang. "Would you like to try for the Central TV Spring Festival Gala instead?"

Gao Xiliang was startled!

Zhao Ke was stunned!

Central TV's Spring Festival Gala?

Who are you?

Who do you think you are?

Zhang Ye removed his sunglasses.

Zhao Ke instantly let out a scream!

Gao Xiliang shot out of his seat. "Director, Director Zhang?!"

Both of them were dumbfounded!

Tongue-tied and slack-jawed!

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "So do you want to come on the Central TV Spring Festival Gala?"

Gao Xiliang shouted at once, "I do! I do!"

Zhang Ye nodded. "Alright then, come look for me at Central TV tomorrow. I have an act to give you."

Zhang Ye turned and left.

Gao Xiliang stood in the same spot in surprise, unable to move!

Zhao Ke covered her mouth in shock, then kneeled down and started crying!

Heavens!

The Spring Festival Gala!

The day that Old Gao had been waiting for had finally arrived!

It had finally arrived!

Chapter 1323: What sort of a Spring Festival Gala will it be this year!

At night.

In the office of the Spring Festival Gala production team.

After Zhang Ye returned, the news started spreading.

"What?"

"A deaf-mute dance troupe?"

"Laborer singers?"

"A cross-gender actor?"

"Wh-What's with all of these performers?"

"What is Director Zhang thinking?"

"Yeah, just what kind of acts are in this new program list?"

"They won't do. How can we possibly have it like that!"

"That's right. This...this program list is too casual!"

When the new program list was first released, everyone was very excited. No one had expected Zhang Ye to finish planning it within a night. But when they learned about the performers that Zhang Ye had invited, everyone felt like puking blood. They felt that these choices weren't even as good as those that were rejected during the first approval session!

The leaders were alarmed!

The executives on the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee couldn't sit still any longer!

Over there, Zhang Ye was just leading some people from the production team to check on the progress of the stage. Before they could get there, they were stopped by some executives on the organizing committee.

...

Not far from them.

The Naval Song and Dance Troupe were rehearsing. They were the star act of the Spring Festival Gala and had appeared on its stage almost every year. But this year, they had encountered a problem. After the first approval session had left the status of all the acts hanging, the coach, Liu Dazhi, became very anxious. They only managed to secure another meeting to put a new act up for approval by the Spring Festival Gala's production team after approaching many of their contacts.

But unexpectedly, Zhang Ye was also here!

And there were also executives on the organizing committee!

From behind, a group of young ladies and men were getting excited!

"Quickly look!"

"It's Zhang Ye!"

"What are they talking about?"

"Why aren't they walking over here anymore?"

Among them, the most excited person was a young lady.

She was not old and was probably around 20 years of age.

It was Teacher Zhang!

It was him in the flesh!

Hu Die's 1 eyes were staring straight ahead. She wanted to run up to Zhang Ye to have a closer look at him more than anything!

She really liked Zhang Ye very much. From the time before Zhang Ye became famous, Hu Die was his fan. Just to catch a glimpse of Zhang Ye, she had spent the money that she had worked so hard at saving to buy a last-row ticket from a scalper to attend the King of Masked Singers' concert. When she saw Zhang Ye singing in the rain, she even got so emotional that she cried.

After she learned that Zhang Ye had been appointed as the Spring Festival Gala's executive director, Little Hu Die decided that she must definitely get on the Spring Festival Gala as well. She went to plead with the teachers and leaders to bring her along with them. But as her standard was not up to par, and she couldn't compare with her brothers and sisters in the troupe, she did not manage to go to the first approval session. As such, Hu Die cried to herself under her bedsheets for an entire night when it happened.

However, she didn't expect that there could be a turnaround. The Naval Song and Dance Troupe did not pass their first approval session and the leaders had to make last-minute changes to the act for their reattempt. They lacked several dancers for this revised act, so Hu Die went about doing favors just to be considered for a role. She brought food for the teachers and washed clothes for the troupe's brothers and sisters. In the end, she managed to get a chance to be included for a role. And now that they had arrived at Central TV, she actually got to see Zhang Ye as well. They were only 50 meters apart, and this was the closest to him that she had ever gotten!

She felt so fortunate!

Hu Die was getting a little overwhelmed!

The coach, Liu Dazhi, whisper-shouted, "What are you all doing! Where is your organizational discipline? Little Hu Die! Look at how you're behaving!"

Hu Die said, "They're all having a look too. Troupe Leader, why are you always picking on me?"

Liu Dazhi rolled his eyes and said, "You're the only lass who's staring so fixedly!"

"Little Hu Die's eyes were almost popping out."

"Heehee, you little infatuated fool."

"Little Top 2 has become an infatuated fool."

The big brothers and sisters were all teasing her.

Liu Dazhi harrumphed. "Go, stand to the side and start your punishment."

Hu Die pulled a long face. "Again?"

Liu Dazhi said, "You're the worst performer in the troupe. I've already made an exception by bringing you along to let you gain some experience, yet you're still not making the effort to work hard. If I don't punish you, who will I punish?"

Hu Die said aggrieved, "Whatever."

Liu Dazhi said, "If I don't say that you can stop, don't stop."

Hu Die went off to the side with everyone laughing around her. There, she began twisting her body and started turning around and around again—this was the standard punishment of the Naval Song and Dance Troupe. The person being punished would have to turn around in circles until they became dizzy. Not anyone could take such a punishment. Ordinary folks would often lose their balance the moment they spin around ten times. But for these dancers, they would have to last longer than that. Some of

them could go on spinning for five minutes, while others might be able to do so for up to ten minutes. Of course, there was also an oddity that existed in the Naval Song and Dance Troupe. And that oddity was Hu Die!

How long could she keep spinning for?

No one knew!

That was because no one had seen her getting dizzy before!

Hu Die was not comparable to the big brothers and sisters of the troupe in all other aspects. Singing? She was only average. Dancing? She was not amazing either. Only in the aspect of taking punishment was she better than everyone else in the entire troupe. As such, she was given the nickname: Little Top.

Hu Die started twirling in circles on the balls of her feet. Each time she completed a circle, she would take a look at Zhang Ye.

She felt so blessed!

Hu Die was overjoyed!

Liu Dazhi speechlessly shook his head, thinking about how this child was beyond help. Then he instructed the others in a low voice, "Director Zhang is having a discussion over there. When they finish and start walking over, I'll signal with my eyes to all of you so that everyone knows when to start the performance. We have to make the best of it so that we can catch Director Zhang's attention. That would be half the mission completed. Remember, our Naval Song and Dance Troupe must make it onto the Spring Festival Gala this year as well. Otherwise, none of us will have it good when we get back!"

"Understood."

"We know."

"Don't worry about it, Coach."

...

The discussion over there ended.

Zhang Ye finally convinced the executives of the organizing committee.

An official from the Ministry of Culture said, "Alright then, we'll see how everything goes during the second approval session."

Another executive gave a bitter smile and said, "Director Zhang, these are the only three concessions we can make. If the acts don't have a great effect, they will definitely be rejected."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Trust me on it."

They talked as they walked.

Liu Dazhi quickly gave the wink!

The troupe members immediately began performing!

A female executive asked, "So far, there are only three acts that have been firmed up?"

Zhang Ye acknowledged and said, "I already have in mind the candidates for the other acts. I'll gather them up within three days and put them through rehearsals."

Ha Qiqi was distracted by something.

Zhang Zuo looked across to the front.

An executive on the organizing committee said, "Is this a rehearsal?"

Another executive said, "They're people from the Naval Song and Dance Troupe, aren't they?"

Zhang Ye seemed to have noticed and was momentarily stunned as he stopped in his tracks.

The other people also gradually stopped in their tracks and watched the troupe's performance.

Liu Dazhi was silently cheered up by that. They were successful at catching their attention.

Hu Die also got excited at this. She wanted to stop turning so that she could rejoin the group of big brothers and sisters in their dance. But when she remembered the instructions of her coach, she could only carry on with her punishment. She was in pure anxiety. Teacher Zhang saw us! He saw us! Heavens! Can I stop spinning already! There goes my image!

Eh?

Is Teacher Zhang looking at me?

No, no, that must be an illusion!

Assistant Director Zhang Zuo asked, "Coach Liu, are you rehearsing?"

Liu Dazhi hurriedly came over. "Yes, we've arranged a new dance for our act and would like to show it to the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee executives. We're hoping that they could reexamine our act and consider us for the gala?"

The official from the Ministry of Culture was amused as he pointed to the side. "Why is there someone standing away from the group? And her movements are different from the others too?"

When Liu Dazhi turned to look, he nearly blew up in anger. He went over and whispered, "Aiyo, my young lady, why are you still spinning for! Stop, stop!"

Hu Die came to a stop. Her breathing was still very even, and she was not even panting.

Liu Dazhi said in embarrassment, "I was just punishing her for earlier."

Ha Qiqi said with interest, "Your troupe's punishment is pretty unique."

"Haha, it's normal, it's normal." Liu Dazhi laughed it off.

The troupe's dance finally ended.

But Zhang Ye did not seem interested at all. His eyes were still on that person standing in the corner. When the dancers came to a stop, Zhang Ye suddenly asked, "You there, what's your name?"

You?

Who are you asking?

Everyone looked to their left and right.

Hu Die had a startled expression on her face. She pointed at herself. "Me?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Yeah, you."

Hu Die got all excited and nearly fainted. "Me...My name is Hu Die!"

Oh my God!

Teacher Zhang has spoken to me!

Zhang Ye asked again, "How long did you spin for just now?"

Hu Die said excitedly, "I spun for ten minutes?"

Zhang Ye asked, "How long can you spin for?"

Hu Die blushed. "Me? I can spin for however long I want to spin!"

Liu Dazhi hurriedly intervened and said, "Don't listen to her bragging. In the past when she was punished, the longest she went on spinning for was three hours. We didn't allow her to spin any longer than that."

The production team's people were dumbfounded.

"Three hours?"

"That amazing?"

"Is everyone from your troupe able to spin for so long?"

Liu Dazhi said nervously, "How can that be possible? In the entire troupe, only she can do that. The others wouldn't even last past 10 minutes of spinning. This lass seems to be born without a sense of vertigo. But other than spinning, she's no good at everything else."

Hearing that, Hu Die shyly bowed her head.

You freaking Old Liu!

Freaking Old Liu!

Why are you always putting me down!

But at this moment, Zhang Ye said something surprising, "Four hours, can you spin for that long?"

Hu Die was stunned. "—I can."

Zhang Ye nodded. "Alright, then I'll see you at the second approval session. I'll leave an act for you to perform."

The entire venue burst into an uproar!

“What?”

“Director Zhang!”

“What’s the meaning of this?”

“Ah?”

Everyone was stunned!

Liu Dazhi’s jaw dropped!

Hu Die was dumbfounded. “Me?”

Zhang Ye said, “Yes.”

Hu Die stared with wide eyes. “I’m going to the Spring Festival Gala?”

Zhang Ye said, “Yes.”

“I...Who will I be a backup dancer to?”

“You’re not going to be a backup dancer. The entire act is for you alone.”

Hu Die said in shock, “What act is it?”

Zhang Ye said matter-of-factly, “Spinning in circles, of course!”

When they heard this, everyone who was present was floored!

Spinning in circles?

How is spinning in circles even an act?

Can you fucking stop kidding me?

The few executives of the Spring Festival Gala’s organizing committee could hardly breathe. “Director Zhang, you...this—Aiyo, we are going to wash our hands of this. Just do whatever you like!” The executives were driven off in anger!

The remaining people looked at Hu Die in awe.

Liu Dazhi’s face swirled with a mix of emotions!

Her big brothers and sisters in the troupe were speechless!

Why was it Little Top?

Why did she get chosen out of all people?

Unbeknownst to them, the Spring Festival Gala production team members were even more horrified!

What a weirdo!

What kind of fucking wondrous acts are these!

Of the numerous singers there are, you found two laborers instead?

Of so many dance troupes out there, you had to choose a deaf-mute group?

Of so many actors around, you had to find a cross-gender actor?

Of all the dancers available, you looked for someone who could only spin around in circles?

The Spring Festival Gala's production team members were utterly confused!

Christ on a bike!

What sort of a Spring Festival Gala will it be this year!

Chapter 1324: 40 acts are lined up!

The executives on the organizing committee who had been driven away in anger did not know what else they could say.

"What kinds of acts are these?"

"He can even make an act out of spinning in circles? How would that even be watchable?"

"What the heck is Director Zhang thinking?"

"He's always been someone who doesn't do things according to common sense!"

"Let's see how the second approval session goes. If it doesn't work out, we'll just cut them!"

"Do you even need to see how it will go? It's definitely not going to work out. And by the time we cut the acts, it will definitely not just be one or two of them. It's definitely going to be a mass cut, hai."

If it were someone else?

If it were another director who did this?

They would have intervened much earlier on. In fact, they would probably have even lost their temper at that director!

But when faced with Zhang Ye, they found it more difficult to use harsh words on him. Even if they didn't do it for the sake of the monk, they'd have to do it for the sake of the Buddha. Who could afford to not spare Wu Zeqing some face?

"Why don't we bring this up to Chief Wu first?"

"I'll see what Chief Wu's attitude on this matter is."

One of them immediately called her.

Du du du.

The call connected.

"Hello, Chief Wu."

"Oh, it's Chief Zhao."

"I hope I didn't disturb your rest at this hour."

"It's fine, I haven't slept yet."

"About the acts for the Spring Festival Gala, we've met with some problems. What I would like to ask is—"

"Hur hur, but the Spring Festival Gala isn't under my jurisdiction, right? You're the executives of the organizing committee, so I'm sure you can discuss it amongst yourselves."

"You're the SARFT's leader, so how can we skip over you, right?"

"Aren't Chief He and Director Liu already representing the SARFT on the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee? Besides, you should also be aware that the executive director of the Spring Festival Gala is my husband. Wouldn't I have to steer clear of this matter?"

"But the issue is that there is a lot of controversy surrounding the acts."

"Wasn't there a new list of acts drawn up for the gala?"

"It's the new acts that have an issue."

"Old Zhao, if you're asking me in my official capacity, I'd still say the same thing as I did before. This matter is not under my jurisdiction, so I won't offer any opinion on it. But if you're telling me this in my personal capacity, then I can only tell you that I understand what my husband is like. He might handle things in a rather odd way, but he has never disappointed before, has he? I believe in his judgment. If he thinks that a certain act will be good, then it will definitely be good."

Do things in a rather odd way?

Was this odd?

It was more like bizarre, alright!

Chief Zhao could only shake his head helplessly with a laugh. "Alright, I understand."

From those few words alone, even though Wu Zeqing said that she had to steer clear of the matter and that it wasn't under her jurisdiction, she was actually giving her utmost support to her husband.

Hai, forget it.

They could only wait until the second approval session was held.

...

In the next few days.

He scheduled the acts into the lineup one by one.

The script for each act was written by Zhang Ye.

...

The fifth act.

Zhang Ye called Chen Guang and Fan Wenli.

"Hello, Director Zhang?"

"Old Chen, do come for the second approval session."

"Me and Wenli?"

"Yes."

"I was just waiting to hear these words of yours. What kind of act will it be?"

"It will still be singing, but I'll need you to sing a different song. I'll contribute a track for it."

"Haha, that'll be great. It's our gain then."

...

The eighth act.

Zhang Ye made a video call to Zhang Yuanqi.

"Old Zhang, are you back in the country yet?"

"I just came back yesterday."

"Do you know how to play the piano?"

"I do, but I haven't played for a very long time. I'm afraid that I'll be out of practice."

"That's fine, the song isn't difficult."

"Then I guess it's not a problem."

"Good, then I'll leave an act for you on the Spring Festival Gala."

"What act is it?"

"It's definitely a good act, so don't you worry."

"Sure."

...

The 15th act.

"Hello, how's the progress of that matter I asked about regarding the family of three?"

"We've already found them, Director Zhang."

"Are they Mongolian?"

“Yes, it’s a couple who’re both Mongolian singers.”

“What about the child?”

“The child sings pretty good too.”

“Alright, bring them to Beijing and get them practicing immediately.”

“Understood.”

...

The 27th act.

“Director Zhang, hello.”

“Hello.”

“You were looking for me?”

“I heard that you’re the best magician in the country. I have a few magic tricks here that I wonder if you can perform.”

“About that, I’d have to see what the general difficulty of them are.”

“I can’t tell you about the level of difficulty. After all, I’m not in your line of work. However, I think it’ll be pretty challenging. I need someone who can perform this magic trick flawlessly within the month.”

“What’s the content of the magic performance?”

“I’ll come up with something for you.”

“I’ll give it a try then.”

...

The 30th act.

The staff of Ci Xiufang’s Studio came over.

“Director Zhang, please approve the skit we wrote.”

“Auntie Ci, I really can’t.”

“Everyone’s been preparing for it for three months now.”

“That still won’t do. The skit might be quite good, but it’s still far from being wonderful. For any other station’s Spring Festival Gala, I don’t care what they do. But on my side, it definitely won’t pass. But Auntie Ci, don’t worry about that. I didn’t say that I won’t let you on the show. How about this? I have a skit here that I find especially suitable for you. But I’ll need you to find a partner for it. There are some requirements for their appearance and height, though, so do you think you can do it?”

“Yes, pass the script to me.”

“Alright.”

...

The 40th act.

Zhang Ye called Grandma Zhang Xia.

"Grandma Zhang."

"So is there a place for me at the second approval session?"

"Of course there is. I have a good act that I've kept for you."

"How good is it?"

"It's the last act of the Spring Festival Gala, the finale."

"Who else is there?"

"There will also be veteran singers from the song and dance troupes, and you'll be the one leading them in the song that I've planned to change this year."

"Sure."

...

There were about 40 acts in total for the Spring Festival Gala.

Zhang Ye implemented the acts one by one and followed up on each of them.

Zhang Ye's workload in recent days started increasing as he went around looking for performers to invite onto the show. In between, he still had to take time out to plan the acts, as well as hold meetings with the performers to discuss the scripts. For some of the acts like singing, it wasn't that troublesome to handle since Zhang Ye would only have to fill in the lyrics and compose the tune. Everything else could be left to the professionals, and he only had to make sure that the final product lined up with his requirements. But for some of the other acts, they were much more difficult to coordinate. For acts like dancing, because Zhang Ye was not a professional choreographer to begin with, he did not know how to present the idea he had in mind to them. He could only demonstrate to the dancers with actual movements and then correct them afterwards. This process took up too much time. As for the magic and acrobatic performances, which were much more complex, Zhang Ye had plans in mind that he needed to teach to the performers in person and was basically irreplaceable for this task.

Looking for people.

Practicing.

Constructing props.

Setting up the stage.

Preparing the costumes.

One day.

Two days.

Three days.

Zhang Ye was always kept busy until it was pitch-dark out!

It was also the same for the performers. Everyone went into full preparation mode overnight. Zhang Yuanqi turned down all work and refreshed herself on playing the piano. Ci Xiufang's Studio was going through Zhang Ye's skit for them over and over again. The deaf-mute dance troupe basically lived at Central TV's dormitories since they had to verify the dance moves with Zhang Ye every day. Hu Die was also practicing her spinning daily and found that it was very difficult to spin for four hours straight. If she drank too much water, she would often get the urge to go to the bathroom. If she drank too little, she would easily become exhausted with the physical exertion on her body. She kept trying to find a balance.

Everyone was giving their best for the second approval session!

Only two approval sessions were going to be held for this year's Spring Festival Gala. The second approval session was to confirm the final program list for the Spring Festival Gala. Even though some adjustments were still going to be made during the rehearsal, the changes would not be that major. No one was willing to give up on this chance, and everyone was thinking only of stepping onto this dream stage!

Chapter 1325: The second approval session begins!

Days passed.

The competition was getting intense on the Celebrity Rankings Index.

—A Heavenly King achieved great success at a global new year countdown concert!

—A Heavenly Queen's latest holiday movie's box office earnings reach a new high!

—Another Heavenly King's suspected relationship was exposed but later proven to be a case of mistaken identity!

The end of the year 1 was approaching, and the artists were starting to compete with one another. Sometimes, the ranking of a celebrity at the end of a year would be an indicator of their net worth in the coming year. If they wanted to raise their net worth, endorsement pay, or film commissions, their position on the Celebrity Rankings Index was the most important criteria. The competition amongst the celebrities still boiled down to their popularities overall.

But common folk were still concerned with the changes in the S-list rankings. Since Zhang Ye was making a move to reach the summit, one of those seven S-list celebrities would have to step down. Judging from the packed schedules of the Heavenly Kings and Queens, it could be seen that they were responding to this matter. In fact, their response was very intense too, and this further illustrated that Zhang Ye was truly becoming a threat to them. They were finally unable to sit still. The battle had begun.

In recent days.

A certain Heavenly King's popularity rose again.

A certain Heavenly Queen had reclaimed her spot at the pinnacle of the film industry.

Those seven people had more or less taken another step.

It was the same for Zhang Ye. Wearing the halo of the Spring Festival Gala, a lot of attention was also given to him. Even though he didn't have any new works to speak of, even if he didn't appear in front of the audience, Zhang Ye's popularity still did not drop. In fact, it continued to climb steadily. During this period of time, it was all about the Spring Festival Gala.

Would it be a success?

Or would it be a failure?

Would Zhang Ye be able to reach the summit?

Was there going to be a change in the entertainment circle soon?

All of that would have to depend on this year's Spring Festival Gala!

...

On this day.

It was the day of the second approval session.

The news reports were updated like a bombing run. Some of the news had only just been received by the media. The secrecy surrounding the Spring Festival Gala had always been very high, so it was very difficult for the media to get hold of the latest updates surrounding it.

"The second approval session begins!"

"The Spring Festival Gala's production enters its final stages!"

"Who will be chosen for the finale act?"

"According to a news source, Zhang Yuanqi will be joining the cast of this year's Spring Festival Gala!"

"Major insider news: Zhang Ye redos the program list!"

"Zhang Ye personally plans out over 40 acts for the gala!"

"Will Zhang Ye be able to manage the dance choreographies?"

"Will the magic programs also be personally created by Zhang Ye?"

"After tonight, the final program list for the Spring Festival Gala will be revealed!"

After many of the citizens saw the news, they were scared silly. Like the media, it was the first time they'd heard of such a thing!

"What did they say?"

"Holy fuck!"

"40 acts?"

“Dancing? Singing? Skits? Crosstalks? Magic? Acrobatics?”

“All of them? All of the acts were rewritten by Zhang Ye?”

“Are you kidding me?”

“They must be mistaken, right!”

“Impossible! This is probably fake news, right?”

“Teacher Zhang is planning something again!”

“My titanium dog eyes are blinded! Does it have to be this exciting!”

“They’re really playing it big!”

The media turned their attention.

The public was in an uproar.

The industry insiders also expressed their views.

“This is too rash of Director Zhang.”

“Yeah, who the heck comes up with all the acts by themselves?”

“He wrote all of the 40 acts by himself? Isn’t that too exaggerated?”

“But from another perspective, this shows that the guy is amazing.”

“Yeah! Other than him, who would dare to do it like this?”

“Does he know anything about dancing? Why is he even doing the choreography for the dances?”

“Of course he does. Isn’t he the founding father of plaza dancing? The version of the dance that the aunties these days are all dancing to for ‘Small Apple’ and ‘The Hottest Ethnic Trend’ were all choreographed by him.”

“Pfft!”

“Can you even call that a dance?”

“He should just leave those matters to the professionals. Why is he taking on everything himself? Does he feel that of all the dance choreographers and skit writers in the country, no one is better than him?”

The controversy was no small matter.

It was very shocking.

There had never been an executive director who wrote all the acts in any of the previous galas. Just how confident and crazy would a person have to be to do something like that?

...

At Central TV.

The venue of the second approval session.

The main stage was still not fully set up, so they had to use Broadcasting Studio 3 as a temporary venue.

Backstage.

"Teacher Qi, is everything alright?"

"Everything is fine!"

"Have you changed that move we discussed?"

"We've already rehearsed the changes!"

"Alright, I'll leave it to you all then. Big Sis Ci, please don't change the lines, alright?"

"I got it. I tested it after that time and felt that the lines you gave were still better."

"Little Hu Die."

"Here, here, I'm here, Director Zhang."

"Don't you screw up."

"Don't worry. I-I'll definitely complete my task!"

"The second approval session is about to begin. Management will be coming to observe as well, so do your best, everyone!"

Zhang Ye gave his instructions to them one by one. Today was the most crucial day of all, and he was suddenly getting anxious as well. It was make or break. Zhang Ye was also not 100% sure if they would succeed. He had drawn up all the acts and given the performers a chance, so the rest of it would be up to them to perform to their best onstage.

Little Wang ran in and shouted, "Director Zhang, Sister-in-law has arrived."

Backstage, the looks in the eyes of quite a few people turned ambiguous.

Zhang Ye coughed. "So what if she has arrived. Why are you shouting that out?"

When he stepped outside, he saw the executives from the management.

Other than the executives on the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee, the officials above them from the Ministry of Culture and the SARFT were also here. Clearly, the negative news reports about the Spring Festival Gala had unsettled them quite a bit. Someone had probably snitched on them and made the higher-ups worried about the event, leading to this joint inspection of the second approval session's acts. More than a dozen people had come to take part, including the Ministry of Culture's deputy minister and the SARFT's deputy chief.

Wu Zeqing was among them.

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Old Wu."

Wu Zeqing also smiled and walked over. "Here, I brought you a jacket."

"Hai, you shouldn't have." Zhang Ye took it from her.

"It's quite cold these days. You should wear more." Wu Zeqing said, "Put this on."

"Alright." Zhang Ye put on the jacket.

Old Wu helped him adjust the collar and then gave him a glance before saying with a smile, "Alright, you look much more spirited this way."

Zhang Ye whispered, "What's with the group of people behind you? Why are they conducting a surprise check? Are they worried about what I'm doing?"

Wu Zeqing said, "Someone has some opinions regarding the acts you've planned. They have objections about the performers that you've invited as well."

Zhang Ye said in amusement, "Alright, then I guess I'll just have to open their eyes today and show them what we have planned."

An executive on the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee called for him.

"Director Zhang."

"Yes?"

"When are we beginning?"

"They're almost ready."

The leaders got seated in the first row.

Ha Qiqi, Zhang Zuo, and a few others anxiously came to look for Zhang Ye.

"Are the acts really going to be OK?" Zhang Zuo asked.

Ha Qiqi said, "I'm not really that confident either."

Zhang Ye said, "We'll have to see how they perform."

The executives were already chattering among themselves.

Deputy Minister Zhou from the Ministry of Culture was the highest ranked official and was seated in the middle.

"The stage is not complete yet?"

"We're almost done."

"Is the program list really not acceptable?"

"Hai, those performers are really somewhat..."

"Then why didn't you all intervene?"

"Director Zhang was very insistent on it. Besides, it's not exactly easy for the organizing committee to intervene either."

“Alright, I understand. Let’s have a look at the acts first then. The Spring Festival Gala is an important affair. It’s political, so it must not have any flaws. If the acts don’t work, then they’ll be pulled from the list!”

Deputy Minister Zhou’s words set the tone for today’s approval session.

It wasn’t until when Wu Zeqing came back with a smile on her face that they stopped discussing.

Deputy Minister Zhou had led a team here today for a “surprise attack” to check for problems with the acts. Too many people had feedback to him regarding the bizarre acts that Zhang Ye had come up with. As for what exactly the problems were, Deputy Minister Zhou did not have any details. However, since so many people had complained about it, he knew that there must be a reason.

He was really curious to see just what kinds of acts they were talking about.

Chapter 1326: The approval board’s shock!

At 8 AM.

It was time.

The Spring Festival Gala’s second approval session officially began.

Zhang Ye sat down and said, “Send in the singers.”

The first approval session was the preliminary selection round, while the second approval session was to confirm the acts. As such, the music and stage effects would all have to be ready. Even if the new stage was not fully ready yet, and the facilities of Broadcasting Studio 3 were not enough to bring out the effects to their fullest extent, they would still have to showcase it. Only then would those on the approval board be given a proper performance to assess it. Other than the absence of hosts, and the acts not being presented in order, it wouldn’t be too different from the actual Spring Festival Gala rehearsal.

The first group came out.

It was Chen Guang and Fan Wenli.

The music played and the couple began singing.

Ha Qiqi was nervously clenching her fists.

Zhang Zuo and Little Wang’s palms starting to sweat.

Come on!

You two can do it!

“Eh, this song is pretty good, isn’t it?”

“Yeah, it’s quite nice.”

“Who wrote the song?”

“Uh, it was written by Director Zhang.”

Deputy Minister Zhou lightly nodded.

The second act came out.

A family of three appeared.

Deputy Minister Zhou asked curiously, “I’ve never seen this family before?”

A person next to him said, “Yes, they’re not exactly well-known.”

But when the family opened their mouths to sing, many people were startled.

“Eh?”

“This is quite an interesting song!”

“It’s pretty nice!”

“The arrangement is really good and its target audience is also quite different.”

The executives who had come to watch were unanimously praising it.

The executives of the Spring Festival Gala’s organizing committee were also extremely surprised!

This isn’t right!

It’s not supposed to be like this!

Deputy Minister Zhou looked at an executive on the organizing committee and asked, “Isn’t this pretty good?”

Director Yang dabbed at his sweat. “The main problems are in the acts following.”

Chief Zhao nodded. “The later ones are the problematic ones.”

Deputy Minister Zhou nodded. “Alright then, let’s keep on watching.”

...

The third act.

“This song is the best!”

“The dance is great!”

“This act must be included in the gala!”

“Agreed. This is something new!”

...

The eighth act.

“Who is this woman?”

"Yeah, she's really pretty good at performing!"

"It's not a woman! Th-This is a man!"

"Ah?"

"But that's impossible!"

"Boss, it's really a man."

"What's this performance about?"

"Director Zhang says it's a cross-gender act."

"It's very good. This art form isn't often seen by too many people. It should be brought onto this stage so that everyone can learn about it and understand how many talented people there are amongst the common folk. That's right, Old Yang, Old Zhao, which are the problematic acts you were talking about?"

"Uh, they're still further."

"OK."

...

The tenth act.

"Oh my God!"

"They're—"

"They're all deaf-mute?"

"How did they manage to dance like this? Th-This is amazing!"

"Shocking! This is so shocking!"

"All of the kids have done really well!"

...

The 15th act.

"This dance?"

"How!"

"How did they do it?"

"Why didn't they fall over?"

"How did they keep standing upright like that without falling? What's the method that's keeping them upright?"

"It's too beautiful!"

"Old Yang, Old Zhao, have the problematic acts appeared yet?"

“Ah, they’re later.”

“They’re still later?”

...

The 22nd act.

“Aiyo!”

“This magic show is absolutely perfect!”

“It’s absolutely amazing!”

“H-How did he manage to pull that off?”

“You’d have to ask Director Zhang about that. The magic trick was designed by him.”

“Old Yang, Old Zhao, are we getting to the problematic acts yet?”

“Ah, th-they’re still further.”

...

The 29th act.

“Hahahaha!”

“Aiyo, I’m dying of laughter!”

“Hahahahaha!”

“It’s so hilarious!”

“Aiyo, I can’t take it!”

...

The 32nd act.

“Hahahaha!”

“This writing, it’s marvelous!”

“The lines for this will definitely go viral!”

“It’s really good! This skit is really, really good!”

“Old Yang, Old Zhao?”

“Uh, later, we’re almost getting to them.”

“Yes, yes, we’re almost there.”

...

At the beginning, the approval board members were looking to nitpick on problems with each act. But the more it went on, the more surprised everyone became!

Some people started crying listening to the songs.

Some people laughed at the skits.

Some people marveled at the dance.

Some people were shocked by the magic show.

It was really good!

All of them were very enjoyable!

All of these acts were planned by Zhang Ye?

Nobody could believe it!

Ha Qiqi was dumbfounded!

Zhang Zuo stared with wide eyes!

Little Wang was stunned!

The production team members were so shocked that their jaws dropped!

It wasn't like they hadn't seen Zhang Ye's program list before. In fact, they also took occasional glances at the performers' practices too. Some of the props were even constructed by them. But to watch the act from the start until finish? None of them had gone through this entire process. Today was also their first time watching the entire program list's rundown. Their emotions could only be summed up as shocked. These acts had completely surpassed their expectations!

And this was only Broadcasting Studio 3 they were in!

This was still not the new stage that they would be performing on!

If it were really transferred onto the new stage, the music, the lightings, the set design, all of those elements combined would make everything flawless. At that time, just how would these programs look like!?

They didn't even dare to start thinking about that!

Wu Zeqing was smiling. Right from the start, she did not say a word.

At this time, Zhang Ye heaved a sigh of relief. It wasn't too bad, although there were some acts that still needed tweaking. Some of the performing groups also made some minor mistakes, but all of those were still within acceptable limits. After all, the time given to them to prepare was too tight. So Zhang Ye was quite satisfied with how it had turned out. The remaining work was to keep letting them practice and refine their performances so that they could cut their mistakes down to a minimum. There was still a lot of room for improvement and practice.

Several of the skit actors who had just finished performing left the stage.

Many of the upper management who had come to observe the approval session were so amused that they couldn't close their mouths.

Deputy Minister Zhou looked to the side. "Old Zhao? Old Yang? Where are the acts that you two said were problematic?"

Old Zhao wiped away his sweat. "Th-They're coming later."

Old Yang could only bite his tongue and say, "Yes, that's right."

Ha Qiqi face-smackingly said, "The skit just now was the last act."

The venue fell silent.

Old Zhao, Old Yang, and a few other people turned green with anger!

There was nothing else?

All of the 40 acts finished up?

Deputy Minister Zhou stopped smiling and looked at the several of them. He slammed the table and stood up. "What are you all trying to achieve?! Just what are you trying to do!" He pointed at the stage and said, "It's still I? Then where is it? They've already finished performing, so tell me where is it then? Were these the acts that you all complained to me that were problematic? Were these the acts that you told me were no good? Do you have any eyes to see with? Do you have any ears to listen with? Tell me, which of the acts were bad?! Huh? If these acts aren't good enough, then what kinds of acts would be good enough for you people? Go and identify them for me! What kinds of acts?"

Both Old Yang and Old Zhao were on the verge of tears!

Wu Zeqing mediated, "Minister Zhou, let's forget about it."

Deputy Minister Zhou waved her off and said, "Chief Wu, don't speak up for them. I've been infuriated today." He looked at the executives on the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee and said, "Chief Wu's husband worked so hard and professionally to make the acts work that even a blind person can see it. All of the acts were created with soul, as well as blood and sweat. Nobody can know if the audience can accept them until Lunar New Year's Eve arrives. But at least to those of us here today, I don't believe that anyone would say that the acts were bad, am I right? None of you will say that they aren't good enough, isn't that so? In that case, they're definitely good acts! But what did you all do? Nothing at all! You all only know how to snitch on the production team and tell me that we have problems here and there every single day. Are you trying to create trouble?!"

Old Zhao hurriedly said, "Minister, we were in the wrong because we didn't understand it clearly."

Old Yang said, "We were derelict in our duty." Turning around, he looked at Zhang Ye. "Director Zhang, we're sorry."

Zhang Ye waved it off. "It's nothing that serious. Artistic works have neither good or bad points. Some people might like it, while others might dislike it. That's very normal."

Deputy Minister Zhou said regretfully, "Director Zhang, you've done a fantastic job."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "We're just serving the people."

Deputy Minister Zhou said excitedly, "These acts are all really good. I really didn't expect that the Spring Festival Gala could be produced so well after you took charge of it! It's good! Very good!"

Zhang Ye said, "Minister, you're too lavish with your praise. There are actually a lot more areas we can improve. Some of the acts had minor issues, so they weren't presented to the best that it should have been. Right now, they're still not good enough to be put onto the actual Spring Festival Gala. I still have to make further adjustments to them. I'll do my best to rush them out in time so that we can put up the most perfect performance on Lunar New Year's Eve."

What?

It was still not perfect?

It could still be done better?

Deputy Minister Zhou was very excited. "Alright, just do as you deem fit. Don't feel any pressure or feel burdened by the tasks. We'll leave the Spring Festival Gala to you this year. We're depending on you."

Zhang Ye was flattered. "Don't stand on ceremony with me. It should be expected of me."

Deputy Minister Zhou looked at him and said in seriousness, "I'm not trying to be polite. The Spring Festival Gala is on the decline, and the viewership ratings have been dropping year after year. Looking at where it is headed, we were all panicking. Seeing how the Spring Festival Gala is doing worse by the year, we've been completely unable to do anything about it. But it will be different this year. I feel that this year's Spring Festival Gala will definitely not be like how it was in the past! Teacher Little Zhang, we're really depending on you for the Spring Festival Gala. Please don't let it...be ruined in the hands of our generation!"

Zhang Ye did not expect Deputy Minister Zhou to say that to him. For a moment, he also turned serious. "Alright! I dare not give you my word on any other thing, but I will carry out my duties to the best of my ability."

The officials left.

The organizing committee left.

The Spring Festival Gala's production team was overflowing with passion!

"This is so awesome!"

"We've made it through! All of the acts have passed!"

"Director Zhang, you're amazing!"

"All of the acts were so godly!"

"Those skits were hilarious!"

"The dances were also very amazing!"

"I have a feeling that this year's Spring Festival Gala is going to be super popular!"

“Let’s hope that it’ll really be different this year!”

“With Director Zhang around, it will definitely be different!”

Zhang Ye laughed and said, “Don’t speak too early. Times have changed. We still do not know if the audience might like it. Alright, everyone has worked hard in recent days, so hurry back home and get some rest. We still have a lot of work to do starting tomorrow. A lot of the acts still need working on. Some of the set designs will also have to be redone.” Turning to Ha Qiqi, he said, “Old Ha, go and tell the performers about the outcome, hur hur. They must be feeling very anxious too.”

“Alright, I’ll go let them know!”

Ha Qiqi, Zhang Zuo, and a few others walked backstage.

Soon after, endless cheering sounded from backstage!

“What?”

“We’ve passed?”

“All of us went through?”

“Th-Then that means, we’ve all been confirmed for the Spring Festival Gala?”

“Ahhhh!”

“I’m going on the Spring Festival Gala!”

“Oh my God!”

“I have to call my mom right now! I need to let her know about this!”

“Are you serious? Is this really happening?”

It was a scene of elation!

Qi Xiaomei was crying!

Hu Die was screaming!

Gao Xiliang stood there in shock, his mind blank!

This was really just like a dream!

Chapter 1327: Great anticipation!

The next day.

The finalized program list from the second approval session was revealed.

...

The doorbell rang.

"Brother Gao! Brother Gao!"

"Sis Chen, what's the matter?"

"Quick, watch the news!"

"What news?"

"Don't you all know yet? Your family's Xiliang is going to be on the Spring Festival Gala!"

"But that's impossible!"

"The program list has been announced!"

"What?"

...

The phone rang.

A few minutes later.

"Old Hu!"

"What are you shouting for? You scared me half to death!"

"Old Hu! Old Hu!"

"What is it? Who just called?"

"It was from our daughter! Sh-She's going to be on the Spring Festival Gala!"

"Ah? She can even go on the Spring Festival Gala with that standard of hers? Who's she going to be a backup dancer to?"

"She's not going to be a backup dancer! She has an act tailored for her!"

"What did you say? No way! When did the Spring Festival Gala lower their standards for its performers?"

"Get lost! Why can't you have more confidence in our daughter!"

"Our daughter keeps getting punished by the coach of the Naval Song and Dance Troupe. She can never perform any of those difficult dance moves and actions. All she knows is how to spin around in circles, so how...how could I have any confidence in that!"

...

At the same time, there was another matter that was publicly announced. The upper management had issued a notice to announce that the executive director of the Spring Festival Gala this year, Zhang Ye, would be included in the Spring Festival Gala's organizing committee as a deputy committee leader. This news caused quite the surprise in the media and industry. The executive director had always been the head of the Spring Festival Gala's production team and its authority covered matters of the show's production as well as a series of other related matters. Meanwhile, the supervising authority of the

executive director lay with the Spring Festival Gala Organizing Committee. If there were any divided opinions, the final decision would depend on the executives on the organizing committee. But now, Zhang Ye was going to be appointed as a deputy committee leader of the organizing committee?

What did this mean?

What did this represent?

There had never been an executive director in the history of the Spring Festival Gala who was admitted into the organizing committee before!

Zhang Ye was the first person to get in, and he was also the only exception so far!

The signal that this event sent out was worth ruminating on!

“The program list gets revealed!”

“Zhang Ye admitted into the leadership group!”

“Zhang Ye’s authority has been strengthened even further!”

“This year’s Spring Festival Gala is branded with the Zhang name!”

An interview was even broadcast on Central TV’s News Channel.

It was a summarized conversation between a Central TV reporter and the Ministry of Culture’s Deputy Minister Zhou.

The reporter asked, “What were the reasons behind appointing Zhang Ye as a deputy committee leader?”

Deputy Minister Zhou said with a smile, “Because of the trust that we have in Director Zhang.”

“Can you reveal a little bit about the acts that were in the second approval session?”

“We have to keep that a secret. All I can say is that we’re very pleased to have gotten Director Zhang to take charge of the Spring Festival Gala this year. Zhang Ye is the most serious and responsible director that I’ve ever come across. We believe that everyone will experience a different Spring Festival Gala this year.”

Very pleased?

The most serious and responsible?

This was such high praise!

The minister’s declaration was the strongest support that could be given to Zhang Ye!

The public was also very surprised!

“What happened at the second approval session yesterday?”

“I don’t know.”

“The upper management has entirely delegated the Spring Festival Gala to Zhang Ye?”

"Yeah, I find that weird too. Aren't they too trusting of him?"

"The Spring Festival Gala has turned to advertising this year and the program list was changed at the last minute. With so much negative news, why would the upper management still dare to give Zhang Ye even more authority?"

"Could it be that the acts in the second approval session were all pretty good?"

"Zhang Ye is now someone who wields the greatest authority in the entertainment circle!"

"Yeah. Back then, it was just a saying. But it looks like it has become true now."

"This is so impressive. How did he achieve that? Even Hao Guang, the executive director of the Spring Festival Gala three years ago who enjoyed such a good relationship with the higher-ups, did not get admitted into the organizing committee. Be it the acts or the work put in, he had to do things according to the decisions of the higher-ups and seek their opinions. However, Zhang Ye has managed to do it!"

"The higher-ups must have taken a liking to the acts."

"But just look at the program list. I don't see anything special about it."

"What are these songs? I've never heard of them before."

"They must be new songs written by Zhang Ye."

"There's even going to be a magic show? And song and dance? We won't know anything just from the title of the acts."

"Yeah, just what kinds of acts are they? Why aren't they revealing any more details?"

"This is killing me! I would like to know too."

"It seems like many of the performers this year are unknowns."

"Right, why are there so many newcomers?"

"I only know Zhang Yuanqi, Zhang Xia, Chen Guang, and Fan Wenli."

"I know about Gao Xiliang, but why did he get on the Spring Festival Gala too?"

"A deaf-mute dance group? Fuck this!"

"How can they dance if they can't hear the music?"

"I really don't get this program list at all."

"Well, there's Teacher Ci Xiufang who's a regular."

"Yeah, there aren't too many changes in the performers' lineup of the language acts."

"They still look similar to the previous years, right? There isn't much difference."

"Yeah, it doesn't seem like there's anything surprising there."

"There aren't any Korean celebrities this year, though. I'll give Zhang Ye a Like for that."

“Hur hur, I don’t know about the other stations’ Spring Festival Gala. But if the Spring Festival Gala directed by Zhang Ye had Korean celebrities joining, I would immediately jump off the roof.”

“Who is this Little Hu Die?”

“I’ve never heard of this person before.”

“Old Chen and Old Fan will be singing a duet, while Zhang Xia will be leading those veteran singers and sharing the stage with them for a group performance. So why does this unknown have an act all to herself? This is as good as a Heavenly King or Queen’s treatment! As a newcomer, what right does she have?”

“Damn, look at the estimated duration of Little Hu Die’s act!”

“Ah, my eyes!”

“Fuck, this...this—”

“What?”

“Four hours?”

“What the heck!”

“‘Time’? What the fuck could this act be about?”

“The Spring Festival Gala itself will only be running for about four hours, right?”

“She’s going to perform from the start to the end? It’s entirely going to be her performance?”

“How is that possible? Won’t the others need to perform? Are we only going to watch her act?”

“They must have written it wrong, right?”

“Fuck, what the hell is Director Zhang planning?”

“Why do I get a feeling of fear?”

“I guess this year’s Spring Festival Gala is done for just like that!”

When the program list was revealed, it caused a heated discussion among the public and got flamed. There were all kinds of criticism, and many of the acts on the list were getting analyzed by everyone. Especially that act, “Time,” which would be performed by Little Hu Die. It received endless roasting from everyone. Many people were floored!

For acts on the Spring Festival Gala, the songs would last at most three minutes, while the skits and crosstalks would go on for around 10 to 15 minutes. These were the upper end of the estimates. Sometimes when they exceeded that duration allocation, they would even have to be cut short. Some celebrities would also only be given a minute or two to sing a song. When had there ever been an act that lasted for four hours!

Four hours?

You might as well go on for four weeks!

You could keep going from Lunar New Year's Eve until the first lunar month is over!

In the end, the netizens unanimously came to a conclusion: There was a typo. After that, they all left comments to bring attention to the fact. Some people even complained about it. However, all of that got lost as though they had sunk into the deep ocean. Although there wasn't a response from Central TV, they couldn't believe that there would be an act that spanned four hours of the gala. The general public might know that Zhang Ye never did things logically, but they were still kind enough to think that even Zhang Ye wouldn't resort to something as atrocious as this!

There were countless rants!

The flamers emerged without end!

The topic of the Spring Festival Gala had once again been pushed to the peak after the program list was revealed!

There were scoldings!

There was criticism!

There was praise!

There was anticipation!

From the public!

From the media!

From the higher-ups!

From the industry insiders!

No matter who it was, no matter what they were saying, no matter what kind of opinions they had, there was one thing that no one could change: Every Chinese person was now waiting for the arrival of Chinese New Year's Eve. They all would really like to see just what kind of a Spring Festival Gala Zhang Ye could come up with!

Chapter 1328: Zhang Ye's post on social media!

The days passed.

The costumes were finished.

The props were made.

The stage was completed.

The set design was finished.

The hosts' rehearsals concluded.

The acts were gradually perfected.

Everything was progressing smoothly and in an orderly manner. The first and second dress rehearsals were nearing, which meant that the Spring Festival Gala had entered the final countdown!

Zhang Ye was in a rather good mood. Seeing that everyone had been busy for so many days, he held a meeting with the organizing committee and had a discussion with them. In the end, they decided that the Spring Festival Gala's production team and related staff would get two days off from work. They had to strike a balance between work and rest, and would prepare for the final sprint after they came back from the break!

Everyone went off for the two-day holiday.

Naturally, this included Zhang Ye as well.

...

Saturday.

Later that morning.

Today, his relatives were all gathered at Zhang Ye's maternal grandma's house.

The moment Zhang Ye arrived, he collapsed onto a bed and lay down. "None of you even dare think about snatching this bed from me. Aiyo, I'm so exhausted from these past two months, and I can finally get two days of rest."

His grandma said with her heart aching for him, "They're tiring out my grandson so badly."

His grandpa said, "It must have been particularly difficult on you, right?"

"How is it just particularly difficult?" Zhang Ye corrected. "These are the darkest days ever!"

His third aunt said, "Mengmeng, get a glass of water for your brother."

"Alright." His third sister quickly went to get it for him.

His eldest younger sister went over and sat down to massage Zhang Ye's shoulders. "You've worked so hard, Brother."

Zhang Ye said in a pampered manner, "Look at this, it's still my eldest and third sisters who are the most sensible."

His second sister rolled her eyes. "Brother, aren't you hurting me with your words?"

Zhang Ye laughed. "By the way, Grandma, Grandpa, Dad, Mom, I probably won't have much time after my break. I'll be busy all the way until the first day of the Lunar New Year, so I won't be spending the eve at home this year."

His mother pursed her lips. "What do you mean by this year? Which year have you spent the eve at home with us?"

Zhang Ye broke out into a sweat.

Last year, he was busy with the Spring Festival Gala at Beijing Television.

The year before that, he had been taken to the police station where he got detained.

He really hadn't spent Chinese New Year's Eve at home over the past few years.

His grandma harrumphed. "Little Ye is busy doing great things out there, so where would he find the time to spend the New Year at home? Do you think that my grandson is as free as you every day?"

His mother was speechless.

"Little Ye, what good acts do you have lined up for this year's Spring Festival Gala?"

"First Uncle, I have to keep that a secret."

"Brother, just reveal a little bit, won't you?"

"No, I can't."

"Do you have to keep it a secret from us?"

"I can't tell anyone at all, so don't ask me anymore. You'll all know when you watch it on TV."

Everyone continued chasing after him for answers anyway, as they were very concerned about the Spring Festival Gala. But Zhang Ye did not wish to speak about it. This fellow had been working so much on the Spring Festival Gala for the past two months. It was always about the gala from dawn til dusk, and even in his dreams. At the moment, just the mention of the words "Spring Festival Gala" was enough to make him shiver in fright. It wasn't easy getting these two days of break from it, so he really wasn't interested in talking about the subject.

Soon after, the elders went out into the living room to chat.

Only his three sisters were left in the room as they chattered on while browsing through their social media.

"It's increased again!"

"There are already 2,000 votes."

"Sis, you're doing awesome."

Zhang Ye clasped his hands behind his head while lying down. "What are you talking about?"

His eldest younger sister said somewhat embarrassed, "They're voting for me."

His second sister looked over. "Oh yes, Brother, have you voted for Sis yet?"

"What vote?" Zhang Ye did not understand.

The second sister said, "Didn't you see the status that Sis posted in her Moments 1 ? The selection for this year's 'Most Beautiful School Belle' has begun. Over a few hundred universities in the country are participating, and the competition is really intense. Our family members have all voted for Sis already. Even Sister-in-law has voted for her, so how can you not know about it?"

Zhang Ye exclaimed, "Do you think I have the time to check my social media? Even Old Wu has voted?"

His third sister rolled her eyes. "Only you have not voted yet."

"Alright, alright, I'll vote as well, hur hur." Zhang Ye launched his social media app and scrolled up for a very long time until he saw his eldest younger sister's post. It seemed like there really was a "Most Beautiful School Belle" selection going on. It was a competition to find the prettiest student from universities all over the country. The promotions for it were even quite intense, and many of the media outlets were following it as well.

He had a quick glance at the rankings.

First: Jin Ni

Votes: 280,000

Second: Wang Xiaohe

Votes: 260,000

Third: Chen Di

Votes: 250,000

Then, from fourth place onward, the votes were no longer that high. They only had several tens of thousands of votes, and it was obviously of a different magnitude as compared to the top three spots. The disparity between them was very obvious.

Zhang Ye blinked. "What rank is Dandan?"

His eldest younger sister coughed and said, "I'm at around 700th place."

"Pfft, you're that low?"

His third sister said, "Our sis has been utterly demolished."

Cao Dan, his eldest younger sister, did not exactly look exceptionally beautiful. In fact, she was far from it. However, she was still quite beautiful. It could be summed up as a quiet-looking kind of beauty, and one would find her particularly pleasing to look at. Zhang Ye compared her with the photos of the current top three school belles. No matter how he looked at it, he thought that his sister was much more pleasing to the eye.

They managed to get over 200,000 votes?

While his own sister had only a little more than 2,000 votes?

Zhang Ye was still stuck in a traditional kind of mindset. He asked, "Do the candidates in the top spots have a lot of friends and relatives?"

His third sister was floored. "Who could possibly have over 200,000 relatives!"

"Oops, true that."

His second sister harrumphed angrily. "Do you think that everyone is as honest as us? They bought all those votes with money! Someone exposed that the person in first place, that Jin Ni who's from a film

academy, has already signed a contract with an entertainment company. It was her company who helped her to get most of her votes so that she can become the most beautiful school belle. By spending a bit of money to raise her profile, this bit of investment can easily be recouped once she becomes famous. For the second and third place candidates, they're from rich families and probably also bought their votes. Look at some of the comments on their profiles. They're all scolding them for taking over accounts to vote for themselves. Basically, the people that they paid off to mass vote for them did not handle the matter properly and used stolen accounts to vote for them without the actual owner's knowledge. Such behavior is so awful! What they're doing is illegal!"

Zhang Ye exclaimed, "Whoa, it's that shady? Has anyone complained yet?"

His second sister said, "Many of the stolen account owners have already complained, but to no avail."

At this moment.

Someone knocked on the front door.

His eldest younger sister smiled and said, "That must be Sister-in-law."

When they opened the door, it was indeed Wu Zeqing who had come.

"Zeqing, you've knocked off?"

"I had something to attend to this morning, so I went back to the office for a while. Otherwise, I would've come along with Little Ye."

"Come in, quick."

After greeting the elders, Wu Zeqing walked inside.

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "You're here?"

His second sister greeted, "Sister-in-law."

His eldest younger sister greeted, "Hello, Sister-in-law."

Wu Zeqing smiled and said, "Are the results for the 'Most Beautiful School Belle' out yet?"

His eldest younger sister smiled and blushed. "The poll is ending tonight, so the results aren't out yet."

"What's your place right now?" Wu Zeqing asked.

His third sister came up and complained, "Sister-in-law, my elder sis is getting demolished. She's ranked several hundred places from the front. Those people are awful. They're all resorting to buying votes to win."

Wu Zeqing smiled gently. "Why don't you approach your brother for help?"

Zhang Ye shrugged. "I have so few friends. As though it'd help with her votes."

His third sister pointed at him. "Look at him, sister-in-law. This brother of ours is so terrible."

Wu Zeqing laughed.

His eldest young sister had a very good character. She tugged at her younger sister. "Aiya, there's no need. I won't be able to get a spot that would matter anyway. It's already pretty good to place within the top several hundred candidates. I was just messing around when I decided to join the competition."

His third sister said, "If you get a better placing, we would look good too!"

His second sister agreed, "That's right, that's right!"

Zhang Ye helplessly took out his cell phone and said, "Alright, I'll help share the post. I don't really have that many people in my friends list, and most of them are still busy with the Spring Festival Gala. They won't have time to vote for sure."

"#029121 is my younger sister; please vote for her."

He finished editing the post.

Then shared it.

Zhang Ye said with a laugh, "All done."

His eldest younger sister said, "Thanks, Brother. I'm not actually thinking of competing and was just doing this for fun. I shared my status randomly, but who could have guessed that these two girls would pick up on it."

His second and third sisters giggled, "Heehee."

Someone replied to the post that Zhang Ye had just shared.

Chen Guang: "That's your sister?"

Zhang Ye read it and typed his reply: "Yes."

Chen Guang: "I got it."

Ci Xiufang also left him a message. "Which younger sister?"

Zhang Ye: "The eldest one."

Ci Xiufang: "Dandan, right?"

Zhang Ye: "Yes."

Ci Xiufang: "I've voted."

Fan Wenli: "I've voted."

Zhang Xia: "I've voted."

Quite a few of his friends replied to his post.

Many of the celebrities who attended Zhang Ye's wedding had seen Cao Dan too.

His third sister was refreshing the rankings. "Wow, Sis! Your votes have already gone up by more than forty."

His second sister said, "It's all to the credit of our brother's influence."

Zhang Ye didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "It's so few votes and you're saying that I have a great influence? Whatever. It's almost time to eat. I'll let you all have a taste of your sister-in-law's culinary skills today."

Wu Zeqing smiled. "Oh, you! Don't praise me like that."

Everyone was joking and laughing as they started preparing for lunch. No one gave another thought to the "Most Beautiful School Belle" selection.

Zhang Ye had only shared the post in his Moments, and no one other than his friends could see it. But unexpectedly, this post was about to kick off something huge!

Chapter 1329 Just who the hell's sister is this?

Just before noon.

At an entertainment company.

"Jin Ni, the company will definitely make sure you get first place this time.

"But the people behind me are right on our heels."

"It won't be a problem. The company has bought another 100,000 votes for you."

"Thanks, Sister Chen, thank you."

"We'll buy however many votes that they are catching up by. There's nothing to be afraid of."

"I understand."

"Work hard in the future and don't let everyone down."

...

At a villa.

"Dad! Why am I only in second place!"

"Hur hur, Little He, don't be anxious."

"But I want to be in first place. It's no use getting second!"

"Daddy knows. Don't you worry, I already got someone to take care of this. When the voting ends at midnight tonight, my darling daughter will surely be in first place."

"Really?"

"Really. It's just about spending money, isn't it? I'll see who can outbuy whom for the votes!"

...

At a university.

In the female dorms.

“Chen Di, you’re in third place!”

“Yep.”

“Why are there so many people accusing you of stealing their accounts?”

“Ignore them, those are the alt accounts the top two girls sent to slander me.”

“You didn’t buy votes, did you?”

“Would I need to?”

“Haha, that’s true. Our Didi is so beautiful!”

“Yeah, Didi will definitely win the most beautiful school belle!”

...

The competition for Most Beautiful School Belle was getting intense.

The top three were in a knock-down, drag-out brawl. At times, one of them would suddenly gain an additional 20,000 votes. At times, another one would suddenly gain 30,000 votes. The voting pattern was very strange as the three of them were determined to take first place!

The netizens were also watching the fun.

“This is getting really intense!”

“How did these three girls get so many votes?”

“The girl in fourth place is behind by so many times fewer votes than them?”

“Hur hur, did you think that those votes were real? They’re all bought votes.”

“At least 95% of the votes here were bought with money. It’s too shady.”

“I don’t like any of these three.”

“Let’s see which of them will get first place.”

“The Most Beautiful School Belle is now just a matter of who can spend more money. There’s no meaning to it anymore.”

“Yeah, this ranking’s authority is getting worse and worse each year.”

“Fuck, my account was hacked by them! It was used to vote for one of those three!”

“Mine too! I’ve already filed a complaint, but it’s no use!”

“Motherfucker, how is this the ‘Most Beautiful School Belle’ competition? It should be called the ‘Most Shady School Belle’ competition instead!”

“Nice sarcasm, hur hur hur.”

But it was at this time that something really surprising occurred!

A name suddenly appeared at the front of the rankings!

30,000 votes!

50,000 votes!

100,000 votes!

The netizens were stunned!

“Damn, here comes another vote buyer!”

“What strong momentum!”

“She gained over 100,000 votes in just five minutes?”

“Who the hell is this person?”

Then, in the blink of an eye, that girl’s votes skyrocketed once more!

200,000!

500,000!

1 million!

With hardly any effort, she had been pushed into first place!

The netizens were dumbfounded!

“Oh my God!”

“Hahahaha!”

“This is going to be interesting!”

“How awesome, there’s a school belle who’s even shadier than those three shadiest school belles!”

“This is so exciting!”

The change in the rankings surprised everyone! A lot of people could not even react in time as they witnessed in dumbfounded shock that girl’s votes soar upwards. The votes kept going higher and higher until it reached a number that made many people piss their pants. It was only then that everyone realized that something was off!

“This isn’t right!”

“This doesn’t look like vote buying!”

“Damn, is this girl insane?”

“Who’s voting for her?”

"There can't be anyone buying this many votes! They wouldn't be able to vote at such a fast rate either!"

"The price per vote has already reached 2 yuan. Just look at the number of votes, goddamn! If a vote really cost 2 yuan each, how much would they have to pay for all of that!"

"Of course she didn't buy those votes!"

"Previous poster, what's going on?"

"I also voted for her. You guys should go and check out the celebrities' Weibos!"

"Check the celebrities' Weibos? Which celebrities?"

"—All of them!"

"All?!"

"What do you mean by that?"

...

At a villa.

"Dad! What's happening?!"

"I'm not sure either!"

"Who is Cao Dan?"

"Is this girl out of her mind?"

"Dad, I want to get first!"

"—Little He, why don't we just forget about this?"

"Dad!"

"Th-This is really too much to spend!"

...

At an entertainment company.

Someone ran in from outside.

"Sister Chen, go and look at the rankings!"

"What's the matter?"

"Jin Ni is no longer in first place!"

"What? Then hurry up and go buy more votes!"

"It won't work anymore! We can't catch up to the girl who's in first place."

“Why can’t we catch up to her? Just spend more money on it. However many votes they’re buying, we’ll buy just as much! We won’t reject anyone who’s willing to sell their vote. How many votes does the first place girl have right now?”

That person gulped. “12 million votes!”

Sister Chen nearly fell over and hit her head!

Jin Ni nearly vomited blood!

What?

12 million votes?

Bro, we’ve only received several hundred thousand votes after so many hours of buying them!

Who was this person?

Just who could she be?

...

At a university.

The school campus was in an uproar.

“Damn! Everyone, quickly go and have a look at the rankings for the Most Beautiful School Belle!”

“What? First place has changed?”

“It’s someone from our school?”

“Cao Dan?”

“It’s Sister Dan?”

“Oh my God! Cao Dan is from our class!”

“She has over 10 million votes?”

“She’s even gained an enormous lead over second place!”

“Is Classmate Cao soaring to the skies?”

“This is so impressive!”

“Sister Dan is invincible!”

“Ah, everyone! Look on Weibo!”

...

Noon.

At Zhang Ye’s maternal grandma’s house.

Everyone just finished lunch and were chatting.

His eldest younger sister received a call from a classmate. "Hello, Lü Zi?"

Her female classmate on the other end of the line yelled: "Dandan, you're in first place! You're going to be super popular!"

His eldest younger sister was stunned for a moment: "What first place?"

"Damn, don't you know? Go look at the Most Beautiful School Belle. You've already amassed over 10 million votes, and it's still increasing!"

His eldest younger sister shook her head in disbelief. "That's impossible. I've only got about 2,000 votes or so."

Her classmate yelled: "But several dozen big name celebrities are soliciting votes for you on Weibo!"

His eldest younger sister finally got a stunned look on her face. "What?"

His third sister asked, "What's the matter, Sis?"

His first uncle asked, "What happened?"

Zhang Ye and a few other relatives also looked over.

His eldest younger sister quickly checked the rankings and was startled. Then she had a look on Weibo and got a shock too. After that, she dumbfoundedly turned her cell phone around for Zhang Ye and everyone else to see.

The family was shocked too!

"The most beautiful school belle?"

"Sis, y-you're in first place?"

"Dandan, how did you get so many votes!"

"Aiyo, how did this come about?"

His eldest younger sister swiped the screen and switched over to show the Weibo homepage.

This time, it was Zhang Ye who was floored!

Chen Guang's Weibo: "This is my friend's little sister; please vote for her."

A B-list singer's Weibo: "It's my boss's sister. Please do give her your support and vote."

Ci Xiufang's Weibo: "A little sister of mine, please share."

Gao Xiliang's Weibo: "Please give your vote to #029121. It's my lifesaver's sister, please help! Please share! Thanks!"

Countless replies were shown below.

"Pfft."

“Auntie Ci is also involved with this?”

“I’ve voted.”

“Voted.”

“If Old Chen says so, then I surely have to give face to him.”

“Haha, I’ve already voted.”

In just a short while, several dozen celebrities had canvassed for votes for Zhang Ye’s eldest younger sister on Weibo!

His third sister said, “Damn!”

His second sister said excitedly, “It really blew up!”

Zhang Ye’s first uncle and aunt both let out an exclamation!

Zhang Ye wiped his sweat. “I didn’t know about this. I never asked them to share it!” He quickly took out his cell phone and sent them a message. “What’s this about? Why did you all share it onto Weibo?”

Ci Xiufang was the first to reply. “Ah? Weren’t you asking for votes for your sister? I just thought that I’d share it.”

Gao Xiliang said: “You’re my benefactor, so your sister’s business is also my business. I just shared it. It’s no big deal.”

Many of the others also replied with a similar response.

Zhang Ye didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. He did not know what to say. It was only at this moment that it hit him that he was now the executive director of the Spring Festival Gala. He was no longer the same person as before. By sharing a post on social media, what would you expect others to think when they see it? Hai, forget it. What’s done is done. It wasn’t like he could take it back anyway.

...

At an entertainment company.

Sister Chen was close to swearing!

Jin Ni asked dumbfoundedly, “Sister Chen, are we still buying votes?”

Sister Chen nearly wanted to kick her unconscious!

You still want to buy more votes?

Buy, your sister!

We’re already fucking behind by more than 10 million votes!

Sister Chen had also taken a look at Weibo. She knew that there was no more hope of getting first place this time. However, she could not understand why so many of the big name celebrities and other artists in the entertainment industry were giving their support and canvassing for votes for a university

student? What was going on? Just whose sister could this be? All of them were big shots who had already been famous for a long time! There were A-, B-, and C-listers among them. Any one of them was a very famous person!

This was only a competition to pick the most beautiful school belle!

Did it really have to attract all of you godly people?

Any single one of you stepping forward to canvass votes for Cao Dan would have been enough to leave us with no chance of winning! But now, over 60 to 70 of you big name celebrities are canvassing for votes together? Damn, did you all need to bully us like that?!

Sister Chen was on the verge of tears!

Today's battle lineup had given her a terrible scare!

...

It wasn't only her though.

Many of the media outlets and citizens were also in a state of shock!

Cao Dan?

Cao Dan?

Who the hell's sister was she?

...

On the same night.

The voting came to an end.

Cao Dan was chosen as the most beautiful school belle with 28 million votes in the end!

Chapter 1330: My name is Cao Dan, a girl who embodies both beauty and talent!

The next day.

It was a Sunday. At Zhang Ye's parents' house.

It was around 9 AM when the doorbell rang.

His mother snorted, "Who is it?"

His father said, "Just open the door and you'll know."

When the door opened, Zhang Ye's first uncle and his family were all standing outside. They were carrying quite a lot of things in their hands. Zhang Ye's other two cousins were here as well.

His first uncle smiled and said, "Sis, Brother-in-law."

His first aunt said, "Zeqing, you're here too?"

Wu Zeqing smiled and nodded. "I didn't go back home yesterday."

His father called to them, "Come, come on in."

"Why did you all bring so many things?" His mother glanced at what they were carrying. "We aren't lacking anything at home."

His first uncle said, "These are all food that Little Ye likes."

His second sister blinked, "Where's Brother?"

His third sister looked to the bedroom. "He better not still be sleeping!"

Wu Zeqing chuckled. "He's still in dreamland."

His mother shouted to the bedroom, "Little Ye, wake up. Your first uncle is here."

A sleepy voice came from Zhang Ye's room. "I know."

His eldest younger sister said, "Don't wake Brother up. He's going back to work tomorrow, so let him sleep a little longer."

His mother said, "It's fine. Oh yes, Dandan, did you get first place in yesterday's Most Beautiful School Belle competition? We turned in early after coming back from your grandma's place, so we didn't check on it."

When Zhang Ye's first aunt heard that, she got really excited and said, "She won, she won. She received more than 20 million votes in total."

His second sister also exclaimed excitedly, "My sis is now on fire. Her Weibo followers jumped to 500,000 overnight, and she even got reported about in the newspapers."

Zhang Ye's mother said very happily, "Where is it? Let me have a look."

She was handed some newspapers.

"The Most Beautiful School Belle selection comes to a conclusion!"

"Cao Dan wins the Most Beautiful School Belle award!"

"Many A- and B-list celebrities collectively helped her canvass for votes!"

"Whose sister is she? The mystery of Cao Dan's background!"

Although this news wasn't in the entertainment headlines, it was still reported about in a pretty good spot.

Zhang Ye's father said interested, "It was really reported about?"

Cao Dan said rather embarrassed, "It's all credit to Brother's influence."

At this moment, Zhang Ye's bedroom door opened. He came out yawning while still wearing his pajamas. After greeting his first uncle and aunt, he looked at his three cousins. "Hey, why is it you three again? Didn't we just see each other yesterday?"

His second sister giggled. "Sis needed to look for you regarding some business, so of course we had to tag along."

His third sister jumped in joy and said, "Brother, other than you, there's gonna be another big star emerging in our family."

"What big star?" Cao Dan rolled her eyes at them. "Stand aside."

Zhang Ye also saw the copies of newspapers and picked them up to have a look. He asked, "Look for me regarding some business?"

His first aunt spoke, "Little Ye, we just wanted to seek your advice about what we should do now. Look, Dandan will be graduating this year and will have to get a job soon. But she doesn't have any idea about what she wants to do. And now that she has won the Most Beautiful School Belle award, some entertainment companies came to approach her. We're not sure how they got her number either, but they said that they were looking to sign her so that she can carve out a career in the entertainment industry."

Zhang Ye asked, "Are the contract terms good?"

His first uncle scratched his head. "Like we'd know any of that."

"What are the companies called?" Zhang Ye asked.

His first uncle replied, "One of them is called Feng Nian? The other one is called Hua Hai Entertainment?"

Zhang Ye shook his head. "They're just small companies. It's better to not join them."

His first uncle said, "We didn't know what to do after discussing it for a long time, so we decided to come over to consult you. Do you think this is a viable opportunity? The issue is that such opportunities do not come by every day. If we just let it pass, we might end up regretting it. But you also know how Dandan is. She's not talented like you, so I'm fearful that she won't be able to survive in the industry."

Cao Dan looked at Zhang Ye.

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "If you're asking me, of course I would say no to my sister joining the entertainment circle. The waters here run too deep. I'm sure you all know how badly I've been scolded over the years. Dandan has a more reserved character, so I don't think she's suitable in this line of work. But it doesn't matter what I say, First Uncle and Aunt. We have to see what Dandan herself thinks."

Cao Dan's lips did not move.

Zhang Ye's mother asked, "Dandan, what are your thoughts?"

Cao Dan stayed silent for a long time and finally said through clenched teeth, "I would like to join the entertainment industry."

Zhang Ye blinked. "You had better consider it carefully."

"Brother, I've already thought it through," Cao Dan said with conviction.

Zhang Ye's mother said with a smile, "Right, just do it if you've already thought it through. Even though the waters of the entertainment circle are deep, which industry's waters are not deep? No industry is easy to be in, so if Dandan wants to carve out a career in the entertainment circle, at least there's already your brother in it. You don't know how to scold people? Your brother does! You can't fight? Your brother knows how to!"

Zhang Ye was floored. "Thanks for you 'praise,' Mom."

Everyone laughed.

Cao Dan also covered her mouth and laughed.

His first aunt quickly said, "Little Ye, then you must guide your sister more often. If she intends to join an entertainment company, which one would be a good choice? How can she sign with them?"

His first uncle said, "Yeah, we don't know how to go about doing any of that."

Zhang Ye said, "Those companies that you mentioned earlier are just small companies that aren't well-known. If Dandan really wants to develop her career, let me think for a bit first." He pondered for a while. "I know Zhang Yuanqi rather well. She has part ownership of the company she's signed to and has quite a big say in it too, so Dandan can consider signing with them. If she goes there, Old Zhang should be able to help take care of her. As for the other entertainment companies, I haven't really dealt with them much, so I don't really know them well. So I can't—"

Wu Zeqing spoke up.

Old Wu took a sip of tea before interjecting, "You can also join any other company you wish."

Her words were very domineering.

Perhaps only Old Wu would dare to speak in such a way.

It was only at this moment that everyone remembered that there was still a leader from the SARFT in the house. Well, with the thorniest character in the entertainment circle, who would dare to provoke Zhang Ye? Meanwhile, Wu Zeqing was one of the top three leaders at the SARFT who oversaw the entertainment circle. With these two people backing her, would Cao Dan still have a hard time? Even if they did not bully anyone, at least they wouldn't be pushed around by the others. If she could still get bullied in such circumstances, then that would be a wonder!

His mother said happily, "Yeah, there's still your sister-in-law backing you."

Cao Dan quickly said, "Thank you, Sister-in-law!"

His second sister exclaimed, "Sister-in-law is almighty!"

Zhang Ye's first uncle and aunt were both overjoyed. "Zeqing, thank you so much."

With those words from Wu Zeqing, they were finally much more confident.

He had lost the opportunity to show off!

His wife had stolen his thunder!

Zhang Ye could only roll his eyes. But he switched his tone and said, "Actually, I still don't recommend Dandan to sign with a talent agency too soon. First, there will be more restrictions implemented on her. Second, there are also many artists-in-waiting at the larger agencies, so it won't be that easy for her to make a breakthrough. Don't think that several hundred thousand followers on Weibo are a lot. It really isn't that big a deal! Moreover, such popularity is only temporary. There's nothing set in stone yet since you don't have any works on your résumé. A celebrity still has to be capable in order to compete with the others. After the momentum of the Most Beautiful School Belle award dies down in another month or two, there's a possibility that no one will pay attention to you anymore. What then? How would you expect the talent agency to push your case? How would they promote you? Would there be any momentum? All of this is still unknown. Besides, with your current popularity, you still can't negotiate for a good contract."

Cao Dan humbly asked, "Then what should I do, Brother?"

Zhang Ye said, "I suggest that you get a little more famous first before signing with an agency. It's not exactly necessary for you to sign with one anyway. Didn't I also strike it out on my own?"

His first uncle and aunt didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "But Dandan isn't capable like you."

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "You still have me around, don't ya? That's right, what did Dandan major in at university?"

His mother said in a speechless manner, "You don't even know what your sister studied?"

Zhang Ye nervously said, "I forgot, I forgot."

Cao Dan said, "I'm a directing major."

Eh?

Directing?

He got an idea.

Zhang Ye confirmed again by asking, "Sis, let me ask you this again: Are you really serious about it?"

Cao Dan nodded firmly. "Brother, I'm truly serious about it."

Zhang Ye acknowledged, "Alright then, I'll write some screenplays for you later. Bring them back and read through them. If you think that you're up for it, give it a try."

Cao Dan's eyes widened. "What screenplays?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Something about some short funny videos."

His third sister said dismissively, "Would anyone even watch that?"

His second sister also said in a speechless manner, "Isn't this starting point a little too low? The other celebrities are all involved in singing and acting, but you want my sis to make funny videos? How long would she have to do that for before she can make a name for herself?"

Zhang Ye harrumphed. "What do you all know? Do you think that the screenplays I come up with would be average?"

His mother said, "Will it really work out?"

His father added, "You better not make a fool out of your sister."

Zhang Ye said annoyed, "Alright, just wait and see then."

His first uncle and aunt quickly said, "Little Ye, thanks for your help."

"Thank you, Brother," Cao Dan said, feeling touched.

Short videos?

Would that really work out?

Everyone was actually quite skeptical.

...

Noon.

Zhang Ye was very efficient. In just two hours, he finished everything.

He came up with drafts of more than 20 videos for a start.

Everyone was very interested in them and did not care about eating anymore. They all gathered around to read the drafts.

"This is?"

"A storyboard?"

"She'll be taking on multiple roles per video?"

"And they're all going to be so short?"

"Will this work?"

Zhang Ye looked at his eldest younger sister. "Can you shoot these?"

Cao Dan studied the screenplays intensely before saying, "I should be able to since there isn't really any technical difficulty in it, and the equipment required is quite basic. I can do the editing too since I learned that in school. I'm just afraid that I can't act the parts where I have to play multiple roles well. I'll have to go back and give it a try to find out."

Zhang Ye said, "Alright, I won't be able to help with that then."

"One more thing, Brother." Cao Dan said with a despondent look, "Do I really need to speak this line?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Of course, that's definitely necessary."

Cao Dan said, "It will appear in every video that I make?"

Zhang Ye said, “Yes, every one of them.”

Blushing, Cao Dan recited it once, “My name is Cao Dan, a girl who embodies both beauty and talent?”

His third sister giggled, “Pfft!”

His second sister laughed, “Hahahaha!”

Cao Dan stared at them. “No laughing.”

But the more she said that, the harder everyone at home laughed.

Zhang Ye also laughed out loud. “Say it more domineeringly and with a little more confidence.”

Cao Dan cleared her throat and tried again. “My name is Cao Dan, a girl who embodies both beauty and talent!”

Yes.

This was Papi Jiang’s ¹ work from Zhang Ye’s previous world and how she had embarked on her route to fame. He had brought that over here and wanted to see if his own sister could replicate it.

As for whether it would be a success?

As for how far Cao Dan could go from here?

Zhang Ye wasn’t worried about that. The path had already been paved for her. All he could do was lead his sister into the industry. The rest of it would have to depend on Cao Dan herself.