

Superstar 1351

Chapter 1351: All of China's population get ripped off by the five fortunes!

It was now past midnight!

It was a new year!

The sounds of firecrackers going off popped through the streets. Those at the venue of the Spring Festival Gala were also in a very boisterous mood.

The Spring Festival Gala continued.

The acts were being performed.

When Ning Lan, Huo Dongfang, and the other celebrities appeared onstage together, when the song was performed, the world's Chinese population overflowed with excitement once more!

" My Chinese Heart 1 "

"Hills and streams appear only in my dreams.

"I've not set foot in my homeland in ages it seems.

"Yet nothing can ever possibly transform

"My Chinese heart.

"Though I wear a Western suit.

"My heart is still Chinese.

"My ancestors branded every inch of me

"With the Chinese stamp.

"Yangtze! Great Wall! Huangshan! Yellow River!

"Weigh so heavily on my bosom!

"Whenever, wherever I am!

"You are dear to me!"

...

At Old Wu's parents' house.

Wu Changhe slapped his thigh and exclaimed, "Well sung!"

Li Qinqin said, "'My Chinese Heart'? What a great song!"

Wu Mo was dumbfounded. "Did Brother Zhang write this song too?"

...

At Zhang Ye's maternal grandma's house.

His third sister applauded. "Our brother is indeed our brother!"

His eldest younger sister marveled, "I thought that the acts after midnight would just go through the motions and not be so detailed and serious. But it turns out that there are actually still such good performances to watch? The quality of the acts is still as high!"

His father said proudly, "Your brother has never been sloppy when it comes to work. If it's something that he can do, he will surely do it to the best of his abilities. Little Ye takes after me in that area."

His mother rolled her eyes. "Go away, he takes after me!"

His father said in a speechless manner, "With that sloppy attitude of yours, what has it got anything to do with you?"

His mother stared her husband. "Who's sloppy? Who are you talking about?"

His grandma quickly stopped them both. "Alright, alright, why are you both arguing on New Year's day? If I have to say something fair, Little Ye—actually takes after me."

Everyone burst into laughter at that!

...

This was destined to be a night to be remembered forever. Especially for those who were attending the Spring Festival Gala live, they knew very well what kind of a Spring Festival Gala they had witnessed tonight!

Be it the introductory video at the beginning, the gala's opening, the middle, the closing, or the finale.

Or perhaps even the construction of the stage, the lighting, the special effects, or the costumes.

They were astounding from the start until the end!

It had exceeded all expectations from beginning to end!

It was unprecedented and would never be replicated again—this saying might not be really suitable when used in many other situations. To say that it was unprecedented was still quite a valid argument, since that could be verified with past cases. But to say that it would never be replicated again was something that people in the present could never be certain about. But at this moment, a lot of people were actually thinking to themselves that this year's Spring Festival Gala would really "never be replicated again." It wasn't that they weren't rigorous about the standards, nor that they were shortsighted about the future. It was simply because they really could not imagine how future Spring Festival Gala could get mentioned in the same breath as this year's Spring Festival Gala that Zhang Ye helmed!

It was unimaginable!

Truly unimaginable!

If such a time were to come, then the executive director of that year's Spring Festival Gala would probably be Zhang Ye too!

The live audience members felt this way.

The television viewers similarly remembered this night in their minds. Especially those who participated in the five fortunes battle, they would never ever forget this night which would leave them gnashing their teeth in anger!

...

On TV.

Host Yan Mei started the advertising talk. "Now, I would like to announce some exciting and good news. Our Five Cards of Fortune Collection campaign has ended, and the cash prize has been disbursed. Those who have collected all five cards of fortune can now launch your Unipay app. A surprise is waiting for you inside."

Exciting?

Surprise?

Haha, we've been waiting for this for a long time!

It blew up in the outside world!

Even many of those who were at the venue of the Spring Festival Gala started taking out their phones!

"It's here, it's here!"

"The campaign has ended!"

"Haha, it's time to receive the red packet prize!"

"My 200 million!"

"Quickly, quickly, quickly!"

"Has it been credited yet?"

"Ah, it's been credited already!"

"How much did you get?"

"Eh?"

"Th-This is?"

...

In the production control room.

When Zhang Ye heard the announcement, the look in his eyes started flickering.

Ha Qiqi, who was standing next to him, asked, "What's the matter, Director Zhang?"

Zhang Ye coughed. "Ahem, nothing."

The five deceptions were here!

Their arrival could not be avoided!

...

Meanwhile.

When those people who had gathered all five of the cards of fortune opened up their Unipay wallets, each and every one of them was deeply shocked as their eyes grew wider and wider!

Surprise? Your sister!

Exciting? Your sister!

"What is this? What the hell is this?"

"220 yuan?"

"I received 220 yuan as well!"

"Me too, what the fuck!"

"Your sister, didn't they say that it would be 200 million!"

"I, I had to fucking toil to gather those five cards!"

"Where's my 200 million prize money?"

"Has it all been split and given out? Aren't they splitting it amongst too many people this way?!"

"Just how many work dedication cards did the Spring Festival Gala program team give out at the last fucking moment?!"

"My God!"

"Zhang Ye! Show yourself!"

"I'm in tears! I've been collecting them for a month! And all I got for it is 220 yuan? It's not even enough to pay for my Internet bill!"

"Whose idea was this? Whose idea was this!"

"This advertising campaign was planned by Zhang Ye!"

"I should've known that this scammer wouldn't have any good intentions!"

"220 yuan? I might as well die!"

"Pfft! Zhang Ye really is a fucking great trickster!"

"Yeah, he's just like the character he played in the skit!"

"This fellow has totally scammed all of us! Ahhhh! I wanna bite someone!"

“This has got to be the biggest scam in history!”

“Hahahahahaha! Aiyo, this is so funny it’s killing me! I knew it. Any plans created by Zhang Ye definitely aren’t anything good! Just look how this ended!”

“This fellow only wanted us to watch the Spring Festival Gala to gather the five cards of fortune. He only used us to contribute to the viewership ratings!”

“It’s a conspiracy! It’s a great big conspiracy!”

“Zhang Ye, you’re really oozing with evilness!”

“Quick, turn off the TV! Don’t help him by contributing to the viewership ratings anymore!”

“What’s the point of turning it off now? The Spring Festival Gala is ending right after this. He’s already gained enough viewership ratings!”

“Ahhhhhhh! I’m so pissed off!”

It was only now that everyone realized what this was all about.

...

Backstage.

Some of the production team’s staff had also gathered all five of the cards of fortune. They secretly opened up their Unipay wallets to check but were startled and nearly fainted from the surprise that they saw!

220 yuan?

They nearly rolled up their sleeves and confronted Zhang Ye about it!

Does it have to be this little!

Does it have to be such a scam!

We gathered them for so many days!

Do you know how much electricity we’ve wasted?!

And that was it?

...

At Old Rao’s house.

Rao Aimin cursed angrily, “Zhang Ye, fuck your grandpa!”

Chenchen was also very angry. “Aunt! Zhang Ye, h-he really doesn’t have the makings of an adult!”

Rao Aimin sneered. “You’re only giving me 220 yuan, right? Fine! Chenchen, go get the key to Zhang Ye’s Studio. I’ll see what valuable things are in there and take them for myself!”

...

The netizens were enraged!

Countless people were so angry that they broke down!

A group that was spontaneously organized started causing a commotion. They were all expressing their views by “shouting” rallying cries!

“Denounce Zhang Ye!”

“Denounce Zhang Ye!”

“Return my 200 million!”

“Return my 200 million!”

“Zhang Ye, your sister!”

“Zhang Ye, your sister!”

Those who didn’t manage to gather the five cards were cursing.

Those who did manage to gather the five cards were also cursing.

Everyone gritted their teeth in hatred. Come on, you can’t deceive people in such a way!

In the blink of an eye, countless threads that were titled “Zhang Ye, your sister!” started appearing in the forums and on Weibo all over the country to fully express the countless grass mud horses that were rampaging through their heads!

...

And now, the Spring Festival Gala was finally coming to an end.

The music started playing on television. Zhang Xia appeared onstage as the lead singer.

Behind her, all of the Spring Festival Gala’s participating performers came back out and the entire stage was filled with them, including the hosts. “Selling Crutches” was the finale act before the new year at midnight, while this song was going to be the finale act of this year’s Spring Festival Gala. It was the essential song of Zhang Ye’s previous world’s Spring Festival Gala: “A Night To Remember 2”!

“A night to remember, a night to remember.

“Wherever you might be in this world.

“We are in the same embrace in this vast country.

“Wishing our homeland well, homeland well.

“Farewell to this night, farewell to this night.

“Whether you are a new friend or old.

“Let us meet again next spring.

“The green hills, forever young people, forever young people

“The green hills, forever young people.

“The green hills, forever young people.

“Wishing our homeland well.

“Wishing our homeland well.”

The song was very touching!

The singing voices lingered in the air!

The curtains on this year’s Spring Festival Gala had finally drawn to a close!

...

Watching TV.

A lot of people were feeling a swirl of emotions!

Some people gasped in admiration.

Some people were calling it good.

Some people couldn’t help but appreciate it.

Some people were discussing the prior acts with their family.

And a large group of people were scolding Zhang Ye for being so immoral. Initially, they had been amazed by this year’s Spring Festival Gala and Zhang Ye’s abilities to oversee it to such success. They also had a good laugh over Zhang Ye’s skit. But they couldn’t have expected that this fellow was so terrible to cheat all of them at the very end of the show!

Especially this song at the end, it sounded even more sarcastic the longer they listened to it, and they got angrier and angrier as a result!

“A Night To Remember”?

That’s right!

This was truly a night to remember alright!

The five fortunes?

They should be called the five deceptions instead!

And they were even the five goddamn heavenly deceptions!

Chapter 1352: The Spring Festival Gala comes to a close!

At Central TV.

Broadcasting Studio 1, production control room.

All of the staff members were holding their breath.

Zhang Ye was seated in the command position with an earpiece on and taking charge of the operations personally. He stared at the video monitor while slowly sliding two buttons upward.

“Five.”

“Four.”

“Three.”

“Two.”

“One.”

“Cut! We’re done!”

The Spring Festival Gala’s live broadcast signal was cut.

Exhausted, Zhang Ye plucked out the earpiece and threw it onto the table. He heaved a long sigh of relief with a smile on his face before turning his head to everyone and saying, “It has ended!” The broadcast signal had been transferred over to Central TV Department 1’s backend master control ¹. The television signal was definitely still going, but whatever was being broadcast now was no longer under the control of the Spring Festival Gala’s executive director. Zhang Ye was only responsible for the Spring Festival Gala, and at this moment, Zhang Ye and the Spring Festival Gala’s production team’s responsibilities also ceased!

With this “it has ended.”

Everyone in the production control room broke into jubilant cheers!

“Our work is done!”

“Happy New Year!”

“Ahhhh!”

“We did it!”

“Yeah, we did it!”

“This year’s gala was great! We were so awesome!”

Everyone could only express the excitement in them by shouting it out.

Then the production control room’s door flung open. Outside, the staff members of the production team came rushing in one by one. The Spring Festival Gala Organizing Committee’s members were also standing outside!

They were all here!

Everyone had come over!

A bustling 60 to 70 people were both squeezed into and out of the production control room!

Some of them hugged together amid the screaming!

Some of them fist pumped and cheered!

Some of the female staff members were even surreptitiously wiping away tears of joy!

It really hadn't been easy. This year's Spring Festival Gala had really not been easy at all. Li Ke had suddenly quit and there was no one left to take the role of the executive director. They kept encountering difficulty after difficulty. With the Spring Festival Gala fast approaching, Zhang Ye stepped in and led the production team to stage a stunning reversal to turn the tide! Before this, who could have expected that this year's Spring Festival Gala could be done to such an effect?

No one!

No one could have expected it!

But Zhang Ye managed to!

All of them managed to!

Zhang Ye embraced them one by one.

"Old Han, you've worked hard!" Zhang Ye said.

Assistant Director Han said, "It's no big deal."

Zhang Ye said, "Old Ha, you've worked hard."

Ha Qiqi said, "No, you're the one who has suffered!"

Zhang Ye said, "Old He, the lighting was superb!"

Old He said, "It was because we had your leadership!"

Zhang Ye said, "Old Sun, you had to put up with a lot over at the venue today."

Old Sun said emotionally, "That was nothing, that was nothing!"

Zhang Ye asked to embrace every staff member and addressed them by their names as he told each of them "you've worked hard."

But everyone knew that the one who had worked the hardest of all was not them!

The person who almost single-handedly carried the entire Spring Festival Gala, the person who had spent two months in a row working on the front lines—was standing right before them!

The executives came in and grabbed hold of Zhang Ye's hands!

Chief Zhao said, "It was hard on you! Director Zhang, you were amazing! You were so amazing!"

Director Ma said loudly, "This was the best Spring Festival Gala that I've ever watched! You're really a god!"

Deputy Chief Liu said, "Director Zhang, thank you! Thank you!"

But Zhang Ye sincerely responded, "I should thank the few of you instead. We had differences of opinion, but you all still gave in to me and did your best to accommodate me, I—"

Director Ma quickly said, "Let's not bring that up, it's already in the past."

Chief Zhao said, "That's right, that's right, it's already in the past." Then, he gave a loud laugh and said, "If you're still coming back to helm the Spring Festival Gala as the executive director next year, Old Zhao and I would like to team up with you again!"

Zhang Ye was startled. He hurriedly waved it off, saying, "Whoa, please spare me! You still want me to direct the Spring Festival Gala? This year's event has already nearly taken my life; I'm not gonna do it again!"

Everyone laughed loudly. Yes, this year's Spring Festival Gala was indeed full of scares and shocks!

Suddenly, an executive on the organizing committee said, "Here, everyone, quiet down for a bit. May I suggest that we give a round of applause to Director Zhang?"

Everyone started shouting:

"Sure!"

"Sure!"

"Sure!"

Zhang Ye quickly said, "Please, there's no need for that."

However, no one seemed to have heard him. Applause rang out!

"Director Zhang!"

"Thank you!"

"Thank you!"

"You've worked hard!"

"Director Zhang, it was all thanks to you this time!"

"You're basically a god among men!"

"If we didn't have you taking charge this time, we really wouldn't know what to do!"

"Director Zhang, thank you!"

The applause continued for a long time!

Everyone was grateful and giving their heartfelt thanks!

They had all witnessed Zhang Ye's suffering, hard work, and sacrifices in recent days. During the two months of preparing for the Spring Festival Gala, the light in Zhang Ye's office had never been flipped off. With all of the external pressure placed onto him, the production of the programs was also overseen by him personally. Even the criticism from the fallout of the Five Cards of Fortune Collection campaign

had to be placed onto Zhang Ye himself and deflected from Unipay and the Spring Festival Gala. Zhang Ye had already predicted early on that this would be the outcome, so he started making plans when nobody realized it yet. He had Unipay settle the PR issues first, and even got them to deliberately set the amount very low when the red packets were given out in his name. All of it was done so that he would become the person to bear the blame for everything!

The dirty work!

The tiring work!

He took on all of it!

He was a director worthy of all the respect in the world!

All of a sudden, the crowd of people parted. A lot of people were pushing to the sides to create a path as a woman gracefully walked in from outside.

“Chief Wu!”

“Ah, Chief Wu!”

It was Wu Zeqing!

Zhang Ye was also stunned. “Hey, what are you doing here?”

Wu Zeqing smiled. “I was waiting for you, of course.”

Zhang Ye exclaimed, “I was overseeing the Spring Festival Gala’s recording. Why did you come here to wait for me? When did you arrive?”

Director Ma laughed and said, “Chief Wu was here since the live broadcast began. She’s been waiting all this while backstage.”

“Look at you.” Zhang Ye grumbled, “It’s so noisy here. Wouldn’t it have been more comfortable to wait at home?” He might be complaining, but he was very touched at heart.

“Director Zhang, do hurry back home.”

“Yes, you must be tired out from the entire day.”

“Hurry back home with Chief Wu.”

“Director Zhang, happy New Year!”

“Chief Wu, Director Zhang, happy New Year!”

Everyone was wishing them well.

Zhang Ye also said, “Alright then, all of you hurry back home too. We’ve been so busy for the past two months, so be sure to rest well for a few days. I estimate that the viewership ratings will only be released tomorrow or the day after. We’ve already done all that we could and the acts have all performed up to expectation. In fact, they even exceeded that! However the viewership ratings look,

there isn't anything regrettable. We can only wait for the results, so go back home and enjoy the new year without worry. Let's not think too much about anything else!"

Viewership ratings?

Yes, they were only waiting for the viewership ratings to be released now!

They had done their best, but the results still depended on how the viewership ratings would do. Everyone was really looking forward to the day it would be released!

The higher-ups had set the target for them to hit at 20%?

Could they exceed this figure?

How much could they exceed it by?

No one dared to presume too much!

Chapter 1353: The Celebrity Rankings Index gets updated!

The next day.

It was the first day of the lunar new year.

In the morning, at the entrance to a neighborhood.

"Yo, Old Li!"

"Big Sis Zhou, happy New Year to you."

"Happy New Year to you too! Why are you up so early today?"

"Hai, I was too tired last night, so I was already asleep by 8."

"Ah? Then you didn't watch the Spring Festival Gala?"

"The Spring Festival Gala? I haven't watched it in some years. There's nothing interesting about it anyway."

"Aiyo, then you're really wrong about it this time! There will be a repeat telecast of it on Central TV Channel 1 in a bit. Quickly go back and watch it for yourself. You'll know how wrong you were after you've watched it!"

"This year's Spring Festival Gala was that good?"

"More than that! It was crazy good!"

"Is that so? Then I better hurry home to watch it!"

Some people did not watch it yet.

Some people had only just found out about the news and hurried back home to catch the rebroadcast.

...

The Spring Festival Gala was being replayed.

A lot of those who were up early had actually waited in front of their televisions to catch the entire show once more from start to finish, Further, they were enjoying it very much!

On Weibo.

"This is really good!"

"There's nothing to nitpick for this year's Spring Festival Gala!"

"Zhang Ye is so awesome!"

"Yeah, this is what true skill looks like!"

"I think some changes might be stirring in the entertainment circle!"

"Can Zhang Ye make it to the top?"

"I don't know, but I know that those Heavenly Kings and Queens will definitely be very worried!"

"The Spring Festival Gala was truly fabulous, but I'm definitely gonna remember that fellow forever due to the five fortunes!"

"Hahahahaha. Come on, don't take it so seriously over this bit of money."

"My 200 million, how can I not take it seriously!"

"*cries* You guys don't know this, but I cracked my phone by tapping it too much while trying to get the work dedication card. In the end, all I received was 220 yuan! That Zhang Ye is awful!"

"Pfft."

...

The newspapers on the first day of the new year went on sale!

"Shocking! The Spring Festival Gala has been revived from the dead!"

"The Spring Festival Gala sets off a wave of frenzy!"

"Zhang Ye: His march from variety director to the Spring Festival Gala's executive director!"

"A Spring Festival Gala that everyone is praising!"

"'Thousand-Hand Guanyin' amazes the audience!"

"Topicality of Little Hu Die's act shoots through the roof!"

"A magic show that shocks the industry!"

"Hilarious 'Selling Crutches' receives great praise!"

"Zhang Ye wins the affirmation of the industry insiders!"

“Former executive director of the Spring Festival Gala, Li Ke, lavishes praise upon Zhang Ye: ‘I admit that I am not as good as him.’”

“Many lines from the skit ‘Selling Crutches’ set to become this year’s hottest Internet slang!”

“Talk of all 40 acts on the Spring Festival Gala is bursting through the roof. An unprecedented occurrence!”

“The craziest Spring Festival Gala executive director in history: Personally crafting all of the acts on the show!”

“Dong Shanshan’s popularity soars!”

“Gathering the five fortunes—The biggest scam in the history of advertising and marketing!”

“The Spring Festival Gala’s viewership ratings to be revealed soon?”

“Zhang Ye’s path of defiance!”

“Can Zhang Ye reach the summit of the entertainment circle?”

At the newspaper stands, copies after copies of newspapers were flying off the shelves.

Online, the news articles were getting published one after another.

This was the effect of the Spring Festival Gala. This was a grand gala in which the entire world’s Chinese population participated in, and all the more so for this year’s miraculous Spring Festival Gala!

The media was dominated by news of the Spring Festival Gala!

From the various ranking lists, it could also easily be seen.

...

On the Top Chinese Music Chart.

#1: “Because of Love”

#2: “Where Has the Time Gone?”

#3: “Lucky Treasures”

#4: “A Night to Remember”

#5: “The New Drunken Concubine”

#6: “My Chinese Heart”

And so on.

Without exception, from the first to the tenth spot, they were all songs from yesterday’s Spring Festival Gala. In fact, they were all leading by far in their popularity compared to the other songs on the chart!

...

On Weibo's trending topics.

First: The Five Cards of Fortune Collection scam

Second: "Selling Crutches"

Third: Little Hu Die's "Time"

Fourth: Skit – "The Leading Role and the Supporting Role"

Fifth: Spring Festival Gala viewership ratings

And so on.

In the top ten places, no, in the top fifty places, the topics were all related to the Spring Festival Gala!

...

The views on the video highlights:

First: "Selling Crutches," 300 million views

Second: "Thousand-Hand Guanyin," 150 million views

Third: "Myriad of Changes" magic show, 120 million views

At the top of the charts were all acts that had appeared on the Spring Festival Gala. They had all exceeded a 100 million views, and that showed that the viewers did not get enough of it after only watching it once. They had to watch it a second, a third, or even a fourth time.

...

And on the most watched Celebrity Rankings Index, it was the same as well!

Needless to say for Zhang Yuanqi who was already a Heavenly Queen, it would not look too obvious even after her popularity had boomed. But this wasn't the case for the others.

Dong Shanshan's popularity had soared. With the skit she acted in, it brought her up into the middle of the B-list celebrity rankings!

Yao Jiancai's popularity also rose after his outstanding performance on the Spring Festival Gala!

The successor to the art of cross-gender acting, Gao Xiliang, had risen up to the bottom of the C-list rankings overnight after being an almost unknown small-time celebrity all this while!

Ci Xiufang's popularity grew by leaps and bounds too. Even if she was already considered a big sister among the domestic professional skit comedians, "Dance If You Like" had helped propel her to the top of the skit industry.

Magician Chen Tian became famous overnight and was now closing in on a place on the C-list rankings!

The one who surprised everyone the most was Hu Die. Everyone else still had some previous popularity to base off of. Even if some of them did not have lots of popularity, they were still at least at the D- or E-list rankings and had some fans to call their own. But Little Hu Die had started off from nothing. She was

just a backup dancer and hadn't even been the focus of the camera before. But just by spinning in circles on the stage of the Spring Festival Gala, she actually managed to "turn" herself into a top D-list celebrity!

It was the same for many others!

The performers who participated in the Spring Festival Gala all experienced a significant boost to their popularities!

This was what the Spring Festival Gala was—a stage that could work miracles. On it, nothing was impossible if you dared to dream it.

But of course, a situation like this year was also an exception of exceptions. It was a never before seen development in the years since the Spring Festival Gala began. This year's Spring Festival Gala had created so many stars that it was unimaginable. It was so heaven-defying that when the industry insiders and citizens saw the updated Celebrity Rankings Index, they got rather dumbfounded!

...

Later that morning.

Zhang Ye's parents' house.

Wu Zeqing was already up while Zhang Ye was still sleeping soundly in bed. At some point in time, the cell phone on his bedside started going off.

Ring, ring, ring.

Ring, ring, ring.

Zhang Ye rolled over and continued to sleep.

It wasn't until he had no choice that he drowsily grabbed his phone and answered it.

It was the magician, Chen Tian.

"Director Zhang."

"Yes?"

"Ah, you're still resting?"

"It's fine, just speak."

"The rankings index has been updated. I just thought I'd call you to say thanks, but I won't say too much so that you can get back to sleep. We'll talk again when there's a chance, or you can call me anytime you like!"

His phone continued to ring.

This time, it was Dong Shanshan.

"Haha, Zhang'er."

“Hey, Shanshan.”

“Did you see my spot on the rankings index yet?”

“Are you a B-lister?”

“I’m in the middle of the B-list!”

“Whoa, congratulations.”

“I’ll treat you to dinner some time.”

“Alright, I’ll hold you to your word. It isn’t easy getting a meal out of you.”

Immediately after that, Zhang Xia, Chen Guang, Fan Wenli, Gao Xiliang, and the others who had performed on the Spring Festival Gala were calling to thank Zhang Ye. It was very late when they dispersed last night, and there were also a lot of matters to attend to. With the venue quite chaotic, everyone only cared about enjoying themselves. So they didn’t get to say some words to him. But with the Celebrity Rankings Index updated now, and the dust having settled, it was expected that everyone would come forward to thank Zhang Ye. It was Zhang Ye who had given them the chance to be part of the Spring Festival Gala, while the acts, set designs, and even the costumes were designed by him. Their rise in popularity was the direct cause of Zhang Ye, so it wouldn’t be right if they didn’t say a word of thanks to him.

There were more than 20 calls.

Zhang Ye spent a full 30 minutes answering them.

Afterwards, he didn’t feel sleepy anymore and sat up from bed with a bitter smile. But thinking about it, he also started feeling rather excited and couldn’t help but check out the Celebrity Rankings Index as well.

What about me?

What about this bro’s popularity?

He had nearly been driven crazy during these past two months. As a result, Zhang Ye immediately fell asleep in bed after returning home with Wu Zeqing. He did not even wait for his parents to get back from his maternal grandma’s house. The moment he opened his eyes again, it was already the morning of the first day of Lunar New Year, so where could he have found any time to check on the rankings index during the night?

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Zhang Ye rolled his eyes and felt utterly speechless.

He couldn’t find his name on the list!

He knew that there could only be one explanation for this. It must mean that his popularity had increased by so much that the backend system or the manual calculations could not be handled properly. So his name and status was temporarily set as pending in the rankings. He wasn't unfamiliar with this occurrence since he also had such a status once during a previous battle of the popularity rankings. The statistics were processed several days later and his popularity had soared at that time.

Hopefully, it was the same case this time!

Hurry up and let this bro get into the S-list!

Hurry up and let this bro reach the summit of showbiz!

Only this step was left!

It was the final push!

The "Reach the Summit" plan that was drawn up half a year ago had been successfully undertaken step by step. All that was left now were the results!

Chapter 1354: Drawing tenth blood!

On the same morning.

The television in the living room at Zhang Ye's parents' house was also replaying the Spring Festival Gala. From the sound of it, the rebroadcast seemed to have already reached Zhang Yuanqi's "Where Has the Time Gone?" song.

The shouting of Zhang Ye's mother came from outside the bedroom.

"Son, are you up yet?"

"I'm up, Mom."

"Come and have breakfast."

"Alright. Where's Old Wu?"

"She's making breakfast for you, so come out quickly."

"OK, I'm coming."

They were having leek dumplings for breakfast.

The moment Zhang Ye came out of his bedroom, he could immediately smell the aroma of the food.

Wu Zeqing was holding a pair of chopsticks. "Why didn't you sleep a while longer?"

Zhang Ye sighed and said, "I wanted to, but there were so many calls the entire morning. Everyone was calling to say thanks or offer their congratulations, so how could I get back to sleep?"

Wu Zeqing smiled. "Yes, I heard your cell phone ringing. Come over and eat."

Zhang Ye turned his head to the side. "Dad, what time did you all get back yesterday?"

His father put the newspaper down. "A little before 2 AM I guess?"

"Why didn't you all turn off the TV before going out?" Zhang Ye asked.

His father laughed and said, "Your mom didn't let me. She said that it would help with the viewership ratings that way."

His mother said happily, "The TVs at your uncles' houses were also left on. I called them and told them to do so before we went over to your grandma's place yesterday."

Zhang Ye applauded. "Great job, Mom."

His mother laughed.

His father said, "How much viewership could it possibly add with just these few TVs switched on in our family?"

His mother shot his father a look. "What do you know? One more is still more than none!"

Zhang Ye asked, "I haven't read the newspapers yet. What is everyone's thoughts on the gala?"

"Of course it's getting a lot of praise!" His mother got all excited the moment she spoke. She pointed at the stack of over a dozen copies of newspapers on the coffee table. "Read for yourself, I went out to buy them this morning. There's also news online and on TV, and they're all talking about you and yesterday's Spring Festival Gala. Many of the industry insiders are saying that this Spring Festival Gala of yours is the most wonderful one since the debut one. Even the one that everyone thought was the best from 20 or 30 years ago is not as good as yours from the perspective of the acts' quality, art direction, or entertainment value!"

Zhang Ye smiled. "The masses' eyes are sharpest."

After lunch.

Zhang Ye sat on the sofa and flipped through the newspapers one by one. Beijing Times, Morning Post, and even People's Daily had all given this year's Spring Festival Gala high praise.

Zhang Ye was quite pleased with everyone's evaluation. If even this year's Spring Festival Gala were to be questioned and criticized by the people, then that would really be the biggest joke in the world. Other people might not know about the origins of these acts, but Zhang Ye knew them quite well, of course. The acts that could be shown on the Spring Festival Gala in his world were the ones that had emerged from the competition in China. They went through a round of selection and those that did not make it were eliminated. The ones that remained were all the most excellent ones. And what Zhang Ye did this time was to put these selected acts through another round of selection to pick the most reputable and excellent acts from the best ones that had been on the Spring Festival Gala of his previous world. This was equivalent to picking out the best acts out of an already excellent pool of choices!

He did this for all 40 of the acts!

The "Thousand-Hand Guanyin"?

Liu Qian's magic show?

“Selling Crutches”?

“Spring Days”?

Which of them were not well-known?

Which of them were not the classics of the classics?

So how could this year’s Spring Festival Gala not be enjoyable to watch?

It would be a wonder if it wasn’t good! Zhang Ye had brought over so many of the classic acts that spanned decades of the Spring Festival Gala in his previous world to this world and put them all into one show. He had basically brought over all that he could bring over. But of course, he wasn’t going to bother about next year’s Spring Festival Gala and the year after that. That would be left to some unlucky executive director to worry about. It was enough to be the executive director for the Spring Festival Gala once, and he definitely did not plan on doing it a second time. This job was way too tiring and the stress was too enormous. He had never had a good night’s sleep these past two months.

With the Spring Festival Gala over, Zhang Ye was finally able to take some time off. He was taking it easy and relaxing now. He just wanted to rest up for the next few days to enjoy the new year properly.

It was almost noon.

His parents were already dressed.

His father said, “Little Ye, Zeqing, we’re heading to your aunt’s place now.”

Zhang Ye asked, “So we’re heading to my aunt’s place for lunch?”

“Yes. Your dad and I are going over early to help make lunch,” his mother said.

“Alright, then Old Wu and I will be there in a bit,” Zhang Ye said.

“There’s no rush, just be there before lunch,” his mother said.

“Alright,” Zhang Ye said.

His mother reminded him, “You still have to go over to your maternal grandma’s house tonight since you weren’t there yesterday. Be sure to go over today to give your New Year’s greetings to them. Take a shower and quickly tidy up the place.”

Zhang Ye said, “I got it.”

His parents left.

When the door closed, only Zhang Ye and Wu Zeqing were left in the house.

Wu Zeqing was clearing the plates from breakfast.

Zhang Ye gave a cheeky laugh and hugged her from behind. “Old Wu.”

Wu Zeqing did not turn around and laughed as she continued clearing the table. “What’s the matter? Why are you laughing so slyly?”

"Pfft, what do you mean? Listen to your choice of words. Aiya, stop clearing the dishes." Zhang Ye hungrily eyed Old Wu, who was dressed in homey attire.

Wu Zeqing laughed and said, "Hur hur, aren't I almost done clearing them away?"

Zhang Ye blinked and said, "This bro hasn't been home in two months. Ahem, shouldn't you express something to me?"

"Express what?" Old Wu asked.

"Come, let's talk in my room." Zhang Ye then led her into his bedroom.

"Wait, my hands are still dirty."

"Aiyo, quickly, we have to leave soon."

"But it's still so bright and early."

"It'll be dark once the curtains are drawn."

"There isn't enough time."

"There's still an hour."

"Hur hur, oh you."

"Quickly, hully-arp!"

This fellow suddenly threw out a phrase in English, catching Wu Zeqing by surprise.

"Little Ye."

"Hm?"

"If you can't speak English well, don't use it."

"Was the pronunciation wrong?"

"It wasn't very good."

"Oh, then I'll study hard to learn it."

"Why are you suddenly thinking of learning English?"

"Don't just stand there. Let's talk as we get out of these clothes. If I do get to the summit of the entertainment circle, the next goal will be to step onto the international stage. So it will definitely be useful to know some English, Russian, and Spanish too. I'm preparing to learn them all. It's not that I want to communicate with them, but this bro would at least know who is scolding me. I'm going to focus my learning on the foreign swear words first. I'll check if there are any crash courses on swearing in English later. If there's one, I'm gonna sign up for it so that I'll be prepared in times of need. Ai, do you think it's easy being a celebrity? There are so many things to learn. I don't think that just anyone can become a celebrity."

“Hur hur, there aren’t any celebrities in the entertainment circle who learn a foreign language just to scold people either.”

“Aiya, hurry up, there’s no time! No time!”

“Alright, I’m ready.”

The door closed.

The curtains were drawn.

10 minutes.

20 minutes.

30 minutes.

A youthful energy encompassed room.

After two months, Zhang Ye finally drew tenth blood from Old Wu!!

Chapter 1355: The Spring Festival Gala’s viewership ratings are out!

Noon.

In his bedroom.

The two of them were putting their clothes back on.

At this moment, Zhang Ye’s mother called to hurry them up.

“Mom.”

“What are you doing?”

“Getting ready to leave.”

“Why are you so slow? Your aunt and cousin are waiting.”

“We’ll be there immediately. We just finished watching the rebroadcast of the Spring Festival Gala.”

“Hurry up.”

“Got it.”

The call ended.

Wu Zeqing chuckled. “Never does a word of truth come out of your mouth.”

“Heh, then what should I have said?” Zhang Ye got dressed very quickly. When he saw that Old Wu was still only half-dressed, he said, “I’m gonna head downstairs to warm up the car.”

Old Wu said, “OK, I’ll be right behind you.”

Zhang Ye threw on a jacket, then opened the door and left. As he made his way downstairs, he had a spring in his step and felt like he was floating. The feeling was amazing. Having worked at Central TV without much rest for the past two months, he was finally relieved of a great deal of the tiredness. He felt very spirited as well, and his eyes glistened with life. He felt “powered up” again and even started humming the melody to “The Hottest Ethnic Trend.” This sort of life was so enjoyable.

He had a harmonious family.

His work was going well.

His career was thriving.

And his wife was so beautiful.

He wouldn’t exchange this life for anything!

Downstairs.

Zhang Ye walked to his car. But before he could even reach it, 20to 30 people suddenly appeared in the seemingly empty neighborhood. It was just like magic, and Zhang Ye got a big scare from it.

Three reporters materialized from behind the car.

Five reporters sprang out from behind the tree in the garden.

Six reporters came out from the corridor beside.

It was as though this were an illusion where people appeared out of thin air.

“Teacher Zhang!”

“Director Zhang!”

“We’re from the Morning News!”

“Can we interview you for a moment?”

“Teacher Zhang, can we take up a few minutes of your time?”

“We’re from Youth Daily!”

“We’re from Xinhua News!”

The reporters from the news outlets surged forward in a chaotic fashion. They had probably been camping there for a very long time. But this wasn’t unexpected since Zhang Ye had become the most watched person in the entertainment industry ever since he took responsibility for the Spring Festival Gala. The news related to the Spring Festival Gala was overflowing, yet the most important person related to it had not once given an interview during the entire duration. Zhang Ye did not give any interviews, nor could the reporters find him. Even when the Spring Festival Gala ended last night, many of the reporters did not go back home and just waited at the main entrance of Central TV. In the end, they still couldn’t catch him leaving. As a result, they could only descend on his place to wait for him. With the Spring Festival Gala doing so well this year, who wouldn’t want to get a first-hand interview with Zhang Ye?

As Zhang Ye was in a good mood, he answered with a smile, "All I have is five minutes, so ask quickly." He opened the car door and started the engine.

The reporters got excited and immediately shoved their cameras and microphones at him.

"Did you plan out all 40 of the acts? How did you manage to do that?"

"I just wrote them all."

"Director Zhang, there's news that you've already been earmarked internally to be the executive director for the next Spring Festival Gala."

"Your info is not reliable. I don't know anything about it."

"Which act are you most happy with for this Spring Festival Gala?"

"I'm happy with all of them."

"People say that you saved the Spring Festival Gala. What do you have to say about that?"

"Hur hur, it was not me who saved the Spring Festival Gala, it was everyone who didn't give up on it. That's the most important reason of all."

"What were the biggest problems you encountered while directing the Spring Festival Gala?"

"The biggest problem? It would have to be that I only had 24 hours in a day. If only I had another 10 hours each day, I could've gotten a better night's sleep."

"The Spring Festival Gala's viewership ratings will be announced soon. Are you looking forward to it?"

"I guess."

"What are your expectations?"

"Aiyo, that's difficult to say."

At this moment, the click clack of high heels came from the corridor.

Wu Zeqing had come downstairs.

When the reporters saw her, they restrained themselves.

"Chief Wu."

"Uh, Chief Wu."

The reporters all subconsciously carved out a path for her to pass.

Wu Zeqing smiled at them. "Is the interview done yet?"

This question left the reporters too embarrassed to say no.

"It's already done."

"Thank you, Director Zhang."

“Chief Wu, happy New Year to you.”

“We won’t hold the two of you back then.”

“Then we’ll get going.”

In fact, they still had a ton of questions to ask. It wouldn’t be enough to ask a 1,000 questions in an interview with Zhang Ye. But with Chief Wu’s arrival, the reporters could only obediently take their leave.

...

At Central TV.

A lot of people had come back to work overtime today.

This included many of those in the Spring Festival Gala’s organizing committee and production team.

Ha Qiqi and Zhang Zuo also rushed over early in the morning in anticipation of the result.

“Have the viewership ratings been released?”

“Not yet.”

“It should be out soon.”

“Yes, the stats department said that they’re going through the calculation of the results right now.”

“Will we be able to surpass 20%?”

“That won’t be a problem for sure!”

“Yes, I also don’t think that 20% will be difficult to achieve. But anything more than that is harder to say.”

...

At the SARFT.

“It’s still not out?”

“Chief Liu, it’ll be out very soon!”

“Let’s hope that it will be a good result.”

“Yeah, how the Spring Festival Gala does this year will all depend on the viewership ratings.”

“If we’re talking about word of mouth and the response from the viewers, then this year’s Spring Festival Gala has clearly been a big success. But the end result is still dependent on the viewership ratings. It’s something that we cannot avoid no matter what.”

“That’s right.”

“Little Qi, notify me once the viewership ratings have been released. The higher-ups are also waiting to know about it.”

“Understood, Chief Liu.”

...

In the crosstalk world.

“I hear that the Spring Festival Gala’s viewership ratings will be released very soon.”

“It should be really high this time around, right?”

“That might not happen. For the past few years, they were all hovering around 20% or so. The lowest it went to was around 19%. This perennial weakening is not something that can be improved overnight.”

“Haha, it will be fun to see if the viewership ratings are not ideal this time.”

“My guess is that it won’t be too good.”

“Me too. That Five Cards of Fortune Collection campaign was too scammy. Just take a look online. There are still countless people scolding Zhang Ye over it. The viewership ratings will definitely be put in doubt too.”

“Yes, however high it might get, it definitely won’t cross the 25% mark!”

“25%? I think you’re already overestimating it.”

...

At a dinner event in the directing circle.

Li Ke and about nine well-known directors were seated together at a table. They also started discussing this matter.

“How much do you all think it’s going to get?”

“27%?”

“I think it might only be 25% for a more conservative guess.”

“It should be around 27% to 28%.”

“Will it be able to reach 30%?”

“That’s not likely to happen.”

“It will be difficult, but it’s not impossible.”

“If it does hit 30%, then Zhang Ye will truly be godly!”

...

At a newspaper firm.

“It’s not out yet?”

“No, they still haven’t released the figures.”

"Make the necessary preparations. Leave the exact figure blank for now and get the rest of the content filled in so that we can publish it the moment it gets released!"

"Uh, Chief Editor, then what kind of viewership ratings should we phrase it with?"

"Write one for 20% and another for 30%. We'll have two drafts on standby."

"What if it hits 40%?"

"40%? You must be dreaming, right?"

"Damn, you're right."

"Stay vigilant and be prepared for any news!"

...

On Weibo.

"How much will it get?"

"Yeah, this is taking so long! Why haven't they released it yet?"

"I also wanna know how many people got pulled back into watching the Spring Festival Gala by Zhang Ye!"

"I'm sure that the viewership ratings will hit 40%!"

"Previous poster, please wake up!"

"Hahaha, it's a little overblown to claim that it will hit 40%. But I believe that 30% is still possible."

"That scammer, I'll curse his ratings to not even hit 20%! Just thinking about those five deceptions is making me angry again!"

"Pfft, Zhang Ye also successfully used the 'collection of the five deceptions' to scam my family of our viewership ratings. I hope the fellow doesn't even get 10% for the viewership ratings, otherwise it'll be very difficult to ease the hatred I have for him!"

"That's right! Let's fucking curse the viewership ratings to a historical low!"

"You're extremely right! Zhang Ye has always liked breaking historical records, so let's give him a chance at it this time as well. Please condemn this jinxed scammer to an eternity of infamy!"

"Sincerely wishing for the Spring Festival Gala's viewership ratings to make a new historic low!"

"Sincerely wishing for the Spring Festival Gala's viewership ratings to make a new historic low!"

"Sincerely wishing for the Spring Festival Gala's viewership ratings to make a new historic low!"

The group of netizens were making a commotion with their jokes and laughter. A large number of them were even Zhang Ye's fans. These people had always been unafraid of trouble. Wherever there was a commotion, Zhang Ye's army would be there as well. From that moment on, a discussion and forecast of the Spring Festival Gala's viewership ratings were set off on the Internet. Regarding the final results of

the Spring Festival Gala that Zhang Ye directed this year, they were all very concerned and wanted to know how it had done!

The release of the viewership ratings was impending!

There was a very tense mood at Central TV!

The executives were feeling very nervous!

The media was also waiting impatiently!

The people were very eager to find out!

Everyone was just waiting for a number!

The entire world's Chinese population was waiting for an outcome!

...

At 12 o'clock sharp.

It wasn't released yet.

At 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

It wasn't released yet.

At 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

It still wasn't released yet.

Many people were almost going crazy over this!

"Holy fuck!"

"Why isn't it out yet?"

"Didn't they say that it was going to get published soon?"

"Yeah, how long has it been already?"

"Is the statistics agency even working?"

"Their work rate is really poor!"

...

At the statistics agency.

In the office.

"Boss, this—"

"That's impossible!"

"But the numbers show that there's nothing wrong!"

“Calculate it again! Use the Band II signal statistics!”

“Yes!”

Not long after.

“Boss, we’re still getting the same number.”

“Impossible! Calculate it again!”

“Uh, OK!”

Once!

Twice!

Thrice!

They calculated it over and over again!

They used all kinds of methods to calculate it again and again!

The end results were still the same. This left the entire office’s statisticians a little dumbfounded. They stared at the figures and were feeling at a loss at what to do. They thought that there could only be two possibilities. One was that the computer had gone crazy and caused all of the equipment to go haywire at once, and the second was that all of them at the office had gone crazy!

How was this possible!

How the fuck was this possible!

Several of the leaders were stunned on the spot!

Everyone in the office stared wide-eyed at one another!

A minute later, someone finally spoke up.

“B-Boss.”

“Yes?”

“Are we going to publish this?”

“...Just publish it.”

...

Past 3 in the afternoon.

At Central TV.

A group of people were sitting there impatiently and having tea.

Suddenly, the employee responsible for liaising with the statistics agency came rushing in after pushing the door open. “It’s out! The Spring Festival Gala’s viewership ratings are out!”

Ha Qiqi flew over.

Everyone else stood up!

“How much is it?”

“Quickly speak!”

“Did it reach 30%?”

“Did it?”

That employee panted, “Everyone, everyone, you have to see this for yourselves! My God!”

Ha Qiqi was the closest, so she snatched the viewership ratings form and lowered her head to read it. She then screamed, “Holy shit! This—this—”

Zhang Zuo ran over and grabbed it. “What are you shouting for. Let me see—what the!” His hands trembled and he dropped the piece of paper!

A third person rushed up. “Just how much is it? Let me have a look—damn! Damn! Damn!”

Chapter 1356: Viewership numbers that tear a hole in the sky!

At Central TV.

Everyone was screaming in surprise, feeling like they were going crazy!

“Oh my God!”

“This, this—”

“Heavens!”

“Is this for real?”

“Ahhhhh!”

“I’m not fucking dreaming, am I?”

“This viewership numbers—damn, are we about to tear a hole in the sky this time?”

“Leave out the words ‘about to,’ we’ve already torn a hole in the sky!”

...

At the SARFT.

“Director! Director!”

“What is it? Everyone’s working. Why are you shouting so loudly?”

“It’s the Spring Festival Gala’s viewership ratings! Quickly look at it!”

“It’s already out?”

“It was just released!”

“Let me see—aiyo, what the heck! I-Is this for real?”

“I verified it with the statistics agency the moment I saw it. It’s real, there’s no mistake about it!”

“Quick, bring this to Chief Hu and the others! Hurry, hurry, hurry!”

...

At a newspaper agency.

The phone was ringing. This was a call that the editor-in-chief had been waiting for a long time. He quickly went back to his office and closed the door to take it. The agency staff outside were all looking in that direction. Then they heard the exclamations of the editor-in-chief.

“What?”

“This is impossible!”

“There must be a mistake!”

“No, no, go and verify it again!”

“Really?”

“Damn, you’ve already verified that this is real?”

A minute later, the editor-in-chief pushed the door open and came out.

Everyone stood up in wait of the announcement.

“Chief Editor, how much is it?”

“Our drafts are ready to be published!”

“Yeah, we’ve already prepared them!”

The editor-in-chief screamed, “Discard all of the drafts from before! Immediately! Rewrite everything from scratch! Hurry up, write it at your fastest speed!”

“Ah?”

“But don’t we already have them prepared?”

“Didn’t we already write a draft each for a viewership ratings of 20% and 30%?”

The editors did not understand.

The editor-in-chief said angrily, “Both those figures for the ratings are incorrect!” He lowered his head and picked up a pen to scribble something on a piece of paper. “Take a look for yourselves!” Then he turned and walked away.

All the editors rushed forward to see. Then they were dumbfounded!

...

In the crosstalk world.

The news spread rapidly

The crosstalk actors who had feuded with Zhang Ye all gasped when they heard the figure. There were dumbfounded looks on all of their faces!

"What the heck!"

"Did they get it wrong?"

"This must be made up! It most definitely has to be made up!"

"These viewership numbers...only an idiot would believe it's real!"

"This is impossible!"

"Right, it's impossible!"

...

At a dinner party in the directing world.

There was silence.

And then, there was further silence.

"Old Li."

"Hm?"

"After seeing these viewership numbers, what do you think?"

"I have no thoughts. That is purely his skill."

"Just what kind of a person is this Zhang Ye? You're the only person among us who has had any dealings with him."

"What kind of a person?"

"Yes."

"He's probably an extraordinary talent!"

"Luckily for us, this guy doesn't know how to direct films and TV series. Otherwise, every one of us other than Old Li and Old Han would probably not be able to make a living anymore."

"These viewership ratings too goddamn scary!"

...

Shanghai.

At the home of a previous Spring Festival Gala's executive director.

When he heard the news, he nearly fainted!

His wife asked, "Old Wan, what's the matter? Are the viewership ratings for the Spring Festival Gala out?"

Old Wan's face had turned green with anger. "This is too goddamn big of a difference!"

His wife said in a stunned manner, "What? Could the Spring Festival Gala have exceeded 30% in the ratings this year? That's not that big of a difference. The Spring Festival Gala that you directed years ago also received 22% in the viewership ratings, so how much is it this time?"

Old Wan coughed. Right now, he was too embarrassed to tell his wife.

...

At Beijing Television.

Hu Fei came walking in. "Zhang Ye has absolutely defied the Heavens!"

Xiao Lu was startled. "Is it finally out?"

Dafei quickly asked, "How much is it? How much?"

Hou Ge and Hou Di also rushed over anxiously. "Did it exceed 30%?"

"30%?" Hu Fei chuckled before passing the viewership ratings form to them. "Have a look for yourselves. In the domestic entertainment industry, there's no one who can hold back Little Zhang anymore!"

When the several of them saw it, they nearly jumped in shock!

They were really scared silly!

"This—"

"This—"

"Oh my fucking Heavens!"

...

At Zhang Ye's maternal grandma's house.

When Zhang Ye and Wu Zeqing had just arrived, their cell phones started ringing.

Wu Zeqing's call was from the SARFT.

Zhang Ye's call was from Ha Qiqi who was currently at Central TV.

In the call, Ha Qiqi's voice trembled as she said, "Director Zhang! This is too amazing! You're simply too godly! The viewership ratings are out! It's simply unbelievable!"

Zhang Ye smiled. "Calm down, calm down."

Ha Qiqi said excitedly, "But I can't calm down! Do you know how much it is?"

Zhang Ye chuckled and said, "I've already guessed it. We've all worked hard for a long time and put so much effort into the Spring Festival Gala. We've been exhausted, and we've been scolded by so many people. If it's still no good, we might as well not continue in this line of work."

Ha Qiqi said in admiration, "So you've already guessed it?"

"But of course," Zhang Ye said.

Ha Qiqi said, "You're still the calmer one among us"

Zhang Ye said happily, "So what was the final figure that was calculated?"

Ha Qiqi told him.

Zhang Ye was taken aback. "How much?"

Ha Qiqi got a little suspicious and repeated it to him.

Zhang Ye looked very stunned. "What?"

Ha Qiqi said, "Huh? Didn't you already guess it?"

"Ah? Ah, yes, yes, I already guessed it." Zhang Ye said dumbfoundedly, "These viewership ratings are well within my expectations. It's not too low, nor is it too high. I think it's pretty good. Well alright then, Sister Ha. Since the viewership ratings have been published, it's time that you and Brother Zuo hurry home to enjoy the new year. You've both worked hard."

On the other end, Zhang Zuo took the phone. "Director Zhang, hahahahaha, what hard work? When Old Ha and I heard this viewership figure, the two of us got so pumped up! Even if we have to go through another two months of the Spring Festival Gala, we would be able to hold up for sure! But aren't you amazing to be able to guess the viewership ratings?"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Well, of course. Otherwise, would I be the executive director?"

The call ended.

Wu Zeqing was looking at Zhang Ye and smiling.

His several uncles and aunties were all staring at him.

His parents and younger sisters were almost going crazy from the anxiety.

"Little Ye, how much is it?"

"Brother, tell us quickly!"

"Aiya, I'm so nervous!"

"Brother, you guessed it early on?"

Zhang Ye gave an indifferent smile. "But of course, everything is within my control. The viewership ratings were something that I could guess too—" He finally broke down and cried out, "Your sister! As if

I could guess something like that! I thought that Old Ha was just going to tell me that it reached 30%!
That was the figure that I guessed!”

Wu Zeqing laughed at her husband.

...

On Weibo.

In the forums.

In the media.

Within the industry.

At the SARFT.

In the entertainment circle.

At the entertainment companies.

Among the overseas Chinese.

When the viewership for the Spring Festival Gala was announced, it blew up at home and abroad.
Anywhere that could blow up at this moment blew up!

When they saw these viewership ratings, each and every person was shocked and dumbfounded!

Disregarding everyone else, even Zhang Ye himself was dumbfounded!

It wasn't that everyone was making a fuss out of it, and it wasn't that they were inexperienced in life either. Some people had predicted that this year's Spring Festival Gala's viewership ratings would come out of left field, but no one could have expected that it would be so far out. This was a viewership that could tear a hole in the sky!

56.8%!

The country was stunned!

The world was shocked!

Chapter 1357: Into the annals of history!

At Zhang Ye's maternal grandma's house.

Zhang Ye was answering call after call.

Many of those who received the news started calling up Zhang Ye in shock.

...

An executive from the Ministry of Culture.

"Director Zhang! Congratulations!"

"Likewise to you, Minister Zhou!"

"I'm really in awe of you this time!"

"Haha, I hadn't expected such a viewership ratings figure either."

"Yeah, this year's Spring Festival Gala was such a great success! Director Zhang, tomorrow, tomorrow afternoon, let me throw a celebratory feast for all of those on the organizing committee!"

...

Central TV's deputy station head.

"Director Zhang."

"Hey, Deputy Station Head Hong."

"Thank you!"

"You're too polite."

"If you ever wish to return to Central TV at any time, if anyone says no, I, Old Hong, will surely be the first one to take it up with them!"

"Station Head Hong, there's no need, there's no need."

...

The former Spring Festival Gala executive director, Li Ke.

"Director Li."

"Director Zhang, I'm calling to congratulate you."

"Hai, it was all to your credit for laying the foundation for me. Otherwise, it couldn't possibly have done so well."

"Come on, stop flattering me. What has this got to do with me? It was all due to your own skill. If I had been the one handling the Spring Festival Gala this year, it might not even achieve a viewership ratings figure of 20%."

...

He received over a dozen calls!

Everyone sounded really excited over the phone!

56.8%!

What kind of a concept was that?

This was nearly three times the viewership ratings of last year's Spring Festival Gala!

This was twenty times the average viewership ratings for the first season of The Voice!

This was over a dozen times the average viewership ratings of I Am a Singer!

It was too impressive!

It was too fucking impressive!

According to the various media outlets and the industry insiders' forecast, there was no doubt that the Spring Festival Gala would reach a viewership of 25%. But whether it could hit 30%, that was still pretty difficult to put a finger on. As for 35%? Or 40%? A lot of them didn't even dare to think that high. There was no inkling of such a figure. In their opinion, no matter how capable Zhang Ye might be, he couldn't possibly achieve a 40% viewership with the Spring Festival Gala that had such a weak reception for so many years!

However, the results left everyone nearly pissing their pants!

This viewership performance was actually two levels above the high that no one dared to imagine. It had exceeded that forecast figure by twice the amount!

56.8%!

It was a viewership that sent shockwaves all around!

The media was dumbfounded!

The industry was stunned!

The people pissed their pants!

The entire country was astonished!

"That's such an insurmountable fortress!"

"Zhang Ye has always been someone who's performed miracles!"

"He actually revived this hot potato that no one was willing to handle!"

"I have nothing I can say! This is what true skill is!"

"56.8! This has set a new bar for the Spring Festival Gala!"

"But what about next year? Whoever takes over the Spring Festival Gala next year will surely die!"

"Hahaha, that's true. This viewership is too heaven-defying. What is going to happen to those that come after this?"

"Is it that difficult? All they have to do is to appoint Zhang Ye again for next year's gala and the one after that!"

"Right! That guy might have a questionable character, but the Spring Festival Gala that he directed was so fucking fun to watch!"

"I'm someone who never used to watch the Spring Festival Gala, but I caught it this year. If Zhang Ye is invited to direct next year's event, I'll definitely watch it again! If they invite him to direct every year, I'll watch it every year!"

"Damn, although I've been scolding Zhang Ye for an entire day and night over the five deceptions, I still somehow got fucking pulled into his fandom after the broadcast of the Spring Festival Gala!"

"This fellow has always been loved and hated just as much!"

...

The news spread quickly as articles got published one after another.

"The Spring Festival Gala's viewership ratings are released!"

"The highest in 20 years: 56.8%!"

"A miraculous Spring Festival Gala!"

"Zhang Ye makes history once again!"

"Zhang Ye: A god-like director?"

"The Night of Miracles! The Spring Festival Gala's viewership ratings reaches 50% again after 23 years!"

"Is Zhang Ye the most deserved best director of the Spring Festival Gala?"

"The Spring Festival Gala's viewership ratings shock industry insiders!"

"Last night, Zhang Ye left a mark of his legend at Central TV's Broadcasting Studio 1!"

"This success belongs to Zhang Ye, please cheer for him!"

"Zhang Ye single-handedly helps the Spring Festival Gala back to the top!"

"It's finally safe to say: The Spring Festival Gala of the yesteryears has finally returned!"

They were reporting the news without holding back!

They did not skimp on the compliments!

The Chinese media outlets were singular with praise!

...

Overseas.

Meanwhile, the foreign media outlets were also reporting on the news.

The Japanese media: "The largest new year gala in China achieves great success!"

The Korean media: "The world's top Go player directs the Spring Festival Gala to a new record!"

The English Media: "A colorful life of a mathematician!"

The American media: "A Chinese gala sets the world record for viewership numbers!"

...

On the second day of the new year.

The Spring Festival Gala's celebratory feast was held.

In the previous years, a symbolic celebratory feast would always be thrown within a week after the Spring Festival Gala was held to thank everyone for their hard work and sacrifice. Of course, it was only symbolic in nature because if it was based on the results of the viewership ratings, none of the previous 10 years of the Spring Festival Gala would be qualified to have a celebratory feast thrown for it. So this celebratory feast became routine and was gradually turned into a superficial practice.

But it was different this year!

It was not a symbolic event for this year's Spring Festival Gala. They were really holding a celebratory feast!

This reputation!

These viewership ratings!

If this wasn't called a real celebratory feast, then what would?

By the time Zhang Ye arrived, he saw that many others had also arrived. A majority of them were familiar faces. There were the leaders at the Ministry of Culture and the SARFT, people from the production team, the staff from Central TV, and many of the participating performers of this year's Spring Festival Gala. A lot of celebrities were in attendance!

There were a total of 25 tables 1 !

There were 200-300 people in total at the venue!

The entire three floors of the restaurant were booked for this event!

It could be said that the celebratory feast this time was of an unprecedented scale. There was a cheerful atmosphere in the entire restaurant!

"Zhang'er!" Zhang Xia waved.

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Grandma Zhang."

Zhang Xia smiled widely and said, "You're surrounded by an air of glory."

Zhang Ye said, "Don't say that, don't say that."

Fan Wenli came over. "Director Zhang, congratulations."

Zhang Ye said, "And the same to you, Old Fan. Didn't both you and Old Chen's popularity go up again?"

Fan Wenli smiled and said, "It was only because of you that we managed that. With the exposure from this Spring Festival Gala, it has given us more than enough to take a year's break from work."

Zhang Ye said, "Yes, there should be a work-life balance, after all."

Yao Jiancai also came over. He said happily, “Yo, our star has arrived!”

Zhang Ye waved it off and said with a grin, “What star? Today’s stars are the executives of the upper management. I’m just here as a supporting figure.”

Eh?

A few people who didn’t know Zhang Ye well were startled when they heard this. They all wondered if Director Zhang was always this good at talking. He was this humble?

But those who knew Zhang Ya well were all amused when they heard that. Like they didn’t know what kind of a personality this fellow had. Who was he bluffing? If you cared so much about the higher-ups, would you have fought against them so many times over the years? Which department’s executives have not been scolded by you before?

Very soon, everyone was here.

The 25 tables were filled.

The executives were seated at the main table. When Zhang Ye saw that the banquet was about to begin, he joined the table the production team’s members were seated. As a result, the executives saw this and would not agree to such an arrangement.

“Director Zhang, where do you think you’re going?”

“Ah?”

“You should be sitting over here.”

“It’s OK, I’m fine with sitting here.”

“Heh, you’re the star today, so quickly come over!”

“Sir, you don’t have to be so courteous to me.”

“That won’t do, haha, come, come, come. We’ve already left a seat empty for you. If you don’t come over, we won’t start the banquet!”

“Well, alright then.”

Zhang Ye went over.

In the end, he was cheerfully nudged by a few executives to sit together with Deputy Minister Zhou. This treatment would not be offered to anyone other than Zhang Ye. This wasn’t just because Zhang Ye was Wu Zeqing’s husband. Everyone knew that the reason why the Spring Festival Gala had done so well this year was due to Zhang Ye.

To say that this breakout the Spring Festival Gala had experienced this time was all down Zhang Ye’s contributions alone would be overstating things a little.

But if they were to say that they had also contributed to the record-breaking viewership ratings of the Spring Festival Gala, it would surely be quite embarrassing to claim so. All of them really did not dare to accept any credit for this!

What had they done?

Thinking about it, it didn't feel like they had done anything at all!

Under the suggestion of the higher-ups, everyone raised their glasses for a toast.

Deputy Minister Zhou said loudly, "Everyone, you have all worked hard, especially Director Zhang. Turning the tide so spectacularly this time has completely convinced everyone. There's nothing that anyone can say to that. The Spring Festival Gala is not only the best New Year's gift to us, but it is also the best New Year's gift to the people!" He raised his glass. "I would like to take this chance to offer a toast to all of you on behalf of the leaders from the different departments. Let's not talk too much and just drink! Cheers to everyone!"

"You're too polite, minister."

"Cheers!"

"Cheers!"

"Cheers!"

The celebratory feast was very boisterous and enjoyable!

Everyone was extremely happy and carefree!

This was the first time that the Spring Festival Gala's popularity had done so well!

A heaven-defying viewership ratings of 56.8%!

Each and every one of the 40 acts was on fire!

This was a day that would enter the annals of history, and all of their faces were glowing with pride!

Chapter 1358: The battle at the top of the entertainment industry is revealed!

On the third day of the Chinese New Year.

At Old Wu's villa.

In the morning, another wave of firecrackers was being set off.

When Zhang Ye called out to Wu Zeqing several times after waking up and received no response from her, he continued to lie in bed, lighting up a cigarette and puffing away.

Oh, right.

Time to check the Celebrity Rankings Index.

When Zhang Ye opened it to check, he saw that his popularity status was still pending. Hadn't it been two days already? Why wasn't it out yet? Efficiency! Efficiency, my comrades! Then he remembered something. He opened up the game ring's interface that he hadn't checked in a long time. When he brought up the interface, a very long series of numbers was displayed. This astronomical figure was the

Reputation Points that Zhang Ye had accumulated. It was so large that it even gave Zhang Ye quite a scare!

Having not used it in such a long time, it had grown to such a large figure?

Well, this wasn't unexpected since his popularity had been growing all this time as well!

I Am a Singer.

His wedding.

The advertisements.

And the Spring Festival Gala.

Ever since his "Reach the Summit" plan began, his popularity had been climbing like a rocket's ascent. Naturally, his Reputation Points would also increase since he hadn't used it much all this while.

Since it was the new year, he thought that maybe he should try his luck out.

So he activated the Lucky Halo (Upgraded) and placed some additional stakes on Lottery Draw (Two). With a total of ten stakes, he spent 100 million Reputation Points.

The lottery draw began.

Clunk, clunk.

The slot machine started moving.

10 seconds.

20 seconds.

30 seconds.

With a ding, the machine gave out the prize!

Ten shiny Treasure Chests (Medium) were dispensed.

It was a Skills Category item!

—Calligraphy Skill Experience Book!

Zhang Ye was taken aback. He had received this item on more than one occasion. If he remembered correctly, he should have already maxed out on the level one Calligraphy Skill Experience Books? Even if he didn't max out on it, he was probably quite close to the limit. The Calligraphy Skill Experience Books that he just received were the higher level ones. It was a very good item which could still be used to level up on a maxed-out lower level skill. These 10 higher level skill experience books could give Zhang Ye's originally maxed-out calligraphy skill a further breakthrough. For these skills category items, it wouldn't be too much no matter how many of them he received. His luck today didn't seem too bad at all.

He immediately flipped open the skill experience books.

One book.

Five books.

Ten books.

He learned it all.

Zhang Ye was equipped with so many skills now. Lock picking? Flying a plane? Playing the piano? Directing? Photography? Acting? Taiji? Taekwondo? Hacking? Programming? And even that Flight Engine Manufacturing Skill Experience Book that he received in that last lottery draw he attempted? If he counted the Stats Category items as well, then it would be even more. Fruit of Alcohol Tolerance, Fruit of Strength, Fruit of Agility, Fruit of Charm, etc. Even he had lost count of them. Although there were a lot of them, they were not really that refined. For example, the Commercial Airline Piloting Skill? During the plane hijacking incident, Zhang Ye had only managed to land the plane with a lot of luck. If he were to attempt it again, he would probably die trying. So Zhang Ye had a goal in mind, which was to slowly upgrade all of his Skill and Stat Category attributes to the maximum level one by one!

It was a rather ambitious goal.

Heh, it would be better to take it slowly then.

Just as he was about to attempt another few lottery draws, his cell phone rang.

The call was from Ha Qiqi.

“Old Ha?”

“Director Zhang, are you home?”

“Yes, what’s the matter?”

“Are you at your parent’s place, or?”

“I’m at the villa.”

“Then we’ll head over there now. Is it convenient?”

“Why? There’s no need.”

“That won’t do. We must go over to pay you a New Year’s call ¹. Old Zuo, Old Wu, and the others are already on the way too. We’ve already bought our gifts for you. Besides, there are also some work issues to discuss.”

“Hur hur, alright then. Come on over.”

“Alright, we’ll see you in a while.”

Zhang Ye minimized his game ring interface and put on his clothes before heading downstairs.

But to his surprise, some people were already downstairs. Wu Zeqing was sitting on the sofa and chatting with a man and a woman dressed in business attire.

When they heard the sound, the three of them looked over to the staircase.

Wu Zeqing smiled. "You're up?"

Zhang Ye sighed. "I thought you were already out."

Those two people hurriedly stood up.

The man said respectfully, "Mr. Zhang."

The woman also said, "Mr. Zhang, happy New Year. We're here to pay a New Year's call to you and Chief Wu."

Zhang Ye self-deprecatingly waved it off. "No need to be so polite. Just carry on chatting and don't mind me." He quickly made an attempt to slip away. Well alright, these people were both older than him and were in leadership positions at the SARFT but were addressing him as Mr. Zhang. This made Zhang Ye feel rather awkward.

The woman quickly said, "Don't, Mr. Zhang. It's about time we leave too."

The man said, "That's right, we won't disturb Chief Wu and you from resting."

Wu Zeqing stood up to send them off. "I'll accept the fruits, but please take everything else back with you."

The woman gave a wry smile. "Chief Wu."

Wu Zeqing smiled. "Your thoughts are appreciated, alright?"

The woman said, "We're always in your care, but you're still rejecting our gifts. You're making us feel really bad about it, but alright, please continue to guide us in our work for the coming year."

The two of them left.

Soon, another group of visitors arrived.

For the entire morning, six groups came to pay their new year's call to Wu Zeqing. There were those from the SARFT, the television stations, the media organizations, as well as the old subordinates of Old Wu's. Wu Zeqing received them one after another. As her husband, Zhang Ye had to be at his best too. Every now and then, he would come over to sit with them. But as they were always talking about things like government policies, culture, trends, and skill, Zhang Ye found it difficult to join in on their conversations. He was a coarse person, after all.

Having arguments.

Scolding people.

Smacking faces.

Becoming famous.

This was what Zhang Ye's world was about.

...

Finally, Ha Qiqi and company arrived.

Zhang Ye quickly led them up to the second floor.

Little Wang giggled, "It's so active at your place. Who are all those people?"

Ha Qiqi shushed her. "Quiet, those are executives and staff members from the organizations."

"Who cares who they are?" Zhang Ye said with a laugh, "I don't really know them in any case."

Ha Qiqi said amused, "Then why were you chitchatting with them for so long?"

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "Do you think that I wanted to? We're completely different kinds of people, and there's nothing in common for us to talk about."

Zhang Zuo said, "Pfft, department heads are always afraid of trouble, while you're always looking to stir up trouble. It sounds more like you have nothing in common to speak with them about."

Everyone laughed.

Zhang Ye also chuckled.

Zhang Zuo handed over the gift they bought. "Director Zhang, happy New Year to you."

Wu Yi also smiled and said, "There wasn't a chance to wish you before the Lunar New Year since you were so busy with the Spring Festival Gala, but we're finally able to come and visit you to wish you a happy New Year. Happy New Year, Director Zhang."

Zhang Ye laughed heartily. "Thank you, happy New Year to you all too."

In the second floor's guest area.

Everyone was seated together.

Zhang Ye asked, "Old Ha, what was that you mentioned on the phone?"

"Oh, it's an important matter that we're very concerned about." Ha Qiqi opened her bag and took out some documents. "The Chinese Celebrity Rankings Index will be updated soon. I just received news that your ranking will be revealed at midnight today!"

Today?

That was only a little more than 12 hours from now?

Zhang Ye took a deep breath. "Are you sure?"

Ha Qiqi said in seriousness, "Yes, I'm quite sure."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "OK."

Ha Qiqi said, "I had a meeting with Old Zuo, Old Wu, and the others before this to analyze the situation and get a gauge on our opponents. Have a look at this info."

A copy of the information was handed out to everyone.

Zhang Ye lowered his head and went through the information. A graph detailing the seven S-listers' popularity growth was shown, with his own graph included as well.

Ha Qiqi said, "Ever since the 'Reach the Summit' plan was thrust into motion, our popularity has caught up to the seven people, and the gap between us is shrinking. Although there's still a bit more to go, it's something we can achieve with some fight. If we quantify the data, our score would be at 85, compared to theirs at 100. Meanwhile, the other A-listers ranked below you would only score 50 or so. We've already pulled away from the other A-listers. Compared to those seven people, we're really not that far away from them anymore."

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

Zhang Zuo said, "We only got delayed these past two months due to the Spring Festival Gala."

Ha Qiqi said, "One of the Heavenly Kings and another Heavenly Queen experienced a breakout in popularity as their holiday movies' box office earnings reached a record high and won many awards. This increase in their popularity was something unexpected. It was even greater than the popularity you gained when you did I Am a Singer. Meanwhile, the other Heavenly Kings and Queens have not been slacking either. They've all been fighting their way up during this holiday period to fend you off. Because of the inactivity during these past two months, they have also pulled away from our popularity score by a bit. There was even a rumor in the industry recently that suggested that you've already lost your chance at fighting for a position in the S-list."

Zhang Zuo said in amusement, "They claim that it's already been decided."

Little Wang giggled and said, "But none of them could have expected that the Spring Festival Gala would be so explosive, could they!"

Ha Qiqi laughed as well. "Yeah, those seven S-listers might not be pushovers, but they forgot that we're not pushovers either. A Spring Festival Gala with a viewership ratings of 56.8%, that's over half of the world's Chinese population who stayed watching TV to catch the broadcast that night. I wanna ask: Who else is there? This viewership has surely given everyone a scare. All that's left is to see how much popularity the Spring Festival Gala will bring us. I suppose those Heavenly Kings and Queens are also getting nervous over this. But since all will be revealed tonight, there's nothing that they can do. It's the same for us too. All we can do is wait for the results."

Zhang Zuo said, "I doubt there'll be too many people who will sleep well today."

Wu Yi also said nervously, "Let's stay up and wait for the results."

Little Wang said, "What's the use of waiting? We should go back and offer some joss sticks to ask for a blessing!"

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "What's the use of offering joss sticks?"

"Ah, I guess I'm probably too superstitious," Little Wang apologized.

Zhang Ye said, "You'd have to give some offerings ² as well!"

Little Wang and Wu Yi were speechless.

Ha Qiqi laughed and said, "We still have to depend a little on luck. Let's hope Lady Luck is on our side this time. Those seven people have been holding onto their spots for too long, and there hasn't been

much change in showbiz in a decade. Those seven people, those seven spots, it's about time that one of them gave up a seat for Director Zhang!"

Little Wang applauded. "That's right, this is what it means by the wheel of fortune is always turning."

They appeared to be in a relaxed and happy mood, but the truth was that they were all extremely unsettled and were just pretending not to be. They couldn't help being nervous. Having reached this point where they were at the final step, who wouldn't hope that they would have a surprise waiting in store for them? Who wouldn't hope that they could take a spot from one of those seven people!

A continuous onslaught for half a year!

A plan to reach the summit that was carried out for six months!

Popularity?

Contacts?

Experience?

Ability?

Status?

Achievements?

Whichever it was, they felt that Zhang Ye had already achieved enough to qualify for a place among those seven spots!

All there was left was to see how far this miraculous Spring Festival Gala could take them!

Be it success!

Or defeat!

It would all depend on tonight!

Chapter 1359: Zhang Ye ascends to the summit of the Chinese entertainment circle!

Later that morning.

Zhang Ye's phone was ringing incessantly.

His mother called.

"Son."

"Yes?"

"Are the rankings going to be published tonight?"

"I think so."

"How confident are you?"

"Hai, who can say for sure?"

"How can you not know? This is such a big deal!"

"There's no use in worrying about it. I'm also waiting for the results."

Zhang Xia called.

"Little Zhang."

"Grandma Zhang."

"All the best; I'll be waiting to see you get to the top."

"Aiyo, there's not even a hint of it happening."

"But there's still a lot of hope that it will happen. You're the only person in the entertainment circle who has gotten this close to breaking into the S-list in recent years. If you can't get up there, there's even less of a chance for anyone else."

"Alright, I'll be counting on your blessings then."

"And I'll be waiting for your good news."

Zhang Yuanqi called.

"Old Zhang, what's the matter?"

"Can you make it?"

"Heh, like I'd know."

"All the best; you should be able to."

"Let's see what the results are tonight."

"OK."

A lot of his family and friends were very concerned.

If the Spring Festival Gala was a big deal to a lot of people, then this battle to reach the summit of the entertainment circle was Zhang Ye's personal big deal. The result of the Spring Festival Gala was already known, and Zhang Ye had given the entire country's people a very satisfactory answer. Meanwhile, tonight's update of the Celebrity Rankings Index would be Zhang Ye's answer to himself. He was also extremely looking forward to it—reaching the summit of the Chinese entertainment circle was his very first goal since the day he entered the industry.

Now it was right before his eyes!

All there was left was this final step!

Zhang Ye paced around the house for a long time, walking from the study to the bedroom, then from the bedroom to downstairs, and from downstairs to the garden. He was thinking if there was anything

else he could do. But he realized that nothing more could be done. Activate the Lucky Halo? That would be useless. Everyone's popularity score was already fixed. He could only wait for the results now.

...

The news began spreading.

This was also not much of a secret.

There was overwhelming coverage in the news as everyone's focus turned to this battle at the summit of the entertainment circle.

"All shall be revealed at midnight tonight!"

"The battle for the summit: Who will be the last one standing?"

"Will today usher in a change in the seven S-listers' spots?"

"Analysis by industry insiders: A difficult to predict outcome!"

"Tonight, anything is possible!"

"The entertainment circle might really be welcoming a new Heavenly King!"

On Weibo.

"It's really happening!"

"This day has finally arrived!"

"Is it really possible?"

"I think it will be quite difficult to say."

"Yeah, those seven people haven't moved from their spots in such a long time."

"But their opponent is Zhang Ye. Has he not created enough miracles? Everyone never thought that he could do well when he was taking charge of the Spring Festival Gala, but look at what happened. Zhang Ye took charge of it so well that it was heaven-defying!"

"That's what true ability is."

"This fellow might like scolding and scamming people, but it has been really emotional to see Zhang Ye climb from his role as a small-time radio host over the years to where he is today. It really has not been easy for him to make it to where he is now. He had to fight against so many obstacles every step of the way. Let's see if he can finally reach the summit today!"

"Lord Zhang, you can do it!"

"It's time for showbiz to see some shakeup!"

"The entertainment circle has indeed undergone quite a bit of change in the years since Zhang Ye's debut!"

“Yeah, I feel very happy whenever I see Zhang Ye causing trouble, and I get in a better mood. This person is really infectious; I like him so much!”

“I won’t scold you today, but I’ll definitely take it up with you another time over the five fortunes. You can do it!”

“My large saber is again again again again again again again again again again again again again again again again unable to endure the thirst!”

...

At the team office of a Heavenly King.

The company was in a frenzy.

“Is the calculation out yet?”

“It’s too difficult to count.”

“It has to be done even if it’s too difficult. We have to know how much Zhang Ye is behind in the popularity score compared to ours!”

“The effects from the Spring Festival Gala are too great! There’s no way we can process all that data!”

“Then estimate it! We can’t just sit around and do nothing!”

“This really came out of nowhere. Who could have expected that Zhang Ye would execute the entire Spring Festival Gala so beautifully? All the momentum that we had going for us has been thrown out the window!”

“What do we do now? He couldn’t possibly be catching up to us, could he?”

“No, it won’t happen. Zhang Ye’s popularity score before it went pending was still too far away from our score!”

“Right, no matter how explosive the Spring Festival Gala was, it shouldn’t push Zhang Ye into the S-list, right?”

“In any case, just prepare for all possible scenarios!”

“Understood!”

...

At the team office of a Heavenly Queen.

“We’re not in danger, are we?”

“Uh, that’s hard to say.”

“Yeah, Zhang Ye is coming on too strongly!”

“That guy’s unstoppable now!”

"I did some calculations and found that our Heavenly Queen Sister should not have much to worry about. Even though there's not much difference in the popularity scores of the seven Heavenly Kings and Queens, we're not at the lowest spot."

"Yeah, it should be those two Heavenly Kings who should be the most worried."

"Are you guys saying—are you guys saying that Zhang Ye is really going to jump in?"

"Ai, who can be so sure of that. But based on Zhang Ye's current popularity and status, he's truly capable of standing shoulder to shoulder with the S-listers. Let's just wait for the results."

...

At a talent agency that a Heavenly King was signed with.

It had been a state of emergency everywhere in the company for the past two days.

"Go and arrange another event!"

"It's too late!"

"Can't we bring forward the premiere of the movie that will be shown in several days?"

"We can't do that. The SARFT already approved the movie's screening schedule."

"Goddammit! Who was the one who said that Zhang Ye wouldn't be able to catch up the other time! Who said that the battle for the summit was already a foregone conclusion? Zhang Ye's popularity score is still pending. Who knows what kind of a ranking he'll get after the update! We only have this one Heavenly King in our company's lineup helping us gain a foothold in the industry. If that spot gets taken away, everyone else is going to be affected as well! Hurry up and get moving. I want everyone to think of ways to drum up our Heavenly King's popularity!"

"Yes!"

"President Zhou, I have an idea!"

"What is it? Speak quickly!"

"Let's pull some underhanded method and bring Zhang Ye down. We'll make him—"

"Fuck off!"

"Ah, President Zhou?"

"Are you fucking trying to be funny or what? You want to bring Zhang Ye down with some underhanded methods? Don't you fucking know who Zhang Ye's wife is? You're not afraid of dying, huh? Do you think that the company's circumstances are still not messy enough? Do you think that the face smacking that we received from the industry-wide boycott the other time was not harsh enough? Old Hong, Old Hong! What on earth made you hire someone like that?! Right now, immediately, I want him out of my sight! I don't want to see this fool anymore by this afternoon!"

"Understood!"

...

The industry was in chaos!

The entertainment industry was in chaos!

Those Heavenly Kings and Queens' teams were all preparing for any eventuality!

A lot of the heavyweights of the industry were unsettled!

If it were someone else, they would still be able to deal with them. The waters of the entertainment circle ran too deep, and there were many sinister things going on within. Fake news, harmful rumors, obstruction, backstabbing. In many of the crucial ranking battles in the past, there was always a lot of fighting going on behind the scenes. The celebrity teams and entertainment companies spared no effort in executing their "deadly plans" and enacted scene after scene of palace dramas that would leave anyone stunned and shocked. Why were the best dramas on Chinese television always those about power struggles within the palace? That was because they didn't need to learn anything about it. They would only need to act as themselves and that would be good enough! But this time around, it wouldn't work. Those tricks would work on anyone in the entire entertainment circle, except Zhang Ye!

His wife was the SARFT's leader!

His wife was Wu Zeqing!

Do him in with a deadly plan? Entrap him?

Do you think that they are sick of living?

Therefore when pitted against Zhang Ye, all they could do was to compete fairly!

A storm was brewing!

The winds were howling!

Many of the celebrities in the industry could only stare wide-eyed at this most thrilling drama in ten years which was about to take place. There was going to be a change soon, this time it was really going to happen!

...

At night.

It was getting closer and closer to midnight.

The outside world had blown up and no one could sleep soundly.

The attack by the Heavenly Kings and Queens' fans was getting fiercer and fiercer as their spears all pointed at Zhang Ye.

Controversy!

Doubt!

Attacks!

There was no peace at all.

However, at the home of the person in question, it was as quiet as it could get. It didn't seem like anything had happened and felt just like any other night.

In the garden of the villa.

Zhang Ye and Wu Zeqing were admiring the moon.

"Little Ye, are you cold?"

"I'm not cold, what about you?"

"Hur hur, I'm not cold either."

"I initially hoped to rest well over the Lunar New Year holiday so that I could spend more time with you. But it looks like whatever the outcome is, I'm not likely to be able to rest much."

"Do what you want to do; it's alright."

"Haha, but it's a little tiring."

"It looks to me like you're enjoying this, though."

"The happiest event in this bro's life is marrying you, my beautiful wife. Even if I can't get to the top today, I have no regrets."

"It's midnight."

"Oh, is it?"

"Just hit midnight."

"Alright, let me check it out."

"Is it up yet?"

"...Yes, it's up."

"It's pretty good."

"Mhm."

The Chinese Celebrity Rankings Index was updated. Zhang Ye's name had astonishingly appeared within the ranks of the S-list!

On the fourth day of the new year, at midnight.

Zhang Ye ascended to the summit of the Chinese entertainment circle!

Chapter 1360: The birth of a new Heavenly King!

At Zhang Ye's parents' house.

“Has the rankings index been updated yet?”

“Yes.”

“How is it?”

“...”

“Say something, will ya!”

“He’s in the S-list!”

“Are you serious? Check it again!”

“I’ve already checked it three times! Our son has made it to the top!”

“Good! Good! Very good!”

“I-I’ll go and call our relatives!”

His father was so excited that he couldn’t say anything else!

His mother’s hand that was holding the phone was even trembling:

“Hello, Mom, Little Ye has reached the top!”

“Hello, Brother, your nephew has reached the top. Yes! For real!”

“Hello, Little Ye’s Aunt. Little Ye, he...Little Ye—”

His mother made the calls one by one, and her tears were slowly rolling down her cheeks as she did so.

It had taken too long. They had been waiting so long for this moment that when it finally came, they were in disbelief that this was really happening!

...

At Zhang Ye’s first uncle’s house.

“Dandan, whose call was that?”

“It was from Eldest Aunt. Bro-Brother has reached the top!”

“What? We have a...superstar in our family now?”

“Brother is so awesome! He’s the best!”

“Little Ye has finally made a name for himself!”

...

At Zhang Ye’s Studio.

Screams and cheers erupted!

“It’s done!”

“God!”

“Director Zhang has done it!”

“Ahhhhhh!”

...

At Yao Jiancai’s house.

“Dad! Look at this, quick!”

“I saw it already!”

“God, Uncle Zhang has done it! He’s really done it!”

“This night oughta belong to him anyway. Little Zhang hasn’t had it easy these past few years. This should be the best gift that the world can give him for the new year!”

“I’m so happy for Uncle Zhang!”

...

At the team office of a Heavenly Queen.

“Heavens!”

“Zhang Ye has really become an S-lister!”

“That can’t be possible! Just how much popularity has the Spring Festival Gala brought him!”

“I’ve done some calculations. It should be an astronomical figure!”

“This fellow is too fearsome!”

“Little Lian, stop addressing him as this or that fellow.”

“Ah?”

“Zhang Ye is now on equal standing with our Heavenly Queen Sister.”

“OK, Sister Li, I understand. I’ll pay attention to that.”

...

At Zhang Yuanqi’s house.

She was in a call with Fang Weihong.

“Sister Zhang, Teacher Zhang has really done it!”

“I see.”

“Aren’t you surprised?”

“I am, but not by much.”

“True, you already predicted that if there would be any changes to the S-list, the person coming up would definitely be Zhang Ye!”

...

At the team office of a Heavenly King.

“This is truly unbelievable!”

“It’s Zhang Ye who’s the unbelievable one!”

“Damn, he really came up!”

“Without much film credit to his name, not acting in any TV series, never taking on commercial appearances, and not even having a talent agency behind him, this person has actually reached the summit of the domestic entertainment circle? He has actually become one of the seven S-listers? Oh my God, I’m not dreaming, am I? If anyone told me in the past that this would happen, I would never have believed it!”

“He’s really like some kind of god!”

“Yeah, there has never been a celebrity like Zhang Ye in the entertainment industry, nor will there be another like him in the future! He’s truly one of a kind in the world of entertainment!”

...

In the crosstalk world.

In a group chat.

“Fuck!”

“He has really broken into the S-list!”

“How the hell did this happen! What’s going on with those Heavenly Kings and Queens!”

“Is there no one who can stop Zhang Ye? What are they all doing!”

“With Zhang Ye reaching the summit, can the crosstalk world have a peaceful time? Wouldn’t he come and scold us every other day?”

“Ai, there’s nothing we can do even if he does that. We were the ones who scolded him so often in the past. The fact that Zhang Ye hasn’t taken it up with us after he got married is already quite good.”

...

At an entertainment company.

“The world has changed!”

“It’s all to the credit of the Spring Festival Gala! It helped him ascend to the top!”

“Before Zhang Ye got to the summit, the entertainment industry was already greatly troubled by him! Now that he’s reached the top, will there be any peace in the entertainment circle?”

“Hai, who knows?”

“Zhang Ye is just a bomb waiting to go off in show business!”

“Yeah, even if there were going to be a change to the seven spots of the S-list, many people in the industry were hoping that the person coming up would not be Zhang Ye. They would have accepted anyone but him!”

“That’s right, but it’s always what we fear most that comes true! It just had to be this fellow who made it to the top!”

...

On Weibo.

“Tonight’s events will definitely go down in the annals of showbiz history!”

“I don’t know why, but I’m getting really excited over this as well!”

“I love Zhang Ye so much!”

“I’m so happy and proud of him!”

“He deserves this. Even if there are some issues with this fellow!”

“Zhang Ye is indeed well-qualified to sit in this Heavenly King’s throne!”

“The new generation has replaced the old. Sigh.”

“Congratulations, Zhang Ye!”

“Hahaha, Zhang Ye must be ecstatic at home right now!

“I wonder if he’ll show himself in public tomorrow. What would he say?”

“Remember the time Zhang Ye left behind a poem after he was forced out? ‘Vast snow clouds darken the skies. / The blowing north winds drive the geese and snow. / Worry not that close friends won’t appear on the road ahead. / Who in these lands don’t appreciate you?’ Haha! Wonderful! Delightful! Those people who scolded and doubted him back then could never have expected that Zhang Ye would be able to ascend to the top of the entertainment circle one day! Who could’ve expected something like that?”

“Although he hasn’t exactly reached the status of being appreciated worldwide, but who in China doesn’t know him? Zhang Ye has done it today!”

“I’ve been waiting for the rankings index to be updated all this while, but I wasn’t as excited as I thought I would be at the moment of revelation. Later on, I finally realized it was because Zhang Ye was already a Heavenly King in my heart. Watching him come all the way here from the time he was just a radio host to becoming one of the top in the entertainment circle, I’ve actually witnessed all of that. This is truly an honor of a lifetime!”

...

The dust settled!

The battle to reach the entertainment circle's summit ended!

Zhang Ye had snatched a spot from one of those seven people purely through his own abilities, and this indicated the birth of a new Heavenly King in the Chinese entertainment circle!

This was the biggest restructure to the entertainment circle in ten years!

This was the first time that the S-list rankings had changed in ten years!

Some people were cheering!

Some were calling it good!

Some were looking forward to it!

Some were smiling bitterly over it!

Some people broke down!

Some people vomited blood!

Some people were troubled!

On this night, no one in the country was able to rest well!

—Zhang Ye!

—Zhang Ye!

—Zhang Ye!

Online, in the households, on the streets, on the news, on television, this name was splashed everywhere!

...

At home.

In the villa.

The constant ringing of the cell phone broke the silence of Zhang Ye and Wu Zeqing's time together.

Wu Zeqing smiled and said, "Take it."

"Alright," Zhang Ye said with a smile.

The call connected.

"Zhang'er, you must treat us to a meal!"

"But of course."

"Haha, congratulations!"

“Thanks, and congratulations to you too.”

“Oh? What’s there to congratulate me for?”

“You know. When you go out in the future, you can brag that you’re friends with Lord Zhang. People are going to respect you so much because of that.”

“...Shut up!”

“Hahahaha!”

His phone was exploding with the continuous calls from his family and friends. Ha Qiqi, Chen Guang, Zhang Xia, Yao Jiancai, Fan Wenli, Zhang Yuanqi, Dong Shanshan, Yu Yingyi, his younger sisters, his uncles, his aunties, his paternal cousin, Deputy Station Head Hong, Deputy Minister Zhou, Hu Fei, Hou Ge, Hou Di, etc. In the end, even Lillian, who was on the other side of the globe, received this news and called over to congratulate him.

It was his moment of glory!

Old Wu was there with him.

His friends were there with him.

This was a night that Zhang Ye was destined to never forget.