

## Superstar 871

Chapter 871: Da Hong Pao becomes famous!

The next day.

In the morning.

As long as they were situated in the same city, the courier packages would have reached their destinations by now.

His paternal elder cousin called. "Little Ye, I was still wondering what you'd sent to me. So it's actually some cosmetics and a cell phone, and it's even the latest Yuanhe 8V model?"

Zhang Ye laughed and said: "You've received it?"

"Yes, I did." His cousin said: "This gift is too expensive!"

Zhang Ye said: "It didn't cost me anything anyway."

His cousin said: "Alright then, Sis thanks you for it!"

Zhang Ye said: "How is your blogshop doing?"

His cousin beamed and said: "Ever since we put up your photos and that advertising tagline last year, our business has been doing quite well. It's even getting better in conjunction with your popularity."

"That's great then." Zhang Ye said: "Just use my photos as you deem fit. I don't have a management agency anyway, so there aren't many restrictions."

A while later, Yao Jiancai texted him a message.

Yao Jiancai: "Zhang'er, I've received your package."

Zhang Ye replied: "Great."

Yao Jiancai: "Haha, Mimi wants me to thank you on her behalf. That girl keeps holding onto that He-something cell phone and is playing with it. My wife has also opened up the cosmetics set that you gave her and tried the milk cleanser. She says it's really good."

Zhang Ye: "It's great as long as she likes it."

After that, Xiao Lu also texted him a message. "Thank you, Teacher Zhang!

Dafei: "We've received the items! Mighty Teacher Zhang!"

Hou Ge: "Director Zhang, early Spring Festival greetings to you! Thanks for the cell phone! It's just really great to use!"

Songstress Grandma Zhang Xia also called. "Thanks, Little Zhang."

Peking University's Chinese Department's Teacher Su Na directly posted on Weibo instead and even attached a picture accompanying it. The picture depicted the cell phone in its before unboxing state and

after unboxing state. She said on Weibo: "Thank you to Professor Zhang for your New Year's gift. I like it very much!"

Zhang Yuanqi also received her gift.

However, Old Zhang only sent him a message with two words: "Received it."

Zhang Ye asked: "How do you like it?"

Old Zhang: "I'll make do with it."

Lightly chuckling, Zhang Ye knew that this was Old Zhang's true character in private, so he did not get too bothered by it. After replying to everyone, he put aside everything and quickly went to work.

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Stepping into the period just before the Spring Festival, Zhang Ye was suddenly swamped with work as his schedule was packed to the brim.

Dinner gatherings...

Year-end reviews...

A Bite of China's promotions...

Advertiser feedback sessions...

Throughout the day, he was kept on his toes.

In the end, an incident even happened when night arrived. Tonight was the broadcast of A Bite of China's latest episode. Many of the home viewers were tuned into Channel 14 to watch the show as usual. As with previous broadcasts, A Bite of China always focused on food, whether they were ingredients or cuisines. However, today's episode had an additional segment that focused on tea leaves. Even though the focus on tea leaves was not exactly unusual as it still stayed faithful to A Bite of China's theme, the critical issue here was that no one seemed to have heard of this particular tea leaf that was featured.

"There is a nameless monastery located in the Wuyi Mountains scenic area, where incense does not burn too brightly. On this morning, Huizhi, the young monk, wakes up as usual and goes with his senior brother to draw the water..."

"Several tea trees of a lush green shade line the cliffs over here."

"This tea in focus is called Da Hong Pao. Its leaves are wiry and have a greenish-brown appearance, with the resulting brew forming a clear and light amber tea. The most outstanding quality of this tea is its aroma that has a hint of orchid and lingers ubiquitously for a long time, with a distinctive terroir of 'rock.' In addition, most teas have the benefits of refreshing and aiding thinking, elimination of fatigue, promotion of diuresis, clearing away and preventing heat, being antibacterial, having detoxification effects and preventing diseases, aiding digestion, helping in losing weight, and improving health and fitness. It may also prevent cancer, help lower cholesterol levels, and has anti-aging and other special effects."

"The Da Hong Pao tea leaves can last through more than seven or eight infusions and still be very fragrant.

After the episode was broadcast, there was a great reaction online.

"Da Hong Pao?"

"What tea is that?"

"Oolong tea? Why have I never heard of it before?"

"Your horizons are not wide enough!"

"My horizons are not wide enough? Fuck you, I am a local of Wuyishan!"

"Previous poster, I don't think you are from the way you speak."

"Fuck, my style was influenced by Zhang Ye, but I'm really a local here. There are many Wuyishan teas that are quite good and famous, but I've never, ever heard of this Da Hong Pao before!"

"That's right, I'm also a local and I've never heard of this tea called Da Hong Pao. My family have been tea merchants since my grandpa's and parents' time. If there was really a oolong tea called Da Hong Pao, I couldn't possibly have not heard of it. There are only so many varieties of oolong tea and I can recite their names backwards easily!"

"But that's not what A Bite of China says."

"Did they get it wrong?"

"It can even last seven or eight infusions and still be very fragrant? That must be bullshit! Any tea leaves would be tasteless after three brews!"

"If it's really as A Bite of China says, then won't that tea be the number 1 tea in the country?! How can it be that good!? That even the locals do not know about it?"

"Impossible. When Teacher Zhang makes a show, he's always very care to fact check and surely would not make such a stupid mistake!"

Online, the discussion about this was relentless as the debate intensified.

A lot of those who did not like Zhang Ye were using this chance to attack him.

"Zhang Ye only knows how to talk nonsense!"

"Da Hong Pao? You must be joking!"

"Is there even such a tea?!"

"This show is too irresponsible with its claims!"

"This is called cheating the viewers!"

"How can a tea that grows on some wild mountain top be nice?!"

Finally, some of the locals of Wuyishan and even the local tea merchants there started appearing on Weibo as well.

One Fujian tea shop owner said: "Da Hong Pao? Excuse my ignorance, but I've really never heard of it."

A merchant who deals with oolong tea in Wuyishan said: "Me neither. Does such a good tea really exist? If it's really as good as the show claims and there are only several of those tea trees left, then with the excellent taste and aroma of the tea, wouldn't it be worth an out-of-this-world price? So how could it be possible that no one knows about it?"

An expert from the Chinese Society of Tea Science also came out and asked: "What tea is this?"

Almost at once, A Bite of China had attracted a wave of criticism, being called liars along with claims that they were irresponsible. They even claimed that they were broadcasting a fake segment and gave the show many similar labels too!

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At home.

Yan Tianfei urgently contacted Zhang Ye.

Over the phone, Old Yan sounded very anxious. "Teacher Little Zhang, have you seen what's happening online yet? What's this about Da Hong Pao? Is there really no such tea?"

Zhang Ye laughed. "They're just ignorant."

Yan Tianfei was taken aback by the response. "But those are local tea merchants speaking up. Do they also not know?"

Zhang Ye explained: "Director Yan, I have never faked anything when it comes to making shows. It's not like you don't know that already. There's nothing that they can pick on regarding this tea; it's just that there aren't many people who know their stuff."

Hearing that, Yan Tianfei felt somewhat relieved. "I should've known. Anything that you, Little Zhang, do has never disappointed anyone before. I understand. So we won't need to hold an emergency PR session?"

Zhang Ye replied: "I guess not? We'll see how it goes, just leave it to me."

Yan Tianfei said: "Alright then. It's coming up to the Spring Festival soon. Just bear the brunt for a little longer."

Zhang Ye laughed: "Of course."

The debate was still going on online.

This was the first time that A Bite of China was suffering from a crisis of confidence.

The matter only had a turnaround the next day.

A Bite of China's viewership ratings were rising extremely high and the show was now considered a national documentary. Although any of its scenes could attract all kinds of attention, that unheard of tea

called Da Hong Pao had attracted countless people's attention this time. Quite a number of local tea merchants, and even the local Society of Tea Science and other national tea-related organizations, had descended upon the Wuyi Mountains scenic area, with some of them rushing here by flying from miles away. The Wuyi scenic area management committee staff were alarmed by all of this.

Seeing this turnout, the Wuyi Mountains scenic area management committee staff could only lead those people into the scenic area. Actually, even most of the staff here did not know about the existence of these few trees. The trees did not really stand out much, so no one bothered with them or took them seriously since they were really miserable looking. Otherwise, why would they have sold the trees to Zhang Ye back then so agreeably and even took him for a sucker!

The monastery was located.

The tea trees were located.

The tea merchants started to investigate, while the experts began examining. "These tea trees have to be at least a hundred years old! Or even older than that!"

This fact shocked many of them!

Previously, the monastery's abbot had already packed most of the Da Hong Pao tea that they harvested in the past for Zhang Ye to bring back to Beijing. However, they still kept a little bit of it for their own consumption. The tea merchants and experts spoke with the monastery and somehow managed to get their hands on some of those Da Hong Pao tea leaves.

After tasting the tea, all of them were greatly astonished!

"Heavens!"

"What kind of tea is this!?"

"It's really true! A Bite of China's claims were true!"

"This...this..."

"It's really a top-of-the-line oolong tea! On top of that, it even has an aroma that no other oolong tea has! It's has such a full aftertaste! And it's so pure! This has to be first-rate tea!"

"Is there even such a gem in this world?"

"Master, do you still have any of the tea left in your monastery? I'll buy them all!"

A monk of the monastery said, "We don't have any more left."

The tea merchants immediately approached the scenic area's management committee. "Regarding these tea trees, we would like to buy them all. Just let us know how much you want for them!"

Even those tea experts were getting excited!

But when they heard what the scenic area's management committee staff told them, a sense of disappointment came over them. "These parent trees have already been bought by Teacher Zhang Ye."

"Ah?"

"Why did it turn out like that?"

"There's not even a single one left that we can have?"

"Aiyo, what a pity!"

Everyone started howling with pained hatred!

Little did they know that those people from the scenic area management committee were also almost in tears. Seeing how these merchants and experts reacted, they understood that the tea leaves were not just any ordinary tea leaves. Besides, one of their staff members was lucky enough to have tasted it just now and could still smell the tea's aroma in their mind. But then, so what? They had already sold away all their rights to those trees! There was nothing left!

This news quickly spread!

After the experts and tea merchants went back, they could not stop praising the tea!

The netizens were surprised!

"What?"

"Is it really that good?"

"That can't be, right?"

"Why not? The people from the Society of Tea Science went onsite to examine them!"

"So this claim about Da Hong Pao is true then?"

"Then why didn't anyone know about it until now?"

"Yeah, why is it that only those from A Bite of China's program team know about it? And how did this name of Da Hong Pao come about? Who gave it that name?"

"I will keep my reservations about this. Could those experts and tea merchants turn out to be shills?"

"How can that be? There have been several waves of tea merchants and tea lovers who went to the site over the past two days! It should be real!"

"But why was it that only Zhang Ye who knew about it and not anyone else?"

On the third day of this incident, another major turning point surfaced!

This turning point was one that even Zhang Ye did not think of.

A professor from Fujian University who researched history discovered a historical record of Da Hong Pao from a rare Qing dynasty document. Although the document was badly damaged and missing a large chunk, it really mentioned words like "Wuyi Mountains," "Da Hong Pao," "tribute," and "Emperor." Due to the missing information, there was no description of the specific location and other relevant details. Therefore, this document did not attract the attention of anyone until now!

This was an astonishing discovery!

That professor uploaded the historical document online and posted: "As an associate professor of Peking University, I can't comment on Zhang Ye's character. But in terms of knowledge and diligence, I trust him fully. Therefore, I went through a lot of information and finally found some evidence that can prove that the tea called Da Hong Pao truly existed. In fact, the earliest mention of it dates back to the Qing dynasty where a few isolated words match closely with the introduction of the Da Hong Pao parent trees on A Bite of China!"

This news immediately caused a huge reaction on the Internet!

The tea merchants went into a frenzy!

The tea experts went into a frenzy!

The tea lovers went into a frenzy!

"So it's really true!"

"Fuck, Da Hong Pao was really a tea used for tributes?"

"It's that famous? Even the emperors liked to drink it?"

"How awesome! It's really too awesome!"

"What the fuck! Is it really that good?"

"So it turns out that this Da Hong Pao was already amazing in ancient times!"

"It's a famous tea!"

"There are only a few parent trees left in the entire country? Then how much would it cost per catty?"

"Per catty? You fool! How could they be selling this by the catty! With this proof from the historical documents, they wouldn't even sell it by the tael. It's more likely it would be sold by the gram!"

"Ah?"

...

Zhang Ye who was at home was also stunned. There was still a difference between this world and his previous world. The historical direction of Da Hong Pao had developed differently. For example, there was no longer that inscription on the wall of the cliff where the tea grew, but a historical documentation of the tea had appeared in this world instead.

The newspaper coverage of this subject was appearing everywhere!

It was even talked about on News Simulcast!

"Birth of a famous tea!"

"The Da Hong Pao tea that was forgotten by history!"

"Qing dynasty tribute 'Da Hong Pao' shockingly reappears in this world!"

"A tribute by A Bite of China to cultural heritage!"

Da Hong Pao!

Da Hong Pao!

Da Hong Pao!

This term appeared all over the news and on the Internet!

At home.

His parents were staring with their mouths agape as they watched the news on TV.

Suddenly, his mother turned around and lightly kicked at a bag of tea under the coffee table. She pointed to it and asked dumbfounded, "Little Ye, that famous Qing dynasty tea that they're talking about, could it...could it be this big bag of lousy tea that you brought home that one time?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "That's the one."

His father jaw dropped. "The one that you wouldn't let us have more of after we had a cup of it?"

Zhang Ye replied, "That's right."

His father asked again, "It was a drink for the emperors during the Qing dynasty?"

Zhang Ye answered with amusement, "That might be possible, but I don't know the details."

"Aiyo, oh my god!" His mother was utterly shocked by that, then hurriedly bend down to take out the bag of Da Hong Pao carefully. That gentleness, that movement, that protectiveness was as if she were carrying her own baby. "Hurry! Hide this! Hurry up and hide it!"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "I've already stored the bulk of it, so what you have there is just for our own consumption. Why are you hiding it?"

His mother stared at him. "Nonsense, how can I not hide this?! Right now, we're the only ones who have Da Hong Pao in this entire world! This is a treasure! A treasure that only emperors had the honor to drink!"

Chapter 872: The astronomical price of the tea leaves!

Overnight, almost everyone knew of the name Da Hong Pao!

However, there were naturally controversies as some netizens did not acknowledge it.

"Is it that nice?"

"They must have exaggerated it!"

"That's right, why is the news all about Da Hong Pao?"

"No matter how good it is, would it be better than Longjing?"[1.]

"I think those people are all skills hired by Zhang Ye! What tribute? Bullshit!"



"I heard that the most expensive Xihu Longjing from last year's harvest cost around 60 to 70,000 yuan per kilogram. No matter how expensive Da Hong Pao is, how can it be more expensive than Longjing? That is the best among all the famous teas!"

"Right, they really know how to boast!"

"Comparing oolong Tea with green tea, it's still worse by a ton!"

"Yes, green tea is the king among all the teas!"

In the end, it didn't take long before someone came forward to smack faces!

On Weibo, a very famous tea merchant from the Zhejiang area posted: "I am willing to offer 100,000 yuan for 50 grams of Da Hong Pao tea leaves!"

With that, the netizens were all stunned!

"What?"

"100,000 yuan?"

"To buy 50 grams?"

"Fuck, how can that be?"

"How can it be so expensive? It's impossible!"

But soon after, a CEO of a different tea enterprise made an offer and attached a contact number along with it. "This is my office number. Whoever has Da Hong Pao tea leaves can contact my secretary. I can offer 100,000 yuan for 30 grams. And there's still room for negotiation. That's all."

"What the hell!"

"Someone made an offer again?"

"It's even more expensive this time!"

"100,000 yuan for 30 grams? That's crazy!"

Following that, requests to purchase the tea leaves came one after another!

A Beijing real estate CEO: "I don't have any hobbies other than drinking tea. I would also like to ask if anyone has Da Hong Pao tea leaves. I can give a good offer and don't need much, just 10 to 20 grams will be sufficient. If you have it or if you know someone who has Da Hong Pao tea leaves, please contact me or make the introduction so that I can contact the other party directly."

A toy merchant: "I offer 60,000 yuan for 10 grams!"

A famous affluent second generation posted online: "I will offer 500,000 yuan for 100 grams!"

"600,000 yuan!"

"650,000 yuan!"

A bidding war broke out and kept going.

Finally, that affluent second generation got annoyed and flatly made an offer. "I will also offer 650,000 yuan, but I only need 20 grams! Who has it? Contact me immediately!"

This was the highest offer so far today!

The netizens were dumbfounded by what they saw!

"Is this what it's like in the world of the rich?"

"Fuck! Spending over 600,000 yuan just to buy some tea leaves? And it's only for 20 grams?"

"Impressive!"

"Fuck that, who was just saying that Da Hong Pao wouldn't be worth that much? Who was saying that no matter how expensive it was, it wouldn't compare to the best Xihu Longjing? No matter how expensive Longjing is, it is still sold by the catty. But what about Da Hong Pao? It is fucking sold by the gram! This is a totally different level of pricing altogether! The price difference is too great!"

"Whoever has a catty or two of Da Hong Pao would totally strike it rich, right?"

"But no one has come forward yet, so it doesn't seem like anyone has it."

"Yeah, it's so precious that you can't buy them even if you do have the money!"

"Where is all the Da Hong Pao?"

"If anyone has those tea leaves, it would be Zhang Ye!"

"Teacher Zhang Ye doesn't need money, so I guess he wouldn't consider selling them."

"That's why the price has been speculated to such an extreme!"

"Zhang Ye is really sharp and has good vision! I'm still wondering how he was able to discover this long-lost tribute from so many years ago."

"I'm still unsure if this is fake news or not!"

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The next day.

At Zhang Ye's parents' house.

Early in the morning, there was someone knocking at the door. Some people had come to visit.

His mother went to open the door and saw eight or nine people standing outside. "Uh? Who are you?"

One of them said, "Hello, Big Sis. Is Professor Zhang at home?"

"Little Ye is still sleeping at the moment." His mother sized them up curiously. "Why are you looking for him?"

That person, a middle-aged man, smiled and said, "I have something to discuss. I'm the Head of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences' Tea Research Institute. My surname is He." Then he

introduced the person next to him, "This is the Vice President of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences." As for the other staff who had come along with them, he did not introduce them.

People from the Academy of Agricultural Sciences?

His mother was slightly taken aback as she had definitely heard of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences before. "Please come in quickly. Our house is a bit messy and has not been tidied up yet, so please don't mind."

Someone else from the group said, "Big Sis, we're from the Fujian Provincial Government Administration Department."

Following, yet another person said, "Hello, we are from the Wuyi Mountains scenic area management committee, excuse us for dropping by uninvited."

Provincial government?

Wuyi Mountains scenic area management committee?

So they were three groups of people and not just one.

His mother exclaimed, "Uh, please come in! I will go and wake Little Ye up."

Ten minutes later.

Zhang Ye came out from the bedroom. Actually, Zhang Ye had already expected them to visit because the dean of Peking University's Modern Agriculture Department had called yesterday evening to inform Zhang Ye that the Academy of Agricultural Sciences had contacted him and were hoping to get in touch with Zhang Ye to discuss some matters regarding the Da Hong Pao parent trees. He did not reject them, but neither did he expect that they would come over so quickly the next morning. As for the other two groups of people, they were probably just tagging along.

Everyone sat down as his mother boiled some water to make tea.

Zhang Ye blinked and said, "Mom, brew some Da Hong Pao for the guests."

"...OK." His mother could feel the pinch as she knew that the Da Hong Pao had already been speculated to an astronomical price on the Internet!

When those people heard that, they were unable to conceal their excitement any longer, eager to try out the tea.

After steeping and brewing, the tea was served.

The vice president of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences' Tea Research Institute couldn't wait any longer and stood up to say, "Big Sis, I'll do it instead."

His mother said, "Don't trouble yourself. Please take a seat, everyone."

The several of them immediately turned serious as they formally took a deep breath and raised their teacups to taste the tea.

"Great tea!"

"This is indeed a top-of-the-line tea!"

This...taste spreads out the moment it enters the mouth!"

"Good! Good! Very good!"

In the house, sounds of surprised praise immediately rang out!

The vice president of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences asked, "Professor Zhang, how did you discover the existence of Da Hong Pao?" To those from the Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Zhang Ye was a mathematician and was thus regarded as a person of science. They saw him as their peer, so when they addressed him, they naturally used Zhang Ye's title obtained from Peking University's Math Department.

With the Qing dynasty document that the Fujian University professor found, Zhang Ye had better support as he smiled and said, "I read a lot and have seen more things than most people."

The Head of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences' Tea Research Institute nodded vigorously. "Teacher Zhang is no doubt someone who researches Chinese literature. You're really experienced and knowledgeable."

Zhang Ye said, "You're flattering me. It's just a coincidence."

The vice president took another sip before looking at Zhang Ye and saying, "Professor Zhang, do you know why we're here today?"

"Surely you are not here to drink tea only." Zhang Ye shook his head, not really knowing why.

The vice president laughed and stated, "Then I'll get straight to the point. The Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences paid a visit to the Wuyi Mountains scenic area to investigate. We've already done the relevant research and that data has been sent back as well. The team that went there was also led by another vice president, so you can say that the academy is taking this very seriously."

Zhang Ye just listened to him quietly.

The vice president said, "After we conducted the fieldwork and surveyed the area, as well as doing a sample analysis on the few parent trees there, we were able to determine that those were indeed the Da Hong Pao trees described in historical documents that had disappeared for over a hundred years. Therefore, the Academy of Agricultural Sciences held an emergency meeting and established a research project. We would like to conduct an in-depth study on the parent trees on the premise that we would not affect its growth and development. On top of that, we would also try grafting and cultivating the tea tree so that we may propagate the planting of it. Da Hong Pao is too precious. It's not only a testimony of history, it's also the entire country and nation's cultural heritage. So of course we hope for it continue into the future. Because the ownership of these parent trees lies with you, we definitely want to seek your approval first. Besides, we want to assure you that we won't cause any damage to the parent trees in the conduct of this research. In fact, we will use our experience of agricultural science to ensure that the Da Hong Pao parent trees will flourish and grow even healthier, preventing pest damage, natural disasters, as well as other uncontrollable factors from affecting it."

The head of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences' Tea Research Institute added, "The Academy of Agricultural Sciences values those parent trees more than you, so you can definitely rest assured if you leave them to us to protect."

Zhang Ye asked, "Then what do I need to do?"

The vice president said, "You don't have to do anything, just giving us the authorization will be enough."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "OK, no problem."

The people from the Academy of Agricultural Sciences were stunned as they did not expect Zhang Ye to agree so readily.

"I've never refused to do my bit for the country and our citizens when it matters, such as passing down our cultural heritage." Zhang Ye smiled and said, "You guys are right. The Da Hong Pao parent trees are the nation's assets and culture, they do not belong only to me." After he said that, he quickly added, "Uh, though the trees belong to the nation, the tea leaves are mine."

Everyone was amused.

The vice president smiled and said, "The annual harvests of those parent trees are definitely yours, but for our research work, I would like to bring some tea leaves back later. 50, no, 20 grams should be enough."

Zhang Ye agreed, "Sure."

When the discussion with the Academy of Agricultural Sciences was done, it was time to speak with those from the Fujian Provincial Government Administration Department.

That person from the Administration Department said, "Teacher Zhang, it's like this. We have also held an emergency meeting and decided to set up a new scenic spot at the Wuyi Mountains scenic area which will be called the Da Hong Pao scenic area. It will be opened to tourists to help spread our tea culture."

Zhang Ye heartily consented, "Sure, just do as you all deem fit."

With the discussions completed in the smoothest of ways, everyone was happy with the outcome.

Actually, all of the issues that they'd discussed today were already in place back in Zhang Ye's previous world. For example, in his previous world, there was also a Da Hong Pao scenic area in the Wuyi Mountains. Then, there was also the mass cultivation of Da Hong Pao seeds and cuttings that took place back there, though the quality of such mass cultivated Da Hong Pao tea trees were less uniform and would never be as good as the harvests from the parent trees.

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On the same day.

The country's decision to do research on and cultivate Da Hong Pao was even reported on News Simulcast!

This was also another way that Da Hong Pao had its status confirmed, even more so as it was an official affirmation from the country!

"So it wasn't fake news at all!"

"Da Hong Pao is real and it exists!"

"Even the country has involved itself in the research? They have placed such a great importance on the tea?"

"Holy shit, it's really a famous tea from the ancient days!"

"A gram costs over 10,000 yuan? Well isn't that really expensive!"

At this point, no one had any more doubt about the authenticity of Da Hong Pao!

Chapter 873: A Bite of China ends! A shocking viewership rating!

Da Hong Pao has become famous!

The calls were arriving one after another.

That night, Zhang Ye was taking a dump in the bathroom when Hu Fei called.

Zhang Ye answered and said: "Hey, Brother Hu. I'm still going through the crosstalk in my mind. Give me another two days. When A Bite of China wraps up, I will get the crosstalk proposal written properly for sure. I will definitely get it out in time."

Hu Fei said: "I'm not calling to hound you over the crosstalk routine."

Zhang Ye laughed and said: "What is it about then?"

"Nothing much. I'm just calling to give you my New Year greetings in advance," Hu Fei equivocated.

"Oh, thank you." Zhang Ye said: "Have a happy New Year too."

After dragging out the conversation for some time, Hu Fei finally said: "I heard that all of those Da Hong Pao trees have been bought by you? The country still had to inform you before they could start on their tea research?"

Zhang Ye chuckled: "Brother Hu, if you have something to say, just say it. Why be so courteous with me?"

"Alright, then I will just say it. Hai, but actually it's not me." Hu Fei felt a little embarrassed and said: "You know the executive director of Beijing TV's Spring Festival Gala, right? Director Chang usually enjoys drinking wine and tea. After he heard about this Da Hong Pao tea, he has been itching for a taste for the past two days. Hur hur, you might not know this, but Director Chang has asked me more than three times in the past two days about this matter. He knows that we were old colleagues and had a good relationship, so he requested that I ask if you have any excess tea leaves to spare. If you do and are alright with it, can you sell a few grams to him? He doesn't need much as he knows that the tea leaves have already been speculated to over 10,000 yuan per gram. So it will be good enough as long as he can

make a cup of tea from it, perhaps like three or four grams? Director Chang said that he will pay according to the market price."

Zhang Ye laughed upon hearing that and said: "Come on, Brother Hu. Why are you mentioning the money? Are you putting me down? Aren't they just some tea leaves? I'll bring some for you guys when I go over soon."

Hu Fei immediately said: "You're truly a loyal friend! About the payment, we'll talk about..."

"If you still mention the payment, I won't give you the tea anymore." Zhang Ye laughed and said: "Anyway, it won't be much, just five grams, but that should be enough to make a cup or pot of tea. Just don't mention paying anymore. You can have a taste when the time comes as well."

Hu Fei laughed heartily: "OK, then I won't stand on ceremony with you."

"It's nothing," Zhang Ye said generously.

A moment later, a call from the executive director of Beijing Television's Spring Festival Gala, Chang Xiaoliang, arrived. "Teacher Zhang."

Zhang Ye was still taking a dump. "Hi, Director Chang."

"Thank you," Chang Xiaoliang said with gratitude.

Zhang Ye laughed and said: "Please don't be so polite with me. It's just a small matter."

Chang Xiaoliang stated: "To us tea lovers, this is a big matter. Have you seen how high the price has been speculated online? Da Hong Pao is so hard to come by now that you can't buy it even if you had the money since there is demand but no supply. Do you know many people would kill for a sip of it right now!"

Zhang Ye replied: "It's not that bad. If you come over to my place, you can drink all you want."

Chang Xiaoliang said: "Then I won't mention paying, but consider that I owe you one."

"You don't have to do that, Director Chang," Zhang Ye said.

They had only gotten to know each other recently and were not actually that close. Therefore, Chang Xiaoliang approached Hu Fei to convey the message on his behalf. But when he heard that Zhang Ye readily agreed to his request, Chang Xiaoliang felt a little embarrassed and decided that he must give Zhang Ye a call personally to thank him.

Five minutes later.

Another call came in.

It was Dong Shanshan. "Zhang'er, what are you doing?"

Zhang Ye said bluntly: "I'm taking a dump in the bathroom."

"Whoa, I was wondering why it was so smelly," Dong Shanshan joked.

Zhang Ye laughed and said: "You can even smell it over the phone?"

"I need to discuss something with you." Dong Shanshan did not beat around the bush. "I would like to buy some tea leaves from you, can you give me a price?"

Zhang Ye asked: "Hur hur, how much do you need?"

Dong Shanshan answered: "Just five or ten grams would be sufficient. I can't afford to buy too much since I still have to pay for my home loan."

Zhang Ye wondered: "I didn't know that you liked to drink tea."

"It's for a gift." Dong Shanshan said: "There's a female manager at the station who has always taken extremely good care of me. The reason I was chosen to host the Spring Festival Gala was because she had suggested it, so I can be considered indebted to her. This manager of mine likes drinking tea and her birthday is coming soon. I definitely must express my gratitude."

Zhang Ye understood. "Alright, don't talk about buying or not buying. How could I ask you to pay? I'll give you ten grams for free. You can give it to whomever you like."

"Thanks, old classmate."

"You're welcome."

"Muuu—ah!"

Over the phone, he could hear the sound of her lips smacking as she gave him a kiss.

Zhang Ye was amused and hung up.

However, right at the next moment, his phone rang again.

This time it was from Yan Tianfei. "Little Zhang, what are you busy with? Are you resting now?"

When he heard that, Zhang Ye replied: "I'm not resting yet. Director Yan, I'll give you ten grams of Da Hong Pao tea leaves and bring them to the office tomorrow after I've packed them into smaller packages."

Yan Tianfei was stunned. "How did you know that I was planning to ask you for the tea leaves?"

Zhang Ye could not help laughing. "I've already gotten a few calls; everyone was asking about the tea leaves."

"Hai, to think I was hesitating to call you for over an hour just now." Yan Tianfei laughed and said: "I should have just called earlier if I knew."

Zhang Ye said: "Even if you did not say it, I was already planning to bring some for you tomorrow."

Yan Tianfei immediately spoke: "OK, thanks. I'll be trying out the tea that an emperor drank and see how it tastes. Oh right, I have a piece of calligraphy by a calligraphy master of our current generation. I've had it for some years now, so I'll bring it over as well. Let me give it to you in exchange for the tea leaves."

"There's no need to, Director Yan."



"That won't do. That's that then."

Following that, a few more friends and relatives contacted him.

Zhang Ye did not reject any of them. As long as they asked, he readily agreed to give them some tea leaves. However, it was definitely not that much and was limited to just five to ten grams per person. The tea was naturally very rare and precious to others since it could not be bought even with money, but none of that mattered to Zhang Ye as this fellow had brought the Da Hong Pao tea leaves back to Beijing from the Wuyi Mountains in a gunnysack. It was the entire stockpile of tea leaves that the monks at the nameless monastery had harvested over the years. Whether it was ten grams or a hundred grams of tea leaves, it was just a drop in the bucket to him. Even the excess spillage from the gunnysack alone would weigh more than that. Just that little box that he had used to randomly keep the excess tea leaves and placed underneath the coffee table would have around 150 to 200 grams of Da Hong Pao in it!

...

The next morning.

At the office.

When Zhang Ye arrived, he was immediately surrounded.

Little Wang exclaimed, "Director Zhang, our A Bite of China is famous again!"

Huang Dandan also said excitedly, "The country has even initiated a project because of it!"

"This Da Hong Pao was discovered by our A Bite of China!" Ha Qiqi laughed and said, "No matter what happens in the future, we have definitely leave a mark on history!"

Tong Fu yelled, "Our work today will benefit all our future generations!"

When Zhang Ye saw this group of people boasting about themselves to the skies, he was amused. "Our work today will benefit all our future generations? It's not that great of an achievement! Alright now, stop bragging about ourselves like that."

AD Zhang Zuo said excitedly, "At least the news surrounding A Bite of China will be surely soar over the next few days!"

Ha Qiqi made a noise in acknowledgement. "The show will be ending after the last two episodes are broadcast in a few days' time. I wonder what the viewership ratings will be."

"How is Rise to the Dance doing now?" Zhang Ye asked curiously. That show had once competed fiercely with them and even tied in the viewership ratings for their premiere episodes.

Zhang Zuo laughed as he shook his head. "They have totally waned. Rise to the Dance's season finale has just concluded and the viewership rating of the last episode was only 0.45%. Xu Yipeng and Chen Ye's program team can be considered to have totally failed their objectives. I heard from a friend that Central TV Department 1 is already planning to disband their program team or replace the main bosses. Otherwise, who would bear the responsibility of their failure?"

Ha Qiqi stated, "Letting Director Zhang go will surely be their lifelong regret."

Zhang Zuo laughed, "I bet they're already regretting it!"

Zhang Ye said, "Don't bother with them. We're approaching the end of our documentary's broadcast, so let's just do the things we're supposed to and see if we can rely on the momentum generated by our Da Hong Pao episode to rewrite the record of the viewership ratings again!"

"Understood!"

"Got it!"

"We must do so, Director Zhang!"

...

Several days later.

The last two episodes of A Bite of China were broadcast on the Central TV Documentary Channel!

"For the Chinese, the habit of eating breakfast developed during the Han Dynasty some 2,000 years ago. Since then, most Chinese people have eaten three meals a day. While breakfast has become an almost a universal custom around the world, in China, it has sparked a variety of lifestyles and philosophies."

Next, the caption appeared.

Finale: The Three Meals.

Episode Director: Zhang Ye.

In front of their televisions, many of the viewers who saw the captions on the last episode suddenly felt a sense of emptiness.

"For city dwellers, breakfast has to be quick and easy. Tianjin people know this best of all."

"They start with mung bean batter and spread it into a wonderful, round shape on the pan—thin and even without breakages. Eggs make it nutritious. Then they deep fry the batter until it's golden brown. They're fritters with fruit filling, tender on the outside and crisp on the inside, both sweet and salty. Two minutes is all that's needed to enjoy them."

"It's human nature to want to enjoy good food. But everyone has different and sometimes opposing ideas about good food. We all make choices about what we eat. Today, the Chinese are seeing an amazing abundance of food, as well as extreme shortages of resources. If they turn to their ancestral wisdom for answers, they may find this advice. Big a mansion may be, but a bed is all one needs to sleep at night. Rich a man may be, but three meals a day are all one needs to live."

The ending music started to play.

A Bite of China ended![1.]

...

At Central TV Department 14.

It was already nighttime, but no one had left yet.

The moment A Bite of China ended, the colleagues who were watching their own show in the office stood up together and started clapping!

Bba bba bba!

"It's ended!"

"We were absolutely the best!"

"Thank you, Director Yan!"

"Director Zhang, you've worked hard!"

"We're the best!"

"Oh! Let's give a cheer for ourselves!"

"We will surely enter the annals of history together with A Bite of China!"

Little Wang who had not been seen around all this time suddenly appeared at the entrance of the office and started humming a tune. She pushed a small cart with a cake on it. There were even some candles lighted and placed on it.

Yan Tianfei laughed loudly. "There's even a celebration planned?"

Zhang Ye threw up his hands. "I didn't know about it either. They were the ones who organized it."

Ha Qiqi said happily, "Director Yan, Director Zhang, please blow out the candles and cut the cake!"

Zhang Ye asked, "Is there any alcohol?"

"Of course there is. We've already prepared everything!" Little Wang and Huang Dandan took out the alcohol as though they were performing a magic show!

It was champagne!

Yan Tianfei laughed and said, "I was still intending to not drink for a few days. But alright, I'll make an exception today. Let's celebrate together with everyone! Come, pour the champagne!"

"Cheers!"

"Cheers!"

"Let's celebrate the successful ending of A Bite of China!"

"Oh, hooray!"

...

The next day.

The latest nationwide viewership ratings for television shows were released!

A Bite of China used the viewership rating of its last episode to shock the entire country once again! It had given those previously doubting voices and critics another loud slap!

The last episode's nationwide viewership rating was 2.98%!

Little Wang screamed, "Ah!"

Zhang Zuo was so excited that he nearly threw his mouse. "Oh my god!"

"We're too awesome!" Huang Dandan shouted loudly, "We're simply too awesome!"

The entire A Bite of China program team was screaming!

Central TV was dumbfounded!

The industry was dumbfounded!

Everyone was stunned!

Disregarding all those years when television enjoyed a monopoly on home entertainment, and after the birth of the modern Internet era in recent years, when had there ever been a television show that could achieve such a level of popularity? When had there ever been a television show that could achieve such a viewership rating? In this present market environment, they had in fact very nearly breached the 3% viewership rating mark of the old days!

And it was even a documentary!

Xu Yipeng was silent!

Central TV was silent!

Many of the industry insiders were also silent!

They could use a thousand or ten thousand reasons to attack and criticize Zhang Ye, but this result that Zhang Ye achieved had truly left them with nothing to say!

2.98%!

2.98%!

Looking at the viewership ratings charts, many of the industry insiders' first reaction was: Has this world gone crazy?

How can a documentary turn out to be so fucking popular?!

Chapter 874: The crosstalk routine is confirmed!

It was also crazy online!

"2.98%! Your sister!"

"This is too damn scary!"

"About a decade ago when we still hadn't transitioned fully into the modern Internet era and the main form of entertainment for people was still TV, it was possible for a show to achieve close to 3% viewership. However, in today's Internet age where a TV is no longer an essential item for a family, the program team that could achieve such a viewership rating can only be Zhang Ye's team and the person who could hit such a viewership rating can only be Zhang Ye!"

"Let's cheer for Zhang Ye!"

"This has to be an unprecedented miracle in history!"

"I suppose the other TV stations are already dumbstruck to witness something like this!"

"That's right! I had thought that the best a documentary could do is break 2% of the viewership ratings. But who could have thought that the last episode of A Bite of China would shock everyone again? Even though it was already so popular, the viewership ratings still rose so explosively?"

"I love A Bite of China! It's a really good watch!"

"This is the best documentary in history!"

"Is there a second season?"

"Don't end it! My family has already gotten used to watching the Central TV Documentary Channel every weekend!"

"Pleading for a second season!"

"Teacher Zhang, if there's a chance in the future, please make a second season of the documentary!"

"I really can't bear to see A Bite of China end its run!"

"I also can't bear to see it end, but this should be Zhang Ye's last show for Central TV. After the new year, his contract with Central TV will almost be up."

Yao Jiancai posted on Weibo: "Congratulations to my old bro's show for ending perfectly!"

A local documentary director: "A Bite of China is probably going to be an insurmountable mountain in the history of documentaries. I wish Zhang Ye well and hope that he will get better and better in the future!"

Dong Shanshan: "Congratulations, old classmate."

Yu Yingyi: "Zhang Ye—the most talented guy in the history of Media College. The best director of the hosting world, the best mathematician of the directing world, the best literary scholar of the mathematics world, and the best host of the literary world!"

Zhang Xia: "Congratulations to Little Zhang on hitting a new high."

Fan Wenli: "Looking forward to Teacher Zhang's crosstalk performance at Beijing TV's Spring Festival Gala."

The popularity of A Bite of China had also lifted the confidence of the entire industry regarding this kind of niche programming. On the day A Bite of China ended its broadcast, there were many television

stations and production companies who submitted their documentary proposals and put forth their agendas. Some television stations were even announcing the broadcast times for their new shows. Guangxi Television would be launching a documentary called A Walk into Delicacy next week. Guangdong Television would start televising Village Tastes next month. Meanwhile, Shandong Television would start filming a documentary called Gluttonous which they'd invested a huge sum of money into. All of them had wanted to ride on the momentum created by A Bite of China's popularity.

They naturally did not schedule their shows while A Bite of China was still broadcasting. Everyone knew that no matter how they shot their documentary, they could not possibly be on par with A Bite of China and compete with it. Therefore, after A Bite of China's broadcast ended, numerous food documentaries were launched one after another as their promotions spread like a wildfire.

An expert referred to this period as the post-A Bite of China era.

...

On this morning.

At Taoran Pavilion.

Wu Zeqing's home.

Old Wu, I'm here."

"Come on in."

"Where are the slippers?"

"There's no need to change into them, just come straight in."

Inside, Wu Zeqing did not turn around to welcome him. Instead, she seemed like she was fiddling with several big and small bags of clothing or something. Dressed in casual attire, Old Wu was wearing a pair of black leggings and a gray knit sweater that made her look extremely gentle and elegant.

Zhang Ye walked over to her and asked, "What are you doing?"

"I bought you some clothes." Wu Zeqing took out a piece of clothing from its packaging and threw the packaging aside. She straightened the shirt and placed it against Zhang Ye's body to see if it fit. Then she smiled and said, "Come, try this on."

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "Why did you buy clothes for me again?"

Wu Zeqing replied, "I'm afraid that you won't have any clothes to wear."

"I did not even get to wear many of those clothes you bought for me last time," Zhang Ye remarked.

Wu Zeqing said, "The new year is coming and you didn't even buy any clothes for yourself. If I don't buy them for you, who will?"

Indeed, ever since Zhang Ye went down the path of the entertainment industry, he had basically never gone to the mall. Zhang Ye could not do that as there were too many people around. In fact, the majority of his current clothes had been bought by Wu Zeqing. Old Wu would also frequently give him

some skincare products, discount vouchers, or prepaid gift cards to him as she did not really use them for herself. At least half of these benefits for the SARFT's director-level staff had gone into Zhang Ye's pocket. Of course, Zhang Ye was previously the top artist on the SARFT's blacklist and was now on their watchlist as a person of interest. If people from the SARFT knew that their upper management benefits were being used by Zhang Ye, who knows how they would feel.

It was a bit ironic in every case.

"Alright, I'll try them on." Zhang Ye then handed her a small box and said, "I brought you some more Da Hong Pao."

When she heard that, Wu Zeqing smiled and said, "Previously, I did not know what type of tea you brought for me, but I finally understood from the news the past few days. No wonder you reminded me over and over to not give it to other people. It was because this is a famous tea from ancient times and there are only a few remaining parent trees of it left in the world? It's better that you to keep it for yourself. It's a waste to give it to me."

Zhang Ye declared, "Aiya, just take it and drink whenever you want. I still have plenty anyway. Even if you want a few catties of it, I'll still give it to you. It's really nothing much!"

Just look at this guy. He was willing to give Old Wu those tea leaves by the catties, but when it came to anyone else, he would only do it by the gram.

This was what you call a difference!

Zhang Ye began trying on the clothes. He did not feel at all embarrassed to do so in front of Old Wu. Besides, he was wearing a pair of long johns anyway, so he just tried them on piece by piece. Old Wu was very meticulous as she bought two sets each of the coat, shirt, pants, and shoes for him. There were even two sets of long johns and socks too.

They chatted as he tried on the clothes.

"Has the documentary finished broadcasting?"

"It just ended."

"Then are you just waiting for the new year now?"

"Hai, of course not. I still haven't finished prepping for the Spring Festival Gala crosstalk routine."

"It's not ready yet?"

"Not yet. I still can't think of anything to say."

"Nothing comes to mind?"

"Not really. It's just that I don't have the inspiration yet."

"What do you mean by you don't have the inspiration?"

Zhang Ye explained, "In the past, when I performed my crosstalks, they were always based on my pent-up emotions, anger, or resentment. My crosstalks were always about scolding people, whether it was

scolding the crosstalk world or Central TV's Spring Festival Gala. But recently, I've finished scolding all the people who deserve to be scolded and finished fighting those who deserve to be fought. Everyone knew what I did and no one dared to pick on me anymore in the past few days. But that leaves me not knowing what I can talk about in my crosstalk routine now."

Wu Zeqing smiled and said, "Why are you always thinking about conflict?"

Zhang Ye replied, "Because I've gotten used to it by now. If anyone tries to pick on me, I can easily scold them day and night in my crosstalk without repeating a single joke. But now that everything is fine and peaceful, it somehow makes it more difficult to say something. Beijing TV has been pressing me for the script as they have already carried out the second rehearsal for the Gala, but I'm still unprepared with the content. See this?" He pointed at his lips and said, "I'm so stressed recently that my lips are cracking."

"I'll apply some eye cream for you." Wu Zeqing headed up to the second floor and came back down with the eye cream very quickly.

Zhang Ye continued, "I'm worried over that problem right now. Old Yao has also called me several times regarding it. My task now is to finish writing Beijing TV's Spring Festival Gala crosstalk before the new year."

Old Wu squeezed out some of the eye cream onto her finger and applied it gently for him. "Recently, I've seen some of the netizens' comments about you. Many of them like your crosstalk routines and say that the routines are great at venting their anger. But there's a small group that dislikes them. They feel that your crosstalk routines are too hostile and that you are always fighting with others through them."

Zhang Ye said with embarrassment, "But that's always been my style."

Wu Zeqing looked at him and commented with a smile, "I've been meaning to ask you this, but can't you perform a crosstalk without scolding people? I don't believe you can't do that."

"Of course I can," Zhang Ye answered without even thinking.

Wu Zeqing said, "So, why don't you just perform a proper crosstalk routine this time?"

"Perform a proper crosstalk routine?" Zhang Ye blinked several times.

Wu Zeqing put the cap back on the eye cream container. She smiled and said, "Let everyone see that even without scolding people, you can still perform a great crosstalk routine!"

Zhang Ye went silent and thought for a full minute about her words. Suddenly, he smacked his thigh and shouted, "OK! Just as you said! I will prove to them what I'm capable of! I'll make the crosstalk world open their eyes! There is no crosstalk that I can't say!"

Wu Zeqing smiled. "Is your fighting spirit back?"

"Yes!"

"Are you inspired now?"

"Yes! I've already decided what the crosstalk will be!"



Zhang Ye said that while picking up his cell phone to call Yao Jiancai.

Du du. The call connected.

Yao Jiancai's voice sounded: "Zhang'er, what's the matter?"

Zhang Ye laughed. "Old Yao, I've thought it through! Let's perform a proper crosstalk routine this time for Beijing TV's Spring Festival Gala! We will criticize the problems in society and widen everyone's horizons!"

Yao Jiancai was stunned. "Perform a proper crosstalk routine?"

Zhang Ye responded: "Yes!"

Yao Jiancai asked doubtfully: "Are you sure you're up to it?"

Zhang Ye nearly fainted. "Why aren't I? Don't tell me you also think that I'm only capable of crosstalk routines that are used for scolding and smacking people's faces?"

Chapter 875: Zhang Ye pokes fun at the Spring Festival Gala! (First Half)

On the eve of the Spring Festival.

Zhang Ye's maternal grandma's house.

The sound of firecrackers going off outside was heard all around as every household decorated their homes with lanterns and streamers.

By the time Zhang Ye drove there and arrived, it was already evening and the sky had turned dark.

His third sister went up to the door. "Brother, why did you just arrive?"

"Wow, our brother is here!" His second sister also ran over.

His third aunt opened the door for him. "Little Ye, come in quickly. We were just talking about you!"

Zhang Ye smiled and greeted, "Third Aunt."

His third aunt said. "I still haven't thanked you for getting Mengmeng such a good cell phone and even got her to bring me a cosmetics set. Thank you so much, Little Ye."

Zhang Ye sighed, "Why are you still being so polite with me?"

His mother emerged from the living room and asked, "Didn't you say you'd be busy today?"

Zhang Ye laughed and replied, "I've finished all my work and the routine has been confirmed as well. There's only the live broadcast left tomorrow, so I decided to come back to celebrate the New Year with everyone. Whoa, there's this much food? We're not eating yet?"

His grandma said, "We'll start very soon."

"Grandma, Grandpa, happy New Year to the two of you." Zhang Ye put down the two boxes of Brain Gold in his hands. These were from the previous time that Wu Mo had given the health supplements to

him. He had kept them in his car's trunk ever since. It made it convenient for him to give them out wherever he went, so he didn't have to worry about not being able to bring any gifts if he suddenly visited someone.

His first uncle and aunt, second uncle and aunt...

Zhang Ye made the rounds to give his New Year's greetings to them. By the time he was done with everything, his throat had gotten extremely dry. So he sat down and drank a sip of tea. "Has the Spring Festival Gala started yet?"

His eldest sister looked at her watch and smiled. "There's still half an hour till it starts."

His third sister suddenly said, "Brother, have you seen the newly posted statement by Central TV's Spring Festival Gala?"

Zhang Ye was taken aback. "What new statement?"

His second sister held up the cell phone Zhang Ye had given to her and showed him. "Here."

"I was busy at Beijing TV all day today and didn't keep myself updated on anything. Let me see." Zhang Ye lowered his head and looked, then read the netizen's comments as well before understanding what was going on.

Due to a not so good overall audience satisfaction for last year's Spring Festival Gala which had invited a Korean celebrity, an incident where Zhang Yuanqi's and Zhang Xia's performance was scrapped, topped with the language performances being unfunny, as this year's Spring Festival Gala approached, more and more people started criticizing the show and had very low expectations for this year's Spring Festival Gala. It ended up with the Spring Festival Gala production team issuing an official statement on Weibo after getting provoked by all those negative comments. They said that there had been someone with ulterior motives who was trying to ruin the Spring Festival Gala and so on in recent times, and that they would not dismiss the possibility of using the law to defend their interests.

Someone with ulterior motives? They were clearly talking about Zhang Ye!

However, after this statement was published on the official Weibo account, the netizens started criticizing even harder!

"They're talking about Zhang Ye, right?"

"How many days has that incident been? Why are they still pulling it out to talk about it?"

"Pfft, why do you all keep pinning the blame on Zhang Ye? Everyone is saying that there is a problem with the performances and don't find them enjoyable to watch, so that already says that the problem lies with the Spring Festival Gala production team! Why are you guys finding fault with Zhang Ye?"

"Why is it that when something happens, Central TV will always blame it on Zhang Ye? Isn't he one of your hosts?!"

"What does the criticism of the Spring Festival Gala have to do with Zhang Ye? Didn't he only perform a satirical crosstalk many days ago?! Do you guys need to resort to using legal action on that? Don't forget that Teacher Zhang is also a lawyer himself, so think about who you're suing! Did you beat him in the

previous lawsuit to begin with? At that time, Zhang Ye had utterly destroyed your Central TV legal team all by himself!"

"Everyone has been criticizing the Spring Festival Gala for many years. It's already become a form of entertainment in itself. Why are you guys shifting the blame to Zhang Ye now? How many times has Teacher Zhang been shot even though he's just lying there and doing nothing!"

"I've come to realize that the current Central TV organization is becoming very interesting. When a show doesn't do well, it's Zhang Ye's fault. When a show does well, it's Zhang Ye's fault. Now that someone over here is scolding them, it's the fault of Zhang Ye too. When someone over there criticizes them about their performance lineup, it's still Zhang Ye's fault. Pfft, Teacher Zhang will never be any good no matter what!"

"Go on and fight it out, the contract won't last much longer anyway."

"I've been following Teacher Zhang's conflict with Central TV for half a year now, but I'm still not bored of watching it! Haha!"

At home.

His second sister put down the phone. "Know what happened now?"

Zhang Ye threw his hands up and laughed. "Why am I involved again?"

His second uncle said, "They are totally targeting you now."

"That lousy Spring Festival Gala, I'm never watching it again in the future!" his grandma grunted.

But Zhang Ye said happily, "Don't be like that. I wasn't actually planning to watch it, but since the Spring Festival Gala production team has given that statement, then I'll definitely watch it closely. This bro will take on the role of that 'someone with ulterior motives' as they said!" He had been worried that he wouldn't have anything to keep him occupied this Spring Festival Eve, but somehow this had happened.

I was the one who led the criticism against you guys?

Alright then, this bro will take the lead all the way to the end!

...

At Central TV.

At the Spring Festival Gala venue, everyone was busy with their assigned jobs!

"Counting down to the last ten minutes!"

"It's about to begin!"

"Camera 3, try it again!"

"Lighting Team 7, get the lights in sync! What are you doing! Hurry up!"

"Where are the hosts? Why are they still at the bathroom at this time! Call them back now!"

The executive director gave his orders. Xu Yipeng and the other assistant directors also went about taking charge of their responsibilities. They all felt nervous while waiting in anticipation for today's Spring Festival Gala to begin. They were nervous because this was going to be a live broadcast and there couldn't be any screwups. Their anticipation was due to their satisfaction of their planned performances for this Spring Festival Gala that they wanted to present quickly to the audience and to let the higher-ups see that they could beautifully finish the job the organization entrusted to them.

The hosts were on standby.

Chen Ye made some last-minute adjustments to his red suit and looked very high-spirited. He was going to step onto this wonderful stage again today after Rise to the Dance had slipped in the ratings and popularity toward the end of its broadcast, which had affected his individual popularity greatly. Such a large-scale talent show had not helped him gain much popularity at all, so Chen Ye had definitely failed his objectives this past year. He had lost to Zhang Ye by too much. But that was fine, because Chen Ye still had the stage of Central TV's Spring Festival Gala. This was something that Zhang Ye could never compare with, in his opinion. With the current relationship between Zhang Ye and Central TV, it was definitely impossible that Zhang Ye would ever have the chance to stand on this stage. And so, on this day, Chen Ye needed to present his best side to continue consolidating his position in the industry!

They were all looking forward to the Spring Festival Gala quite a lot!

...

Online.

The netizens were also getting prepared.

"It's about to begin!"

"Let's see how this year will turn out!"

"I actually still have some anticipation for it."

"It's almost time to start our criticism. It's time for us flammers to step forward!"

"Haha, I'm here!"

"Watching the Spring Festival Gala these days, it seems like criticizing the show is more enjoyable than watching it!"

"Yeah, we created quite a number of jokes about last year's show, so let's see which flamer will excel for this year's show!"

"Today is the once-in-a-year stage for us flammers!"

"I'm on standby!"

"Flamer #3 is here as well!"

"Flamer #11 reporting for flaming!"

"My large saber is again again again again again again again again again again again again again again again again again again again unable to endure the thirst!"

Countless flammers were gearing up and silently counting down to the start of the show!

Chapter 876: Zhang Ye pokes fun at the Spring Festival Gala! (Second Half)

The countdown started.

Three.

Two.

One.

The Spring Festival Gala's live broadcast officially began!

A short, two-minute promotional video was broadcast at the start. This video was very elegantly shot but also very traditional in a sense. All the different industry frontline workers in their work uniforms appeared in this promotional video and finally boarded a packed train for the holiday season. Everyone then gave a fist and palm salute before several words appeared on screen—Spring Festival Gala.

Music started to blare. It was a piece of traditional folk music to which the performers came onto stage with in their beautiful stage costumes. There were people dancing the Uighur folk dance, the Dai folk dance, as well as the Mongolian folk dance.

"Uh..."

"Why do I have an ominous feeling about this?"

"I do too."

"A hodgepodge of performances? Fuck!"

"The composition of performers is too complicated!"

"This opening dance is already exuding the feeling of a 'Spring Festival Gala'!"

"Has there been a year they did not do this? Hurry up and find something to criticize them about!"

"Flammers, step up!"

Some of the flammers were already ready, but as the gala had only just began, they were not in the groove yet. They could not find a good entry point and were unable to muster up a truly worthy criticism yet.

At this moment, the Mongolian folk dance performers rotated to the front and the big screen behind them started showing some of Inner Mongolia's locations. Each location was accompanied with New Year photos of locals wearing traditional Mongolian deels on horseback, standing outside their yurts, or studying at school.[1.]

"Where are the flammers!"

"Where are they?"

"Say something!"

"Where is everyone's fighting spirit?"

"Who will be the one taking the opening shot at the Spring Festival Gala!"

Suddenly, an insult appeared on Weibo: "I'm from Inner Mongolia, I'm here. I wanna say this: I've been telling my foreign friends for many years that we don't live in yurts, don't ride horses, don't bathe in milk, and don't wear deels anymore. But after the Spring Festival Gala is broadcast, all my years of effort go down the drain."

With this insult, everyone was laughing madly!

"Ahahahahaha!"

"Pfft! Hilarious!"

"What a goddamn professional flamer!"

"Just a look at that insult and I know it must be by a professional!"

"Too awesome!"

"This is the first flame heading into the new year!"

"Hahaha, I laughed so much my sides hurt!"

"Aiyo, which mighty flamer is this!"

"Let's see who posted that, it's hilarious!"

In the end, when the netizens saw this person's name, they laughed even harder!

"Pfft!"

"It's Zhang Ye!"

"Fuck, it's Zhang Ye himself!"

"Rofl!"

"Hahahahaha!"

"So it's Zhang Ye! I was still wondering whose fighting strength could be so fierce!"

"Quick, come and see! Teacher Zhang has fired shots at the Spring Festival Gala again!"

"I was saying that after the Spring Festival Gala production team issued such a strong statement obviously targeted at Zhang Ye, if he did not strike back at them, it just wouldn't be his style!"

"Teacher Zhang has also joined the flaming army!"

"Zhang Ye the Mighty!"

"Teacher Zhang, well done!"

The flaming army immediately exalted at Zhang Ye's participation!

If it were any other flamer's insults, it might not have spread so quickly. But since this insult was from Zhang Ye, there was no doubt about how fast it would spread. Zhang Ye had such a vast number of Weibo followers at 10 million that before the opening dance on television was over, this insult of his had already propagated all over the Internet!

...

Zhang Ye's maternal grandma's house.

His third sister yelled, "Hahaha, Brother, you're so sarcastic!"

His second sister also laughed loudly. "Brother, you're really serious about flaming them?"

"What a classic!" His eldest sister was also giggling nonstop while browsing Weibo. "Our brother's eloquence is still as amazing as ever! This insult was so professional. It found the perfect entry point and hit it spot on!"

However, Zhang Ye did not really care about all that. This was the essence of the netizens and flammers from his previous world, so how could it not be good? How could it not hit the sweet spot?

...

After the opening dance was over.

The hosts took over the stage!

Chen Ye who was dressed fully in red said, "The annual welcoming of a joyous festival!"

The female host beside him said loudly, "The country celebrates together for the new year!!"

Their hosting lines did not have much creativity and basically stuck to the traditional New Year greetings of past years. The only thing that was different from previous years was the stage, which was much grander and incorporated more technological elements this time.

Very quickly, the second performance of the night started.

It was yet another singing and dancing performance, with an emphasis on singing.

A big shot singer came on stage and sang, "Oh, homeland, a brand new atmosphere!"

A big name actor came on stage. "Year after year, a brand new look."

A veteran singer sang loudly, "The common folk very happy."

A female soprano: "Let's advance together with the Communist Party."

This was a new song composed and written by an unknown person. It was the first time it was performed at the Spring Festival Gala.

The netizens flamed it.

"The lyrics have an overly proper energy!"

"Fuck, isn't there anything else they can perform?"

"I'm almost falling asleep."

"Could we not have such performances? Why does this year's Spring Festival Gala seem so much more boring than previous years'!"

"There are so many points that we can criticize that I don't know where to start!"

"It's time for the skits!"

"Anticipating the language performances!"

The third performance welcomed this year's gala's first skit.

But when the audience began watching, they felt even more speechless.

The skit was titled "This is a new policy." It depicted a rural farming family running into some problems and obstacles when they had to get something done. Their problems ended up being solved by the country's recently approved new policy. As the skit came to a close, the performers got together and praised the new policy.

The netizens had mixed reactions.

"It's nice, I guess."

"Only the beginning was a little funny."

"BS, how was it even funny? I was totally speechless throughout the skit!"

"It was so boring! There's nothing funny about it at all!"

"What sort of a skit is this even?"

"\*faints\*. It turned out totally different from what I had expected!"

Then it was time for another song and dance performance which included the shouting of slogans. Afterwards, the time finally came for the first crosstalk routine of the night. It was exactly that mass crosstalk Tang Dazhang was leading his group of 60 people to perform, titled "Family Reunion"! It felt like the crosstalk routine used to be scheduled at a later time that was closer to midnight. But perhaps due to the great pressure from public opinion and doubt, the Spring Festival Gala production team made some last-minute adjustments and pushed forward Tang Dazhang's crosstalk routine.

The language performance began.

Tang Dazhang led his senior and junior brothers as well as his disciples and strode onto the stage.

The moment he came on, Tang Dazhang smiled and waved at the audience as he said, "We meet again, my friends."



The applause in the audience was scant, but many of the audience members were amused when they heard that. It wasn't because his words were funny, but because many of them were reminded of Zhang Ye's joke in "I Want to Get on the Spring Festival Gala" that ridiculed Tang Dazhang.

"Let us first wish everyone a prosperous new year!"

The 60 people bowed and said in unison, "A prosperous new year!"

"It's a good day today."

"Yes."

"A year is just like a day."

"That's right."

The crosstalk routine began. It started off with two people speaking, then when it entered the singing segment, the remaining crosstalk actors joined in as well. Some of them played the erhu and sanxian, with a few female Jingyun Dagu actresses gradually joining in as well. The entire crosstalk performance was loud and filled with song and dance![2.]

The netizens were dumbfounded by what they were watching.

"Is this still a crosstalk routine?"

"Why does it feel like it's a singing show instead?"

"How boring!"

"There was only one funny point in the entire performance and it's an old gag from several years back. There was also one joke that felt really familiar that I thought was adapted from something Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai did before!"

"This is really a true family reunion! I pissed myself listening to that!"

"They shouted the catchphrase so clearly, but it still wasn't as good as I expected it to be!"

"Tang Dazhang is getting on in years. He's becoming more and more irrelevant now and is already out of touch with times!"

"This year's Spring Festival Gala seems like it doesn't belong in the same era as us. If someone told me I was watching a Spring Festival Gala from five years back, I might just believe them!"

"I finally get why Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai were not invited to this year's Spring Festival Gala. Teacher Zhang and Teacher Yao obviously do not have as great a political awareness as Tang Dazhang!"

After several performances, many people had run out of patience!

One by one, the flammers started berating.

Even Zhang Ye's fan club leader, Big Saber Bro, joined in.

Fan Yingyun: "On this night, every person in the country will be able to sleep peacefully. My mother will no longer have to worry about my insomnia!"

But among all the insults, one of them didn't seem to fit in with the rest. "Exciting, how exciting! This year's Spring Festival Gala is the most enjoyable News Simulcast broadcast that I have ever watched in the entire twenty-odd years of my life. It has gotten rid of the customary newscaster reporting with the aid of imagery or video highlights, and replaced it with a collection of songs, dances, skits, and video clips instead. It promotes the good policies of the party and simplifies it for the layman. The country is thriving and the people are prospering. This is a new creative breakthrough by the Publicity Department that will ensure the news reaches the minds of our people and helps to put into practice the Three Adjustments. It is definitely worth our comrades at the news publicity battlefield learning from!"

Published on Weibo by: Zhang Ye.

The moment the other flammers saw this, they were astounded!

"Damn, what a burn!"

"Teacher Zhang has beautifully done it again!"

"News Simulcast?"

"Hahahahaha!"

"Heh, it's a proper gala but you described it as a News Simulcast broadcast instead! Haha!"

"This insult is way too godly!"

"Looks like Teacher Zhang is going to offend yet another bunch of people tonight!"

After several minutes, the hosts started pairing couplets in a light-hearted hosting segment.

One of the hosts came up with the first half of the couplet. "The country is thriving."

Chen Ye matched the second half. "The people are prospering."

Right at this moment, Zhang Ye made yet another post on Weibo: "Good news, everyone, good news! Comrades who are able to finish watching this year's Spring Festival Gala will definitely not experience any difficulties in the coming year!"

"Hahaha!"

"Dying from laughter!"

"That's what you get for offending Zhang Ye! !"

"Pfft, hahaha! I've decided to not watch the Spring Festival Gala anymore. All I need is to read Zhang Ye's Weibo as we cross into the new year!"

When the next performance ended, the hosting team reappeared again to thank the higher-ups and audience for their unwavering support over the years. They also thanked the Spring Festival Gala production team for their hard work on the show.

At almost the same time, Zhang Ye's insults started again. "Thank you. Everyone should also thank this year's Spring Festival Gala production team for making us see our mistakes. As of this night, all of us owe the previous versions of the Spring Festival Gala our deepest apologies—we are sorry!"

"We're sorry? Pfft!"

"Aiyo, I can't take it anymore!"

"Zhang Ye is too sarcastic!"

"I've passed out from laughing too much at my computer! Hahahaha!"

"Yeah, we all really owe an apology to the previous versions of the Spring Festival Gala! We shouldn't have criticized them back then!"

"Can you guys stop being so funny!"

"Just look at Teacher Zhang's caliber of insulting. The rest of you really aren't a match for him!"

"No shit, of course we can't compare to Teacher Zhang when it comes to dishing out insults!"

"Amazing! At the critical moments, we still have to depend on Teacher Zhang!"

A lot of the other flammers accepted this remark. "Indeed, Zhang Ye's literary skill and eloquence are at the professional level. Compared to us amateur flammers, he's on a whole different level!"

With that insult, the results were clear!

Tonight, Zhang Ye stood with the public and joined sides with the flaming army. He had even become the leading figure of the flammers and threw out the insults incisively, bringing the standards to a new height, to a new realm!

The Spring Festival Gala's live broadcast continued.

Zhang Ye's insults also continued!

Every word the hosts said could be caught by him, and every performances' details had weak points that Zhang Ye could make fun of at length. A lot of the flammers had already stopped their "duties" and were just watching Zhang Ye sling his insults during the entirety of the Spring Festival Gala. Of course, there were also some performances and artists Zhang Ye did not ridicule. People like Zhang Yuanqi and Zhang Xia—and Ci Xiufang's skit performance—were all spared. As long as it was someone Zhang Ye knew personally and had a good relationship with, he did not say anything about them. This fellow has always been this way....He'd always mix business and private!

Everyone had a good laugh!

Zhang Ye's family members didn't know how to react.

His mother said, "Son, you're not even touching the dumplings and only care about posting on Weibo? Why are you always engaged in such tomfoolery?"

Zhang Ye answered in high spirits, "Did you only realize that now? I've always been like this!"

His third sister, who only wished to watch the world burn, said, "Brother, how about another one! Insult them again!"

Zhang Ye said, "I've just posted one, go on and Like it!"

"Understood! Hahahaha!"

...

When the Spring Festival Gala ended.

As the production team staff were about to check online for the audience and netizens' reactions to this year's Spring Festival Gala, everyone—including the executive director, assistant directors, and other staff members—were all dumbfounded the moment they checked Weibo!

What is this?

What is all this?

Everyone nearly vomited blood!

Zhang Ye! Fuck your grandpa!

You're too damn wicked, you!

Those hundred-plus ridiculing posts on Weibo made by Zhang Ye had utterly shocked the Spring Festival Gala production team! Over a hundred posts! You're going to participate in Beijing Television's Spring Festival Gala tomorrow, so you should be busy preparing for it right now. Yet as a big shot celebrity, you're free enough to stay home to watch television and insult our Spring Festival Gala on the eve of the Spring Festival? Every member of the Spring Festival Gala production team cursed!

This damned hooligan!

The worst hooligan in the entire entertainment circle!

Chapter 877: The run-up to Beijing Television's Spring Festival Gala!

It was the first day of the Lunar New Year.

Morning.

The netizens were still having a lot of fun.

"I've been laughing the entire night!"

"I've already reread the entire sequence of events from the beginning!"

"Me too. I've reread all of Teacher Zhang Ye's Weibo post from yesterday! Hahaha!"

"Damn, what happened yesterday?"

"What happened? I'm just a bypassing southerner who doesn't watch the Spring Festival Gala."

"You guys came too late, but you'll understand after you read Zhang Ye's Weibo! For several hours during the live broadcast of Central TV's Spring Festival Gala, Zhang Ye made over a hundred of ridiculing posts regarding the show! It was really wonderful!"

"What kind of mind does he have to be able to come up with those hundred-some posts?!"

"Yeah, go and take a look! We were made to kneel due to his insults last night!"

"Zhang Ye's temper is what I like most about him! He does not have any pretense at all! He just says whatever he likes!"

"That's right. Usually, for most top-rated B-list celebrities like him, which among them do not mince their words when speaking? But Zhang Ye is different; that guy is incredibly fearless!"

"Supporting Zhang Ye!"

"I really, really like him!"

Those hundred-odd ridiculing posts made by Zhang Ye were quickly forwarded by the netizens. Each and every one of those insults were the quintessence of wisdom from the netizens and flammers from his previous world against the Spring Festival Gala over many years. Not only did those insults stand the test of time, a lot of them were known by many in his previous world and would naturally be as popular and well-received in this world!

Goof Group.

This was the celebrity chat group that Zhang Ye had recently joined. At this moment, many of the celebrities were active online.

Dongdong, a member of a popular domestic group, messaged: "Teacher Zhang, you really are brave enough to say anything! After reading your ridiculing posts from last night, I completely take my hat off to you!"

Zhang Ye typed: "Why would I be scared to speak?"

Dongdong: "...OK then."

A-list celebrity, Ning Lan: "Bro, you sure have guts."

Fan Wenli interrupted: "Hur hur, you made it sound like he did not have guts in the past."

Fan Wenli's husband, Chen Guang, sent a smiley face. "This guy has always been like that. The things we never dare to say or find unsuitable to bring up can be repeated by him every day without any consequences whatsoever."

Ning Lan said: "If I even dare to criticize the Spring Festival Gala once, there would probably be a lot of people coming after me, much less posting more than a hundred times about it. Then my work schedule for next year would definitely be reduced by 20% and I'd probably lose my fans too."

Huo Dongfang replied: "That's why you aren't Zhang Ye."

Dongdong commented cheekily: "This is what we call the demeanor of a celebrity. The way that every celebrity speaks and does things is different. We definitely couldn't say the same things that Teacher Zhang Ye says. Unless Sister Ning intends to become a female hooligan of the entertainment industry and get shouted at and beaten up by everyone wherever she goes?"

Ning Lan: "Then I better not consider it at all."

Zhang Ye sent a blinking emoji and asked: "Who's the hooligan?"

"Pfft!"

"Who do you think?!"

Everyone was tickled.

Suddenly, one name appeared out of nowhere.

Zhang Yuanqi: "Yo, Zhang Ye has joined the group too?"

Ning Lan laughed and said: "You're finally online."

Zhang Yuanqi: "I'm been too busy recently. The Spring Festival Gala has really tired me out."

Dongdong: "Teacher Zhang joined the group some time ago. Sister Zhang, did you only learn of it now?"

Huo Dongfang: "Sister Zhang, it's been a while."

An A-list actor said: "Hello, Sister Zhang."

A B-list male singer: "Hi, Sister Zhang."

Many of those celebrities who had not appeared recently popped up.

Zhang Ye played along and said: "Hello, Sister Zhang."

After Zhang Yuanqi greeted all of them, she asked Zhang Ye: "Are you performing at Beijing TV's Spring Festival Gala this year? Do well. I'm looking forward to your crosstalk routine."

Zhang Ye laughed, "Sure."

Dongdong: "Teacher Zhang, break a leg!"

Huo Dongfang: "Why isn't anyone cheering for me?"

Chen Guang asked: "Old Huo, you have a show tonight as well?"

Huo Dongfang said: "Liaoning TV's Spring Festival Gala has invited me to perform."

Fan Wenli sent a smile. "I got invited to Hunan TV's Spring Festival Gala. In fact, I'm already at the TV station now."

Another big shot celebrity: "I'll be making a guest appearance in a skit on Dragon TV's Spring Festival Gala tonight."

This was a group in which most of the entertainment industry's big names were gathered. Except for a few semi-retired celebrities, the others were the most popular superstars as of now, so they naturally wouldn't miss out on the Spring Festival Galas. Some celebrities with higher statuses and better luck could appear on Central TV's Spring Festival Gala, and those who couldn't would still be able to get a spot on the other provincial stations' Spring Festival Galas.

Zhang Yuanqi gave her well wishes to all: "Everyone, break a leg. Have an auspicious start to the new year!"

"OK!"

"Thank you, Sister Zhang."

"The most intense competition will start this night!"

"There's over twenty Spring Festival Gala events on the provincial stations, how can it not be intense!"

"Let's see which station will do better than the others this year."

"I still think Liaoning TV and Hunan TV have the higher hopes as they invited more big shots to their shows."

"Beijing TV is a candidate as well."

"I have high hopes for Dragon TV because I'll be there, haha!"

...

At home.

Zhang Ye was not familiar with many of the celebrities in the Goof Group and it could even be said that he did not know them at all. As he hadn't had any dealings with them, he did not bother to start a conversation with them. Seeing that everyone was happily chatting, Zhang Ye silently closed the chat app instead. He set his cell phone to silent before throwing it onto his bed.

Let's practice a bit more again!

It will be a proper routine this time!

Taking out a sheet of A4 paper, Zhang Ye read through the speed recital lines written on it once. Then he closed his eyes and began rattling it off as he recited it without reading. Zhang Ye's reciting speed gradually got faster and faster, but he would sometimes stutter in between the lines. Frowning as he shook his head in displeasure, he restarted from the beginning again.

One time.

Five times.

Ten times.

Since waking up at 7 AM, he practiced hard until 10 AM.

Zhang Ye was putting a lot of hard work into this, having already practiced this for several days now. Actually, he didn't have any problems with it except that he had high expectations of himself. Since he promised Wu Zeqing to perform a proper crosstalk routine to show those people what he could do, he had to strive for perfection without any drawbacks! This time he was prepared to perform a proper crosstalk routine by using other people's doubt of him to smack their faces in response!

The Three Vulgarities?

Only knows how to scold people?

Can't even be considered crosstalk?

Alright then, this bro will let you all have a listen to my routine this time by performing a traditional crosstalk routine that you bunch of people are best at! Do you people really think that I don't know how to perform in your style? Today, I will follow a traditional crosstalk format and Spring Festival Gala's crosstalk style to show everyone that I can still say it better than all of you!

...

The day of the galas.

The promotion rivalry for each provincial stations' Spring Festival Gala was getting intense!

Some of the provincial stations' Spring Festival Galas were doing their promotions on the Internet and the updates about their Spring Festival Gala were seen everywhere on Weibo. There was even some advertising that a Heavenly King was going to withdraw from their Spring Festival Gala, yet later on, news was that the Heavenly King would not withdraw from the show. After that, the news of withdrawing and not withdrawing kept happening several times as it forcefully created a hype to attract attention. And some other provincial stations' Spring Festival Galas invested a lot of money into buying advertisement spots at major discussion forums and online video hosting sites. Those advertisements could be seen almost everywhere. Anyways, each of them were trying to outshine the other as everyone was hoping to get off to a winning start on the first day of the new year. This also concerned the survival of the television stations and no one was going to back down!

As the promotions were battling it out, the netizens joined in.

"I will definitely tune into Liaoning TV!"

"I'll watch whichever station's Spring Festival Gala that Sect Leader Huo appears on!"

"Central TV's Spring Festival Gala this year was too crappy. I'm looking more and more forward to Beijing TV's Spring Festival Gala now!"

"I still haven't decided on which station I should watch!"

"You should watch Dragon TV as they had some rather good crosstalk and skit routines last year!"

"If we are talking about crosstalk and skit routines, then the top choice would definitely be Beijing TV's Spring Festival Gala."

"You're right, Beijing TV's Spring Festival Gala has invited Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai this year."

"Oh, come on. Their crosstalk is famous for scolding people and the script is full of picking on and scolding others. He will only get a kick out of it by scolding from the start till the end. I also agree that Zhang Ye's crosstalk routines are exciting, but how can it be broadcast at an event like the Spring Festival Gala?"

"Uh, that is true. Zhang Ye's crosstalk routine probably won't even get broadcast, right?"

"Yup, there are still some differences between a gala crosstalk and other crosstalk routines."

"But Zhang Ye can choose to perform a traditional crosstalk routine."

"How can he know how to perform a traditional crosstalk? All his crosstalks are about scolding people!"



"Oh, right! I just remembered!"

"Then what can be done?"

"What else can they do? All the Spring Festival Galas follow this style, so if the entire crosstalk is about scolding people, they definitely won't allow him to perform the routine. He won't even be able to pass the approval. Zhang Ye's crosstalk style is only famous because it's meant to be performed at a smaller theater. What people like to watch is him scolding people and smacking their faces. But if he suddenly did not scold others, then who would want to watch? Zhang Ye probably doesn't know how to perform a proper crosstalk anyway. In any case, I've never heard Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai perform a proper and traditional form of crosstalk before!"

"Then aren't they done for?"

"Now that you guys brought this up, I'm starting to feel disheartened!"

"Yeah. Initially, I was also looking forward to it. Will Zhang Ye really behave himself when he performs the crosstalk for Beijing TV's Spring Festival Gala? Will he follow in the footsteps of Tang Dazhang and his 60 people mass crosstalk, who shouted catchphrases all over the place during the crosstalk at Central TV's Spring Festival Gala? If he does, then who would watch it!"

"That might really happen!"

"Then Zhang Ye might as well not appear on the Spring Festival Gala at all!"

"Agreed. Rather than performing such a boring traditional crosstalk, he might as well not perform at all. Just please don't have something similar to that Tang Dazhang's 'Family Reunion' performance! Teacher Zhang and Teacher Yao both command a very high status in my heart! Don't destroy that perfect image just because you want to get on a Spring Festival Gala!"

"Right, they might as well not get on it at all!"

"Traditional crosstalk routines have reached a low point and it's impossible to walk out of it. Even if it were Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai performing a traditional crosstalk, the results would still be the same!"

"Let's just wait for tonight and see what happens."

"Hai, we'll know everything tonight!"

Discussions were flying around everywhere, especially regarding the crosstalk piece that Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai were doing for this year's Beijing Television's Spring Festival Gala. The attention garnered was exceptionally high and close to the utmost! They were not like those newly established rookies and had been famous celebrities for some time now. Their reputation and names were very popular within the crosstalk world, having single-handedly reversed the downturn of the crosstalk industry back then. This was why everyone had very high expectations of Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai, so were worried for them this time!

Zhang Ye's fans were like that.

Zhang Ye's friends were also like that.

Even Zhang Ye's enemies were equally concerned about it.

...

At Central TV.

There was a concluding meeting today. When the meeting ended, everyone started chatting among themselves.

The group of people from the Spring Festival Gala production team could no longer bear to not curse anymore. None of them had anything good to say about Zhang Ye due to the hundred-some ridiculing posts that hit the sore spot and pricked right through their hearts. Nobody could tolerate that!

"That Zhang guy, let's see how he performs during tonight's show!"

"Right, I also want to listen to his crosstalk so that we can flame him as well!"

"This fellow has the thickest skin that I have ever come across! His crosstalk routines are clearly all about scolding people, yet he still has the cheek to come and criticize other people's shows? I really have nothing I can say to that!"

"Let's see if he can afford to scold people tonight!"

"He won't be able to scold anymore. There's still the approval board to get through before that."

"If he can't scold any people, then who would want to watch his crosstalk? Hur hur."

Chen Ye.

Xu Yipeng.

Tang Dazhang.

Central TV, the crosstalk world, and people from all kinds of industries and different jobs were now waiting to see Zhang Ye make a fool of himself!

Chapter 878: Beijing Television's Spring Festival Gala begins!

Noon.

After eating lunch at home, Zhang Ye produced two pieces of clothing out of nowhere.

"Dad, Mom, these are for you," Zhang Ye said.

His mother looked over and asked, "What is that?"

His father frowned. "You're wasting money buying things again?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "It's the new year so I bought some clothes for the two of you. A mink coat for Mom and a leather jacket for you. They are reputable brands. Put them on and see if they fit."

"Don't waste money buying such things in the future." His father was already used to not spending frivolously.

His mother smiled as she took the coat from him. "How much did it cost?"

Zhang Ye replied, "Around 100,000 yuan."

His mother was deeply shocked by that. "Whoa, are you crazy?! If you have a hundred thousand, why don't you spend it on something better instead? You could have given me the money and I would've saved it up for you!" She threw the coat back to him and said, "Quickly return it and get a refund!"

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "I was just kidding, it's only a few thousand yuan. Alright, I still have to report to Beijing TV in the afternoon, so I'll be leaving now."

His mother asked, "Are you coming home tonight?"

Zhang Ye said, "I'll see how it goes."

His mother asked again, "How about the second and third days of the new year?"

Zhang Ye said, "I don't know yet. It'll depend on whether I'm busy or not."

His mother grumbled, "Don't keep running around outside during the New Year period. Can't you just spend the new year at home? How many days have you been around at home in the past year? When you come home every night, it's already past 10 or 11 PM and I can barely get to see you. When you left Beijing to shoot your show, it was for a few months at a time. And just last year, you stayed away from home beginning from the eve of the Spring Festival! You insisted on going to the venue of Central TV's Spring Festival Gala to write songs for other people and even fought with a Korean which resulted in you spending New Year's Day at the police station! So can you just not run around this year! Be good and stay at home!"

Zhang Ye acknowledged, "Aiya, I got it."

His mother stared at him. "Drop that patronizing attitude! Why is it so difficult for our family to spend the new year together?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "OK, Mom, I got it."

His father asked with concern, "How's your preparation for the crosstalk gone?"

Zhang Ye said casually, "It's already done."

"Then why did I still hear you preparing in your room just now? Muttering something to yourself in there?" his father said.

Zhang Ye sighed. "Actually, there are no more problems, I was just refining it. The two of you can rest assured and just watch the show tonight."

...

The live broadcast was getting close.

The chattering online was also growing louder.

When Zhang Ye arrived at Beijing Television, he bumped into several people from the Gala production team.

"Eh, Teacher Zhang, you're here?" an assistant director remarked.

Zhang Ye smiled. "Yes, I came early to prepare."

The assistant director said, "Many people are discussing your routine for tonight. There seems to be a lot of controversy surrounding it."

"Yeah, I saw that too," Zhang Ye said indifferently.

The assistant director laughed and stated, "Many people feel that you can't do a gala crosstalk, and even if you can, you won't do it well. Though there are still quite a lot of people supporting you. We were so amused when we saw what some of your fans said. They claimed that even if you did not say a word onstage and started to munch on sunflower seeds with Yao Jiancai, they would still enjoy watching it!"

A director's aide said, "Teacher Zhang, break a leg."

Another staff member said, "There's certainly not going to be any problems regarding your performance."

"Thanks." Zhang Ye smiled and said, "I'll be counting on your blessings."

As he walked in, he greeted the people he knew. Then Zhang Ye found a waiting room and closed the door behind him as he started to deliberate on the crosstalk script again. This was his first time preparing a crosstalk routine in such a way. It wasn't that he did not have the confidence, but rather that this crosstalk was too risky. Those previous crosstalks he performed all revolved around the crosstalks that existed in his previous world and he would at most add a few of his own ideas to it without changing the main through line. But the crosstalk that Zhang Ye was going to perform today was made up of different individual's jokes put together. There were Guo Degang's, his apprentice, Yue Yunpeng's, and Wang Zijian's bits, peppered with some of his own ideas as well. What he needed to do now was string them together into a single routine, which was a very difficult task to achieve. As a result, Zhang Ye had to put in a lot of effort and judgement this time around as he wasn't very sure if he could perform this crosstalk routine well. Rather, to phrase it better, he wasn't too sure if the audience would accept it.

Around 2 PM.

Yao Jiancai arrived.

"Old Yao, you came at the perfect time."

"You're quite early, eh? It starts at seven in the evening, you know."

"I've made some changes to our routine again."

"Ah? You've changed it again?"

"Somehow, I feel that something is missing and it doesn't feel exciting enough!"

"But it's already very good."

"Come, let's go through it quickly."

"Sure, whatever you say."

Everyone at Beijing Television was kept busy by their work. The busiest period each year would probably be during the Spring Festival Gala on the first day of the Spring Festival, as it was a live broadcast after all. Naturally, there were some television stations that were not so busy; for example, Gansu Television, Shanxi Television, Jiangxi Television, and a few other stations. As their viewership ratings were just average and them not being the popular television stations around, they had nothing to vie for on this occasion. To put it bluntly, their Spring Festival Galas were all prerecorded several days before. In this world, only Beijing Television, Hunan Television, Liaoning Television, Zhejiang Television, and the other, larger provincial stations would broadcast the Spring Festival Gala live. As they wanted to fight for the viewership ratings, they had to broadcast a live show.

Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai's crosstalk was no doubt one of the main highlights of Beijing Television's Spring Festival Gala this year. As the station planned to rely on them to pull up the viewership ratings, they were arranged to appear at the earlier part of the programming schedule. This was different from Central TV's Spring Festival Gala as Central TV broadcast on the eve of the Spring Festival to coincide with the countdown to midnight. As a result, the main highlights of the gala were all scheduled just before midnight. These were the differences between them and a provincial station's Spring Festival Gala.

A few hours later.

A staff member came over to remind them, "Teacher Zhang, Teacher Yao, it's time for your makeup!"

Zhang Ye looked up at her and said, "Wait a while more, we'll go over soon!"

That female staff member said anxiously, "But it's already 5:30 PM!"

"There's still something we need to deal with." Zhang Ye immediately got back into the discussion with Yao Jiancai. "Are we still going with this bit?"

Yao Jiancai said, "There might not be enough time."

Zhang Ye nodded. "Then let's take it out."

Finally, the executive director of Beijing Television's Spring Festival Gala, Chang Xiaoliang, was alerted. He dropped the work in hand and rushed over in a hurry. "Why aren't the two of you getting your makeup done and changing into your costumes? It's almost 6 o'clock! We'll be starting in an hour's time!"

However, Zhang Ye ignored his words and just said, "Director Chang, I was just going to look for you. I was going through the script with Old Yao just now and there are some things that we need to add in. I want to have a piece of music added to our performance and record two sets of narration now."

Chang Xiaoliang was dumbfounded. "We don't have time for all of that!"

Zhang Ye insisted, "We must add in this segment no matter what."

"Why would a crosstalk routine require music?" Chang Xiaoliang did not agree to his requests. "Wasn't what was rehearsed previously already very good? The production team has already approved that, so we're fine with it."

Zhang Ye shook his head and said, "I haven't been feeling too confident with our previous routine all this while, but I only just understood the reason. The ending is not enough to hold up the routine and that makes all the jokes seem too scattered. Therefore, I must add in this segment!" He explained his thought process to Chang Xiaoliang in a simple manner.

When Director Chang heard that, he said, "Your changes came too suddenly and it's hard to say whether they'll work or not. Since nobody can see the end product and I'm also unsure of what overall effect it would add, how do you expect me to agree to your changes?"

Yao Jiancai said, "It should be good."

Zhang Ye added, "Director Chang, you have to believe in my professional standards!"

Hu Fei and the others also rushed over upon learning about it. "What happened here?"

Chang Xiaoliang said, "This issue is too serious. I must discuss with the heads first." He quickly left the venue to make a few calls. After communicating for some time, he finally came back.

Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai both looked at Director Chang.

Director Chang clenched his teeth. "The heads have approved of the changes, so we'll base it on your idea to perform the routine! The two of you really know how to make things troublesome for me."

Yao Jiancai also wiped away the smile on his face and said, "Little Zhang is rarely as serious as now."

Zhang Ye commented, "We are striving for perfection."

Chang Xiaoliang stated, "Hurry up and tell me what you need. I'll get someone to arrange for it immediately!"

A staff member said anxiously, "Teacher Zhang, Teacher Yao, please do your makeup first! You can discuss while having your makeup applied!"

Zhang Ye apologized, "Sorry, I've made it quite troublesome for everyone."

In the past, Zhang Ye's crosstalk routines were all about scolding people. He would scold one person after the other. Being comical and face-smacking were good enough, and the routine did not have to be too artistic or exquisite. But this time, it was different as he wanted to perform a proper routine. He definitely had to polish it repeatedly and not have a casual attitude like before.

The audience gradually entered the venue and got seated.

As the start of the gala neared, the atmosphere was becoming tense!

The staff of Beijing Television were fidgeting with anxiety too!

"It's starting soon!"

"Where's Director Chang? Where has Director Chang disappeared to?"

"Director Chang is at the recording studio!"

"Something happened with Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai's crosstalk routine. I heard that there were some last minute changes and a lot of people are running around because of it. Hai, their crosstalk routine was arranged for the sixth performance of the night!"

"Ah?"

"Will they make it in time then?"

"Who knows! Teacher Zhang Ye is always doing things like that!"

"Hurry! Hopefully they'll make it in time!"

With the unexpected situation happening, Beijing Television's Spring Festival Gala production team staff had their hearts in their throats!

Counting down to the last 20 minutes.

Chang Xiaoliang was back.

An assistant director asked anxiously, "How are things going over at Zhang Ye's side?"

"They're still getting to it. Let's not bother with them anymore!" Chang Xiaoliang shouted, "Everyone, get into position!"

A female assistant director stamped her feet. "That Zhang Ye! Seriously!"

Counting down to the last 10 minutes!

Counting down, 5 minutes to go!

At 7 PM sharp, the live broadcast of Beijing Television's Spring Festival Gala officially began!

...

Meanwhile.

Liaoning, Hunan, Zhejiang, Shanghai, as well as the other provincial stations' Spring Festival Galas began almost concurrently!

Chapter 879: Crosstalk routine: Everything is Great!

It was getting lively on Weibo!

"Wah, it's starting!"

"Come and watch Mango TV's opening dance! It's really good!"

"Zhejiang TV's broadcast is quite good as well!"

"Beijing TV's is average. The stage effects aren't all that good!"

"Mango TV is still the best at incorporating technology into their stage presentation! They're so rich! Don't you guys think their stage is almost at the level of Central TV's Spring Festival Gala? They must have really invested a lot into it!"

"Hunan is the best!!"

The netizens immediately started commenting with their opinions after the live broadcast started.

There were even people who kept surfing through the channels broadcasting Spring Festival Galas and made a summarized evaluation on them!

...

Zhang Ye's family had organized a feast at their house today.

Almost all of their relatives were here.

His maternal grandma kept asking, "Why hasn't Little Ye appeared yet?"

His maternal grandpa laughed and said, "What are you so anxious for? The first performance just started."

"Little Ye is slated for the sixth performance." His mother poured some tea for them. "He's going to come on very soon."

Chenchen stared at the television, unblinking.

His third sister sat there with Chenchen, stroking her head and saying excitedly, "Brother is appearing soon! Come on and appear quickly!"

...

Beijing Television.

Backstage, the staff were running in and out busily.

"Hurry up, Teacher Zhang!" A person was urging him for the fourth time. "We're already at the second performance! There's just 15 minutes to go!"

Zhang Ye was decorating some props a distance away and answered without turning around, "It's almost done!"

Yao Jiancai was also getting anxious beside him. "If it's not ready, why don't we push our performance back a little? Can we appear as the 10th performance instead? Or the 15th?"

That staff member said, "That won't do. The performances are all scheduled, so if we change anything, it will be totally messed up!"

Zhang Ye was used to such situations. "Don't worry, I'm almost done."

...

The second performance began.



Then the third and the fourth.

The audience and netizens expressed their opinions on the galas.

"This year's satellite channels are really giving it their all!"

"Liaoning TV is impressive! The Heavenly King is coming out now! Hahaha!"

"This is an old song, but no matter how many times I listen to it, I can never get enough of it!"

"Liaoning TV's viewership rating is probably going to be the highest!"

"Dragon TV is not bad either. Their fourth performance is a skit! Hahaha, quickly go and watch. I highly recommend watching it. The skit is very funny, or at least better than the Central TV Spring Festival Gala skit!"

"Did you guys watch Zhejiang TV's crosstalk routine? It's on right now, but I think it's not really that interesting. These two crosstalk actors were probably quite popular five or six years ago, but they're quite irrelevant these days. Why does it seem like those crosstalk actors who were quite funny in the past always become irrelevant after they appear on a Spring Festival Gala stage?"

"It's inevitable. The crosstalk industry has been suffering in recent years and has long since reached a bottleneck. Moreover, a gala crosstalk is very difficult to perform since it won't be approved if there aren't any implications, criticism of current affairs, or singing of praises about the homeland. Such a stage requires more elegance and artistic qualities in the routines as well. In the past, Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai were two of the more watchable comedians, but that might not apply to the Spring Festival Gala stage. When have you ever heard Zhang Ye perform a proper crosstalk routine anyway?"

"Go and watch Dragon TV now. The highlight performance of the night is beginning soon!"

"Is that so? I'll tune in and have a watch then."

"I won't be watching that. I just want to wait for Beijing TV's Spring Festival Gala crosstalk routine!"

"Yeah, Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai will be coming on anytime now! I have a feeling that Zhang Ye will not disappoint me!"

"I don't carry much hope for it."

"Me too, but it's still worth a watch. If it's not good, I'll just switch channels."

"I wonder how many people are here today to watch Zhang Ye make a fool of himself. If his upcoming crosstalk routine is not performed well, just watch, there'll definitely be countless people coming out to criticize and ridicule him! It can't be helped since Teacher Zhang has offended so many people in the past. Everyone is just waiting for him to slip up!"

Beijing Television's Spring Festival Gala was heading into its fifth performance at this point.

"Soon! They're coming on next!"

"I'm so nervous. Hopefully Teacher Zhang Ye's illustrious name won't be ruined on this stage today!"

"Whether it's Central TV or a provincial station, as long as it's a Spring Festival Gala stage, it's always been a crosstalk comedian's downfall in recent years. Whoever appears on one of these galas sinks into oblivion. It's become universal now. Besides, it's useless even if Zhang Ye joined this time since he doesn't know how to perform a proper gala crosstalk!"

"Let's just not watch it!"

"Haha, or we could just tune into Liaoning TV."

"There's still something to look forward to if Zhang Ye scolds people. But if he's not going to scold anyone? What's there to look forward to?!"

...

Beijing Television.

Chang Xiaoliang spoke into a microphone and implored, "Are they ready yet?"

Someone at the other end answered, "Teacher Zhang is ready! He's headed to the frontstage!"

"Hurry! It's time for them to go on!" Chang Xiaoliang said loudly.

At this moment, Beijing Television's fifth performance ended. On the stage for the language performance, Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai had managed to arrive just in time at the last second.

When the Beijing Television people finally saw the shadow of their forms onstage, they heaved a long sigh of relief.

Hu Fei wiped away his sweat. "They've finally made it!"

Xiao Lu who was trembling nervously said, "What a scare they gave us!"

Yao Jiancai was also panting a little as he quickly caught his breath.

The cameras pointed to where the hosts were.

Dong Shanshan, who was joyously dressed in red and smiling at the camera, said, "For the next performance, I believe that everyone who is watching their TV has been anticipating it for quite some time now."

The male host smiled and said, "Yes, this next performance is not to be trifled with."

Dong Shanshan: "A lot of the audience members have been anxiously waiting for it."

The male host: "Then let's quickly hand the stage over to the two of them."

Dong Shanshan announced, "Please enjoy the crosstalk 'Everything is Great,' performed by Zhang Ye and Yao Jiancai."

The cameras immediately cut to the two of them!

A lot of the netizens who were watching the TV at home felt their hearts turn cold!

"What kind of a title is that?"

"Everything is Great?"

"Damn, so Zhang Ye is really going to do a traditional style crosstalk routine then?"

"I know that it's not going to be funny just by that title alone!"

"It's over! I have an ominous feeling about this!"

"'Everything is Great'? Why am I reminded of Central TV's Spring Festival Gala where Tang Dazhang's group did their 'Family Reunion' performance? If that's how it is, then this will be really boring to watch!"

"See? This is what a gala crosstalk is! Every performer is the same and will always conform to the standards!"

"Hai, I don't look forward to this anymore!"

"Why did it turn out like this? Teacher Zhang, please don't do that!"

The netizens' doubts were getting stronger!

At home.

His parents, who also heard the title of the crosstalk for the first time, were slightly startled by it.

Tang Dazhang was sitting in front of his television and tuned into Beijing Television as well.

His wife beside him frowned. "What are you watching him for?"

Tang Dazhang said, "I want to see how he'll do this!"

Master Xu, Master Lin, and many of those from the crosstalk world at odds with Zhang Ye had also switched to Beijing Television's channel.

And not to forget, Central TV's Spring Festival Gala production team.

"They're onstage!"

"Let's see what he's going to say!"

"Ha, and he ridiculed us? How laughable!"

"'Everything is Great'? Pfft!"

"Whether it's Central TV or a provincial station, whose Spring Festival Gala is not planned that way? Whose crosstalk is not performed that way? Do you still believe that you could have done it any other way? I would have liked to see that!"

Songstress Zhang Xia said to her children, "Has Little Zhang's crosstalk started yet? Quick, let's take a look."

Zhang Xia's son replied, "Everyone on the Internet is saying that Zhang Ye's crosstalk won't be worth watching."

Zhang Xia laughed. "We'll see for ourselves."

The couple, Chen Guang and Fan Wenli, had already turned their television on and were waiting for the crosstalk performance.

Meanwhile, Yu Yingyi, who was currently overseas and had a table tennis tournament to cover later, took some time out to check on Beijing Television's Spring Festival Gala live broadcast online.

Zhang Ye's fans.

Zhang Ye's friends.

Zhang Ye's foes.

At this moment, all of them were watching Beijing Television!

Actually, even Beijing Television's own staff and their Spring Festival Gala production team were fully focused and staring at the stage. This was because Zhang Ye had decided to make a last-minute change to the crosstalk script and they no longer had any control of how it would turn out. Even they did not know what Zhang Ye was going to say!

"Everything is Great"?

Zhang Ye even changed the title of the crosstalk?

These people from Beijing Television felt that they were about to get a heart attack!

...

In the center of the stage.

There sat a long table with two microphones on it.

Zhang Ye walked onto the stage calmly with his seasoned crosstalk partner.

"Good evening, everyone." Zhang Ye stood there smiling and said into the microphone, "Let us first wish everyone a prosperous new year!"

Yao Jiancai clasped his hands into a fist and palm salute and said, "Happy New Year!"

Zhang Ye said, "May you achieve everything your heart desires!"

The audience at the venue was still very enthusiastic, giving their most passionate applause. Like the netizens, they did not know what Zhang Ye would be performing in his crosstalk!

Zhang Ye smiled pleasantly and said, "Let me introduce myself. My name is Zhang Ye and I'm a famous crosstalk comedian, as well as a famous host. I've been a director before, worked on mathematical research, and also been involved in a wide variety of professions."

Yao Jiancai smiled and said, "That's right."

Zhang Ye gestured to the man next to him. "Beside me is my partner."

Yao Jiancai nodded. "That's right. Why don't you introduce me too?"

Zhang Ye introduced, "Bite Building Materials, Teacher Bite!"[1.]

This was a joke that had been used before, but no one was tired of hearing it. The entire live audience roared into laughter.

Yao Jiancai reeled back. "Who bites building materials!"

Zhang Ye blinked and spoke, "What?"

Yao Jiancai corrected, "I'm not called that!"

Zhang Ye replied with doubt, "Ah? You've changed your name?"

"Why would I change my name?"

"You're no longer biting building materials? What are you biting then? Bricks?"

Yao Jiancai roared in protest, "Why must I be biting anything at all! Do you want me to break all my teeth?!"

The audience laughed even harder!

"Pfft!"

"Hahaha!"

"This old pun has been revamped!"

"I almost died laughing!"

The opening bit immediately caught everyone's attention!

Zhang Ye chuckled. "It was just a small joke."

Yao Jiancai said in annoyance, "Then introduce me properly."

Zhang Ye reintroduced, "This is Teacher Yao Jiancai."

Yao Jiancai laughed. "There's no need for the honorific. I should be the one addressing you as Teacher Zhang instead. You're a true blue Peking University teacher."

Zhang Ye quickly waved it off. "Don't call me that. I don't deserve that title in front of you."

Yao Jiancai replied, "But that's how it should be."

Zhang Ye continued to wave it off. "Please don't, you're being too polite."

Yao Jiancai asked, "Then how should I address you?"

Zhang Ye pondered for a bit. "Well, you can call me Master Zhang, Great Director Zhang, Great Professor Zhang, or Great Host Zhang Ye. Any of those would be just fine."

The audience: "Pfft!"

Yao Jiancai threw his head back and rolled his eyes. "Oh, and that's not being too polite with you? Forget it, I'll stick to addressing you as Teacher."

Zhang Ye laughed and said, "Although you guys might see me and Teacher Yao bickering all the time, we're actually very good friends off the stage."

Yao Jiancai chuckled. "That's right, we've known each other for quite a while now."

Zhang Ye gave a thumbs up. "Teacher Yao can claim to be my mentor and good friend. If I were to give a score to Teacher Yao, I would give him a ten for sure!"

Yao Jiancai quickly and modestly replied, "You're too generous. Am I really that good?"

Zhang Ye added, "But as for the remaining 9,990 points, I—"

Yao Jiancai was stunned. "Ah? You mean a full score is 10,000 points?"

Everyone in the audience burst into laughter!

"Hahahaha!"

"Ahahahaha!"

Wasn't this still Zhang Ye's same old style?

Wasn't he still able to perform without scolding others?

How enjoyable!

It was still as good as before!

Chapter 880: Laughing like crazy!

Real-time comments were being posted online.

"Wow, it's really quite good!"

"What's quite good?"

"Zhang Ye's crosstalk?"

"You guys actually bothered to watch? Didn't everyone say that there was nothing to look forward to?"

"It has just started, but it still feels the same! It's full of humor!"

"Really? Damn, I should go watch!"

"Hurry then. I was nearly fooled by those haters! Who said that it wouldn't be good?"

"It's still the familiar Zhang Ye we're used to. We just have to see how it goes from here!"

Meanwhile, some of those from the crosstalk world scoffed at this.

One of Tang Dazhang's disciples commented: "A gala crosstalk's difficulty lies in its punchlines. It depends greatly on its artistry and overall integrity of the entire routine. Just because a few bits were done well, it doesn't mean the routine will be good. Even if the entire routine were scattered with all

kinds of gags and jokes, if the entirety of it does not cause others to reflect on a subject, it's still a failure!"

Another crosstalk actor replied: "That's right, which is why a gala crosstalk is not at all easy to perform!"

A disciple of Master Xu who had been scolded by Zhang Ye before said: "Zhang Ye is just depending on his wit now, but when it comes to his crosstalk artistry being tested, he won't be able to succeed. If you guys don't believe me, just watch. It will just become more and more unfocused, without adhering to a main theme."

The points raised by these experts were definitely quite valid. In the past, Zhang Ye's crosstalk themes only focused on scolding people, scolding the crosstalk world, or subverting the Three Vulgarities. Although the crosstalk world members did not like it, in all honesty, those works were still valid as crosstalk performances. At least the theme was clear and the routine was a complete one. But if it was just using some gags from here and there to piece together a routine, that would not be considered crosstalk, much less an even more demanding gala crosstalk!

...

At the venue of Beijing Television's Spring Festival Gala.

The crosstalk routine was still proceeding.

Yao Jiancai said, "I only deserve 10 points out of 10,000? Am I that lousy? Are you even praising me?"

Zhang Ye replied, "What I mean is that you still have much potential for improvement."

"Save it. You're stepping on me this early into the festive season. Before we took the stage, it was announced that our crosstalk performance is titled 'Everything is Great'. So why are you steering away from the subject?"

Zhang Ye looked left and right. "Everything is great for whom?"

Yao Jiancai responded, "Us, of course! And the audience too!"

Zhang Ye snorted. "Everything is great for all of you, but everything is not great for me!"

The audience was entertained. What was going on with Teacher Zhang?

Yao Jiancai asked out of concern, "Why, we're celebrating the Spring Festival, so what's wrong? Haven't you been pretty fine all this while?"

Zhang Ye gesticulated. "All of you are really supportive of me today, but I had a really rough time in the past."

Yao Jiancai sighed, "Hai, who hasn't had a rough time?"

"Before I did crosstalk and hosting, I did not even have a stable job."

"Really?"

Zhang Ye went on tirelessly, "I had just graduated from university back then and was job searching."

"It's the same for everyone."

"Ever since I was young, I've had the dream of becoming a soccer player."

Yao Jiancai looked at Zhang Ye. "Not bad."

"When I first went to apply to a team, the soccer coach took a liking to me immediately. He said that I'm a million times more talented than last year's FIFA World Player of the Year, Lionel Messi!"

Yao Jiancai exclaimed, "Whoa, then you must be a soccer genius!"

"Then he said afterwards that there were only two things that hindered my development in the sport."

Yao Jiancai asked with interest, "Which two things?"

Zhang Ye answered, "My left and right feet."

Hearing that, the audience laughed like crazy!

"Hahahaha!"

"Left and right feet?"

"Aiyo, what the hell!"

"This joke is so funny!"

"How did Zhang Ye think of that, hahaha!"

Yao Jiancai pretended to vomit blood. "Hai, then that just means you're not cut out for it!"

Zhang Ye said angrily, "I was disappointed too, so when I realized that there was no future for me in soccer, I went ahead and applied for a private company instead. I sent out my résumé and went for an interview, but without even looking me in the eye, the interviewer told me, 'I'll give you a minute to leave an impression on me.'"

Yao Jiancai laughed, "Yup, that's how many interviewers do it."

Zhang Ye said, "I instantly knew I could do that, so I walked up to him and whirled around to give him a great slap! After that, I quickly turned around and ran away!"

Yao Jiancai was startled. "Whoa, then you must surely have left a huge impression!"

A great slap?

The live audience was in stitches!

Zhang Ye said, "In the end, I passed my interview. The moment I stepped out of that company's office, I received a call from that person inviting me back to the company."

Yao Jiancai sighed, "Hai."

"I thought about it for a long time, but did not dare return!"

Yao Jiancai laughed and said, "Yeah, you shouldn't go back."



Audience: "Hahahahaha!"

Zhang Ye said in frustration, "I was disappointed again, so I went into a public bathroom and washed my face. I stared into the mirror and told myself, 'Zhang Ye, you must be strong. These little difficulties can't set you back. Come on, be strong!'"

Yao Jiancai nodded. "You can't lose heart."

Zhang Ye continued, "After cheering myself on, I felt much better and managed to calm myself down. When I came out the bathroom, I saw a man come out of the bathroom opposite mine."

When he said that, Zhang Ye turned around with a look of horror.

Yao Jiancai was stunned. "Ah? You were in the female bathroom all that time?"

Some of the audience members were in tears from laughing!

"Hahahahaha!"

"Yi!"

"Aiyo, I'm dying of laughter!"

Beijing Television's Spring Festival Gala hosts were also cramping from laughing too much at their corner!

Dong Shanshan covered her mouth and laughed hard!

Zhang Ye rapidly said, "So I quickly took off!"

Yao Jiancai agreed, "You had to."

"A bunch of old women came chasing after me out of the bathroom. The one leading the chase even shouted, 'Catch him. That's the man who kept talking nonstop in the female bathroom, making me too afraid to come out!'"

Yao Jiancai was amused. "How unlucky can you get?"

Zhang Ye said with anger, "I thought to myself that this couldn't go on any further. I had to find a job and earn some money. But how could I do that? I had to spend some money first, right?"

Yao Jiancai shook his head disapprovingly. "By 'gifting'?"

"I spent quite a sum, but I was finally able to get myself a job at a state-owned enterprise in Beijing."

"Is that so?"

Zhang Ye happily related, "This job of mine was really good. We didn't need to work at all and the section chief, who I 'gifted presents' to in order to get the job, often brought us out for meals. There were usually seven or eight of us and we would always order a tableful of dishes."

Yao Jiancai asked, "What did you guys usually have?"

Zhang Ye recited, "Steamed lamb, steamed bear's paw, steamed deer's tail, roast duck, roast chicken, roast green goose, stewed pork, stewed duck, brown sauce chicken, bacon, century egg, hog maw, braised pork, sausage, assorted vegetables, smoked chicken with white cut tripe, eight treasure steamed pork, duck with glutinous stuffing, pot-braised pheasant, pot-braised quail, brined giblets, brined goose, pheasant, dried hare meat, meal wraps, whitebait, steamed frog legs, braised duck kidney, braised duck slices, cold-tossed duck strips, stir-fried aorta, braised eel, braised finless eel, catfish with black beans, pan-fried carp, stewed softshell turtle, stir-fried carp, stir-fried shrimp, soft-fried pork tenderloin, soft-fried chicken, assorted innards, pot-stewed jackdaws, spicy fried rolls, sautéed mushrooms, sautéed fish slices, sautéed fish maw, sautéed fish fillets, meat fillets sautéed in vinegar..."

This whole recital was the traditional speed recital piece, "The Imperial Feast List." All the audience members were dumbfounded when they heard that!

The crosstalk comedians who were watching the show on their televisions could only look at one another as they gasped at that recital!

Anyone could do speed recitals, especially "The Imperial Feast List." This was considered a basic skill for crosstalk comedians like them. Even most of the "straight man" comedians could recite that, but what was astounding was none of them could recite it the way Zhang Ye recited it. His recital speed could easily be described as insane, as he sped through the entire list in one breath using the same speed he used for his advertising messages in The Voice!

No one could replicate his style!

It was the first time everyone had heard such a fast recital!

Tang Dazhang felt a sinking feeling too. He did not expect Zhang Ye to be able to skillfully combine a traditional crosstalk's speed recital into his performance like that, and even matched it to the speed that had astonished the country's citizens back when they first heard it on The Voice!

Rapturous applause thundered!

Bba bba bba!

"Great!"

"Well said!"

"Amazing!"

"This reciting speed, it's as though he's taking off from a runway!"

The audience also had goosebumps from hearing the speed recital done at that speed! This speed was at least three or four times faster than any other crosstalk comedian could muster!

This speed recital was too astonishing!

Onstage, Zhang Ye had finished speaking.

Yao Jiancai said in surprise, "Why did you guys order so many dishes? How much would that even cost?"

Zhang Ye waved it off. "Public funds!"

Yao Jiancai suddenly realized what he meant. "Hai!"

Hearing that, many of the crosstalk comedians were stunned again. He was doing a satirical piece on officials paying for banquets with public funds?

Yao Jiancai said, "Our country is cracking down on such practices! But you guys still dare to do that in defiance of the policy?"

Zhang Ye replied, "We don't only eat and drink, our chief often brings us along on vacation too. To Shanghai, Guilin, Suzhou, there's no place we won't go."

"You're all burning the cash away."

Zhang Ye looked at Old Yao and said, "But during our trips, I've seen some uncivilized behavior."

Yao Jiancai asked, "What kind of uncivilized behavior?"

"On some monuments and attraction signs, there are people who write things like 'XX, I love you' or engrave their names on them like 'Yao Jiancai'—"

Yao Jiancai quickly stopped him from going further. "I'm not involved! I don't do things like that!"

The audience burst out laughing. "Hahahaha!"

Zhang Ye stated, "I was just citing an example, don't take it so seriously."

"But it's true that such uncivilized behavior exists!"

"My sense of justice is quite strong, so I got really angry when I saw those inscriptions. I was so angry that I had to criticize them! It was outrageous!"

Yao Jiancai nodded in agreement. "Right, you must definitely criticize those people!"

Zhang Ye pondered for a second before picking up the fan from the table and using it as a pen to write in the air as he spoke, "Dear comrade, I must criticize you! Why are you vandalizing the signs by putting your words on them? Do you have any class? Are you a civic-minded citizen? How did your father bring you up? How did your mother bring you up? How did your grandpa bring you up? How did your grandma bring you up? How did your grandaunt bring you up? How did your eighth grandaunt bring you up?"

Yao Jiancai was stunned by this.

The audience was laughing themselves into a mess!

"I can't take it anymore!"

"Hahahahaha!"

"Aiyo, my tears are spewing!"

Zhang Ye vented, "In any case, I wrote over a thousand words on the wall to criticize their behavior! They're so infuriating!"

Yao Jiancai stared at him. "A thousand words?"

"But of course. Who asked them to be so uncivilized!"

Yao Jiancai said in mock anger, "Others would only write a few words such as 'XX was here,' but you wrote a thousand words? You're even more uncivilized than them!"

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes. "How am I uncivilized? When our chief saw it, he even commended me. He said, 'Little Zhang, you did well. When you see such uncivilized behavior, you must always point it out!'"

The audience: "Hahahaha!"

Yao Jiancai nearly fainted. "With a chief like that, you'd get into trouble sooner than you think!"

Zhang Ye suddenly clicked his tongue and said, "Oh, you've got it spot on. Only a few days later something else occurred."

"What happened?"

"We went overseas for a vaca—no, I mean we went overseas for a work trip and encountered some pirates in the Caribbean."

Yao Jiancai was startled. "Whoa!"

"After the pirates boarded our ship, they took out their guns and demanded a ransom of 5 million!"

"What did you guys do?"

"We had to rely on the experience of our chief. He immediately sought out the captain of the pirates and said, 'It's alright if you want a ransom of 5 million, but we require an invoice of 10 million!'"

"Ah?"

"The pirates cried at that and said that we definitely knew how to make money better than they did!"

Yao Jiancai sighed, "Hai!"

The waves of laughter at the venue kept drowning out the previous wave!

"Hahaha!"

"Issue an invoice for 10 million? Aiyo!"

"Hahahahaha!"

As they watched up to this segment, the crosstalk world members fell silent.

Several of those crosstalk comedians who had publicly doubted Zhang Ye's performance on Weibo earlier had disappeared from the platform.

The audience was stoked as though they were high on adrenaline!

Networking by "gifting"?

Satire on publicly funded banquets?

Irony of dealing with the uncivilized behavior of tourists?

Bluntly highlighting the tricks resorted to for claiming reimbursements?

These were all the basic means in crosstalk to criticize the problems in the society! But they also required a very advanced technique to bring the point across!

It was now that a lot of people finally understood that Zhang Ye had used his work experience to connect and interpret it into his crosstalk routine today. He had used various gags and jokes to satirize the misconducts happening in society nowadays! In addition to that irreplicable and astonishing speed recital...

Who said that Zhang Ye doesn't know how to do a gala crosstalk routine?

Who said that Zhang Ye couldn't do a traditional routine?

That's bullshit, just like your grandma's balls!