

Superstar 1331

Chapter 1331: The Spring Festival Gala is coming!

It was the eve of the Chinese New Year.

Every household in the country had already put up their festive decorations.

There were couplets.

Firecrackers.

Red lanterns.

This is how Chinese New Year is celebrated. It's one the most boisterous and festive days of the year. Children who work away from home return, and family reunions occur amid the crackling of firecrackers as everyone celebrated this joyous day.

At Zhang Ye's parents' house.

His mother was full of smiles as she put up the "Good Fortune" ¹ characters at the door.

Several neighbors passed by.

"Yo, how beautiful those words are."

"Of course, my son wrote them in advance."

"Little Ye's writing is so good."

"Haha, I guess it's not too bad."

"Where's your son and daughter-in-law?"

"Them? They won't be coming back home tonight. They've gone to fulfill their duties to the people."

"Right, everyone's waiting for your son to kick off the Spring Festival Gala."

"Don't forget to watch the Spring Festival Gala tonight."

"Need you say? I wouldn't watch it if it were directed by anyone else. But since this Spring Festival Gala is headed by Little Ye, I'll definitely switch on both my television sets to help boost the viewership ratings for him."

"We're neighbors after all!"

"Haha, we must give him our support."

...

Out on the streets.

Firecrackers were set off and crackled with mini-explosions.

Joyous looks were on the faces of every pedestrian.

"It's finally the holidays."

"Let's hurry home and wrap some dumplings."

"What are you gonna do tonight?"

"What else? A reunion dinner with my family and the Spring Festival Gala, of course."

"You're really gonna watch it? I haven't watched that in so many years already."

"Of course I'm really going to watch it. The Spring Festival Gala this year has had a change in leadership. I am actually quite looking forward to Zhang Ye's debut Spring Festival Gala show. At the very least, I should watch it to see how it turns out, right?"

"True that, I guess I'll watch it too then."

...

At a stall selling fireworks.

A few students walked out after purchasing some firecrackers.

"Shall we light them tonight?"

"Why don't we light them now? I won't be free tonight."

"Where are you off to?"

"I want to grab a work dedication card of fortune!"

"Damn, how did that slip my mind!"

"I'm only missing the work dedication card!"

"Me too, that Zhang Ye is such a scammer!"

"Yeah, let's watch the Spring Festival Gala and grab the red packets for a work dedication card. If we manage to get one, we're gonna be rich. I heard that are a lot of people who still haven't managed to gather all five of the cards of fortune!"

...

At a newspaper firm.

"Old Li, are you working overtime today?"

"Yes."

"Thank you for covering tonight's duties."

"It's fine, I can catch the Spring Festival Gala in the editorial office."

"There aren't any changes to the program list?"

"No changes, it's still the same as before. I can't believe it, I really can't believe that Zhang Ye would come up with an act that spans four hours, so I must see for myself just what he has got planned!"

"Yeah, the entire country's media outlets are very curious about it."

"There wasn't any news that came out of the first and second rehearsals either?"

"No, they've kept it really tight-lipped for this year's Spring Festival Gala. It's no longer the same as previous years since they didn't arrange for any media and audience representatives at the rehearsals. So other than the Spring Festival Gala's production team, no one knows exactly what's happening. At both of the rehearsals, they only allowed the Central TV reporters into the venue."

"They're making it so mysterious that I wonder what they're really trying to achieve."

"I guess we'll find out exactly what they've got planned when we watch it tonight."

...

In a household.

"Mom."

"Yes, my daughter."

"What time does the Spring Festival Gala start?"

"8 PM sharp, so it's still early."

"Aiya, I can't wait anymore."

"Why not?"

"I want to see Zhang Ye, Zhang Yuanqi, Liu Guo, and Sun Mian. They're my favorite celebrities!"

"My daughter, you better not get your hopes up too high. Zhang Ye has never directed such a large-scale gala before, nor has he taken charge of any smaller-scale ones either, so we still don't know how this will turn out. If he really screws up the gala, there are many rumors in the industry that this might just turn out to be the last ever Spring Festival Gala."

"No way?"

"That's what the rumors say though."

"No, Zhang Ye will definitely have a way to reinvigorate the Spring Festival Gala. Teacher Zhang has never disappointed anyone before! Even if the others could not do it, he can definitely make it a success!"

"You're such a fangirl."

"Heehee."

...

Online.

“Comrades, assemble!”

“The Spring Festival Gala is almost here. Let’s get ready for some roasting later tonight!”

“Haha, are we still doing it this year?”

“Of course we are!”

“Where are all the flammers? Hurry up and report in!”

“Let’s start taking attendance!”

“But we don’t have Zhang Ye to lead the group this year!”

“Right, it was Zhang Ye who led us in the flaming of last year’s Spring Festival Gala. Who could have expected that he would actually become the Spring Festival Gala’s executive director this year? Hahahaha, why am I gloating at this!”

“He deserves it! He’s getting his just deserts! Brothers, there’s no need to be polite with Teacher Zhang!”

“That’s right, we don’t need Zhang Ye to lead us this year. We’ll band together and flame him!”

“Pfft, you people are too harsh. Old Hu, Old Lu, aren’t you both diehard fans of Zhang Ye’s?”

“It’s exactly because we’re diehard fans that we mustn’t dishonor this glorious tradition that Zhang Ye has passed down.”

“Zhang Ye must not’ve thought that such a day would come for him, hahaha!”

“I’m here!”

“Flamer #1 reporting in!”

“Count me in too!”

...

Old.

Or young.

Male.

Or female.

The Spring Festival Gala was entering its final countdown!

The entire world’s Chinese population had turned their attention to it!

Scoldings? Criticism? None of those could be seen at this moment in time. First, it was because the matter had been going on for so long that everyone was getting tired of being doubtful. Second, this was where the charm of the Spring Festival Gala lay. It was an event that could change the mood and

mentality of the people. A lot of people who had been scolding and criticizing Zhang Ye before this and expressing their dissatisfaction with him taking charge of the Spring Festival Gala were now less angry now that the actual day had arrived. Hearing those firecrackers being set off outside on the streets as well as watching their families getting reunited at home had eased their tempers.

They were just going to watch it peacefully.

They would have to see how the Spring Festival Gala would be handled by Zhang Ye.

There were still ten hours left.

There were still eight hours left.

There were still six hours left.

...

At Central TV.

In Broadcasting Studio 1.

With the time approaching, the Spring Festival Gala production team was under increasing pressure.

For example, Ha Qiqi seemed really nervous and looked like she was carrying a heavy burden on her shoulders since morning.

Meanwhile, Zhang Zuo, Little Wang, and the others were not doing any better. Even if they weathered countless storms and experiences with Zhang Ye, they couldn't bear the pressure they were experiencing. This was not a variety show but the Spring Festival Gala. It was going to be a live broadcast with the entire world's Chinese population watching them!

No pressure?

No nervousness?

That would be bullshit!

"Where's my cell phone? Where did my cell phone go?"

"You're holding it in your hand."

"Ah!"

"Everyone, don't panic."

"But my heart has been pounding ever since this morning."

"We have Director Zhang. It'll be fine!"

Zhang Ye was the calmest person among them. Actually, he wasn't really calm. But he knew that at such a time, anyone could panic except for him. Being the leader of the group, as the executive director of the Spring Festival Gala, he would have to bear the pressure. So he looked at everyone.

Zhang Ye said with a smile, "Old Ha, Old Zuo, do you two really have to be this nervous?"

Ha Qiqi wiped her sweat away. "But I can't help feeling nervous! I'm just afraid that, that if something happens, what do we do? We'll become sinners to our nation!"

Zhang Ye laughed. "We've already done all that we could and prepared for every situation. If there's really a power outage, building collapse, or a tsunami, it's not something that we can control." He turned his head to the side and noticed an assistant director from Central TV sitting there calmly. He seemed to be eating something, so Zhang Ye pointed at him in admiration and said, "Just look at Old Han over there. He's someone who already has three years of the Spring Festival Gala under his belt. Just look at how calm he is in the face of adversity. He even knows to replenish his energy by eating something beforehand. We youngsters should really learn from him and his way of handling such situations!"

Old Han turned stiff as he looked over, surprised. "Huh? Who's calling me?"

Zhang Ye was taken aback. Having just noticed what Old Han was holding in his hand, Zhang Ye asked, "Old Han, what are you eating?"

"It's an instant cardio-reliever pill ². I'm too nervous and need to calm myself down."

Zhang Ye was speechless.

Ha Qiqi giggled, "Pfft!"

Zhang Zuo laughed, "Hahahaha!"

Little Wang was also cramping up with laughter!

Old Han asked, "What's the matter? Do you need me for something?"

Zhang Ye rolled his eyes and said, "It's nothing, just continue taking your medication."

Old Han nodded: "OK."

Sigh!

These guys!

Chapter 1332: The Spring Festival Gala is really coming!

There were only five hours until the Spring Festival Gala began.

In the production control room.

Video monitors were mounted on all the walls.

Zhang Ye took his position and oversaw the entire operations.

"Camera 10."

"Director, I'm listening."

"The camera is a little off, turn it slightly to the left."

“OK.”

“Stage management, stage management, come in.”

“Director, please instruct us.”

“What’s the status of the problematic display from yesterday?”

“We’ve already replaced it with a new one.”

“Carry out a final check on it.”

“Roger.”

All of the production departments were conducting their final checks!

...

There were still four hours to go until the Spring Festival Gala began.

The executives on the Spring Festival Gala’s organizing committee arrived. From the looks on their faces, no one seemed to be relaxed and were looking rather uptight. They were finally going to put this year’s Spring Festival Gala to the test, so they were very nervous too. The pressure of the task of increasing the viewership ratings that the higher-ups had delegated to them was overwhelming. The feeling wasn’t as intense before today, but with the start of the Spring Festival Gala approaching, their emotions were sinking further.

“Director Zhang, how are the preparations going?”

“Everything is on standby.”

“There won’t be any problems, right?”

“How do you expect me to answer that? We’ve already done everything that we could. If any unforeseen situations really happen, we’ll just deal with it on the spot. After all, this is a live broadcast, so nothing will go perfectly according to plan.”

“If you put it like that, we feel even less assured.”

“Yeah, Director Zhang, do give us some assurance.”

“Can we at least retain the viewership ratings from the previous year?”

Everyone chipped in with something to say.

Zhang Ye smiled. “Don’t worry, everyone. Just leave it to me.”

The executives looked at one another with bitter smiles. What kind of an answer was that?

The viewership ratings for the recent Spring Festival Galas had been dropping year after year.

Four years ago: 23%

Three years ago: 22%

Last year: 19%

It had fallen below the 20% mark and was at a historical low. If it dropped any further this year, there would really be no way for them to answer to the higher-ups. The higher-ups had already tasked them to at least maintain the viewership ratings, or if possible, to bring it back above the 20% mark. Only then would they be considered to have successfully completed their job.

20%!

It might not look like much.

But could they really complete that task?

Could they really stop the decline of the Spring Festival Gala?

...

There were still three hours left until the Spring Festival Gala began.

The backstage was packed with performers.

"Let's go get our makeup done!"

"It's still too early."

"Where's my costume? Where is it?"

"Have you checked inside the cabinet?"

"I found it! What a scare!"

"Aiyo, where did I put my script? Let me have another look, I've forgotten the lines."

"Little Xu, don't be nervous!"

"How can I not be nervous?"

"Let's rehearse one more time?"

Some people were so nervous that they kept going to the bathroom.

Some people were pacing around and trying to regulate their breathing.

There were also regulars of the Spring Festival Gala among them, like Zhang Yuanqi, Ci Xiufang, and Zhang Xia. Comparatively, they were much calmer than the others, especially Zhang Yuanqi who had arrived on the dot at Central TV as per schedule. She knew exactly what to do, and had taken part in the Spring Festival Gala many times before. As such, there was a natural air of confidence to her. But for the majority of the other performers, this was their first time taking part in the Spring Festival Gala. There was no need to explain just how suffocating the stress and the anxiety was.

At this moment, Zhang Ye came backstage to encourage them.

"Little Hu Die."

"T-Teacher Zhang."

"Whoa, why are you stuttering?"

"I-I-I'm nervous!"

"Your legs aren't gonna stutter too, are they?"

"Ah?"

"It's fine if you're fumbling with your words. Just don't mess up your footwork later."

"Pfft! Don't worry about that, I'll be able to spin for sure!"

Hu Die was tickled, her nerves calmed.

"Where are the Laborer Brothers?"

"We're here, Teacher Zhang. We're here."

"What's this about? I heard that the two of you have gone to the bathroom a dozen times!"

"Ah, uh..."

"We're feeling a little scared, so we can't really control ourselves."

"You'll both have to hold it in when you're up on stage. Just hold it for three minutes. You can then go to the bathroom all day for all you like after you finish singing. If you two don't think that you can hold it in, then please seek some advice from Little Hu Die. Look at her. She doesn't even need to go to the bathroom for four straight hours. But you two grown men?"

Hu Die was floored!

The Laborer Brothers forced smiles.

Then Zhang Ye went to look for Ci Xiufang's team.

"Auntie Ci, are you still rehearsing?"

"Yup, I still want to go over it another two times. Otherwise, I won't feel at ease."

"Everyone, take a break for now. I recommend that you all stop rehearsing. If you don't, you'll lose that freshness. Once you get tired of it, you'll just end up not being able to do well and lose the desire to perform. Everyone did great during the rehearsals. There's no need to familiarize yourselves any further. Listen to me on this and leave some energy for your performance onstage!"

"Sure, you're the director, so we'll listen to you."

Finally, Zhang Ye came to the deaf-mute dance troupe.

Qi Xiaomei was signing to her team, looking like she was giving them some encouragement of sorts.

Zhang Ye walked over. "Teacher Qi, how's everything going?"

Qi Xiaomei turned to him. "Ah, Director Zhang. About that, the children are all a little nervous. But don't worry, we'll definitely complete our performance and not screw it up."

Zhang Ye nodded and turned to look at the girls. All of a sudden, he raised his hands and gestured for a bit. He paused for a while and gave it some thought before gesturing further.

Qi Xiaomei was taken aback!

The children were also stunned!

Sign language?

The first sentence was: "Do your best."

The second sentence was: "You'll all be fine."

When Zhang Ye saw their expressions, he turned slightly embarrassed. "Did I mess up something? I just had someone teach me a little bit."

Qi Xiaomei shook her head furiously. "No, it was correct, it was completely correct!"

To encourage them, he as the executive director of the Spring Festival Gala who didn't even have time to sleep had actually learned some sign language for their sake?

Some of the girls' eyes reddened. They were very touched and looked at one another in the eye. They could see each other's determination in wanting to dance well later! They definitely wouldn't embarrass Teacher Zhang!

...

There were still two hours left until the Spring Festival Gala began.

The gates were opened and a large group of audience entered to take their seats.

"Whoa, it's this huge?"

"The stage looks like an entirely new one?"

"It looks pretty good, but I wonder if the lighting effects will be as good?"

"It's about to start. We'll find out soon enough."

"I'm really looking forward to it!"

"Yeah, I wonder what it'll be like this year."

"Let's see what sort of an answer Zhang Ye can come up with."

Celebrities.

Leaders.

Workers.

Teachers.

Students.

People representing all walks of life were admitted into the venue.

...

There was still an hour left until the Spring Festival Gala began.

At Zhang Ye's maternal grandma's house, his family members had all congregated here today.

Zhang Ye's three younger sisters were happily cheering!

"It's the Spring Festival Gala! The Spring Festival Gala!"

"Why hasn't it started yet?"

"It's coming up."

"Aiya, I can't wait!"

"You three, come and have dinner first. We can watch as we eat."

"It's starting, it's starting!"

...

There were only a few minutes left until the Spring Festival Gala began.

All the staff members were fully focused.

All of them were standing by in position.

Zhang Ye had already returned to the production control room. Looking at the second hand ticking away, he felt his heart pounding. He took a deep breath to ease the stress and managed to control his anxiety a little.

It had finally arrived!

This moment was finally here!

Bring it on! This bro is all prepared for this!

I don't know if you guys will like it. I don't know if you can accept it. But this is my Spring Festival Gala, and it's the gift I want to present to you for Lunar New Year's Eve!

So please be sure to accept it.

Zhang Ye said loudly: "All departments, stand by!"

"Counting down!"

"Five!"

"Four!"

"Three!"

"Two!"

“One!”

It was time!

Chapter 1333: A magnificent opening dance!

At night.

It was three minutes to 8 PM.

At Zhang Ye’s in-law’s house.

“Changhe, come here quickly!”

“Why?”

“It’s starting!”

“What? But it’s not time yet?”

“Hurry over!”

...

Online.

“Ah!”

“It’s starting, it’s starting!”

“It’s already beginning?”

“Why did it start ahead of schedule?”

“I don’t know.”

“Eh, what’s this?”

“An introductory video?”

“There’s never been something like that in the past galas, right?”

...

America.

Chinatown.

“Mom, the Spring Festival Gala has started!”

“Ah? Shouldn’t it be starting in another few minutes?”

“Come and watch! It’s really started!”

“It’s beginning!”

...

Right now!

At this minute and second!

The entire world's Chinese population turned their attention to Central TV Department 1.

In the past, the Spring Festival Gala would always start right in the studio. But this year, an introductory video played before the actual event had captured the attention of every Chinese person watching!

A piece of music played.

On the television screens, a row of words appeared: What is the Spring Festival Gala?

An auntie: "The Spring Festival Gala is a celebration, a very boisterous celebration!"

An uncle: "The Spring Festival Gala signifies reunion!"

A chef: "The Spring Festival Gala means having loads to eat and drink, hahaha!"

Huo Dongfang: "The Spring Festival Gala? It's a reunion feast for all Chinese people around the world!"

Xiaodong: "The Spring Festival Gala? It's just something that's there. Actually, it's probably more of a companion to the common folk during Lunar New Year's Eve."

A seafood stall owner in the south: "The Spring Festival Gala? It's about jokes from the north that we don't understand!"

A cab driver from Beijing: "The Spring Festival Gala signifies a good break for me. It's the only time of the year when I can truly switch on my TV and watch something on it."

An academic: "The Spring Festival Gala? I've never watched it before; it's so tacky."

The academic's wife: "How would you know that it's tacky if you've never watched it before? Don't mind him, that's just how he is!"

Ning Lan: "The criticism of the Spring Festival Gala shows that everyone still cares deeply about it. People nitpick the gala as they watch it, so that signifies how important it is in the hearts of everyone."

A Chinese man abroad: "The Spring Festival Gala? If we Chinese who are stationed abroad catch the Spring Festival Gala, it means that we're missing home!"

A Chinese woman abroad: "We're not as picky as the domestic viewers. We just enjoy whatever acts are lined up!"

An old man who was feeding his wife: "The Spring Festival Gala cheers her up! When one becomes old, one behaves just like a child!"

Zhang Yuanqi: "Hur hur, the Spring Festival Gala? It's just the night before Lunar New Year, isn't it?"

An old man from a scholarly family: "The Spring Festival Gala should not only be about entertainment. It should also be educational!"

The old man's son: "Aiyo, Dad! After working hard for a year, the Spring Festival Gala should be a source of enjoyment to everyone. Don't keep schooling us with your thoughts on what it should be!"

The old man: "What's so bad about being able to get a takeaway from it!"

A young man: "Do you know where my greatest source of enjoyment when watching the Spring Festival Gala lies?"

Several other men: "Flam-ing! Ah! Haha!"

A traffic cop: "The Spring Festival Gala is everyone watching the performances while we safeguard your peace!"

A nurse: "The Spring Festival Gala is a time when we welcome new lives into this world!"

Two Navy sailors: "The Spring Festival Gala is making sure we're combat ready to protect our land!"

A firefighting squad: "The Spring Festival Gala is maintaining our readiness for any situation!"

...

This introductory video stunned every Chinese person who was watching on television!

There wasn't any preaching!

There wasn't any deliberate overstating!

It wasn't full of praise!

Didn't understand the jokes? It was tacky? The greatest source of enjoyment when watching the Spring Festival Gala was flaming it?

A lot of negative comments were casually included in the introductory video!

This introductory video was very special. It was so special that many people felt touched by it. People from all kinds of industries, be it men or women, young or old, all of them had a different understanding of the Spring Festival Gala, and there were various attitudes for it. What was the Spring Festival Gala? There was never a definitive answer to that question. Every person had their own understanding and answer, just like those people who were featured in the introductory video.

The main event hadn't even started yet!

But this appetizer of a video clip had already stunned everyone!

They had never come across anyone starting off a Spring Festival Gala that way!

On Weibo.

"Whose idea is this?"

"It must be Zhang Ye's idea."

"This is a good one!"

"Yeah, I quite liked it!"

“Zhang Ye’s way of doing things is indeed different from other people’s!”

“I like how Sister Zhang answered: The Spring Festival Gala? It’s just the night before Lunar New Year—hahahaha!”

“That person who said that the Spring Festival Gala was about flaming it spoke my mind for me!”

“This introductory video has got a thing or two!”

“I’m just worried that this will be the only highlight of the show.”

“Uh, I’m worried about that too.”

“That’s right, I suppose that the acts lined up will still be the same as the previous years. They’re going to have the same kinds of dances, on the same stage, and with the same songs too, haha. If that’s really how it is, I’ll just head to bed.”

...

At 8 PM sharp.

Central TV, in the production control room.

Zhang Ye said loudly, “Three!

“Two!

“One!

“Curtains up, cue the music!”

...

On TV.

The scene changed and the main stage appeared onscreen!

The sound of music and dancing exploded!

The dancers came out onto the stage!

The opening dance began!

The Spring Festival Gala had arrived!

This was the first act of the entire Spring Festival Gala, and it was also the most difficult act to handle. It went without saying how important the opening dance was, yet it was very difficult to manage it.

Dancing? Singing? Getting a bunch of celebrities to strut their stuff on stage? In the many years of the Spring Festival Gala, this formula had been repeated too many times and had totally lost the interest of the audience. As such, Zhang Ye was hoping to prevail over the dissenting views. He spent almost all of the 1 billion RMB budget to recreate Broadcasting Studio 1’s main stage, then brought over the highest rated song and dance act from his previous world’s Spring Festival Gala as the opener here!

From the acts!

To the stage!

To the performers!

To the effects!

Zhang Ye had spent a lot of effort in trying to make this work!

He did whatever it took to ensure that they could get the gala off to a good start!

...

Watching TV.

"Is this a new stage?"

"All of the facilities and equipment have been changed?"

"Yeah, it's different from the ones that I've seen in past years."

"It does look very impressive."

At the beginning, no one seemed to think much about it.

But all of a sudden, the entire stage was imbued with a feeling of spring! Countless flowers started blooming onstage, across the big screen, on the floor, and in the air. It seemed like an ocean of flowers was all around with no blind corners. The 3D lighting effects conjured up many realistic flower blooms all over the place!

Then it turned into summer.

Followed by autumn.

And finally winter.

The sun.

The sea breeze.

The snowflakes.

All of these effects appeared season after season onstage!

The performers were dancing!

The four seasons were also dancing!

...

At Zhang Ye's maternal grandma's house.

The three sisters were squealing.

"Heavens!"

"Brother is so awesome!"

“H-How did they do that?”

“It’s too beautiful!”

Zhang Ye’s uncles and aunties were also stunned!

...

At Old Wu’s parents’ house.

“Aiyo!”

“What’s with this opening dance?”

“Are they real? Or is it special effects?”

“How can the special effects be this good!”

...

At a television station.

“Damn!”

“Did they really overhaul their equipment?”

“How much would that have cost them?!”

“The station head requested a quote from the Americans. Not including the servicing costs and just based on the hardware alone, it was quoted at 400 million RMB! If we include everything together, it would cost at least 800 million RMB! It might even be much more than that! Much less our television station, which other television station in the world could bear such a cost! Not even the Americans themselves have tried out this set of equipment before! This was just developed this year, and Central TV should be the first in the world to purchase it!”

“Has Central TV gone mad?!”

“It’s not Central TV that has gone mad, it’s Zhang Ye who’s the crazy one!”

“That wastrel!”

“It seems like Zhang Ye is really going all out!”

...

Watching TV.

Countless viewers were stunned!

“This is magnificent!”

“Damn, I’m dumbfounded from seeing this!”

“Is that really special effects? How’s that possible!”

“Has technology really become this advanced?”

“Yeah, it has! I heard that this stage is equipped with the most advanced lighting facilities in the world! This was revealed in the news. But as for how good it really is, the media didn’t report on that. So no one really knows because no one has seen it before. But what the hell, they’ve finally revealed just what sort of a stage they’ve got set up today! As the saying goes, you get what you pay for. Those words couldn’t be truer! This money is absolutely well spent!”

“This is so awesome!”

“If I had to give the lighting effects and colors a score out of 10, I would fucking give it 10,000 points!”

“Look! The entire floor is made out of displays!”

“W-Wouldn’t it break when they step on it?”

“Who knows! How fucking much money would that have cost them!”

“This year’s Spring Festival Gala has really gone through a total overhaul! They’ve really switched from shotguns to cannons!”

“I’m gonna cry! Motherfucker, has our Spring Festival Gala finally been bestowed with the facilities of a world-class stage? This opening dance has really amazed me!”

“Me too!”

“What a visual feast this is!”

“Everyone, quickly start flaming!”

“Fuck, I have no idea how to flame them!”

“This year’s Spring Festival Gala’s main stage is too impressive!”

“This is what I call a Spring Festival Gala!”

“Right, this is what the Spring Festival Gala should look like!”

What were the stages like for the Spring Festival Gala in the past?

It would only have an ordinary large display, one that only got larger and more colorful with each passing year. Basically, there weren’t usually many major changes. There was even once when the audience seating was not revamped for two years in a row. A lot of people had flamed the Spring Festival Gala regarding this during last year’s event, so who could have thought that this year’s Spring Festival Gala would bring about such an overwhelming change. Zhang Ye had to withstand such great pressure back then to introduce an advertising model for the Spring Festival Gala. And right now, the most direct effect that it brought about was shockingly seen here!

With an opening dance, it had stunned the Chinese population around the world!

At home!

On Weibo!

On the Internet!

Everyone started heatedly discussing this!

Chapter 1334: The longest act in the history of the Spring Festival Gala: 'Time'!

In Broadcasting Studio 1.

The venue of the Spring Festival Gala.

The live audience members could feel a greater impact from this entirely new stage. It was so immersive that they could experience the four seasons changing around them. They were dazzled by the presentation.

"Amazing!"

"The stage is really so well-equipped!"

"All there is left to see now is what this year's acts will be like."

"Eh, who's that girl over there?"

"I don't know."

"Why's there a smaller stage next to the main stage?"

"When did she appear there?"

"I think she was there all along."

"I saw her too, but I thought that she was a part of the opening dance."

"But that dance has already ended, so why is she still dancing?"

"How strange."

...

In the production control room.

Zhang Ye was observing the video monitor wall and giving instructions.

"Camera 2, pan up a little!"

"Camera 5, get ready for a close-up!"

"Hosts, countdown in three seconds!"

"Alright, move!"

...

On TV, the cameras zoomed in to the stage!

The hosts for this year's Spring Festival Gala were already standing in a row.

Li Chen said, "China Central Television!"

Hao Hailiang said, "China Central Television!"

Yan Mei said, "Distinguished guests and dearest friends—"

The three of them smiled as they gave fist and palm salutes and said, "Happy New Year!"

A round of applause sounded!

The live audience cheered!

The hosts for this year's Spring Festival Gala were still mainly the old-timers, albeit with slight changes. The hosts spoke loud and clear, calm and collected, with every word cleanly enunciated. This was especially comforting to anyone listening to them and was exactly what a professional gala host was capable of.

"It's New Year's Eve today; we're coming to you live from Central TV's Broadcasting Studio 1. Let's say goodbye to the old and usher in the new as one tonight."

"Tonight, when everyone is reunited with their families and spending it in joy, we'll accompany you as we await the ringing in of the new year!"

"In this beautiful moment of the world's resurgence, we welcome yet another spring along with you!"

"No matter where you may be right now, please accept our messages of blessings to you. Before the arrival of our annual Chinese heritage new year, let us first—"

"Wish everyone a happy New Year!"

...

Online.

"What a glamorous lineup of hosts!"

"Yeah, it only feels like the New Year when we see them standing together onstage each year."

"That's right. Otherwise, it feels like something is missing."

"What's the upcoming act going to be?"

"Hurry up already!"

...

Somewhere in Beijing.

At Hu Die's house.

More than 20 family members had gathered here today. The television was on in the bedroom and in the living room as well. All of her relatives were staring with wide eyes.

"Where is she?"

"Where's our Little Hu Die?"

"Didn't they say that she would be featured in the first act?"

"Yeah, but why haven't we seen her yet?"

"Old Hu, could your daughter's act have gotten cut?"

"That's impossible! She'll definitely be performing! Definitely!"

"Then what exactly is her performance about?"

"I don't know; she wouldn't say. She only mentioned that there was an NDA."

Hu Die's parents were also getting anxious.

Even now, some relatives still didn't believe that their Hu Die was actually going to be on the Spring Festival Gala. The reason was that this was too unbelievable. How was Hu Die like since she was young? Other people might not know, but would their own family not know? She could never keep still and was not strong at learning. She was always inferior to others in many ways but had somehow managed to be admitted into the Naval Song and Dance Troupe. Although she had been going around with the troupe to perform, she was always a backup dancer to someone else. The entire family would sometimes gather together to watch when Hu Die's immediate family members claimed that she would be appearing in some gala event. But they would never spot her. After all, who would possibly give a close-up shot to a backup dancer? If it weren't for Hu Die's parents repeatedly replaying the performance four to five times and confirming an angle that coincidentally captured the back of Hu Die, nobody would've believed that she was even there at the venue.

But now?

They claimed that she would be appearing on the Spring Festival Gala?

How could that be possible?!

Could they have gotten it wrong somehow?

Suddenly, the image on the television switched!

Hu Die's father was stunned!

Hu Die's mother excitedly shrieked. She pointed at the television and was at a loss for words!

The relatives looked up and were all startled!

"Holy shit!"

"Hu Die!"

"It's her, it's her!"

"It's our Little Hu Die!"

“Hu Die has really gotten on the Spring Festival Gala!”

...

At the same time.

The entire world’s Chinese population was stunned again!

“What?”

“Why is there a smaller stage next to the main one?”

“Who’s that girl?”

“What’s this performance about?”

...

At the venue.

A woman in a colorful costume was spinning around in circles.

It was a white dress, but the lighting that was projected onto her presented it with a colorful and dreamy effect.

She was spinning around in the same spot.

Unhurried.

At her own pace.

The dress was fluttering as she spun. Looking at this, it was amazingly beautiful!

Yan Mei looked over there and said, “I was just going to ask about this. I saw that little lady spinning over there since the event began and she still hasn’t stopped. Who is she?”

Li Chen said with a smile, “Her name is Little Hu Die and she’s gifted with the unique talent at spinning around in circles.”

Yan Mei said, “Ah?”

Hao Hailiang said, “Then what’s her performance going to be about?”

Li Chen said, “She’s just going to be spinning in circles.”

Yan Mei replied, “You can even make a performance out of spinning around in circles?”

Li Chen smiled and pointed at Hu Die. “Yes, but there’s a meaning to that. Today, she’s here as the messenger of time. She will be using her spinning to represent the passing of time and the cycle of the four seasons. When we ring in the New Year later, Little Hu Die will come to a stop and welcome the New Year together with us.”

On the smaller stage.

Hu Die’s feet did not stop. She continued spinning in circles.

She was very nervous. She knew that the hosts were all looking at her, that Zhang Ye was looking at her, that the live audience was looking at her, and that her parents were looking at her. At this moment, all the Chinese people around the world had their eyes on her. She was on the verge of breaking down as she was still quite inexperienced with the stage!

They've turned the camera to me!

God, everyone is watching me!

Calm down! Little Hu Die, you must calm down!

Try to think of your prince, think of Teacher Zhang!

The dress.

Her appearance.

The patterns.

The colors.

And the setting of the stage.

This performance named "Time" was designed by Zhang Ye himself. Hu Die knew that Teacher Zhang had placed a lot of hope and expectations on her and this act. She wasn't stupid. She could feel that Zhang Ye's energy was limited as the attention he put into the different acts were all at a varying degree. For the songs, Zhang Ye would simply hand them over to the singers and suggest some stage choreography to them before washing his hands of the matter. But it was different for some of the other acts. Zhang Ye had to repeatedly follow up with them from start to finish, often giving instructions over and over again. As Hu Die's "Time" was one of those acts, she didn't want to screw it up for him. She could still remember very clearly when she heard Zhang Ye speaking to Ha Qiqi privately, saying that whether the topicality and viewership ratings of the Spring Festival Gala could break out right from the start would depend on Little Hu Die's performance.

Teacher Zhang had not said those words to her directly, perhaps in fear that it would put too much pressure on her. But Hu Die had overheard it and bore those words in mind since then. She understood very well that her act was an important piece of the puzzle in Director Zhang's Spring Festival Gala that couldn't be missed. There was no room for any mistakes!

Smile!

Keep smiling!

Very good, this is it!

You mustn't let Teacher Zhang down!

Little Hu Die, you can do it. You can do it!

Hu Die kept cheering herself on!

...

At a newspaper firm.

“Holy fuck!”

“A messenger of time?”

“So there really is a four-hour act?”

The reporters were all dumbfounded!

...

Zhang Ye’s parents’ house.

His maternal grandma was stunned. “Four hours?”

His grandpa was also startled. “Won’t the child get dizzy?”

His mother said, “Who knows?”

His first aunt said, “So the allocated time on the program list was not a typo?!”

...

Watching TV.

Some people were dumbfounded!

Some people were chuckling!

“Hahahaha!”

“Spinning in circles? Aiyo!”

“How can that even be considered a performance?”

“This is such a joke!”

“I feel that this is a pretty innovative idea!”

“Pfft, it does look rather interesting!”

“This really is the longest performance in the history of the Spring Festival Gala. What’s more, it’s fucking unprecedented and will never be repeated again, ever! There will never be another performance on the Spring Festival Gala that exceeds four hours!”

“That’s not necessarily the case.”

“It’ll never happen again!”

“Why is it not possible? As long as Zhang Ye is around, anything is possible. If they appoint him as the executive director again for next year’s Spring Festival Gala, who knows if the guy will create an act that will span ten hours in total! This fellow is capable of anything!”

“I’m laughing at the previous poster’s comment!”

“With this act, I’m unsure of how to start flaming the gala!”

“Pfft, hahaha, that’s true. There are too many points that we can complain about!”

“There are so many issues with Little Hu Die that we can flame her for!”

“Spinning in circles? I really have to give it to Zhang Ye!”

“This entire performance is just a spinning machine made to suck in all the complaints that we throw at it!”

“She can’t stop at all? Zhang Ye must be advertising the chewing gum brand 1 that he’s endorsing! This product placement was almost done without a trace! I’m convinced!”

“Hahahahaha!”

“It’s beginning, it’s beginning! The flamers have been set loose!”

“Bravo!”

“Almighty flamers!”

Chapter 1335: The ‘Flying Apsaras’ amazes the audience!

On Weibo.

Flaming!

Heated discussions!

Controversy!

Even after losing Zhang Ye, their spiritual leader, the flaming army was still as strong as ever.

The discussion around “Time” was instantly drummed up. In an instant, it surpassed the topicality of the opening dance and moved up to the main page of Weibo. It was now trending at #1 on the headlines. Although the hosts had only briefly introduced it, and even though the cameras did not give Little Hu Die too much screen time, the performance had immediately set off an overwhelming discussion. Further, judging by things, the momentum of “Time” did not seem like it would die down anytime soon!

Zhang Ye’s Spring Festival Gala was showing its lethality for the first time!

Unwittingly, the Chinese population all around the world was starting to get involved in this discussion!

...

At Central TV.

The Spring Festival Gala’s organizing committee.

“What?”

“The discussion amongst the public has risen to a crazy level?”

“The topicality has shot through the roof?”

“This—this—”

“This is the most controversial performance in the program list, and there were a lot of objections to it within the production team at the beginning. If not for the strong insistence of Director Zhang, this act would have been cut a long time ago!”

“That’s right, so how did it manage to get so much attention?”

“Isn’t it just spinning in circles?”

“It looks like Zhang Ye was right. We were still wondering why Zhang Ye had put so much emphasis on this act. But now, we finally know why.”

“Just how did he achieve this?”

“Yeah, why was he able to do it?”

“I know why. It’s because we’ve always insisted on doing a serious Spring Festival Gala. In the past, the previous executive directors also thought this way. Everyone just wanted to focus their efforts to make it better and ensure that every act was done perfectly. We wanted to make sure that no one could nitpick on them, yet the facts have proven that the results have never been good. The audience has never accepted what we did. But Director Zhang is different from the other directors. He is the best variety show director out there. What he sees from his point of view is different from what a gala director has in mind. What he’s doing is to defy the expectations of people. He is trying to create a discussion amongst the audience so that they will come forward and be a part of the event voluntarily. Besides, this act is also very creative. The set and dress are both very beautiful!”

“I still don’t get it.”

“Hur hur, that’s why we can only sit and watch from here while Zhang Ye is the executive director of the gala.”

“Hai, it looks like we laymen should really just stop commanding the professionals in the future. Zhang Ye has really schooled us today.”

...

It was a perfect opening!

They were off to a good start!

The emotions of the people had been stirred. This was exactly what the Spring Festival Gala’s opening act needed to achieve. Up until this performance, it could be said that there hadn’t been a Spring Festival Gala that had done it better than this year’s had. But everyone knew that this was only the beginning. The upcoming acts were the real highlights of the event. Those were the ones that really mattered!

The statistics of the previous years made it very clear that in every Spring Festival Gala, the starting two acts would catch the attention of the viewers who just wanted to take a look for the fun of it. Perhaps

they did that out of curiosity or habit. But once they found it to be uninteresting, some parents might bring their kids out to set off firecrackers or turn off the television and start playing mahjong instead. They would probably not turn the television back on after that. This was the point in every Spring Festival Gala where they would lose a great deal of viewership, so the next act would play an extremely crucial role!

This was an uphill battle!

And the army that Zhang Ye had sent forth would naturally be the elites!

In the production control room.

Over the intercom:

“Standby, performers!”

“The props are to be up within ten seconds!”

Zhang Ye pressed the intercom button. “Hosts, drag the introduction out for another ten seconds.”

At the venue.

The hosts were quick to react.

“Oh you, you’re too good at bragging.”

“Hur hur, it looks like he’s gonna soar to the skies.”

“With my size, it would be rather difficult to do that. But it does seem like a group of ladies are going to soar to the skies instead.”

“Oh? Is that so?”

“Shall we watch together then?”

“Alright!”

They did their best to churn out the ten seconds for the preparations!

Zhang Ye immediately instructed, “Camera 2, move forward! It’s starting!”

He silently breathed a sigh of relief.

Ladies!

It’s all up to you all now!

...

The TV image cut to the main stage.

“Flying Apsaras 1 .”

Costumes: Zhang Ye.

Score: Zhang Ye.

Choreography: Zhang Ye.

Performers: Air Force Song and Dance Troupe.

The music played!

The stage lights dazzled!

Seven ladies dressed in golden costumes were already standing there 2 !

The entire stage was filled with a visage as beautiful as the Dunhuang Murals 3 !

...

Online.

Everyone was once again shocked by this set!

"It's so beautiful!"

"There's simply nothing to criticize about this set!"

"The more I look at it, the more I feel amazed!"

"Is that a starry sky behind them?"

"It's also appeared below their feet! There's a starry sky all around!"

"I'm still more interested in to the language performances."

"Yeah, I'm not interested in dances anyway. The effects are good, but there's nothing special about it once you've seen enough of them."

"Haha, did you guys see the text that was just onscreen? The costumes, score, and choreography are all by Zhang Ye. The earlier opening dance was also choreographed by him. Could all of the acts on this year's Spring Festival Gala really have been planned by Zhang Ye himself? Even down to the costumes?"

"This fellow might attract a lot of scolding, but we really can't criticize his ability."

"This year's Spring Festival Gala must have tired Lord Zhang badly!"

On the screen.

The seven ladies were dancing.

It was slow.

It was gentle.

It didn't feel intense.

Every twinkle and smile was full of beauty.

"Why are they dancing so slowly?"

"I can't feel any excitement in it."

"Is it the same old thing all over again?"

"I'm not watching anymore. I'll take my kids out to set off firecrackers."

"No matter how they dance, that's all there is to it."

"I'll be waiting for midnight to come back to see Little Hu Die. I wanna know if she's fainted by then or not."

Some people were getting ready to turn off their televisions.

But all of a sudden, the seven ladies on television performed a move that shocked the entire world's Chinese population. They started to slowly lean backwards.

Many of the viewers who were about to turn off their televisions stopped.

"Ah?"

"What are they trying to do?"

"Don't fall!"

"Fuck, do they intend to lean all the way backward?"

"Haha, that's impossible."

"Yeah, they already out of balance."

"They're really brave to push it so far. If they fall over, that'll be it. It'd definitely become an incident on the Spring Festival Gala."

"Heavens!"

"Why are they still leaning backwards?"

"This—"

By now, the seven ladies had leaned over into right angles. Furthermore, they were not holding on to any supports!

That's right!

They were bent 90 degrees backwards in the air!

It was as though they were no longer bound by gravity!

This shocked all of the audience so greatly that they almost jumped out of their seats!

What the heck!

Are you all serious?

Can you really line on your backs in midair?

...

At Zhang Ye's maternal grandma's house.

His mother shouted, "Aiyo, what the hell!"

His eldest younger sister said in surprise, "Oh my God!"

His second sister looked on dumbfoundedly. "Heavens!"

His first uncle and other relatives all got the goosebumps!

...

At Old Wu's parents' house.

Wu Changhe was staring in shock. "What's happening? What the heck is going on?"

Li Qinqin was also shocked silly. "H-How did they do that!?"

Wu Mo's jaw hit the floor. "This is so impressive! It's super impressive!"

Fat Sis and the rest of their relatives were also shocked out of their wits!

"They didn't fall over?"

"Why didn't they fall over?"

...

In a household.

"Mom, let's go."

"Hold on."

"Let's get going. We have to set off the firecrackers."

"Aiya, just go by yourself. I want to watch this."

"What are you watching?"

"Celestials!"

...

On Weibo.

"Damn! Damn!"

"Those ladies are really soaring to the skies!"

"Why can they do that!"

"Damn, this doesn't make any sense!"

"Why aren't they affected by gravity?"

“This is too godly!”

“This dance is so beautiful!”

“Aiyo, hey, can someone explain how they did it?”

“They’re from the Air Force Song and Dance Troupe, right? Even gravity can’t affect them? They should fucking belong to the Space Force Song and Dance Troupe instead!”

“Previous poster, I give you a perfect score for that comment!”

“Hahahahaha!”

...

At the venue.

At this moment, the seven ladies on stage executed an even more outrageous move. They stood on one foot and then leaned sideways 4 . They were clearly not balanced anymore, and if it were any other person, they would have already fallen over. Yet, the ladies were still wearing smiles on their faces and dancing uniformly as they stood firmly without falling over!

The visual impact of this was simply too strong!

The live audience members immediately broke out in exclamations and applause!

“God!”

“Does it have to be this amazing!”

“This dance is absolutely perfect!”

“The choreographer is fantastic!”

“Well, the choreographer is Zhang Ye!”

“This is obviously quite a slow dance with no particular traits that are special. But these seven ladies have made the dance look so godly! This movement that defies gravity is a stroke of genius!

“Yes! A stroke of genius!”

“This year’s Spring Festival Gala really does seem like it’ll be different!”

...

In a dance group chat.

“Old He, what’s happening?”

“I don’t quite understand it either.”

“This dance defies all logic!”

“There must be a mechanism somewhere.”

“But where? I can’t figure it out!”

“I know!”

“Teacher Sun, how exactly do they do it?”

“It’s their shoes. Look carefully, the seven of them have not raised their right legs once since the beginning. They did not move it at all. It must be affixed to the platform, so their center of gravity has been shifted to where their right leg is supported. It’s just that their costumes are covering the point of support!”

“It looks like that’s really how they’re doing it!”

“Is it that simple?”

“Simple? For such a creative way of doing things, who else besides Zhang Ye could have come up with such an idea? And this dance is very difficult to perform as well. It would require a very long time to practice to sync their moves up. They might even get injured while trying to execute those moves!”

“This Zhang Ye, how godly!”

“When did he make the switch to choreographing dance?”

“Damn, he really doesn’t intend to give us a chance at making a living!”

...

Shock!

Dumbfoundedness!

Amazement!

Thrill!

The TV viewers were all reacting in different ways. They had never seen such a dance, nor people dancing in such a way before!

It was simply amazing!

And too beautiful to watch!

Only Zhang Ye knew the origins of this dance. It was an act from his previous world’s 2008 Spring Festival Gala. On that year of the Spring Festival Gala, this performance had amazed all the viewers and stood out against many of the other acts. It received even more love than many of the popular language performances in his previous world and was praised by countless people. Even in the few years after that, this dance was not forgotten by people. As long as there was any mention of classic Spring Festival Gala performances, as long as there were replays of the Spring Festival Gala’s classic performances on television, this dance called the “Flying Apsaras” that had amazed countless people would always be included!

This was one of the most amazing dances ever on the Spring Festival Gala in Zhang Ye’s previous world.

If there really had to be another act that could be spoken in the same breath, then only that one dance could go head to head with “Flying Apsaras.” And as it happened, that dance had also been brought over here by Zhang Ye. He did not let any of the most classic Spring Festival Gala dances from his previous world escape from his clutches!

Right now.

“Flying Apsaras” had made its appearance in this world!

It had shocked the entire world’s Chinese population here!

Chapter 1336: Skit: Dance If You Like!

The dance ended.

The audience was left wanting more.

This was a dance that would make people want to watch it a second time even after they had just watched it.

On television, the hosts retook the stage.

The male host commented, “That was so amazing!”

The female host said, “That’s right. Thank you to the ladies from the Air Force Song and Dance Troupe for their wonderful performance.”

Applause from the audience sounded once more.

It was followed by some advertisement messages.

The female host said, “Dear friends, we have prepared for everyone tonight the five cards of fortune that represent our deepest and sincerest blessings to you. These five fortunes are the prosperity and strength card, the harmony card, the friendship card, the patriotism card, and the work dedication card. So now, please take out your cell phones and open up the Unipay app, then tap on the ‘Check It Out’ button. Then a card will be deposited into your account!”

The male host added, “In particular, we would like to remind you that before midnight tonight, if you can gather all five cards of fortune, you will get a share of the five fortunes prize pool. As they say, the five fortunes have arrived, so what are you waiting for? Hurry up and start ‘checking it out!’”

...

Online.

The netizens were getting excited.

“Has it started yet?”

“Can we start checking it out now?”

“Damn, hurry up and give out the cards already!”

“Where’s my work dedication card!”

“It’s ending right before midnight? Hurry, hurry, hurry!”

...

In a household.

“I didn’t get it!”

“Damn, it’s another prosperity and strength card!”

“Prosperity and strength card, get lost!”

“What a scam!”

“I’m not getting any of the work dedication cards. Why is it always the prosperity and strength card?!”

...

“Dad, quickly check it out!”

“Ah?”

“The Spring Festival Gala has started to give out the cards of fortune!”

“Alright, I’m definitely going to get a work dedication card for my darling daughter today!”

“Everyone needs only that card!”

...

“Heavens!”

“It’s the work dedication card!”

“You got it? Show me!”

“What the heck, it’s true!”

“I’m rich! Rich!”

“They’ve really given out the work dedication card!”

“Ahhh, I’m gonna post the screenshot online!”

...

Very quickly, the viewers were occupied.

This was the moment they had been waiting so long for.

In fact, many of those who didn’t used to watch the Spring Festival Gala were now sitting before their televisions and waiting. It was because of this deceptive Five Cards of Fortune Collection campaign that they were watching it. They initially had no intentions of watching the Spring Festival Gala at all and had

no expectations for it either. But unexpectedly, after two or three dance and song performances, many of them became interested and actually started watching it seriously.

These viewers who didn't used to ever watch the Spring Festival Gala were converted just like that.

Grabbing red packets for the cards of fortune.

Watching the Spring Festival Gala.

Countless families were happily experiencing the joys of the new year.

And this joy could not be fulfilled with just those few song and dance acts.

"It should be time for the language acts, right?"

"By past convention, it should be."

"This won't be easy to handle."

"Yeah, the crosstalks and skits have in recent years been getting more and more unfunny."

"They're not exactly unfunny. They're just too ordinary and disconnected from the common clay. The performances are too traditional, which is why it doesn't feel fun to watch."

"Let's see how it'll be this year."

"This year's song and dance acts are pretty good."

"Yeah, they're amazing!"

"I'm just worried that the language acts would not live up to the expectations of the occasion."

"Yeah, the most talked about acts are still the crosstalks and skits."

"Zhang Ye himself is a crosstalk comedian, and he's also acted in a skit before. This might just be worth looking forward to."

"Hey!"

"It's starting, it's starting!"

Instantly, the world's Chinese population refocused their attention on the television. The song and dance act this year had amazed many people. But for the most anticipated language acts, no one had seen them yet. So they were trembling with excitement as they wanted to know how it would turn out.

...

In the production control room.

Zhang Ye issued the orders.

"It's starting."

"Camera 3, follow!"

“Cut to Camera 4!”

“Alright, close-up!”

It was time for the first language act!

Zhang Ye naturally understood the importance of this more than anyone else. Zhang Ye carefully thought over the arrangement of acts for a long time. Which would be the first to go? It was not an easy decision. It wasn't until after the second dress rehearsal that he finally decided on the order and pushed for this skit to be the first one to be shown. This was the most popular skit from the 2013 Central TV Spring Festival Gala in his previous world. Zhang Ye was hoping for this skit to help get the language acts off on the right foot.

He was not worried about the performers.

They were veterans of the Spring Festival Gala, so they would definitely rise to the occasion. There wouldn't be any problems there.

...

On the stage.

The hosts were still talking.

A fashionably dressed Ci Xiufang was in a wheelchair and was being pushed out onto the stage. She was unaffected by her surroundings and was even muttering impatiently, “Make way, make way.”

Li Chen turned his head and said with a smile, “Yo, Auntie, you're here? Happy New Year to you! Why don't you share with everyone how you're doing after your retirement?”

Ci Xiufang sat firmly in her wheelchair and gave him a look. “Tell me how you'd feel if your legs have been shortened?”

The audience laughed:

“Hahaha!”

“Hahahaha!”

The famous long-legged and handsome host, Li Chen, was at a loss. “Hai, why is this auntie speaking in such a way?”

Hao Hailiang pushed him aside. “You're no good at phrasing your questions. You have to be a bit more tactful and speak like this. Auntie, happy retirement! Hey, Auntie!”

Ci Xiufang looked at him, “Who are you calling an auntie? Your face is full of wrinkles and you're trying to act cute!”

The audience roared with laughter again!

Host Li Yan said, “Ai, look at this. Just look at you two, getting rebuffed like this. You two are really bad at talking!”

Hao Hailiang rolled his eyes. "Then why don't you ask..."

Li Yan said, "Didn't you hear? Auntie doesn't wish for us to bring up her retirement!"

Li Chen said, "Alright, why don't you give it a try instead?"

The famous interview host, Li Yan, had always been famous for his soft approach with people. He composed his features and knelt down gently in front of the wheelchair. Supporting himself with it, he said, "Auntie, I know that you poured blood and sweat into your career. So what do you—"

"Stop playing to my emotions! I won't cry!" interrupted Ci Xiufang.

With that reply, the audience cramped up with laughter!

"Aiyo!"

"Pfft!"

"Hahahaha!"

"Aiyo, how face smacking!"

Li Yan sighed and said, "This—"

Ci Xiufang waved her hand. "Enough, enough, off the stage! This is my territory now!"

Li Chen said, "But this is a public space!"

Li Yan said, "We've been hanging around here since forever!"

Hao Hailiang said, "Yeah! What do you mean by your territory?"

Ci Xiufang curled her lips. "Alright then, those who are ugly can stay behind."

At that, two of the hosts turned around and ran offstage!

Only Hao Hailiang was left stunned before he finally hurried offstage as well!

They had all disappeared!

Ci Xiufang harrumphed. "Like I wouldn't be able to handle you people, tsk—"

The audience:

"Hahahaha!"

"This skit looks interesting!"

"It's just the opening and I think it's quite funny already!"

"This old lady is too harsh!"

"What a viper she is! Hahahahaha!"

"Auntie Ci has gone through a total makeover for this year!"

“Yeah, she’s never acted in such a role before. This is definitely a break from the kind of character that she usually plays. Zhang Ye is so bold!”

The cameras pulled out.

The info box was shown.

Skit: Dance If You Like.

Writer: Zhang Ye.

Performers: Ci Xiufang, Lian He.

Only now was the skit officially beginning!

The TV viewers instantly had their appetites whet!

Chapter 1337: This is what you call a skit!

On TV.

On the screen.

Hundreds of thousands of households were watching the masterful skit actress, Ci Xiufang, whose image had changed from the previous galas she had been in. They were both curious and surprised. This was very refreshing!

...

In the production control room.

Zhang Ye was observing the video monitor wall silently.

Auntie Ci.

I’m leaving this to you.

You must shock the audience.

If Little Hu Die’s performance was to increase the topicality of the event, and the “Flying Apsaras” dance was to spread word of mouth among viewers, then “Dance If You Like” was definitely to add to the cheers. This act had to work out like it was meant to!

...

The skit 1 began.

Ci Xiufang was sitting there with nothing to do.

Then an arguing couple appeared.

The man: “Babe, babe, don’t be mad!”

The woman: "Stop following me around!"

The man: "Aiya, babe, I'm begging you, please don't be angry!"

The woman: "Aiya, I said stop following me!"

Ci Xiufang: "Hey, hey, hey, go home if you want to argue!"

The man: "Hey, we're talking here. Are we burdening you?"

Ci Xiufang: "Of course you're burdening me."

The man: "Then I'll burden you today! What can you do? I just want to burden (ài) 2 you! I burden (ài) you! I burden (ài) you! I burden (ài) you! Hmph—"

The audience laughed heartily!

Ci Xiufang looked at the couple. "Hear that, girl?"

The woman came over angrily. "You disgust me!"

The man: "I—aiya, that's not what I meant!"

The audience:

"Hahahaha!"

"Hahahahaha!"

Then a jogging young man arrived.

He was in the middle of exercising and was stretching his back and chest

Ci Xiufang looked straight ahead and produced an item in hands. Tearing the tape loudly, she mimicked the sound of fabric ripping!

The young man was doing some leg stretches when he heard the sound. He was shocked and extremely embarrassed, so he quickly pulled his shirt downwards to cover his pants before running off!

Ci Xiufang said in satisfaction, "Ah, it's finally peaceful."

Applause rang out!

"Hahaha!"

"How harsh!"

"How devious of Auntie Ci!"

"This is cracking me up!"

"She's driving away anyone who comes by!"

"How wicked, hahahaha!"

At this moment, famous skit actor Lian He came out onstage!

Lian He was not young anymore, and he was very short and skinny. These characteristics of his appearance made him very unique. This skit was the first time that he was working together with Ci Xiufang, so it captured the attention of a lot of the common folk. They were all wondering if there would be any sparks from the debut partnership of these two masterful skit actors!

It was finally time to see if that would happen!

The highlight of the performance was here!

The audience applauded for them!

...

On the stage.

Lian He was carrying a boombox over his shoulder and walking over happily.

Ci Xiufang glanced at him. "Hey, hey, kiddo!"

Lian He was taken aback. "Are you calling for me?"

Upon closer inspection, Ci Xiufang said, "Whoa, this child looks really old!"

Lian He: "Uhh, I'm actually an adult."

Ci Xiufang sighed, "An embarrassment to adults then! What are you here for?"

Lian He twisted his hips. "I'm here to practice ballroom dancing!"

Ci Xiufang: "Ballroom dancing (guóbǎo)? More like a mouse pointer (shǔbiāo)!"

...

On the other stage, Little Hu Die, who was still twirling around, found it hard to keep a straight face!

A child?

Mouse pointer?

Hahahaha!

I can't take this!

I must not laugh!

Bear with it! I must bear with it!

...

At this point, Lian He turned on the music!

Ci Xiufang, who was sitting in the wheelchair, suddenly removed the blanket covering her legs and marched over to turn off the music before returning to sit down again, all to the shock of Lian He!

Lian He was dumbfounded. "Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, you can actually stand?"

Ci Xiufang sneered. "Who said I couldn't?"

Lian He: "Then why do you sit in a wheelchair?"

Ci Xiufang: "I want to! I get light-headed whenever I stand! Ah, I feel faint."

Lian He: "If you feel faint, you can always go back home."

Ci Xiufang: "Too cold and lonely."

Lian He: "If that's so, then sit in a more lively place!"

Ci Xiufang: "Too annoying."

Lian He rolled his eyes. "Hey, old lady, you're even more difficult to please than Empress Dowager Cixi!"

Ci Xiufang looked at him and said in a voice dripping with sarcasm, "Yo, you've served Cixi before?"

Lian He was dumbfounded. "Ah?"

The audience was stunned for a moment before bursting into laughter!

...

At Zhang Ye's maternal grandma's house.

His grandma was clutching her stomach. "Hahahaha!"

His grandfather was also laughing uncontrollably!

His second sister was slapping the sofa and laughing!

"Aiyo!"

"It's so funny that it's killing me!"

"Served Empress Dowager Cixi before? Hahahahaha!"

"So he's a eunuch then?"

...

On TV.

Lian He was getting anxious. "Hey, big sis, it's like this: I need to take this time to practice for ten minutes. Then I'll be done."

Ci Xiufang: "You can't."

Lian He: "Because I agreed with my dance partner to meet here in ten minutes."

Ci Xiufang: "Yo, someone like you has a dance partner? She's blind, right?"

Lian He: "Seven. I've got seven old ladies hounding me every day, insisting that I be their dance partner. But I refused them all. And all of them are as fair as snow, like princesses!"

Ci Xiufang: “Seven Snow Whites?”

Lian He: “Ah!”

Ci Xiufang looked at him. “And a single dwarf? So it’s a fairy tale?”

...

At Old Wu’s parents’ house.

Wu Mo was cramping up with laughter. “Pfft, hahahaha!”

Li Qinqin was also laughing while covering her mouth. “Wasn’t that fairy tale written by Little Ye?”

Even the usually serious Wu Changhe was tickled funny!

Who thought up the script for this skit!

...

On the stage.

Lian He harrumphed. “Looking down on me, are you? Why don’t you have a look at what I can do! One and-a, two and-a, three and-a, four and-a. Hey, did you see that? This move, the Spinning Top, that swept the entire community was invented by yours truly! My stage name is Little Top (xiǎo tuóluó)!”

Ci Xiufang: “No wonder I have such an urge to whip 3 you!”

Lian He was speechless.

The audience: “Hahahaha!”

Ci Xiufang: “Let me ask you, Little Radish (xiǎo luóbo).”

Lian He: “What Little Radish!”

Ci Xiufang: “Little Screw (xiǎo luósī)?”

Lian He: “What Little Screw? It’s Little—”

Ci Xiufang: “I know! Little Ostrich (xiǎo tuóniǎo)!”

Lian He said angrily, “Don’t try that on me. I’m practicing right here today, what of it? Hai, I don’t believe you can stop me!” He then started to sing and dance. “You are my-a small-a, small apple / However much I love you, it’ll never be too much—”

Ci Xiufang deliberately messed upped his rhythm by singing, “Forever singing in the hottest ethnic trend / Is the most beautiful gesture in the whole sky.”

Lian He fumbled his dance moves at that.

Lian He ignored her and continued singing and dancing. “Your small blushing face warms my heart—”

Ci Xiufang continued messing him up. “Is the most beautiful gesture in the whole sky.”

Lian He went along with Ci Xiufang's singing and kept dancing!

He sang even louder, not giving in, "Spring has come again and the flowers are all abloom—"

Ci Xiufang sang, "Is the most beautiful gesture in the whole sky."

The audience was staggering in laughter!

"Hahahaha!"

"Hahahahaha!"

Lian He was almost in tears. "I beg of you, big sis, can you stop making trouble?"

Ci Xiufang threw her hands up. "Alright, alright."

Only then did Lian He clear his throat and continued singing, "You are my-a small-a, small apple / However much I love you, it'll never be too much. / Your small blushing face warms my heart, / Is the most beautiful gesture in the whole sky—eh, eh, eh!" He facepalmed and said dejectedly, "I'm done for! I've been practicing to this song for half a year, but I've been thrown off by just one line from you!"

The audience was roaring with laughter!

The applause from the audience was thunderous!

"Hahahahaha!"

"Bravo!"

"Bravo!"

Cheers rang out all around!

...

In the production control room.

The gags were full on!

The audience was laughing!

Zhang Ye heaved a sigh of relief. Because "High Song 4" didn't exist in this world yet, there were some changes he had to make to this skit from the original version.

...

On the stage.

Lian He took out a rag doll. "Big sis, look. It's my grandson—"

Ci Xiufang nodded. "Looks just like you."

Lian He: "It's my grandson's doll which he got me to buy for him!"

Then Ci Xiufang took the doll from him and threw her voice 5 while holding it.

This part was hilarious. Many of the audience members in the venue laughed until they cried!

“Old lady, your tongue is too sharp! You must be living by yourself!”

“Aren’t you single yourself too?”

“Eh, how did you know?”

“By your looks.”

The audience laughed, “Hahahahaha!”

The gags kept coming!

Classic lines came one after another!

Finally, the plot reached the turning point!

A cell phone rang.

Lian He was delighted to hear it. “Haha! My dance partner is calling me! Hahahahaha, hello! Partner, where are you? Do you need me to pick you up? Ah? You’re not coming anymore? No, wait, why aren’t you coming? Didn’t we already agree to it? You’ve decided to partner with Old Man Zhang instead? No, but we’ve already agreed, so how can you....Oh, never mind, it’s fine. You don’t have to be considerate of me. Yes, I wish you both the best in your partnership! Alright.”

The call ended.

Lian He said dejectedly, “How can she just change her mind when we already agreed on it?” He pulled off his wig and revealed a head of grey!

Ci Xiufang was taken aback. “How old are you exactly?”

Lian He laughed and said, “Me? I’m still young, only 70.”

Ci Xiufang: “You’re already 70, so why are you still running around so much?”

Lian He said, “Life is about constant motion!”

Ci Xiufang shook her head. “Wrong! Life is about stillness! Look at the tortoise, which doesn’t move around much. How long does it live for?”

Lian He pointed at himself. “Don’t look at the tortoise, look at me!”

Ci Xiufang glanced at him and turned away. “I’d rather look at the tortoise!”

The audience laughed. “Hahahahaha!”

...

Online.

“This is hilarious!”

“I’m laughing so hard I shit myself!”

“Hahahahaha!”

“Auntie Ci’s tongue is too sharp!”

“Aiyo, why do I like her so much!”

“Lian He is absolutely getting disparaged here! Hahaha!”

...

At a newspaper firm.

Several of the reporters working overtime were laughing so hard they lost their senses!

“That’s so good!”

“It’s fucking too good!

“What a rare old lady she is!”

“Auntie Ci’s acting is so good!”

“It’s the script that’s good!”

“This is cracking me up!”

...

After the old man was consecutively rejected a few times over the phone.

Ci Xiufang got up angrily. She took his phone away and smashed it onto the floor of the stage!

The skit had entered its climax!

Lian He bent down over the wreckage of his cell phone. “Eh, hey, hey, that’s my phone!”

The audience couldn’t close their mouths anymore as they kept laughing!

“Come over here.”

“Ah?”

“Let me tell you something, Little Pineapple (xiǎo bōluó)!”

“Little Top.”

“It’s been changed now!”

“I’ve long wanted to change it!”

“Let me tell you this, Little Slippers (xiǎo tuōxié)!”

“Just what is my name supposed to be

“I’ll call you whatever I want!”

“Sure, whatever you say!”

“Listen to me, Little Camel (xiǎo luòtuó)!”

“Aiyo, my God! I’ve become three people in no time. Eh, big sis, why are you standing up?”

Ci Xiufang said coldly, “For someone like you who’s standing up even though he doesn’t look like he’s standing up, what reasons would I have to not stand up?”

The audience applauded!

“Good one!”

“Well said!”

“Hahahaha!”

Ci Xiufang: “Starting from now, I’m your dance partner!”

Immediately, the music played. The scene onstage suddenly changed as several dozen dancers appeared behind Lian He and Ci Xiufang. All of them started dancing together!

“The Hottest Small Apple” had brought the entire venue’s atmosphere to a high!

The audience’s applause swallowed the stage whole!

The world’s Chinese population watching television was also laughing like crazy!

...

On Weibo.

In the forums.

In the chat groups.

On social media.

When the skit was broadcast, all of those communication channels blew up!

“Ahhh!”

“That was so impressive!”

“How did they manage to come up with such a good script!”

“The script’s lines are really heaven-defying!”

“Zhang Ye is too godly! He’s really too godly!”

“Auntie Ci and Master Lian also played their roles really well!”

“I really can’t believe that there could still be a skit of such quality at the Spring Festival Gala!”

“Me neither, it’s incredible!”

“I didn’t have any expectations before watching it. But who knew that I would actually tear up from laughter while watching it! Aiyo, I can’t take it. I have to go laugh some more, hahahahaha!”

“What the heck is ‘The Hottest Small Apple’? Hahaha!”

“A mashup of ‘The Hottest Ethnic Trend’ and ‘Small Apple’ of course!”

“Zhang Ye is really enjoying himself by writing this!”

“Yeah, this fellow actually made a skit for plaza dancing!”

“Hahaha, is this fellow trying to normalize plaza dancing as an activity?”

“He’s really playing the role of the founder well. To! No! Fault!”

“This skit is really great!”

Thinking back on the past years’ skits, and thinking back on the traditional delivery of those skits, countless viewers could not help but agree on one thing in the bottom of their hearts:

This is what you call a skit!

This is what you fucking call a skit!

Chapter 1338: ‘Because of Love’ wows the audience!

At the organizing committee for the Spring Festival Gala.

The executives were thrilled.

“They’re laughing, everyone’s laughing!”

“The audience’s response is very good!”

“What about the online reviews?”

“I’ve already checked it out. There are only praises!”

“Yeah, everyone is commenting about how funny it is! Hahahaha!”

“This is great! Big Sis Ci and Master Lian have absolutely nailed their performance today. It’s even a step above their performance at the first and second dress rehearsals!”

“That’s right, these are skit masters we’re talking about here.”

“They’re both battle-hardened actors, the type who’d definitely perform well when they’re put in the situation!”

“Director Zhang wasn’t wrong to line up this skit at the beginning!”

“That’s right! With this skit spearheading the acts, the effect will be great!”

...

In a group chat of the industry.

“Did anyone watch the first skit of the Spring Festival Gala?”

“I watched it.”

“Hai, it was amazing.”

“Old Ci is going to be on fire after this.”

“Yeah, Big Sis Ci might be a regular on the Spring Festival Gala and a big player in the skit industry. She’s also highly popular, but that’s not the same. Big Sis Ci has never been a main pillar in the field of skits before. She has never had a breakthrough role that left a deep impression on the audience. But this time, it’s different. With Zhang Ye’s script, coupled with Big Sis Ci and Master Lian’s acting, their performance was flawless. Big Sis Ci is going to rise a level after this.”

“A good script is super important for a skit actor.”

“Yes, Big Sis Ci ought to thank Zhang Ye for this.”

“That’s right. Such scripts are indeed priceless and to die for!”

“Zhang Ye is so generous to be willing to give it out. Why doesn’t he keep it for his own use though?”

“Because he wouldn’t be able to act in it. Even if he put on makeup to look older, he doesn’t have Master Lian’s image. He’d be too tall as well and couldn’t bring out the hilarious side of the role.”

...

In the production control room.

Little Wang came running in. “Director Zhang, ‘Dance If You Like’ is now trending at #2! It’s only second to Little Hu Die’s act! And it’s probably going to catch up soon too! It’s really popular!”

The staff in the room became excited and thrilled!

It was a good start!

They were off to a good start!

Was this year’s Spring Festival Gala really going to experience a breakthrough?

Could it really get revived in their hands?

The production team’s staff did not even dare think in that direction!

But Zhang Ye smiled and said nothing.

It hasn’t even started yet.

This is only the first skit.

There are still many more headliners and killer acts lined up that hadn’t been brought out yet!

The Spring Festival Gala would always aim to be all-inclusive, catering to the old and the young, whether they were men or women. There was no bias, and everyone’s interests would have to be taken care of. This first skit Zhang Ye brought out had immediately generated a phenomenal amount of discussion, with many young people laughing like crazy over it. Even a lot of the elderly people liked it as well—all of

it was planned by Zhang Ye. He did not just brainlessly replicate those classic acts from his previous world over here. Everything had to be arranged carefully to achieve the effect.

Which acts would be placed at the beginning?

Which ones would come later?

Which ones could be shown?

And which ones would not make the cut?

All of that had to be scrutinized properly.

Because this was a gala that spanned the entire evening and not a standalone show. It had to unite the different levels while paying attention to the quality of the acts and also take into account the overall experience. Of course, the resources he had on hand were also a problem. Some of the acts from Zhang Ye's previous world had characteristics that were too distinctive. Although the acts were good, he couldn't find a suitable person for the performance, so he had to give up on using them.

...

Watching TV.

The entire world's Chinese population was very surprised. They had not thought that this year's Spring Festival Gala would be like this. It was entirely different from what they had imagined!

"I'll tentatively give this year's Spring Festival Gala a score of 90 points!"

"Right, just based on the first few acts alone, I have nothing to complain about!"

"The skit was so amusing. My parents are 70 this year, and neither of them used to watch the Spring Festival Gala, nor liked watching skits either. But today, they were actually tickled."

"My grandparents too, they nearly pissed themselves laughing!"

"My mom is praising Zhang Ye too. She says that this skit was very well-written and reflective of our lives. It connects to the common folk very well and uses a fashionable language to depict the retirement lives of the elderly like them. It hits quite close to home for her."

"The next act is starting."

"Let's keep watching."

"What's coming up next?"

"I'm looking forward to it."

"This year's Spring Festival Gala is quite good so far. Let's see if that will continue or not."

"Yes, if they can keep it up until the end of the show, that would be really awesome."

"That would be too difficult."

"Yeah, the opening was great, but that makes it even harder to handle the later part."

“Surely Zhang Ye did not place the best acts at the beginning, right? There aren’t any good acts left?”

“Shouldn’t it be time for Old Chen and Old Fan to make their appearance?”

“Aren’t the two of them are performing a duet this year?”

“These two are both megastars in the music scene even when standing on their own. But they haven’t had any good duets between them, which is quite sad.”

There were doubts.

There were concerns.

There was anticipation.

The world’s Chinese population turned to stare at their televisions again.

...

On the stage.

The hosts were making some light-hearted conversation.

Hao Hailiang said, “There’s a famous paragon couple. Do you two know who I’m referring to?”

Li Chen said, “A famous paragon couple? I know!”

Hao Hailiang said, “Tell us who.”

Li Chen said, “It must be Director Zhang and his wife!”

The audience burst into laughter!

Zhang Ye and his wife?

He only just got married!

The SARFT’s leaders and staff seated in the audience were also amused by this bootlicking.

Li Yan rolled his eyes and said, “You, that was too obvious. You can’t just say that because Director Zhang is the executive director of the gala.” Changing his tone, he suddenly said, “Actually, I think so as well. It must be Director Zhang and his wife.”

The audience laughed.

“Hahahaha!”

“Hahahaha!”

Hao Hailiang said helplessly, “And who else?”

Li Chen said, “You must mean Chen Guang and Fan Wenli, right?”

Hao Hailiang said with a smile, “They’re also here today.”

“Oh?” Li Chen smiled. “Then let’s listen to their love story.”

...

In the production control room.

Zhang Ye had a mysterious expression on his face.

Little Wang asked in concern, "Director Zhang, what's the matter?"

Zhang Ye smiled and said, "It's nothing, I'm just feeling the pinch."

Little Wang asked in confusion, "What pinch? What do you mean?"

Zhang Ye was, of course, feeling pinched by this song. It had taken a lot out of him to give this song away even though he wasn't going to sing it himself. The real problem was that there was no one for him to sing this song with. He was married, but surely he couldn't get Old Wu to come out and sing this with him, could he? Old Wu also wouldn't agree to that. But even if Zhang Ye could not use this song for himself, it still pained him to give it away to other people. This was because the song was such a classic and so popular with the people in his previous world.

Hai.

He had to sacrifice this all because of the Spring Festival Gala.

Old Chen, Old Fan, if you two mess this up, I'll mess the two of you up!

...

The curtains came up.

The cameras zoomed in for a close-up.

The music also played.

With the effects of the dazzling stage lights, Chen Guang and Fan Wenli were standing at separate ends of the stage. Their costumes, bearing, and the stage design were impeccable!

The audience was stunned.

"Wow!"

"How beautiful!"

The two of them gently raised their microphones.

Chen Guang opened his mouth and sang ¹.

"Here is an old CD for you.

"Have a listen to our love from back then.

"Sometimes it slips my mind

"that I still love you."

Fan Wenli sang.

"I can no longer sing those kinds of songs.

"Just hearing them makes me blush and shy away.

"Though I often forget,

"I'm still in love with you."

The man's voice was full of charm!

The woman's voice carried a sense of etherealness!

Many of the viewers were enchanted!

"Because our love can't be easily hurt,

"Everything is always happy-go-lucky.

"Because our love grew simply,

"I can always be crazy for you.

"Because with love, how can there be sorrow?

"So we are still as we were when we were young.

"Because of the love that exists,

"people are still wandering out there,

"pacing back and forth."

...

Watching TV.

Many Chinese people around the world were also mesmerized by what they were hearing!

"Great song!"

"It's more than that! This song is fantastic!"

"Beautiful!"

"It's like they're filming a music video!"

"This song is so well-written!"

"Heavens, Old Chen and Old Fan finally have such a godly duet to their names!"

"Can it not be such a good song!"

"I love this song too damn much!"

"Yeah, it's only the first time I'm listening to it, but it's really touching!"

The songs had always been the least anticipated acts of the Spring Festival Gala. Everyone still preferred the crosstalks and skits, and even some of the dance and magic acts would occasionally amaze them. But songs were always met with a lukewarm response from the audience. For songs that they'd listened to before, no one would find it interesting and would probably have heard it thousands of times already. For songs that they'd not heard of yet, no one knew if they would like it after just listening to it once. This led to the songs on the Spring Festival Gala to be quite a difficult act to handle. So the executive director of every Spring Festival Gala would always put in some work for these acts by inviting the more well-known singers or by getting more people to boost the lineup for the songs. In the end, they even resorted to inviting Korean celebrities to perform, all for the sake of trying to reverse the unpopularity of such acts and giving the viewers a surprise. / AllNovelFull.Com

But today, Zhang Ye had given them a lesson.

A quiet and gentle song could also be deafeningly loud!

Before this, no one could have predicted that a duet could wow the audience like this!

Chapter 1339: Three songs in a row!

Beijing.

In a neighborhood.

The sound of firecrackers being set off rang out time and again. The children were playing in the neighborhood, with some adults accompanying their children to set off the firecrackers, while others were smoking and chatting nearby.

Upstairs.

An apartment's window was opened and a woman shouted down.

"Old Liu!"

"Ah?"

"Quick, bring the children home!"

"Why?"

"To watch the Spring Festival Gala!"

"It's boring, I'm not watching it."

"Aiyo, just come back and you'll know!"

"Is it really that good?"

"It's really good this year!"

...

Shanghai.

In the streets.

A cell phone was ringing.

"Hello, hubby, did you knock off yet?"

"I just did. It's such torture to still be working overtime on Lunar New Year's Eve."

"Quickly come home and watch the Spring Festival Gala."

"Spring Festival Gala? I thought that you never used to watch it?"

"But it's different this year!"

"Are you serious?"

"Yes, of course!"

"Alright, I'll head back immediately."

...

Nanjing.

In a household.

Their neighbor from the opposite household came over to visit.

"Old Li, I'm here to offer you my new year greetings."

"Aiyo, thank you, thank you."

"Eh, why isn't your family watching the Spring Festival Gala?"

"Spring Festival Gala? We don't watch it because we don't like those skits by the northerners. The songs and dances are not interesting, and there has been nothing new about it either."

"Heh, you all should quickly watch it then. This year's Spring Festival Gala is really good!"

"How can that be?"

"Old Li, why would I lie to you?"

"What are they performing now?"

"The songs are on right now. After I'm finished here, I have to quickly rush home to continue watching!"

"Is that so? Then let's have a look at it too."

...

The Spring Festival Gala was spreading furiously via word of mouth!

People were telling each other about it!

One became ten!

Ten became a hundred!

A lot of people who didn't used to watch the Spring Festival Gala had all turned on their televisions in doubt at the urging of their relatives, friends, or neighbors. They wanted to see how Zhang Ye would save an event like the Spring Festival Gala that was already at the end of its life. This was, in the view of a lot of people, an unimaginable thing to achieve.

100,000 people!

1,000,000 people!

10,000,000 people!

The number of people turning on their televisions was increasing by the second!

Some people were curious, while others were forced to watch by their family members. As a result, they found themselves unable to stop watching once they started, revealing surprised expressions on their faces!

On TV.

Several old-school singers were performing a song ¹.

"Return Home Often"

"Free up some time, find yourself time.

"Take your children and return back home.

"Bring along smiles as well as best wishes.

"Go with your spouse and return back home.

"Mom has a lot of nagging for you.

"Dad has made a table of delicious dishes.

"Complain about life's annoyances to Mom,

"And share stories about work with Dad.

"Return home often, home often.

"Even if you will only help Mom do the dishes.

"Parents don't seek too much from their children.

"All they desire in life is a family reunion."

...

At the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

In a research department.

Several researchers were watching the Spring Festival Gala and listening to this song. A hush fell over the room.

A female researcher stood up silently and walked outside into the yard to privately make a call back home. Her hands were trembling, and her heart was pounding.

The call connected.

“Little Wen, is that you, Little Wen?”

“Mom, it’s me.”

“Oh, hey, how are you doing? Is your work going well over there? Is your research project successful? How’s your health? Is it cold in Beijing? Are you wearing the down jacket?”

“I wore it. I’ve been wearing it for some time already.”

“That’s good then, that’s good.”

“Mom, this year I might—”

“I understand. Your work is more important. Your dad and I are fine, we’re doing well. Hur hur, we can understand. Just do your research seriously and bring glory to the country!”

The female researcher could clearly hear the song in the background coming through the phone on the other end: “Return home often, home often. / Even if you will only help Mom do the dishes.”

After hanging up, she immediately teared up and couldn’t stop crying.

...

There was no lip syncing!

This year’s Spring Festival Gala was different from the past ones. The performers would all have to sing for real!

This was requested by Zhang Ye, and it was a compulsory rule for the performers to sing for real.

People on the organizing committee and the production team had raised strong doubts about this before. Many of them even expressed objections to it. They felt that on such an important live broadcast event like the Spring Festival Gala, the pressure on the singers would be too great. Too many things could go wrong, so to achieve the best possible effects and the steadiest performance would definitely require a certain degree of lip syncing. However, Zhang Ye rejected this suggestion. There was no room for negotiation!

Many of those on the production team still had a very deep impression of what Zhang Ye’s original words were.

He had said at that time, “If a singer can’t even sing for real, or have the courage to perform a song live, then what right would they have to be on the Spring Festival Gala!? I don’t care about other people’s Spring Festival Gala, but there won’t be any lip syncing on mine! If you can do it, go ahead. If you can’t, then get off the stage. We’ll just replace them with someone else who can!”

Flaws?

There could be some.

Mistakes?

They might happen too.

But all of that was still acceptable to Zhang Ye. Because no one singer could guarantee that they would be able to sing flawlessly at every live performance they gave. But this was a matter of attitude. If you were to lip sync and just move your mouth along with the music, singing “Return home often,” how could you move anyone with your fake singing?

...

On TV.

The second song also finished.

“Because of Love,” “Return Home Often,” and another song were a series of three songs all about family ties and love.

Right after, the third song began.

...

In the production control room.

Zhang Ye was still keeping up with giving out orders.

No one knew what was so special about this song, except him.

This was not just some group song, because no ordinary song could receive such great attention that exceeded even the language acts like the crosstalks and skits in his previous world’s Spring Festival Gala. This upcoming song was exactly what that was!

...

Onstage.

A Mongolian family of three came out onto the stage.

A playful harmony and melody sounded ².

The daughter asked, “Ah-Pa? Does the moon go home when the sun comes out?”

Dad answered, “That’s right.”

The daughter asked, “Where does the sun go to when the stars are out?”

Dad answered, “It’s in the sky.”

The daughter asked, “Why can’t I find it even though I look so hard?”

Dad answered, “It went home.”

She and her dad sang, "The sun, moon, and stars are a lucky family."

The daughter asked, "Ah-Ma, when will the flowers blossom after the leaves turn green?"

Mom replied, "When summer's here."

The daughter asked, "Can I pick the fruits when the flowers turn red?"

Mom replied, "Not until autumn."

The daughter asked, "Will fruits sprout if I plant it in the soil?"

Mom replied, "It will when spring arrives."

The family ³ sang, "The flowers, leaves, and fruits are a lucky family."

...

Zhang Ye's thoughts were spot on!

He had used facts to prove it countless times before. A song that was so popular all over the country in his previous world would definitely work in this world too!

Once more, the countless people of this world's Chinese population were wowed!

"Wow!"

"This little girl is so adorable!"

"This song sounds really cute too!"

"I like it so much!"

"It's nice, not bad!"

"This song is very unique. It's not sung in a way that most songs are sung!"

"How heartwarming!"

"I like it! I like this song!"

"The songs are getting cooler and cooler!"

"I'll give this third song a perfect score!"

"The arrangement of these three songs is really good. The lyrics are good and so is the tune!"

"Ahhh, what is with me? Why do I feel like I've suddenly become fascinated by this year's Spring Festival Gala! I've been sitting and watching TV without moving for the past half an hour! Heavens, could I have gone crazy? I never used to watch the Spring Festival Gala! Even when I do, it's only because I want to join in the flaming against it!"

"Me too!"

"This year's Spring Festival Gala has really turned things around!"

“What’s coming up next?”

“What’s the upcoming act going to be?”

“Hurry up!”

“I’m so looking forward to it!”

“I wanna see what the magic acts are like this year!”

“I care more about the skit involving Zhang Ye, Yao Jiancai, and Dong Shanshan!”

“Little Hu Die’s performance has already clearly stated my feelings for this year’s Spring Festival Gala. It’s totally unstoppable!”

“Yeah, I didn’t even bother to eat my reunion dinner and just sat here all this while to catch the Spring Festival Gala. All of the acts would’ve been totally unimaginable in past years!”

“Wow, they’re giving out the cards of fortune again!”

“They’re giving out another stash of the cards of fortune! Hurry up and grab them!”

“200 million yuan, here I come!”

“The celebrities are giving out red packets as well!”

“Hahaha, I managed to grab a red packet from Zhang Yuanqi!”

“I’ve got a big one! There’s 7.80 yuan in it!”

“Damn, I actually grabbed a red packet of Zhang Ye’s! There’s only 2.5 cents in it! Your sister! Zhang Ye, you’re such a miser! Why are you giving out so much less than everyone else!”

“Hahahahaha!”

“I’ve managed to grab a work dedication card!”

“What a great harvest!”

Countless people were sitting and watching TV. This year’s Spring Festival Gala had entirely captured their attention. Even if you were to tell everyone to turn off their televisions right now, they wouldn’t want to do so!

Chapter 1340: A stunning magic show!

Watching TV.

The entire world’s Chinese population was eagerly waiting.

Hurry, hurry, hurry!

What else is there?

What other acts will there be?

Hurry up and bring them all out!

Will the latter acts be as wonderful as the earlier ones?

At this moment, the Spring Festival Gala's female host, Yan Mei, smiled and revealed the next act. "Next up, let me introduce to everyone a magician. I heard that he will be bringing us some close-up magic ¹ today and that the act will be pretty extraordinary. I wonder if it's true, so why don't we take a look?"

...

In the production control room.

Zhang Ye smiled.

It was time for the magic show. This should be the act that he was the least confident in. He could easily compose and give out songs for the song acts, as well as teach the dance moves for the dance acts. Even for the acrobatic acts, he could still give pointers and instruct the performers on how they had to jump. Everything except for the magic acts could be handled that way. The reason was that Zhang Ye did not understand the intricacies of how the magic trick was performed. He had seen some of the magic tricks before and could also describe to the magician what it was like. But if he were quizzed on how exactly the trick worked, and what the secret behind the trick was, he wouldn't be able to explain most of it. He only knew about some of the analysis of the tricks by the netizens in his previous world. Based on the process of the trick and some clues of how they worked, he had spent over half a month working hard with the magician to deduce and slowly experiment on the magic trick. The difficulty behind it all could not be understood by any outsiders.

The Spring Festival Gala!

Liu Qian ² !

Coins!

The magic trick that Zhang Ye had been anticipating for the longest time was finally going to be reborn in this world. So Zhang Ye was really looking forward to it and could no longer wait to see the stunned faces of this world's people. Those expressions and amazement had also been observed on the faces of the people in his previous world when the trick was performed.

...

The TV viewers were also taken aback.

"A magic show?"

"It's time for the magic act?"

"A close-up magic act?"

"What's the meaning of that?"

"I don't know."

"Close-up? How close is it?"

"I don't like this. I prefer watching the skits and crosstalks. Hurry up and show us another one of those."

"Haha, I agree. The language acts are still better. Everything else is just a supporting act."

"It's always the same kind of magic acts every year. If they're not producing pigeons out of thin air, then it's flowers or a live human being. Watching that once or twice is enough since any more than that is boring. There's nothing new at all."

"That's true. They just depend on special props and sleight of hand to execute the tricks. Any viewer who has a brain can understand how it works, so there's no point in watching them too many times."

"Hehe, do you all remember last year's magic show on the Spring Festival Gala?"

"I remember, I remember! Someone explained how it worked after the act had just finished broadcasting for five minutes."

"Yeah, they just switched the boxes in the back."

"Yeah, it was just using misdirection to distract the audience. That's how all magic tricks work these days."

"You're right. They perform the tricks at a distance and often make use of curtains or cloth to block the details. No one can see what tricks or methods they're using behind the covers."

Some people became disinterested the moment they heard that the next performance would be a magic show.

In this world, the Chinese audience's liking for magic shows had already turned from an initial liking to numbness. They had come across it very often and seen too much of it. Whenever a magician used something to block the audience's view, the audience immediately knew that something was going on behind the covers. Even if they did not know what trickery the magician resorted to, they would assume that it was definitely happening. They would think that there wasn't much technicality involved and thus have less enthusiasm for it.

But when the scene cut to the stage³.

When the camera focused on the magician.

Everyone watching TV was taken aback.

This was too close!

They had zoomed in way too close!

"Three meters? Two meters?"

"Holy shit!"

"How are they going to execute the magic trick this way?"

“Is that really how he’s going to perform the trick?”

“I can even see the magician’s facial pores!”

“Whoa, they’re purposely stirring up trouble like this!”

“Haha, where’d he get the balls to do that from?”

“At this distance, the trick will definitely be exposed!”

“Yeah, how daring of him!”

The entire Chinese world’s viewers were in disbelief. Instantly, their curiosity was aroused!

Some people who were not that interested in the magic act and were preparing to take a trip to the bathroom sat back down at this moment. They wanted to see what tricks the magician could possibly come up with.

Onscreen.

A magician was seated and surrounded by a round glass table. Several audience members were seated all around him. Some items were on the table.

The magician was seated in the center.

Chen Tian was dressed handsomely and looked into the camera that was just a few feet away with a smile. “Hello, everyone, I’m Chen Tian. What we call close-up magic is also known as table magic. It just means that the magic will be performed under close observation. As for how close it will be?” He suddenly raised his palms and showed them to the camera.

The TV viewers could only see a hand obscuring the view.

The live audience members could also see this clearly on another screen at the venue.

Damn!

This shouldn’t be more than a meter, right?

Everyone was astonished.

Chen Tian smiled and said, “Right, this is how close we’re talking. Then let’s cut to the chase. I’ll first give a simple demonstration to everyone.” He pointed at a cup on the table and held it up. “I have a cup of apple juice here.” He raised it to his lips and sipped from it. Then he showed it to the camera before picking up a bottle of juice to refill to cup with a little more juice. “Yes, let’s fill it up. This is Tianxi’s Apple Juice. It’s delicious.”

Everyone was stunned.

With a pfft, the sound of laughter could be heard coming from many audience members!

They continued to stare at him without blinking.

The paper cup.

And the apple juice.

It was filled to the brim.

It didn't look like anything was off.

Chen Tian then placed his hand over the top of the cup. "Let's not say too much here. With my hand over the top and supporting the cup from below, it's time for everyone to witness a miracle."

A miracle?

What miracle?

Was he going to make the juice disappear?

Everyone was blinking and watching closely, not understanding what he meant.

They saw Chen Tian pause for two seconds before suddenly turning the paper cup upside down. He was actually holding the cup upside down. Under the startled looks of the viewers, he removed the hand covering the top of the cup. However, not a single drop of apple juice splashed out. With a clench of his hand, he crumpled the paper cup!

There was no juice!

The paper cup had actually become empty!

It had actually become empty under the gaze of everyone!

Applause erupted at the live venue!

A lot of people were so shocked that their eyeballs nearly popped out!

"Holy fuck!"

"Ah!"

"What's going on here?"

"How did it disappear?"

"Where's the juice?"

"This is one awesome trick! It's amazing!"

"How's that possible! Did anyone get a clear look? How did he make it disappear?"

"I don't know! It just happened!"

"My God, at such a close distance too? How did he pull that off?"

"Yeah, there are several hundred million Chinese people watching around the world! The camera was only one meter away, and there was no cut either! So how did it disappear?"

"Is this what close-up magic is?"

“Zhang Ye designed this act?”

“Goddammit, magic can even be done this way?”

“And that Tianxi Juice ad could even be done in that way?”

“Speaking of advertising, I really have to take my hat off to Zhang Ye!”

It was such an eye-opener for everyone. The majority of them had never seen magic being performed so up close before and were really shocked!

But unbeknownst to them, this was only an appetizer. They were just getting started!