

## Episode One Chinese New Year

Description: Cooper, May, Nana, and Dean are gathered at Cooper's home for dinner on the eve of Chinese New Year. On the table there are dishes of sweet and sour fish, dumplings, New Year cake, apples, oranges...

Cooper: Please, have a seat. Let us raise our glasses and drink to the upcoming Year of the Rabbit!

Dean: Year of the Rabbit?

May: Yeah! You know, the Year of the Rabbit from the Chinese zodiac?

Nana: No wonder a lot of Chinese people ask me what year of the Chinese zodiac was I born in; they are actually asking for my age!

Cooper: In the Chinese zodiac, each year is named after a different animal. The 12 animals are: Mouse, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig. There are many children's stories that explain the Chinese zodiac.

Nana: That's fantastic! We use Chinese zodiac in Japan as well.

May: Dean, you also follow the zodiac signs, don't you?

Dean: Yeah, but personally, I adopt Western zodiac signs that indicate birthdays: Gemini, Sagittarius, Cancer, and so on. They're used to analyze personalities!

Nana: I was born in 1987 and that makes me a Rabbit.

Dean: My birthday is May 26, and that makes me a Gemini.

Cooper: Whether it is the Western horoscope or the Chinese zodiac, young people are particularly interested in knowing their astrological signs. There are also many television shows on them as well. . .

May (Interrupting): Alright, alright, if we keep continuing this conversation we'll have to light firecrackers and welcome the New Year already!

Cooper: Okay, okay! Let's dig in, then! But remember, we can't finish all of the sweet and sour fish. We have to save half of it for tomorrow.

Nana: Why? I love fish!

Cooper: Well, we often wish people peace, safety, and abundance during the New Year. In Chinese, the word *yu*, which means fish, is also a homonym for abundance.

May (interrupting): So if we finish all the fish tonight, then we'll have nothing left in the New Year!

Nana: So, does saving part of the fish for tomorrow mean that we are saving our wealth?

Cooper: Nana sure is bright! Saving more this year means a happier and more fulfilling year in the next!

(At this moment, Dean accidentally breaks a cup.)

May (bringing her palms together): Oh, may you have peace and safety during the New Year.

Cooper: You know, we should say as many auspicious phrases as we can during the New Year because that'll keep us safe and bring us peace and prosperity.

Nana: Wow, I never thought I could learn so many interesting Chinese idioms from just a New Year's Eve dinner!

Dean (pointing at the New Year's cake): Hmm...so if I eat the New Year's cake, would that make me taller every year?

Cooper: No, not taller, but moving higher every year.

(They all laugh.)