

Japanese “Inventions”

When I was talking about the best reality show ever, The Mole, the other day, it made me think of my second favorite: American Inventor. It was a show where people brought their inventions in front of a panel of judges, and the “good” ones advanced until a winner was chosen. This show was fun to watch because some of the inventions were horrible ideas, and when the inventor pitched them, it was hilarious to see their inventions and the judges’ reactions to them. It was also heartbreaking at times because there were people who put up everything they had to pursue the development of their invention – and some were so bad, they never had a chance. Take Bulletball, for instance. It was a game invented one night while the inventor and his wife sipped wine and batted a cat’s toy ball back and forth across a table. So the inventor proceeded to invest everything he had, even living in his car, to develop the “high caliber” tabletop game of bulletball. One of the judges asks, “So if you invested everything, what do you have?” His reply? “I have Bulletball.” Oh my. His segment on the show was very memorable (and sad – you had to feel sorry for someone who was so determined, yet his idea was SO bad, all 4 judges said no and broke his heart) that we were talking about it the other day and decided to look it up on youtube. So, I will share his clip with you. I admire his determination, but even I wouldn’t get Bulletball if I spotted it at the thrift store... see below.

I wonder if American Inventor is going to return? It was a good show, but the problem with it was that the inventions that end up winning aren't realistic. Both of the winning inventions were born out of tragedy, one was a special protective car seat thought up by a guy who lost his daughter in a car accident. The other was a Christmas tree that extinguished itself if it caught on fire. Both good ideas, but not really practical when you take cost and other factors into consideration. But anyway, I'd like to see the show again, even if they keep choosing winners based on emotional reasons.

While we were looking up American Inventor on youtube, we came across this wacky video from Japan. They call these "inventions", and they are contraptions that make a series – random objects falling, hitting other objects, etc. in order to cause the next reaction until there's a whole chain of them. Think of the game Mousetrap (found that one a few weeks ago, by the way, but it's missing the big ball!) or dominoes without the dominoes. Check it out below. You'll notice that after each series of reactions, there's a cute little Japanese song that plays – it's actually quite catchy. There are a bunch of these on the video, it's over 9 minutes long in case you're wondering while you watch if it'll ever end. I wonder if these "inventions" are shorts that aired on Japanese tv, maybe before or after some weekly show or something? Who knows, but it's fun to see the different things they came up with: