

Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 515: The Subtle Friendship Between President Pei and Big Boss Ruan

Meanwhile, at Tengda Group Games.

Min Jingchao was, as usual, browsing the forums, happily "freeloading" off the players' ideas.

It had to be said that the creativity of the player base was truly limitless.

Take the concept submitted by the Traveler Bao Xu, for example. The moment Min Jingchao saw it, he thought it was excellent. The hero's mechanics were diverse, the character fit perfectly, and most importantly, it matched Bao Xu's personality incredibly well.

So it was accepted on the spot.

Of course, ideas of that quality were rare.

After all, only a handful of players truly understood both game mechanics and character design. Most submissions had one flaw or another.

Min Jingchao's daily work lately consisted of filtering through the mountain of player submissions. Whenever he found a promising one, he would hand it over to the design team for refinement before it entered production.

Over time, he had also developed a few unwritten rules.

First, members of the game development department did not participate in the event.

Min Jingchao himself had designed several heroes, but he never claimed the rewards. President Pei had already paid him a generous salary, along with bonuses based on the game's reputation and investment. In his opinion, it wouldn't be right to get paid twice for the same work.

He simply couldn't bring himself to compete with ordinary players for those rewards.

Second, whenever possible, he tried to select heroes from different creators.

Only if one creator submitted a concept that was obviously far superior to everything else would he consider accepting two of their designs.

After all, the event was meant for everyone to participate in. GOG only had room for a limited number of heroes, and the rewards were limited. If a single account claimed too many prizes, it would discourage other players from participating, which would ultimately hurt the long-term health of the community.

Naturally, there were other factors to consider as well—whether the hero's mechanics fit the game, whether the character had a distinct identity, whether its role overlapped with existing heroes, whether there were balance conflicts, and so on.

As Min Jingchao continued scrolling, one particular post caught his attention because it had accumulated a surprisingly high number of upvotes.

Curious, he clicked on it.

It was a post containing nothing but a hero's gameplay mechanics.

The hero's first skill was a short-range damaging attack. After using it three times, the final strike would knock enemies into the air. The second skill was...

"Hmm?"

"These mechanics are actually pretty interesting."

He studied the design carefully.

The hero's intended role was very clear, and the mechanics themselves looked both fun and distinctive. As long as they could come up with suitable visual design and lore, the hero would probably be quite popular.

The problem was...

What kind of theme should they give the character?

If the player had provided even a rough backstory, they would at least have a direction to work from. But aside from indicating that the hero was somewhere between a fighter and an assassin, there was absolutely nothing else to go on.

Min Jingchao casually opened the creator's profile, hoping to find some inspiration.

After all, since the idea came from this player, it would be nice if the hero's appearance had at least some connection to its creator.

"Hmm?"

"They own every Tengda Group game? This is a hardcore Tengda fan."

"Huh?"

"They bought Lonely Desert Road that early? This is a veteran player among veterans."

"..."

"..."

"Holy crap— this is President Pei himself?!"

Min Jingchao nearly jumped out of his chair.

He checked the account again and again.

There was no mistake.

It really belonged to President Pei.

That realization immediately left him baffled.

If President Pei wanted to create a new hero, couldn't he just tell me directly?

Why go through all the trouble of posting it anonymously on the forums?

What if the players failed to appreciate it and didn't upvote it? Wouldn't all that work go to waste?

Could it be that President Pei was simply so confident in his own design that he believed it would stand out even when mixed in with countless player submissions?

Well...

Judging from the results, that certainly seemed to be the case.

But somehow, that explanation alone didn't feel sufficient.

Min Jingchao's thoughts began to spiral once more.

After all, "think more deeply" was a core skill every Tengda employee was expected to master.

Why hadn't this hero been given a concrete appearance?

Was it because President Pei couldn't come up with one?

Of course not.

Which meant...

He had deliberately left it blank.

After repeatedly analyzing the situation, Min Jingchao eventually arrived at two conclusions regarding President Pei's intentions.

First, by intentionally leaving the hero's visual design and backstory unspecified, President Pei seemed to be testing the GOG development team—challenging them to infer his true intentions and complete the hero's appearance and lore on their own.

The second reason was this:

Given the fierce competition between GOG and IOI, President Pei cared about both sides equally. He didn't want to appear biased in favor of either

project. That was why he hadn't given direct instructions and had instead chosen such a subtle, indirect approach.

In other words, President Pei didn't want anyone to know that he had personally participated in GOG's design. He only wanted to give it a quiet helping hand behind the scenes.

A warm feeling welled up inside Min Jingchao.

As expected... GOG really is President Pei's beloved child.

As for the reward money from the event, there was obviously no way President Pei would care about such a small amount. What he valued was probably the title of "Designer of XXX."

"So..."

"I should hide the fact that this hero was designed by President Pei and evaluate it exactly as if it had come from an ordinary player."

"That leaves one question."

"What kind of theme should this hero have?"

"There's already a hero modeled after President Pei himself, so this one should obviously be based on someone else."

"But who?"

"President Pei must already have someone in mind."

"He just felt too embarrassed to write it outright."

Min Jingchao pondered carefully and noticed that this hero seemed to have excellent synergy with Zadkiel.

Zadkiel's second skill created a barrier while knocking enemies backward. Technically, that knockback counted as airborne displacement, meaning it should allow this new hero's ultimate to connect perfectly.

In other words:

Zadkiel could flank the enemy, use his second skill to block their escape route and knock their key carry into the air.

The new hero would immediately follow up with the ultimate.

Then Zadkiel would activate his own ultimate to soak up damage while the new hero unleashed devastating attacks.

A perfect partnership.

Then Min Jingchao thought about reality.

Who was President Pei's perfect partner?

Obviously, Master Ruan Guangjian.

Moreover, the hero's abilities actually matched Ruan Guangjian's personality quite well.

An artist's image ought to be graceful and ethereal.

Although Ruan Guangjian looked like an ordinary person on the outside, years immersed in art had given every movement and gesture the refined elegance of an ancient Chinese scholar.

At that moment, inspiration struck.

Hero Name: Ruan, the Windborne Ink Scholar

Ruan would be an ancient Chinese calligrapher and painter whose weapon was an enormous calligraphy brush.

First Skill: Swing the brush to write wild cursive calligraphy. After three strokes, the accumulated brush intent would summon a powerful gust of wind, knocking enemies along its path into the air.

Second Skill: Rapidly paint a mist-shrouded landscape before him, creating a barrier that blocked projectile abilities.

Third Skill: Ride the wind, allowing him to dash swiftly between enemies.

Ultimate: Illusory Realm. Cast an illusion upon airborne enemies. At the same time, Ruan rides the wind from thousands of miles away, instantly arriving beside the target to completely suppress and damage them.

After matching the mechanics with the hero's theme, Min Jingchao reviewed everything once more.

To his surprise, everything fit together uncannily well.

"Could it be..."

"This hero was originally tailor-made for Master Ruan?"

"It's just that President Pei didn't want to make it so obvious?"

"That seems highly likely."

"After all, President Pei once deliberately increased the outsourcing budget just to support Master Ruan's studio, helping him get through the difficult period after moving to Jingzhou."

"So..."

"Is this how great people express their friendship?"

Min Jingchao couldn't help imagining the future, where Zadkiel and Ruan fought side by side in the Valley of the Gods.

Just thinking about it made his blood boil with excitement.

He immediately began preparing the concept art specification for Ruan.

Since this was Master Ruan's own hero, it was only natural that Master Ruan himself should design its appearance.

Once Traveler Bao Xu was released, the next hero would be Ruan, the Windborne Ink Scholar.

Min Jingchao worked with remarkable efficiency.

In less than two hours, the complete hero specification document for the Windborne Ink Scholar was finished.

He immediately sent it to Ruan Guangjian.

...

At Halo Studio...

Ruan Guangjian sipped his coffee while continuing his work.

Suddenly, the chat application's icon began flashing in the lower-right corner of his screen.

A file transfer window popped up.

Windborne Ink Scholar · Ruan — Hero Specification.xlsx

"Hmm?"

Ruan Guangjian blinked in surprise.

They're already designing another hero?

Wasn't it just last Thursday—or was it Friday? Traveler Bao Xu had only just entered the production schedule.

And now there's already a new one?

He accepted the file and opened it.

The moment he looked at its contents, he froze.

Surname Ruan...

Fond of calligraphy and painting...

Ruan Guangjian couldn't help wondering whether this hero had actually been modeled after him.

But then again...

Isn't that a bit too narcissistic of me?

Just then, a message from Min Jingchao popped up.

"Master Ruan, that's right. This is the hero President Pei designed based on you. I only added a few extra details afterward."

"However, President Pei prefers to keep a low profile and doesn't want others to know it was his work. So don't make it too obvious either. Just understand it in your heart."

Ruan Guangjian was momentarily stunned.

I just ran into President Pei when I went out to buy coffee...

So that means President Pei had already designed a hero based on me before that?

Yet when we met at Moyu Internet Café, he never even hinted at it...

Mm...

That really is just like President Pei.

Quiet. Reserved. Always expressing himself indirectly.

The last time Halo Studio relocated to Jingzhou, President Pei had been the same way.

On the surface, he had seemed cold and indifferent.

But behind the scenes, he had quietly increased the outsourcing rates, helping Halo Studio survive its difficult transition.

This time, he had been even more subtle.

Without saying a single word, he had secretly created an exclusive hero for him inside the game.

A smile slowly appeared on Ruan Guangjian's face.

He replied:

"Don't worry. I'll make sure the concept art looks incredibly handsome."

Min Jingchao sent another message:

"Then... for his first skin, how about we make a crossover skin with Zadkiel? We can also establish in their backstory that the two heroes are the closest of friends. Sound good?"

Ruan Guangjian smiled knowingly.

"Of course. I couldn't ask for anything better."