

Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 444: What to Enter in the Input Boxes

With everyone in the group working together, this new code was quickly deciphered as well.

The string of numbers consisted only of 0, 1, and 2. Notably, 0 never appeared consecutively, making it a natural separator—immediately suggesting Morse code.

Treating 0 as a separator, converting 1 into “.” and 2 into “—”, produced a sequence of Morse code.

Using a Morse code reference table, it could then be translated into a string of letters:

GDBBEAICEADCECHCHBCB

From there, it could be further decoded using the same method as the string found in Lonely Desert Road.

74225193514353838232

Converted via a phone keypad:

SBJYJILVUE

And interpreted through double pinyin, it became:

soujgjilvshe

The players in the group didn't take long to reach this stage. Since they already had a "template" from solving the previous code, and Morse code was a fairly common encryption method, the process wasn't particularly difficult.

Qiao Liang felt a surge of excitement. Solving puzzles together like this, with everyone actively participating, gave him a real thrill.

"The second code just adds two extra steps—it doesn't change the overall encryption method. The later steps are still letter-to-number, number-to-keypad, then to double pinyin."

"Why didn't they switch to a completely different encryption method?"

"Is it because President Pei's knowledge is limited and he only knows these few techniques? Or is he just being lazy?"

"Oh... no, no, that's probably going too far."

"President Pei probably thought that finding such a deeply hidden code in Game Producer was already difficult enough, so he decided to go easy on us and reduce the difficulty of this one?"

"Is this... a form of mercy toward players who worked so hard to solve the puzzle?"

"Yeah! That must be it."

Qiao Liang didn't dwell on it further. He immediately opened the TPDb website and found the search box.

Combining the two decoded strings gave:

pgfendewangzhan, soujgjilvshe

So Qiao Liang first entered “jgjilvshe” into the TPDb search bar and hit enter.

No results.

Then he tried “jyjilvue.”

Still nothing.

“Hmm... maybe it needs Chinese characters?”

He thought for a moment. The pinyin was ambiguous—did it mean “Thorn Hostel,” “Economy Hostel,” or “Silent Hostel”?

There were many homophones.

Of course, he could try every possible combination, but that would be tedious.

Then he remembered the earlier poster.

Behind the bloody handprint on the poster was a special red symbol—a shape like a house roof—and beneath it was a line of English text:

PalpitationHotel!

“Palpitation” means a sudden, uneasy heartbeat. That made the name much clearer—it should be “Fright Hostel.”

“Fright” refers to a kind of fear that arises without obvious cause—not from jump scares or overt horror, but from a subtle, creeping sense of dread, like an inexplicable premonition.

Qiao Liang felt a surge of excitement. Solving the puzzle now seemed within reach!

He quickly entered “Fright Hostel” into the search box.

Sure enough—the page changed!

All the original content on the TPDb site disappeared. Black shapes spread across the screen, turning the entire page pitch black.

Then, two input boxes appeared prominently in the center.

There were no instructions—just two empty fields.

Qiao Liang first entered the two previously decoded strings into the boxes and pressed Enter.

No response.

He thought for a moment, then entered his Tengda Group account and password.

Still no response!

Qiao Liang: “?”

He tried many variations—original codes, decoded double pinyin, Chinese characters...

Still nothing worked.

Considering that it might not be triggered by pressing Enter, Qiao Liang tried pressing Space, CTRL, TAB, SHIFT, and other keys instead—but there was still no response!

He even tried swapping the account and password fields.

Still nothing.

After half an hour of trial and error, Qiao Liang felt dizzy.

He had already tried countless combinations, yet the two input boxes just sat there on the page, completely unresponsive no matter what he did!

Calming down, Qiao Liang checked his fan group. Sure enough, no one had found the solution either—they were all stuck at the input box stage.

No one knew what to enter!

Qiao Liang stopped trying and began to think instead.

Clearly, up to this point, everyone's puzzle-solving process had been correct.

The reason they were stuck now was that they were missing some crucial piece of information. There was no clear hint about what exactly should be entered.

Frowning, Qiao Liang considered the possibilities.

“Are there more hidden clues in other games that specify what needs to be entered?”

“Or did I miss something important?”

“So far, not a single player has gotten past this step... Clearly, this is another puzzle meant for everyone...”

...

Meanwhile, Pei Qian sat in his office, monitoring the players’ progress on the forums.

“Damn it, the clue in Game Producer was found this quickly?!”

He felt deeply frustrated.

He had originally thought that the clue hidden in Game Producer was well concealed and would last for quite a while.

After all, Game Producer had many different endings, and the “Total Failure” ending was one that very few players reached. Most players would avoid it as long as they made a few reasonable decisions.

But that just happened to be Pei Qian’s favorite and most anticipated ending, so he had hidden the second code in the corner of the second-to-last scene leading to that ending.

Yet not long after the first code was cracked, the second one was discovered—and decoded at lightning speed!

Of course, the rapid decryption was also because Pei Qian hadn’t introduced a new encryption method. Compared to the first code, it only added one extra step—converting numbers into Morse code—making it relatively simple.

Players who had solved the first code already understood the method. They just had to follow the same process.

Pei Qian had actually wanted to make the second code more complex. But due to time constraints—and his limited knowledge, as well as his reluctance to ask others for help—he had taken a shortcut, thinking it wouldn't be discovered so quickly.

Reality had slapped him in the face. These players were absolutely insane!

Fortunately, there was still the final third of the puzzle left—the last line of defense.

“Please, just hold out a little longer!”

Pei Qian checked the time. There were still three weeks until settlement. It was unlikely that the puzzle could stop all players, but as long as it could reduce the number of people buying the game before settlement, it wouldn't be a wasted effort.

After that, Pei Qian went online to check public opinion about the OTTO E1 phone.

Two days had passed since the launch event. The first batch of review videos and reports from tech media had already come out, and the hype from the launch had peaked the previous day.

Chang You's long promotional speech at the event had gone viral. Many people online were trying to recite or imitate it, and quite a few had recorded themselves and uploaded the videos to the Aili Island website, gaining high view counts.

The original launch event video had also been uploaded to Aili Island, and its popularity had even reached the top three in the tech section—briefly making it onto the homepage.

Normally, it's very difficult for a tech brand's launch event to achieve such high rankings.

That's because most product launches—whether for computers, phones, or other gadgets—have relatively low information density. Much of the content consists of marketing language that can be summarized in just a few sentences.

Moreover, major brands usually livestream their events. Those who are genuinely interested have already watched them live and won't bother rewatching the full video.

As a result, full-length launch videos rarely get high view counts.

Instead, short, three-to-five-minute commentary or parody videos that summarize and critique the event tend to generate much more attention.

However, the recording of OTTO Technology's launch event was completely different.

First, the content of the event was extremely concise, compressed into less than an hour. Throughout the presentation, there were plenty of humorous moments, the information density was high, and the overall entertainment value was strong.

Second, many people online hadn't paid attention to the launch at all. It was only after Chang You's tongue-twisting promotional speech started

trending that they even became aware of it—and then went to watch the video to see what it was all about.

As a result, the playback numbers for the recorded event also increased significantly, fully compensating for the low live viewership and lack of attention during the livestream!

On top of that, there hadn't been any major product launches from big brands recently, so tech reviewers in the digital space all flocked to produce reviews of the OTTO E1 phone. This quickly drew a large number of tech enthusiasts' attention to the device.

Pei Qian carefully watched all the review videos for the OTTO E1 phone, and the situation could be described as a mix of good and bad.

The bad news was that these review outlets had said quite a lot of positive things about the phone!

During their reviews, they thoroughly explained the phone's various advantages, praising it as "solidly built," and also gave detailed introductions to the various bonuses included with it.

It seemed like this was a lingering effect of Tengda Group's "all expenses covered plus gifts included" treatment during the launch event.

The good news, however, was that after the hype had fermented for a while, a wave of contrarian sentiment began to emerge among netizens!

Although the reviews were generally positive, some of the phone's drawbacks started to surface—namely: it was expensive, heavy, and hard to get!

There was no need to elaborate on “expensive” and “heavy.” The phone had unsurprisingly earned nicknames like “half-kilo phone” and “Ou half-kilo,” and was also labeled as a “luxury phone” and a “IQ tax product.” While these were misunderstandings, they did manage to confuse some onlookers.

However, Chang You had already thoroughly mocked these two issues during the launch event itself, so the criticism online now seemed relatively insignificant.

These points didn’t generate much backlash. Instead, they reinforced the phone’s image as a “truly valuable heavyweight item.”

The most critical point of criticism, however, was that it was “impossible to buy.” Many netizens even believed this was a deliberately orchestrated marketing tactic.