

Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 522: A Small Token of Appreciation for President Pei

At the Terminal Chinese Web Author Training Class...

After a full day of writing, the authors uploaded their latest chapters one after another and prepared to head home for some rest.

Cui Geng stretched lazily and looked with satisfaction at the over seven thousand words he had written.

By now, The Butterfly Game had surpassed 1.6 million words and remained a regular fixture on Terminal Chinese Web's bestseller rankings.

Moreover, after President Pei had adjusted the website's revenue-sharing model—raising authors' share of subscription income to 70%—Cui Geng's royalties had increased substantially once again.

Ironically, that seemed to have weakened his motivation to work hard.

Cui Geng had always been a notorious procrastinator.

Under normal circumstances, a situation like this should have completely destroyed his drive to write.

But it was the Tengda Group Spirit that had helped him discover a genuine sense of purpose.

Although his initial burst of enthusiasm had gradually cooled, and his daily output had declined from over 10,000 words at his peak to around 4,000

words, he still maintained a steady minimum update schedule and had never stopped updating altogether.

For readers who were used to Cui Geng either disappearing for long periods or abandoning his novels halfway through, that was already excellent news.

However, Cui Geng himself could clearly feel that his writing had reached a bottleneck.

For an author who had rarely written novels exceeding one million words, *The Butterfly Game*, now over 1.6 million words long, had already gone beyond the limits of both his experience and his ability to fully control the story.

Every chapter felt like navigating dangerous waters.

After much deliberation, Cui Geng decided to fight against the laziness that naturally emerged whenever he encountered adversity.

His chosen method of resistance?

Returning to the Author Training Class.

His writing habits had changed many times over the years.

At first, while attending the Author Training Class, he discovered that he actually *could* produce massive daily word counts.

Sometimes writing slowly really did mean he was struggling.

But other times, "writing slowly" was nothing more than an excuse for laziness.

Later, after studying the Tengda Group Spirit, he finally identified the root of his own mental obstacles.

That breakthrough inspired him to write *The Butterfly Game*, elevating his writing career to an entirely new level.

Now, however, as the novel continued to grow longer, he encountered increasingly difficult problems.

Sometimes, even the Tengda Group Spirit alone wasn't enough to help him overcome them.

So he had asked Chief Editor Zhu for permission to return to the Author Training Class.

He shut himself away in its quiet "little black room," hoping to rediscover that feeling of complete concentration, free from outside distractions.

The results were undeniable.

Simply changing his environment had dramatically improved his productivity again.

His daily output had climbed back to over seven thousand words, which, for Cui Geng, was no easy achievement.

Having finished his work for the day, Cui Geng left the building together with the other authors.

Some planned to relax by playing games at the internet café.

Others intended to head home, get some rest, and refine their story outlines.

Cui Geng could clearly sense that the Author Training Class itself had also changed since its earliest days.

After several generations of experienced authors mentoring newcomers, attending the Author Training Class had become a normal part of life for Terminal Chinese Web's writers.

Everyone exchanged ideas, learned from one another, and improved together.

More and more authors had come to realize that the Author Training Class truly was an excellent place—one that genuinely boosted both productivity and writing performance.

Over time, this has created a healthy, self-reinforcing cycle.

As for Cui Geng...

He had become the role model in the eyes of many writers, the textbook example of what the Author Training Class could accomplish.

He couldn't help sighing.

'Sigh~ I'm still so young, and yet I'm already burdened with the image of being everyone's idol. Life is hard.'

As he reached the ground floor and prepared to leave, he spotted a familiar figure.

"Wu Bin?"

Cui Geng remembered Wu Bin very clearly.

When everyone had been studying the Tengda Group Spirit, it was Wu Bin's interpretation that had completely cleared away his confusion and opened his eyes.

Wu Bin smiled.

"Got some time? Want to grab a couple of drinks?"

Cui Geng nodded without hesitation.

"Sure."

The two headed to a nearby Moyu Internet Café and found an empty table in the bar area.

It was already evening, and the bar was gradually filling with customers.

A singer on stage was tuning his instruments, preparing to begin the night's performance.

Rumor had it that Moyu Internet Café was already experimenting with its 3.0 model, with new locations scheduled to open soon.

Even so, the original Moyu Internet Café 1.0 locations still attracted more than enough customers.

Thanks to Chen Lei's rise to fame, many resident singers in Jingzhou had come to regard Moyu Internet Café as a highly desirable venue to perform.

Naturally, many of their fans also visited the cafés specifically to support them and tip them during their performances.

Revenue from drinks and the commission on customer tips had always been one of the major sources of income for the Moyu Internet Café 1.0 model.

As for Chen Lei, he was now busy pursuing his music career.

After releasing several singles, he had been traveling all over the country, performing at music festivals to build his popularity while preparing for his very first solo concert.

Although Chen Lei rarely stayed in Jingzhou anymore, he continued to say in interviews that he had never forgotten his hometown.

Whenever he had the chance, he promised he would definitely come back to visit.

Wu Bin and Cui Geng each ordered a drink and chatted over them.

Wu Bin briefly explained why he had come.

The moment Cui Geng finished listening, he slapped his thigh enthusiastically.

"You've got to let me be part of this!"

The two immediately hit it off.

For Cui Geng, money had never really been an issue.

After The Butterfly Game became a huge success, it certainly wasn't one anymore.

What he cared about now was finding a way to break through his creative bottleneck.

Now that The Butterfly Game had exceeded one million words, signs of creative exhaustion had begun to appear.

The fact that his writing speed kept slowing down was proof enough.

At the beginning, inspiration had poured out endlessly.

His enthusiasm was sky-high, source material came effortlessly, and writing 10,000 words a day felt easy.

But as the novel grew longer and longer, the pool of usable ideas gradually shrank.

How to keep the story from declining in quality had become Cui Geng's greatest concern.

Back then, as Tengda Group's "Special Observer," Cui Geng had been free to visit every department within the company for inspiration.

Many of the storylines in The Butterfly Game were directly adapted from events and experiences he had observed throughout Tengda Group.

However, once he had gathered enough material, he buried himself in writing and rarely visited those departments anymore.

Even now, although he could still return to Tengda Group's various divisions for inspiration, no matter where he looked, he would mostly encounter familiar material.

It had become increasingly difficult to discover anything genuinely new.

Besides, Tengda Group now had so many departments that, with the constant pressure of maintaining daily updates, wandering around aimlessly gathering material would be highly inefficient and simply not worth the time.

At a moment like this, having someone like Wu Bin as both a partner and a guide was exactly what he needed.

Wu Bin possessed a deep understanding of the Tengda Group Spirit.

As a member of the Human Resources Department, he also knew every department's organizational structure and personnel inside and out.

He could certainly identify the best angles for research and the most suitable people to interview.

All Cui Geng had to do was accompany him, carefully record everything, and write it up.

That way, he could help Wu Bin produce a comprehensive annotation of the Tengda Group Spirit while also breaking through his own creative bottleneck.

Wasn't that killing two birds with one stone?

The thought filled Cui Geng with excitement.

"So," he asked, "where do we start? The game development department?"

Wu Bin shook his head.

"No."

"If it's about Tengda Group's internal departments, I can simply talk directly to each department head. That kind of material is easy to collect."

"As the saying goes, those involved are often blind to the truth, while outsiders see things more clearly."

"For too long, our understanding of the Tengda Group Spirit has been confined to the company's own departments."

"This time, I want to begin from the outside."

"I want to see how companies outside Tengda Group—and President Pei's business partners—view President Pei."

"Perhaps that will allow us to see the full breadth of President Pei's thinking, vast as the stars."

Cui Geng nodded in wholehearted agreement.

"Then... where do we begin?"

After thinking for a moment, Wu Bin answered,

"As far as I know, President Li of Fu Hui Capital has long been one of President Pei's business partners."

"The two of them are currently working together on the Fright Hostel project."

"So let's arrange a time to start with President Li."

. . .

May 18, Wednesday

In Jingzhou City's old industrial district, construction of the Fright Hostel was proceeding at full speed.

According to the schedule, the Fright Hostel was slated to officially open to visitors in July, so the construction crews were working overtime to stay on track.

Fortunately, the factory buildings themselves were already in place.

The most difficult part of the construction was, naturally, the Fright Hostel itself.

The interiors of the old factory buildings had to be completely rebuilt, so construction had begun as early as December of last year and had continued all the way until now.

As for the other businesses that President Li and the other investors planned to open—restaurants, inns, and similar establishments—they were all being created by renovating existing factory buildings and other structures in the old industrial district.

Strictly speaking, the work mainly involved remodeling and decorating the interiors rather than constructing entirely new buildings.

With ample funding and construction crews working overtime, everything was expected to be completed on schedule.

Moreover, the weathered appearance of the old factories carried a unique sense of history and age that perfectly complemented the atmosphere of the Fright Hostel.

Yet once visitors stepped inside those old buildings, they would discover an entirely different world.

Comfortable restaurants, relaxing accommodations, and pleasant shopping areas would allow guests to completely forget the fear and exhaustion they had experienced inside the haunted attraction and simply enjoy themselves.

President Li arrived outside the temporary office where Chen Kangtuo was working and knocked gently on the door.

"President Li? Please, come in."

Chen Kangtuo welcomed him inside and handed him a cup of tea.

Over the course of the construction project, Chen Kangtuo had interacted frequently with President Li and the other investors.

By now, they had become quite familiar with one another.

Since they were jointly investing in the project, everyone's interests were aligned, making discussions straightforward whenever issues arose.

After taking a couple of sips of tea, President Li began.

"Brother Chen, to be honest, today I'm here on behalf of all the other investors."

"We'd like to make a proposal to Tengda Group."

"A proposal?"

Chen Kangtuo looked surprised.

President Li unfolded a large architectural blueprint.

It showed the overall layout of the Fright Hostel and the surrounding buildings.

"Here," he said, pointing to one of the prime locations on the map, "the other investors and I intentionally reserved one factory building."

"We plan to renovate it into a marketplace dedicated to selling souvenirs, merchandise, and all kinds of products related to the Fright Hostel."

"This marketplace will be funded jointly by all of us investors."

"Tengda Group, meanwhile, will provide the design plans."

"When the marketplace begins generating profits, Tengda Group will receive 50% of the earnings, while the rest of us investors will split the remaining 50%."

"What do you think?"

Chen Kangtuo froze for a moment.

"President Li... that doesn't seem appropriate."

"Isn't that practically the same as giving it to us for free?"

President Li smiled faintly.

"This is simply a small token of appreciation from all of us to President Pei."