

All R. Artist 231

Chapter 231: GOAT quota

“Top tier?”

Upon receiving a call from YangFeng, Lin Yuan learned that “Ghost Blows Out the Light” had been decided to be published, and the promotion of the novel was of the top tier scale – a treatment only top class authors within the publishing house could receive.

“Yes.”

YangFeng explained, “Even with the success of your previous two novels, this treatment is considered quite impressive. But the reason the company offered top tier promotion is ours hoping that you could make it onto a certain list.” “What list?”

“Here’s the thing, since the merger of Qin and Qi Provinces, the circles of novelists naturally merged. You were previously selected as the tenth novelist on the short story ranking by the ‘Literature and Art Gazette’, right? That’s one of the changes that came about as a result of the merger. Our fantasy genre has similar selections too.”

“Oh...”

Lin Yuan remained noncommittal.

YangFeng laughed while explaining, “‘Literature and Art Gazette’ held the selection of short stories, whereas the selection of fantasy novels is more important. So the entity responsible for the selections is the Literature and Art Association, which was established after the merger of Qin and Qi Provinces. They plan to conduct two professional evaluations: The first one is to select the ‘Gold Award GOAT’ of fantasy genre; the second criterion is to crown the ‘Supreme God’ of fantasy genre. Every industry should be setting similar standards for the future, just like the music industry that has ‘Golden Composers’ and so-called ‘Maestro’.”

“Are there any benefits?”

Lin Yuan was not interested in these empty reputations. In the music industry, ‘Golden Composers’ could receive contracts with higher share percentages from their companies, whereas the ‘Maestro’ status was even more incredible. This was what Lin Yuan truly valued.

“Of course, there are!”

YangFeng answered immediately, “If you could become the ‘Gold Award GOAT’, your contract with our company will inevitably rise to the next level. The specifics can be discussed later. Of course, I know that Mr. Chu Kuang doesn’t care much about these things. He just wants Silver Blue to make a gesture. As for the ‘Supreme God’, chances are slim because the sales volume of Chu Kuang’s works is not high enough...”

“I got it.” Lin Yuan’s eyes sparkled.

‘GOAT’ is akin to ‘Golden Composer’ in the music industry, and ‘Supreme God’ is equivalent to the ‘Maestro’ in the music world.

The biggest drawback for Lin Yuan currently was that the total sales volume of his novels was not high enough.

His novels were indeed popular, but he had only been in the industry for so short a time. Without the accumulation over a period, Lin Yuan’s sales volume could not be compared to top-class novelists who had been writing for decades.

However, Lin Yuan had his strengths.

He had pioneered two new genres in the fantasy fiction field, and there is also “Ghost Blows Out the Light,” which would soon establish a new tomb-robbing genre. All these achievements could be counted as Lin Yuan’s influences. If a selection is to be held, these would all be considered. Giving the highest promotion to the new book obviously meant that Silver Blue Books wanted to help him receive a higher ranking. After all, the stronger the influence of the authors under a company, the greater the influence of the company itself.

“And, as long as you understand.”

YangFeng chuckled, “Recently, these matters have been circulating both within and outside the industry. It is rumored that the selection would commence officially in June. Therefore, the timing

of your new book is just right. However, precisely because there is such a selection in June, there are numerous authors releasing their works in June. ‘Ghost Blows Out the Light’ happens to be the new book that Silver Blue values most in June...”

“Hmm...”

Lin Yuan did not engage in further discussion.

Regardless of the selection results, at least the top-tier promotion arranged by Silver Blue was a good thing. Just like the promotion for films, novels also require promotion before their publication. Proper promotion could garner more sales. After all, good wine needs no bush.

Word-of-mouth reversal?

Rising through word-of-mouth reversal is indeed a good narrative, but that is only a consolation when faced with reality. Wouldn’t it be better if a storyline could be explosive right from the start?

Sure enough...

After notifying Lin Yuan, Silver Blue Books began to operate on a full scale. “Ghost Blows Out the Light” directly entered the top-tier promotion phase. It involved not only the conventional strategy of flaunting banners on the official website but also pervasive urban advertisements and newspaper promotions. Even the literary section of the tribe also advertised for it, mentioning that Chu Kuang would soon publish a new lengthy novel...

Consider this...

Under normal circumstances, tribes seldom accept these kinds of novel advertisements. However, this after all, is a new book by Chu Kuang, and there has always been a good cooperation foundation between the tribes and Chu Kuang. Therefore, when Silver Blue Books approached for a partnership, the tribe agreed without considering much. Instead of saying it’s to give Silver Blue Books face, it’s more about showing some courtesy to Chu Kuang.

As a result...

The advertising campaign was successful!

After this comprehensive promotion, Chu Kuang's new book advertisements were everywhere within a few days. All those paying attention to novels knew about the release of Chu Kuang's new book. Anyone could see that this was the highest level of promotional value that a writer could get from a publishing house – the advertising effect was almost maxed out.

Apart from this...

The promotional slogans that Silver Blue Books used for Chu Kuang's new book were extremely ambitious, no less audacious than those of Chu Kuang's last book: [Chu Kuang's new book will launch on June 1st, "Ghost Blows Out the Light" will set the agenda!]

Meanwhile...

There were more slogans everywhere, their appearances all over the internet were relentless, like the irresistible advertisements on some novel forums that sparked curiosity in people: "Planting mound print, touching golden talisman, moving mountains and unloading ridges to find dragon decisions; people lit candles, ghosts blew out the light, exploring gradients and dipping dippers to seek star peaks. Mercury streaks, nurturing brilliants, numerous trips to dragon tower treasure pavilions; burying deep coffins, bronze bottles, don't approach if the eight characters are not hard!"

People light candles!

Ghosts blow out the light!

Although the style of the advertisement was completely different from the previous two books by Chu Kuang, resembling supernatural novels, many readers actually enjoyed this mysterious feeling. It highlighted an impressive unknown, especially the fans of Chu Kuang:

"It feels like it's a new genre!"

"The promotional material said they're starting a new school of thought."

"After the previous two books, although I had hoped Chu Kuang would continue with fantasy martial arts or sports genre, I still support him writing a new genre. Because I believe in Chu Kuang's writing ability; the previous two books have proven everything!"

“The advertisement is really strong!”

“Old rascal Chu Kuang is now one of the faces of Silver Blue Books, his sales may not be number one, but his influence is extremely high. After all, he led two waves of trends, he’s a real pioneer. How could Silver Blue Books not give him the recognition?”

“I can’t wait!”

“The old rascal Chu Kuang has finally released a new book, seems like he’s quite productive. But, I won’t read it. Ever since he killed off Biyao in his book, I decided not to read any of his novels anymore, this post is my witness!”

“To be released in June?”

“Are there too many new books being released in June? Probably all aiming for the GOAT award. But Chu Kuang is one of the few authors whose status is high enough. Other novels released in June can only be considered as last-minute attempts, the main thing is still past achievements. I think with Chu Kuang’s strength, there’s no problem in getting a GOAT award.”

And within the industry.

All the major publishing companies frowned at the same time. In such fiercely competitive market conditions, Chu Kuang’s sudden release of a new book is not good news for everyone, since everyone in the industry has already witnessed Chu Kuang’s capability twice.

In fact.

From the start of the high-level promotional campaign, several booksellers have contacted Silver Blue Books, pre-ordering a certain number of Chu Kuang’s new books. After last time’s painful incident, no one dares to underestimate Chu Kuang anymore.

“Is he ushering in a new school of thought again?”

“Is he aiming for the GOAT?”

“Addicted to introducing new genres?”

“Even if Chu Kuang doesn’t release a new book in June, with the influence of his previous two books, he still has hope of getting the GOAT award. Now that he’s releasing a new book, he probably wants to play it safe. The specifics are up to the quality of his new book.”

“It shouldn’t be too bad.”

“That’s not necessarily true, while advertising scale represents an author’s brand; regardless of the quality of the famous author’s new book, the publisher will give them recognition based on their past achievements. Whether the content of the new book is masterful is another matter. What I’m curious about is whether he’s really created a new genre?”

While the industry is discussing, Chu Kuang’s name is well-known, but now that Qin and Qi have merged, not everyone knows who Chu Kuang is, because half of the market now consists of readers from Qi Province.

Yes.

Although some readers from Qi Province have read Chu Kuang’s “Zhu Xian” after the merger, the number is not significant and the readers from the two sides have not completely integrated yet. They still have limited knowledge of the authors from the other side, so many people have raised questions:

“Is Chu Kuang really that good?”

“This Chu Kuang seems pretty tough, his new book advertisements are on the bus I frequently take. In our Qi Province, such a level of author is already a leading figure in some fields.”

“Is he really that impressive?”

“I’ve read Chu Kuang’s short story ‘Necklace’, it was really good. I didn’t expect that he would also write long fantasy novels, and this happens to be the genre I like. I’m curious to see if Chu Kuang really is that good.”

Naturally, readers from Qin Province are eager to explain Chu Kuang's information to readers from Qi Province: "Chu Kuang originally wrote long stories. All the popular sports competitive texts in Qin are following Chu Kuang's trend. Qin's popular fantasy martial arts novels are also following Chu Kuang's trend. Do you know what a pioneer stands for?"

With pride.

With a hint of bragging.

Since Chu Kuang is a fantasy writer from Qin, after explaining to the readers from Qi, they genuinely have high expectations, and plan to see how good 'Ghost Blows out the Light' is. This also serves another purpose of Silver Blue Books in giving Chu Kuang's new book the highest level of promotion:

Win the competition!

Expand the market!

Let Chu Kuang firmly become a GOAT, and at the same time let the readers of Qi province recognize Chu Kuang's strength. In this way, the sales of Chu Kuang's novels can go to a higher level.

Without a doubt.

Silver Blue Books is still very optimistic about the quality of "Ghost Blows out the Light". Although there is some internal controversy about this novel, such as worries that readers won't accept the first-person narrative, or concerns that the genre of this novel doesn't quite match with fantasy, one thing everyone agrees on is:

This novel is very fascinating.

All major publishing companies are now closely watching the competition. The publisher with more GOATs and Supreme Gods under its banner represents greater strength. Naturally, Silver Blue Books wants to help Chu Kuang....

Chapter 232: Official Release

GOAT, the absolute best.

The award seems rather adolescent.

However, who among the readers who enjoy fantasy novels don't have some adolescent attributes?

The official naming of this award is probably also a way of catering to young readers who love this genre of novels.

After all, everyone still likes to call their favorite author "GOAT".

There are also some who call them "old rascal".

However, this title is used by the minority.

Only those authors who evoke mixed feelings of love and hate from their readers are addressed as old rascals.

If there were an "old rascal" award, Chu Kuang, the author who killed off Biyao, might be famous on the list.

Lin Yuan didn't care about these shallow titles...

Until he knew that being the supreme deity could earn better contracts.

At that moment, Lin Yuan's aspiration to be the so-called "supreme deity" was as great as his anticipation of becoming "Maestro".

In comparison, the benefits of the short story award, apart from gaining a good reputation, seem uncertain?

Of course, there are some benefits.

But in terms of making money, long stories overpower short ones, which is why Lin Yuan has never given up on writing long novels.

In the following days, Lin Yuan conscientiously paid attention to the award's developments.

The Literature and Art Gazette, which previously ranked authors based on their short stories from Qin and Qi provinces, is affiliated with the Literature and Art Association and is considered a subsidiary unit.

The short stories were judged by the Literature and Art Gazette.

The judging of the long stories, on the other hand, is conducted by the headquarters of the Literature and Art Association, and preparations for it have been underway for a while, otherwise the news wouldn't have already reached the public.

Only someone like Lin Yuan, who straddles multiple industries, lacked knowledge of industry updates.

And by the middle of May.

The details of the GOAT and supreme deity awards were finally disclosed.

The Literature and Art Association published an article in the Literature and Art Gazette, stating, "In the future, the awards will be held annually, so there will be new GOATs and supreme deities every year. The exact number is yet to be determined, but the number for the first event has already been decided. We will judge fair and square, openly choosing ten GOAT-level fantasy authors and three supreme deities..."

As expected.

The difficult supreme deity award only has three spots available, which are very likely to be given to the top fantasy authors who have been famous for many years and have consistently achieved good results!

The number of spots for the GOAT award is comparatively more, a total of ten.

No wonder Silver Blue Books believes Chu Kuang can secure one of the GOAT spots.

Although he started late, Chu Kuang's influence is not something ordinary novelists can compete with!

Indeed, there are many industry insiders who have already started to forecast.

For these kinds of rankings, it is actually possible to predict some of the results in advance, given that the editors within the industry understand the authors' achievements the best.

And in the vast majority of predictions, Chu Kuang's name features prominently.

"In terms of sales, Chu Kuang doesn't have a significant advantage in being picked as the GOAT, but his industry influence is undeniable. Chu Kuang has consecutively created two new genres of writing. It's only fair that he secures a spot as the GOAT."

Many agreed with this sentiment.

The indisputable fact is, the sports novels and Xianxia novels created by Chu Kuang have provided for many authors.

The influence of the pioneer is too great.

Especially the Xianxia novels, which are so hot right now!

There was a tally...

In the Qin provincial market, the Xianxia and sports competition genres combined have already occupied one-fifth of the market share in the fantasy domain!

In other words.

One-fifth of the authors on the market are following the two genres initiated by Chu Kuang!

Does one-fifth sound small?

No, when we talk about the entire Qin Province, it's quite terrifying.

Of course.

Now with the merger of Qin and Qi provinces, this market share has certainly shrunk a lot, but this accomplishment is already dazzling enough for Chu Kuang.

The editors are making predictions, and so are the readers.

The readers are more fond of making these predictions than the editors, even coming up with specific lists.

There are people who believe that Chu Kuang will make it to the GOAT list, but his ranking might not be particularly high because fantasy authors from both Qin and Qi will be participating in the evaluation...

In comparison, the fantasy novels from Qi Province are indeed inferior to those from Qin.

That's just relatively speaking.

Qi Province also has many talented fantasy authors.

But to be fair, several fantasy authors from Qi province will inevitably be selected, although the number will likely be less than those from Qin.

But now, there's no point in making any more predictions.

Because the official results will only be formally announced after July.

Currently in the marketplace.

Everyone seems more concerned with how the new books released in June will perform.

There are many talented authors in June.

Among these, three works catch the most attention.

The authors are:

Chu Kuang, Devil Child, and Mister Sea.

No need to mention Chu Kuang, the marquee artist in June for Silver Blue Books and the focus of the highest ad campaign.

Devil Child's work is also being released in June, titled "The Sword Sage Descends the Mountain".

His fame is no less than that of Chu Kuang. As the June marquee author heavily backed by Ding Sheng publishing, it also has the highest promotional efforts, with the goal of fixing a spot in the GOAT selection!

As for Mister Sea...

He's the banner author for Sky Publishing in Qi province, with a book titled "My other world is primitive society".

Needless to say, it also gets the highest promotion, only the subject matter chosen is traditional other-world adventure...

Devil Child has the suspicion of imitating Chu Kuang.

But now that Xianxia has created a trend, nobody keeps bringing up whether one is copying or not anymore.

When a lot of people are writing on the same subject, it forms a genre.

It might be a stretch to say that every Xianxia novel on Earth is influenced by “Floating Dream”.

When they first came out, everyone would compare them to “Floating Dream”, but later on, this stopped.

All in all.

The promotion of these three novels was fierce, alongside the release of some other novels.

But clearly, they couldn’t compete with the hottest promoted titles.

The booksellers were also making choices.

On the side of Silver Blue Books, many booksellers pre-ordered “Ghost Blowing Lamp”.

But the June new releases of Mister Sea and the Devil Child, two novelists, were also pre-ordered by major bookstores.

Just comparing the pre-order data...

Ghost Blowing Lamp of Silver Blue Books, which hasn’t been released yet, has already sold a million copies.

The Sky Publishing House’s “My other world is primitive society”, also not yet released, has currently sold a million copies as well.

The most impressive is Devil Child’s “The Sword Sage Descends the Mountain”, with pre-sales of 1.3 million copies!

This doesn’t mean that Devil Child is stronger than the other two.

The main reason is related to the theme.

Because there are no tomb-robbing types in the market, Silver Blue Books classified “Ghost Blowing Lamp” as a horror-mystery —

A niche market.

It was only after “Zhu Xian” that the industry dared not treat Chu Kuang normally. Otherwise, the initial treatment of this book would not be better than Chu Kuang’s previous work.

On the other hand, “My other world is primitive society” is much more steady — a traditional other-world adventure. While readers may be tired of this, it is still the most active genre in the market.

As for Devil Child’s “The Sword Sage Descends the Mountain”, the pre-sales were the highest because it is a Xianxia!

Xianxia is the freshest subject matter currently, with several bestsellers already out. Plus, the writer this time is Devil Child, naturally appealing to booksellers! Why?

Because Devil Child has many nicknames, such as, “killer of original series”, “king of bandwagon-hopping”, “master of drastic changes” and so on.

Hearing these nicknames...

Devil Child is good at jumping on the bandwagon, but he does it cleverly, adding his own details and thoughts, making drastic changes, and the final works often perform better than those he imitates!

This is a kind of ability.

Many powerful writers in the industry have this ability, but Devil Child is undoubtedly the cream of the crop.

Some even wondered if “The Sword Sage Descends the Mountain” could surpass the pioneer...

That is, Chu Kuang's "Zhu Xian"?

Lin Yuan cared about the title race of the GOAT, but he didn't care about the competition for the new book in June.

Although the competition for the new book affected his top-tier promotion.

This is natural.

If there is only one best-selling author starting a new book at the same time, everyone's attention will naturally be focused on this best-selling author.

But if several best-selling authors start a book at the same time, their attention will inevitably be dispersed.

Booksellers also need to make judgments...

Bookstores sell books, basically, there are the main push works.

If the performance of the works they choose to push is not good, it will affect their income.

Of course.

They can adjust according to the situation.

For example, if the book they push does not perform well, they can completely switch to promoting another book that sells well...

But it depends on whether they signed any other contracts when they preordered the novel.

If they signed other contracts, such as author signing events, they can't easily change their main push works.

Actually.

Some big booksellers also hope that Chu Kuang can cooperate with the bookstore to have a signing event for “Ghost Blowing Lamp”, which is a good method to stimulate sales.

Chu Kuang’s fans might buy “Ghost Blowing Lamp” for Chu Kuang’s signature, even if they don’t necessarily like this book.

However, after receiving a call from YangFeng, Lin Yuan refused.

Although he really wanted to make this money, once he held a signing and selling event, his fall would not be far away.

This is the downside of having too many pen names.

Lin Yuan decided to continue being a quiet Matryoshka doll.

On the contrary, Devil Child and Mister Sea have signed additional contracts with different booksellers, preparing to hold signature selling events, aiming to achieve higher sales in June.

However, Lin Yuan also has his own way of promoting.

He promoted the news of “Ghost Blowing Lamp” releasing a new book in June through Chu Kuang’s account.

Then, he used Shadow and Xian Yu’s accounts to forward and recommend.

The three accounts are interconnected, sharing the same heart, emphasizing unity in progression and retreat!

It’s also due to the bundling of the three accounts that fans get extra excited whenever they see these three accounts collaborating. It always feels like a self-circling CP, and the collaboration always locks CP with a heavy taste.

“Today’s threesome has started!”

“Triangle love?”

“A battlefield of love?”

“Before it was just Chu Kuang and Xian Yu, but now there’s an additional Shadow. It seems like Chu Kuang is the core, while Xian Yu and Shadow are competing for favor...”

“You guys are so dirty (blushing)”

“As everyone knows, when Chu Kuang posts an update, Xian Yu and Shadow must share.”

The three-person CP is as steady as a dog; netizens love to tease the bromance circle formed by Chu Kuang, Xian Yu and Shadow. Various spoofs abound, so every time they collaborate, it’s like a sucker punch to the netizens’ wicked sense of humor.

Lin Yuan was not sure if this bundling promotion was good for sales. Anyway, once he finished this, he didn’t continue to pay attention to it.

At this point, May had quietly ended.

June.

A large number of new books have been placed on the shelves of major bookstores.

Chu Kuang’s third long novel, “Ghost Blowing Lamp”, was officially released!

Chapter 233: Shocked Reader

The subject matter is critical to a novel; so why do most novelists always opt for popular themes in their works?

Because readers prefer those themes, they seek out books within those categories—

Choosing a popular theme increases the chances of the novel being selected by readers!

Even some well-reputed bestselling authors don't dare to easily choose some niche themes for their creations.

This is because they are not sure whether their readers will continue to support them after they write a book with an unpopular theme.

Yet, there are always some authors who defy convention.

Chu Kuang is one such author.

He seems to be inherently averse to writing on popular subjects.

His debut novel in the field of the fantasy long-fiction genre was called "King of the Net," revolving around competitive sports—

An incredibly niche theme!

His second novel, "Zhu Xian," falls into a genre of fantasy novels that hardly anybody else was touching—

It's an even more dubious proposition than competitive sports!

Despite this, these two unlikely-themed novels turned out to be remarkably successful, even setting trends in the market!

Therefore,

When Chu Kuang's third novel was placed in the horror and mystery category, many industry insiders weren't surprised at all.

It's clear that

If it weren't for the success of "Zhu Xian," the industry would definitely have been pessimistic about Chu Kuang's new book, and there would have been a hundred per cent chance somebody would have said:

"Chu Kuang's new book will certainly flop!"

This is because horror and suspense are also niche genres in the realm of fantasy novels!

But Chu Kuang had already twice outperformed everyone's expectations, so when Silver Blue Books started promoting his new book, no one dared to question the quality of Chu Kuang's new book, although deep down they might have had some reservations.

Editors within the industry are not fools.

Whenever it comes to anything involving Chu Kuang, judging based on conventional wisdom usually ends up being humiliating. It would be better to keep quiet and wait for the results.

Book merchants are not fools either.

Even though "Ghost Blowing Lamp" seemed to be headed for a flop, all the major booksellers were still respectful, pre-ordering a decent quantity of stock from Silver Blue Books.

There was no choice really,

After all, "Ghost Blowing Lamp" was Chu Kuang's new novel?

With his first two novels as a base, the pen name Chu Kuang has come to largely overshadow the importance of genre and subject.

However...

This is just the opinion of some people in Qin Province.

A lot of readers in the Qi Province do not agree with it.

Like Mai Tong.

Mai Tong is a native of Qi Province.

After the merger of Qin and Qi Provinces, as a lover of fantasy novels, Mai Tong naturally read many of the great fantasy novels from Qin Province.

Because there are so many excellent works from Qin Province, all brilliant, Mai Tong was captivated and couldn't stop reading.

Therefore, Mai Tong hadn't yet had time to get to Chu Kuang's novels.

However, many readers from Qin Province praised Chu Kuang a lot on the internet, making it seem as if Chu Kuang was really something special.

So Mai Tong was planning on reading some of Chu Kuang's work

Just then, Mai Tong came across the promotion for Chu Kuang's new book from Silver Blue Books.

What better way to understand an author than through their newest work?

That's why, after learning that Chu Kuang was releasing a new book, Mai Tong didn't buy any of Chu Kuang's past works, but looked forward to his new book.

Mai Tong wanted to see just how great this Chu Kuang from Qin Province really was.

But-

Before the book named "Ghost Blowing Lamp" was officially released, just seeing the theme of the novel mentioned in the promotion, Mai Tong was already starting to feel disappointed.

It's a horror and mystery book?!

Isn't Chu Kuang a famous author from Qin Province? Why would he choose to write such a niche theme?

Is this typical of bestselling authors in Qin Province?

To be honest, Mai Tong wasn't interested in this theme at all.

But maybe the Qin Province web users were just too effusive in their praise of Chu Kuang.

Even though Mai Tong had zero interest in the theme of Chu Kuang's new book, he still bought a copy of "Ghost Blowing Lamp" on its official release date, the first of June.

He wasn't interested in the book, but in the person.

The praise for Chu Kuang coming from Qin Province's readers online was too high, so much so that Mai Tong was curious about what makes this person so special.

However,

As soon as he flipped open "Ghost Blowing Lamp," Mai Tong's face fell.

"First person narrative?"

The great Chu Kuang's writing is just this mediocre?

Mai Tong has always believed that the first-person narrative is the most unconvincing method of storytelling.

He once tried to force himself to read a novel written in the first person, but he couldn't make it past a few chapters before giving up.

Since then, he hadn't read a single novel written in the first person.

The market response also proved that first-person writing was unpopular.

Ninety-nine percent of popular books are created in the third person, with a god-like perspective.

Barely looking at these points, Mai Tong already wanted to write off "Ghost Blowing Lamp."

However, he had spent money on this book; Mai Tong held back his instinctive resistance with a grimace and continued reading.

And the set up and plotline of the novel slowly unfolds before Mai Tong's eyes...

[Opening the mound, gold finding, shifting the mountain, unloading the ridge, these are the four major tomb-raiding schools.]

[Man lights the candle, the ghost blows the lamp.]

Before opening a coffin inside an ancient tomb, you must first light a candle in the southeast corner. If the candle goes out, you must quickly exit and cannot take a single thing. This is said to be a contract between the living and the dead set by the founder, adhered to for a thousand years, never to be broken.]

[At the crow of the rooster or the snuffing of the candle, refrain from touching the gold.]

[When searching for the dragon, observe the pattern of the mountains. Each turn is a challenge; A gate with a thousand locks hints at royalty living within.]

At first, Mai Tong skimmed through the book hastily, like swallowing dates whole.

Just like reading a textbook, his lack of interest made his reading very perfunctory.

But when the plot unfolded, like the part about paper dolls, and the rules and setup of tomb robbing got meticulously analyzed by the author, Mai Tong gradually got interested.

“This is quite intriguing.”

He quirked an eyebrow and continued to Read.

Time, ticked away little by little.

When the story got integrated into the main line, through the perspective of Hu Bayi, Mai Tong found his eyes widening a little, the speed of his reading slowing down.

“Zongzi (rice dumplings)...”

“Goldfinder’s charm...”

“Gifted one distributes gold and determines dwelling places...”

“Sixteen-Character Yin-Yang FengShui Secret Technique...”

From the moment the Ancient City of Jingjue got first mentioned in the story, the main plotline became clear. It was like the trunk of a large tree, slowly branching out into leaves and twigs.

It’s absolutely fascinating!

With the progression of the story, Mai Tong completely lost himself in it. He recalled those Qin Province readers’ comments on Chu Kuang on the internet, for the very first time, he felt a profound agreement in his heart...

Chu Kuang, so exceptional!

This novel, seemingly scary, actually covers historical geography, humanities, and even “The Book of Changes”. Only a knowledgeable author could produce such a work.

Because...

To write this type of book, one needs the imagination of a thriller author, the profundity of a historical writer, the logic of a detective writer, a psychologist's grasp on human nature, knowledge of a civil engineer, the sensitivity of a politician, the basics of a geographer, and most importantly, an endless source of superb inspirations!

A great reputation is never gained without merit.

Chu Kuang accomplished all this!

What is most magical is...

The tomb-robbing scenes depicted by Chu Kuang!

The underground world he describes is too ingenious and bizarre, the thrilling and terrifying atmosphere carries a intense mental stimulation, triggering Mai Tong's countless imaginations!

The characters are very vividly drawn.

Hu Bayi, who would talk about everything under the sun, but would become decisive at crucial moments.

Shirley Yang, who's agile and has extraordinary insights, upstanding and universal.

Wang Kai Xuan, the Fatty Wang, who loves money and has a fear of heights, yet demonstrates deep loyalty and extraordinary gun skills.

Faction, unique skills, jargon, sense of era, all present. It appears absurd, yet it's unusually reasonable. There's even analysis and explanation of materialism weaving through it, which keeps people from feeling that the author is concocting cock-and-bull stories...

This world, almost real!

Thrilling and exciting, horrifying and suspenseful, mystifying and weird, while carrying a bit of deductive, puzzle-solving vibe.

This is entirely different from the horror suspense that Mai Tong had expected!

Even putting this novel into the “horror suspense” category is somewhat of a mistake.

This is clearly a new genre.

This is...a grave-robbing novel that’s never been seen in the market before!

“I’m totally sold!”

Mai Tong’s mood, became exceedingly excited!

Previously, he disliked the first-person perspective, but as he read through the novel, he suddenly felt, there’s nothing wrong with first-person perspective!

Tomb robbing novels should use first-person perspective to boost immersion, making one feel as if they too have entered the story!

This kind of immersive reading experience, is something third-person perspective can’t provide.

In other words, if the writer is skillful enough, first-person perspective can also be beautifully done!

By now.

It was already dark.

Without realizing it, Mai Tong had spent the whole afternoon reading.

Only then did he come back to his senses and noticed that his neck was a little sore, and his eyes a little dry.

However, at this point, he was nearly finished with the first volume of the novel.

Mai Tong reads quite fast compared to average readers.

Meanwhile, around the same time.

The editors of Silver Blue Books were anxiously awaiting feedback online for “Ghost Blows Out the Light”, though there were some comments already, most of them were not directly related to the content, only personal support for Chu Kuang.

“There shouldn’t be any problems, right?”

“Although the style of the novel isn’t exactly youthful and imaginative, in this era, isn’t it all about whether the story is exciting or not...”

“I’m worried that readers won’t accept the first-person perspective.”

“Yes, everyone struggled with the first-person perspective, but everything requires an adjustment period, don’t you think after reading for a while, you start to forget about the first-person issue?”

“Yes, I became engrossed later on, I didn’t even mind the first-person perspective.”

As the editors carried on with their discussion, feedback on “Ghost Blows Out the Light” started to appear online.

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Even if they didn’t finish the first volume.

After reading just a part of this book, its exciting charm started to emerge, enough to allow all appraisals to be well-founded.

The editors who had been eagerly watching the official website finally began to see the readers' reviews.

The first review regarding the official content was from a reader named "Mai Tong":

"As a reader from Qi Continent, I've always heard of the great Chu Kuang. Today I had the fortune of reading 'Ghost Blows Out the Light', finished it in one breath, and was mind-blown. Since the merger of Qin and Qi, this is the best novel I've ever read from Qin Province!"

Shortly after.

As if a starting gunshot.

Once this book review appeared, more reviews regarding 'Ghost Blows Out the Light' followed like bamboo shoots after a spring rain, one after another.

Chapter 233: Shocked Reader

The subject matter is critical to a novel; so why do most novelists always opt for popular themes in their works?

Because readers prefer those themes, they seek out books within those categories—

Choosing a popular theme increases the chances of the novel being selected by readers!

Even some well-reputed bestselling authors don't dare to easily choose some niche themes for their creations.

This is because they are not sure whether their readers will continue to support them after they write a book with an unpopular theme.

Yet, there are always some authors who defy convention.

Chu Kuang is one such author.

He seems to be inherently averse to writing on popular subjects.

His debut novel in the field of the fantasy long-fiction genre was called “King of the Net,” revolving around competitive sports—

An incredibly niche theme!

His second novel, “Zhu Xian,” falls into a genre of fantasy novels that hardly anybody else was touching—

It’s an even more dubious proposition than competitive sports!

Despite this, these two unlikely-themed novels turned out to be remarkably successful, even setting trends in the market!

Therefore,

When Chu Kuang’s third novel was placed in the horror and mystery category, many industry insiders weren’t surprised at all.

It’s clear that

If it weren’t for the success of “Zhu Xian,” the industry would definitely have been pessimistic about Chu Kuang’s new book, and there would have been a hundred per cent chance somebody would have said:

“Chu Kuang’s new book will certainly flop!”

This is because horror and suspense are also niche genres in the realm of fantasy novels!

But Chu Kuang had already twice outperformed everyone's expectations, so when Silver Blue Books started promoting his new book, no one dared to question the quality of Chu Kuang's new book, although deep down they might have had some reservations.

Editors within the industry are not fools.

Whenever it comes to anything involving Chu Kuang, judging based on conventional wisdom usually ends up being humiliating. It would be better to keep quiet and wait for the results.

Book merchants are not fools either.

Even though "Ghost Blowing Lamp" seemed to be headed for a flop, all the major booksellers were still respectful, pre-ordering a decent quantity of stock from Silver Blue Books.

There was no choice really,

After all, "Ghost Blowing Lamp" was Chu Kuang's new novel?

With his first two novels as a base, the pen name Chu Kuang has come to largely overshadow the importance of genre and subject.

However...

This is just the opinion of some people in Qin Province.

A lot of readers in the Qi Province do not agree with it.

Like Mai Tong.

Mai Tong is a native of Qi Province.

After the merger of Qin and Qi Provinces, as a lover of fantasy novels, Mai Tong naturally read many of the great fantasy novels from Qin Province.

Because there are so many excellent works from Qin Province, all brilliant, Mai Tong was captivated and couldn't stop reading.

Therefore, Mai Tong hadn't yet had time to get to Chu Kuang's novels.

However, many readers from Qin Province praised Chu Kuang a lot on the internet, making it seem as if Chu Kuang was really something special.

So Mai Tong was planning on reading some of Chu Kuang's work

Just then, Mai Tong came across the promotion for Chu Kuang's new book from Silver Blue Books.

What better way to understand an author than through their newest work?

That's why, after learning that Chu Kuang was releasing a new book, Mai Tong didn't buy any of Chu Kuang's past works, but looked forward to his new book.

Mai Tong wanted to see just how great this Chu Kuang from Qin Province really was.

But-

Before the book named "Ghost Blowing Lamp" was officially released, just seeing the theme of the novel mentioned in the promotion, Mai Tong was already starting to feel disappointed.

It's a horror and mystery book?!

Isn't Chu Kuang a famous author from Qin Province? Why would he choose to write such a niche theme?

Is this typical of bestselling authors in Qin Province?

To be honest, Mai Tong wasn't interested in this theme at all.

But maybe the Qin Province web users were just too effusive in their praise of Chu Kuang.

Even though Mai Tong had zero interest in the theme of Chu Kuang's new book, he still bought a copy of "Ghost Blowing Lamp" on its official release date, the first of June.

He wasn't interested in the book, but in the person.

The praise for Chu Kuang coming from Qin Province's readers online was too high, so much so that Mai Tong was curious about what makes this person so special.

However,

As soon as he flipped open "Ghost Blowing Lamp," Mai Tong's face fell.

"First person narrative?"

The great Chu Kuang's writing is just this mediocre?

Mai Tong has always believed that the first-person narrative is the most unconvincing method of storytelling.

He once tried to force himself to read a novel written in the first person, but he couldn't make it past a few chapters before giving up.

Since then, he hadn't read a single novel written in the first person.

The market response also proved that first-person writing was unpopular.

Ninety-nine percent of popular books are created in the third person, with a god-like perspective.

Barely looking at these points, Mai Tong already wanted to write off "Ghost Blowing Lamp."

However, he had spent money on this book; Mai Tong held back his instinctive resistance with a grimace and continued reading.

And the set up and plotline of the novel slowly unfolds before Mai Tong's eyes...

[Opening the mound, gold finding, shifting the mountain, unloading the ridge, these are the four major tomb-raiding schools.]

[Man lights the candle, the ghost blows the lamp.]

Before opening a coffin inside an ancient tomb, you must first light a candle in the southeast corner. If the candle goes out, you must quickly exit and cannot take a single thing. This is said to be a contract between the living and the dead set by the founder, adhered to for a thousand years, never to be broken.]

[At the crow of the rooster or the snuffing of the candle, refrain from touching the gold.]

[When searching for the dragon, observe the pattern of the mountains. Each turn is a challenge; A gate with a thousand locks hints at royalty living within.]

At first, Mai Tong skimmed through the book hastily, like swallowing dates whole.

Just like reading a textbook, his lack of interest made his reading very perfunctory.

But when doing plot unfolded, like the part about paper dolls, and the rules and setup of tomb robbing got meticulously analyzed by the author, Mai Tong gradually got interested.

"This is quite intriguing."

He quirked an eyebrow and continued to Read.

Time, ticked away little by little.

When the story got integrated into the main line, through the perspective of Hu Bayi, Mai Tong found his eyes widening a little, the speed of his reading slowing down.

“Zongzi (rice dumplings)...”

“Goldfinder’s charm...”

“Gifted one distributes gold and determines dwelling places...”

“Sixteen-Character Yin-Yang FengShui Secret Technique...”

From the moment the Ancient City of Jingjue got first mentioned in the story, the main plotline became clear. It was like the trunk of a large tree, slowly branching out into leaves and twigs.

It’s absolutely fascinating!

With the progression of the story, Mai Tong completely lost himself in it. He recalled those Qin Province readers’ comments on Chu Kuang on the internet, for the very first time, he felt a profound agreement in his heart...

Chu Kuang, so exceptional!

This novel, seemingly scary, actually covers historical geography, humanities, and even “The Book of Changes”. Only a knowledgeable author could produce such a work.

Because...

To write this type of book, one needs the imagination of a thriller author, the profundity of a historical writer, the logic of a detective writer, a psychologist’s grasp on human nature, knowledge of a civil engineer, the sensitivity of a politician, the basics of a geographer, and most importantly, an endless source of superb inspirations!

A great reputation is never gained without merit.

Chu Kuang accomplished all this!

What is most magical is...

The tomb-robbing scenes depicted by Chu Kuang!

The underground world he describes is too ingenious and bizarre, the thrilling and terrifying atmosphere carries a intense mental stimulation, triggering Mai Tong's countless imaginations!

The characters are very vividly drawn.

Hu Bayi, who would talk about everything under the sun, but would become decisive at crucial moments.

Shirley Yang, who's agile and has extraordinary insights, upstanding and universal.

Wang Kai Xuan, the Fatty Wang, who loves money and has a fear of heights, yet demonstrates deep loyalty and extraordinary gun skills.

Faction, unique skills, jargon, sense of era, all present. It appears absurd, yet it's unusually reasonable. There's even analysis and explanation of materialism weaving through it, which keeps people from feeling that the author is concocting cock-and-bull stories...

This world, almost real!

Thrilling and exciting, horrifying and suspenseful, mystifying and weird, while carrying a bit of deductive, puzzle-solving vibe.

This is entirely different from the horror suspense that Mai Tong had expected!

Even putting this novel into the "horror suspense" category is somewhat of a mistake.

This is clearly a new genre.

This is...a grave-robbing novel that's never been seen in the market before!

"I'm totally sold!"

Mai Tong's mood, became exceedingly excited!

Previously, he disliked the first-person perspective, but as he read through the novel, he suddenly felt, there's nothing wrong with first-person perspective!

Tomb robbing novels should use first-person perspective to boost immersion, making one feel as if they too have entered the story!

This kind of immersive reading experience, is something third-person perspective can't provide.

In other words, if the writer is skillful enough, first-person perspective can also be beautifully done!

By now.

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Chapter 234: The Old Pioneer

As the direct editor of Chu Kuang, YangFeng is more dedicated than anyone to the reader feedback for "Ghost Blows Out the Light".

When it was about time, he would wait in front of the computer, constantly refreshing the reader's reviews:

"The new work is really amazing!"

"It scares me to the point that I dare not go to the toilet... I, as a man, in broad daylight, dare not go to the toilet!"

"Do you seem very proud?"

"Did Chu Kuang try to scare me to death and then inherit my mortgage?"

"Children do not speak of strange forces and chaotic gods, the snippets in this book actually justified themselves with materialism."

“Hey bro, wait a second, how about you explain to me the principle of Corpse Fragrance Demon Taro using materialism?”

YangFeng couldn't help but laugh.

How could a tomb-robbing novel be entirely explained by materialism?

The Corpse fragrance demon taro and so forth mentioned in the book, many of the bizarre plots, all have a bit of a mystical tint.

Fortunately, this is not what the readers are hung up on.

More readers think this book is horrifyingly exciting:

“The plot makes my scalp tingle and my heart kept pounding, is Chu Kuang, the old rascal, avenging us for blaming him for killing Biyao? However, the novel is really good, Chu Kuang, the old rascal, is still extraordinarily talented.”

“Oh my god, it's a horror novel, I'm so scared but want to continue reading, I can't stop!”

“The intriguing tomb-robbing is astonishingly brilliant. This novel should be placed in the adventure category, but no matter what category, it doesn't change the fact that it's niche. Thankfully, Chu Kuang made this tomb-robbing theme popular.”

“What did Chu Kuang, the old rascal, major in? How does he seem to know everything? The book involves too much knowledge about geography and feng shui”

“Chu Kuang can now construct ancient tomb castles with just words.”

Good reviews, all good reviews!

The horror atmosphere made many readers uncomfortable, the type of “Ghost Blows Out the Light” is nowhere near the same as Chu Kuang's previous two books, not to mention a completely different style.

But considering the quality of the text, Chu Kuang's new book, is as brilliant as ever!

Of course, it's also very scary.

The majority of readers have expressed that while the book is scary, it is also very exciting. So essentially, they are all scared, yet irresistibly curious about the upcoming plot, therefore they can only continue reading amidst fear and excitement.

It's not easy to experience stimulating emotions while reading a novel.

There are also many comments from readers from the Qi Province...

Most of these readers from the Qi Province are reading Chu Kuang's work for the first time.

But such a first-time experience is destined to be unforgettable, "Ghost Blows Out the Light" captivated many new readers to Chu Kuang's work.

Based on experience, YangFeng has already made a judgment.

This book, is a success!

At this moment, YangFeng is no longer nervous, he exhaled a long breath, "As expected from Chu Kuang..."

As a matter of fact,

Not only the official website,

There are also quite a few editors from other publishing companies in the industry who are paying attention to "Ghost Blows Out the Light".

However, unlike readers in Qi Province, the focus of these editors is on:

New genre!

After sports and martial arts novels...

Chu Kuang actually created another new genre of novels!

Isn't that a bit too terrifying?

Who ever heard of an author creating a new genre with each book they write?

Is Chu Kuang's creation framework leading everyone by an era?

If we look at it from a broader perspective, "Ghost Blowing the Lamp" can indeed be considered mystery, horror, adventure...

Anything goes, as they are all somewhat related.

But if we divide it more finely, considering the content, this novel is a unique tomb-robbing novel!

"Can this be considered a tomb-robbing genre?"

"I think it's close."

To be called a "xx genre", it must first become popular.

At present, "Ghost Blows Out the Light" is the only novel on the market that writes about the tomb-robbing theme, so this theme cannot yet support the word "genre".

But every editor is cunning...

Anyone can see that the ideas in "Ghost Blows Out the Light", can be imitated even if they can't be copied!

The main characters go on an adventure in the tomb, and in the process of turning danger into safety, the author shows the horror and mystery of the tomb.

What is it suitable for?

Of course it's to follow the trend!

Some quick-acting editors already have plans for authors who are good at adventure and horror mystery to follow the trend of "Ghost Blowing the Lamp".

Even without the reminder from the editors,

Authors have been eyeing Chu Kuang's new book for a long time.

Following Chu Kuang means there's meat to eat!

If you can't eat meat, at least you can drink soup!

Several people who have followed Chu Kuang's trend previously have tasted the sweetness.

So, when Chu Kuang creates a new genre again, many people want to see if they can also catch the trend.

As for this, the editors in the industry are even more sighing:

"Three long novels, written in whatever unpopular genre, and each book is so well-written, this kind of novelist is a monster!"

"Silver Blue Books is so lucky to have an old pioneer like Chu Kuang."

"I can't believe that tomb-robbing can also be written as a novel, it's fortunate for other authors that Chu Kuang is in the market, but if they release a book at the same time as Chu Kuang, it's another story."

“You’re talking about Mister Sea and Devil Child, right? They will most likely be overshadowed.”

“The key point is that he also used first-person, this is really impressive! Nowadays, not to mention readers, which of us editors doesn’t frown and reject manuscripts when we see first-person?”

“So there is only one Chu Kuang...”

“Chu Kuang is as willful as ever, but his capital is too strong.”

Chapter 235: The Old Pioneer

“With this book’s release, his status as a GOAT is secured.”

Some were puzzled.

How can you be so certain when the sales haven’t even been released yet?

A majority of editors could only offer a bitter smile.

Do we really need to wait for the sales?

No need to wait for the sales figure.

It’s just a talk based on experience.

Because since that night, all the various online forums have been filled with discussions about “Ghost Blows Out the Light .

Lieutenant Goldfinder, grave robbing....

There were even people who conducted specialist expose online to prove that the tomb raiding depicted by Chu Kuang was indeed real and very professional!

This fervent atmosphere for discussion already attests to the fact that the sales of “Ghost Blows Out the Light” will not be bad!

Yet, there were those who could not see through it all, or those who refused to believe.

In the end, they wanted to see substantial market results, to prove the popularity of “Ghost Blows Out the Light”.

What if it was all talk and no action?

Only sales numbers are truly solid.

So, how were the sales of “Ghost Blows Out the Light”?

Compared to contemporary writer Devil Child’s “The Sword Sage Descends the

Mountain”, how was it?

What about compared to Mister Sea’s “My Other World is a Primitive Society”?

These were the suspense hyped by some people in the industry before the arrival of June.

However, such suspense, a week after the release of “Ghost Blows Out the Light”, had completely lost any value for hype.

Because the sales of “Ghost Blows Out the Light”, started to surpass other two hot books of the same period from the third day!

In the first two days, the sales of “Ghost Blows Out the Light” were on par with the other two novels.

Slightly higher than Mister Sea’s, slightly lower than Devil Child’s.

Devil Child was leading for a while.

The effect of signed books is indeed very good.

The simple reason for suddenly surpassing them on the third day was...

Chu Kuang's "Ghost Blows Out the Light" had gathered such tremendous word-of-mouth reviews that it exploded in popularity!

And when the week was up, the sales of "Ghost Blows Out the Light" had completely crushed the two aforementioned books.

With the explosion in popularity of the novel, readers who were initially observing finally had a clear target to buy.

Crash!

In bookstores, the number of readers purchasing "Ghost Blows Out the Light" jumped astronomically, all generously spending on Chu Kuang.

The gap widened to the point it seemed insurmountable.

Chu Kuang's "Ghost Blows Out the Light" deservedly became the top hit of

June!

Also on this day, many bookstores naturally started promoting "Ghost Blows

Out the Light" as their main product!

Even Devil Child had to step aside, not to mention Mister Sea.

Shortly thereafter,

Orders for Silver Blue Books came pouring in!

The publisher started to reprint “Ghost Blows Out the Light”.

Obviously,

This one week was enough for many people to finish the book.

As more and more people finished the book, discussions about it naturally started to heat up.

Even on the forum and blogs, many renowned authors couldn’t help but review “Ghost Blows Out the Light” after finishing it.

Among them was a notable one, the famous best-selling author from the Qin

Province, the 38-year-old Mr. Antarctica:

“When I first saw the title, I thought this was a supernatural ghost story. But as I read on, I was utterly surprised. The so-called ‘Ghost Blows Out the Light’ is a rule of tomb raiders. They would place a candle in the southeast corner of the burial chamber and leave one or two burial items behind when taking others. If the candle goes out, they must return all the stolen treasures... puzzling, isn’t it? But it can be legitimately explained. The extinguishing of the candle indicates a lack of oxygen. This detail shows the depth in Chu Kuang’s new book.”

Moreover,

Mercury, an author whose sales are not too far behind Mr. Antarctica, also expressed his opinion:

“Chu Kuang may not be the highest-selling author in the field of long fantasy, but he is certainly the most stunningly gifted! Tomb raiding has been prevalent two thousand years ago. With a millennium of development, continuous innovation in techniques has formed a hidden underground cultural undercurrent. I’m very interested in this industry, but I never thought someone would turn it into a novel, and write it so brilliantly.”

Mr. Antarctica and Mercury, are considered as the top long fantasy authors in Qin Province, mainly because their work has high sales.

Both were highly regarded as the first generation of Supreme Gods.

Their comments allowed “Candle in the Tomb” to gain more widespread recognition.

Apart from top writers in the same genre.

The “Literature and Art Gazette”, which is semi-official media, actually published an article about this novel:

“Chu Kuang’s new book “Candle in the Tomb” has become popular due to its unique theme. However, its range is very vague. There are opinions in terms of thrill, supernatural, suspense, horror, etc. But on second thought, it might be more representative to call it tomb-robbing genre. The rules of the tombrobbing industry are written in detail in the book, even with different categories, but the strange things in the book are not confined to the tomb itself. The queen of the Jin dynasty made a coffin with millennia-old sacred wood and planted Corpse Fragrance Demon Taro on it. Anyone who gets close will hallucinate and go crazy until they die. Many people think it’s fantasy, but the prototype of this flower is the titan monster taro flower, which is planted in the botanical garden in Yan continent. Chu Kuang’s seemingly true and false writing technique, which draws on Blue Star’s ancient history, legends, and modern wonders, should also become popular soon. His purpose of writing is not to become a historical archeological textbook, but to pursue a kind of wonderful imagination that exists in the real world...”

This report surprised many people.

Firstly, “Literature and Art Gazette” confirmed the status of the “tombrobbing flow” pioneered by Chu Kuang’s new book.

The semi-official newspaper certified Chu Kuang as a pioneer.

Secondly, the content of “Candle in the Tomb” seems to be really solid!

Everyone thought Corpse Fragrance Demon Taro was a complete nonsense, a product of the author’s imagination, but “Literature and Art Gazette” actually found a prototype?

Although these descriptions and situations are not completely congruous, they can explain some strange phenomena in the novel.

And there's the explanation of Antarctica.

Human lights the candle and ghosts blow it out, the light goes out when the cock crows, and gold is not touched...

This seemingly nonsensical setting is actually due to the lack of oxygen?

The deeper their understanding, the less simple "Candle in the Tomb" appears to them. All settings make sense and can be tracked, not to mention the geographical knowledge categorized by Feng Shui in the book!

Some people think that this report by "Literature and Art Gazette" aims to establish Chu Kuang's status in the industry.

The Literature and Art Association clearly sent a message through its newspaper:

Chu Kuang will definitely be one of the candidates for the Fantasy domain's GOAT!

While all other candidates are yet to be determined, Chu Kuang secured the first sure spot with "Candle in the Tomb".

In fact.

With Chu Kuang's new book sparking a sales frenzy.

If he doesn't get the GOAT spot, people may start questioning the fairness of the selection.

Therefore, the report of the Literature and Art Association was very smart and timely.

They set Chu Kuang as the typical.

There is no suspense about this archetype.

One look at the new book performance in June will reveal everything.

The new work of Mister Sea during the same period, an adventure in another world, is mediocre in sales volume.

The “Sword Sage Descends the Mountain” by Devil Child, relying on the freshness of the mythical martial arts genre, plus his own writing capabilities as a guarantee of the quality of the novel plot, the sales volume is quite pleasing.

Pity, it’s still being crushed by “Candle in the Tomb”.

The fact that “Literature and Arts Gazette” under the Literature and Art Association has not given an evaluation of Devil Child’s new book already explains a lot.

Whether it’s the outside world or the official, everyone greatly recognizes Chu Kuang’s new work.

It’s worth mentioning that...

The online voices basically think that although Devil Child’s works are good, this novel not only can’t match “Candle in the Tomb”.

But also can’t match his previous work “Zhu Xian” that was following the trend.

In some sense, Devil Child has been killed two times by Chu Kuang.

Somehow, there is a sentence floating in people’s hearts again:

“Those who learn from me, live. Those who imitate me, die.

With each genre Chu Kuang creates, this saying becomes more and more apt.

Devil Child learned well.

He grasped the essence of “Zhu Xian”, so the sales volume of his trendfollowing new book is quite good.

But success or failure, it’s all because of Chu Kuang.

When everyone is learning from Chu Kuang, who can surpass him?

This question is almost unsolvable.

At least the Devil Child, who is best at following trends, has proven with his strength that he cannot surpass Chu Kuang by following trends.

All of this is not too surprising to Lin Yuan, after all, this is Candle in the Tomb plus.

The ancestor of the Tomb Robbing stream on the Earth, a phenomenal piece that sparked countless trends, should have this kind of influence.

As for anything surprising, it would probably be the top-rated comment below Xian Yu’s tribe’s move that confused Lin Yuan:

“Your Chu Kuang’s new book is really good to read!”

Lin Yuan started to doubt if he had fallen off the horse.

How did this fan know that Chu Kuang... actually belonged to my home?

Chapter 236: Chu Kuang is a Scumbag

Let’s put aside the topic of fans and their fawning online communities for a bit.

Lin Yuan is more concerned about the progress of his missions.

Speaking of missions...

Before Lin Yuan realized it, he had accumulated four system missions!

Each mission had its own level of difficulty.

Mission one: [Reach a reputation of over a million each in both Literature and Music]

Mission two: [Receive three disciples under the pseudonym Xian Yu and successfully finish their training]

Mission three: [Increase drawing reputation to over 300,000 within a year]

Mission four: [Break 100 million fans for Chu Kuang's Tribe]

The first mission was the toughest and most crucial but as it was a long-term mission, Lin Yuan would check the progress every now and again.

As long as he steadily published books and songs, he considered this mission ongoing.

The second mission had no time limit yet, but he intended to work on it soon.

Xue Liang was his only successful disciple so far, meaning progress was only one third completed.

The third mission was drawing-related, one of the tasks that Lin Yuan was currently working on, and making the "King of the Net" comic was his method of completing this task.

As for the fourth mission, to break 100 million fans for Chu Kuang's Tribe...

The progress bar for this mission was steadily increasing following the release of "Tales Behind the Tomb".

Prior to the release of “Tales Behind the Tomb”, Chu Kuang’s Tribe followers were just slightly over 30 million.

In the days after the release, Chu Kuang’s Tribe followers predictably skyrocketed!

32 million...

35 million...

37 million...

38 million...

It seemed like it was just an inch away from 40 million, but the growth rate of Chu Kuang’s followers began to slow down.

That was understandable.

Although “Tales Behind the Tomb” was incredibly popular, it was understandable considering how recently the book was released, with only the first volume out so far.

Once the subsequent volumes were released, the number of followers was bound to increase significantly.

But...

Lin Yuan was still feeling antsy.

Especially after refreshing the webpage multiple times and still not seeing Chu Kuang’s followers breach the 40-million mark...

His obsessive-compulsive disorder was acting up.

Lin Yuan had a mild case of OCD.

Maybe everyone has a mild case of OCD.

Either way, all Lin Yuan wanted to see that day was Chu Kuang's followers surpassing the 40 million mark, not achieving this target was making him feel antsy.

What to do about it?

Time for some creative thinking.

After thinking for about ten seconds, an idea formed in Lin Yuan's mind.

A straightforward and brutal method.

That was to post a status under Xian Yu's account: "We're just a little short of breaking 40 million followers. Could everyone please help to follow @Chu Kuang's Tribe account?"

Yes.

What Lin Yuan thought of was to rally Xian Yu's followers to become followers of Chu Kuang.

As for Shadow...

The Shadow account only had a few million followers, so rallying them likely wouldn't make much of a difference.

Plus, Shadow's comic was an adaptation of Chu Kuang's "King of the Net".

So, there was already a significant overlap between Shadow's followers and Chu Kuang's followers, making rallying these followers not particularly productive.

What Lin Yuan didn't expect was...

This status seemed to strike a chord with the fans, and the comments section blew up:

“Getting this direct now?”

“Can I take it as official confirmation?”

“Gay for each other!”

“Bromance goals, sharing one quilt.”

“Alright, followed, and notifications turned on.”

“Wow! You must be really close to let your followers follow someone else.”

“Chu Kuang already has more followers than you. Instead of trying to increase your own followers, why are you working on increasing his?”

“I declare that Shadow has lost this round.”

“Shadow: Is it because I have fewer followers than you?”

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The comments were diverse, but the result was good. On the same day Xian Yu posted the status, Chu Kuang’s followers increased again, successfully surpassing the 40 million mark and settling around 41 million.

The conversion rate isn’t bad at all.

In fact.

On Chu Kuang’s Weibo, many followers started to:

“Just accept Xian Yu.”

“He treats you so well.”

“It’s the first time I’ve seen someone increase their friend’s followers in such a simple and direct way.”

“Chu Kuang, Xian Yu, these names rhyme quite well. They’ve got that chemistry.”

“Real bromance buddies.”

“What’s your relationship with him behind the scenes?”

“A big shot in the novel world, a big shot in the music composition world. It’s a match made in heaven.”

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Too bad.

Despite Xian Yu helping Chu Kuang to increase followers, Chu Kuang did not respond. He remained as aloof as ever.

Only Lin Yuan would silently thank himself in his heart.

Anyway, seeing Chu Kuang’s followers surpass 40 million gave Lin Yuan an extreme sense of satisfaction.

However...

This incident also made Lin Yuan more worried that he might slip up someday.

If you always walk by the river, how can you not get your shoes wet?

What if someday he accidentally logs into the wrong account and posts a status on Shadow's account saying, "Please support my new song..."?

Wouldn't that be awkward?

With this concern in mind, Lin Yuan called Luo Wei over.

"You mean to say that I should manage the Shadow Tribe account?" Luo Wei looked at Lin Yuan in astonishment, not understanding why he wanted to do this.

"Yes."

That was Lin Yuan's idea, to entrust the management of Shadow's account so as to avoid any problems.

"It's not impossible."

Luo Wei's eyes flicked towards Lin Yuan, looking mysterious. Lowering her voice, she said, "Then you can tell me, what's your relationship with Chu Kuang?"

Lin Yuan felt a little bit awkward: "It's pretty good."

Luo Wei stared at Lin Yuan: "Just pretty good? Rest assured, feel free to say anything, I'll keep it a secret. I'm known by everyone for keeping my mouth shut!"

Did Luo Wei sense something?

Lin Yuan felt uneasy and suddenly became coy, "Probably very good."

His relationship with himself, of course, was really close. But when asked by others and without the ability to directly explain, Lin Yuan would naturally become coy.

There seemed to be a sense of inexplicable shame.

After all, his three pseudonyms had their own distinct online personalities.

What Lin Yuan didn't know was that his reaction, in Luo Wei's eyes, had a completely different interpretation.

Luo Wei let out a deep "Oh," "Then can you tell me, what's the relationship between Chu Kuang and Xian Yu?"

Lin Yuan didn't hesitate to say: "It's pretty good too."

"Too?"

Luo Wei frowned, suddenly seeming dissatisfied. "I didn't realize that Chu Kuang was such a jerk..."

Lin Yuan didn't understand Luo Wei's sudden mood change: "What?"

"Nothing."

Luo Wei looked at Lin Yuan earnestly, even a little pity and outrage in her eyes, "I understand, I empathize with you! I will help you!"

What do you understand?

Why empathize with me?

Lin Yuan always felt that there was something off about Luo Wei.

However, since she agreed to manage Shadow's account, Lin Yuan had no worries left.

There was no one more suitable to handle the "Shadow" account than Luo Wei.

Since Luo Wei had contributed at least one third of the effort toward the comic drawn by Shadow, she certainly knew how to manage the account.

Chapter 237: Post-Production of the Movie Completed

Not only was Chu Kuang's alias account rising in popularity among the tribe, but Lin Yuan's literary fame was also growing, currently reaching four hundred thousand. Literature had now become Lin Yuan's highest category in prestige value...

The latecomers surpassed!

Previously, Lin Yuan had always been leading in music prestige, mainly because Xian Yu was Lin Yuan's earliest alias, and his priority has always been music. However, the sustained popularity of novels could not be subdued.

Think about it.

Releasing a song might only be popular for a short time, but publishing a long fantasy novel could be serialized for half a year to a year or even longer!

This kind of popularity could persist until after the novel is fully published, which is why Chu Kuang's tribe account has the most fans.

At this time.

Luo Wei, who was officially managing the Shadow account, saw the comments in the backend.

She excitedly said to Lin Yuan: "Did you see that a company wants to turn 'King of the Net' into an animation?"

"I saw."

Lin Yuan said: "But I don't know how strong this company is."

“This company?”

Luo Wei was taken aback, then laughed: “It seems you didn’t read the backend information, there are already four production companies interested in buying the anime rights to our ‘King of the Net’, including the well-known Divine Wings Tech in the industry!”

“Divine Wings Tech?”

Lin Yuan was not very familiar with these.

Luo Wei explained: “Divine Wings is considered a top-notch animation production company in Qin Qi. The popular new anime ‘Alchemist’ at the beginning of the year was produced by their company. You may not be very familiar with it because you don’t follow anime shows, but I think if it is this company, it’s worth considering. Why don’t you contact Chu Kuang to hear his opinion?”

Luo Wei is an art student, basically a bit of a house-girl.

House-girls love anime, games, and things with a second-dimension attribute, so she also has a decent understanding of animation production companies.

“Can we collaborate?”

“Absolutely.”

Upon seeing the worried look on Lin Yuan’s face, Luo Wei chuckled and added: “You might want to look at the classic animations produced by this company, they are all of good quality, let me recommend a few for you. Apart from the new shows this year, earlier works such as the ‘Magical Girl’ series are also very classic...”

“I’ll take a look later.”

Lin Yuan needed to do some investigating.

Luo Wei nodded: “Then who holds the rights... you or Chu Kuang?”

Lin Yuan casually replied: “No difference.”

Luo Wei was surprised, then let out a peculiar smile.

Lin Yuan found Luo Wei’s smile strange, anyway.

He interrupted Luo Wei’s musing: “Go paint.”

“Okay.”

Luo Wei was full of enthusiasm.

Little did Lin Yuan know, Luo Wei’s passion was fueled by a small goal in her heart:

She hoped to make Shadow’s reputation surpass Xian Yu’s!

As for the reason...

Of course, it’s to make Chu Kuang realize the value of Shadow!

Although this is difficult, with the help of anime adaptations and the serialization of ‘King of the Net’, it’s not entirely impossible.

Since Lin Yuan and Luo Wei have been working together, the serialization of ‘King of the Net’ has been going at a fast pace.

Even the fans agreed that Shadow’s updates were the most conscientious bunch among the comic artists.

This is because Lin Yuan and Luo Wei truly formed a two-person team for the task...

The creation of comics is different from novels.

It's challenging for two people to write a novel together, but it's doable for comics.

All Lin Yuan needed to do was to provide the storyboard, and the rest would be taken care of by Lin Yuan and Luo Wei together.

After all, Lin Yuan and Luo Wei's drawing styles are the same, which is a basic requisite for top-tier fan artists.

Thanks to this collaboration, the 'King of the Net' has been serialized for quite a bit now.

In the following days, the sales volume of 'Ghost Blowing Lamp' remained very satisfactory.

Many readers who had finished the first volume were already looking forward to the second volume!

This was because of the suspense ending of 'Ghost Blowing Lamp'.

The conclusion of the first volume was that Hu Bayi contracted a strange disease and his body had strange red spots.

It was rumored to be a curse that could be deadly.

In order to solve this curse, Hu Bayi and his companions needed to find the legendary Phoenix Dust Pearl...

Clearly, the search for the Phoenix Dust Pearl would be the plot of the second volume.

They still needed to rob graves.

This was the absolute mainline of 'Ghost Blowing Lamp'.

After reading the first volume, readers were already somewhat addicted. However, there were a few suspense elements left in the first volume, so the readers were naturally very excited about the second volume and wanted to see the continuation of the story.

At this point, no one was cursing Chu Kuang as the old rascal for cutting chapters anymore.

Because everyone clearly saw that the first volume of ‘Ghost Blowing Lamp’ was a complete story!

The part about the Ancient City of Jingjue was well constructed.

About three hundred and forty thousand words of content had left the readers ecstatic.

Naturally, Lin Yuan also began the second volume of ‘Ghost Blowing Lamp’.

Under normal circumstances, there was no way Lin Yuan had this much energy.

Having to draw comics and write novels...

Luckily, Lin Yuan now had energy potions, after using them, Lin Yuan felt limitless vitality.

As for the price of the energy potion...

Although it was expensive, Lin Yuan is also doing all of this to make money.

Investment would lead to returns.

Then in mid-June, when Lin Yuan was busy, director Yi Chenggong suddenly contacted Lin Yuan and brought him good news:

The post-production of the movie ‘Flirting Scholar’ was completed!

Upon hearing this, Lin Yuan immediately felt upbeat and rushed to the company the next day to meet Yi Chenggong and review the finished product.

Well, what can you do...

Although the actors had changed, 'Flirting Scholar' still had that familiar flavor.

Anyway, from Lin Yuan's perspective, this movie was reasonably faithful to the original, and the comedic points were basically all represented.

However, Lin Yuan's viewing process did not have too many emotional fluctuations.

He was too familiar with the script.

Executive Yi Chenggong, on the other hand, as the film director who was also familiar with the script, watched with great delight and laughed throughout the entire film.

After the film.

Yi Chenggong calmed his emotions before turning back to Lin Yuan and said: "The film has been submitted for review, I don't think there should be any problems with the content, next we need to consider the premiere. Would Mr. Lin go and discuss it with the film department?"

"Sure."

Lin Yuan nodded.

He had read countless film books and understood the market, so he knew that to premiere a film, one had to obtain the permission of the theatre chain first. It would be difficult for Lin Yuan to do this alone, it required Blue Star's intervention.

This wasn't difficult.

Since Blue Star agreed to invest in the production of 'Flirting Scholar', it would definitely not ignore the movie's screenings. They were certainly going to help secure it. Lin Yuan himself did not have Blue Star's widespread connection with major theatres.

What belonged to the theatre belonged to the theatre.

What belonged to the company belonged to the company.

For Blue Star's films to premiere, it must negotiate with the theatres. It might need to schedule a viewing for theatres to evaluate the film's quality, which is what the theatres' scheduling consideration is based on, certainly Blue Star's own weight would be also considered.

Imagine...

If Lin Yuan were to fight alone without the backing of a large company, how difficult would it be to discuss the film scheduling issue with the theatre based on just one film with an investment of less than ten million?

It would be as difficult as ascending to the heavens!

Let's not even talk about whether they would favor 'Flirting Scholar', even if they genuinely love this film, the theatre would surely make excessive demands for outright purchase or similar plans. An insignificant individual just wouldn't be able to negotiate on equal terms in front of the theatre.

Thinking of this.

Lin Yuan called 01' Zhou, and securing the theatre would mostly rely on 01' Zhou's help.

Lin Yuan remembers that 01' Zhou was highly appreciative of the 'Flirting Scholar' script!

Chapter 238: Online Blockbuster Movie

"Preparing for the premiere...?"

Everyone is at the company. After receiving Lin Yuan's call, they all met in the film department.

In the face of an expectant Lin Yuan, 01' Zhou felt a headache coming on. He contemplated his words while saying, "Your movie can most certainly be premiered..."

"But?"

Lin Yuan felt like there must be some kind of catch.

Just as Lin Yuan anticipated.

or Zhou, as predicted, coughed and said, “But our company is currently busy preparing for the premiere of ‘Thunderstorm’, and July is the summer season, the competition in the film market is fierce...”

Lin Yuan frowned.

He, of course, knew about the ‘Thunderstorm’ project.

It was the company’s first film project, so it was given high priority.

Unlike Earth.

The film industry on Blue Star was undoubtedly more developed. The various special effects technologies could easily overpower Hollywood on Earth.

This meant a drastic increase in the speed of such film productions.

With such superior film technology support, the completion speed of movies like ‘Thunderstorm’ may not be much slower than some small budget movies. On Earth, this would be unimaginable, but on Blue Star, it wasn’t an issue.

“So here’s the thing.”

01’ Zhou sighed, “Your film, ‘Flirting Scholar’, won’t get many screenings. The market is full of blockbusters at the same time. Even our previous agreement stated that we didn’t have a surplus budget to promote your movie.”

“What if I adjust the schedule?”

Lin Yuan, of course, understood the importance of scheduling.

01' Zhou was taken aback, not expecting Lin Yuan to consider the screening schedule.

Summer season was a mere excuse from 01' Zhou.

He really couldn't secure many screenings for 'Flirting Scholar'.

For a film with an investment of less than ten million, none of its actors could carry the box office.

The director is inexperienced, and the scriptwriter is a songwriter. Moreover, the plot is quite unpredictable...

You should know.

Screening decisions are not only based on the film quality, but also the effort put in by the production company.

Take 'Thunderstorm' for example.

As a film heavily promoted by Starlight, to secure high initial screenings, 01' Zhou and the film department leaders had to offer certain benefits to the heads of theaters.

Do they expect him to offer benefits for 'Flirting Scholar'?

How much would that cost?

And it wouldn't be an issue if offerings were useful.

The problem is that even with more screenings, 'Flirting Scholar' wouldn't benefit much.

The ultimate decision to purchase is neither up to the theaters nor the entertainment companies, but the general public!

01' Zhou complains, "Adjusting the schedule can be done, but no matter how you adjust, securing screenings for your movie will be difficult. After all, theater companies also make decisions based on benefits. Your film lacks stars, known directors, and investment..."

No large investment.

No famous directors.

No famous actors.

These films are referred to as 'three-absence films'.

While there have been instances where such movies have been successful, they are few and far between. Hence, theater companies will be unwilling to invest much in them.

It's not that 01' Zhou deliberately makes excuses.

Even if 01' Zhou wanted to help, he couldn't.

He could only allocate a few off-peak slots for 'Flirting Scholar' as a consolation. After all, the film had been made, so it couldn't just not be screened, right?

"Then let's not screen it."

After some thought, Lin Yuan suddenly suggested.

01' Zhou's expression changed.

Has this kid... gotten angry?

He carefully coaxed Lin Yuan, "The movie has already been made. Why not screen it? Let's just see how it performs. If the movie does well, word-of-mouth could spread, and the theaters might increase screenings..."

Lin Yuan shook his head.

What 01' Zhou said was the norm.

But Lin Yuan knew that with a lack of screenings and the available ones being scheduled during off-peak times, it was highly likely that the movie would fail.

There are quite a number of movies that attempt to make a comeback.

But there were awfully few that actually succeeded.

Lin Yuan did not plan to pin his hopes on such an elusive comeback.

Under normal circumstances, there might be a chance for a movie to make a comeback, after all, “Flirting Scholar” is quite a successful comedy in Zhou’s catalog.

But now...

The hope is very slim.

With the merger of Qin Qi, all major companies in the film market are battling for dominance. There are so many people eyeing the summer season, how could one possibly stand a chance?

No scheduled screenings...

There are several films with investments of hundreds of millions released at the same time, isn't there a single one that resonates with the audience? Why should your low-budget film be the one to stand out?

The foundation of a comeback is having no strong competitors in the same period, or at least favorable scheduling in advance.

Take the classic Earth come-back case of “Crazy Stone” as an example.

Everyone talks about how this movie's comeback had textbook significance, but they overlooked an important factor:

At the time this movie was released, there was not a single competitor that could put up a fight against it!

Keep in mind, the audience also knows their calculations.

If they spend the same amount of money, should they go watch a blockbuster with impressive special effects, enjoying a visual feast, or pay for a low-budget film?

The answer is quite clear.

So, Lin Yuan dared not risk betting on the lack of blockbusters during July's summer season.

Especially after hearing 01' Zhou's analysis, Lin Yuan more clearly understood how perilous this summer season could be.

He had completely overlooked this before.

This is also due to Lin Yuan's book knowledge, but without certain practical experience.

Luckily, after 01' Zhou mentioned the issue of screenings, Lin Yuan came to his senses.

That was a close call.

Competing with those big investors for box office revenues during the summer season was a foolish decision on his part.

He thought for a moment, and had a new plan, proposed his idea to 01' Zhou:

"We can skip the theater and go direct to streaming."

“Go direct to streaming...”

Only then did 01' Zhou understood Lin Yuan's meaning, his expression showing some surprise, “You mean, online cinema?”

By online cinema, he meant online movies.

Online movies don't need to go to the theater, the review standard is also lower, and many low budget films can profit from being online.

Of course, for major film companies, profiting from online cinema is quite modest.

If the operation of a theater movie is good, the income will be in the hundreds of millions...

Then online cinema can only make tens of millions at best.

Chou thought Lin Yuan was just over-confident like many fresh-out-of-school newcomers, believing his film to be the best.

But to his surprise, Lin Yuan was willing to take a step back and choose online cinema as the channel for “Flirting Scholar” to premiere.

Carefully considering, it was not a bad choice!

However, before 01' Zhou could agree, Lin Yuan immediately added, “Since we re not going to the theaters, the company can't help me out much on this one.”

01' Zhou gave an embarrassed smile.

The threshold for online cinema is very low, even without the company's intervention, “Flirting Scholar” can still be premiered.

As far as theater movies are concerned, a film with an investment of less than ten million has almost no presence.

But in the context of online cinema, the investment in “Flirting Scholar”, although not considered huge, is not seen as small either.

“So...”

Lin Yuan revealed his secondary motive for choosing online cinema, “I hope the company will sell me ‘Flirting Scholar’. I’m willing to personally pay ten million to buy the rights to the film.”

01’ Zhou: “???”

The company invested time, manpower, and finances to make your movie, and after it’s finished, you’re telling me you’re going to buy it for personal use?

It was the first time 01’ Zhou had seen someone so brazenly take advantage of a company.

The company invested nine million in the production of “Flirting Scholar”. Lin Yuan’s ten million offer might seem like a small profit for the company. But considering the costs of manpower, material resources, and time, the company isn’t making any profit at all.

That’s because the production team was hired by the company, and they were charging the company’s internal prices.

If Lin Yuan wanted to shoot this movie himself earlier on, the same quality couldn’t be achieved for less than fifteen million.

But then again...

The company initially planned to write off this investment, but was unexpectedly willing to take the film off their hands and foot the bill himself... In a roundabout way, the company did make a small profit...

So, did the company benefit or lose out?

It probably depends on how the company sees it. Anyway, after a few seconds of confusion, 01' Zhou felt a bit bemused.

“I agree.”

In the end, 01' Zhou made the call to agree.

As one of the top executives in the company, he does have the power to decide on projects under ten million.

Chapter 239: Mr. Lin is a Good Person

Lin Yuan revealed a standard smile. He initially wanted to purchase the rights for “Flirting Scholar” at the original price. Considering the company had also invested so much, he finally paid to million —

A1 million profit for the company.

It was not out of generosity that Lind Yuan did this, but he couldn't let the company work for him for free. Isn't it objectionable for someone to sell a product they've worked hard on for months, without considering any profit margin?

He felt justified.

Actually, his sudden decision to broadcast “Flirting Scholar” online was not just due to a lack of confidence in the film's summer box office comeback. Lin Yuan had a deeper purpose—

He wanted notoriety!

Lin Yuan had realized the reasons why “Flirting Scholar” couldn't secure screenings—it was being treated as a three-nothing film. If the first movie is doomed to be undervalued, then why stubbornly focus on holding it to cinemas?

What if it flops?

Lin Yuan still wanted to continue making movies with the company's investment. If his first movie turns out to be a failure, on what grounds can he encourage the company to continue investing in him? This isn't logical.

So, going with an online movie premiere is a wise choice.

The bar for online movies is quite low.

Because the threshold for online movies is sufficiently low, "Flirting Scholar" can garner more attention. If the movie were to be screened in theaters, everyone would be focused on the big shots — who would buy a ticket for a three-nothing movie?

So...

Just use "Flirting Scholar" to gain fame, then take on theaters when the opportunity arises. If this movie becomes successful online, at least Lin Yuan will have some credentials, and people will at least acknowledge him as a screenwriter.

Not just Lin Yuan.

If this movie proves successful, the initial crew and actors will no longer be nameless people behind the scenes. If and when Lin Yuan decides to film a new movie, the company would definitely support him.

It's not the company's fault.

Nor can it be blamed on the theaters.

They are just subject to reality.

However, when Yi Chenggong found out that "Flirting Scholar" would not be screened in theaters, he was inevitably disappointed.

Every director has a dream of having their film on the big screen.

The last movie Yi Chenggong made was a low-budget independent film and had no opportunity to hit theaters.

This time, he thought that “Flirting Scholar” would make it to the big screens because of Mr. Lin’s backing. Yet, in the end, the plans fell through.

“Are you familiar with the ways online movie collaborations work?”

Lin Yuan asked Yi Chenggong – the latter had had experiences with online collaborations in his previous film.

Yi Chenggong spoke, “I’m slightly aware. There are mainly two types: one is a buyout, and the other is revenue sharing...”

“We choose revenue sharing,” Lin Yuan said without hesitation.

While Lin Yuan lacked confidence in the cinematic prospects for “Flirting Scholar,” he was quite optimistic about online streaming.

Yi Chenggong nodded his head, “Most production companies choose buyouts. But revenue sharing has its advantages too. As for the specifics, Mr. Lin, I suggest you get somebody else to handle this, perhaps Mr. Shen. He should have the necessary connections.”

Shen Qing was the producer of “Flirting Scholar.”

Lin Yuan called Shen Qing “Mr. Shen,” so Yi Chenggong followed suit.

“Understood.”

Lin Yuan immediately contacted Shen Qing.

Strictly speaking, this deal no longer had anything to do with Shen Qing, as “Flirting Scholar” now entirely belonged to Lin Yuan. Still, Lin Yuan felt that Shen Qing would assist in liaising with the video streaming websites.

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When Shen Qing heard that Lin Yuan had purchased “Flirting Scholar” in a personal capacity, his feelings were somewhat mixed.

Everyone had expected that the company would inevitably lose money by deciding to film this movie.

Yet, with Lin Yuan taking it upon himself to pay for it, the movie had strangely balanced out to neither make a loss nor gain?

In the end, Lin Yuan was the one who lost out.

At least from the company’s perspective, they neither lost nor gained anything.

Because strictly speaking, the minimal loss they made was not worth mentioning.

After all, everyone knew from the beginning that this film was being produced to accompany Mr. Lin, the Crown Prince, in his studies.

If Mr. Lin had a good time, then any loss incurred would be worth it.

The Crown Prince just had a throw away kind of game.

But Mr. Lin did not use the company’s money to play around...

In the end, he took his own money and threw it away.

At this moment, Shen Qing was somewhat admiring of Lin Yuan.

The company bore the cost of Lin Yuan’s capriciousness, yet Lin Yuan ended up footing the bill for the company’s indulgence.

It’s clear that Lin Yuan sticks by his principles!

So, when Lin Yuan called and asked Shen Qing to help contact suitable videohosting websites to broadcast “Flirting Scholar,” Shen Qing agreed.

Mr. Lin is a good man!

Although he isn’t cut out to be a screenwriter, as a producer, he should do his utmost to help Mr. Lin recoup the investment.

An investment of 10 million...

There’s no way to recoup it all, but if a little of it, like one or two million, could be recovered, that should be doable, right?

Shen Qing has seen many online movies.

Some of those he thought were garbage somehow managed to attract viewers, proving the bar for these is indeed quite low.

Although “Flirting Scholar” isn’t exactly decent, Shen Qing had a great time filming it.

He thinks that some of the comedic parts, though odd, have an inexpressible charm that makes it impossible not to laugh along with them. That’s much better than those mediocre ones.

With this in mind...

Shen Qing made a call to a friend who worked in a video hosting website to discuss streaming “Flirting Scholar.”

Meanwhile...

Over at the company’s Film Department...

Everyone also knew about Xian Yu's personal purchase of "Flirting Scholar." For a moment, they shared Shen Qing's mixed feelings.

"So he did pick up the tab himself in the end?"

"It's like someone exclaimed for others to treat him, so the others reluctantly ordered a tableful of expensive dishes. But when the meal ended, he was the one who paid. It might not be the perfect analogy, but it kind of fits the situation right?"

"We shouldn't have spoken about him that way."

"Yeah, the guy just wanted to have a bit of fun. Considering it objectively, who doesn't get a sudden urge to do something new once in a while?"

"Why do I feel like your words are an excuse you made up on the spot when you were caught in a vice raid last week?"

"Nonsense, I wasn't caught."

A few may have been displeased by Lin Yuan's willfulness. So, when Lin Yuan picked up the tab for the movie himself, there was a slight shift in the public sentiment within the Film Department.

Everyone thought...

Lin Yuan was considerate. He must have known that his movie would lose money, which is why he bought the rights to "Flirting Scholar" – he didn't want the company to bear a loss.

"Good kid."

Even 01' Zhou couldn't help but sigh.

If Lin Yuan hadn't voluntarily backed out from the cinemas, 01' Zhou and the others might have thought that Lin Yuan bought the rights to "Flirting Scholar" because he was confident in the movie.

But Lin Yuan didn't even want to go to the cinemas...

This showed that Lin Yuan was actually aware that his movie was terrible, and could only recoup some money by broadcasting it online. Either way, he got to make his movie.

This kid, he's truly straightforward!

Chapter 240: Saving Unhappiness

The video website industry in the Qin and Qi provinces is quite saturated, with major platforms like Penguin Video, Catmill, and Qiyi. These websites, known for their guaranteed high traffic, are all popular choices for video streaming.

Shen Qing is reliable.

He managed to secure cooperation deals with Penguin Video and Catmill. As we are not relying on exclusivity or selling the production rights to these platforms, the profit-sharing agreement won't be that sizeable.

The profits aren't just limited to those earned from video streaming but from advertising as well.

Let's use Catmill as an example.

The full name of Catmill is Kitty Cat Movies, but the audience prefers to call it Catmill.

In the Catmill platform, if an online feature film is watched for more than six minutes, it's counted as a successful view.

Why six minutes? Because the first five minutes is a free preview. If you make it to the sixth minute, it means you've paid to watch.

For each successful view, the profit share is approximately 1.5 yuan if it's not exclusively broadcasted. If it's exclusive, the share is around 2 yuan, while the platform prices the film at 5 yuan.

Advertising costs are calculated separately.

Lin Yuan has reviewed the contract in detail.

He didn't concern himself with the complex calculations, all he knew was that for each 5-yuan payment made by a viewer to watch "Flirting Scholar", he would earn 1.8 yuan. Including advertising revenue, the total would amount to more than 2 yuan.

Though the platform takes a bulk of the earnings, their profit-siphoning abilities are lesser compared to movie theaters, which is within the threshold that Lin Yuan is willing to accept.

After signing the contract,

The film's release date is also settled.

The official streaming begins on 1st July, during the summer holidays on the two websites.

This is a typical advantage of a web-based feature film, Lin Yuan wouldn't have to wait for a slot like regular films or TV shows. If he wanted to, he could even stream it today.

However, that's not good.

Even web-based feature films need publicity. The video streaming sites serve as the major platforms for this.

Penguin Video and Catmill have each drawn up several documents. Almost overnight, they hastily kickstarted the publicity campaign.

The publicity for web-based feature films is typically not very grand.

Catmill's proposed publicity document read: [Investment of tens of millions in the biggest online movie, "Flirting Scholar", screening from July 1st, click to reserve and kickstart your summer holiday!]

Penguin Video's was similar.

Their promotion was placed at a rather noticeable location: [Web-based feature film also has a summer release. “Flirting Scholar”, out on July 1st, all your happiness, I promise, here to save your unhappiness!]

That’s it.

Anyway, the audience interested in web-based feature films would surely take notice, however it seems that the movie still lacks a ‘wow factor’. The number of reservations made by the audience is not very high after the publicity.

“This is not good.”

Being behind the web-based feature film contract, Shen Qing naturally hopes for it to attract more audience.

He contacted Lin Yuan: “Mr. Lin, would you mind if we use your name, Admirable Fish, for publicity? Most of the time, our movie publicity needs some controversial topics for the outside world to discuss. The entry of a gold record composer into scriptwriting would make a great topic.”

Using “Admirable Fish” for publicity?

Lin Yuan hesitated a bit, then agreed with Shen Qing.

Because at Starlight everyone knows that “Flirting Scholar” is made by Admirable Fish, there’s no usefulness to hide it. Even if he uses a pseudonym, his identity would be revealed in minutes, so it’s better to let Admirable Fish take full ownership of the scriptwriting.

The day after Lin Yuan agreed,

New promotional texts for the web-based feature film were introduced.

This time the texts from the two websites were similar, it’s not clear who copied who:

[The golden record composer and sensation of the music industry, Teacher Admirable Fish, makes his scripting debut with “Flirting Scholar”, releasing on July 1st!]

The text was sneaky.

The words “Admirable Fish” in the publicity text were enlarged and bolded, to make sure they’re not missed by the viewers.

There are also some small letters underneath the text, listing all the famous songs Admirable Fish had previously composed, attempting to use the popularity of those songs to boost the film.

Apart from this, the movie’s poster was also changed.

The original poster was a group photo of the male and female leads along with some supporting characters, nothing eye-catching.

Now it has changed to pictures of the lead actors, one on each side.

No need to focus on the leading male character, he looked like he was in a play.

The lead actress was different. A fiery figure, pretty facial features, with a sneak peek of her long white legs.

Anyhow, very enticing, leaving plenty to the imagination

It’s got hardly anything to do with the movie’s content.

The actress is Yu Xilu, the only one of any fame in “Flirting Scholar”.

Even though she’s a typical vase in the entertainment industry, at least she’s got some fame.

This poster uses her beauty and figure as bait, giving off a “we know what’s up” vibe.

The photographer should consider adding more chicken legs.

It can be seen that the website indeed has given the movie a bit more attention.

Initially, the two video websites weren't very enthusiastic about "Flirting Scholar".

Because at the beginning, Shen Qing did not mention that Admirable Fish was the scriptwriter.

The situation is pretty ironic.

Admirable Fish's foray into filmmaking is ridiculous in the company's eyes, yet this absurdity fits perfectly into the key to movie promotion: the importance of controversial topics.

No wonder some movies choose to attract attention with distasteful, boundary-pushing rumors and controversial promotions.

In this day and age, whether it's praise or criticism, any attention is better than being obscure.

Apart from that...

After Admirable Fish's name came out, the reservation numbers for "Flirting Scholar" did increase quite a lot, proving that Admirable Fish indeed has some fame.

Of course, the cover girl Yu Xilu, who looks stunning after the photoshopping, also deserves some credit.

Lin Yuan has also logged into his Admirable Fish account to support them, by posting a picture from "Flirting Scholar".

Nine squares, nine pictures.

People with OCD will definitely be satisfied.

The text attached was: [The movie “Flirting Scholar”, for which I have written the script, will be officially released on July 1st. Please support it.]

Next, Lin Yuan shared the post using Chu Kuang’s account, with two simple words attached:

[Support]

Shadow’s account was handed over to Luo Wei to manage, and Lin Yuan didn’t bother with it since it didn’t have many followers.

As a result, the commentary got lively.

This time, people didn’t joke about the “good buddies” gag, they were more interested in the fact that Xian Yu was making a movie:

“Is Xian Yu the screenwriter?”

“I’ve heard of singers turning into actors and directors, but never a music composer turning into a screenwriter...”

“Huh?”

“Can’t Xian Yu just focus on writing songs...”

“Friendly reminder, Teacher Admirable Fish, making a movie is not for everyone.”

“I will definitely support you, however, I hope you focus on composing.”

“A music composer making a movie feels like you’re not focusing on your job. But since you’re Xian Yu, I’ll support you this once.”

“Teacher Admirable Fish is full of talent, he can even write scripts, I must support his movie!”

Xian Yu's lyrics are always full of stories, so I am quite interested in the script he wrote."

"I like Xian Yu too, but I don't support blind encouragement."

Professional practice has specialties.

Even though Xian Yu has a great reputation in the music composition field, many fans still feel a sense of "this doesn't seem right".

They didn't criticize, they just expressed their views.

There were also a small number of fans who were supportive, acknowledging their true love.

It didn't cause a major stir.

In essence, this is nothing more than a composer moving across boundaries to write a movie script.

Under the amalgamation of Qin and Qi, someone made a rough count:

Every year, there are over five thousand online movies successfully launched.

What does this mean?

This means that even if these movies are allocated to each month, there are about four to five hundred online movies launched each month.

July is the beginning of the summer vacation.

The number of new online movies released by Qin and Qi in July might even exceed this number.

Among these numerous movies, "Flirting Scholar" is not very noticeable.

It's just that the combination of Qin and Qi has a large audience, which gives these small-budget movies a chance to survive.

If it weren't for Xian Yu's fame, no one would even discuss this movie.

Therefore.

As time transitioned into July, the online movie market was still very calm.

On the other hand, in the theater.

The marketing wars among various big companies were so intense it was dog-eat-dog.

This made Lin Yuan somewhat relieved that "Flirting Scholar" did not choose to premiere in theaters.

And when July arrived.

Large scale movies began to premiere in theaters one after another. The war in the movie theater market had finally reached a climax!

The battle for box office began!

Compared to them, the premier of "Flirting Scholar" by Catmill and Penguin, seemed uneventful.

Of course.

No matter how uneventful, under the large population base of Qin and Qi, there will always be some onlookers who will open this movie.

They might have come across it for a variety of reasons-

Like Deng Chi.

Deng Chi was a bona fide rich second-generation.

Driving sports cars, living in luxury houses, changing girlfriends monthly, he lived a luxurious life that many envied.

But such a person, he had mild depression...

The reason was complicated.

Perhaps because his parents got divorced?

Even though his parents gave him more and more money each month in an apparent competition, he was still not happy.

Anyway, due to this depression, Deng Chi would often lock himself in the multi-storied mansion, watching movies alone.

He watched comedies a lot.

Because his psychologist said that watching comedies can help soothe his mood when he's bored.

On the first of July, much like any other day, Deng Chi opened the video website and started looking for movies that interested him.

Then he noticed "Flirting Scholar".

The tagline for this movie reads like this: "Saving the unhappy."

For some reason, Deng Chi suddenly felt somewhat irritated.

Because Deng Chi had watched many comedies, but he was still unhappy.

These comedies, branding themselves as hilarious, had fooled him again and again, he wouldn't believe them anymore.

Even though his psychologist explained that:

He simply had a high threshold for humor.

People with depression, more or less, tend to be emotional.

Of course, Deng Chi had no intention of opening this movie.

But when he was about to scroll past, he accidentally hit the play button and the movie started playing....