

DC: The Making of a God

#Chapter 31: The Approaching Storm - Read DC: The Making of a God Chapter 31: The Approaching Storm

Chapter 31: The Approaching Storm

Technology in the DC Universe is highly developed, featuring many mechanical and energy technologies that the previous world had not yet touched upon. However, its internet infrastructure is surprisingly lagging.

Luke targeted this gap when he founded **ShowMe**. From the platform's inception, he knew that as social media became popular, superheroes would certainly become regular users.

He just hadn't expected that day to arrive so soon.

Batman!

Looking at the information in the database, Luke couldn't help but curl his lip, a mix of surprise and slight pride.

Old man, old man! I never thought you'd be the first to walk into the trap!

Charlie pushed open the office door and rushed in.

"Boss, you finally woke up. It's almost chaos outside!"

"Chaos about what?"

"It's Batman again!"

Charlie snorted, sounding slightly annoyed. "Ever since he posted that message, ShowMe's traffic has skyrocketed, nearly crashing the server!"

"Isn't that a good thing?"

"How is it good? In just two hours, his account gained over **400,000 followers!** ShowMe's total user base is only five million. He accounts for nearly a tenth of it by himself."

"Didn't you say recently that ShowMe needs to maintain diversified development and shouldn't rely solely on superheroes and online hot topics?"

Charlie's point was valid. Luke stroked his chin, thinking for a moment, and said,

"I'll handle this. How's the IP address situation coming along?"

A peculiar expression immediately crossed Charlie's face. "The technical department tracked Batman's IP address. It shows the user is in the **Arctic**."

"The Arctic?"

Luke froze. "He didn't fake the IP address?"

"Zack and the others repeatedly verified the IP address's authenticity and found no signs of forging. The address is real." Charlie scratched his head, clearly frustrated. "I just don't understand why he'd be in the Arctic!"

Luke burst into laughter.

"Alright, alright. Tell Zack to stop tracking it. There's no need."

Given **Bruce Wayne's** financial power, building a base in the Arctic would be the simplest thing in the world. What idiot would go looking for him in the Arctic?

Charlie, however, had a different idea and spoke with seriousness.

"I think we should continue the investigation!"

Luke raised an eyebrow slightly and said gravely, "What are you trying to say?"

"While you were napping, the Gotham City Police Department and the FBI both called, demanding that we provide Batman's IP address. Following your instructions, I didn't give it to them."

"That's right. And then?"

"Then the **threat calls** started."

Luke was stunned. "Threat calls?"

"Yes, they came from Gotham City, over a dozen times in quick succession. They weren't anonymous calls, and they weren't all from the same person."

Luke's expression instantly changed. His eyes narrowed slightly, showing a hint of coldness.

"Who were those people?"

"Tommy Church, Alexander Rhodes, Justin Cook, Harrison Khord, and Victor Zsasz's older brother, Frank Zsasz—all notorious heavy hitters in Gotham City, all with a grudge against Batman."

Luke picked up his coffee, remained silent for a while, and then set it back down.

"Don't spread the word about this."

"I've already instructed the phone operators to keep this confidential. Aside from the three of us, no outsider knows."

After saying this, Charlie let out a long breath. The threat calls had been like a rock pressing down on his chest, and moving it aside instantly made him feel much better.

"There's one more thing I need to tell you. For some reason, many news outlets are pointing their finger at us. They're saying that ShowMe is not only an accomplice in spreading terrorism but also a cradle for murderers."

Luke frowned. "Didn't Batman post evidence?"

"Those media outlets simply don't believe what's online. They claim the ShowMe account is fabricated and that person isn't Batman at all unless he steps forward and admits it. Other reports claim ShowMe is Batman's puppet, and the account was opened only to cover up his crime."

"Are there many articles like that?"

"The *Gotham Weekly*, *Daily*, *Commercial Press*, as well as city television and radio stations—all the traditional media—are running those stories!"

Luke tapped the desk repeatedly with his index and middle fingers, his expression becoming increasingly serious. *The old man truly brought a massive headache down on me.*

Charlie said worriedly, "I think we should hold a press conference and clarify our relationship with Batman."

"If we do what you suggest, we'll lose more than half of our five million users."

"But we can't be the scapegoat! He plays the hero, and we take the blame? That's not right."

"Enough. Don't waste time on that. Notify all department heads: we have a meeting at three o'clock. Oh, and invite **Robert**."

A Shift in Strategy

Bruce Wayne's statement affected not only traditional media and online media but also ShowMe's internal operations.

In the conference room, looking at the faces flushed with excitement, Luke could only sigh internally.

Slap!

He slammed a document onto the table, interrupting everyone's speculation.

"This is the third managers' meeting in four days. Honestly, it's too frequent, but I have to do it. As for the reason, you all know it, so I won't elaborate."

"I called you here today for two reasons: First, **recruitment**. The company is severely understaffed, and expansion is imperative. Calculate the manpower shortage in your respective departments and report back to me shortly. Second, the **new version**. I plan to move up the new version release, originally scheduled for next Wednesday, to tomorrow noon. Also, the **[Black Men Carrying Coffin]** marketing plan must synchronize with the new version's rhythm. **Rowan**, you are in charge of this."

As soon as he finished speaking, **Zack Burge** immediately stood up.

"What about Batman?"

"Batman is not within the scope of this meeting's discussion."

"Why?"

Zack said excitedly. The others also looked puzzled. Analyzing the situation from both an emotional and business standpoint, this incident was a golden opportunity for ShowMe to soar. By standing behind the vast user base and rallying support for Batman, they could tear off a huge piece of the cake from the traditional media's mouth.

ShowMe could then become famous throughout the U.S., becoming a lighthouse in the hearts of young people.

Philip Arthur

also expressed his confusion.

"Luke, are you going to give up this opportunity?"

"Yes."

Luke didn't hesitate, giving a direct answer. Then, he scanned the crowd, pausing on **Robert Downs** on his right. "Do you all believe the company should seize this opportunity to further expand its influence?"

No one spoke, but their expressions gave the answer away.

"That is incorrect. I reiterate one point: **ShowMe is a social networking platform, not an arbitration body for good and evil.** We face the entirety of human society, regardless of skin color, race, or gender. Every ShowMe user will receive equal treatment."

"But..."

"No 'buts.' Go back and tell your subordinates that the matter of Batman ends here. It is forbidden to discuss it in the company from now on."

The managers left disappointed, having arrived excited. No one expected the boss, known for his bold fearlessness, to back down on the Batman issue.

Soon, only **Cindy** and Robert remained in the conference room.

Luke looked Robert Downs up and down, a wide smile on his face.

"How are your injuries? Does it hurt?"

"I'm fine now. It doesn't affect my work."

"That's good. The company has heavy workloads these days and desperately needs people. With you here, it will alleviate a lot of the burden." Turning to Cindy, he added, "Cindy, please hand over the company's **financing matters** to Robert."

Cindy froze, completely shocked that her boss would say this. *Was my work poor? Where did I go wrong?*

"Alright, Cindy, go get busy!"

She nodded sadly, glanced at Robert, and turned to leave the conference room.

As Cindy left, the smile faded from Luke's face, replaced by a look of seriousness.

"Some things I can hide from them, but not from you. I won't waste words: the financing must be finalized before next Friday. **\$35 million** is my bottom line. Can you do it?"

Robert quickly stood up. "I will not disappoint you."

Luke added, "If you succeed, your share will be paid in full. Not a penny less."

Robert awkwardly waved his hands.

"Don't mention that matter again. It was a spur-of-the-moment decision; it doesn't count."

"No!"

Luke said sternly, "I always honor my promises. This is what you deserve."

Explore up to **20 chapters** in advance!

Chapter 32: The Triple Agent

After a long day of work, **Robert Downs** returned to his dilapidated apartment building.

He poured half a glass of red wine, sank into the sofa, and sipped it slowly. The rich aroma spread through his mouth, and time seemed to stand still.

Robert particularly loved red wine. When he was the boss, he used to pour two glasses of Romanée-Conti every evening; the feeling was unforgettable.

A moment later, the sound of the door opening came from behind him. **Warren Austin** walked into the room, glanced at the empty wine bottles in the corner, and sighed.

"One case of wine, gone in a few days. Looks like I need to call the boss and have him send a few more."

Robert held up his glass. "Want a drink?"

Warren shook his head. "I prefer whiskey to red wine."

"Whiskey is too strong; you get drunk easily."

Warren shrugged and changed the subject. "How is the financing progressing?"

Robert swirled the wine in his glass and said casually,

"**Luke Shaw** has given me full authority to handle the financing."

Oh!

Warren raised an eyebrow, a little surprised.

"I don't recall you joining ShowMe very long ago, yet he entrusted you with such important work."

"He has no one else."

The simple words contained immense confidence. Warren offered a polite smile, but a hint of derision flashed in his eyes.

He had initially admired the ShowMe boss—developing a startup to millions of users in just two months was no ordinary feat. But now, it seemed he was just a lucky idiot.

Poor judgment of character and bad hiring choices—does a person like this think they can succeed?

"It seems ShowMe's financial power is now in your hands."

Robert nodded. "ShowMe has a major shortfall in its capital chain and urgently needs cash flow. This afternoon, Luke Shaw gave me a hard deadline: the financing deal must be finalized before next Friday, with a bottom line of **\$35 million.**"

"What about the shares?"

"20%."

"That's too little. The boss requires **67% or more**—he needs absolute control."

"That will be difficult. Luke Shaw won't agree."

Warren smirked and said carelessly, "He's just a seventeen-year-old kid; what ability does he have? If he doesn't agree, we'll let him see the adult world."

Robert glanced at his old friend, lowering his eyelids and gazing vacantly ahead, lost in thought.

"Redwood Group's investment department will contact you tomorrow morning. The rest is up to you."

"I know what to do."

Warren patted his shoulder, smiled broadly, and left.

The door closed, and the dim room returned to silence.

Time ticked by. When the clock crossed the nine o'clock mark, Robert put on his jacket and walked out, passing through the dirty, water-logged alleyways until he stopped at a streetside restaurant.

He bought a coffee and two sandwiches, found an empty table and chair, and started eating, bite by bite.

A short while later, a white middle-aged man in his forties walked into the restaurant. The man was tall and muscular, stretching his suit taut. A gold chain hung below his collar, and a gold watch adorned his wrist—the attire of a successful man. But his heavily jowled face was enough to deter anyone.

He swaggered to the chair opposite Robert and sat down, saying coldly,

"You made me wait ten minutes, old man."

Robert quickly put down his sandwich, glanced around to ensure no one was paying attention, and said in a slightly resentful tone,

"Mr. Rhodes, couldn't this wait for a phone call? You know my position; I can't attract attention."

"Who cares about you!"

Alexander Rhodes grinned, making no effort to hide the sarcasm in his face. He slammed the table, beckoning the startled waitress over, ordered a black beer, and continued, "I wouldn't come to this dump, Metropolis, unless the boss told me to! Listen up..."

He reached out and grabbed Robert's neck, threatening him word by word.

"The boss is very unhappy with your work and told me to rough you up a bit! You know what 'rough up' means, right?"

Robert struggled. "My injuries haven't healed yet. If I get hurt again, I won't be able to go to work."

Alexander Rhodes rubbed his chin, pondering for a moment. Under Robert's nervous gaze, he casually pushed him back into the chair.

"We'll save that beating for later. Let's talk about Batman."

Batman!

Robert rubbed his neck, looking confused.

Alexander ground his teeth and said, "I don't care how you do it, but you have to get **Batman's identity information** within two days. This is the boss's final test for you. If you fail, you know the consequences."

Hearing this, Robert felt utterly hopeless.

"Batman didn't register with his real name, so it's impossible to track down his personal information. Besides, according to the technical department, Batman is likely in the **Arctic**. You can't seriously expect me to go to the Arctic to look for him. I don't have that capability!"

"The Arctic!"

Alexander erupted in rage. "That rotten bat was in Gotham last night, and now he's run off to the Arctic? **FUCK!** Are you lying to me?"

The roar startled the café's customers, who all looked over.

Robert frantically waved his hands, both nervous and terrified. "I didn't say he's in the Arctic. The IP address shows the registrant is in the Arctic, which means he most likely built a base there."

Alexander thought about it and decided the man made some sense. If he were Batman, he wouldn't use his real name either.

"I've passed on the boss's message. Whether you can do it is none of my business. You have two days. Figure it out yourself!"

Finished, he took his beer glass, casually pinched the waitress's sizable backside, which earned him a glare. Alexander didn't care and even whistled proudly.

Robert's face was bitter. He wanted to argue but didn't know how, sitting there like a beaten man. After a while, he lowered his voice.

"I believe it's impossible to find Batman's identity in such a short time, given the current situation, unless the boss sends someone to the Arctic."

He paused, looked up, and saw Alexander still flirting with the waitress, then continued,

"However, there is a great opportunity right now for **long-term tracking of Batman**, and that is **ShowMe**. If we control the ShowMe database, we can potentially find his real location based on his IP address. Additionally, we can manipulate his account to post or delete inappropriate comments, such as supporting racism or terrorism..."

"Mr. Rhodes, are you listening?"

Alexander chugged the entire glass of black beer, let out a satisfied burp, and said,

"I'm not interested in your talk about IP addresses or social media accounts. Cut to the chase. What do you want to do?"

"The original plan: **acquire ShowMe** and firmly put the social media platform in our hands. Boss, I sincerely beg you, let me meet with Sidney. I will persuade him."

At ten o'clock that night, after watching Alexander drive away with the waitress, Robert instinctively pulled his jacket tighter. He couldn't remember how long it had been since he had been with a woman.

Fighting the cold night wind, Robert returned to his run-down apartment.

The light flickered on, revealing a familiar yet strange figure sitting on the sofa, staring straight at him with indifferent eyes.

It was **Roger Consius** of the **FBI**!

Robert was shocked.

"You... how are you here?"

Roger Consius crossed his legs and said with a half-smile,

"Alexander Rhodes, Falcone's trusted henchman. If I tell Luke Shaw that you've been colluding with him to sell out ShowMe, what do you think he'll do to you?"

"I don't know what you're talking about, Mr. Consius. I seriously warn you, trespassing is against the law."

Robert swallowed hard, his eyes darting around the room.

"Don't bother looking. The others are outside. It's just you and me in here."

Roger Consius stood up and walked closer to Robert. He played a recording near Robert's ear. After listening, Robert collapsed to the ground like a fish with its bones removed.

Roger Consius patted his cheek and chuckled softly.

"Mr. Downs, from now on, you belong to me."

Explore up to **20 chapters** in advance!

Chapter 33: The Death Call - The Black Coffin Dance

A fly won't sting a seamless egg!

Upon realizing that ShowMe could become a "very dangerous" enterprise, **Roger Consius** set about organizing an infiltration plan. He first tried to use threats and hints to recruit several technical staff with criminal records, but they were entirely uncooperative. He then contacted Rowan in the marketing department through a family relation, only to be rejected again.

Two failures made him realize that ShowMe would not be easy to penetrate. It was at that moment that **Robert Downs** appeared.

The former financial genius was now an employee.

Not everyone can endure such dramatic ups and downs in life.

Roger Consius didn't believe Robert was without ulterior motives, and a quick check confirmed it.

The guy was actually colluding with his enemy, **Falcone**, intending to seize ShowMe. The funny thing was that the self-proclaimed brilliant Luke Shaw hadn't noticed and had even handed over the company's finances to him.

Idiot!

Roger couldn't help but want to laugh. He was eager to see the expression on Luke Shaw's face when he discovered he had been betrayed by his subordinate.

ShowMe 2.0 Launches

After a night of sleepless confusion, Robert showed up at Sea Prosperity Building right on time the next morning.

He pushed open the company's main door and was immediately met with a clamorous scene.

The sound of fingers striking keyboards was nearly a continuous line. Technical and marketing staff were huddled together, conducting final tests for the new version. Judging by the stack of paper cups and meal boxes in the corner, many people had pulled an all-nighter.

Luke Shaw was among them. At this moment, he lacked his usual flair, sporting dark circles under his eyes, sitting in front of a computer, frantically typing.

His fingers moved incredibly fast, like an octopus.

A few heavyset technicians surrounded him, occasionally pointing at the screen and discussing something, apparently a recurring bug issue.

Everyone was deeply engaged and full of passion, as if they were working on something magnificent.

Robert, who knew nothing about computer technology, didn't interfere. He walked into his office with his briefcase tucked under his arm.

As the door closed, the intense atmosphere vanished.

He leaned back in his swivel chair, staring blankly for a long time before picking up the phone and dialing the number for **Dominic Sidney**, the president of Gotham Central Bank.

While Batman's statement caused an uproar, ShowMe, as the social platform, maintained silence throughout.

This stance deeply hurt its users.

Many people discussed the issue, unable to understand or explain why ShowMe seemed so "cowardly" and what they were afraid of.

At 2:00 PM, amid a wave of criticism, **ShowMe 2.0** was launched.

The 900MB installation package brought dramatic changes to ShowMe. The interface was smoother and more stylish, with a light blue background, a mechanical art style, and a simple, grand format that was instantly appealing.

The original ShowMe was already trendy; this update elevated it to a new level, like a work of art.

The users' dissatisfaction instantly evaporated. *No wonder ShowMe didn't speak up; they were preparing for the new version.* Driven by curiosity, they began exploring the new ShowMe.

Dozens of plug-ins were launched in the expansion center, many featuring functions users had never seen before. The most interesting were the **View Editor** and the **Rating System**.

The View Editor is a modification tool for videos and images. It has no limitations or strict boundaries, making it a platform for completely free

creation. You can do anything you want on it—for example, giving your girlfriend an elephant's trunk, putting a friend's head on the Statue of Liberty's backside, censoring inappropriate videos, and so on. If you can imagine it, someone can create it.

The function was an instant hit.

Young users spontaneously recommended it to their friends and classmates. In just half an hour, tens of thousands of "original views" appeared on ShowMe.

Compared to the View Editor, the Rating System was simpler—an auxiliary program that allows you to rate views uploaded by yourself or others. Works with high scores automatically enter the recommendation page, making them visible to more people.

Although simple, this function is highly social. Which creator wouldn't want their work to receive a higher score?

The two functions complemented each other perfectly.

The Coffin Meme Takes Over

Yale University men's dormitory.

Most of the summer vacation had passed, but Andrew Gatch, a third-year film student, remained at school, preparing for his first feature film. The movie was a Western, but due to funding and equipment issues, the footage included too many elements that didn't belong in the 19th century, such as flashlights, toilet lids, and cameras.

These elements turned the Western into a hilarious time-travel comedy.

Andrew was desperate, unable to imagine his professor's reaction upon seeing the sample footage.

Just as he was preparing to pay out of his own pocket to reshoot, his roommate recommended a feature called **View Editor**. After trying it, he was stunned. The software could perfectly clip out the anachronistic parts of the sample footage and paste new flow patterns onto them. The two layers matched perfectly, leaving no trace, making the film look brand new.

His roommate, **Tommy Eugene**, patted his shoulder and smiled.

"Well, is it awesome or what?"

Andrew gave a thumbs-up. "I've never seen anything so incredible. Where did it come from?"

"ShowMe!"

Andrew paused, blurting out, "ShowMe has a feature like that?"

He logged into his account, and when he saw the updated interface, he couldn't help but exclaim: *That's cool.*

The View Editor was in the first slot of the expansion center. The recommendation count below the text description exceeded three thousand, and hundreds of comments praised the plug-in.

Just then, his girlfriend, Lisa, sent him a video link with the title: **The Death Call - The Black Coffin Dance!**

Curious, Andrew clicked the link.

Six Black men wearing black shoes, black trousers, black suits, and black sunglasses carried a coffin and danced awkwardly in the street. Their movements were strange and funny, and when paired with the music, they created an inexplicable sense of rhythm. The scene shifted, and under the gaze of serious-looking Black men, several young people rode bikes off a cliff, followed by a melancholic Scottish funeral tune.

Andrew burst out laughing, and his roommate was equally amused.

"Where did this video come from? That's hilarious."

"Lisa said she downloaded it from ShowMe."

Opening the recommendation page, sure enough, "**The Black Coffin Dance**" was in the top spot, with a high rating of **9.0** and a click-through rate far exceeding the second-ranked funny quotes about Batman.

After watching the original material, Andrew had an idea: *I can also use the View Editor to create my own funny video.*

He immediately got to work. Two hours later, the **Western-style Black Coffin Dance** was born.

Andrew uploaded the video to his space. Unexpectedly, the click-through rate exceeded ten thousand in just half an hour. What surprised him even more was that, with the combined efforts of his many friends, the video actually made it onto the recommendation page.

The clicks began to surge: ten thousand turned into twenty thousand, twenty thousand into fifty thousand, fifty thousand into one hundred thousand... It was incredibly fast.

Explore up to **20 chapters** in advance!
Chapter 34: 300 Million Dollars!

The click-through rate surged, and the follower count rose alongside it, changing every minute, like riding a rocket.

Andrew realized this was a golden opportunity. If he played his cards right, he could become a super influencer, an internet celebrity like Superman and Batman, on ShowMe.

He acted immediately, setting aside his movie for the time being and dedicating himself entirely to creation. He spent one night producing **seven different styles** of the "Black Coffin Dance."

Sci-fi style, Oriental style, grotesque style, fantasy style, and the indescribable "girly style," satisfying the needs of different demographics.

After uploading these videos to his space, Andrew collapsed into bed. When he woke up, his phone was littered with missed calls; his girlfriend **Lisa** alone had called seven times.

How annoying!

He grumbled impatiently, then called his girlfriend back. As soon as she answered, he was met with a barrage of hysterical questions.

Andrew held the phone away from his ear. When the interrogation ended, he yawned and asked,

"What is it?"

"You're famous, didn't you know? Get online, now!"

With that, she hung up. Andrew scratched his head, completely baffled. He slowly climbed out of bed, opened his laptop, and logged into his account. When he saw his follower count, his eyes widened into saucers.

Holy crap! What the hell?

He suspected he'd misread it and rubbed his eyes vigorously. After confirming it was five digits, not four, he was utterly stunned.

He had gained **30,000 followers** just by sleeping!

He quickly clicked into his space. Seeing the view count on the seven videos, he was baffled again. Four of the seven videos had made it onto the recommendation page. The "girly style" Black Coffin Dance was the most explosive, with **500,000 clicks** and over a thousand comments, leaving the other videos far behind.

Andrew grabbed his hair, unable to understand. The girly-style video took the least amount of time and was, frankly, shoddily produced. Yet, the lowest quality video was the most popular.

Why is this happening?

He looked down in thought. Just then, a text message caught his eye.

It was from a **funeral home** in Metropolis's southern suburbs, hoping to place an ad on Andrew's video to promote their newly launched "Black Coffin Dance" service.

Andrew paused, then typed:

"Are you kidding me?"

The other party quickly replied: "We are willing to pay **\$3,000** for the advertising fee. If you're interested, we can meet to discuss it."

The message included contact details: the funeral home's address, phone number, and the owner's name. It was clear the offer was serious.

A funeral home wants me for an ad!

Andrew was speechless, feeling overwhelmed. He considered it for a moment, then forwarded the message to his girlfriend. Lisa didn't hesitate and immediately gave an affirmative reply.

Her reasoning was simple: The seven videos cost you a night of effort; why shouldn't they have ads?

What's wrong with a funeral home? Everyone goes to one eventually!

In fact, ShowMe's rapidly increasing user base was attracting the attention of many businesses, especially sports and electronics brands targeting young consumers.

Today's youth are different; they spend far more time on their computers than on TV or newspapers. Traditional media is declining; the internet is the future. To capture the hearts of young people, marketing must happen online.

ShowMe's appearance perfectly filled this gap.

Before Andrew, many influencers had received advertising invitations. Even superheroes like **Batman** were no exception, having received dozens of ad messages within just two days of launching his account.

Bruce Wayne couldn't understand why these companies wanted him for commercials or insisted on meeting in person. *Are they joking?*

I am the heir of the mighty Wayne Enterprises, a billionaire with hundreds of millions in income a year. Do I need your advertising money?

Alfred sighed.

"Master Wayne, we can't delay this. From both a personal and business perspective, acquiring ShowMe is an excellent choice. This is a highly promising internet company, and no one knows how far it will grow."

"What does Blair say?"

Alfred shook his head. "I've carefully considered it. It would be better for the **Wayne Family** to handle this."

"Acquire ShowMe in my name?"

"No, in the name of the Wayne Family."

Bruce paused, deep in thought.

Alfred continued, "After Batman's account went online, ShowMe has been remarkably silent, which is uncharacteristic. I worry they might be in trouble."

"Are you suggesting..."

Alfred sighed. "ShowMe's owner is only seventeen years old. Who can guarantee that a seventeen-year-old won't change his position when threatened by the gangs?"

Bruce understood. He stood up and said,

"I'll leave it to you, Alfred. Please test the waters for me. I want to secure that company as soon as possible."

"Understood, Master Wayne."

The \$300 Million Offer

Since the new version launched, Luke had been busy—either patching bugs or maintaining the servers. The servers leased from Redwood Group were no longer keeping pace with ShowMe's growth and had to be replaced.

Replacing the mainframes required money, and Luke was so poor he couldn't even pay this month's salaries, let alone anything else.

Financing was inevitable!

On Wednesday morning, **Robert Downs** opened the door to Luke's office.

"Boss, here's the file I compiled on potential investors. Take a look."

Luke put down his keyboard, took the file, and quickly scanned it.

Robert added, "After the launch of Version 2.0, ShowMe's market feedback has been excellent. Banks and investment firms that cut ties with us due to the video incident have re-established contact. However, due to some gossip, most of them are currently in a wait-and-see state."

"Gossip?"

Luke looked up. "What kind of gossip?"

"Someone is saying that ShowMe's accounts are fabricated."

Luke scoffed. "And people actually believe that?"

"If someone says it, someone will believe it."

Luke closed the file and said indifferently, "It seems we don't have many choices."

Robert shook his head.

"Actually, we have quite a few. **Chase Bank, Central Bank, Queen Consolidated, Redwood Group, and the Wayne Family** have all indicated investment interest and can meet the \$35 million funding requirement."

The appearance of the Wayne Family did not surprise Luke. He thought for a moment, then asked, "Which company do you think is suitable?"

"We can exclude Chase Bank and Queen Consolidated."

"Reason?"

"Both are investment structures. They have money but no influence, and they won't significantly boost ShowMe's future development. In contrast, Redwood Group and the Wayne Family are different. The former is a leader in the internet industry and can comprehensively elevate ShowMe's level. The

latter—well, it's the largest financial conglomerate in the world; that speaks for itself."

Luke smiled. "Five options, you explained four. You missed Central Bank. Why?"

"Because the price they offered is outrageous."

Oh?

Luke was intrigued. "How outrageous?"

Robert held up three fingers. "**\$300 million for 30% of the shares!**"

Luke gasped, surprised.

"Are you sure you didn't misread that?"

Robert took a contract from his briefcase and placed it on the table.

"This is the contract template they provided."

Luke opened the document. After reading it, he became visibly excited.

"Three hundred million dollars!"

"Robert, you've given me a massive surprise. I don't know how to thank you."

"It's my job."

Robert said with a beaming smile.

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He had gained **30,000 followers** just by sleeping!

He quickly clicked into his space. Seeing the view count on the seven videos, he was baffled again. Four of the seven videos had made it onto the

recommendation page. The "girly style" Black Coffin Dance was the most explosive, with **500,000 clicks** and over a thousand comments, leaving the other videos far behind.

Andrew grabbed his hair, unable to understand. The girly-style video took the least amount of time and was, frankly, shoddily produced. Yet, the lowest quality video was the most popular.

Why is this happening?

He looked down in thought. Just then, a text message caught his eye.

It was from a **funeral home** in Metropolis's southern suburbs, hoping to place an ad on Andrew's video to promote their newly launched "Black Coffin Dance" service.

Andrew paused, then typed:

"Are you kidding me?"

The other party quickly replied: "We are willing to pay **\$3,000** for the advertising fee. If you're interested, we can meet to discuss it."

The message included contact details: the funeral home's address, phone number, and the owner's name. It was clear the offer was serious.

A funeral home wants me for an ad!

Andrew was speechless, feeling overwhelmed. He considered it for a moment, then forwarded the message to his girlfriend. Lisa didn't hesitate and immediately gave an affirmative reply.

Her reasoning was simple: The seven videos cost you a night of effort; why shouldn't they have ads?

What's wrong with a funeral home? Everyone goes to one eventually!

In fact, ShowMe's rapidly increasing user base was attracting the attention of many businesses, especially sports and electronics brands targeting young consumers.

Today's youth are different; they spend far more time on their computers than on TV or newspapers. Traditional media is declining; the internet is the future. To capture the hearts of young people, marketing must happen online.

ShowMe's appearance perfectly filled this gap.

Before Andrew, many influencers had received advertising invitations. Even superheroes like **Batman** were no exception, having received dozens of ad messages within just two days of launching his account.

Bruce Wayne couldn't understand why these companies wanted him for commercials or insisted on meeting in person. *Are they joking?*

I am the heir of the mighty Wayne Enterprises, a billionaire with hundreds of millions in income a year. Do I need your advertising money?

Alfred sighed.

"Master Wayne, we can't delay this. From both a personal and business perspective, acquiring ShowMe is an excellent choice. This is a highly promising internet company, and no one knows how far it will grow."

"What does Blair say?"

Alfred shook his head. "I've carefully considered it. It would be better for the **Wayne Family** to handle this."

"Acquire ShowMe in my name?"

"No, in the name of the Wayne Family."

Bruce paused, deep in thought.

Alfred continued, "After Batman's account went online, ShowMe has been remarkably silent, which is uncharacteristic. I worry they might be in trouble."

"Are you suggesting..."

Alfred sighed. "ShowMe's owner is only seventeen years old. Who can guarantee that a seventeen-year-old won't change his position when threatened by the gangs?"

Bruce understood. He stood up and said,

"I'll leave it to you, Alfred. Please test the waters for me. I want to secure that company as soon as possible."

"Understood, Master Wayne."

The \$300 Million Offer

Since the new version launched, Luke had been busy—either patching bugs or maintaining the servers. The servers leased from Redwood Group were no longer keeping pace with ShowMe's growth and had to be replaced.

Replacing the mainframes required money, and Luke was so poor he couldn't even pay this month's salaries, let alone anything else.

Financing was inevitable!

On Wednesday morning, **Robert Downs** opened the door to Luke's office.

"Boss, here's the file I compiled on potential investors. Take a look."

Luke put down his keyboard, took the file, and quickly scanned it.

Robert added, "After the launch of Version 2.0, ShowMe's market feedback has been excellent. Banks and investment firms that cut ties with us due to the video incident have re-established contact. However, due to some gossip, most of them are currently in a wait-and-see state."

"Gossip?"

Luke looked up. "What kind of gossip?"

"Someone is saying that ShowMe's accounts are fabricated."

Luke scoffed. "And people actually believe that?"

"If someone says it, someone will believe it."

Luke closed the file and said indifferently, "It seems we don't have many choices."

Robert shook his head.

"Actually, we have quite a few. **Chase Bank, Central Bank, Queen Consolidated, Redwood Group, and the Wayne Family** have all indicated investment interest and can meet the \$35 million funding requirement."

The appearance of the Wayne Family did not surprise Luke. He thought for a moment, then asked, "Which company do you think is suitable?"

"We can exclude Chase Bank and Queen Consolidated."

"Reason?"

"Both are investment structures. They have money but no influence, and they won't significantly boost ShowMe's future development. In contrast, Redwood Group and the Wayne Family are different. The former is a leader in the internet industry and can comprehensively elevate ShowMe's level. The latter—well, it's the largest financial conglomerate in the world; that speaks for itself."

Luke smiled. "Five options, you explained four. You missed Central Bank. Why?"

"Because the price they offered is outrageous."

Oh?

Luke was intrigued. "How outrageous?"

Robert held up three fingers. **"\$300 million for 30% of the shares!"**

Luke gasped, surprised.

"Are you sure you didn't misread that?"

Robert took a contract from his briefcase and placed it on the table.

"This is the contract template they provided."

Luke opened the document. After reading it, he became visibly excited.

"Three hundred million dollars!"

"Robert, you've given me a massive surprise. I don't know how to thank you."

"It's my job."

Robert said with a beaming smile.

Explore up to **20 chapters** in advance!

Chapter 35: Pie in the Sky

\$300 million is a staggering sum for a company established less than three months ago.

Luke excitedly paced the room, like a child receiving his first Christmas gift.

Robert internally sneered but maintained a composed demeanor. "**Mr. Sidney** is very satisfied with ShowMe's performance and hopes to sign the contract as soon as possible."

"How soon does he want to do it?"

"Two days!"

Luke frowned, utterly confused. "Two days isn't enough. We have a mountain of issues to discuss, like equity division and operational management, not to mention everything else."

Robert said gravely, "Boss, you may not know Mr. Sidney well. He is a pure investor. He won't interfere with the company's operational rights or decision-making power."

"There's good news like that?"

Luke didn't believe in pie falling from the sky. An investor who is a rich banker, doesn't interfere with operations, doesn't participate in management, and only wants equity is something that only happens in the movies.

Robert smiled and explained,

"Mr. Sidney is betting on the rapidly growing user base. ShowMe has nearly **six million users**. That number could multiply several times over in a few months. No one can ignore that. It's a long-term benefit."

Luke still shook his head. "Even so, the process is too casual. Isn't he worried I'll abscond with the money? That's \$300 million—enough to last a lifetime!"

"Would you?"

"Of course not!"

"There you have it." Robert spread his hands. "Boss, I think you're overthinking it. The company's goal is financing. As long as we get the money and don't lose the management rights, nothing else is a problem. Of course..." He changed his tone and continued,

"If you feel uneasy, we still have **Redwood Group** and the **Wayne Family**. Redwood Group is demanding over 67% of the shares. Mr. Alfred from the Wayne Family is demanding 51%. The money aspect is negotiable with both."

67% is absolute control! 51% is relative control!

The intentions of those two companies were clearly not innocent. Redwood Group was out—they had proposed multiple acquisition plans that Luke had rejected, and their boss was definitely unhappy. As for Wayne...

Luke propped up his chin, shaking his head resignedly.

"It turns out we only had one choice all along!"

Robert nodded slightly, offering no response.

"When does Mr. Sidney want to sign the contract?"

"They have already prepared the relevant materials and legal documents. We can start anytime."

Luke nodded. "Since the other party is eager to give us money, we shouldn't play hard to get. Let's do it this afternoon. Set a time and get it done."

"Understood. I'll make the arrangements now!"

Robert gathered the documents and left the office. Once out the door, he let out a long breath, as if a great weight had been lifted from his heart.

He raised his hand and wiped his forehead, finding a layer of fine sweat.

Robert shook his head, wondering why he was suddenly so nervous.

Concerns and the Trap

Cindy soon learned about the financing deal and immediately put down her work to rush to Luke's office.

"Boss, are you really going to partner with **Central Bank**?"

"They offered the highest price and have the lowest demands. Who else should I choose?"

Cindy said with a serious expression, "I've investigated Central Bank's background. It's very complex. There is information indicating that Central Bank has been linked to multiple international money-laundering cases in recent years. Choosing them as a partner could drag ShowMe under."

"Do you have evidence?"

"No, but..."

"Everything requires evidence. Without evidence, we can't take it seriously."

Cindy was about to press the point, but Luke raised his hand. While tidying documents, he said,

"The decision has been made, and it won't change. Also, **Rowan** has been complaining about being understaffed. Put your current work aside and go help the marketing department. And you don't need to attend this afternoon's negotiation. **Will, Charlie, Robert, and I** are enough."

"I really think this is inappropriate."

Cindy became agitated. "ShowMe's current market value is \$80 million, yet they offered \$300 million for only 30% of the shares. That's a premium of over twelve times the valuation. There must be something wrong!"

"Investment concerns the future of the company. We can't ignore everything just because they offered the highest price. Even if we choose Central Bank, we must thoroughly investigate their background. How can we make a hasty decision? Also, **Robert**—I feel like he's hiding something from us. He's definitely keeping secrets."

This foolish girl!

Luke inwardly shook his head. *She's a Stanford-educated business elite; why is she so dense?*

"That's enough. Go back to work. You don't need to worry about this matter!"

Cindy's pleas were unsuccessful. Furious, she slammed the door on her way out. She vowed to use all her contacts to uncover Central Bank's background, determined not to let ShowMe be ruined by them.

If Luke knew her thoughts, he would sigh up to the heavens: *Why are the people I trust all blockheads!*

The Negotiation Begins

After multiple communications arranged by Robert, the two parties decided to hold the negotiation at the **Fox Hotel** in Metropolis's West End.

At 2:00 PM, the ShowMe representatives—owner and legal representative **Luke Shaw**, lawyer **Will**, assistant **Charlie**, and head of financing **Robert Downs**—arrived at the hotel precisely on time.

When they arrived, Central Bank General Manager **Dominic Sidney** was already in the lobby.

He was a white man about fifty years old, short and somewhat plump, wearing gold-rimmed glasses, giving off a very shrewd impression.

As the junior party, Luke greeted him first. "Hello, Mr. Sidney. It's a pleasure to meet you."

Sidney's gaze lingered on Luke's overly young face for a few seconds. A flash of contempt crossed his mind, but his expression was outwardly warm.

"Mr. Shaw is truly young and promising. To achieve what takes others a lifetime at the age of seventeen, that's remarkable, truly remarkable!"

Luke laughed heartily. "Mr. Sidney, you flatter me. It's just luck."

"This way, please!"

"Please!"

The two walked side-by-side out of the lobby and toward the second-floor conference room.

Robert deliberately lagged behind, using the excuse of needing the restroom to sneak to Room 203.

Alexander Rhodes was sitting on the sofa, a submachine gun resting next to him and a large cigarette dangling from his mouth.

Robert approached him, lowering his head, and whispered,

"It's all ready."

Alexander impatiently waved him off, signaling Robert to leave. Robert dared not linger, but before exiting the door, he turned and said,

"Boss Rhodes, please be careful during the negotiation later. You mustn't..."

"Relax!"

Alexander smirked, not bothering to hide the mockery in his expression. "No one will know you're the traitor!"

Robert offered an awkward smile, turned, and left.

In the second-floor conference room, a long table separated the two teams. The ShowMe delegation sat on the east side, and Central Bank sat on the west.

Without much small talk, the parties formally introduced themselves and exchanged documents.

The contract provided by Central Bank was surprisingly simple, not typical of a large corporation, but it contained all the necessary clauses.

The two main sections on **Operations** and **Management** were clearly marked, stating that the investor (Party A) would not interfere with the operational management or personnel changes of the investee (Party B). However, there were significant discrepancies regarding the funds and equity.

After seeing the numbers on the contract, Charlie and Will's faces changed instantly. Robert, fighting down a wave of anxiety, spoke up,

"Mr. Sidney, I think you've picked up the wrong document."

Explore up to **20 chapters** in advance!

