

Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 534: All of This Came from an Accurate Understanding of President Pei's Personality

Monday, May 30.

Liang Qingfan arrived at Fright Hostel with the design plans for The Golden Maze.

For the past week, he had practically been working himself to the bone. Yet instead of feeling exhausted, he was more energized than ever.

For architects, producing design drawings can take either a long or a short time. Some real estate developers, in their pursuit of rapid project turnover, even issue internal directives requiring design firms to produce complete drawings overnight on the very day they receive marketing requirements and design specifications.

That was an extreme—and highly unreasonable—example, but it illustrated just how brutal the architecture industry could be.

For Liang Qingfan, The Golden Maze wasn't the project with the tightest deadline or the hardest workload he had ever taken on.

It was, however, by far the most exciting.

There were only three reasons:

First, the budget was extremely generous.

Second, the client didn't constantly interfere or demand endless revisions.

Third, the project itself offered enormous creative freedom and was genuinely fun to design.

When an architect is allowed to realize his own vision, has sufficient authority over the design, and doesn't have to worry about funding, inspiration and enthusiasm naturally reach their fullest potential.

Arriving at the Fright Hostel's office, Liang Qingfan found Chen Kangtuo and Shi Zherui already waiting.

"Sorry to keep you two waiting," Liang Qingfan said. "I'll walk you through the design proposal for The Golden Maze. Some of the finer details aren't fully polished yet, though, so I'll need Teacher Shi to refine them afterward."

Shi Zherui immediately nodded.

"Of course."

Liang Qingfan spread out the blueprints and began explaining.

"After surveying the site, I found that the factory building is quite spacious and highly adaptable. However, if we're going to build the maze President Pei described, the available floor area alone feels somewhat insufficient."

"After all, each shop needs to be large enough to store a substantial amount of merchandise. If we're hiding those shops inside the maze, then the maze itself also needs to be correspondingly large."

"So my first thought was to take advantage of the building's unusually high ceiling."

"We can create a split-level structure, using vertical space to stagger the different shops and build a three-dimensional maze."

"At the same time, this split-level design allows us to create rest areas and observation platforms at specific locations."

"When visitors stop to rest in these areas, they'll be able to see two or three shops from afar."

"Seeing those shops without being able to reach them will naturally motivate visitors to continue exploring after they've rested. Once they've caught a glimpse of a shop, they'll become even more eager to find it."

"Of course, seeing a shop and actually finding it are two completely different things."

"We'll also make sure every observation area and rest area includes concealed emergency exits."

"Under normal circumstances, these exits will be camouflaged so they look no different from the maze's regular passages."

"But if an emergency occurs, illuminated exit signs will activate, allowing visitors to evacuate quickly and safely."

"As for construction, given the schedule, we'll almost certainly rely heavily on steel framing."

"Since we're not the ones paying for it, we don't really have to worry about construction costs."

"Now, regarding the interior style..."

"I've prepared a simple concept rendering."

"Although President Pei requested a magnificent, golden, luxurious atmosphere, I don't think we should literally make everything pure gold."

"That would quickly become visually tiring."

"And frankly, the end result might look rather tacky—more like the taste of a nouveau riche businessman wearing oversized gold chains than the elegant luxury we're aiming for."

"My idea is to keep the maze's overall visual language consistent."

"To maintain stylistic unity, we can use a variety of premium materials that naturally convey luxury, complemented by carefully designed lighting."

"This creates a luxurious atmosphere without making visitors feel the place is gaudy."

"At the same time, each shopping zone can have its own distinct design details."

"For areas aimed more at younger visitors—selling figurines, collectibles, and merchandise—we can use energetic reds and bright oranges to symbolize vitality, youthfulness, and abundance."

"For areas catering to more mature customers—selling refined souvenirs—we can use blue, representing rationality and tranquility."

"For warmer, more intimate shopping areas, selling couples' accessories and themed clothing, burgundy can serve as an accent color."

"And for shops selling quirky little gadgets, purple can create an air of mystery."

"Since both purple and gold are rich, saturated colors that could overwhelm the space when combined, we'll balance them with touches of white and other lighter colors."

"Each shop will also have its own dedicated staff corridor."

"These passages won't be open to visitors."

"They'll make it easier to restock merchandise, while also ensuring employees don't have to navigate the entire maze every time they come to work."

"At the same time, we can also place small, randomly appearing vendor stalls in certain special areas of the maze to sell interesting little trinkets."

"That way, when visitors are trying to find a specific shopping area, they can judge from the surrounding environment whether they're heading in the right direction."

"After all, President Pei didn't ask us to design this maze to frustrate visitors. The goal is to provide them with a novel and enjoyable shopping experience. By giving them subtle hints here and there, we can preserve the sense of exploration and mystery without making the stores so difficult to find that people lose the motivation to shop."

"That's the overall idea. Do either of you have any suggestions?"

Having finished his explanation, Liang Qingfan looked up at the other two.

Chen Kangtuo and Shi Zherui answered in unison, "It's excellent! No objections!"

Liang Qingfan smiled awkwardly.

"If you have any thoughts, please don't hesitate to say them. It's perfectly normal to revise a design to meet a client's requirements, so there's really no need to feel embarrassed."

Chen Kangtuo shook his head.

"No, I genuinely think this proposal is already very complete. I especially love ideas like the observation areas where visitors can see shops from afar, and the use of different color palettes for different merchandise zones."

"It fulfills President Pei's requirements while maximizing the mall's practicality and functionality. It strikes the perfect balance between exploration, entertainment, and shopping."

"President Pei has always told us that professionals should handle professional work, and amateurs shouldn't try to direct experts. Just as President Pei places complete trust in Master Ruan, we should also place complete trust in your design!"

Liang Qingfan couldn't help smiling.

It seemed that President Pei's philosophy had truly been inherited by the employees of Tengda Group.

Having clients like this really made an architect's life much easier.

He then turned to Shi Zherui.

"Teacher Shi, you'll be overseeing the construction on-site. If you notice anything unsuitable, be sure to let me know as early as possible so I can revise it."

Shi Zherui shook his head.

"No objections at all! Just by looking at the drawings, it's obvious how solid your fundamentals are. You've thought through every aspect so thoroughly, and your imagination is something I can only admire."

"If I were asked to design a maze like this myself, I definitely couldn't do it."

"Although I really hate admitting that *outside monks know how to chant the scriptures better*," he said with a laugh, referring to the Chinese idiom meaning that outsiders are sometimes more highly regarded than locals, "the truth is exactly that. Fortunately, President Pei invited you all the way from Shanghai. Otherwise, if this maze didn't turn out well, I'd have been the one left carrying the blame."

Liang Qingfan smiled.

"You're too kind, Teacher Shi. I think the main reason is that you're also responsible for the Fright Hostel project, so you simply don't have enough time or energy. If you could devote yourself entirely to this project, I'm sure you'd also be able to fulfill President Pei's requirements perfectly."

The two architects exchanged a round of professional compliments, both thoroughly satisfied with the proposal.

"Alright then," Chen Kangtuo said. "I'll submit this plan to President Li and have them arrange construction as soon as possible."

Liang Qingfan let out a yawn.

"Sounds good. I'll leave you two to your work. I've been seriously sleep-deprived these past few days, so I'm heading home to catch up on some rest. If any issues come up, feel free to contact me anytime."

More than an hour later, Li Shi arrived at Chen Kangtuo's office.

"President Li, this is the shopping mall design proposal we've prepared."

Chen Kangtuo and Shi Zherui carefully walked President Li through Liang Qingfan's design.

Since President Li wasn't an architectural professional, Shi Zherui intentionally skipped many of the technical details and instead focused on explaining the overall concept, design philosophy, and intended functionality.

The moment Li Shi saw the incredibly complex structural drawings and the magnificent, gold-themed renderings, he was startled.

A shopping mall decorated this lavishly—looking more luxurious than a high-end boutique—and built with such a complicated structural layout...

How much is something like this going to cost?

Could President Pei be treating me like a gullible sucker and taking me for a ride?

However, after listening to Chen Kangtuo's and Shi Zherui's explanations, every trace of suspicion in Li Shi's heart instantly disappeared.

In its place arose a deep sense of satisfaction—and even pride.

Li Shi had initially thought the proposal was simply a way to inflate the budget, but after hearing the complete explanation of the design, he completely changed his mind.

Expensive? Yes.

But effective? Absolutely.

Not only could it function as a shopping mall, it could also become another attraction within Fright Hostel.

Through this unusual design, it would constantly tease and entice visitors—drawing them in, holding them back, making them eager to explore further. In short, it would create plenty of buzz and greatly stimulate people's desire to shop.

More importantly, it was obvious that President Pei had put a tremendous amount of thought into this project.

Turning a shopping mall into a maze—

That idea must have been something President Pei had racked his brains to come up with.

And such an ingenious, intricate design, combined with such an elegant decorating style—he must have spent a fortune hiring a professional architect specifically for it.

All of that could only mean one thing:

President Pei attached great importance to this project.

And if President Pei took it seriously, how could the project possibly fail?

Which raised another question.

Why was President Pei taking it so seriously?

President Li believed he already knew the answer.

It was because he had accurately understood President Pei's personality.

He had concluded long ago that President Pei was an exceptionally rational businessman.

How much effort President Pei was willing to invest in someone, and how much profit he was willing to let others share, was determined entirely by cold calculations of mutual benefit.

If Li Shi hadn't voluntarily contributed the shopping mall, agreed to pay for the renovations, and offered half of the profits, then President Pei certainly wouldn't have bothered coming up with such a proposal.

It was precisely because Li Shi had given up that portion of the profits and further aligned everyone's interests that President Pei was now willing to expend the mental effort to produce such an outstanding design.

See?

This was what a win-win situation looked like.

Ultimately, this collaboration had only become possible because of his own precise understanding and analysis of President Pei's personality.

Shouldn't I reward myself with a little gold star for this? Li Shi thought proudly.

After Chen Kangtuo finished presenting the proposal, he said,

"President Li, if you have any comments or suggestions regarding the design..."

Li Shi waved his hand decisively.

"None at all. Absolutely none."

"If it's a proposal from President Pei, then there's no way it could be wrong."

"I'll go make the arrangements immediately and do my best to get construction started as soon as possible."