

Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 525: President Pei Clearly Cares, Yet Pretends Not to

That President Li... Every so often he comes up with some new way to make trouble for me!

In the past, whenever he caused me problems, he'd at least tell me about it beforehand.

Now he's just gone and worked together with the spy in my own ranks to get everything done behind my back?

Is there no justice anymore?

What about the law?

Is nobody going to stop this?

Pei Qian was furious, because he didn't want this income at all.

If the system allowed it, he'd gladly make admission to the entire Fright Hostel free of charge.

Now, out of nowhere, someone had practically handed him a shopping mall—and half of all the profits it generated.

To him, it felt no different from a bolt from the blue.

Sure, selling merchandise could make money.

But he had never intended to sell any.

Now he was being forced into it.

The land in the old industrial district was open for anyone to lease.

President Li and the other investors could easily have opened their own stores in better locations.

They wouldn't have been able to sell merchandise related to the Fright Hostel IP, but they could still have sold plenty of other products. As long as there was enough foot traffic, they'd still make money.

Instead, everyone had decided to operate together.

From President Li's perspective, although the investors would receive a smaller share of each item's profit, if they could make the overall business much larger, then everyone would ultimately benefit.

But Pei Qian saw it differently.

Isn't this just shoving a huge pile of profits into my lap for no reason?

He was irritated.

Fortunately, after countless battles, Pei Qian quickly calmed himself.

Looking at it another way, Fright Hostel was intended to lose money from the very beginning.

If Fright Hostel doesn't make money, then naturally the shopping mall inside it won't make money either. There's nothing to worry about.

On the other hand, if the mall is making money, that means Fright Hostel itself has already become popular and earned even more from ticket sales...

This is merely the difference between losing fifty steps and losing a hundred. There's really no point dwelling on it.

Pei Qian tried hard to console himself.

But after a long while, it wasn't working.

The more I think about it, the more cheated I feel.

The more I back off, the angrier I get!

He couldn't let President Li get away with this betrayal.

Keeping his composure with great effort, Pei Qian turned to the Fright Hostel management trainee.

"Tell me the details of the partnership."

The trainee replied, "President Li and the other investors have already leased an old factory building in a prime location."

"The proposal is that they'll cover the rent and renovation costs, while our side provides the interior design plan."

Hearing this, Pei Qian became thoughtful.

He seemed to have found an opening.

"Do you have the design renderings?"

The trainee took out his phone.

"Yes, President Pei. Please have a look."

Pei Qian accepted the phone and examined the images.

It was a perfectly standard high-end shopping mall.

Soft lighting.

A clean, elegant environment.

Shelves packed with dazzling merchandise.

Crowds of tourists strolling through the aisles, selecting products.

Friendly sales assistants enthusiastically introducing the merchandise.

The rendering even included large numbers of shoppers.

Just looking at it caused Pei Qian a sharp pang, as though he could already see the mall becoming wildly successful.

Absolutely unacceptable!

Think about it.

Visitors would first be terrified inside the haunted house.

Their nerves would already be completely frayed.

Then they'd step into this luxurious shopping mall and instantly feel as though they'd entered heaven.

All of their fear would vanish.

When they were wrapped in an overwhelming sense of safety, wouldn't they start shopping like crazy?

After thinking for a moment, Pei Qian declared, "This design absolutely won't do. It needs a complete overhaul!"

"Construction hasn't started yet, has it?"

The trainee shook his head.

"Not yet, President Pei."

"This is only the first draft of the design. It'll probably go through several more revisions, and construction isn't expected to begin until the end of the month."

Pei Qian checked the date.

There was still a week left.

If the designers put in some extra effort, producing an entirely new proposal shouldn't be a problem.

"The current design is far too plain."

"Forget ordinary luxury malls."

"Model it after the world's most extravagant luxury shopping centers."

"It has to be majestic."

"It has to be dazzling."

"It has to be dripping with gold."

"The more expensive, the better."

"Of course, to keep construction on schedule, don't use materials that are difficult to install."

"They just have to be expensive."

"Customers will definitely appreciate our sincerity."

"Also, this mall layout is far too ordinary."

"There's absolutely nothing original about it."

"It doesn't match the Fright Hostel theme at all."

"Turn the entire mall into a maze."

"Hide every single merchandise shop somewhere inside the maze."

"Most customers should wander in, accidentally find the exit, and leave without ever locating a single store."

"...Right."

"You'd better not spread this around."

"I'll go talk to Chen Kangtuo myself."

Once again, Pei Qian emphasized that the existence of the management trainees must remain a secret. Their identities could not be exposed.

The reason for choosing this design was actually very simple:

Sell as little merchandise as possible while making President Li and the investors bleed money.

Renovations were already expensive enough.

Now, by turning the entire mall into a maze filled with walls, the construction costs would skyrocket.

Hmph. That's what you get for messing with me!

Since Tengda Group is providing the design while you're paying for the renovations, don't blame me for being ruthless.

If I don't make you suffer a huge loss this time, you'll just keep clinging to me forever.

The biggest problem was that these investors always followed wherever he invested.

Whatever he invested in, they invested in too.

As a result, many projects that originally weren't supposed to make money ended up becoming profitable because of their involvement.

Where was the justice in that?

If President Li and the others took a massive loss this time, then President Pei's myth of never making a bad investment would finally be shattered.

Once that happened, the crowd of followers would naturally disperse.

Then he could finally find some forgotten corner of the world and lose money in peace.

Before long, all of the management trainees had finished their reports.

Looking back over the meeting, Pei Qian couldn't help feeling genuinely pleased.

Excellent. The management trainee system is finally starting to show results!

Without these trainees, he never would have learned about the latest developments regarding Moyu Delivery's new Fitness Meals.

Nor would he have known what was happening with the Fright Hostel shopping mall.

With the management trainee system in place, his control over every project had become significantly stronger.

Any tiny sign that a project might start making money could no longer escape his notice.

Of course, once certain things had already happened, even knowing about them didn't necessarily mean they could still be changed.

But compared to before, this was already tremendous progress.

Pei Qian nodded in satisfaction.

"Everyone has done an excellent job."

"Keep up the good work!"

. . .

Sunday Evening, May 22

Yesterday afternoon, Pei Qian had already written emails to Chen Kangtuo, Guo Licheng, and Rui Yuchen.

The emails briefly outlined his thoughts regarding the new Fitness Meals and the Fright Hostel shopping mall.

He scheduled them to be sent on Monday morning.

That way, everyone would receive the emails as soon as they arrived at work, without delaying anything.

As for why he waited until Monday...

President Pei had always discouraged overtime.

If he sent work emails on Saturday or Sunday, what if everyone misunderstood?

They might think:

"Wow! President Pei is still working on the weekend."

"How can we be so lazy?"

"Come on, everyone! Time to work harder!"

That would completely defeat the purpose.

Today was Sunday.

Pei Qian spent the morning comfortably basking in the sunlight in his spacious living room.

He spent the afternoon and evening playing video games on his enormous television.

Life felt wonderfully complete.

At present, he remained the only actual resident in the entire apartment building.

He had already hired one housekeeper and two cleaners.

Unfortunately, the workload for all three of them was woefully insufficient.

Pei Qian didn't mind in the slightest.

The fewer people living there, the better.

He glanced at the time.

It was already after ten o'clock at night.

Maybe I should start fixing my sleep schedule and go to bed earlier.

Previously, while researching ways to adjust the schedules of the internet-addicted teenagers at DGE Club, he'd read countless articles about the dangers of staying up late.

The more he read, the guiltier he felt.

After all, only by staying healthy could he continue losing money effectively.

Otherwise, imagine his health collapsing and ending up bedridden in a hospital.

Then, every department head would visit him every day with nothing but good news.

Today one department earned tens of millions.

Tomorrow one of the company's films swept another awards ceremony.

The day after that, another game became a worldwide phenomenon.

Wouldn't he end up foaming at the mouth right there in his hospital bed?

So after giving it some thought, he concluded that if he wanted to keep outsmarting his traitorous subordinates, he absolutely had to take good care of himself.

Go to bed early.

Wake up early.

Eat healthy.

"All right."

"Time to get washed up and go to bed."

Pei Qian happily soaked in the bathtub for a while, brushed his teeth, and then climbed into bed with his phone.

He set an alarm for 8:00 a.m. the next morning.

After placing the phone on the bedside table, he touched the control panel beside the bed.

The bedroom lights switched off.

The smart glass windows automatically turned opaque, blocking out all the lights from outside.

He had only just begun drifting off...

Ding

His phone chimed with a notification from a messaging app.

Pei Qian: "..."

Who is it?

Who stays up this late instead of sleeping?

Don't they understand the importance of going to bed early and living a healthy lifestyle?

He felt thoroughly exasperated.

He desperately wanted to ignore it.

Yet, he couldn't suppress his curiosity.

Unable to resist, Pei Qian reached over and picked up his phone.

He figured that if it wasn't anything important, he simply wouldn't reply.

Ruan Guangjian: "President Pei, you're watching too, aren't you?"

Pei Qian narrowed his eyes, instantly annoyed.

What do you mean by only saying half of what you want to say?

Watching what?

Irritated, he typed back:

Pei Qian: "Watching what?"

Ruan Guangjian replied almost immediately.

Ruan Guangjian: "The live broadcast of the Cannes Film Festival."

Pei Qian: "?"

The Cannes Film Festival?

What does that have to do with me?

It's the middle of the night. Why would I stay up watching a bunch of foreigners hand out awards to films I'd never watch in my life?

Pei Qian decided not to continue the conversation.

He planned to send a random emoji to end the chat and then go to sleep.

Which emoji should I use?

"Smile" feels a little too impolite.

"Grinning" doesn't seem serious enough...

Then I'll just send the "Cool" emoji.

A universal conversation-ending emoji.

However, before Pei Qian could press send, another message from Ruan Guangjian arrived first.

Ruan Guangjian: "A Better Tomorrow is competing at the Cannes Film Festival. Director Zhu Xiaoce and Lu Zhiyao are both there in person. It might even win an award... President Pei, you're really not watching?"

Pei Qian: "😎"

Ruan Guangjian: "😂😂😂"

Ruan Guangjian: "There you go again, President Pei."

"You're pretending."

"You're obviously watching and completely confident about the outcome, but you insist on acting like you don't care."

"All right, I won't disturb you anymore."

"Let's patiently wait for the awards ceremony together."

Pei Qian: "?"

My finger slipped!

Do you understand? My finger slipped!

That emoji didn't mean that at all!

I was just trying to end the conversation!

...

Wait.

A Better Tomorrow is competing at the Cannes Film Festival???

Pei Qian suddenly realized that things might not be as simple as he'd thought.

He hurriedly searched online for the schedule.

Only then did he discover that the final awards wouldn't be announced until after midnight.

Pei Qian: "..."

After a long silence, he quietly set his phone back on the bedside table.

"I'm absolutely not watching."

"Whether it's a blessing or a disaster, if it's meant to happen, I can't avoid it."

"Whether I watch the ceremony or not won't change the results."

"So I might as well not watch."

Pei Qian checked his alarm one last time, tossed the phone onto the bedside table, and pulled the blanket over his head.