

Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 495: Who Dares Teach President Pei?

Pei Qian couldn't help but freeze for a moment.

Game design?

Well, from other people's perspective, that made perfect sense.

Ever since Tengda Group's game division had been established, every single project it produced had been a success, and almost none of the games repeated the same genre.

Other departments had experienced ups and downs to varying degrees, but the game division seemed never to have failed.

And in everyone's eyes, although President Pei's vision, leadership, and decision-making abilities were outstanding—and although he had achieved success in investment, manufacturing, digital products, dining, and many other fields—his greatest strength was still believed to be game design.

The game division was universally regarded as the crown jewel of Tengda Group. Employees who emerged from it were all capable of standing on their own.

But that was only how outsiders saw things.

Pei Qian desperately wanted to say:

I don't have any game-design talent at all!

Throughout the years, the thing he had done most often during game development was simply to go against every successful trend in the market. Yet somehow, every game ended up becoming a huge hit.

However, Tang Yishu's remark gave Pei Qian a major revelation.

He nodded.

"Mm, got it. Nothing else."

After Tang Yishu left, Pei Qian had already made up his mind.

He would study game design!

All the problems he had been struggling with before could be solved this way.

First, he genuinely knew very little about game design, meaning there was plenty of room for improvement. As long as he learned even a little, the system would probably judge that he had gained something.

Second, if he focused only on learning game-design concepts, it shouldn't be too difficult. Unlike highly specialized fields, there was little risk of ending up completely unable to understand anything.

Third, if he was going to learn game design, there was no need for some ordinary training course. He could simply pay top designers from leading domestic game companies to teach him one-on-one. Those industry veterans earned bonuses worth hundreds of thousands—or even millions—of yuan every month. Paying them a hundred thousand yuan per lesson for private tutoring wasn't unreasonable, was it?

Finally, learning more about game design would help him fill in his knowledge gaps. In the past, he had made money precisely because he didn't understand game design. If he actually learned it, wouldn't he be able to avoid profitable ideas more effectively and finally achieve Tengda Group's first historically disastrous game project?

It was practically the perfect solution.

The more Pei Qian thought about it, the more reasonable it seemed.

There might not be many game producers in China who possessed both fame and fortune, but there were certainly plenty who knew how to make money.

Pei Qian figured that the ability to generate profits was probably a form of design skill too, and the system should recognize it.

In any case, he would contact a few people first.

Even if he was willing to pay, they might not necessarily be willing to come all the way to Jingzhou.

Successful producers either owned their own companies, held company shares, or received enormous bonuses from hit projects.

Even if they happened to need money, they might not have the time. If their projects were currently in development, there was no way they could spare themselves.

Considering the time and effort involved, those people might not be interested in a mere few hundred thousand yuan in tuition fees.

So first, he needed to find suitable candidates and discuss the matter with them.

Pei Qian called Assistant Xin over.

"Contact several well-known domestic game companies. Find their best producers and tell them that I sincerely want to learn some game-design knowledge. Ask whether they'd be willing to come to Jingzhou and teach. The tuition fee is negotiable."

A look of surprise flashed across Assistant Xin's face, but she didn't ask any questions. She simply nodded and turned to carry out the task.

Pei Qian added, "This matter should not be made public."

Assistant Xin nodded.

"Understood."

After she left, Pei Qian couldn't help but begin imagining the possibilities.

I wonder which game producer will accept my sincere invitation?

He tried hard to recall the people he knew, only to realize that he had barely interacted with other game producers at all. The only one he could think of was Zhou Muyan from Tianhuo Studio, and that had been more than a year ago.

The main reason was simple: to Pei Qian, games were merely a method of losing money. He had never been interested in the domestic game industry and had no motivation to network with successful game producers.

As a result, even now, he hardly knew any game producers.

But that didn't really matter. Tengda Group's games were at least somewhat well-known within China's gaming industry. If President Pei sincerely wanted to learn some game-design knowledge, surely there would be at least one or two industry veterans willing to honor him with their presence, right?

Or, at the very least, they could come simply to get acquainted with President Pei.

Jingzhou was a city full of talented people, good food, and fun attractions. A trip here certainly wouldn't be a loss.

I wonder which big-name producer will be willing to come? I'm really looking forward to it.

Pei Qian couldn't help but daydream.

More than ten minutes later, there was a knock on the door. Assistant Xin had returned.

Pei Qian looked at her expectantly.

"So, who agreed to come?"

Assistant Xin's expression was somewhat strange.

"Uh, President Pei, I contacted four companies. They... all refused."

Pei Qian froze.

"Why? Did I not make the tuition arrangement clear enough? Or was our sincerity insufficient?"

Assistant Xin shook her head.

"It's not about money, and it's not about sincerity."

"They simply didn't believe it. They thought we were joking."

"One of them said, word for word: *'Come on, stop joking. President Pei is already one of the top game producers in the country. Who would dare teach him? Wouldn't that be showing off one's meager skills before a master?'*"

"Another said: *'All I know how to make are pay-to-win games. When it comes to artistic merit in game design, I'm not even qualified to breathe the exhaust fumes from President Pei's car. How could I possibly teach him?'*"

"Everyone said that if they were being invited as guests or to build connections, they'd be happy to come. But teaching a class? They'd rather not."

"I felt that continuing to ask around probably wouldn't produce any results, so I came back first to report to you."

Pei Qian was speechless.

"How about asking Zhou Muyan from Tianhuo Studio?"

They were old acquaintances. He should be easier to talk to, right?

Assistant Xin smiled.

"I already asked him. His reaction was the strongest of all."

Pei Qian: "..."

What a mess.

Personally, Pei Qian didn't care much about the wording. Learning, exchanging ideas, discussing—it all amounted to roughly the same thing.

But the system's requirements were crystal clear.

It had to be *learning*, and the 1.6 million yuan had to be spent specifically as tuition and other teaching-related expenses.

Exchanging ideas or discussing game design didn't satisfy the system's conditions.

Pei Qian had never expected to be rejected.

And he certainly hadn't expected to be rejected for *this* reason.

Everyone thought President Pei's game-design skills were already too advanced, so they felt embarrassed to teach him!

Pei Qian refused to accept that.

He had finally come up with a workable solution. Was he supposed to just give up?

Absolutely not!

If they wouldn't teach him openly, then he'd simply have to study anonymously.

Because Pei Qian had always been careful to keep his identity private, very few people actually knew what he looked like. Even during interviews, there had never been any photographs or video recordings of him.

In other words, even if he met these producers face-to-face, they wouldn't know that he was President Pei.

Pei Qian considered disguising himself as a wealthy second-generation heir who had money to burn and was willing to spend 1.6 million yuan hiring successful game producers to teach him game design.

After all, rich heirs did strange things all the time. The producers probably wouldn't find it suspicious.

However, that created a new problem.

The 1.6 million yuan was coming from the system and had to be paid from the company's account. When the recipients saw that the transfer came from Tengda Group, what would they think?

Why would some rich heir be paying tuition with Tengda Group's corporate account?

That clearly wouldn't work.

After giving it more thought, he decided to adopt a different identity.

Not a rich heir, but an outstanding employee of Tengda Group.

Because of his exceptional performance, President Pei had specially granted him 1.6 million yuan to spend however he wished on further education and professional development.

This outstanding employee had always dreamed of learning game design. Since money wasn't an issue, he had decided to use the funds to hire successful game producers and study their game-development experience.

Under this setup, he obviously couldn't be an employee of the game division.

So...

The investment department!

Because of a highly successful investment, he had received special recognition and rewards from President Pei.

Yes, that more or less made sense.

But if someone asked:

"Since you're an employee of Tengda Group, why not just ask President Pei to teach you game design?"

At that point, he could simply answer, *"President Pei is extremely busy and doesn't have the time."*

There were still a few holes in the story, but it should be good enough. As long as he could fool even one person into accepting the arrangement, that would be sufficient.

All he needed was for a successful game producer to agree to teach him so he could spend the money.

Besides, most of what he was saying was technically true.

Pei Qian really could be considered an outstanding employee of Tengda Group, and he had indeed achieved results in the investment department.

He was only concealing one small detail:

That outstanding employee and President Pei were the same person.

After thinking for a moment, Pei Qian said, "Let's try a few different companies. Tell them that an outstanding employee from our investment department wants to learn some game-design knowledge and is willing to pay a substantial amount to hire them as an instructor."

Assistant Xin immediately understood.

"Understood, President Pei."

She knew perfectly well that this "outstanding employee" was actually President Pei himself. The purpose of presenting it this way was simply to avoid running into the same problem as before—namely, nobody daring to teach him.

As for why President Pei was so determined to have other game producers teach him...

Assistant Xin was somewhat curious, but she had no intention of asking.

President Pei had always been an unconventional person. This wasn't even close to the most baffling thing he had ever done, so there was no reason to be surprised.

Ten minutes later, Assistant Xin returned.

"President Pei, one producer said he's willing to consider it."

Pei Qian brightened immediately.

"Who?"

Assistant Xin replied,

"He An from Mengguo Games. President He is a veteran game producer with accomplishments in both single-player and online games. He's highly respected within the domestic gaming industry. At the moment he's semi-retired, spending his time traveling both inside and outside the country and enjoying life."

"Do you think he'll do?"

Pei Qian nodded.

"Perfect."

As far as he was concerned, all successful game producers were probably more or less the same. They all had unique insights into games.

As long as someone was willing to come, that was enough.

Assistant Xin nodded.

"All right. I'll book the flight right away. President He is semi-retired and happens to be free at the moment. If everything goes smoothly, he should arrive in Jingzhou tomorrow."

"Oh, right. President He said he'd like to give a simple aptitude test first. He doesn't teach people who are too slow."

At that, Assistant Xin smiled.

"Of course, for someone like you, President Pei, that's hardly worth mentioning."

With that, she turned and left.

Pei Qian sat there with his mouth slightly open, frozen in place.

Huh?

A condition that's hardly worth mentioning?

At that moment, Pei Qian felt exactly like a student who hadn't done a single bit of studying and had suddenly been informed that there would be an entrance exam.

People always said the test would be easy.

In reality, he wouldn't know how to answer a single question!

Is it still possible to cram at the last minute?

But then another problem occurred to him.

How am I supposed to study when I have absolutely no idea what kind of questions he'll ask? There isn't even a textbook! Study what, exactly?

Dark lines seemed to appear across Pei Qian's face as he began to seriously question the wisdom of his decision.