

Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 477: Won't You Hear About the Compensation First?

Friday, April 8

Pei Qian followed Assistant Xin to a high-end gym near the company.

It wasn't far away—only about a five-minute walk from the office. It was also fairly close to Handong University.

The gym occupied a storefront facing the street. Above the entrance was the gym's brand name:

Platinum Sand Fitness, Handong University Branch.

The large stylized characters gave off a sense of energy and fashion. Besides the clean floor-to-ceiling windows, both sides of the entrance were decorated with dynamic, abstract murals depicting people in motion—a basketball player soaring for a dunk, someone swinging a badminton racket, a boxer wearing gloves, and more.

The artwork was divided by irregular lines, creating a comic-book-like aesthetic that further emphasized youthfulness and movement.

Pei Qian frowned slightly.

He was quite satisfied with the interior decoration. After taking over, the gym could reopen quickly without wasting time on renovations.

However, he wasn't pleased with the flashy exterior.

It attracted far too much attention!

A business under Tengda Group should be as low-profile as possible.

Still, that was an easy fix. After acquiring the place, he could hire a construction team to repaint the entire storefront in a subdued color and make it as inconspicuous as possible.

Just a minor issue.

Before they entered, Assistant Xin gave a brief overview of the situation.

"President Pei, I had people inquire at several nearby gyms. Three of them are interested in transferring ownership, and this one has the best facilities and décor. It fits your requirements the most."

"Platinum Sand Fitness is a nationwide gym chain with several branches in Jingzhou. It has expanded very rapidly in recent years, but that aggressive expansion has also caused problems."

"The Handong University branch was originally intended to be a premium gym targeting university students and office workers from nearby business districts. However, the operation ran into difficulties."

"There are simply too many gyms around Handong University. Many small gyms engage in price wars and sell annual memberships at extremely low prices. The local fitness market has already been divided up among them."

"To make matters worse, Platinum Sand Fitness has another branch just over a kilometer away, which further split the customer base."

"The manager of this branch targeted high-income customers from the start, so membership fees were significantly higher than those of competing gyms."

"Things were fine initially. The gym's excellent environment attracted a number of affluent customers. But as more memberships were sold and the pool of potential customers was exhausted, revenue from new memberships and personal training could no longer cover operating costs."

"Eventually, the gym fell into the red and could no longer sustain itself."

"If you're interested in this location, there are two options."

"First, you can take over everything—the memberships, coaching staff, and so on. Naturally, the current owner would love that arrangement. But we could use it as leverage to negotiate a lower price, perhaps even far below expectations."

"The downside is that we wouldn't actually receive the money those members originally paid for their gym cards. We'd simply be inheriting the obligation while getting a discount from the owner in return. Of course, we could continue earning money from personal training services."

"The second option is to take over only the premises—excluding the members, coaches, and even the equipment. The current owner would clear everything out, and we'd start fresh."

"Since there's another Platinum Sand Fitness branch within a kilometer, the owner could transfer all existing members there."

"While that would reduce our burden, there are only so many people in the area who regularly work out. It could mean that when we open, we struggle to attract any members."

Struggle to attract members?

That would be perfect!

Keeping his expression neutral, Pei Qian replied, "Alright, I understand. I'll handle the rest myself. You only need to take care of the paperwork."

Assistant Xin nodded, "Understood, President Pei."

The two walked into the Platinum Sand Fitness Handong University Branch.

The moment they entered, a man in his thirties wearing a business suit quickly approached them.

"President Pei! Welcome, welcome! I'm the manager of this branch. My surname is Wei."

Clearly, Assistant Xin had already informed Manager Wei of Pei Qian's identity in advance, which was why he was treating him with such importance.

After all, not all buyers taking over a failing business were created equal.

An ordinary buyer might be a "sucker" taking over a losing operation, but an extremely wealthy buyer wasn't a sucker at all—they were a benefactor.

The moment Manager Wei heard that Tengda Group was interested in the gym, he was overjoyed.

The branch had been losing money for quite some time. Manager Wei had already made plans to transfer all members to the neighboring chain location and shut this branch down entirely to stop the bleeding.

Now that Tengda Group was willing to take it over, he would still lose money, but losing less was better than losing more.

Naturally, he was delighted.

"President Pei, let me give you a quick tour first."

Under Manager Wei's guidance, Pei Qian thoroughly inspected the entire gym.

It was spacious, well-decorated, and among the better gyms in Jingzhou in terms of environment and facilities.

However, it lacked a swimming pool, sauna, massage area, and other fancy amenities.

Pei Qian understood very well that this was a significant disadvantage for a gym positioning itself as a premium establishment.

For traditional gyms, the more complete the facilities, the better. Gyms equipped with pools, saunas, and similar amenities generally found it much easier to attract members.

The reason was simple. Many beginners chose gyms with the mindset of "*I may not use it, but you can't not have it.*"

Even if they didn't currently know how to swim, they might think *"What if I suddenly feel like learning someday?"*

As a result, many people were willing to pay higher membership fees for a gym with more comprehensive facilities.

What others viewed as a weakness was actually a strength in Pei Qian's eyes.

It further reduced the gym's attractiveness.

Of course, Manager Wei wasn't about to mention any of that. Instead, he enthusiastically described the large amount of investment that had gone into the gym and its bright future prospects.

Pei Qian wasn't really listening. The words went in one ear and out the other.

When it came time to negotiate the price, he could simply unleash Assistant Xin and let her handle everything.

After the tour, Manager Wei gathered all of the gym's personal trainers and lined them up in two rows in front of Pei Qian.

Every trainer stood tall with their chest out and stomach in, looking energetic and confident.

These days, finding work as a fitness trainer wasn't easy.

If the gym shut down, they would have to apply to other gyms, and there was no guarantee they would be hired.

Since someone was willing to take over the business, the best outcome would be to make a good impression on the new owner and convince him to keep both the gym and the staff.

Manager Wei's intentions were obvious.

There was no way he could personally arrange jobs for all these trainers. If President Pei happened to like some of them and decided to retain them, that would be ideal.

"President Pei, allow me to introduce some of our most popular gold-level trainers—"

Pei Qian raised a hand and interrupted him.

Compared to Manager Wei's recommendations, he trusted his own judgment more.

His eyes swept quickly across the trainers before mentally eliminating them one by one.

Anyone with a poor physique was automatically rejected.

If someone with a mediocre body could survive in the fitness industry, it probably meant they were exceptionally good at selling classes, persuading clients, and marketing themselves.

People like that were dangerous.

If he recruited such a marketing genius, the gym might actually become profitable enough to make him cough up blood.

Anyone whose eyes sparkled with enthusiasm and who appeared highly motivated was also rejected.

Those people clearly looked like workaholics—overly driven employees who had already been brainwashed by several gyms into embracing hustle culture.

They weren't what he wanted either.

Finally, Pei Qian's gaze passed over the bulging muscles of the trainers in the front row and settled on someone standing at the far edge of the back row with his head lowered the entire time.

The man wasn't tall and wore glasses.

His face looked somewhat older than the others, and hidden behind the crowd of trainers, it was impossible to tell what kind of shape he was actually in.

"You. The guy with the glasses. Come out."

Pei Qian crooked a finger at him.

All the trainers immediately turned to look at the bespectacled man.

The man raised his head in disbelief and pointed at himself.

"Me?"

Pei Qian nodded.

"That's right. You. Come here."

Still looking completely confused, the man squeezed past the trainers in front and walked over to Pei Qian.

The moment he stepped forward, Pei Qian was stunned by the mountain-like physique hidden beneath his ordinary appearance.

A scene from Kung Fu Hustle suddenly popped into his mind.

This trainer wasn't tall, and when he stood behind the others he seemed completely unremarkable, but his muscles were unbelievably developed...

"What's your name?" Pei Qian asked.

The personal trainer replied in a deep, muffled voice, "Guo Licheng."

Pei Qian paused.

"I asked for your real name, not your nickname."

Manager Wei hurriedly explained, "President Pei, Coach Guo's name really is Guo Licheng. His surname is Guo, and Licheng comes from the phrase 'cultivate sincerity through words and actions.'"

Pei Qian fell silent.

"...My apologies. My education has failed me."

"But your name doesn't exactly sound very favorable for weight loss."

Manager Wei quickly pulled Pei Qian aside.

"Ahem, President Pei, there's something I need to make clear beforehand."

“It's not that Coach Guo is bad. The issue is that he's... not particularly clever. He's not good at management, his interpersonal skills aren't very strong, and his sales ability ranks near the bottom of the entire team.”

“Of course, if you simply want him to be a personal trainer, there's absolutely no problem. He's extremely professional.”

“But if you're planning to have him manage a gym, there might be... a tiny little problem.”

“And another thing: Coach Guo had already decided to leave the fitness industry altogether.”

“I can recommend someone else to you—someone who's every bit as good as Coach Guo, but also smart, quick-witted, and highly capable. I guarantee you'll be satisfied!”

Pei Qian shook his head.

“No need. I don't want anyone except him.”

“Uh... alright.”

Manager Wei wanted to continue persuading him, but then thought better of it.

What happened to these trainers after the gym changed hands wasn't really his concern. There was no reason for him to meddle.

He dismissed the other trainers, leaving only Guo Licheng behind to await President Pei's instructions.

Meanwhile, Pei Qian gave Assistant Xin a few brief instructions.

“Sell off all the gym equipment. Move it out and sell it second-hand to other gyms. We'll buy brand-new equipment.”

“Transfer all the members to the other chain location. We won't be taking them over.”

“Keep only Coach Guo. I'll talk to him personally.”

“Find a few faults and negotiate the price down a bit. No need to be ruthless, but don't let the manager think we're easy marks.”

Assistant Xin nodded and went off to discuss the contract with Manager Wei.

Pei Qian, meanwhile, approached Coach Guo.

Before he could speak, Guo Licheng beat him to it, “President Pei! I'm very sorry, but there's something I need to tell you.”

“I've already decided to leave the fitness industry.”

“So I'm afraid I have to decline. You should look for another trainer.”

Pei Qian was silent for a moment.

“Are you sure you don't want to hear how much the compensation is first?”