

Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 485: An Architect Who Fits the Requirements

April 13th, Wednesday

As Liang Qingfan set foot in Jingzhou for the first time, he gazed curiously through the car window at the city streets passing by outside.

The driver sent by Tengda Group was highly skilled, and the ride was exceptionally smooth. It wouldn't be long before he met Tengda Group's President Pei.

Thinking of this, Liang Qingfan couldn't help feeling a sense of anticipation.

Liang Qingfan was currently employed by Gaoling Architectural Engineering Design Co., Ltd.

Gaoling Design was one of the top architectural design firms in China, specializing in spatial planning, stylistic design, and architectural techniques. Its services covered land planning, product positioning, architectural design, landscape design, interior design, and furnishing design.

The company had designed model homes, sales centers, clubhouses, shopping malls, hotels, and various leisure and entertainment venues. It had completed designs for thousands of real-estate developments belonging to major property companies across the country and enjoyed an outstanding reputation within the industry.

The company's founder, Zhou Nanling, had won numerous domestic and international architectural awards and had even appeared on several television variety shows, earning the nickname "The Magician."

In one such program, Zhou Nanling transformed an ultra-small apartment measuring only 12 square meters—with a maximum ceiling height of 5.1 meters and a minimum height of 3.1 meters—into a residence containing two bedrooms, a living room, and a bathroom. Every inch of space was utilized to its fullest potential, making it suitable for a family of four.

Although he appeared on television renovating homes for ordinary families, a designer of Zhou Nanling's caliber was far beyond the reach of average homeowners.

In reality, Zhou Nanling and Gaoling Design typically accepted commercial projects worth millions of yuan or more, such as planning high-end hotels, shopping centers, or designing model units for major real-estate developers.

Yesterday afternoon, the company had received a call from the famous local enterprise Tengda Group in Jingzhou.

The caller explained that they were creating a new brand called Sloth Apartments and hoped to establish a long-term partnership, requesting that an architect be sent to Jingzhou.

Originally, Zhou Nanling intended to send one of his senior architects.

However, the client had made a special request:

The architect had to be under thirty years old, on the grounds that younger architects would better understand the needs of young people.

The requirement was extremely unusual.

Architecture was a profession that depended heavily on experience and accumulated knowledge. Generally speaking, the older the architect, the more valuable they became. Architects under forty could still be considered "young architects," while architects under thirty who had achieved any notable reputation were exceptionally rare.

Even though the reasoning sounded rather absurd, client requirements were client requirements.

As a result, twenty-seven-year-old Liang Qingfan was given this precious opportunity to travel to Jingzhou and independently take charge of such an important project.

Liang Qingfan had heard of Tengda Group long ago because he had played the game Ocean Fortress.

More recently, A Better Tomorrow and the OTTO smartphone had made him realize that Tengda Group was involved in far more than just games.

But after searching on Qiandu and browsing the TPDb website, he discovered that Tengda Group actually operated an astonishing number of businesses.

When he saw ventures such as Moyu Internet Café and Mingyun Private Kitchen, he became even more excited.

He couldn't help imagining that if this cooperation went smoothly, perhaps Gaoling Design could eventually take over the design work for all of Tengda Group's various businesses and establish a deep, long-term partnership.

If things really reached that stage, perhaps he could even strike out on his own in Jingzhou and establish a new design firm.

The thought filled Liang Qingfan with excitement and hope for the future.

"Driver, are we heading to meet President Pei now?" Liang Qingfan asked.

Xiao Sun shook his head.

"No. President Pei has already made arrangements. You'll first check into a hotel, get settled, and have a good rest. Tomorrow you'll meet President Pei and discuss work."

Liang Qingfan quickly replied, "That's not necessary. It's not even noon yet, and there's still plenty of time. Besides, I hardly brought any luggage—just this small suitcase."

"If President Pei is available, I'd like to meet him directly and discuss the project first. It'll put my mind at ease."

Xiao Sun thought for a moment.

"Alright, please wait a moment. I'll give President Pei a call."

He temporarily pulled over to the side of the road and dialed Pei Qian's number, briefly explaining the situation.

"President Pei agreed. I'll take you directly to the City Dawn complex."

. . .

Half an hour later, Xiao Sun drove Liang Qingfan into the residential development.

The uniquely shaped building designated for Sloth Apartments stood before them, and Pei Qian was already waiting at the entrance.

Liang Qingfan quickly got out of the car and walked over.

"President Pei!"

"Mr. Liang!"

The two men felt an immediate sense of rapport and warmly shook hands.

Pei Qian carefully looked Liang Qingfan up and down and was extremely satisfied with his age.

He had gone to considerable lengths to find a designer who met his requirements.

Although hiring a famous architect would have allowed him to spend more money, it would also generate publicity.

Zhou Nanling was a renowned architect in China. Bringing him in would certainly increase costs, but it would also be equivalent to attaching a golden signboard to Sloth Apartments.

What if large numbers of people heard Zhou Nanling's name and rushed to rent units there?

That would be a disaster.

So he couldn't hire someone too famous.

At the same time, he couldn't hire someone completely incompetent either.

The main reason was simple:

Pei Qian planned to live there himself.

If he hired a terrible designer who made a complete mess of the interior, Pei Qian would have to suffer through living in it as well.

Wouldn't that just be spending money to make himself miserable?

After much consideration, Pei Qian had given Gaoling Design a specific requirement:

Send a designer under thirty years old.

A designer like that would inevitably have less experience. Their work would be unlikely to be exceptionally impressive, and they would lack major industry fame, making them less likely to attract attention.

At the same time, since the architect was recommended by Zhou Nanling, their abilities shouldn't be too poor either. At least they wouldn't turn the place into a disaster.

Taking everything into account, Liang Qingfan perfectly matched Pei Qian's requirements.

Meanwhile, after getting over his surprise at President Pei's youth, Liang Qingfan noticed something else in his eyes:

Genuine welcome and appreciation.

There wasn't the slightest trace of doubt, condescension, or dissatisfaction.

This immediately increased Liang Qingfan's favorable impression of President Pei.

As a very young architect, Liang Qingfan frequently encountered clients who silently wondered, *"Can someone this young really do the job?"*

Even if they didn't say it aloud, he could always sense it.

Naturally, that left him feeling somewhat uncomfortable.

President Pei's attitude, however, was like a refreshing spring breeze.

After exchanging a few pleasantries, Pei Qian led Liang Qingfan into the elevator and took him to the model apartment.

The moment they entered, they were greeted by the enormous living room that occupied roughly a quarter of the floor plan.

The room was shaped like a quarter-circle sector. It contained sofas, a coffee table, a television, a round dining table, a piano, and two tea-drinking seating areas by the windows.

Overall, the design was fairly conventional.

Clearly, the developer had not hired the industry's top designers to create this model apartment. However, judging from the results, the designer's abilities were respectable, and they had obviously done their best.

Liang Qingfan carefully examined the space before asking:

"President Pei, are all the units in this building delivered with full interior finishing?"

Pei Qian nodded.

"That's right."

Liang Qingfan felt somewhat troubled.

A fully finished interior meant he couldn't make drastic structural changes.

After all, it wasn't realistic to tear out perfectly good flooring and wall finishes, demolish every removable partition wall, and rebuild everything from scratch.

The existing finishing work here was actually quite good.

Completely stripping it out would be unnecessary and would dramatically increase the construction schedule.

Liang Qingfan then looked toward the furniture throughout the model apartment.

"And, President Pei, these furnishings..."

Pei Qian waved his hand decisively.

"Replace all of them!"

"The reason we've invited you here is because we want to completely redesign and customize all of the interior furnishings."

"Each floor should have a furnishing budget of at least 500,000 yuan."

"We'll pay your design fee with a 30% premium on top."

"As for the style, it should preferably be a minimalist design suitable for young people. None of those flashy, gaudy luxury decorations."

"Install every smart-home feature that can reasonably be installed. The sofas must be extremely comfortable. There should be dedicated gaming equipment, both a large television and a laser projector, game consoles, game discs, a soundbar system, high-end massage chairs, and so on."

"In short, the project's name is Sloth Apartments. The idea is that once young people move in, they'll become like sloths and never want to get up again!"

Pei Qian launched into a lengthy explanation, outlining all of his requirements.

In short, the design was being planned entirely around his own personal preferences.

As for future tenants...

It would be even better if they didn't like it!

Liang Qingfan felt somewhat conflicted.

The requirements were certainly clear, but the entire concept of Sloth Apartments sounded a little questionable.

Gaoling Design had handled furnishing projects before, but those were typically model homes for major real-estate developers, and the styles generally leaned toward luxury and high-end aesthetics.

In other words, what people commonly called the "luxury villa" style.

After all, the people who could afford these kinds of large apartments were usually wealthy businesspeople and affluent families, and most rich people weren't particularly fond of minimalist or Scandinavian-style interiors.

Minimalist designs were generally more suitable for smaller apartments and younger residents.

But young people usually couldn't afford apartments this large.

President Pei's requirements went even further.

Not only did he insist on a minimalist aesthetic and premium quality, but he also demanded a furnishing budget exceeding 500,000 yuan and wanted the rooms packed with entertainment equipment.

That seemed to narrow the target audience to a very small group.

Then Liang Qingfan reconsidered.

After all, Sloth Apartments was intended as a rental property, not something being sold.

If the rent was reasonable, some young people might be willing to share the apartment with roommates.

At the time, in Jingzhou, a sixty-square-meter two-bedroom apartment in a reasonably good location rented for roughly 2,300 yuan per month.

Using that as a reference, this apartment could easily accommodate three to five young tenants sharing the space.

As long as the rent stayed around 6,000 yuan per month, the cost could be divided among several people, and there should still be plenty of interested renters.

As a result, Liang Qingfan didn't raise any objections.

Instead, he quietly noted all of President Pei's requirements and began seriously considering how to design the furnishings to meet them.

Meanwhile, Pei Qian was pondering a completely different question:

How could he raise the monthly rent above 8,000 yuan—while still staying within the system's rules—and discourage as many tenants as possible from renting the place?