Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 347: I Want to Invest in the Most Unpopular Project

December 3rd, Friday.

Tengda Network Technology Co., Ltd.

Tang Yishu finished cleaning up after Yin Tang, scooping the litter and refilling the cat food as usual. Then she passed by Bao Xu and returned to her own desk.

On Bao Xu's computer screen was the website Terminal Chinese Web.

It looked like he was completely absorbed in the gripping plot of a novel, utterly unconcerned with what was happening around him.

However, the moment Tang Yishu walked past him, Bao Xu swiftly swept his peripheral vision around, confirmed that no one was watching, and switched programs at lightning speed.

He skimmed through the revised document, saved it quickly, and sent it to Li Yada via the chat software.

After finishing all that, Bao Xu finally relaxed a little and went back to pretending he was reading the novel.

Switching back and forth between game programs was too slow—clumsy and far too easy to expose himself. A novel website was much more convenient.

Although GOG had already entered an intense development phase, the design work showed no sign of slowing down.

After all, this type of game was extremely prone to bugs.

Every hero had unique mechanics. The priority rules between different skills, whether the animations, effects, and numerical values of certain abilities were reasonable, whether some details still needed refinement—

Design issues like these required constant tweaking.

Relying solely on Li Yada and the design team was clearly not enough, so Bao Xu had no choice but to help out.

But whenever he thought about the threat of “paid vacations,” his courage wavered.

He didn’t dare openly modify the documents. Instead, he would secretly make the changes and then send them to Li Yada for her to upload.

That way, when the time came to select Best Employee again, he could slip through unscathed.

A few minutes later, Li Yada replied.

“Do you want me to apply for overtime hours for you this weekend?”

“Or are we continuing to do this secretly?”

“I honestly think it’s better not to keep sneaking around. There are too many people around, and it’s easy for something to go wrong.”

Bao Xu replied: “I haven’t decided yet. Let me think it over.”

“It feels like the atmosphere’s been pretty tense lately. Not sure if it’s just my imagination.”

Ever since he’d run into Tang Yishu by chance last weekend, Bao Xu had been plagued by an ominous feeling, mentally preparing himself for the possibility that he might be exposed at any moment.

Yet President Pei never came knocking.

Instead, Li Yada and Xiao Zhou had been summoned to President Pei’s office, clearly indicating that the issue of weekend overtime had already aroused his suspicion.

This time, they’d gotten lucky. Li Yada and Xiao Zhou helped cover things up, and the new girl, Tang Yishu, turned out to be fairly loyal and didn’t run off to tattle to President Pei. For now, he was still safe.

But it was also a wake-up call.

This weekend, President Pei had already approved a certain amount of overtime.

The design team could apply for a limited number of overtime slots. Although both the number of people and the hours were strictly capped, it was still good news. At the very least, they no longer had to secretly work overtime at home. They could come to the office openly, mooch coffee and snacks, and discuss design ideas face to face.

But Bao Xu had no intention of applying for one of those slots.

Because once he did, how would President Pei look at him? How would his colleagues see him?

Wouldn't all his previous efforts be for nothing?

With only two or three months left until the next Best Employee Selection Process, Bao Xu had no desire to let everything fall apart at the last moment.

So now, three paths lay before him:

Apply for overtime and work openly and aboveboard; work overtime at home; or don't apply at all and sneak into the office to work overtime in secret.

Bao Xu felt a bit torn, but his instincts told him not to rush this. It would be better to observe the situation for a while before making a decision.

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Saturday night, Moyu Internet Café, Handong University branch.

Pei Qian and Li Shi sat facing each other, sipping cocktails in silence.

Pei Qian looked distracted, his gaze unfocused and his mood low.

Li Shi, on the other hand, drank while carefully observing President Pei's expression, as though trying to guess what he was thinking.

Recently, Pei Qian had felt that things just weren't going smoothly for him. With nothing else to do that evening, he came out to have a couple of drinks.

He hadn’t expected to run into Li Shi.

Pei Qian didn’t think much of it. After all, President Li was also a regular at Moyu Internet Café. He assumed it was just a normal chance encounter.

But for Li Shi, it was anything but accidental.

He had come to the Handong University branch specifically to look for Pei Qian.

As for why…

That was a long story.

Some time ago, the explosive popularity of Mingyun Private Kitchen had earned Li Shi’s Fu Hui Capital a tidy profit, and it also made him pay much closer attention to Pei Qian’s movements.

He suddenly realized that investing could be this easy!

As long as President Pei opened a Moyu Internet Café or a restaurant somewhere, you could just follow blindly with your investment and make money for sure!

However, lately Pei Qian seemed to have lost interest in brick-and-mortar businesses.

Aside from opening a few Moyu Internet Café 2.0 branches in major shopping malls, there had been no further news.

Li Shi wanted to follow along and make some easy money, but no matter how hard he tried, he couldn’t even get a bite.

This puzzled Li Shi greatly.

In his view, Moyu Internet Café had finally taken off. Occupancy rates were up, its reputation was established—wasn't this exactly the time to roll out the model nationwide and open branches like crazy?

Even if he wanted to play it safe, shouldn't they at least expand to other cities within Handong Province? Cities like Liuzhou or Lin'An—shouldn't those be next on the list?

Li Shi's plan was simple: once President Pei opened Moyu Internet Cafés in those cities, he would jump in with some investment on the side and make a profit for sure.

But he waited, and waited, and waited…

And President Pei made no move at all.

It was as if the Moyu Internet Café—having finally turned losses into profits and started making money—had nothing to do with him anymore, as though Pei Qian had simply abandoned it.

It was downright bizarre!

So today, Li Shi finally couldn't hold it in anymore and came to subtly probe President Pei's intentions.

"President Pei seems to have been very busy lately. You don't come to Moyu Internet Café for drinks very often anymore."

"Looks like when your career is going too smoothly, that can be a kind of happy trouble as well."

Li Shi decided to start with a bit of flattery.

But Pei Qian wasn't moved by it in the slightest.

His career was indeed going smoothly, but there was only trouble, no happiness at all…

Pei Qian took a sip of his cocktail, his expression gloomy. "President Li, I'm feeling especially lost right now."

Li Shi was taken aback, then laughed. "What could President Pei possibly be confused about? Is it because you succeed so effortlessly every time you enter a new field that life no longer feels challenging?"

Pei Qian: "…"

The first half was right. The second half was wrong.

To be precise, it was precisely because he succeeded every time he entered a new field that Pei Qian felt life was *too* challenging, so much so that he was practically on the verge of losing his fighting spirit.

Unfortunately, this was the kind of trouble he couldn't confide in anyone.

Pei Qian looked at Li Shi and said with complete sincerity, "President Li, you have extensive experience in investment, and you're especially familiar with the industries in Jingzhou. Could you perhaps give some guidance to a confused me?"

Li Shi froze for a moment, then smiled. "President Pei, I feel like you're teasing me. When it comes to investment, I'm no match for you. As for understanding Jingzhou's industries, I might have a slight edge, but when it

comes to the future development trends of Jingzhou's industries, you're far ahead of me."

Pei Qian: "……"

I'm asking you very seriously for advice, not trading rainbow-flattery with you!

Sigh… talking to successful people is exhausting.

Pei Qian decided to cut through all the polite detours and get straight to the point. "President Li, I'll be blunt."

"Could you tell me, roughly, what project the investment community in Jingzhou is most unwilling to touch right now?"

"I'm planning to casually invest five or ten million, to make a tiny, insignificant contribution to Jingzhou's economic development."

Li Shi was stunned.

As expected of President Pei, even his questions were so unconventional!

When other people asked, they always wanted to know which projects had the brightest prospects or the greatest potential returns.

But when it came to President Pei, the moment he opened his mouth, he asked about the projects the investment circle least wanted to touch.

Awesome!

As expected, a genius's way of thinking was truly different.

“I understand now, President Pei.”

“Is it that you feel traditional investment projects are already too easy and no longer satisfying, so you want to find something high-difficulty to play with and challenge yourself?”

Li Shi’s eyes were filled with admiration and reverence.

Pei Qian: “……More or less.”

Li Shi gave him a thumbs-up. “Impressive!”

“If we’re talking about the project that the entire Jingzhou investment community is least willing to touch…”

“It would probably be the old industrial district.”

“Right now, the whole country is emphasizing industrial upgrading, phasing out outdated production capacity, and vigorously developing the service sector and innovative industries.”

“A lot of factories in the old industrial district have already moved away, leaving behind only abandoned workshops. Those locations are basically on the outskirts of the city, fairly remote, so they’ve just been left idle.”

“Some people once proposed turning that area into a cultural and creative industrial park, learning from the advanced experience of the capital.”

“However, while there were plenty of people making proposals, the moment it came time to actually invest money, everyone backed off.”

“Because this is a major problem nationwide. Many cities want to learn from successful cases and transform old factory districts into industrial parks, but the vast majority have failed.”

“So even though this project has gotten approvals all the way through, hardly anyone dares to touch it. At most, someone will symbolically rent one or two workshops or warehouses to open a café or an art gallery or something like that—and they run at a loss year-round.”

“Well, President Pei, doesn’t this sound challenging enough?”

After finishing, Li Shi smiled and observed Pei Qian’s reaction.

He had originally thought that Pei Qian was just posturing a bit, and that upon hearing how difficult the project was, he would immediately back down.

But to his surprise, President Pei’s eyes lit up!

“Excellent. Many thanks, President Li! This is exactly the answer I was looking for!”

Pei Qian was absolutely overjoyed.

Li Shi was right, this truly was a mess.

Those kinds of factory buildings were all located on the outskirts of the city, in remote areas, with hardly any decent supporting facilities nearby and very few people around.

If they were in the city center, converting such factories into art galleries or niche tourism projects might actually have a chance of bringing them back to life.

If they were located in the city center, then with a change in land-use designation, they would instantly become hot commodities that countless people would fight over.

But since these old factory buildings were out in the suburbs, they immediately became completely unwanted, so much so that they couldn't even be demolished, because no one was willing to pay the cost.

And yet, this was exactly the kind of thing he loved!

Pei Qian drained the cocktail in his glass in one go and stood up, ready to leave.

Li Shi hurriedly said, "President Pei, please wait!"

"You're really going to invest there?"

Pei Qian nodded. "Of course."

Li Shi instinctively found it hard to believe, but he also had to admit that President Pei had never lied to him…

Everything President Pei had done before had seemed unreliable at first glance, yet he had charged ahead without hesitation—and every single time, he had succeeded.

Li Shi stood up as well. "President Pei, could you reveal what you plan to use those factory buildings for?"

Pei Qian was silent for a moment, then said, “President Li, I can tell you—but on one condition.”

“When the place opens, I hope President Li will be the very first customer and experience every single attraction inside.”

Li Shi couldn’t help but laugh. “What kind of condition is that? No problem! Even if President Pei hadn’t asked, I’d definitely go experience it and learn from it.”

Pei Qian nodded. “Alright, then I’ll be honest.”

“I’m planning to build a large-scale haunted house.”

Li Shi: “……”