

Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 541: Foreign Customers at Mingyun Private Kitchen

Monday, June 6.

At 9:00 a.m., Pei Qian woke up naturally.

After spending the weekend gaming with Ruan Guangjian, his mood had been rather low for the past couple of days. He'd been keeping to himself at home and had little desire to go to work.

After washing up, Pei Qian took two small cakes and a carton of milk from the refrigerator, planning to eat a quick breakfast before finishing the game he hadn't completed the day before.

Because his apartment was decorated in an ultra-minimalist style—essentially "bare walls and almost no furniture"—the only place he could eat was at the small tea table by the large balcony.

The little tea table was one of the few remaining pieces of furniture in the living room. It came with two small chairs and was mainly meant for enjoying the view outside or having tea.

He quickly finished the cakes, tossed the trash into the garbage bin, and didn't think about it anymore. After all, the cleaners would take care of the rest.

Just as he sat down on the sofa and picked up his game controller, the doorbell rang.

"Hmm?"

Pei Qian paused for a moment before getting up to answer the door.

The building manager stood outside holding a square package.

"President Pei, this is a delivery from Dream Fulfillment Ventures. Would you like me to carry it inside for you?"

The building manager, Song Kai, was twenty-six years old. He had previously worked as a property manager for a rental company and had been recruited by Assistant Xin. So far, he had been doing a good job.

Of course, there really wasn't much work to do.

Ever since coming to Sloth Apartments, Song Kai had often found himself so idle that he began questioning his purpose in life.

Pei Qian had considered the situation. It was obvious that Liang Qingfan couldn't manage Sloth Apartments alone. Even if the project never became popular, every building would still need a building manager and cleaning staff.

As long as there was even a single resident in a building, at least one cleaner had to be employed.

As the number of apartment buildings increased in the future, Liang Qingfan couldn't possibly handle all those responsibilities himself.

After all, he was an architect. His main duties were designing buildings and overseeing construction.

Therefore, Pei Qian intended to observe Song Kai for a few more days. If he proved capable enough, Pei Qian planned to let him serve as the

manager of Sloth Apartments as well, assisting Liang Qingfan with the day-to-day operations.

"Go ahead and unpack it. Just hand me the item," Pei Qian said.

Song Kai opened the box, took out the square black device inside, and handed it to President Pei.

Pei Qian accepted it and found that it was surprisingly heavy—heavier than he had expected—but still light enough to carry comfortably.

It was the upgraded version of the Fully Automatic Argument Machine. Zhang Wang had arranged for it to be shipped directly to Pei Qian's apartment.

After thoughtfully closing the door behind him and taking away the empty box, Song Kai left.

Meanwhile, Pei Qian stood in the living room holding the Fully Automatic Argument Machine, looking around in confusion.

There was nowhere to put it.

The thing wasn't especially big, but it wasn't exactly small either. It was too large to sit on a bookshelf as a decoration, yet too small to be placed in a corner of the room or beside the TV cabinet like a proper piece of furniture. It would just look awkward.

In short, its bizarre dimensions pleased Pei Qian immensely.

After looking around the room, he finally placed it on the same little tea table where he had eaten breakfast.

To his surprise, it fit perfectly. Sitting in the nearby chair, he could reach it effortlessly, making it very convenient to operate the machine's "arguing" function.

"Excellent, Zhang Wang. I'll trust you one more time. If this project actually succeeds in making me lose money, then from now on, I'll invest in whatever project you bring me!"

The system clearly imposed limits on inventory buildup. It wouldn't allow endless production once stock had obviously piled up, but accumulating twenty to thirty thousand units probably wouldn't be a problem.

In other words, if everything went according to Pei Qian's expectations and the Fully Automatic Argument Machine failed to sell, leaving twenty or thirty thousand units sitting in storage, burning through several million yuan would be effortless.

Pei Qian began carefully inspecting the Fully Automatic Argument Machine, upon which he had placed such high hopes.

Compared with the prototype Zhang Wang had made earlier, the new version was several times larger. The entire machine was matte black, with a subtle texture, while bright metallic gold trim accented certain edges, giving it an understated yet luxurious appearance.

Pei Qian immediately tried out its "debate" function.

Each time he made an argument, the Fully Automatic Argument Machine would argue back, returning the conversation to its original position.

If someone kept arguing with it repeatedly, the Fully Automatic Argument Machine would restore the raised metal levers in the exact order they had been triggered. Until every lever had returned to its original position, the machine considered itself to be in a "continuous debate" state.

During this period, a purely mechanical counter on the box displayed the current count. Once every lever had reset, the "continuous debate" state ended, the displayed number returned to zero, and the box once again appeared as nothing more than a plain black cube.

Besides that, Pei Qian noticed that the materials had also been upgraded. The Y-shaped levers were now gold-colored, and their design had clearly been refined, giving them a carefully crafted, premium appearance.

After all, the production cost had doubled—from 200 yuan to 400 yuan—and virtually all of that extra cost had gone into these completely unnecessary cosmetic details.

Pei Qian played with it for two minutes before completely losing interest.

Who in their right mind would spend 488 yuan on this thing? They'd have to be crazy!

First, it had absolutely no practical purpose.

Second, it was just a black box with gold trim. Even with its matte finish, very few people would buy it as a decoration. At that price, there were countless decorative items that looked far better.

Pei Qian was extremely satisfied. He immediately called He Desheng.

"I've received the Fully Automatic Argument Machine. It turned out great. Transfer the funds immediately and start mass production! Hmm... the more we manufacture, the lower the cost per unit, right? Then let's stock twenty thousand units to start with!"

Producing an initial batch of twenty thousand units meant that if they all ended up sitting unsold in the warehouse, eight million yuan would disappear in an instant.

Of course, if sales were poor at the beginning, Pei Qian planned to increase production even further. How much more he could produce, however, would depend on what the system allowed.

No matter what, Pei Qian had placed enormous hopes on Zhang Wang's triumphant return with the Fully Automatic Argument Machine.

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June 7, Dinner Time

Mingyun Private Kitchen

Within Tengda Group, the restaurant was known as Mingyun Private Kitchen, but to the outside world its official name was simply "Nameless Restaurant." Because its actual name couldn't be found anywhere online, it had become something of a local legend.

Two tall blonde women arrived at the front entrance of the villa.

"Elena, I honestly didn't expect this place to be so far out of the way... If I'd known, I probably wouldn't have come with you."

"Come on, Jessica. A close local friend of mine made this reservation two months in advance. It's my first time here too. Whether this restaurant deserves its reputation or not, let's at least finish the meal before we complain."

"Fine. But if the food isn't good, I'm definitely not going to hide my disappointment."

"You don't have to tell me. I feel the same way."

The two chatted quietly in English as they walked inside.

One of the servers in the main hall noticed immediately and approached them with fluent English.

"Good evening. Welcome. You must be Miss Elena and Miss Jessica, correct?"

The reservation system at Mingyun Private Kitchen had both advantages and disadvantages.

The obvious downside was that anyone who wanted to dine there had to reserve a table one or even two months in advance. A single meal required a very long wait.

However, the system also offered several benefits. The number of diners each day was fixed, so the restaurant never felt crowded. Guests could enjoy a high degree of privacy during their meals. At the same time, the

staff knew roughly who would be arriving each day and could prepare accordingly.

For this occasion, Lin Canrong had specifically assigned a server who had previously worked as a well-known simultaneous interpreter in Jingzhou.

The young man's name was Jia Nuo, whose English name was Lucas. He had spent several years working as a simultaneous interpreter and was well known locally. Although the profession paid very well, it was also exhausting, and he had begun worrying about its long-term sustainability, prompting him to change careers.

Lin Canrong hired him with a monthly salary of 40,000 yuan. His only responsibility was to assist when foreign guests visited the restaurant. He would work at most eight times per month, with additional pay if that number was exceeded.

At first glance, the salary seemed very generous. Compared with Jia Nuo's previous interpreting work, however, it was actually fairly comparable.

Previously, Jia Nuo mainly worked for multinational corporations. His standard rate was 8,000 yuan per day, though this was calculated based on working hours. For a conference lasting around four hours, he typically charged 4,000 to 5,000 yuan.

After all, this was only 2011. A few years later, his rates would likely have been even higher.

Some people who didn't understand the profession might calculate based on twenty-two working days a month and conclude that Jia Nuo should be earning over 100,000 yuan a month, but that wasn't how it worked.

Simultaneous interpretation was an extremely demanding job. Preparing for a major business conference required extensive advance research—sometimes one or even two weeks of preparation—which consumed enormous amounts of time and energy. Working continuously also took a serious toll on one's health.

Although Jia Nuo's hourly rate appeared very high, his annual income was actually only around 400,000 to 500,000 yuan.

For that reason, he accepted Lin Canrong's offer. On one hand, it gave him a stable monthly salary. If, by chance, no foreign guests visited during a given month, he could simply stay home and still earn 40,000 yuan. Even if he had to receive more than eight parties in a month, Manager Lin would pay him additional compensation based on the standard rates for simultaneous interpreters. No matter how he looked at it, it was a good deal.

From Lin Canrong's perspective, hiring a professional like Jia Nuo was absolutely worthwhile.

Although it would seem like a loss during months with no foreign visitors, Jia Nuo's role as a server at Mingyun Private Kitchen required him to master English terminology related to fine dining, memorize the recipes and details of every dish, and undergo specialized service training covering

etiquette, wording, posture, facial expressions, and other aspects of hospitality.

For Lin Canrong, paying a base salary of 40,000 yuan was still excellent value.

Besides, there was an enormous difference between an average translation and an exceptional one.

Fine dining wasn't just about taste—it was about color, aroma, and presentation. The dishes themselves were given names intended to evoke elegance and poetry. When introducing them to foreign guests, merely conveying the literal meaning was one thing; producing a translation that was faithful, expressive, and elegant was something entirely different.

Jia Nuo escorted the two women to the restaurant's largest private dining room. The table had already been set for two, and even the room's decorations had been specially arranged.

The courses had all been selected in advance during the reservation process, so there was no menu.

Most of the dishes at Mingyun Private Kitchen required rare or specially sourced ingredients. Some involved dozens of preparation steps and had to be made well in advance, making it impossible to order them à la carte on the spot.

Elena smiled and said, "Lucas, the friend who made this reservation for us said they ordered your restaurant's two most elaborate and uniquely

flavored dishes. They're also this month's new specialties. I hope that isn't an exaggeration."

"As a matter of fact, my friend Jessica has always had certain prejudices against Chinese cuisine. I'm really looking forward to seeing whether your restaurant can change her mind today."