

You Were Told to Lose Money By Making Games, and You Actually Did It?

Chapter 55: Choosing the Next Game

"Sure enough... spending your own money just feels so much better."

Leaning back on the sofa in his apartment, Chen Xu recalled the previous night's experience and couldn't help sighing with satisfaction.

After giving his parents 1.5 million yuan and buying two apartments back in his hometown, he only had 2 million yuan left.

For the time being, luxury cars and lavish mansions were still out of reach.

But visiting some high-end entertainment venues?

That was no problem at all.

So the previous evening, he had taken Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu to a well-reviewed wellness spa in the city center and enjoyed living like an emperor for a night.

There were two reasons he had brought them along.

First, Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu had been his roommates for three and a half years.

They were his brothers.

After successfully milking a huge payout from the system, he naturally wanted someone to celebrate with.

Second...

He had to admit his own skin wasn't thick enough.

It was his first time visiting a place like that.

Going alone, he felt a little awkward.

Having accomplices beside him made things much easier.

Foot massage.

Full-body massage.

Every available service was checked off the list.

The massage therapist's hands were soft.

Her strength was just right.

Her voice was gentle.

She was exactly his type.

The only disappointing part was that the establishment was too legitimate.

Or perhaps, he simply hadn't been introduced by a regular customer.

He never got to hear the legendary tragic story:

"She possesses the beauty of a celestial maiden, yet was born into an ordinary family. Her father passed away, her mother is gravely ill, and her younger brother still needs money for school..."

Otherwise, he would have generously opened his wallet.

"But I still need to start another project and fleece the system again."

"Two million yuan really doesn't last very long."

Chen Xu stood up from the sofa, his expression becoming serious.

Before he had actually started spending money—or rather, when he still viewed money through his old spending habits—two million yuan had seemed like an enormous fortune.

But after experiencing some truly upscale places, the feeling completely changed.

They hadn't even gone overboard the previous night.

Yet just the three of them, including food, drinks, and the spa, had spent over 10,000 yuan in a single evening.

Was it worth it?

Absolutely.

After reminiscing about the wonderful massage, Chen Xu began thinking about what his next project should be to drain the system's funds.

After all, he couldn't simply live off his savings forever.

He had learned quite a few lessons from Sekiro.

Under normal circumstances, Sekiro's journey toward losing money shouldn't have been nearly so dramatic.

But just like every protagonist in those "losing money" novels, he had been repeatedly stabbed in the back by unexpected events.

It could only be said that this was the kind of treatment every truly great game eventually received.

Unfortunately, that introduced a huge element of uncertainty.

So whatever his next project was, it absolutely had to account for that.

Chen Xu took out his notebook and wrote down this crucial point.

"Still..."

"I also need to keep an eye on Chenmei Studio and Old Liu."

"When the time comes..."

"I'll return the favor."

Looking at the name written at the very top of his notebook—in bold red marker—Chen Xu quietly made his plans.

President Chen lived by a simple philosophy:

Repay every kindness.

Repay every grudge.

Hiring internet trolls to smear his game.

Manipulating public opinion through excessive praise.

He hadn't forgotten any of it.

"But games like Sekiro can't be my next project."

After browsing online discussions for a while, Chen Xu made up his mind.

Sekiro's explosive success had brought high-difficulty action games into the spotlight for many developers.

At the same time, it had significantly raised Morning Star Games' profile.

Players and gaming media alike were now watching the studio's every move.

In that case, a game like *Sekiro* was no longer suitable for exploiting the System.

High-quality games that lost money at first.... There were actually quite a few examples from his previous life.

But he also had to understand why those games had initially failed.

For example—

The legendary Titanfall 2.

Its launch sales had been disastrous.

Only after years of deep discounts did it gradually recover its costs.

Calling it a financial failure at launch would be completely accurate.

But in terms of quality?

It was absolutely phenomenal.

Especially the famous time-travel level, which was nothing short of brilliant.

However, in his previous life, the game had found itself in an incredibly awkward position.

It launched sandwiched between Battlefield and Call of Duty.

Its main focus was multiplayer—

And a relatively hardcore multiplayer at that.

Its gameplay was completely different from the easy-to-pick-up, instantly satisfying style of Call of Duty and Battlefield.

As for the single-player campaign...

It was disappointingly short.

Many players simply didn't feel it justified the full retail price.

Those factors together caused the game to suffer massive losses during its initial release.

But what about this parallel world?

First-person shooters were just as popular.

However, the market here was far more diverse.

There were no dominant franchises like Counter-Strike, Call of Duty, or Battlefield, each ruling its own corner of the genre.

On top of that, multiplayer games always had the potential to explode in popularity because of their social nature.

So if he brought Titanfall into this world...

Suppose he released only the single-player campaign and sold it for \$59.99.

It would almost certainly lose money.

But the system would never approve such an obviously crippled product.

On the other hand, if he included the multiplayer mode...

Although it had struggled in his previous life, given the state of this parallel world, whether it would suddenly become a massive hit was anyone's guess.

That's why games of this type carried a great deal of risk.

Secondly, the next game couldn't be too small, nor could it be too large.

If it was too ambitious—something like *Cyberpunk 2077* or *Red Dead Redemption 2*, for example—

Putting aside whether it would even lose money during the settlement period, the current Morning Star Games simply didn't have the capability to make such a game.

It wasn't just a matter of money or development time.

It was also a matter of management.

A team of two or three hundred people was still within Morning Star Games' ability to handle.

But once a project involved a thousand people—or even more—

The company simply lacked the management capacity to coordinate something on that scale.

Under those circumstances, even if he was standing on the shoulders of giants—even if he knew exactly what the game's core design principles were—he still wouldn't be able to develop it.

It was just like many game studios in his previous life.

Whenever certain genres became popular, companies would swarm in like flies to a carcass.

But when other genres exploded, they could only produce pale imitations.

Was it because they were too embarrassed to copy someone else's homework?

Of course not.

The real reason was that their team's management simply couldn't match the original developers'.

Even if they copied everything step for step, they still couldn't copy it well.

As he pondered the possibilities, Chen Xu gradually settled on an idea for the next project.

Unlike Sekiro, it wouldn't be driven primarily by gameplay.

Instead, it would be story-driven.

As long as games of this type met two core requirements, their reputation would rarely be poor.

Even if the story itself was fairly ordinary—

As long as it told a complete narrative clearly and coherently, and the presentation was excellent, then everything else—graphics, music, and so on—would simply become additional strengths.

The problem was...

Although story-driven games often received excellent reviews, their sales frequently fell short of expectations.

Because the most important part of a story-driven game was the narrative experience itself.

And in the age of livestreams and video platforms, that kind of content was incredibly easy to consume without actually playing the game.

As a result, game sales were inevitably affected.

Among story-driven games, there was also one particularly distinctive subgenre:

Interactive cinematic games.

Detroit: Become Human.

That was the game Chen Xu had chosen as his next project, the one he would use to drain the system's funds once again.