

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

Chapter 69: Isn't This the Perfect Time to Throw a Bucket of Cold Water on Them?

July 28

At Morning Star Games.

Having just approved payroll for the finance department to distribute this month's salaries, Chen Xu leaned back in his chair and let out a yawn.

He opened the system panel and glanced over the latest figures.

[Loss Conversion System]

[System Funds: 56.25 million yuan]

[Current Loss Conversion Rate: 1:0.75]

[Second Settlement: 71 days remaining]

[Current Revenue Pool: 394,401,551 yuan]

[Remaining Leverage Funds: 500,000,000 yuan(Locked)]

[Personal Funds: 348,581.40 yuan]

There were now less than three months left until settlement.

Chen Xu hadn't been paying much attention to Sekiro lately.

After all, the game's content was already complete, and he had no intention of making any DLC.

As for player-reported bugs, patching them once a month was good enough.

Its popularity had fallen to about one-fifth of its peak.

Which was perfectly normal. It was a single-player game, after all. Achieving this level of longevity was already impressive.

Meanwhile, development on Detroit was burning through money like water.

Compared to the Sekiro project, the development team had grown significantly larger.

Most of the additional budget had gone into the art department.

Chen Xu had checked in on the project midway through development.

Calling its visuals "cinematic quality" wouldn't be an exaggeration.

Compared to the original version of the game, the graphics were even more realistic.

The lighting, in particular, had been greatly improved.

When the original Detroit was released, ray-tracing technology hadn't yet matured.

But this parallel world was different. Detroit made full use of ray tracing, taking its lighting and shadow effects to an entirely new level.

Of course, using ray tracing didn't mean the team ignored traditional lighting work.

Thanks to the experience gained from Sekiro, Gong Qi, Ying Gao, and the others knew that not every player owned a high-end graphics card.

So they had also put tremendous effort into optimization.

Chen Xu didn't pay much attention to those details.

He was content to let things develop naturally.

It mattered—but not by much.

Rather than worrying that poor optimization might cause the game to sell too well, he was more concerned that the stunning graphics might boost sales.

Still, it wasn't a major problem.

Because Detroit was fundamentally a different kind of game.

After everything he'd experienced with Sekiro, he was no longer a rookie.

He now had plenty of experience dealing with all sorts of situations.

Just as he was reflecting on that, a knock sounded at his office door.

Looking up, he saw Zhou Ran.

"What's up?" Chen Xu asked.

Just a few days earlier, Zhou Ran had finally beaten Sekiro.

Chen Xu had found that somewhat regrettable.

After one and a half months and 217 hours of gameplay...

Zhou Ran had finally reached the finish line.

Which also meant Chen Xu had lost one of his daily sources of entertainment at work.

"Mr. Chen, information about our new game has been leaked," Zhou Ran said, looking both nervous and worried.

"What got leaked this time?" Chen Xu asked, momentarily surprised, though he didn't seem particularly concerned.

He had long expected that parts of the game's development would eventually become public.

After all, security this time wasn't especially strict.

Besides, Morning Star Games had become fairly well known.

As development progressed, it was only natural that some information would leak out.

"Brian May and the others were spotted entering and leaving Hyakukin Studio in Osaka by some fans," Zhou Ran quickly explained. "Hyakukin has been publicly known to be working on a game that was greenlit long ago. Since we previously acquired Hyakukin's motion-capture division, players have concluded that those actors were hired by us to perform motion capture."

As he spoke, Zhou Ran opened his laptop and showed Chen Xu the news reports and online discussions he had compiled.

Everything had been arranged in chronological order.

After looking through them briefly, Chen Xu immediately understood what had happened.

The key incident was that while Brian May was heading to the Umeda Sky Building for a motion-capture shoot, a tourist visiting Osaka happened to photograph him and post the picture on X.

Brian May's fans quickly noticed it.

Although his career wasn't doing particularly well these days, and he rarely appeared in major blockbuster films anymore, he had once been quite famous and still had a loyal fan base.

His X account still had several million followers.

As people dug deeper into the story, they eventually uncovered Morning Star Games' involvement.

Unlike in Chen Xu's previous world, having famous actors participate in game development had already become commonplace.

Of course, this didn't mean the kind of celebrity endorsements where actors like Jackie Chan or Nick Cheung appeared in flashy mobile game ads shouting things like, "The siege starts at eight sharp!"

It meant providing facial models, performance capture, and motion capture for games.

Takeshi Kaneshiro, Jet Li, Chow Yun-fat, Keanu Reeves, Norman Reedus ("Daryl"), Léa Seydoux...

Many major stars had served as motion-capture performers and facial-capture actors for video games.

But in this parallel world, this was the first time anything like it had happened.

Especially with someone like Brian May—a former A-list star who, while no longer at his peak, was still considered a solid second-tier Hollywood actor.

Before this, no game company had ever done something like this.

In an instant, media outlets both in China and overseas began reposting and reporting on the news.

"Insiders Reveal Morning Star Games Has Apparently Invited Hollywood Star Brian May to Participate in Its New Game!"

"Can Celebrity Actors Improve a Game's Quality?"

"Could Sekiro 2 Be Set in the West?"

...

One article after another flooded the internet.

To the media, Morning Star Games' latest move was genuinely surprising.

It wasn't just journalists, either.

Many companies within the gaming industry were also watching the situation closely.

As for the players, opinions were sharply divided.

"Hiring a celebrity is ridiculous. Has Morning Star Games lost its mind? Instead of wasting money on this, why not make a DLC for Sekiro?"

"Exactly. Wouldn't a regular motion-capture actor have been enough? Isshin Ashina and Genichiro already looked awesome. Is the new villain really worth hiring a celebrity? This is performance art at this point."

"Has it occurred to anyone that Morning Star Games simply has money to spare? Besides, what's wrong with hiring a celebrity? Maybe it's just for marketing."

"Marketing? Sekiro was already insanely popular. Do they really need celebrity marketing? Wouldn't it be better to spend that money on development?"

"So because the previous game was successful, they shouldn't advertise anymore? Your logic is hilarious. Coca-Cola is known all over the world, and they still spend billions on advertising."

"I'm curious. The game's not even out yet. Nobody knows its quality. They just hired an actor for a performance, so why is everyone freaking out? It's not like the celebrity is designing the game."

"Exactly. Everyone should calm down a little. We all know Sekiro's quality. If Morning Star can afford to hire celebrities, that probably means the development budget isn't hurting because of it."

"..."

The discussions among players became increasingly heated.

Both domestic and international gaming communities were completely absorbed in the topic.

Meanwhile, Chen Xu's eyes lit up.

He glanced at the system's settlement countdown.

Then he looked back at the players' comments online.

Just like the first time information had leaked, both the media and players had now completely convinced themselves that Morning Star Games' next project was Sekiro's sequel.

What if he told them that the game wasn't Sekiro 2 at all?

That it wasn't even an action-adventure game—but an interactive movie?

Wouldn't the players riot?

Nothing declines faster than something that has reached its absolute peak.

The hype had already reached its highest point.

If he dumped a bucket of cold water on everyone now, wouldn't players' expectations come crashing down?

What a heaven-sent opportunity!

This was the favorable east wind at the Battle of Red Cliffs.

If he waited too long, the players would still complain.

But by then, many of them would also become curious about Detroit itself.

It might even benefit from riding Sekiro's momentum.

But now?

Even if players became curious, it wouldn't matter.

They couldn't buy the game anyway.

Of course, some players would probably continue thinking about it.

But that wasn't a big concern.

As long as the majority of players—those who were eagerly anticipating Morning Star Games' next title because of Sekiro—lost their expectations...

That standalone luxury villa would practically be waving at him.