

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

Chapter 60: Xiao Dao, You're a Genius!

May 21

The chef and nutritionist they had recruited officially started work.

At noon, Chen Xu had Zhou Ran accompany him to the temporary kitchen to sample the food.

There were three chefs:

- One specialized in Shandong cuisine (Lu cuisine).
- One specialized in Huaiyang cuisine.
- The third was an all-rounder, though his specialty was white-board cooking (flour-based dishes such as noodles, dumplings, and steamed buns).

As for the nutritionist, they held an internationally recognized Level 2 certification.

After all, the food couldn't just taste good—it also had to be nutritionally balanced.

After tasting a few dishes, Chen Xu was immediately satisfied.

He hired all four of them on the spot.

"For prep work, you can hire another two apprentice assistants so you won't be overwhelmed later. Also, prepare a menu for me. The company will send you the list of dishes to prepare one day in advance."

A menu?

Receiving tomorrow's menu in advance?

Weren't they applying to be cafeteria chefs?

One of the Shandong cuisine chefs couldn't help asking,

"President Chen... isn't this supposed to be a company cafeteria?"

"It is," Chen Xu nodded. "It's just... our cafeteria is a little special."

After hearing his explanation, the three chefs looked somewhat reluctant.

When they had applied, they thought they'd simply be cooking large batches of cafeteria food.

But this sounded almost no different from running a small restaurant.

The only difference was that they could prepare the dishes in advance, then reheat individual portions shortly before mealtime and deliver them to the company.

Standing nearby, Zhou Ran quickly realized what was happening. She leaned close to Chen Xu and quietly explained the situation.

"I see... My apologies. I wasn't very familiar with how the catering business works."

Chen Xu finally understood.

In terms of workload and refinement, cooking huge batches for a cafeteria was obviously very different from preparing restaurant-quality individual dishes.

Looking at the somewhat hesitant chefs, Chen Xu quietly asked Zhou Ran about standard hotel chef salaries.

Once he understood the market rate, he made his decision without hesitation.

"Raise their pay."

. . .

After the interviews, Chen Xu headed straight back to the office.

He couldn't be bothered dealing with hiring prep assistants and other follow-up matters.

Unfortunately, the ingredient supply chain and the cafeteria menu wouldn't be finalized until the next day.

That meant he'd have to wait another day before finally eating at his company's own cafeteria.

The thought left him slightly disappointed.

But the moment his eyes drifted toward Zhou Ran's desk outside his office, his mood immediately improved.

He could only conclude that someone who rarely played video games really was something else.

Just from watching the screen, it was hard to believe a human being was actually controlling the character.

She had been playing for almost two straight hours since returning, yet she still hadn't managed to take away even the first health bar of the Samurai General.

Every time Chen Xu glanced over, it never took more than three minutes before the screen went black again.

If Dragonrot actually killed people permanently, there probably wouldn't be anyone left alive in all of Ashina Castle by now.

Normally, Zhou Ran always carried herself with grace and professionalism, wearing a polite workplace smile wherever she went.

But after sitting down in front of the computer, her expression had gone through several distinct stages.

Excitement.

Then confusion.

Then suffering.

And finally...

Complete emotional numbness.

Only the veins occasionally bulging on the back of her hand hinted that her emotions were anything but calm.

It was enough to make anyone feel sorry for her.

But...

Watching it was incredibly stress-relieving.

Chen Xu couldn't help sighing to himself.

"Xiao Zhou."

"Go register all the domain names and trademarks related to Detroit: Become Human."

"And one more thing. Our game is pretty difficult, so don't feel pressured to beat it too quickly. Whenever work isn't busy and you need a break, you can relax a little by playing it."

Seeing the vacant look on her face, Chen Xu decided to give her a breather and called her into his office to assign her another task.

There was no rush.

He didn't want his secretary's mentality to collapse before she'd even been with the company for two weeks.

After all, she was his secretary.

If Sekiro bullied her into tears and someone else saw it, they might think he'd done something terrible to her.

Of course, the task he assigned her was genuinely important.

By now, Morning Star Games was no longer some insignificant newcomer to players or the gaming industry.

The company had made a name for itself.

Although Sekiro was no longer as explosively popular as it had been at launch, it was still selling around 20,000 copies worldwide every day.

Its total sales had also surpassed 1.3 million copies just last week.

On top of that, Sekiro had fundamentally changed the formula for action-adventure games.

With all these factors combined, the media, players, and industry insiders were all closely watching Morning Star Games, eager to learn what the studio would do next.

If news of the Detroit project leaked under these circumstances...

By the time the game was finally released, forget calling it Detroit: Become Human—you wouldn't even be able to call it Florida: Become a Sensation. The name would have been snapped up long before then.

"Understood, President Chen. But should we acquire a shell company with the proper qualifications, or hire a trademark agency to handle the registrations?" Zhou Ran nodded before adding a reminder.

"After all, Morning Star Games has become fairly well known. Trademark applications are publicly announced for three months before they're finalized."

"When Sekiro's trademark was registered, Morning Star Games wasn't famous, so no one paid attention."

"But things are different now."

"If we register trademarks related to Detroit under the company's name, the media will definitely notice. Other companies might even try to jump on the bandwagon."

"Let's just buy a shell company and handle everything through that," Chen Xu said after thinking it over.

. . .

That afternoon, Chen Xu called Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu into his office.

He wanted to finalize the game's main storyline and flesh it out as quickly as possible.

"Brother Xu, don't you think this story might have a pretty limited audience?"

Xiao Dao closed the story outline.

The plot of Detroit wasn't particularly complicated or groundbreaking.

Connor's and Kara's storylines carried a feeling reminiscent of Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

Meanwhile, Markus's storyline evoked echoes of Martin Luther King Jr.

As a story in itself, there wasn't really anything wrong with it.

After all, whenever a futuristic sci-fi setting involves robots or androids, it's almost impossible to avoid the question:

Can humans and machines coexist peacefully?

Stories like these all revolve around the same fundamental theme:

Oppression and resistance.

Whether in China or abroad, in ancient times or modern society, similar stories have always existed.

What Xiao Dao was actually worried about was something else.

The game was explicitly set overseas—in Detroit, North America.

Under those circumstances, even if the game itself had no such intentions, it would be easy for people to read extra meanings into it.

"You're absolutely right, Xiao Dao!"

Hearing Xiao Dao's concern, Chen Xu's eyes suddenly lit up.

Exactly!

How had he not thought of that before?

Fortunately, it wasn't too late.

Whether they were robots, androids, or even aliens—at the root of it all, these stories had largely grown out of Western discussions surrounding racial discrimination and civil rights.

Chen Xu had no problem with equal rights.

In fact, he fully supported genuine movements that sought equal treatment.

Did Markus's storyline in Detroit contain that kind of symbolism?



Of course it did.

Especially since the original actor who portrayed Markus was of mixed race, with half African ancestry.

But now, he could simply cast a white actor as Markus instead.

After all, his goal was to squeeze money out of the system without making a bad game.

What was the game actually about?

The conflict between androids and humanity.

So what did racial equality have to do with the game itself?

If he changed the actor's race, would the game's quality suffer?

Of course not.

Then again, it wouldn't become any better, either.

The original actor who played Markus was actually fairly handsome.

He wasn't one of those deliberately unattractive character designs that Chen Xu mentally lumped together with examples of what he saw as intentionally "uglified" modern game characters.

In those latter cases, replacing the characters with more attractive designs wouldn't merely leave the game's quality unchanged—it would arguably improve it.

So replacing Markus with another actor would have virtually no impact on Detroit's quality.

Moreover, by changing Markus' actor, it would eliminate the possibility of the game receiving an additional boost in sales from attracting attention through identity-related discussions.

Genius.

Xiao Dao, you're an absolute genius!