

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

Chapter 48: Will You Step In?

It wasn't just Li Xiang who was preparing to take action.

At that very moment, Yang Chen had already begun.

Watching the flood of negative reviews surrounding Sekiro over the past few days, Yang Chen wasn't particularly perceptive when it came to online discourse, but even he could tell that some people were taking advantage of the situation.

As for who they were?

Obviously, they were the evil internet trolls hired by Morning Star Games' competitors.

It was absolutely despicable.

He was furious.

But he felt powerless.

Whenever he saw people criticizing Sekiro's difficulty, he stayed silent.

Because his own skill level gave him no confidence to argue back.

Even though he had faithfully played five hours of Sekiro every day during this period, he had been stuck on Genichiro Ashina for at least fifteen hours.

His total death count had long since exceeded one hundred.

There was nothing he could do.

He was simply bad at action games.

Sometimes he knew exactly what move the boss was about to use, yet his hands simply couldn't react in time.

The only way he could eventually overcome a boss was through countless repetitions until muscle memory took over.

When people accused Morning Star Games of being arrogant... He still couldn't refute them.

After all, despite nearly every player complaining that the game's difficulty was excessive, Morning Star Games had publicly stated that they had no intention of changing it.

That was simply a fact.

But when he saw people claiming that the limited Deluxe Collector's Edition, sold on Morning Star Games' official website for 1,499 yuan, was nothing more than a shameless cash grab, he knew he could no longer remain silent.

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April 15

Chen Xu leaned back comfortably in his chair, sipping coffee, eating cake, and binge-watching short-form web dramas.

He was in an exceptionally good mood.

The only disappointing thing was that the short dramas in this parallel world were... Pretty terrible.

They were all ultra-low-budget productions, and the acting was so awkward it could make your toes curl hard enough to dig a three-bedroom apartment into the floor.

The only thing Chen Xu found interesting was that the industry's current state reminded him of its early days in his previous life.

It was still in a phase of wild, unchecked growth.

And industries in that stage usually had one thing in common—

They often relied heavily on suggestive fan service to attract attention.

So although the stories were boring and the acting painfully embarrassing, Chen Xu still watched them with great enthusiasm.

After all, the actresses were very... well-endowed.

Having finished admiring the "northern hemisphere," Chen Xu performed his usual routine and checked the system's financial data.

【Loss Conversion System】

【System Fund: 4,916,000 yuan】

【Project Revenue: 27,471,210 yuan】

【Settlement Period: April 1 – May 10】

【Current Profit: -72,312,790 yuan】

【Personal Fund: 11.50 yuan】

"...Wait."

"Why has it increased so much?"

Especially the System Fund.

Steam wouldn't transfer its payments until May 1.

So this money could only have come from sales of the Deluxe Collector's Edition.

Why had so many Deluxe Editions suddenly sold?

And more importantly, just a few days ago, project revenue had only been around 17 million yuan.

How had sales suddenly jumped by another 10 million yuan in just a matter of days?

Although there was still nearly a month remaining before the settlement date...

In theory, everything should still be under control.

But now, Chen Xu was genuinely starting to panic.

Just as he was about to go online to investigate what had happened during the few days he had relaxed, Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu burst into his office with good news.

"Brother Xu!"

"Great news! Incredible news!"

"Our game's reputation seems to be recovering!"

"And we've sold quite a few Deluxe Editions!"

"Remember the merchandise manufacturer and the QA testing company you worked with?"

"It's all thanks to them!"

"This is exactly what they mean by '*A just cause enjoys abundant support, while an unjust one finds little.*'"

Xiao Dao sighed with emotion.

His excitement was impossible to hide.

Chen Xu didn't respond immediately.

Instead, his expression became unusually serious.

*Just as I thought...*

*Farming system coins was never going to be that easy.*

Maintaining a perfectly calm expression, Chen Xu slowly asked, "Don't get ahead of yourselves."

"Explain everything from the beginning."

Xiao Dao immediately took out his phone, opened a video he had already bookmarked, and handed it over.

"Brother Xu, just watch this."

Chen Xu accepted the phone.

The very first video at the top of the list had been uploaded only two days earlier.

Yet it had already accumulated over two million views along with nearly one hundred thousand bookmarks.

The title was simple and direct:

"Sekiro Actually Has a Hidden Ending!"

The video itself was equally straightforward.

It lasted less than five minutes.

In great detail, it explained to players that, besides the three commonly known endings—

- Shura
- Immortal Severance
- Purification

—the game actually contained a fourth ending:

Return.

If that had been the only video, it wouldn't have been much of a problem.

But scrolling further down through the creator's saved playlist, Chen Xu saw an entire collection of videos related to Sekiro.

"Beat the Chained Ogre Without Taking Damage in Just Three Minutes—even if You're Bad at Games!"

"Sekiro Too Hard? A Step-by-Step Guide to Beating the Game!"

"Was the Trailer Misleading? 500 Deaths Later—Combat Better Than an Action Movie!"

"Everything You Need to Know About Sekiro's Story in One Sitting!"

The most important part was... These videos weren't obscure at all.

Even the least popular one had hundreds of thousands of views.

Boss guides.

Walkthroughs.

100% collectible guides.

Lore analyses.

Stylish gameplay showcases.

The channel had everything.

If these had been made by ordinary players, Chen Xu figured they wouldn't have appeared until at least another half month later.

But these creators weren't ordinary players.

They were QA testers who had already completed the game hundreds of times—perhaps even more.

During testing, they had also been given access to developer console commands and detailed maps and quest documentation.

In some ways, their understanding of the game might even have surpassed that of Xiao Dao and the frontline developers themselves.

*Fine, I can accept that the QA testers ended up stabbing me in the back.*

*But what about Yang Chen?*

*What's his deal?*

*Could he actually be some hidden gaming expert?*

Chen Xu couldn't make sense of it.

Just as he was puzzling over the situation, a notification suddenly popped up on Xiao Dao's phone.

"The streamer you follow, 'Stellar Props Manufacturing Factory,' has started broadcasting!"

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If Chen Xu remembered correctly, wasn't Yang Chen's factory called Stellar Props Manufacturing?

Completely bewildered, Chen Xu tapped into the livestream.

Inside the stream, Yang Chen was standing inside his factory.

Workers could be seen manufacturing products in the background.

In front of him sat a box.

Printed on it were the Sekiro logo and related artwork.

"Good afternoon, everyone!"

"I'm not going to waste your time."

"Let's continue yesterday's product review!"

"Yesterday we tested whether the leather map included in the package was actually waterproof, and how durable it was."

"Today..."

"Let's find out whether the Mortal Blade and Kusabimaru can cut through rebar!"

As he spoke, Yang Chen opened a brand-new, factory-sealed Sekiro Deluxe Collector's Edition.

He removed the replica Mortal Blade and Kusabimaru from the box.

Without any unnecessary fanfare, he swung one of them directly at a steel reinforcing bar.

*Clang!*

"Take a look, everyone."

"Not a single bit of damage."

"Now, I know some of you are going to say, 'But the blade isn't sharpened.'"

"So let's test its durability another way."

Yang Chen picked up the steel bar from the ground.

Then he laid Kusabimaru flat on the floor.

Holding the rebar with both hands, he repeatedly smashed it against the exact same section of the sword.

Once.

Twice.

Three times.

Four times.

Afterward, he picked the sword back up and held it close to the camera.

"See that?"

"Not a hint of structural damage."

"Sure, there are a few surface scratches—that's perfectly normal."

"A quick wipe and they'll come right off."

"I'm not even going to compare it with merchandise from other games."

"That'd be picking on them."

"Recently, a lot of people have been criticizing Sekiro."

"As for the game's quality, I'm not going to comment."

"I'm not a professional game reviewer."

"But when it comes to people saying the Deluxe Collector's Edition is just a cash grab..."

"I have to speak up."

"The quality and craftsmanship speak for themselves."

"The materials alone cost well over a thousand yuan, not to mention shipping, packaging, labor, and everything else."

"You've all seen it with your own eyes."

"Other content creators have already uploaded unboxing and durability tests."

"Given this level of quality and workmanship, how much would collector's editions from other IPs normally sell for?"

"Anyone who's followed this sort of merchandise already knows the answer."

"But Morning Star Games isn't asking for 4,999 yuan."

"It's not asking for 3,999 yuan."

"It's only 1,499 yuan."

"I'm not trying to convince everyone to buy it."

"I just don't want a company that's genuinely putting its heart into making a quality product to be saddled with completely undeserved accusations."

Chen Xu didn't continue watching.

The mastermind behind the sudden surge in Deluxe Edition sales had been identified.

From a marketing perspective, Yang Chen's sales pitch was actually fairly ordinary.

Nothing flashy.

Nothing particularly viral.

But he had highlighted the single point players cared about most.

The merchandise included in the Deluxe Collector's Edition was made with genuine quality.

There was no corner-cutting or deceptive marketing.

At the same time, he conveyed another important message to viewers:

At this price, Morning Star Games was barely making any profit at all.

"Brother Xu..."

"President Yang is such a straightforward, honorable guy."

Watching the entire stream, Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu couldn't help sighing in admiration.

"...Yeah."

Chen Xu's feelings were complicated.

Having a business partner like Yang Chen was certainly something to be grateful for.

But...

This completely unintentional betrayal still hurt.

*Fortunately, everything is still under control.*

*Even if every single Deluxe Collector's Edition sells out, so what?*

After deducting labor, shipping, taxes, and other expenses, the profit per unit was only about 100 yuan.

In other words, even if every copy sold, it would add only around 14 million yuan to total revenue.

And there was no guarantee they'd even sell out before the settlement period ended.

So the real deciding factor was still the game's sales.

After all the preparations Chen Xu had made before launch...

Could Sekiro hold on until the very end?

And then there was Chenmei Studio.

First they had backed away from competing head-on.

Then, after seeing Sekiro's poor public reception, they immediately kicked it while it was down.

But now, Sekiro's reputation is beginning to recover.

Would they make another move?

After Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu left the office, Chen Xu slowly rose from his chair.

He walked over to the window and gazed silently into the distance.