

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

Chapter 63: Is There No Justice Left? Is There No Law?

May 29

Gong Qi and Ying Gao had already found a candidate for outsourcing the game's art.

However, it wasn't a domestic studio, but an American art outsourcing company.

The price was higher, but its reputation was excellent.

Chen Xu had also reviewed some of the concept art they had sent over.

Although it differed from the original Detroit: Become Human, it still captured the futuristic sci-fi aesthetic very well.

One of the company's greatest strengths was creating highly detailed standalone environments.

That happened to fit Detroit perfectly.

As an interactive cinematic game, Detroit didn't feature a massive open world.

Instead, it consisted of a series of self-contained "sandbox" maps.

Some were small, like the hostage's house, the park, and Todd's house. Others were larger, such as Pirate's Cove Amusement Park, Stratford Tower, and the Recycling Center.

The number of interactive objects within these areas wasn't particularly high. What mattered was filling each scene with high-quality models and environmental details.

The goal was for players to glance at a scene and immediately feel as though it were a real place.

Regarding the art department, Chen Xu had originally considered doing what they'd done during their previous trip to Osaka—

Taking Gong Qi, Ying Gao, and the rest of the art team on a half-month tour of North America.

But after remembering that the destination was the United States—where there was always the possibility of being unwillingly recruited into a real-life FPS—Chen Xu decisively abandoned the bold idea.

Sure, the odds weren't high.

But what if they were the unlucky ones?

Rather than spending time on a trip like that, he'd much rather visit a bathhouse, enjoy a massage, and listen to a massage therapist tell him the classic tragic life story about how *"Dad gambles, Mom is sick, and my younger brother still has to go to school."*

He had to admit that service industries were becoming increasingly conscious about hygiene and safety these days.

Especially the bathhouse he'd visited recently.

Not only was it impeccably clean, but every therapist was required to undergo a medical examination once a month.

A truly premium and reassuring experience.

Just as Chen Xu was lost in thought, Gong Qi knocked on the office door.

"President Chen, here's the shortlist of actors. Would you like to take a look?"

Holding a stack of résumés, Gong Qi walked over.

"Sure. Just leave them on the desk."

Chen Xu casually picked them up and flipped through them.

Good.

He didn't recognize a single one.

Their appearances were certainly attractive—tall, well-endowed, and curvy.

Unfortunately, they didn't resemble Kara at all.

They looked more suited for the blue-and-red android dancers in Connor's nightclub chapter.

Skipping ahead, Chen Xu focused on the résumés for the three protagonists—Connor, Markus, and Kara—as well as key supporting characters like Hank and Alice.

Hank and Alice pleasantly surprised him.

Based purely on appearance, the middle-aged man and the little girl matched the characters quite well.

But he wasn't satisfied with the candidates for Connor, Markus, or Kara.

Their appearances weren't ideal.

And their fees were... too cheap.

The reason he had chosen Detroit and leveraged an extra 50 million in funding was precisely because he wanted to go all out on hiring actors.

"As an interactive movie, the actors' performances are extremely important."

"Compared to ordinary games, this project will rely heavily on close-up facial expressions."

"We want players to understand a character's emotions simply by reading their face."

"It's like how TV actors often struggle in films because the big screen magnifies every flaw in their acting."

"Maybe ordinary motion-capture performers are good enough for regular games."

"But not for this one."

"And besides, we're not short on budget. Hire actors with real acting ability—well-known professionals," Chen Xu spoke with genuine disappointment.

Spend the money already!

Why were they trying so hard to save it?

It's not like spending more on actors would reduce the game's quality or force them to cut corners elsewhere.

Go spend it!

Meanwhile...

In Osaka, inside Hyakukin Studio at the Umeda Sky Building...

Kamiyama Atsushi stared at Eiji and Shinji standing before him, unable to believe what he had just heard.

"You've come here to acquire Hyakukin Studio's motion-capture division?"

His eyes widened in disbelief.

Suddenly, he recalled the phone call he'd had with Chen Xu a few days earlier.

What had Chen Xu said?

*"There'll be opportunities for us to work together."*

How had he responded?

He had sincerely thanked him.

He'd even become so emotionally invested that he'd given a respectful bow toward the phone.

And now...

So this is what you meant by 'working together'?

Your idea of cooperation is buying out our motion-capture department?

And if you had come personally—or at least sent someone I didn't know—that would've been one thing.

But instead...

You sent my former employees to negotiate the acquisition?

You poached my people...

And now you're digging up my roots too!

Is there no justice anymore?!

Is there no law?!

This is outright bullying!

"President Kamiyama, we've come to discuss this with complete sincerity. We have a very clear understanding of your company's situation."

"Hyakukin's motion-capture department certainly has some capability. But at the moment, it's actually a negative asset for your company. And even if you wanted to sell it off, you'd have a hard time finding a buyer."

Hearing Eiji's words, Atsushi clenched his fists again.

*A very clear understanding?*

*Damn it!*

*Of course you understand our situation!*

*Three months ago, you two were still working in the office outside, reporting your progress to me every day!*

At that moment, Atsushi took a deep breath, his expression turning cold.

*Even Buddha fights for a stick of incense; people fight for their dignity.*

*Do they really think I'm made of clay? That I don't know how to get angry?*

"President Kamiyama, we're willing to take over your entire motion-capture department, including all the equipment and future lease obligations. We'll even cover the salaries of the sixteen employees for the current month." Eiji spoke calmly, as though he hadn't noticed Atsushi's mounting fury.

Beside him, Shinji added, "On top of that, Morning Star Games will pay an additional 25 million yen."

The icy look on Kamiyama Atsushi's face disappeared instantly.

Forcing the corners of his mouth into a smile, he said, "President Chen and I are close friends. Let's do it exactly as you've proposed."

It wasn't that he lacked backbone.

It was simply that they were offering too much.

They were taking over the entire motion-capture department, assuming responsibility for employee salaries and the remaining lease.

Without the mocap department, Hyakukin Studio would no longer have to pay those salaries or the rent, saving roughly 12 million yen every month.

The motion-capture equipment alone was worth at least 15 million yen.

The remaining value lay in Hyakukin Studio's accumulated reference materials, assets, and several patents.

The additional 25 million yen wasn't exactly an overpayment, but it was certainly generous.

At the very least, he was confident that, anywhere in the world, he wouldn't find another buyer willing to pay this much anytime soon.

Faced with such a sincere offer...

What else could he possibly say?

*Fine.*

*Let's just say Kamiyama Atsushi really is made of clay.*

*When you kicked him... it was like kicking a pillow.*

"...One more thing."

Atsushi suddenly thought of something and asked awkwardly,

"After we sell the motion-capture department to your company... would we still be able to rent the facilities when we need them?"

"Of course not."

Eiji and Shinji both shook their heads.

*What are you thinking?*

*You already sold it to us, and now you want to pay to keep using it?*

*Dream on.*

Hearing that, Atsushi let out an embarrassed laugh.

He then forced a smile as he escorted the two men to the door.

After they left, he collapsed into his chair, clutching his chest.

He couldn't help imagining the future.

They would still be in the same building.

Right next door.

But the employees who had once worked for him...

The motion-capture department that had once belonged to him...

Because he had run out of money, it had all been sold away.

From now on, it would only serve other companies.

And he?

He would be sitting there every day, money from the sale in his pocket, forced to watch what used to be his motion-capture studio working tirelessly for someone else.

*What kind of NTR storyline is this?!*

Kamiyama Atsushi suddenly felt a crushing pain in his chest.

*How did things end up like this?*

The first time they worked together...

His employees were poached.

The second time—if this could even be called cooperation...

His motion-capture studio was no longer his.

*If this keeps up, will Hyakukin itself end up changing owners—or even changing its name?*