

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

Chapter 33: The Deluxe Collector's Edition!

*How had I not thought of this before?*

Game merchandise!

Although the system definitely wouldn't allow him to give away merchandise for free, and any products he produced would have to generate profit in order to pass the system's review—

So what?

Merchandise only generated profit if it actually sold.

But what if it didn't sell?

Then it would simply sit in a warehouse, gathering dust.

It wouldn't boost the game's sales in the slightest.

It was perfect.

Absolutely perfect.

And once the game became popular, any merchandise that eventually sold could provide a steady stream of long-term income afterward.

It was killing two birds with one stone.

As for the possibility that the game might become a hit during the settlement period, causing the merchandise to sell out?

Well, if the game became that successful, then his dream of losing enough money to buy a Bentley and a luxury riverfront apartment was already doomed anyway.

At that point, if the merchandise sold well, then so be it.

Everything would already be ruined.

He might as well embrace it and stop caring.

The more he thought about it, the more excited he became.

*Brilliant!*

*This is genuinely brilliant!*

He wondered which genius had first come up with the idea of game merchandise.

Based on the system's previous limitations, there would definitely be a production cap.

It wouldn't allow him to manufacture an unlimited quantity.

But even so, this represented a major avenue for spending money.

Otherwise, he honestly couldn't think of anywhere else to burn cash besides marketing and promotion.

"Forget the digital extras."

"If we're making a collector's edition, then physical items are what truly have value."

"Kusabimaru, the Mortal Blade, Healing Gourds, an art book, maps, vinyl soundtrack records—everything we can include, we're including."

"Use the best craftsmanship and the best materials."

"If we're calling it a Deluxe Collector's Edition, then it needs contents worthy of that name!"

Chen Xu looked at Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu with complete seriousness.

There were still 81 days remaining until the settlement period.

Even after subtracting the Spring Festival holiday, there were still more than two months left.

That should be enough time.

The only question was how much money they could spend.

"B-Brother Xu..."

"How much would we even have to charge for a collector's edition like that?"

After hearing his proposal, Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu stared at him in shock.

If they really did all of that, the production costs would be astronomical.

How much would such a deluxe edition need to sell for?

"We'll determine the price after we calculate the total production costs," Chen Xu thought for a moment before answering.

Selling at a loss—or even at cost price—would never pass the system's review.

So it definitely had to generate some profit.

But they only needed to stay just above the system's minimum threshold.

Besides, they only made money if the products sold.

What if they all ended up sitting in storage?

At that point, what profit would there be?

"Would players actually buy something like this?"

For the first time, Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu seemed genuinely uncertain.

At these specifications, the production costs would be sky-high.

Would players really be willing to spend over a thousand yuan on a collector's edition?

"Don't worry."

"It doesn't matter if they don't sell."

"I wasn't planning to manufacture many anyway."

"We'll make it a limited edition and treat it as a special benefit for our most loyal fans," Chen Xu said cheerfully.

The two men were speechless.

*You can do that?*

"Alright. Go talk with Gong Qi and Ying Gao. See if we can find a reliable manufacturing partner before the Spring Festival," Chen Xu waved them off.

This was the perfect opportunity for the veteran employees to prove themselves.

Back when they had purchased equipment, these two had somehow managed to arrange deals with several suppliers, causing him to suffer his first "betrayal" and spend less money than intended.

Now it was time for them to redeem themselves.

. . .

Two days later.

Under the guidance of Gong Qi and Ying Gao, Chen Xu arrived at an industrial park in Steel City.

The group headed directly to the innermost area, arriving at an administrative building.

After speaking with the receptionist, they waited briefly.

Soon, a middle-aged man in his thirties hurried out of the elevator.

"President Chen, I presume? It's a pleasure to meet you!"

The man's name was Yang Chen, owner of a manufacturing factory specializing in entertainment and film-related merchandise.

"President Chen, please, this way."

Yang Chen enthusiastically led them to his office and personally prepared tea for everyone.

"You should have given me a heads-up before coming. I could've arranged a proper reception."

After serving tea, Yang Chen seemed almost impatient.

It was as though a drowning man had just grabbed hold of a life-saving straw.

"Mr. Yang, no need to be so formal."

"We came today primarily to discuss outsourcing the production of some merchandise. I believe you've already been informed about the details."

Chen Xu smiled politely and got straight to the point.

Stellar Props Manufacturing was a factory located in Steel City's industrial district that specialized in producing props and merchandise for the film and entertainment industry.

It wasn't a particularly large company, but this wasn't exactly a highly technical industry either.

In the past, the factory had even worked with Target Games on several projects.

The products they manufactured were generally of acceptable quality.

More importantly, their pricing was straightforward, without any shady practices.

That was why, when Chen Xu asked Gong Qi and Ying Gao to find a contract manufacturer, the two of them immediately thought of this factory.

But it was obvious that Stellar Props Manufacturing was not doing well these days.

"President Chen, you probably already know a bit about our situation, so I'll just be honest with you."

"If we don't get new orders soon, this factory probably won't survive much longer."

Yang Chen sighed.

The economic downturn over the past few years had steadily reduced the number of orders they received.

Not long ago, one of their long-term overseas clients had also terminated their partnership.

If they couldn't secure new business soon, he wouldn't even be able to repay the bank loans.

"As for game merchandise, we don't have extensive experience, but I guarantee we can handle it!" Yang Chen spoke sincerely.

"Can I see some of the products you've made first?" Chen Xu asked.

"Of course! Of course!"

Yang Chen's face immediately brightened.

The difficult part wasn't passing an inspection.

The difficult part was getting someone to negotiate at all.

As long as there was discussion, there was hope.

Clearly having prepared in advance, Yang Chen dragged over a large box from the corner of the room.

When he opened it, it revealed all kinds of props and merchandise.

Weapon replicas.

Art books.

Badges.

Even figurines.

There was quite a variety.

"The quality is... a little rough."

Chen Xu picked up a longsword replica and frowned as he felt its texture.

Visually, it actually looked pretty good.

The wooden scabbard had decent paintwork and weathering effects.

But the moment he held it, the cheapness became obvious.

Especially after drawing the sword.

The contrast between the scabbard and the blade was so severe it was almost comical.

The art books suffered from the same problem.

The coloring and layout looked attractive enough, but the paper quality felt like that of a pirated book.

Cheapness practically radiated from it.

Yang Chen smiled bitterly.

"President Chen, this might sound like I'm making excuses, but I still have to say it."

"This is purely a materials issue. It really has nothing to do with our manufacturing process."

"When clients hire us for contract production and insist on lowering costs, we can only use cheap materials."

"Hmm. Alright."

"How about this—after the New Year, provide me with some samples. If we're satisfied with the quality, we'll sign the contract."

After hearing his explanation, Chen Xu nodded.

The reasoning made sense.

If a client only provided ten yuan of budget, the factory couldn't possibly use fifteen yuan worth of materials.

Otherwise, they'd lose money on every unit.

"No problem, President Chen!" Yang Chen nodded excitedly.

Then he seemed to remember something and asked somewhat nervously:

"President Chen... may I ask roughly how large the order is?"

"A ten-million-yuan order."

"Everything should follow these designs."

Chen Xu signaled Gong Qi to hand over the prepared documents.

The design package included two blunt decorative swords—Kusabimaru and the Mortal Blade, with each roughly the length of an 84-key keyboard, intended primarily for display. One Healing Gourd, one string of Buddhist prayer beads, an art book, a large map, and A vinyl soundtrack record

Ten million yuan!?

Yang Chen's eyes widened instantly.

Gong Qi and Ying Gao, standing nearby, were equally stunned.

They knew game merchandise could be expensive.

But this expensive?

Were they seriously planning to spend all this money on merchandise instead of marketing and promotion?

"President Chen, what material requirements do you have?" Yang Chen asked excitedly and nervously.

"The best quality possible."

"Don't try to fool me with materials like those."

Chen Xu pointed toward the sample box on the floor.

"Design each set around a production cost of about one thousand yuan. Going a little over budget is acceptable."

One thousand yuan per set!?

Yang Chen's legs nearly gave out beneath him.

He had worked in this industry for years.

But merchandise with a production cost of around one thousand yuan per set?

The two swords would certainly cost more due to custom molds and detailed scabbard work.

But the gourd and prayer beads?

Judging from the designs, they were extremely simple.

There was no complicated craftsmanship involved.

At most, they'd add some game logos and decorative text.

Yet they were being given a one-thousand-yuan production budget?

Based on his experience with previous clients, five or six hundred yuan—or even less—would have been enough.

"Can't do it?" Chen Xu frowned.

"We can!"

"Absolutely can!"

Yang Chen immediately snapped back to reality and nodded vigorously.

"Good."

"Then let's leave it here for today."

"When the samples are ready, we'll talk again."

Chen Xu stood up, shook Yang Chen's hand, and left with Gong Qi and Ying Gao.

As he watched them disappear into the distance, Yang Chen couldn't help clenching his fist.

He had already made up his mind.

He had to win this contract.

Even if his own profit margins were tiny, he would still take it.

Because he could tell—

This was absolutely a major client.

And if he maintained the relationship properly, it could become a long-term partnership.

How could he tell?

What ordinary company casually throws around a ten-million-yuan order?

Not to mention spending one thousand yuan on the production cost of a single game merchandise set.

"Call a meeting!"

"We've got a huge order!"

"I want a finalized proposal today, and then we start working on molds immediately!"

Yang Chen hurriedly began calling the factory's designers and project planners.

After all, these merchandise products had a budget of one thousand yuan per set.

In all his years in business, he had never fought a battle with resources this abundant.