

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

Chapter 18: If Brother Xu Won't Make a Move, I Will!

The next morning.

Chen Xu woke up in his hotel bed.

Out of habit, he picked up his phone and glanced at it.

There were several unread messages.

Opening them, he found updates from Xiu Fu and Gong Qi informing him that they had already brought the team to Hyakukin to begin collaborative development.

There was also a payroll report from the company's finance department waiting for his approval.

Normally, salaries weren't paid until the middle or even the end of the following month.

After all, employee payroll represented a huge sum of money every month.

Even keeping that money in the company's account for an extra day could generate a considerable amount of profit.

But for Chen Xu, who had the system, those tiny gains were completely insignificant.

Or rather, those tiny gains were obstacles standing in the way of his future Bentley.

Therefore, he had instructed the finance department to pay salaries at the end of the current month rather than delaying them until the next.

“That's it? The entire month's payroll only costs this much?!”

The moment Chen Xu opened the payroll report, his heart sank.

He didn't bother looking through the long list of salary categories and details.

After all, with the system overseeing things, if there were any problems with salary payments, it would immediately issue a warning.

So he wasn't worried about the finance department trying anything funny.

What truly crushed his spirit was the final number.

4.71 million yuan.

The entire salary expense for November was only 4.71 million yuan.

And that was with employees working overtime and the company hiring a batch of outsourced artists.

What happened to the saying that labor costs were the biggest expense in game development?

Only a little over four million yuan a month?

Where was he supposed to spend all the remaining money?

Would the game even be able to burn through 30 million yuan before it was completed?

If they couldn't spend it all on development, then wouldn't the remaining money have to go into marketing?

Pain.

Pure heartbreak.

And there was something in the payroll report that hurt even more.

His own salary line.

1 yuan.

That was his salary for November.

The system had long since anticipated the possibility of him abusing his position to pay himself.

So it only allowed him a symbolic salary of one yuan.

Anything above that—even one extra cent—would trigger an immediate red warning from the system.

Slumped in his chair, Chen Xu felt as though he had lost even the strength to wash his face or brush his teeth.

He let out a sorrowful sigh.

Then he picked up his phone and replied to the finance department, approving the salary payments.

. . .

Meanwhile, at Hyakukin Studio.

Xiu Fu, Gong Qi, and the rest of the employees who had come on the trip had already settled into their workstations.

The temporary desks that had been squeezed into the office made the already cramped workspace feel even more crowded.

As for equipment, Hyakukin naturally hadn't prepared any.

Everyone was using their own laptops.

Glancing around at the surroundings, Xiu Fu sighed inwardly.

This workplace really couldn't compare to the environment back at Brother Xu's company.

But he quickly pushed that thought aside.

He hadn't come to Osaka to enjoy himself.

He had come here to learn and steal expertise.

Over at the other side of the office, Gong Qi was explaining Sekiro's desired animation style to Hyakukin's project lead.

Meanwhile, Xiu Fu deliberately found a seat near someone who looked like one of the studio's strongest developers.

Don't ask how he knew the guy was an expert.

The shiny, gleaming bald head already told the whole story.

Sitting beside him was Yamagami Eiji, who had recently celebrated his twenty-fifth birthday.

He couldn't help stealing a few curious glances at Xiu Fu.

As a member of Hyakukin Studio, he already knew that a game company from across the sea had signed an outsourcing agreement with them.

He also knew that they had sent employees over to participate in collaborative development.

Unlike President Kamiyama and the management team, who worried about their experience and techniques being copied, ordinary employees like Yamagami were simply curious about what kind of company would send people overseas for collaborative development.

Unable to suppress his curiosity, he quietly initiated a conversation in English.

“Hello. Could you tell me in advance what type of game your company is outsourcing? What's the setting and genre?”

Xiu Fu had been wondering how to build rapport with the other side, so seeing Yamagami Eiji take the initiative immediately delighted him.

“Our game?”

He smiled.

“It's an action-adventure game about a ninja set in an alternate version of Japan's Warring States period.”

This wasn't exactly confidential information, after all, Hyakukin Studio had already been hired as the outsourcing partner.

Once official development began, the game's setting, genre, and even its design priorities would all have to be discussed with Hyakukin anyway.

Different themes and gameplay focuses required different animation systems, combat mechanics, and action designs.

“What?”

Yamagami was completely stunned.

For a moment, he even wondered whether his own English—or perhaps the other man's English—wasn't good enough.

Maybe he had misheard.

But after confirming it once more, he finally realized that neither of them had made a mistake.

Japan's Warring States period.

Ninjas.

Instinctively, Yamagami Eiji looked up at the Hyakukin Studio logo hanging on the wall ahead.

That's right.

This was Japan.

This was *their* company.

His expression became extremely strange.

However, Xiu Fu didn't notice at all.

Because a bold idea had suddenly formed in his mind.

Why had the company hired Hyakukin Studio as an outsourcing partner and sent them all here for collaborative development?

Because Morning Star Games lacked the technical expertise to develop high-quality action games.

They were here to learn.

But the truth was that everyone understood one thing:

The truly core knowledge was difficult to learn.

Things like internal databases and the accumulated experience of veteran developers would never be openly shared.

Sure, they could learn plenty of useful skills, but surpassing their teachers?

That was just a fantasy.

So originally, their goal had simply been to understand the development process behind high-level action games.

But now, a new possibility occurred to him.

If they couldn't fully learn the technology, then what if they brought the people themselves back with them?

Wouldn't that solve the problem?

Suddenly, they'd have the expertise they needed.

Granted, this wasn't really something an ordinary employee should be thinking about.

But what was his relationship with Brother Xu?

And why had the respected Brother Xu placed him under Gong Qi's supervision at Morning Star Games?

Wasn't it so he could learn how to coordinate and manage a team more quickly?

Gong Qi and Ying Gao were already doing an excellent job.

Even if his and Xiao Dao's positions changed in the future, they would most likely become leaders of new departments or development teams.

And if that happened, wouldn't they need people?

Looking at it from another angle, if he started swinging a recruiting shovel now, he wouldn't just be helping the company, he'd also be recruiting future subordinates for himself.

Maybe Brother Xu secretly had the same idea all along.

Perhaps he simply felt awkward about saying it out loud.

But in game development—in business—how could one afford such softheartedness?

If that was the case, then the move that Brother Xu couldn't bring himself to make—he would make it on his behalf.

Brother Xu, as the owner of the company, had a reputation to maintain.



He couldn't bring himself to do something like this.

But Xiu Fu could.

Who cared about face?

What was the big deal?

With that thought, Xiu Fu looked at Yamagami's shiny bald head and found it increasingly appealing.

At the same time, he felt the burden on his shoulders grow a little heavier.

His intense gaze made Yamagami feel somewhat uneasy.

Fortunately, the awkward atmosphere was broken when a text message arrived on Xiu Fu's phone, which was lying on the desk.

The moment he saw the message, Xiu Fu's eyes lit up.

The opportunity had arrived.

He let out a sigh and deliberately refrained from locking his screen.

Instead, he casually left the phone on the desk.

Specifically, on the side closest to Yamagami.

Human beings were naturally curious.

Originally, Yamagami had no intention of looking.

After all, it was someone else's privacy.

But the phone was simply too close.

So he couldn't help sneaking a glance.

He couldn't recognize all the Chinese characters in the message, but based on the format and a few characters he vaguely understood, he could tell that it was a salary payment notification.

“This month's overtime was pretty low. My paycheck is only this much.”

Xiu Fu sighed deliberately.

“Your company only pays salaries now? Isn't that pretty late?” Yamagami asked curiously.

Anything involving money—especially the compensation of overseas industry peers—instantly captured his attention.

In fact, he became so curious that he completely overlooked the fact that Xiu Fu's supposedly "muttered" complaint had been spoken in English rather than Chinese.

Hearing the question, Xiu Fu revealed a smile that made Yamagami instinctively slide his chair slightly farther away.

“Not late at all. That's this month's salary.”

Yamagami froze.

For a moment, he thought he had misheard.

“This month's?”

“Yeah. Our company pays salaries at the end of the current month. The final day's pay and overtime hours are rolled into the next month, though.

It's a shame I didn't work much overtime this month, otherwise my paycheck would've been nearly double," Xiu Fu spoke with genuine-sounding regret.

Yamagami was stunned once again.

Paid within the same month?

What kind of company was that?

Weren't salaries normally paid around the middle of the following month?

"Then your company's compensation must be really good."

Yamagami couldn't hide a trace of envy.

Even though he was already considered a veteran employee at Hyakukin, his monthly salary was only around 200,000 yen.

As for overtime pay, it was capped at 50,000 yen.

And even that was already considered above average for the industry.

If the company hadn't offered decent benefits, he would have quit long ago.

"It really is. There aren't many bosses as generous as President Chen. Our overtime pay is calculated according to our salary level. And all our equipment is top-of-the-line. For this business trip, President Chen even provided us with the newest laptop models."

Having deliberately steered the conversation in this direction, Xiu Fu was fully prepared.

He immediately pulled out his phone and showed Yamagami photos from the company.

The images displayed rows of luxurious workstations with premium hardware.

And sitting right in front of Xiu Fu was the latest flagship laptop.

Combining that with the salary figure he had just glimpsed in the text message—and mentally converting between yuan and yen—Yamagami quietly swallowed.

It was the only way to hide the envy swelling in his heart.

Which company is supposed to be the famous game studio here? Us or you?

How could an unknown little company have such incredible employee benefits?

Then he thought about several supervisors at Hyakukin.

People whose technical abilities weren't even better than his own.

Yet because of seniority, they earned significantly higher salaries.

His fists unconsciously clenched.

And then came the final blow.

The killing strike from Xiu Fu.

“By the way, Hyakukin is such a large company with an international reputation. Your salary and benefits must be pretty amazing too, right?”