

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

Chapter 3: I'm Definitely Going to Lead You Guys to a Huge Loss!

The company would be found through a headhunting agency.

If there were no requirements, it would be easy enough to find some tiny game studio that was barely staying afloat.

But Chen Xu had no intention of doing that.

On one hand, the system might not approve.

On the other hand, although his ultimate goal was to lose money, spending his own money to support a bunch of parasites would be downright disgusting.

What? You say it's the system's money?

Bah! The system and I are one and the same!

Besides, he was worried that if he really approached things with that kind of "lose-money-at-all-costs" logic, the system would have ten thousand ways to make things turn out completely differently from what he expected.

This was a lesson learned from countless predecessors like President Pei.

So if he was going to lose money, he had to do it properly—openly and honorably.

...

While the headhunters were still searching for a company that met his requirements, Chen Xu was explaining the details of his first project to his two trusted generals, the "Sleeping Dragon and Young Phoenix" of Room 404.

"So the story is set in Japan?" Xiu Fu asked in surprise as he looked through the setting draft and world background information Chen Xu had handed over.

"That's right. It's set during Japan's Warring States period," Chen Xu replied with a smile.

"This kind of dark story is pretty appealing, but won't the setting be a bit niche? What if we kept the gameplay the same but switched it to a Journey to the West setting? A dark mythological version would be awesome," Xiao Dao suggested.

Wouldn't that just become Black Myth: Wukong?

And now that he thought about this parallel world, there really wasn't any outstanding dark-fantasy Journey to the West game.

If it really turned into Black Myth: Wukong, the domestic market alone would explode from the start.

After all, one reason he had chosen Sekiro was that its difficulty and lack of RPG progression might lead to weak early sales.

But the setting itself was just as important.

Since he's in China, a Japanese-themed setting naturally had a smaller audience than traditional Chinese settings.

If he had chosen Dark Souls or Bloodborne instead—

One had an obviously appealing Western fantasy world, while the other possessed an incredibly charming Victorian aesthetic.

Those factors alone could make the game's initial sales meet expectations.

And if that happened, how was he supposed to squeeze bonus money out of the system?

"You have to take things one step at a time. Besides, with a niche style like this, we don't have to worry about getting crushed by the competition."

"As for the audience, wasn't Rurouni Kenshin incredibly popular recently? That proves players can accept this kind of setting."

Chen Xu smiled as he presented this completely made-up justification.

"I guess that makes sense," Xiu Fu said with sudden understanding.

Makes sense my ass!

*Rurouni Kenshin was a manga-style work, while Sekiro was a game—and judging from the draft, a realistic-looking one at that. How could the audiences possibly be the same?*

Xiao Dao couldn't help but complain inwardly, but he didn't press the issue.

He could tell that Chen Xu had his own ideas.

Besides, the game hadn't even been officially greenlit yet.

And as someone studying game development, he knew very well that a game's initial concept often looked nothing like the final product.

Not just the story and worldbuilding—even the gameplay itself could change completely.

"But Brother Xu, is this gameplay design a linear action game?" Xiao Dao asked curiously.

The draft Chen Xu had provided wasn't very detailed. It was more of a concept document.

The gameplay was described only in broad terms:

A third-person action-adventure game.

Combat would not simply revolve around reducing enemy health bars. Players could parry attacks with a katana, build up a posture gauge through offense and defense, and then deliver a finishing blow.

In addition, the game would feature stealth mechanics, allowing players to quickly assassinate enemies without being detected.

Players would also have access to various tools to assist in combat and exploration.

"It's not completely linear. It's more of a sandbox-style structure. The entire land of Ashina will function as one huge interconnected sandbox."

"The story will branch into several routes that players can choose freely. As long as they're skilled enough, they can challenge areas and bosses early on that would normally be intended for the late game," Chen Xu explained.

Although this parallel world lacked many of the games from Earth, concepts such as sandbox-style map design still existed.

The moment they heard Chen Xu's explanation, both Xiu Fu and Xiao Dao immediately understood what he meant.

And they also realized a crucial aspect of the game.

"So there won't be RPG-style stat progression? A pure action-adventure game? Or maybe just very light numerical progression?" Xiu Fu asked.

The advantage of such a design was that players would feel an enormous sense of freedom.

But on the other hand, if players were allowed to enter late-game areas from the very beginning—and successfully clear them as part of the intended experience—then heavy stat-based progression would be impossible.

The game would either have to greatly weaken numerical attributes, or remove them altogether.

"That's right," Chen Xu nodded.

"In that case, it's pretty unique! It's quite different from the types of games currently on the market. Will players actually accept it?" This time, it was Xiu Fu who looked concerned.

“Don't worry, players will definitely accept it. The market always needs something fresh. Besides, if you think about it, isn't our system basically still built on the traditional action-game formula?” Chen Xu said with a smile.

*Heh. What I want is for players NOT to accept it.*

If players accepted it, how was he supposed to farm bonus money from the system?

Completely unaware of the grand vision in Chen Xu's mind, Xiu Fu and Xiao Dao exchanged doubtful looks before nodding.

Come to think of it, that did seem to make sense.

Parrying, stealth, various abilities designed to complement level design, and infiltration mechanics—weren't these all fairly traditional gameplay elements?

“Then, Brother Xu, what should we do during this period? We can't just sit around waiting, can we?” Xiu Fu asked.

“For now, help me work on the game's worldbuilding and main storyline.”

“Oh, right. As for you two, once the company is set up, you'll officially be placed on the payroll. Fifteen thousand yuan a month each. Social insurance and housing fund contributions will be added afterward as well,” Chen Xu said after remembering something.

Every little bit counted.

If he wanted to lose money, he had to start with these small details. Otherwise, how could he successfully squeeze rewards out of the system?

Unfortunately, the system had strict limits. No matter how talented they were, two fresh graduates could only be paid so much.

That was already with the bonus of coming from a prestigious university.

Otherwise, he would have loved to give his two trusted generals a truly shocking salary package.

Hearing Chen Xu offer such generous compensation, both Xiu Fu and Xiao Dao froze.

Then they were deeply moved.

At that moment, they felt as though Chen Xu were radiating a brilliant, dazzling light, like the sun hanging high in the sky.

After all, the gaming industry was never short of newcomers.

That wasn't an exaggeration.

But moved as they were, both Xiu Fu and Xiao Dao still chose to refuse.

“Brother Xu, let's wait until we're actually part of the company,” Xiao Dao said, shaking his head.

“That's right, Brother Xu. We don't even know what kind of company you'll be acquiring yet. If our compensation is too good, it could create problems with the existing employees. When the time comes, just pay us according to whatever the company's interns receive,” Xiu Fu added.

*Damn it!*

*Was this part of your plan too, system?*

Chen Xu sighed inwardly.

Still, hearing the two of them speak with such consideration for him warmed his heart.

No more needs to be said.

My Sleeping Dragon and Young Phoenix, for our very first project, I will definitely lead you to achieve a massive loss.

Filled with unwavering faith in inevitable failure, Chen Xu firmly patted both of them on the shoulder.