

Game Development: Starting by Healing the Players

Chapter 6: This Is the Judgment of a True Game Professional

The days passed one by one.

After finishing the last CG illustration and editing the corresponding audio and subtitles, Chen Xu looked at the game's compiled build on his computer and smiled excitedly.

"It's done!"

"So... are you going to look for a game publisher now?" Ruan Ningxue asked, equally excited.

After all, this was a project they had worked hard on for the past month.

Well... even though she hadn't received a single cent in salary from Chen Xu.

"No." Chen Xu shook his head.

"Huh?" Ruan Ningxue looked surprised.

Although she didn't know much about games, she knew Chen Xu was essentially an indie game developer now.

Just like making comics or films, shouldn't he be looking for a publisher or distributor?

"Games are a bit different. Besides, I'm not releasing it on a domestic platform, I'm putting it on an overseas official game platform."

"Players in China can still access it directly, though."

"It can't really be helped. It's like selling doujin works—they're mostly distributed through overseas platforms too. Mirror is definitely an 18+ game. This kind of subject matter is in a rather awkward position." Chen Xu explained.

"Then why did you make this kind of game in the first place?" Ruan Ningxue asked, puzzled.

From what he was saying, it sounded as if the game was doomed before it was even released.

Of course, if that happened, it would mean Chen Xu could become her assistant afterward.

But honestly, after spending the past month with him, her thoughts had changed somewhat.

She had developed a much better impression of Chen Xu and gained a basic understanding of the game industry. It actually seemed pretty interesting.

Besides, she had poured her own effort into the project, so she genuinely hoped it would succeed.

"You have to take things one step at a time. I've already made thorough preparations for Mirror's release. Just wait for my good news, Senior. When the time comes, I'll definitely give you a big bonus!" Chen Xu said with a smile.

"Alright then, I'll hold you to that." Although still confused, Ruan Ningxue nodded as she looked at his confident expression.

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In an apartment complex in Shanghai.

A woman wearing a white blouse and jeans was lounging in Ruan Ningxue's apartment.

"Xiao Xue, are you really not going to join me? With your art skills and my game design ability, we'd definitely make a name for ourselves in the gaming industry!" Yang Xin said enthusiastically.

Setting her glass of juice on the coffee table, Ruan Ningxue suddenly felt she could understand how Chen Xu must have felt.

"Sister Xin, I'm not trying to discourage you, but you've already developed three games, and every single one of them lost money, didn't they?" Ruan Ningxue rolled her eyes.

She hadn't known much about games before, but after working with Chen Xu for a month, she had learned quite a bit.

Even though her own job was basically the same as drawing doujinshi—just drawing artwork—she now understood the industry a little better.

And then she realized that Yang Xin, who had always boasted about making games, had never released a profitable one.

"The next one will definitely be a bestseller! As long as you join me!" Yang Xin declared confidently.

"Oh, come on. Didn't Uncle Yang say he'd stop funding you once your startup capital ran out? So what are you going to do now?" Ruan Ningxue asked skeptically.

Yang Xin coughed awkwardly.

"Ahem... By the way, how's your junior's game coming along? Has he found a publisher? If not, I can introduce him to one."

"No need. Chen Xu said he's just going to release it directly on the official platform without using a publisher." Ruan Ningxue recalled what he had told her yesterday.

"No publisher? That's a huge disadvantage. Without a third-party publisher's promotional resources, you'll have to rely entirely on the official platform's new-release recommendations. Unless the game's quality is exceptional, it'll be very hard to stand out," Yang Xin said in the tone of a seasoned professional.

"Well... Sister Xin, Chen Xu also said the game won't even get the new-release recommendation, and he's uploading it to the overseas version of the platform."

"No new-release recommendation? The overseas platform? An 18+ game?" Yang Xin immediately understood what kind of game it was after hearing that.

"No wonder he recruited you, Xiao Xue. But your junior is being a bit naïve. Games that rely purely on fan service and erotic content rarely become successful."

Yang Xin was fairly familiar with the game industry.

Even games with violence and gore could usually still receive the platform's new-release recommendation, as long as they weren't too excessive.

But if a game wasn't being released on the domestic platform, was instead targeting the overseas platform, and still didn't qualify for the new-release recommendation...

There was usually only one explanation:

It was an adults-only (18+) game.

"Really? I think Chen Xu probably has his own plan. Besides, Mirror isn't just an 18+ game—it also has a fairly substantial story," Ruan Ningxue said uncertainly, recalling how confident Chen Xu had looked.

"What, you don't think I'd know? You said your junior's art skills are on par with yours, right? That's why he recruited you—he's clearly trying to sell the game on its artwork. But games don't succeed on art alone. And as for story... what kind of story can an 18+ game possibly have?"

"This is the judgment of a professional game developer! On top of that, there's no new-release promotion and no third-party publisher. Unless he's spending heavily on advertising himself, the game will probably make no splash whatsoever," Yang Xin declared with complete confidence.

"Then... Sister Xin, do you think the game could sell over 50,000 copies?"
Ruan Ningxue asked.

"No chance."

Even though she hadn't actually seen the game Ruan Ningxue had worked on, Yang Xin delivered her verdict without hesitation.

Based on what she knew, it was a low-budget indie game with no publisher, an adults-only title made by just two people. Its creator had apparently been a comic artist before this and had only done outsourced work for other games.

There had always been a sizable audience for 18+ games.

After all, who wasn't at least a little horny?

But that also meant the competition in that market was incredibly fierce.

With a combination like this, how could they possibly make a successful game?

After all, Yang Xin herself had already developed three games—and all three had failed. She knew better than anyone how difficult the game industry was.

"Now, selling 50,000 copies is out of the question. But 18+ games are usually priced fairly low, and with artwork of your quality, Ningxue, that'll be a big selling point. If the overall quality is decent, maybe you can hope for around 10,000 copies sold. At least it probably won't lose money."

"From a risk perspective, making an 18+ game is actually one of the safer choices," Yang Xin added, trying to comfort her.

After a moment's thought, she emphasized once more:

"And that's the judgment of a professional game developer!"

"I see..." Ruan Ningxue replied. Since she still only had a limited understanding of the game industry, a trace of worry appeared on her face.