

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

Chapter 41: Is This What High-Level Business Warfare Looks Like?

Taking some time off, Chen Xu headed to the university to complete the paperwork allowing him to be absent from campus for the new semester.

While he was there, he also submitted employment verification documents for Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu.

On the drive back to the company, Chen Xu cruised along in his little BYD.

By coincidence, he noticed that cars ahead were deliberately keeping their distance from a luxury car bearing the iconic winged "B" emblem.

Chen Xu smiled faintly.

For some reason, that scene made him imagine his own future.

After arriving at the office building's parking garage, he parked his car and took the elevator upstairs.

He was just about to head to the break room to grab a cup of coffee and a slice of Black Forest cake when he stepped into the office and immediately sensed that something was off.

Normally, during working hours, everyone would be busy carrying out his previous instructions—performing completely pointless "optimization" on the game.

But today, no one had their heads buried in work.

Instead, groups of employees were huddled together, whispering excitedly among themselves.

If it had been an ordinary boss witnessing this scene, they'd probably have flown into a rage.

Slacking off during work hours was one thing.

Gathering together to gossip?

Was this a rebellion?

But Chen Xu knew his employees well.

Rather than anger, he felt an unsettling sense that something strange had happened.

"President Chen is incredible!"

"Yeah! I never imagined we could pull something like this off!"

"Exactly! When I first heard about it, I was terrified. Turns out the ones who should've been scared were the other side!"

"President Chen... was all of this part of your plan?"

"You planned ten moves ahead with every single step! You even predicted our opponent's psychology perfectly!"

Everyone rushed over at once.

Compliments rained down on him so fast that they nearly left him dizzy.

Surrounded by the crowd, Chen Xu looked utterly bewildered.

*What happened?*

He had merely spent two days lazing around at his apartment and stopped by the university to take care of some paperwork.

So... what exactly had happened while he was gone?

Looking at the admiring faces of Xiao Dao, Xiu Fu, Gong Qi, Ying Gao, as well as the foreign staff led by Yamagami Eiji and Aonuma Shinji, Chen Xu felt as though his brain had completely stopped working.

"President Chen, Vencent's game has officially announced a delay. You predicted this all along, didn't you?" Gong Qi said as he pulled out his phone.

Displayed on the screen was a news article.

"Vencent's New Title Tribulation of God and Demon Delayed—The Reason Will Surprise You!"

Aside from not literally using the word "shocking" in the headline, every part of the article practically screamed clickbait.

Chen Xu tapped it open and skimmed through the report.

His expression immediately darkened.

The article itself was simply a routine gaming news update.

It mentioned Morning Star Games' upcoming title, Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice, along with previous interviews from Hyakukin Studio and NGL.

Then it got to the real topic—Vencent subsidiary Chenmei Studio's Tribulation of God and Demon had officially been delayed.

The article further pointed out that the original release dates of the two games had been only three days apart.

However, after Sekiro's promotional campaign began, Tribulation of God and Demon—which had announced its release date first—suddenly postponed its launch.

Officially, the studio claimed that the delay was due to several serious bugs requiring additional fixes.

But anyone with even a little common sense could guess the real reason.

They were obviously trying to avoid releasing alongside Sekiro.

One side was Chenmei Studio—one of the most famous studios under Vencent Games.

The other was Morning Star Games—a studio that had been virtually unknown until recently.

And yet, the prestigious Chenmei Studio had actually backed down first.

That alone was enough to attract countless players who simply enjoyed watching drama unfold.

More importantly, Morning Star's official social media had just begun promoting its paid trending topics and advertising traffic.

With those two factors combining, while saying Sekiro had become a nationwide sensation would have been an exaggeration, at the very least, its popularity had already far exceeded everyone's original expectations.

After understanding the situation, Chen Xu felt as if the world had gone dark.

*Vencent...*

*Vencent!*

*How could you be so disappointing?*

*You're one of the two gaming giants in China!*

*Why are you afraid of a tiny, unknown studio like ours?*

*Shouldn't you be crushing us head-on without hesitation?*

*Why would you delay your game?!*

Looking at the excited employees, Chen Xu waved his hand, telling everyone to get back to work before dragging his exhausted body toward his office.

He was so tired.

He could guard against his own employees.

But he couldn't guard against his competitors.

Returning to his office, Chen Xu slumped into his chair and let out a long sigh.

He simply wanted to lie down and recover.

Why did things end up like this?

Casually opening the official social media account and the front page of several gaming websites, Chen Xu began reading the comments.

"Who the heck is Morning Star Games? They actually scared Vencent into backing off?"

"Just a reminder—it wasn't Vencent Games that backed down, it was Chenmei Studio."

"Why are you being so pedantic? Isn't Chenmei Studio owned by Vencent? That's all that matters."

"I think I saw news about this game before. Isn't it being developed by Hyakukin?"

"Not entirely. Hyakukin Studio only handled the action system. But it isn't Hyakukin's usual combat system, they're using one designed by Morning Star's own development team."

"I see. Guess I'll wait and see if it's actually fun."

"Have you guys watched the trailer on their official account? It looks incredible! Super stylish! Honestly, Chenmei delaying their game seems like a smart move."

"Yeah, I watched it too. It really does look amazing, and the scenery is gorgeous. It's hard to believe a game like this is coming from a completely unknown studio. I hope it's not fake advertising."

"Morning Star Games might not be famous, but they clearly aren't short on money. Otherwise they couldn't have hired Hyakukin Studio. The graphics should be solid, so I doubt it's false advertising."

At first, Chen Xu could only sigh.

But then something suddenly occurred to him.

*Wait... maybe the situation isn't that bad after all?*

He realized that after Vencent's retreat, players—and even the gaming media—had all but concluded that Sekiro was going to be an excellent game.

In terms of quality, that assessment wasn't wrong.

The problem was...

Sekiro's difficulty.

For players who had never experienced the brutally difficult games of the arcade era, Sekiro's challenge would be absolutely punishing.

They would go in expecting a flashy, power-fantasy action game, only to discover that they died over and over like helpless beginners.

Wasn't that exactly why he'd approved Xiao Dao and the others' misleading promotional trailer in the first place?

Now, the scale of the misunderstanding had simply become a little bigger.

Sure, first-day sales might end up being higher than expected.

But didn't Steam have a refund system?

Thinking of that, Chen Xu's mood immediately improved.

The situation had changed a little, but it was still under his control!

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"President Chen doesn't seem very happy..." Xiao Dao said as he glanced toward the office, recalling the expression on Chen Xu's face earlier. He couldn't quite figure it out.

The game's popularity was skyrocketing.

Shouldn't that be something worth celebrating?

So why did Brother Xu look as though he had completely lost interest?

Xiu Fu, standing beside him, looked equally bewildered.

Even though the two of them liked to think of themselves as Brother Xu's "Sleeping Dragon and Young Phoenix"—the people who understood him best—at this moment, they couldn't figure him out at all.

However, Gong Qi and Ying Gao seemed to have realized something.

The excitement on their faces vanished, replaced by grim expressions.

"This is bad," Gong Qi said in a low voice.

"Gong Qi, what's wrong?" asked Shinji, whose Chinese was only conversational.



Gong Qi took a deep breath.

"Earlier, Ying Gao and I suggested to President Chen that we should do more with the game's marketing."

"But President Chen rejected the idea."

Ying Gao picked up the explanation.

"Because Sekiro is a very special kind of game. Its difficulty means it was never meant to be a fast-food single-player experience—it's not the kind of game where players can mindlessly steamroll everything and have fun for ten straight hours."

"So President Chen believed that becoming explosively popular before launch wouldn't actually be good for the game's long-term future."

He proceeded to explain all the conclusions he and Gong Qi had previously come up with in their own imaginations.

"So... doesn't that mean we've accidentally made things worse?" Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu finally understood.

Looking at it this way, Sekiro's surging popularity wasn't necessarily a good thing.

"Exactly," Gong Qi nodded.

"And I think there's a very high chance this is Vencent Games' counterattack against President Chen's strategy."

"Otherwise, how could it possibly be such a coincidence?"

"Retreat in order to advance."

"I think President Chen realized that too, which is why he looked so unhappy."

"Our financial resources are nowhere near Vencent's."

"They can afford to give up their marketing budget and use that retreat as a strategic move."

Gong Qi's expression was solemn.

"But..." Xiu Fu frowned.

"How did Chenmei Studio know what kind of game Sekiro really is?"

Ying Gao let out a sigh.

"You two are still new to the industry, so you don't know."

"Chenmei Studio's boss, Liu Yishou, is famous for carefully planning every move before taking action."

"His first priority in every situation is to make sure he can never lose."

"That's right," Gong Qi agreed.

"So regardless of whether Sekiro ultimately turns out to be a masterpiece or a disaster, Liu Yishou has already put himself in an unbeatable position."

"And we've been forced to respond to his move."

He clenched his fists tightly.

"What do we do now?" Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu asked with serious expressions.

*So... this is high-level business warfare?*

*It's so dirty and ruthless...*

*They're trying to kill us!*

Ying Gao slowly spoke, "We respond to every change by staying the course."

"Don't forget what President Chen said."

"In the end, victory should be decided by the quality of the game itself."

"Sekiro's gameplay and difficulty may cause terrible word of mouth during its early release."

"But we still have a way to make up for it."

"We polish the optimization."

"If the game runs smoothly, we can earn players' patience."

"That will soften the impact on the reviews and help Sekiro survive its most difficult early days."

After Ying Gao finished speaking, no one said another word.

Everyone silently returned to their desks and resumed optimizing the game.

They would save Sekiro's launch sales and early reputation through their own hard work.