

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

Chapter 49: Liu Yishou, "Loyal to the End"

"Make a move? Of course we have to."

"But the direction our internet trolls take needs to change. Use your brains a little."

"Don't have them simply attack Sekiro anymore. That'll only backfire."

Looking at the plan submitted by his trusted subordinate, Liu Yishou couldn't help sighing.

*Loyal... yes.*

*But hopelessly lacking in talent.*

In contrast, that unseen enemy of his was truly brilliant.

He had deceived everyone.

Liu Yishou glanced once more at the subordinate standing beside him with his head lowered, listening attentively.

He silently sighed again.

His mind replayed everything that had happened over the past few weeks.

Sekiro's excessive difficulty.

The official announcement that had enraged players.

The resulting wave of negative reviews.

Then, his own covert intervention.

He had deliberately muddied the waters, fueling the controversy until the flames burned even hotter.

Under normal circumstances, an ordinary game company would react in one of two ways.

Either stubbornly refuse to budge until the bitter end, or immediately surrender and lower the difficulty.

But Morning Star Games had responded in a completely unimaginable fashion.

They began releasing strategy guides and helping players learn the game, effectively lowering the game's difficulty without actually changing it.

As for the accusations that the Deluxe Collector's Edition was a cash grab...

They had simply started livestreaming and demonstrated the product's quality on camera.

What frightened Liu Yishou even more was that the merchandise really was that well made.

As someone in the same industry, he had overseen the production of collector's editions for previous games.

He knew exactly what the quality of Sekiro's merchandise implied.

It meant Morning Star Games had never intended to make money from it.

But why would they do that?

A collector's edition... Not designed to make a profit?

How could such a company possibly exist?

Therefore, Liu Yishou reached only one conclusion.

This had to be another part of Morning Star Games' plan.

More importantly...

A company capable of planning so far ahead...

How could it possibly have released such an infuriating announcement by accident?

The more he thought about it, the more everything began to fit together.

Originally, Sekiro had only generated a moderate amount of attention.

Now, it had become one of the hottest topics in gaming.

Even though plenty of criticism still remained, its reputation was steadily improving.

So...

Had everything been part of their plan from the beginning?

Perhaps they had realized he had chosen to retreat instead of confronting Sekiro head-on.

So they intentionally exposed what looked like a fatal weakness to lure him into making a move.

Or perhaps, they had never cared whether he acted at all.

Even if he hadn't intervened, they might have hired internet trolls themselves to criticize their own game simply to generate controversy and attract attention.

By nature, Liu Yishou was an extremely cautious man.

The more he analyzed the situation, the more unfathomable his opponent seemed.

Planning five moves ahead with every single step.

Even Zhuge Liang reborn might not have done any better.

He turned back to his subordinate.

"Don't have the trolls blindly attack the game."

"Instead, have them pretend to be over-the-top fans."

"Have them sarcastically praise Sekiro while putting down classic games."

"Keep trying to delay media reviews if possible."

"And make sure the troll scripts are properly reviewed."

"Don't let them become too obvious."

"And under no circumstances should any of it be traceable to our own game."

After emphasizing the key points, Liu Yishou dismissed his subordinate.

Watching him leave, Liu Yishou slowly shook his head.

*Honestly...*

*I have to handle everything myself.*

*Even hiring internet trolls.*

Thinking about it...

He suddenly found himself feeling a little envious of the never-before-met Chen Xu.

He wondered whether this entire chain of schemes had been devised by Chen Xu himself or by one of his employees.

If it had been the latter...

Could that person be poached?

That would be a truly valuable talent.

After pondering the idea for a long time, Liu Yishou finally sighed and shook his head.

Then, almost instinctively, he glanced toward the office door.

After confirming it was locked, he leaned back in his chair and launched Sekiro.

After all, it was a competitor's game.

If his employees caught him playing it, it might hurt morale.

Still, regardless of being a competitor, as a game designer, he couldn't deny how outstanding the game really was.

Undermining it for business reasons while sincerely admiring it as a professional, even enjoying playing it...

Those things weren't contradictory.

In fact, Sekiro had inspired him quite a bit.

The only thing he truly disliked was that, for someone as emotionally expressive as he was, the game was murderously hard on game controllers.

. . .

April 25

Sitting in his office, Chen Xu wasn't watching those "Northern Hemisphere" web dramas anymore.

Instead, he was reading the community forums.

Ordinary players.

Fans who had been converted into loyal supporters.

Paid trolls pretending to be sarcastic fans.

All of them were busy "greeting" one another in increasingly colorful ways.

Chen Xu took a leisurely sip of his latte.

*Wasn't this far more entertaining than those web dramas?*

When he had originally decided to launch Sekiro on the same schedule as Tribulation of God and Demon, Chenmei Studio's response had disappointed him greatly.

But then, their decision to kick him while he was down had been absolutely magnificent.

And just as Sekiro was on the verge of turning its reputation around, that same man had broken free from the constraints of his shell and charged back into battle, leading his army of three thousand internet trolls.

Chen Xu knew all along that farming the system's reward wouldn't be easy.

He had made plenty of preparations beforehand.

Although his lack of real-world experience meant his plan wasn't perfectly airtight, what Chen Xu had never expected was that just as he was about to be stabbed in the back, his enemy would unexpectedly step forward to defend him instead.

When Liu Yishou had retreated the first time, Chen Xu had assumed he would become the greatest obstacle standing between him and the system's payout.

But who could have imagined...

He wasn't an obstacle at all.

He was a loyal bodyguard.

If not for him, this settlement cycle might truly have been in danger.

【Loss Conversion System】

【System Fund: 8,516,000 yuan】

【Project Revenue: 43,871,210 yuan】

【Settlement Period: April 1 – May 10】

【Current Profit: -52,312,790 yuan】

【Personal Fund: 11.50 yuan】

Looking at the revenue, which had now climbed to nearly half of the target amount...

Even Chen Xu was starting to feel a little nervous.

If Liu Yishou hadn't stirred up another wave of controversy, this settlement cycle might have become genuinely risky.

But now?

There was still hope.

"I guess this is what the ancients meant when they said 'Man proposes, Heaven disposes.'"

Chen Xu couldn't help sighing.

From the very beginning, starting with the choice of the game's theme, he had carefully laid out his plans step by step.



Although there had been some setbacks along the way, overall, events had largely unfolded according to his expectations.

What he had never anticipated was that the outsourced QA testers would start releasing strategy guides.

Nor had he expected his competitors to pile on and attack the game.

Ironically, the betrayal from one side and the "assistance" from the other had almost perfectly canceled each other out.

His entire plan hadn't completely fallen apart because of that.

In reality, things had long since slipped beyond his control.

But now?

Even though there were still half a month remaining before the settlement date, the overall outcome had already been decided.

Domestically, Chenmei Studio was doing everything it could to drag Sekiro down.

Overseas, although the game's review scores were somewhat better, and there were plenty of players who enjoyed ninja and samurai settings, the Morning Star Games was still an unknown indie studio.

Sure, some interest was beginning to spread.

But by the time that spark grew into a wildfire, the settlement period would already be over.

Compared to the endless twists and reversals happening in China, the overseas market was progressing almost exactly as Chen Xu had predicted from the start.

"Thank goodness Chenmei Studio was there this time."

"Thank you... my friend I've never met."

Standing before the floor-to-ceiling windows of his office, Chen Xu looked toward the direction of Vencent Group's headquarters.

He picked up his coffee and raised it in a silent toast through the air.

After a moment of reflection, he set the cup down.

Then he opened the drawer and took out his notebook.

Finding the page where he had previously written:

- Chenmei Studio
- Liu Yishou

He uncapped a red marker and carefully drew a large check mark beside each name.

*Although the result of your kicking me while I was down turned out to be wonderful...*

*President Chen is very satisfied with the outcome.*

*But your intentions were absolutely terrible.*

*President Chen is still very angry about that.*

So...

The grudge still belonged in the notebook.

President Chen was a man who lived by his principles.

Kindness should be repaid with kindness.

Grudges should be repaid with grudges.