

Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 474: A “Kneel Before Reality” Game — Struggle

April 4th, Monday.

After waking up in the morning, Pei Qian briefly organized his work priorities for the next few days.

First, he needed to deal with Tengda Group Games and Shangyang Games, the two gaming departments that kept making money over and over again!

As for Shangyang Games, he would simply have them focus all their efforts on promoting the Chinese server for IOI.

But on the Tengda Group Games side, Pei Qian also needed to find something else for them to do.

Otherwise, if Hu Xianbin and the others continued fully updating GOG, releasing new heroes, and increasing promotional efforts, the Chinese server for IOI might genuinely fail to beat it.

After all, GOG had gotten off to a much smoother start domestically than IOI. He needed to find a way for IOI to steal all of GOG's players away.

So what kind of work should he assign to Hu Xianbin and the others?

After thinking it over, Pei Qian decided to summarize his past experiences and learn from previous mistakes. This time, he absolutely had to develop a single-player game that nobody cared about!

The success of *A Better Tomorrow* had dealt Pei Qian a tremendously heavy blow. It had practically overturned his entire worldview.

Why was it that what clearly looked like disgusting and frustrating content to him didn't anger audiences at all? It simply wasn't scientific!

But after much painful reflection, Pei Qian finally understood.

The main issue was the method of presentation!

If viewers actually inserted themselves into the protagonist's shoes while watching *A Better Tomorrow*, they would definitely feel miserable, suffocated, and emotionally devastated.

But the problem was—it was a movie.

Through specific directing techniques, Zhu Xiaoce ensured that audiences always maintained a godlike observer's perspective. Nobody truly immersed themselves into the male or female lead; instead, they viewed the story from a higher, more compassionate standpoint.

And the entire flavor of the work changed instantly because of that.

In Pei Qian's eyes, this was precisely the greatest failure of *A Better Tomorrow*. The difference between catastrophic losses and massive profits had come down to a single thought, sending everything spiraling irreversibly in the wrong direction.

So after thinking it over again and again, Pei Qian concluded that the basic idea itself was not wrong: poisoning the audience *could* indeed lead to losses.

Otherwise, the phrase “kneeling before reality” would never have existed.

The key was *how* the poison was delivered—it required technique.

Immersion had to be strengthened!

As long as players truly immersed themselves into a character, and then that character suffered horribly, the desired effect would definitely be achieved.

Pei Qian felt that he had finally discovered the true root cause behind A Better Tomorrow making money. Now he just needed a little practical verification.

But how exactly should he verify it?

Feihuang Studio had already been put into suspended animation by Pei Qian, and after being bitten once, he wasn't eager to touch movies again anytime soon.

Compared to film, games were an art form with far stronger immersion!

Certain kinds of suffering in movies might not provoke much resentment from viewers, but in games, if players suffered alongside the protagonist, that would be a different story entirely.

Of course, some people might point to games like Turn Back Before It's Too Late—hardcore suffering games that didn't provoke hatred from players and instead made them feel exhilarated.

But that was a complete misunderstanding.

Games like Turn Back Before It's Too Late certainly made players suffer, but what players actually enjoyed was not the suffering itself. They enjoyed the stronger selves they became after enduring hardship. At the end of the day, what they truly sought was the sense of accomplishment that came from overcoming difficulty.

In other words, players of those games were not masochists at all. On the contrary, they were all sadists.

Almost every game in the world had to provide players with sufficient positive feedback in order for them to feel enjoyment.

And Pei Qian had already decided that this time, his game would provide absolutely no positive feedback whatsoever. It would convey nothing but pure, thorough negative energy!

Wasn't there a saying about "kneeling before reality"?

Then this time, he would create a game that was realistic to the absolute extreme—a game so brutally real that nobody would want to touch it!

This time, President Pei decided to personally step in. He would write the game's story outline himself, preventing Hu Xianbin from misunderstanding his intentions again.

This time, he was definitely going to arrange the players properly and thoroughly!

Of course, Pei Qian had also considered that doing this did not necessarily guarantee failure. The failure of Game Producer had already been a profound lesson.

Back then, Pei Qian had also believed that the narrator in Game Producer was insulting the players. Yet not only did players not get angry, the narrator instead became a huge selling point.

Then, combined with Qiao Liang's overanalysis, things had spiraled completely out of control.

As for those issues, Pei Qian had already prepared countermeasures in advance. He absolutely would not repeat the same mistakes, nor would he possibly fall into the same pit twice!

In short, after learning from the failures of both A Better Tomorrow and Game Producer, Pei Qian decided to settle everything in one decisive battle!

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Inside the reception room of Tengda Group's gaming department.

Hu Xianbin looked somewhat nervous.

Pei Qian had called him alone into the reception room to explain the design philosophy behind the new game.

This time, Pei Qian had deliberately not invited anyone else, especially veteran employees like Li Yada and Bao Xu.

That was because those people had participated in the development of Game Producer and had a deep understanding of why it succeeded. Pei Qian was afraid that if they got involved, they would once again lead the new project completely off course.

Therefore, Pei Qian decided to isolate the veteran staff.

The older employees who had worked on Game Producer would casually maintain GOG, while Hu Xianbin and the other newcomers—people with little experience developing single-player games—would be pulled out to handle development of the new project.

To ensure the game fully matched his intended vision, Pei Qian planned to explain every little detail to Hu Xianbin this time, preventing him from making any imaginative interpretations whatsoever.

Pei Qian took a sip of tea and slowly began explaining his ideas.

“This game will be called Struggle. It will be a realistic-themed interactive movie game. Every character must have high-definition models and motion capture, with visual quality comparable to AAA titles.”

“Of course, since the game’s length will be relatively short, the spending won’t be *too* outrageous. Let’s prepare forty million yuan for now. If it’s not enough, we’ll add more later.”

“The development schedule is temporarily set at five months. We’ll aim for a release around September 1st.”

Hu Xianbin was completely bewildered.

What the heck?

An interactive movie game... with a realism theme?

What kind of bizarre combination was that?

So-called interactive movie games were basically highly polished visual novel-style games. Once the story began, players could choose different routes and endings, but instead of direct gameplay, all they really did was make choices at certain decision points.

Some interactive movie games used in-game graphics, while others used real-life sets and actors. Neither approach was cheap.

But according to President Pei's requirements—high-definition character models, motion capture, AAA-level quality—the cost would probably burn even more money than filming with real sets and actors.

Forty million yuan... that was enough to make an actual movie...

Thinking about this, Hu Xianbin felt both confused and under enormous pressure.

This sounded incredibly unreliable!

If President Pei hadn't personally explained it himself, Hu Xianbin would have suspected someone was falsely delivering imperial orders.

Pei Qian continued:

"The so-called Struggle is about allowing players to once again experience the struggles of real life within a game."

"This game will be divided into two parts: the Rich Person Version and the Poor Person Version. They'll be sold separately."

"Struggle: Rich Person Version is sold to poor people. Original price: 29 yuan. Discount price: 19 yuan."

“Struggle: Poor Person Version is sold to rich people. Original price: 99 yuan. Discount price: 79 yuan.”

“If players buy only one version, they can enjoy the discounted price. But if they buy both versions, they must pay full price for both, totaling 128 yuan.”

Hu Xianbin blinked.

“Uh... is there some deeper meaning behind this?”

Pei Qian nodded. “Of course there’s a deeper meaning. Poor people experience the lives of the rich, and poor people don’t have much money, so the price is lower. Rich people experience the lives of the poor, and rich people have money, so the price is higher. Life doesn’t offer second chances, so if you want to experience both, you have to spend more money.”

Hu Xianbin fell silent for a moment, then sighed emotionally.

“Even President Pei’s pricing philosophy is so profound...”

Pei Qian continued:

“Whether it’s the Poor Person Version or the Rich Person Version, both will be divided into several stages, following the character from childhood to adulthood—from school to work, from career to daily life, from rest to entertainment.”

“Through these scenarios, we want to showcase every aspect of poor and rich lifestyles as comprehensively as possible.”

“In the Rich Person Version, the player takes on the role of a rich person. From childhood onward, they live a carefree and smooth life, effortlessly achieving success in life, career, and relationships through the money and resources inherited from their parents.”

“But in the end, he dies at the hands of a homeless man.”

“In the Poor Person Version, the player takes on the role of a poor person. From childhood onward, they live frugally and struggle constantly. Even after growing up, they never rise above their circumstances, instead continuing the cycle of poverty.”

Hu Xianbin listened in utter confusion.

“And then?”

Pei Qian replied, “Then? There is no ‘then.’ That’s the entire game.”

Hu Xianbin became even more bewildered.

“But as an interactive movie game, shouldn’t there be many different endings?”

Pei Qian shook his head.

“No. No matter what choices the player makes, the game only has these two endings: the rich person gets killed by a homeless man, and the poor person remains poor.”

Pei Qian thought to himself: *I absolutely will not repeat the mistake of multiple endings from Game Producer!*

Hu Xianbin stared in shock.

“If everything is already predetermined, then what are players even playing for?”

Pei Qian explained:

“The process will differ. Every different choice the player makes will lead to different side routes, but all side routes ultimately converge back into the same ending.”

“The differences between those routes won’t be reflected in the ending.”

“As for the game’s details, we’ll fill the overall framework with every aspect of everyday life.”

“For example, during school years, poor people can only attend low-quality ordinary schools, while rich people go to expensive elite academies. During job hunting, poor people repeatedly fail interviews, while rich people simply join their father’s company directly. During romance, poor people break up with long-term girlfriends because they can’t afford a house, while rich people bring different women home from nightclubs every night. During marriage, poor people exhaust their entire family’s savings to buy a tiny secondhand apartment, while rich people already have luxury mansions prepared by their families. They don’t need to do anything—just the annual appreciation in property value earns them more than poor people make through exhausting work...”

“Understand?”

The corner of Hu Xianbin’s mouth twitched slightly.

“I... understand perfectly.”

Pei Qian thought for a moment, then added:

“Oh right, the setting should take place in Europe or America. Hire some foreigners for motion capture and voice acting.”

Hu Xianbin hesitated.

“President Pei... does this game have some deeper meaning?”

Pei Qian chuckled.

“Whether it has deeper meaning or not isn’t your concern. Just do your job properly.”

“I’ll provide the story outline. You and the rest of the production team will flesh out the plot. Once all the story content is finished, let me review it again to ensure there are no misunderstandings.”

“Alright, you can start preparing now.”

“You can begin making art assets and the like first. You should already be able to imagine what kinds of characters are needed—parents, teachers, classmates, bosses, and so on.”

After briefly giving a few more instructions, Pei Qian turned and left.

Leaving Hu Xianbin alone, clutching his hair in agony.

Teacher, this question is way beyond the syllabus, isn’t it?

I can’t figure it out at all!

...

This time, in order to guarantee catastrophic losses, Pei Qian had made extremely thorough preparations.

The pricing alone carried deep meaning.

The Poor Person Version could also be called the *Ultimate Suffering Edition*. By playing the game, players would relive all the hardships poor people suffer in real life—ultimate emotional torture.

The Rich Person Version, meanwhile, could be called the *Gold-Foil-Wrapped Crap Edition*. Everything would go perfectly smoothly at first, following a completely overpowered wish-fulfillment protagonist template, making players feel incredibly satisfied and triumphant. But in the end, the rich protagonist would still die by the knife of a poor man.

Considering that the Rich Person Version was “gold-foil-wrapped crap”—pleasant all the way until the final reveal—Pei Qian intentionally priced it low at 19 yuan.

Meanwhile, the Poor Person Version subjected players to nonstop suffering from beginning to end, yet was priced high at 79 yuan.

To prevent players from buying both versions and coming up with some bizarre interpretations, Pei Qian intentionally raised the combined price.

And if players really insisted on buying one, the optimal choice would obviously be the 19-yuan Rich Person Version. Since it cost very little, the risk of Pei Qian making money would also remain low.

As for the actual content, it was even more outrageous. Endless suffering alone would already be bad enough, but the key point was that *both endings were utterly miserable*. No matter how hard players tried in the game, they could never change those endings!

A game like this—who would even play it?

Absolutely impossible!

This time, Pei Qian was completely determined to “kneel before reality.”

By committing suicide in this manner, he hoped to make the entire forty million vanish into thin air without a single cent returned!