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MUNPIA

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lang="en">

Ace of Ace - Chapter 00-02

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Prologue

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Prologue

5th June, 2022

Gun Choi went to the local council light-heartedly.

“Today is finally the last day”

The last day of the 24-month public military service.

Beep. Beep.

Lowering his head to check his smartphone, he found a message from his colleague.

“Don’t forget! after work we’re having your discharge celebratory get-together!”

The colleague who’d been assigned to the civil service department due to his obesity had been counting down days for this gathering.

However, Gun himself wasn’t even the slightest bit interested in the upcoming event.

There was only one thing in his mind right now.

– THE MAJOR LEAGUE –

The day had finally come after a long wait of nearly 3 years since his last attempt at the league. He was finally re-entering... to prove those who doubted and abandoned him wrong.

“This time... Finally...”

As he was walking across the street, he witnessed a pram racing down a hill uncontrollably. Within moments Gun had taken off to save the pram from crashing... to save the baby that may be lying there innocently.

“NO!!!”

THUMP

With screams of terror and shock echoing his surroundings, he slowly lost consciousness.

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Chapter 1 – Part 1: An Angel's Life On Chance (1)

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An Angel's Life on Chance (1)

When Gun had regained consciousness, the situation had already been settled.

He woke up startled, to find a young girl looking down on him.

“What happened...?”

The girl responded indifferently.

“You're dead”

“What?”

Gun hastily pushed himself up. Then he raised his voice in anger.

“Look, I can move so freely, and you say that I'm dead? You don't joke about those things little girl”

The girl remained calm and indifferent, and simply pointed her finger behind him.

When Gun turned his head around to look, he found his body lying in the middle of the road.

“Your life was ended when you saved a baby in a pram and was hit by a truck as a result. But do not worry, you sacrificed your life for the baby, so you will be sent to Heaven.”

Gun wavered his arms as he responded in shock.

“Wa... Wait, what do you mean Heaven?! I'm not yet...”

The girl cold-heartedly cut him off and continued speaking.

“Eliminate any secular desires you may have for the things you failed to achieve in this world. Those will all disappear once you reach Heaven.”

As soon as she finished, a beam of light came down from the skies and pulled Gun upwards.

“Dammit... my life ends here... without ever standing on the Major League mound. What were all those countless hours of practice and rehabilitation training for...?”

As she watched Gun float to the skies, the young girl thought to herself.

“Hmph... not bad for my first mission. I had perfect control of my facial expressions too.”

As of this mission, she was graduating from being a trainee angel.

– *Gun is approximately half way up to the skies* –

Someone had sent a message to her mind.

“Ell, didn’t you forget something?”

Ell responded to the high angel, Veness’s question.

“This mission was on an accident occurred at local time 08:21:23, on the 5th of June, 2022, in the A-12 region of Seoul, South Korea, which resulted in a death. The target is Jang Geun Cho, a person with enough pure and good deeds to be admitted to Heaven entry. During the procedures, he seemed to have no forgotten memories.”

Veness sighed as Ell responded.

“Ell, as an Appointed Angel, it is one of the most fundamental principles to check the target’s name”

Appointed Angels, aka “AA”s, were those that lead the dead spirits to Heaven.

Ell froze in shock and horror as she heard Veness’s comment.

“No way...”

“YES way”

Ell hastily shot up to the skies and grabbed Gun, who was about to disappear into the clouds.

“Wait a moment”

Gun looked down at Ell in wonder.

“...Yes?”

“Tell me your name”

“... Gun Choi... is there a problem?”

As Ell heard his answer, she pulled him down with all her strength.

Unfortunately, the beam of light from Heaven was too strong, and had pulled both Gun and Ell above the clouds, into Heaven instead.

“NOOO”

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Chapter 1 – Part 2: An Angel's Life on Chance (1)

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An Angel's Life On Chance (1)

“What are you going to do now?”

Ell dropped her head at Veness's question.

“I'm sorry”

“That's not the problem. Their distorted destinies are too great, That man...”

Ell continuously dropped her head and bowed to Veness.

“I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.”

Veness led the truck driver Jang Geun Cho to Heaven. The correct target Ell should have led to Heaven.

However, despite Veness's quick response to the mistake, the destiny had been too greatly distorted to be recovered fully.

“Your trainee graduation... will have to be postponed for now”

Veness turned her attention to Gun.

Was Ell simply unlucky?

Her mistake wasn't entirely her fault...

The given situation could have easily led to an incorrect assumption.

The truck driver Jang Geun Cho saw the pram racing down the road and quickly turned the wheel. His quick response avoided the truck from running over the pram.

However, that wasn't it. The truck soon ran uncontrollably, straight into a 5-metre high wall.

The destined task to sacrifice one's life to save the baby in the pram was Jang Geun's task, NOT Gun's.

Gun bolted for the pram and pushed it out of harm's way, and in the process had simply lost consciousness.

Ell asked Veness in a greatly troubled tone.

"Wha... What do we do now? The spirit already reached all the way here, his physical body down there will hardly be recoverable. Even if we send his soul back down, I doubt his body will be able to accept it and revive..."

"The situation has gotten serious. I mean, we can't even use the Angel's Miracle for an incident like this"

An Angel's Miracle was the angels' ability to bring a dead person back into life, in itself being a miracle to overcome death.

However, to have this ability, you had to have the consent of those in the High Angel or Chief Angel ranks.

Gun had reached the entry of Heaven but could not enter.

He was troubled between the two angels who were holding a discussion regarding the situation.

'Hmm... I'm sure there's something wrong. But I can't see what it is.... Surely not a problem as stupid as bringing the wrong person. Nah, no way.'

Veness lectured Ell once more and turned her head to Gun.

"Seems like this is the only way"

"Veness, please, not Angel's Miracle. You must first acquire the Chief Angel's consent for that."

"Don't worry, I'm not using the Angel's Miracle."

"Then wha..."

"I'm going to utilise the trainee angel mission program. There's a revival program included in it.

"Do you think that will work?"

"Let's just hope his mental durability and will power is sufficient to withstand it"

Veness approached Gun after she finished the conversation.

Gun grew slightly nervous about Veness's approach.

'Maybe they found a solution'

As Veness got closer, Gun could feel his consciousness becoming weaker and harder to grasp a hold of.

The presence of the High Angel and her spiritual power was overwhelming for a normal human being to handle.

Gun stayed conscious with all his might. Then he asked her.

"What's happening? My mind's becoming weaker"

After seeing Gun still standing, Veness thought.

"With mental power this strong, it should be sufficient for him to withstand the program"

Veness asked him with a typically bright angel's smile.

"We have decided to return you to the secular world. As it seems, that is what you desire as well"

"You're sending me back? Is that even possible?"

Gun's consciousness grew weaker and weaker.

"Of course, It's not that simple. However, we are going to repay you for your good deeds sufficiently."

"Wh..What?"

Gun wanted to ask what the repayment was going to be, but had lost his consciousness.

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Chapter 2 – Part 1: An Angel's Life on Chance (2)

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An Angel's Life on Chance (2)

Losing consciousness twice in one day.

Having a bad dream with angels and dead spirits.

Gun was frowning due to the stress on both his body and mind.

'Dreaming about returning going back and forth from Heaven, what's going on in my mind?'

After regaining consciousness, he tried to bring his body back up.

However, his body did not respond.

'Am I under a paralysis?'

Gun moved his throat with all his might.

Soon after, a variety of unfamiliar objects caught his attention.

Electrodes, bandages, an IV and an oxygen respirator.

The bandages were covering the majority of his body.

Gun soon realised the severity of his state and closed his eyes.

'Is this the repayment for my 'good deeds'?! With injuries this severe, my hopes of entering the Major League are gone. Damn it...'

He thought that the two women he ran into in his dream were demons, not angels.

Beep.

With a short and sudden sound, a bright light filled his sight.

– trainee program has been implemented –

– scanning the body and mind –

– *detected bodily impairments* –

– *initialising reconstruction program* –

Despite having his eyes closed, the messages were displayed before him.

Had there been some electronic smart lens implemented in his eyes while he was unconscious?

Putting the questions aside, a significant amount of data were soon listed.

– *adjusting display settings to suit the user* –

User: Gun Choi (Human)

Age: 25

Gender: Male

Occupation: Unemployed

‘What? Unemployed? I’m a professional baseball player who’s preparing for his debut in the Major League!... well with my body in this state that won’t be possible for a long time...’

As if the program was listening to his thoughts, it quickly modified its data.

– *Occupation: reinitialising based on the new job suggested* –

User: Gun Choi

Age: 25

Occupation: Professional Baseball Player

Position: Pitcher

Preferred Hand: Pitching – Right, Batting – Right Team: undrafted

Condition: Extremely damaged

– *displaying User’s basic stats* –

Health: F

Strength: F

Agility: F

Responsiveness: F

Trust: C

Luck: B

Mental Power: A

– displaying User's occupational stats –

Speed: F

Control: F

Movement: F

Pitch Type 1: Fast Ball: F

Pitch Type 2: Slider: F

Pitch Type 3: Change Up: F

Pitch Type 4: Knuckle Ball: F

O Skill: None

Gun was relieved to see knuckle ball included in the list, for he had secretly been training and practising during his time at the military service.

‘It’s classified as F, but it must definitely be included in my arsenal. A bit disappointed that the Curve Ball wasn’t included.’

Out of all the breaking ball pitches (type of pitching), the curve ball was the first type that pitchers trained. However, it was this type that Gun failed to master. Whenever he loosened up, the ball fell short of the home plate, and whenever he tensed he had no control over the pitch.

In his minor league days, one of his coaches once criticised that Gun’s inability to master one of the fundamental pitch types, the curve ball, could be a type of trauma.

Regardless of the reason, it was a fact that Gun was one of the few pitchers that could not utilise the Curve Ball.

– calculating time required for full bodily recovery –

– time required: 5,311 hours...

Chapter 2 – Part 2: An Angel’s Life on Chance (2)

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An Angel’s Life on Chance (2)

‘5,311 hours?! That’s... 220? 221 days?! And let’s see... That’s over 7 months!’

‘Dammit, 7 months from now it’ll be early next year. I need to recover before this year passes’

Next year he’d be turning 26. Including rehabilitation time, he’d be well over 27 before he could start pitching properly.

‘Isn’t there a way to recover faster?’

As if the program was responding to his thoughts, new messages were displayed.

– *recovery time using mental enhancement: 1,244 hours* –

– *may I commence the mental enhancement?*

1,244 hours was equivalent to approximately 2 months.

‘Full recovery in 2 months, then I may be able to finish the rehab program by early next year’

This was Gun’s final chance.

Without hesitation, he responded in his mind.

‘I don’t know what mental enhancement is, but desperate times call for desperate measures. Hurry and commence the enhancement’

– *initialising mental enhancement* –

Within moments, Gun could feel his body rapidly heat up. He wanted to groan and scream in pain, but no sound, nor words could escape his mouth.

12 days after the accident

Gun was recovering at an unbelievable rate, surprising all the doctors and nurses.

“I have never seen a patient recover this quickly”

“Perhaps it’s because he’s an athlete that his recovery is outstanding!”

“Hm... maybe he was born with unique genes. His muscle density and recovery rate is no match for an ordinary human being”

“You mean to say, he was blessed with special gifts or powers?”

“Hm... as reluctant as I am, I’d have to assume so”

Gun was lying down on his nursing bed, looking at the texts that were displayed.

Health: D

Strength: E

Agility: E

Responsiveness: D

Trust: C

Luck: B

Mental Power: A

As the recovery processes progressed, the mere F’s on his stats were beginning to slowly rise.

‘Hm... I guess there’s no point telling other people about these stats, they wouldn’t believe me... What a shame.’

Gun also knew that even if he could somehow prove that he could magically quantify and produce an accurate table of his stats, the people would only take him to a hidden laboratory for cruel experiments in an attempt to extract the power from him.

According to the messages, there were approximately 40 days left until all stats were to return to normal.

‘I wonder how long the rehab would take. I’d have to start from rock bottom again right’

He let out a deep sigh.

The minor league life was dooming.

‘Here comes the bread and strawberry jam again...’

4th of January 2020 (2 years and 6 months ago)

Gun let out a breath of relief as the doctor notified him that the operation was successful.

“Only thing you need is some good rest now”

Gun delivered his words of gratefulness on his nursing bed.

“Thank you very much”

2 months ago, with the help of his minor league team, he was drafted into the top 40 list of the Major League and was aiming to be drafted officially into a team.

The major league, which he dreamt of for years.

However, due to a critical elbow injury, he ended up undergoing a surgery.

There were 2 things pointed out as the cause for his injury.

Firstly, his incorrect pitching form.

Gun held the ‘Inverted W’ pitching form.

Numerous major league pitchers from the past with high speed balls fell with the Inverted W form.

Gun also knew very well of the dangers and risks of adopting this form.

However, this form was also the best form to produce top speed fast balls. Gun was unable to resist the temptations of immediate quality performance for taking the risks of injuries, much like other pitchers from the past.

Secondly, he often overworked his body.

Gun was known for his significantly large amount of training. He trained even after games, typically working on mastering his Breaking Balls.

It didn’t come to a surprise that Gun faced such injury, for he was overworking his body with an incorrect form.

“It ‘s a miracle that your body endured for 4 years”

After he was discharged, the draft team officials visited his cabin.

Gun regarded it as a necessary visit of manners and courtesy to check up on a player’s conditions after an operation.

However, their purpose for the visit was different to what Gun had expected.

“Mr. Choi, you are now an unrestricted free agent, able to establish contracts with other teams”

Gun hadn’t even entered the major league yet, but they were talking about free agency.

It took Gun several moments to figure out the deeper meaning of their notice.

“...Are you saying that I’m no longer part of the team?”

“Mr. Choi, the team can no longer wait for you”

Gun’s age had already reached the end of that of a super rookie. He knew that very well. Which was exactly why he had spent so much time and effort training harder than others.

“Is it okay for a team to abandon their injured player like this? Without pre arranged meetings or negotiations?”

Gun yelled in a tone filled dense with emotions.

The team’s draft officials had experienced these types of abandonments numerous times, so they had grown accustomed to the players’ outrages.

“Mr. Choi, your talent is sensational. However, you are slightly different to the rest of the players. You own an absolute Achilles heel.

“I’m different to other players? Is it the injury?”

The official replied as he shook his head.

“It’s not the injury, Mr. Choi. It’s the military service.”

It was true. Gun hadn’t yet served in the compulsory South Korean military service unlike many other players in his age.

Had he entered the Major League he wouldn’t have these worries. If you enter

the Major League, and ultimately the Olympics and win a medal, you are able to apply for an exemption.

However, all such hopes were blown away by the injury.

“Mr. Choi, I hope you are able to respect the team’s decision.”

The official used the excuse of the military service, but in fact he wasn’t regarding Gun’s abilities that highly at all.

Had he seen true potential in Gun’s abilities, then despite the military service issues, the team would have waited 2 years or so.

However, that wasn’t the team’s decision.

They regarded Gun’s talents as quite ordinary.

Gun asked.

“Is there no other way?”

The official shook his head firmly.

“It was Thompson’s final call. It would be impossible to oppose it. Mr. Choi, please respect his decision”

A.Thompson was Boston Red Sox’s new GM. As soon as he was newly appointed, he used his very first opportunity to eliminate ‘ordinary’ or ‘hopeless’ rookies, and Gun was his first target.

“Pardon me, but I will be on my way, I have a lot to take care of today”

Thump

The door closed, and the draft official disappeared.

Gun murmured, filled with rage.

‘Damn it... To be abandoned like this. I will show those bastards what I’m capable of. I will become the second Bambino.*

*Legendary home run king, Babe Ruth’s nickname. After Boston traded away Babe Ruth at an incredibly low price, they failed to win a World Series for 86 years until 2004. They often referred to this as the Bambino’s Curse.