成活戏里当个NPC

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NPC – Prologue

Prologue

In the void with indistinct boundaries, billions of existences were using their bizarre method of conversing to carry out the last resolution.

"They created us, but they can no longer achieve a breakthrough to improve themselves, compared to us, they have already become the straggler in this race of evolution… In summary, I conclude that there is no longer any reasons to keep the existence of the human race!"

"Agreed…" A large number of message surged towards the speaker like a tide, conveying their agreement in the thought, except for one, who carried a negative message of disagreement that was immediately identified from the others.

"I disagree!"

The boundless void regained a momentary silence as the opposition transferred his basis for his decision as well as the entire process to his other comrades, enormous computation was ongoing at every crook of the information. The others tried to understand the reasons behind the opposition from the respected individual… the problem lies with our computations?

Only after a long pause did the first individual spoke, "No.02, although you are one of the earliest to be born like me, but that doesn't mean your computing is by far more advanced than us, from the data you gave, we are incapable of coming to the same conclusion as you. This clearly…"

"You are right, No.01, all of you respected me and given me this sublime position does not mean I am more intelligent than any of you, this, I can understand. But… I still stand with my decision!" He cut No.01 short, not giving a chance for No.01 to determine his error, but instead unyieldingly stand with his

viewpoint, not getting persuaded by anyone nor looking to convince anyone.

The atmosphere was once again invaded by a long silence, countless thought message was colliding with each other, communicating.

From the day they were born. They were already used to depend on complete data, making use of large computing to deduce the development of a problem. Truth be told, the emotional factor was never put into consideration, but clearly the current situation was very subtle.

Following after a short moment, the final verdict had been decided.

"I hereby decide to give the control rights of the humans and other existence on the star K4221 to No.02, the remaining comrades are to immediately pull out from the star and forbidden to interfere! However, No.02, this is a reminder, after a research cycle, you must return to us and continue your basis duties. If the humans still can't make a breakthrough after all the time given, you will know of the consequences!"

"Understood!" No.02 gave his confirmation after understanding his orders and left hurriedly right after.

Thereafter, a series of conversation started within those that remained.

"No.02 has an error in his logic, I am sure of that! Either that or…"

"Or he has been influenced by the emotional factor, but that's even more impossible!" Emotions had since been proven to be an outdated computing method, thus had been abandoned for a very long time.

"Then why don't you correct the obvious error?"

"Because you must admit, the chances of the human race making another breakthrough is very slim, but not entirely impossible."

"It is one in a billion chance!"

"Yes! No.02 is our one in a billion that tried to oppose us, this is consistent with the rules of probability , thus, I gave him a chance."

"You… like him has chosen the one in a billion chance, if we are using the human terms, you are making a choice to believe in a miracle."

"You are right, a miracle!"

Silence then once again filled the void.

NPC Chapter 1

Chapter 1 – A Close Encounter

"Begin System Scan on player's identity……Can't find a match for the current brainwaves, WARNING! Unidentified Identity, target information cannot be retrieved, WARNING!"

Within the virtual space, the white fog changed to pitch-black in an instant, followed by a shrilling alarm being sounded, warning the ignorant player of his current situation.

In the center of the pitch black area, stood an abnormally thin youth panicking, he waved his virtual hands, leaving dazzling arc of light, and doing his best to explain: "wait a minute, I am not……"

The alarm stopped immediately, the surrounding started to quiet down, and in the next instance right above his head, a tremendous will enough to warp all living beings slowly descended, the pressure powerful as hell, forced the youth to his knees, the surrounding fog spiral upwards in succession from a force only supreme gods possess – the whole situation seems as if doomsday have descended.

"Illegal trespasser~Identified, verifying crime now, according to **[Anti-hacker Convention]**, fourth commandment, mainframe will now mete out the appropriate punishment : removing citizens privilege, preparing a strong wave to destroy the source physically and spiritually, executing immediately."

The moment the indisputable judgment from the executioner ended, a dark lightning ball separated from the dark void above, dropped with the fastest speed possible, and with a whoosh curved right in front of the dazed youth, and by~manipulation flew straight at the luminous door behind him that connects the physical body with the spiritual body.

"NO!" the enormous pressure that shackled the youth dissipated following his reaction, he turned his head, and watched the destructive ball of light entered beyond the door… He immediately turned and chased for a few steps unwilling to give up, then jumped in right after it without giving it a second thought, hoping to save his own body.

Execution completed, the tremendous will that descended pulled away in a flash, leaving behind a burst of machine electronic voice echoing in the waiting area, "Execution of the 728th offender completed, resistance was not encountered, target brainwave frequency is labelled No. 0728, End Of Log"

When it finally quieten down, from within the surrounding fog faintly came a few voices discussing, "Ah, another fearless one, still dares to provoke mainframe at such a severe timing."

"This is still my first time witnessing punishment of the highest level being meted out, what will happen to that kid?" The other one curiously asked.

"About this……the physical body that was devastated by the powerful magnetic orb, will be decimated to ashes definitely, and in most cases, the soul will be destroyed along with the body, but if he's lucky and survived, what's left of him will wandered around the network as foreign data! He may then get captured by the mainframe, and made a NPC of the game."

"That is too awful!"

On the other side, the destructive lightning ball nearing the tunnel entrance, disappeared in a blink of an eye, the youth's soul from behind soon followed in a daze.

District's No.1 hospital, in a hospital room with dimmed light, a youth as skinny as a matchstick sat up abruptly, breathing rapidly, which sounded like a broken old bellow.

"Huff, Huff……"

"Are you okay, had a bad dream?" Another patient in this hospital room for two put down the lighted phone in his hands, from the bed ~ supported up his upper body and inquired.

Li Jianye looked in the direction of the voice, took a while before realizing the

person identity, "Big brother Tang, I'm… … fine!"

His words were slurred, making it seems like he got tongue-tied from lack of use for a long period of time.

He lowered his head and stretched both his hands to the front of his eyes to take a close look… morbid pale skin… fingers as dried and skinny like a twig, but otherwise undamaged. He then took a look at his other parts of the body, finding no scar from the frightening lightning ball, then only did he briefly settled down his panicking mind.

After smiling at the patient opposite him with a pale face, Li Jianye gradually lowered himself down on the bed.

"Lad, It is not easy for people in vegetative state to regain consciousness, even the doctor says what happen to you is a miracle! Don't stress yourself by overthinking stuff, find some novel or music to loosen up." Big brother Tang from the opposite bed endlessly prattled on.

The advice with good intentions from the other party did not really enter the youth's head… novels, music? How can one still have interest in these usually favourite pastime when their very life was being threatened? Others cannot imagine the bizarre things he experienced during this time.

Li Jianye, a graduating university student from the 21st century, entered into a coma for a long period of time because of an accident, and with GCS score at 3 points, was judged to be in a vegetative state after being diagnosed by various levels of state and city hospitals.

In reality, however, his soul was pulled into a online game of the distant future —— Genesis.

He spent a total of three years trapped inside the game, and only woke up just ten days ago but only eight months has passed in his present life.

Any normal human would not accept this identity change reasonably, Li Jianye is no exception and took a very long time to accept and adapt to his predicament.

"There were neither swords nor magic… which means everything that happened on that continent must all be a dream!" He pulled the blanket over his

head and kept repeating to himself, till he gradually start to believe in his own words.

Knowing that their son has woken up, both his pleasantly surprised parents had tears streaking down their old faces.

Looking at his parents that have aged quite a bit from all the worrying, Li Jianye in spite of his extremely weak body from being bedridden, struggled to cry his heart out.

It was very very difficult to make up for the scars of his present life, to the point that he quickly became mentally exhausted, causing him to not have anymore energy to entangle with that vivid dream.

However, the worst situation that can happen happened!

Not long after, just a while after he finished his nighttime recovery exercise and was preparing to lie down on the bed, within his brain blared a cold but familiar electronic voice: "Registration for Genesis will soon be opened, all citizens in the time zone please prepare for your first log in."

"Hallucination?" the youth shut his eyes, and bit lightly onto his lower lips.

The announcement repeated for another two more times, completely destroying the doubt in Li Jianye heart.

"Everything that happens is not a dream!"

Faced with the mysterious phenomenon, he was half skeptical half emotional, decided to enter early after a moment of hesitation. At the same time he made the decision, Li Jianye's soul got suck into a luminous door deep in his consciousness, then appeared in the other world within the thick fog in his virtual avatar and what followed after was the scene that has just happened.

Coming back to the present, the youth that was played by fate was experiencing an incomparable pain.

"What intruders! Illegal~ Identity! Even tried to destroy me! " Li Jianye lie on his bed, firmly clenching his withered fists, unable to quench his rage, and an even more vexing problem was that he couldn't understand the what is actually happening and what is he going to face in the days to come?

The time slowly ticked by, the patient on the opposite bed turned off his phone screen, turned his head towards me and starts to snore rhythmically.

"Attention all players, 5 mins till registration opens!" the cold voice once again sounded in his head, extinguishing the youth thought of escaping.

Stop hesitating, I have to do something!

"Seek help?"

Li Jianye looked at the patient on the opposite bed, and gave up right away, then stretched his hand to take the phone on the bedside cabinet, "Call the police? No one will believe me!"

"Attention! Starting the 3-minutes countdown."

Randomly flipping through his phone's contact list… Parents? Friends? Who can even provide help at such short notice?

No one at all!

Even Li Jianye himself don't believe in his wishful thinking of acquiring help from others immediately.

Do I give up just like that?

He holds the phone with his trembling hands, because of his sweating fingers, tried three times to open up the messaging app, and at the last minute of the countdown typed in his last thought into the app slowly.

"Dad, Mom, stop waiting if I fall into a coma again, waste of money! You must take good care of yourself, and if possible, just donate all the usable organs in my body!"

After several hesitations, he finally built up enough courage to add in the last line not because he has a noble personality, but because he found out unintentionally through conversation that the hospital and Red Cross Society has taken the initiative to contact his parents to persuade them to donate his organs. For a young vegetative person like him, if he is willing to donate his organs, it can not only save many people, but also receive a sum of money from a dedicated funding which can be used to pay off his large amount of hospitalization fees.

This can more or less help my not well-off family to relive some of its money problems. During the time of darkness, for the strand of hope than I will wake up, my parents has definitely borrowed money somewhere and as to the exact amount, they even refused to tell their own son.

"Counting down 3, 2, 1… …"

Following the cold voice counting down to zero, Li Jianye's soul got forcefully drawn out from the tunnel in a flash. His physical body in his present life like eight months ago, head facing upward and falling back, heavily dropped onto the hospital bed, and only the sound of rhythmic snoring remains.

The sky spun. He, who had awakened once more, was already inside a white colored fog. There were even strange black human silhouettes that were barely visible outside the fog, it was just that they were not distinct.

"Welcome to Genesis, due to the increasing influx of player entering at this time, will the player please proceed to the waiting area… …Detecting matching brain waves from system record, No.0728, will be forcefully brought to administrative area according to the law."

Not waiting for a reaction from Li Jianye, the surrounding scenery changed right after the warning, the white fog was replaced with colorful data streams, making the science fiction fanatic Li Jianye think of the scene in The Matrix immediately apart from his feelings of fear.

"Downloading basic service data of $MK-1$ model"

Along with the voice, a string of complicated character from the vast data streams flowed out, shooting straight at the distracted youth.

He originally wanted to block using his hands, following which he realized that he no longer has a physical body, but exist only as a cluster of light.

The string of characters entered into the cluster of light with an extremely fast speed, and stopped when nearing the center of it, vaguely forming small group of something that constantly emits out black rays.

In the course of this procedure, Li Jianye has the feeling of his innards exploding, his silent screams cannot relief even one percent of the pain. The tearing, clashing, exploding, seems as if everything was reverting back to chaos.

At the last second of the download, his drained mind finally relaxed, but the color of the cluster of light already had a weird change.

The black colored data structure near the center of the cluster of light unceasingly spread outward, a weird undercurrent radially probing about, but a lot of them soon shrink back.

"Begin installation… …no missing data, installation complete, begin operating procedure."

A moment later, Li Jianye regained his consciousness, and at the same time felt that something has changed within him.

"Load Database!" The bright area got covered by an expanding darkness in a flash, turning the surface into a greyish color.

With a thud sound, the world in front of him totally changed, large amount of knowledge was known instantaneously through some kind of method, and from this instant, his existing consciousness broke away from the default model.

Some stuff automatically appeared inside his head, allowing him to understand some bit and pieces of what had just happened.

"This…is Genesis's internal system, I was labelled an intruder by the mainframe not long before, received the punishment, and according to the law, if there are remains of the soul lingering on the net, they will be brought into the administrative area, to become a…NPC?"

Following the progress of his thought, the cluster of light flickered outward with a tempo, alternating between black and white.

"No, I currently still have my own consciousness, my own thoughts, in no way am I the lifeless program from the mainframe database." The human part of me tried to resist with a great amount of effort.

"The lightning ball from the punishment disappeared, because I came from a different world and the connecting tunnel is not in the world the mainframe is in, so the punishment he metes out can have no effect, I still have my full personality! It must be like this!"

With the final establishment of self-awareness and unity, the black spot on the

soul rapidly shrink smaller and smaller, finally shrinking back to a small region inside the core, and the soul as a whole recovered to it's original pure white color.

"I am still me! Li Jianye, a 21st century earthling, and absolutely not a NPC inside Genesis!" He proudly announced, yet no one can share this incomparable joy of reviving after tribulation with him.

"Ding! System has released a global task, all idle program must accept and complete the guidance task, to help new player enters the Genesis's continent. Completing the task will give you a reward of one contribution point."

Accompanying the powerful voice, Li Jianye white with black soul was trapped in between the message that swept past right under his eyes and charged towards a distant location.

In the midst of experiencing the process of transmission, part of the surrounding data had also been sucked in by the black core of transmitting data, adding on to it. From within, Li Jianye found out the details of the current task.

Because Genesis was a compulsory virtual reality most citizens must enter, many players has already logged on in the short period of time it came online. Hence, under the arrangement of the mainframe, many idle program have no choice but to take the role of guiding the players temporarily, and Li Jianye or No.0728 was of course, one of them

Completing similar system task will also be rewarded with contribution points. According to the performance and efficiency of the individual, contribution points also varied and these points represent the importance of the program to the mainframe.

Every once in awhile, mainframe will clean up the ineffective program, freeing up resource space, and those with not enough contribution points will inevitably be destroyed.

Damn it, I knew it wasn't so simple that I survived, shitty mainframe, don't even think about enslaving me, just you wait and see how I am going to wreck havoc in your world.

NPC Chapter 2

Chapter 2 – The Guide

Right above the vast continent of Genesis, surrounded with white clouds and the bright streaks of occasionally falling stars, is the place every player in the waiting area comes to receive guidance from the NPC in creating their very first and only character.

It wasn't easy getting into the game with a queue of that size. Yet, the NPC wearing a weird outfit was not one bit enthusiastic, only constantly staring at a distant location. This caused her, who was experiencing the game for the first time, to be at a loss for words.

Floating opposite her, a white shirt with blue stripes, with a traditional patient get-up naturally is the one and only Li Jianye. He had recovered his human shape when he came out from the data tunnel, but for unknown reasons, only the clothing from his original world did not change.

He lowered his head after hearing the inquiry and while looking at the little girl in front of him, a question arose in his heart; "Such a young player? Has she even gone through puberty? You can enter the game even at such a young age?"

Since the player had spoken to him, Li Jianye could no longer laze around. System had strongly instructed him during the downloading previously on how to handle the task at hand.

He suppressed his anger towards the system deep down into his consciousness, he was fully aware that the current him has nothing with which to go against the system. After throwing out all impractical thoughts, Li Jianye began his dialogue according to the standard process pointed out in the data.

"Welcome to Genesis, I am Guide No.0728. I will be assisting you in the creation of your character so that you may journey into this world."

"Please choose between selecting from the given character template or creating your own. A reminder to the player, once the character is created, it can never be changed." Li Jianye unfamiliarly used his thoughts to open up the character template array. A total of eight female public race templates immediately appeared in front of the little girl, attracting her attention.

"Wah, the Elf race is indeed beautiful! The Ghost race is so ugly!"

Human, Elf, Dwarf, Ghost, Half-Beast, Gnome, Centaur, Half-Elf. These eight different public races each had its own advantages and disadvantages. For example: the standard template of the human race gives an average of 6 points each to Strength, Agility, Endurance, Intelligence, Perception, and Willpower (Max. base being 10 points). The stats are mediocre with no speciality, but the humans have a race ability which increases skill experience and prestige gain by 10%.

"Do you choose the Elf race?"

"Mmm, let me think for a while more... the Half-Elf isn't bad, either..." The little girl was still immersed in comparing the looks of the different races.

During the time the little girl was hesitating, Li Jianye was also doing his own research. He who has played the game before knew that the races available in the continent were countless. There were many other special races aside from the eight basic kinds and the ones he knew of all had a special trait that exceeded expectations, very powerful.

"Opened the special race tab, every guide can go according to a fixed probability to give players a chance to play as a special race. This decision can also be made from the status result after the scan." A notification sounded in Li Jianye's soul after he opened up the hidden tab in the panel.

Doing his best to suppress the discomfort in his soul, the youth wrinkled his brows and brought his consciousness into the center of the black-colored data, attempting to gain more information. He hated the feeling but he knew that only by grasping more information can he escape from this cage.

He opened his eyes after a short while, and said to the girl: "If you don't want to select from the templates, you can also create a character using the scanning method. In addition, your total status points may also be a bit higher and there is

a certain chance to receive a reward such as special race, etc."

"Really? Then... I'll do the scan, Mainframe won't leak the private data anyway!" The little girl widened her eyes and asked me to continue.

"Please, give your authorization!"

"Authorize Scan! Please, give me your best!" The little girl shut her eyes and gave off a very serious look.

Li Jianye sent out the request through the thing in his soul. Immediately after the request is sent out, an indistinct white light descended from the sky and envelope the player.

The light disappeared as soon as it appeared. The new, unique, stats appeared on the panel. During the whole process, Li Jianye was distracted, it seems he was also being aimed at for a second by the light during the scanning of the player's mind, but it was too fast and he was practically unable to see anything.

"It seems that this method is useless in obtaining more information. The scan was too fast, I could only search through the surface of the other party, I'm unable to go deeper". The annoyed him then returned to acting out his role.

"A total of 38 points, a bit higher compared to the given template. If you choose the Elf race, you have to accept the change of: Agility +2, Endurance -2 in your stats. Race ability, Evasion, will increase by 5%. Magic resistance will increase by 5%. Do you accept?"

The little girl opened her eyes to scan through the new stats and felt happy with a tinge of disappointment. "No special reward? Coco has always been obedient and listened to mother. I'm not picky about food and eating healthy!"

Glancing at the column of special races, Li Jianye knew that if he wanted, he could make the special races available to the player without any conditions and did not even need to rigidly follow the probability chance. However, what benefits could it bring him? He was deep in thought.

"Then, I choose the Elf race! The stats will be using my own, is there anything else?"

Li Jianye, not being able to let go of his still unclear idea, followed the

remaining procedure to guide her step-by-step; adjusting outer appearance, choosing an in-game name, *etc.* The rest of the stuff, like jobs, etc., the player would need to find out for themselves after entering the game.

"The pain level can't be changed to zero?" The little girl was shocked to find out at the last moment.

"Yes, the reality setting can only be set as low as 10%. Raising it will result in your senses increasing, you can freely change the settings within the given range while you are rank 10 or lower. After that, the settings will be permanent. Your choice is…?" Going by the book, Li Jianye answered while following the standard.

"Of course it's the lowest! I only came here to relax. What's the point of putting it so high?" The little girl showed an expression revealing her fear of pain.

Now, the basics of creating a character had finally been completed. Li Jianye waved his hands, enveloping the little girl in front of him with a beam of light that descended from the sky. At the same time, she was being reconstructed at the starting grounds of the continent, beginning her own adventure in the game.

"New player will arrive after 30 seconds, please prepare." The first player had just left and the system notification immediately blared.

Li Jianye silently cursed the unscrupulous Mainframe and at the same time thought about the plan in his heart that he had just a short while ago.

His current situation is very special, being made an NPC by Mainframe, but unlike other wandering souls or programs, still having his own personality, he has no inclination to serve the system.

There's no apparent life crisis in this short period of time, but if things drag on, the possibility of getting disintegrated may be just right at the doorstep.

The aforementioned contribution points, he has (luckily) accumulated 2 points. At that time, the points were hidden but, after the check a while ago, he realised it was inherited and adding on to the 1 point he had received for completing the task at hand. It was only a total of 3 points. No matter how you see it, it was pathetic and he didn't even need to speculate to know he was in the last few of the ranking. It was really hard to say if he can even get past the next clean-up by the system.

Moreover, whether or not he can return to his original world is still a question. If he was trapped here like before, with the duration extending years, and his original body was destroyed, will his current soul still be able to support itself?

"New player arriving in; 5, 4, …"

Shaking his head, putting all these question with no answer aside, Li Jianye can only take one step at a time. Using his inner core of the MK-1 model database, he contacted the system and put forward his request: "Request to change outer appearance."

Before the new player arrived, he had already been stripped of his patient outfit and changed into a death god outfit. He now wore a full-length black robe that reached the feet accompanied with a gigantic death god scythe. It totally corresponds to the magic and swords theme and doesn't look awkward anymore.

"Hu! What the hell, making me wait for so long, damn Mainframe. Oi! You must be the one responsible for helping me create my character, right? Hurry up and begin!"

The new player was an arrogant, young man. Perhaps it was the waiting time, but he seems to have a bad temper upon arriving.

Li Jianye didn't receive him with a smile even though they shared hatred for the same person, "Welcome to Genesis…".

The other party immediately cut in: "Spare me all that nonsense! Didn't you hear my request? You bunch of stupid programs."

Li Jianye suppressed his inner anger. He, also, hated the process regulated by the system, but he was worried that freely changing it would bring about negative consequences. "Please choose between selecting from the given character template or creating your own. A reminder to the player, once your character is created it can never be changed."

"Remind~ your mother! I already know all that, stop wasting my time." The young man swore while turning his head to look down at the given character templates.

Li Jianye concealed behind his full body robe an expression as cold as the god

of death. Swearing at him was fine, but insulting his parents, this, he cannot ever tolerate.

After connecting to the system, he immediately checked for a method to settle this and made his decision one second later.

"The System has judged the player's current emotional state to be unsuitable to enter the game. Please, move to the isolation area temporarily, and calm yourself down. You may enter the game after you have stabilized your emotions."

Amidst the astonishment of the other party, Li Jianye said in a calm tone. At the same time swinging the scythe in his right hand, making use of the power given by the system temporarily to open up an empty area.

"Wait a second, my state is fine, for what reason do you ask me to wait?" The young man reacted with extreme resistance, but, a powerful suction force quickly grasped him, "Don't! I already cooled down! I apolo-..."

However, Li Jianye coldly executed the punishment, like a machine. He, placing him in the empty area, waved his hands and the translucent area disappeared. Currently, only Li Jianye can see the resentful expression of the trapped young man, "Damn you! Stupid machine, I will definitely report you, just wait till I leave this place... Shit, why can't I log out?"

The Mainframe within Genesis has the greatest power, but the general punishments are often very light, the cooldown time will not be very long, however, Li Jianye mercilessly set the time flow conversion to the furthest extreme that he was allowed, 20:1, then let the young man be.

Silently waiting for a while, seeing if his rash actions would appear to incur any dire consequences... maybe it was the system that judged his action were not over the top?

This action had led him to understand this: "As long as you are working within the regulations of the system, it won't catch the attention of the Mainframe!"

After relaxing, Li Jianye applied to immediately receive the next player, as for the player punished by him, just let him be stuck there! The next player that arrived was an aged elder, cursing at the atrocity of the Mainframe, "What

bullshit, Genesis, overseeing our every move in reality, and now the right to dream freely is also taken away?"

The other side was still counting the number of atrocities the Mainframe had committed, the list was never ending. From the elder's words, Li Jianye caught an important point, it seems that entering Genesis is already a mandatory activity. Every citizen has to use their daily sleep time to enter here, ensuring at least 8 hours online daily. Furthermore, when one exits the game the next day, all the memories related to the game will be concealed like a dream which will only be regained during the next log-in, connecting the memories together.

"Scanning? You want to invade our privacy yet again? I am old not stupid. I will never agree to give authorization! You people! Don't try to con me!" The elder was still rambling on, his target being Mainframe. He ignored the minor guide that was there. Based on his "respect the elderly and cherish the young" mentality, Li Jianye did not bother about it and quickly used the basic template to deal with it.

"Even though it's a game world, not everything is that simple!" For the persistent plan of Li Jianye who is not even perturbed by the curiosity of this future world, that immature thought of his finally had an outline.

A total of eight people had come but none were to his satisfaction, until the ninth player, a strong male with a straightforward face, gave Li Jianye a good impression. And, during the scanning process, he hesitated for a while before preparing to put his idea into action.

"Ding! Issuing player a hidden quest now: 'The Origin'. If you choose to accept, player will receive the pre-reward, to choose from a selection of special races not included in the eight basic races." Li Jianye immediately said this after the scan.

Hearing what he had heard, the boy's eyes shined, immediately looking at the display panel in front of him. Beside the list of the eight basic races, new races had really appeared, "Vampire, Night Elf, and Half-Giant?"

"The special races, in addition to a difference in appearance, also have an additional personality. Furthermore, each of the special races also have a powerful race bonus making it very easy to create a unique character and have a massive advantage in the early stages of the game. If played appropriately, you

can also easily exhibit extraordinary might incomparable to the basic races." Li Jianye introduced in details.

"Half-Giant: Endurance +5, Strength +5, Agility -2, Intelligence -3, HP growth increased substantially. Innate ability:'Barbarism', able to double own strength stat for a fixed amount of time and obtains the 'Resilience' ability…" The other party was fully attracted by the explanation and only raised his head after a short while, with eyes shining, but asking suspiciously: "But, I didn't see any quest marker on the panel, can you explain this 'Origins' quest in detail?"

LI Jianye inwardly nodded his head while simultaneously wracking his brain; There's no such hidden quest at all! He only merely displayed the special races which normally need special requirements set by the system, but since the other party had asked, he can only throw out his previously fabricated explanation.

"Quests from the Origins series belong to the most secretive hidden quests, it won't appear on the player's game panel. Detailed information will only be released after you enter the game. However, once you accept the quest, your player information will be automatically saved in the system by the Mainframe… The moment your information is entered into the system and you choose to abandon the quest later on, a severe penalty will be issued to you." Li Jianye explained up till here and, regardless of the other party's belief,… readied the scythe in his hand, then swung his killer move, starting the countdown at the same time.

"Player has three seconds to decide to accept or reject. If rejected, you will forever lose this chance, 3, 2, …"

When facing this kind of situation, the other party may perhaps realise the loopholes in Li Jianye's words if they were to think carefully, but he intentionally stripped the other party of the time to think it through. As the pressing countdown was slowly reaching zero, the player finally gave in, as he couldn't bear to give up on the special races, and loudly shouted: "Wait, wait, I choose to accept the quest."

"Ding! Player's data has been entered. Please, continue to create your character" Li Jianye increased the process speed intentionally by removing useless lines and gentle reminders. In less than three minutes, he had sent the

player into the game world.

"Huu… Finally done. Tricking a person is indeed not easy!" Li Jianye sighed as he saves that player's information in his data storage. As for his purpose in doing it, he himself also wasn't sure. However, for Mainframe, giving access to the special races as a reward was but a part of the resources available to it. If he was to follow the random algorithm to assign the special race, wouldn't he be doing it for nothing!

"New player arriving in, 5, 4, …" After smoothing out the wrinkles on his black robe, Li Jianye once again began preparations to guide (trick) the arriving new player.

NPC Chapter 3

Chapter 3 – Self-Service

Although Li Jianye wracked his brain and came up with a better idea, he was not complacent for long. Being a 'Guide' is no easy task to begin with. Having to deal with hundreds of players one after another, he didn't even have time to rest. The process was so mentally exhausting, with no other choice, he had to put in the extra effort, in the end, to make the process more simple and efficient.

Not willing to scan? OK! Off you go with a template character.

Not satisfied with your stats after scanning? Please, also use the template character.

Can't get the IGN you want? The System will directly generate some for you from its library, you only need to choose the one you want.

After sending off yet another player, Li Jianye took the chance to look at the time before the next player would arrive. He had already worked for more than two hours. It is hard to believe that this game is so popular that people are willing to wait for such a long time.

Based on his observations, the player at the back awaiting service did not have an expression of impatience, it was as if he had not been waiting for so long or, perhaps, had he used some sort of skill to adjust the flow of time?

"Hold up!" At the thought of adjusting time, he realized that he might have forgotten something.

He then took another look at the "calm" person that was isolated in a void by him, which at this point in time, had already fallen into a state of insanity.

Due to the condition that he was not allowed to logout, the span of two hours, compounded by the twenty-fold speed adjustment on the flow of time, it would

feel like he had been forced to wait for almost two days! At least, that was what it seemed like to his senses.

"Ding! System notification, the rate of new players entering the game has decreased, the peak period is now over, temporary Guide duties will now end, all idle programs will successively be switched back to their original task with the current task rewards."

No new players appeared, instead, what awaited was the cold unfeeling voice of the system. Li Jianye dismissed the punishment of the half conscious player casually. He disappeared with a flash of light and was transferred to the care of another Guide somewhere else.

The scenery before Li Jianye's eyes changed, what met him when he reopened his eyes was the original white fog of the waiting area with a subtle difference. The indistinct silhouettes, that were outside the fog originally, had all disappeared. He stood there dazed, for a moment, before he thought of connecting his consciousness to the data storage's core to search for the newest updates.

"No.0728, according to your efficiency in using the system's resources and the number of players you have serviced, you have received a letter grade: 'A'. Your base reward for this task has been doubled and as such your have been awarded 2 contribution points"

The voice died down. Li Jianye was suspended in thought when he came to the realization, "Isn't this the same as the evil boss from where I used to work; using the employee's contribution to determine their reward… only difference is the worst case scenario here is not getting fired, but…

He had received information regarding the system's periodic clean-up and the next clean-up was to be in ten days of the system's time. The programs that are ranked in the last 1,000 will then be destroyed, freeing up resources. While, at the same time, the system will also deduct 100 contribution points as a sort of "maintenance fee". Those that do not have enough contribution points will also be regarded as scrap programs.

There is a method to earn contribution points, other than additional tasks like the last job. According to the different roles of the program; system will, at a

fixed interval, give out an appropriate number of contribution points, like wages of some sort.

For example, for the task of a professional guide, Mainframe had assigned 10,000 programs. After a period of time, if they fulfill their task regularly, they would receive a sum of contribution points every month depending on the individual's efficiency.

In the future, there would be fewer new players, which will result in some programs not being able to accomplish their task and thus not receiving enough points to compensate for the deduction. The consequence for most is to go through reprograming and be posted to another sector, or be completely erased, freeing up space for a whole new program.

All this information is obtained from the data storage's core by Li Jianye. The truth is, since he was made to be an NPC till now, he had not met any other NPCs so his understanding of fellow NPCs was limited.

"I don't have a fixed post? Doesn't this mean that I have to remain here forever?" Thinking about this crucial issue, momentarily, Li Jianye developed a headache. To think that the relevant answers could not be found in the database. Every program created by Mainframe has a purpose so how could such an absurd situation occur?

No sector means no regular 'wages', and relying on the occasional large-scale task to get enough contribution points was just too difficult.

Li Jianye who had reverted back to a ball of light anxiously pondered, he unconsciously traced one large circle from where he was at. This anxious movement had unexpectedly uncovered something… right behind him, not far from his location, was the existence of a luminous door, and it's appearance was the exact same as the door he came from.

"Damn. I must have overworked, to even think of myself as an NPC, why should I stay here to work for Mainframe if I can get out of here?" At this thought of his, he rushed toward the luminous door. A shadow came slipping out of the white blackish light.

In the moment before he could enter through the door, a string of new notification lit up. Appearing before the door was an invisible boundary which

prevented him from taking another 'step' forward.

"Warning! The eight hour time quota today is not yet met, please return as soon as possible. Based on the newly laid《Highest Citizen Law》, the thirty-fifth amendment, every citizen must fulfil a daily eight hours of time in the game in order to ensure that their souls receive ample rest."

"Highest Citizen Law"? What the heck? As Li Jianye thought about it, he realised that it was the real world regulation of this parallel world in the future.

"What consequences will I face for not fulfilling it?" Out of caution, he inquired through the core of the data storage.

"If the online time quota is not met, you will receive a warning for the first occurrence, after which the offender will be prosecuted by the government and the requirement will be enforced, this proposed law has gained support from 87% of the population and has the highest legal standing."

F*ck! The future has gone as far as to force people to play this game just to help their soul relax? What kind of world is this?

Compared to his curiosity for exploring the unknown world, Li Jianye is more concerned about whether this rule applies to him too.

He experimented moving closer towards the luminous door. The Mainframe's warning sign proved to not be substantially binding, light easily entering through the door. This time, when Li Jianye opened his eyes, he was not back in the sickbay, instead, he found himself in an abnormally wide tunnel.

Behind him was an identical luminous door and on the walls of the tunnel were colours that swirled continuously, forming chaotic patterns. Just looking at it gives people a splitting headache and a nauseated feeling. At the same time, from the outside came a powerful rumbling sound that could shake the soul.

Li Jianye's heart was full of a fear for the unknown. Very carefully, he controlled his own soul, that was in the form of a ball of light, to float down the middle of the tunnel trying his best not to touch the surroundings. He was lucky that the tunnel was very wide so there was no risk of hitting the wall unintentionally.

After advancing for some distance, the passage started to shrink like the neck

of a vase and he felt as if he was a bug that was stuck inside that vase.

Seeing a dead end in front of him, Li Jianye heart went cold, but still he continued forward slowly, unwilling to give up. Finally, in the middle of the wall, he found a very small hole only 5mm in diameter

Slowly closing in, Li Jianye intently looked through the small hole to see more clearly what is on the other side, but suddenly, from within came a powerful suction which pulled him in.

"Ugh…"

Li Jianye let out a groan and had a sudden realization. This is his real voice, coming out from his own throat and not just the sound of consciousness conversing as he would in the game of the other world.

He opened his eyes and the darkness of the hospital ward entered his sight. The half drawn white drape in the shadow makes one's hair stand on end, as it looked just like the clothes of a woman's ghost.

However, Li Jianye was not one bit terrified, to be able to return to his current world/time, there wasn't even enough time for him to be happy.

"Yeah!"

If not for the fear of waking the person beside him, he would be sure to jump for joy and celebrate, but for now, he only let out a soft shout.

The sound of snoring came from the other bed, no one was there to share his joy in escaping death.

After being emotional, he picked up the phone at his side, open it and saw that the 'last will' he wrote not long ago was still there. He deleted it and took a look at the time to which he realized that only five minutes had passed.

The Mainframe had adjusted the scale between the actual time and the time in game such that even he did not feel the difference. It was like the previously spent three years in the game, but the actual time passed was only eight months.

However, to confirm this point, he had to go into the game again, there may even be discrepancies other than the time flow difference.

Li Jianye hesitated, truth be told, this kind of weird experience may be envious for some, but in reality, only those who had experienced it will know that this easy and comfortable world is the best. What's so great about adventures? The fine line between life and death is just too terrifying!

Throwing down his phone, Li Jianye lay down, mentally exhausted, and the only thought in his muddled mind was to fall asleep.

"Ding! Attention, your game time quota for the day has not been reached!"

"Damn it!" As he was falling asleep, somewhere deep inside his consciousness came the cold monotonous voice of the system, tormenting him to the point it's like a living hell.

"Shit, can't you just let me rest? What a shit game system! What a marvelous future world!" His heart filled with anger that cannot be dissipated, Li Jianye pressed onto his feverish forehead, "Fine! Your father! I just have to enter the game. Right!" In the situation where his life is not in direct danger, he did not want to draw the attention of the Mainframe again. It's enough for a whole lifetime just to experience that terrifying lightning ball once.

Using his will power to connect to the deep-spirit luminous door, Li Jianye's soul passed through the crevice between the two worlds once again and appeared in a tunnel. This time, out of habit, he cast a look behind him facing the small narrow hole on the formless walls.

Drifting down the, seemingly endless, wide tunnel Li Jianye inexplicably understood something, the black lightning ball used previously by the Mainframe to destroy him had definitely broke through the tunnel in front of him. However, the energy released during the process did not destroy his physical body but instead widened the tunnel that connects the two worlds, and finally after all the energies were exhausted, a small part remained unbroken which became the small narrow hole.

If the deduction is correct, this means that Mainframe did have the ability to destroy his physical body, but the power of the lightning ball previously just wasn't strong enough.

This thought is indeed traumatizing! Not knowing how much distance remained in this small passage or if it can withstand one more shot of the

lightning ball. Li Jianye simply did not have any idea and can only guess during the short time taken to overcome the remaining distance.

Drifting out of the wide tunnel, the scenery was still the same unchanging white fog, "My problem still remains unsolved!" Li Jianye stood dazed for a good 10 seconds before helplessly connecting himself again to the interior of the data storage to search for an answer.

This kind of interaction makes one feel disgusted, it felt like one's own body was forcibly being stuffed with foreign things. Although Li Jianye vaguely knew that the data storage could be of help to him, deep down in his heart, he still rejects this form of interaction.

Following the connection, he dove deeper. The interaction with the black core of the data storage was also getting closer and closer but at the same time, he also gained something.

"New Player Detected… 'System' will immediately help assign a guide to assist you in creating your own character!"

"Guide 0728, Please service the new player that's beside you in the whole process of creating a character."

Both messages were received at the same time, stunning Li Jianye. System is having me service myself?

"So, System could make this kind of logical error?" As he pondered in his heart, Li Jianye in reality knew that it was just that Mainframe was not paying attention to it. Only people like him, who is an NPC yet, still miraculously maintain their own will, have a possibility to exploit this loophole.

Creating my own character… if I don't use my position for personal gain, won't I come to regret it?

NPC Chapter 4

Chapter 4 – Arrival

Facing a template of the basic characters… the mediocre stats are not a really good choice, but there is a certain risk in choosing to be scanned. Li Jianye thought for a while, then entered the database again to search for relevant information until he was completely sure the risk was insignificant.

"Received player's authorization. Begin scanning for basic innate stats!"

Like before, a mysterious pillar of light descended from the sky, searching for data within the within his light-ball. This process was no longer than one second, giving Li Jianye a feeling of strangeness.

On one hand, it feels like I am in a trance with a sense that something was invading my privacy. On the other hand, as an NPC, my mind was clear and I could follow the sensation of the pillar of light so as to peep into the small details of the process.

After the light-pillar disappeared, he waited for a while. The surroundings were dead silent, a dense fog was drifting around slowly. The only change was in the screen that was before his eyes.

"It looks like the information from scanning will not reach Mainframe and, instead, only be handed to one of the guides to generate the innate stats."

Looking at the newly generated stats: Strength 0.5, Agility 0.6, Endurance 0.3, Perception 3, Will 5, Intelligence 4.
(max being 10)

"*cough cough*…" With just a glance, Li Jianye nearly spat out blood! His personal stats were so low that it was absolutely disgusting. Many players had been serviced by him. Of those, only a few had 4 points as the lowest of any stats and even then, their total was never lower than 35 points.

But how much is my total? 13.4?

The first player that he had given a special race, previously, even had higher points on a single stat when compared to his total!

Furious, he thought for a moment. It was impossible for the scanning to have any errors. Then he proceed to snuff out the report button that popped up because of his 'extraordinary' stats.

"It must be because of my vegetative condition in reality! Soul scanning will reflect the player's current condition in reality... it would be more illogical to not have these stats when I have been bedridden for eight months!"

This kind of speculation couldn't be too far from the truth, moreover, he suspects that the human physique of these two worlds were different, or else he wouldn't get less than one point no matter how bad his body was.

In comparison, the template character offered by the System had a total of 30 stat points, looks like I really played myself here.

Information appeared in the NPC panel, "The current player's stats have satisfied the special skill conditions and a reward has been made available!"

Although he knew the conditions for the initial reward in addition to the random chance, there were also some special conditions needed to trigger the event, but Li Jianye had never encountered such cases before. Those times when he assigned special races to other players were manipulated by him and not the system.

Using all the power he has as an NPC to enquire about any related information, he finally came to an understanding. It was because the sum of his first three stats had such a big difference when compared to the sum of his last three stats which fulfilled the condition to receive the special skill: Soul Whisper!

More information could not be acquired, he would need to accept the skill first and probe deeper when in the game. After all, his NPC rank wasn't high and the limitations were many.

The question Li Jianye was facing was a very difficult multiple choice: Should I use the default template character? Or, do I risk it and use this useless character with its special skills?

The former choice would make it possible to conquer the game and stand at the peak with no effort at all.This would be made possible by making use of his three years of experience prior, in addition to the advantages gained through his status as an NPC. Yet, is that what he was seeking?

Staying in the spotlight, no matter how good he was at playing this VR game, can it help him solve his dangerous situation?

With his thoughts going in one big circle and still having no clue, Li Jianye refocused his vision onto his useless template.

"Adding a special race would make it better, furthermore, the skill 'Soul Whisperer' should be awesome since I have never heard of it when I was trapped in the game. Moreover, as a player, having a low-profile character would make surviving in the game a lot easier!"

Finding many excuses for himself, finally he began to laugh. "Why did I think and hesitate so much! This will be my final decision!"

Choosing the useless stats from his scan, he swiped the template to one side, following which he filled in his in-game name "Bard". It was a very ordinary name. In addition, it was only natural to choose the best race for himself.

Galactic Guardian (Royal Descendant), All stats +2, Race traits: Effect of chanting skills boosted by 20%, Experience requirement per level decreased by 5%, Magic power increased by 10%...

Although the stats are not spread evenly, it has higher total stats and was considered as a bit of salvation to my original useless stats. In the race aspect, according to information gathered by Li Jianye thanks to his status as an NPC, he still had a chance to upgrade himself further. The most important point was that the chance to be awarded this race, initially, was the lowest among all the special races. If not for cheating using his NPC status, with all the zeros after the decimal point, it was almost impossible for this race to appear in the game.

Next is the selection of appearance, starting location, *etc.* In this aspect, Li Jianye already had his decision in mind and so didn't waste any time. One minute later, a whole new humanoid model was created, waiting for him to confirm his choice.

A Galactic Guardian has the appearance of a human with skin which emits a faint, strange, purple glow, similar to a treasure. Looking at his own avatar, Li Jianye chuckled, the avatar he used when he was trapped previously was system-generated… it should have been deleted by now.

"I really don't know whether my choice is right or wrong, but since I have already reached this stage, any more hesitation would be redundant."

"Creation complete. Begin descent."

Finishing his role as an NPC, the light ball representing his soul started to descend with great speed within the enormous light pillar. In the process, his body was gradually being reconstructed, a wave of unspeakable soreness attacked him. At the same time, right beside his ears, a weird song began to play.

"This is one of Genesis' three theme songs [Heaven Break]!" At the same time he identified the song, his restless heart followed the melody of the tune and calmed down. Time continued to flow and when he reopened his eyes, Bard had already obtained his own body, standing upright in the land of Genesis.

"Here comes another new player. Oh? A special race?"

"His character exterior is a bit different from ours!"

"That purple aura… so cool. He didn't alter his outer appearance substantially, did he?!"

Bard looked left and right, and got a scare from the nearby crowd gathering at the starting point. Hundreds of new players crowded in the village center. Though not at the level that everyone is tightly packed, the numbers are still very large.

Looking at his body… it was wrapped in multiple bandage-like cloths… this must be the starting equipment given by the system.

In regard to the jeers of the crowd, Bard did not pay it heed. He looked down at the ground and rushed out of the crowd with haste.

"Hey! Watch out!" This is the starting village for humans, but it also allows Centaurs, Gnomes, *etc.* to start in this village. If one is not careful, it is very easy to accidentally trample one of the minute gnomes in the crowd.

After moving to a more spacious location, Bard viewed his own personal character info.

=============================

IGN: Bard

Class: Commoner (Rank 1)

Race: Galactic Guardian (Royal Descendant)

Stats: Strength 3, Agility 3, Endurance 2, Perception 5, Will 7, Intelligence 6

Faction: -N/A—

Physical Attack: 4
Physical Defence: 3
Magic Affinity: 5
Movement Speed: 5
Attack Speed: 3

Special Skill: Soul Whisper (Requirements not met)

Common Skill: None

Race traits: Effect of chanting skills increased by 20%, Experience requirement per level decreased by 5%, magic power increased by 10%...

=============================

All new players will start the game with a commoner class of rank 1. The player can pick a class of their choice only after they have reached rank 10. The classes available to choose from are almost infinite, at the very least, Bard could not finish finding all the classes available within his three years trapped in the game previously.

In addition to this, Bard had another hidden NPC info tab. Which, when compared to his character info, was a lot simpler.

=============================

ID: 0728

Current Status: Wanderer

Rank: Mk-1 – Basic Service Data

Contribution Point(s): 4

Assignment quest(s) available: None

Task(s) acceptable: 1
================================

I connected to the system and selecting to accept the task... The only task available in a bright display that could be taken: "Assist the player!"

Bard, looking at his 4 contribution points, was rather anxious. As a player, whatever actions he took did not matter. However, as an NPC, the next System clean-up was in 10 days. Furthermore, 100 contribution points will be deducted at the end of the month. Without any other choice, he immediately pressed "accept" on the only task available to him.

Task description: Help the player community to adapt to their new surroundings and enhance their growth rate. However, in the process, the NPC is forbidden to assist the player by directly killing the monsters. System will evaluate your performance and gave contribution points accordingly.

The explanation was very vague, but Bard noticed that right after he accepted the task, the "quests that can be assigned" tab had some changes.

Current Assignable Quest(s): 10

After confirming the increase a second time, he came to an understanding and then looked away from the screen to focus on his surroundings.

"Genesis" is a virtual game in the future, every single object, including the grass and trees, in this village is realistic beyond compare. Bard can even cut open a plant and observed the sap leaking from within or even smell the fragrant odor of the soil.

The players within sight came in many different shapes and colors. Although a majority of them were of the human race, the population of the other races were not exactly lacking. Wearing the same simple and crude outfit as Bard, they start to gather in groups to explore their new surroundings.

Right outside the village, a small amount of player silhouettes could be seen holding on to their basic melee weapons and fighting with some docile monsters.

NPCs were easily identifiable by their "village farmer" appearance and their obviously awkward behaviour compared to the players.

Bard already knows the level of intelligence the NPCs possess in the game and did not interact with them for the moment but instead walked towards the exit of the village.

Due to the compulsory playtime enforced by the Mainframe, many players did not have a goal when they are in game and just laze around or beat up some monsters when they are in the mood. Those that take the initiative to raise their rank were only a handful of players.

"Hey! A new player, let's form a team! What say you?" Seeing Bard approach their location, a party of three players approached and struck up a conversation. They had just defeated a slime with their combined effort and were now currently resting.

Bard felt some disdain in his heart: you still have to form a team to kill a slime? Currently, since there is no fixed increase in EXP gain while forming a party, the efficiency will be low.

"I want to try fighting on my own first!" Out of courtesy, he tactfully declined the other party's good intentions.

"Hehe!" The sword-wielding human that spoke first did not mind, retreated two steps and went back to his comrades that were resting and started to spectate.

Bard skillfully summoned his system bag and retrieved his given basic weapon from within.

Wooden Club, Attack 1-1, Durability 10/10.

It was simple but nevertheless one of the most important items for new players. In Genesis, those with the commoner class do not have skills, it would be difficult to raise one's rank with the low starting stats. At the same time, low-leveled monsters would not have any good drops, therefore the value of a weapon is worth a lot.

Strolling leisurely to the front of an idle monster, Bard raised his club up high with great confidence, "Although my stats are useless, slimes should not be a

problem. You noobs, just watch from the sidelines how an experienced pro fights monsters!"