

## Prologue

When Colin come back to his sense, he realized that he is starring at unfamiliar wall. He look around and see that he is at some sort of office lobby or clinic with a reception counter in front of him. There are a different type of people sitting around him. At the side of the reception counter, there are a few door with a digital number above it. The first door has 1098, the second door have 9803 and the third door digital door have 2016 on it.

‘What happened?’ Colin thought. He then notice that there are also a file at his hand. At the edge of the file there are a small number ticket similar to that one that are usually issued at bank when waiting for a turn. On the ticket, a number 2017 are written on it.

‘2017? What is this?’ Colin then look through the file and a sudden realization come down to him. It’s a CV file. All of his detail are in it, his application letter, his certificate, his criminal record, his military service and so on. He even feel impressed with the file attention to detail that he even 99% sure that this file wasn’t prepared by himself. He even feel a bit scared to the point that he are considering that his privacy has been breached.

A sudden robotic voice called for number, “Number 2017. Room 3.” Colin look up and at the further door with sign ‘ROOM 3’ digital bard are calling for the same number on his hand.

‘I guess I need to go.’

Colin grab his file and walked toward the door. He then stop stop the front of the door. Taking a deep breath, he opened it.

‘Excuse me.’

Inside there are a simple room with a big mirror at one of the wall. There are a wooden door at the side of the mirror. At the center of the room there are a table and four chair, three at opposite side facing toward him and one chair near his side. There are a stack of file on top of the table. Beside the table there are a small trash basket. The room composition remind Colin a lot of an interrogation room at one of the military base he once worked in.

Since the room are empty, Colin decided to walk and put his CV on the table. He then just stand behind the chair that he presumably will sit on. While waiting for his ‘interrogator’, Colin look around the room, his eyes dart around looking for exit in case of something bad happened. He look up and could see a ventilation duct are actually wide enough for him to squeeze through. There are two doors, one are probably for the ‘hidden room’ behind the mirror that he assumed as a one way see-through mirror. Another doors are the one that he just used to enter the room.

‘Enough exit I guess, 2 hidden camera at the ceiling. There are wire at the table leg, I guess that is for the microphone under the table.’ Colin thought. His training start to kick in and he sharpen his senses seeing for oddity around him.

Suddenly the door beside the big mirror opened. A fair skinned middle aged man come through it. He then walked toward Colin and offered his hand for a handshake. There are a sincere light coming from his eyes causing Colin to reflexively return the gesture.

"I'm Bal, your interviewer for today. Mr. Collin Anthony Burke, I have read your dossier, got to say son, I'm impressed. Your original detail have a lot of stuff redacted on them. Take a seat." Bal said while taking his own seat opposite of Colin.

"I have done something that not allowed to be said without..."

"The clearance from the Secretary of Defense. I know, but sorry to break this to you but you are already dead you know," Bal said without letting Colin finished his word.

"What? I'm dead?" Colin sunk into a deep silence. He still maintain his stoic facial expression but his emotion are in turmoil. If what this man said is right, then the consequence of him failing his mission is grave. His "last mission" was to ensure the safety of a UNICEF encampment at the South Sudan, at an area that are filled with warlord and professional mercenaries. Should he fail, there are 2,523 refugees that are mostly composed of women and children, are under the mercy of this blood thirsty warlord. Not to mention his childhood sweetheart are also there as a volunteer doctor.

"Pardon me for asking but what happen to the Camp Charlie?" Colin asked. His demeanor suddenly changed. There are a serious gaze emanating from his eyes.

Sensing Colin gaze, Bal also drop his happy-go-lucky smile and answers straightforwardly, "After your unfortunate death, the firefight ensued for 3 more hour before UN Forces manage to relieve the besieged force. There only 2 casualty from your team, both manage to survive thanks to your bravery. Darting across a LMG beaten-zone and carrying them back to safety is really crazy call," said Bal while making a running gesture using his hand. "Unfortunately, a stray rifle grenade manage to hit near you position. You might already loss your consciousness during that time but your teammate really trying hard to save you. A brotherhood forged and baptized through fire, beautiful."

Colin cracked a smile. His teammate, no- brother-in-arms are the important thing in his life after his family member and his childhood sweetheart. The have been together since they all meet at Special Force selection program for US Navy SEAL. Ever since that, the 4 four of them have been through thick and thin, bailing and protecting each other back. Their teamwork and skill are so legendary among operator peers that some of the Special Operation Group modify their training method to emulate their team understanding. All of them got invited to UN Special Operation Command named Task Force 140. Their job are to provide the necessary protection to all UN envoy and mission. Initially, Colin decided to decline the invitation. However when he was told that Amanda Sherwood, his childhood friend are joining the volunteer program then he retract his decision.

"Did she make it?" Colin asked.

"Who? Did you mean Amanda Sherwood?" Bal asked back. His happy-go-lucky smile are back. He then pull Colin CV and start to go through it. "Taking down Syndicate cell. Capturing an 87 rouge intelligence agent from various country. 73 assassination of various political dissident around the globe." Bal look at Colin with a smile. He put the CV on the table, the cross his arm. "It didn't mention there but that include a legendary 2.66 km shot in heavy

urban area. You are a villain, Mr. Colin. Why would you care on some random girl that you will never have?" Bal asked.

"Permission to speak freely, sir." Colin said.

"Granted," Bal replied.

"Thank you, sir. Amanda Sherwood is not some random girl, sir. She is a doctor, or more accurately a surgeon specializing in brain surgery, sir. I have known her since we were young, and also growing beside her since then, sir. We might have gone different life route but we still keep in contact with each other, sir. She is the most beautiful, kindest and dedicated woman I ever met in my 34 years of life, sir. I have told a lot of lies in my life sir, pass every pictograph test, sir, saying I've only seen her as a friend is one of them, sir. My biggest regret is failing to replace her last name into mine, sir. Hence, Amanda Sherwood is not some random girl, sir." Colin end his lengthy answers with a final thought, "Sir, you say that I'm a villain right?"

"Yes, I did." Bal answered.

"You are wrong sir, I'm not a villain," Colin remarked.

"So are you a hero then?" Bal asked again.

"No sir." Colin returned.

"Then what are you, Mr. Colin?"

Colin when into a silence. He look at his reflection on the mirror behind Bal, contemplating on how he want to approach this question. "Just an ordinary red-neck from Texas."

Bal smile at Colin. He close Colin CV and push it aside. "I see. They say an opportunity is a game of chance, do you agree, Mr. Colin?"

"No, sir. Opportunity door are not meant to be opened slowly." Colin answered.

"Then how would you open it, Mr. Colin?" Bal asked again.

Colin shifted his eyes to the door beside the big mirror and answered, "I'll would kick the door open and then I will introduce myself, sir."

Bal laugh, "Hahaha, a very *operator-ish* way of answers. Interesting. Kick the door down, huh." He took the paper stack in front of him and throw it into the trash basket at the side of the table.

"That is all the application for this job. I like you Mr. Colin. So I have a proposition to you. I'm offering you a lifetime job of being a true red-neck, advocating freedom and stuff. This job require you to be able to do a wide variety of job that may include helping people and also eliminate the radical one. Should you accept this mission, you will be provided with a lot of benefit. That include a sizable land tiles, a house, a steady afterlife pension, 72 beautiful

angel at your service and a demigod title. Are you interested, Mr. Colin?" Bal asked. He leaned forward with both of his finger cross on top of the table.

Colin is taken aback by this offer. He isn't sure on how he should think of this job. The description by Bal is vague and the job requirement are too general. Usually Colin would just outright reject this offer as "*too-good-to-be-true*" type. However, ever since knowing that he have been dead, he is quite open minded on the next step he should take.

While mulling on the offer, Bal suddenly ask Colin on gaming, "Mr. Colin do you play games?"

"Sometimes I play games sir."

"Do you play RPG games?"

Unsure on the direction of this conversation, Colin answered immediately, "Occasionally."

"Great. I'm a fan of Be\*\*\*sda Softworks. They are a good studios you know. Very supportive on single player content, especially El\*\*r Scr\*\*I V: Sk\*\*im. I always have this goosebumps whenever I see a dragon fighting another dragon." Bal said with enthusiasm. Colin could see that this guy really like the game studio.

"I have played it too, sir. Got to say T\*\*d Ho\*\*rd have done a really good job on it."

Bal suddenly slam the table, "You know him too? I have his autograph on the my Mo\*\*owind game copy. An absolute treasure."

Colin just smile at Bal. He find Bal is very similar to one of his teammate, a hardcore gamer. Colin reminiscence stop when Bal suddenly ask him on his answer to the job offer.

"Sure, why not sir. I'm dead anyway so I have nothing to lose." Colin answered.

"Great. Wait up." Bal stand and walk toward the big mirror behind him. He knock on it and said, "Come in." He then turned toward Colin and pull out his tablet. "Ugh, another job. Right, Mr Colin. I guess I take my leave then. Someone will come in and brief you on your mission detail. Good luck, son. You will need it." With a smile, Bal suddenly vanish out of the thin air leaving Colin flabbergasted.

'What the heck?' Colin have seen a lot of thing in his short life. Even stuff that should never be seen. However, vanishing into thin air isn't one of them.

Colin still in shock when the door beside the mirror opened again. This time a woman come through it. Colin just got jolted out of his initial shock when he got shocked again by the women now standing in front of him. She look very nostalgic to him. No to be really accurate, Colin know this women.

"Colin. I know you would pass this interview. Congratulation." her voice is like a music to Colin ears.

"Mendy, you..."

"Hahaha, surprise," said Amanda while making a surprise gesture. She then collect Colin CV and put a "PASS" stamp on top of it. "Come on. Follow me. C." Amanda ushered Colin through the door beside the mirror. As Colin suspected the mirror are one way see-through. Both of them goes through the hidden room inti the next door that lead to a corridor.

"I know you have a lot of question C. No worries, we have a lot of time to talked. For now I need to brief you on your job. You will be sent to a new world. That guy who just interviewed you, Mr. Bal is the creator of that world. His actual name is Beelzebub, a god," said Amanda.

"Ahh, that explained why he could vanish at will."

"That's right. He is currently searching for a hero for his universe. So, unsurprisingly for me – pick you. So you will be living at that world for the rest of your life. Depending on your action it can change the course of the history in that world. So be careful." Amanda stop walking causing Colin to follow suit. In front of them there are elevator door. Amanda press the button to called for the lift.

"Supposedly you can use magic. Yes, before you asked, there are magic on the world you are going to, and no it's not omnipotent. There are limitation and rules on their usage. Oh, it's here." The elevator door opened. Amanda and Colin steps in and the elevator door close. Amanda press the button number 2.

"The mission will be sent based on circumstance basis. Someone will sent it to you, regardless on your circumstances. By the way, I'll be your handler. Any request that you want will be sent to me." The elevator door opened. "This way." Amanda take a left turn and walk straight through the corridor. She enter the first door that lead to a sort of counter manned by a presumably African old lady.

"A candidate? You finally pick someone Amanda." Asked the old lady.

"Hahaha, that's right, aunty. His name is Colin Anthony Burke. Referral number 0053." Amanda answered.

The old lady key in the information into her workstation. She then give a silver card to Amanda. "Thank you aunty."

"Anytime sweetie. Young man, take care of her okay."

"Yes, ma'am." Colin answered straightforwardly. However, he still bewildered at the old lady remark. Of course he would take care of Mendy, She is technically still his dream.

Both of them then go out and continued to the next room. Here there are a pedestal at the center of the room. There are a magnificent blue glass globe hanging at the ceiling the wall are full with carving that remind Colin on the Indian scripture. At the floor, there are a lot of telltale sign of the hazard of the room. Yellow line of no cross zone, floor are wet please be careful sign, staff only sign...

"This card is the record of your deed. It also a universal card that act as your ID when you are here. Don't worry, I'll be holding this for you as you can't bring it there anyway. That pedestal there, is your gateway. You will be sent to... Ah." Amanda suddenly stop.

"Why? What's wrong Mendy?" Feeling curious, Colin asked Amanda for her explanation.

"Nothing. It will be just fine. I think it is very suitable for your constitution and skill set. Unfortunately, you can't use magic in this world as you come from a universe with different fundamental law. You can't bent the nature to your will."

"WHAT??! I want to generate electric bolt like Sas\*ke too. This is too unfair." Colin cried out.

"Unfortunately, you can't. But, Mr. Bal has given to you his signature in the contract that he will grant you a god class item for every mission you manage to compete. Such item has the potential to change the history itself." said Amanda with a very confident face. She then walk toward the pedestal and insert the card at key-card hole. She then type something on the keyboard and it bring up information screen on Colin.

"This is your information screen. Take a look." Amanda move aside so Colin could read at the screen. He just scan through the screen and just scroll downward.

"No problem here."

"Did you really read it, C?"

"No, but it fine. I already know about myself. Heck I bet you are the one that prepare that CV, am I right?" Colin asked.

"Hahaha, how did you know?" Amanda said while grinning. She close the information panel and started to activate the pedestal for transportation.

"The application letter has your sentence style. Plus, who do you think that teach you on the CV style writing format, huh?" said Colin while pinching Amanda nose.

"Ehehehe, so that's why huh. Gotta be careful next time. So this pedestal will send you to your mission area. When you are ready, press this red button, and off you go. So any question C?"

Colin look at th pedestal. There are a lot of button, but there are no way he could miss the red button that scream "PRESS ME UROD". He then look straight Amanda eyes tenderly. His last memory are making a secret promise in himself that he will propose to her should he complete he manage to complete his "final mission". Unfortunately, the death flag was triggered.

"How you livin' Mendy?" he asked softly.

"I'm fine. Life quite great. Mr. Bal is kind. Most staff are friendly." Although she said positive thing, Colin could sense loneliness from her facial expression.

"I see." Colin Started to pat her head. "It's been tough for you huh. Don't worry, I'm here now. This time I will promise to shield you from anything that will hurt you."

"Sure, I'll be counting on you. Anything else?" said Amanda with a smile.

"Will we meet again?" Colin voice become softer.

"Remember I'm your handler right. Of course we will meet. Once per week. I need to make a weekly report."

"I see. How can we meet when we are separated by..."

"C, your are being cheesy again. We will meet through dream of course. Actually, we can meet anytime using this medium. It a different reality after all. Dream are a branch of illusion magic."

"I see. I really wish I could stay. But a man gotta do what a man gotta do." Colin suddenly hug Amanda. "I'll be going first." He immediately press the red button as soon as he release her. Within seconds, Colin figure disappear in to a light bubble.

'Off he goes again, that idiot.' Amanda muttered under her breath. She then insert the key-card again. This time she bring up the information panel. Under the 72 angel list, Colin currently only have one angel assigned to him, Amanda Sherwood.