Chapter 1

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Chapter 1: Head Explosion

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Translator: Henyee Translations **Editor:** Henyee Translations

It was a ceiling that he had never seen before.

After Roland opened his eyes, he saw an enormous statue of a woman above his head. The statue was made of black rock, with vague greenness flowing on the surface. But when he observed it more carefully, the greenness was gone.

Roland sat up and found himself on a blue stone platform that seemed like a ritual table for sacrifices in the medieval age. It was cold and rough.

There was a unique fragrance in the air. He looked around and saw strange grasses burning below the statue of the goddess not far away behind him. The grasses seemed to be wormwood, albeit with more teeth at the edge.

Wait… fragrance?

He could smell and even feel? Roland touched the ritual table again, sensing its roughness and coldness. He then sniffed hard. This time, he smelled both the strange fragrance of the grasses and the bitter scent of the stone building itself.

Am I really not hypnotized, but in an immersive game? It feels so real… Roland looked at his hands. They were fair and slim, as expected of the hands of a spellcaster.

He pinched his arm. There was pain… but not too obvious. It came as no surprise. After all, before he entered the game, he had read the official announcement which stated that the pain in the game was only one-tenth of that in reality.

Roland rose from the platform. He looked around and realized that he was in a building made of rocks. There was a goddess statue, a ritual table, and several rows of chairs up ahead. Judging from the arrangement, it was likely to be a chapel.

Jumping from the ritual table, Roland observed his body. He was wearing gray and brown clothes made of linen, which was not exactly comfortable. His shoes were ugly and thin. He could feel the cold stone below his feet as he stepped on the ground.

It's very real… Roland sighed and touched the ritual table. The stones felt so real. The granules on their surface were identical to reality. He did not expect the game to be a legitimate immersive game exactly as Penguin Corporation claimed, not a VR counterfeit that intended to fool people's money.

When was such great technology developed? And how could it have been developed by Penguin Corporation? Roland sighed with mixed feelings. The immersive cabin that he bought with fifty thousand bucks was definitely worth it.

He was about to observe the environment some more and adapt himself to his new body, when the ragged door of the chapel opened.

While the door was still creaking, a hunched old man walked in. His eyebrows were long and white and dangled to his slender cheeks. His eyelids were so loose that they almost covered his eyes. He was wearing a long white robe that had a symbol of a tree at the center.

Before he joined the game, Roland had studied the basics of this game world from its official website. If he recalled correctly, the clothes were the standard uniform of the Church of Life. Only the reverends of the Church of Life wore them.

The old man was surprised to see Roland at first, but then he relaxed.

The change in his expression, both the movement of his facial muscles and his eyes, was exactly like that of a real person, instead of an NPC in the game.

In the VR games that Roland had played, facial changes had always been a flaw in NPC behavior no matter how real the NPCs seemed to be. Even though NPCs' expressions were abundant thanks to motion capture, one would inevitably feel horrible when they changed their expressions.

But right now, Roland felt that he had met a real person… Was the newcomer another player?

He dropped the idea very soon. He was among the first batch to join the game. It was impossible for a player to become a reverend so quickly. Also, more importantly, players all appeared as young human beings in the game, and what Roland saw was a withering old man.

However, the old man was too real. Roland felt that he was a real person even though he did not talk and was only staring at Roland.

His eyes, his stance, his blinking eyes, his moles, his dry and yellow skin… He could even see that the old man's temples were vaguely throbbing because of the flow of blood.

Roland was not involved in the game industry, but he had played a lot of games, including Pac-Man at the beginning and the exquisite VR games right now. Even though the games today could make NPCs look vivid, they still lacked the critical essence, which was the soul!

Yet, the old man gave the feeling that he was a living person with a soul, instead of an NPC built with cold data inside a human skin, when he was doing nothing but standing.

Is this a guiding NPC? The official website did not mention anything about a guiding NPC… Confused, Roland asked, "Hello, mister. What is this place?"

The old man was stunned for a while. Then, he waved his hand and spoke in a language that Roland had never heard.

Even though he could not understand, Roland had inferred from the old man's countenance that he was expressing his inability to understand Roland.

Shoot! Roland cursed the producer of this game for their pursuit of perfection. Had they set up different languages for the NPCs in this world? If the introduction on the official website was to be believed, there were dozens of countries and races in this game world. If every country and every race had their own language, how much work would have to be done?

If it was true, Bli**ard and Ub*soft would be nothing but kindergarteners in front of Penguin Corporation.

Though dissatisfied, Roland had a solution. He remembered that he had pre-learned Language Proficiency, a level-two spell, when he created the character in the game.

In many of the sandbox games he played, although everybody used the same language, the players of different countries or sides would hear and see random words if they did not know each other's language thanks to the setting of the games.

Roland felt lucky that he had abundant game experience. He summoned the system in his mind. He was clumsy at first. After all, an immersive game was different from a VR game. But soon, he got the hang of it and found Skills on Magic Book. Then, he locked on Language Proficiency.

A strange chart popped up in front of his eyes, with a lot of blue nodes on it.

A blue node that seemed to be the starting point glittered and shot a streak of redness to another node in the blink of an eye.

Is this a spellcasting chart?

While Roland considered the possibility, the red link between the two nodes suddenly began to tremble. Then, it trembled harder and harder, and Roland felt a stronger and stronger headache.

What's going on?

Roland had played games for twenty years, but it was the first time he played an immersive one. He had no experience and did not know how to deal with the situation.

Several seconds later, the red link finally broke apart in the violent quakes. Before that, the pain in Roland's head was already insufferable, as if needles had been stuck inside.

The moment the red link broke apart, Roland's consciousness was ejected out of his body in the game. Then, he discovered, to his surprise, that his game character's head exploded.

The headless corpse fell heavily on the ground, blood splashing everywhere.

Roland's consciousness stood next to the corpse as a transparent soul. He was so surprised that he froze and did not know how to react.

The old man's hair, face, and clothes were covered with blood. He opened his mouth that had few teeth left, stunned.

Chapter 2

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Chapter 2: Resurrection

Translator: Henyee Translations **Editor:** Henyee Translations

Falken was the only reverend in the Church of Life in Red Mountain Town.

He worked as a mercenary for two years and traveled in a lot of places when he was young. Although he had only lived in Red Mountain Town afterward, he always considered himself a worldly man.

But today, he felt that he was too ignorant. He did not know the new way of suicide, which was to detonate one's own head with magic recoil. Every spellcaster would've been impressed by such an accurate detonation.

Falken finally closed his mouth. The young man who emerged in his temple should be the undying Golden Son that would arrive today according to the oracle, which said that he would reappear on the ritual table in the temple after he died.

But what if he didn't? There were so many temples of the Church of Life in the world, and there were only finite Golden Sons. He might not reach his temple. Now, how should he deal with this headless body and this place that looked like the scene of a homicide?

He had been a reputable reverend in Red Mountain Town for decades. He did not expect this before his death. It would be the time of prayer in the town soon. If the villagers saw him standing in the chapel soaked in blood next to the headless male…

He could imagine what theory the villagers would come up with!

It took the Church of Life decades to establish grounds in this village. If the villagers lost their faith because of this incident, he would be too ashamed to face the goddess when he was summoned by her later.

Falken had a strong headache.

The thing he most dreaded happened. The wooden door behind Falken opened, and a plump lady cried as loudly as if she were a virtuoso when she saw the horrifying scene. She even fell on the floor when Falken turned around with brains and blood all over his body.

"Don't be scared, Susan," said Falken intimidatingly. "I'm Falken. About this…"

"What? You're Reverend Falken?" Surprisingly, the plump lady named Susan relaxed after distinguishing Falken's voice. She jumped up and cursed at Roland's headless body. "Reverend, was he a burglar? You've done a great job! Wait a moment. I'll ask other people to help you. He was stupid enough to rob you…"

Cursing, she left and cried out, "Somebody help! The old reverend has killed a burglar. Come here and help him move the body out."

Hearing the exclamations and yells, Falken grinned, tears in his dirty eyes.

Soon, a bunch of people swarmed in. Most of them were adults; children were kept outside. They gasped when they saw the ghastly scene and then cursed the burglar who broke into the temple. None of them suspected that Falken was a murderer.

After discussing for a while, some of them fetched clean water to mop the floor, and some went for a piece of cloth to move the body away and burn it.

More people were gathered around old Falken, asking if he was hurt. They obviously cared about him. Some even wiped the disgusting blood stains on his clothes for him.

None of them, including old Falken, saw that Roland's consciousness had stayed next to his body. To be more exact, Roland was invisible to them when he was in the state of consciousness.

Roland finally returned to himself from the unexpected pain. He confirmed that his body in the game had been killed by the head explosion due to inappropriate spellcasting.

It was one of the most hilarious ways of death that he knew. He would've laughed nonstop if it happened to any other player, but since he was the victim here, he could only weep in sorrow.

No wonder the difficulty of Mage was listed as ten stars on the official website of the game, which was the highest

difficulty of all classes. Warlock and Priest, the other two classes of spellcasters, were only five stars.

Roland recalled the notice he read before entering this virtual world. After a player died, they could be resurrected several seconds after their consciousness found a temple of the Church of Life and lied on the ritual table.

He observed the people who were busy next to his body. In this state of consciousness, he only had regular sight and could not smell, taste, or feel anything. He felt panicked and horrible when he stayed in this environment of sensory deprivation for too long.

He hurried to climb on the ritual table and lie down. The stone skirt of the goddess skirt was before him again.

Of course, there was nothing underneath the skirt except for simple stone structures. It was not fun at all.

While Roland was having random thoughts, the goddess statue's eyes glowed a green that illuminated his consciousness.

His consciousness turned warm, and strange energy flowed within. Then, he became dizzy. By the time he woke up again, he found himself lying on the ritual table.

He stood up, only to discover that the NPCs who were busy moving the body stared at him in surprise with their mouths gaping.

At this moment, he felt slightly cold. He lowered his head. Then, he couldn't have looked more awful.

He was entirely naked, without the tiniest piece of cloth.

Roland was so embarrassed that he would rather kill himself. Trying to remain calm, he glanced at the crowd and wondered how he could extricate himself from this awkward situation. But soon, he heaved a long sigh, because it was impossible for him to explain himself when he did not know the language.

It had been proved that he couldn't activate Language Proficiency for now.

At this moment, the old reverend said something to the crowd, and they left the temple in order. The last of them even closed the door.

The temple became dim again. The headless body was still lying on the ground. The blood on the old reverend's face was gone, but brains still lingered on his clothes, which was rather creepy.

Roland, however, was not scared, because the blood and gore had been thoughtfully blurred into harmless squares in the game.

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