

# My Iyashikei Game

## Chapter 2: 2

“Perfect Life is a casual Iyashikei game that will comfort your soul and ease your tension. Here, you will find plenty of laugh out loud scenarios, and heart-warming familial life waiting for you. With hope and bliss as our central tenets, we strive to bring positive energy into every player’s life...”

Time ticked by until 23: 59 when the mechanical voice, that seemed to echo from deep inside Han Fei’s brain, silenced.

“Now you are free to choose your own perfect life.”

A hard, icy surface stimulated Han Fei’s facial muscle. The young man slowly opened his eyes and realized he was lying face down inside an unfamiliar room. The room was about 70 cubic metres in size. The furniture was covered in a thick layer of dust. The wall was mottled with some dark red stains.

“Jesus Christ, the headache. It felt like someone had drilled a hole into the back of my head.”

A light scent of mould filtered into his nostrils; Han Fei could detect everything around him clearly. His senses of smell, sight, hearing, touch and taste were all intact, this gaming world was no different from real life. Sitting dumbly on the ground, Han Fei studied the empty and dilapidated room around him. The room’s layout and furniture style reminded him of an old home. Dust was everywhere which suggested that the place had been vacant for a long time. “So this is my in-game house?” Han Fei stood up, rubbing the back of his head. “Based on the game intro, this should be a life simulator game in the Iyashikei genre. It is an open world game with no fixed plot. It is my freedom to increase my personal level or farm resources. I can even find a virtual girlfriend, to pursue virtual love and relationships.”

Just as Han Fei was considering what to do next, a knock came from the door. Walking through the living room, Han Fei pulled open the anti-theft door. The dim voice-activated light from the corridor filtered into the room, chasing away the silence and loneliness.

“Young man, you’re our new tenant, yes?” A friendly voice travelled from outside the door. A granny with a kind smile and silvery hair stood in the corridor that was packed with trash. “It’s the New Year. Granny has made some home-made dumplings. Come and join us for dinner. You shouldn’t be alone on the holiday.” Everyone was busy with their lives in the modern city, normally neighbours in the same building would not even share a few words within a month. Therefore, this was the first time Han Fei received this kind of invitation in his life.

“Thank you but I really don’t want to impose on you.” Ever since Han Fei was fired, he formed a social block around himself. He did not wish to have too much social interactions with others.

“Both my son and daughter in law are away from home. There are only myself and my young grandson at home. I’ve cooked too much and the two of us can’t possibly finish all of them so you won’t be imposing on us.” The granny looked at Han Fei with kindness and adoration like she was laying eyes on her own children. Her every word spoke of sunny warmth. “Traditionally, dumplings have the meaning of unity and they are meant to usher in the new year. Having dumplings on 1st of January will help you chase away the negative aura from the previous year. I know it must be hard for a young man like yourself to have come to the big city to work and eke out a living. Come and join us for a simple new year meal.”

The granny was insistent with her invitation. If this was real life, Han Fei would have found many different excuses to deny her but since this was a game, he had to consider the possibility that this was a necessary plot point. With a nod, Han Fei grabbed the ring of keys on the living room table and followed the granny downstairs.

“Granny, watch your feet, be careful.” The corridor and staircase were both filled with trash and garbage. The iron banister was rusted. Children doodles and small paper advertisements covered the walls. This place was a perfect replica of a housing apartment from several decades ago. As technology flew forward, this kind of apartment building slowly faded out of existence.

The granny led Han Fei down one floor and stopped before Room 1031. The number on the door faded from age but its paint was still startlingly red. With a light cough, the granny pushed the door open. A delectable smell of meat drifted out from the room. Han Fei swallowed his saliva and peered into the room. The granny’s house was dark. The lights were not switched on, and the only light source was the several candles on the dining table.

“The electric fuse burnt. I called the electrician but they were probably on break due to the holiday.”

“Granny, how about I help you? I used to change my own burnt fuse.” Han Fei did not treat the old lady as an NPC. For some unknown reason, the granny felt like a real-life person to him.

“Then you better be careful. The spare fuse is inside the drawer.” The granny said as she hurried towards the kitchen. Her meat was cooking on the stove.

Using the spare ladder, Han Fei replaced the burnt fuse. He pulled on the electric brake and bright light returned to the dark room.

“Notification for Player 0000! Grade G Normal Mission: Changing the Fuse completed. Friendliness with Meng Siyou increases by 5. Forming a peaceful neighbourly relationship is the first step to a perfect life.” A cold and emotionless robotic voice echoed deep inside Han Fei’s brain, “Mission system activated. New player missions updated. Completing the new player missions will aid you to understand everything about this world better.” Following the unfamiliar voice, a window appeared before Han Fei’s eyes but before he could take a closer look at it, the granny came out carrying a pot of fish stew.

“This stew is fresh from the stove, come and taste it while it’s still hot.” The granny served the dish with a smile. She turned to the bedroom door. She unlocked the iron lock on the door. “Chen Chen, it’s time for dinner.”

Moments later, a young boy about 5 or 6 sauntered out. He kept his head lowered and he appeared to be in a mood. He probably was arguing with his grandmother earlier.

“Have dinner first. I still have some other dishes to cook.” The granny opened the refrigerator and took out a frozen half chicken from the upper section. “The electricity has been out for so long, how come it’s still so frozen?” She placed the frozen meat into a small box and casually placed it on the dining table.

“Granny, there’s no need to cook so many dishes, we won’t be able to finish them.”

“It’s tradition for us to serve our guests the best. Plus, the meat will go bad if they’re left in the fridge for too long.” The way the granny bustled inside the kitchen reminded Han Fei of the picture of a perfect family always featured in Chinese New Year advertisements.

Han Fei was an orphan, you’d think he never got the chance to experience the joy of holidays but the orphanage he grew up at did celebrate these holidays and they did them with style but... The joy was short-lived.

Han Fei smiled, surprised at being given the chance to re-experience this unexpected warmth in the game.

The smell of meat permeated the air. The sound of sizzling came from the kitchen, and the television was playing some kind of new year special. The ordinariness of everything seemed to wash away the aloofness of this unfamiliar city. “Perhaps these simple things are the true essence of a happy life.”

There would be ups and downs in life. If one refused to move forward due to the fear of falling, then one would forever be trapped in darkness.

Han Fei picked up the ladle and served Chen Chen and himself each a bowl of fish stew. The milky white soup gave off a scrumptious smell. Han Fei blew on the hot soup.

Just as he took a sip, he saw from the corner of his eyes the boy across from the table raise the bowl up from the table.

'What is he doing?' Before Han Fei could react, the boy slammed the bowl heavily onto the ground!

"There's no way I'm going to eat something that comes out from the coffin!"

Pfft! Hearing what the boy said, the fish stew came flying out of Han Fei's mouth. 'Coffin?'

The china shattered and the soup splattered everywhere. Hearing the commotion, the granny rushed out from the kitchen. "Chen Chen! What have you done?!"

"I'm not eating these! Like the chicken, you made them from ingredients taken out from the coffin!" The boy lifted his head and his eyes were incredibly bloodshot.

"What nonsense!" Afraid that the hot soup might scald the boy, the granny rushed to the dining table without even removing her apron.

"The apartment manager said that you should only store dead people inside coffins!" The boy struggled loose from his grandmother. He grabbed the frozen chicken off the table and threw it to the ground. After that, he retreated to his bedroom.

"Get back here!" The granny chased after the boy, leaving Han Fei with the bowl of fish stew in the living room.

"The boy is kinda strange." Han Fei put down his bowl gingerly. He found the mop behind the door and moved to help the old lady with the clean-up. But when he bent over to pick up the frozen chicken from the ground, something hit him. The boy said that he'd never eat something made from ingredients kept inside a coffin but Han Fei saw very clearly the chicken was taken out from the refrigerator. So why would the boy confuse the refrigerator for a coffin? Perhaps the clues laid in the second statement the boy gave... "The apartment manager said that you should only store dead people inside coffins!"

Could it be that the boy saw a dead body inside their family refrigerator?

'Hmm?' As this thought crossed his mind, Han Fei was stumped. Was this a question he should be asking in an Iyashikei game?!