

NEW EDEN: LIVE TO PLAY, PLAY TO LIVE

Chapter 1 Start Of A New World

Staring at his screen with anger, Alexander let out a long sigh.

"Another defeat. Seems I still can't beat him." He said, with an exasperated tone.

On his computer, the game almost everyone played nowadays was playing, 'Tower of Babylon'. His screen was displaying a big red 'DEFEAT' sign.

He had been trying to enter the top 1000 players in 'ToB' for a while now, without avail. The top 1000, or the 'Heavenly Thousand' as players had called them, were all freaks of nature with unmatched skill and gear.

They were not described as heavenly for nothing.

Looking at his clock, Alexander went to bed. Tomorrow was a big day, and he wanted to be in his best mental and physical shape.

"Tomorrow is the start of my new life." He said to himself, closing his eyes and drifting to sleep.

That night, Alexander dreamt of all the time he spent playing 'Tower of Babylon'. All the sleepless nights and restless days spent grinding his levels and finding gear.

He had been playing 'ToB' for 5 years now and was part of the top 1% of players in the game. But to him, it was not enough.

He had always aimed higher. Unfortunately for him, his ambition never matched up with his actual game skills and luck.

He had never found a piece of legendary gear or a scroll with a unique skill. That was what differentiated the 'Heavenly Thousand' from the rest.

They had all found something unique that elevated their characters to the next level. His dreams soon drifted to him exploring untouched dungeons and finding legendary items and unique skills, becoming the number one player in the world.

His happy dreams kept going for the night until his alarm clock rang the next morning. Alexander was a young 25-year-old man, living on his own in a small 1 bedroom apartment in Montreal.

He was not rich by any means, but he was not a beggar either. His parents had died a few years back and left him a little money and a small house, but he had not been ready for that kind of responsibility back then and had sold the house.

He had been living on the money he made from the sale and his inheritance, plus the money he won from the few competitions he took part in on 'ToB' to get by.

But today was a new beginning. Today at 6 PM, the game creator of 'ToB' was launching their new platform for gaming along with their new game. The new platform was the first gen of Virtual MMORPG playing, with full-dive helmets.

It was the new technology they had announced a few years back, and it was finally ready for worldwide use. They were launching it with their new game, called 'New Eden'.

'New Eden' promised a world full of possibilities and novelties. Magic and technology intermixed with fantasy and non-narrative storyline.

They publicized that the game had only a starting story, with a full history, but no predetermined path to follow from there. It would be a player-action-based storyline, with little to no outside direction from the devs for the future.

Alexander had already pre-purchased his copy of 'New Eden' and his full-dive helmet. He would receive both today before the official game launch time.

He was excited about the prospects this new game offered. He might finally climb to the top this time.

'My chances can't get better with this game. No one will have any advantage over anyone for a while.' He thought while taking his morning coffee.

He sat in front of his computer to read up on the game one last time, trying to glean details that might give him an edge over others, knowing full well that many people had tried to do the same already and failed.

After an hour of reading, his coffee long turned cold, his apartment buzzer sounded. He got up, almost running to the screen, showing the front door.

On the screen was a man with a box in his arms, looking at the camera. Alexander pressed the intercom button and spoke.

"Hello, how can I help you?" He said, not even trying to hide his trepidations.

"I have a parcel for Alexander Leduc. Is this the right address?" The man asked back.

"Yes, it is. Come right in. I'm on the third floor." Alexander answered, pressing the door lock button.

The door to the apartment complex unlocked with a loud buzz, and the man entered the building. After walking up the two flights of stairs, he walked to the apartment door with the right number and knocked.

Alexander was already waiting by the door, fidgeting with his fingers like a kid on Christmas eve. He opened up as soon as the man knocked and almost ripped the box out of his hands.

He quickly took the deliverer's pen and signed the form of delivery before hastily saying goodbye to him and almost slamming the door shut. He heard the man laugh on the other side of the door before leaving.

Alexander almost ran to his computer, grabbing a knife on the way. He sat down in his chair and started unwrapping his box religiously, making sure he didn't damage the contents.

Inside the box was the game box, resting on another box, this one white, bearing the image of a black helmet. Inside that box, his new full-dive helmet and its wires, carefully packed, were waiting for him.

He unpacked all of it and plugged the helmet in, starting the software updates on his computer. It took him a good 2 hours to install everything and update the drivers to have his dive helmet operational.

With that done, he installed the game next. The game took a few hours too, being very update-oriented.

With all this done, it was close to dinner, so he ordered in, as he often did. Once his food got delivered, he ate while looking ravenously at the 'New Eden' launch icon on his desktop.

Time had flown by that day, and 6 PM was getting close. The game was launching at 6 PM and the handbook recommended that players log in fifteen minutes before, to create their characters, as that function would be unlocked for them a little before the game was.

Alexander strapped the helmet on his head and laid his gaming chair back down. As soon as the clock showed 5:45 PM, he tapped the preset launch button on the helmet to start up 'New Eden'.

The game launched with the helmet, and Alexander felt his body sink into the ground. He felt like he was falling for a short while until everything stabilized and he was upright again.

In front of him stood a svelte man with pointy ears. He looked like any typical elf from fantastical stories. He walked up to the man to ask him how to create his character. Once he got closer, the elf spoke to him first.

"Ahh, welcome to New Eden young man. Are you here to experience the adventure of a lifetime?" The elf said, smiling.

"Yes, I am." Alexander proudly declared.

"Very good, young man. You look determined. That is good, as your adventure will be fraught with unknown dangers and enemies beyond mortal reason. Are you ready?" The elf asked.

"Yes, I am ready." Alexander responded, barely containing his excitement.

"Ahh, but first, what should one call you, young adventurer?" The elf asked as an empty bar appeared before Alexander's eyes.

Over the bar, Enter your name, was written. Alexander used the same name he had used for all his games in the past. He typed in Astaroth and tapped on confirm.

"Astaroth, hmm. A fine name indeed, for a young ambitious man like you. Young Astaroth, do you wish to pick a different race than humans to start your adventure?" The elf continued.

As he said that, a selection of different races popped in front of Alexander's eyes. Among them were dwarfs, elves, gnomes, orcs, and many others.

Alexander scrolled through all of them, looking at their different racial traits and starting stat bonuses. Among them, one particularly stood out to him.

It was a grey-skinned Elven race, called the Ash Elves. It had no starting stat bonuses and its racial trait was just a vague sentence about how they were a rare race of elves rarely seen in the open world, that no one really knew much about them.

"What's this race?" Alexander asked the elf, pointing to the Ash Elf.

"Ahh, I do not recommend that race, young adventurer. It is but a subrace of us, great elves, and has no good points to offer you at the beginning of your new journey." The elf said with a look of disgust.

"Also, if you pick this starting race, your point of departure will be unknown and might be too dangerous for a fledgling like you." He added.

"So you say it's dangerous to pick this?" Alexander asked.

"Yes, young Astaroth, it is a risk not worth your time." The elf said, brushing the race aside with a swipe of his hand.

Alexander looked at the elf with incredulous eyes. He then swiped back to Ash Elf and looked at the elf man with a sadistic smile before pressing confirm on his starting race.

White light flashed around him as his body reconstructed to match the Ash Elf's slim physique. As the surrounding light faded, he saw how the elf looked at him with disdain, now that he went against his recommendations.

"Do as you wish, young adventurer. I only wish to add this. Do not come back with complaints when you realize you have made the wrong choice." The elf said, looking at him with clear hatred.

"We will see about that." Alexander flatly replied.

"I love challenges." He added.

"Very well!" The elf harrumphed.

"Have the adventure of your lifetime, as short as it will last." He added sarcastically.

The elf then swung his arm towards Alexander, and the world around him spun, before becoming black. All Alexander could see was a big white timer, counting down in front of him.

The timer showed 4 minutes left. He guessed it was the time left before the game launched officially.

"Huh, I didn't even get to choose my class. Weird." Alexander spoke out loud.

He waited for the timer to reach zero, and in the meantime, he accustomed himself to controlling this new body. The size of this body was pretty close to his, so it took little.

He assumed they made the game like this to not throw people off with weird body sizes.

Four minutes passed by quickly and the timer was nearing its end. As the last few seconds flashed by, the surroundings changed. The black made way for bright colors.

The nothingness around Alexander switched over to a flight view of a bright new world. He was flying over a continent in the world of New Eden and could see the cities, forests, mountains, and other sights to behold.

An announcement sounded all around him.

WELCOME TO ALL, IN THIS NEW WORLD OF ADVENTURE CALLED NEW EDEN. MAY YOUR FUTURE BE BRIGHT AND YOUR PATH BE FILLED WITH THE BODIES OF YOUR ENEMIES. LET YOUR NEW LIVES BEGIN!

As soon as the announcement stopped, his body spun again, as he got teleported to his starting point. When he finally opened his eyes, he could see around him what appeared to be cave walls.

He was in a small alcove made of stone, and it was lit with only a small lantern. He could see no furniture around him except for the small cot he was lying on.

"It finally begins." Alexander said, grinning from ear to ear.