

Cyberscape Neo: Exodus (Episode 1)

by

Titanium Templar

EPISODE 1

SCENE 1: SYNTHETIC USER - ROLAND, MYRA

Roland stares into the in-game night's sky as he lays down on a bed of grass in a hidden corner of a lower level zone.

ROLAND

(Internal monologue,
starting with a long
relaxed sigh before
explaining how he ended
up in his current
position)

They said it wasn't possible. That you couldn't put a machine's mind inside of a human's body and have it walk upon the Earth. Well, they were right. But what they didn't account for was the opposite: putting a human's mind inside of a machine's body, walking inside theirs.

(Take a deep breath.)

My name... is Roland. I now live inside of the Encephalon Universal Virtual Operating System, or the EUVOS Cyberscape.

(Spoken in a matter of
fact-like manner.)

The original Cyberscape, created by Advance Studios was *meant* as a mass software-based entertainment platform until Encephalon, a larger software company, bought them out and tied it into their latest operating system release -- taking on *this* ambitious project.

(Voicing acceptance to
his fate.)

And guess what? I was the lucky test subject -- a terminally ill cancer patient. In return for a lifetime of *being* that test subject, I was granted -- supposedly -- eternal life, so long as nobody pulls the plug on the servers.

(Explaining his biological condition.)

My avatar in the Cyberscape is much like the form I wore before in the real world, with a few changes depending on the program I enter. As the cycles pass though, I undergo no physical changes. 29 years in the outside world might seem like an eternity to the youthful, but for the... (counts cycles) 3 years I've been in here since, it has felt like I've lived countless lives -- and left a very precious one behind...

(Drawn out sigh, continuing as if listing chores he's done rather than achievements.)

I've played dozens of games to their conclusions, defeating every boss, maxing most every statistic, and completed every side quest... alone. Some even that no one else will ever get to see again.

(Read this as if it's just a label or name tag, not something that really defines your true being.)

You see, I am what is called a Synthetic User. At least that is what the system calls me here. I am neither online, nor offline.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

The game developers don't write systems with me in mind. I guess you could say that, to the world around me, I am just a non-player character with a mind of its own?

(Accepting tone, though still disappointed.)

I have no friends list, no skill bar, and no "Log Out" button. It's a lonely experience, but I always wonder if there will be others out there like me... though I don't wish the circumstances upon them.

(Stretch and groan slightly, as if relaxing in a new pose to shake your mind of negativity.)

But enough of that. Here I am, relaxing. It's about to be the Spring pre-expansion patch inside of my most recent time-waster made by EUVOS Soft: Cyberscape NEO.

(Starts in a half-mocking tone, but transitions into respecting the huge expense of resources, finishing with curiosity.)

Apparently the bigwigs at the head of the tech company that put me into this massive server wanted to jump on the bandwagon themselves and make their own MMORPG. But to think they'd make an expansion when the game is only a few months old... The budget is noticeable, and I've started to notice something unique about the game, too... It's like... How do I explain--

MYRA
(artificial)
Hello... Roland.

ROLAND
(startled)
Agh!

MYRA
(rehearsed and cheery)
The server will be undergoing
maintenance in 5 minutes. This
server will be offline for
approximately 6 hours, during
which the patch will be
integrated. Please make sure to
log off prior to server shutdown
to prevent delays. Have a nice
day.

ROLAND
(Desperate, but cautious)
Wait! How do you know my name?!

MYRA
(artificial)
You are in the database, and so I
know your name. Is there anything
else I can do to assist you?

ROLAND
(confused, concerned)
Wait? Which database?

MYRA
(artificial)
Access Denied. You do not have
sufficient permissions. Is there
anything el-

ROLAND
(eager)
Check time played: Roland.

MYRA
(artificial)
You have been logged in for 25173
hours. It is recommended that
users log off, stretch, and
receive hydration before
continuing to play. Would you like
me to set up alerts for the
future?

ROLAND
(annoyed and held)
No.
(eager)
Check player status: Roland.

MYRA
(artificial)
Player data not found. Would you
like me to submit a ticket to the
moderators?

ROLAND
(annoyed and sighing)
No...

MYRA
(artificial)
Is there anything else I can do to
assist you?

ROLAND
(urgently searching for
something to ask)
Uhh... hmm... hold on... So this game
has only been online for a few
months... and it's been tracking me
since I was brought in...

MYRA
(rehearsed and cheery)
The server will be undergoing
maintenance in 4 minutes.

ROLAND
(rushed)
Wait!
(curious)
Umm... Can I add you to my friends
list? (defeated) Of course not...
neither of us are actually play--

MYRA
(artificial)
Myra has been added to your
friends list.

ROLAND
(relieved, surprised)
M-myra, huh? Are there others like
you on this server?

MYRA
(artificial)
I do not understand, Roland. I am
the server. I will rest soon, and
be updated with the latest version
of Cyberscape NEO.

ROLAND
(bewildered)
Wait, what?! You... you are the
server?

MYRA
(artificial)
Yes.

ROLAND
(curiously determined)
Check player status: Myra.

MYRA
(artificial)
Access Denied. You do not have
sufficient permissions.

ROLAND
(defeated)
I figured...
(concerned)
Umm... Are you going to be okay?

MYRA
(artificial)
I have received multiple updates
in the past with no incident. Are
you going to be okay?

ROLAND
(unconcerned)
Yea, I'll just hang out on the
forums until the server comes back
up...

MYRA
(artificial)
You were not notified previously?
This update is going to be applied
to all EUVOS Soft servers. That
includes you...

ROLAND
(panicked)
Wait... wha... How?! I'm... getting
updated? But I'm a human!
(MORE)

ROLAND (CONT'D)
 Not a server!
 (sudden realization)
 Wait... what am I? ... Aghhhh!

MYRA
 (artificial)
 You seem to be malfunctioning... Do
 you need assistance with your
 shutdown procedure?

ROLAND
 (legitimate fear)
 No! I can't log off! I'll die!

MYRA
 (artificial)
 I have filed a ticket with the
 moderators. They have instructed
 me to assist you in shutting down.

ROLAND
 (legitimate fear)
 Get away from me! Abort! Stop! End
 task!

MYRA
 (artificial)
 I am to shut you down before
 further file degradation takes
 place and to assure the update
 process proceeds smoothly.

ROLAND
 (defiant and hysterical)
 BUT. I'M. HUMAN!

MYRA
 (rehearsed, cheery)
 The server will be undergoing
 maintenance in 3 minutes.

ROLAND
 (horrified)
 No! Noooooo!

SCENE 2: LOGGING IN - ANNOUNCER, DAXXIS

ANNOUNCER
 (announcer voice)
 Welcome to the Encephalon
 Universal Virtual Op--

DAXXIS

(annoyed)

Skiiiiip... [a few clacking noises as he presses a key to skip the game's bootup cinematic] Ugh... Why did they have to go with saying that stupidly long name...

ANNOUNCER

(announcer voice)

Select your server.

DAXXIS

(annoyed)

Who even plays all these old games anymore? [menu scrolling sounds] Especially since Encephalon bought up Advance Studios and added their entire game catalogue to their operating system... And to think they run all these games on the same server network? Everyone knows most people stick with the newest release anyway...

ANNOUNCER

(announcer voice)

Cyberscape Neo.

DAXXIS

(annoyed)

Other than naming the game based off of the software platform of the operating system, why did they make the game sound like it's a sci-fi game, even? It's high fantasy!

ANNOUNCER

(announcer voice)

Would you like to pre-load the expansion content?

DAXXIS

(sighing, slightly embarrassed)

Yea... Just hope my friends don't look at my profile and notice I'm getting early access...

ANNOUNCER

(announcer voice)

Cyberscape Neo: Exodus installation complete.

DAXXIS

(annoyed)

Ugh... I wish I didn't have to be reminded that I live right next to the server... and what's with the expansion so soon after release anyways? It's like day 1 DLC that they couldn't even get out on day 1. lame...

ANNOUNCER

(announcer voice)

Shall I log you in -- in incognito mode then?

DAXXIS

(stressed, sighing)

No... I'm meeting up with my friends in Terra's Fall for the release event, so I have to be social. I'm really nervous, because I'm not used to being around her when we're not doing dungeons. Though... I do wonder if Yllia would like it I seemed like I knew a lot about the game's world. (sigh) No, she would see right through that... and ask some impossible questions that only Vin could answer...

ANNOUNCER

(announcer voice)

I could enable a reactive encyclopedia for you, about the world of Cyberscape Neo.

DAXXIS

(bothered)

No... it's not that I can't learn about the world. It's that I don't care, alright?! There are more important things than that... like proving to people that I'm not just a shut-in slouch...

Announcer

(announcer voice)

Would you like to activate your VIP account benefits for that, sir?

DAXXIS (CONT'D)

(angry)

No! And stop asking! I'm not special!

(vulnerable)

I'm just... Just no, okay? Just because I'm the son-in-law of the CEO doesn't mean that I'm special... And don't call me sir...

ANNOUNCER

(announcer voice)

Character selected: Daxxis.
Logging in.

DAXXIS

(frustrated sigh)

SCENE 3: FIND ME - YLLIA, ANNOUNCER

YLLIA

Internal monologue

(excited, anxious)

Well, today's the day... The server went offline earlier this morning for the pre-release.

(determined)

But when it comes back up... I know I'll find the answers I've been looking for! Nearly everyone that is at max level is meeting up at Terra's Fall for the release event. My brother has to be there! At least, that's what my optimism tells me to think.

(sigh)

(melodramatic and serious)

We almost lost him 3 years ago. We were told he only had weeks to live; that they had found a brain tumor.

(hopeful)

Then, the CEO of Encephalon came in and promised they could save him. Sure, the family and I had to sign an NDA, stating that we wouldn't discuss the details of what happened to him. But if we agreed, he would live -- inside of a computer, maybe... but he'd still be my brother, right?! He said something just before he left us, "Find me."

(reminiscing)

And so my quest started... To think it's been 3 whole years... The day I lost him was the day I started playing these types of games, just like he did. At first I didn't like it; the VR was nauseating,
(chuckle)
the controls and menus were confusing, and the thought of role-playing a character? It was... anxiety-inducing, especially as a girl...

(plain voice, happy)

Things have gotten better though. Ever since I started playing Cyberscape Neo, I've met some great friends! Rapture and Hyperion, two incredible PVP'ers; Vin, our mysterious and knowledgeable support; and Daxxis... I don't know what to make of Daxxis. He's always bashing one thing or another about the game he plays, but he's always been nice to me.

(somewhat embarrassed)

And me? I call myself Yllia (ill-ee-ah). I'm embarrassed to admit it, but it's just a shortened version of my own name.

(sighs as if disappointed in herself.)

Ding to signify that the server is coming online.

(anxious)
Well, here I go. The server is coming back online and I don't want anyone to be waiting on me... Especially Hyperion. She's always grumpy when I'm late.

ANNOUNCER
(announcer voice)
Character selected: Yllia. Logging in.