

Chapter 101 - Dragon-eagle Knights

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In truth, even though the dragon-eagles had the word ‘dragon’ in their names, they were a far cry from actual dragons. They might be only facing an illusory dragon formed from nothing, but it was still enough to give the dragon-eagle knights pause.

The dragon-eagle knight regiment sent a squad speeding over, and two of them watched Xiao Lin and Song Junlang, blocking any exit routes they might have had. Another squad landed on the platform, and a fully armored man jumped down to communicate with Bella and the others.

They were speaking in English, so Xiao Lin could not really understand. With the dragon-eagle knights there, he knew they would not be able to escape. However, they were still from Dawn Academy, so the Americans could only observe them for now.

Xiao Lin paid more attention to the fight happening in the skies. There were about forty to fifty people on the knights’ side; the dragon-eagles had large and lengthy bodies and a pair of strong-looking wings, which made them seem like small dragons. Their heads looked like eagles, and their bodies were covered in red feathers instead of dragon scales, which made them look weaker since it offered less protection.

The dragon-eagles surrounded the dragon and took turns to dive at it, while the knights used their lances to strike at it, but it was hardly doing any damage. Whenever the lances would hit the dragon, it would cause a ripple to appear on its body. Even though the knights seemed to be immune to the pressure brought forth by the draconic power, the surges caused by the ripples were enough to force back any dragon-eagles that got too close.

Song Junlang shook his head. “An illusory dragon is a body of energy, physical attacks are basically useless to it.”

Xiao Lin touched the jade pendant. “Can’t this thing reabsorb it?”

Song Junlang did not know whether to cry or to laugh, “Do you think that thing is your pet! Didn’t I tell you; that thing is only an illusory dragon, and the draconic power was kept in the jade. It’s a limited-use object, it will stop working once the draconic power is exhausted.”

“Are you telling me I can only use this once?”

“That would depend on how much power the dean stored in it.” Song Junlang could not help but be a little envious. “I thought that the dean had only put some Gold-rank protection spells into the jade, but he actually stored draconic power in it. Now I’m really beginning to wonder if you’re his bastard child!”

Xiao Lin ignored that last part and asked curiously, “Is it that hard to extract draconic power?”

“Of course it is! Simply put, only a handful of people could possibly extract the power of a giant golden dragon in all of the academies put together! Even if the dean is protective of his students, this is just way too much.” Song Junlang could not help but regard him with some suspicion, trying to see what was so different about Xiao Lin.

The battle in the sky was not going well, just as Song Junlang had said. The physical attacks from the knights were not doing much visible damage to the giant golden dragon but, on the other hand, the dragon had very few ways to attack since it was made out of energy, and could not stop the dragon-eagles.

Everyone was worried for the outcome of the battle; it was a densely populated city, so even if the knights had prepared magic attacks, they were hesitant to use it because they were worried it would cause collateral damage to the city; not because of their own spells, but rather they were afraid the dragon would unleash its draconic power.

“They’re afraid of enraging the dragon. It might just be an illusory dragon, but the pride of dragons is something that is burnt into their blood. If it were to go crazy, it might be able to destroy half the city before they manage to eliminate it !” Song Junlang had a serious look on his face.

“How long will this dragon last?”

“Between five minutes to half an hour, it depends on how much draconic power the dean extracted.” Song Junlang hesitated before patting Xiao Lin on the back, consoling him. “Don’t worry about it too much. Even if the worst comes to be, I can still guarantee that we will be able to get back safely. Don’t forget, I have someone powerful on my side!”

Song Junlang kept saying that, but it felt like he was really serious this time. Despite the ferocious battle in front of them, Xiao Lin could not help his curiosity. “Department Head Song, who exactly is your backer?”

Xiao Lin always thought it was the dean, but it did not seem to be the case now. No matter how clueless he was, he still understood that New Washington was the capital of the Judge Academy in the New World. If half the city were to be destroyed, even the dean of Dawn Academy would not be able to deal with the aftermath.

Song Junlang could only shake his head in silence.

Thanks to the dragon-eagle knights, the dragon was not able to descend into the city. After a few minutes, the knights suddenly scattered.

Xiao Lin curiously said, “Huh? Why did they run? Are they going to abandon the city?”

Song Junlang did not have to answer this time; Xiao Lin saw the answer himself. Surrounding New Washington were a few sharp and tall towers which suddenly shot many blue streams of water toward the giant dragon. There were more than a hundred streams in total which all centered on the giant golden dragon.

“Did they finally activate the magical defense array? But what is this spell?” Song Junlang furrowed his eyebrows and talked to himself.

The gigantic dragon made for a very good live target; the streams of water seemed to hit it without much difficulty. The jets of water were extremely powerful and the draconic power which formed the dragon's body was constantly and intensely pulsing. Every single pulse seemed to deplete the dragon's energy by just a bit more.

After the water stopped, the thoroughly soaked dragon was noticeably smaller than it was earlier, but even the remnants of draconic power managed to maintain the form of the giant dragon. The more horrifying thing was that it seemed to have been enraged. With a roar, the dragon opened its mouth and started to gather a faintly golden energy ball.

The water had not fully dissipated from the air, and as it flowed down, the water began to gather into countless droplets and stopped in midair. All the droplets slowly morphed into long and sharp arrow-like shapes, facing the giant dragon as before.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

Without a warning, tens of thousands of arrows fired!

In the blink of an eye, the entire sky was littered with sparkling water arrows—no one knew if it numbered in the millions or billions. The initial salvo of arrows did not pierce through the dragon, and the ripples they caused could not compare to the prior jets of water, but the sheer number of water arrows was terrifying.

Slowly, the dragon began to shrink again. If one were to make a comparison, it was like ants against an elephant; the arrows were like ants, but with enough ants, even an elephant could be bitten to death.

After ten minutes, the illusory dragon started to get fainter before finally disappearing. The arrows turned into vapor, and after gathering for a while, it turned into a downpour, completely enveloping half the city in a veil of rain.

Chapter 102 - Commander Harry

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Translator: EndlessFantasy Translation **Editor:** EndlessFantasy Translation

“I never expected New Washington to have something like that; Judge Academy really is powerful to be able to create such a large-scale hybrid magic array.”

After the crisis was averted, Xiao Lin and Song Junlang breathed sighs of relief before greeting Bella and the others who were approaching. Song Junlang sang praises about how powerful their magic array was.

However, it was obvious that the praises did nothing to assuage the other party. Even though the dragon was eliminated, and the city did not take any damage other than a massive downpour, at least half of the city still felt the draconic power from earlier.

Xiao Lin had personally felt the terrifying presence of draconic power during his opening ceremony. As a superior species, draconic power naturally exerted a great pressure on most other species. Since it was a natural reaction, no one could really stop it from happening. It was not a pleasant experience either, it was as if a battle was being waged in the depths of one's soul. It was even able to make weak-willed people faint from the feeling.

That was why Xiao Lin could understand the furious expressions on the faces of Bella and the others, but the city was still unharmed in the end. As for any compensation for the mental damages that anyone might have suffered, Song Junlang would be able to solve the issue.

With that, though Xiao Lin nodded to himself, he suddenly felt something was amiss. Where was Song Junlang?

He could not find any trace of him, and when he turned around, he was rendered speechless as Department Head Song was standing a few meters away, pretending to admire the scenery. When he felt Xiao Lin's gaze on him, Song Junlang waved his hand at Xiao Lin, with an expression that said, 'It's in your hands now'.

Quit joking around!

Xiao Lin almost exploded; he was just a freshman, and Song Junlang was a department head with a powerful backer; how could he let the new kid deal with it.

However, it was too late. Bella was furiously approaching and finally stopped in front of Xiao Lin. Bella cut to the chase and said in heavily accented Chinese, "You! Need to! Your actions! Responsibility!"

Bella realized halfway that her speech was slow due to her unfamiliarity with the language, and could not properly convey how angry she was. She immediately switched to English, and went into a very fluent rant.

Xiao Lin was dumbfounded; even though his English was not that good, he could still make out the basics. However, the woman was way too interested in venting her frustrations, so she spoke extremely fast. To Xiao Lin's ears, it felt no different from listening to Normese.

After finishing her tirade, Bella looked much calmer. When she looked at Xiao Lin's puzzled expression, she suddenly realized her strict scolding fell on deaf ears. This guy in front of her obviously did not understand English, and the fire she had finally suppressed threatened to boil over again. She was visibly shaking, and looked to be on the verge of collapse.

"Let me handle it!" Hank hurriedly shouted. He really did not want the woman to go crazy again. If Xiao Lin released that giant golden dragon again, then the New Washington that had known peace for over a hundred years might actually be destroyed that day.

However, someone was even faster than Hank. The man who jumped off the eagle-dragon just now was already standing in front of Hank. He wore an entire body of jet-black armor and was holding his helmet under his arm. He looked like a man that had been through a lot; his face was riddled with scars of various sizes and his blue eyes measured Xiao Lin.

The man was just about to speak, but he recalled something and motioned to the young girl next to him and uttered a few words. The girl nodded, then waved around a small wand. A white chain began to form, linking Xiao Lin and the man's chest. The chain was not a physical object, and when Xiao Lin tried to touch it with his hand, it disappeared.

The man slowly said, "Spirit chains; it's a spell that can allow two parties to share energy, but it has a more practical use as well. When two people are linked, they'll be able to understand each other, regardless of language."

Xiao Lin exclaimed, "What a mystical spell!"

The man nodded, and introduced himself politely, "I'm the commander of the dragon-eagle knight regiment. You can call me Harry."

Xiao Lin responded, "Xiao Lin; a freshman from Dawn Academy. I was invited to New Washington to participate in the translation of Ancient Normese."

Harry was quite surprised to hear that Xiao Lin was a first year, but he recovered quickly before his expression turned serious. "Then you summoned the giant golden dragon?"

The man had a very intense aura, which Xiao Lin was much more sensitive to thanks to the spirit chains. This man was extremely powerful, and the pressure he exuded felt like a wave powerful enough to topple mountains.

Xiao Lin did not like the feeling, so his tone shifted to a more obstinate one, "That's right! I supposed I did, but your people provoked us! I'm here as a representative of the Dawn Academy, and Bella doubting my capabilities is equal to insulting Dawn Academy! As a student of that academy, I'm fine with damaging my own reputation, but I absolutely cannot have the academy be looked down upon because of me! How could I possibly tolerate it!"

Xiao Lin shouted all that with his head held high; even Song Junlang could not help but cringe hearing his words. 'He's so pretentious!'

Harry did not answer immediately, but instead looked at Xiao Lin's chest with great interest. He was so fixated that Xiao Lin could not help but grip his collar in shock, retreating a few steps before warning, "Don't even think about asking for my body in compensation!"

"Haha!" Harry laughed and averted his gaze, "I'm sorry for being rude earlier, but are you really wearing a Lightstream Jade?"

"Yes, that's correct."

"It is said that Lightstream Jades can store anything! It's a pity that the stuff is so rare, and basically only found in the colonized areas of the Eastern academies.

Harry's eyes suddenly widened as he said with a smile, "Why don't you name a price? I'll buy this jade off you. You can ask for money or for some other goods to exchange, no problem!"

“Huh?” Xiao Lin paused. He felt a bit dumb at the moment, every single development had been completely different from what he expected. He had thought that the commander stepped up first in order to hold them responsible, but Harry did not seem to care about it at all.

“Give me your price! I’ll pay as long as I can afford it!”

Harry pushed once again with an earnest expression on his face. Bella was starting to get anxious, and whispered, “Commander Harry! Are you just going to ignore the fact that this guy almost destroyed New Washington!”

Chapter 103 - Settling Disputes

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Harry had an impatient look on his face as he waved his hand like he was swatting away a fly. “You must be tired, Bella. Head back and get some rest! I’ll take care of this!”

“But...”

“No buts!” Harry suddenly turned cold. “Don’t forget that I’m in charge of the defenses of New Washington. That was an order; not a request. Miss Bella, please obey your orders!”

Bella was furious as she was forced to leave, but the atmosphere got much better once that overbearing woman was gone. Hank wiped the sweat off his forehead as he tried to explain the situation, but Harry did not treat him any better, and Hank wisely shut up after a few words.

Harry’s imperious mannerisms put Xiao Lin at a loss. He had a ton of excuses ready, but it seemed like they would be useless. Finally, he touched the jade as he said, uncertain, “Are you willing to pay any price for this jade pendant?”

“I always speak the truth!”

Xiao Lin had a determined look on his face, but before he could say anything, Song Junlang could not take it anymore and interrupted. He might have been standing by the side, but he was always listening, and he finally lost his patience as he stood right in front of Xiao Lin, saying in fluent English, “Quit dreaming! The Lightstream Jade is not for sale!”

From Song Junlang’s simple explanation earlier, Xiao Lin more or less could guess that the Lightstream Jade was something incredibly valuable, especially since it contained draconic power. However, that toy was really too high-ranked for him—to the degree that it would be very hard for him to have any chance to use it. He had felt the draconic power, and thankfully it was in New Washington. He really did not want to use it a second time and cause himself trouble.

The most important part was the thing had limited uses!

Xiao Lin licked his lips with a bit of regret, but Department Head Song was frantically shooting him some looks, so he eventually had to shake his head and force himself to reject Harry’s offer.

Harry had a look of pity on his face. “If that’s so, then we’ll put it on hold for now. However, if you feel like selling the jade, you can look for me at any time while you’re in New Washington! Alright, I need to go maintain order. Ah, you really caused me quite a bit of trouble!”

Xiao Lin felt a bit awkward, but he was quite surprised that Harry did not say anything else. He could not help but ask, “Surely this incident did not incur too much loss for New Washington?”

“You call this not much loss? Do you know how much resource is needed to activate that magic array?” Harry finally showed some anger. “The fees are even paid for by my knight regiment!”

Xiao Lin’s eyes twitched; he felt that the last words were the main reason Harry was angry.

“The city is probably in a state of disarray today; I’ll bring you to Professor Brown tomorrow.” Hank was now being much more courteous to Xiao Lin. “I’ll get someone to take you to the inn.”

“Sorry for the trouble!”

Walking down from the platform, Xiao Lin finally properly stepped into New Washington. The streets were made out of limestone and very wide. The sudden downpour from earlier had washed the city abnormally clean. The teleportation platform was built close to the center of the city. This was the busy area of the city, but there were not many people out and about at the moment, probably scared away by the dragon earlier.

Both sides of the streets were densely packed with shops, and none of them seemed to be closed, even after the chaos earlier. These merchants were all probably very confident in Judge Academy. The shops had all sorts of fruits, items, weapons, armor and daily necessities on display. There was an insane amount of variety. Other than familiar modern goods such as shampoo, there were even some exotic carvings and accessories. No matter the workmanship or the materials, they were all extremely beautiful.

Beautiful accessories had a natural allure; Xiao Lin could not help but stop and browse for a bit. Hank hurriedly ran up to say some words, but once he noticed that Commander Harry’s spirit chain had disappeared, he switched to Mandarin, “These are small elven accessories. They have quite a bit of sentimental value, and most students of Judge Academy will buy some the first time they come here. You can think about getting one yourself.”

“It’s not like I’ve never stepped into New Washington before; these things are only here to trick outsiders!” Song Junlang said without any consideration, “Don’t fall for it, Xiao Lin. They’re all fake goods!”

“Fake goods!”

“Please don’t slander people so lightly!” Hank smiled dryly.

Song Junlang ignored him, and advised Xiao Lin in a low voice, “Let me teach you a useful trick. If you feel like buying elvish things, don’t get it from a shop that the Americans opened themselves; most of it is fake and they charge an insane amount. Conversely, if you feel like buying anything from Earth, like shampoo, don’t get it from any foreign species. Even the quality is drastically different.

It seemed like there were unscrupulous merchants everywhere. Xiao Lin smiled and said, “I wasn’t planning on buying these things; I don’t really have that much money. I want to spend the money on more practical things, like gear and weapons.”

“Then you’re at the right place!” Hank immediately changed the topic. “You will definitely be able to find any equipment that you need in the trade district!”

“I trust Department Head Song’s judgement.” Xiao Lin seemed even more careful now.

No matter what, Xiao Lin was broke at the moment. Thanks to the day’s chaos, their meeting with Professor Brown would be delayed. When Hank asked if they wanted to continue shopping, Xiao Lin rejected it and felt like heading to the inn first.

Even though the city was filled with wonder, the anti-gravity shield Bella cast on him would be gone soon. Once he loses that protection, Xiao Lin would have the pressure of this planet’s gravity once again. That was why he would rather lie in the bed and wait for Hank to deliver the special item he talked about.

New Washington separated into many ring-shaped districts. In the center was the governmental district, which served as the heart of the city, and was where the Judge Academy was centered. The central district was rebuilt from the castle of the old Thunder Kingdom, so from appearances, it looked like an ancient castle. It was majestic and awe-inspiring, and the ancient walls that surrounded it told viewers of its history.

With the castle as the center, it was neatly surrounded by a few large districts. It was separated into the residential district, the trade district, the army district, the entertainment district, and the commoner district.

Chapter 104: Tower of Revival

Translator: EndlessFantasy Translation **Editor:** EndlessFantasy Translation

On the way to the inn, Hank passionately introduced the city to Xiao Lin, including the use of each district, the areas the districts were in, and the population.

“New Washington is a globalized city. Every colonial academy has an embassy established here. It enjoys a very good reputation even among the inhabitants of Planet Norma. You can find elves, dwarves, beastkin, and even Norman humans here,” Hank said with pride.

“How do you handle so many races? Wouldn’t it cause unrest?” Xiao Lin said, surprised. He had not seen many other species on the way, but they could obviously have just been scared away by the dragon.

“The arrogance of Americans!” Song Junlang could not help but interrupt, correcting him. “To be more precise, they’re naturalized citizens from other races.”

“Naturalized citizens?”

Song Junlang explained, “We’re the invaders of this world, but in our centuries of history, it’s not like we were at war every single day. War is just a way to establish a government. Once we get what we want, the next step would obviously be peace.”

Hank smiled and said, “Naturalized citizens are what everyone calls them. It’s usually the Normans of all races that surrendered to us. They usually plant crops, trade, and live within our jurisdiction. They pay taxes, so they would gain the protection of Judge Academy as well.”

“I get it now. They’re Norman traitors... Aren’t you worried they’ll rebel? After all, you did destroy their whole country!” Xiao Lin asked.

Hank did not understand the phrase Norman traitor, so he tilted his head, and did not really understand, even after some thought, so he continued. “We have obviously taken some basic precautions. All these Normans are usually assigned to the outermost district in New Washington: the commoner district. Furthermore, the dragon-eagle knight regiment is around, so no one would dare to stupidly revolt. Right, I need to remind you: it’s best you don’t go near the commoner district. It’s not very safe there.”

Xiao Lin looked at Song Junlang, “Does Dawn City also have Norman traitors? Ah, I mean naturalized citizens.”

Department Head Song smiled bitterly, “We do, but not much. We’re far from the scale of New Washington.”

Hank had some understanding of the matter as well, smiling as he explained, “Dawn City isn’t positioned as well as we are. The city has its back to the sea, and the only two races nearby are merfolk and beastkin. Beastkin are not very intelligent, and the whole race loves war. Even discussing peace with them is hard, let alone being naturalized.”

“What about merfolk?”

Song Junlang said with a sour expression, “Merfolk? That race has absolutely no intelligence!”

Recalling that Song Junlang seemed to hold some grudge against merfolk, Xiao Lin wisely avoided the topic as he pointed at the tall and pointed tower in the middle of the city. “What’s that?”

The silver-white tower was not that big, and was shaped like a needle. It did not look hollow at all, so it was obviously not meant for anyone to climb up into. Furthermore, the tower had nothing on the outside and the surface was extraordinarily smooth. It shone brightly under the sunlight. It was the tallest building in the city, even taller than the teleportation platform. It stood alone in the center of the castle, and was a strange sight to behold.

“That’s the resurrection tower, how could you not know that?” Hank was not mocking Xiao Lin, but rather he was genuinely surprised. Then he remembered Xiao Lin was only a first year, and motioned to Song Junlang, saying earnestly, “I feel like you should properly explain this to your students. The resurrection tower is incredibly important to us.”

Under Xiao Lin’s curious gaze, Song Junlang pushed aside the matter of the merfolks and explained, “I told you before that the current Law of Immortality for us colonists is thanks to the actions of our predecessors. However, the actual act of resurrection requires some sort of medium to realize it. Otherwise, even if you had plenty of lifespan left, you would only be a wandering spirit lost in a different world. After a period of time, you would still disappear into nothingness. The resurrection tower is precisely the medium that allows this. In the coverage area of the resurrection tower, death will only deduct your lifespan.

That was the first time Xiao Lin had heard of that, “So it even has a coverage area. What if you’re not in it?”

“Then you won’t be able to return to life immediately, unless someone who is good at spiritual magic brings your spirit back. Otherwise, in most cases, the end result would be turning into nothingness, which is basically death!”

Pausing for a while, Song Junlang added, “Remember this, colonized land is indicated by the presence of resurrection towers. As long as any land is in the range of a resurrection tower, then it is considered an area that we rule. In those places, it’s very hard for natives to defeat us! In all these years, including now, everything the academies have been doing is expanding, trying to place more and more resurrection towers to cover even more area in Planet Norma. This is the true purpose of the colonists.”

Hank followed up, “Even though New Washington only has one resurrection tower, it’s considered a gigantic one. Other than encompassing this city, it also includes almost ten kilometers outside of the city. Therefore, in terms of safety, you have nothing to worry about.”

Xiao Lin listened with great interest. It seemed that he still had a lot he did not know about the New World. All that information could only be learned when they actually stepped into the world.

No wonder Judge Academy was so comfortable with all the alien races within New Washington. Within the range of the resurrection tower, no one would even dare think about a rebellion. After all, the Laws of Immortality only applied to those with the mark of an academy.

The residential district was near the castle, and was the earliest area to be developed. There had already been a lot of mass expansions in the history of New Washington, so the other districts were all built later. The residential district and the castle were the oldest areas, and there were even remnants of Thunder Kingdom architecture still inside.

“A lot of people suggested leaving these old buildings, claiming they could become historical relics in the future. However, a lot of the local natives don’t understand our ways, and feel like we’re crazy for not building anything new and instead living in old and beaten up buildings.” Hank explained with a smile yet again.

Chapter 105 - High Priest

Chapter 105: High Priest

The inn Xiao Lin would be staying at was precisely the type of building that had a hundred years of history. The inn had three floors and the white brick walls looked as good as new after some restorative renovation. The wear and tear of history could hardly be seen. The inside had also undergone large-scale renovations. The first floor was an open dining area and lavishly carpeted. It was like Hank had said: the residential area was built to provide various services to the colonists and was remarkable in many ways, with a style closer to the modern era.

Of course, as an inn that had its historical significance as its main selling point, there were all sorts of authentic antiques inside. The one that garnered the most attention was the over two-meter tall statue in front of the inn entrance. The pedestal the statue was on had rotted in various places over the years, so it was specially recoated with gold and stabilized.

What was shocking was that the stone statue itself did not have any traces of decay. The milky white stone still looked vivid and lifelike; every single wrinkle and expression on its face was perfectly carved. The statue depicted a man in long robes, but the left half of its body was missing. Hank explained that half the statue was destroyed when Judge Academy attacked the castle all those years ago.

“Is this Asabanor?” Song Junlang asked Hank.

“Asa...banor?” Xiao Lin tried to pronounce the strange name, and felt that it sounded a bit like Ancient Normese, so he guessed, “Is he someone from the Thunder Kingdom?”

Hank nodded and answered, “Correct, that’s Asabanor. Ah, it’s a name that was directly translated from Ancient Normese, so no one really knows the true meaning of the name. Asabanor was the high priest of the Thunder Kingdom. Based on the hierarchy of the Thunder Kingdom, the high priest is similar to our Secretary of State.”

Xiao Lin raised his eyebrows in surprise, and asked curiously, “Then he’s definitely someone very important. What happened to the high priest after Judge Academy attacked the castle? Was he captured? Executed? Or did he kill himself?”

“He disappeared.” Hank said with a strange expression.

“Disappeared? So he ran away?”

“No, he did not run away. He literally disappeared. All those years ago, Judge Academy thoroughly surrounded the palace. Even a fly would not have been able to get out. All of the royalty was found and captured, but only the high priest remained unfound. I believe America only revealed the truth a few decades ago, but before that, Judge Academy had always maintained that the high priest was killed in the chaos.” Song Junlang had some understanding of this part of history.

To Judge Academy, failing to kill such an important figure all those years ago was nothing to be proud of. Hank lost his composure a bit, but quickly regained it as he smiled. “It doesn’t matter anymore if Asabanor ran away or died; it’s been more than a hundred years without a single bit of news from him. He’s most definitely nothing but a pile of bones right now.”

Xiao Lin realized, “So, that’s why you guys publicly revealed the truth a few decades ago. You were sure that the high priest could not possibly still be alive.”

Hank said, “That’s right. What we’re actually worried about is that the high priest would use his influence to fan the flames of rebellion or the urge to reclaim their country in the Normans. However, even if he were to really crawl out of hell now, the naturalized citizens that have been under our protection for so many years, they wouldn’t listen to his orders anymore anyway.”

“You seem really confident!” Song Junlang shrugged.

“Confidence comes from power! I’ve already settled your accommodations. For the next month, you’ll be temporarily staying here. If you need anything, please tell the innkeeper; he’ll relay it to me.” Hank laughed. He was not idling as he talked, but was actually handling everything at the inn.

Before he left, Hank did not forget to ask Xiao Lin to get some rest because he would be there at six in the morning at the very latest to take Xiao Lin over. After all, Judge Academy did not invite Xiao Lin over here for leisure, and Professor Brown seemed to be very pressed for time.

The innkeeper was a very stout old man; his body was pudgy and he had a thin beard on his oily face. He wore long silk robes, and his most defining feature was the white-peaked cap on his head.

Xiao Lin felt uncomfortable just looking at him and could not help but say, “He’s wearing a peaked cap with those clothes. How strange.”

Song Junlang shrugged, “The only thing I can say is that this man is definitely a Norman—a Norman traitor as you said. Only natives would treat our earthly things with such reverence and dress so flashily on the daily.”

“Are we able to bring everything from Earth?” Xiao Lin seemed to have thought of something, and asked.

“I know what you’re thinking. You’re wondering why we haven’t brought tanks or cannons, or even weapons of mass destruction like nuclear bombs, right?”

Xiao Lin nodded after he was seen right through. “Dawn Academy was established during the Ming dynasty, and there admittedly wasn’t anything like that at the time. However, hasn’t anyone thought of bringing modern weapons in recent years?”

Song Junlang waved dismissively, “It’s not possible. The space-time continuum doesn’t just apply to Earth, it applies here too. During our journeys between Earth, the academy and New Washington, there actually has always been an invisible safety protocol that would check us before we boarded. Anything that could possibly disrupt the space-time continuum is prohibited, especially within the wormhole. These things could possibly threaten the stability of the wormhole, and I’ve told you the consequences before.”

Xiao Lin could only answer, “You’d be forever lost in the nothingness of space and time, never to return... Then what if we just made these things on Planet Norma? Since we can’t bring anything that could disrupt the balance from Earth, surely we can recreate these things with our minds?”

“I knew you would say that, so how could the colonists not have thought of it?”

“Then what was the conclusion?”

“It’s logically possible, but in truth it’s too hard to pull off. First of all, you know that even gravity is different on both worlds. A lot of the science that we have mastered on Earth works differently here, so it needs to be researched from the very basics. Among the colonists, there aren’t many that actually have the knowledge and skills to be able to do it. If you want us to study the laws of the New World from the very basics and figure out how to make airplanes, tanks and even nuclear bombs, why don’t you just kill us instead.”

Chapter 106 - The Inn

Chapter 106: The Inn

Song Junlang smiled and said, “Furthermore, a lot of the things on Earth don’t exist on Planet Norma, like gunpowder. A lot of the things we take for granted on Earth don’t exist here on Planet Norma, so replacements need to be found. America, Germany, England, Russia and Dawn Academy have always been researching for substitutes, and the experiments have gone on for the past few decades without much success. It was only in recent years that we finally managed to find a way to make gunpowder thanks to the help of the dwarves.

“How powerful is it?”

Song Junlang shook his head. “Not as powerful as we’d like. To be honest, after researching for so long, even the ones that started the research had lost interest. Even after discovering new gunpowder, an even more awkward problem appeared: no one wanted to use it.”

“Did they feel it wasn’t powerful enough?” Xiao Ling guessed.

“More or less. The new gunpowder is stronger than the bullets you’d find on Earth, but it still falls far behind the power levels of this world. Our own people feel it’s beneath us, that it’s not as convenient as weapons or magic, and the natives find it unsafe.”

Then Song Junlang suddenly smiled, “The real ones with interest in the new gunpowder are actually the dwarves. That race is really good at tinkering and inventing; they even created their own firearm squad, and would purchase large amounts of new gunpowder from the academies every year. Everyone was initially frustrated that the new gunpowder was useless, but after that happened, a lot of academies are actually profiting quite a bit from it.”

“So after researching gunpowder for so many years, the final purpose was to scam the dwarves?” Xiao Lin could not help but let out a small laugh.

“As the colonized territories expand, everyone has been thinking of ways to set up businesses and increase their income. The colonists aren’t at war every day after all, and business is a very good alternative path.”

Song Junlang pointed at the odd peaked cap on the innkeeper’s head and said, “We also realized very quickly that the aliens are actually very fascinated with a lot of modern things. For instance, the humans here love our towels and hats, whereas the elves love our soaps and perfumes.”

Xiao Lin asked curiously, “Then wouldn’t these things disrupt the space-time continuum as well?”

“Of course they do!” Song Junlang let out a sigh, then thought for a while before explaining, “Logically, anything that does not belong to this planet would trigger ripples in time and space when brought over. However, the impact varies from object to object. If you imagine the space-time continuum as a lake, then something like a hat or shampoo would be like a paper falling into the lake, causing very minimal effects. If you brought in something like a submachine gun, then it would be like throwing a huge rock inside, and there would naturally be more ripples.”

Xiao Lin smiled and asked, “Then what if we just went ahead and brought in nuclear weapons?”

Song Junlang waved his hands descriptively. “Then it would be like dropping a small mountain into the lake, and the lake would immediately disappear.

Xiao Lin licked his lips. The lake disappearing...that would be the end of the world.

“Haha! Let’s stop there! Rest soon; the sky gets darker much faster here.” Song Junlang looked outside, and the sun was indeed already setting.

The innkeeper had a very respectful attitude toward the two of them, to the degree where it was overtly humble. He bowed down in respect every time he spoke with a flattering smile on his face. It was obvious that his plump body had a hard time bowing, but everytime Xiao Lin tried to stop him, he let out a horrified expression, as if he had done something wrong.

Even though the innkeeper was a Norman human, his English was quite good and even Xiao Lin could understand it. Operating an inn within this district where colonists gathered would be quite hard if he could not speak English. However, his accent was quite odd, and Xiao Lin could not help but liken it to an Indian accent. It felt very weird to listen to; even Department Head Song had to use some guesswork to talk to him, let alone Xiao Lin with his shoddy English.

Partially, the innkeeper’s attitude also rendered him speechless. Xiao Lin lost any interest in interacting with him. He simply made a few requests before heading straight to bed. Song Junlang and him had two different rooms, but they still had dinner together.

They had hamburgers for dinner. Appearance-wise it was no different from the hamburgers from Earth, but the meat they used were from local animals. The meat was fresh and juicy, and it was extremely delicious. Xiao Lin was full of praise as he ate it. Song Junlang was quite knowledgeable on the area, and was teaching him the origins of the meat, as well as other information such as how it was reared.

Xiao Lin was a bit speechless and quickly changed the topic, “Department Head Song, do you feel like what happened today will be dropped just like that? Will they be troubling us again?”

“What happened today?” Song Junlang slowly chewed on a piece of meat.

Xiao Lin stared at him silently. Department Head Song swallowed the meat and wiped his mouth before saying nonchalantly, “Obviously. What else could they do to us?”

“This was never my fault in the first place!” Xiao Lin could not help but say indignantly. “I didn’t willingly summon that illusory dragon, it was released by the Lightstream Jade! What’s more, that American girl is really rude! What happened between the two of you during the academy exchange eight years ago.”

Song Junlang said bluntly, “She lost.”

Xiao Lin refused to believe it. “She hated you for eight years just for that?”

Song Junlang rubbed his chin and said, “Thinking about it, I think I might have accidentally used my flame sword to burn away all her clothes. It was just an accident. After all, swords don’t have eyes. She probably hates me because of that.”

Xiao Lin's eyes twitched, "No wonder she hates you so much. I think she was actually quite merciful. That strong energy pulse was completely aimed at you! However, it's quite hard to believe she actually dared to make a move against you. After all, we're still representing Dawn Academy, so we're basically emissaries. Even in ancient times, they would not harm diplomats, even at war, and that's forgetting the fact that we're allies."

Song Junlang put down his hamburger and said, "Don't be naive! What are the two of us? You're only a new student who isn't even at Black Iron-rank yet, and I'm just a crippled department head. Do you think we can really represent Dawn Academy? We're only allies because there are benefits to be gained from both sides."

He paused before continuing, "Bella is actually really smart. She actually held back today, and her attack would not be able to kill us. At the most, we'd be injured, but do you really think Dawn Academy would risk offending Judge Academy for the injuries of two insignificant people?"

Chapter 107 - Lightstream Jade

Chapter 107: Lightstream Jade

Xiao Lin was shocked by Department Head Song's words. Xiao Lin was fairly angry at what happened during the day, but like a lot of things, other people might not think you are in the right, even if reason was on your side.

At the end of the day, Xiao Lin was a new student. Even if he was invited by the Judge Academy because he understood a bit of Ancient Normese, it did not mean he was the only person to understand it in the world. It also did not mean Professor Brown could not continue his work without him.

Both Xiao Lin and Song Junlang were just very ordinary existences. Their standing at the school was quite insignificant. Even though it was quite frustrating to admit, it was still the truth.

Song Junlang once again faced the hamburger, bite by bite. He only continued when he was half full. "Honestly this is quite interesting. I was initially quite worried Judge Academy would push the responsibility onto us. Yes, I know you did not release that golden dragon, and the Americans aren't stupid either; they obviously know the Lightstream Jade has a self-defense mechanism. However, if they really wanted to push it, the matter would not be resolved for a quite long time, which would be a huge bother."

"I find it quite weird too. Commander Harry from the dragon-eagle knights did not seem to care about the matter at all."

"How could he possibly dare not care about the matter! This is New Washington; even if there was no structural damage, the academy's higher ups would still ask questions after all that commotion."

Song Junlang shook his head, and looked deep in thought. "Commander Harry is a smart man, or should I say, he's someone who has a good eye."

“A good eye? Why?”

“The Lightstream Jade you have hanging on your neck! The materials to make it has certain special characteristics that make it only available in extremely few areas. It is extremely difficult to mine, and usually has very little yield. Do you know how much ore you would need to go through to get a piece as big as the one you have?”

Xiao Lin shook his head in confusion.

Song Junlang said, “The amount of ore you would need to mine would probably be able to fill up all of New Washington. Think about it; so much ore is needed for just that tiny pendant.”

Xiao Lin widened his eyes, “That much? Is this jade pendant really that valuable?”

Department Head Song said, “It’s a lot more valuable than you think. The special characteristics of the Lightstream Jade makes this thing priceless. The amount of people who have the power and the right to own such a complete jade pendant is very limited, and our dean is one of them. I think Harry correctly guessed that the jade pendant is the dean’s.”

“So because he had that suspicion, he didn’t dare push the matter?”

“More or less. Judge Academy can look down on the two of us, but they definitely would not dare to ignore our dean. He is one of the most famous figures among the academies! As long as Harry doesn’t clearly know the relationship between you and the dean, he will be careful when dealing with you.”

Xiao Lin gaped. He had thought that Harry was an easygoing, magnanimous man, but things were not as simple as it seemed. The only reason he did not make a huge fuss was because of his Lightstream Jade. No wonder Song Junlang made him deal with things himself. He must have guessed something like that would happen. The Lightstream Jade definitely mattered a lot more than a Bronze-ranked department head.

Song Junlang said, “Remember how he asked to buy your pendant? He was actually testing you. He asked you to name your price, but even if he was the commander of the dragon-eagle knights, he could still never afford something like that. Thank God I reminded you.”

“What a cunning man!” Xiao Lin changed his evaluation of Harry.

“Anyone who got to a position like his did not only rely on hard work. This time around, the results were quite good, but you need to be careful with your pendant in the future. Don’t treat people too lightly. I still don’t understand why the dean gave you this,” Song Junlang said.

The environment within the inn was quite good. They each had neat and clean single-person rooms, and the carpets had purple and red flower patterns. The walls were white and clean and there was a mild fragrance to the beddings. Obviously the facilities could not compare to that of Earth, such as the fact that the bathroom did not have a heater, and one needed to manually fill the bath with hot water before bathing.

Of course, Xiao Lin did not need to personally do it. It would all be done by the service staff at the inn. The staff were all mostly second or third generation naturalized Normans, and had more

familiarity with the colonists, which was why they were allowed to work in this district. In this regard, the Americans were quite particular with their safety measures.

Hank had probably asked the innkeeper to give them special attention since the innkeeper seemed to be especially hospitable to them. He constantly ran up to ask if they needed any help, but Xiao Lin and Song Junlang did not particularly like this pudgy Norman who spoke such accented English, so they were very lukewarm whenever he approached.

Feeling their lukewarm attitudes, the innkeeper silently hinted that the cute female staff in the inn could provide special services to them when they were bathing. Xiao Lin finally lost it and bluntly told the innkeeper to stop disturbing him.

Night time in New Washington was quiet. Even though there were not special curfews set by the government, the natives did not have the habit of working at night, and all of them returned home to rest. There were not many colonists who stayed long-term in cities, even though a capital like New Washington was a bit better. After graduating from the academy, the students had three choices: stay at school, head back to Earth, or come work in the New World.

Most of them chose the New World, but not all of them would be assigned to a place as nice as the capital. Alongside the constant expansion of the colonized territories, new cities would need to be established by colonists, especially important buildings like resurrection towers, which could not just be handed over to the natives.

For Xiao Lin, night was going to be a big hurdle. The special accessory that they said was specially made for him to reduce the weight of gravity did not arrive. He did not know if the Americans had forgotten, or if Bella was taking some revenge on him.

When the anti-gravity shield disappeared, Xiao Lin once again felt the full force of the New World's gravity. It was double Earth's gravity, and caused him to not be able to even walk normally. He was forced to lie down in bed, and it felt like a gigantic rock was pushing down on him. He forced himself to shut his eyes, but it was hard to fall asleep.

The next morning, Song Junlang jumped in fright when he saw Xiao Lin. He was perfectly healthy yesterday, but that morning he was as pale as a ghost, and had two large eye bags which surrounded his bloodshot eyes.

Song Junlang quickly guessed the cause and was furious. Thankfully, the innkeeper decided to come up to offer his services at that moment, so the two of them vented their frustrations on the unlucky fatty.

After twenty minutes, the innkeeper finally brought Hank over. Hank also brought along some super-potions and the accessory that Xiao Lin needed.

Chapter 108 - The Castle

Chapter 108: The Castle

Hank arrived right on schedule and he politely expressed his apologies. He made a bunch of excuses, but it only caused Xiao Lin and Song Junlang to further suspect it was an act of revenge.

However, there was no way to do anything about it for now; this was still New Washington: American territory. Song Junlang had said before that the Dawn Academy's territory was at least two or three months away.

The super-potion was a medication that was just produced by the American academy. It would allow anyone below Black-iron rank who was still not used to the environment in the New World to avoid harm from any of the foreign viruses and microorganisms there. The price for it was extremely high, since it would allow for those people who were not specialized in combat, such as alchemists and enchanters to be able to live there. Their skills were far behind others, especially in the beginning, but these people would often gain early entry into the New World, since they were much more valuable than combatants.

Every academy had poured in a lot of manpower into the development of the super-potion, and the Royal British Academy was the first one to successfully manufacture it. However, the drawbacks of this medicine were very obvious: it was only effective for a limited time. According to Hank, they had bought an improved version this time that would last for a whole week.

The light-blue medicine was contained in a very small test tube. Its smell was faint, and had a sliver of sweetness. Xiao Lin gulped it down and smacked his lips while asking for another bottle, claiming to not have tasted it, but Hank ignored him.

He was looking forward to seeing the accessory that was custom made for him, but Xiao Lin was quite disappointed when he saw the actual object. They said it was an accessory, but it was actually just a pin to be placed on his shirt. The pin had a grey jewel the size of a grain of rice on it.

When Xiao Lin wore it, a light suddenly shone from the grey jewel that enveloped Xiao Lin's entire body. It was like an invisible veil that stopped some of the influence of gravity.

Hank self-indulgently bragged about how complicated the manufacturing process for this accessory was. It was rare that they would spend so many resources and so much effort on a new foreign student.

However, Song Junlang touched the pin and immediately said, "Isn't this pin a perishable object. The quality of the jewel is disastrous; it's obviously never been purified. Can this thing even last half a month? This thing could be done by anyone that knows alchemy; isn't this just a magic jewel with a small anti-gravity array attached to it? How hard could that be?"

Hank awkwardly coughed. "Professor Brown has been waiting. Let's hurry up and leave."

Xiao Lin said it was not a problem. He practically did not sleep last night, but after drinking the super-potion and putting on the anti-gravity pin, he felt much better. He suddenly felt a lot more awake as well.

Hank led the way, but Song Junlang was stopped from following. Hank smiled softly but resolutely said, “I’m very sorry, Department Head Song, but other than Professor Brown’s team, no one else is allowed to follow.”

Song Junlang was left alone, and Xiao Lin followed Hank through the residential district and right into the most central district of the city: the castle district.

The castle had been repaired and renovated many times, but it still maintained the general style and feel of the Thunder Kingdom—strange and seemingly random corridors, a courtyard that was full of vibrant flowers and plants, and a majestic and luxurious palace. Xiao Lin stopped in his tracks to admire the scenes a few times, only continuing his walk when Hank called for him.

The castle was about as big as a small village, but only the outer buildings were used by Judge Academy. The buildings further inside were in obvious disrepair, which indicated that no one had used them for a long time—a big contrast from the beautiful sights outside.

Xiao Lin was a bit apprehensive when he noticed that Hank was walking toward the deepest part of the castle. The buildings there were in horrible shape. The further inside they went, the more desolate the scenery became. If the outside was spring, then the deepest part of the castle was winter; they were completely different environments. Even the flowers there had all withered.

“We’re here!”

Hank finally stopped in front of one of the courtyards. The rusted metal gate was already impossible to shut, and there were two guards stationed outside wearing silver armor. The two of them were stopped, and Hank went up and exchanged a few words. After that one of them produced a few sheets of paper. On them were Xiao Lin’s picture and some details. The guard compared Xiao Lin with the photo a few times, and after verifying that everything was in order, passed the last empty page to Xiao Lin.

“Press your fingers to it for fingerprint verification; it’s just regular security protocol,” Hank whispered to Xiao Lin.

Xiao Lin pressed his thumb down and his thumbprint magically appeared on the paper. The whole paper rapidly turned blue.

The guard nodded to Hank, then burned away the piece of paper.

“Does that mean it went through fine?” Xiao Lin looked in wonder.

Hank explained, “Fingerprint verification. That paper had your fingerprint that Dawn Academy provided stored in it. If the verification was correct, then it would turn blue, otherwise it would be red.”

After everything went smoothly, Xiao Lin was allowed into the courtyard, but Hank was stopped outside. He exchanged a few quick words with Xiao Lin, asking him to remember to wait for someone to come get him in the evening, because if Hank was not leading him, Xiao Lin would find it very hard to get around the heavily-guarded castle.

In the ruined courtyard, other than a few large and leafless trees, there was not a shred of green. The wild grass on the ground was as high as half a person. There was a small palace in the middle of the courtyard. Its walls were black and grey, and the original color could no longer be ascertained. There was a small path leading toward the palace where the wild grass had been cut clean, but the path had a lot of marks on it that were obviously left behind by explosions. These were probably all left behind by the war many years ago.

The palace entrance was not completely shut. After hesitating for a bit, Xiao Lin pushed the door open and entered. The door made a heavy grating sound, which caused a slight chill in the grey, desolate courtyard.

The inside of the palace was much more spacious than he thought, or rather, all the previous decorations and objects had already been stripped away. On the clean flooring that was recently built, a few hundred stone plates were wildly strewn around. Each stone plate was almost two meters long, and were all incomplete. Most of them were smashed, and the more severe ones were even grinded to dust.

Beside the stone plates, around eight or nine people were either squatting or standing. Some of them seemed to be very focused on ascertaining something from the stone plates. The others were trying to rearrange the broken pieces, and some of them were even chatting in low voices.

The sound of the door being pushed focused everyone's attention onto Xiao Lin. A few of them were in a confused daze. A dark-skinned man nearby stood up and spoke in some foreign language to Xiao Lin. Seeing his confused expression, he switched to a few different languages, even using Normese.

Xiao Lin really wanted to tell him he knew English and Normese, but he did not really have time to digest it. However, the man seemed to lack patience, and grabbed Xiao Lin's shoulder before shouting some words upstairs. After a few minutes, an old man walked down, accompanied by a blond woman.

Chapter 109 - Professor Brown

Chapter 109: Professor Brown

The old man had a head full of white hair and wrinkles on his face. He had obvious liver spots on the sides of his head, and was likely quite old. Xiao Lin was quite surprised to see it, since the existence of lifewater meant that most of the colonists usually maintained a youthful look. However, this old man looked really old.

The blond girl with short hair was a stereotypical American beauty, and Xiao Lin was familiar with her. He did not know many Americans, but when the girl waved around her small wand to cast a spell on Xiao Lin, he immediately recognized her as the one who used the spirit chain on Commander Harry and him on the teleportation platform.

She was once again casting the same spell, but the target seemed to be everyone in the hall. After using the spell a few times, the chains connected him with everyone in the room. He was not very clear on the actual use of the spell, but it was quite useful as an automatic translator.

After using all that magic, the girl's face was very pale. It was obviously taxing her mentally, which made Xiao Lin think she was not very high-levelled. Xiao Lin could understand her next words perfectly thanks to the spirit chain.

"This is Professor Brown. My apologies, I'm quite tired at the moment and will need to rest. My spirit chain is still relatively low ranked, so I can only cast it with a single target and it uses a lot of mental power. Please continue communicating amongst yourselves, I'll come back to refresh the spell after an hour." The girl was obviously exhausted, so she headed upstairs before even introducing herself.

Professor Brown was the white-haired old man in front of him. He did not even bother properly appraising Xiao Lin before pointing at a table in the corner, sternly saying, "This is the part you're responsible for. I've seen your information, your LV1 in Ancient Normese is the lowest level here, so your job scope will be very simple. You will just be recording the stone plates that everyone else has arranged, understood?"

Xiao Lin nodded, only half understanding him.

Professor Brown grunted in acknowledgement, not bothering with further instructions.

"Hold on, Professor Brown. I'd like to ask if my wages can be given daily. Mr. Hank discussed that with me before I came over."

"Okay," Professor Brown answered without hesitation, then turned around to head back upstairs.

It did not take even two minutes for Brown to appear and leave. Xiao Lin's job scope had been completely allocated to him, and it caused him to stare incredulously. It was quite different from what he had in mind.

The dark-skinned man who called over the professor earlier patted him on the shoulder, laughing as he said, "Professor Brown is an uptight man, and doesn't really talk much. I wasn't really used to it when I first got here too. Alright, stop dreaming! Qe have a lot to do!"

"I'm Xiao Lin, I'm from Dawn Academy." Xiao Lin introduced himself.

"Lolander, Sainte Académie." The man smiled and said, "I just graduated not too long ago. I was actually worrying about not having a good place to go to when I received the invitation from Judge Academy. I did not expect that the Ancient Normese I learned out of boredom a few years ago would actually be useful. The salary is high and the job is pretty easy, so I immediately rushed over."

"You're a graduate? I actually just enrolled a month ago."

"You're a new student?!"

The rest who were busy working raised their heads up; another Caucasian woman said in surprise, "When I heard that the last member of our team would be a new student, I didn't really believe it... I can't believe that a new student would actually have the time to learn this language. Does Dawn Academy teach Ancient Normese in the first year?"

“No, I learned it by myself.”

“My God! You actually bothered to learn such a weird language by yourself! How easy do the new students at Dawn Academy have it?” Even more people joined the conversation.

“Ah, I’m probably a special case.” Xiao Lin corrected them, not wanting to drag the others from Dawn Academy into it.

“That’s true, the colonized territories of Dawn Academy don’t really intersect with the Thunder Kingdom.”

“I heard that your Ancient Normese is only LV1, but that’s not bad still! To be frank, the only reason I stubbornly learnt this language was only because our academy gave extra credits for different languages, and I needed just a bit more to graduate. I really did not imagine I would actually use it!”

Everyone there was probably chatting out of boredom. When Xiao Lin arrived, his status as a new student piqued everyone’s interest. The good thing was it allowed Xiao Lin to gain a lot of insight into the team .

Including himself, there were only nine people there. The number of people caught him by surprise, since Hank told him the Judge Academy invited people from all the academies. However, to end up with only nine people, it was no wonder they were even willing to pay for a LV1 like Xiao Lin.

The level of Ancient Normese among the people there was not too high either. The highest was the Caucasian woman at LV6, whereas the rest of them were around LV3 to LV4. Xiao Lin was the only one at LV1.

However, Lolander said that, out of everyone in the world who knew the language, they were actually not even among the more fluent ones. For instance, Professor Brown’s rank for Ancient Normese was MAX.

If not for the fact it was all a massive undertaking, and Professor Brown entering the academy late in his life and missing out on the best time to consume lifewater, which meant his body was not in the best condition, Judge Academy would not have needed to invite people from the other academies.

Another man explained that the true experts of the language were not there. Those people had high ranks in Ancient Normese, but Judge Academy did not have a way to invite them. Rather, they could not offer enough incentive to actually interest those people.

“The only reason they invited us is because we’re the cheapest!” The man seemed unhappy with his wages, and was venting.

As for how much everyone was actually getting paid, everyone smartly avoided discussing that in front of unfamiliar faces.

The conversation got louder and louder, causing Professor Brown to rush downstairs once again. The old man gave everyone a proper scolding, and warned everyone that if they kept at it, they would have their salaries deducted just like Lolander.

No one was from the same academy, and Professor Brown's standing at Judge Academy did not affect them too much, but they could not help but lower their heads to him, especially since their salaries were in his hands. After the scolding, everyone obediently shut their mouths and continued working.

"Your salary was deducted? Xiao Lin asked softly.

"I was half an hour late this morning, so I was fined a day's wages! That harsh old man!" Lolander complained.

Chapter 110 - Copying

Chapter 110: Copying

Translator: EndlessFantasy Translation **Editor:** EndlessFantasy Translation

Xiao Lin clicked his tongue when he heard that. No wonder the old man was so quick to agree on paying him daily; if just being late would deduct a whole day's wages, then he might not even have any money at the end of the day.

Xiao Lin sat on his desk in the corner, and in front of him was a thick stack of white paper. A few pages were already full of Ancient Normese. Lolander walked over and said softly, "This was originally my job, but I can finally hand it over to you! According to the rules Professor Brown set, the person with the lowest level in Ancient Normese would be in charge of recording, and now that's you."

The team's task was actually very simple, as Xiao Lin found out during the conversations earlier. All those stone plates on the floor were in pieces and the words on them were already fading—some of them had even completely disappeared. Their job was to restore the stone plates as much as possible, then record the contents on them before handing it to Professor Brown.

"It seems like my job is the easiest." Xiao Lin smiled and said. His task was only to copy down all the stone plates that were already assembled.

When he said that, the rest of them quickly looked at him with a strange expression. Lolander could not help but smile as he said, "If that's the case, why would he need to spend money on inviting someone who knows Ancient Normese to do the recording. You'll understand very quickly!"

Lolander's sly smile made Xiao Lin feel that he might have had the wrong impression. He realized his blunder in just half an hour. Even though he did not know how troublesome everyone else's work was, copying was definitely not as easy as he thought. It was much more complicated and tiring.

Ancient Normese was a very difficult language. The difficulty did not rest solely on the complexity of pronouncing the words, it also lied in the writing. Everything was weirdly shaped. It was neither hieroglyphics nor was it alphabets. The writings of Ancient Normese were very detail-oriented, even to a perverse degree.

For instance, one of the letters needed a 45 degree angle for the last stroke to be correct. If you angled it at even 30 degrees or more than 100 degrees, then the word would suddenly have a completely different meaning.

It was somewhat similar to how Mandarin would have some words that had multiple pronunciations and different meanings. In Ancient Normese, every word had multiple pronunciations, so even the difference in pronunciations were reflected in the writing.

Xiao Lin spat in his mind. No wonder Ancient Normese was the original language in that world, but was quickly lost to history. It was replaced by the much simpler Standard Normese. Normal people would not be able to take such a painful way of writing.

A normal person would definitely not have been able to complete this work. If one did not understand the language, then the person would definitely not understand the correct way to write the words.

Even though Xiao Lin's LV1 was more than enough for the task, he did not dare to be careless at all. The finished copies would be handed to Professor Brown for inspection, and if he noticed any mistakes, Xiao Lin might just be fined. On top of that, Ancient Normese words had a lot of strokes, so the copying work progressed slowly, expending both time and energy.

Xiao Lin arrived a few days later than everyone else, so there were already a few stone plates that had already been assembled. Thanks to the parts that Lolander had already recorded, he temporarily did not have much on his plate, so Xiao Lin could do it much more carefully. Even though the stone plates next to him could be considered assembled, it was realistically only at 60 or 70 percent-some of them went even lower. It could not be helped, since a lot of it was already lost.

The rest of them did work that was quite similar to the evaluation Hank gave Xiao Lin, trying to match words where they should be, but on a larger scale, and with much harder writings. They needed to find the appropriate words and pieces from countless stone fragments to continue from earlier parts.

Judging from the marks around the stone plates, they probably had a very, very long history. Xiao Lin could not make out the origins of those stone plates since he just arrived. He did not ask anyone else either.

Professor Brown really was a strict person. Their lunch was sent in by someone, and none of them were allowed to leave the courtyard. The main hall of the palace had a lot of stone plates stacked around, and Xiao Lin and the others chose to eat their lunch there. All of the furniture in the area had already been moved away, leaving only the grey walls that had traces of decay on them. The hall did not have sunlight coming in, so the entire room was dark. The weather in New Washington was not great that day either. The whole sky was covered in clouds and a cold wind was blowing in from the broken windows.

Eating in a dark environment made Xiao Lin feel like he was going to be depressed. He suggested eating in another room. The palace might not have been big, but there were still a few other rooms. Lolander rejected him. Xiao Lin grabbed his food and searched for other rooms, but scurried back very quickly, glaring at Lolander who was laughing happily.

“You knew all along that we’re not allowed in the other rooms! Why are there even guards in those rooms!” Xiao Lin said angrily.

The palace really did have people stationed even inside of it, not just outside the courtyard. Other than the main hall and the side hall where they were in, every other room had someone stationed in front. Those people did not stand in front of the rooms either; they chose to hide in dark corners. When Xiao Lin wanted to enter, they jumped out from somewhere and a very complicated process of verifying his identity ensued. They even called over Professor Brown to ensure that Xiao Lin was a student invited over from Dawn Academy before letting him off.

Professor Brown warned him not to simply run off for no reason. Without his permission, no one was allowed to enter those rooms, but he did not provide any further explanation.

That only caused Xiao Lin to be even more curious. He was already lacking goodwill toward Judge Academy, so he naturally had this thought in his heart: ‘The more you don’t want me to know, the deeper I’m going to investigate.’

Xiao Lin half-jokingly asked everyone what exactly was in the room, and even asked if any of them had tried sneaking in. He could feel that they were some pretty strong people on the team.

They had been bonded together by the spirit chains; other than understanding each other’s languages, Xiao Lin could actually feel that there was an indescribable power within some of them. It could be mental strength or just energy, but under the chains, they could feel the power within each other.

Chapter 111 - Stone Plates

Chapter 111: Stone Plates

Every academy had different requirements for their classes, but of the people in the hall right now, there were only three students, including Xiao Lin. The other two were seniors, and everyone else was either a graduate or a researcher.

Xiao Lin was the weakest one there, so he was very curious if the rest of them had ever looked inside the rooms. However, the moment he asked the question, everyone immediately went quiet.

Lolander said, “Don’t you know those guards are all Gold-ranked? From their gear, they should all belong to the elite dragon-eagle knight regiment. I definitely don’t want to get into any trouble with them.”

The Caucasian woman put down her fork and knife and elegantly wiped her mouth. Xiao Lin remembered she was called Chloe from the Royal British Academy. She was a researcher. Chloe lowered her voice and said, “My tutor once told me that the stone plates were all dug up from the

ground. The castle district of New Washington had always been set aside for development, and someone probably suggested developing on these empty grounds. They hired a few Normans to clean up the place, and one of them accidentally fell through the floorboard when he was cleaning a bedroom, which was how they realized there were secret passages underneath.”

As if trying to stir their appetites, Chloe took a small sip of her coffee before slowly continuing, “The Judge Academy then came in to investigate. The floorboards there have gone through many years of wear and tear, so were considerably weak. The results of the investigation were very shocking, because they discovered that there were secret passageways under practically every room. Judge Academy blew apart a secret door by force, which was how they discovered the stone plates.

Xiao Lin waited, but realized there was no continuation to that story. He could not help but ask, “Is that it? Are you done?”

“What more do you need to know?”

Lolander could not understand. “It’s just a few stone plates, why is Judge Academy taking it so seriously?”

“You definitely scored very low in your history classes!” Chloe glared at him before adding, “This palace was the bedroom of the last queen of the Thunder Kingdom.”

“So what?” Lolander still did not understand.

Chloe rolled her eyes, not even bothering to glare at him, “The Thunder Kingdom’s last queen was the sister of the high priest.”

“Asabanor!” Xiao Lin exclaimed in surprise. The inn he was staying in had a half-statue of Asabanor, and Hank once told him and Song Junlang about the last high priest of the Thunder Kingdom.

“Correct, it’s Asabanor.” Chloe’s blue eyes looked at Xiao Lin in mild surprise. It was not easy for a new student to know that name.

Xiao Ling recalled what Hank told him, saying, “Back then, when Judge Academy destroyed the Thunder Kingdom, everyone in the castle was captured, except for Asabanor. Putting aside the question of how Judge Academy missed the secret pathways under the palace, are they worried right now? Right, what was the average life expectancy of ancient Norman humans?”

Chloe shook her head, “It’s impossible, when Judge Academy was at war with the Thunder Kingdom, the high priest was already almost a hundred years old. Over a hundred years have passed since then, and even modern spells or medicine can’t possibly extend his life by that long.”

At that point, everyone was deep in thought, wondering what secrets were kept in the stones.

Lolander said in disinterest, “Guys, why are you all adding to your own troubles! No matter what the stone plates are hiding, it concerns Judge Academy. We’re just here to work, once we get our pay, everything here has nothing to do with us!”

Chloe pursed her lips and smiled. “You’re right, nothing in the stones has anything to do with us. Let’s just get our work done properly. I really need to head back and get my own research done.”

After a simple lunch, the work for the afternoon was the same as earlier. As Xiao Lin was copying, he tried to piece together any information he could glean, but his grasp of Ancient Normese was way too weak. The only thing it was good for was ensuring his writings were accurate, and that he could understand a few random phrases here and there. However, when linked up together, he had no idea what the texts meant.

When he got back to the inn at night, Song Junlang forcefully pulled him into his room. He showed an immense curiosity as he asked about Xiao Lin’s work today.

Xiao Lin told him everything, and Department Head Song went deep in thought before exclaiming, “I really did not expect that this would have something to do with the high priest.”

“I don’t really understand it. That Abasanor guy has definitely been dead for a long time. Are they scared he’ll climb out of hell and lead the citizens to revolt?”

Song Junlang half-jokingly said, “Logically, it’s actually not that impossible! Don’t forget we’re currently on Planet Norma. Black magic exists in the world’s magic system. Of course, it’s impossible to actually resurrect someone from the dead, even our own Law of Immortality only gives us a very restricted version of resurrection. However, black magic can still revive the souls of the deceased... That’s not a big threat though; it’s probably even more insignificant to the academy.”

Department Head Song started to look confused. Xiao Lin could only say, “All I can do is to try as hard as I can to remember the contents of the stones. Maybe I can find some clues from that.”

Song Junlang smiled, “Are you saying you want to be a spy? Did the student union president say anything to you before leaving?”

Xiao Lin did not hide it. “He did, but I’m just in a bad mood myself.”

“The Americans are indeed quite prideful, which has to do with their history. The colonists only came to be about four hundred years ago on Earth. America did not exist at that time. The Americans established Judge Academy in the very infancy of their country, but their power was far behind the few original colonist academies. After all, they were late by more than a hundred years, but their birthplace is way too perfect.”

“Birthplace?”

“Yes, I mean the wormhole that is in America. Honestly, those wormholes originally belonged to the Royal British Academy. As I’ve said before, the wormholes are all locked, and both the origin and destination can’t be changed. The wormholes in America were way too perfect, and they were quite ambitious at the time as well. They were not willing to just hand it over to the English. In the end it caused some sort of war.”

Song Junlang thought for a while and continued, “Back then, the Thunder Kingdom was in decline, and their power was among the weakest on Planet Norma. After conquering Thunder Kingdom, the American colonists practically did not have any strong enemies around them. The only ones were

the neighbouring elves, who are a peace loving race, or should I say a very lazy race. They very rarely ventured out of their own territory, and had no interest in expanding. In the end, America signed a hundred year non-aggression pact with them, and focused all their resources and energy into building up the country.”

Chapter 112 - Lilith

Chapter 112: Lilith

Translator: EndlessFantasy Translation **Editor:** EndlessFantasy Translation

Xiao Lin could not help but ask, “Then what about Dawn Academy? Were we busy fighting beastkin?”

Song Junlang sighed. “Yeah, the beastkin are a crazy race, but they are still very strong. Even though we won back then, it was at a great cost. Those wars pretty much completely set back all the progress the Dawn Academy had made in the past two hundred years. The Americans then had absolutely no large-scale conflicts for more than a hundred years after they were established. Furthermore, they entered the New World after the initial stages when everyone was figuring things out. The rest of the academies had already set many examples for them to follow. They were spared a lot of trouble, and are now among the highest in terms of overall strength.”

The secret of the stone plates were a puzzle to the public. When he thought about how Judge Academy had the confidence to invite the other academies, they probably felt that, even if they saw the stone plates, they would still not be able to decipher it. Ancient Normese was a very difficult lost language, and Xiao Lin felt it hard to believe that Professor Brown was actually at MAX-rank.

Song Junlang did not know much about Professor Brown. All he knew was that the man seemed to be a historian before he entered the academy, and had practically no interest in colonists when he entered the academy. Instead, he was extremely interested in the ancient history of Planet Norma. His own skill was not too high, and only at Silver-rank. However, when it came to history—especially the history of the Thunder Kingdom—he had quite a bit of influence.

Work for the next few days was more of the same; Xiao Lin was in charge of recording the contents of the stone plates, and the rest of them restored the stone plates. Work itself was actually not too dull, Xiao Lin got to interact with the others as he recorded, and got to ask things such as what the meaning of certain phrases was. When they met some harder questions, everyone would discuss it together.

At those times, Xiao Lin could only spectate and listen in silently. He worked hard to remember the phrases and sentences they mentioned, and slowly digested it during the night. His Ancient Normese was the lowest level there, so no one found it strange. Just the fact that a new student had any grasp of the language was enough to surprise anyone.

What made Xiao Lin happy was that the professor seemed to keep his promises. After he agreed to pay him daily, Hank handed him 400 New Dollars.

New Dollars were the same as currencies on Earth—in the form of paper notes. However, it looked a lot prettier. On the notes was a picture of planet Earth, and the two sides of the planet were reflected on the note. This was something all the academies took a long time discussing before coming to an agreement on. Anyone above Silver-rank would never be able to return to Earth, so this was like a tribute to their old world.

When he saw that it was the first time Xiao Lin touched a New Dollar, Hank explained the defensive mechanisms of the notes to him. In a magically-advanced world like that one, it was not hard to create complete imitations. In order to prevent that, the colonists utilized a lot of methods to ensure the authenticity of the notes. The materials used were very meticulous, and the finishing touch was a type of ink printed into the paper that was impossible to be replicated by magic.

Hank passed 400 dollar notes to Xiao Lin, and told Xiao Lin that, if it was inconvenient to carry it around, he could always deposit it into the New Washington bank. Xiao Lin rejected the offer politely because Song Junlang had told him even though some academies had established banks in the New World, money was still not transferable between banks.

Song Junlang did not stay idle in the inn during the day; he said he visited some old friends, but did not reveal more than that.

The first few days in New Washington went by smoothly, though Xiao Lin was still unable to make heads or tails of the contents of the stone plates. Professor Brown usually kept to himself inside the palace, and only appeared occasionally to issue orders, such as which stone plates to prioritize.

Xiao Lin had been lectured a few times for not performing up the standards, but it was not too strict and he never had his salary deducted. The professor probably knew he was a new student and did not have a high level in Ancient Normese.

Xiao Lin had his own thoughts as well. He had already been in New Washington for four days. On top of the time he stopped at Earth, which equaled one day on Norma, five days had passed. That meant he was two days away from being able to use his replication skill. He had already decided on using the skill on Professor Brown's Ancient Normese in order to properly discern what was written on the stone plates.

However, on the sixth day something happened that disrupted Xiao Lin's plans.

He was copying the stones as usual that day when the doors of the hall were pushed open. The sharp grinding of stone disturbed everyone's concentration as all of them furrowed their eyebrows and raised their heads.

In front of the door was a tall woman with brown, curly hair. Her blue eyes surveyed the hall, as if looking for something.

"I didn't hear anything about a newcomer." Lolander mumbled to himself.

"Maybe it's someone that Judge Academy invited. Our progress isn't too fast right now," Chloe said earnestly.

After looking around, she did not seem to find who she was looking for, so she opened her mouth to ask. Her voice was clear and loud, as she surprisingly said in Mandarin, “Where’s Xiao Lin? Which one of you is Xiao Lin from the Dawn Academy?”

The rest of them might not understand Mandarin, but they still heard the words Xiao Lin and Dawn Academy. Their bewildered gazes fell on to Xiao Lin.

The woman walked straight toward the corner with elegant footsteps, eyeing Xiao Lin with a very interested expression.

Lolander whistled as he had a teasing look on his face. He flashed his thumb to Xiao Lin as he said, “Xiao! You actually managed to land yourself such a hot babe in just a few days within New Washington. I thought they said the Chinese were more reserved, but you definitely aren’t!”

“I don’t even know who she is!” Xiao Lin quickly dispelled any misconceptions of their relationship. He had been spending every day in either the palace or the inn since he came to New Washington; he had not even managed to find any free time to go sightseeing in the city, so how could he be hitting on women. Plus, this woman was looking at him with an expression that was making him uncomfortable.

Yes, Xiao Lin had encountered this gaze before. It was the same gaze Song Junlang had on his face when he tricked Xiao Lin into eating the iron comb chicken. It was like a hunter that had found its prey!

Finally finding her target, the woman let out a beautiful and vibrant smile. “So, you’re Xiao Lin. My name is Lilith.”

Her Mandarin was very fluent, but no matter how hard Xiao Lin dug into his memories, he could not recall even meeting an American woman named Lilith.

However, when Lolander, who was all smiles earlier, heard the name Lilith, his expression changed drastically as he almost lost his voice in shock. “Lilith? My God, you...you can’t be that Lilith!”

Chapter 113 - Wanna Duel?

Chapter 113: Wanna Duel?

The rest of them had basically the same flabbergasted reaction as Lolander, accompanied with a hint of fear. Yes, fear. With the spirit chains, they could very easily recognize each other’s mental states. The fear was especially present in Chloe and Lolander.

Xiao Lin was very curious. He did not understand why that name caused such a big reaction in them. He very quickly heard Lolander attempting to flatter the woman by saying, “I want to apologize for my joke earlier. Please rest assured, Xiao Lin might be our temporary colleague, but if he had done anything to offend you, I wouldn’t let him off easily.”

Lilith narrowed her eyes at him. “You’re from the Sainte Académie?”

Lolander hurriedly nodded, adding, “That’s right. I was fortunate enough to be able to witness that simulated battle at the start of the year. You savagely beat up all the participants from our academy. Ah no, I should say you beat all your opponents in the tournament.

Xiao Lin raised his eyebrows. He did not know Lilith, but he had some impression of the Demon Queen moniker. Before he left, the student union president did mention that a student managed to achieve an S-rank evaluation in the Sunset Canyon exam before, and that person was from Judge Academy and known to outsiders as the Demon Queen.

He was planning on looking for the Demon Queen to find out how she managed to get an S-ranked evaluation in the exams, but both the Bella incident and the stone plates had left Xiao Lin without much time to himself in New Washington, so he forgot about it. Never would he have expected the other party to look for him herself.

Xiao Lin rubbed his temples, not believing his eyes. In his mind, the Demon Queen was an immensely powerful, vicious and savage person, massive and muscular. It was hard to consolidate that image with the beautiful woman in front of him. He smiled bitterly as he shook his head, thinking to himself that he should be strengthening his mental fortitude.

Even though he was still confused, Xiao Lin stood up and offered his hand to the other party, saying, “That’s right, I’m Xiao Lin from the Dawn Academy. I’ve long heard of the Demon Queen, so I’m very happy to meet you.”

Lilith gave him a very warm and tender smile, but her next words shocked everyone present. She did not shake Xiao Lin’s hand, but instead pointed at him with her finger as she spiritedly declared, “I heard you’re very strong! Wanna duel?!”

Xiao Lin’s hand hung in the air. His face wore a strange expression as he began to suspect he was hard of hearing, or maybe that the woman was not that proficient in Mandarin, and so misspoke.

However, Lilith’s next words shattered his hopes; the woman’s gaze was intense as she said, “I heard you were a summoner capable of summoning a giant golden dragon. I’ve never fought with a summoner of your caliber before. I think it would be very interesting!”

“Hold on! Hold on for just a minute!” He saw that Lilith somehow already unsheathed two daggers, and Xiao Lin frantically waved his hands, “There’s a misunderstanding here! Summoner? Please, I don’t even know any summoning spells. How could I be a summoner!”

Lilith tilted her head with a confused expression, “Are you telling me that the giant golden dragon that appeared above New Washington a few days ago wasn’t summoned by you?”

“Well, I guess it was...” Xiao Lin thought for a moment, and even though it was not by his own volition, the dragon really was summoned from the Lightstream Jade that he had with him.

After saying that, Lolander and the others looked at him differently. Everyone at least knew a little about the chaos that happened in New Washington that day, but none of them could possibly have linked the dragon with a new student who had just enrolled.

Lilith impatiently said, “Then that’s that, quit dilly dallying. You must be very strong if you could defeat the commander of the dragon-eagle knights. Don’t worry, I won’t go easy on you!”

The woman's bloodthirst made Xiao Lin break out in cold sweat. He immediately retreated a few steps, distancing himself from the woman. "Let me finish! I used some other method to summon the dragon, but what do you mean defeat Commander Harry? That's just a false rumor!"

Lilith tilted her head again. "But everyone says so."

Even Xiao Lin himself did not know of the rumors that had been spreading within the city the past few days. The initial version was that a young man from the Dawn Academy had summoned a giant golden dragon, then after two days, he turned into an immensely powerful summoner from the Dawn Academy, and then it morphed into that summoner from Dawn Academy had summoned the dragon to fight the dragon-eagle knight regiment, defeating Commander Harry."

Xiao Lin was not familiar with Lilith, but Lolander's expressions and the words from the student union president assured him that the woman who was called the Demon Queen was definitely not someone he could match at his current level.

After that, Xiao Lin spent all his energy and spit in explaining the situation. With that, on top of Chloe and the others vouching for his status as a new student, they finally managed to persuade Lilith. However, the woman did not give up, pointing her dagger at Xiao Lin, "However, it's true that you can summon a giant golden dragon. I've always wanted the chance to fight with an actual dragon. Summon it! I won't fight you, but surely I can fight your illusory dragon!"

Xiao Lin felt that he had wasted all his time explaining. He did not know if Lilith was clueless or fearless for daring to fight a giant golden dragon alone.

The Lightstream Jade had limited uses, and he did not know how much draconic power was left inside. Every time he used it would mean one less use out, so he did not dare waste it. Furthermore, if he really did summon it again in New Washington, who knew what sort of reaction would come from the Americans. Moreover, if he really let Lilith duel the dragon, his head would be on the chopping block if anything were to happen to her.

No matter how he thought about it, Xiao Lin could only stubbornly refuse the suggestion.

Lilith's white face was full of rage, but Xiao Lin was relieved that the woman did not seem to know of the Lightstream Jade's defense mechanism.

The incident quickly attracted Professor Brown to run over, but Xiao Lin strangely noted that Professor Brown did not seem to have much influence over Lilith. It was only until the girl who used the spirit chains got there when Lilith finally agreed to let it drop.

However, before she left, Lilith calmly told Xiao Lin she would not give up.

The incident was finally over, and Xiao Lin did not pay it much mind until he noticed Lolander looking at him with a pitiful expression. When he asked, Lolander shook his head and sighed. "Didn't you hear her say she wouldn't give up? It's all over for you..."

Chapter 114 - Rumors

Chapter 114: Rumors

“Xiao! Do you really understand Lilith?” Lolander said with a look of pity, “Trust me, she’s definitely not someone who you can reason with normally. Don’t be tricked by her beauty; no matter how crazy it is, she’s always been able to do what she said she would.”

Chloe also looked at him with sympathy, “I heard of the simulated battle at the start of the year as well. You poor child. I think you’d better give Professor Brown a proper explanation, then hurry back to Dawn Academy.”

The rest of them nodded as well. Xiao Lin had thought Lilith’s last words were a joke, but everyone acting like this caused him to reassess that. He suddenly felt a sense of foreboding as he softly asked, “What was the simulated battle at the start of the year? I didn’t really understand what Lolander said earlier. Could someone explain it to me?”

“I’ll do it! I’m from the Sainte Académie, so I personally witnessed that bloodbath!” Lolander had a sick look on his face. “All the academies occasionally hold mock battles. Both parties would pick out a certain number of students, and have a competition on a special map. The rankings of the academies are usually determined like that. At the start of the year, the American academy had a mock battle against an alliance of European academies, minus England...”

“Why is it an allied European team? And why exclude England?” Xiao Lin was confused.

Chloe, who was from the Royal British Academy, explained, “The European colonized territories are all relatively close together, but the Royal Academy is located further away. Not to mention we are much stronger than them, so there is no need for us to enter their alliance.”

Even though Lolander shot her a glare when she mentioned strength, it was not the topic of conversation, so he collected himself and continued.

“So this simulated battle is a 10-versus-10 tournament. Of the 20 participants, 19 of them were Silver-ranked, the only Bronze-rank was Lilith. Lilith was also the only sophomore student among everyone there; the rest of them were in their third and fourth years. At the time, our academy was even discussing on the forums if we should give her some boost, especially with her being a girl...” Lolander had a painful look on his face as he rubbed his forehead, looking like he was regretting his naivete.

“The time limit for the battle was set at three hours, but in actual fact, the tournament lost all meaning forty minutes in. Everyone could immediately tell that Lilith’s strength alone was enough to defeat all ten of the representatives from our academy without breaking a sweat. However, she refused to directly beat all her opponents and end the tournament. All the spectators including myself thought she was showing us some face, but we realized that was only the beginning of a nightmare.”

Xiao Lin asked, “What did she do?”

Lolander said bitterly, “She said the tournament was too boring, and way too easy. She wanted to change the rules... She then proceeded to toss aside the sickle which she was most proficient at, saying she wanted to duel each of them individually. She would only use the same weapons and skills as her opponents, and she would forfeit the moment she used something different... At the

time, we thought it was the perfect time to mount a comeback, so we immediately agreed. The Demon Queen then proceeded to stomp the reputation of the whole of Europe into the ground!"

"What kind of joke is this?" Someone could not help but exclaim. "Does she think she's God? Using the same weapons and skills? What right does she have to say something so audacious?!"

Lolander let out a long sigh. "Which is why I said that was the beginning of the nightmare... Those students representing our academies were all among the elites of their year! However, they were all easily defeated by a sophomore girl, not even having any chance at victory. These battles between academies happen almost every year, so obviously everyone had been prepared for the possibility of losing. However, to lose to a novice in their own field, with the skills they were the best at... Everyone of them had their confidence shattered by Lilith. Some of them even gave up on their specialities when they got back, changing right into different courses..."

Chloe knew quite a bit about the tournament as well. She added, "Europe had about five or six different weapons on their side, and all the skills they used were of extreme difficulty. Anyone who looked at the tournament could confirm that Lilith had definitely never mastered those skills before she made that insane bet. Do you all realize what that meant?"

Xiao Lin was stupefied. "What you're saying is she completely mastered those skills in the middle of the tournament? How could that be possible!"

Chloe smiled bitterly. "I can't understand it either, but that is the truth. Losing in your best field to a complete novice... No one would be able to accept something like that. The participants all started calling her the Demon Queen, and after a while, that moniker began to spread."

After saying that, Lolander patted Xiao Lin's shoulder. "Mate! I'm honestly advising you to quickly head back to the Dawn Academy. She is definitely not someone you want to get involved with! Frankly, even though I don't know how you came to possess a giant golden dragon, but if she has you in her sights, I feel like even a dragon would not be able to save you!"

"Hey! Xiao! What's wrong with you. You actually don't have to worry that much, since she gave up dueling with you personally. At least you can be assured that you yourself will be fine."

"Actually, what's the deal with you and the dragon? That's not something a new student can have!"

"I'm even more curious as to how he brought it into New Washington!"

The pressure brought by the Demon Queen slowly dissipated, and other than Xiao Lin, everyone else felt that, no matter how horrifying Lilith's powers were, it had nothing to do with them. However, since they had been together for about a week, they still tried to help Xiao Lin figure a way out of things.

Xiao Lin's feelings were very complicated at the moment, and his face was even frozen in place for quite a while, but not because he was afraid of Lilith; it was purely due to shock and confusion.

Lilith, that Demon Queen was also multi-classed! However, not in training in magic and martial skills like Xiao Lin. Rather, she was proficient in all sorts of weapons.

Correct, it was proficiency, not just shallow understanding. He knew that because most high-level skills needed a lot of experience as a foundation; that was a condition that could not be escaped.

Chapter 115 - Gravity Training

Chapter 115: Gravity Training

The fact that Lilith could learn the skills of others in the middle of the tournament meant that she had quite possibly mastered a great number of weapons. That type of learning ability was monstrous.

As someone who was cultivating both magic and physical abilities, Xiao Lin had a lot he could not figure out. His efficiency in copying even started to suffer from it. He was even unmoved when he heard Professor Brown say the next day would be a rest day before they left for the evening.

It was only until Xiao Lin reached the inn when he realized that he actually did not need to go to work the next day. Other than remarking about how strongly Americans valued their holidays, he also realized that his replication skill would be off cooldown tomorrow. He was prepared to use it on Professor Brown's Ancient Normese, but since it was a break, who knew if he could actually find the man.

Song Junlang got home much later than usual that night, and the heavy scent of alcohol could be smelled off him. However, the moment Xiao Lin finished recalling the day's events, Department Head Song immediately sobered up.

"Lilith? Demon Queen? Do not provoke her! You absolutely must not offend her!" Song Junlang used his sternest tone to warn Xiao Lin.

Xiao Lin furrowed his eyebrows. "I've heard of Lilith's famous battle, but I really can't put her face to the Demon Queen moniker..."

"I've never met Lilith, nor do I know how she earned that name, but do you know of the other rumor surrounding Lilith?"

"What rumor?"

Song Junlang looked around, making sure the windows and doors were all shut before saying in a low voice, "In truth, there was a rumor about Lilith, even when she just entered the academy. It's just that a lot of people do not know she is the one the rumors are talking about. When she entered the academy last year, there was a rumor that Judge Academy discovered an SS-talented student."

"SS-rank! Lilith?"

"Correct, the news shocked everyone at the time." Song Junlang did not realize Xiao Lin's shocked expression also contained a hint of curiosity. He continued saying, "This is the first bit of news about an SS-rank talent since the predecessor who enacted the Law of Immortality. It was denied very quickly by the dean of the Judge Academy, and never talked about since."

Xiao Lin raised his eyebrow. “So, is that rumor true or not?”

Song Junlang shook his head. “That, I have no clue. However, a lot more people were more willing to believe the rumor ever since the battle at the start of the year. That woman is rumored to be extremely strong!”

Seeing Xiao Lin’s unsettled expression, Song Junlang consoled him and added, “Don’t you worry about it. If Lilith really does have a SS-rank talent, then there’s no shame in the difference of your abilities. Furthermore, I got an interesting piece of news when I visited some old friends a few days ago. Do you know how Lilith trained during her first year?”

Xiao Lin really did have quite complicated feelings, because he also had an SS-rank talent. According to Department Head Song, there had only been one confirmed SS-ranked person in the history of the colonists. The rarity of such a talent was obvious, but his skill was not even close to Liliths, which made him feel quite vexed. He asked, “First year?? Shouldn’t she have been attending classes and participating in monthly tests?”

“No. From what I heard, Lilith entered the New World one month after she enrolled, beginning to train here. Do you understand what that means?”

Xiao Lin was flabbergasted. “One month after enrolling? She couldn’t possibly have been Black-Iron ranked then. However, it’s probably not a problem with the Royal British Academy’s super-potion, and the gravity issue can be mitigated by special accessories. However, what use would it be? Would training in the New World yield better results?”

Song Junlang also had a complicated look on his face. “No, the first time Lilith trained in the New World. She only consumed the medicine. She did not use any anti-gravity accessories.”

“No accessories? Oh, Bella probably cast the anti-gravity spell on her then.”

“No! What I meant was, she used absolutely no means to reduce the gravity, but exposed herself to an environment with double the gravity to train in.”

Xiao Lin was dumbfounded. He had felt the impact of double gravity before, and it was definitely pure torture. He could not help but ask, “Would there really be no problems with that?”

“There are very big problems!” Song Junlang shook his head and said, “Doing that is absolutely challenging your body to the very limit. Anyone else trying to do intense training in such an environment would quickly see their body destroyed, and even after that, the injuries would be extremely difficult to cure. It’s not like no one had ever thought about doing so before Lilith, but it did not end well for any of them.”

“So Lilith managed to exceed her limit?”

“That I’m not too sure about. According to my friend, Lilith only managed to enter the Black-Iron rank four months after she entered the academy. If the rumors are true, then her speed of progress is among the top three people in the history of the colonists. Do you get it now? Lilith is absolutely not someone you can currently mess with. No matter what happens, you should run very far away from her.”

Xiao Lin was deep in thought, and suddenly raised his head after a long time with a fire in his gaze, “Department Head Song, I wish to continue my training here. I’ll be in New Washington for a month. Even though I’ll be getting quite a lot of money, if I let myself waste away for a whole month, I might not even be able to hold onto my class monitor position when I get back. I’ve been thinking about it for the past few days.”

“Training? That’s not an issue. New Washington has its own training grounds, but don’t tell me you want to take off your anti-gravity pin?”

Not waiting for an answer, Song Junlang said sternly, “No way! Absolutely no way! Not everyone can be like Lilith. You’ve felt for yourself what the gravity is like; that’s courting death! Since I agreed to accompany you, then I’m basically your guardian. I’m responsible for your safety!”

Xiao Lin smiled. “How could I? I don’t plan on experiencing that sort of pressure again. I just want to find a place to train when I’m free tomorrow to not waste my time.”

Song Junlang was suspicious. “Is that true?”

Xiao Lin blinked. “Look at my eyes! It’s definitely true! Relax! How could I toy with my own life!”

Song Junlang still could not eliminate all his suspicion, but he relaxed a bit before saying, “Just don’t do anything stupid. Training in a high-gravity environment is very dangerous. Lilith only managed to survive thanks to her extreme learning ability, which allowed her physique to level up when it reached its limits. Anyone else would definitely die.”

Chapter 116 - Virtual Battle System

Chapter 116: Virtual Battle System

Xiao Lin continuously swore and guaranteed he would take his life seriously and finally managed to subdue Song Junlang’s suspicions. Song Junlang finally agreed to look for a place to train with him in the city the next day.

As the central city of the American colonists, there were an immense amount of graduates there. Even after leaving the academy, people there would still take the time to train and improve their abilities, which led to the establishment of training halls in the city.

The next morning, Song Junlang woke Xiao Lin up very early. He told him if he really wanted to train then, he needed to be early; There might not be any spots later. He then told him about the training halls.

“New Washington has a lot of training halls of various levels. The low-leveled ones are similar to the ones in school. The mid-level ones have a lot of weapon facilities, as well as specialized instructors who are usually part of the military. Their skills may not be ranked high, but they have plenty of combat experience. They also provide specialized sparring, but don’t even think about it. The sparring partners here are all at least Black-Iron rank; against you, it wouldn’t even be called training. It’d be a beating.”

Xiao Lin did not listen to Song Junlang's further explanations; he just asked, "Then what about the high-level ones?"

"That's very expensive!"

"How expensive?"

"I remember the price used to be around three or four hundred New Dollars, but I'm not sure if the price has gone up."

"Three to four hundred dollars for a day is pretty okay."

Song Junlang corrected him. "It's not a day, it's for an hour."

Xiao Lin was shocked. His wages in New Washington were 400 New Dollars a day. He has already earned 2800 New Dollars after a week of working with Professor Brown. He was not sure how much buying power that had, but Song Junlang did tell him the income was quite good. However, just an hour of training in the high-level training halls would set him back by a day's worth of wages. That fee was really quite exorbitant.

Song Junlang saw the look on Xiao Lin's face and shook his head. "I told you it was expensive. You don't even need to think about it."

Xiao Lin thought about it and did not immediately reject it. "What do the high-level training halls provide?"

"Ah, the high-level training halls have the newest virtual battle systems. It can automatically generate opponents that you need to face. It's pretty advanced stuff—only invented about five to six years ago. It can be considered the pinnacle of fusions between science and alchemy."

With a sigh, Song Junlang looked at Xiao Lin's puzzled expression, and continued to explain, "Have you played online games before? This virtual battle system would give you a 0 level 0 attribute and 0 skill character for you to freely customize by yourself. After that, the character would virtually fight you, and because it's a virtual fight, there's no risk of injury."

Xiao Lin finally understood, and was quite intrigued. This battle system sounded really impressive, so he asked, "Why don't we have this system at the academy?"

Song Junlang laughed. "This system was originally researched to be built in the academies, but they realized later that the cost of building it was way too high. A lot of the materials needed were quite rare, and the manufacturing costs were expensive as well. None of the academies had the ability to install it, so it ended up in the hands of private investors. That led to the opening of training halls in the colonial territories, and the income was quite good, so it was a profitable venture. There are only two high-level training halls in the whole of New Washington."

"Let's go take a look."

"No problem. It's your own money after all!"

The training hall was situated in the army district, which was in the south-eastern corner of the city. The army district was actually not where the troops were garrisoned. In truth, the soldiers of New Washington, which were the dragon-eagle knights, were stationed outside the city. The army district was where all the facilities which had to do with training, and was where weapons and gear were situated.

Entering the army district, Xiao Lin could feel that everyone there had a different kind of attire compared to those in other districts. Most of the people there were either wearing a suit of armor or mage's robes. The majority of the people there were colonists, but there were also a small number of Normans. The most interesting ones were a few sharp-eared elves with mildly green skin. Xiao Lin was a bit excited when he saw the elves, but Song Junlang told him it was nothing to gawk at.

America had signed a nonaggression pact with the elves a long time ago, so them appearing in New Washington was a very common matter.

The high-level training hall that Song Junlang talked about was very eye-catching. It was probably the building that occupied the largest area here, and there was already a huge queue in front of the hall.

Xiao Lin gaped. He thought there would not be so many people at such an expensive facility, but it turned out to be so popular.

Song Junlang went over and chatted with one of the Americans before returning, "How unlucky. The other training hall is closed for repairs today, so everyone ended up here instead."

Xiao Lin looked at the queue with a troubled expression.

Song Junlang asked, "Do you really want to go in?"

Xiao Lin nodded earnestly.

Song Junlang then said, "Then go look for Hank. We should have just looked for him when we headed out earlier! We're diplomats, so we should get some special treatment...right?"

"Why are you so uncertain?"

Hank was usually at an office next to the castle. That was pretty much Judge Academy's foreign affairs office, specially there to handle matters related to other academies. Hank was in charge of the Dawn Academy.

It took them some time to locate Hank. When Hank heard what they wanted, his attitude was a lot better than what they expected. He passionately assured them that, as invitees of Judge Academy, they would be given special priority. That training hall actually had a good relationship with Judge Academy, so he could be of great help with the matter.

Song Junlang was curious about his attitude, but Hank very quickly thanked Xiao Lin. It turned out Hank had gone to Professor Brown to ask about the work they were doing, and Xiao Lin had gotten some praise from Professor Brown thanks to his hard work.

Even though they were invited over, Judge Academy obviously wanted the money they spent to count, so they would ask for an update from Professor Brown every week to prevent anyone from earning an empty wage.

It seemed like Xiao Lin's hard work for the whole week really paid off. On the way to the army district, Hank beat his chest, saying he could get Xiao Lin a discount thanks to his personal relationships."

"Could I get a fifty percent discount?" Xiao Lin asked in anticipation.

"No! five percent!"

Xiao Lin's eye twitched, not knowing what to say.

Hank let out a dry cough. "You need to understand, maintaining the virtual battle system costs a lot. Even though the training hall is supported by our academy, it's still a private venture in the end, so they can't really give too much of a discount."

Chapter 117 - Simulation

Chapter 117: Simulation

Hank brought them straight into the training hall after showing his identification. The inside of the hall looked like a hotel. The first floor was the business lounge, and every floor after the second were personal training rooms. A tall and muscular man came out and gave Hank a hug.

After Hank talked to him for a bit, the man was introduced to Xiao Lin, "This is Dickens, the manager of the training hall. After hearing that you're here to help Judge Academy, he's willing to give you an even bigger discount: 10 percent off! That's a discount no one else can possibly get!"

The corner of Xiao Lin's mouth twitched, but he consoled himself by thinking it was better than nothing. "Then how much would I need to pay per hour? Mr. Hank, you know I'm only making four hundred a day."

Hank smiled. "The prices are actually different for everyone. To put it simply, energy stones are needed to operate the virtual battle system. Different simulations would require different levels of energy, and the price would obviously be higher for simulations that require more energy. However, I think the lowest level of energy stones would be sufficient for you, so it's only 100 New Dollars an hour, 90 after the discount."

That was a lot cheaper than what he expected. Xiao Lin let out a sigh of relief and nodded in acknowledgement.

"Then why don't we have you down for an hour first to test it out? You can decide if you want to continue after that," Hank said. He then turned his head and asked, "Department Head Song, why don't you give it a try as well?"

“No need, this toy is too classy for me.” Song Junlang shook his head and rejected. He turned to Xiao Lin and said, “Well, I won’t be staying here to look after you. I trust you remember the way back? Just remember, do not take off your anti-gravity pin!”

“Relax!” Xiao Lin answered resolutely.

Song Junlang and Hank left, and Dickens brought Xiao Lin upstairs. Dickens did not speak Mandarin, so the two of them only used some simple phrases to communicate. He brought Xiao Lin to the last room on the second floor. After pushing the door and entering, he saw that the room was separated into two parts. The first part they saw looked like a living room. It had some simple furniture and beverages; on the sides were two rows of weapons and armor. They were all very common gear.

There was another door in the room which led to the training room. The training room was very spacious, only consisting of four metal walls without any other items.

Dickens gestured around with his hands to explain to Xiao Lin how the system worked. There was something like a tablet outside of the training room which was operated by magic. Xiao Lin needed to place his hand on the sparkling orb next to it for the computer screen to turn on.

The system was quite easy to understand. On the screen were a few options Xiao Lin could adjust, and it was in simple enough English for Xiao Lin to understand. The options were: sex, age and height, followed by strength, agility, intelligence, and physique.

Dickens explained that even race could be set, but that would require a newer model of the virtual battle simulator, which would also be more expensive. Xiao Lin did not need that option anyway. The model he was using was the first model, so there were no settings for different races, but most of the other functions were similar.

The system also had stored data of real people. Everyone who trained there had the option of storing their data into the system, such as their attributes and skills. After that, anyone would be able to choose anyone’s data to spar against. If enough people picked your data, the training hall would even offer monetary rewards.

After all, it was hard to create a realistic character just from setting it by yourself. The best way to get more realistic simulations was to use stored data. Dickens helped Xiao Lin switch to a different interface which had a lot of character templates. Of course, for privacy reasons, the names and even genders were hidden.

However, Xiao Lin quickly lost interest in it. The lowest ranks there were at least at Black Iron or Bronze; it would be foolish for him to choose them.

After a basic introduction to the system, Dickens placed a white conical energy stone into an empty slot next to the tablet. He warned Xiao Lin that it was an energy stone of the lowest grade; it was only enough to simulate a character no stronger than Black Iron-rank. If the character he set exceeded that strength, the energy stone would not be able to handle it and explode from being overloaded. The losses incurred would be borne by the user.

Xiao Lin did not plan on simulating anyone near that level of strength; his main reason for training there was to get used to the gravity, so he would not need an excessively strong opponent.

After Dickens left, Xiao Lin carefully thought out the settings. He would not be charged for the time taken for him to fix up the settings, so he had plenty of them to think about it.

The opponent he set for himself was definitely of the lowest rank. After a few minutes, he quickly entered the stats he wanted into the tablet.

[Strength 2, Agility 1, Intelligence 3, Physique 3]

[Basic Swordsmanship LV1]

[Basic Blocking LV1]

[Slashing LV1]

[Basic Fitness LV2]

[Basic Perception LV1]

[Basic Meditation LV1]

Xiao Lin basically entered his own attributes and skills but cut them in half. He got a dagger from the weapon rack and started the program. The monitor showed a one-hour timer as he entered the training room.

It was a bit dark in the training room, but it did not really affect his vision in the narrow training space. A beam of light rose in the center of the room. It was the virtual character that was made from drawing out magic from the energy stone.

It was a bit hard to call it an actual person; the blue glowing figure in front of him only had the shape of a human. The face was devoid of any organs; it was just like a blue shadow. Xiao Lin set it to have Basic Swordsmanship and Basic Perception, but at LV1, the Basic Perception was not enough to cast spells, so the shadow had something like a sword in its hand.

Almost at the same time, the walls at the side showed two red lines. Xiao Lin smirked when he saw it; it really was looking more and more like a game. The two lines represented both their hit points, since the shadow could not actually cause any physical harm, it would assign damage based on their attributes and skills, which would then be reflected on the lines.

Of course, the calculations would be quite different from what would happen in real life; it was just there as a reference point for the trainee.

After all, things like hit points and attack power do not exist in actual battle. However, since it was a virtual battle, Xiao Lin just treated it as a game.

Chapter 118 - Training

Chapter 118: Training

After preparing himself mentally, Xiao Lin took off the anti-gravity pin. His promise with Song Junlang was obviously a lie... If Lilith was actually also an SS-rank talent, then there was no reason Xiao Lin would not be able to do anything she could do.

The virtual character would not be affected by the gravity in the New World either. Strictly speaking, it was just an energy body formed with the energy stone. Even if it was not at the Black Iron-rank, it would not be affected by the gravity anyway.

[Virtual battle, start!]

The virtual character was set to never initiate the first attack, so Xiao Lin rushed forward first with his blade. However, in just a few steps, Xiao Lin let out a shout before falling to the ground. His body could not adapt to the gravity after he took off the pin. He could not run and had to stick his dagger into the ground to stop himself from falling down.

After verifying that Xiao Lin had already made an attack, the virtual character started to attack as well. It only had one point in agility, so its speed was quite slow. Its swordsmanship was also quite shoddy and full of flaws, but against Xiao Lin who could barely move, the blue blade of light slashed through Xiao Lin's neck without any difficulty.

Xiao Lin felt a warm feeling go through his neck as his hit points on display immediately went to zero. That was because the blade had struck a critical point without any attempt at defense from Xiao Lin, so the hit was judged to be fatal.

After the attack, the virtual character once again stood in the center of the room unmoving. When either of their hit points reached zero, it meant the end of a round of sparring. The virtual character would revert to its initial position and wait for an attack from the trainee.

Xiao Lin struggled to get back to his feet. This time, he did not start his attack from far away; instead he slowly walked in front of the virtual character and slashed his blade at it.

The virtual character's reactions were slow, but Xiao Lin's movement was even slower. The dagger in the training room was similar to the beginner dagger at Dawn Academy, but he felt like what he was holding was not a dagger, it was like an extremely heavy weight. He used all his might just to raise his blade and slash it. His body shook the entire time, and it also gave the virtual character enough time to counterattack.

Clank!

Even though the virtual character was set to have lower strength than Xiao Lin, Xiao Lin could not even exert half his actual power on the blade. It was unsurprisingly blocked, and the rebound caused Xiao Lin to take a step back. It was hard for him to even keep his balance.

The blue blade of light once again aimed for Xiao Lin's neck, but he was prepared for it this time. He swung down his blade that was just deflected, but the pressure of gravity caused his body to be like a rusted machine. Even though he knew what to do, his body could not react in time.

His hit points slid down to zero once again. The second battle did not even last for more than a minute, but Xiao Lin was noticeably breathing much harder and the muscles on his arms were extremely numb. Xiao Lin did not choose to rest, since he had gotten this one hour using his treasured New Dollars. However, the results of the one hour of training were too horrible to look at.

The virtual character's attributes were actually not too different from Xiao Lin's when he first entered the academy. From his perspective, the virtual character's skills were really very low. He did not realize it when he took the admissions test, but the movements of the zombies were all very clumsy, and their power had even been reduced by the academy. Now that he had an outside view, Xiao Lin finally understood how weak he was when he first entered the academy.

However, training in double gravity was a lot more challenging than he thought. Just letting his body adapt alone took up quite a lot of time. In the first hour, based on the system's evaluation, Xiao Lin could not even inflict any real harm to his opponent. On the other hand, even though the virtual human was slow, and its swings were not that powerful, it could hit him very easily. Even later on, when Xiao Lin decided to only defend and not attack, he was still unable to prevent his hit points from rapidly evaporating.

In one of the battles, the virtual fighter actually used the Slashing skill right in front of Xiao Lin. That skill could deal a lot of damage after fully charging, but it took too long to charge, which meant it was not very practical in actual battles. However, Xiao Lin's stiff body was still not able to avoid it...

Of course, it was not all doom and gloom for Xiao Lin. In the last battle, Xiao Lin could finally hold the virtual character back for more than one minute. He could actually do it for longer, but the virtual human disappeared when the hour was up.

Clank!

Xiao Lin threw the training dagger away as he lay down on the floor straightaway. He was desperately grasping for breath. Up until the last exchange, he had practically been biting on his lips, forcing himself to move. It was only when he finally got to rest when he started to feel pain all over his body. He wanted to raise his hand but found that he did not have the strength, so he could only use his tongue to lick his bloodied lips.

After a few minutes of recovering, he could finally force himself up to reactivate the anti-gravity pin. After the pressure dissipated, he felt much more relaxed. However, he had still used up quite a lot of his stamina, and would need quite some time to recover.

The door to the training room once again opened as Dickens walked inside. When he saw Xiao Lin's exhausted body on the floor, he found it was strange. How could he have fought to that degree when it was not even of the Black Iron-rank? Nonetheless, he never pried into their clients private matters, so he politely asked, "Would you like to continue?"

Xiao Lin nodded as he held up one finger to show he would like another hour. After thinking, he gestured as tried to speak in English, "Please let me rest for a bit before starting the next hour. Is that okay?"

Dickens puzzled over it before finally getting it. He smiled as he nodded, indicating that he could start at any time. After receiving 90 New Dollars, he left and shut the door.

“He’s a decent man!” Xiao Lin mumbled to himself.

The man was the manager of this training hall and would naturally be quite busy, especially since there were so many people queuing outside. Despite that, Dickens still personally went there to meet him. Even if it was to give face to Hank, Xiao Lin still felt he was a decent man.

However, Xiao Lin did not see Dickens quickly stopping at a corner right after he left the room. He had a bitter smile on his face, “My apologies, that boy from Dawn Academy is not intending on leaving at the moment. If you really need to meet him, I’m afraid you’ll need to wait for one more hour.”

The beautiful girl in front of him impatiently said, “What? One more hour?! How troublesome. Whatever, get me an hour as well!”

“Please don’t!” Dicken exclaimed, “You’ve already broken three of my systems. If you continue, I’ll lose so much money, I’ll have to sell my body!”

Chapter 119 - : Virtual Character Changed

Chapter 119: Virtual Character Changed

The woman standing in front of Dickens was Lilith. She had followed Xiao Lin all the way to the training hall and was waiting outside for quite a while before she got frustrated. She had planned to barge inside, but the sharp-eyed Dickens noticed and stopped her.

Lilith was once a regular there and Dickens was quite familiar with her as well. Dickens was usually a friendly boss, but Lilith was absolutely not a customer they wanted around. Lilith had broken three of their expensive virtual battle systems and had caused Dickens a lot of grief,

After debating for a while, Lilith finally gave up on training there. However, when Dickens let out a sigh of relief and left, Lilith looked around before sneaking over to Xiao Lin’s room. When she noticed the door was locked from the inside, she pouted and mumbled to herself, “Troublesome.” She then used some force and broke the door handle.

She managed to get into the room, but the training room was still shut tight. The specially enhanced metal walls did not have any windows, so Xiao Lin, who had just started a new bout, did not realize there was someone outside either.

Xiao Lin did not rest for too long. Some sweet and refreshing water was provided in the rest area, and the water seemed to be able to magically reduce exhaustion. According to Dickens, the water came from the elves and had some sort of life-giving plant mixed in. It could restore energy and was very good at getting rid of fatigue.

However, only a bit was mixed into the water. More effective mixes needed to be paid for, which Xiao Lin rejected. Wearing the anti-gravity pin, coupled with the water, Xiao Lin's strength recovered a lot quicker than he anticipated.

Lilith was planning on entering the training room, but she thought for a while and instead operated the tablet by her side. The tablet shone brightly. The system could actually be used to observe the conditions inside the room.

In the image, Xiao Lin was currently sparring with the virtual character. After the first hour, Xiao Lin had actually somewhat gotten used to fighting in double gravity.

Of course, that did not mean the effect Planet Norma's gravity had on him had disappeared. Whether it was running or jumping, Xiao Lin still looked very clumsy. Until he reached Black Iron-rank, that effect would never disappear, but Xiao Lin was working hard to learn how to fight in those conditions.

Xiao Lin adapted in many ways. Even just waving his blade while standing was quite a burden to Xiao Lin, but he tried his best to stand in a stance that would make him more comfortable, and used his blade in the least taxing manner. To an outsider, his exaggerated movements and stances were quite funny. Anyone would mistake him for a circus actor instead of a swordsman.

Lilith could not stop herself from laughing at the hilarity of it, but she lost her interest after a moment. She could tell that Xiao Lin was not used to the gravity, which led her to understand that he was definitely not at the Black Iron-rank. It was no issue though, Lilith's target was the giant golden dragon that Xiao Lin could summon; his actual capabilities were of no concern to her.

Xiao Lin's comical moves seemed to be working out, he could finally somewhat compete with the virtual character, even if he was still stuck on the defensive. Every slash he made was methodical, but after a few minutes, his hit points still went to zero. There was nothing he could do about it. The virtual character was not influenced by the gravity; there was little he could do to such a natural advantage.

Lilith was quietly observing outside the training room, but her white face looked impatient as she mumbled, "How dull! How could this kind of training have any results! Is he stupid? Even if training in higher gravity can improve your training, if it's only to this degree, then his body will quickly not be able to handle it!"

Rolling her eyes, Lilith suddenly had a sinister smile on her face, "Let me teach you how to train in double gravity!"

Lilith quickly typed some things into the tablet. If Xiao Lin could see what was happening, he would realize that Lilith was picking out data of some other people to add as participants. After some adjustments, Lilith then specially added the condition of gravitational influence.

The characters in the virtual battle system were indeed unaffected by gravity, and almost all of the people who trained there were Black Iron or above, but it was not impossible to simulate the effect of gravity as well.

In the training room, Xiao Lin was once again on the ground as he stared at his empty hit point bar once again. He spat in anger as he struggled to get up. Even though he had more or less recovered

his strength after resting, the second battle depleted his strength much quicker than earlier. If that continued, he would run out of strength again very quickly.

No matter how much effort Xiao Lin put into adapting to the gravity, the pressure was still immense. Basically every action he made needed twice the amount of power. The exertion was beginning to affect his body, and he was not sure he could even last the whole hour at that point.

Xiao Lin once again adopted a defensive stance, but Xiao Lin was confused. The virtual character would always go back to the middle of the training room after every bout.

However, the virtual character suddenly disappeared after Xiao Lin fell to the ground last time. He felt it was quite strange, since the second hour had just started not long ago, so there was no way he was out of time. Just when he was going to head out to check, a ray of light once again shone in the middle of the room—this time much brighter than the last one.

The light quickly solidified into a human form, but this time it was a red virtual character. The face was still very blurry, but it looked a little clearer than last time. Xiao Lin could actually vaguely make out that it was a girl, and she seemed to be holding a dagger.

He did not understand the reason for the change, but who he was facing did not matter. Xiao Lin initiated another round, but he quickly realized the virtual character was very different this time.

It was not that this red virtual character was stronger than the last one, but the character's actions were much clumsier before. Xiao Lin felt some familiarity before quickly realizing that his movements earlier when he was not used to the gravity at all looked like that too.

That virtual character was set to be affected by the gravity! It was different from the settings Xiao Lin had input!

Mumbling to himself, Xiao Lin thought he had put in the wrong settings. He planned on fixing it after that bout, but now that his opponent was just as clumsy as he was, he felt that he could actually win this time. He had been tortured by the virtual character for more than an hour, so he definitely had some pent-up frustrations he needed to vent.

Chapter 120 - Special Battle

Chapter 120: Special Battle

With the intention of finally being able to let off some steam, Xiao Lin resolved to be extra focused that time. Therefore, he stopped being on the defensive and chose to attack.

His blade clashed against the dagger made of energy as red ripples of energy could be seen. The weapons the virtual characters used were formed by the energy from the energy stones, just like they were. Thanks to the system strictly restricting the amount of energy that could be retrieved, they could guarantee there would not be much harm done to the human body. At the most, one would feel a slightly warm sensation.

Xiao Lin backpedaled for a few steps before stabilizing himself. He furrowed his eyebrows, feeling the impact of the gravity. His opponent seemed to still be stronger than him, which was even further away from his settings. He had an impulse to complain to Dickens, but that had to wait until after the battle.

Two people, who were not even at Black Iron-rank fighting in the New World, were akin to fighting while carrying sandbags. This battle was extremely not worth watching. Their movements were slow and the blades swayed as they slashed around. The two of them had not distanced themselves a single step after closing in on each other. A single extra step meant a lot of extra effort from Xiao Lin.

All of the red virtual character's attributes were higher than Xiao Lin's by quite a bit, but thanks to the effect of the gravity, the character's advantages were greatly restricted. The battle entered a deadlock, with both their hit points slowly decreasing. It was hard to tell who would win just from looking at the speed of decrease.

The situation suddenly changed when the red virtual character suddenly held its dagger backhanded and took a leap forward. It was not that fast, so Xiao Lin managed to dodge it, but he widened his eyes in shock when he raised his head because the virtual character's weapon turned into a shortsword.

It could change weapons?

Xiao Lin cursed in his head, but he quickly lost any opportunity to think about it when the virtual character charged at him again right after switching weapons. What was even more shocking was that the speed of the blade was noticeably faster and more accurate.

Xiao Lin could not dodge it, so he could only exert himself by raising his blade to block. He was using a lighter sword, but with the gravity, the blade felt no different from a heavy sword. Xiao Lin was very certain he could not wield his blade so quickly, but the virtual character managed to do it.

Both of them were influenced by the gravity, but why was his opponent faster than him! Xiao Lin could not figure it out, but their blade forced him to retreat. The only reprieve he had was that the virtual character's strength was not as much as he thought, which indicated that it was still affected by gravity.

The virtual character retrieved its sword before changing weapons once again. This time it was a curved blade. Xiao Lin once again raised his blade in defense as he panted. However, the virtual character did not attack immediately as it waved around the blade for a bit before changing its weapon once again.

This time it was a staff. The virtual character finally attacked again and Xiao Lin could only defend as he fell back. He did not have the strength to dodge, and when the staff hit his blade, the heavy impact hurt his wrist, causing him to almost drop his blade.

"You've got to be kidding me!"

Xiao Lin was stunned. In not even a minute, that virtual character's speed and strength both increased; was that due to it switching weapons?

Or could it have been concealing its strength to lull him into a false sense of security before striking? Xiao Lin shook his head and crossed that possibility out. The opponent was just a virtual character made by the system and the system was designed for training. How could it have such a cunning setting?

He had no time to think about it as Xiao Lin noticed the weapon had changed yet again. This time the weapon was a long war scythe. Even though it was made of energy, the virtual character held the weapon valiantly, with the blade dragging the floor and making grinding sounds. It was a sight to behold.

Suddenly, the virtual character moved again, and this time it was even faster than earlier. It looked very adept, as if gravity had stopped influencing it.

The virtual character drew a circle in the air with its scythe and flames started to form on the blade. The hot air caused Xiao Lin to take a few steps back, retreating from the scythe's wider attack range.

Curiously, the virtual character once again increased its speed. It seemed that Planet Norma's heavy gravity no longer affected it. It was like the wind as it charged at Xiao Lin from the corner.

Xiao Lin was suddenly feeling a sense of danger he had not before. Even though he knew this was a virtual battle, even though he knew getting hit would only mean his hit points would hit zero again, Xiao Lin was still filled with anger. Anyone would also be angry if they were tortured like this by virtual characters. The most important thing was that no matter how Xiao Lin thought about it, he could not understand how the red virtual character was doing what it did.

Xiao Lin thought about it for less than a second, and then he immediately activated his replication skill!

Even though the opponent was just a virtual character, he should still be able to replicate its skills. It was just as he thought, but Xiao Lin could only gape in surprise when the skills flashed in his mind.

[Choose a replicable skill:

[Piercing Wind: limited to daggers; use the dagger to lunge forward and attack. After the skill is used, agility will be increased by half a grade. Skill evaluation: F]

[Breeze Blade: limited to swords; continuously attack in a forward direction. Can increase speed by half a grade after hitting the target. Skill evaluation: F+]

[Violent Blade Dance: limited to curved blades; can strengthen the user by performing a sword dance; has no offensive capabilities; increases strength by half a grade. Skill evaluation: F]

Xiao Lin snarled as he recalled all the moves the virtual character used earlier. Every skill needed a completely different weapon, and the variety rendered him speechless. He believed that was possibly not all the skills that the virtual character had.

He could not really say the opponent was very powerful, since upon detailed inspection, one would notice all the skills were very low ranked. The skills were all around F-ranked, and it did not even seem to have any E-ranked skills.

Xiao Lin finally understood how the virtual character suddenly spiked in strength and speed. It was not that the virtual character had overcome the effects of gravity, it was just using all these skills that could strengthen itself to temporarily enhance its abilities. When stacking all those buffs together, the virtual character really did overcome the effects of heavy gravity, at least for a short while.

He felt that the system had some problems somewhere; that was obviously not the settings he had input!

Nonetheless, Xiao Lin refused to admit defeat. He had already activated his replication skill. No matter what, he would replicate a skill. It would at least let him vent his frustrations. Otherwise, he might go crazy after being tortured for a whole day.

Chapter 121 - Red Lotus Blade

Chapter 121: Red Lotus Blade

[Red Lotus Blade: converges the red lotus' fire on the blade for an attack, dealing dual damage to physique and spells. This skill uses both physical and mental power. Comprehensive damage rating F+]

That was the skill the virtual character was executing at that moment. Compared to the previous skills that had enhanced effects but lower damage, it was—without a doubt—a purely offensive skill, and Xiao Lin did not hesitate to replicate it.

At the same time, a crimson red light began glowing on the blade of his sword. In an instant, Xiao Lin's body trembled violently and he felt his physical and mental strength drain completely. That sword skill was more exhausting than he had imagined.

The virtual character, who was unaffected by the influence of gravity, approached quickly. The red glow began intensifying on its raised scythe, and with the hot wind blowing toward Xiao Lin's face, a burst of sparks flew in all directions like a red lotus in full bloom.

The two red flames overlapped and burst out in less than a second. In that low explosion, the turbulent air wave slammed Xiao Lin into the metal wall. Hot air then sealed the entire room, making Xiao Lin feel as though he was soaking in boiling water. His skin felt astonishingly hot, and the sword's attack—coupled with the impact of the double-gravity environment—made it impossible for him to get up.

The virtual character had disappeared, and when he looked up again, Xiao Lin was slightly surprised to find that the hit rate had somehow disappeared from the metal wall. He was unable to judge who won the battle earlier, and what left him befuddled was a thick black smoke coming out of the room, like the aftermath of something that had burned.

Startled, Xiao Lin immediately put the anti-gravity accessory back on and rushed out of the training room. The black smoke was coming from the device where the energy stone was, and the stone had shattered into pieces all over the ground.

What puzzled him further was that the door of the room was open. He clearly remembered that it had been locked after Dickens left. The screen displaying the attribute settings was also quite strange. He walked over and looked at it, only to find that the screen was on the historical character parameter option. His attempt to find the information of the virtual character he fought against proved futile, for there were no records at all.

...

Outside, Lilith had long left the place. She had an unexpectedly peculiar expression on her face, along with some surprise and amazement. Dickens had been constantly keeping an eye on her behavior, and when she was finally ready to leave, he hurriedly sent her off like she was the plague.

“Oh, yes. The energy device in room three-two-eight is probably broken again. Don’t ask that Xiao...whatever his name is...to pay for it. Charge it to my account. I believe there’s still a lot of New Dollars in the card I left with you last time,” Lilith curtly remarked, suddenly turning around.

“What? The energy device is broken? Impossible. The simulation system is well maintained. It can’t be broken for no reason... And why should it be credited to your account?” Dickens muttered suspiciously. His expression then collapsed all of a sudden and he clutched his metaphorical pearls in anger. “You! Did you use your Creation skill again? This is why I don’t want you using any simulation devices. You know that the actual damage is much higher than the system’s rating because there isn’t any data or parameter records. This is the third device! My goodness!”

“Oh, come on. I compensated for everything, didn’t I! Plus, I wasn’t the one who used it.” Lilith felt a little embarrassed, but she was even more impatient. “That Xiao something, what’s his name again? Chinese names are really hard to remember.”

“Xiao Lin. Are you seriously looking for him when you don’t even remember his full name?”

“Xiao Lin? Xiao Lin! Well, he’s a very interesting person,” Lilith repeated several times and made sure that she had etched in her memory. She then clapped her hands and left with satisfaction.

Soon after Lilith left, Xiao Lin found Dickens again. He was a little worried about the damage to the energy device and the broken energy stone. His concern was that the other party would make him pay for it, but what surprised him was that Dickens said nothing about it. In fact, Dickens even apologized to him repeatedly and was willing to reduce that day’s fee by half as compensation to Xiao Lin.

Xiao Lin was confused, but reducing the fee by half would mean that he would only need to pay a total of 90 New Dollars for two hours that day. That was not a deal he could pass on.

However, Dickens asked Xiao Lin a very strange question. “Do you know Miss Lilith?”

“Lilith? I can’t say I know her.” Xiao Lin recalled the woman who singled him out for a challenge when they met and instinctively blurted out that he had nothing to do with her.

Dickens felt relieved, but he felt that something was fishy. In general, Lilith's designation of a person as interesting was a sign that she recognized their strength. Be that as it may, Dickens was unable to discern any such ability on Xiao Lin, who had not even reached Black Iron-rank. He advised solemnly, "As a friend, I suggest you not to get too close to that woman. Nothing good will come out of it!"

"I wholeheartedly agree!"

Because of the excessive physical exertion, Xiao Lin's training lasted only half a morning before he was done. If he continued, it was entirely possible that his body would be worn down just as Song Junlang said. Training under double gravity was much harder than expected, and the key was whether or not his body could adapt under the pressure. In any case, such a physical reaction was difficult to compensate through sheer willpower.

Song Junlang repeatedly emphasized against conducting such dangerous gravity training, and it was no wonder that Lilith seems to be the only one who trained like that.

The simulated battle earlier gave him a few new ideas. Before that, he had never thought that battles could be fought like that. The amplification effects of various skills could be used to strengthen himself before bursting out quickly with a strong combative strength that far exceeded his own.

It sounded simple in theory, but with careful thought, there were still many problems with it. After returning to the inn at noon, Xiao Lin exchanged that idea with Song Junlang, but did not mention who the virtual character was. After all, Xiao Lin had no idea which historical figure the system's data parameter referenced during the simulated battle.

After listening to Xiao Lin, Song Junlang suddenly burst with laughter and shook his head. "Do you think this is a game! That simulated battle system is actually set according to the idea of Earth's online games, but do you really think this can be done in an actual battle? First of all, weapons in virtual battles are formed by extracting energy. Weapons can be changed any time based on the set parameters. How are you going to change weapons that quickly in actual combat? Will the opponent even give you the luxury of time?"

Xiao Lin remained unconvinced and retorted, "It's not impossible to carry more weapons with you. I remember that the T-rex—ahem—I mean the tutor who taught us Basic Swordsmanship could retrieve her weapons by plucking them through a tear in space. I've never seen her carry a sword."

"You mean Cheng Na, that T-rex? Tsk, tsk!" Song Junlang used Xiao Lin's nickname for her and shook his head, saying, "The weapons she uses are spatial ones. You can only encounter them by chance instead of getting them, and spatial weapons also require you to study the courses about the system of space and time. Even Cheng Na has very limited mastery over space; the most she can do is store her Lightning Sword."

Chapter 122 - New Ideas

Chapter 122: New Ideas

“Aside from that, there’s other critical issues with your idea. While it sounds amazing to use the augmentation effects of multiple skills, have you ever thought about how long you need to spend to achieve such an effect?”

Song Junlang had a serious look. He felt that Xiao Lin’s thoughts were teetering on the edge of risk and had to be corrected. “Comprehensive enhancement requires you to take more courses. I can tell you frankly that prerequisite learning requirements are much higher for all enhancement-effect skills. You won’t be able to master them without fulfilling those requirements. Are you sure you have the time?”

“Can’t it be done with a single weapon type?”

“It’s very difficult! Each weapon has its own characteristics, and although the basic skills may overlap, the respective characteristics will only be more obvious later on. Let’s take skills involving the épée for example. There’s no way you can continue to enhance your body techniques. In the same vein, there’s no way for you to further enhance your arm strength for dagger-based skills.”

Seeing Xiao Lin’s hesitant expression, Song Junlang emphasized further, “I know you’re cultivating both magic and martial arts, but magic and martial arts are both merely broad categories. As your courses increase, this wide category can be broken down into countless small categories. Do you really think you have that much energy?”

Song Junlang did not approve of that training method, but Xiao Lin still expressed some doubt. If the virtual character’s parameters were based on a certain historical figure, it meant that someone must have done it, and if someone could do it, Xiao Lin believed that he could at least give it a try. The virtual character’s unique fighting style in that short battle had left too deep an impression on him.

Xiao Lin did not go to the training hall again that afternoon. Although combat training was more effective than training alone, he felt that it was best to slowly adapt to the basics after experiencing the hardships of fighting in a gravity environment that morning. As a result, he stayed in the inn for the afternoon and did not go out.

Song Junlang did not bother him, but if he were to push the door and enter Xiao Lin’s room, he would find that Xiao Lin had taken off the anti-gravity accessory again and was in the midst of attempting a push-up. The sweat beads on Xiao Lin’s forehead appeared at a rapid rate, oozing out in no time and forming a puddle on the floor.

Such basic training was simpler than actual combat. After an entire afternoon however, Xiao Lin had pushed the limits of his strength, and even inhaled the delicious burger for dinner in a few bites. Song Junlang noticed that something was not quite right, but Xiao Lin hid it well. He went back to the room for an early rest, giving Department Head Song nary a chance of inquiring.

The short weekend passed quickly with that training. The next day, when the sky was barely lit, the person responsible for fetching and sending Xiao Lin arrived at the inn on time. Hank personally came the first two times, but he seemed to have other things to do in New Washington and sent an assistant on subsequent occasions.

Hank's assistant was an American man in his early 30s who went by the name of Norn. He was a senior at Judge Academy who was nearing graduation. Norn said that his strength was only average and it was difficult for him to enter military- or expedition-related departments, so he chose the Foreign Relations Department. He seemed to cherish that opportunity for an internship and used English to communicate with Xiao Lin on the way to the palace.

What surprised Xiao Lin was that the graduates of these colonial colleges were actually under great pressure. Although the number of colonists in the New World would always be lesser compared to the local indigenous people, employment was not as easy to come by as imagined. Rather than having a lack of jobs, it was the positions of leadership that were scarce.

As colonists, no one wanted to do the same jobs as the natives since they were the aristocrats and privileged people of that world. Many people would be reluctant to start from bottom as soldiers when they entered the army, but at the end of the day, those who could become leaders were far and few in between. The fact that job offers were based on meritocracy would almost certainly produce competitive pressure.

Norn was a very ordinary student, and after learning that Xiao Lin was just a freshman, he would complain about those problems to Xiao Lin from time to time. After their interaction, the two somehow got along with each other. On that day, after Xiao Lin forced himself to get up, despite his exhaustion, he took the initiative to start a conversation with Norn.

"Where can I learn skills in New Washington?"

Norn was a little surprised. "Learn skills? There are only two ways. If we want to learn skills, we can either find someone who has those skills and learn from them, or learn them yourself through skill books, which you can either buy or rent. I recall you're still a freshman, right? Your tutors will be teaching you those basic skills."

Xiao Lin smiled wryly. He would be staying there for a whole month, and after calculating the duration, Dawn Academy would have already started with their basic skills. He might be out on official business, but the entire freshman year would not change their schedules just for him. Add that to the irritation he felt after battling the virtual character the day before, he decided to ask around first.

Seeing the troubled look between Xiao Lin's eyebrows, Norn felt that he had to satisfy Dawn Academy's guests to successfully complete his internship as a chaperone from the Foreign Affairs Department. He thought for a moment and added, "If you really want to learn skills now, I suggest you have a look at the bazaars in the trade district. You might end up with an unexpected surprise."

"An unexpected surprise? Like what?" Xiao Lin's interest was aroused.

Norn's white teeth were revealed in his bright smile and there was pride in his tone. "New Washington's development could be considered to be the fastest of all the colonial capitals, and our business is also the most prosperous..."

"Get to the point."

“Ahem, in fact, the skills taught by your tutors during your freshman year are often the most basic and common skills, but you have to understand that Planet Norma has a history spanning millions of years. With so many races, the number of spells or martial arts are endless, and even a learned professor dares not say that they fully understand them all. If you want to learn the less popular spells or skills instead of the same stereotypical ones, you’ve come to the right place!”

Xiao Lin nodded with intrigue. “Looks like I’ll have to take a look.”

Norn then added, “However, the more niche skills often require very strange prerequisites. There’s no complete system to those skills either and it’s difficult for you to get advanced skills manuals for those skills. In contrast, although the skills taught by the academy are ordinary; all of them have a complete system on which they can be continuously advanced.”

Norn explained plenty of things to Xiao Lin. For example, there were a lot of life-based spells and elven martial arts in New Washington because it was adjacent to the elves. In fact, it was the case for each academy. Dawn Academy was close to the merfolk and the beastkin orcs, so they had a wider reserve of water-based and sacrificial spells.

Chapter 123 - Name

Chapter 123: Name

The constant deliberation over those skills as well as a deep yearning for it left Xiao Lin incapable of fully concentrating on his work for that day. He had used his replication skill the day before, so he would have to wait seven more days for its next use. In addition, the past day’s gravity training made his muscles sore and swollen. He appeared absent-minded when transcribing that morning, and it did not take long for Professor Brown to head downstairs and point out—very harshly—some grave grammatical errors in Xiao Lin’s transcript.

“Xiao, your focus seems to be lacking.” Brown had also noticed that Xiao Lin was in a state of malaise.

“Professor, I went to the training hall yesterday and I’m still a bit tired. I think I need some time to adjust.” Xiao Lin took the opportunity to ask, “Can I take a day off if it’s possible?”

Brown’s face was very unhappy. “I’m sure you’re aware that our current rate of progress is unsatisfactory.”

“Okay. I understand.” Xiao Lin was not too optimistic that the strict professor would agree. He shrugged to indicate that it was not a big deal, then handed to Brown the few volumes that had been copied. He pointed to areas that had been circled with a red pen and said, “These aren’t easy to translate. They’re not smooth in terms of Ancient Normese’s grammar.”

Chloe looked up and added, “I’ve seen those areas. The contents existed on the slate to begin with, and we couldn’t have possibly made a mistake either in transcribing or by missing some letters. I think it’s likely that they were erroneously recorded on the slate.”

Brown frowned, and said in a reprimanding tone, “Ancient Normese is a very rigorous language. It’s impossible that they’d make such a low-level mistake. You’re not on a high enough level!”

Brown casually took it and narrowed his eyes before looking at it for a moment. A trace of confusion flashed in his expression and he chanted repeatedly before whispering to himself, “This is odd. It doesn’t look like the standard grammatical combination for Ancient Normese. Is it possible that there’s still some grammar that I haven’t figured out yet? No, that’s impossible.”

Xiao Lin was the closest to Professor Brown and could therefore hear the man much clearer. When he thought about how Professor Brown—whose understanding of Ancient Normese had reached the peak—could not even understand it, Xiao Lin decided not to be too hard on himself.

Brown appeared to be quite a serious person, and when he discovered that he could not even comprehend the grammar, the wrinkles on his face seemed to become even deeper. He paced back and forth around the area, causing everyone else to put down their work and wait curiously to see if Professor Brown could solve the problem.

“Might it perhaps be an inversion? I remember Ancient Normese having grammar like that,” Chloe suggested.

“No. It doesn’t work.” Brown shook his head.

“Shorthand? Like English shorthand,” Lolander ventured.

“Impossible. There’s no evidence that shorthand exists in Ancient Normese! I only believe in facts that have reliable information!” Brown continued to reject.

Everyone rushed to offer their suggestions, but were all refuted by Professor Brown. The scene soon reverted to silence again. They were unable to offer any more help with their level of Ancient Normese, but simply offered their opinions for the sake of constructiveness. After all, it was Judge Academy’s affairs, which had nothing to do with them.

Xiao Lin did not say much. His level was the lowest and he was the one with the least right to speak. When other people were discussing, he held the copied volumes and flipped through them. Though he could not understand the meaning of those texts, he could just barely recognize the pronunciation of some words.

Xiao Lin suddenly had a thought and said in a half-joking tone, “Maybe it’s a transliterated word? Like foreign words that don’t appear in their vocabulary, so they use similarly pronounced characters instead. I used to learn English like that, using Chinese with a similar pronunciation in place of...”

Lolander chuckled and empathized with Xiao Lin. “I understand what you mean. I did the same when I learned Standard Normese!”

“How boring...” Chloe shot the two of them a blank glance. Tricks like that were clearly pointless for someone who was really proficient in foreign languages.

However, Professor Brown’s eyes lit up slightly and he said softly, “That’s a good idea. If this is a transliterated word, what language would it be transliterated in?”

“Judge Academy was the one that attacked the Thunder Kingdom, so it must be English,” Lolander said matter-of-factly.

Chloe shook her head. She read the untranslatable text in Ancient Normese and said, “This pronunciation obviously has no association with English.”

“Sounds a bit like French?”

“Please! I don’t think it’s French!” Lolander, the only one from a French academy, immediately denied.

“We should approach this with an open mind. The pronunciation might not be exactly the same when transliterating characters. You probably know that it’s sometimes really difficult for local indigenous people to learn our language. Their pronunciation would be quite awkward.”

Xiao Lin kept quiet. It was definitely not Chinese from the pronunciation, but he thought about it and spread his palms. “Let’s not get ourselves in a twist, guys. How many colonial colleges are there? We can just try each language one by one.”

Everyone looked at each other and seemed to view that idea favorably.

“There are a dozen colonial colleges in total, but there weren’t that many when the Thunder Kingdom was still built. Several colleges in South America and Africa were built in the last couple of decades, so we can exclude them from the list.”

“I think Xiao may be right. Let’s try everything!”

“Egyptians speak Arabic, right? Do any of us know Arabic?”

“We can just let Judge Academy go over there and find someone who understands the language. That won’t be a problem!”

“Silence, everyone!” Brown shouted in a deep voice. He rubbed his head before saying, “Let’s try all the languages that you’ve mastered. Since you’re all from different countries, you may try it in your native languages. Xiao, let’s start with you!”

Xiao Lin read it half-heartedly a few times and shook his head. “It’s not Chinese.”

“Not French either. Swear to God!” Lolander did not even bother to read it.

“It’s certainly not English either.”

...

The questioning soon ended, and many academies did not have any representatives there. Not every academy was like Dawn Academy, who did not share a boundary but produced students like Xiao Lin who understood Ancient Normese.

“What about Russian?” Professor Brown asked.

“None of the people from Russia’s Voyna Akademiya are here. They’re all war-loving madmen who don’t appreciate the wonders of linguistics!” Chloe’s tone seemed to suggest her unfavorable view of Voyna Akademiya.

“I know a little bit of Russian. My grandmother is Russian, but I don’t know much,” a thin, tall man answered in a low voice.

Chloe turned around awkwardly.

Brown could not care less about insignificant things and asked bluntly, “Then come over and read it. Does the pronunciation resemble Russian?”

The man frowned for a while and did not immediately state his answer. He looked a little nervous in front of Brown, and after a moment’s consideration, said, “I’m not sure, Professor. It doesn’t look like standard Russian, but if you ask me from a purely pronunciation point of view, my opinion is that this text is trying to express a name. A Russian’s name!”

Chapter 124 - The Marketplace

Chapter 124: The Marketplace

“Try saying them?” Brown looked up unexpectedly.

The man’s voice sounded a little stifled. It appeared as though he did not understand Russian very well or that the pronunciation itself was not very clear. He hesitated when identifying the name. “Ivan, Naveki, Tonya, wait no right? Let me think about it. It looks like it’s Ivanovich...”

Xiao Lin was the closest to Brown and noticed the old man’s pupils contracting violently when the name was mentioned. For the first time ever, Brown’s staid face had a look of horror and shock.

The man was oblivious to it and muttered to himself to try and correct it. More and more people gradually realized the name and their eyes were full of surprise and shock.

Lolander interrupted the man and said in a strange tone, “Are you sure you didn’t mistranslate? That’s impossible! You must have read it wrong!”

“What did I just hear?” Chloe seemed unable to recover from the shock.

Brown waved his hand and said in an astringent tone, “There’s no need to translate anymore. Ivanovich is probably the correct name. My God, it’s actually Ivan! His name appeared on the slate!”

There was a stark silence in the hall. Everyone’s expression was that of pure shock except for Xiao Lin, who did not understand the meaning behind the name. He shuffled in his seat and asked in a low voice, “Ahem, can anyone tell me who that Ivan is?”

Whoosh!

About a dozen pairs of speechless eyes turned to him, but Xiao Lin's words had eased the dignified atmosphere a little. Professor Brown rubbed his temples and sighed. "That's it for today. You wanted a day off, didn't you, Xiao? I'll approve it. In fact, I'll give you all a day off. No, two days off!"

"What about our pay!" Lolander recovered from his shock and was more concerned about his remuneration than the name Ivan.

Professor Brown's voice was very weak. Not wanting to argue over such trivial matters with Lolander, he gritted his teeth and simply waved his hand. "The remuneration will be paid as normal!"

Lolander smiled and set everything aside. "Let's head back then. I don't think you need to worry about it too much, Professor. The name must just be a coincidence, or someone else with the same name?"

On the way back, Xiao Lin seized the opportunity to ask Lolander and the others about it, but all of them either sighed or shook their heads. Even Lolander, who usually liked to joke around, did not say much, but simply asked Xiao Lin to go back and find the information himself. It was clear that everyone seemed to be in awe of that name.

It was not even midday when he arrived at the hotel and Song Junlang was not in the room. In fact, only half the morning had passed. Xiao Lin planned to continue his gravity acclimatization training in the inn, but after thinking about it for a moment, he decided to head to the trade district first and take a look around the city.

He was still unfamiliar with New Washington, but the enthusiastic innkeeper seemed to have noticed his difficulties and took the initiative to present him with a tourist map of the city. As a result, Xiao Lin felt that there were advantages to be gained by ingratiating the Norman innkeeper.

The bustling trade district was located at the center of the city. Various shops were lined on both sides of the streets, and it was easy to tell from the way the vendors dressed that an overwhelming majority were locals. At the heart of the district however, he slowly began to see some colonial vendors, but not all of them were from Judge Academy. At the very least, Xiao Lin spotted several Asians, like him.

The shops they operated were actually supermarket-type stores. Xiao Lin's interest was piqued and he went in to take a look. The items they sold included bones, skulls, teeth, and jewelry pendants. He spoke with the owner and learnt that they were from Dawn Academy. Those knickknacks were made into simple pendants from beast bones that were hunted by the orcs, and most of them were equipped with mystical properties after some simple spells were casted over it by the orc shamans. It was very common among the beastkin orcs and in Dawn City, but relatively rare at New Washington so they could often be sold at a price several times higher.

Xiao Lin politely declined the other party's offer and asked about the location where skill books were sold. He then left the supermarket, checked the map, turned left and did a turn before finally stopping at the corner of an alley. It was very old, and the stone bricks were completely covered with vines. It was likely an old site left behind from the Thunder Kingdom and the environment was very quiet, so much so that it appeared like a completely different world from the hustle and bustle outside.

Xiao Lin felt a little strange. Compared to the bustling market outside, the place looked very deserted and it would not have been easy to locate the place if someone had not given him directions.

He pushed open the dilapidated wooden door with a creak, and though the shop was rather small, the furnishings were quite unique. The two floor-to-ceiling windows were covered in old, thick branches and leaves. Some bright sunlight, mottled with the shadows casted by the leaves, lit the wooden floor sparsely.

Rows of bookshelves were positioned in the center. The tops of most bookshelves were exquisitely carved with several small animals, and by the window were two rows of sofas surrounding a round table. At that moment, several men and women were sitting there, sipping their aromatic coffee while holding exquisite books.

Once they heard the sound of the creaking door, they turned their heads immediately and looked suspiciously at Xiao Lin.

Xiao Lin was made to feel rather awkward. In any case, it looked more like a private gathering in a small library rather than a skill book shop. Xiao Lin's mind raced to find some of the English words that he knew.

A middle-aged man stood up first and asked, "Who are you? What are you doing here?"

Xiao Lin quickly found the words to phrase his answer, "Someone told me that skill books can be bought here, but I think I might have found the wrong place."

He was about to leave when a middle-aged blond woman, who sat with her back to him, turned around in surprise and could not help chuckling. "You're right. This is the place that sells skill books. How did you find it?"

More laughs were heard when Xiao Lin told them about the Dawn merchant who operated a supermarket. The middle-aged man shook his head, not knowing whether to laugh or cry. Then, he said directly in Chinese, "So you're from Dawn Academy. No wonder that old guy suggested you come to me."

The fluency of his Chinese gave Xiao Lin an immediate sense of familiarity. He released his hand from the doorknob and asked, "Are you also a graduate of Dawn Academy?"

He was a burly man with thinning hair and seemed to have shaved his head not too long ago. Clad in a white shirt, the muscles exposed to the air were swollen and resembled steel bars. Despite his robust looks, he had a kind disposition and smiled before replying, "You can say that. Hehe. Today's one of the rare occasions I'm a businessman. So, tell me Junior, what do you need?"

"So, he's your compatriot. We won't bother you then."

"Let's get together another day!"

The others on the sofa heard the middle-aged man's words and took the initiative to get up and bid their goodbyes. They smiled politely as they passed by Xiao Lin and proceeded to leave.

Chapter 125 - Skill Book

Chapter 125: Skill Book

“How may I address you?” the middle-aged man asked.

“Xiao’s my surname.” Xiao Lin did not immediately reveal his name, since the man was still a stranger.

The man did not seem to mind and smiled kindly, “My surname is Lin, and I left Dawn Academy a couple of decades ago. What grade are you in?”

Xiao Lin noticed that the man used ‘left’ instead of ‘graduate’, and that he had left for a couple of decades already. That would mean he was a very old senior, which confused and surprised Xiao Lin somewhat. In any case, he did not ask too much, and replied, “Freshman.”

The man was a little surprised. “Just enrolled? A freshman?”

“Yes.”

“I’m surprised that a Dawn’s freshman is here in New Washington.”

The two chatted briefly, but the man did not continue to ask Xiao Lin what he was doing there or how he arrived. It was quite clear that the man was a very educated person, and their topic soon shifted back to the bookshelves there.

“These books are my personal collection. They were collected during my travels around the New World in my early years. Not all of them are skill books. There are also some translations. I don’t have any other hobbies, so all I do is read books. I can’t use these books at all and it’s a waste just to store them, so I opened up a small shop here. I don’t really want to make money either, so it’s good enough if I call a few friends over to hang out here in my spare time.”

Speaking of that, the man smiled and said, “You can choose whatever you want and I’ll give it to you at cost price. It’s rare for customers to come over, and it wouldn’t hurt to give them to you too, but I’d still have to recover some of the cost. The cost of housing in New Washington isn’t cheap.”

Xiao Lin dove right in and began choosing, but within minutes, the man knew that Xiao Lin was a layperson who did not know how to pick out skill books. He was not too surprised after recalling that Xiao Lin was only a freshman, so he began to explain everything little by little.

Skill books were obviously different concepts from that in video games. It was not as though one could learn them immediately with the simple click of a mouse. Skill books were actually textbooks that describe in detail the composition of skills, its learning requirements, and their usage methods. The higher quality ones even came with classic battle examples.

The skill books on the man’s bookshelf were very old. The page corners were severely rolled-up and heavily creased, but it was clear that the man had stored those skill books very well and they were not too damaged.

Xiao Lin was not too averse to it, but he was still rather reluctant to pay. Those were not new books, but they did not seem to be cheap, even though they were sold at cost price.

However, his eyes lit up immediately after flipping through some of the books and his earlier doubts were completely cast away. In addition to the printed words, lines of small red writing frequently occurred beside them. They were almost certain to be annotations that the man added on.

The man guessed what Xiao Lin was thinking. “Those are my own personal learning experiences in the early days. You can refer to it if you want, but you can also ignore them. I dare not say that my experience is suitable for everyone.”

Xiao Lin flipped through some high-level skill books, and although he might not be able to learn its contents immediately, the man’s annotations were undoubtedly of great value.

Taking an example from the Flame Bullet’s skill book, the man had the following annotation beside a certain section of the introduction to the initial hand casting action: ‘If these actions are omitted, the power of the Flame Bullet will only be reduced by about 10%, but the casting time of the converged element will be reduced by several seconds.’

Such tiny details could sometimes play a crucial role. After all, the reduction of a spell’s casting time by a couple of seconds might prove to be the deciding factor between life and death.

Xiao Lin read those remarks with gusto and soon realized that he had been acting impolitely. Booksellers must surely loathe customers who only read without buying.

The man returned to his sofa and said with a smile, “Sit here and read. There’s more light here.”

Xiao Lin was a little embarrassed and put down the skill book. Aside from skill books, there were many works translated from the New World there. Though they were not necessarily skill books, they were all written by the local indigenous masters.

Xiao Lin felt spoilt for choice. Good books seemed to be all around him, but he did not know which one to choose.

The man saw his awkwardness and walked over again. “Tell me. What type of course are you taking? Realistically speaking, most of my skill books are probably not useful for freshmen.”

Xiao Lin thought for a while, and said, “Any basic skill books are fine.”

The man cocked an eyebrow. “What kind? There are plenty of basic skills. There are basic skills spells using all the major elements, as well as others that use complex elements. There are also basic skills for various weapons used in close combat.”

“What types do you have then?” Xiao Lin asked. The man’s book annotations were very useful, and Xiao Lin did not mind purchasing some basic skill books if there were some.

“Hehe, what if I have both?”

Xiao Lin was a little surprised. He could not help but wonder if the man mastered all weapons.

The man saw through Xiao Lin's thoughts again and laughed as he said, "I mentioned that I like reading books, but I enjoy collecting books even more. I don't have much energy to learn the skill books here. Many of them were actually bought back from others at a low price. Skill books are considered consumable items, because they have no value once you master a particular skill. People rarely buy used skill books, so I'll buy them at a low price."

"You buy them at a low price just to read them?" Xiao Lin was a little puzzled, but he quickly realized that the man read other people's notes in the skill book rather than the book itself.

Sure enough, the man said, "Everyone's understanding of skills is different. I'm not a prodigy, let alone a talented student. My understanding of some skills is actually based on the summary of other people's learning experiences."

"Can you show me your basic skills book?"

"You'll have to wait a moment."

The man very happily agreed and turned to head to his basement. After a while, he came back with a heavy copper box and placed it on the floor with a thud. The box was completely covered with a thick layer of dust.

"I've been accumulating these from my travels abroad during the early years. I haven't read them for decades. Later, all the major colleges began using standard textbooks and few people read these basic skill books too."

The man wiped off the dust as he explained and opened the lid of the box. It was filled with books of all sizes. Xiao Lin picked up a copy and looked through it before unexpectedly discovering that it was filled with handwritten characters. The difference from the skill books on the bookshelf lay in the fact that the books inside the box were all handwritten.

One might as well call them study notes instead of skill books.

Xiao Lin looked at the man with both surprise and doubt.

Chapter 126 - Differences in Teaching

Chapter 126: Differences in Teaching

Aside from that, Xiao Lin discovered that many of those notes were very faded. The yellowed covers made it hard for him to discern how old they actually were, and their texts were very messy. There was Chinese, English, Russian, and even Normese, which indicated that there were also study notes for the locals.

The man narrowed his eyes and said sentimentally, "There were no unified skills textbooks back then, let alone something like this in the New World. They were taught through apprenticeship, so everyone was accustomed to recording them as notes. The colonial academies later formulated relatively complete textbooks and summarized the more commonly used skills for students to

learn. Although it provided great convenience and saved time, it actually made the students lose their creative ability, which makes it hard to say whether it's a good or bad thing."

After muttering to himself for a while, the man laughed and shook his head. "Sorry, people talk a lot when they get old. In short, I only have these notes in my basic skill books. If you want the standard college textbooks, then I suggest that you go to the general bookstore on the corner of the trade district's second street. Their range of new books is quite comprehensive, and it seems that the store is officially supported by Judge Academy."

Xiao Lin touched the New Dollars in his pocket and asked a little hesitantly, "How much do these notes cost?"

The man laughed and said, "Well there's no need for that. I told you I'd give you at cost price because I used a lot of money and energy to get the books on the shelf. The books in this box were all acquired by chance. It's not worth any money and it'll be very insincere of me to charge a fee for them. If there's anything you can use, I'll give it to you for free."

Xiao Lin was shocked but he felt hesitant and said, "You're really giving me everything?"

The man was stunned by the question. "You want all of it?"

Xiao Lin, who felt that he might have misunderstood the man, cleared his throat to cover up his embarrassment.

"You haven't told me what courses you chose."

Xiao Lin's elective courses were not worth a mention, but when it came to skills, he preferred those with enhancement effects. The difficulty of taking more courses in the academy was evident, and even if he had the authority to listen to all classes, there might not be that many courses offered to him.

He thought briefly about it and felt that there was nothing for him to hide. He made a cursory explanation of his idea and said awkwardly, "I know I'm being a little foolish, but I'm still curious to try and succeed."

The man's jaw dropped and the shock on his face was as expected, but he soon calmed down again. He smiled in a fascinated manner. "Are you trying to learn from America's Lilith?"

"Lilith?" Xiao Lin had a look of shock that was even more profound than the man. "You know about Lilith too? Did she also take a lot of basic courses at the same time?"

The man shook his head and said, "Lilith has been traveling to and from the New World since freshman year. She is, without a doubt, a real genius. I don't know her, but don't forget that this is New Washington. A genius like her will be much more famous here than in other academies. Although I have never seen Lilith before, I heard that she never used the same weapons twice in battle. Whether she can use spells or not has never been confirmed."

Xiao Lin was taken by surprise. The virtual character could be vaguely identified as female, so he wondered if it was based on Lilith's original historical parameters.

The man continued, “My interest is piqued after you mentioned your idea. To what extent can this kind multifaceted training reach? I’m really looking forward to it.”

“You don’t think I’m a fool? Even dual cultivation of magic and martial arts is frowned upon.”

The man was stunned and a sad look came over him. “The college doesn’t allow dual cultivation now? Sigh, looks like the academy has seen a lot of changes in the past few decades!”

“What was Dawn Academy like in the past?” Xiao Lin was curious.

“We didn’t have any textbooks at that time, so sometimes we borrowed notes from our seniors. But most of the time, we developed as we please. The courses we chose were all a mess at that time. Hehe, I think about it sometimes, and I did take a lot of detours, but...”

Xiao Lin understood that Dawn Academy adopted a completely open and freestyle method of studying in the past, while the one used presently bore an increased resemblance to China’s traditional education system.

The man frowned. He was probably unable to discern the pros and cons of such a system, so in the end, he simply said, “In fact, the academy doesn’t need too many students who take a lax approach to their development. Systematic teaching is the right thing to do for long-term development of the colony. To give the simplest example, New Washington’s dragon-eagle knight regiment is America’s strongest military force, but for training these dragon-eagle knights, the elective courses are practically fixed with Advanced Knighthood, Advanced Beast Language, and Advanced Dragonspear Techniques. Do you understand?”

“Set training.” Xiao Lin nodded to express his understanding of it. From the college’s perspective, students who train according to the academy’s set could no doubt speed up the construction of the colony. Whatever the colony lacked could be remedied by designing the relevant course, but from a student’s perspective, Xiao Lin was obviously more inclined toward the freestyle teaching of the past.

The man did not seem too keen on talking more about that topic, so he shook his head and said, “I digress. It’s not as if no one has tried the idea you mentioned, but I personally haven’t seen it. Hence, my interest in it. I can give you these basic skill books for free.”

Xiao Lin was just about to rejoice when the man’s sentence took a turn, “But I won’t give it to you all at once. The true value of these skill books is only exhibited when they’re shown to someone else. It’s a pity to put them in here, but I don’t want you to put these things to waste. You can only choose no more than five books whenever you come here, and the next time you’re here, I need to know your progress before deciding whether or not to continue giving you these skill books.”

Xiao Lin hesitated for a bit when he heard that. He had been invited to New Washington on that occasion, and Dawn Academy might not let him go there if he wanted to come by himself next time.

In the event that he was somehow allowed to go again, he might not get the treatment that he was getting with all the super-potions and anti-gravity accessories. He did not believe that he could afford all that using only the New Dollars he had on him. The man’s annotations in the skill books were very interesting, but he had some doubt over whether those things were worth all the troubles and time to travel back to New Washington.

“Lin. Mr. Lin.” Xiao Lin recalled the man’s last name and asked, “Why don’t you go back to Dawn City?”

“For personal reasons. I can’t go back.” The man curtly expressed his reluctance to talk in depth about it and Xiao Lin could only give up on it.

The man did not know whether to laugh or cry. “These notes might not be very valuable now, but trust me, you’ll never find something like this elsewhere. The annotations in these skill books are extremely valuable to freshmen.”

Xiao Lin kept quiet, but his face was full of disbelief. Dawn Academy had plenty of senior students and graduates. Department Head Song was once a genius-level student too, so if worse came to worst, he could always ask Song Junlang for help.

Chapter 127 - Accessory

Chapter 127: Accessory

The man was a little helpless, but his tone was still very gentle. “Most of these notes have their original owner’s names. Why don’t you have a look at them first?”

Xiao Lin opened a book, the title page of which was written in flamboyant cursive calligraphy, which were surprisingly written in traditional Chinese characters. He could only recognize a name after reading it for some time: Tang Ken. He turned his head to mull over it for a moment before shaking his head in confusion.

He found another one with several small clerical scripts at the corner of the pages: Ouyang Ming.

Who was Ouyang Ming?

Xiao Lin shook his head in a daze before flipping through another one. On that occasion, the name on the page was written in Russian.

As good tempered the man was, he tried his best to control his repeatedly-twitching eyebrows when he saw Xiao Lin’s increasingly confused expression. He remained speechless for a moment and did not know what to say.

“Maybe I’ll just take these home first.” Xiao Lin was also a little embarrassed because he really did not know who those people were.

“Sure,” the man patted his forehead and suddenly remembered that the boy in front of him was still a freshman. He smiled bitterly, then shook his head and sighed. His attitude remained firm. “We’ll just do it like that. You can choose three to five books, and if you still want them next time, you’ll have to come back here again. Understood?”

Xiao Lin knew how to quit when he was ahead and nodded in agreement.

The selection process took some time, as all those notes added up to at least hundreds of copies. Xiao Lin consulted the man and screened them according to the learning requirements.

In the end, he brought back four notebooks: Lightsword, Earth-shattering Chop, Flame Bullet, and the Wind Defense Spell. Two were physical skills and two were spell skills, and all were Black Iron-ranked. According to the man, they were all suitable for beginners.

After bidding farewell, Xiao Lin realized that it was almost noon. Since an off-day was hard to come by for him, he decided to take a look around the other areas within the bustling trade district.

He had worked for a total of seven days, including that day itself. His pay had reached 2,800 New Dollars, and after deducting the sum spent at the training hall, he still had 2,700 remaining.

It was not a small sum of money. For example, the lowest level ordinary skill book cost about one to two hundred New Dollars, and the price of weapons and equipment was typically around that range too, albeit slightly more expensive. Slightly higher-quality ones, like various alchemical formulae, cost about four to five hundred New Dollars.

Xiao Lin walked around a few times and had a rough idea of the New Dollars' purchasing power, but he hesitated to buy anything and was not in a hurry. There were a large number of well-made weapons and armors in the equipment store, and although they were all very exciting, those things could also be obtained in Dawn Academy. Furthermore, the equipments' qualities were not that high, nor very durable either.

There might be few opportunities for him to make extra money in the future. Xiao Lin wanted to plan carefully and the money had to be spent on a blade. He looked around for a long time but there was nothing much to look at.

However, Xiao Lin found several interesting little pendants and accessories in several elf-owned shops. All were exquisitely made and very unique, and more importantly, often had good uses. After picking and choosing, he spent 700 New Dollars on two items.

One was an ornament that was supposed to be hung on his clothes. It was hexagonal and was about the size of a button. It had a shiny appearance that was neither agate nor pearls nor diamonds, but was very soft when pinched. The shop owner was an attractive male elf, who was very friendly but spoke poor English. After an explanation, Xiao Lin had only a vague idea of the power of those ornaments. It was only after he made some hand gestures and showed some explanatory diagrams that Xiao Lin understood.

The function of the ornament was simple and could be easily summarized. Its purpose was transfiguration, but not the kind that was seen in martial arts or television. According to the elven shop owner, the gadget was derived from the seeds of certain plants that were specially grown by the elves. The seeds contained a certain energy, and picking them before their germination could preserve that energy within and prevent it from being emitted.

After that energy was emitted, it could temporarily produce a certain hallucination effect to anyone who laid eyes on it. When worn, the wearer could also allow others to see a fake version of themselves, the effect of which was more or less like transfiguration.

Of course, that kind of energy could be used only once, or perhaps twice at most. Therefore, it was not very expensive—only 400 New Dollars. Nevertheless, it was a unique ornament that had some collection value, even after it had been used up.

The other piece was a coil of spider silk, refined from spiders that only inhabited the elven territory. It was much more resilient than ordinary rope, but the most important point was its extremely slim and light properties. The elven shopkeeper was very thoughtful: he placed the spider silk coil in a delicate ring and made it easy to carry.

The spider silk was cheaper, costing 300 New Dollars. After buying the two items, Xiao Lin touched his pocket—which only had 2,000 New Dollars left—and decided to stop for the time being. As someone who was new to the New World, there were a lot of dazzling things that attracted his attention. If he really wanted to let himself loose, the money he had was not enough at all.

It was past noon by the time he returned to the inn. Song Junlang had returned at some point and was sitting in the room with a birdcage on the table. Song Junlang was teasing the bird and feeding it.

The bird was about the size of his palm and was fiery red from its hook-shaped beak all the way to its talons. The color was extremely bright and brilliant, like a burning flame. Its head was adorned with an ink-black crest, and the combination of red and black was a breathtaking sight.

The bird food in Song Junlang's hands was equally as unusual. They were all pieces of meat the size of fingernails, with streaks of blood that were not even cleaned off. The bird swallowed them whole as they were tossed into the birdcage. It called out in low grunts, as if longing for the meat.

Xiao Lin was perplexed by what he saw. He did not expect Song Junlang to be in such a carefree mood. He asked curiously, "Pretty bird, Department Head Song. Where did you get it?"

"Bird?" Department Head Song shot a condescending glance at him and said in an irritated tone, "Please! Don't insult it by comparing it to a creature as low-level as a bird. This guy is a near-genuine dragon-eagle!"

"Dragon-eagle!" Xiao Lin widened his eyes and exclaimed.

"F*CK!" Song Junlang was obviously taken aback by Xiao Lin's exclamation and quickly dropped the meat in his hand. He hurriedly walked to the corridor outside the room and looked left and right, breathing a sigh of relief when he saw that there was no one around. He then shut the door quickly and said in a slightly reprimanding tone, "Keep it down! Don't spread this around, do you understand?"

Xiao Lin's mouth twitched slightly, feeling like he had been too naïve. Would the Song Junlang he knew even keep an ordinary bird?

Department Head Song's nervous expression earlier made Xiao Lin suddenly realize something. He lowered his voice. "You went to America's dragon-eagle knight regiment and stole a baby bird? I mean, a baby dragon-eagle."

"Steal? No, no, no. I got a dragon-eagle egg through my own channels. It just so happened to hatch today."

“Are dragon-eagle eggs that easy to get?”

“Of course not. Dragon-eagles are a military-controlled creature of Judge Academy. First, you have to pretend to be a bad guy and get reported, then you have to hide it from the inspection staff, and at long last, you can sneak out and take back with you a real dragon-eagle egg. This entire day had been just torturous!”

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 128: The Value of Notes

Although Song Junlang was complaining, his expression suggested that he was waiting to be praised. The Dragon-eagle Knight Regiment were the elite troops of Judge Academy, and it did not take a genius to know that the birth and growth of that creature was under America's strict control. Xiao Lin also had to give credit to Song Junlang's connections and skills, for the latter could steal a newly born dragon-eagle so stealthily in someone else's city.

“What are you going to do if you're discovered?” Xiao Lin did not praise him, but instead asked anxiously. However, he regretted asking that question as soon as he finished speaking.

“I've got someone up there!”

Department Head Song's answer was exactly the same as Xiao Lin's expected. Other than cursing silently and guessing just how strong his backer was, Xiao Lin was left in awe.

After feeding the creature, Song Junlang noticed that Xiao Lin came back with a big bag and asked out of curiosity. After learning that they were the skill books that Xiao Lin had obtained in the trade district, he reluctantly said, “It's not like we don't have all these basic skill books at our college. Why must you give the Americans a chance to make money from us.”

Xiao Lin defended himself. “They gave it away for free. These skill books are different because they've been used.”

Song Junlang's mind went blank for a moment before he said, “It's a used book? Are you talking about other people's notes and explanations in these books? Everyone's understanding of skills is different, and there's still the question of whether other people's experiences are useful for you. Most importantly, how will you ensure that other people's explanations are correct? If you study them incorrectly, you'll be lucky if you only waste your time. What if you're misguided or the spell bites you back? You'll be ruined for the rest of your life! ”

Xiao Lin was shocked because he did not expect it to be so serious. He was unsure if Department Head Song was just trying to frighten him, but he still felt uneasy. He quickly took out the four notebooks in the bag and handed them to Song Junlang. “Why don't you check them out for me? I'm not sure if the contents are completely correct.”

Song Junlang had nothing to do, so he agreed and took one at random. He whispered to himself as he perused through it. “Earth-shattering Chop? This is the kind of skill you can find on the street,

and you must use an axe-type weapon for it to truly be effective. Why do you need this for? If I remember correctly, you learned swordsmanship—”

Song Junlang’s complaining suddenly came to an abrupt end and his expression became rather odd. Xiao Lin thought he had actually found a wrong comment, so he hurriedly peered over, only to find that Department Head Song’s eyes were fixed on the title page of the note. A name was scribbled on the yellowed page: Tang Ken.

After a long while, Song Junlang looked up and shot Xiao Lin an unsure look. “This Tang Ken. That Tang Ken?”

Xiao Lin was confused. “Who is Tang Ken? I don’t know him.”

“Well, of course I know that you don’t know him... You’re still a freshman, and it’s normal if you haven’t heard of this person, but if this really is him. Tsk tsk...”

Xiao Lin was still confused. “Come on, don’t keep it to yourself. Who’s Tang Ken?”

Song Junlang’s teasing expression became somewhat serious. As he read through the notes, he slowly said, “Tang Ken was an S-rank genius who appeared in this world about a century ago. He was an outstanding character who had a terrifying strength. Anyone who has the heart to understand Dawn Academy’s history would definitely have heard about a figure like him. His contributions to Dawn Academy deserve everyone’s respect.”

Xiao Lin was tongue-tied. He then asked, “Then what level of strength is he now?”

Song Junlang sighed, “Decades ago, he was killed in the war with the orcs. He and his power were the sole force that stopped tens of thousands of elite orcs. In the end, his lifespan was drained and he died of exhaustion. It was such a pity; he could well become an even more legendary figure if he lived to this day.”

Xiao Lin became silent too, but he soon asked, “This note is a relic of his, then?”

Song Junlang put down the notebook and spread out his palms. “My knowledge of Tang Ken is limited to history textbooks. As far as the authenticity of this notebook is concerned, the only ones who could tell are probably those acquaintances who fought with him back then.”

Xiao Lin smiled bitterly. Those ideas were still too far away, so he left that notebook aside and passed him the Lightsword’s notes. After what happened earlier, Department Head Song’s expression became even more serious. Just looking at the signature of the notes made him burst, “F*CK!”

“What is it now?”

“Ouyang Ming? The Sword Saint Ouyang Ming! More than 50 years ago, he brought a light sword and went straight to the merfolk’s hinterlands, killing the merfolk’s king. At least half the credit for bringing peace to Dawn Academy’s surrounding areas should go to him...”

Song Junlang did not even bother to look through the contents and simply took out the other two notes for Flame Bullet and Wind Defense. His face had a look of utter shock when he glanced at the signatures.

Xiao Lin's curiosity was thoroughly aroused and he continued pressing further about them. The two notes were signed by foreigners, and they were not in English either, so he did not know what their names were.

"Basil, a French alchemist. He's created many novel alchemical formulas, many of which received recognition, even by Norma's natives. Wolff, a German wind elemental, is said to have taken the half-step into Legend-rank."

Xiao Lin had never heard of those people, but had a rough idea of their immense character from Song Junlang's awe-inspired tone. The two of them looked at each other for a long time, and Department Head Song asked silently, "The one who gave you the notes. Who was it?"

"Uh..." Xiao Lin suddenly remembered that he knew the other party only by their surname: Lin. No other information was given, and he actually had no plans to go back at all.

"Lin. A graduate of Dawn Academy?" Song Junlang racked his brains but failed to recall any famous graduates in the history of Dawn Academy. In any case, if the other party was really a graduate from decades ago, it was not at all surprising that Department Head Song did not know.

"What should I do about these notes then?"

"How should I know? I can help you identify them if they're from ordinary people, but if it's these people..." Song Junlang looked helpless.

"Such a valuable thing was actually given to me for free." Xiao Lin also had some doubts about it.

"Valuable? No, no, no. That person was right. Even if these signatures aren't forged, the practical value of these notes are very limited. At most, they're a small collection of commemorative value," Song Junlang corrected him. "These are just Black Iron-ranked skills. The level is really low, but it's not too bad for freshmen."

Department Head Song's meaning is very simple. Regardless of whether those notes were real or whether the annotations were correct, it was still something that he got for free. One could take a look at them when one had the time. Xiao Lin could learn from it if he found them useful, or vice versa. Either way, he would not lose anything.

Xiao Lin happened to think the same too. He set aside the skill books and thought of something more interesting. "Ivanovich. Have you heard this name before? It's probably Russian."

Chapter 129 - Ivanovich

If Song Junlang's previous expressions were that of shock and horror, his was absolutely petrified when Xiao Lin mentioned that name. His expressions froze in an instant.

Xiao Lin did not notice it and continued, “Professor Brown gave us a few days off. The name was discovered on the excavated stone slabs earlier today. At that time, everyone—including the professor—seemed a little strange. Um, Department Head Song...”

Xiao Lin discovered that Department Head Song’s expression was similar to that of Professor Brown. After calling out for a long time, Song Junlang rubbed his eyebrows and his tone suddenly became solemn. “Are you really sure the name Ivanovich was written on that stone slab? Could it be a translation error? I remember you telling me that there’s no one from Russia’s Voyna Akademiya there. None of the others understand Russian, do they?”

“It’s a transliterated word, but it’s just a guess really. Professor Brown seemed to believe it.” Xiao Lin briefly explained the situation at the time and could not help asking, “You haven’t told me yet. Who is this guy? Was he really strong like Tang Ken?”

Song Junlang’s expression was very strange; he could not tell whether it was disbelief or doubt. After considering it for a moment, he explained: “Tang Ken, Ouyang Ming? No, compared to Ivan, they’re not on the same level. All colonists must have this name etched forever into their memories.”

Department Head Song looked at Xiao Lin with a never-before-seen seriousness and said with clarity, “Ivanovich is the only person with a clear historical record of having an SS-level talent. He’s also the creator of the resurrection law!”

Xiao Lin was stunned. Even though he was just a freshman, he immediately understood the implications of that name. The resurrection law had the effect of deducting one’s lifespan after death. Colonists were only able to come thus far with that indispensable law. In fact, the entire world’s colonial academies ought to thank the person who created that law.

However, that did not explain Professor Brown’s near-terrified expression at that moment. Xiao Lin thought for a moment and suddenly had a realization. He asked, “Wait. When was the resurrection law created? And when did Ivanovich die?”

Song Junlang smiled wryly. “Do you finally get it now? That’s right, if the name on the stone tablet is really the legendary Ivan, then the time span won’t make any sense. The Thunder Kingdom’s capital was invaded in the year forty-eight N.C. In that same year, the high priest disappeared and all members of the royal family were sent to their deaths, but the resurrection law was only created in the year sixty-eight N.C. Ivan also died because of that.”

“It’s impossible to know when Ivanovich enrolled and how he spent his days at the academy. These are all listed as top secret by Russia’s Voyna Akademiya. What is certain is that there can’t possibly be anyone who knew who he was during forty-eight N.C.!”

Xiao Lin then said, “So, those slates must have been placed after the destruction of the Thunder Kingdom? But that’s difficult to explain away too. Why put those slabs there?”

Department Head Song sighed, “Things are more complicated than you think. The dark room may have existed a long time ago. You said two days ago that the palace was the palace of the last queen, and the last queen was the priest’s sister who disappeared during that time. The only thing we can be sure of is that the high priest didn’t die.”

Xiao Lin found it quite incredible. “He even lived under the noses of the Americans and quietly made these slates to put into the palace’s dark room.”

“Yes. This is hard to make sense of, but if the person who made the slab is the high priest, then he must be alive and knew about Ivan, since his name is engraved on the slab. Even though Ivan was a SS-level talent during that time, he was still not very well-known. It was only when the resurrection law came to being that even Norma’s native tribes knew his name.”

“That means the earliest time the high priest could have engraved and placed the slate there must have been after sixty-eight N.C.” Xiao Lin then remembered something. “I remember Hank saying that the high priest was already very old at the time, and there was no potion or spell that could prolong his life. How did he live to sixty-eight N.C.?”

“That’s not important. The question is why did the high priest do this? Put yourself in his position and think about it, Xiao Lin. If you were that high priest, what would you do if you were in the same situation?”

“Me?” Xiao Lin was taken aback. He thought for a moment and said, “If my country was destroyed and everyone else was killed except for me, I definitely won’t be able to accept it and I’ll find ways to retaliate.”

“Exactly. In such a situation, a normal person would definitely wait for an opportunity to retaliate. There are many forms of retaliation: assassination, sabotage, or instigating a rebellion. With the high priest’s ability and prestige during that period, he could do any of those things as he pleased, but he didn’t. Instead, he hid in the shadows and carved out that slab, with Ivan’s name appearing there too. All of this is just too strange.”

The two of them deliberated for some time and were still at a loss. In fact, the crux of the matter was still the slates. It was important to figure out what contents were recorded on them, and as far as Judge Academy was concerned, they had to face a more embarrassing problem—they had no way to determine whether the high priest still existed to that day.

Indeed, the phrase used was ‘still exist’, not ‘still alive’.

Logic dictated that it was impossible for the high priest to remain alive until the present, but there was a possibility that he used some method unknown to the colonial academies, or perhaps even prolonging his life in another different form altogether.

Those were the speculative theories put forth when the Thunder Kingdom was invaded and the high priest was nowhere to be found. The man never showed up, even after many years, so it was natural that everyone thought he was dead. The initial disclosure of the slate’s contents, however, forced America to reconsider all those possibilities.

Song Junlang’s expression remained solemn after learning about that. He did not even have any time to take care of his just-acquired little dragon-eagle. Instead, he left it to Xiao Lin and told the latter to feed it on his behalf. Meanwhile, he told Xiao Lin that he wanted to talk to Dawn Academy via trans-spatial communication. He was elusive all day long and often disappeared without a trace.

Xiao Lin did not bother too much about Ivan or the high priest, since they were of no importance to him. The longest he would stay in New Washington was about a month at most, after which he would have to return.

During his hard-to-come-by two-day paid leave, Xiao Lin chose not to continue shopping, but instead did gravity training in his room. However, there was no central computer like Dawn Academy that could record his body's various attributes and monitor his progress in real-time.

As a result, Xiao Lin was unsure how effective his training would be, but judging from the number of push-ups he could do each time, he felt that he was slowly adapting.

Chapter 130 - Attack

Chapter 130: Attack

Xiao Lin's two-day leave passed quickly. He received no further notice stating that the leave would continue, which meant that he had to report to Professor Brown as usual. He got up early in the morning and waited for a long time at the inn entrance, but his escort Norn was nowhere to be seen.

As the intern from the Foreign Affairs Department who was responsible for picking Xiao Lin up every day, Norn had never been late, which left Xiao Lin scratching his head. Norn still did not appear after ten or so minutes, so Xiao Lin decided to go to the palace by himself. Brown was a very harsh old man, and Xiao Lin's pay might even be deducted if he was late. All of a sudden, Norn finally arrived.

"I was going to be late. Why are you only here now?" Xiao Lin complained, somewhat dissatisfied.

Norn acted quite strange that day. He did not even say a single word, even though he was usually very talkative, and his face was lowered slightly, making it difficult to see his expression. Xiao Lin wondered if he had seen things wrongly after noticing that Norn's clothes were very messy, giving off a rather awkward vibe. He nodded to Xiao Lin and proceeded to set off at once.

Xiao Lin shrugged. He and Norn were not really that close, and since the other party did not want to explain, Xiao Lin naturally did not bother to say anything. Norn's purpose of picking him up was to provide the necessary documents when entering and leaving the palace area every day. Xiao Lin found it quite troublesome, but the Americans seemed reluctant to hand over such documents to other colleges.

New Washington was already very lively in the early morning, and people were bustling on the clean streets. Even so, Xiao Lin was quite surprised to see that there were a lot of heavily armed people patrolling back and forth, and their equipment looked rather sophisticated. The conspicuous red dragon-eagle logo on their armor belied their identity: they were the dragon-eagle knight regiment, and they stopped people on the street from time to time to commence random interrogations.

Xiao Lin looked pensive throughout their journey, but those dragon-eagle knights did not give him and Norn a hard time because the Norn was leading the way. They went straight through the

periphery of the palace grounds and reached the desolate palace. As always, their fingerprints were verified under the watchful gazes of two guards stationed outside.

Xiao Lin then bid farewell to Norn and entered the palace hall. He arrived there early, and only three or four people were present. The others were not there yet, and none of them went to work immediately. They instead chatted with each other during that spare time.

“Have you noticed that the city’s defenses increased significantly today!”

“The Dragon-eagle Knight Regiment seems to have been dispatched.”

“Tsk, tsk. The Americans are probably a little scared after Ivan’s name appeared on that slate.”

“In fact, I think the Americans are making a big deal about nothing. Even if the high priest lives to the present, the possibility that he’d instigate a rebellion is very low. I don’t think the second or even the third generation of local natives will band together, especially when their strength is far behind that of the dragon-eagle knights.”

“The success of a rebellion would definitely be zero, but they might still be able to inflict some damage. The Americans are really terrified of terrorist attacks and the like.”

“Heh, doesn’t matter. We’ll be back home in just over half a month.”

The significance of the name on the stone slab from two days ago was easy to understand with a bit of critical thinking, but the others were similarly unconcerned like Xiao Lin. Whether the high priest was dead or alive, or whether he was instigating a rebellion or trying to wreak havoc, they were all Judge Academy’s headaches and had nothing to do with them.

A new round of work began as soon as everyone else came. Professor Brown, who finally showed up, did not express any opinions on the matter, but verbally asked everyone to speed up their progress.

They had just started their work when a dull explosion suddenly occurred outside the palace. What soon followed was a clamor of voices, hasty footsteps, and the clanging of blades. Another, more violent explosion soon occurred, and everything soon reverted back to calm.

Xiao Lin and the others raised their heads and looked at each other. Their eyes were filled with bewilderment and confusion. That was the deepest part of the palace district and the central area of New Washington, so it was quite impossible for a battle to occur there.

Bang!

The palace gates were pushed open heavily and several of them stepped back instinctually. They all breathed a sigh of relief when they saw the person who broke in: Commander Harry of the dragon-eagle knight regiment.

“Excuse me. What happened?” Lolander asked, but Harry kept quiet and glanced at him sternly.

After Professor Brown came down, Harry nodded at him slightly and said in a deep voice, “Someone tried to break into the palace area just now, but I happened to be nearby.”

Brown frowned in surprise. “They were targeting this place?”

“From the other party’s path of movement, this place is the only possibility.”

“Who was it?”

“I don’t know. He escaped.”

“The palace area is heavily guarded and you need special documents to get in and out. How could someone just enter like that!”

“I’m still investigating. The other party’s objective is unclear and I’d like to strengthen the security of this palace from today onward. I’m sure you have no objection to it, Professor.”

“I’d have to trouble you to do that, Commander Harry.”

“Don’t worry. No matter who that person is, they’re in New Washington City after all. It’s not somewhere they can just mess around!”

Harry left quickly again, but dozens of other knights that came with him stayed behind. Several of them were stationed in the hall itself. Dressed in sturdy armor, only their expressionless eyes were exposed and they swept their gazes across everyone.

The feeling obviously made Xiao Lin and the others uncomfortable. Chloe protested, feeling that Judge Academy did not trust them and therefore came to monitor them on purpose. She felt insulted, but with things reaching that point, no one in America would heed her protests.

Xiao Lin’s heart was gradually shrouded in a haze and he was feeling unwell. The Americans’ actions were clearly a sign that they suspected the presence of a mole who provided help for the mysterious intruder.

There was a chill in the hall. No one felt interested in chatting anymore with those cold eyes staring at them. In light of that, their progress accelerated tremendously, and everyone had the same thought in mind—finish all the work as soon as possible and leave the city at the soonest available opportunity.

After returning to the inn, Xiao Lin informed Song Junlang of the matter, causing the latter’s expression to turn even more solemn. He did not express any opinions about it, but repeatedly told Xiao Lin to watch himself and refrain from interfering regardless of what happened. After all, they were from Dawn Academy, and New Washington’s affairs had nothing to do with them.

Life returned to peace and calm again in the next few days. The mysterious man who broke into the palace disappeared and never reappeared again. No one knew if the other party had left New Washington or was simply laying low.

Xiao Lin’s routine had not changed much either. He worked for Professor Brown during the day and trained at the inn at night. Once he could do a higher number of push-ups in the gravitational environment, he planned on trying night runs.

Unfortunately, he was quickly caught by the guards barely seconds after leaving the inn. Once he went through some troublesome procedures and had his identity confirmed, they proceeded to release him. He then learnt of some unexpected news from Department Head Song.

New Washington was officially going to implement a curfew from that week onward!

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 131: Single Moon Festival

According to the announcements that were widely spread by Judge Academy, the entire city would be on a curfew at seven o'clock. Other than those approved by the officials, anyone who was out of their homes would be treated as a suspect and would be captured.

Song Junlang told Xiao Lin that curfews were not all that rare. Plenty of colonial territories maintained it in order to preserve order, but it usually applied only to the natives, not to colonists.

However, not only did New Washington apply the curfew to everyone, it was also the first time a curfew had ever been applied in the city that had only known peace.

"The Americans are really scared this time, but what are they afraid of?" Song Junlang could make no sense of it.

Department Head Song would make Xiao Lin recount the entire day's happenings every time he came back in order to find a shred of a clue to understand what was happening, especially to find out what was recorded in those stone plates.

It was not only Xiao Lin; even Lolander and the other coworkers were filled with curiosity, despite their saying that they were not interested. All of them would subtly try and make their own translations while working, but their Ancient Normese was not up to par, and they were unable to solve the riddle.

Xiao Lin did not participate in the discussions, and no one bothered to ask him as well since his LV1 Ancient Normese would not provide any help whatsoever. Xiao Lin was biding his time as well.

The day his replication skill went off cooldown, he got to the palace hall especially early, before anyone else had got there. He knew that Professor Brown always arrived earlier than anyone else. In just a few short minutes, Professor Brown pushed open the door and entered. He was surprised when he saw Xiao Lin, but was quick to nod at him in praise. He gave a few encouraging words and headed upstairs.

[Replication skill, activated!]

[Ancient Normese MAX, replicated!]

Xiao Lin did not come early to gain Professor Brown's praise; he was only there for the opportunity to replicate Professor Brown's skill, and everything was going as smoothly as he anticipated.

All the copied notes were with Professor Brown, but it was not an issue as the stone plates that had been put together were all still neatly arranged in the wall. After using his skill, he hurried over to where the stone plates were.

Professor Brown's maxed out Ancient Normese was something else; those indecipherable symbols suddenly became clear and meaningful. Xiao Lin could pretty much read ten lines with a glance, so he managed to quickly read through everything without pause.

"Mortals in the living world, heed God's call. In this world filled with turmoil, a blood moon will rise. Then, the light of God will once again rise from the ancient ashes. In the cover of the fog, my prayers will cleanse all sin and impurities..."

There were over forty stone plates, and Xiao Lin read them very easily. However, the more he read, the more he was confused. He could recognise all the words, but when they were grouped together, he could not understand the meaning at all.

The contents seemed like poetry or prose, or even some form of litany. If the one who carved the stone plates was the high priest, then Xiao Lin doubted he would have been so idle as to write poetry to soothe his hatred.

Xiao Lin once again sped through the contents which were hard to understand, turning his gaze to the plates that had Ivanovich's names on them. The appearance of the name of the man who established the Law of Immortality was also when Judge Academy started to act alarmed.

The state of that stone plate was worse than the others, even after Lolander and the rest of them restored it. There was still not much left of the plate. The words on the stone plate were also very blurry and hard to recognize.

They guessed that these stone plates were placed into the dark room at different times. The one he was looking at could very well have been placed there even longer ago, and the ones that were better preserved could have been placed there not as long ago. Thankfully, it was not prose written on that particular stone plate, and the meaning was easy to understand.

"... I spent several decades to finally understand that these evil demons come from a different point of time and space... The power they currently have is more horrifying than I imagined... Ivanovich; he used up all his powers and even went against God. God will not forgive him... God did not abandon us. Ivanovich, that heathen enlightened me. I finally found a way to defeat these evil demons..."

His replication skill had ended, but Xiao Lin remembered all the contents. He felt that his understanding of the New World was way too shallow, but there were no results, even after asking Department Head Song that night.

Song Junlang did not ask Xiao Lin where he got the translation, skipping straight to analysis. "The evil demons in this case definitely refers to us, but what does it mean by defeating us? That part's too vague."

"Maybe it means fanning the flames of rebellion." Xiao Lin said.

“The problem is that these stone plates were carved who knows how many years ago, and were only recently excavated. If it was for a rebellion, then it would be way too late. Furthermore, who would stupidly carve all of that on the stone plates and wait for the Americans to find it so they could prepare themselves?”

The two of them discussed for half a day, but could not seem to find any headway. It only caused Xiao Lin to be even more confused. New Washington’s law enforcement grew stricter, since it was still a city the Americans had garrisoned in for a long time. Even if there had been a long peacetime, when Judge Academy really put their mind to strict investigation, they still managed to find several problematic areas.

Xiao Lin still maintained his routine of only going to the inn and the palace, and would occasionally try to get some news from Lolander and the others. Just the day before, they said that Judge Academy captured a few natives who were acting suspiciously. Those people called themselves merchants from outside, but they suddenly fought back when they were being questioned. They were quite skilled, even managing to kill a few Americans in the process.

Of course, under the influence of the resurrection tower, those unlucky eggs only lost 20 years of their life, but that was still enough to cause alarm.

“It’s definitely not possible for a rebellion to happen; the dragon-eagle knights are here and we have the resurrection tower. The New Washington’s defenses are impenetrable, but some might be trying to cause a scare, since it will be the Single Moon Festival in a few days,” Lolander said when they were resting.

“Single Moon Festival?”

“Planet Norma has two moons, and most of the time, both of them are in the sky. However, sometimes the two moons would completely overlap, making it seem like there is only one moon in the sky. The Normans think it a day of blessing, so they would sing and dance in celebration. The colonists call it the Single Moon Festival,” Lolander explained to Xiao Lin.

Xiao Lin had been training every night at the inn in those days, so he had no time to look at the moon. Of course, he did not notice that the moons had some parts that overlapped. When they completely overlapped, it would be the Single Moon Festival.

Chapter 132 - Before The Festival

Chapter 132: Before The Festival

Translator: EndlessFantasy Translation **Editor:** EndlessFantasy Translation

According to Norman mythology, millions of years ago, God created the world during the day the moon converged. Therefore, the Normans believed that God would descend upon them on that day and bless everyone.

The Single Moon Festival felt like Christmas or the Spring Festival on Earth, but the difference was that the moons did not converge on a regular basis, and would usually only happen every four or

five years. The natives viewed the festival as very important, and was not an event that could be simply cancelled. Even the colonists, who set up various stores within the city, would use various discounts to earn a killing from the natives during this time.

New Washington had only known peace and prosperity. It was even well-known amongst the natives. If they actually cancelled festival celebrations, it would be a very big hit to various parties. After all, colonizing was not just about war; economy and profit were also things everyone was fighting for.

That was why Judge Academy was currently in a precarious situation. More and more evidence pointed toward an unknown and mysterious presence in the city that could very possibly perform some destructive activities in the city. It would put the Americans in a very tough spot if chaos were to happen during that important festival.

Various checkpoints had been set up within the city for the curfew, and there were a lot more stringent measures being taken at the city entrances. Everyone who entered would need to give proof of identity and records of an address, especially natives from the outside. Any resistance or suspicious activity would be detained on the spot.

Xiao Lin managed to learn quite a lot thanks to Department Head Song, and Song Junlang's news was much more detailed than Lolander's.

For instance, upon detailed inspection, the suspicious detainees were mere risk takers who tried to enter for illegal trade, or even smugglers and traffickers attempting to profit from the Single Moon Festival. Those were all normal occurrences, but the Judge Academy usually turned a blind eye to them. However, to say that those activities could be linked to rebellion would be quite a stretch.

"The Americans will probably need to allow the Single Moon Festival to carry on. It's very hard to just cancel the festival," Song Junlang said. "The inspections in the city have been getting increasingly stricter lately. Judge Academy is probably trying to ensure everything goes well on that day."

Xiao Lin said, "That's all fine and dandy, but to be honest, it's hard to tie all this to the stone plates and say that everything was orchestrated by the high priest who is still alive. However, surely he wasn't just carving all those stone plates to vent his feelings?"

Department Head Song shook his head. "Let the Americans worry about this. Just focus on doing everything Professor Brown asks of you, and don't cause any trouble. To be honest, the best thing for us would be to leave New Washington by the Single Moon Festival, but it's not possible anymore. After some investigation, I found out that the teleportation platform would be temporarily closed."

"Closed?" Xiao Lin gaped, and then he said in realization, "Are they taking precautions against the other academies?"

"Of course!" Song Junlang coldly smiled. "Even if the colonists are considered a single body, we still have our conflicts when it comes to individual interests, so basic precautions are a must."

There were two fundamental structures that were needed in every colonist academy city: a resurrection tower and a wormhole. A resurrection tower tied into the lives of the colonists. The

Law of Immortality was the most important factor for them in overcoming the advantage in numbers the natives had.

The wormholes were the foundations of all the academies. It ensured that resources and new recruits from Earth or the academies could arrive on the planet. Even though there was more than one wormhole in the world, if the Americans lost their wormhole, it could signal the end of Judge Academy.

No matter what happened, the Americans could not lose either of them.

That was why Judge Academy's greatest defensive strength, the dragon-eagle knights, were all garrisoned in those two locations as of late. The wormhole was even closed off temporarily. The Americans seemed to place more importance on those than the contents of the stone plates.

At the end of the third week, Xiao Lin noticed that all the dragon-eagle knights stationed in the palace had been dismissed, which was how he made that guess. Of course, the castle district was still the heart of the city, so the necessary defenses were still there.

"There shouldn't be any problems with so many defenses!" After work that day, Lolander casually said that to everyone. He had returned to his usual chatty self after the hall guards were sent away.

It was actually awkward for them those few days thanks to the tensions within the city. The wormhole's temporary closure did nothing to assuage their moods either. The students of the western academies were particularly sensitive to things like terrorism, so they were constantly worried of being attacked by natives on the streets.

"The Americans are quite good at handling these problems," Lolander said, but it was unclear if he was consoling himself or everyone else.

"I heard yesterday that the wormholes would be reopened after the Single Moon Festival. When the time comes, I'm getting out of here. I don't even care about my remaining wages!"

"Xiao! What do you think?" The few Europeans looked at Xiao Lin after voicing their opinions.

"The stone plates seem to be about finished. If we pick up the pace, we'll definitely be finished by the end of the month." Xiao Lin agreed with them as well. He was only a new student who was not even at the Black Iron-rank; he absolutely had to stay out of conflicts. The best way to do that was to ensure he could leave early, but he still wanted the remainder of his wages, especially after he saw the value of New Dollars in the trade district a few days ago. That sum of money was quite big for the broke Xiao Lin.

The rest of them thought for a while, and felt like Xiao Lin made sense. It was best if they finished up the stone plates. Otherwise, they might not even get permission to use the wormhole, especially if Professor Brown decided to stop them.

At the time, the Single Moon Festival was three days away. Other than the increase in guards and patrols, a celebratory atmosphere spread throughout the streets, especially in the commoner district where Normans were more prevalent. The streets got increasingly more colorful as the holiday spirit increased. Even the outskirts of the city saw Normans building various platforms and transporting various foods.

A large bonfire gathering would be held during the night of the festival. The traditional way of celebrating the festival was even grander, with the king or some other individual with high status performing various rituals to offer prayer and thanks to the gods while accepting the coming of the future.

Those traditions consumed time and resources, and the Americans felt it had the potential to foster rebellious sentiment, so they cancelled it. However, the Normans could still hold small scale prayers in their own homes, which were regarded as fine.

Chapter 133 - Skill Requirements

Chapter 133: Skill Requirements

Despite the tension in New Washington, Xiao Lin's life did not change much. In the day, he would work with Professor Brown, and at night, he would train in the inn. The only difference was, during his spare time after training, Xiao Lin was responsible for feeding the dragon-eagle chick that would constantly cry for food.

Department Head Song said he had urgent business, and had been missing for a few days.

Other than that, Xiao Lin would look at the four skill books whenever he was free. The basic skills were not too hard to grasp, but there were a lot of prerequisites to those skills. It would take quite some time to truly master them.

For example, the Earth-shattering chop required a level four mastery in Basic Axe-like Weapons and a MAX in Slashing. Those are the requirements that Xiao Lin referred to which needed to be fulfilled to learn that skill.

Xiao Lin once suspected he was in a game world, so he asked Song Junlang what would happen if he learned the skill without satisfying the requirements.

Song Junlang laughed out loud, and gave a simple example. It was logically possible for a year one student to jump to a year six graduating class, but the prerequisite would be that the student could grasp all the basic knowledge that a year six student knew.

Learning skills was just like that; some basic weapon mastery and mastery in slashing were the foundations to the Earth-shattering Chop. It was impossible to learn it without first having the other two.

That was also the reason why Xiao Lin chose a skill that could only be used with axes, because he had already maxed out his slashing. Slashing was a skill that could be used with any sort of melee weapon. Compared to basic weapons mastery, active skills of that sort were much harder to level up, so Xiao Lin did not want to waste it.

Lightsword had slightly higher requirements. It needed Basic Swordsmanship to be at LV6 and Basic Sword Aura at LV1.

Wind Defense needed Basic Perception LV6 and Wind Affinity LV1.

Flame Bullet needed Basic Perception LV4 and Fire Affinity LV1.

Compared to basic skills, those few skills were doubtlessly better, because basic skills usually only had one requirement, such as being able to learn Energy Bomb with just Basic Perception LV3.

Xiao Lin did not pass any of the requirements at the moment, but with the speed that the Academic Genius talent allowed him to learn at, it could all be done in a short period, which is why he did not stop learning about the skills in the notes. He was just too curious.

On the day of the Single Moon Festival, Xiao Lin noticed the entire city on high alert when he left in the morning. Judge Academy had sent out a large number of students to be on patrol, both in public and in hiding. Dragon-eagles patrolled the skies in squads, and the tall resurrection tower was their focal point.

“Don’t you guys get a holiday during the Single Moon Festival?” Xiao Lin idly chatted with Norn on the way, but he did not get an answer. The guy had been acting weird since a week ago.

The real celebrations only started at night, but it was obvious that even during the day that there were a lot more people out than usual. Even though the inspections at the city gate were harsher than usual, there were still a lot of natives in the crowd, waiting for the celebrations that they could only hold once every four to five years.

Professor Brown did not give them a day off, and Lolander told them the colonists did not celebrate the Single Moon Festival. The various colonial territories actually celebrated holidays from Earth. On one hand, it was out of habit, but the other more important reason was to slowly erase the influence of local traditions and cultures.

Dawn Academy held large celebrations for Spring Festival, and the western academies did the same for Christmas. Even the natives would be given a holiday, which slowly accustomed them to the festivals and celebrations of Earth.

“Surely nothing is going to happen,” Chloe said solemnly. Even her work was slower than usual. If someone wanted to mess with Judge Academy, today would without a doubt, be the best chance.”

“Relax, I believe in the might of the dragon-eagle knights!” Lolander consoled her.

“I believe that the century old city of the Americans would not be so easily toppled,” Xiao Lin said.

“I hope so...”

Bam!

The door was once again forcefully pushed open, shocking everyone. After looking at the culprit, everyone quickly tossed a confused gaze toward Xiao Lin. Xiao Lin’s eyebrow could not help but twitch when he saw the girl who waltzed inside.

Lilith was wearing a full suit of purple armor as she walked into the palace in large strides. She pointed at Xiao Lin. “I heard you’re heading back soon? That won’t do. I have to fight your giant golden dragon before you leave!”

Just two days ago, Xiao Lin and the rest of them had asked Professor Brown to allow them to return to their respective academies. Of course, they did not cite New Washington being unsafe as the reason, but instead that the job was almost complete. That was the truth, in the few days of them working extra diligently, there were less than ten stone plates left.

Xiao Lin did not know where Lilith heard the news, but her pale face was very obviously angry. She seemed to not want Xiao Lin to slip away so easily.

Xiao Lin sighed miserably, Lilith had not come looking for him in the past few days, so he had almost forgotten about it. Dueling a giant golden dragon was something most people would treat as a joke, but he did not expect Lilith to be serious, to the extent that she came over today with a full suit of armor. She probably was not going to let the matter rest.

Xiao Lin smiled bitterly. “It’s the Single Moon Festival today, and the whole city is on high alert. I don’t think it’s a good idea to have the fight today.”

“Of course, we won’t do it in the city. I’ll bring you outside. All you need to do is release your dragon!” After that Lilith, added, “You don’t have to worry about any responsibilities. I’ve already submitted a request to the mayor of New Washington and gained approval.”

Xiao Lin’s lips twitched. How could such an absurd thing be approved. Was Lilith’s position among the Americans that high? Or did they just trust her that much?

Xiao Lin exasperatedly pointed at the stone plates on the floor. “Look, I have a lot to do here, and we’re actually doing all this for your academy. You need to at least let me finish my work first.”

“You’ll be finished at some point. I’ll just wait here!”

“I’ll be working until very late.”

“I have nothing to do tonight anyway.”

“Why do you keep pestering me?”

“I wouldn’t mind if you found me another giant dragon.”

“Aren’t you afraid of dying? Even the knight regiment couldn’t defeat that dragon.” Xiao Lin tried scaring her away.

“That’s great! Only through fighting to the limit can I improve myself!” Lilith’s face was filled with bloodthirst.

Failing to dissuade her, Xiao Lin sighed again. The rest of them could only offer sympathetic looks. None of them dared draw the ire of the legendary Demon Queen Lilith.

Chapter 134 - Sudden Change

Chapter 134: Sudden Change

The moon rose exceptionally early for the Single Moon Festival. The sun would usually only set after six on most days, but it started to get dark after five that day.

Xiao Lin used his break to look out of the palace, only to see the two round moons had converged, as if they had merged into one. However, it did not dim the moonlight. It was actually brighter than usual; a vibrant, silver moonlight lit up the world. Even the weeds and bugs on the ground within the palace could be clearly seen.

Xiao Lin stared for a moment when a cold breeze blew by, causing him to sneeze. He shook his head. "Why is it suddenly so cold?"

Lolander had followed him and heard his complaint. He smiled and said, "You really don't know anything about the New World, huh? Even though Planet Norma has the four seasons, it's different from on Earth. The seasons here are not wholly dependent on the position of the planet relative to the sun. Even the moons have a very big effect on the changing of seasons. That is why Planet Norma's seasons are calculated from when the moons converge to when they converge again, so their four seasons span four to five years."

"So each season lasts an entire year?" Xiao Lin was surprised.

"More or less, sometimes it's longer, sometimes it's shorter. Even more interesting is that there's a branch of magic called Astrology on this planet, which is similar to astronomy on earth. The converging on the moons are usually calculated by astrologians. After the Single Moon Festival today, it will be autumn from tomorrow onward." Lolander rubbed his neck. He was only wearing a thin T-shirt, so he felt the chill as well.

"Doesn't it start with spring?"

"The New World's seasons start with autumn. Don't ask me why. I know nothing of astrology."

Xiao Lin massaged his shoulders. "Then let me ask another question. What type of magic is astrology? I've never seen anything like that in my academy's courses."

"Haha. I've heard that the dean of Dawn Academy doesn't like astrology. It seems that's true." Lolander laughed softly. "Astrology has very high requirements to begin studying in. The course exists in our academy, but it is only available after the third year. There are usually a lot of people who take it up, but more than ninety percent of them usually quit after half a year."

"Is it really hard?"

"Ah, don't ask me that. I've never liked magic. However, astrologists are quite rare on Planet Norma. Only a member of royalty or someone like a high priest would be able to take up the study."

"So was the high priest of Thunder Kingdom back in the day a student of this branch of magic?"

"Who knows."

As the two of them chatted, they heard Professor Brown's footsteps coming from the hall. His footsteps had the unique quality of always sounding very rushed, so they could make it out after a while.

They looked at each other in exasperation and prepared to continue working. They used to only work until six in the evening, but once tensions started rising within the city, they started to work overtime in order to leave New Washington sooner, only leaving at eight.

"Oh? It's Norn." Xiao Lin saw the American man who sent him to work everyday from the corner of his eye. Norn usually came at eight since he started working overtime.

Xiao Lin turned and told Lolander, "Norn is the one in charge of bringing me around. He'd probably forgotten the time. Why don't you head back first? I'll remind him."

However, after a few steps, a look of horror suddenly appeared on Xiao Lin's face. He was in shock for a moment as his entire body quivered before he immediately turned around and ran back to the palace, quickly closing the door behind him.

Behind him, under the silver moonlight, Norn's face had a strange and sinister smile. The muscles and flesh on his face seemed abnormally rigid, and he looked like a machine that was trying to mimic a smile, but it only ended up making his face even more terrifying.

Beneath Norn's legs was an entire floor full of blood. Two corpses lay down on the floor next to him: palace guards. Their eyes were wide open, frozen in disbelief before their death. They probably did not expect their fellow American to suddenly attack them, completely overwhelming and killing them with one strike.

The corpses did not remain there for long. After a few seconds, they started to turn into streams of light, floating toward the resurrection tower in the middle of the city and quickly disappearing into the air.

Norn looked up toward the tower, furrowing his eyebrows before mumbling to himself in a rigid tone, "The resurrection tower. What a troublesome thing. These godless, evil demons!"

In the palace hall, Xiao Lin was still in a panic. He tried to lock the main door, but the palace had not been touched up in ages; the door lock was rusted beyond repair, and the latch was stuck in place.

"Damn this stupid lock!" Xiao Lin angrily shouted in defeat. He looked at Norn's sinister smile through a crack in the door. He walked past the blood on the floor as he leisurely headed toward the palace.

"Xiao, what's wrong with you?" Lolander, who arrived earlier, asked curiously.

Xiao Lin gave up on locking the door. To be honest, after seeing the American's display of skill, he did not really feel that the ancient door would have been of much use.

Xiao Lin did not have time to explain to Lolander. He looked at Professor Brown who was standing next to the staircase with a difficult expression before running and shouting, "Professor Brown,

there's an intruder! The guards were eliminated. If there are other guards in the palace, I think you should get them here quickly!"

"An intruder?"

"This is the deepest part of the castle district. Who would dare intrude?"

"Xiao, this isn't funny."

...

Bam!

A heavy impact stopped everyone's discussions. This was the second time someone forced the door open that day, and the ancient door was finally at the end of the road as it shattered.

"Norn?" Professor Brown called out in shock. He seemed to recognize the man, but his words only earned a cold and sinister laughter.

"Professor Brown, please retreat. Everyone else, please come up to the second floor." A clear voice came from behind the professor as the blonde American girl walked past the professor. She stared intently at Norn.

Her name was Pamela, and she was the one who produced the spirit chains to aid them in communication every day. At the same time, she was the assistant of the leader of the greatest regiment in New Washington: the captain of the dragon-eagle knights, Harry.

Chapter 135 - Summoning The Dead

Chapter 135: Summoning The Dead

Translator: EndlessFantasy Translation **Editor:** EndlessFantasy Translation

Behind Pamela was a number of fully geared Americans. They were the guards that regularly patrolled the palace. Pamela wore deep red magicians robes. With her staff, she was ready to attack at any time.

Everyone immediately reacted, hastily running up to the second floor. Professor Brown did not leave immediately, as he was still in shock. "Norn! What are you doing! Are you betraying Judge Academy?"

"Professor Brown. He's not the Norn you knew!" Pamela motioned to her sides, and Professor Brown was immediately escorted up to the second floor.

"Pamela, will you kill him?"

"Professor, I regret it too, but don't worry, Norn still has plenty of life left. His death will not be fatal."

Pamela maintained her respect for Professor Brown as she patiently advised the old man. Professor Brown's combat abilities were not high, but his language skills definitely were. Non-combatants usually had even more important functions, so Pamela placed protecting Professor Brown as her primary objective.

However, Norn did not immediately attack after entering the hall. Instead, he half-knelt as he rubbed his hand against the stone plates on the floor, murmuring to himself. It was not loud, but the night was quiet and everyone had their attention on him, so his murmuring could subtly be heard.

"It's Ancient Normese!" Professor Brown was the first to react. He had a very shocked expression and he added. "He's reading the words on the stone plates!"

Pamela was not rushed to action. Even though they had about five or six of them against the lone Norn, she was not certain that Norn was acting by himself, so she chose to patiently observe and react.

After hearing what Professor Brown said, Pamela furrowed her eyebrows in realization. "So the stone plates were the objectives after all. But what does he want with them?"

As the vice-captain of the dragon-eagle regiment, Pamela knew more about the situation than everyone else present. Judge Academy did suspect someone would pull off an attack during the Single Moon Festival. They initially suspected either the resurrection tower or the wormhole to be the most possible targets, but the palace was also one of the suspicions. The only problem was that they could not figure out any possible motive.

Xiao Lin silently observed from the second floor. He was the weakest of everyone within the hall, so no matter what happened, he only hoped that he would not get dragged into it. However, there was something really bugging him, because Norn had a very strange expression at the moment.

Norn no longer had that terrifying smile. Instead, he had an abnormally stern look right now. He looked more fervent and pious, as if he was doing something immensely holy.

It was that expression that made Xiao Lin suspicious; it felt like he had seen something similar before. Suddenly, he snapped up in realization.

It was the monthly examinations. During the examinations not too long ago, that Norman woman tried to use some strange and unnamed curse to launch a final attack on them at the last moment. At that time, the woman had the very same look of fervor, piousness and resignation to death.

No matter what that person was there for, no matter what use the stone plates were, Xiao Lin's intuition told him that if they let Norn finish chanting, something inexplicable would happen. He immediately shouted, "Stop him! Stop him, quick! Don't let him finish reading the stone plates!"

Pamela looked at Xiao Lin. She was filled with anxiety before showing a look of determination. She ordered her men to attack from both sides, but Professor Brown shouted, "Be careful! Do not use any wide, destructive skills. The stone plates are all priceless!"

Pamela had an exasperated look. She had just started to cast a spell, but she could not help but stop midway after Professor Brown's words, causing her to prepare a new spell.

The others rushed over with their swords, and Pamela's spell was complete. With a wave of her wand, a subtle light was sent out, and landed on the Americans' armors. It was support magic. In order to preserve the stone plates, she could not use any destructive spells in the hall. She would need to force Norn out of the hall first.

Against the vicious assault, Norn did not even bother to dodge. Even after a sword pierced through his heart, his expression turned serious as he raised his hand. With a light wave, a grey aura swept out of his hand, sending the guards flying.

"What strength!" Pamela was taken aback. She turned to look at Professor Brown. "I don't think we'll be able to preserve the stone plates. My job is to protect New Washington, first and foremost."

With the blade still in him, Norn did not seem the slightest bit affected. All he did was furrow his eyebrows and say in a very solemn tone, "You evil demons. Feel the pain of the dead that was buried here!"

Norn pressed his hands to the floor and chanted an ancient and cryptic verse. The entire palace started to shake; even Pamela's spell was disrupted as she realized the floor underneath her feet seemed to move and struggle.

Xiao Lin opened his eyes in disbelief as skeletons started to break out of the ground. They shakily got out and slowly stood up. Behind their empty eye sockets were wisps of green flame.

"Summoning The Dead! Even Planet Norma deems it forbidden magic. I can't believe someone actually used it!" Pamela clenched her teeth as she glared at Norn. "Who are you?! Normal people could never use such high level necromancy!"

"Haha! You'll find your answer in hell!" Norn laughed darkly before commanding the skeletal army to attack with a few chants. He did not seem to mind the fact that his whole body was stained with blood as he continued to touch the stone plates and chant in Ancient Normese.

"Summoning The Dead; it's a Golden-rank necromancy spell. This spell summons Golden-ranked skeletal soldiers. Interesting." A chime-like laughter was suddenly heard. Looking toward it, Xiao Lin was speechless as he realized that he had actually forgotten Lilith amidst the chaos.

The number of soldiers increased. Even the outside of the palace was filled with skeletons. Xiao Lin stood next to a window near the staircase, and under the moonlight he could see an ocean of skeletal soldiers advancing into the palace.

Chapter 136 - Chaotic Battle Begins

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Lolander and the others paled tremendously. The number of skeletons outside the palace were at least in the hundreds, and there were not more than ten of them who really had decent combat ability within the palace; it was a drastic difference.

“Isn’t this the castle district? Isn’t this the heart of New Washington? Where’s the dragon-eagle knight regiment!” Lolander shouted at Pamela.

The dragon-eagle knights were definitely busy protecting the resurrection tower and wormhole. No matter how important the castle district was, it could not compare to those two buildings.

“Where are the American reinforcements?!”

“I don’t want to die here!”

...

“Can you guys shut up?! You’re so loud!” Lilith impatiently glared at everyone. With a flick of her wrist, her ink-blank battle scythe was in hand.

“Lilith, don’t you...” Pamela smiled bitterly, with the tide of skeletal soldiers, she could only choose to retreat to the staircase with the others.

Before Lilith could even finish, Lilith eagerly answered with her actions. She lifted her scythe and, with an unexpected shout, rushed right into the skeletal army, swinging her weapon into the horde.

With a flash of red, a flaming red lotus flared out and five skeletal soldiers disintegrated instantly without the chance to even react. They turned into a pile of charred bones on the ground.

Everyone could only gape at the woman who rushed in without hesitation. Her black battle scythe was wreathed in flames as she weaved around the battlefield like a battle goddess, looking like she transcended humanity.

Pamela gaped. She had wanted to advise Lilith to not be reckless, but she could only swallow the last part of her words. She could not leave Lilith alone, so she turned around and told everyone to be careful in a low voice before rushing into battle with her men as well.

The battle turned even more chaotic. Pamela’s spells were mostly supportive, so with her at the heart, the other five Americans had all sorts of buffs on them, dramatically increasing their capabilities.

Even though the number of skeletal soldiers were still increasing, in terms of combat ability, they were far behind Lilith and Pamela’s group.

Lolander and the others did not participate in the battle. Even though they were all graduates with impressive skill, they hesitated and ultimately chose to stay in front of the staircase. They would make a move in self-defense if any skeletal soldiers appeared, but they would not rush out by themselves.

After all, they were not part of Judge Academy. Why would they waste 20 years of their life for no reason.

Lolander seemed to have regained some positivity after all the excitement earlier. “It seems like it’s only an incomplete form of Summoning The Dead. Those skeletal soldiers did not have their bones strengthened, so they’re all probably only at about bronze-rank.”

Chloe was still cautious. “There are still too many of them. Isn’t there an ancient Chinese saying: many ants can bite an elephant to death, Xiao?”

Xiao Lin was standing in the back, so he was currently the safest person there. All he did after hearing Chloe was vaguely answer. He was not that happy with the way the battle was going. As an idle spectator on the second floor, he could clearly see what the state of the battle was.

The skeletal soldiers did not seem to even want to rush upstairs. All they did was surround Norn, using their bodies to stop Lilith and Pamela from getting close. As for Norn, who was at the center of the sea of skeletons, he continued to chant through the contents of the stone plates. He did not seem to be the slightest bit worried that his skeletal army was being massacred.

That caused Xiao Lin to worry. He did not understand why Norn was so concerned with the stone plates. The most worrying thing was every time he finished one of the plates, the stone would immediately turn to dust.

“Why are there so many skeletons here?” After a few minutes, Lolander looked at Professor Brown, asking in confusion. “From what I know, necromancy requires a large amount of corpses as a sacrifice.”

Professor Brown sighed. “Back when the Thunder Kingdom was invaded, the last defenses of the country fought Judge Academy to the death here, so countless lives were lost. At the time, the leader had all the corpses buried right here.”

“So, this is actually a gigantic cemetery!” Lolander shouted in anger. “Why didn’t you say so before?”

“Too many people died in the war, so a lot of the corpses could only be handled at the spot,” Professor Brown sighed in resignation, but it was not clear if it was for the war ages ago, or the chaotic battle right in front of them.

The battle lasted about ten minutes, and skeletal soldiers dwindled, but Xiao Lin could clearly see that it was only because Norn had already finished with the stone plates in the hall, and was slowly heading toward the side hall, where the last ten-odd stone plates were. The skeletons were also following him, guarding Norn.

Xiao Lin whispered. “We can’t wait anymore. Let’s rush out!”

“I agree.”

“Where are the American reinforcements? Are they all asleep?!”

Hearing the exchange, Pamela retreated and nodded to them. “We’ll give you cover. Hurry up and leave.”

“Lilith, you should leave with Professor Brown’s group as well!” Chloe shouted to Lilith, who was enjoying herself.

“You all can leave. I’m good staying behind.” Lilith ignored the order as her scythe started to summon wind around her, increasing her range of effectiveness. Practically no skeleton managed to get near here during the entire battle.

“No! Your safety is the most important thing for Judge Academy!” Pamela’s tone turned extremely strict. “This is the dean’s order! Lilith, don’t forget your promise to the dean. If you disobey any more orders, you’ll be barred from entering the New World!”

“Fine!” Lilith pouted indignantly. It was obvious that the final warning was effective on her.

With Lilith and Pamela at the helm, on top of the fact that most of the skeletons were protecting Norn, they had an easy time breaking free. Xiao Lin and Professor Brown were at the center of the formation since they were the two weakest. Xiao Lin started to regret not buying weapons earlier, but upon reflection, he would still have been vastly out of his depth, even with weapons.

It would be fine, so long as he could leave safely.

As if to answer Xiao Lin’s prayers, their group quickly managed to carve themselves a path through the sea of skeletons. Stepping past an uncountable number of skeletons, they successfully escaped the palace.

As long as they left the area, the powerful dragon-eagle knights regiment in the city would get them quickly out of danger. However, the moment they stepped out of the door, every one of them sucked in a deep breath as they froze in place.

Chapter 137 - End of Chaotic Battle

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The converging moons still hung in the night sky, but for some reason, they had turned deep red. It was as if the moon had been filled with blood, which looked both treacherous and beautiful. Bathing in the crimson moonlight, everyone suddenly had goosebumps.

Xiao Lin gulped. It was his first time in the New World and his first Single Moon Festival. When he saw the blood red moon, he consoled himself, thinking it might just be a regular occurrence during the Single Moon Festival. However, the moment he looked at the horrified expressions on everyone else, he knew that it was not true.

In the blood red skies, the sounds of dragon-eagles could be heard in the distance skies. They could vaguely make out a few teams of dragon-eagle knights currently engaged in battle with some skeletal creatures. It was obvious that the chaos in the palace was only a part of what was happening.

“Stop dreaming! We need to get out first!” Pamela sobered up quickly before shouting at everyone else.

Even though the skeletal soldiers in the hall did not pursue them, there were a lot more skeletons outside the palace than they anticipated, and all of them were trying to get inside. Xiao Lin and the others had not escaped from trouble just yet.

“Get into formation! Charge!” As the vice-captain of the dragon-eagle knights, Pamela was the de facto leader of this team. She calmly and quickly started giving out orders.

She and the other melee combatants surrounded everyone else in a bell-shaped formation. Their silver armors had various complicated markings, and were somehow still unharmed despite being hit by so many skeletons earlier, so it was good that they formed the first defensive line. In the middle of that formation was Professor Brown, Xiao Lin, Lolander and the others. Pamela did not force them to help, possibly because she was very confident in her own skills.

Even though they were unable to completely wipe out such a large number of skeletons, Pamela felt that escorting that group out to safety was not a problem.

Of course, a large part of that belief was due to her faith in Lilith’s abilities. She was very clear on how important Lilith was to Judge Academy, and would not easily put her in harm’s way. However, it was not like she was going to leave such a strong fighting force unused.

After leaving the palace, Lilith once again slashed her battle scythe around.

The blazing flame lotuses were even more beautiful under the blood moon. With Lilith carving the path ahead, the rest of them had a much easier time, but Xiao Lin could not shake his uneasy feeling. He felt like the skeletal soldiers were not really fighting them earnestly, but were only trying to prevent them from heading back to the palace.

“Everyone, don’t worry. The dragon-eagle knights will be here very soon. These skeletal soldiers only have numbers on their side, but they are nothing compared to us!” Pamela consoled Lolander. As someone from the American Judge Academy, she did not want the other academies to have any reason to look down on them.

It seemed that she was speaking the truth. Looking at the vague and blurry battle in the distance, the dragon-eagle knights were not holding back as much as when they fought the giant golden dragon half a month ago. The full force of the dragon-eagle knights really deserved to be called America’s greatest unit. The fight in the skies lasted a little over ten minutes before basically coming to an end. Those creatures had been mostly defeated and were rendered to skeletal dust in mid-air.

Xiao Lin let out a relieved sigh; part of his worries were resolved. He slowly moved his hand away from the Lightstream Jade that he had been holding onto for most of the night. It was his final defense. If Lilith and Pamela’s men could not hold on, he would have had to use the Lightstream Jade and release the giant golden dragon’s illusory dragon. However, no one knew how much draconic power was within the jade, so it was better to use it sparingly.

Possibly because the blood moon caused the atmosphere to be thick with tension, not one spoke too much. Everyone was trying to get out as soon as possible. They made pretty good time, and after a few minutes, they were already at the gates of the courtyard outside the palace.

The courtyard had a desolate and bleak feel to it. No one knew why before, but now, everyone realized it was because they were basically on a gigantic burial ground.

At that moment, a muffled rumble came from within the palace. Streaks of white light began to shoot out from the rundown building, and the entire roof of the palace blasted away. The white light quickly gathered together, forming an even brighter light. It looked like the sun, enveloping the entire sky of the castle district in bright light, even enveloping Xiao Lin and the others within.

Everyone could not help but shudder. The white light was extremely cold, chilling them to the bone. The good news was that the skeletons had stopped moving the moment the light appeared, so seizing the opportunity, they quickened their pace, but the light spread much faster than they could run.

The beam of light rapidly extended to the horizon, and in the blink of an eye, it connected with the blood moon. In the chaos, Xiao Lin seemed to notice that, within the blood moon, something seemed to have been opened. His heart started beating heavily as his right hand once again gripped the Lightstream Jade.

“Hahaha! You evil demons! Today will be your reckoning!”

Norn’s figure once again emerged with the rumbling. He floated in the air as he looked at all of New Washington City. A wild and crazed look appeared on his face, as if he was filled with happiness and excitement after completing his task. He spread his arms, shouting, “I’ve waited for this for way too long! Open now! Dark Gate of Doomsday!”

The shout reverberated in the air and the white light suddenly became more intense and cold. Everyone had to shut their eyes, and the rapidly decreasing temperature caused frost to begin forming on their clothes.

A strong and intense surge of energy came from within the palace, pouring out like an avalanche. The energy felt indescribable... Chaos, cold, panic, death...

In a few short seconds, Xiao Lin suddenly felt like he had stepped into hell. He was like a small raft in the torrential seas, and could be toppled over and drowned by the tides at any time. At that point, he did not care about saving the draconic power. He hoisted up his Lightstream Jade. Thanks to the self-defense mechanism, when the jade felt the torrential energies surrounding him, the golden illusory dragon once again soared in the skies.

That was his last line of defense. No matter what the surge of energy meant, if even the giant golden dragon could not protect him, then Xiao Lin was probably going to die there.

He really should not have gone to New Washington.

That was the last thought that went through Xiao Lin’s mind in all the confusion.

Chapter 138 - Disappearance

Chapter 138: Disappearance

At peak intensity, the white light had enveloped half of New Washington City. Even the blood moon looked abnormally dull in the night sky.

At that moment, be it Pamela, Professor Brown, or Lolander and the others from the different academies, a sense of dread and an inexplicable hopelessness rose within all of them.

They had underestimated their enemy. More accurately, even though they found their opponent strong, they did not think the opponent could inflict so much damage to Judge Academy. That was the confidence Judge Academy had for countless years.

The confidence did not last too long; the Americans had egg on their face that night. First, the blood moon suddenly appeared, then that mysterious light.

What would happen next? No one had any confidence anymore.

With the confusion and shock, all the Americans had complicated expressions. They did not know what they needed to do and could only wait for their foe to make his next move.

Just as quickly as it appeared, the white light suddenly disappeared.

When Pamela and the others opened their eyes, everything turned quiet. The white light was nowhere to be seen, and the white, converged moons were once again in the sky. The moonlight was no longer blood red, reverting to the original silver hue.

The floor was littered with skeletons, and not far away, people could be heard screaming and shouting. Sporadic explosions could be heard, which were the only remainders of what had happened.

Everyone had a lost, questioning expression on their faces. It was like the sea had sent over a gigantic wave, and everyone had shut their eyes waiting for death, but at the next second, they opened their eyes and the sea in front of them was once again calm.

Everyone felt that; one moment they were frantic, but the next it seemed like nothing had happened. At least, everyone was sure that they were not hurt by the intense light earlier.

“Is it over?” Chloe said suspiciously.

“What were they doing? Was that a light show?” Lolander tried joking to dispel the odd atmosphere, but no one laughed.

“It’s Norn!” Professor Brown suddenly pointed at the direction of the palace.

Everyone immediately tensed up. The Americans quickly picked up their weapons and assumed a defensive stance, looking over with full preparedness. However, his expression made them curious.

Norn stood at the palace door, dumbfounded. His eyes looked empty, and it took awhile for him to snap back to reality. His lips trembled as he cried out in a low and hoarse voice. “What...what is

happening! The Gate of The End had opened. Why did I not go inside! Why! Impossible! Why did it happen!”

“What is he saying?” Chloe asked in a low voice.

“What is the Gate of The End?” Professor Brown said, unsure.

“Whatever he was doing, it seemed to have failed,” Lolander said brightly. Whatever the end goal was for that night, from Norn’s expression, it did not seem to have succeeded.

“You! You evil demons! What did you do? How could you have the power to close the Gate of The End! It’s absolutely impossible!” The veins could be seen in Norn’s eyes as he wildly shouted at them.

The cry of a dragon-eagle was suddenly heard in the skies, and a squad of dragon-eagle knights descended close to the palace. Under the moonlight, a tired-looking middle aged man quickly walked over.

“It’s Captain Harry of the knight regiment!”

Pamela could finally relax. The American woman vibrantly smiled for the first time. “We’re safe.”

Harry wore a purple and gold suit of armor, and he held his helmet in front of his chest as he looked at the skeletons scattered all over the ground. He gazed over everyone, finally stopping at the despondent Norn. With a wave, two riders immediately rode their dragon-eagles over, pointing their lances at Norn’s throat.

Harry chose to immediately kill Norn. He quickly determined that the man was no longer his ally. As the focal point of everything that happened tonight, he needed to hear what happened from Norn’s own mouth.

“Captain, what is the situation in the city?” Pamela asked, the skeletal creatures in the air earlier caused her some concern.

Harry solemnly replied, “It’s all been settled. I pursued the origin of the bright light here. What happened?”

Pamela pointed at Norn before noticing the various wounds he had. Those were from the start of the battle, so she hurriedly said, “Captain, be careful. He seems to not be affected by physical attacks.”

“I understand. I fear he might be controlled by some spirit borne from necromancy. No matter, their lances all have anti-magic capabilities. They can directly harm the spirit.”

Harry came prepared, but it did not come as a shock. He looked around before rubbing his forehead. “Pamela, I heard that Lilith was here tonight. Where is she?”

“She was with us the whole time and was very safe. Earlier, she even...” Midway through her sentence, she tried to look for Lilith, but she was nowhere to be seen.

“Xiao Lin! Xiao Lin is gone as well!” Lolander cried out in shock.

Everyone started to get nervous, but after looking around, they noticed that only Xiao Lin and Lilith had disappeared, causing Harry’s anger to rise.

Harry’s usually calm face had a look of frustration. “Pamela! I reminded you to ensure Lilith’s safety!”

“That’s...that’s impossible. She was right here. Could she have gotten injured and headed home?” Pamela started to get anxious as well, not even believing her own excuse.

“Have people investigate!” Harry immediately decided.

“Hold on! Xiao Lin too! Xiao Lin disappeared as well! You need to find him too!” Lolander called out to Harry. He had been pretty decent friends with Xiao Lin over the few days, so when he said that, Harry was only focused on locating Lilith, not even noticing Xiao Lin’s disappearance, he immediately spoke up.

“Xiao Lin?” Harry had a confused look in his face, and tried to figure it out. It was only until Pamela reminded him softly did he realize, and say with some uncertainty, “The Chinese boy?”

“Correct!”

“Fine. Perhaps he’s with Lilith.” Harry gave a half-hearted answer. In his eyes, Lilith was a lot more important than Xiao Lin.

Chapter 139 - Mysterious World

Chapter 139: Mysterious World

After being unconscious for an unknown amount of time, Xiao Lin started to groggily get up. He looked around him and saw a blood red world. Under his feet was red ground and above him was a deep red sun.

Where was this?

Xiao Lin tried hard to figure it out, but the last memory he had was of him unleashing the giant golden dragon when he was faced with that torrent of power. After that, he seemed to make out something opening in the middle of that blood moon, as if a door had opened. Finally, he was sucked inside by an extremely strong force before falling unconscious.

That meant that he was in the world behind the door on the blood moon. Was it still Planet Norma?

Xiao Lin realized he was in a huge courtyard, and next to him was a tall and majestic palace. In the distance were rows of magnificent structures that exerted a familiar feeling.

Xiao Lin suddenly realized that he was clearly in the castle district of New Washington. Next to him was the palace he worked at every day, but upon closer inspection, there were some very obvious differences.

The courtyard was not as desolate as before, and the palace was not as rundown. There were all sorts of flowers and trees around him and he could smell a faint but clear fragrance.

It looked like a very nice courtyard, but under the blood red sunlight, it looked very different. It enforced a strong feeling of rejection and made Xiao Lin feel very unsettled.

Was he still in New Washington? Where was everyone else?

Xiao Lin looked around the courtyard and could not find anyone. After leaving the courtyard, he was sure that even though the place looked similar to New Washington, it definitely was not the same place.

The buildings there did not have any hint of modernization. New Washington might have preserved a lot of the old buildings, but the new buildings had a very modern western style. The buildings looked very unique. At the very least, he knew they were not styles from any era back on Earth.

Because of that, he suddenly felt lost. The roads in the palace district were winding and complicated. The buildings all looked more or less the same. Why did they design it all those years ago to be like a maze?

Xiao Lin started to get dizzy from wandering around, so he decided to enter a palace to rest inside. He was curious as well. Having not had the chance to do so in New Washington, this was the best time for him to see what the ancient Thunder Kingdom's legacy was like.

His curiosity did not last long. When he got to the nearest palace, he pushed open the gold doors and the sight in front of him almost made him run away immediately.

The blood red sunlight shone into the large palace and in front of him was a horde of skeletons!

However, the skeletons were very quiet, as if they were in a deep slumber. They did not react to Xiao Lin entering at all, which allowed him to calm down before slowly closing the door. He looked around the other palaces nearby, and what made him jump in fright was that the inside of every palace was the same!

Those skeletons were dead, just quietly standing there. They were different from the skeletal soldiers they had encountered earlier. Those skeletons did not have a green flame behind their eye sockets, and their skeletal bodies had a faint golden glow. Compared to the white skeletons from earlier, those skeletons all seemed to have endured countless years.

After checking a few palaces, Xiao Lin felt extremely strange. If every one of these palaces were like that, then the amount of skeletons present must have been staggering. He decided to leave as fast as he could.

It was like a maze, but luckily the castle district was not too big. After an hour, Xiao Lin managed to leave, but the sight outside the castle district shocked him even more.

It was a completely foreign city. He could not find any similarities to New Washington. Walking slowly on the empty streets, he realized that he did not know where he was at all, nor did he know what his next step was.

It was when he stopped in front of a stone statue that he started having a strange expression on his face. He was very familiar with the statue, since he saw it every day when he went back to the inn. It was the statue of Asabanor, but this one was in pristine condition. Even the pedestal had no signs of decay. However, the statue was not at an inn, but at a large and vast plaza.

The unsettling feeling in Xiao Lin's heart grew even more intense as a crazy thought formed in his head. He might actually have left New Washington. He might not be in the New Washington of 210 N.C., but rather at the Thunder Kingdom capital that Judge Academy attacked hundreds of years ago!

As he walked from house to house within the city, he was even more certain of the fact. The houses in the city were not packed with skeletons like the castle, but even stranger. There were mills in some of the buildings, but what was placed in the mills were bones.

The mills seemed to operate by themselves. Without any external force, the bones inside were being slowly ground to dust, and flowed along recesses on the sides, which were connected to a building farther away.

Xiao Lin found it incredibly weird, and he curiously followed the recesses to the other building. There was an incredibly large furnace inside and the bone dust was being mixed with ores of various metals, combining them before they were poured into the hot furnace. The inside of the furnace started to boil, and scorching hot air shot out, suddenly increasing the temperature within the building. Xiao Lin was forced to retreat, choosing to investigate another area for now.

In the neighbouring room, there were objects that had already been smelted. They were still piles of bones, but the difference was that those bones were now like the ones he saw earlier, carrying a faint golden glow. Xiao Lin tried touching them. The surface was still scorching hot but it was abnormally hard.

Xiao Lin's eyes widened. It was like a production line, obviously made to create skeletons for necromancy. Those skeletons that had been mixed with metals would obviously create even more powerful skeletal soldiers.

Who was making these special, stronger skeletons?

What was the point of making them?

After cracking his head over it, Xiao Lin seemed to have an answer. He could not believe it as he uttered a name. "Asabanor!"

Chapter 140 - Asabanor

Chapter 140: Asabanor

Asabanor, the high priest of the ancient Thunder Kingdom. Back when Judge Academy conquered the capital, the only high-ranking person who could not be found was the high priest. Now, after a hundred years, the stone plates they dug up seemed to indicate that the high priest was still alive.

Xiao Lin quickly visualized. The high priest held onto his hatred and somehow got there, filling the entire city with necromantic creatures that he made day and night, preparing to take revenge on the Americans.

However, learning from past mistakes, Xiao Lin was not too confident in his theory. As he was mulling it over, a long sigh was suddenly heard from the sky and the entire world shook.

Xiao Lin rushed out of the building, looking toward the sound. It came from the tall tower that stood in the middle of the city and he suddenly felt something was wrong.

New Washington had a tower, the resurrection tower, built so that colonists could invoke the Law of Immortality every time they died. However, this was not New Washington, based on his earlier guesses. Everything there was made by Asabanor, so the tower could not possibly be a resurrection tower.

It looked quite different from the resurrection tower as well. This tower had a jet black trunk and a conical shape. There was a small room on the top, and the sigh seemed to come from that direction.

He was not the only one there! That revelation astonished Xiao Lin. Obviously, those skeletons in the palaces could not be considered people.

No matter who was in the tower, Xiao Lin felt that it would be best if he did not go near it. With that in mind, he decided to head in the opposite direction, but just as he turned, he saw a white-haired old man standing not far away, looking at him with a curious expression.

Xiao Lin was startled, especially when he noticed that the old man's feet were a few centimeters above the ground, which is to say, he was floating. His mind immediately made the decision to turn around and flee.

In this deathly still world, there were only skeletons and himself. With the sudden appearance of that old man, it was not a stretch to think he was definitely not an ordinary person, which is why Xiao Lin did not even plan on communicating with the man. He clearly understood his own lack of skill, so he ran ahead without even looking back.

After running for more than twenty minutes, he finally stopped, gasping for breath. He turned around and saw that the old man was nowhere to be seen, but he had not even finished catching his breath when a low voice suddenly spoke up beside him. Xiao Lin's head snapped back, and he saw that the old man was only a few centimeters away from him.

He frantically retreated, shouting, "Who are you!"

"@#%@%..."

A string of cryptic words came out of the man's mouth. Xiao Lin could make out that it was Ancient Normese, but with his current grasp of the subject, it was very hard for him to reply.

The old man did not wait for his answer. Instead, he closed his eyes and they began to emit a faint bluish glow. When he opened them again, he started speaking Mandarin. "This language is one of the blasphemous ones. Are you also one of the evil demons from a different time and space!"

The old man was way too fluent in Mandarin; it made Xiao Lin lose focus for a moment. However, those words meant that the old man was definitely not a colonist, so he could guess the person's identity. He was not certain, so he tried to call out, "Asabanor?"

The old man maintained his calm, casually acknowledging his identity, "So you actually recognize me. It seems like your kind fears me as well."

Xiao Lin had a whirlwind of emotions in his heart. The man the Americans had been laboriously looking for was right in front of him. However, he took offense to what the man said, so he retorted, "Yes, how could we not know of you. The last high priest of the country that could not withstand an invasion for four years. That's quite hard to forget!"

The old man wore a long white robe, emitting a hazy feeling. He closed his eyes and his tone was as calm as before, "Young demon, you're trying to provoke me. I've been here long enough. That's not an easy thing to do anymore."

"Where is this place?" Xiao Lin asked hurriedly.

"The Final Land."

Xiao Lin did not know what to say. The old man might as well have not answered.

Asabanor seemed to be quite patient, he continued saying, "Your kind would not understand. There was an old myth in my old country. Before the world was born, everything was empty and chaotic. There was no life, no creatures, not even time and space. Then God used an immense power to split open the chaos, and from there, the world was born. However, the cradle that brought forth the world did not disappear just like that; it became The Final Land."

"So, what you mean is that this is the birthplace of Planet Norma?"

"You are correct. Since the world was born, countless people have tried and failed to locate this lost land. I dedicated my whole life to the study of astrology, and through complicated calculations of the interactions between the planets and the stars, I managed to ascertain that this place was not on Planet Norma, but on the moon."

At that, the high priest finally had a strange expression on his face. "However, discovering The Final Land does not mean it can be entered. This is a place only God can enter. At the time, my kingdom was being attacked by your kind, and I had no choice but to use my last bit of power to risk opening the gate."

Xiao Lin mocked, "So, you've been living in this world by yourself until now? You're making those skeletons. When do you plan on launching your attack?"

“Living?” The high priest made an exaggerated laugh. His entire body even started to distort with it, looking nothing like a live body. After a moment the old man returned to his cold state. “Do you think my current state is of someone alive? This is the world’s birthplace. Other than God, no one can enter as they please in their physical body without consequences!”

The old man did not look human at all, so Xiao Lin understood the point, but he quickly realized something as he started to get worried. “So am I dead?”

The high priest seemed to have a playful look. “No, you’re not dead, and you still have a perfect mental state and body. It’s very strange. Do you know what state I was in when I arrived here? At the time, even my soul was in flux, and I had to use more than ten years to slowly recover my sanity, and then another ten years to slowly form this appearance. However, that’s about as far as I got. I’m not really a human right now, nor am I a spiritual existence. I’ve been trapped here, unable to leave The Final Land.”

Xiao Lin could not help but remark at the inconsistencies in what the high priest said. “You said this was a place only God could enter!”

Chapter 141 - The Final Land

Chapter 141: The Final Land

“That’s right. The Final Land is the first place of God’s descent. How could the filthy bodies of mortals contaminate this sacred place? That was my belief in the past, but a century ago, that man’s arrival shattered my view completely!”

A look of hideousness appeared on the high priest’s wrinkled face. “Yes. That demon named Ivanovich, was able to step into The Final Land against all odds!”

Xiao Lin was slightly shocked that Ivanovich—the Russian with the SS-level talent who created the Law of Immortality and was the stuff of legends for colonists—actually managed to enter The Final Land.

“Wait, you said hundreds of years ago? It couldn’t have been that long!”

“Hmph, the concept of time doesn’t exist in The Final Land. Time here is fluid. It can be fast or slow. I don’t know how much time has passed on Planet Norma, but I know that I’ve been trapped here for 960 years!”

Xiao Lin was surprised yet again. If his understanding of Judge Academy’s history was correct, then almost a century had passed since the war of that year. It would mean that time in The Final Land was almost 10 times longer than that of the outside world.

The high priest drifted to the side a little and stroked the wall beside him. He said lightly, “But I have to thank him, because he allowed me to understand a little bit about surviving in The Final Land. Here is where everything began. It’s where laws began too. Once I master the law, I can create anything I want in this land!”

That was, without a doubt, the ancient Thunder Kingdom's old capital. The old man in front of him had copied the past city with a certain law. Xiao Lin felt an inexplicable unease, but he still had some things he could not figure out and continued to ask, "What's with those skeletons thingies then?"

The old man did not hide anything at all. "As you've said, those had been prepared to chase you out of this world. I've spent hundreds of years working on this and I'm only one step away from success."

"What step is that?"

"Haven't you guessed already? I've said that I won't be able to leave The Final Land in my current state, let alone bring these soldiers back, but the The Final Land's gates will open for a brief moment when the two moons overlap. "

"That's a shame. The Single Moon Festival ended just before I came in. I'm afraid you'll have to wait a few more decades!" Xiao Lin took a few steps back and remarked sarcastically, "Oh wait, given the ratio of time, you'll probably be waiting for centuries!"

The old man approached him slowly. "I regret having missed that at first, but with the two of you showing up here, just like that man before. I think I might be able to find a better way to get out of here."

"Why are you telling me all this?" The old man's weird looks only increased Xiao Lin's unease.

"You were the first person to talk to me since that man left. Do you know how boring it is in this silent world?"

Xiao Lin sneered slightly. "There's only one reason why you're telling your secrets to someone you don't know, especially when that person is your enemy. You never planned to let me survive from the beginning, did you?"

"The smartest people don't live a long life." The high priest stopped floating, and his tone gradually eased. "I didn't want to kill you. I was hoping to join hands with you. If you want to leave, you can only do so with my help. This is a good deal. How about it?"

"What do you want me to do?"

The voice of the high priest was tempting. "I need to study your power. You and Ivanovich are of the same kind. There seems to be some mysterious power in your body that allows you to ignore all the laws God set in The Final Land. I need this power!"

If there was anything in common between Xiao Lin and Ivanovich, it was the fact that they were both SS-level geniuses. Xiao Lin suddenly realized why he had been sucked into that world.

Xiao Lin mocked him, "I'm not gonna lie, this place gives me the creeps and I'm dying to leave, but is there any reason I should trust you? If Ivanovich could leave by his own means, I'm quite sure I can do the same too. If you really need my power, you could just capture me and take me away, but you didn't do that. Let me guess. Is it because you aren't capable of doing that?"

The high priest's face changed slightly, affirming Xiao Lin's guess. He did not believe a single word from the old man, especially after he had been twice deceived by the Normans during the exam more than half a month ago. He was very much aware of it; the exam granted him insight to many things.

Although he was not a member of Judge Academy, the colonist point-of-view meant that his position was at odds with that of the destroyed kingdom's high priest. The statement about joining forces would probably only deceive a freshman.

"You're neither a human or a ghost in your current state. Maybe a soul? Something with no physical existence? Or perhaps you are suppressed by the laws of that place. After all, you're different from us. You don't have that mysterious power, so you can't do anything to me at all!"

Xiao Lin once again began to make fanciful associations and began musing to himself. He did not think that the high priest, who was filled with the hatred of subjugation, would have the luxury of saying all that nonsense to him. The only possibility was that the old man had no choice.

The high priest's expression became worse and his body twisted again. He took a deep breath, and his tone became cold. "You've missed your last chance to live, you arrogant heretical demon. You'll regret the choice you made! You're right, I don't have the same mysterious power you demons have, but I don't need to personally deal with you!"

The high priest's figure faded until it disappeared completely. Xiao Lin then heard a low roar, as if something had been opened, followed by creaking footsteps, like skeletons marching.

Xiao Lin's expression changed slightly and he cursed. He did guess that the old man was unable to personally take any action, but he did not expect that the old man would activate the sleeping skeletons, which seemed capable of moving freely in that world.

The only fortunate thing was that almost all the skeleton soldiers were hiding in the palace hall. The city outside was almost all workshops with no skeletons, giving Xiao Lin more time to escape.

"The old man said something about the two of you showing up here. Did another unlucky person come in? Who could it possibly be? Uh..." Xiao Lin muttered to himself, but the answer entered in his mind after a few seconds.

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 142: A Sudden Increase in Speed

According to Asabanor, Ivanovich came in the flesh to that world's birthplace many years ago. The high priest did not seem to have reacted yet, but Xiao Lin understood the reason.

There was one other aspect Ivan had in common with Xiao Lin, other than their gender: they were both SS-level talents. If anyone else could enter that world safely, that person was likely another SS-level talent: Lilith.

“So, she does have a SS-level talent!” Song Junlang had previously told him about it. Other people had their suspicions, but there was no direct evidence. Xiao Lin had unknowingly received a 100% confirmation at that moment.

Lilith had also come to the world known as The Final Land. Where was she now? The high priest must have also gone to her and sought her cooperation, but Xiao Lin was not sure whether Lilith would agree. If she did, he would be facing a much greater danger.

However, before that, Xiao Lin felt that he still had to worry about the headache in front of him.

The skeleton army coming out of the palace area quickly rushed in swarms toward the streets and alleys, carrying out a thorough search of the city. Asabanor was very confident. The city was his creation, and he was the apex predator that no prey could escape from.

After realizing that, Xiao Lin understood that whatever his plans for escape would only delay time. He did not know anything about the skeleton army’s effectiveness in combat, but the ease with which they could dispose of him was certainly as effortless as pinching an ant.

Death was the last thing on his mind. He had not seen all of Planet Norma yet and still had relatives which he fondly remembered on Earth. Xiao Lin absolutely did not want to die in that rundown place where no one would know about his whereabouts.

Xiao Lin bit his lips and once again pinched the jade pendant on his chest. That was the last barrier he had, but he had used it a second time before the white light came and did not know how many illusory dragons were left.

“Just do it! At least it’ll help me stall them!”

After making up his mind, Xiao Lin quietly waited in a certain corner for the arrival of the skeleton army. The Lightstream Jade was a passive defense mechanism, meaning Xiao Lin could not release it actively. He could only wait for danger to arrive.

The ancient Thunder Kingdom’s capital was much smaller than New Washington City, lacking clearly divided areas such as trade districts and the like. It was composed only of disorderly, intertwined, spider-like streets. The sea of skulls was huge in number, and it was as if a white tide quickly spread to Xiao Lin’s vicinity.

The skeletons that had been awakened from their deep sleep would have faint green flames dancing in their hollow eye sockets. That was a symbol of vitality for the undead. After feeling the approach of death, the Lightstream Jade on Xiao Lin’s chest once again shot out a dazzling golden light, and just like the last time, the dragon power condensed into a golden dragon upon release, producing extremely powerful combat power.

Xiao Lin was looking forward to it. The powers peculiar to dragons soared into the sky, causing the tide of the skeleton army to lull for a moment. In fact, the uniquely-dragon based force had no effect on the undead creatures and it was the high priest Asabanor who controlled them from behind the scenes. After sensing the dragon’s power, Asabanor’s spirit was visibly shaken, but the skeleton army’s actions resumed once again.

However, the golden dragon did not appear as expected and the blood-colored sky was still empty. Xiao Lin was immediately dumbfounded. Where was the promised golden dragon? Did the dragon power run out? It was nevertheless very strange, because despite not knowing what dragon power was, the special feeling he felt earlier told him that it had to be dragon power.

There was no time for him to think too much. After the skeleton army discovered his tracks, they quickened their pace. Their bones crackled as they marched on the stone bricks. Each skeleton held a knife made out of bone. The blade was gray, and although they lacked the cold sharp light, there was a creepiness to them.

Without the golden dragon, Xiao Lin had no choice but to bite the bullet and make an escape. He turned and ran, then heard a bang when he directly hit a wall and fell to the ground. Xiao Lin touched his forehead painfully and stared blankly at the shallow depression on the wall with an incredulous look.

“How is that possible!”

Xiao Lin exclaimed. His surprise came not from hitting the wall, but from the speed at which he burst out earlier.

It was too fast! If the speed he demonstrated earlier was like a cheetah, then his previous speed was no different than a tortoise.

He moved so quickly that he began doubting whether that body really belonged to him. Could he have been possessed by the high priest, who was neither human nor ghost?

Xiao Lin's agility attributes were not high and he was well aware of his own speed. Even though his gravity training in New Washington did play a role, he was not naïve enough to think the effect would reach such an outrageous extent. His reaction could not keep up with his body's rhythm, resulting in him accidentally hitting the wall.

“Let's try again!”

Xiao Lin left the small alley first, then ran like nobody's business on the straight road. It was an exhilarating feeling, as if he was flying. His speed had been greatly improved, and in the blink of an eye, the skeleton army was already far behind him. After a few minutes, they had completely disappeared from sight.

Xiao Lin's speed dropped instantly and he reverted to his usual speed levels. He halted his footsteps with a look of confusion. In an attempt to sort out his thoughts, he replayed the entire sequence of events to find out the reason for the sudden increase in his speed.

Xiao Lin's eyes suddenly lit up. If all other impossible factors were eliminated, the only remaining possibility must be the correct answer, regardless of how baffling that possibility was.

The first thing he wanted to do was summon the illusory golden dragon, but it did not appear as expected. However, he proceeded to discover that his speed had increased suddenly just as he was about to escape...

That was the only thing he did. Although he failed to summon the golden dragon, his speed increased dramatically for some unknown reason.

The only possible explanation pointed to that.

He was startled by that, but Xiao Lin was still uncertain whether it was actually the case. Although he had the urge to try again, the Lightstream Jade's power had to be passively activated, and he did not want to risk exposure to the skeleton army.

The skeleton army's pursuit soon stopped. Xiao Lin wondered if the dragon's power had frightened the high priest, or whether the high priest had other ideas. The skeletons did not return to the palace, but simply fell asleep on the spot. The green flames in their eye sockets extinguished temporarily.

Chapter 143 - The Dragon Power's Properties

Chapter 143: The Dragon Power's Properties

Xiao Lin soon realized that there night existed in that world. The blood-red sun in the sky did not set, but there were two extra moons in the sky. They were also of a terrifying blood-red color, which only added to the creepiness of that world.

Xiao Lin hid in a random building. There were no skeleton soldiers on the periphery of the palace, only countless workshops. At the moment, he chose a blacksmith's workshop, where he saw all kinds of weapons. It was automated, like an assembly line, but machines did not exist in a world like that. The only explanation Xiao Lin could come to was that the high priest used some kind of mana to manipulate it.

The skeleton army's movements ceased when the blood moon rose into the air, and those workshops stopped working too. Of course, Xiao Lin was unsure whether there was a connection between the two, but in any case, the place had provided him a relatively hidden place to rest.

Although Xiao Lin had no idea how time there was calculated, he estimated that he ought to find some food or drink after realizing that he was getting hungry. The place was harsh on a person, but there was actually no shortage of food there. The priest created an almost perfect-looking city, with flowers and trees on both sides of the road, rivers and spring water, as well as wild fruits and the like. However, he could not tell for certain whether those things were edible. After a brief struggle with his thoughts, Xiao Lin decided to eat them.

He wanted to do his best to survive the damned place. If he did not eat, he would probably starve to death before he was killed by skeleton soldiers or captured by the high priest. That was not a glorious way to die. After picking some wild fruits nearby and trying them, Xiao Lin was surprised to find that they were sweeter and more delicious than the fruits on Earth.

More accurately, it was even better than the fruits from New Washington, since the fruits cultivated on the New World were generally sweeter than those on Earth. According to Song

Junlang, the New World did not have as much industrial pollution as the Earth did, and the air there was rich with the four major elements, thus giving the fruit more natural power.

Be that as it may, Xiao Lin was not at New Washington. He was at the cradle of the world created by God: The Final Land. The blood-red sun and moon in the sky were far from natural-looking and harmless. Even though Xiao Lin was forced to eat the plants that grew in that environment, it was unsurprising that they would form shadows of doubt in his mind.

After having his fill and repeatedly confirming that no skeleton soldiers appeared in the surrounding buildings, Xiao Lin finally breathed a sigh of relief. When he looked at the blacksmith's workshop again, Xiao Lin's eyes lit up and he found that there were tons of weapons and armor. They were obviously prepared for the palace's skeletons, but there had not been any time to equip them.

Xiao Lin was unable to clearly recognize the equipment, but he knew that he could not use weapons that were too high high-ranked, so picked up the swords on the weapon rack and tried his hand at them one by one.

They were all very sophisticated weapons that had engravings of various peculiar runes. Evidently, they were not ordinary weapons, but Xiao Lin could not sense any of their effects when he held them. There were those he could not even pick up and proved difficult to use at close distance. Weapons that he could not use were equivalent to scrap copper and rotten iron to him.

In the end, he could only turn his eyes to the weapons scattered in the corners. Compared to those on the racks, they looked like defective products. Each weapon had defects of varying levels of obviousness. For example, there was varying thickness in the armors, revealing weak points in certain areas. The blades of some of the weapons were notched too.

The deterioration of the weapons' quality also made these weapons lose their power, but correspondingly, the requirements needed to use them would also be reduced. For example, a weapon that could only be used a Gold-rank may only need a Silver-rank—or even a Bronze—to use. Its power may be less than half of the original version, but it was also much stronger than going at it empty-handed.

Xiao Lin chose a long and slender sword. It was very unique, in that the edges of the two blades were forged from unknown maroon materials. He held the hilt and swung it twice, producing a faint flame in the blade that fluttered quite majestically.

The only hitch was that there was a very obvious groove in the center of the blade, thus reducing the quality of the entire sword by more than a couple of grades. Xiao Lin was able to wield it quite smoothly, and the flame imbued to the blade gave him the impression that it was a magic weapon. That—defects aside—was a good choice of weapon at the moment.

Xiao Lin did not rest very well that night, but the skeleton army remained inactive until the blood moon in the sky disappeared, thereby cementing his theory that the blood moon's appearance in the sky affected the actions of those undead creatures.

Night lasted only a short while in that world. When the blood-red sun was left in the sky, the skeleton army regained its ability to move and continued to spread its search to the surrounding streets.

Although Xiao Lin tried his best to hide and evade, it was still difficult to escape completely in the face of their blanket search. However, the advantage was that the skeleton soldiers separated from each other even more as the streets became more intricate and complicated. Xiao Lin faced teams of only seven or eight skeletons at that moment.

“I hope my guess is correct!” Xiao Lin was not as panicked as he was the day before. He held the Lightstream Jade tightly and its automatic defense mechanism sprung into place after sensing the threat from the undead creatures. The power belonging to the Golden Dragon came out again, and Xiao Lin was relieved a little; it indicated that the dragon’s power in the jade pendant had not been completely exhausted.

The golden dragon’s figure still did not appear, but Xiao Lin began paying special attention to his own changes. The dragon’s power floated around his body in a semi-visible manner, and the reason for its semi-visible state was because Xiao Lin’s level of strength was not high enough, making it impossible for him to observe it much deeper.

It was nevertheless sufficient. Xiao Lin gritted his teeth, grabbed the big sword he had just obtained, and rushed toward the skeleton soldier. He had already sprinted to the skeleton several meters ahead of him, having no time to appreciate that amazing increase in speed. He gasped, then quickly raised his sword as the red part around the blade immediately burst into flames, engulfing the entire skeleton in an instant.

Such formidable strength!

Xiao Lin was astonished. The sword had actually shattered the skeleton soldier’s left arm completely, but he could clearly feel that the force was the dragon power strengthening him.

The reason did not matter; the result was most important.

Several other skeleton soldiers reacted immediately and began surrounding Xiao Lin. He slid away smoothly and avoided a bone knife that was thrust right at him. He then deftly stood behind the skeleton soldiers and raised the sword yet again.

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 144: Injury

“Slash!”

A glow began converging on the blade of the sword. Xiao Lin’s Slashing was at MAX level, but time was required for him to gather that strength. The skeleton’s agility was not that high though, and with his instant turn, Xiao Lin had powered up his sword before the skeleton could turn around.

He slashed the big sword with fury and the flame on the blade doubled in power. Although the skeletons’ strength was heightened due to being fused with unique metal powder, the heavy blow was still incredibly powerful, cutting the skeleton in half from its skull all the way down to its breastbone.

The green flame in the pupils of the skeleton soldier extinguished instantly, and the bones that made up the body collapsed like a house that fell apart. A single slash sufficed to kill that skeleton soldier.

Even Xiao Lin himself was surprised by its lethality, but it was not the time to be complacent. Six skeleton soldiers remained and Xiao Lin did not back off. His arm was slightly sore after using his Slashing, but it was still within a range he could tolerate. The use of skills consumed physical strength, and after continuous use, his physical strength consumption increased exponentially.

However, Xiao Lin's physical strength seemed to have increased a lot more than usual. He decided to make things quick and prevent other skeleton soldiers from getting a chance to surround him.

His Basic Swordsmanship played yet another role. Those skeleton soldiers might possess high physical strength, but they wielded their bone knives in a disorderly manner and hacked haphazardly. Meanwhile, Xiao Lin wielded the big sword with ease. The inexplicable increase in his upper body strength and agility allowed him to dart between the skeleton soldiers with zero effort. He seized the skeleton's lack of flexibility when turning and did not hesitate to use his Slashing.

That was the only skill he mastered at that point. It was not very practical, but it was able to exert an unexpected effect when facing those skeletons. After killing three skeleton soldiers, Xiao Lin had a rough idea of his skill's effect on those skeletons. He did not need a thorough power-up; roughly three seconds worth of powering-up sufficed, in addition to the bonus given by his own strength.

Xiao Lin needed less time to kill the last few skeleton soldiers, but it was time for him to let his guard down. He quickly left the street and ran to a more remote place outside until he felt a burst of exhaustion overwhelm his body. He weakened immediately and understood that the dragon power had disappeared.

There was still a long time to go before night. Xiao Lin sat down and panted slightly as he recalled everything and began analyzing quickly. He had confirmed that the dragon power stored in the Lightstream jade had unexpectedly attached to himself, even though the golden dragon failed to be summoned. His agility, strength, and physique all received a full range of bonuses. It was as yet uncertain whether his intelligence also received a boon, but everything that was mentioned prior was enough a surprise.

The reasons for it were not that easy to guess though. Xiao Lin thought about it and ended up feeling that it was related to that so-called The Final Land. The high priest Asabanor had also mentioned that it was the birthplace of the world. The laws there were still in a state of chaos, and it was different from the New World be it in space-time or space itself. That might be the reason why the Lightstream Jade was difficult to use there.

"I have to survive!"

Xiao Lin clenched his fists and his confidence increased a bit. The only thing that bothered him then was that he did not know how much dragon power remained in the Lightstream Jade. It would be great if he could reduce the strength released by the dragon power every single time.

The amount of dragon power that was required to manifest into the golden dragon was undoubtedly massive, but it did not take a lot of dragon power to defeat the skeleton army. Therefore, anything extra was nothing but a waste.

“I’ll try and see if I can control the dragon’s power next time.”

Xiao Lin’s opportunity came soon enough. He had nothing to do while hiding in the building and was muttering to himself to analyze what the old high priest was doing as of then. As soon as he mentioned the name Asabanor, a white shadow suddenly appeared in front of him, frightening him.

“You can’t escape! As long as you’re still in this city, I’ll catch you sooner or later! I’m the only one who will win this cat-and-mouse game!”

As soon as the high priest finished, the figure disappeared once again. A few minutes later, the skeleton army’s unique tapping and crackling footsteps sounded from the street. Xiao Lin’s face turned pale and he smiled wryly. He then suddenly realized that the high priest was able to detect him immediately because he had uttered the name aloud.

After carefully reminiscing the previous day’s situation, the blanket search by the skeleton army signified that the high priest could not directly locate Xiao Lin’s position. In fact, it was only because he mentioned the high priest’s name that the old man could detect it, just like sonar.

Other than lamenting his own big mouth, Xiao Lin’s only recourse was to flee again. He encountered two teams of skeleton soldiers in the midst of his journey and once again touched the Lightstream Jade. On that occasion, he made sure to keep an eye on things. Despite being unprepared to control the Lightstream Jade’s power at will, he still tried to find a way to control the rate of dragon power he released.

The Lightstream Jade bloomed with a glittering halo and the dragon power slowly rose up. After several uses, Xiao Lin gradually became familiar with it and began murmuring silently in his heart, ‘Not so much, not so much...’

Indeed, that was the only thing Xiao Lin could think of as of that moment, since there was no switch on the jade pendant. Strangely enough, the dragon power lessened considerably than before after a couple of repeated chants.

“Seriously!” Xiao Lin was dumbfounded, and he was soon left helpless. “This is a bit too little though. Please don’t tell me that I chanted it too much?”

The dragon power grew very scarce, causing his bonus strength to be far less than before. Even using his Slashing to kill the skeleton soldier was insufficient to destroy the skeleton soldier immediately. Instead, a deep cut was inflicted on his left arm by the bone knife. After seeing the disparity in strength, Xiao Lin did not hesitate to use the Lightstream Jade again, silently chanting ‘a little bit more, a little bit more’. The dragon power did increase, but instead of fighting back, he turned around, ran away, and shook off the skeleton soldiers’ pursuit.

After the dragon power dissipated, he looked at the wound on his arm and knit his brows in a very tight frown. He tore off his shirt and dressed the wound in a simple manner after cleaning up the blood using the spring water in the square.

When he unwrapped the bandage, he found that the area around the wound was dark and his muscles became a little stiff. It was not at all painful when touched, and his entire arm seemed to be much weaker, which was not a good sign.

Fortunately, Xiao Lin did not encounter any more canvassing skeleton soldiers after hiding. Although there were a large number of skeletons in the palace, it was not easy to search for one or two people in each of those intricate lanes. More importantly, those skeleton soldiers seemed to have been ordered not to damage the workshops in the city, which undoubtedly afforded Xiao Lin greater convenience to avoid them.

Chapter 145 - Holy Light Blessing

Chapter 145: Holy Light Blessing

When the blood moon rose into the sky again, the skeleton army ceased all action just like before. Xiao Lin was quite certain that the blood moon had a great influence on the skeleton's actions as opposed to himself. What surprised him was that the high priest actually left his skeleton army on the streets, as if unafraid that Xiao Lin would execute a sneak attack on them at night while they were deep asleep.

After thinking about it for a bit, Xiao Lin immediately decided to forgo that idea. A sneak attack when the blood moon was in the sky was like hitting an easy target. The skeleton soldiers would not resist, but the army was far too large in number and the high priest would not possibly send out all the skeletons to do the search.

Even if he destroyed skeletons throughout the night, the total number of destroyed skeletons would only be a fraction. Xiao Lin would not get enough rest and his combat effectiveness would drop severely during the day. If he repeated that several times, he would be worn down from the fatigue.

The high priest had to enlist Xiao Lin or Lilith's help if he wanted to leave The Final Land. Xiao Lin felt that the dead old man would not miss such an opportunity, because then he would have to wait for an indeterminate amount of time for other SS-level talents to enter that world by accident again.

Xiao Lin was almost certain that Asabanor would not kill him, at least not as a last resort. Asabanor's order to the skeleton army was probably so he could capture them alive.

The battle was undoubtedly a protracted one. Such a blanket search was actually very inefficient, but the delay of a couple of days or months would not matter to the high priest, since he had been in The Final Land for more than nine centuries anyway. On the other hand, Xiao Lin did not want to die in that monotonous, blood-red world.

The dazed Xiao Lin fell asleep again, and it was a really deep sleep no less. The high intensity and increased exhaustion during the day was one reason for that, while another was the deterioration of his wound. It was not until he was awakened by a burst of noise that he got up abruptly from the cold stone ground and found that the blood moon had long disappeared from the sky.

He cursed to himself because he had been unaware that daytime had already come. The pain in his left arm left him drenched in cold sweat, even after some movement. He touched the wound a little and felt absolutely nothing, indicating that things had worsened much more than the previous day.

The worry in Xiao Lin's heart amplified. Then, a loud clash of metal was heard outside the door, as if there was a fight. He quickly hid himself and looked out of the window. There stood someone he knew, the very same person he predicted had been sucked into the world as well. It was Lilith, who wielded a scythe that was as tall as a person, and moved freely forward and backward between at least a dozen skeleton soldiers. The attack range of the scythe was huge, and she brandished the weapon to its fullest potential, even though she had to contend with the enemy's numerical advantage.

The red lotus flame on the sickle blade whizzed and fluttered, and the girl shone with a layer of radiant white light. The battle was over just as Xiao Lin pondered over whether or not to go out and help. Lilith exhaled and her eyes darted slightly before she pointed the weapon toward the window, the raging flames blazing yet again.

"Don't attack! It's me!" Xiao Lin quickly opened the door with his still-able right hand.

"Xiao Lin?" Lilith tilted her head, pronouncing the name somewhat arduously. She asked in surprise, "Why are you here?"

Xiao Lin looked at Lilith and was unsure if she had come to the conclusion that only SS-level talents could enter and exit there. He asked in return. "Did Asabanor, the high priest, get to you?"

Lilith nodded, then smirked and said disdainfully. "How ridiculous that he'd expect me to help him."

Xiao Lin loosened up and the two had a brief exchange. There was not much difference between what the high priest said to them, and Lilith was clearly not going to be deceived by such low-level rhetoric. Just like that, the two of them joined hands. Leaving that place in one piece was their common goal.

"You're injured?" Lilith quickly noticed the discomfort in Xiao Lin's left arm.

"I was grazed by a bone knife." Xiao Lin untied the bandage with great effort, revealing the black wound. He smiled bitterly to himself. "I'm not going to become a zombie like the movies, am I?"

Lilith pondered for a moment. "It's possible."

"Huh?" Xiao Lin was just making a joke, not expecting to get an affirmative answer from Lilith.

Lilith did not notice Xiao Lin's nervous look and muttered pensively, "Judge Academy has been facing more and more undead enemies in recent years, and it's for that reason the academy provided the Undead Awareness Course for sophomore year students. As far as I know, some advanced attacks from undead creatures are contagious. If an infection occurs and one fails to eliminate it in time, the person would lose their consciousness and become a fighting puppet for the undead."

Xiao Lin laughed nervously. "You're kidding, right?"

Lilith's face was dignified as she continued, "Rather than waiting until you're neither dead nor alive, it's better to deal with it quickly right now. This is the best solution!"

"Hey! Wait! Wait a minute!" Seeing Lilith moving the scythe, he quickly stepped back and asked, "Are those skeleton soldiers considered advanced undead creatures?"

"Uh, I don't know."

"Then how are you so sure it's the best solution?"

"I don't like guessing, and I don't like having a time bomb next to me," Lilith replied in all earnestness. Her scythe twitched gently and she spoke sincerely, "It's still safer for you to die. I heard that the Chinese are very particular about proper burials. I'll make sure to erect a tombstone for you."

She lived up to her title of Demon Queen indeed!

Xiao Lin cursed internally, but winning was not a guarantee in that situation, even if dragon power was released, since he had lost the use of an arm. He hurriedly said, "The skeleton soldier doesn't look like a high-level undead creature. You must have failed the Undead Awareness Course!"

A blush of embarrassment flashed across Lilith's face, which soon turned to anger. The flames on her weapon were faint and looming.

He had guessed correctly...

It was rumored that Lilith, who excelled at using various weapons, actually failed in the basic knowledge courses. Xiao Lin could not help but poke fun of her deep down. He dropped the topic at once and maneuvered it in a different direction. "You do know that there's many skeletons here, right? Can you guarantee that you will be unharmed every time?"

"I mastered the Holy Light series of skills. Wounds of this degree are self-healing."

"Me too!"

"You've mastered the Holy Light Blessing?" Lilith looked suspicious and quickly shook her head confidently. "Impossible. The Holy Light Blessing is a skill that requires a concurrent study of matter and law. Neither Judge Academy nor Dawn Academy has this course. Only the Royal British Academy and France's Sainte Académie offer that skill, since they deal with the undead all the time."

"Then how did you master it?" Xiao Lin asked.

"Because I'm a genius!" Lilith said that in a very calm tone. She was not flaunting it at all. It was as if she was stating an absolute fact.

Chapter 146 - Interaction

Chapter 146: Interaction

SS-level talents could be regarded as true geniuses indeed, hence Lilith's confidence in saying that. Meanwhile, Xiao Lin also replied with confidence. "I'm also a genius! But I doubt you actually know the Holy Light Blessing. Oh, and people usually don't study matter and law at the same time!"

Lilith cocked an eyebrow and her right hand shook slightly. The scythe suddenly disappeared, and when she turned her wrist again, a stream of light flew out from her wrist bracelet. When it landed in her hand, it turned into a short one-handed hammer.

Lilith raised the hammer high, and the cream-colored head of the hammer exploded into a dazzling milky white halo. The halo landed slowly, bathing Lilith in a noble and holy white light. The light lingered for a long time before gradually dissipating.

[Replication, begin!]

[Replication target: Lilith!]

[Skill scan: complete!]

[Holy Light Blessing: Condenses the power of the Holy Light. User's body will be bathed in a blessed light and receive a comprehensive healing equivalent to F- rating. Similarly, the next attack will cause a damage equivalent to the F- rating of the Holy Light Spell. The damage to undead creatures is more significant, and the comprehensive evaluation of this skill is F+. The weapon is limited to a hammer.]

It was still an F- level skill. In fact, after he surmised that the virtual character in the simulation battle hall was based on Lilith's parameters, he had a rough guess that the girl must have mastered a lot of low-level skills, but was blessed by the Holy Light. Nevertheless, it was a little troublesome that the weapon for the Holy Light Blessing was limited to the hammer.

"Let me use the hammer," Xiao Lin said involuntarily and grabbed the one-handed hammer from Lilith's hand. Although the once-a-week replication skill seemed a bit wasteful at that point, he did not hesitate when facing a life-or-death situation.

"Holy Light Blessing!"

A white light also engulfed Xiao Lin when he used that skill. It was as if he was soaking in a hot spring. A warm heat emanated from every cell in his body. In particular, there was an itchy feeling in his left arm where the bone knife injured him.

He could feel it!

Xiao Lin was both surprised and delighted. The white halo quickly dissipated and he used the Holy Light Blessing again. The black abscesses around the wound then began to fade slowly, and he did not hesitate to continue using it after it faded again.

Within three minutes of copying, several consecutive uses of the Holy Light Blessing healed the wound almost completely, leaving only some extra-dermal scars that had no effect on his movement.

Xiao Lin returned the hammer to Lilith and felt a little dizzy. It resembled the state of excessive mental energy consumption and he was slightly surprised. “Does this skill consume mental energy?”

“Yes. Otherwise, why would it be a combination of matter and law?” Lilith looked even more surprised than him, but she quickly recovered her calm and had a look of approval in her eyes. “Let’s work together then!”

“This skill is very easy to use. Do we need any prerequisites to learn it?” Although the copying time was over, Xiao Lin still felt uneasy as he could not guarantee that he could remain uninjured again. He could not count on copying the skill every time. During the cooldown period, Lilith would probably kill him for being a hidden danger, even if he did not die from other causes.

“Don’t you already know this skill?”

“Ahem, I’m just asking.”

Lilith appeared suspicious again, but she was not someone who tended to want to get to the bottom of things. There was nothing for her to conceal too, and after thinking for a moment, she replied, “The prerequisites are not that high. Level four Basic Hammer-series Weapon Mastery and level three Basic Meditation. But this skill is actually very low in terms of offensive qualities. It’s not very useful, except for dealing with the undead and demons.”

Xiao Lin thought for a moment. The requirements were not that high, since he had already reached Basic Meditation LV3. However, it would take some time before he could reach LV4 Basic Hammer-series Weapon Mastery. First of all, he had to use a hammer-type weapon, and his expression became slightly odd when he thought of that. He then got up and walked toward the blacksmithing workshop that he discovered earlier.

There were a wide variety of weapons in the workshop. Xiao Lin previously chose bladed weapons because he only mastered Basic Swordsmanship, but the earlier battle gave him some new ideas. In fact, he could choose other weapons to fight there, since the dragon power would allow him to completely crush the skeleton soldiers in terms of combat effectiveness. The weapon used basically had little impact on the outcome of the battle, since Slashing could be executed with all melee-type weapons.

“Don’t you need to choose a weapon?” Xiao Lin glanced at Lilith, who was leaning against the window idly.

Lilith shook her head. “My weapons are all custom-made. Plus, these weapons are in the style of the ancient Thunder Kingdom. They’re ugly, and I don’t like them.”

As expected, girls had a natural persuasion toward aesthetics. Xiao Lin shrugged helplessly and asked suddenly, “Do you know any of these weapons?”

“I saw some in history class.”

Lilith walked over to help take a look, but it was obvious that her history grades were probably only a bare pass. Apart from being able to slightly identify the weapon's quality, she had absolutely no other information about them.

It turned out that the girl had relatively poor scores in her basic courses. It would seem that her SS-level talent was unlikely similar to Xiao Lin's Academic Genius skill, since its effect applied to all things, not just combat.

Xiao Lin had that guess in mind when he glanced at the rather irritated Lilith. He changed the topic quickly but carefully and picked a heavy hammer, asking, "What do you think of this one?"

"The Holy Light Blessing is theoretically a skill used by auxiliary staff. I only learned the more offense-based methods when facing the undead. Although the warhammer is able to use the Holy Light Blessing, it leans more toward physical attacks." Lilith immediately showed a very professional attitude when she returned to the battle.

"I do realize that this warhammer is quite heavy!" Xiao Lin held the heavy hammer in his hand, but there was no lighter one-handed hammer on the weapons rack. Therefore, he could only use that in order to learn the Holy Light Blessing.

After selecting the weapons, the two had a brief exchange. Although they were not very familiar with each other, being trapped in such a creepy place gave them a lot of common topics.

Getting out of there was undoubtedly the main concern for Xiao Lin and Lilith.

What Xiao Lin regretted was that Lilith knew little about The Final Land even though she was a member of Judge Academy. As for the mysterious high priest, Xiao Lin felt that he should not expect much from her, judging from her history class grades.

The key to leaving that place lay with the high priest, but they absolutely shunned any form of cooperation with that old man. As an old man who had lived for hundreds of years and formed a hatred for colonists, his words are wholly unreliable.

Chapter 147 - A Theory About the Law

Chapter 147: A Theory About the Law

The discussion with Lilith went nowhere for the time being. The first thing they had to do was avoid capture by the skeleton soldiers. Xiao Lin could only rely on the dragon power to launch a counterattack. He understood that Lilith was the main powerhouse between the two, but when he asked for her opinion, the expression she gave him was a bit odd.

"Those skeleton soldiers are much stronger than those encountered in New Washington. They're around Bronze and Silver-rank, or wait, maybe they're higher than Silver. I don't know if it's true, but sometimes, those skeleton soldiers aren't as strong as I thought."

"Umm, what do you mean by that!" Xiao Lin was puzzled. "I heard that your strength is Silver-rank?"

Lilith quickly nodded in agreement and added, “Because the way I take courses isn’t the same as other people; my attribute values aren’t dominant. If we’re comparing combat power, then I don’t think I’m any worse than Gold-rank.”

She was telling the truth. Xiao Lin could only express helplessness when he thought of the rumored tournament with Europe and America. However, he was still a little confused. “The skeleton soldiers were Silver-rank and had a numerical advantage, but my feeling is that you had it really easy in the last battle.”

Xiao Lin was not deliberately suspecting that Lilith was concealing her true strength. In fact, there was no need for her to do so. Many people could guess the standard she was at, but he still found it quite puzzling. Lilith was just far too relaxed when she was facing dozens of skeleton soldiers in the battle earlier.

The dragon power had greatly improved Xiao Lin’s attributes, but he was still rather surprised to learn that the skeletons he faced earlier were around Silver-rank in terms of strength. Did the dragon power’s really give him the strength to fight a dozen Silver-rank skeleton soldiers at once?

It was not that Xiao Lin had no self-confidence; it was just that he always found such a thing to be incredibly difficult to comprehend.

Lilith hesitated before saying, “My combat style is a little special. Most of my skills have little effect when I fight those undead skeletons, but there’s one skill which has a really surprising killing ability.”

“Which is that.”

“The Red Lotus Slash. A skill I created myself.”

“As expected, the Red Lotus Slash...”

“As expected?”

“Oh, umm... Nothing.”

Xiao Lin looked enlightened. The virtual character in the simulated battle was finally confirmed to be Lilith, but there was no time to mull it over and he instead got lost in thought again.

Lilith remarked frankly that she could only face about eight to ten skeletons at any one time if she relied on her own strength instead of using her Red Lotus Slash. She would still be able to barely win, but once the number of skeletons exceeded that number, the outcome would be difficult to predict.

Even though she was the legendary Demon Queen that many people feared, Lilith’s strength still had a limit, but Xiao Lin still could not help but complain, “There were more than ten skeleton soldiers in that wave just now and you still didn’t run?”

Lilith raised her head. “The stronger the enemy, the greater the chance for you to temper yourself! In fact, I do sometimes feel that this place isn’t that bad. Although the enemy’s suck in quality, their numbers are the best for training, don’t you think?”

‘You lunatic!’

Xiao Lin resisted the urge to yell at her and switched topics. He had a blank expression on his face as he said, “I’m about the same as you. I’ve shown more combat effectiveness than usual during the battle.”

Lilith glanced at him oddly and fell into deep thought. After a while, she showed a look of interest and muttered something to herself.

Xiao Lin immediately asked, “So? Any thoughts?”

“When the dead old man came to you, did you notice that he repeatedly emphasized one thing?” Lilith recalled. She asked and answered herself, “He repeatedly emphasized that the law of The Final Land is chaotic and disorderly.”

Xiao Lin nodded. “I know that time and space is chaotic here. I’ve seen it these two days. For example, the sun and the moon always appear at the same time and time passes very quickly here.”

“Have you heard of Ivanovich?”

“Of course. The Russian who created the Law of Resurrection.”

“He’s been to this place too.”

“Mm. And?”

Lilith cocked her graceful eyebrow as her tone became heavier. “If the time I’m guessing is correct, Ivan created the Law of Resurrection after leaving The Final Land!”

Xiao Lin got up abruptly, his eyes full of shock. After a while, he said with some uncertainty, “You mean, we can create laws however we want in this place? Is that why our strength is significantly improved compared to usual?”

“Don’t you think it’s very interesting? Every college has a course on law, but this course is usually only offered at the doctoral level. Only the top talents from each college are qualified to study them, but right now, we actually have a chance to experience the law!”

There was a spark of excitement in Lilith’s eyes. She was always in high spirits whenever the topic was about strength and battle.

...

In any case, after reaching an initial agreement to form an alliance with Lilith, the battle became easier when they encountered skeleton soldiers over the next few days. Xiao Lin also made a point to count the number of skeleton soldiers.

They worked together in a squad of about 15 to 20 soldiers to hunt down each street. There were usually two to three battalions near adjacent streets, each of which had about 10 squads. 20 battalions could then be concentrated into a brigade numbering three or four thousand skeletons.

Xiao Lin was familiar with that number because he remembered the Thunder Kingdom's military system in the monthly exam, which was almost the same model. Since Asabanor was the last priest of the Thunder Kingdom, it was only natural that he would continue using it.

According to that system, there are about 10 brigades in one legion, which was the equivalent of about 30,000 to 40,000 skeletons. It was a terrifying number, especially when Lilith expounded on his guesses. Although the legion of the undead were not particularly intelligent, the high priest alone could not possibly command tens of thousands of skeleton soldiers. At the very least, Lilith had no knowledge of any means that could possibly do that.

"This legion of the undead actually has similar distinctions between ranks, just like us. The division into upper and lower levels are stricter compared to beings with intelligence. The upper-level undead creatures command the lower-level ones and the hierarchy continues downward. The highest-level ones take orders directly from the high priest. The legions of the undead in French and British history were controlled in this way," Lilith added.

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Chapter 148: Basic Hammer-series Skills

The high priest's search for the two was still ongoing. For Xiao Lin and Lilith, although the battle process has become a little easier, they were on the run every single day and had to keep their guard up for any possible attacks.

The scope of the city was not large and there was no city gate. After a few days, the two of them stood on the edge of the city. They looked at the towering city walls but did not have the slightest intention of leaving because of the endless gray storms outside the solid city walls. They went on throughout the day without a moment of cessation, and the billowing storm was like a chaotic black hole, especially during the day. Any person or object that accidentally came into contact with it would be swallowed instantly.

However, the storm was limited to outside the city walls, as those walls were engraved with densely-packed strange runes. The runes shone in a gray light, the force which protected the city from the storm.

Xiao Lin and Lilith could only return to the central area of the city. They took advantage of the night to circumvent the enemy forces, seizing the skeleton soldiers' slumber to go deep into the hinterland. That way, the skeleton soldiers had to search the whole city again after waking up during the day.

It was a game of hide-and-seek. For Lilith, she enjoyed the fighting process every single time. What she felt was, without a doubt, enjoyment. After days of interacting with her, Xiao Lin had a more intuitive understanding of the legendary Demon Queen. In a nutshell, she had a mad love for fighting.

Lilith's battles were unsystematic, disorderly even. Although she mentioned that she only used her Red Lotus Blade to effectively exert a very strong destructive power against the skeleton soldiers, Xiao Lin did not see it in action during the few battles. Lilith's fighting method was very unique,

similar to that seen in the virtual character battle simulation. Through the combination of various skills, she temporarily strengthened herself to achieve a more powerful final blow.

Lilith's weapon originated from the bracelet on her right wrist, and Xiao Lin guessed that it was some kind of a storage space.

Lilith was the main fighting force while Xiao Lin wielded a heavy hammer and happily provided support. Most importantly, there was someone covering for him in front, so he did not need to draw any more of the dragon power, using only a very limited amount each time for strengthening. His main purpose was to train the hammer to master the skills, and at the same time, he monitored the surrounding streets and warned Lilith if he discovered other skeleton soldiers approaching.

When Lilith finally had her hands full, she immediately used her Red Lotus Blade to end the battle as quickly as possible. If the number of skeleton soldiers exceeded the amount she could withstand, Xiao Lin no longer worried about saving the dragon power. He would then release a power equivalent to that of the real golden dragon.

Two or three skeleton squads could be dispatched with ease under the combined effort of their combat strength. They then quickly left the streets before the other squads surrounded them.

After several occasions, Xiao Lin even began to feel a little happy.

"The ancient Thunder Kingdom's high priest clearly has no understanding of what guerrilla warfare is. I think we can take advantage of this," Xiao Lin had a simple exchange with Lilith when they rested. Although the girl could speak fluent Chinese, she did not understand 'guerrilla warfare'.

"The essence of guerrilla warfare is that we retreat when the enemy advances, we sabotage when the enemy is at rest, we fight when the enemy is exhausted, and we attack when the enemy retreats." For Xiao Lin, who had been brainwashed by anti-Japanese dramas despite being an otaku, had a good cursory grasp of that theory.

Lilith thought about it calmly for a moment and said in earnestness, "No. The undead creatures don't get tired. The feature of undead creatures is that their individual combat power is low, but they come in huge numbers and are tireless like machines."

Xiao Lin cleared his throat awkwardly. "Basically, our tactic is to delay time. It's impossible for us to kill the entire skeleton army."

Based on a calculation of killing 10 to 20 skeletons each day, the number would only total up to a few thousand a year. There are tens of thousands of skeletons in each legion, and no one knew how many legions were present in the entire city.

As for when things would finally come to an end, Xiao Lin did his best to focus on the hammer training instead of dwelling on that issue. The hammer had higher requirements for arm strength and strength in general, and if not for the dragon power's influence, he would find it absolutely difficult to even swing it.

Relatively speaking however, using the Slashing with the hammer increased its power even more shockingly. At full strength, he was able to smash a big hole right in the chest of a skeleton.

Battles of that sort lasted for nearly a month, and time passed faster than imagined. Xiao Lin even wondered how many hours a day there were in The Final Land. Since there was no clear concept of time, he started counting how many times the blood moon showed up in order to judge whether a month had passed.

Xiao Lin had just mastered the Holy Light Blessing a day prior. The skill was not difficult to learn, as long as the basic learning requirements were met. After observing a few key movements repeatedly used by Lilith, he gradually figured out the principle behind it, and was able to master the skills quickly after repeated attempts.

When he lifted the hammer high and was blessed by the light, Lilith showed yet another look of surprise.

It took a month for him to upgrade his Basic Hammer skills to LV4. To be more precise, less than a month, because Xiao Lin spent a lot of time studying the Holy Light Blessing too.

Xiao Lin had never expected that his daily high-intensity combat, coupled with the passive effect of the Academic Genius talent, allowed him to master the new basic weapon skill so quickly.

On that matter, Lilith simply said ‘very interesting’ to express her feelings. The fighting madwoman only said that after nearly a month or so.

Xiao Lin’s basic combat strength was very poor and he was well aware of that. Whenever he encountered a skeleton soldier, Lilith would often tell him to move aside. In nicer terms, it was for his safety, but if one were to be direct, he was actually a hindrance because his strength was too low.

There was only one occasion when they accidentally encountered more than four teams of skeleton soldiers and Xiao Lin had to use the dragon power. That made Lilith look at him a little differently. Later, Xiao Lin asked whether Lilith knew the reason why his attributes increased with the dragon power, as he still did not understand why the golden dragon that could be summoned in the past had suddenly disappeared.

Lilith thought about it for a long time, but said with regret, “It looks like I can’t fight your golden dragon.”

Xiao Lin was speechless. That lunatic was still thinking about fighting his golden dragon! Notwithstanding the lack of means to summon it, he would not allow her to do so, even if it could be summoned, because the dragon power was steadily decreasing.

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Chapter 149: Skeleton Army Upgrade

As for the Lightstream Jade, Xiao Lin had obtained some information from Song Junlang’s words, namely, that the jade used to make that jade pendant was extremely difficult to mine, hence the low production output. It was basically only produced near Dawn Academy, but Lilith also had some understanding of the Lightstream Jade.

“The Lightstream Jade’s special feature is its ability to store any energy form, be it mental power, sword aura, dragon power, or stuff like that which can’t be stored in any other space. The Lightstream Jade is basically divided into two uses. One is, as you’ve mentioned, the condensing of a certain energy through some kind of magic formation. It can be a creature—such as a golden dragon—or a weapon.”

After a pause, Lilith continued, “The Lightstream Jade’s second purpose is purely for recharge and replenishment, whether for yourself or someone else. When a person’s mental power is exhausted, it can be replenished directly through the Lightstream Jade. Most people will choose to utilize it for the second purpose.”

Xiao Lin was taken aback and asked, “What about the all-round enhancement that results from transforming its energy into a person’s own strength?”

Lilith’s face was also filled with confusion. “Even though Judge Academy cannot produce Lightstream Jade on its own, I know of a few people who have the ability to make this kind of accessory. But I’m quite sure that I’ve never heard this use before.”

“Does this mean that the change only occurs in The Final Land?”

“Maybe. It’s the same with my Red Lotus Blade.”

“Speaking of which, it looks like your Red Lotus Blade has been strengthened beyond its normal power.”

Lilith glanced at him and nodded in some surprise. “You’ve probably also noticed that my Red Lotus Blade transforms into a flame with dual physical and magical damage by fusing spiritual power and sword aura together. The shape of the flame looks like a red lotus, hence the name for the technique. However, the flame isn’t exactly the shape of a red lotus when I used it recently. It seems to have changed a lot.”

“Has its power also increased because of that?” Xiao Lin asked.

“I’m still not sure whether the increase in power is really related to the shape of the flame, but it’s quite interesting.” A playful smile raised in the corner of Lilith’s mouth as she made an interesting analysis yet again.

Xiao Lin’s mouth twitched and he rubbed the shining jade on his chest. He was unsure whether the changes in dragon power had anything to do with The Final Land. He tried many things in the past month, and as an example, one of the things he could control was releasing only the desired amount of dragon power, amounting to about one percent of the entire golden dragon. Therefore, the Lightstream Jade could sustain the entire month and the dragon power was not completely exhausted.

During that month, Xiao Lin and Lilith ran almost all over the city, hiding under the noses of the skeleton soldiers. The thrills during the period were not as effortless as he imagined, and Xiao Lin became more and more anxious to improve his strength. After upgrading his hammer skills to LV4, he changed back to the big sword again and wanted to continue improving his Basic Swordsmanship.

No truer words were spoken when Lilith said it was a training field. Xiao Lin had begun to understand why Lilith was so strong.

Sometime later, the high priest Asabanor seemed to have grown rather tired of that hide-and-seek game. The number of skeletons on the street obviously began to decrease, but a new kind of skeleton soldier appeared, slightly larger than the previous ones. Their bones glowed with gray-black metallic luster, and their weapons were no longer monotonous bone knives, but were replaced by those produced in the forging workshop.

“It looks like our enemy has had an upgrade!”

“I can see that!”

The two encountered yet another team of skeleton soldiers on that day. They could clearly sense that the skeleton soldiers’ strength was different from usual. Lilith could not instantly kill them, even though she used the Red Lotus Blade, and Xiao Lin was forced to release even more of the dragon power.

The blood sun hung in the sky as always, but it radiated only cold. Xiao Lin and Lilith stood on the edge of the city square with a dozen skeleton soldiers scattered around them. The click and clack of their footsteps were fast approaching and they had much faster support than the previous month.

The high priest was not at all incompetent in his high position. After one month of futile work, it was obvious that the old man had adjusted his tactics.

“What should we do?” Xiao Lin asked in a low voice.

“Charge!”

“Charge? F*CK!” Xiao Lin had just finished when he saw Lilith dragging her scythe in a forward lunge. She seemed to be afraid of nothing!

A layer of red flames appeared on the moon-shaped scythe again. It was her signature skill, the Red Lotus Blade. The first skill she used when she attacked was her own skill, and it was clear that Lilith was very wary of the enhanced skeleton soldiers.

The flames did not manifest in the shape of a red lotus, but scattered into denser flames like a goddess scattering flowers, striking each bone of the skeleton soldier’s body. Lilith yelled, lifted the scythe, and leapt upward, drawing a crescent shape in the air. Clusters of flames flared up on the skeleton soldier’s bodies, turning into a raging flame and enveloping the entire skeleton soldiers. The high temperature that exploded in an instant quickly destroyed the skeletons and burned with red.

Lilith descended and the scythe passed through the skeleton soldier’s body. The bones, after being reduced in strength from the strong heat, failed to withstand the attack and collapsed.

Lilith panted quite severely, indicating that the attack had consumed a lot of her stamina. Xiao Lin was rather taken aback and stopped sitting on his hands. He squeezed the Lightstream Jade and released more than the usual amount of dragon power. He was already very proficient in its mastery.

Although it was not the time to be miserly, it was inevitable that Xiao Lin would not be too happy about releasing so much of the power. He could not help but think of how he would not have to use as much if he was just enhancing his strength.

With that thought, Xiao Lin took advantage of the situation and tried it out. After switching back to the huge sword, he leaned sideways and used his agility to dodge behind the skeleton. At that moment, he suddenly felt that his body was filled with lead and his steps were a little bit heavier.

‘Could it be! Could it really be successful?’

Countless thoughts flashed in his mind, but Xiao Lin had no time to think too much about the situation before him. He immediately raised his big sword high and at that moment, he only powered-up for about two seconds before slicing the skeleton in front of him. He completed his power-up and launched a slash.

Boom!

The sword exploded with greater power than usual. Although the skeleton soldier subconsciously raised its sword to resist him, its weapon was still cut in half by Xiao Lin’s sword and the green flame in its pupils extinguished at once.

Xiao Lin seemed to have figured out something, but he needed time to digest his findings slowly. After the slash, his agility returned to normal and he yelled at Lilith all of a sudden, “Your hammer! Let me use it!”

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Chapter 150: Attribute Conversion

Lilith had no time to ask anything during the fierce battle. She shook her wrist lightly and a silver light flew out of the bracelet, turning into a hammer in mid-air. Xiao Lin quickly caught it and remarked how useful that spatial bracelet was to himself before striking an oncoming skeleton soldier.

‘Holy Light Blessing!’

A milk-white holy halo landed on the one-handed hammer and it howled with the glow. With the dull sound of impact, the helmeted soldier actually had its skull smashed open.

“So strong!” Xiao Lin himself was stunned. Although the Holy Light Blessing could cause more damage to undead creatures, its basic damage was not high enough and was limited, even when strengthened. However, Xiao Lin used the dragon power to enhance his mental strength.

The Holy Light Blessing’s attack was that of spell damage, and the level of his own mental strength had an amplifying effect on spell damage. On that basis, the final destructive power was equally as formidable because the undead creatures were enhanced.

Xiao Lin finally confirmed his guess that he was indeed able to freely transform dragon power into a certain attribute enhancement. Although other attributes would be greatly reduced as a cost, the enhanced attributes would be better than usual enhancement.

The power of Slashing was undoubtedly greater, but that skill required time to gather strength, was unstable, exposed oneself to harm when gathering strength, and used up a significant amount of physical strength each time. Relatively speaking, the Holy Light Blessing was more of an auxiliary skill, and its consumption of mental power was even lower than ordinary spells that were rated at F-.

Undead creatures were innately sensitive to the Holy Light. Upon sensing the strong halo that just broke out, the four or five skeleton soldiers besieging Lilith immediately turned their sights to Xiao Lin. However, Lilith was given a small breather. After being assaulted to the point that there was not much room to fight back, she immediately adjusted her posture and released her Red Lotus Blade yet again. That time, the flame on the blade formed a chain, directly binding the legs of the closest two skeleton soldiers.

Xiao Lin quickly transformed the dragon power into strength, raising the big sword in his right hand and forcefully blocking the skeleton soldier's attack. Then, he turned it into mental power again, raising the hammer in his left hand and striking down with Holy Light Blessing.

A team of more than 10 skeletons was quickly killed by Xiao Lin's targeted Holy Light Blessing hammer. When confronted by two or three skeletons, Xiao Lin immediately transformed the energy into agility, avoiding the attack deftly with amazing flexibility and posture before quickly moving to the side of the skeleton.

He then turned all the dragon power into power and used his Slashing to deliver a one-hit kill. Continuous use of Slashing took up extra physical strength, so it was transformed into mental power while interspersing its use with the Holy Light Blessing.

If Xiao Lin faced danger and had nowhere to hide. He converted all his dragon power toward his physique, forcefully resisting the attack before using the Holy Light Blessing to quickly heal.

Lilith could strengthen her body through the auxiliary skills of a variety of weapons, but Xiao Lin could not coordinate with Lilith anymore. Such quickfire transformation of attributes had provided Xiao Lin with a whole new way of looking at the battle.

In a simple comparison of strength, the previous average enhancement of Xiao Lin's dragon power could increase his total attribute value to a level equivalent to Bronze. It was also possible to increase it to Silver, but that would consume an extreme amount of dragon power. Unless it was absolutely necessary, Xiao Lin usually only stopped when he reached Bronze-rank.

However, Xiao Lin only strengthened a certain attribute using the dragon power. His total attribute value was still equivalent to the Bronze-rank, but because of the extremely unbalanced attribute value, the strengthened single attribute had basically reached Silver-rank.

Xiao Lin could not immediately adapt to using that brand-new attribute transformation ability. Each transformation could not be completed in an instant, and even the method of transformation was still in the exploring stage for Xiao Lin. He was unaccustomed to it, so the conversion speed was a little slower and it was inevitable that he would suffer several attacks.

Although the Holy Light Blessing had a healing effect, there was no enhancement for it. All it did was remove the special toxin from the undead creatures, but the wound would still be there. After repeating it several times, Xiao Lin would not be able to bear it. Especially when he transformed the dragon power to other attributes, he would end up suffering from extreme physical exhaustion.

The worrying part was that a group of skeletons from far and near had appeared in their line of sight, and those skeleton soldiers were much more unique. In addition to the melee weapons, Xiao Lin also saw skeletons holding crossbows and even staves. They were shorter, but their eye sockets were lit up with an orange flame.

“Skeleton archers and mages!” Lilith’s face gradually became serious.

“Are they strong?” Xiao Lin asked.

Lilith rolled her eyes. “If you’ve taken those courses, you should know that crossbow and spell courses are always more difficult to learn than ordinary melee courses. The same is true for undead creatures, making skeleton archers and skeleton mages much more difficult. Such skeleton creatures have some level of intelligence and are even more difficult to deal with.”

“And there’s lots of them too!” Xiao Lin suddenly turned around and glanced. Color drained from his face as countless skeletons gathered around the square. They poured in from the streets and alleys, enclosing the two of them completely.

“We’re surrounded!” Xiao Lin exclaimed in a low voice.

“I’m not blind.”

“You look calm though. Do you have a way to deal with so many skeletons?” Xiao Lin asked again, eager.

“It won’t be easy.” Lilith’s face showed an unprecedented fighting spirit. Xiao Lin’s eyelids twitched. He was completely speechless. He understood that the fighting madwoman cared not about the outcome. Victory, loss, life, and death were irrelevant to her. What Lilith pursued was nothing more than stronger opponents.

“But how do they know that we’re here unless they set an ambush here in advance. We’d have time to leave otherwise!” Xiao Lin still could not figure it out.

“Stupid demon! Do you think you can escape? I’ve been waiting for you for a long time!” Asabanor’s form once again appeared in the air. He was still a blur of light and darkness, without any form. He gazed down condescendingly at Xiao Lin and Lilith.

“Annoying old bag!” Lilith could not stand the high priest and pursed her lips. She turned to Xiao Lin. “He probably predicted our tracks with astrology spells.”

Xiao Lin remembered Lolander saying something about high priests being proficient in astrological spells. He did not expect that such a mysterious spell could be used for prediction.