

Elite Mages' Academy Novel

Chapter 161 - The Investigation Team's Arrival

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New Washington had finally reverted back into a hard-earned normalcy when things became tense yet again. Dawn Academy's warship arrived unexpectedly, which undoubtedly caused great unrest within Judge Academy. New Washington was their main city, and they felt very insecure, even though their dock was dozens of kilometers away from the city.

Around ten minutes after the arrival of Dawn Academy's warships, more than half of the dragon-eagle knights were dispatched and began guarding the dock. An armor-clad Commander Harry also showed up in person.

It went without saying that neither academy could intensify the conflict for no apparent reason, since they had already signed the treaty of alliance. However, the necessary confrontation continued, and Song Junlang coldly stood opposite Johnson at the Foreign Affairs Department.

"I repeat again. New Washington is Judge Academy territory. According to the alliance treaty between our two sides, anyone with a strength of Gold-rank or above must first make an official application. I'm sure you won't unilaterally go against the treaty, Department Head Song!" Johnson spat and spoke righteously. City Hall was piling the pressure on him, forcing the fat man to remark in anger.

Song Junlang remained calm and unruffled amidst the chaos. "Well, I'm coming to apply now, aren't I? This time, our side will be fully responsible for the disappearance of our students. That way, it won't waste your academy's time and effort."

"This is what you call an application?" Johnson jumped up in anger. "According to recent information, there's another Epic-level person in your investigation team! You're seriously making the application when they're already at the dock? How dare you let an Epic-ranked person come into New Washington as and when you please. Who do you think will agree to such unreasonable demands? What are you trying to do! Do you want to start a war!"

Song Junlang's expression became colder and colder. "We've given you time. Our warship would turn back halfway through the journey if you could find the boy during this half month. Sadly, the capabilities of your people are really disappointing!"

Johnson asked abruptly, "What kind of person is Xiao Lin?"

Song Junlang did not answer. He was silent for a moment, but simply remarked lightly, "This is a personal order from the dean. By the way, the dean is probably heading to the Supreme Council right now to look for the person-in-charge of your academy. "

Johnson's face got worse when he heard of the Supreme Council

"What did I say? You have to understand that if we are to take over this incident, our goal is only to find Xiao Lin. As long as he's found, they'll all go back immediately. There won't be any trouble."

"Impossible! You think it's only your student that disappeared? Our academy's Lilith disappeared in that incident too, and we have no news at all so far!"

"What does Lilith have to do with our Dawn Academy? I only want Xiao Lin!"

"And what does Xiao Lin have anything to do with Judge Academy!"

"Are you going to break the alliance!"

"I have to remind you that the dean said only one thing when I spoke to him yesterday: find Xiao Lin at all costs!"

...

The quarrel became more and more intense. Whether it was in the diplomatic office or on the dock, countless last-minute emergency meetings were held. Equally as many people were inquiring and asking, overtly and secretly.

With the inexplicable tension between the two academies, most people were perplexed and the result of inquiring left them even more clueless. Almost everyone thought that Dawn Academy was acting overboard, as their own students had disappeared in other colonies too. Such issues could be big or small, but since he was just a freshman, there was no need to raise hell for it.

It was not until midday that New Washington was suddenly enveloped in darkness. Something seemed to have opened in the dark sky. When that happened, the crowds on the street hardly had any time to panic when the darkness quickly dissipated again. Two figures then fell from the slightly rainy sky.

Two city guards immediately cast a spell on the two people to slow their fall. After identifying them, they communicated the news to the senior officials almost immediately.

Lilith was rather famous in New Washington and many people knew her. On the other hand, Xiao Lin was not, but in the past half month, notices with his portrait were all over the city and it was difficult for anyone not to know about him.

Johnson's entire body relaxed when he heard the news. He smiled and said, "Seems like things have been resolved now."

Song Junlang breathed a sigh of relief and said immediately, "I need to see Xiao Lin now."

"No problem. He's probably with the city guard."

The two left the Foreign Affairs Department. The city garrison was similar to a police station on Earth. Their offices were located on the east side of the business district, but when they arrived, the people at the garrison told them helplessly that Xiao Lin and Lilith had been taken away.

“Taken away? By whom?”

“The dragon-eagle knight regiment. Commander Harry had ordered us in advance to inform him should there be any news.” The guard was a very young American who had likely graduated recently.

Johnson’s brows throbbed with anxiety when he heard that. He quickly explained to Song Junlang, who seemed to be on the verge of lashing out, “Strictly speaking, the city’s defense is strictly under the Military Department. In the case of an emergency, Commander Harry will be responsible for it. But please trust us. Now that they’re found, they’ll be under the dragon-eagle knights’ protection. The safety of your academy’s students is... Umm, Department Head Song, where are you going?”

Song Junlang was done listening to the man’s nonsense. He walked off without looking back and left Johnson with a sentence: “I’m of the opinion that your academy can no longer be trusted for the time being. We won’t trouble you any further!”

“Wait...”

After a couple of steps, Johnson finally gave up. He took a few breaths and looked up at the gloomy sky. His mood was just as bad as the weather and he muttered with a bitter smile on his face, “I wouldn’t have done what I did with him that day if I had known this would happen. I didn’t expect Dawn Academy’s response to be so timely. Oh, Harry, whether my guess is true or not, we don’t stand a chance anymore! I hope you don’t do anything stupid, or Judge Academy will likely face a civil war with the colonists!”

...

Xiao Lin woke up very quickly this time. When he opened his eyes again, he found that he was actually up in the sky. The gloomy cumulus clouds were just under his nose, and there seemed to be lightning and thunder. The red sun was there when he looked up.

Xiao Lin was confused. When he discovered that he was actually riding on the back of a huge dragon-eagle and bound with a rope by the rider in front of him, he managed to confirm one thing.

He had finally returned alive! Xiao Lin could not control himself from roaring at the sky after thinking of the scene and feeling the rush of escaping death. The dragon-eagle seemed to have sensed his excitement and synced with him by executing a tricky 360-degree somersault.

Chapter 162 - Disguised House Arrest

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The experience proved to Xiao Lin—who had not undergone any training before—that riding a dragon-eagle in the air was definitely not something to look forward to. The entire journey brought

with it bumps and turbulence, and the dragon-eagle improvised its flight pattern from time to time. A couple of tumbles in the air was more than enough to make him empty his stomach.

Fortunately, the flight did not last very long. When the dragon-eagle landed again, Xiao Lin's face turned pale and he quickly rolled down from the dragon-eagle's back with two weakened legs. It took him a very long time before he could suppress nausea in his chest. Only then could he look at the surrounding environment.

He was on the top of the mountain. He could see the majestic silver resurrection tower of New Washington City in the south—a sign that it was not too far away from the city. There were heavily armed soldiers pacing nearby and the roar of dragon-eagles were heard in succession.

“This is the dragon-eagle knights' residence,” Lilith walked over and dispelled Xiao Lin's confusion.

“You seem to be quite adapted here.” Xiao Lin glanced at Lilith, who looked as right as rain.

“I usually come here to play, but it's still very difficult for me to control a dragon-eagle by myself. Not everyone can learn advanced riding skills,” Lilith said, shaking her head.

Even though Xiao Lin had the feeling that the particular knight who brought him back deliberately tried to make his head spin in the sky, he did not care about any of that after having come back alive. He heard Song Junlang mention before that the barracks of the dragon-eagle knight regiment was a place of strict control, since they were the most elite unit of Judge Academy. People from other academies could not simply approach it without permission.

When Xiao Lin came to that mysterious military base for the first time, he was incredibly curious to walk around and take a look. A couple of steps later however, he was stopped by the knight who brought him back. The knight had already taken off his helmet. He was a blonde American who said a few words in English with a blank face.

Xiao Lin looked at Lilith, who immediately helped to translate. “Commander Harry has ordered us to stay here for now.”

Xiao Lin was puzzled, and so was Lilith, but the American did not explain anything further. Instead, he sent someone to arrange a place for the two of them to stay and left at once.

It was a very simple place to live. It was a three-story building that seemed to be rather old with yellowed walls, and rooms with mostly broken doors and windows. Lilith told him that the place was the earliest dormitory for the knights. After the new building was built, the old one was left unused.

The room arranged for Xiao Lin seemed to have been prepared at the last minute. There was nothing else except a simple table, a chair, and a bed. Meanwhile, the bathroom was hopeless and it was a far cry compared to the city's hotel conditions.

Lilith had a rare look of embarrassment on her face introducing the history of that building since the residence arranged for her was not there, but at the newly constructed and well-equipped dormitory. The difference in treatment was more than obvious.

Xiao Lin did not really care about all that, but what irked him was the presence of three or four soldiers hovering nearby at all times downstairs. He could feel their vigilant glances, even though he was just standing there and chatting with Lilith.

Xiao Lin was very angry. Those people were clearly watching him, so he waved his arms heavily and vented to Lilith, "I'm not a prisoner! Lilith! I am not a prisoner of your academy!"

Lilith had a tight frown. "I'm afraid this is a misunderstanding. I think Commander Harry will explain more when he returns."

"There's someone else who accompanied me to New Washington. Can you bring him a message and at least let him know that I'm safe now?" Xiao Lin was helpless. Lilith's earlier inquiries revealed that they had been missing for more than half a month and he could imagine Song Junlang's desperation.

"I'm afraid I can't!" Lilith's face also showed a look of displeasure. "They also forbade me from leaving the knights' residence."

Xiao Lin was very much surprised. Although his time spent with Lilith was not too long, she gave him the impression that she was fearless. Were there actually things that she was afraid to do?

Lilith continued to murmur, annoyed, "The lowest-ranked members of the dragon-eagle knight regiment are at least Gold. Their combat strength is raised even more when they act in tandem with their dragon-eagles."

Xiao Lin rolled his eyes immediately. As it turned out, it was only because Lilith knew that she could not beat the knights. If that were not the case, an order like that would not be able to restrain her at all.

Xiao Lin had no right to object. He spent the first night of his return in the shabby dormitory. There were no lights in the corridor and no one provided him candles, so the past few days were very gloomy. The weather was not forgiving, so moonlight was absent, sinking the entire dormitory into darkness when night fell.

The knights allowed him to move freely only in the corridor downstairs, but he did not want to have a staring contest with those Americans in the dark. He therefore washed up and went to bed early, but he tossed and turned, unable to sleep.

He had no mood during the day because of his disguised house arrest by the Americans. Now that he calmed down and carefully recalled the scene in The Final Land, he suddenly felt that something was not quite right.

High Priest Asabanor!

Xiao Lin suddenly stood up in the dark and began thinking carefully. On the eve of the day where The Final Land was about to be destroyed by a tornado storm, the mysterious tadpole-like text erupted suddenly from his body and formed a black channel. Asabanor still caught up at the last moment, and he vaguely remembered that Lilith had been pulled into the passage using the flame chain.

With Lilith's safe return, did that mean that the dead old man's spirit had also returned to that world? After considering that possibility, Xiao Lin suddenly felt a creeping feeling. His heartbeat quickened slightly and his entire self became alert. He could not help it after all the suffering the old man caused him.

A few minutes later, however, he relaxed again and shook his head before falling back in bed. If Asabanor did come back, it was impossible for him to stay nearby for long. Though the old man's strength remained unknown, he could not possibly be stronger than the entirety of Judge Academy, and their location was none other than the Americans' capital city.

Additionally, if he remembered correctly, only the high priest's head was left in his soul state and it was uncertain how much his power had declined. It might have even been possible that Asabanor did not even manage to return and that his soul had dissipated during the journey.

Moreover, it was America's Judge Academy that destroyed the ancient Thunder Kingdom. As the saying went, third parties should never be involved when settling disputes. The unhappiness caused to Xiao Lin in the daytime gave Xiao Lin a slightly malicious thought—if the high priest really did come back alive, it would be one hell of a headache for the Americans.

Chapter 163 - Meeting Harry

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After staying in the dragon-eagle knights' old residence for three days, Xiao Lin seemed to have been completely forgotten. No one cared about him. The guards at the door provided three meals a day and did not pay him any attention. If Xiao Lin had not known that the dragon-eagle knights were of Gold-rank strength, he would have wanted to fight them directly.

Lilith never showed up again at that time. He did not know if she was not willing to come over or had her movement restricted.

It was not until the evening of the third day when someone knocked on his door after dinner. It was Commander Harry. The scar on Harry's forehead left a deep impression on Xiao Lin, making it instantly recognizable at a glance.

The beautiful vice-captain still followed Harry around. After casting a chain on the two, she excused herself and left only Harry and Xiao Lin looking at each other.

Harry was not clad in his fine armor that day but was instead dressed in white casual clothes with a slender sword hanging by his waist. His eyes wore a hint of aggression as if trying to pierce a hole through Xiao Lin with his gaze.

Xiao Lin was unafraid and stared back angrily.

After a long time, Harry was the first to retract his gaze and then said in a calm tone, "We've wronged you over these past two days. Judge Academy has to treat an incident like this with caution. I'm afraid we'll need your assistance in investigating a number of things."

Xiao Lin suppressed his anger. “So your investigation is over?”

Harry shook his head. “Lilith explained everything yesterday. Both your experiences are quite surprising. Did you know that The Final Land in Planet Norma is a legend equivalent to that of paradise on Earth? Oh, perhaps you Easterners call it heaven. In short, in the eyes of the locals, The Final Place is where Gods created the world. It’s extremely sacred, but we only treat this as a religious myth.”

‘Heaven?’

‘Stretching it, the side full of green grass might be considered heaven, but the blood-colored world could not possibly be regarded as such,’ Xiao Lin chided in his heart without expressing it overtly. Instead, he nodded. “Yes, I suppose you’ve already known all there is to know about The Final Land from Lilith. Lilith was with me all throughout and I wouldn’t know more than her. You probably know my strength by now, and in fact, it’s all thanks to Lilith that I’m able to survive. If you really need to know anything, I think it’s best you ask Lilith.”

Harry had a shallow smile on his face. The commander of America’s most elite force had to be extremely strong, but he looked rather approachable. Perhaps it was a preconceived notion, but Xiao Lin felt that there was a sense of hypocrisy in Harry’s smile. Xiao Lin also abhorred the way Harry looked at him because it felt as though he was being stared at by a beast. Needless to say, it made him very uncomfortable.

Harry waved his hand and smiled meaningfully. “You don’t have to be humble. Your strength might be low for now, but the truth is, I can see your immeasurable potential, judging from the golden dragon incident before!”

Xiao Lin’s heart wavered slightly, but he still responded with some sarcasm. “I never thought you’d remember me, Commander Harry.”

It was not the first time that the two of them met. The first was when Xiao Lin accidentally summoned the golden dragon when he first arrived at New Washington. Harry even proposed to buy his Lightstream Jade, but Song Junlang reminded him that Harry was just deliberately probing Xiao Lin’s background. From then onward, Xiao Lin knew that Commander Harry was by no means a simple man.

Xiao Lin felt that he was in a tight spot because he did not know what Lilith actually said to Harry. After carefully remembering everything he experienced in The Final Land, there seemed to be no secrets that he should not be telling them.

Perhaps the only one that might fall into that category was the Lightstream Jade hanging from his neck. The jade pendant had undergone unimaginable and peculiar changes in The Final Land, allowing himself to gain strength that put him on par with Silver-rank undead skeletons, despite not being Black Iron-rank himself.

That might well be the new purpose of the Lightstream Jade. Imagine if someone with higher strength used that jade pendant... Their burst of power would be even more terrifying. America did not produce Lightstream Jade, so it made sense that Harry was thinking along those lines.

In just a few seconds, countless thoughts flashed through Xiao Lin's mind and he was trying to guess why the Americans detained him.

He was all but certain that it was a deliberate house arrest. Harry would not have needed to explain everything to him alone, but ought to have taken him directly to see Song Junlang, who accompanied him there. After all, he was a member of Dawn Academy. Broadly speaking, it was a diplomatic incident between the two countries, and regardless of what reason Harry detained him for, it was obviously unreasonable and illegal.

Just as Xiao Lin was mulling over everything, Harry was already walking around in the room as he pleased. He walked to the bed and sat down, then touched the bedding. He frowned and cursed, "Those b*stards! It's autumn and they gave you such a thin blanket. Don't they know that the autumn's in the New World are equivalent to winter on Earth!"

"Huh?" Xiao Lin's mind was a little short-circuited. He was still trying to figure out whether Harry was deliberately detaining him for his Lightstream Jade, but he unexpectedly changed the subject.

Harry got up with a sincere and apologetic look on his face. "This is my oversight. Allow me to apologize to you on behalf of the dragon-eagle knights, but please rest assured, I'll arrange for a change in your residence as soon as possible. The environment here is just despicable."

Seeing Harry preparing to leave, Xiao Lin suddenly recollected his thoughts. A burst of anger came over him all of a sudden and he cursed the old fox in his heart. He blocked the door at once, not having the courtesy to give so much as a smile when he asked coldly, "Commander Harry, your words suggest that you don't plan to let me go back. You sound like you wish to continue imprisoning me here."

"Imprison you?" Harry looked extremely surprised. He spread his palms and said innocently, "I think you're gravely misunderstood. We just want you to stay and assist in the investigation. You may have heard that the ancient Thunder Kingdom's high priest Asabanor was once the most wanted criminal in Judge Academy. Based on what Lilith said, he's probably returned. I'm sure you understand the seriousness of this matter. Whether the priest wants to commit a terrorist attack or instigate a rebellion, the end result will always be a headache."

"Does that mean you want me to stay and help capture Asabanor?"

"That's right. After all, you had brief contact with him in The Final Land and you'd know him better. We'll need your help."

"Lilith can help you all the same!"

"She's not enough. We need a more comprehensive understanding."

The sneer at the corner of Xiao Lin's mouth became even more prominent. Harry's words were half-truths and sounded very genuine, but Xiao Lin pointedly asked, "Does that mean you don't plan to let me leave until you get Asabanor?"

Chapter 164 - A Theory on Attribute Conversion

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If the high priest really did return to Planet Norma, his incomplete soul state allowed him to easily hide from the Americans as long as he had the smarts. Who would be able to find him if he found a place to hide?

Harry's request for Xiao Lin to assist in finding Asabanor was obviously just an excuse not to let him go. Would Xiao Lin have to stay here for a few years if they could not locate the high priest?

Since that was the case, Xiao Lin might as well show his displeasure.

Harry patted Xiao Lin's shoulders. The latter immediately felt his shoulders sink and an unimaginable force pressed down on his body. He could not stop his legs from kneeling down on the spot.

Xiao Lin bit his lip. It was impossible for Harry to use full strength so that pat was only equivalent to the strength of Black Iron-rank. Even so, the strength was overbearing enough for Xiao Lin. He was not Black Iron-rank yet himself.

That old fox! It was a clear warning and reminder to Xiao Lin that he had no right to object on their turf!

Xiao Lin bit his lip firmly, but his own qualities were limited and he could not resist it through sheer willpower. His knees trembled uncontrollably, but just as he was about to kneel, a huge force suddenly came out of nowhere and surged in his body.

Xiao Lin slowly stood up straight and looked directly at Harry.

The smile on Harry's face gradually diminished and he raised his brows slightly in surprise. He lifted his palm and frowned, as if thinking about something. A few seconds later, he put on another hypocritical smile, and said plainly, "Don't get me wrong. I don't mean to imprison you. In fact, I can allow you to have your own activities in New Washington city sometime later. If you want to continue training, I can even persuade senior management to transfer you to Judge Academy."

After a pause, Harry added, "You're a freshman, so you might not understand it, but the truth is, transfers are more than feasible. Judge Academy always welcomes outstanding students from all over the world. Your nationality on Earth is not a problem."

"Thank you. I've enjoyed my time at Dawn Academy, so you shouldn't be bothered to worry about it!"

Harry shrugged. "That's such a pity. We'll talk another day. By the way, I heard that you've eaten and drank in The Final Land, but since we still don't know anything about that world, you may

need to undergo an individual examination tomorrow in order to avoid possible diseases or infection. This is what I came here to tell you today. I suggest you go.”

Xiao Lin was inevitably stunned after hearing about the physical examination. He knew that Harry would definitely not be able to let him go that day, so he had no choice but to give way.

Harry walked to the door, then suddenly turned his head and asked curiously, “The information I found shows that you are only a one-month freshman, and your comprehensive attribute value doesn’t even exceed twenty. You probably haven’t reached Black Iron-rank yet. ”

“Ah? Hmm.” Xiao Lin nodded. He was not sure what Harry’s intention was, but there was really nothing for him to conceal. Of course, he also lamented how quickly America got their information.

Harry nodded, stopped talking, and left the dormitory.

Xiao Lin let out a sigh of relief. The brief confrontation with Harry made him feel uncomfortable and the feeling of being watched from behind could not be shaken off. He did not know what level Harry’s strength reached; it could have been Gold-rank or higher, but he could not even bear it when Harry exerted just a small portion of his strength.

At that moment, Xiao Lin suddenly felt strength draining from his entire body and he slumped on the bed. It was then that he realized the sudden burst of force earlier, and immediately figured out why Harry asked if he was Black Iron-rank.

Harry probably used Black Iron-rank strength, perhaps to humiliate Xiao Lin or send a warning threat. He assumed that Xiao Lin was powerless because he had not reached that rank yet, but the result obviously surprised him quite a bit.

Had he reached Black Iron-rank?

Xiao Lin did not think so. Even if his battle in The Final Land would improve his comprehensive attributes, there was still a ways to go before he reached Black-Iron.

Moreover, this special power bonus did not seem to last, indicating that the power was only temporary. He touched the Lightstream Jade on his chest. With some doubt, he shook his head and rejected the guess.

The dragon power in the Lightstream Jade had long been exhausted and he was certain of that fact in The Final Land. Thus, it was impossible for him to have used the dragon power to improve his attribute value.

‘Hold on. Attribute improvement?’

Xiao Lin seemed to have thought of something and his eyes brightened. He did not just rely on dragon power to simply increase his attribute value in The Final Land. In particular, the conversion between various attribute values was undoubtedly more helpful to his battles.

Although he did not try again after losing the dragon power’s help from Lightstream Jade, Xiao Lin felt that he might have misunderstood.

He used the dragon power stored by the Lightstream Jade to increase his total attributes and to greatly improve his combat effectiveness for a short moment. He naturally believed that the conversion between attribute values also depended on the Lightstream Jade, or that it could only be carried out on the premise of improving attributes through the dragon power.

Perhaps that line of thinking was wrong.

The attribute conversion did not require the Lightstream Jade, let alone the blessing of dragon power. It was more like an ordinary skill that he could use at any time and anywhere!

That speculation undoubtedly made Xiao Lin so awestruck that the anger of Henry's house arrest was gone for the time being. He urgently needed to verify his speculation.

After multiple thoughts, he decided to immediately go downstairs and find the American guarding him. He told the American that he wanted to borrow a training ground, regardless of where it was, but the American still did not understand, despite repeated gestures.

However, the guards were also more polite to him on that occasion. It seemed that Harry had spoken to them before leaving. They soon found Lilith because Lilith was the only one fluent in Chinese.

Lilith came quickly. After translating Xiao Lin's request, the guarding Americans hesitated, especially after hearing that Xiao Lin asked them to provide the necessary training weapons.

Xiao Lin immediately began expressing his anger. House arrest aside, it was a deprivation of his basic freedom. After all, he was a student of Dawn Academy and a diplomat, not a prisoner. He droned about how it was a violation of his human rights and similar stuff.

The guard was a young American who had no opinion of it. He seemed a little flustered after so much big talk and quickly stated that he would go back and ask for further instruction.

Chapter 165 - The Supreme Council

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"Sorry!"

Lilith suddenly apologized to Xiao Lin after being left behind with him. She was no idiot. Although it looked as though the both of them were temporarily detained, Lilith's detention was obviously perfunctory and she had great freedom.

Xiao Lin sighed and knew that his resentment could not be lashed out on Lilith. Nevertheless, he still could not resist complaining, "What are you guys doing? You'll have to at least give me a reason!"

Lilith seemed to want to tell him something, and in the end, finally said, "Harry asked me about you yesterday... Your strange way of fighting, um, I mean the Lightstream Jade. I didn't say

anything, but Harry is a very smart man and I'm not sure if he inferred it himself. I think this course of action may be in Harry's personal capacity."

Xiao Lin's eyes lit up. "In other words, Judge Academy doesn't actually want to detain me?"

"I was allowed to return to New Washington City yesterday. I asked a few friends about it and City Hall is already upset. Not only is Dawn Academy piling the pressure, City Hall has also been strongly telling Harry to release you." Lilith did not mince her words. She was probably just as dissatisfied with Harry's behavior.

"And the result?"

The bitter smile on Lilith's face had already given Xiao Lin the answer. She shook her head and said, "Harry is a very powerful person in New Washington, or rather, our colony. The dragon-eagle knights are basically our most elite defense too, and as long as he does not accede, it will be difficult for anyone else to convince him."

"Convince him?" Xiao Lin said somewhat annoyedly "Why don't they just order him directly! He should always obey orders. He's a soldier!"

"Order?" Lilith found it to be a little strange. "That's not possible! City Hall isn't qualified to give Harry orders. This is determined by the basic management system."

Xiao Lin was silent. He had little understanding of the administration of the entire colony.

Lilith explained a little bit to him. In fact, any academy basically had two sets of management institutions. One was for the academy and the other was in the New World.

Xiao Lin understood that the internal management system of the academy was the student union, but once students graduate, they would be managed not by the student union, but as part of the New World management system.

However, the New World management system was different for each academy. Judge Academy adopted a system that separated military and political affairs. Every city in the colony would set up an organization, such as City Hall, the chief of which only has the right to govern all administrative affairs in the city. However, they could not involve the military in it.

All of Judge Academy had a special military system that had direct management over all military aspects of the colony. Harry's dragon-eagle knights fell under that military system, and the knights' own combat power determines their specialization, making Harry's position an important one.

Although he was responsible for guarding New Washington, City Hall only had authority to advise him at best. Harry could just ignore them if they directly issued an order.

"What's the highest management organization?" Xiao Lin was a little curious.

"America has the High Council, the chairman of which has almost the same power as the dean. The difference is that one is responsible for the New World and the other is responsible for the academy. But this is just for our country. It's not as troublesome for Dawn Academy. As far as I

know, Dawn Academy's dean is both the highest management authority of the academy and in the New World. There is no High Council either and it's under the direct jurisdiction of various departments. It is also much larger in terms of authority than other academies, but that's because the dean of Dawn Academy is a powerful person himself."

"What about the Supreme Council?" Xiao Lin simply asked whatever question that came to his mind. Since he was being detained, it would be better for him to clarify all those things as soon as possible.

Lilith paused for a moment and continued, "The Supreme Council is an institution above all colonial academies. It has authority over everyone, regardless of nationality, color, race, or academy."

"It's the same as Earth's United Nations?" Xiao Lin quickly understood.

Lilith shook her head. "No. The United Nations is just a paper tiger. The Supreme Council is different. It has great powers, and although they don't formulate regulations and rules on a whim, any academy must comply with their directives unconditionally once those directives are given. For example, the prohibition from using the abilities learned in the academy on Earth was set by the Supreme Council. No one dares treat that rule lightly."

After a pause, Lilith looked at the incredulous Xiao Lin and asked, "Do you find it difficult to understand?"

Xiao Lin nodded. He could easily understand it if it were an organization like the United Nations. After all, if they wanted to carry out colonial activities together in the New World, there was a need for a place that provided mutual coordination and consultation. What puzzled him was that the Supreme Council actually had the authority to restrain all academies.

A sudden thought then occurred to Xiao Lin. "Who are the people in the Supreme Council?"

Lilith glanced at him with a look of approval. "You've gotten to the point. The composition of the Supreme Council is the reason everyone must obey them. The first thing you need to know is that the Supreme Council was personally created by Ivanovich."

"Him again!" Xiao Lin exclaimed. He had heard the name more than once, but on closer thought, the fact that the Supreme Council was created by someone like him lent great weight to it.

Lilith continued, "He's just the founder. There are only five members sitting in the Supreme Council. They're affiliated with Judge Academy, China's Dawn Academy, France's Sainte Académie, Britain's Royal British Academy and Russia's Voyna Akademiya. It is only with everyone's approval that they can admit the members of other academies into the Supreme Council. Any one person who opposes it renders the proposal invalid. Of course, the Supreme Council usually won't intervene in academic or colonial affairs."

Xiao Lin was a little speechless. "Uh, doesn't this mean that these five big gangsters, I mean, these five people are the permanent members?"

“You could say that. These countries basically have extremely glorious histories, so it is understandable for them to have a very high status, whether on Earth or the New World,” Lilith said proudly.

Xiao Lin chided silently in his heart, ‘But the history of America is very short...’

“Then, they became the main members. The representatives of each academy in the council are that of the earliest pioneers. To put it bluntly, these people practically represent the strongest combat power of all our colonists!”

Lilith’s expression became a little serious. “No one knows how strong they are, but it’ll at least be Legend-rank. If the law of resurrection created the future of colonists, then these five people from our colonial academies are the ultimate guardians for this world to maintain its current status!”

Chapter 166 - Dispute in The Council

Chapter 166: Dispute in The Council

The Supreme Council, the highest presence over the entire colonial world, comprising five members who had reached an unfathomable level of strength. Each person was over a few hundred years old, and they were the first ones who came through the portal and became pioneers of the New World. Until then, they had rarely intervened in the affairs of the academy or the New World.

“The role of the Supreme Council is to supervise, not to manage. As the dean of Dawn Academy, I believe you’d know this rule better than anyone else!”

Dawn Academy’s dean was standing in a white beam of light inside a self-contained space. The area outside the beam was pitch black. There were only five blurred projections of human silhouettes in the dark, but their actual appearances were unidentifiable. They formed a circle around the dean and one of them spoke in an unclear voice.

“I think this incident is no longer within the scope of the colonial academies’ ability to deal with. I come before you today not just because of the disappearance of our academy’s student. I believe that all members of the council are already aware of the blood moon incident that just occurred.”

A shadow slowly said, “The chairman of Judge Academy’s High Council came to consult us on the second day of the blood moon incident. We have already given a reply.”

“I would like to hear the details.” Although Dawn Academy’s dean was one of the most outstanding figures among academies, he paled in comparison to those five people. However, he spoke in a tone that was neither too humble nor overbearing.

“The blood moon may have opened a channel to another world that day. This involves various rules and systems of this world, but this is only an accident that has no effect on you. There’s no need to worry, let alone take deliberate action. Everything will be as usual!”

The dean was silent for a while before speaking again. “You know what I’m worried about. What if this blood moon incident is a sign that he’s back?”

“He will never come back!” The vague figure seemed a little dissatisfied.

“Of course. We’re the ones who personally sealed him! Are you questioning our power!” Another mighty voice also sounded in due course.

The dean shook his head. “My strength is certainly inferior to yours, but I was fortunate to meet that person once when I enrolled in academy. I am more aware that the person’s ability is far beyond what anyone could imagine, including your own strength. I believe that the seal was only successful a hundred years ago because it was his desire not to embarrass us. After all, he was the one who paved the future for the colonists, even though it was done unintentionally.”

“Presumptuous!”

“Do you doubt us!”

“Do you even understand what you’re talking about!”

The dean’s remarks incited some low-voiced complaints, but the dean did not care and continued. “I’m not questioning you for no reason. You’re all the final benchmark for us to reach in the New World. I respect you, but I’m just a little curious: what are you all so afraid of after so many years? Are you really afraid of his return? How many things have you concealed from the colonists who were brought from Earth!”

“Enough! You’re the dean of Dawn Academy. You must understand that we are the Supreme Council! Your questioning is insulting to us! We’ll let it slide this time, but if you continue, you shan’t blame us!” The cold and indifferent voice dropped the temperature in the darkness to chilling degrees.

“We’re the only remaining pioneers. Everything we do is for the future of mankind. Whatever the case may be, we won’t harm the interests of colonists. That’s all you need to remember.”

“Let’s adjourn for now!”

The other black shadows appeared relatively calm, but there was no need to continue the discussion.

The dean was silent for a while, but he seemed to have anticipated the result and breathed a sigh of relief. “Then can you at least do me a little favor, please. My academy has a student named Xiao Lin. I know you have mastered a very strong astrological spell. Could you just predict his trajectory? This should be easy for you.”

“Hmph, you old fox! After all that beating around the bush, it all ended up with that missing student. This is the real purpose for your current visit, isn’t it?”

“We use a lot of energy whenever we descend to this plane, and you’re the only one who comes to us for such trivial things!”

“But since you’re here, I suppose it wouldn’t hurt to help you with this! You’re the same as always. Caring and protecting your students so dearly!”

“Since this is Dawn Academy’s affairs, let’s leave it to the one from Dawn to make the prediction. Your astrology level is also the highest among us. Astrology is indeed a very interesting school of magic, since everyone has a different path in life. Astrology spells allow you to trace their trajectory through changes in the starry sky, but since the boy is just a freshman who has not even reached Black Iron-rank, it would not take much energy to perform such astrology spells.”

“Xiao Lin, correct?”

A voice came from among them. It was the council member from Dawn Academy muttering to himself. In the darkness, his whole body flashed with a faint glazed light, like stars in the shining galaxy. It was only then that the dean let out a sigh of relief.

There was a brief silence before a halo of starlight erupted in the darkness. Although it was unknown how much time had actually passed, the dean himself could not help but raise his brows slightly. He did not have much knowledge on astrological spells, but he knew that predicting the trajectory of a person who did not reach Black Iron-rank would not take long.

Finally, the starlight gradually dimmed and the black shadow seemed very weak. He slowly sighed in a low tone, “I couldn’t see anything. This is very strange. I can’t see the life path of that Xiao Lin boy. His trajectory seemed to be shrouded in fog. Even I couldn’t see it!”

“That’s impossible! He’s only at Black Iron-level!”

“No. This has nothing to do with strength.” The dark figure breathed slightly before saying carefully, “This feeling, it’s like his trajectory has been deliberately changed. All of you ought to know that the natural trajectory of a life’s progression can only be seen in astrology. Once it has been changed, prediction would be impossible.”

“Modifying the trajectory of life will change the future. It’s impossible even for someone like me, who’s already mastered the power of time and space...”

“Is he really back?”

“Don’t talk nonsense!”

“But this kind of thing.”

“Xiao Lin. Who is he?”

...

At that moment, Xiao Lin probably had no idea that the legendary Supreme Council was having a small dispute because of him. His mind was solely focused on how to test his brand-new ability.

The request to use the training ground was quickly approved, though it was well within expectations. After all, even if Xiao Lin was provided with any weapons, it was impossible for someone of his strength to escape from a residence filled almost completely with Gold-rank dragon-eagle knights.

Chapter 167 - Message

Chapter 167: Message

The dragon-eagle knight regiment's training ground was open grass. It was where the young dragon-eagles were being trained, and the training of the knights themselves usually started from when the dragon-eagles were young, thereby strengthening their communication and cooperation.

Xiao Lin's arrival did not cause too much of a ruckus. It was obvious that the Americans showed little interest in other academies. It was Lilith's presence that made many people avoid them as if having seen a ghost, making Xiao Lin wonder what the girl had done.

He held the sword provided by the training ground and first started to practice his Basic Swordsmanship, such as chopping, stabbing, and slashing. Those were the basic movements that constitute any series of swordsmanship moves. He clearly felt that they were more skillful, compared to before he came to New Washington. His strength in wielding the sword had obviously increased a lot, which surprised him tremendously. It was a sign that his overall attributes must have been improved during his time in The Final Land.

Next came the most important thing. Xiao Lin took a deep breath, closed his eyes, and carefully recalled how he felt when he changed his attributes in The Final Land. However, it was not as smooth as it was back there. Perhaps the magical qualities in The Final Land had a certain catalytic effect, or perhaps it was due to the dragon power conferred upon him by way of the Lightstream Jade.

In short, Xiao Lin's first attempt had failed. He did not give up and tried to find other ways. The first thing he had to do was transform his agility into pure strength, but agility itself represented many things, such as movement speed, flexibility, balance, and so on so forth. All of a sudden, he finally understood why he failed.

He tried everything, one by one. First off was his movement speed, whereby he would transform his motor movements into strength. Xiao Lin tried hard yet again, and after some time had passed, Xiao Lin suddenly felt that his legs were a little heavier. He quickly swung the sword to the ground in tandem with the change, but the feeling soon disappeared.

"The power of this swing is a little bit stronger than just now," Lilith commented next to him. Her eyes were filled with surprise, as Xiao Lin's peculiar fighting style was obviously something she had never heard of.

"This is very interesting! I've looked up some ancient legends about Planet Norma in the library these past two days. The Final Land is the cradle and birthplace of the world. Xiao Lin, have you ever wondered where all our skills came from?" Lilith lowered her voice a little. She was undoubtedly referring to her own flames, the shape of which she could change at will.

Xiao Lin had already guessed that possibility, but there was still disbelief in his tone. "The Final Land is where the law of creation was made. Ivanovich created the law of resurrection there, which means he had also been there. We have also created our own laws, or skills, such as my

attribute conversion, such as the change of your flame shape. Is this something that can only be done in The Final Land?”

“But the dead old man didn’t.”

Lilith added that at random and the two of them soon fell into a bit of an awkward silence. They were not idiots who did know the difference between Asabanor, themselves and Ivan. The reason for that was already well-known to the both of them, but they were just deliberately feigning ignorance.

Xiao Lin had a sudden thought and asked, “Did Commander Harry ask you to have a physical examination in a couple of days? Something about being worried about the food and drink we had in The Final Land?”

“Not at all!” Lilith said incredulously. “I’ve never heard about such a thing.”

Xiao Lin was silent again, but there was a storm brewing in his heart. A far-fetched inference emerged in his mind, and although he believed it was a very slim possibility, he might never have the chance to return if it turned out to be true.

The biggest difference between themselves and Asabanor was none other than the SS-level talent.

Having experienced everything, Lilith and Xiao Lin were very much aware of that fact. However, no one else was a fool. Those who had the gumption to make bold guesses would probably come to a similar conclusion, not to mention the inexplicable request for a sudden medical examination.

Xiao Lin felt that perhaps the shrewd dragon-eagle knight commander had guessed that possibility, but even so, why did he have to detain Xiao Lin? This answer was a very terrifying one and Xiao Lin did not dare think too much about it. In any case, he felt that he had to take some measures to save himself.

“Lilith, whatever happens, can you do me a favor and pass a message to Song Junlang on my behalf. He’s the Chinese man who accompanied me here. He lives in the hotel arranged by your Foreign Affairs Department. Uh, I don’t know the name of the hotel, but it has Asabanor’s bust in front of it.”

“I know that hotel. What do you need me to say?”

“It’s very simple. Just let him know that I’m here.”

Lilith’s eyes narrowed slightly and she seemed to be put in a tight spot. Seeing her hesitance, Xiao Lin quickly glanced around. After confirming that there were no other Americans nearby, he pleaded, “Please! I’m not asking you to help me escape. Just help pass on a message. I don’t think the dragon-eagle knights will prohibit you from traveling to and from New Washington City.”

Lilith whispered, “You’ve saved me once in The Final Land, and I don’t want to owe you any favors. In fact, I was thinking of ways to get you out after Harry found me yesterday. I can tell that he has no plans to let you go, but unfortunately, I can’t do anything as long as you are still in this barracks. I hope you understand.”

Xiao Lin said, "I know. You've mentioned that you're not on par with those dragon-eagle knights yet, and I understand that this matter must be very difficult from your standpoint. All you need to do is help me pass a message. "

"I don't think he can do it either. It would still be impossible, even if his strength never declined from eight years ago, especially when he's only a..." Lilith remarked bluntly. She seemed to have done some research on Song Junlang and was not completely ignorant.

Xiao Lin was silent for a while before smiling bitterly. "Because I trust him. To put it another way, if there's anyone worthy of trust in New Washington, he's the only one aside from you."

"The special investigation team Dawn Academy dispatched has arrived at the port of New Washington," Lilith reminded.

"But I don't know them. I don't know who sent them and what their purpose here is. At this point, I think it's better to look for Department Head Song first."

Although Xiao Lin did not make it clear, his insinuation was abundantly obvious. America's Judge Academy was still an ally of Dawn Academy and they even signed an alliance treaty, yet Harry still dared detain him there. If he had not interacted with Lilith for over a month and understood her character, Xiao Lin would even think that Lilith was untrustworthy.

"I understand. I'll help you to convey what you said, but I don't think you should get your hopes up. Commander Harry is very powerful. I don't think he'll submit to a logistics department head from your academy."

Chapter 168 - Proposal

Chapter 168: Proposal

Song Junlang was a genius among the Dawn Academy's graduates eight years ago, so it was normal for other academies to know about him. Unfortunately, he had long since fallen, and Song Junlang was just a Bronze-rank logistics department head who managed his farm every day.

If there was anyone at Dawn Academy who was absolutely worthy of Xiao Lin's trust, the first person he thought of was that logistics department head who always spoke about having someone taking care of him. Despite his seemingly unreliable qualities, he sometimes gave Xiao Lin an inexplicable sense of trustworthiness.

Xiao Lin could only sigh silently in his heart after instructing Lilith. Still unsure whether Harry detained him because he had guessed that he possessed an SS-level talent, all he could do was hope that it was just that: a guess.

Xiao Lin shook his head of all his messy thoughts. There was nothing he could do when it came to that. After all, the strength gap was just too big, while that was all there was to his status and position. It was impossible for him to have a place to speak, which spurred an even more urgent desire to improve his strength.

First of all, he had to familiarize himself with the attribute conversion skill. After Lilith left, Xiao Lin reinvested his time in training and continued to start from the converting agility to strength.

Other Americans on the training ground initially observed his practice with curiosity but soon realized that the young Asian boy's strength was not even at Black Iron-rank. He was still performing the most common sword-swinging exercises, so none of them paid much attention.

Everyone was busy that day.

Xiao Lin's every move was quickly reported to Harry, who was also puzzled by the training. After thinking for a moment, he asked another person in his office, "What do you think, Johnson?"

Aside from Harry, also inside the room was Johnson from the Foreign Affairs Department. The fat man fidgeted around nervously. Although the fireplace made the room very warm, Johnson wiped the cold sweat from his forehead from time-to-time. His face was very sad, as if thinking about something, and he forgot to answer.

Harry glared at him and increased the severity of his tone. "If our guess is correct, what do you think his talent would be? I've been observing him these few days, but unfortunately, I don't think there's anything different about him. You probably know that Lilith stood out, even when she first entered the academy."

Johnson suddenly came back to his senses and avoided Harry's question. He sighed with a wry smile, "You're playing with fire and you're dragging me down with you! Have you ever thought that the council chairman won't be able to protect us if this matter is revealed and Dawn Academy really decides to hold us accountable?"

Harry said disdainfully, "What of it? You're the head of the Foreign Affairs Department and I manage the dragon-eagle knight regiment. What else can the chairman do? Dismiss us?"

Johnson said loudly, "We have signed an alliance treaty with Dawn Academy. It will have a very bad impact on the reputation of our academy. You're well-aware that the chairman and the dean have been trying their best to improve the reputation of our academy over the years. What you're doing now is a slap to their faces!"

Boom!

Harry slammed the table abruptly and shouted impatiently, "A group of cowards! It's all reputation, reputation, reputation. I really don't understand what you politicians are so afraid of! Hmph, even the chairman and the dean are getting more and more timid. As long as we maintain sufficient military power, why should we be afraid of the natives or of Dawn Academy!"

Johnson also stood up angrily. "You're a madman. I've already said that this Planet Norma isn't the same as a hundred years ago! The local indigenous have gradually gained a sense of belonging to us and this is a good thing, so except for occasional local conflicts, all academies will not just launch large-scale colonial wars on a whim anymore! Everyone understands that politics is indispensable for real colonization!"

Harry took a deep breath. There was irritation between his eyebrows. "I've already detained him. What do you suggest I do?"

“Send him back? We’re not even sure that he’s really the same as Lilith anyway. It’s just a guess. After all, there is only one Ivanovich in history. Why must we bother Dawn Academy when we already have Lilith?”

“No!” Harry outright refused. “On the balance of strength, I’m more than willing to see us gain more advantages. Dawn Academy hasn’t seen any war and turmoil in the past few years, and the speed of their development is getting faster and faster!”

“Be careful. Play with fire and you’ll get burned!” John was full of anger.

Harry looked confident. He tapped on the table, saying slowly, “Don’t worry too much. As long as I insist on detaining him, no one can do anything to us! Does it matter if their warship sails to our port? Who cares if Epic-rank people are coming?”

After a pause, Harry sneered softly, “Their actions only demonstrate Xiao Lin’s importance, but he’s now in my hands. I’ve studied the character of the Chinese for a long time. The most they’ll do is show up and thumb their noses at us. They wouldn’t dare take any action! I’m sure of it!”

Meanwhile, in New Washington...

Song Junlang met Lilith in the hotel. After listening to her words, his expression turned furious but he quickly recovered his calm. “As expected, they’re hiding him in the residence of the dragon-eagle knight regiment. Heh, that sly old fox. But it’s true though. That’s probably the safest place in New Washington.”

Lilith had never interacted with Song Junlang, so she spoke in a much colder tone. “I’ve already passed the message on, and at the same time, I’m also reminding you that Commander Harry doesn’t seem to have any plans to release him yet. If possible, I hope you can contact your special investigation team immediately. I can’t meet them because of my identity.”

Song Junlang was stunned for a moment and teased, “You’re Lilith. You’re from Judge Academy, aren’t you?”

Lilith cocked her eyebrows. “I know what you want to say, but I owe him a favor, and I hate owing people favors. I’ll try my best to help.”

“What if we cooperate with the investigation team to attack the dragon-eagle knights’ residence?” Song Junlang immediately asked in an aggressive tone.

Lilith answered even quicker. “I’ll still help you.”

Before Song Junlang could express his shock, Lilith quickly continued, “But from then onward, I’ll still send you all back to the resurrection tower—Xiao Lin included!”

Song Junlang was stunned. He smiled bitterly after a pause and waved his hand, “I’m just shooting my mouth off. After all, we’re still allies, so doing such a thing is impossible.”

She would give their help without any hesitation because she did not want to owe any favors, but once those debts were settled, she would continue to faithfully perform their obligations and fight back.

Lilith really was a woman with a clear grudge!

Chapter 169 - Song Junlang's Plan

Chapter 169: Song Junlang's Plan

Song Junlang subsequently asked many other questions of Lilith, such as what happened during their disappearance, but Lilith answered in a very concise manner. Song Junlang noticed that she was reluctant to speak in further detail, so he stopped asking and very politely sent her away.

In fact, Song Junlang really did consider bringing along someone and going directly into the regiment's residence. After all, there were Epic-ranked people in Dawn Academy's investigation team, but doing so was a blatant expression of hostility, and a tactic like that should only be used as a last resort.

Harry was unmoved by force or persuasion and was hell-bent on detaining Xiao Lin. The situation might continue to be quite tricky if someone on the level of a dean showed up there in person. As far as Song Junlang knew, the dean had probably gone to the Supreme Council. It would have cost even more time if the dean were to rush back there, and many more variables would be at play.

Song Junlang thought for a long time and stared oddly at the birdcage on the table. In it was the little dragon-eagle that he had quietly brought over. The beast had grown a lot in the past half month and would soon outgrow the cage.

After a long time, he sighed with regret. "Looks like this is the only way. Will the Americans hound us about this for years on end?"

The next morning, Song Junlang and Dawn Academy's investigation team appeared outside the dragon-eagle knights' residence. Although Harry gave the order to not allow any outsiders to enter, the guards had no choice but to allow them after seeing that their entourage were composed of officials from City Hall.

"Please do not fret. If Commander Harry really did detain your academy's students, we'll definitely support your request for his release." The escort sent by Judge Academy was a middle-aged American with glasses. With a gentle and educated demeanor, he was considered a mayor-level figure in New Washington, which could be taken as a sign of respect for Dawn Academy.

Song Junlang huffed coldly. "Support? We wouldn't be standing here if your orders were effective in the first place!"

There were five people in the investigation team. Any more and Judge Academy would certainly express some objection. The frontmost person was a short-haired woman and Song Junlang whispered to her, "I'll go around. You guys help me stall Harry."

After that, Song Junlang left the team, saying that he was going to the toilet.

Harry arrived soon too. He was going to give Xiao Lin a physical examination that day and the menacing crowd did not give him much pressure. He smiled faintly and said, "I believe there's been

a massive misunderstanding. Xiao Lin is with me, but he stayed voluntarily to help us locate the movement of Asabanor, the high priest.”

He remained stubborn, just as they expected. City Hall could not directly give orders to him, and their hands were tied until the High Council gave an order. Even if they took Harry by force, the chances that Dawn Academy would succeed were similarly slim, since they were on American soil.

They had also expected Harry to argue indifferently with everyone, enumerating various reasons to prevent them from taking Xiao Lin away, such as Xiao Lin admiring the culture of Judge Academy and showing a willingness to join Judge Academy.

The negotiation lasted from morning to afternoon, and there was no progress at all. It was a deadlock until Song Junlang reappeared in the negotiation room and flashed a sly smile at Harry. He pretended to be surprised and said, “I’m surprised you’re still in the mood to chat, Commander Harry. I just took a look at your barracks. Your dragon-eagles seem to be sick.”

“Sick?” Harry frowned and suddenly realized something. His gentle smile disappeared, and after whispering a few words in the ear of the beautiful vice-captain next to him, she immediately dashed out.

The temperature in the meeting room suddenly dropped a couple of degrees. No one knew what to feel and waited patiently for the vice-captain’s return. After a quarter of an hour, the vice-captain ran back in a panic, ignoring everyone and saying directly, “Things don’t look good! I don’t know why, but the dragon-eagles have all become sluggish. They seem to be having some trouble breathing.”

Harry’s face turned icy and a faint red light appeared all around him. A strong aura enveloped him and he pointed at Song Junlang, demanding coldly, “What did you do?”

“Hehe, Commander Harry, we’re a diplomatic group. I’m not mistaken, am I? Are your actions suggesting that you’d start a war against Dawn Academy?” The short-haired woman from Dawn Academy glanced at Song Junlang then asked curtly. She waved her hand to relieve the tension.

The few people from City Hall who accompanied them had a drastic change of expression. The combat effectiveness of the dragon-eagle knight regiment was of great significance to New Washington and all of Judge Academy. The bespectacled mayor immediately stood up in anger but pointed instead at Harry and asked, “Is security so lax in your regiment!”

“You brought them here!” Harry retorted angrily.

“Doesn’t matter what you say now! Can you figure out what poisons are in the dragon-eagles?”

“No. The healers have tried all the healing spells, but they have no effect,” the vice-captain added.

Harry regained his composure slightly, but frowned even deeper, “Dragon-eagles have sub-dragon bloodlines and are inherently very resistant to toxins. No one has ever tried poisoning them. Some local natives have attempted it when the regiment was just formed, but there was no effect whatsoever. Dragon-eagles can easily resist it by virtue of their immunity!”

“Want to know what happened?” Song Junlang asked slowly. Facing the angry eyes of a group of Americans, he sneezed and rubbed his nose before looking at them with a smirk.

“What’s your condition?” Harry was not an idiot. He knew that Song Junlang would not tell him so easily.

“You know the conditions well enough. All we ask is to bring Xiao Lin. We’re exchanging the dragon-eagle knight regiment with a mere freshman. Good deal, right?”

Harry fell silent. After some time, he asked coldly, “How can I trust you? What am I to do if I let Xiao Lin go and you end up not giving me the solution?”

“Chill!”

The short-haired woman coughed a few times and quickly interrupted Song Junlang. She said solemnly, “Commander Harry, we’re still allies after all. There’s no need to cause trouble to such an extent. Please trust our sincerity.”

Song Junlang was playing bad cop while the woman was playing good cop. In addition, the people from City Hall quickly took the opportunity to put more pressure on Harry, causing his expression to sour even more.

The decision no longer rested in his hands alone. The people from Dawn Academy could wait, but he could not take any risks. The importance of his regiment was self-evident, and it was absolutely impossible to lose them just for the sake of a guess.

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief when Harry waved his hand to have someone bring Xiao Lin out.

Chapter 170 - Departure

Chapter 170: Departure

Xiao Lin was overwhelmed with emotion when he saw Song Junlang again after half a month. Although the reason Xiao Lin told Lilith to look for Song Junlang was because he trusted the man, he was still worried what Song Junlang would end up doing.

Nothing much came out of the conclusion of the incident. After Harry realized that he had lost his standing, he knew that getting entangled in the situation would only put him at a more disadvantaged position. As a result, he happily chose to let Xiao Lin go.

On the way back to New Washington, Xiao Lin listened quietly to Song Junlang’s brief explanation on the negotiation process. He could not resist asking, “Then what did you use to poison their dragon-eagles?”

Song Junlang laughed and said, “The Americans are too confident. It’s true that the dragon-eagles inherit the unique characteristics of the dragon clan’s high immunity, especially when it comes to strong resistance to toxins and other injuries. But they ignored an important factor!”

“What is that?”

“I once told you that the biological physiques of Planet Norma are high, and ordinary people from Earth would be attacked by various diseases there. The reverse however, is also true. Some viruses from Earth are powerful in this world, lethal to the creatures even!”

Xiao Lin’s eyes widened. He suddenly remembered that the department head in front of him was an expert at crossing creatures from Earth and that of Planet Norma!

“Why did you think I should accompany you to New Washington?” Song Junlang grinned. “Even if you are my experimental test subject, ahem, I mean even if you are my friend, I can’t possibly go to such lengths. My purpose is the dragon-eagle.”

Xiao Lin was quite speechless and was slightly surprised. “Could this toxin, oh I mean, this virus, was a subject of your research from very early on?”

“Yes, this virus is actually similar to the bird flu on Earth, but my original purpose was to deal with the dragon clan.” At that point, Song Junlang sighed slightly. “The dragon clan is more powerful than I imagined. In fact, it’s a headache for all academies to deal with them. Of course, our masters can more or less face them, but the problem is that the dragons are erratic. It’s difficult to be on guard always, so I wanted to find a better solution to face the dragons.”

“Then did you manage to research it?” Xiao Lin was sweating profusely. He slowly began to feel that Song Junlang was a terrifying man.

Song Junlang nodded, but then shook his head. “I failed. This virus is still very flawed and has no effect on the perfect dragon gene, but it has a very good effect on creatures with sub-dragon bloodlines. I came to New Washington with the intention of getting a dragon-eagle back for testing. They’re the most suitable experimental material, but unfortunately, America controls them too much. I wouldn’t be able to do it unless I personally came over.”

Xiao Lin also laughed. “It’s no wonder that Harry was persuaded so quickly. I thought I was going to stay in New Washington for a lifetime. At least I had a chance to walk around the city for these two days. I didn’t even have a chance to do that after being here for so long.”

Song Junlang’s face turned a little serious. “Can’t do. We’ll take the spatial carriage back to Earth this evening, and then immediately return to Dawn Academy. The special investigative team has already set off this very moment.”

Xiao Lin frowned unexpectedly. He did not even have the chance to use the New Dollars that Professor Brown paid him and he was actually curious to see what he could buy in the city.

“Are you afraid that Harry will take me?”

Song Junlang smiled bitterly, “Of course not. A person that has been released cannot be arrested again. I know Harry, and I’m worried he’ll want to arrest me this time instead of you! ”

“What?”

“I originally studied this virus to deal with the dragons. You and I both believed my words, but the Americans don’t. What would you think?”

Xiao Lin immediately understood. He kept silent for a while and sighed, “If it were me, I would’ve thought that you planned it, because this kind of research can’t be completed at a moment’s notice.”

“Yes, the Americans will definitely learn that Dawn Academy has long been thinking about going against their dragon-eagle knights. With their arrogance, they’ll definitely find ways to retaliate. That’s for the future.” The smile on Song Junlang’s face became even fainter, as if he had remembered something.

“The Americans will start a civil war?”

“They won’t. As long as there’s the Supreme Council, there is no possibility of a civil war. What’s more, there are local indigenous people who are eyeing them. The civil war will only allow the Normans to take advantage of them. This grudge is very clear cut.”

After a moment, Song Junlang’s tone became low. “The Americans may impose sanctions on us in business and trade.”

“It’s just commercial sanctions.” Xiao Lin, who was initially a little nervous, immediately relaxed. Everyone had their own colony, and he felt that such sanctions would not have any effect.

However, Song Junlang’s expression was unusually solemn, making Xiao Lin feel that something was amiss. He posed yet another question.

Song Junlang hesitated and finally said, “For us colonists, there are two things that are of utmost importance. The resurrection tower and Lifewater. The former ensures that we can continue to resurrect and open up colonies, and the latter ensures that we have a source of constant lifespan but these two things don’t appear out of thin air. The resurrection tower has to be built, and the Lifewater needs to be refined by alchemists.”

Xiao Lin’s tone changed slightly. “Can’t we build or refine these two things ourselves?”

Department Head Song said in a heavy tone “Yes, but there aren’t any materials! The resurrection tower and the Lifewater require huge and complex materials. We can exchange most of the materials or collect them by ourselves., but some key materials are produced too far from our colony.”

“Materials like Lightstream Jade are only available in the colony near Dawn Academy?”

“Yes, and unfortunately, Lifewater needs a special kind of leaf to be refined. It’s only available in the American colony, near elven territory. The reason America was able to progress quickly despite entering the New World much later was due to the stable environment, but another important factor is that leaf of life. Other academies had to exchange large quantities of materials with them or buy them at high prices. After this incident, it’s hard for Dawn Academy to withstand it, even if the Americans only reduce the export volume or raise the prices instead of cutting the supply all at once!”

Xiao Lin was completely silent; the joy of leaving was instantly wiped out. The importance of Lifewater was irreplaceable and its value could be seen from the limited amount of Lifewater sold by the academy every month.

Chapter 171 - Return to The Academy

Chapter 171: Return to The Academy

Xiao Lin had an apologetic look on his face. All of this might not have been his fault, but he still caused all of it. Song Junlang waved and smiled. “Don’t worry about it too much. Americans are all like this. I’ve disliked them for a while. No one likes being held hostage like this after all. The formula for lifewater was a collaboration of all the academies, and our academy was one of the frontrunners.”

After returning to the inn in New Washington, Xiao Lin did not stop for anything. Song Junlang even rudely rejected some officials from the Foreign Affairs Department who came to understand the situation. It seemed like Xiao Lin was really worried about being captured by the Americans.

The two of them packed up their things and hurried to board the interspatial carriage, heading back to Pennsylvania in America before heading back to China in a plane. Song Junlang only let out a sigh of relief when the plane landed, telling Xiao Lin, “You can stay on Earth a few days if you want. I’ll help you make the arrangements.”

Xiao Lin thought to himself before saying, “Time in The Final Land was very chaotic. I don’t really know how long I left, in terms of the time at the academy.”

“It has been three weeks since you left Dawn Academy. You’ve definitely missed out on the second monthly examination. There’s still half a month to go to the third one. Yes, according to academy regulations, the official monitor will be decided after the third monthly examination.”

Xiao Lin quickly shook his head. “I’ve already visited home, so there’s no need. Let’s head right back to the academy.”

Song Junlang looked at him with approval before saying, “Rules are rules, but you’re a special case. The dean might be willing to delay the third monthly examination to give you enough time to prepare.”

“Would the dean really do that?”

“Why do you think the special investigation team and the warship was sent over? He didn’t even care if he offended Judge Academy. I understand the dean quite well. He’s always cared for the students, but never to this extent.” Song Junlang looked at Xiao Lin meaningfully.

Xiao Lin realized that the dean definitely knew of his SS-rank talent. However, Department Head Song had not mentioned anything the entire time. He was smart, and he knew that the dean would not go so far for just a regular student, but he knew not to push it in his questions.

If it was a secret, then the less people who knew about it the better.

After the plane landed, the two of them headed to the Earth branch of Dawn Academy without any delay, getting on an interspatial carriage once again. Xiao Lin had finally returned to the academy after three weeks away. He suddenly felt a wave of relief. No matter what, New Washington was someone else's territory; nothing felt as safe as his own academy.

With the eventful journey at an end, the two of them felt extremely tired. After verifying that it was a weekend with the carriage staff, Xiao Lin headed right back to the dormitories after bidding Department Head Song farewell.

There were not many people around during the day on a weekend. Everyone was either resting in their rooms or busy training. He did not meet any familiar faces on the way back, and no one from the other classes really remembered who Xiao Lin was.

Xiao Lin had a good rest, and by the time he opened his eyes again, the sun had already set. After waking up, he impatiently hurried to the computer. He was curious to see how much his attributes had grown.

[Name: Xiao Lin]

[Student ID: 201235]

[Rewards earned: 50 credits, 550 Redemption Points]

[Strength 10 Agility 6 Intelligence 12 Physique 12]

[Basic Swordsmanship LV8]

[Basic Hammer-series Weapon Mastery LV5]

[Basic Blocking LV5]

[Basic Fitness LV 5]

[Basic Mastery of Planet Norma's Common Language: LV3]

[Basic Perception LV3]

[Basic Meditation LV3]

[Slashing LV3 (max)]

[Holy Light Blessing LV3 (max)]

His attributes all seemed to have doubled, and all his basic skills had greatly improved, especially Basic Swordsmanship, which rose all the way from LV4 to LV8. With the added difficulty of leveling up as the levels increased, the improvement was staggering.

Of course, Xiao Lin had spent most of the battles in The Final Land with a blade, and life or death situations were very helpful for improving swordsmanship.

However, that was all within his expectations. The next part left Xiao Lin flabbergasted.

[Special skill detected. No match found on the database. Please give it a name, Student.]

Staring at the naming form that popped up, Xiao Lin was in disbelief. He could not help but laugh out loud. It was as he guessed. He had created a new skill in The Final Lands. With his time at the dragon-eagle knight regiment camp, he familiarized himself with the skill, and was quite adept with it. Since there were no records in the database, he might be the first and possibly the only user of the skill.

Xiao Lin wanted to call it Attribute Swap, but he felt it too simple, straightforward and lacked impact. After some consideration, he entered the following.

[Skill Name: Miracle]

[Level: LV1]

[Skill Description: Can convert a maximum of 50% of one attribute into other attributes. Time limit for the conversion is one minute. Every conversion will use up stamina, and the user will become incredibly weak after using up the limits of their stamina, and each attribute would temporarily decrease.]

It was different from when he used it in The Final Land. There was a big limit to the attribute conversion, and there was no way to use it repeatedly. It was more suited for temporary bursts, which made the name Miracle very suitable.

However, he remembered he had the Lightstream Jade's draconic power aiding him in The Final Land. That was probably why he could use it without any care.

Xiao Lin could not resist touching the Lightstream Jade. He was now very clear on the value of the jade, but he did not own it. After listening to Song Junlang, he knew that Dawn Academy's pressure on Judge Academy in the incident was only thanks to the dean's approval.

Xiao Lin could not possibly have returned so soon if not for Dawn Academy's pressure, so he was extremely thankful to the dean he had only met once during the opening ceremony.

With those thoughts, Xiao Lin felt like it would be better if he returned the Lightstream Jade on his own volition. Even the dean might not have a second piece of such a valuable jade, and he really wanted to thank the dean in person.

It would be hard to contact the dean, so he tried giving Song Junlang a call, but it was not picked up. Xiao Lin wondered if the man was sleeping or busy tending to his cross-bred animals.

Meanwhile, the small dragon-eagle that Song Junlang had secretly obtained was handed over to the special investigation team and brought straight to the Dawn Academy's territories in the New World. The Americans might have realized it later on, but under the watch of the warship, there was not much they could do.

Chapter 172 - Rumors At The Cafeteria

Chapter 172: Rumors At The Cafeteria

Department Head Song did not pick up the phone, so Xiao Lin could only look for another way. After thinking for a moment, he immediately called the second year senior Chen Yu. He had no choice. He knew way too few people.

Chen Yu picked up the phone very quickly, it being a weekend. After the magical display lit up, Chen Yu looked visibly surprised as he measured Xiao Lin with a strange look. He said curiously, "You're back?"

Chen Yu was from the student council and was temporarily in charge of the first years, so it was no surprise that he knew of Xiao Lin going to Judge Academy. However, he was not high ranking enough to know why Xiao Lin went, and he obviously knew nothing about what happened after that.

Even though that was the case, it was enough to cause Chen Yu to be extremely envious. It was the New World and was also the most prosperous city of the colonists: New Washington. Even Chen Yu had very limited opportunities to go to the New World.

"Yes, I just got back this afternoon. I want to meet the dean, but I don't know how to contact him." Xiao Lin was not too familiar with Chen Yu, but when he saw that the man seemed distracted, he could not help but call out, "Senior Chen?"

"Oh, I apologize." Chen Yu snapped back to reality, suppressing his envy as he smiled. "Just call me Chen Yu, everyone does. What were you saying earlier?"

Xiao Lin felt a little strange. He remembered Chen Yu was not so friendly to him the first time they interacted, but he did not dwell on it, repeating the earlier question.

The smile on Chen Yu's face stiffened as he could not help but uncomfortably furrow his eyebrows. "You want to meet the dean?"

"Yes, I do." Xiao Lin nodded.

"The dean is usually very busy, and spends most of his time in the New World since he needs to deal with a lot of matters there personally. Can't the student council solve your issue?" Chen Yu said. What he really wanted to say was, 'Who do you think you are? Do you really think you're so important as to see the dean after just going to the New World once?'

The deans in that world were very different from the ones back on Earth. The dean of Dawn Academy was equal to a governor or even a minister back on Earth. He was not someone a new student could meet whenever he felt like.

However, Chen Yu did not expose his thoughts, since he remembered that the student union president had requested that he immediately report back if Xiao Lin returned. After some thought, he continued, "This isn't something I can decide, but I can forward your request to the student

union. However, don't hold too much hope. Meeting the dean isn't so easy; he's got very limited time."

Xiao Lin was ecstatic and hurried to thank Chen Yu, but he had already hung up.

Xiao Lin was not sure the dean would be willing to meet him either, but he had too many questions about the New World after returning which Department Head Song could not answer. He did not trust anyone else, and the most important was his anger at being held under house arrest by Harry. Even if he did not suffer physically, it was still something he could not just let go.

Xiao Lin was still a member of Dawn Academy, and Judge Academy at least owed him an explanation.

After tidying himself up, he headed to the buffet hall on the top floor. The seductive fragrances caused him to hurry. The food in New Washington was not bad, but he felt that western cuisine was boring, and a far cry from Chinese cuisine. Furthermore, he did not even have western food in The Final Land.

Evening was peak meal hour. Xiao Lin had just sat down with his plate when plenty of people noticed him, especially those from Class Seven. How could they forget their class monitor when there was only half a month left until the third monthly examination, after all.

A few of them walked past Xiao Lin and immediately had shocked expressions, asking him, "Monitor Xiao, didn't you quit school?"

A friend next to him nudged him before smiling and adding on, "No, it's just that we heard that you had returned to Earth. Why did you return so quickly?"

"Quit school?" Xiao Lin remembered the two of them were from his class, but he had awkwardly forgotten their names. It could not be helped. Their class was never particularly united, and he had been gone for so long.

The two of them stood awkwardly in silence.

However, that was enough for Xiao Lin to piece things together as he said calmly, "Did Wang Dalin say that? Did he say that I was gone for so long because I had been sent back to Earth by the school?"

It was not a secret within the student union that he had gone to New Washington, but it was quite a secret to these new students since they did not have the authority to know anything.

Xiao Lin could just imagine how the rumor was formed.

The first week he left, no one probably noticed anything.

The rumors probably started from the second or third week, since it would be expected that people would talk when their acting class monitor had disappeared for so long. At that time, someone probably started the rumor that Xiao Lin had been expelled.

No one might have believed it at first, but Xiao Lin was still missing for over a month, so more and more people would believe the rumors as they circulated, up until it became the truth in their eyes. They might have thought Xiao Lin did not say anything to save himself some face.

However, Xiao Lin was there, and the rumors were dispelled just like that. It would be natural for everyone to feel some awkwardness.

Xiao Lin remained calm, changing the topic. "How did our class do in the second monthly examinations?"

"The task this time was a pursuit in some canyons. We needed to escape the orcish pursuit, but we did not get any good results. In the end, less than 10% of us completed the compulsory task."

"The test was actually very simple, much easier than the first month's examination. The other classes all had at least a 50% completion rate, but our class had the worst results of the whole year."

The two of them had angry looks on their face. It seemed like they were likely one of those who did not pass. They might have even lost 10 years of their lifespan from dying.

"It was way too chaotic!" one of them said after hesitating. "Everyone had their own opinions and strategies; no one wanted to give in. In the end, the situation was too messy and we wasted too much time. The orcs ended up catching up to us, and only the more skilled ones managed to fight their way out."

Xiao Lin was speechless after hearing their accounts, but he could understand the chaos. Even in the first examination, the class split into two because of differing opinions, and that was even with him acting as a monitor in the mix.

Chapter 173 - Summoned by The Dean

It was logical that monitors were usually students with talents. They could at least gain everyone's acknowledgment with their skills, even if they were only listening on the surface.

Class Seven had a unique situation since Xiao Lin's SS-rank talent could not be announced. Even if he did not understand the reason for the secrecy, after Harry held him back by force, he developed an understanding.

People get envious when faced with talent!

"Relax. Now that I'm back, we'll have decent results in the third monthly examination." Xiao Lin consoled the two of them. He was quite confident in his claim.

The two of them mumbled to each other and suddenly shut up, looking toward a corner. Xiao Lin followed their line of sight and saw a group of people walking toward their direction, probably looking for empty seats. At the helm was Wang Dalin.

Wang Dalin was joking around when he saw Xiao Lin and he was stunned. His face was a very interesting mix of shock, embarrassment, and rage. The time that Xiao Lin was not around were his happiest days in the academy, especially since Xiao Lin was not around to continue banning him on the forums, which said a lot of things.

However, the protagonist was back. Even though he spread the rumors himself, after it spread around, enough he began to believe it as well. Wang Dalin's good mood evaporated immediately. He was not someone who could conceal his own emotions, and he immediately mocked, "Oh, if it isn't acting monitor Xiao Lin? You actually have the guts to come back here?"

Xiao Lin composed himself, not wanting to bicker as he smiled. "Of course I'd come back after finishing the tasks that the school asked me to do."

He raised his volume on purpose, gaining quite a bit of attention. Xiao Lin was planning on dispelling the rumors that way.

Wang Dalin was in an awkward spot. Even if he knew that was the truth, he would not acknowledge it. Twisting the topic around, he said, "Who knows where you went?! Ah, do you know how pathetic our second monthly examination was? You are a disgrace of a class monitor."

Xiao Lin was thankful for this man's naivete. He had exposed his own intentions so easily. Even though he knew a lot of people were eying the class monitor spot in the class, only the man in front of him was so transparent.

"I might not know what you've been talking about on the forums these days, but I think I should continue to ban you now that I'm back." Xiao Lin felt it was impossible to keep talking to Wang Dalin.

The Class Seven students around them could not help but laugh. Xiao Lin had banned Wang Dalin for the entirety of their first month, but they did not feel that it was not deserved. Wang Dalin was extremely rude on the forums. He mocked people and spread ill-rumors; the rest of them hated it, but were just not willing to do anything about it.

Wang Dalin's face turned red with anger. As long as Xiao Lin was still the class monitor, there was nothing he could do about it. Wang Dalin's voice turned several pitches higher as he said, "Ban away! Do whatever you want! You'll only be the class monitor for half a month more! Do you really think you can keep up with us after ditching classes for over a month?!"

With that, Wang Dalin's mood improved a lot. He felt that he had a huge advantage. He started with decent attributes and had been working hard at his training. As long as Gu Xiaoyue was not competing with him, he had full confidence in himself.

The rest of them agreed with that somewhat. Everyone knew Xiao Lin had started out with very low attributes and he had less training than them by more than a month. Everyone felt that Xiao Lin would really not be able to continue being class monitor after the monthly examinations. With that thought in mind, they could not help but feel some sympathy for Xiao Lin.

Class Seven's situation was really too unique. The other classes all had talented monitors. Even if their classmates had thoughts of seizing the positions, two months of training and examinations

would reveal an obvious gap in the skills of students with and without talents, and the other students could only resign themselves to their fates.

Xiao Lin's phone suddenly rang and he hurriedly answered it at the table. A baby-faced man suddenly appeared on the magical display, causing everyone to step back in shock.

They were very familiar with that baby face; it was the student union president of Dawn Academy. In the two months they had been there, the new students have gotten used to the lifestyle and regulations of the academy. The student union president was basically a leader with immense power in their eyes. Outside of the dean, the student union president held the most power at the school.

Someone like that had actually called Xiao Lin, so a lot of them immediately put down their food as they looked on.

Xiao Lin felt a little awkward. He could more or less guess what it was about. Even though Chen Yu had told him that his request would be forwarded to the student union, he did not expect such a quick response.

"Xiao Lin." The student union president had a gentle voice. He seemed to have heard the noise surrounding Xiao Lin, as he asked, "Are you at the cafeteria?"

"That's right. It's quite noisy here, let me head somewhere else... Huh?" Xiao Lin did not even finish speaking when his entire surroundings turned quiet. The gossip caused them to be very curious as to why the student union president was looking for Xiao Lin.

The president smiled as he waved. "It's fine, I'm just letting you know that you should come over to my office at eight tonight. I just received news from the dean: he will be hurrying back from the New World to meet you tonight."

"That's great! I'll be there on time," Xiao Lin exclaimed.

"Won't the dormitory lock the doors at seven?" someone said softly, but it was clearly heard in the silence.

The student union president laughed softly and said, "Oh, I almost forgot this rule for the new student dormitories. It's an automatic rule in the system, so let me think for a bit. How about this. I'll just lift the rule for you. From now on, you can enter and leave the dormitories as you please. It will be like that eventually anyway."

The student union president's words were very meaningful. If he had contacted the dean, then he must have had some exchanges with the dean as well, but he could not divulge too much right then.

The call hung up, and everyone looked at Xiao Lin in admiration.

The short call had contained a lot of information and all the onlookers were absolutely silent as they digested.

The dean was rushing back from the New World just to meet a new student at night, and even the student union president had to call him personally, even giving him so much special permission.

That was not the kind of treatment that a regular person could possibly have. More accurately, Xiao Lin was probably the only person in the entire first year who could possibly have that kind of treatment.

Chapter 174 - Checking Attributes

Chapter 174: Checking Attributes

Xiao Lin did not like being the center of attention. He lost the will to enjoy his meal under everyone's gazes, so he hastily wolfed down his food before leaving. There were a few unfamiliar faces who tried to greet him and start conversations on the way out, but he ignored them.

In another corner of the cafeteria, a few monitors were having dinner together as usual. In the two months they had been there, everyone had gotten closer, but not all of them liked the thought of working together. In the long term, they would be fellow comrades in war on the New World, but in the short term, it was still a competition between themselves in the school, especially considering the fact that the year leader could only be chosen from among them.

"The monitor from Class Seven is back. Wasn't he expelled?"

"How could you believe such a ridiculous rumor!" Cheng Ming said. He had refused to entertain the idea.

"I heard that the monitor of Class Seven actually went to the New World! I even heard he went to the American territories!" a girl said, amazed. To prevent the others from disbelieving her, she added, "I heard about it from a friend in the student union!"

The rest of them were stunned. They might be acting class monitors, but they did not really have any power in the school hierarchy and did not know that much more than regular students. They refused to reveal much shock, but the look of admiration in their eyes was obvious.

"Only half a month left till they pick the actual class monitors." A dissatisfied monitor changed the topic.

"Are you not confident in retaining your position?" someone else said.

"How could that be! In the two months of training, no one has been our equal other than us class monitors fighting amongst each other!" he said arrogantly.

"There's Gu Xiaoyue from Class Seven!" came a retort.

"Oh... Did you mean to say that Xiao Lin would not hold onto his position?"

"Did you not see what just happened just? Even the student union president and the dean know him. I refuse to believe he won't stay as the class monitor."

“Dawn Academy isn’t like Earth. Power talks here. Furthermore, everyone is a new student, so how could he have so many connections.”

“That’s not necessarily true. Look at Department Head Song...”

They were not completely clueless. A lot of information could be gleaned just from talking to the upper year students. To be honest, they were just slightly curious about Xiao Lin’s situation, or some of them were envious of the fact that he could head to the New World so early.

To those acting class monitors, they were more interested in the year leader position. To them, the class monitor positions were in the back, and they had their eyes set on being year leader, that was in charge of the entire year. However, to this day, the student union had yet to announce the criteria for choosing year leader.

There was still some time until his meeting with the dean, so Xiao Lin opened up the forums, planning on understanding the latest news and gossip in the school and their year.

For example, even though the second monthly examination had ended half a month ago, there were still a large amount of threads discussing how they could have earned a higher grade or even how to earn an S grade. According to the contents of the threads, Xiao Lin knew immediately that no one had earned an S grade, even though the second monthly examination had drastically lowered the difficulty. Even A grades are very scarce, only encompassing about 15% of their year. Compared to the first monthly exams, it was still quite the improvement.

With the oncoming third monthly examination, skill studies had been added into the classes for the new students. Everyone was celebrating with joy after two months of boring basic training. Even if skills were much harder to learn than they had thought, everyone jumped right into it passionately. The obvious proof was that more people were going to the training halls themselves during the weekends.

Xiao Lin remembered the skill books he had brought back. His various attributes had improved greatly in his time in The Final Land, and at the very least, he should be able to start learning Lightsword.

Dawn Academy had very limited skills available for new students, since they did not want to let the new students have too many options. It was just like the man who gave Xiao Lin those skill books in New Washington said, the Academies needed students that were useful to them.

Other than topics regarding their classes, there were various gossip topics on the forums as well. For example, a beauty from one of the classes managed to get together with an officer from the student union, getting various benefits from it. She was given various gear and tools, which were common among the upper-year students, but extremely helpful to new students. It seemed like a classmate of hers started that thread, and claimed that the girl was always just average in skill, but with the added equipment, she managed to get an A-grade in the second monthly examination.

The replies seemed to belittle the girl, but they mocked the thread starter as well. At least the girl had looks and a good body; the thread starter did not have the skills to get a high grade, nor even the body or face to make up for it, so it was obviously just a jealous classmate.

Other than that, a lot of the discussions centered around lifewater. After the second monthly examinations, a lot of people died from accidents, even though the difficulty had been decreased and their lifespans were fast becoming a limited resource.

At the start of the third month, the academy released a batch of lifewater. Everyone who managed to get decent results in the second examination quickly exchanged their points for lifewater, but those who had lackluster results would need to at least wait until the third month to afford it.

Xiao Lin could not help but think of Gu Xiaoyue. She only had two years left in her life, but with her skills, she definitely could have afforded to buy lifewater after the two exams.

With that in mind, he left the forums and entered the class database. He had access to all basic information of Class Seven other than information related to talents. First, he browsed through everyone's skills and was not surprised at what he found.

The higher the skill level, the harder it was to level it up. At some point, it required actual battle experience to slowly improve. Most of their skills stopped at around LV5, and their attributes only grew by about 10 points, so there was not a significant difference.

Xiao Lin's current total attribute score was 40 points, thanks to the hard battles he fought in The Final Land. His initially low attribute scores had now leapfrogged almost everyone else's. To be accurate, his total attribute score was now firmly in the second position in the class.

Chapter 175 - Meeting Gu Xiaoyue Again

Chapter 175: Meeting Gu Xiaoyue Again

Why was he in second place?

When Xiao Lin saw Gu Xiaoyue's attributes, he could not help but gape. His excitement for his own growth quickly dimmed when he saw that Gu Xiaoyue's total attribute scores were already at a staggering 60 points. Out of those points, her Intelligence attribute was already at 40; that alone was enough to equal Xiao Lin's total.

After calming down, Xiao Lin noticed that the girl was seriously imbalanced. Her other attributes only totaled to 20 points. Even though Gu Xiaoyue had attended some classes to improve her physical attributes, progress looked to be very slow.

Xiao Lin looked at Wang Dalin's attribute points, finding that he was at 38 points in total. Even though it was only two points lower than Xiao Lin, he remembered the guy being among the highest ones during the entrance examinations, so his growth lagged behind a lot of them.

Xiao Lin was not worried about Wang Dalin at all. With his current speed, he would soon eclipse everyone else, other than Gu Xiaoyue.

"In the end, he's only an idiot who only knows how to talk!" Xiao Lin said before once again banning Wang Dalin and shifting his attention to Gu Xiaoyue's information.

When he opened the lifespan column, Xiao Lin stared for over ten seconds before almost throwing his mouse on the floor in anger. On the monitor, Gu Xiaoyue's lifespan was still at 2 years.

Was this a joke?!

Gu Xiaoyue actually did not buy lifewater at the beginning of the month. The data showed she only had a few hundred points left, but it was clearly shown that Gu Xiaoyue had obtained an A-grade in the examination.

Coupled with the entrance exams and the first monthly examination, Xiao Lin was absolutely certain Gu Xiaoyue had enough points to buy novice lifewater, which was sold at a thousand redemption points. She only had so little left in her account, which meant she had actually spent her redemption points on other things.

Xiao Lin was furious and called Gu Xiaoyue right away. She did not pick up even after several minutes, so it was not clear what she was doing. However, Xiao Lin did not want to wait any longer. He stormed out of his room. As the acting class monitor, he obviously knew everyone's room numbers.

The woman's dormitory was on the fourth floor. Xiao Lin went straight for Gu Xiaoyue's room, and his banging on her door even caused the other students to look at him curiously. However, when they noticed it was Gu Xiaoyue's room, they quickly lost interest. Gu Xiaoyue was cold to everyone, even if some male students tried to get close to her, the female students did not care for such a cold person.

After about two or three minutes, Xiao Lin was about to leave when the door opened. Gu Xiaoyue had a jacket on as she looked at him with a confused look. Her hair was still wet and a little messy, and her pale skin was red with heat; it was obvious she just came out of the shower.

Xiao Lin felt a bit awkward before remembering why he was there, and his anger quickly rose again.

After a month of not seeing each other, Gu Xiaoyue was still the same. Her bespectacled face had a cold look, not even showing a shred of surprise or happiness at seeing Xiao Lin again.

Xiao Lin quickly pushed open the door. "What is wrong with you?! Why didn't you buy lifewater at the start of the month? Are you that confident you won't die in the next examination? Or maybe you don't even care if you die!"

His loud shouts attracted even more attention, and Xiao Lin hurriedly entered the room. However, as he closed the door behind him, he wondered if it would cause even more misunderstandings.

Xiao Lin suddenly had a headache when he saw that Gu Xiaoyue's expression did not change. She did not react to his berating or anger, nor did she care about his rudeness.

Gu Xiaoyue thought for a moment before softly and coldly saying, "If I'm not mistaken, the acting monitor does not have the power to choose how we spend our redemption points."

Xiao Lin paused. She was not wrong.

Everyone had absolute power over their own redemption points, and no one in the academy could interfere with it. However, Gu Xiaoyue was different. She only had two years left.

Xiao Lin patiently said, “Then you shouldn’t be so callous with your own life. Even if you really don’t die in any of the examinations, in two years you will... I met your sister when I went back to Earth. She cares for you a lot, and I told her you would take good care of yourself. Surely you won’t want her to not be able to see you again.”

Bringing up her sister, Xiao Lin remembered the picture in his possession. He hurriedly ran out to get it, and after a few minutes, he gave it to Gu Xiaoyue. She glanced at the picture and a tender look flashed on her face, but it was only for a moment before she reverted back to her cool self, rolling up the picture before saying, “That’s right, it’s definitely from her. Thank you.”

“That’s why, even if it’s just in consideration for your sister, you shouldn’t be taking risks...”

“I’ve already addressed it.” Gu Xiaoyue interrupted Xiao Lin.

“Huh?”

Gu Xiaoyue tidied her messy hair as she said, “In that letter I gave you, I’ve already addressed everything that needed to be settled, so even if we never meet again... What I mean is, thanks for your concern, but we don’t need any outsiders interfering with us sisters.”

“You told her you only had two years left in your letter?”

“That’s right.”

Xiao Lin was dumbfounded. Gu Xiaoyue’s sister, Gu Chengyun, read the letter right in front of him. He obviously could not read the weird symbols and letters in the letter, but Xiao Lin clearly remembered that Gu Chengyun seemed very normal after reading it. She even had a very charming conversation with him after that, let alone showed any signs of sadness.

How could someone not react at all when they knew their sister only had two years left in their lives.

Xiao Lin could not understand those siblings at all, but he suddenly lowered his voice as he warned, “You said you addressed it in the letter? After returning to Earth, I understood that if we don’t let anyone from the academies know of this place, there are only two consequences. One is the other party joins us; the other would be to eliminate the other party. Thankfully, only you, your sister and I know about the letter. I won’t tell anyone else; you should keep it a secret as well.”

Xiao Lin did not ask what exactly Gu Xiaoyue said in the letter, nor did he want to know. However, the girl with her paralyzed legs drawing cheerfully in a wheelchair left a deep impression on Xiao Lin.

No matter if it were to eliminate her or to bring her to the academy, Xiao Lin felt that both options were very cruel.

Chapter 176 - Additional Rewards

Chapter 176: Additional Rewards

Xiao Lin's reminder did not surprise Gu Xiaoyue and she seemed to have known that beforehand. She nodded subtly in acknowledgment, but her lips still parted to softly thank Xiao Lin.

Xiao Lin was surprised by her gratitude this time. He wondered if he imagined it, but for a moment, he could swear that he saw a hint of weakness and fatigue on Gu Xiaoyue's face.

No way. How could that woman make that sort of face?

Xiao Lin rubbed his eyes and was once again greeted by Gu Xiaoyue's cold expression. That girl was always like that, cold to everyone. She had very strong opinions as well, and very rarely would someone else's thoughts or suggestions influence her.

Xiao Lin did not know why he advised that stubborn girl, and the two of them looked at each other in silence. Gu Xiaoyue did not intend to invite Xiao Lin inside to sit down, and when Xiao Lin saw a few questionable silk objects on her bed, he stiffened and immediately said he had something else to do before leaving.

When the door was shut, Gu Xiaoyue's stone-cold face suddenly morphed into a weak and helpless one as she walked to the bedside, picking up an empty bottle that was as big as her thumb. After looking at it for a while, she sighed as she threw the empty bottle into the trash. On the bottle were the words, 'Elementary Lifewater'.

Xiao Lin left the dormitories after seven and found that the student union president really did unlock the permissions for him. Even after seven, he could enter and exit the locked doors with just a swipe of a card, which of course attracted some curious gazes.

Dawn Academy was very cool and quiet at night. Even though the academy was absolutely safe, the student union still strictly prohibited students from wandering out at night. Even though the upper years could return later, returning too late was still prohibited, and special permission was needed to do that.

It was not the first time Xiao Lin met the student union president, and the baby-faced man who held immense power was quite amicable, not having any air of arrogance about him. Xiao Lin considered telling him about New Washington, and even The Final Land.

The student union president stopped him with a look of understanding, smiling as he said, "You don't need to explain anything to me. I'm only in charge of matters inside the academy. I have no right to know about what happened in the New World."

The president seemed to be very strict. He obviously would have heard of New Washington, but he seemed to have zero interest in it, and instead shifted the topic to Xiao Lin's rewards.

According to the agreement between the two academies, Xiao Lin would have been given 400 New Dollars every day as payment, which was determined by the student union president. He then said he had negotiated with Judge Academy after all the problems that happened.

Xiao Lin had worked with Professor Brown for 3 weeks, totalling to 21 days. Since the pay was given daily, he had received 8,400 New Dollars, of which he had used up 800 in New Washington. He still had 7,600 left, which he regretted not spending since they left in a rush. However, Song Junlang consoled him with the fact that it was the universal currency for the colonists, so he would naturally still be able to use it on Dawn Academy territory in the future.

The student union president smiled as he said, "Other than the money you have already received, Judge Academy has decided to award you with an additional 8,000 New Dollars after my negotiations."

Xiao Lin was stunned. He left Dawn Academy for about 6 weeks, but the latter part of it was spent in The Final Land, and after that under house arrest by Captain Harry. It seemed like Judge Academy planned on compensating him with the same amount for that period of time.

Xiao Lin furrowed his eyebrows. "Is this supposed to be compensation for me?"

The student union president shrugged. "That is outside of my purview."

Xiao Lin did not feel too happy, but he was just a small character in the grand scheme of things, and Judge Academy was basically a whole country. He was currently no match for them.

Of course, looking at it positively, he had just earned an additional 8,000 New Dollars; on top of what he had, it would be 15,600 Dollars. The student union president told him it was quite a significant sum of money, and many graduates would need to work for several years to get that much money.

"Every academy has its own banks, and obviously it's your choice if you want to keep it there or not. I would personally recommend you to deposit into a bank since it's safer. Hand me your student card as well. I'll raise your rank and open up more permissions for you. The universal card is used in our territories as well, and even has the ability to store money, which will be convenient for you when you head to the New World again."

After a pause, the president smiled. "That's actually the main reason I called you over. Alright, it's about time, leave your universal card here and head to the dean's office."

The president called over Chen Yu from the second year to escort Xiao Lin while he took Xiao Lin's card to be ranked up.

The Dean's office was in a deeper part of the academy. Xiao Lin was not that familiar with Chen Yu, and the two of them walked silently without conversation. Chen Yu shot him strange looks with a mixture of disdain and admiration. His feelings were very complicated, when Xiao Lin asked him to convey the message that he wanted to meet the dean, Chen Yu treated the request with contempt, so he was obviously shocked when he received the notification from the student union.

Chen Yu could not tell what was so special about Xiao Lin. He even speculated that he might have a hidden backer, similar to Song Junlang.

That had to be the case!

Chen Yu slowly convinced himself of his theory and his disdain solidified, causing him to not want to talk to Xiao Lin. Naturally, Xiao Lin did not know what was going on in Chen Yu's head. His impression of the dean was only from the opening ceremony, so he could not help but ask Chen Yu what sort of person the Dean was.

Chen Yu did not want to bother with Xiao Lin, but upon hearing the dean being mentioned, he had a very respectful tone. "The dean is a great man! Dawn Academy is undergoing a huge resurgence thanks to him, so you definitely have to treat him with all the respect he deserves!"

Ignoring the warning, Xiao Lin was once again deep in thought. He was filled with both anticipation and apprehension.

Xiao Lin felt that if everything went smoothly, then he would probably put all his cards on the table. He believed that the dean definitely knew about his SS-rank talent, so what sort of attitude would the dean take toward him? Xiao Lin was also full of questions that he hoped would be answered.

Chapter 177 - Conversation With The Dean (1)

Chapter 177: Conversation With The Dean (1)

The Dean's office was a lone tower that was four stories tall. Even though it was nighttime, the entire tower was lit up by bright lights. The first three floors were locked, and Xiao Lin followed a spiral staircase up to the top floor. In front of the door were two solemn and quiet statues, each holding a long spear in their right hands.

Chen Yu was about to push the door and enter when the stone statues suddenly moved, crossing their spears and blocking the way. Chen Yu had an awkward expression as he retreated a few steps, signalling to Xiao Lin. "Go ahead and enter yourself. The dean only wants to meet you."

When Xiao Lin stepped forward, the stone statues once again returned to their original position and the door opened by itself. Chen Yu tried to look inside, but the door shut very quickly. He was very unhappy, but he knew that if he had stepped even further, the statues would have killed him without hesitation. In the end, he shook his head and left.

The office on the top floor was very large and the dean seemed to have arrived earlier than expected. When Xiao Lin stepped inside, the dean was looking at the wall with his arms crossed. On the wall was a huge map; it did not look like a map of Earth.

The dean turned around and nodded to Xiao Lin, pointing at a sofa in the corner before saying, "Sit."

Xiao Lin uncomfortably sat upright on the sofa, trying to observe the old man who held utmost power in Dawn Academy with the corner of his eye. Even though his hair was all white and his face was full of wrinkles, his spirit was extremely strong. He did not look like an old man at all. He wore a white sorcerer's robe, and the wand he used in the opening ceremony was nowhere to be seen.

The dean seemed to be quite easygoing. He did not sit behind his desk, but instead sat on a sofa opposite Xiao Lin. He took out a pack of cigarettes and put one in his mouth before offering it to Xiao Lin, "Give it a try; it's made from tobacco grown in the New World. The taste is quite unique."

"I don't smoke." Xiao Lin put up his hand in rejection.

The dean nodded before lighting his own cigarette by producing a small flame on his fingertip, taking a few drags after he lit it. He shifted his focus back onto Xiao Lin, amicably saying, "Don't be nervous, you're only here for a casual chat today. I've heard the reports from Department Head Song and the investigation team, but I want to hear everything regarding The Final Land straight from you. Don't worry. You just need to remember one thing: I'm the dean of Dawn Academy. No matter what happens, I will always be the shield that stands behind you."

Xiao Lin breathed a sigh of relief. It was a lot more comfortable than he had imagined. The dean did not seem to be an overly strict person. He took a moment to collect his thoughts before slowly recounting everything that happened in The Final Land.

Even though Xiao Lin was not that familiar with the dean, especially since it was only the first time they met, the dean's words still gave him a sense of comfort.

'This is a trustworthy old man,' he decided in his head.

Xiao Lin spoke in great detail, including everything Asabanor had said, Lilith's combat style, even the mystical tomb, and the guesses he had regarding Ivanovich.

The dean listened earnestly, not even realizing his cigarette had burned out. He did not utter a single word as Xiao Lin spoke, only revealing a difficult expression at times, and at other times a curious one.

It was only when Xiao Lin mentioned Harry placing him on house arrest when the dean put his cigarette into the ashtray, holding his hand up and saying, "Let's not talk about what happened in New Washington first. Did that high priest really say he had found a way to deal with us?"

Xiao Lin was shocked, the dean placed emphasis somewhere that surprised him. It was true that Asabanor was claiming he would eliminate all the evil demons and take revenge on the colonists, but the words of a man mad with revenge were not worth listening to. In truth, even if the high priest managed to survive and was in hiding, Xiao Lin did not feel like that half-dead man would be able to do much.

Even Lilith and Song Junlang were of the same opinion. It had been more than a hundred years since the Thunder Kingdom was destroyed. Even among the natives, how many of them still even remembered the high priest?

The dean had a hesitant look on his face, slowly saying, “I don’t understand that high priest too much, so I can’t be certain he was speaking nonsense. However, let us hypothesize; if he really did find a way, what would it be?”

Xiao Lin thought and said, “Assassinate high level figures in Judge Academy? Gather followers to revolt? Or maybe even commit acts of terrorism, causing havoc in the American territories?”

If Asabanor did want to take revenge, there were many ways to do so, but these were all just trivial matters. The dean shook his head. “With the foundations Judge Academy has, those actions wouldn’t impact them too much, let alone eliminate all of us.”

Xiao Lin tried to think. “Then are there any other ways? He couldn’t possibly have control of nuclear-equivalent weapons of mass destruction?”

The dean said, “There is no way to get a nuclear bomb into Planet Norma, but the most destructive spells in the New World would not lose to a nuclear bomb in destructive power. Of course, it’s hard to learn, but even if the high priest had that magic, what could it do?”

Xiao Lin gaped before answering, “Wouldn’t that be a huge problem? It’s the power of a nuclear bomb; we would lose a lot of people. Hold on...”

Xiao Lin finally realized something. Even if they all died, would it matter?

As long as they were in colonial territories, as long as the resurrection towers existed, they could still revive after death, and the high priest would probably not have a second chance to unleash a spell after he was exposed.

Xiao Lin’s face paled as he realized, “Dean, are you implying that the high priest found a way to stop us from resurrecting?!”

The dean did not deny it; instead, he asked, “You mentioned earlier that The Final Land had a building similar to the resurrection tower in the fake city. Could you describe the appearance?”

Xiao Lin had brushed past it earlier since he felt like there was nothing special about the tower. After carefully recalling it, he described it to the dean.

That tower had a lot of differences to the resurrection tower. First of all, that tower was black, and the resurrection tower was silver. The shape was different as well. While the resurrection tower’s surface was smooth without a blemish, that tower had various symbols carved into it.

After he finished describing it, the dean’s look of concern deepened. He put down a cigarette that he had not even lit up before going deep in thought. “That tower is the most primitive version of the resurrection tower. There might still be a lot of flaws with the tower, but that high priest has, without a doubt, figured out a way to counter the Law of Immortality that Ivanovich established!”

Chapter 178 - Conversation With The Dean

(2)

Chapter 178: Conversation With The Dean (2)

Xiao Lin was shocked. As the dean of the academy, his experience was definitely incomparable to Xiao Lin and Lilith. When they were at The Final Land, or even after they left, neither of them had considered it, and neither of them even worried about the consequences of Asabanor going back to Planet Norma.

Xiao Lin gulped as he got anxious. "What would happen if that old man really has a way to fight against, or even eliminate the Law of Immortality?"

The dean leaned into the sofa, taking his time before saying. "War."

Who would the war be against?

Very obviously, it would be a war against the natives of Planet Norma.

Xiao Lin had occasionally heard Department Head Song mention that Dawn Academy had been at war with the orcs for a long time. However, there had not been any large scale conflicts for a while. At the most, there were just some skirmishes with the surrounding merfolk.

It was the same for the colonized territories around the whole world. In the initial stages of colonization, war was very common. Outside of the elves who avoided conflict, almost every race in Planet Norma had a history of war with the colonists. It was only until Ivanovich established the Law of Immortality that the tides drastically swung in the colonists' favor.

Ever since then, there were very few large-scale wars against the various races in Planet Norma. At the most, there were some local conflicts, but they were resolved peacefully most of the time. Of course, resolving it peacefully was just lip service. In truth, it demanded various forms of compensation in exchange for peaceful coexistence with the people from Earth.

If the Law of Immortality disappeared, would that form of peace hold?

The atmosphere in the office got very heavy. Xiao Lin was out of his depth regarding the subject, but the dean did not bother asking him for his opinion either.

After a short moment of silence, the dean adjusted his posture and laughed, "Forget about it. This isn't anything important at the moment and you shouldn't be worried about it. No matter what, us old coots are still around to prevent anything from happening. Now, let's discuss your problems."

Xiao Lin was startled; the true motive had presented itself. The dean obviously did not rush back to school just to ask about the undying high priest.

"First of all, I need to explain what talents are. Talents are not exclusive to us colonists. In Planet Norma, this power is called a God's Blessing, which implies that it is a power given by God at birth." The dean did not go straight into the main topic, but slowly explained things.

"God again?" Xiao Lin furrowed his eyebrows. In The Final Land, he kept hearing Asabanor bring up God's existence. He refused to make a firm conclusion on the existence of God, since Planet

Norma was completely different from Earth. God might just be a spiritual existence, or he might even have a physical body, but that was still just Planet Norma's God.

The dean said ruefully, "In truth, according to our database, the manifestation of individuals with talent, regardless of rank, among natives number to around one to every ten thousand. Among the academies, the ratio of individuals with a talent is instead one to every thousand. Even if there are definitely certain margins of error with our data for the natives, this gap is still shocking. You should know yourself, in terms of our physical capabilities, the people from Earth cannot compete with the natives. However, when it comes to talents, we have a huge advantage."

Xiao Lin could not help but speculate, "Could the God of Planet Norma be taking care of us outsiders from Earth?"

"It's really strange, and we haven't managed to figure out the reason. As for the rankings, we're quite similar to the natives. Talents are all split into five ranks, from D-rank to S-rank. Our rankings in the start were actually made in reference to the ones on Planet Norma."

No wonder the system in the academy had such detailed explanations on all the different talents; they probably utilized the information already available on the planet itself.

Xiao Lin asked softly, "Then what about SS-rank talents?"

The dean shook his head. "There were no SS-rank talents initially. What I mean is, the SS-rank does not exist among the natives. It was only until Ivanovich appeared did Voyna Akademiya realize his talent was not in any records, and that his talent was terrifyingly strong. Not even the S-rank talents that appeared before could hold a candle to him. Everyone immediately set his talent as SS-rank. After that, upon discussion, we settled on a new rule: any talent that was not in the archives would automatically be regarded as an SS-rank talent."

This was the first time Xiao Lin had heard of this explanation, especially in regards to his SS-rank talent. It was a little surprising, but disappointing as well. He curiously asked, "I actually thought SS-rank talents meant it was stronger and better than an S-rank talent. Based on what you said, SS-rank talents are just holes in the archives, or just talents that the natives had never seen before?"

The dean knew what he wanted to say, and asked, "Do you know what Ivanovich's SS-rank talent was?"

Xiao Lin shook his head. "That's probably a big secret of the Russian academy."

"Not many people know it now, but it was not a big secret at the time. Almost everyone knew about it back then. Ivanovich called his own talent Genesis; he could create anything from his mind that the laws of nature allowed, in any space that his own power could reach! A cup of water, a cigarette, a loaf of bread; he could create anything he wanted. If it's anything that was at a higher level, such as a dragon-eagle or a golden dragon, then his own power had to be at that rank for him to create it."

The dean narrowed his eyes in reminiscence, "Voyna Akademiya was once at war with the titans up north. They were few in number, but they were an extremely strong race; they've gone extinct now."

“Did Ivan do it?”

At the time, Ivan’s skills were still not as powerful as the legends said. He only did one thing in that war, which was to head to the titan’s lands alone, creating a small meteorite and hurling it down toward them. The entire titan race was wiped out, and to this day, nothing grows on those lands.

Xiao Lin sucked in his breath. Even though the laws of the world did not allow a weapon of mass destruction like a nuclear bomb, meteorites were probably more terrifying than a nuclear bomb.

He suddenly recalled that there were a lot of plants that could only be seen on Earth around Ivan’s tomb in The Final Land. He always assumed that it was brought in by someone, but upon reflection, it was probably all created by Ivanovich’s talent.

Chapter 179 - Conversation With The Dean (3)

Chapter 179: Conversation With The Dean (3)

When Ivanovich entered the realm of being a legend, he created the Law of Immortality and allowed all the colonists to prosper. These were all facts that Xiao Lin knew. However, regarding Ivan’s disappearance after that, the dean did not mention it at all. He brushed past it quickly.

That question was not the main reason the dean called for Xiao Lin today. The dean paused for a moment to allow Xiao Lin to process the information before continuing, “Since Ivan, there were two main schools of thought regarding SS-rank talents that did not exist in the system. Some believe it was a blessing from God that symbolizes our destiny as the rulers of Planet Norma. Even some of the natives felt that way, which led to a lot of them willingly coming under our rule.”

The dean then sighed. “Conversely, a portion of people believed it was the power of demons. They believe that it should not exist in their world, and someday, an individual with an SS-rank talent would destroy the world. Did you know? Ever since the news of an individual with an SS-rank talent being found in Judge Academy leaked, there had been at least 10 assassination attempts on Lilith. On average, it was one attempt a month. Of course, thanks to the strict protection offered by the academy, all the attempts had failed. Even so, Judge Academy was forced to announce that the SS-rank talent was just a misunderstanding, even if many saw through the poor ruse.”

After that, the dean looked at Xiao Lin patiently, saying, “Do you understand now?”

Xiao Lin nodded. He now understood that the long lecture from the dean was just for his own good. The truth was, after visiting New Washington and seeing the treatment Lilith got from the Americans, he felt it was a bit unfair. They both had an SS-rank talent, but the difference in treatment was too great.

Even if he could not vocalize those thoughts, the dean had guessed what he was feeling, and he felt a sense of gratitude. Everything the dean did before this was just to conceal Xiao Lin’s existence,

especially since his own talent was definitely very weak initially, but possessed infinite room for growth. It was definitely important that Xiao Lin had a safe time to grow in the beginning.

“I’m partially responsible for everything that’s happened, since I agreed to let you head to Judge Academy. My intent was to let you get used to the New World ahead of time, since Lilith went there very early on, but I could not just give out that order. Thankfully the Americans came looking for her themselves, and I went along with the flow.”

“No matter what, I did receive some compensation. I got more than ten thousand New Dollars.” Xiao Lin hesitated before asking, “About that, they held me under house arrest. Did the Americans have any explanation for that?”

“I plan on voicing my concerns and displeasure to Judge Academy about that.”

“Oh...”

“Yes, if you don’t think it’s enough, then I will strongly voice my concerns and displeasure.”

“...”

The dean laughed out loud, and Xiao Lin asked, “You were joking, right?”

After the laughter died down, the dean calmed down and sighed, “You need to understand; we are allies with Judge Academy. Even though friends never last forever, we are still currently benefiting from each other. I cannot allow any conflict between the academies right now, especially with the threat of Asabanor looming over us.”

Xiao Lin furrowed his eyebrows in silence. Even though he had anticipated it, he was still unhappy.

“However, the Americans crossed the line this time. I discussed things with the chairman and dean of Judge Academy over the phone, and the final result was this.” The dean put a document on the table.

Xiao Lin hurriedly flipped through it and it was very obviously a list of items. On the list were various never-before-heard materials, such as violet grass, blood-moon flowers and dragon-blood stones. Roughly counting, there were over a hundred different materials listed.

“This is?” Xiao Lin got the gist of it, but he was still unclear. Other than the additional New Dollars, it seemed like Judge Academy wanted to offer these things as additional compensation for himself. However, he was absolutely clueless regarding alchemy and medicines, so he did not know what these things would be useful for.

The dean guessed his thoughts and asked with a smile, “Originally, I should have asked you about this list first, but this time, I helped you decide so you didn’t need to worry about it. Let me ask you, if it were up to you, what would you ask from them?”

Xiao Lin opened his mouth to say something, but he did not know what to say. Just like when Hank came over to invite him to New Washington, he did not know what he actually needed.

There was so much he wanted, such as legendary weapons or equipment, but Judge Academy obviously would not just kneel over and hand him those things. Furthermore, Xiao Lin did not even know when he would actually be able to use them. As for things he could use, there were definitely a lot. The problem was that he was not even at the Black Iron-rank, even if he wanted compensation with items of that rank, those would not be valuable at all and would quickly become useless.

After a period of consideration, Xiao Lin said, “I probably would have asked for more money.”

That was the best option he could think of, and the dean anticipated that, nodding as he said, “That’s right, New Dollars are the most realistic option. However, when you head to the New World in the future, you will realize that you will have a lot of opportunities to make money, but a lot of things cannot be bought with just cash.”

Xiao Lin impatiently smiled. “Dean, you can stop with your sales pitch now. What exactly are these items?”

The dean was very calm as he lowered his voice and said, “This is a list of items that can allow an SS-rank talent to advance.”

The dean had dropped a bomb!

Xiao Lin could not help but stand up immediately, looking at the dean as he said, “Wh-what you mean is, I can finally advance my talent!”

Just like how skills could be leveled up to achieve greater results, talents could as well. Xiao Lin’s Academic Genius talent could double his training effectiveness at rank one, and could only copy F-ranked skills at the moment.

Xiao Lin had always wondered how he could advance his talent. He had originally thought that his talent was similar to skills, and would naturally level up after constant use.

That was why he always used his replication skill every time it went off cooldown. Even in The Final Land, he would copy Lilith’s skills whenever he could. Based on the time differential in The Final Land, they were there for several months, but he did not feel like his talent was improving at all.

Chapter 180 - Freedom of Classes

Chapter 180: Freedom of Classes

“SS-rank talents are different from normal talents. Just like I said, on Planet Norma, talents are considered blessings from God, and can be leveled up through repeated use, just like leveling up skills, but that’s not the case for SS-rank talents.”

The dean smiled as he continued, “The research we have regarding SS-rank talents is limited to Ivanovich all those years ago, especially since the Russians started to conceal their information later on. SS-rank talents need to be leveled up with outside help. As for what the outside help is,

the other academies are left in the dark, even the Russians all those years ago needed four to five years to find a way.”

“How about Judge Academy?” Xiao Lin asked.

“Judge Academy did not announce anything publicly, but I had some inside information. They initially wanted to research it themselves, but lacked any progress for half a year, so they finally had a secret deal with the Russians, paying a hefty price for this list of items.”

Xiao Lin was ecstatic. He finally realized the dean’s good intentions. The list was definitely what he needed most at the time. If not for the Americans digging a hole for themselves, Dawn Academy would probably have needed to pay quite a price for the list.

“How do I use it then? Are these materials hard to obtain?” Xiao Lin was clueless in this field, and could not help but worry if any of the materials were overly expensive.

The dean smiled. “The most expensive part of this list is the list itself. The materials are all common items, and the academy can afford to pay for you. I’ll get the academy to prepare and concoct it for you. I’ll be in school these few days to handle this, and your primary task for the next half a month will be this as well.”

Xiao Lin was about to say something but the dean raised his hand to stop him. “One other thing, thanks to the uniqueness of your talent, the courses in school aren’t that meaningful for you. I’ve considered it for a while, but I’ll allow you to attend classes as you wish. From tomorrow onward, any class from the first to fourth year will be available for you to pick and choose for your attendance.”

The dean once again gave him a surprise, which caused Xiao Lin to not even know how to react. The freedom to pick his own classes, Song Junlang had helped him obtain something similar before, which allowed him to avoid the forced nature of the school curriculum. What the dean gave him was even better, allowing him to attend any class he wanted to in the school.

At the same time, Xiao Lin could not help but worry. “Wouldn’t that cause some objections?”

The dean laughed imperiously, “Of course! Not just objections, the lecturers will probably be trying to break down my door when it happens, but what of it? This is a right that I gave myself. Who would dare oppose it in this school?!”

“Sir, you’re probably recommending that I attend more classes, right?” Xiao Lin felt like there was a hidden meaning to this.

The dean once again raised his hand. “You don’t have to ask me. I won’t and can’t give you any recommendations. Every SS-rank talent is unique and there are no prior examples. The only thing I can give you is freedom, and I hope to see the results in half a month.”

The third monthly examination was in half a month. Xiao Lin now realized that the dean had no intentions of delaying the exam, but it was fine. He had absolute confidence in his own skill.

The dean’s eyes were sharp, and he quickly guessed what Xiao Lin was thinking, “Even though I can give you all the convenience in the world in the academy, that hinges on the condition that it

does not break any rules. Examinations, including the monthly examinations, will be indiscriminate. The map for this coming exam was personally chosen by myself; it will be very difficult, so you should be prepared. Even though your value to Dawn Academy is considerable, I won't lower my expectations of you, nor will I spoon feed you. Your path can only be determined by yourself!"

After that, the dean's expression grew stricter.

Xiao Lin stared and realized the dean was definitely not joking, but he acknowledged his good intentions. He did have the SS-rank Academic Genius talent, but it required him to work hard in order to unleash its true potential.

The conversation was at an end, and it was already late at night when Xiao Lin left the dean's tower. He did not realize it was so late, since the conversation was quite enjoyable. The dean was very different from the powerful and detached leadership figure he had imagined.

Xiao Lin still had a lot of questions that went unanswered, such as those regarding Ivanovich and the high priest, but the dean did not go deep into those topics. Those matters would not have anything to do with him for a while. To Xiao Lin, the most important task at hand was to improve himself quickly.

What caused him to relax was the fact that he finally understood the attitude the dean and the school had toward him. Even if the dean did not say it outright, he now knew that the dean was standing behind him. It was impossible not to be pleased with that fact.

Xiao Lin did not hurry to bed when he got back to the dormitory. Instead, he opened the list of classes. The courses for the first year did not change much, since the first few months were all filled with basic courses. However, since Xiao Lin had obtained the freedom to attend any classes he wanted, his options widened.

He was initially confused as to why the dean would open up all four years of courses to him in one go, because skills were like a large branching tree, and most skills were connected to each other. If the prerequisites were not mastered, it would be impossible to learn anything more complicated.

However, he had a moment of realization when he opened the second year courses. In it, he saw courses like Basic Medicinal Studies and Basic Alchemy, whereas the third year classes had basic courses such as Basic Dragish.

The dean might not have said that he needed to take those courses, but just gave him a wider array of options, unrestricted by the limitations placed by the school's rigid systems.

"I need to hurry up and improve!"

Xiao Lin had gained a lot of determination thanks to the dean's support, especially after he realized how weak he was in The Final Land. The feeling that his life was in someone else's hands was a terrible one. As fellow SS-rank talents, the gap between him and Lilith was too wide.

"In half a month, I will raise Academic Genius to level two, and then it's Black Iron-rank we go!"

Xiao Lin set the goal for himself. When he recalled that the map for this next examination was chosen personally by the dean, he realized in great anticipation that the exam would be exceptionally difficult.

Chapter 181 - New Courses

Chapter 181: New Courses

The courses on Monday were the same as ever. He had General History of Planet Norma in the morning and Basic Swordsmanship in the afternoon. It had been more than a month since Xiao Lin saw Professor Dai and he felt a little emotional. After comparing the Dawn Academy's Professor Dai with Judge Academy's Professor Brown, he realized that the two of them shared some similarities. They were both knowledgeable in their respective fields, Professor Brown being a linguist and Professor Dai an excellent historian.

Professor Dai was the same as always. He gave his lectures in an animated and focused manner, and his display of various magical images ensured that his classes were never boring.

Xiao Lin actually hesitated to attend the history class at first. After all, he had the authority to sit in any class as he pleased and could choose whatever classes he wished to take as long as he could fulfill the conditions to advance to sophomore year.

After pondering over it for a long time in the morning, he finally decided to attend the class. He hoped to gain a more thorough understanding of Planet Norma. Professor Dai's lecture that day was about the history of the merfolk, a race which bordered directly with Dawn Academy's colony. In the hundreds of years of colonial history, the merfolk had engaged in several wars with Dawn Academy, and the conflicts were especially fierce in the early days when Dawn Academy was founded.

The feud between two sides could be regarded as an age-old one. Countless lives died at the hands of each opponent, especially during the period where the resurrection tower had not yet been built. In order to restrain Dawn Academy, the orcs provided the merfolk with a large number of weapons and equipment, giving them the necessary support to fight back against Dawn Academy. It led directly to the most tragic battle between Dawn Academy and the orcs.

Professor Dai first gave a brief introduction to the history of the merfolk. The race had a long history and were the first to appear when life was born on Planet Norma. The merfolk evolved from the ocean's fish life and in general, possessed most of the characteristics of a fish. However, their hind limbs have evolved into two functional legs and they gained the ability to walk on land.

The earliest territory of the merfolk was around Dawn Academy. Dawn Academy tried to avoid conflict in the early days and discovered that the race had almost zero intelligence. It was a race that relied entirely on instinct for survival and any agreement with them was not binding. Dawn Academy then decided to go to war, and for decades, the merfolk were almost completely driven back to the sea.

Xiao Lin noticed that Professor Dai used the words 'driven back', not 'defeat'. After expressing some puzzlement, Professor Dai explained that the merfolk possessed extremely terrifying

reproductive abilities. The number of their offspring would only increase, and in the end, there was no other way except to drive them back to the ocean and launch a war against the orcs. Those low-intelligence races retreated quickly after their supply source was cut off.

In addition to introducing the history of the merfolk and the history of the war with Dawn Academy, Professor Dai also briefly explained the language system of the merfolk. Although the course content in that area was not his strong point, he said that Mermish was a compulsory course in the early days of Dawn Academy, perhaps even more important than Planet Norma's Common Language.

The others were all amazed, but Xiao Lin was not surprised. The academy's courses were oriented around training and nurturing, and since the academy considered the merfolk to be a major hidden danger, courses relevant to merfolk would naturally become more important.

The Mermish script was messy-looking, but they were not difficult to learn. Most characters could easily be identified through their shape, as they bore some resemblance to hieroglyphs. Their language however, was difficult to learn, with the key aspect being the lack of a unified grammatical system as well as an extremely confusing pronunciation system.

The morning class ended quickly and was not that boring for Xiao Lin. As a student of Dawn Academy, it was not a bad thing to gain more knowledge about the school's history. In spite of that, Xiao Lin was a little confused when he heard complaints from other students after class. From those complaints, he discovered that Professor Dai had apparently changed the topic at the last minute that day, and the original topic of that lesson ought to have been elvish history.

As the lecturer, Professor Dai had every right to change his lecture contents at any time. Xiao Lin did not take that episode into his heart, but he was rather surprised to see an extra skill after querying the central computer: Basic Mermish Mastery LV1.

Xiao Lin did not know whether to laugh or cry. He could not help but wonder if he really had the talent for learning languages?

Later that afternoon, Xiao Lin paid more attention to his swordsmanship course. When he reappeared in the training hall after being gone for more than a month, it was only natural that he would arouse excitement and whispers from the other students.

The T-rex's temper was still the same and she instantly silenced the chattering training hall with a roar. The dean had probably spoken with all the lecturers and tutors beforehand, and the violent woman did not seem to show any favoritism toward Xiao Lin.

The contents of that lesson were skill training and the skill being trained was the Slashing that Xiao Lin had already mastered. It was not a difficult skill to learn, but the training required to master it took up a lot of time. According to the tutor, that skill was a prerequisite skill for many skills and it was advantageous to master it as soon as possible.

Xiao Lin however, had his own ideas. After the group practice started, he took the initiative to meet the tutor and ask, "I'd like to learn Basic Sword Aura."

The woman stared at Xiao Lin fiercely for more than ten seconds, then said in a rather unkind tone, "You again! Are you trying to trouble me on the first day? Even though the dean gave us all a

heads-up, the old man also told us that he won't lower the standard for your assessment. You understand what I mean, don't you!"

Xiao Lin smiled helplessly. "Tutor, my basic swordsmanship is already level eight, I think I've already reached the required standard for learning Basic Sword Aura."

"You don't understand do y—" The tutor swallowed her last word abruptly. Her eyes widened in surprise, and the others reacted similarly, looking at Xiao Lin as if he was a monster.

Xiao Lin had seen the basic skills of the others in the class, and most of them were only around LV5. Taking into account the increased training difficulty that came with progressive advancement of one's skills, LV8 was already considered an unimaginable level.

"The learning standard of the Basic Sword Aura course is indeed level eight Basic Swordsmanship, but I don't believe you can do it. Prove it to me! If you succeed, I'll teach you how to master Basic Sword Aura!" The tutor still seemed skeptical.

"My information is there for you to check."

She looked impatient and said in a soft voice, "Don't take me for a fool. How can I check when the dean has already encrypted your data!"

Xiao Lin was stunned. The dean had not told him about that, so he said helplessly, "Then what can I do to prove it? Am I supposed to fight you?"

"Fight him!" The tutor pointed at Cheng Ming, who was just beside Xiao Lin.

Chapter 182 - Battling Cheng Ming

Chapter 182: Battling Cheng Ming

Cheng Ming was the monitor of Class One. He was also a very straightforward man, well-liked among the freshman year. Everyone was shocked by the tutor's words. Cheng Ming quickly said, "Instructor, you know that my Basic swordsmanship is only level seven now, right?"

Everyone else could not help but roll their eyes when they heard that, lamenting to themselves that Cheng Ming was too honest. It was impossible for anyone to know if Xiao Lin was just making a random assertion about his LV8, and Cheng Ming was probably the only one among all those people who truly believed Xiao Lin's words.

Xiao Lin was also slightly surprised, but Cheng Ming's Swordheart talent was common knowledge because of Cheng Ming's own loudmouth. All swordsmanship-related skills increased by one level, and he only attained LV7 because of the bonus accorded to him by the Swordheart.

The instructor still maintained a cold face and showed no expression on that fair mien of hers. She did not provide any explanation and simply watched them quietly.

Xiao Lin was suddenly intrigued. In fact, he was curious to know what level his current strength had reached. Cheng Ming possessed one of the more outstanding strengths among the class monitors, especially in terms of swordsmanship.

“Let’s try, then.” Xiao Lin gave Cheng Ming a friendly smile and said, “Let’s treat this as an exercise for us to learn from each other.”

Cheng Ming felt a little pressured. “Learning from each other is different from training. Swords don’t have a mind of their own and I still can’t willfully control my power.”

Xiao Lin immediately understood why Cheng Ming felt awkward and could not help but realize how much of an honest person Cheng Ming was. The latter was probably worried that the two of them would be injured and would have to use their redemption points for treatment. Those points were more important than anything, especially when the third monthly exam was approaching.

“Come with me,” the tutor spoke again and walked toward the training hall.

Xiao Lin and Cheng Ming looked at each other and followed, only to discover that there were actually other rooms inside the training hall. Cheng Na had never mentioned it before, and they were not allowed to enter them either. After opening the door to those rooms, Xiao Lin stretched his neck and looked around. His eyes widened and he could not resist muttering, “A simulated battle system?”

The tutor raised her brow somewhat unexpectedly. “You’ve used it before?”

“Yeah, in New Washington.”

“Alright, then I’ll keep things brief.”

The instructor briefly explained that the system could also allow two people to learn from each other, in addition to creating virtual characters for combat practice. That way, the simulated health bar could provide a rough distinction between the strong and the weak.

The sword to be used was a special wooden sword that was not lethal in the slightest, which meant that there was no need to worry about getting injured. To put it bluntly, it was solely to compare their Basic Swordsmanship level.

The simulated battle system consumed energy stones every time it was used, so the tutors almost never let them use it. On that occasion however, they made an exception for some reason. Xiao Lin’s relationship with Cheng Ming was quite good too, and their friendship would not be affected, no matter what the outcome was. Meanwhile, Cheng Ming was amazed at the two health bars in the battle room and heaped continuous praises on how amazing the system was.

“Haven’t you played online games before?” Xiao Lin asked softly.

“I never play online games.”

The corner of Xiao Lin’s mouth twitched as he brandished the training sword in his hand. The sword was very light and had no edge. It is not very easy to use, but it did not matter since they were just using it to learn from each other. He said, “Let’s start then.”

“Looking forward to learning from you!” Cheng Ming was still very polite, but his gaze sharpened suddenly when the battle began. He chose the épée, and the combat system subsequently made a higher assessment of the damage it could inflict. Cheng Ming launched the first attack.

The battle room there was much more spacious than that of New Washington, which allowed more room for maneuverability. Although Cheng Ming’s Basic Swordsmanship was lower than Xiao Lin’s, his total power value was higher than his. Cheng Ming’s strength was likely around the 20- to 30-point range. Even if Cheng Ming did not exert 100% of his power, it would still be enough to spell trouble for Xiao Lin.

“So, you’re confident enough to engage in a direct confrontation with me?” Xiao Lin muttered softly and raised his sword high. He chose a long and slender sword, of which the attack power was weaker than that of an épée. However, his advantage was in the lightness of the blade, with both his attacking speed and posture improving tremendously as a result.

Xiao Lin understood that his low agility was a big weakness for him, so he naturally refrained from choosing heavy swords that increased his burden on speed.

On seeing that, the tutor moved her lips slightly, and coldly spit out two words: “You idiot! You’re using the Slashing right away?”

The battle room was surrounded by glass windows, which afforded the outside world a view of what happened within. Behind the instructor, other students craned their necks to watch the battle, and it was no surprise that they were greatly interested.

Both opponents in the battle could be considered some of the more famous individuals from the academy, albeit on two different extremes of the spectrum. Cheng Ming was a good person who could get along well with anyone, while Xiao Lin received comments that were mostly negative. His sudden return in those two days dispelled the claims of him dropping out, and there were also rumors saying that someone was taking care of him behind the scenes. Although no one verbally expressed their skepticism, it was all but certain that many felt that way in their hearts.

‘I’m stronger than him. Why does he have the right to become the acting monitor? How is it possible that he could be valued by the student union and even the dean?’

Every onlooker had that mentality and cheered for Cheng Ming, though it was impossible for the two to hear anything coming from outside the battle room.

Xiao Lin did use his Slashing. The others learnt that skill too, but he had already mastered it early on using his talent. The shortcomings of that skill were something he was very aware of; it had to be powered up for some time in order to exert enough power. Such luxury of time was nonexistent in a battle, where changes occurred in the blink of an eye.

Cheng Ming roared and accelerated his sprint speed at once. In seconds, his body was already fast approaching Xiao Lin, but Xiao Lin gave him an unexpected smile. Xiao Lin, who had already accumulated his energy from the start, immediately dodged sideways with ease, avoiding Cheng Ming’s head-on attack.

Cheng Ming gaped in surprise. With his burst of speed, he attempted to seize the moment before Xiao Lin completed the Slashing’s power-up, but there was a drawback to it—he could not stop his

pace at all because of inertia, and the empty attack which he placed all his focus on destabilized his body's center of gravity. Cheng Ming was unable to defend himself at that moment and it was exactly the effect Xiao Lin was aiming for.

"Nice hit!"

The tutor was silent for a moment before gritting her teeth and uttering those two words. The students around her went blank when they heard her remark, and the sequence of events happened as quickly as a spark, so much so that most people did not understand what happened.

"Tutor, can the Slashing's power-up be forcibly canceled midway?" someone asked suddenly in confusion.

"Yes, but you must have very precise control over power, otherwise you'll lose your defensive ability in an instant. Doing this requires a lot of experience!" The tutor's eyes gradually became serious.

Chapter 183 - Battling Cheng Ming (2)

Chapter 183: Battling Cheng Ming (2)

Xiao Lin feigned a move and forcibly canceled the retraction process of the Slashing's power, but he successfully found Cheng Ming in a vulnerable state. It went without saying that he was not going to spare Cheng Ming any courtesy. He delivered several quick stabs with his longsword, and Cheng Ming's health dropped by nearly half on the health bar displayed on the wall. In that state, Cheng Ming had no way to block or mount a counterattack, so he could only endure those stabs as they came.

Xiao Lin did not enjoy the battle. After succeeding in the attack, he quickly backed away and distanced himself. Cheng Ming was stronger than he had imagined, and although the open attack earlier had allowed him to succeed, he originally expected it to decrease Cheng Ming's health by at least two-thirds. It was Cheng Ming's quick response that forced him to step back and temporarily avoid an attack.

The voices cheering for Cheng Ming outside the room kept coming, but the tutor sighed silently. She had already seen that Cheng Ming might not be a match for Xiao Lin at all.

Although the current strength levels of the two were close and Cheng Ming's strength even edged out Xiao Lin's, their experience gap was so large that it completely surpassed the tutor's expectations.

The battle continued.

After Xiao Lin distanced himself, he raised the longsword high up again and a silver light flashed along the blade's edge. It was clearly a sign that he was beginning to gather strength after activating his Slashing. Surprisingly, he was actually planning to use the same technique again.

"Xiao Lin, the same moves are useless against me!"

“You’re not Saint Seiya!” Xiao Lin could not help but taunt.

“Huh? Saint Seiya?”

Cheng Ming did not understand Xiao Lin’s taunt, but he would not be fooled for the second time. Direct as he was, he preferred a straightforward face off. In addition to his relatively large stature and low agility, his dodging technique was not that good. He thought for less than half a second and stepped forward, raising his épée above his head as it glowed while powering-up.

‘Slashing vs Slashing!’

The instructor snorted coldly, and could not help but burst out saying, “Idiot!”

The students watching the battle looked a little confused and immediately asked, “Tutor, who are you calling an idiot?”

“Both of them!” It was a rare instance where she explained something. “When it comes to real combat, Slashing is a very tasteless skill. All you have to do is avoid the attack in time during the power-up stage. Cheng Ming avoids non-confrontational fights, and that penchant of his will be his downfall. Xiao Lin is also an idiot for having the guts to confront Cheng Ming with Slashing. Their simultaneous attack now becomes a pure contest of strength, and Cheng Ming has an overwhelming advantage! The outcome is all but decided. Xiao Lin may excel in terms of experience, but his own foundation is still too poor!”

Cheng Ming’s Slashing proficiency had reached the highest level due to the bonus of his Swordheart talent, but with the addition of his own strength, the power of that slash would certainly be immense.

The power-up process lasted only three or four seconds and the two training swords collided with a piercing sharp light. Although the training swords were not made of iron and had almost no lethality, the onlookers’ eyes twitched seeing the burst of impact from those two rushing out with all their strength.

“Miracle!”

Xiao Lin was not so stupid to confront Cheng Ming directly. His Miracle skill had been quietly activated, converting no more than 50% of his attributes into other attributes. He converted his agility, physique and intelligence into strength. A total of 15 points were converted, bringing the total value of power to 25 points.

There was still a slight gap between himself and Cheng Ming, but his Basic Swordsmanship was one level higher than that of his opponent, which barely made up for that shortcoming.

It was not the first time he has used the attribute conversion skill. He has used it many times in The Final Land, but it was the first time he had used it without the help of the Lightstream Jade.

Xiao Lin felt his footsteps become heavier, evidently due to the decline in agility and physical fitness. The fatigue in his brain had also increased inexplicably: the result of low intelligence and low mental strength.

In the same way however, he felt his arms flood with power.

The forces generated by the two slashes collided, and the powerful energy sent Xiao Lin and Cheng Ming back several steps. If they were using real swords, they would have both suffered huge injuries.

Beep, beep, beep!

The battle system issued a notification that the battle had ended. Everyone suddenly turned to look at the health bar monitor and exclaimed. Cheng Ming's health bar had dropped to zero, and even those who did not understand the battle earlier finally understood that the winner was Xiao Lin.

The most important aspect of that simulated battle system was undoubtedly its accurate and intuitive reflection of a battle's outcome through a digitized health bar, rather than having both sides fight to the death.

The noisy cheers came to an abrupt end. Everyone looked at each other with incredulous looks. Although it was just a trivial exercise, many of them looked forward to seeing Cheng Ming put Xiao Lin in his place.

The result put almost everyone at a loss for words, especially the other monitors, who looked like they had seen a ghost. As members of the same Basic Swordsmanship class, they knew how strong Cheng Ming was. It was not as though they never made that comparison before. Even though they did not use the battle system, they were well aware that they could not defeat Cheng Ming because his Swordheart talent practically made him born to use swords.

Despite all that, Cheng Ming was defeated by Xiao Lin in a very short battle that lasted no more than two minutes.

A crowd of strange gazes fell on the tutor again. She had just said that Xiao Lin would lose, yet the outcome had slapped her in the face within a few seconds. Her face turned pale, after which she yelled angrily, "Don't you all need to train? I'll deduct the credits of anyone who slacks off!"

The onlookers still had much to say, but they dispersed immediately after her shout. Everyone felt incredibly dejected from Cheng Na's harshness.

"It's over?" Cheng Ming was a little dazed.

Xiao Lin curled his lips and rubbed his numb wrist, then raised his head and glanced at his own health bar. He was also overcome with emotion. In fact, he did not really care about the outcome of that match. The more important point was that Cheng Ming proved to be a good opponent to experiment with.

The goal of the experiment was naturally to convert his own attributes, which was the Miracle skill in other words. It was a useful skill indeed, allowing Xiao Lin to match Cheng Ming, even in a head-on confrontation.

As it stood, his basic attribute value was still a bit low, and although the slash earlier was a resounding victory, only half of his health remained. If that was actual combat, Xiao Lin would have suffered a serious injury.

“Hahaha! You’re really strong! Looks like I’ve not been training hard enough!” Cheng Ming walked over and hugged Xiao Lin without any complaints. Although that easygoing man was very dispirited when his health drained to zero, he quickly set those feelings aside.

Chapter 184 - Classification of Sword Aura

Chapter 184: Classification of Sword Aura

“Next up, I’ll be teaching you two Basic Sword Aura mastery.”

After the exercise, the tutor Cheng Na did not give the two of them much time to rest. After randomly assigning the rest for pair training, she called Xiao Lin and Cheng Ming to a separate training room next door.

Cheng Na was clad in a fitted black leather jacket as always, which accentuated her exquisite and slim figure. Xiao Lin however, did not dare have any thoughts of that T-rex, and the fact that Cheng Na would be able to teach Basic Sword Aura so readily was a bit unexpected.

Normally, the arrangement of the courses was determined according to the general progress of the whole class, meaning that Cheng Na would only start teaching sword aura when most of the students in the swordsmanship class reached the same level. On that occasion however, it was equivalent to a separate lesson. There had never been such a precedent.

Cheng Ming was also equally as surprised. He scratched his head because his own Basic Swordsmanship level was only LV6, which was one level short of the Basic Sword Aura learning requirements. Being the honest person that he was, he reminded Cheng Na awkwardly, “Tutor, I think you forgot that I still can’t learn Basic Sword Aura.”

Cheng Na said, “Don’t worry, your talent adds another level to your basic skill. In other words, your actual basic level is actually basic swordsmanship level five, and its far less difficult for you to upgrade from level five to level six than it is to upgrade from level six to level seven. Do you understand?”

“I don’t.” Cheng Ming shook his head honestly.

Cheng Na paused and said annoyed, “Let’s put it this way; there’s still half a month left. It’s entirely possible for you to upgrade your Basic Swordsmanship to level six. That way, your actual level will be able to reach level seven and meet the requirements for sword aura. Instead of waiting until then, it might be better to remember the essentials of sword aura in advance so you can catch up by then.”

“Catch up?” Cheng Ming was still confused.

Xiao Lin had a sudden thought and whispered, “The tutor is talking about the third monthly exam. It’s an important one, and it’ll help you a lot if you can master sword aura by then, even if you only master a tiny little bit!”

Cheng Ming finally understood it. Cheng Na glanced at Xiao Lin faintly in a tacit response to his answer. She then continued, “It’s not difficult to get started with Basic Sword Aura. The difficulty lies in mastering it. It’s actually similar to swordsmanship. If you want to go further with the way of the blade, sword aura is something that has to be mastered.”

Xiao Lin and Cheng Ming both listened carefully, but Xiao Lin felt a little weird in his heart. He felt that he was vaguely able to guess why Cheng Na was so willing to teach Basic Sword Aura.

The dean said that he would personally be selecting the map for the third monthly exam, which meant that the difficulty would see a huge increase. Cheng Na gave him and Cheng Ming a separate lesson because there were the only ones who had the ability to master Basic Sword Aura within half a month.

Having sword aura was definitely a qualitative leap.

“First of all, you need to understand what sword aura is. I’m sure you must’ve seen it in various novels or games, and I believe your history teacher has already mentioned the many novels and stories on Earth originate from the New World.”

Cheng Ming’s eyes lit up and he nodded repeatedly. Although he had never played online games, he was obsessed with swordsmen in Wuxia novels. That was an important reason for his decision to choose Basic Swordsmanship.

Cheng Na said, “However, there are actually two types of sword aura on Planet Norma. Internal and external sword aura. The so-called internal sword aura is the power of the sword that comes from within oneself. Swordsmen can enhance their sword aura through years and years of tempering and practice. External sword aura is somewhat similar to spells. The swordsman communicates with nature’s four major elements, thereby inducing the power of the elements to release the sword aura.”

“Magic sword?” Xiao Lin blurted out. “Magic-martial arts dual cultivation?”

“Of course not!” Cheng Na stared fiercely at the interrupting Xiao Lin. “Although external sword aura includes some spell damage in the scope of its lethality, the main essence is still the physical damage that the sword aura inflicts. It cannot be used as mental power to execute spells, so this is fundamentally different from the dual cultivation of magic and martial arts!”

Xiao Lin shrugged. “Well, then, Tutor, do you think we should learn external or internal sword aura?”

“The two schools of sword aura have their own characteristics. The early stages of external sword aura require a certain level of mastery in Basic Meditation, and the starting point is relatively high. The initial lethality is very powerful, but your stamina will be insufficient later on. On the other hand, internal sword aura requires a long time to accumulate in order to hone it, but it’s later progress will be higher than that of external sword aura.”

After a pause, Cheng Na said again, “These two schools of sword aura are studied by many on Planet Norma. Each school thinks that they’re promulgating genuine sword aura, just like black mages and white mages in the spell world. Each side doesn’t take kindly to the other, but there’s no such conflict in our colonial academy. It all depends on your personal preferences and choices.”

“What school of sword aura did you learn?” Cheng Ming asked.

“I learnt external sword aura first, then later I switched to internal sword aura,” Cheng Na answered truthfully. She pondered for a moment before explaining, “From a long-term perspective, the destructive power of the internal sword aura at the latter stage is better than external sword aura.”

Cheng Ming laughed. “Then I must choose the most powerful one. I’ll learn internal sword aura.”

Xiao Lin hesitated for a moment, then smiled. “I’ll learn external sword aura then. I’m quite confident in my Basic Meditation.”

Cheng Na was not surprised by their choices. She nodded and said, “Sure. I’ve mastered the basics of both anyway. Alright then. Cheng Ming, I’ll teach you the basics first. The basics of internal sword aura is actually very simple, but the focus will be on cumulative drills.”

Xiao Lin did not express any opinion and listened carefully.

When swordsmanship mastery reached a certain stage—LV8—a special kind of airflow would be produced whenever a sword was swung. It could be called inner Qi, fighting Qi, or sword aura. The name was not important, but that special airflow was the embryonic form of the sword aura, and the first step to practice an internal sword aura was to thoroughly control that airflow.

Due to the fact that sword aura could only be considered a kind of force when it was first generated, the sword user could not control the sword aura as and when they pleased. That was the threshold to enter practice; constant training was required until it could be released and retracted at will, and only then could they be considered to be crossing the threshold of entry.

Cheng Na’s explanation was very simple. In fact, there was nothing more for her to say. Although the threshold to practice sword aura was based on her own comprehension, it depended highly on her own aptitude and ability as well. Cheng Na was not worried that Cheng Ming would not be able to learn sword aura; as long as he reached Basic Swordsmanship LV8, mastering sword aura was just a matter of time.

Cheng Ming left first after listening. He did not have any interest in the explanation of external sword aura. Since he had decided to learn internal sword aura, it was basically impossible to change his mind. The first thing he had to do was to upgrade his basic swordsmanship to LV7.

Chapter 185 - Elemental Sword Aura

Chapter 185: Elemental Sword Aura

“Next is the external sword aura. Frankly speaking, although I did predict that you’d choose external sword aura, I still want to remind you that it relies on the elements despite having amazing lethality at first. The prerequisite requirements are very difficult, because it’s connected with the requirement level for Basic Meditation. In addition, it can be very troublesome once it is restrained. Are you sure there won’t be a problem?” Cheng Na confirmed once she was alone with him.

“No problem.” Xiao Lin actually hesitated, but he thought of Lilith. He had seen that woman fight in The Final Land, and if things were as he expected, Lilith had likely used her external sword aura too.

“Let’s start then!”

Cheng Na did not explain immediately, unlike when she was teaching Cheng Ming earlier. Instead, she turned her wrist and fished out her large black sword from the void. She brandished it and said, “The threshold to entering practice of external sword aura is more troublesome than internal sword aura. It’ll be harder to explain in simple language, so I’ll show you directly.”

Cheng Na was already swinging her big sword without waiting for Xiao Lin to speak. In an instant, purple electricity intertwined all around the blade, causing sparks as a result of friction with the air. After a set of Basic Swordsmanship moves, the air seemed to heat up with the electric ions flowing freely around, making Xiao Lin’s skin feel a little numb.

“Do you understand?” Cheng Na asked.

Xiao Lin thought for a moment and shook his head.

Cheng Na skipped all the nonsense and demonstrated it again. It was a few simple swordsmanship movements, just like before, but the purpose of her demonstration was not to show those moves. She said indifferently, “What’s important in external sword aura is the power of your own comprehension. It’s purely a matter of personal talent.”

“Are there requirements for the basic level of meditation?”

“In theory, as your Basic Meditation reaches level one—which means you’re already beginning to feel the presence of the four elements—you can guide them to release the sword aura. But if your Basic Meditation level is high enough, it might be easier to master external sword aura.”

Xiao Lin was somewhat distressed. If Cheng Na’s level was lower, he would have wanted to use his Academic Genius talent to replicate her skills. Unfortunately, the woman was a graduate, and her level of sword aura would surely have exceeded the range with which he could replicate.

“Don’t look with your eyes. Feel with your heart. Since you’ve taken spell courses, you ought to know that the elements can be felt in a meditative state. On the other hand, external sword aura doesn’t require you to fully perceive the elements, so there’s no need to enter the meditative state. Remember, you’re guiding it! It’s almost like you’re drawing upon them with your own power to control the elements.”

Cheng Na explained it as simply as possible, but it was obvious that she had limited understanding when it came to spell-related knowledge. It was unsurprising that she gave up external sword aura and learnt internal sword aura. She did not seem to be that proficient in internal sword aura.

After dozens of repeated demonstrations, Cheng Na began panting slightly. She put away her huge sword and said, “Let’s stop here for today. You don’t have to be discouraged. It’s really much harder to get started with internal sword aura. You’re considered successful if you can enter the initial stages of practice before the end of the month.”

“Excuse me, Tutor. What’s exactly different with this monthly exam?” Xiao Lin asked quickly.

Cheng Na stopped and looked at him with surprise for a moment. “Didn’t the dean mention it to you?”

Xiao Lin smiled bitterly. “The dean just told me that this exam will be different. Okay, I know what you want to say, but I just want to say that I have no relation with the dean, and I’m sure you know the dean’s penchant for fairness. He could not possibly disclose the contents to me in advance.”

Cheng Na’s gaze eased slightly and she sighed, much to his surprise. “The Academic Affairs Department had actually decided on the map for the upcoming monthly exam, but the dean gave a last-minute notification to replace it. I can’t say much, but you have to pay attention. This exam is... Um... It’s very special.”

“Excuse me, Tutor. Do you know if there’s anyone on campus who mastered external sword aura?” It’s not that Xiao Lin did not believe in his understanding, but it was obviously a waste of time to continue like that. He could not possibly spend the rest of the month on that, so the best way was undoubtedly to replicate first, and experience external sword aura within the limited three minutes. He believed that he could get started quickly after that.

Cheng Na was even more surprised than he was. “You have a good relationship with Department Head Song, right? Don’t you know that he used to be the academy’s famous elemental sword aura master? There aren’t a lot of people in Dawn Academy who chose external sword aura, and even fewer are able to learn it to a higher level. Department Head Song is one of the best, but it’s a damn shame.”

Her last sentence lamented how Song Junlang fell from Gold-rank back to Bronze-rank. Xiao Lin was dumbfounded after hearing that, but he was overjoyed after Cheng Na left. The result was better than he expected! If Song Junlang was only at Bronze-rank, it would mean that his sword aura was not that high a level.

After going through that day’s lessons, Xiao Lin was incredibly excited to rush to the logistics department. Song Junlang was toying with his little dragon-eagle. The little guy was growing almost at a speed visible to the naked eye, and it was no longer kept inside a bird cage. Because of that, Department Head Song had specially prepared a very spacious room to be used as the residence of dragon-eagle; something which he had been busy with for the past two days.

“Elemental sword aura?” After hearing Xiao Lin’s answer, Song Junlang—who was busy in a private chat—suddenly stopped moving and had a strange look. “I haven’t participated in a battle for many years now. Why did you think to bring it up today?”

“I just want to know what level your elemental sword aura is. Umm, it’d be better to describe your evaluation to me. What evaluation is it equivalent to?”

Song Junlang did not pay attention to Xiao Lin’s eager gaze. He continued to bury his head in the private chat and said casually, “Well, that’s hard to say. I reached the advanced elemental sword aura at my peak, so the evaluation might be equivalent to C or B. I can’t remember. But that’s what it used to be. I can only use basic elemental sword aura, at the most, now. In terms of evaluation. Well, it’s probably equivalent to Grade E.”

“Great!” Xiao Lin cheered.

“Huh? Great?”

“Umm, that’s not what I meant. I’m sorry for you. But... Forget it, that’s settled then. I’ll come to you again in a bit.” Xiao Lin wanted to explain, but he simply said goodbye and left Song Junlang with a confused look.

Song Junlang’s elemental sword aura was only Grade E. Xiao Lin’s Academic Genius skill could replicate skills up to Grade F, but it was not a problem. Xiao Lin remembered the dean saying that he would help to double the SS-level talent’s advancement within half a month. With that, his talent would definitely be stronger, and he might even be able to copy Song Junlang’s Basic Sword Aura by then.

Chapter 186 - Phantom Steps

Chapter 186: Phantom Steps

The courses for the next day were Planet Norma’s Common Language and Basic Meditation. Xiao Lin decided to forgo the common language course for the time being after much deliberation, as his primary purpose was to increase his basic attribute value. Advancement would become more difficult as the value increased, but with the Miracle skill, Xiao Lin’s goal was very simple.

He did not need to aim for high attributes, because doing so would make it difficult to have any significant improvement within half a month. Xiao Lin had gained a better understanding when it came to the promotion of attributes.

It was easy to improve attributes, and that was with continuous practice. There were many ways to train, like improving strength through Basic Swordsmanship. At the same time, a similar effect could also be achieved by training other strength-related skills. The higher the skill, the better its effect.

Xiao Lin’s less-developed attributes were undoubtedly agility, which stood at only six points. Aside from the Basic Body Technique course, he felt that he had to take other relevant courses.

He opened up the sophomore course electives table and screened them according to attributes. The choices were quite different from that of freshmen and there was a larger variety of courses from sophomore year onward. Students also had a certain degree of autonomy in terms of their choices.

Most of the sophomore courses were advanced courses based on basic courses. For example, once a student’s Basic Swordsmanship reached a certain level, there were Intermediate Swordsmanship Courses. Clearly, those were not within Xiao Lin’s choice.

However, there were also plenty of courses which did not require high basic prerequisites. After all, the power system of Planet Norma was large and extremely complicated, and a freshman could not possibly choose to learn all of them.

Xiao Lin quickly had his heart set on a course called Phantom Steps. It only required an agility value of more than five points. There was also a brief introduction to the skill in the course schedule. The skill enhanced one's ability to dodge enemies, and a person could even create temporary apparitions to confuse the enemy once the person's agility value was high enough.

It was a very practical move, and a course based entirely on agility was certain to improve his agility attributes. More importantly, the time of the lesson happened to coincide with his common language course and therefore did not conflict with other courses.

After remembering the classroom, Xiao Lin appeared outside the sophomore training hall on time the next day. He swiped his door with his universal card, and the permission granted by the dean made things convenient. He kept a low-profile, quietly found the innermost corner of the training hall and waited there. The students taking elective courses were all from different classes, and no one cared about having more individuals in the training hall since everyone was unfamiliar with each other.

The tutor was a very young man. Even though the other students did not seem to care as much, he still remembered the number of people in the class. After entering, he frowned and clicked the interface by the door to browse the list. Using the universal card when entering and leaving the classroom almost certainly left a record.

"Xiao Lin? I don't recall you being in my course." The man's voice was a little hoarse. He raised his head and looked curiously at Xiao Lin sitting in a corner. He then buried his head and continued reading the information, muttering to himself, "Huh? A freshman? Uh, I don't have permission to access data. This permission is..."

Everyone else seemed to have no interest at first, but became a little curious when they heard that he was a freshman. After hearing that even the tutor did not have the permission to access the data, everyone's interest was thoroughly piqued. Just as they were about to listen carefully however, the man's confident voice had stopped abruptly. He grinned, wiped the sweat from his forehead, then coughed and said, "Let's continue with today's lesson."

There was a loud clamor in the training hall. The man had stopped his sentence midway and was clearly trying to whet everyone else's appetite. Unable to resist, they asked each other, and although they spoke politely, the whole training hall seemed at ease.

Xiao Lin was embarrassed as well as a little surprised. The tutor seemed to have a good temper and was not at all intimidating. On the contrary, he was more like a senior who got along with everyone as if they were in his generation.

What Xiao Lin did not know was that graduates, professors even, were tasked to teach the entire freshman year. As a result, the discipline and requirements of the freshmen's class were much stricter than those of sophomore year or even third year.

In fact, the young man was a third-year repeat student. He chose to teach in second year because he needed to earn more redemption points. Phantom Steps was a very basic skill and did not require much advanced skills, so a third-year student was competent enough to teach that.

After everyone's questioning, the man's forehead began sweating much more profusely. His earlier search revealed only one piece of information: that Xiao Lin had been granted access to that class by the dean.

It was no joke. He had been in the academy for so many years, yet he had never seen the dean except during the occasional ceremony. It went without saying that he never met the dean in person either. Xiao Lin's identity was unimportant. The fact that he had the authority was reason enough for the tutor to refrain from being nosy.

The questioning proved fruitless, so everyone else turned their attention to Xiao Lin. Several who were nearby randomly struck up a casual conversation with him, but he would not disclose anything. Although he was well-known in his freshman year, he was not really that interesting to those in sophomore year.

Nevertheless, surprises always came when one least expected. A tall girl with short hair suddenly yelled, and exclaimed with some excitement, "Xiao Lin? Xiao Lin! I remember you! I haven't greeted you yet. Did you forget about me?"

"Huh?" Xiao Lin finally raised his head and looked at the woman.

Xiao Lin's blank face made her very upset, and she directly introduced herself, "It's Wu Qin!"

"Wu Qin?"

Xiao Lin was still confused, irking the woman at last. She stomped her feet and said petulantly, "We met in the meditation hall before! You said you wanted to borrow the hall and meditate? You're that genius who entered the realm of meditation in three minutes. You can't possibly forget me so quickly, right!"

Xiao Lin had a sudden realization and could not help but feel flustered. He had earlier replicated the skills of that woman named Wu Qin when he started learning Basic Meditation, but he soon went to New Washington and The Final Land. He had long forgotten the woman, whom he met only once.

"You took Basic Meditation, right? Why are you here?" Xiao Lin chatted briefly with her.

"Tch! I'm not cut out for learning spells, and besides, I have to collect enough credits, so I might as well learn some easier courses."

Everyone else's attention was not focused on the fact that two of them knew each other. Wu Qin was just a very ordinary woman among the sophomores, but what was it that she just said?

The genius who entered the realm of meditation in three minutes?

Finally, someone came over again and looked at Xiao Lin incredulously. The person then asked, "Could you be the freshman genius that Wu Qin mentioned in her post?"

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‘Post?’

‘Genius?’

Xiao Lin was even more confused when he heard it. On the other hand, Wu Qin blushed in embarrassment. She had spread the matter on the sophomore forum, but unfortunately no one believed her at all.

Everyone knew how difficult it was to get started with Basic Meditation, yet he succeeded in just three minutes? It was ridiculous!

With the rumored person-of-interest sitting right there, everyone exchanged glances. The man closest to Xiao Lin asked in a half-joking tone, “Hey, dude! I heard you entered the meditative realm in only three minutes? Is that for real?”

Wu Qin also looked at Xiao Lin expectantly. She was very upset when she was questioned, and she had planned to ask Xiao Lin for clarification later on. Alas, Xiao Lin went to New Washington and was nowhere to be found.

Xiao Lin touched his nose and smiled. “I’m sure it’s just a joke. Three minutes to enter meditation? Why don’t I know about this?”

“You!” Wu Qin glared at him all of a sudden. He was blatantly lying.

Xiao Lin did not want to cause too much trouble. He went there for the purpose of learning and he shook his head even more firmly when he sensed the gossipy tendencies and curious eyes of the people around him. After indicating that it had nothing to do with him, he said helplessly, “Guys, I think you should at least consider the tutor’s feelings.”

A noisy classroom was not that big a deal, but hardly anyone was paying attention to the tutor on the stage. He looked incredibly sullen, but he could not say anything. In theory, he could silence them all with his tutor’s authority, but the world was a wheel—he could not have known what the future held when those people reached their third year. One of them might become his classmate, or even his immediate superior in the future.

Xiao Lin’s words had more or less lifted him out of his predicament. He quickly shot Xiao Lin a grateful look and cleared his throat before interjecting, “Although the Phantom Steps only has eight basic movements, it’s very easy to master. I believe everyone here has almost mastered it, but the real use of Phantom Steps is in actual combat. When should we use a certain action? The connection of each action extends to dozens of changes.”

Everyone pursed their lips and understood that they were still in class. They restrained themselves and the tutor soon continued to give detailed explanations. Xiao Lin was in luck. The Phantom Steps course started at the beginning of the month. He had only missed two classes in two weeks, so there was not much that he missed.

As the man said, the eight movements of the Phantom Steps were very basic, so much so that Xiao Lin felt he could imitate them after watching them a few more times. The difficulty lay in seamlessly incorporating all eight movements in actual combat.

The man randomly picked a student to come up for a demonstration. The opponent's job was to attack while he was responsible only for defending. It ended up with the student failing to even touch the corner of the tutor's clothes after a full twenty minutes of attacking. Instead, the student was left tired and panting.

Xiao Lin was surprised to see it. 'It's a really interesting skill,' he thought to himself. Miraculous effects could be achieved, especially when one faced an unruly attack.

The tutor probably gained some confidence from that and allowed the class to practice freely in groups. He took the initiative to come up to Xiao Lin and smiled. "You're a newcomer, so I'll explain the fundamentals of each action to you separately."

Xiao Lin suddenly remembered something and asked casually, "Tutor, what grade is Phantom Steps?"

"F-plus. Hehe, you don't need to call me Tutor. Senior's fine. I'm only a third-year student acting as a temporary substitute tutor. Phantom Steps itself is not a very advanced skill." The man was very soft-spoken, perhaps even a little humble.

Xiao Lin was rather surprised. "It's rated just F?"

Wu Qin, who had been paying attention to the situation, could not help but remind him, "Of course. Phantom Steps is only the most basic in this series of skills, so the most it'll be is F."

"What about advanced skills?"

The instructor hurriedly replied, "There's too few changes in Phantom Steps and it's easy to be restrained. Advanced skills, such as Apparition Hundred Steps, are based on these eight fundamental movements. There's also the higher-level Divine Shadow Step and stuff like that."

Xiao Lin breathed a sigh of relief and muttered, "You could've said so earlier."

"Said it earlier?"

"Senior, your Phantom Steps must have reached the max, right?"

"Well, the highest level of the Phantom Steps is level six and I've reached it long ago." The man was rather pleased with himself, but he was more confused if anything.

Xiao Lin flashed a bright smile. Things would be much simpler then. He said, "Could you show me again, please?"

The man thought for a moment and happily agreed. Xiao Lin had the dean's support and was also a polite freshman who left a good impression on the tutor. The man immediately called another student to practice with him, and the sequence was the same as before—he defended while the other student attacked at random.

[Replicate skill: activate!]

[Scanning the skill to replicate, Phantom Steps LV6 (MAX)!]

[Skill evaluation F+, within replication range. Replication, start...]

[Replication successful!]

Xiao Lin immediately interrupted the man and the student in training. He was very eager to try his hand at it. “Practice with me.”

“Junior Xiao Lin, it’s still too early for you to practice. First you need to master the eight basic moves before you can understand the most basic cohesive movements, then...”

Before the lecturer was finished, Xiao Lin impatiently drew a training sword from the weapon rack next to him and thrust it toward the nearest student. His replication time limit was only three minutes, so there was no time for him to explain things.

Although the training sword was made of wood and did not cause substantial damage, it would certainly arouse anger if a stranger suddenly used it to attack. The man he attacked did not even know Xiao Lin and yelled angrily in response. After that, he also drew a training saber from the weapon rack and slashed it at him.

Xiao Lin yelled back in acknowledgement and retreated a little later. He distanced himself from the man and the skill information which he had replicated in an instant told him that Phantom Steps required some distance in order to execute. He stabbed simply to provoke the opponent and avoided making more offensive moves. The opponent had to be allowed to attack, as he needed to adapt his body as much as possible within those three minutes in order to remember the Phantom Steps’ essential moves.

The man was merciless when he was angry, but fortunately, he was only using a training saber. Most of the others were onlookers and did not step forward to stop him.

Take two steps forward, turn left three steps, retreat, move a half-step to the left, move forward sideways by four steps...

The basic essentials of Phantom Steps kept flashing in his mind. Faced with the threat of the sword, he was able to evade it with ease. Phantom Steps was not a series of footwork that emphasized speed, but rather avoidance through precise anticipation. So long as the footwork was well connected, all attacks were virtually harmless.

Chapter 188 - Learning the Phantom Steps (2)

Chapter 188: Learning the Phantom Steps (2)

The other student's Basic Swordsmanship did not seem to be very high. Xiao Lin estimated it to be around LV7 or LV8, because his own basic swordsmanship was also LV8. Even though a saber was different from a sword, he could still get a rough idea of it.

The tutor was anxious and planned to stop everything, but he paused halfway after seeing Xiao Lin's movements and muttered in disbelief. "Impossible! Phantom Steps. Footwork like this is surely the highest level!"

"It really is Phantom Steps!"

"Isn't this his first time in class?"

"He's a freshman too. Is the Phantom Steps course offered during freshman year?"

"Nonsense. The freshmen are still learning basic courses now."

Everyone reacted with suspicious looks in their eyes. Phantom Steps was not difficult to learn, but even though they were in their sophomore year, it was almost impossible to master and practice Phantom Steps to the highest level.

Xiao Lin was not very comfortable with the first few stabs, but he soon became thoroughly proficient in the technique with the subsequent attacks. By the third minute, he could just close his eyes and rely on the saber's sound against the air to predict the direction of the opponent's swing in advance. With that, he could easily move his feet and effortlessly dodge the attack.

The more the tutor looked at it, the more frightened he became. Such anticipatory ability could definitely be achieved by mastering Phantom Steps to its peak and it was something he could do, but he required repeated practice from the beginning of his sophomore year until his senior year before reaching that level.

The three-minute time limit was fleeting, and Xiao Lin, who opened his eyes again, waved the longsword in his hand again, smoothly blocking the oncoming blade. "I'm done. I'll be heading back now."

After saying that, Xiao Lin did not linger for long and walked through the surprised crowd. He left the training hall immediately. The instructor was still momentarily in shock before he suddenly ran to Xiao Lin and shouted angrily, "You came here just to mess with me!"

It was obvious that the incident had casted a shadow on the tutor. The other sophomore students had weird expressions and turned to ask Wu Qin about Xiao Lin. None of them knew Xiao Lin, and Wu Qin was the only one who knew him. Unfortunately, Wu Qin knew very little about him and never interacted with him, except for that chance meeting in the meditation room before. The one thing she could confirm was the undeniable fact that Xiao Lin was a freshman who had only entered the academy that year.

"He couldn't have just watched the senior's demonstration and learnt it from that?" a woman surmised with uncertainty.

"How's that even possible! This isn't a game where you can learn a skill with a few clicks!"

“There’s no other possibility. Didn’t Wu Qin say that the guy started to meditate in only three minutes?” The woman confidently offered up some evidence to back her theory.

The others were also taken aback. With that thought, Wu Qin’s post on the sophomore forum seemed to ring true. After all, it happened before their very eyes, and unless Phantom Steps was offered for freshmen year, the woman’s theory was the most likely explanation.

Later that day, a similar post was published again in the sophomore forum. Some people even re-read Wu Qin’s post from a few months ago. Both posts were re-released and immediately attracted a lot of fierce discussion.

That was a story for another time, and Xiao Lin—who has just experienced the wonders of Phantom Steps—had no intention of lingering and wasting any more time. Although the Academy Genius replication time limit had passed, his past few experiences dictated that the skill would be learned if they had already reached the requirements. Even if his replication skills ended, his body would remember some of the skills’ experience and use, and as long as he could practice it in time, he could certainly transform that experience into true proficiency.

The practice of Phantom Steps was divided into two parts. The first part was familiarity with the eight basic steps and the proficient use of various footwork linkages. That was not the difficult part. Anyone who was willing to spend a lot of time to practice would almost certainly master it.

Then came the second part: the actual combat anticipation and the corresponding use of footwork. Those eight footwork movements were not to be used indiscriminately, as doing so would not enable him to dodge any attacks.

Time was very precious to Xiao Lin. He could not spend a month, let alone half, getting slowly acquainted with the skill. He frowned and contemplated this all the way out of the training hall, then thought of a way. In fact, the fastest way to improve had popped up in his mind long ago, and that was the simulated battle system.

Actual combat was always the fastest way to improve, and the simulated battle system was the best method to meet that requirement. When he was in New Washington, he knew that this system was originally developed for students to train better, but it was very expensive. The price and cost of use made it impossible for all academies to popularize its use because each use would consume valuable energy stones.

Each colonial academy certainly bought a few sets of equipment. An example was the one Xiao Lin saw in the swordsmanship training hall earlier that day, which affirmed that Dawn Academy had the same battle system, but either students were rarely allowed to use them, or they were unavailable to junior students.

Xiao Lin was different. He believed that his universal card permission would not pose a problem. He did not go back to the dormitory since it was still early, so he just dropped by the swordsmanship training hall. There was no swordsmanship class arranged for that day, so he could avoid anyone else interfering.

After going to the training hall next door, he swiped the card gently in front of the tight room door, which swung open silently. As expected, the simulated battle system was rare and precious, but he

had the permission to use it. Xiao Lin breathed a sigh of relief and could not help but wonder just how much authority the dean had granted him.

There were some spare energy stones in the room, but it did not matter that they were all of the lowest level. The opponent that Xiao Lin needed to simulate should only be below Black Iron-level.

He had learned how to use the battle system when he was in New Washington, and Dawn Academy's system was not too different from New Washington's. Firstly, he had to adjust the various data of his virtual opponent in the system. Xiao Lin did the settings in an arbitrary manner, but the important point was for the basic skill to be set to Basic Swordsmanship LV9. If the swordsmanship level was too high, the effect of the Phantom Steps would be too low, but if the swordsmanship level was too low, the intended effects of practice would not be achieved.

After fiddling with the settings, Xiao Lin placed a milk-colored cone-shaped energy stone in the groove and stepped into the battle room after activating it. With a flicker of the shadow, the simulator soon appeared in the center, and two health bars appeared on the wall.

Chapter 189 - Learning the Phantom Steps (3)

Chapter 189: Learning the Phantom Steps (3)

The battle began!

Since the virtual battle system was set in such a way so the virtual character would not attack first, Xiao Lin picked up the sword and made a provocative stab. After that, he maintained a defensive stance throughout. The virtual character immediately attacked with the training sword, but Xiao Lin did not counterattack because his purpose was to train Phantom Steps as quickly as possible.

The biggest difference between the battle systems in Dawn Academy and New Washington was the weapons. Physical wooden training swords were used in Dawn Academy instead of harmless laser-like energy swords. A person with no armor or defense would find it quite painful if they took the sword to bare skin.

In particular, Xiao Lin's setting for the virtual character was Basic Swordsmanship LV9. It was a level which he could not block, and he would certainly be hit unless he dodged completely.

The first round of attacks ended quickly. Xiao Lin's health bar dropped to zero after hanging on for less than 10 minutes. After all, he was in a state of completely passive defense. After the replication had ended, his body's remaining memory of Phantom Steps had just barely reached standard LV1 or so, making it rather tricky to deal with.

Xiao Lin rubbed the red sore spot on his arm that had been struck by the wooden sword. He pressed the start button again without hesitation, and the second round of the match soon began!

However, the second round ended even quicker than the first. It ended unsurprisingly after only eight minutes. The entire battle could be likened to be a process of self-abuse. Xiao Lin could not even dodge the virtual character's attack. He glanced at the completely emptied health bar and frowned slightly. He had somewhat underestimated the practical difficulty of Phantom Steps, and it would be ineffective to continue training like that.

"In that case, let's lower the difficulty first."

Xiao Lin adjusted the virtual character's skill setting to Basic Swordsmanship LV1. He stepped into the battle room again, and as the lights dimmed, the new virtual character was projected into the center of the room.

Compared to LV9, the swordsmanship movements of LV1 were extremely simple. Each attack was the most basic technique, such as thrust, stab, and jab. Each movement was also very monotonous, and it was difficult to achieve several complex connections of movements. At Xiao Lin's present level, he could easily see through the virtual character's each and every movement and intention. Dealing with them was a piece of cake, and the effect of Phantom Steps was finally displayed.

Xiao Lin could easily defeat an opponent with Basic Swordsmanship LV1 in the past, but there was no way to guarantee that he would not be injured. With Phantom Steps, he could dodge each of the opponent's attacks. That was the biggest benefit of the skill. Every successful dodge in actual combat equaled avoiding the possibility of injury or death.

10 minutes later, Xiao Lin ended the training. Basic Swordsmanship LV1 was no longer difficult enough. He adjusted the virtual character's settings again to LV2. The increase in difficulty from LV1 was negligible, but the virtual character's swordsmanship moves had changed slightly and were not too rigid.

Xiao Lin's dodge rate immediately suffered a significant drop. The biggest difficulty of that skill was dealing with constantly changing attacks. After all, no one would deliver rigid and monotonous attacks in a real battle.

This battle lasted for about half an hour, and Xiao Lin's health bar was emptied again. He still needed some time to adapt to the change, so the fifth round started almost without pause.

The sound of fierce fighting in the battle room was endless, and Xiao Lin's reduced his physical exertion to a minimum because he was on the defense throughout the entire process. That prevented him from taking breaks and wasting time, but the price to be paid was waves and waves of attacks from the virtual character. His bones seemed to fall apart completely and he ached all over, especially the bare part of his skin on the back of his hand that had been beaten by the wooden sword.

Xiao Lin stayed at the LV2 stage of Basic Swordsmanship for more than two hours. He persisted for longer and longer each time until he could almost avoid more than 80% of the virtual character's attacks. The room then fell into darkness all of a sudden, forcing him to stop.

When Xiao Lin walked out of the battle room and looked at the dim energy stone, he realized that the energy stone was completely spent. The reason why such battle systems could not be popularized was because of the energy stones that were required whenever it was used. Moreover, Xiao Lin was only engaging in a battle below Black Iron-rank. Any higher and the energy stone

might have to be replaced in 10 minutes. The speed of its consumption meant that not even the richer academies would dare to popularize it.

Xiao Lin searched the room and found that there were only five spare energy stones, barely enough for a day. After lunch, he stopped by the dormitory and checked his attribute changes through the central computer. His Phantom Steps skill really had reached LV1, and what surprised him was that his agility attributes had actually increased by one point.

The speed was faster than he imagined, but on second thought, Phantom Steps was purely dependent on body techniques, which almost undoubtedly proved beneficial for his agility attributes. They were very low to begin with, so the effects of an increase would naturally be more obvious.

The improvement effects were more prominent when a person with low basic attributes learnt various elementary skills. It was a well-known fact in the academy. When a person's basic attributes were high, the effect of learning basic skills was minimal-nonexistent even. Of course, learning low-level skills with high-attributes would also make the learning speed quite rapid.

As a result, Xiao Lin decided not to go for afternoon classes that day. He continued to stay in the battle room to train Phantom Steps, and his goal was to increase his low agility attributes to at least 10 points, seeing as he was only shy of another three points.

For that afternoon's training, he directly changed the virtual character's setting to Basic Swordsmanship LV4, which was followed by a similar repetition of that morning's self-torture. Basic Swordsmanship LV4 had more complex movements, and a simple Phantom Steps was either very difficult to avoid or completely impossible to avoid in time.

Xiao Lin had to link up the different basic footwork and make a complete set of footwork sequences. That was the real Phantom Steps. He did not know how much his Phantom Steps skill proficiency would increase with each successful dodge, but it was certain there would be a higher increase in proficiency if he managed to dodge a stronger opponent.

Although the proficiency was digitized by the central computer, from Xiao Lin's experience, each successful dodge gave him a deeper understanding of that set of footwork movements.

Such was the case on many occasions. As long as he executed it and practiced it, he would be able to have his body remember those movements thoroughly. If he were to face a similar situation in the future, he would then be able to react much quicker.

Chapter 190 - Purchasing Redemption Points

Chapter 190: Purchasing Redemption Points

After a day's training, Xiao Lin went back with his nose and face practically swollen. On the way back, he encountered other people looking at him with surprised expressions. Although the

training hall had an automatic treatment system, it still cost redemption points. Despite the extensive permission granted to Xiao Lin by the dean, treatment was not free and there were not even any discounts.

He had gained a basic understanding of the limit the dean set for him. The convenience that the dean could afford to give him was only to the extent of allowing him to better learn and improve his strength. The dean could not possibly give him everything in one go and spoil him through excessive enthusiasm. For example, the dean would never give him an array of powerful equipment for free. If he wanted them, he could only earn them by himself.

The monthly exam was approaching and Xiao Lin did not dare to whimsically waste his redemption points, especially when he did not have too many redemption points due to missing one monthly exam. He only had about 500 redemption points remaining, and those were from the earlier admission test and the first monthly exam.

After returning to his room, Xiao Lin took a very pleasant hot bath and lay on the bed, resting and thinking. He screamed all of a sudden and facepalmed before lamenting how stupid he was. He had nearly forgotten that he had plenty of New Dollars!

Professor Brown's remuneration, plus the compensation Judge Academy gave later on, added up to a total of 15,600 New Dollars. The dean once asked him if he wanted to deposit them in a bank, but he refused for the time being because he took into account the possibility that he might need it at any time. If it was deposited in the bank and he wanted to withdraw them again, he would have to travel to and from Dawn Academy's colony, which was a little troublesome.

The New Dollars and the redemption points were two completely different currencies. The former could be used in all the colonies of Planet Norma, while redemption points were the exclusive internal currency of Dawn Academy and were useless outside of it.

Because of the unequal value of the two currencies, Dawn Academy did not provide direct exchange methods for New Dollars and redemption points. For most junior students, the opportunity to earn New Dollars was very rare. Even if they had the chance to go to the New World and earn some extra money, New Dollars were much more important than redemption points.

However, Dawn Academy did not prohibit the students' private transactions. Just as the stores were divided into official and personal items, the school did not prohibit students from managing their personal belongings as they saw fit.

Students in the junior years certainly needed more redemption points, while the seniors and graduate students would certainly care more about New Dollars.

Where there was a need, there was also a demand, and all the needs of Dawn Academy would be reflected on the trading website.

Xiao Lin quickly got up, switched on his computer, and clicked on the Taobao-like webpage in the trading area. He directly entered the words New Dollars in the search bar and, as expected, miles of transaction information were filtered out at once.

A cursory look showed that things were just as he expected. Almost all those posts were by fourth-year or graduate students—rarely third-years. The transaction information was either directly

exchanged for New Dollars for redemption points or exchanged for various materials such as alchemical items, herbal medicine, or energy stones, and even Lifewater.

Few requested to exchange them for equipment. After all, the seniors were usually doing business with juniors, and lower-grade equipment was of no use to them. The only items that held the most value and were Lifewater and materials.

Although the transaction information was released, the price difference of those exchanges was not very big. It was roughly maintained at a level of about 1:1. It seemed that everyone had agreed on that, but there were the occasional exchange rates that were more favorable. Those who sold at low prices were relatively few and the deals probably went through only because they were in dire need of money.

That ratio seemed quite fair, but Xiao Lin had been to the New World and understood how the value of the New Dollars was higher than the currency circulating in the academy. Since the value was not equal, a 1:1 ratio was obviously a disadvantage.

“These seniors have probably set the exchange rate so low because they want to bully the juniors who haven’t been to the New World very much.”

Xiao Lin murmured and ignored all the transactions. He immediately posted his offer with his account. The post was very simple, carrying only a few sentences.

“Selling New Dollars. All kinds of equipment, props, Lifewater, redemption points and other trading methods are welcome. Drop a private message with your price if you’re in need of New Dollars!”

Xiao Lin deliberately did not mention the price because he noticed that the offers were all redemption points and there were none selling New Dollars. Evidently, redemption points had lost their value after senior students graduated.

After publishing the information, Xiao Lin went to dinner first. In fact, he was still a little nervous, since there were countless people publishing various offers in the trading area every day. The speed at which a new offer came out was unimaginable, and looking for his own post was equivalent to finding a needle in a haystack. Even if someone wanted to sell something, it might take a long time for others to find it. Xiao Lin did not know if he could make it in time for the monthly exam.

However, Xiao Lin had clearly underestimated the demand for New Dollars among senior students. After he returned and opened the forum, nearly a hundred message requests popped up in an instant and practically shocked him senseless.

A brief message was attached, but only a small portion included their price. Most of it were either requests for more information or questions on how many New Dollars he actually had with him.

There were too many messages and Xiao Lin could not respond to each one personally. After comparing those prices, he had a rough idea of the value and immediately revised his offer post.

“The exchange rate is set to one New Dollar to three redemption points. Items or equipment of the same value are accepted. Counter-offers not accepted. The inventory exceeds 5000 New Dollars.”

The feeling of selling items in online games suddenly came over him and it was quite interesting when he thought about it. Despite being initially worried about whether anyone would actually buy them, he had already figured out the market supply and demand, so whether or not anyone would accept the price was of no concern to him.

After the transaction offer was posted, the number of steadily increasing message requests dropped abruptly by more than half. For those who insisted on sending him a message, Xiao Lin clicked on them at random and discussed the details with them.

“More than five thousand New Dollars? Are you sure you really want to use that much money in exchange redemption points? I’m sorry, I’m not doubting your sincerity, but New Dollars are far more useful than redemption points for graduates or graduate students.” The person seemed to be very kind, for the first thing he did was try to persuade Xiao Lin of how bad of a deal that was.

“Uh, I’m a freshman. Before I’m able to freely enter and leave the New World, redemption points are more meaningful to me.”

“!!!” The other party used a few exclamation points to express his surprise, then quickly replied, “A freshman? Are you serious? Where did you get so many New Dollars!”

Xiao Lin was rather speechless, but he did not want to get too involved with that kind of question. “All you need to know is that I got them legally. Do you want them or not...?”

Chapter 191 - New Potion

Chapter 191: New Potion

Even though the responses had greatly decreased because he revealed that he was a new student, Xiao Lin had still used most of the night replying messages. Most of the ones who contacted him were troubled by the fact that he had so much money, but they did not disbelieve him. All the transactions on the forum were protected by the academy, and any acts of fraud would be punished. However, every time Xiao Lin revealed he was a new student, the responses would be full of doubt.

It was not that there were no lower-year students that used New Dollars, but transactions like Xiao Lin’s that were over three digits were extremely rare, and the jealousy it invoked caused certain thoughts to float around, such as questioning the legality of his money.

Since deals on the forums did not hide your identity, which was one of the ways the academy ensured reliability, Xiao Lin’s name was spread around by the fourth-year students.

Xiao Lin had actually underestimated the value of New Dollars. Even though upper-year students had chances to earn New Dollars in the New World, the amount was miniscule. Graduates of the academy were usually no different from fresh graduates on Earth; they were fairly impoverished.

Coincidentally, the very same night, Xiao Lin’s name appeared on the second-year forums as well. The thread by Wu Qin a while ago about him reaching the threshold to meditation had been

regarded as a joke, but a teacher had witnessed the thread. The two incidences had caused a lot of people to believe the earlier incident, and no one was treating it as a joke anymore.

Who was Xiao Lin?

That night, a lot of people had that question in their heads.

He did not know that he was being investigated and asked about by countless students, but Xiao Lin managed to get a deal done before he went to bed. In the end he had picked a female research student to deal with, even though her price of one to two was not the highest among the offers he received. In fact, the highest offer he got was around one to two and a half.

However, the conditions she offered were very attractive to Xiao Lin. Other than that price, she would provide him with various new potions. The potions were all newly developed and had not even entered mass production, but she was able to provide them to Xiao Lin.

Her name was Fei Yawen. She said she was a research student from a certain potions lab. In truth, there were a lot of labs like that; they usually focused on a certain kind of research, such as new spells, swordsmanship or medicines.

In the early days, the colonists had learned from the established systems within Planet Norma. However, even if those systems had been passed down for thousands of years, they were not completely flawless. After they had completely familiarized themselves with the systems, they started to look at it with a modern lens. They often located problems or room for improvement. That was why almost every academy had a lot of laboratories, with which graduates could choose to stay within as research students instead of heading to the New World.

However, that was not the key reason Xiao Lin had agreed to deal with Fei Yawen. After all, even if the potions she offered were good, he would need to actually be able to use them.

The potions that Fei Yawen researched were related to experience and training. She claimed that her supervisor had always been researching methods that could boost and speed up learning. It would dramatically increase the overall skill of the colonists once it received widespread use.

That was what interested Xiao Lin. His Academic Genius's passive ability was to increase his learning efficiency by 100%, and he was beginning to feel the benefits that it brought him. When he entered the academy, his attributes were the lowest in the academy, yet now he was quite a bit better than a regular student, and only lost out to those with talents.

Fei Yawen needed to buy 3,000 New Dollars, based on the one to two exchange rate, it would end up being 6,000 redemption points. Neither of them wanted any delay and quickly agreed to complete the deal the next day.

The next day, Xiao Lin deliberately woke up very early. He walked around with the address given to him in hand, and he reached a five-storey building in the south-western corner of the academy. That was the specialized research building in school. The sky had just begun to brighten, so there were not a lot of people around, giving the research area a serene feeling.

Since he was early, Xiao Lin did not hurry, and chose to walk around idly. However, he began to get impatient when he did not see Fei Yawen, even after waiting a long while, so he gave her a call, which was picked up very quickly.

Xiao Lin was just about to open his mouth when he saw Fei Yawen furrow her eyebrows in frustration in the magical display. “I’ve been waiting for you for half an hour. Where are you?” she said

“What?” Xiao Lin was confused, he exclaimed, “I have been here for a long while, but haven’t seen you at all. Why didn’t you call me?”

Fei Yawen paused before saying with a weird expression, “You’re at the research area?”

“Of course. Didn’t you say we were going to deal here? Are you backing out?” Xiao Lin said. He had borrowed a black bag to carry his New Dollars there just for the deal. There was no choice; since there were not any banks around, they could only deal in cash.

Fei Yawen’s face was full of disbelief as she murmured, “No, it’s not that. How did you get inside in the first place? Only research students that have passed certain tests can enter this area... Whatever, just head to the lounge at the entrance. I’ll wait for you here.”

Xiao Lin hurried back to the entrance and finally saw the research student. Fei Yawen was quite a pretty woman. She did not look that old and had a very pretty face with a pair of thick spectacles. She was waiting outside, but when she saw Xiao Lin come over from the inside, her small mouth gaped.

Even as Xiao Lin walked over and greeted her, she was still murmuring in disbelief, “Could the security systems be broken? That’s not possible, how could anything in the academy have quality problems?”

Xiao Lin could more or less guess what troubled the woman, and was pleasantly surprised himself that the access the dean had granted him even encompassed the research area. He was amused, but did not show it as he tried to get the deal done. He still needed to head back and train.

Fei Yawen set aside her suspicions for a moment as she took out a box from the bag she had with her. After opening it, Xiao Lin saw a row of test tubes; they were probably the efficiency-enhancing potions that she mentioned.

“I need to tell you beforehand: even though the potion has passed the research phase, according to the current data we have, the effects of the potion are still not too stable. Do you understand me?”

Chapter 192 - Training Continues

Chapter 192: Training Continues

Xiao Lin paused, asking, “Unstable? Do you mean the potion won’t always work?”

“That’s not exactly true. It will always work, but how effective it is differs with the person.” Fei Yawen had a difficult look on her face, sighing as she shook her head. “Based on our earliest simulations, the potion should be perfect, but once we started clinical trials problems started to pop up. The unreliability of the effects were more than we expected. Some people had very obvious improvements to their training, whereas others barely noticed a difference.”

Xiao Lin was a little disappointed, but barely making a difference was still better than having no effect at all. He seemed to think of something before curiously asking, “Could the effects differ with regard to each person’s potential?”

Fei Yawen subtly frowned. “That was our initial hypothesis, since the effects it had on individuals with talents were better, but it still remained inconclusive.”

It was obvious the potion was not yet complete, or it would have been rolled out for use in the entire academy. However, a way to increase his efficiency was exactly what Xiao Lin had been looking for, and whatever effect the potion had on him would still help out. If the effects on individuals with talents were better, then would it not be perfect for him?

Xiao Lin asked some more questions about the potion’s effect and duration, and the two of them finally finalized the deal. The points were transferred to Xiao Lin’s card via the central computer, and the deal was complete.

Xiao Lin continued to train his Phantom Steps during the day. He only had less than two weeks left until the third monthly exam, so time was of the essence.

He used the potions he just obtained as well. He actually suspected that Fei Yawen was using him as a guinea pig. Before he left, the woman had told him to keep in touch. He had almost thought the woman was interested in him, but then he realized she probably just wanted to gather some data.

The training potions were actually split into a few types: there were intelligence potions, meant to help with spell and meditation type training; the agility potions helped with dexterity-based training; the strength potions helped with melee combat-related training; and the physique potions helped with body strengthening.

According to Fei Yawen, the potions caused the related parts of the brain to temporarily strengthen and experience increased activity, which allowed the drinker to be able to absorb more knowledge in the short period of time. That even included training the body, but Xiao Lin barely understood any of it.

In order to differentiate the potions, Fei Yawen had deliberately made the potions in various colors. Red was strength, blue was intelligence, yellow was agility, and purple was physique. Xiao Lin asked why the colors were categorized that way in suspicion, and the woman answered that they were all just the colors of the fruit juices that were mixed in, which rendered him speechless.

The potions were surprisingly tasty thanks to those juices. After drinking one, Xiao Lin felt his body heat up and his mind began to get dizzy. However, the effects were short-lived, and he quickly felt nothing.

Xiao Lin felt like he had been cheated. Was he too unlucky, or was his potential not enough to properly trigger the effects of the potion?

Even if his heart was unsatisfied, he still had to continue his training for the day. The contents of his training were the same as yesterday, using the virtual combat system to simulate an opponent. He continuously increased the basic swordsmanship of the virtual opponent to train his Phantom Steps.

The training was as difficult as always. Alongside increasing the level of basic swordsmanship, more and more sword skills were being used. Even though there were only eight basic steps in Phantom Steps, there were still a lot of different combinations that could be used, which meant he needed to constantly adapt and train to increase his familiarity with the skill, or he would not be able to react properly in an actual situation.

There were no shortcuts for the process, and Xiao Lin could only rely on time and effort to improve it. That was why an F-rank skill like that had still been pushed back to the second year.

The skill was not hard to learn, but increasing the mastery was about as, if not even harder than an E-rank skill. It could only be more effectively trained with enough mastery over swordsmanship, which the second-years had.

During the evening, Xiao Lin headed back to the dormitories, exhausted, but it was just mental fatigue. He was no longer covered in wounds like the day before. Since he managed to obtain six thousand points that day, the fees for recovering himself were no longer an issue.

During dinner, he once again met Cheng Ming and the other monitors. Cheng Ming enthusiastically called out to Xiao Lin to eat with them. Xiao Lin was actually unwilling, since outside of Cheng Ming, he was not too friendly with any of the other monitors. While he was hesitating, Cheng Ming had already pulled him toward their table.

He had barely been back from New Washington for a few days, so he did not really have any time to properly chat with Cheng Ming. A few of them exchanged some pleasantries, but other than Cheng Ming's sincerity, the rest of their smiles hid some other intentions.

They were all quite curious about Xiao Lin's trip to the New World, but that was the extent of it. They probably all felt they would eventually end up in the New World anyway, so it was just a matter of time.

After that, everyone's topic shifted toward the monthly examination. In truth, it was also the hottest topic on the forums. Someone seemed to have gained information from the student union and learned that the monthly examination was set by the dean himself this time. Usually, the first-year examinations were arranged by the student union.

"The dean seems to have quite big expectations of us!" one of the monitors said proudly.

"The dean even took the time to attend our opening ceremony. I've actually heard that the dean has quite the reputation in the New World. Not just among the academies from Earth, his name is even famous among the natives."

They were no longer new faces that did not understand anything. Everyone had managed to establish various connections and relationships, acquiring all sorts of information over the two months.

The dean was a large figure in the New World, and that large figure was actually paying attention to an examination for new recruits. It was like a minister on Earth invigilating a secondary school examination. Normal folk might feel anxious about it, but they were all acting class monitors. According to Chen Yu, they were all elites of the future.

No matter what, it was good to feel like they were being valued.

The acting class monitors were all laughing as they discussed. As they talked about the future, they deliberately ignored Xiao Lin as usual. Xiao Lin did not mind it, and as he was eating his food silently, his face twitched. He really wanted to tell those people that they were overthinking it—that the dean did not set the monthly examination for any of their sakes.

Chapter 193 - Meeting Lu Renjia Again

Chapter 193: Meeting Lu Renjia Again

When he got back to the dormitory that night, he immediately switched on the computer to check out his training progress. What he saw shocked him; his Phantom Steps was already at LV3 and his Agility had increased to nine points. It was a lot faster than he anticipated.

When he finished his training the day before, his Phantom Steps leveled up from LV1 to LV2, which was already a shocking pace, only possible thanks to his Academic Genius talent. However, the jump from LV2 to LV3 would definitely be harder, yet he still did it in a day.

Xiao Lin was sure he did not change anything about the training methods in the two days, so after eliminating all other possibilities, his curious gaze landed on the box of potions from Fei Yawen.

The potions really did work!

Xiao Lin was surprised, since Fei Yawen's disclaimers had caused him to not put too much hope on the effectiveness of the potion. He felt that it would have been good if they worked, but it would not be a huge loss if it did not, since the one to two exchange rate was already quite decent.

As for how much the training potions would help, even Fei Yawen did not know. She had told him that, out of her previous participants, the results were not ideal, and even differed from person to person.

Could it really be because of his SS-rank talent?

Xiao Lin did not know anything about medicine, so he did not know the specifics for the potion. He gave up on puzzling it out quite fast, but he had gained quite an interest in potions thanks to it. He considered attending some classes in the future.

He logged onto the forums and left a word of thanks to Fei Yawen, telling her the effects were quite reasonable. He asked if she would be able to continue supplying him, since the potions she gave him would only be able to last him for three or four days based on his training frequency.

Fei Yawen was offline at that moment, so after dropping the message, Xiao Lin once again looked at the deals that were on the forums. He currently had more than 6,000 redemption points, and about thirteen thousand New Dollars. It felt like he had become rich overnight. The feeling was absolutely different as he browsed the forums.

Regular-grade gear?

That was way too lame. Xiao Lin did not even have a speck of interest, and glossed right over them. Gear from the New World was classified the same way skill was: from regular to Black Iron, then to Bronze, followed by Silver and Gold, and then it ends with Epic and Legendary gear.

This time, his gaze was fixed on Black Iron- and Bronze-rank gears. Equipment that was too high ranked would usually require a lot of the user's skill, and with his current attributes, it was unlikely he would be able to use them.

Bronze-rank gear were all around 500 points and above, and the better weapons would even go for upwards of 1,000. After Xiao Lin's observations, the effects were on a whole other level compared to regular-grade gear.

For instance, the sword he was currently looking at was made from a very hard ore, and the sharpness reached an E+ grade. It even carried armor-piercing, injury enhancing, and poisonous effects. The overall damage could be considered at D-. Being hit by that blade without any defensive measures would basically mean instant death.

The price was set at 2,000 points, and it was considered quite expensive even among Bronze-rank weapons. Xiao Lin was quite interested, but he knew he should look around some more. Especially considering the fact that his current skill level was just temporary, and with Academic Genius, his skills and attributes would be improving very quickly.

With those kinds of thoughts, Xiao Lin was even more hesitant. Finally, his mind thought of someone: Lu Renjia.

Lu Renjia was the senior that made his weapon for him back during the first examination. After that, Xiao Lin had heard that the man seemed to regularly make weapons for the lower years, and basically focused on making small profits at large volumes.

It was already almost midnight when he contacted Lu Renjia, but the man seemed to be a late sleeper. Under the magical display, Lu Renjia's hair was messy, but his face seemed quite awake.

"Xiao Lin? It's been awhile!" Lu Renjia seemed to be quite happy to see Xiao Lin, saving him the need to redo any introductions.

"You still remember me?"

"Of course! Customers are kings. How could I forget my king?"

Xiao Lin was a little speechless. Lu Renjia was even more shameless than he thought. He coughed. "I'm contacting you because I want some gear made. The wand you made last time was quite good."

Lu Renjia had a face of realization, and after some rummaging around, he took out a pen and paper, getting straight to the point. “It’s quite late, so let’s dispense with the pleasantries. Name your requirements, then tell me what your budget is.”

He really was an experienced merchant!

Xiao Lin went straight to the point, saying after some deliberation, “Budget-wise, just make sure it’s reasonable. Not too high and not too low.”

Lu Renjia nodded. “I understand. The third monthly examination is coming up after all. You’re an acting class monitor, and you can’t afford to mess this up. Let me remind you, the class monitor position comes with a lot of benefits. I really regret... Ah, I’m going off topic. What I mean is you really should be thinking about saving costs. The third monthly examination’s results are extremely important for choosing class monitors. Right, so what exactly is your budget?”

“About six thousand redemption points.”

Crash!

Lu Renjia fell off his chair, and when he grabbed the table to stand up again, the smile on his face was even more vibrant as he beat his chest and guaranteed, “You can rest assured! I’ll cover all the gear you need! I guarantee your satisfaction!”

“If it’s a whole set of equipment, I’m worried that there won’t be enough time. How fast do you think you can get it done?” Xiao Lin was a little worried, especially since the wand from last time had taken a whole week.

“Relax! I’ll work overtime and overnight just to get your gear done. I’ll push away all my other prior arrangements. From tomorrow onward, I will only service you!” Lu Renjia had a glint in his eyes, and he looked at Xiao Lin like a hunter looking at his prey. On top of those last words, someone would probably think he was a pervert without context.

Xiao Lin wiped cold sweat off his forehead. He had heard from Cheng Ming that quite a few of the acting class monitors had asked Lu Renjia for gear as well. It was not like Lu Renjia was the only one capable of making them in the academy, but he was practically the only one willing to make low-grade gear for new students. He had completely monopolized the remaining half a month of Lu Renjia’s time; who knows what everyone else would think.

Chapter 194 - Choosing Armor

Chapter 194: Choosing Armor

Time passed very quickly, and there was only a week left till the third monthly examination. According to the news around the academy, the results of the examination would be used as the criteria for choosing the class monitors. Obviously, the current acting class monitors would take priority, but if the other students perform exceptionally well, and at least overtook the acting class monitor, they had a chance to take over the position.

The examination being set by the dean made it very special. The news was no longer a secret. The acting class monitors managed to learn of it from the upper-years or even the student union members. Just a few days ago, the first-year forums had a very interesting thread, even with a new banner which had basic instructions for the next monthly examination.

Only the student union year leaders or department heads had the authority to change the banner on the forums. Usually, the student union would make announcements this way through the forums, so the accuracy of the news was guaranteed.

The thread stated that the examination had been personally set by the dean, followed by a bunch of official jargon, such as stating that the student union and the dean cared deeply about the growth of the first years. Most of the students quickly scrolled through all the nonsense before noticing there were a few reminders and tips toward the end of the thread.

That was something that had not happened before. In the last two monthly examinations, there were always announcements, but never any reminders or tips.

This small change had caused quite a lot of surprise. The contents obviously did not reveal sensitive information like what the map would be, but it did give some guidance as to what they should prepare, such as letting the students know the examination would be longer, so the students should prepare enough consumables, such as recovery potions and certain scrolls. It also advised students with limited lifespan to purchase some Lifewater before the examinations, and that the academy would release a new batch of Lifewater just for the first-year students one day before the examinations.

Lifewater was not easy to make, and the key ingredients could only be imported from the American academy. All of that greatly restricted the supply of Lifewater, and batches were always released to the entire school. The last two reminders were what caused the largest reaction among the students.

Even the students that had no intention of gaining the class monitor position could not help but get nervous. Everyone had certain expectations for the difficulty of the monthly examinations, and on top of the entrance exams, they had already been through three different ones. Outside of the first monthly examination, the other two were quite easy. That was understandable; since everyone was a new student, so their skills would naturally be lower.

The difficulty of the third monthly examination quickly became a topic of great discussion. Everyone was definitely very anxious. The normal students that did not have any talents might have grasped some skills and basics in the three months there, but they were still all quite weak.

Xiao Lin's training went on without any trouble. For the whole week, he had ignored all other classes, completely focusing on training up his Phantom Steps. Before then, he rarely skipped class for training, but that skill could very well be the key to him staying alive.

After understanding how difficult the examination would be, Xiao Lin's first priority was not to pass the examination, but rather to focus on surviving.

To a veteran of online games, Xiao Lin clearly understood that he needed to be alive to do damage. Especially since the examination was not going to be short, he prioritized being able to guarantee that he could live until the last moment.

Fei Yawen was very interested when she received his reply. She told him she had forwarded the matter to her supervisor, and that the supervisor was also very interested. They were willing to provide a supply of training potions to Xiao Lin free of charge, with the sole condition being he would regularly give them data.

However, Xiao Lin felt that the data would not be too valuable for them because he obsessively trained everyday. Plus, he had the Academic Genius talent. Even though he felt the training potions have a large effect on him, he still could not let anyone know he had an SS-rank talent.

Xiao Lin obviously could not let the fact leak. Ever since he was placed on house arrest in New Washington, he clearly understood how important that secret was.

He managed to get Phantom Steps to LV6 after a week of training, which was the highest level. That was the product of him sacrificing everything else, but he was very happy with the results. Other than the skill, his Agility trait had reached 12 points. The speed of growth was more than he had anticipated. As a skill purely involving his dexterity, Phantom Steps was quite good for training his agility.

Lu Renjia fulfilled his promise as well. The day after Xiao Lin contacted him, he cancelled all of his prior commissions, not even caring about the negative impact it would have on his reputation. The topic was actually mentioned in the forums, but they obviously did not know that Lu Renjia had been monopolized by Xiao Lin, so they could only vent at his unreasonable conduct.

Xiao Lin was apologetic at the start, but he had accidentally heard Lu Renjia say that his commissions were higher than everyone else added together, so Xiao Lin ended up fine with it. All Xiao Lin did was remark that Lu Renjia really did have the talent to be an unscrupulous merchant.

Xiao Lin's commissions were actually very large. Since he had so many skills, he needed a blade, which was his main weapon, but he needed a wand as well since he did not want his basic meditation to go to waste. He had planned on using the final week for spell training, using the remainder of his time to master a few reliable skills.

He also needed a single-handed hammer for the Holy Light Blessing skill. Even though the damage was miniscule when not facing the undead, the healing it had would be critical.

Finally, Xiao Lin needed armor. Lu Renjia passionately gave Xiao Lin some simple recommendations, such as heavy armor, chain armor, light armor, leather armor, or mage's robes; each of them had their own specialities.

Xiao Lin pondered over it for two days before finally deciding on leather armor. Heavy and chain armor were slanted toward strength; even though they had excellent defensive capabilities, they would drastically reduce his speed. In fact, even mages could wear heavy armor as long as they had enough strength, but it would disrupt spellcasting, affecting their gathering of the elements and even decreasing the success rate of spells.

After Xiao Lin considered it, if the examination would be a task where they needed to flee, heavier armors would definitely be a huge negative.

Chapter 195 - Class Twelve Monitor

Chapter 195: Class Twelve Monitor

There was another reason he selected leather: Xiao Lin's combat style was going to be dual cultivation. Even though Lu Renjia was shocked when he mentioned it, he still gave his best recommendation, which was that leather would be the best option.

Of course, it was just the current situation. Lu Renjia had given Xiao Lin quite a lot of information over the few days. Making gear was a very complicated process, and the material chosen would basically determine what the end product would do.

For instance, heavy armor than had metals as a base would not interact well with spells. Even if they could, it would be high-leveled metals, which were not within Xiao Lin's budget.

For that reason, leather was currently his best choice. It would at least have higher defensive capabilities than a mage's robe.

Lu Renjia slaved away making his gear. Xiao Lin was obviously not idle during the last week as well. He resolved to use his remaining time on spell-related training, so he asked for a dozen vials of intelligence training potions from Fei Yawen. The woman seemed absolutely disinterested in whether or not he was dual-cultivating, and only cared about the experiment's results.

Xiao Lin had not been to any Basic Meditation classes for quite a while, and that week he would once again attend them. The teacher, Li Mailing, was an arrogant Lolita, and Xiao Lin had a deep impression of her, mainly that she did not like him.

He used his class monitor privileges to check on everyone else's basic meditation. Compared to physical skills, everyone's progress with basic meditation was quite slow. Most of them were only at LV3 or LV4, and Xiao Lin's was at LV4. It seemed that he was in a decent spot, but Xiao Lin had not trained his basic meditation for more than a month.

Of course, the sole exception was Gu Xiaoyue. She was already at LV7, which was something that absolutely eclipsed everyone else. There was already a lot of discussion on the forums, and all of them determined that, no matter what Gu Xiaoyue's results in the other classes were, and no matter if she was a class monitor or otherwise, the title of best mage in the entire year was definitely hers.

Xiao Lin had deliberately gotten up early on the day so he could maintain a low profile. He headed to the classroom to locate a solitary and quiet corner, but someone had gotten there first.

"Hi! Xiao Lin! You're a rare sight. I haven't seen you here for a long time!" A young man waved at him.

Xiao Lin looked at the sky outside, which was still dim before furrowing his eyebrows as he smiled. "You're really early."

"Haha! Aren't you too? This class is nothing like the other classes. It's way too hard to level up."

“Indeed.” The man seemed to know him well, but Xiao Lin really could not remember who the young-looking boy was. After trying hard to remember, all he could be sure of was that he was not from his own class. In the end, he asked awkwardly, “Who exactly are you?”

“Huh?” The man stared blankly, not knowing what expression to make. “My gosh, we might not have met a lot, but your memory is really bad. It’s Chen Dao.”

“Chen Dao?” Xiao Lin vaguely recalled before exclaiming, “Class Twelve’s monitor, Chen Dao!”

“That’s right! You finally remembered.”

There were not many acting class monitors who chose magic. There were only three or four even, including Xiao Lin. He had only attended basic meditation classes two times, so Xiao Lin obviously could not remember.

“Sorry, I don’t really see you normally. Oh, I mean I don’t see you with Cheng Ming’s group usually.” Xiao Lin referred to the group of acting class monitors who were close to Cheng Ming. He usually saw them together, but not all the monitors were in that group.

“They don’t really know magic, so I don’t have much to talk to them about.” Chen Dao frowned, not wanting to go deep into it. A bright glint flashed in his eyes when he said, “I heard you disappeared for a month because you went to the New World. Come on, tell me what it was like!”

Xiao Lin felt that Chen Dao had probably just turned into an adult. To be more accurate, he was probably a university student before entering Dawn Academy. After all, Dawn Academy’s recruitment process did not take age into account. However, among the current first years, there were very few university students.

Chen Dao did not seem to have ill-intentions, and he was right at the age where he would approach everything new with curiosity and excitement. He passionately dove into magical training after he entered the academy. Thanks to him being a talented student as well, his meditation level was not low, and was probably second only to Gu Xiaoyue.

Xiao Lin remembered a similar topic on the forums, since most of the students enjoyed spreading gossip on the forums when they had nothing to do. Chen Dao was like an unfortunate individual that was always overshadowed. If Gu Xiaoyue did not exist, Chen Dao would definitely have been the best mage among the new students. It was a pity that he had been eclipsed by Gu Xiaoyue; even his class monitor title did not help much.

Chen Dao did not know what went through Xiao Lin’s mind. Seeing Xiao Lin’s distracted expression, he said, “So, do you have any pictures? Let me see some pictures of the New World!”

“Ah, pictures!” Xiao Lin laughed dryly. Even though there were some laws regarding transferring objects from Earth to Planet Norma, he did not feel like a camera would drastically affect things. However, he had gone to New Washington for the sake of making money, so he did not even think about a camera. Xiao Lin could only put his hands up and shake his head.

“What? You didn’t get any pictures? What, how could you be so behind the times? How could you go to the New World and not go out shopping or take some pictures as a souvenir!” Chen Dao

widened his eyes in disbelief, and quickly and sadly sighed. “Ah, I really want to go to the New World. I even go there in my dreams!”

Everyone wanted to go to the New World, but few people expressed it as directly as Chen Dao. Being young really is different!

Xiao Lin vaguely felt like he was getting old. On Earth, he was just a fresh graduate, but he could not compete with Chen Dao. He suddenly asked curiously, “Why do you want to go to the New World? You want a vacation? I know a lot of people have wishes like that, thinking they’re visiting an alien world. However, the New World isn’t heaven; it’s filled with danger.”

Xiao Lin thought the boy too naive, so he could not help but warn him. However, Chen Dao quickly shot him a look, saying, “Of course, the natives are definitely our enemies! However, that’s fine. It’s better that they’re enemies. It would be much harder if they were our friends.”

“Huh? What are you saying?”

Chen Dao’s face was full of longing. “I heard that elven women are gorgeous! There’s even a fox tribe in the beastkin who are extremely sexy. When I think about the noblewomen and princesses...”

Xiao Lin was speechless.

Chapter 196 - Gu Xiaoyue’s Magic

Chapter 196: Gu Xiaoyue’s Magic

Xiao Lin’s mouth twitched at Chen Dao’s dream of establishing a harem of various races. He insincerely gave Chen Dao his blessing, but it seemed like Chen Dao had very big plans. Xiao Lin had felt it a pity that Gu Xiaoyue had overshadowed him, but it seemed like Chen Dao did not really care at all.

To be honest, all of them were working hard to get into Planet Norma. No matter what they said their intentions were, most of them wanted to enjoy their lives there. On Earth, most of them were probably regular people that would not amount to much, but on Planet Norma, all of them had the chance to be someone great.

Dawn Academy did not reject any of those notions, and truthfully, such thoughts were great motivators, which was what the academies were after.

When he heard that Xiao Lin’s life in the New World was quite boring, Chen Dao immediately lost all interest in continuing the topic. Xiao Lin quickly changed topics as well, trying to get some information on the meditation classes for the past month.

Chen Dao’s eyes brightened when he heard that and his interest renewed. It was obvious he loved magical classes. The reasoning was simple: he always picked magician classes, no matter what game he played.

Xiao Lin was also quite the gamer, and the two of them had a few topics of conversation on that front. Thanks to that, their relationship improved quite a bit, and the topics slowly broadened, or rather, Xiao Lin steered Chen Dao away from games and back onto the topic of magical studies.

Chen Dao's basic meditation had reached LV6, only losing out to Gu Xiaoyue. Xiao Lin already knew that, but what surprised him was that Chen Dao had already started studying Black Iron-ranked spells. Even if LV6 was the threshold for those kinds of spells, the brat was advancing quite quickly.

It seemed like it was not just him; everyone else was also working hard.

When the other students entered the classroom, they all shot strange glances at the two of them who were chatting away. They did not know when the two of them got so friendly with each other.

When the teacher, Li Meiling, entered the class at eight o'clock sharp, the woman's gaze fell onto Xiao Lin, even though Xiao Lin had specifically chosen a secluded corner. As a mage, her perception was uncanny.

However, all he received was a glare. Li Meiling did not say anything antagonistic, which caused Xiao Lin to breathe a sigh of relief before turning around to quietly beg Gu Xiaoyue for her notes.

The magic classes were different from any other courses for the simple fact that physical courses could be grasped through repeated practice, but meditation required personal enlightenment as well. Without understanding, any amount of training would be useless, and in terms of understanding, Gu Xiaoyue stood at the top.

Compared to Li Meiling's class, Xiao Lin was more interested in Gu Xiaoyue's notes. Gu Xiaoyue did not reject him, but wordlessly handed the notes over, without even averting her gaze.

That woman was still so cold!

Xiao Lin wordlessly opened the notebook and was stunned by the neat and immaculate handwriting. Gu Xiaoyue had mastered quite a lot of skills by that point. Outside of novice level spells, she had already mastered quite a few Black Iron-rank spells. To Xiao Lin, who had the information of all his classmates, that naturally was not a secret.

As with all other courses, the start was always incredibly boring. It was only until their basic meditation reached LV4 did they begin to learn spells.

Even though they were exposed to very limited spells at the beginning, the actual amount of spells was staggering. One could spend their entire lives, not stopping for a single second in researching and training, and still not be able to learn every spell that existed. In order to avoid overcomplicating things in the future, the new students would all be made to choose two branches of magic that they either liked or were more suitable for them to practice.

Li Meiling had the same requirements for all of them, but did not forget to remind them that even though they were not that many spells at their level, they should never believe they had more than enough energy and time to learn it all. Every novice-level spell was the entry point to a different branch of magic. Outside of the four basic elements, there were various mixed elements. Outside of damaging spells, there were also controlling and supportive spells.

Gu Xiaoyue's choices shocked Xiao Lin. Not mentioning the beginner-level spells, since those were not too unique, Gu Xiaoyue had picked Elementary Speed Boost, Elementary Protection, and Ice Bullet as her Black Iron-rank spells. Ice Bullet aside, the other two spells were support-oriented.

Gu Xiaoyue wanted to specialize in support!

Xiao Lin could not believe it. His first reaction was that it was a pity: a spell's destructive ability was directly related to one's intelligence points. If someone with 60 points used the same spell as someone with 30, the destructive power could differ by as much as half a rank to a full rank.

Gu Xiaoyue's abnormally high intelligence was definitely among the upper end of all the academies, let alone among the new students.

When he was in New Washington, he would occasionally talk about Gu Xiaoyue with Song Junlang. Song Junlang only had one thing to say about her: as long as Gu Xiaoyue did not give up, based on her trajectory, she would without a doubt become the top mage on Planet Norma one day.

Xiao Lin remembered it very clearly; Song Junlang compared her to all of Planet Norma! Of course, looking back into history, it was not like there were no mages that would be better than Gu Xiaoyue. According to Song Junlang, all the mages that could rival her were either dead, or going to be dead.

Someone who had the potential to stand at the top of the world actually chose to be a support mage? It really wasted her natural-born intelligence and immense potential.

Xiao Lin immediately wanted to try and change Gu Xiaoyue's mind, but the words stopped in his throat. Would that woman really listen to advice?

Obviously, the answer was no.

Over the few months, Xiao Lin understood very well that Gu Xiaoyue was someone who held onto her opinions very strongly. Otherwise, she would not adamantly refuse to buy Lifewater to that day. Just thinking about her dwindling lifespan gave Xiao Lin untold frustration.

He slaved away in his training over the few days, obviously so he could get good results during the third monthly examinations and secure the class monitor position. However, Xiao Lin did not notice that he actually had another hidden goal for his training. He wanted to ensure he would be strong enough to fend off all manner of foes just by himself. That way, a certain person who had very limited lifespan left would not have to worry that she might die in an accident.

Chapter 197 - Magical Scrolls

Chapter 197: Magical Scrolls

Xiao Lin could not change Gu Xiaoyue's choice, but he now needed to choose his own branch. He was not willing to be relegated to a support-type mage. Coupled with the fact that he would mostly be in the frontlines as a dual-cultivator, support magic was out of the question.

There were a lot of types of offensive magic. The basic ones would be the four elements of wind, earth, water and fire, and each of them gave birth to a very large array of spells. Other than that, there were mixed elemental magics such as ice, lightning, and nature, but they usually had higher requirements to begin learning them.

For instance, nature-type magic required the use to first get their earth and water element magics to a certain level before they could begin learning it.

Xiao Lin could not help but be anxious. The different branches of magic were all regarded as equals, and it usually depended on the user's preferences and roles, which was what caused him grief.

Would he mainly use swordsmanship, with magic to support, or mainly use magic, with swordsmanship to support it?

That involved thinking about his combat tendencies, but to Xiao Lin, he had only entered the academy for three months, and he had not considered all that since he was still finding his way around. More accurately, he never really had the time to think about it.

If that was the case, he would temporarily focus on being a jack of all trades.

Xiao Lin quickly made his decision. His current focus was still preparing for the third monthly examination. Even though they were considered a team during the examinations, based on the first examination, he needed to officially become the monitor. Otherwise, there would always be people who would question his authority.

Basically, Xiao Lin would need to rely on himself.

That was why Xiao Lin decided to focus on long range attacks and disruption as his spells, which was why he temporarily focused his attention on the flame and water branches. Flame elemental spells had the strongest attack power among the four main elements, and the water element was a prerequisite to learning ice spells.

After making the decision, Xiao Lin finally relaxed. Now, he just needed to follow the plan for his training. He then shifted his focus back on Li Meiling, who was busy conducting her class.

Today's basic meditation class was a little different. They did not go straight into meditation or skill training. Based on Gu Xiaoyue's notes, that was usually the focus of most classes. However, Li Meiling was teaching them something new: elementary magical strolls.

Casting spells were not limited to meditating to gain harmony with the elements, then using one's perception to gather the elements for use. Magical scrolls were a consumable tool that allowed anyone to easily cast spells.

On Planet Norma, mages could use a special type of ink to draw seals to invoke certain spells on specialized paper. They would then use magical crystals to imprint the magical energy needed to cast spells on the paper. At that point, anyone, even those with absolutely not spell-casting basics, could just take out the scroll to use the spell stored within.

It was just like an electrical circuit. After an engineer manufactures a complicated circuit, the user would only need to flick a switch to operate it, not needing any engineering knowledge.

Similarly, scroll creation was an important part of the magic courses, but creating magical scrolls was both time and energy consuming, and it was much harder to break through than even basic meditation. During the beginning, the quality and success rate of creating scrolls were also very low, which meant that good magical scrolls were very expensive, several times more than other equipment of the same rank. Most people who had magical scrolls would not use them save for emergencies.

Of course, the class was not about teaching them how to make magical scrolls. They were just new mages. Even Gu Xiaoyue would not be able to do it.

Xiao Lin listened in earnest for a while and finally grasped the true reason for the class. Lin Meiling was actually using the introduction to magical scrolls to have everyone understand that casting spells was not the end goal. There was still a long journey ahead which could allow them to have a lot more strategies and choices when they were fighting.

Xiao Lin was somewhat worried; that was not a good sign. There were a few others with the same expression in the class, and the smarter students all mostly guessed what was hidden within Li Meiling's words.

Everyone knew the third monthly examination would be very hard, and Li Meiling was clearly telling them they would never be able to pass the examination with just their own skills, so she encouraged them to buy a few magical scrolls for emergencies.

In truth, most classes had some changes these few weeks. More and more students had noticed something was up. The teachers all carried serious expressions, and some students even tried to get some information regarding the upcoming examinations from the teachers, but they were all tight-lipped; or rather, the student union was incredibly strict with the information, and even the teachers only heard rumors, not having concrete information themselves.

The attitude the teachers had adopted also caused a lot of nervous tension among the new students, especially among the minority that did not have much of a lifespan left. Most of them were all begging for loans in points to buy Lifewater in anticipation of the batch that would be released for the first year students in a few days.

The truth was, after the two prior monthly examinations and the entrance examinations, coupled with the fact that the second month was fairly easy, it was actually not difficult to afford Lifewater as long as they were not reckless with their spending. That was why the more positive individuals who were not as ambitious were not too nervous.

Their lifespans were still quite long, so dying just one time was not a big deal. At the time, when everyone was full of tension, there were quite a few students who thought that way.

However, all that was happening did not affect Xiao Lin too much, outside of him constantly reminding Gu Xiaoyue that she needed to buy Lifewater, no matter what. He even offered to help her if she did not have enough. He currently had an abundance of points.

Li Meiling's class also gave Xiao Lin an idea. He gave a call to Lu Renjia that afternoon, saying he wanted to change up the order and cancel a few things. He needed the points to buy some magical scrolls, which Lu Renjia was obviously not too happy about.

After that, it was time for his planned training for the final week. The magical scrolls were just in case of emergencies. His own magic was still going to be the most reliable thing.

Before he started training, Xiao Lin once again received a call from the student union president, asking him to retrieve something, stating it was something the dean personally asked to be handed to Xiao Lin.

Even the student union president did not know what the object was for, so he expressed a great deal of curiosity. However, Xiao Lin immediately knew what it was. It was the key to levelling up his talent!

Chapter 198 - Talent Level Up (1)

Chapter 198: Talent Level Up (1)

SS-rank talents did not level up the same way as other talents or skills. SS-rank talents were not able to level up through training, instead needing external help.

On Planet Norma, talents were regarded as blessings from God, but SS-rank talents did not exist in that world. Now that Xiao Lin understood more about SS-rank talents, he only gained more and more questions, but no one could answer him. Just as the dean said, the only thing the dean could help him with was to make things easier. In the end, Xiao Lin still needed to figure things out himself.

What exactly were the goods that could level up the mysterious SS-rank talents?

Xiao Lin had that question in mind the entire way. When the student union president handed a diamond the size of a fist to him, his expression was fairly puzzled.

Indeed, it was a very colorful and glowing diamond; it sparkled brightly and there were no flaws on the surface. There seemed to be a water-like substance flowing within the diamond, and it looked really beautiful.

The question was, how was he supposed to use it?

Staring at the diamond, Xiao Lin was quite confused. It was drastically different from what he had imagined. He had thought it would be a type of potion or pill, but it turned out to be a diamond. Was he supposed to swallow it?

“How am I supposed to use this?” Xiao Lin asked the baby-faced student union president.

The president smiled nonchalantly. “I want to know as well. Alas, the dean had left for the New World two days ago. There is a lot to do in the colonial territories, and most of them are far more

important than what happens here. The diamond is something he got a few lecturers to make, but the truth is even they don't know what it is meant for, let alone how to use it.

"Normally, diamonds and jewels in Planet Norma are not just decorative goods. It might be something you need to wear, or maybe it's a magical stone that needs to be enchanted onto a weapon?"

The president was very earnest, as if he was investigating a very important matter. Even if he did not know the reason for it, it was something the dean had personally asked for, so the president did his utmost.

However, it was a pity. No one could help Xiao Lin with this. The secret of the SS-rank talent meant Xiao Lin had to figure it out himself. Since the dean did not leave any other messages, it likely meant that even the dean did not know how to use it. After all, Xiao Lin was only one of three people in history who had ever possessed an SS-rank talent.

After thanking the president, Xiao Lin put the diamond in a box and headed back to the dormitory. He cancelled his plans for training today, and he spent the rest of the day staring at the diamond.

Even though the examinations were very close and the remaining time he had was very valuable, Xiao Lin was very clear that levelling up his talent was the most pressing task.

How was he supposed to use it?

Xiao Lin used all his brainpower, thinking up all sorts of ways. He wondered if the diamond was some sort of energy boosting accessory, and all he needed to do was train next to it, or maybe he really needed to eat it? He could not think of a solution, and almost sank his teeth into it.

The afternoon passed by just like that. Not only did Xiao Lin fail to make any progress, he had wasted half a day of training. Meditation training was much harder than Phantom Steps for any sort of swordsmanship training. His goal was originally to master as many useful spells as he could in a week, so wasting time like that caused him quite a bit of grief.

He was quite out of it even when he was having lunch. He even ignored Cheng Ming's greeting and headed back. He puzzled over whether to train in the evening or continue torturing himself over how to use the diamond.

Suddenly, an idea popped into his head. Xiao Lin facepalmed as he cursed himself for being stupid. Since he did not know how to use the diamond, he should just ask someone who did. He definitely did not need to be wasting his time.

The dean definitely did not know how, and it was likely that no one in Dawn Academy knew as well. However, Lilith from the Judge Academy might know. The Demon Queen, who had already levelled up her talent before, definitely knew how to level it up.

As for whether or not Lilith would help him, Xiao Lin felt it would not be a problem. The world might call her the Demon Queen, but ever since their interactions in The Final Land, Xiao Lin found her to be a very straightforward person. Furthermore, he helped Lilith after they got back, and he felt that Lilith would not hesitate to repay that debt.

Lilith was smart, so as long as she thought about what happened in The Final Land, she should have reached the same conclusion as Captain Harry of the dragon-eagle knights.

The next problem was how he could contact Lilith. Xiao Lin definitely could not do the same thing as last time: return to Earth and head to New Washington from America. That would waste too much time, and after the house arrest, Xiao Lin swore he would never willingly set foot on that place again.

According to school rules, when the dean was not around, the student union president would handle all internal matters. That baby-faced president was quite friendly, and Xiao Lin had his number. However, it was not his private number, but rather the number to his office.

Even though he had just met the president earlier that day, the one who answered the call was not the president. An unfamiliar man was on the other side of the screen who called himself the head of recruitment. Xiao Lin had actually seen him before during the opening ceremony, but he did not remember at all. When he saw Xiao Lin, he gaped for a moment, but he did remember the new student who got an S-grade during the entrance examination. He exclaimed in surprise, “How do you have the contact number for this place?”

Xiao Lin answered strangely, “This is the number the president gave me. Is something wrong?”

The head of recruitment was taken aback, not knowing what to say. Xiao Lin did not know that he was quite flabbergasted. Not everyone had the right to have the contact number of the president’s office, just like how regular people on Earth could not just directly contact the city mayor. Otherwise, the president would be swarmed with calls every day.

Normal students, even the ones in the higher years, were only able to contact their monitors or the year heads. That was the basic rules set by Dawn Academy management.

Even the monitors or year leaders were not able to easily contact the student union president. At the most, they only had the right to contact the various department heads who would escalate the issue if needed.

Chapter 199 - Talent Level Up (2)

Chapter 199: Talent Level Up (2)

Xiao Lin was new, so he definitely did not know that rule. He had also been directly interacting with highly ranked people since the beginning. First, it was Department Head Song Junlang, then the student union president, then the dean. Xiao Lin did not realize his social standing was actually quite high, so to anyone else, it was absolutely shocking.

The head of recruitment was allowed to directly meet the president. It was by coincidence that the president had just left on some business and the phone rang at that time. Everyone was usually eating or resting at noon, and the office was completely empty, which was why he answered.

When he saw that a new student actually had the number to the office, and had asked directly for the president, the head of department silently wondered if Xiao Lin just stumbled upon the

number. In the end, he pushed the matter to the second-year leader. Even though his tone was polite, Xiao Lin could sense his half-hearted attitude, so he hung up.

When he contacted Chen Yu, the leader for the second-years also cursed silently. Though Dawn Academy was a school in name, the class separation was very strict. It was basically a hierarchical society, with the monitors to the year leaders, then the department head and the president; every rank had their own roles and rights.

However, that obviously did not apply to Xiao Lin. Even though Xiao Lin was quite friendly with him, without a shred of rudeness or arrogance, Chen Yu was still unhappy. That was because the only reason that man would contact him was so he could contact the student union president.

Chen Yu was regularly in contact with the acting class monitors from the first year. He knew that it was very likely the future year leader would be one of them, and that person would eventually enter the student union. That was why he offered his help: to build his connections early.

The acting class monitors were quite sensible as well. They all treated Chen Yu as a superior. It was only when it was Xiao Lin that Chen Yu did not feel he was treated like a year leader. He felt like he was just a messenger who was in charge of passing on Xiao Lin's messages.

However, Chen Yu swallowed all that down. After the past few experiences, only an idiot would not see that the student union president regarded Xiao Lin quite highly. Even though he was not sure if that was due to the president himself or the dean, they were still both people he could not afford to offend.

"The president is currently in a meeting with a few lecturers discussing resource allocation. He will probably not be free for most of the day. Is there a reason you're looking for him?" Chen Yu patiently explained, but he was actually crying inside at the fact that he needed to provide an explanation to a new student.

Xiao Lin was a little disappointed, but he immediately asked, "That's alright, I understand. I don't actually need to see him. Anyway, do you know how I can contact the American side?"

"The Americans?" Chen Yu did not have time to properly process what Xiao Lin had said. He asked in confusion, "Are you talking about Earth? If you have any relatives in America, you can write some letters and we'll get it sent for you from our branch on Earth."

Xiao Lin said, "No, I'm referring to New Washington; Judge Academy territory!"

Chen Yu was surprised, but he did not have too many questions. He knew of Xiao Lin heading to New Washington, so it was quite normal he would know a few people there.

Chen Yu smiled. "Why would you need to trouble the president for something like that? Earlier, I said you could write a letter which would be delivered for you. It's the same for the other academies. We can get your letter sent to the American branch and they will help you bring it to the colonial territories. If nothing goes wrong, it will arrive in three to five days."

"Three to five days?" Xiao Lin jumped, shaking his head. "No, that's too slow. I need to contact them immediately. Is there no other way? Surely there is? I remember Department Head Song

directly contacting the academy in New Washington. I think it's called trans-spatial communication?"

Xiao Lin's face was filled with disbelief, and Chen Yu could not help but continue, "That's right, Department Head Song might have used trans-spatial communication. That is indeed a way to communicate immediately regardless of distance. However, the technique is extremely complicated, and a lot of energy stones are needed to do it..."

Chen Yu suddenly paused and waved his hand dismissively. It was not clear if he did not know the specifics or if he gave up explaining. He skipped to the conclusion. "Trans-spatial communication is very expensive. Even graduates rarely choose such a method of communication. It's usually only used on special occasions like war."

Xiao Lin grasped the key points. "So, what you mean is, even normal students are allowed to use it?"

"Of course, it's a public service. However, one would first need enough money to use it. After all, if the academy bore the cost, Dawn Academy would have gone bankrupt by now..."

"How expensive?"

"One thousand New Dollars per minute." Chen Yu emphasized the New Dollars, reminding Xiao Lin it was not redemption points. Probably worried that Xiao Lin would continue, he added, "Since you've been to New Washington, you should know what New Dollars are. I might not know what relationship you have with the president, but business is still business. Even the president himself needs to pay the fees. Of course, he might help you with the money, but that would need to wait until after his meeting."

Xiao Lin was actually quite anxious at first, but he let out a sigh of relief after Chen Yu finished. "Who knows how long he will take? I'll just pay for it myself."

"You don't understand. You need to wait for the president... What? Hold on, what did you say?"

"I'll pay for it myself. That's the rule of the academy after all. I shouldn't be exempt." Xiao Lin never wanted to use someone else's money. Relying on himself was the best way, and it was not like he could not afford it.

"Every minute is one thousand New Dollars. I'm talking about New Dollars!" Chen Yu emphasized in disbelief.

Xiao Lin started to get impatient. "Could you just tell me where I need to go?"

Chen Yu paused, speechless, before nodding as he said, "I'll bring you over!"

Chen Yu really wanted to see if that shocking freshman really did have such a massive sum of money, or if he was just mocking him.

Chapter 200 - Talent Level Up (3)

Chapter 200: Talent Level Up (3)

Trans-spatial communication was created by the colonists using Planet Norma's energies combined with science from Earth. The technique allowed them to instantly communicate across great distances.

On the way to the communication room, Chen Yu gave Xiao Lin a simple explanation of the origins of trans-spatial communication. The technique's earliest inventor was someone from Dawn Academy, which Chen Yu was visibly proud of, even though it had nothing to do with him.

The room was located in a very large building, and it was located very close to the wormhole. It was the most heavily guarded place in the entire academy, but thanks to Chen Yu's status, the two of them passed by without any issues.

"Year Leader Chen, you're using the trans-spatial communicator? You must have struck gold!" A few women sat inside the room, and were busy chatting away when they recognized Chen Yu in surprise.

Other than the few staff inside, the room was very quiet, which was proof of how expensive it was. It was definitely hard for a regular person to afford it.

Chen Yu was not in a good mood at that time, so he scolded them, "Don't just sit here doing nothing all day. Don't forget you're members of the student union. The student union placed you here to protect the equipment!"

The woman brushed it off, smiling as she said, "Alright, alright. You really must be rich now. You've used the equipment before, so we don't need to teach you, right?"

Chen Yu said rudely, "I can't afford this. This junior wants to use it, so explain it to him!"

"Junior?" A long-haired woman stopped looking at her nails, instead looking at the man behind Chen Yu curiously before exclaiming, "Junior! If you can call him a junior, doesn't that mean he's in his first year!"

"Of course! Well, my job is done. Xiao Lin, you can ask them about everything else!" Chen Yu was rapidly losing interest, but he did not move to leave. Instead, his eyes were fixated on the bag Xiao Lin had. He had glanced at the bag a few times on the way there, and he obviously had his guesses as to what was inside.

"Since you were brought here by Chen Yu, you should already know the rules. It's 1,000 New Dollars a minute, school rules. Oh, we don't accept credit either," the woman said professionally.

Xiao Lin nodded and placed his bag on the table before opening it. All their gazes immediately moved toward the bag, and everyone's eyes widened when they saw stacks of fresh bills within.

Since he did not know how long he would take, Xiao Lin had brought all of his savings over just in case. Because the largest New Dollar bill was 100, he basically had over 10,000 New Dollars stuffed in that bag, which was a sight to behold.

Chen Yu had mixed feelings. Even though it meant that Xiao Lin was not making a fool of him, he still wanted to know how a new student could get so much money. He was the year leader for the second years and considered the best student among his peers. He had been to the New World a few times, and made some money doing tasks over there as well. However, even now, his savings were not more than 2,000 New Dollars.

Even so, among the second and even the third years, Chen Yu was considered quite a wealthy person. Back then, he had gritted his teeth and bought an accessory from Planet Norma for a girl at 200 New Dollars. Even that was enough to cause a huge uproar.

However, looking at the thick stacks of New Dollars in front of him, he suddenly felt like his world was very small. He counted in his head as Xiao Lin placed the money stack by stack onto the table. How much money was there? At least 10,000?

Chen Yu was not at all interested in why Xiao Lin wanted to make the call. However, the amount of money was way too shocking. He did not even say a word as he left in a daze.

Xiao Lin did not know that he had basically just changed someone's worldview. He was actually frowning as well, asking the women if the money was enough.

The women, who were shocked into silence, quickly snapped back to reality, smiling as they said, "It's more than enough."

The rest of the procedures went quite smoothly. The communications room was in its own corner. The room was quite unique. Even the walls, floors, and ceilings were made made of gold. Xiao Lin felt like his eyes were assaulted by the bright sparkles before slowly recovering from the shock and awe. He could see that they were not regular gold, as the metal contained some sort of sand-like object flowing within.

"That's Timesand. If you've sat in the interspatial carriage before, you would have seen them. It's very common in the wormholes, and they are also necessary materials for trans-spatial communication. The problem is that it is extremely hard to process, which contributes to the high costs of trans-spatial communication." Money really was all-powerful. That woman that Xiao Lin had never met before was explaining everything to him in a very friendly tone, with an extremely amicable face.

Xiao Lin did see the Timesand before, so he nodded in understanding. In his mind, he remarked that there were still so many unknown mysteries in the world, causing him a lot of excitement.

As the official staff there, the woman was quite professional as she explained how to use the communications device in great detail. It was actually quite simple, and the real difficulty was ascertaining the proper location. However, that did not require Xiao Lin's own effort, as the woman would be responsible for it. She said she was a third-year student who was in the spatial courses.

Upon hearing that Xiao Lin wanted to contact New Washington, the woman's eyes sparkled. She had never been there before, only having been to the territories of Dawn Academy in the New World. The only way to get to American territory was on official business, so she was extremely curious about Xiao Lin's status.

Xiao Lin started to feel that the woman was being overly friendly, so he rushed her out of the room. However, before she left, she did not forget to ask if trans-spatial communication was private, but she received a negative reply.

Trans-spatial communication was similar to the earliest telephones back on Earth. Due to the difficulty of stabilizing the locations, there was no way to make it as convenient as their magical phones. Trans-spatial communication required them to communicate with the other party through the main system, which was established early on by all the academies.

However, because of that, the operator of the main system, which was the woman in front of him, would be able to listen in on the call at any time as long as they wish to do it, even though it was not allowed by the academy rules.

Xiao Lin obviously did not want anyone else to listen in on Lilith and his conversation, so he was doubtlessly disappointed. However, when he thought about it, as long as he avoided directly mentioning anything sensitive, no one would be able to guess what they were talking about.