

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 21: Basic Swordsmanship Class

Xiao Lin had a rough understanding of Dawn Academy's stance when it came to the classes. Students were not recommended to take courses in cultivation and magic at the same time. For example, Basic Swordsmanship and Basic Saber Technique were arranged at different times, since there were many who had chosen both Swordsmanship and Saber Technique. Meanwhile, few probably chose both Swordsmanship and Magic.

Xiao Lin was still unable to devise a solution, even by two in the afternoon. Left without a choice, he had to bite the bullet and head to his Basic Swordsmanship class. Unlike the mandatory courses, the training venues for more specific courses were located in the more remote southeast corner of the school. There, magnificent training halls were aplenty, almost to the point where one could not see the end of the building. Each training hall was at least the size of two football fields.

As he approached the training hall, Xiao Lin discovered many people wearing school uniforms—in red, blue, and even black—all senior students. The building formed the main training venue for the entire academy.

The freshmen's training hall was in the frontmost row of those venues. He searched one by one and quickly found the hall holding Basic Swordsmanship. After verifying his identity with his universal card, the hall's doors automatically opened.

Inside the training hall, Xiao Lin discovered that the interior was different than what he imagined. The hall in itself was divided into two sides—left and right. The left half was an empty training ground with wooden floors. Various weapons—including swords, shortswords, épées, and broadswords—were arranged against the wall. Every single one was made of wood and was likely to be used for training.

On the right side of the hall were partitioned, transparent single rooms. Figures stood inside each of the rooms, but on closer inspection, he could see that the figures were actually just bronze dummies.

Xiao Lin did not arrive early. There were already plenty of people inside the stadium, and more were still coming in. The total number of people probably amounted to at least two hundred. Fortunately, the stadium was large enough to accommodate that many people, and the swordsmanship teacher had not yet arrived. Everyone got together and chatted in groups of twos and threes.

“Xiao Lin! Here!”

Xiao Lin saw someone enthusiastically beckoning toward him as soon as he came in. He searched deep in his memory, realizing that he did not know the person. Nevertheless, he walked over and greeted them politely.

“My name is Cheng Ming. I’m the acting class monitor for Freshmen Class One. We were just talking about you. You got pretty famous in the forum last night. Lots of people are excited to get to know you.” The guy who spoke was a dark-skinned, robust-looking boy. He had a hearty smile and a rather squarish face.

“You were talking about me? ” Xiao Lin noticed that there were six people gathered around Cheng Ming, all of whom looked at Xiao Lin in a different light.

Cheng Ming smiled and patted him on the shoulder. “They’re the monitors from each class. Everyone’s got a penchant for swords. Of the twelve acting monitors, eight chose Basic Swordsmanship.”

Xiao Lin smiled and greeted the others, but he did not receive an eager response.

“The Chinese people love swords more than other weapons,” a ponytailed girl coldly remarked. She hardly noticed Xiao Lin’s smile.

“We’re all competitors here, actually. Chen Yu said it before. The year leader will be chosen from among us. ”

“We’re still waiting for our status as acting squad leader to become official. ”

“What’s wrong? Short on confidence? We’re all talented students here. I think everyone was surprised about what our talents could do during the admission test! ”

“Hehe, that isn’t actually the case. Isn’t there one other talentless class monitor? ”

Apart from Cheng Ming, the others did not have the slightest intention of introducing themselves—only casting a glance at Xiao Lin. They then continued with their conversation, only looking at Xiao Lin when the topic turned to him. It was clear that the others were not too friendly toward him.

Cheng Ming felt a little embarrassed and apologetically smiled at Xiao Lin. He said, in a slightly dissatisfied tone, “Come on, guys. We’re all acting class monitors here.”

“I heard that there’s someone in Class Seven with an attribute value of forty-six and probably set a new world record. Is that true?” The ponytailed girl spoke first and looked suddenly at Xiao Lin.

Xiao Lin had no clue about the world record that Gu Xiaoyue had broken, but was very surprised. However, his tone froze over too. “It is, but that girl is also talentless. Haha. ”

His words made some of the acting class monitors a little embarrassed. The fact remained that their basic attributes were not as high as Gu Xiaoyue’s.

“I’m definitely going to be the year leader!” The girl with the ponytail had an aggressive glint in her eyes.

Xiao Lin grew bored and left the company of that group. He stood quietly in one corner and waited for the course to start.

At two o'clock, their tutor stepped into the training hall, right on time. Xiao Lin was quite surprised to find that the image of the Basic Swordsmanship teacher was far from what he had envisioned.

She was a very attractive woman, clad in a tight, long black dress. Her curves made her the perfect example for the golden ratio. She had short, attention-catching ginger hair, and her fair face had a very heroic quality. She lifted her chin up slightly, while her proud and confident eyes swept across every freshman's face.

She was a very confident, very beautiful woman. The students who made eye contact with her compelling gaze inadvertently turned away, but a few boys still who catcalled after her.

The woman smiled. Her black boots clacked against the floor as she walked to the nearest boy. Her beautiful face leaned forward, and she asked in a seductive tone. "Pretty, am I?"

"Yes! Very!" The woman's tone seemed to have encouraged the boy. He made an exaggerated thumbs-up and smiled triumphantly, as if showing off to the others.

However, he could not even hold his smile for more than a second. The woman's expression changed at lightning speed and her black boots rose 180 degrees into the air, kicking the boy square in the face.

Boom!

Before the boy could even retract his smile, he soared like a rocket, hitting the hall's ceiling with a thud, and falling back to the ground like a meteor. The force of the impact rocked the solid training hall a little. Xiao Lin had to look away; the guy's face was so bloody that his mother might not even recognize him.

The woman said loudly in a brash, unfeminine voice. "Remember, all of you: I am not your teacher, I am your tutor! This is the most lenient punishment you can get catcalling your tutor! Of course, the academy is equipped with automatic treatment systems in every training hall and it's possible for you to recover, if your injury isn't fatal. However, I'd like to remind you that the treatment system is no longer free after the admission test has concluded. You'll have to exchange redemption points for them now."

"I don't have any redemption points," someone muttered.

The woman sneered. "If you don't have any, you'll automatically pay it with your credits. If you don't have enough credits," she giggled, "just sit tight and wait for your memory to be erased. You'll be sent straight back to Earth! "

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 22: Strength

During the admission test, Qin Chuan had chopped off the arm of a new student, but it healed over completely. The academy's healing system was excellent, but it did not erase the pain the injury caused.

The boy who fell to the ground wailed and curled into a ball. A cream-colored beam of light enveloped him and immediately healed the wounds on his face. After ten or so seconds, the boy had fully recovered; all wounds on his face had completely disappeared.

"Hey bro, how many redemption points did that deduct?" The person beside nudged him and asked softly.

"Fifty!" The boy gritted his teeth and did not dare to speak further despite his anger.

There were loud gasps in response. Save for a few who managed to achieve Grades S, A, or B in the admissions test, none of the others had any redemption points. Therefore, using the treatment system just once was enough to necessitate memory erasure and force them to be sent back.

In Dawn Academy, credits were proof of performance and strength, while redemption points were universal currency. Regardless of whether a person was rich or poor on Earth, everyone's starting point at the academy was the same.

"I killed twenty-three orcs in the New World yesterday; any one of them would have had no problem dealing with all of you! To put it bluntly, I've always loathed teaching new students; you're all weak and incompetent. Teaching swordsmanship to you lot makes me feel like I'm playing with a bunch of infants!"

The woman had a sullen expression as she scanned the trembling students. All of a sudden, she licked her scarlet lips and smiled playfully, "But I was told that this batch of freshmen was very special. So special, in fact, that the dean even attended your opening ceremony in person. For that reason, I applied to be your swordsmanship tutor, so I hope you guys will at least be a little entertaining. Otherwise... Hehe..."

"Well, I'll spare you the nonsense. I don't want to talk too much about theory. The gist of swordsmanship is to kill people. Bladework that can't even do that is nothing but a joke!"

The woman walked to a corner of the hall, where rows of wooden swords of various sizes—specifically used for training—were arranged. Then, under everyone's watch, the woman waved her right hand in the air and conjured a huge, silver broadsword from the void. With purple lightning swirling around the blade, the woman held the hilt in a backhand grip and swung it toward the training swords.

The purple lightning burst and instantly turned all the wooden swords into powder.

"This useless garbage isn't necessary in my class! We'll be using real swords for all future training!"

Immediately, uproar!

"Is there a problem?" the woman asked coldly.

“Yes. I don’t have a sword yet. The weapon I was assigned during the admissions test was a saber,” a guy said, trembling.

“Do you want me to hire you a babysitter so you’ll always remember what kind of weapon to bring?” The woman approached the boy who spoke; her extremely charming face was inches away from him. She was still holding the hilt of her two-meter long sword. Its rapidly flickering electrical current was extremely terrifying.

The guy staggered and fell, bottom-first, to the ground. He wanted to cry, but the tears would not come. “I...I’m sorry. ”

The woman shouted, “If you don’t have a weapon, go to the Equipment Store and buy one! If you don’t have redemption points, go and complete some missions. Do I still have to teach you how to do all that?”

She was a very hot-tempered woman, and after several bouts of reprimanding, no one else dared challenge her authority. She was no joke. Everyone believed that she would not hesitate to cut them in half with her sword, which was entirely capable of cleaving through iron like it was dirt.

The Basic Swordsmanship course then finally began.

“First of all, I need everyone to have a more intuitive understanding of your own strength attributes. That’s right, the physical properties of a melee weapon and its attack power depends on your strength value. But those attributes aren’t the be all and end all. The power that the central computer measures is the strength that you are capable of showing under the best possible conditions. I’ve seen too many idiots that can’t even display even half their strength attributes!”

The woman continued, “In today’s lesson, and in the upcoming lessons, your task is not to learn swordsmanship, but how to fully exert your strength value! If your strength value exceeds twenty, please take one step forward!”

The moment she belted out the command, Xiao Lin noticed that five among the seven acting class monitors—including Cheng Ming—took a step forward. Although Cheng Ming was the only one among the group that he had a favorable impression of, Xiao Lin had to admit that the talents of those people were far beyond the scope of ordinary individuals. Joining those acting monitors, only a dozen other ordinary students stepped forward.

The woman remained expressionless. She pointed at Cheng Ming and asked, “How much is your strength value?”

Cheng Ming, firmly but humbly, replied, “Thirty.”

“Give it a try.” The woman glanced at the longsword Cheng Ming was holding. The random weapon Cheng Ming was assigned in the admission test was not a sword, but he had gotten someone to exchange weapons the night before as preparation for the Swordsmanship course.

Cheng Ming scratched his head earnestly. “Teacher, um, Tutor. I’m no match for you.”

The woman waved her right hand and her big, silver sword vanished. In place of it was a short and powerful stainless-steel dagger. She brandished the dagger with a force that whipped up gusts of

wind, and raised her eyebrows before pointing at Cheng Ming. “I’ll keep my strength to about thirty. Come on!”

Cheng Ming did not refuse. He wielded his longsword in both hands and rushed over with a low growl. Despite facing a head-on attack, the woman did not evade; instead, she raised the dagger to her chest. Light flashed suddenly in mid-air.

The two blades struck, keening with a metallic clash.

Everyone was stunned to see Cheng Ming’s sword slip his grip and fall to the floor a few meters away. Cheng Ming stared at her, his hands a little numb. The woman had indeed lowered her power. Although Cheng Ming’s ability was far above the hapless catcaller, it was still a resounding defeat.

“Twenty. That’s the strength value your sword just displayed. Displaying 70 percent of your total strength is commendable,” the woman impassively commented.

Cheng Ming was in disbelief. “What? I clearly used all my strength! My talent is a bonus too!”

“Having a talent isn’t everything! You focused all your strength on the hilt and you released it too early. The first thing you should do is learn how to control the distribution of power when you swing your sword! Next!”

Another acting class monitor stepped forward. He initially looked down on Cheng Ming, but ended up worse off. Not only did the sword slip out of his hands, he was flipped over completely.

The woman mocked him. “You have a strength value of twenty-seven, but used only thirteen—not even half. You’re holding a sword, not a torch! Idiot! Next!”

...

After about ten minutes, dozens of longswords and shortswords were strewn all over the floor. Aside from the acting monitors, other ordinary students reluctantly came up to try, but fared no better.

The woman reported the strength of each person’s sword. The result was undoubtedly frustrating for everyone, and only a third of them could exert 60 percent of their strength. Cheng Ming’s 70 percent achievement was already the highest possible value that they could attain.

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 23: Xiao Lin’s Challenge

In the end, no one dared try it; such a test would only continue to undermine their self-confidence.

“Don’t think a Grade S or A in the admissions test makes you so great! I can tell you that the academy weakened the monsters in the test by at least half their actual strength!”

Everyone felt like a bucket of cold water had been splashed over their heads because it was exactly as she had mentioned. Many people were elated after surviving the admission test, buoyed by Chen Yu’s encouragement the night before.

The woman’s face was full of disappointment and impatience. “I wonder which bastard said that this new batch was special. Hmph. What a total waste of my time! For this afternoon, or more accurately, for as long as it takes, don’t do anything else. Just stay here, and keep practicing! We’ll start the next lesson once you all can exert a hundred percent of your strength value!”

The woman said this as she walked toward the door.

“Teacher—I mean—Tutor, where are you going?” Cheng Ming asked immediately.

The woman said petulantly, “I’m going home to sleep! Why would I intentionally waste time here with all of you?”

“But...but you haven’t taught us how to exert all our strength!” Cheng Ming was afraid of the woman’s aura, but he nevertheless straightforwardly asked.

The woman turned her head. She shot back as fast as a machine gun, “What’s there to teach! Do I need to teach this? Practice makes perfect, ever heard the phrase? Why are you still standing there? Practice; now! One-on-one! Practice how to swing the sword and how to knock down your opponents! Don’t forget that you’re not allowed to use those wooden training toys. If I find out that you do, you’ll never be allowed to enter this training hall again! Remember this: actual combat is always the fastest and easiest way to make progress!”

“Practice one-on-one with real swords? What if we get injured!”

The woman glared and yelled, “Did you leave your ears at home? Didn’t I say in the beginning that this hall has its own healing system? With these garbage swords, any injury—no matter how serious—will heal over. What are you afraid of?”

“But, our redemption points...” In the end, the questioner did not dare to finish his question.

Upon seeing the hall finally descend into complete silence, the woman nodded, satisfied, and yawned. She really seemed ready to go back home to take a nap, but when she took half a step out of the training hall, a somewhat hesitant, yet salient voice was heard.

“Um, Tutor, I’d like to ask something. I chose Basic Meditation as one of my courses this afternoon, so is it possible that I leave first and go to the meditation class since you’re leaving?”

Everyone looked in that person’s direction, glaring at him as if they were an idiot.

Xiao Lin felt embarrassed under their watchful eyes as well, but unless he had a better way, he would not have wanted to provoke that madwoman. The academy scheduled Basic Swordsmanship and Basic Meditation at the same time, and Xiao Lin was not about to just abandon any particular course; he wanted to smoothly progress into the sophomore year.

“Oh? This freshman wants to cultivate both magic and martial arts?”

The woman stopped for a moment, retracting her foot from outside the hall. She slowly walked toward Xiao Lin. She had a charming smile on her face and looked at him with intent.

The distance between the two was less than half a meter and her womanly fragrance was exceptionally refreshing. However, Xiao Lin was not in the mood to appreciate her beauty up close. He clearly remembered how the last guy who displayed his attraction to this woman was kicked into the air.

Every hair on Xiao Lin’s entire body stood on end. He took a couple of steps back and looked warily at her. After some thought, he realized that he felt unsafe and began increasing the distance between them to about ten meters.

The woman’s smile gradually faded. “Basic Swordsmanship leans toward physical attacks, and Basic Meditation cultivates spells. If I remember correctly, there’s a reminder in the course selection table saying that it’s not recommended for new students to practice both magic and martial arts.”

“But there is no express prohibition, is there?” Xiao Lin asked.

The woman’s expression became completely indifferent. “Yes, Dawn Academy does not prohibit it, and in fact, many graduates will choose to learn some basic spells. For freshmen, however, dual cultivation is a waste of time! Don’t you have the faintest idea why the academy arranged the freshmen’s schedules in such a way that the physical courses are held simultaneously with spell courses?”

“I understand that dual cultivation means that it will take me twice as long to reach the same strength levels as everyone else,” Xiao Lin said stubbornly, “But I insist on it. I’d like to attend the Basic Meditation class.”

The woman narrowed her eyes. “So, you’re some genius, are you? Tell me, what are your initial attribute values? I heard that there was a new record of 36 intelligence points in this batch of freshmen. Could you be them?”

A slight mocking laugh came from the crowd. “Tutor, you gotta have the wrong person. This isn’t the one with 36 intelligence—”

“DID I SAY YOU COULD INTERRUPT!” the woman yelled back.

Xiao Lin replied, “Strength, three; Agility, two; Intelligence, two; Constitution, three. That’s my current attribute value. ”

“Three points in strength and two in intelligence. Hehe, you’re very amusing. Are you sure you want to take up dual cultivation with those numbers? It’ll be even more difficult later on for you to increase your attribute values. You should thank the heavens if you can reach Black Iron Rank in four years with your basic attributes. If the freshmen in this class all bite off more than they can chew like you, the principal must be senile to have personally attended the opening ceremony!”

The woman was very disappointed. She felt that it would be pointless to continue arguing and had no intention of entertaining Xiao Lin. However, she had only just turned around and barely taken a step when Xiao Lin reluctantly ran up to her to ask. “So, is that a yes?”

On that occasion, even the earnest Cheng Ming felt that Xiao Lin was digging his own grave. Everyone could see that the furious woman’s mood had soured tremendously at that moment, yet Xiao Lin dared push her buttons.

The woman laughed out loud. The new students looked at Xiao Lin with pity, giving him looks that said ‘good luck’. Then, they stepped back, so as not to be affected by her rage.

Cold sweat streamed down Xiao Lin’s cheeks as quickly said, “Wait, wait! Didn’t you say that the initial goal is complete if we can fully display a hundred percent of our strength?”

“I did. And?” the woman asked indifferently.

Xiao Lin said what he wanted to say in one breath. “I think I’ve probably already accomplished that goal, and since you’re refusing to teach us, it’ll be a waste of time for me to stay. In that case, would it be okay for me to attend the other course?”

Several of the acting class monitors frowned when they heard that. Even Cheng Ming felt that Xiao Lin’s was boasting a little too much. Among them, Cheng Ming had the highest strength value, and even that was a measly 70%. The others were doubly certain that their strength was better than a loser with 10 attribute points like Xiao Lin.

“Oh?” The woman raised her chin and was somewhat surprised. “Then I’ll give you a chance. However, if you’re lying, then you’ll never be allowed in my class. I don’t care what you do with the other courses; that’s your own business!”

“If I’m not lying, does that mean you’ll agree with me?” Xiao Lin remained persistent.

The woman nearly lost her mind, but managed to suppress her anger. “Not only will I agree, I’ll get the lady who teaches Basic Meditation and to agree too!”

“Deal!” Xiao Lin was overjoyed; his problem was all but solved.

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 24: Slashing LV2

The woman conjured a steel sword, raised her delicate chin, and teased, “I’ll take my power down about three points. It’ll be difficult for me to go any lower than that, but I won’t go too hard on you either. I’ll just stand here, not fighting back. Don’t think that you can do better with that low strength score. Come on, show me how much you can do with your measly little strength. One point? Two?”

Three strength points?

Xiao Lin unsheathed his novice dagger and began calculating in his mind. His strength value was three points and his Basic Dagger Mastery was at LV2. In fact, he had always been a little confused regarding Basic Weapon Mastery. The explanation the computer system gave him was that it increased the skill of wielding a dagger, but only then, did he realize what it meant.

The so-called skill referred to the control of one's strength. A person could have 20 strength points, but it might not be possible to fully exert all 20 points with a sword.

With the help of his SS-level Academic Genius talent, Xiao Lin had LV2 Dagger Mastery since the admissions test. Although his strength was low, he could exert his power better than others. Nevertheless, relying on that aspect alone might prove difficult to meet the woman's requirements.

Xiao Lin believed that some of the acting class monitors had reached a LV2 standard. Even though they were slightly behind him, they were all talented students who still could not manage to exert 100 percent of their strength.

However, Xiao Lin could only rely on one vital aspect—LV2 Slashing! The Smart Computer explained that skill as the ability to deliver a stronger blow after briefly charging one's strength.

After upgrading to LV2, Slashing became even more powerful, but its drawbacks were significant too. Powering up at LV1 took about two seconds, but increased to around four seconds for LV2. It did not have much value in actual combat, but he was lucky that the woman said that she would not fight back.

Under everyone's scornful and mocking gazes, Xiao Lin raised the dagger and rushed forward without hesitation. The woman held the sword in one hand, standing in front of him nonchalantly. Despite having suppressed her strength to three points, she did not believe that Xiao Lin could break through her defenses.

Slash!

Xiao Lin swung his shortsword high and activated his skill, causing a silver-white cold glow to illuminate the blade. The powering up process took four seconds. He could choose any moment to swing the blade down, but to ensure that his strength could exceed three strength points, he chose to power up for the entire four seconds.

"What's he doing? Why did he stop? "

"Is he scared?"

"Scared of shame!"

Everyone figured that Xiao Lin was just deliberately acting dumb, but the tutor raised her thick eyebrows slightly. The bright light on Xiao Lin's sword might have slipped the freshmen's radar, but it could never trick a battlefield veteran like her!

The corners of her eyes twitched as Xiao Lin slashed down with his dagger. Her instinct told her that she was in danger and she immediately raised her steel sword. A purple light then began flowing through it.

“Ah, damn...” Xiao Lin was surprised by that, but could not stop his dagger from clashing with the woman’s sword. Then, as expected, he felt an unstoppable force extending through him along the sword’s surging purple light. His entire body was thrown high into the air and he fell straight down.

There was a roar of laughter in the hall; the result was exactly as they had expected. Xiao Lin seemed to have had it worse, perhaps even worse than the unlucky person who received a brutal, disfiguring kick in the face.

Xiao Lin lay on the ground, convulsing and foaming at the mouth. His lungs were on the brink of collapse while the purple current paralyzed him and rendered him motionless. All he could do was stare at the woman to express his anger.

“Tutor, I think your strength exceeded three points!” Cheng Ming took a deep breath, stepped forward, and remarked in a deep voice. The woman said that she would suppress her strength, but any idiot could see that she had not.

The woman was silent, but she raised her head. She ignored Cheng Ming’s accusation, and looked up at the roof. After determining that a student was injured, the Smart Computer would automatically switch on the venue’s treatment system.

The woman suddenly stepped beside Xiao Lin. She fumbled for a glass bottle that she carried with her, the contents of which were filled with viscous red liquid. The woman then forced open Xiao Lin’s mouth, unscrewed the bottle cap, and poured all the red liquid into his mouth.

“Drink this!” the woman ordered firmly.

Xiao Lin’s entire body was already sore and numb, so he had no choice but to drink that strange liquid. It had a bad taste, tasting like how rust smelled, but soon he felt a pleasant warmth spreading throughout his body. Not only did his numbness gradually fade, but the scars all over his body vanished too.

The healing glow was just about to land on him when it quickly disappeared after determining that Xiao Lin had healed from the injury.

Everyone realized that the woman had used some kind of magical potion to heal Xiao Lin from his injuries, thus sparing him from having to use redemption points from being automatically treated by the system.

The woman snickered. “You got some gall using Slashing on me? You don’t know the meaning of death, do you! Only under very specific combat conditions will it be possible to power up for four seconds. That renders this skill useless. Other than using it as pre-training for certain skills, it doesn’t have any practical value.”

Xiao Lin got up again, wiped the blood off his face, then stared at the woman. “You didn’t keep your word!”

The woman remained noncommittal. After confirming that Xiao Lin was all fine, she stood up too. “What I just gave you was a mid-level complete recuperation drug. On a normal course schedule, you’ll only be able to taste this medicine when you’re in your third year. Redemption points are very valuable for new students, but you don’t need to thank me for saving you a fortune in the treatment.”

Xiao Lin’s face was expressionless. “You didn’t keep your word.”

The woman’s face stiffened. If she had not increased her strength earlier, the clash of weapons would have knocked her sword down. It went without saying that she could never accept that possibility, so on instinct, she raised her strength to a higher level. She was never going to admit it and instead said, “I admit, the strength of your dagger earlier exceeded three points, but you were only able to do it with the help of a skill. That’s right, I don’t acknowledge that your swordsmanship has reached the point where you can display a hundred percent of your strength!”

Xiao Lin blinked. “You didn’t keep your word.”

The woman became irritated, and a network of purple thunderbolts exploded out all of a sudden. Everyone else made themselves scarce, startled, believing that their tutor was going to go berserk at any moment.

Xiao Lin repeated like a parrot. “You didn’t keep your word.”

“You, you, you...” The woman was trembling with anger. Her fingers—entwined with the purple current—pointed right at Xiao Lin. If she chose to be cruel, she could definitely burn the boastful little freshman in front of her into charcoal, but her action was nothing more than a sudden outburst to vent her anger. The purple lightning soon dissipated completely.

The woman turned around without saying a word. Her black leather boots stomped on the floor, producing heavy footsteps. As she walked, she said, “The Basic Meditation course is in Classroom Three, the first row of Zone B. I’ll give them a call, but I still stand firm on my opinion that there’s no point in magic-martial art dual cultivation. ”

Xiao Lin exhaled a long sigh. Although everything progressed rather differently from what he had planned, the results were still in his favor. After all, the woman was a graduate and seemed to have quite high status. If she went out of her way to say that, then there was definitely a possibility for Xiao Lin to take both courses.

The woman walked toward the door and stopped suddenly before turning around to ask, “What’s your name?”

“Xiao Lin.”

She nodded and opened the door to leave.

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 25: Cheng Ming's Talent

After the woman left, the tense atmosphere throughout the entire venue dissipated with her. The other students gathered around again and chatted with Xiao Lin.

“Hey, dude! You’re so lucky to have convinced that tyrannosaurus of a woman to let you do anything. I almost thought she was gonna kick you into the ceiling!”

“Why did she give only you the healing potion!” protested the unlucky person who she kicked. He was still unhappy at the cost of treatment which he had paid for no reason.

“What would’ve happened when your weapons clashed and she didn’t increase her strength?” Unfortunately, that question could never be answered. Even if Xiao Lin and the woman were to attempt it again, it was impossible for him to succeed; she would have been prepared for it.

There were mixed feelings and perplexed looks on the faces of the acting class monitors, though the bulk of their feelings was truly jealousy. Indeed, there were looks of envy in the eyes of the talented students and the acting class monitors.

“Xiao Lin, the tutor’s going to remember you!” Just like before, Cheng Ming was the one who took the initiative to speak to Xiao Lin. Although Cheng Ming was the only one who could exert 70 percent of his strength, the woman did not notice him at all. Throughout the entire time, the only student that caught her attention was Xiao Lin.

In their first Swordsmanship class, the woman laid down the ground rules almost immediately. The smoking hot woman with a temperament almost as violent as *Tyrannosaurus rex*’s left many without a favorable impression of her. Despite that, there were a few who did not think that way and were actually jealous to see a woman exuding such sheer strength. The acting monitors were especially aware that they—as freshmen—had struck gold to get a tutor like that.

“Haha, good job! You didn’t bring shame to us class monitors! I’ll have to work harder next time.” Cheng Ming was a good sport. Despite being a little jealous of Xiao Lin for catching the powerful tutor’s attention, he still had a smile on his face and moved past it.

The acting squad leaders had clearly formed a small inner circle, but Cheng Ming was the only one who treated Xiao Lin as one of their own. The others did not think that Xiao Lin would continue to be class monitor after three months, so they could not be bothered to actually talk to him.

“It’s just a stroke of luck!” The ponytailed girl retained her petulant attitude.

“It’s odd though. The tutor had controlled her strength without a problem when we went up against her. How could she suddenly miscalculate when it was Xiao Lin’s turn?”

“Must’ve been an accident. That’s why she felt guilty and gave him such a precious potion.”

Before, everyone else had been rather far away and did not manage to hear Xiao Lin and the tutor's dialog. They had no idea about the skill and could only make haphazard guesses.

Xiao Lin was happy to let them fill in the blanks and did not seem interested in explaining anything at all. He felt comfortable with Cheng Ming and had no interest in getting to know the other acting monitors. With Basic Meditation and Basic Swordsmanship starting at the same time, he was not about to waste any more time there. After saying goodbye to Cheng Ming, he hurriedly left the swordsmanship training hall.

The few acting monitors exchanged looks with each other and continued the discussion.

"It looks like he really intends to cultivate both magic and martial arts."

"I can understand. His basic attribute values are so bad that dual cultivation should be able to make up for his deficiencies."

"But didn't the year leader say that the advantages of dual cultivation would only have a slight effect on freshmen? And that the basics will turn to crap after that? It's not difficult to understand that reasoning, and I don't think Xiao Lin is that stupid." Cheng Ming seemed worried. "Maybe I'll talk to him about it later in the evening. After all, he is one of us."

The ponytail girl snorted coldly. "Stop being such a boy scout. None of us treat him as equals. Plus, we might be in a group now, but don't ever forget: we're still competitors!"

In that completely unfamiliar environment, the talented students-slash-acting class monitors naturally formed their own clique, of which Xiao Lin was the only one excluded.

"Don't be like that," Cheng Ming answered helplessly.

"Alright, let's stop talking about Xiao Lin. We should focus on how to utilize a hundred percent of our strength value! Cheng Ming, you're the only one among us who managed to 70 percent of your strength value. How did you do it?"

"Because of my talent." Cheng Ming smiled triumphantly. "My talent is called Swordheart. When I hold any sword-like weapon, all sword skills I've mastered will be raised by one level."

Cheng Ming had the tendency to talk a lot, so he began rambling on and on at once. "You guys wouldn't believe it. I got a saber at random during the admissions test, and to sum things up, no one wanted to exchange a sword with me. Man, it was depressing. Last night, I went from room to room, begging for a sword, and finally I found someone who was willing to exchange weapons with me!"

The rest were all speechless. They were baffled that Cheng Ming treated them as his friends and revealed his talent so easily.

As the ponytail girl said before, they were still competitors, even in a group. Everyone's instinct was to conceal their talents and skills. The instructors could see their talent levels, but were restricted from viewing the specifics. That was also the scope of the class monitor's authority, demonstrating how Dawn Academy valued the confidentiality of one's talents.

The ponytail girl interrupted Cheng Ming unceremoniously. “Do you know any other skills besides Basic Weapon Mastery?”

The rest could not help but roll their eyes at the ponytail girl. Although it was quite clear that Cheng Ming was straightforward, it was rather uncouth to be so direct and ask for his personal information.

Cheng Ming answered earnestly, “Of course not! We just enrolled. How could anyone master any other skills aside from having their talent. Besides, even with talents, a great majority of them must be passive skills, right? ”

No one answered the last question, but everyone’s eyes lit up unwittingly, including the ordinary students who were quietly eavesdropping. All of a sudden, they all had a sudden realization.

Their basic strength values did not differ too much, even when factoring in the talented students. However, his reliance on Swordheart would raise his basic swordsmanship to LV2. None of them were fools and they immediately understood the real purpose of Basic Weapon Mastery.

The surrounding crowd then dispersed. After getting the solution to the problem, they all knew what they had to do next. The only aspect that worried everyone was that the training swords had been destroyed; they were instructed to use real swords to train.

Luckily for them, the admissions test allowed everyone to understand how best to upgrade their Basic Weapon Mastery. There was no need for actual one-on-one combat drills, so everyone in the hall found a nice spot and began swinging their swords in the air.

No kidding. Swords had no mind of their own and no one could guarantee that they would be free from injury if they practiced actual one-on-one sword drills. After all, they had just enrolled in the academy. Even those who actually received good grades in the test had a dearth of redemption points. No one wanted to meaninglessly waste those points.

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 26: Basic Meditation Class

Only when Xiao Lin left the swordsmanship hall did he notice a partitioning of the training halls. Swordsmanship belonged in Zone A: the same zone as sabers, axes, and other physical weapons. Zone B and Zone A were very close to each other, and—although the number of training halls in Zone B was relatively small—the size of each training hall was rather huge.

Following the tutor’s directions, Xiao Lin quickly found himself in the first row, standing before Classroom Three. A sign displaying the words ‘Basic Meditation’ hung at the door.

“It’s probably here. I hope I didn’t take too long.” He tried pushing the door, but it was locked from the inside. He raised his hand to knock on the door and it immediately opened with a creak. Xiao

Lin had already stretched out his hand; it was past the point of no return. He could only watch as his hand gently rapped against a beautiful girl's forehead.

She was a delicately petite girl with short hair, neat bangs, and a pair of spectacles. She gave off the impression of a cute, petite girl-next-door.

"You're not the teacher, are you?" Xiao Lin blurted out.

"I'm the teacher for Basic Meditation for this batch of freshmen. Is there a problem?" The woman's voice was very sweet, but was not as pleasant coupled with her cold look of superiority.

Xiao Lin retracted his hand in embarrassment and laughed dryly. "That was a misunderstanding... I really didn't know you'd open the door so suddenly."

"If a mage like me fails to sense an ordinary person's presence within ten meters, then I might as well quit this school and head back to Earth to sell tofu! Don't you think so?" The girl's words were very cutting and she was not as sweet as her voice suggested. With that, Xiao Lin's impression of her as a charming girl-next-door crumbled all at once.

Xiao Lin repeatedly said no and tried to explain himself.

Nevertheless, the girl irritably waved her hand, as if swatting a fly. "No need to explain. I understand! Come on in!"

Xiao Lin was on the verge of tears seeing the girl's disgust toward him. He wanted to ask her, 'Big Sis, what exactly do you understand!'

Having experienced lessons in history and swordsmanship, Xiao Lin could sense the paramount importance the school attached to the present batch of freshmen. Even though the girl in front of him looked petite, Xiao Lin guessed that she was a graduate, who might even be centuries old, like Professor Dai.

The girl spoke as she walked. "Senior Sister Cheng Na called me. You are Xiao Lin?"

"That's me." Xiao Lin nodded and sighed. He finally found out that the violent beauty's name was Cheng Na.

"You're interested in cultivating both magic and martial arts?"

"Yes!"

"You used underhanded means to make Senior Sister lose the bet and force her to agree to your unreasonable request?"

"Mhmm! Hm?" Xiao Lin was subconsciously nodding and quickly waving his hand. "Wait, what do you mean by underhanded means! I did everything fairly, but your senior sister didn't keep her word. I'm glad she eventually did, though."

The disgust on the girl's face increased even more and she waved her small hand. "No need to explain. I understand perfectly!"

'Again, what exactly do you understand!'

Xiao Lin sighed helplessly. He felt that his words fell on deaf ears, regardless of how much he explained, and so finally gave up talking. In any case, the important thing was that he be allowed to listen well in the class.

The meditation hall was very empty and there were no windows around, like a sealed dark room. A couple of white headlights made the room bright as day, and rows of cushions were neatly arranged on the smooth floor. Students of both genders sat on those cushions and curiously looked at Xiao Lin.

"My surname is Li. I'm a fourth-year senior. You can call me a teacher or Senior Sister, but frankly speaking, I really don't want to hear your voice. If it weren't out of courtesy for Senior Sister Cheng Na, I wouldn't have allowed a despicable person like you to enter my meditation classroom!" the girl coldly said to Xiao Lin.

The girl raised her head. She had to look up to see Xiao Lin's face because of the height difference. Xiao Lin's nonchalant expression seemed to irritate her a little and she added, "This Basic Meditation course is three-months. If you fail to meet the requirements after the duration, I hope you'll get out of the way immediately. Staying here is just a waste of both our time!"

'God knows what Senior Sister Cheng Na said to this Lolita to make her hate me so much,' Xiao Lin thought helplessly. Even though he was an acting class monitor, all he could do was nod earnestly and answer 'yes' whenever he faced seniors or graduates.

Xiao Lin's attitude was submissive and the girl seemed irked for not being able to find fault in him. "Although I won't stop you from coming to my class, I've been lecturing for almost an hour. I won't repeat it again just for your sake. You ask your other classmates and see if anyone is willing to help you!"

Xiao Lin felt a headache coming on. "I'll ask my classmates."

Xiao Lin's gaze swept across the hall and everyone immediately avoided it. They could clearly see that the girl did not like Xiao Lin and so no one was willing to take on a thankless job.

After about ten seconds however, Xiao Lin's eyes lit up when a familiar figure came into view. As a genius with an intelligence of 36, Gu Xiaoyue had no reason not to apply for the Basic Meditation course. As always, the silent girl kept a low profile and chose the corner-most position in the room.

Gu Xiaoyue did not disappoint Xiao Lin and simply said, "I'll do it."

The teacher was just about to watch Xiao Lin make a spectacle of himself, but was left with a stiff expression. She had a helpless look upon seeing that the person who spoke was Gu Xiaoyue. Despite not being a talented student, Gu Xiaoyue was the one who stood out the most among that batch of freshmen. Indeed, she was none other than the person whose individual intelligence broke a record that dated back to when the school was founded!

The teacher was a senior, but she found it imprudent to say anything to Gu Xiaoyue. In the end, she nodded and agreed. “You can sit next to Gu Xiaoyue!”

Xiao Lin went to Gu Xiaoyue’s side and sat cross-legged on the cushion, just like everyone else. He then whispered to her, “Thank you!”

Gu Xiaoyue nodded.

Xiao Lin noticed a notebook beside her and felt a rush of joy. He remembered that she had a good habit of taking notes in class and was just about to suggest that they not waste anyone’s time by just having her lend him her notebook.

Gu Xiaoyue did not plan on doing that at all and adjusted her spectacles. With her voice still as crisp as an oriole, her bright pupils looked at Xiao Lin as she said, ” Do you know anything about computer programming?”

Xiao Lin did not understand why she asked that out of the blue, but he nodded and replied, “I don’t, but I definitely know what programming is.”

Gu Xiaoyue explained, “There are four major elements in the world—wind, fire, water, and earth. Those elements are used as codes, and casting spells follows the same principles as programming. It is the process of rewriting the element’s codes through a certain pattern, then finally executing the corresponding magic spell.”

“Then what’s meditation?” Xiao Lin asked again.

“Do you know what monks are?”

“Of course...”

“Well, simply speaking, meditation is to meditate and recite sutras.” After that, Gu Xiaoyue closed her mouth and with no intention to speak further.

Many people, including Xiao Lin, were speechless. From their viewpoint, magic was like a beautiful woman wearing a lace veil, but Gu Xiaoyue’s explanation completely removed all the mystery from it.

She had always been a girl of few words and Xiao Lin was all too aware of that. Even so, her summary was so extremely simple, nourishing doubts as to whether it really was that simple.

However, Xiao Lin soon discovered that many other students who had attentively listened to her wore looks of enlightenment.

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 27: Introduction to Meditation

The corners of the petite teacher's mouth twitched constantly. She had spent an hour explaining to the freshmen what the four elements were, what spells were, and what meditation was. As a senior of exceptional ability, she explained using very technical concepts, which left everyone feeling mystified and unable to entirely grasp the concepts.

On the other hand, Gu Xiaoyue summarized the contents of that one-hour lesson in two simple sentences. Most importantly, the reactions on everyone's faces made it clear that those two sentences had greater impact than the Lolita's own lecture!

Gu Xiaoyue demystified it by using a more conventional method of understanding. While the Lolita did not explain anything wrong, it had been years since she returned to Earth. Taking into account the time ratio, she would have been gone for an amount longer than a dozen Earth years, thus making her unable to use Earth's current way of thinking to consider the issue in front of her.

She took in a couple of deep breaths and tried to calm her anger. Her pretty face deadpan, she said, "That's just the basic theories of meditation, but if you understand it, then you'll be able to successfully cast spells! Don't assume that learning spells is easy. In the past five years, the ratio for graduates in the spell classes compared to warrior classes are about one to four. "

"Anyone can learn spells, right?" the students whispered among themselves.

"I used spells during the admission test."

The Lolita's tone became serious. "The spells used in the admission test are only a byproduct of the magic wand and only require you to activate the spell to trigger magic. By no means does that make you a real mage!"

The spell attached to the wand was akin to a complete program, only requiring one to type in a command to get the result. On the contrary, a real mage did not just need to input it—they also had to understand how to program it and how to write elemental codes in order to create the program.

Admittedly, Gu Xiaoyue's simple and straightforward explanation made it easier for many people to understand what the teacher said.

The teacher continued, "Many of the students in the previous batch gave up on spell courses halfway. Even sophomores and third-years would rather take physical courses again. Having said that, I'd like to tell you that the foundation for all spells is meditation. Even when you graduate from here in the future or enter postgraduate studies, meditation courses are still essential! The speed in which you can enter the meditation state and the speed of your meditation itself will determine whether you are suitable for learning spells.

"This is a meditation room that contains an assemblage of magic circles, condensing the four elements in a density far beyond that of the outside world. It's specifically dedicated for newbies to use for meditation. It's now three o'clock, so the cut-off point will be six. I'll come back and check on you after three hours," the Lolita took out a watch to confirm the time. "Alright, you may begin!"

Were they supposed to start just like that?

As they watched the Lolita push the door open and leave, everyone in the meditation room looked at each other. Although she had explained the basics of meditation to them, they only had a smattering of knowledge about it. Everyone thought that she would remain in the room and instruct them from the side, since it was their first meditation lesson after all. However, the Lolita immediately left them to their own devices.

“Are we supposed to sit and chant?” Xiao Lin muttered to himself. He knew what it meant to meditate like a monk. Sitting cross-legged with his hands on his knees, he closed his eyes and paid attention. A few minutes later, he received a prompt.

[Basic Meditation LVo: 0/50]

Xiao Lin immediately opened his eyes. Many people had the same reaction as he did. With faces full of surprise, they whispered amongst each other.

Unlike ordinary weapon mastering skills, the initial level of Basic Meditation was LVo instead of LV1. Although it only differed by one level, it signified that they were not even considered at the entry level as of then.

Many people were randomly assigned magic wands in the admissions test and had accumulated some EXP, but it had nothing to do with meditation, and yet was different from physical close combat. Basic Wand Mastery only affected one’s proficiency when using Magic Enhancement Tools, and not one’s inherent magical ability.

Gu Xiaoyue said that meditation was to meditate and chant. Xiao Lin trusted her judgment but, meditation and chanting were actually two different processes. They had no sutras to chant yet, so the first thing they had to do was to enter the initial process of meditation.

After a brief hubbub, the meditation room fell silent again. The process of meditation required absolute silence. It was fortunate that everyone was aware of that particular point.

The purpose of meditation is to sense the four elements. The Lolita said that the meditation room was an assemblage of magic circles, had a strong concentration of elemental energy, and was specially set up for new students. Nevertheless, everyone still underestimated the difficulty of meditation.

There was only darkness before Xiao Lin. The completely sealed off room was so quiet that he could hear a needle drop. He had read many novels with magic and watched many similar movies. According to Professor Dai, many fantasy things on the earth were actually described by dropouts who had their memories erased.

For example, the four elements of wind, fire, water, and earth was something he had seen in many settings. Xiao Lin therefore had reason to believe that it had something to do with magical spells. However, elements were invisible, intangible, colorless, tasteless. They did not even have a specific shape. Who would know whether an element was round, square, long, or flat? To actually perceive them was a very difficult thing to do.

Time passed by the minute and someone quietly opened their eyes. There were no clocks in the meditation room and no one knew how much time had passed. The Lolita had switched off all the lights in the hall before she left.

The first hour passed quietly and Xiao Lin's Basic Meditation EXP remained at 0. He tried very hard to perceive something out of the endless darkness, but he came up empty.

The second hour was fleeting and Xiao Lin's heart gradually became irritable. His EXP at 0.

The restless Xiao Lin could barely concentrate in the last hour, even though meditation focused heavily on concentration.

When the Lolita reopened the door to the meditation room, the white light above their heads came on again. Xiao Lin opened his eyes and wore a thoroughly disappointed look; his three hours of meditation was but a futile exercise. He could not even get a tiny grasp of any of the four elements and his Basic Meditation value still remained at 0.

Many people in the room had similar frustrations. The Lolita had previously warned about how difficult it was to learn spells, but many took her words with a grain of salt. Only then, they realized that her advice was not at all exaggerated.

The Lolita seemed to have anticipated the outcome long in advance. She clapped her hands and said, "Those whose Basic Meditation EXP is still at 0, please stand up."

Everyone waited and looked at each other. There was some reluctance, probably out of embarrassment, and no one stood up.

The Lolita snickered. "I have access to everyone's meditation results!"

Finally, some people began slowly getting up from the cushions. As the number of people increased, the total number accounted for nearly half of the entire meditation room, and it soothed everyone greatly. Although they were in last place, at least there were dozens of people who were tied with them!

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 28: Gu Xiaoyue's Meditation Level

Xiao Lin also stood up, but he did not feel the slightest bit relieved even though many did. He had a SS-level talent which was confirmed to be very powerful during the admission test. Why then, did he lose the effect that day?

Xiao Lin frowned and thought hard for a few minutes. The talent the smart computer gave at the time indicated that its passive effect was to improve learning efficiency by 100%.

He thought hard about those words and had a slightly deeper understanding of it. His Academic Genius talent could increase the XP of each learning session, rather than simply increasing the XP from 0 alone!

To put it more simply, whenever Xiao Lin practiced swordsmanship, his basic skills XP would increase by one point each time. Under the passive effect of his SS-level talent, it would become two XP. However, whether it was Basic Swordsmanship or Basic Saber Technique, the base level started at LV1. After all, anyone could wield a sword or a saber.

Basic Meditation was different. Not everyone was born to connect with the basic elements and, therefore, everyone's basic meditation level was at LVO. Unless Xiao Lin relied on his own ability to feel the four elements and bring his Basic Meditation XP up from zero to one. Only then would his Academic Genius talent then take effect and turn that one XP into two.

That conclusion was undoubtedly very frustrating for Xiao Lin. He had much too simplistic a view of the courses.

Xiao Lin knew that he could only be considered a non-achiever at best. The reason why the talent was named Academic Genius was only because he was the first person to possess the talent, thus giving him the right to name it.

Xiao Lin's basic attributes were very weak and he was very aware of that fact after using his class monitor's authority to view his other classmates' attributes. In terms of those values, his standard was more or less the same with a number of other people. For example, Wang Dalin's intelligence was two points as well, while Gu Xiaoyue's physique was very low as well. Nevertheless, at least one or several other attribute values of those people were still acceptable. They might even be considered prominent.

The only exception was Xiao Lin. All his basic attribute values were hopelessly low, but he was fortunate to have an SS-level talent. However, that talent could be more accurately described as to provide greater speed in terms of progressing skills he already had. It did not make up for any weak innate attributes.

He subconsciously glanced at the calm Gu Xiaoyue beside him. As expected, she was still sitting on the ground in a dignified manner.

In front, the Lolita's eyes lit up without hesitation when she saw that Xiao Lin—who had an absolutely sour expression—was among those who stood up. She made a point to add insult to injury and say, "Even though I don't have the authority to expel you just yet, let me give you a word of advice: give up all spell courses as soon as possible. They're completely not suited for you! There's still time to take another course, rather than waiting until sophomore year or third year only to regret it. They'll only waste more of your time!"

A dissatisfied voice replied, "It's only been three hours. I just haven't grasped the basics yet. Give me more time. I can definitely sense the four elements!"

The Lolita nodded. "You're right. Feeling the four elements is the prerequisite for meditation and the basis for becoming a mage. It could be said that anyone who spent enough time in this meditation room—which has an unusually high elemental concentration—is able to enter a state of meditation sooner or later. Then, they can learn spells."

Those words put a smile on many people's faces. Those who took the course were undoubtedly very interested in the legendary feat of magic. They did not want to give up that easily.

The Lolita snorted and her tone suddenly sharpened. “But do you really think it makes sense to take days, even months, just to increase your Basic Meditation XP by only one? In theory, anyone in this school can learn spells, but a person who takes four years to become a Black Iron Mage is in an entirely different situation than a person who only takes four months!

“I don’t care what evaluation you received in the admissions test. Learning spells requires talent. The results of today’s three-hour meditation will almost certainly determine your future in spell courses! ”

Xiao Lin touched his nose and smiled bitterly. The Lolita stared at him unceremoniously and was obviously mocking him. He clearly had no talent yet insisted on cultivating both magic and martial arts.

After making that remark, the Lolita stopped paying attention to Xiao Lin and turned to the students who were still sitting. The faces of those people were half-expectant and half-nervous. The Lolita then pointed to her right. “For those remaining, anyone who increased their Basic Meditation XP within the range of ten XP, please stand there.”

90% of those who were still sitting stood at the Lolita’s right side. The sight of that filled Xiao Lin’s mind with disappointment and he could not help his surprise.

After three hours of meditating, Xiao Lin thought that those who entered the state of meditation might have already advanced to LV1 in their Basic Meditation. After all, upgrading required only 50 XP, but it came as a shock that those who could connect with the four elements still only had less than 10 XP.

During the same period of time, skills such as Basic Dagger Mastery could at least be raised from LV1 to LV2.

According to the meditation learning rate, it would take at least a week or so to just upgrade one’s Basic Meditation to LV1. Could spells be that difficult to learn?

The Lolita glanced at them and saw another six people still seated. Unsurprised at the outcome, she called them out. “How much has your meditation XP increased? Please report it one by one!”

“Twelve XP!”

“Fourteen XP.”

“Thirteen XP.”

“Eleven XP.”

“Thirty XP.”

Upon hearing someone say 30 XP, the Lolita finally had a change of expression on her immature face. “What’s your name?”

The four people with more than ten XP were rather unhappy. It was clear that the Lolita was not asking about them. As the last few who remained, they had more than enough right to be proud of themselves, but the person with 30 XP stole their limelight by a landslide.

Xiao Lin, like everyone else, looked toward the direction of the voice. The person who gained 30 XP was a handsome, short-haired boy that looked quite young.

The boy found it rather hard to adapt to the sudden thrusting into the limelight. He touched his head and smiled awkwardly. "My name is Chen Dao."

"Class monitor! Awesome!" Someone among those standing shouted out loud.

The Lolita raised her eyebrows. "Are you an acting monitor?"

"I'm Freshman Class Twelve's acting class monitor." Chen Dao answered at once. After some thought, he added, "I'm a talented student."

Xiao Lin had to admit that talented students were on a whole different level compared to ordinary students. Considering that he was also a talented student with an SS-level talent, it was a mystery as to why it was so difficult for him to enter into meditation.

He sighed to himself and suddenly had a look of realization, as if he had forgotten something. He abruptly turned to look at Gu Xiaoyue, who was sitting quietly beside him in the corner of the meditation room. She seemed to have yet to report her meditation value.

The Lolita finally thought of the girl she nearly missed, but after the initial shock that Chen Dao gave her, her face had already calmed down significantly.

"Gu Xiaoyue, how much XP did you get?"

"One!" Gu Xiaoyue's answer was always incredibly concise. Superfluous words seemed taboo to her.

"Only one XP!" The Lolita looked displeased. "Are you kidding me, Gu Xiaoyue! Or perhaps you didn't hear what I just said? I ordered anyone who had ten XP to stand on by my right!"

Gu Xiaoyue frowned slightly and adjusted her black spectacle frames. She then said, "I mean, level one."

"What?" the Lolita's tone fell flat.

Gu Xiaoyue's delicate expression appeared to be at a loss and she had to repeat her sentence in its entirety. "Basic Meditation level one. No more, no less. Just right!"

Damn it!

A speechless Xiao Lin looked at the ever-calm girl beside him. He had his suspicions as to whether she was similar to him—whether she actually possessed some kind of SS-level talent that no one knew about.

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 29: Inquiry

Everyone else's expressions were similar to Xiao Lin's; they looked at Gu Xiaoyue as if they were looking at a monster. They had just gone through a three-hour Basic Meditation course and already had some inkling as to how complex meditation was compared to what they imagined.

The young teacher had her mouth open so wide that she could practically swallow an entire egg. As a lecturer, she could track the progress of these students, thus making it impossible for Gu Xiaoyue to lie on that particular point. The young teacher took a long time to come back to her senses and was already unsure how to better express herself. Finally, she nodded. "Okay, that's very good! You're Gu Xiaoyue, right? I'll keep you in mind!"

The first lesson on Basic Meditation ended in dramatic fashion. Students left the meditation room in twos and threes, walking together. The afterglow of the setting sun poured on the rows of towering training halls and lent them a touch of magnificence.

Dawn Academy's schedule did not have any night courses, but they also restricted the freshmen from leaving the dormitory. The forum issued a clearly written statement saying that the dormitory would be closed at 7 p.m. every night. Every freshman had to return, as students from the student union would conduct checks everywhere in the school. Anyone who was found loitering around instead of being back in their dorm would be punished through the deduction of redemption points or credits.

Harsh and rigid rules of that sort led everyone to feel like they had returned to their trapped lives in high school. During the previous night, many freshmen expressed dissatisfaction with that issue on the forum once the opening ceremony ended. The academy, whose aim was colonizing an alien world, remained very mysterious to everyone. With their courses filling up practically the entire day, many initially had plans to go around exploring at night, but the rule had shot down all possibility of that happening.

It was only after the first day of lessons was over that many began to understand why the academy made such a rule. Even if they were given free time, the thought of exploring might not even cross their minds after being spent of all their energy.

Having experienced an entire day's worth of courses, the general feeling most the freshmen felt could be summarized in two words: dead tired.

The compulsory courses during the day were still reasonable; many showed great interest in the history of Planet Norma, the place where they stood a chance of going to in the future. They paid attention during those lectures.

However, the afternoon classes were completely different from what everyone imagined them to be. During the opening ceremony, they were motivated by the dean's new world colonization speech and wanted to step into that whole new world as soon as possible.

Everyone rubbed their hands, eager to learn about sword-fighting and magic spells seen only in novels and television, but their tutors doused their excitement with cold water!

Learn sword-fighting? Use magic spells? Sorry to burst their bubble, but they were far from qualified!

To sum up the afternoon's lessons, it was all repetition, repetition, and more repetition with swinging swords, sabers, hammers, and so on. Exercises with that level of monotony drained them of all their physical strength.

Those who took courses like meditation did not fare much better either. Anyone who could enter a meditative state would then become extremely fatigued after three hours of meditation. For those who failed to enter a meditative state, their foremost concern was whether they were suitable for the course.

Dinner on the top floor of the dormitory was as sumptuous as ever, but everyone came back tired and did not have any appetite. Most just ate to fill their stomachs and went straight back to their rooms to rest.

Xiao Lin wasted an entire afternoon in vain and was still full of energy. However, he was equally as disinterested as the others to see the delicious food before him.

After some thinking, he decided to ask Gu Xiaoyue. As the girl who achieved Level 1 Basic Meditation in just three hours, he felt that she might have a way to dispel his doubts.

The academy equipped each freshman with a magic phone that used energy stones as a power source. As class monitor, Xiao Lin had the authority to check all the phone numbers of his classmates. After returning to the room, he immediately dialed Gu Xiaoyue's phone number. Barely moments before he was about to put the phone to his ear, a beam of multicolored particles suddenly burst from the phone screen.

Startled, Xiao Lin practically threw the phone to the ground. The fine particles morphed rapidly in the air and quickly condensed into Gu Xiaoyue's appearance. He could see even the subtlest of expressions between her eyebrows with clarity.

It was a magical image that reminded Xiao Lin of the spells that Professor Dai used earlier. He breathed out a sigh and remembered that there was nothing surprising about such magical properties since the device was given by the academy. He thus calmed down and set the cellphone on the table. Gu Xiaoyue looked confused for a while and soon understood what was going on.

"Gu Xiaoyue, how did you enter your meditative state?" Knowing the personality of the girl in front of him, Xiao Lin spared her the nonsense and chose to get straight to the point.

"I felt the four elements and entered meditation."

"How did you feel the four elements?"

"Meditation."

Xiao Lin waited for a while and realized that the girl had already closed her mouth shut. He had no choice but to say, “Could you be more specific?”

Gu Xiaoyue frowned for a moment and felt that there was nothing else to add. “I just meditated and I felt it.”

Xiao Lin was speechless. He looked at Gu Xiaoyue incredulously. He felt as though he had asked a very silly question, like he just asked, ‘How do I talk?’. How would one answer that question?

‘Just open your mouth and speak.’

That was it. For Gu Xiaoyue, awareness of the four elements and entering a meditative state was probably as natural to her as talking and walking, hence her difficulty in explaining it in detail.

Meanwhile, Xiao Lin was still in the rudimentary stages of meditation and was neither able to talk or walk. He therefore found it a bit depressing that Gu Xiaoyue might not be able to help him with his problem.

After hanging up, Xiao Lin continued to think about it and began wondering whether he should forgo learning spell courses. After all, the effect of the SS-level talent was still noticeably effective in the physical courses. On second thought, however, he felt a little unwilling to just drop the magic courses.

The main difference between himself and Gu Xiaoyue was that of intelligence.

Xiao Lin suddenly came to a realization that the shortcoming was due to his naturally low intelligence. He felt that his previous understanding of the intelligence attributes might have been a bit skewed. In Dawn Academy, the intelligence value did not represent the level of IQ. Rather, a more appropriate definition of it would be an attribute related to the magical elements.

Of course, Xiao Lin was not completely clear about what it meant. He still has no clue and thought that it might be better to look for someone else. Asking a freshman was out of the question, as they may not know any more than he did. Instructor Qin Chuan came to mind, but Xiao Lin recalled the guy’s attitude toward him and decided against it.

Sophomore year leader Chen Yu was a very good choice. Xiao Lin could contact him through the forum and, after some hesitation, decided to send him a message. At that juncture, it was probably the best choice for Xiao Lin.

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 30: On the Subject of Attributes

Xiao Lin sent the message after deliberating it for quite some time. “Hello, Senior Chen Yu. I’m the acting monitor of the Freshmen Class Seven. I wanted to ask you something about our attributes.”

A few minutes later, he received a response containing a few words: “Freshmen can consult instructors or tutors.”

Xiao Lin shook his head helplessly. How half-hearted was that excuse. The sophomore class leader had expressed great concern for the acting monitors the day before, but his attitude had changed rather quickly a day later.

Xiao Lin suddenly remembered that he had the numbers of more sophomores on his phone, aside from Chen Yu. It was the couple who was in charge of welcoming new students in the dormitory building the previous day: Gu Fantian and Zhang Tingting.

Xiao Lin was well-prepared when he dialed Gu Fantian’s number. He placed the magical phone on the table in advance and a virtual image of the young man soon appeared.

Gu Fantian remembered the freshmen class monitor and even expressed surprise that Xiao Lin took the initiative to call him. “Xiao Lin, right? Haha, why the sudden call?”

Xiao Lin expressed his confusion without much ado.

Gu Fantian was a little surprised. “Wasn’t the tutor supposed to explain that in your lesson?”

“No, it’s a bit complicated. Our teacher today, uh, how do I put it?” Xiao Lin rubbed his head, smiled bitterly, and said, “Our Basic Meditation teacher is surnamed Li. She’s a petite girl who doesn’t seem to have that great a temper. The point is, I didn’t hear her explain it before.”

“Surname Li, huh?” Gu Fantian frowned and his expression changed suddenly. “Could it be Li Meiling? I’ll be damned, why is she teaching the freshmen Basic Meditation?”

“You know her?”

Gu Fantian shook his head. “Li Meiling is our fourth-year senior! I can’t possibly get to know such a person, but if she’s teaching you Basic Meditation, I’m not surprised that you wouldn’t know the true meaning of our attributes. There are pros and cons when people of that level teach freshmen. The upside is that you’ll gain a deeper understanding of the course, and the downside is that they might skim through many of the most basic things.”

Xiao Lin was not too surprised and did not express much shock that she was a fourth-year senior.

Gu Fantian continued explaining. “The attributes of Dawn Academy are based on Planet Norma’s rules. For example, intelligence does not refer to our traditional IQ. As far as I understand, the intelligence of some big figures in the New World can go up to several hundred points, but it doesn’t mean that their IQs have reached the same amount of points. The intelligence attributes in Dawn Academy refer specifically to the ability to communicate with the world’s basic elements through spirit, perception, and concentration.”

Xiao Lin pondered for a moment, and humbly asked, “I’m still a little confused. You said a couple of things. What does intelligence represent?”

Gu Fantian felt a sense of superiority. After all, he was teaching a class monitor, someone who stood a chance of going to the New World in the future. Such an opportunity was very rare for him, so he continued to explain more carefully.

“Attribute values actually represent a lot of things and they aren’t unique in themselves. Take strength for example, aside from the traditional sense of the word, strength attributes also represent your muscle strength, blocking strength, immediate explosive power, and much more. Meanwhile, agility attributes don’t just represent your physical attack speed, quickness of movement, balance, and flexibility—for example, people with a certain level of agility might even be able to climb a steep peak as though they were walking on the ground, but those with low agility cannot. Lastly, physique attributes aren’t just the health bar we see in games, but a combination of physical fitness, tenacity, and willpower.”

Xiao Lin felt enlightened. His understanding of the various attribute values had been rather skewed and, in fact, he was not alone in understanding it from an erroneous perspective. Their tutors should have explained all that, but unfortunately, the student union attached far too much importance to the new students and sent high-quality professors to teach them. In the end, it was like asking doctoral students to teach elementary school students—certain things might not be explained in detail and there was a higher chance of missing some basic information that was deemed unimportant.

“Then, how do we increase the meditation value? Um, I don’t know if you’ve taken any spell courses, but the Basic Meditation value starts from LVO...”

“My girlfriend’s elective is a spell course. Wait a minute, I’ll get her on the line.”

Gu Fantian disappeared from the magical projection. Xiao Lin shook his head, unsure whether to laugh or cry. Gu Fantian was really enthusiastic with him, but would he continue to be that kind after finding out that Xiao Lin was a class monitor with a total attribute value of only 10? Xiao Lin was not so sure.

About ten minutes later, the figure of Gu Fantian’s girlfriend—Zhang Tingting—appeared in the projection. The girl’s messy hair was still wet and she clasped her hands together while flashing an apologetic smile. “Sorry, I was just in the shower. Fantian told me everything. In fact, the most difficult step in Basic Meditation is to get the XP from zero to one. For many people, increasing it from one to fifty might only take a week or two, but the process from zero to one might take one or two months!”

Although Zhang Tingting was only an ordinary student, she was a sophomore after all. Gu Xiaoyue might not understand as much as her when it came to the most rudimentary of knowledge. After speaking animatedly for some time, Zhang Tingting realized that he was just a freshman and stopped to ask, “Um, that might’ve been a bit too fast. Did you catch all that?”

From behind her came Gu Fantian’s slightly reprimanding tone. “What are you talking about! He’s the class monitor. How could he not understand it!”

Xiao Lin smiled awkwardly and motioned to Zhang Tingting so she could continue.

“Actually, there really is no shortcut to meditation. The initial intelligence value almost certainly determines the difficulty of your first entry into meditation. Of course, as long as your intelligence value isn’t 0, anyone can enter meditation sooner or later.”

Xiao Lin sighed. “Yeah. So, In theory, anyone can learn spells, but if their initial intelligence is too low, it doesn’t make much sense to continue taking such courses, right?”

Zhang Tingting agreed. “That’s for sure, but Dawn Academy’s admission standards have always been very high. People with attribute values that are too low can’t enroll at all. People who manage to attract the attention of the Admissions Department must have a certain attribute value that is higher than that of ordinary people. If your intelligence score is too low, you can always just take other courses.”

Xiao Lin paused for a moment and asked suddenly, “What’s the attribute value of an ordinary person? ”

Gu Fantian leaned over and replied, “Let me explain this one. I’ve been in the Admissions Department for a few months, the total attribute value of ordinary people is usually around ten points. Those ranging about twenty points are considered to have met the Admission Department’s standards. Anyone who exceeds thirty points basically surpasses an ordinary person in terms of physical stamina, speed, or strength.”

Xiao Lin was slightly surprised. He finally had an answer to a doubt that had been lingering in his mind for the past two days. The fact that he was a loser otaku did not contribute entirely to his low basic attributes; the main reason was actually because the recruits’ qualities were generally better than an ordinary person’s.

Even so, why was Xiao Lin the only exception? To be more precise, why was he recruited into Dawn Academy when his attribute value was lower than an ordinary person’s? Xiao Lin did not think that his SS-level talent had been detected before he even entered the academy.