

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 31: Missing Admissions Notice

Xiao Lin was not the only one who was confused. Many of Dawn Academy's rooms were brightly lit that night.

In the dean's office, the white-haired old man sat on the sofa and took a swig of strong tea. He looked up, scanned the baby-faced boy who stood next to him, and said, "Don't be so tense. Tell me, what brings you here to me so late at night? "

The student union's president smiled and said, "It's about the freshmen's course reports today. More specifically, it's the performance of several acting class monitors, including that Gu Xiaoyue who has thirty-six intelligence points..."

The president slowed his words so he had enough time to observe every single detail on the dean's face, but he was disappointed again. The dean's expression did not change at all, and he gestured to interrupt before the president even finished speaking. Dissatisfied, he said, "You're the president of the student union. You're responsible for all the new students. You don't have to tell me all this. I'm going to the New World tomorrow. I don't have the energy to be concerned with all these teeny little things!"

"Understood. You're going back so soon?" Doubt disappeared from the student union president's face. Other than making an exception to attend the opening ceremony, the dean seemed to show no other interest in those freshmen.

"America's Demon Queen is making too much of a ruckus in the New World recently. We may be their allies, but we're still their competitors..." the dean said halfway and shook his head. He did not continue that sentence; it was still too early to say anything, even to the student union president.

The student union president exclaimed, "Demon Queen? She's already in the New World. She's still a sophomore!"

After hesitating, the president lowered his voice and carefully asked, "Rumor has it that America's Demon Queen has an SS-level talent. Is that true?"

The dean appeared evasive. He set the teacup down, narrowed his eyes, and rubbed his temples wearily. He then changed the topic. "I'm a little tired right now. Is there anything else?"

The student union's president shook his head, but something suddenly came to mind and he casually asked, "Oh yes. The head of the Admissions Department told me something during the day. A total of 1,360 students are enrolled in this batch, but when he did his routine inspection, he discovered that there were only 1,359 admission notices recorded in the system. No matter how much he tried, he couldn't find the last remaining one. It was very strange, because, as we're all

well aware, it's impossible for anyone to enter the academy without an admission notice, especially when our notice is made of special materials. How could any ordinary person possibly fake it?"

"Negligence! There's no need to look into these little things. Plus, the group of eliminated individuals has probably already returned to Earth by now. Just make sure the head of admissions is more cautious next time!"

The student union president did not notice anything out of the ordinary when the dean played the incident down. He too felt that it was not a big deal and was simply giving his routine report. Finally, the president left after finishing what he had to say.

The dean opened his eyes again and looked up at the ceiling, as if he was thinking about something. After a prolonged silence, he suddenly stretched out his right arm and chanted in a low voice. "Advanced Strengthening Barrier! Advanced Silencing Barrier! Advanced Anti-Stealth Barrier! Advanced Anti-Missile Barrier! "

Four magic rays shot out consecutively from the palm of his hand and lit up the office. Everything appeared to be in a state of calm; the dean's advanced magical barriers sealed the area so no ordinary person could ever approach.

"With the authority vested in me as the dean, I summon the Central Smart Computer System!" the dean's deep voice boomed.

A curtain of light covered the office ceiling and, manifesting from thin air, was the image of a girl in a white dress. With a delicate face and fair-skinned feet, she looked ever-so lifelike, even though it was merely a virtual image. She covered her mouth and giggled. "Master Dean, how may I be of service?"

The dean was expressionless. "You seem to be rather obsessed with Lolita appearances as of late."

"I heard that lolicon is all the rage on Earth nowadays. My appearance may be more attractive to the new students." The virtual Lolita smiled sweetly and wandered around the office like a ghost.

"As Dawn Academy's central control system, you're not allowed to directly come into contact with anyone except a few of those with higher authority. I don't need to remind you, do I?"

The virtual girl pouted, and her crisp, bell-like voice echoed in the office. "It's been a century and you're still as boring as ever. Alright, out with it. Why did you summon me with your dean's authority so late at night?"

The dean asked in a deep voice, "I'm sure you have a backup copy of the freshmen's admission notices."

The girl giggled and said, "I know what you're going to ask. I heard your chat with that pesky president just now. Unfortunately, there were a total of 1,360 admission notices issued to the freshmen. There's no issue with those notices."

The dean raised his eyebrows to some surprise, then buried his head in thought. He trusted the student union president because he was the one who personally appointed the boy. Besides, the president had no reason to deceive him in that respect. At the same time, Dawn Academy's central

computer system was right in front of him, making it doubly unlikely that it would conceal anything from the dean, especially considering his authority.

Suddenly, the dean looked up in surprise. “Are you saying that neither the admissions head nor the student union president has the authority to view that one single admission notice?”

The girl’s respect for the dean gleamed and she smiled teasingly. “Your brain seems to be working quite well even though you’re getting older!”

The dean then ordered in an imperative tone, “Show me the admissions notice right now!”

The girl spread out her fair palms and had a helpless look in her glazed eyes. “As much as I’d like to do that, you don’t have the authority to view it either.”

The dean got up at once, and for the first time, had a shocked look. “Not even I have permission to view it? Even though it’s just a copy of the admission notice?”

The girl’s hands were tied. “That’s right. I was surprised too.”

After a moment’s silence, the dean lamented, “I understand. We’ll set this aside then. Right now, with the highest authority I have, I order all the copies of the freshmen’s admission notices to be encrypted. Only I, or those with authority higher than mine, can view them. That shouldn’t be a problem, right?”

“No problem at all. Wait a moment.” The girl closed her eyes and opened them again after a few seconds. “Done. You don’t want anyone else to know who the disappeared admissions notice belongs to, am I right? Or, have you already guessed whose it is? ”

The dean paced to the window. Dawn Academy was very quiet at night and he remarked indifferently, “Yes, and no. During the opening ceremony, I noticed how interesting this batch of freshmen were. But before that, I don’t want too many busybodies or interferences hindering their growth. I’ll be returning to the New World tomorrow and they’ll remain in your capable hands.”

...

Not a single soul knew about the conversation in the dean’s office. Similarly, no one was aware that the copies of that batch’s admission notices had been restricted and were accessible only for those with higher-authority.

Meanwhile, Xiao Lin was still troubled by his basic meditation. Although he had gained plenty of valuable fundamental knowledge from Zhang Tingting, it was still of little use at present.

“Isn’t there any other way?” Xiao Lin asked grudgingly. His initial intelligence value was too low, and if his initial intelligence value represented the ability to attune to the elements, it was a clear sign that he might really need a month or two to raise that zero to one. He could not afford to wait that long!

“Unless you’re a talented student. I know that there are some talents which can enhance your ability to be more aware of the elements. Tsk, tsk, I’m so jealous. I know a senior who has that talent, and she practically rockets through her meditation!”

Zhang Tingting spoke unhindered and chatted away animatedly. However, she immediately heard a cough from behind her. It was her boyfriend, Gu Fantian, reminding her helplessly in a low voice, “Don’t wander too far from the topic!”

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Chapter 32: The Second Day’s Courses

“Ah! Sorry, sorry!” Zhang Tingting apologized profusely. Her brows furrowed for a moment and she clapped her hands all of a sudden. “I got it!”

“Oh? What is it?” Xiao Lin’s eyes lit up.

“I remember a senior telling me that the process of entering meditation is neither difficult nor simple. As long as you experience contact with the elements once, you can easily enter a meditative state!”

“That doesn’t help at all, does it?” Gu Fantian could not help but interrupt again.

“It does!” Zhang Tingting answered defiantly. “I heard that there’s a spell called Magicus Similitudus or something like that, which is capable of synchronizing the mental consciousness of two people. That way, a person who has zero mastery of meditation can borrow the other person’s mental power through the spell and connect with the elements.”

“What level is this spell? ” Xiao Lin asked.

“Let me think. I think the caster has to be a Gold-rank mage.”

Xiao Lin wiped the sweat from his forehead and laughed dryly. He felt like he could not keep up with the girl’s haphazard thinking. After a bit more small talk, he proceeded to end the conversation.

Nevertheless, Zhang Tingting’s words gave Xiao Lin a little bit of inspiration. There was no way for him to seek out a Gold-rank mage who knew the Magicus Similitudus spell, much less persuade that person to aid in his predicament. If, however, the only requirement was that he had to feel the attunement with the elements, he believed that there might be another more convenient method, although it would take a couple of days before he could implement it.

The entire night was a sleepless one for him.

The next day’s courses were completely different from the first day, but it still adhered to the general trend of compulsory courses in the morning and elective courses in the afternoon. The compulsory course scheduled on the second day was Common Language of Planet Norma or, simply put, a foreign language class. The electives he had for that afternoon was Basic Physical Skills, but because Xiao Lin was doing dual-cultivation in magic and martial arts, the other course he applied for—Basic Perception—started in the afternoon as well.

For Xiao Lin, the entire day's courses were downright disastrous.

The language lesson was not as lively and interesting as the previous day's history class. Their professor was an old woman who only explained basic grammar throughout the entire class. Planet Norma's language seemed to be a combination of English and Pinyin, with 43 basic letters. All of its daily words were composed of those basic letters.

The common language was what humans used to converse on Planet Norma. In addition, there were humanoid races like dwarves who also used it as their lingua franca. Therefore, the old woman emphasized repeatedly in her lectures that mastering that language was the most basic requirement in order to travel to the New World. Without learning to speak it, it would be especially difficult for them to enter.

The course's contents were an absolute bore, but it was clearly stated on the course table that Band Four was required for the language course. Xiao Lin understood its importance, but continued to yawn repeatedly, acknowledging that he was completely unsuited to learning foreign languages.

After the first class was over, Xiao Lin discovered that he had already gained an extra skill. His mastery of Planet Norma's Common Language was at LVO: 10/50, leaving him feeling a little relieved. Common Language did not seem as difficult as Basic Meditation.

During lunch, Xiao Lin asked a few other people and found that everyone had different levels of XP gained in that same three-hour course. Some had more than 20 XP, while others had much fewer, at only five or six XP.

Xiao Lin's 10 XP was considered the average and was neither good nor bad. He smiled bitterly because he knew that the 10 XP would have been five if not for his SS-Level Academic Genius talent. He practically ranked as one of the underachievers.

Meanwhile, Gu Xiaoyue's Common Language had increased by 20 XP, and although she was still the best among the freshmen, she did not perform as incredibly as she did in the Basic Meditation course.

Xiao Lin actually felt rather relieved when he finally discovered that she had a rather normal side to her. However, that aspect also confirmed his understanding of attributes as Gu Fantian elucidated.

In the end, one's intelligence points did not represent pure IQ. Gu Xiaoyue, with her 36-point intelligence, took only three hours to increase her Basic Meditation from LVO to LV1, but only managed to get 20 XP for Planet Norma's Common Language.

Courses such as common language were purely based on a student's talent in learning foreign languages. In that regard, many girls would surely perform much better than male students. Even Cheng Ming—a talented student and an acting class monitor—was likely to have less than 10 XP, judging from what Xiao Lin noticed to be a gloomy expression on the former's face...

In the afternoon, Xiao Lin's compulsory courses were Basic Physical Skills and Basic Perception, but because of his delay in getting a breakthrough for Basic Meditation, Xiao Lin chose to focus on Basic Physical Skills for the entire afternoon.

The course had only one goal, and that was to improve physical fitness. The contents of the course were as boring as the one that morning, with little to no technical content. Exercises, such as 100 push-ups, 200 squats, and a 20-kilometer run, continued throughout the afternoon.

Since the course contents were not that difficult, the tutor was only a third-year, even though the demands remained high. He made it clear that anyone who did not complete the required exercise would not be allowed to leave. If it was already 7 p.m. and the dorm closed its doors, then those who did not complete it had to spend the entire night starving in the training hall.

A year-round otaku life had basically destroyed all of Xiao Lin's physical fitness. He could hardly do any push-ups or squats, and the 20-kilometer run nearly robbed him of his life. Unfortunately, the moon was high up in the sky when Xiao Lin dragged his heavy legs to complete the final lap. It took him three hours to complete the 20 kilometers, and it was already way past 7 p.m., after taking into account his previous push-ups and squats.

The entire training hall was empty. Xiao Lin was the last person to complete the course, as the others had basically finished the whole course in three hours. Some who had average physical fitness also stepped out before it was 7 p.m. and finished in time to return to their dorms.

The tutor went back early as well, but no one dared to slack off in spite of that. There were automatic measuring instruments in the physical training hall and every single move was recorded. If anyone did not want their credits deducted, all they could do was earnestly complete everything.

Just as before, Xiao Lin received a prompt after completing all the exercises and collapsing on the track. A new skill was added: Basic Fitness LV1: 10/100.

It was worth mentioning that Basic Fitness were not calculated from LVo, but from LV1. According to Xiao Lin's understanding, things such as Basic Meditation and Planet Norma's Common Language did not exist on Earth, and so everyone's foundation was zero and the levels started from LVo.

Basic Fitness was an essential attribute for melee. A variety of physical skills that required energy release, or special energy such as sword Qi and the like, which he would likely learn in the future, was highly contingent on the user's physical fitness.

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Chapter 33: Logistics Department

After resting for a long time in the training hall and recovering from his fatigue, Xiao Lin returned to the dormitory and bet on his chances that he would still be allowed in. However, the two transparent doors were closed tightly. The computer managed everything automatically, leaving no chance to compromise. He looked up at the towering dormitory building, dropped the unrealistic idea of climbing up, and finally went back in despair.

The student regulations clearly stated that freshmen were not allowed to hang out for no reason at night. Although no one knew what that rule was for, anyone who violated the rule would have their redemption points deducted. More serious offenses would incur a direct deduction of credits. At that stage, credits and redemption points were extremely valuable; no one dared to violate that rule on a whim.

Xiao Lin hesitated a little. The academy must surely have people on night duty, and the best option for him as of then was to head back to the training hall following the route he came from. Although he did not know what season it was, he felt that it was probably 20 or so degrees. It would not be a problem to spend a night at the training hall.

However, Xiao Lin was very curious about that mysterious academy—a trait he shared in common with all freshman students. With such a good opportunity at hand, he felt that he should take the chance to have a look around in the academy.

The manifestation of that idea almost instantly shot down all of Xiao Lin's other worries. At times, curiosity could overcome reason, and Xiao Lin was the typical example of it.

It did not seem to matter if he was caught and punished with a deduction of redemption points or credits. His Grade S achievement in the admission test meant that he still had plenty to spend.

He was stubborn like that!

Xiao Lin made a resolute decision to head out. He passed through the front quarters of a grove, where the road diverged into two different paths. One passed through the public classrooms and went directly to the training halls, forming the path that everyone took on a daily basis. Another one led deeper into Dawn Academy, which also happened to be the path that Xiao Lin was taking.

Moving past the large fountain in front of the public classrooms, there were three magnificent academic buildings in front of him. The academic buildings were all classically-designed, with a steeple-shaped sloping roof and white walls covered not with tiles, but with an unknown material. It was very smooth, shining softly in a silver brilliance under the bright moonlight.

Mm? Hold up!

Xiao Lin suddenly realized something and raised his head, seeing a silver moon above his head high up in the sky. He knew that Dawn Academy was not on Earth, but still had a moon and a sun. However, the bright moon was ovular and looked slightly bigger too.

That was not the point, however. The main point was a smaller round moon not too far away from the oval moon. Two moons shone next to each other, and the brighter silver moon outshone any stars. Of course, Xiao Lin was also unsure if he could still see the familiar stars he used to see on Earth.

“I was told that this academy was designed to emulate Planet Norma. That includes the environment, time, and climate. Does this mean that the New World has two moons? How many suns does it have, then?”

Xiao Lin sighed a little after remembering that he was not on Earth. The three academic buildings were each divided into a specific area, and each area was separated by strange flowers and plants. All three were public academic buildings for the more senior students.

After going past the three academic buildings, he came to a wide, open space behind them, where a huge silver sculpture of a man stood in the middle. Xiao Lin approached it to look at it. At the base of the sculpture was a line of golden characters: Lei Jun, founder of Dawn Academy, pioneer of Planet Norma!

“Did this man establish the academy?” Xiao Lin looked at the sculpture carefully under the moonlight. From appearance alone, the man looked rather ordinary. He was dressed in an ancient robe that could only be seen in historical television series.

Xiao Lin silently made a mental note of the name, not for any specific reason, but purely because he thought that it might be useful in a history lesson or an exam. In any case, committing it to memory was not a bad thing at all.

There were four diverging roads around the open space and signs were erected at each intersection. On the left was the dormitory area for seniors, while up ahead was the library. The upper right was the lab area, and the lower right was the logistics department.

Upon seeing the last sign, Xiao Lin’s eyes suddenly glowed like a lightbulb. The logistics department was for none other than food and clothing, of course. He gulped hard, because after a whole afternoon of intense exercise, Xiao Lin barely had any water. He was so famished that he could gobble up an entire roast chicken. The word ‘logistics’ was practically the same as ‘roast chicken’ right then.

Just as he was getting some mischievous ideas, a sudden voice came from behind him. “You there! Hold it!”

Xiao Lin turned quickly and saw two blue-uniformed boys approaching him quickly. One stopped and asked, “Hello there, Senior. Please produce your universal card.”

Blue uniforms meant that the two guys were in their sophomore year. Their tone of voice was still very polite, as they probably mistook Xiao Lin for a senior. It was logical, given that freshmen were forbidden to hang out around campus at night, and Xiao Lin’s uniform had been left in the training hall.

“Oh, the universal card. Gimme a sec,” Xiao Lin pretended to lower his head to search his pockets. He casually made a remark, “There’s still inspections so late at night? Dawn Academy’s rules are so troublesome.”

One of the boys smiled. “Good one, Senior. We have no choice. The student union established this rule a long time ago. Students in all years are not allowed to enter Dawn Academy’s forbidden areas, but there are always people who take advantage of it during the night... Haha.”

The statement implied that Xiao Lin was one of those people. Xiao Lin’s curiosity was piqued and he raised his head to ask, without thinking, “What forbidden area? Where are the academy’s forbidden areas?”

Xiao Lin wanted to give himself two slaps after he said that. Sure enough, the other boy looked suspicious and began sizing Xiao Lin up. “Dawn Academy’s forbidden areas are no secret. Any teacher or student in this college should know about it!”

“Wait, this isn’t right. If he’s a freshman, there’s no way he’d know about the forbidden area.” The boy had a sudden realization.

Xiao Lin was drenched in cold sweat and could only curse his mouth’s quick response. Seeing the growing suspicion in their eyes, he suddenly raised his finger to the night sky and exclaimed, “Look! The dean’s flying dragon! ”

During the opening ceremony, the dean came in person riding a golden flying dragon. Such a cool and commanding appearance shocked all the freshmen, but little did they know that the second- and third-year students were just as shocked to see a real-life golden dragon.

That sentence prompted the two boys to turn their heads almost subconsciously. However, there was nothing in the night sky but the silver-white moonlight—not even any birds, let alone flying dragons.

They immediately realized that it was actually a very feeble attempt at deceiving them. When they turned their heads again, Xiao Lin was already bolting toward the logistics department like a madman.

Indeed, Xiao Lin made a run for the logistics department because filling his stomach remained his immediate priority...

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Chapter 34: Encountering the Dragon Again

“Stop!”

“Hold it right there!”

The two boys on duty were not slow either. Although they lagged behind by a few seconds, their physiques and speed far surpassed a freshman like Xiao Lin.

The path leading to the logistics department was paved with stones and was dense with woodland. The bright moonlight was blocked out, leaving only a few white spots on the stone road.

As soon as Xiao Lin made a turn to the first exit, his shirt was grabbed by the two boys behind him. Under normal circumstances, Xiao Lin could never have been able to run faster than a second-year student, and on top of that, his extreme exercise that afternoon had already pushed his physical strength to the limit.

“You must be a freshman. I didn’t expect to catch a freshman with the guts to roam around instead of going back to their dorm. Let’s go! We’re heading to the student union right now! ”

“Hmph. Can’t wait to see what your punishment is!”

Xiao Lin lamented internally. Even though he was actually already prepared for such a situation, it was still a pain to think that the rewards he worked so hard to achieve in the admissions test were soon going to disappear.

Knowing that there was no point in resisting, the desperate Xiao Lin accepted his fate and was about to turn back. He shot one last reluctant glance at the logistics department, which was also within spitting distance. If he walked through the woods and came to the big building, he firmly believed that there would be roast chicken and roast duck there.

All of a sudden, Xiao Lin sensed that something was amiss. The corners of his eyes twitched slightly and he stopped in his tracks, just as he was about to start moving. He pulled at the uniforms of the two sophomores and whispered in a very low and cautious tone, “Be careful. There’s a dragon!”

Perhaps it would have done him good not to say that, for the two boys roared furiously after he said that, reprimanding, “F*CK THAT! That trick again! Do you really think we’re stupid!”

Roar!

A resounding dragon roar suddenly echoed, and Xiao Lin’s face instantly paled. He was practically on the verge of tears as he said, “I told you to be careful! Why did you yell so loud!”

The two boys were also stunned to the spot, as if they were struck with a freezing spell. Having experienced what happened in the opening ceremony, they should not have been as scared of the dragon as they were then, especially when the dragon’s roar seemed to sound as if it came from a dream. The roar did not contain much dragon might and was insufficient to leave them instinctively fearful. However, the main issue was that the source of the roar was far too close, as if it was just next to them!

All three of them looked at each other and turned around cautiously. In the depths of the forests, where the lush foliage completely blocked the moonlight, a pair of orange lights flickered in the dark.

They gulped hard and finally recognized the behemoth hidden in the dark. It was clearly a dragon’s eyes; it was none other than the dean’s golden dragon!

Xiao Lin finally understood the saying ‘speak of the devil and he doth appear’. No one would have expected that creature to be hiding in the woods, seemingly fast asleep, right in front of the logistics department. However, there was one thing that all of them understood: no creature would be pleased to be awakened from their slumber. The two boys were well aware of that fact and began retreating slowly, observing the dragon’s actions.

Xiao Lin took the opportunity to break free from both their grasps and rushed toward the only house in the woods. He paid absolutely no mind to the dragon that was close at hand.

The two second-year boys widened their eyes in bewilderment and anger.

“After him! I’ll get the year leader! This freshman must be punished severely once we get our hands on him!” One of the boys gritted his teeth and ran away.

“You!” The other boy was dumbfounded and watched his companion turn and run off. He wiped the cold sweat from his forehead, glanced at the dragon’s golden eyes, and felt his heart thumping wildly.

Xiao Lin was fearless because he was ignorant, but the second-year courses had already explained the habits of dragons. The boy knew that the dragon was presently in a half-dream/half-awake state. Dragons never completely closed their eyes when sleeping, and they were highly alert. The slightest danger could wake them up.

That was also why Xiao Lin could rush past it so safely. After all, he was an underachiever with an attribute value of only 10 points. The golden dragon’s instincts did not take him for a threat at all.

The boy was unsure of whether his strength would be as dangerous, as his control over his own power was very poor. Unable to fully exert control, he could only take little teensy steps as he moved forward. All he could do was hold his breath and focus his attention; that was the only way he could reduce his own presence to a minimum and avoid awakening the dragon.

The path stretched for about two hundred meters through the woods, and although Xiao Lin’s physical strength was at about 70% or 80%, he still could not run anywhere, even if he was at full strength. In any case, he had to at least run faster than the second-year student’s tortoise-like pace.

Before arriving at the building marked ‘logistics department’, Xiao Lin was actually rather scared still. Fortunately, the dragon seemed to be sound asleep and showed no signs of waking up at all. He even had the errant thought of throwing something to wake the dragon up completely, but he soon decided to drop the idea after some thought.

For one, he bore no grudges against that sophomore he did not know, who was also just doing his duty. Secondly, if Xiao Lin really did disturb the dragon, he felt that he might end up becoming the dragon’s supper.

Before the boy had arrived, Xiao Lin decided to hide in the building for a while and look for something to eat while he was at it. Even if he ended up getting punished, he still had to fill his stomach. Having spent half the day in hunger, Xiao Lin was overwhelmed with an intense yearning for food.

The logistics department was different from the previous teaching building. It was nothing more than a low one-story bungalow, but it occupied a larger area than all the other teaching buildings. The front entrance was a heavy, black metal door. It was locked tightly, but Xiao Lin walked along the wall and chanced upon a small fence gate which happened to be unlocked.

Xiao Lin felt enlightened when he pushed the door open and entered. Inside the towering walls was a huge courtyard that was not shaded by tree leaves, but instead shined beautifully under the moonlight. Individual patches of vegetable gardens grew in the courtyard and each patch was planted with a variety of vegetables. The corners were covered with vines, while farther ahead were trees laden with unrecognizable fruits.

The place was clearly a vegetable garden and an orchard. Xiao Lin felt that he had come to the right place and it was indeed the logistics department. Believing that he could find something to eat there, he continued forward and opened the door with a squeak. In front of him was a long, quiet, dimly lit corridor. The rooms on both sides of the corridor were all wide open.

Curious, Xiao Lin stepped into the nearest room. It was empty, surrounded only by a row of iron cages. After his eyes adjusted to the dimness, he discovered that there were chickens in the cages. It turned out to be a chicken coop.

Xiao Lin's eyes beamed like a weasel. He gulped and muttered to himself, "Beggar's chicken sounds really good right about now."

Unfortunately for Xiao Lin, someone was hot on his trail. His idea of making beggar's chicken sounded good in theory, but aside from having no condiments to cook with, there was also a problem of slaughtering the chicken.

Xiao Lin shook his head, sighed with regret, and decided to head to the other rooms to find out if there was any cooked food.

"Craving beggar's chicken so late at night? Good idea, but do you know how to cook?" came a man's lazy voice from inside the dark house.

Xiao Lin was so scared that he nearly fell flat on the ground. He yelled out, "Ghost!"

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Chapter 35: Iron Comb Chicken

Snap!

As the lamp above his head switched on, the room was immediately fully lit. Xiao Lin finally saw that the person behind him who spoke all of a sudden was not a ghost, but a man in nightwear leaning against the wall.

The man yawned and looked at Xiao Lin sleepily. "What year are you from? Why are you here stealing chickens this late at night instead of sleeping?"

"Who are you?" Xiao Lin had a wary gaze. He also felt rather shocked to see a man suddenly appear there in the dead of night.

The man did not know whether to laugh or cry when he heard Xiao Lin's question. "I'm the Department Head for logistics. You broke into my place and you dare question me? You're a freshman, I believe! Tsk, tsk, this batch really is something. It's only been two days and you're already violating the student code."

After learning the man's identity, Xiao Lin finally gave up all his ideas. He finally understood that the academy's administration actually held a lot of power. Since the person before him was the head of logistics, Xiao Lin was no match for him—be it in status or strength.

It hardly occurred to him that the Department Head would actually spend the night inside the logistics department. Xiao Lin sighed and asked, "How do you know I'm a freshman?"

"Because only the freshmen don't recognize me." The man slipped into his slippers and walked to the chicken coop to check the birds one by one. Then, he turned his head and said unhappily, "Look! You've woken up all the chickens!"

The chickens looked rather strange. They had gray feathers and their heads were at least twice as big as an ordinary chicken's. Their eyes were small, blood-colored, and spun around repeatedly. However, their most striking character was the fleshy crest on the top of the head, which was actually semicircular and sharp like a knife's edge. It was as dark as ink, which was a sight to behold for Xiao Lin. He could not resist leaning forward to take a closer look.

"Be careful!" The sleepy man's eyes opened wide all of a sudden. His hand quickly grabbed the corner of Xiao Lin's clothes and threw the boy back.

At that moment, a rooster from the corner jumped out at lightning speed and slammed the fleshy crest into the wire fence of the chicken coop.

Sparks flew everywhere and the sound of metal clashed!

Xiao Lin, who had been forcibly thrown to the ground, looked dumbfounded. He then realized that those crests did not just look like blades—they were blades, and sharp ones at that!

"This... What in the world is that?" Xiao Lin was dripping with cold sweat. He realized how naïve he was for wanting to eat those chickens earlier.

The man patted his forehead and said helplessly, "You'll learn about them in your biology course; there's a species of animal on Norma called the iron comb bird."

Xiao Lin pointed to the birds in the chicken coop with a look of disbelief. "Iron comb bird? They're birds? Don't pull my leg just because I don't know anything!"

"Well, these are chickens."

"Then why did you claim that these are iron comb chickens?"

The man nodded, "Okay, okay. Let me explain more accurately. These are chickens in front of you. I forcibly hybridized Earth's domestic chickens with the Planet Norma's iron comb bird. I should name them iron comb chickens, shouldn't I? Has a nice ring to it, doesn't it!"

"Forced hybridization..." Xiao Lin connected the dots regarding that cross between a chicken and a bird and his lips twitched. He looked at the smug man and stuttered, "You... Who are you exactly?"

“I’m Song Junlang, head of the logistics department,” the man introduced himself. As his name suggested, he was a very handsome man¹ indeed, but Xiao Lin’s mind was conditioned to think of the chicken-bird hybrid whenever he looked at the man...

Bang, bang, bang!

A heavy knock was heard at the door not too far away. Song Junlang walked to the window and took a look, then looked back at Xiao Lin and smiled. “I knew it. How could a freshman sneak out in the middle of the night and steal chickens without being caught? The Disciplinary Department of the student union can’t be that useless. Come with me. You’ll have to accept what’s coming to you.”

Xiao Lin knew that the student outside was the one tasked with patrolling and had safely passed by the golden dragon. Even if Xiao Lin had a surplus of redemption points and credits, he was not prepared to have them be deducted just like that. A sudden thought then occurred to him after he opened the door. “Wait! Didn’t you just say that you wanted to eat beggar’s chicken? How about I stay here and cook some for you!”

Song Junlang snickered. “You’re the one who wanted to eat beggar’s chicken.”

Xiao Lin’s vision was hazy from hunger; his stomach gurgled non-stop. He nodded without denying and lamented, “Let me be a hungry ghost for now. I haven’t even anything until yet.”

Song Junlang asked, “Is the freshmen’s buffet so unappetizing to you?”

Xiao Lin shook his head quickly. As the head of the logistics department, Song Junlang was likely the one who was responsible for all three of those meals. Xiao Lin would never dare to say anything bad about that, and besides, they all tasted amazing. He briefly explained the situation of his physical training that afternoon and did not manage to return to the dormitory in time because he was finishing his last round of exercise.

Department Head Song sighed dramatically. “You took more than three hours to run twenty kilometers? How bad is your stamina?”

Xiao Lin whispered embarrassedly, “Only three points.”

“Oh? That’s low!” There was a strange expression on Song Junlang’s face. He rubbed his chin and glanced back-and-forth between Xiao Lin and the chicken coop. He then asked, “Do you really know how to cook beggar’s chicken?”

“Yes, definitely!” Sensing a change in the department head’s attitude, Xiao Lin would never be so foolish as to admit that he only learned from television.

Song Junlang added, “I’m talking with these kinds of chickens.”

Xiao Lin gritted his teeth and comforted himself by saying that the iron comb chicken was just a little bigger than a normal chicken. In the end, he nodded and said yes, but added after some thought, “I won’t be responsible for slaughtering this chicken!”

If Xiao Lin and his current combat ability came face-to-face with the iron comb chicken’s sharp-edged fleshy crest, no one knew whether Xiao Lin or the chicken would be victorious.

“You don’t need to be concerned about killing the chicken, but you have to give your assurance that you’re doing this out of your own accord, and that I’m not forcing you.”

“No problem. This is my decision,” Xiao Lin agreed unhesitatingly, but failed to notice a peculiarity in Department Head Song’s tone.

Song Junlang’s face suddenly lit up with joy and looked at Xiao Lin with interest. He patted the boy’s shoulder again and happily remarked, “I think it must be fate for the two of us to meet tonight. Hahaha, I can’t wait.”

‘Are you really that excited to eat beggar’s chicken?’

Xiao Lin removed the doubt in his mind as the knocking outside the door became more urgent. He said anxiously, “Then, what about the Disciplinary Department?”

“It’s fine. Leave them to me. As long as you’re on my turf, no one can do anything to you!”

Xiao Lin was slightly relieved. At the end of the day, he managed to save his redemption points and credits. However, he had a very uneasy feeling in his heart. Department Head Song was looking at him rather strangely, like a scientist looking at a guinea pig.

Xiao Lin comforted himself by saying that he was reading too much into the situation.

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 36: The Clash

Xiao Lin had an epiphany as he walked behind Song Junlang: a more apt description for the Logistics Department would be a farm with a vegetable garden. Each room cultivated creatures that were both familiar and unfamiliar.

They seemed familiar to Xiao Lin because they looked pretty much similar to the animals in his memory. They were also unfamiliar as he had never seen a glowing snake, nor a rabbit flying in the air with short wings, let alone a two-headed duck...

Xiao Lin had chills looking at them. He could not help but ask, “Are these the product of hybridizing animals from both Planet Norma and Earth?”

“Aren’t I great at this?” Song Junlang seemed proud of himself.

Xiao Lin nodded unwillingly. He thought about the giant golden dragon at the entrance and asked, “The giant dragon in the bushes, was that also a product of hybridization?”

“Impossible!” Song Junlang seemed disappointed. “I wish I could do that, but it would require the dean’s permission. That giant lizard is the dean’s baby; no one dares to touch that thing!”

“Could that giant dragon wake up all of a sudden?” Xiao Lin could not help but be afraid of the possibility; he had come over here by rushing right past that creature.

“Don’t worry, the dean casts an advanced hypnosis on it. It should sleep for a full 24 hours!”

“Why is the dean’s dragon here?”

“The guy’s gotta eat. Dawn Academy does not prepare food for the dragon; either it eats here, or I can throw it into the dorm and let it eat you guys.”

The duo continued chatting casually. Xiao Lin found Song Junlang to be a very easy-going person; although he was the head of the student union’s Logistics Department, he did not sound arrogant at all. But of course, the hybridizations were an entirely different conversation.

They arrived at the door soon after that. Xiao Lin stopped nearby and said, “I’ll hide somewhere so you can tell them you didn’t see me come in.”

Song Junlang’s face was filled with disdain. “They’re not blind. Here’s the only safe spot. If you don’t stay here, you might end up in the dragon’s stomach.”

“How are you going to explain?” Xiao Lin was still worried, but not because of Song Junlang; it was for his own precious redemption points and credits.

“You’re so troublesome. Just stay here!”

Song Junlang pulled the black metal door open, and the man who was chasing Xiao Lin was standing right there. However, Xiao Lin was curious after seeing that his partner was missing.

The man seemed like he met his mortal enemy upon seeing Xiao Lin. He said with red eyes, “Haha! I’ve caught you! F*ck, the hell you’ve put me through—I’m reporting to the department head and having him punish you severely!”

As Song Junlang said, the giant golden dragon was hypnotized by the dean, so it was impossible to wake it under normal circumstances. However, the man did not know this; he felt like he was walking over the tip of a knife as he walked past the dragon’s eyelids, and it was excruciating. He vowed to make the culprit—this rebellious freshman—learn Dawn Academy’s strict rules the hard way.

“Department Head Song, thank you for catching this freshman for us,” the man acknowledged Song Junlang and tried to arrest Xiao Lin.

Song Junlang blocked the man from Xiao Lin. He asked, hostile, “What are you doing?”

The man was taken aback. “Department Head Song, this freshman violated the rules and snuck out of the dorms in the middle of the night. Moreover, he trespassed on your farm. Oh no, he’s trespassed on the Logistics Department. I’ll drag him back and not bother your sleep.”

Song Junlang blinked and said, “Who said he snuck out? I told him to come over and help.”

“Huh?” The man was both stunned and surprised. He forced a smile and said, “Department Head Song, stop joking. What could he help you with in the middle of the night? I know you’re being nice, but we can’t have Academy rules violated.”

Department Head Song squinted and asked, “Do I have to report to you what he’s helping me with? Are you disrespecting a Department Head like me? Tsk tsk, looks like I have to take a trip to the student union tomorrow.”

The man was terrified as he raised his hands in surrender.

“On top of that, I didn’t allow you into the Logistics Department. Who let you in? Aren’t you a recruit at the disciplinary department. Don’t you know the rules?”

The man backed out of the door, pleasing Song Junlang. He yawned and got ready to lock the door.

“Hold on!” With a soft shout, a pair of hands pressed against the door, preventing Song Junlang from closing it.

Song Junlang lifted his brow after seeing who it was. “Oh? The sophomore leader is here instead of sleeping at this time of the night. Moon gazing or out for a stroll?”

Xiao Lin was stunned. Was it Chen Yu, the sophomore leader, who collected the course schedules on behalf of their class monitor? He looked over to the two people who had just rushed over. One was the man who conducted the patrol, and the other was a man with a crew cut and a serious face.

The man who Song Junlang turned away whispered to Chen Yu about what had just happened. Chen Yu nodded, glanced at Xiao Lin, before laying his eyes on Song Junlang again. He said with a smile, “I hurried over when I heard that there was a giant dragon. Looks like the dean casted an advanced hypnosis on it, so I don’t have to worry.”

Song Junlang replied respectfully, “A sophomore leader deserving of his position. You could discern the spell with one look! Now that the matter is resolved, good night!”

Song Junlang tried to close the door again, but Chen Yu’s hand was still on the door. The duo looked at each other, and their strength increased by the second. The metal door rattled non-stop, but it did not move an inch.

Song Junlang let go of it and his expression darkened. “What are you trying to do?”

Chen Yu smiled and said respectfully, “Department Head Song, you must be joking. I wouldn’t dare do anything. I’m just helping those in the disciplinary department to bring a rule-violating freshman back. You wouldn’t say no to that, would you?”

Under the bright moonlight of the quiet night, Xiao Lin sensed something unusual in the atmosphere. He did not understand what he was seeing.

The student code explained the routine of Dawn Academy; the student union had great autonomy at the school. They were the ones deciding the course and teacher arrangements.

The student union was divided into several departments, including the admissions and the disciplinary department. In terms of position, the president of the student union held the most power; it could be said that whenever the dean was away, the student union president would be in charge of almost all daily trivial affairs for everyone—from freshmen to seniors.

Under the president's authority, there were several department heads, followed by the year leaders, then the monitors of each class. Of course, although the definition of the monitors' powers was the same, the senior monitors were always deemed more important than the junior monitors. The last on the list would be the team leaders which were appointed by each class monitor.

This was most of the management hierarchy of Dawn Academy's student union.

At the moment, as a sophomore facing Song Junlang, the head of the logistics department, Chen Yu's remarks could be regarded as polite, but Xiao Lin could clearly tell from Chen Yu's eyes that there was disdain!

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 37: A High-Ranking Person Is Looking After Me

A sophomore leader looking down on a department head seemed confusing to Xiao Lin. However, he could not afford to offend either one of them; he took a few steps back unconsciously and activated his Onlooker Mode.

Song Junlang said with a straight face, "I don't think there's any need for me to explain things to you as a department head!"

Chen Yu laughed and mumbled to himself, "You're just a cook, you're not even Silver rank. You only got to be department head with your connections. You really think you can do whatever you want?"

Chen Yu intentionally lowered his voice, but there was pin-drop silence in the quiet of the night. Some heard what he said.

The two sophomores behind Chen Yu were shocked. They looked over at Department Head Song with a weird gaze and whispered to each other, "He must be kidding! Every department head in the student union is Gold-ranked. If he isn't even Silver-ranked, that would mean he's just Bronze-ranked, wouldn't it?"

"Aren't most sophomores already Bronze? Even our year leader is Silver-ranked!"

"Shut up! Are you even allowed to talk about the department head like that? Some recruits at the Disciplinary Department you are. Apologize!" Chen Yu cut the duo short, but he did not seem all too stern about it.

Xiao Lin understood what was going on. In an academy that measured everything by strength, although Song Junlang was a department head, his strength was not greater than Chen Yu's. That was why Chen Yu did not take him seriously. However, Xiao Lin was still a little confused; Chen Yu claimed that Song Junlang had connections. Could there be descendants in Dawn Academy?

Xiao Lin looked at the silent Department Head Song with worry. Although they had just met and they did not really know each other, he had a better impression of this easy going department head than he did of Chen Yu.

But of course, most of it was due to Song Junlang protecting him, while Chen Yu was trying to arrest him.

What surprised the crowd was how calm Song Junlang remained in the face of Chen Yu's provocation. He still had a gentle, harmless smile on his face, but his words were threatening. "I'm not letting you take him away tonight! You're right; a high-ranked person is looking after me, what are you gonna do about it?"

Xiao Lin looked up silently. Two oval-shaped moons still hung in the sky.

Chen Yu growled, "Department Head Song, I know you're close to the dean, but do you think the student code is a joke? It's been the law here since Dawn Academy was founded!"

Xiao Lin was shocked. Chen Yu invoked the name of the dean in a pretty serious accusation. Xiao Lin could not help but worry.

Song Junlang smiled and replied, "I've cooked for the dean."

Chen Yu was evidently pissed. He stressed, "Even the dean himself has to follow the rules!"

Song Junlang nodded. "I understand, but I've cooked for the dean."

Chen Yu was extremely pissed. He did not know much about Song Junlang, but one thing was for sure: Department Head Song was close to the dean. It was no trivial matter that they had cooked together; this meant that Department Head Song had explored the New World with the dean. This was an unusual relationship.

Beep, beep, beep!

The magic phone in Chen Yu's pocket rang. He pulled it out and took a look before frowning. He walked to a corner and opened his phone; a virtual screen rose from it slowly.

Xiao Lin took a good look from the corner of his eye; there was a baby-faced man on the screen. He had met this man during the orientation; it seemed like he was president of the student union.

This confused and terrified Xiao Lin. He only snuck out to walk around and get some food; he did not expect to involve this many people. There was a department head, then a year leader, and now the president of the student union.

He took a glimpse at Department Head Song. This handsome department head seemed nonchalant and relaxed.

Although Chen Yu lowered his voice while talking to the student union president, the crowd could still hear quite a bit of the conversation.

“Stop this now, come back. Stop going after the freshman as well.” The president was speaking; Xiao Lin had heard his voice during orientation, so he could recognize the voice immediately.

“But Department Head Song...”

“You know who’s backing him.”

“So what! I’m not giving in!”

The duo continued arguing. Xiao Lin was mildly shocked that the student union president chose to back off, but Chen Yu was not giving in. Their focus was also not on Xiao Lin; it was on Song Junlang.

It was getting late, and the wind was picking up. The duo’s conversation became harder to hear, but Xiao Lin heard the president saying, “Just remember this, the dean and the entire academy owes Department Head Song a huge favor. No matter what he does, as long as it doesn’t affect Dawn Academy’s basest interests, no one can interfere!”

The conversation ended there. Chen Yu’s expression was darker than ever when he returned. Since the president had said so, Chen Yu could not do anything about it anymore. Before he left, he asked, “Department Head Song, you know Xiao Lin?”

Xiao Lin was not surprised that the year leader recognized him right away. It was normal for a year leader to be able to see his information.

However, Song Junlang’s expression became strange. He thought about it long and hard before asking, “Who’s Xiao Lin?”

Chen Yu shivered; he walked away with gritted teeth. He felt that this Department Head, who was some high-ranked person was looking after, was more interested in causing him trouble than protecting a freshman he did not know.

“So, you’re Xiao Lin.” Department Head Song came to a realization moments later and stopped asking questions. To him, Xiao Lin’s entrance exam results and basic attributes did not matter.

“Let’s make beggar’s chicken.” Department Head Song was excited. That was all he cared about.

Xiao Lin was left speechless. “Are you really craving it that much?”

Song Junlang corrected him, “No, not for me, for you. Stop wasting time, let’s go!”

Xiao Lin felt like Department Head Song was treating him like a lab rat. He shook his head, stopped overthinking it, and went ahead to work on making beggar’s chicken.

Although the logistics department was more like a farm than anything, there were sufficient spices for cooking. Xiao Lin found some aluminium foil; he planned to do it in the simplest way: roasting a chicken in the wild. He had not learned anything more complicated than that.

Song Junlang was quick as well. Although Chen Yu insulted him for being low-ranked, handling an iron comb chicken was no problem for him. He seemed very experienced; he cleaned up the chicken in moments, and the sharp comb was completely removed as well. As ferocious as the iron comb chicken looked before its death, it was now a roast chicken for human consumption.

Xiao Lin's lips twitched as he watched Song Junlang. He thought to himself, 'could this Department Head be nothing more than a glorified cook?'

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 38: Effects Of The Iron Comb Chicken

Roasting chicken was simple. Following his memory, Xiao Lin marinated it with salt, MSG, soy sauce, chilli powder and so on before wrapping the chicken in aluminium foil. He started a fire next to the grove, and threw the wrapped chicken under the charcoals.

Xiao Lin extinguished the fire excitedly after about an hour. He grabbed the roast chicken and tore the aluminium foil open. The roast chicken was a little burnt, but it smelled extremely good. The oil was still bubbling loudly in it.

Xiao Lin, famished, did not care about scalding his mouth. He tore the fat and tender chicken legs off its body and stuffed them into his mouth. This iron comb chicken was bigger and meatier than Earth birds, and it was more delicious roasted.

Xiao Lin was really hungry; there was nothing left other than the chicken's skeleton within ten minutes. He patted his stomach in satisfaction, only to discover that Department Head Song had been watching him eat instead of tasting it himself. Xiao Lin felt a little embarrassed, but Department Head Song spoke first.

Song Junlang asked with concern, "How was it? How do you feel?"

"Well, it tasted good."

Song Junlang shook his head. "No, I'm not talking about the chicken. I'm asking how does your body feel?"

"Huh? Body?" Xiao Lin was confused, but he began feeling that something was off as he spoke. His stomach started aching and he fell onto the ground, clutching his gut in pain.

"Does it hurt a lot?" Song Junlang seemed worried as well. He went over and helped Xiao Lin up.

“You, what did you give me?” As dumb as Xiao Lin could be, he knew that the pain was caused by the roast chicken.

Song Junlang comforted him saying, “Don’t worry, ordinary people’s bodies repel things from Planet Norma. You’ll be fine soon. Your life isn’t in danger, trust me!”

“What! D-danger!?” Xiao Lin’s eyes widened. He finally understood why this guy was not eating. He said weakly, yet angrily, “I’ll get you. Even if I become a ghost! I’ll come back and haunt you!”

Song Junlang helped Xiao Lin into his bedroom. He said gently, “Drink some water. You’ll feel better soon.”

Xiao Lin was curled up on the bed. The pain was so excruciating and it spread throughout his body as fast as blood flowed in him. Xiao Lin wanted to run himself into the wall to kill himself. He cried, “I...I’m not drinking that! Who knows what water that is!”

“Be good and listen. It’s iced water. You’ll feel a lot better.” Song Junlang stuffed the cup into Xiao Lin’s mouth as if he was trying to talk a child into it.

Apart from the pain all over, Xiao Lin felt like there was fire burning inside of him; he felt like his skin was boiling hot. Song Junlang’s iced water was rain after a long drought for Xiao Lin; he downed the water, and the cold liquid flowed into his stomach through his throat. The burning feeling in his body, together with the pain, relieved instantly.

However, Xiao Lin immediately realized that his sight was becoming blurry. An uncontrollable drowsiness overwhelmed him as he pointed at the smiley Department Head Song saying, “Your...your water... It’s...”

Before he could finish, Xiao Lin crashed into bed and slept.

Song Junlang put the cup down and tucked Xiao Lin in. He said helplessly, “You’re a rebel, kid,. It’s better I put you to sleep than leave you in pain for the night.”

With a sigh, Department Head Song sat in front of his desk and opened a thick notebook on his table. He found a blank page, picked up his pen, and wrote: Hybridized Iron Comb Chicken, variety no. 3, 18 kg, non-hazardous, but adverse reactions are relatively great.

He put his pen down and mumbled to himself, “I wonder what the experiment’s results are. Even after hybridization, there’s repellency after consumption. This won’t get past the student union; it has to be improved.”

...

When Xiao Lin opened his eyes, the sky was bright and he was bathed in sunlight that came through the window. He felt warm and the soft bed was comfortable as well. He wanted to keep sleeping, but he jumped out of bed instead. He remembered what had happened last night.

Interestingly, he no longer felt pain; he only felt uncomfortable from his sweat-drenched clothes. He had to be in Song Junlang’s bedroom; it looked simple compared to the five-star dorms for

freshmen. There was only a bed, a desk, and a shelf full of books and notes. It was unexpectedly simple.

“You’re finally awake. You’ve got a pretty bad physique, even with repellency, one wouldn’t be asleep till this hour.” Song Junlang pushed the door open and walked in. He had a tray of dishes in his hands.

Xiao Lin was extremely wary of this after the lesson from last night. He took two steps back and said, “Don’t even count on me eating anything from you from now on! Wait, ‘I slept till this hour’... What time is it?”

“It’s nearly five o’clock.”

Xiao Lin breathed a sigh of relief. “Thank God, I can still catch up with classes today.”

Song Junlang coughed dryly. “I mean 5 p.m.”

Xiao Lin widened his eyes and he exclaimed, “What! I slept for the whole day!”

Song Junlang mercilessly said, “No, I think you’ve slept for two days. You knocked out the night before yesterday.”

Xiao Lin could not even exclaim this time around. He sat by the bed, his face deadpan. “That’s it! What do I do now! The student code says that if I missed classes without a reason, my credits will be deducted!”

Department Head Song comforted him saying, “If you’re worried about being punished for missing classes, don’t worry. I’ve notified the student union; they won’t punish you.”

Xiao Lin was doubtful. “Really? I missed two days of class! The instructor said that Dawn Academy’s management is strict about this.”

“Someone high-ranked is looking after me!”

“Fine, I’ll believe you.”

Song Junlang put the tray down, and pulled out what seemed like a laptop. He threw it at Xiao Lin and said eagerly, “Quick, check your attributes. I want to record the experiment’s results.”

Xiao Lin was pissed. He thought back to how this guy looked at him like a lab rat the night before yesterday; was he really treating him like an experiment?

“Don’t be angry. Let’s check the info first, okay? Trust me. You’ll be surprised!”

“I’m not trusting you!”

Xiao Lin sneered, but he was still curious deep down. He grabbed the laptop, logged onto the Academy’s forum, and clicked open the personal details section. After the health screening from the

admissions test, everyone's changes in attribute points would be reflected here in real-time through the Central Computer.

[Name: Xiao Lin]

[ID: 201235]

[Credits: 40]

[Redemption Points: 800]

[Basic Attributes: 3 Strength points, 2 Agility points, 2 Intelligence points, 5 Physique points]

[Skills: Level 2 Basic Swordsmanship Mastery, Level 2 Slashing, Level 0 Basic Mastery of Planet Norma's Common Language, Level 2 Basic Fitness]

Xiao Lin was stunned. He exclaimed, "Impossible!"

His Physique was only at 3 points two days ago, and his Basic Fitness was only at Level 1: 10/100. His Physique points increased by two points and his Basic Fitness also increased by a level after sleeping for two whole days.

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 39: Food Therapy

Xiao Lin was unconvinced that he could increase the XP for his basic skills just by sleeping. He guessed that it was something else, but he did not dare confirm it. He looked at Song Junlang with a doubtful gaze.

Department Head Song was more anxious than Xiao Lin was. He asked, "What? Did your attribute points increase? How much of an increase was there?"

Xiao Lin nodded. "A two-point increase for Physique, and my Basic Fitness is now Level 2."

"Hahaha! It worked!" Song Junlang nearly jumped from excitement. He was beaming.

"Department Head Song, as your lab rat, I think I deserve an explanation," Xiao Lin said helplessly.

"Haha, fine. There's no harm in telling you." Song Junlang rubbed his hands as he contemplated where to begin.

Seeing that the happy department head had yet to find a way to tell the story, Xiao Lin reminded him, "Was it the chicken?"

Song Junlang found his way into the story. “That’s right, it’s the hybridized iron comb chicken! How do I say this; you’ll learn in your future classes that, although Planet Norma is similar to Earth in many ways with regards to air composition and its lifeforms, they’re still two different worlds. The first Explorers of Planet Norma did not realize this, and they quickly found a huge problem: the physicality of most people on Earth aren’t adapted to Planet Norma!”

Song Junlang paused for a moment before speaking. “For example, you’ve read time-traveling novels, haven’t you? When a person from ancient times travels to modern society, how long do you think they’d live?”

Xiao Lin understood. “I’ve read about this. If someone ancient does travel here, modern society’s bacteria and viruses will kill him. Even a small flu could be life-threatening to him.”

“That’s right! It’s the same on Earth. We’re trying to go to another planet, and it’s a planet with more complicated lifeforms. On top of that, their physiques are usually better than those on Earth. Truth be told, the first batch of Explorers over there should deliberate how to survive rather than migrating people there!”

Xiao Lin replied, “But now we’ve probably solved the problem. I heard the Academy’s already been there for over a century, so there must be lots of people who’ve been to the New World.”

Song Junlang forced a smile. “Do you know why they usually disallow freshmen to go to the New World? Even for sophomores, only a handful of them get the chance to go.”

“Is it because we’re not strong enough?”

“Something like that. Your physique is too weak. According to the Explorers’ experiments, one would need to achieve Black Iron Level; that’s the minimum requirement. Truth be told, there are many places on Planet Norma where the environment is worse than you can imagine. For example, there is a swamp full of poison and a volcanic landscape full of sulfur. These places have a lot of precious resources, but there are also dangerous alien groups. If you want to get into these places, you’ll have to be stronger than ever.”

Xiao Lin nodded. “I understand. The differences in the two environments make it necessary for us to have stronger basic attributes in order to adapt, but what does this have to do with the iron comb chicken increasing my XP?”

“There’s a lot to do with it!” Song Junlang was elated. “In order to help us adapt to Planet Norma’s environment, the Explorers made it a requirement that only those with Black Iron Level can get in, but why don’t we think about this the other way around? The native species on Planet Norma have already adapted to the environment there. Even a snake has a stronger physique than ordinary humans. Why don’t we get more help from these creatures instead?”

Xiao Lin was deep in thought before coming to a realization. “Food therapy?”

“That’s right! Food therapy, just like in Chinese medicine!” Department Head Song was so excited to see someone understand what he meant.

In Chinese medicine, it was generally believed that food was an edible substance that provided the human body with various nutrients needed for growth and health. The use of food characteristics

to regulate bodily functions in order to prevent diseases and strengthen bodies was known as food therapy.

Xiao Lin understood it instantly. This logistics department head was increasing their basic attribute points through food therapy, but he was using resources from Planet Norma.

“I still don’t understand one thing; why hybridization?” Xiao Lin looked at the logistics department head. He could not help but picture hybridization between a chicken and a bird. It would probably take him some time to get rid of this conditioning.

Song Junlang said frustratedly, “When I first conducted this research, I used species straight from Planet Norma. Of course, they were all low-level creatures like chickens, ducks, cats, and dogs. However, freshmen who ate them ended up producing a repellency, and not only did their basic attributes not increase, they were ill for a long time. Thankfully, their lives were not in danger.”

“Thankfully, their lives were not in danger...” Xiao Lin mumbled to himself in frustration. He lifted his brow and asked, “So was I your lab rat, like all the other freshmen were?”

Song Junlang said confidently, “Relax, ever since that experiment failed, I’ve been looking for ways to reduce this repellency, and I landed on hybridization. Its effects are greatly reduced, and the repellency will not be as strong as it was back then. It’s definitely not dangerous; at most, the effects will be just like what you experienced. One would just experience a little pain and fall asleep for a few days.”

Xiao Lin said frustratedly, “Easy for you to say! A little pain? Do you know how excruciating that was? I wanted to kill myself! If this is the level of repellency for hybridized species, I can’t imagine the pain those who ate the native species endured!”

Department Head Song sighed. “I know, the repellency is still great. With my previous failures, this hybridized species will definitely not get past the student union’s review. I’ll have to continue modifying it.”

“How could the student union still let you continue your research?” Xiao Lin was shocked. After failing the first experiment, why was this guy’s farm not shut down already?

“Someone high-ranked is looking after me!”

Xiao Lin’s eyes twitched. He asked, “Why don’t you look for seniors to experiment on? Their basic attributes are stronger than us freshmen; they should be able to handle the repellency from the food therapy.”

Song Junlang shook his head. “The food therapy’s aim is to help freshmen grow quicker. For recruits above the Black Iron Level, their physiques are already at the required level for Planet Norma. Food therapy would barely have any effect on them.”

Department Head Song paused before joking, “But of course, if I used higher-level species, like dragon meat or something, it would definitely affect the seniors. However, getting something like that is about as hard as getting the S-grade in your exams. You’ve gone through the admissions test, you should know how hard it is to get the S-grade. Haha, speaking of which, what was your grade for that test anyway?”

“I was graded S.”

Song Junlang was silent for a while. His lips twitched, and he got up to walk toward the window. He looked out at the scenery and laughed, “Nice weather today. Let’s take a walk outside!”

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 40: Done Deal

The weather was pretty good. The sky was clear and the sunlight felt warm. Now that it was almost evening, a walk or a sit in the grove to watch the sunset looked like a good idea.

However, Xiao Lin was not interested in watching the sunset with another man. He shook his head. “I should go back, I don’t want to miss tomorrow’s class.”

He paused before uttering, “So, uh, can I still come and eat beggar’s chicken next time?”

The unspeakable pain felt worse than death, but its reward was too tempting for Xiao Lin; his basic fitness increased by a level. He would usually get only 10 XP after exhausting himself with a full day’s worth of training. A roast chicken saved him 10 days worth of Basic Fitness training—accompanied by two extra Physique points.

Xiao Lin thought that this deal was pretty decent. As for the horrible pain, Xiao Lin comforted himself by thinking that men should be cruel to themselves.

Song Junlang laughed and spread his hands. “As the first successful experiment subject, you’re welcome anytime, but I don’t think the iron comb chicken has an effect on your basic attributes now.”

“Why!”

“Have you heard of drug resistance?”

A popular explanation for drug resistance was that if the same drug was used repeatedly, its effectiveness would decline. This was a common phenomenon with antibiotics on Earth.

Xiao Lin nodded in comprehension, but he was still puzzled. “I only had the iron comb chicken once. Does the resistance develop that fast with food therapy?”

“Yes. I can’t do anything about it. Although it’s a completely different world, there are some similarities between Earth and Planet Norma. Nonetheless, a resistance develops faster in Planet Norma.”

Department Head Song continued with patience, “In fact, it’s not just food therapy. If you enrol in the Basic Alchemy course in the future, you’ll learn that there are many medicines that will make people develop a strong drug resistance. Brand new processes like food therapy will only work on a person once in their lifetime.”

Xiao Lin was a little disappointed, but it made sense to him. If one could rely on external means to reach the Black Iron Level so easily, why would anyone exhaust themselves with various courses?

“Well, drug resistance only happens if you consume the same species. The iron comb chicken won’t work on you anymore, but I have other edible things here.”

Song Junlang blinked and smiled mysteriously. The handsome department head seemed like a demon, wagging his tail as he sinisterly smirked at Xiao Lin.

Xiao Lin palmed his own forehead and muttered helplessly, “You just wanted a free lab rat!”

He knew what Department Head Song wanted to do. Since food therapy had failed, it was impossible for his hybridized food to be approved and used on freshmen. Xiao Lin believed that, even if someone high-ranked was looking after Song Junlang, it would still not be allowed.

Department Head Song was desperate to see the true effects of his experiment, and at that moment, Xiao Lin might as well have been a lab rat walking itself into a cage.

“Will there be any side effects or something?” Xiao Lin was cautious; he did not want to put his life at risk.

“Nothing life-threatening. I guarantee that with my honor!” Song Junlang replied, his tone serious.

Xiao Lin’s brows moved. What Song Junlang meant was—apart from it not being life-threatening, he could not guarantee anything else!

Xiao Lin did not want to make a hasty decision. He continued asking, “Are the effects from other species similar to the iron comb chicken’s?”

“I’m not sure about that. You already know that, other than that failed experiment, all of my research has been built on theory.”

Xiao Lin felt helpless. “Fine, tell me your theory then.”

Song Junlang thought about it for a moment. “It’s hard to confirm the type and strength of effects. Some ingredients can help increase XP directly. For example, the iron comb chicken you had; iron comb birds on Planet Norma are actually pretty weak in terms of strength, but strong in their fitness. They could fly around one-third of their world for days without rest, so its effects in food therapy should be for fitness and physique. But unfortunately, its effects were weakened after hybridization.”

Department Head Song paused before continuing, “Apart from species that directly add XP, some can help increase the XP gain rate instead. Others can increase a certain type of resistance, but of course, some ingredients may not be effective at all. In short, this is new territory for recruits of Dawn Academy and those around the world working toward the Colonization. There’s still so much to discover.”

Xiao Lin was silent. He was convinced.

Despite having the SS-level Academic Genius talent, his basic points were still too low. Even after improving his learning efficiency by 100 per cent, he could barely catch up with ordinary people. He would still be far behind talented recruits for quite some time.

He was now acting class monitor. After experiencing a few benefits from the authority of being a class monitor, Xiao Lin felt that he did not want to give this position up anymore. That was the case with power; once you got a taste of it, it would be hard to let go. Xiao Lin was just an ordinary person; he was no exception to the rule.

Qin Chuan said he would only decide on the real class monitor after three months. In Class Seven, there were plenty of people who were breathing down his neck since his basic attribute points were less than 10. Wang Dalin, for instance, who led the pack, had pretty high basic attribute points.

Three months were not enough time. Although the Academic Genius talent was strong, it was a slow-burner type of talent. It would take more time to achieve better results. That was why Xiao Lin needed more bargaining chips to keep his position.

“Have you decided?” Song Junlang was a little nervous as well. A lab rat was pretty hard to find, especially when his research was deemed unsuitable and barred from openly recruiting experiment subjects.

Therefore, the logistics department head was worried of Xiao Lin’s rejection; his research results would likely be delayed for quite some time if he did. After all, the effects of food therapy only worked on those under the Black Iron Level; the lower the basic attribute points, the more obvious the effects. If he missed this opportunity, he might have to wait for a new batch of freshmen.

Department Head Song thought for a while before throwing out more attractive bargains. “If you’re worried about coordinating your class schedule, I can help you!”

Xiao Lin was asleep for two days this time after having just the iron comb chicken. Although not every ingredient could make people fall asleep, it was inevitable for Xiao Lin to miss classes for two or three consecutive days if they struck a deal. Song Junlang decided to solve this problem once and for all. He appeared confident as he patted his chest. “After all, someone high-ranked is looking after me!”

Xiao Lin’s eyes lit up all of a sudden. This sentence became the ultimate reason for his decision.

What Xiao Lin needed most right now was help coordinating his class schedule!