

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 41: Dawn Academy Evening News

Xiao Lin was enrolled in both magic and combat-related courses, but that strategy was not recommended by the Academy. His classes always overlapped. He really needed a flexible schedule, but the Academy would never change the entire freshmen schedule just for one recruit. If Xiao Lin could have the privilege to listen in on any course he wanted, it would be perfect for him.

At that moment, Department Head Song, who had someone high-ranked looking after him, was handing Xiao Lin this opportunity.

Xiao Lin left the logistics department and returned to the dorm that he had left for two days. There was another half an hour left until the next class, so he had dinner in the buffet cafeteria alone. He was not rushing to rest; he had ample sleep for the past two days. He went to the common room around the corner instead, poured himself a cup of tea, grabbed a stack of newspapers from the rack, and began reading with interest.

There were few options for entertainment at Dawn Academy; although everyone was given a computer, there were no games on it. Moreover, in this realm away from Earth, one could not surf any further than the Academy's intranet. This was no place for people to waste their time.

Thus, on top of the tight class schedules and intense training, the Academy's paper was one of the few entertainment options with which people could spend their time. Some people choose to revise their compulsory courses or train for their electives in their free time.

However, this was no game where you could continuously defeat monsters to level up 24/7. Humans would naturally become exhausted, especially after finishing tough courses like Basic Fitness. It was ineffective to train or meditate when one was exhausted.

There was only one publication available in the common room named the 'Dawn Academy Evening News'. The paper's issue, it seemed, had inconsistent publication dates; it could go from once every week to one every ten to 14 days. Thankfully, the paper's contents were pretty engaging. For freshmen who barely knew anything, this paper was the best way they could get to know this New World.

The paper was split into two sections; one for Intra Academy news, and the other was on the New World. The Intra Academy section was not really interesting; it usually published either praises for some capable seniors or motivational pieces for students to work hard. The latest news was the welcome for freshmen: the dean participated in the orientation for the first time, gave an important speech, and expressed his high hopes for the freshmen.

On the other hand, the New World section was of interest for many students. There were adventure stories from recruits in the New World, as well as photos of peculiar flora and fauna and unique sceneries. The paper used the same virtual reality technology; tapping on photos would make magical multidimensional projections appear, looking more realistic than 3D movies. That was the main reason why freshmen loved reading the paper.

Copies of the paper were limited, so it was impossible to give everyone a copy. Xiao Lin was there early, and he was the only one in the empty common room. He found a soft sofa, sat down, and flipped the paper open. He wanted to skip the Intra Academy section, but he was quickly attracted by its headline.

A few huge, black words on the first page of the Intra Academy section read: Exposé! Suspicion Over Song Junlang's Continuous Tenure As Department Head!

Xiao Lin's eyes twitched; this was an aggressive headline. Although he only knew Song Junlang for a brief time, and acknowledged that it was suspicious for him to continuously claim that someone high-ranked was looking after him, this young and handsome department head had been pretty friendly and pleasant.

The article was lengthy; it described Song Junlang's life. He was accepted by the Dawn Academy eight years ago, and he displayed great capability back then, on top of being a talented recruit. Although no one knew the true extent of his talent, his life at the Academy had been pretty smooth-sailing—even the dean put him on a pedestal. After his graduation, Song Junlang was fortunate enough to explore the New World with the dean for the colonization.

Xiao Lin was mildly confused at this point while reading about the Department Head's past. The first part of Song Junlang's life at the Dawn Academy was undeniably grand, but given the provocative headline of this article, it was impossible for it to only talk about his achievements. Xiao Lin held that thought and continued reading.

Soon after the adventure, to secure their colony in the New World, Dawn Academy launched multiple attacks on the Mermaids who interfered with the colony. Mermaids were a weak species on Planet Norma, so this war was led by graduates and interns; researchers and postgraduates were not involved. As someone already at Gold rank, Song Junlang commanded the operation.

This conflict should not have had any unexpected circumstances. It was just like how the US invaded smaller, underdeveloped African countries; victory was already in the bag.

However, Dawn Academy lost horribly in this war. Material losses aside, this affected Dawn Academy's colonization strategy overall. As a result, the Dawn Academy was forced to go on defense for the next few years in the New World instead of hastily expanding its colony. This was why the Academy eventually trailed behind the US and Europe.

As commander, Song Junlang was severely injured, and he was degraded from Gold to Bronze level. Upon returning to the Academy, Song Junlang was targeted by many and accused of causing the defeat. Some vicious folk even spread the rumor that Song Junlang had reached an agreement with the Mermaids and betrayed the Dawn Academy.

Although this rumor was unreliable, everyone thought that Song Junlang should have been severely punished for it; he should have been stripped of his duties at the student union, or have his memory wiped before getting thrown back to Earth. He should have been expelled from Dawn Academy.

However, results of the student union's investigation shocked everyone. Not only was Song Junlang not punished, he was also handed the position of the logistics department head, which had been vacant for some time. This caused an uproar, especially from seniors who made a fuss about it

multiple times. However, since the dean gave his silent approval to it, everyone had to let the issue go.

The logistics department head was a unique position. Although it was a department head position, there was not much authority to it. The department head was only responsible for providing meals to the Academy. That was why Song Junlang was known as the Delivery Department head among the seniors.

In an environment where the strong was distinguished from the weak through their capabilities, this nickname was the greatest insult to Song Junlang. His capabilities had never recovered since he was degraded to Bronze. Over time, everyone gradually forgot that he was the talented Song Junlang of once upon a time. They only knew him as the department head who managed to hold the position for four years while only being at the Bronze rank.

The article was filled with sarcasm. It criticized Song Junlang for being unfit to be a department head and that he only managed to stay put through his connections. The student union would probably strip him of his position in the next election cycle.

After reading the article, Xiao Lin put the paper down and went silent. He finally knew some things about this unreliable, yet friendly department head, and he also understood why Chen Yu, as a second-year leader, dared butt heads with Department Head Song that night.

Chapter 42 - : Basic Perception

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Xiao Lin overheard the phone call between the student union president and year leader Chen Yu that night. The president seemed to have said that both Dawn Academy and the dean owed Department Head Song a huge favor.

It was completely different from what was being reported in the article. Xiao Lin did not know who to trust, but when his eyes landed on the end of the report, he was stunned.

Dawn Academy had a Propaganda Department, but these reports were crowdsourced from staff and students. It was an honor to be able to have one's name as a byline, but this article attacking Department Head Song was written by an anonymous person. Xiao Lin's imagination ran wild again.

Xiao Lin did not care whether Song Junlang was a fitting department head. He was bothered that this article was even published at this point in time; it was as if the article wanted everyone in the academy to remember that man again. How big was this person's grudge against Song Junlang?

Xiao Lin touched his nose and thought about how embarrassed Chen Yu was two days ago. He also thought that it had something to do with himself, but that was him making the worst assumption about Chen Yu. Maybe Chen Yu was not as petty as he thought?

It was break time, and other students began arriving at the common room. After afternoon classes, most people liked resting here to drink tea and read the paper before dinner.

“Ayo! If it isn’t Class Monitor Xiao? I heard you’ve skipped class for two days. Were you sick?”

Xiao Lin looked up and frowned. The sarcastic tone came from someone he knew: Wang Dalin.

Wang Dalin was clad in his training uniform and had his novice blade strapped to his back. He said sarcastically, “Does being as weak as you are make you terrified of the courses here? You should quit the academy with your basics being as horrible as they are. Just because dumb birds can still fly, some don’t even know how to flap their wings!”

“You remembered that I’m the class monitor?”

“Haha, don’t get me wrong! Acting Class Monitor Xiao!” Wang Dalin stressed the word ‘acting’.

“I was going to let you off after your silence period ended, but it looks like I’ll have to extend your silence period to a month.” Xiao Lin used his authority without mercy.

“Do you think I care!” Wang Dalin was pissed, but he could not do anything about Xiao Lin’s authority. He scoffed, “Go on, be arrogant! In three months, you better watch your back!”

Xiao Lin did not bother much about the incident. Many people were envious of his position; Wang Dalin was just another one of them. Xiao Lin was more concerned about getting into Basic Meditation as soon as possible.

Eating anything that had to do with Intelligence or Meditation from Department Head Song would be a good idea, but there was too much uncertainty with the effects of food therapy. It could complement, but it would not help much.

Before going to Department Head Song’s that night, Xiao Lin had already come up with a solution: the SS-grade Academic Genius talent’s automatic skill replication!

The Replication skill could allow him to use any F-grade skills for three minutes, but the replicated skill would be forgotten completely after the time frame.

He had a thought the other day while speaking to the sophomore senior Zhang Tingting. Xiao Lin had been mistaken before this; he thought that Replication would allow him to replicate proactive skills, but there was no such description for it. Therefore, it was possible that it could replicate passive skills too.

This possibility intrigued Xiao Lin. If his assumption was right, this talent could give him more than he could imagine.

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The next day, Xiao Lin was back on track with his classes. Freshmen had three days of classes a week, and there would be one compulsory class and one elective class each day to fill up all three days. Nonetheless, double majors like Xiao Lin were an exception; they had six class days a week. This meant that Xiao Lin had classes like these twice a week.

Xiao Lin went for two days of class this week and missed another two days. He only had two days of classes left this week. Today's classes were the Common Language of Planet Norma and Basic Fitness. He also had Basic Perception at the same time as the Basic Fitness class.

Common Language was not as interesting; to Xiao Lin, language classes were boring as usual. Since he was at the introductory stage of the class, everything was about grammar. The tough pronunciations tortured many students. After the class ended, Xiao Lin's Common Language Mastery EXP was at LV1: 20/50.

In his elective class in the afternoon, Xiao Lin roughly understood the Basic Fitness class. This was just a course to increase his fitness; moreover, due to Department Head Song's iron comb chicken, his Physique had increased by 2 points, and his Basic Fitness increased by one level. Therefore, he did not need much from the Basic Fitness course.

One thing worth mentioning was that, although the Basic Fitness class could help improve one's fitness by improving their fitness, the person's physique would not be exactly the same as his fitness. This was mentioned in the first lesson; Basic Fitness was mainly meant for providing one's body with enough strength to perform skills. Everyone understood this as a mage's magic points.

That was why Xiao Lin chose the Basic Perception class. Although he missed the first lesson, he was not worried about missing a lot since the attentive Gu Xiaoyue was in the class.

Basic Perception was mainly to cultivate students' perceptive exploration ability, as well as their hit rates for various spells. For most people, the latter was more practical in use.

The admissions test made many people who yearned for magic realize what it really was. While hit rate was not an issue for close combat, people who wanted to become mages had to face embarrassing issues with their hit rate beforehand.

After all, it was not a game where you could just use the mouse to select your target to cast a spell. In the real world, once the spell went out of the mage's hands, it would be like a broken kite—no one could anticipate where it would go. It could even hit an ally.

The teacher who taught the class was a middle-aged woman. To ensure that everyone was aware of the importance of the course, she cited many examples of accidental injuries inflicted by teammates. Just casting spells did not make one a mage; only those who can accurately cast spells on the enemy were!

Targeting a spell was different from using long-range weapons such as bows and arrows. Bows and crossbows relied on one's eyes, so recruits who chose bows would often take elective courses such as Observation. Mages relied more on Perception and mental power to lock their enemies down.

The teacher was very abstract about it. After all, those whose Basic Meditation was still at LVo could not even feel the Four Elements, let alone talking about mental power.

Xiao Lin asked Gu Xiaoyue about it quietly.

The girl subconsciously pushed her glasses before giving her answer. "Have you ever heard of laser guidance? The principle of spell aiming is similar: mental power would be your laser, and the spell is your missile."

Xiao Lin had to admire how the girl always managed to use her own thinking to transform abstract and complex magical knowledge into familiar analogies that could be better understood.

No matter what, Gu Xiaoyue's words really helped Xiao Lin a lot. After the class, he gained an extra skill and more XP in Basic Perception LVO: 20/50.

Chapter 43 - Replication Target

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Xiao Lin's first week at Dawn Academy ended without much drama. Everyone was allowed to have one free day on the weekends, so it was the perfect opportunity for most people to explore the Academy. However, there were only limited places on campus that were permitted for exploration.

Dawn Academy was huge; it was a lot bigger than Xiao Lin imagined. Dawn Academy's compound was at least a few times bigger than the prestigious schools on Earth, but there were only a few places on campus where freshmen were allowed to go. There were many areas on campus where access rights were strictly enforced to keep freshmen out.

The training venue and public classrooms were open on weekends, but not many people took the initiative to train themselves. Most of them did not have such a level of consciousness in their first week on campus.

To Xiao Lin, the weekend meant that his replicating skill finally completed its seven-day cooling period. He got this idea from chatting with Zhang Tingting a few days ago. If this talent could help him replicate others' passive skills, Basic Meditation would perhaps become very simple for him.

Xiao Lin first set his target on Gu Xiaoyue. The girl's Intelligence was extremely high. Along with her unique ability to understand things, she had an unmatched talent in learning magic.

Xiao Lin called Gu Xiaoyue to the common room that morning. The girl did not ask why, but the blinking eyes behind her glasses had doubt in them.

[Launching the Replication Skill!]

[Target, Gu Xiaoyue!]

[Replicated Skill: Basic Meditation LV2 (F-grade)]

[Select Replication?]

Xiao Lin's lips quivered. He had not made it to the second Basic Meditation class, but he did not expect the girl to have improved her Basic Meditation to LV2. He could not help but ask, "Aren't you improving your Basic Meditation a little too fast?"

Gu Xiaoyue knew that the class monitor was capable of checking everyone's attributes, so she was unsurprised. She replied with her clear voice, "It isn't fast; the highest level for Basic Meditation is LV10. I'm too slow."

“Did you train in the dorm after school?” Xiao Lin guessed. He did not believe that Gu Xiaoyue could get up to LV2 with the three allocated hours in class.

Gu Xiaoyue nodded decisively. “Now that I think about it, the effectiveness of Basic Meditation is pretty bad.”

“Maybe it’s because of the fatigue. Humans’ mental power and fitness have their limits; don’t work too hard.” Xiao Lin felt bad for this girl all of a sudden. Maybe Gu Xiaoyue was only pushing herself this hard because she only had two years left to live.

“No, not exactly. That Basic Meditation class was special.” Gu Xiaoyue hesitated, shook her head, pushed up her glasses, and said, “If there’s nothing else, I’m heading to the meditation hall.”

“Yeah, go ahead.”

Xiao Lin thought about it and decided not to replicate the skill. Gu Xiaoyue said that the highest level for Basic Meditation was LV10. If Basic Meditation was only F-grade, it was an undeniably better choice to replicate a LV10 Basic Meditation skill than a LV2 one.

Xiao Lin decided to follow Gu Xiaoyue to the mediation hall. There were three meditation rooms open for freshmen on the weekends, and each of them could fill over 200 people. They were more than enough to accommodate all freshmen.

Xiao Lin was there early; there were only over 30 people in the meditation hall. Gu Xiaoyue and his presence attracted everyone’s attention instantly, but all for different reasons.

Gu Xiaoyue, on one hand, had the utmost respect from everyone in the Basic Meditation course. There were people who admired and envied her, but if the person you envied was so great that it was impossible to reach her level, you would only have to stew in that pure jealousy.

Regarding Xiao Lin, everyone felt speechless. Instructions in the Freshmen Code were clear; the penalty for unexcused absences was so severe that the freshmen could not afford it unless they planned to be wiped of their memories and kicked back to Earth. However, someone dared do so after all. Everyone admired Xiao Lin a lot for that; some even maliciously speculated that if Xiao Lin reappeared in the next class, the Loli teacher would definitely lose her temper.

Xiao Lin peeked into the meditation room as well and was left speechless. Those who came to train this early in the morning had pretty decent Basic Talents; they all passed the threshold to get into Basic Meditation. However, their Basic Meditation levels were generally lower than Gu Xiaoyue’s.

The one good thing going on was seeing Chen Dao, the timid acting monitor of Class Twelve; his Basic Meditation level was LV1. Apart from him and Gu Xiaoyue, everyone else was at LVo. Xiao Lin thought that he was in the wrong place; it was nearly impossible for freshmen to get their Basic Meditation level up to LV10 within a week anyway.

Xiao Lin decided to turn around and leave, leaving everyone else confused.

“Why was he even here?”

“Who knows? Maybe for the nostalgia.”

“Probably. I heard he’s skipped two days of class. Some teachers were pissed about it; they threatened to kick him back to Earth.”

“What a pity.”

“I heard he’s an acting class monitor too.”

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Each year’s training classrooms were separated; the seniors’ common classrooms were easy to find. However, there was strict management of access rights in all entrances on campus; junior recruits could never get into the seniors’ classrooms.

Xiao Lin walked around the training hall in frustration. Areas A and B were basically the freshmen’s training halls; meanwhile, areas beginning from C were filled with people clad in senior’s uniforms.

[Launching the Replication Skill!]

[Meditation Skill Search Begins...]

[Elementary Meditation LV3: E-grade]

[Unreplicable]

Xiao Lin sighed. He shifted his gaze away from a sophomore who walked past him. The effectiveness of waiting for a miracle to happen was really low; there was minimal chance that he would bump into someone with a LV10 Basic Meditation. Once someone passed that level, it would advance to Elementary or Intermediate Basic Meditation; it would be impossible to replicate those due to their higher grades.

He realized a severe problem soon after that as well. Even if he did replicate it successfully, he only had three minutes; he would need more than ten minutes to walk from the seniors’ training halls to the freshmen’s meditation room. There were special elements and magic in the meditation room, so the effects there would definitely be better than doing it outside.

He still needed to find a way into the seniors’ classrooms. Xiao Lin came to a realization; he nearly forgot about the department head who had some high-ranked person looking after him.

He dialed his phone; the magic phone’s VR function began showing Song Junlang’s sleepy face. He yawned and complained, “Do you know what time it is? It’s only 9 a.m.! It’s the weekend. The weekend!”

The logistics department head had too much free time. Xiao Lin grunted and cut straight to the chase. “I want to access the seniors’ classrooms. Can I?”

Department Head Song rubbed his eyes and rejected Xiao Lin’s request right away. “You’re joking! How is that possible! Even if I lent you my pass, it wouldn’t work. The Academy’s passes are all soul-locked. Do you know what soul-locked is? It’s something more advanced than biometrics...”

Xiao Lin hit his own head and cut the man short abruptly. He said helplessly, “Isn’t some high-ranked person looking after you?”

Song Junlang shrugged. “Yes, true, but only the Central Computer has the right to change things. The computer isn’t a person!”

Xiao Lin’s lips twitched.

Chapter 44 - Sophomore Meditation Room

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Xiao Lin was silent.

Song Junlang’s sleepiness gradually faded. Seeing how Xiao Lin was not joking, he got serious. “Do you really want access? What do you want in the seniors’ classrooms?”

“To listen in.”

“Would you even understand?” Song Junlang expressed a little disdain. After all, he used to be the genius talented recruit back then. “Moreover, don’t you think the teacher will chase you out?”

“I have you, don’t I? You said you’ll help me.”

Department Head Song’s eyes flinched. “I think you’re taking this too far...”

“Fine, stop wasting time. I just want access to the sophomore training field or classroom.” Xiao Lin sighed. “If it’s too much trouble, forget it.”

Song Junlang called him, “Wait! Sophomore? You only need sophomore access?”

“That’s right.”

Department Head Song frowned in thought. “I thought you wanted to sneak into the senior or researchers’ labs! If it’s just for sophomore, it’s not impossible. I can give you temporary access, but it only lasts a day. Is that okay?”

“Definitely!” Xiao Lin was happy. “Will it really work?”

“I’m department head. It’s within my authority!” Song Junlang told Xiao Lin to wait, moved away, then popped back up in VR after a few minutes. He said proudly, “It’s settled, but what are you trying to do? Don’t lie to me about listening in. It’s the weekend... Beep beep beep.”

Xiao Lin had already hung up. He found a passing recruit, asked for the location to the sophomore meditation room, thanked him, and hurried away.

Xiao Lin took a pass from the front of the first classroom in the fourth row of Area C. On the outside, the card was no different from travel passes on Earth, but Song Junlang said that this one was soul-locked. The fancy word shocked him; he flipped the card around, but could not see anything substantial.

Xiao Lin took the card and swiped it past the door lock. With a beep, the meditation room's door was opened silently. As he felt pleasantly surprised, he once again felt that Song Junlang's authority as a department head was indeed beneficial.

The sophomore meditation room was bigger than the freshmen's, but everything else was the same. There were more people there on the weekend than there were freshmen. At a glance, there were about 70 to 80 people in the room. It was very quiet; everyone sat cross-legged on the mats. Some people quietly opened their eyes, glanced at Xiao Lin in confusion, but soon closed their eyes again.

Xiao Lin nodded in satisfaction. The more people there were, the greater the available options. He immediately turned on the Academic Genius Replication skill and began searching for appropriate Meditation Skill levels.

[Elementary Meditation LV5, E-grade, unreplicable]

[Elementary Meditation LV4, E-grade, unreplicable]

[Elementary Meditation LV7, E-grade, unreplicable]

[Intermediate Meditation LV1, D-grade, unreplicable]

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After a few minutes, Xiao Lin wiped sweat from his head. He scanned the entire meditation room, but none of their skills were lower than the Elementary level. He even found a D-grade Intermediate Meditation skill...

The sophomore students that year seemed too strong; or maybe it was the quality expected of sophomore recruits. As Xiao Lin thought about how many freshmen were still struggling with Basic Meditation LVO, he could not help but feel ashamed.

He closed the meditation room's door silently and decided to try his luck in a few other classrooms. There were four meditation rooms for sophomore recruits; if he had no other choice, he had to choose Gu Xiaoyue as his replication target.

Xiao Lin still could not find suitable targets for replication in the second and third meditation rooms. Thankfully, it seemed that the better sophomores were concentrated in the first classroom. Nonetheless, the levels of those in the latter classrooms were still strong; they had at least LV1 for Elementary Meditation.

Basic Meditation was F-grade, and Elementary Meditation was E-grade; so it was not within the scope of replication. Xiao Lin was secretly surprised; Elementary Meditation was indeed the standard for most sophomore recruits. It seemed like he had no choice but to replicate the skill from Gu Xiaoyue.

After swiping the card, the door of the last meditation room opened silently. It was different from the silence in the previous classrooms. There were a lot of people there, and there were at least 20 to 30 students gathered in twos and threes chatting together. A few women were enjoying bags of peanuts and sunflower seeds. If it was not for the sign hanging on the door, Xiao Lin would have thought that he walked into a supermarket.

Xiao Lin's sudden appearance attracted everyone's attention. There was a brief silence in the classroom, then louder voices broke out.

"Am I seeing this right? Is he actually wearing a freshman's uniform!"

"A freshman? Maybe a repeater!"

"Even if you are a repeater, you can't have permission to come in."

Xiao Lin could vaguely hear that their focus was on him. Since there were not many clothes to change into on campus, everyone wore uniforms most of the time. It was very clear which year each student belonged to. In this sophomore classroom, Xiao Lin's green freshman uniform made him stick out like a sore thumb.

"Why are you still stunned? Come in quickly. If you don't close the door, it'll leave a bad impression on anyone who sees us." A short-haired woman closest to Xiao Lin strode forward, pulled him in, and closed the door.

He instantly became the focus of everyone's attention; many of them stared at him with hostile vigilance. Xiao Lin wiped sweat from his forehead and smiled, "Dear seniors, I'm just here for the meditation room. I think I might be in the wrong place, so won't bother you."

"No, no, you're in the right place! This is the meditation room, but the freshmen's meditation room is in Area B." The short-haired woman stood in front of the door to stop Xiao Lin from leaving. She scrutinized him and said, "Are you from the student union?"

"Xiao Lin? Xiao Lin! Why are you here!" A familiar voice came from the crowd. Xiao Lin looked in the direction of the voice; it was his acquaintance, Zhang Tingting, the sophomore recruit from whom he asked for advice from a few days ago regarding Meditation.

"So you know each other." Some people put their guards down and returned to their own circles to chat and eat sunflower seeds.

"Tingting, who's this Xiao Lin? Your new boyfriend?" someone asked.

"Eh, did you break up with Gu Fantian?"

"No way, I saw you guys together yesterday. You should be giving us a non-disclosure fee for this! Not much; we just want 200 redemption points!"

It was mostly women in the meditation room. If three women could stir up some drama, the amount of drama in there must have been palpable. They were all chatting at the same time, and Xiao Lin had no room to explain himself.

Zhang Tingting became irritated and overpowered the others with a louder voice. “Shut up! What are you talking about? This boy’s a freshman monitor!”

For a moment, there was pin-drop silence in the meditation room again.

Chapter 45 - Advanced Meditation

Chapter 45: Advanced Meditation

“You’re a freshman monitor?” the short-haired woman said, shocked.

“Cough. I’m an acting monitor,” Xiao Lin corrected her.

The short-haired woman ignored it. “A monitor indeed. Tsk, we were being disrespectful before. You won’t penalize us, will you? I’m Wu Qin.”

This woman seemed ordinary, but she acted generously. She grabbed Xiao Lin’s hand and shook it, then said with a flirty voice, “So, you’re here for Zhang Tingting?”

Xiao Lin shook his hands. “No, no, no. I’m here to practice meditation.”

Zhang Tingting glared at the few who made noise and asked in curiosity, “Why didn’t you go to the freshmen’s meditation room? Although the sophomore meditation room has a stronger elemental cluster spell; it doesn’t help much for freshmen who have yet to reach Elementary Meditation. It’s not as effective as the freshmen meditation room.”

Xiao Lin asked dubiously, “Is...is this really the meditation room?”

Dozens of faces in the classroom seemed embarrassed in that moment. Zhang Tingting was also speechless; only Wu Qin seemed to be okay. She shrugged and said, “To put it simply, our meditation level is relatively lower. Get it?”

Xiao Lin understood it then; he felt embarrassed. If these people were gathered in schools on Earth, they would have a more direct name: poor students!

Everyone was at the same starting point when they first entered as freshmen. Apart from the talented recruits, it was still hard to tell good students from the bad ones in the first year. However, it was clearer in second year.

It was no wonder that these people would come to the meditation class on weekends to chat and eat snacks. Xiao Lin thought that they were probably letting themselves rot.

Wu Qin caught Xiao Lin’s expression and angrily said, “Do you actually think that we’re giving up on ourselves? Tingting just said that the sophomore meditation room is made for people in the Elementary Meditation level. Understand?”

Xiao Lin understood it better now. These were the poor sophomore students, and they were also not at the Elementary Meditation level. They did not want to go to the freshmen's meditation room; maybe they thought it would be too embarrassing for them.

Xiao Lin's eyes brightened. If this group of people were all at Basic Meditation, then it would meet his requirements. The Academic Genius talent was immediately activated and he began to search for skills.

[Basic Meditation LV6; evaluation grade F; replicable]

[Basic Meditation LV8; evaluation grade F; replicable]

[Basic Meditation LV7; evaluation grade F; replicable]

[Basic Meditation LV10; evaluation grade F; replicable]

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Unsurprisingly, these people were stuck at the Basic Meditation level. Moreover, he found his candidate for a LV10 Basic Meditation—it was Wu Qin.

Xiao Lin's gaze was sharp. Wu Qin raised her brow and teased, "Monitor, why are you looking at me like that? Are you into me? If you profess your undying love, I might consider you."

Xiao Lin was speechless. Before Wu Qin misunderstood him further, he looked away and said loudly, "I'm going to start meditating. Seniors, can you give me a few minutes? Yes, just three minutes!"

He had no choice. Meditation training required a silent environment; otherwise, it would be hard to focus on sensing the elements. If they did not cooperate in this noisy classroom, it would be impossible to do anything.

Wu Qin retracted her sarcastic look. "You really want to meditate? Right here?"

"I'm not joking."

Zhang Tingting did not believe him. "What's your meditation level?"

"Basic Meditation LVO."

Xiao Lin did not want to lie about that, but he sparked a louder uproar. Dozens came over.

"Basic Meditation LVO? Oh right, freshmen have only been here for a week; it's normal."

"After a week's worth of classes, you must've had at least two meditation classes. What's your XP?"

"o EXP. I know what you all want to ask. I'm not at the threshold yet," he replied obediently to make the seniors keep quiet for a while.

“It’s useless. With that meditation level and not reaching the threshold to train it yet, you won’t get any effects, even if you went to the senior meditation room.” Wu Qin shook her head and stopped everyone else’s questioning.

Wu Qin sighed. “Fine, you have a few minutes, but know that the meditation room’s energy-gathering magic does not work better with higher levels.”

Everyone nodded in agreement; they looked at Xiao Lin with pity and compassion. Not many people were making fun of him, likely because they could relate. When they first reached the threshold to practice meditation in freshman year, they spent a long time gaining XP for meditation. However, before they could celebrate, they realized that they were still far behind the others.

It took some talent to be a good mage after all.

Xiao Lin was speechless; he felt that the more he explained himself, the more they would misunderstand him. Thankfully, he was promised a few minutes; it was more than enough.

[Activating the Replication Skill!]

[Target: Wu Qin!]

[Basic Meditation LV10, evaluation grade F]

[Successful replication!]

Xiao Lin sat down with his legs crossed. He did not even bother looking for a mat. He only had three minutes to train with the replicated skill, so he was not going to waste any time.

He shut his eyes, calmed himself down, and focused.

This time, it was easier for him to enter a state of full meditation. Xiao Lin found it very different from his last meditation. Although his eyes were shut, it was no longer pure darkness around him; there were countless grain-shaped stars shimmering in the darkness. It was like a bright galaxy decorated with twinkling lights.

He tried to catch them, but the stars blinked like naughty children running around. They were erratic. Xiao Lin failed after several attempts and he became a little annoyed. He thought to himself that if the stars could come over to him, that would be great.

Then, the grainy stars began swimming toward Xiao Lin...

As they got closer, Xiao Lin noticed that these bright spots actually came in four colors: red, blue, yellow and green. They intertwined and surrounded each other. The red spots were violent and hot, the blue spots contained purity and coldness, the yellow spots gave off stability and solidity, while the green spots were embellished with lightness and agility.

Xiao Lin suddenly understood that these were the four elements of nature—red fire, blue water, yellow earth, and green wind.

The feeling was very peculiar. The elements were completely invisible and intangible normally, like molecular atoms on Earth that were impossible to observe with the naked eye. The meditation state was like a microscope, allowing people to enter this wonderful microscopic world to feel the magic of the elements.

In fact, everyone would have a different understanding of magic. For example, Gu Xiaoyue believed that the essence of magic was like programming, while Xiao Lin believed that meditation was observing the microscopic nature of the world.

They had different ways of understanding it, but the results were similar.

Three minutes flew by in his meditation state. When he reluctantly opened his eyes again, Xiao Lin found that his skills felt different.

The LV10 Basic Meditation disappeared after the replication time was over, but Xiao Lin's contact with the four elements during meditation was unforgettable.

[Basic Meditation LV1: 50/100]

His Meditation XP directly increased by a 100 XP!

Chapter 46 - Trading Zone

Chapter 46: Trading Zone

Xiao Lin got up, brushed the dust off his pants, and bid goodbye to Wu Qin, Zhang Tingting, and the others happily before leaving. He had gotten substantial gains today; not only did he improve his Basic Meditation level, his hypothesis was proven as well. He had a new understanding of how to use the Academic Genius' replication skill.

"Eh? You're leaving?" Wu Qin was confused. Xiao Lin's excited and relaxed disposition was different from what she had expected from him.

She estimated the freshman to be demotivated. It was inevitable; reaching the threshold for meditation required talent. Some people could never cross that threshold. It was not a problem that could be solved by coming to the sophomore meditation room. Wu Qin had come up with a speech in her head to comfort this adorable freshman.

"My problem has been resolved, so I won't bother you all anymore," Xiao Lin thanked everyone again.

"Solved?" Wu Qin had a slow reaction. Soon after, she thought of something, winked at him, and giggled. "Oh, don't be shy, little boy. Don't you want to stay with us longer? Why are you looking for excuses? You shouldn't underestimate the power of meditation. Just because our results are... Ahem, in short, it took some time for us to get our XP up from 0 to 1."

Xiao Lin said vaguely, "Uh, I think I've reached the threshold to practice meditation."

“Haha, you’re funny. How could your XP have increased after just a few minutes of meditation?”

There were chuckles around him. In their experience, they knew how difficult it was to start meditating; they were not being cruel, but they thought that this freshman was a little full of himself.

“I think I should go.”

“No way!” Wu Qin blocked the door vigorously; she seemed like she was set on exposing Xiao Lin for his lie. She put her hand on her waist and said, “You have to explain this; we’re your seniors after all. I want to see your Basic Meditation level!”

“Sister Qin, forget it.” Zhang Tingting tugged on the woman’s top and whispered, “He’s the acting monitor.”

“And a freshman. He has to respect his seniors!”

It had been just a joke, but more people joined the clamor and got a little more serious as well.

Xiao Lin frowned, looked at Zhang Tingting, who looked to be in a dilemma, and sighed. He intended to keep a low profile; after all, he was only able to enter the sophomore training room as a freshman with Department Head Song’s help. Thinking back to the article attacking Song Junlang in the Dawn Academy Evening News two days ago, Xiao Lin felt that he should not cause too much trouble for the fairly kind department head.

Xiao Lin said with a straight face, “Fine, no harm telling you. Basic Meditation LV1.”

“I don’t believe you!” Wu Qin continued blocking the exit. Someone passed a laptop over, and she tossed it to Xiao Lin. “Show us! Otherwise, you can’t leave. Hmph, we may not know how a freshman got into a sophomore meditation room. If we investigate, we’ll definitely find something!”

Xiao Lin was a little unhappy. He waved the computer and asked, “How do I use it? I mean how do I show the level of an individual skill.” He did not want to expose his other attributes’ levels.

Wu Qin was obviously more familiar with the system than he was. She pointed out a few things and Xiao Lin logged onto the forum before entering his personal information. There was indeed an option to ‘show more’ under his LV1 Basic Meditation.

He clicked in and a virtual screen rose from the computer. All of the Academy’s equipment seemed to have the magic VR function. The words ‘Basic Meditation LV1’ were clearly displayed on the screen.

The meditation room quietened instantly.

Wu Qin’s eyes widened and she was stunned. Other people’s reactions were similar to hers; they rubbed their eyes vigorously to make sure that they were seeing right. They looked like they had met a ghost.

It was not that they had never seen anyone with a talent for meditation. It was that being able to go from Basic Meditation LVO and 0 EXP to LV1 within three minutes seemed like a fantasy.

“You wanted to see for yourself!” Xiao Lin muttered. He expected this reaction; he was a little frightened by the efficiency himself, what more these seniors.

While Wu Qin remained in a daze, Xiao Lin fled.

After over ten seconds, Wu Qin finally snapped out of it. She yelled after Xiao Lin’s back, “*sshole! You came to show off, didn’t you!”

Wu Qin could not believe it. She thought that Xiao Lin had already reached Basic Meditation LV1, and that he was there to pretend and show off in front of the poor students. Everyone nodded in agreement; they thought that her explanation was more logical. Meanwhile, Zhang Tingting kept explaining that the freshman’s monitor was only at LVO a few days ago. Obviously, no one believed her.

...

It was early on the weekend. Xiao Lin wanted to practice swordsmanship again, but he seemed to have thought of something. He first returned to the dorm, turned on his computer, entered the Academy’s forum, and clicked into the equipment trading zone.

It was similar to an online store. All transactions of weapons, equipment, and props in the academy were done there. The entire section even gave Xiao Lin the feeling that he was on Taobao. There was a huge promotional picture on the homepage, showing a giant golden sword with various peculiar runes carved into it. There was a note beside it that read, ‘The Best Choice for a Sword Saint. You’re worthy of the Golden Holy Sword!’

Scrolling down, the page showed another promotional banner that read ‘Clearance Sale for All Magical Accessories! 50% Off Sale Price! You Won’t Regret These Purchases!’

Xiao Lin’s eyes twitched. In fact, there were two types of trading zones: one was the official store and the other was the personal store. The former was run by Dawn Academy. Its advantage was its fair prices; there was no need to worry about being cheated. However, the downside was that official merchandise was not that great in use. They were not horrible, but they were not great either.

Personal stores were mostly set up by seniors or graduates themselves. They sold a wide variety of things. The higher the year of the seller, the better the things were. However, their prices were uncertain; it was possible that you could be conned for a fortune.

This trading section was open to the whole Academy. Nonetheless, there were very few freshmen buyers. Xiao Lin casually clicked open a few stores and the things sold in them were worth tens of thousands of redemption points. It was not suitable for freshmen, nor could they afford such things.

Xiao Lin only had 800 redemption points. Since he wanted to practice both magic and martial arts, he first had to have a wand. This was also mentioned in the Basic Perception course; they were currently focusing on training one’s hit rate, so the teacher suggested that the recruits get wands.

The wand was not necessary for casting spells, but it could gather and arrange elements better and faster. For freshmen who were just starting out, the wand was essential.

Chapter 47 - Weapons

Chapter 47: Weapons

The weapons on there were divided into levels like individual capabilities were. There were Black Iron, Bronze, Silver, Gold, Dark Gold, Lore, Epic, and Legend levels. There was one novice level under Black Iron as well; it was for the beginner weapons given to everyone at the admissions test.

Xiao Lin entered the official store. Novice weapons were only sold here and their prices were cheap. They cost about 20 redemption points, but long-range weapons like bows and wands were a little more expensive, costing about 50 redemption points.

Xiao Lin thought about it for a while before searching for Black Iron-level weapons. There were more options, but their prices increased by a few times as well. Black Iron weapons cost at least 100 redemption points, and some went up to 200 or 300.

Apart from weapons, the official store sold other practical props as well, such as Mental Strength Recovery Potions, Healing Potions and so on. They were not expensive; they cost about 50 to 100 redemption points. However, not many freshmen were willing to buy props that were for one-time use. Textbooks were available as well—you heard right; one was not given textbooks in this Academy. They must be purchased.

Xiao Lin could not come to a decision, so he moved onto the personal stores. He set the search filters to novice and Black Iron-level weapons; anything higher than those were too expensive and unusable.

As he casually browsed, Xiao Lin noticed that there were various restrictions for use for the higher level equipment. For instance, there were requirements for Strength, Agility, Intelligence, or other capability requirements.

If these conditions were not met, these weapons would not perform upon use. It would be like letting a novice-level freshman hold a golden sword. The sword would not be able to exert its special effects or attack power to the maximum effect at all. In the hands of those below the requirements, the performance of the sword would not even be as good as a novice weapon.

The goods sold by seniors were roughly divided into two categories. One, to resell the equipment and props they had used at low prices to recover some of the cost. Although these equipment were old, many of them were still in good and usable condition.

The other category was repossessed equipment that was originally sold in the official store. Seniors would resell them at a higher price to earn the difference.

Take the image of the novice dagger that Xiao Lin casually opened for example. From the looks of it, this dagger was no different from the one he used, but the blade in this moving picture was obviously shining with light-blue light.

The novice dagger (Elementary Frost Enchantment), with an F-grade physical attack power, would slow one's enemy down. Upon hitting an enemy, there would be a chance to reduce their movement speed by 10%. Its price was 200 redemption points.

Xiao Lin was shocked; not because the price was almost quadrupled, but the frost enchantment effect actually increased the dagger's attack power grade from F- to F. Unfortunately, the enchantment course was currently not open to freshmen.

There were a few lines next to the picture that read, 'In order to welcome freshmen, I'm running a one-week 20% off promotion! Dear friends, as you usher in your first monthly exam, good weapons and equipment will help you get better evaluations and more rewards. What are you waiting for? Trust me, slow close-range weapons are definitely the better choice for the freshman exam!'

"He seems like a guy who specializes in freshmen's business, but unfortunately it's still too expensive," Xiao Lin mumbled to himself. He did not believe that those were the real prices. Even if it was 20% off, the cost was probably even lower than that.

Instructor Qin Chuan said that, in Dawn Academy, there would be a test similar to the admission test conducted every month—commonly known as the monthly test. One could get great rewards based on their evaluation; but on the flipside, each death would deduct one's HP. The first monthly exam was still three weeks away, and it was a little stressful for Xiao Lin.

There were not many seniors doing business with freshmen; they probably thought that freshmen did not have many redemption points and the profit from novice-level equipment and props was too small. It was not worth their time and energy. Most of them were sophomore recruits who put up the weapons they did not want for lower prices. For things like the novice weapons that held enchantments, Xiao Lin could not find them in any other stores.

In desperation, Xiao Lin went back to the previous shop. It was run by a man named Lu Renjia, and he sold many things. In addition to daggers, there were also a large number of enchanted and strengthened weapons—almost all of them were on Novice and Black Iron levels. He was truly someone who specialized in doing business with freshmen.

In addition to the frost enchantment, there were four different kinds of enchantments: burning, lightness, and stability. Novice-level enchanted weapons cost about 200 redemption points, and Black Iron-level enchanted weapons cost 400 redemption points.

With the same 200 redemption points, one could buy Black Iron-level weapons that were equivalent to F+ physical attack power from the official store. However, there would not be any effect; moreover, Black Iron weapons had certain requirements for the user's Strength or Agility. Although the requirements were low, unfortunate Xiao Lin had yet to satisfy them.

Apart from close-range weapons, novice wands and those similar to it had enchantments like Elementary Focus, Elementary Perception, Elementary Spell Penetration and so on. The price for those was 50 redemption points more than physical weapons. These enchantment effects could make up for the freshmen's lower hit rate accuracy and damage.

Xiao Lin was a little swayed, but he was not eager to buy; he did not want to be taken advantage of. He chose to contact the seller instead. According to the store's simple introduction, this person named Lu Renjia was a third-year recruit.

Since it was around noon on the weekend, Lu Renjia happened to be online. Not long after Xiao Lin sent his message, he received a response. The duo talked in a separate chat box; since they were not familiar with each other yet, they did not turn on the magic VR system.

Xiao Lin politely said, "Good day, senior!"

Lu Renjia was straight to the point. "Haha, good day, Junior! Which product are you interested in?"

Xiao Lin was also very direct. "It's too expensive. Can you do it cheaper?"

"... Dear junior, you get what you pay for. You won't have access to enchantment courses for a long time, and other seniors are too busy to be making enchantment weapons available at the novice level. I'm the only one who gets to make a small profit while benefiting freshmen. There is no other shop like mine."

Even after some attempts at bargaining, Lu Renjia refused to budge. He claimed that the 20% discount was his limit; he would not make any profit if he lowered the price any further.

Xiao Lin had no choice but to ask whether there were other types of enchantment weapons.

After all, it was his first time using his redemption points. He wished he could split up each point he had. It was only natural for him to hope that there were more choices before coming to a decision on which weapon was the most effective for him.

Chapter 48 - Custom-Made

Chapter 48: Custom-Made

Lu Renjia surmised that a freshman would be concerned about cost and value. He quickly replied. "Enchantment is a very advanced course and there's a wide variety of types, involving many other related courses such as Alchemy and Elementology. Not even graduate students would dare claim that they've mastered all kinds of enchantments. At most, they'd choose several specific areas for in-depth study."

"In other words, these are the only enchantments you have?"

"You could put it that way! Higher-ranked enchantments are available too, but higher-ranked enchantments cannot be applied to lower-ranked weapons," Lu Renjia continued to explain. "In fact, the practical value of these enchantments is really good. Your monthly exam is coming and a good weapon can definitely help out a lot."

"But I noticed that none of the wands you sell have any skills attached? Don't they have enchantments for those?" Xiao Lin was still not satisfied. He had Slashing as his physical attack,

but nothing when it came to spells. The admissions test had clearly demonstrated to him the difference in damage between brute force and actual skill.

“...”

“What’s wrong?”

Lu Renjia smiled bitterly. “Well, let me briefly explain that there’s a fundamental difference between enchantment and enhancement. I won’t speak about it in too much depth because you’ll know soon enough when you take these courses in the future. Simply put, enchantment is when you carry out fine-tuning and upgrading without changing the structure of the equipment itself. Enhancement is when you adjust the equipment’s structure in order to achieve a higher strength.”

“In other words, weapons with skills attached to them must undergo enhancement?”

“Bingo!”

“Then make me an enhanced magic wand that comes with skills attached!”

“...” Lu Renjia once again used a series of ellipsis to express his speechlessness.

“What’s the matter now?”

“I’ve taken the courses related to weapon enhancement, but I haven’t completed any weapons yet. I must admit that having skills is very important for freshmen in the early stages, especially when it comes to the monthly exam. But frankly speaking, it’s not worth enhancing the skills of a novice weapon! There are a lot of materials needed for enhancement, and many of them don’t come cheap. Therefore, the price of a finished product is so high that it’s practically unaffordable for freshmen!”

Xiao Lin understood. Lu Renjia explained at length, but he only had one main point: weapons with skills were so expensive that Xiao Lin could not afford them.

Xiao Lin felt disheartened and asked hesitantly, “How expensive are they?”

“It depends on the customization requirements. A novice magic wand is not valuable itself, but its value lies in the embedded skill stone. The price will double if you want to enhance it, on top of the existing enchantment.” After all that explaining, Lu Renjia casually stated a figure. “It’ll be at least three or four hundred.”

Xiao Lin became suspicious. “But the novice magic wand randomly assigned to us in the admissions test also comes with an energy bomb. It can’t be that expensive!”

“You’re so naïve, kid! Do you think the academy is so charitable to give freshmen weapons worth hundreds of dollars for free? Haha, don’t think for on second that Dawn Academy is a welfare institution!”

After a pause, Lu Renjia continued, “The energy bomb is the most amateur of hand spells. It’s not even Black Iron-rank. The damage is limited, and a novice magic wand with the energy bomb is

both flimsy and cannot be repaired. Hehe, you understand now, don't you? That thing is actually an expendable item. It's probably only barely enough for you to pass the admissions test."

Xiao Lin started to believe it a little bit. As Lu Renjia mentioned earlier, freshmen who were given the novice wand would have blatantly taken advantage of it. In addition, he also noticed that the sophomores who sold outdated equipment in the trading zone did not sell any novice magic wands.

Magic damage, which caused more harm than physical damage, came at the cost of being an expendable item. Whether it was worth it was besides the point. After all, the casting of a spell was not completely dependent on a magic wand.

Xiao Lin thought for a while and decided to call Gu Xiaoyue. She had just finished lunch and was on the way to the meditation room. After hearing Xiao Lin's question, she pushed her glasses and said naturally, "I found out when I checked the equipment's attributes after the test. Not to worry, you can learn energy bombs when your Basic Meditation reaches level three."

"Huh? You can learn spells at level three? I didn't know that."

"Oh, you weren't in that particular meditation lesson."

Xiao Lin wiped his sweat after remembering the meditation lesson. It was the same lesson he was forced to skip after eating Department Head Song's iron comb chicken and falling unconscious. He hurriedly asked, "What about other skills? What's the minimum Meditation level requirement for learning skills? That little Loli—ahem, I mean, did the teacher bring it up?"

Gu Xiaoyue was a good student who paid lots of attention in class. She thought about it for a moment and replied, "Level three in Basic Meditation is the minimum requirement, but you can only learn a few low-powered spells with it. This is considered entry level. Real Black Iron-rank spells require at least level five."

In-depth discussions about all things magic brought out the talkative side of Gu Xiaoyue, but when Xiao Lin switched the topic to other areas—such as why her life span was only two years—Gu Xiaoyue immediately reverted back to her cold and aloof persona. Xiao Lin snickered and had no other option but to end the call.

Xiao Lin desperately needed a skill-attached magic wand and was already making preparations for the monthly exam in three weeks. Many factors would be considered in the final exam after three months—including his physical fitness, results of each subject, and the most importantly: the results of the monthly exams!

In the short term, his physical fitness paled in comparison to the others. If Xiao Lin wanted his official appointment to go smoothly after three months, he had to pay special attention to his monthly exam results.

"Even if I replicate Senior Sister Wu Qin's level 10 Basic Meditation every week, my own meditation level still wouldn't reach level five in three weeks."

After making that consideration, Xiao Lin made up his mind too.

Before returning to the computer, Xiao Lin replied Lu Renjia with determination, “If the skill-attached novice magic wand is only three or four hundred redemption points, I’ll buy it!”

“... ” Lu Renjia was speechless again.

“What spells can I choose?”

“...”

“Black Iron-rank spells should be fine. What about higher levels, like Bronze-rank spells?”

“Wait! Are you really going to buy it!”

“I’m serious.” Xiao Lin actually felt rather disheartened. It was very expensive, especially when some of the ubiquitous Black Iron-rank wands were slightly cheaper than that.

Xiao Lin had to spend his redemption points one way or another. The true value of a skill-attached weapon was that it could be used by freshmen right away. The enchantment and skill enhancement of the weapon did not change the usage requirements of the weapon itself. The cost of it was still acceptable, given that he would be getting a novice weapon that was on par with one of Black Iron-rank.

Chapter 49 - Ice Bullet Wand

Chapter 49: Ice Bullet Wand

“Let me first clarify that my small business doesn’t accept any loans or instalments! It’s only been a week since freshmen like yourself have started classes, right? Haha!” Lu Renjia still did not trust Xiao Lin that much. He was very cautious, and as he said earlier, weapons that underwent enhancement had to be customized. He would stand to make a big loss if he made them and no one wanted nor was willing to buy them at a high price.

Xiao Lin thought for a while and finally sighed before clicking open his personal data. He took a screenshot of his redemption points for Lu Renjia in order to dispel the latter’s doubts.

“...” Lu Renjia seemed fond of using the ellipsis and the conversation sunk into a long silence. Just when Xiao Lin thought that Lu Renjia was going to disagree, the latter said again, “You got a Grade S, didn’t you? You must be the acting class monitor.”

“I am.”

“Good God! My mistake! What skills do you want?” Lu Renjia’s attitude changed quickly.”According to the laws of enhancement, we can impart one level higher at most, but it’ll come at a cost—the weapon itself cannot be strengthened in other aspects or undergo enchantment, because each piece of equipment must take into account its quality level. There’s a capacity limit to how much energy can be put in. Of course, you can also choose to attach novice-level spells, which can undergo enchantment.”

Xiao Lin pondered those explanations carefully. Many things, such as the capacity limit, might only be known to him when he finally took those courses. He asked, “What novice spells are there?”

Lu Renjia explained it enthusiastically now. “A novice spell can be defined as a weakened version of a Black Iron-rank spell. For example, the novice-level Energy Bomb is a weakened version of the Black Iron-rank’s Convergent Energy Bomb, and the novice-level Flame Spell is the weakened version of Black Iron-rank’s Fire Bullet. In terms of power, novice spells are one level lower than Black Iron spells.”

“In other words, you can either use a novice spell along with an enchantment, or you can only attach one Black Iron-rank spell to a weapon.”

“You could put it that way, yes.”

“Are there any Black Iron-rank spells you recommend? Something that can be used in the monthly exam. ”

“It depends on what your goal is. For high damage, it has to be the Convergent Energy Bomb. This Black Iron-rank spell is rated E- in terms of power. The disadvantage is that it takes a while to gather up the energy, and if your Basic Perception isn’t high enough, the hit rate will be very low.”

“Forget about that then. Are there any others?” Xiao Lin decisively refused. He had seen the terrible hit rate of energy bombs and did not have much confidence in that.

“Then I recommend the control type. The Ice Bullet, with F-rated spell damage, has the effect of slowing the target’s speed. Or perhaps the Stunnie, with a spell damage rating of F+, that can produce a short-term stun effect if it hits the target.”

“If it hits the target?” Xiao Lin questioned.

“Ahem, this spell, just like the Convergent Energy Bomb, requires a high level of Basic Perception to maintain its hit rate.”

Xiao Lin pondered for a moment, then asked, “What’s the price like?”

“Good God, I wouldn’t dare to cheat you. I’ll sell you at market price. Five hundred redemption points will do!”

Of course, Xiao Lin did not believe that was market price, so he decisively stated the price he had set in his heart. “Four hundred redemption points.”

“Good God, don’t you think we could be friends who can take care of each other in the New World? I really can’t go any lower!”

Some bargaining later, the deal was ultimately made with 450 redemption points. Lu Renjia had also droned on and on about how little profit he was making and treated the transaction as a chance to make friends.

Xiao Lin finally chose Ice Bullet as the attached skill that would undergo enhancement. As a Black Iron-rank spell, its F-rated spell damage was nothing to shout about, but what Xiao Lin valued most was the Ice Bullet's visually-discernible slowing effect.

A novice wand like that was not yet a finished product and had to be customized, but Lu Renjia vowed to complete it in a week at most.

The two of them then signed a simple contract. Xiao Lin paid an upfront deposit of 200 redemption points. The contract was guaranteed by the Academy. In the event of non-delivery or quality problems, the parties could apply to the student union for arbitration.

After settling everything, Xiao Lin left the forum. Only 350 redemption points were left and he planned to save them for a rainy day. Although he regretted not buying any textbooks, it was enough that he had Gu Xiaoyue's notes in class. Of course, he did not forget to pour some scorn on the academy for not providing its students textbooks.

That weekend, Xiao Lin finally devoted himself to practicing swordsmanship in the afternoon. It had already been a week since he entered the academy, and apart from the admissions test, he did not manage to properly practice his Basic Swordsmanship. The academy's curriculum was arranged on a very tight schedule, and there was not much free time left for freshmen to go about their own business.

Xiao Lin checked everyone else's skill levels using his class monitor's authority. Students in the basic weapon category did not differ much, as most of them were only at LV2. Most outstanding out of them was Gu Xiaoyue's Basic Meditation, which stood at LV2. Although both meditation and weaponry were on the same level, meditation was more difficult to upgrade than swordsmanship.

Many people were already present inside the swordsmanship training hall. Several other acting class monitors were also there. Except for Class One's Cheng Ming, the rest were indifferent and did not come up to greet him.

The two of them chatted casually for a bit and Cheng Ming expressed concern about Xiao Lin's two-day absence from lessons. However, Xiao Lin simply explained his absence away with being ill. Much to Xiao Lin's surprise and speechlessness, Cheng Ming seemed to eat that excuse up...

Their conversation soon shifted to swordsmanship practice. Xiao Lin learned that Cheng Na, the T-rex tutor, did not show up during the second class. Was she really just going to leave them to their own devices?

Cheng Ming was even more distressed. He revealed bluntly that his Basic Swordsmanship had reached LV3, but found it increasingly difficult to advance from there.

Xiao Lin quickly discovered the problem after starting his training. It was actually very simple to level up when Basic Swordsmanship was at LV1. As long as one's sword swings were performed correctly and, with sufficient physical strength, 100 XP would equal to 100 sword swings. If one trained with all their heart, they could complete it very quickly. Compared to passing the thresholds for Basic Meditation, it was much, much easier.

However, Xiao Lin clearly noticed the increasing difficulty in levelling up beyond LV2. It took 500 XP to upgrade from LV2 to LV3, but even though Xiao Lin used all his strength to meticulously complete those swinging actions, his Basic Swordsmanship XP only increased by one point.

He had the SS-level Academic Genius talent, for goodness sake!

Under the passive effects of 100% upgrade efficiency, the increase ought to have been two experience points. It was impossible for his talent to lose its effects, which could only mean that ordinary people had to complete at least two sword swings to gain one XP.

If ordinary people needed only two hours of practice to upgrade their Basic Swordsmanship to LV2, then the upgrade from LV2 to LV3 theoretically took at least 10 times that duration to complete, which was 20 hours.

In fact, it was impossible for students to continuously practice their swordsmanship for 20 hours straight, not even during the weekend when they had spare time and no classes. The reason was due to the sheer exhaustion they would feel and the limited energy they had. If their physical fitness suffered a rapid decline, then their training efficiency would continue to decrease, so much so that it would not produce any XP at all.

Xiao Lin finally understood why so many people in the class remained at LV2 even after a week. From that perspective, Cheng Ming's achievement at LV3 was truly surprising.

Chapter 50 - Wu Qin's Post

Chapter 50: Wu Qin's Post

Xiao Lin went to the swordsmanship hall at two o'clock, and by six, his four hours of training had raised his XP to 300. The increase depended heavily on strict standards of force and strength when swinging the sword. The slightest sloppiness was not tolerated. There was no doubt that continuously swinging the sword consumed a lot of physical energy. A pleasant surprise for Xiao Lin was that he felt less strain in his sword practice after increasing his physical fitness and physique.

To some extent, it actually proved Xiao Lin's suspicion that many of the academy's courses were actually complementary to each other. For example, the efficiency of his swordsmanship practice increased after his physical fitness improved. He might not necessarily have gained better training results if he simply set aside all other courses and invested completely in swordsmanship.

The short weekend ended quickly, and once nightfall came, the freshmen could only scan the posts on the academy's intranet, since they were not allowed to leave the dormitory. For many freshmen, it was a way for them to pass the time.

Some people shared their experiences in the previous week's lessons, such as comparing the relative ease of different courses and which classes had better teachers. Everyone soon found out that the difficulties were actually rather similar.

In the first week of the course, the teachers in all the classes did not actually teach anything too substantial. Whether they took Basic Swordsmanship or Basic Saber Technique, the instructors merely asked them to repeat the largely non-technical swinging and hacking movements. Some people could not help but have some doubts; if that was the extent of the course, would it not be more convenient to train by themselves? Why was there a need for the teacher to be present?

There were also many who complained that the academy's system was too harsh. For example, being late was the one rule that received the most complaints. According to the freshman student code, 50 redemption points was to be deducted for every instance of late arrival. Those who passed the admissions test had redemption points, but not much, and for many who were used to sleeping late, getting up early was a Herculean task.

Most of them thought that being late for one or two occasions was a non-issue, or perhaps the tutors might let them off if they begged for mercy for being late. Many had the mindset of getting lucky and escaping punishment if and when they were late. That seemed to be the case, especially when the teacher simply kept quiet, despite their tardiness.

That evening, all the freshmen received their weekly attendance records from the Central Computer, after which the entire dormitory building erupted with wailing. Those who had a record of being late received penalty slips, all at the same time. 50 redemption points were deducted for each late arrival, and several had their points deducted so badly that their scores were in the negative. They then received a warning from the student council and their credits could be used as collateral on account of the fact that it was their first offence. However, should the redemption points be deducted to zero a second time, their memories would be erased and they would be sent back to Earth.

Amidst the sorrow was joy as well. Most of the freshmen who went to class on time and never left early received another prompt at the exact same time—they had been given a weekly reward for full attendance: 50 redemption points!

The received redemption points was not that high a number, but they stood to obtain 200 redemption points for a full month's attendance. That was a big number, and many people expressed their praise and support for that system in the forum.

Someone then randomly asked a question. 'If 50 redemption points were to be deducted for each instance of tardiness, then would someone who was absent for two days be sent back to Earth?'

The post did not name anyone in particular and it was unlikely that the hundreds of freshmen knew each other. However, someone soon replied to the poster with Xiao Lin's achievements. For example, his physical examination attributes, the results of his admissions test, how much the tutors disliked him for insisting on dual cultivation, and how he still had 0 XP in Basic Meditation...

The reply must have been from someone who hated Xiao Lin, because the taunting was rather excessive. Xiao Lin sensed that, apart from Wang Dalin, he had not ruffled anyone else's feathers since arriving at the academy. Be that as it may, such an occurrence was inevitable, given the envy that arose from some conflicting interests.

Xiao Lin was the class monitor, but only on an acting basis for a three-month term. After gradually getting a better understanding of the various benefits coming with the position, anyone with the slightest bit of ambition would certainly covet the position.

The students in the other classes might not share the same mentality, but their monitors were genuinely talented and had shown potential far exceeding that of any ordinary human throughout the past week. For example, Class One's monitor Cheng Ming was the first to raise his Basic Swordsmanship to LV3. Another example would be Class Twelve's monitor Chen Dao, whose meditation speed paled only to that of Gu Xiaoyue's, effectively forcing everyone to drop whatever intentions they originally had.

Xiao Lin's heart nearly jumped out when he received his attendance sheet. The record clearly showed that he was absent for two days, but there was also an explanation for his absence below, stating that it was due to a cooperation with the student union department to conduct important research. Therefore, his attendance was still full and he received a reward of 50 redemption points.

The phrase 'conduct important research' nearly made Xiao Lin burst with laughter. He breathed a sigh of relief. Song Junlang was telling the truth when he asserted that he had a high-ranked person taking care of him.

If Xiao Lin really was kicked out of Dawn Academy, everyone else in Class Seven would benefit from it. Theoretically speaking, they all stood a chance to become the next monitor. With that sort of mentality, they were unafraid to express their support, even though they knew how much Xiao Lin liked to show off his authority.

Xiao Lin ignored the provocative post which questioned whether or not he would be kicked out of the academy. Although he wanted to post his attendance sheet just to give those people a slap in the face, he was deterred by the possibility of stirring up trouble.

The post questioning Xiao Lin was not around for too long. Soon, a more popular post appeared on the forum. The post was made by a person named Wu Qin, but the name did not really matter. After all, everyone was practically strangers to each other. The more eye-catching aspect was the sophomore sign in front of the name, indicating that the poster was a second-year student.

The forum's rules stipulated that those who were senior could enter the section for their juniors, while the reverse was not permitted. The rule came about as a means of encouraging older students to guide the younger ones, but the truth was that not many people were willing to waste their time on freshmen.

Xiao Lin's eyes twitched when he saw who posted it. In fact, he immediately knew what Wu Qin was talking about without even looking at the post.

Wu Qin's post condemned Xiao Lin too, exciting those who wanted to take over Xiao Lin's position. Most of them probably felt that Xiao Lin—who had the audacity to provoke a sophomore—was the stereotypical example of someone who had done something foolish and received karmic retribution.

As a result, the number of clicks on that posts surged quickly. Many people who clicked in did so out of glee or curiosity. Wu Qin seemed very angry as she unceremoniously accused Xiao Lin of looking down on people when he was nothing but a freshman. He might have been acting class monitor, but he had no regard for his seniors and was extremely arrogant.

Wu Qin briefly stated what happened in the sophomore's meditation room the other day but omitted half of what truly happened. For example, she brought up the weekend gossip and conversation between the senior sisters in the meditation room, but the focus was on how Xiao Lin mocked her because he thought too highly of himself.

Wu Qin would never believe that Xiao Lin only took a few minutes to upgrade his Basic Meditation from LVo to LV1 that day. Even a talented student could not achieve that, so she concluded that the Freshmen Class Seven's acting class monitor was just putting on a show.

As the saying went, those who showed off all the time had it coming to them. Wu Qin went ballistic and could no longer take it, so she made a point to head to the forum to vent her frustrations.