

Elite Mages' Academy Novel

Chapter 451 - Elemental Compression

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“Did you think that my elemental aura was extremely weak?” The old man saw through Xiao Lin’s thoughts before waving his sword in the air.

The faint glow of fire turned vibrant for a moment, but it only maintained for less than a second before the flames dispersed. The entire process was extremely quick, and even Xiao Lin, who was staring unblinkingly, almost did not catch it.

The professor did not say anything after waving his sword because he noticed that Xiao Lin was deep in thought. After a dozen or so minutes, Xiao Lin finally relaxed his eyebrows in realization, saying hesitantly, “Even though it wasn’t very obvious, I could somewhat feel the immense power that was emitted for a brief moment, but why was it so short? Did you use some special ability to hide your elements from perception?”

“No, that’s not right.” Xiao Lin quickly shook his head. “The elements cannot be hidden. Hold on, what was that strange feeling from earlier?”

Xiao Lin muttered to himself by the side, but it was useless to just think about it like that, so he sat down cross-legged on the floor, closing his eyes as he rapidly entered his meditative state. The old man raised his eyebrows, not disturbing him, instead waiting for Xiao Lin by the side.

In the meditative universe, Xiao Lin tried to use his Perception to investigate the surrounding space. Thanks to the old man’s slash, the surrounding elemental fragments had yet to completely disperse, so from the perspective of the meditative universe, Xiao Lin could clearly see countless stars lingering around him.

However, the stars that represented those elements were very strange. They still emitted the glow of a star, but the size was very different from the usual ones he saw in meditation, and there were also a lot of fragment-like structures in the surroundings. Of course, it was not strange to see those in the real universe, but in his meditative state, those were oddities.

Just like that, he spent half an hour in his meditative state. Xiao Lin then reopened his eyes, and when he looked at the old man, his expression was filled with respect.

“It seems that you understand.” The professor laughed.

“The compression and release of elements. Heavens, how did you do it!” Xiao Lin was amazed, he had more or less understood how that slash was done.

What Professor Zhang did earlier was actually very simple. He had consistently compressed and combined massive amounts of elemental energy; the final product might be the same in size, but despite the similar size and numbers, it contained unthinkably shocking power. When released in the blink of an eye, the destructive power was naturally surprising.

Even though it sounded simple, Xiao Lin, who was no longer a mere rookie, knew that it was something not even the elemental spellcasters on Planet Norma had managed to do in tens of thousands of years. Compressing the elements, especially to the degree that there was practically no external leakage, was similar in difficulty to taking two stars and smashing them apart before putting them back together. Even the structural integrity of the stars needed to be maintained.

Ever since Dawn Academy had come to the New World, there were countless people who researched the problem, and even when they tried to combine Earth's physics and magical knowledge, the results were the same.

Yet now, it had just happened right in front of Xiao Lin.

If not for the shushing motion the old man had done beforehand, Xiao Lin would have cried out in shock. It was a miracle, not just from a magical perspective, but it could also be said to be a miracle of microbiology.

"Keep it down. I don't want anyone else to know," the professor said in a low voice, his expression clear that he was not joking. He really did not want it known.

"Why?"

"They would not approve of my methods," the professor said. "Those stubborn b*stards are the same as those unaging mages on Planet Norma. Their way of thinking has been set in stone!"

Xiao Lin was speechless, but he had nothing to do with it anyway. His head started to race, and he smiled as he said, "Are you going to teach me that?"

"That depends on how much you can learn. You should realize how much elemental compression will enhance the combat ability of elemental sword aura, right?"

"Of course!" Xiao Lin said.

Elemental sword aura was very different from inner sword aura, because it involved controlling large amounts of external energy. Elemental sword aura did not rely on sword technique; it simply used brute force. Yet, that meant it was easily handled, and was hard to control as well as inner sword aura.

If the elements could be suppressed, then elemental sword aura would be not that different from inner sword aura. Not only that, Xiao Lin had even thought about the next step; if he used it in spell casting, then many spells would be enhanced. The value of it would be hard to measure.

"In truth, it's not hard to be done. You just need to view the elements as life forms. Inanimate objects are hard to combine, but if they were alive, compressing and combining them is not that difficult."

“It sounds reasonable, but surely it’s not that easy?”

“Why don’t you start learning from meditation! Elemental sword aura has always needed Basic Meditation as a foundation. It’s a pity those stubborn fools in the academy aren’t willing to allow me to open up a meditation class for elemental sword aura.”

“Oh, I think my meditation rank should be enough.”

“No, not that useless all-purpose meditation you’ve learnt. How do I put this?” The professor tilted his head and asked, “If you want to truly control the method of compressing the elements, you first need to start from necromantic meditation, which you probably don’t know as a new student. Let me explain, the natural world has three main types of energy, life, death and elemental...”

“I know. The elves use life energy; humans and most races use elemental energy; and death energy is used in some necromantic spells and by dark races.” Xiao Lin had already read about that in the library.

“Yes, in order to understand life, you first need to start with death energy. That sort of energy is called the breath of death...”

“Oh, what about after that?”

“What do you mean after that?”

“How do I compress the elements after learning necromantic meditation?” Xiao Lin asked directly.

Professor Zhang furrowed his eyebrows in dissatisfaction. “Don’t be too eager to soar. I know you’re curious and excited, but the class needs to be taken step by step. Necromantic meditation isn’t easy, especially for someone like you who has already grasped basic mediation.”

“But I’ve already learned necromantic meditation.” Xiao Lin could not help but speak up.

“Oh, is that so?” The old man nodded, before his eyes suddenly widened. “What? Hold on! What did you say?!”

Chapter 452 - The Professor’s Theory

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The professor was quite loud, attracting half the training hall to look over. He then lowered his voice, but his look of shock was still on his face. “What-what did you just say? Necromantic meditation? You’re preparing to learn it?”

“No, I think I already have a basic grasp. Of course, I’m not very good, but I’ve already passed the barrier of entry,” Xiao Lin explained; the most difficult part of necromantic mediation was the barrier to start, so he wanted the old man to know that he was not speaking nonsense.

The professor fell silent for a moment before asking, “Who taught you?”

“I learned it myself.” Xiao Lin then added, “I got the book from the library. There are quite a few basic books on necromantic meditation there.”

The professor’s face twitched. “I know that. The books in the library were only bought back then due to my insistence, but they’re not for new students like you to read. Hold on, I remember where the books were placed in the library. Only second-years and above can get there. How did you see them?”

The old man grew more and more suspicious as he spoke, almost accusing Xiao Lin of lying.

Dawn Academy had never before started a course on necromantic mediation, and the student union never planned to start it either. Xiao Lin had been curious as to why the library had books on it, but now he understood why. He did not say much, instead closing his eyes and activating Miracle before heading into the meditative world.

The glint showed in the old man’s eyes under his glasses. He had first been in disbelief, but quickly started to laugh. “Interesting! Interesting! I haven’t seen anything so fun for many years! Hahaha! Song Junlang, you recommended me to a decent prospect!”

The old man did not bother to hide his laughing. The training hall was busy dueling, and no one bothered to shift their gazes over. They had long since gotten used to the professor’s eccentric nature.

Xiao Lin once again opened his eyes, feeling a little tired from deactivating Miracle. He could still only rely on Miracle to be able to enter that special meditative world that could feel death energy.

“Why didn’t you continue? Are you tired?” Professor Zhang asked, concerned.

“You’re too noisy. I could not focus at all!” Xiao Lin said impolitely. Even though he already understood that the old professor in front of him was a hidden Boss-level figure, he still did not raise the proper sense of respect, especially after knowing the professor taught Song Junlang. Just like when he faced Department Head Song, even if he had some admiration for Song Junlang, that b*stard’s horrible personality of trying to trick him at every turn deserved no respect...

“Very good, since you’ve already managed the first step yourself, then let’s enter the second phase.” The professor thought for a moment before heading into the lounge, retrieving a thick notebook before flipping through the pages. As the notebook of a professor with decades of experience, that thing was undoubtedly extremely valuable.

“Planet Norma’s natural energy goes through the cycle of life as well; it’s the basic law of living things. Natural represents the start, elemental represents the period of growth, and necromantic represents death. The elements are in their period of growth, so it’s hard to compress and combine them, but if we convert death energy into the elements, the problem would not exist, because to those that are completely not elements, we are their creatures, a mother-like existence.”

The professor explained as he flipped through the notebook, speeding up as he got more and more excited. His theory was extremely bold, and something that Xiao Lin had never heard before. He only regretted not bringing a notebook to take notes with.

Everyone else in the training hall looked at each other, their eyes filled with envy. The professor's notebook was a priceless treasure, and they had never seen him take it out in their years of study, yet he brought it out for that new student.

After an hour-long lecture, Professor Zhang only stopped when he realized his throat was dry. Looking at Xiao Lin who had his eyebrows furrowed in thought, his excitement cooled down, smiling in embarrassment as he said, "I was a little too impatient. I forgot that you're still a new student. Even if you have learned necromantic meditation, there are many theories that are too advanced for you. Don't worry, we'll take it slow..."

"Continue." Xiao Lin was just working hard to digest the key points that the professor had said. Only when he was sure that he had everything memorized did he raise his head, asking curiously, "Professor, are you done?"

"Did you manage to grasp what I said earlier?"

"Yes, more or less."

"Don't say it so vaguely! Elemental sword aura is an extremely complicated undertaking. You can't afford any carelessness!"

"Alright, I've grasped about 60% to 70%. You'll have to let me head back to properly digest the rest of it, but it's fine. I've already memorized it all." Xiao Lin was not bragging. Ever since his Academic Genius had stepped into LV2, the effects were amazing. His memory, comprehension, or learning ability had all noticeably improved. He finally understood why that talent was SS-rank.

Seeing the old man's look of disbelief, Xiao Lin could only helplessly say, "Professor, why don't you test me?"

"Fine! I mentioned this just now. What is the time frame of an element's creation until its death?"

"Normally it would take three to five minutes, but an active element, due to the law of conservation, would use up its life to achieve higher explosiveness, which speeds up its destruction to around five seconds."

"How long would compressing the element limit the time to?"

"Not more than one second. Otherwise, the compressed energy would be unable to be released after the element dies and turns into death energy."

"What is the basis of elemental compression?"

"It is to condense new elements from death energy, creating new elements completely controlled by yourself."

The two of them continued with the questions and answers, with Xiao Lin showing no pause at all. Each answer was given smoothly, proving that he had already properly absorbed everything into his head.

The old man was speechless, and his face twitched. He finally closed his notebook, looking like he wanted to utter a few words of praise, but he finally held it back, saying, “You’re better than what I thought. We’ll stop here for today. The next part of what you need to do is simple, to carry out those theories I mentioned just now in practice!”

Chapter 453 - Providing Death Energy

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The first Elemental Sword Aura class brought Xiao Lin a lot of pleasant surprises. It gave him a lot more anticipation for the courses during the new semester. Professor Zhang wanted him to first try interacting with the elements, learning how to condense new elemental energy from death energy was the first step.

Xiao Lin worked hard digesting what the professor said when he went back to the dormitories after the class, including writing down everything he had memorized. Based on what the professor had said, he needed to revise his necromantic meditation. He never expected that the sudden urge to learn necromantic meditation in the library back then would be so useful now.

However, it was hard to work on necromantic meditation within the academy’s isolated space. Even the professor said he only managed to grasp the method in the New World. The academy’s space did not possess death energy, which caused many problems for necromantic meditation.

Death energy represented death, but under the protection of the Law of Immortality within Dawn Academy, death was very rare. However, Xiao Lin’s eyes quickly lit up; he remembered he had something he could use to represent death energy, which was what Silverlight had left behind for him: the black knight!

Back then, on Silverlight Lake, Onyxia had improved his undead swordsman into a black knight, and after that, Silverlight had stayed in his spatial ring when she followed him out from Silverlight Lake, and had brought in the black knight since his Holy Soul Sword had been broken.

Ever since the black knight had turned into one of Silverlight’s possessions, Xiao Lin had lost the ability to summon it, especially since the destruction of the Holy Soul Sword had led to his mental connection to black knight being weakened.

It was a pity that Silverlight had passed away on Earth. Thinking about the princess, Xiao Lin’s face saddened as he touched his forehead. His forehead was smooth as normal. Even though Silverlight said that she had given her third eye to him, after they left the bottom of the sea, Xiao Lin’s bump on his forehead had disappeared.

As the mark of Atlantean royalty, the eye was difficult for outsiders to control. Silverlight said that Xiao Lin could, but it did not mean she meant the current Xiao Lin. Xiao Lin might possess the potential, but he was too weak at the moment. He could somewhat feel the connection to the eye, but activating it would require tremendous amounts of energy, so he had yet to try.

Xiao Lin sighed, focusing his attention on the ring in his hand. The spatial ring had been Silverlight's temporary residence, and he never interfered with it, but the layer of protection had stopped rejecting Xiao Lin like before, instead immediately letting him in.

Xiao Lin understood after a brief pause. Silverlight must have not planned to return after she had used Time Rewind before, and had already released the shield surrounding the ring for Xiao Lin, yet she did not completely remove it. Even if the ring was lost, other than Xiao Lin, anyone who could not rival Silverlight's mental strength which had accumulated over thousands of years would not be able to use the spatial ring.

Xiao Lin was quite touched. It might not have been much of an effort to Silverlight, but to him, it was an extremely valuable treasure. The ring was now a spatial ring that belonged completely to him.

When his spirit looked past the entrance to the ring, Xiao Lin's mind had a feeling like it was suddenly being expanded. What his mind reflected back to him was an unfathomably large space. The space was as big as a city. As a ring made from pure starmetal, forged by the hybrid Hammerhead, it was basically perfect.

However, when it was first forged, Xiao Lin had known the space was large, yet completely empty, just like a completely new isolated space. It was a desolate land, yet in a short time, Xiao Lin sensed a lot of things within the ring. They were simple things, such as trees and flowers, earth and streams. It was not a lot, but there were still traces of life.

It was unbelievable!

Xiao Lin was shocked. However, amongst all the life, he quickly felt an unusual aura of death. The black knight was standing silently in the center of the grass fields, not moving and not speaking. It was just standing there, as if waiting for its master's commands.

Xiao Lin tried to communicate with it, and then tried issuing an order. He breathed a sigh of relief when he noticed that the command worked. He had been worried that black knight's evolution coupled with the long period of not communicating had lost him the power to command the black knight. If that was it, he was willing to leave the black knight within the isolated space. Otherwise, a black knight that did not listen to orders would have brought him or someone else unneeded problems.

He had the urge to slowly explore the new space that Silverlight had opened, but it was not the time to do so. Exploring the isolated space would consume a lot of mental energy, so he retreated quickly after establishing a connection with the black knight, since he had already felt a mental toll.

The black knight was quickly released, and it was still in the dark, dull armor. Only its two eyes emitted a strange green glow. It stood quietly in the room, seeming quite obedient. Xiao Lin did not dare bring it outside. It was one matter to scare the other students, but if the student union treated it as a dangerous being and confiscated it, he would suffer a great loss.

That was why he performed his necromantic meditation alone in his dormitory.

Compared to the undead swordsman from before, the evolved black knight had a much larger reserve of death energy. The death energy even materialized in a faint black mist. It was a power the black knight naturally possessed. It was a pity that when Onyxia forced it to evolve with the skeletons that had been accumulated over many years, there was a sense of prematurity. That was why the black knight was actually still in a somewhat weakened state. It was actually a lot weaker than those black knights that naturally evolved after hundreds of years of experience. Of course, it was Silverlight that told him so.

As for how he could use the black knight that was stronger than even himself, Xiao Lin had no idea for the time being. That was why he was merely using the black knight as a source of energy at the moment, leaving it in his room as Xiao Lin entered necromantic meditation, using the dense aura of death around the black knight to improve his necromantic meditation.

Chapter 454 - First Attempt At Compressing Elements

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The first week of the new semester passed quickly. The complicated classes under the new curriculum led to a lot of students complaining, especially since cultural classes, like history and foreign languages, had turned even dryer than before. The other courses had also begun to feel different.

Be it magic classes or physical ones, the professors started to pass on large amounts of basic skills. Even more spells and even more sword techniques led to the students swimming in them.

Xiao Lin was an exception. Other than the compulsory cultural classes, he had used his freedom to choose his classes to avoid all other combat-based courses other than elemental sword aura.

After the first class, the old professor no longer provided him with more direction, but after listening to the professor and constantly working on his necromantic meditation, he got more and more excited. That was why before he mastered elemental sword aura, he did not plan on attending other courses.

In truth, the improvement was faster than he anticipated, his necromantic meditation had improved from LV1 a week ago to LV3—two levels in a week. When the old man asked him about his progress, the old man's mouth opened so wide an egg could be stuffed inside.

As his familiarity with necromantic meditation increased, it caused the professor to increase his advancement as well. That was why, during the first weekend, Xiao Lin could finally try condensing the elements.

The venue was still in his dorm, since necromantic meditation was not something that required a dedicated room to increase its effectiveness; all that was needed was the black knight's death energy.

At the end of death lay rebirth.

Those words were basically the foundation of elemental compression, but it was no simple task to actually do it. Xiao Lin went into Miracle as usual before entering the meditative world. As his basic attributes increased, the amount of time he could maintain Miracle did as well. Even so, he could only meditate for twenty minutes at most before needing to rest, so every opportunity was very valuable.

After a week of necromantic meditation, his meditative universe now had countless grey meteorites alongside the flaming or frozen stars. Those meteorites floated between the stars, small yet containing large amounts of energy. They were the representation of death energy.

Based on what the professor had taught, Xiao Lin had used all his time attempting to master and establish a mental connection with death energy. It was actually very hard because he needed to be familiar and even adept at communicating with both the elements and death energy. It was something that necromancers and elemental mages struggled to do.

However, Xiao Lin was lucky. He used his own special method to enter necromantic meditation, which was why he could perceive both the elements and death energy. The death energy was also provided by the black knight. As its former owner, even if the black knight had already surpassed Xiao Lin in skill, there were still fetters of a mental connection between the two. The connection was weak, but it was a great help to Xiao Lin in perceiving death energy.

Xiao Lin had already prepared the time and place; now, it was time for the first attempt.

Following the professor's instructions, Xiao Lin first started with one orb of death energy. When establishing a mental connection, he could already give that orb basic commands. He carefully commanded the orb to leave the vicinity of the black knight. To the black knight, who had vast amounts of death energy, the orb was just one small part of a million, and was not worth mentioning.

Following that, Xiao Lin started to apply constant pressure on the orb. Thanks to Miracle converting his attributes into Intelligence, his full mental strength gathered on the thing the size of a microorganism. It was a force that was hard to imagine.

The meteorite that represented death energy started to expand; it was trying to absorb Xiao Lin's mental energy, but not even a second had passed when the meteorite started to rapidly collapse like a ball with a puncture. The speed was shocking, and in the blink of an eye, the meteorite turned into fragments in Xiao Lin's meditative world.

After leaving the black knight's body, the orb of death energy actually did not have much time to live. Even if Xiao Lin had not done anything, the lone orb would merely have survived for a little while in the academy's isolated space.

The decay of the death energy was just the start. As it perished, Xiao Lin's full attention had been on it. He had observed traces of energy that came out of the fragments in that brief moment. It was extremely weak, and if he did not pay special attention to it, he would have missed it. However, with the professor's special methods, and under the special environment of necromantic meditation, Xiao Lin still felt it. He was mildly shocked; the professor's theories were constantly being proven right.

If it were to be explained by Earth's physics, it could be called the law of conservation of energy. Even if Earth followed different laws, Planet Norma had very similar environments to Earth. The two worlds actually shared a lot of laws, and the professor had found the best way to use this particular law.

The perishing of death energy would just cause the energy to disappear from the world. The new energy that Xiao Lin grasped was similar to natural elemental energy. They were also similar in size to the stars in the meditative world. However, the difference was that they did not have burning flames or flowing waters.

According to the professor, they were newly born elements, and had yet to take up a trait from nature. They were newborn, which was the start of everything. Of course, the process was short in reality, possibly not even taking the blink of an eye or the time it took to take a breath to complete. When new elements were born, the natural environment would give them one of the four basic traits.

Xiao Lin did not have time to admire it or be surprised. He needed to use that small window to perform true elemental compression. True elemental compression was done when the element was reborn; that was the defining point of the professor's theory.

The energy that came out of the orb of death energy had turned into numerous smaller starting stars. Xiao Lin used his special mental strength to force those elements to collide.

True compression was simple and violent. In such a short time, there was actually no way to try out other methods.

Boom!

As the two stars collided, Xiao Lin felt a shocking explosion being produced. The sudden impact threw him out of the meditative world, and he immediately opened his eyes to look at his surroundings.

The black knight still stood quietly in the room. There was no explosion, no impact. The shocking amounts of energy produced by the two orbs colliding in the microscopic world remained there.

Chapter 455 - Battle Training Class

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Success!

Xiao Lin was panting, his heart thumping. He had already prepared for various problems. After all, the professor said that the first step was the hardest. The professor himself took numerous years before he could even make his theory a reality, so Xiao Lin did not expect to succeed in his first try.

The compression of the first energy orb was just the start, but he now essentially had one foot through the door. The next step was just repetition and training—from one orb to ten, a hundred, a thousand. The time taken to compress each orb needed to constantly shrink as well. Using this

ability in true combat would require it to be done in the blink of an eye, or it would lose its meaning.

No matter what, it was a good start.

In the next week, Xiao Lin repeatedly trained and familiarized himself with the process. The professor had stopped teaching him much more after the first class because he believed that the process would take a very long time. Xiao Lin did not ask any more questions either because he believed that it was better to do it himself, which would make it easier when the professor taught him the next step.

The first half-month of the new semester passed just like that without any surprises. He had thrown all his effort into elemental sword aura training, even neglecting many of his other classes. However, his Basic Meditation had skyrocketed because of that, and he had reached LV9 without knowing, which was the highest basic level.

The next stage of Basic Meditation was Novice Meditation. That required the user to not only feel the elements, but also be able to tell the types, power, and amount apart. Xiao Lin had already managed to do that with his elemental sword aura training, which was why Xiao Lin was only at the MAX rank of Basic Meditation for three days before breaking into Novice Meditation LV1.

Xiao Lin's Intelligence attribute had reached 30 points in the latest test. It meant that his abilities seemed to have quickly soared in the past few days.

Other than the cultural classes, Xiao Lin had basically spent the past half a month either in the sword aura training hall, the dormitory, or the cafeteria. When he appeared in Saturday's shared class, a lot of them looked at him in surprise.

"You can't do this. You won't have enough credits." The kind-hearted Cheng Ming worried about Xiao Lin as usual.

"We were even betting on whether or not you'd appear for this class. Why did you show up? You lost me three hundred redemption points." Chen Dao looked depressed. Since Xiao Lin was the only one who enrolled in elemental sword aura, he did not see anyone most of the time.

"This time I won't lose to you!"

Xiao Lin was just greeting Chen Dao and Cheng Ming when a woman suddenly interjected. He quickly noticed that the woman was Class Four's monitor Han Manman, the last class monitor to be formalized. She was heavily mocked for not being able to become a formal class monitor last semester, and had lay low because of that. However, she was still a talent holder in the end, and had been officially promoted.

"Oh, Han Manman." Xiao Lin's relationship with her was not great, maybe even bad, so he just casually acknowledged her.

"Don't be so full of yourself!" Xiao Lin's lackadaisical attitude seemed to have caused Han Manman to feel looked down on, and she looked quite angry.

However, at that time, the class started. The extra class implemented during Saturdays was the battle training class. It was something that was only added this year.

There was no fixed teacher in charge of the class. According to the student union, each class would have a different person invited over, since the experience with combat that everyone had was different.

When the instructor for this class walked in, Xiao Lin was speechless. It was a familiar person: the captain of the Seventh Regiment, Yu Mei. He could not believe that she had rushed back from the New World to teach a class. He began to suspect that the woman might have just been bored because there was no one in the regiment.

Yu Mei did not hide her familiarity as she looked over to Xiao Lin, causing the other students to be dumbfounded. It was obvious the teacher was once again someone Xiao Lin knew, and every more or less had a bit of admiration and respect for Xiao Lin in their hearts.

However, Yu Mei did not greet Xiao Lin. She was dressed for battle that day, but it was simple armor, not even Bronze-ranked in quality.

She walked to the center of the arena. As the largest training hall available to the first-years, it could basically contain all the new students. Eyeing the crowd, Yu Mei looked around before clearing her throat and letting out a thunderous roar.

“Some of you might know who I am. I am a captain in the army. My job is to kill our enemies in war, and battle with any foreign races that threaten Dawn Academy! I did not come here to play with you. The student union had some requirements for this class, but I rejected them. Since I’m here, then we’ll follow my rules, and this class will commence with the requirements I put on my soldiers!”

‘Captain?’

Even these rookies knew how powerful a captain was in the New World. They then looked at Xiao Lin again. He actually knew that captain!

Only Xiao Lin smiled to himself in a corner. Soldiers? What a joke. When did that woman have soldiers? The Seventh Regiment only had him and Yu Mei!!

“The first thing that needs to be clear is that this is absolutely real combat. There are no simulations and no training swords.”

Yu Mei’s next words immediately caused everyone’s looks of admiration to turn into shock. A murmur shot through the crowd, and someone shouted a question. “You want us to fight each other for real? Quit joking! What if someone is injured!”

“Injuries just mean you’re not skilled enough!” Yu Mei mocked. “Why don’t we use simulated combat? That’s because you’ll all know it’s fake and think nothing will happen to you. What’s the point of fighting with that mentality?”

“What if someone dies?” someone asked.

“Then you’re just unlucky!”

Boom!

The hall once again exploded. Xiao Lin nodded as he looked at Yu Mei’s smiling face. The woman was obviously joking. Just as tempers started to flare, she laughed as she said, “You’re all so boring. Fine, fine, that was a joke. How could the student union allow you to waste your lifespans here?”

“So, we’re still using simulated combat?” someone asked.

“No, that was not a joke, you’ll be using real weapons.”

Everyone was rendered speechless.

“Quit giving me those looks. Let me finish speaking. The training hall has been equipped with a high-level recovery system. We’ll also be giving all of you protective armor, so you can just fight to your heart’s content. I’ve already gained the approval of the student union. All recoveries done in this class will be paid for by the academy!”

Chapter 456 - Wang Dalin’s Challenge

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It was a real battle, and the medical treatment would be covered by the academy.

Xiao Lin was getting a headache and he grinned. He could already vaguely perceive everyone’s unkind gazes toward each other. Usually, people got along just fine and were friendly with each other. However, there was always friction. There would be people who held grudges against someone else, but because of academy regulations, no one dared to fight in private.

In Yu Mei’s actual combat lesson, Xiao Lin understood that it was an opportunity for people to settle grudges and carry out revenge. In the end, if two people usually had a good relationship, it was unimaginable how they could be ruthless toward each other in a battle like this.

However, despite the complaints, Yu Mei, as a teacher, undoubtedly stood by her decision.

The grouping was soon to commence. As people were free to choose their opponents, and considering that injuries would inevitably occur in the next battle, everyone appeared to be quite hesitant and cautious. Yu Mei then repeated the grouping principles. Opponents may be chosen freely, under the condition that there must be a combination of magical versus melee fighters.

Xiao Lin was starting to understand the point of this class.

The grouping took quite a long time. As there was an imbalance in the number of magic and melee groups, many people had to wait a little longer.

“In the future, you are all likely to be fighting in the New World. If you encounter an opponent of a completely different type, and you have no choice but to engage in battle, then you need to know what you should do. I know you have all gone through several monthly exams, but in actuality, your monthly exams are nothing more than something that happened in history. Actual combat tactics are constantly being improvised. Allow me to first demonstrate to you.

“First of all, as a melee fighter, what should I do when I meet a spellcaster...”

Then came a long lecture period. Although everyone complained about the arrangements for actual combat in the beginning, however, as Yu Mei continued her lecture, everyone settled down quickly and listened intently.

Though they were no longer novices, as the monthly exams gradually provided them with some combat experience, it was all in a self-explored manner. In the first half of the semester, the professional course teachers only taught basic knowledge. They were not allowed to run before they learned to walk.

Hence, this class was the first time they were actually exposed to systematic combat methodologies. What they did not know was that, before this, these courses were only meant to be taught in the second semester of the sophomore year.

“I know that many of you used to play games. So, tell me, what should a melee fighter do when they see a spellcaster? Do you just charge in brainlessly? Try to beat the opponent in the shortest time possible, right?”

Many students snickered at Yu Mei’s comment. These words brought everyone closer together. Who would have thought that Yu Mei played video games too?

“If you do the same on Planet Norma, I’ll give you two words, plain suicide!” Yu Mei’s words escalated just as quickly.

“Indeed, when your strength reaches Gold-rank and beyond, a person with expertise in agility can do something like this. However, it is impossible for most other people to run up directly to a spellcaster in his casting phase to kill him. I believe you all experienced the power of spells. Without preparation or relevant resistances, rushing in is tantamount to suicide!

“So, how do you fight a caster? It’s simple, interfere with the casting! Use high-speed movement, evasion, and other actions. Also, make use of obstacles to increase the difficulty of the opponent’s lock-on. When the spellcaster is injured or in an abnormal state, the success rate of casting will drop drastically. For example, the spellcaster can be repelled, stunned, or paralyzed with special sword auras. In summary, you have to maneuver around it. Unless you can guarantee beating spellcasters with brute strength, maneuvering around the spellcaster and depleting the opponent’s mental strength to exhaustion are always good choices...

“As for spellcasters who face melee fighters, you need preventive measures. Although the chances of melee fighters getting into close range are slim, all they need is to succeed just once, and the spellcaster will be devastated. In addition, everyone’s misconceptions must be corrected. Spellcasters must learn to cast their spells reasonably. How many of you present can accurately tell how many Novice spells can be cast by your current mental strength capacity? How many Black-iron rank spells...”

Yu Mei chose her words carefully. Some people had already experienced these concepts to a certain degree through the monthly exams, but nobody revealed who these people were, and some were even completely neglected.

However, Yu Mei did not say much. In her own words, they did not need to know too much. They first had to apply what they knew into battle.

With this as groundwork, not many would be complaining when actual combat practice started.

Xiao Lin, who was double-cultivating, actually did not care. However, as a monitor, not many ordinary students were willing to practice combat against him. To do so was basically masochism.

Chen Dao and Cheng Ming were both eager to try, but someone rushed ahead of them. When Xiao Lin saw the person standing in front of him, preparing to spar, he was shocked for a long time before saying, "Wang Dalin?"

Xiao Lin's impression of Wang Dalin remained at the beginning of the academy when the guy kept on targeting him. However, since becoming the monitor, Wang Dalin suddenly disappeared and kept a low profile. Xiao Lin was not one to hold a grudge, and he stopped paying attention to Wang Dalin after that.

"I'll fight you!" Wang Dalin seemed a little unusual today. His aggressive tone was very unlike his low-key style from before.

"Do you want to challenge me?" Xiao Lin frowned.

Wang Dalin frowned back. Displeased, he said, "It's not a challenge! Challenging is a term used by the weak when they are faced against the strong. I admit that you're not weak, but you underestimate me!"

Xiao Lin did not want to accept. He knew his own strength. If they fought seriously, what if he actually disabled his opponent? Even if it could be cured, it would not be good if it left some psychological trauma. Anyway, they were still students and fellow classmates.

However, Wang Dalin's attitude was very unpleasant. In front of a crowd, he was even a little instigatory. Xiao Lin did not want to hurt others for no reason, but he was not afraid either. Xiao Lin did not know what Wang Dalin was cooking, but he decided to accept the challenge.

"As you wish. I shall accept your challenge."

Xiao Lin once again emphasized the word 'challenge', causing Wang Dalin's expression to turn even darker. The two of them removed their weapons. Although this was actual combat, using their own weapons was prohibited. Instead, they had to use the weapons on the weapons rack at the venue. Compared to training swords, these swords are significantly higher in both quality and sharpness.

The venue was large enough, but the others still consciously spread out to give them more space.

"I remember you used knives. Then, I will use spells," Xiao Lin muttered, then shouted to Chen Dao, who walked not too far away. "Hey! don't walk away. I want to spar with you later. Wait for a moment, this will be over soon."

Wang Dalin's face twitched fiercely.

Chapter 457 - Strange Speed

Chapter 457: Strange Speed

Xiao Lin actually knew about Wang Dalin's strength. Although he has been to the New World on business trips several times, it did not mean that he was oblivious to the situations in class. A monitor had access to check on the changes of attributes of every member in their class. It had to be admitted that Wang Dalin's strength was among the best in the class.

However, Wang Dalin's strength was limited, and Xiao Lin did not think that he would lose to Wang Dalin. He casually took the most common short wand from the weapon rack and walked to the center of the battlefield. He chose to not attack first, considering it a final act of humility as a monitor.

Wang Dalin's weapon was a knife, but what surprised Xiao Lin was that he actually went for dual knives. He remembered that the guy had always used a single knife. The sword was considered to be the weapon of choice for melee professionals, and Xiao Lin had not taken a knife course. However, swords and knives were similar in many ways, and dual knives are obviously more focused on dexterity and speed. Wang Dalin had always single-wielded, and Xiao Lin did not know when he changed courses.

It did not matter. Xiao Lin casually cast a water shield on himself. He very rarely cast elementary defensive spells, but since Wang Dalin chose double knives, he thought it was better to be safe.

The water shield spell was completed almost instantly, but Wang Dalin's was even faster. Almost immediately after he lowered his wand, Wang Dalin's figure had disappeared from his sight.

Xiao Lin, who was inattentive at first, snapped alert in an instant. In terms of actual combat experience, he was actually much better than all other freshmen. After all, he had faced various powerful enemies in the New World, and his several near-death experiences also improved his abilities significantly.

Usually, there were not any official signals to start sparring like this. Ordinarily, people would extend a greeting and notify that preparations were complete before starting. However, this time, Wang Dalin's speed shocked many of the onlookers. Several other monitors who were uninterested also came to spectate.

'Ping!'

The blade of Wang Dalin's knife swept across the surface of the water shield from top to bottom, but because Xiao Lin had preemptively stepped backward, creating space between them. Although the water shield was broken by this guy in an instant, Xiao Lin himself was unharmed.

"Flame Bullet!"

Xiao Lin sent a barrage of ten Flame Bullets without hesitation. At such a close range, coupled with his current perception level, it was easy to land his shots on the target. The result was out of his expectations. Wang Dalin did not evade and actually took all the Flame Bullets head-on.

Although basic armor was provided in the training hall, Wang Dalin chose the leather armor with the lowest defense. This kind of armor made of ordinary animal skin was very light, allowing the wearer better mobility. However, while there was an increase in speed, it also greatly reduced all aspects of defense and resistance.

Xiao Lin adjusted slightly to avoid hitting vital parts. Although the power of Flame Bullets was not lethal, a series of hits blasted several holes through the leather armor provided by the training hall. The exposed skin was already split and bloody. Fresh blood started flowing, causing several onlookers to gasp. This was real combat, and it was certainly no joke.

Yu Mei, who was watching from the side, started to frown unconsciously, seemingly a little solemn and confused. However, it was not toward Xiao Lin, but Wang Dalin. She suddenly interrupted and said, "Everyone has the right to give up."

Before Yu Mei's words could register, Wang Dalin grimaced with pain and suddenly let out a roar like a beast. He held his knife in a backhand grip and attacked once again. Just as Yu Mei had taught earlier, in melee combat versus a spellcaster, it was important to finish the spellcaster in one go. Never give the opponent any chance to even breathe.

"So fast!"

Xiao Lin's pupils constricted rapidly. Wang Dalin was indeed very fast. Such explosive speeds at such a short distance was beyond the limits of his eyes to track. Xiao Lin could reach these speeds, but he must first be in the Miracle state. No, perhaps he even needed to be in the Ruin state to be able to surpass such speed.

This had to be a joke. When did Wang Dalin achieve this level of agility?

Although Xiao Lin did not have the time to check on his classmate's attribute levels in the last two days, he saw them at the end of the first half-semester. He remembered it very clearly; this guy's agility attribute was just around 20 points or so. Currently, by the looks of it, his agility should be at the very least 100 points!

A lot of thoughts were going through Xiao Lin's head, but his hand movements were not slow either. With a backhand, he raised his wand to block, as he noticed Wang Dalin's dual knives were coming at penetrating speeds, directly toward his throat. This was actual combat and people were allowed to attack liberally, as healing systems were prepared for the injured. Even so, targeting vital parts and going for lethal blows raised a lot of discussion among all those in the venue.

Wang Dalin growled low once more, and Xiao Lin noticed that his eyes were gradually turning red, looking like a crazed demon. Wang Dalin, who was unsuccessful on his second blow, did not give up. He moved quickly again, and in a flash, he was by Xiao Lin's side. In less than a second, he feinted a blow with his knife.

Xiao Lin was slightly angry. The requirement for this battle was melee versus magic. He was not allowed to use melee weapons. As a pure spellcaster, it was indeed very troublesome to be stuck in close range with an opponent with such strange speed.

However, he was not a pushover. Even if he did not turn on the Miracle state, he would evade by relying on the advanced judgment brought by his high Perception, coupled with good agility, strength, and physical attributes. Wang Dalin's several attacks, which could certainly be described as determined, did not have much of a real effect.

It was not easy to force Wang Dalin back. The number of spells that Xiao Lin had mastered thus far was limited. It was a stalemate, and it was a matter of waiting to see who could not endure it and had to stop. Xiao Lin judged that Wang Dalin's speed could not be normal. It was probably the result of a certain skill buff.

Xiao Lin was not willing to wait. That was not the result he wanted for this battle. Originally, Saturday's actual combat course was the best time for him to experiment with compressed elements. With that thought, he instantly stopped hesitating, and immediately went into the Miracle state.

As he used Miracle, Yu Mei raised her brows slightly. With a backhand, Yu Mei tossed a scroll, and a transparent glass-like hook appeared around them, covering Xiao Lin and Wang Dalin within it.

In terms of difficulty, there was a world of difference between compressing and fusing a single element versus compressing and fusing countless elements. The number of elements in each spell was different, and the Flame Bullet that Xiao Lin wanted to use was the lowest level and also a low-power spell. Hence, the required number of elements was also low.

Chapter 458 - Wang Dalin's Abnormality

Chapter 458: Wang Dalin's Abnormality

Xiao Lin touched the spatial ring on his finger. Although the professor told him that when he reached a proficient level and that he would not need to use death aura to transform elements, he was still a beginner and he needed to rely on death aura to perform element compression. He felt that it was a little too rushed.

Extracting death energy from the spatial ring was the quickest thing that came to mind. After all, he could not summon the black knight anywhere or anytime wanted. Fortunately, this ring was completely controlled by his mental strength, so it was possible to properly extract the black knight's breath of death.

Xiao Lin's shots were very quick, and it was the same Flame Bullet spell. However, his casting time was a little slower this time. Fortunately, his own basic attributes, coupled with the water shield, bought him enough time. In addition, this spell had an extremely short casting time. From condensing elements to compression, until the elements were recombined into the structure required by Flame Bullets, the entire process only took a few seconds.

Of course, this was a total failure in the eyes of the professor. In actual combat, a few seconds could be the difference between life and death. However, this was more than enough to deal with opponents of Wang Dalin's level.

A dazzling red light began to emanate from Xiao Lin's fingertips. This was a hotter flame compared to the one he cast earlier, and some people already started to notice that something was off. Yu Mei seemed to realize something and opened her mouth as if about to say something, but in the end, she just sighed.

'Boom! Boom! Boom!'

In quick succession, Xiao Lin fired three Flame Bullets. Xiao Lin was also observing carefully. After all, the significance of this duel was not actually to hit Wang Dalin, but to experiment with the application of his own compressed element techniques in actual combat.

Three explosions happened one after another. Xiao Lin was a little disappointed that the first two Flame Bullets detonated before they reached their targets. This showed that the death energy had not been completely transformed into elements, resulting in an incomplete spell structure. Colloquially, this was a spellcasting failure. The third Flame Bullet hit Wang Dalin squarely in his lower abdomen.

Wang Dalin was brutally flung backward, crashing against the defensive barrier that was set up by Yu Mei earlier before falling to the ground. He was barely able to get up, swaying a few times, and almost fell over again. The leather armor on his abdomen had long been completely burned, revealing a hideous and terrible-looking wound.

"You still want to fight?"

Xiao Lin frowned. In his view, when a melee fighter successfully closed the distance with a spellcaster but was then beaten back by the caster and distanced, it was already a failure. Now, he had enough time and space. Even if he did not compress elements, he could easily knock him down with a normal Flame Bullet.

"Xiao Lin! Something seems off with this guy!" A familiar voice could be heard from outside the protective barrier.

Xiao Lin stood stunned for a moment. There was indeed something abnormal with Wang Dalin. The blood in his pupils seemed to have become even thicker, and his muscles seemed to be trembling as if enduring great pain. Was his attack so powerful?

After compressing elements, the power of the Flame Bullets was greater than expected, but that was its limit. After all, the basic power of this spell was too low. Being able to knock Wang Dalin into the air was actually an unexpected effect, and it was unlikely to be fatal.

"Enough! That's enough! This duel ends here!"

Yu Mei walked over while breaking the protective barrier. Walking to the corner of the venue, she glanced back and forth between Xiao Lin and Wang Dalin, who was barely able to stand. Xiao Lin laid out his hands to show that he did not intend to continue, but Wang Dalin seemed to completely

ignore Yu Mei's warning. He was still approaching Xiao Lin, clutching the handle of his knife tightly.

Yu Mei's frown deepened, and she did not waste her breath. She suddenly rushed over and with a heavy chop, she struck Wang Dalin on the back of his neck, stopping him completely.

"What's wrong with him?" Xiao Lin asked as he walked over.

Yu Mei glared at him and snapped in a low voice. "You brat, I finally got the opportunity to come here to have some fun, but you had to meddle and ruin it!"

Xiao Lin's put on an innocent face. "That has nothing to do with me."

Yu Mei wanted to say more but decided not to continue, as there were a lot of discussions all around. She waved her hands, and said loudly, "What are you all looking at! Don't you know class is still going on? These two students demonstrated textbook dueling between melee fighters and spellcasters. Now, start practicing!"

The crowd finally dispersed as they watched Yu Mei carrying the unconscious Wang Dalin in one arm, walking out the classroom with Xiao Lin. For the subsequent portion of the lesson that was essentially open duels, she simply handed the responsibility of maintaining order over to the monitors.

Yu Mei made her way to the student union. Although she was a legion commander, according to Dawn Academy's management mechanisms, she had no right to supervise students. Obviously, the student union had to get involved with this matter, and Xiao Lin as a party would naturally need to follow.

On the way to the student union, Yu Mei's face locked into a frown made Xiao Lin realize that things were not as simple as he thought. He was getting more confused and he thought about it for a while before probing, "This Wang Dalin probably bears hatred against me. Umm, it was when school started. I thought he didn't care anymore, and I didn't expect this guy to hold such a grudge. Earlier, he was coming at me with fatal moves, but good thing I'm not a pushover."

Yu Mei did not know whether to laugh or cry and said, "Whatever animosity between you two isn't important. Even if he really killed you, it's just some life points. I know you're quite wealthy. Are you that afraid to lose a little money? This... uhh, what was his name again?"

"Wang Dalin." Xiao Lin glanced at Wang Dalin, who was being carried by Yu Mei. He was still unconscious while foaming in the mouth and convulsing from time to time.

"Well, what is Wang Dalin's usual strength like? I mean compared to the battle just now."

"The difference is huge. His power has been raised significantly, the most obvious one was his speed. His speed was very scary." Xiao Lin looked a little frustrated.

"You are a monitor, and you have access to check his attribute points. Do you think that, judging by his attribute points, his sudden explosive power is normal?"

“I haven’t checked for over two weeks, but I don’t believe that he can grow that much in a mere two weeks’ time.”

“That’s it.” Yu Mei finally released a heavy sigh. “This guy had violated the academy’s biggest taboo.”

“You know how he is able to achieve such explosive strength and speed?”

Seeing Xiao Lin’s glimmering eyes, Yu Mei immediately stopped and said, “Don’t even think about it. I said this is a taboo of the academy. If you want to stay in Dawn Academy, don’t think about it. Moreover, it’s not good for your health.”

“Can you stop playing hard to get?”

Yu Mei did not seem to be playing hard to get; she was truly being hesitant. In the end, she still waved her hand, and said bitterly, “Fine, I don’t see any harm in telling you. At your rank, you’ll find out sooner or later anyway. Have you heard about forbidden techniques?”

Chapter 459 - Forbidden Technique

Chapter 459: Forbidden Technique

Forbidden techniques, just as the name suggested, were spells that were prohibited. They could be understood as spells, but in Yu Mei’s words, it was a collective term for various sword skills, spells, and other techniques.

Xiao Lin certainly understood the meaning of this term, but he did not know what it meant in Dawn Academy, or on Planet Norma.

Yu Mei continued, “The system on Planet Norma has been developing for millions of years, creating countless spells and skills. It’s difficult to precisely count the numbers and types, but after our screening, we have classified some of these to be classified spells. No, it should be said that even in the natives of Planet Norma, these spells are not endorsed.

“These forbidden techniques can either allow the user to gain a great increase in strength in a short period of time or allow the user to obtain abilities that are difficult to obtain for ordinary people. These are called forbidden techniques after all, as these abilities come at a great cost, and the cost depends on the ability itself. However, most of them come at the cost of life, soul, or others of that sort. So, basically, all academies have clearly stipulated rules that prohibit students from using forbidden techniques.”

Xiao Lin understood. If that was the case, the scary speed and power that Wang Dalin suddenly gained could be easily explained. He thought for a while and said, “But if you only use your life as the price, then it shouldn’t be unacceptable. Uh, I mean, life points can be supplemented with Lifewater anyway.”

Yu Mei glanced at him. "It's not that simple. This kind of life loss is permanent and irreversible. Lifewater itself is not omnipotent, and the loss of life caused by forbidden techniques cannot be compensated by any means."

Xiao Lin nodded. "However, the price for that kind of power... I'm afraid that it's a temptation that many would find difficult to withstand."

Yu Mei sighed. "Indeed, many were not able to resist this temptation. That's why it is listed as forbidden techniques. Many years ago, all academies signed a joint agreement for this. This probably means that the dissemination and learning of forbidden techniques are totally banned. I don't know about other academies, but this agreement is strictly adhered to in Dawn Academy."

Xiao Lin blinked, as he figured out why Yu Mei's expression was so solemn before. It was not that bad for Wang Dalin to learn the forbidden technique itself. He was just a freshman who would not create much impact. However, how was Wang Dalin able to have a forbidden technique? How did he obtain the forbidden technique? Those were the key questions.

Xiao Lin looked with some pity at Wang Dalin who was in a coma. He had gone against academy rules, and the worst result was probably expulsion from the academy. He might never be recruited again.

Half an hour later...

The two were in the office of the student union president. The president, who came after hearing the news, did not look like his usual gentle self. He glanced at the passed-out Wang Dalin, frowned, and asked Yu Mei, "Are you sure it was a forbidden technique?"

Yu Mei did not have much respect for the president. There was no affiliation between the two of them, and therefore she spoke casually, "Do you still doubt my judgment?"

"Fine, skip this question. Does anyone else know?" The president looked at Xiao Lin, and a hint of frustration flashed across his face. "You really cause a lot of trouble. It's only been half a month since the new semester began."

Xiao Lin could only throw open his arms to indicate his innocence.

"The students all saw it, but they probably wouldn't see it as a forbidden technique. Since the last total ban agreement, these kinds of stuff shouldn't appear in the academy!" Yu Mei said, her temper flaring.

"Let's wait for him to wake and ask him." The president was very frustrated. To him, this incident was totally unexpected.

Wang Dalin, who was knocked unconscious by Yu Mei, soon woke up and saw that he was lying on the floor. He had a dazed look, the blood-red in his eyes was quickly fading. He recognized the president and Yu Mei as well. However, when his eyes fell on Xiao Lin, his gaze quickly became hostile, even looking as if he still wanted to rush over.

“Haven’t you had enough! Settle down!” The president’s voice was low, but when the voice reached their ears, it was as if they were struck by thunder. Wang Dalin trembled, and he actually calmed down.

“I think I should step out of this.” Xiao Lin rose and planned to leave. He felt that he attracted hatred here, despite not knowing why Wang Dalin hated him so much.

“No, you are also a party to his matter. If the dean asks about this, he will definitely ask you.” The president waved his hands, indicating that he did not mind. In fact, he had always been very tolerant with Xiao Lin.

“Your name is Wang Dalin, yes?” The president looked toward Wang Dalin, his baby-face full of dignity. He slowly asked, “Do you know why you are here?”

Wang Dalin shook his head and finally opened his mouth. In a hoarse voice, he pointed at Xiao Lin and said, “I... I couldn’t beat him. But I swear, one day I will beat him!”

“Competition is a good thing, but I want to know exactly what you learned during this period, and how you were able to have today’s strength.” The president already called up for a recording of the battle in the training hall, and his frown deepened the more he watched it.

“It’s because I endure, I work hard. How can a person like him be a class monitor? I want to make an appeal. Why is he favored by the student union and the dean!” Wang Dalin shouted with agitation.

The president was unmoved, and said with a blank expression, “Your jealousy has made you lose your composure. In fact, don’t think that we can’t find out what you’ve done. Your every move in this academy is recorded. All we need to do is call up the recording and everything is laid bare.”

Yu Mei went with the flow and said, “Just get to it. We know that you learned a certain spell or skill to achieve a temporary spike in your strength.”

Wang Dalin was silent for a while, turned his head and said coldly, “Why can’t I use skills that I thought of myself!”

“My *ss!” Yu Mei said angrily. “You learned a forbidden technique on your own? Don’t take us for idiots!”

The president’s tone was also very stern, but it was still slightly gentle. He warned, “Trust me, this kind of reinforcement comes at a great price. Maybe you won’t feel anything right now, but you will definitely regret it in the future.”

In this hour-long questioning and review, the president and Yu Mei were playing good cop/bad cop. However, despite various warnings and persuasions, they were of no use. Although Wang Dalin implied that he had indeed used a special method to strengthen himself, he was insistent that he had learned it himself.

Wang Dalin’s lips were very tight. In the end, the president was helpless, and he could only let him go for now. Although it seemed that Yu Mei had the urge to extract a confession from Wang Dalin

through torture, it was obviously impossible to do so this in the academy. The president later sent two people to follow Wang Dalin.

Chapter 460 - Bell

Chapter 460: Bell

Naturally, this matter would not end here. Soon, the president brought Yu Mei and Xiao Lin to the Central Computer to retrieve a large number of relevant video materials. It was also at this time that Xiao Lin learned that Dawn Academy was surveilled in almost all locations, except for dormitories that involved personal privacy.

Of course, apart from the dean, the only person who had the authority to look at these files and records was the president. The subject of the investigation was naturally Wang Dalin. Due to this being a cumbersome topic, and because of the special nature of forbidden techniques itself, there was no way more people could know and be involved in the matter.

Xiao Lin could also discreetly see that the president did not wish this matter to become a big deal. He hoped to resolve this matter within the smallest possible scope, so the immediate concern was to solve the problem of the source of the forbidden technique.

This was why the president dragged Xiao Lin to examine the recordings. The actual combat course on Saturday was over anyway, and the weekends were their break time, so Xiao Lin was pulled in for free.

Xiao Lin was also very helpless about the whole thing. He had plans to study for the weekend, but he was also worried, so he nodded in agreement. Wang Dalin himself was not scary, but it was not easy to get foolproof deterrents in place. He never would have thought that Wang Dalin's jealousy was so strong. Coupled with the mysterious forbidden technique, he just wanted to get rid of the matter quickly.

After going back that evening, Xiao Lin made a brief announcement in the forum and the class internal chat group. He explained what happened during the class that day, and of course, he did not mention the forbidden technique. He mentioned that Wang Dalin's injury had recovered so that everyone did not have to worry, that Wang Dalin was currently under academy supervision, and he would not have the opportunity to explain.

Xiao Lin then found Zhou Feng in private. He was more at ease meeting the team leader that he appointed himself. He met in Zhou Feng's dormitory, and after he went in, the bare-headed man was full of chagrin and guilt, "It was an error on my part! I actually was keeping an eye on the guy, but he behaved really honestly and really fooled me. Hmph! Don't worry. There will never be a next time!"

Zhou Feng's cold laugh made Xiao Lin wave his hands frantically. Although he had never asked about Zhou Feng's life experience on Earth, he knew that this guy was definitely a ruthless character. He did not want to cause any more commotion in the academy, and repeatedly told Zhou Feng to relax. He appropriately revealed, "Don't worry about us. That guy, heh, my guess is that he won't be in the academy for much longer."

Zhou Feng had always trusted Xiao Lin. He immediately wore an expression that said “I understand”, and asked no more. Then, Xiao Lin asked about how the rest of the course progressed. It was as he thought; at first, everyone was hesitant to fight each other. However, after some people stopped holding back, everyone else followed suit, and the whole scene was described to be fiery and explosive.

There were quite a few injured, but Yu Mei had indeed fulfilled her promise, and all treatments were free of charge. It had to be said that this kind of actual combat training really benefited many people.

Early on the next weekend, Xiao Lin, who had promised the president, made his way to his office early. However, he found a little girl in the office when he came in. She was approximately one meter in height, wearing a clean white dress. She sat barefoot on the sofa, spacing out with her bored face propped up by her hand under her chin. When she noticed that Xiao Lin had come in, the girl immediately raised her head, raising her thick brows, and a sweet smile spread across her face. She suddenly shouted, “Big Brother Xiao Lin!”

Xiao Lin was confused and returned the greeting cautiously. He was trying to judge whether the brat was a reincarnated ancient monster created by the professors. After all, he did not think that the academy would enroll such a young girl.

He gave a weak salute. “Hello. I was entrusted by the president to handle some things. Uh, I don’t know which professor you are? Do you know me?”

Xiao Lin did not say anything about the investigation of the forbidden technique, but the girl giggled and said, “I have read through your information a long time ago, so of course I know you. You don’t have to pretend, you’re here to investigate the forbidden technique. I will fetch the video recording for you later.”

“Uh, who are you actually...”

When he approached the girl, he found that her feet were actually off the ground. More importantly, she was not really sitting on the sofa. She was a few inches from the surface of the sofa. Xiao Lin’s head started to go numb. If not for it being daytime, he would really have the urge to turn and dash out.

“Hehehe, hahaha. You are so interesting!” The girl was amused by Xiao Lin’s bewildered expression. She burst out laughing, trying to catch her breath. She could not help but slap the sofa leather with her little hands, but it did not make a sound, which made the atmosphere even more spiritual.

“Okay, don’t scare the freshman. You’ve had this old habit for over a hundred years. Get over it!” The president entered the room, but Yu Mei was not there. She said that she had an emergency in the New World.

The president’s appearance caused Xiao Lin to let out a relieved sigh. However, he still pointed to the strange girl and asked in a low voice, “President, is she a human or a ghost?”

“She is neither human nor a ghost.” The president smiled bitterly and rubbed his eyebrows, seeming to be distressed about how to explain it.

“President, your explanation is a little scary.” Xiao Lin also smiled bitterly.

“Geez, you guys are wimps. I’ll just introduce myself.” The little girl’s tone was lively, but she looked more domineering than before. She stood up, no, floated in the air and swayed back and forth a few times before saying, “You can call me Bell. As for my identity, I’m the Central Computer’s master control program.”

“Oh, so you’re a computer program!” Realization flashed across Xiao Lin’s face, and he fell quiet for several minutes before raising his voice. “WAIT! Artificial intelligence!”

“I am not artificial intelligence! The most accurate term would be ‘artificially-intelligent life-form,’” with some dissatisfaction, the little girl Bell corrected him.

Xiao Lin put on a weird face. Was there a difference?

The president sighed. “Bell, stop it. Don’t forget the dean’s instructions before he left. I called you today to settle some business.”

Bell seemed to be just very casual toward the president, but she looked to respect the dean much more. Just the mention of the dean caused her to tone down. She pouted and said, “Here, I have collected all the videos, and I have already screened them. However, the remaining video content is still huge. But that’s okay, I can make an exception to help you all today.”

Xiao Lin temporarily suppressed his doubts about this mysterious computer program girl and concentrated on investigating Wang Dalin.

All the videos were uploaded by Bell into the microcomputer arranged by the president. The next thing they had to do was to investigate for any clues in the videos.

Chapter 461 - Investigation

Chapter 461: Investigation

It was a long and cumbersome project. Plus, they were short of manpower. Fortunately, there was Bell, the artificial intelligence—or artificially-intelligent life-form. She could archive and organize a large number of videos and then replay them to Xiao Lin and the others to watch one by one.

For example, she would first cut all the trivial Wang Dalin time out of the video, such as eating or sleeping in class and so on. The president still had absolute confidence in the courses and teachers that he arranged, and it was impossible for someone to learn forbidden techniques in class. It could only be done in private.

Soon, their investigation focus fell on the library again, because they found that in the last two months of the last semester, Wang Dalin spent a considerable amount of time in the library. For this reason, they brought up Wang Dalin’s borrowing records.

However, after a busy half-day, nothing was found. In the afternoon, the president had to attend meetings and left first, leaving Xiao Lin and the little girl with the white blouse in the office.

After the president left, Bell started to become lively again and started to unwittingly chat with Xiao Lin. Xiao Lin was also starting to get extremely bored. Wang Dalin was not even a beautiful woman. Looking at images of him all day long would drive anyone mad with boredom.

“Actually, I have been following you since you first enrolled.” The little girl’s voice was crisp and lively. Anybody who did not know of her identity beforehand would have a hard time telling if she was real. However, Xiao Lin already knew that what he saw with his eyes was merely a phantom formed by virtual graphics. This girl was, as she said herself, intangible.

Xiao Lin froze, not knowing why.

Bell curled her mouth and said, “Hehe, you should thank me. I was the one who processed and summarized all the data of your admission health screening. If I hadn’t sent your data to the dean in time, do you think you would have received the same treatment afterward?”

“As an artificial intelligence, these things are supposed to be your job anyway,” Xiao Lin said feebly. He was very interested in artificial intelligence, and he did not expect Dawn Academy to have such a thing. However, half a day’s boredom had long driven his curiosity away.

“I’ll say it again, I am not artificial intelligence! I am an artificially-intelligent life-form!”

“Which is to say, there isn’t really any difference.”

“I was not created in your world. I am a life created by the laws of Planet Norma. Again I am not what you call a computer program, I possess intellect. To put it simply, if you give me a body, I would be indistinguishable from you humans!”

“A man-made life-form?” Xiao Lin pondered for a while and suddenly thought of the Big Bai that Silverlight had entrusted to him before her death. That magical life form seemed to be also created with Atlantean technology, and it also possessed a high level of intelligence. With that said, this Bell should be similar to Big Bai.

“Speaking of which, your progress is really slow.” Bell seemed to have a habit of babbling, and she droned on. “You have an SS-level talent, and up till now, it’s been more than half a year, and you’re still only a Black Iron-rank. This speed is not even as good as an S-level talent.”

Xiao Lin understood this. He was indeed dragged down by too many complicated matters in the last semester. However, he suddenly thought of something and quickly took the little girl by the arm. It was a pity that his hand just passed through the little girl’s arm. Paying it no mind, he asked hurriedly, “Wait, did you just say that you were responsible for the statistics of the admissions health screening? In other words, you are able to look into all our files?”

“Of course. As I said, I am in charge of the entire academy’s computer files.”

“Then what about my admissions notice? Can you look into this file?” Xiao Lin thought about what Wang Yuelan told him previously, that his notice had been encrypted, and ordinary people would not be able to read it.

“Admission notice? Of course I know it. However, those are sealed and encrypted under the dean’s repeated instructions,” Bell said indifferently.

So, it was the dean.

Xiao Lin stabilized himself internally. He trusted that the dean was protecting him, but that actually seemed more strange. It was just an admissions notice, but it was encrypted, even to the point of top-secret level encryption.

“The dean mentioned that the admissions notice cannot be shown to anyone without permission.”

“Not even me?” This girl made Xiao Lin itch for more. Feeling his curiosity mounting, he could not help but ask, “It’s my own admission notice, so I should have permission, right? The dean would certainly not mind.”

Bell hesitated. The girl seemed to be very intelligent, but she also seemed to lack contact with people. It was probably due to this reason she became so energetic when she saw Xiao Lin today. It was difficult to withstand Xiao Lin’s badgering, and he even pulled tricks that were used to fool children on her.

Of course, Bell knew the importance the dean placed on Xiao Lin. After hesitating several times, she finally relented in a low voice, “Okay, okay, I can show you. Actually, it is no big deal, so I guess the dean won’t blame me. But, you must promise me not to tell anyone. This time, I’m making an exception for you because the dean values you.”

“Don’t worry, my lips are sealed tight. I will not betray you!” Xiao Lin pounded his chest to indicate his promise.

Looking really unsure, Bell floated to the window and looked from side to side. In fact, this was the president’s private office. Usually, unless with his permission, no one would have the courage to break into this place for no reason.

It was a good long while before the girl drew the curtains and floated back down, clutching her dress. She stretched out her hand onto a screen and pressed at it several times, but the feed was dizzyingly fast. After entering a password that was completely invisible, a virtual screen dropped, and the admission notice was displayed on the screen.

“This is a virtual copy. The original copy was destroyed long after admission, so only the virtual file was kept.”

This familiar-looking admissions notice was the culprit that brought Xiao Lin into this academy at the start, and he could not help but sigh when he saw it again after such a long time. By the looks of it, the short admissions notice did not look any different from any other.

The notice did indeed exist, but Wang Yuelan insisted that the school had never admitted him. Wang Yuelan probably made a mistake.

Xiao Lin was starting to feel relief when he suddenly read something that was off. Looking at the text on the admissions notice, his eyes went wide, and his heart sank all the way to the bottom...

Chapter 462 - Handwriting

Chapter 462: Handwriting

It was already evening when the president came back. He smiled wryly as he explained to Xiao Lin that there were a lot of trivial matters in each year in the new semester, on top of the education reform. It was not just for the freshman year; a few seniors had to prepare for internships in the New World. As the president, he had to attend a bunch of meetings all day long.

However, he stopped mid-explanation as he noticed Xiao Lin's strange mood. The president could not help but express his concern, but he did not get any response. Xiao Lin could only smile and mutter that he felt a little tired.

"Did you find anything?" the president could only ask.

Xiao Lin shook his head, and laughed bitterly. "I have looked through almost all of Wang Dalin's extracurricular surveillance records. I don't think there was any suspicious opportunity for him to be exposed to forbidden techniques. Looking at probability, perhaps it was the time spent in the library?"

The president looked at Bell. The little girl was sitting on thin air. She curled her mouth and said, "I already pulled up all relevant borrowing records for you."

The president nodded. "I trust in our library. It's impossible for any prohibited books to appear inside."

Xiao Lin cleared up his mood and said, "Actually, I don't think there were any omissions in the management of the academy. But, President, do you think there are loopholes in our initial ideas? Wang Dalin may not have learned the forbidden technique in the academy."

The president's baby-face was slightly taken aback, and he understood what he meant. He frowned. "Do you mean on Earth? How is that possible?"

Xiao Lin spread his arms open. "This is not something I know. I wonder if the academy monitors the students that return to Earth?"

"It's currently impossible to achieve that sort of all-around surveillance. However, if you use abilities that transcend the rules on the plane of Earth, it will definitely be detected. Mao Tianying of the Earth Division has never reached out to me, and I believe that he wouldn't hide anything from me."

"But wasn't there an accident on Earth last time?" Xiao Lin blinked and continued to refute. "Regarding the Pacific Ocean matter, I don't know much about the battle, but if someone took the opportunity to do something at that time, I believe it would be difficult for the Earth Division to monitor it, right?"

The president's frown deepened and murmured to himself, "You're right, but who would possess a forbidden technique? And why would they choose to teach it to Wang Dalin specifically?"

Nevertheless, Xiao Lin's reminder gave the president no choice but to consider the possibility of investigating the matter on Earth. However, this was not something that Xiao Lin could take care of, and the president understood this. He let Xiao Lin leave after thanking him for the day's efforts.

...

"You really hold him in high regard. In the entire academy, only a select few can come and go freely from this office," Bell said abruptly after waiting for Xiao Lin to walk away.

"The dean values him," said the president, without looking back.

"He begged me to pull up his admissions notice today," Bell said casually. She behaved very casually in front of the president.

The president was not surprised. "The head of recruitment told me a few days ago that there was a woman who also wanted to check his admissions notice file. I bet it was also requested by Xiao Lin."

Bell changed her posture mid-air, letting her white feet dangle enticingly. However, the baby-faced president continued to ignore it, which made her quite dissatisfied. She pouted and provocatively asked, "The dean once ordered that his admissions notice be permanently sealed and encrypted. Aren't you curious about the reason?"

"I trust the dean's decision." The president's tone did not change at all.

"You are the same as that old dean—so boring. I don't believe you haven't investigated. With your authority as president, you should be able to find out. In the pre-admission list issued by the Admissions Department to the student union, there was absolutely no information about Xiao Lin."

The president finally turned his head, his kind gaze becoming rather sharp. He warned in a low voice, "Speak of this matter here and forget it. Neither I nor the dean wants anyone else to know about this."

"Okay, okay, you're not that old fart, so don't use that look to scare me." The girl smiled, unfazed, and continued, "And, you know, not many people in this academy know that I exist. Who can I tell anyway?"

There was a short silence.

The president could not help but speak again. "Today, he asked you to help investigate his admissions notice. Did you guys find anything?"

"Hahaha!" Bell immediately laughed exaggeratedly. "I thought you really didn't care about anything! In fact, you're also very curious. I studied human psychology in the library database; curiosity is in human nature!"

"Fine, fine, even I can't avoid it." The president was also quite helpless with this girl, "So, can you tell me the answer now?"

"I don't know."

“...”

“Don’t give me that look! I’m serious!” Bell smiled slightly, and continued seriously. “After Xiao Lin looked at his admissions notice, uh, how should I say this, he looked weird. But I can’t tell what was weird, I think he suddenly understood something. But frankly, I have read through his admissions notice thousands of times, but I really can’t see anything unusual.”

The president was stuck, and after a long time, he sighed, “Xiao Lin is now an indispensable student of Dawn Academy, and his significance to the academy will be even greater in the future. It doesn’t matter how he got in; the dean’s approach is correct. This was to not give the military a chance to poke holes, and also for Xiao Lin’s protection.”

...

Xiao Lin did not eat his dinner right away after got back. He bumped into Chen Dao and the others on his way back, who very enthusiastically invited him to the cafeteria. However, he politely declined them. After arriving in the dormitory, he shut himself in his room, searched for a sheet of paper, and scribbled line after line profusely.

After he finished writing, he looked through it for a long time, and then he said, “F*ck me!” He then tore up the paper and looked for a fresh paper to continue writing. After writing, he looked through it, tore up the paper again, and continued writing...

It was like this for the whole night, until he was exhausted. Xiao Lin stared at the confetti all over the floor, his face was incredulous.

He was neither crazy nor stupid. He was just constantly comparing his handwriting. Earlier, when he finally got Bell to pull up his notice file, the appearance of the notice, including all its production materials, did not look any different from other notices. However, what was strange was that all the words on the notice were handwritten. Wang Yuelan and Bell confirmed to him that admissions notices were all printed electronically. It was impossible to write them manually.

What shook Xiao Lin to the core, to the point that he was not able to calm down, was that the handwriting on the admissions notice clearly belonged to him!

Chapter 463 - After the Turmoil

Chapter 463: After the Turmoil

Xiao Lin’s handwriting was actually quite unique. As he was once mocked in school for his ugly handwriting, he gritted his teeth and practiced his handwriting for a long time. Although he became lazy when he arrived at university, he finally developed the skill and he had possessed it ever since.

If someone suddenly placed it in front of his eyes, he might not be able to recognize it. Just like when he first received his admissions notice, he did not think about the handwriting at all. If he looked at it again, he would inevitably get a weird feeling.

He was not very sure when he saw it in the office that afternoon, so he kept checking his handwriting throughout the night. The conclusion made him even more perplexed.

Indeed, the handwriting was exactly the same.

However, Xiao Lin was still unable to believe it. After all, looking at the rationality of the matter, it was totally unbelievable. How could Xiao Lin write himself this admissions notice from Dawn Academy?

Xiao Lin rubbed his numb head and felt like his brain was about to explode. He was trying to make sense of the whole puzzle. If Wang Yuelan was not lying, then there had to be a problem with his admissions notice. At the very least, it was not distributed through the academy's formal channels.

Unless there really was someone whose handwriting was exactly the same as his, and that person happened to be willing to forge a perfect admissions letter to fool the student union president, the head of recruitment, and even the dean. Risking such great danger and creating a massive cover-up, just to get him into an academy?

Was this a high possibility? Xiao Lin shook his head. He felt that the probability of such idiocy was very low.

After eliminating all the impossible factors, the remaining inferences were the truth, no matter how unbelievable they were.

The fact remained: was the admissions notice really written by Xiao Lin himself?!

If this happened in the past, Xiao Lin would definitely think that it was a big joke. He might even think that the president and that artificially-intelligent life-form Bell were collaborating to deceive him, but he was not so sure now.

Xiao Lin touched his forehead, and his expression gradually turned a little strange.

He thought of the Time Rewind skill Silverlight had cast, which brought them into the corridor of history as an observer. However, when the wall of time was broken, they changed from mere bystanders to historical participants. Just like the time paradox he and Gu Xiaoyue mentioned earlier, these kinds of things were difficult to explain.

However, if they were to follow this logic, then Xiao Lin sending his own admissions notice to himself seemed to make sense.

“You must be joking!”

After a long time, Xiao Lin could not help but let out an angry cry. He was still unable to completely control the third eye on his forehead, let alone show it in public. He did not want to be thrown into a lab and treated as a monster. If he could not even control that, he could forget about the Time Rewind skill.

In fact, he was actually very interested in this skill. However, before her death, Silverlight repeatedly warned that the skill needed to be used with caution. Silverlight herself had obviously

paid a certain price before casting Time Rewind, and this made Xiao Lin afraid to experiment with it lightly.

After thinking about it, Xiao Lin still did not have a clue. Although he considered what seemed to be the only possibility for a moment, it was still unrealizable from a practical point of view.

However, this matter did not actually affect Xiao Lin very much. Since he could not make sense of it, he decided to stop thinking, and he sighed. All he could do was to temporarily carry this weight in his heart. Due to this, he had also decided to take time off every day to start learning more about how to use the third eye.

Most students were completely oblivious to the turmoil that happened over the weekend. Only a few perceptive students could see the differences. Wang Dalin had been suspended from his courses. Wang Dalin was locked in his dormitory all day long, and even his daily meals were prepared by someone and sent to him. A few of his close friends wanted to visit, but the person appointed by the student union to watch over Wang Dalin refused them, saying that Wang Dalin was unwell.

Of course, there was a slight impact from this incident. Those in Class Seven who were unsatisfied or had contempt toward Xiao Lin had now completely eliminated every trace of their delusion. They did not believe in the obvious farcical nonsense of physical unwellness, and they firmly believed that this kind of treatment was inseparable from Xiao Lin.

Xiao Lin was really frustrated when he heard about this private gossip from Zhou Feng. However, he did not intend to offer any sort of explanation. To him, a united and stable class was not a bad thing, even if the unity was only superficial unity.

Apart from a few unsavory friends, Wang Dalin's interpersonal relationships were actually very poor. Most people did not actually care about whether this guy showed up or not, and the student union still had yet to come to a conclusion on how to deal with Wang Dalin. The main thing was that the president still wanted to find the person who taught Wang Dalin the forbidden technique. Compared to Wang Dalin, this matter was more important. It was because of this that Wang Dalin was able to stay on the academy grounds.

Naturally, Yu Mei could not stay in the academy for long after finishing the temporary lectures on the weekend. Before leaving, she invited Xiao Lin and Chen Dao for a private meal. As for why Chen Dao was invited, it was because due to Xiao Lin's swindling—actually—due to Xiao Lin's kind advice, Chen Dao was actually a member of the seventh regimen in name. Currently, it was just that there was no way to get an officer's certificate before getting the approval of the student union. After all, Chen Dao was not Xiao Lin, and he could not be directly appointed by the dean.

They had the meal in the faculty canteen, and Xiao Lin did not know of the existence of such a canteen until today. It was specially for the cadres of the student union, as well as various professors and teachers.

If they were to ask about the difference between this and their luxurious cafeteria on the top floor of their dormitory, on top of the more chic and elegant environment, the biggest difference was that there were more dishes here. Most of them used ingredients from Planet Norma. For those who achieved Black Iron-rank, there would be no problem eating these foods.

However, when Xiao Lin accidentally learned that these ingredients were all supplied by the Logistics Department, he barely touched his chopsticks during the meal. He only smiled and said that he was on a diet. Then, watching Chen Dao wolfing down the food, the corners of his mouth kept on twitching.

Yu Mei roughly knew what was going on, and irritably rolled her eyes at Xiao Lin, but did not bother to talk to him. In fact, she specially invited Chen Dao to this meal. Xiao Lin was even sure that the woman coming to the academy to teach was just an excuse. She came just to examine Chen Dao.

Xiao Lin could tell from this woman's expression that it was basically confirmed that Chen Dao had met her requirements. After all, as a talented recruit, he was a spell-type genius second only to Gu Xiaoyue. Chen Dao's accomplishments were obviously impressive.

Chapter 464 - New Curriculum

Chapter 464: New Curriculum

Chen Dao was actually a very simple person. In terms of his greatest interests, besides all kinds of fantasy novels, it was probably women of different races.

After affirming Chen Dao's ability, Yu Mei also chose the right moments to talk about his ideals and fantasies. For example, how beautiful were the elves, or how flirtatious the Norman human beauties were, or how there was no such thing as marriage law in Planet Norma, and so on. Chen Dao was so bewitched that his eyes were shining, and he almost swore loyalty on the spot.

Xiao Lin's eyes twitched as he heard this. It was indeed as Yu Mei said, there was no such thing as marriage law on Planet Norma. People from Earth over there were free to marry whoever they wanted and marry as many as they wanted. However, Xiao Lin was also aware that the mixed blood between Earth and Normans currently had a serious defect. This defect would cause them to have a very short lifespan.

Xiao Lin had met Gu Xiaoyue and even Hammerhead the Orc. This tragedy was undoubtedly cruel to them.

However, Xiao Lin also knew not to break the fantasy that Yu Mei painted on the spot. Yu Mei then briefly spoke about the developments of the legion. In fact, they were recruiting, and recruiting like mad. The recruitment for the legion was currently only open to people on Earth. They were trustworthy people, and they could only rely on them to recruit and promote the legion.

The outcome of the meal was really successful, and Chen Dao's enthusiasm was even higher than Xiao Lin had imagined. In the end, Yu Mei also hinted at another matter: the Inter-academy Tournament.

This could be regarded as an after-meal chat. Although the list of entries had not been officially announced, it was basically certain that both Chen Dao and Xiao Lin were selected to participate.

"The academy attaches great importance to this competition. By the way, I will tell you a secret."

Xiao Lin rolled his eyes at Yu Mei's mischievous smile. If it was really a secret, obviously they should not know it. However, it seemed that it was probably just an internal secret.

"This education reform was actually a preparation for the Inter-academy Tournament. The academy hopes that the current batch of students could gain some honor for the academy. Hehe, otherwise some people will not take us seriously!" Yu Mei's smile was cold when she uttered the last sentence.

Chen Dao was still clueless, while Xiao Lin vaguely thought about something. The president had also mentioned something similar. It involved games between the academies, and naturally, it was not something people like them could talk about.

Xiao Lin thought of more, and asked abruptly, "How is the dean now?"

Chen Dao looked at him incomprehensibly. Last semester, there was a newspaper article about the attack on the dean. Although the matter fizzled out, there was no more news about it. The freshmen probably would not pay attention, but Xiao Lin suddenly recalled this incident.

Yu Mei squinted at him. After being silent for some time, she said indifferently, "Don't worry. How could anything happen to that old man! Sort yourself out before worrying about others!"

Xiao Lin stared at Yu Mei, trying very hard to discern anything from her expression. However, it was a pity that he could not see anything. He did not have much contact with the dean, but he knew very well that his current special treatment was all thanks to the dean. Compared to the military who was willing to trade his life for Lilith's, he undoubtedly liked the kind old man better.

"I understand, I will try my best in the tournament." Although Xiao Lin was already prepared, he declared it more solemnly this time. Even if it was to repay the care that the dean had provided all this time, he had to also help Dawn Academy acquire some honor in the tournament.

After Yu Mei left, the peace in Xiao Lin's life was restored. Of course, peace was also a relative term. Compared to having to travel to the New World from time to time or having to face multiple near-death situations, leisurely eating and sleeping in the academy was undoubtedly a much more comfortable life.

People only realized this when there is a comparison to be made. Therefore, even though the freshmen were pressured by the courses and were groaning repeatedly, Xiao Lin behaved very calmly.

Xiao Lin still devoted nearly half of his time to compressing elements, and the old professor was also shocked by his progress. Xiao Lin only took a week to cover the ground that took the old man several years. There was nothing more to teach him after that.

After completing the class for compressed elements, all subsequent courses were shortened as much as possible for this time period. This was also to ensure stability after compression. However, Xiao Lin's ambitions were greater. After initial success, he not only wanted to use the compressed elements in elemental swordsmanship; he also wanted to apply them to the learning of spells.

On top of that, Xiao Lin also took the time to start reading up on other courses. After all, his goal was to reach the Bronze rank, so he needed to improve attributes beyond just Intelligence.

The advanced courses in the subsequent semester would bring about a much higher difficulty. In terms of swordsmanship, he was quite comfortable, because in the final exam last semester, he actually experienced the essence of Elementary Swordsmanship. Elementary Swordsmanship focused on the changes in swordsmanship, and not merely the simple combinations in Basic Swordsmanship.

Thus, this required students to select a specialization in different sword moves to be able to continue the course. For most students, it was still a little early to get in touch with sword aura. Therefore, most of the swordsmanship lessons provided to them by teachers did not require sword aura. A select few students, such as the talented recruits, naturally received exceptional treatment.

Xiao Lin, who had the freedom to engage in lessons, only started the Elementary Swordsmanship course halfway through the month. The teacher was a middle-aged man, who probably understood Xiao Lin's privileges, and did not seem surprised. He enthusiastically helped Xiao Lin and introduced the alternative sword moves.

"You should already have a sword aura, just like Cheng Ming and the others. I won't get into other sword moves, but you can look into these sets of sword moves." Xiao Lin was in his first swordsmanship course, and this man took the initiative to hand over materials and books that were meant to introduce swordsmanship.

Another key point of the education reform was to enable outstanding students to receive a better education. To put it simply, the academy had shifted from a dogmatic approach of cultivating popular soldiers and colonists, to prioritize cultivating elites.

All of this was to prepare for the imminent Inter-academy Tournament, and obviously, the student union had already given the teachers the heads-up. All the contestants would receive extra privileges and treatment. So, even without Xiao Lin's background, he would have received good treatment anyway.

There were actually many choices of sword moves and swordsmanship techniques. In Planet Norma's development through millions of years, countless complete swordsmanship routines were formed. It was obviously impossible for the academy to provide for all of these techniques. For example, the materials that this man had handed over to Xiao Lin contained only about 20 carefully selected sets of routines.

Chapter 465 - Elementary Swordsmanship

Chapter 465: Elementary Swordsmanship

Every set of swordsmanship had a level rating next to it. This was a label added by the teacher so that they could better choose the appropriate swordsmanship. This teacher was quite thoughtful.

Swordsmanship was not the ultimate goal, but a secondary process to supplement training and learning. In fact, Xiao Lin did not care much about what sort of swordsmanship he chose, and from

the labels, the highest level of these was only Black-Iron or Bronze in rank. In other words, these were routines that would be obsolete sooner or later.

Therefore, Xiao Lin's focus was still on the effects of these swordsmanship studies. For example, certain types of swordsmanship could enhance the flexibility of the body, and certain types could improve reflexes. With the continuous improvement of attributes, for Black Iron-ranks, each attribute actually provided meaningful empowerment.

Xiao Lin studied carefully from start to finish, and then again from the last page to the front. He pondered for a long time before raising his head and saying to the teacher enthusiastically, "Um, these routines all look really useful, and they should be a big help to my learning process. I will learn them all."

"Sure, then you can choose... Huh?" The teacher was a gentle-looking man, and his smiling face froze in an instant, his eyes wide. "What, what did you say?"

"I will learn them all." Xiao Lin thought for a moment, and added confidently. "No, I can't say that. Anyway, I will learn as much as I can."

"That, that... But..." The man felt that his brain was overheating.

"Can't we choose multiple swordsmanship specialties?" Xiao Lin's eyes fluttered innocently.

"There are no such rules."

"Oh, then thank you, Teacher." Xiao Lin had always been polite in front of these senior teachers.

"..."

The man's mouth hung open. He wanted to remind Xiao Lin that there were no such rules because no one would ever choose all the specialties. Human energy was limited, especially with courses in the second half of the semester being so tight. Where would he find the time to learn it all?

However, this man also had his sources of information, and he knew that Xiao Lin had the privilege to freely attend classes. If Xiao Lin was determined to be that way, he really could not stop him.

After a short break, the course continued.

Compared to the fiery woman who taught last semester, this man's swordsmanship course was more laid back. It was uncertain if it was some kind of authorization from the student union, or it was just this man's personal teaching style, but it was almost like a free-for-all style of learning. After splitting up several sets of swordsmanship moves for demonstration, he left them to practice on their own. Only after an hour or so, the man would return to simply check on their progress.

However, for a few elite students, he conducted holistic and comprehensive individual lessons. In addition to a few monitors, there were also a few ordinary students with a relatively high strength attribute value.

The first set of swordsmanship that Xiao Lin learned was called Total Annihilation. This set of swordsmanship was actually developed independently by Dawn Academy after they integrated Norman Swordsmanship, and was very suitable for freshmen courses.

“This set of sword moves is the most effective sword technique when you find yourself surrounded by your enemies. It damages in an area of effect. If you possess sword aura, it can also cause large-scale damage. It is a very practical skill on the battlefield, but pay attention to the timing of the release, because it requires an obvious charging time before use. Also, it does not differentiate between friend or foe, so you must be cautious. I don’t want to see you killing your own allies on the battlefield!”

The teacher’s explanation was very detailed, and the elites were listening very carefully. Earlier, Chen Yu mentioned something about building an Elite Club, and the planning for this was actually already underway. If there were no surprises, apart from a few monitors, they would definitely only select from the best students. The relatively outstanding ordinary students would inevitably have a deep desire to surpass the monitors.

“It looks like we’re all using the same approach,” Cheng Ming took advantage of the teacher’s brief pause, left his post, and joked softly to Xiao Lin.

“I fell in love with this Total Annihilation skill the moment I saw the introduction. No question, even the name sounds domineering!”

Xiao Lin’s face twitched slightly. He wanted to explain that he did not choose this sword move just because of its name. However, after thinking about Cheng Ming’s simplemindedness, he simply agreed.

Several elites actually did not only choose a single sword move, and they also occasionally engaged in chit-chat to inquire about the sword moves. The highest number of sword moves that were chosen were four, which was the limit of their learning ability.

The more sword skills digested in a short period of time, the more obvious it would be for the improvement of basic attributes. However, if it took too long to learn a certain sword move, it would not be worth the time lost when it could be used to learn other sword skills. These people naturally understood this basic reasoning, and thus they chose according to their abilities. Due to this, when they learned that Xiao Lin was going to learn 20 sets of sword skills, everyone thought he was an idiot.

Xiao Lin had long learned to ignore what others thought of him. In fact, he put a lot of effort and time into it. The Elementary Swordsmanship course had three classes a week, and each class lasted the entire morning. In addition, Xiao Lin devoted a lot of his spare time to this.

Total Annihilation was not a sword skill of high difficulty. Of the 20 sets of sword skills provided by the teacher, it was the lowest level. As long as he was able to upgrade Elementary Swordsmanship to around level two, he would be able to learn it. This was not really a challenge for Xiao Lin.

Three days later, in the final Elementary Swordsmanship course of the week, he demonstrated the entire set of Total Annihilation swordsmanship moves in front of several monitors and teachers. The speed of his learning shocked everyone speechless.

Did he master a set of swordsmanship moves in three days?

Even Cheng Ming, who had the Swordheart talent, could not do this. He claimed to have only mastered 60% to 70% of this set of swordsmanship. As for the others, it was even more unbearable. With no matching talent, they had only barely started on the three-day course.

“Well, the difficulty of this set of swordsmanship is indeed relatively low.” The teacher laughed dryly, and they did not know if this was to comfort himself or for the students.

After that, Xiao Lin logically started to learn the second set of swordsmanship on his own, and it was called Broken Strike. After the teacher overcame his brief shock, the basic movements of this set of swordsmanship were also taught very seriously.

There were very few swordsmanship moves in Broken Slash. This set of moves was very modest, its power not very great, its area of effect not very large, and the sword moves not very quick. However, the biggest benefit of Broken Strike was its adaptability. No matter how bad the environment was, the user could rely on this set of swordsmanship anytime and anywhere.

It was also due to the simplicity of this set of swordsmanship, Xiao Lin decided to not waste any more time. Therefore, after working diligently to memorize the essential movements, he planned to practice them on his own on the weekends.

Chapter 466 - Sudden Improvement

Chapter 466: Sudden Improvement

Xiao Lin understood very well that his time was incredibly valuable at that moment, which was why he needed to use the limited time intelligently. For Saturday’s battle training class, he had set a goal to learn Broken Strike during the lesson.

Battle training class might have a different teacher, but the contents of the lessons were still the same; it was still meant to train the students in adapting to different opponents.

Xiao Lin was challenged as usual. This time, his opponent was Han Manman, the monitor of Class Four. The newly formalized monitor had regretted not being able to challenge him last week.

Han Manman was a mage that focused on the wind element. As a talent holder, even if she was not as good as Gu Xiaoyue and Chen Dao, she was still a cut above the rest in terms of combat ability.

However, it was not a problem; all Xiao Lin needed was an opponent—nothing else.

The challenges between the monitors were a point of attention by a lot of others. Before Xiao Lin fought, he managed to look at the duel between Cheng Ming and Chen Dao. He actually wanted to face Cheng Ming, but since he had already decided to use swordsmanship during the lesson, he naturally would not choose Cheng Ming, who was also a swordsman, as his opponent.

The two of them were basically legendary figures amongst the first-years, and were very strong. The fight was very close, and it was obvious that both Chen Dao and Cheng Ming were very experienced. Chen dao's mastery of fire magic was very deep, and Cheng Ming's martial prowess was also very impressive.

The fight ended up in a draw, the two of them did not hold back, and after they repeatedly had their wounds treated, they finally had to stop the fight out of sheer exhaustion.

After that, it was Xiao Lin and Han Manman's turn. Han Manman bluntly chose to attack first. She was quite skilled in wind magic, and had focused more on damaging spells such as Hurricane, Wind Blade, and Wind Cutter.

The battle between the two of them was quite tense. Since Xiao Lin kept trying to use Broken Strike, Xiao Lin's inexperience with the rather mediocre skill caused him quite a bit of trouble, especially under the constant onslaught of a mage which, at a certain distance, meant Xiao Lin could not advance and could merely defend.

That caused Han Manman's morale to rise. She felt like she was beginning to seize the advantage. However, a very small number of students could see that Xiao Lin was just using this as practice, and an even smaller number of them could tell that Xiao Lin was practicing a sword technique that he was not used to.

The situation started to slowly turn after around thirty minutes. Even if Han Manman had tried her best to control the exertion on her mental strength, she had started to fall into a state of fatigue. On the other hand, Xiao Lin had gotten more and more familiar with Broken Strike, and the advantage of the sword technique that could both attack and defend began to show itself.

As a very ordinary technique, the physical strength it needed was not big, and it allowed Xiao Lin to stick to Han Manman like glue. Even if he could not launch a successful attack, his defense was more than enough.

When Han Manman had exhausted her mental strength, Xiao Lin magnanimously stopped his attacks. Neither of them were injured, other than the fact that the armor Xiao Lin had on for defense had been shattered by various wind blades. However, thanks to his physique being far above Han Manman's, he was untouched.

The duel between class monitors might have ended in a draw, but it was nowhere near as intense as Cheng Ming and Chen Dao's. Anyone with a clear mind could tell that Xiao Lin was just toying around, since he had only used Broken Strike from start to finish. The power of Xiao Lin's swordsmanship was something many of them had seen during the last monthly examination, so they naturally understood how much he had held back.

"Not bad."

Xiao Lin said to Han Manman as she walked past him, but the woman was shaking with anger, and naturally ignored Xiao Lin. From an objective standpoint, training in actual combat was something that helped a lot in improving skills, especially against opponents with a certain caliber like Han Manman, so it allowed him to understand Broken Strike's practical value even more.

Broken Strike was not a difficult technique. Xiao Lin took the entire next day to focus on training it, and managed to raise the sword technique to the highest level by nightfall, thoroughly mastering it.

At some point, the topic of Xiao Lin learning twenty different sword techniques had been talked about on the forums by the other swordsmanship class students. Of course, they did not speak in mocking tones since Xiao Lin's skills was something most of them had come to acknowledge. Even so, it was still outrageous to a lot of them.

[The current report is that Xiao Lin has already mastered at least two swordsmanship techniques!]

[What two? Isn't it just Total Annihilation? I'm also in the swordsmanship class, so don't try to bully me for not having a source of information, OP.]

[Your information is outdated, OP is right. I saw with my own eyes that Xiao Lin had mastered Broken Strike in the training hall today.]

[My God! Is that man human? It's only been a week and he's mastered two?]

[I haven't even mastered my first swordsmanship technique.]

[I heard that Cheng Ming has basically finished his first technique, but it's still a huge difference from Xiao Lin.]

[I heard that Xiao Lin's magic skills are also quite good.]

...

The bored students slowly turned to talking about these things during their free time after dinner as hobbies, and at some point, Xiao Lin had become a hot topic among them.

He had gone from someone who was mocked and jeered at for entering the academy with the lowest basic attributes in the whole year to catching up to everyone's standards and standing out in the monthly exam. He had also managed to secure the class monitor position, slowly having people acknowledge him as a true class monitor.

However, with how it looked now, Xiao Lin was not just someone at the strength level of a class monitor; his skills were rapidly soaring, defying all imagination.

In the last week, Xiao Lin had not rested and had thrown himself into new magical studies. The packed training schedule he had the week before had earned him a large payout, having his Strength and Agility both raised up to 30 points, which meant a combined increase of about 10 points.

His rapid speed of improvement shocked everyone. No one else in the year could compare to him; even Gu Xiaoyue could not stand up to him at that point. After all, Gu Xiaoyue's true selling point was only her rapid growth in Intelligence.

Since they started the semester, Xiao Lin actually had very few chances to privately meet Gu Xiaoyue. At the most, they greeted each other when they met in class, but Gu Xiaoyue did not talk

too much about private matters in front of others, and the woman had also been working very hard that semester.

The end of the first month was quickly arriving, and during the weekend, they would be facing a new monthly examination.

Chapter 467 - The Meeting Before The Examination

Chapter 467: The Meeting Before The Examination

After a semester, everyone was quite familiar with monthly examinations. However, the times Xiao Lin had actually participated in them were few. Of course, what he had experienced in the New World greatly exceeded examinations, be it in intensity or in realism.

However, thanks to the restructuring of the courses, the monthly examinations stood to be affected as well. There were various rumors sprouting up on the forums, and those who started the rumors were those who were closer to the upper-years and the student council. It was a pity that Song Junlang had yet to return to the academy, or Xiao Lin could have gotten information from him.

No matter what, the current Xiao Lin would face it the same way. The forum was filled with a large number of students being worried about the standard of the examination, including those in his class. That was because the last few monthly examinations in the last semester were quite moderate in difficulty, which Xiao Lin could see from the reports on the results after the fact. Even so, each class had close to a third of their students losing their lives in the examinations.

If the difficulty were to increase, then the casualties would be even higher. It was not good news for a lot of them, and in truth, Xiao Lin and the other class monitors had noticed it as well. Each class was beginning to break into two factions.

Last semester, everyone had just entered the academy. No matter how talented they were, everyone was still walking on the same path, which was why there was not a huge difference. After a semester of training, the exceptional students were rapidly widening the gap between them and the less talented students.

Xiao Lin's current attributes were Strength 30, Agility 30, Intelligence 30, and Physique 30, which was already enough to be at Black-Iron Rank. With Miracle and Ruin as extremely explosive killer techniques, he was very confident in his own skill. He could say that, even if the academy increased the difficulty of the monthly examinations—even to the level of the third monthly examinations from last semester—Xiao Lin would not have to worry.

Of the other class monitors, Chen Dao and Cheng Ming were naturally amazing figures, but the other class monitors might be worse than the two of them; they were still much stronger than regular students regardless. Of the class monitors, even Class Four's Han Manman, who had the lowest attributes, had already reached Black Iron-rank last week, which meant all of them were at that rank.

That was why, facing the upcoming monthly examinations, the class monitors could be considered the group that would need to worry the least. Even if they could not guarantee the overall results for their classes, their personal combat abilities were still enough to guarantee they would get decent results.

Xiao Lin's personal training plan did not change due to the monthly examination. Of the twenty sword techniques, he had already begun training on the third one, called Breeze Slash. It was a technique that focused on speed, and was quite helpful to increasing his agility.

His Elemental Swordsmanship was also steadily improving. Xiao Lin could already control the compressing and condensing of the elements to around three seconds. The professor initially had strict requirements for him, but after checking on Xiao Lin's progress a few times, the old man was speechless, and could not help but increase his requirements on Xiao Lin, lest Xiao Lin relax too much. Thus, his next goal was to shorten the time to two seconds.

That one second was nothing to look down on. The further he advanced, the harder it was to shorten the time. At the end of it, even shortening it by 0.1 seconds was extremely hard, but the benefits it brought forth were incrementally higher. The higher level a battle was fought at, the more valuable time was. A strong opponent would not allow you to have those few seconds to slowly compress the elements.

On Thursday, Xiao Lin had finished his dinner and returned to the dormitory. He was preparing to look at his notes when he received a message on his phone, asking him to head to the fifth floor in half an hour for a meeting.

The fifth floor of the dormitories had a lot of meeting rooms, which were regularly used by the various classes. However, at that moment, other than the monitors, no one was doing such a troublesome thing. After all, to most students, meetings were quite pointless. Anything could just be talked about on the forums or even just announced in the various class groups.

The message had been sent by the student union, so Xiao Lin naturally had to abide. He put down his notes and immediately headed to the meeting room. He had even bumped into Cheng Ming and Chen Dao at the stairway; the two of them had confused expressions. On the way there, they speculated that the year leader, Chen Yu, was probably going to announce the details on the monthly examination.

They met their fellow class monitors at the door; no one dared to be slow to respond to a student union notification. They had put down whatever they were doing to rush over. When they opened the door, the second-year year leader was standing there. His expression was very serious as he stood at attention, not averting his gaze. There were two others standing next to Cheng Yu.

One of them was the baby-faced student union leader. He smiled at the class monitors at the door, motioning for them to enter. The other one was the Seventh Regiment Captain Yu Mei. She also had an easygoing smile, and even shot a look at Xiao Lin, which caused Xiao Lin to roll his eyes in response. However, an uneasy feeling started to rise in his heart.

"Is everyone here?" The president flashed his usual kind smile at everyone as he cast a scrutinizing look around. He nodded and said, "Yes, everyone come in. Sit anywhere you want."

Everyone was shocked. It was not that big a deal if it was only Chen Yu speaking, but this time the president had appeared himself, and a captain was present as well. That ensemble would even shock fourth-year graduates, let alone first-years. Other than Xiao Lin, everyone had noticeably tensed up, their conversations from earlier stopping immediately.

“I’ve asked all of you here mainly to discuss the upcoming monthly examination.” The president’s tone was gentle. It was just like everyone had guessed; the meeting was going to be about the monthly examination, but for it to be something that involved even the student union president caused everyone to curse silently. Would the examination this time be a never before seen difficulty?

Xiao Lin had a look of realization and turned to look at Yu Mei, who was trying hard to maintain an expressionless look to preserve her dignified look. However, the slight twitch at the corner of her mouth showed that she was resisting the urge to smile. Yet, what did Yu Mei have to do with the monthly examination? The sense of unease he had started to increase.

“Everyone should already know about the educational reforms for this semester. In order to verify the results of the change, as well as to raise everyone’s collective combat ability, the upper management of the academy, after repeated negotiations, managed to submit a proposal to the dean and the student union. A conclusion was finally reached...”

The president maintained his gentle smile, but his tone was incredibly dry and official. Everyone almost fell asleep listening to it, but they forced themselves to look like they were earnestly listening to the student union president. Xiao Lin, on the other hand, did a double take. He noticed the student union president say, ‘the upper management of the academy, after repeated negotiations...’

Chapter 468 - The New Monthly Examination

Chapter 468: The New Monthly Examination

Xiao Lin was more familiar with Dawn Academy’s management system than other first-years. The term ‘upper management of the academy’ was very vague, but in truth, the first-year’s monthly examinations had always been arranged by the student union, but the president had mentioned the student union was working with upper management.

The student union was already considered upper management within the internal academy, so it was obvious that the president was referring to the management bodies within the colonial territories, but Dawn Academy had always separated the academy and the territories, never having them interfere with each other. How could the territories interfere with the monthly examinations this time, and even choose to involve the first-years?

After the long official speech, the president paused, letting everyone know the important parts were about to come up before he slowly said, “I believe you would have heard from Chen Yu during the start of the semester that the academy intends to establish a club of elites. After careful study by the student union, we have decided that the first-years’ Elite Club will be set at Black-Iron Rank.

The standard will hold for half a year, which means it will be adjusted every semester. This time, the Elite Club will have their monthly examinations separately!”

Everyone was shocked, but after a moment, most of them revealed looks of understanding. In each class, the monitors that were at the helm were growing more and more distant in strength from the others, especially since this batch of first-years were special in the sense that they were the batch with the most talent holders in the past decade. The growth of talent holders was faster than regular students, which was slowly turning evident among the first-years.

However, that would present the problem of the difficulty of the monthly examinations. If it were too simple, the talent holders would naturally have an easy time getting through it, while the regular students would just need to rely on the talent holders carrying the majority of them through it. It was definitely not enough for the academy, the entity that wanted to train them.

If it was too difficult, the talent holders might be challenged, but it was basically sentencing the regular students to hell. The academy definitely did not hope to see death rates that were too high. The goal of the monthly examinations were training in order to allow the students to be able to adapt to the New World in the future, and not for the students to use up their lifespan and all die before they even graduated.

In the past, due to the low number of talent holders, a moderate difficulty level had always been fitting, and the student union did not need to rack their brains over it. However, this batch of new students had an explosive number of talent holders, which meant the old examination style was not appropriate.

Another way of putting it was that the separated examination was forced by the circumstances. The monitors present were all shocked, but they could somewhat understand the decision.

Cheng Ming raised his hand and asked, “If we will be separately tested, then what about our classes? Ah, what I mean is that, who will lead them?”

“Haven’t you all assigned group leaders? As leaders and officers, you can’t always do everything yourself; you still need to trust your subordinates. That is something you’ll have to learn eventually.” The president’s smile seemed to have a powerful aura behind it. In terms of being a leader, the president was actually the most successful example present. He was popular within the school, and most of the students followed him willingly, with both respect and admiration.

“The maps for the examination are announced the day before, which means that we can actually assign the tasks and use the maps to plan everything beforehand, including general personnel assignments. What I mean is, we can assign things like who will take over if one of our group leaders dies in the middle.” Xiao Lin raised his hand as he voiced his suggestions.

The student union president looked at him with praise, nodding. “Not bad, your thoughts are quite holistic. Let me emphasize once again, you are all monitors. Anything internal within your classrooms, as long as it doesn’t affect the academy negatively, can be handled completely by you. Outsiders, us in the student union included, will not interfere needlessly, be it in assignments, or rewards and punishments. Of course, any consequences of your decisions will be borne by yourself as well.”

Chen Dao raised his hand to speak as well. He was not interested in all that as he said, "Alright alright, President. Why don't you go straight into the main topic? Let's not talk about the regular monthly examination. How will the examinations for us class monitors be done?"

Han Manman interrupted him. "Did you not hear what the president said? It's not the monitors. It's the Elite Club, we are all elites!" She emphasized the word 'elite', very obviously proud of herself. She might be a class monitor that had only been formalized this semester, but she was still at the Black Iron-rank, fitting the parameters for being an elite perfectly.

Chen Dao did not like the woman that much. Softly, he muttered, "You call yourself an elite? Learn some manners as basic as raising your hand before speaking with the student union first!"

"You!"

The two of them glared at each other until Chen Yu coughed softly. The president did not treat things lightly, and he had to stop it himself as the year-leader. Chen Dao immediately shut his mouth, his face clearly showing he did not want to bother talking to her. However, Han Manman refused to let it go, not letting the matter rest even with the year-leader's interference. It was only when Chen Yu started to look angry did Han Manman finally shut her mouth in realization.

The small drama did not affect the president, who still maintained his gentle smile as he said, "As for the monthly examination for the Elite Club. We've thought about it a lot, but this time, your examination is being handled by the upper management. Let's have your instructor tell you, the Captain of the Seventh Regiment, Yu Mei. I trust you all know her."

What followed was Yu Mei standing right in front of the president, smiling as she looked at everyone. Her gaze looked like she was appraising her troops, and she only averted her gaze after a while, not giving any indication of whether or not she was satisfied. She cleared her throat and dropped a bombshell immediately. "I won't go on with the bullsh*t. Based on the instructions and will of the old farts, with the new curriculum, anyone within the Elite Club will have their examinations be done in actual combat!"

"Oh, so it's actual combat."

"Yes, so it is."

There was a brief moment of silence.

"Holy sh*t!"

"What? Did I hear that right?!"

"Real combat?"

"Real combat!"

After a brief silence, the entire classroom stirred. The president's news about the separate monthly examinations was like dropping a pebble in a lake, but Yu Mei's news was a boulder in a puddle!

The monthly examinations would be done with real combat?

What flashed in their minds was not the difficulty of the monthly examinations, nor was it the rewards, but rather three large words; 'The New World'!

They could go to the New World! Other than for Xiao Lin, was there any news that would be more exciting for them?

Chapter 469 - Real Combat And The Monthly Examination

Chapter 469: Real Combat And The Monthly Examination

Before this, they had been toiling through practice and training every day, and what pulled them through was no doubt the existence of the New World. The dean had painted a beautiful picture for everyone during the opening ceremony, and in order to arrive at that picture, everyone worked their very hardest.

Xiao Lin was so famous amongst the first-years, not because he was strong, but rather because he was the only one who had been to the New World before—numerous times at that. Even now, Xiao Lin would be greeted by many people around the campus or the dormitory lounge. He would always get questions about the New World during his conversations.

Even with the monitors being more skilled, wanting to get to the New World would need them to at least reach the second year, but that time frame had been shortened by half a year. The president and Yu Mei even brought up the Elite Club. Originally, everyone was not that interested in the club that did not seem to have any practical benefits, but now it was different. The club could allow them to enter the New World in advance; nothing else could be more attractive.

Yu Mei was very satisfied with the waves that her bombshell had caused. She paused for a long time, admiring the expressions on everyone's faces that ranged from astonishment and shock to excitement, but when her eyes settled on Xiao Lin's calm face, she could not help but let out a dry cough. She had wanted to see something out of Xiao Lin's face, but she almost forgot that Xiao Lin went to the New World regularly, which meant it was not all that interesting to Xiao Lin.

Yu Mei motioned for everyone to be quiet before continuing, "How does it feel? Isn't it exciting? Stirring? Have you all started to fantasize about your new perfect life, thinking about the wonders on the other side? Hmph, if that's what you're all thinking about, then just wait for your deaths! Don't think that the academy is sending you to a foreign world to play. That's right, it's the monthly examination. That won't change! I need to remind all of you as well, in the New World, the Law of Immortality is in full effect, and each death will cost you 20 years!"

Yu Mei's style was to first give out a few candies before slapping everyone in the face, especially for those like Chen Dao. Those of them that were originally so excited that they wanted to shout, Yu Mei needed to make them understand that the New World was not a playground. In terms of danger, it was much more serious than the simulated examinations.

After the strict warning, it was the president's turn to speak. He used his warm tone to console everyone. "To be honest, none of you need to be too worried. First of all, Black Iron-rank is the

minimum you need to enter the New World, which is why the standard for the Elite Club was set as that. You won't need to worry about your bodies not being able to adapt. Other than that, since it's the first time all of you are going to the New World, ahem, I mean most of you."

Recalling a certain special person, the president smiled, changing his words. "Basically, since it will be the first time for most of you to enter the New World, the special examiners won't make things hard for you. Oh, the committee is a special organization set up with the relevant departments of the student union and the colonial territory, specializing in handling the activities for the Elite Club on the New World for each year. This captain and I are also part of it."

After that, he explained the special examination committee, including the composition of its members. However, to the monitors, that was not important, because other than the president, they did not know any of them. However, Xiao Lin paid some attention. In the committee, other than Yu Mei and the president, as well as a few professors, most of them were part of the military.

At that moment, the president finally reached the last part of his speech, and everyone's ears perked up, because the next part would be the important parts of the monthly examination. "This time, the monthly examination will be held at the Rosa Kingdom. As for the examination format and tasks, you will only get it when you arrive at the New World. The examination will be held this Saturday, which means your combat training class will be halted as well. Everyone can make their preparations during this time, and I should remind you that the Elite Club's rewards will be more rewarding than you've ever seen, so everyone, do your best!"

Other than revealing that the examination would be held at the Rosa Kingdom, the president did not give them any other information. Of course, considering the composition of the special committee, the president might not even be privy to some of the information.

The meeting ended just like that, and everyone left still feeling excited. Their discussions started to get louder as they went further. Even with Yu Mei's harsh warning, the excitement of being able to go to the New World was still hard to contain.

Han Manman was smiling delightfully, unable to mask her excitement. Her expression was the most obvious, probably feeling like she would be able to stand as Xiao Lin's equal with that. After all, the main difference between Xiao Lin and the other monitors was the fact that Xiao Lin had been to the New World.

Since it was still early, they did not rush to go back to the dormitories, instead heading to the public lounge to have some coffee and tea. There were some other students talking there, and when they saw the monitors walk over in large strides and red faces, a few of them had their interests piqued.

"Speaking of which, does anyone know anything about the Rosa Kingdom?" As the leader of the class monitors in name, the honest Cheng Ming posed the question in earnest. Compared to the excitement of the others, Cheng Ming's first thoughts were instead about the difficulty of the monthly examination.

The others did not seem that interested in his question, especially Chen Dao, whose face seemed very carefree. Xiao Lin shook his head; that man was probably fantasizing about foreign beauties.

“I read a lot of Normese history books in the library, so I know a little about the Rosa Kingdom.” The clear voice came from Class Six’s monitor, Li Jiayi. She was a delicate and pretty girl, but did not speak much usually. That was why, other than her name, Xiao Lin knew nothing else about her.

The other eleven of them shifted their focus on Li Jiayi, causing her to blush. She cleared her throat and spoke like she had memorized a book. “The Rosa Kingdom is a kingdom situated south of Norma’s mainland. It has around four hundred years of history. For Planet Norma, it’s an extremely young country. The Rosa Kingdom is a peaceful country, but of course the main reason is because it does not have enough military strength. That’s why when Dawn Academy slowly became a permanent occupying force, The Rosa Kingdom was the first native country that willingly established diplomatic ties with us...”

Chapter 470 - Sharing Information

Chapter 470: Sharing Information

Li Jiayi was quite good at remembering books. It was quite obvious she worked hard regularly. She was praised by the others as well, but the information in the library was obviously outdated.

After she finished, Xiao Lin continued, “To add to that, the Rosa Kingdom is currently at war. Rebels have been fighting the royal troops for about half a year now. The current reports say that the rebels have the advantage. The territories actually controlled by the royals have been shrinking, so the Rosa Kingdom is in chaos at the moment, and refugees have been flooding other areas.”

“How do you know that?”

“I’ve been to Norma, and I met refugees from the Rosa Kingdom there.”

Xiao Lin casually said that, and the logic was irrefutable. Compared to information from the library, his words were undoubtedly more reliable. After thinking for a bit, he added, “Oh, right. The Rosa Kingdom might have dark races hiding there. If we go over, it’s better to prepare for that just in case. It is said that dark magic possesses strong decaying and poisonous attributes, so it’s better to be prepared.”

The others opened their mouths, especially Han Manman, who looked like she wanted to retort, but could not find a moment to rebuke despite racking her brains. Their knowledge of the Rosa Kingdom was limited to classes and textbooks.

Cheng Ming happily said, “That’s great! It seems like your excursions to the New World last semester will be helping us a lot, Xiao Lin. Is there anything else we need to take note of?”

Everyone watched on speechlessly as Cheng Ming even took out his notebook, but thinking about it deeper, Xiao Lin gave them a good reminder. Dawn Academy had never started a dark magic class to date, so all of them did not know anything about it. It might be too late to learn everything about it, but they could at least get a basic understanding.

“We still don’t know how the tests will be evaluated; the president did not say we would be teaming up for the monthly examination.”

Xiao Lin looked at the young man who spoke from the corner of his eye; it was Class Two’s monitor, Zhang Sunxiao. He was leisurely making himself some tea, not seeming to care at all about their gathering. Xiao Lin’s impression of Zhang Sunxiao was just that the man really liked winning.

Other than being close to Chen Dao and Cheng Ming, Xiao Lin did not really have a good relationship with the other class monitors. That was also because he had gone on too many excursions, and was not actually in the academy much. Xiao Lin’s relationship with the other class monitors was basically only at the level where they knew each other’s names.

“That should not be the case,” Xiao Lin immediately denied it. “When the time comes, we will definitely be finishing the examination tasks in groups.”

“How do you know that?” Zhang Sunxiao raised his head curiously.

Xiao Lin laughed. “I know someone up top!”

The monitors looked at each other, hesitating before they nodded in agreement. Everyone knew Xiao Lin had a good relationship with the Head of the Logistics Department at that point; even the president looked at Xiao Lin differently.

In truth, Xiao Lin was just making up a bunch of crap. He was not Song Junlang after all.

However, there was no need to investigate this sort of thing at all. Even though Xiao Lin’s understanding of the Rosa Kingdom completely came from that vampire girl Ibeiya, he still knew very well that the royalty in that little kingdom was struggling with war and various disasters. How could the academy let them fight amongst themselves in such a place?

“The Rosa Kingdom is not too far away from our colonial territories. You only need to go past the Silver Province and the plains before you reach the place. There are a lot of refugees from the Rosa Kingdom in the Silver Province...”

“The Silver Province? Is that the place that produces starmetal we heard of in class?”

“You’ve been there?”

“I spent a bit of time there when I went to Planet Norma last time.”

“Speaking of that, do the orcs look exactly like what we saw in the monthly examination?”

“More or less. There are quite a few orcs in the Silver Province.”

“Aren’t we enemies?”

“The Silver Province is a neutral city, and we are not currently at war with the orcs, so be careful when the time comes. Don’t immediately try to fight any orcs you see. You’ll cause diplomatic conflicts.”

...

Xiao Lin did not mind sharing all the information he knew. If it was to be a group test, he did not want to be dragged down by the others. Originally, they did not pay that much attention to his words, but a lot of the information was actually very useful, such as the fact that the Silver Province’s borders were right next to orc territory, and would occasionally be disturbed by the orcs.

Slowly, everyone started to listen in earnest. Other than a select few, no one had any animosity toward Xiao Lin; it was just that they interacted very little, and so felt like strangers. Xiao Lin generously providing all that information had pulled their relationships closer.

There were only two days left until they left for the New World, and time felt more and more tight. After the gathering at the lounge, Xiao Lin immediately contacted Lu Renjia when he went back to his room.

Currently, all of Xiao Lin’s equipment and weapons had been provided by Lu Renjia. After a few battles, Xiao Lin trusted that senior’s craftsmanship quite a bit.

“That’s the gist of it. I know time is a bit tight, and there probably isn’t enough time to make anything new. What ready-made weapons do you have right now? Just let me know, money isn’t a problem.”

Xiao Lin did not waste time and went straight to the point, exuding the aura of a rich person. Lu Renjia might be two years Xiao Lin’s senior, but after he had seen how much Xiao Lin could spend, he did not feel any seniority toward Xiao Lin at all. Lu Renjia, who had dark circles around his eyes, probably from working throughout many nights, warmly smiled at Xiao Lin.

“So it’s Xiao Lin, ah no. It should be Monitor Xiao. I’ve heard about your monthly examination, that you will be going to the New World. Wow, the dean and student union are really bold.” Lu Renjia’s admiration in his voice disappeared quickly as he shifted to the main topic.

“To be honest, I’d already prepared everything the moment I saw who won the bet on the forums. I had been wondering when you would find me. I’ve actually already prepared your Black Iron-ranked weapons and equipment. The materials and schematics have been prepared. The moment you make a decision, I’ll start working. I guarantee everything will be done in two days!”

In order to prove his honesty, Lu Renjia immediately entered some functions into the computer, and Xiao Lin quickly received a few pictures from Lu Renjia. Opening them, Xiao Lin saw some extremely refined designs of weapons and equipment. It seemed like the man was not boasting empty.

Xiao Lin found it amusing. “If I don’t want them, won’t all your preparations have been for nothing?”

“How could that be possible? Most of the first-years know you get your equipment from me. With that alone, why would I worry about customers?”

“You’re really straightforward.”

“Only with honesty will there be returning customers.”

“Do you like being a merchant?”

“Sure. My dream is to open a weapons store in the future, and then make it into a chain that can be found on all of Planet Norma. I want to be the richest person in the New World!”

“I wish you success...”

Chapter 471 - Before The Monthly Examination

Chapter 471: Before The Monthly Examination

Xiao Lin had first looked at the weapons. The Holy Soul Sword had been destroyed in the New World last semester, and he had not gotten a new weapon to date. That was because he took into consideration the rapid rise of his attributes, on top of his few special skills. Because of that, normal blades were not suitable, and he could only get custom-made ones from Lu Renjia.

Lu Renjia had shown him several weapon blueprints, and they all had their special features compared to what the academy provided. It had to be said that Lu Renjia was quite talented at designing weapons. Xiao Lin looked through everything and quickly eyed the last one.

[Holy Sword, Silver-ranked in quality, possesses high attacking power.]

Lu Renjia only had few words to describe the sword, and it could be seen that the Silver-ranked weapon did not possess any special effects or elemental attributes. For a weapon of that level, that was actually unacceptable.

Xiao Lin immediately voiced that question to Lu Renjia, but Lu Renjia instead revealed a happy expression, immediately flashing a thumbs-up. “Monitor Xiao, you have good eyes. You actually looked right at the coolest weapon in the catalogue. No wonder you’re considered the monitor with the most potential in the first year...”

Lu Renjia was still trying to flatter him, but Xiao Lin interrupted, “The strongest weapon? You didn’t even give that weapon any special effects, such as sharpness, armor piercing, or even any elemental attributes. Don’t forget, the Holy Soul Sword you made me last time could summon a spirit.”

“Ah, compared to the Holy Sword, an undead spirit would be an afterthought. The Holy Sword’s attack attribute at a C-grade. Do you know about the Golden Holy Sword?”

“I’ve heard about it.” Xiao Lin remembered seeing it on the front page of the official merchant store.

“Ah, my Holy Sword is the weaker version of the Golden Holy Sword. After removing various buffs, I made the Holy Sword into something Black Iron-rank students can use, but the attack power did not drop.”

Lowering various other attributes to strengthen one particular one was Lu Renjia’s style of craftsmanship. Xiao Lin grew satisfied with it. What made him happiest was that, even though various effects had been removed, the materials used on the sword were not compromised for it; it still used lesser dragon bones as its primary material.

To Xiao Lin, his power explosively increased under Ruin, and most weapons had a high chance of being destroyed because of it, such as the Holy Soul Sword. That was why he needed a solid and strong weapon, which the Holy Sword fulfilled. Comparatively, additional effects were not that important.

The two of them struck a deal. The Holy Sword was not cheap, costing 10,000 redemption points on top of 20,000 New Dollars. Lu Renjia was quite honest; 20,000 New Dollars was the cost of his materials, although he refused to disclose how he got it. The 10,000 redemption points were basically his manufacturing fees.

“The lesser dragon might be inferior to regular dragons, but they’re not easy to catch. I had managed to get a senior to get this for me, but it did not come cheap.”

Xiao Lin nodded in agreement, transferring the money to Lu Renjia without a second word. Their regular dealings had led him to trust Lu Renjia.

The other monitors were all making their own preparations as well. Before that, each class got their information on the monthly examinations for the regular students. As usual, the information was given on Friday to the monitors. Xiao Lin immediately headed a short meeting in the class group that night.

The respect Xiao Lin commanded within Class Seven had steadily risen during the six months. Of course, it was also due to the two group leaders that he appointed, Gu Xiaoyue and Zhou Feng. Most of the daily tasks were done by Zhou Feng when Xiao Lin was not in the academy. The man did things very strictly. There had been some dissent in the class initially, but all of it had been quelled in half a year.

Gu Xiaoyue maintained her coldness, and Xiao Lin knew as well that it was impossible to change her attitude. He gave her a suggestion toward the end of last semester, asking Gu Xiaoyue to upload some of the class notes she took on the class group chat occasionally.

Gu Xiaoyue’s notes were very well-done and complete, and even contained a lot of her unique insights. It was very valuable stuff to normal students, and quickly caused that arrogant and distant woman to be more widely accepted. Even though she still did not have that many friends, she was at least greeted by quite a few thankful students whenever she went online.

However, Gu Xiaoyue was still a little ways away from Black Iron-rank. After all, other than Intelligence, her other attributes were way too low, which were dragging her down. Xiao Lin had told Gu Xiaoyue a few times, but she did not seem to care about it.

The difference between Black Iron-rank and not was not just those few attribute points, but rather it was a basic change in the laws of the world. For instance, one's perception of the various elements in the natural world would turn clearer, which was why Xiao Lin's current Intelligence growth did not lose to Gu Xiaoyue. Before that, even with his SS-rank talent, he still lagged behind Gu Xiaoyue.

"I won't be participating with all of you during this monthly examination. I trust all of you have seen that in the forums. I've looked at the information on the monthly examination, and the difficulty is quite moderate..."

Xiao Lin looked at the contents of the monthly examination, and it would basically be an ambush. The simulation would have them in the first war against the orcs, and they were to ambush the logistics troops of the orcs, destroying all their supplies.

The contents did not look too hard, and the monthly examinations for the new students were always things like ambushes, sneak attacks, and scouting missions. It was not very possible for them to participate in large-scale combat simulations.

What Xiao Lin noticed this time was that, with the last time as well, the academy's monthly examinations for them had all been set during the war against the orcs. The simulated examinations were fairly repetitive, as if trying to get the students to imagine the orcs as their foes, which caused him to put some thought behind it.

Xiao Lin did not plan on giving them any instructions on strategy. After all, he was also sweating when thinking about an ambush. It did not seem like he knew more than the others, so he decided to just place his trust in them.

"After that, I need to appoint substitute group leaders. It's not really an appointment, it's just something internal to the class, and will not be shown to the student union. If the group leaders unexpectedly lose their lives during the monthly examinations, the substitute group leaders will take their place"

Xiao Lin finally discussed a few of his thoughts in the group chat. He did not talk much about combat strategies, but instead talked about the allocation of tasks.

"Let's have Lu Renyi be the substitute group leader for now. Does anyone have any objections?"

"No!"

"I support your decision!"

"Lu Renyi will need to treat us to lunch."

...

Naturally, no one objected to Xiao Lin's suggestion, and the surprised Lu Renyi repeatedly expressed his thanks. Even though he had said that it would not be recorded with the student union, it still meant that Xiao Lin had recognized him.

Chapter 472 - Departing For The Monthly Examination

Chapter 472: Departing For The Monthly Examination

Choosing Lu Renyi was not a decision Xiao Lin made lightly. In the examinations before this, Lu Renyi's scores had always been either B- or A-ranked. It was not extremely exceptional, but he was still at the top end of the rankings. The man was also doing well in terms of his attribute growths as well.

The most important thing was, Lu Renyi was the only person in Class Seven to practice archery. Being a ranged attacker allows him to have a wider range of vision and more chances to observe. In terms of the bigger picture, he would have a better time making decisions.

In terms of combat power, he did not dare to guarantee anything with the others, but he had full faith in Gu Xiaoyue, especially since she had chosen to focus on support-type spells, which was a great help to the group. However, another reason he had chosen Lu Renyi was that Gu Xiaoyue would eventually join the Elite Club, and when that time came, Lu Renyi would have to take her place.

Xiao Lin gave out instructions for the regular monthly examination just like that. The next day, he went to Lu Renjia to get his equipment. After that, he gathered with the others at the dormitory entrance. Based on earlier instructions, they would head to the New World on the spatial platform with Yu Mei.

"The entrance to the New World and to return to Earth and both on the spatial platform. Dawn Academy is basically the transit point between the two."

"What about the exit?"

"Our capital, Dawn City."

"Is Dawn City very prosperous?"

"Of course, that's our capital afterall."

"Are there a lot of beauties there?"

"Quite a lot, I guess. There are a lot of foreign races there."

...

As time wore on, Xiao Lin started to talk with more and more of them. No matter if they liked him or not, everyone knew that, for this trip to the New World, Xiao Lin's experience would be a great help.

Captain Yu Mei was in front leading the way. The student union president might have been on the platform to send them off, but thanks to the numerous responsibilities within the academy, he could not leave as he pleased. However, he had expressed his care for Xiao Lin and the others before they left, repeatedly reminding them to ensure their own safety.

The sound of the spatial carriage could be heard. There were thirteen of them within the carriage that had been enveloped by the golden sands of time. It was quite a tight fit, especially thanks to the fact that Captain Yu Mei's status meant that the others did not dare sit close to her. Even Chen Dao, who was usually very lively, did not speak a lot.

Xiao Lin could only seize the initiative himself. "So can you reveal the tasks for the monthly examination already?"

His words had hit the main worry in all the other monitors' hearts spot on, and they could not help but glance over at Xiao Lin when he said it, silently wondering how thick Xiao Lin's face was to be able to converse so casually with a captain.

However, everyone's gazes quickly shifted to the information packet in Yu Mei's hands. She had been holding the document from earlier, and there were large words printed on it: 'Monthly Examination (Top Secret)'.

"Want to take a look?" Yu Mei smiled, raising the document.

"No thanks," Xiao Lin twitched, maintaining an expressionless look. "We'll see it eventually anyway."

"How dull." Yu Mei pouted, opening the packet before pulling out a few pieces of paper and setting it next to her. Cheng Ming, who was closest, rushed over before handing it out to everyone.

Once the documents with the tasks for the Elite Club were in hand, everyone started to look at them in earnest, using the light from the sands of time within the carriage.

However, Yu Mei chose that time to speak. "I'll just conclude it simply. The task you have this time is actually very simple. You just need to escort a few people back from the Rosa Kingdom."

Xiao Lin speechlessly looked up. He had already skimmed through the whole thing. "That's putting it lightly. What's written here is that we'll be escorting the Rosa Kingdom's royalty. Don't forget there's a rebellion there, which means that our task will put us against the rebels. There's only twelve of us. How many rebels are there? A hundred thousand? A million?"

"If you follow the plan, it's not exactly impossible."

"You're putting it way too simply, how could it be so easy to escort them in the middle of all the chaos."

“The information says that the royal city has already been surrounded; just sneaking in will be hard.”

“Sneaking in is easy. The history lessons have taught us that no one would dare stop us with our status. The question is how we’re going to get out.”

“What language do the people in the Rosa Kingdom speak?”

...

Following Xiao Lin’s initial words, even more of them voiced their doubts. Their collective questions had them unintentionally pointing out the same point, which was that the information in that piece of paper was way too simple. Other than a few words regarding the task, there was not even a map. Everyone looked at the package in Yu Mei’s hands, feeling like that must still be some other information inside.

Yu Mei shook the package upside down, snorting. “What? Did you hope that it would be like your prior monthly examinations, and your information and gear would be provided? Quit dreaming. Do you understand what an elite is? That means each of you needs to take personal responsibility! Information should be collected yourself! Resources should be found for yourself! Gear should be prepared yourself! That’s the three principles of this monthly examination!”

Most of them looked disappointed, but this was more or less expected. Xiao Lin was silent for a moment before raising his head again, saying in a strange tone, “Does that mean once we get to the New World, our movements will be completely arranged by ourselves?”

Yu Mei paused before saying, “We’ll have some people send you to the Rosa Kingdom, but everything else will be up to your own choices. The task is flexible, you only have to make sure it’s done within the given time frame, which is ten days. As for how you complete the task, that’s up to you guys.”

“Ten days? Won’t we miss out on classes then?”

“Your classes are all to prepare you for the New World in the future. If you can successfully complete this task, I believe your rewards will be better than ten days worth of classes.”

Xiao Lin still had a strange look on his face; it was obvious that was not his main question. He asked, “So what you mean is that, no matter what we do or who we interact with in the New World, it will be allowed by the examination?”

Yu Mei paused for a while before reacting, saying in a foul mood, “You still can’t forget that little girl you have. Whatever, I’ve said that whatever you do will be allowed!”

Xiao Lin let out a sigh of relief. Ever since he heard that the task would send them to the Rosa Kingdom, he had obviously thought of that little vampire Ibeiya. He had remembered that Ibeiya told him before that she was a princess of the Rosa Kingdom, even if she was just a child born out of marriage. However, he believed that she would know more than anyone what the situation there was like.

For a first-hand account on things, Ibeiya was definitely the best option.

Chapter 473 - Start Of The Monthly Examination

Chapter 473: Start Of The Monthly Examination

The other monitors were obviously clueless as to who Ibeiya was, but Yu Mei's words had caused their imaginations to run rampant, and they started to look at Xiao Lin strangely.

The innocent Xiao Lin had wanted to ask about Ibeiya's situation, but could not only maintain his silence, pretending to be dumb. Thankfully, the spatial carriage quickly arrived at its destination, and as the Timesand started to dim and fade, the carriage fell into darkness, and the doors opened.

Black Iron-ranked individuals would not feel any adverse effects entering the New World, but after what they had been taught in class, everyone still took their first steps carefully. When they finally stood on foreign soil, their faces lit up with varying degrees of excitement, happiness, and shock.

Chen Dao opened his arms, as if he was trying to hug the sky. Cheng Ming was taking deep breaths and feeling the clear air. The others looked around, trying their best to feel the New World with all their senses.

The blue skies, the white clouds, the sea, and the city.

It was what every student felt when they stepped into Dawn City for the first time. Yu Mei understood how they felt, which was why she stopped the workers with a wave when the workers came to get them to leave, softly saying, "They're new students. Let them admire things a bit more."

"Speaking of which, where have you hidden Ibeiya?" There was always someone who ruined the excitement. Xiao Lin was no stranger to Dawn City's sights, and did not need to stop to smell the roses.

Yu Mei rolled her eyes, lowering her voice as she said, "I used your name to buy her a house in Dawn City for your little girl. She's been provided with all daily necessities, but she seems to be quite good with people. She didn't need too long to get friendly with most of the foreign affairs department..."

"Hold on." Xiao Lin interrupted. "Using my name? You bought a house! How much money was it? How come I never heard of this!"

"Some tens of thousands, I forgot. It's fine. Isn't it just petty cash to you."

Xiao Lin was speechless as the corner of his lips twitched, but when he thought about the fact that it gave Ibeiya a steady place to stay, he held it in.

Xiao Lin was not worried about Ibeiya's ability to get friendly with people; she was very good at using her strengths to her advantage. Anyone who did not know about her would be sucked in by

her pitiful and naive appearance, and also seduced by her innate allure, but what was that about the foreign affairs department?

Xiao Lin was confused, and Yu Mei's face did not seem to be joking. "I heard from the intelligence department. That girl has been very active after coming to Dawn City, and has interacted privately with quite a few people, including natives and our own people. She's really well-liked, and some men who have the same loli-loving disease as you are completely vulnerable."

"Hold on! What do you mean like me! I'm not a lolicon, I just brought her back to protect her!" Xiao Lin objected, but quickly quieted down. He knew that Ibeiya was a vampire, but her status in Dawn City was just that of a refugee from the Rosa Kingdom.

"Do you think Ibeiya is planning something?" Xiao Lin did not let Yu Mei's words slip.

"The intelligence department thinks so, and have started to follow and investigate her, but there do not seem to be any problems right now. I've talked to her, and all I can say is I can't trust her that much."

Xiao Lin felt a bit of a headache. Ibeiya was like a strange spirit; her words were always filled with half-truths. Lilith had always been full of suspicion toward Ibeiya, and Xiao Lin could not say he completely trusted her either. To be honest, whether Ibeiya was a fraud or a liar, it was just her way of living, but if everything ended up harming Dawn City, then Xiao Lin would definitely not protect her.

"Let me bring her along!" Xiao Lin suddenly decided, slowly saying, "Since she poses some threat to Dawn City, then just let me bring her to her hometown. I could properly investigate her roots. Ah, this doesn't violate the monthly examination rules, right?"

Yu Mei's expression was strange. "That should not be a problem. I've already said that your actions will all be up to yourselves, and no one will interfere. However, are you sure that you're only bringing the loli there to investigate?"

"I've already said it, I'm not a loli-lover!"

...

The task only had a ten day time frame, and their travelling time was counted as well, so they were actually quite tight on time. The monitors had wanted to look and shop around in Dawn City, but Xiao Lin quickly reminded them of the price of goods there, which quickly dissuaded everyone.

The rewards the monitors made were on the lucrative side, and before they went there, they had all used the redemption points to purchase some New Dollars under Yu Mei and Xiao Lin's reminders through various sources. However, that money was to be used in emergencies on the road, not to be spent simply.

As the capital of Dawn Academy, Dawn City's prices were not low, and a lot of the products there did not mean much to them. There were plenty of products from Earth, mostly to attract the natives. The prices were naturally high as well, but it did not interest them at all.

According to the rules of the monthly examination, Yu Mei was no longer allowed to help them from the moment they arrived. She brought them to the center of Dawn City and gave everyone temporary identity cards. That was something everyone in Dawn City needed, and was also the assurance they needed to be able to move around the colonial territories without worry.

After that, Yu Mei issued some supplies to everyone before leaving, not even bothering to take them to lunch. That was because the special examination committee had military officials inside this time, and strictly speaking, even Yu Mei treating them to food would be a violation of the rules; it was not a risk Yu Mei wanted to take.

The supplies were basically a backpack for everyone. Inside was food and water enough for three days as well as 1,000 New Dollars.

“How stingy! A thousand New Dollars. Based on the prices Xiao Lin mentioned earlier, what can we even get with this little bit of money!” Chen Dao said angrily.

Yu Mei had left rather quickly, leaving the twelve monitors in front of the government office in the middle of the city. It was where they had made their temporary identity cards earlier. Chen Dao had sat down on the stone stairs and was throwing a tantrum.

Chapter 474 - Meeting Ibeiya Again

Chapter 474: Meeting Ibeiya Again

“There’s twelve of us; twelve thousand New Dollars should be enough,” Cheng Ming said.

“For all of us?” Han Manman slowly retreated, warning, “That money was given to all of us. We should have the right to decide how to use it!”

The rest of them looked at her speechlessly. It was obvious that the money was given to them by the academy for basic expenses. The good news was that they probably did not need to use the money they had exchanged their redemption points for, but they still needed the money for a lot of things. It was definitely not the time to be stingy.

“Let’s go eat first. I’ll pay for this meal.” Xiao Lin did not feel like dealing with Han Manman. He was currently the one with the most money, and he had even more on his mind. The Rosa Kingdom might have recognized New Dollars long ago thanks to wanting to build a relationship with Dawn Academy, but there was no way to tell if the rebels would.

The others did not know how rich Xiao Lin was. After all, news of the bets in the New World never reached them, but Xiao Lin’s generosity still caused them to be thankful.

Han Manman’s expression was not the greatest. She was not willing to accept Xiao Lin’s goodwill, but the meal was even more attractive, so she finally walked behind everyone else.

Xiao Lin and Cheng Ming walked to the front. Cheng Ming looked back before saying, “Xiao Lin, I know Han Manman has crossed the line, but the task is still a group effort.”

Xiao Lin sighed, but he did not want to throw a tantrum in front of him; Cheng Ming was a good guy. “Relax, I know when to give in. As long as she doesn’t cause trouble, no one will ostracize her. The situation in the Rosa Kingdom is still unclear. We definitely can’t be fighting among ourselves.”

They had lunch at the most luxurious restaurant in Dawn City. As a restaurant serving people from Earth, the dishes there were all local delicacies. They even served some rare lesser dragon meat. Thanks to his dealings with Lu Renjia two days ago, Xiao Lin knew how valuable lesser dragons were.

The meal had cost Xiao Lin over 10,000 New Dollars, but he did not even feel anything at such a small sum. The card An Fumin, the casino boss, had given him back then was used. Other than what he paid Lu Renjia, he was also missing 150,000 New Dollars, which was probably used to buy the house for Ibeiya.

Taking advantage of lunch, Xiao Lin got the others to wait at the restaurant as he used the address Yu Mei had given him to get a carriage to send him to Ibeiya’s residence. It was in the southeastern part of the city. From the designs of the buildings, it was an area for the rich. Of course, the rich folks in Dawn City were all basically from Earth.

Xiao Lin’s mouth twitched, somewhat understanding why the house cost him 150,000 New Dollars. Ibeiya’s house was basically a small villa. Xiao Lin coincidentally saw the little girl watering plants on the courtyard as he walked over. Her movements were fine and earnest. The sun shone on her small frame, revealing drops of sweat on the tip of her nose, making for a picturesque scene.

Xiao Lin did not interrupt immediately, but Ibeiya was more perceptive of people thanks to her innate talents as a member of the dark races. She suddenly raised her head to look where Xiao Lin was standing, and her face immediately turned from shock to excitement as she threw aside the watering can and rushed toward Xiao Lin in greeting.

The girl was too fast, and Xiao Lin was afraid she would fall to the ground, so he could not help but open his arms to hug Ibeiya. Ibeiya’s little head nuzzled his chest like a cat before she raised her head, revealing her slightly red eyes as she choked back tears. “I thought you didn’t want me anymore! You left me alone and did not visit for so long. That Yu Mei lady is so fierce. She keeps screaming at me!”

Her pitiful look would pull at anyone’s heartstrings, but Xiao Lin was full of doubt. He did not believe a single word of Ibeiya’s accusations. How could she be bullied so easily?

It was impossible, and after listening to Yu Mei’s words, Ibeiya had a very good time in Dawn City.

Pulling the passionate hug apart, Xiao Lin’s face reddened. Thankfully, there was no one familiar on the streets, or Xiao Lin would really be seen as a lolicon.

“You want to go out to play?” Xiao Lin started to feel like he was a weirdo tempting a kid with a lollipop.

“Yes!”

“I came today to take you out, alright?”

“Alright, alright! Where are we going?” Ibeiya’s expressions changed like flipping books. She was teary-eyed just now, but was now just full of happy smiles.

“Your hometown, the Rosa Kingdom.”

Ibeiya’s smile stiffened as she retreated a few steps. She raised her head to look at Xiao Lin before smiling again. “Did Big Brother have something you wanted my help with?”

“I really can’t hide anything from you. I have official business in the Rosa Kingdom. Mainly, I need to escort some people back. You know that the Rosa Kingdom is an allied country to Dawn Academy.” Xiao Lin did not bother to hide it. As for the suspicions Yu Mei hinted to him, he naturally did not bring it up.

“What do you want from me?”

“I want everything you know.”

Ibeiya tilted her head, not even thinking for ten seconds before saying sweetly, “I’ll obviously listen to Big Brother Xiao Lin. Seeing as you’re in a hurry, let’s go!”

“Don’t you need to pack?”

“No need. To me, Big Brother Xiao Lin is the most important!”

Xiao Lin did not delay things, immediately departing with Xiao Lin. Ibeiya looked extremely happy to be able to travel with Xiao Lin. She seemed obedient, not asking for any information she did not need.

However, when she saw the others in the restaurant, Ibeiya immediately understood that the journey would not just be Xiao Lin and her. She started to mumble to herself, her face unhappy. Xiao Lin gave her a simple introduction, only saying that she was from the Rosa Kingdom that he met the last time he was there. As for her status as a vampire and a princess, he kept it completely concealed.

Following that, Xiao Lin once again bore witness to how Ibeiya’s cuteness slayed men and women alike. The monitors treated her extremely fondly. Chen Dao was the most extreme, even pouring her tea. However, when he could not hold himself back and tried to pinch Ibeiya’s face, Xiao Lin stopped him bluntly, and the former could only laugh as he retracted his hand.

“Basically, she’s more familiar with the Rosa Kingdom than anyone else. We’ll probably be relying on her a lot for this assignment.”

Xiao Lin’s decision naturally met everyone’s approval.

Chapter 475 - Mounts

Chapter 475: Mounts

They did not delay after lunch. Even though Han Manman and a few others insisted on going on the road immediately, under Xiao Lin's suggestion, a few class monitors decided to go look at the market first.

"The Rosa Kingdom is still quite a distance away, so it will take quite a long time to get there on foot." Xiao Lin was not trying to antagonize Han Manman, but it was obvious they would not have enough time if they moved on foot.

Xiao Lin had never been to the Rosa Kingdom. He looked at Ibeiya next to him. The girl had stuck to Xiao Lin like glue ever since they left the restaurant. Even though Chen Dao had passionately tried to take care of her, Ibeiya immediately said he was a bad guy, causing Chen Dao to collapse with despair.

Catching Xiao Lin's inquisitive gaze, Ibeiya thought for a few seconds before quickly giving an answer. "If it's by foot, even the fastest speeds would get you there in half a month, but in truth, counting the possible detours you'll have to make on the way, it'll probably take you a whole month."

"What if we get mounts?" Xiao Lin thought before saying, "There are two kinds of mounts in Dawn City: unicorns and tamed magical wolves."

"What's the difference between unicorns and magical wolves?" Cheng Ming asked earnestly. The monitors could not help but feel awkward when they discovered the fact. Even if they had prepared and done so much homework before coming, they were still obviously underprepared. None of them had thought about mounts.

Xiao Lin had spent a lot of time in the New World. In truth, his understanding of the New World might not be that much better than anyone else, but he had traveled with Lilith twice last semester, and had learned a lot from the American.

Xiao Lin answered, "Unicorns might be a bit slower, but they have more stamina. It's no issue for them to run overnight. However, unicorns are rare and the prices reflect that. Furthermore, they're more fragile. If we don't find a specialized doctor when it's sick, we won't be able to continue our journey. The wolves are faster and cheaper, but they're not very stable. Even after being tamed, the magical wolves are still beasts that could go feral at any time, which would cause us some trouble. Furthermore, the speed of the wolves are all contingent on getting enough rest."

Which mounts would they choose?

The monitors looked at each other, each having their own thoughts, but none were enough to make a decision. That was because everyone knew that the monthly examination had already started, so each decision they made could affect their final scores.

"What do you think?" Xiao Lin threw the question at the girl next to him.

"To be honest, the two mounts would need a day or two to reach the Rosa Kingdom, but you can always consider a third option."

"A third option?" Chen Dao's interest peaked, but it seemed like his interest was more on the girl herself.

Xiao Lin immediately stood in between the two of them, blocking Chen Dao's vision, much to the latter's grief. Ibeiya laughed uncontrollably, taking a while before she continued, "If I recall correctly, Dawn City should have griffins for sale. If we use griffins, we could probably reach the Rosa Kingdom by nightfall."

"Griffins."

The monitors paused for a moment before revealing determined expressions. It was obvious that was the best choice. Xiao Lin furrowed his eyebrows; their history lessons taught him that griffins were hard to capture and train, and griffins were mainly from English and German territories. The two academies have griffin riders as their main troops, but griffins were rarer in Dawn City.

Rarities were usually expensive, Xiao Lin understood that, so he asked, "How much is a griffin? Not buying them, but just renting them for a day."

"An adult griffin would cost you at least a hundred thousand New Dollars, but renting them is cheap. Each day would cost you a thousand New Dollars."

The monitors were dumbfounded. 1,000 New Dollars, not more or less. That was the money that the academy had given them. Thinking about it, the academy could have given them that amount on purpose.

"Each griffin can seat two people." Ibeiya added.

Xiao Lin did not care too much about the price, so he agreed on the spot. The others did not have much of an opinion. Two of them would cost 1,000 New Dollars, so everyone needed to pay 500 New dollars. However, adding Ibeiya would make it thirteen, meaning someone would need to pay for it in full.

Xiao Lin did not bother with any nonsense, immediately saying he was willing to sit alone, but he immediately faced Ibeiya's objection. The girl said she wanted to share a griffin with Xiao Lin. The rest of them could only blink and pretend they did not see anything. In the end, Cheng Ming was the one who had to be the good guy. The man did not mind and said he would ride alone, joking that his head was too big, and they would be over the weight limit if he sat with someone else.

Ibeiya was very familiar with the griffin rental spot, which caused Xiao Lin to think about Yu Mei's words: Ibeiya had familiarized herself quickly with Dawn City. If the girl was really scheming something, then it was a terrifying prospect, but he currently did not think about any of that.

The griffins were situated at a small hill outside of Dawn City. The store owner was a bearded Englishman. As the colonial territories started to stabilize, the business relationships between them improved as well, which was why it was normal to see foreigners in Dawn City.

However, the Englishman was extremely shrewd; he obviously did not show any shred of passion that the renters were from Earth as well. Renting the griffins needed a large deposit. Each griffin needed a 10,000 New Dollar deposit, and the money would only be returned after the griffins were returned.

Ibeiya, who was more familiar with the situation, immediately rejected it. The deposit had obviously been inflated by the Englishman. Normally, they would only need less than half of that. If

it was 10,000 a griffin, then they would need to pay 70,000 New Dollars. As rich as Xiao Lin was, he was not willing to pay that amount. People formed habits quickly, and he did not want to be seen as a walking goldmine by the others.

The Englishman was only willing to rent out two griffins at the most; he said it was because Xiao Lin and the others were too young and new. Even if they were from Earth, it was not enough to trust them.

“It’s fine if you don’t want to pay, but you’ll need to find a guarantor that is trustworthy enough!” Just as Xiao Lin was thinking about paying for everything himself, the Englishman shouted in broken Mandarin.

“A guarantor?” Xiao Lin paused before saying in a strange tone. “Such as Century Casino’s boss, An Fumin?”

Even though Yu Mei from the government was a better choice, the monthly examination meant that they could not rely on the academy’s help. Asking Yu Mei for help could cause them to fail. Other than her, the only other person with status that Xiao Lin knew was An Fumin.

Chapter 476 - Griffins

Chapter 476: Griffins

The plump Century Casino’s boss... Xiao Lin had won a lot from the bet, which led to him knowing An Fumin. However, they were not very familiar, and Xiao Lin’s sole impression of the man was that he was a very good businessman.

Xiao Lin felt like he could try looking for An Fumin. When he said the name, the Englishman obviously started to hesitate. The man knew of the boss of the largest casino in Dawn City, and the man decided to test it out. It was obvious that they would not have time to hurry back to the casino in the middle of the city, but the Englishman had an even better way. He went into the house and used a magic formation that had been set up inside to communicate with the city. The point of communication was the casino.

“That’s a communication line. It uses magical formations to enable short-range communication. It’s a little like our magical phones.” Xiao Lin told the curious monitors.

He was originally just testing it out, but the Englishman quickly pointed at Xiao Lin with a strange look. “The guy wants to see you.”

“An Fumin?”

“That’s right. I can’t believe you actually know him.” The Englishman’s attitude noticeably improved. He was very clear on An Fumin’s wealth as well; someone who wanted to make money like him would naturally not want to offend rich people.

Under the surprised and curious gazes of the monitors, Xiao Lin walked into the house. The short distance communication used special ink and energy stones on the floor to form a magical

formation to establish communication. A few dozen energy stones condensed into a magical image, and An Fumin's large stomach was in frame.

"So it really is you!" An Fumin was surprised to see Xiao Lin, laughing as he said, "Someone told me you wanted me to be your guarantor. I thought it was some blind fraudster, but it looks like your monthly examination really has started."

Xiao Lin paused. The boss' information network was really vast to even be able to get ahold of the news regarding their monthly examination. It had only been spread out within a small circle.

"To be honest, I can help you pay for all that; it's only a few dozen thousand New Dollars." An Fumin was rich enough to not even need the exact amount. He paused and smiled again. "However, you probably don't care about that amount of money either."

Xiao Lin said, "That's right, but this is a group examination, and I don't want others to treat getting money from me as something natural, but it's definitely not easy to repay your favor either."

"Hahaha!" An Fumin laughed. "It looks like you understand me well. That's right, I'll never lose out when it comes to business. If it's just you, I'd be willing to help, but since there are others involved, we'll need to make a deal."

An Fumin thought for less than ten seconds, continuing, "I have a casino branch in the Rosa Kingdom, and business there is pretty good. You know as well that the Rosa Kingdom's relationship with Dawn Academy in the past was quite good. It's a pity that the situation is like this. I had originally not given much thought to my branch there, but no one will turn down an opportunity to make more money. Our deal is simple; bring my goods from the branch over and I'll pay for your entire journey. That way, none of you will owe me any more favors."

An Fumin spoke very quickly, making it hard for Xiao Lin not to be suspicious. Did the sly old man plan this scheme in advance? An Fumin did not specify what the goods were, nor the quantity. However, the support it would get them was definitely tempting; supporting them the entire way would mean that they would have a sufficient guarantee on their expenses.

An Fumin smiled. "I'm not very clear on your assignment, nor do I want to know, but in the Rosa Kingdom, our status as colonizers might not be that useful. You need to understand that, in the outside world, power and wealth is the only key to things going smoothly."

"I'll need to discuss it with the others," Xiao Lin said carefully.

"Not a problem." An Fumin seemed very confident.

After briefing the other monitors simply, as well as introducing who An Fumin was to them, no one rejected the tempting suggestion. Cheng Ming was noticeably hesitant, wondering if they would be going against the rules by doing so.

Chen Dao felt like it was not a big deal. "To be honest, we can just treat it as a side quest. A main quest and a side quest—doesn't that sound interesting?!"

"I think you've played too many games!"

Xiao Lin was hesitant as well, but Cheng Ming's worries were unneeded—that much Xiao Lin was certain. It was just that Xiao Lin felt like An Fumin might not be acting out of kindness.

However, since it was a group decision, Xiao Lin's personal feelings could not influence the decision of the others, especially since most of them had agreed to it. The remaining ones could only go along.

An Fumin was not surprised when he got an affirmative answer, and immediately gave Xiao Lin the location and name of the person responsible for the casino in the Rosa Kingdom. The Englishman then received the deposit immediately; even the daily rental had been paid for. Xiao Lin and the others obtained seven griffins.

The griffins had bodies and claws like a lion's, as well as the head and wings of the eagle. Wild griffins had extremely high offensive strength, but those griffins were bred in captivity, and were obviously very obedient. The Englishman simply gave them instructions on how to start flying and land, as well as the choice in routes. They did not need to worry about anything else.

The Englishman took out some soil, and made all seven of the Griffins smell it. The soil was from the Rosa Kingdom, which meant the griffins would know the routes themselves. The simple method had opened up Xiao Lin and everyone else's eyes.

Xiao Lin had been nervous about riding a griffin for the first time, but their soft and warm bodies, as well as the fragrant odor had caused his worries to disappear. Ibeiya unabashedly leaned into Xiao Lin's embrace, acting like she was shivering in fear, drawing murderous gazes from the surroundings.

Xiao Lin could not tell if that little vampire was really afraid, but he still held Ibeiya tightly, preventing her from falling. With a pull of the reins, the griffins flew into the air with a shout, and there were several cries of despair that followed.

The trained griffins had very strong ropes around them, so there was no worry of falling, but flying thousands of meters up into the air without any experience riding them before was not a pleasant experience. Xiao Lin was beginning to regret eating too much for lunch, but in front of Ibeiya, he still had to maintain his dignity. He forced down his urge to vomit.

Ibeiya might be acting scared and pitiful, but she was actually laughing secretly, proving that it was not the first time the vampire had ridden a griffin. She even leaned into Xiao Lin's ear to remind him of the correct posture to ride a griffin. Xiao Lin had stabilized after following it, and his stomach felt much better.

"Why didn't you say that earlier?" Xiao Lin asked loudly.

"Then I wouldn't get the chance to enjoy it. Look, look, that guy is vomiting up a storm. Hahaha, how fun!"

Xiao Lin was speechless.

Chapter 477 - Infiltration

Chapter 477: Infiltration

The griffins were very fast. They had left after noon, and the griffins had already started their descent as the sun started to set. They stopped on a hill, and right away, someone came over to help untie them, as well as help those who were so dizzy they could not even find their bearings down. After that, the griffins were brought into the specialized cages and fed.

These fixed routes were a mode of transport introduced by the colonists. Originally, griffin-riding required a lot of skill, but considering the fact that most of them would not be so skilled at riding, they decided only a landing and takeoff point was needed. They would then let the griffins get familiar with the routes, and did not longer need to be steered after that. The griffins would be able to get to the destinations themselves.

With the increase in the territories that the colonists controlled, the destinations for this mode of flight had also slowly spread to every colonized territory, and even the allied territories around them. As Dawn Academy's first allies, it was not strange for the Rosa Kingdom to be one of those destinations.

Other than Xiao Lin and Ibeiya, who were fine, the rest of them all had bad looks on their faces, leading to them needing to rest nearby for a while. The workers at the destination point had probably seen a lot of similar situations, especially since this was a mode of transport primarily meant to serve those of them from Earth. Someone quickly brought out some medicine. Of course, those required money as well, but someone had already paid for them in advance.

Xiao Lin was surprised when he heard that. An Fumin was keeping his promise, but it looked like the opportunistic tycoon had arranged everything way ahead of time, which Xiao Lin found strange.

"We were supposed to be able to take riding classes in our second year. It'll probably feel better then." Cheng Ming seemed to be in the worst state. He had eaten the most that afternoon, so he had also vomited the most. Even if the medicine had helped a lot, he still looked out of sorts.

"Yeah, but it's just common riding skills. Flying mounts will only be open in third year." Chen Dao said; the guy enjoyed looking at higher level classes in his free time.

"It's an optional course. I'll definitely not take it in the future. Too scary!" Class Six's Li Jiayi clutched her chest as she said that; it looked like she had developed a new phobia.

...

The only map the academy had given them was within the colonial territories. There was nothing about the Rosa Kingdom. That was why Xiao Lin looked for the person in charge of the place. He was an Englishman as well, but seemed much friendlier than the guy before. Of course, it might also be due to An Fumin's prior arrangements. When he knew that Xiao Lin wanted a map of Rosa the Kingdom, he smiled and produced a box.

The other monitors also gathered curiously. When opened, the box was filled with maps. Everyone was speechless as he slowly opened all of them. They were all maps on the Rosa Kingdom, be it geographical maps, territorial maps, city maps, population density maps, racial distribution maps,

war maps, and even weather maps. However, there was no one map that had them all together. Of course, they would have to purchase the maps to use them.

‘Fine.’ Xiao Lin started to feel like the smile on that Englishman’s face was just an accessory. He was still a sly merchant.

After some discussion, they bought a geographical, city and territorial map. Each was worth 50 New dollars. That amount did not need to be paid for by An Fumin, and Xiao Lin did not mind; he did not care about such a small sum of money.

As a few of them whose constitutions were weaker were still recovering, the rest of them decided to look at the maps first. They noticed that, strictly speaking, they were still not within the Rosa Kingdom. In consideration of the ongoing war, they did not dare establish a flight destination in the country.

From their location, they still needed to walk a few kilometers. The distance was nothing to them, but after looking at the territorial maps, they realized they were facing a tough problem. The territory that was right next to this hill had already fallen into rebel hands.

Outside of the Rosa Kingdoms territorial lines was a large chaotic area. The area was originally an unregulated region. Before, the Rosa Kingdom did not bother with it due to not wanting to provoke anyone, but when the rebel forces expanded, they did not adhere to the boundaries set by the Rosa Kingdom, and had expanded beyond those lines.

“So this means that, if we want to reach the Rosa Kingdom, we’ll first need to get through rebel controlled territory?” Cheng Ming furrowed his eyebrows.

From the limited information that had been provided by Dawn Academy, the rebel troops called themselves the Black Rose Organization, because their flag was a black rose. The rebels consisted mostly of commoners and farmers; the reason for their rebellion was complicated, and was being investigated by Dawn Academy.

“We don’t know what the rebels think of us, and by us, I’m referring to Dawn Academy.”

“The current news we have is that the people from Earth within the Kingdom are still safe. At least that means that the rebels troops won’t dare make enemies out of us for no reason. Of course, that’s a normal thing. Anyone that dares to touch us could not hope to defeat our armies.” It was Class Eight’s Zhang Shengguo who said that. The dignified man had the natural air of a leader. His status back on Earth was not low, but unfortunately, in the group of monitors, his words did not hold much weight, which gave him much dissatisfaction.

Xiao Lin furrowed his eyes. “That’s true. The rebels won’t dare make enemies out of us, but they have not shown any goodwill toward us either. Otherwise, we’d have already brought the royal family out.”

The rebels’ attitude would decide how they entered the Rosa Kingdom, as well as how they acted within the Kingdom. If the rebels were kind enough to the colonists, then they could just walk right in, and no one would stop them.

However, if the rebels bore them ill-will, then they would need to sneak in quietly. Even if the limited reports showed that the rebels consisted mostly of commoners, the basic attributes of commoners on this planet were much higher than those back on Earth. It was only because most Earth commoners did not have the resources to go through specialized combat and skill training did they lose out to those from the academy, but their numbers were still not easily handled.

The assignment this time was an escort mission; it was not for them to charge in and defeat the rebels.

After making the point clear, Xiao Lin and Cheng Ming, alongside another six or seven monitors, all felt like sneaking in was the best choice. It would be best if they did not alert the rebels. The other monitors might not have the same opinions, but the majority determined the direction of the group, and the decision was passed.

Chapter 478 - Accident

Chapter 478: Accident

It was already evening when they reached their destination point, and night quickly fell. The landing point did not provide any accommodation services, so Xiao Lin and the others had some of the bread they brought along before taking advantage of the cover of the night to walk toward the Rosa Kingdom's borders.

The gods seemed to be helping them on that day, as the moonlight was obscured by the increasing number of clouds. In a wasteland without any sources of light, their field of vision was very low.

It was a vast wasteland when they got down from the hill. Ever since the Rosa Kingdom was embroiled in the civil war, a lot of refugees had to escape from their hometowns, and many of them would set up camp here, establishing simple accommodations, which was why Xiao Lin and the others could hear the sound of people in the distance.

The refugee camps had a lot of bonfires lit up, and they could somewhat make out some armed patrols. The camp had a flag with a black rose in the middle, signifying that the area was under the care of the rebels. Xiao Lin could guess what the rebels were planning. After all, the most important resource in the world was manpower, be it troops or labor. If the rebels wanted to take complete control of the Rosa Kingdom, they could not let those refugees leave so easily.

"Let's avoid the refugee camp!"

Cheng Ming was at the head, already having his full suit of armor on. He had even brought a large tower shield for the assignment, and was holding a heavy sword in one hand. His shocking strength was obvious.

Xiao Lin followed closely behind, his Holy Sword in hand. Being behind Cheng Ming guaranteed that he could respond to anything immediately. Other than Ibeiya, the twelve class monitors were three women and nine men; the mages had all been placed in the backline. Ibeiya was following Xiao Lin closely. Xiao Lin had wanted to place that powerless girl in the middle of the team, but she violently rejected it.

The other men could not help but give Xiao Lin a big thumbs-up in envy; they could see how much Ibeiya relied on Xiao Lin.

The monitors were all confident in their strength, and their probable opponents, the rebels, mostly consisted of commoners.

With that in mind, a few of them were quite carefree, even feeling like it was too dark and wanting to light torches, but they were rejected by Xiao Lin and the others. No matter what their combat strengths were, they did not want to invite unnecessary trouble.

“I actually feel like we’re being too careful. This level of visibility really affects our travel speed. Don’t forget, our time is very valuable. After getting into the Rosa Kingdom, we still need to sneak into the royal city as well as find the royalty. All of that needs time.”

“We might be able to move a little faster if you would just shut up!”

“Excuse me?”

“What are you fighting over! Do you want everyone nearby to know we’re here?!”

Xiao Lin exclaimed softly. The entire squad fell into a brief silence. If it came to a leader among all the monitors, Cheng Ming was definitely the public one. However, in terms of threat level, they could not deny that Xiao Lin had the advantage, even if most of the monitors would not verbally agree to it. Even Han Manman, who hated Xiao Lin, understood in her heart that Xiao Lin’s skills were at the top of the class monitors.

The more powerful one was, the more weight their words held. That was the law of this world.

The team advanced in silence, and their speed slowly increased. They could only approximate the road in the darkness of the night. After about half an hour, based on the map they had seen before, they guessed that they were already at the border of the Rosa Kingdom. It was just a pity there were no landmarks around.

Based on their approximate route plans, they would need a few hours after entering the Rosa Kingdom to get through the scarcely populated wasteland. After that, they would reach the furthest city, where they could either buy or rent new mounts to head to the royal city.

If they did not want to sleep in the wild, they would need to increase their speed. That way, they might be able to arrive at the city by dawn, and would have a chance to nap after.

After another half an hour, the bonfires from the refugee camps slowly disappeared from their sights. They would occasionally hear some wild animals, but otherwise, there were no sounds.

“Speaking of that, I think we forgot to buy one map.” Since they had distanced themselves from the refugee camp, Chen Dao’s voice started to be slightly louder.

“What kind of map?” Xiao Lin asked.

“A map of magical beasts. Don’t you think that our nighttime journey is just like a food delivery service for them?” Chen Dao half-joked.

“The Rosa Kingdom’s magical beasts are all low-leveled, and they rarely appear in these places.” Class Six’s Li Jiayi said earnestly.

“It seems like you listened very closely during our lessons.”

“I saw it in the library.” The girl really did like going to the library.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

As everyone was chatting away to fight off the boredom, Xiao Lin suddenly narrowed his eyes, lowering his voice as he said, “Everyone quiet!”

Xiao Lin’s perception was quite high. As he quietened them, the others started to feel like something was off as well. High perception could help them detect danger, but even with Xiao Lin’s current rank, he could not accurately tell where the danger was or how far it was.

In the night, the whooshing sounds started to get more obvious, and it did not sound like an animal’s cry or breathing. It seemed erratic, making it hard to make out clearly. The monitors closed ranks quickly, forming a circle as they moved defensively.

The darkness of the night turned into the most troublesome thing then. The lack of vision caused them to be unable to tell what their surroundings were like. Even though Xiao Lin quickly fired a few flame bullets into the distance, the flash of lights did not allow them to see anything clearly.

Now, it was too late to lament not taking up specialized detection classes. Xiao Lin knew that they could not just keep defending passively like that, so he activated Miracle. Alongside his constant increase in attributes, the amount of points he could convert with Miracle increased as well. The time he could maintain it also followed suit, but he could still not repeatedly use the ability in a short time.

However, it was not the time to be concerned about that. After he converted all his attributes to Intelligence, Xiao Lin’s perception strengthened as well. Even if the strengthening did not result in a complete change in his perception, he could still sense more things. He suddenly raised his head. “The sky! Watch the sky!”

The whooshing sounds that constantly changed distances was clearly the sound of the friction caused by high-speed flight with the air. In the dark sky, at some point, something had started circling over their heads. Whatever it was, they did not seem to have good intentions.

Chapter 479 - Attackers From The Skies

Chapter 479: Attackers From The Skies

The moment Xiao Lin spoke, they seemed to realize they had been discovered, and the assault from the skies started. Xiao Lin could feel the sound of the winds charging toward him quickly. The winds were as sharp as swords, and he immediately converted his attributes to Strength as he raised his Holy Sword to block.

Bang!

Following the loud impact, Xiao Lin felt a large force colliding with his sword. However, the Holy Sword's durability was proven there, and thanks to him putting up his defenses, he was not hit by the sudden attack. Yet, when Xiao Lin prepared to counter, the sound was retreating rapidly.

How fast!

The rest of them immediately started their counter attack as a few flame balls shot toward the sky. Class Nine's Wang Wanzhu also chose to focus on flame magic, and was more familiar with it than Xiao Lin. Her focus had led to her already mastering the higher level Grand Fireball.

A large flaming ball was sent up to the sky. In that brief moment of light, their silhouettes were revealed in the sky.

The high basic attributes of the monitors really shined here; if the regular students had been met with such an ambush, they would have been wiped instantly.

The first attack was by Class Five's An Luo; he was the only person who specialized in archery among the monitors, and Xiao Lin vaguely remembered that he had boasted that his talent was increased accuracy when it came to archery. That allowed him to show a high level of archery despite the lack of vision.

An Luo drew his bow, and with a few shots, a low and sharp cry could be heard, but it looked like the ambusher only sustained minor injuries.

However, An Luo's attacks revealed their opponent's location. Chen Dao managed to complete his spell; the kid, whose talent in magic was only second to Gu Xiaoyue's, shot out an intense red light from his staff, causing the few of them who specialized in magic to do a double take.

"Flame Dragon!"

A large flaming dragon shot out of Chen Dao's staff. That was a Bronze-ranked spell, and the difficulty of learning it as well as the requirements were both very high. It was also much higher ranked than anything anyone else had.

The Flame Dragon's power was immense, and thanks to An Luo's arrows that had slowed down the attackers, the dragon managed to swallow the targets whole. After a sharp cry, the sound of an object dropping to the ground could be heard.

"Everyone, keep defending. Cheng Ming and I will go look!" Xiao Lin immediately said; he had wanted to make a move, but it seemed like the other monitors had high combat ability as well. Their defenses were sufficient, so he brought along the highly defensive Cheng Ming. The most important thing was for them to find out the identity of their attacker.

With Miracle active and Intelligence pumped to the maximum, Xiao Lin had the highest perception out of everyone. Following the direction of the sound, Cheng Ming walked in front with his tower shield and Xiao Lin carefully walked behind with his sword in hand.

A few hundred meters away from the sound, Xiao Lin pointed his finger and shot out a few flame bullets, temporarily lighting up the night. Looking at the bodies on the ground, Xiao Lin and Cheng Ming gasped.

Xiao Lin slung a carcass on his shoulder and turned back. He threw the body in front of the other monitors. “Griffins! The ones in the skies are griffins. We need to be careful. Griffins might not be that famous on Planet Norma for their combat abilities, but not many creatures can challenge them in the air.”

“Griffins?”

“The ones we rode earlier?”

The expressions of the monitors all changed. They had done their homework as well, and naturally understood that griffins were hard to handle while they were flying, especially for those who did not have the ability to hit them. Other than defending passively, there was not much of a better way.

In the next few hours, they focused completely on keeping their defenses up. Even though An Luo’s archery and Chen Dao’s large-scale magical attacks, coupled with Xiao Lin’s perception, let them kill off the occasional griffin, it did not really damage much of the entire flock of griffins.

The griffins had immense speed and reactions, after Xiao Lin and the others made their preparations, they could defend themselves quite well. After all, the monitors were all talent holders, and their combat abilities were not bad. However, the cover of the night gave the griffins natural protection. The griffin’s attacks had all been countered by then, but after each attack, the griffins would slyly pull away at a high speed, not giving them many chances to counter-attack.

Following Chen Dao’s mental exhaustion as well as An Luo’s physical exhaustion, Xiao Lin’s Miracle state had run out as well, which made them even more passive. Xiao Lin actually had the ability to fight back if he activated Ruin, even if he did not have vision or the ability to fly; he could rely on the devastating power of Ruin to clear out the field with large-scale attacks.

However, after some hesitation, Xiao Lin chose not to do so. Even with the increase in attributes and him being more familiar with Miracle, Xiao Lin had yet to see much improvement in his Ruin state. He would be powerless for a long time after using it.

The griffins’ earlier attacks had all just been used to check on their abilities, and Xiao Lin was filled with suspicion on the attack as well, so he chose not to use his trump card.

The truth was like he had thought. From the cries in the sky, they could tell that there were at least a dozen griffins in the skies, but the griffins did not use any formations, nor were the attacks as intense as they anticipated. However, the defending monitors did not dare let their guards down, their minds tensed up, not allowing themselves to relax.

It continued for an hour, all the way until the first ray of sunlight shot out over the horizon. The night-time attackers made a final round around them before slowly flying away in the distance. Everyone could finally see with their own eyes, and it really was a flock of griffins. They could not mistake that after having ridden those beasts.

After half an hour, the skies were completely bright, and the night sky could no longer be used as cover. Seeing as the griffins showed no signs of returning, everyone let out a sigh of relief, collectively collapsing on the ground.

The fight they had gone through most of the night might not have been that intense, only resulting in some light injuries on three who specialized in magic, the rest of them were fine. It had taken a toll on them mentally, and they were completely exhausted.

45: Assimilation

“Liao Long, are you alright?” Luo Ya walked towards ‘Liao Long’ and asked in concern. “Where are you hurt? Do you have healing medicine?”

“You can’t move? Don’t worry, we will save you and bring you back. We are comrades...”

She moved closer step by step. Towards the end, her voice got gentler, as if she was comforting the other person.

“Save me...”

‘Liao Long’ was still pleading for help. However, his voice was getting weaker. He was breathing in more air than he breathed out, as though he would die at any moment.

“Don’t worry. I’ll save you immediately!”

As Luo Ya spoke, they were already less than five meters away from each other. The moment she finished speaking, she suddenly shot forward. She rushed in front of the other party in an instant.

Wang Teng only saw a sharp sword light flashing in the dark. The speed of her attack was extremely fast. It felt as though the moment she took her sword out of its sheath, she had already stabbed ‘Liao Long.’

“Luo Ya!”

Her three teammates’ expressions changed. They didn’t expect Luo Ya to attack ‘Liao Long.’

They had also noticed something amiss, but they didn’t want to attack ‘Liao Long.’ After all, he had been their teammate for many years.

Luo Ya’s expression didn’t change, though. A cold glint flashed past her eyes as she stabbed her long sword viciously into ‘Liao Long’s’ body. She didn’t care about their relationship at all.

Wang Teng’s eyes widened. This lady left a strong impression on him.

She was sharp, decisive, and ruthless!

Wang Teng was able to notice the difference with the help of his Spiritual Sight. However, Luo Ya acted solely based on her observation and judgment.

It wasn't easy for her to make such a decision!

At first, he wanted to remind the other party, but when he noticed that she had another motive, he decided to wait and see.

Although the result was unexpected, he wasn't too shocked.

In the next instant, Luo Ya's teammates' expressions changed again. They shouted at her.

"Dodge!"

Almost at the same time, Luo Ya had already started moving. While the sword light slashed through the air, she tilted her body slightly. She pierced her battle sword behind her closer to her right side.

"This was what I was waiting for!"

There was a cold smile at the edge of her lips. She seemed to have been saving her energy for a long time. At this moment, her Force exploded, and the sword rays glowed brightly. It slashed towards the dark apparition with a loud sound.

Howl!

The dark apparition was finally hit. It let out a painful wail as blood spurted out of its chest. It flew backward.

"Let me kill you when you're injured!"

Wang Teng moved his body and stabbed the dark apparition with his battle sword.

Slash!

The sword penetrated the heart of the dark apparition.

The three members of Luo Ya's team followed closely behind him. The giant martial warrior held his battle mace and slammed it on the dark apparition's head.

Splat!

It shattered into pieces like a watermelon.

Such violence!

Wang Teng hurriedly jumped back to evade the red and white matter splattering everywhere.

"You are a step too late." The giant martial warrior, Kun Qi, laughed while speaking to his other two teammates.

“Kun Qi, how did you react so quickly today?” The dwarf martial warrior was frustrated, but he was curious too.

“I’ve been staring at this young man. The moment he moved, I moved too,” Kun Qi said smartly.

“You can do this?”

The dwarf and the other man exchanged glances with each other.

Wang Teng looked at Kun Qi in surprise when he heard this. This big guy wasn’t stupid!

Boom!

Just when everyone thought that the trouble was solved, blood spurted out of Luo Ya’s back. Her entire body flew out.

“Luo Ya!”

Kun Qi and the other people screamed in shock as their expressions changed.

They looked at ‘Liao Long.’ He was actually standing up in an extremely weird posture.

His actions were a little stiff. The top half of his body was slouching, his shoulders were bent, and his joints were cracking loudly. He staggered as he stood up.

No one, including Wang Teng, saw how Luo Ya was attacked.

Kun Qi and the other two people rushed over and stood in front of Luo Ya to protect her.

“Luo Ya, how are you?”

“Cough! Fortunately, I managed to block some of the damage. I won’t die yet.” Luo Ya crawled up from the ground with difficulty.

Her left arm was injured, most likely fractured. If she didn’t manage to defend herself just now, that attack would have cost her her life.

“Be careful of that thing. He seemed to have... been assimilated.” Luo Ya’s expression was serious. She thought for a moment before she managed to squeeze out this descriptive word.

They had heard of the dark apparition before, but this was their first time meeting one.

As for ‘Liao Long’s’ current condition, they had never heard nor seen it before.

Everyone looked at ‘Liao Long.’

At this moment, they finally saw his face. ‘Liao Long’s’ face was very similar to the dark apparition’s face. His eyes were scarlet, and strange black stripes covered his face. The dark green veins were popping out of his forehead, wriggling like snakes.

It looked disgusting and terrifying.

‘Liao Long’s’ neck was severely mangled. Half of it was already bitten off. Fresh blood flowed out of his wound and trickled down his chest, thigh, and legs. It dripped onto the ground from his trouser legs.

“Stabbing his heart is useless. We need to smash his head,” Luo Ya reminded everyone.

Wang Teng nodded. Luo Ya had already stabbed ‘Liao Long’s’ heart. However, the other party didn’t die and even managed to retaliate.

“What on earth is this!”

Kun Qi and the other people looked at ‘Liao Long’ with complicated expressions. They had sorrow on their faces as they gritted their teeth and cursed uncontrollably.

“Kill it. This thing is no longer your teammate,” Wang Teng said.

“You don’t need to tell us. Let our team deal with this,” Kun Qi glared at Wang Teng and shouted in anger.

“Sure,” Wang Teng said indifferently.

‘Liao Long’ staggered as he stood on the spot. Suddenly, it pounced forward without any warning. The clumsy movement just now had disappeared completely as it charged at Kun Qi and his teammates at an unprecedented speed. It started running on all fours like the dark apparition.

Luo Ya, Kun Qi, and their teammates released their full power. They wanted to send their teammate off personally and not let him remain as a monster.

However, the dark apparition was really difficult to deal with. They had already experienced it before. The ‘Liao Long’ in front of them was assimilating into a dark apparition. As time passed, it became more and more similar to a dark apparition. Darkness was its element. The martial warriors found it hard to tackle it.

Wang Teng didn’t move. His gaze landed on the dark apparition that was already killed.

Dark Force*5

Beginner stage dark talent*1

Spirit*8

Three bubbles were floating above the corpse.

These three bubbles were different from the bubbles in the past. They were giving off a black glow.

Killing dark apparitions would drop attribute bubbles too!

Dark Force? Dark talent? Wang Teng was dumbfounded. There were such attributes too?

If he picked them up, would he become a dark apparition?

Wang Teng had his concerns. He couldn't help but hesitate. *The system won't harm me, right?*

Eventually, he gritted his teeth and picked up the three bubbles.

As the beginner stage dark talent merged into his body, Wang Teng felt a sense of intimacy with the darkness around him. It was as if he was able to turn invisible when he stood in the dark. No one would be able to find him.

Is this the dark talent?

There's dark Force too!

Wang Teng felt a weak Force in his Force nucleus. He could sense that the dark Force was different from the five elements and the other mutated Forces.

He couldn't state what exactly it was, but it was a natural difference.

The dark Force was colder and eerier. The five elements Forces and mutated Forces, even the ice Force, had a warm and vibrant feel.

Finally, it was the spirit attribute. The dark apparition had dropped 8 points of spirit. It was a surprise for Wang Teng. After all, no martial warriors had dropped this much spirit before.

Is there something special about dark apparitions? He thought to himself.

Chapter 480 - An Enigma

Chapter 480: An Enigma

Close to them were various griffin corpses, and the sizes looked relatively small. They looked like griffins who had yet to fully mature. Even so, just defeating those griffins had used up a lot of their strength. They had really experienced why griffins were called the kings of the sky.

They had learned before in their classes last semester that, of the countless wild beasts on Planet Norma, only a few could call themselves rulers of the sky. Basically, other than the dragons, there were only griffins and dragon-eagles.

No one talked at that moment. Everyone was thinking about just lying down and sleeping in the middle of the wastelands. Xiao Lin was exhausted as well, but thanks to not using Ruin, he still had enough to go on. Looking at the blue skies and the wastelands, he furrowed his eyebrows.

"My God, we're so unlucky! Surely it's not the griffins at the transport point that flew over!"

“Then we’d need compensation!”

“Whatever! However, I already said that sneaking was not a good idea. There’s no one in sight here. Our group would naturally become a target.”

...

Everyone lying down there was powerlessly complaining. Only Xiao Lin was still standing, thinking for a long time before saying, “Who here did better in classes?”

“Li Jiayi? She goes to the library a lot more.”

Xiao Lin looked at the pretty monitor. “Then do you know about the griffins’ habits? Like, do griffins usually go out at night?”

Li Jiayi was panting. She had used a lot of her mental strength, but she managed to regain her composure and force herself to speak. “We’ve never learned that in class before. Zoology is only being taught this year. However, I’ve seen some books in the library that say that Planet Norma’s flight-based animals are similar to those of Earth, and like to move during the day. Even dragons don’t like moving around at night.”

Xiao Lin’s expression darkened, looking at the others. The rest of them seemed to realize something as their expressions changed as well. Cheng Ming let out a breath, saying suspiciously, “Xiao Lin, you think that this ambush was a scheme?”

Xiao Lin said, “I might not know much about the animals on Planet Norma, but I’ve heard Department Head Song mention before that the avians on Planet Norma rarely move about at night. Even if they did, they would not move at such a scale.”

“Could the griffins have gone crazy?” Class Four’s Han Manman questioned.

“Why don’t you just say the griffins are going through menopause?” Chen Dao, who did not get along with her, mocked.

“It’s not completely impossible for it to be something like that. After all, we don’t really know much about griffins. I think it’s more likely to be an accident. It’s not necessarily always a scheme.” Class Eight’s Zhang Shengguo was working hard to appear dignified. Unfortunately, the fatigue on his face was more serious than everyone else’s. That man was notorious for having very low stamina.

The other monitors could not help but furrow their eyebrows. Zhang Shengguo’s words were basically pointing at Xiao Lin for deliberately disrupting them. Even though no one wanted a single accident to disrupt their monthly examination assignment, the thought of someone potentially trying to bring them harm in the dark was terrifying.

“Those griffins were the ones we rode on the way here!” Just as the atmosphere was getting awkward and heavy, Ibeiya broke the silence.

Ever since the attack last night, Ibeiya had been obediently hiding in the middle of everyone, never crying or making a sound throughout. Everyone could not help but admire the obedient girl. Only Xiao Lin knew that the situation was nothing much to Ibeiya.

“Are you sure?” Xiao Lin asked.

Ibeiya knelt down next to the griffin carcass that Xiao Lin had brought over for a long time before she raised her head with a determined look. “I’m very sure. This griffin was the one he sat on.”

Ibeiya pointed at Zhang Shengguo, who had an incredulous look on his face. “How can you be sure? I can’t tell at all.”

Ibeiya was not willing to explain. She had a difficult look on her face, but she still confirmed it again.

Xiao Lin felt like the girl’s consternation might come from the fact that it was related to her status as a vampire. It could just be one of the talents of vampires. He waved his hand, changing the topic. “No matter what, we’ll need to be more careful after this. I know that everyone is exhausted, but I don’t think this is a good place to rest. Let’s get into the city first.”

Xiao Lin’s suggestion was agreed upon by most of them, so everyone supported each other as they continued forward, but their speed had greatly decreased.

Xiao Lin deliberately lagged behind. After a certain distance, he whispered to Ibeiya, who was next to him, “How could you tell that was Shengguo’s mount? Is that some skill your race has? This is quite important to us, so I hope we can get better proof.”

Ibeiya’s large eyes blinked. She laughed as she said, “That’s not it. That man vomited out a storm when he was riding his griffin, and I just happened to notice some residue on the griffin’s feathers. Unless this flock was also ridden by another team of rookies, that would be way too much of a coincidence. However, that guy really is interesting. He looked so serious, but thinking about how much he suffered in the air. It’s hilarious, hahaha...”

Xiao Lin’s face twitched. He looked at the happy little girl, and looked at Zhang Shengguo’s back, feeling that it really was quite funny...

But that was not the point.

Xiao Lin had confirmed his speculation with Ibeiya. That was definitely not good news. The flight points were opened by the Englishmen, but he did not think that he offended the two of them in any way, nor did they have any reason to make a move on Dawn Academy. They might be in the Rosa Kingdom, but there were still resurrection towers nearby. Even if they really were killed, the conflict between Dawn Academy and the British Royal Academy would have to fall on the two of them.

Xiao Lin could not think of a good reason at the moment, but flying was now obviously not a good choice. Of course, he did not discount the fact that it could be a challenge the academy had deliberately set for them. After all, within the resurrection tower’s radius, death was just a loss of 20 years. To those monitors, it was not an unimaginable loss.

With his suspicions, after over an hour, the monitors finally walked out of the wastelands.

Chapter 481 - Small Town

Chapter 481: Small Town

Leaving the wastelands, they could see the fringes of civilization. It was the Rosa Kingdom's most distant town. They called it a town, but in terms of size, it was basically a village. The Rosa Kingdom was considered a poor country without many natural resources. On top of that, the harsh requirements set by the nobles on the commoners resulted in the poor conditions in the remote area.

The town might have the black rose flags of the rebels, but thankfully did not seem to have many troops guarding it. That was because the military might of the rebels had all been focused on the Rosa Kingdom's royal city, so there were not any troops in charge of such a small town.

Entering the town, the scene in front of Xiao Lin and the others shocked them. Compared to the Silver Province and the prosperity of the colonial territories controlled by Dawn Academy, the town was in really desperate straits.

The entire town could be seen with just a look. There were weeds growing everywhere, and the streets were filthy and poorly maintained. The streets were lined with simple stone houses, but most of them had been destroyed, seemingly in the recent war. As for whether it was by the government's troops or the rebels, that was not important.

The town was very quiet, even though there were a few general stores and ironworkers, but there were very few merchants on the whole. Most of the people there only had simple shirts on, and were either sitting by the streets or drinking and gambling. There were those dressed in ragged clothes begging for food everywhere, but no one cared.

Xiao Lin's group attracted everyone's attention. They were fully clad in armor, and thanks to the confrontation with the griffins, the thick smell of blood was still on them. It was impossible to keep a low profile, even if they wanted to.

Drinkers and gamblers alike, everyone had stopped what they were doing and shot fearless looks at Xiao Lin's group. There was an air of challenge, as well as warning.

"The Rosa Kingdom's civil war has enveloped the whole country. It's natural that the citizens here have been swept up by it as well. Let's try our best to not cause any trouble," Xiao Lin said in a low voice.

He actually did not need to remind them. The only thing the monitors wanted to do at that moment was find a place to sleep. How could they even think about causing more trouble? Furthermore, even the commoners, who did not even have armor on would at the most be at Black Iron-rank, and would have never gone through any training. The monitors were all at that rank or above and, on top of their talents, their strengths far exceeded anyone in the town. They at least had that point of pride.

Cheng Ming walked to an old lady in front of him. Using broken Normese, he said, “Do you know where I could find an inn?”

The old woman was frail and unbelievably gaunt. She could be somewhat younger, but the wrinkles on her face could rival a century-old tree. She raised her head and stared at Cheng Ming for a long time, not saying anything.

Cheng Ming thought she did not understand, and patiently repeated himself. The other monitors stood behind, all their weapons stowed away to show they bore no ill-will.

The old woman pointed at Cheng Ming’s waist. Cheng Ming was starting to sweat. Ibeiya whispered into Xiao Lin’s ear, and Xiao Lin walked in front, patting Cheng Ming as he took out his pouch. He produced a piece of bread and gave it to the lady. The old lady immediately wolfed down the bread, even sucking at the remnants on her fingers a few times.

Those people were way too hungry!

Cheng Ming’s eyes widened in realization, regretting not understanding it himself. He sighed. The war between the rebels and the government ended up harming the commoners the most in the end. He generously retrieved even more food from his bag, because in the broken home behind the old lady were several skinny children looking out. Seeing Cheng Ming’s slight smile, they were still a bit afraid, but once a bold kid reached his hand out to take the bread, the other children rushed over as well.

The bread that Xiao Lin and the others had brought were made of the highest quality ingredients. Dawn Academy did not mistreat its students on that part. Be it the taste or the amount, to the commoners, who could only eat the most crude of foods normally, the bread was unbelievably delicious.

Cheng Ming’s actions caused more and more people to come closer. Other than children, there were also women and elderly, all of whom unable to hold back the looks of hunger from their faces.

“I think that the rebels might have confiscated all the food nearby for war supplies,” one of the monitors said softly, very possibly hitting the nail on the head.

Even though there were not many people in the town, there were at least a hundred people gathering there. Cheng Ming could not help but feel guilty. He did not have that much bread, and he needed to leave some for himself as well. Xiao Lin furrowed his eyebrows, pulling Cheng Ming aside. “Let’s go!”

Cheng Ming hesitated, but even more of the monitors started to feel sorry. For those of them who were used to peaceful life on Earth, the scene was hard to watch. They all started to feel pity, and started to take out a bit of food to give to the commoners.

However, Xiao Lin started to feel like something was off at that moment, because the men close by started to walk over as well. The old folks and the children were one matter, but those men, who still looked relatively fit did not need it. They did not come here to do charity after all.

Xiao Lin gave out a few warnings before the rest of them stopped, taking advantage of the large crowd to slip away. Luckily, probably because of their actions, someone decided to guide them to an inn.

It was called an inn, but it was just a few dilapidated rooms. They could even see cobwebs in the corners. It was unknown how long it had been since the inn last opened. The owner was a middle-aged man, and seemed to know a bit of Mandarin. He was willing to accept New Dollars as well.

Even though a few monitors felt like the environment was bad, it was not the time to be picky. After paying a few hundred New Dollars, they got themselves three rooms. Because only three of the rooms were still in reasonable condition. After entering the rooms, they did not care about the foul stench within, falling asleep immediately.

They were way too tired.

The few female monitors shared a room. Xiao Lin had wanted Ibeiya to stay with them, but was once again rejected by Ibeiya. The girl said she was not tired, and would be fine just leaning against Xiao Lin for a bit. Xiao Lin did not argue. He told her not to run anywhere before falling fast asleep, not being able to hold back his exhaustion.

Xiao Lin was deep in sleep, all the way until he started to feel a cold sensation. He startled awake, and his vision started to clear, but he remained in the darkness. The bed he was lying on had disappeared, and his hands could feel ice-cold water. His back seemed to be against some rocks, and when he raised his head to look around, the only source of light around him was a window in a corner, fastened with metal bars...

Chapter 482 - Prison Cell

Chapter 482: Prison Cell

Xiao Lin's muddled mind immediately snapped awake. His body shot up, but he realized that there was a slight pain coming from his feet. He struggled to stand up, and squinted as he tried to use the limited amount of sunlight to appraise his surroundings. After that, his heart plummeted.

It was a prison. A wet place with filthy walls and a foul stench that assaulted his nostrils. Lying next to him were the other monitors, but none of them seemed to be awake. There were two cells, and there were six of them in Xiao Lin's cell. He hurried over to wake someone up, and shouted at the other side.

Just like Xiao Lin, after the initial grogginess, they began to notice their surroundings and all of them were shocked before they quickly turned to anger.

"Why are we in jail?"

"Damn! It must be the rebels. We were too careless."

"It can't be the rebels. I think we've been betrayed."

“Betrayed? By who?”

“The ones we helped must have gotten greedy, and took advantage of our sleep to capture us!”

“Oh! Who was the one who helped them first yesterday? Those natives had nothing to do with us!”

“What do you mean by that, Han Manman. It’s not like you didn’t give out your things as well!”

...

The prison cells suddenly erupted like a marketplace. Everyone was very agitated, and was constantly speculating. Some of them even tried to put the blame on others.

“Everyone quiet!” Xiao Lin took a deep breath, saying angrily, “What’s the use of saying all that now! Look at our current predicament first!”

After a moment, most of the monitors quieted down. A few of them still seemed to have something to say, but were quickly stopped by the ones next to them. In the dim light, everyone looked around. Even in this environment, they could not help but have a strange feeling. At some point, Xiao Lin had slowly turned into a leader that was more persuasive than Cheng Ming. Of course, it was only because Xiao Lin was stronger, and they did not retaliate because of that.

The monitors needed a leader, which was why the school had the year leader position. While the year leader was absent, Cheng Ming had been the temporary figure that everyone silently acknowledged, but now Xiao Lin had taken over. Cheng Ming did not express any discontent. He probably felt the same way as Xiao Lin, they needed to first grasp their current situation before thinking about how to get out.

Xiao Lin let out a sigh and looked at the door that was locked tight. Even after the commotion just now, no one had come to check on them. It seemed like they had been left there by themselves. After that, he said, “The first thing is the time. We arrived in the town and stayed in the inn during the second day. How much time would have passed now?”

“It seems like it’s day right now, but I don’t feel like we were brought here right after we fell asleep because we would definitely have felt it, so I think it’s already the next day.”

“Don’t you think it’s strange? How could we not have reacted at all. Even if we really were that tired, it can’t be possible that none of us reacted.”

“It can’t be more than a day. I’d be famished.” Cheng Ming’s appetite was the best gauge they had at the moment.

Xiao Lin nodded. “I think we’ve been made. Try and see if any of us can still use our strength—sword aura or mental strength.”

After a moment, just as expected, everyone was shocked and angered to realize they were powerless.

Xiao Lin sighed. “Then let’s treat this as the next day. Now comes our team. Everyone, report in. We’ll start with Class One.”

After all twelve of them reported their names, Xiao Lin's expression sank. Everyone realized something was wrong too. The monitors were all there, but Ibeiya was missing.

Xiao Lin forced himself to calm down, continuing, "Now, motive. If it was really done by the commoners in the town, then it can only be for money. Everyone check yourselves."

Their bags had all gone missing. Even Xiao Lin's spatial ring was nowhere to be seen. Thankfully, other than himself, no one could open the ring, but it still caused him some grief. The rest of them were the same. Everything they brought along, as well as their weapons, had gone missing. What caused them to sour was the fact that the New Dollars the academy issued to them were untouched in their pockets.

"Even refugees understand the purchasing power of New Dollars on colonial grounds. Even if they had no way to get there, New Dollars are still useful in the Silver Province."

"So, we can eliminate the possibility that it was for money, but who did it?"

"The griffins!" Chen Dao brought up the ambush during the night again.

Originally, they had their doubts on whether or not the griffins were mobilized by someone, but thinking about it now, they started to believe it. There was definitely someone watching them in the shadows.

Everyone fell quiet. The only thing they were not certain about at the moment was whether or not this was done by the academy to increase the difficulty of the monthly examination.

"Then let's think about how we should get out." After a short silence, Xiao Lin spoke up.

"Get out? How would we get out? Don't forget we can't use any power right now."

"We haven't eaten for at least a day. We don't have our physical or mental strength. We should at least wait until we've rested up to think about it."

Xiao Lin said, "Yes, once we recover, this prison might not be able to keep us in. With Chen Dao's fireballs and Cheng Ming's strength, we have many ways to get out, but if this was not the academy making things harder for us, if someone is really scheming something, would they give us the chance to escape? We might encounter something worse while we're resting."

"Do you have a better way?" someone asked hopefully. After all, no one wanted to stay in that dark, filthy, and smelly prison cell.

"All I can say is, it's a plan borne out of desperation." Xiao Lin smiled bitterly.

"You're crazy!" Class Eight's Zhang Shengguo exclaimed from the other side.

"Ah, you understood it as well." Xiao Lin acknowledged Zhang Shengguo's words. Even if he had some problems with vanity, he was quite intelligent.

"I object! There's absolutely no need!" Zhang Shengguo said angrily.

“Can you just tell us already?” More of them started to sweat.

Chen Dao had a moment of realization, widening his eyes in disbelief. “Hold on, Xiao Lin, surely you’re not telling us to commit group suicide!”

“Yes, that’s right...”

“My God...”

After a moment, the quiet prison cell once again erupted in clamor.

Chapter 483 - Suicide

Chapter 483: Suicide

Suicide?

Xiao Lin did say ‘suicide’.

Everyone immediately understood it after thinking for a bit. As one of the nations that used to be subservient to Dawn Academy, the kingdom had resurrection towers within it; resurrection towers were basically the mascots of the academies.

Since they were within the area of a resurrection tower, then dying would only cost them 20 years of their lifespan. They would be resurrected next to a tower. That was Dawn Academy’s biggest trump card to stabilize their rulership, but seeking death voluntarily to escape difficult situations was a way to use it as well.

However, everyone found it hard to accept suicide. Han Manman was the first to question it. “Do we really need to go to the degree of suicide? It’s only a monthly examination. Putting aside whether or not we can complete it, rewards aside, we’d be throwing away twenty whole years of our lives!”

“It’s true; it seems to be a good way to escape, but we don’t have to go that far. Once we recover, escaping won’t be a problem.” Zhang Shengguo agreed with Han Manman.

The other monitors did have more neutral views, but the fear of suicide was not something they could easily overcome. They also felt like Xiao Lin was making a big deal out of nothing.

The arguments in the prison cell were within Xiao Lin’s expectations. He remained quiet as he listened to everyone’s reservations and objections. When everyone else stopped, he slowly said, “I understand your concerns. In truth, I’m also a bit afraid of the idea of suicide. Who would do that if they didn’t need to! I’m just afraid, I’m scared that we will never be able to escape if we lose out on this chance!”

“Alarmist words!” someone retorted.

“Do you have any proof?”

“Yes, who’s heard of Asabanor?” Xiao Lin suddenly said.

“Asabanor? Who’s that?”

There was a brief moment of silence.

“He’s the former high priest of Thunder Kingdom.” Class Six’s Li Jiayi was quite versed in information. She helped explain the priest’s past to the others.

Xiao Lin nodded. “It’s more or less like that, but the high priest actually did not die. He has a grudge against our academies, and used all sorts of ways to destroy us. I suspect that this was a scheme by him. At least, he definitely has a part in this.”

That was actually a conclusion he had reached via process of elimination. Everything that had happened in the past two days showed that they were being schemed against. If he had an enemy in the New World, then it could only be Asabanor, that old undying priest. If all of this was not arranged by the academy, then it could only have been that high priest’s plans.

“Asabanor can control the bodies of others. I think we’re currently being locked and ignored because the ones that captured us are waiting for their master to arrive, which is why we can still escape now, but it will be too late if Asabanor arrives.”

Xiao Lin smiled bitterly. Asabanor was very well versed in necromancy. The mysterious spirit he saw the last time he came to the New World had alarmed Xiao Lin. He did not expect Asabanor to be so persistent. Everytime he came to the New World, he noticed traces of that priest.

Of course, Xiao Lin hoped that his guess was wrong as well, but he did not dare take the risk.

The other monitors were naturally unfamiliar with Asabanor, and what had happened to Xiao Lin before was all classified. He could not easily reveal it. Xiao Lin could only say, “To be honest, if it was not for the fact that the academy’s latest information showed that the resurrection towers in the Rosa Kingdom are still fine, I would not have thought of this plan at all. Basically, with a fifty percent chance, I would suggest that everyone does it, but no matter what, I won’t force anyone.”

The arguments continued for a long time, until everyone started starving. They noticed that no one was sending in any food or drink. Unless their captors planned on having them starve to death, it was possible that it was just as Xiao Lin said; their captors were just in charge of guarding them. Anything else would have to wait for the true mastermind’s decision.

Finally, someone started to think about Xiao Lin’s suggestion. “If we’re killing ourselves, how will we do it?”

Xiao Lin had not said anything after the initial decision because he had seen a rock in the corner. After a long time, he had managed to sharpen the rock. When someone asked, he raised the rock, which glinted in the darkness.

“I’ll leave first then. Bye bye!” Xiao Lin smiled as he said. Not many people had the courage to commit suicide. He was actually very nervous. He was even more concerned for Ibeiya. He did not know if she had been captured or if she had escaped.

Taking a deep breath, Xiao Lin relaxed his muscles as much as he could, or he would not be able to guarantee that a rock of that degree could pierce his strengthened skin. Not waiting for anyone to speak, the sharp stone glinted before piercing into his heart.

Pop!

Large amounts of blood began to gush out. Xiao Lin clenched his teeth tightly, not letting himself scream. He did not know if there was anyone standing guard outside, and did not want to expose himself.

Death was really unpleasant. His entire body burned with intense pain. Thankfully, his consciousness faded, and after a large amount of blood escaped him, Xiao Lin quickly passed out. His body turned cold before it started to go transparent. After that, it shattered into various star-like spots, drifting into the air before disappearing.

Everyone else was dumbfounded. It was the first time they had seen a resurrection in front of them. They more or less had to show some respect for Xiao Lin’s decisiveness but, as for who would do it next, everyone looked at each other before falling into silence.

...

Even though the torture before dying felt like years to Xiao Lin, when he suddenly opened the eyes again, it felt like only a second had passed.

He was lying down on the smooth stone platform at that moment. Next to it was a silver resurrection tower. Only after seeing the resurrection tower did his heart relax. He only dared to take that gamble because he believed in Dawn Academy’s report that the resurrection towers in the Rosa Kingdom were unharmed.

It was not that he was worried that the rebels would destroy it. They would never do that unless they were willing to stand against Dawn Academy, but Xiao Lin was worried about Asabanor. He did not forget what happened in Wildfire Town with that rotten and non-functional resurrection tower. That was why when he saw the silver resurrection tower, Xiao Lin felt incredibly relaxed.

Xiao Lin climbed off the stone platform and started to move about. His strength had recovered. It seemed like the restrictions on them were only physical, and it disappeared after resurrecting.

Chapter 484 - Royal City

Chapter 484: Royal City

The resurrection tower was built indoors. The roof was built with special, transparent gems. There was also a statue of a god, and surrounding him were various stone platforms. The resurrections here were all completed on the stone platform.

As Xiao Lin was accessing things, the stone platform next to him started to glow a faint blue light. He immediately went on alert, but when he realized it was the sign of resurrection, he guessed that the other class monitors had followed him.

He was quite interested in the mechanics behind the resurrection towers. Based on his prior understanding, the towers would absorb the dispersed souls of any colonists, and would use a special law to reassemble them before giving a flesh-and-blood body.

However, it was the first time he had seen someone else resurrect. The blue orbs were probably soul fragments. Those orbs persistently came out of the silver resurrection tower, and quickly condensed. It got more and more condensed, and after a few minutes, the soul started to fade in and out until it turned completely transparent.

Regretfully, the one who was resurrected was not the other monitors, but rather a young East Asian, man. He rubbed his shoulders when he got up, muttering a few words before he looked at Xiao Lin, who was staring at him. The man immediately put up a defense, causing Xiao Lin to remark to himself that the man's reactions were quick; he was definitely not weak.

After a few seconds, the man relaxed, smiling as he said, "I overreacted. Anyone who can resurrect here would be a friend. Brother, which department are you from? I've never seen you before."

Xiao Lin hesitated for a little, but when the man in front of him showed the Dawn Academy emblem, he relaxed. The emblem was like their national emblem; no one would put that on in the colonial territories. The only ones who would have them were government officials working in foreign lands. It was obvious that the man was a government official of Dawn Academy.

"I'm a first-year student from Dawn Academy. I came to the Rosa Kingdom for an assignment." Xiao Lin deliberately withheld the monthly examination.

The man paused before slapping his forehead. "So you're the ones who came over for the monthly examination. I know about it. I was supposed to be the one in charge of you once you got to the royal city."

The man immediately mentioned the monthly examination, proving that his status was definitely real, causing Xiao Lin's worries to disappear.

The man called himself Liang Taibai. He was a foreign official within the Rosa Kingdom. He was supposed to be in charge of the examinees when they arrived. However, he was unlucky, and had been ambushed and killed when he went out on business.

"Where are the others? How did you die? Were you attacked on the way? Was it a wild beast or the rebels?" Liang Taibai was not surprised at Xiao Lin's death; the Rosa Kingdom was quite chaotic.

"I killed myself."

The man was speechless.

Following that, Xiao Lin spent half an hour talking about their story. He had wanted to find out from Liang Taibai if it was arranged by the academy, but the official's changing expressions gave him the answer.

“The griffins were definitely arranged by the academy. Ah, I should not have told you that before the end of the examination.” Liang Taibai regretted it after he said it, but his expression turned serious. “However, the kidnapping was definitely not arranged, based on my information.”

Pausing, he continued, “Furthermore, those griffins were to test your reactions. We arranged for the attack to disperse after an hour or two; it’s not possible for it to last an entire night.”

Xiao Lin panicked. “Then you need to immediately send people to rescue them. I’m worried as to what will happen if we’re too late.”

“Where are they?”

Xiao Lin paused before asking, “Where are we now?”

“The royal city.”

Xiao Lin fell silent.

The royal city’s resurrection tower was a large model, but the effective radius was the entire city, and maybe the neighbouring areas at most. That meant that they had been brought so close by. Based on Xiao Lin and everyone else’s estimates, they had been kidnapped not one whole day after they fell asleep before being sent into the prison cells.

In just half a day, how could they have arrived at the royal city?

Griffins!

Xiao Lin immediately found the answer. If the griffins were the mode of transport, then it was not strange for the journey to take only half a day. It was obvious that the griffins that attacked them that night had broken free of the academy’s control.

“We should head to the embassy. I need to report this immediately and save the rest of them.”

Liang Taibai’s face was sweating. He immediately brought Xiao Lin out of the resurrection tower. After leaving, Xiao Lin saw an immense number of troops patrolling nearby, about a thousand strong.

“These are all the troops of the Rosa Kingdom’s royalty. Don’t just look at the numbers—their combat abilities aren’t too high. This is only because we warned them repeatedly that if the resurrection towers were destroyed, our relationship with the royalty would go the same way, including our rescue efforts,” Liang Taibai explained to Xiao Lin.

It was the first time Xiao Lin was at a royal city of Normese natives. Compared to Dawn City and New Washington, the relatively young city was not inferior in its prosperity, or maybe luxury was the more accurate term. Most of Planet Norma’s countries were monarchies. The royalty always ensured their cities were majestic and prosperous, but there was no use to it other than looks. Comparatively, the colonists had built their buildings with modern ideals—few buildings were without a practical purpose.

It was a pity that the streets and the houses were comparatively in worse shape, and were scarcely populated as well. Liang Taibai mentioned that, since the rebels were approaching, most of them had fled. The ones remaining either had no choice but to flee or had things they could not leave behind.

“Are they not willing to part with their riches?” Xiao Lin asked.

“That’s right, and they’re still hoping we’ll extend a helping hand.” Liang Taibai sighed.

“Surely it’s not good for us if the Rosa Kingdom falls to the rebels.” Xiao Lin might not be clear on the political situation, but he knew a little. If the rebels did not maintain the Rosa Kingdom’s subservience, then Dawn Academy would first lose all the resurrection towers in the kingdom. That would be quite a great loss.

“The military is refusing to send any troops. We have no other choice. The results of the negotiations were only to help the main royal family members escape to Dawn City before using our name to garner support and money, allowing them to reclaim the country.”

“It feels a bit like we’re leaving them to struggle by themselves.” Thanks to what had happened before, Xiao Lin did not have any good will toward the military.

“That’s basically it. The military’s focus is not here, and they’re not willing to send any troops for this. Furthermore, it looks like they’ve already sent men over to negotiate with the rebels. As long as the resurrection towers are safe, they do not care about anything else.”

Chapter 485 - Liang Taibai

Chapter 485: Liang Taibai

Liang Taibai’s words made sense, Xiao Lin knew that the military felt that Dawn Academy’s greatest threats in the future came from the other academies as opposed to Planet Norma. That was why they would rather focus their manpower and resources on preparing to deal with the other academies. As for their subordinate countries, they only needed to preserve the core, which was the resurrection towers. As for who was the king, that did not matter.

However, Xiao Lin’s expression sank. He thought of an even more serious question. “How many people know about the contents of this monthly examination?”

“Not many, but not that few either. That’s because it involves the intelligence and foreign affairs department, so those involved would know about it, but it’s kept a secret from outsiders.”

Liang Taibai furrowed his eyebrows. “Do you think someone sold out your information internally, which caused you to be attacked? That’s not very possible. Why would they sell out their own people?”

“I wish I knew the reason as well. Otherwise, everything would be too big of a coincidence. We were attacked the moment we entered the Rosa Kingdom’s borders, and we were captured the

moment we arrived at the town. If the enemies did not know all of our movements, there's no way they could set up such an ambush."

"Don't think too much. I'm sure a problem just came up somewhere."

Dawn Academy's embassy was situated in the most prosperous area of the city. The building that was filled with Chinese architecture could be seen from far away. Compared to how quiet everywhere else was, the embassy's entrance was very busy. There were a lot of people gathered at the front, but when they saw Liang Taibai appear, those people rushed forward, and the troops maintaining order nearby could not help but chase them away, even whipping them. Only then did they give way, allowing Liang Taibai to bring Xiao Lin inside.

Xiao Lin looked at those of them who had been violently thrown to the ground, shouting in pain as they were beaten. He could not stand it, saying, "Is this really okay?"

Liang Taibai sighed, but did not even turn around as he said, "You'll get used to it after awhile. Most of Planet Norma's countries are like this. Be they led by kings or religious figures, commoners have no rights as well. These people want to gain the right to enter our colonial territories, but that's impossible."

"Why? Isn't an increase in the labor force a good thing?" Xiao Lin asked. Even if Dawn City's facilities were already quite complete, the surrounding areas were still being developed. As colonists, they would naturally not do such laborious jobs themselves, so the work could only be handed to the natives, which was why population growth was important to the colonists.

"The issuing of the permits were quite lax initially, but..." Liang Taibai paused for a moment, looking around before whispering, "Surely you know about the attempt on the dean. The assassin had been issued a permit to enter the capital. Who do you think would take responsibility for that; who would dare? That's why, since then, the issuing of permits have gotten stricter, and we no longer dare to give it out so casually."

Xiao Lin was shocked. The dean's attempted assassination was actually made too big a deal last semester. Initially, everyone was shocked when it happened, but after that, even the papers moved onto other topics, and it was slowly forgotten by a lot of people.

He felt like he needed to understand more of it, but it was not the time to do that. As Dawn Academy's subordinate country, the embassy's facilities were all of good quality. They had jeweled decorations, high quality beast-skin sofas and gilded floors. Even five-star hotels could not compare.

According to Liang Taibai, due to the civil war, the embassy had been quite busy recently, and a lot of them were working out of office. The ones remaining were all low-ranking office workers helping to clear up documents.

Liang Taibai seemed to be quite high-ranked because he had a large and luxurious private room to himself. The candles on the walls caused the room to feel warm.

"Let me pour you a local specialty." Liang Taibai warmly helped Xiao Lin prepare something, but it was not coffee or tea. Instead it was a red, rose-like flower. The flower had been taken out even

with the roots. Liang Taibai smiled and said, “This is the rose—oh, of course it’s not the rose we know; it’s a Normese rose, the symbol of this country.”

Xiao Lin was speechless. Was it popular to bring out flowers for guests here?

Liang Taibai was laughing; he picked up another rose before taking out a small straw, sticking it into the roots before sucking on it. The light-red colored petals suddenly darkened before decaying in a flash.

Xiao Lin was surprised, and tried it out as well. He sucked on it, and a refreshing liquid flowed into his mouth through the straw. The faint fragrance of the flower had a thick and natural sweetness. That feeling of refreshment coursed through his entire body, and even reduced the fatigue he felt after resurrecting.

“Not bad.”

“Haha, isn’t it? This thing is quite a popular product in most of the academies. Differently colored petals all have different flavors.

Liang Taibai had wanted to continue, but looking at Xiao Lin’s distracted look, it was obvious what was on his mind, and Liang Taibai wisely switched to the main topic. “As for the ones who kidnapped you, do you have any leads? I don’t have a lot of manpower here, but the Rosa Kingdom listens to us. It’s not impossible to get their help.”

“I suspect it might be Asabanor.”

“That undying old man again, son of a b*tch. That incident in Wildfire Town had already tortured us enough. If it’s him, then it’ll be troublesome.” Liang Taibai furrowed his eyebrows. Last semester, Xiao Lin and Lilith had met the spirits Asabanor controlled in Wildfire Town, and even found a corrupted resurrection tower. However, the matter did not cause any waves to this day, so it was probably concealed, probably to prevent panic.

“Right, what happened with Wildfire Town back then?” It seemed like Liang Taibai had some understanding of what happened last semester, and Xiao Lin could not help but ask about it.

Liang Taibai sucked on two roses before leaning into the sofa, staying quiet for a long time before vaguely saying, “This matter involved a lot of people, and it’s very serious. The Academy has already reported it to the high council. It won’t be easy to hear about it; it’s very rare for anything to be reported there. Basically, this isn’t something you or me can get involved in.”

Chapter 486 - Impossible To Unravel

Chapter 486: Impossible To Unravel

Liang Taibai asked about Xiao Lin as well, but he really did not know anything about Xiao Lin. That was quite normal. As an official who was always in foreign lands, Liang Taibai would not know too much about the academies, especially when it came to the new students.

“To be honest, the monthly examination is very strange this time. I heard of the change in curriculum, but sending the students to such a chaotic country is really crazy!” Liang Taibai did not understand the meaning of the monthly examination. Even if there were resurrection towers, he knew very well that 20 years were very precious to new students.

“I heard that it was arranged by the military,” Xiao Lin muttered softly.

Liang Taibai looked at him, surprised at Xiao Lin’s information, but he quickly said, “Well, our superiors know best. We should just do our part. That’s right, this information was supposed to be given to you all when you arrived. I’ll give it to you for now. You can pass it along once everyone is here.”

In the man’s hand was a thick folder of information. On top was the assignment for the monthly examination, and the list of names they would need to send. There were over twenty people, princes and princesses included. However, after looking through it, Xiao Lin said curiously, “There’s no king?”

The only one missing from the list was the king of the Rosa Kingdom. Even if Dawn Academy did not plan on taking the king away, based on the current situation, the kingdom being taken over by the rebels was just a matter of time. The people outside who were trying to get into Dawn Academy’s territories were the best proof. Everyone understood that there was no way to protect the city.

“The rebels are getting powerful. We’ll need something to placate them. Otherwise, how would we continue our relationship with them?” Liang Taibai said meaningfully.

Xiao Lin understood; they were basically going to sell the king to the rebels in exchange for the rebels assuming and maintaining Dawn Academy’s status as their superiors. Even if he knew the kings in the New World were not necessarily tyrants, most of them still exploited their people. Basically, not many of them were good people. However, to betray their own subordinate country so easily still felt wrong.

Xiao Lin shook his head, opening the document and earnestly saying, “Let’s forget about the monthly examination for now. There are some things I need your help arranging.”

“Alright.”

“The first is to send someone to stand guard at the resurrection tower. There might be other monitors who will resurrect there soon. The second thing is to continue investigating where they were kidnapped; the best is if you blanket search everything. This should not be delayed. I’m afraid something will happen if we’re too late. The third thing; I hope you can issue a search warrant for a little girl named Ibeiya. It’s best if the embassy does this. Don’t let the royal family interfere.”

“Alright.” Liang Taibai paused for a moment before agreeing.

Xiao Lin let out a sigh of relief, and decided to ask for a room to rest. Restructuring of the soul and the creation of a new body made resurrection extremely tiring. On top of that, resurrection did not alleviate mental stress. Basically, Xiao Lin needed to sleep.

It was already the second day since they left Dawn Academy. There were only eight days left until the end of the monthly examination.

Liang Taibai was quick to act. Xiao Lin had slept till the next day, and he received Liang Taibai's notification when he woke up. First of all was the resurrection towers. After Xiao Lin, there were four others who had resurrected. They were Li Jiayi, Chen Dao, Cheng Ming, and An Luo.

"They resurrected at a later time and are resting now. Other than that, I managed to get some information about the capture from them, and I've gotten the kingdom's troops to investigate. We managed to find somewhere similar this morning, but we're still not sure. Do you need to come with me?"

"That fast?" Xiao Lin paused, immediately asking, "What about the others? Other than Cheng Ming and the rest of them, if you found the prison, were the others not there?"

"It's regretful." Liang Taibai shook his head.

Xiao Lin's heart sank. He now hoped that the promising location they had found was wrong. Since the others were still resting due to the weakened state of their bodies after resurrection, they needed to rest to recover, so he did not look for Cheng Ming and the others. Instead, he went alone with Liang Taibai.

What confused him was that they did not walk toward the outside of the city. Instead, they went right to the heart of the city. The building in the middle of the city was the palace.

Liang Taibai saw his confusion and said, "Actually, there are only a few prison cells close to the city, so it's not hard to investigate... We have eyes within the palace, and they told us that the royal prison had a few special people locked up recently, and had not allowed anyone to get close. They were suspicious... Unfortunately, the prisoners had been moved when we got there.

Borrowing the status as envoys from Dawn Academy, they were allowed through all the checkpoints with no issue. When they walked into the royal prison, Xiao Lin squinted, and the familiar surroundings basically confirmed that was the place immediately. To be sure, he had checked the two cells in detail, and managed to find a stone with dried blood on it. There were also visible remnants of blood around it.

Liang Taibai guessed the answer from Xiao Lin's expression, and his face darkened—even a bit of rage was visible. "The Rosa Kingdom is really crossing the line. I won't talk about the ambush on me, but now something like this happened. Ahem, I think they're forgetting the power of Dawn Academy!"

"That's right. You said you were ambushed. What happened?"

"I was killed by black magic. It was really unfortunate, I never had much resistance against black magic."

"Was it the dark races?"

Liang Taibai shot him an astonished look. "You know of the dark races? The Rosa Kingdom is one of the places the dark races dwell, but Planet Norma's dark races usually keep a low profile. It's not

like the myths on Earth where they only know to kill. They usually know how to protect themselves, and would not voluntarily participate in any troublesome matters.”

“Let me stay here for a bit. I want to see if there are any clues,” Xiao Lin suddenly said.

Liang Taibai agreed, and told Xiao Lin he had already helped Xiao Lin greet the royalty. The investigation would need to be accommodated unconditionally, so no matter what happened and no matter what he needed, Xiao Lin could just look for those within the palace.

Xiao Lin thanked him. Once Liang Taibai left, Xiao Lin sat down cross-legged. The current pressing matter was to locate the other class monitors. No one could help him with that, because until now, he did not even know who was behind all of it.

However, now he had a good chance to understand it. He lightly touched his forehead and started to focus his mental strength. Quickly, the third eye on his forehead started to surface. The third eye Silverlight had given him back then was still not very stable, and even opening it caused Xiao Lin to feel tired.

Chapter 487 - Rewinding Time Again

Chapter 487: Rewinding Time Again

Xiao Lin could not afford any delay, and immediately activated the power of Time Rewind. It was his first time using that ability after gaining the third eye. Silverlight had warned him against using it casually, but he had no other choice. If he did not manage to figure out where his fellow class monitors were, and if they really were taken away by Asabanor, nothing good could come out of it.

When Silverlight transferred the eye to him, she had also planted her memories on how to activate it.

The mental and physical cost of activating Time Rewind was immense. Even in his Miracle state, Xiao Lin did not feel like he had enough, and had to raise his power even more. Thankfully, he had gotten enough rest yesterday, allowing him to activate Ruin easily.

Following the memories that Silverlight had given him, Xiao Lin focused all his mental strength toward his forehead to enlarge his third eye, which started to emit a warm glow.

‘Time Rewind, activate!’

As the light enveloped the cell, Xiao Lin’s mind fell into a strange state of emptiness. Countless scenes were rapidly being played in front of him. It was the start of the reverse flow of time. His next step would be to pick out the appropriate stop. It was a little like watching TV.

Xiao Lin focused his whole attention on it until a familiar sight flashed by in his mind. He immediately opened his eyes, and the light on his forehead exploded outward, completely covering the prison cell. The scenery outside was all swallowed in white light.

It was not his first time experiencing Time Rewind. When Xiao Lin's vision cleared up, he did not feel the shock he did the first time, but was still surprised by that mysterious skill.

Each time Time Rewind was used, the power needed was based on the time and scale. It was different from when they returned to ancient times. This time, he only rewinded it by two days, and the scope was only the prison cell, so even though the immense cost had Xiao Lin feeling dizzy, even with Ruin activated, it was still something he could withstand.

Xiao Lin still stood in that prison cell, but his surroundings had been cut off by the wall of time, placing him in a completely different world. He had been worried he would accidentally break the wall like the last time and cause unexpected results, but after waiting for a few minutes, everything seemed peaceful.

Xiao Lin let out a sigh of relief. The prison cell at that moment was when Xiao Lin had just committed suicide. His body was already turning into spiritual fragments, returning to the resurrection tower.

For someone who had used Time Rewind for the first time, the timing he had returned to was quite accurate. Xiao Lin had wanted to know what happened after he died as well.

His death led to the other monitors to be in a brief state of shock, but they awkwardly fell silent. No one dared to follow suit just yet.

Two hours passed by just like that; the monitors were still arguing with each other. All of them had their own opinions, but no one managed to convince anyone else.

The first to make the decision was Chen Dao. He had just had an intense quarrel with Han Manman and a few others. Since he was the youngest among them, he had been mocked as naive. In his fury, he decided he no longer wanted to bicker there, and followed Xiao Lin.

After that, Cheng Ming had slowly started to trust Xiao Lin's judgement after repeated deliberation, but his method of suicide was a bit sad. Since his physique was too strong, a simple rock was unable to pierce him, so he chose to ram his head into the wall to kill himself. His brain juices splattering everywhere shocked all of those who could not make a decision.

What surprised Xiao Lin were An Luo and Li Jiayi. The two of them did not speak much usually, and had not interacted with Xiao Lin much either. When Cheng Ming committed suicide, they made the same choice.

Those who remained continued to quarrel. As it got later, they had lost their last chance because the entrance of the prison cell opened for the first time. Xiao Lin, who was falling asleep watching the 'movie' was immediately shocked awake as he narrowed his eyes and appraised the situation.

The man in front had black robes, and on his head was a grey hood that covered most of his face. Xiao Lin could not see what he looked like, regardless of the angle, so it was obvious that he was a very careful man. The man walked around the prison cell twice before muttering in a low voice.

"No! We're missing five people! Missing five people!"

Someone rushed in behind him hurriedly, probably the guards of the palace, since Xiao Lin had seen quite a few people in similar attire that day. He hurriedly counted before stuttering, “No! Impossible! We guarded this place strictly; no one could possibly have escaped. We followed your instructions strictly and even applied restrictions on them!”

“You thought that the restrictions would be perfect, and did not have anyone guard them the whole time, right?! Did you forget what I told you! These heretics can resurrect! They only need to kill themselves to leave this place!” The man’s shouts were very sharp, and the monitors in the cells could not help but close their ears.

“But-but it’s suicide. How could that be possible? Who would just kill themselves.” The guard’s face wore disbelief.

“Useless trash!”

The man coldly roared, his hands suddenly shooting out of his robes as a strange green energy ball quickly condensed before spreading to hit every one of the guards. They did not even have the time to cry out before the green light enveloped their bodies, and they decayed into puddles.

“Tell Sheiksa I’ll be bringing them away, but the one I really need isn’t here. Make him think of a way!” The man left one guard alive, using the guard to pass on the message.

The dumbfounded guard immediately nodded in acknowledgement before stumbling away.

The monitors were shocked, but they were not scared, and immediately started to challenge, “Kill us if you dare! You’ll never get any information from us!”

The person was obviously an enemy, and was definitely targeting Dawn Academy. They were naturally worried about being tortured. Compared to that, death was a release. It was only 20 years of their life they would lose.

“You don’t have to be afraid. I’m just inviting you back for some experiments. As for the resurrection tower... Ah, you’ll see it soon, as you so wish to.” The man’s sinister laugh only made them feel even more terrified.

After that, the man used some method to cause all the monitors to fall unconscious before getting someone to wrap them all up in black cloth. In the cover of night, they left.

Chapter 488 - Difficult Situation

Chapter 488: Difficult Situation

The Time Rewind scene stopped there. Following that, Xiao Lin’s vision blurred, spun, and went dark. When light returned, he had already returned to the present.

Even if it was just a small-scale rewind, it still used up all his physical and mental strength. Coupled with the weakness he felt after dismissing Ruin, Xiao Lin could only lean against the wall to support his own body.

The guards noticed his odd state, and hurried over to support him. Thanks to Liang Taibai's instructions, they knew that he was no ordinary person from Dawn Academy, and did not dare offend him.

After returning to the embassy, Xiao Lin did not dare go rest. Liang Taibai had errands to run out of his office, so Xiao Lin could only wait in the office, repeating the name 'Sheiksa' on his lips. That was the biggest thing he learned with Time Rewind, which was the name the mysterious man brought up. Xiao Lin wanted to wait for Liang Taibai to return before investigating, since the man was obviously more familiar with the Rosa Kingdom.

However, after repeating the name a few times, he felt a sense of familiarity with it. As he waited, Xiao Lin suddenly stood up from the sofa, losing all sense of fatigue as he hurried to the desk. He looked through a pile of documents—examination materials that Liang Taibai showed him yesterday.

Xiao Lin only stopped after flipping through and finding a few familiar words. It was the list of royal members they were supposed to escort, and there was a name on that list: Sheiksa.

Sheiksa, male, 26 years old. The tenth in line for the throne of the Rosa Kingdom. He kept a low profile, and rarely participated in court matters. As the tenth in line, it meant that, unless he hit the jackpot, he had no hope at all to take the throne in his lifetime. However, since he had a personality that was easy to control, Dawn Academy had deliberately added him into the list to be escorted.

The fact that they were locked in the royal prison meant that there was definitely someone pulling the strings inside. Yet, looking at the information, Xiao Lin began to suspect that Sheiksa might actually be a puppet being controlled by someone else.

When Liang Taibai returned, Xiao Lin immediately reported the situation to him. Liang Taibai wisely refrained from asking him where the information was from, and instead indignantly brought him to see Sheiksa. As a prince of the Rosa Kingdom, the man was actually in an awkward spot. Thanks to the impending danger facing their kingdom, Dawn Academy's embassy was more powerful than him. Naturally, no one dared offend Dawn Academy for a prince without any real power.

Even though Sheiksa was listed as 26 years old, Xiao Lin almost thought he was 62. He looked very old. His hair was sparse, a mix of black and white. The wrinkles on his face were numerous. Even though he was wearing eye-catching clothes, he still looked like he was caught off guard, and lacked the dignity or aura of royalty.

"You're Sheiksa?" With Liang Taibai's permission, Xiao Lin immediately asked him this. Since the Rosa Kingdom was familiar with Mandarin, language was not a problem at all.

"Yes-yes I am." Sheiksa stuttered out an answer, looking obviously very nervous.

“I’ve got enough evidence to prove that you had allied with outsiders to kidnap our students. Do you admit it?” Xiao Lin’s face was cold, it was best to assert dominance immediately when faced with cowards like him, in order to scare the other party.

However, Sheiksa’s performance surprised even him. Xiao Lin had been worried about what to do if he refused to admit it, but he did not expect Sheiksa’s expression to immediately pale when he said so. The prince’s entire body collapsed, like he had lost his bones, saying, “I said I would definitely be discovered. What can I do? I really didn’t mean it! I didn’t mean to do it!”

Xiao Lin and Liang Taibai looked at each other. After that, they interrogated the prince for an hour. The prince spilled everything. Around half a month ago, a man in a black hood had found him, claiming to be able to seize the throne for him as long as he helped provide a hideout and a list of Dawn Academy’s people in Rosa.

After some threats and promises, the weak-willed Sheiksa agreed. After that was everything Xiao Lin already knew about. As for the hiding spot of the black-robed person, Sheiksa did not know at all, because after moving the class monitors away, the black-robed man disappeared as well.

It was pointless to be angry at that point. Liang Taibai had just removed Sheiksa’s name from the escort list, but the following investigation yielded no results.

It was already the third day, and the two of them were feeling a sense of urgency. On a normal schedule, they only had a few days before the group would be out of the Rosa Kingdom’s soil. If they allowed the black-robed individual to take the monitors out of the kingdom, then it would mean that they would leave the coverage of a resurrection tower. At that point, it would be very difficult to find them. After all, Dawn Academy’s relationship with the other powers was not the best.

To Dawn Academy, what they stood to lose was not only a few class monitors; it also concerned their dignity and honor. If they allowed their own people to be kidnapped so easily in a subordinate country, it would be a massive humiliation.

That was why Liang Taibai had prioritized that news so much when he heard of it. Based on what he said, the situation had already been reported, and Dawn City would send a skilled squad over to investigate, but receiving the news and getting here would take them at least two more days.

In the two key days, Xiao Lin could only move around in panic without any clues. Cheng Ming and the others had woken up as well, but they did not have any useful information either. After understanding the severity of the situation, all of them had wanted to help, which Xiao Lin allowed. After all, it was just a few extra eyes.

A turning point came during the evening, just as Xiao Lin was preparing to head back to the embassy after a wild goose chase. In the shroud of the evening, the scarcely populated city felt extremely deserted.

“Big Brother Xiao Lin! Big Brother Xiao Lin!”

A clear and soft voice could be heard from the corner of a street. Xiao Lin was on alert, and immediately looked over. There stood a slender girl in the shadows. The darkness of the streets

blurred her face, but Xiao Lin could still tell with a glance that it was Ibeiya, who had been missing for a long time.

“Ibeiya!”

Xiao Lin shouted, but the girl did not respond. Instead, she turned around and ran away. He immediately followed. Ibeiya was not fast, nor was she slow. She was standing still after a while of running, as if waiting for Xiao Lin to catch up. Once he did, she would once again run away, never responding at all to Xiao Lin’s shouts.

Chapter 489 - Ibeiya’s Uncle

Chapter 489: Ibeiya’s Uncle

Ibeiya seemed to be guiding Xiao Lin. When Xiao Lin finally caught up to her, he noticed that he was no longer in the royal city. Ibeiya stood at the entrance of a very unusual manor, waving to Xiao Lin before walking inside.

Xiao Lin furrowed his eyebrows and was immediately on high alert. He measured his surroundings, noticing trees around him that were blooming with flowers despite it being autumn. The manor looked very old, but it was not broken down. The gray walls had vines growing on them, and the evening light gave it a golden coat, making it look quiet and peaceful.

There were three large, black dogs guarding the entrance of the manor. Of course, they looked like just dogs. As Xiao Lin walked by, they narrowed their eyes and shot looks at him. The surprising action was enough to alarm Xiao Lin, allowing him to understand that those animals had very high offensive capabilities.

Ibeiya unhappily shouted at the dogs, chasing them away before affectionately moving over to hold Xiao Lin’s hand. She skipped with him into the manor.

Even though he still had his suspicions, seeing as the familiar Ibeiya was back, Xiao Lin breathed a sigh of relief, asking, “Where did you go? I was very worried about you. Oh, and where is this?”

“Haha, I knew you would have a lot of questions. I can answer the first question right now. When we were at the town, I noticed there were people sneaking up on all of you, but you’d all had a sleeping spell cast on you. I could not break the spell, so I left for a bit before following all of you into the royal city quietly. I wanted to try and save all of you, but I heard that you got out a few days ago.”

Ibeiya clapped her hands happily. Xiao Lin could not help but smile bitterly. He had gotten out, but a few of the class monitors were still there. He knew that Ibeiya did not care about the others at all though.

“As for the second question, Uncle will tell you where this is later.” Ibeiya blinked her adorable eyes, bringing Xiao Lin in as she opened the door.

“Uncle?”

Xiao Lin's mind was full of questions. The light within the house was sparse. It was already the evening, but there were no lights inside at all. He could not help but sneeze as he entered. Planet Norma was going through autumn, and most families had lit up furnaces for warmth, yet this place was still freezing, which was very strange.

"You must be Xiao Lin." A cold voice came from the darkness as a pair of red eyes focused on him.

"You're Ibeiya's uncle?" Xiao Lin felt that it was weird. He remembered that Ibeiya had told him she had no family. As a child born out of wedlock to a royal family, the Rosa Kingdom did not acknowledge her existence.

"Yes, Her Highness Ibeiya has told me about you over the last few days. I really wanted to see what sort of human had managed to catch her eye." The old-fashioned voice did not have any change of tone, but it was still getting closer. Thanks to the darkness, he could not tell what the speaker looked like, but he could still tell that the other party was getting closer.

That person calling Ibeiya 'Her Highness' confused Xiao Lin even more, but at the next second, his instincts immediately kicked in. A strong, sharp wind whizzed toward him like a blade, giving him less than a second to react. Xiao Lin immediately dodged to the left, but even so, he felt warm blood flowing down his face.

The sudden attack infuriated him. Ibeiya wanted to walk up to stop it, but she was restricted by a cage that appeared from the ground.

Xiao Lin did not want to participate in a meaningless fight, but he noticed that the door he had wanted to retreat out of had disappeared. Not only that, the windows had all gone missing as well. Without any light, the inside of the house was completely pitch black.

"You're crazy!" Xiao Lin was getting frustrated and immediately activated Miracle. Since he could not use his eyes, he would have to use his perception.

What angered Xiao Lin even more was that his equipment had been taken away when he was kidnapped. They had traced everything to the royal prison, but they still needed time to find all the gear. At that point, he was empty-handed, so all the sword techniques he had mastered were useless.

"If that's the case, Ruin!"

Xiao Lin once again raised his attributes with Ruin. With his increased perception, he locked onto his foe immediately. He had first used Flame Ball and Flame Bullets to attack from a distance. The flames momentarily lit up the room, and he caught a glimpse of a wizened old man, but his spells had no effect.

Boom!

The old man lunged again after dodging the spells. The old man was not fast, but the narrow room did not give Xiao Lin enough space to dodge. The old man's fists were as strong as charging elephants. Xiao Lin had planned on blocking after seeing his opponent's age, but just one punch had sunk his feet inches into the floor.

The next punch sent Xiao Lin flying and slamming into the wall.

“Stop it! Stop it now!” Ibeiya was shouting, but to no effect.

The attacks continued, the old man’s cold voice said, “Is that all? You disappoint me. If that’s the case, you don’t even deserve to leave here.” The old man’s voice had traces of killing intent.

Xiao Lin forced himself to stand up, surprised that the old man was so strong. He finally decided to stop holding back. He might not have a sword, but his attributes had been increased by quite a bit. He took a deep breath, slowly gathering the draconic power within him.

With the draconic power that was stored in his body, he could completely mimic the power of dragon breath. Usually, the power was way too strong, so he did not use it lightly.

As the dragon breath slowly condensed in the room, the old man seemed to gasp in shock, but even though he had given up on Xiao Lin, he had decided to not spare Xiao Lin as well. His attacks could not have been in vain.

Xiao Lin usually used a sword to unleash the dragon breath, but his fists worked fine in the absence of a blade. Even if the power would be lessened, Xiao Lin did not care about anything else at that point. He raised his fist without any hesitation when he got up and a faint glow condensed in his right hand.

Xiao Lin chose to slam his fist down before hitting, choosing against a direct attack in consideration of Ibeiya. Even so, the heat and light that exploded was enough to envelop the whole building.

At the last moment, Xiao Lin dashed next to Ibeiya, easily destroying the cage before protecting the girl. As for how the old man was, he did not care at all.

Chapter 490 - Ibeiya’s Request

Chapter 490: Ibeiya’s Request

In a flash of white light, half the building had been turned to ash. Even without the assistance of a sword, the power of the dragon breath was still frightening. Opening his eyes and looking up toward the evening sky, Xiao Lin’s pursed his lips. He had caused such a big scene, but thankfully, they seemed to be on the outskirts, and would likely not alarm the city guards.

Ibeiya struggled out of his embrace, her face full of worry. Xiao Lin knew she was worried about her uncle, and could not help but console, “I had no choice just now. Your uncle forced my hand. Each strike was vital. I’d probably have been killed if I didn’t do what I did earlier.”

Ibeiya pouted. “No, you destroyed uncle’s home. Once the rest of them come back, they might not let you off. Why did Uncle let things get to this point! While he isn’t back yet, let’s hurry up and leave!”

“Your Highness, I’m not that petty,” a cold voice said at that point.

Xiao Lin’s eyes widened, seeing a pale faced man slowly crawl out of the rubble. His black clothes had been completely torn, but thankfully his underwear was still intact. Of course, that was not the main point. Xiao Lin could see that his exposed skin was not injured at all.

Facing the dragon breath from just now, he was actually unharmed.

“You’re a vampire?” Xiao Lin reacted. The natural regenerative abilities of vampires was something he had seen from Ibeiya.

“Is Mr. Xiao prejudiced against dark races?” The old man’s tone was still very mechanical, but it was less cold. The old man did not attack when he moved closer, and even addressed Xiao Lin properly, signalling that he acknowledged Xiao Lin’s strength during that short battle.

“I haven’t been on Planet Norma for long, but our home country has always emphasized equal rights for all races, and it’s the same here,” Xiao Lin answered honestly.

The old man nodded. He could not see any trace of falsehood on Xiao Lin’s face. He finally managed to relax from that, but the old man still did not have a single trace of a smile on his face. His tone once again got warmer. “Let’s talk in the basement.”

“The basement?”

Xiao Lin did not dare say anything after he had just destroyed the other person’s home. The basement’s entrance was about two hundred meters away, and was very different from the basement he had imagined. The basement was actually a small room, with even a living room and bedroom.

“The dark races basically live like rats in a lot of places. That’s why, no matter where we are, we live in more secluded places to prevent regular inspection,” Ibeiya explained.

“Doesn’t the Rosa Kingdom tolerate dark races?” Since he had done some research beforehand, Xiao Lin knew that a lot of places on Planet Norma did indeed have laws against dark races, but the Rosa Kingdom at least lacked such conditions.

Ibeiya laughed coldly. “They just want to increase their income. Even though we can stay in the royal city, we are discriminated against and exploited everywhere. Do you think those vicious and greedy nobles could be so kind?!”

The old man seemed to hate some of the nobles of the Rosa Kingdom as well. It sounded like it was the royalty as well. Xiao Lin only listened on, having no opinion on the matter. Once they finished, he said, “What does that have to do with me? I’m just passing through.”

The old man looked at Ibeiya, and she immediately wrapped around Xiao Lin, sitting next to him on the soft sofa as she nuzzled her tiny head against his arm. “We need a country that belongs to us, and that would be our best chance right now. You can help us.”

Xiao Lin was immediately on alert. He had always been somewhat vigilant toward her cuteness because he could not see through her exceptional lying. However, Ibeiya had been on his side and

had helped him a few times, so he was not stingy with his compassion for her. Even Yu Mei's warning did not completely sway Xiao Lin.

Xiao Lin looked at Ibeiya calmly, his expression warm as usual, but Ibeiya felt a never-before-present sense of unfamiliarity. Her face panicked, and she leaned in even closer, holding back tears as she said, "Big Brother! I know you're suspicious of my intentions, but I guarantee you, I bear you no ill-will at all. You'll be helping us, and helping yourself as well!"

Xiao Lin remembered the first time Lilith and him met Ibeiya; she had tried to ask him to join the dark races, but Xiao Lin was obviously not interested in giving up on humans.

Now it looked like Ibeiya had very big ambitions. She actually wanted to establish a country for the dark races. He had to admit that the Rosa Kingdom's civil war presented a very good opportunity. The place had already been friendlier to dark races than most, meaning there were more of their own there than anywhere else. The civil war had slowly eroded the power of the royal family, and even now, just defending the royal city was a huge question.

If Ibeiya could really get enough support, once the royalty left the royal city, and before the rebel troops were garrisoned there, if they seized that time to unite all the dark races in the city, they might actually be able to seize control of the government.

After that, they would only need to scare the rebels away from attacking. The way to do that was simple, which was to use Dawn Academy. Even if Dawn Academy did not help them with everything, the dark races only needed Dawn Academy to show its face, and the rebels would retreat willingly.

That was the greatest possibility that Xiao Lin could think of at that time. Ibeiya's pitiful look was way too impactful. He could not help but show a caring look as he sighed bitterly, "You've thought of a good method, but do you really think I can influence Dawn Academy's decisions? You probably don't understand how our government works. I really don't have any standing."

"No, it has nothing to do with Dawn Academy. We only need you!"

This time, the old man spoke with a firm and steely tone. Coupled with the old man's glowing eyes, Xiao Lin's hair stood on end in the dimly lit basement.

Xiao Lin tugged at his clothes, pulling his arm away from Ibeiya's embrace. He had to admit that the little girl was very convincing, and he did not want his basic judgement to be swayed by her powers.

"In terms of skill, I'm just a student that just got to Black Iron-rank. Even with our territories aside, just the natives alone have many people that can completely destroy me.

"In terms of influence, I basically don't know 99% of the people within the academy that really have power or influence. I even need to beg for help for my own matters sometimes. I won't have enough to be of any help to you."

Chapter 491 - King Of The Dark Races

Chapter 491: King Of The Dark Races

Xiao Lin logically broke everything down. No matter what, the old man's words sounded preposterous. Ibeiya earnestly listened to his analysis, and when Xiao Lin finished, he looked at the two of them quietly, waiting for their response.

Ibeiya cleared her throat, smiling enigmatically as she said, "You're right, but we don't care about that. We need you to reorganize our society. With your prestige, it'd be more than enough."

"I don't understand."

"Big Brother Xiao Lin is God's Chosen." Ibeiya was probably getting frustrated with Xiao Lin acting the fool, and could only drop that bomb.

The living room fell quiet, only their breaths could be heard. After a long while Ibeiya laughed, her laughter breaking the momentary silence. "Your expression was a bit scary just now. Were you thinking about killing us to shut us up? Would you really be willing to kill me?"

Then came Xiao Lin's turn to feel awkward. God's Chosen was a Normese term. In academy terminology, it would mean one with an SS-rank talent. Planet Norma might have countless talent holders, but to be called God's Chosen, one could only be an SS-rank talent holder.

That was a secret; even within Dawn Academy, only the dean and that artificial intelligence, Bell, knew about it. Even someone as smart as Song Junlang could only guess at it, but he never managed to gain any evidence.

SS-rank talents can allow someone to gain tremendous status in a short while, just like Judge Academy's Lilith. However, it would also bring countless troubles, such as assassination and sabotage attempts. Before he gained enough power, keeping a low profile was key.

Yet, now he had randomly been exposed by these two vampires. Xiao Lin could not help but be shocked at how they obtained such classified information. Did they have spies or traitors within Dawn Academy?

That was why Xiao Lin really did consider killing them, but he gave up quickly because the old man had sensed it as well, and subtly approached Ibeiya. Even his dragon breath failed to do anything to that old man. With his current weakness thanks to using Ruin, Xiao Lin did not have a choice.

"Fine." Xiao Lin shrugged, defusing the situation. "Even if it is as you say, I feel that this suggestion is crazy. All of this because I'm God's Chosen? What do you actually need me to do?"

Ibeiya exchanged a look with the old man, and the old man said, "In our future country, we hope that you'll be our new king."

Xiao Lin stumbled a bit; the answer was way too out of his expectations. He said with some difficulty, "That's not a joking matter."

It really did seem like a joke. He did not believe that those people would just randomly pull anyone in to be a king. No matter how he looked at it, they were only planning on using him.

Ibeiya walked a few steps forward, closing the distance between them once again. That way, Xiao Lin started to smell her fragrance. She really knew how to use her abilities to her advantage!

“I won’t use you, and have no intention of lying to you. In truth, we have no other choice. Ever since the King of Darkness fell during ancient times, our race has been scattered. If you’ve looked us up, you should have some understanding of that history.” Ibeiya’s voice was very pleasing to the ear.

Xiao Lin blushed a little; their history lessons did not cover something so high-level.

Ibeiya continued, “In thousands of years, our race has constantly been torn apart, to the degree that it has been shattered. It’s not that no one has tried to save it, it’s just that it’s useless. Do you know why?”

Xiao Lin started to get the idea, but he just looked at Ibeiya.

Ibeiya answered her own question. “That’s because there’s a saying that came from our past: that the only person that can lead the dark races is God’s Chosen. Darkness is merely the reverse side of light. Since the beginning of creation, we have been neglected by God, so only God’s Chosen can reunite everything again, just like the first King of Darkness. He was the first and only one of God’s Chosen in our history, but it’s a pity that the glory from before has already been lost. Big Brother, we aren’t seeking our former glory, nor do we dream of ruling the world or even making an enemy out of your academies. We just want somewhere we can really call home.”

The old man slowly followed, “Years ago, we found that person called Ivanovich. He had promised us as well, but it’s a pity that man met his end early. If you’re worried about your position, then you can relax. I can guarantee you right now, our future country will always be your best ally. If your academy wishes to rule the world, then fine, we’ll help you. If you wish to take over land, we would also cooperate. We have this saying in our world as well—an enemy of our enemy is a friend, is that not so?”

“Ivanovich had promised you!” Xiao Lin finally snapped back to reality. That was the first SS-rank talent holder in the history of the academies; he had actually met that old man.

“That’s right, he was a very strong man.”

Xiao Lin’s mind was in disarray. He did not understand why Ivanovich had agreed to the request, or if that old man was just making things up.

Of course, Xiao Lin was more inclined to believe the second option. He might not have interacted with Ivanovich before, but that mythical man who created the Law of Immortality could not have betrayed mankind. It was illogical for him to help the dark races.

As if sensing his disbelief, Ibeiya pursed her lips and looked at the old man, asking, “Let’s bring him to look at the thing. Maybe he’ll believe us then.”

The old man seemed hesitant.

Ibeiya said urgently, “If we miss out on this chance, who knows how long we’ll have to wait. Big Brother Xiao Lin is the most suitable. As for that other girl, we don’t even need to think about her!”

“Lilith?” After a brief moment of confusion, Xiao Lin suddenly exclaimed, “Ibeiya, was that meeting with you in Wildfire Town actually not a coincidence? Did you arrange for it all?”

Ibeiya was quite honest, or maybe she just did not think there was anything to hide at this stage as she admitted, “That’s right. My status allows me to not draw any suspicions. In truth, I had only wanted to get closer to that Lilith since our reports only said that she was God’s Chosen, but then I met you accidentally, causing me to have to choose between the two of you. That’s why I followed you the whole way, and it’s only recently that I was sure you were the one we wanted!”

Chapter 492 - What Ivanovich Left Behind

Chapter 492: What Ivanovich Left Behind

“I’m certain you’re the one we’re looking for!” Ibeiya’s bright and charming eyes stared at Xiao Lin, speaking with deep emotion. Anyone who did not know the situation would find it hard to withstand her persuasion.

However, Xiao Lin knew Ibeiya. He deliberately avoided her alluring eyes, ensuring his thoughts were not disturbed as he said, “Did you not want to show me something earlier? What is it?”

Ibeiya pouted in disappointment. “Ivan had left something behind as proof of our mutual trust. Back then, we did not know what it was and did not care too much about it. When we finally understood what it was, we no longer dared take it out.”

Pausing, Ibeiya smiled bitterly. “Basically, we’re afraid it will cause trouble.”

“I see.”

“Basically, the thing we have is very scary. Even though we know it has incomprehensible power, we don’t know how to use it. Even if we did, we wouldn’t dare it. However, you might be familiar with it.”

Ibeiya led the way with the old man as they left the basement. However, after finding out there was still a long way to go, he returned to the embassy to let Liang Taibai and Cheng Ming’s group know he had something to do. The rest of them assumed he was investigating and did not question it.

Ivan’s ‘thing’ was situated somewhere far in the outskirts of the royal city. Even with the three of them increasing their speed, it took them three hours to get there. Planet Norma’s outskirts were not as brightly lit as on Earth. After leaving the city, it was just deserted and pitch-black wilderness.

If not for his trust toward Ibeiya, Xiao Lin would not have taken the risk in following them. Thinking about it, he was definitely very much on high alert. After all, Ibeiya and the old man’s identities had not been mentioned until now.

The night sky was not bad, and the wilderness did not look too dark. The old man was not a talkative person, and his sullen face looked a bit scary under the veil of the night. Thankfully, Ibeiya would start up conversations here and there, so the journey was not too boring.

When they reached their destination, Xiao Lin noticed it was a cave a few meters tall. At the entrance to the cave was a large golden door engraved with various patterns. Xiao Lin saw Ibeiya walk forward, bite her lip and smear that blood on the patterns. After a rumbling sound, the large door started to open.

Xiao Lin remained cautious, and chose to walk behind the two of them, subtly activating his Miracle state. The journey had allowed him to recover quite a bit, and with his strengthened perception, he was more aware of his surroundings.

However, there was no ambush like he had feared. The cave was not that large, and they followed a winding path before stopping at a narrow stone room. To be precise, it was a grave, because at the center of the room was a golden coffin that was covered in dust.

“This is my father’s final resting place,” Ibeiya said in a low voice before raising her hands in prayer. After that, she exchanged a look with the old man and they worked together to open the coffin.

Xiao Lin was astonished and could not help but cast a few glances at Ibeiya. Even though he was not very familiar with the history of the dark races, his research in the library had given him some common knowledge, such as the fact that vampires had strict rules regarding their coffins. It was given based on their status, and those who had golden coffins had very high statuses, at the least on par with patriarchs of large families, or even leaders of certain areas.

As the coffin slowly opened, the old man snapped his fingers, and the inside of the room was lit up with magical fire. The green flames were a bit frightening, but the inside of the coffin was empty, with only a few clothes and armor inside. There was no body, but Xiao Lin did not ask about it. After all, it was Ibeiya’s father’s resting place. He merely waited and observed quietly by the side.

The coffin did not only have one layer. The old man and Ibeiya carefully moved away all the objects on the first layer before exposing the second layer within. The second layer had a mechanism similar to the entrance, and used the blood from her wound that had yet to be healed. Once her blood covered the whole second layer, the mechanism started to slowly move.

Ibeiya’s face was a bit pale after losing so much blood, and she even started to stagger as she stood. Xiao Lin lightly supported her shoulders, earning a brilliant smile from her.

Of course, as a vampire, the blood loss would only weaken her, not threaten her life, but her pitiful state still tugged at his heartstrings.

The third layer of the coffin was a very small entrance. Xiao Lin was speechless, but the elaborate mechanisms had led him to be curious as to what it was hiding.

Entering the place, the few of them carefully walked down a flight of seemingly ninety degree stairs. After about a hundred meters in, they finally saw a miniature castle. The castle was adorned with jewels and pearls, and the natural glow lit up the underground. The palace was only as big as half a room, and other than a strangely narrow entrance on the top, there did not seem to be any

way inside. That was why the air in that area was not great, causing Xiao Lin to almost start gasping when he entered.

The place was bathed in a mysterious and warm light. Xiao Lin had thought that it was from the jewels around him, but when the light touched him, it caused a strange feeling which led Xiao Lin to start to understand what their goal was.

The inside of the castle was empty. Ibeiya and the old man had fallen silent, casting their gazes onto Xiao Lin, as if they were testing him. Xiao Lin did not speak. He looked around for a while before his sights fell on a transparent wall to the right.

He slowly walked over, using his hand to wipe away some of the dust on the wall. He saw that the transparent wall had a shard the size of a thumb in the middle, causing him some shock. It was just as he was starting to suspect. He turned around and said, “A Shard of Creation? Ivanovich actually gave a Shard of Creation to you!”

The old man had a look of praise as he said, “You really are God’s Chosen. You saw through the history of this thing immediately. Ivan had said that only God’s Chosen could really use the shard, which was why we kept it here after what happened to him. And no one has dared to take it out for countless years.”

Xiao Lin rolled his eyes internally. He did not know of the shard because he was chosen by some god. He only knew of it because of his promise to Ivan.

Chapter 493 - Shard

Chapter 493: Shard

It was not actually Ivanovich himself, but rather a remnant of Ivanovich’s memories that told Xiao Lin about it, asking him to help gather the Shards of Creation. Even though Ivan had emphasized the severity of the matter, saying the shards that had been left behind since ancient times could affect this world and Earth, Xiao Lin had yet to understand what practical use the shards had.

Xiao Lin had two shards at that moment. Other than the one Ivan had given him, there was also another one he had obtained in Onyxia’s realm. He did not know how many shards there were in total, nor had he tried to look for them. After all, the world was so large, there was no way he could know where to look.

However, now it seemed like his luck was not so bad. Even if he was not looking for them, he had found the third Shard of Creation.

“If that’s so, then forgive me for being rude. I’ll be taking this shard.” Seeing as the old man and Ibeiya did not seem to have any intention of stopping him, Xiao Lin retreated two steps before activating Ruin once again.

The shard within the transparent wall started to vibrate, as if resonating with Xiao Lin. The old man and Ibeiya looked at each other in shock. The old man had actually wanted to stop him when Xiao Lin said he would take it.

It might be a gift, but it was not possible for there to be no cost to it. In truth, they were just planning on letting Xiao Lin see it, but ‘seeing it’ had turned into ‘giving it’. The old man was a little frustrated, but when he saw the sight in front of him, his old face finally showed some expression: shock and disbelief.

“The shard has been activated!” The old man sighed. He knew that no one could stop Xiao Lin from taking the Shard of Creation away now.

“What do you mean by activated?” Ibeiya asked curiously.

“We’ve kept the shard here for so long, mainly because we can’t use it. The shard is merely a shard in our hands. It’s no different from picking up a stone. However, he’s activated the shard, just like Ivan all those years ago...”

Xiao Lin remembered what Ivan’s memories had told him before, the shards had a form of resonance with each other. Only, he had never felt such a strong resonance before that day.

Bang!

The shard within the wall had shot out. Even the solid jewels did not offer up any form of resistance. The shard the size of a thumb was quietly floating in front of Xiao Lin’s forehead, emitting vibrant light and heat. Xiao Lin shut his eyes, and started to feel something reacting within his body. He quickly realized that the reaction was the two shards he had obtained before.

After a few minutes, the light started to dim. When he opened his eyes again, Xiao Lin was surprised to see that three shards were floating in front of him. The three shards seemed to have a magnetic field between them as they circled each other. The rotation got faster until an even brighter glow exploded outward, but that glow was brief.

In the light, the three shards had gathered to the centermost point before fusing together into a dim, round object. The object once again floated toward Xiao Lin’s forehead. Xiao Lin did not stop it. Instead, he chose to shut his eyes and accept it.

The object seemed like a formless, gaseous object, dispersing the moment it touched Xiao Lin’s skin. At that moment, Xiao Lin could clearly feel a mysterious power flow quickly throughout his body from his forehead. Every inch of skin, every organ, even every hair on his body was enveloped by the power.

“Huff!”

Xiao Lin let out a long sigh after a while, his body slowly returning to normal. The feeling was an indescribable sense of comfort, like he had taken a bath in hot springs, allowing the water to flow all over his body, washing away all the filth, leaving him cleansed.

The look of shock had already disappeared from the old man’s face, leaving behind only a solemn and respectful look. It was a look of admiration he did not have before, and was near fanatical.

Ibeiya had some questions, but she did not speak up at that time. Thanks to the glow from the shard, the castle was filled with warmth at that time. Even those who were just standing behind could feel a strange sense of serenity.

The state went on for an entire hour before the light slowly dimmed in the castle. Xiao Lin, who had been standing there unmoving, finally turned around. His spirited face had no trace of fatigue on it.

Facing Ibeiya's anticipation and the old man's reverence, Xiao Lin said, "Let's go back."

The two of them had no opinions. After leaving the castle, Ibeiya closed the coffin once again. It was already deep in the night when they left the cave, but Xiao Lin had never felt better than he did at that moment. His footsteps felt light, and even raising his arms brought forth power that rustled the wind.

The first one who could not stand the strange silence was Ibeiya. Her voice was clear and pleasing as usual, but it was thick with confusion, "Big Brother, what happened back there?"

Xiao Lin smiled softly, he raised his fist, feeling the power in his hands. He had some realization, but was not very sure, so he did not say anything.

The old man said, "He absorbed the power of the Shard of Creation. The shard is just a rock to us, but he has truly mastered the shard. Your Highness, you were right. He is the one most suited to bring us back to our former glory!"

Xiao Lin turned around. "Hold on, what do you mean 'your former glory'. I haven't agreed to anything."

"Yes, yes, I know. Understood." The old man did not seem to take Xiao Lin's words to heart.

Xiao Lin got frustrated. He had taken someone else's Shard of Creation. Even if Ivan had left it to them to guard, he had just taken it away. It was still not a great thing to do.

"Speaking of which, why do you keep calling Ibeiya 'Her Highness?' Is it because she was born of the Rosa Kingdom's royalty?" Before that headache was resolved, Xiao Lin decided to change the topic.

The old man looked at Ibeiya, and when the latter nodded, he said, "Her Highness's mother is a princess, but do you know who her father was?"

Xiao Lin shook his head.

Would he have asked if he did?

"Her father is the leader of our clan." Among the dark races, those similar to vampires would all live among large clans, so that was not strange.

Xiao Lin blinked, not seeming to understand anything. A clan leader was within his expectations. The old man did not seem to have gotten to the main point.

Chapter 494 - Qualifications

Chapter 494: Qualifications

The old man seemed a little exasperated. After a moment, he added “My clan’s name is St. Claude.”

“Oh.”

And then there was silence.

Xiao Lin and the old man looked at each other. It was obvious that the name meant nothing to Xiao Lin. After a long awkward silence, Ibeiya could not help but start laughing.

Xiao Lin was beginning to feel like Ibeiya’s clan could be a very powerful clan, but regretfully, he had never done any research on the subject.

Ibeiya once again interrupted, laughing as she said, “Big Brother, there was once a King of Darkness that led the dark races, and it’s the only king we’ve ever had.”

“Yes, he’s said that before.” Xiao Lin looked at the old man.

Ibeiya’s bright eyes blinked, continuing, “The King of Darkness was named St. Claude.”

Xiao Lin was speechless.

After another bout of silence, Xiao Lin let out a dry cough, saying, “So you’re telling me that your clan consists of the descendants of the King of Darkness?”

“That’s right,” the old man said seriously. “Since Ibeiya trusts you and you could activate the Shard of Creation, we told you this secret. We hope you can keep it for us.”

Ibeiya did not seem to care as much. “It’s actually not a big deal. St. Claude had a glorious history during ancient times, but there has not been a new king after the King of Darkness fell. The St. Claude clan has greatly deteriorated. There are quite a few of the dark races that know of our clan, but so what. In their eyes, maybe we’re just like beggars on the street.”

“Your Highness!” The old man was unhappy with Ibeiya’s attitude. “No matter how many years have passed, The St. Claude clan will always be a significant part of the history of the world. No one can disregard our existence!”

“How many are left from your clan?” Xiao Lin asked.

“Not many. They’re all here.” Ibeiya smiled ruefully. She obviously did not care much about the clan the old man so proudly flaunted.

“How did your father die? Don’t vampires have very long lifespans? Even this old man is still alive.” Xiao Lin pointed at the old man who was staring at him.

Ibeiya’s expression dimmed. “My father was hunted down by humans.”

“Hunted?” Xiao Lin paused.

“You know that most of the world does not allow for dark races to exist. A country toward the north even treats us as monsters, even having specialized squads to hunt us down. Even though the St. Claude clan has fallen to this degree, our ancient reputation is still enough to make us a primary target.”

Ibeiya smiled pitifully. “Isn’t it funny? Our glory as a clan has turned into the reason we die.”

Xiao Lin was speechless. A clan that sounded as powerful as that only had two people left. Their name that was useless had caused them to be targets for hunting. It really was quite pitiful.

“What about your mother?”

“I told you before; my mother is a princess from the Rosa Kingdom. She passed away after I was born.”

“Oh, I was just making sure. It looks like you did not lie to me about that. Hold on, you’re really not lying to me, right?”

Ibeiya was silent.

Xiao Lin half-jokingly teased her before turning serious again, “Returning to the initial question, what do you actually need me to do? Even if you were royalty before, even if you have a long history, I still don’t understand what I can do for you.”

“I know your journey here is to escort away all the main members of the Rosa Kingdom’s royalty. At that moment, the city will turn into a city without a master. We will restore order to the city. Of course, the country that I mentioned before will not be so quick to be established. First, we need a city we can call our own.”

“We just need you to do one thing right now: help the St. Claude clan obtain the right to rule over the darkness of the city!”

“As repayment, we will make sure you escort everyone out safely. A city controlled by us will no longer need royalty.”

Finishing his plan, the old man waited quietly.

Xiao Lin furrowed his eyebrows, thinking for a long time before voicing his questions.

The first thing was the rebels. The information he got from Liang Taibai was that, after escorting the royalty back to Dawn City, they would immediately begin negotiations with the rebels, possibly even helping the rebels obtain the royal capital in exchange for support from them.

The general direction of that was decided on by the higher-ups of Dawn Academy, and Liang Taibai had hinted that it was basically decided by the military. That was something Xiao Lin could not change.

Lastly was the right to rule. Xiao Lin felt like the old man was looking at him with a strange look, and could not help but ask about it.

“Honestly, it’s basically a fight.” Ibeiya smiled as she explained, “There are a lot of dark races taking up residence in the royal city, and there are also a lot of clans as well. Even though we disregard human laws, we still maintain our own order. Every ten years, we organize a tournament. The winners will obtain the right to rule for the next ten years.”

“What does this right to rule give you?”

“The right to govern all the dark races within the Rosa Kingdom. Of course, the clans that don’t acknowledge it can choose to leave the country, but those who stay here need to adhere to the order everyone agreed to! No one would break it, or they risk being cast aside!!”

Xiao Lin somewhat understood why the old man had attacked him, but was still confused, “If that’s the case, wouldn’t this old man be better? I don’t think my skills are better than his.”

The old man said expressionlessly, “The rules everyone set is that only the heirs of the clans have the right to participate in the tournaments. I might be Her Highness’s uncle, but we aren’t actually directly related by blood. I’m not a direct descendant of St. Claude.”

“Neither am I! Comparatively, shouldn’t you be closer to Ibeiya.”

“That’s true. As a human, you’re not even part of the dark races, but our rules are not impeccable. There’s a way that you can have the right to participate.” The old man returned to his mechanical way of speaking. What was strange was that Ibeiya had fallen quiet as well, and seemed to be looking away in embarrassment.

“What way?” Xiao Lin suddenly had a bad feeling.

“As Her Highness’s husband, your children will definitely be the heirs in the future. As the father of the heirs, you absolutely have the right to represent the St. Claude clan!”

Chapter 495 - Marriage

“That’s not funny!” Xiao Lin paused for a few minutes, his first reaction thinking it was a joke.

The old man looked at him expressionlessly, and Ibeiya was bright red with embarrassment, not even daring to look at Xiao Lin.

Xiao Lin laughed bitterly. This development was way out of his expectations. If he really agreed, would he not actually be a pedophile?

That could not happen!

Xiao Lin resolutely shook his head. “You better be joking. Otherwise, we’re done here.”

The old man was perplexed. “Why are you refusing? Isn’t this good? In the future, we’ll be very helpful to you here. With your status, I’m sure your leaders won’t allow you to fall into obscurity. We won’t implicate you either.”

Xiao Lin’s head started to ache. It was true, from the old man’s perspective, marriage was definitely the best choice. Even though the natives hated dark races, those of them from Earth did not. At least, looking at the larger picture, helping Ibeiya’s clan and tightening the relationship of the St. Claude clan and Dawn Academy would help the establishment of a puppet state that belonged to Dawn Academy. In that case, marriage would be the tie that people would place the most trust in.

From a political perspective, the old man was right, and from the perspective of Dawn Academy, the suggestion was also worth considering.

However, Xiao Lin would definitely not accept it, but he did not know how to explain it to the old man. Lolicons and pedophiles were greatly frowned upon on Earth. Looking at the naive young vampire, Xiao Lin could not bear to touch her either.

Planet Norma did not have a minimum age for marriage. Some girls were married away at a little over ten years old, so the old man could not understand Xiao Lin’s way of thinking.

Ibeiya saw Xiao Lin’s awkwardness, and the blushing girl could not help but laugh, which solicited a deathly glare from Xiao Lin.

“You already knew about it, didn’t you?” Xiao Lin angrily asked. “You said you could not choose Lilith, but that was just because she’s a girl, and you can’t marry her, right?”

Ibeiya looked at Xiao Lin pitifully. “Do you hate me?”

“How could I... How could anyone hate a girl as cute as you.”

“So that means you like me.”

“Don’t put words into my mouth, marriage is definitely not on the table.”

“Then do you want to wait for me to grow up a bit before thinking about it? That’s actually fine too. We can just get engaged first.”

Xiao Lin was speechless.

“You won’t be a pedophile if I grow up a bit more.”

“... You understand some of our culture quite well.” Xiao Lin’s eyebrow twitched. Ibeiya was quite familiar with some of the horrible practices of Earth.

“I’ll help you with the tournament,” Xiao Lin finally said after being silent for a while. “Even if it was left behind by Ivan, I still took away your Shard of Creation. I will definitely return the debt, but that’s it. I’ll leave immediately if you bring up marriage again!”

The old man looked very disappointed, but Xiao Lin's attitude seemed determined, so he could only let it rest for the moment. His dream was to return the St. Claude clan to glory, and the tournament that would help Ibeiya obtain the right to rule over the dark races of the royal city was just the first step. He understood that it was hard to go on just relying on Ibeiya and himself.

The two of them did not bring up the marriage anymore, and Xiao Lin was relieved. He suddenly thought of something, and asked, "How much do you know about the dark races nearby? Have there been any strange movements recently?"

"Do you suspect the dark races kidnapped your classmates?" Ibeiya naturally knew what Xiao Lin had been worried about.

"Yes." The hooded man he saw in Time Rewind. Even though Xiao Lin could not make out his looks, Xiao Lin could still tell that the power he used carried very thick death energy.

"Did you find any clues?"

Xiao Lin thought about it, and described that hooded man as best he could. Since he did not see the man's appearance, he could only describe the man's attire. Ibeiya and the old man looked at each other, but could not give a clear answer.

"Hood? Black robes? I'm sorry, Big Brother. The attire you described... There are at least a few hundred people in the city wearing it; there's no way we can tell."

Xiao Lin had a thought, and remembered the spell that the hooded man had used to completely dissolve the guards in a moment. He described the spell to them.

Ibeiya's face was one of shock when he finished, and the old man asked for a few more details, such as the color of the spell, the size, and scale and the power.

Even if the old man was very suspicious as to how Xiao Lin could be so clear on the details, Ibeiya trusted her big brother unconditionally. She said, "I think the spell you're talking about is the Soul Disintegration spell."

"The spell sounds very scary. Is it dark magic?" Xiao Lin smiled. He actually did not hold out that much hope. It was just a spell after all, and there were naturally many who mastered it, so it was a clue that was hard to follow up on.

There were billions of spells on Planet Norma, but they could broadly be classified into three kinds: elemental magic, nature magic, and black magic. What they needed was elemental, life, and death energies respectively. What Xiao Lin saw was definitely black magic, and it was not strange to have seen it in the royal city where the dark races gathered.

Ibeiya suddenly said, "Soul Disintegration is not high ranked by itself, but it's a spell that has been passed on since ancient times. It's already gone missing in a lot of places. We can't be sure that it's not someone from outside, but within the city, only a handful know the spell!"

Xiao Lin was shocked, and immediately asked for more details.

“Let’s talk after we get back.” The old man was serious. In the wilderness, sound traveled far. It was not the place to talk.

It was already dawn when they returned to the basement. The two vampires did not care about sleep, but when they saw Xiao Lin’s sleepiness, Ibeiya prepared a pot of tea. Surprisingly, it was authentic tea that she had gotten from the Chinese. She knew that a majority of Dawn Academy’s people liked drinking tea instead of coffee or other sorts of local drinks.

In that moment, the naive, innocent, sometimes alluring and cheeky girl actually portrayed a very obedient image.

Chapter 496 - Night Exploration

Chapter 496: Night Exploration

The tea was very strong, and he had a cute little vampire by his side, but Xiao Lin did not feel at ease at all. He was more interested in asking about the Soul Disintegration spell.

“The spell is a part of black magic, and can basically destroy a person’s soul. Those that are killed by the spell would not even turn into spirits. You should know, to us of the dark races, death is not always the end, which is why the Spirit Disintegration spell is regarded as overly cruel and prohibited in a lot of places.” The old man seemed to understand the spell very well.

Xiao Lin was shocked, and thought about something more important. “Even the soul won’t survive after being killed by that spell?”

If that was the case, it would really be problematic. Resurrection towers are for reassembling their spirits after death, but if their souls were destroyed, then they would not be able to resurrect.

After being with Xiao Lin for so long, Ibeiya could immediately tell what he was thinking. She laughed and said, “Don’t worry. We said earlier that the spell was not high ranked; it’s about Silver-ranked. Do you know why such a cruel spell would only be Silver?”

She paused briefly. “That’s because the spell is considered a hybrid spell. When used against a person, there is an order it follows. The spell would first destroy the target physically before destroying the spiritual fragments within the body.”

Xiao Lin paused in thought before his eyes widened again. Based on what he knew, the resurrection towers would reassemble their spiritual fragments right before they die. That meant that as long as their souls were not directly attacked, their spiritual fragments would immediately be summoned to the resurrection tower when their physical bodies died. That meant the spiritual attack that came at the end of the spell would be ineffective.

The old man continued, “The spell is considered a secret inheritance within clans and families. The difficulty is very high, and clans have never allowed it to spread. That’s why, in the royal city, no, the entirety of the Rosa Kingdom, the only people who know the spell would be part of the Argos clan.”

The old man then explained that the Argos clan were the winners of the martial tournament ten years ago, and were the current ruling dark clan of the Rosa Kingdom. The family had a long history as well. Even if they had declined, they were still quite large locally. Not only did the clan have a lot of influence among the dark races, they dealt with the Rosa Kingdom's royalty a lot as well. Their power could not be underestimated.

However, their patriarch had passed away when the civil war started, and the clan had since been embroiled in a fierce power struggle. In the end, the one who won was the youngest son of the former patriarch, Valen Argos. The youngest son had always kept a low profile, and few knew about him. However, once he rose to power, all his older siblings that had the right of succession above him met mysterious deaths, causing the outside world to be filled with respect and fear for Valen.

"The Argos family will definitely want to maintain their right to ruling over the dark races, so Valen Argos will definitely take part in the tournament. He will also be our greatest foe." The old man did not care about Xiao Lin's fellow class monitors, so he ended up changing the topic back.

"Since Soul Disintegration is a hereditary spell of the Argos clan, and that Valen is the clan leader, then the one who kidnapped my fellow students could well be him?" Xiao Lin quickly turned the topic back.

The old man stared at him, and Ibeiya smiled by the side, helping Xiao Lin as she said, "Even though we don't really know why Valen would anger Dawn Academy at this time, the Argos family has always been filled with madmen. Who knows what they could possibly pull off."

"I wonder if there's a way to contact the Argos family. It's still fine now while my fellow students are all still in the royal city, but if a few days pass and they leave the boundaries of the resurrection towers, then everything might be too late," Xiao Lin said with concern.

"Do you really think Valen would let them go?"

"No." If they really did kidnap the class monitors, anyone who dared anger Dawn Academy would naturally understand that, after a few days, the academy would send people over to investigate. It was not possible to keep it a secret, so they naturally had a plan if they dared to do it.

Xiao Lin hesitated before suggesting, "If it's possible, I hope to take a look at that clan in the next two days." If the other party would not admit to anything, then they might as well check it out themselves.

Ibeiya blinked. "The night sky is not bad today. As your academy likes to say, strike while the iron is hot. Let's go now!"

Ibeiya was even more daring than Xiao Lin, but the old man jumped, exclaiming, "You want to infiltrate the Argos clan? No! It's not like over here, they have very strict security there! This kind of thing is taboo here. If we're noticed, our right to participate in the martial tournament would be revoked!"

Xiao Lin rolled his eyes. The old man would not let go of the tournament, but he was stubborn this time. If he could not rescue his fellow students, he would not help the St. Claude clan.

On top of that, Ibeiya ‘cruelly’ chose to help outsiders over her own family, and the old man could only agree. Xiao Lin then let out a sigh of relief. Compared to Ibeiya, the old man obviously knew more about the royal city and the Argos clan. If Xiao Lin really wanted to sneak in, he needed the old man’s help.

It was already around two or three in the morning, and the night was dark and the winds were heavy. Ibeiya’s tea had alleviated Xiao Lin’s initial tiredness.

Time was of the essence, and they could not delay. After the old man drew a map of the Argos clan’s residence from his memory, they immediately left.

“At the most, I’ll be waiting outside with Her Highness. Only you can infiltrate the place. If you’re caught, Valen probably would not dare do anything to you, but we can absolutely not be caught!” the old man said sternly as they moved.

If his guess was right, then Valen might not hesitate to capture him after already kidnapping his classmates. Xiao Lin thought that in his heart, but did not say it out loud. He then asked about Valen’s skill level.

The skill of the entire Rosa Kingdom was actually not that high, which was why the small kingdom could never expand. Xiao Lin had known beforehand that, other than a very small number of Gold-ranked elite soldiers under the royal guard, the country did not even have many Silver-ranked individuals.

The old man verified his guess. Since they were allowed to stay in the kingdom, then the dark races had naturally been restricted in skill as well. As stupid as the Rosa Kingdom’s monarch was, he would know not to allow overly strong members of the dark race to stay in their country.

Chapter 497 - Infiltration

Chapter 497: Infiltration

In truth, Valen Argos kept a low profile normally, so not many knew of his true skill. However, thanks to the restrictions of the kingdom, his strength could not be more than Silver-rank. Considering his age, it was most likely that he was only Bronze-ranked, because the king would never allow Gold-ranked dark races within the royal city.

“The Argos clan is a clan of necromancers, but due to the local laws, they can’t cultivate too many undead warriors. Any king would be wary of that, since necromancers are very reliant on their undead summons, not having high combat abilities themselves.”

“Soul Disintegration is what you need to look out for the most, but there’s no need to worry too much. That spell is very inaccurate against targets that are moving at high speeds; it’s easy to dodge.”

The old man rambled about all the possibilities. Xiao Lin coughed dryly, rolling his eyes in hiding as he interrupted, “I’m not going in to fight. I’m just trying to rescue some people. I might not even fight Valen.”

“You’ll need to eventually, since you’ll definitely end up facing him in the martial tournament.”

Xiao Lin was speechless.

“Uncle!” Ibeiya chided.

“Fine, necromancers are different from us because their constitutions are closer to humans. That’s why they have regular active periods. Everything will be fine as long as you’re not discovered.”

“After that?”

“There’s nothing else.”

Xiao Lin did not know what to say.

The old man did not hide the fact that he was not interested in saving anyone at all, but it was not a problem, Xiao Lin knew enough now. He would need to avoid any form of confrontation if he could.

Even if he could not avoid it, just like the old man said, he was a student from Dawn Academy. He had even quietly told Ibeiya that, if he did not return, Ibeiya would have to look for Liang Taibai at the embassy. Xiao Lin did not believe that this small clan of necromancers would dare stand up to all of Dawn Academy.

The Argos clan’s home was situated at an old castle on a hill to the east of the city. According to the old man, the castle was over a thousand years old. The Argos family had also been in the Rosa Kingdom for just as long. It seemed like a very long time, but in truth, the Argos family only had two clan leaders before this, and thus Valen was their third. Necromancers could often prolong their life by abandoning their mortal flesh in the later years.

The old man stopped when he arrived at the foot of the hill, explaining that he had very dense death energy around him as a dark lifeform, which would be easily noticed. Ibeiya had wanted to go in with Xiao Lin, but she would only be a burden, so she wisely stayed back.

Xiao Lin did not give them any trouble, heading toward the ancient castle himself after activating Miracle.

Under the Miracle state, his necromantic mediation was at its peak. Due to the differences between the three main energies, normal elemental mages had a hard time perceiving death energy.

The moment Xiao Lin stepped onto the hill with Miracle activated, he was almost suffocated by the death energy that surged forward. He had never experienced such amounts of death energy before. He even suspected that the hill had countless dead bodies buried underneath. Only a large amount of death could produce such an environment.

Xiao Lin was immediately on alert. His necromantic meditation was already at a decent rank. The death energy on the hill was thick like fog, and within the fog, there were numerous groups of tightly gathered, flame-like energies, which would be necromantic lifeforms.

The hill belonged completely to the Argos clan, and the death energy was confined to the hill itself, which was probably within the degree that the royalty could tolerate.

Xiao Lin's perception increased by a lot under Miracle, and he had quietly avoided the undead beings. Low-level undead beings had no intelligence, so sneaking through was not too hard.

After a moment, Xiao Lin reached the peak of the hill without issue. The ancient castle was huge, and the walls that surrounded it were over two meters tall, but they lacked any defensive mechanisms. He first looked around carefully, making sure there was no one hiding nearby before changing his attributes to agility, deftly allowing him to climb over the wall.

Before he even landed, he suddenly felt a huge sense of alarm, and he quickly hid himself, using the walls to block any lines of sight. After a moment, he peeked over and looked around, noticing a clock tower about a hundred meters away. However, on the clock tower was not a clock, but a large eyeball.

'A Necromantic Eye!'

Xiao Lin was shocked. He had seen the spell at Wildfire Town before, when that undying high priest Asabanor used the spell to spy on Lilith and himself.

After that, he researched it in the library, finding that the necromantic eye was a more highly-ranked observation spell, but the conditions to cast the spell were very steep. The spell needed the eye of a live person as an offering. Necromancy was something that a lot of people hated on Planet Norma, and cruel conditions like these were the main reason.

There was only one necromantic eye on the castle, but it basically covered every road that led to the main entrance. The person who placed the eye there had been very smart as well; there seemed to be no blind spots in the vicinity at all. Xiao Lin could only retreat temporarily, since he would definitely be discovered if he crossed the wall. After kneeling for over ten minutes, he suddenly heard the sound of talking outside.

Xiao Lin hurried over and hid nearby, noticing someone slowly approaching in a carriage. Someone had actually come over at such a time, and the driver seemed to be a regular person because his face carried intense fear. That was definitely not what a necromancer would look like, but Xiao Lin sharply noticed that he seemed to be wearing a special pendant on his chest. The pendant seemed to block any influence from the death energies around him, and also caused the undead beings to ignore him.

"O-open the door. I-I'm here to deliver vegetables!" Outside of the door, the driver shouted out, stuttering.

Deliver vegetables?

Xiao Lin's heart raced. Most of the dark races had their own unique eating habits, and necromancers usually ate fresh meat and fresh blood that was filled with death energy. That was because they believed it would replenish the energies in their bodies. Vegetables? There was no way vegetables would never appear in the diet of the necromancer.

Then who was he delivering the vegetables for? It was also so late, so the delivery was clearly meant to be hidden. Who could possibly need vegetables in this ancient castle of necromancers?

Xiao Lin was beginning to understand. He took out two New Dollar notes from his pocket before picking up a few rocks from the ground. He threw them nearby.

The driver jumped with fright, almost running away from the carriage. However, once he saw what looked like money on the ground, he hesitated. New Dollars were naturally accepted in the Rosa Kingdom, and he understood the value of the notes. After a few minutes, the allure of the money had succeeded his fear, and he got out of the carriage to walk toward the notes.

Chapter 498 - Feeling Things Out

Chapter 498: Feeling Things Out

Taking advantage of the driver looking away, Xiao Lin immediately shot toward the carriage. Changing all his attributes to agility had also strengthened his dexterity, so his silent approach could not be detected by regular people. By the time the driver carefully put away the New Dollars, Xiao Lin had already hidden at the bottom of the carriage.

There was a large dog-like creature pulling the carriage that had actually detected Xiao Lin's approach, but the dense death energy around the hill had caused the animal to be filled with fear, which was why it did not react to Xiao Lin at all.

The gate of the castle slowly opened. Under the gaze of the necromantic eye, the carriage was slowly led inside, but the driver was not allowed to enter. After talking to the people from the castle, he happily left after taking his money.

"Bring the vegetables to the kitchen!" A few people were talking in Normese with a thick local accent. Even if it was a castle of necromancers, other than those faced with death, normal necromancers were usually regular humans.

"How unlucky. Why do we have to specially prepare food for those people?"

"I heard that they had been refusing to eat anything the past few days. They really are clueless outsiders. How could they refuse the fresh flesh and blood we prepared for them?"

"Our lord is so kind, even preparing fresh vegetables for them. He should just turn them into undead beings. I heard that the spirits made with those aliens are even stronger."

"I heard that we'll be sending them away in two days."

"There's no choice. Those outsiders are too strong. No one in the whole kingdom dares fight them."

...

The sound of the chatter got further and further once the cart was pushed into the kitchen. The two of them had already gone far away before Xiao Lin got out.

It seemed like the monitors really were taken here. What relieved him was that Valen did not make it too hard for them, even preparing fresh vegetables for them to eat. It was obvious he did not dare starve them to death.

The ancient castle covered the whole hill, so it was not small. Even though the old man had given him a general blueprint, such as where the dungeons could be, it was not easy to investigate while avoiding detection. It was hard to guarantee if he could finish his inspection before the sun came up.

Xiao Lin actually understood that the smartest thing to do was to retreat. His goal for that night had been to determine if they were safe. He would then only need to wait for the next day before getting Liang Taibai to get the soldiers in the royal city to surround the castle and force the Argos clan to hand the monitors over. If the Argos clan wanted to stay within the city, they would be unable to refuse.

He had wanted to avoid mobilizing the troops and potentially alerting the Argos clan since everything was just speculation before that. It would have been troublesome if the Argos clan had moved the monitors away the moment they received the news, but now he basically confirmed it.

The ancient castle was larger than he thought. It seemed like the Argos family had a unique approach to architecture. The design was complicated and the corridors often intersected. On top of that, there were long flights of stairs that separated the castle into various segments.

Xiao Lin gave up after walking around for a bit. He knew that, even if he was handed a map, it would still be hard to find where they were hidden, so he decided to hide in the kitchen.

After a while, people came in to prepare the food. The chef was obviously unhappy at being made to cook in the middle of the night, and was mumbling all sorts of vulgarities while he cooked. It was called a kitchen, but it really was just a storage room. There was trash and dirt everywhere. It seemed like the temporary chef was just going through the motions as well, not even bothering to chop the vegetables as he threw the piles of vegetables into the pot and fried them.

Xiao Lin hid behind a pile of junk. After ten minutes, the man put the food into a very large wooden box and carried it out. Xiao Lin immediately followed behind.

After twenty minutes, Xiao Lin almost got a headache from all the twists and turns before the man finally stopped in front of the cells. The cells were built on the third level of the basement. Other than a few torches that gave the bare minimum amount of light, everything was dark.

“Eat up!”

His voice quickly spread across the cell. He then threw the wooden box into the cell through a small window. After a few minutes, movement could be heard, and someone seemed angrily say, “F**k! What sh*tty vegetables are these?! They’re so salty!”

“They probably feed it to the pigs!”

The shouts had little power behind them, but they sounded confident. They seemed to figure out that the captors did not dare make things too hard on them, nor did the captors dare starve them.

Sure enough, even though the chef had complained in a fit of rage, he still clenched his teeth as he took away the wooden box that had been thrown back out, probably to redo the dish.

Xiao Lin finally made his move after being hidden for so long. The unlucky guy was not very strong; Xiao Lin only needed to chop him lightly on the back before he passed out.

“Xiao Lin?”

“It’s Xiao Lin!”

The monitors were shocked when they saw the man collapse, but they quickly saw that it was Xiao Lin from the dim light, and a few of them exclaimed.

“Shut up!” Xiao Lin softly said. “Do you want to attract the whole castle?”

All of them fell silent immediately. Even Han Manman, who always went against Xiao Lin, was obediently silent. Of course, seeing how haggard she looked, it was understandable that she had absolutely no will to retort.

Xiao Lin looked around. The cell was much better than last time. At least, it was not that damp and there were not that many bugs around. Of course, as a place thick with death energy, it was doubtful bugs could live there in the first place. They had even prepared beddings for them in the cell, so their treatment was definitely better.

“How are all of you?” There were seven of them in the cell, and the men and women were not separated, which was probably a hard time for the women.

“We’re okay. They’re probably worried about the academy, and did not dare do anything to us.” The one who spoke was Class Eight’s Zhang Shengguo. Even with his pallid face, he still tried to maintain a look of calm in front of Xiao Lin. His words seemed to imply that, even if Xiao Lin did not come save them, they would have been fine anyway.

Xiao Lin did not bother entertaining the pretentious fellow. If he had been a few days late, they would probably be unable to be saved.

“Xiao Lin, sorry we did not listen to you.” In opposition to Zhang Shengguo, Class Ten’s Chen Fangming apologized immediately.

“Why did you all not kill yourselves?” Xiao Lin asked.

“We thought of it, but that bastard warned us that the castle was not within the boundaries of a resurrection tower. If we committed suicide, we would actually die.

“You believed him?”

“Not completely, but who would dare try?”

Chapter 499 - Rescue

Chapter 499: Rescue

It seemed like they were not abused at all after being brought over from the royal prison. Other than Valen coming over to say a few words, no one had asked them anything, not even their status.

Xiao Lin suspected that Valen was acting on behalf of someone, and it seemed like his theory had some merit, but it was not the time to think about that. The prison cell was made with regular metals. Xiao Lin tested it, and the hardness was only at the level of Bronze-ranked armor. After that, he activated Ruin and got the rest of them to retreat before slamming his fist with all his might. With that, the prison cell was destroyed.

The other monitors might have known that Xiao Lin was strong, but it was the first time they had seen him using his full force under Ruin. The simple and explosive way he destroyed the doors stunned them, and they could not help but praise.

“Quickly! Don’t waste time!” Xiao Lin did not have the time to enjoy their compliments. His Ruin state was only active for a limited time before it ran out. They needed to leave the place now.

“Xiao Lin, we’re in a bad state right now. We probably can’t fight.”

“That’s fine, I’ll hold them off in front!”

“That’s great. Right, do you know the way out?”

“Quit wasting time!” Xiao Lin suddenly exclaimed, casting his gaze at a few of them. Even if it was unintentional, the seven monitors all looked at each other before obediently shutting up.

The feeling Xiao Lin gave them just now was very different. His gaze at that moment had unlimited killing intent behind it, freezing their hearts. It was completely different from Xiao Lin’s usual humble and casual manner.

In truth, even Xiao Lin had not noticed. Entering his Ruin state not only increased his various attributes; it also affected him in other ways.

“Let’s move!” Xiao Lin ordered, and started to rush along the path that he had come from. Currently, he could only maintain his Ruin state for a few minutes, after which his weakened state would render him unable to fight.

It was a fight against time. Keeping themselves hidden was no longer important. Xiao Lin was very confident in his combat ability in that state, and thanks to Ibeiya’s information earlier, he knew that the clan could not be that strong of an opponent.

At a corner, Xiao Lin forced open the locked entrance. There were two people whose faces were filled with shock at the entrance, and started to point at Xiao Lin and shout something. The two of

them were undoubtedly very careful, not daring to attack before figuring out Xiao Lin's identity. However, that brief moment of hesitation cost them everything.

Boom!

The fireballs that Xiao Lin shot out set them ablaze. After that, his fists had immediately killed the two of them. Xiao Lin stopped for a moment, picking up a sword on the ground before charging forward again.

Xiao Lin was more familiar with having a blade with him than using his fists. The sudden commotion had caused the palace to erupt with noise. Xiao Lin met quite a few guards on the way. Even though the Argos clan consisted of necromancers, a lot of the guards still used their blades in close combat. However, just as expected, their skills were not worth mentioning.

The blade he picked up from that unlucky man earlier was quite easy to use. It was a long and thin blade, and the black tip of the sword exuded a thick death energy that had a strong decaying aura. It was quite strong against normal humans.

“Quick!”

“Faster!”

“Stop lagging behind!”

Xiao Lin was already going at full speed, and the rest of them could only barely keep up, but Xiao Lin still felt like they were too slow, and would turn around to shout at them. The corridors of the castle were beginning to fill with guards, and it was starting to get troublesome.

“Dragon Breath Sword!”

Xiao Lin was able to estimate where the exit was, and immediately used his killing technique. The draconic power surged through the wall, blowing it apart.

After using his dragon breath, Xiao Lin's Ruin state was immediately cancelled, but the way out was now right in front of them. The power of dragon breath was immense, and undead beings and humans alike had been turned to ash.

The class monitors gaped, but Xiao Lin's swaying body caused them to rush forward to help. A man immediately carried Xiao Lin and rushed out.

Outside the castle, the large necromantic eye had been hit by the draconic power, and only half of it was left. Yet, it kept its gaze on them, looking even more terrifying. At the base of the hill, the weak undead beings were not hit by the Dragon Breath Sword, but the pressure brought forth by the waves were enough to render them incapable of fighting.

They had an easy time, and once they met Ibeiya at the foot of the hill, everyone let out a collective sigh of relief before collapsing on the floor.

Ibeiya was not interested in how the rest of them were, but panicked at the sight of Xiao Lin's unconscious state. However, they were not idle. A carriage the old man had prepared quickly appeared, bringing them all away.

...

They left behind a destroyed castle, but strangely, the ancient castle had quickly returned to peace and quiet after such a large commotion, as if nothing had happened.

"Is this really okay? It took so much effort to get those experimental subjects. Why did you release them just like that?" At the highest level of the castle, a pale, young man looked at the distant night sky as he spoke, not even looking back.

Behind him was a man dressed in long, grey robes and a black hood. The man replied with an even colder tone, "It's no matter. The seeds have been planted. Now, we just need to wait for the right time to reap the rewards. It was your mistake, after all, that cost us our biggest prey. The rest of them are not even worth one of him."

"Hey, don't you dare bring that up! For this, I sacrificed all of my pawns in the royal palace. Once the representatives from Dawn Academy come over, I might need to move again!"

"Don't worry, we have our arrangements with the rebels. Those fools from another world think they can control the rebels. How naive!"

Pausing, the hooded man continued, "Valen Argos, I represent the high priest in promising you, if there needs to be a new country established in these lands, then you'll definitely be the new king!"

"I represent the high priest in congratulating you for your future success!"

"No, it's our future success!"

Two goblets filled with blood rang with clarity as they clinked together.

Chapter 500 - Continuation Of The Assignment

Chapter 500: Continuation Of The Assignment

At the embassy...

Liang Taibai, who had received some news ahead of time, had been waiting in his room for a long time. Ibeiya and the old man had left under the cover of the night after dropping Xiao Lin off part of the way. They did not seem to want to interact with those from the embassy.

The staff within the embassy quickly brought everyone into the embassy lounge, and Liang Taibai located doctors to treat everyone. In truth, the monitors were not really injured, and Xiao Lin had

woken up halfway through the journey as well. Therefore, Liang Taibai arranged for a meal for everyone, followed by hot baths before they all went to sleep.

“We can talk about everything else tomorrow. Don’t worry, the embassy is Dawn Academy’s land, and no one would dare do anything here!” Liang Taibai’s words put everyone at ease.

Of course, some of them asked for Liang Taibai to send the Rosa Kingdom’s troops over to exterminate the Argos clan for daring to do what they did. Liang Taibai entertained them for a bit before sending them all away.

Xiao Lin remained in the lounge, still weak from using his Ruin state, but he felt much better already. Liang Taibai knew he had things to say, which was why the others had been sent away.

When it was just the two of them, Liang Taibai looked at Xiao Lin seriously, and the former was deep in thought before he asked, “Ambassador Liang, do you have the equipment to calculate attributes?”

“Huh?” Liang Taibai was surprised. He thought that Xiao Lin had some important information to share, and was not expecting the question, but he still answered, “Of course I do. Hold on.”

Liang Taibai quickly retrieved the equipment. The testing equipment was very portable, and looked like a round plate. On the round plate were fine lines that connected to ten different round gems. Liang Taibai explained, “There is no central computer here, so the testing numbers will have some margin of error. The higher your attributes, the greater the error will be, so this is just for reference.”

“That’s fine.”

Under Liang Taibai’s guidance, Xiao Lin hurriedly placed the gems on the important places on his body, such as his heart, lungs, temples, and such. Then, he stood still and relaxed his body. Liang Taibai then activated the round plate and a wave of heat passed through his body.

The simple mechanism was obviously not as efficient as the one in the academy. It took ten minutes before Liang Taibai said it was done. Xiao Lin then took off the gems, and the numbers took about half an hour to calculate before they were displayed on the plate.

[60, 60, 60, 60]

Four of the same number. Liang Taibai was surprised, and smiled as he said, “How rare it is to have it all the same. These four numbers represent the basic attributes.” Since they were all the same, there was no need to explain which number was which.

Liang Taibai praised, “With a total attribute score of 240, you’re only 60 points away from Bronze. You’re still in your first year, so this is very good. At your rate, you’ll probably be at Bronze at the end of the semester with no issues.”

Xiao Lin had a strange expression on his face. He definitely would not tell Liang Taibai that his total attributes were only at 120 when he left the academy.

Xiao Lin touched his forehead. Since the fused Shard of Creation entered his body, he felt like he was much stronger, especially with that Dragon Breath Sword he used in the castle. It had been way above his expectations. Now he had the machine to prove his suspicions.

With his attributes being improved so much, it could only have been caused by the shard. Xiao Lin had been apathetic toward the Shards of Creation since they did not seem to have a use, basically not living up to a name as cool as 'creation'. Now, he knew that the earlier shards were useless because they were not complete.

Ibeiya really gave him a really good gift!

"If there's nothing else, you should rest up." Liang Taibai put the machine away. He saw that Xiao Lin was very fatigued.

"No, there's still official business to talk about."

Liang Taibai waited for him to continue.

The test was just to verify his speculations. Xiao Lin then said seriously, "Do you know a lot about the Argos clan?"

"I've been in the Rosa Kingdom for about ten years. I've naturally had some interactions with Argos's leader, but as for Valen Argos... Frankly, I don't know too much, but..."

Liang Taibai stopped there, seemingly having his own difficulties, Xiao Lin chose to help him finish the sentence, "But you feel like I had way too much of an easy time getting out, right?"

Liang Taibai paused, nodding. "That's right, the Argos clan is not as simple as you think. I've never been to their ancient castle, but I've heard a lot about it. It's a necromantic grave they used close to a thousand years to cultivate. It's a special presence within the royal city. Truthfully, with your skills..."

Xiao Lin smiled bitterly. "So it's just like I thought? I feel like they were just taking advantage of the situation, and allowed me to take everyone out."

"They might be afraid of Dawn Academy, or maybe it's a sign of peace." Liang Taibai analyzed it from an outside perspective. It was not illogical, which was why he did not want to mobilize the local troops just yet.

"Basically, it's all okay as long as everyone is safe. I'll make arrangements for your departure," Liang Taibai finally said.

"Let the rest of them go first. Also, the assignment for the monthly examination, the people we need to escort will be leaving with us, right?" Xiao Lin thought for a moment before adding, "I need to stay for some private matters."

"Monthly examination?"

Liang Taibai furrowed his eyebrows when he heard that, "With things the way they are, the monthly examination doesn't matter anymore. Your safety is the most important."

“Have you already reported this incident to Dawn City?” Xiao Lin asked.

“Yes.” Liang Taibai did not understand what he was getting at.

“Then you’ve definitely received a reply.”

“That’s right.”

“Then, did the reply say that the monthly examinations have ended?”

“Ah, it did not, but the higher-ups have repeatedly emphasized that I need to ensure your safety, and they would send people over in two or three days at the most.”

Xiao Lin sighed silently; it was as he expected. The military was making things harder on them deliberately. If they really wanted to, they could just take the griffins over. Why would it take two or three days?

Half the duration of the monthly examination had lapsed. If they really waited for the military, and if there were any delays, then they would not be able to make it. Even if their safety was still important, they were still students. The monthly examination results would be in their records. No matter what reasons and explanations they could give, not finishing the task was still not finishing the task.

“Ambassador Liang, I’ve heard at the academy that we’re considered reserves, and would need to fight in the wars in the future.”

“That’s true.”

Xiao Lin said, with some nerve, “Then the monthly examination is basically an assignment. Soldiers need to finish their assignments unconditionally in war. Any reason should not be used as excuses for failing. So, unless we have documents to show that the monthly examination has ended, we definitely need to complete our escort mission!”