

Elite Mages' Academy

Chapter 81 - Cheng Ming's Result

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There were some twists and turns in the process, but the final result was similar to Xiao Lin's predictions. As for the outcome of those who were captured, many happened to take the same stance and avoided the topic. In any case, they were all classmates, and at the end of the day, the monthly exam was a simulated exercise. The question of who betrayed whom and what information was relayed was irrelevant at the end of the exam.

Wang Dalin was the subject of everyone's verbal attacks because he was the first to propose that plan. Of course, Xiao Lin also understood that the brainless guy was just having some bad luck after being made the scapegoat. Those who had ambitions to gun for the monitor's position were the true instigators behind the scenes.

As for the dozens of people who went on the same path with Xiao Lin, they were initially not that pleased after only completing the mandatory tasks. Having heard of everyone else's experiences, they then began to feel extremely lucky. At least they were not captured, or worse still, died and had their lives deducted.

Lu Renyi did not care much for rewards. He was happy enough to have been able to survive. He smiled and said, "You guys should be thanking us, actually. You wouldn't have gotten the one hundred redemption points if we hadn't completed our mandatory tasks."

"Sure, sure, sure! That's a great job you guys did there! We would've had it even worse if it weren't for you guys!" Wang Dalin shifted the subject. He was the one who surrendered and survived, so based on the rule that the class would pass if 30% of them completed the task, he would not end up losing anything.

Soon however, those who could not stand Wang Dalin anymore began jeering, "Well, you have to thank Monitor Xiao then. We would've had it even worse if it weren't for him."

Wang Dalin's expression suddenly turned ugly. He opened his mouth to say something, but soon swallowed back his words and snorted coldly, "What's so great about him! All you had to do was walk straight out of the canyon. It's not difficult at all. You could've at least brought up a better reason if you wanted to flatter him!"

"F*CK YOU! What are you suggesting! Have you any idea what we encountered along the way?"

"You stupid c*nt!"

"Are you out of your mind!"

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The majority of the class soon joined in. Gu Xiaoyue left by herself through the back door after checking her scores at the completion of the exam. Xiao Lin was also privy to what occurred during the exam, so he got bored after listening to their arguments and left the classroom.

In fact, a similar situation occurred in all the other classes. There were constant disputes, with some people ending up in fisticuffs. The student code stipulated that random fights in the school were not allowed. Barely moments after those people came to blows, several individuals dressed in senior year uniforms walked up quickly and shouted, “We’re from the Disciplinary Department! Stop it right now. If you fight again, we’ll bring you with us to have your credits deducted!”

“I can’t stand it! I want to go back! I want to go back to Earth! Take me right now! Motherf*cker, is your student union so oblivious to the lives that were lost! Huhuhu, why didn’t she come back!”

A sudden roar erupted from the crowd, followed by weeping. Xiao Lin stopped for a while. He had a good guess as to what had happened and could not help but feel a little sad. One of the unlucky persons must have died for real because she had a short lifespan.

On the other hand, those who remained alive despite having 10 years deducted from their lifespan were still angry. The first guy’s roar triggered resentment in their hearts. They vented their anger on the Disciplinary Department. Then, more and more people entered the fray, though it was uncertain whether they did so just to rile things up or because they felt things had not escalated quickly enough.

“I heard that this exam was set by the student union!”

“Who the f*cking hell could accomplish such a difficult task!”

“Yeah, yeah! The caravan tortured me!”

“You and me both! At that time, more than a dozen of us were destroyed by that woman’s Flame Shield! Is that what you call a reduction of difficulty?”

“It’s all the student union’s fault!”

“Get them!”

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The scene grew more and more chaotic. Even those who did not die could not help but feel their anger boil up after hearing those few sentences. It was apparent that the test was far from well-received. By comparison, they felt that the admission test’s difficulty was a walk in the park. Many people did not agree and felt that either the academy or the student union was deliberately making things hard for them.

The Disciplinary Department people who came over became punching bags, but as senior students, their strength was naturally higher than that of freshmen. Even though it was difficult for one person to deal with four hands, all they had to do was protect themselves. One of the guys was so

incensed that he even took out his cell phone and yelled a few angry words into it, as if calling someone over.

Things noticeably got worse and Xiao Lin facepalmed because the crowd had blocked the exits to the corridors. He was completely blocked from getting out. In the end, he decided to just find a classroom and hide in it to avoid the angry crowd.

“Xiao Lin! Why are you here?” a familiar person greeted Xiao Lin as soon as he sat down. It was Cheng Ming; the classroom had to belong to Class One.

Xiao Lin pointed at the door with his lips. “I can’t get out.”

Cheng Ming let out a drawn-out sigh too. “I heard that a girl from Class Six passed away. She had only eight years left in her lifespan. To be honest, no one took any of this seriously before the exam. Who would have imagined that she would die? When the girl just disappeared after the exam, not even her body was left behind. Who knows whether we might end up like that in the future... Sigh!”

Xiao Lin was silent. The exam was very difficult, and the freshman year’s mortality rate might be rather high. Perhaps the academy wanted them to realize that this was a real war, not a game of house. Many people had learnt their lesson, but some people—whose life-spans were too short—had no such chance at all.

Those troublemakers were not so much complaining about the exam’s difficulty as they were unable to accept such a cruel rule. In their eyes, Dawn Academy should be a school, but Xiao Lin understood that the essence of Dawn Academy was a military camp—a place to train soldiers!

“What grade did you get?” Xiao Lin shook his head, not wanting to dwell on those disheartening topics. He decided to switch the topic and start a conversation, as more and more people appeared in the corridor outside.

Cheng Ming placed his hand over his chest. “Grade C! I’m not satisfied!”

Xiao Lin asked strangely, “That can’t be, right? Didn’t you complete the mandatory tasks? I remember that you’d get Grade B as long as you complete the mandatory tasks and survive. Were you unable to beat the Norma woman?”

“Woman? What woman?” Cheng Ming was confused.

Xiao Lin’s mouth was agape for a moment before he said helplessly, “Okay, let’s not talk about her. Tell me, how did you accomplish the task?”

Cheng Ming immediately let the floodgates loose and droned on and on about every single detail. He started with the discussion their class had when they first entered the canyon, as well as their differing opinions and various other things. After 10 minutes without getting to the point, Xiao Lin could not help but interrupt, “Just tell me how you died.”

Cheng Ming was full of grief and indignation. “I was killed after a one-on-one confrontation with the wolf cavalry squadron captain.”

Xiao Lin was surprised. “What? The wolf cavalry squadron’s captain! Wait, one-on-one confrontation?”

“Yes, there’s a girl in our class who mastered Normese quite well, but God knows what she said to provoke them. The wolf cavalry squadron captain agreed to fight me one-on-one.”

“Then were you killed?”

Cheng Ming shook his head. “No. I killed the captain. Er...well, I can’t say that I killed him. But, in any case, he drew his last breath.”

Chapter 82 - Judge Academy

Chapter 82: Judge Academy

Xiao Lin was dumbfounded. “What happened after that? Didn’t you go forward and end him?”

Cheng Ming sighed. “I didn’t have a chance. I was about to go up and kill the guy, but I was swarmed by the other wolf cavalry soldiers. I was already short of breath in the duel and I didn’t have the strength to deal with the other soldiers. But the captain of that wolf cavalry squadron was really strong! It was a great fight!”

Xiao Lin eyes twitched uncontrollably. He did not know whether to marvel at Cheng Ming’s sheer strength—which allowed him to challenge the wolf cavalry squadron captain head-on—or deem him exceedingly reckless and naïve. Such one-on-one challenges were pointless because they were facing the entire army. Even if they killed the captain, the rest of the squadron could easily crush Cheng Ming.

“I had wanted to hold off the wolf cavalry so the others could retreat as soon as possible, but for some reason, I learnt after the exam that those who retreated to the canyon still failed to complete the required tasks!” Cheng Ming was undoubtedly very frustrated.

Xiao Lin was not too surprised. “They must have been killed by the Norma woman. She’s very strong. It wouldn’t be a problem if you were there, but without a talented student like you, the others would face a lot of difficulty in dealing with that woman’s Flame Shield.”

“Woman? What woman?”

“You weren’t listening to me just now...”

The two of them chatted enthusiastically. There were a total of 12 freshmen classes, and among the acting monitors, Xiao Lin could only get along with one person and that was Class One’s Cheng Ming. Cheng Ming had good relations with everyone and got along well with most of the other class monitors. He was a straightforward and honest man, which made everyone feel at ease. That aspect of his character was well-known to all.

The public classrooms were rife with group fights, and at almost the same time was an equally intense quarrel in the spacious student conference room.

The baby-faced student union president looked helplessly at the blond man in front of him and sighed. “Mr. Hank, once again I would like to emphasize that we didn’t deliberately conceal this. This request of yours really is unfulfillable. Dawn Academy has signed a treaty of alliance with Judge Academy; we’re friends. Please trust our sincerity.”

The blond man was an American known by the name of Hank. He shook his head again and again, and said in half-baked Chinese, “NO! NO! NO! I understand Chinese culture well. You tend to treat these things half-heartedly, hence my skepticism to your reply. If you really want to express the sincerity in your friendship between our two academies, please just provide me with the data the central computer screened!”

After a pause, the blond man once again emphasized, “Although we can’t specifically disclose why, this is actually really important for Judge Academy. In fact, it’s not just your academy. At this exact moment, my colleagues are rushing to the other colonial academies because Judge Academy urgently needs someone who understands ancient Normese! When it comes to this, not even your school’s dean can stop us!”

The student union president said helplessly, “I understand. The dean sent me a trans-dimensional letter a few days ago and asked me to cooperate with you, but we’re not patronizing you. You know full well that ancient Normese has disappeared since your academy wiped the Thunder Kingdom off the map, especially when the ancient Normese used by their royal family is of the northern dialect. This dialect is the minority among the minority. The Thunder Kingdom’s royal family had been destroyed for more than a hundred years. There has to only be a handful of people in this entire world who still understands the language.”

“I only trust the data provided by the central computer!”

“Your request is a bit excessive.”

“I think it’s reasonable. I don’t need to check it myself. I just need to personally confirm the final result. Your school is one of the first colonial schools founded by the pioneers. I believe in your heritage and strength!” Hank was very adamant, not neglecting to shower some compliments.

“Okay!” The president was helpless. He finally got up and spread his palms. “If you insist, please follow me. All retrieval data will be provided to you, but believe me, no one in Dawn Academy understands this language. Those days, Dawn Academy’s colony did not border on the Thunder Kingdom’s territory! We’ve never offered this particular language course, even since the founding of our academy. It’s even more redundant now that the Thunder Kingdom has been destroyed.”

“I’m sure your library has the relevant materials. It can’t be ruled out that some would learn it out of their own accord.”

The blue-eyed blond immediately followed the president and continued prattling on, despite the noticeable fidgetiness of the Dawn Academy personnel accompanying them.

“This check will include all school students, graduates, graduate students, and doctoral students. With the exclusion of some who are carrying out important missions, data on all others individuals’

language skill levels will be searched. This is a lot of data and it'll take some time. Would you like a cup of coffee?"

"I'll have a cup of Chinese tea then!"

A cup of fragrant hot tea was soon served, but the blond man had no intention of savoring its taste. He poured it all directly into his mouth to quench his thirst, then paced back and forth while anxiously waiting for the results.

Along the way, a few people came over and whispered in the president's ear to report the chaos in the public classroom. The president frowned and said unhappily, "I can't go now! Tell the Disciplinary Department's Head to go there. He's free to deal with it as he pleases as long as no one dies! This is an academy, not a place for them to make trouble!"

"What's wrong?" Hank turned around.

"Something minor has happened on campus."

The query result finally came out after a quarter of an hour. Someone came over with a microcomputer and delivered it to the president. The president clicked on the interface and said with a smile, "You can rest assured. We're not deceiving you on this occasi—WHAT?"

The president's voice halted all of a sudden. His face was full of shock, as if he had seen a ghost. He opened his mouth, seemingly to rephrase his words, but he did not know where to start. In the end, he could only murmur, "How is this possible?"

The blond man had already grabbed the microcomputer and glanced hurriedly at it. The gloom disappeared from his face and he was both surprised and delighted. He exclaimed, "Good! Very good! Dawn Academy has quite the talent pool. As expected, your academy is equally as on par with Judge Academy! Please arrange the transfer procedures for this student immediately. We'll give our full cooperation!"

The president's face gradually became serious. "I'm afraid we still have to discuss this."

"What?" the blond man asked. "What is there to discuss? Haven't we already negotiated? We've also obtained your dean's consent! This is just a temporary transfer. We will have the student on loan for a period of time; less than a month! If you're worried that the student himself disagrees, you can rest assured that Judge Academy will not ask him to serve us free-of-charge. We'll give him remuneration. The amount will be enough to tempt him!"

Chapter 83 - Negotiations

Chapter 83: Negotiations

“It’s not about the remuneration.” The president still had not recovered from the shock and was facing a dilemma. “If I remember correctly, you said that you’d have to go to the New World for this.”

“Yes, we need someone who understands Ancient Normese to help us translate something, but this item is very special and can’t be brought to the academy’s self-contained space. We have to go to the new world, but you can rest assured that our colony is absolutely safe.”

“Umm, this isn’t about the safety issue either,” the president smiled bitterly. “Let me just be frank with you. This student still can’t directly enter the New World.”

Hank was initially puzzled, but he gradually understood and exclaimed incredulously, “My God! You mean they haven’t even reached Black Iron rank yet?”

“In fact, this student named Xiao Lin is a freshman who has just completed his first month after his enrolment here. You’re well aware of the consequences of a freshman under Black Iron rank entering the New World.” The president had a strong impression of Xiao Lin because the dean personally showed up during the school opening ceremony. The president certainly had to pay more attention to the new batch’s class monitors.

Hank scratched his fluffy hair while pacing back and forth. He said urgently, “Yes, of course I know that humans have to at least be Black Iron rank if they want to adapt to the New World’s environment. Otherwise, they’d be infected with various viruses and get sick. Their body will suffer a rapid decline, and if they fail to get timely treatment or leave Planet Norma, death is a likely scenario in serious cases!”

The president nodded. “That’s right. Xiao Lin is our student. We can’t neglect his well-being, so we can only apologize...”

Hank was silent. He did not give up and thought for a moment before saying, “I want to contact my academy. I hope that you can provide me with a means of doing so, President.”

“You do realize that trans-spatial communication is very energy-consuming...”

Hank gritted his teeth. “All expenses will be paid for by Judge Academy!”

“I’m more than happy to help our allies!”

Hank left quickly and came back even quicker. In less than 20 minutes, he stood in the office again with a surprised look on his face. There had been a considerable time delay in the trans-spatial communication.

“I’ve already contacted the academy. We’ll buy super potions from the Royal British Academy. I’m sure you’ve heard about the various super potions that the Royal British Academy developed some years ago. For people whose bodies have yet to reach the desired rank, the super potions are capable of providing temporary immunity to all kinds of viruses in the New World,” Hank spoke firmly that time.

The smile on the president’s face gradually faded. He looked at Hank for a while, then nodded and said, “I heard about it when I was a guest at the British academy last year. These potions seem to

have been produced for those who are talented in alchemy and other technical fields, but have subpar strength. Such potions would allow these people to travel to the New World as soon as possible... But with all due respect, the materials for these potions are relatively rare and the cost of manufacturing it is very expensive.”

Hank shrugged. “This isn’t a problem. We’re also allies with the Royal British Academy! However, the condition is that we must get in touch with that student in order to make sure that Judge Academy’s investment is worth it!”

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In the public classroom...

Xiao Lin had been talking with Cheng Ming for almost an hour. Cheng Ming was a talkative person who could hardly stop once he started. Other than the initial couple of sentences, Xiao Lin was basically listening to Cheng Ming reminisce about the duel with the wolf cavalry squadron captain in vivid detail. For example, in order to deal with the immediate attack of the wolf, he had to sacrifice one arm to chop off the front leg of the wolf and destroy the opponent’s mount...

Meanwhile, the conflict outside the classroom had gradually subsided after more students from the student union got involved. After all, the strength gap was prevalent, and those who had any semblance of rationality would leave quietly and softly. A very small number of people who could not accept reality was forcibly taken away by the Disciplinary Department and the rest had no sympathy for them. At most, they would utter a few cries of ‘How unfortunate!’ and ‘Why!’ from the standpoint of bystanders.

Seeing as the crowd had more or less dispersed, Xiao Lin got ready to leave after saying goodbye to Cheng Ming. It was still the weekend morning, and the exam time was not synchronized with the academy’s time. Although seven days had passed in the simulation exercise, only one hour had passed after they returned to the academy.

Just as he was about to get up and walk out of the classroom, he saw the crowds in the corridor being suddenly part. Several people who seemed to be from the student union walked toward that corridor, and to his surprise, the person leading them was the student union president. Other than attending the opening ceremony, the baby-faced president rarely showed up, though he still left a very strong impression on everyone else. In addition, his photos were occasionally published in Dawn Academy Evening News; practically all the freshmen knew who he was.

Xiao Lin subconsciously took two steps back and returned to the classroom. He turned around and faced the oncoming Cheng Ming, who had come over out of curiosity. “This looks like a big deal. Even the student union president is here.”

Cheng Ming sighed. “The troublemakers are just too emotional, but it can’t be helped since they died this time. Anyone in their place would feel the pressure. I hope that the school won’t punish them too severely. It’ll be terrible if they’re sent back to Earth.”

Xiao Lin shook his head. “Being sent back to Earth might be a good thing if you can’t adapt.”

Cheng Ming glanced at him unexpectedly. Xiao Lin gained a true understanding of that academy after going through the exam. Although there were many things that could not be accepted too quickly, anyone who wished to stay there had to force themselves to adapt, albeit slowly.

The student union president went straight to Class Seven's classroom. He glanced back and forth before yelling, "Xiao Lin! Where's Xiao Lin?"

"Back in the dormitory maybe?" someone offered.

"There's no record of his entry and exit at the dormitory entrance!" The student union president continued to ask, "Does anyone know where Xiao Lin is?"

The president's expression was serious and the surroundings were completely silent. They might not know how powerful the student union president was, but they knew full well that the baby-faced man must have had a strength so formidable that there was no question of him holding the president's position.

Cheng Ming had a weird expression. He looked at Xiao Lin and asked in a low voice, "What have you done now? The student union president was provoked into coming here!"

"I didn't do anything!" Xiao Lin had an innocent expression. "Also, what did you mean by 'now'? What did I do before?"

"You're the only person in our freshman year who insisted on cultivating both magic and martial arts. I'm sure you know that there are more than a couple of teachers who don't like you."

Xiao Lin was speechless, but he knew about it all too well. For example, the lolita who taught them Basic Meditation and the T-rex who taught Basic Swordsmanship were both not fond of him, but he did not think that his actions would go so far as to provoke the student union. Could Department Head Song have done something to implicate him?

Someone soon recognized Xiao Lin standing in front of Class One's classroom and quickly notified the student union president. Xiao Lin was not even given any time to escape, prompting him to grit his teeth with hatred.

The student union president rushed to Xiao Lin before the latter could slip away and looked carefully at him. A feeling came over the president. He had studied the information of the new batch's acting class monitors and each had their own merits. The sole exception was shameless Xiao Lin, who had poor foundation and zero talent. The president felt that it was only sheer coincidence that the guy was able to be elected as class monitor. Another possibility was that Gu Xiaoyue eschewed the position.

Chapter 84 - An Opportunity to Visit the New World

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“Xiao Lin, right? Come with me.” There was not the slightest anger on the student union president’s expression and he seemed to have no intention of offering any explanation. With a wave of his hand, two members of the student union immediately walked over to Xiao Lin and held one arm each. Nothing more was said and Xiao Lin was half-forced away.

“Hey, hey, hey! Can any of you explain everything!” Xiao Lin was startled, but he soon gave up after struggling for a few seconds. The two people beside him grabbed his hands like steel bars, so his struggling made no difference. Their strength differential was just too wide.

Everyone was surprised when they watched the sullen Xiao Lin being taken away. Several other deputy monitors heard the movement and ran to ask Cheng Ming.

Cheng Ming was anxious too. “I don’t know either. I still believe in Xiao Lin, especially after the exam!”

“Could his assessment rating be so bad that he’s about to be kicked out of the academy?”

“You must be kidding! That can’t be a rule!”

“Who knows. Now that you mention it, what grade did you get?”

“Haha, what’s yours?”

As acting monitors, it was only natural that they paid more attention to their own results. With Xiao Lin, they expressed only a brief curiosity before quickly forgetting about him.

The student union president was not too tall and had a baby face. He gave the impression of being a boy who had not grown up, but in fact, Xiao Lin once heard that the president was actually in his forties. It went without saying that Xiao Lin had understood a fundamental truth in Dawn Academy—never judge a person’s age based on their appearance.

Not many people knew the student union president’s real name. Everyone usually addressed him as President. He always had a cordial smile and was friendly with everyone, but his face looked rather solemn that day, which made Xiao Lin’s heartbeat quicken. Xiao Lin racked his brains to think about what he had done to offend the president.

The president finally spoke when they were on the way to the student union. His voice was low and tactful. “This matter is rather complicated. I have to ask you first: did you really master Ancient Normese? I’ve read your information at the beginning of the academic year and you hadn’t mastered this skill at that time. After the exam, I happened to check it again and found that you’ve actually mastered this obscure language that had been lost for more than a century. Even though your mastery is only level one, I’m curious as to how you did it.”

Xiao Lin was slightly surprised. Ancient Normese was the skill he copied from the Norma woman. Although the Central Computer’s evaluation after the exam had vaguely indicated that he had

mastered the language, he did not put too much attention to it and wondered why the president suddenly asked him about it.

Xiao Lin gave a half-hearted explanation. “During the monthly exam, I met a Norma woman who spoke the language. At that time, I thought that I might as well learn a little of it.”

The suspicion in the president’s eyes grew deeper. “I know about Sunset Canyon’s simulation battle. I chose the map, but the exam only lasted seven days. You mastered this lost language in seven days?”

The president shook his head again and flashed his signature kind smile. “This is your secret and I’m being a bit of a busybody by asking this. Just remember that everyone has their secrets in this academy and it’s impolite to be persistent in asking. There’s no need to explain yourself in detail.”

Xiao Lin breathed a sigh of relief and asked in passing, “Then can I know where we’re going?”

“Hehe, well this is a bit complicated, but I have to ask for your personal opinion first. Do you want to go to Judge Academy? And do you want to go to the New World?”

“AH!” Xiao Lin exclaimed and was stunned on the spot.

The president stopped walking and waited for a reply too.

Xiao Lin asked sensibly, “I don’t quite understand. Freshmen can’t go to the New World so soon, I thought. Even if the dean made a promise at the opening ceremony, he only said that there would be opportunities after freshman year. And what about Judge Academy? Aren’t they the American colonial academy?”

“We’re allies with Judge Academy. We may need you to go there and help them. Of course, it’ll only be temporary, about a month or so. Judge Academy’s people will explain the specifics to you later.”

After a pause, the president added, “We have signed an alliance treaty with Judge Academy, and help on certain minor matters is no big deal since we’re allies. But at the end of the day, you’re still a freshman. There hasn’t been any precedent for something like this, especially when this is a private arrangement between the two academies. You don’t have to worry too much. Just speak your mind. Would you like to go?”

Xiao Lin was a little confused, and the news was still rather shocking to him. What were the academy’s students’ motivation to persevere in daily training and classes? Was it not just to go to the New World?

The dean presented a beautiful and delicious pie in front of everyone at the opening ceremony, but most people might not be able to taste the pie until at least a year or two. As of then, the chance was presented in front of Xiao Lin and he could soon take a bite out of that big pie. Even if it was only a small bite, he was lucky to have tasted it compared to many others, who could only yearn for it.

For Xiao Lin, the New World was like the faint presence of the most beautiful woman in the world. He could only admire it from a distance through the veil, but the more he looked at it, the more tempted his heart became.

Xiao Lin's heart was thoroughly moved after getting a chance to unveil that facade. He then nodded without hesitation once he had thought it over briefly. "I'm definitely willing if there's an opportunity to go to the New World right now, but—"

The president only needed to hear the first half of his sentence. He nodded, then waved his hand to interrupt Xiao Lin's subsequent sentence. "It'll be much easier if you agree. Mr. Hank is probably getting a bit anxious waiting. Go on into my office."

"Mr. Hank?"

The president nodded. "Yes. From Judge Academy. The details of the subsequent negotiation will be between you and him. In principle, this is a private invitation and you're willing to undertake it, so it's inappropriate for anyone else to interfere. I must remind you though: don't be overwhelmed with excitement. Offer yourself at a low price. If you're not sure about the remuneration, you can always ask me."

"There's remuneration?"

The president let out a laugh. "Of course! You're a freshman at our school, so you can also ask the other party to compensate for your missed classes and training time."

Xiao Lin gradually calmed. If he went to the Judge Academy for a month, he would lose not only the courses and training, but more importantly, a month's worth of time would also be gone. Would he still be able to top the rest of his class in the subsequent comprehensive exam and remove the 'acting' from his title as 'acting class monitor'?

Xiao Lin had only gotten Grade B in the monthly exam. He had yet to find out what other people's ratings were, but in any case, that grade could only be considered mediocre. All he had to do was complete the mandatory task and remain alive, which many other people managed to obtain as well.

Chapter 85 - Hank's Test

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The office of the student union's president was simple yet elegant. A blond American was gulping tea beside the long table. As soon as he saw the president come in, he immediately set aside his teacup and got up. Some less-than-fluent Chinese came out of his mouth. "Is this the alleged freshman who knows Ancient Normese?"

"That's right, a first-year freshman. Xiao Lin, this is Mr. Hank, the representative sent by America's Judge Academy to Dawn Academy." The president gave a brief introduction and chased out the other members of the student union. He sat next to the conference table, and smiled toward Hank. "As Dawn Academy's student union president, I won't interfere with your discussion, but since our two academies are involved, diplomatic issues aren't trivial. For this occasion, the entire

conversation will be recorded for verification and shall be passed to our dean later on. He will make the final decision. I trust there's no issues with that."

"OK! OK! OK! The Chinese are always so troublesome!"

"I'm fine with it."

"This is purely procedure!" The president smiled and nodded. He took out a light blue cone-shaped crystal and crushed it with his hands. The diamond-like crystal fragments turned into countless tiny particles in the air and spread quickly to the surroundings, permeating every corner of the entire office.

Xiao Lin stared blankly. He subconsciously wanted to avoid the floating particles, but the president smiled and assured him, "Don't worry. They're harmless."

Hank's mouth twitched and he muttered. "Memoria Crystal. Your procedure is extravagant! Crystals like these, which are solely dedicated to recording, are very rare, even for us in Judge Academy... Okay then, I believe we can start!"

The president smiled and nodded.

Hank's expression gradually turned serious. He rubbed his hands and said, "Student Xiao Lin, the information obtained from your central computer shows that your Ancient Normese is LV1, and it just so happens to be the northern dialect that our academy needs the most. Even so, we still have to test you right now. That shouldn't be a problem, right?"

Xiao Lin nodded, but felt a little nervous. The other party's words suggested that they had confirmed his mastery of Ancient Normese through his replication skill. Although the level of Ancient Normese he replicated at the time was MAX, he had forgotten most of the vocabulary when the replication ended. He could barely remember some of the most basic grammar, and that was why Hank referred to Ancient Normese as LV1.

Due to the importance attached to his language level, Xiao Lin guessed that Judge Academy needed him to translate some ancient historical documents. With his LV1 level however, he was not that confident of his ability to do it.

The student union president sat quietly next to him with the same confusion in Xiao Lin's eyes. That language—which was already very rare to begin with—had been lost for hundreds of years and it was normal that Judge Academy had no one with that ability. Nevertheless, he did not think that Xiao Lin could help; as the boy's level was still too low.

Hank took out a plastic paper bag from the black briefcase he carried with him. There were a lot of fine paper scraps in the bag. He opened it, dumped all the scraps on the table, then pushed it to Xiao Lin and said, "I'd like you to reorder these letters or words in the correct sequence based on Ancient Normese grammar."

"Mr. Hank, may I ask you what this is?" The president could not help but interject with confusion.

“This is a document written in Ancient Normese from more than a century ago. We found this in our reference room. I’ve divided the document into about a hundred pieces, so all he has to do is reassemble them. He can have as much time as he needs to mull it over.”

Hank thought for a while and added, “I know your Ancient Normese is only level one, but that’s not our concern. All you have to do is to arrange the pieces of paper in grammatical order. As for the meaning of the completed text, don’t give it too much thought, because I believe rearranging it can be done, even at level one.”

Xiao Lin nodded and said yes. Unlike the translation that he was expecting, simply arranging the vocabulary according to grammar might be doable and he could certainly try it. It was likely similar to the subject-predicate-object grammatical structure. Although he might not recognize the meaning of each Ancient Normese word, but at LV1, he could distinguish which words were the subject, the predicate, the object, and the attributive.

Xiao Lin picked up a piece of paper and looked at it. Hank must have torn a complete article, so most of the paper pieces he saw were only part of the article. It might lack a predicate, a subject, or several words might be missing. That way, the difficulty was greatly reduced.

He closed his eyes and recalled the Ancient Normese grammatical knowledge in his mind. According to Xiao Lin’s understanding, after his three minutes of replication disappeared, it was unlikely that the knowledge he possessed would disappear completely from his mind. That was because his brain learnt everything quickly when his replication skill was in effect. That, in itself, was a learning process, so the things that he managed to master were his own and continued to exist in his mind, even though the copying time had ended.

The effect had been verified during Basic Meditation, and the mastery of Ancient Normese convinced Xiao Lin of that fact even more. However, it seemed to only have a similar effect on passive skills instead of active skills. Xiao Lin copied both the Shockwave in the admission test and the Flame Shield in the monthly exam, but he could use neither of them once the replication was over.

“What’s wrong? Is it difficult?” Hank became a little anxious when he saw Xiao Lin closing his eyes for a moment.

Xiao Lin came back to his senses and said, “Oh no, I was just resting for a while. You probably don’t know that I just went through a monthly exam.”

Hank spread his hands and said innocently, “I can understand your exhaustion. I’m very sorry to disturb you right now, but this matter is really important to Judge Academy. We’ll give you a satisfactory reward if you can help us.”

“I understand. Let’s start then!”

Xiao Lin took a deep breath and got up to spread all the pieces of paper on the table. Firstly, he gathered up and re-categorized all the pieces of paper which were relatively complete, such as those that lacked the subject or the predicate.

Then he piled the pieces of paper with only one word on the other side, sorting them in the order of subject and predicate. The selection process took him at least half an hour.

After all, his mastery was only at LV1. He knew a scant amount of vocabulary and often needed to think hard for a while just before continuing to scan through. During the whole process, Hank and the student union president watched quietly and did not interrupt.

That was just the beginning. Xiao Lin exhaled and sat back down again. The earlier work was simultaneously simple and difficult, and to put it simply, it was a cloze test.

Chapter 86 - Discussing the Remuneration Terms

Chapter 86: Discussing the Remuneration Terms

Xiao Lin felt like he had returned to his school days. Cloze tests consisted of questions where the test author removed some words in a coherent article to form blanks. Xiao Lin used to hate those kinds of questions in English class back in the day.

It was an examination of one's comprehensive ability in grammar, vocabulary, sentence patterns, and many other aspects of knowledge, but Xiao Lin's Ancient Normese was only LV1. He could follow the basic grammar to guess the combined sentences, and at best, he could only guarantee guesses at the correctness of the syntax. As for the meaning, Xiao Lin felt like he was reading obscure or illegible text.

The process took another hour, and Xiao Lin did not stop until he cobbled up a complete article. There were still a few torn pieces of paper on the table that were not put in, and Xiao Lin thought for a moment before saying helplessly, "That's it. I can't do anything with all these other words."

Hank stood up. "Thanks for all your hard work. I'll check it."

He took out the original text of the article and compared them one by one. The American obviously knew nothing about Ancient Normese, and even though he was comparing the original text, it took him nearly half an hour to complete the check.

"It's about sixty percent correct. What an amazing result!" A bright smile finally appeared on Hank's face and gave Xiao Lin a thumbs up!

Xiao Lin was somewhat speechless. Could being half-correct be considered good?

Hank turned his head again to look at the student union president and said, "I think we can arrange the transfer procedures now."

The student union president's confusion grew even more. Judging from the results of the test, Xiao Lin's understanding of the ancient lost language could only be regarded as superficial at best. He thought about it and said, "Xiao Lin's Ancient Normese is only level one."

“Don’t worry! In fact, when I contacted the academy earlier, they told me that the passing mark for this little test is getting forty percent correct. Xiao Lin’s result is exceptional! He won’t be the only person in this assignment, and we’ll search the entire world’s colonist academies for those who understand the language. Don’t you have an old Chinese saying: strength in numbers?”

“Yes, but before we talk about the formalities, I think you should discuss remuneration with Xiao Lin.”

Hank slapped his forehead and laughed out loud. “I almost forgot! Don’t you worry. We’ll try our best to meet your requirements in terms of remuneration. So, Xiao Lin, is there anything you need?”

Xiao Lin breathed a sigh of relief. He felt as though he had passed an interview. On the way to the office, the student union president had earlier told him that the Judge Academy had a request and that he did not need to be too courteous.

“Can you give me a paper and pen?”

“Sure.”

After receiving the paper and pen from the student union president, Xiao Lin thought about it for only a few minutes before writing everything down. He actually did not know what he needed, so he simply listed down all the expensive weapons, equipment, and accessories he had seen in the Trading Zone. He jotted down anything that came to mind, and it did not matter whether he could use it or not because he could still sell it if he did not need it!

Hank did a double take and withdrew his gaze. There was a smug smile on his face, and as one of the first time-honored academies to colonize Planet Norma, Judge Academy had a very large colony. There was no shortage of wealth or supplies, which was why he was confident enough to let Xiao Lin ask casually.

10 minutes later, Xiao Lin was still struggling to write. Hank was still smiling, but his smile seemed a little reluctant and dry.

Xiao Lin still showed no sign of stopping even after 20 minutes. Some bean-sized drops of cold sweat appeared on Hank’s forehead and his mouth twitched a couple of times, but after recalling how much he had boasted earlier, he simply sucked it up and kept quiet.

30 minutes later, Xiao Lin finally put down his pen and raised his head, but before Hank could speak, Xiao Lin had already said to the student union president. “I don’t have enough paper. Could you give me some more?”

“F*CK!” Hank was finally at wit’s end and stood up all of a sudden. He immediately realized that he had stepped out of line and was still on the other side’s turf. He massaged his neck and mumbled, “Cough cough, my throat has been quite bad recently. It’s just awful. Hay fever, you know how it is.”

“Have some more tea. Our tea is specially cultivated to moisturize the throat,” the president immediately offered.

“Dawn Academy lives up to its reputation as one of the most famous academies with a long history!”

The two smiled hypocritically at each other and barely moved past that little embarrassment. Hank then stretched out his hand and placed them on the paper that the president handed to Xiao Lin. He smiled dryly, “Well, Xiao Lin, although I said I would try my best to pay you an appropriate remuneration, it doesn’t mean that you can treat Judge Academy as your own back garden and take whatever you want. Do you understand?”

Xiao Lin frowned in thought and sighed, “Understood. You’re saying Judge Academy can’t afford these things, right?”

Hank’s fair face turned red. He was unsure whether it was due to embarrassment or anger, but he eventually leaned back and said sullenly, “Let’s put it this way. It’s not that we can’t afford to give you the stuff that you mentioned, but I don’t have the authority to do so and no one will agree either. Don’t forget that your Ancient Normese is only level one. Your value isn’t worth all this! Also, are you sure that you really need these things? Like this golden holy sword. If I remember correctly, you’re just a freshman. You must be joking if you claim that you can use this golden sacred sword!”

“I can sell it! I can always bring it back with me and sell it!” Xiao Lin answered frankly.

The student union president could not help but laugh and quickly sat back down. He said, “Xiao Lin, be serious. This is a diplomatic occasion. This conversation will go on record and be archived... But Mr. Hank, I hope you can be more understanding too. After all, Xiao Lin is just a freshman who has only been here for a month. In fact, I don’t think he can immediately think of what he actually needs.”

Xiao Lin nodded repeatedly. It was not that he could not think of what he needed. Instead, the things he needed were far too many and he had no idea how to choose. For example, he wanted a full set of weapons and Lifewater even, but he was also unsure whether his demands reflected his value.

The student union president thought for a while and suggested, “How about this. For every day Xiao Lin stays at Judge Academy or the New World, Judge Academy will pay him a certain amount of New Dollars. I’m sure Xiao Lin will have more than enough time to think about how he’ll spend that money.”

Hank touched his nose and thought. “This is a good idea, but what amount are we talking about?”

“A thousand New Dollars per day?”

Hank nearly jumped up again. “This is blackmail!”

“Eight hundred?”

“His Ancient Normese is only level one!”

“Then it’ll have to be at least five hundred New Dollars a day. Don’t forget, Xiao Lin has sacrificed no less than a month’s worth of his time!”

“Three hundred New Dollars a day. No more, no less! You mustn’t forget too that Judge Academy has its own training place too. I can lend it to him for free during this period and I can assure you I call the shots here!”

“Your price doesn’t show me your sincerity. We are allies after all! How about this: we each make concessions and agree on four hundred New Dollars a day! Long live our friendship!”

“Deal! Long live our friendship!” Hank was really bad at bargaining. He immediately approved once he saw the student union president acceding, but when he looked up again and saw the president’s satisfied smile, Hank had a vague feeling that he had been conned.

Chapter 87 - New Dollars

Chapter 87: New Dollars

Xiao Lin coughed a few times after being ignored and raised his hand weakly, asking, “Excuse me, what are New Dollars?”

Both Hank and the student union president shot him a weird look. The president was the first to react and patted his head, unsure whether to laugh or cry. “I almost forgot that you’re still a new student. Let me explain briefly. New Dollars are the currency for the New World. It’s jointly promoted by all our colonial academies in Planet Norma to replace the chaotic currency system there.”

“Can the New Dollar really buy anything?” Xiao Lin was skeptical.

The president smiled and said, “You can rest assured that this is different from redemption points. The so-called redemption points or credits are merely a trading system used by students in our academy, while the value of New Dollars is vouched for by the Supreme Council, which comprises all colonist academies throughout the world. The purchasing power of New Dollars is guaranteed in all colonies.”

“Understood, redemption points can only be used within the academy, while New Dollars are the currency of the new world. What’s the Supreme Council then?” Xiao Lin blinked his confused eyes.

The president sighed. “We can go on forever if we are to explain these things. In the future, all these basic things will be systematically explained to the freshmen before they enter the New World for the first time. You are an exception.”

“Judge Academy will send someone to help him understand these things,” Hank answered quickly.

“I don’t understand English,” Xiao Lin gave a very curt response.

The president had a headache. “How about I send someone to accompany Xiao Lin? After all, it’d be more convenient for people in my school to communicate. There are still many things that need attention before going to the New World.”

Xiao Lin and Hank thought for a while before nodding simultaneously in agreement.

The president rubbed his hands and looked at Hank, “Well then, I’m sure you know that even senior students or graduates have many things to do. If you want to get them to go to Judge Academy, it’s all a question of labor costs...”

Xiao Lin was a little speechless. Was that a buy-one-get-one-free offer?

Hank finally lost it and jumped up. He shook his head like a rattle and objected, “NO! Absolutely not! If I agree, I’ll be sliced in half by my superiors when I return!”

The president’s baby face looked quite dejected. He was not trying to deliberately embarrass the American, but he had no power—not even with his president’s authority—to compel any senior or graduate to accompany Xiao Lin to Judge Academy for free. It was almost impossible for them to do so unless they were paid.

“Maybe you can have Department Head Song come along with me?” Xiao Lin suddenly proposed.

“Department Head Song? Which Department Head Song?” The president asked blankly and quickly realized. “You mean Song Junlang, the Head of the Logistics Department?”

“Yes, him!”

The president looked at Xiao Lin hesitantly for a moment and before mulling over the idea. “I heard that the two of you get along well, but I don’t think your relationship with him is so good that he would be willing to accompany you to America for no reason. It’ll be good if you can convince him, but if not, I’m afraid I can only ask Judge Academy for the favor.”

“I’ll call him!” Xiao Lin was not very sure, but instead of going to a completely unfamiliar academy all by himself, he felt that it would be better to find a reliable person to accompany him. After living at Dawn Academy for a month, the only person he knew who met that requirement was Department Head Song.

Based on what Xiao Lin knew, Department Head Song usually woke up at around that time on weekends and might be washing up or having lunch. The call quickly connected and the virtual image of Song Junlang in pajamas with bread in his mouth appeared through the magic cell phone.

Xiao Lin expected such a scene and briefly explained everything.

After listening to everything, Song Junlang widened his eyes and finished the bread in his mouth in two bites. Ignoring the crumbs at the corners of his mouth, he shouted with spittle flying everywhere, “What? You want me to go to America! I don’t care what reasons you have for going there, but why should I accompany you! Have you gone bonkers after the monthly exam? Don’t you know I have loads of stuff to do at my farm—ahem—I mean my Logistics Department, everyday!”

Xiao Lin murmured, “What else could you be doing other than spraying hypnotics on your cabbages or something like that? Just have the president arrange people to take care of them for a few days.”

“Don’t use the student union president to threaten me! Someone higher-up is taking care of me and I’m not afraid!” Song Junlang looked absolutely frustrated.

The student union president coughed a few times to indicate that he was still there. Hank shrugged and turned around wisely to show that he would not interfere with the Dawn Academy's internal affairs.

Xiao Lin was silent for a while and sighed. "Then I won't bother you, Department Head Song."

Song Junlang snorted twice. "I'll hang up if there's nothing else."

Xiao Lin then said, "Well, actually, there is one more thing. I didn't perform very well in this monthly exam and ended up getting a bad grade because of the side effects of the burning Fire Chicken that you gave me before. I thought about it for a while and I'm afraid I won't be able to participate in your diet therapy research in the future..."

The corner of Song Junlang's eyes twitched noticeably. He was silent for less than a second and his expression changed rapidly. A hearty laugh soon followed and he said, "I was just kidding! Did you actually take that seriously! Come on, what are we? Of course, I'll help you. This is no biggie! Tell me, when are we going to Judge Academy!"

"The specific time hasn't been set yet and I'll let you know once I get news! But if you're really busy, then it's okay if you can't come with me."

"Xiao Lin, you don't consider me as a friend anymore if you say that again! Don't worry, just let me know if you're facing any difficulties and I'll help you as much as I can. After all, someone high-up is watching over me!"

...

The student union president's face was a bit stiff after Xiao Lin hung up. He had no idea whether he should admire Xiao Lin's quick-witted wisdom or denounce Song Junlang for being so unethical. After a long while, he said, "I'll send someone to make arrangements with Department Head Song's Logistics Department and he can rest easy... You seem to have a very good relationship with him... Hehe."

Xiao Lin forced a smile. "Yes, we have a very good relationship... Hehe."

Now that the chaperone had been selected, it was much easier to handle everything else. Hank seemed to suggest that the sooner they set off, the better, and the best scenario was if they could set off immediately. However, the president indicated that they had to go through many procedures. First of all, Xiao Lin would be absent from school for a month, and it was imperative that their teachers must be briefed. The central computer must also be notified so Xiao Lin's daily absence would not be recorded in the attendance. To do all that, the dean must first be informed, and it was the dean who had to give his final approval before they could proceed with the above procedure.

After sending Hank away, the president said to Xiao Lin, "The entire process won't be too slow. The procedures will probably be completed tomorrow or the day after. As for Department Head Song, I'll have to trouble you to inform him about it. You can rest a bit for these two days. After all, you just finished your monthly exam."

Chapter 88 - Monthly Exam Results

Chapter 88: Monthly Exam Results

Xiao Lin saw the warm smile on the president's face and hesitated before asking all of a sudden, "Did you arrange this monthly exam?"

The president nodded. "I discussed with several teachers, as well as other individuals from the student union. The academy always attaches great importance to the freshmen's performance. The exam's simulation was only selected after careful consideration."

Xiao Lin asked again, "Did anyone complete all three tasks in this exam? Umm, I'm just curious, because I think it's almost impossible for freshmen like us to complete all three tasks at once."

"No one did. I just scanned the results of this session, and I can tell you with certainty that the best grades anyone could get in this exam was A. Only three people achieved that," the president answered quickly.

Xiao Lin did not ask who they were and was unsure whether or not he should breathe a sigh of relief or regret. From that result, his Grade B was actually not that bad, but he was even more curious about how the three people got Grade A.

The president thought for a while, smiled, and added, "Don't feel pressured. The first monthly exam for freshmen is often very difficult and we don't want you to have any misunderstandings about the admission test's difficulty. The monthly exam is basically a simulation exercise, and the academy's intention is to have all of you form a greater understanding of things during the first exam."

Xiao Lin continued asking, "I heard that this exam has been used by many academies all over the world. I wonder if—"

The president understood what Xiao Lin meant and interrupted him. He replied immediately, "As far as I know, our academy's previous students have received Grade S in this simulation battle, but you don't need to worry too much because they were all sophomore students. A freshman will find it extremely difficult to get Grade S in this simulated exam."

Xiao Lin persisted with his questioning after keenly noticing that the president termed it as being 'extremely difficult', not 'absolutely impossible'. "Does that mean there are freshmen who managed to get Grade S?"

The incessant questions made the president frowned imperceptibly. He hesitated longer before speaking slowly, "Yes, there are freshmen who have obtained Grade S in this setting."

Then, the president continued explaining everything in one go; perhaps he was afraid that Xiao Lin would continue asking further. "That person is an American who was admitted to Judge Academy last year and got Grade S in this Sunset Canyon exam three months after enrolling. Of course, America's criteria might not be the same as ours, but if they were able to get Grade S, then they must have completed all the tasks. If you're really interested, you can ask Judge Academy about it

when you go there. This matter isn't classified as confidential, so I believe the Americans will tell you about it. Hmm, I don't know their name, but she has a nickname: the Demon Queen."

"Demon Queen? What a cool nickname!" Xiao Lin muttered. An image of two sharp horns and a terrifying appearance popped up in his mind. He made a mental note of it. In fact, he asked a lot of questions because he wanted to know just how big the gap was between himself and true masters. It was only after he knew the gap that he had the motivation to keep improving himself.

"Thanks for your answers, President. I'll head back to rest," Xiao Lin politely said goodbye.

The president nodded and stopped him all of a sudden. He rubbed his forehead and said helplessly, "I almost forgot to tell you something important after you interrupted me earlier."

"Something important?" Xiao Lin walked back again.

The smile on the president's baby face gradually sank and his tone became low and serious. "Hank never made specific mention of what you're supposed to do when you go to Judge Academy."

"Isn't it to translate?"

The president snorted softly, "That's a big fat lie! I won't tell you much more about the history of Ancient Normese and the Thunder Kingdom because you can check all the relevant information when you head back. What I want to tell you is when you arrive at Judge Academy, try to keep note of every single thing as much as you can, regardless of what they ask you to do. Do you understand what I mean?"

Xiao Lin understood it clearly. "You want me to be a spy. I understand."

The president's face twitched and he coughed a few times, "Don't say that. We're still allies with Judge Academy. It's just that this is a rather abnormal matter and we place importance on... You know what, forget I said anything. You wouldn't understand anyway. My point is, if they ask you to read something, you must remember as much of it as possible. But don't go out of your way to do something. If Judge Academy is bold enough to recruit those who understand Ancient Normese from all around the world, they must have taken some precautions."

Xiao Lin nodded and only half-understood everything. The president probably wanted to tell him more, but in the end, the man did not continue explaining further. As a freshman, Xiao Lin knew too little about the situation in the New World, nor about the relationship between the several academies. Eventually, the president waved his hand and sent Xiao Lin away.

The still-confused Xiao Lin did not head straight back to the dormitory, but came to the Logistics Department first. To his surprise, Song Junlang was not there. It was not a problem though, since Xiao Lin's universal card had been given access to the department after he agreed to join Department Head Song's so-called diet therapy research.

After swiping the card and entering the door, Xiao Lin cautiously passed through the narrow winding path in the middle of the vegetable garden without daring to stop for even a brief moment. The vegetable garden had left a lasting impression on him after his numerous visits. Weeping Chinese cabbage aside, some leafy greens might suddenly emerge from the soil and open its mouth

wide at him. Although it could not go too far because its roots were deeply in the soil, the shock was enough to scare an ordinary person witless.

When he arrived at the Logistics Department, Xiao Lin waited quietly in the living room. Quite some time had passed and Department Head Song still did not come back. Feeling bored, he decided to take a walk around despite the fact that he treated the Logistics Department as though it was a beast's lair. Countless strange hybrid creatures proved to be a sight that was hard to forget, but Xiao Lin's curiosity got the better of him.

He reminded himself not to touch the large creatures, and with that thought in mind, he walked out of the living room and headed for the breeding area. A transparent jug on the table soon caught his attention. Compared to the chickens, ducks, snakes, rabbits, and other animals that were kept in special cages around him, there was only a two- to three-inch long loach swimming around inside.

The loach did not look any different from an ordinary one, but what really attracted Xiao Lin's gaze was its color. Except for its black eyes, the loach's round and smooth body was a brilliant golden color.

Xiao Lin knew that the creatures of the Logistics Department were not ordinary beings. He watched the beautiful loach carefully and began guessing what kind of biological hybrid the little guy might be.

Then, a lazy voice was heard behind him. "Are you interested in this little guy? That's no good. I've no plans to feed this little guy to anyone yet, at least for the time being."

Department Head Song had finally returned.

Chapter 89 - The Return Journey

Chapter 89: The Return Journey

Xiao Lin retracted his gaze and shook his head grimly. "I'm not interested in eating this loach. I think it's disgusting."

Department Head Song widened his eyes as he walked over, torn between laughter and tears. "Loach? Please. This little guy in front of you is a genuine dragon!"

"Dragon?" Xiao Lin looked at the slender loach again. His expression seemed to say 'Don't lie to me just because I don't know much.'

"It's been injected with golden dragon blood."

"Golden dragon?" Xiao Lin thought of something and suddenly realized, "You attacked the dean's golden dragon? Don't worry, I'll definitely keep it a secret for you after you accompany me to Judge Academy."

Department Head Song was noncommittal and snorted twice. "Keep it secret my foot! I have an agreement with the dean! Forget it, let's not talk about this. Speaking of which, it's time we talk about Judge Academy. What is going on?"

"I have no idea either. When the student union president came to me, I thought it might be some translation job, but his tone makes me feel like it probably isn't. And that Hank guy from Judge Academy. He asked me to do a cloze test. Feels really weird." Xiao Lin spread his palms and asked innocently, "That's why I came here. I wanted to ask you. Don't you have someone high-up taking care of you? Do you have any inside information?"

Song Junlang looked at Xiao Lin with a scrutinizing gaze and sucked his teeth. "I don't know for sure. Do you really know Ancient Normese? Did you learn it in the monthly exam?"

"You could say that, but my level isn't that high. I'm only at level one."

Department Head Song shook his head. "This is quite the coincidence. In fact, it's been about half a month since Judge Academy started recruiting people who understand Ancient Normese. They didn't intend to come to Dawn Academy, but few people in other academies understand this language. In the end, they decided to try everything in desperation and sent someone to ask Dawn Academy. In the end, they really did find what they were looking for."

Xiao Lin smiled bitterly. "That someone happens to be me... I'm curious though, there's so many other colonist academies throughout the world aside from Dawn Academy. Couldn't they find anyone who understands Ancient Normese within the span of a hundred years?"

Song Junlang sat down, fiddled with the golden loach in the pitcher, and explained casually, "First of all, do you understand what Ancient Normese is? Do you know the difference between Ancient Normese and Norma's common language?"

Xiao Lin recalled every character in Ancient Normese and compared it to Standard Normese; Ancient Normese was obviously more cumbersome, with each character being much more complicated and difficult to understand. He thought about it and replied, "Is it equivalent to the difference between simplified and traditional Chinese?"

Song Junlang nodded approvingly, but shook his head again. "You've got it, but the analogy is not entirely correct. The difference between Standard Normese and Ancient Normese is equivalent to simplified Chinese and oracle bone script."

Xiao Lin was speechless. "Simplified Chinese and oracle bone script is considered Chinese, but there are few who understand simplified Chinese and oracle bone script ... I understand what you mean. That means there are few people who understand Ancient Normese?"

Song Junlang pondered for a moment and said, "The history of Ancient Normese's use on Planet Norma dates back tens of thousands of years. As the years passed, the language has proven to be extremely difficult to use and not at all ubiquitous. Many countries in Planet Norma had gradually abandoned Ancient Normese and adopted a simpler language, now known as Standard Normese. Even so, there are very few countries who still insist on using Ancient Normese."

"Was the Thunder Kingdom one of them?" Xiao Lin asked.

“Yes. There are fewer and fewer countries using Ancient Normese, and by forty-five N.C., the Thunder Kingdom was the only country in Planet Norma that still used that language. Even so, few Thunder Kingdom people could fluently converse with it. Those who could were only royals or noblemen. After the Thunder Kingdom was destroyed, Judge Academy killed all royalty and noblemen in the kingdom to prevent a possible rebellion, thereby exterminating the fate of Ancient Normese.”

Song Junlang had a bitter expression on his face when he mentioned that. “Who would’ve known that, more than a century later, Judge Academy would have to face such an awkward situation needing Ancient Normese. They’re probably regretting it now and wondering why they didn’t spare a few royals or noblemen in the past.”

As for what Judge Academy wanted, Department Head Song’s hands were tied because Judge Academy would surely classify it as confidential. Song Junlang did not believe that the other party would actually reveal the entire truth to outsiders like them once they arrived at Judge Academy.

If Department Head Song—who knew someone high-up—had no idea what everything was about, it would not be helpful for Xiao Lin to rack his brains over it. Xiao Lin therefore decided to set everything aside. From his personal point of view, his visit to Judge Academy was regarded as an expatriate mission. Other than getting a remuneration, the most important point was that he could finally go to Planet Norma ahead of time to see the New World that they would colonize in the future!

As Xiao Lin thought of that, he was overjoyed and could not help but ask, “Then when can we set off? Are we going straight to the New World?”

Song Junlang shot him a weird smile. “Looks like you still don’t know much about the procedure. We’re going to Judge Academy’s colony in the New World. This is a very complicated process. First thing’s first: we need to return to the Earth and go to America. Then, we must enter Judge Academy’s self-contained space through a certain spatial point on American soil. Only then can we traverse through Judge Academy’s portal and enter their colony.”

Xiao Lin was a little dumbfounded. “That troublesome, huh? Can’t we just go there directly?”

“Each academy has a portal to the New World, but the portal operates by way of fixed-point teleportation. The starting point and the destination cannot be changed.” Department Head Song waved his hand, “America’s colony in the New World doesn’t border ours at all. Of course, we can also enter our own colony first through Dawn Academy’s portal, but then you’d have to take a boat northward for at least a two-to-three-month journey before reaching Judge Academy’s colony. By comparison, returning to Earth first is the quickest way.”

“We’re returning to Earth first?” Xiao Lin suddenly realized that the time ratio between the academy and Earth was 1:2. A month in the academy equaled two months on Earth.

Dawn Academy implemented a strictly sealed-off administration system. Under usual circumstances, no one was allowed to return as and when they pleased. In other words, unless they failed the admissions test and were sent back to Earth, other formal students would not have any opportunity to return for at least one year. It was all clearly written in the freshman code. Although most found it difficult to accept the fact that they were unable to go home for two years, the rules set by the academy would not be changed simply because of their protests.

After leaving the Logistics Department, Xiao Lin's excitement of going to the New World was somewhat diminished. The thought of his parents, as well as the fact that he was going back to Earth, left Xiao Lin with a gamut of emotions. He felt that he should take the opportunity to go home and have a look at the situation because he did not know when he could return to Earth again if he missed that opportunity.

Chapter 90 - The Monitors' Discussions

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It was already evening when Xiao Lin returned to the dormitory. After going to the cafeteria for dinner, he met Cheng Ming and the others chatting in the lounge while on the way back to his room. After Cheng Ming's sharp eyes recognized him, he called out to Xiao Lin, leaving the latter no choice but to join them in the lounge.

There were five or six individuals with Cheng Ming, the names of which Xiao Lin did not know. What he did know was that those people were acting monitors of the other classes. After their enrolment, the acting monitors gradually formed their own small circle. Xiao Lin was the only one excluded from said circle. They were all drinking tea and coffee, chatting about the monthly exam that had just ended.

The others were not as friendly toward Xiao Lin as Cheng Ming. They simply nodded politely when Xiao Lin came over and did not even bother to stand up. One of the guys suddenly asked, "What grade did you get in your exam, Xiao Lin?"

Before Xiao Lin could speak, Cheng Ming had patted him on the shoulder and said, "Xiao Lin got Grade B, which is way better than me. Sigh, if I had known earlier, I wouldn't've engaged in the duel with the wolf cavalry captain. I lost ten years and I didn't even end up killing the guy. In the end, no one else in our class managed to complete the required tasks..."

Cheng Ming began prattling away as soon as he had something to talk about. A ponytailed girl who was immersed in a newspaper suddenly looked up and glanced unexpectedly at Xiao Lin. She asked, "Grade B. Did you beat that Norma woman?"

Xiao Lin had seen her in the magic training room before and replied, "Her Flame Shield was a bit tricky, but luckily we managed to capture the woman."

Cheng Ming hurriedly asked, "And then what happened? What did you do with that Norma woman? We were discussing her just now and the woman seemed a bit weird."

Xiao Lin probably guessed what they were talking about. "If you're talking about the last spell she wanted to use, I actually killed her before she finished chanting."

With that answer, more and more people looked up at him in surprise. A man asked, "That woman lied to all of us eventually. How did you know that you were supposed to kill her?"

“It’s not that difficult to deal with her. The Flame Shield is obviously a hindrance, but she doesn’t have much defense against physical attacks. I originally thought that she would be the key to completing our optional tasks, but who knew in the end...”

“I should’ve killed her first!”

Several acting monitors joined the discussion one after another and Xiao Lin realized that the Norma woman tricked many people. Not everyone was as lucky as him to be able to use the replication skill and understand Ancient Normese. Without it, his grade might only be C at most.

Cheng Ming laughed and explained to Xiao Lin, smiling, “We’ve just learned about what happened to all the classes. Basically, all twelve classes arrived at the supply depot and met the Norma woman. Those in Class Three killed that woman immediately, and although Class Two won, the number of survivors was insufficient, so they failed to meet the minimum requirement of thirty percent. The other seven classes defeated her, but only one killed her. All other classes chose to hold her captive. They also bet with me just now that the ending was unavoidable, but I never expected you to be the only one among these six classes who actually managed to evade that spell at the last moment!”

“What spell did that Norma woman use in the end?” Xiao Lin asked.

The ponytailed girl shook her head and replied. “Some fire spell. I don’t know the name, but its power was absolutely terrifying. From my guess, its damage rating is at least E or higher, maybe even D? Anyway, after she cast the spell, the whole cave went up in flames. None of us could get away.”

Xiao Lin glanced at the acting monitors who were either regretful or ashamed. Some of them realized that they were probably the ones who were duped by that woman, and because they had not completed the mandatory tasks when they died, the highest evaluation they could get was Grade C.

As Xiao Lin expected, the monthly exam was actually to make those new students understand their identity as colonizers and conquerors. If they did not figure that out, they would most likely be tricked by the Norma woman. In fact, she had also deceived Xiao Lin, but he eventually used his SS-level talent to forcibly bring them back from death’s door.

Xiao Lin’s mood improved inexplicably, but he suddenly became curious. The student union president had told him that three people achieved Grade A in the monthly exam, so he enquired them about it.

Many people’s faces became quite surprised yet again. Cheng Ming coughed a few times. “You’re quite well-informed. We just saw it on the forum too. They’re from Class Three. Three of them from Class Three completed the first optional task. I’m afraid they’re the only people in our entire year who got Grade A.”

Xiao Lin wondered. “Did they convince the Norma woman to take them into the barracks?”

Cheng Ming’s expression turned slightly odd. “No. They convinced the Norma man. You probably don’t know that the man in the caravan was her lover...”

“I know that.”

Cheng Ming seemed puzzled. “Oh, well, anyway, the acting monitor of Class Three persuaded this man to betray her. God knows how she did it. She even told the man to kill his lover on the spot, and after finally being driven to a dead end, the man could only help them complete the tasks.”

Xiao Lin was a little speechless. The result proved to be an unexpected gambit, but the optional task of killing the wolf cavalry captain still remained incomplete. It was also proof that Class Seven was not entirely weak.

The topic did not last long and everyone was generally dissatisfied with the monthly exams. After comparing their results however, they discovered that everyone was about the same, so they reluctantly accepted it.

“Why did the student union president ask for you?” Cheng Ming was still concerned about Xiao Lin.

“It’s nothing big, but I might not be able to attend classes next month,” Xiao Lin answered bluntly.

“What the hell did you do? Why are they banning you from attending your classes?” Cheng Ming really became anxious, believing that the student union president was banning Xiao Lin from attending classes. The other acting monitors lost interest in that topic. They either continued to drink tea or look down at their newspapers.

Xiao Lin deliberated for a moment. “No, but I’ll probably return to Earth maybe tomorrow or the day after.”

“Ah!” Cheng Ming’s eyes widened, and he exclaimed, “You’ll be sent back to Earth?”

His loud voice attracted the attention of many people. After realizing that Cheng Ming realized that he was bothering others, he lowered his voice considerably, though it was still loud enough that everyone in the quiet lounge could hear. It attracted the curious gazes of more and more people.

Xiao Lin smiled bitterly. “Don’t get me wrong. I’ll be back in a month. I’m just going out for some official business and I might probably go to the New World.”

On that occasion, several acting monitors turned around with incredulous looks on their faces.

More and more people began to walk toward him and Xiao Lin hurriedly ran away when he saw the situation getting worse. He fled back to his room before everyone else surrounded him.