

ELITE MAGES' ACADEMY

Chapter 91 - Gu Xiaoyue's Request

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After those freshmen passed the admissions test and became Dawn Academy's official students, they were forced to accept a very cruel and unaccepted fact. Due to the academy's tight management, they were not allowed to return to Earth for the entire freshman year.

If they failed to meet the requirements for entering sophomore year, they would have to repeat their freshman year, which meant that they might not have the opportunity to go home for at least a year or two. The academy was located in a pocket dimension, where time flowed at a different rate compared to Earth.

Therefore, news of Xiao Lin's return to Earth—despite being a freshman that had been at the academy for only a month—spread quickly, and so did the news that he might go to the New World. Dawning Forum's posts were refreshed at a very fast rate that night. All eyes were on that news, more so than the monthly exam that just ended.

There were people in the forum who envied Xiao Lin's chance to see the New World in advance. Others envied him for being able to return to Earth, as many inevitably missed their family after spending a month at the academy.

On the other end of the spectrum, the majority of people questioned the entire thing and put forth their own arguments. For example, the freshman rules clearly stated that freshmen were not allowed to return to Earth, as well as the fact that a freshmen's constitution might not be able to adapt to the New World.

There were a very small number of people who speculated out of spite that Xiao Lin would be sent back to Earth forever because of his record of absenteeism and average monthly exam scores.

Although Judge Academy did not deem the arrangement as confidential, Xiao Lin had no intention of offering any more explanations. Moreover, he was equally as clueless; he had no idea what he was supposed to do when he went to Judge Academy, so he refrained from showing himself on the forum.

Within Class Seven's group, Wang Dalin began arrogantly mocking Xiao Lin for not being a competent monitor. He pointed out that it was Xiao Lin's fault that everyone got poor grades in the monthly exam. Three minutes later, everyone received a notification that Wang Dalin had been banned again...

"Great job, Monitor!"

"Don't add these kinds of people into the group next time."

“We owe our thanks to Monitor Xiao. If not for him, we wouldn’t’ve gotten that result in the exam!”

“I’ve asked a few of our friends from the other classes. The class with the most Grade Bs seems to be our class! Class Seven!”

...

In contrast to before, Xiao Lin had gained noticeable support within his class group. On closer scrutiny, those people mainly consisted of those who followed him during the exam. Even though Xiao Lin had admitted his shortcomings and acknowledged his misjudgment that nearly led to everyone’s death, he still played a key role in saving everyone during the two crucial battles.

Those who went the other way with Wang Dalin questioned the group who went with Xiao Lin. Although many people continued to express doubt, their acknowledgment of Xiao Lin as acting monitor rose rather considerably.

Xiao Lin’s night was bound to be a restless one. Someone posted his phone number on the forum and he received all kinds of unfamiliar calls, mostly from other classes’ students. Everyone came to ask him about it after hearing that he was going to return to Earth. Their purpose of making such indirect inquiries was to ask him to help them a little if it was convenient.

In the beginning, Xiao Lin listened more carefully for the simple fact that they were all freshmen. The initial requests were quite typical, such as conveying their greetings to their parents, visiting their children, boyfriends, or girlfriends. Xiao Lin had to turn them down politely.

Department Head Song mentioned earlier that their return to Earth was to smoothen their journey. Due to Judge Academy’s urgent request, they would have to reach American soil quickly before entering Judge Academy. Xiao Lin was unsure whether he had enough free time to move around, because even if he did, the first thing he would do was go back to his own home.

As time went by however, more and more people heard about it and called Xiao Lin with increasingly strange requests. Examples include bringing game consoles or magazines, to the video highlights of the latest ball games. Some even made cryptic requests for him to download ‘colorful[1]’ movies...

Life at Dawn Academy was generally quite boring, despite the academy’s stellar job in terms of providing material goods. Although the accommodation and food provided were excellent, there were no TV shows, no Internet, no magazines, no games, no anime, no sports games, and no fiction novels. Truthfully speaking, it was very hard to bear.

Xiao Lin had no idea whether to laugh or cry because of that. He eagerly switched off his phone and had no plans to answer anyone’s calls. He went to Earth because it was incidental to the journey, not because he was going there on vacation.

Half an hour later however, there was a knock on his room door. Xiao Lin guessed that it was probably someone who wanted to make a request for him to bring something back. He wanted to ignore it, but the person who knocked was very persistent and it grew so loud that it interfered with his rest.

Xiao Lin got up angrily and opened the door, ready to unleash a wave of profanities on the person. When he saw the pretty figure in front of the door, he swallowed his cruel words and smiled kindly. “Is that you, Gu Xiaoyue? What a surprise. Please, come in. Oh, wait, no, wait a moment.”

The person standing beautifully outside the door was Gu Xiaoyue and Xiao Lin was just about to welcome her into his room. All of a sudden however, Xiao Lin remembered something and closed the door. He hurried back in and threw the unwashed socks and underwear into his drawer before tidying up his messy bed. He scanned all around and decided that everything looked okay. Barely a few steps later, he sniffed the air and immediately opened the window.

Once that was all done, he opened the door again. Gu Xiaoyue glanced at him blankly and walked straight in, with Xiao Lin following her from behind. He looked at the girl’s delicately-fair yet still-indifferent face and was unable to immediately discern the reason for her late-night visit. As someone with a very precise schedule, she went to bed early and woke up early too. There was hardly ever a time when she went out at night, much less visit her classmates.

In fact, after a month since their enrolment, Xiao Lin suspected that the only person Gu Xiaoyue knew in the entire freshmen year was himself, and barely so. She often kept a polite and aloof distance from other people, and her acquaintance with Xiao Lin was only limited to academic exchanges, especially in spell-related courses. The two of them occasionally discussed it, but it went without saying Xiao Lin was usually the one asking her for tutelage.

Gu Xiaoyue was a girl of few words. She sat on the bedside ever since she walked in and her pearly white teeth were chewing her lips slightly. She looked like she wanted to say something, but was hesitant to actually speak up.

Xiao Lin smiled and broke the awkward silence. “Did you want my help to bring something back for you after hearing that I’ll be returning to Earth soon?”

Gu Xiaoyue brushed the hair around her ears and straightened her glasses. She nodded earnestly and acknowledged. “Mm.”

Xiao Lin was only joking, but he ended up feeling rather surprised after getting a positive reply. “Huh? Uh... Ok, ok, what do you need me to bring back for you?”

“Nothing. I need your help to send something back.” Gu Xiaoyue lowered her head slightly. A girl as independent as her was probably unaccustomed to asking others for help and there was a touch of unexpected shyness in her tone. After thinking for a while, she immediately explained, “I originally wanted to wait until I got into sophomore year. I wanted to use my chance to go to Earth and personally give her this, but it might be a long time before we can see each other and I’m scared it’ll be a cause for concern, so I just want to...”

“It’s okay, I understand. What do you need me to take? I can only guarantee that I’ll do my best, because I’m not sure if I’ll have enough time after returning to Earth.” Xiao Lin felt it imprudent to explain too much about Judge Academy’s invitation, but the girl’s tone made him feel rather jealous.

Send what to whom? Could it be Gu Xiaoyue’s boyfriend on Earth?

Xiao Lin thought about it and realized—albeit rather reluctantly—that his mood worsened a little because of that.

[1] In case anyone doesn't get this, 色 in the usual sense of the word refers to color, but euphemistically it can refer to anything along the lines of sex/sexual/perverted/explicit (you get the idea).

Chapter 92 - Before Departure

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Gu Xiaoyue did not notice Xiao Lin's expression and continued. "It's a letter. If you don't have enough time, you can just send it to the post office."

Xiao Lin's mind was in a bit of a mess and he asked without thinking, "A love letter?"

Gu Xiaoyue glanced at him and pushed her glasses up before answering, "It's a letter to my little sister."

"Ah! Your little sister! Thank goodness then!" A sense of relief came over Xiao Lin all of a sudden.

"Thank goodness?" Gu Xiaoyue looked at him strangely.

Xiao Lin quickly concealed the expression on his face. "Ahem, nothing. Okay, I'll do my best to personally deliver that letter, and if I can't, I'll help you to post it. Where does your sister live?"

Gu Xiaoyue mentioned an address and Xiao Lin jotted it down immediately with pen and paper. He then remarked out of the blue, "At the Xiling Academy of Fine Arts. I heard that it's really hard to get in that fine arts academy. Your sister's quite amazing. She'll definitely be a great painter in the future."

Gu Xiaoyue turned her head slightly to reveal her delicate side profile, as if she did not want Xiao Lin to see her expression at the moment. Xiao Lin nevertheless spotted a tear from the corner of the girl's eyes. Gu Xiaoyue never usually showed any sad expressions, let alone cry.

Xiao Lin froze. With no idea as to what he mistakenly said, all he could do was apologize. "Umm, I must've said something wrong. I'm sorry."

Gu Xiaoyue took a moment to regain her composure. The trademark indifference that characterized her reappeared once she turned to look at him. After a moment's hesitation, she shook her head and said, "No, just remembered my sister."

"What's wrong with your sister?" Xiao Lin asked.

"Her legs have been paralyzed since she was a child. Painting is the only way for her to kill time and she's always wanted to be a painter." Gu Xiaoyue's voice was low and there was a hint of lingering sadness.

Xiao Lin was startled by it and apologized again. “Sorry. I shouldn’t have brought it up. Didn’t your parents take your sister to see a doctor. Are you sure it can’t be cured?”

Gu Xiaoyue’s voice grew colder. “We don’t have parents.”

Xiao Lin’s mouth was agape and he immediately pictured a scenario. The two sisters were orphans because their parents died since they were young and they depended on each other ever since. The elder one then rushed around doing work and making money in order to treat her little sister. His eyes became a little sympathetic as he thought about it and he felt like he should offer some help. He therefore said, “Why don’t I bring some money to your sister? I’m going back for some matters and I think the academy will help with this.”

Gu Xiaoyue looked at him strangely. “My family isn’t short of money. My sister was able to go to this fine arts academy because I donated a lot of money.”

His imaginary scene was instantly shattered and Xiao Lin cleared his throat, embarrassed. Even so, his curiosity about the girl’s family had increased even more, but Gu Xiaoyue had stopped talking and no longer wished to expound further. In the end, she handed him the beautiful envelope.

Xiao Lin felt that the atmosphere was a bit solemn, and after receiving the envelope, he joked, “You trust me a lot, don’t you? Aren’t you afraid that I’ll peek at your letter during its journey?”

Gu Xiaoyue glanced at him. “Do as you please. I wrote it in code. You wouldn’t understand it.”

Xiao Lin’s jaw dropped and he was speechless. He thought to himself, ‘Are you some kind of secret gang that still writes letters in code?’ Eventually, he could only ask sheepishly, “Are you sure your sister can understand it?”

“We used to play these games when we were young.”

“Well then, there’s nothing else I can say...”

After sending Gu Xiaoyue off, no one else came to bother him. It was understandable that he would be both physically and mentally tired after the monthly exam. Xiao Lin could finally relax and have a good night’s sleep.

Xiao Lin got up early as soon as the sun shone the next day. He was unsure whether the procedures for returning to Earth could be completed that day, and if it was postponed until the day after, he felt that he should not miss that day’s classes. Barely 10 minutes into his Basic Swordsmanship lesson, the ear-piercing tone of his cell phone began ringing.

The student union president appeared on screen as soon as the call was connected. He did not say much but asked Xiao Lin to rush to the student union office immediately. If all went well, Xiao Lin could set off that very morning.

Everything happened faster than expected, which surprised Xiao Lin somewhat. Under the ugly expression of the T-rex teacher, as well as the envy and hatred of other students, Xiao Lin trotted out of the training hall. His first stop was to the dormitory, where he took Gu Xiaoyue’s letter and had a change of clothes again. Wearing the school uniform on Earth was definitely not

recommended, so he changed back to the short-sleeve tee and jeans he had on when he first entered the academy.

When he reached the student union office again, Song Junlang was already waiting there, talking to the president. The two of them probably knew each other for a long time already, but did not seem too close. After seeing Xiao Lin coming in, their conversation stopped immediately.

“The dean gave his approval very quickly this time. I received a reply from the old man in the wee hours today,” the president explained briefly in a few words and smiled. “It’s really urgent on Judge Academy’s end, so I thought that you might as well leave this morning itself.”

“Where is Mr. Hank?” Xiao Lin did not see American anywhere.

“He returned to Earth yesterday evening because he has to settle some things for you in advance. He also needs to report to Judge Academy.”

The president carefully took out a light gold jade pendant from a purple box on the table. He handed it over to Xiao Lin and said, “The dean sent someone to deliver this to the academy overnight. He told me to make sure that you wear it.”

Xiao Lin took the jade pendant and placed it in his hand to observe carefully. The jade pendant had an oval shape with carvings of various unrecognizable and complex patterns interlaced with each other. It felt warm and moist, as if something was flowing inside. Xiao Lin asked curiously, “Is this a protective amulet?”

The president answered helplessly, “The dean didn’t say anything else, but he wants you to wear this jade pendant at all times. Never take it off. The dean won’t harm you, so all you have to do is follow his instructions.”

“Is this thing rare? What’s it used for?” Xiao Lin muttered. He held the jade pendant and fiddled with it, but could not determine what its purpose was.

Xiao Lin was about to bite down on it when Song Junlang’s eyes twitched and he said lazily, “Where is all your nonsense coming from? You’re told to wear it, so just wear it! Tsk, tsk. The fact that the dean actually gave this to you makes me wonder if you’re the old man’s illegitimate child!”

“Do not speak nonsense, Department Head Song!” The president respected the dean a lot and warned Song Junlang with a smile. His gaze landed on the delicate jade pendant again and there were traces of confusion in his expression. He soon realized something and was overcome with horror. He glanced at the Song Junlang, who looked rather nonchalant, and finally chose to maintain his silence.

In any case, Xiao Lin determined that the jade pendant was not something ordinary and proceeded to wear it around his neck. The student union president was still somewhat worried and so briefed Xiao Lin on a couple of things. For example, they had to be strictly mindful of disclosing Dawn Academy’s existence on Earth. The academy had a strict monitoring system that oversaw such matters, and the consequences would be disastrous once discovered.

Xiao Lin was also told to think twice about his actions after going to Judge Academy. As a representative of Dawn Academy, a slight mistake might cause diplomatic disputes between the two schools, and worse still, conflicts that ended in war.

Chapter 93 - Wormhole

Chapter 93: Wormhole

The student union president appeared to be very worried for Xiao Lin. It was quite an unprecedented move for a freshman to travel to a foreign academy's colony.

Song Junlang casually and unceremoniously interrupted the president's nagging, "Don't make it sound so serious. War? It's not like things haven't changed from a hundred years ago. Who would dare to start a war for no reason?"

"Diplomatic disputes. I'm sure you acknowledge this." The president was increasingly helpless and he nearly forgot that the department head beside him was not so easy to fool.

"Xiao Lin is a freshman, but I'm not. It's like you're worried about me too!"

...

After finally leaving the student union, Xiao Lin followed Department Head Song all the way to the deepest part of the academy. It was a huge open-air platform that was about the size of two football fields. In the center of the platform was a cone-shaped crystal stone almost 100 meters high. Colorful bright lights were placed in the center and a soft halo circled the entire platform.

It was a sight to behold for Xiao Lin. He had not been to that area and would never have been able to either, as there was a huge iron gate in front of the platform and at least a dozen people guarding it closely. When Song Junlang came over, he had to endure more than 10 minutes of inspection and inquiries. In the end, he was finally released after it was confirmed that there were no issues.

Song Junlang warned in a low voice, "This is the Teleportation Square. It's the most important place in the entire academy. Stay with me at all times. Don't run around and touch stuff. There's a ton of defense measures and countermeasure magic formations around here. Any one of them can blow you up so terribly that not even dust would be left of you!"

There were very few people on the Teleportation Square. Several train-like carriages were arranged on the white marble. Xiao Lin rubbed his eyes to make sure that he was not hallucinating. He pointed to the carriages and asked in a weird tone, "We'll ride these back to Earth?"

"Well, duh. You want to go back all by yourself?" Song Junlang rolled his eyes and walked to a small light-blue carriage. After showing the relevant documents to the guard next to him, the latter nodded, opened the door, and motioned the two of them to get in.

The inside of the carriage was narrower than the outside and could only accommodate about three or four people. Xiao Lin casually touched it and felt the carriage's cold and firm walls. It was by no

means made out of ordinary metal. There were no windows in the carriage, and when the doors were closed from the outside, everything became a pitch black inside.

The dark and airtight environment made Xiao Lin a little uneasy, but Song Junlang was used to it. A lazy voice came from the darkness, “Don’t worry, the teleportation passage to Earth is very short. It’ll be ten minutes at most.”

“It’s not what I imagined,” Xiao Lin said pensively. In fact, it was entirely different from what he had in mind.

Department Head Song smiled softly. “What kind of teleportation did you think it would be? Did you suppose that a few spells would be recited and you’ll just vanish with a swoosh?”

“Uh, almost.”

“You read too many novels!”

Unconvinced, Xiao Lin continued, “Professor Dai in his history class mentioned that similar novels or scripts on Earth were actually written by people from Dawn Academy who had their memories erased before being sent back to Earth. They ought to be right somehow.”

Song Junlang fell silent and said, “If you put it that way, then yes. but the teleportation that you mentioned can only be used by people who are at least on Gold rank. For insignificant side characters like us, we can only sit properly in this transdimensional carriage, or the chaotic energy in the teleportation channel would shred us to pieces.”

“Did we also travel here through this when we first came to the academy?”

“Yes. The admissions notice was used to gather you at the teleportation point first. You were then thrown into this transdimensional carriage and brought to the academy. The process is slightly more complicated, but if you’re interested, you can ask the Admissions Department’s head.”

“I don’t know him that well.”

...

Xiao Lin gradually relaxed after some brief exchanges. At that point, a harsh tearing sound rang in his ear, as if something had been torn in the blink of an eye. He felt a violent vibration in the carriage and it soon slid forward for a certain distance before going motionless once again.

Xiao Lin was about to open his mouth to ask when beams of kaleidoscopic light projected in from all directions. The carriage’s interior suddenly became as bright as daylight. Xiao Lin closed his eyes and reopened them slowly after adjusting to it. He was soon left speechless when he found that Song Junlang—who had experienced it before—was closing his eyes tightly.

Xiao Lin could not blame the guy for deliberately failing to warn him about it. Xiao Lin was even more surprised than before when he experienced that dreamlike light, as there was a huge amount of sand-like dust amidst the beams. When he stretched out his hand to touch them, the fine sand passed directly through his palm, like a formless mirage.

“Timesand. Only appears in the wormhole.” Department Head Song looked at it with some interest before retracting his gaze. After all, it was not the first time he had seen such a thing.

Xiao Lin was filled with enthusiasm. Shuttling through space and time was a very novel experience for him. They were probably within the wormhole at that moment, but he did not feel any from the carriage. Furthermore, the surroundings were completely sealed, but the golden Timesand could flow unimpeded throughout.

“Will it be the same when we go to the New World?” Xiao Lin asked.

Department Head Song nodded. “You can actually consider colonist academies as transit stations in the space-time passageway, connecting Earth to Planet Norma.”

“Then why can’t we go directly to Planet Norma from Earth?” Xiao Lin asked with interest.

“It was possible at first, but... How should I put this?” Song Junlang scratched his head and thought for a long time before slowly explaining, “Two points and a line. The two points are Earth and Planet Norma, and the line that connects them both is the wormhole. The earliest pioneers used this tunnel to reach Planet Norma directly from Earth, but everyone soon discovered that it was very risky because the wormhole would fluctuate from time to time. It could change from a straight line to a winding one, and if people happen to be in it when it changed, they would be completely lost in the chaos of endless space and would be unable to come back forever.”

After thinking more about it, he said again, “Travelling between two different spaces was very risky in the early days. The pioneers later worked very hard on Planet Norma for countless years, and their strength increased, but the limits of human power precluded from changing the fluctuations of time and space. Even so, they managed to find a compromise: to create an additional point to form a triangle with Earth and the Norma World. Do you understand this principle?”

Xiao Lin said, “I do. A triangle is the most stable.”

Department Head Song gestured to the void with his hand. “Correct. This principle is also applicable in space. The extra point is the colonial academies. By forming a stable triangle through this point, a passageway can be established without any twists and turns occurring.”

Chapter 94 - Back to Earth

Chapter 94: Back to Earth

Xiao Lin still had plenty of questions, such as how the carriage was driven, what materials it was made of, and how the wormholes were positioned. Song Junlang gave a simple explanation to some of them, but he did not know much about the other answers. He simply said that knowledge relating to spaces and realms were extremely profound, and only graduates would slowly learn about it.

The concept of time did not exist in the spatial tunnel. It was not until the golden Timesand gradually dimmed in the air and the carriage reverted to darkness that Xiao Lin understood it to be

the end of that short journey. He had been silently calculating the time in his heart, and the entire journey really did take about 10 or so minutes.

The door of the carriage opened from the outside and a dazzling light shone right in. Xiao Lin looked around after getting off and found that the layout was similar to that of Dawn Academy. There was also a cone-shaped crystal in the center, but it was relatively small and was lilac in color.

After getting out of the carriage, Xiao Lin noticed that there was an arched gate directly in front. The door frame was still filled with crystal dust, and the light blue teleportation circle in the center—which bore resemblance to an actual wormhole—shrunk rapidly until it disappeared completely.

There were already people waiting outside the carriage for some time. A man in white casual clothes enthusiastically shook hands with Song Junlang after the latter got off. “It’s been a while, Department Head Song! You haven’t been back on Earth for many years now.”

Department Head Song was filled with emotion. He looked around and murmured. “It’s probably been three or four years since I last came, but your base hasn’t changed at all.”

The man curled his lips. “While I do want to redecorate, you’re well aware that the focus of Dawn Academy has always been the New World. The resources given to the Earth Division are very limited.”

On noticing the surrounding rock walls and the spiraling stone stairs, Xiao Lin asked in surprise, “Are we in a cave?”

“Actually, a whole mountain was hollowed out. It wouldn’t be easy to place all this teleportation equipment if that hadn’t been done.” Department Head Song pointed to the man next to him and said, “This is Mao Tianying, the person in charge of Dawn Academy’s Earth Division. Old Mao, this kid is Xiao Lin.”

“I know. The Americans sent me a message. Tsk tsk, a freshman going to the New World. How enviable.” Mao Tianying’s eyes were full of yearning and envy. He shook his head and cast aside his complicated emotions. Xiao Lin smiled and said, “I heard that you mastered Ancient Normese. That isn’t easy.”

Xiao Lin said modestly, “It’s only level one. I’m curious, actually. If people who can speak Ancient Normese can be simulated in the monthly exam, why isn’t there anyone else at Dawn Academy who can master it?”

Mao Tianying patted Xiao Lin on the shoulder. “Well, it’s like using Google Translate to translate various languages. You can’t claim to have mastered the language by yourself. While it’s true that the academy does have some materials in Ancient Normese, the fact that there is such information doesn’t mean that someone will learn it. The difficulty of Ancient Normese is more than just one level above Standard Normese. The Thunder Kingdom had also been wiped out for hundreds of years now, so who would waste their time on that? If anyone is idle enough to learn it, they’ll often be shocked by its difficulty and would give up without even reaching the threshold to learn.”

Song Junlang added, “The central computer is not omnipotent. Let’s put it this way: the computer had not been invented yet when Judge Academy destroyed the Thunder Kingdom... The scene in your exam is an inferred simulation by the computer, based on the limited information provided by the academy. It can be as true to life as possible within the range of existing data, but even the computer is unable to simulate any more beyond that range.”

Mao Tianying smiled and said, “Well, enough about this. Judge Academy is urging us to hurry. If it’s convenient for you, I’ll arrange a chartered flight to America in the afternoon for you.”

“Don’t you need a visa or something like that?”

“I’ll handle it for you.”

“Uh, don’t I need to go there myself?” Xiao Lin was a little surprised.

Song Junlang laughed. “We have our ways. A passport copied through magic is no different from a real one.”

“It’s forged...” Xiao Lin suddenly became excited and asked, “Can this spell copy money then?”

Mao Tianying went blank for a moment. “Theoretically, it’s possible, but no one would do such a stupid thing. The copying technique still requires a lot of spell materials and can be used only in an emergency. Using it to copy money is like using a cannon to kill a mosquito, especially when we don’t lack finances.”

Department Head Song somewhat guessed what Xiao Lin was trying to imply. “Are you short of money? Although the focus of the colonial academies is in the New World, there are still some asset reserves on Earth. Special circumstances call for special measures. Let this kid have some, Old Mao.”

“That won’t be a problem, but I’ve spoken with Hank. He wants you to fly directly to America and head to Judge Academy. I don’t think you’d have any chance to stay around and have fun in the States.” Mao Tianying hesitated. He thought that Xiao Lin wanted to enjoy himself in America for a few days.

Xiao Lin shook his head. “No, I just want to pop in at home. Can you give me a few days?”

Mao Tianying was put in a hard place. “I’m the person in charge of the Earth Division, but to be honest, this title is of little value. This...”

Department Head Song thought for a while. “How many days do you want?”

“A week?”

Department Head Song rolled his eyes and said, “Don’t take a mile when you’re given an inch! Is twenty-four hours enough?”

“Three days!”

“You’re getting excessive. Two days!”

Xiao Lin hesitated for a moment and asked. “Where are we now?”

“Earth.”

“Umm, I’m asking which province and city.”

Mao Tianying replied, “The city intersection between City A and City B, but this place isn’t on any map.”

Xiao Lin thought about it. It was not that far from his home in Dongchuan City and was also a reasonable distance from Xiling City, where Gu Xiaoyue’s sister lived. In a pinch, two days was enough, so he nodded in agreement.

“If you want to go back, there’s a couple of things we have to warn you first.” Mao Tianying still felt that it was a tricky situation.

“I told him,” Song Junlang remarked curtly.

“Are you sure?” Mao Tianying was suspicious.

“It doesn’t matter if I’m not sure. Don’t forget that someone high-up is watching over me!”

Mao Tianying was speechless. He waved his hand helplessly and said to Xiao Lin, “In fact, there are only two main points. The academy’s affairs are not allowed to be disclosed to outsiders, and you can’t simply use the abilities that you’ve mastered at the academy. Even if you do, the rule is that you cannot exceed the level that Earth can withstand. We have a strict monitoring system for this, and that’s actually the main task of our division here.”

“Can’t exceed the level that Earth can withstand?” Xiao Lin expressed some confusion over it.

Song Junlang added, “You’re still a freshman. With your strength, you can just ignore this rule. The first point is the one you should bear in mind.”

Xiao Lin did not intend to disclose it to anyone else, but he still asked out of curiosity, “What will happen if I tell them?”

Song Junlang and Mao Tianying exchanged a serious glance. “There are two possibilities if someone reveals the school to a non-student: that non-student would either be killed or invited to join the academy. That’s the common agreement reached by all colonist academies in the world, and it’s not something to fool around with.”

Chapter 95 - The Impact on Earth

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The history of Planet Norma's invasion by colonial academies could be traced back to more than two centuries ago. The fact that they could hide from everyone without revealing anything necessitated an extremely harsh monitoring system. Therefore, Xiao Lin did not doubt Song Junlang's words at all.

Xiao Lin followed Mao Tianying up the spiral staircase while looking all around. The mountain was indeed hollowed out, and except for the portal to Dawn Academy at the bottom, it was divided into at least seven or eight floors. There were doors leading to the stairs beside each floor, but Mao Tianying went straight to the top floor without stopping. Once the top floor door was pushed open, his eyes suddenly lit up as the bright rays of the sun shone down.

Xiao Lin was a little surprised when he saw the blue sky. After living in Dawn Academy for a month, he suddenly felt that Earth's sky was bluer.

Outside the door was the mountaintop, and Xiao Lin noticed the presence of a huge telescope not far away. Speechless, he asked, "You disguised this place as an observatory?"

Mao Tianying corrected him. "It's not a disguise. It really is an observatory, but we have a certificate issued by the country."

Song Junlang laughed too. "About a few decades ago, someone asked off the cuff and wondered if we could see Planet Norma from Earth. Everyone thought they could try it, so an observatory was built on the Earth Division."

"Then, did you manage to see Planet Norma?"

Mao Tianying spread his palms. "No, but everyone treats this as a fun way to pass the time when things get boring. After all, the main task of our division here is monitoring and surveillance."

Mao Tianying led the two of them to his office. The building on the ground was more of a decoration. No one was in it and the interior was also rather messy. He took out a bank card and threw it to Xiao Lin, saying, "The password is one-two-three-four-five-six. The amount inside is left over from someone who came back some time ago. There's probably more than two hundred thousand in it. Will it be enough?"

"That's enough! More than enough!" Xiao Lin was a little surprised at how nonchalant the man was, but when he thought about it, Renminbi was probably nothing to an academy that aimed to colonize strange worlds.

"You'd have to inform the American side if you want to go back. Department Head Song has to come forward on this. I don't have a high enough level," Mao Tianying said half-jokingly.

"Leave it to me."

Department Head Song asked for a number. Magic cell phones were not allowed to be used on Earth, so he picked up the landline on the desk and dialed. The other side answered in seconds.

“Mr. Hank? I’m afraid it’ll take two days for Xiao Lin and I to arrive in America.”

“Why?”

“Oh! It’s a long story. Xiao Lin isn’t feeling well after returning. I’m afraid he’s not comfortable with the environment since it’s his first time here. He has to rest for a couple days.”

“Department Head Song, can you not patronize me with such ridiculous excuses? He’s an Earthling! This is Earth!”

“Mm, I admit that I was kidding when I said his body can’t accept the environment, but he really is not feeling well. As you know, the wormhole is full of uncertainties. We haven’t fully understood the effect of Timesand on the human body yet...”

The two went back-and-forth with each other for nearly ten minutes and Song Junlang finally convinced the other party to agree. Xiao Lin was rather dumbfounded when Song Junlang hung up. “Did he really believe that I’m not feeling well?”

“He’s not an idiot. Who in the world would believe it!”

“Then why would he agree?”

After a moment’s silence, Song Junlang sighed. “The chances of coming back will only decrease in the future. Everyone understands this, so it’s only natural they give you some leeway.”

Song Junlang rummaged around the office, seeming quite familiar with everything. After a while, he found a car key, a couple of bank cards, and a few mobile phones. He threw one to Xiao Lin and said, “Don’t use the magic phone. Just put up with it in the next two days. I’ll drive you to the airport.”

Mao Tianying waved them goodbye after sending them down the mountain. Song Junlang found the parking lot by himself and vomited a bit. Those guys still had not upgraded their vehicles even after so many years.

Department Head Song claimed that he had not been back for several years, but he was actually familiar with the roads nearby. He pointed to the roadside from time to time and talked about the changes that had occurred in the past few years. For example, he would comment that a very large hotel had been demolished there some years ago, or that a bridge had finally been completed.

Xiao Lin sat in the front passenger seat and listened quietly. He suddenly asked, “Why haven’t you come back all these years, Department Head Song? I know that the academy has strict restrictions against the students returning to Earth, but graduates don’t seem to be bound by this rule.”

Song Junlang fell silent for a moment despite his talkativeness earlier. He turned his head and pretended to look at the scenery, as if he did not want Xiao Lin to see his expression. After a while, he faintly replied, “I don’t want to come back. Must there be a reason for that?”

Realizing that the other party did not want to talk about it, Xiao Lin changed the subject. “Why does the school restrict students from coming back? Are they worried that Earth would undergo turbulent effects?”

Department Head Song shook his head. “There’s no ‘might’. It already has, and the effect is irreversible. It’s a pity that people always realize the seriousness of the problem only after things happen.”

Song Junlang asked while driving, “Have you heard of the Great Tianqi Explosion?”

“I have. It was a mysterious explosion that occurred in Beijing during the Tianqi period of the Ming Dynasty. Both the scope of the explosion and the casualties were large, but the cause of the explosion is still an unsolved mystery.”

Song Junlang had a noncommittal attitude and asked, “What about the Tunguska Explosion?”

“I’ve read about it. It was an explosion that occurred over Siberia, Russia in the early twentieth century. The force of the explosion was in the tens of millions of tons and its power was extremely terrifying. There are many speculations about the cause of the explosion, such as asteroids, comets, nuclear weapons, and even an alien spacecraft crash, but there hasn’t been an exact statement yet.”

After speaking, Xiao Lin realized something and was overcome with shock. “F*CK! No way, are you saying that these two incidents were caused by people from colonialist academies?”

“Isn’t it obvious?” Department Head Song said in a very calm tone. “These two incidents were clearly recorded and filed. The big explosion in the Ming Dynasty was when a student wanted to dispense a new type of magic potion, but accidentally caused an explosion. Said student exploded to death on the spot.”

“Doesn’t the reign of the Tianqi Emperor during the Ming Dynasty date back more than four hundred years ago?”

“It’s two-hundred-and-ten N.C. now, which means its two hundred and ten years of colonial history. This timeline is based on the time on Planet Norma. Don’t forget that the time ratio is two to one. Our country’s first foray into Planet Norma dates back to the Ming Dynasty.”

Xiao Lin was rather surprised when he heard that and asked, “What about the Tunguska Explosion? Was it also a failure in preparing a potion?”

“That was a fight between two people from Russia’s Voyna Akademiya. The reason for the fight is known only between their own people, but in any case, it was a very fierce fight.”

Having said that, Department Head Song sighed again. “The original colonists had no qualms about unleashing the otherworldly power they mastered on Earth. Fortunately, they were pioneers in the early days of colonization and everything was trial-and-error. There was no central computer to arrange courses systematically for them. Therefore, the strength of those people was extremely low, and the impact on the world is ultimately limited. At most, they might leave some mysterious legends and strange stories. Stuff like innate martial arts masters who can kill a hundred people, black magic, European vampires and werewolves, and so on and so forth. The explosion during the Ming Dynasty was the biggest event of that year, but that was the extent of it.”

Chapter 96 - Homecoming

Chapter 96: Homecoming

Department Head Song's voice gradually became more solemn. "After that, everyone's strength gradually increased and the impact on Earth became greater and greater. However, the number of colonists in that year was still very small, and everyone could control themselves until the Tunguska explosion. The absolutely awful consequence of the battle finally woke everyone up."

Xiao Lin nodded in agreement. "An explosion of that scale probably had a certain impact on the world back then."

"Colonists would never take such effects to heart!" Song Junlang sighed with a wry smile. "It's the stability of space. Earth simply cannot withstand such a high-level energy impact. Everyone realized it after they got more knowledge of space and law, but unfortunately the damage was already done. During the past two decades, volcanoes, tsunamis, and earthquakes all over the world have been more frequent than before, but you probably already know that."

Xiao Lin was even more surprised. "Are you going to tell me that these were also caused by colonists?"

"Not at all. These are all the bad effects caused by space-time disequilibrium. We have done data deductions, and if this situation continues to intensify, the only result will be that Earth disintegrates completely and turns into cosmic dust. Such a deduction frightened everyone. Although we want to colonize other worlds, Earth will always be our home, and no one wants to see it destroyed. From that time onward, all colonial academies began to impose the harshest restrictions on the return of colonists to earth. Those who violate the regulations will also be severely punished."

Xiao Lin asked again. "If someone with great power violates the regulations, wouldn't they be able to destroy the Earth directly? At the very least, they can reenact the Tunguska Explosion again, right?"

Song Junlang smiled softly. "Not anymore. Earth laws have an upper limit. When a person's strength reaches a certain extent, they would be rejected by the laws of this world. Initially, this upper limit is around Gold rank, but since everyone wants to destroy the stability of this world, it has now been reduced to Silver rank."

Xiao Lin cocked a brow. "In other words, people whose strength ranks above Silver can't return to Earth?"

"Yes. It was a fight between two Gold-ranked people in Tunguska last time... and even if Silver-ranked people can come back, they're not allowed to use any power beyond the norm on Earth. Violators will be punished heavily, and for those Silver-ranked people concerned, the punishment was absolutely unbearable. Coupled with the fact that no one wanted to destroy their homes, Earth has gradually become peaceful in recent years."

Xiao Lin could not help but glance at the calm-looking Song Junlang. If the news about the Logistics Department Head in Dawn Academy Evening News was correct, then Department Head Song was also a Gold-ranked genius long ago, but fell to Bronze after being seriously injured. So far, his strength had not shown any signs of recovering. He sighed and said, “No wonder you said that the number of times we can return would be even lesser. What would happen if someone insists on returning to Earth and deliberately stops training?”

“The two options are either to have your memory and imprint erased before being expelled from the academy forever, or to be dispatched to the Earth Division, as you just saw.”

Xiao Lin felt a myriad of emotions. He did not know how he would choose in the future and slowly became silent along the way. When they reached the airport, Song Junlang bought him a ticket and patted him on the back before comforting him with a smile, “Don’t overthink. Silver rank is still a long way ahead of you, and since your basic attributes are so low, you might never reach Silver at all.”

Xiao Lin lips twitched. “Are you sure you’re trying to comfort me?”

The two of them parted ways at the airport. Xiao Lin did not ask where Song Junlang would go, while Song Junlang only mentioned that they should meet at the airport in two days. The both of them went their separate ways after exchanging temporary phone numbers.

In any case, the future was still far away, and after boarding the plane, Xiao Lin slowly let go of those mindless questions. After an hour’s journey, he landed at Dongchuan Airport and took another three-hour car ride. By evening, Xiao Lin had arrived home.

He came to a dilapidated alley where water accumulated on the bumpy ground. After passing through it, Xiao Lin finally stopped in front of a small three-story building. The house was built decades ago, and the walls looked extremely worn-out after having long lost their original color.

When he went up to the third floor, he knocked on the door lightly and it was Mother who opened the door. She was shocked for about ten seconds the instant she saw Xiao Lin, but complained in a tone that suppressed her excitement, “Why are you back so suddenly? You didn’t even call. What about your new job? This isn’t a weekend or a long holiday. Are you sure it’s okay when you’ve only started working for such a short time?”

Xiao Lin was a little dazed and asked cluelessly, “What job?”

His mother glared at him and said, “Didn’t you send a letter two months ago, saying that you might not be back for a long time if you found a new job? You said that you’ll write a letter at the start of this year, and if it wasn’t your handwriting, I would’ve thought that the delivery person must have sent it wrongly.”

“Can you show me?”

Mother found the letter and handed it to Xiao Lin. Xiao Lin looked at it carefully and was given quite a surprise. The general contents of the letter were that he had found a good job in a faraway city and would not come back for a long time. He clearly did not mail the letter himself, so the only logical conclusion was that Dawn Academy did it for him in the aftermath of everything. After all, the sudden disappearance of an ordinary person would no doubt cause problems.

In any case, it was a good explanation, much better than if it were an inexplicable one. Xiao Lin pretended to pat his forehead suddenly and smiled, “I almost forgot. I did write this letter. I’m doing good right now, and I’ve made a lot of money this month, I mean, in these two months.”

Xiao Lin took out the bank card. On the way back home, he had applied for another card and deposited a few thousand yuan inside before setting up a regular remittance. Otherwise, he felt his parents would be frightened if he gave them the hundred thousand at once. He would find it even harder to explain, and he did not know when he would next return to Earth.

His father soon came back, and although Xiao Lin was either evasive or vague about his work, the two of them were happy that he could find such a good job. They had a simple dinner that could never be compared to the academy’s rich meals, but Xiao Lin felt that it was the most delicious meal he had in months.

Xiao Lin stayed at home for only a short time. The two days allowed by the Judge Academy’s kindness included that day as well, so he had to bid a hasty farewell to his parents early the next morning. Even so, going home for a short time allowed himself and his parents to feel more at ease.

He then took the letter Gu Xiaoyue entrusted him and boarded another flight. His destination was the Xiling Academy of Fine Arts.

It was already two in the afternoon when he arrived at Xiling Airport. Xiao Lin was very tired from running here and there in the past day, but there was no time to sidestep it. He had received a call from Department Head Song that morning, saying that Judge Academy had urged them again, and it was Hank’s superior no less. Unable to avoid the inevitable, the latest time he was allowed to return was set to that night.

Chapter 97 - Gu Chengyun

Chapter 97: Gu Chengyun

Gu Xiaoyue’s younger sister was named Gu Chengyun. Xiao Lin hardly had any time left, but fortunately, it did not take long for him to find her. As soon as he arrived at the fine arts academy, Xiao Lin asked a random person about her and managed to find her directly.

“Gu Chengyun? The paralyzed girl who was admitted to the academy this year! Of course! Who in this school doesn’t know her! Who are you to her?”

“I’m a friend of her elder sister. I was asked to deliver something.”

“Oh. She does have an elder sister.” The tall girl who spoke probably knew Gu Chengyun and let her guard down slightly after hearing what Xiao Lin said.

“Yes, they were dependent on each other since they were young and it’s such a pity too. Her sister is very busy and isn’t able to leave for the time being,” Xiao Lin explained vaguely as much as he knew.

The tall girl really did believe it. “I’m her classmate. I’ll bring you there.”

As soon as they saw Gu Chengyun in the corridor next to the studio, the girl went over and pushed Gu Chengyun’s wheelchair over. Xiao Lin was rather stunned for a moment when she saw Gu Chengyun. He almost thought that he was looking at Gu Xiaoyue; the two of them were spitting images of each other. The only difference was that Gu Chengyun did not wear glasses, but she was nevertheless very beautiful. She was not the stereotypical beautiful woman, but a single glance at her delicate and bright temperament was truly an unforgettable sight.

“Who are you? Do you really have a letter from my sister?” Gu Chengyun’s first reaction was that of great caution and suspicion when she saw Xiao Lin.

Xiao Lin did not say much and handed the letter directly to her. Gu Xiaoyue said that the letter was written in a secret language. Needless to say, it was a nonsensical thing that only herself and her sister would understand.

Sure enough, Gu Chengyun’s doubts were relieved after she opened up and saw the contents of the letter. Its contents were not lengthy, and it looked as though it was about a page long. The girl read very slowly though, and Xiao Lin could not help but quietly lean over to take a few glances. He did not intend to peek, but his actions were done out of pure interest in the so-called secret language.

The letter was full of tadpole-like words. Each word was distorted, slanted, or upside down, but they did not appear to have been written randomly. It looked just like how words should look like.

Xiao Lin’s neck was sore from all the peeping, but he did not even recognize a single word.

“Uncle, just tell me if you want to see it. I didn’t say I wouldn’t show it to you.” Gu Chengyun suddenly looked up. Her bright eyes winked and she remarked playfully in a voice reminiscent of a silver bell.

Xiao Lin retracted his gaze. “I don’t indulge in reading other people’s letters. And I’m NOT an uncle!”

“You can’t understand it, can you!” Gu Chengyun smiled. She was very lively, unlike Gu Xiaoyue who was often very unfeeling. Although Gu Chengyun was paralyzed, the bright smile on her face was very much genuine.

Gu Chengyun tilted his head cutely and said, “I’m really curious, actually. Do you really know my sister? I’m not suspicious of you or anything, but I still can’t believe that someone like my sister actually asked someone for help. And I’m even more surprised that someone was willing to help her!”

Xiao Lin’s mouth twitched after being jibed and smiled resentfully. “I don’t think there’s anyone in China who would be so silly as to write letters in such a cryptic language.”

The girl giggled for a while. “I actually don’t know what text it is either. Father taught it to us when we were young and we learned it.”

Her statement conflicted with Xiao Lin’s imagination of their parents dying since childhood, so he asked casually, “What happened to your father then?”

The smile on Gu Chengyun's face faded in an instant and she said bluntly, "He died!"

Xiao Lin remembered Gu Xiaoyue mentioning that they had no parents, so he quickly apologized to Gu Chengyun. In spite of that, the girl's expression did not seem to improve. Xiao Lin was a little embarrassed and quickly asked about Gu Chengyun's current situation, such as what difficulties she might have in her life and whether she needs people to take care of her, but after recalling that Gu Chengyue had donated 20 million yuan to that art academy, Xiao Lin felt those topics quite irrelevant...

Gu Xiaoyue only spoke briefly about her family's riches, but rather than being rich in the ordinary sense of the word, they could be considered Miss Perfect because they were fair, rich, and beautiful!

Xiao Lin did not know how else to continue the conversation; he knew very little about Gu Xiaoyue. Moreover, he was not good at chatting with girls, so he prepared to leave since he had already sent the letter. Gu Chengyun threw her hair back and regained a faint smile. "Sorry. I just remembered some unpleasant things. How is my sister?"

"Well, she's good, but she might not be able to see you for a while."

"I'm used to it." Gu Chengyun did not seem to mind it and appeared to show no indication of talking too much about her sister. Xiao Lin had to give up asking further questions, despite his intent to try and find out about Gu Xiaoyue's lifespan and ascertain whether the girl had any terminal illnesses or cancer.

"You came all the way to send me the letter and I have nothing to thank you for. I'll give you a painting I just drew."

Xiao Lin thought for a while and added. "Sure. I can bring it back and show it to your sister to prove that I actually delivered the letter."

"Then I'll autograph it for you! Hehe. You can even auction the painting once I become a great painter!"

She was a happy-go-lucky girl indeed, and if Xiao Lin had not noticed her wheelchair from time-to-time, it would have been difficult to imagine that her legs had been paralyzed since she was young. Xiao Lin respected her for that. He pushed her wheelchair into the studio again while smiling and answering, "Sure."

The Statue of Liberty was painted on the girl's drawing board. Xiao Lin looked at it for a while and lauded her, "It looks so real. Your skills are amazing."

"I've been dreaming of traveling around the world since I was a child, but I also know that my legs are troublesome, so I won't bother my big sister. It's good enough that I'm able to show the world with my drawing paper."

Xiao Lin was silent for a moment and no longer continued the somewhat depressing topic. Instead, he pointed to the sky on the drawing paper and said, "Is that rain?"

"No, it's hail!"

“Why did you paint the Statue of Liberty with hail? Those hailstones look quite big too.” Xiao Lin was very curious.

Gu Chengyun pursed her lips and shook her head. “I don’t know. I always imagine the subject in my mind before painting. When I picked up the pen today, the Statue of Liberty in a hailstorm suddenly appeared in my mind, so I painted it.”

That reason was strong enough and Xiao Lin had no words for it.

Due to his limited time, Xiao Lin kept the painting and could not stay any longer. After bidding farewell to Gu Chengyun, he rushed to the airport without even stopping on the way. When he contacted Song Junlang, he discovered that the latter had been waiting there for a long time with Hank.

Xiao Lin jogged all the way to them, panting while asking, “I didn’t miss the flight, did I!”

“It doesn’t matter. It’s a chartered flight anyway.” Song Junlang pointed to the American next to him and added, “It’s their money.”

“Sorry to interrupt your vacation, but unfortunately, I just received a message from our HQ. People from several other academies have already arrived and we’re the only ones left. They’re urging us already.” Hank came up to Xiao Lin, shook hands with him, and apologized politely. He surmised that Xiao Lin had visited home over the past two days and did not give Xiao Lin a hard time over it.

Chapter 98 - New Washington

Chapter 98: New Washington

It was a rarity that Xiao Lin could enjoy the first-class treatment of a chartered flight. The exhaustion from a busy two days quickly made him fall asleep. It was not until Song Junlang woke him up that he realized they had reached America.

“You had a real deep sleep.” Song Junlang crossed his legs and was reading the newspaper.

“I’m a little tired. Are we arriving soon?”

Hank spread out his hand and said helplessly. “I’m afraid it’ll be a while. We were originally scheduled to land in New York, but the darn weather somehow decided it was time for some hail... We’ll be transferred to Pennsylvania.”

“Here in America, there are quite a number of teleportation points to their academy,” Department Head Song explained.

“New York? Hail?” Xiao Lin was taken aback.

“Yup. The storm’s pretty big too. The point is we can’t land. But not to worry.”

“Oh, nothing.” Xiao Lin touched the rolled-up painting in his hand, the one that was given to him by Gu Chengyun. He thought for a while and shook his head with a smile, muttering, “How is that possible? I must be thinking too much. What a coincidence.”

The teleportation point was located in the Pocono Mountains, Pennsylvania. He remembered Hank saying that it was a national scenic spot, but its underground had been converted by Judge Academy’s people into a station that led there. The teleportation passage was similar to Dawn Academy’s and also carried the passengers in a closed space, similar to a carriage. After about 10 minutes in the wormhole, they walked out of the carriage again, and a brand-new academy appeared in front of Xiao Lin.

“Welcome to Judge Academy. Although I really want to bring the two of you around, it’s unfortunate that we don’t have much time. We have to go to the colony immediately.”

Xiao Lin expressed no objections to it. He had gotten enough sleep on the plane and his mind was eager when he thought of going to the New World soon.

“Where is the super potion?” Song Junlang asked suddenly.

“What’s that?” Xiao Lin asked.

Song Junlang said unhappily, “Don’t forget what I told you. If a person below Black Iron rank enters the New World, their body will deteriorate rapidly because of the difficulty in adapting to the New World’s environment. This super potion is the latest thing out of R&D that has been developed in Britain. It’s a brand-new potion that can temporarily stop this deterioration.”

“The super potions are all at the colony. Please trust us. Judge Academy will not harm your school’s students.” Hank’s face was full of smiles.

“I sure hope so.”

They did not stay any longer and quickly set foot on another carriage. It was almost the same as the one they took back to Earth. The door was closed and the inside became completely dark. Song Junlang explained to Xiao Lin that no lighting facilities were installed because it was in the wormhole, and anything remotely similar to a power supply would simply fail to work.

The wormhole to the colony took a much longer time. In the dark, Hank continued to speak in his subpar Chinese and explained to them, “Time is tight. The academy wants Xiao Lin to join our team directly after arriving. You don’t need to participate in the assignment immediately during the first two days and you can familiarize yourself with everything first. It’ll be good for you to first adjust to your routine and habits.”

“What about my remuneration? The four hundred New Dollars a day? When will it be paid?” That was Xiao Lin’s primary concern.

“It’ll be paid in one lump sum after the assignment is over.”

“Can it be paid daily?”

“Well, I don’t have the final say. In fact, I’m only responsible for bringing you back to New Washington. The rest will be handled by Professor Brown’s team.”

“New Washington?”

Song Junlang explained, “That’s the name of America’s main city in the New World, which also happens to be the Judge Academy’s first academy. It was transformed and expanded on the foundation of Thunder Kingdom’s old capital.”

Xiao Lin became curious. “What’s the name of Dawn Academy’s main city in the New World? Is it New Beijing?”

“We’re not as silly as Judge Academy. Moreover, Beijing had yet to be called Beijing when our main city was first built. Ours is called Dawn. Tsk, tsk. You’re a student of Dawn Academy, yet you don’t even know this,” Song Jun Lang criticized unceremoniously.

The Timesand began to permeate and the dark carriage was flooded with a soft golden light. Hank smiled and said, “This is probably Xiao Lin’s first time in the New World.”

“Yes.”

“Then do enjoy the sights at New Washington City. Our main city is bigger than Dawn City and the facilities are more complete! If Professor Brown agrees to pay you daily, you can buy whatever you want in New Washington!” Hank’s tone was full of pride.

Xiao Lin touched his nose and glanced subconsciously at Department Head Song. To his surprise, Department Head Song simply snorted coldly and explained rather reluctantly, “This is true. In terms of its size and construction, Dawn City does fall behind New Washington City. Although it was among the first colonial academies, Dawn City had suffered severe damage in the war with the orcs, while New Washington did not engage in any further wars after its capital was attacked by the Thunder Kingdom in forty-eight N.C.”

Xiao Lin knew very little about the history of the two academies, but it was not the first time he heard about the war with the orcs. The last time it was mentioned, Department Head Song said that Dawn Academy had earlier suspended the monthly examinations for a long time, resulting in heavy losses for the academy in that war. It was likely referring to the same war.

The journey to Planet Norma was particularly lengthy, perhaps due to the excitement and anticipation. About half an hour later, the Timesand within the carriage finally disappeared.

“We’re here!” Hank called.

The surroundings went completely dark again and the car door was opened from the outside. Bright sunshine poured in and Xiao Lin—who was a little too excited—rushed over to Hank. Song Junlang thought of something and hurriedly stopped him, but it was too little too late. The eager Xiao Lin had already rushed out of the carriage, but as soon as his feet touched the ground, he suddenly felt as though a jack was bearing down on his entire body, making it feel extremely heavy.

Xiao Lin could not even stand up under the sudden pressure. He wanted to reach out and support himself using the carriage, but he soon discovered that his leaden-like arms were incredibly difficult to lift. Eventually, all he could do was squat on the ground.

Song Junlang immediately leaped out of the carriage and helped Xiao Lin. He was half-amused and half-concerned, saying, “Why are you so anxious for? Planet Norma’s gravity is almost twice as that of Earth. Are you okay?”

Xiao Lin, who could barely stand up with Song Junlang’s support, panted slightly and stared at him, saying, “Why didn’t you tell me sooner!”

“Sorry, sorry, it was our mistake!” Hank was also a little flustered and said quickly, “We forgot that people below Black Iron rank cannot bear the gravity here. After all, there has been no precedent for Black Iron-rank students to come to the New World.”

Song Junlang roared. “Quit all your nonsense! Get the super potion quickly!”

“The super potion can only prevent the deterioration of his body. I’m afraid it can’t eliminate the influence of gravity!” said a middle-aged Caucasian next to Hank. She wore a pair of spectacles and her Chinese was much worse than Hank’s.

Chapter 99 - Seismic Gravity Wave

Chapter 99: Seismic Gravity Wave

Xiao Lin had yearned for the New World for a long time and fantasized greatly about it before coming. He hardly expected to face such an embarrassing problem on the first day of entering the New World. His strength turned out to be so weak that he could not even adapt to the gravity there.

The Caucasian woman seemed prepared for that scenario and waved a staff in her hand. A faint white halo burst out from the energy stone on the staff and attached to the surface of Xiao Lin’s skin, forming a layer of fine-white protective netting. After attempting to stand up again, Xiao Lin clearly felt that the tremendous pressure on his body had disappeared.

“This spell is a countermeasure against gravity. It can only last for half an hour at most,” Song Junlang expressed concern about this.

“Don’t worry. My anti-gravity shield is specially strengthened and can last for two hours. Of course, it also comes at a cost: the effects of offsetting gravity will be weakened, but it’s more than enough to counteract the gravity of this planet.”

The Caucasian first explained to Song Junlang in fluent English. She then glanced at the leaping and frisking Xiao Lin before changing to half-baked Chinese and saying, “We’ve given this issue some consideration after receiving Hank’s notice. Other than buying super potions from Britain, we’ve also made an accessory for you that can counteract gravity.”

“When will it be delivered?” Xiao Lin asked.

“I’m not too sure. It might arrive a bit later, but during this time, I’ll be responsible for following you and replenishing your anti-gravity shield when necessary. You can call me Bella.”

The American woman’s voice was a little cold. “Frankly speaking, I personally think that Hank is getting old and confused. To think that he let a freshman join the team.”

Xiao Lin narrowed his eyes. The slight affection he had for that woman because of her anti-gravity shield suddenly disappeared. “Do you mean I don’t deserve to be here?”

Bella was noncommittal and warned with a haughty look, “I hope you’ll show a value that’s worth all our efforts; otherwise, getting expelled from New Washington is the least of your problems. We’ll also inform the Supreme Council of this matter and have Dawn Academy send you back to Earth for good! You don’t have to be nervous. I’m just saying this to tell you that Judge Academy doesn’t welcome liars!”

Bella obviously did not believe that Xiao Lin really mastered Ancient Normese, but instead conned Hank in some way to reap free remunerations from Judge Academy.

Xiao Lin felt particularly irked and wanted to refute her, but someone else seemed to be more displeased than he was.

Song Junlang muttered the name several times and suddenly exclaimed, “Bella? You wouldn’t happen to be the top graduate from eight years ago, would you?”

Bella nodded proudly. The title of best graduate was tantamount to acknowledging her as the one of the strongest in her entire year. Bella treated it as an undoubtedly high honor.

Bella’s face was a little dark. “Do you know me?”

The smile on Song Junlang’s face was even brighter. “I don’t just know you. Have you forgotten that we fought each other in the inter-academy battle between Judge Academy and Dawn Academy? But I chased you down and defeated you. Tsk, tsk. Such a pity!”

Bella’s expression instantly looked concentrated. Surprise and embarrassment flashed across her face, and after a while, she uttered his name word by word, “Song Junlang?”

“Haha, do you finally recognize me?”

“How dare you come here!”

“Long time no see! How are you?”

“You humiliated me back then! How dare you come here again!”

“Hey, hey, hey! The inter-academy battle back then was just an accident. Why are you still so resentful?”

“You! You! You!”

Bella was flushed with anger. She gritted her teeth and her staff trembled slightly. The little movement was a precursor to condensing the elements and executing a spell. Xiao Lin was surprised; he did not bring his novice dagger and novice wand before coming over. Neither of those things were allowed to be brought to Earth either, so all he had with him was the jade pendant given by the dean and a scroll of Gu Chengyun's painting.

"Haha, is this how Judge Academy's treats their guests?" Song Junlang's smile remained unchanged, but his vision sharpened considerably.

Xiao Lin was taken aback by everything. The fact that Song Junlang was able to return to Earth meant that the rumors in the newspapers about his drop in strength were true. Regardless of how the genius in him managed to defeat Bella so resoundingly eight years ago, it was clear that their strengths were very different from back then.

That being the case, Xiao Lin wondered why Song Junlang was brave enough to provoke the American woman willy-nilly, and on American soil no less. On second thought, Song Junlang was the head of a department, so there had to be some hidden tricks and or something that bolstered his calm despite his strength having been dropped to Bronze.

With those thoughts in mind, Xiao Lin became rather excited, but he soon discovered that Song Junlang had hidden behind him for some time already. The man leaned forward and whispered, "I didn't think this woman would have such a temper. I can't handle it, so you'll have to help me block it!"

"Huh? Hey, wait! Ah f*ck!"

Xiao Lin's face drained of color. There was a big difference between what actually happened and what his imagination thought would happen. It did not matter what kind of spell the woman used; if Song Junlang could not even stop it, then there was a fat chance that Xiao Lin—who had not even reached Black Iron rank—could stop it.

Bella did not give them any time to avoid it. The purple-gold sandalwood staff she held was nearly two meters tall, and a huge crystal as big as a football was inlaid in it. Blinding rays of light began blooming at that moment, and while fluctuations in the surrounding air were clearly visible on Bella's entire body. The fluctuations became stronger and stronger, forming ripples similar to a boulder being tossed into a calm lake.

There were several other Americans around Bella, including Hank, who tried their best to stop her. Once they saw that the elements had already reached a convergence, they all decisively chose to retreat far away. The spell was already on the verge of completion and no one could interrupt it.

Song Junlang hid behind Xiao Lin, but kept an eye on Bella's actions. The scene before him finally elicited an intensely shocked response. "It's the Seismic Gravity Wave! F*CK! Stop it, you madwoman! If we're struck by this spell, we won't be able to wake up for three days, at least!"

Xiao Lin did not know what kind of magic the Seismic Gravity Wave was, but he deduced that it was extremely unpleasant from Department Head Song's ashen face. He subconsciously wanted to stray away, but Song Junlang dragged him back and spoke quickly, "Why are you running for? We can't escape the range of thi spell!"

“She wants to kill us!” Xiao Lin was also furious.

“Kill you, my foot! This spell is a control spell. The damage isn’t that great, but if it strikes someone of our level, it will definitely leave a temporary concussion. Feeling dizzy for three or four days is the norm! Damn it, these Americans don’t even show us any respect! Hurry up and go! You’re the only one who can deal with it!”

“Are you kidding...”

Xiao Lin was only halfway through his words when Song Junlang pushed him to the front. A gray-black light surged from Bella’s staff at almost the same time, but it only struck the floor tiles some distance away from Xiao Lin.

Song Junlang’s prediction proved correct. Although that woman was mad, she had not completely lost all sense of reason. It was impossible for her to kill the two people that were invited there, because the diplomatic disputes resulting from her actions would come back to bite her too. Therefore, after refining the Seismic Gravity Wave, its lethality was almost reduced to zero, but the spell’s biggest threat was still the violent shock that was soon to follow.

Chapter 100 - Illusory Dragon

Chapter 100: Illusory Dragon

The gravitational wave burst a few meters away from Xiao Lin and a jet-black light cluster formed in mid-air. In that short moment, it rapidly absorbed the surrounding air before exploding once again. Invisible waves that caused intense dizziness began spreading around in all directions.

Bella’s mouth curled up slightly and she seemed extremely confident in her spell. After casting it, she did not even look back to see the effects. She believed that the two people on receiving end would not even be able to stop her, as they were not even Silver rank yet. She turned around to comfort the embarrassed Hank, “Don’t worry, I’m just teaching them a little lesson and having them lie in bed for a couple of days. It won’t be a big problem. They’re just two minor figures, and the most that Dawn Academy will do is just protest verba—HUH?”

Bella had only completed half her sentence when she realized that everyone behind her, including Hank, was not listening to her at all. Their jaws dropped open in surprise and their pupils were riddled with fright. However, they were actually looking behind her.

What was behind her?

Bella frowned, but her confusion lasted for less than a second. A strong feeling of dread rose quickly behind her back, and when she turned her head suddenly, her expression became that of shock as well.

Behind Bella, a huge golden dragon had roared into the blue sky in front of Xiao Lin’s chest. The dragon’s loud roar resounded across all of Washington City, and the majestic draconic power

quickly descended. Although it could not cover the entire city, Bella, Hank, and the others could not even stand properly under its draconic power.

“A g-g-golden dragon? How is that possible?” Hank’s face was covered in sweat.

“No, it’s not real. It’s an illusory dragon! Damn it! How could this thing appear in New Washington!” Bella gritted her teeth and roared, but under the dragon’s power, her mute roar lacked a sound.

“This, this, this...” Xiao Lin was also shocked despite being the instigator. As soon as the Seismic Gravity Wave arrived, he saw the giant golden figure pour out from the jade pendant on his chest. The speck quickly spread across the air and turned into a golden dragon. The strong gravitational wave struck the dragon’s body and the remainder of the ripples vanished into thin air.

It was not the first time Xiao Lin had seen the golden dragon. During the opening ceremony, he remembered when the dean rode the dragon when he made his appearance. He gulped hard and asked, “Department Head Song, did the dean give his dragon to me?”

Song Junlang’s expression was a mixture of wonder, surprise, doubt, as well as various other weird looks. After a long while, he noticed Xiao Lin’s inquiring gaze and finally shifted his eyes away from the dragon in the sky. He shook his head and smiled bitterly, “We’ve gone a little too far this time, Xiao Lin! My God, if I knew in advance that the Golden Draconic power was stored in the Lightstream Jade that the dean gave you, I wouldn’t’ve provoked that mad woman, even if I had a stroke!”

“Huh?” The plot developed in such a way that was completely at odds with Xiao Lin’s imaginations. Xiao Lin thought the dragon was Department Head Song’s plan. He believed that Song Junlang knew about the draconic power within the pendant and therefore used it to refute Bella’s ridicule. Therefore, they would not have encountered any trouble whatsoever if she attacked them.

Song Junlang looked up at the dragon as its howls became progressively louder and louder. His expression was very solemn and he slowly said, “This isn’t the real golden dragon. The golden dragon has surpassed Gold-rank and almost reached Dark Gold. There aren’t any vessels that can contain a dragon of such levels, and even if there was, it’s impossible to have brought it back to Earth. As I’ve said before, Earth’s laws would suffer much destruction.”

“What’s this then?”

“It’s the golden dragon.”

“...”

Department Head Song rubbed his eyebrows. “I don’t have the time to explain everything to you. To put it simply, the jade pendant given to you by the dean is called the Lightstream Jade. It’s a very rare piece of defensive jewelry, and the dean extracted his golden dragon’s draconic power just to store it in this Lightstream Jade. In other words, this isn’t the real golden dragon, but an illusory dragon transformed by the golden dragon’s draconic power.”

“An illusory dragon formed by draconic power?” Xiao Lin narrowed his eyes and gazed upon the huge golden dragon against the dazzling sunlight. He looked over to Bella and the others struggling

under the draconic power and felt his mood improve considerably. He finally had the mood to look around.

The place where he stood was a very high platform, and under the platform was an extremely prosperous city. Various medieval European-style castles and houses extended to as far as the eye could see. That was New Washington, and Judge Academy's colony was right in the center.

"Idiot! Why aren't you running!" Song Junlang could not help but lash out when he saw Xiao Lin still admiring the city.

"Run? Why should we run?"

Song Junlang had a grim look as he pointed to the dragon. "This might just be an illusory dragon derived from draconic power, but its power is on par with that of a real golden dragon. It's a Dark Gold-rank creature for goodness sake! More importantly, you can't control it at all. Just imagine the level of damage an illusory dragon can cause. This is New Washington, the equivalent of a capital in the New World. Do you think the Americans will let us go that easily?"

That explanation made Xiao Lin aware of the situation's seriousness. Although the jade pendant had released the illusory dragon, the process could not be reversed unless the dean was personally present to control the dragon freely.

The two were going to slip away when someone responded faster than them. Bella's strength was higher than Hank's, and she tried her best to resist the draconic power's effects. She brandished her staff and struggled to shoot out two black halos. The ground immediately sank into a big pit.

"Don't even think about leaving! Take this thing back!" Bella growled despite being out of breath.

Song Junlang turned a blind eye to her. "Ignore that woman. The draconic power has an effect on her spells. Those Gravity Bullets can't hit us!"

"Grab them!" Bella was still shouting with all her strength, but on that occasion, she roared toward the sky.

There were a few sonorous cries in the sky and Xiao Lin subconsciously raised his head. In addition to the illusory golden dragon looming above the blue sky, there were dozens of orange-red figures that looked like dragons and eagles.

"The Dragon-eagle Knight Regiment!" Song Junlang did not even have the strength to force a bitter smile at that moment. He sighed, "Well, we can't run away now. This is the most elite unit the Judge Academy stationed near New Washington."

"Can they beat an illusory golden dragon?" Xiao Lin could not help but feel worried. He looked down at the city under the platform, and the streets were full of fleeing crowds. If the golden dragon really attacked the city, not even his and Song Junlang's body could make up for the losses caused.