

The Strongest

Chapter 41 – Commotion in Town

Red Leaf Town, Fountain Plaza.

The entire plaza was dyed crimson by the setting sun. There were quite a lot of Lifestyle players[1] setting up food stalls and selling snacks that were unique to God's Domain.

These snacks tasted delicious, and they were much better than the delicacies in real life. Also, their selling price was just 2 or 3 Coppers. It was truly a bargain.

Many players would come here to rest and taste the delicacies of God's Domain after a day's worth of hard-fought battles. After all, they could only earn tens of Coppers in a single day, and after deducting the expended costs, they would only be left with slightly over ten Coppers. So, giving them a treat should not be a problem.

There were quite a few couples sitting on the stone benches, chatting. They ate the food they bought as they enjoyed a lovely time.

Suddenly, every player in Red Leaf Town received a System Announcement.

System: A player has triggered a special storyline. 'Insurrection of the Little Fishmen' has been activated. An Expedition Quest has been activated in Red Leaf Town. Players can now receive the Expedition Quest from the Adventurer's Guild. Completing the Expedition Quest will reward players with bountiful rewards and Guild Reputation.

All the players were shocked. In Red Leaf Town, a place where Quests were extremely rare, there was actually an Expedition Quest. Moreover, the rewards were great. It was truly unimaginable.

"Who was the awesome person that actually triggered a special storyline?"

The player who achieved this feat attracted the attention of every player in Red Leaf Town. Everyone wondered what great rewards this player gained for activating the storyline. After all, activating a storyline was definitely a rare occurrence. So, how could the rewards be few?

Quite a lot of players started having their own wicked thoughts. They wanted to kill off the player who activated the storyline Quest. Unfortunately, the System Announcement did not reveal the player's name. Compared to the average players, the various large Guilds were in a state of turmoil. At this stage of the game, aside from clearing Dungeons, there was not a single Quest that was capable of increasing Guild Reputation.

A Guild required Guild Reputation to level up. As long as their Guild could reach Level 2 a step earlier, they would be able to obtain the corresponding Guild benefits, creating a large advantage over the other Guilds.

Currently, the other Towns surrounding Scarlet River also received the same System Announcement; it wasn't just Red Leaf Town. All of the large Guilds began strategizing a plan for their crusade against the Little Fishmen.

Meanwhile, Shi Feng, who was the cause of all this commotion, currently sat inside the Auction House.

The Auction House was a very convenient place. The items placed on auction by players were not just limited to Red Leaf Town; they could be seen and bought in the hundreds of Towns and small Cities under the influence of White River City. However, the Auction House was very cunning. They charged a 5% handling fee for all items auctioned, so the items there are usually very expensive.

However, the Auction House was unquestionably the best place for players to sell certain items anonymously. Also, it had been quite some time since God's Domain started. The players had already amassed quite an amount of Coins, and the large Guilds should have already piled up a lot of funding. If Shi Feng were to set up a stall in Red Leaf Town, not only would he attract attention, he might also be targeted by people like Flaming Tiger.

More importantly, the reason Shi Feng chose the Auction House was that there were too few players in Red Leaf Town who could afford the items he planned to sell. However, it was a different story if there were hundreds of Towns competing for them.

Hence, Shi Feng placed a Mysterious-Iron Plate Armor on the Auction House, setting its base price at 25 Silver Coins. Then, he placed five pieces of Bronze Equipment, with the base price of the Plate Armor at 3 Silver Coins, and the others at 2 Silver Coins. As for the Level 10 Fine-Gold Greatsword, the result of placing it on auction would be too terrifying to imagine. This weapon was worth at least 2 Gold Coins, which was the equivalent of 200 Silver Coins. Currently, even 1 Silver Coin was extremely precious; so who would be able to even afford the weapon?

Following which, Shi Feng searched his bag via the half-transparent screen. Initially, players were gifted with a bag that had 100 slots. However, it was far from enough for Shi Feng. Every player could equip a maximum of seven bags. So, Shi Feng immediately bought six of the largest bags currently available. Each of the bags had 25 slots, and each sold for 40 Copper Coins. Six bags meant 240 Copper Coins. Such an amount was definitely unaffordable to normal players, but it was just a small sum to Shi Feng.

Shi Feng's storage space increased by a lot after equipping the six bags. Afterward, Shi Feng left the Auction House and set up a stall not far from it. He was not the least bit interested with the Storyline Quest he triggered.

He would not fight over the rewards with the others. He already had his fill; so it was only proper for the others to have the leftovers.

"Buying Magic Essences and Stones in bulk. A stack[2] of Magic Essences for 6 Coppers; a stack of Stones for 10 Coppers." Shi Feng loudly shouted.

At this stage of the game, Magic Essences were some of the materials needed to practice Enchanting, whereas Stones were one of the building materials Engineers needed. However, many Level 0 to Level 3 monsters would drop these materials when killed, so they were barely worth anything. The materials the many Guilds obtained were also sufficient to supply their own Lifestyle players, so they would never buy any of them. As for normal players, they would only occasionally buy these materials.

However, there was still an ocean of players that did not know how to deal with these materials. They would usually sell these materials to NPCs at a low price. A stack of 20 bottles of Magic Essence sold for 5 Coppers, and a stack of 100 Stones sold for 9 Coppers. Shi Feng bought them at a price of 1 Copper Coin higher, so there were quite a lot of players who were willing to sell their materials to him. An extra Copper per stack would still be quite a significant income.

Magic Essence was one of the required materials to make the Garrison Armor. Besides that, large amounts of Copper Ore and Bronze Ore were also needed. These ores were scarcely available, and all the large Guilds bought them in bulk. Unfortunately, it was very difficult to get ahold of them.

Shi Feng also originally planned to grind for ore. However, now that he had the Philosopher's Stone, ore was no longer a problem. The Philosopher's Stone could carry out Elemental Refinement. That meant it could refine Stone. There was a great chance to obtain ore, even rare ore. There was absolutely no need for Shi Feng to personally grind for them; he could just buy them at an extremely low price. Because of this, tens of thousands of players had effectively become Shi Feng's laborers.

Very quickly, a large crowd of players had gathered in front of Shi Feng.

"Big Brother, I have 6 stacks of Magic Essence here. Will you take them?"

"I have 3 stacks of Stone; do you want them?"

Many players started asking Shi Feng, worried that his bag would fill. After all, they just had too many Magic Essences and Stones. There were no players who were willing to buy these materials. However, it was also a shame to just sell them to the NPCs, so the materials just stayed inside their bags.

"I'll take all of them. Just trade them over," Shi Feng said.

Before this, Shi Feng amassed quite a bit of wealth. Including his transaction with Gentle Snow, he was in possession of quite a lot of Coins. Shi Feng could definitely buy large amounts of Magic Essences and Stones.

A player was selling three stacks of Magic Essences here... A player was selling five stacks of Stones there... Within moments, Shi Feng had acquired 60 stacks of Magic Essences and 85 stacks of Stones. The money that remained in his pockets was less than 10 Coppers now.

"Sorry, but I'm full," Shi Feng packed up his stall after explaining.

Suddenly, the many remaining players who came to sell off their Magic Essences and Stones had faces filled with disappointment.

"Big Brother, will you still buy them in the future?" A player asked.

"I will. However, it will still be a period before I do buy them. You all can save them up for now." Shi Feng resolutely said. The amount of Magic Essences and Stones Shi Feng just purchased was far from enough for him to become an Advanced Forging Apprentice[3].

After leaving the business street, Shi Feng arrived at the Forging Association. He paid 5 Coppers to rent a Basic Forging Room for one hour.

Inside the Basic Forging Room, all the equipment needed for forging was provided; players did not need to buy their own equipment. The Intermediate Ranked Forging Room was a lot better; it could increase the success rate of Forging by 3%. However, it costs 1 Silver per hour to use that room. As for Advanced Forging Rooms, those were not available in small Towns. They were only available in Cities. However, their prices were extremely staggering.

TL Notes:

[1]Lifestyle players: Players who focus on their Auxiliary Jobs i.e. Forgers, Alchemists/Potionmakers etc.

[2]a stack: This is a gaming term used to refer to a group of identical items which will take up only one space/slot in the player's bag. The stack of items has a maximum limit as to the amount of items it can hold within a slot, i.e. a full stack of Magic Essence has 20 bottles of the item. If a player has 21 bottles of Magic Essence, a second stack will be created in the player's bag.

[3]Advanced Forging Apprentice: Forgers can be distinguished into several stages, which are Forging Apprentice -> Forger -> Master Forger -> Grandmaster Forger. These stages are then further distinguished into three different ranks, Basic -> Intermediate -> Advanced

Chapter 42 – Elemental Refinement

Forging Association, inside a Forging Room.

Shi Feng took out a stack of Stone, placing it on the table.

A stack of Stone had a hundred pieces in total. They immediately filled up the round table; some even fell to the ground.

“Time to see how good you actually are,” Shi Feng smiled as he retrieved the crimson red Philosopher's Stone.

If the Philosopher's Stone were seen by someone else, the consequences Shi Feng would face would be immense. Hence, Shi Feng rented a Forging Room. Without his permission, nobody could enter the room.

Shi Feng took a piece of Stone from the table and used the Philosopher's Stone on it.

System: Do you wish to use the Philosopher's Stone for Elemental Refinement?

Shi Feng immediately chose 'Yes.' Following which, the Philosopher's Stone started emitting a faint red glow; a mysterious power flowed into the Stone.

Peng!

The Stone the size of a fist suddenly turned into yellow sand, scattering to the ground. The result was a failure.

However, Shi Feng revealed a calm smile at the result. It did not perturb him in the slightest. Afterward, he picked up another Stone and tried again.

Ore was very precious. A normal Copper Ore sold for 2 Coppers; they were only worth 1 Copper Coin if sold to an NPC. A stack of 100 Copper Ore could be sold for 200 Copper Coins to Guilds, and they would still fight over them. Compared to a stack of Stone, which only sold for 10 Copper Coins, Copper Ore was just too expensive.

Elemental Refinement extracted the Metal Element out of the Stone. However, some Stones did not possess any Metal Element. So, it was only natural that they turn to sand. Such failures were just too common.

Peng... Peng... Peng...

There was still no ore after ten consecutive tries. Shi Feng started becoming depressed. The success rate was just too low.

Shi Feng even started to suspect that these Stones were picked from a desert to result in all the yellow sand.

“Relax, relax. There are still many Stones left.” Shi Feng sucked in a deep breath, reassuring himself.

He picked up another piece of Stone, trying Elemental Refinement once more.

Peng!

This time, the Stone still scattered into a pile of sand. However, in the middle of the yellow grains, there was a piece of metal that had a purplish-red luster. It was Copper Ore.

With the first piece of Copper Ore in his hands, Shi Feng let out a relaxed breath. His hands started moving at a faster pace.

All the Stones above the stone table turned into yellow sand within moments. The stack of Stones had yielded a total of 23 pieces of Copper Ore and 2 pieces of Bronze Ore. Compared to Copper Ore, the price of Bronze Ore was three times that of Copper Ore; they were worth 3 Copper Coins when sold to NPCs. Due to the rarity of Bronze Ore, players would buy them at 7 Copper Coins a piece.

Seeing the ores on the table, Shi Feng felt the Philosopher’s Stone was truly a gold mine. Even if the Philosopher’s Stone was currently damaged, it was still out of the ordinary. It was no wonder why many kingdoms were willing to muster up their armies and fight for the Philosopher’s Stone. Having the Philosopher’s Stone in hand was the equivalent of having a wealthy treasury. At that time, a kingdom would find it hard not to become prosperous.

Shi Feng kept the ores on the table and brought out another stack of Stones.

Stack after stack of Stones disappeared, whereas the amount of yellow sand had piled up into a small hill. Fortunately, the Forging Room could be cleaned of rubbish with just a click of a button. After pushing the Clean button, the small hill of yellow sand vanished from sight.

After spending an hour’s time, Shi Feng had refined 40 stacks of Stones. He had obtained a little over 7 stacks of Copper Ore and a little over 1 stack of Bronze Ore. They would be worth over 20 Silver Coins if

Shi Feng sold them. Meanwhile, the cost of obtaining these ores were only four Silver Coins. The difference was five-times the price. It was an absolute profit.

Most importantly, ores dropped in very small numbers, so it was impossible to buy them in bulk.

Shi Feng received a System Notification the moment he had left the Forging Room.

System: The Violent Bear Armor you placed at the Auction House has been sold. After deducting the procedural fees, 31 Silvers 53 Coppers have been placed in your bag.

System: The Dark Star Boots you placed at the Auction House has been sold. After deducting the procedural fees, 3 Silvers 21 Coppers have been placed in your bag.

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A series of notifications from the Auction House had caused Shi Feng's lips into a smile.

"As expected, the greater the competition, the higher the price would go" Shi Feng was very satisfied with the amount the items sold for. He never imagined that a Mysterious-Iron Plate Armor for Shield Warriors could actually be sold for over 30 Silver Coins. It seems there were a lot of wealthy people within the area of influence of White River City.

After selling the equipment, Shi Feng had suddenly become a wealthy tycoon. With over 50 Silver Coins in his pockets, even his confidence was different now.

Currently, players would still be happy over having twenty to thirty Copper Coins on their person. Shi Feng already possessed more than 50 Silver Coins. Including the Silver Coins Gentle Snow owed him, if Shi Feng were to sell off the Copper Ore he had immediately, he would instantly become wealthy with gold.

However, he would not sell the ores. These ores were the foundation for Shi Feng to earn big money.

Following which, Shi Feng rented the Forging Room for another hour. He turned the remaining Stones into ores. His luck was better this time around. From 45 stacks of Stones, he obtained 10 stacks of Copper Ore and 2 stacks of Bronze Ore.

With this, Shi Feng had a total of 17 stacks of Copper Ore and 3 stacks of Bronze Ore. It would be quite some time before Shi Feng could use them all up.

With money in hand now, Shi Feng once more arrived at the central area of the Forging Association, at the administration area. Currently, there were quite a few Forger players, that were groomed by Guilds, renting Forging Rooms.

"This is just evil. It actually costs 5 Coppers for an hour. My Guild just gave me 30 Coppers. That's not enough at all."

"That's considered good already. At least the equipment is all there. Look at the Forging equipment. Even the most common required a few Silvers. An entire set would cost over 30 Silver Coins! It's just a blatant rip-off!"

“You still haven’t seen the Intermediate Forging Room. It costs one Silver an hour, but the room only increases your success rate by 3%. Even a first-rate Guild would not be able to handle such a price.”

A few Forgers continuously complained. They bitterly detested the prices set by the Forging Association. However, there was also a hint of bragging carried in their voices. After all, they had the support of their Guilds, whereas normal players wouldn’t even be able to rent a Forging Room, not to mention increasing their Forging Levels.

Shi Feng circled these players, walking towards the manager of the Association, saying, “I want to rent an Intermediate Forging Room.”

“May I know how long you wish to rent it for?” The ashen youth who was the Association’s manager excitedly asked.

Currently, a majority of the adventurers were poor blokes. Every one of them only rented the Basic Forging Rooms, and even then, they rented with unwillingness. So, a great change occurred to the manager’s servicing attitude when he was able to see a rich adventurer like Shi Feng.

Looking at the time, it was currently morning in the real world. When using the Virtual Gaming Helmet, a person could not stay within God’s Domain for too long.

“Two hours then.” Shi Feng said after some thought.

“Alright, here is your key. That will be a total of 2 Silver Coins.” The manager handed the key over to Shi Feng, smiling.

Shi Feng took out two shiny Silver Coins, placing them on the table and turning around to leave.

The players who had previously been discussing the deviousness of the Forging Association were all dumbstruck. They even thought they were hallucinating. However, they were indeed Silver Coins on the table, and not the scarlet-yellow Copper Coins.

“Crap, a tycoon!” A male Elementalist said in envy.

“Brother Tycoon, Little Sister knows how to warm beds.” Another pretty and flirtatious female player winked at Shi Feng, flattering him.

“Isn’t it just some dirty money? I will definitely become an Intermediate Forging Apprentice a step ahead of him,” a male Priest said in a sour tone, even though he knew it to be impossible. The facilities of the Intermediate Forging Room were much better than the Basic one. On the surface, the room itself only increased the success rate of forging by 3%. However, including the facilities that came with the room, the success rate was increased by at least 5%.

To a Forger, a difference of 5% success rate was like the difference between heaven and earth.