

Realms In The Firmament

Chapter 11: You want to buy it, I don't want to sell

As soon as Guan Wan-Shan spoke, he regretted opening his mouth. Finding such a valuable piece of dan was worth the good fortune of three generations, and he was actually hoping to see more. He really felt that greed had taken over his rationality. However, if he could obtain more than one of such a precious item, it would definitely be the best day of his life.

The old man's reaction startled Ye Xiao but he still managed to reply indifferently, "Well I didn't count how many are present. It should be about fifteen.... maybe sixteen. Though, I truly didn't count..." He felt drops of sweat appear on his forehead as he started to worry, "I truly don't think of this as something valuable. Why would it draw such a big reaction from this old man? This is such a hot headed old man!" He was really taken aback by this kind of a reaction.

"WHAT?! F-fifteen... o-or sixteen?!? And you didn't even count it out?! Seriously?!" Guan Wan-Shan stared at him like he wanted to hit Ye Xiao.

Ye Xiao felt helpless as he innocently threw his hands up in the air..

Guan Wan-Shan truly wanted to curse this man in front of him, but managed to keep his words to himself and thought, "A single item is valuable enough to shake the world, yet he actually has more than fifteen of them. He has such ridiculous amounts of good luck to be able to acquire such valuable dan beads, yet he doesn't even seem to value it. He even takes it to an auction and yet, he couldn't even be bothered to do a simple count?!"

That was such a reckless waste of God's good gifts!

This... This guy... was truly... a humongous black sheep!

The three lords? They were simply three good kids compared to this guy!

One could really not be compared with the other!"

Guan Wan-Shan's lips were trembling. He turned around and yelled, "... G-go bring me twenty Purple Jade Bottles!"

He couldn't scold Ye Xiao at the moment, so he vented his anger on his subordinates.

Many loud shouts were heard one after the other, followed by footsteps which belonged to an approaching crowd.

It had been at least a dozen years since they had seen the master connoisseur so agitated.

By any chance, if they acted too slowly then they would be reprimanded at the least and in the worst case, even lose their jobs.

Only a few moments later, Guan Wan-Shan had received all the equipment he had demanded.

Then he took out a clean white towel and wiped his hands completely clean. He put a purple plate which was made out of crystal on the table after which, he took out a strange transparent cover and placed it over the plate.

After that, he took the jade bottle from Ye Xiao and placed it on the plate through a strange opening in the cover.

With that, only his hands could reach through the cover. They fit perfectly into the opening, making sure that none of the qi that was emanating from the dan bead would be able to escape.

“This is some incredible equipment. It really is of great quality.” The Xiao Monarch clicked his tongue in admiration for the structure of the cover.

However, he didn't realize that his praise had made the old guy Guan nearly fall back down in anger. “The story about ‘keeping the casket and giving back the pearl’ [1] has become a laughingstock for over a thousand years. Now there is another living example. The cover is an artful thing but it can never even compare with the valuable dan beads. You think little of such treasure but admire a common cover. What a bloody world-class joke!”

When the jade bottle was opened, the wonderful scent spread again. Moreover, from the bottle, a mass of white mist emerged, which was much too dense to disperse.

“Dan... cloud!!!”

The white beard of Guan Wan-Shan was quivering. His eyes nearly popped out of their sockets and dropped to the ground.

There are nine grades of dan and only those over grade 7 release a dan mist. At the highest grade 9, this dan mist would even contain visible dan veins.

However, only the legendary, limit breaking dan that had broken through the limits of the ninth grade could produce... the legendary dan cloud!

Note: The appearance of the dan cloud is, however, not a certainty! That is to say... even those legendary dan beads might only have a layer of 'dan mist', rather than a full dan cloud.

The cloud and the mist actually share the same essential attributes, but the mist would quickly disperse while, according to the legends, the cloud would keep on rising while continuously changing its shape!

That is similar to the difference between heaven and earth!

The dan cloud was something that only appeared in those legendary stories from eons past. Only stories were told about it in this mortal world, but it had never been seen before!

At this moment, Guan Wan-Shan was witnessing the legendary dan cloud that he hadn't even dared dreaming about, and was feeling its extremely dense scent, which brought the greatest joy to both his body and mind. He was nearly crying out in excitement.

"My dear ancestors!" Guan Wan-Shan thrillingly murmured, "Today, I...I have finally seen the legendary dan cloud with my own two eyes! Oh this dan cloud... It is worth three-generation good fortune... I no longer have regrets and I can die willingly..."

The Xiao Monarch was slightly stunned, "What the hell is going on? He is just identifying some dan beads. How could such a simple thing make him go crazy... Die willingly he says... That is just a simple dan bead, not some lethal incurable poison!"

The bottle was carefully being leaned forward letting a soybean-sized dan bead roll out. The soybean-sized dan bead was still enveloped by the dan cloud as it was rolling around on the plate. After a while the dan bead could be clearly identified as a golden dan bead with mysterious veins covering its entire surface...

Guan Wan-Shan lightly closed his satisfaction filled eyes.

No further inspection was needed.

Veins were densely covering this dan bead, while the dan cloud was still ever spreading

This was — something that could only be produced by the supreme immortals from myths — the legendary magical grade 10 dan!

Although it was just some Pei-Yuan Dan, with such quality, even the grade 9 dan-maker that only existed in the myth would want to buy it for a price and take it for research, because... more than just about the grade of dan, it was about opening an entrance to a tough path towards supreme dan-making!

Even learning a tiny bit of the technique could bring a big upgrade to the dan-maker.

Almost acting like a devotional fanatic, Guan Wan-Shan quickly grabbed a purple jade bottle and put the first Pei-Yuan Dan bead into it. Followed by the second Pei-Yuan Dan bead entering a second bottle, the third one in another bottle... and then the fourth...

"Fifteen in total!"

Guan Wan-Shan was utterly shocked by the number.

Although Ye Xiao had mentioned it, Guan Wan-Shan still had a hard time believing this man in front of him, especially after he had confirmed the quality of the dan beads that even released the legendary dan cloud. It could be said that to even create one of these at a time in a sealed furnace would be a matter of unbelievable luck. But, it was obvious to him that the fifteen were produced from the same furnace at the same time, and they actually all had the same legendary quality!

"This... Brother Feng!" Guan Wan-Shan turned around, looked at Ye Xiao like a ravenous wolf and said eagerly, "Brother Feng, these dan beads were so outstanding. Make a price! These dan beads, no matter what price you make, we will take them!"

"Master Guan..." The governor standing beside them was greatly startled. "WTF! He must have gone crazy..." He thought.

Normally, as the connoisseur of the salesroom, even if he had confirmed the facticity of the dan beads, at least he should have depreciated it, declined it a little and then taken it with feigned difficulty. This was his known tactic to greatly lower the price required to acquire new items for the auction.

However, now that he had said this... it was so far beyond outstanding that they would take it regardless of the astronomical costs.

If Ye Xiao made a sky-high price... What was he supposed to do about it?!

"Heh heh, these dan beads, I'm not interested in selling them." Ye Xiao glanced at the governor with a mocking smile, "Master Guan, you really do have some exceptional capabilities. With such spirit, heh heh, you must have achieved great heights."

Guan Wan-Shan understood the hint and hurriedly turned around and shouted, "Get out! Not even a single word about today should leak out! If there is any information that leaks outside, you can forget about your puny life!"

The governor quickly gave Master Guan his word, before quickly making his way out, wiping large beads of sweat off of his forehead.

He might not know anything about the grades of dan, but even he had realised the seriousness of this situation.

Guan Wan-Shan turned to Ye Xiao and said with an embarrassed smile, "Sorry. My underlings are underbred. They don't understand the rareness of these legendary dan beads... Please forgive them with your lenience."

Ye Xiao nodded lightly.

Guan Wan-Shan clearly knew the meaning behind Ye Xiao's words: If he tried to force down the price of such supreme dan beads like he dealt with some ordinary thing... then, Ye Xiao might feel sullen and just leave, leaving him empty handed losing this three-generations worth of good fortune.

An opportunity like this one... Over ten generations of his family had done auction appreciating, yet it wasn't until now that such a valuable item had appeared in their auction house!

Besides, if he were to lie about his opinion, he would feel like he was desecrating the legendary dan beads this man had brought; for such high-quality dan beads, even if he had intentionally tried to force down the price, he would have very likely offended all the dan-makers in the world at the same time!

Once it spread out that he had done such a vile thing, his reputation would be ruined – people might say, "You had actually dared to force down the price of the legendary dan beads that even produced an actual dan cloud?! Then what about those ordinary dan beads which were in your possession? Would you expect to be given money for taking those?!"

"Brother Feng, you just said that you don't want to sell... What do you mean? What plan do you have? Please, could you say it out, please!" Guan Wan-Shan asked humbly, and then immediately called for tea, "The good one. The best tea..."

"My plan is simple. I just want some treasures in exchange for these dan beads." Ye Xiao said honestly, "And you must have realized that I haven't produced these dan beads myself. The production of these dan beads is far beyond my capabilities."

Guan Wan-Shan looked at him as thoughts quickly rushed through his head, "Hmm, he doesn't have any traces of firing on his hands, any traces of gentle and mass roasting on his face or the unique smell of a dan-maker on his body..." He nodded and nearly said something offensive, "I dare you to... Eh-hem... Brother Feng you are being humble..."

Instantly, he felt his face starting to burn and a dark red color quickly spread on his face. He had somehow managed to hold the second part of his sentence in his mouth, however, the half that he had already spoken out had such a clear meaning that even a fool could guess where it was going.

Ye Xiao humphed, “It isn’t me who produced these dan beads... but, the dan-maker who was able to create such dan beads is unwilling to show up, let alone to be in contact with ordinary people in this mortal world...”

What he meant was that master Guan could do all he wanted, he was simply not worthy to meet this legendary dan-maker.

Guan Wan-Shan didn’t doubt these words at all; instead he comprehended tacitly and took it for granted, so he showed a humbler attitude, “Yes... Yes. Yes. Such an expert must absolutely be absorbed in his dan-making cultivation. He will never have some spare time on hand to get in touch with us mortal people. Brother Feng what you say is very reasonable...”

“Whenever we could get the favor from an honorable dan-making master, we would accept any proposal from him or her, no matter what was proposed. However, to exchange dan beads for treasures... This salesroom truly has never had such a case in our long history...” Guan Wan-Shan said, “Brother Feng, I am sure that you’re aware of the laws concerning trade in our Land of Han Yang. Everything has to be valued with gold or silver and in every trade, the salesroom must give the government a fixed... expense as tax. It is not that I don’t want to make this deal, but...”

Ye Xiao nodded. He understood.

If they used treasures for exchange, how could the government take a percentage of the deal? What would the tax be in a scenario like this? Would it be equal to the value of a golden leave perhaps?

Salesrooms were strictly overseen by the government, so they wouldn’t dare to make such deals.

Once they did, they would lose their qualifications and, moreover, get prosecuted.

Even though Guan Wan-Shan knew he would offend this legendary dan-maker and even though he wanted to do anything to make this deal work, under such circumstance, he had to think of those relying on him and turn this offer down!

Ye Xiao muttered, “I understand your concern and difficulty... but, the senior dan-maker is eccentric. Gold and silver, he turns his nose up at them. If I go and tell him about your difficulty, the deal will certainly be canceled. I am afraid you will not be happy to see that happen!”

[1] Keeping the casket and giving back the pearl: A Chinese idiom. It is an analogy meaning a lack of judgment and making the wrong decisions. It also refers to people who attach more importance to the appearance than the inner beauty or the quality.

A jewelry dealer put his pearls in small caskets so as to make them look precious. The caskets were made of precious wood and luxuriously decorated with perfume and gemstones. A person was very fond of these exquisite and beautiful caskets and bought one. After paying the money, he opened the casket, took the pearl out and gave it back to the dealer. He then left with just the casket.