

## The Heavens 651

Chapter 651: Sudden Appearance of Incomplete Formulas

A Ding Fire Fate Dipper Essence was staring him in the face!

Shang Xia didn't think that he would receive such a pleasant surprise and he knew that he had to cherish his chance. There was no letting the fate dipper essence get away!

He was even prepared to be ripped off by the other party at that point. Even if they wanted an astronomical amount of essence crystals, he was prepared to give it to them!

Hearing that Shang Xia was agreeable, the blacksmith's companion seemed over the moon. He chuckled in glee, "If you really want it, I'll sell it to you at the price your Dark Void Life Extermination Evasion Fate Dipper Essence is valued at. I'll take 350 essence crystals!"

Obviously, the other party was asking for more than what the Hundred Bone Phosphorescent Fire Fate Dipper Essence was worth.

The Dark Void Life Extermination Evasion Fate Dipper Essence is extremely rare to begin with, and the price obviously had to be raised. However, the same couldn't be said for the Hundred Bone Phosphorescent Fire Fate Dipper Essence. It was something nobody really wanted, and the blacksmith's companion should be thanking his lucky stars that someone was willing to buy it from him.

The blacksmith might have been slightly displeased by his companion's actions, but they were great friends at the end of the day. Otherwise, he wouldn't have helped to make a deal with Shang Xia. He might have felt that it was slightly unfair, but he remained silent nonetheless.

Shang Xia could tell that the other party was trying to take advantage of him, but he wasn't willing to mess around and waste even more time. As such, he replied quickly, "Deal. However..."

"... I don't have enough essence crystals in my Talisman Fish at the moment. If I return to get more, I might not be able to find you in the Cloud Sea when I return." Shang Xia muttered. He didn't realize the problem earlier and he only learned about it after he agreed to the deal. He wasn't able to control his talisman fish and it was nearly impossible for him to locate the 2 of them again amidst so many other fishermen.

The blacksmith was also shocked as they just thought of the problem. The Three Unity Pagoda wanted to keep the identities of the buyers and sellers hidden as best they could and thus implemented the current trading system. They didn't think that anyone would run into Shang Xia's situation.

He turned to his companion and relayed the message, but unexpectedly, the blacksmith's companion chuckled in response. "That's easy! All we have to do is to agree on a code phrase. I'll change what I'm looking for on my jade coin to 349 pieces of essence crystals and you should put that exact amount in your Talisman Fish the moment you get back. When that happens, you should be drawn to me. Even if there are Talisman Fish in the Cloud Sea who brought the same amount as you, I'll reject all of their trade requests until you get back."

Shang Xia didn't think that something like that was possible, but he realized that it was actually pretty feasible. After all, both sides wouldn't lose their treasures if anything were to happen and he readily agreed.

After he was tossed back into the Cloud Sea, Shang Xia couldn't help but realize that such a method could even allow several parties to cooperate in the long term without exposing their identities.

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When Shang Xia's Talisman Fish was returning, the 3 Martial Dipper Realm Ancestors of the 3 super factions held a secret gathering somewhere in the Three Unity Pagoda. They observed everything that was happening and noticed several problems that had popped up.

"A lot of cultivators want us to allow them to control the movement of the fish with their consciousness. There are some who complained that the efficiency of trades is too slow as most of their time is wasted traveling through the Cloud Sea.

Elder Yi Guang from the Eternal Palace held several transmission talismans in his hand and seemed extremely tired. He rubbed the corners of his eyes wearily, but the tone of his voice was still as gentle as before.

"Hmph! It has only been a little while and quite a few of them found loopholes in the trading system. They're really creative alright... They came up with code phrases and some of them even made secret alliances. There are even some who managed to join hands to scam others!" Zhui Fengzi of the Northern Sea Mystic Sect frowned.

"Moreover, that's just everything my disciples gathered after observing the situation. They didn't interfere with any of the trades to dig deeper. Otherwise, they will definitely be able to discover even more annoying details. This is the first time we're hosting the trade fair, and after they familiarize themselves with the process, there will be even more shady things happening!"

Ninth Sand Palace Elder from the Divine Capital Sect looked to be the oldest of the 3, and he let out a hoarse chuckle. "Elder Zhui Fengzi, why are you getting so worked up? If the water is too clear, fishes won't be able to live. The reason we sealed off their divine perception is to ensure that they can only swim randomly through the Cloud Sea. Of course, we can improve the process a little bit. For example, we can allow them to seal a portion of their extermination origin 5 Talisman Fish to increase the efficiency. Well, there's no need for them to use so many Talisman Fish, but increasing the number to 3 shouldn't be a problem. That way, they won't have to waste so much time. It also benefits those in the middle and outer rings."

Elder Yi Guang and Zhui Fengzi nodded in unison.

"As for allowing cultivators to control their Talisman Fish..." Ninth Sand Palace Elder raised an eyebrow slightly.

"We cannot allow that!" Zhui Fengzi spoke immediately.

Elder Yi Guang did the same. "Palace Elder, we need to consider this properly!"

Ninth Sand Palace Elder's hoarse chuckle came again. "The two of you are too hasty! The main objective of our first trade fair is to slowly perfect the system. It's alright to have imperfections. We can try out some suggestions when we hold the next trade fair a year later."

Elder Yi Guang nodded in agreement.

However, Zhui Fengzi seemed to have thought of something and turned a little serious. He coughed lightly, "I just hope we have more time..."

Be it Elder Yi Guang or Ninth Sand Palace Elder, their expressions turned solemn as the words left Zhui Fengzi's lips.

...

When Shang Xia's Talisman Fish returned, he discovered that there wasn't a single Talisman Fish in his area.

Pulling it back up, Shang Xia retrieved the Serene Immersion Clay. With that, he gathered 3 of the 5 rank five spiritual treasures he required. He obtained the Celestial Gold that corresponded to the Metal Element, Ten Thousand Year Bamboo that was of the Wood Element, and the newly acquired Serene Immersion Clay of the Earth Element. He only had to look for rank five spiritual treasures of the Water and Fire Elements in the future.

He didn't waste time as he brought out a portion of essence crystals and placed exactly 349 pieces into the fish's belly.

As he prepared to toss his Talisman Fish back into the Cloud Sea, Chu Jia yelled beside him, "There are quite a few jade coins in the Cloud Sea wanting to buy rank five advancement formulas!"

Widening his eyes in shock, Shagn Xia saw that everyone else had already gathered around Chu Jia.

"What's going on? Little Chu, are you messing around again?"

"Rank five advancement formulas?!"

"That's not possible, right? Even if they're peddling rank five advancement formulas, they should only be able to summon Talisman Fish who have rank five advancement formulas in their belly..."

Chu Jia couldn't be bothered with all their questions and she snapped, "Can't they think of other ideas? Who the hell would let their Talisman Fish swallow a complete rank five advancement formula? Also, how else would I have received the news?"

Shang Xia tossed his Talisman Fish back into the Cloud Sea as he listened to their conversation.

"There were many who left requests on their jade coins stating that they wanted to purchase treasures related to rank five advancement formulas. With that, they would be able to gather a bunch of Talisman Fish. They would state their intention to sell rank five advancement formulas. As such, news of something like that spread really quickly." Chu Jia explained.

A frown formed on Ji Yu's face. "Doesn't that mean that they're just playing word games? Not only would they waste one of their fishing poles, but there wouldn't be anyone willing to trade a rank five advancement formula either!"

Chu Jia laughed, "I think you might have forgotten something. There are multiple people on a single platform and they don't just have one fishing pole. As long as they split the job up, they can do whatever they want. Moreover, it's not like any factions here lack an essence crystal or two."

"As for whether or not anyone would sell a rank five advancement formula... I don't know if they're selling real or fake ones. However, I do know that all of them have defects!" Chu Jia concluded.

Yun Yichen's jaws dropped slightly and she asked, "How would you know?! Did you manage to see it for yourself?"

"Of course not. It's just that everyone who sold a rank five advancement formula made it clear that their formula wasn't perfect. However, even if they're talking about an imperfect rank five advancement formula, it's not something we can afford." Chu Jia shook her head while chuckling softly.

Liu Qinglan sighed, "There will definitely be some lucky fellows who can afford to buy it. It's not hard to imagine those scattered cultivators in the outer ring requesting to buy rank five advancement formulas. Even if it's an imperfect formula, they wouldn't mind. Oh right. Why did your fish enter the outer regions anyway?"

Surprisingly, Chu Jia shook her head. "No, I'm in the core region of the Cloud Sea. I didn't say that they were buying rank five advancement formulas! They're selling rank five advancement formulas and those who are doing it belong to the holy lands. The area of light around their jade coin can't be faked!"

A look of realization appeared on Liu Qinglan's face. "It's actually them... How is that possible? Shouldn't they be trying to protect their rank five advancement formulas and perfect them through their own efforts?"

"It's not just a single holy land selling defective rank five advancement formulas. They're not just selling one or two of them either. There are many different types of rank five advancement formulas!" Chu Jia added.

Ji Yu had a face full of shock and he didn't know what to say. He could only mumble to himself in fright, "This... This... This... What's going on?!"

When Chu Jia and the others were conversing, Shang Xia had already completed his second deal with the blacksmith of the Hundred Weapons Mill and his companion. He handed over 349 essence crystals to obtain his Hundred Bone Phosphorescent Fire Fate Dipper Essence.

His Talisman Fish that had the Hundred Bone Phosphorescent Fire Fate Dipper Essence in its belly was swimming through the Cloud Sea, back to Shang Xia.

With the deal complete and his heart at ease, Shang Xia finally joined in the conversation. “Teacher Chu, are you able to confirm that it’s not just a single holy land trying to sell defective rank five advancement formulas?”

“Of course!” Chu Jia glared at Shang Xia and snapped, as though questioning his intentions for doubting her.

With a soft sigh, Shang Xia swept his gaze across the other members of the Tongyou Institution and explained, “it looks like all the holy lands are planning to use the cultivators who are desperate to break through to the Martial Dipper Realm as their lab rats. From there, they can adjust and perfect their rank five advancement formulas accordingly.”

“Do they really dare to do that? Aren’t they afraid that they will incur the wrath of the masses?” Yun Yichen asked.

In response, a cold sneer formed on Shang Xia’s face. “Yeah... From what Chu Jia said, the holy lands are the ones selling off defective rank five advancement formulas. They also mentioned the risks, and anyone who wishes to take the chance can go ahead and do so. They have no one else to blame. This should be the true meaning of ‘the willing party takes the bait’.”

“Why didn’t they do this before? Why did they only take those defective rank five advancement formulas out now?” Chu Jia was a little confused.

Chapter 652: Magnetic Fate Dipper Essence?

“Why would they only bring out these defective rank five advancement formulas now?” Chu Jia’s question touched on the crux of the problem.

Lightly tugging his fishing pole, Shang Xia fished up his Talisman Fish and took out another cube that contained the Hundred Bone Phosphorescent Fire Fate Dipper Essence under the shocked gazes of everyone present. When he was finally done, he started to share what Zheng Chang had told him. He spoke about how spies of the Spirit Abundance World might have already infiltrated the Azure Origin World and Azure Spiritual World. He also told them about how Martial Dipper Realm experts from the Spirit Abundance World might start an assault on them soon.

Liu Qinglan sighed in response, “Do you mean that these holy lands are planning to use their incomplete or defective rank five advancement formulas to nurture a batch of Martial Dipper Realm... Cannon Fodder?”

Shang Xia muttered helplessly, “The entire thing is an open scheme to begin with. There are many experts in the Azure Origin World and Azure Spiritual World who possess the cultivation to attempt a breakthrough to the Martial Dipper Realm. All they’re lacking is an advancement formula. The appearance of these incomplete or defective rank five advancement formulas gave them a trace of hope. They can choose if they wish to take the risk, but those holy lands will receive a bunch of treasures regardless. At the same time, the strength of our worlds will rise. Our ability to resist the invasion of the Spirit Abundance World will be strengthened and they have no reason not to do it.”

Liu Zhidao, whose attention was placed on his fishing pole earlier, finally spoke. “I wonder how many cultivators would be able to enter the Martial Dipper Realm after buying those formulas...”

“As long as a few of them succeed, it doesn’t matter if dozens are sacrificed...” Shang Xia muttered.

“Should we try to obtain a few of those formulas in that case?” Chu Jia asked.

Even though she didn’t mention anything about rank five advancement formula of the Tongyou Institution, those present could already guess that their advancement formula was also slightly defective!

It was an open secret among the Martial Extermination Realm experts of the Tongyou Institution at that point.

One couldn’t see how there were 3 Martial Dipper Realm Ancestors present in the institution and compare the strength of the institution to other holy lands. It was true that if they were to mention combat power, the Tongyou Institution would stand at the peak of the Azure Origin World. They were no weaker than many holy lands and only the 3 super factions stood high above them. There were no other factions who could take the Tongyou Institution lightly! However, with the exception of Kou Chongxue who relied on his luck to enter the Martial Dipper Realm a long time ago and established his prestige, the others were mere amateurs in the Martial Dipper Realm! Be it Ji Wenlong or Shang Bo, they spent a ton of time planning and scheming before eventually succeeding. Moreover, they had to bet the future of the entire institution each time either of them tried to advance.

Chu Jia didn’t make her suggestion for fun. She wanted to use the other incomplete or defective rank five advancement formulas as a reference to perfect their own.

Liu Qinglan laughed softly, “Go ahead and take a look if you want to. However, we’re not in a rush to obtain other advancement formulas. We can try to get them if we have extra essence crystals at the end of the trade fair. After so many years of trial and error, we made some improvements to our advancement formula. Even though it’s not perfect, we can still say that it’s pretty much complete. The price we have to pay might be unusually large and the difficulty of using the method to break through might be high, but one can probably succeed...”

Looks of astonishment and pleasant surprise could be seen on the faces of Chu Jia and the others.

Shang Xia maintained the smile on his face. That wasn’t news to him as he had guessed as much.

Moreover, no one said that the Tongyou Institution only had a single rank five advancement formula!

No longer caring about their conversation, Shang Xia placed his attention back onto his Talisman Fish and the jade coin hanging in his Cloud Sea. He needed to make full use of his time to obtain the fate dipper essences and rank five spiritual treasures he needed to break through!

After retrieving the Hundred Bone Phosphorescent Fire Fate Dipper Essence earlier, Shang Xia felt that the time had come. He placed the final rank four talisman he had on him, the Divine Restraint Talisman, onto the ground for the Talisman Fish to swallow before tossing it back into the Cloud Sea.

After swimming for a little while, his Talisman Fish felt a strong sense of attraction before swimming in a certain direction. Shang Xia quickly placed a majority of his attention on the fish.

Before he could arrive at his destination, Shang Xia felt a strong jolt running through his mind from the fishing pole he held.

Changing his approach, he no longer bothered with where the fish was going and his divine perception spread around the area covered in light emitted by his jade coin. He noticed a giant fish that was green and red in color crashing into his jade coin from time to time.

“Fellow cultivator, do you have fate dipper essence?” Shang Xia asked.

The other party’s voice rang in Shang Xia’s mind. “Why the hell would I be here if I didn’t have one? What a stupid question.” From the tone, Shang Xia felt that the cultivator he was dealing with was probably a lady.

Of course, their voices had undergone a layer of disguise. It was impossible for him to truly tell the gender of the other person and Shang Xia could only guess.

Whatever the case, he wouldn’t waste his time arguing with her. He stated directly, “I apologize. That wasn’t what I wanted to ask. I wonder what fate dipper essence you wish to trade?”

Her voice came quickly. “Oh? Are you planning to pick and choose the type of fate dipper essence you can get? Didn’t you state that you were looking for fate dipper essence? You didn’t limit them to anything specific and I thought you would accept anything that came your way!”

There was a trace of mockery in her voice and she sounded really irritated.

Shang Xia wasn’t too affected by her emotions. Instead, he felt as though he had hit the jackpot. From the way she spoke, he felt that she might have multiple strands of fate dipper essence. His explanation eventually came. “Fate dipper essence are treasures of the fifth rank and I had no choice but to try my luck by leaving my request on my jade coin. You... Fellow cultivator, please don’t misunderstand. To be honest, you’re the second person who came since the start of the fair.”

Her pointed voice rang in Shang Xia’s mind the next moment, but it didn’t seem like she had anything against him at that point. “Heh, it would be a miracle if you managed to get a few people willing to sell fate dipper essence. There are at least 3 holy lands buying fate dipper essence and some of them would even reject the fate dipper essence if they’re of poor quality. With them as your competitor, how many Talisman Fish would be able to find you?”

Shang Xia felt a chill running through his heart. He might have guessed as much, but nothing beat hearing it for himself. Despite whatever he was feeling, he was helpless against the actions of the holy lands.

Thinking about it for a moment, Shang Xia felt that the cultivator on the other side had to be someone from the holy lands. After all, she was extremely clear of the situation. If that wasn’t the case, the only other possibility was that she was from an ordinary faction and ran into multiple requests to buy fate dipper essence while traveling through the Cloud Sea.

From how cynical she was acting, Shang Xia felt that the latter was more possible.

Laughing softly, Shang Xia asked, “I might be curious as to why you haven’t sold your fate dipper essence, but I should be thanking my lucky stars that you managed to find me.”

The female cultivator snorted in response, “You better think twice before thanking your lucky stars. Maybe this lady here won’t trade with you at all.”

The way she addressed herself confirmed Shang Xia's initial speculation of her gender.

Regardless, Shang Xia chuckled in response. "Alright, but let me ask you again... Do you have multiple fate dipper essences?"

"You're from the middle section but you're acting pretty arrogantly. You're right. I have more than a single fate dipper essence. Don't tell me you want all of them?" The trace of mockery in her voice was transforming to one of shock.

Shang Xia didn't care that she was testing him and he revealed his intentions immediately. "That's right. I do plan on getting more than 1 fate dipper essence if you have them."

"How do you wish to trade?" She asked.

"I can pay in essence crystals, but if you have other requirements, I will do my best to fulfill them." Shang Xia replied.

This time, she was no longer as snappy as before. She turned a lot more serious and she said, "I have 2 different Magnetic Fate Dipper Essence. However, they're intertwined and there's no way to separate them. I tried countless times to trade them with others, but all of them decided not to after realizing that they wouldn't be able to separate them."

"Magnetic Fate Dipper Essence?" Shang Xia raised an eyebrow in surprise. "I am indeed interested in them, but I do not know if they are something I require."

The female cultivator gasped in shock, "Do you not care that they are inseparable? Or do you actually have a way to split them up?"

"You don't have to worry about that." Shang Xia responded.

Snorting heavily, her displeasure with his answer was clearly conveyed to him.

When Shang Xia was worrying over whether she would just turn to leave, her voice rang in his mind again. "You can take a look at them, but I don't plan to trade them for essence crystals. You better be prepared to pay through the nose if you want them!"

Shang Xia barely agreed when the fish swallowed his jade coin.

Tugging his fishing pole, he dragged the fish up onto the platform.

The female cultivator got directly to the point. She spat out 2 pieces of dark rock that were stuck together.

Shang Xia barely reached over to pick them up when her voice rang in his mind. "Don't think that you can separate the fate dipper essence by splitting up the rocks. These are merely used to seal them together."

Shang Xia nodded but didn't say more. Actually, there was no need for him to say anything as the Crimson Soul Tablet told him whatever he needed to know once he touched the rocks.

"Yin Alignment Earth Essence Fate Dipper Essence. Ji Earth Element Fate Dipper Essence."

“Yang Alignment Heaven Extremity Fate Dipper Essence. Wu Earth Element Fate Dipper Essence.”

Shang Xia was speechless after seeing the words displayed on the Crimson Soul Tablet.

He didn't care to return the rocks that contained the fate dipper essences back to her and he asked, “These are definitely something I need. I wonder what you wish to obtain in exchange?”

Seeing how Shang Xia hadn't returned the goods, she knew that he desperately wanted to make the trade. “I want a divine weapon. Do you have one?”

Shang Xia glanced at her with a trace of shock in his eyes. He tossed back the rocks without a second thought. Failing to contain his emotions, he sneered, “Do you even want to make the trade? Here, take them back. I won't send you off.”

Chapter 653: Even more Fate Dipper Essence

Shang Xia didn't think that she would make such an unreasonable request. He couldn't help but find it ridiculous. He didn't know if she lost her marbles or something. Who in the world thought that they would be able to obtain a divine weapon for 2 fate dipper essence?

There wasn't a need to mention fate dipper essence. Even 2 complete Origin Dippers might not match the worth of a divine weapon.

The female cultivator on the other side didn't think that Shang Xia would reject her so decisively. She fell silent for some time, but she didn't control the fish to retrieve both fate dipper essences.

A moment later, her voice rang in Shang Xia's mind again. “I apologize. I was too rash. I'm not actually asking for a divine weapon. Instead, I wish to trade them for a method to craft divine weapons.”

Even so, Shang Xia shook his head and rejected her offer. “A divine weapon has always been born naturally. Even if you manage to craft it, it will only be a weapon embryo. Whether or not it gains spirituality depends on the will of the heavens. I have no idea how to force the process to happen, but even if I did, I wouldn't tell others for 2 mere strands of fate dipper essence.”

Shang Xia suddenly connected the dots and he muttered, “This should be the reason you failed to trade your fate dipper essences, right?”

“Bullshti! How the hell do you know that I've been rejected everywhere else and I wasn't the one who refused to make the trade?” Her words betrayed her anger at being exposed.

A faint smile appeared on Shang Xia's face as he continued, “It doesn't matter if it's a divine weapon you're looking for or the method to craft it. I shouldn't be the first person you ran into. You definitely tried your luck at those bigger factions first, right?”

“You... Forget it, hmph!” The female cultivator sounded as though she had given up. “I'll trade them for an extermination origin. Don't tell me you don't even have an extermination origin with you.”

“I do, but I’m afraid these fate dipper essence aren’t worth a complete extermination origin.” Shang Xia chuckled.

Once again, the female cultivator erupted in anger, “Why the hell not?! Don’t take me for a fool! Those fate dipper essence definitely holds a special meaning to you!”

Shang Xia didn’t deny it. Instead, he countered, “It’s not like you can sell your fate dipper essences elsewhere. Who else other than me will be willing to buy them?”

A sneer came next. “This lady here has 3 fate dipper essences, not just the 2 of them.”

“I need to take a look at it to ensure it’s something I need.” Shang Xia replied.

Unwilling to back down, she questioned, “What if it is?”

Standing there in stunned silence, Shang Xia thought about the requirements he needed to craft his rank five advancement medicine. He needed 10 fate dipper essence corresponding to the yin and yang alignment of the 5 basic elements. It wasn’t easy to gather them, and the trade fair was an opportunity that was hard to come by. He was afraid he would need to wait for the next year for a chance like that to come again.

He felt that it wasn’t too much of a loss to trade an extermination origin for two strands of fate dipper essence.

One had to know that the disciples of the holy lands would value a fate dipper essence at a price of 300 essence crystals.

Back when Shang Xia sold his superior high-grade weapon, he only obtained 700 essence crystals.

No matter how it went, the value of a high-grade weapon was definitely above that of an extermination origin.

If he had to be truly objective, a magnetic fate dipper essence was hard to come by, much less a pair of them.

If she managed to split them up, she might be able to raise their value. In fact, Shang Xia would probably have to make up for the difference in essence crystals even after giving her an extermination origin.

Unfortunately, they were combined in a way that they couldn’t be separated. Their value took a huge hit because of that, and there wasn’t a need to bring up the ordinary price of a fate dipper essence at 300 essence crystals. Even if she sold them for a total price of 500 essence crystals, no one would be willing to buy them.

That was why Shang Xia felt that he could lower the price a little. After all, saving a few hundred essence crystals meant that he could keep a few mid-grade essence crystals!

After thinking about it, Shang Xia muttered, “Let me take a look at it first.”

A sneer came from the other party. “Well, I don’t think you will dare to take advantage of this lady anyway.”

After she spoke, the Talisman Fish spat out a ball of ice. *This chapter is updated by*

As soon as it did, white mist filled the area and the temperature dropped several degrees.

Shang Xia turned serious. Reaching out to touch the ball of ice, a sharp chill entered his body. It was promptly destroyed by his Four Constellation Qi.

The Crimson Soul Tablet also gave its evaluation. "Frost Jade Essence Fate Dipper Essence. Frost Element Fate Dipper Essence."

It seemed as though he wouldn't be able to use the fate dipper essence. After all, the Crimson Soul Tablet didn't state which specific element or its Yin Yang alignment.

He might not be able to use it, but he couldn't help but turn a little curious. After all, the other party had 3 different fate dipper essences on her.

"Apologies, this fate dipper essence is useless to me." Shang Xia sighed with regret.

The female cultivator seemed a little suspicious at that point and she muttered, "Don't tell me that you are..." [1]

"Do you think that's possible?" Shang Xia interrupted her immediately.

The treasures they had taken out were of extremely high quality. None of them would make an impulsive decision just because the treasure the other side had was a little rarer than usual.

The female cultivator also seemed to notice that point and she controlled her Talisman Fish to swallow the piece of ice that contained the Frost Jade Essence Fate Dipper Essence. Under Shang Xia's surprised gaze, she spat out another item.

"Take a look at this then."

That was another treasure that contained a strand of fate dipper essence! She actually had 4 of them!

Shang Xia's gaze lingered on the fish and he examined it carefully. It was as though he wanted to dig out the secret behind the female cultivator's identity.

Of course, that didn't mean that he would ignore the fate dipper essence she spat out. He quickly reached down to pick it up.

"Qingxuan Purple Cloud Fate Dipper Essence. Jia Wood Element Fate Dipper Essence."

Shang Xia's eyebrows jumped violently and he didn't return the object in his hand.

Realizing what had happened, a light chuckle rang in his mind. "How about it?"

"It is definitely something I need." Shang Xia responded.

"What do you think you should value them as?" She laughed with glee.

Shang Xia didn't respond directly. Instead, he tried pushing his luck a little further. "Do you still have another fate dipper essence? If you have another one I require, I am willing to give you 2 extermination origins."

At that point, Shang Xia couldn't be bothered with the difference of several hundred essence crystals. After all, those were all fate dipper essence he needed! If he was able to gather all 10 he required, he was even willing to pay thousands of essence crystals more than what the other party was asking for.

Unfortunately, the world didn't work that way. It wasn't so easy to get lucky everyday. Finding 3 fate dipper essences he could use from a single person already proved that he had heaven-defying luck.

Unsurprisingly, a sarcastic sneer rang in his mind the next moment. "You seem to be thinking too much. I risked my life to obtain 4 fate dipper essences. Where the hell am I supposed to find another?"

"I was too greedy. Anyway, how do you wish to carry out the trade for the magnetic fate dipper essences and the other one?" Shang Xia asked.

A soft sigh left her lips. "It's a shame you don't have a divine weapon embryo or the method to craft one... Forget it. I'll value the pine cone that contains the final fate dipper essence at 400 essence crystals!"

"Fine." Shang Xia agreed without hesitation even though the price was obviously higher than usual.

The next moment, a bold thought entered Shang Xia's mind. "Fellow cultivator, if you're so interested in a divine weapon embryo and the method to craft one, I have a damaged pseudo divine weapon with me. Do you wish to take a look at it?"

Chapter 654: Secret Codephrase

"You even have a pseudo divine weapon?! Do you even know what a weapon has to be to be classified as one?"

Shang Xia didn't think that she would start scolding him after he casually brought it up.

A trace of annoyance filled Shang Xia's mind. "It's fine if you don't want it. There's no need to act so sarcastic..."

After so many exchanges with Shang Xia, the female cultivator seemed to understand his personality and she quickly restrained herself a little. Her tone became a little better as she muttered, "Alright, it won't hurt to tell you anyway. A weapon can only be considered a pseudo divine weapon if it's a weapon embryo of a divine weapon without spirituality. What ignorant fools out there classify as a pseudo divine weapon is merely high-grade weapons crafted with exceptional materials. Those weapons could be considered superior high-grade weapons, but they're far from an actual pseudo divine weapon! Their understanding of pseudo divine weapons is completely wrong!"

She didn't stop there. Instead, she started to question Shang Xia again. "If I'm not mistaken, you probably think that way too, right? The pseudo divine weapon you're talking about is probably a superior high-grade weapon. Hmm... Maybe, they should come up with a new classification and call them peak-grade weapons..."

Shang Xia didn't think that there were actually so many things to consider. However, he couldn't be bothered to maintain his stance either. If there was one thing he was good at, it was admitting his mistakes. If he was ignorant, so be it. He waved his hand and he didn't care whether she could see his actions or not as he asked, "I have indeed learned something today..."

The female cultivator seemed to have heard the sincerity in Shang Xia's voice and she snorted twice before she added, "Alright, where's your so-called pseudo divine weapon? Let me take a look at it."

Slightly taken aback by her sudden shift in attitude, Shang Xia frowned. “You really wish to take a look? Didn’t you say...”

“You might have some misunderstandings about pseudo divine weapons, but a superior high-grade weapon has been made with many different high-level materials. In the hands of a Martial Extermination Realm expert, the power it can display is comparable to if they wielded a divine weapon. Of course, a divine weapon is another story altogether, but I can’t give up a chance to obtain a weapon like that.”

Shang Xia found her rapidly changing emotions a little hard to get used to, but he still retrieved an intricate silver shuttle from his Spatial Pouch.

He obtained the silver shuttle after killing Chen Yuanzi, the expert in the grand completion stage of the Martial Extermination Realm from the Northern Sea Mystic Sect.

After Chen Yuanzi self-detonated, the silver shuttle he controlled was sent flying by Shang Xia’s Abyssal Blade. It was eventually retrieved after the dust had settled.

As soon as her Talisman Fish swallowed the weapon, the female cultivator gasped in shock. “It’s no wonder you classified this as a pseudo divine weapon... This silver shuttle might be a high-grade weapon, but it contains a huge amount of extremely precious material! I believe the owner of this silver shuttle poured a lot of resources into it. They definitely come from a prominent and strong background too...”

While she was evaluating the silver shuttle, she didn’t hide her delight at the discovery.

Shang Xia chuckled in response, “Seems like fellow cultivator is really pleased with the weapon...”

“At the very least, I will be able to use this until I break through to the Martial Dipper Realm. A divine weapon won’t mean much to me when I’m not in the Martial Dipper Realm anyway. At the very most, it’s a sturdier and sharper weapon compared to high-grade ones...” She laughed.

Shang Xia’s curiosity was piqued after hearing what she had said. “Why would you say so? A divine weapon is still a divine weapon at the end of the day, it...”

Mocking others seemed like second nature to the female cultivator and despite having controlled herself a little, she couldn’t help but snap at Shang Xia, “I knew you would say something like that after you misunderstood the meaning of a pseudo divine weapon. I don’t know if you have seen Martial Dipper Realm Ancestors wielding their divine weapons, but I can tell you for sure that a divine weapon can only unleash its true strength in the hands of a Martial Dipper Realm expert. If we take this silver shuttle as an example, it will shatter the moment a Martial Dipper Realm Ancestor swings their divine weapon at it. However, if the same divine weapon is used by a cultivator at the Martial Extermination Realm, they would only be able to leave scratches and some damage on the weapon... HUH?! Why the hell does this shuttle look like it’s been damaged... Do you... Do you actually own a divine weapon?”

Shang Xia felt a chill running through his heart but he chuckled casually, “Fellow cultivator, you must be kidding. Divine weapons aren’t cabbages that grow by the side of the road.”

What she said earlier was truly accurate. Even though Shang Xia's Abyssal Blade was missing a third of its actual blade, it was a true blue divine weapon. It could display formidable strength in his hands and allow him to obtain the absolute advantage when fighting cultivators of the same level, but it was difficult for him to display the true power of the weapon. Shang Xia thought back to the time when Yun Jing summoned the Hidden Frost Sword into the battlefield between the two worlds. It might have scared off the Martial Extermination Realm experts, and she could use it to maintain order in the Tongyou City. However, it was only when Kou Chongxue wielded the weapon and barged into the White Deer Paradise did their combined might shake the Azure Origin World.

He might not have seen Kou Chongxue personally using his Hidden Frost Sword, but he could feel the shockwaves that caused his soul to tremble from the battle whenever it was used. It was truly an awe-inspiring feeling.

Back then, Shang Xia always attributed the feeling to Kou Chongxue's tyrannical divine presence. Now that he heard her explanation, everything became clear. Kou Chongxue wasn't the sole reason he felt that way. It was because he was wielding his divine weapon!

"That's true..." The female cultivator sighed. She didn't press on the matter and she continued, "I am interested in this silver shuttle. I'll trade the fate dipper essences for this. However, this would seem like I'm taking advantage of you..."

Shang Xia roared with laughter, "It's alright. I received your teaching today, and I'll consider it the difference in price between our treasures."

"Hmph, I guess I would have to thank you for being so generous!" The female cultivator mumbled softly at the side.

Since she swallowed the silver shuttle, there was nothing left to do but to toss her back into the Cloud Sea. However, Shang Xia thought of something and decided to remind her, "Oh right, there would be some complications if someone saw you using that weapon. You should change its appearance before you start swinging it around."

"No shit!" Her voice rang in his mind again.

Chuckling bitterly, Shang Xia decided to try his luck one last time. "Young lady, would you like to leave behind a secret contact method so that we can reach each other again at the next trade fair?"

"There's no need for that. Unless improvements are made in the future, there is no point in remembering a code word or message. Are we supposed to keep waiting for each other without knowing if the other party is even here?"

Shang Xia felt that her words made sense. The method the 3 super factions used ensured that everyone's identity was protected. However, it seemed a little overkill as everyone could only rely on luck to run into their next trading partner. It definitely brought about a lot of inconvenience to everyone involved...

The female cultivator was truly a unique individual. She didn't wait for Shang Xia to think about tossing her back into the Cloud Sea. Instead, she controlled her fish with the intention to return to the sea and it started flopping around on the platform.

When she reached the edge of the platform and Shang Xia thought that she would drop back into the Cloud Sea on her own, her voice rang in his mind again. “Fine! I thought about it! It won’t be convenient for you to contact me regardless, but you can leave behind a secret contact codeword we can use if I try to find you. If I find more fate dipper essence in the future, I’ll trade them with you... Oh right, do you even want more fate dipper essence?”

“Of course I do! If there are future trade fairs, I’ll leave the words ‘Four Constellation Sage, Talisman Grandmaster’ on my jade coin in case you run into me again.” Shang Xia replied instantly.

Finally, he seemed to say something useful and the female cultivator gasped. “Four Constellation Sage, Talisman... You’re a Talisman Grandmaster?! Please forgive my lack of respect earlier... Looks like I will definitely have to look for you in the future.”

“Of course, you’re welcome anytime!” Shang Xia laughed.

“Alright, I’m off!” With that, her Talisman Fish flopped over the edge and disappeared into the Cloud Sea.

Sighing softly, Shang Xia tried to suppress the excitement he felt. He glanced at Liu Qinglan and the others before shifting his attention to his own fish.

After completing the deal for 3 strands of fate dipper essence, Shang Xia felt that his Talisman Fish had already arrived at its destination.

He stared at the ball of light before him and noticed no other fishes around. He quickly entered the area covered in light and slammed against the jade coin.

“Abyssal Void Breaking Talisman.”

Zheng Chang’s voice came from the jade coin and Shang Xia knew that he found the right place.

Before Zheng Chang and him left for the Three Unity Pagoda, Shang Xia received a list of treasures owned by the Lushan Sect. There were fate dipper essence and rank five spiritual treasures among them and he decided to make use of the opportunity to get them.

Since neither of them knew how the trade fair would take place, Shang Xia decided to make a random suggestion and agreed on a secret phrase that only the 2 of them would understand. In the end, he decided that the secret phrase would be the name of the talismans Zheng Chang obtained back then!

The Abyssal Void Shattering Talisman came from the inheritance of the Abyssal Sect, and Shang Xia was the only one who obtained their talisman inheritance. He was the only person who knew how to craft those talismans.

Because everyone’s divine perception was restricted within the Three Unity Pagoda, Zheng Chang could only send his divine perception into the jade coin and repeat the phrase over and over again whenever a fish arrived. Shang Xia would know that he arrived at the Lushan Sect’s platform once he heard the phrase.

Since the 3 super factions decided to use such a complicated method to host the trade fair, Shang Xia didn’t look for Zheng Chang the moment it started. Instead, he went around looking for fate

dipper essences and other rank five spiritual treasures he needed. After all, he couldn't be sure that Zheng Chang would be so obedient as to wait for him the entire time.

What Shang Xia didn't know was that Zheng Chang had been looking for him since the very beginning! In fact, he almost couldn't withstand the pressure any longer and was about to give up.

"Junior Brother Zheng, what are you waiting for?!"

"Junior Brother Zheng, you haven't completed a single deal... What the hell are you doing?"

"Yeah... Junior Brother Zheng, Senior Brother Tang has already finished several trades and obtained some of the treasures we require. You're the only one who hasn't gotten anything. You should know that you're in charge of obtaining rank four talismans during the trade fair. If you fail to get a single one, you'll be heavily punished by the sect! You will even drag us down with you!"

"Junior Brother Zheng, is there something wrong?"

Since the trade fair started, Zheng Chang followed Shang Xia's instructions. He had been yelling their code phrase over and over, waiting for Shang Xia to locate him.

Who would have thought that Shang Xia would be nowhere to be found?! Because he hadn't been completing many trades, he was incurring the resentment of his senior brothers.

At the start, he could brush them off by saying that he got unlucky. However, they were starting to get suspicious.

Seeing as they were about to blow up and snatch his fishing pole away, Zheng Chang yelled abruptly, "What do you know?! I'm waiting for a Talisman Grandmaster!"

His 2 senior brothers stared at him in shock before revealing looks of doubt.

"Talisman Grandmaster? Are you sure? How did you get in contact with a Talisman Grandmaster?"

"It's been so long since the trade fair started. Junior Brother Zheng, is the person you're waiting for lying to you?"

Beads of cold sweat dripped from his forehead and Zheng Chang realized that he messed up. He realized that he should have given up control of the fishing pole since they were sharing it. He could rotate with them and continue waiting for Shang Xia when it was his turn. Actually, straight up renting another fishing pole for himself wouldn't be a bad idea either.

Shit! What a stupid move!

Senior Brother Tang, who was on the other side of the platform, glanced at him and muttered, "Since Junior Brother Zheng said that he's waiting for a Talisman Grandmaster, the rest of you can just relax. It's fine to wait a little more."

Now that Senior Brother Tang had spoken, Zheng Chang felt incomparably nervous. He was paranoid that his secret was going to be exposed! If anyone found out that he was under someone else's control, his fate was sealed.

He was seriously contemplating if he should admit it and allow his cultivation to be crippled or if he should just wait for their Martial Dipper Realm Ancestor to kill him with a single slap when he heard the chime of the jade coin ringing in his ears. It resembled a heavenly melody and it was as though a godly pardon had arrived.

“Why didn't you come earlier...”

As soon as Shang Xia's Talisman Fish slammed into the jade coin and heard the words 'Abyssal Void Shattering Talisman', Zheng Chang's voice that was laden with hidden bitterness rang in his mind. He had no idea a grown man could actually speak in that sort of tone.

Chapter 655: Scarlet Blazing Cloud

“Why didn't you come earlier...”

Zheng Chang immediately started complaining now that Shang Xia was here. “My senior brothers are starting to suspect me. If you come a little later, my secret would be revealed!”

Shang Xia was extremely curious after hearing what he said, “Why are you so obedient? Just hand your fishing pole to someone else and forget about our agreement if you were about to be exposed!”

Zheng Chang obviously wouldn't admit that he was stupid and didn't think of that. He quickly came up with another excuse. “I can't go against my word! I made you a promise, and I had to keep it!”

Shang Xia could only sigh helplessly in response, “Alright. Tell me what you told your senior brothers so that we don't say the wrong thing later.”

...

After Senior Brother Tang's instructions, the other 2 experts of the Lushan Sect stood behind Zheng Chang quietly.

With Three Unity Pagoda's property of isolating one's divine perception, Zheng Chang communicated with Shang Xia while he was still under the water without any of them knowing.

He eventually pulled Shang Xia up onto the platform and he revealed excited looks from time to time as they traded some treasures with each other.

The others on the platform stared at him curiously and one of them couldn't help but ask, “Is he really a Talisman Grandmaster?”

Zheng Chang recalled how they had been yelling at him earlier and doubting him and he released several loud snorts to express his displeasure. Taking out a bunch of talismans, he fanned them out in his hand and sneered, “Take a close look! These are 5 rank four talismans! I traded them for the talisman papers and rank four talisman ink we brought!”

“5 identical talismans... Looks like he has to be a rank four Talisman Grandmaster!”

“It's actually a Talisman Grandmaster... However, what does that talisman actually do?”

His senior brothers stared at each other for a moment and felt a lot more reassured that he wasn't lying to them.

Raising his chin with a slight trade of pride, Zheng Chang replied, "This is the Abyssal Void Shattering Talisman. It can assist us when we're flying and it's especially so when we're traveling through space outside the Beyond Heavens Pavilion..."

"Is it used to escape? Junior Brother, that's just an assistive talisman. Go ask if he has offensive or defensive talismans for sale!" One of them asked and before Zheng Chang could retort, a voice rang from the other side of the platform and interrupted them.

"You fools!" Senior Brother Tang placed his fishing pole down at an unknown time and he ignored the other two while making his way over to Zheng Chang. He grabbed a piece of Abyssal Void Shattering Talisman and inspected it carefully. "Indeed... This talisman is extremely important to us! Junior Brother Zheng, you're really lucky to be able to find a Talisman Grandmaster!"

As if afraid that Zheng Chang would fuck up, Senior Brother Tang immediately passed down an order. "Junior Brother Zheng, you have to maintain a good relationship with this Talisman Grandmaster. It would be for the best if we can cooperate for the long term. It will still be worth it for us to take a little loss in order to obtain more Abyssal Void Shattering Talismans."

Senior Brother Tang didn't know that his words truly solved a huge headache for Zheng Chang. It was especially so when he mentioned how it would be worth it for them to take a loss to gather more Abyssal Void Shattering Talismans. The worry he had when Shang Xia ripped him off before entering the Three Unity Pagoda was immediately forgotten.

Naturally, Zheng Chang wasn't a fool. He finally started acting properly and sighed helplessly. "It's a shame I found him too late. He traded away most talismans he had and I only managed to obtain the Abyssal Void Shattering Talismans as no one else wanted them."

"Hahaha! Those people have no idea what they're doing! You should thank them for allowing you to benefit greatly from this!" Senior Brother Tang laughed.

The other 2 at the side could no longer hold in their curiosity. One of them asked, "Senior Brother Tang, how useful is an Abyssal Void Shattering Talisman?"

Finally glancing at them, Senior Brother Tang explained, "The reason it's special is because we're not the only ones who can use it. Both our Martial Dipper Realm Ancestors can make use of the talisman too, and that's not all. Those talismans will be extremely useful when the time comes!"

Senior Brother Tang didn't go too in-depth in his explanation. However, since he brought up their Martial Dipper Realm Ancestors, the 2 of them fell completely silent.

When he finally turned back to look at Zheng Chang, he found an ugly expression plastered to his junior brother's face. He quickly asked, "Junior Brother Zheng, is there something troubling you?"

"Our communication went pretty smoothly, and the other side promised that as long as we provide talisman paper and talisman ink he is willing to craft rank four

talismans for us according to the publicly agreed standard of 3 rank four talisman papers for a rank four talisman. Moreover, the other side is willing to carry out this trade every fair..”

After a moment of contemplation, Senior Brother Tang asked, “Can you try asking him if he is willing to take rank four talisman commissions?”

“Senior Brother Tang?” Zheng Chang stared at him in shock.

“Be a little bit more tactful when you ask. After all, he’s not a Talisman Grandmaster from our Lushan Sect.” Senior Brother Tang gestured to Zheng Chang with a slight upward nod. Even though he sounded calm, his expression betrayed the anxiety he was feeling.

With a ‘helpless’ look, Zheng Chang could only relay Senior Brother Tang’s concerns. It didn’t take long before he raised his head and relayed the message, “The Talisman Grandmaster says that he can craft 12 different types of rank four talisman. As long as our request falls within those 12 types of talisman, he would agree to our request.”

Sinking into deep contemplation, Senior Brother Tang grunted once before speaking again, “Ask if he knows how to craft rank four formation talismans.”

Zheng Chang did as he was told and eventually relayed the reply he received from Shang Xia. “He said that he doesn’t know how to craft rank four formation talismans. However, formation talismans have always been the easiest type of talisman to craft in their respective ranks. If we can provide the inheritance to craft them, he will ignore the initial cost of familiarizing himself with it and trade it with us for the same price of 3 talisman papers for 1 of them.”

Senior Brother Tang was shocked by Shang Xia’s response and his back straightened subconsciously. He muttered softly, “Alright, it’s a deal!”

Who would have thought that Zheng Chang’s expression would sink further after communicating with Shang Xia a little further? “Senior Brother, this Talisman Grandmaster wishes to obtain fate dipper essence and rank five spiritual treasures. He’s asking if we have any.”

“I brought 2 strands of fate dipper essence and 2 rank five spiritual treasures with me on this trip but I traded away one of them each. Does the Talisman Grandmaster want the other?” Senior Brother Tang was slightly taken aback by the request but replied nonetheless.

After a short conversation, Zheng Chang conveyed Shang Xia’s intentions to the others. “He says that he needs to take a look at them before deciding if he needs them. However, he also said that he has one last talisman, the Divine Restraint Talisman, left. He wonders if it is alright to make up for the difference in value with essence crystals if our fate dipper essence and rank five spiritual treasure are things he needs.

Essence crystals? That’s the last thing my Lushan Sect needs...

Senior Brother Tang thought to himself. However, after seriously considering it, he muttered in a low voice, “Alright. We can do that.”

Zheng Chang retrieved the treasures from Senior Brother Tang before introducing them to Shang Xia. “There’s a Hundred Mellow Chirp Fate Dipper Essence and a piece of cloud we obtained during sunset, the Rank Five Scarlet Blazing Cloud.”

After his introduction, Zheng Chang revealed both treasures to Shang Xia. The Hundred Mellow Chirp Fate Dipper Essence resembled a wavy thread that was sealed in a piece of transparent crystal. The Scarlet Blazing Cloud was sealed in a tiny crystal ball that was the size of an infant’s fist.

Shang Xia’s Talisman Fish swallowed the Hundred Mellow Chirp Fate Dipper Essence before spitting it out. Clearly, the fate dipper essence wasn’t something he could use.

When the fish swallowed the crystal ball, the Crimson Soul Tablet immediately reacted. “Scarlet Flame Cloud. Rank five Fire attribute Spiritual Treasure.”

It wasn’t easy to obtain the Scarlet Flame Cloud. One had to be in the Martial Extermination Realm and they had to retrieve a piece of scarlet cloud in the sky that appeared during each sunset. Only after they gathered a whole lot of them would they be able to form the rank five spiritual treasure.

Even though Senior Brother Tang was serious about trying to form some sort of relationship with the Talisman Grandmaster, he had no choice but to ask for 500 essence crystals to complete their deal. After all, business was business.

His deal with the Lushan Sect came as a great surprise to Shang Xia. He once again obtained a treasure he could use, the Scarlet Flame Cloud. That wasn’t all. He managed to build a long-term client that was the Lushan Sect and he would be able to obtain a steady supply of talisman paper and ink from them. As if that wasn’t enough, he would also be able to obtain the technique to craft rank four formation talismans!

He wasn’t the only one who benefited from the deal. The Lushan Sect also managed to gain another avenue to craft rank four talismans. That was actually extremely important for them.

Despite everything both sides gained, the person who benefited the most was actually Zheng Chang. He was afraid that his sect would discover his secret that he was controlled by Shang Xia, but now that the deal had taken place, no one would suspect him of anything! He would even be praised by his sect. He also managed to gain Shang Xia’s trust and friendship by brokering the deal with his sect!

Chapter 656: How Much?

Shang Xia and Zheng Chang’s acting were seamless as an award winning performance played out on the Lushan Sect’s platform. With his perfect coordination, he managed to obtain a steady source of rank four talisman paper and talisman ink. He even managed to use 500 essence crystals to obtain a piece of Scarlet Flame Cloud.

Before he left, Shang Xia also mentioned his special code phrase to the members of the Lushan Sect. Like the female cultivator before, he left his title ‘Four Constellation Sage, Talisman Grandmaster’. He then instructed them to look for him by using the secret code phrase the next trade fair in order to carry out their trades.

Naturally, he knew that their initial meeting was merely for them to reach an agreement. They would have to carry out deals in the future in order to build their trust for each other.

With both sides profiting from their deal, the only downside the Lushan Sect would suffer would be the formula for crafting rank four formation talismans.

As Shang Xia's Talisman Fish returned to the platform and retrieved the Scarlet Flame Cloud, he started to take stock of what he had. Of the 10 fate dipper essence, he managed to gather 7. Only the Yi Wood, Bing Fire, and Gui Water Fate Dipper Essences were left.

He also gathered 4 of the 5 rank five spiritual treasures he required. The only one left was of the Water element.

If the trade fair ended then and there, Shang Xia would be able to say that he gained a lot. At the very least, he benefited a lot more than he expected.

However, he still had a lot of essence crystals left over. The four great clans and the Tongyou Institution sponsored him with 3300 essence crystals before the start of the fair but he still had 3200 of them left!

The only things he traded were the 3 high-grade weapons he obtained in the multiple battles he had been through. He traded them for fate dipper essences and rank five spiritual treasures.

After his experience with multiple deals, he discovered that even though essence crystals were considered the common currency, many cultivators would trade high-level items for treasures of equal value. They would hardly use essence crystals during their transactions.

Leaving behind his request for fate dipper essence and rank five spiritual treasures on his jade coin, Shang Xia placed another 1000 essence crystals into the belly of his Talisman Fish before sending it off. He hoped that he would be able to take a short break to look through what the other members of the Tongyou Institution obtained.

There were 6 members of the institution on the platform and they had 3 fishing poles. Other than Shang Xia who was using one on his own, the others took turns.

Chu Jia and Ji Yu were holding their fishing poles as they focused on their Talisman Fish swimming in the Cloud Sea.

Before Shang Xia could say anything, Liu Qinglan noticed him and she laughed, "You look much more relaxed. Looks like you managed to gain quite a lot."

"I'm still missing some things, but I gained a lot more than I expected," Shang Xia laughed.

Liu Qinglan smiled in response. "That's great. You seemed really anxious since the start of the trade fair. You haven't taken a break the whole time and only someone like you in the grand completion stage of the Martial Extermination Realm would be able to withstand such a huge consumption of divine perception. All of us swapped places several times over."

It was only then when Shang Xia noticed that fishing in the Cloud Sea or following their Talisman Fish would actually drain one's energy.

Of the 6 members of the Tongyou Institution, it could be said that they represented the 5 major factions. They were the four great clans and the Tongyou Institution.

Ordinarily, there should be at least 5 fishing poles. After all, it only cost 2 essence crystals. It wasn't as though they were lacking 2 essence crystals.

The real reason they didn't rent more fishing poles was because of the exhaustion it caused. It was perfectly alright for them to take turns so they could recover before their next attempt.

Shang Xia immediately realized why Zheng Chang was in an almost-state of hysterics when he arrived earlier. The Lushan Sect probably only used 2 fishing poles and there was no way a faction like theirs cared about 3 essence crystals.

Zheng Chang was able to fish the entire time because he didn't bother sending his Talisman Fish out to trade with others! He was waiting for Shang Xia the entire time!

Making a quick calculation, Shang Xia realized that he was able to withstand the consumption due to his mastery of the Man and Heaven Synergy Chapter.

After thinking for some time, Shang Xia asked, "Instructor Liu, how are we doing right now? Do you need me to help?"

Liu Qinglan waved her hand and chuckled, "What we lack are lower-leveled resources. We're doing fine and you should focus on yourself."

However, she couldn't help but sigh the next moment, "Our Continent is just too damn small. We have close to no resources. Without the battlefield between the two worlds, we wouldn't have been able to make ends meet. Patriarch Kou has been supporting us single handedly by going everywhere to scour for resources. That is the reason why many powers in our Azure Origin World dislike him. Otherwise, he wouldn't be stuck in the third element of the Martial Dipper Realm with his talent..."

"The later generations of the institution only managed to grow in the recent years and obtain enough strength to stand up for themselves. Deputy Patriarch Ji and Deputy Patriarch Shang entered the Martial Dipper Realm in recent years and he finally managed to get some time to catch his breath. Now, he can finally consider cultivating properly once again," Liu Qinglan continued, "That is also the reason why the institution is sparing no expense to push you into the Martial Dipper Realm. The moment a fourth Martial Dipper Realm expert is born in our institution, it doesn't matter if we upgrade the Tongyou Mysterious World to a holy land. With so many experts, we'll be a sacred land of cultivation no matter what. Only when that happens will our You Continent be able to strike fear in the hearts of other factions, putting us in an unassailable position."

Liu Qinglan's words definitely moved Shang Xia, but if there was one thing he picked up from whatever she was saying, it was the fact that Kou Chongxue would be able to grow stronger.

He couldn't help but ask, "Did Patriarch Kou already reach the stage where he could refine his fourth fate dipper?"

Since the gathering in the Beyond Heavens Pavilion where Kou Chongxue asked Shang Xia about what his fourth fate dipper should be, Shang Xia had an inkling that the patriarch was ready to take the next step. Even though it was possible Kou Chongxue had merely asked in the spur of the moment, but Shang Xia didn't think so.

Maintaining an unwavering expression, Liu Qinglan explained, “The patriarch has always had a clear plan on how to improve his cultivation. He even said that all he was lacking now was a chance.”

Shang Xia lowered his head and fell into thought.

Unexpectedly, Liu Qinglan continued, “With everything that is happening now, Patriarch Kou might have to bring forward his plans...”

“What? Why?” Shang Xia was slightly stunned.

With a frown on her face, Liu Qinglan sighed, “Didn’t you hear what was going to happen from the cultivator from the Lushan Sect you were talking about?”

“Are you talking about the invasion of the Spirit Abundance World?” Shang Xia felt his heart skip a beat.

In a soft voice, Liu Qinglan explained, “Our worlds have to give it our all in order to resist the invasion of a superior world. Under such circumstances, no one can stand alone. If our Tongyou Institution doesn’t wish to be a mere sacrificial piece in the grand scheme of things, we can only grow stronger. I believe that is also one of the reasons the patriarch is pushing for you to enter the Martial Dipper Realm the best he can. I can also guess that he wants to take the risk to push his cultivation to the next level in the near future. When you enter the Martial Dipper Realm, our institution will still have 3 Martial Dipper Realm Ancestors holding the fort in case anything unexpected happens to him.”

Naturally, there was only one thing Liu Qinglan could be referring to when she mentioned that something unexpected could happen to Kou Chongxue. That was the fact that he might perish when his attempt to grow stronger fails..

All of a sudden, Shang Xia felt that the gains he received from the trade fair were far from enough!

“Hey! Oh mighty Talisman Grandmaster, someone’s interested in your rank two Golden Sword Talisman Seal!” Chu Jia interrupted them with a loud yell from the side.

Chapter 657: True Worth

“Oh mighty Talisman Grandmaster, someone’s interested in your rank two Golden Sword Talisman Seal!” Chu Jia yelled from the other side of the platform and interrupted their conversation. They quickly turned to look at her.

Liu Qinglan’s expression sank and she growled, “Chu Jia, where did you get your hands on the talisman seal?!”

Turning to Shang Xia, she questioned, “Did you give it to her?”

Shang Xia shook his head in confusion. He created a Golden Sword Talisman Seal and a Golden Lantern Barrier Talisman Seal, but after showing them to the members of the Tongyou Institution, he retrieved them and placed them in his Spatial Pouch. He brought it with him wherever he went and he didn’t take it out during the trade fair.

“Yeah, he didn’t give it to me! I brought it up to the person I was trading with!” Chu Jia explained.

“This is ridiculous! The matter concerning the Talisman Seal is of great significance, especially rank two talisman seals! How can you reveal it so easily?!” Liu Qinglan erupted in anger.

Chu Jia grumbled after feeling wronged by Liu Qinglan’s sudden scolding. “He agreed to buy the rank one talisman seal I had for sale and he’s not stupid! Since I had a rank one talisman seal, he guessed that we had rank two ones.”

With a gloomy feeling in her heart, Liu Qinglan turned to look at Shang Xia.

However, she was greeted with a chuckle. “I have long since decided on trading the talisman seals. Instructor Liu, you took away the 3 rank one talisman seals in order to prevent them from leaking out to the outside world, but with the measures the Three Unity Pagoda have in place to protect our identities, it’s our best shot at selling them off!”

Even though Shang Xia had described the situation, Liu Qinglan was still feeling somewhat reluctant.

“Instructor Liu, leave it to me! The person is willing to trade a rank five spiritual treasure for it. I know that Grandmaster Shang is currently gathering rank five spiritual treasures and I know what I have to do!” Chu Jia hastily added.

Liu Qinglan was shocked, and Shang Xia was equally as surprised.

Glancing at each other, they started walking over. Liu Zhidao and Yun Yichen also learned about the matter and started to crown over.

Liu Qinglan asked, “Which seal did you trade with him? Was it the Wind Arrow Talisman Seal or the Stimulation Talisman Seal?”

“Of course it was the Wind Arrow Talisman Seal!” Chu Jia muttered.

“Heh.” Liu Qinglan snorted once in response. “Why didn’t you give them the Stimulation Talisman Seal?”

“That’s mine! ... ” Chu Jia yelled. Regret filled her heart the moment she did. She glanced at Shang Xia before quickly turning away.

With a glare that clearly expressed her dissatisfaction, Liu Qinglan growled, “You’re no longer a kid! Didn’t you turn 30 not too long ago? Why are you still acting like a little lass? You don’t have the air of being someone’s teacher in the slightest...”

Liu Qinglan thought that she was giving Chu Jia a quick lecture, but she didn’t expect Chu Jia’s reaction. Like a cat whose tail had been stepped on, Chu Jia widened her eyes in shock and she gnashed her teeth, “Teacher, how can you say that!”

“Alright, stop messing around. Don’t forget that someone here was your student...”  
Liu Qinglan patted her head softly and softened her tone.

A wave of shame immediately battered against Chu Jia's heart. She glanced at Shang Xia from the corner of her eye and saw the cheeky smile on his face. Quickly glancing downward to avert her gaze, she growled, "He... He... How can he be considered a student?"

"Alright, alright, let's stop playing around now," Liu Qinglan muttered, "Tell us what you said to the other party."

With no other choice, Chu Jia could only restrain her emotions and she repeated everything she said.

After analyzing their conversation, Liu Qinglan said, "So... You gave them the Wind Arrow Talisman Seal and allowed them to create a rank one Wind Arrow Talisman for themselves?"

"If I didn't do that, they wouldn't believe me!" Chu Jia pouted.

Yun Yichen felt a wave of confusion and she wondered out loud, "Other than Talisman Masters, who would bring talisman paper into the Three Unity Pagoda?"

"Do you mean..." Chu Jia gasped.

Liu Qinglan sighed before giving her explanation. "You're really lucky to run into a talisman paper. The other party might also be a Talisman Grandmaster for all we know. After all, no one knows about the value of those talisman seals more than those talisman masters!"

"Teacher Little Chu..." Shang Xia chuckled.

Turning suddenly to glare at Shang Xia, Chu Jia snapped, "Who the hell are YOU calling Teacher Little Chu?! You're A Little Chu, your whole family are Little Chus."

Ignoring Chu Jia's anger, Shang Xia continued, "Did you tell them about the origins of those talisman seals?"

"Relax. I'm not stupid. I told them that I managed to obtain these talisman seals while adventuring in some ruins." Chu Jia mumbled.

Shang Xia couldn't help but chuckle bitterly.

Liu Qinglan nearly slapped her forehead in disbelief. "They can obviously tell you're lying. It's clear the talisman seal had been made recently. Now that you told them you obtained it when exploring some ruins, you might as well have told them we were the ones who made the talisman seal!"

Chu Jia didn't know what to do now that Liu Qinglan had explained the situation. She turned to Shang Xia to plead for help before muttering softly, "What do I do now?"

"It's alright. Even if they know we made the seals, they won't be able to tell who we are due to the suppression of their divine perception," Shang Xia chuckled.

The anxiety Chu Jia felt was greatly alleviated.

However, the frown on Liu Qinglan's face remained. "What? Are you really going to sell a rank two talisman seal?"

Shang Xia chuckled in response, "If the price is right, of course I'll sell it."

“Are you sure other people won’t be able to replicate the method and craft another talisman seal? It truly isn’t safe if you’re only relying on the special properties of the material used...” Liu Qinglan couldn’t put down her worries.

Shang Xia’s confident chuckle came soon after. “The Impaled Stone is merely one of the limitations they will face. The fundamental reason they won’t be able to copy the talisman seal will be because of my unique crafting method. Without learning how I did it, any copies they make are useless!”

Liu Qinglan wasn’t fully convinced and she wanted to say more, but Chu Jia interrupted her, “He’s here! The Talisman Fish is back!”

Signaling for everyone to back away, he didn’t wish for anything to go wrong. The divine perception sealed in the Talisman Fish wouldn’t be able to detect them even if anything went wrong.

After thinking about it for a second, Shang Xia tossed a rank two Golden Sword Talisman Seal over to Chu Jia.

A greenish-brown fish was pulled onto the platform and a voice immediately rang in Chu Jia’s mind. “Where is your rank two talisman seal? Can I take a look at it?”

Chu Jia instinctively turned to look at Shang Xia and saw him nodding slightly with a smile on his face.

Making up her mind, she brought out the rank two Golden Sword Talisman Seal. Bringing out some talisman ink and several pieces of rank two talisman paper, she followed Shang Xia’s instructions and restrained her inner qi to that of extremity qi. Sending it into the seal, she dipped it in some ink before pressing down on the talisman paper. A rank two Golden Sword Talisman was thus completed.

“Amazing! This is truly amazing!” The Talisman Fish sent out a wave of praise towards Chu Jia. It was fortunate his consciousness was stuck in the fish. Otherwise, he would be jumping about in joy and clapping his hands.

“How about it?” Chu Jia turned a little more serious and she used her words a lot more concisely.

“I always keep my word! I’ll definitely give you a rank five spiritual treasure for this! However, I wish to ask again... Do you have any other talisman seals with you? Or perhaps... Do you have talisman seals of higher ranks?” If you do, I’ll let you pick any treasure I have on me.”

Chu Jia opened her mouth but before she could say anything, Shang Xia and Liu Qinglan’s voice transmission boomed in succession in her mind.

“Tell him this is the only one you have!”

“He’s baiting you!”

In stunned silence, Chu Jia hesitated for a second before she replied, "I apologize. These are the only talisman seals I have. I might want to obtain more treasures, but I have no other talisman seals to trade..."

With the restriction from the Three Unity Pagoda and Chu Jia disguising her voice, the other party was unable to discern whether she was lying or not. He could only sigh helplessly, "It's a shame... It's a real shame! If you really had a rank three talisman seal, I would be willing to give you all the treasures I brought!"

Seeing how Chu Jia hadn't reacted to his final attempt, he knew that his luck had come to an end. He wouldn't be able to learn anything more and he muttered, "In that case, let's carry out our deal according to the agreement we made. I'll use a rank five spiritual treasure to trade for both seals."

Seeing as it was about to take place, Shang Xia's voice rang in Chu Jia's mind and she quickly conveyed it over to the other party. "We might have agreed to trade the talisman seals for a rank five spiritual treasure, but that's only if it's something I need. If I don't find it suitable, please swap it for another one."

"Lady, that wasn't a part of our agreement," a confused cry came from the Talisman Fish.

With an expressionless face, Chu Jia replied, "We were negotiating earlier and we didn't reach a proper agreement. Now that we're about to complete the deal, I'll have to make things clear."

"I only brought a single rank five spiritual treasure with me! If you can't use it, won't it mean that I won't be able to obtain these talisman seals?!"

Chu Jia's voice rang across the platform again. "Do you have fate dipper essence? If you do, I'll agree to trade them for one. Even though a fate dipper essence is a little less valuable than a rank five spiritual treasure, I'll take the loss."

"What if the fate dipper essence isn't something you need?"

"Change it to an extermination origin then!" Chu Jia snapped.

Annoyed by Chu Jia's sudden request, he grumbled, "The combined worth of a fate dipper essence and a rank five spiritual treasure can't match up to a complete extermination origin! Lady, what type of trading method is this?!"

Too lazy to even raise her brow, Chu Jia snorted in contempt, "Oh really? Do you have a problem with that? You can always choose not to make the trade!"

Chapter 658: Incomplete Rank Five Advancement Formula

Reality slapped Shang Xia in the face.

After the Talisman Fish spat out the spiritual treasure he brought, Chu Jia handed it over to Shang Xia. Even though it seemed as though the five elements should encompass a huge range of treasures, the treasure it spat out was an exception.

Helpless, the owner of the Talisman Fish could only request for Chu Jia to hold on to the talisman seals for a while longer and agree on a secret code phrase with her. He quickly rushed back to bring over his fate dipper essence.

It didn't take long for him to reappear; it seemed as though he wasn't an ordinary expert. He brought along a strand of fate dipper essence this time.

Shang Xia seemed to have used up all his luck in his previous trades. The fate dipper essence that was brought over was of the Ren Water Element, but he already had one.. It was a shame that they could only refuse to do the trade.

With no other choice, the owner of the Talisman Fish could only spit out a complete extermination origin to complete the trade with Chu Jia for the rank one Wind Arrow Talisman Seal and the rank two Golden Sword Talisman Seal.

After their deal was done, Liu Qinglan sighed, "No matter what, I feel that we still took a loss. Those talisman seals were one of a kind. Shang Xia managed to carve out a new method of crafting talismans and the value of those seals are clear for all to see..."

Shang Xia laughed nonchalantly, "Well. we actually profited by trading it for a complete strand of extermination origin!"

He could tell that Liu Qinglan was struggling to accept the fact and he quickly explained, "It's true that the appearance of those talisman seals will be monumental for Talisman Masters of our Azure Origin World and the Azure Spiritual World, but that's only if they're one of a kind. We obviously won't be shortsighted and never sell them again..."

"Didn't you say that you were running out of materials to craft them? Moreover, it's definitely detrimental for a large amount of these seals to appear in our worlds..." Liu Qinglan hesitated before she spoke.

Shang Xia chuckled in response, "At the end of the day, Instructor Liu, you're still afraid that someone else would be able to replicate those seals."

Even though Liu Qinglan revealed a forced smile, she didn't say a word. It was clear Shang Xia's guess was correct.

He then continued his explanation, "If we're talking about the fragments used to make rank one and two talisman seals, they're just useless rocks that broke off the main structure. I can basically confirm that when I successfully create a rank three talisman seal, it will be a lot larger than rank two talismans. Those tiny fragments will become completely useless and we can take the chance to rip off a whole bunch of experts!"

While he was speaking, Liu Qinglan had already gestured for Chi Jia to hand the extermination origin over to Shang Xia. She didn't expect him to refuse it directly. "Extermination origins are useless to me right now. You can bring it back and leave it with the institution."

"How can we do that? You crafted those talisman seals with your resources. Why would you hand the proceeds over to the institution?" Liu Qinglan frowned.

"Hehe, Instructor Liu, you might have forgotten that I'm part of the Talisman Hall. Those talisman seals should have belonged to them. If you have some reservations, would you leave the extermination with the Talisman Hall? In the future, it can be used to reward those Talisman Masters who are on the brink of breakthrough or

those who achieved great merit. After all, everything comes down to one's cultivation at the end of the day."

Moreover, now that Shang Xia decided to sell his talisman seals, he handed the other Golden Lantern Barrier Talisman Seal over to Chu Jia and Liu Qinglan did the same. She passed the other Wind Arrow Talisman Seal and Stimulation Taliman to Chu Jia but she didn't forget to remind her of the many risks involved. Obviously, she didn't agree with Shang Xia's idea of selling them away.

When everyone went back to whatever they were doing, Shang Xia's consciousness returned to his Talisman Fish.

The only thing he gave the fish was 1000 essence crystals, and he didn't know who would bother summoning him.

However, the 3 super factions seemed to have already thought of a countermeasure for those who only possessed essence crystals.

It didn't take long for Shang Xia's Talisman Fish to be attracted to a ball of light.

His luck didn't seem too bad as there were only 2 Talisman Fish before him. Not too long later, one of them left.

When it became Shang Xia's turn to slam into the jade coin, he quickly learned what the other party was selling. "Defective rank five advancement formula. 3000 essence crystals. You need to swear an oath never to share the contents, and you need to make a detailed record of how you enter the Martial Dipper Realm."

When Shang Xia was still digesting the contents, a divine perception arrived. "Fellow cultivator, do you wish to buy the advancement formula?"

"Are you really selling a defective rank five advancement formula?" Shang Xia couldn't help but ask.

An unhappy voice quickly rang in Shang Xia's mind again. "Fellow cultivator, you should understand what the area of light around my jade coin means. Do you think my holy land will tarnish our reputation and lie to you?"

Shang Xia continued to mutter to himself, "Who would know which holy land you come from..."

"Fellow cultivator, if you're unwilling to trade, you can leave. You won't have to worry about anyone harming you then," the cold snort came again.

Shang Xia immediately released an 'embarrassed' chuckle, "Please don't misunderstand. After all, wandering cultivators like myself have been accustomed to acting cautiously."

Another cold snort rang in Shang Xia's mind, but his Talisman Fish wasn't chased away.

Seeing as the other party wasn't completely annoyed yet, Shang Xia asked, "May I know how defective your rank five advancement formula is exactly? Are you missing the main or auxiliary ingredients? Or perhaps, you don't have the exact way to craft the advancement medicine?"

A surprised cry came from the fisherman above. "You seem to know a lot! Our Grandmaster Alchemist did indeed try to deduce the problem causing the defects, but I can't say anything about it. I can only tell you the things he discovered after you pay up and take the oath."

"Is your sect planning to use me and whoever else who buys this formula as your lab rat?" Shang Xia wondered.

In a cold voice, the fisherman replied, "We're not forcing you to do anything. If you wish to buy, go ahead and bite the coin. If you think it's dangerous, feel free to leave."

Shang Xia naturally didn't depart. Instead, he continued, "I guess it's nothing much to make an oath however, why would you need a detailed report on how the breakthrough process went? If that doesn't show that you're using us as your test subjects to fix your advancement formula, I don't know what will. Moreover, why would I care about reporting to you after I break through to the Martial Dipper Realm?"

The fisherman seemed ready for Shang Xia's doubts and he simply sneered, "Looks like you have no idea what it means for a Martial Dipper Realm expert to make an oath..."

Even though he didn't go into details, Shang Xia could hear how confident the other side was.

It probably had something to do with the secrets of being in the Martial Dipper Realm that Shang Xia didn't know for the time being.

He was planning to continue annoying the other party, but they seemed to understand Shang Xia had pretty much no intention to purchase their formula and no longer spoke. Even so, they didn't kick him out of the ball of light.

Seeing as he wasn't going to get anything else, Shang Xia bade farewell before leaving the ball of light to swim aimlessly through the Cloud Sea.

Not too long after he left, he was quickly drawn in a different direction. He saw a similar red ball of light that stretched 10 feet and the fisherman was also selling a rank five advancement formula. The requirements were pretty much the same, but this time, the price was 3500 essence crystals.

Shang Xia went through the same process again and again and realized that he was basically running into experts from the holy lands. They were selling rank five advancement formulas for 3000 to 4000 essence crystals and all of them had almost the same attitude. They didn't really care if anyone else was interested, but as long as one showed the slightest intention of purchasing the advancement formula, they would require them to take the oath.

As the process continued, Shang Xia was discussing with the others how they should maximize the value of his talisman seals.

Shang Xia's Talisman Fish continued to wander the Cloud Sea as it went from one light ball to another.

Of course, not every jade coin that attracted him wanted to sell rank five advancement formulas. There were many who were selling strange treasures, and Shang Xia managed to learn quite a bit from all the new things he was seeing.

Unfortunately, he didn't run into anyone selling fate dipper essences or rank five spiritual treasures for essence crystals.

...

When Shang Xia finally paid a little attention to his Talisman Fish when it received the calling of a jade coin, he discovered that the ball of light he entered was barely 3 feet large. He didn't know when, but he had left the core of the Cloud Sea and traveled to the periphery.

#### Chapter 659: Star Essence

From the beginning of the trade fair, Shang Xia had never entered the outskirts of the Cloud Sea.

It was where the members of the outer ring were fishing and most of them were wandering experts. They were leaders of small factions at best, and there were even some who were random cultivators who risked their lives to travel through space in order to locate the Three Unity Island.

They might be a random bunch, but it would be wrong for anyone to underestimate them. Any wandering cultivator who had the qualifications to receive an invitation from the 3 super factions had to possess frightening strength! It was either that or they stood out in other aspects.

Of course, the treasures they were trading were also all over the place. Those people were unlike cultivators and disciples of large factions. Large factions had a clear purpose in what they were doing, and they knew what resources they needed.

The bunch of wandering cultivators were like walking convenience stores. They had everything and anything. Sometimes, one would be able to find something amazing. However, they would need to look through everything carefully and rely on a little bit of luck.

Shang Xia clearly understood that and that was why he would try to get everything he could before going around the outer region.

That was what most of the experts from larger factions thought too. Of course, that usually applied to disciples from the larger factions who came to the fair with a purpose. There were also some of them who were like Chu Jia who came to mess around and try their luck.

The 1000 essence crystals in his Talisman Fish still remained and he had been to more than a dozen jade coins. He had seen several rare resources, but he failed to spend a single essence crystal.

The others on the Tongyou Platform pulled their fishing poles up several times and received a good harvest. According to the timeframe given by the Martial Dipper Realm Ancestors of the 3 super factions, the trade fair should be coming to an end soon.

When Shang Xia was thinking about whether he should call his Talisman Fish back and use the rest of his essence crystals to buy some low-level resources, it once again slammed into a white colored jade coin.

“Treasures, treasures, all sorts of treasures! Regardless of quality, everything costs 100 essence crystals! Take whatever you want but there's no refund!”

A strange tag could be seen on the jade coin and Shang Xia's curiosity was piqued. He decided to take a closer look before calling his fish back.

Biting the jade coin, Shang Xia was brought up onto the platform and a voice that sounded like a broken gong rang in his mind. “You should have seen what was on the coin. I won't say any more. These are all I have left and you can only rely on yourself to find any valuables among them.”

Shang Xia noticed 20 odd treasures laid out in front of him after he was pulled onto the platform.

In no rush to pick out his treasures, Shang Xia first asked, "Fellow cultivator, where did you get these treasures? Aren't you afraid that you might need them in the future?"

The fisherman's voice came once again. "You can call me the Ancient Lover and I found these treasures myself. The Divine Martial Calendar goes back 850 years, but that doesn't mean that our Azure Origin World only started its existence 850 years ago. We know next to nothing before the start of our Divine Martial Calendar, but those holy lands should know a thing or two. Regardless, they refuse to say anything about it. I was only able to look for inheritances of the ancient people alone in order to uncover our history. These items were retrieved from ruins and their remains. I won't hide anything from you. Even I have no idea what some of these things are. I learned about some of them and their uses, but that's about it. I don't know what the others are used for."

Shang Xia didn't think that he would meet an eccentric fellow like that out of nowhere.

However, he wasn't the only one who was curious about the time before the Divine Martial Calendar. Shang Xia was equally curious, but he was either in seclusion or dealing with matters one after the other. He didn't have time to dig deeper into it.

Even though he was really interested in having a nice chat with this 'archeologist', time wasn't on his side. He could only focus on the treasures before him.

With his attention on a rusted metal case, Shang Xia asked, "Can't you open the case?"

"I would open it if I had the ability to. The restriction on it might not be extremely special, and the case seems to be of an ordinary quality. However, both of them look to be fused together and I'm afraid the things within would be damaged if I messed up. I never thought of opening it. If you like it, you can have it for a low price of 100 essence crystals."

Shang Xia could guess that the other party didn't bother opening the case because he felt that the items within were too ordinary. He might even be afraid that the treasure contained within had already been destroyed by the passage of time.

However, when Shang Xia's divine perception swept across the restriction on the box again, he spoke decisively, "Alright, 100 essence crystals. I'll take it."

Sniggering softly, the fisherman seemed elated that someone would be interested in the case and he placed it in front of Shang Xia's Talisman Fish. After swallowing the case, Shang Xia's fish spat out 100 essence crystals.

"Alright! Feel free to keep looking to see if anything catches your eye." Seeing as Shang Xia had already bought something, the fisherman became a lot more friendly. He even sounded like he was trying to curry Shang Xia's favor in hopes that he would buy more. His appearance greatly resembled a store's attendant and the prestige of a Martial Extermination Realm expert was nowhere to be seen.

Obviously, Shang Xia wouldn't look down on him just because he was acting that way. If what the other party said was real and he truly went around finding lost inheritances, his knowledge would

be top-class. No matter how strong the other party was, Shang Xia knew he shouldn't underestimate the other fellow.

Shang Xia chose the strange sealed case not because of any other reason, but because his Four Constellation Qi could most probably destroy the restriction on the case without damaging anything within. He wanted to try his luck to see if there was anything special within.

With the urgings of the fisherman, Shang Xia's divine perception swept across the treasures laid out. However, everything was a blur and he couldn't help but ask, "I can't see anything clearly this way. Would it be possible for you to place the treasures into my fish so I can inspect them?"

"No problem! As long as you don't damage anything, it's fine!" the fisherman agreed readily.

Thinking for a second, Shang Xia chose one of the treasures that he couldn't tell what it was made from. "Let me take a closer look at this."

Shang Xia could tell that the treasure was a semi-finished product and he hoped that it would contain some sort of precious resource.

With the help of the fisherman, the item that resembled a giant ball of candle wax was placed in Shang Xia's Talisman Fish. He enveloped it with his extermination origin but realized that the Crimson Soul Tablet didn't bother evaluating it.

From what Shang Xia thought, only treasures in the fourth rank and above would be appraised by the Crimson Soul Tablet.

It was either something outside was stopping the Crimson Soul Tablet from giving it a proper evaluation, or it was completely useless altogether. Whatever it was, Shang Xia's fish spat the treasure out.

Not surprised at all, the fisherman laughed, "Do you wish to take a look at anything else?"

Shang Xia continued to look through the items laid out and laid his eyes on a treasure that had multiple points. There was sparkling sand stuck on it and it flashed under the illumination of the lights in the Three Unity Pagoda. It looked pretty impressive.

It took some effort for Shang Xia to swallow the treasure but the moment he did, his expression changed. On the Tongyou Platform, Shang Xia's eyes widened in shock. He stared at the words on the Crimson Soul Tablet in disbelief.

"Celestial Metal wrapped in specks of Star Essence mixed with sand."

Chapter 660: End of Trade Fair

Celestial Metal?!

The treasure was pretty much a mixture of garbage. It was too impure and it could be considered a rank three ingredient if it was slightly better. Otherwise, it would only be classified as a rank two ingredient.

Naturally, Shang Xia couldn't care less about the metal. Instead, his attention was on those sparkling spots that covered it. It was actually made up of Star Essence!

That was something he required to restore his Abyssal Blade, and it was the only method he knew!

Trying his best to show no emotions, Shang Xia muttered casually, “Looks like there’s something else In the ball of metal. I guess I’ll take it.”

Paying another 100 essence crystals, Shang Xia obtained 2 treasures like that. He was elated to have received some Star Essence from the trade. With renewed vigor, Shang Xia started to look through the rest of the items.

The fisherman seemed extremely patient and he placed the treasures in Shang Xia’s Talisman Fish’s mouth one by one. He continued to make conversation throughout the entire process.

Alas, other than the impure Celestial Metal coated in Star Essence, Shang Xia failed to find anything else that could activate the Crimson Soul Tablet.

Feeling a little bad for having wasted so much time, Shang Xia randomly chose a piece of ancient wood that neither of them knew the name of before paying another 100 essence crystals. He was then released to the Cloud Sea.

The space in the Talisman Fish’s belly was limited and Shang Xia could only return to the Tongyou Platform to retrieve his treasures. After taking them out and placing yet another 1000 essence crystals into the fish’s belly, Shang Xia sent it back out to sea.

A single ‘dong’ ripped through the Three Unity Pagoda as a bell rang once. According to the rules set by the 3 super factions, the Cloud Sea would fade after the bell rang thrice. All trades would cease and everyone would have to take their leave.

Shang Xia’s Talisman Fish quickly arrived at the outskirts of the Cloud Sea and smashed into every jade coin it came across. He started to buy low-level cultivation resources in bulk.

Of course, those cultivation resources were only considered low-level to those present. The treasures he bought were at least of the third rank.

Shang Xia went around buying a batch of cultivation resources for his Shang Clan, and it was especially so for spiritual treasures and herbs the others could use.

Those treasures alone cost Shang Xia 300 to 400 essence crystals. His Talisman Fish shuttled across the Cloud Sea several times as he kept batch after batch of resources.

The second ring of the bell arrived...

By the time he brought back the batches of resources he obtained, he managed to erode the restriction on the strange metal case he obtained from the ‘archeologist’ back then.

Examining the items inside, he noticed a bunch of talisman paper made from unknown beast skin. However, instead of runes, rows upon rows of words were recorded. It seemed to contain a complete rank four martial art.

After looking through them, Shang Xia discovered the name of the technique. It was called the Disruption Twin Blades. It was suitable for cultivators wielding twin short shorts, short blades, spikes, or weapons of the like. One would be able to wield considerable power if they trained in it. What was more, every strike was strange and unpredictable. If used properly against their opponent, they were sure to cause significant damage.

A hundred essence crystals for a complete rank four martial art. There was no way Shang Xia made a loss in that trade. It could be considered a pleasant surprise.

...

As the trade fair reached its final phase, Shang Xia no longer bothered sending his Talisman Fish out to the outer regions to try his luck. He didn't expect Chu Jia to wave him down violently and yell, "Come over here! Hurry up!"

Taken aback by her sudden cries, Shang Xia looked at Liu Qinglan who was focused on fishing before rushing over to Chu Jia who was already standing beside her.

As soon as he arrived, Chu Jia questioned in a low voice, "How many essence crystals do you have left?"

"2000 or so?" Shang Xia replied instantly.

To be really exact, he had 2500 essence crystals left.

A look of joy flashed past Chu Jia's face. "Perfect! Lend me 1000 of them!"

Taking out 1000 essence crystals, Shang Xia handed them over before asking, "What's going on?"

"We are doing something big! Heheh... Instructor Liu said that something fishy is going on. The treasure someone brought out to sell should have been looted from others!" Chu Jia whispered, as though she was afraid someone else would overhear their conversation.

A frown appeared on Shang Xia's face. "Is the person from our Azure Origin World?"

Rolling her eyes at him, Chu Jia grumbled, "Who the hell would know that? However, from what they seem to be selling, those treasures should originate from the southern continents of our Azure Origin World."

Shang Xia nodded slowly and said, "Who cares about their origins? All of us came a long way to take part in this trade fair. We won't have to give a damn whether those treasures were stolen or not."

Chu Jia also nodded in agreement. "Instructor Liu said that those treasures seemed to have been intentionally split off into different groups to be sold. That would mean that it has changed hands many times, but it might also show that they are intentionally avoiding the disciples of the holy lands."

As they were concluding their conversation, Liu Qinglan, whose eyes had been closed the whole time, finally opened them. She sighed softly, "We finally came to a deal..."

She turned to look at Shang Xia before she continued, "The other side wants a complete inheritance from the first to fourth rank. Not only does it include advancement formulas, they also require the corresponding martial arts and secret arts."

"If those treasures Chu Jia were talking about came from them exterminating some random faction, wouldn't they have obtained whatever they were asking for?" Shang Xia wondered.

"If that's what they did, it wouldn't come as a surprise that they failed to retrieve the cultivation methods and inheritances. After all, every single faction would destroy

their inheritances before they were annihilated. That would prevent their enemies from learning anything, and inheritances are a lot easier to get rid of than treasures!" Liu Qinglan cleared off some of his doubts.

Chu Jia was also surprised by her explanation. "Wait! If we give them an entire inheritance, would that mean that they wish to change their appearance altogether and establish another faction in the world?"

Liu Qinglan nodded to indicate she was right. "I already agreed. After all, we can change up the Zhu Family's inheritance we obtained from the Coral Forest back then and hand it over to them. They won't be able to discover that it came from us anyway. Originally, they wanted to trade those treasures for 2 more sets of rank four advancement medicine. I rejected them immediately and changed the condition to 2000 essence crystals instead."

A complete rank four advancement medicine alone was worth slightly more than 1000 essence crystals. For Liu Qinglan to change the condition from 2 rank four advancement medicine to 2000 essence crystals would ensure they suffer no loss.

What shocked Shang Xia and Chu Jia was that Liu Qinglan actually agreed to trade away a complete set of rank one to four inheritance.

One had to know the recipe for the rank four advancement medicine alone would definitely be worth more than the medicine alone. A rank four inheritance would contain the advancement formula which would contain the recipe for an advancement medicine and the way it could be used! With the corresponding martial arts and secret arts, the value would definitely be no lower than 3000 to 4000 essence crystals!

Adding the 2000 essence crystals, would mean that Liu Qinglan's trade would be valued at 6000 essence crystals or so!

The amount was enough to shock Shang Xia.

Chu Jia added, "I managed to borrow 1000 essence crystals from him! Do we have enough?"

Liu Qinglan looked at Shang Xia again before responding, "I nearly exhausted my essence crystals... I'm afraid 1000 won't be enough. Please lend me another 500 essence crystals."

Obviously, Shang Xia wouldn't be stingy at this point in time. Taking out another 500 essence crystals, he handed it over to Liu Qinglan while giving her a quick reminder, "The bell is going to ring for the third time. Instructor Liu, you need to hurry up."

She nodded before retrieving the essence crystals. Taking out another 500 from her Embroidered Cloud Case, she seemed to whisper something before dragging a Talisman Fish up onto the platform.

The Talisman Fish spat out 3 sealed spiritual cases and after Liu Qinglan looked through them, she placed 500 essence crystals into the belly of the fish before releasing it.

She casually handed the cases to Chu Jia before focusing on her fishing pole again. More accurately, her divine perception entered her jade coin.

Chu Jia couldn't wait and opened those cases immediately. She brought out a semi broken stone slab that was 3 feet tall and seemed a little mottled away.

“Wow! It’s a formation core! From the damage it suffered, it looks like it was destroyed not too long ago...” As a Rank Four Formation Grandmaster, Chu Jia could obviously tell the state the item was in since it was a formation core.

Not too long later, Liu Qinglan’s fishing pole jerked violently and she dragged another massive Talisman Fish up onto the platform. It spat out another 3 sealed spiritual cases before swallowing 500 essence crystals.

By the time the third Talisman Fish left, Liu Qinglan had several spirit cases. However, she picked one out and tossed it over to Shang Xia.

Opening it with slight confusion, he discovered that there were 3 stacks of talisman papers of various ranks. There were 50 rank two talisman papers, 20 rank three talisman papers, and 6 rank four talisman papers.

That wasn’t all. There were even 3 rank three talisman inheritances contained within and a rank four talisman inheritance.

Examining the rank four talisman inheritance, Shang Xia discovered that it was called the Earth Evasion Concealment Talisman.

With his perception as a rank four Talisman Grandmaster, he could tell that it was a great treasure when it came to fleeing from dangerous situations!

Liu Qinglan chuckled happily, “Those people weren’t willing to hand over the talisman papers initially. They wanted to look for a Talisman Grandmaster themselves to make talisman commissions, but I promised to help provide an avenue where they could request talismans of the fourth rank and under from us in the future. That was how I obtained this case. I also told them about your secret code phrase, the ‘Four Constellation Sage, Talisman Grandmaster’. They will come to retrieve the talismans in the future.”

Shang Xia scratched his head before muttering, “Alright... Looks like our Talisman Hall will be getting busy soon!”

Obviously, Liu Qinglan didn’t obtain the case of talisman papers for Shang Xia alone. It was also meant to be shared with the Talisman Hall.

...

When the fourth fish was retrieved, all 2000 essence crystals had been brought away. The fifth Talisman Fish would come to retrieve the Zhu Family’s inheritance. It would start with the rank one inheritance and continue going up the ranks as each Talisman Fish came with their promised treasure.

However, the bell rang the third time after the final Talisman Fish came to spit out the 3 remaining sealed spirit cases. Liu Qinglan placed the rank four inheritance into its belly solemnly as she completed the trades as the trade fair drew to a close.