

## The Strongest

### Chapter 57 – Hammer Trading

“Hammer Trading?” Shi Feng wanted to confirm once more.

“Correct. He even posted a thread on the forums criticizing the blackhearted forger that made the Garrison Armor. Currently, the thread has already received more than seven million clicks. With it, that guy has quickly become a famous person in White River City. I heard many large Guilds have already sent out an olive branch to him, trying to recruit him with a high price.” The logistics player had a face filled with envy while he spoke. He couldn’t help but wish he could turn into Hammer Trading. That way, he would be able to live a life filled with beauties and riches.

Shi Feng only smiled at the player as he turned to walk towards an empty seat. He sat down and called out the game’s official forum.

He wanted to have a good look at this Hammer Trading who nearly robbed him of his business.

In Shi Feng’s previous life, Hammer Trading did not reveal himself as quickly as this. Before Shadow scouted him, he had been playing God’s Domain with tens of fellow schoolmates. With the support of these schoolmates, in addition to some chance meetings that had allowed him to become an Intermediate Forging Apprentice, he managed to become acquainted with the upper echelons of Shadow. At that time, there were very few Intermediate Forging Apprentices. The Bronze Equipment that was forged at the time was also very popular. Seeing such a situation, Shadow also wanted a share of the profits. So, they paid a large price to hire Hammer Trading. Along with the continuous support of Shadow Workshop, Hammer Trading grew to become a shocking figure, becoming a relatively famous Forger and earning Shadow a lot of money.

Afterward, Hammer Trading also obtained the Forging Talent[1] in addition to the great support from Shadow, allowing him to become a Master Forger. During those times, he did not have the slightest hint of respect for Shi Feng, who was the Guild Leader of Shadow at that time.

In the end, with the strong support of Hammer Trading, along with several Master Forgers and Master Potionmakers, Lan Hua Financial Groups gladly agreed to World Dominator’s acquisition of Shadow. Otherwise, Lan Hua Financial Groups would not have agreed to the decision without hesitation and dismissing Shi Feng at the same time.

Shi Feng opened the forums for Star-Moon Kingdom, his heart lamenting over how fate was toying with him.

In this life, just when the Garrison Armor was beginning to sell like hotcakes, Hammer Trading appeared to break off his road to wealth.

Shi Feng couldn’t help but admit that he and Hammer Trading were rivals in life.

Shi Feng stole the Forging Talent from Hammer Trading, whereas Hammer Trading turned around to break off his road to wealth.

Browsing the forums of Star-Moon Kingdom, Shi Feng quickly discovered a thread marked in red, positioned at the top of the forum.

Upholding justice starts from us! We absolutely cannot let this blackhearted forger do as he pleases! I am a forger with a kind heart!

These large, bright red words caused Shi Feng's brows to furrow.

What kind of trouble is he trying to cause here?

The number of clicks exceeded ten million!

Out of curiosity, Shi Feng had opened the thread.

Shi Feng looked at the eloquently written condemnation that had over ten thousand words. The article had justifiably mentioned that the cost of making a piece of Bronze Equipment did not even exceed 1 Silver Coin. However, the blackhearted Shi Feng sold his equipment for up to 30 Silver Coins. He was ripping off other players. Hence, Hammer Trading wanted to oppose Shi Feng. He was even willing to sell Level 3 Bronze Equipment without limit. Only, due to the failure rates, he had no choice but to sell them at 4 Silvers a piece to reclaim his cost of making.

This article received the support of a lot of players. They had all declared that they would no longer purchase the Garrison Armor and that they would support Hammer Trading's actions of kindness.

Shi Feng was speechless after reading the entire article.

The entire article was just trying to put a smear on his reputation while heightening Hammer Trading's own self. At the same time, Hammer Trading wanted to state that he, too, could forge Bronze Equipment.

He was clearly trying to use Shi Feng as a stepping stone to raise his own worth and fame. He wanted to let the many large Guilds extend an olive branch to him, and in turn, raising his own worth.

However, Shi Feng had to admit that Hammer Trading had succeeded. Not only had his fame risen in a burst, but many second-rate Guilds had also sent him an invitation. There were even a few first-rate Guilds who were willing to discuss matters of cooperation with Hammer Trading.

"Crap, not only has he broken off my path to wealth, he still wants to use me as a stepping stone?!" Shi Feng could no longer hold back his two lifetime's worth of rage. He wanted to properly teach Hammer Trading a lesson.

Did he think he was awesome for selling Level 3 Bronze Equipment without limit?

Shi Feng did not wish to have any relation with Hammer Trading if he did not try to use Shi Feng as a stepping stone. However, now that he had provoked Shi Feng, he must be ready to pay the appropriate price.

Shi Feng felt it was just hilarious when he looked at the statements and numbers provided by Hammer Trading.

Basic Forging Apprentices only had a 5% success rate when forging a piece of Level 3 Bronze Equipment. However, looking at the numbers provided by Hammer Trading, it could be seen that he did not possess just a Forging Design for a piece of Bronze Equipment. He must have also obtained an item that increased the success rate for forging. In addition to using the Intermediate Forging Room, his success rate should be around 20%. That was why he dared to spout nonsense and brought out several pieces of equipment for auction to prove his words.

However, according to Shi Feng's estimates, to raise his reputation, Hammer Trading was taking a loss of 1 Silver Coin for every piece of Bronze Equipment he sold. Although Shi Feng did not know how much funding Hammer Trading had, he was still ten years too early from competing with Shi Feng.

Selling at 4 Silver Coins, is it?

Shi Feng would sell his equipment at 4 Silver Coins as well. He had the Philosopher's Stone and the Book of Forging, so his initial cost was just slightly more than 10 Coppers. Including his terrifying success rate, Shi Feng was looking forward to seeing who had the last laugh.

Without holding anything back, Shi Feng immediately posted a thread on the forum anonymously. The article was titled "Shockingly high-quality Plate Armor on Auction House." Afterward, he called up the interface for the Auction House, placing twenty pieces of the worst Glimmer Chestplate on auction.

The Healing Power on the Glimmer Chestplate had a remarkable effect on MTs when inside a Dungeon. It was even better when compared to the Garrison Armor. When compared to Hammer Trading's Savage Chestplate, it was more than two times better. Players would naturally know which equipment to choose when they saw the Glimmer Chestplate.

"Hammer Trading, didn't you want to be famous? I'll let you become super famous. I'll turn you into a celebrity." Shi Feng revealed a cold grin as he closed the interface. He turned around and left the Auction House, setting up a stall outside to purchase Stones and Hard Stones.

Two minutes after Shi Feng had posted his thread...

A few players noticed Shi Feng's post. Average players were still very attentive towards high-quality equipment. Currently, the average player did not even possess a piece of Bronze Equipment, not to mention high-quality equipment. So, naturally, they wanted to get a glimpse.

The moment these players arrived at the Auction House, they were stupefied by what they saw.

The Attributes on the Glimmer Chestplate was just too good, especially the Healing Power. It was definitely the most beloved Ability for an MT when inside a Dungeon.

After they finished looking at the Attributes, the players chose to try wearing it.

They looked at their own appearance when wearing the Glimmer Chestplate. Streamline mold, dashing figure, and even a faint radiance coming off their bodies. There was also a flickering black flame on their left breast. They looked absolutely awesome! It was as if they had become the heroes from legends while wearing the Glimmer Chestplate, valiant and powerful.

Then, they looked at the selling price. It actually only required 4 Silver Coins.

These players did not dare believe their eyes. Such high-end equipment was only selling for 4 Silver Coins. If they did not buy it, they would be doing a disservice to their own lives. Even if they did not have much money on their persons, they were willing to sacrifice everything they had to buy the Glimmer Chestplate.

Within a short fifteen minutes, Shi Feng's post had become the topic of the forum. There were even players who posted the information and appearance of the Glimmer Chestplate, the equipment instantly arousing everyone's exclamation. Shield Warriors and Guardian Knights could not help but wish they could obtain this high-end equipment right that instant.

However, when they wanted to go to the Auction House and buy it, there were only four pieces of the equipment remaining. Moreover, every one of those pieces had their prices bade up to more than 6 Silver Coins...

One MT from an Elite party had reluctantly chosen to borrow money from all over the place. In the end, he successfully won a piece for 7 Silver Coins. When the Glimmer Chestplate arrived in his hands, he no longer minded the money he owed for it. With such Attributes and dashing appearance, he would not have any troubles earning money in the future.

Thinking up to this point, the smile on this Shield Warrior spread widely.

TL Notes:

[1] Forging Talent: this is referring to the Forging Genius mentioned in Chapter 19

## Chapter 58 – Equipment Competition

Just a short twenty minutes after Shi Feng placed the Glimmer Chestplates on auction, all twenty pieces of them had been sold off. The Glimmer Chestplate's popularity was far better than the Garrison Armor.

There were even quite a few players showing off their purchases on the official forum.

Previously, these players had to beg, using various methods, to join a party. Now, however, with their majestic-looking equipment, a simple shout would garner them tens of invites from Elite parties for their own choosing.

Following the Glimmer Chestplate's rise in popularity, the players that failed to buy one were all beating their own chest in anguish. They hated themselves for not borrowing money to buy the piece of equipment since, right now, it was no longer being sold.

Meanwhile, the Forging Association in Golden Sand Town was packed with people.

The spacious hall was entirely occupied by players. The players present were the spokespeople for various Guilds. They were here for only one purpose, and that was to invite Hammer Trading to their Guild.

Amongst the Guilds present, there were quite a few that were very famous. There was no lack of spokespeople for third-rate Guilds. If it were during ordinary times, these spokespeople would act proud and arrogant. They would use a condescending attitude when dealing with Lifestyle players. Even so,

these Lifestyle players would still treat them with great respect. They would even shed tears of emotion, pledging their loyalty to the Guild as they quickly signed the contract, becoming a part of a large Guild.

However, the current trend of the game had changed. The higher-ups of the Guilds strongly emphasized that they, the spokespeople, must definitely invite Hammer Trading. Otherwise, they could start packing up their bags. Hence why these Guild spokespeople were like obedient grandchildren, standing and waiting in the hall for Hammer Trading's summons.

Inside an Intermediate Forging Room on the second floor...

"Brother Hammer, you're so awesome! I admire you so much! Before, those third-rate Guilds would not recruit you no matter what. Now, they're just like grandchildren waiting upon you. They would not leave even if you chased them away," A sexy female cleric in her mid-twenties hugged around Hammer Trading's robust arm, giggling and speaking with admiration. Her bulging chest was rubbing against his arm.

Hammer Trading had a very brutish appearance. He had a thick beard and beady eyes, and his skin color was similar to yellowish wax. Judging from his appearance, he looked to be over thirty years of age. Nobody was able to tell, however, that Hammer Trading was just a university student in reality. His age was just slightly over twenty.

"Hahaha, this is just a small matter. However, I truly have to thank the fool who opened the road for me and has even hidden his name. He made all the large Guilds know of my importance," Hammer Trading heartily laughed. He silently praised his own intelligence and wisdom for being able to think up of a plan to utilize that anonymous forger's fame. It allowed him his current good fortune, becoming every player's idol, "Wait till I've entered a first-rate Guild and rise into their upper-echelons. It will be truly awesome. Right now, I'm just showing a small part of my prowess. Let those third-rate Guilds continue waiting outside. I can use them to raise my own value and fame."

"Boss, what are we going to do about all the orders we've received?" an Assassin asked.

Hammer Trading rolled his eyes at the Assassin, saying in disdain, "Who cares about them? I'm taking a loss of 2 Silver Coins per piece of equipment. Do they think I'm running a charity? My goal has already been met. I'm only waiting for the first-rate Guilds to come. Don't bother with the other players; just tell them that we're too busy and don't have time."

To use Shi Feng as a stepping stone, Hammer Trading used up all the Silver Coins belonging to his classmates. He also spent a lot of Credits to purchase a lot of materials and Silver Coins. Yet, he only forged over ten Savage Chestplates from all those materials. So, selling each piece at a maximum of 4 Silver Coins caused a major loss for him. However, all his sacrifices were worth it. As long as he was recruited by a first-rate Guild, he could get as many materials as he wanted, a huge salary, and even a line of female players desiring his attention. Hammer Trading felt invigorated just from thinking of all these benefits.

Suddenly, a Berserker entered the Forging Room with a panicked expression.

“What happened, Hadron? Seeing as you’re in such a hurry, has the upper echelon of a first-rate Guild arrived?” Hammer Trading teasingly asked.

“Big trouble! A lot of top-tier equipment has suddenly appeared at the Auction House. All the players on the game’s official forum are discussing it now, and the number of clicks on the post is madly increasing. The post has over five million clicks right now, and many Guilds have started to notice it. Moreover, the equipment is being sold by the same anonymous forger. The equipment’s price is set at a minimum of 4 Silver Coins. Everyone is starting to wonder about the identity of the forger responsible, and they are no longer paying any attention to you, Boss.”

“Moreover, there are already a few first-rate Guilds who made a declaration on the forum. They are willing to hire that forger with a high salary and make him the Chief Forger of their Guild. A few representatives of large Guilds downstairs have also started leaving for the Auction House.”

Hammer Trading’s expression froze when hearing Hadron’s words.

He only managed to attract the attention of first-rate Guilds after much difficulty. However, now, that anonymous forger stole his wind. If he did not steal it back, those first-rate Guilds would most likely forget about him.

“He has such nerve to steal my wind and position. Don’t blame me for not being polite. Making that kind of top-tier equipment has a high cost and low success rate. If you sell it at 4 Silver Coins, then I’ll sell at 3 Silver Coins. I wonder just how much you can afford to lose?” Hammer Trading abruptly stood up. He wanted to let Shi Feng know he would definitely not let the position of Chief Forger, and his future ‘happiness’, go.

He was already taking a loss of 2 Silver Coins for making the Savage Chestplate that had inferior Attributes. Then, Shi Feng would at least lose 4 to 5 Silver Coins for selling each piece of top-tier equipment at 4 Silver Coins. Maybe even more. Hammer Trading believed he could outlast Shi Feng.

“But, Boss, we don’t have many Silver Coins remaining. At most, we can afford to forge ten more Savage Chestplates,” Hedron worryingly said.

“What is there to be afraid of? I still have some funds. Worst comes to worst, I’ll spend some more Credits to buy materials and Silver Coins. I believe I can get rid of that little bastard. For every piece of equipment that little bastard sells, he’s taking a loss of at least double or triple of ours. Why should we be afraid?” Hammer Trading confidently asked. He assured himself that Shi Feng, too, was trying to attract the attention of first-rate Guilds by doing such lossful business. However, he would definitely be the final champion.

An hour later, a few additional Savage Chestplates appeared on White River City’s Auction House. Their minimum selling price was 3 Silver Coins each.

At the same time, a new post appeared on the game’s official forum.

For the benefit of the masses, I, Hammer Trading, have decided to sell the Savage Chestplate at 3 Silver Coins each. I will make a stand against this blackhearted forger to the end! Requesting support! Requesting encouragement!

Suddenly, a wave of players followed the post, sending it to the top of the forum. Every one of them supported Hammer Trading's kind actions.

As a result of this incident, all of White River City became lively. Everyone understood this was a competition between two forgers that were capable of forging Bronze Equipment. Every player in White River City watched on with anticipation. The ones who would profit from this exchange, in the end, would definitely be them, the players. It would not be long before they would be able to purchase Bronze Equipment at a low price.

The various Guilds also started watching by the sidelines, no longer expressing any of their intentions. They were all waiting for the final victor, while at the same time buying all of the equipment and developing their Guild's strength.

However, Shi Feng himself did not know of this matter. He just finished purchasing Stones and Hard Stones. Just after entering the Auction House, he discovered that the number of players there had once more increased. Only then did he find out about this incident.

"You wish for a fight?" Shi Feng faintly smiled, "Then, come."

He called out the Auction House's control interface, placing all of his Glimmer Chestplates on auction. He assigned twenty pieces to be sold every hour, selling a total of 120 pieces of Glimmer Chestplates. Such a number was definitely enough to torment Hammer Trading.

Afterward, Shi Feng used the money earned from selling Glimmer Chestplates to buy Hard Stones and Card Sets. After purchasing all these items, Shi Feng suddenly discovered that he still possessed a little more than 1 Gold Coin.

From time to time, Shi Feng would receive a notification from the System. It would state that another Glimmer Chestplate had been sold, and some amount of Silver Coins have been deposited into his bag.

Shi Feng felt, the more Silver Coins he spent, the more Silver Coins he had. The amount he did not seem to be decreasing in the slightest...

Shi Feng considered selling some of his Silver Coins at the Trade Center[1], exchanging it for some spending money in real life. It was much better than just holding on to these Silver Coins.

TL Notes:

[1] Trade Center: this is not the Trade Area in the game. It's something like an online market for game currency and items, where you can sell/buy Coins/items for real life money (Credits).