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Chapter 174 174: The Ominous Seal (Part 1)

As they walked cautiously through the broken terrain, the grand elders exchanged glances, their expressions a mix of shock and concern. They had seen battles before, but this was something entirely different—an act of destruction that surpassed their wildest imaginations.

And then, amidst the chaos, Kaelar's gaze landed upon a solitary tree. Its once vibrant foliage had withered and turned brittle, its branches contorted and twisted. Despite the devastation that surrounded it, the tree stood tall, a silent witness to the tragedy that had unfolded.

Recognition dawned in Kaelar's eyes as he beheld the fallen tree. He had encountered this ancient being before—the tree god that held the wisdom of the Veiled Forest. Memories of their previous meeting flooded his mind, along with the guidance the tree god had offered him.

Kaelar approached the dead tree, his voice filled with a mix of sadness and reverence. "Tree god... It is I, Kaelar, Sect Master of the Heavenly Sword Sect. I have returned to this forest, the place where we last met. But what has befallen this sacred realm? The darkness that permeates the air, the devastation that surrounds us... Can you shed light on these calamities?"

A soft rustling of leaves filled the silence, as if a whisper carried on the wind. Kaelar strained his ears, hoping for a response from the tree god, seeking the wisdom that had guided him before.

And then, a faint echo of a voice resonated within his mind, the ancient voice of the tree god. "The seal."

Kaelar's eyes widened in disbelief. The tree god's voice reached him, even though the tree before him seemed lifeless. He called out again, his voice filled with urgency and confusion. "Tree god, can you hear me? What is this seal you speak of? Please, guide me through this darkness."

Silence hung in the air for a moment, and then, a flood of memories surged into Kaelar's mind. He saw images of a powerful demon's finger, a mere fragment of its immense power, capable of annihilating the Azure Continent with its sheer aura. The seal, which the tree god had guarded for centuries, was now starting to loosen, its power seeping out into the Veiled Forest, corrupting everything it touched.

As the memories flooded in, Kaelar felt a sharp pang in his head, a splitting headache. The information was overwhelming, the weight of the knowledge threatening to consume him. He

staggered, his hand clutching his temple, but he fought through the pain, determined to understand the truth.

Grand elder Lan approached Kaelar, concern etched on his face. "Sect Master, are you alright?"

Gasping, Kaelar staggered back, clutching his head in pain. He shared the information with the grand elders, his voice strained. "The tree god... It showed me fragments of its memories. The seal it has been protecting... It is connected to a finger of a powerful person. The seal is weakening, and the darkness we perceive is the result of its malevolent energy."

The grand elders exchanged worried glances, realizing the gravity of the situation. Kaelar spoke with a hint of fear in his voice. "If that seal breaks, the power contained within that finger could unleash unimaginable chaos. We must find a way to strengthen the seal, to protect not only the Veiled Forest but the entire Azure Continent."

Kaelar continued, determination shining in his eyes. "We cannot afford to hesitate. The balance of power is at stake, and innocent lives hang in the balance. We must gather our forces, rally the cultivators of the Azure Continent, and devise a plan to reinforce the seal. Our cultivation world depends on it."

The grand elders nodded in agreement, their expressions filled with resolve. They understood the urgency of the situation and the importance of their role in preserving the balance of power.

With a sense of urgency, Kaelar turned his attention back to the fallen tree. The memories he had received from the tree god guided him to the location of the seal—the bottom of the tree itself. Though the tree god appeared lifeless, its essence was still intertwined with the seal, waiting to be unleashed.

Kaelar's eyes narrowed as he surveyed the decaying tree trunk. "The seal lies within the core of the tree, at the very bottom. We need to reach it and stabilize the weakening barriers."

Kaelar's gaze shifted back to the withered tree before him, his mind racing with possibilities. "The fallen tree god... Its life force may have faded, but its essence remains. We have to dig deep into its core to reach the seal."

Grand elder Zhou, his eyes filled with a mix of reverence and apprehension, added, "It is said that the core of a tree god contains the purest essence of its being. It will not be an easy task to reach it, but with our combined strength as Core Formation cultivators, we might have a chance."

Kaelar nodded, his gaze fixed on the tree. "Indeed, the four of us—three grand elders and myself—are all Core Formation cultivators. It seems like fate has brought us together for this purpose. We must gather our strength and create an opening to reach the seal."

The grand elders positioned themselves around the tree, their cultivation energy swirling around them. They closed their eyes, entering a deep meditative state, drawing upon their inner reserves of power.

As the grand elders channeled their energy, the ground beneath the tree quivered, cracks forming along the trunk. The earth trembled, responding to the surge of power being unleashed by the Core Formation cultivators.

Kaelar's voice resounded with authority. "Together, we shall forge a path towards the seal. Our combined strength will pierce through the layers of decay and darkness that surround it."

The air crackled with energy as Kaelar summoned his sword, its blade gleaming with a brilliant light. With a swift and precise motion, he struck the tree trunk, carving out a deep crevice.

Grand elder Zhou followed suit, his palms glowing with an ethereal light. He pressed his hands against the cracked bark, channeling his cultivation energy to widen the opening, revealing a glimpse of the ancient seal within.

As they dug deeper into the tree's core, the scene before them transformed into a mesmerizing display of raw power and spiritual energy. The inner layers of the tree glowed with an ethereal light, pulsating with ancient wisdom and hidden secrets.