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Chapter 185 185: The Big 3

Elara's voice echoed through the hall, her bidding filled with unwavering determination. "Eighty thousand soul coins!" she declared, her eyes fixed on Thorn, challenging him to go further.

Thorn's eyes narrowed, his expression a mix of surprise and annoyance. He hadn't anticipated Elara's resilience and the newfound strength behind her bids. He leaned back, contemplating his next move.

A moment of tense silence stretched, the room holding its breath, waiting for Thorn's response. Finally, he smirked, a glint of competitiveness in his eyes. "Eighty-one thousand soul coins," he said

Elara's heart skipped a beat. The bid had reached an exorbitant amount, far surpassing what she had initially imagined. But she couldn't back down now. This was her chance to secure the elemental amulet.

Taking a deep breath, Elara's voice resonated with unyielding determination. "Eighty-two thousand soul coins!"

The room erupted into whispers and gasps. The bidding war had reached unprecedented heights, captivating the attention of every cultivator present. They watched in awe as Elara and Thorn battled fiercely for the coveted prize.

Thorn's face contorted with a mix of anger and frustration. He glanced around the room, assessing the situation and realizing that the momentum had shifted. Despite his initial dominance, he recognized that Elara had become an unstoppable force. He hadn't expected Elara to match his bid so confidently. After all, his ultimate goal was the last 7-star treasure.

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With a deep breath, Thorn reluctantly made a decision. He knew that continuing the bidding war with Elara would hinder his chances of acquiring the coveted 7-star treasure. It was a difficult choice, but he had to consider the bigger picture.

Thorn's voice rang out, filled with a mix of coldness and determination. "I concede the bid for the elemental amulet to Elara of the Radiant Holy Land. However, mark my words, this is not over. I have my sights set on the final 7-star treasure, and I will not be denied."

The room fell into stunned silence as Thorn's words hung in the air. Elara's heart swelled with a mixture of relief and triumph. She had won the bidding war and secured the elemental amulet, a crucial step in her cultivation journey.

With a steady voice, Elara responded to Thorn's declaration. "Thorn, I will not back down either. The final 7-star treasure will not come easily to you. I will meet you in the upcoming bid, and may the best cultivator prevail."

Just as Elara's words settled in the room, a powerful voice resonated, cutting through the silence. "I think you guys have forgotten about us, the Heavenly Sword Sect," proclaimed the Grand Elder of the Heavenly Sword Sect. The sudden declaration startled everyone, reminding them of the presence of another influential force in the Azure Kingdom.

All eyes turned towards the Grand Elder, their attention captivated by the unexpected interruption. The Heavenly Sword Sect, renowned for their exceptional sword techniques and formidable disciples, held a prominent position among the top three forces in the Azure Kingdom. Their participation in the bidding war added a new layer of excitement and uncertainty to the proceedings.

Elara, recognizing the significance of the Heavenly Sword Sect's presence, stepped forward with respect and addressed the Grand Elder. "Grand Elder, I am honored to stand alongside the Heavenly Sword Sect as we strive for the ultimate treasures. Our sects share a history of mutual respect and cooperation. Together, we can overcome any challenge that comes our way."

The Grand Elder nodded, his gaze unwavering. "Indeed, Elara. The Heavenly Sword Sect values the alliance we have forged with the Radiant Holy Lands. Our common enemy, Thorn's Dark Moon Clan, has long plagued the Azure Continent with their criminal activities. It is our duty to ensure that justice prevails and the Azure Kingdom remains free from their influence."

Thorn, the representative of the Dark Moon Clan, scoffed arrogantly from his position. "Hmph! Criminal activities? I prefer to call it embracing the true nature of power. The weak will always be at the mercy of the strong, and my clan understands that better than anyone."

Elara's eyes narrowed, her voice filled with determination. "Thorn, your misguided understanding of power has brought suffering and chaos to innocent cultivators. Your actions go against the principles of cultivation and harmony. We, the Heavenly Sword Sect and the Radiant Holy Lands, stand united against your tyranny."

Thorn sneered, his expression oozing arrogance. "Justice? In this world, strength defines what is just. Your empty words mean nothing."

The Grand Elder's eyes blazed with resolve, his voice resonating with authority. "Thorn, you underestimate the power of unity and righteousness. The Azure Continent will no longer tolerate the darkness you bring. We, the Heavenly Sword Sect and the Radiant Holy Lands, will eradicate your criminal reign and restore balance to this continent."

As the heated exchange between Thorn and the alliance of the Heavenly Sword Sect and the Radiant Holy Lands continued, the auctioneer, seemingly unfazed by the commotion, stepped forward to present the next item up for bidding—the 23rd item.

The auctioneer's voice rang out with an air of detachment. "Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed cultivators, please direct your attention to the 23rd item, an exquisite set of ancient cultivation artifacts. Let us not allow this minor disagreement to hinder the progress of the auction."

The room quieted down, cultivators exchanging glances, knowing well the consequences of causing trouble within the exchange floor. The auctioneer deliberately dismissing the ongoing feud as a mere distraction.

Elara, the Grand Elder, and Thorn reluctantly redirected their attention to the auctioneer and the newly introduced item. However, their gazes still held a hint of rivalry and determination, the tension between them simmering beneath the surface.

Elara's voice broke the silence, her tone laced with a touch of defiance. "Very well, let us focus on the auction at hand. The 23rd item, the ancient cultivation artifacts, is indeed a remarkable treasure. But, for now I will not bid for this item."

The Grand Elder and Thorn exchanged puzzled glances, surprised by Elara's decision. The auctioneer raised an eyebrow but remained composed, awaiting further instructions from the participants.

Elara continued, her voice steady and calculated. "The Radiant Holy Lands have discussed our strategies for this auction. We have decided to conserve our resources for the final 7-star treasure. As such, we will not participate in the bidding for the 23rd item."

The room buzzed with murmurs and whispers as the cultivators tried to make sense of Elara's announcement. It was an unexpected move, and many speculated on the reasoning behind it.

The Gran Elder, intrigued by Elara's decision, stepped forward, his voice carrying authority. "Elara's decision is wise. The Heavenly Sword Sect also shares the same strategy. We, too, will abstain from bidding on the 23rd item. Our eyes are set on the final 7-star treasure." The Grand Elder's words echoed through the hall, leaving the cultivators astonished at the united front presented by the Radiant Holy Lands and the Heavenly Sword Sect.

Just as the cultivators absorbed the impact of the alliance's decision, Thorn's lips curled into a sly grin. He saw an opportunity amidst the unexpected turn of events. Thorn stepped forward, his voice filled with confidence. "Well, well. It seems the esteemed cultivators of the Radiant Holy Lands and the Heavenly Sword Sect have revealed their true intentions. Very well, I, Thorn of the Dark Moon Clan, will seize this opportunity and continue the bidding for the 23rd item."

The auctioneer, unfazed by the turn of events, adjusted the starting price for the 23rd item. "The bidding for the ancient cultivation artifacts will continue with a starting price of 40,000 soul coins," the auctioneer announced.

Thorn raised his hand, his gaze fixed on Elara and the Grand Elder. His bid carried a sense of determination and a touch of provocation. "I bid 40,000 soul coins for the 23rd item."

The room erupted with whispers and gasps as Thorn's bid resonated through the hall. It was clear that Thorn intended to seize the opportunity to assert his presence and challenge the alliance of the Radiant Holy Lands and the Heavenly Sword Sect.

Elara's eyes narrowed, a flicker of annoyance crossing her face. By abstaining from the bidding, she can preserve her resources for the final 7-star treasure.

The Grand Elder's expression remained calm, his eyes gleaming with shrewdness. He understood the significance of Thorn's bid and the message it conveyed. It was a test of wills and a battle for dominance within the auction.

Finally, Elara's voice broke through the murmurs in the room. "Thorn, your bid is noted. However, the Radiant Holy Lands and the Heavenly Sword Sect stand firm in our decision. We will not engage in a bidding war for the 23rd item. Our focus remains on the final 7-star treasure."

Thorn's smirk grew wider, his eyes gleaming with confidence. "Oh, I understand your strategy well, Elara. But remember, the path to the ultimate treasures is fraught with challenges. If you're not willing to fight for each step, how can you claim victory in the end?"

Elara's gaze locked with Thorn's, determination burning in her eyes. "Thorn, we have chosen a different path—one that ensures our long-term success. We are not swayed by momentary temptations. The final 7-star treasure will be the ultimate testament to our strength."