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Chapter 227 227: Hidden Place

As the alliance leaders marveled at the Celestial Haven, their excitement quickly turned to surprise as an old man with a long, white beard emerged from the back of the hidden shop. He wore simple robes, and his eyes sparkled with wisdom and amusement.

The old man looked around, his eyes squinting behind a pair of thin spectacles, as if trying to size up the visitors before him. "Well, well, well, this is a surprise indeed," he said, his voice tinged with humor. "What brings such esteemed cultivators to my humble shop?"

Alix stepped forward, showing the utmost respect to the elderly vendor. "Greetings, sir. We've come seeking to acquire the Celestial Haven that you have in your possession," he said, his tone polite and humble.

The old man raised an eyebrow, a glimmer of amusement in his eyes. "Ah, the Celestial Haven, is it? That's not an ordinary item, you know. It's quite valuable," he said cryptically.

A hushed silence fell over the group as they waited for the vendor to reveal the price of the Celestial Haven. Everyone was well aware of its importance, but they didn't anticipate the cost.

With a slight grin, the old man spoke, "This item is a little expensive, my young friends. It will be 200,000 soul coins."

Gasps of astonishment echoed through the room. The price was far higher than anyone had expected. The alliance leaders exchanged glances, knowing that while they had gathered some soul coins, acquiring the Celestial Haven would practically empty the alliance's pocket.

Lady Xin's tactical mind quickly calculated the alliance's current resources. She stepped forward and respectfully asked, "Sir, we understand the value of the Celestial Haven, but the price is quite steep for us. Is there any possibility of negotiation?"

The old man chuckled softly, his eyes twinkling with amusement at Lady Xin's request for negotiation. "Ah, negotiation, you say? My dear, I appreciate your desire to strike a deal, but I'm afraid the price for the Celestial Haven is fixed," he replied, his tone firm and unwavering.

Lady Xin, undeterred, continued, "Surely there must be some room for flexibility. We are willing to offer a fair price, but 200,000 soul coins is an immense sum."

The old man shook his head gently. "I understand your predicament, but you see, the Celestial Haven is a rare and powerful item. It's not something I come across every day, and I cannot simply lower the price for it."

Alix, feeling the weight of responsibility on his shoulders, stepped forward with determination. "We truly appreciate the value of the Celestial Haven, sir. It will be a great asset to our alliance in the face of the impending confrontation with the Dark Moon Clan," he said, trying to appeal to the old man's sense of camaraderie.

The old man regarded Alix with a hint of admiration. "You're a persuasive one, young man," he said, his voice softening slightly. "But the Celestial Haven's price remains unchanged."

Alix took a deep breath, realizing that the old man was not easily swayed. He glanced at his fellow alliance leaders, their faces filled with concern and determination. This was a significant investment, and they needed the Celestial Haven for their alliance's strength and survival.

"Sir," Alix began, his voice steady, "we understand the rarity and power of the Celestial Haven. We do not doubt its value, but we also face a formidable enemy, the Dark Moon Clan. If we are to stand a chance against them, we need this treasure. Our alliance's future depends on it."

The old man regarded Alix intently, seeming to weigh his words. "You make a compelling case, young leader. I sense the sincerity in your words and the strength of your alliance's bond," he mused. "Very well, I will offer you a small concession. The final price for the Celestial Haven will be 180,000 soul coins."

The alliance leaders exchanged glances, realizing that the old man had granted them a slight discount. It was still a significant sum, but it brought the Celestial Haven closer to their reach.

"We are grateful for your understanding, sir," Alix said, bowing respectfully. "Your generosity will not be forgotten."

The old man nodded, seemingly pleased with their response. "Make good use of the Celestial Haven, young leaders. May it aid you in your endeavors and strengthen your alliance."

With a sense of relief and determination, the alliance leaders pooled their resources and counted out the 180,000 soul coins. They handed over the payment to the old man, who carefully handed them the Celestial Haven in return.

"We will not disappoint you," Alix said, his voice filled with gratitude.

As they left the hidden shop, clutching the Celestial Haven in their hands, the alliance leaders felt a mixture of excitement and responsibility. The journey to acquire the powerful treasure had been challenging, but it was worth every effort.

After they stepped out of the hidden shop, Yara couldn't help but feel a sense of curiosity about the mysterious vendor and his elusive establishment. He turned around to get another glimpse of the shop, but to his surprise, it had vanished without a trace. Even when the alliance leaders tried to retrace their steps, the hidden shop did not reemerge.

"Did you all see that?" Yara exclaimed, his voice tinged with disbelief. "The shop just disappeared! How is that even possible?"

Alix and the others exchanged puzzled glances. "It seems this hidden shop is more than meets the eye," Alix replied, his brow furrowed in thought. "We should keep an eye out for any other hidden shops in the future. Who knows what kind of treasures they might be storing?"

Shadowblade, who had been silently observing the situation, nodded in agreement. "Don't worry, Alix. I will assign some of my most skilled operatives to keep a vigilant watch on any hidden shops that may emerge in the exchange floor," he assured, his voice low and reassuring.

Lady Xin chimed in, her tactical mind already at work. "That's a wise decision. We can't afford to miss any opportunity to acquire valuable items or resources for our alliance," she said, nodding in approval of Shadowblade's plan.

Alix's curiosity remained piqued, but he trusted Shadowblade's capabilities. "Alright then, let's focus on the task at hand for now. We have the Celestial Haven, and that's a significant advantage for us. Our next step is to meet with Lord Tan Zong for the hidden place he is talking about," he said, rallying the alliance leaders.

As the alliance leaders continued their journey on the second floor of the tower, a vast world of undead surrounded them. Skeleton warriors, zombies, and ghouls kept appearing, launching attacks at the group. However, the alliance leaders, each a skilled cultivator in their own right, fought back with precision and unity, defeating the undead foes without much difficulty.

Alix's fists struck like lightning, pulverizing the skeletons that dared to approach him. Yara, with his bow in hand, released arrows with deadly accuracy, picking off zombies from a distance. Captain Zao swung his massive axe with immense strength, cleaving through the ghoul horde with each strike. Lady Xin expertly wielded her whip, entangling and incapacitating the undead attackers. Meanwhile, Shadowblade moved with unparalleled agility, his dagger-like strikes silently dispatching enemies from the shadows.

As the alliance leaders fought side by side, their skills complementing one another, they made their way deeper into the undead world. The vastness of the second floor seemed unending, but they pressed on with determination, guided by Tan Zong's instructions.

Amidst the relentless onslaught, Yara couldn't help but wonder about the hidden shop they had just visited. "That vendor and his shop... It's like they were never there," he remarked, his curiosity getting the better of him.

Captain Zao grunted, his attention still focused on a group of charging zombies. "Aye, it's peculiar, but we can't let our guard down. These undead creatures keep coming, and we must stay vigilant," he said, swinging his axe with ferocity.

Shadowblade, dispatching another ghoul with a swift strike, added, "Agreed. The tower is full of mysteries, and we have to be prepared for anything."

Alix nodded in agreement, his fists never faltering in their precise strikes. "Indeed, the tower is a realm of endless surprises. But we can't afford to be distracted right now. Our priority is to reach the hidden place Lord Tan Zong mentioned," he said, his voice determined.

Lady Xin skillfully whipped away a group of encroaching skeletons, her eyes scanning the surroundings. "Lord Tan Zong must have a good reason for leading us here. Let's trust in his guidance," she said.

With each step they took, the undead world seemed to grow more challenging. Waves of skeletal warriors, zombies, and ghouls relentlessly surged toward them. However, the alliance leaders fought with unwavering resolve, never losing their focus on the task at hand.

As they progressed deeper into the undead world, the attacks intensified, and the alliance leaders found themselves surrounded by an overwhelming horde.

Captain Zao let out a mighty battle cry, bolstering the group's morale. "We've faced countless challenges before, and this won't be any different! Together, we are unstoppable!" he bellowed, charging forward to meet the undead head-on.

Just as the alliance leaders were pushing back against the relentless horde of undead, a figure clad in white robes appeared at their side.

"I see you all are in need of some assistance," Tan Zong said calmly, a hint of a smile on his face.

Alix, while still fighting off the undead, nodded gratefully. "Yes, Lord Tan Zong. Your help is most welcome!"

With a flick of his wrist, Tan Zong summoned a surge of powerful energy, sending shockwaves through the surrounding undead. Skeletons crumbled to dust, zombies were knocked back, and ghouls were paralyzed by the force of his cultivation.

"Keep moving forward," Tan Zong advised. "The hidden place lies ahead."