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Chapter 258: Destroy All The Fortress (part 3)

The words of wisdom resonated with the other leaders, slowly quelling their initial unrest. Everyone become quite, each grappling with their own reservations, yet acknowledging the need to put the safety of their people first.

"As much as I hate to admit it," a seasoned leader spoke, his tone begrudgingly accepting, "we don't have the luxury of time to debate. If Kaelar believes that this is the best way to ensure our survival, then we have no choice but to follow his orders."

As the leaders contemplated the situation, the magnitude of the threat became increasingly clear. The news of the destroyed fortress and the mention of a Soul Strengthening demon's involvement weighed heavily on their minds. The dread of an adversary with such unparalleled power overshadowed their initial grievances.

"We'll have to put our trust in Kaelar's leadership," another leader concluded, his voice resolute. "Our people's lives are at stake."

As the leaders grudgingly accepted the necessity of following Kaelar's orders, they activated communication talismans to coordinate the evacuation efforts in their respective territories. Time was of the essence, and they could ill afford delays.

Meanwhile, in the vicinity of the second fortress, Xal'Thur descended from the skies with the force of an impending storm. His arrival was heralded by a crimson aura that radiated power and malice. He had arrived to find the cultivators guarding this fortress in the midst of evacuating, their actions driven by the urgency of the situation.

Xal'Thur's eyes, like burning coals, fell upon the cultivators who were hastily making their escape. With a mocking laugh that sent shivers down the spines of those who heard it, he taunted them, "Haha, run, insects. Your futile attempts to escape won't save you."

His amusement gave way to action as he launched into a devastating assault. The leader of the fortress, a cultivator of considerable power, recognized the imminent danger and stepped forward to confront Xal'Thur. Their exchange was brief but catastrophic.

With a swift, precise movement, Xal'Thur unleashed a concentrated burst of energy that struck the leader with unerring accuracy. The power behind the attack was overwhelming, and it left no room for defense or evasion. The unfortunate leader was obliterated in an instant, reduced to ashes before they could even react.

Xal'Thur's onslaught continued without mercy. His attacks were like a relentless tempest, sweeping through the evacuating cultivators with devastating efficiency. He moved with a cold and calculated precision, striking down any who dared to oppose him.

As the chaos unfolded, the cultivators of the second fortress found themselves caught in a maelstrom of destruction. Xal'Thur's power was beyond anything they had ever witnessed, and their attempts at resistance were futile.

In a matter of moments, the second fortress, which had once stood as a bastion of strength, was reduced to ruins. The life lamps that had guided its inhabitants were extinguished one by one, and the once-mighty cultivators lay defeated in the wake of Xal'Thur's rampage.

With his task complete, Xal'Thur's crimson aura gradually subsided. He stood amidst the wreckage, a harbinger of destruction, his gaze unwavering and his purpose clear. The second fortress had fallen, its defenders vanquished.

Without hesitation, he took to the skies once more, leaving behind the smoldering ruins. His next target awaited, and he was determined to carry out Cambion's orders with ruthless efficiency, regardless of the consequences that lay ahead.

After some time, Xal'Thur arrived at the third fortress, but to his surprise, it was already empty. The cultivators who had once guarded this fortress had evacuated, heeding the urgent orders that had been issued earlier. Despite the absence of any resistance, Xal'Thur couldn't help but offer a sardonic comment to the empty surroundings.

"Well," he mused with a hint of amusement, "when it comes to running, humans are truly the fastest."

Though the fortress was devoid of any inhabitants, Xal'Thur remained resolute in his mission. With a gesture, he summoned forth his formidable power, and the destructive energy at his command was unleashed upon the fortress.

Even though there was no one left to oppose him, the fortress crumbled under the relentless force of Xal'Thur's attack. Stone and debris were sent flying in all directions, as if the very earth itself had rebelled against the structure that once stood there.

Over the course of a day, Xal'Thur systematically obliterated all of the empty fortresses that once dotted the landscape. Each one fell to his overwhelming power, leaving nothing but desolation in their wake.

With his grim task finally completed, Xal'Thur took to the skies once more, his expression unchanged.

As the news of the cultivators abandoning the fortresses spread across the Azure Continent, a wave of disbelief and anxiety swept through the population. People from various regions and walks of life couldn't fathom why the protectors of their land, the cultivators from the mightiest sects, would choose to abandon their fortresses.

In the bustling marketplaces and quiet villages alike, discussions buzzed with a mix of fear and confusion. Voices whispered in hushed tones, and worried expressions painted the faces of those who had heard the unsettling reports.

"I heard they're leaving the fortresses behind. How can that be? Those fortresses were our last line of defense!" one concerned citizen exclaimed, their brows furrowed with worry.

Another individual, their voice trembling, added, "And did you hear about that demon? They say it destroyed every single fortress! How could something like that even exist?"

The news of a powerful demon capable of such destruction sent shivers down the spines of those who heard it. The very idea that a force of nature could lay waste to the fortresses they had always believed were impregnable was almost too much to bear.

In a tea house where intellectuals often gathered, a scholar voiced their concerns, "It's unprecedented. For the cultivators to abandon their posts, it must be a threat beyond anything we've ever faced. But what are we to do without their protection?"

A seasoned warrior who had seen his fair share of battles chimed in, his expression grim. "We can't rely on them anymore. It's every person for themselves now. We need to fortify our homes and be prepared for the worst."

Even among the cultivators who had chosen to remain in their respective regions, doubt and fear had taken root. They were well aware of the might of their own sects and the strength of their leaders. To see them retreat was a stark reminder of the danger that loomed on the horizon.

"I can't believe it," muttered a young cultivator, their voice tinged with disbelief. "The strongest sects of the Azure Continent are running from this demon. What chance do the rest of us have?"

News of the powerful demon that had razed the fortresses to the ground only deepened the sense of dread. Rumors spread like wildfire, each more terrifying than the last.

"I heard it's a demon with a cultivation of Soul Strengthening Realm," one man declared, his voice trembling. "A realm that's been a legend for centuries."

A nearby scholar attempted to calm the growing hysteria. "We shouldn't jump to conclusions. We don't have all the facts yet."

But his words fell on deaf ears as fear and uncertainty gripped the hearts of those who had always looked to their sects for protection.