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Chapter 273 273: The War Begins (Part 3)

As the grand meeting hall's doors swung open with a thunderous crash, a flood of people surged into the room, their voices raised in desperate pleas for help. The first-grade leaders, already divided in their opinions, were now faced with a stark choice: to assist these beleaguered souls or to remain steadfast in their original strategies.

A leader, who had argued for a defensive stance, stood firm, his voice unwavering, "We cannot afford to divert our resources. Our duty is to protect Skyhaven City, and we must not falter in the face of this sudden plea."

However, a leader who had advocated for aiding the trapped citizens countered, his gaze filled with empathy, "Our strength should not be measured solely by our ability to fortify the city's defenses. We have a moral obligation to help those in need, even if it means stretching our resources thin."

The room was now a battleground of ideals, with the fate of countless lives hanging in the balance. As the leaders continued their impassioned debate, the voices of the desperate citizens, who had stormed the meeting, grew louder, their pleas echoing off the grand hall's walls.

One of the leaders, a woman with a steely resolve, raised her voice above the commotion, "Are we truly so callous that we would ignore the cries of our fellow countrymen? Our strength is a shield, but it should also be a beacon of hope."

Opposing her, a leader known for his strategic thinking countered, "Our resources are finite. If we spread ourselves too thin, we risk losing everything. We must prioritize our own survival."

The room remained divided, half of the first-grade forces advocating for aiding the desperate citizens and the other half emphasizing the need to protect Skyhaven City at all costs.

Sect Master Kaelar and Sect Master Althea, though their hearts were heavy, listened to the voices of both compassion and pragmatism. They knew that whatever decision was made would shape the destiny of their world, and the weight of that responsibility rested heavily upon them.

Amidst the heated debate, Sect Master Kaelar and Sect Master Althea exchanged a knowing glance, their expressions reflecting the immense burden of their decision. It was a choice between the duty to protect their city and the moral obligation to help those in dire need.

After a prolonged silence, Kaelar, his voice calm yet resolute, addressed the assembly of leaders, "We are faced with an agonizing decision, one that will define the path of our sects and the fate of countless lives. While the protection of Skyhaven City remains paramount, we cannot turn a blind eye to the suffering of our fellow countrymen."

Althea, her eyes filled with empathy, added, "Our strength should indeed serve as a beacon of hope, not just a fortress. It is the duty of the strong to protect the weak."

The room fell into a contemplative hush, and the leaders watched their sect masters closely, awaiting their decision.

Kaelar spoke once more, his voice carrying the weight of their choice, "We will provide aid to those in need. We shall marshal our resources and the strength of our sects to protect not only Skyhaven City but also the innocent lives caught in the demon's grasp."

Althea nodded in agreement, her determination unwavering. "This is not a decision made lightly, but it is the right path. We will find a way to help both Skyhaven City and those besieged by the demons."

Their decision, rooted in compassion and responsibility, began to bridge the divide in the room. The leaders, realizing the gravity of the situation, started discussing strategies to aid the besieged cities while maintaining the defense of Skyhaven City.

In this moment, the first-grade forces, though divided in their initial stance, found common ground in their resolve to protect their world from the encroaching darkness.

In the depths of the demon camp, Cambion, now basking in the semblance of a high demon's authority, was joined by his council of demons, each transformed and strengthened by their relentless cultivation.

Hyr, his loyalty unwavering, stepped forward to deliver the report. His tone held an air of accomplishment as he began, "Lord Cambion, our forces have made remarkable progress in their campaign against the humans. We have obliterated countless towns and razed two cities to the ground."

Vexoria, her serpentine presence undeniably regal, added with a touch of arrogance, "I, for one, thought they would crumble easily under our might. But it seems the humans still cling to their futile resistance."

Nihilus, his shadowy form now pulsating with newfound strength, chimed in, "Indeed, Lord Cambion. However, after the third city fell to our forces, the humans began to muster reinforcements. They dare to challenge us, believing themselves more than mere ants."

Cambion, his crimson eyes gleaming with an aura of dark satisfaction, listened intently to Hyr's report, his imposing figure exuding authority. "Your report is commendable, Hyr," he acknowledged, his voice a deep resonance that commanded attention. "The destruction we have wrought upon the humans is but the beginning of their torment."

Vexoria, her serpentine form shimmering with pride, spoke with a hint of amusement, "It appears they possess a flicker of resilience, even in the face of annihilation. How amusing."

Nihilus, added with a touch of icy menace, "Their resistance only serves to fuel our determination, Lord Cambion. They are but ants before the might of our demonic forces."

In response to Vexoria's comment, Cambion's lips curled into a sinister smile. "Indeed, their struggles amuse me as well. They believe they can defy the inevitable, but they shall learn the true extent of our power."

At this moment, Xal'Thur, who had been silently observing, stepped forward. His presence was a reminder of the darker forces at play. "Lord Cambion," he began, his deep voice resonating with unwavering loyalty, "our preparations are complete, and our forces stand ready. We await your command to unleash our wrath upon the humans."

Cambion, maintaining his facade of a high demon, regarded Xal'Thur with a mixture of authority and cunning. "Xal'Thur," he responded, his crimson eyes gleaming with a concealed agenda, "your loyalty and the readiness of our forces do not go unnoticed. The time to unleash our true might upon the humans approaches, but we must wait for a specific signal."

Hyr, standing nearby and dedicated to Cambion's cause, exchanged a subtle glance with Xal'Thur. They both knew the true nature of their mission, one that transcended mere destruction.

Vexoria, her serpentine form coiled with anticipation, inquired with a hint of curiosity, "What signal are we waiting for, Lord Cambion? Shouldn't we continue our assault?"

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Cambion, his dark charisma masking his ulterior motives, replied cryptically, "Patience, my loyal council. There are forces at play beyond our comprehension. We await the culmination of events that will bring our grand design to fruition."

Nihilus, his shadowy presence resonating with intrigue, pressed further, "You speak in riddles, Lord Cambion. What is this grand design you speak of?"

Cambion's smile deepened, revealing a hint of the intricate web he had woven. "All will be revealed in due time, my fellow demons. For now, let us bask in the anticipation of the chaos we shall unleash."

With that, Cambion maintained his role as a high demon orchestrating the impending destruction, even as his true allegiance lay with forces that cared not for humans or demons. His manipulation of the demons was a carefully crafted ploy, and the true extent of his dark agenda remained shrouded in secrecy.