

Apocalypse 175

Chapter 175 The Tibetan Mastiff

Kisha peered into her territory pack's rainforest area where she had placed the mastiff, expecting it to frantically search for a way back or to be destructive, laying waste to the tall trees around it. Just thinking about it made her heart ache.

But surprisingly, what she saw on the holographic view was the mastiff happily running around the rainforest, chasing some of the scarlet bee workers pollinating the flowers. Its fur was matted with blood, but because of its black fur with shades of brown, the matting hadn't been obvious from her earlier viewpoint.

But now that she was watching closely, she could see that one of the dog's eyes was barely open due to a huge wound, making it impossible for the dog to open its eye without blood seeping in. There were also more wounds on its body, including a large open wound on its hind leg that had scraped off the fur, though the bleeding had already stopped.

Despite its pitifully wasted appearance, the dog still stood tall, happily trotting around the flower field. As if everything it saw was new and amusing.

"Master," Bell's melodious but sad voice echoed in Kisha's head. "This young dog was so pitiful." Bell trailed off, sadness evident in her tone, as if it was sharing her own story. "It said that its owner, who owned the bakery in the community, passed away long ago, before the apocalypse. Some people in the community gave it food sometimes out of pity.

Since its master's death, it became a stray and only stayed around the fountain every day, watching the bakery that used to belong to its owner, missing it."

Kisha could hear Bell's sigh through their mind link. "It played sometimes with the children in the community, but because of its size, the people living there thought it was dangerous. So, no one plays with it anymore while it's missing its master," Bell said.

Kisha stared blankly at the holographic, lifelike image of the big dog running around in the rainforest. She didn't know if she should be more surprised that the mountain of a dog was still a young pup or that Bell could even communicate with it. Before hearing Bell's account, she had already been thinking that it would be a hell of a challenge to get the dog to follow her.

It had been defending that community with its life against the evolved zombie while being surrounded by a hungry horde of zombies.

She mulled over various ways to win the dog over, observing its fierce loyalty to the community. She anticipated that the dog might view her as an enemy for taking it away without understanding the circumstances surrounding their encounter.

"Master, could we keep this young one?" Bell asked hesitantly, her motherly instincts evident in the tone of her voice. As the Queen Bee of the Scarlet Bee species, Bell now spent a third of her time inside her colony to reproduce, emerging occasionally to assist Kisha when needed and to enjoy a brief respite in the less-than-fresh air of Kisha's world, which often reeked of decay.

Kisha decided to test the waters with Bell, seeing her as a potential bridge to communicate with the dog and gauge its response. Bell had already begun to view the dog as part of her own kin and was confident that Kisha would be taking it in, but it still had its reservations and it was obvious to Kisha from just listening to Bell.

So Kisha asked Bell directly, "Do you think it would be happy to follow me as its new master?"

"Absolutely!" Bell exclaimed without hesitation, its voice filled with conviction. "It expressed feeling lonely and longing for companionship. It understands its old master won't return, but it has nowhere else to go, only the fountain area.

In my opinion, it would gladly accept you as its new master, as long as you're willing." Bell finished its account, and Kisha could almost picture her doing a celebratory flip in her mind.

"Alright, thank you Bell for letting me know about this, it was a great help." Kisha's voice sounded light and refreshing, it was obvious from her voice that she was happy with this and Bell could only let out a cute giggle as it silently retreated from the mind link.

She nudged Duke, who had been silently observing her. "Any ideas on what we should name the dog? I'm drawing a blank," Kisha whispered, eager to find a fitting name rather than just referring to it as "dog" all the time.

"What about Thunder?" Duke blurted out almost instantly. Kisha wasn't sure if he was being serious or if Duke's naming sense was a bit...

"Can you think of anything else we could consider?" Kisha asked again, watching as Duke pursed his lips, clearly giving it serious thought.

"What about Lightning, Tabby, or Massy, considering it's a Tibetan Mastiff? Or maybe Swift, because despite its size, it moves so fast it could even be called Flash," Duke suggested, arms crossed thoughtfully as he tried to come up with a fitting name for the dog.

Kisha couldn't help but be amused by Duke's earnestness. It was the first time she realized that Duke's naming sense was a bit imposing yet endearingly cute, like that of a little boy excitedly suggesting names for a new pet.

"Do you know if it was a male or female?" Duke asked, wanting to factor in its gender while brainstorming names.

"I'm not sure. Let me ask Bell," Kisha replied, initiating a mind link with Bell. "Bell, do you know the dog's gender?"

"It's a male, master," Bell cheerfully relayed. "Are you thinking of naming the young one, master?"

"Yes," Kisha affirmed simply.

"Great! I would let it know and the young one would surely be very happy to know of this." Bell excitedly cut the mind link again as it dashed off to find the dog roaming around the rainforest with fascination.

"Bell said it's a male," Kisha relayed to Duke. His expression mirrored hers from earlier upon learning Bell could communicate with the dog, but he quickly regained composure. With everything happening around them and Kisha's unpredictability, nothing surprised him as much as she did anymore. He nodded and returned to contemplating about male pet names again.

Kisha softly chuckled as she observed Duke's unexpected excitement. She recalled that Duke had mentioned never having a pet before; since he was just 4 or 5 years old, he had been immersed in his

family's heir training, focusing on learning and leadership. Even before reaching his teens, he had established his own elite group by taking in orphans and nurturing them into capable individuals.

They had all grown up together under his guidance, and as he matured, he took on greater responsibilities, elevating the Winters family to new heights on the world stage.

Kisha glanced back at Duke, reflecting on his upbringing. She realized that growing up under such weighty responsibilities had likely shaped his demeanor into one of cold and indifference. She couldn't help but think that Duke might have secretly longed for a pet all these years, unable to entertain such luxuries amidst his duties.

Now, with the chance to bring the dog into their fold, she understood why he had been so eager earlier, asking if they were taking the dog home.