

## Apocalypse 297

### Chapter 297 Gather The Crystal Cores

They had witnessed Kisha's fighting skills when she first arrived at their base, but her performance now was notably different. She fought with a newfound ease and fluidity, a stark contrast to her previous displays of strength. Although she was always strong, it was clear that something had changed, and her current prowess reflected a significant improvement.

Kisha effortlessly dominated the zombies that had been lured by their shouting, ultimately dispatching more than two dozen on her own. Thankfully, she was wearing an apron, so only a small amount of the black, coagulated blood splattered onto it. Despite this, the stench of the blood clung to her, and the zombies' bodies lay in a chaotic mess around her.

Kisha didn't seem bothered by the mess. Instead, she signaled for the soldier on top of the wall to come down. At first, they didn't understand her intent, but after she repeated the gesture silently, it became clear that she wanted them to stop shouting. The gatekeeper, unsure of Kisha's exact request but making a bold assumption, decided to act on the implicit instructions.

He instructed the soldiers standing beside the gate to open a small gap and step outside to speak with their City Lord. The soldiers exchanged horrified glances as if they were staring at someone who had just suggested an absurdly dangerous idea.

Despite their reluctance, the soldiers had no choice but to follow orders. Since the gatekeeper hadn't specified how many should go outside, the two soldiers standing by the gate decided to settle the matter with a game of rock-paper-scissors. The loser, clearly distressed, squeezed through the small gap in the gate and made his way to Kisha with a pained expression.

Kisha continued to methodically eliminate zombies that emerged from the streets ahead while waiting for someone to approach.

When the unfortunate soldier, who had lost the game, nervously stood beside her, she glanced at him before stating calmly, "Dig their brains out." Her indifferent and cold expression made her words sound chillingly stern, leaving the soldier with the impression that he was being reprimanded.

"—A-Again, please?!" he stammered, his eyes wide with disbelief and tears welling at the corners. Despite having witnessed numerous gruesome scenes in his life, the sight of the zombie carcasses sprawled around him, coupled with Kisha's cold demeanor, left him unsure if he was being punished or merely following orders. The macabre scene before him only intensified his unease.

"Dig into their brains, and you'll find a crystal core. Gather it," Kisha clarified, offering a bit more guidance before returning her attention to the street. The soldier, now understanding his task, stopped questioning and nervously crouched beside the nearest zombie carcass.

He drew his dagger from his side, plunged it into the zombie's head, and twisted it to create a larger hole, searching for the crystal core within.

The overpowering stench hit his nose like a punch, making him gag repeatedly. Desperately, he pulled his shirt over his nose to mitigate the nauseating smell that was making his head spin. After the initial stab and twist of his dagger, he still couldn't find the crystal core, so he tried again in a different spot.

When his dagger struck something solid that wasn't bone, he pushed aside the brains and tissue to get a better look through the hole he had made.

There, embedded deep within the zombie's head, he spotted a crystal-like object that resembled a shard of glass. Carefully, he maneuvered his dagger to twist and extract the crystal, inching it closer to the opening he had created so he could grasp it with his fingers more easily.

However, since the tip of his dagger was too narrow to maneuver the crystal closer to the opening, he had no choice but to insert his index and middle fingers into the hole. His face contorted with disgust, but he persevered and successfully extracted the crystal core from the first zombie carcass.

Realizing there were more zombies to search through, he glanced around at the piles of carcasses with reddened eyes, his face etched with exhaustion. Sniffing pitifully, he moved on to the next zombie. As he worked, the soldier who had climbed up onto the wall to observe the situation looked on with puzzlement, only able to see their comrade hunched over and busy stabbing the zombies.

They were unsure what the City Lord intended for the soldier, but it was evident that the soldier had gagged several times and was wiping his forehead with his uniform sleeves. Observing this, the gatekeeper decided to send additional soldiers to assist.

He knew that their City Lord wouldn't be engaged in pointless tasks or power trips, so he assumed she had assigned the soldier a specific and important task involving the zombies.

Realizing that the task was taking longer than expected, and with so many zombie carcasses scattered around, the gatekeeper decided to send additional help. Three more soldiers, who had also lost at rock-paper-scissors, reluctantly joined the first.

The original soldier greeted them with a mix of relief and pity, quickly explaining the grim task at hand and showing them what to do and what to look for.

With more soldiers helping out and Kisha still fending off the incoming zombies, it took some time before they could gather all the crystal cores from the carcasses. Once the task was completed, Kisha instructed them to return inside the base, clean the cores, and close the gate. After a final scan of the area, she too made her way back.

But before the soldiers could open the gate, Kisha leaped into the air, and when it wasn't quite enough, she used her telekinesis to control her dagger, turning it into a stepping stone for a second leap. She landed effortlessly on top of the wall, where the gatekeeper stood, jaw practically on the floor in disbelief.

They had heard rumors about awakened abilities and had seen the lightning bolt and fireball Duke sent from the square up to the sky, but since it was far from the wall, they didn't have much of an opinion. They knew that these abilities could boost their survival rate, but without witnessing them up close, the impact was minimal.

Now that they had seen Kisha's display, even though it was a simple demonstration of her ability, their hearts raced with anticipation at the thought of their own potential awakening. The realization sparked a new level of excitement and curiosity, even though they didn't fully grasp what had just happened.

The fact that someone could leap more than 10 meters high seemed almost superhuman to them. It was only now that they began to understand what had changed in Kisha—it wasn't her fighting style, which remained the same, but her strength itself. She had become faster, stronger, and more versatile, clearly surpassing the limits of a human body.

Their eyes remained wide as they stared at Kisha in silence until she finally spoke. "Now that you've gathered the crystal cores, clean them and send them to the Supply Center. You can exchange them for points or keep them for your future awakening. When you're off duty and join the training in the square, you'll learn more about these crystal cores and the awakening ability.

But remember this—don't get greedy and venture outside the wall to gather crystal cores without clearance from the Central Hall. If you do, you'll be punished," Kisha said sternly.

She understood that once the use of crystal cores became widely known, many people without jobs or those eager to earn would attempt to go outside and hunt zombies for their cores. Without proper regulation, this could not only be dangerous but also lead to a breakdown of order within the base.

After hearing her stern warning, all the soldiers nodded vigorously, not wanting to provoke their City Lord. Despite her fragile and beautiful appearance, they knew the saying that the more beautiful something is, the more dangerous it can be—and this was especially true for their City Lord. The last thing they wanted was to incur her wrath when she could easily twist their heads off.

After completing her tasks, Kisha headed back to the medical facility to check for any updates. As she walked through the base, she noticed an increasing number of people rushing around in a state of panic, like headless chickens consumed by worry. Yet, amidst the chaos, some were still focused on their duties, determined to survive—even if only for another day.