

Apocalypse 351

Chapter 351 Is She....

Most of these people were veterans, so Sparrow trusted that after allowing themselves a brief moment to mourn, they would pull themselves together. They didn't have the luxury to falter or stop, as that would only lead to one outcome—death. And if that happened, it would dishonor Rose's sacrifice.

Cough! Cough!

"We have a heartbeat!" someone shouted from the group administering first aid. Instantly, everyone perked up, straining to catch a glimpse of Rose.

'It seems there won't be mourning just yet, but maybe later,' Sparrow thought. It might sound callous, but he didn't want to get his hopes up. The real battle was still ahead—Rose was still fighting the virus that was overtaking her system and threatening to eat her brain.

Although she remained human for now, she was drifting in and out of consciousness, moving between the brink of death and her current state.

"Do you see it?" Clyde asked, inching closer to Sparrow as he fixed his gaze on Rose's face. The black veins still marred her neck and cheeks. Meanwhile, Sparrow was preoccupied with the unfolding situation, rearranging their schedule and mission timeframe as he strategized their next steps for continuing the road ahead.

Sparrow raised an eyebrow, humoring Clyde but unsure of where he was headed. He remained still, deep in thought, as Clyde continued. "She was bitten, but instead of going into cardiac arrest, she should

have turned by now. It's been over half an hour since the bite—between the battle in the storage room and the time others spent attending to her. This delay is unusual."

"Usually, when someone is bitten, they turn into a zombie almost instantly due to the rapid spread of the virus through the bloodstream," Clyde explained, his tone matter-of-fact. "But if we look at her now, she appears to be in a sort of half-turned state. It's almost like the virus has stopped spreading, though that's unlikely."

"I've seen enough of this to know that if the virus was active, it wouldn't be on hold. Wouldn't it?" Clyde shrugged, acknowledging that everyone surrounding Rose had likely witnessed similar horrors.

It almost seemed like no one had considered this issue before, perhaps because their minds were too rattled by the situation.

"What did you just say?!" Sparrow's voice rose sharply, his head snapping towards Clyde in shock. Clyde quickly raised both hands defensively, his expression a mix of apprehension and urgency as he gestured for Sparrow to calm down.

"Relax, I'm not trying to curse her or be insensitive. I just noticed something unusual," Clyde said, his tone more measured. "We've all seen people get bitten and turn into zombies within moments. It rarely takes more than half an hour. So why is she different?"

"Is this the first time something like this has happened? Could it be because of her immunity? That seems unlikely, but it's worth considering. I'm just trying to help by pointing out what I see, without any emotional bias. I might come off as detached, but I'm only offering my observations." Clyde paused, focusing his attention back on Rose, who was convulsing again.

"No, wait! You actually raised a valid point," Sparrow said suddenly, drawing Clyde's attention. Clyde sighed in relief, having feared that Sparrow might misinterpret his concerns as a political maneuver rather than a genuine observation.

"Captain!" Another voice called out, catching Sparrow and Clyde's attention. They quickly urged the STAU to retrieve something from their supplies. Moments later, the STAU returned with thick blankets and began to wrap Rose in them.

By rolling her in the blankets, they could restrain her movements without needing everyone to hold her down during her convulsions. The thick fabric provided a practical solution to contain her while minimizing the risk of injury.

Sparrow, puzzled by the commotion, moved closer with Clyde to see what was happening. The six men who had been attending to Rose were drenched in sweat. They had carefully wrapped Rose in a thick blanket, ensuring it was snug enough to restrain her movements without suffocating her. Only after confirming that she could barely move did they finally release their hold.

"What are you guys doing?" Sparrow asked sternly. He understood that they couldn't kill Rose yet—she hadn't fully turned, and no one was prepared for that task. It wasn't something Rose had requested, nor was it a decision for him to make. But what they were doing now was baffling.

"Captain Sparrow, Captain Rose felt icy to the touch, like a block of ice. She was shivering uncontrollably, her teeth chattering from the cold. It seems like she's experiencing a severe fever, but instead of feeling intense heat, she's feeling the opposite," someone explained.

They had struggled to make sense of the situation, and this was the only explanation they could come up with, though they still hadn't recognized the full abnormality of the situation.

"Wait, are you saying she's going through an awakening?!" Clyde exclaimed, his words hitting everyone like a bolt of lightning. The group exchanged looks of dawning realization, and even Sparrow's eyes widened in disbelief as the idea sank in. No one had a better explanation, so they could only collectively focus on Clyde's theory, stunned by the sudden possibility.

"But her symptoms are different from what we've seen in others who've gone through awakening," one of the men said, hesitating. "We can't say for sure that's what's happening. But..."

Clyde's theory had sparked a glimmer of hope. They began to consider the possibility that Rose might indeed be undergoing a forced awakening due to the life-threatening situation. Perhaps her survival instincts were boosting her chances of awakening, which could explain why the transformation had seemingly stalled.

"Perhaps her body is forcing her to awaken as a defense mechanism," someone suggested. "The sudden drop in temperature might be a way to slow down or halt the spread of the virus while she's undergoing this forced awakening."

"But since it's a matter of survival, her body might have opted for an unconventional method," another person added. "This could explain why Rose's body is struggling to cope, leading to her experiencing cardiac arrest." As the group followed this line of thought, they exchanged uneasy glances, their initial relief giving way to growing anxiety.

Whether she was undergoing a forced awakening or her immune system was having a final struggle with the virus before succumbing was still uncertain. For now, they could only wait and hope. Regardless of the outcome, if Rose's body failed to overcome the challenge, she would inevitably turn into a zombie. All they could do was pray that this was indeed a forced awakening and that she would succeed.

With this new perspective, they carefully placed Rose inside the truck and took a quick break to eat. Heads hung low, each person was lost in their own thoughts and anxieties. Conversation dwindled, especially the somber discussions about Rose and the current situation. The gravity of their predicament weighed heavily on them, leaving everyone acutely aware of their dire circumstances.

Despite their concerns, they knew they couldn't return without completing their mission. After their break, they resumed their journey. This time, their travel was notably smoother compared to their departure from the city. The road to Port City, connected to a provincial highway, was wide and largely deserted, making for a much more straightforward and uneventful trip.