

Apocalypse 427

Chapter 427 Mutated Rats

Duke watched in horror as a massive mutated rat gnawed on a steel pipe from a street sign, its gaze fixed menacingly on him and his team.

Mucus-like saliva dripped from the corners of its mouth, pooling on the ground below as it savored its makeshift meal.

Duke inhaled sharply as he surveyed the precarious situation, acutely aware that neither his team nor the mutated rats had made any sudden moves.

They were locked in a tense standoff; the rats seemed to sense Duke's formidable aura, holding back their eagerness to attack, their eyes gleaming with a mix of hunger and caution.

As Duke continued to analyze the scene, a chilling realization struck him.

The earlier ease of their journey through the southern part of the city hadn't been due to luck or flawless reconnaissance. He had sensed something was off—a disquieting stillness that felt unnatural.

Now, watching one of the larger mutant rats gnawing on the decaying flesh of a zombie, its mouth stained with dark, congealed blood, everything clicked into place.

The absence of zombie hordes was not a sign of safety; it was a warning.

The mutant rats had claimed this territory for themselves, eliminating any competition for food and effectively driving the zombies away.

Duke's pulse quickened as he realized that their earlier path had been a mere prelude to the true danger lurking ahead.

The rats were not just a nuisance; they were apex predators in this new, twisted ecosystem, and they were hungry for more than just rotting flesh.

They were hunting for fresh prey, and Duke and his team were now squarely in their sights.

Duke contemplated the unnerving scene before him, piecing together the implications of the mutated rats' presence.

It seemed clear that these creatures had emerged from the sewers in search of new dietary options, driven by an insatiable hunger.

They resorted to consuming the zombies roaming their territory only when no other prey was available.

Although he lacked concrete evidence to support his theory, it felt like the most logical explanation for the situation unfolding around him.

Reflecting on his previous arrival with Kisha in City B, he recalled their journey through the most secluded areas, where they had successfully avoided unnecessary encounters with a horde of zombies.

This time, however, he had intentionally chosen routes closer to their designated location, opting for paths that were supposed to be safer due to a lower number of zombies.

Yet, even now, they had only encountered a few hundred of the undead.

While he was relieved that their reconnaissance had been relatively smooth, it nagged at him that City B, a bustling big city that once boasted a population in the millions, felt eerily desolate.

Given the size of the city and the density of its former inhabitants, the current scarcity of zombies didn't add up.

Even after the recent zombie raid, which had not significantly thinned their numbers, it was puzzling that this portion of the city appeared so abandoned.

Duke's instincts told him that the mutant rats were likely responsible for this unsettling shift in the city's ecosystem, claiming territory and asserting dominance over the food chain.

The unsettling thought gnawed at him: what would happen if these rats continued to grow in number and boldness?

Would they turn their ravenous hunger on the living next?

Or are they already hunting human survivors that's why they came out of the sewers?

With every passing moment, Duke understood the gravity of the situation.

The presence of these mutated rats was not just an anomaly; it signified a shift in the balance of power within the city.

They weren't merely scavengers; they were predators, and his team was standing on the precipice of danger.

Duke observed closely as the mutated rats appeared to hesitate, seemingly taking a step back.

His team let out a collective sigh of relief, but Duke's instincts tingled with unease, darkening his expression.

"Prepare for battle!" he shouted, his voice cutting through the tension like a knife.

In that instant, the warriors realized the truth: the rats weren't retreating; they were merely regrouping, preparing to launch their attack.

As soon as the words left Duke's mouth, the air crackled with a sudden energy, and the mutated rats sprang forward, a frenzied wave of fur and teeth.

Duke acted swiftly. He conjured an ice wall that encased himself and his team, forming a shimmering barrier against the onslaught.

His companions, having learned from past encounters, instinctively summoned their own defenses. Earth walls erupted from the ground, encircling the group in a sturdy fortification.

"Now!" Duke commanded, channeling his energy.

With a flick of his wrist, he called forth his Fire Meteor.

The sky darkened as flames ignited, and fiery projectiles rained down upon the encroaching horde of mutated rats.

The sight was both awe-inspiring and terrifying, a tempest of heat and destruction aimed at their foes.

The mutated rats, momentarily stunned by the display of power, began to scatter.

Some turned to flee, sensing their impending doom.

But Duke's fire meteors had already encircled them, casting a deadly net of flames that fell in random directions, igniting anything in their path.

Screeches of panic erupted from the rats as the first meteor struck the ground, sending shockwaves through their ranks.

The heat radiated outward, causing the air to shimmer.

Duke's heart turned cold as he maintained focus, directing the meteors with precision, ensuring that no rat would escape unscathed.

His team watched in awe, adrenaline surging through their veins, as the mutated rats, once a formidable threat, were reduced to chaos and confusion.

In that moment, Duke knew they had turned the tide; they were not merely surviving this encounter but fighting back with ferocity and determination.

The battlefield had transformed, and they would not be victims today.

Despite the chaos and destruction wrought by Duke's fire meteors, a resilient group of mutated rats remained, their instincts ignited by the loss of their companions.

With an unsettling determination, the surviving rats surged forward, as if throwing caution—and their very lives—into the winds.

They lunged at the ice and earth walls protecting Duke and his team, their sharp claws raking against the surfaces while their teeth gnawed desperately, trying to breach the barriers and reach their prey.

Duke could feel the mounting pressure.

He refused to allow the rats to overwhelm his defenses.

With a swift and focused motion, he activated his ice ability, channeling his energy.

The ground trembled as he summoned numerous ice spikes that erupted from the earth, towering over the advancing rats like jagged teeth of a great beast.

The spikes shot up with astonishing speed, piercing through the air as they emerged from the ground, catching many of the rats off guard.

The icy formations glistened menacingly in the dim light, casting eerie shadows as they impaled their targets.

The remaining rats screeched in terror and confusion, their frenzy momentarily halted by the sudden onslaught of ice.

The once-chaotic battlefield was now a testament to his power and his team wasn't even able to lift a finger to help him.

The mutated rats, disoriented and panicked, found themselves trapped in a deadly trap of ice and earth, struggling against the elements that sought to claim them.

"Push forward!" Duke commanded, invigorated by the sight of their enemy faltering.

"We can't let any of them escape!" With renewed determination, he summoned more ice spikes, his mind racing with strategies as he directed his team to prepare for the next wave of attacks.

Duke's eyes flickered with resolve.

They had the advantage now, and he intended to make every moment count.