

Apocalypse 431

Chapter 431 A Way Out

Duke understood that whatever mutation these rats had undergone, it had amplified their ability to breed and grow in numbers at an astonishing rate.

In less than half a month, the situation had shifted from a manageable nuisance to an uncontrollable horde.

But right now, Duke couldn't afford to focus on the mutated rats' alarming reproduction rate.

What demanded his immediate attention was survival—how to escape the relentless pursuit of the mutant rat's horde closing in on them.

If he and his team couldn't outmaneuver the swarm on their heels, there would be no future plans to consider.

The rats were faster than they appeared, and if even one of them fell behind, they'd be dead within seconds.

These creatures weren't just predators; they were ravenous.

A single slip-up, and the rats would devour their prey so quickly that there wouldn't be enough left to bury.

Duke knew that every second counted, and unless they could escape, they'd become nothing more than a meal for these monsters.

Survival now was the only path to ensuring he'd get a chance to eradicate these pests once and for all.

But first, they had to live through the next few minutes.

"Run faster!" Duke urged the warriors ahead of him, his voice sharp with urgency.

The group strained to comply, their faces flushed red, veins bulging in their necks as they pushed their bodies to the limit.

They were already giving everything they had, but Duke, in his haste, seemed to forget one crucial detail: these warriors were still at level 0, far behind him in strength and endurance, much more agility.

There was a massive gap in their stats.

While Duke was pacing himself, aware that he could push harder if needed, he had been holding back to protect the rear, ensuring no one was left behind.

To him, this was a controlled effort. But for the warriors, every step was agony—they were running at their absolute limit, lungs burning and muscles screaming for relief.

Duke's call to run faster hit them like a punch to the gut, a stinging reminder of their limitations.

They knew they couldn't keep up with him, but they also knew that falling behind wasn't an option.

The mutated rats were closing in, and if they slowed down for even a moment, their fate would be sealed.

Even then, no one uttered a word of complaint.

Instead, they gritted their teeth and pushed themselves harder, climbing the stairs with relentless determination, never daring to look back.

When they finally reached the fifth floor, they paused only long enough for Duke to catch up before hastily erecting an earth wall at the stairwell.

But they all knew it was a temporary solution at best—the wall wouldn't hold for long before the mutated rats tore through it.

Duke scanned the rooftop, assessing their next move.

His eyes locked onto the opposite building across the alley.

There was only a few meters of distance separating the two rooftops, and without missing a beat, he sprinted to the edge.

The warriors exchanged uneasy glances, understanding immediately what Duke was thinking.

But while Duke stood there with a calm, calculating expression, the others paled at the realization.

It wasn't that far, just a few meters, but for them, it might as well have been a chasm.

They knew they couldn't make that jump.

The only solution was to build a bridge.

But that posed another problem—the earth bridge they could create, even if they all pooled their strength, would be thin and fragile, only able to hold a few individuals at a time.

And to make it strong enough to support them all would take time, time they didn't have.

As they felt the rumble of the mutated rats hammering at the earth wall behind them, panic began to set in.

The clock was ticking, and every second counted.

Bang!

Bang!

To make matters worse, a loud rumbling and frantic banging came from the rooftop door.

The sound was unmistakable—the mutated rats inside the building had already reached the fifth floor.

Without waiting for Duke's orders, two earth-type ability users sprang into action, immediately raising another earth wall in front of the door to buy them precious time.

This time, Duke also realized that the warriors in his team were all just level 0's and they didn't have the stats or strength to make the leap to the neighboring building.

He could make it easily, but the others?

They wouldn't even come close. If they tried, they'd likely plummet from the fifth floor straight down to the streets below.

Even if the fall didn't kill them, it would leave them vulnerable, helpless targets for the mutated rats swarming the ground.

Those who fell wouldn't have the chance to get back on their feet—the rats would be on them in seconds, tearing them apart before they even had time to scream.

The clock was ticking, the rats battering against both their earth walls, and he knew they needed a plan fast.

The warriors had done all they could to fortify their position, but the walls wouldn't hold much longer. Every moment they delayed, the more certain their doom became.

Duke quickly gestured for half of the earth-type ability users to start conjuring the earth bridge.

He recalled how Vulture had done the same when he and his family were fleeing from the Coltons, so he knew it was possible, even at their current level.

The plan was simple: they would create the bridge, and Duke would use his ice ability to fortify it, making it strong enough for more people to cross safely.

He gave them a tight deadline—just five minutes to finish building the bridge.

It was an immense amount of pressure, but there was no time for hesitation.

Everyone nodded in grim understanding. The mutated rats weren't going to give them the luxury of waiting.

Determination set in as the earth ability users immediately set to work, hands moving in unison, channeling their powers to shape the earth and extend it across the gap.

Meanwhile, the rest of the team formed a perimeter, scanning the rooftop for any sign of the mutated rats finding another route.

They knew these creatures were cunning and relentless—if the rats started scaling the walls or pouring out of vents, it would be over.

Eyes darted nervously between their surroundings, each warrior bracing for the worst.

Duke, along with a few other warriors, turned their focus to the emergency staircase.

Mutated rats were already climbing, their sharp claws scraping the metal as they ascended.

Without hesitation, Duke unleashed a barrage of ice projectiles, while his comrades fired earth projectiles to slow the swarm.

Every second bought was precious.

At the same time, the remaining earth-type users reinforced the barricade at the rooftop door.

The mutated rats were hammering at it furiously, the walls shuddering with each impact.

The warriors holding the line knew it was only a matter of time before it gave way, but they couldn't afford to let that happen—not before the bridge was complete.

The air was thick with tension. Everyone was racing against the clock, and the sound of claws scraping and walls trembling only added to the pressure.

Duke could feel everyone's nervousness and fear thick in the air, but he remained focused, knowing that failure wasn't an option.

If the bridge wasn't finished in time, they wouldn't make it out alive.