

Apocalypse 44

Chapter 44 Disguise

After quelling the storm of emotions provoked by the recent events, Kisha diverted her gaze from Duke as they journeyed along a smoother stretch of road, having exited the mountainous terrain.

Now navigating the highway, they had shaved off 8 hours by cutting through the mountains instead of following the circuitous route along the highway.

"We should take a break," Kisha suggested, her gaze fixed on the seemingly endless highway strewn with abandoned vehicles ahead.

"Alright. Sparrow, locate a secure spot for us to rest," Duke commanded, his demeanor betraying little emotion.

"Consider it done, boss," Sparrow replied promptly. His need for rest was palpable; the strain of relentlessly maneuvering through a zombie-infested road had taken its toll. With arms threatening to surrender and a leaden foot from the constant pressure on the pedal of the manual car, a break was not only necessary but urgent.

Within a mere 500 meters, a gas station came into view. Sparrow skillfully drove the car to a halt at one of the fuel pumps. "Vulture, could you please check if there's any gas left and refuel the car? If you stumble upon any spare containers, fill them up as well. We'll pass them to Kisha later," Sparrow instructed.

Sparrow swiftly exited the car, unsheathing his dagger in a fluid motion. With only a few steps taken, a zombie lunged towards him. "Eager to die, aren't we?" Sparrow remarked casually as if making light of the situation.

In truth, their location was swarming with over a dozen zombies, with more approaching rapidly. Sparrow's movements were swift and precise as he dispatched each one with a well-aimed thrust to the head with his dagger, ensuring their demise with a deft twist of the blade to confirm that they were dead, a double dead kind of dead.

His precision and agility enabled him to maneuver seamlessly through the throng of stiff, undead bodies, clearing a path with remarkable ease.

The increasing mastery of his wind ability added to the mix, making him look like he was playing in the midst of the flesh-eating zombies.

Meanwhile, Vulture had mastered the technique of conjuring earth spikes. With precision, he summoned a single spike that could impale a zombie, ensuring a swift death. "Quality over quantity," he murmured, driving his dagger into the nearest zombie with lethal accuracy.

Outside, Sparrow and Vulture were fully occupied, exterminating any zombies that crossed their path. The scene grew increasingly chaotic and grim, with black blood spattering through the air and coating the ground, accompanied by the nauseating stench of decay. Inside the safety of the car, Kisha and Duke patiently waited for their companions to complete their task.

The atmosphere was thick with an awkward silence, a stark difference from the usual tranquility they feel around each other like of the night. Duke found himself struggling with the tension, his throat growing dry as he cleared it nervously. Keeping his gaze fixed outside, he attempted to distract himself from the lingering warmth of Kisha and the lingering fragrance that enveloped him.

Despite his efforts to push the thoughts away, her presence lingered vividly in his mind, refusing to be erased.

He tried counting sheep while his eyes were tightly closed but from time to time, Kisha's image would suddenly flash in his mind, disrupting his slowly calming mind so he would have to go back to square one.

He lost track of time while dealing with his inner turmoil until Sparrow called out to him. "Boss, the gas station has been cleared, and Miss Aldens is resting inside the store. Why don't you take a nap too before we continue our journey?"

"Alright, I'll take a quick nap. You guys better rest too," Duke replied wearily. As he trudged towards the store, a nervous knot twisted in his stomach. Kisha was already resting inside, and he couldn't shake the uncertainty of facing her. He cursed his lack of control over his impulses, his lower half seemingly acting on its own accord.

His initial nervousness morphed into frustration upon reaching the store and finding Kisha resting so peacefully, without a trace of worry on her face. He felt like a silly child, fretting over nothing. After a few deep breaths to calm himself, he settled down near Kisha, ready to spring into action if needed.

Unbeknownst to Duke, Kisha and 008 had been conversing about the recent events. 008 playfully teased Kisha until she reached her limit and jokingly threatened not to upgrade him for a few days. 008 relented and refrained from further jests, realizing Kisha's discomfort. In truth, Kisha was just as uncertain as Duke about how to navigate their evolving relationship.

This was uncharted territory for her, and she found herself drawn to Duke in ways she hadn't anticipated. Despite her initial reservations, she discovered herself growing fond of him with each passing moment.

She unknowingly fallen asleep as she's having her inner debate about things.

The four of them took turns resting for a maximum of four hours before they prepared to continue on their way.

As they were about to step outside, Kisha interrupted with a firm "Wait." She then retrieved a large suitcase from her inventory and motioned for the others to find chairs. Puzzled by Kisha's actions, the three of them complied and found chairs to sit on. Though curious, they remained silent, waiting for Kisha to explain her intentions.

Rather than providing an explanation, Kisha opened the suitcase to reveal an assortment of makeup and prosthetic elf ears, long noses, and other items. The three of them were not just baffled but also intrigued by her sudden actions.

Unsure of her intentions, they looked at each other for confirmation, they had allies skilled in disguise among them so they are somehow familiar with what's inside the suitcase. With silent agreement, they allowed Kisha to alter their appearances as she saw fit.

Kisha spent a whopping 30 minutes on each person, because they had to wait for a little for the artificial skin to dry before she could cover it with waterproof foundation and makeup. She did not allow them to look at each other's faces yet and let them dry their faces with mini fans while she takes care of her own disguise.

In 2 hours, their disguise are complete and they changed into baggy worn clothes too. And when they had the chance to finally see each other's faces. The three was beyond shock.

"Who are you?!" Vulture exclaimed as he pointed at Sparrow who has a big open wound on his left cheek that seems to scratched the surface of a sand paper. It was a disturbing sight, as Sparrow not only appeared unrecognizable but also seemed pitifully worn out, clearly affected by stress. Even his hair seemed to be losing its vitality.

"Vulture?! This disguise is both pitiful and eerie." He observed Vulture's appearance, noting the numerous black bruises that adorned his face, he looked like a panda,. With scratches resembling those caused by asphalt, and traces of blood mingled with small stones still embedded in the wounds.

Now that they knew who they were facing, they all turned their gaze to the tall Duke. His missing eye looked like it was dug out and it incredibly looked real, and every inch of his face bore scratches and bruises. The overall makeup was surreal, making him appear as though he'd endured the trials of life and death, emerging from the depths of hell itself.

Despite looking pitiful, as if Kisha had intended to make him suffer, he also exuded a menacing aura, reminiscent of a demon ready to consume you whole.

Kisha bore a large cut from her right eye down to her left cheek, crudely sewn together with thick black thread. Like Duke, she appeared both pitiful and terrifying. If one didn't know them, they might assume they had a field trip through hell and back before returning.

"Are we going for a trick or treat? This will definitely scare a lot of people and we'll win the best costume awards," Sparrow joked awkwardly.

"Miss Aldens, why can't we disguise to look like different people and appear normal? Like those who do missions, they definitely don't look anything like this," Vulture honestly asked, clearly unnerved by his own appearance.

Kisha sighed and explained, "If we go out looking as we usually do, we'll attract unnecessary attention and increase our enemies' chances of finding us before we complete our mission. It's because we appear unharmed and clean that others will try to target us. In this chaotic world, no one emerges unscathed when they flee. So, our current appearance is what normal people look like out there.

Besides, Duke is so good-looking with a great figure that he'd surely attract a lot of attention in a crowded place. So, I had to add more wounds to make him appear as he does now."

Hearing her explanation made Duke break into a happy smile, as if he could taste the sweetness of honey in his mouth. The two nodded in agreement. "So that's why you two look more pitifully scary than us." But after saying that, Vulture came to a realization that they were not as handsome as their boss.

He looked at Sparrow and felt relieved that he had more scars on his face, meaning he was a little more handsome than Sparrow.