

## **Apocalypse 451**

### Chapter 451 Endless Tide

Half an hour had passed without any sign of movement from the other side, and he began to second-guess himself.

Was he truly in danger, or was he merely imagining shadows in the darkness?

The lack of immediate threat made him feel unsure; it was unnerving to be on edge when the enemy remained unseen.

He took a deep breath, grounding himself in the present.

Doubt was a dangerous companion in times like this.

Instead of succumbing to it, he reminded himself of the facts: they had encountered too many organized attacks lately to ignore the possibility of an evolved zombie lurking nearby.

Duke forced his focus back to his team, watching their faces as they remained vigilant, ready for any sign of danger.

Their trust in him gave him strength. They needed a plan, and he was determined to formulate one that would keep them alive, whether that meant confronting the threat head-on or finding a way to slip past it unnoticed.

Whatever lay ahead, he was prepared to face it.

That's what he thought when he resolved to protect his people.

But just as his determination solidified, who could have predicted another wave of zombies would surge toward them?

This time, it wasn't just a few hundred—it was a full-on small-scale zombie raid that took them completely by surprise.

"Fall back! Get to safer ground!" Duke commanded, his voice cutting through the chaos.

He conjured another round of ice spears, each one as long as his own spear.

With a force like a ballista, the spears shot forward, pinning two or three zombies to the walls at once.

But it still wasn't enough—it felt like trying to fend off a hornet swarm with a needle.

Despite his relentless efforts, their numbers barely seemed to dwindle.

"Sir, there's nowhere left to fall back to!" one of his warriors shouted, hacking his way through the encircling zombies.

"And there's no end to them!" another called out, as more undead flooded in from every street around them.

For each one they managed to take down, two more took its place, surging forward in an endless tide.

Duke scanned their surroundings desperately, searching for any possible escape route.

If he were alone, he could slip away—but leaving his team behind wasn't an option.

"Rotate positions every two minutes!" he commanded, voice steady despite the chaos.

"Don't exhaust yourself before switching out with the person behind you! And if your spiritual energy and stamina are still low after resting and you're hitting your limit, use the stamina booster and the vial of black liquid!"

"Yes sir!"

"Roger sir!"

"We will!"

A unified shout of agreement filled the air, their voices steadying each other amidst the chaos.

A shiver ran through them—not from fear, but from the surge of determination and resolve to survive.

Knowing they wouldn't turn into zombies if bitten gave them an edge, replacing fear with a focused drive to fight their way out.

They fought their way through, conjuring earth spikes from the ground with a speed they hadn't realized they'd gained.

Between dagger strikes and earth spikes, they didn't notice their abilities had sharpened under pressure.

When their spiritual energy dropped to half within two minutes, they rotated out, letting the next line step in to hold the front.

But even while resting at the back, they stayed vigilant, covering blind spots and ensuring no attack came from behind.

Their teamwork flowed seamlessly, a synchronized effort driven by survival and an unspoken trust in their team.

They formed a tight circle, each warrior covering a direction to ensure no side was left unguarded.

Meanwhile, Duke fought with brutal precision on his own, smashing zombie heads into the ground with his fists.

One kick from him fractured skulls, shattering them from the sheer force—his enhanced stats delivering blows akin to a small cannon.

Yet, even with his power, the zombies pressed close, surrounding him within arm's reach.

He itched to pull his spear from his Space Ring but hesitated, mindful of staying visible to his warriors, worried that they might see him taking out the spear from out of thin air.

Though they were in peril, Duke held back, knowing that revealing his Space Ring would risk exposing Kisha and possibly endanger her.

Despite his instincts urging him to wield his spear, he forced himself to fight barehanded. Fortunately, he still had a dagger, which would have to suffice for now.

Duke spun around after delivering a powerful kick to one zombie, swiftly gripping another by the head with one hand while driving his dagger into the skull of a third zombie nearby.

In just sixty milliseconds, he crushed the skull of the zombie in his grasp and then pivoted sharply, unleashing a rapid series of kicks to clear a path around him.

While Duke engaged in hand-to-hand combat, he continued conjuring more ice spears even as he fired off the previous ones.

Above him, fire meteors rained down from the sky, providing essential support to both Duke and his warriors.

To conserve spiritual energy, Duke honed in on precision and efficiency, ensuring each attack was deliberate and used minimal energy.

He abandoned flashy maneuvers in favor of tactical strikes.

With greater stamina, he prioritized melee combat and utilized his awakened abilities as a support system for his warriors, who were clearly struggling to defend themselves.

Even Duke felt the strain of exhaustion after another half hour of relentless fighting, his mental stamina beginning to wane.

'Something is seriously off here,' he thought, scanning the area once more.

They were still encircled by an endless tide of zombies, and no matter how many he took down, the numbers only seemed to multiply.

He couldn't see any carcasses of the zombies he had defeated; there should have been enough to form a small mound by now, given that he was certain he had killed hundreds.

Those bodies should have created obstacles for the others, but there was nothing.

Duke's suspicions, which had nagged at him from the beginning, now crystallized into a chilling certainty: everything was an 'illusion'.

Yet, the fight felt painfully real. He could touch the zombies, and each of his strikes landed with a solid impact.

This dissonance left him doubting whether he was facing an elaborate illusion or a small-scale raid orchestrated by a higher-level zombie.

"Sir! We can't hold on much longer!" one of the warriors shouted, his voice raspy and strained as he conjured another earth spike while fighting off a zombie with his dagger.

Like Duke, they all felt the weight of exhaustion pressing down on them.

They had consumed so many stamina boosters and vials of black liquid that they could hardly keep track.

Now, the effects were taking their toll: sluggishness crept into their limbs, and a throbbing headache pulsed at their temples from the relentless cycle of draining their spiritual energy and body, only to replenish it again for the next fight.

Despite the pain, they clung to the hope that they could carve out a path to escape or eliminate every last zombie advancing on them.

Each of them understood the stakes, and though fatigue clawed at their resolve, the thought of survival drove them to push on.