

Apocalypse 457

Chapter 457 Their Coordinated Attack

Even Duke's Ice Spears and Fire Meteors struggled to make a dent, yet none of them were willing to relent.

The intensity of Duke's reaction and the gnawing sense of dread that clawed at the depths of their hearts made it clear: allowing this evolved zombie to break free from its cocoon would spell disaster. They understood that if it emerged, it could mean game over for them all.

Rose conjured dozens of Ice Crystal Spears, but this time, instead of focusing on size, she honed their strength and durability, carefully molding each one to maximize its offensive power.

She understood that bigger wasn't always better, so she concentrated on crafting each spear to its sharpest and sturdiest potential, even though this required more time and energy.

Despite the intense strain on his energy core, Duke concentrated on conjuring sturdier, more powerful Ice Spears, while continuously sending Fire Meteors at the cocoon.

His strategy was to keep the cocoon under relentless attack, forcing it to divert energy toward reinforcing its outer shell and healing damage instead of fully committing to the evolution inside.

By keeping the cocoon on the defensive, Duke hoped to delay the evolved zombie's transformation, buying his team precious time to weaken it.

The warriors continued their assault, hurling earth spikes repeatedly, even though they seemed ineffective against the cocoon.

Some resorted to throwing spikes by hand when their powers couldn't reach far enough, resulting in makeshift projectiles soaring through the air.

Despite the lack of visible impact, none of them were willing to relent, each determined to do whatever they could to contribute to the fight.

Duke caught Rose's attention and signaled to her with a series of hand gestures—a unique code the Winters had developed and taught to Rose and the others for situations just like this, when silent communication was crucial.

Understanding immediately, Rose nodded and focused on summoning a few more dozen Ice Crystal Spears, pouring nearly all her remaining energy into making them.

With a wave of her hand, Rose launched the dozens of Ice Crystal Spears in a single, focused barrage aimed directly at one spot on the cocoon—the head.

The projectiles struck with a series of dull, heavy impacts, each blow widening the initial crack she had created.

As the first dozen shattered on impact, Duke immediately followed up with his own Ice Spears, driving them into the opening and deepening the hole Rose created through her attack.

Inside the cocoon, the evolved zombie was helpless to move or retaliate, limited to healing the damaged area while its illusionary zombie army surged forward, trying to distract Duke and the others from attacking it

This time, however, the team adjusted their approach.

The warriors concentrated on fending off the illusionary army, keeping them at bay and giving Rose and Duke a clear path to continue their relentless assault on the cocoon.

With their coordinated efforts, they prevented the cocoon from healing fully, keeping the pressure on and weakening the evolved zombie's defenses.

Meanwhile, Rose released a second wave of Ice Crystal Spears aimed precisely at the same weakened spot she had been targeting.

Duke's Ice Spears followed closely behind, driving deeper into the breach with each strike.

It became clear that Rose was deliberately creating an opening for Duke's attacks to land with maximum impact—and they weren't trying to hide this strategy anymore.

Sensing their intent, the illusionary army of zombies pressed forward with renewed urgency, attempting to disrupt Rose and Duke's attacks, even though they couldn't inflict real harm.

Their purpose was clear: to distract and break the rhythm of Rose and Duke's assault on the cocoon.

Yet, with the team's intense focus and coordination, they managed to maintain their momentum, each strike chipping away at the cocoon's defenses bit by bit.

Duke and Rose relentlessly continued their assault until they had carved a five-inch-deep hole into the cocoon, revealing a glimpse of the evolved zombie resting within.

Its oversized head was pulsating with a strange rhythm, as if feeding on energy—but the open hole was already starting to close within seconds they stopped their attacks.

Without hesitation, they knew they had only seconds to strike before the cocoon could fully regenerate.

Duke gritted his teeth, unable to conjure any more Ice Spears as the pain in his head became unbearable.

He downed another vial of black liquid, but instead of relief, the pain intensified, spreading through his energy core like it was fracturing under the strain.

Waves of nausea washed over him, and the throbbing in his head reached an agonizing peak.

With a heavy thud, he fell to his knees, clutching his spear to keep himself upright.

Gritting his teeth, he tried to push himself back to his feet, refusing to let the pain stop him from fighting.

Rose unleashed her third wave of Ice Crystal Spears while drinking the vial of black liquid to replenish her spiritual energy, her gaze flicking toward Duke, who had signaled his next move.

Duke's plan was for her to create a direct opening for him to launch his Kratos' Spear.

He could have thrown it earlier, but seeing how little damage even Rose's Ice Crystal Spears had managed, he hesitated.

He wasn't sure if his spear alone could penetrate the cocoon's tough defenses and reach the evolved zombie within—he didn't yet fully understand the limits of his spear's power, and didn't want to risk wasting his best shot without a clear path.

If Duke threw the Kratos' Spear relying on its "Pierce" effect to break through the cocoon, it was only a 50% chance that the effect would trigger a critical strike.

There was no guarantee it would work, and he couldn't risk everything on one throw without a clear advantage.

If he failed, the cocoon might strengthen its defenses even further—or worse, it might call for reinforcements, summoning a swarm of real zombies to defend it.

The cocoon couldn't move, but it was likely still capable of sending a distress signal to nearby undead.

Weighing all these possibilities, Duke knew he had to play it safe and wait until there was a clear path.

Now, with Rose creating a focused opening, he finally had the opportunity he'd been waiting for.

But now, his body was on the verge of giving out.

Duke gripped his spear tightly, forcing himself to stand once more.

He couldn't let Rose carry the entire burden of the attack; eventually, she would reach her limit and have to stop for any number of reasons.

He struggled to rise but faltered, his strength waning.

The open hole in the cocoon was slowly closing, and he clenched his jaw in frustration, aware that his body had reached its breaking point.

The explosion of spiritual energy he had unleashed earlier had taken a toll, causing significant internal damage—including to his energy core.

Distant Roars and marching...

Grahhh!

Roarrrr!

Marching.....

As he had feared, not far from their position, the unmistakable sounds of hurried marching filled the air, accompanied by the deafening roars and growls of incoming zombies from all directions.

They hadn't heard the evolved zombie call for help, but Duke realized that it didn't need to make an audible distress signal; it could have transmitted a brainwave signal that only other zombies could detect.

Their situation had become increasingly dire, and Duke's body was betraying him, refusing to respond to his commands.

Weighed down by an overwhelming heaviness, his limbs trembled uncontrollably, making it an effort just to grip his spear.

It felt as though his entire body was preparing to shut down in an instinctive response to protect him from the brink of death due to the immense strain on his energy core.

He was teetering on the edge of survival mode, where his body would prioritize preserving its functions and healing itself—especially his energy core, which felt like it could explode at any moment.

Duke's vision began to blur and flicker, and a deafening ringing filled his ears.

Rose and the other warriors quickly noticed his deteriorating condition, their expressions darkening as they realized the gravity of the situation. They could only curse under their breath, fully aware that they were in deep shit as the marching sound came closer to their location.

Swoosh!

Then, a splatter of blood, and the sound of almost like something exploded before the blood hit the floor, everyone was momentarily taken aback by the series of events that took place that was outside of the plan.

Even the sound of marching abruptly ceased, leaving an eerie silence that felt almost surreal.

Perhaps it was their minds refusing to process what had just happened and so, they could no longer hear anything around them, aside from one thing, as the sickening sound of flesh exploding and blood splattering echoed nearby.

A heavy thud resonated through the air, the sound piercing the silence like a gunshot, as Duke's body collapsed to the ground, still clutching his spear.

They could only watch in stunned disbelief, their mouths opening and closing like fish gasping for air, but no words came.

The shock rendered them speechless, paralyzed by the reality of what they had just witnessed.

They all turned to Duke, their eyes wide and rimmed with red, struggling to comprehend the chaos unfolding around them.

But who would answer them? After all, Duke has already...