

## **Apocalypse 459**

### Chapter 459 What Really Happened

Louder sobs reverberated through the building as they began to reflect on their failures.

One by one, they crouched around the room, overwhelmed by their emotions.

Even Rose, who had been striving to maintain her composure, succumbed to her grief and sank to the ground, unable to meet Duke's motionless body.

The memory of flesh exploding and blood spraying across the street haunted them, and they simply couldn't bring themselves to look, knowing all too well what that meant.

They could only imagine the horrific reality—someone had lost their life, and it was a burden they could not escape.

They remembered Kisha's warning about the dangers of overusing spiritual energy; depleting it could lead to catastrophic consequences, including the explosion of one's energy core, which means, their brain exploding.

They understood that having too much spiritual energy spiraling out of control could result in the same fate.

With these cautionary reminders echoing in their minds, they could piece together what had happened to Duke.

The sheer amount of energy he had expended to create that shockwave indicated that he had pushed himself to the brink, sacrificing his energy reserves to unleash explosive power against the small-scale zombie raid in order to protect everyone else.

After using the vial of black liquid, they understood its effects on the body.

Some of them had witnessed Duke taking it, so it wasn't hard to piece together how things had unfolded.

Among them, Rose felt the most guilt.

She had believed that Kisha sent her to help Duke, to ease his burden as he completed his mission.

Now, however, she felt like she had failed both Kisha and Duke.

Overwhelmed by shame, she couldn't bring herself to look at him, terrified of seeing the consequences of the explosion that had destroyed his energy core.

"Hu hu hu.."

Sob...

Sob...

"Ugh!"

A chorus of sobs filled the air, drowning out all other sounds, including the grunts of those around them.

No one paid attention to one another; they were lost in their own self-reproach and disdain.

"Hiss... Why is everyone crying? Ugh."

"What else?! Mourning for the death of the Vice City Lords. Hu hu hu..."

Duke, just awakening with a splitting headache and aching body, choked on the words he heard.

Still hissing in pain, he struggled to prop himself up.

Even before he opened his eyes, he was met with the sounds of sobbing and crying.

Fear gripped him as he forced his eyes open, worried that they had lost too many warriors while he had been incapacitated, unable to complete his mission.

He had no idea what their situation was or what had happened with the evolved zombie that was going through another evolution.

So many questions swirled in his mind, but first, he needed to stop everyone from crying.

The sound of their sobs echoing through the building only intensified his headache, making his throbbing energy core feel like it was on the verge of exploding.

His body still ached from the strain of his spiritual energy running wild, a sensation similar to how Kisha's two conflicting energies had once clashed within her.

But this time, it felt different—a torrent more violent, like a lake suddenly hit by an intense drought, drying up as life withered without water, only to be followed by a flash flood that broke through every dam meant to regulate its flow.

His veins, channels for the energy, burst in places under the overwhelming surge, struggling to make way.

Meanwhile, his energy core—the main source of his power—had nearly fractured from the sudden, uncontrollable influx, teetering on the edge of explosion.

He had come dangerously close to losing control and ending his own life.

Fortunately, he remembered the time he'd seen Kisha manage her conflicting energies within her body—a moment that offered him just enough inspiration.

Drawing on her example, he was able to stabilize his energy core, deflecting the impending explosion and averting death.

Even without checking his condition, his subordinates had already assumed the worst and were now mourning his death.

"Very well!" Duke growled through gritted teeth.

"So, you really want to send me to my death, huh?" His indifferent, cold expression hardened further, casting an icy chill over the entire room.

The shift was so unsettling that everyone felt a shiver down their spine, as if they'd been plunged into freezing water.

But even more than the fear, there was something hauntingly familiar about the voice.

One by one, they stopped crying, turning slowly toward the sound like rusty metal doors, mouths slightly agape, eyes wide in disbelief.

"V-Vice City Lord?! Y-you didn't turn into a vengeful ghost, did you?!" Rose stammered, pointing at Duke.

He sat there, eyes bloodshot, his body covered in blood—looking as if he had crawled from the grave like a vengeful spirit.

His blood-smeared face and menacing glare sent a collective gasp through the room, a chill creeping up everyone's spine as they instinctively took a step back.

If supernatural powers could exist, then perhaps ghosts and demons could too.

A mix of disbelief and fear gnawed at their cores as they wondered if Duke had truly crossed into something otherworldly.

"Oh? I didn't realize I was so hated that you'd be praying for my demise..." Duke said slowly, one eyebrow arching.

His voice held an unsettling mix of amusement and menacing threat, making them regret even considering such words in his presence.

But right now, everyone was too disoriented to respond—they'd all clearly heard an explosion and seen blood spraying through the air, leaving them bewildered and unsure of what had really happened.

One of them, sensing Duke's growing anger and driven by a strong survival instinct, tried to deflect his fury.

"V-Vice City Lord, if it wasn't you who... died from a brain explosion, then who did?" But his question only made things worse.

"You tell me," Duke replied with a smirk, his eyes as dark as the abyss.

As if on cue, a loud buzzing sound filled the air.

"Ah! That sound again!" one of the warriors exclaimed, recalling hearing it outside.

"Did something follow us here?!" he added, as they all instinctively dropped into defensive stances.

The buzzing grew louder, pulsing with a strange, almost eager intensity as it circled the room.

"Stand down," Duke commanded, taking a deep breath to steady himself.

Then, seemingly out of nowhere, a massive Queen Bee appeared, startling everyone.

"Bell?!" Duke said, incredulous. He had requested assistance from Kisha to allow him to borrow some of the Scarlet Bees, but he never expected Kisha to send Bell.

Bell was essential back at the base, overseeing scouting missions, reporting to Kisha, managing the walls, and coordinating Scarlet Honey production.

In truth, Bell hadn't been sent by Kisha.

While busy with its duties along the wall, Bell had sensed a distress signal from a distant Scarlet Bee.

However, the signal was too far beyond its control for Bell to decipher its meaning; it felt more like a dying call for help.

Without hesitation, Bell abandoned its post and darted toward the source of the signal, neglecting to inform Kisha.

That's why she was unaware that Bell had left its station.

When Bell finally arrived at the location of the signal, darkness had already fallen.

It found Duke on his knees, witnessing a small-scale zombie raid approaching, as Bell flew past the marching undead.