

Apocalypse 47

Chapter 47 Sharing Supplies

As the sun rose, everyone awoke feeling refreshed and well-rested. While most had experienced nightmares and restless sleep, Kisha and Duke slept soundly for the first time in ages, particularly Duke. He had never experienced such a peaceful night's sleep without any dreams. It felt as though he had simply closed his eyes, only to awaken to the morning light.

Brimming with energy, they both did a few stretches to ease their stiff muscles.

"How do you think we should proceed from here?" Fred asked as he walked towards them, feeling noticeably better after a good night's sleep.

"It would be ideal if we could find transportation for all these people," Kisha suggested, scanning their surroundings.

"But navigating through this highway filled with abandoned cars would pose a challenge," Fred remarked somberly.

"We can clear a path for you; we just need to find a larger vehicle for everyone," Kisha offered. She couldn't afford to travel leisurely with them, which is why she suggested opening the path, as that was their intended course of action anyway.

"Do you really think it's possible?" Fred asked, his tone laced with skepticism. His team had also been traveling in a S.W.A.T. truck, considered an armored vehicle, yet they had still encountered difficulties. The truck had gotten stuck, resulting in the loss of many comrades who were cornered.

Fred didn't want to dampen their spirits, but he knew from experience that navigating through a highway full of cars wouldn't be as straightforward as they imagined. "I don't think it'll work out that easily," he added cautiously.

"I know it will not, but it's still better to give it a shot, besides, we are nothing but sitting ducks in the open with many non-combatants here." Kisha gave a cursory look at everyone's battered and defeated look everyone had.

"This is our best bet to keep everyone safe because if we dilly dally here, more people will die from attacks that can possibly come from any corner of the highway, and when that happens, we'll truly be stuck." Kisha shared her thoughts, she's lived most of her life in a repetitive cycle of her rebirth and experienced all kinds of death that's why she has learned that decisiveness and making sure that she's a few steps ahead of the enemy works best.

If she could take a hundred steps ahead better, but if not, she should at least have a backup plan.

Fred's intuition strongly urged him to stick close to Kisha at all costs if he wanted to stay alive. Although he couldn't pinpoint any logical basis for his gut feeling, it had served as his guiding force, his silent protector, throughout his journey. It was the unseen hand that had guided him through countless dangers, and he trusted it implicitly, this is the reason he has survived this long.

With a resolute nod, Fred conveyed their discussion to the group. Despite the fact that many among them hadn't fully grasped how the plan would work, their unwavering trust in him was evident. This deepened Fred's resolve to safeguard everyone to the best of his ability, instilling in him a sense of duty and determination to rise to the occasion.

Before Kisha and the others could take a single step forward, a bulky man in his mid-50s stepped forward and stood in front of Kisha. "Before we head out, how about we eat something first?" he suggested, his gaze shifting between Kisha and her companions.

Implying that they should share more food just like last night, Kisha couldn't help but sneer. She was all too familiar with these kinds of people—give them an inch, and they'll take a mile.

Fred stepped forward to take charge of the situation. "Why don't we search for food along the way? Let's endure for a bit until we find something to eat."

"But we are already so old, we won't be able to last long if we don't eat," he lamented, casting a worried glance at the others, silently rallying them to support his cause. He emphasized that it wasn't just for his own well-being but for everyone.

"But we don't have anything now. We've used up all the supplies we gathered on the way here," Fred explained. In fact, none of them carried anything with them aside from the occasional stroke of luck when they found food in deserted shops and such.

"Since we'll be looking for food on the way anyways, why not borrow their supplies first then we can just pay it back after?" The man pointed at Hera and the others, he was eyeing the bulky bags they had behind them.

"Uncle, we can't do that. They already provided for us last night. You know how risky it is to search for supplies out there..." The woman with the baby interjected. She was grateful to Kisha and her companions for sharing their food the previous night, but she was also concerned about offending them.

She had witnessed firsthand how swiftly individuals could transform amidst the loosening grip of law and order amid chaos. She harbored no desire to engage in conflicts, particularly with those who had shown her kindness. Even as others succumbed to immorality, she was determined not to follow suit.

She was keenly aware of the old man's intentions to exploit Kisha's group. Having observed him consistently positioning himself in the safest spots and showing no hesitation to use others as shields. On multiple occasions, she had nearly fallen victim to his schemes, only for him to dismiss them as accidents caused by the chaos or other convenient excuses.

"Look, if you're content to starve, that's your choice, but don't assume to speak for all of us. I've been pushing myself to the brink, walking despite my joints protesting and hunger gnawing at me. If there's a chance for us to eat and make it through another day, why wouldn't I want that? Huh?" His words and expression seemed sincere like an old man trying to reason with genuine concern.

Yet, the subtle flex of his arm muscles betrayed an underlying aggression.

Observing the exchange, Kisha couldn't suppress a soft scoff. She was all too familiar with hypocrites like him, scattered throughout that group and beyond.

"As an elder, my foremost concern is the well-being of all. Consider this: amidst the turmoil that surrounds us, a guiding hand is indispensable. We require leadership, a unifying force to navigate the chaos that has engulfed our world. Uncertainty looms, and to ensure our collective survival, order must prevail.

In the absence of a recognized leader, I have taken it upon myself to advocate for the greater good."

"Furthermore, let's be clear: I'm not seizing their supplies outright. I simply propose a temporary loan, with the intent to replenish what we borrow in due time. After all, it's for the benefit of all involved."

Now that the man had voiced his seemingly benevolent intentions, those who remained neutral, especially the hungry and suffering, grew dissatisfied with the woman with a baby. They believed the man's words offered a more compelling solution than Fred's earlier proposal.

Even Fred found himself unable to object, recognizing that the proposed course of action seemed to be in the best interest of everyone. With a strong sense of duty, he understood that aiding the civilians was his responsibility, and ensuring their safety was an integral part of that duty.

However, he failed to recognize that this approach did not necessarily apply to Kisha and her group. Furthermore, nobody noticed the malicious glint in the man's eyes, aimed directly at the woman who had spoken out against his suggestion.

"Well..." Kisha's voice cut through the silence, capturing everyone's attention. All eyes inadvertently turned towards her. "If you're proposing to borrow our supplies, then we'd like to witness your group's ability to handle zombies and scavenge for resources."

Lending our supplies implies we must have assurance of their return, so we need to assess your skills." Kisha's words carried a cold, emotionless edge.

She doesn't want to show anyone unnecessary kindness because once they tasted that kindness, they would want more and would feel entitled to it. She doesn't want any burden right now, especially those who have their own agenda.

She suggested accompanying this group as a cover, but if they pushed their luck too far, she preferred they strike out on their own again, seeking out other groups along the way. They were still several miles from their destination, and this certainly wouldn't be the only group they'd encounter.

The man, feeling flustered by Kisha's condition, appealed emotionally. "Can't you find it in your heart to show compassion for your own people? For the elderly and the young?!"

If you won't help us old folks, since we're nearing the end anyway, at least consider helping the young ones?" He resorted to emotional manipulation, he believed stirring up feelings would sway a woman, assuming emotions were every woman's weakness.

Unfortunately for him, Kisha had already seen through his tactics long ago; emotional manipulation didn't sway her either. Her heart had hardened, only open to her family and Duke – and by extension, his people too.