

Apocalypse 523

Chapter 523 Thunder Redirecting Talisman

Once Kisha felt she had the right sensation, she clenched her outstretched hand again.

Another zombie collapsed to the ground with a loud thud, its head bursting apart in a grotesque explosion.

She repeated the action, over and over, practicing until the motion became second nature.

Each time, the result was the same—a lifeless body falling to the ground, its head obliterated.

Duke observed the carnage closely, his sharp eyes scanning the remains.

No crystal cores were left intact in the wreckage.

That's when it clicked—Kisha was deliberately targeting the zombies' crystal cores with precise, devastating accuracy.

By the time Kisha had grown accustomed to the technique, she was already feeling drained.

However, thanks to the newly formed protective barrier surrounding her energy core, the strain on her body was minimal.

Instead, the toll came from the excessive use of her spiritual energy.

While her mental capacity was notably high, her spiritual energy reserves were only slightly above average.

Using the skill for the first time demanded more energy than usual, as she hadn't yet mastered the control needed to wield it efficiently.

Despite her progress, refining the technique would clearly require time and practice.

As Kisha finally stopped, Duke immediately stepped forward, gripping her arm to steady her.

"Are you alright?" he asked, his voice laced with genuine concern. His eyes searched her face anxiously, unable to hide the worry etched into his features.

Though he didn't say it aloud, Duke couldn't shake the memory of his own near-fatal experience from overusing his energy core—a mistake that had brought him dangerously close to death.

The thought of Kisha suffering a similar backlash sent a wave of dread through him, making it impossible for him to stop fretting over her well-being.

"I'm alright, just a little tired," Kisha replied softly.

After taking a moment to steady herself, she looked up at Duke with a playful smile dancing on her lips.

"What about you? Are you tired? Hungry? Or maybe... you want something else?" she teased, her voice lilting with mischief as she nuzzled her head against his firm chest.

Kisha knew exactly why Duke was so worried, and the weight of his concern tugged at her heart.

Not wanting him to dwell on it, she decided to redirect his attention. Her playful, coquettish behavior was her way of lightening the mood and easing the tension between them.

Sure enough, as soon as the words left her mouth, Duke burst into a hearty laugh. "I choose the last option!" he declared cheerfully, clearly interpreting Kisha's teasing as an invitation for intimacy.

Kisha smirked, her eyes glinting mischievously as she caught on to his thoughts.

Without missing a beat, she hooked her arm through his and began leading him back toward the base.

Below, the warriors who had accompanied Duke were still waiting. When they caught sight of their leaders' playful exchange, a ripple of chuckles spread through the group.

Their lighthearted interaction was a rare but welcome moment of levity amid the usual seriousness of their duties.

"Thank you all for your hard work. Please head to the military cafeteria and enjoy a good meal—it's on us," Kisha said warmly, motioning for the warriors to take their leave.

Her words brought an instant spark of energy to the exhausted group. Despite their weariness, their eyes lit up, and they eagerly made their way to the cafeteria.

The STAU team followed suit, their hunger driving them forward.

Once they had eaten, they would need to return to Kisha and Duke to receive instructions on where to store the supplies they had retrieved from the textile factory.

As the warriors dispersed, Kisha took Duke's hand and pulled him along.

Duke followed willingly, a wide grin spreading across his face as he let her lead the way.

Before long, they stood in front of a modest building where Doctor Shuveck and Engineer Steel were stationed.

Duke froze, staring at the structure with a mixture of surprise and unease. He knew exactly what this place was—after all, he had chosen it himself.

His mouth opened and closed as if to speak, but no words came out. Frustration flickered across his face as the realization dawned on him.

'I've been tricked,' he thought, casting Kisha a look as if he was wronged.

Kisha, unfazed, merely tilted her head up to meet his gaze, her expression unreadable but her eyes glinting with a hint of mischief.

"What? This is the last option," Kisha said with an innocent smile that didn't quite match the mischievous glint in her eyes. "I just wanted to show you the completion of the project you led."

Duke let out a resigned chuckle, fully aware that he'd been played.

But as he looked at her beaming face, he couldn't bring himself to be annoyed. Instead, his expression softened, and he reached out to ruffle her hair affectionately.

"Alright, alright," he said with a mock sigh of defeat.

Kisha took his hand and led him toward the entrance of the building. Before they stepped inside, she handed him a spiritual fruit, her voice gentle as she said, "Here, eat this first."

They entered the building quietly, the hum of activity greeting them as people moved around the computers, focused on their work.

Outside, the sky had turned pitch black, a heavy gloom settling over the base.

The air felt charged, and the distant rumble of thunder, deep and resonant like a lion's roar, echoed ominously.

"It's starting!" Engineer Steel exclaimed, his voice brimming with excitement.

He rubbed his sweaty palms together, his eyes fixed on the monitors as he eagerly awaited the first bolt of lightning to strike the pole.

The anticipation in the room was palpable as everyone held their breath, watching the screens.

Moments later, the first thunderclap boomed, and a brilliant flash lit up the sky, signaling the strike.

Clap...

Crack...

The thunderclap cracked through the sky with such force that it startled everyone in the room. The sound was deafening, like the sky itself had split open.

"Wait, did it not reach the pole? Where did it hit?" Doctor Shuveck asked, frowning at the computer screen, which showed no change in the data.

Kisha, however, felt her heart skip a beat.

Why?

Because just as the lightning struck, a system notification had flashed before her eyes:

[City Shield Protection: 950/1000]

Instead of the lightning striking the pole Kisha had placed on the roof of the Central Hall, it collided with the city shield first.

'Shoot, why did I forget this part?' Kisha muttered, slapping her forehead in frustration. Her sudden movement startled Duke.

'The lightning from the storm counts as an attack on the base,' Kisha realized, her mind racing. 'It would naturally hit the city shield first, preventing it from reaching the pole.'

Her worry deepened when she saw the shield's energy drop by 50 points in an instant. That meant the lightning strike had been strong enough to kill even an evolved zombie on contact.

"Host, we can use the Thunder Redirecting Talisman," 008's voice suddenly echoed in Kisha's mind.

"Why are you only telling me this now?" Kisha asked, her frustration evident. "Won't the city shield block the talisman's effect too?"