

Apocalypse 574

Chapter 574 Search And Rescue Mission 10

Only after ensuring that both Zeus and Bell had resolved not to follow her inside did Kisha finally relax. While her concern for their safety was paramount—knowing the poisonous gas could easily claim their lives—she also needed them to guard the perimeter.

Their role was crucial in preventing any external threats or reinforcements from sneaking in and tipping the balance of the battle, a risk that could jeopardize their mission and endanger everyone inside.

She needed to ensure they were fully prepared before moving forward. As much as she wanted to save Sparrow, it was equally vital to guarantee that she, Duke, and Vulture made it out alive.

Saving Sparrow only to lose someone else in the process would be a hollow victory, equally devastating and rendering their mission meaningless.

Her priority was to plan meticulously, equip themselves thoroughly, and establish contingency plans to face whatever dangers lay ahead.

Fortunately, Kisha wasn't the only one prioritizing caution. Duke shared her mindset, meticulously preparing to ensure they wouldn't be at a disadvantage once inside.

Like Kisha, he was determined to avoid the devastating outcome of losing one person while saving another. With this shared resolve, Kisha moved forward, her senses sharp and focused.

Duke followed closely, his heightened alertness and defensive posture reflecting his readiness to counter any ambush.

Meanwhile, Vulture maintained vigilance at the rear, safeguarding their flank and ensuring no threats could sneak up on them.

They didn't forget to fall into formation. Kisha took the lead as the vanguard, relying on 008's radar-like mapping to navigate the dense fog.

Duke stayed close behind her, practically her shadow, determined not to lose sight of her in the oppressive mist that limited their visibility to barely three feet.

Vulture brought up the rear, wielding his massive hammer with an air of nonchalance. Yet, beneath his calm exterior, he was the most worried and tense of the group.

His impressive defensive abilities gave him some reassurance, allowing him to maintain his composure, but his mind kept drifting to the worst-case scenarios.

Despite his nerves, Vulture focused intently on the mission, pushing aside his fears and anxieties, especially those concerning what might have happened to his good brother.

As soon as Kisha and her team entered the fog, their vision and senses were severely compromised.

It felt as though they had stepped into an endless white void—disorienting and devoid of any tangible landmarks.

Their sense of direction faltered, unable to distinguish right from left, while their physical awareness dulled to the point where they couldn't feel the environment around them.

The overwhelming blankness made them hyperaware, their instincts kicking into overdrive to compensate for the lack of sensory input.

However, this heightened awareness came at a cost. Remaining in such a state would strain their mental fortitude, leaving them fatigued before they even encountered their enemy.

Kisha couldn't shake the thought that this was precisely what their enemy intended—to weaken their resolve and sap their energy, making them vulnerable when the confrontation finally came.

Kisha took a shaky breath, placing one foot carefully in front of the other as she scanned the foggy surroundings.

Her heart threatened to race out of control, but a reassuring pat on her back from Duke steadied her.

It was his silent way of saying, "Don't worry, I'm right behind you." The simple gesture grounded her, pushing back the creeping edges of panic and reminding her that she wasn't alone.

This enemy was unlike any they'd faced before—dangerous, methodical, and deadly. Kisha's mind raced as she pieced together possibilities, narrowing the creature's identity down to a handful of horrifying candidates.

Each scenario confirmed one undeniable truth: they were walking into real danger.

It made Zeus and Bell's roles in securing the perimeter all the more critical. If reinforcements arrived or something attacked them from behind, they'd be cornered.

Knowing the two were outside watching their backs gave Kisha the strength to push forward, even as uncertainty gnawed at her resolve.

Each step Kisha took felt heavy with dread. The soft crunch of grass beneath her feet and the faint rustle of blades echoed unnaturally in her ears, as though it were the only sound in the entire world.

The oppressive silence wrapped around her, amplifying every movement.

She could barely see more than three feet ahead, the fog reducing everything to indistinct shadows.

A tree would only reveal itself as a dark blur at the edge of her vision, its full shape materializing only when it loomed directly before her.

The eerie delay between seeing and recognizing her surroundings set her nerves on edge, heightening the tension with every step forward.

"This won't do," Vulture muttered, his frustration bubbling over. "Can't we do something to drive this fog away? Or does anyone know how long it might last?" His voice, though controlled and barely above a whisper, seemed to echo unnaturally in the oppressive silence.

Following closely behind Duke, Vulture couldn't afford to keep more than two feet of distance between them.

Any further, and he risked losing sight of the group entirely, making himself vulnerable to an ambush. Yet staying this close came with its own risks.

Both he and Duke wielded large weapons—a massive hammer and a spear, respectively—and the confined proximity meant that any sudden movements in combat could inadvertently strike an ally.

The fog wasn't just disorienting; it was forcing them into a position where their coordination could falter, adding another layer of danger to an already precarious situation.

"I agree," Duke said, his tone grim. "This fog is dangerous. It conceals any potential attack, and we'd only notice it at the last second—too late to react properly. That kind of delay could easily get us hurt, or worse."

They halted in their tracks, each member keenly aware of the oppressive atmosphere.

Though it felt as though they'd been walking for several meters, the truth was sobering—they had only ventured about fifty to a hundred meters into the fog.

The disorienting environment was playing tricks on their senses, making progress feel far more significant than it actually was.

Kisha remained silent, knowing that anything she said might only heighten their anxiety. She, too, was relying heavily on 008's radar-like map to detect enemies and on her sharpened senses to navigate the suffocating fog.

Without 008's assistance, she might have been just as worried as Vulture.

She didn't need them to voice their concerns to understand their fears.

She shared them.

The fog was a perfect hunting ground for an enemy that thrived on confusion and isolation. It was clear to her that the creature might be waiting for them to separate before launching its attack.

To counter this, Kisha stretched out her telekinesis, creating invisible tendrils that silently connected her to Duke and Vulture.

Their dulled senses made them unaware of the subtle contact, but she maintained this link to ensure she wouldn't lose them in the disorienting haze.

This silent act of protection gave her a small measure of control over an otherwise unpredictable and deadly situation.

After their brief pause, the group pressed on.

Vulture fell silent, realizing that the more he spoke, the easier it would be for the enemy to pinpoint his location through the echoes in the still air.

Surprisingly, his anxiety began to ebb, his heartbeat slowing, as if a heavy weight had lifted.

What he didn't realize was that Kisha's silent protection was at work—her invisible tendrils had subtly connected to his waist, allowing her to pull him away if necessary, just as she had done with Duke. None of them felt the gentle touch of her telekinesis.

With a newfound sense of confidence, Kisha quickened her pace, her senses sharpened as she readied the daggers in her inventory, prepared to launch them the moment a threat emerged.

Duke, now gripping his spear tightly, stayed close behind, his focus unwavering.

After what felt like an eternity, Kisha suddenly realized something had changed. The usual crunch of the grass beneath her feet had faded, and now the ground beneath her was strangely sticky.

'What is this, mud?' she thought, glancing around, but seeing nothing.

Suddenly, a sharp "Ack!" broke the silence, and both Kisha and Duke flinched, their heads snapping back to locate Vulture. Since they couldn't see him clearly, they instinctively took a cautious step back.

"What happened?" Duke asked, his sharp eyes scanning the area, every sense alert. His gaze landed on Vulture, who was struggling to regain his balance.

"I got tripped by some roots sticking out," Vulture muttered, gritting his teeth. He had indeed noticed something protruding from the ground moments earlier, but it had been too late for him to react, and the impact had been unavoidable.

"Ugh!"

"What now?!" Duke snapped, his frustration mounting. Every sound Vulture made was amplified in the eerie silence, and Duke couldn't help but worry that their enemy might be listening in from the shadows, waiting for the right moment to strike.

"A... A-arm..." Vulture stammered, his voice trembling just above a whisper, as if the words had caught in his throat.

Both Kisha and Duke froze. Their eyes widened in unison as they turned toward Vulture, following the direction of his trembling finger. Just a foot away from them, half-buried in the ground, was a dismembered arm, its fingers clawing at the ground as though it were trying to crawl free—only to remain trapped, motionless.

The thick fog and oppressive darkness had initially disguised the object as a simple root protruding from the ground.

It wasn't until Vulture had moved closer and squinted in suspicion that the true nature of the thing became clear. They all realized, with a sinking feeling, that they were now perilously close to the creature's lair or nest.

A tense silence fell over them as they stiffened, eyes scanning the ground for any other signs of movement or danger.