

## **Apocalypse 61**

### Chapter 61 Going Out

In a rush, Duke darted to the drawer in his study room where the spare keys were kept. He quickly retrieved Kisha's room key and dashed back to her door with urgency like a sprinter in a marathon, his heart pounding with concern.

As he returned, the sound of Kisha's faint sobbing lingered in the air. Without hesitation, Duke unlocked the door and made his way to her bedside. There, he embraced her with such intensity, as if he wished to merge her into his own being, to shoulder her suffering as his own, all in an effort to alleviate her distress and bring her solace.

Feeling pained to see her in such distress, Duke hugged her tightly, wishing he could bear her pain himself. They sank onto the bed together, him cradling her in his arms, gently patting her back in a rhythmic motion, offering what comfort he could.

Kisha felt a warm, boulder-like presence enveloping her entire body. Surprisingly, rather than feeling discomfort, she found herself at ease, as if cocooned in a protective embrace. The sensation seemed to gently ease her pain, cradling her until she drifted back into a peaceful slumber.

As Kisha's breathing steadied and her soft whimpers ceased, her knitted brows gradually relaxed. Watching her peacefully sleeping in his arms, Duke felt a sense of relief and happiness wash over him. Drawing her closer, he too succumbed to sleep, comforted by her calming scent and the warmth of her body against his. In her presence, he found a sense of ease and solace, his heart at peace.

As morning broke, Sparrow searched for Duke in his room, finding it open and empty. Curious, he headed to Kisha's room to inquire about Duke's whereabouts, only to discover her door wide open as well. To his surprise, he found Duke sleeping in Kisha's bed, with Kisha nestled in his embrace.

Had it not been for the sight of Kisha's long hair entwined with Duke's arms, Sparrow might have mistaken the rooms altogether.

Seeing Sparrow's stunned reaction, Vulture approached and witnessed the same scene. Instead of being taken aback like Sparrow, he took action. Closing the door firmly, he then gently guided Sparrow downstairs.

"Mas-master..." Sparrow began uncertainly, his words trailing off.

"It's a good thing that Master has found the woman who could melt his heart made out of a block of ice." He then chuckled and hauled Sparrow into the kitchen so they could both prepare a sumptuous meal.

The two worked diligently to whip up fluffy pancakes that would delight anyone's taste buds for breakfast. They also brewed coffee and squeezed fresh orange juice, intending to surprise Duke and Kisha with breakfast in bed. However, just as they finished cooking the pancakes, Duke and Kisha appeared together heading downstairs.

Kisha descended the stairs, followed by Duke, whose sharp gaze betrayed no signs of sleep. Despite her red and puffy eyes, Kisha retained her stunning beauty, though her demeanor exuded coldness and indifference. Duke, equally distant, stood close behind her, emanating an aura of aloofness and unapproachable.

Both of them still wore their disguises, which were becoming increasingly itchy and irritating against their skin.

"Young Master, young madam, the breakfast is ready," Vulture eagerly invited the two to sit down.

Duke's eyebrows raised, but he didn't correct them. Kisha opened her mouth as if to say something, but Duke had already pulled her to sit down next to him. They were promptly served by the two, who were acting like doting parents-in-law.

Soon enough, Kisha had already forgotten what she wanted to say, her mind drifting back to the memory of her nightmare from the previous night. She desired to recall every last detail of the dream, but upon waking up, only the overwhelming emotions lingered, leaving the specifics shrouded in fog

Duke reassured her, urging her to let go of the nightmare as dwelling on it would only sour her mood, which held truth. Thus, she heeded his advice and ceased dwelling on it altogether.

"Kisha, have your bees discovered anything significant last night?" he inquired, drizzling more maple syrup onto Kisha's pancake.

"No, it seems we may need to widen our search radius. There were no clues here, nor any signs of secret passages being accessed covertly. Alternatively, we could postpone the investigation for now. They might be laying low," Kisha explained, delicately cutting a piece of pancake to fit into her mouth.

"Hmm."

Noticing his understated response, Kisha stole a worried glance at Duke. She understood his anxiety about his family, yet he maintained a calm and composed demeanor to avoid pressuring her in her search.

Feeling a warm surge in her heart, Kisha spoke up. "Perhaps we should conduct our investigation outdoors. Using our group mission as cover would allow us to freely access the shelter without arousing suspicion."

"I think so too."

With a consensus reached, Kisha and the others swiftly finished their breakfast. She made sure to stow away all their supplies in her inventory. Even if someone were to snoop around inside their villa, they wouldn't find anything amiss. The HAMO officer knew they had sent all their supplies as rent for the villa.

It seemed logical that they would need to venture out to search for supplies.

But before they departed, Kisha insisted they remove their disguises and take a moment to freshen up. Spending an additional two hours to redo the disguises ensured their comfort, preventing any skin irritation.

With all preparations complete, the four emerged from their villa, their expressions determined, as if going into a war.

Kisha and the others had barely stepped out of the villa's gate when a fox-like old man approached them from across the road.

"Hello there, neighbors! I heard you're new around here?"

Kisha, Duke, Sparrow, and Vulture remained silent, their expressions indifferent as they regarded the old man.

"I apologize if I startled you. I'm one of the leaders of the prominent group within this shelter. It has come to my attention that your group is filled with talented and exceptionally strong individuals," he began, his gaze sweeping over each of them before settling on Kisha. "Frankly, I would like to extend an invitation for you to join our group.

It would greatly enhance our ability to gather supplies, complete missions outside, and, of course, reap more rewards." He offered a friendly smile at Kisha who looked a little less intimidating, appearance-wise, but when he met her eyes, 'Oh boy, he was so wrong.'

He found it difficult to maintain eye contact with her for more than a few seconds and instinctively looked away. When his gaze met Duke's, a sense of dread washed over him, surpassing anything he had experienced outside.

Buckets of cold sweat formed on his back, and each second of waiting for their answer felt like a decade. He even contemplated running away without waiting for a response, feeling as though he stood before not two human beings, but beasts.

Duke's voice, cold and intimidating, echoed in the old man's ear, as though Duke were looking down on him from a throne at the top of a grand staircase. "Is your group the strongest and most influential in

this shelter? Were you once among the top families?" Duke's tone wasn't that of a question; it carried the weight of authority, demanding a response from the old man.

"N-no... We were not as formidable as the Coltons, who are among the top 8 families of City A," the old man nervously replied.

"Why bring up the Coltons?" Kisha pressed for further information.

"They're the only prominent family in this shelter," the old man truthfully disclosed.