

Apocalypse 621

Chapter 621 Beach Campfire

After gathering hundreds of sea urchins with Duke's help, Kisha and Duke drifted through the water, their eyes scanning the surroundings.

It wasn't long before something caught Kisha's attention: a large lobster hiding beneath the coral. Its bluish hue stood out starkly against the surrounding colors of the reef, drawing her in.

Without hesitation, she swam closer and effortlessly caught it. The lobster didn't even attempt to swim away, and for a moment, Kisha felt a twinge of guilt.

She couldn't help but think of herself as a landlord taking advantage of her tenants—these creatures never fought back, and she couldn't shake the feeling that she was exploiting her ownership of the territory.

But the guilt was short-lived. She shook it off and stored the lobster in her inventory, continuing her exploration.

The size of the aquatic life in her territory was truly remarkable. The lobster alone was longer than her forearm and thicker than her upper arm.

Even the sea urchins she'd gathered earlier were as large as both her fists combined.

Kisha's gaze drifted to something unusual—what she initially thought was a rock swaying gently in the water.

As she drew closer, she realized it was actually a large octopus, perfectly camouflaged. Like all the other aquatic creatures in her territory, the octopus didn't even resist as she caught it.

Without hesitation, she pushed aside any lingering thoughts of fairness and simply collected whatever caught her attention.

After resurfacing a few times to catch their breath, Kisha and Duke continued their underwater exploration.

By the time they were ready to head back to the shore, their haul was impressive—striped bass, black sea bass, sea eels, two types of flounder, and countless other fish. It was as if they had scoured the entire sea, their bounty growing by the minute.

When they reached the shore, everyone proudly displayed their catches. Vulture had managed to haul in a massive swordfish, its size towering over him.

The fish, still thrashing in his grip, swung its sword-like nose dangerously as he struggled to hold it.

With his immense strength and sturdy defense, he'd been lucky not to have been pierced, but the fish was so large it made him appear as though he were carrying a small boat.

Mike and Gant had worked together to spear a flounder, its size nearly equivalent to an adult torso, and half as tall as them. Daisy, who had only ventured into the shallow reef, was just as successful, proudly holding up a large lobster.

The others had similarly impressive catches, each person grinning from ear to ear, their pride evident.

But Kisha hesitated to take out her own haul. She couldn't shake the feeling that displaying it would somehow diminish the others' sense of accomplishment.

While they had worked hard for their catches, she and Duke had effortlessly gathered an abundance, with the aquatic creatures in their territory yielding to her presence without resistance.

Kisha exchanged a glance with Duke, who gave her a nod of affirmation, silently entrusting her with complete control.

She was still getting used to this version of Duke, so compliant and agreeable, unlike the Duke from her past life who was always in competition with her.

The shift felt strange, but she pushed aside the feeling. Deciding to take charge, she pulled out the hundred black sea urchins they had gathered, adding with a casual tone, "We happened to find a nest of sea urchins."

The group accepted her explanation without question, and soon they were all focused on setting up their campfire.

Duke, Vulture, and the other men worked together to dig into the sand with shovels, preparing the area for the fire. Meanwhile, Kisha and Daisy arranged their catches on large banana leaves, adding an extra touch of care to the feast.

Mr. and Mrs. Winters were also present, acting like an endearing older couple, their interactions sweet and tender as they cared for one another.

The Patriarch watched the younger group with a smile, quietly enjoying their laughter and camaraderie.

Meanwhile, Tristan and Aston were deep in a lively debate about which fruits complemented the feast best and what drinks should accompany it.

As the designated beverage and fruit arrangers, they were determined to get everything just right.

The STAUs, who had proven themselves invaluable as couriers during the battle, were also invited to the gathering.

Along with them came Rose, Evelyn, Clyde, and Reeve, as well as all the Winters' men, making for a sizable assembly.

For those visiting Kisha's territory for the first time, signing a slave contract was non-negotiable.

While the bonds forged through their shared struggles were deep, Kisha had learned a painful lesson: the only person she could trust completely was Duke.

As much as she cared for her comrades, she understood that loyalty, no matter how steadfast, could falter under the right pressure. Betrayal was always a possibility.

But she couldn't be blamed for thinking this way or for being overly cautious.

She had been let down and betrayed so many times during the apocalypse that she had lost count, leaving her trust bruised and battered beyond repair.

Fortunately, the others understood her reasoning. The slave contract wasn't entirely one-sided—it served as a safeguard for both parties.

If Kisha were ever to betray them first or attempt to kill them without just cause, they would have the right to retaliate against her.

This way, the contract provided security not only for Kisha but also for those bound by it.

After the signing, just like before, a slithering golden light of letters crawled across the ground toward each person who had to sign their name on the contract after agreeing verbally.

The glowing letters plunged into their hearts, followed by a wisp of flame that came from them and came towards the paper.

As their names appeared on the contract, the ritual was completed after the contract burned and disappeared.

Many others stepped forward of their own accord to sign, without needing to be called—an undeniable testament to their trust in Kisha.

Everyone's reaction stirred deep emotions within Kisha for countless reasons.

What had started as a simple gathering had unexpectedly turned into a mass contract-signing event, with the golden glow from the contracts creating a breathtaking sight.

No one could look away as they watched the process unfold.

However, when Mr. and Mrs. Winters, along with the Patriarch, stepped forward to sign the contract, Kisha gently refused.

To her, they were already family, and she didn't want them to feel as though she doubted their loyalty.

More importantly, she didn't want this to become an unspoken issue between her and Duke now that they were married.

Family conflicts were different from those with subordinates—more delicate, more personal—and she knew they had to be handled with care.

Seeing this, Duke felt even more emotional than Kisha. It was a clear sign of how much she valued his thoughts and how she had already embraced his family as her own.

Though his family was treated differently, no one felt it was unfair—they all understood the reasoning behind it.

In fact, it made them feel even more secure. The contract wasn't one-sided, and it reassured them that Kisha wasn't just protecting herself—she was also ensuring their safety.

As long as they remained loyal or posed no threat to her and her family, she would treat them with the same care and respect she gave to her own.