

Apocalypse 652

Chapter 652 A Way To Get Back To HOPE Base

"I don't know if we should call this luck or not," one of the men from Group 6 muttered, eyeing the military chopper warily. "The Bell Boeing V-22 Osprey is one of the hardest helicopters to fly. There was even a report about Japan storing this model in an underground warehouse after a crash killed several people." His voice carried a hint of doubt. While many of them were skilled in multiple areas, piloting—especially this particular model—was a different challenge altogether.

"Don't worry," Sparrow interjected, his gaze locked on the aircraft. "I'll help fly it. I might not be the best pilot, but I'm good enough." His tone was steady, reassuring. "And with two more pilots from Group 6, we've got a real shot at making this work. For now, let's focus on getting to that chopper."

Determination flared in his eyes. They had no time to hesitate—survival depended on their next move.

If they attempted to cross the mountain to reach the other side, as Group 6 had informed him while they were running—based on intel from the civilians who helped them—it would take days to get there. Retracing their steps back to the HOPE Base, however, wasn't just dangerous; it was nearly impossible because of the mutated tree and mutated animals.

Now that they had the chopper, their chances of returning to the HOPE Base had significantly improved. As long as they could get it off the ground, the others wouldn't have to worry anymore.

But a new problem stood in their way—the high-voltage electric fences surrounding the bunker. The power seemed to be running from an underground backup system, likely supplemented by solar panels installed around the area. Although the bunker was well hidden, its size suggested it was more than just a shelter—it looked like a full-scale base.

Since they had approached the bunker without encountering any soldiers or receiving any warnings, it could only mean one of three things: the bunker had been abandoned, there were no survivors inside, or the people who had tried to evacuate here never made it.

Sparrow, however, leaned toward a more unsettling possibility—the bunker's silence likely meant that the people inside had either turned into zombies or had been attacked by mutated creatures or evolved zombies.

Either way, they needed to get inside. For Sparrow, scaling the six-meter-high fence would be easy—his Whirlwind ability could lift him effortlessly. However, using it on the civilians was a different matter. He feared that without precise control, the sheer force of his ability could shred them into mincemeat rather than safely carrying them over.

His enhanced defenses, strengthened through awakening and leveling up, allowed his body to withstand the force of his own Whirlwind effortlessly. Whenever he conjured one, the currents instinctively adjusted around him, behaving as if they were an extension of his own being. However, that same level of control didn't extend to others. He had yet to master the finesse needed to lift an unawakened human without risking serious harm.

One of the earth-type ability users from Group 6 suggested, "Then maybe we could create an earth staircase. "

Sparrow nodded. "That's our best option. We just need to make sure the earth staircase is sturdy enough and won't crumble while people are climbing over," he said. After receiving a confirming nod from the earth-type awakened ability user, Sparrow leaped over the fence, using his Whirlwind to propel himself effortlessly to the other side.

The civilians, who had never witnessed awakened abilities before, stood frozen in shock as Sparrow soared through the air. Their astonishment deepened when one of the Winters' men raised his hand, causing the ground to shift and mold itself into a staircase without him even touching it. His hand glowed faintly, making it clear that the phenomenon was his doing.

A mix of awe and unease washed over the civilians. They weren't sure whether to be terrified by what they were witnessing or relieved that these powerful individuals were their allies. One thing was certain—had they offended them, they might not have even realized how they died.

Luckily, despite their disorientation, the Winters' men could still use their awakened abilities. While some of the Group 6 members scattered to guard the perimeter, the earth-type awakened ability user focused on conjuring the staircase.

Meanwhile, Sparrow ventured cautiously around the bunker, staying close to the chopper. Given his current state, he didn't dare to explore too deeply—there was no telling what dangers might be lurking inside.

His priority was to inspect the chopper, determine if it was operational, and check for any immediate threats. If there were dangers inside, he wanted to deal with them before the others finished their work outside the fence.

As he approached, Sparrow leaned against the chopper, his body swaying slightly. A wave of dizziness washed over him, making him grit his teeth.

"Damn! That scent's effect is lasting way too long. How much longer do I have to suffer through this? Will it even wear off?" he muttered, shaking his head in an attempt to clear his mind.

As he tried to shake off the dizziness, Sparrow was suddenly startled by a zombie lunging at him from the side. Its face was a grotesque sight—maggots wriggled within the rotting flesh of its cheeks, which were peeling away in decayed chunks. Its mouth gaped open, revealing a tongue riddled with holes from the infestation, with more maggots squirming out between its rotted teeth.

Fortunately, the zombie was sluggish, its twisted foot dragging uselessly behind it. But Sparrow hadn't noticed it earlier—it had been lurking in the shadows, hidden behind a stack of crates near the helipad.

His dulled senses, still reeling from the lingering effects of the mutated insects' scent, had failed him. His reaction time was sluggish, his perception muddled, and he barely registered the threat until it was almost too late.

Sparrow instinctively reached for his dagger, a reflex born from years of experience. But as his fingers grasped at empty space around his torso, a realization hit him—most of his gear had been lost when the mutated tree dragged him to its lair. Aside from his tactical belt, which held only a few vials of liquid and a piece of beef jerky, he was practically unarmed.

Then, a memory surfaced—Kisha's dagger. He had hidden it in his boot as a last resort.

As the zombie lunged at him, Sparrow swiftly ducked, lowering himself just enough to reach for his boot. His fingers closed around the familiar hilt of the Shakan Poison Dagger, still tightly secured by his shoelace and garter belt.

Sparrow let out a weary sigh of relief as he pulled the dagger free, but the moment was short-lived. The zombie had already turned and lunged at him again. His sluggish movements barely allowed him to react in time—he instinctively raised the dagger, using it as a barrier to keep the creature's rotting jaws at bay.

A sickening squelch followed as maggots spilled from the zombie's decayed mouth, landing on Sparrow's face.

"Ugh!" He grunted in pure disgust, his face contorting as he struggled against the decaying corpse pressing down on him. He braced himself, trying to push the zombie off, but the weight and his weakened state made it difficult.

Never in his life had he imagined he'd end up in such a pathetic situation.