

Apocalypse 677

Chapter 677 Two Families Getting Along

After presenting his gifts to Grandpa Aldens, Duke turned his attention to Grandma Aldens, taking out an array of carefully chosen presents—exquisite jade bracelets, elegant clothing, high-quality health supplements, and luxurious beauty products.

The number of boxes far exceeded what he had given Grandpa Aldens, and for good reason—he knew that if Grandma Aldens was happy, the entire family would be at ease.

It wasn't just Grandpa Aldens who was dissatisfied with him; his brother-in-law, Keith, shared the sentiment. As a devoted siscon, Keith wasn't ready to accept that Duke had so easily taken his sister away.

To maintain harmony within the family, the true head of the household had to be pleased—and in the Aldens family, that role undeniably belonged to Grandma Aldens. Duke understood this well, which was why he knew exactly who to win over.

"Oh my! This is too much! You shouldn't have brought so many gifts!" Grandma Aldens exclaimed, waving her hands to refuse them. "You already gave us plenty earlier—there's no need for personal gifts."

She was genuinely overwhelmed. Now that the world had changed so drastically, resources like these meant everything—they could be the difference between life and death for many. The fact that Duke was willing to offer so much was a clear sign of how deeply he and his family valued Kisha.

More than that, it also meant that these gifts weren't just gestures of goodwill; they were meant to be the Aldens' personal supplies, ensuring their comfort and survival.

Grandma Aldens understood all too well how difficult it was to gather supplies in the outside world. Her grandson, Keith, often ventured out with Ethan and the others to scavenge and assess the situation beyond their territory.

Every time they returned, their haul was minimal, and they were often battered and bruised from the dangers they faced.

They were fortunate to have a farmland and a small livestock within their territory, which sustained them even when supply runs were scarce.

Even so, the struggle was real. If not for the food stocks carefully managed by Mr. Evans and his eldest son, Eric, their situation would have been far more dire.

What Grandma Aldens didn't realize was that a steady supply of resources had actually been allocated to City A's hidden base from Kisha's territory. These provisions were discreetly stored in their warehouse, ensuring that no matter how difficult things became, they would never truly face starvation.

Kisha had been careful to make the arrangement as inconspicuous as possible. Even though Mr. Evans and Eric were responsible for managing the supplies, they hadn't noticed the subtle influx—or perhaps they had, but without any clear explanation for how it was happening, they eventually chose to stop questioning it and simply continued overseeing the distribution as usual.

"Grandma, did you know? While my wife and I were building City B's base, we managed to gather enough supplies to sustain over ten thousand people for an entire year or more," Duke said, his tone calm and reassuring.

"And that's not all—we've expanded our land, increased our farmland, and raised more livestock. So, what's a little bit of supplies compared to that? There will be plenty more in the future. After all, we have the manpower to rebuild entire industries when the time comes."

Duke spoke with confidence, fully aware of what was weighing on Grandma Aldens' mind. Reassuring her was no trouble at all—he knew exactly what she needed to hear.

Grandma Aldens glanced at Mrs. Winters, seeking confirmation of Duke's claim. Seeing her questioning look, Mrs. Winters smiled and nodded reassuringly.

"My son isn't lying," she affirmed. "We have more than enough to spare, and it wouldn't do us any good to dwell too much on the distant future. These supplies won't last forever, so it's not practical to hoard them indefinitely."

"Instead, we need to put them to good use now. So please, don't feel burdened. What matters is looking ahead. After all, my son is more than capable, and my daughter-in-law is just as remarkable. With them leading the bases, I have no doubt that we'll never be lacking in the future."

Hearing the Winters' mother and son reassure her grandmother, Kisha raised an eyebrow. Duke wasn't wrong—she truly did have plans to rebuild various industries in the future, especially food preservation.

That was precisely why she had prioritized setting up a workshop for Artisan-type awakened ability users. Perhaps Duke had seen through her intentions and was now using that knowledge to ease Grandma Aldens' worries.

Kisha remained silent, observing the exchange, only speaking when her grandmother turned to her for confirmation. Meeting her gaze, Kisha finally responded, "Grandma, they're telling the truth. Don't worry and just accept it. And don't be too frugal either—you need to eat well and live well."

"Alright then, I will gladly accept the gift." Grandma Aldens smiled warmly, but deep inside, she was already making plans.

'Our family should also prepare a return gift. I'll have to discuss this with the old man and Keith later—after all, our families will soon be connected through marriage.'

"Alright, Grandma, Grandpa, why don't we head to the cafeteria and eat first?"

Keith, who had practically blended into the background, suddenly spoke. He had been standing by the closed door, unmoving, and only now did everyone seem to notice him.

For some reason, he felt aggrieved at being ignored. With a pitiful expression, he turned to his sister, silently pleading—because if there was one person who loved and doted on him the most, it was her.

Sure enough, Kisha only noticed Keith's presence when he spoke. She immediately stood up from the sofa and walked over to him, ruffling his hair with a fond smile.

"Are you hungry? We brought some pickled vegetables made by artisans from City B's HOPE Base. Do you want to try them?" she asked dotingly.

Seeing this, Duke's face instantly darkened. He was so used to being the one Kisha showered with affection that watching her be this gentle with someone else stung his eyes.

His possessiveness flared, simmering beneath the surface, but there was nothing he could do—except helplessly sulk in silence.

Unable to hold back, Duke moved beside Kisha and wrapped his arms around her waist. "Wifey, let's go ahead and eat first. Let Grandma and Grandpa have a taste, too. Didn't we bring fresh seafood? Let's have the cafeteria cook it up and turn this into a feast," he suggested with a grin.

At his words, Keith, Grandma Aldens, and Grandpa Aldens all perked up. Lately, their meals had consisted mostly of canned goods, vegetables from their farmland, and a small portion of meat—but even then, they carefully rationed it, always mindful of the future.

The people working in the cafeteria were strict in monitoring supply consumption, ensuring nothing was wasted.

However, to the newly arrived survivors, the meals in the hidden base were already seemed extravagant.

After all, they had rice with every meal, along with vegetables and even meat—a luxury many couldn't afford in these desperate times. To outsiders, it appeared as though they were living comfortably, with no need for restraint.

Yet, compared to how Duke and the others dined in City B, this was, in truth, a frugal way of living. There, food was abundant, and meals were far more generous, making the Aldens' careful rationing seem modest in comparison.