

Apocalypse 771

Chapter 771 - What Did Melody Realized?

The drive back to the hidden base was mostly uneventful. Aside from retracing their earlier route and plowing through clusters of zombies, the group used the time to rest. Some even drifted off to sleep, mentally and physically exhausted.

The Winters' men from the hidden base, the Evans group, along with Dracon and his team, all nodded off one by one.

Among them was Melody — the moment she sat down and the truck started moving, she was lulled into sleep. Despite the bumpy ride, she slept like a rock, completely oblivious to the chaos around her.

"She's sleeping so soundly on the way back," Mrs. Evans whispered to her husband. Both wore complicated expressions, their emotions a tangled mix of relief and disbelief.

They had never expected that this mission outside the base would bring about such a change in Melody. If anyone had truly benefited from this experience, it was her.

They had assumed Melody would always remain the same — a pampered young lady driven by jealousy and resentment toward her sister.

Yet here she was, having stepped up in the face of danger, actively helping instead of abandoning them like she once did when they had fallen ill. It felt almost surreal, like a dream they struggled to believe was real.

Perhaps, deep down, Melody had already learned her lesson the first time she neglected her family when their lives were at risk.

She had distanced herself from them then, and the disappointment in their eyes when they woke up had left a sting far deeper than any words ever could — though she never dared admit it aloud.

After all, it's not harsh words that hurt the most, but the silent, piercing weight of disappointment from those you care about.

Maybe she really had matured overnight after experiencing hardship firsthand. Through it all, Melody finally realized that compared to Kisha, she was nothing — like a toad foolishly dreaming of eating swan meat.

She was lucky that Kisha hadn't put her in her place sooner, considering all the taunts she'd thrown her way. No matter how pampered she had been, Melody wasn't foolish enough to throw herself headfirst into danger.

Just Kisha's awakened abilities and close-combat skills alone were enough to kill her with a mere flick of the wrist. Besides, hadn't Kisha already taught her a lesson with just three slaps?

Those slaps had stung bitterly — Melody would never forget the humiliation and pain. If Kisha had used even a little more force, Melody's head might have spun like a roulette wheel.

Although Melody was fast asleep, she was actually trapped in one of her usual nightmares. But this time, unlike before, when she would do nothing but tremble and hide from the zombies, helpless as a leaf blown in the wind, she faced them head-on.

Instead of cowering, she lifted her head and raised her hands to fight back, summoning a bravery she had never felt before. Her dream was different now; she felt stronger, more powerful, and her subconscious fought fiercely.

In her sleep, she furrowed her brows and mumbled incoherently, a little trail of drool escaping her lips. Seeing this, Mrs. Evans couldn't help but chuckle helplessly. To her, Melody looked just like she had during her childhood — innocent, brave, and so very endearing.

Without even realizing it, Mrs. Evans gently reached out and guided Melody to rest against her shoulder, adjusting her position to shield her from the worst of the bumpy ride. Soon enough, a small smile appeared on Melody's sleeping face.

Watching her, both Mr. and Mrs. Evans felt a complicated mix of emotions. They knew they were partly to blame for how Melody had turned out.

After all, they were the ones who had spoiled her, making her believe the world revolved around her. If she wanted something, they made sure she got it.

If she was upset, they did everything they could to erase her tears. Though they had encouraged her to socialize, they had never truly given her the chance to grow on her own, to face hardships or see the world from a different perspective.

They had always paved the road ahead of her, shielding her from every bump and bruise. In doing so, they had unknowingly nurtured her "princess syndrome" — a belief that everyone should love, obey, and revolve around her as if she were the center of the world.

The very first real hardship Melody ever faced was trying to win Duke's affection. Unlike everyone else, he didn't cater to her whims or revolve around her, and that difference made him stand out.

At first, she found him intriguing, then she became genuinely interested, and before she knew it, her curiosity had turned into an obsession — she had to make him like her.

And then there was Kisha, someone her own age yet completely different. While Melody had been raised like a pampered princess, Kisha was like a blade of grass that had weathered every storm and still stood tall, only becoming taller and stronger after every storm.

That resilience, that quiet strength, stirred a complicated emotion in Melody. Deep down, she envied Kisha for it — and resented her, too.

Especially because Duke, without Kisha even trying, was naturally drawn to her. That silent, effortless bond between them made Melody feel both jealous and indignant, and so she planted the idea in her mind: if she could just replace Kisha, if she could stand in her place, maybe she could finally become the woman Duke would love.

Now that she had been firmly put in her place and forced to see just how far ahead Kisha was while she herself remained stagnant, sheltered in the greenhouse built by her family, Melody couldn't help but question what she had been doing all this time.

What exactly had she been so proud of? With her family's influence, money, and power stripped away, they had nothing left — not even a home of their own.

They were living under someone else's roof now, and the truth was clear: she was no longer the princess she once believed herself to be.

Yet her mind had remained stuck in the past, clinging to the delusion that the world still revolved around her.

Now, it felt as though her glass greenhouse had finally shattered, and if she continued standing still, refusing to change, she knew she would eventually become someone like Lisa.

Someone with a blackened heart who used others as meat shields to protect herself, yet never once saw her own actions as wrong — instead, she blamed the world for placing her in danger.

Lisa twisted everything in her mind until she was the victim, even when it was her choices that led her there. Melody had an ominous feeling that if she didn't pull herself together soon, her end might not be much different from Lisa's.

Although Kisha's decision to leave Lisa behind had seemed ruthless, even heartless, Melody now understood — even she couldn't imagine taking Lisa back with them. There was no telling when Lisa might poison their food or do something reckless that could cost lives.

In Lisa's eyes, other people's lives meant nothing if they didn't serve her comfort, and Melody realized, with a chill, that if she didn't change, she could easily fall into that same darkness.

Keeping Lisa at the base wouldn't have just trapped them in fear — it would have slowly broken them down, eating away at their sanity through constant overthinking and relentless caution.

In the end, Melody realized that making sure Lisa died was the best outcome they could have hoped for. In this apocalypse, people's moral compasses had long since begun to erode, and given the chance, many would do things far beyond anyone's worst imagination.

She knew she wouldn't have been any different if she had stayed in her delusions. Luckily, she had woken up — even if just a little — before it was too late.

Aside from Melody, no one expected her to grow up and mature this much. Her sudden realization had truly saved her life. If she had continued down the same path, it wouldn't have been long before Kisha took matters into her own hands.

After all, the only reason she had allowed the Evans to stay at the base in the first place was out of curiosity.

Now that her curiosity had been satisfied, she no longer felt the need to get close to the Evans. If Melody continued to cause trouble, she wouldn't hesitate to kick them out of the base, letting them fend for themselves elsewhere.

If they didn't make it, it wouldn't be her concern. After all, her plate was already full, and she didn't have the time or energy to deal with family drama and scheming. It felt like an insult to her intelligence to waste her efforts chasing after the Evans' affection, especially for someone so pampered, when she could be out there completing missions and earning system points.

The same woman who appeared so tough and ruthless was now peacefully sleeping in the passenger seat, looking surprisingly harmless and cute.