

Apocalypse 78

Chapter 78 Finding a Different Way

As Kisha guided the team through the center of the western district, they encountered sporadic resistance from zombies lurking in the alleys or hidden within buildings. Each member of the team engaged in battle, swiftly killing the zombie threats. However, amidst the chaos, Kisha and her team remained vigilant, ensuring to search for crystal cores within the zombie heads after each skirmish.

Even the newbies were instructed to inspect the zombies' heads for crystalline formations embedded in their brains before proceeding. Initially, they found the task unusually revolting. Despite having encountered and experienced numerous gruesome sights, the mushy texture of the brain and the nauseating stench of the zombie's decaying flesh was on another level entirely.

It took them some time to acclimate to the task.

Thus far, they had acquired an additional 3 crystal cores, bringing the overall total to 9, including the ones in Kisha's inventory. Searching for crystal cores after each battle became their routine, serving as both a rest and a crucial task. Afterward, they would resume their journey, repeating the process at each encounter.

Exhaustion settled in as they pressed on. Despite Sparrow's success in luring away most of the zombie horde, a significant number still obstructed their path, disrupting what should have been a relatively smooth journey. Even with Kisha carefully selecting the safest route, they found themselves facing more than two dozen zombies at every turn.

The situation was dire enough with most of the zombie horde lured away. If they hadn't succeeded in that endeavor, their predicament would have been exponentially worse. Time was a luxury they couldn't afford, with little respite between encounters as fresh waves of zombies seemed to flood in incessantly. To manage the relentless pressure, Duke and Kisha split the group into two teams.

Each team alternated between leading at the vanguard and resting at the rear, alleviating the constant strain and ensuring they could continue without succumbing to exhaustion.

The vanguard bore the brunt of the assault, absorbing roughly 75% of the pressure as they faced the onslaught head-on. Meanwhile, those at the rear handled the remaining 25%, affording them brief moments of respite amid the ongoing journey.

The relentless cycle persisted unabated. Among them, Vulture stood as the sole awakened ability user, stationed at the center to offer aid whenever necessary. Clutching the vial of black liquid given by Kisha, he had previously tested its effects when his spiritual energy level dwindled to a mere 10%.

Upon consuming the elixir, his spiritual energy level surged to 100%, rejuvenating not only his energy but also replenishing his stamina.

Kisha verified the potion's efficacy through her 'Eye of Truth', affirming its effectiveness. However, the cost was steep—1000 points per small vial. Uncertain of its long-term effects, especially given Vulture's current Level 0 status, she harbored concerns about its usefulness as they advanced in levels.

Additionally, there lingered worries about potential side effects or even the risk of addiction.

So she only gave Vulture and Sparrow few vials and warned them to only use it whenever necessary but to never be too reliant on it.

After their relentless efforts for half a day running around while piercing through the zombie-infested streets, Kisha and the rest have finally reached the center of the western district. They thought that they would finally have some rest but the situation was not what they thought it would.

Zombies were freely roaming about the central area, leaving Kisha puzzled as to how the seven men managed to navigate their way out of this perilous zone to gather supplies on the outskirts.

"What's happening?! There shouldn't be this much of zombies around here!!!" The one leading the seven-man codename: Bald Eagle, exclaimed, his eyes scanning the surroundings in disbelief.

"What do you mean?" Duke's expression turned grave, his voice dropping a few degrees colder.

"M-master... When we left 2 days ago to search for supplies as we told you, the central part wasn't this concentrated with zombies! There must have been something that happened!"

"Shit! Let's go!" Kisha almost shouted through gritted teeth. "The drones have noticed a cluster of zombies around that building!"

"No!!! That's where we left the others!" Without waiting, Bald Eagle sprinted through the streets in panic, gripped by fear.

But Duke clutched his shoulder, restraining him from running around on his own. He knew it would only result in his own death, keeping his own frantic thoughts from running amok. He then looked at Kisha, seeking an answer about what was happening around the building. However, Kisha only shook her head.

The bees couldn't differentiate between the living and the dead, so they needed to find a way to get closer to the building without drawing too much attention from the zombies and secure an exit for all of them.

Duke took a deep breath, consciously calming his nerves to prevent his judgment from being clouded by his emotions. He reminded himself of the importance of Kisha's safety as well.

"Have you identified any alternative routes that are less dangerous than this one?" Duke asked Kisha, seeking confirmation.

Kisha nodded, her expression serious as she responded. "I've dispatched the bees to scout the sewers, and they confirmed the presence of fewer zombies down there. However, it poses a greater risk for us to venture into the sewers. If we're detected by the zombies above, we could find ourselves trapped with no escape route." She exhaled slowly, attempting to steady her nerves amidst the tension.

Duke considered the options carefully, his gaze turning to Kisha for her input. She nodded in agreement with his unspoken question. "It's undoubtedly risky," she began, her voice measured. "But considering the overwhelming numbers aboveground, it seems our only viable entry point.

We'll need to proceed with utmost stealth and speed through the sewers to minimize the risk of drawing the zombies' attention." Her explanation was clear and detailed, emphasizing the importance of their approach.

"I think so too." Duke paused and then added. "Will we have an entrance to that building?"

Kisha furrowed her brow, her focus divided between awaiting the bees' response and handling any zombies that crossed their path. Even in conversation, they remained vigilant, ensuring their safety while scavenging for valuable zombie cores.

Kisha's eyes brightened, and she exclaimed, "The bees found one right at the building!" Her smile was infectious, bringing relief to everyone. They were all well aware of Kisha's remarkable Scarlet Queen Bee, which effectively commanded the ordinary bees, turning them into vigilant scouts that monitored their surroundings like a radar throughout the day.

Trusting Kisha's words filled them with hope, yet a gnawing worry persisted as they remained in the dark about the other's situation.

"Then we entrust ourselves to you," Duke said with a smile, his voice carrying a blend of seriousness and unwavering trust.

Kisha nodded in understanding before guiding them to the nearest manhole in the street. With a quick check for any lurking zombies, Kisha descended first. The damp and smelly sewer greeted her, its dimensions providing ample space—2 meters high and 3-4 meters wide—enough for all of them to maneuver comfortably.

Along the sides, elevated platforms provided dry passage, sparing them from the dirty water below. Once everyone descended, the last person ensured to seal the manhole, preventing any unexpected zombie encounters that could complicate their journey ahead.

They wasted no time and sprinted at full speed under Kisha's lead. The yellow lamps above cast a steady glow, illuminating their path as they navigated the sewers. Duke's team, renowned as the elites among elites, moved with unparalleled stealth. Their footsteps barely made a sound, akin to the silent tread of a cat.

Encountering zombies ahead, a member of the group would swiftly rush forward, executing precise, lethal maneuvers before the zombies could detect them. Each encounter resembled an intricate assassination mission, with the team adeptly lowering the zombies to the ground without a sound—all the while scouring for crystal cores.

Throughout their journey in the sewers, this pattern persisted. They encountered only a handful of zombies along the way, many clad in orange uniforms adorned with neon reflector vests, likely maintenance workers or laborers toiling in the depths.

Civilians-turned-zombies were a rare sight; those attempting to flee through the sewers likely succumbed to bites before reaching safety, transforming into zombies within the very refuge they sought.

Kisha and the others didn't linger on this grim reality; time was of the essence. Within a brief ten minutes, they halted beneath a steel ladder that leads to another manhole above.

"It's just up ahead. Let's take a quick breather while I send some bees to gather intel." Kisha's words came between gasps. They'd been running around for half a day nonstop while fighting, her body wasn't as strong as she was used to and this was already her limit while she was feeling lethargic and hot. She felt her blood pumping to her brain as if it was about to explode.

She did not know if she had pushed her body beyond the limit.