

## Apocalypse 80

### Chapter 80 Are They Alright?

As Vulture attempted to straighten up, drawing closer to Tristan while wincing in pain, those in the manhole keenly observed the shifting dynamics between them and they noticed the person standing before Vulture.

"Tristan, we're back!" Bald Eagle exclaimed with excitement, emerging eagerly from the manhole.

"Bal...Bald Eagle?!" Tristan's voice trembled once more, taken aback by the unexpected appearance of Bald Eagle and his team. They hadn't seen them return from their supply run the previous day, leading them to assume the worst—that those who ventured outside were lost.

Plans were already underway to verify their fate when this unforeseen turn of events unfolded, leaving them caught in this precarious situation.

Before Tristan could contain his excitement, he caught sight of Duke's silhouette emerging from the manhole, and his heart leaped with even greater anticipation. "Master!" he exclaimed, rushing toward Duke. However, as he drew closer, he sensed something amiss and his mind immediately jumped to the worst conclusion.

"Has Master been bitten?!" His voice, filled with anger and fear, reverberated through the basement, drawing the attention of everyone present as they struggled to comprehend his words.

Vulture gasped as he tried to adjust his breathing due to the pain brought by his broken ribs from being beaten to a pulp by Tristan. "Tristan, what are you saying? Master could never have been bitten."

Tristan furrowed his brow at Vulture's words, acknowledging Duke's formidable strength and skill, traits that would typically render him impervious to even the slightest scratch from the feeble zombies. However, it was the relentless stamina and overwhelming numbers of the zombies that posed the true threat.

Observing Duke's abnormal behavior, Tristan couldn't ignore the signs reminiscent of those who had been bitten and were on the brink of turning into zombies themselves.

"Rest assured, he's not turning into a zombie; he's undergoing awakening," a clear, cold female voice echoed from the entrance of the manhole.

As her words sank in, gasps escaped everyone's lips as they turned their attention back to Duke, then to Kisha, who struggled to breathe under the weight of the same condition afflicting her body.

"Does that mean you're also awakening, young madam?" Vulture sought clarification.

More than the revelation about awakening, Tristan was taken aback by Vulture addressing someone as "young madam," especially in Duke's presence. He surmised that Duke might not have noticed, given his current state of distress.

As Tristan struggled to place the familiar yet unsettling voice of the woman before him, he wracked his brain trying to recall where he might have encountered it. Despite his efforts, he couldn't place the voice or the face. Something nagged at him, a sense of familiarity he couldn't quite grasp.

Then, as if a light had dawned, his gaze shifted to Vulture's face, realizing it didn't resemble his usual countenance. Suddenly, a memory surfaced—the image of a beautiful woman visiting Duke's office, speaking of the most outlandish ideas he had ever heard. Slowly, the pieces began to fall into place, and Tristan started to comprehend the situation unfolding before him.

Kisha and Duke were feeling sluggish and their brain felt like it was about to explode anytime, their brain's function also slowed down they couldn't even think properly anymore, while their whole body felt like breaking and disintegrating into dust.

The stronger the awakening, the more excruciating the process becomes. What Kisha and Duke were enduring now was ten times more agonizing than Keith, Sparrow, or Vulture had ever experienced during their awakenings. However, it also signified a greater potential.

Interestingly, both Sparrow and Vulture had passed out from the intensity of their awakening pains, resulting in fragmented memories of the event.

Sensing her limits approaching, Kisha waved her hand, conjuring numerous backpacks filled with supplies she had meticulously prepared in advance, materializing them seemingly out of thin air.

Buckets of ice joined the array, ensuring the perishable items remained fresh so they could use it too to lessen Duke and Kisha's temperature to make sure that their brain wouldn't be fried by the overwhelming hot temperature of their body. Amidst the flurry of conjurations, she didn't overlook summoning Bell, directing her attention towards Vulture with a purposeful gesture.

Struggling to utter even a few simple words, Kisha collapsed suddenly, her strength failing her. Duke, moving sluggishly, managed to raise his gaze just in time to witness Kisha about to hit the ground. Instinctively, his body reacted, lunging forward to catch her in his arms.

As he cradled her close, he felt his own strength waning, and with a heavy heart, he succumbed to unconsciousness, embracing Kisha tightly as they both fell into the depths of sleep.

A stunned silence enveloped the room as everyone struggled to process what had just transpired. After a brief moment, their collective gaze shifted towards Vulture, the only one among them who had experienced a similar awakening. With uncertainty clouding their thoughts and no clear course of action in sight, they turned to him, hoping for guidance in this bewildering situation.

It dawned on Vulture what needed to be done. "Quickly, let's move. Carry Master and Young Madam to a safe area. We need to help them lower their body temperature to prevent overheating while they're unconscious."

It was only then that everyone sprang into action. The seven, led by Bald Eagle, attempted to separate Duke from Kisha so they could carry them individually. However, they encountered unexpected difficulty as Duke clung to Kisha with a grip so tight it seemed as though his life depended on it.

Their bond was palpable, and the group hesitated, fearing to inadvertently harm either of them if they were forcefully separated.

Their gazes met in a shared sense of defeat. "What should we do?" someone voiced the question lingering in the air.

"Stay put. We made a makeshift stretcher up above. I'll fetch it so we can transport them to safety," Tristan declared hastily before vanishing into the shadows, leaving the rest behind.

As they waited for Tristan's return, the others decided to inspect the contents of the backpacks. After assessing their supplies, they retrieved towels and carefully arranged clusters of ice in the center. Placing these makeshift ice packs on top of Kisha and Duke's heads, they hoped to alleviate some of the heat that threatened to overwhelm the two.

The ice melted at an alarming rate as if exposed to an intense heat source. They found themselves constantly wringing out the soaked towels and replacing them with fresh ice, a cycle they repeated tirelessly until Tristan finally arrived with the stretcher.

Tristan returned with a couple of eager helpers to assist with the task. Prior to returning to Duke and the others, Tristan had already briefed the Winters and their subordinates on the situation. They were both relieved and concerned about Duke's condition, prompting them to swiftly dispatch Tristan with additional support to aid in carrying everything back.

Duke and Kisha were carefully placed on the stretcher, but their weight posed a concern, raising the risk of potential accidents. To mitigate this, four individuals assisted in carrying the stretcher, ensuring they kept a vigilant watch over their precious cargo. Meanwhile, the others carried the backpacks and buckets.

Tristan took it upon himself to support Vulture, who was struggling due to his broken ribs, offering a helping hand as they moved forward together.

Bell perched on Vulture's head in her smaller form, ensuring her true form remained hidden to prevent alarming the others.

Shortly afterward, they ascended to the floor above, where Vulture realized they were still in the basement. It became evident that there were multiple layers of the basement, deepening the complexity of their surroundings.

As they entered the room adjacent to the staircase, the previously quiet atmosphere was shattered by the sight of the figure on the stretcher.

"My son..." A feeble voice croaked the moment Duke came into view. The woman attempted to rise, only to be thwarted by her weakened legs.

"Sweetheart, don't strain yourself," the man said gently as he steadied the beautiful woman, whose face bore evident signs of stress and weakness. Casting a meaningful glance at Tristan, he silently implored for an explanation of the situation. An elderly man also stepped forward, eager to catch a better glimpse of Duke's face.

"Patriarch, Mr. and Mrs. Winters, please do not worry. Master is undergoing his awakening," Tristan explained calmly. While ascending to that floor, he urged Vulture to share more details about their situation and how they ended up there. Although Vulture had already summarized everything, Tristan was aware of Kisha's significant role in aiding their master.

Tristan's words left the Winters in astonishment. Though his explanation about the awakening and related matters lacked detail, they understood its potential significance. They recognized that even a basic understanding could prove invaluable in their current situation.