

## Apocalypse 816

### Chapter 816 Kickstarting The Trade 3

Kisha shook her head gently. “If you try going to the hospital, you won’t make it. That place is a death zone now, crawling with zombies.” It was true — before the apocalypse, hospitals were crowded, and when the outbreak happened, they were some of the first places to fall.

“But you could try checking our base,” Kisha offered. “We also have doctors there who might be able to help. They could check if there’s an alternative medicine or treatment for him.”

Then, as if remembering something, she slipped her hand into her pocket, secretly accessing her inventory. She pulled out a small vial filled with glowing blue liquid. “Or you could try this.” she said, holding it out. It’s the healing potion. But she’s not sure if it’ll help with a heart condition — wounds and heart diseases aren’t the same — but Kisha could only hope it might make a difference.

The woman accepted the vial of blue liquid as though it were a precious treasure, cradling it carefully in her hands. Her eyes shimmered with emotion as she turned to Kisha, overwhelmed. No words of gratitude felt sufficient to express what this moment meant to her.

And if the base truly had doctors, there might finally be hope for her son. That thought alone filled her with a renewed urgency—more than anything, she wanted to reach the base.

“Miss, thank you so much!” she said, voice trembling with sincerity. She moved as if to embrace Kisha, but Kisha instinctively stepped back, her body tensing. Physical affection wasn’t something she was comfortable with—Duke and close family were the rare exceptions.

The woman hesitated, quickly pulling back with an apologetic smile, but Kisha offered a gentle explanation, softening her stance so the woman wouldn't feel embarrassed or rejected.

"I'm sorry... it's a psychological thing," Kisha said simply. She didn't offer further explanation—there was no need to dive into the who, the why, or the how. They weren't close, and the truth was already in what she had said.

After everything she had endured across her past lives, Kisha had developed scars—deep ones that weren't visible but always there. Like a porcelain doll shattered and pieced back together again and again, she might appear whole, but the cracks remained. Restoration didn't erase the memory of being broken.

Sometimes, she could be unhinged, sharp, unpredictable—other times, warm, even gentle. But every side of her was real, a reflection of the long and brutal road she had walked. Kisha had learned to embrace these parts of herself—not as something to be proud of, necessarily, but as evidence. Evidence that she had survived. That she still existed. That she had clawed her way through the darkness and was still standing.

Others might misunderstand her, judge her, or whisper behind her back. But she wasn't sorry—not for who she had become, nor for how she chose to protect her fragile self.

After all, people might say they understand you, offer sympathy, or speak as if they know your pain—but the truth is, unless they've walked through the same fire, they can never truly grasp what you've endured. Real understanding only comes from experience, from surviving the same kind of hardship.

This small act of kindness Kisha extended to the woman—it wasn't just compassion. It was a reflection of what she herself once wished someone had done for her. In her past lives, during her darkest moments, she had longed for someone to reach out, to help when she was on the edge of despair.

Now, she was giving others the chance she never had—the chance not to live with regret. Because she knew the torment of falling short, of believing that just one more step, one more effort, might have saved a loved one... and living with the ache of being too late.

It's exactly because she understood that pain so intimately that she could now be kind. That she could be generous. Her kindness wasn't born from naivety, unlike before—it came from surviving the worst and choosing not to let it harden her heart.

But she had also learned when to harden her heart—when it was necessary to protect herself and those she cared for. These lessons came from living through many lives, carrying countless pains and regrets. She acted according to the situation, always choosing what was best for herself and the people she cherished, without feeling guilt over those decisions.

Looking at the woman before her—terrified to even step outside, yet still brave enough to seek medicine for her son—Kisha felt the weight of her urgency, her desperation, and her pain. All she could do was offer as much help as she could and hope it would be enough.

The woman, seeing the sincerity in Kisha's face, shook her head gently before nodding. "There's no need to apologize for something so small. I'm truly grateful to you. I owe you more than I can ever repay. If you ever need me in the future, don't hesitate to ask—no matter what it is. I would even give my life for you," she said, her voice steady with conviction.

For someone once paralyzed by fear to make such a promise, it spoke volumes. Her words revealed just how desperate her situation truly was. Her son must be on the brink of death, and she had clearly reached the end of her rope.

After a brief rest, Kisha led the group back out once more. They resumed clearing the path ahead, pushing deeper into the city. Since the woman wasn't suited for combat, she was assigned to collect the crystal cores from the fallen zombies taken down by both sides. Meanwhile, Kisha took up the rear guard, keeping a vigilant watch.

As they progressed, the distance grew—fifteen kilometers into the city—and the number of zombies steadily increased. Fatigue began to weigh heavily on everyone, their movements growing sluggish.

Kisha quickly signaled for silence, forbidding any loud talking or shouting. Instead, they switched to hand signals to communicate as they advanced, with Kisha continuously monitoring their location on the map, adjusting their course as needed.

Kisha carefully scouted for routes with fewer zombies, guiding the group through paths that were less densely packed. Everyone noticed that even though they were deep within the city, the zombie hordes they encountered were manageable, not overwhelming, but still enough to provide a steady supply of crystal cores for trading at the base.

Kisha was subtly directing them along mostly deserted routes, balancing safety with opportunity. She ensured there were enough zombies along the way to harvest the cores they needed, without putting the group at undue risk.

When the situation began to intensify, Kisha avoided direct combat herself. Instead, she quietly dispatched the Scarlet Bees to thin out the incoming zombies in a secluded corner, hidden from the group's view. This clever tactic kept these people from being overwhelmed while allowing the Scarlet Bees to collect crystal cores from their kills.

Because of her careful planning, Kisha didn't really need to fight at all. However, she knew that if everything went too smoothly, the group might become complacent. That was something she couldn't

allow—if they started to believe navigating City B was easy, they could end up getting themselves killed once they left the base and returned to their original camp.