

## Apocalypse 824

### Chapter 824 Kickstarting The Trade 11

After the idea took root in her mind, Kisha felt a strong urge to try it out. However, aside from herself, no one in the base had awakened an ability similar to that of a ‘Heavenly Chef’ just yet. Still, there were a few artisans whose talents revolved around food—like this cured meat vendor—which gave her hope.

For now, she decided to observe how things would unfold and wait patiently for the second wave of awakened ability users to emerge. One by one, more people would awaken, and perhaps among them, she would find those rare support-type ability users—ones who could enhance others through food, medicine, or other means.

Such abilities, especially when scaled up, could be game-changers for her frontline warriors. The potential to grant buffs and enhancements through support roles was too valuable to ignore.

But since it was still just a plan, she tucked the thought away for later and returned her focus to the current state of the marketplace.

“Sir! This really tastes amazing, and I can genuinely feel my fatigue easing. There’s a noticeable surge of energy flowing through my body—not overwhelming, but definitely there,” Jason exclaimed, patting his chest with surprise and excitement.

While part of his recovery was thanks to Hera’s ‘Healing Dome’, the strength boost he was experiencing now was undeniably from the cured meat. Curious to test his newfound energy, Jason reached for a heavy barrel nearly as tall as his waist. With both hands, he lifted it—something he would have struggled with before without the buff. It wasn’t effortless, but the difference in his strength was obvious.

His eyes lit up with newfound hope. During their last battles against zombie hordes, Jason had noticed the enemies growing stronger and faster. If things continued as they were, they'd eventually be overwhelmed. But now—now there was something that could tip the scales in their favor.

These kinds of support-type special items could be a real lifeline, especially for those constantly risking their lives on the front lines.

“Boss! Boss, how much for these?” Jason asked eagerly, eyes gleaming with anticipation.

The stall owner scratched the back of his neck, looking a bit unsure. The cured meat had been classified as a special item. Before, he would've offered it for one crystal core per half kilo, but now—with its confirmed buffing effect—he wasn't so confident about the price anymore. Hesitantly, he glanced over at Kisha for guidance.

Noticing the stall owner's uncertain and uneasy expression, Kisha fell silent for a moment, deep in thought.

Considering the cost of ingredients, the curing process, and the manpower involved, one crystal core for half a kilo was already a bargain. However, now that it provided a combat-enhancing buff, the value had clearly increased. Pricing it at two and a half crystal cores per half kilo seemed reasonable under the new circumstances. This would naturally push buyers to make a choice—either purchase something else worth half a core to make up the difference or buy a full kilogram for five crystal cores.

After all, crystal cores couldn't be split in half, and pricing half a kilo at three full cores might seem too steep. A compromise had to be struck—one that was fair to both seller and buyer.

So, Kisha gave a simple but firm answer. “Five crystal cores per kilogram.”

Even the stall owner was stunned. His eyes widened in shock—five crystal cores was no small amount. When converted into work points, that could easily range from one to three thousand points, maybe even more depending on the exchange rate.

After all, crystal cores held significantly more value than work points. And when it came to pricing for outsiders, everything was already marked up. Take the cafeteria for example—Jason and the others thought that spending one crystal core for a full set meal was a good deal. But for HOPE Base residents, that same crystal core could buy them two decent meals.

This pricing strategy wasn’t just about profit—it was about sustainability, fairness to residents, and maintaining balance between internal economy and external trade.

Jason also thought the price was a bit steep—but then again, it wasn’t like he could get these kinds of items anywhere else. Right now, this cured meat was one-of-a-kind. Besides, he felt it was only right to give Kisha some face.

If it were anyone else, they might have already started doubting the legitimacy of the product—after all, it sounded too good to be true. But Jason felt the effect. He knew he wasn’t being scammed. The special item was real.

Still, five crystal cores was no small sum. For awakened ability users, that kind of resource might be easier to come by. But for regular humans like him and his team, every single crystal core was earned

through sweat, blood, and risking their lives. Even so, Jason knew that with this kind of buff, they'd have a better chance of surviving future battles and gathering more cores.

After a brief hesitation, he looked at the stall owner and asked firmly, "Boss, how many kilograms can I get from this whole hind leg? I'll buy it."

His companions looked at him in alarm, clearly worried about the cost and whether it was worth it. But Jason turned to them with determination in his eyes. "Don't worry. You'll see later—and understand why I want this so badly."

The stall owner was beaming, grinning from ear to ear as he responded excitedly, "If I cut the cured meat into travel-friendly strips and remove the bone, it'll come to about 15 kilograms. That would be 75 crystal cores in total. Do you want it? I can start cutting it right away."

Jason nodded eagerly. Without hesitation, he pulled out a cloth bundle from his bag—the one he used to store his crystal cores. One of his brothers stepped in to help him count, and together they carefully tallied up 75 crystal cores. Once done, they looked around and gently placed the shimmering cores into a porcelain bowl on the stall counter, making sure none fell or rolled away. It was such a large number that they didn't want to risk miscounting.

The stall owner let out a hearty laugh, completely overjoyed. To think his very first sale would be this big! With that kind of income, he could restock on raw ingredients from the Supply Center and prepare even more batches of cured meat to sell in the future. His mind was already racing with plans as he set to work.

With practiced hands, he sliced the cured meat neatly into strips, carefully removing every bit of bone. He then began layering the meat on clean cloth—twenty slices per layer—placing another cloth on top

after each one. He continued the process until he had scraped all the meat from the hind leg. Once done, he brought out a scale he'd purchased from the Supply Center to weigh the final product.

To everyone's surprise, the total weight was even a bit more than 15 kilograms. But the stall owner simply smiled and waved it off.

"Consider the extra my gift to you—for being my first customer and for buying in bulk," he said warmly.

"Brother..." the stall owner continued with a grin. "I'm throwing in a few freebies for you. When you come back to our base next time, don't forget to drop by and check out more of my products."