

Apocalypse 826

Chapter 826 Kickstarting The Trade 13

“Brother,” the stall owner said, holding the meat on the cloth out with a grin, “as you can see, this one gives over 7 kilograms — that’s a total of 35 crystal cores. I’ll even throw in a few freebies. What do you think?” he added, pulling another box from beneath his stall with a salesman’s confidence.

Adam simply nodded and began counting out the crystal cores. Hearing about the freebies and seeing Adam’s approval, the other warriors patiently started lining up behind his group, eager to buy some of the cured meat to take home. They knew it would make a perfect snack to keep them energized while on patrol or duty.

After buying the cured meat, Adam and Jason’s team stopped by the pickled vegetable stall and purchased a few large jars—three boxes in total—each worth 20 crystal cores. They also picked up some utensils for 5 crystal cores. As they continued through the market, they passed by Mrs. Winters’ newly opened clothing store, where they bought several thick jackets, blankets, and additional clothes.

Like many others, Mrs. Winters generously threw in a few extra garments along with some fabric and a sewing kit, allowing the women in their camp to make more clothes tailored to fit everyone, especially the children.

Their purchases quickly piled up, and soon they made their way to the Supply Center to buy canned goods and other essentials. When Kisha brought them there, they were genuinely surprised. The Supply Center looked just like a fully stocked supermarket, complete with fresh produce and various necessities. The place was bustling with people, and seeing it firsthand confirmed what they had only heard before—Kisha’s base was truly self-sufficient and rich in resources.

They originally came to buy grains, flour, salt, and canned goods—but what caught their attention were the large, vibrant vegetables on display. Some stalls even had free samples laid out, just like in pre-apocalypse supermarkets. As they were browsing, a woman approached them with a tray, offering slices of watermelon.

“Would you like to try some?” she asked with a friendly smile. “Our fruits and vegetables here have a much longer shelf life than usual. Take this watermelon, for example—it can stay fresh for up to two more weeks without drying out or becoming overripe after you bring it home. And the taste? It’s sweeter and juicier than anything you’d find in supermarkets before the apocalypse.”

She then glanced at Kisha and added proudly, “And best of all, this one was homegrown—right in the City Lord’s backyard.”

Kisha nearly choked on her saliva when she heard that. It was true she’d let the rumor spread that Marcus was farming behind the villa—using the backyard and even part of the forest to grow crops and raise a few livestock.

But anyone with sense would know that patch of land wasn’t nearly large enough to produce this volume of vegetables and meat. She had no idea what else Mr. Winters had been telling people, but judging by how confidently the story was being passed around, it seemed everyone believed it without question—and was happily spreading the word.

Unfortunately, the vegetables Marcus grew in the backyard were nothing like the ones being sold here. Sure, they were a bit larger and tastier than average, thanks to his ‘Green Thumb’ Gift, but they were still ordinary compared to the produce from her territory space. Those were in a different league—enhanced by special buffs and grown in a completely pollution-free environment.

Jason, meanwhile, had already grabbed a toothpick from the tray and stabbed a piece of watermelon. The moment he took a bite, his eyes lit up—it was incredibly sweet and juicy. Without hesitation, he speared a few more chunks, nodding in approval. The woman with the tray smiled awkwardly as she turned to offer some to Adam and the others, just as Jason polished off the last of the samples.

The woman quickly returned to the stall, where several large watermelons were displayed, and sliced the remaining half of the featured watermelon to offer Adam and the others a taste.

Mr. Winters had come up with this idea to promote the fresh crops and produce available at the supply center to outsiders. After all, while the canned goods and preserved foods were abundant, their supply was still limited.

In contrast, the crops and fresh produce from the territory space were practically limitless. So, to encourage these visitors to buy more than just canned goods, Mr. Winters wanted to showcase the vegetables, fruits, meats, and animal products like eggs and dairy.

Sure enough, as soon as Adam and the others tasted the watermelon, they all felt their thirst instantly quenched. At the same time, the fruit was incredibly sweet and refreshing, perfect for the hottest part of the day when the weather was at its peak. As long as they stored the vegetables properly, they could enjoy them over time while still gathering more crystal cores to exchange later.

To put their minds at ease, Kisha added, “You don’t need to worry about the shelf life or storing the vegetables and fruits sold here. All the animal produce and crops are already genetically modified, which is why they last longer than normal and don’t easily wither or spoil, even under extreme heat or cold caused by climate change.”

“Just find a good storage spot, and you can enjoy your supplies slowly without needing a fridge. As for the meat, it can last at least a day or two without going bad. But if you have access to a refrigerator and

generator, you can also buy gas from here and use it in your generator, so you can store meat properly and bring it back to your camp without any problem.”

Kisha wasn't exaggerating—thanks to the buffs within her territory space, the crops truly were genetically enhanced, making them more resilient and longer-lasting. That explained why her crops were bigger, tastier, and could be kept longer. Although they weren't spiritual crops per se, they still retained residual spiritual energy, which made all this possible.

Hearing that Kisha was also willing to sell them some gas, one of the most scarce and essential resources, Jason and Adam felt deeply touched and grateful. They knew how difficult it was to get more gas these days. The longer time passed, the scarcer it became, as it wasn't something easily found anymore. Most nearby gasoline stations were already dried up, with survivors hoarding whatever little fuel remained.

Gas was crucial for so many things—cooking, transportation, and powering electricity. Jason and Adam were trying to use their limited supply sparingly, reserving it mostly for transportation. Sometimes, they had to move from car to car, siphoning gas from abandoned vehicles just to gather enough to keep going. In fact, that's how they managed to drive up here to City B from where they came from.

The fact that Kisha was also willing to sell gas left both Jason and Adam shocked and impressed. They hadn't expected her base to be so well-stocked—it felt like a one-stop shop for everything a survivor could possibly need. This realization lit up their eyes, though they quickly remembered that the crystal cores they currently had weren't nearly enough to buy everything they wanted.

Still, now they had a clear idea of what to prioritize once they managed to gather more crystal cores. Kisha, for her part, already had a good grasp of their current spending limits and knew they likely wouldn't waste their precious crystal cores on meat just yet, especially without a generator to power up electricity to store it properly back at their camp.

But that didn't stop her from planting the idea in their minds. After all, the biogas facility wasn't ready yet, but once it was, they'd be able to produce liquid gas consistently—and by then, her offer wouldn't just be talk, but a long-term advantage they'd want to return for.

So, Jason and Adam decided to prioritize buying more vegetables and fruits, since they were cheaper than canned goods. They also bought two sacks of rice, each weighing 60 kg, and two sacks of flour, 50 kg each. In addition, they purchased a box of canned luncheon meat, a box of pork and beans, a few packs of energy bars and biscuits, and several boxes of cup noodles. Altogether, they had gathered a decent amount of supplies—just enough to fill the back of their truck.

However, once they were done shopping, they found themselves out of crystal cores—and facing a major problem: their vehicle was out of gas. It had been left outside the city, and now they had no means of transporting their goods.

Their original plan had been to retrieve the truck, which had the goods they found inside, and use it to haul their supplies, but that vehicle was still parked several dozen kilometers away. With so much cargo on hand and no transportation, they were in a bind.

Seeing the lost look on their faces, Kisha stepped in with a reassuring smile. “I remember mentioning that I'd send some people to help you retrieve the truckload of supplies earlier—that offer still stands. And as for transporting the goods out of the city, how about this? As a special service for being our first visitors, I'll have my people help you find a reliable vehicle outside and escort you safely out of the city.”

Of course, Kisha had her reasons for being so generous. It was part of her mission to ensure the success of this trade. Yet, even after Adam and Jason had completed their shopping, she still hadn't received any system notification confirming the mission's completion. That could only mean one thing—at least one group had to return to their camp safely before the mission was considered complete. So, it was essential she made sure they left the city without incident.