

## Apocalypse 84

### Chapter 84 Rusty

"But, how can you be sure that her blade will not be pointed at us eventually?" Mr. Winter suddenly asked, he was well aware of the darkness of the human heart, especially now that they knew that there was no more justice to hold them accountable, morals would surely drop to nothingness now that nothing was holding them grounded.

He can't afford to let his only son be misled by someone or be taken advantage of by blackhearted people, especially through seduction.

Now that everything has become so dangerous, they tend to think of the worst-case scenario before anything else, they have no leisure to think otherwise because that might lead to their own downfall.

They couldn't shake their doubts, especially given Vulture's evident reverence for Kisha, a reverence previously reserved for Duke alone. It seemed as though Vulture regarded her with a godlike reverence, treating her words as if they were sacred creed.

Upon hearing Mr. Winters's words, Vulture's gaze faltered momentarily, but he quickly composed himself, recognizing that persistently defending Kisha in front of the Winters might prove counterproductive. "Don't worry, Patriarch and Mr. Winters. You can make your own judgment about Miss Aldens once she awakens," Vulture assured.

His expression remained neutral, but there was a subtle intensity in his eyes and tone that hinted at a deeper conviction.

The father and son of the Winters exchanged resigned glances, sensing that Vulture and the others were deeply entrenched in their beliefs, which made them wary around Kisha.

After a few moments, the food was prepared. Tristan served the Winters first, despite their days of hunger, they didn't immediately dive into the meal. Their elegance and composure remained undisturbed, a testament to their refined demeanor.

Their noble bearing remained evident as the Patriarch and Mr. Winters gracefully accepted their portions of food, treating them with the reverence one might reserve for a Michelin-starred feast fit for royalty. Mr. Winters received his portion alongside his wife's.

Without delay, he set aside his own meal and immediately attended to his wife, ensuring she was well-fed and had taken her medicine before partaking of his own portion.

Mr. Winters indeed epitomizes the essence of a devoted husband. Even prior to the onset of the apocalypse, he lavished attention on his wife and valued her opinions above all others. Although the men of the Winters family may appear stern and authoritative, they wholeheartedly devote themselves to their partners, demonstrating their love through actions rather than mere words.

While they may not express affection through romantic gestures or sweet whispers, their unwavering commitment speaks volumes about the depth of their love and devotion.

Even in the current circumstances, Mr. Winters continues to regard his wife with tenderness and places her well-being and safety above all else. This is why he remains cautious about Kisha. While he harbors concerns about the possibility of his son being manipulated or taken advantage of, his greatest fear is endangering his wife, who is the most vulnerable member of their group.

After everyone finished eating, silence enveloped them once more. No words were exchanged as they simply allowed their weary bodies to rest, drawing strength from the tumultuous and stressful events of the past 24 hours.

As they rested, their bodies remained vigilant. A few guards took shifts to watch over Kisha and Duke, ensuring their comfort by replacing the towels on their foreheads at intervals. Each guard took turns ensuring that everyone had the opportunity for proper rest.

After four hours of sleep, Tristan resumed his patrol, scouring for alternative exits from the building and assessing the situation on the ground floor. Suspicion lingered in his mind regarding the connection between who's been after them and the sudden influx of zombies swarming the building from all angles.

Despite only staying in the building for only four days, the perimeter only has more than a dozen zombies lurking around every corner. And it was manageable for his group, the situation escalated drastically just two hours after Bald Eagle and the others departed for a supply run, with the streets suddenly brimming with zombies.

Tristan's diligence in securing the perimeter, his habit of meticulously inspecting every corner and crevice of their hideout, proved crucial. It was this vigilance that alerted him to the sudden shift in the surroundings, giving him the opportunity to swiftly relocate the Winters to a safer location.

Had he not been so thorough, they might have remained unaware of the danger until it was too late, trapped and vulnerable on the upper floors, facing imminent demise.

In light of the situation, it's probable that their enemies have a good grasp of their whereabouts. The fact that Duke and the others managed to infiltrate their hideout was troubling enough. Tristan's eyes

narrowed with concern. Instead of heading to the ground floor, he dashed towards the lower level of the basement, desperately hoping that his suspicions were unfounded.

As Tristan reached the lower level of the basement, he observed that everything seemed unchanged, with the same eerie silence prevailing as before. Letting out a sigh of relief, he momentarily relaxed. However, just as he did, his heart skipped a beat so forcefully it was almost painful.

As he surveyed the basement once more, finding nothing amiss, Tristan attributed his sudden unease to concerns about the Winters or the Madam. Turning to head back, his hand on the door, he heard the wind whistle in his ears, a sound out of place in the confined space.

"SHIT!" Tristan wasn't accustomed to cursing, his reserved nature setting him apart from his comrades and earning him Duke's trust as his aide. But this time, a curse escaped his lips as he narrowly avoided a sneak attack from above. The assassin likely clung to the pipes overhead, waiting for Tristan to let his guard down before striking.

Tristan avoided the attack by flipping to the side but did not step too far from the door, afraid that the assassin would head upstairs and see the Winters there when they are currently vulnerable.

They engaged in a silent duel, their minds locked in a battle of anticipation and strategy. Neither flinched nor moved a muscle as they exchanged mental blows, each seeking a vulnerability in the other. Tension hung heavy in the air as they locked eyes, their focus razor-sharp.

They stood locked in their silent standoff, unaware of how much time had passed in their tense exchange.

Creak-

"Tristan? What are you doing here?" One of their group members asked, bewildered, after he opened the door and descended the stairs. His confusion provided the assassin with a split-second opening, and in that brief window, the assailant seized the opportunity, lunging at the unsuspecting newcomer.

Tristan swiftly intercepted the assassin's attack, positioning himself protectively in front of the young man. As the tension escalated, another voice rang out from behind. "What's happening here?" The tremble in the young man's voice reverberated in Tristan's ears.

The assassin's eyes gleamed with malice, a smug smirk curling his lips as he lunged once more at Tristan. It seemed his recklessness stemmed from feeling outnumbered, yet Tristan sensed something amiss. With little time to ponder, he swiftly positioned himself defensively, intent on shielding the young man from harm.

"Ack!"

Thud-

A muffled groan echoed behind Tristan even before the assassin reached him. This sudden noise caused the assailant to halt his movement, his smug smirk fading into a dissatisfied frown as he glanced back, clearly unsettled by the unexpected sound.

"Only a week apart, and you've already gone rusty," Vulture's voice echoed behind Tristan, his breathing ragged and punctuated by panting. Each exhale reverberated through the silent space of the basement.

Tristan's body tensed as Vulture's words hit him as if a sudden realization had struck him. His pupils quivered imperceptibly, and his throat tightened with dryness. "What brings you here?" Tristan's question cut through the air, his gaze never leaving the assassin's form as Vulture loomed behind him.

A heavy silence enveloped the room, broken only by the sound of Vulture's weary sigh. It was unclear whether it signaled relief or exhaustion, but his words soon pierced the quietness. "I merely chased a rat scurrying about," he remarked with a hint of both resignation and disdain in his voice.

Tristan couldn't ignore the weight of Vulture's implications. The abrupt shift in the assassin's demeanor spoke volumes, a stark reminder of how close Tristan had come to peril through his lapse in vigilance. The realization stung—he had almost paid dearly for his brief lapse, misled by a misplaced trust in the figure standing behind him.

Little did he know, that Tristan's misstep could have had catastrophic consequences. Had he met his end at that moment, the assassin and the traitor would undoubtedly have seized the opportunity to strike at the heart of the Winters' operation.

With a mole in their midst, their defenses would be compromised, making it all too easy for their enemies to catch them unaware and unleash devastation upon their entire team.

It's almost as if they were lying in wait, timing their enemy's final strike to coincide with Duke's arrival, aiming to deal with them all once and for all.