

Apocalypse 849

Chapter 849 A New Training Ground?

Kisha and the others continued their routine within the territory space, only stepping outside when necessary to maintain appearances and avoid suspicion. Inside, they each focused on their respective tasks, working diligently. Kisha, in particular, used the time to meditate and keep a low profile while she waited for the punishment tied to her failed mission to pass. She hadn't expected the consequences of letting the system seal her awakened ability to be so burdensome, or so dangerous. It required her full concentration and stillness to endure it safely.

Seeing her like this, withdrawn and silent, deeply troubled Duke. Concern etched across his face each day, he took it upon himself to care for her in the best way he knew how: by cooking.

Every meal, he prepared something new, pouring all his effort into lifting her spirits through food. One day, he even ventured out to the sea and returned with fresh tuna, determined to give Kisha a full omakase dining experience. He served her tuna sashimi, tuna sushi, grilled tuna head, tuna miso soup with seaweed, and more. By the end of it, Kisha felt like she'd feasted on an entire tuna.

Duke had recreated every tuna-based dish he remembered from the Japanese fine dining restaurant he'd visited before the apocalypse, consulting both his memory and the cookbook stored on his tablet. All of it, just to make her feel cared for.

The rest of the tuna was shared with Hugo, Marcus, and the kids, who all enjoyed a hearty evening meal together. Kisha's grandparents had also returned from a day spent walking around the HOPE Base. They genuinely enjoyed their time exploring the area, especially talking with the elderly residents.

Thanks to Grandma Alden's awakened ability, Home Maker, everyone around her naturally felt calm and at ease. Her warm and gentle presence left a strong first impression, and despite it being their first time at the base, both she and Grandpa Alden were quickly welcomed by the community. No one suspected

anything unusual, which allowed Grandma Alden to comfortably mingle and converse with anyone during her free time.

To make things more convenient for her grandparents and her brother when traveling between the HOPE Base and the hidden base, Kisha permanently opened a portal in the forest behind her villa. However, she wasn't reckless, just like in the hidden base, she surrounded the forest with protective restrictions. Anyone who tried to enter without her permission would find themselves wandering in loops, eventually pushed back to the forest's edge and unable to locate the portal.

With this setup, Kisha's territory space became a secure connector between the two distant strongholds, ensuring both safety and accessibility without compromising secrecy.

Although Kisha had already completed the trading mission, one crucial mission remained, and time was slipping through her fingers. If she didn't act soon, she risked failing that mission as well, and failure meant only one thing: game over. Death.

Seated cross-legged in front of the spiritual spring as usual, she tried to center herself. Meanwhile, Duke was nearby, casually chopping vegetables as he prepared a meal of stir-fried octopus in oyster sauce, braised pork, garlic butter shrimp, and more.

But Kisha couldn't relax. Her thoughts kept returning to the warriors' training. Progress was steady, thanks in part to her 'Commander of Heaven'

achievement, which boosted each warrior's growth by 30%, increased experience gain during combat by the same margin, and raised the odds of awakening Gifts, Talents, and ultimately, abilities.

Still... it wasn't enough.

They were running out of time, and Kisha knew she had to find a way to accelerate the process before it was too late.

Kisha folded her arms across her chest, her brows furrowed in deep thought. She had only one week left to complete the mission, and the pressure was mounting.

Using the territory interface, she reviewed the warriors' training progress in the central square. The results were concerning. Not everyone who enlisted was doing well; some were slow learners, struggling just to grip a dagger properly, let alone thrust it forward without flinching at the thought of facing zombies. Others lacked physical conditioning or had no solid foundation in combat at all.

These weren't problems that could be fixed overnight. They required time, time she didn't have.

To make matters worse, there were hundreds in this situation, and only a limited number of capable trainers. Even if she paired Ethan and Aston to work together, their combined efforts still wouldn't be enough to turn things around in just a few days.

"Maybe, Host, you can use the Territory Space to give them more time?" 008 suggested, its voice unusually calm and thoughtful. "If we bring the trainees inside your territory, they'll have over two months' worth of training time. That should be enough to correct the poor foundations of some, strengthen the weaker ones with spiritual fruits, spring water, and Scarlet Honey, and build their confidence so they won't freeze when facing zombies."

"Remember," it continued, "the first batch of warriors overcame their fear because they had to, out of love for their families and the need to survive. If they could do it, so can this batch... with the right help."

Kisha raised an eyebrow, quietly impressed. It was a well-reasoned suggestion, unexpectedly mature for 008. Maybe it was the result of its recent upgrade, or maybe... this really was the best option they had.

"But then again," Kisha murmured thoughtfully, "inviting over a thousand warriors into my Territory Space would risk exposing my secret. The space itself isn't large enough to accommodate that many people, let alone serve as a proper training ground. And more importantly, if word got out, it could stir greed and envy..."

She turned her gaze toward the spiritual spring, frowning slightly.

"Even if the people around the HOPE Base are good at heart, it's better to prevent those feelings from ever forming than to try and fix things once they spiral out of control. Prevention is always better than a cure."

Kisha sighed, the weight of responsibility heavy on her shoulders. Despite the risks, they had no better solution. And so, once again, she found herself deep in thought, searching for a way to make the impossible work.

"Wait..." Kisha suddenly had an epiphany. 'HOPE Base is now an extension of my Territory Space, and it's connected to my Territory Pack... That means I can freely allocate sections of the pack's space around the HOPE Base or the hidden base. If that's the case, then—if I adjust things here and there—this might actually work!'

008 blinked, confused for a moment, unable to follow Kisha's sudden burst of insight, at least, not until it saw her pull up the holographic map of HOPE Base and then put it side by side with the Territory Space map.

Kisha's gaze locked onto the second-largest building next to the Central Hall, the one currently used by the House and Allocation Management Office. That department mostly dealt with paperwork, housing assignments, and administrative records, meaning they didn't actually need such a large office. 'It's a waste of space,' Kisha thought.

Quickly, she began designing her plan inside her mind. 'We can consolidate their work into the Central Hall. If I reorganize it, we can centralize all major administrative functions there—mission allocations, record-keeping, new resident registrations, and housing assignments—all in adjacent cubicles. That way, residents wouldn't have to run around to different offices just to complete a single process.'

'Maybe we can relocate the mission helpdesk to the other side and give it a larger space inside the Central Hall,' Kisha mused. "After all, most people would come and go for the Mission Board and to check in at the help desk for recordkeeping and reporting. It makes sense to give them more room to operate efficiently.'

With that sorted, she designated the soon-to-be vacant building as the new training ground. She recalled Aston mentioning plans to build a dedicated training facility so the warriors wouldn't have to use the Central Square, avoiding unnecessary disturbance to other residents. But that plan had been put on the back burner for now as Aston had just wrapped up the cafeteria project, and was knee-deep in the warrior housing benefit, along with the other projects like the cemetery and such.

'Well then,' Kisha thought, 'it's time to take that training ground idea off the back burner.'

"Host... don't tell me you're planning to turn that into the training ground?" 008 asked, eyes wide with disbelief, as it glanced at the building next to the Central Hall. It was indeed one of the largest structures nearby, but it was made up of a maze of offices, none of which were suitable for sparring or physical drills.

Kisha only shrugged, her expression calm. "It's the best option we have right now."

While the base's territory had expanded, ongoing projects had already consumed most of the usable land. They simply didn't have enough space to spare for a brand-new training ground, not yet, at least. This solution wasn't perfect, but it was efficient. And depending on how things went, it could be either a temporary workaround or a permanent fixture.