

Apocalypse 860

Chapter 860 Another Visitor

"Yeah, it looked good," Kisha said solemnly, her voice soft with reverence as she silently offered a prayer for the departed souls. Then, she quietly stepped inside.

The interior was organized into neat sections. Some of the compartments already held urns, remains of the brave warriors who had fallen during the last zombie wave. Roadside flowers had been placed near the entrance of the compartments, along with hand-drawn portraits to honor their memory.

For those who had photographs, their loved ones placed them beside the urns. For those without, Aston and a few others who could draw had lovingly sketched their faces from memory, ensuring no one was forgotten.

Each urn was protected behind a pane of glass, preserving both dignity and memory.

Kisha took a shaky breath as she slowly walked from one cubicle to the next, her eyes lingering on each name, each face, quietly trying to commit them all to memory. It was the least she could do. They deserved to be remembered.

Then, she vanished for a few moments and reappeared with a bouquet of fresh flowers she had just gathered from the flower field. Along with the bouquet, she had crafted several delicate flower crowns. Quietly, she stepped back into the memorial and began placing them, one crown gently draped over each urn, followed by a single flower placed in front as a sign of respect.

She moved slowly, reverently, making sure no one was left out.

After honoring every urn inside, she stepped back outside and laid another bouquet in front of the memorial stone slab, the memorial marker for all the fallen. She stood there silently for a long moment, eyes downcast, lost in thought and prayer.

Then, without a word, she turned to leave. Her next stop was the new workshop Mrs. Winters had built; she wanted to check on the progress of the textile factory too. But before they could reach it, Kisha and Aston were interrupted by the sharp crackle of the radio strapped to Aston's belt.

He answered quickly, bringing the device to his ear just in time to hear the voice of the gatekeeper from Gate Number 2.

"Sir, we have visitors," the voice said, hesitantly. "But... I think you should come see them yourself. I'm not sure what to do."

"I'll be there," Aston replied firmly, then turned to Kisha. She had already picked up on the unease in the gatekeeper's voice, something tight, slightly nervous, so she nodded and followed him without hesitation.

Fortunately, they were already close to Gate Number Two, and it didn't take long for them to arrive. As they reached the wall, they climbed up to the top where the gatekeeper stood. Kisha could sense the tension in the air even before her head cleared the top. Soldiers lined the edge of the wall, their assault rifles aimed outward, bodies stiff and alert, their nerves obviously tense and hesitant too.

Aston climbed up first. As soon as he stood, a stern voice called out from the other side of the gate.

"Oh! So Commander McMillan is still stationed here! Kindly inform the Minister of Defense that we've arrived. We need to speak with him, and he should prepare food. My men are tired and hungry from the long journey."

The voice belonged to a man who sounded like he was in his fifties, gruff, authoritative, and commanding, as though he expected Aston to snap to attention and obey without question. He spoke to Aston like a superior addressing a subordinate, brushing aside any sense of protocol or respect.

Kisha's brow arched slightly as she finally climbed up and took in the scene. The man below spotted her instantly, his gaze locking onto her clean face and poised figure. She could feel the shift in his expression, the glint of something unseemly flashing in his eyes. After weeks without comfort or luxury, his desires stirred at the sight of a beautiful, well-kept woman.

But just as quickly as it came, the spark was extinguished.

Kisha met his gaze squarely, her eyes cold and piercing like steel. The look she gave was unmistakable: a warning. A boundary.

The man flinched, quickly looking away, the weight of her glare cutting through his bravado.

Outside the base walls, four military trucks sat heavily loaded with soldiers, flanked by three armored Humvees, at the front was the man who called for Aston, an unmistakable formation that screamed official business. This was no ordinary visit. These people were clearly out on a mission.

"Commander McMillan, what are you waiting for?" the lead officer barked impatiently. "Are you denying us entry? We're on a mission under the President's orders, we don't have time to stand here wasting it!"

His tone was sharp, laced with irritation, and teetering on the edge of fury. One more delay, and he might very well lose control. Aston glanced at Kisha, silently waiting. It was her call whether to let them in or not.

Kisha stood still, her expression dark and unreadable as her gaze swept over the military convoy. She recognized them instantly. She had seen this exact group before, in her previous life.

These soldiers were indeed under the President's command. The same President now holed up in the Central District, surrounded by his cabinet and hidden behind layers of bureaucracy and walls. She remembered how these same soldiers moved from base to base under the guise of "missions", collecting taxes from shelters, pressuring local leaders, recruiting anyone they could with power and potential, while demanding supplies. They were parasites, cloaking themselves in the illusion of serving the country.

The truth was far uglier. They wanted smaller bases like hers and the others to gather resources and feed the burden of the Central's growing army while they sat back and expanded their power, safe and well-fed. They still believed they were owed taxes, salaries for government officials who claimed to "protect" the people.

But in reality, those officials were nothing more than cowards, hiding in comfort, using civilians as shields and pawns, and continuing whatever secretive research they were conducting behind closed doors.

Kisha didn't know exactly what they were working on. But she did know one thing: these men didn't come in peace.

They came to take.

She was certain of one thing: this Commander General outside their gate wasn't just here on a mission. He was already sizing up their base, likely planning to negotiate with the Minister of Defense to appoint himself as the official tax collector for the region. No doubt, he intended to establish a routine: come to their stronghold at regular intervals and demand supplies under the pretense of government order.

After all, she remembered how this same group had approached Duke in her past life. They had the audacity to claim Duke was lucky they weren't pressing charges for killing the former Minister of Defense. They threatened him with jail time, as if the law still held any power in a world consumed by the apocalypse. They tried to use fear and legal pretense to control him, all while pretending their authority still mattered.

And now, they were here again, for the same purpose.

But something was off.

In her past life, this visit didn't happen until two years into the apocalypse, when resources in the Central District had begun to dwindle, and rumors of City B's stronghold had started to spread. By then, the Central's military strength had grown enough that they could afford to act aggressively and send out forces to extort supplies. They had become bold, weaponizing their manpower and authority like a blade.

But now? It was far too early.

The Central was still stabilizing. Their base was under construction, their influence scattered, and there were still warehouses nearby for them to plunder. They shouldn't be here, not yet. Not unless something had changed.

And Kisha was starting to wonder, what exactly had changed this time?

These people were more terrifying than terrorists, because they cloaked their actions in patriotism, claiming everything they did was "for the good of the country" or "for the greater good." Civilians were told that their suffering was necessary, that it served a higher purpose. But in reality, all they did was extort the people under the guise of collecting taxes, which was essentially a protection fee.

Yet they protected no one. Time and time again, they let vulnerable shelters fend for themselves. When those shelters were overrun by zombies, the so-called government didn't lift a finger, only stepping in after everyone inside had perished, just to get the resources inside or take over their shelter as a rendezvous point.

That was why Kisha despised them. That was why she didn't want them entering her territory.

Aston glanced at Kisha, silently waiting for her command. Should they let them in, or turn them away? He already knew what kind of people these were. They were like gum stuck to the bottom of a shoe; once they latched on, it was nearly impossible to shake them off. And that's what worried him. He didn't want Kisha tangled up in their business, not when something about this visit felt off.

But just then, Kisha's eyes flickered as something else appeared in front of her.

Ding!

[New Mission Available]