

Apocalypse 861

Chapter 861 A Change

[Sudden Mission: Class-A — "Whack-A-Mole"]

[Description: The government, once meant to protect and serve its people, has become a den of corruption and greed. The current regime prioritizes self-interest, exploiting the masses and turning civilians into little more than tools for their agenda. Whispers speak of a hidden facility—deep within the capital—where horrifying human experiments are being conducted. The true nature and scope of these experiments remain unknown. However, one person may hold the key: the Commander General.

Mission Objective: Extract the truth from the Commander General. Uncover what the Capital's government is hiding.

Mission Completion: Unknown

Mission Failure: Unknown]

Kisha frowned as she read the new mission that popped up in front of her. She hadn't expected this, not like this. It was the first time she'd encountered a mission with no listed reward... and no details on what failure would bring. The uncertainty unsettled her. Was the Constellation doing this on purpose? Upping the stakes out of boredom?

After all, she'd been completing her missions one after another without much trouble lately. Her life hadn't been in any real danger for a while; she was growing stronger, steadily and surely. Maybe that predictability had dulled the thrill for them. Maybe that's why they hid the consequences this time, because the outcome was becoming too easy to guess.

She remembered the mission she'd given up on, confident she could endure the backlash. But what if this was their way of punishing her for choosing a mission and then failing one? Of rewriting the rules? If so, then this wasn't just another task; this was a warning.

But it wasn't as if they ever gave her a real choice. They wanted her to kill innocent people, just to pick a side. Sure, she could have chosen a side and gone on to complete the trade mission with those she spared. But then what? Could she really live with herself afterward? Could she stay sane knowing she'd chosen her own safety over the lives of others, just because she was afraid of punishment?

So, instead, Kisha chose the hardest path: helping both sides, refusing to take a single life.

She might act cold, distant, even rude at times, but that was only a shield, a layer of armor forged from pain and survival. A coping mechanism, born from the countless traumas she'd endured. And yes, she had killed before, but only those who deserved it. Murderers. Monsters. The worst of society. Never the innocent.

If the system was now trying to force her hand... to twist her into something else... then this time, everything would change.

But whatever it was, Kisha felt her heart skip a beat. A flicker of worry took root. Unlike others, she was never given the luxury of choice when it came to missions; there was no option to accept or decline. All she could do was complete them and move on. If she failed, as long as it didn't mean death, she simply endured the consequences and kept going.

But now, not knowing what failure might cost changed everything.

The uncertainty pressed down on her shoulders like a new weight. Would this mystery penalty apply only to this mission? Or was this the beginning of a new rule, one where every task would come with unknown stakes and invisible threats?

[The Goddess of Knowledge and Wisdom watches you with growing curiosity, eager to see how you'll face this trial.]

[The God of the Sun acknowledges your sacrifices and silently nods in approval.]

[The Goddess of Love and Hate fixes her gaze on you, unreadable and intense...]

Kisha could feel their eyes on her, the divine attention prickling at her skin. The shift in the mission's rules wasn't just a coincidence. No... she was almost certain now. They changed the rules. Whether out of boredom, frustration, or some twisted test, they had rewritten the game.

Was this her punishment? A new phase in their amusement?

She didn't know yet. But she would. Sooner or later, she'd uncover what these gods truly wanted, why their eyes followed her so closely, why some seemed hostile, even desperate to see her fall.

[The Goddess of Creation weeps in silence, bound and sealed, powerless to help you... But watching in agony nonetheless.]

Seeing the final pop-up—[The Goddess of Creation weeps...]—Kisha felt her heart thunder in her chest.

'What does this mean?' she wondered, her eyes fixed on the message lingering in the air. Her mind spiraled, the weight of the divine's sorrow pressing on her shoulders like a storm cloud ready to burst. She stood frozen, not speaking, lost in thought.

Aston noticed. With Kisha silent and unmoving, he wasn't prepared to act on her behalf. The officials at the gates were military men, leeches dressed in uniform, and once those gates opened, it would be like letting a herd of pigs loose to ravage the farm.

"City Lord?" Aston called, his voice low but urgent.

The words snapped Kisha out of her daze. She blinked, remembering where she was, in front of a squad of armed officials, some of whom had come to extort, and among them, the very target of her mission: the Commander General.

The mission demanded she let them in, as she had things to ask the Commander General. She didn't like it. But she had no choice.

"...Let them in," she said finally, her voice calm but cold. "But keep a close watch. I want every move they make reported. Don't let them act without our say."

Her order was clear enough for both Aston and the gatekeepers to hear. Aston gave a short nod, and one of the guards at the back signaled for the heavy iron gates to open.

As soon as the heavy iron gates began to creak open, the Commander General swiftly returned to his Humvee. His convoy didn't waste a second; once there was enough room, they drove through and entered the base without hesitation.

Seeing the gathered civilians beyond the gate, the Commander General straightened his spine, puffed out his chest, and wore an expression of authority. He was already preparing to assert his dominance, expecting the people to lower their heads in respect, maybe even awe.

But instead, the crowd merely glanced at him and quietly dispersed, unimpressed and uninterested.

From atop the wall, Kisha and Aston descended together. As they approached, Kisha hung back slightly, her gaze sharp and unreadable. She watched the newcomers with the silent patience of a black panther in the dark, assessing every movement, waiting for the perfect moment to strike. There was no warmth in her eyes, only calculation.

Aston stepped forward and took the lead. He offered a sharp salute before extending his hand for a formal shake.

"Welcome to HOPE Base, Commander General Buck," Aston said calmly. "What brings you to our gates today?"

"Like I said, I need to speak with the Minister of Defense," Commander General Buck repeated, his tone sharp with irritation. It was clear he was growing impatient, expecting to be led to a comfortable room, served food, and treated like royalty.

Aston, unfazed, remained stoic. "About that... I'm afraid that won't be possible."

Commander General Buck's eyes narrowed. "What do you mean by that?"

"The Minister of Defense is no longer with us. He's dead," Aston said flatly, lying without the slightest crack in his expression.

Of course, the truth was far messier. The Minister and the Coltons were still very much alive, rotting in the underground hideout, subjected to periodic torture. After learning the full extent of their crimes, even someone as duty-bound as Aston believed they deserved every second of it. He had never once pleaded with Kisha for their release, nor did he intend to.

The Commander General's brows furrowed in frustration. "Then who's in charge now? I have direct orders from the President meant for this base."

The way he said it—so entitled, so smug—made it sound like his arrival was a gift, a lifeline for the people of HOPE Base. If Kisha hadn't already known that he came to extort supplies under the guise of 'official orders,' she might've been fooled into thinking they were here to help.

Aston stepped aside, gesturing toward the figure behind him. "She's our current City Lord, the one leading this base," he said with unwavering seriousness.

The Commander General blinked, and then he laughed. Loud, crude, and dismissive, as if Aston had just told the punchline of a ridiculous joke. He sneered. "Are you expecting me to believe that? Maybe if you told me you took over after the Minister of Defense died, I might buy it. After all, you were the second most powerful man in the military hierarchy. But her?" He scoffed, shaking his head with open contempt. "She's just a woman. What could she possibly do? Can she even pull a trigger, or does she just hide and scream at the sight of a zombie?"

Kisha didn't flinch. She stood her ground, tall, silent, and composed. Though the Commander General towered over her in size and build, something shifted the moment their eyes met.

He froze.

A chill ran down his spine as a wave of raw bloodlust rolled off her like a storm. Her eyes were cold, unwavering, and filled with the kind of darkness only those who had walked through hell could carry. The space between them seemed to grow heavier, colder.

For all his experience, all his bravado, the Commander General had never felt anything quite like this. His smirk vanished, replaced by a tight swallow as he broke into a nervous sweat. It felt like death itself was staring back at him, and it wore Kisha's face.