

Apocalypse 866

Chapter 866 The Deal

Unfortunately, the scholars didn't possess the complete set of texts. So even with copies of Kisha's magic scrolls in hand, they still couldn't fully decipher the intricate arcane magic circles and text accompanying them.

Instead of providing answers, the scrolls only deepened the mystery, like standing on the edge of a revelation, only to be flung into a vast, directionless void. It felt as though the truth was just within reach, yet impossibly distant.

But for now, they remained unaware. It wouldn't be until three centuries later that they would finally realize they had been going in circles all along, chasing a pipe dream without the full text of the ancient technique to guide them.

Meanwhile, as Kisha casually watched the pop-ups indicating her items were selling like hotcakes, the mage scholars were in disarray, scrambling through their dusty archives, stressed and frustrated.

Her scrolls had already been elevated to the status of priceless artifacts, now worth millions of gold coins and considered one of the greatest magical discoveries of the millennium, a window into a long-lost technique that had faded from history.

Knock... knock...

As soon as Kisha heard the knock, she knew it was Tristan and the others. She calmly exited her system interface, then laced her fingers together on the desk and leaned back in her chair.

“Come in,” she called, her voice cool and composed.

The moment the door opened, the room was filled with an unmistakable pressure. Kisha sat behind her desk with an air of quiet dominance, her gaze unwavering. The Commander General and his entourage paused at the threshold, clearly unsettled. As they entered, they instinctively stiffened under her oppressive aura.

Tristan, unaffected as always, led them to the couch across from her desk. No words were exchanged. Kisha merely watched them settle in, fidgeting, shifting uncomfortably, as if under interrogation lights.

One thing Kisha had mastered in negotiation: establish dominance first. Intimidate them into revealing their unease, and the rest of the discussion would go on her terms. The weaker they felt, the easier it was to steer the outcome in her favor.

Without a word, Tristan excused himself to prepare coffee for the guests and freshly squeezed orange juice for Kisha. The silence that followed was thick, so heavy that even a pin drop might have sounded like a thunderclap. Beads of sweat trickled down the Commander General’s temples, his confidence clearly waning under Kisha’s steady gaze. No one dared speak.

By the time Tristan returned with the drinks, the room was still under a heavy silence. Kisha hadn’t said a single word since they entered, nor did she seem in any rush to break the silence. Meanwhile, the visitors continued to avert their eyes, fixated on the floor as if searching for words they couldn’t find.

Tristan set down the freshly brewed coffee in front of the guests, and then carefully placed the chilled orange juice before Kisha. With practiced ease, he tucked the tray under his arm and moved to stand silently behind her like a proper butler, ready to act on her next command without a word.

The rich aroma of the coffee instantly filled the room, and the guests' eyes lit up. It had been a long time since they'd encountered such a premium blend. They weren't wrong to notice, these beans had been part of a rare stash Fred and the others recovered from the car dealership just days ago, later gifted to Kisha's villa.

This was no random gesture. It was a deliberate move, Kisha and her people extending quiet hospitality, a subtle demonstration of their strength and resources wrapped in civility.

Kisha picked up her glass of orange juice and took a slow sip before finally offering a faint, measured smile.

"Please, make yourselves comfortable," she said smoothly. "And tell me, what mission did the president entrust you with? Let us know how we might be of assistance."

Though her tone was polite, the meaning beneath her words was unmistakable: HOPE Base was extending help, not submitting to orders. If they chose to help, it would be of their own volition, not out of obligation.

The Commander General felt a chill creep up his spine. Just hours ago, he had dismissed Kisha with a sexist remark. Now, seated before her, he could feel the oppressive weight of her aura and the cold edge of her barely restrained bloodlust. It wasn't just power. It was a quiet warning.

The way Kisha took control of the conversation made it unmistakably clear, they were in the palm of her hand. No matter what they say, the final decision rested solely with her. And she wasn't the least bit swayed by grand titles like "President of the Nation."

After all, HOPE Base had never received a shred of support from the Capital since the day it was established. Through every major disaster and turning point, not once did the central government reach out to offer aid or even inquire about their survival. It made one thing painfully clear: they had only ever been able to rely on themselves.

And while the government was supposed to serve and protect its citizens, especially in national crises, the reality was starkly different. When the apocalypse began, the officials were the first to ensure their own safety, building fortified shelters for themselves under full military protection.

Civilians were left to fend for themselves. Scientists were quickly secured to develop a cure, followed by military teams scouring the ruins of the city for resources. Only after securing their own survival did the government turn its eyes to the rest of the population.

But even then, their "help" came with strings attached, offering only limited aid while exploiting survivors as unpaid labor. Worse, they had the audacity to demand taxes from those very people, disregarding their safety under the guise of sacrifice for the greater good.

So yes, Kisha held nothing but contempt for these people, and she didn't bother to hide it. Her posture, her expression, even the silence she kept, it all radiated sharp disapproval. But once she gave the signal for them to speak, the Commander General, despite the clear tension, leaned into the belief that Kisha wouldn't dare refuse a direct order from the President.

He began, “Miss City Lord, it’s true that the President has dispatched not only me, but several military convoys to nearby cities and surviving shelters. Our goal is to reestablish communication and restore the government’s presence to maintain order in society.

After all, the people still need the military’s protection against the monsters now roaming every corner of the country. We’ve stretched our forces thin just to extend this help, but in order to continue doing so, we also require supplies to keep our soldiers fed and fit to fight.”

It was a long-winded, carefully worded appeal, designed to sound noble, generous, and pragmatic. But to Kisha, it was nothing but a rehearsed speech masking their real intent. In truth, their goals hadn’t changed from her past life: reestablish government control, crown themselves rulers of the broken world, and let others carry the burden of survival.

They would sit comfortably behind fortified walls while expecting survivors to risk their lives, scavenge resources, and serve as disposable tools in the name of order.

What a beautifully wrapped lie, hypocrisy cloaked in diplomacy.

Kisha sneered openly, her eyes narrowing into cold slits as they locked on the Commander General, her disdain radiating without a single word.