

Apocalypse 885

Chapter 885 Gale City

Not long after, the Commander General, Rose in tow, departed from City B. With Rose now part of the team, their journey back to the Capital went smoothly. She didn't hesitate to display her awakened ability along the way, making sure even the soldiers remained in line. Although many were already under the Demonic Insect's control, her presence was enough to make them think twice before doing anything that might jeopardize HOPE Base.

While the Commander General continued playing his part as a show for the President, Rose was free to move around and investigate different parts of the Capital's base. Since the President's attention was mostly fixed on the Commander General, because he knew better than anyone how dangerous he could be, he kept a close watch, unsure how long the Commander General would remain loyal.

This worked in their favor. With the spotlight on the Commander General and his officers, they subtly stirred just enough activity to keep that attention in place... while Rose carried out her mission behind the scenes.

While everyone else was busy following the plan, Jason, who had returned to his own camp in Gale City a little earlier, was now back in the field, leading his team to gather as many crystal cores as possible.

"Push the zombies toward this area, then spread out!" Jason barked, his voice cutting through the loud growls.

He charged forward, slamming into a zombie's midsection like a rugby player, flipping it to the ground with brute force. Without missing a beat, he drove his dagger straight into its skull.

'Damn, this cured meat is insane,' he thought, feeling the power thrumming through his veins. His stamina felt endless. He and his men had been hunting for over two hours now, and all it took was a few strips of the cured meat to keep them going like machines.

It wasn't just stamina; the slight boost in strength gave him a serious edge. He was tossing zombies around, smashing heads, and cutting through the horde like it was nothing. As long as he kept it one-on-one with lower-level zombies, he never lost ground.

So, Jason and his team had agreed to only target low-level zombies. They stationed a few men on the rooftops to keep watch from above, scanning for anything out of the ordinary. If they spotted a zombie that looked suspicious or abnormal, the standing order was simple: run and avoid contact.

While staying in the HOPE Base, they'd learned about the classification of zombies, especially the mutated ones. These weren't your average shambling corpses; they were faster, stronger, and far more dangerous.

"Shit! Captain! There's a zombie crawling up the side of a building like damn Spider-Man! It looks hideous!"

And just as Jason was thinking about mutated zombies, one showed up, like some devil answering a call. His scout's voice crackled through the comms, urgent and shaken.

"Fall back! Everyone, retreat on my five!" Jason shouted, finishing off the zombie in front of him before digging out its crystal core with practiced precision. His eyes swept over his team, confirming they were all pulling back as ordered.

Then, he glanced in the direction of the low growl echoing in the distance. No time to waste.

He turned on his heel and ran, not toward their camp, but in the opposite direction. They'd learned enough by now not to lead a mutated zombie straight to their base. Some of those things were rumored to be as smart as predators, calculating, relentless, and capable of tracking prey.

"Change of plan! New hunting ground!" Jason called out as they ran. They'd already masked their scent to avoid being followed, doing everything they could to throw off any potential pursuer.

By now, they'd gathered around 150 crystal cores. It had been days since they left HOPE Base, and their progress felt slow, nothing like when Kisha was leading the charge. But that contrast only reminded Jason of her strength. It lit a fire inside him, pushing him to fight harder.

One day, he swore he'd awaken his ability, too.

"We can't keep hunting in this area anymore. Mark it as a black zone and make sure everyone knows to avoid it. We can't afford to lose people," Jason said firmly through the comms.

They didn't have any awakened ability users on their team, so going up against a mutated zombie was practically a death sentence. Fighting one would only mean feeding it more lives, and that was a risk Jason wasn't willing to take.

But that also meant their hunting grounds were shrinking. This was already the third zone they had to cross off the list due to the presence of mutated zombies, and that fact alone was troubling.

The number of mutated zombies was clearly rising, and worse, they were acting like commanders among the horde. It made every hunt harder, more dangerous. Even with the energy boost from the cured meat, Jason knew it wouldn't be enough, not against those things.

"Boss, if I remember correctly, doesn't HOPE Base offer escort services? Do you think we could post a mission on their board to eliminate the mutated zombies?" one of Jason's men suggested.

"I mean, didn't Clyde mention that the crystal cores from mutated zombies are way more concentrated with spiritual energy than those from normal ones? They might actually want to go after these bastards."

He continued, "We could provide a full report, describe what the mutated zombies look like, list their characteristics, behavior, anything useful. Then post it on the board and let them decide if they want to take the mission. Of course, since they'd be cleaning up our turf, we can't claim any of the crystal cores. Plus, we'll need to offer a decent reward as an incentive."

And as if grasping at straws, Jason's eyes suddenly lit up. "That's it!" he exclaimed. "Right now, we don't have any awakened ability users in our camp, so it's practically impossible to take down those pests. Worse, they might end up finding their way to our camp and put everyone in danger. So our best option is to ask for help from the HOPE Base. You're a genius!"

He turned to his team with renewed energy. "Alright, everyone! Let's ramp up our efforts and collect as many crystal cores as we can. Once we hit our quota, we'll head back to HOPE Base, get help, resupply, and regroup!"

"Yes, sir!" the team responded in unison, nearly roaring with excitement. Just the thought of returning to HOPE Base had everyone fired up, especially because of the cafeteria. They could almost taste the

food just thinking about it. That warm, flavorful cooking had become a source of comfort and motivation, their one little slice of happiness in this bleak world. And for them, that was enough to keep pushing forward.

So far, the people in their camp were in good spirits. More of them were gradually regaining strength and motivation to contribute. While not everyone was skilled in combat, they found ways to help around the camp, freeing up the fighters to focus on hunting and defense.

Jason had also implemented some basic rules inspired by what he saw at HOPE Base, organizing everyone into specific roles with clear responsibilities. This structure brought much-needed order and direction, and it was working out well so far.