

Apocalypse 887

Chapter 887 New Procedures

This time, he had made sure to leave his people with clear backup plans and safe escape routes. It gave them a fighting chance, and they appreciated it. In response, everyone began training with renewed discipline and seriousness, knowing their survival depended on it.

With everything in place, Jason and his team finally set off in three Jeeps, heading out with purpose and preparation.

After more than a full day of traveling, navigating detours and sticking to safer routes, Jason and his team finally reached the weathered sign that read "Welcome to City B." The sight sparked a surge of excitement among them. On the way, they unexpectedly crossed paths with Adam's group, who seemed to have the same goal in mind. Without hesitation, Jason and Adam decided to join forces once again.

Thankfully, Kisha had provided them with a map detailing a safer route back to HOPE Base, and they now followed that same path, harvesting crystal cores along the way. Thanks to their previous collaboration, both teams moved in sync, coordinating smoothly and efficiently.

"On my six! Zombie horde approaching, pick up the pace!" Jason shouted, bolting toward their jeep after yanking a crystal core from a zombie carcass.

"Move it! Let's go!" Adam yelled to his team as he leapt into the passenger seat. He banged on the side of the vehicle to signal the driver, and without wasting a second, the engine roared to life.

Their jeeps sped forward, plowing through the scattered undead, sending limp bodies tumbling beneath their wheels as they pushed deeper into the city.

"Everyone, stay sharp! Watch out for any surprise attacks, don't let your guard down!" Adam radioed to his team, riding in the vehicle behind them.

This time, Adam wasn't alone. Seated behind him was a young child, the son of the woman who had accidentally caused the death of Jason's young subordinate. After returning and receiving medicine, the boy's condition had improved, but it wasn't enough to fully clear him of medical concerns. Simply surviving in a world ravaged by the apocalypse was already too much strain for someone so young.

Knowing this, Adam decided to bring the child along on their trip back to HOPE Base. Like Jason's group, they were heading back to restock supplies, and Adam figured this was also the best chance for the boy to get a proper check-up, perhaps even be admitted to the medical ward.

And who knows? Maybe the environment at HOPE Base, where children still played and laughed, would lift the kid's spirits and remind him of what it felt like to be a child again.

Although they all knew it was risky to bring a child on such a dangerous trip, they didn't have much of a choice. To keep the boy safe and calm, the other team vehicles surrounded Adam's car in a protective formation.

Inside, the boy was nestled tightly in his mother's arms, his head buried against her chest. Large headphones covered his ears, playing music to shield him from the terrifying sounds outside.

Kisha had provided them with a safer route, but "safer" didn't mean safe. Zombies still wandered the streets and emerged from alleyways and corners. The difference was that this path lacked mutated

zombies, unlike other routes where hordes were led by terrifying variants and were practically classified as red zones. This route, by comparison, was considered a yellow zone, still dangerous, but manageable.

Green zones only existed within fully secured areas like bases, and in the apocalypse, those were rare luxuries. They knew they were already traveling along the best route available. Besides, Kisha's people frequently swept through this area for training and cleanup operations, keeping the threat level significantly lower than elsewhere.

And so, Jason and Adam's teams worked together to clear the streets of zombies. Fortunately, they no longer had to waste time moving abandoned vehicles out of the way; Kisha's people had already done that, clearing a path wide enough for vehicles to pass through.

Thanks to their efforts, the road was now much more navigable, ensuring that survivors from other settlements wouldn't get trapped or become easy prey for the roaming undead.

After a few more hours on the road, they finally reached the gates of HOPE Base. The sight alone eased much of their tension, wrapping them in a sense of security. Soldiers stationed atop the walls looked down, rifles pointed in standard protocol, but there was no hostility, just routine checks.

Jason and Adam stepped out of their vehicles and raised their hands in a peaceful gesture. "We came to trade!" Jason called out to the gatekeeper standing on the wall.

Upon recognizing their familiar faces, the gatekeeper nodded and signaled his men to open the gate. He also instructed someone to radio the City Lord for protocol, but it turned out to be unnecessary; Kisha had already been alerted by her system the moment outsiders entered her territory. One look at the system pop-up and she saw familiar faces.

By the time the radio call came through, she merely hummed in acknowledgment and gave the order to allow them in. She then had a warrior escort the group around the base. Everyone needed to get used to accommodating visitors, after all. Outsiders would become a more common sight as HOPE Base grew, and Kisha couldn't be expected to greet each visitor personally.

At the moment, she was busy, completely absorbed in experimenting with her cooking. Using the spiritual crops they'd recently harvested, she was eager to test their culinary potential and discover any hidden effects in the process.

While Kisha remained occupied, the gatekeeper, after receiving her approval, simply assigned a free warrior to accompany Adam and Jason's teams. Neither group minded. They understood that the leader of a major base like HOPE Base had countless responsibilities and couldn't greet everyone personally.

However, some things had clearly changed since their last visit.

As soon as the gates opened, both teams were instructed to exit their vehicles and proceed to a large tent just beyond the entrance for inspection. This, they were informed, would now be the standard protocol for all outsiders entering the base.

Inside the tent, they underwent a series of checks. First, each person was asked to provide identification and log their arrival on a system through the laptop. This would allow HOPE Base to track every visitor, including how long they stayed within the base walls.

More than that, a full-body inspection was conducted to check for scratches, wounds, or bite marks, which had to be done without clothing to ensure absolute safety. Once cleared, each person was required to pay an entrance fee: either one crystal core or an equivalent in supplies, approximately five kilograms per person.

Since both teams had plenty of crystal cores, they opted to pay in crystal cores without protest. Neither Jason nor Adam questioned the new procedures. They knew that with how valuable safety had become, it was only a matter of time before HOPE Base implemented stricter policies and formalized entry fees.

Each team paid over a dozen crystal cores and was granted entry into the base. Upon entering, they were issued identification passes, which they were required to carry at all times. Without these passes, they wouldn't be allowed to leave the base.

Once the inspections were complete, the teams were directed to park their vehicles in the designated parking area. Afterward, the warrior assigned to guide them conducted a detailed briefing about the updated base regulations.

These new rules had been drafted by the Old Winter Patriarch, who currently served as the Minister of Law and Judiciary. The policies were formally implemented by Tristan, Secretary to both the City Lord and Vice City Lord. It was the responsibility of the appointed guide to fully inform all outsiders of the laws and consequences tied to them.

Any violation of these rules could result in immediate expulsion from HOPE Base. In more severe cases, offenders could be permanently banned from reentering. Because of this, the guides were required to be direct and thorough when explaining the laws, ensuring every outsider clearly understood that following the rules wasn't optional, but necessary if they wished to remain inside.

Both Adam and Jason's teams listened attentively to their assigned guide, genuinely impressed by how thoroughly the base's leadership had planned to maintain order—even with a growing number of outsiders arriving. The thoughtfulness behind every regulation showed just how much the leaders prioritized structure and safety for everyone inside.

As they walked through the streets, they continued listening while taking in the changes around them. Their first stop, as always, was the communal cafeteria, where they planned to have their first proper meal of the day.

The child Adam brought along was overjoyed at the sight of the food. The enticing aroma filled the air, and the sheer variety laid out before him made his eyes light up. His pale, gaunt face, once as colorless as paper, slowly regained some life and color from sheer excitement and anticipation.