

Apocalypse 900

Chapter 900 Preparation For Departure

As Sparrow continued speaking, the others nodded in understanding. They grasped the point he was trying to make. In this apocalyptic world, although the old order no longer existed, the aftermath of the first zombie wave following the Geostorm had taught them a harsh truth: no matter how strong their individual base became, their strength alone was still insignificant. They needed support from other shelters.

The number of surviving humans was drastically small compared to the vast hordes of zombies roaming the earth. To survive and carve out a future, they needed as much manpower as possible. Building a network was not just beneficial—it was essential. And to do that, they had to show sincerity and extend support to smaller bases and shelters.

"We'll be coming," Grandpa Aldens was the first to speak. Though aged, he had participated in countless operations before, rescue missions, crisis responses, anything that called for steady hands and experience.

This time was no different. He wasn't the type to blindly throw his life on the line, but he was more than willing to lend his strength where it was needed. More importantly, he saw this as a valuable learning experience for Keith.

But letting that silly boy join on his own? That was out of the question. Someone had to be there to rein him in when he got carried away and forgot his limits.

As for his wife, he wasn't worried in the slightest. She'd already proven her mettle during the mission Kisha led to retrieve the drums; she's fiery, fierce, and far from fragile. With more than enough support-type awakened ability users joining, she could stay behind without guilt. They could cover for each other out there.

And as if reading his thoughts, Grandma Aldens gave a quiet nod in agreement.

With the oldest among them already stepping forward, it would be a disgrace if the younger ones didn't follow suit, wouldn't it?

One by one, everyone agreed to join; no one backed out. With the team set, Sparrow gave them an hour to return home, inform their families, and gather anything they needed to bring. Meanwhile, he dispatched the STAUs to collect the necessary supplies.

Since the military academy was also sending trainees to join the operation and gain field experience, they pitched in by offering some of their own resources, so Sparrow and the others could carry them without trouble.

To prepare for the trip, the STAU members headed to the cafeteria to retrieve food supplies. Given that one hour outside equated to ten hours inside the military academy, the cafeteria staff, led by Clyde's mother and sister, prepared extra dishes so everyone could enjoy a hot meal while out in the field.

If they still wanted to cook outside, Grandma Aldens could help with that and use the fresh ingredients to cook. But if time was tight, they could simply eat the hot meals that were already prepared.

That level of care and preparation meant a lot to the group, making the burden of traveling farther from the base just a bit lighter.

Since Clyde didn't need to go home to inform his family and had very little to prepare aside from his backpack—which he could easily grab later when they left the military academy for the parking area where the vehicles were stationed—he wasn't in a hurry.

Clyde had a habit of keeping his backpack stocked with essentials in case he was suddenly called for a mission outside the base, and times like these proved how useful that habit was.

Everyone else, however, rushed off to prepare, including Keith and his grandparents, who were now busy packing their backpacks and weapons, making sure everything was in order. They even donned their armor, just in case.

While the others were preparing, Clyde stayed behind to help his mother wash vegetables alongside his sister and the other helpers. By now, his sister had gained considerable kitchen experience from working there for several days, which was equivalent to more than a month inside the academy, so she had become the head of the helpers, delegating tasks and keeping things organized.

Their mother, on the other hand, oversaw the cooks, deciding on the meals and ensuring the trainees' diets remained balanced and nutritious.

"Brother, help me carry those drums of oil to the frying station. Thank you," Clyde's sister called out, pointing to the stacked oil drums off to the side. After that, she turned to the other helpers, directing them to start washing the bell peppers and cleaning the eels.

Their mother planned to grill the eel over hot coals, while Clyde's sister focused on preparing the sauce for Japanese-style unagi rice bentos. The idea was to portion the meals neatly into bento boxes, making it easier for the outbound team to simply open and eat without extra preparation.

Alongside the grilled eel, they were cracking eggs to prepare tamago as a side dish, and others were busy washing a large quantity of rice to cook in industrial-sized gas rice cookers, five full pots in total.

Meanwhile, several large cauldrons of water were being boiled with a base of fish stock, seaweed, peeled onions, and a mix of spices. Once it came to a boil, they would stir in miso paste and cubes of soft tofu to complete the miso soup.

Each bento box would contain a well-balanced meal: meat, rice, vegetables, a side dish, soup, and a drink—everything needed to replenish the warriors' energy and keep them going strong.

And this was just the first meal. They still had to plan and prepare for the next one, knowing that while ten hours outside the base might sound long, the real challenge lay in the sheer volume of food they needed to prepare.

It was a grueling task, not just for the departing party, but also for the cafeteria staff who still had to feed the warriors training back at the academy.

Fortunately, Clyde's presence lightened the load, pitching in wherever he could. Even the STAU's, who were waiting nearby to store the meals in their Space so they would retain their heat, were eventually roped in to help. The kitchen was a blur of movement—efficient, purposeful, and filled with the quiet intensity of people working together.

After ten intense hours of nonstop preparation, everyone collapsed to the ground, drenched in sweat and utterly exhausted. Even with stamina boosters to keep their bodies going, they had finally hit their limits. Their physical strength may have been restored, but mentally, they were drained.

Still, despite the fatigue, they managed to complete a major task, ten full sets of hot meals, carefully packed into bento boxes. The rest of the food was left in the form of fresh ingredients, handed over to the STAUs. It would be up to them to decide when to eat the ready-made meals and when to cook fresh ones in the field.

This effort was more than enough; it was a huge support for Sparrow's team. In critical moments, when time was tight or danger was too high, they could rely on the pre-packed bentos for a quick meal. When conditions allowed, they could prepare their own food with the ingredients provided. Either way, the work done today would keep the team nourished and help them push through whatever challenges lay ahead.