

# CHAOS' HEIR

## Chapter 11 - Test

The writings on the walls featured a one-minute countdown that started as soon as the mechanical voice completed its line.

The boys and girls immediately panicked, and only a few of them managed to remain calm. Khan, a short girl with long dark hair, and a tall, slender boy with short grey hair didn't let that news alter their mood and began to study the situation.

'The Global Army accepts everyone,' Khan thought while inspecting the weapons. 'This test must influence part of our life in the army. Maybe its purpose is to assign us to different platoons.'

The answer to his doubts arrived after the slender boy clapped his hands and claimed everyone's attention.

"Calm down!" The boy shouted. "My name is Luke Cobsend, and my family has served in the Global Army for generations. This test will make the higher-ups understand our starting point and potential."

His words didn't have the expected effect. Those who had begun to panic became even more anxious. They didn't want a surprise test to determine their entire life in the army.

"Don't worry," Luke continued. "As I already said, this is only for our starting point. They have to understand who knows how to fight and how they behave in front of danger. The higher-ups will decide our mandatory courses according to our results."

The boys and girls finally began to calm down, but the countdown had never stopped nearing zero. Luke had to do something quickly if he wanted his group to be ready.

"There is no time to exchange names," Luke quickly explained. "Which one of you already has a mana core?"

A few hands rose. Luke, the black-haired girl, Khan, and the skinny boy announced that they owned a mana core.

Evident disappointment appeared on Luke's face, but he quickly steeled his determination.

"That will be enough!" Luke exclaimed. "Those without mana core should choose long weapons or shields. The four of us must handle the frontlines. Pick swords or anything that you are comfortable with."

Khan didn't mind following those directives. Luke seemed to know something about the test and the mana cores, so it was better to listen to him in that situation.

Still, a problem soon appeared. Khan didn't receive any training, and the hall didn't offer even a single firearm.

'Do I have to pick a sword and improvise?' Khan wondered until he found something familiar hidden behind a shield.

Luke had quickly grabbed a sword and had turned to inspect his companions. A satisfied smile appeared on his face when he saw that they had all followed his instructions, but his expression froze at some point.

"Where did you even find a shovel?!" Luke asked when he noticed Khan in the corner of the hall.

"It was behind this old shield," Khan explained, purposely ignoring the real meaning behind Luke's words.

"How do you even plan to fight with that?!" Luke questioned him.

"It's better than picking a weapon that I can't use," Khan replied plainly.

"These things are really sharp. I might end up hurting someone due to my inexperience."

Luke remained speechless. Khan's words made sense, but they still didn't justify his choice in that situation.

"Who do we have to fight?" The black-haired girl asked while rotating her hammer.

The scene was quite peculiar. The black-haired girl was barely one hundred and sixty centimeters tall, but her hammer was as big as a man's chest. Yet, she could wield it at ease.

'Physical enhancement!' Khan thought while inspecting the girl. 'I guess mana cores do that for everyone.'

Luke sighed before explaining what he knew. "Our opponent should be a Tainted animal. The creature won't be able to infect anyone, and the army must have also affected its overall aggression. No one can die in this test, but we still have to do our best."

Luke's words had almost made his companions anxious again, but he had been smart enough to add those last details. The boys and girls could finally realize that they didn't have to fear for their lives.

The countdown eventually hit zero, and the weapons quickly disappeared into the walls. A door opened on the side of the hall, and the writings transformed into a large picture.

The picture depicted a tall boar with shining azure eyes. Azure fur also covered its body, and long tusks grew from the corners of its mouth.

"It doesn't seem dangerous!"

"There are ten of us here! How can a simple animal defeat us?"

"We will ace this test!"

Cheers resounded among the group, but Khan, Luke, the black-haired girl, and the skinny boy remained silent. Khan even ended up exchanging a meaningful gaze with those three.

'They have also faced a Tainted animal before,' Khan concluded in his mind.

Only idiots would rejoice in front of a Tainted boar. Khan had seen a Tainted rat killing grown-up men with a few bites. He didn't know what that animal would be capable of after the Nak's mana tainted it.

"Let's go out!" Luke suddenly shouted. "Remember. The six of you must remain behind us and provide support. Let those who have a mana core take risks."

The six nodded, and Luke took the group's lead while gesturing to Khan and the other two to follow him in the frontlines.

A green field unfolded in the group's view once they exited the hall. The sun shone high in the sky and revealed every detail about that environment.

A few trees occupied a small spot in the distance. Everyone in the group guessed that the boar was there since they couldn't see it in the prairie.

"I guess that you have faced Tainted animals before," Luke whispered to his three companions.

Khan, the girl, and the skinny boy nodded without adding details. It was clear that they didn't want to talk about that during the test.

"The folks behind us will be useless," Luke continued. "It's up to us to kill the animal. What's the tier of your mana core? My family managed to get me a synthetic A-tier."

Both the girl and the boy showed surprised expressions at that revelation, and Khan imitated them. He didn't even know that mana cores had tiers, but he decided to play along.

"Organic B-tier," The girl explained. "My grandfather died serving on Istrone, so the army compensated my family with it. I am Martha Weesso, by the way."

"I'm Jay," The skinny body replied while tightening his grasp on his shortsword. "Synthetic C-tier."

Luke whistled when he heard Martha, but his expression froze after Jay spoke. Khan studied the changes in his behavior and developed a theory about the differences among mana cores.

'Organic should be better,' Khan concluded in his mind. 'Does mine count as organic since it comes from a Nak?'

Khan had to focus on the real world when he saw his three companions looking in his direction.

"I'm Khan," Khan said while wearing a naive smile. "I don't really know the quality of my mana core. I had the chance to obtain it, and I didn't refuse."

"It must be synthetic," Luke explained. "Organic cores are quite rare, and they have compatibility issues. Maybe you had luck and got your hands on a B-tier. It will be less of a pain to upgrade it."

Khan limited himself to nod and feign ignorance, and Luke soon lost interest in him. Instead, he gave voice to polite compliments directed at Martha, but she ignored them.

An awkward silence fell among the four in the group's lead, and Khan almost felt saved when they reached the trees. He preferred to fight than seeing Luke hitting on Martha.

Luke made a hand gesture that no one behind him understood. Even Khan and Jay ignored the meaning behind that, so they simply imitated him.

"The four of us ahead," Luke eventually decided to whisper. "You follow closely but slowly."

Everyone nodded, but a tall figure suddenly appeared among the trees. It resembled an azure shadow that was running at high speed toward the group.

"Shields!" Luke shouted before jumping to the side.

Khan and Jay did the same, but Martha tried to swing her hammer toward the creature. Still, the boar ignored her and crashed on the six in the backlines.