

CHAOS' HEIR

Chapter 7 - Jail

"How do we handle him?" Khan asked while helping his father to stand up.

"Like we handled the other soldiers sent by the Global Army," Bret said while cleaning the blood on the corners of his mouth with his sleeve. "Pretend to know nothing. They won't mind you anyway."

Khan placed Bret on a chair before throwing a dirty towel on the dark-red spot on the floor and walking toward the entrance. When he opened the door, he saw a tall young-looking man who had short golden hair and a pair of piercing brown eyes.

Mark was quite good-looking, but his cold expression ruined his natural beauty. He didn't show any emotion even when Khan's youthful face appeared in his vision.

The soldier wore a dark-blue military uniform that featured a single white star on his right arm. Khan knew the meaning behind that symbol. It confirmed Mark's identity as a first-level warrior.

"What's the reason for your visit?" Khan asked while feigning ignorance.

"I'd rather talk about this inside," Mark replied, and Khan quickly moved aside.

Mark didn't hide his disgust when he inspected Khan's home. The floor was dirty, spots filled the various tiles of metal that made the walls, and a mess of clothes covered the chairs and couch.

"Forgive me for not performing the proper salute," Bret said while struggling to turn toward his guest. "I'm not part of the Global Army anymore. I have no right to act as your equal."

Bret's polite words eased Mark's expression. The soldier didn't like to be in the Slums, but Bret's behavior made him believe that his mission would be over soon.

"I'll get right to the point," Mark announced while taking a notebook from a pocket on his chest. "The Global Army accuses you of unauthorized use of your powers and attempted biological attack. Do you have anything to say on the matter?"

Khan had already reached his father and was waiting behind him. The two of them had gone through similar situations a few times, so their act didn't have any flaw.

Bret wore a tired expression that became full of love whenever he glanced at his son. Instead, Khan revealed pure shame. Tears had even accumulated in his eyes and were ready to fall.

"I am guilty of being a horrible father!" Bret exclaimed. "I spend my days drinking while my son works in the mines. Today I had decided to stop drowning my sorrow and act like a real man, but the news of the Tainted animal caught me by surprise. I'm sure you can understand how I must have felt when I discovered that the soldiers had locked my son with that monster."

Bret's voice rose whenever he said "son" to improve his performance. On the other hand, Khan lowered his head and sobbed at that signal.

The duo's act was perfect. They had managed to send back many soldiers with it. However, Mark appeared unaffected by that scene.

"What about the attempted biological attack?" Mark asked since Bret didn't address that matter.

"I don't understand the question," Bret replied.

"You have thrown the corpse of a Tainted animal on a fainted soldier," Mark read on his notebook. "You have threatened the safety of the entire Slums with your actions."

Bret's expression froze, and Khan pulled his hair to bring him back into the act. Khan could see that his father was about to explode. The thing Bret hated the most was having to deal with incompetents.

"A dead Tainted animal threatening the safety of the Slums?" Bret asked before standing up.

Khan took a step back and shook his head. It was too late. His father had reverted to the head of the scientific division.

"Do you know what's the chance of getting infected by a dead Tainted animal?" Bret asked while nearing Mark. "Less than one in a million, and that only if you actually eat the damned thing!"

"How can you possibly know this?" Mark questioned him while breaking his cold expression.

Truth be told, Mark was only a low-level soldier. His position in the army was even lower, which was why his higher-ups had sent him to the Slums.

His knowledge wasn't great. Mark only followed orders, hoping that his efforts would eventually lead to a promotion.

"Didn't they tell you who I am?" Bret asked. "I swear, the new generations of soldiers have become a bunch of idiots powered by synthetic mana. Did you at least study at the Global Army? Don't tell me that you are another rich boy who wanted superpowers."

Mark didn't know what to say. Everything Bret had said was the truth. He had failed most of the courses in the Global Army and succeeded in the first level of the warrior training only thanks to infusions of mana.

"Dad, stop," Khan pleaded. "They will put you in jail again if you continue."

"Who cares!" Bret shouted. "I only left the Global Army for ten years. Ten damned years! Look at these new soldiers. They don't even know how mana works. How can they protect humankind from the next invasion?"

Khan gave up in trying to calm down his father. Bret was a driven man who had lost his job only to save his son. He would have retained his position and lived happily otherwise.

"It's clear that you don't know your place!" Mark suddenly exclaimed. "You don't understand the gravity of your actions, but maybe a bit of jail time can fix the situation. Turn and let me handcuff you. I will drag you behind bars personally!"

Bret snorted but followed Mark's orders. Still, he didn't fail to impart a few lessons to his son when he turned.

"The enlistment period this year ends in two months, but you will become sixteen in one," Bret said. "Focus on the technique I taught you today during this period, and try to enlist only when you became able to move the mana. That should give you a head-start."

Bret coughed blood while speaking. It seemed that even that information was something that he couldn't share with people outside of the Global Army.

"Don't turn like this idiot," Bret said while Mark began to drag him away.

"Study a lot and keep a balance between body and mind. Don't focus only on one of them because it's easier or looks cooler."

Bret said his goodbyes when he was about to leave the house. "I will come to visit you as soon as I can. Don't do anything stupid. Don't trust anyone. Don't jump into battles unless you feel completely in control of your abilities. In short, don't you dare to die before me!"

Khan heaved a helpless sigh when his father and Mark disappeared from his view, but Bret's voice suddenly resounded one last time. "And buy condoms, even if they are expensive!"

The last line left Khan speechless. Even if he had previously lived in Ylaco, he was a citizen of the Slums now. No girl would approach him so easily.

Khan eventually closed the door and inspected the house. He had stashed some food to prepare for similar situations. He could always go back to the mines, but that didn't seem proper since his birthday was coming.

'I can enlist once I'm sixteen,' Khan thought while picking one of the good pillows from the couch. 'The food hidden in the house can last for six weeks. I should stop working right away and focus on the visualization technique until I can join the Global Army.'