

Chrilic Invasion

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Chapter One: Saneris Island

I ignored the biting cold and surveyed the landscape below a grand structure built in ancient times. I couldn't see much through thick fog veiling the trees. Homes clustered down the side of the hill. Dyer had his back against a trunk and he scanned the valley. A black dome nestled on the brink of a mountaintop where Armor was set up to contain an alien invasion on Saneris Island. A private house converted to the perfect vantage point and hideout. I hurried down a flight of stairs and joined him near the cliff.

"I was on watch all night. No trace of them this side," Dyer said.

"They move fast, last sighted lowland. Wanna see what the hype is about?" I asked.

"And risk our lives, sure." He shrugged.

Through the heavy smoke, I saw the silhouette of a still giant. A chill rushed through my skin. I pointed at it and he followed my gaze. Dyer was a year older. At twenty, he was the youngest recruit until I started training. He grew a scruffy beard and a mop of curls. Oversized chrilics came in our direction in long strides. He kept his gun holster at his hip and his hand trembled reaching for it.

The creatures multiplied, once they discovered the taste of human flesh, death numbers rose in a single week. Four soldiers against thirteen giants and we had to contain them. We became subject to the bloodlust of an alien race in possession of the highest level of technological advancement. A spaceship resembling a cobalt truck container had landed on the platform behind the building.

A quick head count and Dyer discovered thirteen aliens settled for what I presumed was the first time in the history of human existence.

A black racecar parked in an enclosed yard. Dyer loaded a heavy load of weapons in the back. He accelerated to a high speed and we reached lowland where the forest cleared around a wetland. The border of the flood encroached by an overgrowth of grass. The locals called them chrilics and they were impatient when the Armor force sent to destroy them failed on countless occasions. Chrilics were hard to hunt but certainly not impossible to kill. They blended in with the forest. We were yet to capture the first one.

"It's just standing there," Dyer whispered.

"I don't think it can see us."

Chrilics swarmed the wetland. The closest one turned in our direction. The texture of its skin resembled dry, cracked clay. It rose to a staggering height. Large grey eyes popped out of a round, slimed head. Twelve feet tall monsters roamed aimlessly while we assembled our weapons. Bullets against claws the length of my forearm, we needed bigger guns. The water came up to their knees. A smoke layer crept up their thighs. I counted five, more lurked in the water bodies on the island.

My boots balanced on a slippery rock and it approached with a hunch. My chest pounded. Claws swiftly collided with my diaphragm and my ribs hit a rock. I hissed and grabbed my torso. Biting my bottom lip did nothing to ease the pain. I braved the agony and struggled to stand straight. It leaped in a projectile toward me. The gun vibrated in my hand. My heart pounded faster as the rounds tore through the rough surface of the monster. It lifted giant claws. I dodged every swing passing above my head. I fired in quick succession and the beast collapsed and face-planted in the mud.

“Hide!” Dyer instructed.

It took more than two bullets to drop a giant swaying too close and he was down to three monsters. I bolted in the opposite direction but it took one bound for the creature to land in front of me. I ducked when it reached for me. I swung a heavy sword, slashing through its chest. My mouth fell open when I withdrew the sword and it plunged in a lifeless mound. A pinkish fluid streamed down iridescent scales and painted the cracks etched on the monster.

“Three points for Lana.”

The unexpected compliment made me smile. His features creased in disgust.

“This is too much,” he muttered.

“Look on the bright side. We took down three.”

I couldn't believe our luck. Nothing mattered more to me than the safety of my people.

Chapter Two: Wilderness

Dyer launched the racecar through a small forest. The engine blasted and swiftly made a U-turn to the main route meandering uphill. He saw an opportunity to shift to the third gear when the road cleared.

“Ever since we started tracking these things, they are more aggressive than before. Taking down numbers makes no difference.”

He checked his phone. “We have three. If Jeff and Cassie pull off their kills, we’ll be heroes. They’ll never forget our names on this island. The locals had no idea how to deal with them before we landed.”

“We may not have the capacity...”

“Lana, relax, no room for your pessimism now. We have bagged some bodies. Do you know how much we get just for a single beast delivered to Armor, the governments monitoring the situation? We are their lifeline and everyone is watching us.”

Dyer had always been a self-assured young man. I worried about his impulsiveness. Upgraded military vehicles lined the parking area in front of Armor headquarters. We entered the living room and found Cassie typing rapidly at her station. Shortly after announcing the mission, she had her blonde hair trimmed. The cut accentuated subtle features. A striking woman and I found myself simply admiring her athletic physique. As she came closer, my nerves spiraled out of control. I noticed her eyes were an olive shade under thick lashes. She had a demeanor about her that intimidated me. She regarded my condition.

“You look like you barely escaped with your life,” she said.

“I don’t know how we’ll find the rest,” I muttered.

“I found the lair.” Cassie met my intrusive gaze. “Not too far from the spaceship.”

“What did you see?” Dyer asked.

“A pit near the creek, they breed underground,” she said. “We have to pay them a visit and incinerate the newborns crawling there. Drone two captured the nest and there are probably hundreds of those things.”

Jeffrey barged in with an unusual weapon in his right arm. “Joel is a genius.”

“What is that?” Dyer was instantly entranced by the innovation. He took it from Jeffrey and held it like a precious baby.

“Crafted to perfection. These babies are not for the faint-hearted.” He turned to glance at me.

“Is it more powerful than the ones we’re using now?” I asked and he smirked.

“Can’t handle the pressure?”

“She can. We took down three.” Dyer folded his arms.

“Jeff doesn’t care. He doesn’t think I’ll last long.”

“I don’t mean to underestimate your abilities. But I can tell when one is not fit for the challenge.”

“Go to hell.”

“Easy.” Jeffrey aimed the scope at me, then dropped the gun with a smile. “We’ll have to put our differences aside, Lana.”

“I’ll give you guys time to eat and then we’re off.”

Cassie was indifferent to our little spats. She preferred to manipulate computer programs and drones. She unlocked the door with an ID card, she waited for me to walk ahead. We followed her to a military truck. She started the engine. I clipped my seatbelt when she raced too close to other vehicles.

“What are you doing?” I asked.

“We’re allowed to cut through traffic. It’s urgent.”

She reached the single abandoned route heading to the spaceship site. A massive square print flattened the grass. NASA transported the foreign machine to a secret location. The forest grew thicker. Panic rattled my frame and the car speeding through dense wilderness. She swerved onto gravel, uneven terrain. The truck entered a small opening extending to a giant hole in the ground.

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