

BIOLOGICAL 161

Chapter 161: Nathaniel (1)

Nathaniel was currently in the middle of the forest with his team members. Of course, it didn't take much time for the young man to get the leader's role, but contrary to Erik, he didn't do so by earning their respect. He did it by force, brutally beating one of his team members when she dared to talk back to him.

The others tried to stop him but were unable to since Nathaniel was too strong for them to be able to do anything. The other three glared at their teammate, trying not to look directly into his eyes. They knew what would happen if they looked straight ahead, which wouldn't be pretty.

"So?" He asked after a while. "Are you going to look at me like dumb fish? Are we just wasting our time here?" His voice had taken on an edge that hadn't been there before, making everyone flinch slightly. It wasn't anger or hatred behind those words; this was something else entirely. Disdain. Disdain, For those he believed under him.

From there, the group followed his orders without question, even going as far as to rush into the fray without thinking twice. They were more scared of him than the thaids, and that was how Nathaniel wanted things to be.

At Thornton high school, he was a god, the school's leader, the imperator. Here things had to remain the same, as he was born to rule.

Another thing that differentiated the young man from all the others was how easily he came to terms with the killing act. He and his group were lucky enough to chance upon a rather large group of Lomalins. It had more or less a thousand individuals. Of course, Nathaniel didn't waste a second, and without even thinking twice, before going amidst the group of monsters, he started massacring them.

Two were the effects he generated: The first one was that he terrified his team members as they saw the power he wielded. The second was that the Lomalins died like flies.

Nathaniel was fast, strong, and with an insanely mighty power. He massacred the beasts without an ounce of remorse nor a second of hesitation. Blood, legs, brain matter, and gore were everywhere, bodies strewn across the ground like flowers blooming from the earth, some still twitching and moving.

A few thaids managed to flee a couple of meters away, only to fall victim to his trident a few seconds later. The young man was so cruel as not to leave even a single one of them alive.

There was no mercy shown to any of them, none whatsoever. That was Nathaniel's philosophy, one his father made sure to impart to him. If someone was going to go against him, why should he care about his enemy's life?

When his teammates remained there, watching him butcher the Lomalin population, they had goosebumps and almost felt pity for the thaids. However, the fact that the four remained there, watching him kill the monsters, greatly irked Nathaniel.

"If you do not start killing these beasts, I will feed you to them," the ruthless young man said. This prompted the students to join the hunt, making the group gain points quickly.

They slaughtered everything within sight, including young Lomalins. When they finally killed the last one, Nathaniel had a smirk on his face. He turned to look at his teammates and then said, "We are going to go further inside the forest. Do not lag behind." He showed a small but psychotic smile to the others, who could only nod in fear.

As he and the others traveled in search of more thaids, he stopped to check his phone, prompting them to do the same.

Nathaniel went on the Red Palace app to see the ranking. He was immediately displeased to find out that his team was only second. However, once he realized who the first one was, he burst out laughing like a maniac.

"HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!"

One of his team members, curious about what the young man was talking about, gathered the courage and asked him, "Wh-what is the m-matter...?"

Nathaniel turned to look at the young man with a mad look that could give goosebumps to anyone else. He looked at the student until he broke the silence, "Erik Romano's group is FIRST! FIRST! CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?! I'M BEHIND THE PLANT HUGGER!"

The other four were not students from Thornton high school, so they knew nothing about Erik; however, they quickly realized Nathaniel didn't particularly like him.

It took several minutes for the tension to subside. Finally, the young man spoke again, trying his best to sound calm despite the fear bubbling up inside him, "If t-that is how t-things are, we should hu-hurry up and kill m-m-more thaids..."

"Yes, yes, of course. We shouldn't waste time! HOW THE FUCK DID I NOT THINK ABOUT IT?!" he said while punching the student in the face making him fall to the ground. He then looked at the rest of his team members and said, "Any brilliant idea any of you prick has to share? If you do, my door is always open!" sporting a mad grin on his face.

He then resumed hunting, sprinting inside the forest at a mad speed.

After a while, he arrived in front of a huge tree where he saw two thaids fighting each other. They were both larger than the ones he had seen previously.

As he watched them fight, he noticed how both of them were injured and, for this reason, decided to kill them both and earn points.

The others quickly arrived at him and were left flabbergasted when they saw the two thaids fight. They were both massive, one resembling a sort of ape, with bulging muscles under a thick coat of fur and snakes of electricity coiling around its arm.

The other creature was instead feline-like, with two horrendously long tusks jutting out of its mouth and a nasty fire coming out of its throat.

"This looks like big game..." Nathaniel said, leaving the others horrified by the fact he had the mere thought of battling these beasts. However, the four refrained from saying anything; if Nathaniel was so eager to kill himself, so be it. Even better, if he died, the world would be a better place.

Nathaniel decided the best thing to do would be to end the ape-like beast first, since it was the most injured one, and then battle against the feline one.

To do so, he planned to use his trident. He didn't want to do anything fancy, especially considering he was aware he wasn't that skilled with it yet.

However, he could use it to impale the beast. He grabbed the weapon with a murderous glint in his eyes and started dashing toward the monsters while making a murderous laugh.

"HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA" Truth was that Nathaniel was a little bit like Erik. He also felt bloodlust whenever he was in a fight, and it wasn't easy to restrain this feeling. He managed to do so against humans, but here, he could let it flow freely and without any obstruction.

Nathaniel's laugh caused the thaids to stop their battle and turn towards him. With lightning-fast reflexes, the young man ran toward the two beasts before jumping on top of the ape and impaling his trident into its neck from the back. The weapon came in from the nape and went out from the throat; it was gruesome.

A few seconds later, Nathaniel jumped back and somersaulted in the air to avoid one of the feline's attacks, which landed on the still gasping-for-air ape's head and quickly died a couple of seconds later, leaving the young human and the fire kitty cat staring at each other with murderous glints.

Chapter 162: Nathaniel (2)

The creature was bigger than any thaid he had ever seen. Its fur was black as night, and its teeth were sharp as knives. The creature was panting heavily, ready to pounce on him.

The beast was a quadruped one with sharp teeth, two of which were elongated tusks coming out of its mouth. However, what surprised Nathaniel were its two eagle eye and serpentine neck. It also looked like a panther, or at least it moved as such. Nathaniel didn't know what creature it was, but he was sure it was flesh-eating, judging by how it looked at him.

Nathaniel took a deep breath and prepared himself to fight. The young man had never confronted a beast like that but was itching to kill this powerful creature and prove himself.

Adrenaline pumped in his veins and made the hairs stand up all over his body, making him feel more alive than before. He would have loved nothing other than to rip open the thing's chest and bathe in its warm blood. But first things first...

"I will make a coat out of you..." Nathaniel said coldly while looking straight into the thaids eyes. "Maybe a nice cap too..." he added, talking alone like a madman.

The monster let out an eerie growl as it charged toward him. Nathaniel's heart started racing even faster when he saw those four legs moving fast.

The young man started channeling mana into his body like a madman. He didn't need the trident to kill the beast; his power was enough to deal with it. However, he had to pay attention to the beast's fire breath.

Nathaniel threw himself aside just as the beast released a blast of heat from its maw. A second later, flames engulfed the ground where the young man had stood only moments ago.

The ruthless kid saw the beast still charging toward him as soon as he got back on his feet. However, now that he knew what to expect from the beast's fire attacks, he was much more confident in killing it.

Nathaniel decided not to wait until it attacked him once more. Instead, he ran forward and punched with his right hand at the monster's head, releasing a strong burst of force that hit the beast square to its front. The thaid was thrown in the air, with its front body making a 180-degree turn and landing on its back.

It roared loudly as the force's impact knocked some teeth loose. As expected, the attack caused severe damage to the creature.

Nathaniel's teammate looked at him like he was a monster. Battling with a beast like that was by no means easy; they could clearly see it from how fast the thaid was.

The monster couldn't do that much, but it could cover at least a hundred meters of distance in a matter of seconds. They couldn't even comprehend how Nathaniel could keep up with it.

The young man, however, didn't stay idle. As the beast was on the ground, trying to stand up again, he charged at it while laughing like a maniac.

BOOOM

The sound of his power exploding from his feet and giving him speed echoed through the forest, and a huge dust cloud arose behind him.

He jumped onto the beast's face and landed hard on its snout. However, the thaid swiped its paw, forcing the young man to dodge and retreat several meters back. It then got back on its feet and swiped its paws again at the young man, who used his power to gain enough force to defy gravity and jump a meter high.

At the same time, he charged his attack again, channeling much more mana than before. He punched again, and the shockwave hit the body of the creature.

Blood gushed out the thaid's mouth like a fountain; however, it didn't lose its footing, and with its mouth wide open, it unleashed another stream of flame at Nathaniel, who used his power to dodge the move. The young man moved several meters to the right, avoiding the flames that went past him and set a nearby tree on fire.

After dodging the attack, he landed on the ground with an agile move and, by getting a burst thanks to his power, he quickly landed in front of it.

Nathaniel was more in the air than on the ground, moving with dexterity through the air and attacking the beast mid-range. However, the thaid wasn't weak and immediately started sending firebolts at the young man.

A small game of cat and mouse ensued, with the feline-like thaid that tried to get Nathaniel and with the latter avoiding each and every attack.

Slowly, the two made a mess around themselves, leaving scorched land and huge holes in the ground. Trees fell because of Nathaniel's power and were burned to ashes from the heat released by the creature, while leaves burned under the intense heat of the fires.

The beast focused its fire breath on Nathaniel. It fired a giant ball of fire from its muzzle, which flew straight for the young man. Luckily, he managed to avoid it with a masterful move. He did so by jumping backward and evading the fireball by diving down.

However, Nathaniel quickly regained his foothold and charged at the creature, now visibly tired and fatigued. Nathaniel wasn't only a skilled fighter but also had an insanely huge amount of mana available, and his physical stats were superb for kids his age.

The young man used his power to burst in front of the creature. However, he channeled much more mana than before, ending in front of the beast in a second. The creature was too tired to keep up with the human's insane speed and looked at him with fear.

Nathaniel charged another punch, and after a mere second, he moved his supercharged fist. It collided with the thaid's throat, causing it to choke violently for a few seconds. The beast coughed up blood but managed to remain standing nonetheless.

"Die!" Nathaniel shouted angrily, punching the beast once more on the head. The hit left the creature disoriented and with a spinning head, and Nathaniel took advantage of the situation. He slammed his fist on the creature's head twice, thrice, and many more times until the beast finally collapsed to the ground, bleeding from the mouth, eyes, and ears.

Nathaniel observed the beast as life abandoned it and then maniacally laughed.

"HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA, I DID IT! HAHAHA, I DID IT!" He then turned to look at the dead beast and said, "What. Did you think you could have beaten me? Ha! You were nothing compared to my power!"

PTEW

He spat on the beast. Nathaniel wasn't even panting; he was fresh as when he had just started. He was a murdering machine. The other students looked at him with horrified looks, that was not a sane person.

"What the fuck did I just see?" one of his team members said with incredulity.

The others remained silent and dumbfounded. They stared at their leader, shocked. None dared to say anything to him, fearing that in his maddened state, he would attack them. He was strong and powerful beyond belief, and there was no doubt about it.

After a couple of minutes, Nathaniel turned to look at his teammates, "What are you looking at, you pricks?" he said. But they endured. There was nothing more than fear in their eyes.

"You should be grateful that I gained another point for the team..." he added coldly. His voice sounded like thunder, which shook them to their cores.

"O-of course we are, b-boss!" one of the students said.

"Con-congratulation for your kill. The fight was a-amazing..." another said.

"Ok, ok, stop bootlicking. Let's hunt something more; this competition isn't going to win itself..."

With that, Nathaniel dashed toward the forest with renewed vigor. Having killed this beast, he was confident he could kill many more. The other students followed suit, feeling relieved to not face their boss's wrath again.

Chapter 163: First official hunt (6)

"AH...AH... AH... THAT WAS HARD!" Robyn said. He and the rest of the group just slaughtered a group of thaids. Before engaging, Erik explained how these creatures were called: Noks. They had a brain crystal power that allowed them to produce venom; apparently, this was a frequent type of power around New Alexandria's outskirts, so they weren't that surprised to find this kind of beast.

The thaids were in a group of two hundred, and they could find them quickly thanks to Judith's hounds and Erik's expertise in thaids. Anderson was very surprised by Erik and his capability to lead them to hunt for thaids, it was like he had already done so, but that was, of course, impossible.

The Noks were not that big for thaids; they were around 50 centimeters long and were omnivorous. They had four short legs, with which they skittered around, a square head, and medium-length antennae. However, on their head, they had five yellow-green eyes and a long proboscis with some teeth at the end, which they used to capture and eat other insect-like thaids.

The Noks' backs were covered in long hairs, which were brown-green in coloration, and that helped them hide from predators. It wasn't simple to find them, but Erik, knowing what to search for, managed to do so after a relatively short time.

Robyn, Judith, Elena, and Anderson were glad they followed him since they were ranked first on the leaderboards. That was in itself a surprising result.

Yes, they had Anderson on the team, who was a very powerful individual. However, there were teams with much stronger individuals than him, meaning that strength wasn't all that mattered in this competition; it was knowledge.

With Erik, they could find many thaids, especially the ones on the weak side. It was convenient to hunt such beasts since it didn't matter what you killed. What only mattered was that they slaughtered as many thaids as possible.

Robyn and the others didn't know that. Still, Erik believed that the militaries planned this outing to thin the thaids population around the city. He thought that because of the foreign monsters that wandered the surroundings, such as the Leylarhads and the Criculs. Something made it so that thaids traveled west, increasing the number of creatures around there.

In fact, Erik was aware that the number of creatures was much higher than usual. When he first got out of the city, he had the opportunity to see how the situation was, and seeing thaids wasn't that simple.

There were much fewer creatures around here. Now it was different; the local thaids were reproducing like they were obsessed, and many foreign species invaded their territories. It was a mess.

"Let's rest for a bit, guys. It would be dangerous to fight without stamina..." Erik said, noticing the exhaustion in everyone's but Anderson's faces. The students agreed and sat down on the ground. Their bodies needed rest more than anything else right now. Even though the thaids they were facing weren't very strong, they still required energy to be killed.

Erik put his sword inside the scabbard and wiped away the sweat on his hands while looking up towards the sky. Gwen had sent a communication half an hour before saying that there were flying thaids around here but that the military was taking care of them.

That was alarming; the young man knew that there shouldn't be flying thaid near New Alexandria because of the city's defenses, yet, they appeared, adding another danger to them. Erik often glanced upward to see if the canopy above them was big enough to let such monsters spot them from afar. For this reason, he and his team tried to stay under the tree shades as much as possible.

"Judith, how are your mana reserves?" Erik asked.

"Since you asked me to use the hounds only to scout, I have most of my mana. Why?"

Erik looked at the young woman with a contemplative look. The truth was that, while traveling here, he did find several traces left by a Wiangrine, a dangerous beast he had no intention of fighting.

Besides, it wasn't worth it in terms of points. For this reason, the young man went in the opposite direction than the Wiangrine; however, he did find other traces even here.

Since he didn't want to risk it, the young man intended to let Judith scout a couple of kilometers ahead while telling her what to pay attention to.

"Listen to me. I need you to go east and scout. However, you need to be particularly careful about two things," Erik said.

"The first are some traces on the ground; they should resemble a cat's, but much bigger in size. You should be able to distinguish them from other footprints because there are small dots in front of them, left by the creature's claws," the young man added with a serious look.

"You must also keep attention to claw marks on the trees. What I'm searching for uses them to shorten its claws, but the marks should be evident. If you find something like that, follow the traces and search for the beast. I need to know where it exactly is." Erik said while looking at Judith. The young woman immediately understood that whatever the young man was searching for was dangerous.

"Just give me a second..." The young woman started channeling mana through her neural links, making it flow from the brain crystal to the brain and then to the rest of her body. After a short while, the mana went out of her and started taking the shape of two medium-sized hounds. Once the process was ready, the two appeared again.

"Go..." Judith said, and immediately the beasts started traveling east.

"It will take a while," the young woman said.

"What do we do now?" Anderson asked.

"Well, we don't have much choice; I found this beast's tracks in two different places, one heading northeast, the other to the east. So, we should head toward the southeast, and I don't want to do that. The problem is that the most dangerous beasts reside there since we would get closer to the mountain."

"So... what do we do?" Robyn asked.

Erik thought about it for a bit and then had an idea.

"I need pine cones..." he said.

"What? Pine... cones?" Elena replied.

"Yes. Pine cones, this forest is full of such kinds of trees. I need you to help me collect them. They must have the seeds in it, so search carefully."

"What do you need them for?" Robyn asked.

It was at that moment that Anderson chimed in. He had a rough idea of what Erik wanted to do.

"Do you know that Erik is an awakener?" he said, leaving the other students flabbergasted.

"You are what?" Judith shouted.

"Yeah, I am an awakener, and I've got the power to make plant life grow faster..." Erik said.

"Ok, but why do you need pine cones for?" Elena asked.

"Just for precaution..."

There was no point in arguing. Erik apparently knew what he was doing, which must have been related to his powers.

Even Anderson didn't know what he wanted to do or how he would use his power; however, he had a fair amount of trust for the young man.

So he didn't say anything else; however, his previous words were enough to make the other students comply.

After half an hour, the students returned to Erik with ten pine cones each, so Erik could gather around fifty of them.

That was a good amount. The reason why the young man asked them to collect the seeds was to use them to grow trees and throw them to any monster they could not directly fight.

Maybe that wasn't enough, but at least it would injure the creature in question. Erik decided that the best thing to do would be to fight the Wiangrine, in case they spotted it, and that going elsewhere was akin to suicide.

Chapter 164: First official hunt (7)

After Judith's hounds ensured that for the next 2 kilometers, there was no Wiangrine in sight, Erik decided to head east with the rest of his team.

They were currently heading deep into the forest, close to a small cliff from which a small waterfall flowed. Erik knew this waterfall was the source of a nearby river, probably the one where Gwen was some time before, and that close to water sources, there was a high possibility of finding thaids.

He was right in his assessment since the hounds also reported a couple of thousand Noks in the surroundings. For this reason, the group sped through the forest, hoping they would arrive at the group before the others.

"Are you sure we can do this, Erik?" Anderson asked.

"Why shouldn't we? If anything goes bad, we can simply use your power..." the young man replied.

However, a look of reluctance appeared on Anderson's face.

"I don't know... I'm not so sure about using my power." The big guy said while shaking his head. "It might be too dangerous. What if I'm unable to control the radius and kill you all?" he added worriedly.

Erik nodded, understanding what the boy meant. However, Erik felt like this wasn't something to worry over just yet: after all, his plan A didn't involve using Anderson's power but his own. He only told that to the young man in an attempt to make him calm down.

"Ok, look. We can do this. I have everything under control. Besides, even if the Noks overwhelm us, we can simply run away. They are slow..."

Anderson looked at Erik dubiously. It seemed as though he had doubts regarding how well things could go. But then again, it made sense. After all, Erik planned to hunt a two-thousand-strong group of Noks.

Still, the fake awakener remained confident in his plan. Of course, what the young man wanted to do was an already tested strategy on the Lomalin group a week ago.

Besides, Erik did level up during this hunt and was close to doing it again. After all, they killed 2500 thaids; they were even ranked first, with Nathaniel's team behind by 149 monsters. It was impressive how strong that guy was.

As they walked through the forest, they arrived at the cliff, there was no trace of the Noks around here, but Erik knew that they were on top of the cliff, so they either had to climb it or go around it. Both plans and their pro and cons, and Erik decided that the best thing to do was climb, so the group started doing so in earnest. It wasn't hard, considering they were strong individuals.

After they climbed up, they saw a terrifying scene; countless Noks roamed around, eating everything there was around and devastating the surroundings. There was nothing left alive except for some trees. In fact, everything that tried to flee found themselves hunted down by these beasts.

"They are very nasty in numerous groups..." Anderson exclaimed when he finally reached the edge of the cliff.

"Indeed," Erik said. "But to be honest, this is a common trait to every thaid. Even the Lomalins, which have similar strength to these beasts, destroy the environment so much," he added.

"Are you sure we can kill them? They are around two thousand..."

"We can. I have enough cones..." Erik said.

"The cones?" Robyn replied.

"Yeah... the cones... You know what? Just watch. I know what I'm doing..."

"If you say so," Robyn replied.

Erik then started sneaking his way up to the Noks. He wanted to hit the bulk of creatures, creating the highest amount of casualties possible.

He took the pine cones from his backpack and laid them on the ground. He decided to use ten of them since the trees would grow enough to kill much more beasts than the apple seeds he previously used.

However, contrary to before, he didn't have a bag with which he could throw all the seeds simultaneously, but it was also true that a pine cone had much more seeds than an apple.

"Ok guys, whenever I tell you, you have to throw the pine cones to the Noks, ok?" Erik asked.

"Ok."

"Ok..."

"Yes."

"All right..."

Erik then started channeling mana through his birth power's neural links into his body. As expected, the surroundings started to change. The air started becoming moist as soon as he released the mana. Still, Erik tried to keep his power in check and targeted only the cones in his comrades' hands.

"Alright! Here we go, throw them!"

His voice alerted the Noks; however, it was too late for them to do anything. The seeds started sprouting as soon as the items were in the air. Since Erik injected a lot of mana, they grew fast and became huge trees at least 90 meters long in a matter of seconds.

But that was not all; a pine cone had, on average, 150 seeds, and he planned to use 10 of them, meaning that he would produce 1500 giant trees to kill the creatures. To be honest, even Erik and his team had to pay attention since the trees could end up rolling their way.

The sky darkened at that moment since the trees clouded the sun, creating a terrifying view for whoever observed the scene. Erik's team members shivered, especially Anderson. He knew Erik's power was useless, but the young man proved it wasn't.

He didn't know if they would be enough to kill all the Noks; however, it was true that he would kill many of them. His evaluation of the young man suddenly spiked a lot as he believed that the ability to make huge trees rain down upon his enemy was hella scary. This was true especially if one considered that pine so big weighed, on average, three tonnes.

Erik's teammates looked at the trees crushing the bugs like ants leaving bits of brain matter, legs, and blood everywhere. It was disgusting enough for them, having to kill the beasts with weapons and powers, but that didn't leave a mess around. However, this did.

The result of Erik's attack was devastating; basically, only a hundred Noks were left alive, and the cliff on which they were started trembling. The sound of the trees hitting the heart produced a heavy rumble that was heard at kilometers, alerting Gwen's and Floyd's team, the closest one to them.

Once everything ended, Erik received multiple notifications.

[MULTIPLE HOSTILE NOKS KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[0%...1%....5%...30%...70%...100%]

[MANA SUCCESSFULLY ABSORBED, STARTING CONVERTING PROCEDURE.]

[3...2...1...0]

[MANA SUCCESSFULLY CONVERTED INTO EXPERIENCE. 8000 EXPERIENCE POINTS AWARDED TO THE HOST.]

[LEVEL UP.]

[LEVEL UP.]

Erik internally jumped for joy. He had just jumped from level 16 to level 18 and had already gained a level a couple of hours earlier.

His only regret was that he couldn't get the brain crystal nor the blood of the Noks, and he couldn't gain another transformation for Conal's power since he couldn't possibly start sucking the creature's blood in front of them.

To be honest, this wasn't the only time he had to leave behind valuable resources today, but he could do nothing about it. Of course, the others didn't know what had just gone through the young man's mind.

They only knew that Erik killed more than 2000 thaids with a single attack. That was scary. The students, including Anderson, decided not to step on the young man's foot in the future and to try to build good relations with him.

"Let's go..." Erik said. "We must see if more beasts are alive," he added. The students walked toward the carnage with cautious steps and their weapons drawn; Judith even summoned his hounds to see if thaids were trying to run away. Unluckily for Erik, no beasts were alive anymore. They all perished instantly when the trees fell on them.

Chapter 165: Searching for clues

"So, what were you doing around 14:00?" Investigator Hais asked one of the students he hadn't interviewed yet.

The student looked at his watch and said, "I was in the gym, training. Jimmy can testify about this; he was with me..." The investigator nodded to the student, who answered almost immediately.

"There was someone else there that day besides Jimmy?" the investigator asked.

"Plenty. The gym tends to become very busy during these hours..." replied the young man standing in front of him as if it had been evident from the beginning.

"Who's Jimmy? A friend or a member here?" asked Detective Hais, looking at the student. "He is a friend of mine. We started training recently since we will go to military school in September..."

"Is this Jimmy's surname Morel, perhaps?" the detective asked.

"Yes, sir..."

The investigator strongly believed it was all Erik's doing; however, he didn't want to accuse an innocent young man, so he tried to do his job without any bias. It was better to go by exclusion instead of randomly accusing him.

Hais observed the young man in front of him with a pensive look. He seemed like an honest kid, but he could be simply good at lying.

The detective continued observing the young man until his mother came into the room. She walked up to her son and patted her head, knowing well what his son had to endure. She then turned to look at the investigator, "So, do you have an idea what could have happened?" she asked.

"I have a general idea. However, I still need to exclude other suspects..."

"Do you think it was a student?" The woman asked.

Hais kept his poker face and then replied to the woman, "No, I'm just trying to explore all the possibilities. I also have to refute other's people words and make conclusions based on the evidence before making a decision."

"I get it... I hope you will be able to find out what happened..."

Hais then looked at the woman and her son. "It must not be simple for you, am I wrong?" Logan, Conal, and Orson tormented the young man too. They went several times to the police and even talked to their parents. Still, they dismissed everything as 'kids making kids' mistakes' every time.

"It's easier than I thought..." the young man said.

The interview went on for half an hour. The investigator asked the young man multiple questions and jotted down whatever he said to avoid forgetting about it.

Later, the man went to find another one of the students he didn't interview yet and did the same thing. However, once he was done, he knew there was still much to do since he had to check whether what the young men and women said was true.

He went to talk to the school staff, students, and even parents and was able, in the end, to exclude all these people. The only one he was missing now was Erik Romano. However, the investigator didn't want to accuse him without proof, as he could still be innocent.

He knew a student did this and that the awakener was his best lead; however, he needed to exclude the others with a hundred percent certainty.

Though, If he was right and the young man really did what he believed he did, it was clear that the police already knew it and that they protected him. Here a problem appeared: what was he going to do if that was true? Confront the young man? Tell the parents? Alert the police? In the first case, the young man would probably run away.

If he told the parents, they would probably try to enact justice and kill the young man, and if he told the police, they would surely arrest or, worst, kill him.

However, that was something he was going to think about later. For now, Detective Hais decided to go search for clues in the northern district, especially to the house of a local farmer, a man called mister Fox, Erik's employer, who recently passed away. For that reason, he headed to the train station.

Multiple people were walking down the streets, as many of them were returning home after a long day of work. Some of those heading towards the city center stopped to chat while others continued. As far as Hais could see, most conversations involved the weather, gossiping over the latest news, or talking about someone else's misfortune.

Hais walked through the crowd, avoiding anyone coming close to him. He wanted no trouble from any of the people here today. All he cared about was solving the crime and returning to his house safely.

The man arrived at the train station after a short while, and then he waited for the train to arrive. He had to pick train number 113, the same one Conal, Logan, and Orson took when they were last seen.

As he boarded the train, he activated his brain crystal power, and immediately, his ability to think increased twofold. One of his brains observed the surroundings and tried to search for clues while the other process the information he was receiving. This meant that nothing could go unnoticed by the detective.

It was then that the investigator tried to reconstruct the chasing scene. He imagined the masked student entering the train and the three bullies chasing after him.

He then recalled the people he saw sitting on the train that he saw from the footage and slowly started walking to the other side of the train, as it was clear from the images that the masked student ran toward the end of the train.

Then, as he ended up on a certain carriage, he noticed a tiny blood drop. It wouldn't have been possible without his brain crystal power.

Immediately, he assumed that either Logan, Conal, or Orson had fallen and hit their head or that a scuffle had broken out.

However, this second case was unlikely since many people were inside the carriages. Besides, from the video footage, the investigator clearly saw two police officers inside one of the carriages. He imagined the masked student sitting where the police were in order to stop the other three from attacking him.

Like that, he arrived at the northern district, with his imagination still going freely. He saw the students come out from the train, and the chase resumed.

However, this was where detective Hais had to stop since he had no available data to determine what had happened.

Nonetheless, he thought his prediction was pretty accurate. As the detective left the train, he walked toward Mister Fox's farm and noted all the properties and farms along the way.

The next day he was going to interview all these people to see if they noticed something weird if the police came to talk to them. If the latter case was true, it meant that the police knew it was Erik and that they were covering him.

After a while, the investigator arrived at Mister Fox's farm. There were still police tapes placed in front of the property, as it was a crime scene.

Hais entered the main gate and followed the evidence markers trail leading into the building. His first priority would be to check the place where the body was found.

He made sure not to touch anything as he approached the door to the house. After peeking inside, he quickly realized why the police tape was present: the whole area was covered in blood.

The investigator started recording with his camera, hoping to find enough evidence to solve the mystery. He then started wondering where he could find such evidence inside the house. Maybe Erik left a note or a clue about what he did that day. Maybe, Mister Fox kept track of when his employees came to work. That would give him a window of time to focus on.

Chapter 166: Jealousy, rage, and madness

"HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAH," Nathaniel laughed while he killed the thaids, appearing like a maniac intoxicated by the feeling of taking other creatures' life.

The other students watched the man going on a rampage with fear and disgust written all over their faces, not because they thought it was wrong to kill these beasts or that his actions were unjustified but simply because it was not normal to enjoy killing, despite doing so with monsters.

Besides, as the students watched Nathaniel fight, they only saw themselves as weaklings in comparison, and this made them feel vulnerable. Nathaniel's strength did not come from only his brain crystal power; no. It was he who was that powerful. The precise control over his body, the perfect execution of every movement. He could do things that others couldn't even imagine.

However, the students weren't only watching. They, too, were killing thaids left and right, or else they would have made the young man angry, and they didn't want to see that happen.

"DIE!" Nathaniel said as he plunged his trident into the side of a creature. Blood gushed out like a fountain from the wound and stained the ground blood red.

Then His trident impaled another one's throat. He then yanked the beast in the air and tried to shake it off the trident.

The result was that the head detached from the rest of the body and rolled down onto the floor, still twitching slightly. "YOU SONS OF BITCHES HAVE NO RIGHT TO BE IN THIS WORLD! I WILL KILL YOU AND MAKE YOU SUFFER!"

As soon as those words came out of his mouth, there was silence around him once again. For some strange reason, none of the people present dared utter anything more than an occasional grunt when attacking a thaid.

After a while, the five students killed all the monsters in the surroundings. Nathaniel was ecstatic; he killed a bunch of thaids and was sure that he finally caught up with Anderson's and Erik's team.

At that moment, Nathaniel and the others heard a rumble in the distance and got alarmed. Even Nathaniel was vigilant since whatever produced that kind of noise had to be powerful. They didn't know that it was Erik who made it.

"What was that?" Asked one of Nathaniel's team members.

"I don't know... we should move. Whatever did that must be big..." Then they both turned to look at Nathaniel, hoping he didn't have the insane idea to search for whatever made that noise.

However, they found him fiddling with his smartphone when they looked at him. The young man had just picked it up to check the competition ranking, but once he did so, he screamed.

"WHAAAAAAAAAT?!"

Erik's team just gained two-thousand points.

"Is this a joke? IS THIS A MOTHERFUCKING JOKE?!
RHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA" he then punched a tree while circling mana through his arm. The plant broke at the point of impact and fell to the ground with a resounding thud.

The others remained dumbstruck.

"HOW IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE PLANT HUGGER IS FIRST?! FIIIRST!"

Nathaniel cursed under his breath. If anyone deserved to win, it was surely him. After all, he'd been fighting against the strongest opponents possible. But despite having killed thousand of thaids, there was still a vast difference between his and their team's score.

Nathaniel then blacked out as if he was suddenly turned off by a switch. After a good amount of time, he turned to look at his comrades and said. "Keep hunting thaids; I need to make a trip alone..."

Like that, the young man went away and dashed through the forest. He had the hunch that the big noise had been made by Anderson using his power.

It was the only possibility, not only because it coincided with his team's sudden increase in points but also because he was fully aware of how mighty his power was.

With unbelievable speed, he quickly reached the source of the noise. After climbing a small cliff, he arrived where Erik and the others had previously fought.

It was then that he saw the scene of carnage; however, contrary to his expectations, there wasn't a crater there. The trees were still standing, and nothing suggested that was Anderson's work.

Now, on the contrary, there were multiple giant trees strewn across the ground, with Noks' bodies under them and blood everywhere. It was at that moment that it clicked. It was all Erik's doing.

"No way..." he said while looking with incredulity.

Then something snapped inside of him, and he decided he had to do something. He couldn't allow the plant hugger, a worm he should have had the right to crush under his foot, to win this competition.

It was there that a plan brewed inside his mind. Nathaniel searched for Anderson's team's tracks, and after a couple of minutes, he found them.

Following the tracks, it didn't take a lot of time for him to find the students; however, he didn't engage or do anything. He simply observed them killing thaid after thaid with incredible efficiency.

His curiosity grew even further, and he stayed a little more to observe them. However, what he saw deeply enraged him, as they went from thaid group to group as if they already knew where they were.

"How can they kill so many thaids without breaking a sweat? No, how can they even find them so easily?" he said to himself. He then noticed that Anderson's team wasn't even following his orders but Erik's and understood that he knew where to find the beasts.

Nathaniel quickly turned around as he decided to play a prank on them. He returned to the site of the Noks' demise and picked up a couple of bodies. He smeared their guts and blood all over him, and he also picked up two corpses and brought them with him as he started running.

Nathaniel then went all over the forest with his power on, increasing his speed a lot. He dashed through the forest like a madman and started searching for thaids left and right. It didn't take much before he found one, but to be honest, he started noticing that more and more thaids started following him, attracted by the scent of blood.

One, two, ten, twenty thaids were on his tail after no more than three minutes. He kept running until he found another one of the cat-like thaid he had fought before, the fire-spitting one.

The truth was that this was the Wiangrine that Erik was trying to avoid. He deemed the beast too dangerous to fight, and only someone as crazy as Nathaniel would have tried to kill it. However, the young man was even strong enough to kill it alone. Speaking volumes about the young man's power.

The Wiangrine, smelling the scent of blood, started following Nathaniel as if taken by a frenzy. In the distance, the other thaids did the same, but weirdly enough, they didn't confront each other. There was something weird in the monster's behavior, it was like they only saw the human, and the other thaids didn't even exist.

Nathaniel kept running, but after a while, he started hearing heavy footsteps in the distance. After five more minutes, he observed a giant beast running in his direction. If Nathaniel had studied a little bit of thaids' ecology, he would have known that this was a Crombo.

"These will do..."

Nathaniel had assembled a small force of thaids, they were at least a thousand, but they were stronger than the Noks or the Lomalins.

For sure, this fight would be hard for Erik and the others. However, this exploit gave him the idea to attract other thaids with the smell of blood.

This way, he and his team could kill more of them and gain points faster. The young man didn't even fear being overwhelmed. He was confident enough to kill all the thaids that attacked him in a matter of moments or to run away easily. As there were enough creatures, Nathaniel suddenly steered from the other side.

He started heading toward Erik's and Anderson's last known location while still attracting the thaids.

Chapter 167: First official hunt (8)

"Are you sure they went this way?" Greg asked.

"A hundred percent..." Zachary replied.

Greg nodded and said, "Okay then..." He turned to the others with a somber look. He and Zachary were accompanied by three other people, and they had been tasked to kidnap Erik Romano, the awakener.

They went out of the city through a secret passage the Crystal Cross gang used when they wanted to smuggle something or someone out of the city. They actually had to walk through the sewer to do that and were now full of filth. The smell alone could make anyone sick; even thaids steered away from them.

The group walked into the forest, searching for their target undisturbed by beasts. However, they had to pay attention to not being found out by soldiers and teachers. They had been briefed by their boss about this outing. The whole Red Palace, including teachers and soldiers, were there, but since the forest was big, they didn't see people.

Their contact at the Red Palace gave them a device that could track down the student's signal from their phone. It was one used by the teachers to find the students in case something happened, but this guy gave them a spare one.

After all, he would get paid if it worked well. If anything else did happen, no amount of money could cover what kind of punishment he would receive.

After walking for half an hour, they finally came across the trail Erik's group had left, meaning they were on the right track. They even went where Erik and his team killed the Nok's group. From there, finding them was easy, and it didn't take a lot of time.

Currently, there were 2 thieves and 3 assassins in the group. Zachary and Greg were the thieves, while the other three were the assassins. The first of the three was called 'Death,' everyone called him such because of his incredible ability to kill people.

It was common knowledge that if you got targeted by him, you were as good as dead. The man carried two daggers, both made out of highly mana-conductive materials. As for his age, no one knew how old he was since he usually wore a mask.

Next was a man who only knew as 'Slice.' Everyone called him this way because he was a psycho killer who liked cutting off heads and limbs just for fun. His weapon of choice was a sword, which he wielded with great skill. Not many could stand against him once he started swinging that thing around.

Last was 'Laser,' but no one could understand why he was called that way. He wasn't much different than the other two, but his brain crystal power was very nasty, as he could inflict pain onto others with his mere thought.

The three agreed to join the kidnapping mission since it was a high-profile mission, but aside from Death, which didn't really care, the other two were a bit conflicted since they couldn't kill the target. However, there were other people with him, so they could have a little bit of fun, at least they hoped.

After a short while, the five finally reached Erik's group; they were currently killing a group of thaids effortlessly, making the five kidnappers look with amused looks.

"They aren't that bad..." Slice said.

"Yeah," Death added, "they're pretty good fighters, despite their age..."

As the group approached closer, they heard Erik giving orders to his friends.

"Isn't that the target?" Laser asked Greg.

"He is..." he replied.

"That guy knows how to order other people around..." Laser said.

"I can see that..."

"Ok, guys, we must make this quick. Go there, beat them up, and grab the awakener. Is everything clear?" Zachary said.

"Oh... c'mon, we came all this way, and you won't even leave us to have some fun?" Slice said.

"Yeah, I would like to see their face squirming in pain," Laser added.

"Seriously? We are in the middle of an important mission, and all you can think of is having fun?" Zachary replied.

"But I don't wanna miss my chance! There are even pretty girls among them!" Slice said he had a sick taste for young girls.

"Well, you'll be missing your chances this time. We can't fail this mission... Someone very powerful has paid for this, and the boss won't tolerate failure since he issued this quest."

Everyone froze upon hearing the boss being mentioned; he was a scary guy. Even Death was slightly scared. It wasn't very often that these kinds of quests appeared, and not many people were willing to do them since there was the risk they could mess up a quest issued by the CCG leader. Usually, these quests were hard, but the pay was high.

In this case, though, not only was the pay astronomical, but the quest was relatively easy. For people like them, trained assassins and thieves, getting out of the city, and navigating through the forest, going unnoticed by patrols was as easy as breathing. Coming there was like a walk in the park. But if they failed, there could be severe consequences for them.

"Fine, let's move out then," Slice said. "I don't want to waste more time than I already did..." he added.

The five then started sneaking their way closer to the students, who were fighting against a large number of thaids. They tried to be as stealthy as possible.

[WARNING. HOSTILE PRESENCES DETECTED.]

<Emergency quest: Escape.>

-Rewards for completion: 3000 experience points, 500 DNA points, and 3 strength stat points for Escaping the encounter.

-Failure Penalty: Unkown.

WARNING: KILLING THE ENEMY IS NOT POSSIBLE. THE POWER LEVEL IS TOO HIGH.
RECOMMENDED APPROACH: FLEE.

"What the...?!" Erik exclaimed. He turned just in time to see five figures sneaking toward them. He didn't know these people.

Judging by their looks, they weren't soldiers nor teachers, and they couldn't obviously be students. He got already warned by the system that they had bad intentions; however, the fact that they were trying to sneak behind them didn't leave a shred of doubt about their goal.

Erik started wondering who the hell these people were, but immediately understood why they were here; the Biological SuperComputer.

Then everything started to click. They were probably the guys responsible for robbing his house, but were they also the ones who killed Mister Fox? And besides, who sent them? Was it really Amber's family? Or was it the Crystal Cross Gang? If somehow they confessed the old man's killing, everything would be clear, but he doubted they would do it.

"BEHIND US!" Erik shouted.

"THEY NOTICED US!" Greg screamed. He and the rest of the team started running.

"What?" Judith exclaimed, turning around. The young woman wasn't alarmed by these people initially since they were humans; however, she changed her mind as soon as she saw them running toward them.

There were at least two hundred meters of distance between Erik's group and the unknown attackers, so they still had time to do something.

That was a high-tension moment. On the one hand, they were still fighting the thaids, so they couldn't get that distracted; at the same time, if they ignored the newcomers, things would end up bad.

"Judith, summon the hounds! Anderson, I need you to take my share of the thaids! Can you do it?"

"Yes, don't worry!" Anderson replied. The monsters they were currently fighting were not that strong. However, since they didn't think they would be attacked by humans, Erik decided to fight only large groups of weak monsters. If they didn't pay attention, they could end up heavily injured. The first thing Erik did was take the pine cones from his backpack.

He channeled as much mana as possible and started throwing the cones toward the unknown assailants.

"WHAT THE FUCK?!" Shouted Greg. He had never seen something like that. It was a scary sight for him and his team.

However, Erik wasn't done yet. There was still hope everything would go smoothly. He just needed to be quick.

Chapter 168: First official hunt (9)

"WHAT THE FUCK IS THAT?" Greg shouted, referring to the trees that Erik threw at them.

"STOP WASTING TIME AND DODGE!" Zachary said as the tree fell.

At the same time, Anderson, Judith, Robyn, and Elena kept fighting against the thaids. Anderson used his claymore to fell a thaid. Elena did the same with her sword, while Judith's hound kept others at bay enough for the young woman to end them with her knives.

At the same time, Robyn had a more proactive approach, using his power and spear to kill all the thaids that were going to attack his three teammates.

Slowly, the team gathered points; however, they were worried about their assailants. Who the hell were they? Why were they attacking them?

As the tree fell over the Crystal Cross gang members, Erik took another pine cone and sent it toward them. He still had 38 of them.

"DODGE!" Zachary shouted. The five of them dodged the tree quickly, but there were many of them, so it was not that simple to do it. Basically, they had to do that in a small amount of space, just when they were a couple of meters from the ground.

They moved with agility among the tree trunks, dodging the trees and the brunches. However, this kind of dodge required good physical coordination, and it would be hard without training.

Erik threw two pine cones this time; he now had 36 of them. He had to pay attention not to finish them all before help came.

While the two cones traveled through the air, Erik pushed a button attached to his backpack strap. That was a device the Red Palace gave the students for safety reasons; a teacher would go help them once pressed.

The closest teacher received the distress signal on another side of the forest. "Ah... fucking weaklings," he said, not knowing who or what attacked the students who asked for help.

The teacher knew that the ones who called were first-year students, but he also saw from the device that they were inside the peasant rank's safe zones, so he wondered how weak these students were to have problems with weak thaids.

However, once he saw who the caller was, he had second thoughts. To call them was the first-ranked team. They had many kills, so it was weird for them calling for help. Like that, the teacher headed in their direction at full speed.

Erik knew he had to move fast. Calling the teacher was not enough; he needed his friend's help. The more people there were and the safer the situation would turn.

However, as he observed the five intruders, he saw them avoiding the last tree trunk.

"GO!" Zachary shouted. Erik heard him. However, he wasn't done. He got two other pine cones and sent them to the five strangers again.

"BE CAREFUL!" Greg shouted. Erik called Amber through his biological supercomputer as the trees traveled through the air toward his enemies.

"WHAT?!" Amber replied, knowing that he would be in trouble if he called her.

"We got attacked by unknown people. You need to contact the others and..."

Erik picked up two other pine cones again and sent them to the assassins. Who took cover again or avoided the trees.

"THAT FUCKER IS GETTING ON MY NERVES!" Death said.

Erik threw another two pine cones as he remained with 34. More than three hundred trees traveled through the air like freight trains. It was tough to avoid them all. Some of them landed near the five intruders, sending shivers down their spines. Others hit the trees nearby, making them fall to the ground.

"CALL THE OTHERS, AMBER!" Erik said, then closed the call; as he needed to throw the trees again.

"FUCK!" Amber said.

"What happened?" Floyd asked.

"Erik and Anderson are in trouble!" she replied. She then called the others while they moved toward Erik's team.

In the meantime, Erik kept sending the trees to the five. They basically didn't move an inch from their initial spot.

"How was that fucker able to find out we were attacking?" Laser asked.

"I don't know, but I do not like it...." Slice said.

BOOM

BOOM

BOOM

The sound of more trees falling to the ground echoed. The other students heard the noise from a distance and were scared, thinking it was a powerful beast who had done that.

At the same time, Erik's friend heard the noises, and since they knew they came from Erik's team location, they grew worried.

"I want to rip that motherfucker apart!" Death said. The mission suddenly became more complex than expected.

"Didn't he have a slicing power or the like?" Laser asked.

"Did you forget he is an awakener, you dumb prick?" Zachary shouted.

"Hey! There is no need to get angry!"

As Erik used more and more pine cones, he turned to look at his friends, they were almost done with killing the thaids, and once they did, they would have a shot at running away.

However, Erik didn't know if that would be enough. The only way to do that was to learn how strong these guys were.

Still, Erik was already aware they were strong, not only because of how agilely they avoided his trees but also because the system stated so. Nevertheless, it was necessary to know HOW MUCH they were stronger than them.

<Analysis!> Erik thought immediately; multiple screens appeared over the guys' heads, but he could see them clearly as if they were in front of his eyes.

However, Erik frowned once he saw their stats; they were many times more powerful than he and his team, and Erik wondered how he could keep them from attacking.

That was the first time in his life that Erik was glad he had the plant growing power because, without it, he would be a sitting duck. Not even by using his other powers would he have been able to escape from them.

The situation was this: two of them were relatively weaker than the other three, around the XI3 level on the Idor scale.

Their power levels were similar, around 154, almost double Nathaniel's one. However, this didn't mean they were almost two times stronger than Nathaniel no.

They were much stronger than him, not only because they had a very generous amount of Energy, though less than Nathaniel's, but because they had more than double his other stats.

However, if that wasn't alarming enough, the other three were much worse than them, with power ranging around the MI3 on the Idor scale. The scariest of them all was the guy with the mask, Erik didn't know him, but he was Death. That guy was at power level 210; he was a monster.

As Erik saw their levels, he was immediately alarmed.

"Guys, how much before you kill the thaids?" Erik asked.

"5 minutes," Anderson replied.

Erik kept throwing the pine cones at the humans; however, its stash was rapidly decreasing. He hoped his friends and the teachers would arrive soon. Otherwise, there wouldn't be any chance for them to do anything.

Some time later, his team managed to kill all the thaids, but unfortunately, he ended the pine cones. Erik didn't know if they would have been able to escape the five men.

"RUN!" Erik shouted. However, as they didn't have any more of the pine cones' protection, Greg and the others quickly reached them.

"We got you, mother fucker!" Laser told Erik. The young man grimaced; however, a noise started spreading from the forest before anything could happen.

SKITTER SKITTER SKITTER SKITTER SKITTER SKITTER

The sound of something running toward them became louder.

RAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAWR

A beast roared from between the trees.

RAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAGH

Then another screeched.

A huge number of monsters came from within the trees. There were many beasts, but a Crombo and a Wiangrine stood proud among them.

"SHIT!" Erik said.

"PROTECT THE BOY!" Zachary shouted, immediately piquing the students' interest, especially Erik's one.

As the beast advanced, Erik saw a silhouette among the trees. He observed the male figure swinging atop the trees for a couple of moments until he recognized him. It was Nathaniel that motherfucker lured the thaids toward his team. The problem was that they weren't weak monsters at all, not as much as the Noks or the Lomalins, at least.

[QUEST UPDATE!]

<Emergency quest: Survive.>

-Rewards for completion: 5000 experience points, 800 DNA points, and 5 strength stat points for surviving the encounter.

-Failure Penalty: Death or Unknown.

WARNING: This quest has a high failing chance. The recommended approach is to flee.

"YOU SON OF A BITCH!" Erik shouted.

Chapter 169: First official hunt (10)

Erik was furious. Nathaniel lured thousand of thaids toward his team; the problem was that the beasts were not Noks and Lomalins but different and stronger thaid's species.

However, it was with horror that the young man observed the Crombo's and Wiangrine's presence amidst the monsters.

They had a possibility against the second one, but against the Crombo, it was another story itself. The beast would have been enough to wipe out a group like them even if it was alone, which it wasn't. The creature stood proud amidst the other thaids as a king amongst beasts.

Erik could feel the rage building inside him at this sight while he tried to control himself from doing something stupid or foolish in front of his teammates. To suppress his rage and avoid doing something stupid, Erik did what he thought best: ignore everything around him and focus solely on surviving.

"THEY ARE HERE!" Slice said, and then the monsters arrived.

SWOOOOOSH.

The man bisected a thaid with one swing of his sword. His blade glowed blue for some seconds before returning back to its normal color a couple of seconds later. He then raised his sword and swung it down again, killing another thaid.

Laser was instead targeting the weaker thaids. He was faster than slice in killing the beasts. Still, he constantly avoided attacks, occasionally jumping to avoid being bitten. He was using his power to inflict pain to keep the other thaids at bay, and he was viciously effective in doing so.

Greg and Zachary were not as efficient as the other two but were keeping a lot of thaids from reaching Erik,

"Don't let them pass!" Zachary warned everyone. Greg nodded. Both killed thaids left and right; the beasts were a lot. However, they were not that strong as to pose a problem for them, though the Crombo was another story. The beast stood tall amidst the thaids, whose only thought was to devour the humans in front of it.

Death, the strongest of the bunch, was the only one able to fight the beast, but even he was having problems since the creatures' defenses were very high.

In the meantime, Erik observed what was happening. Only ten seconds had passed since the battle started, but his mind was in overdrive. The young man knew what Nathaniel's plan was: lure these creatures into fighting his team so they wouldn't be able to gain more points; this move was dangerous.

However, Erik noticed something weird; the monsters didn't attack each other. They only focused on the humans, which was weird since countless bodies were littered on the ground, only waiting for the alive thaids to eat them.

Though there was something good in the current situation, despite being double unlucky, since he got attacked by two parties, one of the two, the five men, would end up protecting them from the thaids, at least until Erik was around.

If he ran away, the five would try to get him, as their goal was clearly to take him alive, but his comrades would die. If he told his comrades to flee, it was clear that the sheer amount of monsters,

and their overall level, would prevent him from surviving, and he had no intention of getting himself killed.

In a sense, what Nathaniel did was positive since the only thing Erik had to do was to wait for the teachers and his friends to arrive.

The prick did him a favor; however, he couldn't simply ignore the fact that he put them in danger. They could've even risked dying if it wasn't for the five men's intervention. Nathaniel had to pay this time.

He found a good spot near thick bushes where tree branches met overhead, forming a roof over his head. It looked like a good enough spot to decrease their presence enough to give trouble to the thaids searching for them.

"Follow me. We need to take cover behind the bushes!" Erik shouted, and immediately the rest of his team followed suit.

"Ok, we will use the usual battle tactic," the young man said as soon as the other four arrived. "However, Judith, I need you always to keep your hounds active. Is everything clear?" Erik asked.

"Yes!" the others replied in unison.

At that moment, three thaids started getting past the five men and approached the group of students. Two of them were relatively easy to kill, but the last one wasn't.

Erik immediately recognized the beast; it was a Genare. If the young man had kept in contact with Benedict, he would have known this was the same beast he and his team had killed earlier.

The beast's crocodilian body, feline's head, and small but pointy and sharp teeth sent shivers down the student's spines. However, judging by its speed, it was clear this creature could be killed with a joint effort. Though, the team had to pay attention to the two long horns that protruded from either side of its cranium.

This would be a complicated fight for the team, but nothing they couldn't do; however, they had to do it fast if they didn't want to risk other thaids getting in their way.

"Anderson, I need you to stall the bigger beast. Can you do it?" Erik asked.

"Yes," he said while unsheathing his claymore. He then ran toward the beast and started attacking, creating a lot of different but minor wounds on its thick-furred hide. As expected, the monster responded by attacking back, which meant Anderson was forced to dodge or else face certain death.

Fortunately, the beast's attack missed its mark, allowing the boy to counterattack. With swift movements, he managed to land several blows before the beast, luckily distracting the beast. This allowed the young warrior's teammates to take down the other two creatures.

Robyn threw his spear toward one of the two beasts, who dogged with a swift move; however, Judith's hound was there and started biting at the creature while she attacked with her daggers.

At the same time, Elena and Erik attacked the other one, quickly severing its head off. Soon they went onto the other beast and pierced its heart, ending its life.

[MULTIPLE HOSTILE CREATURES KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[0%...1%....5%...30%...70%...100%]

[MANA SUCCESSFULLY ABSORBED, STARTING CONVERTING PROCEDURE.]

[3...2...1...0]

[MANA SUCCESSFULLY CONVERTED INTO EXPERIENCE. 88 EXPERIENCE POINTS AWARDED TO THE HOST.]

It was at that moment that Anderson shouted.

"Guys, I need help here!"

Immediately, the other four students jumped into the fray, attacking the Genare with everything they had. Elena and Erik went melee and hacked the beast with their swords.

Judith's hounds attacked the beast while she hit its leg, trying to cut off its ligament, but without success. At the same time, Robyn used his spear and attacked from a distance.

The beasts tried to bite, gore, and kick; however, the student's coordination helped them avoid the attacks, although some of them got grazed by the horns. Fortunately, none of them suffered serious injuries. The Genare started accumulating wound after wound while losing a copious amount of blood.

At the same time, another couple of thaids slipped past the five men's defenses and approached the five students.

"I will take care of them!" Erik said.

Immediately, the young man disengaged the Genare and approached the other two monsters. They were relatively weak insect-like thaids called Ceren. Erik channeled mana through his brain crystal and diverted it to the sword, and after a couple of quick slashes, he killed the two creatures.

In the meantime, the Genare lost so much blood under the students' assault that it seemed like it wouldn't survive another minute. However, the beast continued fighting until. Finally, it collapsed dead.

[MULTIPLE HOSTILE CREATURES KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[0%...1%...5%...30%...70%...100%]

[MANA SUCCESSFULLY ABSORBED, STARTING CONVERTING PROCEDURE.]

[3...2...1...0]

[MANA SUCCESSFULLY CONVERTED INTO EXPERIENCE. 952 EXPERIENCE POINTS AWARDED TO THE HOST.]

Chapter 170: First Official hunt (11)

Erik immediately noticed the mass amount of experience points he had just gained by killing a single Genare. He didn't know what he would do once in a military school or once he got enlisted.

However, he understood clearly that if he could hunt higher leveled thaids with a team, he would be able to level up much faster than doing it alone.

Sure, he could kill multiple low-leveled thaids by throwing trees at them. Still, the amount of experience he would gain would be significantly reduced.

While thinking this, his eyes quickly darted to the left. The five men let another group of monsters get past them; this time, it was a small pack of five Ma-cofs.

These were another type of wolf-like thaids; however, compared to the Leylarhads, they had a single orange horn on the middle of their heads and silvery white fur.

Aside from that, they were pretty standard-looking monsters but had a very nasty power. They could send bolts whose power was not that much but paralyze their prey. This was their main hunting tactic since there wasn't anything else about these wolves that made them stand out as special other than being able to use electricity against others.

Erik analyzed them and quickly found out they weren't that strong compared to him if taken individually. However, avoiding their attacks was everything but simple.

Erik clearly understood that if he was alone, he would have perished against these monsters; however, now that he had an entire party backing him up, he knew all too well that things weren't going to go like that.

"Anderson! Elena! With me! We will kill the three beasts at the forefront!" Erik shouted. "Judith, Robyn, try to keep the other two at bay! Be careful; they can send paralyzing bolts!"

The four team members nodded in unison while simultaneously going into position. Anderson placed himself in the middle of a trident formation, with Erik on his left and Elena on his right.

Robyn started elongating his arms to attack the Ma-cof from a distance while Judith used her hounds to keep the other Ma-cof at bay.

Erik's opponent didn't waste time and sent a paralyzing bolt in his direction. However, the young man charged his sword with mana and parried the attack. The coat made with the ethereal substance absorbed and dissipated the attack ruining the creature's tactic.

However, this didn't stop the creature from rushing at the young man; the beast lunged at him with his mouth wide open and tried to bite Erik in the jugular.

Yet, Erik's dexterity was sufficiently high to allow him to keep track of the beast's movements. He dodged the beast's jaws by rotating his waist and chest and having enough space to use his Flyssa, he swung his charged sword vertically, chopping the creature's head off.

The young man quickly looked to his right to see how his teammates were doing. Anderson didn't have any problem at all as the young man saw him just plunging his claymore into the beast's heart, ending its life in a mere moment.

The problem was that another Ma-cof was on him. Robyn was the one tasked to stop it from approaching the young man, but apparently, a stray paralyzing bolt hit him, preventing him from stopping the beast.

However, Anderson was now free to deal with it since he killed the other beast. He also saw Judith killing another Ma-cof while hunting it with his two hounds.

However, Elena wasn't doing well at all. Her stats were lower than the beast, who was fast from her point of view. She could barely avoid its attack; however, he was fast enough not to get killed by the beast. Erik rushed to help her while Judith went to Robyn, who was now kneeling on the ground.

The awakener didn't waste any second and plunged his blade into the beast's cranium, instantly piercing its brain. Elena immediately turned around and thanked her teammate for helping her. Erik nodded back and then asked if she was ok.

"I'm fine, I wasn't injured..." however, she was panting heavily.

"Rest a little bit; we will take care of the incoming monsters..." Erik said.

Elena nodded. At the same time, Judith was tending to Robyn; he had trouble standing and was currently leaning on a tree.

"You alright?" Judith asked.

"Yes, but I will be incapacitated for a couple of minutes at least..."

"What happened?" the young woman asked since she didn't see the earlier attack.

Robyn briefly explained what had occurred before asking the young woman if she thought they would make it. Judith tried to reassure him; however, she didn't know if that was true.

At that moment, Anderson finished killing the last Ma-cof, and Erik received the usual notification.

[MULTIPLE HOSTILE MA-COF KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[0%...1%....5%...30%...70%...100%]

[MANA SUCCESSFULLY ABSORBED, STARTING CONVERTING PROCEDURE.]

[3...2...1...0]

[MANA SUCCESSFULLY CONVERTED INTO EXPERIENCE. 1305 EXPERIENCE POINTS AWARDED TO THE HOST.]

Erik still had 20 unassigned stat points, and he decided to dump them all into strength whenever he felt his life was seriously in danger, this way he could at least escape. If he did so, he would gain stat similar to the Genare.

However, that was his plan B. He didn't want to do that, so he decided to drop his future stat points to energy to improve his brain crystal since the neural links didn't improve it.

It would be better to use the neural links to improve his other stats and pump up strength, dexterity, and intelligence only because he was severely lacking at the time.

"FUCK!" Greg shouted. "There are too many. I can't possibly stop them all!" he added.

"Keep your fucking mouth shut and make yourself useful," Zachary shouted back.

They kept swinging their weapons and killing thaid after thaid, but they were too much, and some of them kept getting past them and attacking Erik and his team.

"If anything happens to the kid, we'll be fucked!" Zachary said.

"There is no need to remind me!" Greg replied. The other three team members listened to the conversation with amused looks; however, they were worried since they couldn't stop all the monsters.

At that moment, another beast went past Greg and rushed to Erik's team. However, luckily it didn't look that powerful, and he was sure that Erik would have been able to take care of it. The problem was that the young man's team had two people out of combat, but they weren't aware.

As Erik saw the beast coming, he called for his teammates' attention.

"INCOMING!" he shouted

At that moment, he, Anderson, and Judith went into a fighting position. In contrast, Elena went to protect Robyn, despite not having that much Energy. To compensate for the absence of the two team members, Judith channeled more mana and increased the size, strength, and speed of her two hounds.

The two dashed toward the creature while Erik and Anderson did the same. Erik used his analysis again and judged the beast weaker than the Genare so, with the two hounds, they would be able to kill it.

However, he was worried about Judith's mana. He had less mana than her, but once he got the Flyssa, he didn't have to use that much to fight since the weapon was already sharp. Though she was using a lot of it to keep the two hounds up, he didn't know how long she could last.

The monsters didn't come more than 4 minutes ago; however, she was exhausting a lot of mana since the fight started. If she ended up without mana, she would be exhausted from fighting, and they would lose the hounds.

The battle against the beast started, and Erik did his best not to let his comrades waste energy; however, that was not that simple.

