

## BIOLOGICAL 23

### Chapter 23: Asking Questions (2)

She looked at Erik and Mister Fox with curious eyes, while Erik looked at the woman with anxiety, and Mister Fox couldn't care less.

<Are they here because of the Thaid?> That was all Erik could think of at that moment.

Mister Fox was anxious because he knew something important happened or was bound to happen when the Military was around.

"Yes, sir. Ask whatever you want," the old man said.

"Did you see anything suspicious around here yesterday or this morning?" Sergeant Sinclair asked.

"No, ma'am..." The answer was immediate and short. "I've been working here since yesterday morning and saw nothing strange."

"And you, young man?" Roma asked Erik. The kid was anxious and sweating, but Erik had a natural talent for acting after years of having to fake being OK when he wasn't.

"Did you see anything strange around these parts?"

Erik promptly replied to the officer. "No, ma'am. I saw nothing." His heart was racing as if it would jump out of his chest. He could feel it inside his throat pounding like a hammer against the walls.

[DANGER: THE HOST IS TOO AGITATED. RELEASE OF CALMING SUBSTANCES INTO THE BRAIN IN 3...2...1]

"Why, did something bad happen?" The older man asked. Roma had no reason to withhold information, so she told the truth.

"A thaid entered the barrier yesterday and came in this direction. It is nothing worth nothing, and you would probably be able to kill it. However, the best thing to do would be to call us."

In the meantime, Roma's team looked at their surroundings while the sergeant kept talking to the two men.

There were multiple traces left by the tree that Mister Fox dragged out of the main gate earlier. Small branches were scattered across the floor, dirt smeared their roots, and leaves were strewn everywhere. Luckily, there weren't blood traces since it rained heavily.

Private Rennie noticed the tree moved from the front of the fence gate to a corner of the property.

Not only was it weird for the tree to be there, but there was also the fact that it had been completely eradicated. Its roots were out in the open like someone took the time to dig up the whole thing carefully. It was all due to Erik's power, but he didn't know that.

"We don't know where the thaid is now, but we're searching every inch of this area until we catch it," Roma informed the two men.

The two nodded. Erik knew the creature was already dead. He only hoped they wouldn't link the missing brain crystal to him once they found the body.

Private Rennie asked, "Why is there a tree out here?"

"Oh, that? It's because of this young boy here. He has a power that makes plants grow faster," Mister Fox said.

"Oh?" Sergeant Sinclair said. "A pretty useful brain crystal power on a farm." She looked at the young man and asked, "What is your name, boy?"

The question caught Erik off guard, "My name is Erik Romano," the young man answered. After the system's intervention, the kid was calm enough not to stutter. Sergeant Sinclair smiled when she heard his response.

"This doesn't answer the question. I will ask again, why is there a tree here?" Private Rennie asked again.

Mister Fox tried to devise a valid excuse, "Is it weird for a tree to be on a farm?" Mister Fox asked. Despite Erik having made this thing without permission, it was still his farm, and whatever happened inside was his business.

"I think I'll leave you guys alone now," Sergeant Sinclair announced her departure. "But please tell me immediately should you find any signs of the Thaid."

"Yes, ma'am!" Both men agreed.

She turned around and walked back towards the road. Then she stopped briefly and glanced behind her before turning to go. Something was odd about the look in her eyes, but they didn't get a chance to notice it.

Erik watched as the Military disappeared.

\*\*\*

"Don't you think there was something strange in those two?" Private Rennie said to Private Williams.

"What do you mean?"

"The tree there was too weird... Why place it there if they had to chop it down or something like that?" Private Rennie replied.

"Maybe they just uprooted it..." Private William asked. "You are overthinking..."

"Yeah, besides, it doesn't make sense," Roma interjected. "Do you think that if they killed the Thaid, they wouldn't have told us? It's not like they did something wrong," she added.

"That's true..." Private Rennie responded.

They then arrived in front of Mister Fox's wheat field and entered it. Multiple ears of wheat stretched out toward the sky, like a golden carpet spread across the land. The field was well cared for, and the wheat was unnaturally high.

"Do you think this is that kid's work?" Private McBride said, referring to the unnaturally tall plants.

"Maybe," Roma, the sergeant, said.

"What do you think his rank is, sir?" Private William said.

"I don't know, but I don't think it should be high. He is a kid, after all."

The group went deeper inside the wheat field but didn't find anything.

"We should split up," Sergeant Sinclair said. "We will be able to cover more ground."

"Understood," The privates replied in unison.

As the group of five split up, they went in different directions, searching through the fields. They searched every nook and cranny until finally; Private McBride called the others on the communicator.

"Sir, I found the thaid."

"Understood; stay there and don't engage," Sergeant Sinclair replied.

"Sir, it's already dead."

"Stay where you are, then," the officer replied.

After some time, the other four members of the squad reached him.

"Where is it?" Sergeant Sinclair said.

"There," Private McBride said while pointing at the creature. Then they saw the body; it was already starting to decompose due to the heat. Its head was split open, its blood already dry on the ground.

"Well, at least it couldn't do any damage." Private Williams said.

"I won't be so sure about that," Sergeant Sinclair said. "Besides, there is another problem; how did it die?" she added.

"Probably a citizen. Most of them are retired soldiers, after all." Private Rennie said.

"Yeah, but why they didn't report it to us? A thaid roaming inside the city shouldn't be a small deal regardless of its strength." Private William said, looking at the body. Then, Sergeant Sinclair crouched to look at the body better.

"Should we bring it back to the base?" Private Williams asked.

"There is no need to. It doesn't matter who killed the creature; it is already good enough that it is dead," Sergeant Sinclair replied.