

## **BIOLOGICAL 34**

### Chapter 34: Friends...? (1)

"Follow me," Professor McAllister said. The duo left the room and headed toward the gym.

In the meantime, Principal Harris and Mr. Kite were still talking.

"What do you think about the boy?" the older man asked.

"I'm a little bit disappointed. Usually, Awakeners have stronger powers, you know." Mister Kite replied.

"Yeah, but we must consider that his brain crystal was F-ranked. It was unlikely he would have been able to jump more than a rank. Going out of the F-zone is already a lot for him," The principal said.

"I guess," Mister Kite said.

"What do you intend to do with him?" The principal asked.

"He still is an Awakener. Even if his mana is not that much, he can still make double the neural links and is bound to be stronger than average. He won't probably be the best, but he will still be a good agent," Mister Kite said.

Principal Harris didn't reply; he just looked at Mister Kite.

"Well, if there is nothing else, I will leave. I have to report what I saw here."

"Yes, yes. Have a safe trip," Principal Harris said.

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Erik and Professor McAllister arrived at the gym, where the other students were waiting for him.

"Good morning, Professor McAllister," they said in unison. Amber Joyce, Anderson Worthington, Gwen Lindsay, Floyd Valdez, and Nathaniel McConnel were among the students.

The teacher looked at them, lined in a row, and said, "Since we have a whole day available for training, you will spend some time practicing with your power. Then we will practice some moves and end the lesson with the usual sparring. You all know how this works, so let's get started."

The group of students here were all the top. Not only they all had incredible brain crystal powers, but most were also from powerful families.

For example, Amber was the eldest of Caiden Joyce, Richard Stone's right-hand man. Not only was the Stone family the wealthiest and most powerful family in the whole of Frant, but Richard was also a close friend of General Becker.

That alone told how important Caiden Joyce and his family were. However, the woman wasn't the only one belonging to an influential family.

There were also people from the Zamora and the Montgomery clans among them, and they had extremely powerful brain crystal powers.

However, Amber's power was among the most peculiar. She had to leave the gym since her power was deadly; she could spread a corroding gas from her body.

Only she was safe from the deadly substance. Whoever entered her domain was bound to find a horrible death unless they knew how to circle mana through their bodies and create a sort of mana shield, similar to a Thaid's one, to offset the gas's power.

Nathaniel, instead, decided to practice his force fist by using it while practicing his martial arts against a robot. He was still learning how to do that, as it wasn't easy, but if he succeeded, he was sure to turn into a killing machine.

Gwen was doing something similar to Nathaniel. She had, in fact, a power that allowed her to create a mana armor that shielded her from physical damage and allowed her to create a pair of deadly gauntlets she used to attack.

She, too, was practicing her martial arts, but she was doing so with Floyd, which instead had a sort of energy negation power.

He could decrease momentum, speed, heat, and anything with some drawbacks.

His was essentially a defensive power, but it could also be used to attack in certain circumstances. The power allowed him to face any opponent without repercussion until his brain crystal had mana.

At the same time, people like Anderson couldn't use their powers inside the gym, or the school, for that mattered. He needed specific places to do so since he had a highly destructive power.

He could generate explosions from his body, but not making a giant one for him was hard. He was trying to focus the explosions on some parts of his body to make some smaller and more controlled.

In the meantime, Erik was with Professor McAllister; he was still showing the kid some moves to replicate until he could do them correctly.

Erik already knew what to do since he had injected information about this fighting style into his brain, but doing them was hard. He made the moves repeatedly until he started doing them correctly.

"Good," Professor McAllister said. "Keep practicing like this, and you won't have problems," he added.

"Thank you very much, sir!" Erik said enthusiastically.

After an hour spent training, the usual notification appeared in front of Erik's eyes.

[QUEST COMPLETE.]

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After a few hours in the gym, the students decided to move on to the next training phase and practice several moves. After even the practice ended, the students were divided into several groups; everyone had their friends, after all.

Nathaniel went with Karl Moran and Natasha Pope, his two friends. Anderson did the same with Aaron and Mikey, while Amber, Floyd, and Gwen went together. The cafeteria was closed on Sunday, so the group brought their food from home.

No one told Erik. He observed the other students eating and cursed his situation.

Amber observed the young man looking at the other students with a puppy face. They saw him without anything to eat, and it was then that the young woman said, "Should we give him something to eat?"

"To who?" Gwen asked.

"To Erik Romano," Amber replied.

"The school trash?" Floyd said.

"I would have said to the Awakener," Amber replied.

"Being the Awakener didn't teach him how to throw a punch," Floyd added.

"Seriously? You know he is the only Awakener in the whole nation, right?" Amber said.

"So what?"

"So, we should be a little bit more kind toward him. Besides, he looks pitiful."

"If you say so," Floyd replied. They turned to look at Erik, who was currently heading toward a tree.

"Is he thinking about growing fruits?" Gwen asked.

"That would be a good use of his power..." Floyd replied.

"Are you really going to let him do that?" Amber asked.

"I think it's OK, though?"

"Floyd, go give him something to eat," Amber said while nibbling at her sandwich.

"All right..." he said.

Floyd stood from the ground and walked toward Erik.

"Hey," he said. "Hi," Erik replied, looking at the student with a weirded-out look.

"Are you hungry?" Floyd asked. The Awakener looked at him with a bit of suspicion but then replied.

"A little bit. I didn't know we had to bring food from home and didn't prepare anything."

Floyd looked at the young man, "Do you want to eat with us?" he asked, leaving Erik flabbergasted.

"Are you making fun of me?" Erik said.

"No... What? Why should I...? Do you want to come, yes or no?" Floyd asked.

"OK..." Erik was very hungry, and since Amber had a good reputation inside the school and had been polite to him the previous day, he decided to trust this guy for the time being. However, he didn't let his guard down.

The two walked toward Gwen and Amber and sat on the ground after they arrived.

"Hello," Amber said, smiling politely.

"Hi..." Erik replied, but he was slightly cold, clearly thinking that Amber and her friends had ulterior motives. However, he was also hoping they would really share the food.

"I noticed you didn't bring anything to eat," Amber said.

"Yeah, no one told me yesterday."

"Take a little bit of this, then. I have plenty," Amber said while handing a sandwich to Erik.

"I'm Amber, Amber Joyce, and these are Gwen and Floyd," She said, pointing at her two friends.

"I'm Erik Romano," he replied. "As you probably know..."

"Of course we do," Gwen interjected. "You are the plant hugger," she added.

"Gwen..." Amber said, reprimanding her best friend.

"Sorry. I meant no offense. It is just like people call you..." she said with no remorse.

"Don't worry..." Erik was a little bit pissed off, but he couldn't make a fuss toward them since they were trying to be nice to him and were even offering food, or so it appeared. Due to his lack of interaction with other people his age, which were almost all negative, he couldn't stop thinking the food had laxatives inside.

<Oh god, I'm so hungry... Should I really eat this?>

However, the sound of Erik's stomach grumbling didn't leave him much choice. Immediately, Erik gave a massive bite of the sandwich Amber shared. At the same time, he listened to the conversation between the three friends, which consisted mainly of jokes, laughter, and insults toward each other.

Erik looked at them with a tinge of envy. It was true he hated Frant and everyone born there, yet he couldn't stop wishing for a more normal life, one where he had friends, a normal brain crystal power, and happiness. It was true he hated people, but at the same time, like any kid, he longed for friends and human interaction.

The group saw him stiffen and tried to make him feel comfortable. Well, at least Amber was; Gwen and Floyd were slightly indifferent. Still, they tried talking to him because of their beautiful, more powerful friend.

"So, I heard that Logan, Conal, and Orson got punished for what they did at the cafeteria. They must clean the school for a week..." Floyd said.

Erik looked at him. He was unhappy with this light punishment but didn't receive any, so he couldn't complain. Besides, he did expect something like that would happen.

<FRANT,> he thought. <What could I expect?>

"Yeah..." the young man replied.