

BIOLOGICAL 40

Chapter 40: New Power(1)

The young man's brow furrowed with focus, a glimmer of satisfaction in his eyes. The ping of a sudden notification broke his concentration, drawing a sharp gaze from across the room.

"Erik!"

The young man snapped to attention, his posture straightening. "Sir?"

"Training demands presence, not daydreams!"

A flush of embarrassment warmed Erik's cheeks. "Understood, sir."

They returned to their stances; the room filled with the rhythm of disciplined practice. Hours later, Professor McAllister raised his hand, signaling the end.

Professor McAllister surveyed the room, his sharp eyes locking with each student in turn. "All right, guys," he began, his voice steady and commanding, "the school year is winding down, less than a month is left."

He paced before them, hands clasped behind his back. "That doesn't mean your training halts. My watch over you extends until you join the military academy and you are expected to come here every day."

Pausing, he turned to face them squarely, the lines on his forehead deepening. "When you enroll there, don't expect coddling. Brace yourselves for an inferno," he said, the gravity in his voice leaving no room for doubt.

His hand sliced through the air for emphasis. "The academy's training is relentless—daily sparring, a barrage of tests."

He leaned forward slightly, hands on hips, a challenge in his gaze. "Competitions will be fierce, and remember," his tone dropped a notch, "excellence here is baseline there."

He straightened, crossing his arms. "You'll clash with the best from all schools. No jokes, no easy wins. Do you understand?" His question hung heavy in the air, demanding a response.

"YES, SIR!" Voices rose as one, a chorus of resolve and obedience.

"Dismissed." Professor McAllister's command cut short, final.

Students broke ranks, the sound of boots echoing as they headed for the showers. Erik joined the flow, his movements mechanical, when a voice halted him.

"Erik..."

He pivoted on his heel, a swift motion born of discipline. His teacher's eyes held him just as firmly.

"Sir?" Erik's voice held a steady note, his posture a mix of attention and anticipation.

"Are you training beyond our sessions, Erik?" The teacher's gaze fixed on him, piercing and direct.

Erik met his teacher's eyes, a crease of confusion on his forehead. "At home? No, sir. Why?"

The teacher's stance was unyielding, his look searching. "You are not lying to me, right?"

Erik's hands opened, palms up, an open book. "No, sir..."

"Hmm." The teacher's eyes crinkled, a rare smile playing on his lips. "It looks like you are more talented than I expected."

"Ehm... If I may ask, why are you saying so, sir?" Erik was confused. This was the first time someone had said something like this to him.

"Your form suggests months of more practice than you've had."

Erik's lips twitched upwards, his pride swelling silently. His secret, the edge he possessed, remained unspoken. He knew it was all thanks to the biological supercomputer, the information he injected inside his brain, and the increased dexterity.

"Be grounded, kid." The teacher's voice held a note of caution. "There's a long journey ahead, sparring included, which you sorely need."

"Yes, sir..."

"Just go now..." the teacher said.

"Yes, thank you, sir."

After his training, Erik headed straight to the showers, the day's exertion washing away under the steady stream of water. After getting dressed, he swung open the door to find Amber, Gwen, and Floyd lined up against the wall waiting for him.

"Hey, Erik!" Amber said.

"Hey..." Erik said with a little bit of uncertainty.

Floyd and Gwen exchanged a quick, puzzled look, their eyes wide with shared surprise. They turned back to Amber, whose laughter and playful tone with Erik were a stark contrast to her usual reserve. It was a rare sight; aside from Floyd, she seldom engaged with the others, especially the guys, with such ease and familiarity.

"Need a lift again?" Amber's voice was light, her eyebrows raised in an offer as Erik neared them.

Erik hesitated, a flush creeping up his neck. "I mean, if it's not too much trouble..." His gaze darted to the ground, revealing his discomfort with the question.

The four students ambled toward the main entrance, immersed in conversation. Beyond the gate, Erik sensed a shift; stares clung to them, persistent and curious.

Accustomed to occasional glances because of his condition, Erik initially dismissed the attention. Yet, the intensity of the gazes escalated, fingers pointed in his direction, murmurs lost to him.

Moments later, the pieces clicked for Erik—it was Amber's presence, causing the stir. Her beauty turned heads, and her company alongside him, known as the school's trash, painted an unusual picture.

Suspicion crept into Erik's mind. Amber's timing puzzled him. Her sudden interest coincided with his unveiled new ability.

<System, connect to Amber's phone. I want to understand what she is doing.>.

[UNDERSTOOD. CONNECTING TO AMBER JOYCE'S PHONE. CONNECTION ESTABLISHED.]

Amber strode alongside Erik, attempting to engage him in conversation. Erik, however, kept his thoughts to himself, quietly probing Amber's phone with his mind's supercomputer for any hint of his mention. His search turned up empty.

His quietude wasn't unusual; he often maintained a reserved distance, managing mere courtesy.

Once they had crossed the gates, students dispersed to their cars. Erik and Amber, in contrast, headed for her vehicle together. Climbing into the car, the murmur of students swelled around them.

Erik's swift return home belied his inner turmoil. As Amber conversed, he remained a silent participant, grappling with a familiar unease.

His reticence stemmed not from a lack of interest but from a deep-seated discomfort, an acute awareness of potential missteps in dialogue.

The fear of saying the wrong thing, of revealing too much or too little, left him navigating the conversation like a minefield. Each word measured, each pause fraught with tension.

His silence was a shield, guarding against the embarrassment that often accompanied his attempts at conversation.

Upon arrival, he offered Amber a polite farewell before heading inside. Once within his sanctuary, he exhaled a sigh of relief.

Social interactions, particularly with women, were not his forte; topics eluded him, and he often found himself in awkward exchanges.

The young man then slouched on the couch and rested for ten minutes; after that, he said, "System, start extracting the DNA from the Bush Hedgehog."

[SYSTEM READY. FIFTY DNA POINTS USED. STARTING EXTRACTION. HOST IS ADVISED TO LIE ON A BED.]

Erik collapsed onto the couch, the system activating within him. He winced, feeling as though invisible forces tore at his limbs, the familiar agony engulfing him.

"UGH! This never gets easier," he grimaced, enduring the pain. Tears streaked his face while he stifled his cries to hoarse whispers. Moments later, his body convulsed. The pain ebbed, and Erik rose cautiously to his feet, a notification chiming in his consciousness.

[YOUR DNA IS NOW ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE THE BUSH HEDGEHOG'S BRAIN CRYSTAL POWER.]

"Good, start the procedure," Erik said.

[BUSH HEDGEHOG'S BRAIN CRYSTAL ALREADY ANALYZED.]

[SYSTEM READY. DNA POINTS USED. COMMENCING EXTRACTION. TWO HOURS AND A HALF HOURS ARE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE EXTRACTION. HOST IS ADVISED TO LAY ON A BED.]

The couch's familiar contours embraced Erik as he lay back. With a deep breath, he braced for the transformative ordeal ahead, eyes closing in anticipation of emerging with newfound abilities and a new neural link. Erik closed his eyes, and the process began, a silent whisper in his mind.

For two hours and thirty minutes, the extraction unfolded. Erik floated in the void of unconsciousness, oblivious to the profound metamorphosis his body endured. His still form on the couch was the only hint of the monumental shift happening within.

When the extraction concluded, Erik's awareness crept back. He blinked open his eyes, expecting to be greeted by a vibrant rush of newfound energy coursing through his veins.

Instead, a void met him, an unsettling absence of sensation that belied the intensity of the procedure.

Doubt flickered for a moment, but his resolve took over. He reached inward to access his status, searching for the subtle, yet undeniable, changes he knew had to be there.

[Host Information]

NAME: Erik Romano

AGE: 16

POWER LEVEL: 19

SYSTEM LEVEL: 3

EXPERIENCE: 20/265

DNA POINTS: 40

HEALTH: 240/240

MANA: 170/170

{Attributes}

STRENGTH: 10

INTELLIGENCE: 8

DEXTERITY: 7

ENERGY: 7

Available Attributes points: 0

{Powers}

[Biological Super Computer Powers]

-Brain Crystal Manipulation

Brain Crystal Power Extraction

(Allows the absorption of the brain crystal, enabling the host to gain the power within. Note: DNA must change to use the power. Refer to DNA extraction.)

- (LOCKED)

- (LOCKED)

- (LOCKED)

- Brain Crystal Power Strengthening

(Allows the gaining of energy attribute points)

-DNA Manipulation

DNA Extraction

(Allows the absorption of foreign DNA, enabling the host to replicate it in his own body. Note: Changing DNA is slow and necessary for new brain crystal powers.)

- (LOCKED)

- (LOCKED)

- (LOCKED)

DNA Strengthening

(Allows the gaining of Strength, Intelligence, and Dexterity attribute points)

- Analysis

(Provides information about surroundings, plants, creatures, and ores.)

-Brain Information Injector

(Injects information directly into the brain upon touch.)

-Device Manipulation

(Enables the Host to manipulate electrical and mana-driven devices upon touch.)

[Host's Powers]

PLANT GROWING Eσ2E RANKED

(Enables faster plant growth.)

SHARPENING Eσ1D RANKED

(Sharpens objects according to mana imbued.)

POISONOUS MANA QUILLS Eσ1E RANKED

(Create Ethereal Poisonous quills from the user's back. The amount of toxicity and the quill's length depends on the amount of mana used.)

{Skills}

Kyokar hand-to-hand style (BEGINNER)

(A military fighting style from Frant)