

BIOLOGICAL 50

Chapter 50: Outside the barrier (5)

"That's right," the young man said, his face breaking into a grin.

At that instant, everything clicked into place for Logan. However, he found it hard to digest that Erik had escalated to murdering Conal and Orson and was trying to kill him.

"Why are you doing this, Erik?!" Logan inquired, his voice tinged with fear.

"What do you mean, why? You know exactly why!" Erik said. "How can you have the sheer audacity to ask that question? TO ME!"

In the young man's gaze, nothing but intense hatred for Logan shimmered. The moment he killed him was going to mark his liberation from misery; his daily embarrassments would cease at last. No sweeter vengeance existed than defeating those who had caused him suffering for years.

Logan realized a peaceful resolution with Erik was impossible. Weary from battling the Lomalins and the extensive chase along the barrier, the bully recognized his only option was to engage in combat to escape this predicament. But his mana dwindled, and it was clear, by how fast Erik caught up to him, that he was physically superior.

That wasn't a realization that came easily. It was impossible for him to comprehend how something like that could have happened. Erik was a weakling, a bastard that shouldn't have existed. Someone he could trample under his feet.

Logan channeled mana, forming a venomous mana dart. Remaining outside of Erik's reach, Logan had the upper hand. But he was not stupid. He knew the situation would turn if he got too close. Erik, in response, darted towards cover, shielding himself behind a tree to avoid getting caught by the dart.

<I wish I could directly control plants. If I had been able, I could simply make him trip and end this charade quickly. >1

Logan refrained from launching another one of his mana darts. Attacking recklessly would leave him defenseless. Besides, Erik was taking cover right now, and he didn't want to risk getting close enough for him to deliver a blow. At least he didn't have a ranged attack.

Logan started a sprint, catching Erik's attention. The fake awakener couldn't pursue him in open terrain, vulnerable to Logan's lethal dart. He had to take advantage of the surrounding vegetation. Then the young man got out of his hiding place and started chasing his bully.

From time to time Logan threw a dart, but he had to use his mana sparingly, so he did so only when he believed he would hit Erik. However, after having pumped his statistics, it was much simpler for the young man to avoid the darts. Strength gave him enough speed to move away, dexterity allowed him to see the dart and have enough reaction speed to move his body.

Closing in on Logan didn't pose a challenge.

"LEAVE ME ALONE!"

Erik was mere meters away when Logan spun and hurled the dart toward his foe. The first, perceiving the attack, dashed for cover behind a tree, aware that a direct hit would be likely fatal.

Before Erik could do something else, Logan dashed off once more.

"YOU WON'T GET AWAY, LOGAN!"

Erik resumed his pursuit, while the bully prepared another mana dart.

<Analysis, > Erik thought, focusing on Logan. A window of blue and white materialized before him.

-Name: Logan Reid.

-Brain Crystal Power: Venomous Mana Darts.

-Physical Characteristics: Stands at about 1.75 meters in height. Possesses a lean physique. Weighs roughly 80 kilograms. A member of the human species.

-Personality and Traits: Known as a close associate of Orson Smyth and Conal Price. Logan assumes the role of the group's leader, deriving satisfaction from bullying those less powerful than himself, the reasons for which remain unclear. While not the most intelligent or the mightiest in his circle, his commands are always followed by his companions.

-Power Level: 30

-Approximate Strength: 10

-Approximate Intelligence: 7

-Approximate Dexterity: 10

-Approximate Energy: 52

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Logan had grown stronger. He probably got a new neural link.

<The prick has more energy than Conal and Orson, but his physical capabilities are around that range, > Erik thought.

Considering Logan's extensive use of mana in combat with the Lomalins and crafting the venomous darts he had launched during the chase, Erik surmised that the bully's mana reserves were low. <I have a chance to kill him! >

Their pursuit continued. Logan, not employing his darts against Erik, kept running along the barrier, desperately trying to find the hole from which they came from. They navigated a labyrinth of trees and underbrush. Logan remained aware that any stumble over the scattered rocks and branches could spell his doom. He leaped over stones and weaved under branches.

Erik matched his pace, keenly observing his target's every move. He knew Logan was drawing nearer to the barrier's breach, compelling him to intervene before Logan could escape.

Meanwhile, Logan felt the strain of the lengthy chase and the preceding conflict. His energy, and not only his mana, was depleting rapidly, diminishing his chances of survival with each passing moment. He wasn't used to such sprints; he didn't really like training at all. But now he regretted not having put in the effort.

Truth was that Logan wasn't strong either, and neither were Conal and Orson. They were better than Erik in the past, but they were weak. Logan likely bullied others just to feel better about himself, knowing that his life was bound to be as difficult as the ones he bullied.

Erik, bolstered by an abundance of energy, had the upper hand. His recently gained strength and the enhancements he had gained provided him with a distinct advantage.

As he closed the gap between himself and Logan, the tension escalated. Logan, sensing the threat posed by Erik's proximity, acted to widen the gap between them.

In a calculated move, he unleashed a venomous dart towards Erik. The dart sliced through the air with lethal intent, but Erik, displaying remarkable agility, dodged it by a hair's breadth.

Undeterred by this close call, Erik maintained his pursuit, his determination unwavering as he continued to chase down his quarry.

Minutes later, Logan halted, gasping for air, his complexion turning a deep shade of red. Running further was no longer an option. Erik, full of spite and rage, taunted him.

"Why don't you try to shoot me?" Erik stared down at Logan. "I know you'll evade my shots." Logan's body trembled from the blend of fear and exhaustion.

Erik's grin spread wide across his face. Logan, for the first time, realized the repercussions of his actions. Yet, he found himself unable to manage them.

That's when the bully experienced a mental collapse. "This cannot be! IT IS NOT POSSIBLE! How can you be so fast? How can you evade my attacks? You're nothing but trash!" Spit fell out Logan's mouth as he talked.

"NO LONGER, LOGAN."

At that critical moment, the bully channeled mana, intent on creating another venomous mana dart. Yet, he quickly realized his dwindling mana reserves would not be enough for another dart, understanding a miss would seal his fate.

Panic surged in the young man's heart, dread infiltrating his thoughts, nearly shattering his focus and jeopardizing the formation of the dart.

Erik cast a glance around and saw the barrier's breach was a mere ten meters from Logan. He knew he had to act before the son of a bitch found out he was almost there.

As Logan concentrated on his final mana dart, Erik launched himself towards him, wielding a mana-enhanced stick in his right hand.

Everything happened in the span of a few seconds.

The moment Logan finished his dart, he released it. Erik was his target. Now dangerously near, Erik watched Logan's arm motion. He saw the dart leaving his hand and flying towards him, aimed straight at his heart. Despite everything, Logan's accuracy was undeniable. He probably spent a lot of time practicing his darts.

If he gave the same dedication to physical training and neural link training, maybe he wouldn't be in that situation.

In a split-second, Erik clutched the sharpened branch and swung it vertically, slicing the dart in mid-air. Surprised by his own reflexes, Erik wondered how he managed such a feat.

Logan watched in terror as the man he deemed worthless showed his dominance. For two years, Logan had basked in a sense of superiority, only to have it shattered in his last moments by someone he thought unworthy of existence.

His long-held beliefs and twisted sense of supremacy collapsed, perhaps causing him the greatest pain. Erik then raised his arm skyward, like a god of death, his weapon poised to claim a life, Logan's.

As the branch connected with Logan's body, it cut through his flesh as if it were mere butter, bisecting the young bully effortlessly.

The gruesome scene would have turned anyone ghostly pale. Blood gushed like a fountain, raining down upon the earth.

Moments later, as blood continued to pour from Logan's body, a heavy thud echoed as his corpse hit the ground. Erik surveyed the aftermath calmly, as if time had slowed down around him.

Logan's movements ceased instantly, life fading from his eyes. It was then, amidst the silence, that Erik's laughter erupted, loud and unfettered.