

## BIOLOGICAL 58

### Chapter 58: Questioning (1)

"Logan Reid, Conal Price, and Orson Smyth..." Logan's mother said the names with a tremor in her voice, addressing a police officer.

The officer, displaying a mix of professionalism and empathy, asked, "When were they last seen?"

"Two days ago. Their last known location was at school," she said, her voice laced with concern.

"Understood, ma'am," said the officer. He reached into a drawer, retrieving a tablet and handing it to her.

"For us to assist, you'll need to sign these documents. It's a standard procedure to request police involvement."

The parents of the three missing teenagers united in their concern, journeying to the police station to seek help in finding their children. Upon arrival, the interviewing officer emphasized the importance of knowing whether the children had reported anything unusual before their disappearance.

However, the teenagers had shared no details about their troubles, leaving their parents with no leads. Logan, in particular, felt a profound sense of shame for sustaining an injury from Erik and remained silent about it. Conal and Orson bore no visible injuries.

The disappearance of children in New Alexandria was not a rare event. Despite the city's heavy militarization, it struggled with a high crime rate, making such incidents a frequent reality.

With the police already stretched thin, investigating many other cases of missing teenagers and young children, their capacity to assist was limited. They committed to deploying some personnel to at least attempt a search.

After the parents completed the paperwork, they were politely asked to leave the station, with assurances that they would be updated with any developments.

Exiting the police station, the group of six parents reflected a sense of urgency. The station, a four-story building with an attic, stood on the corner of what was once part of an old park in New Alexandria.

This area had mostly transformed into military barracks over time, yet the police station had remained untouched by this change. It occupied a substantial lot on the north side of the street, surrounded by a variety of trees - oaks, elms, and chestnuts - planted for aesthetic purposes, adding a touch of greenery to the otherwise stark military landscape.

"What do we do now?" Logan's mother's voice quivered as she spoke, her eyes wide with a mix of fear and hopelessness.

"There is nothing we can do," Logan's father said, his voice low and steady, trying to mask his own worry. "We can only wait for the police to search for them and give us some news."

"But there is no time!" Orson's father's voice rising in desperation. His hands clenched into fists at his sides. "If we don't do something now, our sons could end up dead!" he said, his eyes darting due to anxiety from face to face.

"That's if they are still alive," Conal's mother interjected, her voice barely above a whisper. She stared down at her hands, folded in her lap, her face etched with resignation.

"Don't say such things, Mary!" Logan's father snapped, his face flushing with a mix of anger and grief.

"Look, as much as it pains me to say so," Mary said, her voice gaining a bit of strength but her gaze still downcast, "we all know that when teenagers disappear in New Alexandria, they are already dead. I don't get why we should lie to ourselves."

"You don't know for certain they are dead! We must hope for the best!" Logan's mother said. Her eyes met Mary's with a determined glint.

"Yeah, Lucy is right!" Logan's father chimed in, nodding in agreement, his expression softening as he looked towards his wife, their shared concern uniting them in this moment of uncertainty.

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Erik awoke the next morning, his features untroubled, having spent the night in restful slumber, feeling refreshed. Glancing at his watch, he noted it was nearly eight in the morning. With a sense of purpose, he rose from the couch-bed, opting not to idle away the precious morning hours, and prepared for school.

A brisk shower revitalized him further, and he completed his first daily quest while eating breakfast.

"Status," he said. In response, a window materialized before him, displaying a detailed array of his statistics and powers.

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[Host Information]

NAME: Erik Romano

AGE: 16

POWER LEVEL: 33

SYSTEM LEVEL: 9

EXPERIENCE: 1259/ 2116

DNA POINTS:40

HEALTH: 540 / 540

MANA: 470 / 470

{Attributes}

STRENGTH: 16

INTELLIGENCE: 14

DEXTERITY: 13

ENERGY: 22

Available Attributes points: 0

{Powers}

[Biological Super Computer Powers]

-Brain Crystal Manipulation

Brain Crystal Power Extraction (Allows the absorption of the brain crystal, making the host able to gain the power contained within. Notice: the DNA must be changed in order to allow the body to use the power. See DNA extraction.)

- (LOCKED)

- (LOCKED)

- (LOCKED)

- Brain Crystal Power Strengthening (Allows the gaining of the energy attribute points)

-DNA Manipulation

DNA Extraction (Allows the absorption of foreign DNA, making the host able to replicate it inside his own body. Notice: Changing the DNA is a slow process unless more DNA points are provided, and it is required to use of new brain crystal powers.)

- (LOCKED)

- (LOCKED)

- (LOCKED)

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

-Analysis (Gives the host information about his surroundings, plants, creatures, and ores.)

-Brain Information Injector (It allows the injection of information directly to the brain. Based on touch)

-Device Manipulation (Allows the Host to manipulate electrical and mana-driven devices. Based on touch)

[Host's Powers]

PLANT GROWING: Eσ2E-RANKED (Allows the host to make Plants Grow Faster)

SHARPENING: Eσ1D-RANKED (Makes Everything sharper according to the quantity of mana imbued into the item or body part.)

POISONOUS MANA QUILLS: Eσ1E-RANKED (Create Mana Venomous spikes from the user's back. The amount of toxicity and the spike's length depends on the mana used.)

VENOMOUS MANA DARTS: Eσ1E-RANKED (This ability enables the user to create and project mana darts infused with potent toxins. The effectiveness and lethality of these darts are directly proportional to the amount of mana channeled into their creation.)

SHAPESHIFTING: Eσ1A-RANKED (This skill allows the user to transform their physical form into that of other creatures. The prerequisite for each transformation is the prior absorption of its specific DNA, unlocking the ability to assume its form.)

BONE MANIPULATION: Eσ1E-RANKED (This power grants the user the capacity to control and change their skeletal structure. It includes the ability to enhance the density, size, and form of the bones, as well as to sharpen them for defensive or offensive purposes.)

{Skills}

Kyokar hand-to-hand style (BEGINNER) (A military fighting style developed in Frant)

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"Good," Erik said to himself, taking stock of his status. The biological supercomputer had bolstered his abilities a lot. "Seems I've garnered enough DNA points to unlock the Lomalin's brain crystal power." Yet, the extraction had to wait for the cover of night, away from the demands of school and work.

<Should I quit working for that piece of shit? > He thought about it for some time, but then he opted avoiding this. He needed to have a cover about his earnings. How could he justify paying bills if he got no source of money? As much as it was bothersome, he had to keep working for Mister Fox.

<But I can at least buy a car or something like that... The best thing would be to get an AI driven car, but that cost a lot. >

However, during the night, the biological supercomputer had invested some more. Erik didn't check it, but he already got a million New Dollars in his bank account.<sup>1</sup>

The young man stepped outside, making his way to the train station. The day's heat was intense, presenting a challenge of arriving at school without sweating.

The journey was brief, first to the station and then onto school, but by the time he got there, he was drenched in sweat. Upon reaching the main gate, he noticed the usual student hustle, disrupted by an unusual presence—police officers questioning the kids.

"Damn," Erik said under his breath. <They are likely investigating about Conal, Logan, and Orson's disappearance. >

Erik eased through the gate, his movements calculated and unassuming, his gaze lowered to avoid direct eye contact.

He pulled his cap down a fraction more over his eyes and adjusted his backpack, as if burdened by its weight, to mirror the posture of other students around him.

With each step, he matched the rhythm of the crowd, synchronizing his pace with the flow of bodies that moved through the school's entrance.

He drifted closer to clusters of chatting students, using their animated conversations as a shield to obscure his presence.

Just as he was weaving through a group of teenagers engrossed in their own world, laughing and jostling each other, a voice shattered his guise of anonymity.

"That's him!" rang out, turning heads and drawing the piercing gaze of the officers towards Erik. His heart skipped a beat, his cover blown as a finger pointed in his direction.

"Fucking bitch!"

The officers began their approach, deliberate, measured. Erik felt a surge of panic, his mind racing with frantic thoughts. <Have they identified me? Did the cameras capture my face? > His heart pounded as the officers drew closer.

[HIGH LEVELS OF STRESS DETECTED. RELEASING CALMING SUBSTANCES IN 3...2...1...]

Erik was filled with a soothing feeling that permeated his entire being. Right at that precise moment, he felt a wave of calm wash over him.

<Thanks, system. >

The police officers arrived in front of him. One of them guided him away from the gathering crowd. Their gaze was steady and searching as he addressed Erik, his stance firm but not imposing. "Is your name Erik Romano?"

Erik met the officer's eyes, his face a mask of neutrality. "Yes, sir," he responded, his voice steady.

The officers exchanged a brief look before one stepped forward, his expression serious yet not unkind. "We need to ask you a few questions. Would you be willing to give us a moment of your time?"

Erik nodded, allowing a controlled, "Yes, sir, of course," to escape his lips, his hands clasping together in a gesture that pointed out a willingness to cooperate.

They led Erik to a quieter and more appropriate location, which would facilitate the interrogation process. The system's contribution to his state of mind was immense; it eradicated his nervousness and enabled him to choose his words wisely.