

## BIOLOGICAL 66

### Chapter 66: Troubling Speech

After Professor McAllister finished the announcement, he led the top students towards the gym, leaving the rest of the crowd to disperse.

The revelation had stirred mixed emotions among the students, especially among those who had been confident about their direct selection to the Red Palace Dojo. Now, their future there seemed uncertain.

Despite the general unease, students like Nathaniel, Anderson, and Amber appeared unaffected. Their self-assured demeanor suggested they had little doubt about keeping their spot at the dojo.

While making their way to the gym, Erik seized the opportunity to speak with Amber. He had several queries about the Red Palace Dojo that needed answers.

"Amber, may I ask you something?" Erik said whispering, ensuring their conversation remained private.

"Sure, what's on your mind?" Amber responded with a hint of curiosity.

"I know what the Red Palace Dojo is, but since I didn't have a viable power before, I never searched deep information about them. Aside from training people, what is so great about this place? I often heard people talking about it as if it was the greatest place on the planet."

Amber's expression shifted to one of mild surprise upon hearing Erik's question. She struggled to believe that Erik had never been interested in such a place.

However, what he said held truth, in his previous situation, he would have never had even the chance to get to a place like that, and likely, to avoid more inferiority complexes he likely already had, he avoided searching information about it. That was a choice dictated by his emotions, and she could understand it.

having noticed her reaction, Erik asked, "Did I ask something weird?"

"No, it's just that I didn't expect that question." Amber took a moment to gather her thoughts before responding, "Well, it is clearly a dojo, but..." She paused, searching for the right words to convey its significance.

"It's not just any dojo; it's the most important and respected training center in the entire nation."

She let that sink in for a moment and then added, "Every year, many individuals come to New Alexandria with the sole aim of joining the Red Palace. It's a hub for the best of the best."

Amber gestured emphatically, emphasizing her next point. "The dojo isn't just about martial training. It's a gateway to power and prestige. Many of its members are high-ranking officials in the military or influential figures in society."

She looked at Erik, ensuring he was following, then said, "The facilities, the teachers, there are the finest you'll find anywhere in the country. The resources and connections you can gain... they're invaluable."

Amber pause, her expression turned more serious. "You know, even General Becker, the man now considered the most powerful in our nation, was once a member. He trained there when he was just sixteen."

Erik took a moment to digest what Amber was saying, realizing the full scope of the dojo's influence. It was more than just a place for physical training; it was a center where power and influence converged.

He looked at Amber, seeking clarification. "What should one do to enter such a place?"

"Usually, you get selected based on your results at school," Amber expanded on her earlier explanation.

"Right. And how does things work there? You know, I never searched for info about it."

"The dojo's hierarchy is based on a ranking system. As you climb up the ranks, especially by defeating those above you, you gain access to many benefits."

Erik, intrigued, asked, "What sort of benefits are we talking about?"

She listed them off. "There's financial aid, advanced training gear, vital intelligence, and even prospects for future employment. The place has a simple yet effective structure, and every person joining the Red Palace has a rank. Whenever you win in an official competition against someone who is a higher grade than you, you will take his rank.

The higher this is, the better the resources they provide you."

Erik's curiosity piqued. "Resources? What resources are we talking about here?"

"Various types," Amber responded. "Financial help, accommodations, specialized training gear, insightful information, prospects for future employment, and distinct fighting techniques. But the most significant are the stimulating serums."

"Stimulating serums? Given to students, regardless of their background?" Erik's expression reflected his disbelief.

The interplay between brain crystals and mana was still largely a mystery. Despite many studies, a clear understanding eluded scientists. Scientists were more or less able to understand how the crystals affected the human body and the changes they brought to it, but on a very superficial level. There was much more to learn.

To mimic these effects and enhance soldier performance, researchers developed two types of serums. The first was the brain-stimulating serum, designed to speed up the formation of neural links.

That worked thanks to a promotion of the neuronal activity by the serum's ingredients. The primary effects involved mild stimulation to enhance synchronization with the brain crystal. Slight enhancement of neural links to raise mana conductivity, and it improved perception and reaction time.

This serum was invaluable, especially at higher ranks, where rapid development of new neural links was essential for continued power enhancement. But it also had some after effects, prompting the few who could afford it to pay attention with their usage.

The second serum, known to the public as the body-stimulating serum, worked differently, but was equally effective. It involved tailoring to individual DNA samples, replicating the physical enhancements gained through neural link enhancements.

This serum was a boon to the military, enabling soldiers to surpass their natural limits by simulating the DNA alterations that neural links produced. To many, access to such a serum was a distant dream, a coveted cheat item.

Erik looked at his friend, skeptical. "Are you serious? This sounds too good to be true."

Amber nodded. "I'm not joking. That's why joining the dojo is so imperative. It opens up many opportunities to gain these serums."

Resolved to secure his place, Erik knew he needed to win a spot at the dojo. Access to the brain-stimulating serum would be a game-changer, accelerating the formation of the many neural links his powers demanded.

Although his biological supercomputer was busy devising a method to enhance training efficiency, the process would take around two months to complete, having started only nine days before. He realized relying solely on the system was risky.

If he got his hands on the serums and the system's method proved successful, Erik might combine these two tools. Such a synergy might propel his power development at an unparalleled rate, surpassing anyone else in the world.

Upon reaching the gym with his peers, Erik plunged into the familiar rhythm of his training routine. He focused intently, completing his second daily quest. With renewed determination and a clear goal in mind, he left for home, energized by the possibilities that lay ahead, but knowing he had to put a lot of efforts.

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Logan, Conal, and Orson's parents found themselves in a grim situation, seeking answers about their missing children. They had spent hours at the police station before being ushered into a sparse room, furnished with only a desk and two chairs. A solemn police officer awaited them, seated.

"Please, come in," the officer invited the anxious parents.

Logan's mother, her voice trembling with concern, asked, "Is there any news, officer?"

The officer met her sorrowful gaze. "Yes, there actually are some developments..."

At his words, a flicker of hope lit the parents' faces, but it was soon overshadowed by the officer's next statement.

"I regret to inform you that our investigation suggests your sons might have fallen victim to criminal activity, likely leading to their death. We believe their bodies were disposed of by the perpetrators," the officer disclosed, his tone grave. "I must be honest; our efforts have reached a standstill."

As he detailed the investigation's findings, his explanations were coherent and persuasive. Some parents accepted his theories as probable truths, given New Alexandria's notorious history with similar cases often linked to organ trafficking. The room filled with a heavy air of sorrow as the reality of their children's probable fate sank in.

After delivering the grim news, the officer informed the parents that the likelihood of their sons being alive was slim, given the time passed.

"I will give you some time alone to recompose yourselves." He then left the room, giving time to the parents to absorb the devastating reality.

Overwhelmed by grief, the six parents succumbed to tears and sobs, grappling with the unbearable thought of their children being dead. Amidst their sorrow, they struggled to regain composure, each parent haunted by the same questions: What really happened? Who could have done this to my child?

The night promised to be long and painful for them. As they exchanged thoughts, Mary, Conal's mother, proposed an alternative approach.

"I know someone who once hired a private investigator to find out if her husband was cheating on her. Maybe we could consider doing the same?" she said, a glimmer of hope in her voice.

A parent, skeptical, questioned the effectiveness of such a move. "What could a private investigator uncover the police haven't already?"

"I don't know if you noticed, but the police left one particular possibility out of the picture."

Logan's mother leaned forward, curiosity piqued. "What are you talking about? What did they miss?"

Mary took a deep breath, her words carrying weight. "They mentioned nothing about the other students..."