

BIOLOGICAL 72

Chapter 72: A weird attack

"Ah... ah... ah... ah... ah..."

A man, breathless and exhausted, struggled through the forest. His flight from the lethal creatures inhabiting the place was marked by desperation. The distant sounds of gunfire and explosions echoed, yet they were drowned out by the pounding of his own heart.

He pushed himself to the limit, but after thirty relentless minutes, he had to pause, gasping for air. Fear shone in his eyes, a single thought echoing in his mind.

<What the hell is happening inside the forest? >

Unprecedented scenes unfolded as diverse hordes of monsters advanced westward, towards New Alexandria. Various species, typically hostile to one another, now marched in a bizarre, tranquil assembly.

No rational explanation presented itself. His only option was to hasten to New Alexandria and report this bizarre phenomenon of the forest thaids to those in command.

He already reported the attack, and explained more or less what happened through his communication device, but he was on the run. He couldn't give a detailed explanation.

"Damn it! This is insane!"

Tears streamed down his face as he lashed out in anguish, striking a nearby rock. His grief was palpable; he had lost his entire team to the thaids. They were more than comrades—they were like family. Their loss tore at him, a piece of his very being ripped away with their demise.

The group's mission began without incident. Tasked by their superiors, they were to investigate a recent thaid attack near the city's eastern border. New Alexandria's forces received many reports of thaids' attacks, and these prompted an action.

The military's response was measured, yet the soldier knew that this attack was bigger than usual. There was a suspicion among the higher ranks that something significant was unfolding in the far east.

For a week, they scoured the vicinity of the city for signs of thaid activity. Their search yielded nothing out of the ordinary, at least in the beginning. But on the seventh day, they encountered an unnerving sight—the vast horde of monsters moving westward.

Upon sighting them, they reported back to their superiors and opted for a strategic retreat. However, their journey back to the city's border turned dangerous.

A pack of Leylarhads—wolf-like thaids having two tails and prominent vampiric tusks—launched a ferocious attack, forcing them to navigate a treacherous escape through the forest. It was a pursuit of unprecedented tenacity, unlike any the soldier had experienced before. That behavior was not normal.

The Leylarhads, leveraging their sheer numbers, pursued the squad. The soldiers eluded their trackers for a short while, but the thaids' keen senses soon led them back on their trail, cornering the squad in what seemed to be the creatures' domain.

The behavior of the Leylarhads was perplexing. Known for their intelligence, reflected in the sophisticated hunting strategies they used, their decision to engage soldiers seemed irrational. Usually, Leylarhads avoided confrontations with foes stronger than themselves, like the well-armed soldiers.

Yet, these creatures displayed an unusual aggression, as if driven by an unseen force, compelling them to attack. This marked deviation from their typical behavior suggested something was amiss.

In a desperate bid for escape, the survival of one soldier came at the cost of his comrades' lives. The creatures slaughtered and feasted upon the squad members, leaving no trace behind. Regardless of the number of tries, none of the attempts made to save them yielded any positive results.

Now alone, the soldier's sole mission was to reach New Alexandria with the grim news of their failed mission. They hadn't determined the cause of the thaid migration, but it was clear something was going on in the east.

While gasping for air, the man paused, only to be alerted by distant howls. The Leylarhads were near, and discovery meant death because of their numbers.

"I hope they do not catch my scent." Knowing that time was of the essence, he resumed his march.

He resumed his race towards the west, towards the safety of New Alexandria, while fleeing from the massive monsters.

As he neared the city, his path demanded extensive climbing, with the Leylarhads never far behind.

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A chilling howl shattered the forest's silence, resounding for kilometers. Alarming close, the soldier glanced back to see the Leylarhad pack a mere three hundred meters away.

"NO, NO, NO, NO! I WAS ALMOST THERE!" Desperation mounted inside him.

He gasped, the city's protective barrier just five hundred meters ahead. Doubts raced through his mind: Could he outrun these creatures? Could he make it to safety in time?

"AH...AH...AH..."

With desperation fueling his actions, he fired a flare into the sky, a bright beacon signaling for help. His breath came in ragged gasps as he pushed forward, tapping into his brain crystal power to enhance his physical capabilities.

This power was his lifeline, the only reason he had survived the chase through the forest's treacherous terrain.

"HEY! HEY!"

"HELP ME!" His voice pierced the air as he closed in on the barrier, now just a hundred meters away. The urgency in his plea was unmistakable, his survival hanging by a thread.

Just when the soldier believed he was safe, a sudden, crushing force slammed him to the ground. A massive Leylarhad pinned him down, its jaws inches from his head. Despite summoning all his strength, augmented by his brain crystal power, he couldn't match the beast's might.

The Leylarhad paused, its head rearing back, saliva dripping in anticipation of its impending feast. With a swift, brutal motion, it lunged at the soldier to savor his tender meat.

The pain the soldier expected never came. Instead, the thaid's blood sprayed across the ground, a startling contrast against the white and grey of the surrounding rocks.

A well-aimed projectile, resembling an arrow, had struck the creature's eye, ending its life. Confused but grateful, the soldier wrestled the beast off him.

After he regained his footing, he pushed his exhausted body to sprint towards safety. The sight of their fallen comrade deterred the other Leylarhads. With a collective decision, they abandoned the chase, disappearing back into the forest's depths, leaving the soldier to stagger the last few meters to sanctuary.

Exhausted and shaken, the soldier reached the safety of the barrier two minutes later, oblivious to the eerie silence that had replaced the menacing howls and growls.

As the massive building's door connecting the barrier from one side to the other swung open, a team of soldiers sprang into action, rushing to aid their distressed comrade. He collapsed from fatigue and was placed on a stretcher.

A medic, syringe in hand, appeared at his side. She was a healer. She drew a blood sample, and then used her healing abilities, focusing on his wounds and exhaustion.

Aside from a wound on his right shoulder and overwhelming fatigue, he was unharmed. However, exhaustion claimed him, and he lost consciousness, causing an urgent transfer to the hospital for recovery.

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Three hours after his rescue, a man strode down the hospital corridor, heading to room 719. His appearance was distinctive, characterized by a neatly trimmed buzz cut and the crisp lines of his military uniform. Each step he took was measured and confident.

Upon reaching room 719, he knocked before entering. "Hello, Ranger Lakwosky. I trust you're recuperating well," Major James Fischer said.

His chest and shoulders bore an impressive array of insignias, signaling both his rank and many commendable achievements. His presence commanded respect.

"Yes, sir, I'm recovering well, thank you, sir," the ranger said.

"Now, can you please recount the details of what happened to your squad? Your mission report mentioned it was a reconnaissance operation."

"Indeed, our mission took us eastward. We were briefed at base about unusual thaid activities and the chance of encountering thaid hordes. The higher-ups were correct, but they underestimated the scale," Lakwosky said, his gaze meeting Major Fischer's.

"As we retreated towards the city, a large pack of Leylarhads ambushed us. Sir, their numbers were overwhelming, easily 300. This onslaught began just a kilometer from here. We first spotted the horde three days ago."

"And what happened after the attack?"

"We had no choice but to flee. The odds were against us with such many thaid. We initially evaded them, but today, they found us again and decimated my team. It was a massacre..." Lakwosky's voice trailed off as he was lost in the harrowing memories.

He then faced Fischer. "My team took down a few hundreds of them, but it wasn't enough to stop them all."

Gazing distantly at the wall, Lakwosky was engulfed in his thoughts. He returned his attention to Fischer, and with a hint of bitterness, said, "As you can see, I'm the only survivor."

Lakwosky's mind was flooded with images of his comrades, their faces as they urged him to escape, their tragic ends at the jaws of the thaid. These haunting memories lingered in his mind. Major Fischer observed the soldier, his expression contemplative.

"Ranger, you've fulfilled your duty and, thankfully, survived. This chance at life is a gift; make it count. I expect your written report once you're discharged. For now, rest well."

Rising from his seat, Major Fischer exited the room. As he navigated the hospital's corridors, his thoughts lingered on the looming crisis. A thaid horde mere days from the city was troubling enough, but the reported size of the horde was unprecedented. Action was imperative.

Convinced that something sinister was unfolding in the forest, Fischer knew uncovering the truth fell to him. With swift steps, he left the hospital and headed straight for his car, driving towards the military district in haste.