

## BIOLOGICAL 75

### Chapter 75: The tournament (3)

Erik couldn't help but wince as he observed his opponent. Rocco's display struck him as amusing, almost comical. It took considerable effort for Erik to suppress a laugh at Rocco's grandiose speech.

The two were positioned on the lawn behind the school. Around them, at least forty students prepared for their own battles.

The area was spacious, allowing for unimpeded combat. Yet, they needed to remain vigilant to avoid colliding with other fighters or the gathered spectators.

Rocco and Erik faced each other, standing at a distance. Rocco glared at Erik as if he were his arch-enemy without realizing how ridiculous he looked.

"Okay," Rocco's shout was intended to make everyone to hear, and eager to begin. "Let's get started!" His voice carried across the lawn, drawing attention.

With that, he channeled mana. A semi-transparent blue sword materialized in his hand, shimmering slightly in the light.

<A weapon conjuring brain crystal power, uh? > Erik thought. <Analysis. >

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- Name: Rocco Johnston.

- Brain crystal power: Mana sword conjuring.

-Physical Characteristics: Rocco Johnston is a 16-year-old with a height estimated at approximately 1.75 meters. He has a lean and athletic build, not overly muscular. His weight is around 65 kilograms.

-Personality and Traits: Rocco Johnston exudes an aura of arrogance and self-importance. His air of arrogance is as unsubtle as a neon sign in a library, and the self-importance he radiates could probably fuel a small city.

This perception, however, is based on limited interactions and requires more comprehensive data for an accurate depiction. His demeanor seems overly confident and dismissive, possibly a facade to mask insecurities.

His confidence is so thick it could be sliced and served on a platter, yet it's hard not to wonder if it's just a fancy cover for a book with blank pages. In short, he's like a mystery wrapped in an enigma, then dipped in a hefty coat of bravado.

Despite his apparent arrogance, further observation is needed to understand his true character and motivations. The system notes the need for additional information to provide a more complete profile.

-Power Level: 29

-Approximate Strength: 11

-Approximate Intelligence: 7

-Approximate Dexterity: 9

-Approximate Energy: 30

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<Whoa. The system went heavy with that depiction... It must not like him either. >

Erik read the screen with an amused look. He couldn't believe the biological supercomputer could make such a description.

However, he went back to read the important information. Rocco was weaker than him in terms of physical strength, but the two had almost the same energy levels.

Erik never saw him training at school. If he did, he would have at least known his name. For this reason, Erik was confident about beating the guy.

The guy also had a weapon conjuring brain crystal power. Such a power was widespread, possessed by millions.

The nature of the conjured weapon varied with the user. While some could summon swords or lances, others infused their creations with elemental or more sinister powers.

However, a Mana conjured weapon with further abilities was rare. It was just behind healing powers, in terms of rarity, but much further than element wielding ones.

Despite being a widespread power, Rocco's power, commonly seen yet highly prized, allowed him to face thaids head-on at advanced levels.

Traditional weapons proved ineffective against these enemies, because of the amount of mana Thaids released. That created a sort of natural barrier, making mana-based abilities crucial.

Swords and the likes were still relatively useful since the user's strength was used to attack, and that was bound to be a certain amount of damage, but weapons were ineffective since the damage made was lower than that of muscles.

Such powers, linked to weapon creation, were easier to master than others. While mastery required practice, military techniques provided a solid foundation for skill development.

Rocco, likely trained with the sword throughout his life, and had a quiet confidence about him. His training, although not rigorous, had prepared him enough to enter the tournament.

Erik, at the moment, didn't have a weapon and couldn't use his other powers, so he was at a disadvantage.

Rocco charged at the young man with his sword in hand. Erik's opponent could use his power, but he knew he couldn't be lethal, so he blunted his sword a little to avoid serious wounds to his opponent.

Despite being unarmed, Erik's superior stats compensated for his lack of weaponry. As Rocco charged, sword ready, Erik's heightened dexterity made him see everything clearly. Erik evaded the sword strike by sidestepping and landed a firm punch on Rocco's face.

POW!

As Rocco hit the ground, his face contorted in disbelief and shock, like a cartoon character flabbergasted by a comical slip. His family and parents, witnessing the scene, gazed at Erik with expressions of utter astonishment and dismay.

The audience's expressions transformed, eyes bulging like saucers, mouths dropping open as if unhinged and in sheer bewilderment. The air became a tangible blend of shock and disbelief, almost palpable in its thickness.

It was as if they had seen a rabbit not just pulled out of a hat, but driving a tiny car out of it, leaving them in a state of ludicrous astonishment.

The collective gasp and stuttered murmurs that followed seemed to echo the slapstick humor of an old-time comedy sketch.

"You're cheating!" Rocco clutched his cheek where Erik's punch had connected. Pain was etched on his face.

"No," Erik said. "It is you who are a weak ass moron."

"You're lying."

Rocco's face contorted in anger. His eyebrows knotted together like twisted vines in a thicket, furrowing deeply as if they were trying to burrow into his forehead. His cheeks reddened at the hue of overripe tomatoes, pulsating with each surge of anger, completing the picture of a human volcano on the brink of eruption.

"You can't possibly do that... You're just trash!"

"Not anymore..." Erik said.

Rocco sprang to his feet, baffled by Erik's ability to dodge and counter so effortlessly. As he lunged at Erik again, his movements were like those of a sluggish puppet.

Erik sidestepped Rocco's attempt and landed another punch, this time in the stomach. It was clear to Erik that Rocco stood no chance against him; his movements were sluggish, his strategies transparent. Not that there were any. He was just blindly rushing at him.

<It looks like the training with Amber bore its fruits... > Erik thought.

Meanwhile, Rocco was back on his feet, his parents' glares cutting through the air, brimming with indignation at the looming embarrassment of their son. They might not have known the whispers about Erik, but they realized he outmatched their son during this bout.

As some nearby matches concluded, spectators shifted their attention to Erik's duel. They looked on in astonishment, witnessing Erik's unexpected strength.

Rocco, while not on a par with the likes of Anderson or Nathaniel, among the normal students, was recognized for his competency, making his current struggle even more shocking.

"Aren't you finished?" Erik asked, his eyes reflecting an icy resolve. Rocco found Erik's gaze unbearable.

"No, the real fight starts now!"

Rising to his feet, he approached Erik more cautiously than before. For a moment, they stood opposite each other, Rocco attempting to decipher Erik's strategy. However, impatience got the better of him.

Seeing his opening, Rocco lunged forward, sword in hand. But this time, Erik chose not to retaliate. He remained still, allowing Rocco's blade to swing towards him without resistance.

Rocco, in a frenzy, launched attack after attack at Erik without a moment's pause. A wave of anger radiated from him, and Erik recognized that this unbridled rage would be his downfall as he kept attacking Erik blindly.

Erik, almost amused by the situation, dodged each of Rocco's strikes with ease. He couldn't help but smirk as yet another of Rocco's attempts failed to connect.

The onlookers were stunned, witnessing Erik's effortless evasion. They were torn between cheering and disbelief. For years, Erik had been underestimated, and now he was challenging their beliefs.

How could they cheer for someone they deemed inferior for two whole years? Though the young man's situation gave many of the low-ranked students hope that maybe they too could improve their situations if they started training.

Rocco, relentless, swung his sword at Erik once more. But Erik, having grown weary of the repetitive dance, decided on his next course of action. With a swift motion, he sent Rocco reeling back with a powerful kick.

The audience fell into a hushed silence, their expectations upended. Many had expected Erik's swift defeat, especially against Rocco. Yet, here he was, proving his mettle and showing that he was a contender to be reckoned with in the tournament.

Erik started looking around as the crowd started cheering him. It was surreal. Some still believed that Erik cheated, but the majority knew he was better than them and that he was capable of defeating any of them.

Rocco sprawled on the ground, struggled to rise. Erik grabbed him and slammed his head onto the ground below him.

"Do you surrender?" Erik's voice was devoid of emotion.

"NEVER!"

Erik forced Rocco's head to the ground once more. "Surrender now," he said.

Rocco's mother, witnessing the scene, was overcome with fear for her son. She screamed and rushed towards the fray, her movements frantic with worry.

"WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO MY SON?!" She grabbed her hair in a panicked state and dashed toward her son.

A teacher intervened, warning her against any further action. "Interference is not allowed. If you take a step further, your son will be disqualified!"

The woman looked at Erik with a murderous glint. The onlookers found the woman's actions exaggerated, but Erik's were the same; he was too ruthless. She calmed down and went away, but Rocco's father shouted from afar something at Erik.

"Are you finished beating my son?"

"He must surrender..." Erik said.

"NEVER!"

"Don't be stupid, son, you lost!" Rocco's father said.

"I won't surrender!"

Enough was enough. People had to stop thinking they could bully him or take advantage of him and for sure had to stop underestimating him and thinking he would do whatever they commanded.

If they didn't want, he was going to make them. Erik ended the confrontation with a decisive kick, rendering Rocco unconscious.

Onlookers gazed at Erik, their expressions a mix of shock and disbelief. Even the overseeing teacher, taken aback, regained composure to say, "Erik Romano wins!"