

BIOLOGICAL 80

Chapter 80: The tournament (8)

Erik observed four individuals carry the unconscious Zakir to the infirmary, where they placed him in a room alongside others who had sustained injuries in their matches.

Throughout the healing process, Erik reflected on the battle, realizing how dangerously close he was to be defeated. A loss would have meant more than just an exit from the tournament.

It would have spelled the end of his aspirations to join the Red Palace. The loss of vital connections, resources, and the power and freedom that came with them, coupled with the failing of his quest, would have been problematic.

He realized how Zakir's assault had left him little room to fully use his power, but despite that, he emptied his mana reserves.

His attacks were relentless, his punches powerful, and his power terrifying.

Once the healing process ended, Erik felt revitalized. He expressed his gratitude to the healer, who acknowledged his thanks with a nod and left for the main building. He needed to rest.

While pondering his friends' whereabouts, Erik went to find them. He made his way to the gym, but finding it deserted, he ventured out, scanning the school grounds. After nearly half an hour of searching, he spotted Gwen. She was engrossed in watching a match, one that seemed to hold a certain level of fascination.

Erik approached Gwen, tapping her shoulder to catch her attention.

"Oh... Hi, Erik..." she said and then turned back to look at the fight.

"Who's competing?" Erik asked, curious about a fight the mighty Gwen was looking with such attention.

"Allan with the electrified spear, and Aamina, who's handling the mana sword."

"They seem skilled. Is that why you're watching them?"

"Yes, I'm surprised they're not among the top students. Their skill levels are impressive," she said.

Allan, a young man of modest height but sturdy build, stood out with his broad shoulders and medium-length blond hair.

His skin bore the tan of frequent sun exposure, contrasting with his piercing icy blue eyes. Allan's rugged facial features, with a firm chin, square jaw, and prominent cheekbones, gave him a warrior-like demeanor.

His mastery of the electrified spear, combined with his martial arts skills, was a sight to behold.

Aamina was instead a tall girl. She had a muscular figure that was stressed by her revealing attire, highlighting her feminine curves.

Her long black hair cascaded over her shoulders, framing her ample bosom. Despite her muscular build, Aamina's appearance was striking, especially her dark brown eyes that complemented her overall visage.

The two contestants, Allan and Aamina, clashed in a captivating display of martial prowess. They circled each other, their movements a blur of speed and precision. Each strike and counter-strike flowed, as if choreographed by an invisible hand.

Their eyes locked in intense concentration, they read each other's slightest movements, predicting and reacting in a dance of combat.

Allan, with his electrified spear, moved like lightning, his strikes quick. Aamina countered with fluid, sweeping motions, her blade slicing through the air with a deadly grace.

The sounds of their engagement filled the air—the metallic clang of sword against spear, the swift whoosh of dodging movements, and the occasional grunt of exertion.

Spectators watched in awe, captivated by the spectacle before them.

The fight reached a crescendo as Allan executed a lightning-fast maneuver, his spear whistling through the air. Aamina, caught off-guard, could only partially deflect the blow. Allan's spear connected with her shoulder, eliciting a sharp cry of pain from her. The impact threw Aamina off balance.

"AAAAH! MOTHER FUCKER!"

The young woman winced in pain from the impact, losing her balance but regaining her composure to launch a counterattack some seconds after.

Her strike grazed Allan's arm, hindering his ability to harness his power for a moment because of the pain. Allan, however, countered her follow-up move with a block.

Gwen, watching the match, broke her silence after several minutes. "The match is over," she said. She seemed sure of her words.

"What? Why? It looks to me they are even." However, he kept studying their every move.

"That's because you are still inexperienced," Gwen said. "Look closely at the boy. He has a clear edge..."

Erik watched as Allan shifted his fighting style. The young fighter's leg movements became more fluid, enhancing his mobility around Aamina.

His hands, previously held in a more rigid stance, now moved with a deceptive casualness, ready to parry or strike. These nuanced changes weren't just physical; they were psychological, undermining Aamina's confidence.

Allan's decision to stop using his electrified spear was a calculated risk. To the untrained eye, it seemed a reckless abandonment of his advantage. However, Erik understood the deeper strategy at play. Allan was baiting Aamina, luring her into a false sense of security.

For Aamina, this sudden change was disconcerting. Accustomed to countering Allan's electrified attacks, she hesitated, unsure of his next move. Her strikes now carried a hint of caution. She eyed Allan warily, suspecting a hidden strategy behind his disarmament.

Allan's change in tactics had shifted the dynamic of the match. With each passing moment, Aamina became more submissive, more guarded.

Erik observed this transformation unfold, recognizing the psychological warfare being waged. Allan had turned the match on its head, not through brute force, but through cunning and adaptation.

Allan emerged victorious after ten intense minutes, marking the end of the match. Aamina, visibly disheartened, realized her opportunity to join the Red Palace had slipped away.

The announcement of Allan's triumph sparked a flurry of activity as a crowd, mainly friends and family, swarmed around him with congratulations. The group was large and enthusiastic, surrounding the winner with a festive atmosphere.

Meanwhile, Allan, now preoccupied with his well-wishers, engaged in conversations and savored the snacks provided by the Academy. While observing this, Erik approached Gwen, who was watching the scene unfold.

"He seems quite popular," Erik said as he observed Allan's interactions.

"Yes, he does." Her attention was still partly on the crowd.

"Shall we find Amber and Floyd? I'm sure they've seen some interesting matches, too."

Agreeing with the idea, Gwen and Erik set off, finding Amber and Floyd near the Gym. Like them, Amber and Floyd had also spent their post-match time observing other contestants.

In their discussions, it emerged that all the top-ranked students had secured victories in their matches, except for Adam, who had been defeated by Floyd the previous day.

Adam's early exit from the tournament was notable as his rivals continued to advance.

Floyd and Amber shared insights about two other contenders who had caught their attention.

Despite not being top-ranked students, Jacqueline Wiley and Euan Odonnell were performing well, winning their matches with ease.

Their brain crystal powers appeared ordinary, yet their effectiveness in the tournament was undeniable, making them noteworthy competitors.

Jacqueline possessed unique clawed bones that extended from her fists.

While not overwhelmingly powerful, they proved effective in close combat, enhancing her damage output.

The claws' strength, length, and sharpness correlated with the mana she channeled into them, turning them lethal under optimal conditions.

Euan, on the other hand, wielded a brain crystal power that manifested a bladed tail.

This appendage, akin to an extra limb, offered a different tactical advantage.

It worked similarly to Jacqueline's power, but wasn't as suited to use martial arts as Jacqueline's.

"I guess we should keep an eye on those two."

"I'm not entirely convinced," Gwen said.

"They are competent in martial arts, no doubt, but it's unlikely they pose a serious threat to the top-ranked students. Jacqueline's power gives her an edge, but she hasn't fully harnessed its potential. Euan, meanwhile, seems somewhat hampered by his tail in terms of fighting style."

While continuing their discussion, the group delved deeper into the fighters' techniques and strengths. Yet, despite their analysis, it was becoming apparent where the trajectory of the tournament was leading.