

## BIOLOGICAL 85

### Chapter 85: The tournament (9)

Erik concluded his morning routine, having completed his daily tasks and indulging in a satisfying breakfast. His plate was a combination of bacon, eggs, fried potatoes, gravy, and toast, each bite as delicious as the last. Once he finished his meal and tidied up, a familiar notification chimed in his ears, confirming the completion of his daily quest.

[DAILY QUEST COMPLETE.]

"The system won't give me other quests, but apparently, daily quests are still working. I wonder if I will get another weekly one, though."

He allowed a brief respite of half an hour before diving into his training regimen. The school gym, usually his preferred spot for such activities, was not an option this early in the morning. It was likely still locked up, devoid of the usual bustle of students.

So, Erik opted to practice the intricate moves of the Kyokar-style on his own. Two hours of intense, focused training flew by, culminating in another notification acknowledging the completion of his second daily quest.

"Let's check my progresses."

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[Quests List]

{Daily}

<Eating Habits: COMPLETE>

<Physical training: COMPLETE>

{Weekly}

{Conquer the Training Gauntlet}

-Completion Rewards: 1 Strength Stat Point.

-Failure Penalty: Missed Opportunity for Growth.

-Goal: Complete Daily training quests for a week (6/7).

-Description: Commit to daily quests for a full week. Prove your dedication and resilience. Success grants you increased strength, a testament to your unwavering discipline.

{Monthly}

{Make two neural links.}

-Completion Rewards: 1 Point in each stat.

-Failure Penalty: Missed Opportunity for Growth.

-Goal: Make two neural links within a month. You are free to choose what neural link to make (0/2).

-Description: In a world where power reigns supreme, neural links are the founding step to one's power. Make two additional neural links and prove to everyone how strong you are.

{Issued}

{Qualify to join the Red Palace Dojo}

-Completion Rewards: One Level Up.

-Failure Penalty: No rewards.

-Goal: Win four rounds and qualify to join the Red Palace (2/4).

-Description: A tremendous opportunity presented itself to you. If you join the Red Palace, you will make connections, train in the best facilities and get stimulating serums. You must not waste this opportunity.

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"I just need a quest to get the weekly done."

Glancing at the clock, he noted it was already 08:33 AM. Deciding he had trained enough for the morning, Erik briskly showered. Although he planned to spar later with Amber, Gwen, and Floyd, he didn't want to arrive at school reeking of exertion.

Once clean and ready, Erik set off for the train station. The walk from his house was a brisk fifteen-minute journey, which he completed with a focused stride. Upon his arrival at school, he made his way to the gym. To his slight disappointment, it was still empty, void of his friends. Pulling out his phone, he composed a message to Amber, hoping to coordinate their training session.

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E: Where are you?

A: On my way.

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Erik, while waiting, watched as the top students of the school entered the gym. Nathaniel, flanked by Natasha and Karl, walked in with a sense of ownership, his posture exuding confidence.

In contrast, Anderson, followed by Mickey and Aaron, presented a more subdued demeanor. Their overbearing attitude didn't bother Erik too much since he understood they had every reason to put up airs.

Nathaniel and his group wasted no time getting into their training gear, immediately engaging in a 1v1v1 sparring session. What caught Erik off guard, however, was Anderson approaching him, with Mickey and Aaron in tow.

"Hey." Anderson said. He eyed Erik from head to toe. "I heard about your match against Zakir. That's impressive, considering how challenging he was as an opponent. His power was powerful when he was in the top 20, and I remember his brain crystal power had a lot of potential.."

Erik perceived Anderson's words as an attempt at a compliment, though he found it odd since this was the first real interaction they had. Apart from a brief encounter outside of school, Anderson had ignored Erik's existence.

Mickey chimed in, his gaze fixed on Erik. "Yeah, Zakir was no easy opponent. Despite his quirks, he was an exceptional fighter."

"Yeah." Aaron said. "Your victory against him really says something about your abilities. I must admit, I didn't expect it, but credit is due where it's deserved."

Mickey offered a smile to Erik.

The young man tried to be modest. "Well, the fight was quite a challenge. I spent most of it on the defensive. To be honest, I think luck was on my side."

"I may not have witnessed the fight, but regardless, a victory is still a victory," Anderson said.

Aaron and Mickey nodded in agreement, acknowledging Erik's accomplishment.

As Amber, Floyd, and Gwen entered the gym, Anderson, upon noticing them, wrapped up his conversation with Erik. He, along with Mickey and Aaron, prepared to spar, gearing up for their upcoming matches.

Erik watched them depart, his thoughts drifting to Anderson's recent fight. He hadn't witnessed it but was curious about Anderson's power in action, having only heard about it through the grapevine.

Floyd, noticing the three leaving, asked Erik a question, "What were they doing here?"

Erik shrugged. "Just congratulating me on the duel against Zakir. Nothing major."

"You should keep an eye on those three, especially Anderson," Floyd said.

Erik was puzzled. "Isn't Anderson known as a kind of defender of justice? He even helped me once."

Floyd nodded. "That's partially true, but it's more about them seeking attention rather than a genuine belief in justice."

This revelation took Erik by surprise, but before he could comment, Gwen chimed in, "Why are you spreading rumors?"

She turned to Erik. "Don't listen to him. Floyd and Anderson have a history. They were childhood friends, but things changed when they started high school. Anderson grew close to Aaron and Mickey, drifting away from Floyd. This caused a rift between them, leading to a confrontation and a physical fight."

Floyd's face turned a deep shade of red. "SHUT UP!" Erik couldn't help but laugh at his friend's flustered reaction.

The group engaged in some light conversation before commencing their sparring routine. Erik paired up with Amber for training, feeling a hint of embarrassment at the thought he might hold her back.

However, under Amber's guidance, Erik's skills were advancing rapidly. Despite Amber's superior fighting prowess, the young man's physical attributes like strength, speed, agility, and reflexes made him a challenging sparring partner.

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As the afternoon wore on, the clock neared 15:00, signaling the start of the next round of matches.

Excluding Adam, who was eliminated by Floyd, the remaining competitors, a total of 88 students, gathered in front of the school entrance.

They waited for the customary pre-match speeches from their teachers and to discover their next opponents.

Erik was aware of the unexpected strengths displayed by some of the non-top students. Fighters like Zakir, Allan Grimes, and Aamina McDonald had proven how skilled they were, reminding Erik not to underestimate any of his peers.

The teachers delivered their speeches, and shortly afterward, the students received notifications on their phones.

These alerts contained information about their assigned healers and the names of their next opponents, setting the stage for the upcoming battles.

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MATCH: ERIK ROMANO VS PRIYA FOLEY

HEALER: HALIMA O'REILLY

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Erik learned his assigned healer was the same as his previous match. As the bell rang, signaling the start of the matches, everyone searched for their designated opponents.

Erik's search ended when he found Priya. It was with surprise that Erik recognized her as the same girl who had insulted him at school, the one Anderson had scolded at the gate for verbally attacking Erik.

This encounter dated back to the day Erik declared himself an awakener and sent Logan, Conal, and Orson to the infirmary during the cafeteria incident.

When Priya noticed her opponent, her face lit up. She saw this match as a perfect chance to avenge the embarrassment Erik had caused her, with no repercussions.

Approaching Erik with a determined stride, Priya greeted him with a smile that didn't quite reach her eyes.

"Well then, Mr. Romano. I'm truly looking forward to our match today. But just a heads up, don't expect any sympathy from me when you lose!"

Her words were sharp, her tone conveying a mix of glee and rage, setting the stage for a contentious showdown.