

BIOLOGICAL 89

Chapter 89: Thiefs, friends, and mysteries (2)

"Head to the bathroom and search there," Zachary said. "I'll tackle the kitchen."

"Search? In this dump?" Greg was having a mental meltdown. "You can barely fit in that bathroom, let alone find anything!"

"Just get on with it, Greg!"

Greg stepped into Erik's cramped bathroom. The room, barely two meters in size, contained only a toilet and a minuscule sink, above which hung a small mirror. A shower head dangled from the wall above a drain, its presence making it impossible to use the space without drenching everything.

Greg couldn't help but feel sympathy for the boy. Even as a street thug, he lived in better conditions.

Resigned, he began his thorough search of the bathroom. He knew Erik had to be hiding something valuable.

The lack of furniture meant it had to be concealed somewhere else, perhaps behind a loose tile.

So Greg examined each tile, feeling for any sign of tampering or hollow spaces, his fingers tracing every inch of the floor and walls.

After a painstaking half-hour, finding nothing, he abandoned his search in frustration.

Zachary returned from the kitchen just as Greg emerged from the bathroom, his expression mirroring Greg's disappointment.

Greg glanced back at the kitchen, only to witness a scene of utter chaos. Cabinets lay torn from the walls, some smashed to pieces on the floor. The kitchen was in complete disarray.

Greg let a tear fall in silence, feeling for Erik. The thought of the young man returning to his ravaged home weighed heavily on him.

Despite their job's nature and his sympathy for Erik, who was clearly enduring a tough life, his duty took precedence.

In the end, the owner of the house, whoever it might be, was a stranger to him.

"We need to check the living room next," Zachary said. "You take that side. I'll handle this one."

Greg began his search near the couch and table. He inspected the walls and floor but discovered nothing of interest.

Next, he examined the table for any hidden mechanisms or secret compartments, but found none.

Moving to the couch, he resorted to tearing it open in his search. On the other side of the room, Zachary's task was less arduous.

The area held little more than a small desk and Erik's computer. He completed his search in a relatively short time, leaving no stone unturned.

Yet, their efforts yielded nothing. The living room, like the rest of the house, held no secrets, no hidden treasures.

This puzzled them, as their intelligence had showed that the young man possessed something of great value. Why would someone pay that much to hire the Crystal Cross Gang otherwise?

They were uncertain about the specific item they sought, so their superiors had instructed them to confiscate anything that might be remotely suspicious, like USB drives or hard disks.

Yet, much to their frustration, they found none of these items. Apart from the computer, the house's owner seemed to own very little.

"What do we do, Zachary? There is nothing aside from the computer that could lead us to whatever we are searching," Greg said.

"Then we'll have to take the computer."

With that resolution, they collected the device and vacated the apartment.

After Erik's match concluded, he made his way to the gym to meet his friends, enduring a fifteen-minute wait.

Amber was the first to arrive, looking like she had faced a tougher match than usual.

Soon after, Gwen and Floyd joined both victorious, but admitting the competition had grown tougher.

Surprisingly, many formidable fighters at the school weren't among the top-ranked students.

Once everyone had gathered, Erik proposed they shower and grab a bite to eat together.

Everyone agreed. An hour later, they found themselves at a restaurant owned by Amber's family.

The opulence of the place struck Erik, leaving him to ponder why Amber, evidently wealthy, befriended him, a financially struggling nobody. Well, now that wasn't true anymore, but he still hadn't used the money aside from grocery shopping.

Pushing these thoughts aside, they sat down and began discussing the competition.

Out of the 44 remaining contenders, 20 were top students, Erik ranked as the 21st, and the remaining 23 were regular students.

They speculated that almost all the normal students would likely be eliminated the next day, assuming Erik's victory.

They recognized that the upcoming match would be pivotal; the winner would secure a place in the Red Palace, with subsequent matches serving more for personal glory than anything else.

"That Allan Grimes," Gwen said, her mouth full. "He's quite the contender, and his power is impressive. If you face him in the upcoming rounds, don't underestimate him," she said to Erik.

The young man nodded in agreement. He had witnessed Allan's prowess in battle and was impressed. While unsure of how Allan's strength compared to his own, Erik considered him a formidable opponent, possibly on a par with Zakir.

The outcome of a battle between the two would hinge on their brain crystal powers and how they wielded them.

Erik understood Allan possessed the ability to conjure a mana spear infused with electrical energy.

While the summoning of weapons was a common power among humans, Allan's incorporation of electricity made his ability to stand out.

The addition of the electrical element to his weapon enhanced its power. This was noteworthy because such an element was rare and not easily harnessed, especially for those not specialized in elemental control.

Curious about the competition's outcome, Erik posed a question to his friends.

"Who do you think will win the tournament?"

"In my view, it's likely to be Nathaniel. No offense, Amber," Floyd offered his opinion.

"None taken."

Floyd's assessment seemed right. Nathaniel was regarded as the strongest in the school. While Amber and Anderson might surpass him in physical combat skills, Nathaniel's power was both highly destructive and precise, and was also very versatile.

Anderson, capable of leveling entire buildings, often restrained his power, preferring to win matches through sheer skill.

This approach highlighted his formidable abilities, but in non-lethal confrontations, such raw power was a disadvantage.

This limitation was a key reason behind Anderson's diligent training in classes focused on establishing neural links.

The only way Anderson could match his peers, who wielded their powers with ease, was by enhancing his physical strength.

To make more neural links was essential for improving their power usage.

There was widespread belief that once Anderson attained the $\mu 1$ rank on the Idor scale, he might be able to produce controlled, smaller explosions.

Should he achieve this, Anderson would become a very much sought-after individual.

If he chose not to pursue a military career, many organizations would vie to recruit him.

Nathaniel, in contrast, had the unique ability to create force fields for defense and convert the same energy for offensive purposes.

This dual application of his power was a rarity. While his energy might not match the sheer magnitude of Anderson's explosive capability, it allowed him to demolish walls with a single punch.

His ability was not only versatile and destructive but also user-friendly.

Their discussion carried on until it was time for the group to part ways and prepare for the next day's match.

Amber arranged for her driver to take them all home. Since Erik's place was nearest, they agreed to drop him off first. Unbeknownst to Erik, a troubling night awaited him upon his return home.

[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 (3/4).

-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.