

BIOLOGICAL 92

Chapter 92: The tournament (12)

The next morning, Erik woke up feeling rejuvenated. It had been years since he last slept in a proper bed.

To be honest, it was weird to wake up in such an opulence, to the point of being uncomfortable.

He couldn't help but feel a twinge of envy for Amber, Gwen, and Floyd's lavish lifestyles, and cursed his own less fortunate circumstances.

Luckily, that was all in the past. He only had to put to good use his newly earned money, and the event that transpired the previous day gave him an idea of how to do so.

He sighed. <Quests. >

[Quests List]

{Daily}

<Eating Habits. >

-Rewards for completion: Ten Experience, ten DNA points

-Failure Penalty: None

(Eat a healthy meal)

(ACCEPT QUEST) (REFUSE QUEST)

<Physical training. >

-Rewards for completion: Ten Experience, ten DNA points

-Failure Penalty: None

(Train for at least an hour. The Host may choose whatever exercise to complete the quest.)

(ACCEPT QUEST) (REFUSE QUEST)

{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.

<Today I should complete the Weekly quest. That Strength point will for sure be useful during the tournament... >

After having checked the quests, Erik dressed and stepped out of his room to go eating something.

He descended a grand staircase leading to the entrance hall. There, he found the butler and asked him about Amber's whereabouts.

"She is in the living room, having breakfast. Please follow me. I will guide you there," the butler said.

After a brief walk through the expansive house, Erik arrived in the living room. Amber was there, eating a pear.

"Morning, Erik!" Amber said with a smile.

"Morning, Amber."

"Is there something wrong?" she asked, seeing the sour mood of her friend.

"There is nothing bothering me aside from yesterday's matter."

Erik settled at the breakfast table. Amber tried to lighten his mood by talking about light topics. It seemed to work, but despite the pleasant atmosphere, he couldn't shake off the suspicion that this hospitality might be a scheme.

<System. Search the house for any device. I want to find out if someone told Amber's family to take an eye on me. >

[UNDERSTOOD. CONNECTING TO NEARBY DEVICE. CONNECTION ESTABLISHED. STARTING THE SEARCH.]

While the system did its job, Erik kept a jovial mood. It was a facade, but as a guest in Amber's home, he knew he had to behave appropriately.

While talking to the woman and eating breakfast, a notification sounded internally.

[DAILY QUEST COMPLETED.]

However, that wasn't the quest he was hoping to make. Though, before he could start training, he needed to ask Amber for a place to do so.

Post breakfast, Amber and Erik left the house in one of the family's cars. Of course, the biological supercomputer got Erik some feedback about the situation.

Aside from Richard Stone, telling Caiden to monitor him, and gauge his personality, and that just because he was at his house, there wasn't any kind of conversation regarding the young man, aside from the ones discussing him when the government learned about his existence.

Essentially, Amber's family didn't pressure her to befriend him. The drive to school was brief, taking only ten minutes. That made him feel at ease. But the question about who searched his house twice remained.

As they arrived at school and approached the main gate, they noticed a crowd gathered, all eagerly waiting to witness the upcoming matches which the organizers had rescheduled to 11 a.m.

This left only a brief window for Erik and the others to spar before the competition started.

"I see you're already here," a voice called out from behind them. Turning around, Gwen and Floyd, who had just arrived, greeted them.

After exchanging pleasantries, the group made their way to the gym for their pre-match sparring session.

They concluded their training an hour before the matches, to ensure they were well-rested for the fights. Erik, having completed his second daily quest, saw some other pleasing notifications.

[DAILY QUEST COMPLETE]

[WEEKLY QUEST COMPLETE]

[NEW WEEKLY QUEST ISSUED.]

<Good... > A feeling of satisfaction swirled inside Erik's mind.

The group made their way to the main entrance, where the electronic board displayed the names of the remaining tournament participants.

"Looks like Allan, the guy Gwen mentioned, has made it to this round. A win today would mean a spot in the Red Palace," Erik said. The board showed the names of forty-four students still in the competition.

"I told you he was good," Gwen said, her usually impassive expression giving way to a faint smile, seemingly pleased with Allan's progress.

Erik couldn't help but wonder if there was more to Gwen's interest in Allan, recalling how she had watched his previous match.

Catching onto Erik's train of thought, Floyd playfully teased Gwen. "Do you like him?" A teasing grin appearing on his face.

Gwen responded with a flat "NO," her glare sharp.

"Yeah, right. I bet you're probably eager to see his next match and admire his powerful muscles," Floyd's smile turned mischievous.

Gwen didn't appreciate Floyd's joke. She marched towards him, her fist clenched as if ready to strike the young man in the face. Floyd, recognizing the imminent threat, ran, his smile widening. Gwen, even more annoyed, gave chase.

Floyd was a funny guy, albeit too inclined to do something stupid.

"Those two will never change," Amber remarked with a sigh. Erik watched the chase unfold with a smile. This was what he had missed all these years.

As the time of the matches drew near, students gathered in front of the board, where the school workers set up a podium. Professor McAllister stepped onto it to address the crowd.

"Hello, everyone. The moment we've been waiting for is finally here!" he announced, unusually animated. "Today's the last round of qualifications. Whoever wins joins the Red Palace."

The crowd, a mix of students, parents, and friends, erupted in cheers.

"Congratulations to those who've made it this far."

Professor McAllister's gaze sweeping over the students. "I'm proud to have taught some of you. Those who reached this round truly deserve their place in the Red Palace." He then reminded everyone of the rules and wished the strongest competitors luck.

"Now, let's find out who your opponents are!"

At that moment, all forty-four participants, including Erik, received notifications on their phones.

ERIK ROMANO VS JACQUELINE WILEY

HEALER: JIMMY SANDERS

This time, Erik knew well who his opponent was. Jacqueline Wiley was a competitor Floyd had cautioned him about.

Jacqueline possessed a brain crystal power, enabling her to generate claw-like bones from her fists. While this power might not seem strong at first glance, it had proven to be effective in close combat by significantly increasing the damage she could deal.

Floyd had observed that the capability of Jacqueline's claws—including their strength, length, durability, and sharpness—scaled with the amount of mana she channeled into them, rendering them lethal weapons in her skilled hands.

However, Jacqueline's prowess extended beyond her brain crystal power. She was also an adept martial artist, skilled in integrating her clawed hands into her combat style. This ability complemented her techniques, making her a challenging opponent.

Erik couldn't really compare her to Zakir. Maybe he was stronger than her. But for sure, he would not underestimate her. Floyd was a crazy fellow, eccentric sometimes, but he was for sure no fool.

Jacqueline's efficient use of her power, combined with her physical strength and combat intuition, made her a dangerous opponent. She also possessed notable speed, enabling her to dodge and swiftly counterattack.

Erik felt a hint of anxiety about the match. Floyd had spoken highly of Jacqueline's capabilities, and Erik was uncertain of his strength against her. Erik found the healer and searched for the woman in question, but his discovery left him surprised.

Jacqueline was pretty. Tall, with long black hair and striking emerald green eyes. She had tanned, smooth skin, and was wearing the school's training attire. A tight uniform made from an elastic material that highlighted her toned muscles and round butt.

Despite her slender figure, Jacqueline appeared robust and ready for combat. Her calm demeanor masked a firm determination, clear in the focus of her eyes, signaling her readiness for the fight.

Contrary to Erik's previous opponents, Jacqueline refrained from any verbal taunts. Instead, she wished him luck, maintaining her intense focus on the upcoming battle.

That puzzled him even more. Fair play gestures toward him were as infrequent as a god descending among mortals.

Erik appreciated this attitude, finding it a refreshing contrast to the usual arrogance he encountered.

Aside from her outwardly calm demeanor, the young woman appeared to be a gentle person, unlike most in the school or in the city, for all that mattered.

As the two fighters positioned themselves in the designated area, they waited for the referee's signal, locking eyes with mutual focus.

Their expressions revealed nothing but sheer determination, a burning desire to win and prove their worth. When the referee signaled the start, both sprang into action, each eager to seize the initiative.