

BIOLOGICAL 44

Chapter 44: A goal

The pair swiftly exited the building after completing some paperwork and made their way to Benjamin's car, soaring above the city streets toward Erik's house.

Benjamin's vehicle, while not matching the luxury of Amber's, held its own charm. The dashboard boasted a large screen, and the seats, crafted from leather, promised comfort. The interior design, predominantly white with red trimming, hinted at an owner who took pride in their vehicle.

This impression deepened when Erik noticed the meticulous condition of the car. Benjamin, evidently proud of his possession, maintained it with care, often washing and waxing to preserve its appealing appearance. His enjoyment of driving the car around town was clear, often earning him compliments for its stylish design.

As they neared Erik's house, conversation flowed between the two men, touching on various topics. Upon arrival, Erik quickly exited the vehicle and moved to the driver's side. Facing Benjamin, he mustered a look of gratitude, though internally he remained guarded, careful not to reveal too much to someone he now viewed with suspicion.

"Thank you, Uncle Ben," Erik offered, his words polite yet carrying a hint of detachment.

"Don't mention it, Erik. If you need anything, just let me know. Ok?" Benjamin responded, his tone warm and inviting.

"Yeah, don't worry," Erik said. His words were courteous, but his demeanor suggested he did not intend to seek help. He managed a forced smile, an obvious effort to maintain civility, then turned and walked away.

Throughout this brief exchange, Benjamin noticed the subtle distance in Erik's attitude. He sensed the polite but unmistakable barrier his best friend's son put up, yet he remained silent about it, respecting Erik's need for space.

Benjamin pressed the accelerator, and the vehicle responded immediately, soaring upward into the sky to reach the designated travel altitude. He steered the car towards the western district, his home among the other military residences.

Meanwhile, Erik proceeded towards his apartment. Upon entering, he shut the door and promptly sprawled on the couch, seeking a moment of respite. He conducted a thorough check of his body for any overlooked wounds. Fortunately, he found none. The healer's work had been thorough and effective.

<What time is it?> The young man then picked up his phone. Erik had time to complete his quest, but decided not to make neural links. He knew it was important to maintain his mental health and not force himself too much.

"Quests," the young man said.

[Quests List]

{Daily}

<Eating Habits: COMPLETE>

-Rewards for completion: ten experience points and ten DNA points.

-Failure Penalty: None.

(Eat a healthy meal.)

<Physical training: ACCEPTED>

-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.)

<Weekly Quest: Conquer the Training Gauntlet (1/7) >

-Completion Rewards: 1 Strength Stat Point.

-Failure Penalty: Missed Opportunity for Growth.

-Goal: Complete Daily training quests for a week.

-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.

Erik, hindered from training during his hospital stay, shifted his focus to training at home. He dedicated several hours to this endeavor, finding it a means to dissipate some of the day's accumulated tension and anxiety.

The unexpected assault by Logan, Conal, and Orson, coupled with Uncle Ben's presence at the hospital, lingered in his thoughts. The more he pondered, the more he saw the pattern in the man's visits—a series of occurrences that seemed too coincidental to ignore.

Of course, that didn't apply to the hospital visit. Benjamin was his emergency contact, and it was only natural he came to visit him, but for the other times. It was weird, as he came often when something out of the ordinary happened.

Once his training session concluded, the familiar notification echoed within the confines of Erik's mind.

[QUEST COMPLETED.]

"Good..."

Later, Erik went to his computer. For what he had in mind, Erik had to make a lot of preparations. For starters, he needed to understand better his two new powers. Then he had to get a way to kill for sure the three bastards.

What happened to the rat-like thaïd that gave him his first new power came to mind. He could use the same strategy if things took a turn.

If someone were to discover the bodies, he initially thought the scene might suggest that a tree had simply fallen on them. However, upon further reflection, he realized this wouldn't be the case.

The impact pattern would be a significant clue. A tree that has fallen naturally would manifest indications of a gradual descent, potentially with soil disturbance showing uprooting. The existence of bodies squashed beneath a tree accompanied by a forceful impact depression, as would be typical of a tree grown and propelled through the air at great speed, would imply an unnatural incident.

Moreover, the uniform damage to the tree, with branches and trunk showing signs of high-speed impact from all sides, would contrast with the typical one-sided damage of a naturally fallen tree.

The lack of a root plate and soil displacement spreading from the impact site would also suggest that the tree was not naturally growing there, but was forcefully introduced to the area.

These disparities would probably result in investigators concluding that the tree did not simply fall but was part of an abnormal and possibly deliberate event, limiting the sole combat useful manner of using his birth brain crystal power.

This required him to devise an alternative approach, one that would result in fewer clues and involve using his powers. By transforming an object into a weapon, for instance, he could effectively eliminate any evidence afterward, and thaïds would take care of the bodies.

For two years, thoughts of retribution against Conal, Logan, and Orson lingered in his mind, a constant reminder of their deeds. Regrettably, he lacked the power needed to enact his vengeance.

However, the circumstances had now shifted. Erik found himself with a chance to set things right and resolved not to squander this opportunity.

Now he faced the most challenging aspect: how to provoke Logan. Initially, he considered placing a letter in Logan's locker, but quickly discarded the idea because of the risk of leaving physical evidence.

The thought of emailing surfaced, yet he recognized its traceability. Then, the realization struck—he had the advantage of a biological supercomputer. Could he manipulate the email to appear as if it came from another address or send it anonymously?

Both strategies presented advantages and drawbacks. The first allowed for the destruction of evidence post-delivery, minimizing direct links to Erik.

However, he would need to secure the letter, and any discovery of it by the police risked exposing his DNA. The second option, though seemingly less traceable, carried the risk of police accessing Logan's email or phone and discovering the message.

After weighing these considerations, Erik decided on the second approach. The biological supercomputer provided a significant advantage, allowing him to erase all traces effectively. This choice seemed more manageable and offered better control over potential problems.

<System, I need to send a message to Logan. You already accessed his phone, so you should be able to do this. Is there a way to make this message not traceable to me? >

[ANSWER: YES. BY ACCESSING HIS DEVICE I CAN A SIMPLE MESSAGE APPEAR ON HIS PHONE AND AUTOMATICALLY DELETE IT AFTER HE READS IT. WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO THIS?]

<Yes, but not now. This must be done tomorrow, just after the lessons end. >

[UNDERSTOOD. I WILL WAIT FOR YOU TO DECIDE WHAT TO WRITE ON IT. JUST LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU ARE DONE.]

Erik devoted the rest of his time to crafting the right words for Logan. In the anonymous message, he unleashed his fury, labeling Logan a coward and hurling insults at his family.

This outpouring of anger towards Logan was a cathartic release for Erik, a channel to express the resentment that had been festering within him.

Sending this message might not guarantee sure results, but Erik felt confident that Logan would react to the taunts. The act of writing the message itself brought Erik a sense of release.

He concluded the message by daring Logan to meet him at the train station, questioning his and his friends' courage. Erik's patience had reached its limit; his bottled-up anger towards Logan demanded an outlet. He hoped that taking care of Logan and his cronies would provide the closure necessary to move forward.

Erik then moved to his wardrobe, selecting a mask he intended to wear the next day to ensure his anonymity.

Erik experimented with his powers, employing the biological supercomputer to gauge the mana consumption rate of each ability and understand how to use them during a fight.

The supercomputer informed him that growing trees to an average size cost him five mana points per instance.

This rate allowed him the capacity to launch 34 seeds at his adversaries in his current state. Regarding his sharpening power, he could sustain it for fifteen minutes when his mana was at its peak.

This showed an average consumption of about eleven mana points per minute. The Poisonous mana quills, however, were more demanding; he could maintain them for only five minutes.

Given this limited duration, Erik recognized that their use should be reserved for critical situations. He honed additionally these skills.

After concluding his practice, Erik retired to bed, drifting off to sleep without dwelling excessively on the impending confrontations of the next day.

The dawn of the next day brought with it a palpable tension for Erik. He awoke with a sense of purpose, yet his mind was clouded with the gravity of what lay ahead.

After checking his quest and completing the first, earning ten additional DNA points, he took a moment to steel himself mentally.

The confrontation awaiting him loomed large in his thoughts. He understood the challenges that faced him, yet his resolve to confront the trio and assert himself was unwavering.

With this determination, Erik quickly dressed and washed, each action punctuated by his growing anticipation. He then left his house, his steps marked by a mix of eagerness and apprehension for the impending encounter.

Erik strode forward, his demeanor not betraying a hint of nervousness despite having to deal with Conal, Orson, and Logan.

His mind was consumed by a singular, unwavering determination. Today marked the day he would exact his revenge, a resolve forged over years of anticipation.

He was prepared, both physically and mentally, to confront and settle his long-standing grudge against his adversaries.

As he navigated the city streets, Erik was vaguely aware of the surrounding people.

Most passed by without a second glance, while a few lingered with curious eyes. Yet Erik paid them no heed; his focus was laser-sharp, directed solely towards the culmination of his plans. He stopped to buy the seeds he would eventually need and then went to school.

Eventually, Erik reached the train station and then the school gate. There, Amber, Floyd, and Gwen were waiting for him.

Erik couldn't fathom why they had started this routine, but he had no time to dwell on their motives. His mind was set on the task ahead, and any distractions were to be briskly set aside.

"Hey, Erik!" Amber greeted him cheerfully.

Erik paused, offering her a brief nod and a small smile. "Hey, Amber. Just a bit rushed today," he said with a normal tone. He then turned to Floyd and Gwen, acknowledging them with a casual, "Morning, you two."

Without lingering, Erik continued towards the entrance, heading for the lockers. His interaction was brief but amiable, a conscious effort to keep things appearing normal despite the weight of his intentions.

As he walked away, Amber watched him, a slight confusion crossing her face. Floyd looked at Gwen, both sharing a curious glance, but they shrugged it off, assuming it was just another day for Erik.

The trio made their way to their respective classrooms, leaving Erik to head towards his own.

Once there, he faced the usual disturbances from his classmates, but Erik's focus remained undisturbed. His mind was singularly occupied by thoughts of revenge.

When the hour arrived for power training in the gym with Professor McAllister, the students dispersed into their individual areas. Each had their own space to exercise their powers without repercussions. This session marked Erik's first participation since acquiring his second power.

Like Nathaniel, Erik headed straight for the training dummies. There, he embarked on his daily quest, practicing the Kyokar hand-to-hand combat style.

This time, however, he introduced an extra element to his routine. Drawing mana through his brain crystal, Erik channeled the energy into his arms.

A fine layer of ethereal substance coated his limbs. With a mere thought, he caused the mana to condense, its form becoming increasingly sharp and defined.

Then Erik started training. He practiced his moves against the dummy while the other students watched him. However, because of his vengeful thoughts, he was unable to concentrate on his training effectively.

He was still clumsy compared to most of them who had trained since they were children, but they had to admit that the young man improved by leaps and bounds in the short time he had available to train. As he was slowly getting the correct postures.

They knew that Professor McAllister was personally instructing Erik, and they also knew that anyone who got his help had a very high likelihood of excelling in the military.

With each strike Erik delivered, the training dummy endured his growing skills. He unleashed a series of kicks, chops, and punches, even resorting to using his head in his assault. The climax came when he infused his arm with mana, enhancing the sharpness of his limbs, and effortlessly sliced the dummy in half.

This display of power unfolded under the watchful eyes of his fellow students, who looked on in astonishment. Both Professor McAllister and Nathaniel observed Erik's performance, the former with an air of satisfaction, the latter deep in thought.

[QUEST COMPLETED.]

Once the training session concluded, Erik rejoined his classmates in their regular classroom, taking part in the day's remaining lessons.

Despite his physical presence, his mind wandered, preoccupied with visions of confronting Logan and his accomplices, bringing an end to their reign of terror.

<System. Send the message.>.