

## **BIOLOGICAL 621**

### Chapter 621: The Slums Again

Having settled everything, Mira, Kael, Aiden, and Lila made preparations to depart the location, their faces displaying resolute determination. Erik watched them, grateful for their support and trust in handling such a sensitive and dangerous mission.

Mira turned to Erik and Rebecca, her face showing a mix of commitment and something else that hinted at dissatisfaction.

The glance was not lost on Erik, though he didn't fully understand its cause. There was something in her eyes that caused a momentary pause. The look had a hint of jealousy, making it not entirely pleasing.

Since Rebecca arrived, Erik spent a significant amount of time with the beautiful woman. But there was nothing he could do about it; he was trapped due to work.

"Let's get to work," Mira said firmly, her eyes lingering on Erik and Rebecca. "We'll keep you updated on our progress."

"Thank you," Erik answered, nodding appreciatively. "Be careful out there."

The four of them left quickly, but Erik couldn't shake the feeling that he was in huge trouble. However, he pushed the thought aside, knowing that they had a daunting task ahead of them.

Rebecca approached Erik, her eyes filled with questions. "So, what do we need to do?" she asked, eager to contribute to the plan.

Erik's mind returned to the task at hand as he turned to her. "The Crystal Cross Gang usually sends men through the streets to monitor the surroundings and avoid the authorities," he explained, his voice thoughtful.

"Besides, I think they'll for sure start selling drugs and would likely try to expand their business in Etrium if they aren't already doing that."

Rebecca's eyes widened at his insight, her curiosity piqued. "How do you know all of this?" she asked, genuinely impressed by his understanding of the criminal organization.

Erik met her gaze, a knowing smile playing on his lips. "I don't," he said, his voice even. "I'm simply speculating based on the information I have about the Crystal Cross Gang. If you want to establish a guild, you must know this stuff."

Rebecca looked at him, her eyes searching his face for signs of dishonesty. But Erik's expression was unreadable because of his mask.

She knew he was hiding something, and though the connection between them was strong, there were still barriers, still secrets that were kept.

They stood there momentarily, the silence between them heavy with unspoken truths and veiled intentions. Then Erik broke it; his voice filled with determination.

"We need to hit the streets," he said, his focus returning to the mission.

"We need to find any leads we can, gather intelligence, and build a clear picture of what the Crystal Cross Gang is planning here in Etrium," he added.

Nodding, Rebecca's mind immediately switched gears to focus on the task at hand. "Let's do it," she agreed, her voice brimming with determination.

"Where do you plan on starting the search?" Rebecca asked.

Erik looked at her, his expression thoughtful. "The best place to start would be the slums," he said, his voice firm.

"If the Crystal Cross Gang is expanding their operations into Etrium, they'll likely target the most vulnerable areas first. If there are new drug dealers, we'll find them there."

Rebecca's face became tense upon hearing his words, and her mind grappled with the unforgiving reality of the situation. The slums were treacherous environments, teeming with despair and despondency.

They were waging a battle against forces that jeopardized the safety and well-being of the community, and she was determined to do whatever was essential to safeguard them.

"That means we'll also have to search for drug addicts," Erik continued, his voice filled with a grim determination. "They'll be the ones who can lead us to the dealers. Give us information on who's supplying them. It's a challenging and unpleasant task, but unavoidable."

Rebecca nodded, her face set with determination. "I understand," she said, her voice steady.

Erik looked at her. With gratitude, he relied on Rebecca's help for this challenging task. She was strong and willing to face the harsh realities of their mission.

"Thank you," he whispered, his voice filled with sincerity. "I know this will not be easy, but I'm glad we're in this together."

Rebecca flashed a modest yet sincere smile that reflected in her eyes. "Likewise," she said, her voice brimming with warmth.

They then made their way back to the car, the grim task ahead settling heavily upon them.

"Take us close to the slums," Erik instructed the driver, his voice resolute. The driver nodded, and the car's engines hummed to life as they lifted off the ground, gliding smoothly through the city.

As they flew over the bustling streets and towering buildings, Rebecca couldn't help but gaze out the window, her eyes widening at the stark disparity between the city's prosperous areas and the neglected slums.

The bright lights and gleaming structures gave way to dimly lit streets and crumbling buildings, a visual testament to the inequality and suffering that lay hidden beneath the city's surface.

Erik watched her, understanding her reaction. The slums were a world unto themselves, a place where hope seemed to wither and die, replaced by desperation and despair. It was a place he knew all too well since he lived in a rundown house most of his life.

Before long, they made their descent, and the car's engines gradually grew quieter as they touched down on the outskirts of the slums.

Stepping out of the vehicle, Erik and Rebecca were met with the harsh reality of their surroundings, their eyes quickly taking in the scene before them.

"Thank you," Erik said to the driver, his voice filled with gratitude. "We'll take it from here."

As the driver nodded, signaling the car to lift off once again, they found themselves left standing amid the slums, feeling the heavy weight of their task pressing down upon them.

As they glanced at one another, their faces displayed a strong sense of determination, fully aware that the true labor was about to begin.

#### Chapter 622: A Harsh Approach

Carefully, Erik and Rebecca began their walk down the narrow and cluttered streets of the slums, stepping over the broken pavement and skillfully maneuvering around the sprinkled waste that was scattered all around them.

The stench of decay and desperation permeated the air, making it difficult to breathe, and the once lively streets were now hauntingly still and devoid of any signs of life.

The stark contrast between the gleaming skyscrapers of the city and their surroundings created the impression of two distinct worlds.

Buildings were crumbling, their facades stained with years of neglect and windows boarded up to keep out intruders.

The few people they saw looked haggard and worn, their eyes downcast and their faces etched with worry. It was a place where survival mattered more than hope.

People in ragged clothing shuffled by, their faces drawn and eyes vacant, bearing the marks of hardship and despair.

Most of the individuals were mercenaries who lacked the financial means to hire a healer, resulting in severe injuries that hindered their ability to continue their work. It was a sad view.

The air was thick with the stench of rot and waste, and the sounds of the city were muffled, replaced by the distant cries of children and the occasional shout of anger or frustration made by the adults.

Shadows lurked in the alleyways, and the eyes of the slum's inhabitants followed them, suspicious.

"What exactly are we searching for?" Rebecca asked, her voice filled with uncertainty as she took in their cruel surroundings.

Erik's eyes were sharp, scanning the faces of the people they passed. "The Crystal Cross Gang members are likely to wear a pin," he explained, his voice low.

"It's a symbol of their affiliation, and they usually wear them on their chests, but here they can't proudly display it. Look for it in inconspicuous places, not completely hidden but not obvious either."

Rebecca looked at him, her brow furrowing. "Are you certain of this? Would they still wear it here?"

Erik's face was a mask of concentration, but he shook his head. "No, I'm uncertain, but it's the best lead we have."

Rebecca's eyes narrowed, sensing something more. "Should we search for anything else?"

"Yes," Erik replied, his gaze never wavering from the crowd. "Look for unusual people."

Rebecca laughed, the sound jarring in the oppressive silence of the slums. "In the slums, everyone is unusual."

Erik's lips twitched in a faint smile, but his eyes remained serious. "Fine, then look out for drug addicts. The gang's likely involved in drug trafficking, and the addicts could lead us to them."

Rebecca's laughter faded, replaced by a look of determination. "Alright, let's do this."

They continued to walk, their steps echoing against the worn pavement, their eyes darting from one face to another in search of their targets.

As they made their way deeper into the slums, the shadows lengthened, and the sense of danger grew. Erik wasn't worried about his safety, but about Rebecca. He could fight anyone, but his friend couldn't.

The people they encountered along the way observed them intently, their eyes reflecting a combination of curiosity and apprehension. As Erik and Rebecca entered the slums, they could sense the weight of hidden truths and the scarcity of trust.

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"Hey, look at that woman..." Erik said.

Leaning against the graffiti-covered wall of a dilapidated building, the woman's frail body seemed even thinner, her face marked with the telltale signs of addiction. Sunken and glazed, her eyes mirrored the state of her sallow and sore-covered skin.

Her clothes, once resplendent and vivid, were now ragged, barely clinging to her gaunt figure. The fabric had deteriorated and thinned because of constant use and exposure to the elements. Every movement seemed to make the garments hang even more loosely, accentuating her frailty and vulnerability.

Her once glossy and meticulously maintained hair was now a chaotic jumble of tangles and filth. Strands of hair jutted out in every which way, mirroring the disorder and difficulty of her surroundings. She was unable to afford or prioritize tending to her appearance, as survival was of utmost importance.

The fusion of her frayed clothing and disheveled hair evoked a portrayal of someone who had endured significant hardships and struggled to buy even the most necessities.

She was a living embodiment of desperation, a tragic figure consumed by her need for the drugs that had taken over her life.

"Do you think she is a drug addict?" Rebecca asked, looking at the woman while giving her a look of pity.

Erik's voice was low as he nodded toward her. "Strongly..." he replied. "Let's go ask her some questions..."

Rebecca nodded, following Erik as they approached her. She stumbled back when the two appeared before her, her eyes darting from side to side as if looking for an escape.

Erik flicked, grabbing her arm and pulling her into a nearby alley, away from prying eyes. His Flyssa was out instantly, the blade gleaming cold as he pointed it at her throat.

"Please, don't hurt me," the woman stammered, her eyes filled with terror. "I'll do whatever you want. Just don't hurt me."

"We won't hurt you if you comply," Erik said, his voice cold and unyielding. "Look inside her pockets. See if she has any drugs," Erik said to Rebecca.

Rebecca's face twisted in discomfort at the rough handling of the woman, but she did as she was told, reaching into the woman's pocket and pulling out a small plastic bag filled with a brown powdery substance. She held it up for Erik to see, her eyes filled with a mix of dislike and pity.

"Who sold you this?" Erik demanded, his eyes fixed on the woman, his voice sharp and commanding.

The woman's eyes darted from Erik to Rebecca, her body trembling. "I... I don't know his name," she stammered, her voice barely above a whisper. "He's just a guy. Comes around here sometimes. I swear, I know nothing else."

Erik's face was hard, his eyes unyielding. "Think harder."

The woman's eyes filled with tears, and her body shook with fear. But behind the terror, there was a spark of defiance, a glimmer of the person she once was before the drugs had taken over.

"I told you, I know nothing else," she insisted, her voice rising in desperation. "Please, just let me go. I won't tell anyone I saw you."

Erik's sword remained steady, the blade gleaming in the dim light of the alley. His eyes were locked on the woman, searching for any sign of deception, any clue that could lead them to the Crystal Cross Gang.

The woman's pleas hung in the air; Erik and Rebecca knew they had to press on to uncover the truth and bring the gang to justice. The stakes were too high, and the woman's fate was but a small piece in a much larger puzzle.

Chapter 623: Another Side

"I will ask you this one more time. Who sold you this?" Erik asked, slightly cutting the woman's skin with his blade.

The woman's eyes widened with fear, her voice breaking as she panicked. "You don't understand. If I talk, they'll kill me. You don't know what they're capable of."

Erik's face was unyielding; his sword still pointed at her throat. "If you don't talk, I'll kill you right here," he said, looking at the woman with cold eyes. "So make your choice."

Rebecca's eyes flickered to Erik, a slightly disturbed expression on her face at his ruthless determination, but she said nothing, her attention fixed on the terrified woman.

The woman's body was wracked with sobs, her eyes filled with despair. After a moment, she seemed to decide; her face hardening with resolve. "Alright, I'll talk," she said, her voice trembling. "Last month, a new group arrived in the city. I don't know who they are, but they differ from the usual gangs. They sell top stuff, and they're taking over everything.

They're ruthless, and no one dares to cross them."

Erik's eyes narrowed, his mind working quickly as he processed the information. "Where can we find them?" he asked, his voice sharp.

The woman's eyes darted around nervously, her body still shaking with fear. "There's a place," she said, her voice barely audible. "It's an old warehouse hidden among the maze of alleys in the heart of the slums. The address is 57 Bakersfield Lane, here in the city. That's where they usually sell me stuff."



Erik's face was grim as he listened, his mind already trying to come up with a plan to sneak inside the building, but with Rebecca, things were going to be complicated. The address was a crucial lead, a chance to get closer to the heart of the Crystal Cross Gang's operations in the city.

He finally lowered his sword, his eyes still fixed on the woman. "Go," he said, his voice hard. "Do not talk about our encounter with anyone. If you do, you know what will happen."

The woman nodded, tears streaming down her face as she stumbled away, disappearing into the darkened maze of the slums.

The alleyway was silent for a moment after the woman's hurried departure, and then Rebecca turned to Erik, her face flushed with anger. "Was that really necessary?" she asked, her eyes blazing. "Did you have to threaten to kill her like that? She was terrified!"

Erik's face was impassive behind his mask as he met her gaze. "It was necessary," he said. "We needed information, and she would not give it. Sometimes, Rebecca, you must do what needs to be done."

Rebecca's anger didn't abate, and she stared at Erik, disbelief and confusion warring in her eyes. "I've never seen you act like this before," she said, her voice shaking. "How can you be so cold, so ruthless?"

Erik's eyes flickered, and for a moment, something like pain crossed his face. Then it was gone, replaced by that same steely determination. "This is not a game, Rebecca," he stated after a long sigh. "We are dealing with dangerous people, and we cannot afford to be soft. If you want to survive in this world, you must do what's necessary."

Rebecca's anger subsided. She knew that Erik's words were true, but she still had some trouble accepting them; no, it was more like she had trouble accepting reality. She looked at him, her eyes filled with understanding, but a touch of fear was also present. At that moment, Rebecca swore never to become Erik's enemy, as she was sure that, in that case, he would not be lenient with her too.

Erik's eyes softened, and he reached out to touch her arm. "Let's go," he said, his voice gentle. "We have a job to do, and we can't afford to waste time."

Rebecca nodded, and the two of them started walking, heading toward the address the woman had given them. As they moved through the twisted streets of the slums, Rebecca's mind was still reeling, grappling with the new side of Erik she had just witnessed.

She knew he was right, that the world they were navigating was brutal and unforgiving. But she also knew that she had just seen a glimpse of something in Erik that she hadn't seen before, something that both frightened and intrigued her.

She wondered what had shaped him into the man he was, what had hardened him to the point where he could threaten a terrified woman without flinching. And as they walked, she couldn't shake the feeling that there was still so much about Erik that she didn't know, so much that lay hidden beneath the surface, waiting to be uncovered.

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Erik's and Rebecca's steps became more measured as they approached the address the woman had given them. The closer they came, the more they noticed individuals leaning against walls, observing from windows or seated on benches or on the ground, watching the street with guarded expressions.

Their eyes were sharp, assessing each passerby, and there was something about their stance that spoke of danger.

"These are probably people under the Crystal Cross Gang's pay," Erik growled to Rebecca, his eyes narrowing as he took in their appearance. "But they don't have pins, so they're not members themselves. Just hired hands, most likely."

Rebecca's gaze swept over the men, her instincts on high alert. And then, something caught her eye, a glint of metal on one man's sleeve. "Erik," she said, her voice tense. "I think I found one. A Crystal Cross Gang member."

Erik's head turned in the direction she showed, his eyes zeroing in on the pin. Even though it was small, there was no mistaking it; the insignia of the Crystal Cross Gang was visible on the man's sleeve.

"You're right," Erik said, his voice low and tight. "That's one of them. Stay close, Rebecca, and be ready for anything. We're venturing into dangerous territory."

Rebecca nodded, her heart pounding in her chest. They continued to walk, but now their steps were laden with a new sense of purpose and urgency. Every glance and every movement was scrutinized as they made their way deeper into the heart of the slums.

The man with the pin seemed to take no notice of them, his eyes never leaving them. But Erik knew he wasn't the only one monitoring them. He could feel the weight of many unseen eyes on them, the sense that they were being watched, evaluated.

Erik's hand strayed to the hilt of his sword, his grip firm and reassuring. He knew that the time for action was drawing near, and he was ready. Whatever lay ahead, he was determined to face it head-on, with all the resolve and determination that had brought him this far.

#### Chapter 624: Alley Battle

Erik and Rebecca found an inconspicuous spot to hide, a narrow gap between two rundown buildings. They settled in, their eyes fixed on the man with the pin, waiting, watching.

Erik received a report from Mira and the others stating that they found some people from the Crystal Cross Gang in many parts of the slums and even outside.

Erik ordered them to keep searching and see if they could find their base of operation, but he also told her he and Rebecca were watching some other members.

The two then ended their communication with Mira, telling him she was going to contact him as soon as she or the others found something.

The street was a kaleidoscope of noise and movement, but the two of them were motionless, like predators stalking their prey.

The man leaned against a wall, his face hidden under the hood, seemingly uninterested in everything around him. But Erik knew he was alert, his eyes sharp, taking in everything. Hours seemed to drag on; the tension in the air was palpable, each minute ticking by slowly.

Rebecca's muscles were cramping, but she didn't dare move. Her eyes were glued to the man, her mind racing, trying to foresee his next move. She could feel Erik's presence beside her, his body taut, ready to spring into action at a moment's notice.

Finally, after what felt like an eternity, the man pushed himself off the wall and walked away. His steps were casual, but there was a purpose to them, a direction.

"He's moving," Erik said in a barely audible voice. "We gotta stay close to him. But be mindful. He might lead us to more people."

Rebecca nodded, her heart pounding in her chest. They trailed behind the man, staying far enough back to avoid detection but close enough to keep him in sight. The streets of the slums twisted and turned, a maze of narrow alleys and shadowy corners. Every step was filled with danger, every glance a potential threat.

Erik's senses were on high alert, his body moving with a grace and precision that spoke of years of training. He guided Rebecca through the labyrinth, his eyes never leaving the man they were following.

The man's path was erratic and aimless, but Erik knew better. He was testing them, trying to see if he was being followed.

"We need to be extra careful," Erik said to Rebecca. "He's suspicious. One wrong move, and we'll be exposed."

Rebecca's breath caught in her throat, her nerves on edge. She knew they were playing a high-stakes game, one where the slightest mistake could be fatal.

They continued to stalk the man, their bodies moving in perfect unison, shadows in a world of darkness and deceit. Every step brought them closer to the truth, but it also brought them closer to danger.

The tension was unbearable, the stakes higher than ever. But Erik and Rebecca were committed, driven by a determination that wouldn't be denied. They were on the trail of the Crystal Cross Gang, and they wouldn't stop until they had found what they were looking for.

The sense of danger had grown steady as Erik and Rebecca continued to stalk their prey through the twisting alleys. Despite their efforts to calm their nerves, an eerie sensation lingered in the air. It was as if an unseen eye was fixed on them, watching their every move.

Suddenly, the man they were following stopped and spun around, his eyes narrowing as he looked directly at their hiding place. His voice rang out, cold and menacing. "Did you think you could follow me without being noticed?"

Rebecca's heart stopped for a moment as he realized they had been discovered. How had they been so careless? Erik, instead, knew the man noticed them, and it was due to Rebecca's inability to follow the target properly. But there was no time for reflection or blame.

In an instant, they were surrounded by ten people, all wearing long black coats and hoods, the crystal cross gang's pin glinting ominously in the dim light.

The man they had been following, his big black mustache quivering with rage, approached them, his eyes boring into theirs. "Who are you?" he asked, his voice dripping with contempt.

Erik's mind was racing, but he knew words were useless now. They were in the heart of enemy territory, and there was no way out but through. The only thing he could do was to fight. Erik quickly analyzed the men, including the mustache guy. They were all at the v-level, just one rank higher than both he and Rebecca. Of course, that didn't mean he couldn't fight against them.

He didn't know if Rebecca would be able to manage them, but there was no need to be worried; as he could easily take care of these men. He then started channeling mana through his neural links, powering Nathaniel's brain crystal power, readying himself for battle.

The mustache man noticed the mana swirl inside Erik, a cruel smile spreading across his face. "So, you chose violence, uh? All right, I like violence."

With those chilling words, the ten thugs rushed toward Erik and Rebecca, their faces twisted with malevolent intent. Some had mana swords, and some had powers that the naked eye couldn't see, but Erik knew them all thanks to the biological supercomputer.

Rebecca was beside him, her own power rising to meet the challenge.

Five thugs congregated on Erik, their blades slashing through the air. However, that wasn't what he was concerned about. The young man effortlessly avoided their attack; he pumped mana-force to his feet and flashed to the side of one of the men attacking Rebecca.

His eyes narrowed, focusing on his targets as he raised his hand, palm outward. The air around his hand seemed to shimmer, the power within him building to a crescendo.

With a mighty thrust of his arm, he unleashed a devastating shockwave. It burst forth from his palm like a thunderclap, a visible wave of pure force that sped toward the three men.

Their eyes widened in shock as they realized what was happening, but it was too late to escape. The shockwave hit them with the force of a hammer, lifting them off their feet and sending them crashing into the walls of the alley.

Bones shattered, and bodies crumpled under the impact. The sound of their screams was lost in the roar of Erik's power as they were slammed against the hard surface, their lives extinguished in an instant.

<Shit... I used too much mana! >

The remaining thugs faltered, their confidence shaken by the display of raw power. Rebecca looked over at Erik, her eyes wide with a mixture of gratitude and awe. But there was no time to pause; the battle was far from over.

Erik's face was set, his body still humming with energy as he returned to the fight. He started the battle with a shocking move, decreasing the number of enemies fighting against Rebecca in an instant, but he knew they had to keep pressing if they were to survive.

The mustache man's eyes narrowed as he watched Erik's display, his face twisting into a snarl. He had underestimated his opponents, and he knew that he would have to act swiftly if he was to gain the upper hand.

But for that brief moment, Erik had shown them all the depth of his power, a warning to anyone who dared to challenge him.

Chapter 625: Display of power

The narrow, dimly lit alley was a chaos of motion, filled with the sounds of clashing weapons and guttural cries. Erik's senses were on high alert as he moved with a dancer's grace, his body a blur of motion as he swung his Flyssa in deadly arcs.

He used the blade to conserve his mana as much as possible to fight against these guys.

He longed to prove his strength and set himself apart from the weaker ones. His goal was to leave them in complete despair, unable to track his every move with their eyes.

Besides, he had some unresolved matters with the Crystal Cross gang. Erik hadn't forgotten the street chases in New Alexandria. He was once frail, but now he had increased his strength enough to fight them.

Erik felt an immediate sense of control, his body and weapon moving as one. He dashed towards one thug, his movements so swift that the man had no time to react. Erik's blade found his throat, and a spray of blood marked the end of his life.

Erik's momentum carried him forward toward his next target, but another thug who blocked his attack interrupted him. It was a skilled move, and Erik acknowledged it with a grim nod. However, the man's success was short-lived.

Erik's body coiled like a spring, channeling mana under his feet. With a powerful kick, he sent the two men reeling.

The attack put them off balance, their faces contorted with surprise and fear as they realized the magnitude of Erik's strength.

His opponents had underestimated Erik's fighting skills. They had assumed him to be just another v-ranked fighter like them.

However, Erik quickly proved their assumptions wrong when he delivered a powerful kick that sent shockwaves through the thugs' bodies. The force of the impact was so great that their bones creaked under the pressure.

As the mustached man watched the scene unfold, he realized the gravity of the situation. Erik's fighting prowess was on another level altogether, and they understood it in the worst possible way.

The way he moved with such grace and precision was captivating. His raw power was so tangible that it left everyone in awe.

"Kill these fuckers!" the man shouted.

Erik's eyes were cold, his face a mask of concentration as he engaged the remaining thugs.

With a deep understanding of how important it was to preserve his mana, he engaged in battle with a fierce yet calculated approach. He relied on his exceptional physical strength and unmatched skills to triumph over his opponents, leaving them in awe of his prowess.

The man with the mustache grew more and more agitated, his face contorted into a snarl as he shouted orders at his men. However, the situation was not in their favor, and it was evident that they were losing ground.

Erik somersaulted back, his Flyssa swinging through the air with deadly precision. As he spun, the blade connected with two of the thugs, decapitating them in a spray of blood.

Erik's feet hit the ground with a thud, sending a small cloud of dust into the air. He quickly surveyed the scene, his eyes scanning for any other potential threats. With his blade at the ready, he moved with deadly precision, his body flowing with graceful ease as he dispatched the two thugs with swift and precise strikes.

The sound of his blade slicing through the air was like music to his ears, and he felt a surge of satisfaction as the last opponent fell to the ground.

The remaining fighters were getting desperate, their movements becoming erratic due to fear. Erik could feel it.

Rebecca had engaged two of the thugs herself, partially transforming into a dragon giving her an edge. Erik watched, a brief flicker of admiration in his eyes as her skin turned scaly and her muscles swelled.

She was a formidable fighter for her age, and her brain crystal power was even more impressive than her fighting skills. With a strength that belied her size, she made quick work of the two men she was facing, her punches landing with crushing force.

Erik's focus snapped back to the three remaining thugs as they attacked from different angles.



With otherworldly grace, he dodged and parried their blows, his Flyssa blade singing as it met their weapons. His incredible strength and Nathaniel's power allowed him to twist, turn, and spin in the air. When he couldn't dodge, he parried with his Flyssa, the blade singing as it met their weapons.

<It's easier than anticipated. >

One thug, his face twisted with desperation, attacked Erik with a mana sword.

The glowing blade was a threat, but Erik's reaction was swift. He deflected the weapon with a flick of his wrist, his Flyssa finding the thug's neck in a single, fluid motion. The man's head tumbled to the ground, his body following moments later.

Erik swiftly spun once more, effortlessly taking down yet another thug. Now, only one adversary stood in his way. However, before Erik could make his last move, Rebecca leaped into action, gracefully joining the battle.

With a single, powerful punch, she obliterated the man's head, leaving behind a gruesome sight as her hand recoiled, stained with gore.

The alley was suddenly still; the only sounds were the heavy breathing of Rebecca and the distant cries of the city beyond. Erik's gaze shifted to the man with the mustache, his eyes narrowing as he saw him fleeing.

The mustache man's face was pale, his eyes wide with terror as he stumbled through the narrow streets, his breath ragged. He had seen the power and skill of Erik and Rebecca, and he knew he was no match for them.

Erik's body remained coiled with tension as his mind swiftly calculated the best way to pursue the man. Rebecca's eyes met his, a silent question in their depths.

With a determined look in his eyes, Erik turned to Rebecca, his voice calm and resolute. "We have to catch him," he said, his words carrying the weight of their mission.

Rebecca nodded, her eyes filled with a determination that mirrored his own. With synchronized steps, they embarked on their pursuit, their bodies propelled forward by an unwavering sense of purpose.

## Chapter 626: A brutal beating

Erik and Rebecca's footsteps echoed through the dark alleys as they pursued the mustache man.

The narrow, winding streets of the slums were a maze, and the chase was a frenetic game of cat and mouse.

Their target's fear lent him speed, and he darted through the shadows, his heavy boots pounding against the cobblestones.

Erik locked his eyes on his target, moving his body with a fluid grace as he leaped over obstacles and dodged around corners.

The man was desperate but familiar with the slums. It enabled him to keep a safe distance from Erik, who was faster and stronger.

Since adrenaline was still coursing through his veins because of the fight, the young man felt the thrill of the chase and he pushed himself harder.

"Erik!" Rebecca screamed as he left her behind and turned the corner.

Rebecca's heart was pounding in her chest, the adrenaline coursing through her veins as she navigated the labyrinthine alleys.

The slums were riddled with danger and decay, and every shadow seemed to hold a potential threat that made her feel more vulnerable than Erik.

The mustache man glanced over his shoulder, his eyes wide with terror as he saw Erik gaining on him.

He stumbled, his foot catching on a loose stone. His heart pounded in his chest as he quickly regained his balance. With his face set in a grimace of determination, he took a deep breath and continued running. If they caught him, he knew they would kill him.

The thought of the consequences of his capture sent shivers down his spine.

"You will pay for this motherfucker!"

Erik's mind was filled with a flurry of thoughts as he feverishly pursued his prey through the labyrinthine alleys.

His senses intensified as he maneuvered through the labyrinth of obstacles, ranging from decaying wooden crates to slippery mud patches.

Every intricate twist and turn required his utmost vigilance, but he was determined to apprehend his target by any means possible.

A single misstep could cost him the chase, and he couldn't afford to lose the man. At the same time, a primal instinct started surfacing inside of him; he started feeling the elation of the chase.

That was a feeling he hadn't in a while and that was presumably triggered because this man was a member of the Crystal Cross gang.

The chase weaved through the poverty-stricken district's makeshift dwellings and dirty streets.

With lightning speed, the man with the mustache darted through a narrow passage, his figure blending seamlessly into the darkness.

With a last burst of speed, Erik closed the distance, his hand reaching out to grab the mustache man's collar. The man let out a cry of despair as Erik's fingers closed around him, his body going limp with defeat.

Erik's smile was unsettling, a strange gleam in his eyes. "Shall we play?" he asked, his gaze fixed on the man lying on the ground as if he were nothing more than a piece of meat.

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Rebecca skidded to a halt beside them after five minutes, her chest heaving as she caught her breath. "Why did you leave me behind?!"

However, her breath caught in her throat as she stumbled upon the grisly scene. The mustache man lay on the ground, his body battered and bloodied, his eyes wide with terror.

Erik stood over him, his face hidden behind his mask, his fists clenched at his sides.

"What are you doing?" Rebecca gasped, her voice rising in shock and disbelief.

Erik turned to look at her, but the mask hid the man's expression. "Ensuring that he cooperates," he said flatly, his voice devoid of emotion.

The mustached man sobbed uncontrollably, his chest heaving as he fought to catch his breath.

"Stop it! Stop it!" he cried, his voice hoarse with pain and desperation. "I surrender! I will help you! But please stop it!"

Rebecca was ready to kill when she had to, but torture was something she didn't like.

Her mind reeled as she tried to comprehend what had just happened. She had known that Erik was capable of violence, but she had never seen him like this, so cold and detached, so willing to inflict pain. She wondered why.

"Erik," she whispered, her voice trembling, "It's ok; he said he is going to cooperate."

He turned to her; his mask made him look like a monster and his actions even more so. "I know, I made sure of that," he said, his voice low and chilling.

The woman's stomach churned, and she felt a wave of nausea wash over her. She looked down at the mustached man, his body broken and defeated, his eyes filled with terror and despair.

The mustached man's cries had subsided, his body limp and defeated as he lay in a pool of his own blood. He looked up at Erik, his eyes filled with fear and resignation, knowing that he had no choice but to cooperate.

Erik crouched down beside him, stared down at the defeated man on the ground, and issued a command, his voice cold and unyielding. "Bring us to your headquarters."

The man with the mustache, still recovering from the brutal beating he had endured, struggled to nod, his head filled with fear and obedience.

Slowly, with Erik's firm grip on his arm, he stumbled to his feet, wincing in pain.

The trio started walking through the streets, the mustache man leading the way, Erik's hand never leaving his arm.

Rebecca trailed behind, her mind still churning with conflicting emotions, her eyes darting around, on guard for any sign of danger.

The once majestic buildings in the vicinity now lay in ruins, creating a stark contrast to the glamorous parts of the city.

Graffiti adorned the walls, while garbage cluttered the ground, creating an unsightly scene.

The air was thick with the smell of rot and hopelessness, serving as a palpable reminder of the city's seedy underbelly.

After a tense and silent fifteen-minute walk, they arrived at a street where an unusually tall building loomed in the distance. It stood out from its surroundings, a beacon of power and authority in a landscape of ruin and despair.

"That's it," the mustache man said, his voice trembling as he pointed at the building. "That's our base of operation here in Testrovc's Rest."

Chapter 627: Less constraints

Erik examined the building, noting its size, guards, and surveillance cameras. It was clear that this was no ordinary building, but a fortress designed to keep intruders out and secrets within.

"Good," Erik said to the man, his voice cold and emotionless. "Now you've served your purpose."

Rebecca's heart skipped a beat at his words, a chill running down her spine as she realized what he meant. She looked at the mustached man, his face pale and drawn, his eyes wide with terror, knowing that he had just sealed his fate.

Erik's grip on the man's arm tightened, and he turned to Rebecca with pleading eyes. However, Erik unsheathed his Flyssa and decapitated the man without a second thought.

Rebecca had seen these kinds of things in the past, so she was used to it, but Erik's brutality left her shocked. She looked at him with her mouth open agape, unable to say anything about his out-of-character behavior.

"Let's go," Erik said, his words a clear and chilling command. "We have what we need."

As Erik and Rebecca proceeded toward the building, an atmosphere of tension and uncertainty pervaded the area. The tall structure loomed closer with each step, its dark facade offering no welcome.

Rebecca finally broke the silence, her voice tight with concern. "Erik, what do you intend to do? You're not thinking of just marching in through the main door, are you?"

Erik's response was immediate and firm. "That's exactly what I want to do."

Rebecca's eyes widened, disbelief in her voice as she exclaimed, "Have you lost your mind?"

Erik's face hardened, his eyes reflecting a steely resolve. "No, I haven't. But I'm sick of playing games."

Rebecca could hear the edge in his voice, something that spoke of a realization, a shift in perspective that had changed his approach.

"What games are you talking about?" she asked, unable to mask her confusion.

Erik was silent for a moment, gathering his thoughts. He realized that the previous fight had taught him something vital about his own abilities. The average person, even those at the v level, was no match for him anymore, as the massive number of neural links made him much stronger than that level.

His physical prowess alone was enough to dominate the battlefield, a strength that was akin to a 0 ranked fighter.

He was nearly on a par with General Becker and he was sick of having to keep a low profile.

Now, with most of his enemies significantly weaker than him, he had no intention of holding back. He was ready to unleash his full power and show what he was truly capable of.

<Until now, I've always hesitated to fight against people, considering their techniques and weapons. But now I know there are very few who can fight with me on equal terms if we talk about physical might. >

He paused his inner thoughts, his mind drifting to the Xeridon Anteris brain crystal power that could further amplify his strength. It was an edge, a powerful tool that he could wield, but not without limits.

<But I must be mindful of my mana. It's significantly lower than many, and using my full strength could drain me quickly... >

Despite this knowledge, Erik remained resolute in his plan to enter through the main door; he wanted to take action. However, he had to pay attention to Rebecca; she was much weaker than him.

Erik's boots hit the pavement with deliberate force as he headed toward the building's main entrance.

Rebecca trailed behind, her eyes shifting towards the emerging figures - most likely Crystal Cross Gang members.

Dressed in regular clothes, they watched Erik closely, realizing he was a threat. The tension in the air was palpable, a storm brewing that was about to break.

Without warning, Erik's pace quickened, his stride lengthening as he reached the building's door. With a powerful kick, he sent the door crashing to the ground, the sound of splintering wood echoing through the silence like a gunshot.

For a moment, the world seemed to freeze, the shock of Erik's audacity rippling through the alley. Then chaos erupted.

Approximately twenty gang members, their faces twisted in anger, rushed toward Erik.

They drew their weapons, their blades and staves glowing with mana as they channeled their energy through their neural links.

Erik's response was swift and brutal. He unsheathed his Flyssa, the blade singing as it cut through the air, a deadly dance that left no room for mercy. His movements were fluid, a symphony of violence that struck with lethal precision.

The first attacker fell before he could even raise his weapon, Erik's blade slicing through his throat in a spray of blood. Erik skillfully parried a mana-infused sword swing and countered with a stroke that severed the attacker's arm.

Rebecca, though stunned by the ferocity of Erik's assault, quickly joined the fray, her own powers unleashed as she engaged the attackers.

The street became a battlefield, a whirlwind of movement and sound, the clash of steel and the cries of the fallen filling the air.

Erik moved with relentless energy, each strike calculated, each movement a step toward one goal: Kill. He also ensured nothing happened to Rebecca. His strength was on full display, a might that seemed almost inhuman as he cut down his enemies without pause.

There was no holding back, no room for hesitation. Erik's blade danced through the chaos, a relentless force that left destruction in its wake. Bodies fell, lives extinguished in the blink of an eye as he moved through the room, his Flyssa a blur of motion.

The gang members fought desperately, their numbers dwindling rapidly as Erik and Rebecca cut through their ranks. The gang members' efforts were futile against the onslaught, their attacks clumsy and uncoordinated in the face of Erik's might.

As the last of the attackers fell, the street went into an eerie silence, the echoes of battle fading away. The floor was slick with blood, the air heavy with the scent of death.



Erik stood, his chest heaving a little, his Flyssa dripping crimson, his eyes cold and unyielding. The carnage was over, and the battle was won. However, Erik and Rebecca heard people rushing out of the building with haste.

He turned to Rebecca, his face set, his determination unwavering. "Let's move," he said, his voice a hushed command.

ERIK'S STATUS:

[Host Information]

NAME:Erik Romano

AGE:17

POWER LEVEL:306

SYSTEM LEVEL:40

EXPERIENCE:214027/78400

DNA POINTS: 22850

HEALTH:2840/2840

MANA: 2770/2770

{Attributes}

STRENGTH:146

INTELLIGENCE:198

DEXTERITY:126

ENERGY:137

Available Attributes points:0

{Powers}

[Biological Super Computer Powers]

-Brain Crystal Manipulation

Brain Crystal Power Extraction

(Allows the absorption of the brain crystal, making the host able to gain the power contained within. Notice: the DNA must be changed in order to allow the body to use the power. See DNA extraction.)

Brain Crystal Power Merging

(Allows to merge two powers birthing a new one. It requires the merging of the DNA to work)

Brain Crystal Power Analysis

(Allows to Analyse the target brain crystal without the need to know the creature.)

- (LOCKED)

- Brain Crystal Power Strengthening

(Allows the gaining of the energy attribute points)

(LOCKED)

-DNA Manipulation

DNA Extraction

(Allows the absorption of foreign DNA, making the host able to replicate it inside his own body. Notice: Changing the DNA is a slow process, and it is required to use new brain crystal powers.)

DNA Merging

(Allows to merge two DNAs, birthing a new one. Required to accommodate merged powers.)

DNA Analysis

(Allows to analyze the enemy DNA from a distance for a better understanding of the target's stats.)

(LOCKED)

DNA Strengthening

(Allows the gaining of the Strength, Intelligence, and Dexterity attribute points)

(LOCKED)

- Analysis

(Gives the host information about his surroundings, plants, creatures, and ores.)

-Brain Information Injector

(It allows the injection of information directly to the brain. Based on touch)

-Device Manipulation

(Allows the Host to manipulate electrical and mana-driven devices. Based on touch)

[Host's Powers]

-POISONOUS MANA DARTS D $\sigma$ 3DRANKED

(Conjure poisonous mana darts whose lethality depends on the mana injected)

-POISONOUS ASTRAL WOLF BITE D $\sigma$ 2DRANKED

(Conjure an astral but solid projection of a Leylarhad's head whose only aim is to bite at whatever target the host is aiming. Its teeth have a poisonous element whose toxicity depends on the mana used. Notice: the target must be close to the projection.)

-FORCE MANIPULATION D $\nu$ 1BRANKED

(Manipulate a mana-driven force to produce powerful shockwaves that can change in intensity, radius, speed, and power. It is also possible to use the power differently as to generate force shields.)

-PARALLEL WILLS D $\nu$ 1CRANKED

(Allows the user to passively increase intelligence based on the number of neural links. It also allows the construction of a mana brain that allows independent thoughts and can be used for multiple purposes.

-ICE SWORD D $\sigma$ 1ERANKED

(Allows the creation of a powerful ice blade, but needs a real weapon to be used as a base)

-STRENGTH ENHANCER  $D\rho^2$ DRANKED

(Depending on the amount of mana used, the amount of strength increases)

-PLANT MASTER  $D\pi^1$ BRANKED

(Allows to grow and control plant-based organisms. The usage depends on the plant and the user's will.)

-CHAMELEON VEIL  $D\rho^1$ CRANKED

(Allows to turn totally transparent and to project what is behind you, making it almost impossible to be seen. The user can move while using this Brain Crystal power. However, notice that the ripples in light the power creates while moving decrease the power's hiding abilities increasing the chance of being seen.)

-BESTIAL ROAR  $D\sigma^2$ CRANKED

(Allows to emit a roar that can instill fear into the surrounding creatures. It does affect all but the user.)

-TARGET LOCK  $D\sigma^1$ DRANKED

(Allows the user to lock onto the mana signature of a target in order to always find it.)

-CHIMERIC BIOMETAL SOLDIER  $D\rho^3$ ARANKED

(This power allows the user to create a human-worms hybrid with 50% of the user's physical stats. The clones are permanent, but to make them, a lot of mana is necessary; moreover, they can't use brain crystal powers. The clone is born from an egg, and it takes a month for them to reach maturity after having hatched two weeks after the eggs were made.

Before that, their physical stats are lower than 50% of the original's body. The clones are half as intelligent as the main body but know everything the main body knows when he created them. They also have several biological abilities.)

{Skills}

-Kyokar hand-to-hand style (ADVANCED)

(A military fighting style developed in Frant)

-Crypt of the Desert Style (ADVANCED)

(Flyssa fighting style developed by Master Nieminen)

-Etrium's sword style (INTERMEDIATE)

(Basic Sword Style developed in Etrium.)

Chapter 628: Carnage

The building's interior was vast, filled with the harsh noise of readiness as Erik and Rebecca stood surveying the scene. Rows of armed members from the Crystal Cross Gang faced them, forming a formidable barrier. The air was thick with tension, a palpable energy that hung like a storm cloud ready to burst.

Erik's eyes scanned the room, quickly assessing the situation. The scale of the operation was staggering, with at least a hundred people present, their faces set with grim determination. Realizing that this was just a part of the gang's operation in Testrovs's Rest was a jarring truth that settled heavily within them.

"Pay attention and avoid confrontation as much as possible," Erik stated calmly. However, Rebecca couldn't help but sense the underlying urgency in Erik's voice.

He was preparing for a battle, his body subtly tensing, his mind sharpening to a razor's edge.

Rebecca's gaze shifted between Erik and the sea of enemies before them. She felt a chill run down her spine, her body reacting to the imminent danger. The sheer number of opponents was daunting, and their focus on Erik showed their intent.

As the members of the gang charged, a roar erupted through the room, a symphony of rage and aggression.

The gang members sheathed their weapons, they channeled mana, and their hostility reached Erik and Rebecca.

Erik moved with a practiced ease, his body shifting into a defensive stance, his Flyssa at the ready. His expression, behind the mask, was one of cold resolve; his eyes fixed on the approaching storm of violence. There was no fear in him, no hesitation, only the clear intent to kill.

Rebecca stepped back, her eyes wide, her heart pounding in her chest. She was no stranger to combat, but the magnitude of what was unfolding before her was overwhelming. She could see Erik's confidence, his readiness, but the odds were staggering.

The clash was inevitable, and the room resounded with the echoes of footsteps, cries, and the clamor of weapons. Time seemed to slow as the two forces neared each other, the space between them shrinking, the air crackling with anticipation.

Erik gracefully and powerfully confronted the attackers with his drawn Flyssa, leaving Rebecca in awe.

He wasn't the same Erik she knew, the disciplined warrior who had stood by her. He was something else, something terrifying; he was a beast of massacre.

Erik's conflict with the Crystal Cross Gang members was a brutal ballet of violence and precision.

As they descended upon him in a fierce assault, he met them with the controlled ferocity of a seasoned warrior.

The clash of swords and the screams of combat echoed through the vast chamber, mingling with the sharp smell of blood and sweat.

Erik's Flyssa sliced through the air, its blade dancing in the dim light, each movement a deadly arc aimed with unerring accuracy.

With a powerful thrust, he skewered one opponent through the chest, his blade penetrating armor and flesh easily. The man's eyes widened in shock before Erik yanked his weapon free, leaving his opponent to collapse, lifeless.

With a graceful spin, Erik dodged a swing aimed at his head and retaliated with a swift slice, severing the arm of the attacking gang member.

Blood sprayed in a wide arc as the man screamed in agony, his weapon clattering to the ground. Erik didn't pause, his body moving fluidly to the next threat, his blade a whirlwind of destruction.

He ducked low to avoid a horizontal strike, his body bending with the agility of a cat. In one smooth motion, he rose and slashed upward, his Flyssa carving a deadly path through the air, bisecting his opponent's torso. The two halves fell separately, a gruesome testament to Erik's skill.

As more gang members pressed forward, Erik's movements became a blur, his mastery of the blade clear in every strike and parry.

He weaved through his opponents, his body twisting and turning, his blade finding its mark time and time again. Limbs were severed, throats slashed, and bodies fell in a macabre dance of death.

Erik's face was a mask of concentration, his eyes cold, his jaw set. He showed no mercy, no hesitation. He was a force of nature, his every movement a lethal art form.

He effortlessly overcame the gang members, who merely became obstacles in his path.

His footwork was impeccable, his body shifting and pivoting, always in motion, always one step ahead of his enemies.

With swift and brutal counterstrikes, he used his opponents' momentum against them.

Erik's blade sang as it cut through the air, a deadly dance that left no room for mercy.

The sheer power of his physical prowess was on full display, a force that seemed almost otherworldly.



"Who the fuck is this guy?!" a gang member said.

"I d-don't k-know!" Another said in fear.

Rebecca watched, her heart pounding, as Erik unleashed carnage on a scale she had never witnessed him doing.

He was a storm, a whirlwind of violence that left destruction in its wake. Bodies fell, lives extinguished in the blink of an eye as he moved through the room, his Flyssa a blur of motion.

The sound of steel meeting flesh, the cries of the dying, the clash of weapons—all of it melded into a symphony of chaos that resonated through the building.

She froze, unable to grasp the extent of Erik's strength during his attack, which surpassed everyone she had ever seen except her mother.

His true power was far beyond what he had displayed until now; an unstoppable force of nature. His movements and fighting style were unlike anything she had witnessed before.

The Crystal Cross Gang members fought with desperation, their attacks wild and uncoordinated in the face of Erik's skill. But it was futile; they were lambs to the slaughter, their efforts meaningless against the onslaught.

Rebecca's eyes widened as Erik's blade found its mark again and again.

The battle raged on; the room becoming a sea of blood and bodies, the air thick with the scent of death.

With a final sweeping motion, he decapitated the last standing opponent, his Flyssa singing through the air, a deadly harmony of steel and skill. The room grew quiet as the aftermath of the intense battle settled in.

The floor was strewn with bodies, and the walls were stained with blood, a grim reminder of the violence that had taken place.

Erik stood in the center of the carnage, his chest heaving, his blade dripping. He won the battle, but he wasn't satisfied. He wanted to kill more, to destroy the Crystal Cross Gang.

His eyes met Rebecca's, who looked at him with wide eyes and a tint of fear in them.

Erik stood, his chest heaving, his Flyssa dripping crimson, his eyes cold and unyielding.

Rebecca finally found her voice, her words a whisper in the battle's aftermath, "Erik, what... what are you?"

He turned to her, his face a mask of calm, his voice steady. "I am what I must be."

Chapter 629: The stolen bodies

Erik and Rebecca moved through the building with grim determination, the air thick with tension and the ever-present scent of blood.

Every corridor, every room, held a new group of adversaries, all members of the Crystal Cross Gang, their faces marked with a blend of confidence and fear as they confronted Erik's relentless advance.

Rebecca trailed behind Erik, her eyes wide, a silent witness to the storm of violence that he unleashed.

She felt a mixture of awe and terror at his ability, his mastery of combat on full display.

Though her powers were formidable, she recognized the futility of her involvement in the face of so many skilled opponents.

Her role became that of a spectator, her heart pounding as she watched Erik's deadly dance.

The young man moved like a snake, his body a fluid instrument of destruction, his blade singing its deadly song.

The gang members fought back desperately, their numbers providing no advantage against his skill.

Room by room, floor by floor, they fell before him, their bodies left in crumpled heaps, their eyes glazed with the shock of death.

Time became a hazy blur as the building was swept clean of any opposition. The air echoed with fierce battle cries, the clash of steel, and the haunting thud of bodies hitting the ground.

Amidst this macabre symphony, Erik stood unwavering, his expression unyielding, his determination relentless.

Rebecca's thoughts were a whirlwind, her emotions a tangled knot of admiration, horror, and understanding.

She knew the necessity of their mission, and the importance of eradicating the gang's influence, but the scale of the violence was overwhelming.

Yet, she also recognized the precision, the control in Erik's actions. He wasn't a mindless berserker, but rather a skilled warrior who did what was necessary.

Finally, after what felt like an eternity, the building lay in silence. The corridors were littered with the fallen; the walls were painted with evidence of battle.

Erik's breathing was the only sound, his chest rising and falling as he cleaned his Flyssa, its blade stained with the evidence of his work. He turned to Rebecca, his face unreadable behind the mask.

His chest heaved as he slumped against the wall, fatigue finally setting in. The adrenaline that had sustained him through the fight was ebbing, replaced by the realization of the physical toll it had taken on him.

Though he had prevailed without using mana, the sheer number of opponents had made the battle demanding. He then looked at Rebecca and said, "Start searching the place. I need to rest a little."

Rebecca's eyes still held a trace of shock from what she had witnessed, but she nodded, setting off to explore the building.

Erik's head fell back against the wall as he closed his eyes, his body aching, his mind still processing the brutality of what had just transpired.

He wasn't tired, but fighting against so many people wasn't simple. He marveled at how the Frantian soldiers endured the Thaid horde during the attack on New Alexandria.

The need to learn how to fight such battles against many opponents arose in his heart. Then Erik tried to slow down his breath.

Meanwhile, Rebecca made her way through the maze of rooms, her heart still pounding in her chest.

The building was a mix of offices, sleeping quarters, and armories, each space holding evidence of the gang's activities.

She moved in haste, her eyes scanning for anything that might be of importance, her mind racing.

It took little before she stumbled upon a vast storage area hidden behind a heavy door. As she pushed it open, her breath caught in her throat. The sight that met her eyes was both astonishing and exciting.

The room was unexpectedly spacious, bathed in an eerie glow from the overhead lights. The chilly air sent a shiver down her spine as she entered, her breath forming mist before her.

Rows and rows of extensive cellars were lined up systematically, each one sealed tightly and marked with codes and symbols she didn't recognize.

The room had a smooth concrete floor, with refrigeration units humming to maintain a freezing temperature.

Wires, tubes, and machinery scattered around hinted at the complex operation. It was not an ordinary storage area, but a purpose-built facility.

Different-sized cellars filled the room, some capable of holding multiple bodies, others more specialized. The eerie silence was occasionally interrupted by dripping water or the distant hum of machinery.

Everything about the place spoke of efficiency and precision. It was a place designed for cold, calculated actions devoid of empathy or compassion.

The realization of what lay within those cellars made her stomach turn, but her mood soared as she found what they were looking for and urgently turned to find Erik.

She rushed back to her friend, her voice urgent. "I found the storage area," she said, her eyes wide.

Erik's eyes snapped open, fatigue forgotten, as he pushed himself to his feet. Together, they made their way to the storage room.

As they entered, the enormity of what they had found became apparent. Erik's face tightened as he took in the sight.

He hurried to one of the cellars. As he cautiously pushed the door open, his eyes were met with a thrilling sight - the room was filled with the frozen bodies of Thaidis.

He stepped inside, his breath misting in the cold air, and his eyes narrowed as he approached one of the bodies. A tag was attached to one of the beast's feet, and as he read it, his voice was that of satisfaction.

"Property of Marven's Exotic Meats," he said, his voice flat. "Bingo."

"Are these Lysa's bodies?" Rebecca asked.

"No, but these are surely stolen."

After an exhaustive search, they finally uncovered the evidence they were looking for. A hush fell over them as they took in the magnitude of their discovery, leaving them with a complex blend of feelings - a sense of relief, relief, and a touch of worry.

They found the evidence needed to expose the Crystal Cross Gang. However, there were still many unanswered questions. Why they did all this was the first of them.

Finally, Erik turned to Rebecca, his eyes hard, his voice resolute. "We have what we need," he said, his voice filled with a grim determination.

"Let Lysa know we found her stolen goods," Rebecca nodded, her face set, her resolve matching his.

#### Chapter 630: Findings

Erik and Rebecca stood in the vast storage area, surrounded by the cellars that held the frozen Thaid's bodies. The weight of the discovery burdened them, recognizing the operation's magnitude and cruelty.

"There's no doubt about it, Rebecca," Erik said. "These guys are responsible for all the city's thefts."

"Yeah..."

Erik then pulled out his phone and dialed Lysa's number.

"Lysa," Erik said to the phone.

"Any news?" the woman inquired.

"Yes, we've located the thieves, and we've already handled the situation," he stated firmly.

"Good," she responded.

"I need you to come to a location I'll send you. Bring your vehicles to retrieve the bodies, along with some interest. We'll be waiting."

Lysa's voice crackled through the phone, her tone businesslike but with an undercurrent of satisfaction. "Understood, Erik. We'll be there as soon as we can. Thank you for this."

Erik ended the call and put his phone away, turning back to Rebecca. "She's sending her people. In the meantime, I'll look around."

"Why? We found these guys already..." Rebecca retorted.

"I want to see if I can find something more about their operations," the young man said. "Did you come across any computers I can use while exploring the area?"

Rebecca nodded. "I found some computers on the first floor," she said, her voice steadier now.

"There's an office there."

Erik's eyes narrowed, a new sense of purpose in them. "Good. I will go look then," Erik replied.

Rebecca nodded in understanding, and Erik left the storage area, still feeling the coldness of the room clinging to him as he went to the first floor. With a lively spring in his step, the young man bounded up the stairs.

As the young man made his way to the upper floor, his footsteps reverberated through the empty building, creating a cacophonous sound contrasting the eerie silence. The aftermath of the battle was clear as the lingering scent of violence permeated the air.

Focused and determined, Erik's mind was clear on the task at hand. There was much work to be done, considering the immense scale of the operation they had brought to light.

While ascending the stairs, Erik couldn't escape the feeling of the weight carried by the building's hidden secrets, as if the walls themselves had silently borne witness to countless unspeakable atrocities.

Reaching the first floor, he found himself in a corridor lined with doors. He moved with purpose, his eyes scanning for the office Rebecca had mentioned. There was an urgency in his movements, a determination that drove him forward.

Finally, he found the door he was looking for and pushed it open. The room was filled with the soft hum of technology, the glow of computer screens casting a pale light over the desks and chairs.

Rows of computers were arranged neatly, each one connected to a complex network of servers and monitors.

Erik's eyes were drawn to the workstations, the signs of the Crystal Cross Gang's meticulous planning and organization clear in every detail.

Files, documents, charts, and spreadsheets—all of it laid out with precision and care. This was not the work of amateurs; whoever was behind this operation knew exactly what they were doing.

The office was in tune with the rest of the building, its clinical efficiency a chilling reminder of the cold calculation that had gone into the crimes committed here.

Erik sensed the lingering presence of those who had toiled in this room, their invisible influence orchestrating the sinister workings that had caused immense pain and anguish in the city.

As he stepped into the room, he could feel his heart racing with anticipation. This was where he would find the clues he had been seeking.

The air was charged with a sense of excitement, as what he was going to find here was bound to tell him more about the Gang that almost killed him in the past.

<System, I want you to connect to any device you can here and download everything, > he ordered the biological supercomputer.

[UNDERSTOOD. SCANNING THE BUILDING FOR DEVICES.]

[DEVICES FOUND. CONNECTING.]

[CONNECTION ESTABLISHED.]

[DOWNLOADING FILES.]

[DOWNLOAD COMPLETE.]

[STARTING INJECTION.]



Erik experienced a sudden and intense jolt, one that went beyond a mere physical sensation. It was as if a door had been thrown open in his mind, and he stood at the brink of something immense and unfamiliar.

The "injection" of information began. Data streamed into his mind, a torrent of images, words, numbers, and emotions, all of it flooding his senses in a chaotic and overwhelming rush.

As he closed his eyes, it was as if he was transported into a world of memories that were not his own. Memories that had become a part of him, memories of secret meetings, video footage, coded messages, financial transactions, and covert operations.

In a flash, he saw it all unfold before him - the faces, the voices, the fear, and the desperation of those caught in the web of the notorious Crystal Cross Gang. It was like reliving a thousand moments all at once, each one etched deeply into his mind.

The experience was overwhelmingly intense, primarily because of the vast amount of information stored in the computers. Erik's body was tense, and he struggled to catch his breath as he tried to process the deluge of data.

Slowly, the flood subsided, the disjointed fragments coming together to form a coherent picture. Patterns emerged, connections were made, and the full scope of the operation was laid bare before him.

Upon the completion of the process, Erik was filled with an overwhelming sense of comprehension.

The clarity he had gained sliced through the chaos and uncertainty that had previously clouded his mind. He was now fully aware of the magnitude of the criminal operation and the powerful entities that were involved.

The information he had gained was invaluable, a roadmap to the heart of the enemy's operations.

He looked around the room, the once impersonal machines now bearing silent witness to his newfound knowledge. They had served their purpose, giving him the insight he needed to move forward.