

## Chapter I

# Results Unexpected

Soid Bols – fifteen years old for just over two weeks – ran an ion comb through the head of thick black hair inherited from his mother. After washing the high cheekbones from his father and grabbing his wristband and earpiece from the nightstand, he rushed downstairs. He wolfed down his breakfast of a protein bar and vitamin shake before waiting by the front door for his eight-year-old sister, Danni.

On any normal day, Soid didn't mind waiting for the blond pigtailed sister to come bobbing down the hall so they could walk to her the Beta School, only two buildings away from his, the Delta School. But today was a Course Day. As such, he had quite a bit extra on his mind. Standing there, in the foyer of his home, bouncing on the balls of his feet, he thought about having to sit through an entire two-hour period before taking on the latest course. It made him anxious. Watching his sister dilly-dally with her breakfast, somehow, made it worse. Once Danni finished the last sip of her protein shake, she gathered up her own wristband and earpiece, called a distracted yet loving goodbye to their parents, and skipped to the front door, her familiar pigtailed springing about in every direction. Watching her as they exited the family domicile, Soid felt all annoyance evaporate as she hummed an unrecognizable tune on her way to the sidewalk. Oblivious to the goings on inside his head, she cared only for the shining sun and warm springtime air blowing through the trees. He could not fault her for something so trivial as being eight years old. Smiling, closing the door behind him, Soid joined his still-humming sister at the end of the walkway.

Together, he and Danni made their daily ritual of walking the five blocks from their neighborhood before meeting up with their other, regular morning traveling companion. While just the two of them, Soid and Danni would often talk about whatever she wanted. She would go on about silly, eight-year-old problems like getting stuck on an algebra equation or the boy who called her a nasty name at recess. Sometimes they would talk about what she might want to do when she grew up. The vocation would often change as often as the seasons. For the past few weeks, since the start of the spring solstice, she had been saying she wanted to be a teacher, despite what her A.T.'s designated. ...