

## A Bio 161

Chapter 161: So that's a Mythic Core?

The first thing that Ale said when [Gabriel] didn't react to her words was to sigh. She had expected someone to laugh at least, but then again, this was kind of a serious situation, at least by normal standards. Ale had Main Core working on setting up probabilities of victory and possible attack vectors.

“[Chances of victory are estimated around 3% if Lieutenant Designation: Gabriel decides to fight at range.]”

....

“[Chances of victory increase to 15% if Lieutenant Designation, Gabriel fights in a way to attempt to find out host's capabilities.]”

So...

“[Chances of survival are estimated at 0% if Lieutenant Designation: Gabriel, ever finds out the true nature of host.]”

Dang it!

“So?” [Gabriel] said placing the gun on the table, which didn’t inspire any confidence on Ale for some reason. She knew the man could teleport, and she suspected he was even able to teleport things to himself, it didn’t make sense that he had never reloaded that thing.

She had the schematics of it, she knew how many bullets they should have, and that one? That never seemed to run out of bullets. So if he could teleport objects to himself with that precision...

Yeah, no surprise that Main Core said that Ale was royally screwd...

“....Will I be...[Terminated] if I decide not to come clean?” Ale asked.

If it was going to end up in a fight, then she would need to prepare...not for a [Fight] but for a [no holding back] scenario. She hated those; they always made all the subsequent scenarios harder to deal with.

P4 always ended up on the shorter end of the stick after one rolled out since it meant that all the difficulties would be rebalanced, so at some point, it was important for her to pull her punches.

“Terminated?” [Gabriel] said, tilting his head and narrowing his eyes, “The contract you signed is at least for three months; at worst, you may end up only allowed to go on low-level work. I don’t manage those, you would need to ask Eleanore.”

What?

"I am not referring to the employment; I guess being [Terminated] would nullify the other one. No. I mean..." Ale said pointing at the gun, then to the spears of lights that he had made, the [Bolter] rounds. "Will I...be [Terminated]."

Ale made a motion with her hand across her neck, one that she had seen other minions use when speaking about [Terminating] their enemies. Some of the [Villains] had used it, and she even saw videos of [Chrysalis] using it.

"....what?" [Gabriel] seemed surprised by her question, and even the [Bolter] rounds seemed to lose cohesion as they fizzled away, "...Why would you ask that?"

"I mean.... you are showing your means of [Terminating] me while asking for [Data] that is vital to my [Survival]." Ale said, confused, "Isn't it obvious? We just got out of a high stress situation where Alexa needed to fight to her best in a no win situation, and you have claimed that the [Core] we have is important, important enough that you are using all means available to get [Data] on it. Usually on this type of scenario it would mean either [Termination] if I answer wrong."

"....Let me ask for confirmation, but by termination you don't mean getting fired do you?" [Gabriel] said as realization seemed to hit him.

"[Termination], the ceasing of all functions." Ale said, nodding, "It means that the target is no longer-"

"Yeah yeah I get it, they are dead." [Gabriel] said, "No, I'll not kill you kid. At worst I will throw you at Billy and make him stick you into one of the orphanages we manage or something to have him observe you till we can be sure you aren't a risk."

....Orphanages? The ones that [Eleanore] wanted to stick her in? That would be...counterproductive.

"I know we are big on secrecy, but you need to understand my point of view too. Usually, we just let Eleanore deal with these issues since her skill set is the best for this." [Gabriel] said sighing, "She has a soft spot for kids, and a grudge against the Saintsworths. So she screwed herself and the situation."

"She abused her position," Ale said, narrowing her eyes, "At least that was the interpretation that Alexandra got to."

"...She did what she considered best for her family," [Gabriel] answered back, "She just forgot that you are also a minion, your name has that much meaning."

"...Fine." Ale said, deciding to stop the conversation while she could; she didn't need to dwell on that, at least not now, "So my [Life] is not at stake, but what type of work and the amount of interactions I can have will be severely limited?"

"Yeah, I think Eleanore was doing the right thing. But she went about it in the wrong way," [Gabriel] said nodding at Ale's interpretation, "So? What will it be?"

"My [Core Power] allows me to....deal with the matter; I can shapeshift into anything that I know how it works." Ale decided to frame it like that, "Isn't that a Shapeshifter?"

"....That is correct, but usually when we refer to a shapeshifter, we mean someone who shapes his form. Usually, we speak of people who can turn their arm into concrete or people who touch other people and can turn into them." [Gabriel] said fishing on his clothes for his phone, and when he got it, he pulled out

pictures of a man with a comically large concrete hammer instead of an arm, “Like him, he can change his arms and legs into concrete, steel and sometimes into wheels to move around the city.”

That....didn't make sense.

“....How can he change his arm into solid concrete and keep stability?” Ale asked looking at the pictures, his flesh just...turned into concrete? That made no sense! And wheels? Where was the motor? How was he turning those? What?

“That’s Core bullshit, deal with it.” [Gabriel] said, shrugging, “Don’t get distracted; this is what it usually means when someone says they are a shapeshifter.”

“I can’t do that.” Ale said, “Or well. I could do it, but the arm would be uselessly heavy and it would be counterproductive.”

“See, that’s the thing. Core Powers are rarely both useful and easy to understand. While he can shapeshift into anything, he can’t do animals, or well, other people for the matter.” [Gabriel] said bringing a new person photo, “This one however, can.”

The video showed a [Woman] walking and looking around; after not finding whatever she wanted, her body started shifting, from the appearance of a [Young Woman] stage, into another. Her hair changed from brown to black, her skin from pale to dark, and her overall height kept the same, however.

“That is a Mimic class shapeshifter,” [Gabriel] said turning to Ale, “You said that you could do what Plastello can, and we know that you can also change forms like Thousand faces.”

So the man was called [Plastello]? And this one was [Thousand faces]?

“Yeah...?” Ale said confused about this.

“Well, Thousand faces can’t change into inanimate objects.” [Gabriel] said, smiling, as if he had gotten something.

“So? Maybe she needs to study the composition of the objects she wants to mimic?” Ale asked confused, wasn’t that hard if she was being honest.

“That’s the thing, studying has nothing to do with either. Plastello was an actor, and Thousand Faces was a hairdresser.” [Gabriel] said turning to Ale, “Neither has knowledge of biology or chemistry. They are have great imagination tho.”

“....Imagination?” Ale asked confused, “Is that another way to refer to the skill to analyze the way the concrete is made? A way to describe how the flesh must be set up to change the way your face looks?”

“No,” [Gabriel] said shaking his head, “Picture yourself in your mind, then change the color of your shirt, or maybe imagine yourself doing something else. Whatever you want to be doing.”

Ale did just that, pictured herself having defeated [Gabriel] and feasting on his [Core].

"That is imagination, something that shouldn't be possible, but you believe it can be done." [Gabriel] said nodding, "That is how most Core Powers work anyway, I don't know how the science of teleportation works, or flight."

....And he was messing with those forces of nature?

Was he crazy?

The most basic theory that Ale could come up with said that if this man missed his mark and misplaced a single atom, he could make fission happen! It could end up destroying everything around them!

And he hadn't even deemed it important to study?

Was...was he dumb?

"So you can see why I worry." [Gabriel] said turning once again to stare at her, instead of searching something on his phone, "The way you seem to use your Core Powers, is awfully similar to what we have on file for Nanite Cores."

....Crap.

“I know it isn’t one,” [Gabriel] said first, before Ale could say anything, “No way Vulcanus would have left you alone, or Billy for that matter, hell. Not even the Saintsworths are that sloppy.”

....Yay?

“But since Eleanore is out of the count, Billy doesn’t seem to want to ask. And Vulcanus probably knows but doesn’t want to share...” [Gabriel] said motioning to Ale, “I want to make sure, so. Care to explain how what you claim to be a simple Shapeshifter Core can violate so many of the limitations that usually are tied to your type of Core?”

“....I...don’t know?” Ale decided to play that card, “I have been told that instead of a Shapeshifter Core, the one I have is a [Molecular Core]. That I don’t shapeshift but straight up change the base....?”

Of course, Ale knew that was the truth, that what she was doing was just that. Not as much as shapeshifting that seemed to ignore most laws of conservation of matter and normal physics.

“I guessed as much, but that still doesn’t explain where the extra matter came from.” [Gabriel] said pointing at her, “If you move matter from one form to the next, you still need to have that. You have shown the ability to increase both your height and shrink it.”

.... dang it.

“I...like to stockpile...” Ale said in a small voice.

"I know, I am asking where are you getting the extra materials." [Gabriel] said once more, "I will not report it, I just want to make sure you aren't playing with forces of nature that you shouldn't."

Forces of nature that she shouldn't?

"I....stockpiled that okay!" Ale said once more.

"I know, but where?" [Gabriel] asked again, "It isn't like you are hauling that extra meat around."

....

"I..." Ale said unsure about how to broach that topic, she was getting flustered about it, and wanted to curse Alexa for listening to P4 and letting the whole set of emotions to cloud back. She was getting annoyed and angry at herself for not being able to say the right words.

She could feel her face getting hot and her eyes clouding.

"[Notice, perhaps it would suffice to say that host has all that material always at hand?]"

"But we don't!" Ale fought back, annoyed, "That's the problem! How are we supposed to convince him that we aren't pulling stuff from the [Banked Storage]?!?"

“[Host, please repeat after me-]”

Ale was getting annoyed at not having another option, so she merely did as Main Core asked, “I have all that extra material stored within my body at all times!” And felt her face blush as the words left her mouth.

“....What?” [Gabriel] asked confused by her outburst.

“I always weigh more than I should for that reason!” But Ale continued speaking the words that Main Core was feeding her, “I store the extra fat using the same way to compress that the MRE do! And the extra meat is compressed as much before being stored, I always feel bloated on this form since we don’t have enough space!”

She wasn’t sure of what Main Core was thinking anymore.

“This armor is a fake setup that takes materials from the rubble, too!” But she continued as she felt the [Nanites] start replacing the materials of her Nuzzler Armor.

“[Host, please hit the rigth claw at the highlighted spot.]”

So Ale did, and the claw crumbled showing the interior made of what looked to be wood and some metal bits, “See! It’s fake! I always have at least enough meat and fat to change into Alexandra!”

That was fake of course.

“And Alexa....goes around weighing what? 80 kilograms?” [Gabriel] didn’t seem to believe her.

Who would believe that right?

“You expect to make me believe that you can compress that much meat and bones?” [Gabriel] of course was correct, there was no way of doing so, at least not as far as Ale was aware.

“....I don’t know how that works, I know that my [Core] does it, I can stockpile the materials to some degree... But if I want to use them, I need to have a [Blueprint].” Ale said finally, it was incredibly close to how her actual [Core] seemed to work.

She hadn’t gone or even understand how their [Core] worked.

It seemed to follow some of the same process they did, only it seemed able to replace normal materials for [Mana] whenever those weren’t available.

“Can you tell me the name of your Core?” [Gabriel] asked, “It doesn’t seem to be a dangerous one, but maybe if we know what entity it is linked to, we can understand more of it.”

Entity?

“What do you mean?” Ale asked, sniffing and cleaning some of the tears that she had shed while doing the outburst that Main Core had encouraged.

“Some of the Mythic Cores are linked to entities of legends and myths.” [Gabriel] said, weren’t the [Cores] linked to [Wishes]?

“Aren’t the [Core User] powers linked to the [Wish] we make?” So Ale asked.

“They are, but someone must answer our pleas right?” [Gabriel] said back; Ale didn’t understand how that logic worked, “Those that answer to our wish and give us the way to move forward are usually represented in the name of your Core; when you acquire enough mastery over it, the name becomes apparent.”

....That seemed overly complicated, couldn’t they just ask their [Core] for their name?

Not that it seemed to work for her.

“Hey [Core], what name do you have? What entity are you linked to?” Still, Ale decided to try.

Notice:

Not enough authority.

Or, well, she could hope for Alexa to ask then.

“I don’t know.” Still, Ale answered the question as best as possible, and by that, she meant as in she actually said the truth.

They didn’t know what kind of entity had answered their Wish or what their [Core] was called; perhaps the entity that granted their [Wish] was the reason that she saw those blue screens?

So far, she hadn’t heard anyone mention them either. Was she the only one who could see them? Or perhaps was it linked to her [Core]?

“Not enough familiarity?” [Gabriel] asked, mostly to himself, “Well you are young, perhaps when your Core matures a little more...or if not you will find out when your Secondary Core forms.”

Secondary? She had several already, though....

“Ah, right, a Secondary Core is formed when you have enough Mana to catalyze a second core. Usually, they either work in tandem with your original one or are formed according to what you have been doing.” [Gabriel] said turning to Ale and manifesting a new [Bolter] round, “My Divine Spears are thanks to a secondary Core for example.”

....What?

"You could say that Eleanore has a Core that lets her perceive truth, one to read minds and one to bind people too, I guess." [Gabriel] carried on speaking, "Billy also has at least two to three even if the old man never admits it."

"One as a [Maker], one for speed and whatever he uses to manipulate the technology?" Ale asked, remembering what she knew about the [Elder]. He was supposed to be a speedster, but also could make artifacts, and she had seen him manipulate weaponry without obvious input.

"You are getting the hang of it. The more Core Powers someone shows, the more likely they have secondary Cores." [Gabriel] said nodding at Ale.

"But you said that having a Mythic Core is what allowed you to do all of those things." Ale pointed out the incongruity.

"Smart, you were paying attention." [Gabriel] said nodding, "To be precise, having a Mythic Core makes it easier to catalyze secondary aspects or Core Powers."

So.....having one of those would make it easier?

"Then normal Core Users...?" Ale asked to make sure.

"They have a harder time catalyzing a secondary or tertiary Core. The rarer the aspect of your Core, the more likely is that you will get a secondary Core. For example, having a mere Fire Core is not the same as

having a Volcano Core. Or a Core tied to an entity that reigns over Volcans like a deity or something.” [Gabriel] said shrugging.

“Then [Vulcanus]...?” Ale said, thinking about the monicker that the leader of her current organization had.

“That is a talk for another day, not like a Core User would pick a name that would give out their Core or anything.” [Gabriel] said laughing.

Something that she wasn’t sure if she would believe since [Eleanore] had picked the name of a three-headed dog and had three different types of [Core Powers]...