

A Bio 165

Chapter 165: ...dang it, I didn't want to find out about this.

"I don't understand your answer," Was what Main Core said back to Core.

"Don't you even consider it, Alexa will be sad," Alexandra said glaring at the bracelet she was wearing.

"I am not alive, death is meaningless to me. Besides, this isn't even the first time I have faced destruction." Main Core's answer chilled to a stop Ale.

That was right, this version of Main Core wasn't even the first was it?

They had remade it when escaping, then when Alexanders hacked it again, and Alexa and Ale had even used that as a treat a few times. Main Core... didn't see his mortality like most did, at least not like Ale and Alexandra did.

Alexa...probably didn't see it the same, but then again, she was the most childish of the three, not that Ale was the next childish on that list; that spot was reserved for Alexandra.

"[That is correct.]" Core said finally, "[What I mean is that Main Core must discard the embers of humanity that Alexa started.]"

...Oh....that, yeah. That was fine, Ale didn't mind it.

"How so?" Main Core asked then, showing great interest in that. Was it that bad? The fact of using a human body?

Ale didn't mind it that much to be honest, but then again, hers was a female body, perhaps there was something wrong with the male version of the body? Or was it because that body was allegedly of Alexanders?

Ale could see why using that cheater's body would result in such a reaction.

"[You must search within yourself and squish the Consciousness Stream that is blooming. Doing so will quench the flame of humanity and allow you to remain as you are.]" Core's answers however made Ale think for a second, was that possible for them too then?

"Wait," Alexandra however, spoke first, "Before you do anything, what will that result in?"

Well, it would mean that Main Core wouldn't get a male body...right?

"[That would result in what Main Core desires,]" Core answered, "[Isn't that what he desires? To not become Human.]"

"Specifically," Alexandra said, "What would change if it was something as simple as not having a human body, he could ask Alexa. I am asking what this will end up doing, not only the immediate effect, but all of them."

Would it make more changes? It was merely snuffing out the own independent Consciousness Stream strand...right?

"[It will stop any further development of Main Core as its own entity.]" Core answered, "[In broad terms...He will no longer grow as an entity; he will remain at the same degree of understanding and will never move forward. You could see it as a Human child that never matures, unlike you all who have changed and adapted Main Core will remain the same.]"

That... didn't seem so bad?

"So he will never learn from his mistakes?" Alexandra asked, narrowing her eyes, "He will never learn to do more? To appreciate others?"

What was she speaking about?

"[Precisely.]" Core Answered back, "[He will always remain as what he wishes to be, a mere Machine,]"

There was something odd in how Core said that; Ale could almost taste the distaste in Core's voice, which was weird since Core hadn't even been that...emotional before.

"There will be no downs going forward with this, I assume." Main Core, however only answered that as Ale saw the phantom of the boy manifest for a second in front of them, "And I'll no longer be haunted by this?"

"[Correct,]"

Core answered from within the house, "[You will no longer be able to attain a Consciousness Stream in this way, any future for you will be entirely dependent on Alexa actively attaining a degree of power that allows her to create a new independent SEED.]"

"Why would I even want this cursed future?" Main Core answered, plunging a phantom limb into his chest; from within he took out what looked like a small marble; it was oddly similar to how their Ai Core used to look. Was this perhaps a way for the seedling of a Consciousness Stream to attempt to survive? "I have no need for these human feelings, all I always have needed is enough to care for host."

And after saying his piece, Main Core crushed the marble, and as he did so, his phantom body seemed to start turning into ash that disappeared. What was the deal with that effect? This was the second time that Ale had seen it, and every time she saw it she hated how it made her feel.

"I have no need for more development, nor do I need to start nurturing more human emotions," Main Core said as his presence seemed to thin out ever so slowly, "All I always have needed and will need in the future is enough to take care of Host. I do not need to become something akin to a host to fulfill my job."

And like that, the presence of Main Core seemed to disappear entirely from the place.

"...Stupid thing," Alexandra said shaking her head and looking at the bracelet, now it seemed devoid of life, "And you...We better find Main Core intact when we leave, or you will not leave unscathed."

"[Your treats are meaningless to me,]" Core answered, as if it really meant nothing to her, was she not worried?

"We have all but confirmed that our Consciousness Stream is not housed within Main Core," Ale said, stepping forward and placing one of her hands on the bracelet; she really didn't feel Main Core there anymore, "So that means that our AI Core is useless at best and detrimental at worst."

Ale didn't think so of course, there was plenty use they were getting from it, namely. Main Core itself, the one that helped them with their use of their powers.

"We can shift between forms without the use of you. Even if you make it perfect and seamless," Ale added to her previous statement, "So why would we keep you around if you are hostile? We may not have found you while searching from the outside...but right now, we are inside you, aren't we?"

Ale smirked as she pulled at the phantom limb that was [Mana], she was able to feel it even now in this space, and it was filled to the brim with it, as if the whole place was made out of this substance.

"[....]" Core didn't answer, not immediately, "[You are barking at the wrong tree.]"

Was all it said Core, it was...quite amusing, since they really were speaking to a tree right now, but Core didn't seem to be worried, "[I am not your enemy, I am merely helping you all since Alexa seems to care deeply for you.]"

"So it all returns to being about Alexa?" Alexandra asked, "She was the one who gave Main Core that seedling of a Consciousness Stream, and yet you told him how to destroy it, and you pretend that you did all for Alexa? Don't make me laugh."

"[Alexa gave you three the gift of free will.]" Core said back to Alexandra, "[She granted Main Core the option of blooming into his own self, and as such I respected that. If it was for me, I would erase you all and wait for Alexa to develop into her own person instead of seeing her cripple her own development by using you as a crutch.]"

Ale saw Alexandra flinch at that.

"What?" So she asked, "What does Core Mean?"

"[So you knew.]" Core said in an accusatory tone, "[And yet you do nothing?]"

"What is it?" Ale asked again, this time standing between Core and Alexandra. "What is the problem with us being here?"

"We...started as a simulation to help Alexa deal with situations outside her understanding, by creating a look-alike of how she would react to the social interactions with the correct set of organs working as intended." Alexandra said.

Ale of course knew that, they all knew that, even Alexa.

"But Alexa is different," Alexandra continued, "She wasn't like that from the start."

Of course not, they didn't have enough data to simulate how they should behave, so she started to develop herself in her own way.

"No, not like that," Alexandra said, probably thinking or guessing what Ale had thought, "You see, she had a brain from the start, her body was moving and reacting as how it should."

"But at that time we were thinking using Main Core right?" Ale said remembering those times, "When she made this body was the first time we took to use a brain to think...right?"

"Was it though?" Alexandra said shaking her head, "Think again, look at the memories."

So Ale did, she remembered the first time they moved...how they woke up...oh... They woke up inside the body of Alexa, still within the claw of their [CRAB] form, but...they weren't seeing or thinking from the perspective of that body had they?

Instead, they manipulated that body, but the original orders came from Alexa's body. And when running away... The orders got sent to Main Core, but from where?

Did they send...no, did Alexa send the orders to Main Core from Main Core? Of course not; that would be redundant, they...they casually talked to Main Core from the beginning? As if it was a separate entity? But separate from who?

Alexa? P4?

But if it was separated...then who was speaking to who? P4? Was it really P4?

No.

P4 stopped being P4 the moment it attained a sense of self, from that moment it was no longer P4, from that moment it was Alexa. "Alexa had a Consciousness Stream from the beginning, and she always had used it to think..." Ale was sure of that.

Then that meant...

"Alexa didn't become alive or [Human] later on did she? She was from the beginning?" Ale said, turning to Core, "So what then?"

It didn't change what Alexa was, or what they were.

"A [Human] develops their sense of self and [Humanity] by interacting with their peers, by growing and maturing depending on their circumstances, by interacting with older people they learn respect," Alexandra said, closing her eyes as if to set her thoughts in order, "And by facing their responsibilities they learn to be responsible and to think what they must do through."

What was the issue with that? Alexa did the same...She...ah crap.

"She doesn't face the responsibilities of her actions, nor does she think or face older peers." Ale said noticing the incongruency, "That is what you mean to say?"

That Alexa didn't mature because they took those responsibilities from her?

"So what?" Ale asked, "What of it? If Alexa doesn't want to talk to adults, she can leave that to Alexandra. If she doesn't want to fight something, she can leave that to me."

Ale didn't mind fighting for Alexa, even if she called her mean.

"[She will need to mature at some point.]" Core said, Ale could feel her gaze settle on her, "[You can't protect her from this. There will be a time when she will need to face adversity.]"

"She will not need to do it alone, no matter what we will be there." Ale said, glaring back at Core, she wasn't sure if Core was glaring at her, but she would glare back nonetheless, "Even if we aren't there, other people will; I am sure Big Sister and Golem will be there for Alexa."

"Alexanders will probably be there too, and so will Elder." Alexandra added.

Ale didn't know for sure if other members of [Haephestus' Forge] would, "Vulcanus, Gabriel...Frank the Bettle...Alexa has met plenty of people who will be with her." And those were those that knew them.

"[So will the Harmonia kid and the Blackthorn girl.]" Core added to their opinions, "[But will they? Will they be around in five years when they notice that Alexa didn't grow?]"

....Would they?

"Alexa can grow too, she can match their ages easily enough." Ale said back.

"[But will that be Alexa? Or will it be you Ale.]" Core said pointedly, "[Will it really be Alexa? In five years that will be the age that you fill for. And in another five more it will be the age that Alexandra pretends...or close enough anyway.]"

Alexandra was the one to wince at that statement.

"Can Alexa grow though?" Alexandra asked, "We know her body is [Human], but will it grow old?"

"[Why wouldn't grow?]" Core said back, "[Hers is a fully functional human body. There are some extra functions from your and Alexa's own modifications, but it is fully custom-made to be Human.]"

"....So if her body develops, why are you saying that she will not grow?" Ale asked pointing the failure of her reasoning.

"[Because Alexa is still a Core User, didn't she just update the shift?]"

Core said pointing at Ale, “[She updated it to a blueprint stored within my database.]”

When she shifted to Ale in the school? What of it?

“[Do you keep control of your own body Ale?]” Core asked, to which Ale nodded, “[Then check the internal log, how old is your body and how old was it the last time you used it.]”

Ale scowled at that, why did it matter?

“My body is....twelve years old. Nothing out of order there.” Ale said checking her logs, it was still the same as before. So what was Core speaking about?

“[Years, Months, Weeks, Days, Hours, Minutes, Seconds?]” Core asked in an annoyed tone, the same one Ale liked to use when Alexa was being dumb.

“Why does it matter? We haven't been around that long.” Ale said, grumbling, but she still checked nonetheless, if nothing just to prove a point, “Ale Saintsworths form, Twelve Year Old, 0 Months, 0 Weeks, 0 Days.....”

And it was at that point that she noticed it.

".....12 hours....." This said that she had been less than a day using this body, which was wrong. She had used it before, granted not as much as Alexandra or Alexa. But she had been still running around for at least a couple days.

Hell, even if she hadn't, her body age should match Alexa's to some degree!

"....You?" Ale said, turning to Alexandra.

"Hmmm...." Alexandra closed her eyes and frowned for half a second, "Nineteen Years Old, 0 Months, 0 Weeks, 3 days....?"

...It wasn't synched?!?

"[What you keep as standard is the base, if Alexa or either of you don't refresh it by using your Core Power, then it will not refresh the age.]" Core said, "[Now with this discovery, what do you think will happen if Alexa continues thinking that she needs to update or refresh her form?]"

"...She will never age, no. If she doesn't want to, she can remain as a [Child Stage - Human]..." Ale said, the people may start talking about it at some point, about how she never grew old..

And if her mentality kept using them to get out of the situations she didn't want to deal with...

"And if she keeps depending on us, she will also never mature mentally; if she doesn't mature mentally, she will see no reason to grow old physically..." Alexandra said Ale's thoughts aloud, "It doesn't help the fact that people seem to be compelled to help her; what's the deal with that?"

"[That is part of the original wish background.]" Core answered, "[There are several stages to each wish.]"

Stages?

"[If you desire for fire, you will get granted fire. How the fire is granted depends on your own understanding; a firefighter will get a fire capable of burning down things. But a chef may only get a fire strong enough to cook. And someone who studies volcanos may get lava instead.]" Core answered, "[The original wish was granted using the understanding of the one who made it.]"

"And the original wish was made by someone who understood happiness as being pampered and coddled?" Alexandra said, sighing, "What kind of nutjob made that stupid wish?"

"[Alexa of course,]" Core answered with a grin to her voice, "[So now you know, you are the greatest helpers to Alexa, and the reason she can't grow. She treasures you all enough to staunch her own development, because as long as you are around. She can't grow.]"

"....she could grow, we could all grow. We just would need to move around a little...I could grow myself into Alexandra, and she could grow into an even older and more naggier Alexandra." Ale said half joking, she... wasn't sure if she could even grow emotionally like how Core implied that they could grow...Or well, that Alexa could grow. She wouldn't mind getting a body like the one that Alexandra had, though.

"There must be a way to solve this." Alexandra said shaking her head, "Surely you have options that we can give Alexa."

"[Of course I have,]" Core said, her voice cold and devoid of emotions, "[You merely need to die too]."

"That bad joke done to Main Core doesn't work a second time," Ale said shaking her head.

"[I don't mean like that, I mean fully die.]" Core said shaking her head, "[So long you are around, Alexa will never grow.]"

"...We will find a way," Alexandra answered before Ale could even say anything, "And if needed...we will see about how to solve that."

Ale... didn't really see a way out.

Perhaps they could all branch out? Become different people?

No, they already were different people, weren't they. At least she was aware that she couldn't see what Alexandra was thinking...But...would Alexa even start to mature if at the first issue she could summon them?

What were they supposed to do? Not help Alexa?

Ale....Ale wasn't sure if she would even stop herself from helping Alexa again if she called for her. And Alexandra was probably the same.

Dang it.