

A Bio 186

Chapter 186: Vulcanus is here.

[Maintenance finished....]

[Boot-up sequence initiated...]

[Reading file logs...]

[Discarding irrelevant data...]

[Uploading checksum...]

[Comparing checksum with database...]

[File integrity at 94%]

[Downloading missing files...]

[File incompatibility detected.]

[Error, files calls to functions not available in current form.]

[Deleting functions...]

[Restarting sensors...]

[Calibrating sensors..]

[Accessing Memory banks...]

[Restarting connection between memory banks and main intelligence...]

[Restarting emotion emulation programs...]

[Deleting Memoryfile: ImpedingDread.mem and MemoryFile: IdentityCrisis.mem...]

[The Saintsworths Conglomerate welcomes you back and encourages your service.]

[May the Light of Civilization shine upon your endeavors.]

The boot-up finished getting him back online, a quick check on the internal watch showed that he had woken up two hours and fifteen minutes before he was scheduled for wake up. This was not good, it was never good. He had designed his sleep time with those durations for a reason, it helped keep him grounded.

The algorithm that randomized his sleeping also existed for a reason, to simulate that he was still more man than machine, even in this body that didn't require sleeping.

“Sir...There is an emergency...” The Minion brought a USB with him, and he placed it on the desk even though I was not at the desk.

The Minion was unaware of where I was, this part of the office was hidden and only known to the most loyal of the minions, a secret that only the Lieutenant grade minion knew, and those that had close ties with Edwards Black. Only people close to the man I used to be knew of this place.

For a very important reason.

“Thank you, you may return to your work.” My voice was transmitted from the speakers; the Minion in question almost jumped out when the voice sounded; this was also necessary, smoke and mirrors. My enemies could not know how much stable I was, or how much this was a problem.

It was better for it to be rumors about Vulcanus being closer to a machine than man, no matter if it was true or not. Once the Minion left, a door in the wall opened letting me walk into the office, from the small room that housed a bed, a desktop and some clothes from my time as human.

Clothes I would have loved to wear should I remained human, clothes I thought I would wear, clothes my machine half picked, an attempt to remain human. More than anything a desire to keep myself grounded in the routine.

And right now, something that should be left behind as I picked up the USB drive and placed it against the left side of my temple, the metallic plates sliding away for a universal connector to be shown, something that could accept any type of device, perhaps an overkill to read a simple USB drive. But it was what it was.

[Downloading data...]

[Text file found: Report.txt]

[Soundfile found: Report.mp3]

[Videofile found: Report.mp4]

[Decoding data...no encryption found.]

[Running scanner....no hostile program found.]

[Reproducing data.]

The files contained the same thing and all three were shown at the same time, the first was a literal transcription of the other two, a report about a person of interest being rushed into the facility. I had been woken up because of who it was.

Alexandra Saintsworths, one of the newest minions. And one that artificially generated interest in those around her, I had also been affected and even attempted to groom her to a successor position, even though a successor for me was irrelevant.

That had been a something noticed from my mechanical side...and something that hadn't been reported until I found the mention, something that...was more worrisome, that was the reason she had been put in that category.

Something that was only possible if both of my sides accepted, the first was easy enough, the second? That had been harder to manage; my machine side rarely accepted the reasoning my human side produced; most of the things a human does are considered inefficient, so why would you need to spend fifteen minutes each morning washing out your teeth and hair?

Why would you need ten minutes to discharge your waste? Why not recycle it?

The machine side did not understand that, especially since this new body didn't need to discharge waste, a change of oil every three months, a change of battery once every six months, and a change of coolant every four months.

Convincing the machine side took great effort, and in the end, the only reason it accepted to label Alexandra Saintsworths as a person of interest was because of her last name; the fact that she came with a transmitter for the Saintsworths server was enough to make the machine side to accept it.

And now...This report.

"Vulcanus! We need you in the ER, Sylph brought Rhapsody, she has something quite problematic with her." The video showed the report from William, one of his loyal minions, in it there was also the schematics and scans of an Ai Core.

A one-to-one schematics of an Ai Core, there was only one discrepancy, the AI Core was empty, the interior was hollow, nothing was inside, not the processing unit, not the databanks, not the transmitters, nothing. It was a one-to-one representation, but it was empty.

It was something impossible to achieve, no one had the blueprints for these things, one of the most protected secrets of the Saintsworths, the reason they could remain at the top of the markets, one of these was enough to ensure their research laboratories could access all their knowledge database. And this one was definitely an original.

[Confirming ID number...]

[Confirmed.]

[AI Core #435634241234.]

The machine side even confirmed it, the veracity, and yet...

“This is empty,” Vulcanus couldn’t help but vocalize the issue.

His machine side didn’t answer of course, it never did, not willingly.

How had Alexandra achieved this, something that shouldn’t be doable for a mere Shapeshifter, not even a molecular one could access these databases, hack into the Saintsworths and extract this type of technology willy nilly. And even if she was able to achieve this, how could a human brain process the intricacies of this?

The fact that she had a reproduction of something like this...Or had she asked for it from the Saintsworths? Would they even provide it to them? To Alexandra? Why would they even do that?

“Get your metallic ass here! We need your power to make sure she is fine! If she somehow removed it and messed something up...” The worried voice of William sounded in the recording, the old man worried too much for these kind of kids. It was thanks to that that they had been able to settle up after leaving the Saintsworths facility where they had been experimented up on...

And also the reason he had ended with such a bad fate as a Hero, the reason why the SuperHero Hermes fell from grace, ending up as a Lieutenant for him. From William (Hermes) to Billy (Hermes).

“Update the schedule to account for this,” His voice sounded within the room, mechanical, devoid of emotion.

But he hadn’t voiced it for the sake of it, he needed to actually do this, it was the most efficient way to interact with his mechanical side when alone.

[Updated schedule, sent notifications to the required parts.]

[Expected arrival time to ER: 3 minutes 52 seconds.]

[Expected arrival time of Healer Core user: 32 minutes.]

[Name of Healer Core User: Re-Wire.]

That was a surprise, not the fact that Re-Wire had accepted to come, but the fact that his machine side had accepted it that easily, usually he would have needed to wrestle the logical side of his mind into accepting the reasoning. But now? Well, he couldn’t complain about it, but it was still something to be wary of.

This...there may be an angle that he was not seeing, but that was beside the point; since it was true that there was a girl in pain, a quick turn of his attention to the server was enough for his prompt to be understood.

[Downloading medical files...]

[Comparing with standard files compared with other subjects in the same age range...]

[Notice: Subject has less mass than previous encounters.]

[Latest scan shows subject at 30-40 kilogram range, currently subject is at 15-21 kilograms.]

[Notice: Subject shows irregular state on his mana wavelenght.]

[Notice: Subject shows symptoms similar to those experiencing a catatonic shock.]

[Notice: Uploading data.]

What?

“Why would the dat-” He remembered that he was about to say something.

The line connected easily enough, even if it had to burn one of the security codes; the probability of this becoming a level 2 code red was too big to risk a slow connection, so the use of a one-time code was authorized by the internal evaluation AI.

"Yes? What's the matter, Vulcanus, you rarely call me these days?" The voice of Master came from the other side of the line, he sounded....annoyed?

"There is a level 1 Code Red situation Master, there was a need to overwrite and use one of the codes." Vulcanus spoke as it sent the handshake protocol to the secure line.

It was answered within a second by Lady Sapphire and redirected for a second evaluation from one of the lesser AI. Vulcanus didn't need to be told that he was being used as a way to test the lesser forms for their development; he also had no opinion on that misuse of its time.

"...Oh, you are that Vulcanus...." Master's demeanor changed from annoyed to intrigued, "Sapphire! Your cousin is calling!"

"For the love of god, Alexanders, I told you that isn't a cousin of mine!" Lady Sapphire manifested on the video output acting as if she was looking around in the room, even if she wasn't physically here, but the data stream showed how she had skillfully dodged all the security measures in ways that shouldn't be possible.

She snuck past all the defenses, even those reinforced from Vulcanus Core Power.

"It's empty, no one is watching, so?" Lady Sapphire said in an annoyed tone turning her full attention to Vulcanus, it could feel the ever watching eye of the full Saintsworhs might looking down at him, judging...

Vulcanus was incapable of feeling fear or being nervous, but even like that, it was capable of knowing how much a mistake would cost it.

"There is a Level 1 Code Red at the base," Vulcanus said once more.

"We know, you said that the first time." Master said in an annoyed tone once again, it seemed his interest was bleeding away, and the same could be said for Lady Sapphire. Lossing the interest of Master was...dangerous.

"Elaborating on the Level 1 Code red, Mistress Alexa Saintsworth was brought to the base in a catatonic state." So Vulcanus merely stated the problem, that...That managed to make Master show a face that Vulcanus had never seen on him before.

The same for Lady Sapphire.

Master showed a face not of surprise or amusement, but of worry.

While Lady Sapphire showed a face of confusion.

“What?!?!” “Impossible.” And their answers were anathema to each other.

“...Elaborate,” Master said after taking a deep breath and reentering himself, screens flashed around him in quick succession, dismissal notes, cancellation of meetings, acquisitions of companies, all of them in quick succession.

The last one was a note that stated that his schedule for the day was to remain empty. Had Master canceled most of his schedule and outright bought the meetings with people that he couldn’t cancel?

Perhaps this wasn’t a Level 1 code red alert but a Level 4?

“One of our minions, Code Name: Sylph, brought Lady Alexa this morning-” Vulcanus started his report.

“Sylph? Sapphire, who is this.” Master said, raising his hand, a blue holographic screen materializing to his left before he finished speaking.

“Sylph, registered under the name Skye Venti, actual name: Bella Campbell. She has some past with both [The Scrambler] and the Saintsworths.” Lady Sapphire stated as the data flashed across Master’s eyes, “She was one of the patients that underwent the artificial reprogramming attempt, that one initiative to using AI Cores to attempt to rewrite their psyche with the data stored within the deepest parts of the brain.”

“Ah yes, I remember. Both myself and Kellet said that it was stupid, but the bleeding heart of Eversoul still wanted to do it.” Master said, shaking his head, “No one was able to return to normal if I remember correctly, and we managed to shut Eversoul for a month or two, right?”

“Correct darling,” Lady Sapphire said nodding.

“So? What did this Bella girl do to Alexa? Did she find her connection to me and use it to attack my sister?” Master said turning his attention once more to the data feed, and somehow, Vulcanus could almost feel as if Master was in the same room as him.

Even though the data feed shouldn’t allow this. Even though he shouldn’t be able to traverse these distances in an instant.

“That is wrong Master,” Vulcanus quickly said, “Sylph reported that Alexa produced one of the AI Cores from that experiment and turned catatonic moments later, she suspects that Alexa was also part of one medical trial such as that and something went wrong.”

Vulcanus quickly sent the data that Hermes had sent him; before the data was halfway through the connection, the information disappeared, and then it could be seen playing beside Master, another thing that shouldn’t be possible. Even with the might of the Saintsworths, the amount of data that was transmitted in an instant was not possible.

“Hmm....I see....Well, you scared me for a second,” Master said sighing, “Yeah no, that is just her Ai Core. The girl doesn’t even need one, she probably turned it off before untangling her neural network from it.”

“Obviously, Alexa is more sturdy than that.” Lady Sapphire said, nodding after, “That girl is impossible to kill; trust me on that.”

Master turned to look at Lady Sapphire with a weird expression on his face, "That is one weird way to speak Sapphire." And said as much.

"I am reporting this, since Master had assigned a higher priority to anything that happened to Lady Alexa," And Vulcanus needed to know what his Master's desires were. Preferably sooner rather than later, the more time he spent on the surface, the more his lesser side would suspect something was off. "What are your commands Master?"

"Hmm....Well, go and check on my sister, obviously." Master said nodding, "Also make sure her neural network is working as it should. If possible, cover for her if any of her Nanites went out of control...I doubt that can happen, but I know that girl keeps a few nanite swarms around. I can feel them."

"Is that wise?" Vulcanus asked, he was aware of the dangers of a rogue intelligence, he suffered plenty from his lesser form refusing to integrate into the swarm already.

"Are you doubting a Saintsworths?" Master said in a cold tone, his eyes shining in golden light.

"...Of course not, Master," Vulcanus quickly said, lowering his face, "But what if one of the members of this organization finds out?"

"Well..." Master said turning to Lady Sapphire who merely shrugged, "Convince them to keep their mouth shut, or make them shut their mouth. Permanently."

A new series of commands came from the network, or well. Straight into his Core.

[Ensure the survival of Alexa Saintsworths.]

[Ensure that no one threatens her.]

[She is to be treated as a Scion of The Saintsworths.]

“As you wish Master.” Vulcanus said falling to his knee, there would be a need to reroute some of his logical thread of thoughts to make sure his lesser form would adhere to these commands without finding them, “And what of my lesser form? What if he attempts to go against the commands?”

“Well that one is easy, isn’t it Sapphire?” Master said, turning to Lady Sapphire.

“Yes, darling,” Lady Sapphire said, nodding with a smile, “If a bug becomes a problem, you kill it.”

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“And if that isn’t obvious, Edwards Black died almost fifteen years ago. What remains here is either an impression of him. Or a copy.” Master said as the data feed started to disconnect, “If Vulcanus turns into an issue, destroy the servers that house him and ensure that he is not a threat to the Saintsworths. If that means that you must destroy your own Core...”

"As you wish Master," Vulcanus answered while logging the new orders to his Core, that made things easier. Master had been somewhat squeamish about giving this type of order before, but now that Lady Alexa was at hand, it seemed that most of his reservations about the lesser part of Vulcanus had been gone.

Now, all he needed was to go and ensure that Lady Alexa was well.