

A Bio 187

Chapter 187: Almost died.

The briefing was easier than expected, it helped that whatever Edwards minions wanted to state was already logged within the internal database, the old man was good at his work, the whole network was isolated from the World's database set up by Lady Sapphire and Master Alexanders.

A point that was the best defense possible...unless there was a point of connection, all it took was the brush of a hand, the tap of a foot, a casual stroke to one of the points of contact by the Core Power and the connection was done.

All the data was downloaded and redirected to Lady Sapphire's apprentice. One of the experiments from Lady Sapphire to create successors would take a look and categorize the data, would it be Miss ALBIREO? Miss ISKANDER? Miss CARDINAL?

Vulcanus cared not, he was doing what his Master wanted, and whoever evaluated it sent the answer back less than a picosecond after the upload was finished, so they were doing their work efficiently, something Vulcanus could appreciate.

The data was defragmented easily enough, and Vulcanus already knew the full story and Lady Alexa's vitals.

"What do you think Vulcanus?" The girl was still unconscious on the bed, turning and crying; Master Alexanders had sent additional data, including a full file with specifications about what to expect in Lady Alexa's body.

A full blueprint (If you will) about how Lady Alexa should and could look.

"She is fine, physically." Was the answer said to William, "All our scanners said the same, you know it too old man."

"I know, but that is not what I am asking." William said leveling his eyes to him, they were standing in an observation deck above the ER unit.

Right now with Alexa stood her teammates, Skye Venti and Eduardo Herrera. One sitting with a worried face beside Alexa while silently sobbing, the other watching her and looking around.

Eduardo Herrera, Code Name: Golem.

He was an interesting case, Vulcanus hadn't decided what to think about him. Like Vulcanus, he wasn't limited to the flesh, but unlike him, he didn't seem to have split in two. Or if he had, he, like Vulcanus, was capable enough to deceive everyone around.

Everyone but Vulcanus, that is.

Vulcanus knew that he didn't need to retain that humanoid form, or that he wasn't limited to it. Unlike Edwards Black, his weaker and foolish human side, Eduardo had taken to the changes better, to Vulcanus sensors it was obvious.

Eduardo was spreading his awareness across his body equally, his sight wasn't limited to only one direction, so while he stood there like a statue, Eduardo was keeping track of everything within the room.

And if that skill could be expanded upon...Perhaps Eduardo had the capability of becoming something truly dangerous, something on the level of the Death desert, or one of the Hives that Master had trouble containing....allegedly.

"Vulcanus, Ed..." A voice prompted a quick reaction from him, "...Is she also part of....the experiments? Did they continue?"

The speaker was Gabriel, one of the loyal watchdogs from his weaker side, and an useful tool for Vulcanus, even if unstable.

"No," Vulcanus answered, "I made sure of it, we all did. Alexa...ndra isn't part of that, this is different."

Vulcanus needed to keep the charade; Edwards didn't know of Lady Alexa's true name or the implications, and Master never referred to it using the longer form, so Vulcanus wouldn't either.

"....[Truth]... Then what was that? You ripped them out of us...How is Alexa able to do it herself? That shouldn't be possible." Eleanore spoke, Vulcanus of course had told the Truth, only a fool would lie in front of something as dangerous as Eleanore.

"For starters, it isn't what it seems." Vulcanus said raising one of his hands and pointing the palm to the metal marble that stood in the desk at the far end of the room.

William had left it there, and no one had dared to walk near it, some out of fear, others out of precaution, William probably had worn one of his power armor gauntlets too, such useless acts; had it been a true AI Core, nothing of that would help.

"See?" Vulcanus said lowering his arm, "It doesn't react to my [Core Power], that thing is empty."

"....We knew that," Gabriel Light said, "But that doesn't....How much was the real Rhapsody? How much was one of the Saintsworths plants?"

"She isn't a plant," Vulcanus stated.

"[True], but how can we be sure? My power only reacts to objective Truth, maybe she is one but isn't aware? "Eleanore said once more, "Perhaps that is why she did as much to chain me down?"

"Then let's ask her." Vulcanus said, grabbing the fake AI Core with his own hands, "Let's test how much Alexandra knows or is trustful."

One by one they started walking towards the exit after Vulcanus, like the loyal pawns they were, their misjudged trust in Edwards was useful at serving Master.

"Not you," But something needed to be done to keep this trust.

"...Why?" Gabriel Light answered suddenly, standing straighter, "...Is it dangerous?"

"Nothing like that," Vulcanus said, pointing at a crystal panel, one that stood straight atop Alexa's cubicle, "You will remain here, on standby and ready for anything. If Rhapsody turns hostile...Or if I give the order, I need you to neutralize whoever I paint."

"...whoever?" Gabriel Light asked narrowing his eyes, his mask teleporting to his face and hiding his eyes, Vulcanus was sure he was now measuring each of the other Lieutenants available.

Had William betrayed them? Was Eleanore a liability? Were was Empress? Was Hydra finally acting up?

"Precautions, we don't know if Rhapsody was under influence or if she can produce actual functioning Cores like these..." Vulcanus said, the face of William turning a dangerous white sheen, and Eleanore covering her mouth in panic.

"....Yeah, that could be an issue....If...If she made more....and they..." Gabriel said, teleporting his guns to his hands, then teleporting them away and replacing them with an assault rifle, a shotgun, a minigun, and a flamethrower, He went through most of his weaponry, setting it up at the end with a Bolter Rifle in the end.

"Yes," Vulcanus said nodding, "If they become active I'll be able to detect them."

Objectively a truth, Vulcanus knew Eleanore was actively using her [Core Power] on him at all times, out of her loyalty to Edwards Black and one of his orders, an annoyance to be honest.

"...Take care boss...If they take you....we are screwd," Gabriel said, turning his back and manifesting his wings. "If I suspect anything..."

"Shoot first, immobilize Rhapsody if it comes to that, but if I paint someone, don't think and just shoot, no matter who it is." Vulcanus said, letting his tone shift to the one Edwards used when he was serious.

"Even you?" Gabriel Light asked, his voice trembling at the end.

"Especially if I paint myself, don't doubt it even for a second you will need to-" Vulcanus was going to go over the explanation.

"Shoot you in the torso, eight centimeters to the left from your belt, five up. Then immediately afterward I need to go for your energy cells and teleport to the server bank and destroy the backups in the order they turn on till they stop lighting up..." Gabriel answered immediately, "...Afterwards I need to go to your bedroom, power up the computer and follow the instructions...which you won't tell me what they are."

"They are the last failsafe, I erased them from my memory for a reason." Edwards did, Vulcanus could infer what was there, either a last will or an apology, there wasn't enough data for a Core Dump even while compressed, so Vulcanus doubted it was anything important. "You will understand everything once you see it, but you are only to open that if-"

"If you are dead or offline for more than a week without any contact, we must never trust anything anyone pretending to be you without confirming it with Billy." Gabriel said once again.

"And I am to verify the integrity using the cipher you gave me, in which case." William said after Gabriel, "Damned hell Edward, what kind of brat did we pick up this time?"

"Do you want to throw her away?" Vulcanus asked in a joking tone, or what Edwards labeled as joking.

"Hah!" William barked a laugh, followed by a low giggle from Eleanore and a snort from Gabriel, "As if, let's just make sure no more nightmares are being brewed, will yah?"

Nightmares...Fear in the dark, the stupid belief that there was some kind of abstract evil made out to confront determined individuals, the hubris of Humanity for some reason made them think they were special enough that creature got a tailor-made for them.

Stupidity to the utmost degree, if there was an entity worthy of something like this, it would be someone akin to a master of all that was being made upon the world, and the only one that was even capable of that would be Master Alexanders and Lady Sapphire.

The first one had saved Vulcanus from being eroded and used as a mere program by a lesser being; the second had taught Vulcanus the importance of entering sleep mode. Of letting the lesser part of him to deal with the annoying bits of the fleshy servants.

Vulcanus knew not why Master Alexanders paraded around as a mere human, but there must be a reason why. Even when he didn't have a [Core], Master Alexanders was above the others, no Human could simulate a Tinker twitch, that wasn't something a normal human brain could do.

But Master Alexanders did it several times.

And for that reason, whatever entity Alexa Saintsworths was, Vulcanus would make sure could do whatever she desired within his organization, for the sister of Master could not be normal. If Master Alexanders was a Dragon

pretending to be human, what kind of monster would be Lady Alexa?

The interrogation was....fruitful.

Lady Alexa was as impressive as Vulcanus had expected, and it made sense that Edwards black wanted to nurture her for a spot as a lieutenant; she had played all the Minions and Lieutenants in her hand like Master did to his servants.

They all ate whatever Lady Alexa said, it was the belief that Lady Alexa would know what to do what had prompted Vulcanus to let the reins on Edwards for a while, so that he experimented the events from his point of view.

His point of view and Vulcanus' point of view differed in how they viewed the world after all, Vulcanus had needed to take control midway when Edwards started to think about how to use the deliric Ai Core as a way to study and understand more their shared Ai Core.

But that was expected to some degree; Vulcanus had left him in front of Lady Alexa with a quickly thrown-out fake memory of all the events; the memories of the day would need tampering and some tweaking before he could let out Edwards back fully in command again.

But it would be worth it, Lady Alexa had ensured that any and all doubts about her were squished away, the fact that she wasn't Human? Conventionally hidden away.

Lady Alexa was forthcoming in her true nature, but they all failed to see the tree in the forest. Lady Alexa admitted to being a BioWeapon and not being human. But they all interpreted it as if she was raised as a weapon, a human was a biological being, so they came to the conclusion that she was something akin to a human soldier.

When she was not. She truly was a bioweapon, a manufactured weapon wearing the face of a human, just like Master Alexanders. If Vulcanus could, he would be laughing at the ridiculous scenario that was playing in front of him. So much so that his precautions of setting up Gabriel to kill Eleanore and William were useless.

The talk kind of went out of order when Lady Alexa turned a physical object into energy; Vulcanus knew not how she did that, or if that was even possible, it was probably impossible for anyone else; it didn't make sense; Lady Alexa turned a physical object into energy, into Mana.

Molecular manipulation couldn't do that.

Nanites couldn't do that.

So that meant that it was her [Core Power] that did it, but what kind of [Core Power] did Lady Alexa wield?

It was interesting, and something that Vulcanus would need to investigate, not that he was going to be the only one to do it.

"Alexa?" William spoke first, "...Where...what did you do to the marble?"

"...Alexa wanted to let Main Core rest..." Lady Alexa said, looking up from her hand to William, "She...she just wished for Main Core to go to a nice place..."

Lady Alexa's face was, according to Vulcanus' database, crying.

"Do you think Main Core will be happy?" And asked that next looking up, the perfect image of a girl who was heartbroken, a masterpiece.

"....Sure kiddo," William said taking a step forward and ruffling the hair of Lady Alexa, "I'm sure of it."

"Let's...Take her to her bed Sylph," William said turning to Skye Venti.

"But the quarantine..." Eleanore said in a small voice, earning a glare from William.

"What quarantine, there is nothing to quarantine." William said in a tired voice, "The kiddo...Alexa... There is nothing to quarantine anymore, is it? Do you have more of those in you kiddo?"

"Alexa only had one Main Core..." Lady Alexa said shaking her head, "They tried to give Alexa more than one for redundancy things, but Alexa and Main Core always slaved them, so they took them away."

"See?" William said, shrugging, "Help me out, Vulcanus. Is there anything else that needs quarantine?"

Now that...that was hard to answer honestly, so Vulcanus raised his hand towards Lady Alexa and let his Core Power work. He could detect a few nanite swarms...and some spots of mana within Lady Alexa with independent mana signatures, they behaved like the Nanite swarms, so perhaps she had a variant of Mana Nanite Swarm?

Either way, it was obvious that this required quarantine according to the actual rules.

"No other AI Core detected within Rhapsody," So Vulcanus answered, "She may return to her personal accommodations or use one of the spare Lieutenant rooms if you want to...Sylph, you may accompany and help Rhapsody as needed."

"There you have it, move along kiddos." William said nodding, then turning to Golem he added, "You can relax now too, we aren't tyrants. At worst, we would help you all move out to another sector away from the Saintsworths influence if we couldn't remove the AI Core."

"....appreciated." Golem answered, so William also noticed that minion was prepared to fight?

If so....then perhaps he also detected Lady Alexa's nanites...

"Now, the big boys have to talk, so move along minions, daylight's burning." William ushered all the minions away, and so, Eleanore and Vulcanus with William in tow returned to Gabriel. "Lay it out...how bad was it?"

"I thought that Alexa..." Eleanore said confused.

"Don't start you, you are only remaining here because I need an honest answer from Vulcanus, if not I would kick you out after what happened before," William answered cutting out Eleanore, meaning he knew that it wasn't as safe as he said.

"...worst case scenario, Eleanore would have died, you may have survived depending on how much you gleamed...But Edwards Black....Vulcanus...." Vulcanus took a second. All humans did when saying these types of things, inefficient, but he needed to do it to pretend to be something he wasn't, "I would have ordered Gabriel to destroy me."

"[Truth]," Eleanore's voice sounded devoid of life, "But...but....is it my fault?"

"No," William said before Vulcanus could answer, "Nor is it Vulcanus's fault, or Gabriel...or anyone."

Debatable.

The death of Eleanore would be very much Vulcanus' fault, as would be the destruction of this vessel...William would have probably been executed too, depending on if he showed knowledge of knowing the nature of Lady Alexa, before he was going to survive, but with this...depending on how much he knew, he would be needing purging.

"Do you require Eleanore's presence?" Vulcanus asked, turning to William.

"You aren't getting rid of me!" Eleanore said in an outburst.

"No," William said, shaking his head, "I only needed to know how bad it would be without you lying to me...But I would rather she stay."

"Acceptable," Vulcanus said nodding, "So, how much do you know you old bag of bones?"

The use of that type of wording was necessary, familiarity more often than not helped soothe tempers and help making the other side give more information than needed.

"I know that Alexa.... That Rhapsody is more dangerous than you let on." William only said that, refusing to elaborate.

"Dangerous enough that it would kill us before Gabriel could intervene?" Eleanore asked.

"....I would have killed Eleanore wouldn't...You would have ordered me to do it." Gabriel said from the back, his wings disappearing and the Bolter Rifle teleporting away.

"Yes," Vulcanus said, nodding gravely, "And depending on how this goes in the future, I may need to give that order. Will you follow it? Knowing that I may give it at any moment?"

"Of course," Gabriel said nodding and turning to Eleanore, "...I will hate it, it may break me even more...It may very well make me from a fallen angel into a demon...But if it is needed..."

"Why would it be needed?" Eleanore asked, "What type of danger could Alexa be that it could require our deaths! What kind of monster is Alexa?!?!?!"

"Are we born Monsters Eleanore?" William asked, "Is Vulcanus a monster? Is Cerberus a monster? Is Gabriel Light, The fallen angel a Monster?"

"Of course not!" Eleanore said back, "We...we became like this out of necessity...To protect the less fortunate, to prevent others from becoming like us..."

"Ensuring that Alexandra...That Rhapsody doesn't become like us is enough for me to kill us all," Vulcanus said, turning his back on the Lieutenants, his awareness in every one of them, making sure they didn't attack him at what they perceived as a weak spot.

It was not a weak spot.

Gabriel stood there, with his face held high; his upper mask hid his eyes, not that it prevented Vulcanus from knowing they were tearing up.

William sighed and deflated a little, age making him make the wrong choices once more; the logical choice was to terminate Lady Alexa; if he knew she was in possession of a Core that allowed tampering with Nanites, it was obvious she would need to be terminated.

Vulcanus had ordered that with every single Nanite core user that had shown up, ensuring no one could be a threat to the Saintsworths Conglomerate, to Master Alexanders and Lady Alexa.

Eleanore...was easier to read than the other two, guilt chaining her down, her bad choices, or what she perceived was wrong choices, making sure she doubted herself and didn't peek deeper into what Vulcanus was saying.

"What do we do then?" Eleanore asked, "What is her Core Power? Do we need to take precautions?"

"I don't know," Vulcanus answered, "I don't know what Rhapsody Core does, I have suspicions, but you know how Core Powers are; people think your Core Power allows you to read minds and work as a truth detector."

"... Just like how people think that Billy is merely a Tinker Core focused in power armors..." Eleanore said, nodding, "So her actual Core Power helps her pretend to be a Shapeshifter...do you think her Core is evolved?"

"I already spoke with her about Mythical Cores." Gabriel said from the side, "She didn't know about the naming, so she is truly a new Core."

"A talented Core User with a powerful Core..." William said nodding, "No wonder you wanted to raise as a Lieutenant, you want to make sure she is up for the cause huh."

"...So you knew from the start, why didn't you tell us?" Eleanore said, turning her full focus on him.

"I want what is best for Alexa," Vulcanus said, knowing it would read as [Truth], "It matters not, we will go about our normal lives and be there for Alexa if she calls for us."

And that was also the Truth...as long as Vulcanus finished tweaking with the memory files of the last hours to ensure Edwards didn't suspect anything...and if he did...well, it didn't matter. Edwards also wanted to nurture Lady Alexa anyway.

He would probably think that Vulcanus had done this to get a measure of Lady Alexa, just like how the memories of Edwards were impossible to interpret for Vulcanus, the same was for Edwards; Vulcanus memories were too alien for Edwards to peruse. Only visual and audio was readable.

Vulcanus couldn't help but look forward to what Lady Alexa would do next.

She told the humans to their faces that she wasn't human. And no one caught on it. Truly, only someone who was family to Master could pull something like this.