

A Bio 192

Chapter 192: A geese did what ?!?!?!

“And are you sure that was normal behavior for a bird of this height and weight?” Ale asked for what was possibly the fifth time in the last two minutes.

“Yes, for the god knows which time. Geeze are like that!” [Golem] answered annoyed, Ale was surprised that the mass of gravel could even emote this much, or she would. If she took the time to take note of that.

Instead, she was more focused on the data she was pulling out of this bird, a bird that was shorter than most animals and weighed less than most average predators. And yet... it had a temper and was brave beyond what one could expect from one such animal.

“And they have teeth?” Ale asked pulling an image into her cellphone and showing it to the other Minions.

“Yeah, but they aren’t like our teeth, more like...bird teeth, they are a thing or something.” [Golem] said, sighing, “You are focusing on the wrong things here, Ale.”

The man sounded defeated.

“I mean, she does have a point. While incredible how much damage that Bull did from your history, or how the Mobile Armor failed...” [Big Sister] nodded while speaking, “I, for one, did not think a bird would have that much impact in your trigger event.”

Right, Ale was still not sure how the [Bull in heat] or the [Faulty wiring] mattered in this setting. What she cared more about was that there was an animal, a bird, to be precise, that could house such an intriguing temper.

"Okay, fine...I am willing to leave aside the fact that a [Bull in heat] could be that dangerous," Ale said not really thinking much about, by the descriptions that creature should be barely bigger than Ale. While mass and muscle could be an issue, she didn't think it would be that much of a problem, Ale probably wasn't as heavy as the thing. Still, she was faster and a good strike in an undefended flank by her [Armament] would be enough to cripple the thing.

With that body, it wouldn't have enough time to dodge away anyway; it sounded like a classical rusher-type entity, after all. The mechanical-powered armor would be tricky; depending on how many redundancies it had, it could be even harder to damage, and that was without getting into how many defenses or weaponry it possessed.

"But you gotta see my point, that thing!" Ale said pointing at the picture of a white bird dancing, why did it have a hat? Ale wasn't sure, nor why it was dancing, "How could this creature be that devious, powerful, wily, and smart to cause so much more danger than a creature that you stated yourself could kill the average farmer!"

That was the main issue; the danger hadn't come from the mechanical armor or the Bull but from the geese!

"I mean...they are geese, they are like that." And [Golem] merely said with a joking tone.

"Farmers Ale....Don't try to understand them, we as society don't understand them either..." [Big Sister] said with a sigh, "That would explain the weird stoic vibe, though, and the rugged exterior. So you were

a farmer boy...I had pinned you as a poor immigrant or someone who grew up in a rough neighborhood..."

"We are...technically illegal aliens," [Golem] said in a small voice while looking behind him, "We are allowed to be here because the situation with the Core and how the space between cities turned into wilds. The government can't really send us home, so they are stuck with us."

"It also helps that the Saintsworths have as much pull in the politics as they do, they are, if nothing else. The pragmatical kind," [Big Sister] said with some disdain in her voice, "For an organization that crushes rumors with such gusto, it is surprising their boss doesn't do anything about the rumors about himself being a lizard."

"Oh yeah! Alexa and myself have been wondering about that!" Ale said, latching on to the topic, "Why is Alexanders viewed like that? Shouldn't he be a [Leader] or [Idol] like figure? He is the boss of the Saintsworths or something, right?"

"Or something is the more precise title in this case," [Golem] said shaking his head, throwing some gravel in the sofa... Ale would need to clean that one later, right?

"How so?" Ale asked not thinking about that, she would maybe assimilate that material later, turn into a fleshy mass to soak in the dirt then categorize it as materials...yeah, that would be faster than cleaning.

"It is complicated," [Golem] said shaking his head, "Alexanders may be the CEO or something like that, but he also needs to answer to a board of directors."

"Yeah, they are the actual people ruling the company. Alexanders is more like a phony king, the actual owner of the company is probably someone else." [Big Sister] said with a smirk, "In some cases the owner and the CEO are different, usually in big corporations. Don't get me wrong, the owner is probably a Saintsworths, but it isn't Alexanders. Not yet anyway..."

"Yeah, the Saintsworths are weird in that sense. They only allow a Saintsworths to sit at the top, but if you prove your worth you can become the top boss, no matter how much or how much little Saintsworths blood you have." [Golem] said sighing, "Ten years ago it was a trend even, they sold kits to find how much Saintsworths you had, people with above 10% acted like kings even...Till they started demanding to be allowed in anyway..."

"What happened to them?" Ale asked confused, if they had a way in...then why weren't those alleged test still along, they could have tested her way early if that was the case right? Instead of going by hearsay.

"Well, they got in...They got into the spartan training camps, spartan-like school...And they didn't measure up." [Big Sister] said shaking her head, "The Saintsworths are nuts, worst of all. They don't stop people from leaving, be it Saintsworths or not. So most of those that walked in with their head high left, dyed their hair and moved away, there were stories of people going as far as changing their name and going through plastic surgery. The DNA test faded away after a few extra months since people didn't want to take them, worried that the Saintsworths would show at your doorstep to test you with those...."

"Stupid rumors that got squashed a week into it by a formal declaration of the Saintsworths: 'We will not force anyone into our private programs,' they said..." [Golem] said in a mocking tone, "It was later found out that those school programs and training were reserved for the more....dedicated members, that the normal Saintsworths lived normal lives, but those that wanted special privileges went there."

"So they did those for nothing?" Ale asked confused.

“No, they demanded free stuff, and to get it, they needed to take those tests and training.” [Big Sister] said sighing, “So they got what they had coming for them, but that isn’t the issue here.”

“Then?” Ale asked once again, still confused.

“The Saintsworths care not for how pure your blood is, but by how talented you are. And they don’t think Alexanders a veritable monster is worthy of having those rumors about him cleared.” [Golem] stated, “Meaning...Either there is another more dangerous monster behind him...Or Alexanders himself is letting the rumors go around, someone more dangerous and with more influence than the most talented Saintsworths in 200 years...”

That....that was indeed scary.

Not that Alexanders was scary himself, he was, after all. Merely a cheater.

“Well, that doesn’t matter.” Ale said shaking herself from the talk, “Not when there are more important issues at hand.”

“Like?” [Big Sister] asked.

“Where can I get a goose?” Ale asked thinking about the possibilities, “I would rather have a live one, like we did with the [Cat], but I understand how dangerous they may be, so I can settle with a dead one.”

“....Why would you want a...” [Big Sister] asked confused, “....Ale....you said that your power lets you imitate things you understand...”

“Yes, I can adapt and integrate things into my base [Blueprint], this form you see is not 100% [Human], I have integrated some upgrades and shifted some things around,” Ale said shifting some part of her interior (To be precise in her left arm) and raising her arm to show [Big Sister], “See here? I can use this to help me in high-speed mobility scenarios, for example.”

And opening an exhaust in her palm she showed the tip of a metal tube, when [Big Sister] peeked near it, Ale discharged some air, not at the high pressure of course.

“....funny....” [Big Sister] said when the stream of air stuck her in the face, “I assume this isn’t top speed?”

“No, I can control the pressurized burst; it takes some time to recharge, so I don’t want to waste it; also, pressurizing is a hassle in itself too...” Ale closed the opening and quietly dismantled the shift, “So I want to see the [Blueprint] of this animal, to integrate some of their design that allowed them to create as much mayhem.”

“Wait, was that why you wanted that cat too?” [Golem] suddenly pointed out, “I know Sylph gave you a cat, but you only took it for a few seconds and then went back to the training arena...”

“Oh yeah, I know you only asked it for a second, but that confused me...What did you use it then?” [Big Sister] asked smirking, “....did you....”

“I used part of it for its innate reflexes, then complemented it fully with the [Cat Girl Core] girl we met in the party,” Ale said shifting her head to showcase the cat ears she got from that, “I haven’t actually used it in combat, but the expected efficiency seems good. If I can integrate the viciousness of the geese, the effect should be magnified too, so...how do I get one?”

Ale turned to [Golem] with serious eyes and a plan.

“....I’ll see if Pop has any geese that he can loan, I guess...?” [Golem] said with a shrug, “No way in hell we can get one into the city, so we would need to go to the farm, and getting a perm to exit the city will be a hassle in on itself.”

“Why can’t you get one into the city?” [Big Sister] asked, confused, “It’s just a bird, one that Ale seems to be making a big mess about, but a bird nonetheless, not like there aren’t more dangerous animals inside the city already.”

“...Imagine a Geese that becomes a Core User...within the city.” [Golem] merely stated that.

“Oh.....” And [Big Sister] nodded in understanding, “Yeah....point taken, it’s already a mess with all the birds and insects that become Core Users when triggering after running away from the stray cats...”

Wait...weren’t Core Users....rare?

“Aren’t [Core Users] supposed to be rare?” Ale asked confused, “Glory and Alan said so to Alexa, that becoming a [Core User] was a big deal...and even within [Haephestus’ Forge] I haven’t seen that many.”

"Human Core Users, yes, we are rare." [Golem] said nodding, "But that is among Humanity, animals and insects live a more dangerous life, so they either evolve or die."

"So you see, a random stray cat hunts every day for food. That means each stray cat puts in danger other animals, rats and insects. These have to fight for their life, so they do whatever they can to survive..." [Big sister] said after [Golem], "So they do just that..."

"So they [Evolve] to [Survive], they end up needing to [Grow] or die..." Ale said nodding, that meant... "The tests..."

"Yeah, whoever had you. Probably wanted to create artificial Core Trigger events, to probably become a Core user themselves..." [Golem] said gravely...while his gravel-like body shifted in what Ale assumed was anger, "But we will let the people at the top worry about that...They will find who did it and deal with it, it is what they promised, and no one takes kindly to human experimenting....more so with kids."

Oh right....the kids....the alleged kids who had been in the [Human] experimentation site with Ale...Those kids...

"Alexa never saw another [Human-Child Stage] in the experiment site," Ale said sheepishly.

"Of course she didn't, it doesn't make sense to put brats fighting against each other." [Big Sister] said dismissively, "Trust me on this, if they had one, they had more. It makes no sense to have only one sample."

....True.

No, wait, they did see other humans! Or human-like entities anyway, there was P9! Not that it was very [Human] looking....

Should Ale point that out...?

“Wonder what Vulcanus will do?” [Golem] said turning to [Big Sister].

“Probably hack into the government and search for data? The obvious suspects is the Saintsworths and whoever company wants to take them down, who is the current top contender anyway?” [Big Sister] answered.

“I think it was Edison’s Dream?” [Golem] answered scratching his gravel-like head, “That or Machiavelli’s Guns....Probably that Chekov’s Missile Incorporated too?”

“....They are running out of good names.” [Big Sister] said sighing “Remember when we had original ones? Now we have old historical figures as names of random weapon’s development companies.”

“Weapons?” Ale asked, suddenly latching in on that part.

"Yeah, thanks to the wilds the more prolific way to get money is weapon companies, that or working in the walls fending off the super fauna." [Golem] stated, "Not that many people do it; the Saintsworths have a monopoly in that, and they don't take kindly to other people chiming in."

"There are theorists that says that the government doesn't double down in super villains because the super-powered are the emergency plan in case the weapons of the Saintsworths fail." [Big Sister] said shrugging, "Not sure how they plan to make Super Villains work for them....I could understand it of the alleged Heroes, but....I don't see the Scorchers working for the betterment of society."

"Or [The Scrambler], "[Golem] stated plainly, "The Spider may help, but others less....normal would not."

"I would rather use the opportunity to off some of those actually," [Big Sister] said wistfully, "Imagine ridding the world of SuperVillains like 'The Mistress of Vengeance' or 'The Boogey Man'"

"The world would be a better place without those; I, for one, wouldn't mind 'The Ferryman' to go, or 'The Husk'" [Golem] nodded and said those names too.

Ale was busy saving those names for later, she needed a bigger sample of powered entities to look afterward, "Wouldn't someone take them down if they are such a danger?" But decided to ask this first.

"Well, the thing is....They do serve some....purpose," [Big Sister] added, "The 'Mistress of Vengeance,' for example, every time she attacks a site, all the people that die have been found to be some type of sex predator or alleged, suspected sex predator."

"The Husk' only attacks factories that sell or use expired products, 'The Boogeyman' only goes after corrupt officers...." [Golem] added afterwards.

“Then they are [Heroes]?” Ale said confused, because that sounded like something a [Hero] would do, right?

“Oh god no,” [Big Sister] said laughing, “They don’t follow the rules, and more often than not, you need to pick the remaining of what used to be their targets....and the collateral damage. The higher they are in the list, the more damage they make.”

“The list?” Ale asked confused, there was a list?

“The Assessment Danger List,” [Golem] said, pulling out his phone and navigating to a website, “Here, take a look.”

Ale did that, grabbing the cell phone and memorizing the address that [Golem] had put. It was a list with names and ranks, going from F to A...and for some reason, jumping to the S? Why S?

“So they ranked the damage they can make to society and put them in a spot corresponding to that?” Ale asked as she was reading the rough descriptions and names.

“Yes, the higher they are, the more damage they can cause. Not all are humans of course, most of those that rise to A-List and B-List are rarely fully human.” [Big Sister] said pointing to the A-List members, “See, [The Scrambler] is on the A-List danger rating, same as [The Theater Master].”

“They aren’t human?” Ale asked confused, she...was pretty sure they looked [Human] enough.

“I can’t answer for [The Theater Master], but no human can revive after they are killed. And only this year [The Scrambler]

has been killed twice. Once in front of you even.” [Golem] said sighing, “Or was in front of Alexa?”

“It was me,” Ale said, shaking her head, “But...I thought that was his [Core Power] at work?”

“We aren’t sure, there are too many things we don’t know about the Cores. What they do, where they come from, why they work like that. What makes them tick....If they really work on a [Wish]. Who fulfills it? And if they work like that...how can animals and insects trigger a Core? Are they really wishing?” [Big Sister] said wistfully, “If not...are our Cores different from those of animals?”

No...They weren’t.

Ale had tasted and assimilated [Cores] from animals and [Humans], they were the same.

“And more importantly...If....If they really work like almost magic... Why did they give them to people like [The Scrambler], or The Scorch...hell even Chrysalis and V-8.” [Big Sister] said gnashing her teeth, “I don’t mind the silly theatrics of [The Theater Master]. That man is more of a nuisance than an actual threat, and the only reason he is in the A-List is because he is one of the few ones capable of stopping or dealing with [The Scrambler].”

Ale looked once more at the list and noticed [Vulcanus] was there too.

“Where am I on the list?” And decided to ask that.

“That is something for the administrator of the list to decide.” Sounded the voice of [Vulcanus] walking into Ale’s apartment. “Sorry to interrupt, but we have a conversation to finish Rhapsody.”

“Sir.” [Golem] said standing up and reabsorbing his rock chunks that he had discarded, “I was not aware you would be coming.”

The last part sounded once more stoic and serious, gone was the almost (ALMOST) casual tone that [Golem] had been using before.

“Understandable, please vacate the area. My conversation with Rhapsody is....[Private],” [Vulcanus] stated, not asked or pleaded. But merely stated.

“....We will be outside in case you need us, if possible....call your older self.” [Big Sister] said nodding to Ale, “That is no problem right Boss?”

“That is of no consequence; what I need is to speak with Rhapsody. It matters not who is at the helm.” [Vulcanus] said dismissing [Big Sister]’s worry.

Ale took that moment to analyze the situation, there was something...odd.

She couldn’t place it, and it wasn’t till [Golem] and [Big Sister] left the apartment that she noticed.

“...Your eyes,” Ale said pointing at [Vulcanus], “You....are not the normal [Vulcanus] are you?”

“Clever girl, I see why Master is that interested in you.” [Vulcanus] said, his tone shifting from the one that pretended to be human, to one entirely mechanical. “We need to talk, this is something that could affect Master’s plans and I require clarification on your stance...Or the stance of Alexa Saintsworths.”

....Well, now Ale needed some clarifications, like...who was this Master? And why was [Vulcanus] convinced that Alexa knew who he was talking about?