

## A Bio 199

Chapter 199: Chekov's Dylan

Bryan's reaction was amusing as his mana flattened and lost the pressure it had been building. Ale could detect the ambient mana returning to normal, and the muscle man relaxed. They had been tensing their leg muscles and their arms as if preparing to move.

Ale hadn't been worried, of course, all it would take her would be a couple of seconds to shoot her arm up and eviscerate Bryan if it was needed.

"...You... didn't know?" Bryan asked as he deflated, "But I confirmed it...?"

"Yeah," Ale said nodding, "You did, I mean, I suspected something was....afoot."

Ale said the last part, pointing at the other kid's feet, "Hard to not notice it when we have such different footsteps."

Ale was leaving her normal footprints in the dirt, leaving footprints of her combat boot type sneakers, they weren't actual combat boots, she couldn't wear those in a public setting without raising a couple alarm bells...Or outing herself as a Saintsworths, those seemed to be an eccentric bunch of people.

Either way, Ale didn't want to out herself as often as they had needed to do if possible. Instead she wanted to spend her time peacefully...or as peacefully as possible anyway.

"...my feet?" Bryan said looking down, "What about them? I... don't understand? My [Core Power] doesn't affect my feet...?"

"Not that, look at my footsteps," Ale said sighing, "See? I am making normal ones here..."

Ale walked from right to left giving an example, her footsteps sank just enough to make her point. "Now if I move like this..." And after speaking like so, she took a couple of extra kilograms of heavy metals and stored them within her body, just enough to make herself sink a couple of centimeters more into the sand, "I am leaving deeper footsteps, this is roughly as if I weighed as much as your guardian there...I think."

Ale wasn't sure of the weight of course, but from roughly 40 kilograms she added another 20 or so kilograms, she didn't want to distort her body just for an example.

"But I don't make that kind of footsteps," Bryan said confused, "Also how are you doing that?"

"I am getting there," Ale said raising a finger and moving it from right to left doing a tut-tut noise as she did, "Now this...is what you are leaving behind."

And storing those extra heavy metals and a couple of extra kilograms, Ale reduced her weight by twenty kilograms. Now her footsteps barely left a footprint behind, she also moved a couple of steps and before her body could fail for the sudden weight loss, she returned everything to where it was and fixed the errors in her more biological components.

"See?" Ale said doing a twirl as her weight returned to normal. "Now...which one is yours?"

"...these?" Bryan said, pointing to the ones in the middle, "Those are the footsteps of someone who weighs less than what they should, and you are leaving even less of a footprint; those are as if I weighed half of my normal weight."

The footsteps of an Ale who weighed twenty kilograms or so, not enough mass to support a body either, really. It was a bad example of how to pass as normal. And he was leaving less of a footprint, it was impossible to not notice...once you started checking on the footsteps that is. Ale wasn't sure how [Big Sister] had noticed, but she would ask about that later.

"...But...the monkey bars..." Bryan said pointing at the said monkey bars behind Ale, "You could just change the weight while in those and then return to normal afterwards? I would do that anyway, not that I can change my weight like you are doing."

"...But you did...?" Bryan said, "Wait...how did you even do that?"

"Secret, but if you want to guess I just moved the weight around in my body, not that hard if you know what you are doing." Ale said, shrugging, not mentioning how moving part of that body included accessing a metaphysical and probably liminal space that she wasn't sure how worked or why she had access to, nothing in constructing and deconstructing had anything remotely close to what Banked Storage did.

"Well...I can't...move the weight like that, I can change it here and there...But nothing that precise," Bryan said kicking the sand under his feet, "Can...can you teach me?"

"Nope," Ale said, shaking her head, "I don't really know how to teach you how to do something I don't know how it works, what I do works for me, but there is no way it would work for you."

Not unless he could access liminal spaces to shunt biomass and materials around like Ale could, and she sure as hell hoped this random kid couldn't do that, it would be very worrying if more people could do that, it would blow open a hole in a couple laws of physics for one.

"...But..." Bryan said looking up at Ale, "How am I to become a Hero?"

"I dunno, why do you want to become one?" Ale asked, confused, "Do you want to get punched in the face?"

Bryan turned to look at Ale weirdly, "I want to be a Hero, why would that mean to be punched? Heroes are the ones doing the punching." Then he looked at Ale as if she was wrong and would admit it.

"....Heroes fight against Villains," Ale decided to approach this logically.

"Obviously, they are the good guys." Bryan said nodding.

"And the Villains don't want to be arrested," Ale continued her speech. Bryan nodded once more at that statement, so Ale decided to continue, "Do you think that a Villain would let himself be arrested without a fight?"

"I mean....no?" Bryan said thinking, "But everyone knows the good guys win in the end!"

.....That was so adorable...

"But do they?" Ale asked smirking, "Tell me, did the Heroes win when The Scrambler attacked last time?"

"Of course they did! V-8 and SuperForce fought [The Scrambler] and [The Theater Master] off!" Bryan said, smiling back triumphantly, "The new one, The Delivery Guy, even made his debut there!"

Wait, [Superforce]? He was there?

"Right..." Ale said narrowing her eyes, she didn't remember [Superforce] being there...Did they add him to the narrative?

"And how many victims there was this time? How many times do you think you will get close enough to punch one of those in the face?" Ale decided to move the question to something more visceral, "Because as far as I could find, at least [V-8] was defeated by a random Minion."

That seemed to deflate Bryan a little, "We don't know for sure...There are no declarations from [V-8] and [The Theater Master] has not released the videos yet."

"The videos?" Ale asked confused, as far as she knew, the only recording of that encounter should be from her memory, her armor at that time didn't have a recording camera, and the one she got provided, she could turn off, so that was a non-issue.

"Yeah, it seems they are still in editing," Bryan said, pulling out his cellphone and navigating the browser to a website with a little too much flair for Ale's tastes. "See? The Minion in question seems to be called [Rhapsody], she probably has a musical-type power or something."

....Alexa did not have a musical type of power.

"So just because they haven't shown the videos, you don't believe [V-8] was defeated by a [Minion]?" Ale was incredulous at that, she had fought hard for that win, and they would dismiss it like that?

Ale wouldn't mind releasing the video file of that fight if it was enough to restore her honor.

"Most [Minions] would like to declare a win against a Hero like that to increase their fame, so yeah. I want evidence, why are you even supporting a Minion anyway?" Bryan said looking at Ale weirdly.

She was not weird. She was just wanting for people to recognize her effort dang it!

No wait, not dang it! That was an Alexa thing...She just wanted for her efforts to be recognized damn it!

"I want to make a point," Ale said shaking the weird feeling of not wanting to be pulled down to Alexa's level. "And that is, Heroes get kicked in the face."

"I thought it was punched?" Bryan asked confused.

"...And punched too, [V-8] was kicked in the face tho." Ale said shrugging, "And you want to do that for a living?"

"I also want a TV show?" Bryan said sheepishly, "And a Comic."

Of course, he would want a TV show and a comic, men...

"And so, you want to wear tightskin white bodysuit with your underwear on the outside while you run around the streets....weighing an eighth of your normal weight?" Ale said pointly, while looking up and down at the other kid, "Probably wearing a cape?"

"Capes are cool!" Bryan said as he flushed red, either by anger or embarrassment, "...And I would use body armor... Since I can change the weight of things, I can wear more armor than most... I think..."

Yeah, that was such a waste of a power, "You could probably do better in research, if you can keep the weight changed, then you could probably make denser armor, or make a projectile faster since the material weight would be reduced." Ale said, thinking about what she could do if she could make her current metals weigh less than they did.

She could get away with changing her entire skeleton to one made of titanium for example, or perhaps a heavier metal? durasteel? Perhaps some Alloy? The possibilities were endless.

"But that's boring!" Bryan however only groaned, "Wouldn't you want to be a Heroine? No wait, why aren't you a Heroine if you are so smart? Huh?"

"....Why would I be one? Actually, what do they even wear?" Ale hadn't seen many Heroines besides [Chrysalis] now that she thought about it, "Can you search?"

Bryan for his part nodded and pulled out the search engine, a simple word was all it took for the images to change, soon Ale was seeing a veritable amount of...

"Why are they all half-naked?" Many women, teenagers, young adults, and some....some she wasn't quite sure of the age, the style of clothing screamed mature, but the bodies looked like hers, that is to say, [Child Stage - Teenager] at most.

"...That is how they dress, I don't know either. None of my guardians seems to know, and Father just sighs and tells me to ask Mother..." Bryan said shaking his head.

"And what does your Mother say?" Ale asked, hoping to find the answer to this weird [Human] conundrum.

The few that didn't dress with almost no clothes did so in frilly style clothing, there were a few that dressed like [Chrysalis] here and there, but not many, and most of those didn't have that many pictures either.

Weirdly enough, among the pictures was one of Stellar...who was a Minion...why was she even there?

"She said that I shouldn't pay attention to whores," Bryan said confused, "Father and Mother forbidden me from searching what that word meant till I was twelve, so I haven't searched."

... Wasn't that the phrase that referred to a woman who sells her body for money and pleasure? Ale was sure that was the word to describe a woman who sold her body for money.

But she would respect the teaching methods of whoever Bryan's parents were. Actually, "Are your parents heroes then?" This kid seemed to know a little too much about those, or at least enough anyway.

"....No?" Bryan said confused, "I think Father has a [Core Power] but I haven't found what it is yet." Bryan said sighing in defeat. "Mother for sure isn't one, since she spends most of her time scolding me or scheduling classes, no way she has time to fight for justice, peace, and the American dream."

"What is the American dream?" Ale asked, she didn't need an explanation for the others ones.

"Probably Diet Coke," Bryan said, shrugging, "I don't know, but most Heroes say that they fight for the American dream when they speak on TV. Even the Heroines say that sometimes."

"Well, I would rather fight for my own Dream if it came to that," Ale said shaking her head, "Not for someone else."

"But that is what makes a Hero a [Hero]," Bryan said, and his words felt heavy, "To fight for something that isn't only you, to fight for your loved ones, your friends...your family."

....

"I can get behind fighting for those that you care," Ale said thinking about Alexandra and Alexa, she wouldn't mind fighting for them, hell, she wouldn't mind fighting for [Big Sister] and [Golem] either, "But I will not fight for random people you find on the street. I am not that kind of girl."

"I don't believe you," Bryan said shaking his head, "I have met you for the first time today, and we have talked for a few minutes. But I know for sure that you would fight for me if someone attacked us, I would of course be the [Hero], but you would make a good sidekick."

Ale laughed at that, actually laughed at that, the mere idea of becoming a sidekick...a servant to a [Hero], someone who fought for others...It was stupid, her? A [Minion]?

"I would probably do try to help you," Ale conceded, "But I would never be a [Hero], I am not selfless, I am selfish, if I fight or someone is because I want to, not because it is the 'right thing' to do. I am what you could call an orphan, and I know what 'Good intentions' cause is."

"...Oh...." Bryan merely said as his smile disappeared, "I'm sorry."

"What for?" Ale asked confused.

"...I didn't know...." Bryan said looking at the floor. "I didn't know you didn't have parents. And I spoke about mine...Even about my guardian..."

"It's fine," Ale said dismissing the worries of Bryan, "I never knew what a [Parent] was, so it's all the same for me."

"A...[Parent] is someone who will always be for you," Bryan said shaking his head, "As a [Hero] that would be the first thing I would fix, no [Parent] should harm their kid...Even my Father who is stern always cares about me...Even Mother who scolds me for not doing my work would never hurt me."

"..." Ale knew not what to say to those statements.

"So yes, I promise you this Ale," Bryan said as he put his right hand atop his heart, "When I become the best [Hero] of this world, no more orphans will be around."

...That sounded like an important promise, something that would happen...because that was the kind of weight those words had.

Should....not.....ruin...

"I could probably get rid of all the Orphans in around a week or so right now if I had enough resources," Ale said thinking about a biomass processing facility.

"...As a [Hero]...right?" Bryan said nervously.

"Ale!" Before Ale could answer, however, [Big Sister]'s call came, "We have to move!"

"Sorry about that," Ale said turning to look in the direction the call came, "It seems I have to go."

"Wait!" Bryan said pulling a new screen on his phone, "Let's exchange contact info!"

"Sure," Ale said pulling out her own phone, it was easy enough to pull her contact info from the phone, this one had three different contact information, one for each of them. So Ale navigated to her card and exchanged data.

"...You really are a streamer, huh?" Bryan said as he opened the data.

"...Dylan Brighton...." Ale read the screen, "Nice to meet you, Bryan."

".....crap....please don't tell anyone!" Bryan (Now Dylan) said, "My parents will kill me if they find out that I leaked my name."

"Sure, I'll keep it a secret, but you must keep my secret identity too then." Ale said smiling.

"Secret Identity? What..." Bryan said as Ale started running towards [Big Sister], she could faintly hear as Dylan read her name and the words 'Saintsworths' came from his mouth as the cellphone fell to the dirt.

Yeah, she wasn't sure why that had caused such an impact on him, but it was kind of fun nonetheless, now...

"What's the matter?" Ale asked as soon as she got to [Big Sister], "Sorry to cut your fun short....but we are being called back, they have new intel so we will sortie sooner rather than later...They found your friend."

Oh....

Maybe it was finally time for a buffet after all? That was good, Ale was getting hungry.