

## A Bio 201

Chapter 201: Interlude – Experiment Rules of Engagement # 1

"We are the light that shines civilization upon the world."

We all believed this, we truly and honestly believed it. When we came into the Saintsworths Conglomerate... The brightest and most advanced research laboratories, cutting-edge hospitals, and state-of-the-art military were there to ensure that civilization didn't devolve..

We all believed it.

Till we arrived here... To the dark side of the Saintsworths, the black sites... The places where the most advanced technology was developed... and its price? Our souls...

Why do we remain here? Because we can't leave, not really... not fully.

This place takes things from you, and it makes you question reality and the world we live in.

And its rules... Stupid rules that make sense when you don't follow them, the most important of them all and the most ridiculous is the one you must take to heart.

So hear me, listen and remember...If the little girl ever asks you to play with her, you must always say No.

--Kendrick Hamilton, induction speech, July 29.

"Alexa promises it will be fine!" The little girl said while her eyes shone as if literal stars came to peek from them.

One could see the hope and unbridled glee in her, almost as if she could already see the outcome playing in her mind's eye.

To his credit, the man didn't outright answer with a positive answer and instead closed his eyes to think; he knew what he should answer; everyone in his spot knew how they had to answer; it was the most logical answer, the only possible answer.

How do you answer when a little girl asks you to play with her?

Of course you-

"Guardsman, remove your hand from the scanner before I have to blow out your head." A new voice spoke in a cold, even tone.

The Guardsman slowly moved his hand back from the biometric lock; it was asking for double authorization to confirm the previous command. All it would require was a minute movement from his finger, and the door would open.

Then Alexa would be able to play with them.

Would that be so wrong?

"Guardsman, listen to my voice; what is your prime directive?" The new man asked, he had his gun trained on his head, one of the newer models that the Saintsworths designed in this underground laboratory.

The same model he carried as a secondary weapon on his holster even; the design was made to look normal, but he knew the specifications; the subsonic round would turn his head into mush, and then subsequent shots would travel to the destinations his boss had set up.

The question would be...what had his boss put as the secondary, tertiary and fourth target?

Alexa?

Doubtful, they all knew Alexa wouldn't balk an eye at those rounds... Right, he had asked for his orders...Perhaps he could...

"Primary order, do not speak with the test subject," He intoned the first order, a stupid one. Why would someone be as stupid as to speak with a test subject as dangerous as P4?

Why would anyone do that? When they had Alexa here to spend the time.

"And...?" His boss asked.

"I hate you," Alexa said puffing her cheeks at his boss, "I hate mister pig, he ain't fun."

"Secondary order, do not open the door into P4's enclosure," He continued, another obvious order. Why would anyone risk being killed, murdered, assimilated, and in worst case... duplicated and sent back as a sleeper agent?

They had scoured the base for weeks, and they weren't sure it had worked at all. Some even voiced that their boss had been swapped out at that moment. But no one could confirm, Mister Saintsworths was an eccentric at best and a nutcase at worst. Any changes that had been made to him wouldn't show...

And if P4 got hold of him...well, then the world was as good as gone.

"Third directive Guardsman," Mister Hamilton asked, his voice even as the doors behind them opened and new soldiers pilled into the room. Perhaps they could help Mister Hamilton see reason?

"If a little girl asks you to play with her, do not, for any reason, answer yes....??" The words spilled unbridled before he could even take notice.

Why?

Why would they...no wait, hadn't he?

"...Sir....?" The Guardsman asked as he pulled his hand away from the biometric scanner, a prompt telling him he would be locked out for the next 72 hours, but he didn't care. He moved his hands to his head and fell to his knees, "What....What was I going to do right now?"

The world wanted to spin, but he kept himself grounded, they had trained them for this. He only needed to focus on what was important.

"I need you to think, son," Mister Hamilton said as he holstered his gun. It wasn't necessary anymore. Not with the reinforcements in place, "I am setting up a containment zone, anyone moves an inch towards the enclosure they are to get shot."

He should have been worried by the sound of twenty bolter rifles releasing their locks, but he didn't. He didn't want to think about who they were targeting.

"Focus son, how many days have you been working for us?" Mister Hamilton asked, kneeling at this side, "How long have you been with the Conglomerate?"

"...This is my first week sir, I am from the new batch." He answered that it made him remember that when one was in a containment zone, he was to remove his weapons from his person unless he was authorized for them; he wasn't.

His clearance hadn't arrived yet, he still needed some paperwork, he wasn't even supposed to be working near the site, but they needed someone to fill in. And getting closer was the easiest way to get a clearance; his commanding officer told him the risks, of course, but a bigger pay was necessary...

"Okay then, follow the protocol. Think, why are you working for us?" Mister Hamilton asked, "What made you sign for the R&D Weapon Development branch of the Saintsworths?"

What made him sign?

"I needed the money," He answered, "I needed the money to buy something special."

It was always the money; the Saintsworths ruled the world, and most of them worked for the Conglomerate to some degree, but that didn't mean the world was easier, no wars? Good. No world hunger? Good. No money? Tough luck.

"For whom?" Mister Hamilton asked.

Why? Wasn't that obvious?

"For Alexa!" "For Alexa..." Two voices answered as one.

A high-pitched one and his more gravely voice.

"He is good! He promised me candy! Not like you, Mister Pig!" The blonde girl said, sticking her tongue out at Mister Hamilton, "Bleeh! Bleeeeh I say!"

"Now... what's your name, Son?" Mister Hamilton asked, Why was he asking that? Couldn't he see his name tag?

It read it clearly that his name was....

His name was...

"...What is my name?" He asked as the color drained from his face, "I have...I have a name....I....I..."

The world wanted to spin once again, he felt detached, what was happening? Who was he? Why was he here?

"Now...Do you remember your first day? The training we did?" Mister Hamilton asked in a kind tone, "I need you to focus on that."

The first day?

He remembered, yes, he had the jitters all day long; there is a stark difference between working for the Saintsworths and working for THE Saintsworths. It isn't the same thing working in a store that is owned by them where there are five to six companies between you and them.

And working for a company that actually has their logo in it, so he sure as hell made sure to burn the training into his brain, even if it would make him forget everything else.

"Yes sir," So he answered, "We got told that every pouch and pocket had a reason to be, that what we put in some of those would never leave, and that others would be filled in by the company and to not pull anything out unless asked by a superior officer."

That was one weird ruling, he knew they wouldn't put anything biodegradable, of course, but even so, it was weird to have pouches that were out of your control.

"The pouch on your left chest plate, first from right to left; what is in there?" Mister Hamilton asked standing up and helping him stand up too.

"The one that holds the most important thing for us?" He asked,. Reaching for it; some of his coworkers put photos of their family, their girlfriend, their wives, their sons or daughters...And then there was the weirdo Tristan, who put on a book there. "I put..."

He spoke before thinking as he pulled out the contents; he couldn't remember what he had put in.

"Alexa's candy!" The blonde little girl said jumping happily, "Alexa likes that flavor the most! Mango is justice!"

It was...candy, mango-flavored candy.

He...."I..." Didn't remember putting that in.

"\*Sigh\* I thought as much..." Mister Hamilton sighed, looking at him with sadness in his eyes, "Please remove the contents of the pocket in your heart pouch."

That one was a pouch that got filled in by the Conglomerate. One that he wasn't allowed to open, he got told that the Saintsworths tech had some kind of sensors that would detect tampering, and to not mess with it.

He didn't even think of that pouch as of late; one gets used to having stuff you can't control. It is part of being human. But now...now that even his memories weren't his?

"...Will I be all right...?" He couldn't help but ask as he felt the tears pour from his eyes, "Sir?"

"Yes Guardsman....now please procure the contents of your heart pouch," Mister Hamilton said nodding at him.

So he did.

He pulled the contents of the pouch and found...A photo, the photo of a woman with auburn hair standing beside a man with the happiest smile he had ever seen, they stood in a park near a picnic blanket. They seemed quite happy...But why had the Saintsworths put that in there? Who was this couple?

"...I assume you don't remember them?" Mister Hamilton said, his eyes looking at him with...pity? Why was he pitying him?

"No sir," He answered, turning the photo and looking at the back; there was something written there, with his handwriting.... It read 'Me and Trixie celebrating my new jig, cheers to our Saintsworths Overlords!' Dated a month before his deployment.

A week before he left for the training.

Around the time he went to celebrate his employment...when he was....when he was...

"Right when we were playing in the beach episode!" Alexa answered for him helpfully.

Yeah, right when they went to the beach arc...The....The beach arc? What? Was Tristan's delusions of working as a theater director sticking with him?

No! That wasn't important! Who had copied his writing style and played this joke at him?!?!?

"Son...I need you to calm down," Mister Hamilton said, he had taken a step back, his right hand raised towards him as if to catch him in case he fell...but the left...the left didn't escape his attention, it was hovering near his gun.

Not overly hostile, but not defenseless.

That was enough to calm him down, right, protocols.

"I'm sorry sir, this....I don't remember ever writing this," So he stated the issue, "Is this some kind of joke? I don't remember taking this photo or writing this; I assume it is important since it was in my pouch, but...how does it relate to me?"

Mister Hamilton relaxed at his inquiries, so that was something good. It meant there was hope for him to retain his job; he needed the job; Alexa's food and entertainment were expensive; she had just gotten into watching live streams, something about a flesh puppet called Magmo?

"Next pouch, the one at your back, the middle one." Mister Hamilton said, "You have three pouches on your back, one for the first aid kit, one for emergency contamination alert, and the one we picked for you."

Yes, that was one weird setup for pouches; it also annoyed him since he liked to have a pouch there for his spare ammunition; the Saintsworth's weaponry didn't need to swap ammo as much as normal weapons since most used their Nanite furnaces that made ammunition straight into the weapon.

So they only needed the raw metal, no chemicals needed since they used electromagnetic guns or something, he wasn't a tech, so he didn't care as long as his guns could kill.

So, as he went for the contents of the pouch, he stopped, "...Will I recognize what is inside it?" He asked with trepidation, he didn't....He didn't want more of his memories to come into question.

Not here...

Not in front of Alexa, a little girl shouldn't....She shouldn't have to see him break down like this. It was too much already, having so many people pointing the bolters at them. Why hadn't they left?

"Yes, that pouch doesn't have a photo, writing, or video; it's something that is in every room; yours should even have one. You should have seen this object this morning, but there is a reason we put it there nonetheless." Mister Hamilton said with a sigh, "Please provide it, or we will need to move to psychic decontamination without your consent...and that never ends well."

...Yeah, that doesn't end well.

Psychic decontamination...The words made him shudder; they would prick open your mind and analyze every byte of data, and then the Saintsworth's witches would decide what would remain and what would not.

Vivian Kellet would make sure that anything that wasn't useful for the Saintsworths would be removed; the cold blue-haired bitch would judge you. The less human woman he had ever seen...And yet, the most beautiful of all.

Mirian Eversoul on the other hand would make sure anything not Human would be removed, she was a humanitarian doctor who somehow ended up working in a weapon's experimentation site, a contradiction, all her life she had spent it making sure the Saintsworths didn't abuse their position of power, judging them and ensuring the world questioned their enterprises.

The CEO had spent half a decade attempting to get her to work for them, offering all kinds of concessions, last time he heard she had answered to never work for him. And yet...

"Okay sir... I'll trust you," And yet, she was working for him now.

What kind of deal did Alexanders Saintsworths offer to her? He didn't know.

But she was here, one of the few people who had clearance to enter the Testing site of Test Subject P4.

"...A mirror sir?" He asked as the object came into his view, it was a pocket mirror, a fancy one, but a normal mirror. No technology, no integration to the Saintsworths network...No fancy buttons, nothing.

A normal, mundane mirror. A relic of the past.

"Look at it," Mister Hamilton said, eyes serious, "What do you see?"

"A normal pocket mirror, sir," He answered, "My AR doesn't detect anything, and my watch doesn't seem to connect to it either. I don't have enough clearance to sync with it?"

More often than not, if something looked mundane to you, you didn't have clearance to use it, even a normal spoon had some kind of wireless connectivity here, everything could and would watch you, for this was one of the few black sites the Saintsworths had. A stupid notion if someone asked him.

What were you supposed to do? Take a spoon and run away? What would you do then? The site was in the middle of the Arctic Circle. There was nothing for kilometers, besides hungry bears and those weird cannibal penguins...God, he missed normal penguins....

"I didn't ask you what you think it was, nor did I ask you if you could sync with the mirror," Mister Hamilton said, shaking his head, "I am asking you to look into the mirror and tell me what you see."

That....that was worrying...

Why was it worrying?

Why...

"That's stupid, Mister Pig is being stupid, that's just a stupid mirror like Mister Guardsman said." Alexa chimed from the side, "Is Mister Pig dumb? He is being dumb!"

Yeah, Alexa was right.

"Look into the mirror guardsman," Mister Hamilton said once again, this time his tone was commanding, "Or we can do this the hard way."

As his words came, the sound of twenty Bolter Rifles trained on him sounded...And with a gulp....He...He....Looked.

"...wha-" What he saw....was impossible. "Who-?"

"What do you see, Guardsman?" Mister Hamilton asked once more, but he didn't answer. Instead, using his free hand, he removed his goggles, his helmet, his breather, everything.

All that covered his head was removed so he could examine his face closely.

His...hair was the wrong color, he didn't know why, but he knew it was the wrong color, his eyes were the same, and his face...why was it like that?

Why?

Why?

"Guardsman, what is wrong?" Mister Hamilton asked, as if he didn't know the answer...no, he knew, he knew and that was why they gave him that photo, why they put the mirror...they knew this could happen...No....They knew this WOULD happen, didn't they?

Were they toying with him?

He...He needed to save Alexa, he-

"Guardsman, state the problems." Mister Hamilton said, raising his right hand; twenty laser sights came to light, all pointing at him, at multiple parts of his body.

He knew, standard procedure, as if destroying his head with a bolter round wasn't enough.

"....My hair is the wrong color, sir," He stated, clinical, "I should have brown hair, but this..."

He grabbed a strand of his hair and plucked it, it hurt, "Is blonde," The strand of hair was golden in color, so yellow that it almost looked as a thread of gold.

He didn't hate it, it was the same color as Alexa's hair, but it was **WRONG**.

"What else?" Mister Hamilton asked.

"My eyes shouldn't be blue, they should be black." He stated continuing, "My face is also in the wrong shape, this face looks as if I was around fifteen to eighteen, when I am climbing at the thirties."

The face didn't match the body build either, but that was beside the point; if he looked closer at his neck, one could see where the color of the skin changed too, from an almost sickly white to his tanned color.

"Like the man in the picture?" Mister Hamilton asked.

"Of course, since that is me-" He answered in reflex, "... That's me...."

The idea hit him on the head straight, the photo was of him...then the woman was....Trixie? Who was Trixie?

"You broke him!" Alexa screeched hitting the glass window with her little fist, "You broke him Mister Pig!"

He...He needed to stop Alexa, she would hurt her little hand, the door was made out of that weird alloy that made it hard enough that not even a Bolter round could penetrate it, good for containment but bad for confirming the state of what was....inside.....since the material.... didn't....allow....windows...

How was he able to see Alexa if there shouldn't be a window in the blast door?

How was he able to speak with her if there wasn't a way to communicate with the interior of the containment cell?

How was he able to deliver her food to Alexa?

"I assume you are seeing the issue we have?" Mister Hamilton asked, his eyes once more filled with pity and...guilt?

"What....What happened Mister....Mister..." Why couldn't he say his name? It was there! He was... ....Mister Pig?"

"....I am so sorry....I promise we will do our best," Mister Hamilton said, placing a hand on his shoulder...

"...What....What happened to me?" He asked, "How is Alexa..."

"Alexa...Can you fix my Guardsman?" Mister Hamilton said turning to Alexa, he had ignored her the whole time, and spoke to her...But....But...

"Nu-uh!" Alexa answered crossing her arms atop her chest and turning to the side, her white sundress making her look cuter when she pouted like that.

"I'll convince your big brother to get you cake tonight." Mister Hamilton said, tempting Alexa; one could see the little girl want to turn but fight her hardest to not turn, "And convince Miriam to come eat dinner tonight with your auntie."

"You promise?!?!" Alexa said turning quickly and sticking her face against the glass, "Pinkie promise?"

The little girl said extending her hand, the glass shifting away into a jail door, "Only if you pinkie promise!" The little girl said, glaring at Mister Hamilton.

But that wasn't the problem...He implied that Alexa could...Fix him? But...Alexa was a normal little girl...She....she couldn't...

"Tell you what, if you stop affecting him, fix my blast door to normal and promise to give him back his identity, then it's a deal." Mister Hamilton said, extending his hand towards Alexa, closing his hand and leaving his Pinkie pig finger...No, wait, pigs didn't have fingers....but he did? But he was a pig? He was a pig right?

"Gnuuuuuuuuuuuuu...." Alexa groaned, "Fine! But I don't have his identitit...tity! I ate it already."

What?

"....Guessed as much, just stop messing with him. And stop turning my Guardsman into discount versions of Alexanders, one is bad enough." Mister Hamilton sighed, "I promise I'll make sure he spends more time down here with you."

"Fine!" Alexa said, beaming a smile, "Sorry, Mister Filler Guardsman, Alexa promises to not mess with your fleshy bits anymore!"

Alexa said to him, he felt...as if something left his soul, as if he had been a puppet with the strings cut away, and it was at that moment that he ...saw it.

That was no little girl, no, that was something more...something that was so much more....

It was something Eldritch, something his feeble human mind shouldn't peek at...

It was...it was...

Beautiful...

"Mister Pig....I think your Guardsman is broken..." His Goddess spoke, looking at him as the insect he was, the mere worm...the waste of matter.

"....This is why I told you to not do it with people that aren't on the list; not all humans can stand your psychic hazard..." The pig said to his Goddess....Why was he speaking to her like that?

That wouldn't do.

"GUN!"....He heard the sound of a detonation and the sound of something pouring into the floor as a wet sound hit the ground, turning to look at it he found that he no longer had his right arm.

"Ah....your Guardsman lost an arm. Can Alexa have it? Mom didn't give Alexa any yumyum." His Goddess asked, turning to his arm.

Yes, she could have it, perhaps if he moved the other.

"Stop shooting and just taze him, he is no longer under P4's influence," The Pig spoke.

"Alexa is Alexa!" His Goddess spoke, "Not P4, P4 isn't a cute name!"

His Goddess liked the name Alexa more? Then she should be Alexa...All should hail the name of the cutestest of all the Goddesses!

All hail Alexa!

".....If you keep doing this, I'm telling Miriam to increase the amount of ethics classes." The pig threatened his Goddess.

"Gnnuuuuuu....I hate Mister Pig!" His Goddess said running away, no...come back....

"Don't forget to fix the blast door," The pig said as the door morphed away into an uncaring metal,  
"Now....what am I to do with you...."

With him?

"....I guess Eversoul will get another test subject for cloning...And William gets another test for the brain download program....I told Alexanders that this project was a mistake..." The pig said as he looked at him, as the blood dripped from his shoulder....

"The arm....The Goddess desired the arm!" His voice sounded....wrong; his voice shouldn't sound like this; his Goddess had desired the voice of someone with a more cheeky tone, a more imposing and yet mischievous tone!

".....Right....P4 will probably get grumpy if we take it with us...Someone throw it into the feeding tray," The pig said sighing, "Everyone here is to go to decontamination post haste after quarantining this one, CRADDLE? Did we find a name for this poor soul?"

"Negative," A mechanical voice sounded from the wall.

"Well....you are now officially our one thousand, three hundred and thirty-seven John Smith...Congratulations," Was the last thing he heard before he was thrown into a stretcher and moved away.

John Smith...That was the name his Goddess gave him, and would be the name he would take in this world...He would spread the name of his Goddess as far as possible...

All so she could play to her heart's content...

All would bow down to the cuteness of Alexa.