

## A Bio 208

Chapter 208: To prepare a dinner

Ale was now more sure about her decisions before; that is to say, she was happy that she didn't send Beatrice to the front; why?

[Detected multiple life signs.]

[Detected synchronization between observable targets.]

[Maping....]

[Picking up low frequency mana wavelenght harmonization.]

[Theorized an stable sublink between the targets.]

[It is advised to not tap into foreign mana wave networks.]

No kidding.

Ale was seeing a mass of people as far as the eye could see.

“...How do we do this Master?” Beatrice asked from the side pulling at Ale’s jacket.

What indeed...

“I am going to circle down, stay here, stay put, don’t make a sound and don’t engage unless you really must.” Ale said sternly, then turning to look down at the little girl, “I mean it, I’ll be too far away to help you, from what I have seen your powerset is perfect for one on one fights. But this is one vs many.”

And that was the thing...Ale’s current configuration was also good for one vs one...

But their original configuration? The one that P4 was designed for? It was for infiltration and destruction, it was designed for one versus many. It was designed to fight against armies and came at the top. So yes, Ale did have options...not many that she could use in her current configuration...or with people looking.

“Yes Master!” Beatrice said in a loud tone, Ale almost scolded her down, but took notice that most of her sensors hadn’t pinged the sudden shout.

[Notice, sound levels within the accepted threshold.]

The girl...the girl’s Core had prevented the sound from spreading? That....how does that even work?

"Good, remember, do not engage unless I am in danger or I ask you to." Ale said once more, she didn't want the girl to question or say anything, the girl wasn't able to keep secrets as she had spilled plenty data to Ale, "Also, don't look. Good girls shouldn't..."

"Oh! You are going to scold the baddies!" Beatrice said, interrupting Ale, "Yes, Mother Rona has told me this one; if a good girl sees someone scolding a baddie, they will get scolded too!"

What?

"So since I am a good girl...or want to be a good girl, I must not see when people scold baddies unless I am scolding or punishing them!" Beatrice said nodding at Ale, "So I'll not see, I'll hide and not see till you are done scolding the baddies!"

...Well, that worked in Ale's favor?

I guess?

"Good," Ale said nodding absentmindedly, she wasn't sure what this Rona person had said, but it worked to Ale's advantage, she would check on it later, but as far as she was aware, most of the data on this Rona entity was that she was quite brutal on her combats, so perhaps it was because of that?

Either way, if Beatrice was trained to ignore certain things, that worked in Ale's favor. So she wouldn't mind it either way, so with that secured, she lowered as much as possible her sound. It was easily done

thanks to the make up of her body armor, the light and exotic materials that composed it made muffling her sound easy enough.

Some tampering with her body mass to ensure her center of gravity was well centered also helped it greatly. This with her enhanced mapping ability ensured she didn't step anywhere that could make sounds, from small pebbles to weird branch-like substances on the floor.

Ale navigated the sewer system moving around the puddles and anything that could make sound, swapping the material from her boot soles to something that didn't make a sound, reducing her footprint as much as possible.

Slowly she prowled like that, for a second she even thought about climbing to the walls and ceilings, but decided against it, while she could stick to the walls and ceilings easily enough, that would only increase the risk of discovery, what with being an Ale-sized figure moving on the walls and whatnot. Additionally, she couldn't be certain of the integrity of the walls and ceilings; nothing would guarantee that they would hold her weight.

And Ale was not, by any means, someone who was lightweight, even if her current appearance implied that.

Currently, Ale was at the very limit of the body mass her current configuration could tolerate, from enhanced muscle mass to reinforced skeletal system, and that didn't include the weight of her body armor, which while it was light, was by no means light.

Even so, the material was flexible and easily manipulable enough to ensure the minimum sound was produced, it did help that she had an on board AI computer to crunch the math, Ale couldn't help but smirk at that thought.

They themselves had started just like that, mere programs running in a local data server, and now Alexa was so much more than that, so much more than they did a whole turnaround to depend on the same type of programs running in personal servers that they themselves were before.

Technically, Ale's brain, and even Alexa's brain for that matter, was capable of doing those same calculations, hell, half the time when they started they were using their brain as a central processing unit!

But nowadays? Nowadays their brain was to...[Human] to do the same type of computational services as they used to do before. Instead they could think more complicated problems, but were farther and farther away from the same processing prowess that they used to have.

Before, Ale could have done all the calculations needed to diminish the sound her footsteps did, and granted, with some training, she could do the same without having to depend on a program doing the heavy lifting. Hell, if she did this enough times, her body would auto-compensate without her having to think about doing it.

But as of this moment? She needed the extra help to calculate these problems, she at least did ask the program to flag why she was moving in certain ways, why stepping in this puddle was the correct thing when she had dodged almost all the puddles so far.

Why she couldn't put her feet in a certain dry area even though the sites around were filled with mysterious biomasses that stank.

Why stepping in said Biomass was the correct approach, why this increased the likelihood of success against staying as far away from that dubious Biomass as she wanted to.

All the important bits of data that Ale couldn't process at the moment. Nonetheless, she would think of this as a learning opportunity, and to hell with the consequences; she would refresh her own blueprint as soon as this was over.

She DID NOT WANT to keep this body after what she had gone through with it.

Anyway. While thinking about those things, Ale had managed to circle around the gathering of... Humans was a strong word for them, Ale knew these were human-like entities, she had seen their rough figure, and we use the term [Rough] because these didn't move like normal humans.

If Ale was to liken them to any creature she had seen so far, these moved closer to a [Hive] like entity, all moving in circular manners, clockwise and counter-clockwise, Ale could see them tripping over the bodies of other Humans who had stopped moving, and then just standing up and moving once more.

These...these weren't Humans at all, they seemed closer to...

[Husks.]

The word was pinged from the old database from Main Core, the one that they had still, the one that didn't have many of his usual remarks, but mostly a vestige of what Main Core had been, but yes. The word fit, husks. Vestiges of what they had been before, a mighty race at the top...

Now devoid of everything, from emotions to intellectual thought, reduced to mere reminders of what they had been, whatever Meli-Meli had done with them seemed to have stripped them of everything, leaving them like that.

What Ale couldn't see at the moment was Meli-Meli itself, she could see an opening into another area, at the center of the center of the circles the humans were doing she could vaguely see a hatch, one similar to the one [Sam] had, the one that he had asked Alexandra to walk into, while he also asked her to not walk into it.

A...what they had said it was? Containment cell? Something like that, perhaps Meli-Meli herself was there? But Why? As far as Ale was aware, Meli-Meli seemed to hold a grudge against Alexa, for whatever reason, blaming her for the state of her Parents. A stupid thing really.

But since Meli-Meli didn't seem to be around...

[Main Core, send a question to base, ask for text only as return message.]

[Noted, preparing text message, contents?]

[Ask them what are we to do with the victims of Meli-Meli, I know some of the sidekicks have been killing them, but I want confirmation. Also, ask them where the sidekicks I came to help are. I do not see evidence of them around and I found a group of the victims of Meli-Meli.]

[Sending...]

Ale was not...hopeful about Body & Soul, she did waste quite some time with Beatrice before...But then again, she had been advised to do things according to what her Core asked....

[Recieved answer from HQ.]

[Reading...]

[“Be advised, Rhapsody, if possible, please save the victims; this is a secondary objective. Mostly asked from the Saintsworths Conglomerate as they want to experiment...I mean, heal the victims.”]

[“The official stance of Vulcanus’ Forge is that they are a lost cause. Our own investigation claims that these people are dead already, their brain don’t show any activity from the samples we have gotten. So you are free to act as if they are...already dead.”]

[Send acknowledgment and a note that we will attempt to subdue as many as possible.]

[Sent note.]

Of course, Ale would not act in that way, this was a feast of Biomass with no surveillance...Why would Ale say no to this?

There was no logical way, besides they hadn't been able to diversify their blueprint database, this was the perfect chance, the victims of Meli-Meli ranged from all ages, genders, ethnic backgrounds...Every skin tone and body form, from non-core users to core users. It was the perfect congregation of targets.

Really...why would Ale contain herself?

But...But...

She could not go about it the wrong way either. While it was a feast for both the eyes and her [Banked Biomass], it was also a danger; she was as susceptible to swarm tactics as the next non-augmented Human, so...how could she efficiently take them down?

\*Thud\*

Another human fell as they tripped over the body of one of their kind, too many people seemed to be having trouble with their muscles, perhaps they hadn't given them the right maintenance? No, a closer look and Ale could find the issue, they had an open wound, the ground was filled with their own blood, and some of those had hurt themselves while moving here, probably by going around without a higher thinking process.

Perhaps attacked by the local fauna too?

Ale did fight a few giant rats while coming here, not as many as she had thought she would...actually she hadn't seen many of the bigger rats had she?

No wait, think...

They continuously fell as they walked over their own kin...

The floor was filled with their own blood and ichor as they continued to fall, injure themselves...and stand up as best to continue moving...

Blood...ichor....biomass...

Perhaps....

Perhaps Ale didn't need to fight them directly? She had seen it at school hadn't she? One of the greatest blights upon these humans, the desert that ate all kind of Biomass...

Couldn't she do that? She could do that, not to the same effectivity...

[Core, can we do it?]

Ale asked, Main Core didn't answer as it hadn't been prompted.

Core:

What the user is asking is...doable...

The use of Biomass will be negligible as most will be recouped from those that fall to these tactics; it is advised to set up a kill switch in case of uncontrolled growth exceeds the threshold; it is advised that the user ensures a viable Target: Beatrice Starcroft is safe at all instances.

That...was a new one, Core worrying about someone that wasn't Alexa.

[Will do, I just was asking to-]

Core:

Preparing blueprint needed....loading up.....packaging....

Do you wish to receive the blueprint to execute manually?

Or do you wish for us to execute it automatically?

Core:

Core:

Download Blueprint?

Execute blueprint?

Mana Cost: 80 Mana  $\mu$

Y

N

Y

N

“....you are scaring me here...” Ale mumbled in a low voice, both options flashing in her face in the form of two distinct blue screens.

To her right a blue box that asked her to execute the blueprint with the added Mana Cost, it was quite low...considering what Ale was making and what it was designed to achieve, it also promised to be recouped with the same Biomass it ate during the growth...To the left, it was a download button, a blueprint file, and a note that said it would be only usable once, and that it was a one-time only...

Ale...was half sure these options would remain so long Beatrice was near, for some reason Core was leery of bringing harm to the little girl, and that worried Ale, Core had only been protective of Alexa before, Core was outright hostile to Main Core...

And Ale was not dumb, the thing had asked them to die...To die so Alexa could grow, Core...was not her ally; it was the best possible ally to Alexa, but that was only to Alexa...the fact that it was self-conscious of someone else...

It irked Ale, it irked her more than anything, because Ale was sure, she was almost 100% sure that Core could have helped Alexandra, and did not.

“I’ll take my chances,” Ale said picking the second option, the option that was objectively the worst one, she downloaded the blueprint and started building it up manually. Painstankilly, branch by branch.

The blueprint asked for a certain type of tentacles, or tendrils as Alexa would think...No, who was Ale thinking about, the small gremlin would think of them as wiggles, wiggle-wiggle...

No, these tendrils would be of a certain type of make; they would take in the Biomass, and constrict it while growing small serrated microscopic tongues-like objects that would rip apart the Biomass of whatever was constricted within, taking in the Biomass to grow new tendrils and expand their area of activity.

It had no eyes, taste buds or smell receptors, it didn't even have hearing sensory input, all it had was touch-based sensors, and even those were closer to reflex-like actions. Ale could direct their growth (Somewhat) and set up certain make to prevent them from going or eating those objects.

The first blueprint that was loaded in the do not consume was her own make, with her own Mana wavelength as a way to distinguish Ale from anyone else; the second one that was set up to ignore was Beatrice... Afterwards? Everything was on the menu.

No one important to Alexa was supposed to be around, and Ale made sure these things wouldn't eat the make of the floor, walls or ceiling, in theory it wouldn't go further away from this chamber, but even if it did... Well, it wouldn't eat Ale, and Ale could update it later, not that it should be able to survive without her Nanites anyway.

The make of this design was dependent on the Nanite Swarm to survive since she needed to make and update the blueprint of the tendrils live, or the thing would end up eating itself and destroy itself; no entity would survive if it ate itself after all.

That was just a stupid design. Why would anyone design anything that ate itself? Were they dumb?

Ale didn't mind this type of design since it wasn't meant to live long anyway.

So, in the wise words of Alexa...

“It’s time to nom...” Ale said licking her lips as she slapped her right hand against the wall, the clear sound of a slap against the floor rang around the room, all the humans within turning to stare at the direction that the sound came, not that Ale cared about it.

For the creation that she had made would soon spawn and clear it, she hoped. She really hoped, because she didn’t want to find out how far she could fight against a horde of Human-like entities that felt no pain without the cheat use of P4 taking control.