

A Bio 213

Chapter 213: The Happy Meal Facility...

The hatch opened into a wide tunnel that had a single ladder and the tunnel walls were filled with moss and grime, it was quite honestly, the most dubious material and hatch she had ever seen. And she had spent some time in the sewers both as Ale herself and from the memories from Alexandra and Alexa.

And this was at the top of the list of most disgusting things ever.

As she went down the hatch, Ale noticed that some parts of the ladder were badly reinforced, as if someone had inserted chitin and pseudo-bone constructs.

Had someone else been going down? Or was Meli-Meli allied with a molecular shifter? Perhaps an insect core? Ale wasn't sure, as she continued going down the ladder she noticed a few more interesting things. For one, at one point in the descend someone had excavated a hole into the wall of the tunnel, it was badly reinforced as if whoever had done it had attempted to reaccomodate the material to reinforce the walls. It was shoddy work at best.

That and there was a chunk of explosive material with some of it missing, as if whoever had done this had taken a bit of it to check the componenets, Ale did the same and found...

Weird things.

"This is new... but aged artificially?" Ale couldn't help but wonder, the chemicals themselves were new, but the look was aged artificially to make it look older than it was in reality.

What was more interesting was that they had seeded the counter chemical to ensure the thing would not explode, not that this affected Ale, as she merely stored the chemicals within her [Banked Storage] and separated the chemicals, this would come in handy later.

And with that done, Ale closed the opening in the wall and reinforced it back to normal, no one would notice that the explosives were missing now... Except for whoever had set up the dummy like that.

Ale did leave...some token explosives set up in strategic places, and removed the neutralizing agent, only she made sure to reroute the trigger to something she could send a signal later, that could be useful when she was leaving this place, or if she wanted to ensure no one got out.

She could get out by digging herself out thanks to her nanites, but the same could not be said of everyone else, to most normal humans tons upon tons of bricks, rocks and cement coming down upon their heads would be quite problematic.

Ale would make a splat but so long her [Core] remained she would reform somehow later, so it was a moot point to her.

She only needed to make sure Beatrice would survive... Actually, perhaps she would need to make sure Beatrice left first before she triggered the explosion.

"You can come down!" Ale called to the girl when she made it to the bottom, nothing was around so it was quite safe.

"Happy Meal?" Beatrice said as she landed on the floor, the girl unlike Ale, had decided to jump down. As she hit the floor she fell to one knee down to the ground, her other leg was bent and her right arm was on the floor to help balance herself.

Somehow the scarf (She had a scarf before) was fluttering on the...wind? There was wind here? Ale didn't detect any wind though? She was getting some reading of mana wavelenghts behaving as a gas for some reason.

"Happy Meal Project, yes. That seems to be the name to this facility." Ale said pointing with her fingers towards the big bold letters that blinked in and out with light, as if there was a faulty wiring.

As far as Ale was capable of seeing with some tendrils that she spread down into the floor, the wiring had two layers, the superficial layer that was aged artificially with faulty wiring here and there. And an underlayer behind it that was new and well-kept.

She had found some type of fail-safe that was designed to destroy the second layer and then go for the first layer, no idea why. Actually, why would anyone do something like this?

.... This was what Alexanders had asked the purple woman right?

The Happy Meal project....the asshole really went and did it? A black site turned into a facade of Alexa's past? Then... why was Meli-Meli here?

"Master?" Beatrice asked suddenly, bringing back Ale from her musings, "What should we do?"

"Well, the signal I am following is pointing towards the building...And the zombies outside imply that our target is here..." Ale said pointing first to the building then to the ladder they had used to come here down, "At this point we can either wait for the Heroes to come, the villains to come..."

"Or we can go and take down the baddies!" Beatrice said with her eyes (Quite literally) shining with stars, how did that even work? Was she externalizing the mana?

She had memories of seeing Alexanders eyes shine like that, and some memories of P4 doing something similar, perhaps enough mana wavelength manipulation would allow that? It was kind of neat effect to have.

"That is an option yes," Ale answered sighing, she had hoped for Beatrice to want to wait, but it seemed it was a moot point as this gremlin wanted more action.

Perhaps she merely wanted to continue practicing? She doubted the Hero side wanted her to act around as much as she was acting right now, after all she was a child. A very powerful child with a weird Core Power that seemed to work on its own rules, but a child nonetheless.

"What will we do Master? This building gives me big bad evil guy vibes..." Beatrice said glaring at the building, as if her mere glare would be enough to make the building tremble.

But then again, with that type of Core power that seemed to work weird physics and work under different rules? It was a possibility.

"Fine, let's go in... Just let me make a report first." Ale said sighing, searching in one of her pouches she pulled out an automated drone, it was a small scout model, or was supposed to be an scout model, Ale had asked for a revised version of it.

With this one she could load a file into the drone (They had designed so she could put the recordings of her armor into it), it was designed to take video files, so Ale loaded a video with an image of herself speaking and explaining all that had happened so far.

A rough explanation about Beatrice (The Beacon of Justice) and why she had come here, also some questions about if she needed to take her into account as much as she was doing, she had confirmation from [Core] that Beatrice was important,

Either way, she powered up the drone and sent it away into the ladder, the small thing would search a way out or in the worst case tunnel its way out. It would seek contact with the nearest minion affiliated with [Haephestus' Forge] if that wasn't available it would seek friendly Villains.

And if that was out, it would end up using the Hero Network to communicate with their contractor, who then would redirect the video to [Elder].

The video file was encrypted so unless they got a Core User with technology approach, or a tinker core, it was impossible to read. Ale still didn't trust this that much, as such she hadn't said any information about herself, her powers or her situation. Not that she had taken the same approach towards Beatrice and Body & Soul.

With that done, she would wait a few minutes and then move, long enough that the drone would have found a target but not that much that Beatrice would get desperate and want to go in.

"Well, what is our plan of attack?" Ale said as a question towards Beatrice, all to burn some time.

"Hmm.... If we go by the same strategic we went before, then it means you would go first, scout, make sure everything is all right, then I go afterwards and finish the enemies?" Beatrice said slowly, as if she was waiting for Ale to complain or correct her.

"Good, you were paying attention." Ale said nodding at the smaller girl, "It is important to keep this, since we don't know what we will find inside, and this seems like some villain base, they may be filled with traps or hidden weapons, if the villain is still it will be dangerous."

"Everything will be fine Master!" Beatrice said in an upbeat tone, "So long you are here, no villain will be safe!"

Ale really hoped she wasn't being serious, it would become an issue if the villains that worked with [Haephestus' Forge] ended up in a dangerous situation because of her, Ale could lose her work!

And so, they walked into the building, from what she could see whoever had come before them had strutted in quite casually, Ale could see the dust on the floor as there were some footprints in the floor and the line of how the dust had moved when they opened the door.

So Ale did the same, she did a cursory check and found that there were some emplacements on the walls, but nothing too serious, it didn't look like they had opened before, so surely it was safe right?

"Brrr.....Powering up" It was not safe.

"DUCK!" Ale screamed as she heard Beatrice walk in after her.

Ale didn't have time to check on her and instead dashed forward, as she ran she started working her Nanites overtime, expanding and taking in material from the [Banked Storage].

Ale grew a pair of convex metal shields on the side of her arms, she didn't have time to check if Beatrice had taken cover or not... She hoped the girl had ducked and not done some stupid as check if there was a duck or something...

God... please don't look for the bird and actually duck, perhaps she should have screamed crouch?

Either way, Ale had no time to worry about that, instead she continued running toward the end of the hallway, as she ran the turret emplacement, that is to say the [Gun] type weaponry.

One by one they came to life, and one by one they all followed the moving target instead of the stationary, Ale knew it, these worked under the same rules that the ones in the testing grounds.

To solve the issue with these there only existed two ways, one was to tank the damage and wait till the rounds ended, or rush and destroy the control node. During the testing phase the control node was set up in a pillar in the center of the arena.

But this was not a testing site, instead it was a reception area, so where could the control node be set up? Ale had suspicions, since there was an obviously newer metal panel at the end of the corridor.

If Ale was to guess, the asshole had set it up in a way that it was obvious what the real goal was and that they needed to endure the barrage, if Ale was to guess then the [Gun] emplacements would continue barraging and at some point they would fail or allow them to move forward.

But Ale had no time to wait for that, if this was indeed the site that the asshole and the purple woman had prepared for her backstory, Ale needed to be the one to deal with it, she needed to find the story about it to prepare and sync with the backstory they prepared for her.

Granted, the story went as if Alexa had ran away from the site. This would make a contradiction with how they had found about her, after all [Teach Baking] had found her in one of the R&D facilities.

She would need to find a way to excuse how she had ran away from here and end there.

So Ale endured the barrage of attacks as she felt some of those hit her legs, but between the armor she was wearing and the regenerating factor she could generate, the damage was being kept at a minimum. She was bleeding quite badly true, but nothing that was actually dangerous since she could regenerate the damage being taken quite easily

Even so, she fought against the pain and continued enduring the barrage as she walked towards the control panel or what she thought was the panel, after enduring the barrage and feeling her arms about to drop from the pain and kinetic force to her arms, by the end, when she was closer to the other wall she had started to move slower.

Step by step Ale walked towards the other end of the wall, the shields no longer at her sides and now she had them on her back, it was funny, she was slower not only because of the wounds, but because

she was keeping her balance, if she continued at her fast speed she had the risk of falling to the ground, and if she was to fall...

Well, she doubted she would be able to stand up again, not because the wounds would be critical (Because they would), but because she would have a somewhat hard time explaining how she had survived. The amount of wounds she had at the moment was roughly around the limit of what a normal regenerative factor core would allow.

And Alexa and Ale were roughly on the far end of what was believable for a Shapeshifter Core, or a Molecular Core for that matter. More regeneration and it would be on the territory of more esoteric Cores, and she still didn't understand quite well the concept of a metaphysical entity tied to the Core and that granted their powers to the Core Users.

It was anathema to her understanding of the [Wish] theory, not that she understood that either, when P4 triggered... There wasn't anything they considered [Wish].

They wanted an out, but if that was what granted them the [Core], then they would have earned a teleportation power, and as far as Ale was aware... Their power was limited to the [Nanites] and the like.

Leaving aside what [Core] and [P4] said or not, not that Ale could trust them. Not after what they did to Main Core.

"Aaand.... Break for me," Ale said when she managed to arrive at the panel, Ale stood sideways, raising one of her shields to protect herself while using the other as a weapon to break the the panel with one strike to it. "And that is how we do it...Any questions?"

Ale said breathing a sigh of relief when the [Gun] emplacements stopped shooting and powered down.

"... I started searching for a ducky...But when Master started running and pulled the Hero Shield I crouched down..." Beatrice said as she walked slowly, keeping her guard up against the [Gun] emplacements.

At least the girl wasn't as dumb as Alexa, Ale could imagine her little sister walking as if nothing was wrong in the world.

"But...did you really need to tank that many shots? That can't be healthy." Beatrice said pointing at the bloodstains and the bloody trail that Ale had left behind.

"If I was alone I may have managed to do it more cleanly, but I needed to stop it as fast as possible, I am not sure if you can dodge the [Gun] emplacement shots after all." Ale answered as she dropped the shields, the material, while durable, was starting to bend in weird ways, and she couldn't absorb it at the moment.

"... I can't dodge bullets, only someone like Mother Rona could do it... Maybe Mom Elisee could? She could probably do it too..." Bewatrice said in a small voice.

What kind of people were those?

How did one dodge a bullet? Or well, a [Gun] emplacement barrage. Ale could at best endure it and protect herself, usually her normal strategy would have been hunkering down and spreading her nanites under the ground straight to the control panel.

Easier and simpler.

"Good, then let's keep at it, I go first and you come after, do give a second look to the rooms I clear, we need to find Body & Soul before the reinforcement arrives." Ale said as she closed her wounds and burned some extra energy and biomass to fix her wounds, she would leave a few gun holes on her armor. It would be weird to have no visible wounds after how the reception area had ended.

Ale was not looking forward to this, somehow Body & Soul had managed to get past this without triggering the defenses, which meant that either they knew the trap ahead of time and turned it off momentarily...

Or whatever Alexanders and the purple woman had done only was active upon Ale's arrival...

And from what Ale knew of Alexanders, that was a real possibility, the asshole would probably get some popcorn and enjoy the show... Ale couldn't detect any recording device, but she wasn't sure if the man had ways to monitor it that were alien or too esoteric to her senses.

Ale would find out the answer, and she would kick the blonde asshole's ass.