

## A Bio 218

### Chapter 218: SHE HAS A GUN!?!?!

The bodies of the three latest victims of Ale's shenanigans had been kicked to the side, when Meli-Meli merely started screaming and frothing at the mouth (That couldn't be healthy... and gave more points to the theory that this girl had rabies.)

The other two zombies started moving forward, while the barrier one stood behind them, standing in front of Meli-Meli, now that Ale could process more data without having to worry about being burned or cut alive (Even though she had suffered both now...Kinda).

Ale started noticing something, her perception about the zombies was being kind of swayed away.

"Alexandra? Are you seeing this?" Ale asked inwardly as she accelerated her Consciousness Stream a few seconds, "I can't perceive quite clearly the face or make of those three zombies, is this a side effect from the mana corruption that Meli-Meli is inflicting on us?"

"Not quite," Alexandra answered, "I can see them well enough, let me patch my perception... send the required data... and there, you should be able to see them now."

And sure enough, Ale was suddenly able to perceive their faces.

"This..." Ale said as she paid closer attention to those faces, they resembled the parents of Meli-Meli. She knew that those two were under the care of a corpo, as that had been part of the debrief she got. "I did not see coming."

As for the third one, the one that had cast the protective sphere, that one looked like Teach [Baker].

The last three lines of defense looked like the people who were closer to Meli-Meli.

"GRAAAAAAH!!!" The first one, the one who looked like Meli-Meli's [Father] stood forward, his fists raised, as he moved them, chunks of rock were ripped out from the ground and flew straight into his hands.

At first, Ale had assumed he had misused his Core Power and was going to get his hands crushed, but the rock moulded into his hands and turned into two gigantic rock fists, and with a growl, the zombie started running forward with the fists raised.

As the zombie came rushing toward Ale, Ale could take her time to analyze it, and after a slow analysis from the visual data, Ale started noticing things.

[Found discrepancy on the flesh around the face, found evidence of amateur modifications.]

[Amateur modifications?]

[Affirmative.]

"It seems as if the flesh was forcibly twisted," Alexandra answered for the artificial intelligence, "From what I can see from the data we can pick from the sensors, there seems to be some weird interaction between the mana wavelength and the flesh. It is as if the mana wavelength is being twisted forcibly from the interior out. And as a result the flesh is being twisted like that."

That...was nasty, and that was something coming from someone who twisted their body, flesh and bones on the daily, flesh needed to be destroyed and reconstructed, or you would end up like that.

Ale had plenty video evidence and files from the time that P4 started experimenting with biomass to shift their body, and flesh used like this was the one that was less sturdy and more prone to be destroyed.

From the type of Core power that this one was showing.

"GRAH!" Speaking of, the zombie that took a step forward raised their fist to the sky and let them crash down.

So Ale used the refilled cannister on her legs and jumped to the side, the explosion from the kinetic force of that strike was enough to spray rocks all around.

As for the two female zombies that remained behind, they raised once again the barrier and protected themselves. The one that made the barriers seemed to be the zombie that had been twisted into a mockery of [Teach Baker].

So while Ale had jumped back, the rock-wearing zombie dashed forward. And then, there it was.

\*SNAP!\*

Ale heard the sound of something crack in the air, looking around she noticed the other zombie suddenly had a black cable-like thing on her hand.

"That is a whip, a weapon designed to tear off the flesh with each strike. It works thanks to the motion generated from the handle; it cracks and momentarily breaks the sound barrier." Alexandra answered within their shared mindscape, "It can be used both as a neutralizing weapon and a fear agent."

Fear agent?

"According to the data left by Main Core, humans have a certain fear to this type of weapon, something about heritage from old times." Alexandra said from the back.

Ale didn't understand what was the fear factor. But what was clear was that with each use of that whip, there was a weird resonance between the female zombie who was turned into the [Mother] of Meli-Meli.

But something was odd, no matter what, a wavelength shouldn't behave like this. Ale had thought about it before, but... was Wavelengths the right way to refer to them?

To [Mana].

P4 had detected it as wavelengths, and so, Main Core also referred to it as such, and neither Ale, Alexa, nor Alexandra ever questioned, but right now?

Mana was not behaving like a wavelength, it was closer to a resonance. Between Meli-Meli and the three zombies, it was a resonance that came from Meli-Meli to the zombies, from the zombies to each other.

It started from simple resonance into a harmony. As they each other aligned, mana was behaving less like a wave and more like energy. Kind of... kind of like... a living thing.

Did that meant that Mana was alive?

"Perhaps we should focus more on what we have at the moment and question the fabric of the universe later?" Alexandra suddenly said yanking Ale from her questioning mood.

And she had the right of it, thanks to this she now had a measure of all the Core Powers remaining.

A strength-enhanced core power that depended on rocks.

"GRAAAAH!" The zombie in question started pulling more and more rocks, by the second looking closer and closer to [Golem]. What Ale noticed too, was that the mana wavelengths (Name temp) were corroding the body of the zombie, as she could see blood seeping between the rocks that started to encase him.

Ale doubted much of this zombie's body was still complete.

The second zombie was the one with the whip, each crack of the whip seemed to empower the [Father] zombie, as with each crack it started moving faster.

And in turn, "Discard the [Arm-mament]," Ale said as the claws and metallic objects of the [Arm-mament] fell to the ground. Ale was now lighter, and in turn, she was able to jump and run farther away.

The [Golem]-wannabe was getting faster and faster with each consecutive crack, so that meant that [Core Power] was of the enhanced type.

And finally...the [Teach Baker] zombie wannabe, the one with the barrier-like powers. Ale wondered if there was some meaning behind the Core Powers and who Meli-Meli twisted them into.

And in turn, if the other four zombies she had disposed had been twisted in figures that meant something too. Why was it like this?

Ale was...perhaps getting a little too philosophical. That was dangerous, her experience as a content creator told her that this was dangerous, when people started to remember and question the past or present in the middle of a fight, it was when they usually would lose a fight, or something precious.

And while Ale didn't have that many precious things (At least not here), she could not allow herself to lose, not here, not after finding out that Meli-Meli could affect them.

"I didn't want to do this, since this will make me look or be closer with the blonde asshole..." Ale said sighing, preparing herself and for a second stopping jumping or running around and as such, the [Golem]-wannabe zombie started rushing toward Ale. "Load up [Gun] type weaponry, pick the appropriate weapon from the database and adapt it to the current body."

Core:

Order Acknowledged.

Loading up database...

Sending query for access to full database...

Query accepted.

Accessing Akasha...

Found several viable weapons...

Comparing to current situation...

Discarding BGM-71 TOW as it does not fulfill the current setting...

Loading up the next viable option.

Loading up Anzio 20mm Anti-Material Rifle blueprint...

Modifying blueprint to fit with current body...

Adapting body...

...

Body modifications designed.

Do you wish to implement?

Y/N

The answer was obvious, the zombie was almost upon Ale and while Ale had her right hand raised at him.

"Yes," Ale answered and felt the telltale feeling of [Mana] of mana reacting, this time also didn't behave like a wave, more like energy or plasma moving.

Ale felt her arm changing, the interior of her arm shifted to accommodate a new tube that grew in place of her bones. She felt her arm solidify as it no longer had the option of folding.

Her column changed from simple bone covered in metal to actual mechanical components, similar to the actuators and mechanical parts that kept P4's [CRAB] body working.

A series of tubes and channels that seemed to work as a way to dissipate...something.

Core:

Shift complete, fire at will.

Ale didn't doubt for a second and didn't bother to check whatever was loaded into the chamber, instead she merely pointed her palm towards the [Zombie] and pulled the trigger.

What followed... well, remember the fire spear that obliterated Ale's arm before?

\*BOOM (2: Electric boogalo)\*

Ale felt a rush of kinetic force and wind pressure be discharged from her back, as the force of the explosion was expelled by the channels and pipes that had been seeded in Ale's body.

The first exit came from the sides of Ale's arm, the same that she had shot that round from. It bloomed as if it was a flower of destruction, Ale could see the gas burning and cooking her flesh alive.

And she was so happy by the fact that during fights it was common for her to kill the pain nerves, the rest of the force was distributed on her back and expelled as gas.

As for her target?

Ale could see the remains of a pair of legs, an arm that was by the side, and... nothing else. The torso, the head, was gone.

Nothing. Ale could see a few pieces of red mist here and there. Perhaps she could see the remains of a purple crystal...?

Or perhaps she was imagining things.

"...This...may have been overkill." Ale said, then looking ahead she noticed that the zombie with the whip was... missing a head.

As for Meli-Meli and the [Teacher Baker] zombie? They stood behind a barrier. One that was cracking.

"[NONONONONONO NOT AGAIN!] And while Meli-Meli seemed to be fine, the last zombie was barely standing, Ale could see white lines of purple light forming across the zombie.

It...

"Isn't that like you Alexandra?" Ale couldn't help but say that as she lowered her arm, she doubted that one would work, and while her nanites were working overtime to give maintenance and prepare a new round. She still could use that arm as a club to hit people in the head or something.

"That is interesting, and brings questions. But was that how I looked when I shoved you to the front?" Alexandra asked back.

"Yes, it was the same...so if it's the same then..." Ale said while Meli-Meli clawed at her face as the last zombie looked at Ale, for a second, she could swear there was the light of intelligence in that zombie's eyes.

And as the second went past, the eyes turned hollow, and the zombie turned into ash. All that remained of that one was a bright white cracked [Core].

"[YOU BROKE TEACH!]" Meli-Meli said turning to Ale, her eyes full of hatred and rage, "[YOU KILLED MOMMY AND PAPA AGAIN!!]"

Meli-Meli said as she stood, all the zombies' remains started shining in purple light as a purple mist started oozing from the bodies and flew straight to Meli-Meli.

Now Mana was behaving like a gas?

"[YOU KEEP DESTROYING EVERYTHING! YOU ARE RUINING EVERYTHING!]" Meli-Meli screeched as the purple mist entered her body.

Core:

Warning, Test Subject MS2 is coming closer to the threshold for Core Evolution.

Evacuation is advised.

Core evolution?

There was a threshold for that? What was the requirement? Mana density? Mana quantity? Emotional distress? Biomass?

The situation around Meli-Meli didn't allow for a clear understanding of what made it special, there wasn't enough data. Ale needed more info, she had data about Core triggering thanks to Alexa and her experiments with Alan and Glory.

But perhaps she could get new data from this? It would benefit Alexa quite greatly if they could get ahead of the curve... Or she could shoot Meli-Meli...

Ale couldn't help but look at her right arm, it was smoking, the flesh was burnt and Ale could not feel a thing from there, it was closer to a piece of metal than flesh...

But she knew that it could shoot again at the moment, if she didn't mind losing the arm, she could shoot it right now. And yet... the data... They needed more info, more data to deal with [Core], even if at the moment that one was helping them.

"[YOU. WILL. PAY. FOR. THAT!]" Meli-Meli said each word one at the time, and as she raised her arm towards Ale.

"Prepare for another mana incursion, have you purged the previous wave?" Ale asked inwardly while raising her arm.

Worst comes to worst, she could survive a day or two without an arm.

Looking at her mana meter it was dangerously close to zero at the moment (3/26). It seems that this transformation was mana expensive, Ale wasn't sure if it was all the modifications that had been done to her body or the materials and ammunition used.

There seemed to be combinations of alloys that she hadn't even thought and the engineering side was a marvel of design as it seemed to account for most things. Even if it had burnt away most of her flesh in one of her arms, the damage was minimal if one compared it with what was left of the zombies.

Both the [Golem]-like zombie and the whip zombie who had been merely grazed, and that wasn't even the [Barrier] zombie who had merely raised a barrier and whose barrier hadn't even been touched.

"[DEATH]" The word... Ale didn't hear the word, she felt the word, as if a vicious claw had struck her at the neck and was crushing it. And on her chest, she saw a purple stake materialize, right above her heart.

[Status report!]

[Notice: No abnormal status found.]

Ale could feel it, the vitality leaving her body, her breath leaving her lungs, the blood flow slowing down.

"[OBLIVION!]" Then before she could recover, before she could ask Alexandra for help, a second stake materialized on her forehead.

She felt her thoughts dissipate, she couldn't think, she couldn't see, she couldn't feel, the world slowly started losing color.

The gray world Ale was used to seeing, the monochrome world of whites and blacks, the world full of people that wanted to use her or was to be used by her, started to turn black.

"[VOID!]" And somehow, the voice of Meli-Meli filled with hatred still made it to her.

She wasn't sure how, but she felt something wanting to penetrate her last line of defense, she felt as if a stake had materialized atop her [Consciousness Stream] and was attempting to rain down on her.

And yet it was barely being repelled, why?

Because of where her Consciousness stream was?

Because for that stake to hit it would need to hit [Core]? Ale wasn't sure. What she knew was... that she needed help.

"I.....need.....an.....adult..." Ale couldn't help but want to utter those words; she had sent for help, and she knew that Beatrice would also ask for help if what she had gleaned from that girl's Core was right, then she would find a way out and get in time to report this.

Then she would manage to get help and come to save her. Right?

She would...

Someone...

Someone would come and save her...

If not her...Someone would come and save Alexa... Ale had to believe that...