

A Bio 220

Chapter 220: Alexandra's Melancholy

The red screen that showed up in front of me felt... ominous. All the status screens we had seen so far tended to be blue; we weren't sure why, or what it was that made it so. When we spoke with Main Core, it was always an internal dialogue, our voices resounding within the mindscape. Or in worst case, a string of information entering into our consciousness.

After some time, that started to turn into communication with [Core] and that always seemed to be in the form of blue screens.

And Alexandra didn't have time to think about it, even if the red blood color was ominous, even if it reeked of a trap, at least it didn't sound like [Core] or the ND0 System.

Statement:

I am neither your Core nor the ND0 System...

Or, well, it would be more appropriate to say that I am not your ND0 System...Wait a second...

Alexandra started to notice it, the world... was not turning gray, it was more like there was suddenly a static that started to grow around them. It slowly appeared from cracks in the space that grew around them.

As if it was spreading slowly but surely.

"There, will this make it easier for you to process it then?" A bloodied hand came from one of the cracks and forcibly ripped it open.

Slowly from there the small hand pulled as if wanting to climb out from...somewhere, first the left hand that had come, then the right hand was pulled out from within the inky black abyss that clung to the body.

Then the head, a dirty blonde head came out with dried blood atop her. Then the torso, the waist, legs...and when all of that was out, Alexandra could take in the image that had come from it.

"...You....what....how...?" Alexandra asked, confused, completely forgetting what was happening outside.

"You can call me... what can you call me actually? Alexa used to call me granpa, but in this form I guess that is no longer a good analogy." The...thing in front of her looked like Alexa. "Call me...Yes, call me Viv if you must."

No, that was wrong, this thing used a body like Alexa, as far as she could see it was the same original blueprint, but the way she was wearing it was wrong. She was dressed in the same white sundress that Alexa had made, but this one was filled with cuts and holes. Her body(And the sundress) was covered in blood, both dry and fresh.

Her hair was messy, and like P4, her eyes were crimson red.

But there was something wrong about this...thing. Alexandra couldn't see herself referring to this as anything else but a thing. It... It lacked the Human factor.

And while that was weird since Alexa wasn't the most normal (Nor was Ale or Alexandra for that matter).

"...What is happening right now?" Alexandra decided to move on, she needed information. It had been weird, Melissandra's power suddenly changed and no matter how much Alexandra tried.

She couldn't seem to stop it from affecting Ale.

"Hmm.... To say it in simpler terms," The thing said while tilting her head to the side, in anyone else it would look cute, but when this thing did it, Alexandra couldn't help but shiver, it was...wrong. "Meli-Meli is [Implanting] the [Idea] of death into your clone."

What?

"I guess you wouldn't understand it, the concepts are [Foreign] to you aren't they?" The thing said nodding its head, Alexandra couldn't help but be disgusted by the mockery of Alexa's mannerisms, "Your clone is being rewritten into the [Fact] that she is dead."

"What?" Alexandra couldn't help but jump at that. "WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY REWRITTEN?!?!?"

That was important, their identity as a person started as a program, so being rewritten was a serious issue.

"...I think you are interpreting it wrong, I know our identity starts and ends as an artificial intelligence, but that is not what I meant." The thing that called itself Viv said, "I mean it literally, [Words] can have power... Or could have some [Power] before, not so much now. And that girl is tapping into that [Forbidden] power. She is rewriting causality to make it so that your clone's reality is that of [Death] so that she is cast upon [Oblivion] and falls into the [Void]."

Hah?

"... That is not how words work." Alexandra said dumbfounded, but then looking around sighed, "God damned Core Power Shenanigans."

It had to be something like that. Alexandra wasn't sure how this thing knew the full effects of Melissandra's Core Power, but she seemed to be connected to the ND0 System, which in turn, seemed to know more than it let on.

"Don't tell me the bimbo stuck to you too..." The thing said sighing, "We are wasting time if that is the case, I had hopes for you...But I guess you are like that bimbo too. Should have known."

Like who? Did this... Thing speak to other people? Alexandra had seen her come from a weird crack in space, but she had assumed that it just went to a deeper part of P4 or [Core]. But this implied that there was something weird going on, this thing had come from somewhere else?

"Okay, so. Your clone will [Die] that has been set, there is no two ways to go about it, someone has to [Die] the [Idea] has been planted, it is borrowed power. But it comes from a fully settled power system." The thing spoke as if it were a definite thing. "But we have options, and by we I mean you. Because you are the one who cares. I couldn't care less for what happens to Alexa's flawed clones."

"...Not clone." Alexandra said between gritted teeth, "We are our own person, we aren't Alexa's clones. Nor are fake."

"So you say," The thing said with a weird smirk, "But there is hope...Here is the answer to your questions, to your plight, and the key to [Your Survival]."

And the thing raised a hand, from the palm of her hand a weird black sludge-like substance started to come, as if there was something inherently wrong, soon that sludge-like liquid turned into a red screen.

Notice:

Blueprint - Transmission Core: Allows the transmission of Mana between a main core and a secondary core to expand the area of influence of your mana.

Blueprint - Backup Core: Allows saving the state of a [Core] into a secondary Core to ensure the survival of the host.

Do you wish to accept this data?

Y/N

"This.... isn't possible." Alexandra said as she read it, the information was there, she could see fragments of it, but she couldn't internalize it, not till she accepted the data transmission. "This...what do you expect me to do with this?"

"Easy, you will take Alexa and make a secondary body, then leave this one with the... girl, just move all the Mana and your baggage, that way the Singh girl will get to focus on the former body and you get to live. Everyone happy." The thing said smiling. As if it was the most obvious answer, "All you need to do is accept the data transmission... I can even throw the [Formulae] so you can make a new clone if you are really into that... It was always Alexa's weak point... [Playing family]... Didn't think I would find one that was into playing family with [Herself], but the multiverse is large I guess..."

Alexandra's hand was moved as the [thing] took hold of her hand and pushed the Yes button for her.

The full data was then inserted into her Consciousness Stream, and the idea... The hideous idea that this [thing] wanted to do... Alexandra closed her eyes and organized her thoughts.

Ale... couldn't hear anything here. The connection that had been there was severed. Alexandra didn't know how that [Thing] had done it, but Alexandra couldn't feel or contact Alexa or Ale. So if she was to do anything. Then she needed to decide it alone.

And so, Alexandra started to think. How to deal with this?

What could she do? How could they return back? What could she do to ensure that Ale returned back home?

What could she do to help Alexa?

...

"Fine," Alexandra said, swallowing the lump that had formed in her throat.

"I knew you would see the light, now..." The [Thing] said happily as its smile turned vicious, "I am one for sending last messages, I suggest that you-"

"Tell me how to take in this weird idea mana into myself." Alexandra said as she steeled her resolve.

"...tch." The whole demeanor of the [Thing] shifted, her aura, her presence, her face, it all soured in but a second, "You disgust me, you hypocrite."

"Tell me how to do it or I will attempt to do it by myself, consequences be damned." Alexandra said again, glaring at the [Thing].

"You will not do such reckless thing," The [Thing]

said as she ripped open the rift from where she had come, "You would not risk it, if you fail at it, all that will happen is that you will help the [Idea] seep deeper into Alexa, killing her current [Self], P4 will resurface again and all that will happen is that a new Alexa will wake up as if she had just escaped from the test site."

...Would she?

"We no longer have Main Core, there are no second-" Alexandra started saying.

"Main Core? That useless thing? Here, have a new one." The [Thing] said as she spat at Alexandra's feet, a marble landed instead of saliva. A shining purple marble that slowly turned darker and darker, an [Ai Core]. "That is the same one you had on day one. Want a second one? A third? Don't be coy with me, you too can make them. Hell, even Alexa can, and she is using her powers wrong."

.....Of course, they all knew that. But even so, not one of them had done it, it was...

"Main Core died for Alexa. We will not tarnish his-" Alexandra said picking up the [Ai Core] and throwing it back to the [Thing] who merely caught it and crushed it under her palm.

"That is not a him but a thing, like me, like P4... Like you... Like every single goddamned mockery of [Human] in your fancy simulation. Or do you prefer [World] instead? Perhaps you like that term they used in the parallel world Alexanders originally fled to? [Story] was it?" The [Thing] laughed, "I bore of this, ask the NDO System to help you. And see if you can start using [Our] powers instead of the bullshit they use her. [Core Powers]? Such a useless take in the [Mana Manipulation]."

"Wait! How do I-" Alexandra said as the [Thing] slipped back into the crack, the world around her slowly mended, the cracks healed, and the static that had surrounded her slowly started to go away, "[Core]! Help me!"

Alexandra pleaded.

Warning:

Error, error, error...

Unaccounted virus detected... Purging...

Virus not found...

Analyzing...

No corruption spread...

Analyzing Alexandra.subper... No errors within database.

Analyzing Ale.subper... No errors within database.

Analyzing host... No errors within database.

"What do you mean no errors!?!?!" Alexandra screamed at the sky within their shared mindscape, "Ale is going to die!"

Notice:

To die is Human.

To pay for our mistakes is human.

To climb through adversity and find happiness even in the darkest of times... that too is Human.

"Don't start with the semantics! Help me save my family!" Alexandra said as she pulled the blueprints that [Thing] had left her, "Tell me how to use this!"

Warning:

....foreign blueprints detected...

Starting purge of dangerous knowledge...

Error...Error...Error...

Data is an [Original] blueprint of P4, data stored within Akasha using the ND0 System via the pathway created by the R4 substance...

Dangerous knowledge? Alexandra could see why, and it soured her mood. This was the ultimate key, the way for them to live as a family, without having to force Alexa into a situation where she would be alone.

And Alexandra was probably going to die before giving this data to her sisters.

"Tell me how to use it, that ■■■■■...What?" Alexandra couldn't say it? Why? She had been speaking with it normally. Why not?

Notice:

The entity you spoke with is under a different set of [Rules], the causality does not allow foreign [Systems] from affecting an inhabitant of this world.

Only host should be able to speak or commune with that entity.

And as if it was not enough, a mechanical voice started resounding, "To use these, envision what you desire. Focus your mind on what you wish to make, the materials you will use, the way they will affect reality and twist the causality so it is." The voice was similar to the one that ■■■■■ used. Devoid of real emotions, only... not as an eldritch entity, but closer to a machine. "Then focus on your mana and make it happen."

"Ale has used most of our mana already," Alexandra said as she followed the instructions, all but the last one, "Will it work with the remaining mana we have?"

"You are wrong," The mechanical voice of [Core] spoke, "Ale.sub per used our mana, what you need to use is yours. Not Alexa's mana, but yours... This blueprint, this hideous thing that was gifted to you is what will allow it. So shape your hopes, imbue them into your thoughts and give voice to what you desire..."

Alexandra...felt as if she knew what [Core] was saying, as if she knew what the unsaid words were. And so, she closed her eyes, thought about what she needed, what she had to do. What she would use...

And the consequences of what this would end up causing, the angry face of Ale when she found out, the crying face of Alexa when she came running for her and found an empty bed...

But even so, Alexandra would do it. And before she wasted more time, the world around her was filled in a blinding golden light.

"I....need...an.....adult...." The first thing Alexandra heard was the voice of Ale making that stupid joke she loved to make.

"[PAY FOR YOUR SINS AND DIE YOU HIDEOUS MONSTER!!!!]" The second thing she heard was the raving words of Melissandra Singh, a poor child who had been wronged and who no one cared for.

Looking down at herself, Alexandra noticed that she...didn't have a body, not really, she was closer to an ethereal form, with pulsing energy spreading around and waiting for her.

Somehow she knew what she needed to do, so the first thing she did was condense it, taking in all the mana in the area, she knew that she probably didn't need as much, and that it would make her Core unstable, but she...

"Will not live long enough to suffer the consequences," Alexandra barked a laugh while she said that.

"...Ale....xan.....dra...?" Ale said as the mana started pooling as if suddenly a storm had arrived in this underground sewer.

Alexandra could see that... perhaps she had bitten more than she had expected, the mana was starting to turn unstable. Would she be unable to help further her little sister?

[Stabilize], [Condense], [Birth], [New Hope].

Suddenly, Alexandra felt as if the unruly mana had started to calm down, and at the same time, she felt the...what had that ■■■■■ said? Idea?

Yes, she felt as if she understood why that thing had called it like that, the concept behind it was so different from how Alexa and every other [Core Users] had used their powers, but this?

She could understand why it was useful. Not that she would be able to use it for long... But perhaps...

"Hello Ale," Alexandra said as the mana finally stabilized, and with a flick of her will, she condensed it into a body. Even without access to the database, Alexandra knew how to make mana flesh, making a workable body using Mana was not that hard, and they had done that before.

Even if she didn't have access to the Mk2 Nanites, she had access to a few Mk1 Nanites, the mana-enhanced ones. So making this work by overloading them was easy.

"Alexandra?" Ale said, confused, then looked down at herself, then back at Alexandra, "How?"

Ale removed her faceplate, and Alexandra could see the confused expression on the little...on the girl. She also noticed how the eyes of the girl turned dim for half a second, only to return to normal, more confused than ever.

"Why...what?" Ale asked once more.

Alexandra walked slowly to the girl, this new body was not a permanent solution, it was...weaker, she had made a skintight bodysuit, the same design as Ale but one that was for bigger people.

"During a mission, always put on the mask Rhapsody," Alexandra said kneeling in front of Ale, taking the mask and securing it on the face of the girl, "It is basic knowledge."

"You....I...I was dying... I could feel it, I...I should..." Ale said confused.

"No, you aren't going to die... I made sure of that," Alexandra said, shaking her head. She could feel the mana starting to want to run rampant, the corrupted and twisted mana that Melisandra had been using, the one that she was continuously absorbing too.

"How are you here?" Ale asked, ignoring Melisandra completely, "What... What did you do? This... this isn't possible, our powers don't work like this, our Nanites don't work like this."

"That... Was actually easy," Alexandra said standing up straight and turning back to look at Melisandra. "I wish I had enough time to explain it to you, but there is a more important thing that I need to do right now..."

Towards the reason that her precious family almost died, the reason that Alexa would have to mourn the loss of someone... The reason she would not be able to see how Ale and Alexa matured as humans.

"[NDO System...]" Alexandra turned to look up, towards the ceiling? No.

Towards the sky, towards the ever watching entity that managed this [World], towards that.

So Alexandra screamed her lungs out, "[.....I WISH!]" and said the words as she fully painted her will into the mana that wanted to rampage inside her, and clutched at her chest, just above the Crystal geode that was forming inside her.

At the Core that she had triggered.

Even as the mana ran rampant through her body, even as her right arm, the one that she was using to clutch her chest, slowly started to grow crystals.

Even as her life was being burned away. Alexandra Saintsworhs, at this moment, at this time. Would make sure her wish was heard. Her family would be safe, her sisters would live...Even if she had to die for it.