A Bio 229

Chapter 229: She is…alive?

"Wake up!" Gabriel screamed as he jumped away, the mana was returning to the area, but not nearly fast enough for him to use his powers, and he was finding out how much he depended on those same Core Powers he had spent most of his adult life cursing.

Edwards... Their big brother, Vulcanus.

He was a known Tinkerer Core type, or that is what everyone had thought he was, he could deal with machines, that was his thing. Be it understanding, building or repairing.

Everyone accepted that, Eleanore had confirmed it several times, that Edwards power was about that. But this?

This was not merely control, this spread further beyond merely controlling a computer. This... This was an actual power coming out from Myths.

It made sense why Edwards had picked that name, Vulcanus. The god of the forge. From the ancient Roman myth. They had all seen it coming when their organization was called Haephestus Forge.

A second mention to a god of the forge. Edwards power seemed to give him absolute control over mechanical components, this did not mean only machines, he had somehow made his necklace into a new Core and then built a body for himself using the machinery within this base.

Gabriel could see the open and ripped out parts of the place, and then there was the fact that he had somehow created Nanites and used them to further fine-tune his body.

Was his power a Nanite Core? No, it was more like he seemed to be able to control the microscopic machines to do his bidding. It was not the first time they had found a Core power that could control the nanites thanks to a side step.

He himself technically could teleport as a side effect and not as a direct means to his powers.

Not that it helped him much at the time.

"Fight it off Edwards!" Gabriel screamed as he jumped farther away and shot the last remaining rounds of his handgun, he would start bringing more spare magazines in the future.

But that was for a future he was not sure would come, luckily for him, SuperForce was nearby, the scoutboy would surely help him... He was one of Edwards only friends from the before.

Now if he could keep him...

At least that was his plan for now, as something unexpected happened as the sound of a thunderclap resounded behind them, Edwards inmediately froze mid attack.

And seeing the chance, Gabriel himself jumped back as he holstered his weapon and pulled one of his plegable batons and prepared for anything, had Vulcanus called more reinforcement?

The area where the burst of light had showed suddenly seemed to brim with Mana for half a second, only for all that mana to converge in the center once more.

Unlike when Vulcanus had showed, this time there was no sound of metal grinding or twisting. Instead the sound of a couple steps sounded as the ball of lightning started to form the figure of a man.

A man wearing a suit of body armor, the same armor that the alleged brother of Rhapsody liked to wear. They still were doing preliminary investigation on him, but the fact that he had arrived...

"And that worked," The man spoke in a cheery tone, completely against the serious and melancholic sense that the room had before he arrived, "Hello! I have a priority delivery, is one of you Edwards Black?"

"[...He is not here at the moment...Mas-]" Vulcanus seemed to want to say something but there was the feeling of a glare, and he shut up in a second, "[What...What can this worthless clump of burned processors do for you?]"

Vulcanus fell to his knees and deflated, "[The charge under me has died... the only hope for revival and fixing it is not working... And the means to achieve it escape my grasp.]" There was this... sadness to Vulcanus.

More emotions than Gabriel had ever seen in the machine in years.

And all because one Minion had died. And now they stood in front of his kin.

"I'm sorry," Gabriel said holstering the batons, "My name is Gabriel Light. I am the direct supervisor of Rhapsody...your sister."

The man walked towards the dead body of Rhapsody, then kneeled besides her, placing a small spherical device by the side.

"I know it must be hard to believe as she doesn't look like you last saw her," Gabriel continued speaking as he walked besides the man, keeping Vulcanus on his line of sight too, just in case the machine lost control once more, "But that is your sist-"

"I knew it," The man said with the small undertone of a laugh, "Told you Sapphire, your cousin made a mistake."

Mistake?

"Sir... I know it's hard to believe, but that is-" Gabriel continued speaking only to almost raise his voice when the armored man pulled out a knife from his belt and in one swift and what looked practiced motion, the man cut one of Rhapsody's arms. "...Is no one sane left?"

The man ignored him and continued mumbling something to himself, Gabriel noticed that the part where the man had sank the knife didn't seem to be... quite normal either.

The flesh had a blue fluorescent hue to it, and while it should have had blood, there was none.

"See?" The man said with glee on his voice, "This is not Alexa, this is... something else... perhaps she discarded a decoy? Did we found evidence of her using decoys before?"

Who was he even speaking to? Because Gabriel was sure it wasn't to him, was he speaking to Vulcanus? Did he know Edwards too?

"...Not within the files huh...What about the info dumps? Did we got all the data from the testing facility?" The man asked again.

No wait!

"You have the files?" Gabriel asked pulling at the shoulder of the armored man, "You know who is the owner of this place? What happened to him?!?"

It took a second for the armored man to react, as if he hadn't expected someone to interrupt him.

"...Gabriel Light you said right?" The armored man said taking off Gabriel's hand from his shoulder, "To answer your question, yes. I have all the data of the experiments, testing and recording that Alexa went through as a test subject."

He did...? Then... He knew where this was.

"As for the one who experimented on Alexa..." The man said turning to Gabriel as he stood, for some reason his pressence seemed to grow as he stood tall.

Gone was the playful mood, "What does it matter to you?" The man asked as lightning started dancing around him, as if the lightning was awaiting for his command to strike him down.

"To get justice to your late sister." Gabriel answered, not allowing his voice to tremble or show weakness.

The other figure laughed at his declaration though.

"Would you see this?" The man said as he turned to stare at Vulcanus, who was mysteriously quiet all this time. "What do you think about this? He wants to get justice to the ones that set up the human experimentation experiments."

"[A foolish statement that comes from not knowing his place in the world.]" Vulcanus said as much, its voice even, and... deferential.

"The Saintsworths can't be allowed to get away with this." Gabriel stated, "If you have evidence of his misgivings, you could use your position to ask for justice!"

Gabriel wasn't sure how high he was within the Saintsworths, but his casual demeanor and the technology he had access to. Besides the ease with how he broke into high security facilities for something as stupid as deliver mail? It implied he was high, to that we add the fact that Rhapsody herself had a high standing as she had access to the Saintsworths mainframe.

It was just impossible for Rhapsody's brother to be normal.

"So he says..." The brother said, shaking his head, was he disappointed? "Vulcanus, what do you think? If I go forward with this, will we be able to judge the Saintsworths council? Could we put a dent to the high command?"

"[...Debatable.]" Vulcanus answered, "[The most likely outcome is that at best the data would be sealed again and the only one at risk of suffering from the outcry would be the current front of the Saintsworhts.]"

The front?

"But it would be a success! We could at least disturb the plans of their blonde asshole of a CEO!" Gabriel said turning to look at the placid face of Rhapsody, "Her sacrifice will not be in vain! Even if neither of you wants to, I will do it myself!"

Then the mood turned weird.

"*Le sigh*" The brother of Rhapsody seemed to want to facepalm, "Sapphire, make sure the boyscout does not come in."

The boyscout?

Actually, why hadn't SuperForce come in? He should have arrived by now.

"Oh...thank god for his disregard for the good of the corpos, keep him going in circles, also ensure that nothing leaves here..." The brother continued talking to whoever he was communicating with, "Vulcanus, do your job. Ensure no data storage device can record anything that happens here, I will not throw this identity away just because of this."

Then the man started to fiddle with his helmet.

"[As you wish Master.]" And Vulcanus said as much as Gabriel felt a pulse of mana flood the area, followed by the unmistakable sound of electronics being fried.

No wait, Master?

"No...." Gabriel said as a thought started worming into his mind, Rhapsody was someone who managed to become a scion of the Saintsworths after being recognized.

She didn't even need to prove the purity of her bloodline, or even her knowledge, nothing. No tests of any type, no test, nada.

"You know me as [The Delivery Guy] sometimes..." The man said as he pulled out the front of his helmet, removing the faceplate. The face that came out from behind that was one Gabriel knew well.

The blonde hair, the blue eyes, the insufferable smirk on his face, and the eyes that seemed to imply that they knew all that you wanted to say before you even thought about saying.

"And other times I am known as the most powerful man in Terra Invicta," The face and leader of the current Saintsworths generation, the Nascent Scion of the Saintsworths, "Alexanders Saintsworths."

"...then...." Gabriel said turning to look at the dead body of Rhapsody on the floor, "Rhapsody..."

"Is not this woman," Alexanders said pulling from his belt a test tube and scrapping some of the crystals he stored those in the test tube, only to pull more and more.

The man took flesh, the blue liquid that was dripping and should be blood, and even some pieces of the hair of Rhapsody.

"This here... is someone else, something else." The man said turning to Gabriel, "You asked about the research of the place where Alexa was kept all her life, what do you know about the experimentation they did there?"

The man turned his attention to him next, his eyes never wavered and the man didn't even seem worried about being in danger.

Even though he was alone... or well, Gabriel couldn't count on Vulcanus right now, the... machine seemed subservient to Alexanders for some reason.

"... First, let me ask you this." Gabriel said swallowing the bile that wanted to come out of his mouth as he was about to ask something he didn't want to know, "... What did you do to Edwards Black? Why is...Why is he acting like that?"

He needed to know if the Saintsworths had done something to Vulcanus, the fact that he had acted like that... That he seemed so... servile to the Saintsworths.

"Edwards Black? Ah right, Eddy B..." Alexanders said in that fake childish tone he used sometimes when he wanted to be a smart ass, "... Right, that is important to him... I know Sapphire..."

The man continued speaking to himself, but after a second he took a breath and acted as if nothing had happened before.

"Edwards Black, the first singularity... at least to the world at large." Alexanders said once more, then turning to Vulcanus, "Did you do something to him Vulcanus?"

"[No Master, Edwards Black is currently in his office, his processing power is at the bare minimum, but he is still alive.]" And Vulcanus answered as such, "[Should I dispose of him? If my identity was breached then his use has arrived at the end.]"

"Nah," Alexanders answered before Gabriel could even react, "Leave him be, you really shouldn't talk like that about your other half. We still don't even know if the Core would die with him or not. You can't risk your usefulness like that."

....

"Is... Is he even aware?" Gabriel asked as he balled his fist and bit his tongue, he wanted to scream, to trash, to do something! "Does he know that you two... that you..."

"That half his psyche is a program that only wants to work for me?" Alexanders said before he could even formulate the correct way to ask it, "No, Edwards is not aware. The few times we tried to breach that with him he tried to kill himself. So we stopped trying to explain. This is not something I did because I wanted, this is the result of the experiments they did on you all. Vulcanus is an attempt at emulating my personal assistant."

"[Lady Sapphire would differ.]" Vulcanus spoke afterwards, "[As she would say. I am a failed attempt.]"

"I mean, you can't emulate perfection. But yes," Alexanders said nodding, "If I could release him I would, but doing so would only make him search for a new owner within the Conglomerate, and the next in line would be someone from the high council. And they can't be allowed this kind of power."

"... So you keep the leash, or someone worse would grab it from you?" Gabriel spat at the ground as he said those words, "I refuse to believe you."

"You can also refuse to believe the sky is blue, but it does not make it less true." Alexanders shrugged, "So, my turn. What do you know about the experiments?"

"They experimented with your sister in an attempt to create a weapon, they ripped out her flesh and replaced it with machinery till she managed to awaken her Core Powers." Gabriel said, the face of Alexanders seemed confused for some reason, did he thought he knew nothing? Hah! "Then when she awoke her power as a Doppelganger Core, she stole her own previous identity. So we ended with a younger Alexa... instead of the one that had the true age. Your age."

Alexanders then turned to look at Vulcanus as if to ask something, but before he could open his mouth a look of understanding came into his eyes and he nodded.

"Yes..." Alexanders said nodding, "Well, this is kind of that... This here?"

The man said pointing at the corpse, "Is... an application of that." An application?

"This is the perfect body of a human made out from Mana." Alexanders said placing four small marbles making a rectangle around the body of Rhapsody, "Energy made it into something physical, then used as a medium for... something else. As if that wasn't enough, she probably triggered a Core. Or Alexa overheated her own when doing whatever she did here. But this? This is not my sister, but a spare body of her."

...A spare?

"Yes," Alexanders said, nodding, his eyes shining in azure lighting, "Alexa Saintsworths is alive and probably somewhere else... the question is... where did she go?"

....Rhapsody...was alive?

Then...

"[Mistress... I didn't fail her?]" Vulcanus body started lossing cohesion, but Gabriel was too busy focusing on something else, the four marbles had started emitting a blue energy and slowly they made a translucent stretcher that raised the body of Rhapsody.

Or well, the spare body that Alexanders had said.

"What are you going to do?" Gabriel asked as Alexanders put a few extra marbles atop the body, and soon enough a box of hard light covered fully the body, hiding it from sight.

"I am taking this back and learning as much as I can before the crystals evaporate and turn into dust." The man answered putting on his faceplate again, "What Alexa did here... will advance our technology in cultivating flesh and mana organs. Will probably help us with the creation of new prosthesis for missing limbs... And maybe help us heal those whose bodies can't work. Heck, if we can find the way she made a whole ass new body from pure mana, we could give new opportunities to those with a bad trigger."

...Somehow Gabriel didn't think those would be the actual uses of the research using that body.

But... could he stop him?

Could he stop the man who stood at the peak of the Saintsworths? Before they had assumed [The Delivery Guy] was a B-list Core User. But... Everyone knew that the Nascent Scion of the Saintsworths was dangerous.

How more dangerous would he be if he awoke a Core Power?

Gabriel couldn't do anything as the man walked away.

"Oh right, it goes without saying, but I was not here. And no one is to know that Alexa is my sister, unless she tells that to people of course," The man said before walking out, he hadn't even asked where the exit was. "And you can decide by yourself if you tell Edwards or your pals about Vulcanus."

And like that, the man left, leaving him alone with the crumbling body of Vulcanus.

"....We will need to talk about this Vulcanus." Gabriel said turning to stare at his boss, his friend, his saviour...

"[...We will.]" The machine said as more and more of his pieces fell, "[We will call you at a later date. The cohesion of this body is arriving at its end, Edwards will wake up soon. I need to curate his memories. Do not speak of this to anyone else.]"

And like that, the body of Vulcanus crumbled away. Leaving him alone, with the corpse of their target...
The same girl he had stopped Rhapsody from finishing before.

Was... was this the result of his mistake?

Gabriel Light couldn't help but wonder, was this for the better? Or worse?