

A Bio 243

Chapter 243: There is no mana...?

Ale wasn't quite sure what to say or do now that she was pretending to wake up, what she did notice was that the clothing she was wearing was not the same she had before going unconscious.

A second to think about gave her the answer as to why, she had been shoved into a machine that used strong magnetic waves, her clothes... had plenty metal in it. It was lucky that her nanite factories didn't use magnetic materials. A lesson learned from her time as P4 when they had fought against a test subject who specialized in electromagnetic warfare. Looking back on it, that had been a series of test subjects that they hadn't seen often.

That particular one used a combination of magnetism and black sand made out of iron to attack.

It was not very effective, as it didn't have enough power to keep the iron sand cohesive and fused to make an actual threat, but since it could rip out the metallic parts, it had taken P4 quite a long time to dispose of it.

And by the end P4 was mostly organic.

It was thanks to that encounter that P4 had moved from a fully mechanical form to a half-hybrid form that fused mechanical with organic. And that in turn was the reason that Alexa, Ale and... Alexandra didn't fully embrace the mechanical or the organic.

Well, Alexa and Alexandra usually moved more in the organic form, while Ale was probably the only one that truly fused mechanic with organic.

But that was how Ale liked to roll.

"How are you feeling?" Before Ale could continue checking on her current condition more closely, she heard the sound coming from one of the... speakers atop the walls.

For a second Ale couldn't help but smile remembering the last time they saw one of those. When they were in a containment cell in the laboratory.

"What happened?" Ale asked aloud, she was used to being able to interact with the people who spoke to her and hadn't stopped to think for a second about if they could hear her or not.

"You fainted," The voice of Vivian Kellet said from the speaker, "We took that chance to get an MRI of you since you were sleeping."

A... credible lie, if not because Ale already had heard the whole truth after waking up, more so since Albireo had provided the video log and Ale had studied that hour in accelerated time.

"My clothes?" Ale asked touching the white... what was this even? Ale pulled at the fabric and noticed that it was... soft, was it silk?

[Analyzed substance, results: Silk.]

Silk?

The spider's construct?

Was her clothes made out of... Alexandra's crush?

Ale didn't know what to feel about that, besides wiping out the tears that threatened to flood out of her eyes.

"Is something the matter? Are you hurt?" The voice of Miriam Eversoul came from the speaker this time, "Do you need something?"

Ale took a second to recenter herself, she needed to remind herself that her data was being streamed live to the bluehaired woman, she was not safe. Not here, not anywhere, not now and probably never.

Not while she was under the surveillance of the NDO System. A system that... allegedly, didn't exist.

"I'm fine," Ale said, her voice trembling just a little, she wasn't controlling all her bodily reactions, now that tears had formed, it was impossible for her mood to be normal in one go after all, that would show too many irregularities, and that in turn could turn to questions.

Questions she couldn't answer.

"So, what happened to my clothes?" Ale asked again, "You didn't answer."

Ale was aware that they hadn't answered because she suddenly started crying, but she would refuse to let that show, she wanted control over the situation, and if they allowed her...

"The study we put you under required to change you into those clothes, we are sorry that we couldn't ask before," Miriam Eversoul answered, "The machine behind you is like a big magnet, do you know magnets?"

Ale almost scoffed, actually, she did scoff.

"Yes," Ale said, turning to look at the machine, which was basically a giant plastic donut with a bed (A very uncomfortable bed), "So you put me under a gigantic electromagnetic magnet... without checking if I had metal implants?"

Ale was not angry about that, more so she was annoyed, she was not immortal or protected by Fate like Alexa, if they hadn't encountered that magnetic user test subject as P4...

If her AI Cores were of normal make... actually, had her nanites been affected?

[Currently regenerating nanite swarms, only MK1 Nanites are available.]

Main Core answered the prompt quickly enough, was it becoming smarter? Ale wasn't sure, it was still pretty dumb after all.

"As far as we could infer from our passive scans of Alexa, she didn't have any metallic implant." Vivian Kellet answered instead of Miriam Eversoul this time, "So there was no reason to worry about that."

...There was no reason to worry about that indeed. Except that Ale's body was not the same as Alexa.

If Alexa had summoned the altered blueprint... If Ale had updated her base blueprint to the modified combat version... Then her body would have probably exploded when the mechanical modifications were ripped out of her.

That would have created more questions than anything.

"I see... Good thing I don't have anything metallic then." Ale said smirking as she stood up, only to stumble a few steps as she recalibrated manually her sense of balance.

It seemed that she hadn't purged out all the side effects of the anesthetic agent quite yet.

"Sit down a few minutes more," Vivian Kellet said from the speaker as the door was open.

"Easy now," Miriam Eversoul had walked into the room. Ale noticed the woman's clothes had changed, she was now wearing a white gown too, "I changed since my clothes also have quite the amount of metallic decorations too."

Miriam Eversoul smiled as she offered a hand to Ale, this was the same woman that had said that she preferred Alexa over her a few minutes before she was drugged?

Ale couldn't help but shake her head at these antics, what was with adult people trying to gaslight them?

"Right..." Ale merely said that as she took the hand and stumbled forward, a quick calculation of the amount of anesthetic agent and the actual reaction from her body mass said that she should feel the effects for at least another half an hour.

Unless she manually purged herself or... refreshed the blueprint.

But that option would include a blue light and the creation of an extra set of clothes... Not that she couldn't then reabsorb the material back, but that would end with wastage as a fifth of the material would be taken as price by the weird space that they used to store the extra biomass...

Then again, was it actually biomass? They were using metallic elements, minerals and even liquids and gases, those weren't biomass.

"I'll ask Vivian if she has some medicine to help with the after effects of... your blackout." Miriam Eversoul said after helping Ale walk towards a small room that had a black curtain, Ale found her clothing in a small table by the side, the small room had also a tall mirror.

Was she supposed to change?

Ale couldn't help but look at her reflection, she could see a slight redness around her eyes and her nose looked quite red too, was this because of her breakdown? Had she cried that much?

Or was it something that happened while she was unconscious.

"All it would take was a thought..." Ale couldn't help but said as she started grabbing her clothes and putting it in the order she would wear.

A thought, that was all it would take for her face to return to normal, for her body to return to normal, a proof that her control over her body was absolute... And yet...

She still had limited amount of time before the last gift of Melissandra Singh came back full in power to banish her back to the mindscape, at least till they found a way to fully purge it.

Alexandra had done the heavy lifting, now she only needed to find a way to make the world understand that she was here to stay. And that was the issue right?

What was she supposed to do now?

They allowed them to live in their own apartment because it was implied that Alexandra would take care of their food and the things that an adult would usually need to do. But they didn't have access to that. Not anymore.

"Everything okay in there?" Miriam Eversoul's voice came from the outside, "Need help?"

"I can dress myself alone," Ale answered as she quickly took off the white dress they have put her in. She then moved on to dress herself a piece of clothing at the time.

She took her time as she wanted to think about the problem. What would [Eleanore] say?

She probably would use this chance to corner them and shove them into one of those orphanages wouldn't she?

Would [Big Sister] vouch for them? Would [Golem]?

Probably, she wasn't sure if they would accept them into their houses, Alexa was.... too much to deal with, even for Ale. And Ale... against all her better instincts, did care greatly for Alexa.

"What to do indeed..." Ale sighed once more, she wasn't supposed to deal with these problems!

That was Alexandra!

But... could they revive her?

Her base instincts told her that it wasn't possible, Alexa would never do that. And if she tried to do it, Ale would make sure to hit the girl in the head with a book.

Death...

Death was something that meant the end, even if they didn't like it, it was something meaningful. Ale didn't want the last moments of Alexandra to mean nothing, she had... she had sacrificed herself, Ale didn't even want to think about what the older woman had thought at those moments.

Why had she decided to do that?

She must have known right?

That Ale was also willing to do that, even if it scared her, if there was a way to save Alexandra and Alexa... She would have taken it!

There was no need for Alexandra to be the one to do it.

It would have been for the better if Alexandra was the one remaining! She could take care of Alexa!

"Vivian said that you can drink this, it will make you feel better." Before Ale could react there was a cup of water besides her.

Miriam Eversoul had walked into the changing room, "I know... that we haven't started in the best footing possible, what with my questioning and the tests..." That was an understanding of the century.

At least to Ale, not a single person here was an ally.

"So... We checked, the woman called Sky Venti is no longer registered as your legal guardian, there is only one person there." Miriam Eversoul sighed as she sat in the small bench where her clothes had been before.

Ale was already dressed of course, she had finished doing that while thinking about the problems ahead.

"Alexa's Big Brother?" Ale said sighing.

"Your brother you mean." Miriam Eversoul said with a knowing smile on her face. "But yes, your legal guardian is Alexanders Saintsworths, do you want us to call him?"

Did she want to see that blonde man?

"No," Ale answered while shaking her head, "Can you... just leave me back this address?"

Ale then pulled from one of her hoodie pockets a piece of paper, she had made it in a rush as she moved her hand inside the pocket, it was the address of their apartment.

"Your house address?" Miriam Eversoul said as she read the piece of paper, "Columbus, Ohio? As you saw before, we are quite far away from that place, and as an underage girl... Not even in the prime of the time before Core Powers would you be able to travel alone."

Ale nodded, but she didn't believe there was any way of getting there, not with Core Powers and the technology they flaunted around.

"Our lives are there." Ale said, "Alexa's friends are there."

Miriam Eversoul shook her head at that statement, "It isn't as much as an Alexa problem you know? It's also a you problem." The woman said as she put a hand atop Ale's shoulders and pulled her to sit beside her on the bench.

A problem of Ale?

"Do you mean the issue with primordial matter?" Ale said turning to look at her hand, she had been outside for almost an hour already hadn't she? "It seems that it is getting better."

"Vivian, the results?" Miriam Eversoul spoke to the piece of cloth that worked as a door.

"As expected, it has to do with isolating the ambient mana." Vivian Kellet said as she opened the curtain, "This area was isolated from the ambient mana and her saturation has dropped to the lowest level so far."

Ale could see the blue screen in front of Vivian Kellet and sure enough there was a meter that showed the mana saturation as she stated.

"But it is still going up, albeit slower." Vivian Kellet said turning to Ale, "You can't keep cohesion for long amount of time outside. Not without dedicated equipment to help you."

"Dedicated equipment?" Ale asked confused, "How long would I have then?"

"Around ten to thirty minutes depending on mana density, perhaps more if you are lucky." Vivian Kellet answered, "Of course, we could design some equipment to help you."

Equipment?

If that was all that was needed, then [Hephaestus' Forge] could do it.

"This equipment can only be made here," Vivian Kellet said as if noticing Ale's plans, "Because it needs a place that can isolate Mana from the atmosphere, and there are very few places that even have thought of doing that."

"And why is that?" Ale asked, she doubted someone as dedicated to crafting wouldn't think of doing that.

"Because Mana equals power," Vivian Kellet answered, "And everyone is starving for this mystical power, the power to turn delusions into reality, of turning a simple wish into might."

Miriam Eversoul nodded at the side, "Basically, no one has thought about the fact that this new energy can be dangerous. So no one has tried to create an area isolated of it, no one besides..." The woman then pointed with a finger to one of the walls, one that had the emblem of a bird with four wings that seemed made out of thunder.

"The Saintsworths..." Ale said nodding in understanding.

"Alexanders to be precise," Vivian Kellet pointed out, making Miriam Eversoul's face turn into a scowl, "He was the first to ask us what would happen if we isolated Mana from a room, would the things inside change? Would they remain the same?"

"And what would happen?" Ale asked, wondering if that would starve the Cores or not.

"Well, how do you feel?" Vivian Kellet asked, "Right now we are in one of those rooms, in this room Mana can't penetrate or settle down. Do you feel different?"

Did she?

Not really, she could still wield her powers and she was sure that if she did it, she could get her blueprint updated... No wait.

"If there is no mana here... how are my Core Powers still working?" Ale pointed out.

If there was no mana, the energy that fueled Core Powers... How was she able to still interface with [Core] and the MK1 Nanites then?