

## A Bio 244

Chapter 244: Why was Alexa delivered there?

"That is a common misconception some people seem to have," Vivian Kellet answered Ale's question as she guided them outside.

The donut device was turned off, so Vivian Kellet's clothes didn't cause an issue, nor did Ale's clothes for that matter.

She was more comfortable in her oversized hoodie than in a dress, she wasn't that kind of girl after all. Shortpants, T-shirt and a hoodie, what else could a girl need?

"Misconception?" Ale asked as she raised her hand and focused on it, sure enough she could issue orders to the nanites that had started being generated within her body and the internal make of her hand shifted.

She made them change the composition to one of metal-like bones, and then back to normal.

It wasted some of the minerals within the [Banked Storage], but since Ale wasn't sure if they would turn that device again, or how thorough the passive scannin was, she merely let that transformation last barely a second.

Even if they detected it, it would (Or should) be flagged as a mistake or a weird oddity.

"Yes, misconception. People seem to think that Mana is something that only exists outside and is the foundation of their Core Powers." Vivian Kellet said.

And... Ale couldn't for the life of her understand what this woman was saying. All the Core Powers Ale had seen and categorized worked by the use of Mana as an intermediary. There was no way in hell that Melissandra Singh's power was achievable without the use of Mana wavelengths.

No way that [V-8] was speeding himself without the use of Mana, no way that [Eleanore] was detecting the [Truth] of things with her own physical body as a medium.

"So you are telling me that [Big Sister] can control wind because a physical organ in her body?" Ale decided to use an example that couldn't backfire at her, granted, she was showing or perhaps exposing the Core Power of [Big sister], but this required further checking.

"Of course not," Vivian Kellet answered shaking her head, "But that is not ambient mana at work, but the mana stored within your own Core."

....Oh... Yeah, that made sense. Ale turned her attention towards her own statistics, the blue box that would come to the front of her consciousness stream whenever she called for it. The one that categorized her body with metrics. And the one that held the bar and corresponding number to depict the amount of mana available to her.

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Her mana reserves had been going up for some time now, and currently they had plateaued at that number.

"So... my Core powers can still work since I have mana stored in my core?" Ale deduced the answer that Vivian Kellet was hinting towards.

"Precisely." Vivian Kellet nodded while pointing at Ale's chest, "The Mana you have stored will allow your powers to continue working. You have it better than most, those called [Beast Core] Users for example, their physiology can only continue working thanks to their own Mana. So if they are in a mana-deprived area for long, their bodily functions will stop working and can end with them losing those faculties..."

"Wouldn't that mean that you can cure them?" Ale wondered aloud, it sounded as such anyway, if the extra functions stopped working, wouldn't the bare [Humanity] be left?

"No," Miriam Eversoul answered this time. "Sadly it doesn't work like that, we tested."

"Correct," Vivian Kellet nodded, "As I told them, their bodies have changed too much to return to normal. If they kept their base organs or the most important ones, then it may work if you remove the dead new organs. But most [Beast Core] users have changed their bodies too much."

Too much?

Oh... If they had remodeled their hearts, then those would stop working, and since Ale had seen most of those had extensive modifications to the base blueprint, some didn't even have anything [Human] left. Meaning...

"Those that changed too much can't survive without mana." Ale didn't ask, but merely stated her deduction, "As such, going into a place devoid of mana would starve them to death."

"Or towards madness," Vivian Kellet added afterward, "There is also the case of bad triggers, those whose body turned hostile towards them, or reduced their mental faculties."

Those could happen too?

"How can a Core affect their mind to that degree?" Ale asked aloud, she... was aware that [Core] had some degree of influence on Alexa, but never had they attempted to be hostile towards Alexa, if anything. They were only hostile towards Ale and Alexandra, not towards Alexa herself.

"We don't know," Vivian Kellet answered before Miriam Eversoul could say anything, "There are theories of course, stupid theories. But nothing confirmed."

"Some people think that their wish was anathema to their beliefs." Miriam Eversoul said when Vivian Kellet didn't elaborate further, "That is to say, they believe that the wish they made was something that would hurt them, and when it was fulfilled, their body rejected the change, as such, a bad trigger was created."

So they wished something that went against their own Consciousness Stream? Why would they do that?

"But that can't happen, most of the cases of a bad trigger are of people that were in extreme mental or physical duress, they wished for salvation. Not damnation." Vivian Kellet merely stated, "As such, that can't explain this."

Right... [Golem] had said that he wished for something to help him didn't he?

But ended up with a body like that, wonder if Ale could ask other [Bad Triggers]? They hadn't meet that many, perhaps [Sam] could be one? or [Frank The Beetle]?

Neither was particularly close to Ale... She would see about asking [Sam] later, he was the closer and easier to find, she just needed to be wary of his physical situation, and the clues around. If his sickness hadn't receded by the time she could seek him, then she would need to search for [Frank the beetle].

"Who made those theories?" Ale asked, that was also an option, seek the original owner of those theories, check his research and make an informed decision then.

"Alexanders Saintsworths," Vivian Kellet answered, "He is one of the ones that is seeking these topics. Miriam is also writing a thesis on this too."

"Mine seeks to understand the foundation of the Wish theory." Miriam Eversoul said, "We aren't sure why that works, or who first started spreading it. There aren't that many Core Trigger events recorded, or people who can say with 100% certainty that they saw a Core User utter a wish before getting their powers."

"I can," Ale said sighing, "I can attest that I have seen people utter their [Wish]."

Ale had seen two such examples, well, personally she had only seen one. The other had been seen by Alexa. So that one was a little more... uncertain, and that one time she hadn't heard the [Wish] being uttered.

"You have?" Vivian Kellet was the one to react, "How certain are you that they made a wish?"

"I heard them say those words." Ale said closing her eyes and remembering the appearance of Alexandra as she walked forward and looked at the sky, "She said clearly [I wish]."

"...Did you hear the wish?" Vivian Kellet continued asking, uncaring or perhaps not noticing the face that Ale was making.

"...Vivian...." Miriam Eversoul seemed to notice it as she hugged Ale towards her body, "...Are you okay?"

How many times had this woman asked that question?

"I didn't hear the wish she said, the next time I remember is seeing her placing her hand atop my head and waking up here..." Ale said reinforcing her desire to be strong once more, "...But I know for a fact that she didn't have that Core Power before she said the words [I wish]."

Ale couldn't help but turn her head upwards, "Do you think...You can awaken a second core power?" Ale asked to no one.

"It's possible." Vivian Kellet answered, "We have seen cases of Core Users changing how their power interfaces with the world. But even so, the base of their power never moves away, or too much away from the base. What is your Core Power?"

What was her Core power?

They should already know. Alexa's Core Power was...well, what they would think it was anyway, was Shapeshifting.

"Shapeshifting," Ale answered, "Thanks to the way we use it we also count as regenerators."

"Our studies and database shows that the options available for this core power is either to shift towards shapeshifting into figures that are way bigger, increasing their power, giving them things that didn't have..." Vivian Kellet said summoning images of those examples and sending them to a wall, letting pictures of [Heroes] with those examples in there, "Also the option to allow you to shapeshift into imaginary entities or change the composition of your body into one that integrates foreign elements."

...Ale could already do those things though.

"Afterward, it would come the more extreme example." Vivian Kellet stated as a new image showed on the screen, this one didn't seem normal, "A theoretical peak of power, the creation or the ability to emulate the core powers of others, in a nutshell. The ability to create mythical entities."

Yeah... Alexa also could do that... or well, she could create the [Cores] of people she analyzed, but... they hadn't been able to use them had they? Ale could integrate the abilities of the [Cat Girl Core]... But that was more of a physical change than anything wasn't it?

They had other Core powers stored, but they hadn't used them... Why hadn't they used them?

If Ale had used the [Core Power] of [V-8] then couldn't she have finished Melissandra Singh?

If they had used Melissandra Singh's Power against her, couldn't Ale have saved Alexandra?

Why hadn't they thought about that?

"Those are your options," Vivian Kellet said bringing Ale back to reality, "If you want to get away from those options, then that isn't an option. Unless you find a way to trigger a core generation event as if it was the first time. And once a Core Power is generated, there is no second chance. Or well, we haven't found such an example."

Then... how had Alexandra done that?

She had used a brand new Core Power, by what Ale was seeing, they had teleported them to a site god knows how far away from their previous place... Granted, some time had went by (Two weeks or so), but that could be explained as the time she was unconscious.

Miriam Eversoul had said that they hadn't been unconscious for long, but Ale had no reason to believe such thing.

Not after they drugged her to stick her into this machine.

"Thank you for the explanation," Ale said, bowing her head, not elaborating on the fact about how they had been teleported here.

They had seen too much already, but there was no way they knew the full story. So long they didn't...

"Unrelated question, what happened to my other clothes? The ones Alexa was wearing when she teleported here?" Ale said, those things should have a black box, something that recorded everything that happened to Ale.

And while Ale had disabled and tampered with it to some degree, she still wanted to be sure they hadn't exposed anything. Midway into the combat Ale had disabled it, as she was using her more private and secret way of combat, something that [Haephestus' Forge] shouldn't be made aware of.

"We have it in isolation." Miriam Eversoul answered, "We will return it to you when we are done repairing it and ensuring nothing is wrong with it."

Just like that?

"Really?" Ale asked suspicious of such good will.

"Of course," Miriam Eversoul answered, "I want to have a word with whoever gave combat-grade armor to you, but since it is what allowed you to be safe, and there aren't weapons or anything of the like on it, I don't mind it."

...Most of the armament on that was from Ale herself... Just like her [Arm-maments] and the [Anti-Material Rifle] that she used before.

"Thank you," Ale said that for now, unsure if she needed to say anything else, it was something of her anyway, so they should return it to her either way. And if not, well, Ale just needed a few seconds near them to wipe out the data.

More so if she could use Albireo as a middleman, they would never be able to detect her interfacing with the device there.

"How long do you think I will need before being able to be in a normal environment?" Ale decided to ask next, turning to Vivian Kellet, if the thing that allowed them to be free of the corruption left by Melissandra Singh was a mana-free environment...

"As far as I can see from the test results, there is nothing wrong with you." Vivian Kellet brought the full test batch into the wall she had used before as an example for the possible Core Evolutions to the Shapeshifter Core, "The problem is in the environment, we are removing the mana from Ohio that seeped into your clothes. So long you don't remain too long there you should be fine."

The mana in Ohio?

"So if I don't return there, I should be fine?" Ale asked confused, "But... I wasn't okay here either."

"That was because ambient mana clung to you, and that was contaminating everything around," Vivian Kellet said, bringing the results from some analysis to the very front, "See? This is the issue, this mana seed was spreading the contamination. We have purged the ambient mana in the facilities around and everywhere you went by... That is how we are 100% sure you weren't brought by normal means."

Ale could see it, the hideous mana virus... The stench of [Death] that Melissandra Singh had planted within her.

But...

"Then we can't return home?" Ale said thinking about those they had left behind, all Alexa's friends and family...

"You can, but the fix may be slow, you will not be able to remain outside for long..." Vivian Kellet turned to look at Ale, "And if what you said is true, and you are one of the responsible for keeping Alexa's needs. You will be unable to fulfill that."

Then who was going to take care of Alexa?

"Of course there is another option," Miriam Eversoul said from the side, "You can live with me."

What?

"What?" Vivian Kellet turned to look at the black-haired researcher who had found Alexa.

"Why would you..." Ale was about to ask what this woman was thinking.

"I mean... I have been thinking about this." Miriam Eversoul said turning to Ale, "But you were delivered to my door for a reason right? If the blonde asshole isn't in the equation, then surely your older sister brought you to me for a reason."

Ale also wondered that. Why had Alexandra sent them here? How did she know where 'Here' was.

Ale had more questions than Alexa at this moment, which wasn't that hard, since Alexa rarely thought.