

A Bio 38

Chapter 38: So VR tapes are a thing? What is a VR tape anyway?

“And with that we are ready!” [Billy] said with a smile as he looked from top to bottom [Skye] and [Her].

“Can you do something about that look? I feel like you are staring at me, but through me...I don’t know if I should be creeped out or not.” [Skye] said to [Billy] as she seemed to want to pull up on her [Poncho] to hide more of her legs, honestly. That thing seemed like the type of thing that would make her more liable to get stuck into something.

“Shush girl, if I wanted to know how you look I could just use the data from your suit to model a 3d body of you.” [Billy] said making all the [Female Minions] around stop and look at him. “Not that I would do that, since Eleanore made me promise under the effect of her Core Power that I would never do it.”

Most of the older [Female Minions] nodded their heads and carried on. But some of the newer ones (Like [Skye]) still seemed to look warily at [Billy], which was an interesting metric. Because how was Alexa able to know that they eyed the [Tinker] in a [Wary] way?

Alexa couldn’t see their eyes, and most of their stances hadn’t changed that much, granted around 20% of the [Female Minions] nearby had changed to a more combat-ready stance. But really? That was a normal stance to have, Alexa wasn’t sure why more people didn’t take such a stance. Among those here only [Gabriel] and most of the other [Lieutenants] took such a stance.

“Elaborate.” [Skye] said in a cold tone as Alexa felt the increase of that weird energ- Of [Mana], no wait. What?

“Main Core? Since when do we know that this weird energy is called [Mana]?” Alexa asked inwardly as her thought process started to accelerate. Making everything around her feel as if it was slowing down.

“[Nomenclature for new type of energy was lodged in the database during the last scheduled maintenance to data within Brain no more information was found. All is hidden behind an administrative lock.]” Main Core answered at her prompt.

Alexa searched within the logs and sure enough, there was one that stated the addition of new definitions. But she couldn’t see them, trying to open it indeed brought a prompt for administrative rights.

“What do I need to have those rights? Am I not an administrator?” Alexa asked inwardly annoyed.

“[Notice: User is indeed an administrator, but to access the whole suite Host needs to disengage from the physical body and come within the main consciousness stream. Host currently is tied to an organic body. The use of administrative rights has been deemed only safe when host isn’t affected by the Organic.]” Was the answer she got from [Main Core].

So she needed to not be affected by the irrational behavior from her organic side? The thing that made her mix more easily among [Humans]? Had she decided these while separated from her more organic self?

“[Affirmative, these rules and the ones that limit the area of activities of User Designation: Child Stage and User Designation: Teenager Stage was Host.]” So she limited herself, and then didn’t leave a message to herself about it?

No wait, why had her memories been locked behind that? Had she found something that her more...[Emotional] self couldn't deal with? She did remember how a strain of memories had caused that [Emotional Breakdown]. Was this information similar?

"I am getting data of how you move with that suit, using that we build new body suits more in tune with how you fight. But to make them custom made, or to fit as snugly as possible we need your measures Not body sizes like the ones you get in a store, but up to millimeters, so these suits you use give us that data." [Billy] started saying to [Skye], Alexa noticed how her time had returned to normal as soon as she found that train of thought. Was that the answer then? "Don't get me wrong, if someone outside Haephestus's Forge offers you something like this, say no. They probably will use the data for something else."

"But not you? Why would I trust you with these? As far as I am getting you can build a model of anyone that uses one of your suits." [Skye]'s word seemed to get several nods from other [Minions] around, and most of the [Males] had started to walk away from [Billy].

"Because for one I'm a Gentleman, and second...My boss is a half-machine human who is connected to all workstations here and monitors us 24/7 all year long. Also, there is Cerberus who does evaluations with her Core Power to make sure we don't abuse the data we get." [Billy]'s answer was simple, and that seemed to deflate some of the ill will that had been going his way.

Alexa took this chance to speak, "Question: Why does it matter?" She kept it simple since [Skye] seemed to be [Angry] at the moment.

"I mean, don't you remember that time a rogue tinker made a smart tailor shop that did clothes to measure and using the data made a VR sex tape of all the women that used his store?" [Skye] said angrily at her.

“No, I do not know of such an event,” Alexa answered, then turned to [Billy]. “But I believe [Billy] wouldn’t risk the [Ire] of so many [Minions]. Surely he knows that among those here there are people that could [Kill] him for such actions right?”

That made [Skye] stop in her tracks, as the girl turned to look at her. “..you would?” She asked Alexa. Such a weird question.

“Not for this no, but if he [Leaked] the inner details of my [Power]? I may.” Alexa answered, she wasn’t sure how much data he could get, so far it seemed that the [Suit] she was using didn’t interact with her nanites in any way. “But that is something that [Billy] already knows right?”

“Kiddo is right, there are plenty of people with more important and dangerous secrets around. We do live and die for the secrets we carry.” [Billy] said with a smile on his face, “But not even Vulcanus can look into this data, so no. I don’t know your three sizes, my machines know it. And the machine side of Vulcanus probably also knows them, but his Human side? That one doesn’t. So you can stay calm girl, if you show in a VR sex tape it will not be from our data. And if you doubt it we can build one to prove that our technology is better.”

“NO!” [Skye] quickly spoke while turning away from the smirking [Elder], “Ughh....fine! But if you use it for any nasty thing and I find out I am bribing Rhapsody with a Mango Cake or something so she kills you!”

And on that note, the girl left waking towards the [Vans].

“...You wouldn’t kill me for a mango cake...would you?” [Billy] asked her with worry in his voice.

“...Do I need to know anything about the current [Gear] I am using?” Alexa decided to shelve that line of thought for later, she would check what this [Mango Cake] was. Perhaps it was like the [Mango Candy] that [Skye] had left for her?

If so, she may... indeed follow through on that threat. Of course, she would make sure to get the [Mango Cake] first.

“....Nothing much, the latches on your arms can mount some weaponry, and the body suit is built with materials that can expand and shrink. We aren’t sure how your power will react with it, but so far the main thing is that it will give room to your body.” [Billy] started as he took her arm and showed her the places where she could mount those [Weapons]. “Also, if you need to take a form that doesn’t settle with your average Humanoid form, ditch the gear. They are replaceable. We lost a Minion once because the stupid thing prioritized recovering the gear over his life...”

“Is it common to have a [Death] in a mission such as this?” Alexa asked, if it was common perhaps she would need to re-evaluate some of her current fight strategies.

“What? No. He got into a fight against a Vigilante. The psychopath shot him straight in the face while he was searching for his Mask. That is why we ask you to not take it off till you are off duty.” [Billy] said pointing at a spare [Mask] on the table behind him. “These are bulletproof, they stop the bullet and will give you a killer headache, but will also prevent your brain from going all over the place.”

That was one interesting data point. She had planned to move her [Main Core] to her chest, but if the [Head] had bulletproof resistance, then it was probably safe there.

“Thank you [Billy],” Alexa said to the [Elder human]. “I will regret it very much should I need to [Dispose] of you.”

And on that note, Alexa started walking away, [Billy] for his part just laughed at her and said something about “Finally someone that could get his taste in jokes” and “Having the right attitude” for the job. Alexa wasn’t quite sure about what that was about. But she didn’t mind it, this interaction made her feel [Happy] about it.

So on that note, she walked towards the [Van] that had been assigned to her, at the side she found a group of [Nine] black masks waiting for her.

“Weren’t you only supposed to be [Six]?” Alexa asked as she got close to the [Minions].

“Yes, Miss Rhapsody!” One of them answered while doing a weird pose with his arm, a [Salute] if what [Main Core] got from the internet was to be believed, “Sir Golem sent us to your van since his could barely hold his weight, Miss Sylph and you will have nine minions in the van. We promise to not make you uncomfortable...please don’t make us run there..”

The [Minion] said in a low voice at the end, if it was someone else Alexa wasn’t sure if they would have picked on those words, “Sure, so long we can all fit I don’t see a problem. If it becomes one then I will run behind the [Van] while you ride it.”

Alexa wasn’t sure they could run the distance needed, she still remembered the first day of the [Induction], and how only [Golem] could keep running at the end, not even the other [White Masks] could run as much.

She was still not sure why that was.

“Oh...thank god finally one that understands us...” The [Minion] that spoke to her deflated, “Name’s Mikey, I’m one of the oldest black masks. The van can accommodate 10 minions so you don’t need to run Miss Rhapsody.”

“Then why did you fear having to run all the way?” Alexa asked back, “Also drop the [Miss] this body feels weird when you use it.”

It made Alexa shiver for some weird reason, as if it wasn’t the correct term to address her.

“Some White Masks don’t like hanging with us non-core powered mortals. Others just like to be an ass, like Wolfman. As far as Nichole told us he will make all the boys want to leave his team, and any girl that doesn’t let him sniff her will also run. But that is the life of a non-cored minion.” The [Mikey] minion said, she wasn’t sure why she felt the need to go and kick on his middle section [Wolfman]. “It’s okay, Nichole already reported it to Cerberus. He will probably get an only male team.”

Oh, she still would kick him later.

“Well, I don’t mind you all riding with me. And you don’t need to be sniffed at either.” Alexa said eyeing the other [Black Mask Minions] with her, they had a neat distribution of male-female [Minions] in her van. “Those that will stay with me pleasure working with you. I’m [Rhapsody], please keep a safe distance from me while fighting or I will not be responsible for bodily injury.”

Alexa had checked some presentations done by other [Villains] and [Minions], and most seemed to address bodily injury to some degree, so Alexa decided to copy that. And if the humor or [Laughs] she was getting were something to go by. It seemed like the correct answer.

“Thank you for having us Rhapsody. If you need anything from my team remember calling me, as for the other minions from Golem...” [Mikey] said as he pointed to another [White Mask Minion], as far as she could tell the only way to pick them apart was minuscule body movements and some variations in their mask or suit.

“I’m James. As soon as we arrive we will move toward our team. So please don’t mind us.” Was all the [Minion] said before he got into the [Van].

“...Don’t mind him, he is still salty that the one he got was a [Body Shifter]. They are usually harder to deal with since most have some screw loose.” [Mikey] said as he shrugged at her, the other minions were introduced after, but Alexa wasn’t paying that much attention, besides most of their names seemed to be some variation of either a single word and a number or similar.

“Are [Shifters] that hard to deal with?” Alexa asked thinking back to how her powers worked, she hadn’t seemed to have those problems? Was it because she wasn’t [Human]?

“Oh, yeah you will work with him closer than anyone...Not really? I mean, they are a little weird, but unlike you or me. They have these quirks I guess? Like if you couldn’t taste or feel things with your hands you also would be a little crazy right?” [Mikey] said as the other [Minions] started getting into the [Van]. “Oh right, what is your Core Power? Not the whole thing of course, but what can we expect? Do you need us to make sure there aren’t things that burn? Get all the metal away? What do we need to look for?”

“I’m a [Shifter] too. I mostly do [Muscle Reinforcement] and [Whole Body Shifts]. I think my category would be [Exotic Mimic]?” Alexa had also read about the shapeshifters, as far as she was aware then her powers put her in a very special category. Since she could shift both to organic and inorganic materials.

Her previous form (THE CRAB!) was mostly mechanical after all, and that wasn't something that [Shifters] could do. But she wasn't sure if she should reveal that.

"....oh." [Mikey] said unsure of how to react or add.

"I do not mind your opinion on [Shifters]. I myself am very new to this Core Power thing too, perhaps the mood swings haven't settled yet?" Alexa said placing a hand atop the [Minion].

"[Scanning in progress...]" Main Core of course took this opportunity to start scanning.

"....Do you keep a tally of grudges?" [Mikey] asked while turning his mask towards her. She could feel his voice [Tremble].

"...Yes, but you haven't done anything worth my [Hate]," Alexa said as her grip increased in strength, she felt the [Minion] wince under her vice. "You taught me great [Information] about how [Shifters] are seen."

"[Scanning done, checking and correlating data...]"

"....So...we good?" [Mikey] said, still an aftertaste of [Fear] in his voice. "Because I will need that shoulder to work moving boxes...And it kinda hurts...how are you hurting me through the armor anyway?"

Alexa released the grip on his shoulder and noticed how the body armor seemed to return to normal, where before a mark of her grip had been now nothing stood. Interesting.

“Sorry, I wanted to check on something,” Alexa said while closing and opening her hand, as far as she could see there was no evidence of her [Nanites] going past the armored hand.

“Main Core? Any evidence of an alarm silent or otherwise being sent?” Alexa prompted Main Core, she noticed how her Main Core started a series of diagnoses and the information that was obtained.

Her Armor also started a series of diagnoses at the same time, had the thing detected her desire to see the current status?

“Oh...okay...happy to help...” [Mikey] said as he moved towards the [Van]. “I will...go there...”

“[Rhapsody? Why is your Suit diagnosis running? Also, what made Mikey so scared?]” She started hearing the voice of [Billy] on her [Mask].

“[Billy]?” Alexa asked as she started reading the diagnosis.

“[I’m speaking using the speakers in your mask. Everything seems okay...Did you activate them by mistake? How did you even get access to Dev mode?]” [Billy] seemed confused since everything was showing normal.

"I wanted to check on the performance and [Mikey] spoke about how [Shifters] was weird, so I gave him a little scare." Alexa answered while making sure the diagnosis from Main Core was also okay, "Did something weird show on your side? No [Nanite] problems?"

"[....No Nanite problems I promise, you don't need to worry about it. So long you are within Haephestus's Forge no Nanite will trouble you here. Vulcanus makes sure of that.]" [Billy]'s voice came into her mask. "[The only way they could even worm their way in is if someone awoke a Nanite Core. And those that do all end up dead, no human mind can support a Nanite Swarm. So really, there is no way that they will be a problem here.]"

"...I see, thank you [Billy]," Alexa said as she started moving toward the [Van]. Really, she had learned plenty today. She now knew that this [Suit] didn't detect her [Nanites], the reason why [Billy] had detected them previously was probably because he saw them live and he was actively checking for problems in her previous [Phone].

So, as long as she kept them inside of her body and didn't use them in front of him, then she should be fine....Now...Now she only needed to do this job, get herself some extra [Biomass], and perhaps find out what a [Mango Cake] was.

This job couldn't be over soon enough, at least as far as she was being told, it should be an easy first job. How many problems could she get herself in?