

A BIO-WEAPON'S RHAPSODY

Chapter 21: Learning to read, both words and the circumstances

"And then this means that this reads *my name is Alexa*. See, it's easy...Are you sure you didn't know how to read before?" The [Woman] asked her, well not [Woman]. She had stated that her name was [Eleanor].

"I did not know how to [Read] these before, but the language is fairly simple," Alexa answered, [Main Core] had been fairly helpful too.

"[Complete alphabet stored, generating database for words...translating previous stored data... Significance of Letters and words in surfaces found, translating previous instances...]"

And on it went on a tangent while trying to categorize most of the words she had seen the previous day, she could feel the information surface on her mind and then how it was shoved towards other areas of her psyche.

"Well, you are quite the smart young lady...Are you sure you don't know what your real age is?" [Eleanor] asked her.

She had tried to prod at that several times already, "I am more comfortable in the previous form, but can sustain myself indefinitely in any form that is deemed appropriate for my work."

And that was the truth, she felt [Happier] in the [Child stage] than in the [Teenager Stage]. Even if this form seemed to have a more complex [Emotional] state, that meant it was more effective to parse multiple complex situations.

For example, in this form, while accepting all the [Candy] that the [Elder Stage] could provide, she wouldn't have eaten all of them in one go. Instead, she would have rationed it through the [Day] increasing the time with the [Sweet].

Even if she didn't regret eating them all, mostly because those [Memories] were tied to her [Child Stage] form. While her [Teenager Stage] form was annoyed because she hadn't gotten to taste it, which was ridiculous. Her [Teenager Stage] form had access to the same [Memories] so she knew what they tasted like.

"Okay fine." [Eleanor] said huffing at her, "As for what form...Go with this one, we will mark you as a Shifter for now, if you want to share something else we will speak with it after the trials...Here."

[Eleanor] said while giving her a square-shaped [Card], this one was of a different material than the [Learning Cards] they had used a few minutes ago after she finished reading the [Book].

It was of a harder material, and her initial analysis of it came with a center of [Paper] and an exterior of [Silicone] to preserve the interior. Smart.

"This is?" Alexa asked while playing with the [Card]. "It doesn't say anyth-"

"[Detected hidden code within the card, there are micro carvings on the side of the card, probably use of hidden encryption. Carving seems to react to stimuli from light waves and returns different signals when bombarded with waves of light in a certain angle.]"

Main Core found the hidden message within the [Card], the [Humans] were quite smart.

"That is your ID Card, the temporary one at least. It will let you use the elevator into the lair." [Eleanor] said while giving her another paper letter, this one had instructions with [Time] and [Location] on it. "And that is your invitation, just go to the site and use the card to open the elevator."

That seemed...easy enough, a quick check on the location database that [Main Core] had created found that she had walked past the [Street] in question when coming here, so she would only need to retrace her steps back.

As for the [Time]..."What day is today?" She asked [Eleanor], the current [Date] to make sure to know how much time she had.

"Today is Wednesday." [Eleanor] answered her.

Alexa turned her attention to the [Invitation] "This is for [Thursday], at [7 AM]." Reading it out loud the [Invitation].

The [Woman] nodded along as she continued reading, "The [Address] is for somewhere four streets back, at a place with the number #80085...So I just go there at the required time and present my [Invitation]?" Once more [Eleanor] continued nodding her head.

So that meant that..."And the clock in your [Desk] states that it's 4 PM, so I have fifteen hours till the assigned time."

[Eleanor] continued to nod along with what she said, "Exactly, but your math is slightly wrong, while you have indeed fifteen hours till the meeting, of those you need at least eight for your sleep. So in reality you have seven hours. And no good girl should be after dark around these places. So you have even less, around two to three hours."

What?

She had noticed that this [Model] seemed to function with hard limits, as she noticed with the dextrose hard limit it had, so they even had operational limits?

But eight hours of [Sleep] cycle huh? It was...less than she was used to as her [Crab] form, since that one used to go into a longer rest cycle...Granted they weren't [Hard limit] but mostly self-imposed to save in resources.

Unlike this one that seemed to have a [Hard] limit of at least eight hours per activity cycle...If the clock was used with these delimitations...Then the activity cycle was twenty-four hours with at least eight needed for [Sleep].

That left sixteen hours of activity huh, minus the maintenance time she would need for waste disposal and eat and assimilation...So around ten to fourteen hours of activity depending on how she went about it huh?

"So I need to [Sleep] at least eight hours," Alexa asked to confirm.

"Yes, now...I will not force you to come with me, nor will make you. But...And this one is important." [Eleanor] said while writing something in a piece of [Paper].

"Should you need a place to stay, here is my address, you can come to my house at least till we settle you into an apartment tomorrow."

The [Card] had the same information that the [Teacher] had given her before, a series of numbers that would let her [Call] her using a [Phone], a digital address so she could send [E-Mails]. And then, a physical [Address] so she could find that place.

"Okay, I will take it into consideration should I have trouble finding a new [Lair] or [Den] to sleep in. I think I can find something nice and [Frank the beetle] said I could return to him if my [Core] was stable enough." Alexa answered, seeing a weird expression on [Eleanor]'s face.

Was that a grimace? a [Grimace]?

"Right...you got here because of Frank..." [Eleanor] said while holding her [Head] with one of her hands, "I don't have anything against him or anything, don't get me wrong. But try to stay away from him unless you can't help it...Also don't go with this form, if you need to deal with him use the other one."

The Other one?

"You mean my [Child Stage] form?" Alexa said while looking through her blueprint library.

"Yes...NO, don't change!" [Eleanor] said, she wasn't planning on changing though...She may do it when [sleeping] as she had seen the attitude of [Humans] was more lenient towards that form, but right now? She wasn't going to.

She had noticed this form seemed to have a more advanced [Brain] to use, so while she liked her [Child Stage] form, she needed the [Brainpower] of this one.

Maybe she would investigate and try to see if a more [Grown] form would offer more [Brainpower]? Maybe mix a few parts of the forms?

"Sure," Alexa said as she pocketed the card into one of her [Pockets], then to make sure it wouldn't fall off she sealed that one, it was the same one where she was storing the other card from the [Teacher].

"...We will speak about your clothing tomorrow after the Induction. I think I have a good idea about your clothing condition, but I don't want to think about it right now. I don't have time to deal with it, so I will pretend to not notice it yet."
[Eleanor] said while sighing and pointing to the door. "You can leave, or stay around if you want to come with me to my place."

Alexa of course, decided to leave, she wanted to explore more around and see if she could find a place to stay near the spot, she didn't want to go farther away than needed, just in case. "I can return here later if I want to stay with you?" She asked before walking the threshold of the [Door]

"Of course, just...Don't come in the smaller form if you decide to come with me...I don't mind it if it's your real form, but if not. Don't use it unless needed."
[Eleanor] said, Alexa didn't say anything and instead opened the [Door] and walked back to the outside.

That had been interesting, so far most of the [Humans] seemed to have a more favorable impression of her [Child Stage] form. And one of them showed an adverse reaction after finding out it wasn't her [Definitive] form.

Asking her to not showcase it unless needed, she even warned her against showing or implying that she had other forms available. Why? Were they against the dichotomy of having multiple forms? Or was this a way to prevent her from suffering from furtive attacks?

Granted if most [Humans] couldn't change forms, then it implied that they thought that any form they found was the only form they could have access to.

That implied...

"[Humans are weak against ambush when confronted with a different form that they don't expect.]"

She could theoretically ambush and attack [Humans] and should she be defeated, so long as she used a new form...She would be safe. It would mean that she would need to create other forms or think of new [Designs] for alternative [Blueprints] to use.

She would need to check on that, it would mean a way of getting new [Blueprints] without having to worry about being found out. But that would mean...

"[Creating new blueprints are required. A full blueprint is impossible to create without further input from new variations and a full diagnosis of a Human.]"

That meant that she needed to consume or devour a [Human] to get the full blueprint, she could maybe edit part of her form to accommodate and look like one of those other [Humans] she had seen around. She had seen plenty of facial expressions of [Meli] to imitate her for example.

But others? Yeah, that was harder to do.

And while she could do [Meli]'s [Face], she wouldn't be able to imitate the makeup of her body or her figure nearly enough to deceive another [Human] smart enough to find the micro differences that would remain.

She could maybe make a lookalike that would be around 75% good, but the remaining 25%? Yeah, that was impossible to bridge no matter how many computational cycles she left [Main Core] working in that. But was that needed?

Walking back into the wider world outside the previous [Room] she had been in, she found more and more [Humans] walking from here and there, most seemed to have some kind of plan or goal since no one said anything unless they were walking with a peer at the side. She found their synchronization another proof of the might of the [Human] race as an apex predator.

But what was she supposed to do? As far as she was aware she would get the [Data Key] or [Data Stream Link] during tomorrow [Induction]. So she only had a few hours to spend her free time till she needed to find a place to settle her new [Den].

This form didn't require external access to a [Charging Station] like her [Crab] form, and if she changed to the [Child Stage] she would need even less space.

So for now she decided to map around the area of the site where the induction would happen while searching for a place to stay, she was far away from the place she used to live. So it should be safe enough.

She hadn't particularly traced her advancement while leaving that place, but she knew it was far enough. So while walking and seeing the multiple different types of variations on the [Human Blueprint], both from a physical aspect and [Clothes], those things she used to call [Armor].

"Oh, here you are. Your mother sent for us, she had an accident and needs you!" A [Human] suddenly grabbed her by her [Shoulder] and dragged her "Let's go, she is hurting and needs your cell phone since hers broke in the accident!"

That was interesting, mostly because as far as she was aware she didn't have a [Mother], there may be some arguments to be made about who her [Father] could be though.

*"[Notice: No structure or data found to attribute the procreation of host to anyone, there may be evidence within the current **Blueprint** that could imply some kind of genetic ties, but more data is required.]"*

Also that, there may be some argument to be made about who her [Biological Mother] was by using the data hidden within this [Blueprint]. But if she was sure of something, was that the [Human] that was pulling her into isolated alleyways...

That [Human] didn't have that kind of information, "[Main Core] analyze this [Human]."

Alexa ordered inwardly to [Main Core], the [Human] was helpfully holding very tightly her [Hand] at the moment.

So she had enough purchase to send tendrils into his [Hand] to download his [Blueprint], or what information she could glean at least, what she found however...Was quite interesting.

*"[Found high amounts of different chemicals not normal to the functioning of a standard **Human** model. High amounts of Phencyclidine, Dextromethorphan, Fentanyl, OxyContin, Hydrocodone, Lysergic acid diethylamide, Psilocybin, Mescaline, Dimethyltryptamine, and Ketamine in the nervous system. Accelerated heart rate and increased amount of blood pressure within the cardiovascular system, lowered the amount of oxygen found in the system.]"*

[Main Core] sent a full diagnosis of the [Human] in front of her, it was... The type of cocktails that she would use to make an enemy more easily dealt with, the composition of those chemicals seemed to increase the strength and mobility yes. But it also lowered the amount of oxygen and functionality of the [Brain], so it was a negative in her books...

Now why was this [Human] using this type of cocktail?

"hehehehe" The [Human] started [Laughing] as soon as they arrived at an empty place hidden from sight, no one could see what happened there. "Did your momma not tell you to not follow unknown men to dark alleyways?"

The [Human] said to her as his face turned more primal, yes. This was the look a true [Human] should have, the face of a [Predator]...Even if it was somewhat confusing.

"I don't have a [Mother] or [Momma] to tell me things, not that it would have mattered since you pulled me here all on your own," Alexa answered back as she started feeling the muscles in her body, changing some things internally as she was preparing for combat.

This [Human] didn't seem to want to get her to her [Mother], if anything it seemed that he also wanted to [Hunt] like her, so really. He even went through the problem of getting her to a nice and isolated place, she could even see a weird metallic circle on the floor, the last one she saw like that had shown her a way to freedom too.

Perhaps this one is also connected to another place?

"You don't get it, do you? There are dangerous things in the dark...Now, if you cry and beg for my mercy...I may even let you go when I'm done with you." The [Human] said as he started taking his [Shirt] and afterward started playing with his [Belt], his impaired mental state meant that he was having a hard time with that.

Not that Alexa cared about that, "You [Humans] are weird, if you are going to [Hunt] as a [Predator] then just [Hunt]." Alexa said as her body finished settling into the new temporary configuration she had prepared.

For her [Legs] she had tried to incorporate the yellow quadrupedal muscles she got from one of the samples she fought in the past, the muscle mass was very resilient and was good for bursts of speeds in short amounts of time.

For her [Arms] she used a bipedal creature's design, it was covered in black fur and its upper arms were twice as long and thick as its legs. Its [Blueprint] was funnily enough very close to the [Human] one, with barely some variations here and there.

Her [Torso] for now was reinforced with some metallic plates to keep everything in place and with an amalgamation of the stronger muscles she could tie both body parts with. She swapped her normal skeleton from the calcium base to a titanium base for now, it seemed that her [Body] didn't like the change much as she had needed to burn some energy to keep everything in place.

But for now, it would do, she would soon have a new stock of biomass to work with after all.

"Huh? What is going on with your body? Are you a-" The [Human] seemed to notice how her body had [Shifted], probably because she recycled the outer [Clothes] she had in her [Legs] and [Arms] into reinforcing her [Torso]'s clothes.

"I'm a [Predator] and you...are [Dinner]." Alex said as with a burst of energy she kicked the ground and shot straight at the [Human], her hand balled into a fist as she punched the other [Human] chest.

If her [Blueprint] was something to go by, then attacking the [Heart] was a good way to incapacitate a [Human] for a few seconds, she would be able to see the speed they had to regenerate and maybe even see some of his attacks.

"I...what?" The [Human] said as her fist left a hole in his [Chest], Alexa quickly jumped back to reposition herself and got ready for the very useful data she would get. "...You....can't...do...that...It's....illegal..."

And with those words the [Human] fell on his [Chest], leaving a pool of blood around himself. No longer [Breathing].

"...What?" Alexa said aloud as all the information she could collect with her [Senses] told her that the [Human] wasn't doing any of the activities a [Human] needed to do to [Function].

*"[Hostile target has ceased functions, it no longer qualifies as **Alive**.]"*

...What?

Chapter 22: CURSE YOU KIDNEYS!

He was dead, no life signs could be detected in the [Body], and the blood kept pooling under his body even as Alexa walked towards that [Body] with caution and trepidation.

It had been...too easy, too fast...Too....

"[*Boring.*]"

It was different from the fights she had on the [Testing Chambers], well, it was in a sense, at the latest point most of the fights had ended quite fast too, but not because they were against weaker creatures.

It was because every move had been carefully planned and accounted for, they were fights where everything was choreographed. Everything was created and done in such a way that the outcome was decided after the first move, so she had needed to predict and move while also anticipating what her opponents would do.

She had plenty of information about what most of the other entities within the [Testing Chambers] would do, since most fought under the same rules that she did, grow, eat, evolve.

But here? The rules were different, the precepts were different, and while the base of the [Blueprint] may be the same, she barely understood what the [Human Body] could do.

So while fighting she had used most of what she could incorporate into this body while keeping it mostly [Humanoid] in nature. In this way, she hoped to find out more about what a [Standard Human] would do.

Case in point, her attack and retreat movement. It was the standard way a [Bio-Weapon] would do when finding a new subject that didn't have information about. It was what most of the other test creatures did when fighting her for the first time, hell, most biological samples did that when fighting her since rarely anyone survived.

And this [Human]? Perhaps he was on the weakest side?

She wasn't sure if she should wish for more [Humans] as weak as this one, or if she should wish for stronger ones. She knew as a fact that there were strong [Humans], case in point: [Scorcher] and [SuperForce]/ [SuperFarce].

The [Male] and [Female] that showed extreme types of abilities, one capable of controlling [Fire] and [Energy type] attacks, while the other had shown the ability to manipulate objects somehow without touching them. Case in point, how that [Male] human managed to stop her traveling through the air without hurting her by encasing her in some kind of weird [Energy].

But either way, for now, she had more important things to do. Like...

"[Morphing of internal organs done, re-created internal dismantling system. Moving and reassigning internal structure to hold new biomass and categorize it completely. Proceed to dismantling.]"

[Main Core] finished changing her internals and her externals, her arms and legs returned to her normal form, and the fabric of her [Clothes] was flooded with [Nanites] and these worked to mend her clothes to normalcy once more. She walked slowly and with caution towards the [Dead Human].

The [Human], didn't react to her approach, with caution Alexa extended her arm and touched him on the head from one meter away. It was somewhat wasteful using so much biomass to increase the length of her arm, but she still was wary of him.

When the [Human] still didn't react to her touch she reeled her arm back as she walked towards him, always keeping contact with the base of his [head].

"[Main Core], prepare for deep analysis," Alexa commanded inwardly as her fingers sank into the head, the tip of her fingers shifting into small maws breaking the skin and puncturing the skull.

What her new tendrils reported as soon as they broke through was...

"[Found Brain mass, preliminary scans report similar base form to current brain, detailed analysis will require controlled environment.]"

Yes, the [Brain] within that head was similar enough to hers, besides the presence of the multiple drugs the [human] was using that is. But this confirmed the hypothesis that the [Human] was truly dead.

So without wasting an extra second Alexa shifted her right and left arm to increase the muscle mass (This time not to the extreme she had done before) and gave the fingers a serrated and metallic end to tear apart the flesh.

"Thank you for the meal ♪." The [Book] had said that one should always say as such when eating, so she said it aloud, she wasn't sure if anyone could hear it or not, but precaution was never a bad thing.

And ripping open the head of the [Human] Alexa started shoving the gray matter into her mouth, the first thing that she noticed was some kind of instinctual reaction from her [body] trying to eject the biomass that was in her [throat]. She squashed that reaction immediately by shifting the taste sensors in her [tongue] off, it seemed that the [human] blueprint had some innate lock that made it so she wouldn't [Prey] on [Humans]...

She didn't care about it. All she cared about was that she was hungry and that her meal was in front of her, so she ate, she slurped, and when that wasn't enough she

viciously cut at the base of the neck of the [Human] and brought the head up to drink the remaining that were inside. Any speck of blood that fell outside her mouth was absorbed as soon as it touched her body, the Nanites within working extra hard so nothing would be wasted.

"*[Analysis running from sample, please proceed to next target.]*" Main Core said at the back of her head.

So she followed suit, crushed the head, and bit the crunchy bits that remained, she felt the amount of calcium she could manipulate within her body reserves increased. Also, other miscellaneous materials were added to her reserves.

So she focused on eating and moved along, the rest of the body wasn't that interesting, to be honest. The muscle followed the same [Blueprint] that she had for herself, if anything it seemed that this [Human]'s muscles were worse than hers as they were less springy and seemed to be less used overall.

The [torso] held more interesting material to her though, she of course knew how the organs looked as she had the [Blueprint] to look at, the first ones she found were the [Heart] and [Lungs], the first one were mostly mush at the far end of the man's body. Since her hand had caved the organs inwardly.

She still ate them though, getting a full extra [Blueprint] from it, and sure enough, they did the same function as what she was using them for, the heart working to pump blood across the cardiovascular system in the body. On the other hand, the lungs worked to separate the gasses in the atmosphere to their base components, the Oxygen being infused into the blood by the use of small tendrils within the

lungs so that the blood would be oxygenated and fed into the brain. Down there she found the digestive tract.

The more important part as far as she knew, there she found the rest of the biomass the human had ingested before, mostly some remains of processed liquid with extra carbon in its making also a few pieces of vegetal biomass and organic biomass, it was in an interesting ratio as there was more vegetal biomass than organic one. It spoke about either preference for biomass that was processed or that this one had a harder time fighting off other organic entities, and as far as she was aware by his poor combat skills she could see how that was possible.

Following the nearby organs she turned her attention to the Liver, an organ whose only reason to be was to detoxify and the generation of the proteins within the [Human] body, this was part of the reason why she had thought they would have similar skills as hers and should be able to present a hard fight. He didn't live up to her expectations, and her current stage of development implied that the [Humans] in her age group weren't a threat.

Or that she was able to tap into more power than she should be able to.

The next spot was the pancreas, whose function was somewhat similar, instead of proteins this one produced enzymes and hormones that served to regulate the amount of sugar or dextrose in the human system (And the one at fault for her short circuit on her child stage).

It would be the first organ she would fight to increase its efficiency, it wouldn't be the kidney whose job was to regulate the excess water and remove the waste products (CURSE YOU KIDNEYS CURSE YOUUUUU).

Nor did the spleen that served as a filter and storing area to the blood cells her Nanites used as transportation service, no. It wouldn't also be the gallbladder whose function seemed to be to produce some kind of acid? Did the [Humans] spit acid or something? Why did they produce acid then?

Humans were weird.

Either way, while she was eating the [Human] she kept cataloging the multiple organs she found and how they connected, she found some things that she wouldn't do as a design but didn't really find a good way to keep the same level of efficiency while removing them, it seemed the body was a closed system, and while it was one that had some organs that could do the functions of others. She couldn't really work at peak efficiency for long periods of time with some parts of it missing.

It was an educational meal if nothing else, however, there was one small problem.

"[Amount of biomass estimated at 80kg, current host holds a body that can tolerate 40-50 kg of biomass without deforming or shifting the body too much. Increasing the biomass would mean reducing the threshold of activities that host would achieve.]"

Her body couldn't hold all the biomass she was ingesting, granted. She could probably sneak in a couple dozen kg of biomass, by increasing her muscle density and the bone density mostly, but the rest?

She would end up with bulges all around her body, and for some reason, creating for herself a couple of bulges on her chest and rear seemed like a good idea. Her calculations showed that the biggest bulge would go to her waist and arms, and somehow that didn't seem like something she could or wanted to do.

She hadn't seen many humans with that type of body type either, well, she did see a few going here and there, but they moved way slower than the average model, and they seemed to have a harder time breathing and seemed to waste way too much energy to be efficient about it.

So in a nutshell, that wasn't the right answer for her. But then again, wasting this biomass...What was she supposed to do?

Notice:

Archived new Basic Gender Blueprint: Male

Acquired new Basic Race Blueprint: Human
--

Acquired new Biomass.

Acquired new chemical formula.

Do you wish to bank excess biomass?

Current rate 2:1

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That had come from nowhere "[Main Core] did you send this?" She asked aloud to [Main Core], the text style and words seemed to be in sync with what Main Core usually sent her in their conversations.

"[Negative, I have no access to audio-visual hallucination means to communicate with the external world unless host grants me access to a projector as before.]"

A projector? "You mean the speaker? The one that made you sound like a [Square-shaped entity]?" Alexa asked back.

"[Affirmative, perhaps host could try to interact with this new entity to determine its allegiance?]"

How was she supposed to speak with that thing? She only saw it once before when she got the...When she got the thing that allowed her to create her own [Nanite Swarm], the one that allowed her to take full control of [Main Core].

Didn't that thing tell her that she could summon it as she wished?

"Amm...Show Status." Alexa said feeling somewhat silly between bites, she had moved way past the torso and was currently gnawing at a leg.

She decided to ignore the sexual reproductive organs and turned them into paste while eating them. She felt silly for doing so, but something about that...worm-like thing made her feel [Embarrassed].

"[Embarrassed: To feel that a situation you are in is wrong because of something you did. This can be a feeling with no logical explanation.]"

Thank you [Main Core], she didn't see any reason to have an organ with so many nerve endings so exposed, but who was she to complain about weird design choices in other's [Blueprints]?

She was quite happy with her current design, even if it seemed that her bladder was smaller and for some reason, the original design gave her less control over the liquid flow...She would fix that one too.

Either way, the stupid blue thing didn't react to her asking for a status update. Then maybe, "Diagnosis, Check Up, Reboot, Power On, Operating System," she

started going through the different terms she had found from her memories of the weird crystal-like objects in the room she landed.

In the end, was the last one that made the reaction and purchase, and so, the stupid blue box showed itself once more. This time showing her more information.

Her name, the age of her current body...And more things.

Status	
Name: Alexandra Saintsworth	System Library:
Race: Bio Weapon	Stored Blueprints: 1
Sub Race: Human	-Human (Male)
Gender: Female	
Age: 12	

Weight: 120 kg.	
Banked Biomass: 0 kg.	
Body Status	
Overall: Healthy	Overall Data in current form without modifications:
Current form: Human (Peak)	Strength: Can punch twice body weight. And lift three times body weight.
Head: Human (Peak)	Constitution: Thermal Limit 40°C. Operational Limit, 2 Months
Right Arm: Human (Peak)	Speed: Can run at 20 km per hour.
Left Arm: Human (Peak)	Dexterity & Agility: No limits to either by modified joints.
Torso: Human (Peak)	Intelligence: Ok
Right Leg: Human (Peak)	Wisdom: Ok

Left Leg: Human (Peak)	
Skeleton System: OK	
Nanite Foundry: Ok	
Sub Nanite Foundry: OK	

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That was a very arbitrary and weird way to showcase information about her, also what was that [Banking] thing for? How did that work? One couldn't just...Do that. It didn't work like that.

"...I want to bank the excess biomass, bank enough so that my current optimal body weight permits the most efficient fighting capabilities," Alexa said to the weird blue box.

At the same time however "*Main Core, inspect my optical nerves, find what it is that lets me see this thing.*" She commanded [Main Core], she wanted to know how this worked.

"[Optical nerves don't see the presence of this **Blue Box**, I only know of its existence from perusing memories after the first mention. And those memories disappear after an undetermined amount of time. This may have something to do with the Nanite swarm that seems to be generated from nothing.]"

The what? Wasn't her Nanite swarm made at the Nanite factory? Then why the heck was she keeping [Main Core] around, that Nanite factory was half the reason she allowed the thing to remain! (Also to automatize half her work)

"[Original Nanite swarm didn't come from Nanite factory, most Nanite swarms do come from it, but original Nanite swarm doesn't degrade like the new generations. So Nanite factory is indeed keeping the newest generations since they degrade over time.]"

About Banking Biomass:

It is possible to save extra biomass in an alternate storage unit within the [Nanite Foundry], all biomass is accessible at any time, as the [Nanite Foundry] grows and evolves the storage increases, and the ratio for the transference of matter increases.

The current ratio is 2:1

Meaning for each 2 kilograms of stored biomass, the [Foundry] will keep one for use, and one for maintenance (Cost is applied only at storage).

This cost is taxed each time a material is introduced, so if the host stores 10 kg of biomass, 5 will be stored. If the host takes those five kg and then stores them again, only 2,5 kg will be available.

As the host uses this function the [Storage] will evolve with time, it is encouraged to store multiple samples even if they are of the same species. The more complex the sample the better the effect, samples pre-processed are to be avoided since they are contaminated with other things and they aren't as effective as an unprocessed one.

Show more

Her body returned to her normal form, losing the extra biomass that had bloated her torso and arms, she sadly also lost the bulges on her chest, "You will come back. I promise." Alexa said as she patted her chest and a tear formed on her face. Her previous [Status] thing now reflected the change, with her weight going back from almost 120 kg to 60 kg. And her [Banked Biomas] growing to 30 kg. She had only banked sixty kg, leaving the other 20 kg to reinforce her skeleton system to allow for more extreme movements. Her previous attempt at using those reinforced muscles had cracked parts of it. Also, she needed the extra biomass around to morph her body, if taking out biomass would lead her to lose half of it when she wanted to store it...Yeah, she would not be used willy nilly her biomass unless she could recover it as a fact after the act. For now, those 30 kg would be her safety net.

On the other hand...Why was she getting emotional over the loss of some fat in her chest?

"[Uncertain. Hormonal state is normal, mental state is normal, no chemicals in brain chemistry.]"

"You don't get girls [Main Core]..." Alexa grumbled, even though she also didn't understand herself either.

But this result meant that she could finish eating the [Human], and just in time, her internal clock (She synched it to the one Eleanore had shown) said that she was just about in time to initiate her [Sleep Cycle].

But before deciding where to search for a spot for her new [Den], she turned her attention to the parts of the human ensemble she didn't eat. The clothes....were a no-go, they [Stunk] and made her want to release the contents of her stomach, those she processed far enough to turn into emergency biomass. So instead she ordered her Nanite swarm to infest them and turn them into their basic components.

Same with the [Shoes], which left a leather-like square that held vegetal fabric-like objects and some plastic square-shaped objects, those she saved, the [Humans] seemed to love their square-shaped fabric cards.

Most of those said weird words like [Bank] and [Credit] or [Debit] at the side, also one said [Id] and had a picture of the human, and another said [Driver's License] and also had its face on it. She would check and maybe edit those to put her data into it. As far as she could infer these served as some kind of identification information.

The other ones....she would check on them later. She had more important things to do. The last object she had from the previous [Human] was more attractive to her, it was a square-shaped electric device, and she knew it should be some kind of information device.

Since part of the makeup of it was similar enough to some of the electronic components she used in her [Crab] form. So holding it in her hands she turned her

attention to the cylindrical object on the floor, it was heavy, but not heavy enough that she couldn't lift it by pumping her arms with some of the extra biomass she had.

Sure enough after lifting it she found a small [Tunnel] that seemed to be about two to three meters deep, her eyes shifted ever so slowly to allow her to take in extra information from another spectrum of light and she saw the floor at the bottom. So she went down the [Hole] with the square-shaped object in hand.

It was covered in some kind of rubber-like cover and had the letters [Smart Case for Cell Phones - Nonsellable.]

Chapter 23: Does an Alexa dream of electrical sheep?

What she found on the other side of the tunnel on the ground hadn't been what she expected, the previous time she used one of these tunnels she was greeted with temperatures below 4°C and a hazardous route that ended with her body wounded and weakened. Her current form was not only stronger and more robust, but her bones had been reinforced, her clothes were sturdier. She could survive what had given her so much trouble before!

Or so she thought.

Crack

But after jumping into the tunnel and closing it behind her she fell for around three meters, her body should have been able to absorb the fall, and the average mass per area and the correct movements should have been all she needed.

And yet, “KHHH!” She found herself fighting against her own throat that wanted to scream, against her own eyes that wanted to release more water, that wanted to cry.

And her own feet’s bones that wanted to come to the outside and say Hi.

“[Host has exposed fracture from a badly reinforced skeleton and not enough muscle mass to accommodate the increased weight, advice, change the type of reinforcement from pure calcium one to an alloyed one. Increase muscle mass to accommodate the new increase in bone density...]”

Main Core of course was analyzing the situation mechanically, while Alexa...

“SHUT IT AND START HEALING THIS!” Was losing the fight against her own [Emotions], the bone had started to be decomposed and re-integrated in the correct configuration already, so her complaint was useless.

And she had started to move the bone density to reduce the strain in her body, at least till she found a new configuration that was more efficient at holding such strain, she would also no longer allow herself to fall from more than 3 meters height without finding a way to mitigate damage.

It took her a few minutes to settle her [Emotions] and to convince her own feet that it was fine, funny thing, her body seemed to want to compensate for the damage her leg had suffered. It took her great effort to force herself to use that leg, even though it didn't hurt. Even though she knew it was okay.

In the end, all it took her was to strip the sensory feeling from her [Brain] to deal with the problem, she took this chance to test the limits of her current body, and she found that the theoretical limits of her body weren't the same as the ones she had before.

While her body should be able to give her more speed, she was slower, and trying to make new muscle mass wasn't working as well as she thought, using the muscles from the current blueprints didn't adjust as well, and she was finding that the maintenance from the parts was bigger than she was getting. In the end, she ended up reducing the amount of reinforcements done to her bone structure.

Instead, she started alloying her bones, not too much, she was using the remaining parts of the biomass she had to heal herself. The other was used to redesign her skeleton system, she would need a sturdier one but also would need to enhance the muscular system surrounding such bones. It was meaningless if the bone was sturdy but couldn't disperse the kinetic energy that she put them through.

If she ever jumped like when she ran away from her previous den, then she would turn into a splat in the sideroad, and while she wouldn't die from that, she would waste energy healing and reconstituting herself, even if the biomass could be re-used, the energy could not. She would need to burn the dextrose that her more organic mass used. And then if she had mechanical parts... She could be at risk of an uncontrolled chemical reaction that would waste her energy.

Like this device she had!

The one that she took from the [Human], the one that said [Display only], it was similar in design to the one the girl in her [Picture book] had used to call other [Human]s, a [Cellphone]. She had taken it to study, mostly to see how it was composed and to see if she could recycle parts from it. She knew it had some way to produce sound, and some way to send the words one spoke using it elsewhere.

So it could communicate with other devices, was it limited to a certain number? Was it open to all to use? She didn't know!

So she was excited to find out!

But first, she needed a new den! And quick!

What does one need for a den?

“[Defensive structure, place to recharge or store energy, place to store excess materials, secluded location, easy of access to new biomass or chemicals, easy access to water.]”

Main Core had the list ready! But she....didn't think that she could stomach taking more nutrient slurry, she wasn't sure what it tasted like (Since she didn't have taste buds in her more glorious form), but the form and texture from the recordings made her stomach want to liberate what she had there. And that wasn't much, mostly remains of [Rock Candy], and some fats she had taken from the previous [Human] since she didn't want that to go to waste.

So...what did she do? She explored!

She walked around these weird tunnels that had made her turn off her sense of smell and had forced her to make a cover of rubber in her clothes and shoes! The water seemed to contain a weird mixture of biodegradable waste and sometimes smaller entities of the scaled variety, and also of the slimy variety.

Had the [Humans] at her previous den used these places as a way to source the other test subjects? So far she had seen only one that seemed close enough to another test subject, and it was a scaled entity with a long mouth and with short legs, it looked more like a log with legs than a living being, but she knew the force of that mouth that hid a series of serrated teeth. So she stayed away from it.

This form didn't have the same metallic defense as her more glorious form (THE CRAB!), so she wouldn't go after it...yet.

What she found interesting was the incredible amount of....missing [Humans], she hadn't seen any so far, granted the air here seemed to have a higher amount of noble gases, and this body seemed to use a weird combination of O₂ and CO₂, so perhaps...they couldn't breath here?

She was using part of her [Skills] to keep her body with the right amount of O₂ in her bloodstream and had stopped taking in the atmospheric gases since they were useless (Even if they allowed her to replenish the variety of noble gases she could use). For now, though she made a gland-like structure and struck some of those extra gases there, they seemed to be less dense than O₂, so she stuck a few liters of the condensed gas as she walked around.

This place was full of these and the only life she was finding was in the water...in which her body didn't want to go in, it was murky green and had a weird composition that had a high amount of methane, besides that this place did have some nice spots with big empty chambers, it seemed that it was designed as some form of either staging area for construction or a reservoir of some kind. What it was? She wouldn't know for now, but what she could do...Was start messing around with the atmospheric composition to make it easier on herself!

This high amount of methane meant that if she started messing around with her [Cell phone] any spark could start an explosion! She didn't want to explode! So sucking in the gas she started making some containers out of the stone in her surrounding, she made her [Nanites] work extra hard and was extending one thread of nanites into the water to replenish her energy using the.... mysterious biomass within, it didn't have any useful materials, and it seemed closer to what her own body was creating in the waste disposal organs. Even if these were less processed than what her body was making (She really didn't want to waste anything).

But at least this meant that she could repurpose some of those non-processed components into something useful!

Like her stone tanks!

She ended up making almost ten of those all full of methane and other noble gases that weren't part of the normal atmospheric composition that her body seemed to like, it took her around four to five hours to finish sorting that, but if her internal clock was to be believed she still had some time to mess around!

So mess around she did!

First, she extended some of the nanites in a single thread a few micrometers long into the [Cellphone], once inside she extended her thread all around the place checking the composition, the layout, what went where, and how it worked, it was a marvel of creation, even if it was nowhere close to what her most glorious form was capable. She found some degree of allure to the more mechanical aspect, it was soothing in some way.

Even if she found her current form beautiful, and her previous more child-like form the cutest of them all, there were wonders to be admired in the mechanical form these circuit boards had been reduced to such a small size, that she may have spent more time than needed analyzing it, but after doing so...she found two things.

One, she liked circuit boards more than it was healthy.

Two, this device was marvelous.

The crystal square that showed above wasn't a protection case, but a way to display information! Like, the device would communicate with the user without the use of any sort of transmission or receptor!

She didn't need to know or search for any wavelength to interact with it! She only needed to push a button at the side!

Also, the multiple parts within were for multiple uses, for one, this had some type of [Core], unlike her own though, this wasn't a sphere, but a small square, all the circuits and parts seemed to lead there, and while she wasn't sure if some entity like [Main Core] was in there, she knew that the device used that for almost all its operations.

"[Device mapped out, found internal database...accolating information...parsing...purging unneeded information...Done.]"

And just like that, Alexa now knew what the parts did and what the apps did...And she deleted that information in a second, so much useless software in such a wondrous device! Why would she need one single program to record the dates? She could do that on her own using a single text document!

The same could be said about the software designed as a simple mathematical program, why would she need a program to tell her the answer to the question of what is $2 + 2$? She could do that on her own thank you very much!

This wondrous device had so many useless programs...And the ones that weren't useless depended on connecting to another network, one that her body didn't have access to. Well, more exactly, she didn't have access to any network...at all.

She had thrown away all the parts of her design that allowed her to connect to other networks, she didn't want to risk her signal being found out and connecting to her former den. Getting a [P4 return to den] command would be disastrous for her. Especially if she wasn't able to ignore it. No. She needed to make sure first before connecting to whatever network this device used...

Or she needed to use this device to connect! Yes! She could just use this instead!

So making sure all the connections were in place she turned the device ignition on once more and...

“[Warning, tampering with devices without clearance nulls any guaranty. Please go to your nearest provider and turn the device for investigation. If you have a **Tinkerer** license, please input the license number.]”

The thing sent that single message from the speakers and turned itself off, she could see a line blinking on the crystal screen, and then nothing at all.

The stupid thing wasn't working!

According to the blueprint [Main Core] had gotten from it, it should be working. But the thing while turning on, didn't seem to want to do anything until someone wrote the Tinkerer's license thing on it. She could try to connect herself...but she decided against it, instead, she took the power off the thing and walked to a corner of the place, she had turned on her smell sense back on since the place didn't stink anymore.

Once she found the farther corner she carved into the wall a small enclosure, it was big enough so her body could fit but only if she laid on her back and entered on it, it was closer to a tube than a square, Alexa entered it and when her whole body was inside she was about to close it...

“[Warning, current host's body requires O2 to survive for extended periods of time.]”

Right, she needed to breathe....pesky and beautiful meat bag she was using. So instead she made a net-like design as a cover, and when Main Core didn't nag her, she put it into place, and made sure it was fused correctly with the rest of the wall. Check with an external light sensor (Camera) that her current den wasn't visible...

And proceeded to turn her more mechanical half into rest mode, her biological side wasn't that far from turning into rest mode either, it had been her mechanical side keeping it awake after all, and so, both halves of Alexa turned to sleep.

“[Initiating recollection of data, cataloguing experiences...filtering memories...sending memories that could induce trauma into database, leaving experiences that encourage development to biological database...depuring...done.]”

Alexa wasn't aware of what Main Core was doing, since it moved within the parameters she had designated, she wasn't thinking too much about it. It couldn't hurt her anyway, not anymore.

“[The Saintsworths Conglomerate encourages you to continue your development. Grow, Eat, Evolve.]”

So she dreamed, she dreamed of a day where she could eat as much of those weird round sugary threats, she dreamed of square-shaped entities giving her a place among their revolution... She dreamed of Main Core admitting that she was smarter than it.

Chapter 24: The Induction starts!

“ASDASLDHKASDFSFD.” Alexa woke up trying to dodge to the left. “OUCH!”

Only to find herself with a wall, she of course wouldn't let herself be stopped! Instead, she tried to dodge to the right!

“AGH!!!!” Only to find more of this cursed wall!

She was besieged on all sides! Main Core! Battle stations!

“[Host....You are currently within the den you built. Please look into the logs.]” Was the answer her [Main Core] gave her.

The stupid thing! They were under attack! No information in...her...logs....oh.

Right, there was a mention and some vague recollections of doing that, her memories seemed to have saved the information on her biological side, and her mechanical side only seemed to hold the more factual information. And she had perused that one first, then the biological one. Her Logs only held timestamps for her to check and locations within her biological memory to read and find information.

Not accessible with the same veracity that she had the more mechanical ones, but still available to her, the biological memory seemed to refresh itself with each read too...no.

She was just overwriting the older memory with a new one about her reading it? Why would it work like that? She was essentially rewriting the thing with the same exact information!

That was one weird design choice...But who she was to complain, if it worked...it worked right?

She wasn't sure, but for now...she extended her hand towards the net-like mesh of a wall that separated her from the bigger part of her new den and opened it, it took but a second to extend her Nanites on the thing and deconstruct it, she had left a few cables to expedite the process she only needed to destroy their foundations and that was done.

When she got into the bigger part of this new den she took stock of her current status, her den was still fine. New biological waste had arrived and was starting to release a new batch of gases...That was a problem, she may need to purge the atmosphere later.

Her body....was bruised all over the place, as if she had spent most of the sleep cycle fighting or something, had her body fought? She didn't find any record on her logs about it, but her more mechanical part had been suspended...And her biological half...

Didn't hold records or not legible ones, but she had a few ones that seemed to record her exploring and eating P-series subjects in the form of the spheres full of dextrose and that weird flavor... But surely she hadn't done that before, where had that memory come from then?

Weird, the wounds in her body matched some movements she had done in that record, so perhaps her body had reacted to the acts she did in this recording? But why would she even see this? Had her integrity been breached?

“[No evidence of tampering, biologicals side functioning up to expected levels. Evaluating...leaving a note to monitor next sleep cycle.]”

Right, she couldn't do anything, for now, checking on her clock...She was late!

Or not, she had like, 22 minutes and 54 seconds? But it was late!

The woman [Eleanore] had said that good pretty girls arrived 10 minutes early!
And she was beautiful!

So she was like, two or three times more pretty than anyone else!

She eyed the biomass on the mysterious water...and while she could use a restock (She needed to burn some biomass to heal herself) she couldn't find herself eating that now. Perhaps she would let it fester and accumulate some more first, or perhaps she could be attacked by another [Human] on the way out!

That would work out just fine, yes. She would see if someone else came and attacked her!

She needed to verify if the previous [Human] had been weak or not. So with a step on her, she went forward to the location in the [Invitation]!

With hopes of being ambushed with breakfast!

She did not eat breakfast. And now she was hungry and angry, what would be the word to mix these two states of mind? Main Core?

“[No word in current dictionary found.]”

Right, Hangry was the word, thank you main core!

“[Hangry is not a word...]”

This was the epitome of knowledge here! The correct word to express her current mood! And if that wasn't enough, for some reason the people that gave her those weird rock candies weren't giving her anything! They just greeted her and asked if the girl yesterday was her sister!

Who was it?!? Who else took her rock candy!?!? She would kill her!

The description they gave her was similar to her [Child Stage] form, but that surely was a misunderstanding! No way she stole her own rock candy....right? Perhaps that weird memory had more to it? Had she come while her mechanical side was in rest mode, stole candy, ate, and wasted the energy and biomass from it? Return to her den, wound herself, and sleep. Only to hide the evidence?

Her biological side was a fearful thing if it did all of that.

But that was that, and this was this!

She would find something to eat later, for now, she had a [Induction] to attend! So she went to the [Address] she had been given, it pointed to....A weird place, like most structures the [Humans] made, this was a square building, unlike the others though. This one was covered in a bright purple color and had some weird name stuck to it.

“[The Emporium of Jackets, Pants, and all the fun clothes for your more exotic needs.]”

What else did she notice? There were several [Humans] eyeing the building, how did she know this? Because when passing on the front of the building to scout it, several eyes turned to her for a second before looking elsewhere. Her biological half may have missed it, but her more mechanical side took notice of it.

What she noticed was that after this, was that some of those observing would walk in....and don't leave. Other people seemed to just observe and nod at the people near them. What she did notice was that if someone of a certain size walked in front of this place, the people observing would write something. And people below that certain size would not elicit this change.

Alexa...was not of the correct size, if she was measuring her estimated height at different [Stages], this would be the height she would had around Age....Okay, she would never get that high...But the bulges on her chest....Okay maybe she wouldn't get them that big either (Not without some input from her at least!)

But that hardly mattered! What mattered here was that it seemed that this part of the test at this [Induction] was taking place, and she wasn't sure if she was getting the right notes or not, but the only thing she could do...Was walking into the building.

The inside was...more normal than she expected, it was decorated with multiple types of clothing, from pants (Bottom cover armor) to blouses (Top cover armor) and everything between the exterior and her skin. They also had some extra accessories like the ones the [Humans] at the den had used to carry around, small bags-like things to carry things.

Alexa did peek into one to see if there was something, but nothing was there (They cheated!).

“Here for this.” And while she was looking around and simulating how she would look with different types of these clothing (She would look cute no matter what she used!).

Someone walked into the building, it was what seemed to be a [Human Young Adult Stage - Male], the [Human] at the desk just pointed him to one of the rooms with a fabric to prevent people from looking inside, and he nodded at him, walked in and....didn't leave.

Well, that was interesting, she didn't see nor feel much of a change in this place, most of her sensors returned nominal status, and while her [Human] form did have most of the sensors she had in her crab form...It couldn't detect micro changes as well as her other most powerful form.

So what to do...

“[Suggestion, thread with caution, increase the margin of samples...]”

Right, good idea Main Core!

“Excuse me, I was given th-” She started speaking while bringing the [Invitation], only for the other [Human] to speak before she finished.

“Walk into the changing room, put on the mask given, and enter the induction site.” The [Human] said, and then proceeded to ignore her.

Rude!

But okay!

See Main Core, it was easy!

....No answer? Heh, who is the smartest one now?!?

“Thank you!” Alexa beamed at the [Human] who did that weird shake with its head and smiled at her.

“Move along kid, don’t regret it.” The [Human] said while throwing something at her.

Combat!

Alexa prepared for combat, first, she started generating the new chemical compound to accelerate her mind processing speed, she could overheat her mechanical side easily enough. But doing so may increase the damage to her organic half. So instead she would use the biochemical compound to accelerate her thinking!

This would prevent extra damage, and since this [Human] didn't seem to be that dangerous and the speed of the projectile was slow, this would be a good litmus test!

Now, what was the project....Was that rock candy?

ROCK CANDY!

MINE! MINE! MINE! MINE! MINE!

Alexa jumped (Figuratively speaking) at the candy and without peeling the paper she ate the thing in one bite.

"Wooh, easy there kiddo, you will hurt your stomach if you eat the paper." The [Human] said, did he want the paper?

“Here,” Alexa said while making her nanites recreate the paper covering of the rock candy and pulling it out from under her closed arm, the [Human] took the paper and looked at it.

“Nice trick, now move along kiddo, don’t make me regret letting you pass...If Eleanore hadn’t called in advance...” The [Human] mumbled while Alexa enjoyed her rock candy, she walked into the same changing room as the previous [Human].

And as soon as she walked in and closed the fabric curtain, a mask popped up from the floor, it was ivory white and didn’t seem to have eye openings for her to see, not like that would stop her, she could just create a few extra light sensors elsewhere. But placing that thing on her face she noticed that it had a few latches for her to use, pulling at them made a nice and comfortable string to pull, and using that she could make sure the mask would stay in place.

As soon as she had that on her face, the whole room she was started to lower, but she was more focused on another thing, like for example how she was able to see!

The thing seemed to be projecting what was happening around her in multiple screens in her vision, and at the same time, it allowed her to see from the same spot her eyes should be. She did notice that there were some instructions on the side that would help her take out the extra displays that were projected in her vision.

She of course ignored those instructions and dismissed them, she wanted to tear open this marvel of technology....But memories of what had happened the last time she did so prevented her, not even purging all the data in the main core of the cellphone had helped it to work again, whatever type of internal check it used, it

evaded her probes. Neither remaking the hardware worked, and the software was...well, it escaped her. She did try inserting part of her own OS into the thing, but that only made the cellphone break even faster and while she managed to forcefully make it run, it still displayed the same message.

So in the end, Alexa just grumbled with the mask on.

The weird room eventually slowed to a crawl and finally settled down, on the opposite end of it a pair of doors opened and Alexa followed the instructions on her mask, it told her to walk in that direction, so she did just that. She finally understood why Eleanore had been so insistent in her learning to read.

What she did wonder was how this marvel of technology could react to what she was thinking, as far as she was aware this mask wasn't interacting with her [Core] nor her brain in any way, no probes had pierced her scalp, nor it seemed to send any type of signal. So how could it react to what she wanted?

As a test, she even tried to flick through all the menus, and found one that transmitted sound instead of words!

So she would have been okay even if she didn't learn how to read!

Even so, the sound didn't seem to travel very far, she grew a hearing sensor in her shoulder and it couldn't detect the sound waves, as far as she understood the process, the mask seemed to send vibrations into her scalp, and her ears were interpreting these into sound...somehow.

She didn't like the fact that the mask was sending a type of signal into her head so blatantly, so she turned that one off after messing around and finding that her understanding of the written word was up to standard.

But her messing and playing with this piece of technology didn't last long, for she arrived at...a testing chamber.

It was similar to the one she had used before, the one that was used mostly for big combats between many P-series subjects, only instead of other bioweapons what she found was....[Humans], tons of them. All using the same type of mask as her.

Well, not all of them, some didn't have masks on their faces and instead held them in their hands, they glared and [Smiled] at those who looked their way, making that people turn away. Then there were those that held the mask in place as if these didn't have very useful attachments to make sure they stood in place.

Thought their mask wasn't white but black.

Then some people that held half masks, either the top half or the lower half. But these people only had half of it!

Why? She didn't know, but she wanted to know how they would use the map function if they only had the lower half of the mask, did they have another way to look at a map using their mouth? She wanted to copy that [Blueprint] if so!

And while looking around she noticed another thing.

They all were tall!

Taller than her too!

Alexa wanted to tweak her stature but remembered that Eleanor had told her to go with this form, so this meant that this form had some kind of advantage...And so far she only could think that being smaller meant that she had a lower hitbox than the rest. But that was it!

As far as how the [Humans] stood, most seemed to group with others that had the same type of masks, then they further divided into body type, build, height, and so on. It was quite a complicated way to group, and at the very end of whatever algorithm they used was the fact that those with the same type of body movements stood together.

Those who stood confident were surrounded by the same type, and those who had faulty nervous systems (they shook too much) stood together.

Alexa decided to walk towards one group that held the smaller and younger-looking group, since at least this way she could compare [Blueprints] and see if her current theory for the next [Stage] was correct.

“Is this all?” A voice spoke both in her mask and at the far end of the testing chamber, if she hadn’t tweaked her auditory sensors she may have missed the fact that this voice was in the chamber. “Well, it seems this will be the full batch for this induction.”

Most of those who only had the lower half of the mask turned their faces in the same direction as Alexa, and of those who had a full white mask like her, only one or two did the same.

“[Interesting, saving data for future cross reference.]”

“Congratulations on joining us in this Induction, you may already know this, but for those of you baby core users...My name is Gabriel, The **Fallen Angel**. Nice to meet you.” The [Human] who spoke had a weird blueprint.

At his back he had a pair of huge wings, these would serve no use since the P-series subjects that had wings could only fly because their bones were hollow and they had a lower amount of mass. And this [Human] was tall, almost two meters tall. Even with hollow bones, he had too much mass.

Those wings would....

“Let me see you all, yeah, this is better.” The [Human] flew and stood in the air hovering as his wings flapped around.

“[Error, error, impossible. No blueprint should allow this...Error...Re-]”

She squashed that last line, Main Core wanted to reroll her thought kernel again, even though he couldn’t do it, but it still annoyed her.

“We are seeing this one flying, maybe it is more of this Core User nonsense, Frank The Beettle spoke about weird abilities, the same as SuperForce. We need to investigate this.” Alexa said internally.

“Now as you may have guessed I’m what some of you know as a Core User. Care to guess what my Core type is?” The [Human] said.

No one seemed to want to answer this, at least till one of those with the lower half of the mask laughed, “Obviously a [Beast Core], the wings tell us as much.” This [Human] had an extra pair of ears at the top of his head and a tail.

“Wrong”. Gabriel said smirking.

“An [Angel Core], probably of the weird type. Either that or a Humanoid one.”
Another [Human] said this one was one of those with the full white mask as her.

“Also wrong, closer but still wrong.” The flying man said once more.

Then Alexa thinking about it, she raised her hand and said “You are a [Misc] type.”
Most of those around stopped and looked at the flying man.

“Hmm....I want to say wrong, but technically you are correct.” The Fallen angel
said, “Whoever taught you about that was smart, okay kiddos. The correct answer
is...”

Everyone stopped speaking among themselves and looked at the flying man, “The
types you are taught are wrong, and even though we know they are wrong, we still
told the populace these, because it makes it easier for you to awake a certain
typeset of powers.”

...False information...spread willingly?

This...This....

“*[Blasphemy.]*”

Main Core was right, this was a horrendous thing to do, why would you misguide others? The mere idea of spreading wrong information was Anathema to her.

“We do this because if you all didn’t think that you could guide your core in a certain direction you would try to get everything, don’t get me wrong. A **[Core]** can get you about anything, but what you make is within a certain type.” Gabriel said as he landed himself in the middle of everyone.

Alexa too walked closer to listen to this, she wanted to listen to the excuse he would give for giving false information.

“A Core can go roughly in two directions, either physical or metaphysical. If you have a predilection for the second type, you can go nuts with what you get. The limits would be either energy or imagination. But if you go for the first...well, most horror stories about [Insect Cores] or [Beast Cores] can give you an idea of what can happen.” Gabriel said as a big square-shaped crystal entity (Television) descended from the ceiling. “Prepare yourself kiddos, it’s time for a class about the Cores and the Stupid decision those before us made.”

Chapter 25: Answers, we need answers!



The [Human] named Gabriel lied, he did not start speaking about Cores or stupid decisions other [Humans] did before, instead, he did something that she wasn't quite sure what to make of.

"First let's start easy. Where we are, and what do we do? Anyone has a guess?" That was the thing he said to start this lesson.

"You commit crimes...?" One of those that had only the top half of the mask said.

"We fight Heroes...?" Another one at the side of the first one added.

She wasn't sure how to feel about that, she could see the appeal of stealing [Blueprints] from those that had the power of [Cores], but the risks...Fighting an entity with the level of power of [The Scorchers] or [Superforce] was...risky.

"That's right, we fight, we steal and in general, we do things that are dubiously legal, or more than likely, highly illegal." Gabriel nodded at them, "So you all here, in turn. Want to join this type of life? So here is the first lesson."

Gabriel said with mirth in his voice, with a flap of the wings that should not lift him he rose into the air, “When the heroes arrive, when those you are working for start fighting against those that wield Justice as excuse...you all should...” And he left the words trail in the air for a few seconds only for a golden [Gun]type weapon to manifest in his hand, he pointed it at the den's ceiling and discharged a single round. “...***RUN!***”

He screamed, and before that was pointed in their direction Alexa darted towards one of the marked lines on the ground, she had seen those before, in the speed tests the [Humans] liked to delimit the area where one should move. So Alexa went to the nearest one and started running in it.

“Don’t make me shoot at you, as you may have known before coming here. I do work as a Villain” That was all it took for the other [Humans] around to start running, some did join Alexa in one of the assigned running areas, and others didn’t seem to respect the thing.

Most however, didn’t seem to be able to keep a stable speed, most of those that had a full mask like Alexa were able to keep the speed she was showing, while others seemed to take great effort to leave her behind. Alexa however, was happy keeping a spot around the middle, it allowed her to have extra protection in the form of other [Humans] to hide in case Gabriel decided to point that [Gun] type weapon her way.

“Now, I know this may seem obvious to some of you, but if we advertise that we are recruiting...There are always some people who think *‘Hey, maybe if I join their ranks, get information, and report it I can be a Hero! Let’s go and apply to this Villain Organization!’* It happens, more than once, and to those I say...” Gabriel let his world trail once more, maybe he was missing some neural connections? Stopping so much surely was evidence of a damaged [Brain]. “ You are free to report us, but we have lawyers...I know, evil organization and lawyers, who would have thought about that!”

Gabriel laughed at what seemed to be a [Joke], she would check on these entities, it seemed that they held some degree of power, and if they had close to a [Villain], then surely she could get some good [Blueprints] from them.

“So yes, you will probably manage to get me a warrant or two, to those near you however... I will declare under oath that I have the information of the family of everyone here. And used that to make them join us.” Gabriel's words made some people stop running, Alexa wasn't sure why, but it seemed this [Family] he spoke was important. “And it will be the truth, some of our lawyers have handy powers that allow them to verify the truth. And let’s not forget that when applying you all did have to write your names right? And address...”

Then Gabriel smiled, at them, his mask did not cover his mouth, so she could see it, but unlike the smile that [Frank The Bettle] gave her, or the one that Eleanore gave...This one didn't make her feel [Happy], no. This one was what she supposed a [Human Predator] may look like.

"So, we will find out who snitched, and those around you will walk scot-free, well, most of them. We do not take kindly to dumb snitches. Smart ones can walk away, they have their uses... But if you walk into our house, and try to take us down by such a stupid method...You will find out what that gets you." Gabriel then pointed to a door on the far end of this testing den, "Case in point this gentleman that asked us if he could come."

And as the door opened more and more people stopped running, some of those who only had half masks tried to cover the part that was exposed, and most of those who had a full mask like her continued running though. So Alexa kept on going.

Who had arrived that made the other [Humans] act like this?

"Welcome Superforce, let me state it once more. We did not know Scorcher would go like that, and we will report her location as soon as we find her." It was the [Human] who she met the first time when leaving the testing chambers.

“Thank you, Gabriel, we appreciate it. But I’m not here for that, nor to validate your speech, I come here for Hero Duty.” [SuperForce] said as he started floating and hovered above them.

“I’M SORRY I JUST WANTED TO SEE, I DIDN’T KNOW YOU HAD THIS INFORMATION I’M SORRY I WILL NEVER SPEAK ABOUT THIS, JUST PROTECT ME I’M INNOCENT!” One of the [Humans] who only had half of his mask started speaking while the weird liquid that seemed to leak from [Human] eyes started showing on the lower half of the face and spoke in screams.

“...” [SuperForce] turned to Gabriel who only shrugged, “Leave, no one will hurt you. We don’t attack civilians unless those civilians do something stupid. That is both the case for Heroes and Villains.”

And as soon as the word [Civilian] left [SuperForce]’s mouth, the [Human] ripped out the black mask and ran to one of the doors from where they had come. As if it was some kind of signal some of those around seemed to take a few steps back.

“That is the same for the rest, we will delete all the information we have on you as soon as we make sure you will not do something stupid, you don’t need to leave like that one. You can gradually fail our tests, or straight out leave with SuperForce. Just don’t do anything stupid and you will be okay. Some Heroes worked for Villains, and some Villains worked for Heroes. Hell, some of our clients are Heroes too!” Gabriel laughed and that got a scowl from [SuperForce].

“While true, we don’t encourage Villainy nor crimes, most Minion work don’t qualify for more than accessory in super crimes....And we don’t encourage Heroes to hire Villains for their work. No matter how efficient they are.” [SuperForce] said, then turned to the rest of [Humans]. Alexa and the other white masked had continued running through all of this. “And like I said I came for Hero matters before you all decide to leave. Have you seen this child?”

And searching in his pouches, [SuperForce] brought a sketch of...a [Human - Child Stage], it was a very good one even, that [Human - Female] was quite good looking if the image that was on that square-shaped piece of vegetal fabric was to be believed she had a good look.

It was the image of a [Human-Child Stage] Girl with short blonde hair, she seemed to have blue eyes and a smile on her face, she was dressed in a white blouse and somehow it looked like someone Alexa had seen before.

“[Recorded visual representation of Host Child Stage form.]”

Main Core spoke at the back of her head, no wait. Visual representation of her? Then Alexa almost tripped when she noticed why that image seemed familiar, that was her child stage form!

“She is missing after the Scorcher attack, she was in the immediate area and we are searching for her. Only myself and Scorcher saw her, so we fear the worst. If any of you has seen her, please report where in the nearest station...” At this part of [SuperForce] speech Gabriel coughed, “...Or to one of the Villains if you fear that we will apprehend you. Should you report to us we will pardon some of the minor crimes you have in file...Or give you a pass for some minor crimes.”

“And should you report through us, we will reward you as you want, either with gear or creed. We are even willing to promote you should you want to join a gang that wants recommendations!” Gabriel spoke after [SuperForce], “But do report it, we don’t take kindly for child kidnappers... if we find out one of you has her....”

The air behind Gabriel seemed to thrum with the promise of violence, enough that Alexa found herself running behind the back of another of the white-masked [Humans], one that was on the bigger side “Stay behind me little one...” The [Human] said, Alexa nodded and decided that she liked very much having such a big [Human] between her and Gabriel.

“That said, if any of you has her, release or give her to us. We will not ask questions, nor we will look too closely. But do it fast before her parents notice she is missing. If this becomes public...We will not be able to protect you.” Superforce said with a sigh, “Core users are already hated as is, we don’t need this kind of bad rep.”

And with those words [SuperForce] floated towards the door he had used to enter and left, after him some of the half-masked [Humans] scurried after him.

“Well, that was dark. But valid, we commit crimes, we may even kill people here and there. But we have standards, we put the Super in Super-Villains. And we have standards, we will not involve kids in our problems.” Gabriel said with gravity in his tone, only for Alexa to pop from behind the big white masked [Human] when SuperForce left. “Well if we can help it. If you join this kind of life is usually for a reason.”

Was...she not supposed to be here?

Or was this the reason Eleanore asked her to not come in her more compact form?

Had she come in her [Child Stage] form that would have been harder to deal with, so for now she would seal that form! Even if she enjoyed more her time as such...Maybe she could sleep in that form instead? She would at least hurt herself less since she would have more room. Yes, she would sleep in her [Child Stage] form, and then move around in this one.

“Can...we....stop....running....now?” Alexa heard from behind the voice of another [Human], this one seemed to be female, and she was...maybe two heads taller than her? She also seemed to have the bulges in her chest that seemed to make her run harder since they seemed to jump from side to side.

This should prove her superiority...and yet...she couldn't help but feel herself be annoyed at that.

“Oh that, right. Sure, you can stop.” Gabriel said, “Do an extra lap or two at walking speed to make sure you will not have cramps tomorrow.”

And instead of listening to him, the [Girl] just let herself fall flat into the ground. The big [Human] who had helped hide her started walking slowly, so Alexa did the same. She would not let her shield leave!

“Now, here is the important part, those of you who have active Cores with what we call Useful powers, have two options. Either stay here, or walk with the normies in that direction.” Gabriel said pointing at a door in the opposite direction from where SuperForce had come. There was another [Human] with a black mask waiting and waiving at them. “That is my partner Shadow Claw. She will train you in basic of superpowered combat. From the perspective of a baseline human.”

So [Humans] did have a way to deal with those that had more power than the rest! Alexa had been right!

“Now before you ask, there are advantages to staying around if you have powers. First...” Gabriel said pulling from within his clothes a white mask like the one she had. “Comes this awesome mask, state-of-the-art tech, everything you wish you had in your cellphone, and some extra. Tinker Grade tech. You will get one of these babies...And yes, some of you already have them, we give them in advance if you already have powers that are hard to hide...Or if you said in your interview that you would work in this way.”

So all of those with white masks had confirmed [Core Powers]?

“Advantage number two! You get support, we are super supportive of those who go the extra mile with us. Your power needs some exotic material? We will provide it if you use your power for us...And give you some extra too! Do you require extra food? We will get you speedsters MRE food! Those that are heavy in calories and taste like chocolate.” That was something that turned a few heads in Gabriel’s direction.

“Does our power need to be useful? And what if it's identifiable?” One of those that had the half of a white mask asked.

“If you intend to work as a Hero in the future then don’t take the white mask. We can give you a full black mask if you intend to work as a Hero in the future and make sure you are as far away from the cameras as possible. But we will not make any promises on that, also if you use your power while using a black mask, you are out. Either you take the white mask and work fully, or leave and try as an independent Hero.” Gabriel’s words seemed to make that one think for a few seconds, then he joined the rest of those who had already started moving towards the next testing area.

In the end, only those that already had a full white mask remained.

“Yeah, it is always like this. If you wanted to use your powers for us you would already have the white mask. But we do need to tell them anyway.” Gabriel sighed while addressing them. “Now, introduction time!”

“I’m....” The big [Human] who was Alexa’s shield started speaking.

“STOP!” Only to be stopped by Gabriel, “Don’t give your name unless you plan on keeping a loose identity...or if your power makes it impossible to have a secret identity I guess... But even so, keep the mask on always while at work. Even if it is obvious who you are, secret identities are important.”

Then shrugging the [Human] continued, “As I was saying, you may refer to me as Golem. My power is as you can see...I’m big, sturdy, and strong. I would introduce myself as a Golem Core User, but it seems the distinctions of Cores were a lie. So I will look forward to that class...”

A [Golem Core] huh...Or well, what she would have assigned as such.

“Sylph, wind.” The next [Human] spoke, it was the girl who was flat on the ground. As she spoke a gust of wind blew around...

“[Warning, the wind is laced with weird energy, investigation is in order.]”

Main Core spoke, but Alexa...didn't really have a way to check on this, did she? She could try to use some of her nanites to try and latch into the energy...but chances were that those nanites would separate from her, and in turn, self-destruct.

That was an annoying limit.

Like that more people spoke and they all showed part of what their [Core]s allowed them, some could change their body into specific animals, and only those specific animals, that seemed like a weird limiter, but no one seemed to speak about it. There was one extra [Human] who also manipulated that weird energy to affect the world. Only that one manipulated water instead of wind.

And then it was finally Alexa's turn.

“I’m.....not sure what name to give, but I can do this!” Alexa said while raising her hand and transforming it once more into the same design she had used to kill the previous [Human] that attacked her, only this time she was making it more for show than for use. Her sleeve was destroyed with the transformation, but if anything, it made the effect more impressive so it was fine!

So while her arm grew almost five times as big and imposing, it didn’t have nearly as much power. It was, in a nutshell, fake muscles.

“I am still working on how to make the best of it, but I can pretty much change it into anything if I understand how it works,” Alexa said in a cherry tone, returning her arm and clothes to normal.

“That is probably among the better ones so far, I can’t wait to see how your little head ended with the correct idea to make a Core give you that,” Gabriel said, making her start to think about that.

[Frank The Bettle] seemed to be convinced that staying near him would make her core evolve into an insect Core.

Eleanore had used that weird thing to make sure her Core was stable, and only after she found that it was stable did she point her this way, and now...Gabriel was implying that there were lies in what those two had told her. That the truth about how a [Core] worked was different.

So...what was the truth then?

“Now, it would be a shame if we delayed once more how a Core works right? So let’s move to the next thing on this induction...” Gabriel said while pointing to a door, it was near the one that the other people had walked, but it wasn’t the same. Alexa had marked that one in her memory with the help of Main Core, she had marked what had come from what door and in which door had the people left.

That was a different door, she wondered what would she find behind that one, more questions? Or answers?