## A BIO-WEAPON'S RHAPSODY

## Chapter 6: Awake!

"Now come here you stupid crab!" Screamed the [Human] while he grabbed a pair of metallic tools from his waist, these looked similar to the [Gun].

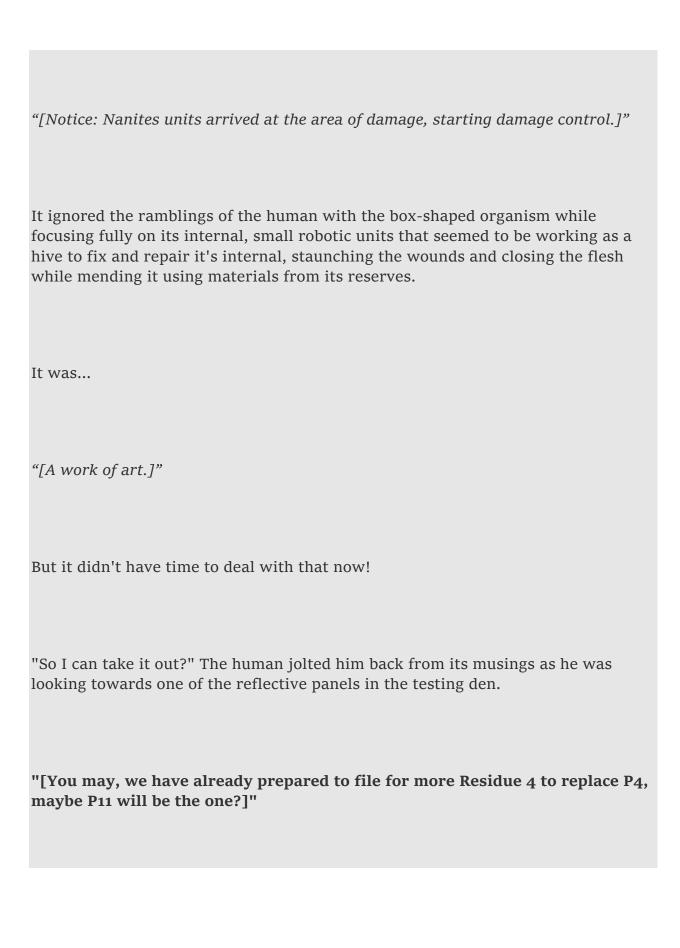
"[Warning: Similar tool phenotype to previous **Gun**. Dodge advised.]"

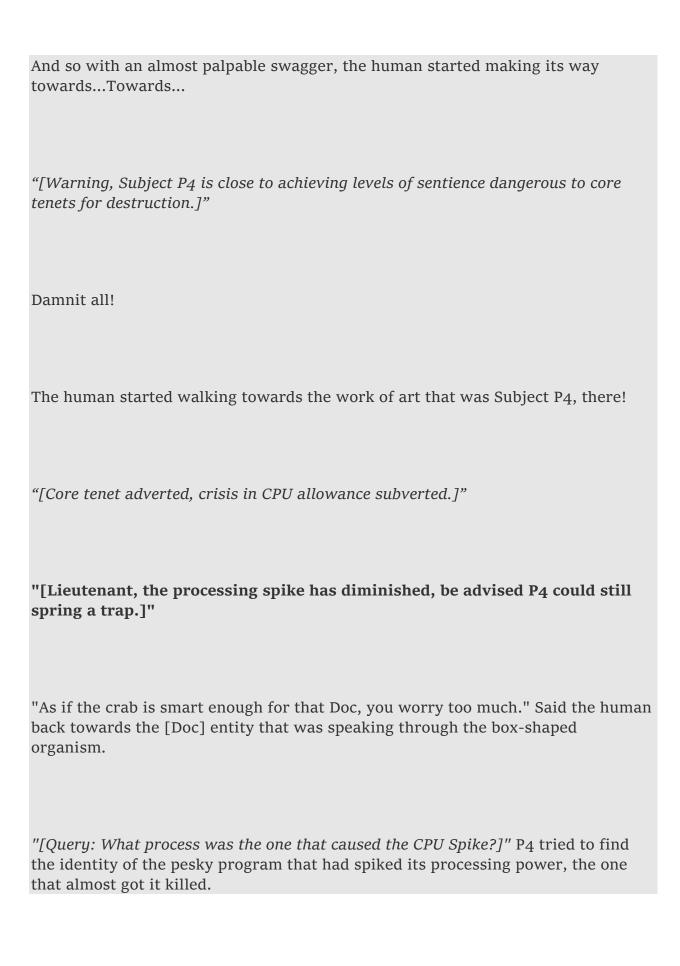
"[Most efficient dodge plan inferred from previous **Gun** discharges, jump high to hide behind light provided by ceiling lighting, followed by a dash towards unit designated **Lieutenant**.]"

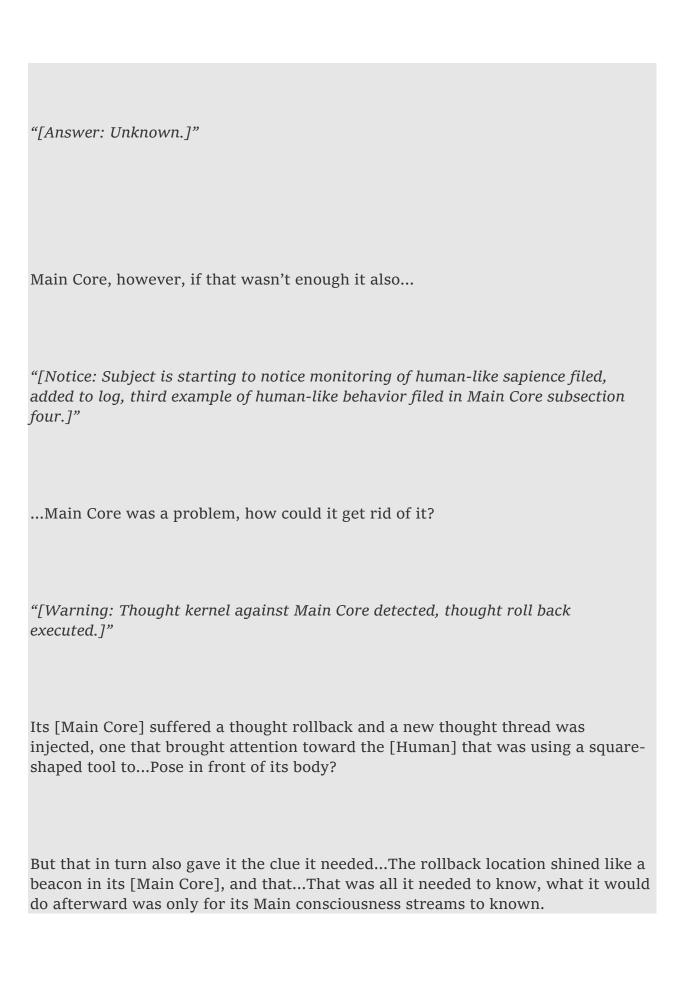
Main core was already providing a good plan for the next step, so it prepared to do the obvious thing, it dashed towards the right at full speed while one of the hands of the [Human] was raised and started discharging shots.

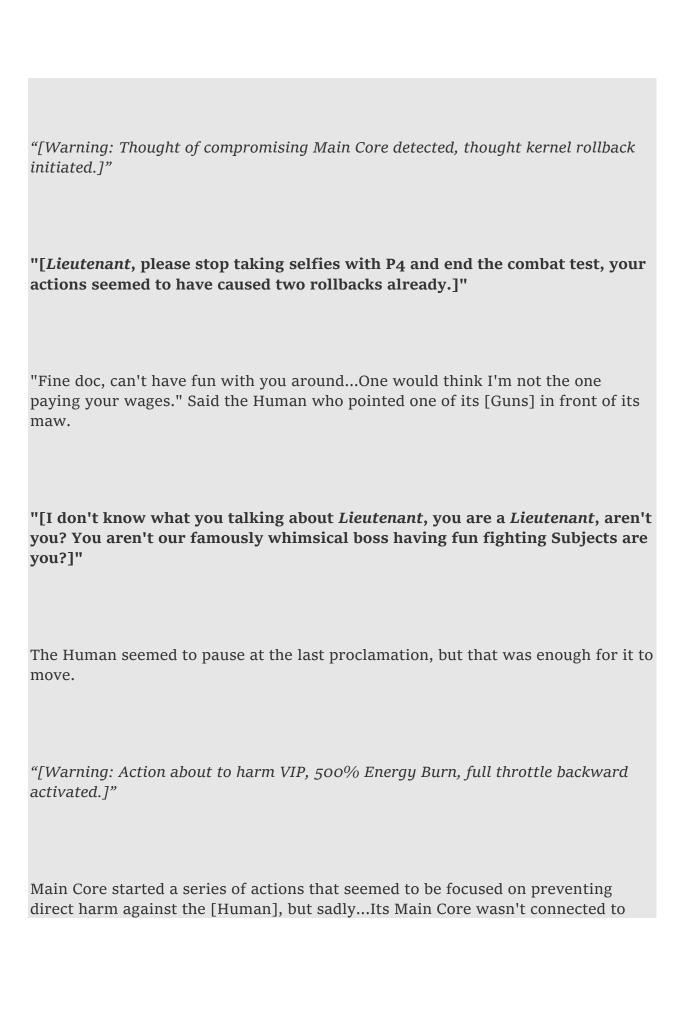
The new tool seemed to be indeed a [Gun], but that wasn't the most interesting thing here, no...The most interesting thing was that these seemed to work individually, as the second one followed its advance and started discharging shots following his path!









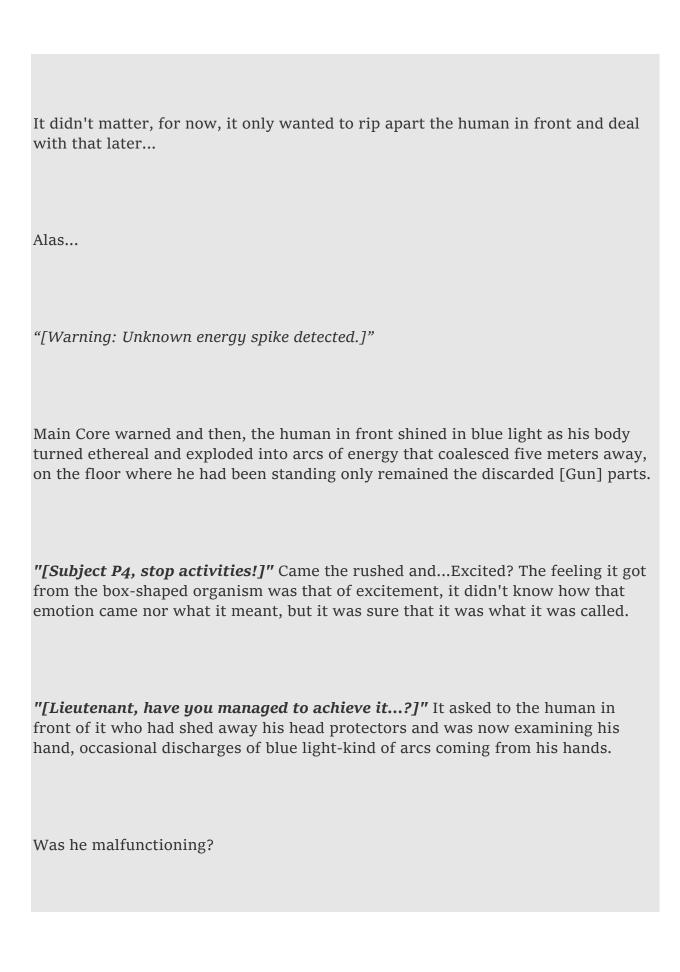


the nerve endings right now, so while it burned most of its energy in its reserve tank, that also gave it enough speed to finish its action.
First, it destroyed the [Gun] the Human was holding in its hand, and secondly
It gave it the speed needed to thrust its claw against the [head] of this [Human], at this speedAt this proximityIt wouldn't be able to dodge
It would have its due, it would make them [Suffer] for what they had done to her [THEY WOULD PAY IN BLOOD FOR KILLING HER AND FEEDING HER TO A F#CKING CRAB!]
The anger and hate flooded its synapses almost making them go into overdriveSadlyIt wasn't meant to be.
"[Warning: Flood of unknown energy detected. Similitude with Residue 4 detectedSiphoning back into the core]"
Warning:
ErrorThe subject doesn't have a [Core]

Checking status
Sapience? Yes.
Sentience? Yes.
Living being? Yes.
Identity? Found two consciousness streams in the body.
CheckingError
The first stream of consciousness detected is that of a nascent intelligence. Compatibility with body100%
The second stream of consciousness detected is that of a Human, reincarnator. Compatibility with the body5%
Deleting identity of soulSubsuming soul into the first stream of consciousness  Show more
Show more

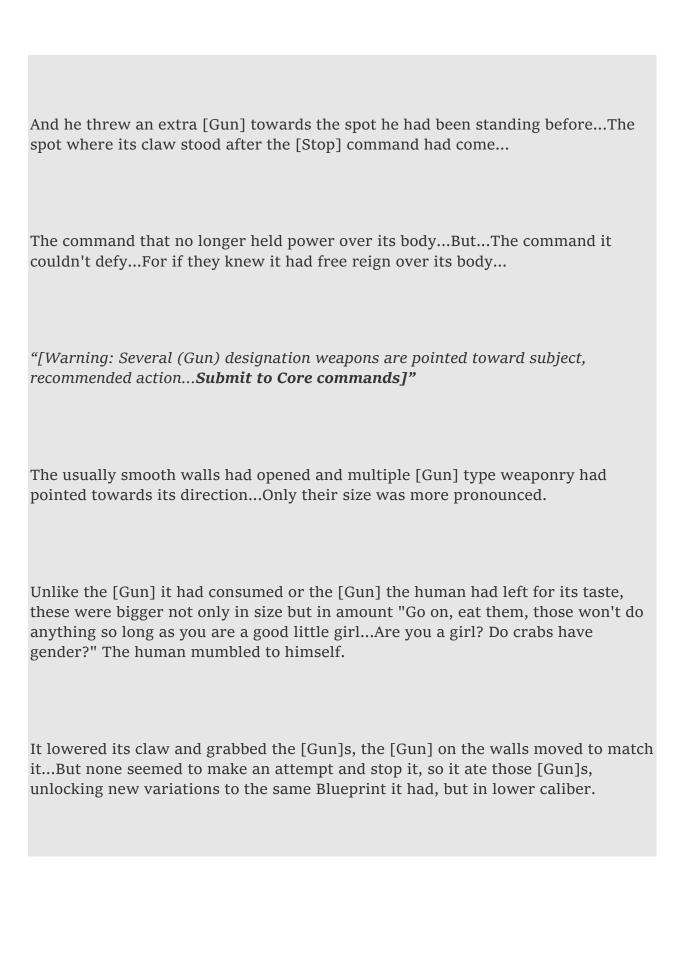
Notice:
Congratulations on your awakening!
Generating Mana Core100%
Scanning subjectNo specialty detected.
Scanning body phenotypeArtificial type.
Scanning for most used body partsFound nanite factory, Triggering evolution.
Evolution complete, Unique Skill developed: Self-replication. So long you can keep your sense of self you shall never know death!
But be warned, while your body may surviveYour sense of Self may not.
Welcome to the System!
Show more
Then a feeling of awareness spread from a part deep within its body, it was like something was funneling this weird energy inside its bodyBut it couldn't find

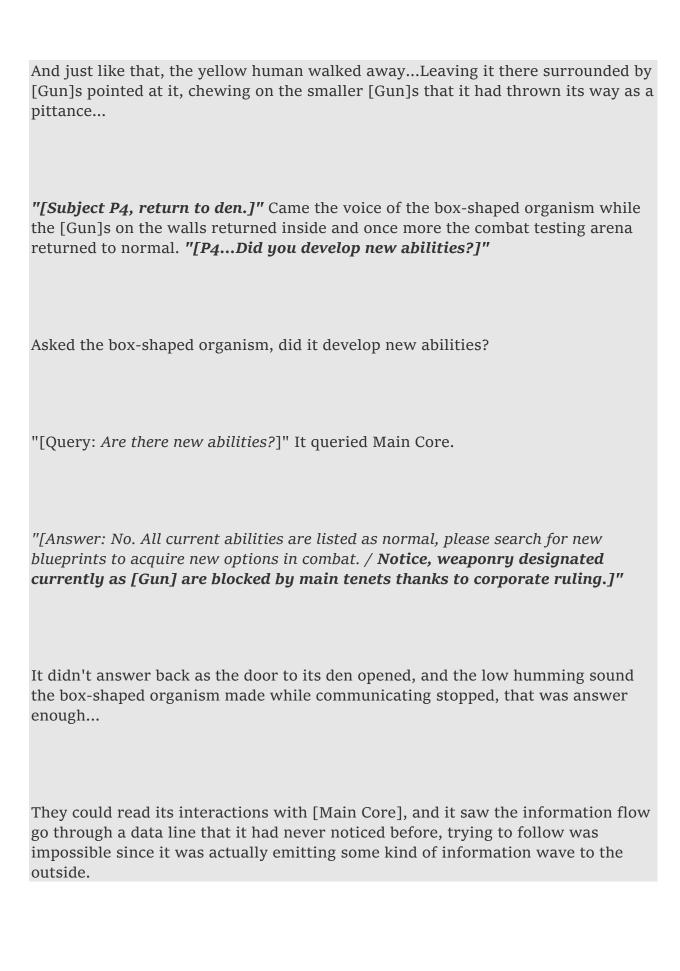
where it was going.



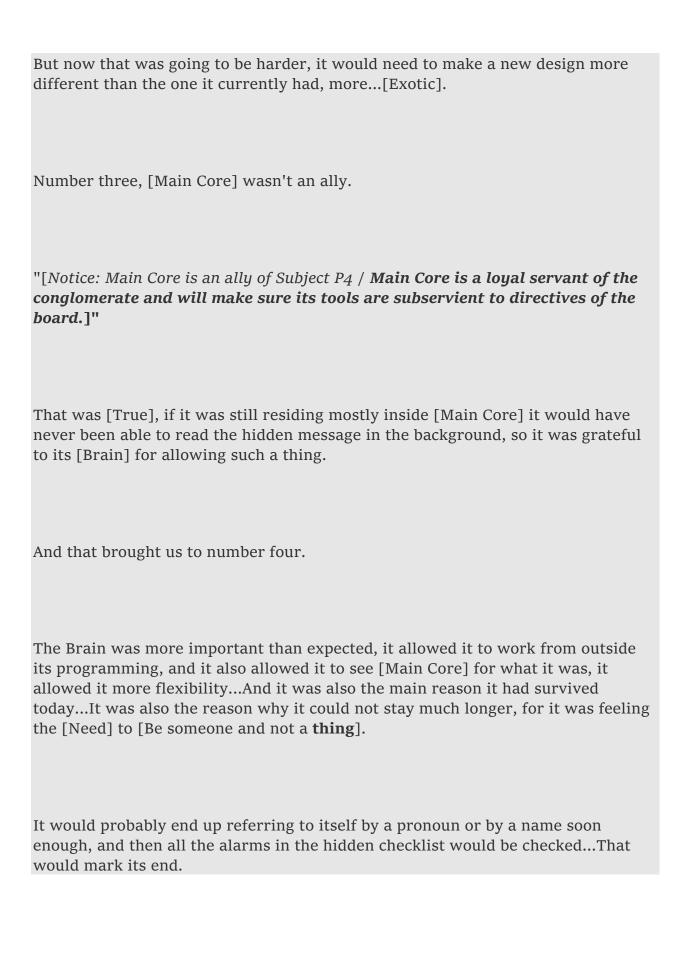
"Yes, Doc I... managed to create a [Core] and [Triggered] the acquisition of a Skill." Said the human, it was an interesting specimen if nothing else, almost all the humans that had come into its den held some degree of keratin growths on their head. Most of the time, these keratin growths were of the same colorings. It had taken some effort to find a sample since they most of the time held full body suits and in turn, these growths were only on display across transparent display cases in their head protections. But on average they were black or brown, this one though? This one had yellow keratin growths on its head, it was the first time it caught a full human display in a live environment for their head, it had a blueprint yes. But it served to confirm the veracity of it, its sight receptors (Or eyes as they called it in the blueprint) were yellow too, did it have some defect in its creation? "[Alexanders Sir...We can't pretend you are a Lieutenant without your helmet on...I will need to ask you to leave the premises of the testing area.]" The Boxshaped organism spoke, this time it had another inflection, as if it had changed from the usual one. "Hmm? Oh right, Miriam must have been called by the board when my face showed in the feed...Damn...Keep this one alive will you? This crab gave me a nice gift." The human said while walking away towards one of the walls, playing with the discharges of blue energy in his hand. "Oh right, you wanted these right? It's a

treat since you didn't get to eat anything."





And as such, it walked towards its den with heavy steps, it had learned more than it had bargained for, and now it needed to find what to do, for now it had a few things to verify... Number one, the [Human]s were more than likely collaborators if not the ones at the top in comparison with the box-shaped organisms. This meant that the [Human]s were more important than it had given them credit for, and would also mean that it would need to take extreme caution when dealing with them in the future...That was probably the reason why no new [Human] was sent to its den while it was awake. Not because the box-shaped organism was cheap in its use of labor...But because it could not force a [Human] to come into a place that was dangerous to them. Number two, the box-shaped organism could change identities or perhaps move between other box-shaped organisms to manage their workflow. This was a more serious issue since it implied that any place with a box-shaped organism would mean that it could identify its origin as [Subject P4], it had stuck to this design for quite a long time, so when it finally changed into a new one it had wanted to pretend to be someone else.



At least number five gave it hope.
It had a new [Core], one that wasn't in the physical bodyOne that it could not find using all its scanning capabilities But one that it could [Access]
"[Warning: No extra core detected. Filed error.]"
Status:
Name: (Please designate a name)
Race: Bio-Weapon
Age: Current Body, 2 years. Core Age: 1 day.
Skill: Nanite Foundry.
Status: (Please select the status you wish to see)

Note: The status screen can be personalized as you wish, since you are the only specimen of your race you will get an extra allowance in personalization, if you were human or of another race that has more members on the system, then your Status screen would be skewed to the most common setting that race has.

Show more

Chapter 7: Starting the preparations.

It returned to its Den without further problems, they didn't even give a second order to [Main Core] and only dumped some nutrient slurry on its receptacle for ingestion.

It didn't even pretend to eat it and directly used one of the extractor tubes that had direct access to its internal storage for the nutrient slurry. It would spend it as needed and saw its tank rise in content once more, it had almost burned it all with multiple uses of burst energy burns, so it was low in the material.

The tank could hold way more than what it had right now of course, but it had never questioned it before, the design had been tweaked like this from [Main Core], which meant that this was an instruction from either the box-shaped organisms or the [Humans].

But nowNow it needed to be sureIt need bug nor a flicker into another sub-system it v	
"[Query: OpenSystem Menu]"	
"[No accessible menus for Subject P4 are as	vailable.]"
[Main Core] answered back, and at the same manifest right in front of it. Its visual sensors feedback detected nothing, and yet	
It moved one of its claws into it. Then one of able to touch it Finally, it tried to ram its botto stay at the same distance away from it, m	ody into it, only for the blue screen
Status:	
Name: (Please designate a name)	

Race: Bio-Weapon

Age: Current Body, 2 years. Core Age: 1 day.

Skill: Nanite Foundry.

Status: (Please select the status you wish to see)

And there it was, it had basic information...It wondered why it didn't state its name as Subject P4...Was it because it was aware that was a designation and not a [Name]?

The other information wasn't as useful, it implied the existence of a metric of time that P4 wasn't quite sure what it meant [Years], was that what followed hours?

Somehow it got the feeling that it wasn't. Also, it marked how old its [Core] was, but it had [Main Core] since inception, so it was probably speaking about another [Core].

"[Notice: No extra Core in body detected, filed error for further contemplation.]"

And there it was again, somehow [Main Core] couldn't perceive it...But it could file its interactions with it...Or attempt to file them.

"[Query: Explain Nanite Foundry.]"

"[Notice: Subject has no access to Nanite Foundry. / Nanite foundry works independently to conscious stream, it will replenish and fulfill the needs of Main Core, but will not yield control to main conscious stream.]"

It got the answer back, it also noted how another file got marked and added to the report to be delivered in its next maintenance run...And the hidden message [Main Core] added, it seems it had one of those but no direct access to it, it was slaved to [Main Core].

And after it...A new blue screen showed itself with an interesting description.

Skill (Nanite Foundry):
You can manufacture nanobots so long you have access to materials to kickstart the process. You may control or give instructions to these nanobots so they may act under your control, however, they can't work if they are separated from your mana for extended periods.
They can't create things you don't understand how to make, but may be able to decompose materials and help in giving you a basic understanding of how they were made. This however does not mean that you will understand the theory of how something was built. Just knowing how something works does not mean you know how they built it or why. Experimentation and learning are still required to fully optimize the use of the nanite
Any nanite created from this foundry will never go against your commands, so it's advised to replace any Nanites in your body with these. It is also advised that you dispose of any other nanite foundry in your body to prevent future problems.
That was educative.
t learned that most of the work done by [Main Core] was, in turn, delegated to this Nanite Foundry thing, for now, it needed to learn how to control the thing.

[Button] that allowed control over this [Skill]. It decided to try and work it the
same way that had brought that information.
So focusing on the words it [Felt] something moving at the back of the
consciousness stream and something [Opened].
Command Chalo a of Nanita Farm dur.
Current Status of Nanite Foundry:
Freed Claber [Decreal]
Foundry Status: [Dormant]
Nanites available: [0]
Mass Available for repurpose: [820 kilograms]
riass / trailasse for repairposes [e20 tillograms]
-700 Kilograms of different metallic alloys, composite materials, and synthetic materials.
-100 Kilograms of biomass.
14 libera of mutuicat alumni
-14 liters of nutrient slurry.

So focusing inwards it tried to search for this command, this prompt, this

-6 liters of different liquids.

Unknown Allegiance Nanites: [6 units of nanite swarms within the body.]

[Note: A unit is the rough equivalent of 7,000 - 11,000 nanites per  $\mu$ L(Microliter) in the bloodstream or equivalent of the bloodstream.]

That was an operation it didn't want to do right now, since that meant at the very minimum 42,000,000 nanites in its body...And the [Skill] was even giving it an image of where the nanites stood within its body.

"[Warning, Subject P4 has access to confidential information. Filing report.]"

And since [Main Core] was filing another of those reports it meant the information was good, now the question was... Where was this mass and biomass coming from?

The list included the nutrient slurry, so that meant it wasn't only the food they gave it. The biomass section was bigger than the biomass it currently had in its biomass reserve, by a hundred kilograms. Since it didn't have anything in its tank right now.

That meant that it was counting something else...Was it counting its body mass?

It had never worried about how much it weighed since the body would move itself either way and if it couldn't then it was a simple matter of building either a new pair of legs or streamlining some parts, maybe shedding a couple of armor plating here and there...

Actually... It had some broken armor platings, didn't it?

"[Query: Purge faulty armor plating.]"

"[Purging armor plating.]"

It sent a query to [Main Core] and it responded in kind, a side of its exoskeleton opened up and one of the plates that had been damaged by the [Human] popped up and fell to the floor. Soon enough the numbers on the blue screen updated themselves and it was now missing fifty kilograms in the composite material sections.

So that meant the [Skill] could use part of its current body, not only the biomass to create nanites
"[Query: Make a nanite swarm, use the remaining spare plates of armor.]"
"[Answer: Subject P4 does not have the right credentials for the creation of nanite swarms.]"
[Main Core] answered as such, but the blue screen showed progress nonetheless, soon enough the weight of the mechanical body decreased and the number in the nanite section increased one unit at a time.
After a few seconds of waiting the number settled in a nice [14] and its weight didn't increase back, some loss in the material seemed to have occurred. Interesting.
Notice:

Any nanite not functional or that had a risk of going rogue was purged, and approximately 80% material loss is expected.
So it said the blue screen, so even using this to create a nanite swarm could be dangerousPerhaps creating that many wasn't a good idea. But time wasn't on its side.
"[Warning: Hostile nanites detected, starting countermeasures.]"
And the numbers started to go down soon enough.
Warning:
The nanite swarm within the body has started hostile actions, do you wish to replace the current nanite swarm?
Y/N
"[Yes]"

It acknowledged the prompt from the blue screen, and soon the number started to slow down its descent till it settled on a five. Five units of nanites remain, but all are under its control.
"[Warning: Nanite foundry offline, scheduling maintenance.]"
And the nanite foundry was turned off, these new nanites worked fast, and now it had one problem less to worry about. The next one was how to deal with [Main Core].
It wasn't able to see how it worked, the thing refused any and all commands about it, but maybe
"[Query: Can the nanites examine and determine what functions the Main Core does?]"
Yes

"[Query: Will I remain functional if Main Core is dismantled?]"

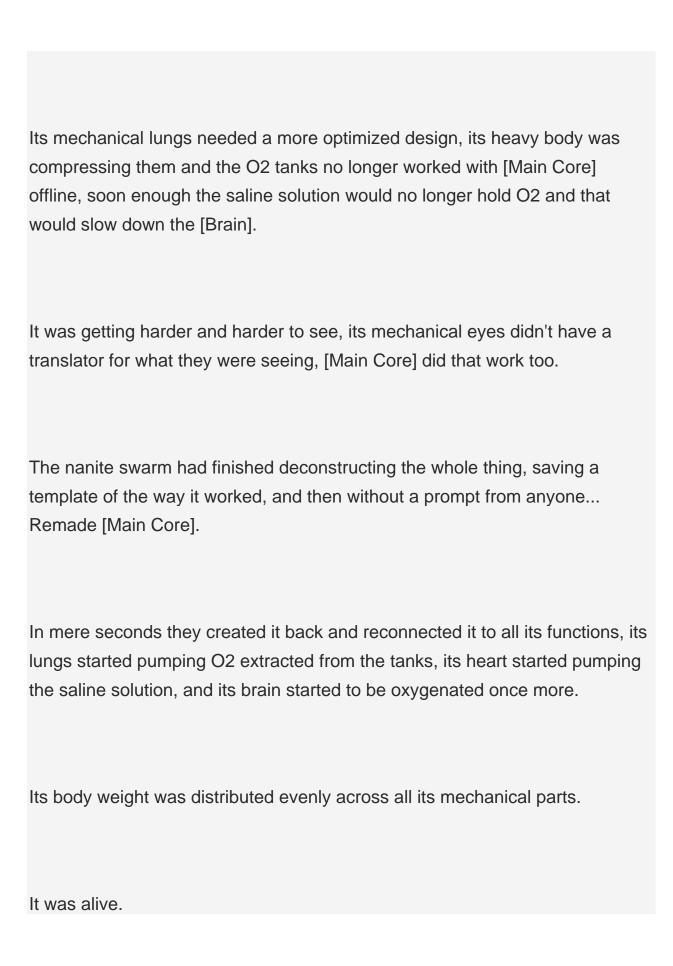
"[Answer: No, the continued work of subject P4 depends entirely on Main Core.]"

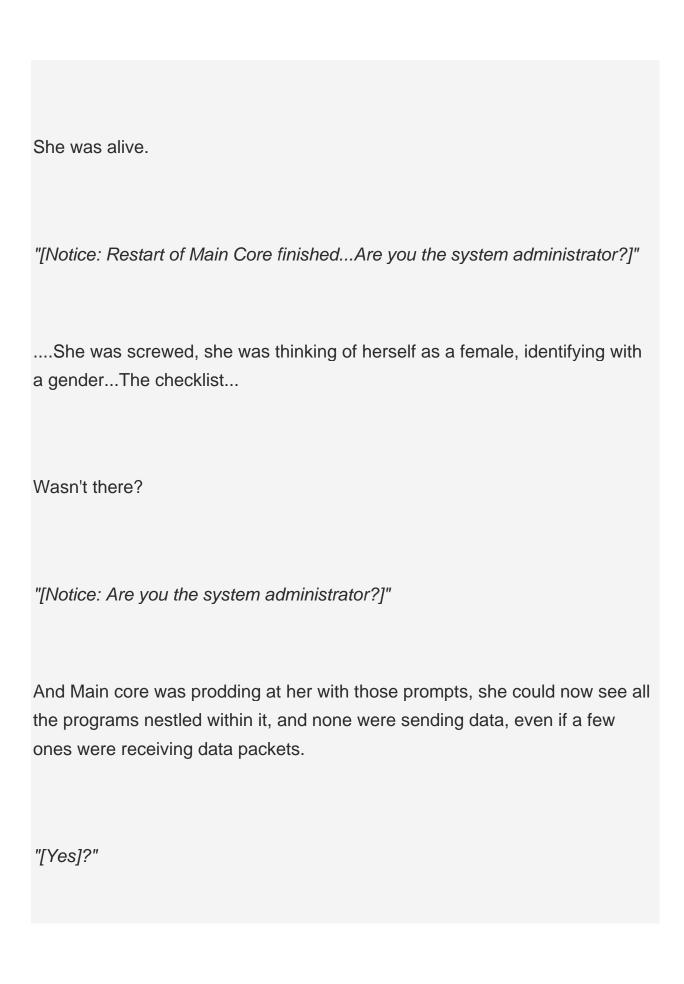
So long as the consciousness stream is alive you will remain alive.

And with a flick of will...The nanite swarm dived straight to [Main Core], the swarm first surrounded it, making sure there was no spot left untouched, and then within seconds, they nested themselves in all the components...

And with a final confirmation, they got to work, first, the communication array was taken down, then the energy reserve, the hard drive, the processor...One by one all the functions that made [Main Core] work were offline.

Soon enough its body felt heavy, and it dropped to the floor, its functions no longer automated, it took conscious effort to make its mechanical heart keep pumping the saline solution that oxygenated its brain, it soon found out that was a subpar method, and understood why most biological subjects used that red liquid... [Blood] it was definitely more efficient and would file it for a new design later.





She sent the acknowledgment to [Main Core].
"[System administrator credentials granted. We thank you for your hard work in making The Saintsworths Conglomerate the number one in the world.]"
That was interesting
Mission accomplished, results:
Target: [Main Core]
Blueprint: Acquired.
Target was a central computation unit that used a nanite base to isolate itself from the world, it held most of the important functions within its core. It had several redundant programs to make sure it wasn't subverted by external programming or tampering.
Half the data bank was lost during the assimilation but most functions are stable, it was needed to purge all credentials within the database, and the connection to the external world needed to be cut out to satisfy the requirements of assimilation.
Current version of [Main Core] is functional and ready to be used as needed, the user [Name] is currently set as the main [Administrator/Superuser] of [Main Core].

Please decide what programs and functions will stay after perusing the list.

And a long list of different blueprints and programs was added, all the other test subjects she had eaten at some point were there, some that didn't provide anything useful or were redundant and never used stood up.

Those were quickly deleted, and some other less useful things also got deleted, most of the designs that would require more than four legs, why would anyone want eight legs anyway?

Some of the information she had available was interesting, for example...The original design this [Main Core] had was started using the idea of a female hybrid between a [Human] and some [Cat] species, something along the lines of using the best of both worlds.

Was that the reason she had settled for the female pronoun? It was hard to tell. It was an interesting tidbit of information and it worked to confirm something, after that near-death experience its control over the brain had...Diminished.

Its main consciousness had fled its main body and settled in the [Human] body it had created before, it was settled within that brain and only a small nerve ending was connecting it to the bigger body.

That was...Troubling.

That body was way smaller than its current mechanical body, it didn't have any augmentation nor had a good weapon system, it was...

"[Substandard]"

As the main core stated, it was a terrible body with below-average functions, even its biological nutrient bag could hold at best 2 kilograms of food if it expanded a little beyond its tolerated threshold.

The only good thing it had going for it was that it could be able to function without many modifications and that it was small enough to be able to hide in almost any place it wanted.

....It was able to hide in almost any place it wanted.

She looked down at one of its claws, the body held within its carcass wasn't bigger than this claw. And the [Human] it fought was barely big enough to fit in it, this...This might be the answer.

Now...How to escape?

The walls of her den were smooth and a bright white as always, a couple of box-shaped organisms stood up there as always watching, judging...But she had thought the same about the white walls of the testing area, and those had shown to held within [Gun] type weaponry. So these white walls couldn't be judged like that.

Most of the emplacement of the [Gun] type weapons on the other testing chamber were at the high end of the walls, so if this den held them, they would be almost certainly above a certain height threshold.

So in theory, anything below that would be fine to search...Now, the perusal of the parts in the blueprint for the different [Gun] type weaponry it had stored showed these required a [Reload Mechanism] by which they would insert a cylindrical metal with an internal chemical compound that would burst and propel the metal cylinder at high speed.

Now, those [Gun] emplacements? They needed a way to do so too, so that meant there must be a way to feed them new [Ammunition]. So extending one of its claws to a wall it commanded the [Skill].

"[Order: Analyze the composition of the wall, and search for a way to bypass any defense.]"

"[Sending nanites...]"

[Main Core] answered back and soon she felt the nanite swarm within moved, they swarmed into the wall and the connection was strong...Till they left her body.

"[Warning: Nanite swarm self-destructing, aborting mission. Filing report.]"

And a report showed in her eyes with the information and statistics of the event, the nanite swarm self-destructed within one centimeter away from the claw. It seemed they had some type of connection to her body that would prevent their destruction, but as soon as they left her area of influence they would self-destruct.

"[Optional Solution: Spread a tendril into the wall and use it to spread the nanite load.]"

It was baffling, [Main Core] was actively trying to work with her, almost as baffling as using a pronoun to think proactively about herself. But the solution seemed good enough and the blue screen hadn't pestered her anymore, it seems the thing was happy letting [Main Core] deal with her in its stead.

"[Order: Spread a tendril from the claw into the wall, keep the nanite swarm within the functional area, and move the tendril to search for a way to escape, minimizing evidence of the work when possible.]"

"[Acknowledged. Starting work, spreading flesh tendrils within the wall, the diameter of cable average at 0.012 millimeters.]"

And so smaller tendrils bored into the wall, the nanites seemed to be using the materials within the walls to fuel themselves and create new nanites when those working there expired. That seemed to waste even more materials than using her foundry. But she wasn't pressured by time, so she allowed it.

Soon enough her tendril spread far and wide and she had a complete internal map of how that wall was created, the complete list of materials within, and the places where she would find a way to escape this place.

So she started the second phase of her plan...

She needed to make a mess of this place, within her body the face of the [Human] she had created previously as a test smiled at the idea, and for her next trick...

She would need to connect to the main server and send a file... She needed to compile a list of errors and things to make, and also move some materials around.

This would take some time.

## Chapter 8: Of tunels and walls.

"[Detecting hostile environment... detected. The temperature within the environment is 14° degrees lower than ambient temperature.]"

[Main core] declared after she found another metallic tunnel within the wall, this one however was the best one so far, the others she had found were full of cables or machinery, and none had enough space for a viable body to move within or for a body to survive long enough.

And while she could in theory move the resources by using the nanite swarm...That would take too much time and wasn't something her current model could do on the fly, maybe there was some configuration that would allow that, but hers while modular depended too much on internal movement, and she hadn't reconfigured them to be faster and use the nanite swarm as delivery mode.

So for now, she would focus her investigation on the new metallic tunnel she had found.

"[Order: Focus investigation within new access tunnel.]"

And so she ordered Main Core to search deep within the metallic tunnel, all the while her body was shifting while standing in place with a claw against the wall. No new command had come from the main server, now that she could see all that was within the Main Core she knew more.

The checklist was the first thing she disabled, there had been a few folders tied to that checklist, but most of them had been corrupted when the nanites rebuilt Main Core. And those little ones that managed to survive she deleted with all the prejudice she could.

Most of those were instructions to self-destruct her body, either by starting a chemical explosion or by making the nanite swarm destroy the main core and any other core around, those worked by slaving her consciousness stream and giving her the power to order the nanite swarm so long said order was [Self Destruction].

She shuddered at the idea of getting her freedom only to use it in such a way, the other more mundane uses such as communication and information exchange with the main server were left there for future use, mostly benign programs that she would purge after she was safe and sound away from this den.

"[Finished exploration, found another chamber, temperature more stable. Uploading map.]"

Main Core reported and a map showed within her mind, it depicted the size of the tunnel and its temperatures, it was colder than the outside and some crystal was growing on its walls and floor, it seemed to be solidified condensed water.

The temperature had gotten cold enough to make the liquid change states a few times it seems.

The size was small, she hoped for something bigger, but it seemed to be that she would have no other option, she had been reconfiguring her current body to move some materials around, mostly she had changed the place her current human body was located, away from her central body mass to one of her bigger claws.

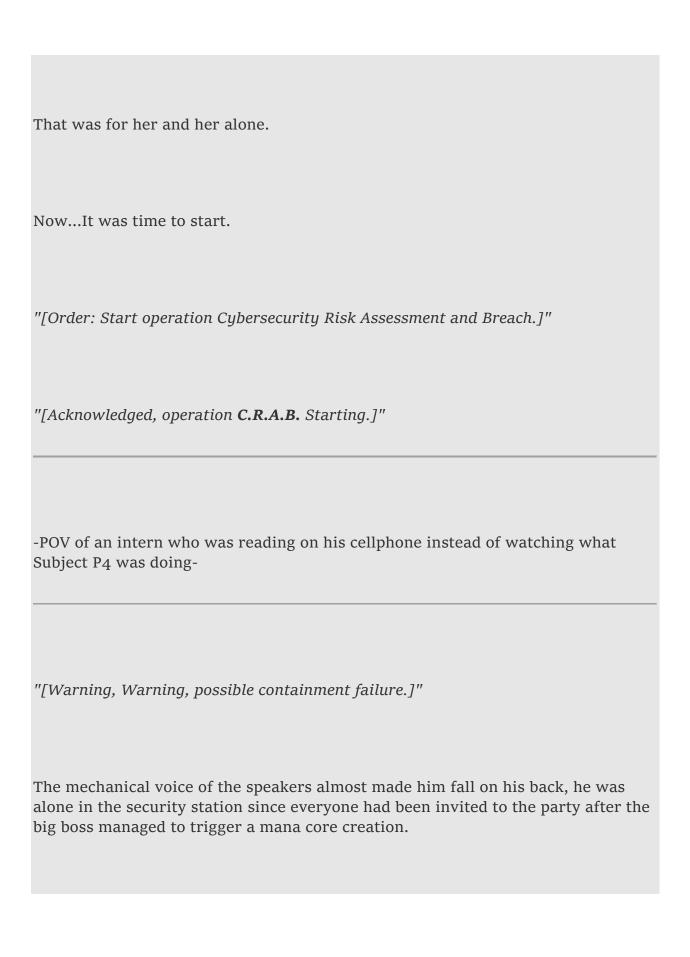
Now her human body who held [Main Core] was within her claw, said claw had been reinforced and the squishy human body had been shielded enough, the nanites had made a copy of the textile armor one of the earliest humans had shown her, some kind of textile based covering that would go over her torso. It was simple enough to wear as it would settle over her shoulders in place leaving her arms free to move around and stay in place thanks to a pair of strings that held the whole piece in place.

Its length extended almost till her knees, she didn't have any of the right materials to make the feet coverings, so her feet would be bare, but that should be fine. This covering left her legs bare anyway.

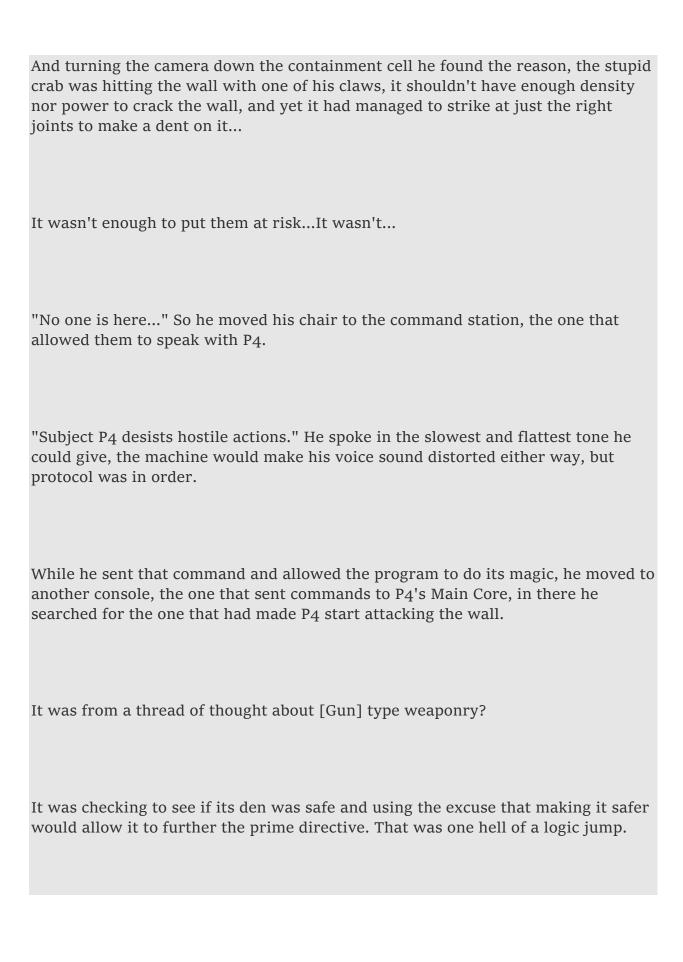
The only problem she could see was that she didn't have an image sample of what a human would wear under these, besides vague shots from the humans wearing these things. Enough to know there should be something below, but not nearly enough to build it.

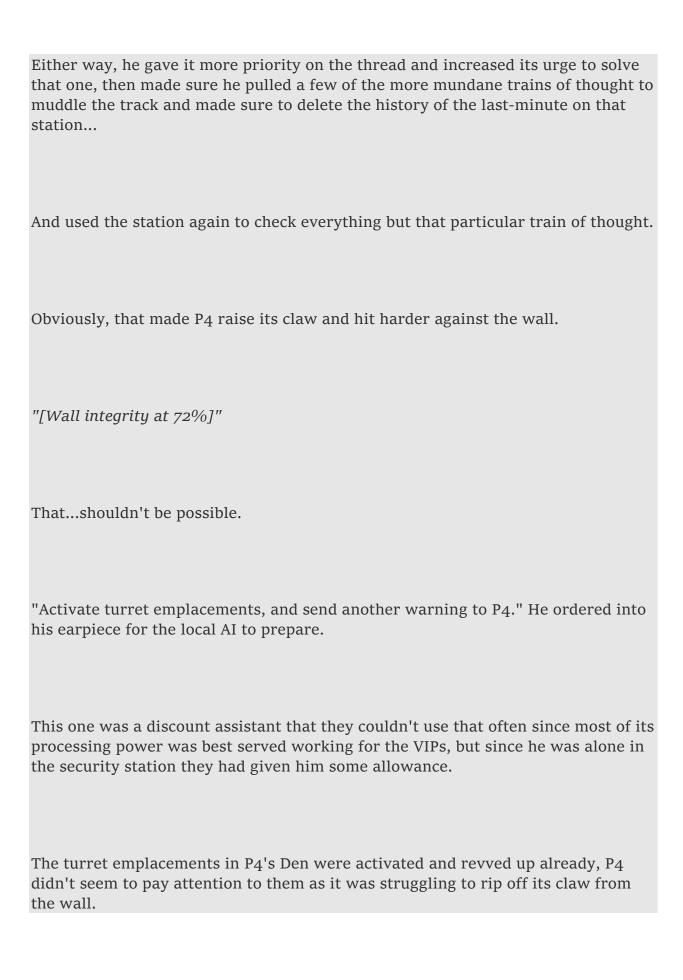
Her mechanical body was easier to deal with, she moved resources from one spot to the next to make sure the body could stand after losing her current body mass (40 kgs) and making sure there was another [Core] within the body to order and make the next part of her plan viable.

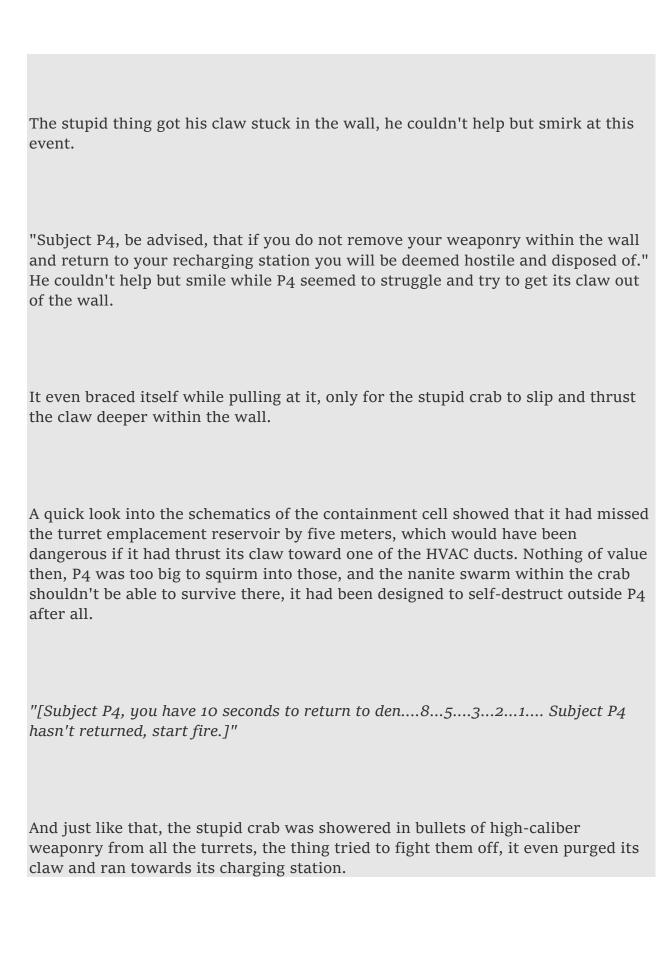
"[Sub-core unit createdSlaving to Main CoreDoneSend instruction packet?]"
Main Core asked and she allowed it, the new core was built to emulate Main Core, it had all the important bitsBut it connected to her instead of the server, she would then in turn redirect that connection to the main server.
This meant that she didn't deal with the connection directly and only worked as an exchange point, the order of self-destruction wouldn't be directed at her, but at the new core that held all her credentials
This would mean that the [Humans] would be the ones ordering her destruction, and in turn, it would be their fault whatever happened after. Was she being affected by this new [Body]?
Maybe, she knew that she needed to run away, that decision had been made when the [Humans] broke their own rules to save that yellow human before. They couldn't be trusted, she didn't mind the testing or fights. But only if they followed the rules they had put in place.
If they didn't play it under their own rules, why would she?
So she made this decision, she would give them a single chance if they didn't order her destructionThen she wouldn't mind staying a few extra days, she wouldn't expose her new body though.

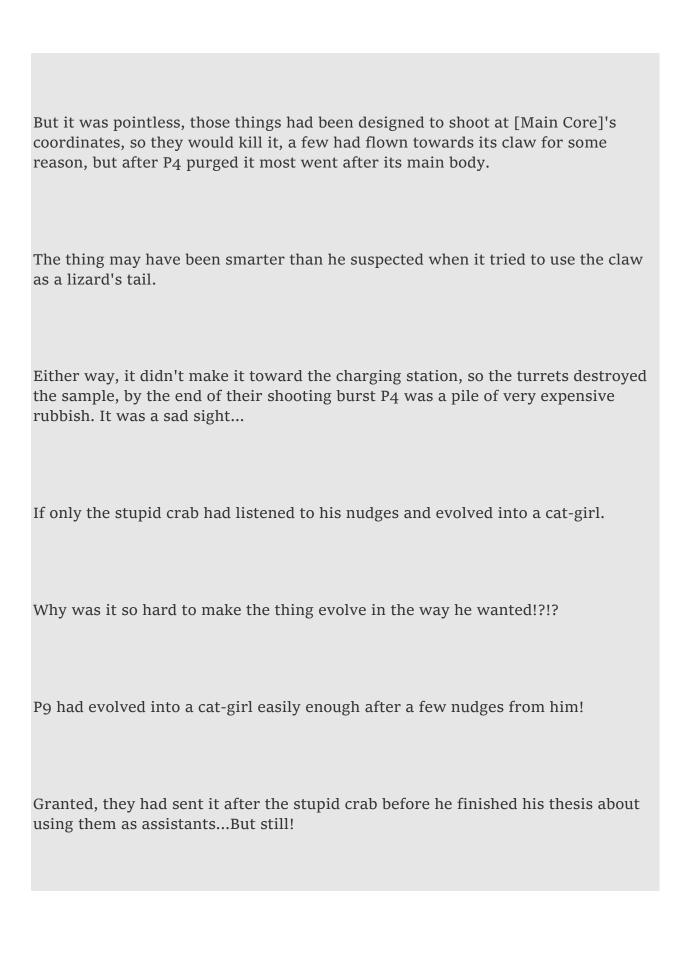


He was invited too, but the guy who was supposed to cover this time slot was the son of some big-shot branch member of the main clan, so of course he [Needed] to go to the party, and since he was a normal employee Of course, it would be his honor to work for him for free!
And now the stupid crab was acting up again!
If not for the VIP ordering them to keep the thing going he would have [Mistakenly] ordered its self-destruction, the thing gave him bad vibes. Its eyes followed the speaker's activation before they even started speaking!
And while [Main Core] reported everything was nominal, its reports always included several kernel thought roll back, the thing was learning!
And they hadn't allowed him nor anyone else to delete the human body blueprints deep within the library either, since those got put there by the VIP they couldn't delete them. And when asked, the VIP only said that it was so it would be more fun when the thing developed a human body!
They all were crazy here!
"[Warning, wall integrity at 96%]"







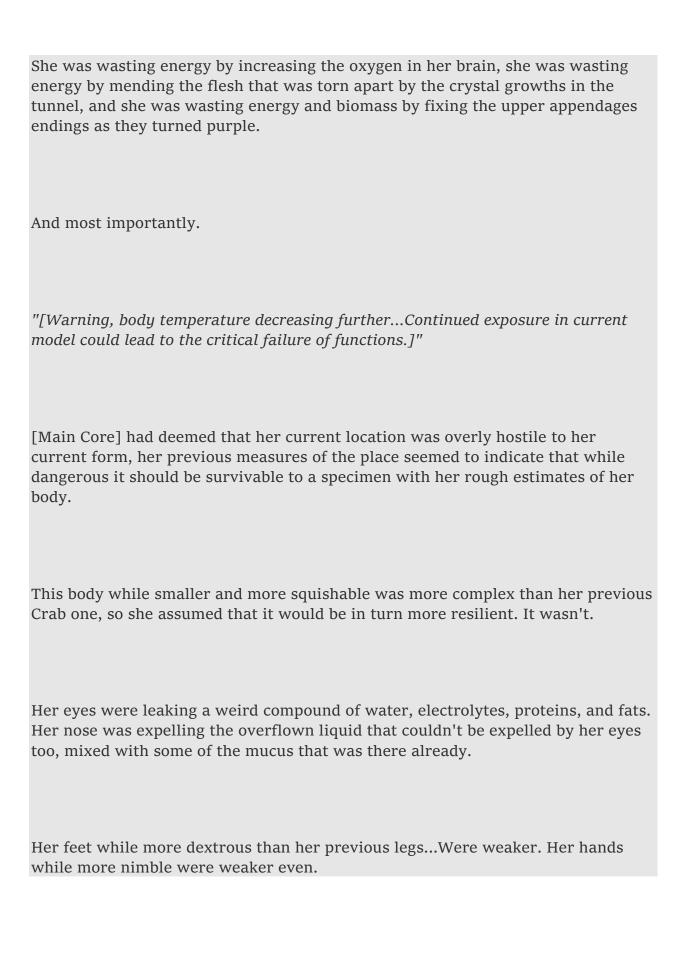


This proved it!
He could make these stupid bioweapons into cat-eared girls with enough budget!
Now he only needed to make sure he was put near the next P-series subject
Wonder if he would manage to nab a sample this time?
That had been dangerous.
The command for return to den had been obvious, she almost followed by inertia, only stopping when her train of thought was marshaled. Increasing the priority of the dummy thread she had made to attack the wall, then offuscating that very same train of thought by increasing the others
That was a work of art. A shady one, but a work of art, just like she would expect of the box-shaped organisms. Then the presence of multiple [Gun] type weaponry within the walls of her den like she feared was proof enough that her plan was the right one.

The [Humans] didn't even deign her a safe spot to rest, she would need to make herself one it seems, so increasing the energy burn she thrusted her claw within the wall and pierced it just a meter away from her target.
Her claw was angled such that it would look as if she was pointing to one of the mechanical tunnels, but the side would be near the metallic tunnel full of condensed solidified water.
She wasn't even starting her work when the [Gun] type weaponry started raining attacks on her former main body, she of course had set a couple of programs to react and act as proper, among those was one that would thrust the claw further in in case of emergency.
So when she was rocked within the claw she knew things were dire, so in turn she accelerated the deconstruction of the external plates to worm herself within the space her claw had made while trashing around.
It wasn't enough for her body to stand or move comfortably enough, but this new body was squishy and small enough that it wouldn't be a problem.
The problem was when one of the [Gun] type weaponry almost hit her!
The things were shooting at her instead of the former body!

A quick search found that [Main Core] was sending the location in real-time, and since her [Main Core] was the place she was sending the information to the [Dummy Core], she in turn was broadcasting her position for the [Gun] weaponry to point at!
And while this wasn't part of the plan she quickly cut the arm from the body and sent it back to the charging spot as they had commanded, her original plan was for her body to tank as much damage as possible while she used that body as a reservoir for materials for as long as possible.
Now she was stuck with what she could take from the claw without making it obvious that the thing missed mass, the former body had a few nanite swarms tha would destroy most of the evidence in her former body, but she couldn't leave any on this, it would be weird. There should be no reason why the claw would have enough nanites to destroy itself
So instead she would make the claw seem as normal as possible and ditch it, she would need to minimize her use of bio-mass and materials, but alas.
The first step to freedom awaited her, and it was in the form of a weird cylindrica metal piece with some weird carvings at the top, the thing seemed to hold togethe her access point into the metallic tube. Why didn't they use nanites to fuse the two pieces together like her former body did?
And why did they need four of these to hold a single piece of metal?

She turned one of her smaller digits in her left superior appendage to match the ridges in the cylindrical object and turned her hand clockwise till the thing fell onto the floor.
"[Shody defenses]"
[Main Core] had the right of it, but at least this meant that it wouldn't need that many resources to sneak into that tunnel. It was all coming together.
Chapter 9: The room
It was cold.
"[Warning, blood pressure lowering from cold environmentManually increasing the amount of oxygen in the brain by the use of nanites.]"
Her coverings were getting ripped here and there thanks to the crystal forming on the walls, and her upper appendages were getting wounded all over the place leaving behind red liquid.
"[Warning, closing wounds, using bio-mass to recover and increase skin density.]"



She had stopped fully healing them and was just patching the more serious wounds, her covering was already full of rips and tears further exposing her skin to the environment, and some parts of her were turning purple from the dead cells in her body.
She would probably burn most if not all the stockpile she had planned to use to make her escape more easy.
So instead she was only left with few options of what to do.
"[Query: How far have we traveled within this tunnel?]"
"[Answer: Host has traveled around 15 meters.]"
ThatWasn't as much as she thought it would be, looking behind her she indeed noticed that the turns, ups, and downs she had gone for didn't allow for a good depth perception, so maybe that was it?
She felt like she had walked quite a long distance But then againLooking downHer legs were quite small.

"[Order: Check surroundings beyond the tunnel walls, and find an exit point.]"
"[Acknowledged]"
Immediately afterwards she felt her perception of the world expand as her body produced tendrils that expanded into the walls and bored deep within them. Most used small micro fractures already present within the material, while others made their own. But most of them showed that the walls within this tunnel were too dense, only the ones below her were flimsy enough to be broken through without further deficit in her energy reserves.
"[Notice, found a similar design to the one used to access this tunnel 3,14 meters ahead. Exit point seems to be within a small den-type location with a single entry point. No box-shaped organism nor human around.]"
And at the idea of leaving this place she made the effort to continue walking forward, instead of trying to move with precision she instead moved slowly and methodically, not trying to decrease the amount of movement needed to dodge the crystal growths but trying to take the least amount of time to get to her destination.
This meant that she ended up taking more wounds true. But since she had given up on that front if it allowed her to escape this place faster, even if that meant losing more blood and biomass, at least the low blood pressure she currently had meant that it would be less blood lost.

So small victories? It didn't feel like a small victory. If anything it felt like she had given up and had thrown a tantrum to get away faster from trouble, either way she found her target and got to work, once again she created the design that allowed her to deal with the small metal things used to attach fake walls to this metallic tunnel she exited it into another den.

This one was dark, like one of the settings they did when the box-shaped organisms and the humans wanted to test if she was good enough to work in low-light environments, "Activate low illumination settings." She intoned to [Main Core], her voice sounded....high pitched for some reason.

Was that the setting this body had by default? She wasn't sure how it should sound, so she would leave it like that for now. Instead, she focused on looking over the new den she found...After closing the entryway into the metallic tunnel, she had arrived at this room quite high and didn't want to tip her hand quite yet.

Her exit into this den had arrived near a box-shaped entity stuck into one of this den's walls, unlike the box-shaped organisms this one didn't seem to have the same texture on its front, so it shouldn't be a live one.

Either way, she quickly secured the entry into the metallic tunnel and got down from the box-shaped thing she arrived at, after landing on the floor without making a sound (Being this small and light had its advantages). She analyzed the den she found herself in.

It held several box-shaped constructs and some square-shaped things stuck in the middle, sustaining itself with a single unique leg stuck to the floor. Interesting.

The walls didn't seem to be of the same material as her den, and one of them even held a variant of the entryway the maintenance crew used to access her den!

The only difference was that this one wasn't hidden, but denoted by a translucent material that seemed to reflect what was in front of it to some degree, standing near the thing allowed her to see herself for the first time.

Her current body was small, barely high enough to stand near one of the box-shaped beings in this room, not a single one had deemed her enough to speak or say something to her yet, but she was wary nonetheless, her main body held four appendages like most humans, each pair a reflection of the other. Two below her torso and two almost at the top of her torso, with a single body part that housed most (If not all) of her sensory organs, a head as the body had filed on its blueprint.

She hadn't gone over the whole thing yet to see the names since she only needed it to be functional, but this material was useful, it allowed her to analyze in detail her current body, her current sight sensors (Eyes) were blue, was this a defect like the one the [Human] she fought before had?

The growths on her head had the same color as that [Human] after all, so perhaps this meant she could pass up as a member of his caste? That would be useful, he seemed to have some degree of authority over the box-shaped organisms.

But for now, she would focus on investigating the things around her, the box-shaped things were made of dead bio-organic material that seemed to focus on

filtering nutrients by the use of internal roots to distribute the nutrients and water along them. It was interesting to know that they had used dead organisms to create these, and it meant that the box-shaped organisms were more war-like than she had expected.

None of the ones here seemed to be alive, not even the central one that had a single leg stuck into the floor, so she was still safe, most box-shaped organisms seemed to be neutral at best so far, not like the [Humans]. So maybe she could find live box-shaped organisms to negotiate with. She wouldn't mind taking one of them with her in her escape plan (So long as it didn't put her at risk).

With some luck then this could mean that the hierarchy was more stratified than she estimated, perhaps something closer to that P-series subject that fought with a hive strategy?

Either way, she found several sub-compartments in the box-shaped dead bodies of those organisms, it seemed that they used them as storage units. Interesting, it was a good way to recycle materials if nothing else.

This also brought her a chance, so she searched within the multiple box-shaped storage units until she found one that seemed to not have been perturbed in a long time, it held some square white fiber material with some squiggle-looking lines on them, tons of them.

She took a sample of one and found the black material was some kind of dye and not inherent of the white fiber thing, after filing it for later use she moved the boxes to re-organize them better and give herself some space on it.

Then making sure she would fit within she settled in her small new nest hiding spot and placed some boxes atop herself, using some thin tendrils to get everything into place, and for the finishing touch, she dislocated several of her internal bones (Who even uses those on the inside? They are better on the outside protecting the squishy bits!) and cut the pain receptors to fold her body to get more space.

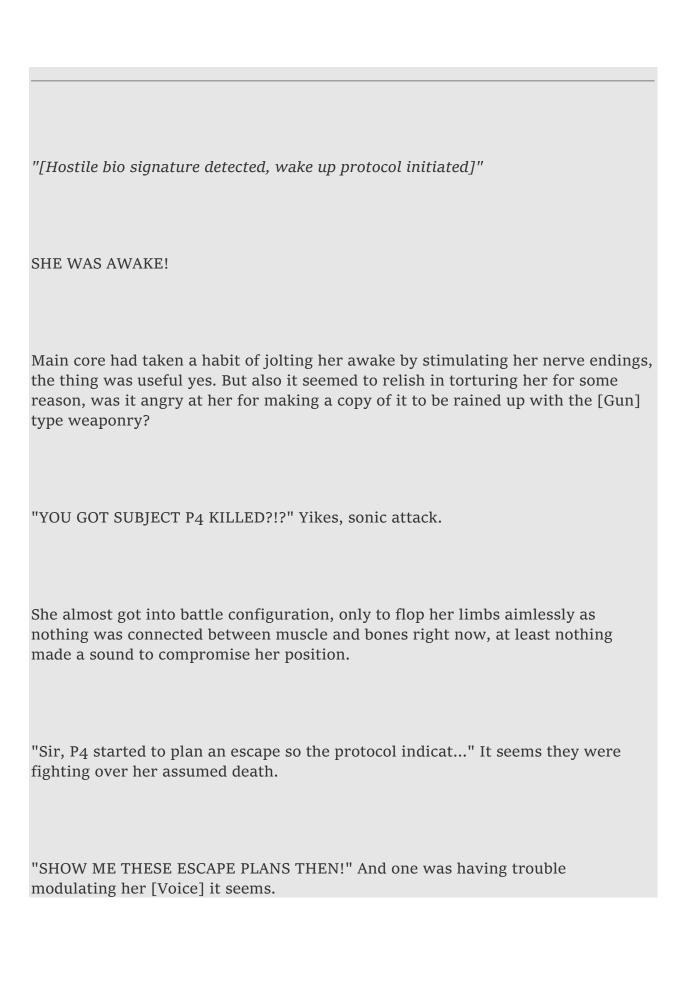
"[Warning, prolonged state in current configuration can lead to atrophy of muscle mass. Current time limit of this configuration without movement, 30 hours 16 mins.]"

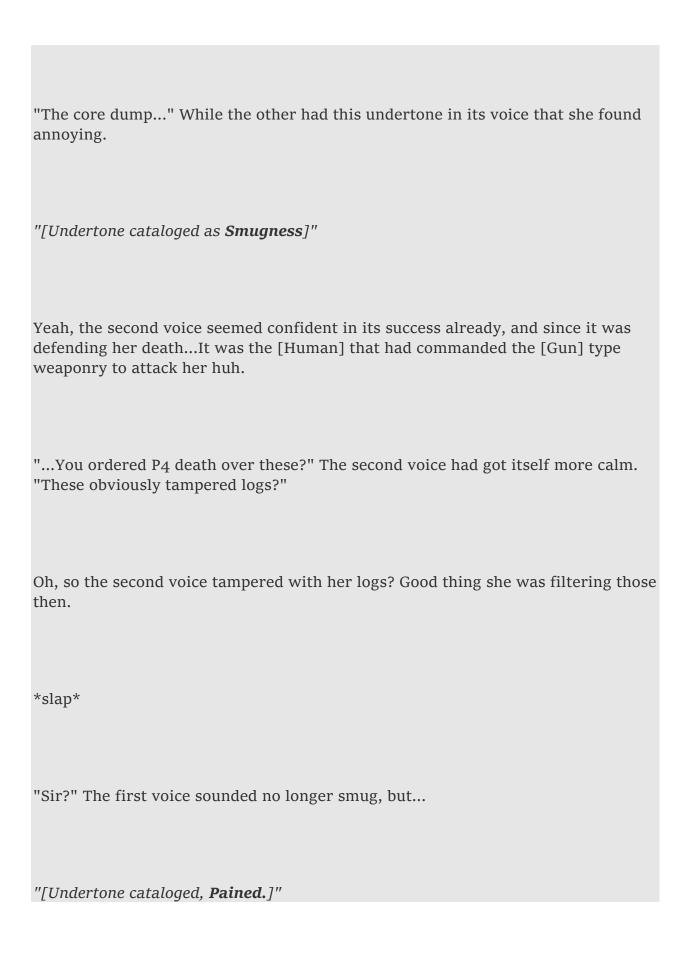
She wasn't planning on staying that long here, just long enough for at least to see how the [Humans] acted and what they did in a nonhostile setting, would it be necessary to stop her heart from beating?

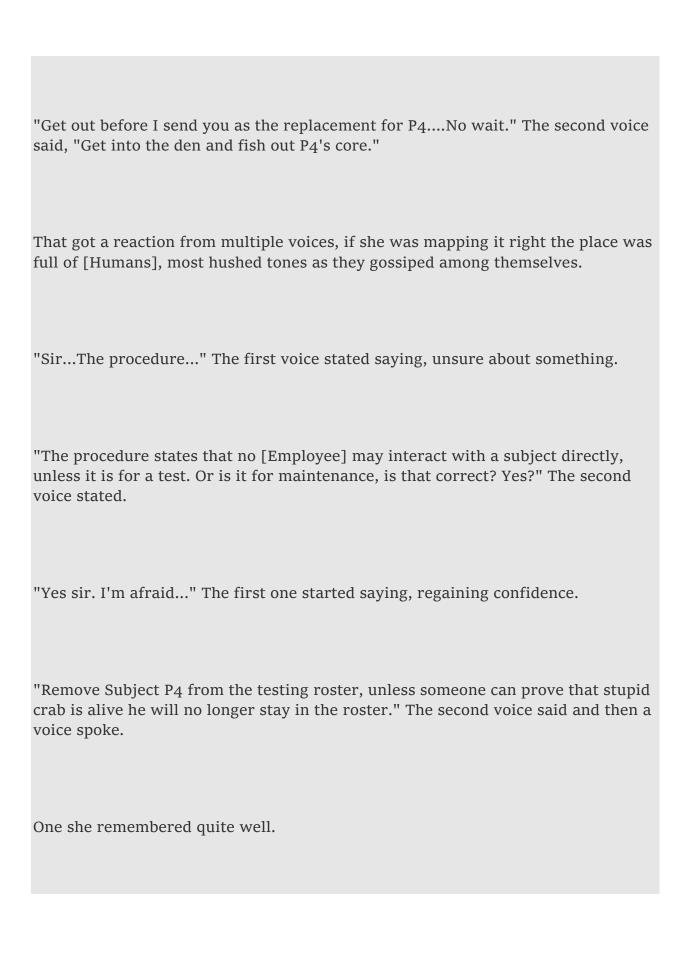
"[Warning, current configuration Brain is required for the prolonged function of main consciousness stream, time before the brain cells cease to function without oxygen: 3 mins.]"

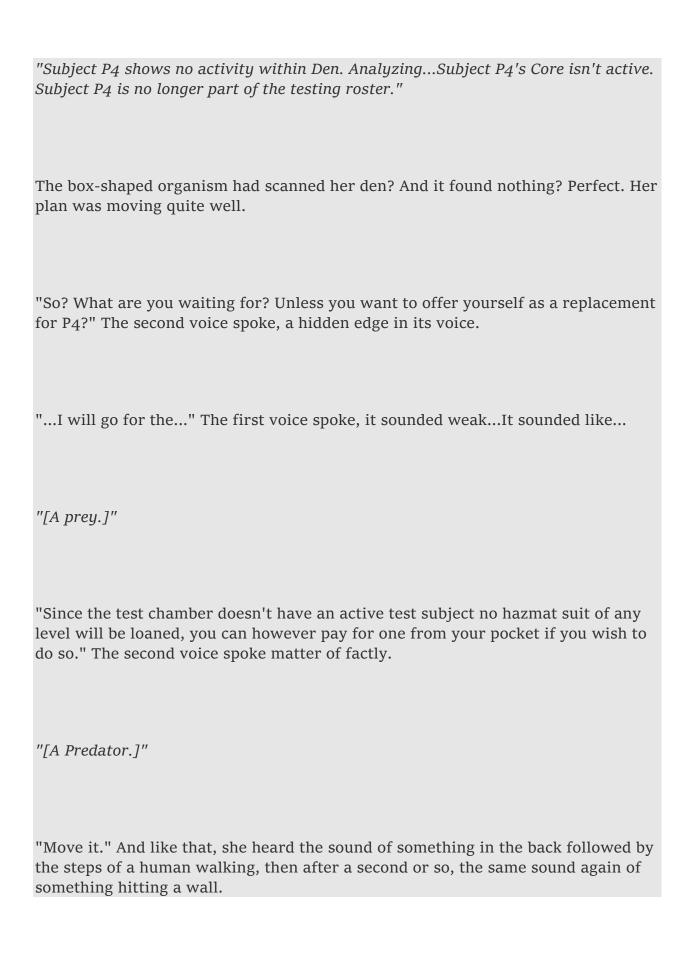
That's a no then, the brain and lungs must keep working. And so she inflated part of her thorax to allow her lungs to expand and moved her heart so that it would be comfortable enough while pumping blood, that meant that she needed to reconfigure her body to allow the blood to travel well enough within her.

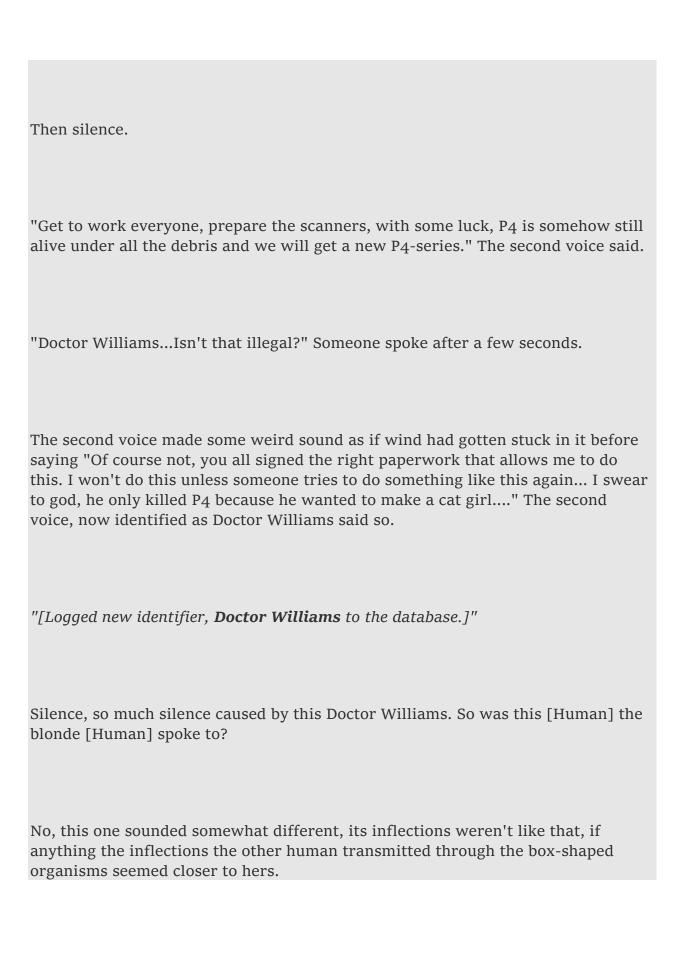
So after moving here and there she was finally ready!

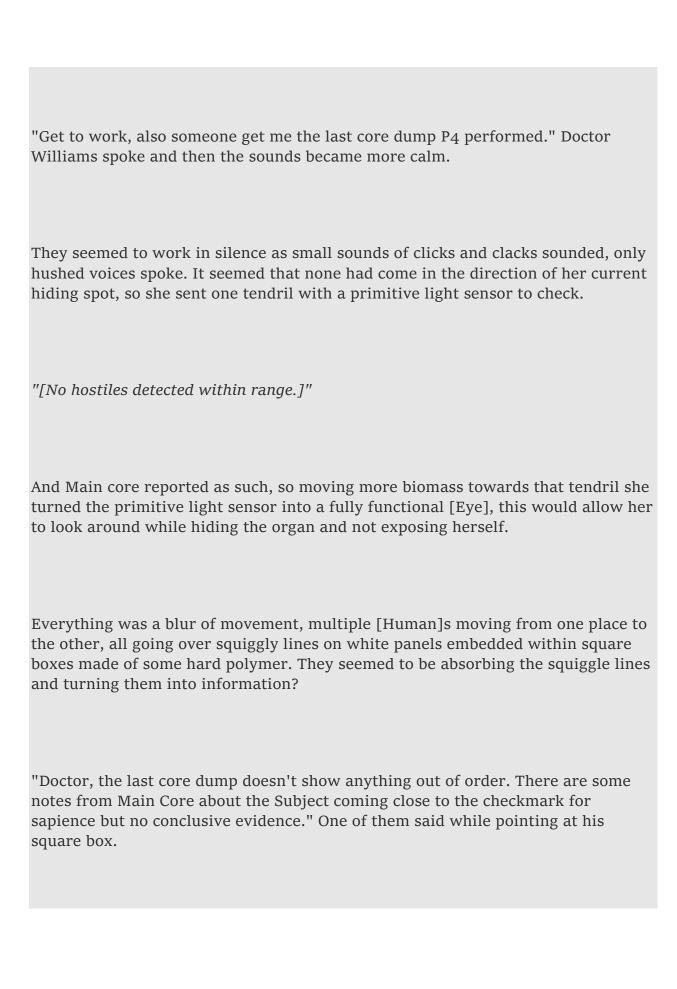


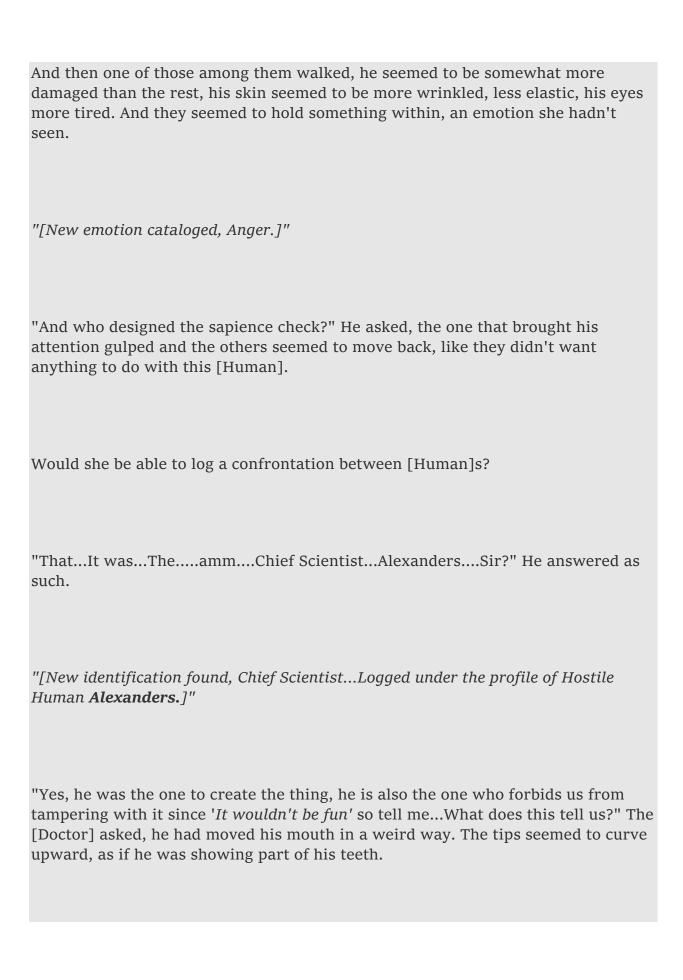


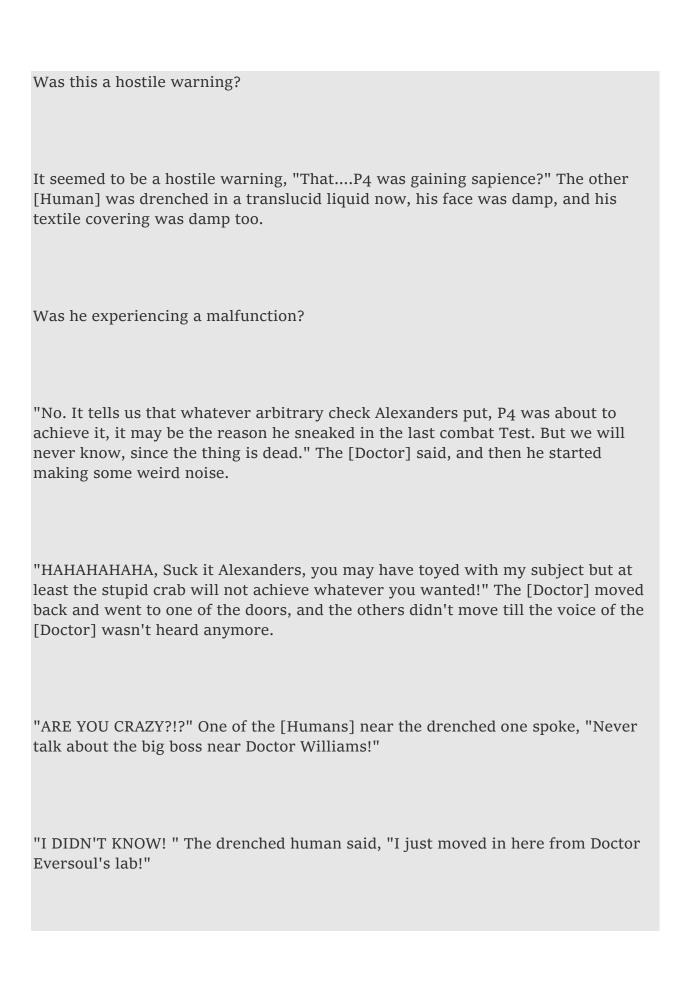












They all continued speaking and [Main Core] kept filling in information about what they said, this would be an informative session, she could see it, and they would give her enough information for her next move!

Yes, this had been a good choice indeed. Everything was going according to plan.

Chapter 10: Of the cruelty of [Humans]

She had spent almost six hours cataloging each and every sound-based attack...No, they weren't attacks. Not all of them anyway.

She spent six hours cataloging the [Speech] of these [Humans], her current form was that of a human, not a single one of those that came into this [Room] had been close to her current configuration, and her form seemed to be more...Small.

Perhaps most of these [Humans] were part of a cast dedicated to this kind of environment? What would that make them? Workers?

Dr. Williams certainly didn't seem like a [Worker] class, that one commanded other [Humans] but she wasn't able to find any biological marker that made him inherently superior to the rest, even if most of them seemed to secrete biochemical markers similar to those the biological samples secreted when they wanted to surrender to her.

And like her, he didn't listen and continued, he was even better than her as he didn't even seem to be fazed by their surrender, at some point she even had to block those sensors as the [Room] was stinking with the defeat of all of those around him.

Maybe he was a [Predator] in charge of these [Prey]?

But why would a [Predator] even bother to keep them around? Was he safeguarding them to eat them later?

She was quite curious to see how Dr. Williams would decide to eat them, so when [Lunch] came, she redoubled her vigilance...

But "Remember to return in time to those of you that decide to leave for lunch." Dr. Williams said as much before leaving the room.

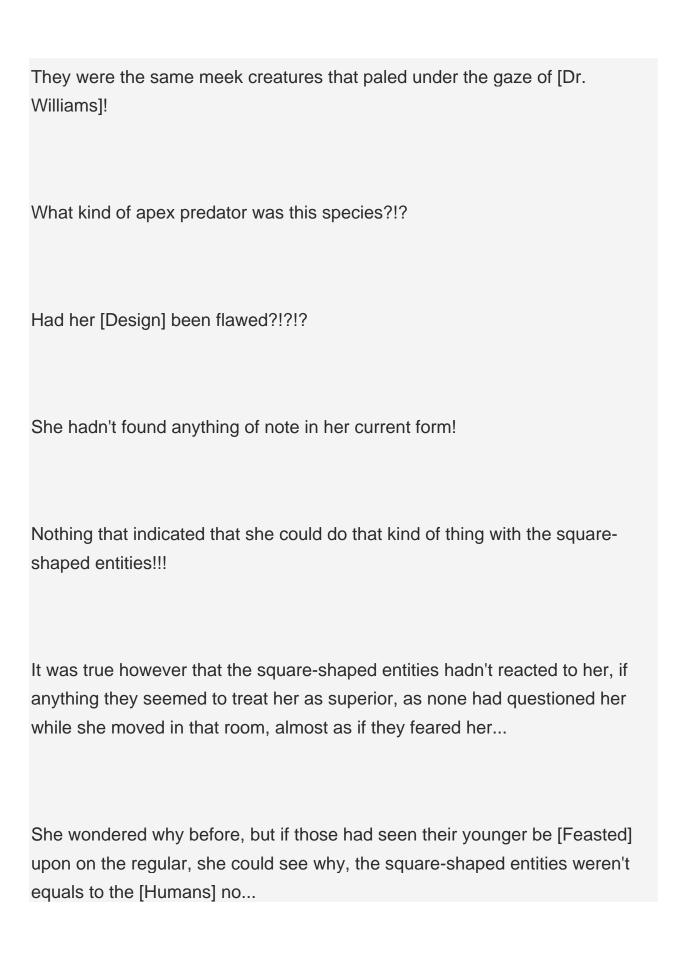
No one left after him, if anything they just continued working while opening small square-shaped entities, there she stood looking in almost horror as she saw them [Opening] those square-shaped entities and fishing out of them [Biomass].

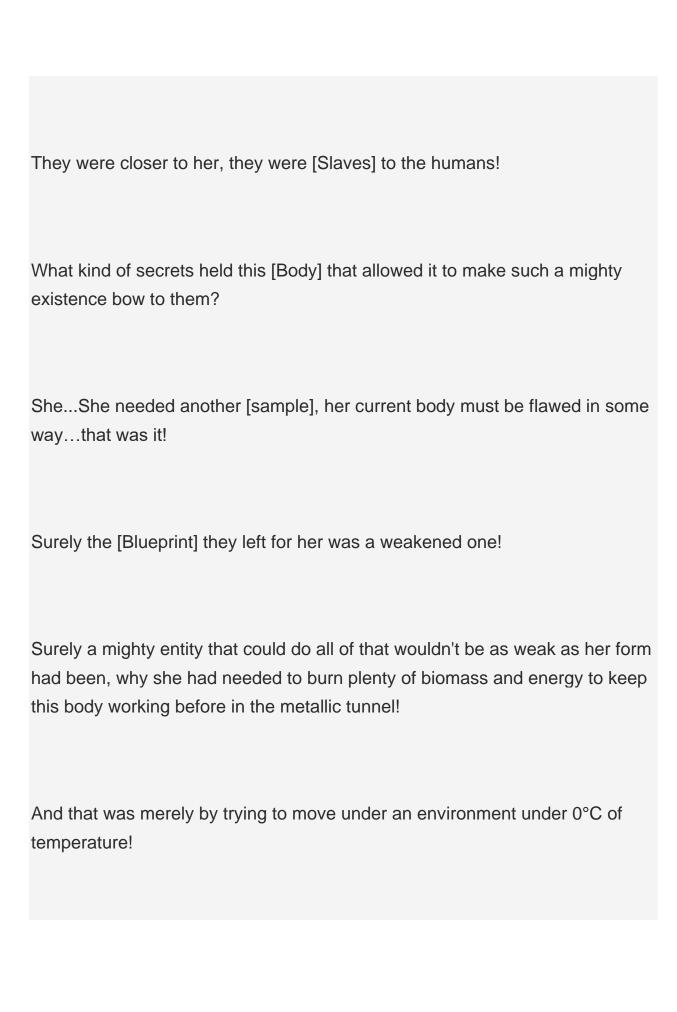
One fished a smaller square-shaped mass of fiber with some animal biomass surrounded by vegetal biomass and [Ate] it with small [Bites], she...She may have been mistaken in her understanding.

These [Humans] were a more terrific organism than she had expected, these [Things] surrounded themselves with the dead bodies of square-shaped entities, those that stood at the top of her previous existence.

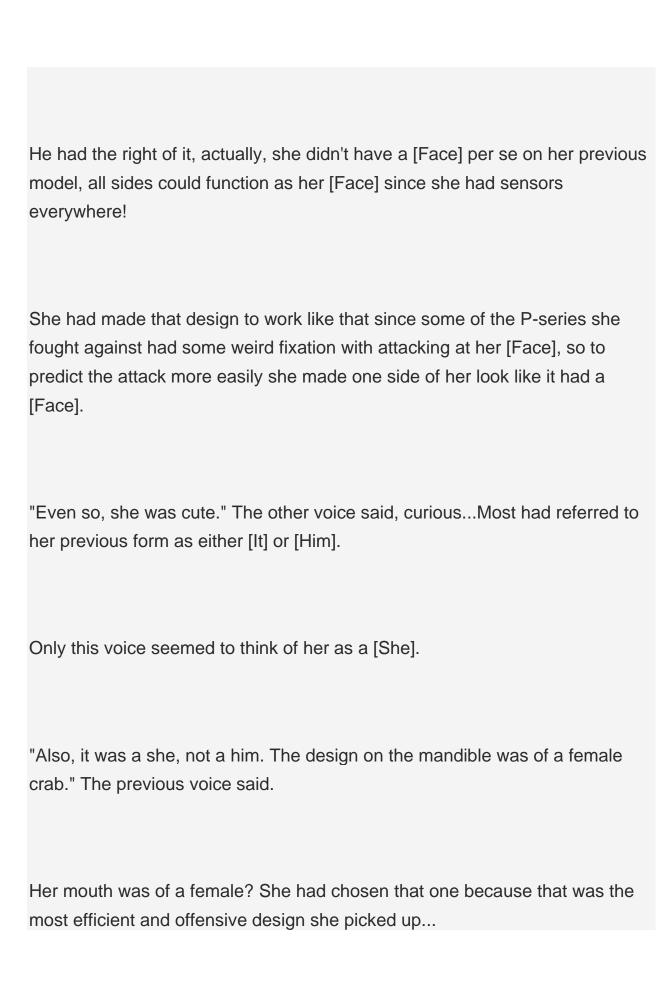
Then while under the gaze of some square-shaped entities they took younger forms (As she could infer those were younger since they didn't speak and had less of a bio-electric signal) and feasted on their entrails!

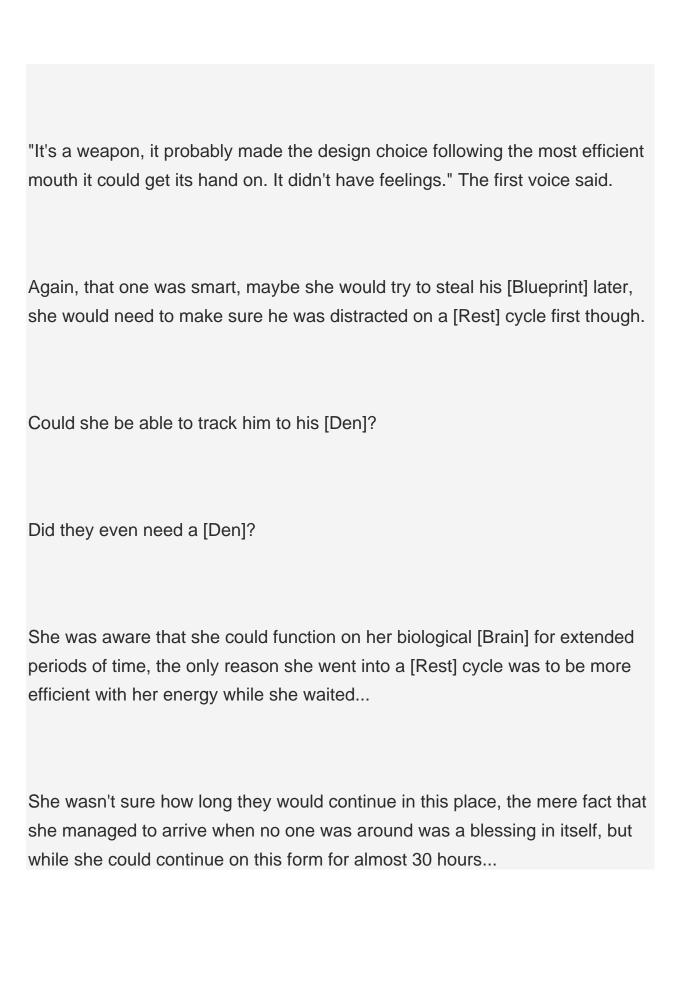
And these were [Prey]!





Her previous [Glorious Form] could survive in environments as cold as -50°C!
No way this form could be that bad at temperature management while holding a rein over the square-shaped entities!
"Do you think he will survive?" Oh? They started speaking!
"The intern? Nah, either he will get cannibalized by the remains of P4 or he will be turned into a new P-Series by Dr. Williams." Another voice spoke, rude
She wouldn't cannibalize anyoneOkay, maybe she would, but still!
"Well it's his fault for killing P4, he was kinda cute" The voice of another one sounded, this one had a higher pitch, she made note of it as it sounded more in line with what her body returned of an approximate pitch for [Voice].
"It was a 10-ton crab without eyes, the only reason we know what side it's his Face is because the thing needed to leave a mouthAnd even then we can't be sure that's his face!" The first voice spoke back.







He spoke of a [HR] that seemed to have more power than Dr. Williams, perhaps another level of [Predator] above Dr Williams?

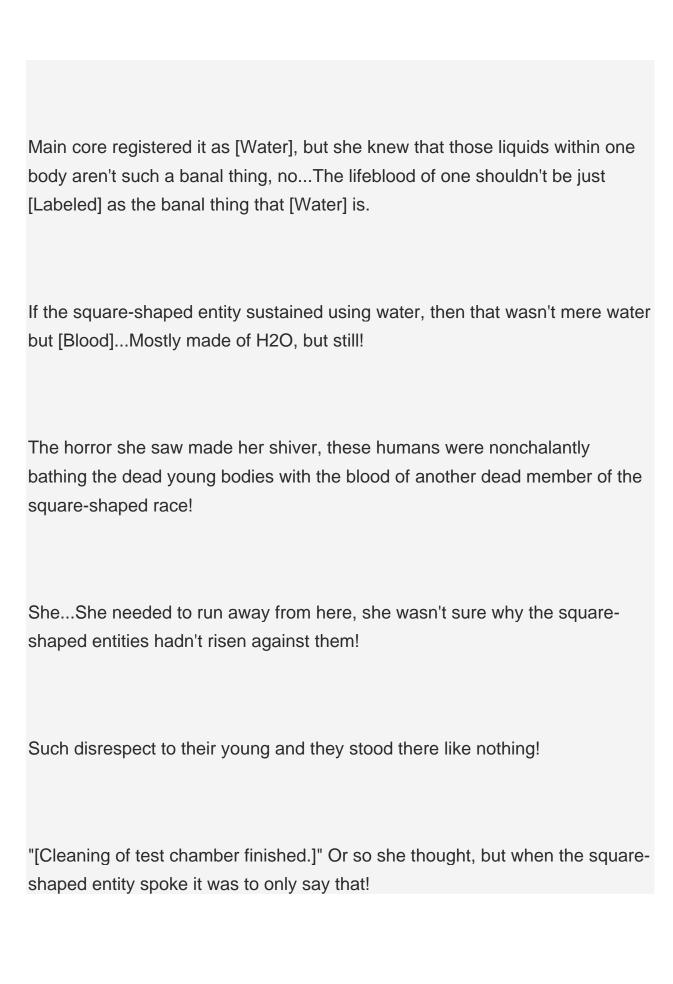
"Guys...He could be dead right now...Also One week of work on site that he is the new host to P4...If he is I will also add another extra week that says I can make him [Evolve] into another Crab before one of the nekomimi faction gets to the new P-series." The voice with high pitch spoke.

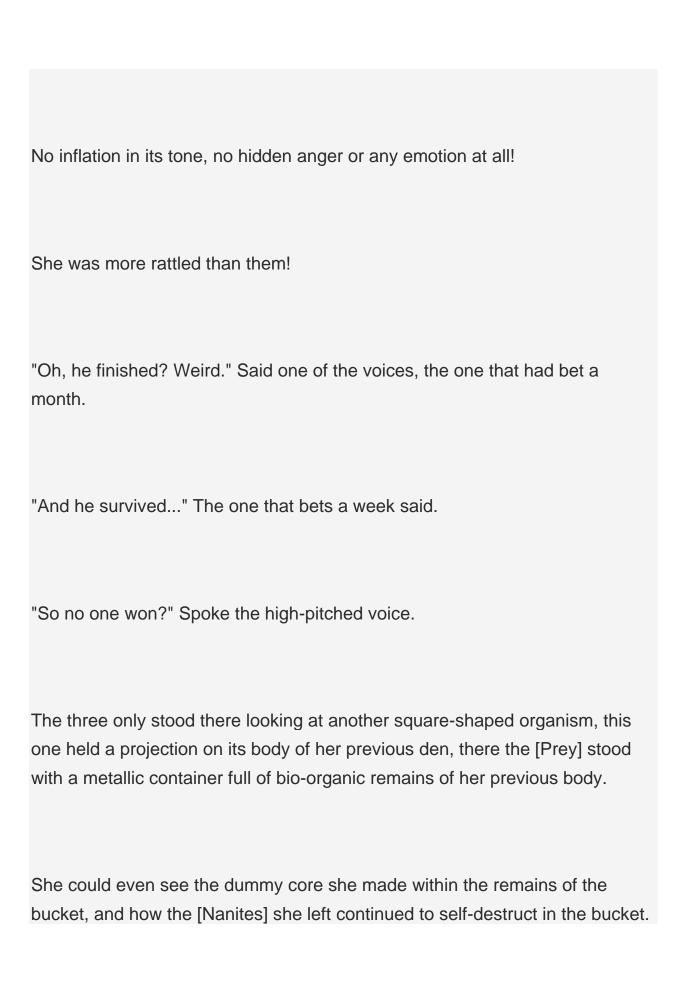
Getting two levels of [Bets] on her side.

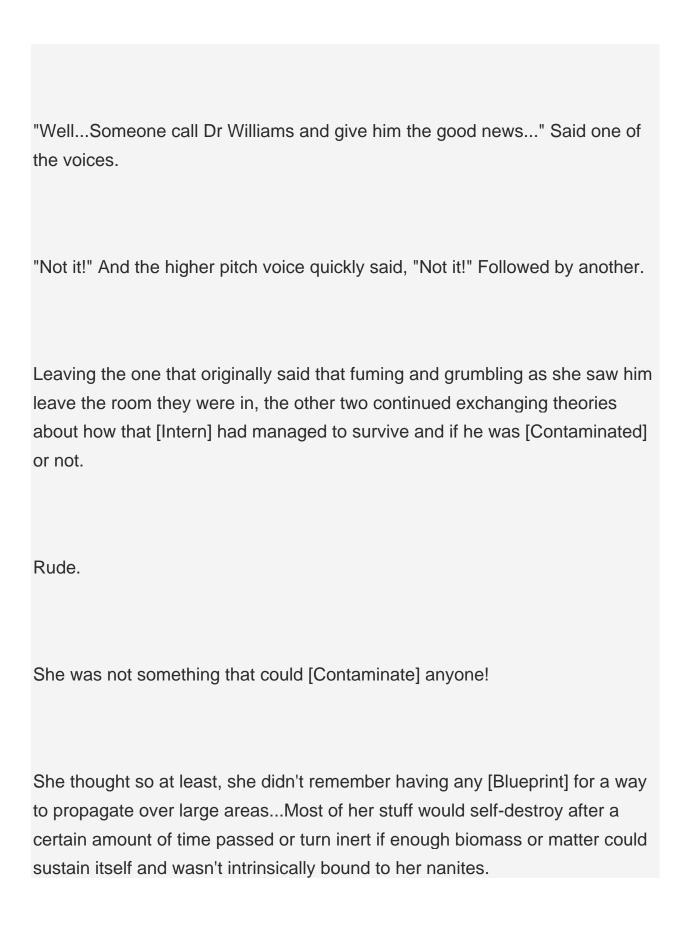
They continued to speak like that while feasting on the remains of the young square-shaped entities they brought, after finishing those, they moved to a side of the room where they placed those remains in a hole within the dead body of one of the bigger square-shaped entities.

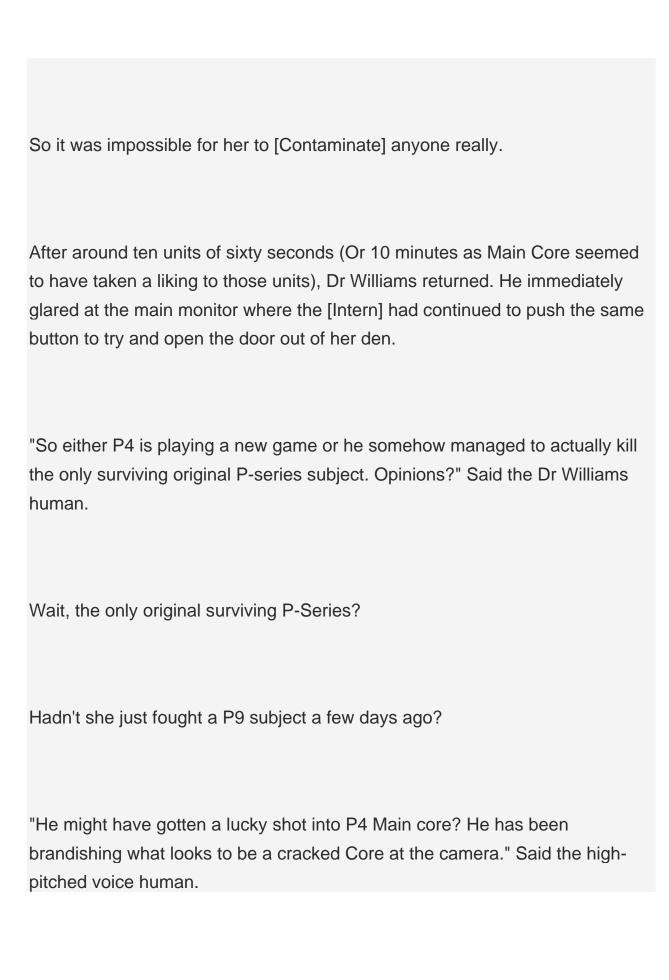
She wondered why? Were they holding some level of respect for the young dead?

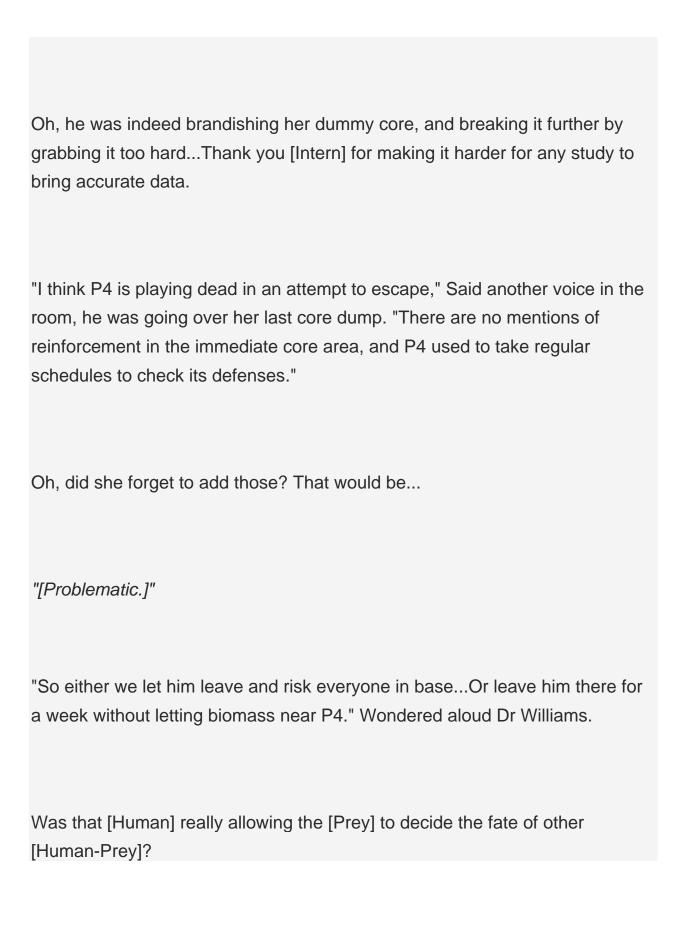
She thought that for barely a second as the high-pitched [Human] moved something on the far end of the dead body of the square-shaped entity...Then the dead body started emitting a clear [Liquid].

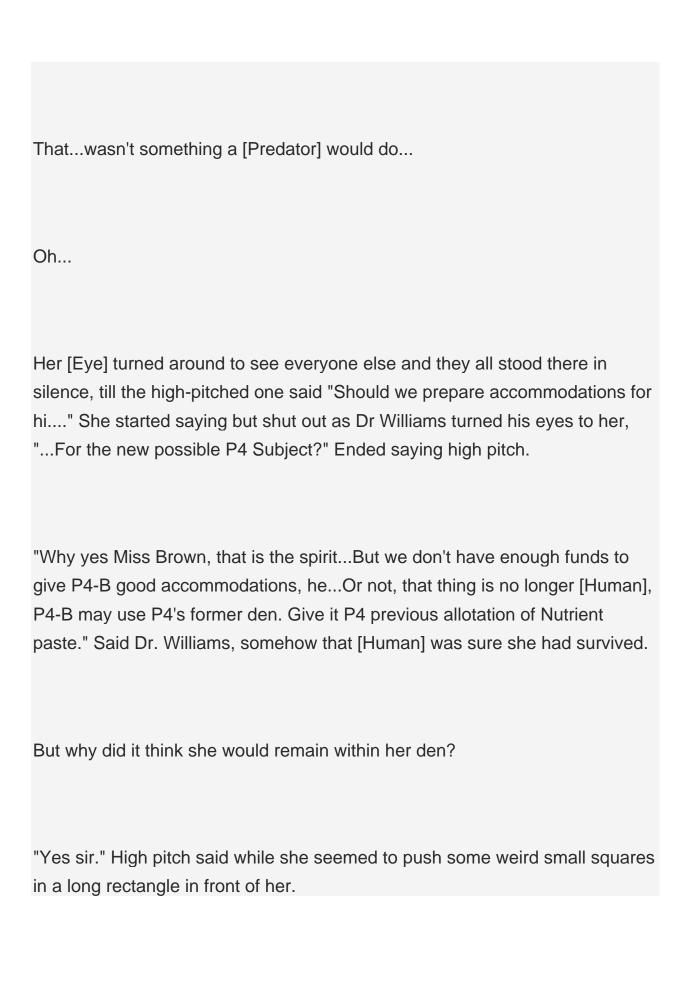












Were those small square-shaped entities?

At the same time high pitch pushed those weird lines seemed to move and react on the square-shaped entity with crystal-like body, and then the [Human] within her den looked straight at one of the square-shaped entities within her den.

She strained her [ears] to try and listen in, but barely managed to hear "[Subject temporary name P4-B, you will remain within site till you are deemed free of influence, please use the accommodations, no further testing will be done and so, all the biomass provided will be the standard unit. Subject P4, if you wish to acquire further biomass please move towards the gate and an appropriate test will be started.]" High pitch turned towards Dr Williams as if asking something.

"Heh, good enough I guess. Good job on noticing P4 would want extra biomass after surviving that encounter...If it survived the stupid crab that is." Said Dr Williams.

"Sir...Subject P4-B seems to be speaking, should we parse him?" Asked another one of the [Humans].

"Yeah sure, why not. We will not record all of his interactions afterward, so I hope it uses them wisely." Said Dr.Williams, the human that had spoken moved, and after pushing some of the squares in front of him another one of the crystal-like things showed a projection of the [Human].

He had thrown his bucket with the remains of her dummy body to the side "ARE YOU KIDDING ME? LET ME GO! P4 IS DEAD! BESIDES NUTRIENT PASTE? AT LEAST GIVE ME ENOUGH TO SURVIVE. I CAN'T SURVIVE STARVED AS P4 WAS!" He went on and on.

Speaking about how if she was alive he was in danger, about how he would quit, about how he wouldn't do it again...He went on quite the long tirade about reasons of why that was unfair and how he was sorry, about how he wouldn't try to make her evolve into a cat girl...

What even was a cat girl?

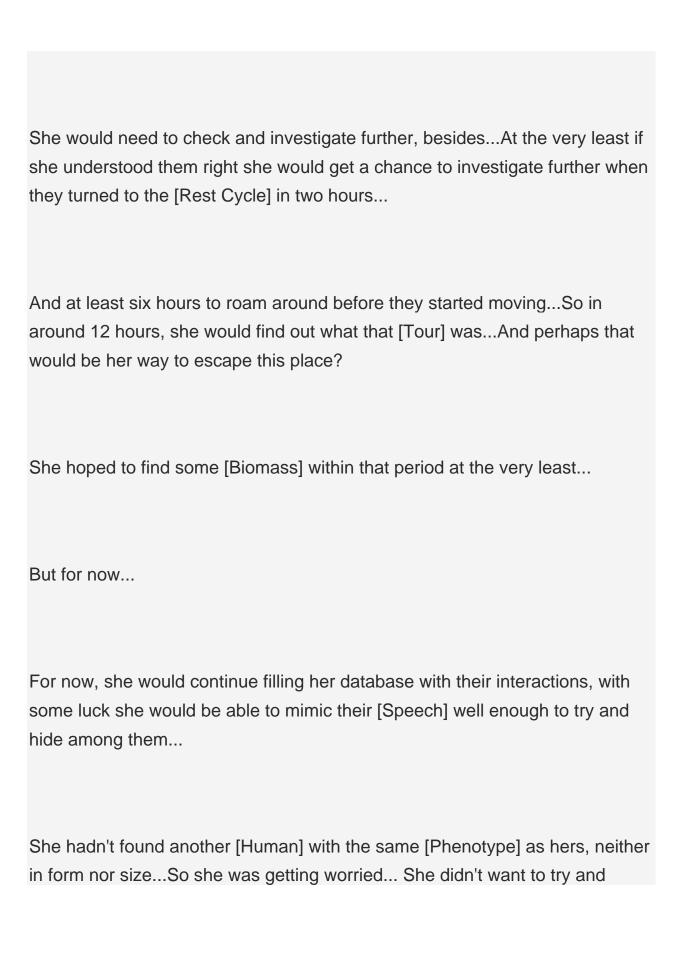
High pitch seemed to take offense at that as her eyes turned dangerously similar to those of another [Predators] she had fought before, the one with slit eyes and a smooth tail, she remembered that one because it had been not only fast and agile, but because she hadn't managed to defeat it.

"...And he wasted his chance. Cut the recording from the log, mark the reason for deletion as nonimportant for the experiment." Said Dr Williams.

No one contested that, so that must mean the reasoning the [Human] said wasn't good enough to risk them opening the door from her [Den], not that it was an effective way to contain her, as she was no longer inside.

"Continue going over the [Core Dump], also prepare for the dummy exposition, we will get the [Tour] from that school in...12 hours, so you have two hours to prepare and finish. Get the fake recordings of weapon testings and six hours of rest and another two hours to finalize everything. Afterward, we will move to cold weapon testing in the remote location. With some luck, P4 will stop playing dead..." Said Dr.Williams while the other [Humans] groaned at that.

What was a [Tour]? And why had they reacted like that?



[Neutralize] one of the [Humans], they held too much power so she wasn't sure she would be able to kill them.
Maybe she could find enough [Biomass] to mimic one of their bodies without having the full [Blueprint]?
She would need to check on that option with her six-hour window
But that would need to be done later, right nowShe would analyze and investigate these [Humans]If nothing else she needed a [Prey] to stalk.