

## Mech Touch 6561

### Chapter 6561 The Secret to Saint Piercer Arms

Ketis decided to present the two configurations that she came up with for the First Sword.

Both of them shared a lot of commonalities, which enabled her to make a certain degree of progress in the month since she commenced the First Sword Mark III Project. However, she would soon reach a point where she could not design the ace mech any further without finalizing the list of collaborators and making a definitive choice on the configuration.

"Let me begin with the pure version first." The swordmaster bearing the Heavensword spoke. "The inspiration for this project comes from the duel where Dise successfully broke through. After speaking with the Master Mech Designers of the Mech Supremacist Faction, several of them have proposed to design an ace mech that can become the ultimate sword fighter. It focuses on stripping away as many redundant elements as possible so that as many resources will be devoted to strengthening the armor system, the flight system, the artificial musculature and so on. By making them as strong as possible, Saint Dise will be able to execute her swordsmanship to the best of her ability, thereby allowing her to bring out her best when dueling against enemy phase lords, particularly the ones that wield the notorious Saint Piercer arms."

The mention of the dreaded Saint Piercer weapons caused Ves to narrow his eyes. During the last battle he participated in, the Arena Lord of Ya'gwasa managed to stall Saint Tusa and the Dark Zephyr Mark III for a long time due to the exceptional threat posed by this weapon.

Ves also couldn't forget that the experimental weapon that was rumored to be jointly developed by the Red Cabal and the Cosmopolitan Movement was ultimately responsible for killing Venerable Imon Ingvar.

Saint Piercer arms gradually became more and more common after that. It appeared that the enemies of red humanity had managed to move past the experimental stage and begun to produce them in greater numbers.

While the Saint Piercers were presumably still expensive and difficult to produce, the native aliens steadily accumulated more and more of them over time!

It was not an exaggeration to call them game changers. Alien phase lords already possessed a considerable advantage in defense, but now that they gained a weapon that could directly negate the

true resonance and willpower amplification of an expert mech or ace mech, the native gods turned into much more lethal threats!

"I see. Ves rubbed his hairless chin in thought. "If you want to create a powerful duelist. that can fight head-on against a phase lord equipped with a Saint Piercer, then it is not a bad idea to strip out the gimmicks, because far too many of them can be negated by the strange tech and materials that make these alien arms so ridiculously effective. The sword fey that I envisioned for the First Sword Mark III will probably get cut or pierced to ribbons by the Saint Piercer because it can completely invalidate most forms of true resonance empowerment."

The sword fey would still remain a good investment when fighting against other opponents, most notably enemy small craft, but they would not fare well against the enemy that the Red Three was most concerned about.

Against this high-priority threat, Saint Dise had to bring out the most of the First Sword and put all of her skills in hunting exobeasts to use.

"This is why my first choice of collaborator is a Master Mech Designer who is the first to develop an effective, if expensive, countermeasure against Saint Piercer arms." Ketis said. A new projection appeared that displayed the public profile of Master Lilian Recins. "This is one of the foremost defensive specialists of the Mech Supremacist Faction. Master Recins is known for her Class III design philosophy centering around Energized Vibrometal Armor Systems. Energized vibrometal is a special form of structured alloy that vibrates at a high frequency just before getting attacked. Due to many reasons I will not get into, this can partially negate the damage of incoming attacks. What truly makes Master Recins notable is when she managed to develop transphasic energized vibrometal. This has made her armor systems drastically more effective at resisting transphasic attacks. The highest end version of this design application has also proven to be partially effective at resisting Saint Piercer attacks. The Red Three have discovered by now that Saint Piercer is somehow able to concentrate phasewater far above the theoretical saturation limit. Therefore, only highly effective transphasic defenses have a chance of resisting this weapon."

"What?!" Ves reacted with surprise.

Discovering the principal reason why Saint Piercers were able to pierce through all manner of high-end alloys as well as the Saint Kingdoms of ace mechs was a huge intelligence gain!

Of all of the reasons why Saint Piercers were so ridiculously powerful, Ves never expected for this to be the reason!

The theoretical saturation limit determined how much a physical object could be infused with phasewater before it became so volatile that it started to tear itself apart.

Ves had always assumed that this limit couldn't be broken, because why would he think otherwise?

Learning that it was possible to break the theoretical saturation limit was like learning that he could put 1 kilogram of sugar into a cup that held only 100 milliliters of tea!

It sounded absurd!

It sounded impossible!

Yet the native aliens and the cosmopolitans managed to turn this into a reality!

The successful development of Saint Piercer arms certainly proved that the enemy could never be underestimated. Even they were capable of coming up with amazing technological innovations.

"Do you know how the native aliens are able to break the saturation limit?" "Maybe." Ketis answered with a bit of ambivalence. "The Mech Supremacists have shared their most likely theory with me. They haven't gathered enough proof to back it up, but it makes sense to them. Their best guess is that the secret to breaking the saturation limit is... to create a superdimensional object and infuse the extradimensional parts with phasewater. That is how you can theoretically infuse far more phasewater into a weapon than it can bear in the material dimensions. The Mech Supremacists assume that the only reason why the Red Cabal has been able to make these impossible products is because they rely on the extreme spatial manipulation abilities of an ancient phase whale. It is likely impossible to produce Saint Piercers through other means... at least for the foreseeable future."

It sounded complicated, but Ves was familiar enough with phasewater theory to understand what she meant.

Although the overly short explanation lacked a lot of important details, Ves could see

why it was plausible.

The production method had to be extremely advanced and difficult to reproduce considering that it needed to manipulate matter in more than 4 dimensions!

Ves looked a lot more thoughtful as he processed this information. "I see. So this is what the pure configuration is designed to fight against. You want the First Sword to be able to effectively resist these superdimensional weapons."

Ketis nodded. "Now that the Red Three know more about Saint Piercer arms, they are hard at work in trying to develop effective counters against them. This will take precious time which red humanity might not have. The special transphasic alloy developed by Master Lilian Recins is not completely effective at resisting Saint Piercer arms, but it is one of the best solutions that is currently available in this early stage. Even if there are better options available in the future, I will still bet on transphasic energized vibrometal

alloy."

It was not difficult to figure out why.

"Ketis, this special alloy... can not only be used to build a much stronger armor system, but can also be used to upgrade the Decapitator, am I correct?"

The swordmaster grinned. "That is a good deduction. You are exactly right! There is no point in fielding an offensive melee ace mech when the weapon subsequently gets cut and broken into pieces after getting struck by a Saint Piercer. The Dark Zephyr was able to get away with defeating the Arena Lord of Ya'gwasa because he relied entirely on evasion to render the Saint Piercer ineffective, but the First Sword is a medium mech. Even though I definitely plan to increase her mobility as well, she will never be able to evade as well as an ace light skirmisher. She will get struck, and her greatsword will get struck as well. It is absolutely necessary to prepare them against the lethality of superdimensional weapons ahead of time."

No wonder why Ketis readily agreed to collaborate with the Mech Supremacists. The design applications of Master Recins was simply too useful for the First Sword Mark

Ves shifted his attention towards his wife.

Gloriana looked anything but happy at the mention of the RA Master Mech Designer, and he could already deduce why she felt this way.

"I haven't heard any details about this transphasic energized vibrometal alloy yet, but I think I can guess why you want Gloriana out of the project. This special material can't be used in combination with archetech."

Gloriana refused to respond, but her silence was an answer in itself.

Ketis was much less reluctant. "Energized vibrometal alloy and its transphasic version both rely on high-frequency vibrations to take effect. That is why they must be applied on mech frames in special ways to prevent all of the shaking from destroying delicate internals. From what Master Recins has told me, her design application simply cannot be integrated with archemetal because there is no way to easily compensate against the transmission of vibrations, and because archemetal parts cannot shake so wildly in order to function as a seamless whole."

That fit with what Ves knew about archetech. The archemetal blocks that comprise archemechs and archeships had to be solid and stable in order to function properly. If some or all of the blocks started to vibrate wildly enough, then they would constantly suffer from transmission problems. Signals might get distorted and end up sending the wrong commands, leading to lots of errors and malfunctions!

It was a nightmare to make archetech compatible with energized vibrometal alloy, so only one of the two solutions could be integrated into the design of the First Sword Mark

III.

Ketis had already made her choice on the matter.

"Gloriana."

"... What is it, Ves?"

"Can archetech be used to make the First Sword Mark III just as resistant if not more

against a superdimensional weapon like a Saint Piercer?"

"No." Gloriana reluctantly but truthfully replied,

"Can the application of archemetal onto the blade of the Decapitator be used to make the weapon a lot tougher, sharper and more resistant against superdimensional weapons?"

"No..."

Ves pinned his wife with a pointed stare. "If that is the case, then I do not see any reason why you have any business with the First Sword Mark III Project." "THAT IS NOT TRUE! THERE IS MORE TO KILL THAN PHASE LORDS ARMED WITH SAINT PIERCER ARMS! BESIDES, IT IS NOT AS IF AN ARCHEMETAL VERSION OF THE FIRST SWORD IS COMPLETELY HELPLESS AGAINST THIS TYPE OF ENEMY!"

Ves remained unmoved by his wife's latest tirade. "I do not think that Saint Piercer arms will disappear from the battlefield anytime soon. I think we should treat them as the Red Cabal's version of Destroyer weapons and adjust accordingly. Even if their numbers will remain limited, our clan should prepare at least one specialized counter against them. It is a good idea to dedicate the First Sword to this task as Saint Dise is our best duelist."

"It is stupid to rely on melee mechs to counter a phase lord equipped with Saint Piercer!" Gloriana vehemently retorted! "We should rely on our best ranged mechs such as the upcoming Minerva Mark II and the Promethea Mark II to eliminate or drive away

this adversary!"

Ves shook his head. "That takes way too long! Do you know how much punishment these

phase lords can endure?! If there is no melee mech that can block their advance, they will tear through our fleet and our ranged champions if they also happen to possess a mobility advantage! Like it or not, Gloriana, but we need a melee mech that can withstand Saint Piercer arms up close. If Ketis is right about the effectiveness of transphasic energized vibrometal alloy, then this means you are off the project."

Chapter 6562 TEVA

Gloriana hated the verdict.

She strongly opposed the decision to offload her from the First Sword Mark III Project.

Ves kind of understood why she fought so hard to remain involved.

There was way more than her partial ownership of the First Sword at stake.

Gloriana had also begun to fear whether the same line of argumentation could be used to kick her from subsequent high-ranking mech design projects, especially the ones centered around melee mechs!

It was too late to start over with the Riot Mark III Project, but what about other high-ranking melee mech design projects?

Other machines such as the Everchanger, the C-Man, the Greenaxe and the Lionheart were also expected to duel against hostile phase lords in the future.

As long as their pilots broke through and became qualified to fight directly against the enemy champions, they would inevitably encounter foes equipped with Saint Piercer arms.

It was not reasonable to command the ace melee mechs to avoid these high-priority threats and rely entirely on ranged suppression to take them down.

The nature of spatial barriers made them incredibly resistant against every form of attack that was not sufficiently able to overcome transphasic defensive enhancements. This meant that such a phase lord could easily tank a huge amount of ranged attacks and wreak havoc on the human battle line!

It took way too much time and effort for lots of mechs, powerful battleships or threatening ace ranged mechs to whittle down the spatial barrier and other defenses of such a phase lord.

The chances of killing them from a distance was also far too small unless the humans possessed a special trump card.

This meant that an exhausted phase lord could calmly retreat from the battlefield and come back a few days later to terrorize the human defenders yet again after he fully restored his condition!

This was why it was necessary to deploy powerful melee champions against any phase lord, but especially the ones armed with Saint Piercer arms.

A good ace melee mech might not be able to kill a phase lord by itself, but should at least pose enough of a threat to stall the native god's advance and lock him into place.

Another important role of the melee mech was to maintain an active space suppression field in the proximity of the enemy phase lord.

The more powerful the space suppressor module and the closer the distance, the

stronger the weakening effect on the enemy's spatial barrier and other spatial abilities! This synergized extremely well with ranged support, making the attacks from all of the mechs, warships and individual champion units multiple times more effective.

This had also become the established doctrine on the battlefield.

Human High Command, a joint military command organization of the Red Three and the first-rate superstates, had collected all of the data and conducted a lot of theorycrafting before setting a guideline that team of ace mechs should always comprise of at least one ranged and one melee unit.

While the theory was sound, I was a lot more difficult to implement in practice. Most ace melee mechs fared decently when pitted against typical lesser phase lords. However, they usually lasted a lot shorter when confronting greater phase lords. What was worse was that they fared especially poorly against greater phase lords that were well-connected enough to get their hands on a Saint Piercer weapon!

If not for the fact that the production of these arms were bottlenecked, the native aliens would have been able to collapse the 4th defensive band by now!

This raised the importance of developing countermeasures against the insane lethality of Saint Piercer arms.

As a member of the Mech Supremacist Faction, the competence of Master Lilian Recins was never in doubt.



She had access to the best resources and infrastructure a mech designer could desire, so she was one of the first to develop a reasonably effective form of defense against Saint Piercer arms.

Many other mech designers, particularly defensive specialists, must be working hard to develop their own counters against Saint Piercer arms.

This was one of the greatest strengths of the mech industry. As long as it identified an urgent need, a huge number of mech designers and supporting R&D institutions would work hard to develop an appropriate and cost-effective solution!

As far as transphasic energized vibrometal alloy was concerned, it was not yet qualified to serve as a proper response to the threat posed by Saint Piercer arms.

The underlying tech still underperformed and it was way too expensive to ever think about applying it onto mass production mech products.

However, it was already effective enough when used to clad first-class ace mechs!

Their design budgets were so high that they could easily afford to equip such an expensive defensive solution.

The mediocre performance of transphasic energized vibrometal alloy against superdimensional weapons was a deceptive statement.

It was true that armor plating made out of transphasic energized vibrometal alloy or TEVA Armor could not resist attacks from Saint Piercer weapons entirely, but it did this job a lot better than 99.999999999 percent of other materials!

The same could be said for transphasic energized vibrometal alloy applied to weapons! TEVA Weapons could block sharp and powerful strikes from Saint Piercer weapons without fear of getting shattered into pieces!

It was for these reasons and more that Ketis had already decided that it was absolutely essential for the First Sword Mark III Project to include Master Lilian Recins.

Since the RA Master Mech Designer's design philosophy was fundamentally incompatible with Gloriana's design philosophy, it became clear that one of them had to be kicked off the project.

"Honey." Ves assumed an impassive expression while turning to his wife. "Just give it up. Ketis has made a good point. Archetech is powerful, but it is not yet capable of solving this problem yet. Switching it with other tech makes complete sense."

Though his wife wanted to continue to fight for her right to maintain her partial ownership in the First Sword Mark III Project, she was not that stupid.

Now that Ves had heard Ketis out, he had decisively taken her side. The chain of logic between their choice was far too strong for Gloriana to break with her own feeble

arguments.

Since that was the case, Gloriana might as well give up this losing battle and concede while they still retained a bit of dignity.

"Very well." She said as all of the tension left her body. "Since the two of you are committed to this direction, it is clear that I do not have a voice in the project anymore.

It is just..."

"I know what you are concerned about." Ves gently consoled his wife. "Archetech is still useful, especially for smaller and lighter mechs where space is at a premium. It has worked out great for an ace light skirmisher like the Dark Zephyr Mark III, and I am sure it will do wonders for ace ranged mechs such as the recently completed Amarranto Mark III and the Promethea Mark II. However, the situation is more complex when we consider ace melee mechs such as the upcoming Riot Mark III."

"It is impossible for us to waste months worth of development time and reset the Riot Mark III Project by replacing archemetal with TEVA Armor." Gloriana growled. "Venerable Rosa Orphan has been waiting for an upgrade to her outdated machine for multiple

years."

Ves raised his palm in innocence. "I am not about to do that, Gloriana. What I wanted to say is that the entire mech industry is looking to counter the threat posed by superdimensional weapons. You happen to have forged a few connections with the Mech Supremacist Faction as well, right? It just so happens that the Mech Supremacists encompass a large number of highly resourceful and capable mech designers. The faction is also known for making a lot of attainments in materials science. After all, mechs rely on good metallic alloys to remain competitive with warships and other combat assets."

His wife soon understood his train of thought. Her expression grew less morose when she saw a possibility of making a counterattack in the future.

"Your idea has merit. I have not been in close contact with the Mech Supremacists as of

late, but that was a mistake. If I reach out to them... I may be able to find a specialist or team of specialists in metallurgy and materials science to develop a new experimental alloy that can mitigate archemetal's vulnerability against superdimensional weapons!" Ves smiled. He was happy to lead Gloriana to a more productive line of thought. It was no fun trying to live alongside a woman who was depressed and frequently prone to

outbursts.

Every faction of the MTA and the RA was good in different areas.

The Survivalist Faction was good at binding different parties to a common cause. On a technological level, the Survivalists tended to be pragmatic and did not favor specific

solutions.

They instead invested their research far and wide, hoping to create new synergies by combining multiple different fields together. The Survivalists also liked to create new solutions in advance and keep them in reserve until they were needed. Finally, the paranoid bastards also invested a lot in the development of super weapons. The RA Transhumanist Faction's interests were relatively more focused on biotechnology, human genetics, exobiology and so on. That did not mean their attainments in other fields were poor, but they were merely up to standard in areas outside of their core interests.

The RA Mech Supremacist Faction generally possessed the strongest overall R&D

capabilities. It was literally what the faction was all about, so its members always invested a huge amount of money and resources into all kinds of research and development initiatives.

The Mech Supremacists were particularly keen on pushing the boundaries of hard sciences such as metallurgy, materials science, computing, theoretical and applied physics, energy science and more.

In the past, Gloriana was aware of all of this, but she did not have the clout to gain the cooperation of the top mech designers and researchers of the Mech Supremacist

Faction.

The situation was different now. Gloriana had gradually realized her high potential, and

while she still hadn't entered the big leagues yet, her greatest advantage was that she was married to Ves!

Even if Gloriana did not deserve it, she would definitely be able to gain much more

favorable treatment from the Mech Supremacist Faction due to this positive factor!

In a way, Ketis had taken advantage of her own connection to Ves. There was no way that a mech designer as busy and successful as Master Lilian Recins would have agreed to spend her time on the First Sword Mark III Project if not for this relation. Gloriana needed no more guidance and encouragement at this time. Her eyes glowed with a competitive spirit!

"You are completely right, Ves! The Mech Supremacist Faction is so large that there must be many research teams working to develop a counter against superdimensional weapons. These teams must all be rivals or competitors towards each other. Master Lilian Recins is hardly the only one who is working to counter Saint Piercer arms. If I want to improve my archetech and make it more resistant against the new threat, then I should contact the faction and try to cooperate with one of the rivals of Master Recins! There has to be at least one metallurgist among the Mech Supremacists that are working to develop experimental alloys that can not only resist superdimensional weapons, but can also be used to make archemetal! If the development of this experimental product can be completed in time, then I might just be able to use it to improve the Riot Mark III

Project!"

Competition was one of the strongest motivators of a mech designer.

Now that Gloriana sought to outdo Ketis and Master Lilian Recins, she would definitely put her full effort into this informal contest!

#### Chapter 6563 Electro-Reactant Flight Systems

Now that Gloriana formally played no role in the First Sword Mark III Project anymore, there was no reason for Ves to remain in her office.

The good news was that they did not end this meeting on a bad note.

Though Gloriana failed to defend her right to participate in the upgrade project, she accepted a new challenge and became a lot more enthused about developing her own counter to superdimensional weapons!

Ace mechs bore the brunt in the fight against alien phase lords. Anyone who wanted to continue to design them had to be able to prepare a response against Saint Piercer arms, or cooperate with a mech designer that was capable of solving this problem.

Gloriana had no intention of giving up on this matter, so she had every reason to follow Ves' proposal and seek out cooperation with the mechers.

Archetech was strong and possessed a lot of potential, but red humanity's development and understanding of it was still too shallow.

It was up to pioneers such as Gloriana to work hard to improve its utility and bring out its strengths. Working together with a metallurgist who was working on developing his or her own counter against superdimensional weapons would definitely increase the viability of archetech.

Gloriana did not want this shortcoming to serve as the downfall of the use of archetech in subsequent high-ranking mech design projects!

Ves smiled when he saw his wife exploding into action. She had become incredibly fired up now that she interpreted this assignment as a direct challenge against Ketis and Master Lilian Recins!

Every mech designer had their own triggers where they became much more passionate and productive than before.

Ves always worked better in high-pressure situations or when he got caught up in the throes of his own creative passion.

Gloriana on the other hand became a lot more effective whenever she felt pressured by formidable competitors.

The greater her feeling of inferiority, the greater her counterattack!

This was also why she was able to keep up with Ves more or less. She constantly compared herself to him every day, and whenever she perceived the gap between them had grown wider, she would work extra hard to make up for this shortfall!

While Ves believed that his proposal would definitely help Gloriana solve one of the weaknesses of archetech, the greatest uncertainty was how long it would take to develop an effective solution.

At best, it would probably take months for Gloriana and her collaborators to develop a

version of archemetal that could effectively resist Saint Piercer arms.

At worst, the development time might stretch out over several years, which meant that more ace melee mechs could not be converted into archemechs due to failing to meet the latest industry standards!

Ves mentally shrugged. This was not his problem. Archetech had become his wife's latest prestige tech, so her own progress and credibility was at stake.

After Ves left her office and entered his own private design lab, he called Ketis yet again and resumed his discussion with her about the First Sword Mark III Project.

Both Ves and Ketis looked considerably more relaxed now that certain abrasive third element was no longer present.

The projected version of the Heavensword attracted a lot of attention from Ves, but he knew that this was not the right time to address this topic. He simply gave it a curious stare before he turned his attention back to the mech design project.

"Please continue your overview of the plans that you have made." He told Ketis. "What else do you have in store for Saint Dise's next machine?" [freeωebnovel.com](http://freeωebnovel.com)

The swordmaster spoke in a relaxed manner. "Well, what comes next doesn't require too much clarification. Aside from myself and Master Recins, there are two more core participants that are vital to both the pure version and the sword fey version of the First Sword Mark III. One of them is Master Lucien Kerckhoff, who has a Class IV design philosophy in Electro-Reactant Flight Systems."

"What?"

"I think it is easier for you if I show you an example."

Ketis transferred a video file to Ves.

When Ves watched the archival footage of one of the many ace mechs that fought in the Red War, he quickly figured out the basis of this strangely named flight system.

Under normal usage conditions, an Electro-Reactant Flight System remained small and low profile. Its energy consumption was probably not that great, but its efficiency was probably pretty high, so the thrust power was not that bad.

This was not enough for an ace mech to effectively duel against an enemy as formidable as a greater phase lord.

Against such a powerful and massive opponent, ace mechs needed to move faster and be able to make very rapid course changes in order to maintain their rhythm in battle.

This was where the Electro-Reactant Flight System truly began to shine! The ace pilot activated a second mode that caused the formerly low-profile flight system to suck in a lot more energy, causing it to overload in a way that directly caused it to shoot out lightning bolts!

No!

Not lightning bolts! Instead, it looked as if skeletal wings made out of stable lightning channels had unfolded behind the back of the ace mech!

The wings appeared much larger and more dramatic than the ace mech itself!

It looked as if the machine had transformed into a dragon that embodied the element of lightning!

All of the highly charged plasma that took the shape of wings was not for show.

For whatever reason, they massively boosted the ace mech's mobility, allowing the machine to move almost two times faster while also enabling it to make turns that were much sharper than before!

The greater phase lord fighting against the electrified monster quickly became overwhelmed by this flashy display. The enemy champion's spatial barrier depleted

quickly.

Eventually, the native god lost much of his courage and retreated from the battlefield much earlier than expected!

This turned out to be a rather fortunate development as the ace mech equipped with the Electro-Reactant Flight System expended so much energy that it could hardly keep up its supercharged state.

The electrified wings quickly faded away, restoring the ace mech to its weaker and much less explosive state. The machine was not in a state to confront phase lords any longer and had to retreat in advance as well in order to replenish its energy reserves. "Wow." Ves reacted. "I am impressed. Compared to other flight systems, the efficiency and endurance of this tech is really bad. However, I can see why you are so enthusiastic about it. If the only job of the ace mech is to overwhelm and



defeat enemy phase lords before they can do a lot of damage against other human units, then this is definitely a design application that can facilitate this role."

Ketis smiled. "I have spoken to Master Kerckhoff numerous times, and he shares the same thoughts. His most advanced implementation of Electro-Reactant Flight System is best suited for ace mechs that have a very high demand for extreme short-range mobility, but are not already equipped with other energy-hungry systems. The First Sword Mark III definitely meets his requirements. The biggest sacrifice that I have to make is to settle for a smaller and less powerful azure energy shield generator. The First Sword Mark III will not be able to rely on it to withstand a large amount of attacks, but this is not too important as it is unable to block the passage of superdimensional weapons. It also doesn't synergize well with Saint Dise's domain."

Anyone who understood Saint Dise's strengths would prioritize physical defenses over energy defenses.

An azure energy shield generator could still be used to block space dust and trivial attacks, but the First Sword Mark III clearly shouldn't rely on it to defend against attacks from more serious opponents.

Right now, Ketis revealed the core players of her design team.

The swordmaster herself was responsible for leading the mech design project. She also took it upon herself to design the overall mechanical structure of the mech frame and optimize it to fit Saint Dise's personal swordsmanship.

Master Lilian Resins was in charge of shaping the defenses of the First Sword Mark III. She contributed her TEVA Armor to massively strengthen the First Sword Mark III's ability to resist superdimensional weapons and many other forms of transphasic armaments. She was also expected to work together with Ketis to contribute her TEVA Weapon Tech to upgrade the Decapitator mech sword.

Master Lucien Kerckhoff of the Mech Supremacist Faction was in charge of improving the mobility of the First Sword Mark III. His Electro-Reactant Flight System would definitely turn the ace swordsman mech into a powerful duelist. Even if Saint Dise wouldn't be able to use this powerful design application to defeat an enemy phase lord, her machine should at least be able to disengage safely, thereby allowing her to fight

another day!

This was already a powerful combination. Ketis did not necessarily have to rely on other mech designers in order to develop a powerful ace swordsman mech.

Of course, it was still better to fill up the two remaining slots in order to maximize the improvement to the mech design.

"The pure version of the First Sword Mark III doesn't include your participation." Ketis told Ves. "It is purely designed to excel at defeating enemy phase lords and nothing else. For this purpose, space suppression technology plays a vital role. Master Pritanis Clisner was part of the R&D team that originally cooperated with the Spacelock to develop space suppression technology. Even if he was not the lead researcher of this important project, he has developed enough insights into this tech to invent his own brand of

space suppression tech."

That most definitely sounded interesting to Ves. Any researchers that were qualified to work with a god pilot on a game-changing piece of technology most certainly weren't weak or incompetent!

"What does he specialize in?" Ves asked.

"Master Pritanis Clisner has a Class VIII design philosophy in Long-Distance Waveform Propagation." Ketis answered. "In short, he can increase the range of energy fields and many other stuff. In this context, he has agreed to contribute a Long-Distance Space Suppression Module to the First Sword Mark III."

"With a name like that, I think I can guess why you have chosen it for your project." "There are two advantages over using this special space suppressor over the normal versions. First, the ace mech does not have to move too close to the enemy phase lord in order to weaken the target's spatial barrier. Second, it can effectively penetrate deeper into the massive body of a larger phase lord. The ones that are as large as space stations or more are so physically huge that a single space suppressor cannot completely weaken the enemy's spatial barrier or spatial abilities. Having a module that can encompass a much greater volume of space will help the First Sword Mark III perform better against these massive opponents."

"I see" Ves remarked. "That sounds extremely useful, especially in the later stages when Saint Disa has grown stronger. A Long-Distance Space Suppression Module should also help the First Sword eliminate warships more effectively, as they all rely on phasewater

tech to move faster, hit harder and resist more attacks. This is truly a practical and useful choice under all circumstances."

Space suppression tech was still relatively new. It was also so complicated and so deeply intertwined with phasewater theory that many other mech designers had difficulty

improving on the tech.

However, a Master Mech Designer that took part in the development of the original version of space suppressors did not suffer from this problem!

It should be much easier for such a figure to develop selective improvements on the original tech. Even if the space suppressor became a lot more expensive and lost performance in other areas, it may still be worth it under the right circumstances!

Chapter 6564 Phasewater Super Energy Cells

Ves had to admit that the pure version of the First Sword Mark III already sounded like an excellent ace mech that likely possessed all of the capital she needed to defeat enemy phase lords.

He truly gained a new appreciation for the Master Mech Designers of the Mech

Supremacist Faction.

He had always heard that the high-ranking mech designers of this faction concentrated a lot of powerful specialists, and Ves was not disappointed in this regard.

Sure, many mech designers of the Mech Supremacist Faction admittedly possessed very narrow specializations and relied heavily on collaborations to develop truly useful mechs.

The faction therefore existed to bring all of these extreme nerds together and make it easier for them to hook up with each other and find willing collaborators.

Ketis took advantage of this existing infrastructure to attract a number of powerful specialists to elevate the First Sword Mark III Project to a higher level.

So far, the pure version of the First Sword Mark III already sounded powerful enough. Ves actually felt tempted to join in the party as well, but it was clear that Ketis had reserved the fifth slot for a different mech designer.

"Ves."

"Yes, Ketis?"

"Now that you are aware of four of the five mech designers who are responsible for designing the pure version of the First Sword Mark III, can you guess the greatest shortcoming of this mech proposal?"

Ves became thoughtful. "Hmm. The Electro-Reactant. Flight System is an energy hog. The Long-Distance Space Suppression Module also sounds as if it will drain vastly more energy than the standard modules in order to project its effect across longer distances. Without Master Benedict Cortez to increase the energy economy of the First Sword Mark III, her staying power will remain drastically limited. I think you should be particularly interested in finding another Master Mech Designer that can address this major weakness."

The projection of Ketis helplessly nodded. "It is already a large burden for an ace swordsman mech to mount an Electro-Reactant Flight System. Just as you have guessed, the Long-Distance Space Suppressor's biggest flaw is that its energy consumption has multiplied by at least. times. You don't have to run it at full power, but doing so will decrease its effective range, thereby making it pointless to employ this special tech. In order to make the whole framework complete, I have to address the energy problem. My solution is to invite Master Hijalt Mosslover to the project. He has a Class V design philosophy in High-Density Energy Cells."

Another unfamiliar name. The Red Association gathered way too many mech designers who were very famed in their own fields, but tended to be obscure outside of their circles due to the narrow applications of their design philosophies.

The reason why there were so many of them was because it was much easier for mech designers to realize their design philosophies when they were narrow in scope.

They were generally treated as the supporting actors to more high-profile mech designers.

That did not necessarily make them weak or incompetent, but their choice of specializations made it difficult to lead their own competitive mech design projects. "There should be multiple Masters who possess Class V design philosophies within the Mech Supremacist Faction. Master Benedict Cortez also has one for that matter." Ves stated. "What makes Master Mosslover's work so attractive for your project?"

"You are right, Ves. Class V design philosophies is common within the RA and especially the Mech Supremacist Faction as providing more energy to mechs has always been a high priority. I chose Master Thornquist over the alternatives because he is able to increase the energy reserves of the First Sword Mark III with the smallest possible footprint. There are other high-end solutions that can provide even more impressive amounts of energy to the ace mech, but they take up more space, and also introduce their own complications. The solutions of Master Thornquist on the other hand amount to better versions of energy cells that are no bigger than the ones that conform to industry standards."

"I see. If he is able to develop better energy cells, then you don't need to make too many changes to accommodate their usage."

Ketis nodded. "I am especially happy with one of his latest experimental products, which he calls PSEC, which stands for Phasewater Super Energy Cell. The energy capacity of such a cell is much higher than his other products, but that is because much of the volume is filled with a liquid phasewater emulsion."

"What?!"

"Calm down, Ves! I am not talking about raw phasewater here! Master Thornquist developed a special phasewater emulsion that consists of phasewater, regular water and a secret formula of minerals. The resulting combination produces a mixture that is less volatile and can absorb an enormous charge of energy. This makes it suitable for his new energy cells. As long as our clan is readily willing to provide the large amount of phasewater it takes to produce the PSECs, the First Sword Mark III will be able to fight at full power for at least 30 minutes, which is enough to decide the outcome of a duel against a powerful phase lord."

"I see."

Ves gained a complete overview of the pure version of the First Sword Mark III. The mech proposal presented an incredibly attractive package to him. It was indeed a machine that eschewed gimmicks in favor of strengthening its core parameters.

There was relatively little creativity and ingenuity in the pure version, but that was not necessarily a disadvantage.

The First Sword Mark III in this incarnation would become a highly specialized tool that could be relied upon to cut phase lords to pieces on a reliable basis!

The ace swordsman mech did not even need to resort to additional support or other special measures to put up a good fight against phase lords armed with Saint Piercer

weapons!

Given the high synergies between the specializations of all 5 mech designers, Ves would not begrudge Ketis for choosing to go forward with the pure version. However, the pure version was not the only evolution that she had in mind.

"So what about the other version of the First Sword?" Ves straightforwardly asked. "The sword fey version naturally included the use of spurs as I originally envisioned." Ketis replied. "What is similar to the other version is that I, Master Recins and Master Kerckhoff will be contributing our own specializations. The greatest deviation is that the slots previously occupied by Master Clisner and Master Mosslover will be replaced by you and another mech designer called Master Draco Thornquist.

If this was the case, then the sword fey version of the First Sword would retain Ketis' specialization in swordsman mechs, Master Recins' TEVA Armor Tech and TEVA Weapon Tech as well as Master Kerckhoff's Electro-Reactant Flight System.

This was already a good base for an ace swordsman mech. It lacked the improved variation of space suppression tech, but that also lessened the need for Phasewater

Super Energy Cells.

This meant that Ketis could allocate the remaining two slots to a different synergistic combination of technologies.

"I don't need to say too much about your participation." The swordmaster said. "Your main draw this time is not the general living mech enhancements to the First Sword Mark III. I am not saying that your sixth generation living mechs are useless to this project, but it is not the principal reason why I want you on this project. The best way you can contribute is to equip the First Sword Mark III with dozens of sword fey. The spurs must all be alive, persistent and able to evolve over time. I know that the regular Fey Fianna typically fields four to six fey at most, but that is not enough for an ace mech. Will there be any problems if you pair my ace mech with 24, 36 or even 64 sword fey?" Ves almost grew dizzy when he imagined 64 sword fey acting in complete coordination with the First Sword Mark III!

Controlling 64 small-sized spurs was somewhat possible for general drone mechs, but it was way too much for the Fey Fianna.

However, the First Sword was hardly comparable to ordinary living mechs.

"I don't have enough data to make a definite judgment, but I believe it is probably

possible to create 36 sword fey without overburdening the living mech." Ves carefully guessed. "The First Sword's spiritual foundation should definitely be able to withstand the load after absorbing so much feedback from Saint Dise's recent breakthrough. It may even be possible to double that amount to 64 sword fey, but... I think that the power between all of them will get diluted to a significant extent, making them weaker. The upside is that as long as the First Sword Mark III grows over time, this weakness will

slowly disappear."

That put Ketis in a thoughtful mood. The power of this alternative version of the First Sword Mark III was clearly dependent on the quantity of sword fey that the ace mech

could effectively support!

"Why do you care so much about the quantity of sword fey, Ketis? My Fey Fiannas always emphasize quality over quantity. They can do more with 4 fey each than other drone mechs that have dozens of spurs under their command."

"That is true in those cases, but there is a reason why the quantity of living spurs is materially important to the sword fey version of the First Sword. This has to do with what Master Draco Thornquist is able to bring to the table."

"Oh? What makes his work synergize so well with mine?"

Ketis began to grin "Master Thornquist just happens to be the direct disciple of the Web Mistress, the inventor of support link technology."

Now that certainly raised his value and importance by a huge extent! Anyone taught by a genuine Star Designer should not be weak!

"You must feel really glad to gain the cooperation of a mech designer of this pedigree."

"I am." She said. "I actually have a suspicion that Master Thornquist would never indulge me if he hadn't secretly been instructed by the Web Mistress to forge a connection with the Larkinson Clan and ultimately you. That is actually one of the reasons why I am reluctant to commit to the sword fey version of the First Sword Mark III. I don't want to get pulled into a political scheme that might damage your interests or unknowingly drag our clan into a political camp."

That sounded surprisingly thoughtful and prudent of Ketis. He could not fault her decision.

"Your concerns are valid. I don't know much about this situation, but I think your

suspicion is likely true. That doesn't necessarily mean that it is impossible for you to work with Master Thornquist. As long as the implications aren't too serious, then I am fine with it. Who would complain about building a relationship, if only an indirect one, with an impressive Star Designer?"

"Mmmhmm. I guess I should explain what Master Thornquist brings to the table. The short version is that he has taken the Web Mistress' support link tech and essentially applied it onto drone mechs. He believes that his drone mechs are the strongest in their respective mech generations. He even looks down on your Fey Fiannas."

Ves blinked at that. "That sounds... incredibly arrogant of him. Does he truly have the capital to make this boast?"



"Well, he has a Class VI design philosophy in Spur Linking Drone Mechs, which should tell you how much he has invested in this mech archetype. I think it should be easy for you to deduce why his works are so powerful. His spurs are all integrated with miniaturized versions of support link technology. They can share energy and other resources with each other over short and even medium distances to pool their strengths together! This can massively increase the endurance, the survival rate and even the damage potential of all of the spurs! The greater the number of spurs, the more effective

the linking effects become!"

No wonder Master Thornquist claimed his drone mechs were the strongest! The synergy between drone mechs and miniaturized support link technology was so great that the whole far exceeded the sum of its parts!

#### Chapter 6565 Extravagant Proposal

After a month of cooperation with the Master Mech Designers of the Mech Supremacist Faction, Ketis clearly became influenced by their ideas.

After exploring the possibilities for collaboration, she had outlined two different visions for the First Sword Mark III.

The pure version pursued extremely solid dueling capabilities above other concerns. The ace mech would become a straightforward evolution of the swordsman mech archetype. This choice had great implications for Saint Dise's future trajectory. This template would most likely remain a constant and permanent fixture of her approach towards combat. She would remain wedded to the strengths and limitations of a pure swordsman mech archetype.

If she ever managed to become a god pilot in the future, then she would likely become the ultimate swordsman mech specialist among her kind!

Ves could clearly tell why Ketis felt so enamoured about this approach. There was beauty in its simplicity. Saint Dise was a great fit for this machine as she had remained committed to piloting pure swordsman mechs for her entire career. She knew how to leverage the strength of this mech archetype while also mitigating its weaknesses.

However, as much as Ves felt attracted by this concept, he clearly held a stronger preference for the sword fey version, and it was not just because he would retain his ownership in the model.

"Of the two versions that you have presented, there is a clear distinction between risks and rewards." Ves spoke to Ketis' projection. "The pure version is a known quantity. The mech archetype is straightforward and Saint Dise doesn't have to branch out and split her training into developing new proficiencies. In order to use the pure version to its full potential, it is already enough for her to polish her swordsmanship and develop her amazing affinity towards the metal element towards augmenting and reinforcing her machine. That said, this approach is so simple that it lacks a lot of depth. The First Sword can only approach every fight the same way. This will make the ace mech predictable, which means that enemies can easily prepare countermeasures."

The swordmaster's eyes grew strained. "That is true, but ace mechs are so powerful that their weaknesses have become much more relative than before. As long as Saint Dise has developed her strengths to an extreme, she can overcome any opposition by force. This configuration is mainly oriented towards strengthening her ability to break all laws with just her sword."

Ves had taken the time to view the footage of Saint Dise's breakthrough event and became suitably impressed by her final move. The Muscular Swordsman ultimately did not stand a chance, especially considering that the earth element was weak towards the metal element.

"I am not trying to imply that the pure version is a bad development trajectory." Ves patiently clarified. "I am just observing that it is a known quantity. A simple mech concept comes with lower risks. Saint. Dise is unlikely to get lost and go astray in her progression. However, her ceiling will essentially be determined in advance, and it will be incredibly difficult to raise it. The lack of complications means that the ace pilot has less options to turn an adverse situation around."

In other words, the pure version was a relatively low risk configuration that provided medium rewards at best.

Ketis had worked on fleshing out the mech concept for a month. She understood his train of thought.

"The sword fey version is a more experimental concept." She said in line with his explanation. "It lacks the guaranteed utility of Master Clisner's Long Distance Space Suppression Module and Master Mosslover's Phasewater Super Energy Cells. This makes it inherently weaker unless it can use the combination of your sword fey and Master Thornquist's Spur Linking Drone Mechs to outperform the pure version. The question is whether that is possible. We have no data or prior references to refer to. The high-level drone mechs designed by Master Thornquist are admittedly impressive in their own right, but their spurs have always been a little lacking, especially if they are oriented towards melee attacks rather than ranged attacks."

Ranged spurs were much more convenient to use as they just had to hang back and launch attacks at distant targets. The biggest difficulty with using them was to aim and control them all with precision, but high-ranking mech pilots along with advanced hardware and software usually made this doable.

Melee spurs were much harder to use. Unless they possessed energy blades or whatever, they needed to exert enough force to inflict enough damage, which was difficult to accomplish due to their much lower mass and momentum.

This problem was much less of a concern for ace mechs as their Saint Kingdoms could usually amplify the power of melee spurs by an enormous extent. However, this strength boost only remained effective within the range of the domain field, which was not all that big.

"I think the sword fey version is worth investing in despite its greater risks." Ves argued. "Sure, the floor is much lower due to inferior space suppression capabilities and lower energy reserves, but as long as you can pair the First Sword Mark III with a lot of sword fey, the living mech can dominate the battlefield with them. There is no rule that states that spurs have to be physically mounted onto the mech frame, so you can do away with that. Instead, you can design them as permanent detached semi-autonomous combat units and make them a little larger and more powerful. They can be integrated with their own power source and miniaturized space suppressors to make up for the aforementioned shortcomings."

The plan that Ves presented was one that Ketis had already considered.

"Your suggestion has much promise, but the difficulty lies in its execution." She said. "Not only must this version be able to field at least 32 sword fey in order to produce strong enough support link synergies, Saint Dise must also be able to control them effectively in the field. She will have to divert time away from training her swordsmanship and learning how to strengthen her mech with the metal element to learn how to best draw out the strength of all of the sword fey under her command."

"There lies the promise." Ves enthusiastically said. "Those sword fey are all alive, and destroying their physical shells won't kill off the subordinate spirits. This means that the latter will constantly grow and develop over time. One day, they will become so strong that the First Sword Mark III can probably defeat a phase lord by relying on the sword

fey alone!"

As wonderful as it sounded, Ketis still maintained sober attitude towards this mech

concept.

"All of that growth alone is not enough if Saint Dise is unable to use them smoothly and with precision. I have asked her about what she thinks about using so many sword fey in combat. She is receptive enough to give it a try, but she does not have total confidence that she can split her attention enough to make good use of the sword fey. We are asking her to make a drastic change to her approach towards mech piloting. She also has to develop an entirely new set of skills and techniques related to the sword fey."

As Ves and Ketis continued to talk, it was clear that the swordmaster was clear about the strengths and weaknesses of both versions, but was unable to make up her mind.

Both concepts were far too tempting to Ketis!

One represented the classic swordsman mech!

The other opened up new ground!

Seeing that Ketis remained far too attached to the two diverging development

trajectories, Ves suddenly came up with a crazy idea.

"Ketis. Since you clearly like both versions, why not realize them both?"

The swordmaster did not understand what he just said. She blinked at him in confusion.

"What?"

"It's just as I said. You like the pure version, so just go ahead and develop it. You also like the sword fey version, so do not give up on it and develop it as well. Once you have completed the two upgrade projects, try and figure out if you and Dise are able to make a choice on which one you want to use to upgrade the First Sword Mark III.

"Isn't that... a waste of time and resources?"

"It isn't." Ves insisted. "Our clan is wealthy and we are not short of social capital and war merits. This is the time where we must decisively use our resources instead of keeping them in reserve. Do not worry about the costs and just do it. Even if half of your work will end unused, you still exercised your design skills and gained a lot of practical lessons and insights. Besides, who says Saint Dise only ever has to remain attached to a

single ace mech?"

Ketis' eyes widened at his implication. "You mean..."

Ves grinned back at her. "There is nothing stopping Saint Dise from piloting a second ace mech! Neither versions include the Carmine System, so she is not bound to a single mech for the rest of her life. I know this practice is highly unusual at the ace mech level due to resource and proficiency concerns, but that does not mean we have to blindly follow this long-standing industry custom."

"But... but... is this not a betrayal to the First Sword?"

"Living mechs have feelings, but we do not have an obligation to spoil them and treat them like princesses, Ketis. They must know their place. If one ace swordsman mech is not enough to do the job, then we will make use of two. I suppose you can use the pure version as the upgrade path for the First Sword Mark II. As for the sword fey version, it is better to flesh it out into an original mech design that possesses its own identity. Think of it as giving Saint Dise additional options. Not only will she be able to employ the best ace mech for the right mission, but she will also be able to switch to a fresh and undamaged machine if her current one has incurred heavy damage." This practice was not unheard of among other powerful mech forces.

However, this was only ever done by keeping the previous mech used by the high-ranking mech pilot in reserve since it was already there. As long as there was enough space available on a carrier, it was worthwhile to keep the old expert mech or ace mech around even if it was weak and outdated by modern standards. The situation with Saint Linda Cross was a typical example of this. She may have switched over to piloting the Amphis Extremis, but if her ace mech ever got wrecked, she could always jump into the cockpit of her old Amphis in an emergency. The suggestion made by Ves was much different from this expedient solution. He was actually talking about designing and fabricating two modern ace mechs for a single ace

pilot!

This was an unexpectedly extravagant plan!

As attractive as it sounded, Ketis did not allow herself to get swayed by her former mentor.

"No. I don't think it is a good idea to waste so much resources on building two ace mechs and split Venerable Dise's attention. I believe in her capabilities. She will not have to make use of two ace mechs to handle most situations. One is enough. I will not waste

my time or the time of the RA Master Mech Designers just because I cannot make up my mind. I will make a choice."

Seeing that Ketis had her own thoughts on the matter, Ves did not press his suggestion any further.

"If you have to pick between the two, then I personally suggest you take a gamble and go for the sword fey version. I am favoring it not just because it has much greater

promise than the pure version. I think it would be genuinely good for you to expand your repertoire and start making more original variations of swordsman mechs. As long as the sword fey version of the First Sword Mark III succeeds, you can develop simplified versions of the same concept and develop a whole line of mass production models that possesses a part of the charm. Think of how fantastic they will be if many more mech pilots can leverage lots of disposable sword fey in combat. It will be like designing a melee version of my Fey Fianna mech line!"

#### Chapter 6566 Access Rights

The proposal to design and fabricate two ace mechs at the same time was too outrageous for Ketis.

What was Ves thinking when he came up with such a crazy suggestion?

In order to stop Ves from pushing this insane idea onto her and the clan, the swordmaster felt obliged to resolve her indecision once and for all. She had already procrastinated long enough. Delaying this matter further would end up doing far too much damage to everyone involved.

Though Ves voiced a clear preference for the sword fey version, Ketis did not immediately want to give up on the pure version.

Yet... when Ketis thought how designing the sword fey version would present new challenges and options for her, she couldn't help but feel tempted to commit to this development trajectory.

While Ketis tried to think whether there were enough counterbalancing reasons to favor the pure version instead, she suddenly realized that she could solicit the opinion of another swordsmanship 'expert'!

She drew out the Heavensword from the scabbard pinned to her back and unveiled a glowing blade that thrummed with heavenly energy.

The projection in Ves' design lab instantly grew a little fuzzy as the optical sensors clearly struggled to accurately convey the energetic activity surrounding the relic weapon!

Ketis did not pay attention to how the Heavensword degraded the remote connection and projected two different draft designs in front of the grand work.

"Heavensword, you must have kept track of me while I worked to flesh out these designs. Which ones do you think that. I should pick to upgrade the First Sword?"

The powerful weapon began to react. It vibrated in her hand, but that was all. It did not show a clear preference towards either concept.

Ketis frowned a little. "Do you think that one of them is stronger than the other?"

The weapon shook again, but did not give a more conclusive answer. Ketis interpreted this as a no, which meant that Saint Dise would probably do well regardless of which ace mech she ended up piloting.

"Do you think that the pure version will eventually be able to break all attacks and defenses with a single strike as long as Saint Dise grows powerful enough?"

The Heavensword shook up and down, which likely signified its agreement.

"Do you agree with Ves that the sword fey version has greater potential than the pure version."

The sentient artifact repeated the earlier motion, but this time it moved more vigorously than before!

"Why?"

The Heavensword presented a more direct answer this time.

It glowed a little brighter and used its heavenly energy to form a dozen miniature manifestations of swords in the air!

These illusionary swords were merely the size of fingers, but when they positioned themselves relative to each other according to a mysterious pattern, Ketis could feel they held power far beyond what they individually possessed!

The manifested mini-swords suddenly shot out at once, generating so much power that it felt as if they could pierce through dozens of compartments inside the hull of the Spirit of Bentheim!

While Ketis tried to process the power of this display, Ves' eyes already lit up as he observed this demonstration from remote.

Even if the projected feed had grown fuzzier, he still understood what just happened! "Formation!" He gasped! "What the Heavensword has just done shares many of the same principles as a battle formation! Do you know what this means? The First Sword Mark III can reproduce this phenomena by using sword fey instead of living mechs, thereby generating extremely powerful attacks that leverage E energy to a much higher degree than by relying on conventional hyper technology and E-technology! If we combine the potent. E energy amplification of this 'sword formation' with the material amplification of Master Thornquist's miniaturized energy link technology, the sword fey will become so ridiculously powerful that they can break through enemies much more effectively than wielding a single blade!"



That last statement remained questionable. There was no guarantee that relying on lots of seemingly fragile sword fey could ultimately produce a result that far exceeded a single solid sword.

Although Ketis still did not entirely trust the Heavensword's motives, she believed it. when the artifact showed that there was a way to amplify the power of sword fey with the use of formations.

Was this the strongest form of swordsmanship?

Not necessarily.

Did she want to explore how far she could go with sword formations?

Yes!

From the moment the Heavensword demonstrated a way for a collection of swords to exert damage that was at least an order of magnitude stronger, Ketis had already developed a fascination towards this phenomenon.

As long as the rully realized sword fey version could produce the same effect in reality, then the results would absolutely take the Red Ocean by storm!

Phase lords would fall one after another as their formidable defenses shattered against. the might of sword formations!

So what if the sword fey version did not possess more powerful space suppressors or longer-lasting energy cells?

The power of E-technology was least constrained by technological boundaries!

"I have made my decision." She eventually said. "While I still think the pure version has a lot of merit, I think... I am willing to take the chance and see where I can go with the sword fey version."

Ves grinned. "Good choice. I will help you as much as I can, though I only have time to flesh out the living sword fey and other sixth generation living mech stuff. I am sure that your collaboration

with the Mech Supremacists will help you deal with the remaining problems of the First Sword Mark III Project."

The two Larkinson mech designers spent the next half hour exploring the chosen mech concept.

Now that Ves had returned, he was able to provide his own feedback on how to design the sword fey based on his experiences with designing the Fey Fiannas.

The discussion proved fruitful. Once Ketis formed a revised design plan for the First Sword Mark III Project, she was ready to go full steam ahead and dedicate the next five or so months to bringing her ambitious vision to a reality.

"I hope that we will be able to finish this upgrade in time for Saint Dise to make a difference." Ketis sighed.

"Don't expect reality to bend according to your desires, Ketis. I have a feeling that Saint Dise will not be able to fight at her best in the decisive battles to come. The native aliens are clearly drawing closer to a final push. I suspect that they are waiting to push over the 4th defensive band before launching an all-out offensive thrust to overcome the 5th defensive band at once and break into the hinterland of human-occupied space."

As a woman who followed the developments of the Red War fairly closely, Ketis could not discount this possibility. It would be a costly strategy, but it was the best way for the Red Cabal to achieve a decisive victory.

"Let us hope that the Human High Command isn't asleep and is ready to foil this final push.

As the remote conversation came to a close, Ves and Ketis continued to communicate with each other in a friendly and familiar fashion.

In no way did they speak about any sensitive or confidential topics.

Ves did not share any of the classified secrets he learned through his position at the Red Collective.

Ketis also refrained from speaking about the Heavensword as much as possible.

"Well, I enjoyed our talk. It was good to catch up with you after my unintentional break

from reality, but we all need to get back to our work again. Let's talk again when we have made more progress in the First Sword Mark III Project."

The connection ended soon after that. Ves stayed in his design lab in order to update his log and record his thoughts and ideas about the upgrade project.

Almost an hour passed by before Ves finally completed his chores. He looked around and noted that only his Apocalypse Warden guards kept him company. Although the situation was not exactly ideal, Ves no longer had an excuse to visit the bathroom anymore. Phase lords and human-sized toilets did not exactly play well with

each other.

He inwardly shrugged. There was no need to fuss over this issue as much anymore. It was not as if he would expose anything if he activated it. He just wanted the added insurance of escaping monitoring as much as possible, but if that was not possible, then

he would do without.

After making his mind, Ves waited for over 2 minutes until he finally activated a command that had been tempting him ever since he woke up after completing the

Amaranto Mark III.

He entered the System Space.

A handful of System notifications immediately bombarded his vision, but Ves deliberately ignored them and turned around to greet Ketis, who should have entered the System Space at the exact right time!

"Ah, good. You managed to pick up my hidden message and... what is that behind your back?"

Ketis turned her head around to see a familiar hilt and scabbard attached to her back.

"It's the Heavensword."

"...I didn't know that it could enter the System Space."

"Well, you learn something new every day. Ketis lamely said.

An awkward silence stretched between the two mech designers. The Heavensword was not exactly a welcome presence in a space that Ves had always considered to be his private refuge.

Seeing that the Heavensword did not exhibit any hostile reactions, Ves was willing to believe that it did not intend to do any harm. He decided that it was best to pretend that this would remain the case.

If the Heavensword ever tried to pull anything off, then either the Mech Designer System successfully dealt with the powerful artifact, or managed to succeed anyway!

Either way, Ves was too weak to intervene in a collision between two very different but unimaginably powerful relics!

The only control he had over the situation was to make sure to never put Ketis into a situation that went against the interests of the Heavensword.

That shouldn't be too difficult. "Anyway, let's get to business, shall we? I think it is best if we address the upgrade to the Mech Designer System first. Can you read these System notifications?"

"I can." Ketis said. "In fact, I have already skimmed through them a month ago. I think I can even pick one of the upgrade tracks."

"Wait, you can do that?!"

"The Mech Designer System registers both of us as 'users' without making any further

distinctions. That means that our status is almost the same. The only difference is that you enjoy greater seniority than I. Perhaps the reason why the System gave me the choice to choose how to upgrade it is because you were not in a condition to do so, but I am not too sure whether that is correct. Whatever the case, I knew that this was a decision that only you should make, so I have been ignoring it every time I enter the System to accept and complete Missions. I still need to earn Ascension Points."

"I see."

This was an alarming revelation to Ves! If the System did not elevate his status about

other 'users' of the System, then that vindicated his decision to be extremely cautious when choosing to invite other mech designers!

He couldn't imagine what Gloriana would do when presented with this situation!

Fortunately, Ketis had proven her trustworthiness yet again by refraining from making a decision that only Ves should make!

His first priority after he had dealt with this upgrade business was to inquire how he could upgrade his status in the Mech Designer System. He could not afford to let anyone, even those who currently held his trust, gain the power to usurp the System and restore it into the original Metal Scroll or whatever!

#### Chapter 6567 Changelog

[Welcome to the Mech Designer Version 4.0, user. With three successive upgrades, the Mech Designer System has become more complete and capable of solving problems. The latest upgrade is built on top of the previously chosen upgrade tracks, thus many of the upgrades have led to an improvement of its existing functions. Some of the changes are listed in the following notification.]

Ves narrowed his eyes when he read that. This was similar to how upgrades of existing mechs were largely constrained by design choices made in the past.

For example, it was acceptable to add sword fey to the upcoming First Sword Mark III, but it was completely nonsensical to convert her into a rifleman mech!

He quickly proceeded to read the list of changes, though he made sure to remind himself that the System never claimed that it was complete.

[Changelog:

The option to rent storage space in the Vault of Eternity for a limited time has been converted into permanently buying the same volume of storage space at the same prices.]

Ves raised his eyebrows. "Damn, I am already beginning to like these improvements. The System is no longer as stingy as before. I can save so much AP now that I don't have to pay the same amount to keep several cubic meters of space. It is also much more worthwhile to buy larger amounts of storage space and stuff all kinds of survival equipment inside."

Ketis nodded in agreement. "I am already planning to buy enough storage space to store an FTL-capable shuttle stuffed with supplies and basic fabrication instruments."

"That's a good idea!"

[The Wishing Fountain grants the option for users to redeem multiple identical lottery tickets at the same time to significantly increase their chances of winning a desired prize.]

"This is also a good option!" Ves immediately judged. "It might not necessarily be worth it to waste multiple high-end lottery tickets, but it is definitely worthwhile to sacrifice a lot of golden lottery tickets to obtain the best item in the prize pool."

"I haven't earned enough lottery tickets."

"Try and do your best to turn the First Sword Mark III into a masterwork mech, Ketis. The System will award you with a radiant lottery ticket if you do. That is one the nicer ones you can obtain. That is where I managed to get my artifacts."

[The Divine Bazaar will permanently offer a large selection of basic goods for sale at any time, thereby explicitly excluding them from period rotation.]

"This is not a dramatic change, but it is actually quite helpful." Ves commented. "Products such as Attribute Candies aren't always available. I hope that the Divine Bazaar will also make Qi Restoration Potion available on a permanent basis. Even if each potion costs 80 Ascension Points, they can be literal lifesavers in the right situation. Don't skimp on them, Ketis. I suggest you buy at least two and keep them in the Vault so that you can recharge your spirit and possibly your willpower as well."

As a warrior, Ketis understood the importance of such aids, so she definitely intended to follow his advance.

The only issue was that Ascension Points did not fall from trees. She already had to spend AP on other priorities, so it would probably take a while before she had enough to spare for this purchase.

Ves already looked further down the changelog. The most important facility of the System Space by far was the Tree of Possibilities. Any improvements made by it had the greatest impact on his life, so he was eager to find out what had changed!

[The Tree of Possibilities can grow golden enlightenment fruits that can be freely claimed when fertilized by the carcasses of powerful opponents. The carcasses must be at least 90 percent intact, less than 1 standard day old and based on enemies that the user has either defeated in person, or defeated by a mech designed by the user.]

This... was a massive change. It drastically changed the way Ves valued the Tree of Possibilities.

The Mech Designer System had so many areas to spend Ascension Points on that it had become a big burden for Ves and Ketis to afford so many goodies.

For the Tree of Possibilities to present users with way to get these so-called golden enlightenment fruits for free was a massive benefit!

While the restrictions made it so that Ves could not get away with shipping dead bodies all the way to Diandi Base, he just had to move a little closer to the frontlines in order to secure a steady channel of alien bodies.

However, what did the System mean by 'powerful opponents'?

If this criteria meant that it would only work by killing enemy True Gods, then this was a useless upgrade!

"Have you already tried out this function yet, Ketis?"

The swordmaster nodded. "I did. It is harder than I expect to meet all of the requirements. Most guns are so powerful that they completely obliterate alien bodies if they are hit. Small arms are more reasonable, but weapons such as laser rifles, positron rifles and especially plasma rifles destroy so much organic tissue that it is nearly impossible to keep 90 percent of the carcass intact. It is best to rely on poison or a good sword to kill an enemy while preserving most of the body."

That sounded handy for Ketis. It was easier for her than others to kill enemy aliens with surgical precision.

"So how many times did you manage to succeed?"

"Once, and that is not for lack of trying." She sighed. "The problem is as you suspect. The Tree of Possibilities looks down on the bodies of ordinary grunts. It was only when I sacrificed the body of a high-caste orven captain of an alien battleship that I finally managed to satisfy all of the conditions. The golden enlightenment fruit is still growing last I checked."



...I see. This means that we can't grow endless golden enlightenment fruits. Figures. Hopefully, the knowledge imparted by a golden enlightenment fruit is based on the enemy from which it is derived. The more powerful the enemy, the more powerful the reward!"

Ves actually looked forward to stopping by the Tree of Possibilities to see whether Ketis' first golden enlightenment fruit had ripened.

He also wanted to see whether he could steal her fruit, not that he would actually commit such a despicable act. He just wanted to know whether it was possible and make

the right precautions.

[The Mission Hall offers three times more Missions on rotation.]

That was a straightforward but also incredibly helpful improvement. More Missions

meant more opportunities to earn Ascension Points!

It also increased the availability of acceptable Missions, which was even more important.

to Ves.

Not all of them were to his liking. He did not want to engage in any weird acts such as bathing in the blood of his defeated enemies or whatever!

"I can't ask for a better upgrade for the Mission Hall,"

"Well, the System could have quadrupled or quintupled the amount of Missions."

"True."

[The Workshop of Creation can be projected at a physical location near the current location of the user for 10 Ascension Points per 24 hours.]

Ves felt underwhelmed by this upgrade.

"I have to pay 10 times more AP to use the Workshop of Creation outside of the System Space. That... sounds like a ripoff."

"Not quite, Ves. Think about it. The facilities available in the Workshop of Creation are actually better than the ones in your own private workshop. The biggest problem is that only you and I can make use of it. Our best products are always collaboration works, so if you can project the Workshop of Creation in Diandi Base, Gloriana and several other mech designers can make use of the best instruments and production machines for a

whole day."

That... was actually a good suggestion. Ves knew that he had not been using the Workshop of Creation to its full potential. The inability to use it for collaborations was

one of the main reasons why he found it so inconvenient.

After this latest upgrade, Ves finally had another option available. As long as he had the

AP to spare, it might be worthwhile to project the Workshop of Creation to his physical location so that he could fabricate the best possible copy of an incredibly important

mech design!

[Ascension Points can be spent to undergo a Mastery experience in the mind of a mech

designer in the past.]

"...This is ridiculous. What is the point of a Mastery experience when we don't actually get to experience first-hand what it is like to pilot a mech?"

"Have you forgotten about your Carmine mechs, Ves? Now that they are out, it should be theoretically possible for you to enter the mind of one of those new 'pilot designers' or whatever

they call them these days, Granted, you will only be able to travel up to half a year in the past if you pass through the Time Gate."

That... was actually true. Ves felt incredibly uncomfortable at the thought of going back a few months and entering a time period where his 'past' self was already highly active!

It would be so easy for Ves to take action that would directly affect his real self!

Of course, Ves believed that the Mech Designer System wouldn't make it so easy for him to mess with the timeline and possibly cause a temporal disaster.

[A large amount of Ascension Points can be spent to project the Dimension Blade into reality and use it as a weapon that is highly effective at tearing through tangible and intangible barriers and obstacles. The effectiveness of the Dimension Blade is based on its completed upgrades.]

"Now we're talking" Ves' eyes lit up. "I suppose you don't have much need for this new feature since you already have the Heavensword, but it is different for me. If I ever encounter a phase lord or phase whale, I should at least be able to get past the enemy's

defenses."

"The cost of projecting it is large, though. You should try your best to keep as much

Ascension Points in reserve."

That went without saying.

"We've been neglecting the Dimension Observatory for too long." Ves stated. "Even

though the timing isn't too great right now, we should really start to tear into a few dimensions and find out what sort of exotic resources we can obtain from them. There shouldn't be many obstacles left for you to expose this particular capability now,

correct?"

Ketis nodded and reached behind her back to pat the hilt of the Heavensword. "I still need to earn more AP, but as soon as I have enough, I will try and create a basic dimensional tear. I don't want to create a permanent one right away to avoid attracting too much attention. I will try my best to give off the impression that I am borrowing the

power of this artifact to create these dimensional breaches."

The Heavensword possessed so much mystique that nobody knew what it could do! That should make it trivially easy for Ketis to play innocent and pretend that the Heavensword was responsible for everything!

[A large amount of Ascension Points can be spent to transfer Chosen Envoys to physical shells created by the user.]

This was another huge change. Although Ves only had a single Chosen Envoy at the

moment, being able to stuff him into a giant mech or war machine made him a lot more useful than allowing him to remain in a ghost form!

Ketis interrupted his thoughts by presenting a promising possibility.

"Do you think we can use this feature to bring Venerable Imon Ingvar back to life? We

only have to grow an organic shell that is as close to his original body as possible. The Saint Commander will be incredibly happy to reunite with her brother again." The idea held a lot of promise, but Ves doubted that would be so easy to resurrect the

deceased!

"I don't think Casella will be happy to see Imon in his current mental state." Ves shook his

head. "Have you talked to my Chosen Envoy? His mind has grown ten times duller than before. Not only that, he is unflinchingly loyal to me. It's like he has been reprogrammed into my slave. Casella is liable to kill me if she sees how much her brother has fallen. I

think it is best to shelve this idea."

"Ah, you are right, Ves. It is not a good idea for now, Maybe Imon will recover further

over time. I think she deserves to see her brother again in her lifetime. We can't hide your Chosen Envoy forever."

"I know, but it is too soon. Let's revisit this subject a few decades later!" That was the end of the changelog. Ves had no doubt that the Mech Designer System implemented a lot of invisible improvements, but mere users like him and Ketis did not deserve to learn about them. He really needed to figure out how he could improve his status. What did he need to do to put himself on top of Ketis and other potential users?

#### Chapter 6568 Powerful Upgrade Track

The general System upgrades this time delighted Ves.

None of the upgrades sounded overwhelmingly powerful, but they all brought useful and practical enhancements to existing functions.

From tripling the amount of Missions available for acceptable to enabling users to convert the mostly intact bodies of power opponents into golden enlightenment fruits, the Mech Designer System had just become a lot more useful!

The previous upgrade did not bring so many different changes to the facilities in the System Space. Version 3.0 merely introduced a Dimension Observatory, which opened up a lot of new options, but demanded way more AP to operate than the current users could afford.

Ves actually had a strong suspicion that the System expended more effort than useful to strengthen its existing functions this time.

It must have heard his complaints and may have grown concerned that he wasn't using the System as much as he should because of that. He had no doubt that the advantages provided by the System had grown so much that he would not be able to resist the temptation to increase his reliance on its functions.

Normally, Ves would maintain a paranoid attitude towards these suspicious gifts, but given the ongoing crises, he was not sure he could afford to waste the potential of the System.

He already planned to visit the Mission Hall and pick up a few convenient Missions so that he could work on earning a good sum of Ascension Points in his spare time.

His expression briefly worsened. Time was his greatest shortcoming. He had way too much to do and not enough time to handle every issue. It would be great if the Missions corresponded to his existing plans and intentions. If not, he would have to think carefully if he could afford to spend that much time to earn specific sums of AP. "By the way, Ves, I also made another potential discovery about the changes to the System." Ketis spoke. "If the description related to the Dimension Blade is accurate, we can potentially use it to kill or destroy stuff that we never thought about challenging in the past. For example, what if we can use it to kill ancient phase whales?"

"Impossible! That's an absurd thought, Ketis! Ancient phase whales and entities of comparable strength are on a completely different level from mortals like us. As far as I know, the scale of the Dimension Blade is fixed. Even if you can cut through the ancient phase whale's spatial barrier and strike the body directly, do you think a body as big as that of a small moon or a planet will notice the miniscule cut? Unless the Dimension Blade can be scaled up to the point where it can cut through entire planets, I don't see any way it can kill such a massive opponent. Besides, those enormous phase lords and phase whales aren't stupid enough to sit around and let you swing your enormously threatening blade against them. They have many ways to avoid getting hit."

True Gods truly stood above mortals in many different aspects. They possessed several transcendent qualities that completely put them into a whole different class.

"If the Dimension Blade can't be used to kill ancient phase whales, then it should at least be able to break the spacetime bubble that has kept Bridgehead One apart from the rest of the Red Ocean."

Wait.

Was that possible?

Ves recalled the description of the Dimension Blade. Whatever it was, its capabilities shouldn't be weak, especially since it was a product derived from the Mech Designer System!

Yet was it truly as absolute as it suggested? Could the Dimension Blade truly break through more than common physical and energy defenses?

If it could be used to break through a greater spacetime bubble that had inflicted considerable damage to red humanity's socio-economic landscape, then that would not only free up the Polymath and many highly competent first-class scientists and engineers, but also liberate the First Flame and the Dominion of Man!

The latter was especially important as the sole Carmine dreadnought could immediately be sent to the border regions and delay the collapse of the 4th defensive band, thereby buying precious time!

Ves felt incredibly glad that the System had introduced a truly useful capability this time.

The only fly in the ointment was that it came too late to be of use.

"Your idea has a lot of merit, Ketis, but... it is probably not necessary for us to employ this solution anymore." He says. "According to classified information that I am not sure I am supposed to share with you, the greater spacetime bubble surrounding Bridgehead One has exhibited increasing abnormalities. The predominant theory is that the Polymath and the other humans trapped inside managed to find a way to multiply its energy consumption, thereby causing it to get deflated at a rapid speed. There is no point in spending dozens or hundreds of AP to pop the bubble when it is already being solved by a Star Designer."

He knew that the Polymath wouldn't let herself get trapped like this for long. It only took a few days inside the time distorted bubble for her to cobble up a solution!

Ketis simply nodded at this answer. "That saves us a large amount of Ascension Points. It is better not to project the Dimension Blade into reality if we can help it as it will delay our other System purchases."

The two users could keep on talking about the implications of the improvements noted in the changelog for hours, but Ves was not interested in going into too much detail at the moment.

He had been putting off the next matter long enough. His patience had grown thin, so he finally allowed himself to study the next notification.

Ever since he submitted a small sample of Yondu Milk to the Mech Designer System, he already had an inkling that the bulk of the upgrades would be oriented towards life.

The System did not disappoint his expectations.

[The provision of Yondu Milk has restored multiple capabilities of the Mech Designer System and is capable of enabling further improvements. The choices made by the user in the past limits the amount and variety of available upgrade tracks. The user can select. one of the following three upgrade tracks to further develop and specialize the role and features of the Mech Designer System.]

Ves wondered whether it was possible to undo the existing upgrade tracks in order to open up new possibilities.

This was not something he could do with the meager amount of power in his grasp. He was still at the mercy of the System, and that unsettled him. He needed to grow up as quickly as possible and gain enough power to gain at least a small degree of leverage over the System, just like his mother.

He quickly moved on to studying the first upgrade track.

[Upgrade Track #1: Five Element Mastery. This upgrade track will upgrade the Tree of Possibilities to provide expanded access to elemental enlightenment fruits. These fruits grant Skills and additional boons that can increase the user's affinity and mastery of one of the five elements of fire, water, wood, metal and earth. Elemental enlightenment fruits can be ingested by any sentient life form, and can impart specific talent and affinities to individuals that lack them, though the final results may vary depending on many factors. After absorbing an ample quantity of elemental enlightenment fruits, the acquisition of multiple strong affinities and gaining deep masteries over several elements can allow you to safely and effectively fuse multiple elements together to produce drastically stronger results.]

Damn, the list of choosable upgrades started off strong by presenting an option that immediately mesmerized Ves!

Of all of the facilities that Ves cared about, the Tree of Possibilities definitely ranked at

the top, even surpassing the importance of the Sacred Temple!

It couldn't be helped. As a mech designer obsessed with incremental growth and accumulation over time, the Tree of Possibilities perfectly matched his inclinations and



design philosophy!

"The first upgrade track is definitely useful." Ves said. "I feel tempted to choose it right away. The five classical elements pretty much comprise the basic building blocks of cultivation, systematic or otherwise. Pretty much anything related to hyper technology, E-technology and cultivation science can be improved by knowing how to work with one of the five elements to a finer degree."

Ketis assumed a more skeptical posture.

"I question whether it is necessary to pick this upgrade track in order to enjoy the benefits can bring. The Tree of Possibilities already offers enlightenment fruits that can grant Skills and affinities related to the five elements and many other E-energy attributes for that matter. Sure, we need to enter the System Space at regular intervals in order to wait for a fruit that possesses the right stuff, but it is not that difficult for me to acquire a fruit related to the metal element as long as I save up enough AP. Perhaps the elemental enlightenment fruits can give us twice as many benefits as a normal one, but I think that we can ultimately reach the same destination as long as we work harder, study more and earn more AP"

Ves frowned. Her arguments successfully sobered him up. "You are right, I think. The benefits of this upgrade track doesn't appear to be entirely exclusive or unique. Perhaps the elemental enlightenment fruits makes it easier for us to fuse multiple elements together, which is definitely a massive advantage, but ancient cultivators probably figured out how to do this on their own. The biggest reason to select this upgrade track is to reduce the time and resources it takes for us to deepen our mastery in one or multiple elements. We can easily make years, decades or even centuries worth of progress with this choice."

"That does sound attractive, but... it sounds too much like cheating to me." Ketis reluctantly said. "I have a feeling that the proper way to deepen our understanding of the elements is to experiment with them in our works and try to figure out useful design applications on our own, Gaining so much affinity and knowledge on how to manipulate the elements by paying Ascension Points gives us the reward without completing the journey that resulted in it. The latter may be just as important as the former. It will be harder for us to build on top of what we have acquired from the System with much greater ease."

"Hmm... I do not think you are entirely wrong, but that is why it is important to use this new function in moderation. We probably don't have the ability to earn enough AP to make this a big problem. The biggest benefit to this upgrade track is that we can leap our progress forward and save a lot of time on self-study and experimentation. As long as you don't base your entire design philosophy and design applications on knowledge that you have not earned yourself, then you should be okay."

Ves had another reason to pick this upgrade track over whatever other possibilities the System dangled in front of his nose.

He believed it would be a lot easier for him to design better and more powerful elemental Carmine mechs with the help of these nifty elemental enlightenment fruits!

This would allow him to realize his design philosophy and advance to the rank of Master Mech Designers multiple years earlier than expected!

Not only that, but as long as he kept on absorbing more enlightenment fruits, his comprehension of the five elements would grow so profound that would become drastically easier for him to recreate the Elemental Lord that could successfully fuse all

5 elements and wield the power of a god!

That meant that Ves would not only be guaranteed to become a Star Designer, but also attain this rank much faster than before!

The biggest concern he had was whether the elemental enlightenment fruits brought

other changes that Ves did not desire.

However, this was not a serious problem for him. He could always allow Blinky to ingest

them instead!

## Chapter 6569 Demoncasting

The first upgrade track did not disappoint. It granted Ves and other people a much easier pathway to mastering the five elements.

Ves had a considerable need for help in this area. His mother likely possessed a lot of expertise in the five elements, but she had consistently refused to teach him her secrets, using a variety of excuses to keep him in the dark.

The Red Collective and the T Institute both mastered a lot of knowledge in ancient and modern cultivation science, but the problem was that their libraries were not complete and systematic enough.

Their understanding of the basics was relatively whole, but that was because they were derived from the most widespread and least valuable pieces of knowledge.

The cultivation research institutions were lacking in advanced and high-end cultivation theories.

This was why vital legacies that used to play a big role in ancient times still hadn't been recovered.

Vulcan's life would have been much easier if red humanity had access to a complete traditional blacksmithing legacy.

Even the Five Scrolls Compact, which supposedly possessed the largest archives of cultivation scriptures, only inherited a scattering of ancient cultivation knowledge. This was why the researchers of the Compact gained so much notoriety. In their obsession to fill up the missing gaps in the theories that they recovered, they recklessly experimented on people in order to reconstruct the wonders of the past!

That was actually rather strange, because from what Ves had observed of the Mech Designer System, it likely had access to all of those complete legacies!

Perhaps what limited their availability within the Five Scrolls Compact was not that they were absent, but it was because other people heavily restricted access to this powerful knowledge.

Ves learned that this was one of the bad habits of selfish cultivators. They tended to hoard high-end knowledge far too much, even going as far as to allow their powerful legacies to become extinct just because they had been too stingy about sharing their own advancements!

The mech industry at least relied on a central authority like the Red Association and the Red Kingdom to force mech designers to share their advancements with each other, thereby leading to a prosperous scene and a high pace of technological progression. In any case, Ves believed that instead of relying on conducting time-consuming experiments or waiting for the cultivation research institutions to figure out more advanced applications of the five elements, he may as well rely on Five Element Mastery to enter the fast track!

The time savings he could expect from embracing this upgrade track was considerable, but only if he actually intended to make use of the five elements to advance his works.

This was not an absolute certainty. Ves could still change his mind and develop his design philosophy in a different direction. Who said that elemental Carmine mechs was the only way for him to realize his design philosophy?

However, Ves had already set his mind on designing them long before the System offered to ease his progress with this upgrade track. Having an upgraded Tree of Possibilities only reinforced his existing plans, which might not be a good idea.

What if he wanted to change his mind later on? What if he came up with a more promising direction in his research that did not have any relations with any of the five elements?

If he had already committed to Five Element Mastery at that point, then Ves would find it much costlier to abandon his current line of research!

His wariness towards putting himself in a sunk cost fallacy made him reluctant to embrace the first upgrade track.

However, Ves wasn't the only user of the Mech Designer System. He felt that Ketis deserved to have her say as well.

"What do you think about Five Element Mastery, Ketis? Do you think it will be useful in your own research?"

The swordmaster nodded. "I can definitely see the uses. Traditional swordsmanship needs to evolve. The Heavensword has demonstrated numerous examples of ancient sword cultivators commanding the power of heaven and earth through their favored elements. I can use the elemental enlightenment fruits to rapidly improve my ability to design hyper swordsman mechs that can bestow ordinary mech pilots the ability to reproduce these feats without requiring any existing talent and affinities in the respective elements. I can also strengthen the swordsman mechs piloted by those who already possess a mastery in them such as Dise."

That meant that Ketis would definitely not waste the possibilities granted by the first upgrade track. This was a strong argument in favor of choosing this option.

Ves decided to move on and study the next upgrade track before he felt tempted to make an premature verdict.

"Let's see what else is available..."

[Upgrade Track #2: Demoncasting. Expands the Workshop of Creation with facilities to learn and conduct the forbidden craft of demoncasting. This lost art is the ability to seamlessly cast demonic entities into physical objects, thereby augmenting and transforming their appearances and capabilities. Demoncasting is a difficult and dangerous art that can more easily produce powerful end products that largely derive their potency from their demons rather than their material qualities. Individuals can make use of demoncasted objects with moderate risk of danger. Cultivators can bind

themselves to demoncasted objects through special techniques that allow them to stimulate their growth or increase the output of their possessions at greater risk. To perform demoncasting, demonic entities must be sourced. They can be summoned to a dedicated ritual circle at the Workshop of Creation by spending Ascension Points, or they can be summoned through other channels. This upgrade track will also give you the option to learn how to create demons yourself by fusing the souls of many resentful beings under special circumstances.]

This was another big upgrade track, one centered around a facility that Ves previously used the least!

Compared to the first upgrade track, the second one was bound to attract a lot of controversy if it ever became known to the public.

From the start, Ves immediately understood that this form of crafting objects was likely not an upright method!

There had to be good reasons for it to be considered a lost and forbidden art. The potential harm it could do to human society was considerable, especially if a 'demoncaster' got the bright idea by sacrificing entire cities worth of people to forge a powerful demonic entity!

Choosing this upgrade track would mean that Ves would constantly have to resist

temptation.

There had to be a good reason for the System to present this upgrade track. It had to be at least comparable in power to Five Element Mastery. The question was whether it was more suitable to his circumstances.

When Ves thought about it, he actually recognized that it could be useful for him in different ways.

Demoncasting objects was probably an easy way to power up objects that were otherwise mediocre in strength.

For objects that were already powerful on their own merits, Ves could probably make them even stronger by casting a demon inside their physical shells!

In fact, Ves was not entirely unfamiliar with this phenomenon. He thought back on what happened during previous cases where severe corruption caused mechs such as the infamous Yuri Machine, Lanie Larkinson's Elegant Rage and Taon Melin's Zeal to mutate

in very strange ways!

Their appearances after they transformed under extreme and abnormal circumstances already suggested that they had 'demonized' to an extent!

Even though these mechs obviously degraded in many ways after they got demonized, they also grew stronger and more formidable, making them a lot harder to deal with than before!

If demoncasting granted Ves a safe, consistent and reliable means to craft mechs and other objects that possessed these strengths, then this was a great way to strengthen

his personal gear as well as the most important mechs at his disposal!

It was definitely an approach that excited the darkness streak inside of him. He even felt

tempted to find a way to harvest lots of souls from the mass casualties of the Red War and better yet the upcoming years of upheaval in the old galaxy to forge lots of demons! Since so many humans and aliens in both galaxies were about to die anyway, Ves might as well make sure that the deaths would not be in vain, and collected the souls of all of those dead individuals so he could extract their remaining value.

This was an excellent way to prevent resources that had suddenly become a lot more useful to him from getting wasted!

However, Ves grew wary about the safety of handling these demoncasted objects.

It should be safe enough for willpower cultivators to wield them without much issue. They were highly resistant towards corruption and would never easily give in to the corrosive influence of demons!

It was others that Ves was worried about. Even qi cultivators may be susceptible due to their more extreme desires and emotions.

However, the risks of using these dangerous objects was worthwhile as long as the user

was firm enough!

Ves wondered whether it was possible to mass produce demoncasted objects. Even if it

was not possible, he could think about a hundred different ways he could boost the power of his personal Polymetal mech and other personal combat equipment! The much greater utilization of resources should give him and his retinue of high-ranking mech pilots an undeniable edge against enemy phase lords and other formidable enemies!

When Ves compared the second upgrade track to the first upgrade track, he found it difficult to evaluate which one was actually better.

Five Element Mastery directly complimented the current development direction of his design philosophy. It held great promise in the future, but Ves would have to invest a lot of time and

Ascension Points to make good use of its possibilities. This meant that it was only marginally useful in the short term, but incredibly valuable and powerful in the long

term!

Demoncasting sounded as if it was not as expensive or difficult to get started with. Since it was tied to the Workshop of Creation rather than the Tree of Possibilities, it was likely set up to become useful right away. Ves would probably have to invest a bit more time, AP and effort to learn how to cast demons more effectively into objects, and to obtain

them in the first place.

Even so, Ves saw great promise in relying on demoncasting to create unprecedented artifacts that exceeded the power of Blessed Weapons.

Ves turned to Ketis again. "Demoncasting sounds like it can be incredibly useful for us in

the short term, but still retain its value over the long term. What do you think, Ketis?" She frowned. "I do not think it is wise to play with forces that we cannot fully understand or control. I am all for exploring new and forgotten technologies to make our mechs and other weapons stronger, but this demon business sounds dangerous to me. If

we don't end up getting corrupted ourselves, we may end up corrupting our clients. I do not want to bring disaster to them. I think the Heavensword will not like me if I try to conduct demoncasting myself. Heaven has always been mortal enemies towards anything related to demons."

The sword rattled in its scabbard.

It clearly agreed with Ketis' statement!

Ves frowned at this response. "You are letting the Heavensword influence your thoughts.

Just because you don't like something is not a reason for you to share the same opinion.



You need to guard your mind and make sure your opinions are your own. I think it would be a good idea to counterbalance the Heavensword's nefarious indoctrination if you counterbalance it with a demoncasted object. Why not convert your Bloodsinger into one? Its name and appearance already leans in this direction, and this will be an excellent way for you to hinder its subtle brainwashing attempts."

Ketis actually looked thoughtful after hearing this suggestion.

The Heavensword did not like it, though! It rattled louder and more violently in its

scabbard, but the swordmaster quickly responded to its unwelcome behavior! "Quiet. Down." Ketis hissed as she reached out behind her back and forcibly thrust the restless blade back into the scabbard! "Let me think for myself."

#### Chapter 6570 Superdimensional Transformation

Ves and Ketis saw demoncasting in different lights.

Demoncasting presented interesting possibilities to Ves.

Sure, the description given by the System gave plenty of warnings about how dangerous it may be, but that did not deter him too much.

Ves had always equated greater risk with greater reward!

As long as he and the users of his products were strong enough to handle the risks, then they stood to gain a huge amount of power!

This was incredibly vital in this day and age. If Ves was able to employ demoncasting to upgrade his most important gear and mechs, then that would make it even better!

What was even more important to Ves was that demoncasting was apparently so rare that it was unlikely that anyone else in the Red Ocean would be able to strengthen equipment in this strange and taboo manner.

This had the makings of another monopoly!

If Ves was able to create gear that was as powerful if not more so than Destroyer weapons, then he would be able to increase his value to the Red Three and remain in their good graces.

Oh, there was also Ketis. If she exposed the ability to perform demoncasting as well, then she would also raise her strategic value, thereby allowing her to integrate deeper into high society.

Another advantage to the uniqueness and high entry barrier of demoncasting was that the enemies of red humanity wouldn't be able to steal it. The Cosmopolitan Movement has transferred so many stolen human technologies over to the Red Cabal that the native alien forces were becoming increasingly better equipped.

This was one of the underlying reasons why it became increasingly more difficult to defend the remaining defensive bands!

After the native alien races sacrificed many of their old and outdated warships, they finally began to deploy their more modern vessels.

These hulls were not only equipped with state-of-the-art azure shield generators and human-developed superdrives, but also possessed much stronger human warship-grade armaments!

In a conflict where the enemy shamelessly copied as much human tech as possible, the benefits brought by Five Elements Mastery were much more replicable than Demoncasting.

Design applications based on the five elements may be difficult to copy if they were tied to his living mechs, but it shouldn't be too difficult for the major alien races to steal everything else!

As for demoncasting, Ves doubted that the aliens would be able to build up a high-end demoncasting workshop and know how to summon or create the necessary demons.

Ves already grew more and more excited when he thought about the prospect of becoming a demoncaster.

Wait.

Instead of letting his main self become a demoncaster, Ves felt it was much more suitable for Vulcan to become one instead!

After all, it sounded as if mechs could only be demoncasted if they were already designed and fabricated.

In that case, there was little point in letting Ves perform the demoncasting himself when Vulcan had already made strides in restoring the tattered legacy of traditional blacksmithing.

It was also a great way to isolate much of the potential risk and danger of demoncasting to the crafter to one of his incarnations.

Vulcan was not weak or vulnerable anymore. His Heart of Steel had grown by a huge extent after absorbing large quantities of high-grade energies from the Iron Resonant Crucifix Crown.

The Heart of Steel gave Vulcan the capital to resist the symbol of authority's pervasive corruption!

Several years of exposure had tempered the Heart of Steel so much that Vulcan would probably be able to resist the corrosive influence of demons despite not having developed any extraordinary willpower!

Ves continually grinned as he developed more and more promising plans in relation to demoncasting.

Ketis on the other hand continued to frown while keeping a firm hand on the Heavensword.

"So what do you really think about demoncasting, Ketis? Do you think it is suitable?" The swordmaster paused for a moment before she shook her head. "Ultimately, no. While I can see the attraction it holds for you, I do not think I need it all that much. I can see why it may be useful for a mech designer and swordmaster like myself, but I think that we are ultimately doing our clients and customers a disservice by pushing cursed products onto them. They probably won't be able to control their demoncasted mechs and weapons. I think that obsessing over them and becoming too reliant on them will cause too many to degenerate into slaves of their own arms. I would much rather work with the benefits brought by Five Element Mastery. The knowledge we gain may belong to others, but at least we can choose to apply it in a controllable manner." His former student raised a good point. Just because Ves saw a lot of promise in demoncasting did not mean it was the same for the users of those products. They might

taste the benefits at first, but they would soon have to pay the price for wielding arms. that were too powerful for them to control and subdue!

Even so, Ves felt reluctant to give up on such a convenient and incredibly interesting means of improving existing mechs and gear.

"Let me study the final option before I get back to demoncasting."

[Upgrade Track #3: Superdimensional Transformation. This upgrade track will expand the Dimension Observatory. The new facilities will allow you to spend Ascension Points to initiate a transformation into an increasingly more powerful or versatile superdimensional entity. The augmentations that you can choose to apply to yourself can be based on the characteristics of exotic dimensions. These may grant you dimensional powers such as the ability to multiply your mental processing by expanding your brains into many more dimensions, or the ability to enter a dimension inaccessible to others where you can build a private refuge. This may allow you to transform into a native of that dimension, allowing you to natively enter, survive and persistently exist in it. Over time, you can choose to continually strengthen your relation to a small amount of exotic dimensions in order to cultivate strong dimensional powers. You can also choose to increase your relation with many different dimensions, allowing you to freely enter any of them and be able to make better use of their advantages.]

At first, Ves did not feel too impressed about Superdimensional Transformation. Hadn't he already become one by turning into a phase lord?

However, as he continued to read further, he understood that the potential of this upgrade track was far greater than that. This option would drastically expand his interactions with different dimensions. This would not only make it easier to enter different dimensions and harvest resources from that. He would be able to improve his understanding of dimensional resources and also gain the choice to use them up to evolve his body into a direction of his choosing!

One claim that Ves paid great attention to was the part where he could amplify his thinking by expanding his brains in more directions!

This was an incredibly powerful benefit to all busy scientists and engineers!

If Ves was eligible to purchase these enhancements, then he would definitely do so first!

With vastly more brain power at his disposal, he could perform calculations far faster and solve difficult problems a lot faster than before!

This meant that he could successively increase his productivity and get a lot more work

done in the same amount of time!

Ves readily ignored the other benefits and implications of the third upgrade track. He only ever really cared about upgrading his brainpower. This was the root of his success

as a mech designer.

Out of all 3 upgrade tracks, the final one granted him the strongest hope of directly

increasing his work speed!

He could design so many more mechs at the same time without getting overwhelmed or causing all of his work to suffer delays. This would not only directly speed up his progression as a mech designer, but provide a lot more useful products to his customer

base.

He only had to spend a little time to quickly master a lot of difficult high technologies. Ves would no longer get stuck in his attempt to understand abstract and convoluted theories in strange fields such as archetech and luminar crystal technology.

He could also boost his effectiveness in research activities by improving his ability to interpret raw data and recognizing important patterns. This would allow him to waste much less time fumbling around in order to obtain the right conclusions!

All in all, the advantages brought by turning his brain into a superdimensional wonder

were endless! "Superdimensional Transformation has the potential to ease our greatest limitation." Ves observed. "As humans, our brain power is always far too weak relative to our ambitions. If we want to study more textbooks, design more mechs and complete more research, we need an awful

lot of time to get all of that done. If we can directly improve our brains and make them bigger without taking up any extra space in the material dimensions, then we can directly improve our productivity and make much better use of our limited time. If we invest enough in these upgrades, I bet we can even obtain the raw processing power of a Star Designer in advance! This should be especially helpful to a time-strapped swordmaster and mech designer such as you, Ketis. Pursuing dual careers puts a much greater strain on your schedule."

The swordmaster did not hide her clear interest in this upgrade track. "You are right about that. The possibility that you have presented to me is a strong

attraction to me, but it is not the only part about this upgrade track that interests me. Of the three options, this one promises to strengthen my fighting capabilities the most. Think about it. If I can absorb strange dimensional matter and acquire their properties, I can make my body stronger, tougher, faster and more unfathomable. Maybe I can even unlock the ability to increase the mass of a volume of my body so I can fight against enemy phase leaders head-on. Demoncasting only allows me to strengthen my sword and other equipment, leaving my body almost as vulnerable as any other human. Five Elements Mastery will probably allow me to strengthen my techniques by leveraging the power of E energy in more sophisticated ways, but I will probably turn into a wizard in the guise of a swordswoman. Fighting like that makes me feel like I am turning my back

on real swordsmanship."

Her considerations were different from that of Ves. That complicated the decision-making process.

While Ves had the right to make a decision based on his own selfish interests, he did not.

want to neglect Ketis' needs.

The swordmaster was not only his former student, but was also shaping up to become a

dependable partner.

It was worthwhile to pay attention to her preferences and take her needs into account. "All three upgrade directions have their own merits." Ves summed up the situation now that he went through all of them. "I can come up with arguments in favor and against each of them. I don't think that the System has presented any obviously inferior or superior choices, so we need to sit down and think about this further. I think it would be best if we form a set of criteria to understand what we want

the most out of this. After that, we can score every upgrade track on how well they score on all evaluation criteria. This is the most rational and objective approach we can apply to determine our decision."

Ketis understood the merits of this approach and agreed with it. "That sounds fine, but what if our highest scoring options do not match with each other?"

"We'll figure something out. At least we have crossed one of the three upgrade tracks off our list."